

# NordForsk Research Funding Guidelines

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## 1. NordForsk Research Funding Guidelines

The NordForsk Research Funding Guidelines describes the processes and routines for NordForsk calls and project management.

The processes and routines should support NordForsk main goal and subgoals:

*NordForsk is an effective facilitator of research collaboration that makes an impact, and ensures that the research is of high international quality and delivers Nordic added value.*

*NordForsk shall*

1. *Facilitate Nordic research collaboration*
2. *Enhance the impact of Nordic research collaboration*
3. *Ensure efficient and transparent management of NordForsk's activities and administration*

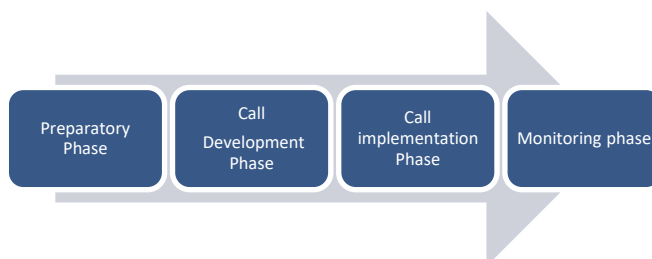
NordForsk's funding processes and call and project management should be open, transparent, responsible, and cost-efficient. The processes should have appropriate systems for ensuring compliance with national and international ethical standards and commonly accepted professional codes and norms, promote Open Science and Open Access, and promote gender equality.

The processes should facilitate for systematic collection of information and data necessary for statistical analyses and communication and dissemination activities.

## 2. NordForsk Calls

Each year, NordForsk allocates approximately 320 MNOK to both basic and applied research activities. Through open calls, NordForsk funds research activities that realises Nordic added value and are of the highest international quality. To apply for funding from NordForsk, applicants use the application system Insights. The grant proposals are subject to review by international experts, and Nordic experts in the respective Call Committees. Based on their assessment, NordForsk's Board makes final funding decisions.

NordForsk's call and project management can be divided into the following phases:





### **3. Preparatory phase**

NordForsk calls are generally developed in cooperation with the national research funding organisations through the Open Invitation mechanism (OI) where the national research funding organisations are invited to propose new Nordic calls. OI encourages and enables the national research funding organisations to set the NordForsk research agenda by working together to develop common expressions of interests. This ensures the involvement of the national research funding organisations in developing new initiatives as described in the NordForsk statutes: "NordForsk ska främst utforma initiativen utifrån de nationella forskningsfinansierande organens prioriteringar" (NordForsk Statutes, paragraph 2.1).

#### **3.1 The Open Invitation process**

The OI is a standing invitation to the national research funding organisations to submit expressions of interest to establish new initiatives in fields where they see a common basis for Nordic research funding cooperation. [More information on Open Invitation can be found here.](#)

#### **3.2 The role of the Administration in the preparatory phase**

The NordForsk administration should, at the initiative of any of the Nordic national research funding organisations or call committees, assist in any way possible in the development of expressions of interests. This includes, for example, acting as a "broker" and facilitate contact between relevant contact persons in the various organisations, organising meetings at the request of the organisations, organise and host seminars/workshops/conferences on particular themes should this be needed, and commissioning feasibility studies or the like on behalf of the organisations. National research funding organisations that would like to pursue an idea for a Nordic call, are encouraged to contact the NordForsk administration for advice on how to proceed, as a first step.

The OI process should result in an Expression of Interest with commitment from a minimum of three national research funding organisations to be submitted to the NordForsk Board.

The expected time frame for the process is 0,5 – 1 year.

### **4. Call Development Phase**

#### **4.1 Call Establishment**

The decision to establish a new call is made by the NordForsk Board, based on the Expression of Interest. The Board decides the allocation of NordForsk funding to the call, which can be from 0 to 1/3 of the total Nordic call budget. NordForsk funding can be allocated per year, or as lump sum at the beginning of the period. The Board decides to appoint a Call Committee and a Call Committee Chair.



