

Norwegian Taxonomy Initiative

Call for project proposals on taxonomic inventories of poorly known species

Norwegian Biodiversity Information Centre (NBIC) opens the call for project proposals on taxonomic mapping/inventories that focus on poorly known species groups in Norwegian territory in the Northern Hemisphere.

About the call	
Thematic area	Taxonomic mapping/inventories
Target groups	Norwegian institutions
Funding scale	Up to 3 500 000 Norwegian kroner (NOK). A minimum of 5% internal financing must be included.
Funding presumed available	16 000 000 Norwegian kroner (NOK)
Project duration	Up to 3 years
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Important dates	
September 20th 2023	Date call is made active
November 15th 2023 kl. 13:00 (CEST)	Application submission deadline
April 1st 2024	Earliest permitted project start
October 1st 2027	Latest permitted project end

Purpose

The purpose of the call is to strengthen the knowledge of species in Norwegian nature, with a special emphasis on taxonomic inventories of poorly known species groups (taxonomic units).

Financial framework

The total amount of funding presumed available for this call is NOK 16 000 000. This amount may be adjusted according to the 2024 budget.

About the call for proposals

The aim of the Norwegian Taxonomy Initiative (NTI) is to strengthen knowledge about species in Norwegian nature, with a special emphasis on taxonomic groups where current knowledge is poor. The long-term ambition is to map all eucaryote, multicellular organisms in Norway. The knowledge obtained from projects funded by NTI must be accessible to the general public through sharing of open data. The call

for project proposals on taxonomic inventories of poorly known species has the following criteria:

Academic criteria

The focus for the project proposal should be to perform inventories of one or more poorly known species groups (taxonomic units) of eucaryote, multicellular organisms in Norwegian territory in the Northern Hemisphere. Within the NTI, inventories are defined as follows: "To identify which species occur in specified geographic areas. For the poorest known species groups, this means revealing which species in the taxonomic group exist in Norway". See "[Artsprosjektet. Definisjoner og avgrensninger](#)" and "[Kunnskapsstatus for artsmangfoldet i Norge 2020](#)" (*only available in Norwegian*).

Inventories can be done based on already sampled material (e.g., from museum collections) and/or sampling of new material.

The application must:

- describe how the taxonomic inventory will strengthen our knowledge of Norwegian species.
- describe how the project will strengthen expertise and recruitment within the field of biosystematics, promote DNA barcoding, and disseminate knowledge of species in Norway.
- describe how the terms and conditions of the NTI grant, "[Vilkår for tilskudd til kartlegging av arter gjennom Artsprosjektet](#)" (*only available in Norwegian*) will be fulfilled.

Who is eligible to apply?

The project owner (applicant) must be a Norwegian institution, with a specified project administrator authorised to represent and follow up the project managers commitment to NBIC. The project administrator must approve the application submission. If the project is granted funding, the project administrator is legally responsible for the completion of the project and for the fulfilment of the terms specified in the grant letter.

What kind of projects can you apply funding for?

The Norwegian Biodiversity Information Centre can grant funding to species mapping/inventories with a taxonomical focus which include the following phases:

- a) collection,
- b) sorting,
- c) species identification and
- d) taxonomic revision (if needed) and/or publication.

Projects relying on previously collected materials (phases b-d) can also receive funding (e.g., projects without collection in the field).

Funding is *not* granted to:

- Project proposals that **only** apply for funding for taxonomic revisions and publication (see phase d above).

- Projects **focusing mainly** on ecology, behavior, genetics (metabarcoding), population trends or detailed species distributions in limited geographical areas.

What costs can be covered?

- You can apply for up to 3.5 million Norwegian kroner (NOK) per project.
- Internal financing must be included and must amount to a minimum of 5 % of the total project budget.

You can only apply for funding to cover the actual costs necessary to carry out the project. The project manager must obtain relevant information about costs from all project partners. These costs are to be entered in the budget under the relevant category.

