novo nordisk fonden
Benefiting people and society

DISTINGUISHED INNOVATOR GRANT

Information and guidelines for applicants

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Information about the call

Grant capital:
DKK 60 million

Award amount
Up to DKK 6 million per grant

Application form opens:
14 January 2022

Application deadline:
9 March 2022

Applicant notification:
June 2022

Earliest start date:
1 August 2022

Latest start date:
1 August 2023

Review committee:
Committee for Exploratory Pre-Seed Grants

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1 DISTINGUISHED INNOVATOR GRANT

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' and 'Code of Conduct' for grants from NNF that all Grant Recipients must comply with.

1.1 PURPOSE

The purpose of the Distinguished Innovator Grant is to accelerate commercialization of research findings and development of novel technologies.

The Distinguished Innovator Grant is aimed for senior faculty members or researchers with a proven track record within innovation, i.e., previous experience of academic innovation projects and experience with establishing patents and spinouts from the academia.

1.2 AREAS OF SUPPORT

The Distinguished Innovator Grant seeks to support research within Life Science, i.e., medtech, industrial biotech, or pharma, and to stimulate the evaluation of ideas that may lead to the development of health technologies, medical treatments, disease prevention, diagnostic methods, devices, and technological platforms benefitting people and the society.

A particular focus for the Distinguished Innovator Grant is to provide the support needed to succeed with the project maturation, i.e., support from experts within legal counsel, entrepreneurship, and innovation. Furthermore, the grant is focused on the role of the applicant as an ambassador for Innovation within academia.

1.3 ELIGIBILITY

The research project must comprise a main applicant and has the option of including co-applicant(s) when deemed relevant.

THE MAIN APPLICANT

- The main applicant must be a senior faculty member or researcher employed at a research institution or hospital/clinic in the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, or Sweden).

- It is required that the Main applicant has a **proven track record within innovation**, i.e., previous experience of academic innovation projects and experience of establishing patents and spinouts from the academia.

CO-APPLICANT(S)

- Co-applicants can be included in the project, but not required.
- Co-applicants may come from the same hosting institution as the main applicant or from different university, hospitals or research institutions locally and abroad.

HOSTING INSTITUTION

- A Distinguished Innovator Grant must be administered by a non-profit organization.
- Projects from incubator development programs are also eligible, as long as the project used for the application has not resulted in the establishment of a company (given company has not established a CVR/company number).
- A Distinguished Innovator Grant cannot be given to a company.

PLEASE NOTE

There can only be one Main applicant to a Distinguished Innovator Grant; In case the project is managed by a group of researchers, with the same level of responsibility and legal ownership, it is formally needed to appoint a Main applicant and the remaining applicants as co-applicants. A person hired to work in the project (e.g., research assistant or project coordinator) is not considered a co-applicant.

If an applicant submits the same or a very similar application in two consecutive application rounds without being granted funding, the applicant will be quarantined from applying for Distinguished Innovator Grants for a year, except if the project is of a very different character and focus.

1.4   FUNDING

A total of up to DKK 60 million is available for grants between DKK 1 million and DKK 6 million for projects lasting up to 3 years.

Applicants may apply for funding for the following types of expenses:
- **Salary** for research assistance on every level (including technicians, postdoctoral researchers, PhD students).
- **Salary** for employees or project consultants at all staffing levels, including project management (including technical and administrative assistance).
- **Operating expenses:** consumables, materials, animals, human test subjects, expenses relating to clinical trials, services, access to registries, access to laboratory facilities, databases and infrastructure etc.
- **Equipment** required for the project.
- **Communication activities:** communication and outreach in the form of conferences, books, articles and other dissemination directly related to the project.
- **Conference participation:** Travel and registration expenses in relation to presentation of the project and research results at conferences and workshops.

