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Centre for Research-based Innovation – SFI V – Phase 1

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Financial scheme: Research Centre

Application deadline: 18 September 2024, 13:00 CEST

Relevant thematic areas for this call: Innovation

Target groups: Research organisations

Funding scale: NOK 50 000 000-96 000 000

Amount of funding presumed available for this call for proposals:

NOK 768 000 000

Project duration: 60-96 months

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Important dates

22 Apr 2024: Webinar SFI call for proposals - questions and answers

More information: <https://www.forskningsradet.no/arrangementer/2024/webinar-sfi-utlysing-2024/>

07 Aug 2024: Open for applications

18 Sep 2024: Application deadline

MID-DECEMBER 2024 :

The decision on which applications will be invited to apply in Phase 2 will be published

PLANNED MAY-JUNE 2025 : Application deadline for Phase 2

Purpose

The purpose of this call is for applicants to qualify to submit a full application to the call [Centre for Research-based Innovation – SFI V – Phase 2](#). The objective of the SFI scheme is to promote innovation by supporting long-term research through close collaboration between R&D-intensive enterprises and prominent research organisations.

SFI aims to strengthen the innovation capacity of Norwegian trade and industry through research that addresses long-term needs, challenges and future opportunities for value creation. Research is to be conducted in effective, long-term collaboration between research organisations and companies, preferably also in collaboration with the public sector. The research must be at a high international level and provide a basis for innovations and increased value creation in Norwegian trade and industry.

Call for proposals

Application results

SHORTCUTS

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About the call for proposals

Funding is available for up to eight new centres starting late in the second half of 2025. This call for proposals is Phase 1 of a two-phase grant application process.

- Phase 1: Short application (5-page project description + 1 page of references).
- Phase 2: Complete application (20-page project description + 1 page of references). Phase 2 is only open to applicants who progress from Phase 1.

What objectives must the centres meet?

The SFI scheme aims to contribute to strengthening the innovation capacity of the industry sector through research that responds to long-term needs and challenges identified by the sector. The centre will contribute to developing an industry sector with competitiveness in a low-emission society and sustainability with regard to climate, environment and society. The centres must have a positive or neutral effect on the green restructuring of Norwegian trade and industry.

The SFI scheme contributions:

- The results of the research are to provide a basis for innovations and

increased value creation in Norwegian trade and industry and/or increased efficiency and good services in the Norwegian public sector.

- Through cooperation with leading research institutions and access to high-quality research, the industry sector must achieve increased competitiveness nationally and internationally.
- The centres are to increase the internationalisation of Norwegian trade and industry and research organisations, among other things through strong national and international research networks and value chains.
- The centres are to contribute to master's and research training to meet competence needs in industry and the public sector.

Facilitating the use of research results by trade and industry and the public sector for innovations requires a high degree and genuine involvement of partners in the centre. It also requires that the centre has expertise in the field of innovation. Innovations based on research results from the centres are expected to be followed up by the centre's partners in separate activities, initiatives and projects.

Centres for research-based innovation must comply with [the Requirements and guidelines for Societal and Industry-oriented Research Centres](#) (pdf).

The call text is available in both Norwegian and English. The Norwegian call text is legally binding.

Phase 1 of the application process

Phase 1 is an open call for proposals. The objective is to select up to 30 applications that best meet clear, identified needs from the industry sector and are best assessed according to the assessment criteria used at this stage of the call. The project description must include only the points described in the attached template.

The user partners must describe their motivation for participating in the centre and their plans for involvement, including financial contributions, either in the form of own contributions or cash contributions. This must be described in a letter of intent attached to the template.

Who is eligible to apply?

Approved Norwegian research organisations may apply in binding cooperation with partners from other research organisations, trade and industry and the public sector.

See here for the list of [approved Norwegian research organisations](#) and the [definition of public sector](#).

Private companies and any public actors shall participate as partners, referred to as user partners.

Who can participate in the project?

Requirements relating to the Project Owner

- The Project Owner must be an approved research organisation.
- The research organisation listed as the Project Owner in the application

form must have approved submission of the grant application.

- The Project Owner (organisation) submits the grant application on behalf of all partners.

Requirements relating to the project manager

- The project manager (centre director) must document experience from managing large, complex projects.
- The Project Manager must be employed by the Project Owner or one of the partners.

