

Ocean Mission: Co-locate for Economy and Sustainability

Nordic Innovation is calling for proposals for an ocean mission to *co-locate for economy and sustainability*. With this ocean mission, we want to encourage cross-sectoral and co-located activities in Nordic seas.

Quick facts

What are we looking for?

Nordic consortia that through projects carry out various activities with the aim to promote multi-use at sea.

Available funding:

3 x 2 million NOK

Key criteria:

- Consortium of partners from at least three different Nordic countries
- 50% co-funding by project partners
- No basic research

Submission Deadline:

22 February 2024 at 23:59 CET

Funding decision:

March 2024

Project Period:

May 2024 – May 2025 (possible extension until September 2025)

Background

This Ocean Mission is part of the Sustainable Ocean Economy program at Nordic Innovation. The aim of the program is to make the Nordic region a frontrunner in the development of a sustainable ocean economy. As we near the halfway mark of the United Nation's Ocean Decade, questions related to the ocean, marine environments, or the blue economy have risen higher on the international agenda.

The ocean is vital to the economies of the Nordic countries, providing livelihoods, trade, and natural resources that significantly contribute to the prosperity of our region. An initial mapping of strongholds of the Nordic ocean economy revealed many competitive advantages which we can harness through innovation. At the same time, the health of our oceans has deteriorated in recent years, threatening the industries that depend on marine areas.

With this in mind, the Sustainable Ocean Economy program was tailored to focus on the sustainable utilization of ocean biomass, cross-sectoral and co-located activities at sea, and Nordic Ocean Testbeds. Within these focus areas we have already initiated several innovative projects, connected stakeholders across the Nordic region, and increased the visibility of Nordic solutions for the sustainable ocean economy.

This Ocean Mission is concentrated on cross-sectoral and co-located activities. Here, the overall idea is to use scarce marine spaces more efficiently and sustainably by conducting activities from different sectors in the same place, at the same time. Such harmonious co-location could be beneficial not

only from a financial standpoint, but also in an environmental sense. This approach – often called “multi-use” – could also create synergy effects for the various industry actors involved. An example could be a wind turbine with an aquaculture installation at its base, where some of the power generated by the wind is used to meet the energy needs of the aquaculture unit. In a broader sense, multi-use could alleviate conflicts of interest at sea, lower costs through shared infrastructure and services, and increase innovation and collaboration throughout value chains.

While the logic of co-located activities at sea is clear, there are still few real-world implementations. Recent EU projects have resulted in valuable pilot installations, but the number of full-scale platforms with demonstrated economic viability is limited. Moreover, it remains unclear how the co-location concept ought to be applied across the Nordic region and its large and varied marine areas.

Our aspiration with this Mission Call is to shape a future where multiple marine activities can thrive side by side, while simultaneously enhancing the health and vitality of the Nordic ocean environment. The mission approach underscores our dedication to a more prosperous, inclusive, and sustainable ocean economy.

What we are looking for

We are looking for Nordic consortia that are interested in actively contributing to our mission of realizing multi-use at sea. The selected consortia will have 12 months¹ to carry out projects that contribute to the mission. These projects may include, but are not limited to, activities such as product development, business plan development, promotion, life-cycle analysis, or testing – in essence, any activity, process, or amalgamation thereof that promotes sustainable, viable, and scalable solutions for co-located activities at sea. This call is centered on innovation; hence, research projects are excluded from its scope.

We want to foster innovation projects that enable cross-sectoral and co-located activities at sea. The projects can lead to new products, partnerships, business models, or value chains. Regardless of the output, the projects should enhance sustainability, entrepreneurship, and competitiveness in the Nordic ocean economy. However, project activities can take place outside the Nordic region if the project as a whole adds value to the Nordic region.

With this Mission Call, Nordic Innovation wishes to spotlight the program’s aim of making the Nordics the most sustainable Ocean Economy in the world. Therefore, the chosen project partners must demonstrate the value of engagement for Nordic Innovation and describe how Nordic Innovation will be a part of the project. The contribution, involvement, and support of Nordic Innovation must be evident in all project communication. The proposal must describe how this will be achieved.

In general, we are looking for industry involvement and benefits for Nordic businesses, as well as consortia that show ambition, possess complementary strengths, and demonstrate competence. Applicants seeking to build a strong Nordic base for future larger projects (e.g., EU-funded) on ocean economy are also invited to participate in this call.

We endeavor to fund innovation projects that are distinct from each other and address different aspects of multi-use at sea. Ideally, the three project consortia should have different geographic distributions of partners.

¹ Please see section below on “Project Period”.



Nordic Added Value

Nordic Innovation's activities are to promote cooperation between stakeholders across the Nordic borders and Nordic Innovation engages only in activities holding the potential for creating a Nordic added value.

Nordic added value is created when cross-border cooperation between actors generates more value than would be the case by only working nationally. This needs to be demonstrated in the project proposal as we are looking for projects that maximize the impact of Nordic cooperation. Furthermore, Nordic Innovation will only fund projects that encourage results that would not otherwise (without funding from Nordic Innovation) be possible or take place.

Funding

Through this Mission Call, Nordic Innovation will fund three projects with up to 2 million Norwegian kroner (NOK) each.