- **Travel:** 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.
- **Publication costs:** Publication of results emanating from the research project.
- **Commercialization costs** directly related to the project (fees for consultants, licenses, patents etc.).
- **Direct administrative expenses** of up to 5 % of the total funding applied for and must be included in the budget.
- **Bench fee***.
- **Legal counsel** on intellectual property (IP)**.

***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 a Hosting Letter/ from the administrating institution enclosed as link or appendix. An unspecified bench fee without documentation will not be accepted.

Administrative support may account for a maximum of 5% of each budget year (max 5% of the total grant amount) 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:
- Salary for main- and co-applicants
- Overhead i.e., rent, electricity, water, maintenance etc.)

> ⚠️ The grant may not be used to cover 'overhead' (i.e., rent, electricity, water, maintenance etc.)

The Novo Nordisk Foundation does not allow double funding of projects:
- If the proposed project has received funding from other sources, in part or in full, this situation 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 Novo Nordisk Foundation, it must be noted in the application.
- If the proposed project receives funding, post application submission, for the project or parts of the applied project from other institutions, the Novo Nordisk Foundation must be contacted and informed as soon as possible.

ACTIVE GRANTS
If the main applicant has received any grants from NNF as a main applicant or a co-applicant within the past five years, 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) must be provided in the application, including a brief summary on how the grants are related to the current application.

If you submit an application after the application deadline to another NNF call, please notify Kira Weis Klinke, Grant Specialist at kwk@novo.dk

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.

14 January 2022 Call opens		**June 2022** Evaluation of applications		**June 2022** Applicant notification	
	9 March 2022 Application deadline				**August 2022** Earliest possible start date

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.

1.7   ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

NNF's Committee for Exploratory Pre-Seed Grants will primarily assess the applications based on the following criteria:

Primary criteria:
- Main applicant's entrepreneurial experience, i.e., previous innovation activities (patents, startups, knowledge-sharing within innovation etc.)
- Main applicant's ability to act as an Innovation ambassador within the academia and engage younger researchers and the surrounding ecosystem.
- Competencies and management qualifications of the Main applicant and research team
- Commercial potential of the research idea/project – AND/OR – scalability and impact potential

Secondary criteria:
- Ability to obtain funding opportunities and availability of the required resources
- Ability to create industry collaborations and build networks outside of academia

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.

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.

The applicant tab contains various sections with information about the main applicant as well as any co-applicants:
- Personal information
- Educational information
- Current institution
- Experience
- Co-applicant(s)
- Previous and current grants from NNF, please also include current applications submitted to other calls in NNF, within the same calendar year

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.

Applicant Information:

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 with your own name highlighted. 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)

For this call, a number of co-applicants may be either required or 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 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.

3.4   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 2,000 characters, including spaces).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project description (max. 20,000 characters, including spaces): Please describe your proposed research project in detail – including:

- Background, including purpose and significance of the project.
- Novelty and potential impact (patients/society/environment).
- Project activities and methods.
- Achievable high-level milestones during the grant period, including validation of the target or new technology.
  Description of plan for commercialization, including patent situation and/or patent strategy (including relevant search reports).
- Main applicant, associated project team, and partners (including resource allocation of each key team member).
- Current grants or applications from other foundations, e.g., Innovationsfonden, Vækstfonden and BII Foundation.

Further, applicants are strongly encouraged to include preliminary data in the project proposal. If you have previously applied for a Distinguished Innovator Grant without being funded, please include information about this in the project description, including the year of submission, project title and how the current project applied for relates or differs from the previous application(s), including how the application has improved.

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

> ⚠ 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.

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

3.6   APPENDICES

For this call it is mandatory to upload the following appendices:
- Hosting Letter(s)
- Acknowledgement of Bench Fee (if relevant)

A hosting letter supporting the project must be signed by the management of the host institution and uploaded with the application.

If relevant, a confirmation that the institution has a bench fee expense policy and process should be included in the host letter from the institution. An unspecified bench fee without documentation will not be accepted.

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.

January 2022

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.