## **4.2 Call Committee**

The Call Committee consists of a chairperson, and one member from each of the funding partners, and observers, if relevant. The Call Committee is expected to have competence in the thematic field of the call and to ensure that the Nordic initiative has a firm foundation in national priorities among the funding partners.

### **4.2.1 Appointment of a Call Committee**

Each of the funding partners are asked to nominate a representative for the Call Committee. If possible, to ensure gender balance, each funding partner should nominate two persons to the Committee, one of each gender. One of these should be appointed to the committee.

Candidates should have a mandate from the respective funding partner to execute the tasks of the committee. The appointment of the Call Committee members and observers is normally delegated from the NordForsk Board to the NordForsk Director.

The Committee Chair is appointed by the NordForsk Board and represents the Board, not one of the funding partners. Nominations for the Chair may come from the participating research funding organisations, from the members of the Board or from the administration. Special care should be taken to avoid situations where the Call Committee Chair is likely to have conflicts of interest.

- NordForsk Board members cannot be appointed Chair of any of the Call Committees but may be appointed as members or observers.
- Observers have access to all documents pertaining to the Call Committee, and have speaking rights, but no voting rights.
- If the Call Committee needs scientific advice in their work, this should be provided by expert groups that the Committee and/or the NordForsk Board can appoint, and not by increasing the membership of the Committee.
- If a Call Committee member or observer changes professional affiliation, the respective funding partner will inform the administration if a new member is to be appointed from the organisation.
- The Call Committee Chair receives an honorarium according to set rates and travel costs are covered by NordForsk. Call Committee members and observers cover their own travel and accommodation, and no honorarium is paid.

### **4.2.2 Mandate of the Call Committee**

The Call Committee is given a mandate by the NordForsk Board to supervise the implementation of the call and follow-up of funded projects and to give strategic advice to NordForsk in matters regarding the call and joint activities.

The Call Committee have different mandates pending on the category of decision:

- a) Funding decisions: The NordForsk Board makes the final funding decisions for a call, based on a recommendation from the Committee.
- b) Other decisions regarding research funding, such as size and orientation of a call, funding instrumentation (excluding decisions under a)): The Committee has the



mandate to make final decisions, as long as the decisions adhere to NordForsk's rules and guidelines.

- c) Decisions regarding budget for communication and dissemination activities, and individual actions such as conferences, workshops, feasibility studies, etc.: The NordForsk Director makes the decision based on a recommendation from the Call Committee.

#### **4.3 Call Framework Documents**

During the Call development phase, the NordForsk administration in dialogue with the Call Committee prepares the framework documents. This includes a Call Memorandum, Terms of Reference for the Call Committee, and a Memorandum of Understanding.

These documents set out the framework for the funding and management of the call, and define:

- the roles of the national research funding organisations and NordForsk
- the aims of the call
- the expected Nordic Added Value for the call
- the funding model to be used
- a description of the call and project portfolio management structure
- the research themes/thematic area of the call(s) for proposals, funding instruments and the main assessment procedures (e.g. one or two-stage calls)
- joint activities
- a plan for disseminating results from the project portfolio, including plans for knowledge exchange and stakeholder involvement.

The payment plan for the call is regulated in a Funding Agreement between NordForsk and each funding partner.

The following general guidelines always applies for NordForsk calls with a real common pot model:

- NordForsk Gender Policy
- Open Access Policy

For calls using the virtual pot funding model, national guidelines apply as specified by the call text.

##### **4.3.1 Funding instruments**

The Call Committee decides the instrument to be used. Instruments should be suitable to fulfil the aims of the call, maximising Nordic added value; and be feasible and cost-efficient for NordForsk to administer.

