Benefiting people and society
The Novo Nordisk Foundation’s vision is to contribute significantly to research and development that improves the lives of people and the sustainability of society.
To fulfil its vision, the Foundation will pursue a three-pronged mission:

To enable Novo Nordisk A/S and Novozymes A/S to create world-class business results and contribute to growth

To develop knowledge-based environments in which innovative and talented people can carry out research of the highest quality and translate discoveries into new treatments and solutions

To inspire and enable children and young people to learn
Benefiting people and society

The Novo Nordisk Foundation will broaden its scope and increase its grants for scientific, humanitarian and social purposes. Existing grant areas within the health sciences will be augmented with other natural science fields, and expanding support for research and development within the life sciences and biotechnology will be a key element in implementing the Foundation’s new grant-awarding strategy. A greater focus on education will also help to encourage children and young people to take an interest in science.

Lars Rebien Sørensen, Vice Chairman of the Novo Nordisk Foundation and new Chairman of the Novo Nordisk Foundation from 1 July 2018.

Sten Scheibye, Chairman of the Novo Nordisk Foundation until 1 July 2018.
“Our focus is on improving people’s lives by improving health and education and developing a knowledge-based, sustainable society,” says Sten Scheibye, Chairman of the Novo Nordisk Foundation.

The Foundation’s new strategy, which the Board of Directors adopted in May 2018, establishes the framework for the Foundation’s work and grants for the 5 years from 2019 to 2023.

“We will continue to support the areas in which we are already active, and we will allocate even more money for this. In addition, we will support research areas such as the natural sciences, the life sciences and biotechnology. We will also further increase our support for education and innovation,” says Sten Scheibye, adding:

“In collaboration with a broad group of actors in society, we have a significant opportunity to contribute to society in the years ahead.”

More major breakthroughs

The ambition is that the Foundation will increase annual grant payouts fourfold by 2023. This means that the total payout of DKK 1.3 billion in 2017 could rise to about DKK 5 billion in 2023. The improved performance of the Foundation’s subsidiaries, Novo Nordisk and Novozymes, and successful investments by Novo Holdings, the Foundation’s holding and investment company, have enabled this.

In the coming years, the Foundation will focus its support within six areas. The Foundation supports three of these already: the health sciences, treatment of patients and humanitarian and social causes. Two of the three other areas are within the natural sciences and sustainability. Finally, education and innovation has become a new independent focus area.

“In the coming years, we plan to cast our support more widely than previously. We will continue to support research, treatment and development that can improve people’s lives. In addition, we will now also focus more on areas that can contribute to creating greater sustainability in society,” says Lars Rebien Sørensen, the Foundation’s Vice Chairman, adding:

“Many major breakthroughs are achieved at the interface between scientific disciplines such as biomedicine, the natural sciences and biotechnology. We will therefore support greater interdisciplinarity within research and development.”

Inspiring children and young people

The Foundation’s support for education has now risen to an even higher level focusing on the entire educational pathway and the general interest of children and young people in the natural sciences.

“Our ambition is to make science a source of interest and wonder. We will inspire children and young people broadly, including those who may not realize that learning more science can be interesting. We hope that the initiatives can inspire more students to enrol in degree programmes that will provide them with competencies in the natural sciences,” says Lars Rebien Sørensen.

Dialogue with society

The Foundation will continue to focus primarily on Denmark and then the other Nordic countries for its grant giving, which is also intended to support international collaboration.

The Foundation knows that its ambition to increase grant payouts for scientific, humanitarian and social purposes imposes responsibility to maintain a constructive dialogue with society.

“We must interact closely with all the relevant actors in society. We must always remember that dialogue with society is key for our legitimacy, and we must be transparent about what we do,” says Lars Rebien Sørensen.
Grant-awarding focus areas and long-term objectives

Biomedical and health science research and applications

Enable people to live healthier and better lives by facilitating research that advances knowledge of human health and disease, solves health challenges and develops the healthcare system.

Patient-centred and research-based care

Make Denmark a global leader in delivering patient-centred and research-based care for people with diabetes and facilitate development of patient-centred and research-based care within diabetes comorbidities and other endocrine disorders.

Life science research and industrial applications promoting sustainability

Act for and inspire the development of a more sustainable world by supporting research that translates into life science solutions to benefit people and the environment.
Natural and technical science research and interdisciplinarity

Catalyze natural and technical science research, particularly in fields with potential interdisciplinary application to the life and health sciences and industrial biotechnology.

Education, outreach and innovation

Support general science education and cultivate scientific and technical competencies and engagement.

To benefit people, promote life science ecosystems that translate scientific discoveries into products and solutions and drive growth.

Social, humanitarian and development aid

Improve the lives and prospects of vulnerable children and young people through education, developing competencies and other interventions.
Biomedical and health science research and applications

Biomedical and health science research is central to the Foundation's heritage and identity, especially within physiology, metabolism and endocrinology. The Foundation already has a strong track record in this area, supporting world-class basic research in biomedicine that paves the way for advances in translational medicine and innovative clinical applications. In the future the Foundation will expand its activities and impact beyond physiology, metabolism and endocrinology.

