

Radical frontier Researcher Project

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Application type: Researcher Project

Application deadline: 2 September 2020, 13:00 CEST

Relevant thematic areas for this call:

[Energy, transport and low emissions](#)

Target groups: Research organisations

Funding scale: NOK 1 000 000-2 000 000

Amount of funding presumed available for this call for proposals:

NOK 30 000 000

Project duration: 12-18 months

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Purpose

This application type is designed to provide funding opportunities for projects that incorporate radical new thinking and challenge existing research within a topic or area. These may be projects that employ unconventional approaches or methods, or address blind spots within a field. Funding may also be provided for projects seeking to combine research fields where there has not been previous collaboration across the dividing lines between disciplines. Projects may incorporate basic or applied research and may have a high level of risk.

Viktige datoer

30 Jun 2020: Date call is made active

02 Sep 2020: Application submission deadline

December 2020: Final decision on grant allocations for pre-projects

01 Jan 2021: Earliest permitted start pre-project

01 Jun 2021: Latest permitted start pre-project

31 Oct 2022: Deadline for completion of pre-project

31 Oct 2022: Latest permitted completion of main project

December 2022: Final funding decision main project

01 Jan 2023: Deadline for start of main project

30 Jun 2025: Deadline for completion of main project report

Shortcuts

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About the call for proposals

Under this call for proposals, the Research Council is testing a new funding scheme for radical, frontier research.

Under this new scheme, the Research Council is seeking to provide funding opportunities for projects that incorporate radical new thinking and challenge existing research within a topic or area. These may be projects that employ unconventional approaches or methods, or address blind spots within a field. Funding may also be provided for projects seeking to combine research fields where there has not been previous collaboration across the dividing lines between disciplines.

Projects may incorporate basic or applied research and may have a high level of risk, such as:

- technological risk associated with equipment or techniques that are unproven or extremely difficult;
- multidisciplinary risk associated with a unique, untried combination of perspectives, disciplines or approaches;
- conceptual risk associated with fundamental ideas that diverge from existing knowledge.

Project proposals will be assessed by international referees. The application review process under this call is specially designed to provide greater latitude to fund unconventional research than the Research Council's ordinary application review process.

Under this funding scheme, projects must be divided into two phases: a pre-project with a duration of maximum 18 months and a main project of maximum 30 months.

In the project description, the applicant is asked to give a description of both phases (pre -project and main project). But the application, and the tables in the application form, can only involve the pre-project (maximum 2 mill. kroner and maximum 18 months). Which of the pre-projects that obtain financing for the main project will be decided later, based on the results in the pre-projects.

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

Who is eligible to apply?

The call is open to approved Norwegian research organisations. [See here for the list of approved Norwegian research organisations.](#)

Who can participate in the project?

Requirements relating to the Project Owner

The organisation listed as the Project Owner in the grant application must have approved the submission of the grant application to the Research Council.

Requirements relating to the project manager

To qualify as project manager, you must have an approved doctorate or equivalent qualifications before the date of the application submission deadline.

- If you do not have an approved doctorate but are qualified at associate professorship level or have current or previous employment in a position as *forsker 1* (research professor), *forsker 2* (senior researcher) or *seniorforsker* (senior researcher), you are also qualified.

Requirements relating to partners

Only approved Norwegian research organisations (see under “Who is eligible to apply?” above) and corresponding research organisations in other countries are eligible to be partners and to receive funding.

Other types of organisations, such as companies and other undertakings, may not be partners and are not eligible to receive support, but they may serve as suppliers to the project. In such cases, the intellectual property rights related to the result of the supplier’s work activities will become the property of the institution procuring the services.

A project participant may not be assigned two different roles in the project. This means that a supplier of R&D services for the project may not have the role of Project Owner or partner in the same project.

What can you seek funding for?

Please see the webpage on “[What to enter in the project budget](#)” for details and important information.

You may seek funding to cover actual costs that are necessary to execute the project. The Project Owner is to obtain information about costs from each project partner. These costs are to be entered into the cost plan under the relevant category.

Support may be granted for the following costs:

- Payroll and indirect expenses related to researcher time (including research fellowship positions) at the research organisations participating in the project.
- Procurement of R&D services. The Project Owner and partners may purchase R&D-related services from public and private suppliers individually or together.
- Equipment. This encompasses operating and depreciation costs for scientific equipment and research infrastructure necessary for the execution of the project.
- Other operating expenses, which comprise costs for other activities that are necessary to carry out R&D efforts under the project.

Please note that since projects are to be divided into two phases and that funding for the main project is not guaranteed, the inclusion of research fellowship positions is not well suited to this application type. Should the institution nevertheless choose to incorporate research fellowship positions in the project, the grant application must include a plan for the funding of such positions in the event that the main project is not awarded funding.

If the project includes doctoral and post-doctoral research fellowships and there are concrete plans in place for research stays abroad for the fellowship-holders, the costs of such stays may be included in the grant application. The Research Council has also issued a [separate call for Research Stays Abroad for doctoral and post-doctoral research fellows](#). During the project period, the project manager may seek funding under that call for research stays abroad for research fellows affiliated with the project.

