

Nature-based solutions in the Nordic region: Funding for national pilot projects

As a part of the programme *Nature-based solutions in the Nordic region*, the Nordic Council of Ministers is funding pilot projects that can develop new projects or further develop existing nature-based solution projects in the Nordic countries. The purpose is to gain practical experience and new knowledge about implementing nature-based solutions in the Nordic region.

The projects will be launched at the beginning of 2022 and will be closely monitored by an external observer until the end of 2023, where the results from all the projects will be compiled and published in a report. At the end of 2024, it is expected that any updated results will be sent to the project coordinator, who will publish any further results. It is not necessary for the pilot projects to be completed by the end of 2024, but funding from the programme will not go beyond this. Applications can be valid for one, two or three years.

Nature-based solutions:

Nature-based solutions are defined as being: "Actions to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural or modified ecosystems that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, simultaneously providing human well-being and biodiversity benefits." (IUCN and IPBES Nature Panel). Nature-based solutions are based on ecosystems' own ability to provide services that we humans benefit from, such as limiting the impact of climate change on communities and infrastructure by, for example, regulating water supply, water flows and water quality and reducing the heat effect in cities. They can also capture carbon and reduce emissions.

Nature-based solutions are assessed as a central part of the work for climate, environment and biological diversity and the benefits have several facets. Nature-based solutions can for example also constitute sustainable use of land and resources, protection and restoration of coasts, pastures, forests, peatlands and wetlands or recirculation or opening of rivers and streams. Researchers believe that nature-based solutions can contribute a third of the reduction in greenhouse gases needed to ensure that global warming does not exceed the two degrees described in the Paris Convention. Climate adaptation is also very important to reduce landslides and erosion, reduce floods and droughts or increase the resilience of ecosystems and the sustainable use of natural resources. Nature-based solutions also help to reduce the loss of biological diversity, and in addition it has been proven that these solutions have a positive impact on several societal conditions such as food and water security and human well-being.

Nordic co-operation is an effective tool in the ambition to make the Nordic countries the most sustainable region in the world by 2030. As part of this work, the Nordic Council of Ministers has allocated a total of DKK 26 million to a four-year programme on nature-based solutions in the Nordic region. The programme consists of five work packages, which will run from 2021 to 2024. The first work package started in 2021 and will result in a synthesis of experiences and knowledge about nature-based solutions in the Nordic region. The second work package in the programme deals with national projects and will be launched in January 2022. In this connection, it is now possible to apply for funding for projects that involve implementation of nature-based solutions in the Nordic region. The plan is to have between 10 and 15 cases in the various Nordic countries covering a broad range of ecosystems.

Purpose

The purpose of this delivery is to test new initiatives of nature-based solutions in the Nordic countries. This is done by collecting information on what works and what does not work when it comes to implementation of projects and dissemination of examples and methods between different Nordic countries. The results will be used in other projects in the program to develop general guidance for successful implementation of nature-based solutions across countries in the Nordic region.

Desired results

The pilot projects should result in either:

- Practical experience with methods for establishing nature-based solutions - for sharing in the Nordic countries.
- Testing of nature-based solutions that are well known in one Nordic country and less well known in another Nordic country, or
- New knowledge and innovation regarding the planning, implementation, barriers and driving forces, follow-up, upscaling, socio-economic assessments or other results from nature-based solutions in the Nordic region.

The projects should lead to improvements for biodiversity while limiting gas emissions, reducing pollution or contributing positively to climate adaptation, food supply or other societal challenges. The projects can for example be linked to work with blue and green infrastructure. They can be in all different ecosystems, both in cities and rural areas, coastal, mountain and inland. It is desirable that the projects test the IUCN's

Global Standard for Nature Based Solutions to ensure that both biodiversity and climate / climate adaptation are taken into account.

