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EXCELLENCE EMERGING INVESTIGATOR GRANT 2024
ENDOCRINOLOGY AND METABOLISM – NORDIC REGION

Information and guidelines for applicants

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Information about the call

Grant capital:
DKK 40 million.

Award amount
Up to DKK 10 per grant

Application form opens:
2 November 2023

Application deadline:
16 January 2024, 2pm CET

Applicant notification:
May 2024

Earliest start date:
1 June 2024

Latest start date:
 1 May 2025

Review committee:
Committee on Endocrinology and Metabolism

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2023.01

1 EXCELLENCE EMERGING INVESTIGATOR GRANT - ENDOCRINOLOGY AND METABOLISM – NORDIC REGION

These guidelines are intended to assist you in the application process when applying for a grant from the Novo Nordisk Foundation (NNF). It is important that you carefully read these guidelines before initiating the application process, as the guidelines contain the complete call text as well as instructions regarding the completion of the application.

NNF will treat all applicant and application information confidentially. Read more about how NNF processes personal data under 'privacy & security' in the online application system, NORMA. See how to access NORMA in section 2 of these guidelines.

Furthermore, please read 'General Terms and Conditions' for grants from NNF that all Grant Recipients must comply with:
http://www.novonordiskfonden.dk/en/content/conditions-grants

1.1 PURPOSE

With this call NNF seeks to support and strengthen the development of young and promising research leaders, and to promote Nordic research at a high international level. The call is targeted starting group leaders with ambitious projects within endocrinology and metabolism that aim to understand the human organism and the mechanisms underlying health and disease at a basic and clinical level. Four grants are available for funding in 2024 and NNF aims at awarding at least one of these grants to an active clinician researcher.

1.2 AREAS OF SUPPORT

The overall goal is to obtain new knowledge and better treatment or prevention of disease relevant to the human organism within the areas of endocrinology and metabolism, relating to cellular energy homeostasis, and hormonal disorders of the endocrine system.

Areas supported include research involving patients and/or clinical practice but could also include animal models, model organisms, cellular- or sub-cellular systems (with clear whole-body relevance) as well as in silico analysis, with the overall purpose of solving challenges related to endocrinology and metabolism in health and disease. **Please note that endocrinology is not restricted to diabetes**. **Research projects within all subfields of endocrinology**, e.g., thyroid, reproduction, or bone and calcium metabolism can be supported.

Projects within cancer research will not be approved, however projects on e.g., endocrine tumours where the topic is focused on signalling or crosstalk (not strictly related to cancer development) will be taken into consideration.

1.3   THE RESEARCH LEADER PROGRAMME

To support the best and the most talented research leaders at all steps of their careers from start-up to established principal investigators, NNF offers three specific grants within the 'Research Leader Programme'. The calls 'Emerging', 'Ascending', and 'Distinguished' each target principal investigators at specific career-stages, and applicants are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the requirements in each call.
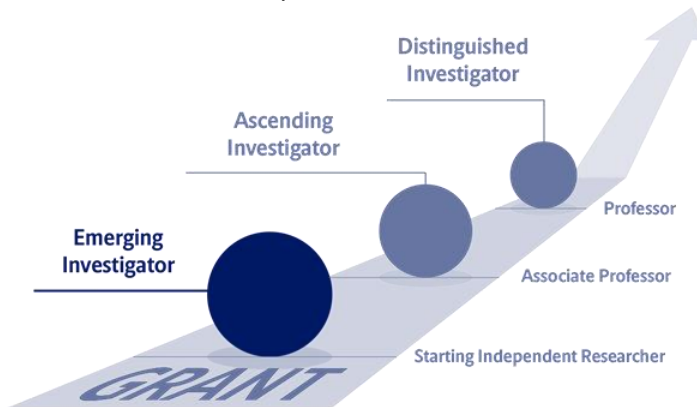
1.3.1   'EMERGING PROFILE'

The Emerging Investigator grant is for talented starting and independent group leaders. The grant is intended for either senior postdocs who have matured to the point of starting their own research group, or junior group leaders in the very early phase of establishing his or her own research group. Applicants are expected to have first-authored peer-reviewed research papers with a high impact. Ideally, after their PhD degree, applicants should have approximately 4-8 years of subsequent research experience (parental leave excluded), but the 'PhD-age' is not a determining factor, while the fact that the applicant is at the stage of a starting group leader is. Emerging Investigator grants can also be awarded to clinicians dedicating part of their time to clinical work.