The following cost categories must be used:

- **Payroll and indirect expenses**
Payroll and indirect costs for the project managers participation in the project, including internal Research and Development (R&D) personnel. R&D personnel, as used here, refers to the project manager as well as all internal scientific and technical staff. Payroll and indirect costs include salary and social security costs for employees, as well as indirect costs related to R&D activities, such as rent, administrative support functions, ICT, etc.
- **Procurement of external R&D services**
Costs associated with the procurement of external R&D services from collaborating universities, university colleges and research institutes should be entered here.
- **Other operating expenses, including equipment**
All costs that are necessary for the execution of the project, and which do not fall under the cost categories above, should be entered here. This includes costs for materials and equipment, project-related travel and accommodation, as well as project-specific dissemination activities and costs associated with making data from the project accessible/available to others.

Conditions for funding

- Project duration has an upper limit of *three* years. The earliest permitted project start date is April 1st, 2024, and the latest permitted completion date is October 1st, 2027.
- NBIC's requirements relating to allocations and disbursement of funding are set out in the "[Generelle regler for tilskudd](#)" (*only available in Norwegian*).
- Projects awarded funding under this call are required to submit an annual project progress and financial report documenting incurred project costs and their financing.

Application requirements

Applications must be written in English with a Norwegian project summary and must be submitted through NBIC's online application form. Attachments must be in pdf format.

You must upload these mandatory attachments:

- a project description (using NBIC's project template) which complements the information given in the online application form,
- budget (using NBIC's budget template)
- confirmation that the application has been approved by the institutions project administrator,
- CV for the project manager and key project participants/collaborating partners,
- confirmation and/or letters of intent from financially bound collaborating partners,
- confirmation of collaboration with the Norwegian Barcode of Life (NorBOL) for DNA barcoding (contact person: professor Torbjørn Ekrem: torbjorn.ekrem@ntnu.no)
- confirmation of agreement with a university museum for long-term repository of collected materials/samples.

Assessment criteria

Project proposals will be evaluated according to the following criteria by an external international panel of taxonomic experts:

- **Excellence**
 - The extent to which the proposed project is of high academic quality.
 - Description and choice of methods and study design.
 - Description of taxonomic status and habitat of the relevant species group(s).
- **Impact**
 - The extent to which the proposed project will strengthen and produce new knowledge about poorly known species groups (taxonomic units), including their habitat and occurrence.
 - The extent to which the proposed project will contribute to strengthen taxonomic expertise in Norway.
 - The potential for knowledge transfer between taxonomists, e.g. from older to younger taxonomists and students, and recruitment into the field of biosystematics.
 - A plan for communication and utilisation of results.
- **Implementation**
 - The joint expertise in the group of project participants, and the quality of the organisation of the project.
 - The feasibility of the progress plan and budget.
 - National/international academic collaboration.

Each of these three criteria will be assessed and given a [score of 1-5](#) points by an external panel of experts. The applications that receive a cumulative score of 10 or more (out of 15 possible points) will be assessed for *Relevance* by the NTI project group ("[Artsprosjektets prosjektgruppe](#)").

Relevance is assessed and given a score from the same scale (1-5) based on the following sub-criteria:

- Compliance with the academic criteria of the call (see above).
- Compliance with the goal and ambition of the NTI (cf. NTI mandate).

- Coordination/synergies with other related species inventories or research projects in Norway or the other Nordic countries.

Each of the four criteria (excellence, impact, implementation & relevance) are weighted equally in the final assessment of the project proposal. Should two or more projects receive the same score under equal conditions (equal total score), project proposals will be prioritised based on:

1. The knowledge status of the taxonomic group in the project proposal. Species groups with a limited taxonomic knowledge will be prioritised over species groups with higher taxonomic knowledge, according to "[Kunnskapsstatus for artsmangfoldet i Norge 2020](#)" (only available in Norwegian).
2. Portfolio considerations of previous and ongoing species inventories funded by the NTI.

