

# Circular Cities & New Circular Solutions

## description

The Nordic Innovation call for proposals “Circular Cities & New Circular Solutions” is our two-fold effort to challenge Nordic cities, companies, public bodies, industries, NGOs and other stakeholders to team up for new high-impact projects and to develop new circular solutions.

Nordic Innovation aims to accelerate the transition to a circular economy in the Nordic countries and further develop the Nordics as agile frontrunners within the circular economy. Furthermore, we are working concretely to help to achieve the Nordic Prime Ministers’ vision of making the Nordic region the most sustainable, integrated region in the world by 2030.

Nordic Innovation is seeking projects that have the potential to generate high-impact, clear and scalable results and substantial Nordic added value. Projects where joint Nordic circular innovation can provide solutions to local, regional and global challenges are encouraged.

The call for proposals covers the two following areas:

1. **Circular Cities: Public-private collaboration & Nordic cities as frontrunners in circularity**
2. **New circular innovations, products, services and processes**

The areas may overlap, but applicants should state the main area of their project in the application.

For the full Circular Cities & New Circular Solutions call text and all related documentation, see [www.nordicinnovation.org/programs/call-proposals-circular-cities-new-circular-solutions](http://www.nordicinnovation.org/programs/call-proposals-circular-cities-new-circular-solutions)

## CALL FOR PROPOSALS – CIRCULAR CITIES & NEW CIRCULAR SOLUTIONS

### Join us in seeking a circular and sustainable future

The Nordic Innovation call for proposals “Circular Cities & New Circular Solutions” is our two-fold effort to challenge Nordic cities, companies, public bodies, industries, NGOs and other stakeholders to team up for new high-impact projects and to develop new circular solutions.

**Application deadline:** 26 March 2020 at 13.00 CET  
**Funding decision:** 30 April 2020  
**Total budget:** NOK 15 million

The text of this call may be subject to change until mid-January 2020.

### Background

The Nordic Prime Ministers have decided on a new vision for Nordic cooperation. The Nordic countries are to become the most integrated, sustainable region in the world by 2030, emphasising green (circular and biobased), competitive and socially inclusive societies. The Nordic countries have the strongholds needed to be frontrunners in the circular economy. However, there are still issues to resolve in order to reach the climate targets and Sustainable Development Goals, especially number 12 (Sustainable production and consumption) and 13 (Climate Change).

The challenge is translating talk into action. There are many strategies, and this call is designed to enable cooperation actions that can turn these strategies into concrete solutions to help reduce the CO<sub>2</sub> footprint, reduce and optimise material use, promote innovations and implement new business models.

This call for proposals addresses two of the four action areas that currently make up Nordic Innovation's Nordic Sustainable Business Transformation programme (<https://www.nordicinnovation.org/circularnordic>). The programme is one of Nordic Innovation's three thematic programmes for the period 2018-21. A total of NOK 60 million has been allocated to the programme.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this call is to initiate the establishment of Nordic innovation projects, new Nordic partnerships, value chains and/or business models in the field of ***Nordic Sustainable Business Transformation – Circular Cities and New Circular Solutions***. Nordic Innovation aims to accelerate the transition to a circular economy in the Nordic countries and further develop the Nordics as agile frontrunners within the circular economy. Furthermore, we are working concretely to help to achieve the Nordic Prime Ministers' vision of making the Nordic region the most sustainable, integrated region in the world by 2030.

### **Funding**

Total budget: Nordic Innovation has allocated NOK 15 million to this call for proposals. Funding may be sought for both small- and larger-scale projects (0,5-3 million).

- The funding will be given in the form of a grant.
- Nordic Innovation reserves the right not to use the entire allocated budget.
- Own contribution of minimum 50 % applies.

Project duration: Maximum 24 months, starting contractually latest June 2020. The planned kick-off for the projects is June 2020.

### **About the programme and thematic scope of the call**

*Nordic Sustainable Business Transformation is about the transition to a circular economy in the Nordic countries.* The term "circular economy" refers to dynamic systems, meaning there is no specific end point, but rather a process of transformation in resource management and closed material cycles. We seek a broad and new approach, where the aim is to transition to a circular economy. *Nordic Sustainable Business Transformation* is also about business development, innovation, entrepreneurship and value creation in this field.

Applicants seeking funding should aim to increase competitiveness in Nordic companies and boost the Nordic circular economy through **achieving one or more of the following outcomes:**



- Speedier transition to a circular economy in the Nordic countries.
- Strengthened Nordic ecosystems and value chains in the circular economy.
- Nordic cities and regions as frontrunners in shaping and implementing circularity.
- Development of new, innovative Nordic circular solutions.
- Increased global market opportunities for Nordic circular economy solutions.

The Nordic Sustainable Business Transformation programme is cross-sectoral. **Under this call for proposals, Nordic Innovation is seeking projects that have the potential to generate high-impact, clear, scalable results and substantial Nordic added value. Projects where joint Nordic circular innovation can provide solutions to local, regional and global challenges are also encouraged.** We seek circular projects that boost added value and spark innovation by combining and building on Nordic strongholds using existing or new circular solutions. This includes innovative Nordic circular concepts and solutions that are ready for global markets.