Requirements relating to partners

- The centre's research is to be conducted by research organisations in binding cooperation with relevant actors from Norwegian trade and industry and the public sector. For a more detailed description of collaboration and roles, see the document [Requirements and guidelines for industry- or society-oriented research centres](#).
- The grant application must reflect the strategic objectives of all partners.
- The centre must have three or more funding partners that are not research organisations; these are referred to as *user partners*. It must always be with private companies as user partners. The centre may also have foreign user partners. It must be documented how any foreign user partners will contribute to achieving the centre's goals.
- All user partners must participate actively in funding and research, and must have a substantial innovation activity of their own and the ability to exploit research results in the development of their activities
- All partners must actively contribute to the planning, follow-up and dissemination of results from the centre, and to ensuring that new knowledge is utilised.
- The centre will have a board where the majority of the members and the chairman come from the user partners.

What can you seek funding for?

Scope of funding

User funding included in the centre may not be used as business funding for other Research Council-funded projects at a later date. This also applies to user financing provided during the centre period.

- You can apply for funding to cover actual costs that are necessary to carry out the centre's activities. You will find detailed and important information about what to enter in the budget on the Research Council's website.
- You can apply for from NOK 50 to 96 million spread over eight years. 3/8 of the Research Council's funding shall be budgeted over the the last three years of the centre period. The centre will be assessed underway in the project period. Based on recommendations from the assessments of the centre, the Research Council may make new conditions in the contract for the centre's activities during the last three years of the project period.
- The Research Council's total funding may not exceed two times the amount of funding from the user partners. Both cash financing and financing in the form of the user partners' own work effort in the centre (so-called in kind) will

be included in the user financing. Experience shows that it is an advantage if there is a certain balance between the proportion of "in kind" and the share of cash financing from user partners.

- In addition to funding from user partners, the Project Owner and other research partners in the centre may contribute own funding, but this is not a requirement. It is not possible to use funding from other Research Council funded projects as part of the funding from the host institution and research partners.
- It is not possible to use funding from the Research Council to cover project costs incurred by user partners.
- Research stays abroad for PhD candidates at the centre and stays for visiting researchers in Norway must be covered within the framework of the project during the project period.

You will find detailed and important information about [what the budget should contain](#) on the website.

Please note that it is only possible to enter a budget up to and including the year 2031 in the budget tables in the application form. The budget for the application for the years 2031, 2032, 2033 and, if applicable, 2034 is summed up in the column for 2031.

Conditions for funding

We will not award state aid under this call. We assume that the research is carried out through effective collaboration as defined in the state aid rules:

"Collaboration between at least two independent parties to exchange knowledge or technology, or to achieve a common objective based on the division of labour, where the parties jointly define the scope of the collaborative project, contribute to its implementation and share its risks, as well as its results. One or more parties may bear all the costs of the project, thereby relieving other parties of financial risk. Contract research and provision of research services are not considered forms of collaboration."

The following guidelines apply:

- Support to the research organisations in the centre goes to the organisations' non-economic activity. Thus, it does not constitute state aid. The Research Council requires that the necessary accounting separation is in place.
- Companies will not be eligible to receive support to cover project costs. Business actors and others who are to be regarded as undertakings in the sense of state aid law will not be reimbursed for any of their costs associated with participation in the centre.
- Rights to project results are to be regulated in such a way that companies participating in the centre do not receive indirect state aid from participating research partners. The regulation of rights must therefore be in line with paragraph 29 of the EFTA Surveillance Authority's guidelines on state aid for research and development and innovation. This means that rights to IPR from the project must be allocated to the various partners in a way that adequately reflects their work packages, contributions and respective interests.

The Research Council's requirements relating to allocation and disbursement of support for the first year, and any pledges and payments for subsequent years, are set out in our [General Terms and Conditions for R&D Projects](#), which can be found in their entirety on the page [What the contract involves](#).

If you are granted the project, the following must be in place before you enter into a contract with us:

- From 2022, all grant recipients that are research organisations or public sector bodies (Project Owners and partners) must have a [Gender Equality Plan \(GEP\)](#) available on their website. The requirement does not apply to private businesses, special interest organisations or the voluntary sector.
- The Research Council requires full and immediate open access for scientific articles; see [Plan S - open access to publications](#).
- For all projects that handle data, the Project Owner must prepare a data management plan in connection with the revised grant application. [Here you will find more information about requirements for data management plans in projects that receive funding from us](#).
- The Project Owner organisation is responsible for selecting which archiving solution(s) to use for storing research data generated during the project. This must be specified in the project's data management plan.