1.4   ELIGIBILITY

- Applicants should be at a senior postdoctoral, assistant professor, associate professor (time limited) or equal level. Applicants who are already established as independent group leaders with two or more senior/last authorships and/or 2-3 years of group leader experience should not apply for this grant, but instead the 'Ascending Investigator Grant'. If you at the time of application already have secured a 'starting' grant of similar size and duration (e.g., Lundbeck Fonden Fellowships, Villum Young Investigator, Swedish Foundation Starting Grant, ERC starting grant) this will be taken into consideration and you must explain how you will manage two large and non-overlapping projects and why one would need a second starting grant.

- Applicants can be clinicians or basic/experimental researchers.

- The project must be anchored at a hospital, university, or other non-profit research institution (administrating host institution) in a Nordic country (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway or Sweden). It is a requirement that the Nordic administrating institution confirms that the project will take place at the given institution. A Hosting letter, signed by the head of

the institute, must be uploaded with the application.

- For basic/experimental researchers, recipients of the grant must contribute to pre-graduate teaching, classroom lectures or similar at their adminsitrating institution as the grant cannot cover a teaching substitute.

- For clinicians, the applicant must commit 20% (1 workday) to the clinic or clinical related work.

- The applicant cannot have a grant portfolio exceeding an annual total of DKK 4 million (including possible overhead) in the year of commencing the project.

- Emerging Investigator grants are individual grants at the disposal of the grant recipient. If the applied project involves collaboration, the collaboration and the nature of the collaboration should be described in the project description, but the grant recipient must be the clear driver of the project.

You may only submit one application to NNF for an investigator grant for granting in 2024 within all NNFs funding areas. If you submit more than one, the first application submitted will be evaluated, while subsequent applications will be administratively rejected.

If you hold a project grant within endocrinology and metabolism or a project grant within other funding areas, you may apply for an investigator grant.

1.5   FUNDING

A total of DKK 40 million is available for granting. For each grant, approximately DKK 2 million can be awarded per year, over a 5-year grant period, for a total budget of DKK 10 million per grant.

Up to four 5-year Emerging Investigator grants can be awarded.

However, In the case of many applications of exceptionally high quality within one career stage, an amount of up to DKK 10 million of the total grant budget amounting to one grant may exceptionally be transferred between the three calls under the Research Leader Programme within the same committee (ENDO Emerging, Ascending and Distinguished).

Applicants may apply for funding for the following types of expenses:
- **Salary for the applicant** for all or part of the project period in case the applicant is not tenured or otherwise guaranteed his or her own salary in all or part of the project period.
- **Salary for research and technical assistance**, including postdoctoral researchers, PhD students (incl. tuition fee up to DKK 80,000 per budget year, which must be specified in the budget), technicians and research-year students.
- **Operating expenses**, e.g., lab consumables, chemicals and reagents, research animals, sequencing/proteomics and other analysis services directly related to the project.
- **Equipment** required for the project, however not exceeding 20% of the budget total.
- **Conference participation** directly related to the project, i.e., conference and workshop participation and presentation of research results, including travel up to DKK 50,000 per budget year.

- **Travel expenses** directly related to the project, i.e., experiments carried out in other labs for a limited period.
- **Publication of results** emanating from the research project, up to DKK 50,000 per budget year.
- **Bench fee** can be included in the budget for support of individual researchers to cover expenses needed to conduct the proposed research.

Bench fee is calculated per academic employee actively working on the project and may only be used for expenses that are related to the research project and which cannot be included within another individual budget category. Bench fee may account for maximum DKK 8.000 per month per FTE working on the project, and the budget must specify the expenses covered by the bench fee, which may include:

- Common or shared laboratory expenses and consumables
- Laboratory utilities (electricity, gas, water)
- Maintenance of essential equipment
- Service contracts
- Technical and IT support

Note, that bench fee cannot cover rent, administrative support, representation, social contributions etc. To include a bench fee in the budget, the fee must be a part of the general expense policy of the administrating institution, and it must apply for all employees independently of funding source.

Documentation that the administrating institution has a general bench fee policy should be included in an Hosting letter or another official document from the administrating institution enclosed as a link or appendix. Documentation must specify what is included in the bench fee and the cost per month per FTE. An unspecified bench fee without documentation will not be accepted.

For salary items, the number of full-time equivalents (FTE) in years must be stated in the field FTE. One full-time employee for one year equals 1.0 FTE. Most institutions have defined a standard number of annual working hours which equals 1.0 FTE. NNF does not require institutions to use a particular number of annual working hours.