The Foundation's activities will focus on:
• Basic biomedical research
• Translational biomedical research and technologies
• Clinical research
• Health-related data science
• Research in patient-centred healthcare and treatment systems
• Training programmes and methods related to biomedical and health science research

Patient-centred and research based care

Through a research-based approach, the Foundation will help make Denmark a global leader in delivering the best patient-centred care within diabetes. As a first priority, the Foundation will advance all aspects of diabetes care in Denmark across a patient's lifetime through the Steno Diabetes Centers public–private partnership model.

The Foundation's activities will focus on:
• Establishing and expanding Steno Diabetes Centers to all regions of Denmark and the North Atlantic
• Delivering patient-centred and research-based care and outcomes for all people with diabetes in Denmark
• Realizing synergistic benefits across the Steno Diabetes Centers network, the Copenhagen Bioscience Cluster, Steno Collaborative Grants and other relevant initiatives
• Training programmes and methods related to patient-centred and research-based care
• Related priorities:
  - Prevention of type 2 diabetes
  - Prevention and treatment of diabetes comorbidities
  - Research on and care for hospitalized diabetes patients
  - Research on other endocrine disorders (osteoporosis, thyroid and pituitary disorders)
Given the important role of research in the natural and technical sciences and how it contributes to advances in biomedicine and biotechnology, the Foundation will increase its focus on natural and technical science research and interdisciplinarity in the 2019–2023 strategy. Since interdisciplinary scientific research plays an increasingly important part in driving new discoveries, the Foundation can advance its mission by supporting a strong interdisciplinary research basis in Denmark.

**The Foundation’s activities will focus on:**
- Basic natural and technical science research with potential interdisciplinary application to biomedicine, health sciences or biotechnology
- Selected other research fields that are potentially relevant to biomedicine, health sciences or biotechnology
- Training programmes and methods related to natural and technical science research and interdisciplinarity
Innovation

Innovation is a critical bridge in translating scientific discoveries into products and solutions that improve the health of people and the environment and in creating new companies that contribute to increased growth and economic activity. The Foundation is in a unique position to foster innovation and translational research by combining commercial, grant-awarding and societal purposes. The broad range of grant-awarding activities the Foundation supports puts it at the nexus of many key academic research, clinical care and industrial networks, making it a natural facilitator of the interdisciplinary dialogue and activity that spurs innovation.

The Foundation’s activities will focus on:
- Early innovation
- Accelerating innovation more broadly
- A start-up incubation and commercialization ecosystem

Outreach

Outreach includes grant-awarding activities that support scientific literacy, awareness and appreciation in the general population and help build a strong voice for the importance of scientific research.

The Foundation’s activities will focus on:
- Science communication and public debate
- Science experiences (outside the formal education system)
- Humanities research to generate new perspectives and critical reflections related to science, technology and healthcare
- Selected areas to support Denmark’s broader interests

Education

Education includes grant-awarding activities within Denmark that support students and teachers from preschool through post-secondary education. Early engagement of students and educators in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) disciplines is important to facilitate interest among children and adolescents.

The Foundation’s activities will focus on:
- Educational and teaching resources as well as methods within STEM, especially for primary and secondary schools
- Science and teaching competency levels of STEM teachers through teacher colleges
- Research on and dissemination of evidence-based best teaching and learning practices
- Vocational education and training within STEM

Outreach includes grant-awarding activities that support scientific literacy, awareness and appreciation in the general population and help build a strong voice for the importance of scientific research.

The Foundation’s activities will focus on:
- Science communication and public debate
- Science experiences (outside the formal education system)
- Humanities research to generate new perspectives and critical reflections related to science, technology and healthcare
- Selected areas to support Denmark’s broader interests

Education, outreach and innovation
Social, humanitarian and development aid

The Foundation will focus its social, humanitarian and development aid objective on children and young people. The social objective relates to activities that improve the lives of people in Denmark, and the humanitarian and development aid objective relates to activities that improve the lives of people outside Denmark.

Social
Supporting education, life skills development and employability for vulnerable children and young people in Denmark will benefit their life prospects.

The Foundation’s activities will focus on:
- Capacity-building education interventions for vulnerable children and young people
- Research on social interventions.

Humanitarian and development aid
Strengthening the education and health sectors is key to improving the lives of people.

The Foundation’s activities will focus on:
- Support following acute humanitarian crises
- Research on development aid interventions
- Capacity-building education interventions for vulnerable children and young people
- Capacity-building health interventions for vulnerable children and young people
Through its grant-awarding and commercial activities, the Foundation contributes to society by:

- Promoting excellent research and innovation
- Fostering the development of talent across different life stages and scientific fields
- Developing new medicines and other clinical aids and interventions
- Developing patient-centred and research-based care and disease prevention
- Developing innovative products and solutions supporting sustainable development
- Helping to develop world-class education
- Creating jobs and growth
- Supporting organizations, systems and infrastructure to catalyse knowledge-based societal development
- Helping people in vulnerable groups

An interaction with society

With Denmark as its centre of gravity, the Foundation’s focus is to improve the lives of people through better health, education and the development of a knowledge-based sustainable society.
Respecting independent research and good ideas

The Foundation has awarded more than 12,000 grants for research and other purposes throughout its history.

