novo nordisk
foundation
Benefitting people and society

Guidelines for applicants

STENO COLLABORATIVE PROJECT GRANTS 2025

Facts about the call

Total amount available for granting:
DKK 30 million

Amount available per grant:
From **DKK 300.000 – 10 million** for projects from one to five years in duration.

Call opens:
7 March 2025

Call closes:
3 June 2025, 14:00 CEST

Applicant notification:
September 2025

Earliest start date:
1 November 2025

Latest start date:
31 October 2026

Review committee:
Committee on Endocrinology and Metabolism

Contact:
Kristina Rohde Larsen
Grant Manager
E-mail: kro@novo.dk

§

All Grant Recipients must comply with the 'General Terms and Conditions' for grants from the Novo Nordisk Foundation (the Foundation).

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

You can find more information about the Foundation's application and granting process at the NORMA Help Centre. Detailed information about the different parts of the application is available in NORMA.

1 Steno Collaborative Project Grants

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, the Novo Nordisk Foundation wishes to strengthen the collaboration between the Steno Diabetes Centers and the research environments related to the Centers. The foundation will support research projects with a unifying and collaborative mission to develop knowledge, to exchange experience across the research institutions and to facilitate synergy with the research environments around the Steno Diabetes Centers.

AIM

Steno Collaborative Project Grants aim to:

- Strengthen clinical, patient-centred and collaborative research between the Steno Diabetes Centers and the research environments outside the Centers.
- Position Denmark at an international level in improving prevention and care for persons with diabetes or at risk of diabetes.

1.2 Areas of support

The research projects must be collaborative and focus on diabetes within the area of:

- Clinical research translating promising strategies, methods and treatments for diabetes and prevention of diabetes into large-scale protocols. Epidemiology and big data may be included.

- Research within the characteristics of the Steno Diabetes Centers, including digital health and diabetes, continuity in patient care, type-2 diabetes, health promotion research, education, and vulnerable diabetes patients.

1.3 Eligibility

The research project must be collaborative with a unifying vision and focus on solving a challenge within the area of clinical diabetes research.

The research project must comprise a main applicant and two to five co-applicants.

The project description should clearly describe the role of the co-applicant(s), and the budget should clearly indicate the co-applicant's/ co-applicants' share of the total budget.

For Steno Diabetes Center Copenhagen, Aarhus, Odense, and Nordjylland, the Steno Partner institutions are defined as hospitals with a cooperation agreement with the local Steno Diabetes Center. In Region Zealand, the main applicant must be from one of the region's hospitals.

International collaboration is strongly encouraged.

MAIN APPLICANT

- The main applicant must be anchored at a Steno Diabetes Center or a Steno Partner institution.
- PhD students are not eligible to apply as main applicant.

CO-APPLICANTS

- The research project must comprise two to five co-applicants from a Steno Diabetes Center or a Steno Partner institution.
- A university, hospital, municipality or other non-profit research or diabetes care institution in Denmark or abroad is also eligible as a co-applicant.

APPLICATION

- Due to the collaborative purpose of the grant, the application must comprise at least two different Steno Diabetes Centers.
- Please also note the requirements on applicants and collaboration in section 3.4 below.

PLEASE NOTE

In the same calendar year, an individual can be a main applicant (PI) on one application in *Steno Collaborative Project Grants* **OR** in Project Grants in Endocrinology and Metabolism **OR** in Non-Diabetic Collaborative Project Grants. If you are a main applicant on an application in one of these three calls, you can be a co-applicant on one application in either Steno Collaborative Project Grants **OR** in Non-Diabetic Collaborative Project Grants.

If you are not a main applicant, you can be a co-applicant on a total of up to two applications in Steno Collaborative Project Grants AND/OR in Non-Diabetic Collaborative Project Grants.

Main applicants, who have applied in the *Steno National Collaborative Call 2025*, and who do **not** proceed to Stage 2, may submit an application for the *Steno Collaborative Project Grants 2025*.

Active NNF grants:
Main applicants with another active NNF grant can apply for a Steno Collaborative Project Grant. If the main applicant has an active grant from NNF, this will be taken into consideration in the evaluation of the 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 applying while having an active grant from NNF, the application must clearly state the differences between the projects.