Expectations for the pilot projects

It is expected that the project managers deliver a short annual report and a final report with results from the individual projects. For more information see: [About funding from the Nordic Council of Ministers | Nordic co-operation \(norden.org\)](#). The projects must also collaborate with the external observer, who during the course will ask questions in order to compile results from the projects in a comprehensive report. Project managers will be asked to provide photos, video and other material (e.g. maps and illustrations) that can be used for communication material (e.g. collection, photos, website or fact sheets) to share experiences and results. This must be submitted to the program coordinator. In addition, the project managers are expected to participate in at least one digital workshop / gathering to share experiences with other pilot projects in the programme.

Application assessment

The steering group will ensure a breadth in the overall assessment of projects both regarding ecosystems and geographical location. In addition to coastal, sea and Arctic areas, there is also a desire to have projects in forests, agriculture, wetlands and mountains. The goal for this delivery is to cover as many Nordic countries including the islands, as well as several different types of nature-based solutions, which is why the prioritization and selection of applications will take place based on these requirements. The steering group reserves the right to reject applications that are not considered to meet the basic criteria or, if necessary, to prioritize between projects in order to achieve the required variation in both geography and ecosystems. It will be seen as an advantage for applications with some degree of self-financing or other external financing of the proposed project.

Application

The application must contain the completed application form, the budget form and an attached project description. By submitting an application, you approve that Umhvørvisstovan and the Nordic Council of Ministers process the application as well as any personal information in the application electronically.

Applications should be sent to jonao@us.fo by Friday, December 17, 2021. Attach a signed version of the application in PDF format.

[File Application.](#)

Who can apply?

Municipal, regional or national authorities, universities and colleges, research institutes and other non-profit organizations and voluntary member organizations (NGOs) can apply for grants. Business enterprises may not be the main applicants and recipients of funding, but may, for example, be included as project participants, participate in the project group or be a project executor on behalf of the project owner.

Which countries can be included?

The purpose is to follow the implementation of nature-based solutions in the Nordic region, and the aim is for all the Nordic countries to be included in the sub-initiative. There is no requirement for cooperation between several countries for the individual projects. Funding is available in the following countries: Denmark, Finland, the Faroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and the Aland Islands.

What is emphasized in the assessment of applications?

When the steering group assesses applications, great emphasis is placed on that the project:

- Has a well-thought-out project-organization that is expected to lead the project from start to finish.
- Is related to the national environmental goals of the Nordic countries.
- Both can mean an improvement for biological diversity and at the same time be good for climate or other societal challenges.
- Diversity in the overall initiative both in terms of ecosystem and geographical location.

Multi-year projects

It is expected that the projects will run for one, two or three years over the years 2022-2024, but it is important to note, that the funding is only provided for one year at a time. For budgetary reasons, it will be an advantage if the main delivery is in 2023. However, if special circumstances arise, it is possible to deviate from this premise and pay more in 2022. It is mainly intended that the projects should run from 2022 to 2023, but an extension can be applied for until 2024.

Funding is provided for much - but not everything

Funding can be given for the initiation of new projects or as a contribution to already established projects where there is potential for new experiences or new knowledge. The projects can be funded with DKK 200,000-900,000 over up to three years. Emphasis is placed on new thinking in context - that is, new thinking can consist of developing something that has already been described or tested in one country or ecosystem, to a new context, for example another country or ecosystem. The application must not be aimed at research funding. Research applications must be addressed to the Nordic Council of Ministers' Department for Education and research, or directly to the Nordic institution NordForsk or the Nordic Innovation Center.

More info

Further information is available by contacting: Coordinator Jóna Ólavsdóttir, jonao@us.fo, +298 234345
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Also read the guidelines that apply to funding from the Nordic Council of Ministers' co-operation for Environment and Climate: [About funding from the Nordic Council of Ministers](#)

And the IUCN criteria for nature-based solutions: [IUCN Global Standard for Nbs | IUCN](#)) [IUCN Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions : first edition | IUCN Library System](#)