Increasing our grant payouts for scientific, humanitarian and social purposes over the coming years will increase our contribution to society. Within the Foundation, we are very aware of the greater responsibility this imposes.

We have a set of principles to ensure the quality and accountability of our grants. We support and respect the freedom and independence of research. Grants are not conditional on preferential access by third parties to the research results. Researchers have full publishing freedom, and the research results based on a Foundation grant belong to the researchers and the public research institutions.

We encourage the dissemination and accessibility of new knowledge and results. Making good ideas and new knowledge accessible to as many people as possible is crucial to benefit society as a whole.

Another basic principle we embed in all our grants is that we only support projects of the highest quality. Whether the applicant is well established or a young talent, the key criterion is the quality of the project. We believe that by setting high standards we will achieve results that have the maximum and sustainable impact on society.

We have a thorough selection process in which all applications are assessed by one of the Foundation’s committees or through international peer review before the Foundation decides to award a grant. Thus, we make use of independent experts who have valuable insight in the respective research fields the Foundation supports. This ensures that the Foundation awards grants to the best projects.

The Foundation is always on the lookout for new ideas and innovative projects. We view collaboration across scientific fields, organizations and national borders as a strength that helps to drive research and development forward to create new solutions.

We are transparent about our work. We listen to other people’s opinions and advice, and we are pleased to explain the basis for our priorities and the purpose of our decisions. In 2017, the Foundation received more than 2,000 applications and awarded more than 430 grants.

We expect to receive a growing number of grant applications in the coming years, and our principles for awarding grants must therefore help to ensure that we can maintain high standards in our grants. This will ensure the best results within research, innovation and education to benefit society.

Birgitte Nauntofte, CEO, Novo Nordisk Foundation
Commercial focus areas and long-term objectives

- Be a strong owner of Novo Nordisk A/S and Novozymes A/S
- Provide a stable basis for the research and commercial activities and maintain controlling ownership of Novo Nordisk A/S and Novozymes A/S
- Generate attractive investment returns for the Foundation on its financial investment portfolio
- Generate attractive investment returns to consolidate and grow the Foundation and its activities
- Make investments with the main goals of promoting better health, sustainability and welfare
- Invest to strengthen knowledge development as well as the generation and application of research
The financial basis for the Foundation’s ambition of increasing its grants for scientific, humanitarian and social purposes is the success of and thereby increased income from the Foundation’s subsidiaries, primarily Novo Nordisk and Novozymes, and successful investments by Novo Holdings, the Foundation’s holding and investment company.

“When our companies achieve good results, we can distribute the proceeds to benefit society. This explains our ambition to increase grant payouts fourfold by 2023,” says Lars Rebien Sørensen, Vice Chairman of the Novo Nordisk Foundation.

The Foundation has the following commercial objectives for 2019–2023: to provide a stable basis for the research and commercial activities of Novo Nordisk and Novozymes through Novo Holdings, and to maintain the controlling ownership of both companies.

The ambition is furthermore to grow and to increase the Foundation’s investments in the life sciences through Novo Holdings.

The objective is to promote health, sustainability and welfare through these investments and to generate an attractive return across the Foundation’s entire investment portfolio.

“Our ownership of Novo Nordisk and Novozymes will remain the foundation of our portfolio. In addition, we will increase investments within the life sciences, in which we have established special investment competencies. An important feature of our investment strategy is maintaining a pool of liquid assets that matches the Foundation’s increased need for liquidity to cover grant payouts,” says Lars Rebien Sørensen.
The Novo Nordisk Foundation is an independent Danish foundation with corporate interests. It has two objectives: to provide a stable basis for the commercial and research activities of the companies in the Novo Group* and to support scientific, humanitarian and social causes.

The history of the Foundation dates back to 1922, when Nobel Laureate August Krogh returned home to Denmark from Canada with permission to manufacture insulin in Scandinavia. This was the starting-point for developing world-class diabetes medicine and a Danish business and export venture. It also led to the establishment of several foundations that, many years later, merged into today’s Novo Nordisk Foundation.

Since 2010, the Foundation has donated more than DKK 16 billion (€2.2 billion), primarily for research and diabetes treatment and prevention at public institutions and hospitals in Denmark and the other Nordic countries.

The Foundation’s strategy for 2019–2023 includes the ambition to increase grant payouts and thus the Foundation’s contribution to society. The Foundation’s total annual grant payouts are expected to increase fourfold by 2023 compared with 2017.

This brochure provides an overview of the Foundation’s ambitions and its strategy for contributing to society through research and development. It covers the objectives on which the Foundation will focus in 2019–2023. The plans and the increases in the payouts will be phased in gradually over the coming years.

*The Novo Group companies comprise Novo Nordisk A/S, Novozymes A/S and Novo Holdings A/S.