- An example calculation: To find the FTE for e.g. 74 hours, the calculation is: 74 (hours) / 1554 (standard annual hours (example)) = 0.05, which is what should be stated in the FTE field.

Administrative support may account for a maximum of 5% of the total budget and must be included therein. The administrative support:
- can cover expenses such as for accounting, payment of salaries, purchasing, hiring, as well as auditing and financial reporting on the project
- cannot cover administrative expenses that are not directly related to the project
- can via the host institution be shared between the institutions of the main- and co-applicant(s), as detailed in the application budget
- is not automatically included in the grant, and must be stated/applied for in the application budget, but should not be specified in detail

NNF will not award funding for:
- commercial activities

- overhead

> ⚠ The grant may not be used to cover 'overhead'

1.6   LANGUAGE

The application and any additional uploads must be written in English.

1.7   APPLICATION PROCESS

The application must be completed and submitted using NNF's online application and grant management system, NORMA, which can be accessed from:
https://norma.novonordiskfonden.dk
Further information on how to access and navigate in NORMA can be found in chapter 2.

2 November 2023		February – April 2024		May 2024
Call opens		Evaluation of applications		Applicant notification

	16 January			1 June 2024
	Application deadline			Earliest possible start date

Applicants must be prepared to participate in an interview with the review committee at NNF in Hellerup, Denmark on **Friday 5 April 2024**. If you are selected for an interview, you will be notified by March 7 at the latest.

When all applications have been assessed, applicants will be notified about whether or not they have been awarded a grant. The notification e-mail will be sent from norma-noreply@novo.dk to the e-mail address entered on initial registration.

> ⚠ NNF does not provide feedback in case an application is not selected for funding.

1.8   ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

All applications will be evaluated by the Novo Nordisk Foundation's Committee on Endocrinology and Metabolism.

In the evaluation, the project and the applicant are weighted equally.

The project is assessed based on the research question and scientific impact, scientific approach, societal impact, quality of past performance and research leadership potential, collaborations and research environment. The applicant is assessed on her/his merits relative to age and career stage, potential and independence and the commitment to the applied project. Past mobility and international experience are considered advantageous.

If you apply, while having active grants from NNF or other funders, you must state these grants in your CV including your time-commitment to them, and you should describe the synergy of the proposed project with the projects already funded. Failure to disclose active grant information and unrealistic time commitment to the proposed project will adversely affect the assessment.

If you have an active grant from NNF, this may be taken into consideration in the evaluation of your application for a new grant. In general, it is recommended that the Grant Recipient has delivered results on the active grant(s) before submission of a new application to NNF. If you apply, while having an active grant from NNF, you must describe how the project you propose in this application is different from and/or coherent with the project(s) already funded and briefly describe the progress of the already funded project(s).

2 THE APPLICATION AND GRANT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM – NORMA

Sections 2 and 3 provide guidance on completing and submitting an application through NNF's online application and grant management system NORMA. Section 2 contains general technical information, while section 3 contains information specific to the individual call. All the fields of the application form must be completed in accordance with these guidelines and the instructions in NORMA.

2.1 USER REGISTRATION

NORMA can be accessed through links on NNF's website or directly at:
https://norma.novonordiskfonden.dk

Before you begin, please read the instructions on the login page.

If you do not have a user profile in NORMA, you can register by clicking REGISTER from the login-page. Here you can also retrieve forgotten passwords by clicking the FORGOT PASSWORD-link. The main applicant should only have one user profile. Please use your work e-mail address for registration. After registration, you will receive an e-mail with your user name and a temporary password, which you can then use to log in to NORMA. After logging in for the first time you will be asked to provide a password of your own choosing.

A registered user who submits an application is legally responsible for the truthfulness of the content of the application.

If you experience technical problems, please contact NORMA Support: norma-support@novo.dk.

⚠ An applicant cannot change the e-mail address provided at registration. Please contact NORMA Support if you need to change your e-mail address.

2.2   CREATING AN APPLICATION

Initiate an application by finding the call you wish to apply for in the OPEN CALLS-section on the Applicant Portal in NORMA. Use the search filters at the top of the section to filter by e.g., overall funding area, and initiate an application by clicking APPLY NOW next to the relevant call.

Applications can be edited up until the deadline. A draft application can be saved by clicking SAVE DRAFT and may be cancelled at any time up until the deadline by clicking CANCEL APPLICATION. An application is not submitted to NNF until an applicant has clicked SUBMIT and has received confirmation that the application has been successfully submitted.

You can review the application at any time by reopening from within NORMA. Opening the application will also allow you to download the application in its entirety as a PDF. Make sure the PDF is readable and formatted appropriately before submitting your application.

