

Milestone Project – Research Commercialisation Project from Publicly Funded Research

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Application type: Commercialisation Project

Application deadline: Open-ended

Relevant thematic areas for this call: [Trade and industry](#)

Target groups: Industry, Research organisations

Funding scale: NOK 200 000-500 000

Amount of funding presumed available for this call for proposals:

NOK 10 000 000

Project duration: 3-12 months

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Purpose

A Milestone Project is a short-term Commercialisation Project undertaken to complete the next, most critical milestone phase in order to move along the long-term commercialisation pathway. The purpose is to clarify key questions essential for determining which course to pursue. The results from a completed Milestone Project may lay the foundation for a subsequent application for commercialisation support.

This call is open to project proposals within all thematic areas.

Call for proposals

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About the call for proposals

A Milestone Project is targeted towards completing the next, most critical milestone phase to clarify key questions essential for determining which course to pursue.

This call is targeted towards proposals for new projects that have not previously been awarded commercialisation funding from the Research Council.

This call for proposals is a collaborative effort between the [FORNY2020](#), [BIOTEK2021](#), [NANO2021](#), [IKTPLUSS](#), [TRANSPORT](#), [MAROFF](#), [BIONÆR](#) og [SAMANSVAR](#) programmer.

The part of this call for proposals that involves support to start-up companies constitutes a funding scheme that is notified to the EFTA Surveillance Authority. Funding awarded under this scheme is granted in accordance with Article 22 of the General Block Exemption Regulation for state aid (Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014).

This funding scheme is to be practised in compliance with the EEA state aid rules. This means that conditions and concepts are to be interpreted in keeping with corresponding conditions and concepts in the state aid rules. In the event of conflict between the text of the call and the state aid rules, the latter will have precedence. The text of the call may be adjusted for this same reason.

The call for proposals has been approved as an aid scheme by The EFTA Surveillance Authority (ESA) with the reference: GBER32/2020/R&D&I.

The Norwegian-language call for proposals is the legally binding version.

Who is eligible to apply?

The following actors are eligible to seek funding:

- [Approved research organisations](#);
- Technology Transfer Offices (TTOs);
- Start-up enterprises originating in research organisations and fulfilling the criteria set out in Article 22 of the EU Commission's General Block Exemption Regulation may apply for funding. Start-ups must clarify with the research organisation or its affiliated TTO that they have the necessary rights to further develop their research results for commercial use.

The applicant company will be the designated Project Owner in the contract with the Research Council.

Who can participate in the project?

Requirements relating to the Project Owner

The Project Owner's objective must be for the project to increase commercial utilisation and value creation based on the results of publicly funded research in Norway.

The organisation listed as the Project Owner in the application form must have authorised the project manager to submit the grant application.

Requirements relating to project partners

Eligible partners include research organisations and TTOs, private or public sector entities and other Norwegian or foreign actors (that carry out economic activity in Norway and have been issued an enterprise number under the Norwegian Register of Business Enterprises).

If the Project Owner is a TTO, the research organisation that owns the intellectual property rights must participate as a project partner.

What can you seek funding for?

Typical project activities include developing, clarifying and demonstrating technological concepts, verifying results, verifying technology in a laboratory, clarifying application and market potential, demonstration, developing business models and establishing contact with customers and users.

Approved project costs must be included in a budget in accordance with [the general requirements and guidelines](#) that

apply for projects funded by the Research Council.

Scope of funding

Under this call, funding may be sought for up to 100 per cent of the budgeted project costs. Projects may seek between NOK 200 000 and NOK 500 000 in funding.

Conditions for funding

Support for research organisations and TTOs:

Approved research organisations and their affiliated TTOs must satisfy the definition of a research and knowledge dissemination organisation set out in the state aid rules:

- Definition in the state aid rules:
‘research and knowledge dissemination organisation’ or ‘research organisation’ means an entity (such as universities or research institutes, technology transfer agencies, innovation intermediaries, research-oriented physical or virtual collaborative entities), irrespective of its legal status (organised under public or private law) or way of financing, whose primary goal is to independently conduct fundamental research, industrial research or experimental development or to widely disseminate the results of such activities by way of teaching, publication or knowledge transfer. Where such entity also pursues economic activities, the financing, the costs and the revenues of those economic activities must be accounted for separately. Undertakings that can exert a decisive influence upon such an entity, for example in the quality of shareholders or members, may not enjoy a preferential access to the results generated by it.

