Handbook for the Nordic Nuclear Safety Research Programme (NKS) - Guidelines for NKS applicants and activity leaders

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1 Information for applicants

In this handbook, guidelines for applicants and activity leaders of NKS projects are provided.

1.1 Who can apply?

Organisations such as universities, research centres, institutes and companies in the Nordic countries can apply for NKS funding for research activities. The NKS funding for an activity should be split between organizations from at least three Nordic countries (funding of organizations from only two Nordic countries has been accepted in the NKS-R programme). Non-Nordic participation in NKS activities is possible, but NKS funding for non-Nordic organisations will not be provided. The activity leader must come from a Nordic country (i.e. work for a Nordic organisation).

1.2 What kind of activities could be funded?

NKS funds work related to nuclear safety, including emergency preparedness, radioecology, measurement strategies and waste management, considered to be of importance to the Nordic community. The work should be of interest to the owners and financing organisations of NKS. The results must be of relevance, e.g., practical and directly applicable. The work can be in the form of scientific research, including experimental work, or joint activities producing seminars, workshops, courses, exercises, scientific articles, technical reports and other type of reference material. Examples of research topics can be found in the NKS framework programme for NKS-R
and NKS-B http://www.nks.org/en/nksb/call_for_proposals/nks-b_framework_2025.htm.

1.3 Requirements for NKS activities

The proposal shall fulfil the following requirements:

- The proposed work must fit with the current NKS framework programme.
- Active participation of all partners to the execution of the activity.
- NKS funded participation of organisations, according to the NKS evaluation process criteria.
- Results of NKS activities are publicly available for free.
- The own funding from participating organisations must cover a minimum of 50 % of the activity's costs.

1.4 Criteria for evaluation of applications

The assessment of the scientific quality of the applications is made based on four basic criteria:

1. Scientific/Technical quality and novelty (20% weight)
2. Merits/Competence of the applicants (the project group) (20% weight)
3. Feasibility (20% weight)
4. Relevance to NKS (40% weight)

The purpose of using several criteria is to achieve a multi-faceted assessment. For each criterion, there are guiding questions to support the assessment of the application.

1. Scientific/Technical quality and novelty

An assessment of the scientific and technical quality of the project.

a. How high is the technical/scientific quality of the proposed work?
b. To what extent does the proposed project address important challenges in relation to existing knowledge?
c. To what extent is the project structured so that it can result in significant progress in addressing these challenges?
d. To what extent are the objectives novel and original?
e. To what extent does the project involve development of novel concepts and approaches, or development between or across disciplines?

2. Merits/Competence of the applicants (the project group)

An assessment of the merits and competence of the applicants in relation to the proposed project.

a. How significant is the scientific/technical competence impact and other merits, in a national and international perspective of the applicants, in relation to the research area and their career age?
b. To what extent do the applicants have the required scientific and technical expertise and capacity to successfully execute the project?

3. Feasibility

An assessment of the feasibility of the proposed project.

a. To what extent is the outlined scientific and technical approach feasible?
b. To what extent are the proposed methodology and working arrangements (including access to infrastructure, equipment and other resources) appropriate to achieve the goals of the project?
c. To what extent are the proposed timescales, resources and participants commitment adequate and properly justified?

4. Relevance to NKS

An assessment of the NKS objectives (as described in the NKS Framework programme, *NKS-DOC-3*).

a. Does the project application include organisations in different Nordic countries? Generally, the more Nordic countries involved the better.
b. To which extent will the proposed activity increase competence in the Nordic countries or build networks between the Nordic countries?
c. Does the proposal aim to facilitate the way that related challenges are dealt with in the Nordic countries (e.g., by creating common Nordic solutions or reference materials)?
d. How well does the proposal address challenges that are of relevance for the NKS end-users? If the proposal is relevant to a larger number of end-

users and/or it addresses a great need to specific end-users, it merits a higher mark.

1.5 What is needed to be done in return for the money

The activity partners are requested to report the work carried out each year. The most common type of output is a scientific report at the end of the year. A report with clear results is requested even if the activity continues the next year. Other forms of reporting can be for example presentations and proceedings from a seminar. All material produced must be available for publishing on the NKS webpage, where final reports and possibly other materials may be downloaded by anyone for free.

