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Industrial PhD Scheme – Doctoral Projects in Industry 2023

PUBLISHED 26 APR 2023 | LAST UPDATED 02 JAN 2024

Financial scheme: Innovation Project

Application deadline: 7 June 2023, 23:59 CEST

Relevant thematic areas for this call: Trade and industry

Target groups: Industry

Amount of funding presumed available for this call for proposals:
up to NOK 50 000 000

Project duration: 36-48 months

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ⓘ You can apply for this call from 31 May at 08:00 CEST until midnight on 7 June.

Purpose

The Research Council has established the Industrial PhD Scheme to boost research efforts and long-term competence-building for Norwegian trade and industry through the recruitment of doctoral candidates.

The scheme is also intended to promote closer cooperation between the business sector and research organisations as a necessary step in promoting knowledge transfer from researchers to society at large.

The target group is companies. The Industrial PhD Scheme provides companies with the opportunity to expand their research knowledge and expertise without having to participate in a more comprehensive R&D project.

SHORTCUTS

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About the call for proposals

The Research Council announces a total of up to 29 Industrial PhD projects:

- 25 Industrial PhD projects open to all themes and industries starting within the next twelve months

- up to 4 Industrial PhD projects in ICT security and cryptology for candidates who have a security clearance (see more details below)

The Industrial PhD Scheme is not a competitive arena. This means that funding is not allocated on a competitive basis, but based on that all the requirements in the call for proposals have been met.

The call will be open for applications from 31st May 08:00 a.m. until 7th June 11:59 p.m. Applications received before the deadline will be listed in order by means of randomisation (lottery draw). The applications will then be processed in the sequential order according to the outcome of the draw, until all available funds are allocated.

Projects under the Industrial PhD Scheme are collaboration projects, normally between one company and a degree-conferring institution. The doctoral project must be based on an issue of relevance to the company but must be planned and carried out in close cooperation between the company and the degree-conferring institution.

The project cannot start before the application to the Research Council has been submitted. This means that the earliest permitted start-up date is the application date. Please note that any project activities that is carried out before the contract with the Research Council has been signed are undertaken at the project partners' own risk. Projects that have been started before the application has been submitted are not eligible for funding in accordance with the state aid rules. We recommend that you submit the application well in advance of the start of the project.

The doctoral project must have a duration of 36 months and can be completed either over three or four years. Candidates pursuing three-year projects must work full-time on the project. Candidates pursuing four-year projects must dedicate 75 per cent of a full-time position to the project and 25 per cent to other tasks.

Projects that are awarded funding under the scheme are subject to the Research Council's General Terms and Conditions for R&D Projects. More information is available on our website: [What the contract involves](#).

The call for proposal is available in both Norwegian and English. The Norwegian call text is the legally binding version.

Please note that the text of the call is subject to revision. The version of the call that is posted online at the time of application submission applies to the application. We will publish information about any changes we make to the call text.

State aid

This call for proposals constitutes a funding scheme that is notified to the EFTA Surveillance Authority. Funding awarded under this scheme is granted in accordance with Article 25 of the General Block Exemption Regulation for state aid (Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014). In addition, the common provisions set out in Chapter 1 of the regulation must also apply. [See the regulations here](#) (link opens in new window).

This funding scheme is to be practiced 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.

State aid may not be given to an undertaking which is subject to an outstanding recovery order following a formal decision by the EFTA Surveillance Authority or the European Commission that state aid received is illegal and incompatible with the internal market. State aid cannot be given to an undertaking in difficulties, as defined by the EEA legal framework.

The call for proposals has been approved as an aid scheme by The EFTA Surveillance Authority (ESA) with the reference: (correct reference number will follow).

Funding subject to special requirements

PhD education in ICT security and cryptology for candidates who have a security clearance

In 2020, the Research Council announced funds for 18 doctoral projects within ICT security and cryptology for Public Sector PhD and the Industrial PhD. Funding is still available for eight ICT projects.

Funding earmarked ICT security and cryptology is given to projects in which the doctoral candidate has already been granted security clearance. Thus, the following additional guideline has been established for these projects: The candidate must have been granted security clearance and authorisation for clearance level Secret or higher required for access to classified material. Security clearance must be in place prior to the submission of the application to the Research Council.