Scope of funding

The maximum funding per project under this call may vary depending on thematic area. Please refer to the information below.

There are no requirements for own financing and the Research Council can therefore provide support for up to 100 per cent of the total approved costs.

Conditions for funding

The Research Council will not award support that constitutes state aid under this call. This means that the Research Council funding must only go to the non-economic activity of the research organisations. The Research Council requires a clear separation of accounts for the organisation's economic and non-economic activities. Companies will not be eligible to receive support to cover projects costs and may not receive indirect support through the granting of any rights to project results.

The Project Owner is to draw up [collaboration agreements](#) with all of the Norwegian and international partners in the project. The collaboration agreements regulate the reciprocal rights and obligations of the partners and safeguard the integrity and autonomy of the research.

The Research Council's requirements relating to allocation and disbursement of support for the first year and any pledges for subsequent years are set out in the [General Terms and Conditions for R&D Projects](#).

Research results are to be made accessible through sharing and publication in line with the [Research Council's Policy for Open Science](#).

Archiving of research data

The Project Owner (R&D organisation) is responsible for selecting the archiving solution(s) to use for storing research data generated during the project. The Project Owner for main projects awarded funding must specify the planned solution(s) in connection with the revised grant proposal.

Relevant thematic areas for this call

This call is targeted towards the topic "Environment-friendly energy" only.

Energy, transport and low emissions



Environment-friendly energy

NOK 30 million for radical frontier energy research projects

The purpose of this call for proposals is to fund up to six ground-breaking, creative energy research projects that incorporate a novel angle or topic. The six projects will be awarded funding for the pre-project phase and will later compete for funding for up to three main projects.

The projects must lie within the scope of the Large-Scale Programme for Energy Research (ENERGIX). (See the link to the ENERGIX work programme on the right.)

Projects must:

- radically challenge either the current state-of-the-art or accepted methods;
- focus on new technologies and solutions for renewable energy production or for reduced energy use;
- be of potential major importance for the energy sphere and directly or indirectly help to cut greenhouse gas emissions substantially.

Scope and organisation of the projects:

- Projects must be divided into two phases: a pre-project with a duration of maximum 18 months and a main project of maximum 30 months.
- The maximum amount of funding available from the Research Council is NOK 2 million per pre-project and NOK 6 million per main project.
- The project description must be written using the designated template and must describe the entire project (both pre-project and main project).
- In the online application form, the budget tables are to be filled in with amounts for the pre-project.
- The pre-project must be completed by 31 October 2022 at the latest.
- Up to three pre-projects will be awarded funding for their respective main projects.

ENERGIX work programme and attachment

The work programme provides an overview of

- challenges, objectives and priorities
- anticipated results, impacts and societal outcomes
- available resources and budget

See: [ENERGIX work programme and attachment \(pdf\)](#).

Requirements for this application type

The grant application form must be created and submitted via “My RCN Web”. You may revise and resubmit your grant application form multiple times up to the application submission deadline. We recommend that you submit your application as soon as you have filled in the application form and included all mandatory attachments. After the deadline, it is the most recently submitted version of the grant application that will be processed.

Applications that do not satisfy the following requirements will be rejected:

- The grant application, including all attachments, must be submitted in English.
- All mandatory attachments must be included.
- Requirements relating to the project manager must be satisfied.
- Requirements relating to the Project Owner (research organisation) must be satisfied.
- The project must start between 1 January 2021 and 1 June 2021.

Attachments

The designated templates (found at the end of this call for proposals) must be used.

Mandatory attachments

- A project description, maximum 11 pages.
- A CV for the project manager, maximum four pages.

For projects encompassing doctoral degrees, a letter of confirmation from the degree-conferring university/institution. The letter of confirmation must include a plan for how the research fellow is to complete his/her fellowship period in the event that the main project is not awarded funding. To be uploaded under Attachments/Other items.

Optional attachments

- CVs for the key project participants. Each CV must not exceed four pages; CVs that exceed the maximum length will not be included in the application review process.
 - Applicants themselves are to decide which project participants are most important and in which cases it will be of significance to the review process to assess these participants' qualifications.
- Applicants are free to propose up to three referees who are presumed to be impartial and qualified to review the grant proposal.
 - To ensure impartiality, we do not use referees who have their place of employment in Norway. The Research Council is not under any obligation to use the proposed referees, but may use them as needed.

Attachments other than those specified above as mandatory or optional, as well as any links to websites in the grant application, will not be included in the application review process.

Assessment criteria

Grant applications will be assessed in relation to the following criteria:

Excellence

The extent to which the proposed work is ambitious, novel, and goes beyond the state-of-the-art

- Scientific creativity and originality.
- Novelty and boldness of hypotheses or research questions.
- Potential for development of new knowledge beyond the current state-of-the-art, including significant theoretical, methodological, experimental or empirical advancement.