A main applicant with an active Steno Collaborative Project Grant can apply for a new Steno Collaborative Project Grant during the final year of the active grant. If a main applicant with an active Steno Collaborative Project Grant during the final year receives a new Steno Collaborative Project Grant, the new grant cannot be activated until the existing grant is completed and no longer active.

1.4 Funding

A total of up to DKK 30 million is available for grants from DKK 300,000 and up to DKK 2 million per year with a maximum of DKK 10 million.

Applicants may apply for funding for the following types of expenses directly related to the project:

- **Salary** of a qualified substitute clinician to undertake clinical responsibilities of the main applicant.
- **Salary for** research assistance on every level, including postdoctoral researchers, Ph.D. students (tuition fee up to 80,000 per student per year – must be specified in the budget) and research-year students (up to 150,000 per budget year).
- **Salary** for technicians, bio-analysts, nurses and other technical and administrative assistance.
- **Salary for co-applicants, project employees or researchers** at all staffing levels, including project management. However, researchers in permanent positions will not receive funding for their own salary.
- **Operating expenses**; consumables, materials, expenses relating to clinical trials, services, access to registries, access to laboratory facilities, databases and infrastructure etc.
- **Equipment**; equipment required for the project, up to DKK 200,000 per budget year.
- **Collaborative activities**; project-related meetings, seminars and exchange of personnel that will strengthen the collaboration between partners of the programme.
- **Communication and outreach** in the form of conferences, books, articles and other dissemination directly related to the project.

- **Travel for an extended period** by the applicant, co-applicants or project staff, e.g., to carry out experiments at the lab of a collaborator. The applicant, co-applicant(s) or researcher(s) working on the project can travel to the institution of an international co-applicant or vice versa. Up to 10% of the total budget, for travel expenses directly related to the project for travel, relocation costs, and living abroad expenses for health insurance, visa, etc.
- **Travel expenses** related directly to the project, i.e. experiments carried out in other labs for a limited period, workshops etc., up to DKK 25,000 per budget year.
- **Conference participation**, directly related to the project.
- **Publication costs**; publication of results emanating from the research project, up to DKK 25,000 per budget year.
- **Project supplement for research grants** (Danish universities only) and only for time spent at the Danish university
- **Direct administrative expenses** (not applicable to Danish universities); of up to 5 % of the total funding applied for and must be included in the budget.
- **Bench fee** (not applicable to Danish universities) can be included in the budget for support of individual researchers to cover expenses needed to conduct the proposed research.

Full-time equivalents (FTEs)
For each salary entry, please specify the FTE in years within the designated FTE field. This will indicate the proportion of a full-time position that the project funding will support for each year of the grant period. One full-time employee for one year equals 1.0 FTE.

Bench fee
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 [eligible to apply for salary]. It may only be used for expenses related to the research project which cannot be included within another individual budget category. Bench fee may account for a maximum of DKK 8,000 per month per FTE. 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

PLEASE NOTE that bench fee cannot cover rent, administrative support, representation, social contributions etc. A valid bench fee policy in line with the Foundation's requirements must be available at the time of application, and this official

documentation from the administrating/co-applicant's institution must be provided upon request.

Project supplement for research grants: (Danish universities only)
The project supplement contributes to the coverage of indirect costs at Danish universities, and replaces budget posts such as administrative costs, bench fee and parental leave.

More information on the joint model for project supplement is found at Universities Denmark's website. Questions related to the project supplement should be directed to the research support units at your university.

Administrative support
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

The Foundation will not award funding for:

- Grants and projects involving use of products where Novo Group companies have a commercial interest (i.e. anti-obesity medications) must be in accordance with the Foundation's Policy on Engaged Ownership of Novo Group Companies, as well as internal NNF policies. In general, NNF will not fund projects where weight loss in a trial using anti-obesity medication is a primary goal.
- Commercial activities
- Overhead/indirect costs (such as rent, electricity, water and maintenance)
- Double funding of projects:
  - If the applicant has received funding for the proposed project from other sources, in part or in full, this must be accounted for in the budget, as no budgetary overlaps are allowed

- If an identical or overlapping project proposal has been submitted to other funding institutions than the Foundation, it must be noted in the application
- If the applicant receives funding for the project, or parts of the project, from other sources following submission of the application to the Foundation, the Foundation must be informed immediately

- Salary for the main applicant. However, salary for a qualified substitute clinician to undertake clinical responsibilities of the main applicant can be requested.