Reporting and disbursement of funding

We will disburse the support in arrears. For more information about funding, see the document "Requirements and guidelines for commercial and social centres", which can be found under "About the call". All reporting shall be done electronically.

Relevant thematic areas for this call

Innovation

NOK 768 million to Centres for Research-based Innovation▼

Strategic priorities

The centres must be organised in ways that safeguard the partners' opportunities for co-determination and involvement.

The centres must have available innovation expertise, plans for developing such competence and plans and processes to promote innovation and follow up ideas and research results with innovation potential, including handling IPR and how the research is to be used by partners.

The centres must facilitate the necessary interdisciplinary cooperation, including perspectives from the social sciences, humanities and law, to promote the development of responsible innovation.

The centres must facilitate relevant use of digital technologies such as artificial intelligence in the research process in order to strengthen the digital competence of the research fellows, the research organisation and user partners.

The centres must describe plans for international cooperation, with particular emphasis on Horizon Europe and, if relevant, other countries and regions where this is particularly relevant. Funds must be set aside in the centre's budget to safeguard international cooperation, network cooperation and mobility.

The centres must facilitate a balance between genders in the centre's management team and among project participants, and describe any measures to promote gender balance and other diversity over the centre's lifetime.

Delimitation

The SFI scheme aims to promote innovation and value creation across the breadth of Norwegian trade and industry. It is therefore important that the portfolio of active research centres covers the breadth of topics and business areas. This call for proposals therefore prioritises new centres that complement research centres that are already funded through the Research Council's industry-oriented centre schemes. The activity in the new centres will not overlap with the activity in centres that have been awarded funding from and including 2019, through the following schemes:

- Centres for Research-based Innovation (SFI)
- Centres for petroleum research
- Centres for Renewable Energy Research (FME)

Guidelines for permitted changes in applications from Phase 1 to Phase 2

The application for Phase 2 must describe the same project as in Phase 1, but in a more detailed project description. Changes in the consortium from Phase 1 to Stage 2 may be approved. In a separate appendix, the applicant must describe any changes in the consortium from Phase 1 to Phase 2, and explain why the project will be of the same quality as previously. If there are changes in the consortium or other changes in the project from Phase 1 to Phase 2, experts in Phase 2 will have access to the application for Phase 1 to assess whether the project is of the same quality as previously.

Practical information

Requirements for this funding scheme

You can amend and submit the application several times up to the application deadline. We recommend that you submit your application as soon as you have completed the application form and uploaded the mandatory attachments. When the application deadline expires, it is the version of the application that was submitted most recently that we will process.

- The grant application and all attachments must be submitted in English.
- All attachments must be in PDF format.
- Mandatory attachments must be included.
- Requirements relating to the Project Owner (research organisation) must be satisfied.
- Requirements relating to partners must be met.
- A maximum of ten short CVs can be submitted.

Mandatory attachments

- Project description (maximum 6 pages)
- Short CV for the project manager (centre director) of maximum 2 pages, using the designated template found at the end of this call.
- Short CVs for up to nine key persons in the project, of maximum 2 pages, using the designated template found at the end of this call:
 - Researchers attaching CVs must use the template "Template for CV researchers".
 - People who are submitting their CV and who do not work at a research organisation can use the template "Template for CV"
- Letter of intent from registered user partners. The letter of intent must use the designated template found at the end of this call.
- An overview of the total user funding provided to centres using a fixed template, which can be found at the end of this call. Upload as attachment type "Other".

Optional attachment

- Proposals for up to five referees who can be assumed to be impartial to assess the grant application if it progresses to stage 2 of the calls.

All attachments to the application must be submitted with the application. We will not accept attachments submitted after the application deadline unless we have requested additional documentation.

We will not consider documents and websites linked to in the application, or attachments other than those specified above. Be careful to upload the correct attachment type, as there are no technical restrictions on what kind of templates it is possible to upload in the application form.

Assessment criteria

We will assess the grant application in light of the objective of Phase 1 of this

two-stage application process for the Research Centres application type.

In Phase 1, a three-part grading scale will be used for each of the assessment criteria.