This call for proposals covers the two following areas:

- 3. Circular Cities: Public-private collaboration & Nordic cities as frontrunners in circularity**
- 4. New circular innovations, products, services and processes**

The areas may overlap, but applicants should state the main area of their project in the application.

### **Area 1: Circular Cities: Public-private collaboration & Nordic cities as frontrunners in circularity**

Nordic Innovation aims to support projects that will help speed up the transition to the circular economy, and thus to more resource-efficient societies in the Nordic region. To adapt to and manage technological changes and future needs, Nordic Innovation is looking for projects that will bring about systemic change and collaboration, optimising the way resources are owned and used – a system that considers users (both consumers and businesses), operators (of both physical assets and services), owners, financiers, as well as regulators. **We wish to challenge Nordic cities, companies, public bodies, NGOs, regulators and other stakeholders to collaborate and develop concrete new solutions and processes in city and/or regional environments.**

**Typical areas of interest include but are not limited to:** industrial and urban symbiosis, construction, city resource management & closed material cycles as well as Nordic circular city networks/ecosystems. The projects should lead to acceleration of the circular economy in the Nordics by creating new business opportunities and solutions.

### **Area 2: New circular innovations, products, services and processes**

A transition to a circular economy requires new business models and innovative products and designs that make use of non-toxic materials that can be endlessly cycled. Areas of interest include new circular materials, technologies, pilots and collaborations that have the potential to transform our societies. As such, the projects are to ensure that future production processes or innovations will reduce the environmental impact towards carbon neutrality, as well as boost the competitiveness of Nordic industry with regards to sustainable products, solutions and services.

Proposed projects can span across all sectors. Projects should promote a Nordic society that is more circular, more resource-efficient, more climate- and environment-friendly, for the benefit of all



Nordic citizens. We are seeking initiatives that would have potential for high-impact, clear results and scalability.

### **Communication:**

Speeding up the transition to a circular economy will require raising general awareness and communication of success stories. Projects should therefore include information and plans for communication and branding in their project plans as well as a plan for how they expect to leverage the results and impact of the project.

### **Who can apply**

Companies (SMEs and larger companies), public sector organisations (e.g. infrastructure owners, regulators, procurers, innovation ecosystems), cluster organisations, business networks or research institutions may apply. Please note that the involvement of industry and the direct benefit of the project for companies in the Nordic region will be part of the evaluation criteria. We are looking for consortia that show ambition, complementary strengths, competence and experience with cross-border activities.

As we emphasise the significance of active participation of problem and technology owners, consultancies should not take the role as project owner or project leader.

Applicants seeking to build a strong Nordic base/consortium for future EU projects on the circular economy are also invited to participate in this call.

Consortium partners from countries outside the Nordic region are welcome to participate, but only partners from the Nordic countries can receive funding from Nordic Innovation. Only Nordic partners will count towards the requirement of participants from minimum three Nordic countries.

### **General eligibility criteria**

Only projects that meet all the following general eligibility criteria will be eligible for funding:

- The project must include partners from minimum three Nordic countries, preferably as many Nordic countries as possible. The balance between the countries should be reasonable.
- Nordic Innovation requires co-funding of minimum 50%, in the form of direct funding or in-kind contributions (working hours). The total share of any in-kind contributions must be reasonable and well-balanced. The co-funding requirement applies to the project as a whole and not individual partners.
- The project period cannot exceed 24 months.
- Technology Readiness Level (TRL) 6 or higher: (if applicable)

TRL 1 – basic principles observed

TRL 2 – technology concept formulated

TRL 3 – experimental proof of concept

TRL 4 – technology validated in lab

TRL 5 – technology validated in relevant environment (industrially relevant environment in the case of key enabling technologies)



TRL 6 – technology demonstrated in relevant environment  
TRL 7 – system prototype demonstration in operational environment  
TRL 8 – system complete and qualified  
TRL 9 – actual system proven in operational environment

- Only applications submitted through Nordic Innovation’s application portal will be accepted.
- All applications must be within the scope of this call.

### **De Minimis Aid obligations**

It is a requirement that all grants from Nordic Innovation comply with the aid rules of the European Union and the Agreement on the European Economic Area (The EEA Agreement). However, organisations under The Nordic Council of Ministers were given new guidelines for State Aid as of 2019, and these apply a.o. to Nordic Innovation.

The support offered is granted in compliance with Commission Regulation (EC) No 1407/2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de minimis aid, published in the Official Journal of the European Union L 352 from 24.12.2013.

Grants from Nordic Innovation comes from the five Nordic governments and a Nordic undertaking is allowed to receive up to € 200,000 of de minimis aid from each of the Nordic Countries. Consequently, a Nordic company can receive up to 1,000,000 EUR over a rolling period of three fiscal years from Nordic Innovation under the de minimis regulation, given that the company has received no grants as De Minimis Aid prior to this grant.