#### 4.3.2 Joint activities and dissemination

Funding will be reserved for

- Funding of research projects
- Administration and coordination
- Communication and dissemination

The Call Committee can allocate funding for joint activities (e.g. a kick-off meeting, conferences and workshops, or participation in international fora), and communication and dissemination activities, to consolidate and coordinate the call and projects, facilitate cooperation between the projects, and promote the Nordic added value created by the call and project portfolio. The allocation of funding to such activities must be specified in the budget. The NordForsk Director makes the formal approval of the allocation of funding up to 1 million NOK. For activities of more than 1 million NOK, the Board makes the formal approval of the allocation. Joint activities are organised by NordForsk with input from the Call Committee and should preferably be in collaboration with one or several of the granted projects, or one of the funding partners.

#### 4.4 Co-funding partners from outside the Nordic region

The following principles applies for co-funding partners from outside the Nordic Region when participating in NordForsk Calls:

- NordForsk can enter into collaboration with funding organisations/institutions etc. outside the Nordic Region when this is expected to result in high scientific quality and Nordic added value.
- NordForsk can act as a broker between national funding organisations in the Nordics and organisations outside the Nordics
- Minimum two Nordic countries must be involved in NordForsk collaborations with countries outside the Nordic Region
- Partners from countries outside the Nordic Region can participate in calls on equal terms as Nordic funding partners.
- The virtual common pot model is the preferred funding model for partners from outside the Nordics.
- Partners from outside the Nordics cannot receive "Nordic money" for gap filling in NordForsk funded projects.
- NordForsk should negotiate the possibility of a financial contribution to the NordForsk administration from the non-Nordic countries participating in NordForsk Calls.
- Regarding areas, themes or topics for possible collaborations, there should be no limitations as long as the planned collaboration is aimed at funding research of the highest international quality and realises Nordic added value. However, research underpinning the vision of the Nordic Council of Ministers of a green, competitive, and socially sustainable Nordic region, should be prioritised.



## **4.5 Preparing Calls**

### **4.5.1 Call text and call implementation procedures**

The NordForsk administration prepares the call text and the call implementation procedures in close dialogue with the Call Committee. The call text is binding, and the Call Committee and the NordForsk director must approve the call text before it is published on the NordForsk webpages.

The call text should contain all relevant information about who is eligible to apply, and how to submit proposals. Eligibility criteria must be clear and leave no room for interpretation as to whether they are fulfilled or not.

The call text should describe the background to the call and the thematic framework and aims of the call. The text must clearly describe the assessment process, including the responsibilities and tasks for the expert panel (mainly relating to different aspects of scientific quality) and the call committee (normally contributions to the aims of call, Nordic added value, open access and a strategic balancing of the total project portfolio). The financial framework is specified, as well as eligibility criteria and assessment criteria. Management and organisation (whom NordForsk will sign a contract with, how the funded projects will be monitored) must be specified. The call text must give information about contact persons in the NordForsk administration.

NordForsk will always include a disclaimer about the right to change the call text until 6 weeks before the deadline.

### **4.5.2 General terms and conditions for NordForsk calls**

The following principles apply for NordForsk calls unless other terms and conditions are specified in the call text.

- Proposals must be submitted electronically through the NordForsk Application Portal by the call deadline.
- All proposals must be written in English and follow the structure set out in the application form available on the NordForsk Call and Application Portal.
- The project consortium must include partners from at least three Nordic countries or Two Nordic countries and one of the regions Faroe Islands, Greenland or Åland.
- If a non-Nordic co-funds the call, partners from at least two Nordic countries must be included in the consortium.
- The project owner of the project must be a legal entity based in a Nordic country, or in a country that is a funding partner of the call.
- The project owner must be a research performing organisation. A research performing organisation is a legal entity which is a university, university college or an established research institute and is characterised by the following:
  - A primary goal is to independently conduct fundamental research and/or applied research and or research-based innovation where results are published.