Please note that the results from the doctoral projects, including those in ICT security and cryptology, are to be published publicly.

Who is eligible to apply?

The applicant and Project Owner must be an undertaking (company) that has been issued an enterprise number under the Norwegian Register of Business Enterprises and that carries out economic activity in Norway. The economic activity must correspond to the purpose of the company's articles of association.

Companies and public enterprises that run activities of an industrial or commercial nature can apply if the enterprise is not financed with more than 60 per cent from public funding.

The Project Owner must have at least two employees in full-time positions. The doctoral candidate may be one of these two employees.

The following are not eligible to apply for funding under the Industrial PhD Scheme:

- enterprises that are financed with more than 60 per cent from public funding;
- enterprises not carrying out or not planning to carry out economic activity, including clubs and associations, which also encompasses unions;
- research institutes, health trusts and [organisations that are defined as research organisations by the Research Council](#);
- sole proprietorships and enterprises with less than two permanent employees;
- enterprises that fall within the target group for the Public Sector PhD Scheme;
- enterprises that at the time of application submission, are considered an "undertaking in difficulties".

The Research Council will only provide support to doctoral candidates who have not previously completed a PhD degree. The call does not support the completion of doctoral degrees that have already been started.

Who can participate in the project?

The project owner and applicant to the Research Council must be a company (as defined above). The degree conferring institution must be a partner in the Industrial PhD project.

The Research Council stipulates the following requirements for the project and project participants:

Requirements relating to the Project Owner

- The company is the formal applicant and must fall within the scheme's target group. Please note that the Research Council may request additional documentation to determine whether the company satisfies this requirement. If you are uncertain as to whether the company is within the target group, please contact the Research Council's contact points for the Industrial PhD Scheme before you submit your application.
- The doctoral project must be of clear relevance to the Project Owner's activity and long-term needs for expertise.
- The Project Owner must demonstrate the financial ability to carry out the project. This means that the company must be able to secure funding for the entire duration of the project, also in the case of delays, and must be able to confirm that funding for the project will also be available in the case of postponements. Please note that we may request additional documentation during the application phase to assess whether this requirement is met.
- The Project Owner is to appoint a dedicated supervisor/mentor for the project and must set aside adequate working hours and resources for completion of the doctoral project. The role of company supervisor is to be filled by an individual with expertise of relevance to the thematic orientation of the project. If the company supervisor does not have a doctoral degree, he or she will be defined as a "company mentor". A supervisor/mentor may be contracted from an external actor if the company does not have the relevant expertise.
- The doctoral candidate must be employed by the Project Owner throughout the duration of the project, and the employment contract must allow for possible delays. The doctoral candidate is to be employed in a full-time position for a period of three years for three-year projects, and at least 75 per cent of a full-time position for four-year projects. The terms of the candidate's employment contract and working conditions must be in compliance with Norwegian regulations.

Requirements relating to the degree-conferring institution

- The degree-conferring institution is responsible for ensuring that the doctoral project maintains an adequately high scientific standard. Under the scheme, the doctoral project must meet the same requirements for scientific quality set out for other doctoral projects undertaken at the institution and must follow the institution's regulations for doctoral degree education regarding admissions, implementation, and evaluation.
- The candidate must have been granted admission to the doctoral degree programme at the degree-conferring institution. The admission process must be underway at the time the grant application is submitted. The documents confirming admission may be forwarded when they are completed. The Research Council will not enter a contractual agreement with the Project Owner until the documentation

has been submitted.

- If the degree-conferring institution is outside Norway, documentation confirming that the degree from the institution abroad is on a par with a doctoral degree obtained from a Norwegian university must be attached to the application.

Requirements relating to cooperation and project organisation

- The project is to be implemented in accordance with the definition of “effective collaboration” in the state aid rules. Effective collaboration is defined as follows:

collaboration between at least two independent parties to exchange knowledge or technology, or to achieve a common objective based on the division of labour where the parties jointly define the scope of the collaborative project, contribute to its implementation and share its risks, as well as its results. One or several parties may bear the full costs of the project and thus relieve other parties of its financial risks. Contract research and provision of research services are not considered forms of collaboration.