2.3   TEXT AND ILLUSTRATIONS

For all applications, the individual fields must be completed in accordance with these guidelines and the instructions supplied in NORMA.

⚠ To prevent loss of data, it is essential to press SAVE DRAFT before you leave NORMA or navigate in the system.

TEXT FIELDS
Text from Microsoft Word or comparable word processors can be copied and pasted into most text fields of the application. It is, however, important to check that formatting, special characters, and symbols have not been converted or lost in the text fields after copying and pasting. If the formatting looks wrong in NORMA or in the PDF, try changing all text to *Normal* using the FORMAT dropdown. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the pdf looks correct before submitting.

The available options for formatting text are at the top of the text fields. Some shorter text fields do not have the option to use rich text formatting.

⚠ For readability purposes, standard fonts, font size 11-12, and line spacing between 1.0 and 1.5 must be used.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Illustrations such as figures, charts, tables, images, etc. related to the project description can be uploaded under PROPOSAL. A maximum of four illustrations are allowed. The illustrations will be placed on a separate page in the application PDF but can be referenced throughout the project proposal as needed. For readability, please name the files numerically by the order in which they are referenced.

The following file formats for illustrations are accepted in the system: JPG, JPEG, PNG and BMP. The maximum accepted size for each illustration is 1050*1650 pixels.

2.4 SUBMITTING THE APPLICATION

The application in its entirety must be submitted electronically via the application system by clicking SUBMIT. It is not possible to submit an application or any part of it by standard mail or e-mail. Any material submitted outside the application system will not be included in the evaluation and will not be returned.

⚠️ Please remember to check that the PDF version of the application is legible and contains all data and uploads before submitting.

All applicants must read and accept NNF's Standards for Good Research Practice before submitting the application. Further, the applicant must declare that the information provided in the application is true and accurate.

An application cannot be submitted unless all the required fields have been completed. Applications can be cancelled at any time before submission. If you need to withdraw an application after the deadline, please get in touch with NNF via e-mail, using the contact information on page 3.

⚠️ A list of any incorrect or incomplete entries will be generated at the top of the screen when you click SUBMIT. Clicking one of these error messages will take you to the relevant field. Amending incorrect or incomplete entries can be time-consuming, so we recommend submitting applications well before the deadline.

3 APPLICATION CONTENT

This section provides guidelines on the content required in the sections of the online application form for this call.

3.1 APPLICANT

The APPLICANT-tab contains information about all those involved with an application, meaning the main applicant or the contact person applying on behalf of an organization/institution as well as any co-applicants. Information about each applicant is collected through individual tasks in the APPLICANT DETAILS-section, detailing experience, publication history, application history with NNF, etc.

MAIN APPLICANT

The main responsible party for the application can enter their details through the Applicant Details-task with the type 'Applicant'. After filling in all mandatory fields, the applicant should complete the task to save the details.

Your **CV** can be maximum 4,000 characters (including spaces and line breaks). Please include in your CV:
- A short bibliographic overview summarizing total number of peer-reviewed publications, number of first authorships, number of corresponding authorships, number of citations, and H-index.
- An overview of your current grants, and an indication of how much of your research time (in %) is committed to each of the projects.
- A short paragraph on your teaching obligations. If no teaching obligations are presently in place, please provide a short teaching plan for the grant period.
- For clinicians, please describe your current clinical responsibilities, including how and to what extend these will be continued during the project period.

Publication list. Please only include the 10 most relevant publications for evaluating your merits. Include a complete specification of all authors for each publication with your own name highlighted. Applicants are strongly encouraged to provide a full list of publications in ORCID.

Supplementary Information (under Applicant Information). Please describe your terms of employment (where the project is to be carried out). Non-permanent employees should indicate when their current contracts are running out and how their salaries are currently covered. Tenure-track employees should indicate when they are up for tenure. Further, indicate how much of your research time (in %) you intend to commit to the project applied for.

PREVIOUS AND CURRENT GRANTS FROM NNF

If you have previously submitted other applications in the same calendar year, summarize how these applications are related to the current application.

If you have received any grants from NNF as an applicant or a co-applicant within the past five years, you must provide the application number, project title, grant period (in years), grant amount and the percentage share of the grant (100% if there is no co-applicant). Briefly summarize how any of the grants are related to the current application.

3.2 INSTITUTION

Please provide information about the institution where the grant will be administrated. This institution is where you will be employed during the grant period and the institution which will be responsible for budgeting, accounting, and staff supported by the grant.