1.6 NKS financing

The NKS funding is granted for one year at a time. Generally, an activity will not receive more than 600 kDKK per year from NKS. The first 50% of the contribution is paid when an activity is started and the rest 50% when the final results of one year's work are available and approved by NKS. The first part of the funding can be invoiced when a funding contract has been made between NKS and the activity leader. If the Activity Leader fails to submit a final report to the NKS Programme Coordinator, the NKS Board reserves the right to cancel the latter 50 % of the NKS funding.

1.7 Language

The main working language in NKS is English. Applications for NKS funding as well as final reports and other material should be submitted in English. However, each working group determines its own language for meetings.

1.8 How to apply?

It is up to the applicants themselves to find collaboration partners in the Nordic countries. The programme coordinators can help with getting into contact with Nordic organisations. NKS seminars are good places for networking. More information on ongoing research and all the published reports are available on the NKS website.

NKS funding is announced in the annual Call for Proposals. It is usually organised in September - October. All the necessary information, material and instructions are distributed on the NKS website. The Call for Proposals is also announced in the NKS electronic newsletter. The applicant is requested to fill in an application form. A voluntary annexe with further details about the proposal may also be handed in. Detailed instructions on how to fill in the application form will be available when the Call for Proposal opens. The applicant is encouraged to read these instructions carefully.

The applicants should demonstrate that at least half of the necessary funding of the activity in question will be supplied by the participating organisations. In other words, the participants are expected to put in the same amount of money

in the project as they are applying from NKS. These contributions may be work hours, travel expenses, etc.

Please note that all funding by NKS includes possible VAT.

1.9 What happens next?

Proposals received before deadline are evaluated against the requirements by the NKS programme Coordinators. Projects fulfilling these requirements are then evaluated against the criteria in section 1.5 by appointed reviewers. Each proposal will be given marks based on how well the proposal fulfils the NKS criteria. Based on the evaluation results and the available budget, the Programme Coordinatorsmake a suggestion for the next year's NKS-R and NKS-B programme. The suggestions are discussed at the January board meeting and the final decision of successful applicants is made by the board. The programme managers inform the applicants of the outcome as soon as possible after the board meeting.

1.10 Subscribe to NKS News

Ensure that you will not miss any important information (regarding e.g. call for proposals or interesting seminars, workshops, etc.) by subscribing to NKS News at: www.nks.org.

1.11 Useful links

Please find use of the following links:

- NKS webpage
- Information about NKS
- Owners and supporting financiers of NKS
- The NKS-B programme
- The NKS-R programme
- Information about the Call for Proposals, NKS-B programme
- Information about the Call for Proposals, NKS-R programme
- NKS Seminars
- NKS Reports
- Travel support for young scientists: NKS-B, NKS-R

2 Information for activity leaders

2.1 Contract

The Activity Leader will shortly after the Board's grant decision receive a contract template from the coordinator of the relevant NKS Programme, which is to be filled in with the information on the activity deliverables or stages of work to be done, *always* including the submission of a final activity report (normally by the end of the funding year). In the contract template, the Activity Leader must also include a budget for each of the various activity partners, in line with the Board's decision. The contract is valid when signed by an authorised representative of the Activity Leader's organisation and by the relevant NKS Programme Coordinator.

The NKS Programme Coordinator will have provided the contract template with a reference number (format: AFT/{R or B}({year}) {serial number}). This reference number is the identifier of the activity, and must be stated in all official management documents concerning the project (contracts, invoices, etc.). Contracts are generally for one year's work, and further continuation of activities is subject to submission and approval of a new proposal. The NKS reserves the right to reduce or cancel the funding in case of breach of the contract or deadlines stated in the contract.

2.2 Invoices

When the contract is duly signed by both parties, the Activity Leader should inform the participants that they can invoice NKS for 50 % (1st half) of their total contractual amount. When the work has been completed and the final report of the activity has been approved by the Programme coordinator, the Activity Leader should inform the participants that NKS can be invoiced for the remaining 50 % (2nd half) of the amount. Invoices must be received within 6 months after the approval of the report. If NKS has not received the invoice within the 6 months, the organization voids the right of remuneration.
All invoices are to be addressed to the NKS Secretariat, but sent, preferably by pdf attachment to an email, to the relevant Programme coordinator (NKS-R or NKS-B).