- The Project Owner and the degree-conferring institution must enter into a written collaboration agreement. The process of writing a collaboration agreement must be underway, but not necessarily completed, by the time of grant application submission. The agreement must satisfy the Industrial PhD Scheme’s requirements for collaboration agreements (see separate section below). The signed collaboration agreement is to be attached to the contract between the Research Council and the Project Owner. The Research Council will not enter into a contract with the Project Owner until the collaboration agreement is in place.
- The Project Owner and partners must jointly be able to provide the candidate with a satisfactory professional and scientific environment and adequate support and supervision for completing the doctoral project.
- The candidate participating in the project must be designated at the time the grant application is submitted. Funding will not be granted to projects that do not specify a candidate’s name.
- The candidate is required to spend at least one year at the degree conferring institution and at least one year at the company during the project period. This also applies if the degree conferring institution is located outside Norway. Each stay may be carried out in stages as several shorter-term visits rather than over one continuous period. Provided that there is adequate scientific justification for doing so and the partners in the project are in agreement, candidates may replace the stay at the degree conferring institution wholly or in part with stays at one or more institutions within the university and university college sector or at research institutes.

Requirements relating to the collaboration agreement

The company and the degree conferring institution must enter into a collaboration agreement that follows our general requirements for R&I-projects. The Industrial PhD Scheme stipulates the following special requirements for collaboration agreements:

- The ownership of results and issues pertaining to intellectual property rights must be adequately clarified. The parties are to regulate the ownership and user rights of project results that have been produced by several parties in a collaborative effort. This must be regulated in a manner that ensures that the companies taking part in the consortium do not receive indirect state aid from participating research organisations. The regulation of ownership and user rights must therefore be in accordance with [the EFTA Surveillance Authority’s guidelines for state aid for research and development and innovation Section 29](#).
- The names, roles, and employers of the supervisors from the degree-conferring institution and the company are to be specified.
- It must be specified that the candidate is to spend at least one year at the Project Owner and at least one year at a degree conferring institution or at one or more institutions in the university and university college sector or a research institute. The time may be distributed in a manner that is most advantageous for the project.
- Requirements relating to the work duties on the part of the doctoral candidate must be clarified. This item may also be incorporated into a separate employment agreement between the candidate and the company. In the case of four-year projects, the site where the candidate is to carry out his or her work duties must be specified.
- Project funding and the distribution of project costs for each partner participating in the doctoral project must be provided.

More information about [collaboration agreements](#) is available on the Research Council’s website.

Requirements relating to collaboration with other actors

The Industrial PhD Scheme primarily targets individual companies working in cooperation with a degree-conferring institution. If it is relevant to incorporate multiple actors in a project, this must be in accordance with the definition of “effective collaboration” in the state aid rules (see definition above).

Industrial PhD Scheme projects involving the participation of other partners (in addition to the Project Owner

and degree-conferring institution) must satisfy the following requirements in addition to the other requirements set out in the call:

- Only one company can serve as the Project Owner.
- If other partners than the Project Owner and degree-conferring institution are to contribute funding, the Project Owner must contribute the largest proportion of project funding from partners except for the degree-conferring institution. This means that the portion of project costs not covered by the degree-conferring institution may be distributed among multiple partners, but the largest share must come from the Project Owner.
- Binding agreements must be signed between all the project partners. These agreements must clarify all relevant issues, including those pertaining to intellectual property rights, distribution of the project results and financial considerations. The Research Council stipulates that a single joint collaboration agreement must be signed for projects involving partners beyond the Project Owner and the degree-conferring institution.

The Project Owner must have a plan for completing the project in the event that any partners withdraw from the project while it is underway.

What can you seek funding for?

Under the Industrial PhD Scheme, the Research Council provides funding to cover eligible project costs directly related to completion of the doctoral project. Approved costs include:

- salary and personnel costs for the candidate
- salary and personnel costs for internal supervisors
- costs incurred by the degree-conferring institution (such as supervisory services and office space)
- costs incurred by project collaboration partner
- other operating costs (laboratory experiments, purchase of literature, conference-related travel, etc.)

