

A woman wearing a bright yellow headscarf and a dark floral-patterned dress is seen from the back, holding a large, flowing white sheet. She is standing in front of a backdrop of colorful, vertically pleated curtains in shades of purple, grey, and green. The lighting is soft, highlighting the textures of the fabric.

# INFORMING HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE THROUGH RESEARCH, LEARNING AND INNOVATION

Information and guidelines for applicants  
2025

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## Information about the call

Grant capital:  
DKK 35 million

Award amount  
Between DKK 1 million and DKK 5 million per grant

Application form opens:  
January 2025

Application deadline:  
16 April 2025 at 2:00 pm CET

Applicant notification:  
September 2025

Earliest start date:  
15 October 2025

Latest start date:  
15 January 2026

Contact:  
Emma Blix Hagemann  
Student Assistant  
E-mail: ebh@novo.dk

Jamie Batchelor  
Grant Manager  
E-mail: jar@novo.dk

*For questions related to budgets and Norma, please reach out to Jamie Batchelor.*

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# 1 INFORMING HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE THROUGH RESEARCH, LEARNING AND INNOVATION

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

Humanitarian needs may arise from several, interrelated factors, including extreme poverty and the effects of climate change, conflict, disaster, and displacement. The purpose of the open call is to support humanitarian actors and the humanitarian system in identifying, adapting, or integrating research and learning, and innovative approaches to improve the quality of humanitarian response and deliver better outcomes for people affected by humanitarian crises. This open call will focus on improving health outcomes and food security.

## 1.2 AREAS OF SUPPORT

With this call, the Novo Nordisk Foundation is looking for applications focusing on **research and learning, and/or innovative approaches in humanitarian settings**.

Applications should fall within one or more of the below sub-themes. Applicants are encouraged to submit applications that focus on both food security and health.

Food Security	Health
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving food security in crises</li> <li>• Strengthening the climate resilience of food systems in humanitarian operations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving CMD<sup>1</sup> prevention and management in crises including its comorbidities, such as infectious diseases and mental health</li> <li>• Strengthening the climate resilience of health systems in humanitarian operations</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Cardiometabolic diseases (CMDs) is a narrower term than non-communicable diseases (NCDs). CMDs include heart attack, stroke, diabetes and hypertension.

Applicants are encouraged to submit applications for projects with strategic relevance for the applicant and within their area of expertise. Applicants with a documented and existing capacity to reach people affected by crisis will be given preference.

The focus of the call is limited to the [OECD DAC List of ODA Recipients](#) in the following geographies: sub-Saharan Africa, Middle East, South Asia, and Ukraine. For the categories *Lower Middle Income Countries* and *Upper Middle Income Countries*, the applicant must describe how the project will specifically focus on people in vulnerable situations or affected by crises from one or more of these geographies. Please see below map for details on geographical scope:



Sub-Saharan Africa	Middle East	South Asia	Europe
Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, CAR, Chad, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, DR Congo, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Equatorial, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe	Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, West Bank and Gaza Strip, Syria, Türkiye, Yemen	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka	Ukraine

The open call understands research and learning, and innovative approaches in the following way:

Research and learning	Innovation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In this call, research is understood as the systematic effort to generate new knowledge, concepts, or intervention approaches to improve the outcomes for people affected by crisis.</li> <li>• The research may include any suitable design, including operational and implementation sciences, and any appropriate methods. Data can be generated from any relevant source including the use of secondary and existing data and literature.</li> <li>• Learning is understood as documentation and evaluation of humanitarian approaches and responses and must be shared across partners and sectors beyond the individual organisation or project.</li> <li>• If an application falls within the research and learning category, the main applicant is expected to partner with a research or knowledge institution or document its own capacity.</li> <li>• Regular monitoring and evaluation activities do not qualify as research nor learning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In this call, innovation is understood as an iterative process that identifies, adjusts, and diffuses ideas for improving humanitarian response.</li> <li>• Innovation may include developing and piloting new concepts and approaches.</li> <li>• If an application falls within the innovation category, the applicant(s) must describe the intended innovation and innovation process, and not merely state that the innovation and innovation process will be identified and developed during the project.</li> <li>• Innovative financing will not be covered by this call.</li> </ul>

**Preference will be given to** applications containing one or more of the following approaches:

- Nexus approach
- Localisation approach i.e. strengthening the capacity and involvement of local organizations and communities in affected countries and furthering more equal partnerships
- Approaches to promote inclusion, including gender mainstreaming

### 1.3 ELIGIBILITY

Proposed projects must directly relate to the provision of humanitarian assistance in emergencies, disaster prevention and preparedness, or recovery. It may also pertain to the provision of assistance to people affected by protracted and complex crises.

International humanitarian organisations are eligible to apply. An international humanitarian organisation is understood as an organisation with engagements in humanitarian settings in more than one country. Main applicants are encouraged to engage research or knowledge institutions, local organisations, regional networks or similar as co-applicants. Only main applicants and co-applicants that are not-for-profit are eligible to apply.