Support awarded to research organisations or their affiliated TTOs may only be used to cover project costs related to activities of a non-economic character in the form of knowledge-transfer activities, cf. Item 19(b) of the EFTA Surveillance Authority’s guidelines on state aid for research and development and innovation.

Both the Project Owner (research and knowledge dissemination organisation) and any partners that are to receive support must satisfy the definition of a research organisation under the state aid rules. Any other partners will not be eligible to receive support from the Research Council under these projects. Steps must be taken to ensure that no indirect state aid is provided to partner companies through, for example, beneficially priced rights to research results. The collaboration agreement must ensure that the rights to the results are distributed in accordance with item 28 of the EFTA Surveillance Authority’s guidelines on state aid for research and development and innovation.

Definition of “knowledge transfer” in the EFTA Surveillance Authority’s guidelines on state aid for research and development and innovation:

‘knowledge transfer’ means any process which has the aim of acquiring, collecting and sharing explicit and tacit knowledge, including skills and competence in both economic and non-economic activities such as research collaborations, consultancy, licensing, spin-off creation, publication and mobility of researchers and other personnel involved in those activities. Besides scientific and technological knowledge, it includes other kinds of knowledge such as knowledge on the use of standards and regulations embedding them and on conditions of real life operating environments and methods for organisational innovation, as well as management of knowledge related to identifying, acquiring, protecting, defending and exploiting intangible assets.

To be considered part of the research organisation’s non-economic activity, the knowledge-transfer activity must, according to the EFTA Surveillance Authority’s guidelines, be conducted either by the research organisation itself or jointly with, or on behalf of, other such entities. Additionally, all profits from these activities are to be reinvested in the primary activities of the research organisation. Support for knowledge-transfer activities is not considered to be state aid under these conditions. The non-economic nature of these activities is not compromised by contracting the provision of such services by third parties by way of open tenders.

The Research Council requires a clear separation of accounts for the research organisation’s economic and non-economic activities.

[Information from the Research Council about the state aid rules is available on this webpage.](#)

Support for start-ups

Support for start-ups constitutes state aid according to Article 61 of the EEA Agreement. Support is granted in accordance with Article 22 of the General Block Exemption Regulation: Aid for start-ups.

Article 22 states that support can only be awarded to enterprises that:

- do not have more than 10 employees;

- are not listed on the stock exchange;
- have not been registered in the Register of Business Enterprises for five years or more;
- have not taken over the activity of another enterprise;
- have not issued dividends;
- are not the result of a merger.

In addition to the requirements under Article 22, the Research Council stipulates the following requirement:

- The balance sheet of the enterprise is not to exceed NOK 2 million.

When assessing an enterprise's size, consideration must also be given to the number of employees and the turnover/balance sheet for companies with a holding of 25 per cent or more of the capital or voting rights or in which the enterprise itself has a holding of 25 per cent or more of the capital or voting rights. See the definition of the concept, "small and medium-sized enterprises" or "SMEs", in the General Block Exemption Regulation: [Aid for start-ups, Annex I, as well as in the EU Commission's User guide to the SME definition](#).

Archiving of research data

The Project Owner (company/research organisation) is responsible for selecting the archiving solution(s) to use for storing research data generated during the project. The Project Owner must specify the planned solution(s) in connection with the revised grant proposal.

Additional information

Termination of contract

It is important to meet the approved milestones by the stipulated deadlines. This will be given particular weight when assessing whether to continue providing support or to terminate the contract.

Other examples of key issues that can lead to amendment or termination of a contract include the following:

- The conditions set out in the call and the approved prerequisites for funding are not met.
- The project is not progressing according to plan.
- Key partners are no longer involved in the project.
- The project no longer has access to critical and necessary resources or equipment that are needed.
- New results or new information become available that substantially diminish the commercial potential of the project.
- The Project Owner no longer owns, or has at its disposal, the intellectual property rights, which substantially diminishes the commercial potential of the project.

Requirements relating to projects for which commercialisation funding has previously been sought

If the applicant has previously applied for funding for a Milestone Project, it must be stated clearly at the beginning of the project description what has changed in the interim since the previous application. The programme administration may reject applications that do not demonstrate sufficient change.