Nordic Innovation requires at least 50% in co-funding from project participants. This can be direct funding (capital), in-kind contributions (working hours) or a combination thereof. Consequently, in this call, if Nordic Innovation funds a project with 2 MNOK, the co-funding of that project shall be no less than 2 MNOK. This means that the total project budget for such a project will be no less than 4 MNOK. The composition of the co-funding must be demonstrated in the proposal. Nordic Innovation's budget template must be filled out and submitted with the proposal.

Nordic Innovation may request a full accounting of costs during and after the project period.

Who can apply?

A consortium of partners headed by a Nordic Lead Partner.² The consortium must consist of partners from at least three different Nordic countries.³ Consortium partners from non-Nordic countries are welcome to participate, but only partners from Nordic countries can receive funding under this call.

The project partners can be:

- Companies (SMEs and larger companies)
- Clusters, business organizations, and facilitators
- Academic institutions and foundations
- Public entities (e.g., ports and municipalities)

Project Period

It is anticipated that the Project is carried out and completed in 12 months. Under special circumstances the project period can be extended to 18 months, e.g. due to biological constraints. If the project period will be longer than 12 months, it shall be articulated in the proposal.

Eligibility criteria

Only project proposals that meet all the following eligibility criteria will be considered for funding:

- A. The proposal must be correctly submitted electronically within the given deadline.
- B. The proposal must be valid until 1 April 2024.

² The Lead Partner must be a legal entity registered in one of the Nordic countries.

³ The Nordic countries are Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, the autonomous territories of the Faroe Islands and Greenland and the autonomous region of Åland.



- C. The proposal shall be in English.
- D. The consortium must consist of partners from at least three different Nordic countries. The consortium must be headed by a Nordic Lead Partner.
- E. The proposal must be signed by the Lead Partner.
- F. A signed Letter of Intent from all project partners shall be included.
- G. The proposal shall include a project budget demonstrating at least 50% co-financing of the total project costs. Nordic Innovation's budget template [LINK] must be used.

Evaluation criteria

All proposals that meet the formal requirements will be evaluated by an expert panel. The evaluation will be according to the following criteria:

Impact (40%)

- How will the project help realize the Ocean Mission, as well as the program's agenda, Vision 2030 for the Nordic Cooperation, and the Sustainable Development Goals?
- How will the project benefit the Nordic region and increase the competitiveness of Nordic businesses?
- What is the potential economic impact on industries within the Nordic ocean economy?
- What is the Nordic Added Value of the project and its initiatives (i.e., what is the benefit of carrying it out at the Nordic level rather than the national or regional level)?
- How will impact and results be sustained after the project period?

Competence, relevance and implementation (30%)

- Are the project activities and the project management realistic, well-structured, and with measurable outcomes?
- What is the competence of the consortium to carry out the project activities? Please note that a wide geographic and sectoral distribution of partners will be considered positive.
- What is the project's relevance to the Nordic region and are real needs in the market?
- How will Nordic businesses and industries be involved in the project?

Value for money (30%)

- What is the level of co-financing and commitment of project partners?
- Is the total budget and its cost structure realistic and in line with the proposed activities?
- To what extent will funding from Nordic Innovation enable activities that would otherwise not have been carried out in the same manner?

Submission

Proposals must be submitted by e-mail to info@nordicinnovation.org and labelled *Ocean Mission*. The deadline for submitting a proposal is **22 February 2024 at 23:59 CET**.

Funding Decision

The final funding decision will be made by Nordic Innovation no later than at the **end of March 2024**.

Information regarding the funding decision, including an abstract of the projects funded, will be published on Nordic Innovation's website.

Nordic Innovation may reject all proposals if the result of the evaluation procedure gives reasonable grounds for doing so.



Questions and further information

During the Mission Call period, Nordic Innovation will organize webinars and other events to publicize and describe the purpose and approach of the mission call. These events will be announced on the program's website: <https://www.nordicinnovation.org/programs/sustainable-ocean-economy>

Questions regarding the call can be sent to Emil Gejrot (emil.gejrot@nordicinnovation.org). The deadline for submitting questions is **8 February 2024**.

All relevant and frequently asked questions will be answered in a FAQ section on Nordic Innovation's website.

Miscellaneous

Those submitting proposals under this Mission Call are responsible for ensuring the inclusion of all necessary information and meeting all requirements specified. Proposals or other information received after the submission deadline will not be taken into consideration.

The submitted proposal shall consist of:

1. A single pdf file consisting of:
 - a. Proposal Document using the provided template, [LINK]
 - b. Gantt chart or similar timeline outlining key deliverables and milestones, and
 - c. Short CVs (½ page each) for key project participants.
2. A Budget using the provided template, [LINK]

The project currency must be Norwegian kroner (NOK). This applies to the Contract, the Budget, project accounts, disbursements from Nordic Innovation, and all project reporting.

Nordic Innovation will offer a contract to the Lead Partner of the selected project proposals. The contract will be between Nordic Innovation and the Lead Partner. It is the Lead Partner who is responsible for the running of the project on behalf of the consortium. [Nordic Innovation's standard terms and conditions](#) will be a part of the project contract.

A final report and project accounts shall be submitted to Nordic Innovation no later than three months after completion of the project.