**A main applicant may submit a maximum of one application.** If further applications are submitted, they will be disregarded.

Sub-offices of the same organisation may not submit more than one application in total. “An organisation” is defined as an entity with separate legal personality.<sup>2</sup> We urge sub-offices and sub-entities of the same organisation to coordinate with their HQ or their Nordic Office (if they have one), such that only one application is submitted.

The Novo Nordisk Foundation will only accept applications from highly transparent organisations and institutions, whose annual reports and annual audited financial reports are publicly available.

The Foundation also expects main applicants to have implemented a code of conduct, or similar, by which they are guided and with which they comply in accordance with ethical humanitarian and development guidelines and standards, e.g., the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS). CHS certification is not a requirement for submitting an application. This is not a requirement for co-applicants.

All projects must comply with applicable sanctions and counter-terrorism regimes, including EU and UN sanction programs. In some cases, international sanctions or other constraints may complicate successful delivery of the project. As NNF will consider project feasibility during the assessment stage, we encourage applicants to already take this into account.

## 1.4 FUNDING

A total of up to DKK 35 million is available for grants between DKK 1 million and DKK 5 million for projects lasting up to 2 years.

The project can be an independent, delimited project or part of a larger project that receives support from other sources. If the applicant has applied for or been awarded co-funding from other sources for the project, the applicant must always state this in the budget.

Applicants may apply for funding for direct cost functions which are the costs of all necessary and reasonable inputs associated with functions which are directly necessary to deliver a programme or project. These functions include:

- Project and grant management
- Technical delivery
- Quality control functions
- Visibility and communications
- Human resources and security
- Compliance
- Finance, procurement, payroll, information technology and administration
- External audit and evaluation

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<sup>2</sup> A separate legal entity is an entity with separate legal personality. This means that the entity has its own legal identity, distinct from any other entity, and is capable of owning property, enter into contracts, sue, and be sued independently of any other entity.

**Indirect costs** may account for a maximum of 7% of the direct sub-total costs. The indirect costs may be used to cover the costs of all necessary and reasonable inputs associated with functions which are necessary to manage the applicant as a whole, provide oversight over all its activities and put into place the overarching policies, frameworks and systems that enable it to operate.

NNF will not award funding for commercial activities.

## 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 or not they have been awarded a grant. The notification e-mail will be sent from [norma-noreply@novo.dk](mailto: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.**

## 1.7 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The applications submitted in this call for applications will first undergo a sifting process where 40 applications will be selected for a full review. The section named “brief project description” in the applications will be the basis of the sifting review.

The review and assessment are based on comprehensive criteria qualifying whether:



- The application falls within one or more of the sub-themes of this open call and is relevant to the objectives and priorities as set out in section 1.1. and 1.2.
- The application is likely to improve outcomes of humanitarian response for people affected by crisis and includes a feasible indication of transfer potential for future humanitarian operations.
- The design of the initiatives in the application is novel and that the application overall is coherent, feasible, and consistent in relation to the objectives and priorities of the open call.
- Preference will be given to applications containing one or more of the following approaches: nexus, localisation and/or approaches to inclusion.
- The applicant and, if applicable, their affiliated entity(ies) have the required capacity, including financial capacity and sufficient experience of project management.
- The activities in the application are cost-effective and appropriately reflected in the budget.
- The budget is auditable.
- The project is ethically sound.

Geographical and thematical diversity of the portfolio of applications that will receive funding will also be taken into consideration.

If you have an active grant from NNF, the performance of this grant may be taken into consideration in the evaluation of your application for a new grant.

## **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 username 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.

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

Applicants who have previously applied for a grant from NNF or have an active grant may already have a user profile in NORMA. If you are in doubt, an existing user profile can be retrieved by clicking FORGOT PASSWORD and entering an e-mail address. If you have a user profile in the system, you will receive an e-mail with login information and a new password within 5–10 minutes.

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](mailto:norma-support@novo.dk).

## 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.

The application consists of several sheets that need to be completed but not necessarily in chronological order. Fields marked with a red star (\*) are obligatory to fill in.

You can review the application at any time by reopening it 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 it.

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 eligible 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. This is done by checking the fields in the **DECLARATIONS** tab.

If you wish to modify a submitted application before the deadline, it is possible to reopen the application. Be aware that the application must be resubmitted before the deadline. Applications cannot be modified after the submission deadline. Once the application has been submitted, a confirmation of receipt will be sent to the e-mail address used for logging into the system. If you do not receive a confirmation of receipt (please check your spam folder), you should contact NNF as soon as possible using the contact details on page 3.

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.

## 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.

### 3.2 CO-APPLICANTS

For this call, a number of co-applicants are allowed for the application. Co-applicants participate actively in organizing and implementing the project and receive a share of the grant. The project description should clearly describe the role of any co-applicants, and the budget should clearly indicate the co-applicants' share 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.



