



# PIONEER INNOVATOR GRANT

Information and guidelines for  
applicants

Science  
Pioneer  
Innovator  
Grant

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## Information about the call

Grant capital:  
DKK 35 million in 2021

Award amount  
Up to DKK 1 million per grant (for a period of up to 12 months)

Application form opens:  
9 August 2021

Application deadline:  
8 October 2021

Applicant notification:  
December 2021

Earliest start date:  
1 January 2022

Latest start date:  
31 December 2022

Review committee:  
[Committee on Exploratory Pre-Seed Grants](#)

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# 1 PIONEER 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' for grants from NNF that all Grant Recipients must comply with:

<http://www.novonordiskfonden.dk/en/content/conditions-grants>

## 1.1 PURPOSE

The Pioneer Innovator Grant is a stimulus fund established to accelerate commercialization of research findings and development of novel technologies within the health sciences.

The Pioneer Innovator Grant seeks to support research within Life Science (medtech, industrial biotech, or pharma) and to stimulate the evaluation of ideas that may lead to the development of new medical treatment, disease prevention, diagnostic methods as well as new health technologies and devices to benefit people and society.

## 1.2 AREAS OF SUPPORT

The Pioneer Innovator Grant seeks to support research within Life Science (medtech, industrial biotech, or pharma) and to stimulate the evaluation of ideas that may lead to the development of new medical treatment, disease prevention, diagnostic methods as well as new health technologies and devices to benefit people and society.

## 1.3 ELIGIBILITY

- The Main Applicant can be a faculty member, a researcher or a student employed at a university, hospital, or other research institution in the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, or Sweden).
- There can only be one Main Applicant to a Pioneer 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.
- A Pioneer Innovator Grant must be administered by a non-profit organization.
- Projects from incubator development programs are eligible. However, a Pioneer Innovator Grant cannot be given to a company.

- Only a single Pioneer Innovator Grant is permitted for activities related to the same project.
- 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 Pioneer 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 35 million is available for grants of up to DKK 1 million projects lasting up to 12 months.

### **Applicants may apply for funding for the following types of expenses:**

- Salary for staff (technicians, postdoctoral researchers, PhD students, project-related employees, and technical and administrative assistance)
- Research activities
- Equipment
- Consumables, materials, animals, human test subjects, services, etc., directly related to the project
- Publications of results emanating from the research project
- Costs related to the commercialization process (fees for consultants, licenses, patents etc.)
- Bench fee\*
- Legal counsel on intellectual property (IP)\*\*

Overhead expenses are not allowed and will not be funded.

Administrative support is allowed and may account for a maximum of 5% of the total granted budget and must be included therein.

### **The administrative support:**

- Can cover non-scientific 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
- Conference expenses
- Travel expenses
- Overhead expenses

The Novo Nordisk Foundation does not allow double funding of projects, i.e. specific budget post applied for cannot be covered by other grants. If the Applicant has received funding for the project or parts of the project from other funding institutions than the Novo Nordisk Foundation,

this must be stated in the application and included in the budget. If the Applicant, post application submission, receives funding for the project or parts of the applied project from other funding institutions, the Novo Nordisk Foundation must be contacted as soon as possible.

**\*Bench Fee:** Support for individual researchers for the coverage of direct expenses needed to conduct the research project applied for, such as equipment, critical experiments such as testing and validation of discoveries e.g., in vitro experiments, initial pharmacology/efficacy/toxicological pre-testing, and defining a preclinical plan. Bench fees must be specified in the budget, and may only be used for operating expenses, lab consumables, and access to lab space and facilities that cannot be included within another individual budget category. To include a bench fee in the budget, the fee must be part of the general expenses policy of the institute/institution and apply for all employees for which the policy concerns.

**\*\*Legal counsel:** Support for the coverage of direct expenses needed for legal counsel on IP (except expenses covered by the tech transfer offices), as well as interactions with regulatory agencies as well as counsel on freedom to operate analysis for preparing the project to spin out academia.



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

## 1.5 LANGUAGE

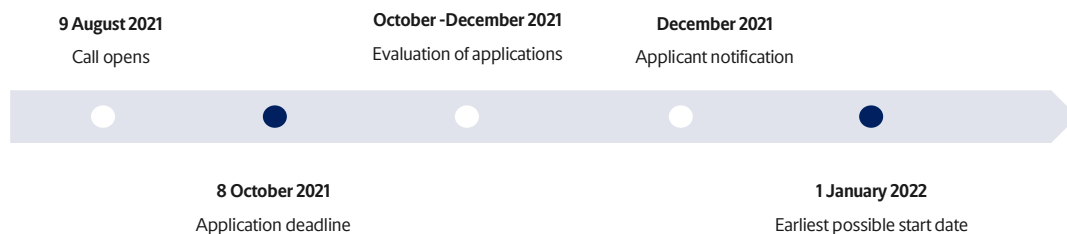
The application and any additional uploads must be written in English.