Funding under the Industrial PhD Scheme will only be provided for project activity that is defined as "industrial research" and "fundamental research" under the state aid rules (see [Important definitions for Article 25](#), link opens in new window).

Industrial research means *the planned research or critical investigation aimed at the acquisition of new knowledge and skills for developing new products, processes, or services or for bringing about a significant improvement in existing products, processes, or services. It comprises the creation of components parts of complex systems and may include the construction of prototypes in a laboratory environment or in an environment with simulated interfaces to existing systems as well as of pilot lines, when necessary for the industrial research and notably for generic technology validation.*

Costs for other types of activities and measures to exploit R&D results, such as filing for patents, market surveys and marketing and testing and completion of new products and services are not approved for funding. Overarching R&D activities in the company that do not directly contribute to the progress of the project in terms of research, scientific objectives and the production of the final dissertation are not to be included in the budget.

The Project Owner must set up a realistic budget in the grant application form showing all costs directly related to carrying out the doctoral project. The Research Council requires you to break down the project budget into the following cost categories:

- **Payroll and indirect expenses.** Salary and personnel costs for the company's staff, including the candidate and internal supervisor, and salary and personnel costs for the degree conferring institution. These costs are to be calculated based on hourly rates for each individual participating in the project. The basis used to calculate costs, i.e., the costs included in the hourly rate, is to be described in the application (in the specification field under the budget tables). Different rules apply for the calculation of hourly rates for company personnel and for staff at the degree conferring institution. Please read and follow the guidelines carefully.
 - [Calculating payroll and indirect expenses for companies, the public sector and other applicants](#)
 - [Calculating payroll and indirect expenses for the university and university college sector](#)
- **Procurement of R&D services.** costs related to the procurement of R&D services from a supplier such as laboratory activity, analyses, etc. See information relating to procurement [here](#).
- **Equipment.** Please note that there are restrictions on which equipment costs may be included in the budget. It is important to read the guidelines carefully. See information relating to equipment [here](#).
- **Other operating expenses.** costs related to purchase of literature, conference-related travel, other operating costs such as laboratory experiments, external advisers, etc. See information relating to other operating expenses [here](#).

Please visit the webpage [What to enter in the project budget](#) for more information.

Calculating support

The table below shows the maximum yearly and monthly amount of support to Industrial PhD Scheme projects in NOK. Funding is calculated monthly from the time of project start.

	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Three-year projects	631 236	650 173	669 678	689 768	710 461	731 775
Support per month	52 603	54 181	55 806	57 481	59 205	60 981
Four-year projects	473 427	487 629	502 258	517 326	532 846	548 831
Support per month	39 452	40 636	41 855	43 111	44 404	45 736

The funding is limited to a maximum of 50 per cent of total project costs.

Funding will not be disbursed as a lump sum allocation and will be adjusted to reflect costs entered in the accounts. Funding may not exceed 50 per cent of total, approved project costs. This means that if the costs recorded in the project accounts are lower than budgeted, the Research Council's disbursement will be reduced so that it will not exceed 50 per cent of project costs.

If multiple partners have accrued eligible costs, a genuine cost and support allocation must take place. Companies that receive funding under the Industrial PhD Scheme may not receive support in excess of 50 per cent of their eligible costs. In other words, a single contributor may not receive funding to cover more than 50 per cent of its eligible costs. It is thus not permitted to distribute the funding according to approximation, for instance by allocating each partner 50 per cent of the overall support, if this does not reflect the partner's actual contribution to the project.

Funding is disbursed as project support to the company, not as a personal grant to the candidate.

If your application is awarded funding, you should also note that:

- The Research Council requires full and immediate open access to scientific publications; [see Plan S – open access to publications](#).
- For all projects that manage research data, the Project Owner must ensure that a data management plan is drawn up and uploaded when the grant application is being revised. [You will find more information about what the data management plan must contain here](#).

Tax deduction for R&D projects under SkatteFUNN

Companies within all sectors and industries can apply to SkatteFUNN and with an approval get 19 per cent of the project costs as a tax deduction through the tax settlement. See the SkatteFUNN website for more information.