The quality of the proposed R&D activities

- Quality of the research questions, hypotheses and project objectives, and the extent to which they are clearly and adequately specified.
 - Credibility and appropriateness of the theoretical approach, research design and use of scientific methods.
- Appropriate consideration of interdisciplinary approaches.
- The extent to which appropriate consideration has been given to ethical issues, safety issues, gender dimension in research content, and use of stakeholder/user knowledge if appropriate.

Implementation

The quality of the project manager and project group

- The extent to which the project manager has relevant expertise and experience, and demonstrated ability to perform high-quality research (as appropriate to the career stage).
- The degree of complementarity of the participants and the extent to which the project group has the necessary expertise needed to undertake the research effectively.

The quality of the project organisation and management

- Effectiveness of the project organisation, including the extent to which resources assigned to work packages are aligned with project objectives and deliverables.
- Appropriateness of the allocation of tasks, ensuring that all participants have a valid role and adequate resources in the project to fulfil that role.
- Appropriateness of the proposed management structures and governance.

Impact

Potential impact of the proposed research

- Potential for academic impact:
The extent to which the planned outputs of the project address important present and/or future scientific challenges.
- Potential for societal impact (if addressed by the applicant):
The extent to which the planned outputs of the project address UN Sustainable Development Goals or other important present and/or future societal challenges.
- The extent to which the potential impacts are clearly formulated and plausible.

Communication and exploitation

- Quality and scope of communication and engagement activities with different target audiences, including relevant stakeholders/users.

Overall assessment of the referee/panel

Overall assessment of the referee/panel based, on the criteria Excellence, Impact and Implementation.

Relevance to the chosen topic in the call for proposals

The extent to which the project satisfies the priorities in the chosen topic in the call for proposals.

Weighting the criteria

When assessing grant applications in relation to the criteria, the referees and the final referee panel will be instructed to assign special weight to the following criteria points for Radical Frontier Researcher Projects:

- Excellence
 - *Novelty and boldness of hypotheses or research questions.*
Here the referees will be asked to assess the extent to which the project radically challenges the current state-

of-the-art and/or accepted methods and focuses on new technologies and solutions.

- Impact
 - ◊ *Potential for societal impact.*
Here the referees will be asked to assess the extent to which the project will help to solve the challenges set out in the thematic section of this call for proposals.
- Implementation
 - ◊ *The quality of the project manager and project group.*
Here the referees will be asked to assign somewhat less weight to previous research merits within the thematic area encompassed under this call. Research merits within other thematic areas may be included in the assessment.

Administrative procedures

1. September 2020: Preliminary administrative review of grant applications. Grant applications that do not satisfy the formal requirements outlined in the call will be rejected.
2. October 2020: Grant applications will be submitted to external referees (minimum three per grant application) for assessment of criteria 1–3 (Excellence, Impact and Implementation). In addition, the Research Council administration will conduct an assessment of the relevance criterion based on the text of the call for proposals. Applications that receive an average mark of 4 or lower will not be eligible for funding and will therefore not be assessed in relation to relevance. Based on the referee assessments and the assessment of the relevance criterion, the Research Council administration will submit a recommendation to the portfolio board chair on which applications should advance to the final round. The portfolio board chair will decide which applications (up to 12 projects) will advance to the final round and which applications to reject.
3. November 2020: The grant applications selected to advance to the final round will be assessed by a final referee panel comprised of minimum three referees with broad-based expertise across the relevant thematic areas.
 - ◊ The project managers for the grant applications selected to advance will be invited to present their project in person to the final referee panel, and the panel will have the opportunity to pose questions after the presentation.
 - ◊ The final referee panel assesses criteria 1–3 based on the grant application and all attachments, the assessments by the international referees, the Research Council administration's assessment of the relevance criterion, and the project manager's presentation and responses to questions. The final referee panel will also conduct an overall discussion on which of the projects best satisfy the call for proposals and will rank the applications.
4. December 2020: The Research Council administration will submit a recommendation based on the referee panel's assessment, the assessment of the relevance criterion and an overall assessment of the project portfolio. Based on this recommendation, the portfolio boards take the final funding decision.
5. October 2022: Final deadline for reports from pre-projects and submission of an updated/revised project description for the main project. The latter is to be based on pre-project results and knowledge of new developments in the field.
6. November 2022: Panel assessment of pre-project results. The panel will be asked to rank the projects on the basis of:
 - ◊ achieved results from the pre-project;
 - ◊ anticipated outcomes and impacts;
 - ◊ updated plan and budget for the main project.
7. December 2022: Up to three projects will be recommended for funding as main projects based on the referee panel's ranking, the Research Council administration's assessment of the relevance criterion, and an overall assessment of the project portfolio. The final decision on funding awards will be taken by the portfolio board.

The details for assessing the results of the pre-projects have not yet been fully established, but project managers will be notified well in advance of the October 2022 submission deadline.

The final funding decision

The final funding decision will be taken at the meeting of the portfolio board to be held in mid-December. The final funding decision will be announced after these meetings.

Please note that the amount of funding announced, overall and per individual topic, represents the estimated amount of funding available. The final amounts allocated may deviate somewhat from these estimates. This may be due to changes in the financial framework or to the number and quality of grant applications received viewed in light of other calls for proposals.

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