- The entity may be private or public but must not pay out dividends from its activities.
  - The entity has a significant production of academic, published research.
- Project partners can include research performing organisations, public sector, private sector and third sector participants, pending on the purpose and objectives of the call and project. Any support awarded to an undertaking must be in compliance with EU rules on state aid. The respective national research funding organisation (funding partner to the call) is responsible to notify and report the funding in accordance with EU rules.
- The Project Leader must be a qualified researcher (PhD or equivalent) at the host institution.
- A researcher may only serve as a project leader for one application under each call. However, research institutions may be affiliated with more than one application.
- The proposal must include a signed Letter of Commitment from each partner institution. Letters of Commitment must be signed by a person authorised to take on financial commitments on behalf of the institution for the entire duration of the project.
- Funding is granted to Nordic research collaboration and Nordic added value is a mandatory assessment criterion.
- The projects must describe their plans for communication, knowledge exchange and interaction with key stakeholders beyond academia. The plan should make visible how the research-based knowledge will be used in collaboration with stakeholders to enhance practice and policy.
- Gender balance and gender perspectives in the research are to be accounted for in the proposal and assessment criteria (with link in the call text to [NordForsk gender policy](#)).
- Ethical aspects should always be considered.
- Projects are encouraged to have a data management plan complying to the FAIR Principles.

#### 4.5.3 Assessment criteria

Proposals to NordForsk calls will be assessed according to the following criteria unless otherwise specified in the call text:

- **Contribution to call aims**
  - The extent to which the proposed research is relevant to the aims of the call
- **Scientific quality**
  - Clarity and pertinence of objectives, research questions/hypothesis and project description
  - Soundness and credibility of concept and methodology
  - Potential to develop new knowledge beyond current state-of-the-art
  - Ethical considerations and how these will be handled
  - Consideration and integration of sex and gender perspectives, when relevant
  - Expected research results, societal relevance, and potential for impact



- **Nordic added value**
  - Potential to create benefits for the Nordic research environments through the research collaboration (achieving necessary critical mass, enhancing cost-effectiveness by sharing data and research infrastructure, mobility, competence building, enhancing scientific excellence, promoting new innovations and patents, building on unique Nordic strengths, phenomena, or data)
  - Complementarity of contributions from participating research environments/institutions
  - Potential to create benefits for the Nordic societies (providing a useful knowledge base for citizens, policymakers, practitioners, and other actors to create societal impact, addressing needs that are unique to the Nordic countries)
- **Quality of the research team**
  - Experience, expertise, and merits in relation to the proposed research
  - Complementarity of the participants and extent to which the consortium as whole brings together the necessary expertise
  - Gender balance or appropriateness of plans to reach gender balance
- **Feasibility**
  - Quality and effectiveness of the work plan, including extent to which resources are assigned in line with the objectives and deliverables
  - Appropriateness of the management structures and procedures, including risk management
  - Appropriateness of the allocation of tasks
- **Stakeholder involvement, knowledge exchange and Communication**
  - Appropriateness of plans for stakeholder involvement
  - Quality of plans for knowledge exchange and communication, including the extent to which such activities align with project objectives

The call text should specify which of the criteria are to be assessed by the expert panel, the Call Committee, or both.

#### 4.5.4 Financial framework

Unless otherwise specified in the call text, NordForsk funding can be used for:

- Salaries of researchers
- PhD and post-doctoral positions;
- Research-related costs (such as data collection and analysis, Open Access charges);
- Project-related costs (such as collaboration activities with project partners and stakeholders);
- Communication, dissemination and knowledge exchange activities;
- Travel/accommodation costs and mobility for the project partners;
- Travel/accommodation costs for other participants including stakeholders;



Indirect costs and overhead can be included. NordForsk does not apply any fixed rate or model for calculating indirect costs for research projects. Such costs should be determined by the applicant's institutions according to their rules and models, and applicants are advised to consult their respective institutions for further guidelines. The feasibility of the budgets will be assessed.

Partner institutions outside the Nordic countries may participate with their own funding. Salaries for applicants not affiliated to a research institution in the Nordic countries cannot be claimed as part of the project costs. However, travel and accommodation costs may be covered.

#### **4.5.5 Call specific criteria**

In dialogue with NordForsk and after approval from the NordForsk Director, the Call Committee can change the criteria or include additional criteria and requirements if necessary for implementation of the call aims or due to national requirements.