**Note that inviting co-applicants can be time-consuming. Please start the invitation process as soon as possible and well in advance of the submission deadline**

When the co-applicant accepts his or her invitation and has registered as a user in NORMA, they will gain access to the application. In addition, they will be assigned an APPLICANT DETAILS-task, available under MY TASKS from the APPLICANT PORTAL in NORMA. With this task, co-applicants should input details such as their institutional affiliation, work and publication history, application history with NNF and will be able to upload supporting documents such as a short CV (maximum two pages) or an endorsement from the institution.

Co-applicants will only be able to edit their own APPLICANT DETAILS-task, as well as make changes to the main application. The main applicant, on the other hand, can review and edit all Applicant Details-tasks for the application including those for co-applicants.

Please note that co-applicants can read, edit, and upload information in the entire application but cannot submit the application.

### 3.3 INSTITUTION

Please provide information about the institution where the grant will be administered. 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.**

### 3.4 PROPOSAL

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

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Please provide a detailed project description including, but not necessarily limited to, the following sections:

- Background and problem identification, including sector and geography
- Capacity of applicant and partner(s)
- Project concept, including expected impact
- Sustainability
- Logical framework or equivalent
- Project operational risk analysis
- Budget

The project's logical framework, risk analysis and budget should be included as appendices.

The Novo Nordisk Foundation has an ambition to reduce inequity in health in Denmark, as well as globally, when supporting health interventions. Please state possible areas/populations, where your project is at risk of unintendedly inducing inequity in health in society and how this may be addressed. And in contrast, areas/populations where your project can potentially reduce inequity in health.

The project description should consist of **a maximum of 10,000 characters with spaces** excluding appendices

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.

Please note that the application should address all the assessment criteria listed in subsection 1.7.

### 3.5 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.

#### ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PROJECT

Funding, both received and applied for, from the applicant's own organisation and from other sources should be entered under ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE PROJECT. The amount entered should be the total sum for the entire grant period. The NNF does not allow double funding and there can be no budgetary overlaps between projects. It must be clearly described in the INFORMATION FOR ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS field what the additional contributions cover and how the project proposed in this application is different from the project already funded or applied for by other parties than NNF. If the applicant, post application submission, receives funding for the project or parts of the applied project from others, the NNF must be contacted as soon as possible.

Please note that the budget format will correspond to the following financial report to the foundation; the financial report must consist of the same entries as the budget in the application.



**Applicants may only apply for the types of expenses listed in subsection 1.4.**

#### SALARY

All salaries must be entered separately under budget items in SALARY. The salary must be specified incl. employer-paid pension, holiday allowances of any kind, ATP, and other social costs if any. This means that salaries in the project must be separated from other costs in the budget. Excluded are certain salary items for the administration that can be entered under the budget item DIRECT ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.

For salaries, you must choose whether they are for a main applicant (SALARY – MAIN APPLICANT), employees in the main applicant's organisation (SALARY – PROJECT EMPLOYEES AT THE ADMINISTRATING INSTITUTION), or co-applicants (SALARY – CO-APPLICANT). Co-applicants participate actively in organising and implementing the project, receiving part of the grant, and are described as co-applicants in the application. Salaries for consultants are also an option (SALARY – SUBSTITUTE).

For salary items, the number of full-time equivalents (FTE) in years must be stated in the field FTE. In general, there are 1924 gross hours in a year; 6 weeks of holidays (222 hours), 10 public holidays (74 hours), and 10 educational days (74 hours) can be deducted from these. This amounts to 1554 net hours per year. To find the FTE for e.g., 30 hours, the calculation should be:  $30 \text{ (hours)} / 1554 \text{ (net hours)} = 0.019$ , which is what should be stated in the field FTE.

Budget item	FTE	Description (illustrative purposes only)
SALARY – MAIN APPLICANT	1	Project manager (1 person-year full time): Developing and implementing the intervention
SALARY – PROJECT EMPLOYEES AT ADMINISTRATING INSTITUTION	0,08	Project staff (2 x 60 hours): Facilitating workshops
SALARY – CO-APPLICANT	0,21	Project Coordinator, contributing to the development of materials

For salary items, the number of full-time equivalents in years must be stated in the field FTE. 1 is equal to 100 pct. Under the DESCRIPTION field, it is possible to note the number of hours of pay (incl. wage rate) for every salary item.

### INDIRECT ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES

The Indirect Administrative Expenses budget item can constitute an amount of up to 7% of the grant before the indirect costs are added. The indirect costs may be used to cover costs of all necessary and reasonable inputs associated with functions which are necessary to manage the grant, provide oversight over its activities and put into place the overarching policies, frameworks and systems that enable the Grant Recipient to operate. The indirect costs may not exceed the amount included in the Grant Application.

January, 2025

## The Novo Nordisk Foundation

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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.