## 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 [noreply@norma.novonordiskfonden.dk](mailto:noreply@norma.novonordiskfonden.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 on Exploratory Pre-Seed Grants will primarily assess the applications for the Pioneer Innovator Grant based on the following criteria:

- Novelty of the project idea and potential impact
- Competencies and management qualifications of the Main applicant and research team
- Commercial potential of the research idea/project – AND/OR – scalability and impact potential

The three criteria are equally weighted in the Committee's overall assessment of the application.

If you have an active grant from NNF, this may be taken into consideration in the evaluation of your application for a new grant. In general, it is recommended that the Grant Recipient has delivered results on the active grant(s) before submission of a new application to NNF. If you apply, while having an active grant from NNF or BII, 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). Further, how this deviates from the current application.

## 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 on register as applicant. You will be asked to fill in a contact form, which will appear in a new window. The Main

applicant should only have one user profile. Use your work e-mail address for registration. After the registration, you will receive an e-mail with your username and password. You can now log in to NORMA. When you log in for the first time, you will be asked to change your password.

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).



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

To initiate a new application, you first need to identify the call and grant you wish to apply for. From the Applicant portal in NORMA, scroll down to the OPEN CALLS section, where all currently available calls are visible. Use the search filters at the top of the section to filter by e.g. overall funding area or geography.

Initiate an application by clicking the blue APPLY NOW button. Your draft application is then created and will remain a draft version until you actively submit the application.

You can create and subsequently edit a draft version of the application until the deadline. A draft application can be saved by clicking SAVE DRAFT and may be cancelled at any time up to the deadline by clicking the button CANCEL APPLICATION. An application is not submitted to NNF until an applicant has clicked SUBMIT.

The application comprises tabbed 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 clicking OPEN under MY APPLICATIONS on the Applicant Portal in NORMA. The whole application, including any currently entered data, can be downloaded as a PDF file by clicking on APPLICATION PDF. Make sure the PDF is readable and formatted appropriately before submitting your application.



## 2.3 TEXT AND ILLUSTRATIONS

### FILLING IN THE FIELDS

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.

### APPLICATION TEXTS

Text from Word, for example, can be copied and pasted into most text fields of the application. It is, however, important to check that formatting, special letters and symbols have not been converted or lost in the text fields after copying and pasting. If the formatting looks wrong in NORMA and in the PDF, you can try to change all text to “Normal” under the tab **FORMAT**.

The available functions for formatting text are at the top of the text fields. Some shorter text fields do not have the option to format.



For readability purposes, standard fonts, font size 11-12, and line spacing between 1.0 and 1.5 must be used.

### ILLUSTRATIONS

Illustrations with figures, charts, tables, images etc. related to the project description can be uploaded under **PROPOSAL** (a maximum of four illustrations are allowed). Include the illustration number and a legend or caption for each illustration file when uploading. The illustrations will be integrated in the final application PDF.

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.

All applicants must read and accept NNF’s Standards for Good Research Practice before submitting the application. A link can be found under “Policies” in the top right corner of the window. 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. Fields in the application that are incorrectly completed or incomplete will be listed in a box at the top of the screen. Clicking on each individual line marked in red takes you directly to the incomplete

field. The box will disappear when you select SAVE DRAFT. This allows you to continue with the application and submission.



A list of any incorrect or incomplete entries will be autogenerated when you click SUBMIT. Amending incorrect or incomplete entries can be time-consuming, so we recommend submitting applications well before the deadline.

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.

If you wish to withdraw a submitted application after the deadline, you must contact NNF via e-mail, using the contact information on page 3.



Please remember to check that the PDF version of the application is legible and contains all entered information and uploads before submitting the application.

## 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 various sections with information about the Main applicant as well as any co-applicants:

- Contact person
- Personal information
- Educational information
- Current institution
- Experience
- Co-applicant(s)
- Previous and Current Grants from NNF

#### MAIN APPLICANT

The Main applicant can be a faculty member, a researcher or a student employed at a university, hospital or other research institution in the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Norway, or Sweden).

**Applicant Information:**

CV (max 4,000 characters): Please include patents submitted and obtained. Publications (10 most relevant publications): Please provide a complete specification of authors for each publication with the name of the Main applicant highlighted.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to provide a full list of publications in ORCID.