Excellence | SFI phase 1

- The extent to which the centre has the potential to generate new knowledge.
- The extent to which the centre's research will be relevant to innovation and have the potential for developing innovations that address the current and future needs of user partners in industry and/or the public sector.

Impact | SFI phase 1

Potential impacts of the proposed research

- The extent to which the centre's planned results can address important challenges in the sector(s), both now and in the future.
- The extent to which the centre's planned results will provide a basis for value creation in Norwegian trade and industry and/or the public sector.

Implementation | SFI phase 1

Overall assessment of the quality of the centre consortium

- The extent to which the participants, including user partners, complement each other, and the extent to which the centre consortium possesses the necessary expertise to implement the centre initiative effectively.

The quality of the centre's organisation

- The extent to which organising the research activities as one centre rather than several separate projects provides added value.

Relevance | SFI

- The extent to which the centre is based on identified needs and commitments for the involvement and co-financing of user partners.
- The extent to which the centre has good plans and processes for promoting innovation and following up results with innovation potential and includes innovation expertise.
- The extent to which the centre will contribute to developing an industry sector with competitiveness in a low-emission society and sustainability with regard to climate, the environment and society. The centre is to have a positive or neutral effect on the green restructuring of Norwegian trade and industry.

Administrative procedures

Once we have received the application and the deadline has expired, we will carry out a preliminary check to ensure that all formal requirements are met. Applications that do not satisfy the formal requirements will be rejected.

Where the requirements are met, we will make the application, with all mandatory attachments, available in an online portal for referees who individually assess the criteria "Excellence", "Impact" and "Implementation". The referees will then meet in referee panels to reach a consensus-based assessment of the grant application for each of the three criteria. Each panel will cover relatively broad

disciplines and industry areas. The referees will not have specialist expertise in each individual application that is assessed by the referee panel.






Grant applications will also be assessed by the Research Council's case officers on the criterion 'Relevance to the call for proposals'.

Up to 30 applications must be qualified from Phase 1 through to Phase 2. This means that only these applicants will be invited to submit a full application at Phase 2. All other applications for Phase 1 will be rejected. The Research Council bases its decisions in Phase 1 on an overall portfolio assessment by the portfolio board. This portfolio assessment takes into account:

- applications' assigned marks based on the assessments
- application dissemination in areas relating to industry, thematic areas and challenges, dissemination of applications across research institutions and regions, and it is desirable to also include applications involving user partners from both the private and public sectors among the up to 30 applications that qualify for Phase 2
- prioritisation of centres that are complementary to the research centres specified in the call, which are already funded through the Research Council's industry-oriented centre schemes at the time of the decision for Phase 1

The portfolio board will hold a decision meeting for Phase 1 in December 2024. We will publish the results of the application review process at Phase 1 before Christmas in 2024.

Download templates

	template-for-project-description-SFI Phase 1.docx	↓
	template-for-cv-researchers - kort SFI Phase 1.docx	↓
	template-for-cv - short SFI Phase 1.docx	↓
	template Letter of intent for user partners participating in the center for research driven innovation.docx	↓
	template-overview funding plan-user partners-SFI.docx	↓

★ MANDATORY ATTACHMENT

Download all templates [↓](#)

About the results of the application assessment process



Total amount sought
Amount awarded
Total number of applications
Number of approved applications

Approved applications

Project no. ▾	Organization ▾	Project title ▾	Subject ▾	Sought ▾	Published ▾
355183	SINTEF Ocean	SFI Seaweed - Centre of gravity for industrial seaweed research and innovation	Innovasjon		17.12.2024
355224	UNIVERSITETET I OSLO	Centre for Biodiversity Genomics Innovation	Innovasjon		17.2.2024
355260	OSLO UNIVERSITETET SYKEHUS HF	Center for Personalized Digital Twins for Ischemic Heart Disease Management	Innovasjon		17.12.2024
355271	UNIVERSITETET I BERGEN	Centre for Deep-Sea Innovation	Innovasjon		17.12.2024
355309	SINTEF AS	Sustainable Fuels for Aviation and Marine Transport	Innovasjon		17.12.2024
355330	NOFIMA AS	Responsible feeds for future farmed salmon	Innovasjon		17.12.2024
355378	OSLO UNIVERSITETET SYKEHUS HF	NOR-TWIN: Norwegian Centre for Virtual Human Twin Technology	Innovasjon		17.12.2024
355387	UNIVERSITETET SYKEHUSET NORD-NORGE	Centre for Personalized Digital Health Promotion	Innovasjon		17.12.2024
355177	UNIVERSITETET I AGDER	SFI LEO - Life Extension of	Innovasjon		17.12.2024

