

Guidelines for applicants

**PROJECT GRANTS
FOR RESEARCH
WITHIN NUTRITION
RELATED CMDS**



Facts about the call

Total amount available for granting:
DKK **30** million

Amount available per grant:
Up to DKK **4** million (DKK **5** million if the project includes an international co-applicant)

Call opens:
15 April 2026

Call closes:
8 September 2026 13:00 (CET/CEST)

Applicant notification:
December 2026

Earliest start date:
1 February 2027

Latest start date:
1 December 2027

Review committee:
Committee on Nutrition

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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 Project grants for research within nutrition related CMDs

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the 'Project Grants for research within nutrition related CMDs' is to develop new understandings and the translation/implementation of new and existing knowledge into society within prevention and management of nutrition related cardiometabolic diseases (CMDs), as well as to support science capital in Denmark within nutritional sciences.

1.2 Areas of support

Malnutrition - defined as deficiencies or excesses in nutrient intake, imbalance of essential nutrients or impaired nutrient utilization - represents a global challenge with increasing prevalence across most geographies. Around 2 billion people are overweight or obese. The associated medical, developmental, social, and economical consequences are serious, lasting, and extremely costly for the affected individuals and their families, communities as well as countries. Throughout the lifespan optimal nutrition has huge potential to counteract/postpone the progression from health to CMDs while supporting recovery from those very same diseases. This potential starts even before conception (e.g., epigenetic transfer from mother/father), is evident during pregnancy and lactation, and continues during the transition from liquid to solid foods, and through adult life e.g., by affecting glucose regulation, blood lipids, and blood pressure. Whereas the potential is huge, the nutritional needs change during the progression towards CMDs (e.g., according to age, gender, body size, geography, disease state) in ways we do not completely understand.

Projects should go beyond simple calorie counting and recommendations for lifestyle changes and focus on novel testable hypothesis with a potential physiological effect on human health which have not yet been sufficiently tested or even overlooked. The focus is on prevention and management of nutrition related CMDs. Areas in scope includes (but not limited to) the low fat/low carb debate, ultra processed foods, protein needs during pregnancy, infancy and weight loss, when to lower fat intake in childhood, matching plant-based diets and microbiota for personalized obesity management, and the use of innovative methods/technologies such as apps, sensors, AI to enhance delivery of evidence-based nutrition for CMDs.

Therefore, the open call should cover novel and excellent research within nutrition related CMDs and be applied in nature with a strategic outlook to improve human and planetary health and equity in health. Research should extend existing knowledge and may have a high-risk profile. Focus should be on nutrition, but other lifestyle factors could be included (e.g., exercise and sleep) to maximize effects. The overall goal is to support nutrition research with clear relevance to human health.

1.3 Eligibility

- The main applicant must be based at a Danish university, hospital, or other non-profit research organisation. They must have at least a 50% affiliation at this institution.
- The profile of applicants may be experienced independent researchers who have already established their own line of research or researchers that are in the process of establishing themselves as independent researchers. As this grant cannot cover salary of the grantee, the applicant must be guaranteed his or her own salary for the entire applied project period. Applications from Master students and PhD students will not be taken into consideration.
- If there is a co-applicant, they must be employed at a university, hospital, or other non-profit research organisation outside of Denmark. The co-applicant should significantly contribute to the scientific advancement of the project and receive part of the funding. Collaboration with industry is possible within this programme, however funding cannot be awarded to industrial partner(s). While there can only be one co-applicant, other collaborators (Danish or international) are permitted, as long as their contributions are necessary in relation to the needs of the project.
- All study designs will be eligible for funding (e.g., follow-up studies, observational studies, registry-based research, re-analysis of existing original data and RCT) as long as it is the most appropriate method for the given research question within the allocated time and budget.
- Recipients of a grant from previous years of this call (Project Grants for research within nutrition related CMDs) are not eligible to apply again.

1.4 Funding

A total of up to DKK 30 million is available for grants up to DKK 4 million (DKK 5 million if the project includes an international co-applicant) for projects lasting up to three years.

If there is an international co-applicant, it is expected that the main applicant receives at least half of the project funding but no more than DKK 4 million.

If relevant, the grant period can be extended to 4 years to cover 4-year PhD stipends without changing the granted amount.

The grant cannot be used to cover salary for main applicants, co-applicants, or scientific faculty with time-unlimited contracts.

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

- Salary for research and technical assistance, including laboratory technicians, nurses, dieticians, kitchen staff, postdoctoral researchers, PhD students (including tuition fee up to DKK 80,000 per year per student, which must be specified in the budget), and research-year students.
- Equipment required for the project

- Operating expenses, e.g., materials, consumables, data management and services directly related to the project.
- Collaborative activities e.g., workshops, meetings, exchange, and seminars between the partners of the programme.
- Travel expenses in relation to the project, e.g., conference and workshop participation and presentation of research results derived from the project.
- Publication costs related to results originating from the project
- For Danish Universities, the new agreement on Project Supplement applies, under which all approved project specific scientific university FTEs (PhDs, post docs and research assistants) trigger a yearly fixed project supplement to the Universities.
- Bench fee: Support for individual researchers for the coverage of direct expenses needed to conduct the research project applied for (must be specified in the budget, not applicable for Danish universities).
- Administrative expenses (up to 5% of the applicant's overall budget and included in the budget) to cover administrative expenses directly related to the project (not applicable for Danish universities).

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 (not applicable to Danish universities)

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 (not applicable to Danish universities)

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:

- 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

1.5 Language

The application and all additional materials must be submitted in English.

1.6 Application process

The application process consists of a one phase submission that must include the following elements (see chapter 3 for details):

- An extensive detailed project description
- Applicant and co-applicant details (CV, research summary, publication list)
- Letter of commitment from the host institutions
- A detailed budget including all participating groups
- Bench Fee policy for all institutions who apply for bench fee

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

NNF's Committee on Nutrition will assess the applications from this call. Their evaluation will consider the quality, novelty and feasibility of the project together with the merits and commitment of the applicant.

- The quality of the project should be weighted over the CV of the applicant.
- The performance of the applicant should be evaluated relative to current career stage.
- Having active grants from other public or private funders should not be disadvantageous for applications for project grants, whereas significant current funding from NNF may be taken into consideration.

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**.

You may not submit the same (or similar) application to any other call from NNF in the same calendar year.

2 The application and grant management system 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.

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.

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.

You can use the VALIDATE button at any time to check which required fields are incomplete in 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.

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.

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 50 MB and 1050*1550 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.

An application cannot be submitted unless all the required fields have been completed.

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.

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 pertains 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.

3.2 Co-applicant

For this call, one international co-applicant is allowed for the application. 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 the co-applicant, and the budget should clearly indicate the co-applicant's 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 potential co-applicant 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

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 2,000 characters, including spaces, line breaks and special characters).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Please provide a comprehensive project description (maximum 30,000 characters, including spaces, line breaks and special characters). The project description should be well-written, clear, concrete, and avoid unnecessary repetitions from the brief project description (which supposedly contains descriptions of purpose and target group).

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*1650 pixels.

LITERATURE REFERENCES

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

If not applicable, please fill in N/A.

LAY PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Please provide a brief summary for non-experts 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.

Before you can fill in the budget template, you must enter the start and end dates for the grant. This will determine the number of years included in the budget template. The budget should be entered in project years, not calendar years.

3.6 Appendices

A signed hosting letter from the Danish host institution, taking responsibility to hosting the project as well as administrating the grant

Bench fee policy documentation (if applied for): Official Documentation stating that the administrating- and co-applicant institutions has a general bench fee policy

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 (limit of 1 upload)