Relevant thematic areas for this call

This call is open for project proposals in all areas, but we would like applicants to assign one or more of the branches of trade and industry listed below to their applications:

Trade and industry



Health, Animal health, ICT industry, Fisheries and aquaculture, Forests and wood, Agriculture, Food industry, Oil, gas, Energy, Processing industry, Manufacturing industry, Building, construction and mining, Transport and communications, Travel and tourism, Finance and banking, Media and culture, Telecommunications, Aviation,

Requirements for this application type

A complete application consists of the online application form and the mandatory attachments.

This call has an open-ended deadline. A grant application may therefore only be submitted once, and will be processed after submission.

- Grant applications and all attachments must be submitted in English.
- All attachments must be uploaded in PDF format.

All the templates for attachments are available for download at the end of the call for proposals.

Mandatory attachments

- A project description of maximum five pages, using the designated project description template.
- CVs for the project manager and other key project participants, using the designated template.
- Start-ups must include a signed letter of confirmation from the research organisation stating that the project is based on research conducted by a specified institution, that the research results have not been published and that the company has the necessary rights to develop their research results for commercial use. Use the designated template.
- Additional information about the project, using the designated template.
- A one-page project summary using the designated template.

Grant applications that do not satisfy the above requirements will be rejected.

Optional attachments

- Letters of intent from any customers, industrial partners or other project partners.

Links to websites and documents, as well as other attachments than those specified above, will not be included in the application review process. Use the templates provided with the call for the attachments as indicated. There is no technical validation of the content of the attachments you upload, so please make sure that you upload the correct file for the selected type of attachment.

Assessment criteria

Project proposals will be assessed in relation to three criteria:

Excellence

This criterion gives an indication of whether the project is based on promising R&D results that are mature enough to contribute to significant improvements relative to the state-of-the-art.

This criterion will be assessed in relation to the following points:

i. Research results:

- To what extent is the research base underlying the project adequately described?

ii. Degree of innovation:

- To what extent will the product/process/service contribute to significant improvements over existing solutions (state-of-the-art) within the same area?

Impact

This criterion gives an indication of the project's long-term potential for value creation as well as the likelihood of its

successful realisation.

This criterion will be assessed in relation to the following points:

i. Market insight and areas of application:

- To what extent are potential branches of industry/markets targeted by the project quantified and accounted for?

ii. Strategy for realisation:

- To what extent does the application outline a realistic long-term strategy for realising the innovation, including quantification of anticipated revenues, investment needs, human resources needs, logistics distribution, etc.?

iii. Conditions and rights:

- To what extent does the application explain the conditions that must be in place for successful commercialisation?

iv. Benefit to society and sustainability:

- To what extent are the relevant societal challenges and the potential impacts of the project accounted for?

Implementation

This criterion assesses the concrete results and risk relief that this project will achieve – which will increase the likelihood of triggering the next phase in the commercialisation process.

This criterion will be assessed in relation to the following points:

i. Project plan:

- To what extent does the application outline a realistic implementation plan, including milestones, deliveries and methods, and to what extent does the application adequately and convincingly describe what will be triggered by a completed project?

ii. Management, team and expertise:

- To what extent is the project considered to have access to the necessary resources and expertise, and to what extent does the project have a plan for involving external actors (mentors, customers, partners, investors, stakeholders, relevant social actors etc.)?

iii. Budget:

- To what extent is the budget and the financing realistic, cost-effective, and clearly rooted in the project's plans and resource needs?

Relevance to the call for proposals

The extent to which the project satisfies the guidelines and stipulations set out in the call for proposals.

Administrative procedures

Applications will be assessed by case officers at the Research Council on an ongoing basis and applicants will receive notification of the funding decision as soon as possible and by at the latest three months after the application was submitted.

Applications that do not fulfil the formal requirements or that fall outside the target group specified in the call will be rejected.

The Chief Executive of the Research Council is responsible for taking the final decision regarding funding awards. The final decisions on allocations for Milestone Projects will be announced as soon as possible and by at the latest three months after the application was submitted.

Download templates



Template for Project Description Milestone Projects - Commercialization.docx



CV Template.docx





Declaration from Technology Transfer Office (TTO) or Research Organisation (RO).docx



Additional Information for Commercialisation Projects.docx



Onepage presentation.pptx



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