

CALL FOR SUPPORT TO CROSS - SECTORIAL NORDIC NETWORKS IN BIOBASED ECONOMY WITH FOCUS ON NORDIC CHALLENGES OF BIOMASS UTILISATION AND LANDUSE FOR BIOMASS PRODUCTION.

The primary objective of the Nordic Joint Committee for Agricultural and Food Research (NKJ) is to contribute to promote and coordinate a knowledge-based agriculture and food sector in the Nordic countries. To meet this end, NKJ encourages and provides support to joint Nordic cooperation within agriculture and food research, including forestry and fishery.

SNS is a co-operating body financed with Nordic funds under the auspices of the Nordic Council of Ministers. The overall purpose of Nordic Forest Research (SNS) is to promote research into the diverse functions of the forests in sustainable forestry, as well as to advise the Nordic Council of Ministers on questions concerning forests and forest research.

This is a joint network call from the Nordic cooperation organisations Nordic Forest Research (SNS) and Nordic Joint Committee for Agricultural and Food Research (NKJ). The aim of the joint call is to promote international cross-sectorial collaboration among researchers and stakeholders from the forest and agricultural sectors by networking activities. The Networks will form a platform for communication and assessing challenges, knowledge gaps and opportunities in the areas of utilisation of biomass and land-use for production of biomass in the scenario of transition to a greater bio-based economy. The networks will work together to address challenges and goals of the Nordic Bioeconomy Initiative 2013-2018 and the Nidaros Declaration (http://nkj.nordforsk.org/copy2_of_NBIstrategydocENG.pdf).

A bio-based economy (bioeconomy) can be defined as an economy based on:

- The sustainable production of biomass to enhance the use of biomass products within a number of different sectors of society. The objective is to reduce negative climate impacts and the use of fossil-based raw materials.
- Increased added value for biomass materials, concomitant with a reduction in energy consumption and recovery of nutrients and energy as additional end-products. The objective is to optimize the value and contribution of ecosystem services to the economy.

As the sustainable use of resources and the utilisation of by-products/waste from one sector by another sector is an important part of a bioeconomy.

Specific examples for this could be:

- Use of recycled material in and from both sectors
- Sustainable application of fertilisers: optimal input with least harm for maximum output
- Nurseries and reproduction of plants / trees for sustainable biomass resources
- Mitigating Climate Change by sustainable biomass production
- Bioenergy
- Chemicals & other bi-products to be refined from biomass from both sectors
- Biomass distribution and land-use (Food production vs biomass production for other use)

One essential goal of the Nordic Bioeconomy Initiative is to foster interdisciplinary cooperation and establishment of networks across sectors.

The Nordic Bioeconomy Initiative is focused primarily on Nordic collaboration, but cooperation with other regions, such as the Northwest Atlantic region, Europe and the Baltic Sea region, is encouraged as well.

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The call is announced jointly by the Nordic Forest Research Co-operation committee –SNS and Nordic Joint Committee for Agricultural and Food Research- NKJ. Deadline for application submission is Sunday, April 26, 2015 at 24.00 CET.

Who can apply?

Researchers at research institutions in the Nordic (*) countries are eligible to apply. Stakeholders should be involved, but cannot be main applicants.

(*) Nordic is defined here as Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and the autonomous areas, Faroe Islands, Greenland, and Åland Islands.

Call description

The aim of the joint NKJ-SNS network call is to increase Nordic synergy in research and innovation between the Agro-food-forest-energy sectors by networking, workshops, seminars and joint utilisation of unique research facilities.

Regional synergy can be described as activities that are carried out on national level, but through collaboration, considerable positive effects can be reached on a wider regional scope.

Applicants are encouraged to:

- have PhD students and young researchers participating in the network
- build a network with an even gender distribution (aim: 40-60% gender balance)

Scope

The applications should besides contributing to the Nordic Bioeconomy initiative also contribute to the strategic goals of NKJ (<http://nkj.nordforsk.org/no>) and SNS (<http://www.nordicforestresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/SNS-Strategy-plan-2014-2017.pdf>).