#### **4.5.6 National criteria**

For calls using a virtual common pot, national criteria apply as specified in the call text.

### **5. Call Implementation Phase**

Call implementation phase includes launching and closing of a call, the assessment procedure, and the administering of funding decisions.



#### **5.1 Launching a Call**

NordForsk calls are administered through Insights Grants and announced openly at least six weeks but preferable three months before deadline.

##### **5.1.1 Communication**

All calls are in addition to being posted on the [application portal](#), posted as a news item/article on the NordForsk website with a direct link to the call in the application portal.

##### **5.1.2 Pre-announcement**

NordForsk will announce the start of a new call when the Board has made their decision to support an Expression of Interest (EoI). When relevant, a pre-announcement is published in due time before the call is opened. This is done, when the call is not yet ready to be published, but there is enough information for researchers to start to plan their collaboration



constellations. Pre-announcements are to be recommended whenever possible to improve transparency.

## 5.2 Closing the Call

**Date and time stipulated for deadlines are absolute and final, and no one is automatically entitled to an extension. 1 pm Oslo time is the deadline unless otherwise stated in the call text.**

Applicants are themselves responsible for ensuring that they have adequate time to complete and submit grant applications.

The deadline can be extended due to technical problems with the NordForsk application portal. If the deadline is extended because of problems with the NordForsk portal, all those who has created a draft application and are likely to submit an application must be informed in writing. Technical problems on the side of the applicants will not lead to individual extension of the deadline.

Applications cannot be amended after the submission deadline has passed, unless it concerns amendments needed because of errors that are clearly clerical or technical.

## 5.3 Assessment of proposals

The NordForsk administration executes an administrative check and eligibility check of applications to verify that all technical and formal issues are in order and that the application is eligible to the call. For calls using a virtual common pot model, the national funders must execute the eligibility check to verify that the national eligibility criteria are fulfilled. Eligibility decisions, and possible rejections based on ineligibility, should be completed no more than three weeks after the application deadline. Applicants found ineligible can file a complaint in accordance with the NordForsk Complaints Procedure.

Eligible applications are forwarded to assessment. Normally the proposals are assessed by peer review by panels of non-Nordic experts. Only assessment criteria that were stipulated in the call text can be used in the assessment of proposals.

### 5.3.1 Planning an assessment process

NordForsk assesses proposals using international peer review. The following principles underlines the assessment processes in NordForsk:

- Competence: The reviewers should have proper and adequate competence in accordance with the themes and objectives of the call.
- Objectivity and equal treatment: All assessments shall be carried out in an equivalent manner and be based on the quality of the proposal. To avoid any conflict of interest or partiality, assessments shall be based on clear quality criteria and formalised processes.
- Ethical considerations: The experts shall not carry out any preliminary ethical review but should take into account how the applicant discusses the research and formulates the research question with regard to good research practice.



- Openness and transparency: The assessment must be based on rules and guidelines set in advance and publicly known.
- Efficiency: The total resources used in the application and assessment, in terms of both time used and cost, shall be minimised for all involved, i.e. applicants, subject experts and NordForsk administration, with consideration for maintaining quality, objectivity, transparency and appropriateness for purpose.
- Conflict of interest: the reviewers cannot have vested interest in the applications or close relationship with applicants (consult [NordForsk guideline on Impartiality](#)).
- The panel's gender composition should be in line with the NordForsk gender policy.

The peer review process should be adapted to the call and the research area and shall be proportional to the size and complexity of the call, but as a baseline NordForsk prefers the use of panels, as this is an efficient and reliable method of processing applications. Ideally, panels should include expertise adequately covering all applications to the call. If this is not possible, NordForsk may recruit single individual experts in addition to the panel.

The NordForsk administration is responsible for appointing experts. The Call Committee should provide suggestions for suitable peers.

If a rebuttal-phase is included in the call, the use of individual experts on all applications combined with a subsequent panel assessment must be applied.

The experts used in peer review in NordForsk should preferably be researchers from outside of the Nordic region.