Application deadline and procedure

To generate an application form, you must enter your e-mail address via this link: [Generate a personal application form](#)

Applications must be completed and submitted to NBIC **by Wednesday November 15th, 2023, at 13:00 CEST**. Applications submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

Applications that do not comply with the *Application requirements* specified in the call will be rejected on formal grounds. All necessary attachments must be submitted along with the application. Attachments sent after the deadline will not be considered. Letters of support from parties not actively collaborating in the project should not be submitted.

Applicants must contact a university museum early in the application process to finalize an agreement on the transfer and long-term repository of materials/samples from the project. Costs associated with this must be included in the project budget.

Evaluation process

A formal decision regarding application funding will be made by the NBIC board by the end of February 2024.

All applications are subject to a comprehensive evaluation process before decisions regarding project funding are made. NBIC employs an external panel of international experts in taxonomy to assess each of the project proposals based on the three criteria mentioned above: excellence, impact, and implementation. Thereafter, the relevance of the project proposals is assessed by the NTI project group ("[Artsprosjektets prosjektgruppe](#)"). The NTI project group presents a proposal to the NBIC board of which applications should receive grants within the total budget of the call. This proposal is based on the experts' assessment and the relevance assessment.

The final formal decision on whether an application is granted funding or rejected is made by the NBIC board. The [NBIC board](#) must ensure that all applications that receive funding collectively comply and contribute to the objectives of the NTI.

Information regarding which projects that receive funding is published on the NBIC webpage. The funded projects will receive a formal grant letter. The grant letter must be signed and returned to NBIC to confirm that the terms and conditions for the grant are accepted.

The panel of taxonomic experts and the members of the NTI project group are reviewed for impartiality before they are cleared to assess grant applications.

Terms and conditions

For projects that are granted funding, the following terms and conditions apply: "[Vilkår for tilskudd til kartlegging av arter gjennom Artsprosjektet](#)" (only available in Norwegian).

All grant recipients must commit to following the NBIC "[Generelle regler for tilskudd](#)" (only available in Norwegian).

Useful information

[NTI](#) was established by The Norwegian Ministry for Climate and Environment in 2009. The project is coordinated by NBIC and contributes greatly to strengthening the knowledge base for management of Norwegian nature. Through annual calls for project proposals focused on species inventories, knowledge and competence within the field of Norwegian biodiversity gradually improves. The knowledge gained through these inventories is used to update and revise the NBIC register of species names, update the scientific collections at the University Museums and improves our knowledge about the distribution of species. Data from NTI projects also contribute to filling NBICs digital encyclopedia with high-quality information about species, in addition to building necessary infrastructure for DNA barcoding and ecological information.

The NTI mandate (*only available in Norwegian*):

[https://www.artsdatabanken.no/Files/30190/Artsprosjektet -
_mandat_og_organisering](https://www.artsdatabanken.no/Files/30190/Artsprosjektet_-_mandat_og_organisering)

Definitions and limitations of the NTI (*only available in Norwegian*):

[http://artsdatabanken.no/Files/17843/Artsprosjektet -
_definisioner_og_avgrensninger \(v. feb. 2017\) \(.pdf\)](http://artsdatabanken.no/Files/17843/Artsprosjektet_-_definisioner_og_avgrensninger_(v._feb._2017).pdf)

Overview of earlier projects with funding from the NTI (*only available in Norwegian*):

<http://artsdatabanken.no/Pages/213341>

Overview of species and species groups that already has a reference sequence in Barcode of Life Data Systems (BOLD): <https://search.norbol.org/>

Knowledge status for species in Norway 2020 (*only available in Norwegian*):

[https://www.artsdatabanken.no/Files/41806/Kunnskapsstatus for arts mangfoldet 2020 \(pdf\)](https://www.artsdatabanken.no/Files/41806/Kunnskapsstatus_for_arts mangfoldet_2020_(pdf))

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