1.5 Language

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

1.6 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.

When all applications have been assessed, applicants will be notified about whether they have been awarded a grant. The notification e-mail will be sent from norma-noreply@novo.dk to the e-mail address used when creating a profile in NORMA.

PLEASE NOTE: The Foundation does not provide feedback in case an application is declined.

1.7 Assessment criteria

The Novo Nordisk Foundation's Committee on Endocrinology and Metabolism will assess the applications based on the following criteria:

- The collaborative and scientific potential of the project team.
- Close and strong cross-institutional collaboration and synergy.
- Scientific quality of the project.
- Potential national/international impact of the research project on patients/persons at risk and clinical practice.
- Creativity, novelty, feasibility and ambition.
- Relevance and timing.
- Scientific excellence and merit of the applicants.
- Potential for implementation in clinical practice.

If you have an active grant from the Foundation, this may be taken into consideration in the evaluation of your application for a new grant. In general, it is recommended that the main applicant has delivered results on the active grant(s) before submission of a new application to the Foundation. If you apply while having an active grant from the Foundation, 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). This information should be included in the **Project Description**.

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 Creating and submitting an application

The Foundation uses the application and grant management system NORMA: https://norma.novonordiskfonden.dk

If you do not have a user profile in NORMA, you can create one by clicking **Register** on the login page. The main applicant should only have one user profile. Please use your work e-mail address for registration.

The registered user who submits an application will be legally responsible for the truthfulness of the content of the application.

You can find guidance on how to create and submit an application at: NORMA Help Centre.

If you experience technical problems and cannot find a solution in the NORMA Help Centre, please contact NORMA Support: norma-support@novo.dk.

3 Application content

This section provides guidelines on the content required in the sections of the online application form for this call. Detailed information about the different parts of the application is available in NORMA.

3.1 Applicant

The **Applicant** tab relates to information about all those involved in an application, meaning the main applicant or contact person applying on behalf of an organisation/institution as well as any co-applicants.

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.

CV for main applicant can be a maximum of 4,000 characters.
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.

Publications list for main applicant. Can be a maximum of 5,000 characters (including spaces, line breaks and special characters). Please only include the 10 most relevant publications for evaluating your merits. Include a complete specification of all authors for each publication. Applicants are strongly encouraged to provide a full list of publications in ORCID.

Supplementary Information (under Applicant Information). This field can be utilized to describe special circumstances regarding your application that the evaluation committee should be aware of, e.g. current terms of employment. Please do not include any personal information of a sensitive nature, e.g. illnesses, family conditions etc.

3.2 Co-applicant(s)

Co-applicants are expected to actively participate in organising and implementing the project and should, consequently, be allocated a share of the grant. The project description should clearly describe the role of all co-applicants, and the budget should clearly indicate the co-applicants' allocation of the total budget. Co-applicants must be invited through NORMA and subsequently enter their details in the system. Please follow the instructions in NORMA on how to invite co-applicants to your application.

Please note that co-applicants can read, edit and upload information into the application portal, **but only the main applicant is able to submit the final application.**

Inviting co-applicants can be time-consuming.
Please invite any co-applicant(s) as soon as possible and well in advance of the submission deadline.

3.3 Institution

Please provide information about the institution where the grant will be administered. This institution is where the main applicant will be employed during the grant period, and the institution that will ultimately be responsible for administering and allocating the grant, including budgeting, financial reporting and staff supported by the grant.

It can take up to five working days to register a new administrating institution in NORMA.
The application cannot be submitted before the institution has been registered.

3.4 Proposal

Describe the project using the fields in the **Proposal** tab.