> ⚠ Registering a new administrating institution in NORMA can take up two working days. The application can be edited but cannot be submitted before this information is registered. We therefore recommend that you register an administrating institution in good time.

3.3 PROPOSAL

Describe the project using the fields on the PROPOSAL tab. Each field (Project title, Brief project description, Project description, Illustration uploads, Lay project description, and Research methods) will have a short instruction text describing the expected input and maximum characters available.

PROJECT TITLE

Please provide a short title for the project (maximum 150 characters, including spaces).

BRIEF PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Please provide a brief stand-alone summary of the project describing its purpose, target group and activities. (maximum 2000 characters, including spaces and special characters).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Please describe your proposed research project in detail – including purpose, background, methods, collaborations, and the significance and potential impact of the project. Please include a short paragraph on how the proposed project is different from and/or coherent with project(s) already funded. (maximum 30,000 characters, including spaces, line breaks and special characters).

Abbreviations should be defined at the first use, and preferably a list of abbreviations should be included in the project description.

ILLUSTRATION UPLOADS

A maximum of four illustrations of 50 mb each can be uploaded here. Accepted formats are .jpg, .png, .gif, .bmp.

LITERATURE REFERENCES

Please provide the reference information for the literature cited in the project description (maximum 8,000 characters, including spaces and special characters).

LAY PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Please provide a brief summary for non-experts in lay language. If the application is awarded a grant, the text may be used for publication (maximum 1000 characters, including spaces and special characters).

> ⚠ Please note that the application should address all the assessment criteria listed in subsection 1.8.

3.4 BUDGET

The budget for the project applied for only comprises the information entered on the BUDGET tab. Additional budget information attached under UPLOADS or added on any other tabs than BUDGET will not be considered.

GRANT PERIOD

Before you can fill in the budget template, start by entering the start and end dates for the grant. This will determine the number of years available from the budget template. The grant period is the duration of NNF's grant for the project, and the budget counts years following the project start date rather than calendar years.

CREATE BUDGET

After saving the project start and end dates, the budget template will become available to edit. The budget will open in a new tab, in which you will need to add the subcategories you need for your budget. Please follow the instructions at the top of the screen to complete the budget.

Notes:
- The budget continuously saves changes you've made without the need to manually save. You are free to leave the budget at any time and come back at a later point.
- When you are done filling in your budget, please use the SAVE AND CLOSE button. This will check that all information has been filled out correctly and in accordance with the guidelines, saving the budget to your application.
- You can now return to the BUDGET tab. A summary of the budget will be displayed, review it to ensure that it is correct.
- The full budget details can be viewed or edited at any time before submission of the application by reopening the budget template.

Any comments about the budget can be entered in the SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION field.

> ⚠ Applicants may only apply for the types of expenses listed in subsection 1.5.

3.5 APPENDICES

A hosting letter from the Nordic administrating institution, signed by the head of the institute, hospital or department must be included. The hosting letter should include:

- A confirmation from the administrating institution that they accept that the project will take place at the given institution and that the institution will provide the required infrastructure, such as laboratory and office space, and administration of the grant
- A confirmation that the administrating institution has agreed to the submitted budget and that the administrating institution will manage the potential grant according to this budget.
- In case the applicant is not a permanent employee at the administrating institution the terms of employment should be described. Also, if the applicant has multiple affiliations in addition to the one at the administrating institution (including affiliations to institutions abroad) the administrating institution must confirm the percentage time/affiliation that the applicant has to the administrating institution during the duration of this 5-year research project.
- A confirmation that the total external grant portfolio of the applicant does not exceed 4 million DKK (not considering this application), in the year of commencing the project.
- If bench fee is applied for, include documentation that the administrating institution has a general bench fee policy (enclosed as link or appendix). Documentation must specify what is included in the bench fee and the cost per month per FTE. An unspecified bench fee without documentation will not be accepted.

All other uploads that are not required, e.g., recommendations, offers on equipment etc. will not be taken into consideration.

All uploads must be in PDF format. NORMA automatically places these uploads at the end of the application. Please respect the page limitation and the upload requirements stated in the call. Uploads in excess of these limits may not be considered for evaluation.

November 2023

The Novo Nordisk Foundation

The Novo Nordisk Foundation is an independent Danish Foundation with corporate interests. The objective of the Novo Nordisk Foundation is twofold: To provide a stable basis for the commercial and research activities conducted by the companies within the Novo Group and to support scientific and humanitarian purposes.

The vision of the Novo Nordisk Foundation is to contribute significantly to research and development that improves the lives of people and the sustainability of society.