Approved applications

Project no. ▾	Organization ▾	Project title ▾	Subject ▾	Sought ▾	Published ▾
		Offshore systems			
355199	UNIVERSITETET I AGDER	Resilient Mission-Critical Ecosystems for Sustainable Service	Innovasjon		17.12.2024
355200	NORGES TEKNISK-NATURVITENS KAPELIGE UNIVERSITET NTNU	Center for Intelligent Computers and Electronics	Innovasjon		17.12.2024
355243	SINTEF Energi	Negative emission cities through biowaste carbonization and storage	Innovasjon		17.12.2024
355244	SINTEF Energi	Centre for Research-based Innovation to Achieve Zero Emissions from Log Wood/Pellet Burning Stoves by 2050	Innovasjon		17.12.2024
355246	NORGES TEKNISK-NATURVITENS KAPELIGE UNIVERSITET NTNU	Future Aluminium Structures	Innovasjon		17.12.2024
355249	NORGES TEKNISK-NATURVITENS KAPELIGE UNIVERSITET NTNU	Norwegian Center for Aviation Transition Innovations	Innovasjon		17.12.2024
355257	UNIVERSITETET I BERGEN	ICoN: Innovation Center for Neuroresilience	Innovasjon		17.12.2024
355274	UNIVERSITETET I SØRØST-NORGE	Centre for Effective Engineering and Learning in	Innovasjon		17.12.2024

Approved applications

Project no. ▾	Organization ▾	Project title ▾	Subject ▾	Sought ▾	Published ▾
Complex System					
355275	NORGES TEKNISK- NATURVITENS KAPELIGE UNIVERSITET NTNU	The Research Centre on Energy- and Climate-Positive Transformation of Buildings and Neighbourhoods	Innovasjo n		17.12.2024
355278	NORGES TEKNISK- NATURVITENS KAPELIGE UNIVERSITET NTNU	Centre for persistent autonomy for safety and security of ocean infrastructure and nature systems	Innovasjo n		17.12.2024
355283	SINTEF AS	SFI Carbon Symphony - Norwegian Centre for Industrial Carbon Management	Innovasjo n		17.12.2024
355291	NORGES MILJØ- OG BIOVITENSKAP ELIGE UNIVERSITET (NMBU)	Exploring Innovative and sustainable food processing using Norwegian raw materials for enhanced utilisation, self- sufficiency and health	Innovasjo n		17.12.2024
355296	UNIVERSITETE T I BERGEN	Center for Research-Based Innovation on BetterAge	Innovasjo n		17.12.2024
355300	NORGES TEKNISK- NATURVITENS KAPELIGE UNIVERSITET NTNU	SFI Sustainable Applied and Industrialized Nuclear Technology	Innovasjo n		17.12.2024
355308	NORGES TEKNISK- NATURVITENS	Next generation ultrasound for health, ocean,	Innovasjo n		17.12.2024

Approved applications

Project no. ▾	Organization ▾	Project title ▾	Subject ▾	Sought ▾	Published ▾
	KAPELIGE UNIVERSITET NTNU	and industry applications – NxUs			
355311	NORGES TEKNISK- NATURVITENS KAPELIGE UNIVERSITET NTNU	Centre for Research-based Innovation in Applied Cryptography	Innovasjo n		17.12.2024
355342	NORGES TEKNISK- NATURVITENS KAPELIGE UNIVERSITET NTNU	Minerals for a better Future	Innovasjo n		17.12.2024
355354	STIFTELSEN NANSEN SENTER FOR MILJØ OG FJERNMÅLING	Subsurface technologies for Accessible and Sustainable Ocean Observation (SASOO)	Innovasjo n		17.12.2024
355409	SINTEF Energi	SFI Thermal energy storage - Flexibility for the energy transition	Innovasjo n		17.12.2024
355414	SINTEF AS	Safe and Resilient Positioning, Navigation, Timing, and Communication Services and Operations	Innovasjo n		17.12.2024
355419	SINTEF AS	Research Center for Innovative & Sustainable Underground Use	Innovasjo n		17.12.2024

Messages at time of print 22 April 2025, 22:02 CEST

No global messages displayed at time of print.