All experts should be asked to declare conflicts of interest before the panel composition is finalised. In addition, each expert will have to declare that (s)he has no conflicts of interest in Insights when the review is submitted.

The minutes from the panel meeting should include an item on conflicts of interest and how any conflicts of interests were handled (i.e. a particular referee left the room during the assessment of a particular proposal).

The Norwegian Public Administration Act, chapter II "Concerning disqualification" applies to all employees, experts and members of the governing and advisory bodies of NordForsk. These rules have been adapted to the needs of NordForsk.

### **5.3.2 Panel meeting**

The expert panel and a panel Chair are appointed by the NordForsk administration for each call. Preferably each proposal will be read by three panel members prior to the meeting. The expert panel will deliver a joint written statement (panel statement) of each proposal, and an overall rating using a scale 1-7 (1=poor; 2= weak, 3= fair 4= good, 5= very good, 6= excellent, 7= outstanding). Normally, proposals rated 4 or below by the expert panel will not be considered for funding by the NordForsk Board.

### **5.3.3 Call Committee meeting**

The Call Committee should assess the Nordic added value and the overall strategic value of the proposals and other criteria as specified in the call text. Based on this assessment, and the



expert panel assessment, the Call Committee make their recommendation of projects to be funded. If the Call Committee decides to recommend funding for projects that have a lower or same score as projects that are rejected, the committee must provide a reason for its recommendation with reference to criteria in the call text.

The result of the Call Committee meeting should be a funding recommendation to the NordForsk Board, documented in the minutes of the meeting.

#### **5.3.4 Administration of funding decisions**

After the Call Committee has met, the NordForsk administration prepares the recommendations from the Call Committee for decision in the NordForsk Board. The decisions will normally be made in the NordForsk Board meetings. If there are more than five weeks to the next Board meeting when the Call Committee recommendation is ready for decision, the decision can be made by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the NordForsk Board on delegation from the NordForsk Board.

For calls using a virtual common pot funding model, the NordForsk Board makes the decision for the NordForsk part of the budget. The national funders make their decisions according to their respective procedures and regulations.

#### **5.3.5 Announcing the funding decisions**

After the funding decision (s) have been made, the NordForsk administration communicates the NordForsk Board's funding decision to the applicants, via Insights. Applicants also receive the joint written statement (panel statement) concerning their application. Rejected applications should receive information about the NordForsk complaints procedure. The information sent to the applicants after funding decision should include the panel statement, and brief information about the committee's assessment.

Funding decisions and relevant statistics for the call are announced on the NordForsk website as soon as possible after decisions have been made.

### **6. Entering contracts with funded projects**

Funding allocations from NordForsk are always carried out in accordance with a contract. The contract sets out the terms and conditions for the use of the research funding and establishes the parties' rights and obligations with regard to the implementation of the project.

Following a funding decision made by the NordForsk Board, or the NordForsk Director (for projects up to 1 million NOK), NordForsk enters into contract with the Project Owner of granted applications.

Contracts are based on a standard template. The contract consists of an agreement document and all attachments. [NordForsk's Standard Terms and Conditions of Contract](#) constitute an integrated part of all contracts. The version of the Standard Terms and Conditions of Contract that was in force when the applicant applied for funding will be applicable for the entire project period.



For some projects, revisions to the project plan or project budget are required before the contract can be signed. The deadline for signing the contract is one month from the date the contract was received by the project leader. The project partners must sign a cooperation agreement governing the relationship as well as respective rights and obligations. The first payment for the project will not be transferred before NordForsk has received a copy of the signed cooperation agreement from the Project leader.

For Calls with a virtual common pot funding model, each of the national funders enters into contract with their respective national partners. NordForsk enters into contract only with the Project Owner. NordForsk's Standard Terms and Conditions of Contract for virtual pot applies.

## **7. Monitoring Phase**

### **7.1 Joint activities**

See 4.3.2. Joint activities are organised by NordForsk with input from the Call Committee and should preferably be in collaboration with one or several of the granted projects, or one of the funding partners of the call.