SNS and NKJ share a common goal of supporting research in sustainable development.

Economic framework

Network grants are for 1-2 years of activities.

The total budget for the call is 800,000 SEK.

- The applied amount per network should be approx. 100.000 – 250.000 SEK/year
- A self-financing component of at minimum 50% of the total budget of the network is required and has to be described in the application.

- The funding should primarily be spent on networking activities such as travel and meeting costs, and related networking cost, e.g. costs of guest lecturers, printed material, database costs or website cost (excl. hardware)

Cost-efficiency: We encourage applicants to ensure that the cost-per-person in the network application is reasonable. In addition to physical meetings we encourage applicants to make use of other means of meeting, e.g. video-conferences and web-based meetings to reduce travel costs.

Call conditions

- Applications must include research groups from at least three Nordic countries (or autonomous areas).
- The network should be cross-sectorial including both the sectors of SNS and NKJ. Involvement of Stakeholders is encouraged and will add value to the application.
- Participation from the Baltic States, Arctic and North-west Atlantic countries can be eligible providing the participation of at least 3 Nordic countries are fulfilled.

The network should have a plan for communication activities, and a publishable output of its topic/area is expected for publication in Nordforsk News, SNS 'News & Views' and 'www.NBForest.info'. SNS uses "Policy Briefs" as a tool for communicating research outcomes and network activities on a popular scientific level to the public and the Nordic Council of Ministers. These briefs are excellent to spread research activities and results to a broad public audience. Thus, the communication plan should include the commitment to write and submit a policy brief ([Template brief \(SNS and NB Forest\)](#)) together with the final report.

Applications must be submitted by email using the application form to the SNS secretariat (bodeker.sns@slu.se, see application form). Applications must be submitted in English. The currency in the applications should be Swedish Crowns.

Schedule

- The call is announced January 26th 2015 on SNS/NKJ websites and by mailing lists.
- Applications must be submitted no later than 24.00 CET on April 26, 2015.
- Decisions will be made in June 2015 and communicated to applicants in July 2015.

Evaluation and selection process

The applications are assessed by 3–5 appointees by the members of the SNS and NKJ boards. The evaluation criteria are described below.

The secretariats of NKJ and SNS compile the results of the evaluations and prepare a joint proposal. Based on the proposal a decision on the selection is made at SNS and NKJ Board meetings.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Quality of the application

- Are the planned activities clearly described?
- Does the network have a working program /clear aim of activity?

Economic framework

- Is the self-financing component 50% in limits of the total budget of the network?
- Is the additional funding for non-Nordic participants documented?
- Is the requested budget necessary for the implementation of the project and is it properly justified?
- Is the activity in line with the amount applied?
- Is the amount applied inside the funding frame?

Expected outcome

- Does the network produce a publishable output of its topic/area?
- Does the activity aim to produce other outputs, e.g. a EU project application or another large-scale application, organising an open conference, infrastructure services (e.g. database, dissemination activities)?
- Does the network commit to submit a policy brief in the final report?

Relevance

- Is the activity/topic relevant to the objectives of the call text and SNS and NKJ strategies and Nordic Bioeconomy Initiative?
- Does the activity increase regional synergy in the Nordic and North European regions?

Composition of the network

- Does the activity involve three Nordic countries?
- Does the network involve young researchers / PhD students?
- Does the network have an even gender balance?
- Does the network involve stakeholders?

REPORTING AND ECONOMIC GUIDELINES

SNS/NKJ networks are expected to provide Policy briefs according to the instruction provided on the SNS website (see above and <http://www.nordicforestresearch.org/sns-research/networks/>).

Reporting and economic guidelines for funded networks can be downloaded from the SNS website

(www.nordicforestresearch.org) and will be communicated directly to successful applicants by email.