**PREVIOUS AND CURRENT GRANTS FROM NNF**

If you have previously submitted other applications in the same calendar year, summarize how these applications are related to the current application.

If you have received any grants from NNF as an applicant or a co-applicant within the past five years, you must provide 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). Briefly summarize how any of the grants are related to the current application.

**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 confirm their status as co-applicants in the application.

- Go to the INVITATIONS link in the blue field on the left.
- Click the + symbol and enter the name and e-mail address of the co-applicant.
- Select CO-APPLICANT under ROLE in the drop-down menu
- Click INVITE.
- Co-applicants will be contacted automatically through NORMA and asked to confirm their status as co-applicants.

When the co-applicant accepts his or her status as co-applicant, additional fields will appear in the application. The CO-APPLICANT field includes information about co-applicant(s), including previous grants received from NNF. A short CV (maximum two pages) or an endorsement from the institution for each co-applicant can also be uploaded as a PDF file by clicking on CO-APPLICANT UPLOAD(S).

Either the co-applicant or the Main applicant must complete the CO-APPLICANT field. Only one person can edit the application at a time.

If the co-applicant has confirmed participation but the information has not been entered in the CO-APPLICANT field, NORMA will not include the co-applicant as part of the application. The Main applicant must therefore check that the information about any co-applicant(s) is included in the application before submitting it.

If co-applicants are mandatory, the application cannot be submitted before the required number of co-applicants have accepted. Similarly, if the number of co-applicants exceeds the maximum number allowed, the application cannot be submitted.

Please start the process of inviting co-applicants well in advance of the submission deadline.



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

## 3.2 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.

## 3.3 PROPOSAL

Describe the project using the following fields on 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 2000 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, and plan for commercialization
- Description of the commercial idea, patent situation and/or patent strategy
- Expertise of Main applicant, associated project team, and partners
- 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 Pioneer 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.

### **ILLUSTRATION UPLOADS**

A maximum of four illustrations of 50 mb each can be uploaded here. Accepted formats are JPG, PNG, GIF and BMP.

### **LITERATURE REFERENCES**

Please provide the reference information for the literature cited in the project description (maximum 4000 characters, including spaces).

### **LAY PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Please provide a summary for non-experts in lay language. If the application is awarded a grant, the text may be used for publication (maximum 1000 characters, including spaces). The Layman project description should not contain confidential information and it should be suitable for potential publishing on the Novo Nordisk Foundation website in case the project is funded.



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

## **3.4 BUDGET**

The budget only comprises the information entered in the BUDGET tab. Additional budget information attached under UPLOADS or added under other tabs than BUDGET will not be considered. The budget must be entered in budget years following the grant period and not calendar years.

### **GRANT PERIOD**

Before you can fill in the budget template, start by entering the start and end dates for the grant. NORMA then generates a grant period in whole years, which is reflected in the budget template. The grant period is the duration of NNF's grant for the project.

Complete the budget as follows:

- Click on the blue OPEN/EDIT icon to open a budget in a pop-up window.
- Click the + key to add budget rows.
- Select one of the budget headings, enter an amount under VALUE (DKK) and specify what the amount is for under DESCRIPTION.
- All amounts must be stated in Danish kroner (DKK) without decimal points, commas, or spaces. NORMA automatically inserts the thousands separator.
- In the first budget year, the costs are shown from the project start until 31 December. The first budget year can cover a period of 15 months if the project's start date falls within one of the last three months (October, November, or December) of a calendar year. This ensures that the next budget year follows the calendar year.

- In the subsequent budget years, the costs are shown from 1 January to 31 December.
- The last budget year can cover a period of 15 months if the project's end date falls within one of the first three months (January, February, or March) of a calendar year.
- Save and close the budget spreadsheet by clicking SAVE and CLOSE (in that order) and then return to the BUDGET tab.

**Important:** If you make any changes to the grant period after filling out the budget, you must clear the budget table before making the change to the grant period.

Any comments about the budget can be entered in the SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION field. The number of months covered by the budget in individual budget years should be specified here if they differ from 12 months.

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. The INFORMATION FOR ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS field must clearly describe what the additional contributions cover and how the project proposed in this application is different from the project already funded or applied for from other parties than NNF. If the applicant, after submitting the application, receives funding for the project or parts of the applied project from others, the NNF must be contacted as soon as possible.

The way in which the budget is set up influences any later financial reporting to NNF. Please note that the financial accounts must have the same headings as the budget posts in the application.



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

### 3.5 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 from the host institution that will administrate the grant must be included.

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.

Do not include any other documents/appendices as additional items will not be included in the assessed application.

**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.

July 2021

## 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.