Relevant thematic areas for this call

Trade and industry

TRADE AND INDUSTRY THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY

Practical information

Requirements for this funding scheme

The application form

The formal roles in the project, project administrator and project manager, are to be held by employees of the Project Owner and not by the candidate.

- The project administrator must be authorised to represent and sign on behalf of the company in connection with the doctoral project. The project administrator must approve the application prior to submission and must sign documents such as the contract and reports during the project period.

- The project manager is responsible for reporting to the Research Council of Norway and is the primary point of contact for the Industrial PhD Scheme.
 - The project manager is responsible for the project's progress as well.
- Partners: Remember to list the degree conferring institution and any other companies or institutions serving as partners in effective collaboration. The Project Owner and the Research Council may not be listed as partners.
- Main activities and milestones in the project period are to include:
 - required and elective courses to be taken at the degree conferring institution and any other university/university college;
 - a midterm evaluation at the degree conferring institution;
 - milestones for the planned scientific articles;
 - completion of the candidate's doctoral dissertation as the final milestone. The completion of the doctoral dissertation is considered to be completion of the project. The Research Council does not wait for the applicant's dissertation defence since this may take time.
- In the specification field for the Cost plan, you are to describe how you have arrived at the hourly rates for project participants and to indicate how many hours per year have been calculated per project participant. If you have used the maximum hourly rate allowed (NOK 1100) an explanation must be provided.

The application and all the attachments may be submitted in Norwegian or English.

Attachments to the application

The project description and other mandatory attachments must be filled in using the designated template(s). You will find all templates at the bottom of this call for proposals. All attachments must be uploaded in PDF format.

Our application process is in part automated. For this reason, it is important that you use the templates below and that the header text is kept intact.

Mandatory attachments when submitting the application form

1. project description
2. information about the applicant and partners
3. confirmation of participation in a doctoral project
4. declaration form for companies (to be uploaded under "Other items" in the application form)
5. the candidate's CV. In the Industrial PhD Scheme we do not have a set template for CVs, and you can upload your own version. We require only the candidate's CV.

Other attachments

- For applications for ICT security and cryptology only: confirmation of security clearance and authorisation.

Please note that applications that do not meet the requirements will be rejected.

Applications that do not contain attachments no. 1-5 will be rejected.

Please do not attach any documents other than those requested. Links to any websites or documents outside the application form or project description, as well as other attachments than those specified above, will not be reviewed.

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.

Administrative procedures

Due to the limited budget, we expect more applications than there are available funds. Processing of applications will therefore take place through the following steps:

- The call for proposal is open for 8 days from the date of publication, after which it will be closed.
- The sequence in which applications are processed is decided by means of randomisation (lottery draw).
- The applications will then be processed in the order of the draw until the available budget has been allocated.

The processing of applications is expected to take approximately 8 weeks. Processing may take longer during holiday periods or if we receive a very large number of applications. Applicants will be notified at "My RCN Web".

















If the application is conditionally approved, applicants will receive a letter that may request additional information or require revision of the application. The applicant will be asked to provide a popular science summary presentation of the project in the revised application as well as provide any clarifications or updates

required.


The deadline for submitting the revised application is usually two weeks. Applicants may request an extension of this when necessary.

When an application has been approved for funding, we will issue a contract that can be accessed at "My RCN Web". The signed collaboration agreement with the degree-conferring institution and any other partners is to be uploaded as an attachment to the contract.

Download templates

	NAERINGSPH Mal for prosjektbeskrivelse 2023.docx	
	NAERINGSPH Template for Project Description 2023.docx	
	NAERINGSPH Partneropplysninger for bedrifter.docx	
	NAERINGSPH Information about the companies.docx	
	NAERINGSPH Bekreftelse på deltakelse i doktorgradsprosjekt.docx	
	NAERINGSPH Confirmation of participation in a doctoral project.docx	
	NAERINGSPH Egenerklaringsskjema for foretak.docx	
	NAERINGSPH Declaration Form for Undertaking.docx	

★ MANDATORY ATTACHMENT

Download all templates 

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