### **7.2 Changes of the project plan and contract**

#### **7.2.1 Changes of the project plan and contract for projects administered by NordForsk**

Substantial deviations from the Project Plan/Research Plan and/or other matters regulated by the contract shall immediately and without undue delay be notified to NordForsk. Changes in account information must be verified by the project owner.

#### **7.2.2 Changes of the project plan and contracts for projects funded by a virtual common pot and administered by the national funders**

For projects funded under calls with a virtual common pot, the national project leaders are responsible for notifying the relevant national funders according to the specifications in the national contracts. The national project leader is responsible for ensuring that the project partners are notified of substantial deviations and changes for the project. NordForsk should promote a good dialogue within the Call Committee, ensuring that all relevant national funders and NordForsk are notified of any substantial deviations via the national contact person.

### **7.3 Annual reports**

All NordForsk funded projects are required to submit an annual progress report via the webportal/Insights and an impact report via the Researchfish webportal. The annual progress report in Insights is mainly to monitor deviations from the contract. The aim for the annual impact report is to monitor the outputs and outcomes from the projects. The project leader is responsible for submitting the reports. Generally, unless other agreements are made, the deadline for the annual progress report and the impact report is 31 March. In some cases,



NordForsk may need additional reports on progress or status. This is also stated in the contract and is part of the Standard Terms.

#### **7.3.1 Researchfish – impact reporting**

All NordForsk projects use the same template for impact reporting via Researchfish. Information regarding the Researchfish platform is [found here](#).

#### **7.3.2 Annual reporting for projects administered by NordForsk under a real common pot funding model**

The annual progress report should be submitted via the web portal/Insights, using the standardised form for progress reports. The project leaders will receive an automatic notification from Insights 60 days before the progress report deadline and get access to the standardised form.

Some older projects and specific cases do not use the standardised form. If there are changes in the project plan, payment plan, or budget, the responsible adviser must change the information accordingly in Insights.

The Call Committee is informed about the progress reports after they have been approved. They will receive written information about the highlights, achievements, and relevant challenges of the projects, and be given access to the progress reports.

#### **7.3.3 Annual reporting for projects funded under calls with a virtual common pot**

The project leader is responsible for reporting the overall progress of the project to NordForsk. All reporting should be submitted via the web portal/Insights, using the standardised form for progress reports. The Project leaders will receive an automatic notification from Insights 60 days before the progress report deadline and get access to the standardised form.

The national project leaders/partners may also be required to submit progress reports also to their national funder according to the national rules and regulations. In these cases, the approval of national reports and disbursement of funding will be done by the national funder, unless other agreements have been made.

NordForsk will inform the Call Committee on the overall progress of the projects in the first Call Committee meeting following the annual deadline 31 March. They will receive written information about the highlights, achievements and relevant challenges of the projects and be given access to the progress reports.

#### **7.4 Mid-term evaluations**

Projects with a period of five years or more may be subject to a mid-term evaluation. Funding for the latter project period may be dependent on the positive results of this mid-term evaluation.



### **7.5 Final reports**

The final report must be submitted to NordForsk at the latest three months after the completion of the project period via the application portal and via the Researchfish webportal, using the standardised forms for final reports. The Project leaders will receive an automatic notification from Insights and Researchfish 60 days before the final report deadline and get access to the standardised forms. Unused funds must be reimbursed to NordForsk according to the NordForsk Standard Terms and Conditions of Contract.

For projects funded under calls with a virtual common pot, the projects are required to submit final reports also to their national funder according to the national rules and regulations.

### **7.6 New calls**

The national funders can suggest new calls through an Expression of Interest (EoI) to the NordForsk Open Invitation mechanism. The NordForsk administration will facilitate the process of making an EoI, if requested by one or more of the national research funding organisations. See chapter 3.

### **7.7 Ending a project portfolio under a call**

When the period of a project portfolio under a call is over and the final reports have been approved, NordForsk will provide the Call Committee with a final report in accordance with the financial agreement and MoU.