PROJECT TITLE

BRIEF PROJECT DESCRIPTION
Maximum 2,000 characters, including spaces, line breaks and special characters.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION
The project description can be up to 20,000 characters including spaces and should describe the following under specific headings:

EXPECTED OUTCOME AND FEASIBILITY
The aim is to strengthen clinical research with a substantial potential for impact on patients and/or people at risk, and the application should describe the expected outcome of the research project, including:

- To what extent and how the project is expected to affect patients/people at risk (include numbers affected).
- The potential and feasibility for changing clinical practice.
- The expected reach of impact; nationally and/or internationally.

SCIENTIFIC QUALITY AND NOVELTY
The application must include a description of:

- The relevance and timing of the project, including a brief overview of existing knowledge on the research subject.
- A thorough description of trial design including, where relevant, power calculations and considerations on sample sizes.

It is encouraged to include preliminary data to support the underlying hypothesis.

CLINICAL TRIALS
If the project involves clinical trials, please note that:

- The clinical trials must conform to good clinical practice guidelines (GCP).
- Clinical relevance and scientific quality is imperative, and a detailed protocol including calculation of power, data management plan, and plan for statistical analysis of data must be included.
- All clinical trials that receive a grant from the Novo Nordisk Foundation must be registered at ClinicalTrials.gov or Clinical Trials Information System (CTIS).
- In case of industry sponsored material(s) there must be a written agreement (before project start) between the researcher and the industrial partner ensuring the researcher full ownership of obtained data and the rights to publish independently of the industry sponsor.
- When the clinical trial ends, the anonymized data must be made available to other researchers through public databases such as the Zenodo open data repository (CERN) or other equivalent databases.
- If an application for the clinical trial previously has been unsuccessfully applied for at the Novo Nordisk Foundation, it is imperative that it is described how the application has been improved since last submitting the proposal.
- An applicant can submit an application to the foundation before all legal approvals have been obtained, but the grant cannot be activated until all approvals from the

relevant public authorities have been obtained. If a grant is not activated within one year following the date of the grant letter, the grant will be considered annulled.

APPLICANTS AND COLLABORATION
Collaborative projects are essential for obtaining the grant. The application must therefore describe how the collaboration is pivotal in addressing the challenge and builds capacity in the research environment. In addition, the application must address how each applicant contributes to and interacts in the research project, in a way that creates synergy and supports national, cross-institutional collaboration. This collaborative nature should be evident in the description of the project.

The application must therefore include a description of the applicants and their collaboration, including:

- The expertise, role and contribution of each participant.
- How the collaboration between the applicants contributes to synergy and to reaching the common aim.
- How the collaboration will take place practically, including for instance in experimental or analytical activities, by co-funding, and by sharing of in-kind resources.
- How on-going knowledge sharing, and networking will take place.
- An organizational outline of the research project, and how the research groups are particularly well suited to address the proposed challenge. Please also include clearly defined leadership functions and reporting structures.
- The expected impact of the cross-institutional collaboration.

RESEARCH PLAN
The application must include:

- A project plan including a timeline for the expected milestones of the research project, preferably with specific outputs and outcomes.
- Considerations on project continuation after ended funding.

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 can be uploaded here.

The following file formats for illustrations are accepted in the system: JPG, JPEG, PNG and BMP. The maximum accepted size for each illustration is 50 MB and 1050*1550 pixels.

LITERATURE REFERENCES
Please provide the reference information for the literature cited in the project description (maximum 4,000 characters, including spaces, line breaks and special characters).
If not applicable, please fill in N/A.

LAY PROJECT DESCRIPTION
Please provide a brief summary in lay language. If the application is awarded a grant, the text may be used for publication (maximum 1,000 characters, including spaces, line breaks and special characters).

3.5 Budget

Enter the project grant period, and the budget template will become available.
Only budget information submitted via the **Budget** tab will be considered in the review process. Any additional budget information attached under **Appendices** (or any other tabs) will not be considered.

3.6 Appendices

All uploads must be in PDF format. NORMA automatically places these uploads at the end of the application. Appendices other than those specified here are not permitted and will not be included in the evaluation.

- Hosting letter from the institution of the main applicant (that will function as the administrating institution if granted). The letter must confirm 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.
- The hosting letter must be signed by the management.

If the main applicant is Head of Department or otherwise part of the management, the hosting letter must be signed by someone from the management level above the main applicant.