

Demonstration Projects for the Industrial Sector

Demonstration Projects are to strengthen companies' own efforts to demonstrate new technology for applications with major socio-economic benefits. Projects are to ensure expertise, value creation, job creation and a competitive industrial sector in Norway.

The Research Council can provide funding for this type of project through a support scheme that complies with the EEA state aid rules.

The purpose is to encourage companies to invest more in demonstration and proof-of-concept of technology to promote innovation and sustainable value creation that is in keeping with their own business strategies. The state aid rules regulate the types of activities and costs that the Research Council can help to cover, while also setting limits for the aid intensity allowed. Support from the Research Council may cover up to 25 per cent of the costs to companies of conducting R&D activities within the R&D category "experimental development".

Research Council funding may not be used to cover costs for other types of activities and measures to exploit R&D results, such as:

- filing for patents;
- market surveys;
- marketing.

Who can apply for funding?

The formal applicant must be a company that has been issued an enterprise number under the Norwegian Register of Business Enterprises and that carries out economic activity in Norway. The Project Owner (company) may apply for funding to carry out the project in binding cooperation with other companies (partners). Sole proprietorships and research organisations are not eligible to serve as the formal applicant.

The Project Owner is required to carry out the project in collaboration with an end-user of the technology.

About Demonstration Projects

Demonstration Projects build on a specific innovation produced by the companies participating in the project. The innovation can be in the form of a new product, service or production process, or as a new means of delivering products and services. The innovation may also entail significant improvements in or new characteristics of existing products, processes or services.

Companies need to demonstrate and verify technology/innovations in order to successfully introduce their product on the market and move forward with commercialisation. It is this need for development ("experimental development") that the project is to cover.

The Project Owner and other company partners in the project may engage the services of other independent suppliers of R&D services to perform R&D tasks and assist in quality assurance.

The scope and risk profile of the project must be such that the companies would not be able to carry out the project without public funding. This means that support from the Research Council will be essential to reducing risk sufficiently for the participants to implement the necessary R&D activities. Project funding may also be crucial to obtaining private investment in the company for the development and realisation of the innovation.

A Demonstration Project may involve international cooperation, and companies from other countries may participate as partners. However, non-Norwegian partners are required to fund their participation in the project themselves. The project may commission organisations outside Norway to provide R&D services when this is considered necessary and expedient.

The Research Council's funding for Demonstration Projects must comply with the EEA state aid rules, which state among other things that:

- The aid intensity depends on the project's R&D content. Funding will be provided primarily for R&D activities that fall within the category of "experimental development". The project may also include certain activities that fall within the category of "industrial research".
- Other public funding to the project, or to activities under the project, will affect the amount of funding that the Research Council can provide.
- Companies involved in the project must submit a declaration confirming that they are eligible to receive state aid.
- Allocated state aid of a certain size will be announced in a public register.

Application processing

Applications for funding for Demonstration Projects may only be submitted in response to a call for proposals for this type of funding issued via the Research Council's webpages. The call will provide more detailed information about specific priorities and conditions for grant allocations, as well as about requirements relating to the form and content of the grant application.

The grant application must include a more detailed description of the R&D project and an explanation of why it is needed as well as the value creation it will generate.

The application must also include a plan for how the project results are to be utilised in the aim of value creation. The project description must be submitted

using the designated template.

Project proposals will be reviewed by a panel comprising at least three external referees who are qualified to assess the project's R&D activities, the potential for commercial value creation and relevant socio-economic and market-related elements. The panel will employ three main criteria when assessing the project proposal:

- Excellence;
- Impacts and outcomes;
- Implementation.

The panel's assessment plays a crucial role in determining whether a project merits funding. The Research Council administration will assess the relevance of the project proposal in relation to thematic and budgetary priorities and other specifications described in the text of the call. The assessments from the panel and the administration will be submitted to the relevant portfolio boards, which will take the decision regarding funding allocations.

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