### **Eligible costs**

Working hours, travel costs, meeting costs, communication, external services.

Nordic Innovation’s approved hourly

rate:<http://nordicinnovation.org/Documents/Attachments/Nordic%20Innovation's%20approved%20hourly%20rate.pdf>

### **Ineligible costs**

- Basic research
- Investments in individual companies
- Independent freelance activities
- Writing applications
- Costs for procurement of equipment
- Overtime costs
- Salary increases
- Indirect taxes and duties, including VAT
- “Return on capital employed”, including dividends and other distributions of profits
- Provisions for possible future losses and charges
- Costs related to any interests



- Provisions for doubtful debts
- Unnecessary or ill-considered expenses
- Marketing, sales and distribution costs for production and services
- Leasing costs (or part thereof) where the leasing arrangement has the effect of unnecessarily increasing the charge made to the project (e.g. where the cost without interest of the leased equipment is higher than if purchased).

## **Evaluation criteria**

All applications/project outlines will be evaluated based on the following four criteria:

### **A. Impact (30%)**

- Business level: Nordic Innovation seeks projects with the potential to create high-impact for Nordic companies, in terms of business opportunities and sustainable growth, more innovation, entrepreneurship or access to new markets.
- Nordic level: Applicants should describe the Nordic added value of the project (why will it be advantageous to carry out the project at Nordic level as opposed to e.g. at national or local level).
- Societal level: Applicants must clarify how the projects will address joint societal challenges or relevant Sustainable Development Goals (e.g. 12, 13). The projects should also have a potential for positive impact for Nordic citizens – and beyond.
- Exit strategy: All applications must demonstrate how they intend to ensure the sustainability of the project results and impact creation after the project has ended.
- Visibility: Nordic Innovation will prioritise high-impact projects with a high potential for visibility. Describe how the project and its results will be disseminated or given visibility.

### **B. Quality and relevance (25%)**

The project must show quality and relevance in regard to:

- Nordic Innovation's mission: To contribute to sustainable growth, increased entrepreneurship, innovation and competitiveness for Nordic companies.
- The topic Circular Cities & New Circular Solutions as described in this call.
- Cross-sectoral innovation within the topic of circular solutions.
- Describe the concrete innovative result and the innovative aspects of the project (new concept, process, business model, product or service) – of relevance to the call text.
- Describe how the project addresses real market needs.

### **C. Competence and implementation (25%)**

- The consortium must demonstrate necessary and relevant implementation capacity and competence. The role, competence and responsibility of all project partners must be described, including the key role they play in implementing the project and/or the results of the project. Short CVs (1/2 page) may be attached.
- The Nordic added value and synergies created through the consortium as a whole must be described.



- Project partners should preferably have experience with international cooperation projects.
- The project plan and management should be realistic, well-structured and clearly defined.
- The involvement of Nordic businesses and industries must be described.

#### **D. Budget and value for money (20%)**

- The total budget and cost structure must be reasonable, realistic and in line with the ambitions of the project.
- A high degree of own investment in the project will be assessed positively as it demonstrates commitment to the project.
- Is the project financially viable and does it provide good value for money?
- A budget template will be available on Nordic Innovation's website. This must be attached to the applications.
- How will the project be financially viable after the support period from Nordic Innovation.

#### **Application process and other requirements**

All applications must be submitted via the application portal on Nordic Innovation's website. All questions regarding this call for proposals will be answered through a "Frequently Asked Questions"-section on Nordic Innovation's website. The answers will be uploaded continuously.

Deadline for asking questions is **5 March 2020**.

Questions regarding this call may be submitted to: Marthe Haugland [mah@nordicinnovation.org](mailto:mah@nordicinnovation.org) Hanna Törmänen [ht@nordicinnovation.org](mailto:ht@nordicinnovation.org)

Please note that the short summary of the project (re application form) may be published.

Applications should be written in English.

#### **Evaluation procedure**

All applications will be evaluated by 1) A Nordic Innovation team and 2) An external Nordic evaluation panel with representatives from both the private and public sector. The final funding decision lies with Nordic Innovation. All proposals will be evaluated according to the evaluation criteria described in this call text.

#### **Communication and reporting**

Funded projects should always acknowledge the support of Nordic Innovation in external communication (media, presentations, websites etc.). Furthermore, [Nordic Innovation's logo](#) must be visible in all communication material related to the project.

Communication material should as a main rule be based on the [Nordic Council of Ministers' design manual](#) unless something else is agreed upon in the final contract. When using social media Nordic Innovation (Twitter: @nordicinno #circularnordic and LinkedIn: Nordic-Innovation) should be tagged and mentioned.

A reporting template will be provided. Reporting will take place in accordance with the requirements of Nordic Innovation's standard contract (link: What we support). Furthermore, Nordic Innovation will establish regular contact with the successful projects to ensure visibility and support. A communication plan for the project should be presented.