2.3 Activity progress reporting and communication

If deviations are foreseen from the agreed activity work schedule, the Activity Leader must immediately notify the Programme Coordinator so that any problems may be solved and contingency plans implemented if necessary. On request, the Activity Leader is also obliged to inform the Programme Coordinator of the state of progress at various stages of the activity.

2.4 Progress documentation if applying for continued funding

If participants in an activity wish to apply for funding for continuation of the activity, they need to document significant progress with the ongoing work (e.g., in relation to declared milestones and deliverables) in connection with the application for continuation.

2.5 Advertisement of dissemination activities

Events like seminars, workshops, courses and exercises connected to NKS activities need to be advertised timely and efficiently to be successful. NKS Programme coordinators can help Activity Leaders in advertising these, e.g., through NewsFlashes sent to subscriber lists and posted on the NKS internet site http://www.nks.org/en/news/subscribe_to_our_newsletter/ as well as descriptions on the NKS 'upcoming seminars' page https://www.nks.org/en/seminars/upcoming_seminars/upcoming_seminars.htm. It is however the responsibility of the Activity Leader and partners to plan and execute all aspects of the activities. Seminars should generally be open and not held exclusively for a closed circle of participants.

2.6 Travel support for dissemination activities

NKS particularly encourages participation of young scientists in NKS events to maintain a high level of competence in the longer perspective, and can offer travel support for this purpose (http://www.nks.org/en/nksr/travel_assistance/). All other costs for NKS in connection with NKS activities are to be covered by the amount approved in the contract.

2.7 Final reporting of the activity

All NKS activities, regardless of their nature, must produce a final report that should be in the standardised NKS report format (see template/instructions: report template). All material reported by an activity in each year is to be contained in **one final report**. The report should be submitted in due time as stated in the contract (see section 2.1).

Please note, that where an activity is anticipated to continue for more than one year, a final report is expected to be delivered after each year of the activity as funding cannot be guaranteed for continuing activities. The final report for each activity year must contain distinct and discrete deliverables of value to the NKS user community.

Note that Activity Leaders must also supply a filled-in bibliographic datasheet (http://www.nks.org/en/this_is_nks/administration/) together with the final report.

Final reports from research activities or exercises aimed at filling knowledge gaps or developing methodologies should be in line with standards expected for scientific publications. Final reports from exercise activities in the form of intercomparisons or proficiency tests should seek to address any discrepancies or problems highlighted by the exercise, to increase knowledge and competencies where necessary. Final reports from seminar or workshop activities should contain extended abstracts from each presenter as well as a final overview of any discussions and conclusions. Presentation slides should not be presented in final reports. Final reports for educational and training courses should contain relevant course documents presented as well as feedback from participants. The conclusion of any NKS activity (and thus the final payment) is subject to the approval of the final report by the Programme coordinator. In addition to the final report, activity participants are encouraged to disseminate activity results (with due credit to NKS) in scientific journal articles as well as at conferences, seminars and workshops with appropriate acknowledgement to NKS for financing. The Programme coordinator in charge of the activity should be notified of any dissemination efforts.

The final report will be formally registered at the NKS and through the international library network. Printing costs of modest paper reports can be covered centrally by NKS (there is no need to use the activity funding for this), but printing of more sophisticated reports (e.g. thick reports using color figures) may

need to be included in the budget of the activity. Information about possible printing costs can be obtained from the NKS Secretariat.

2.8 Internet hosting of NKS activity material

All final reports of NKS activities are hosted on the NKS internet site (http://www.nks.org/en/nks_reports/). In connection with NKS events like seminars and workshops it is encouraged that the Activity Leader seeks the permission of the participants to publish presentations (slides) on the NKS internet site (http://www.nks.org/en/seminars/presentations/presentations.htm). Also information on other available software (e.g., as downloads) or hardware generated by NKS activities can be hosted on the NKS internet site (http://www.nks.org/en/nksb/supporting_material/). For further information contact the relevant Programme coordinator.