



2ND CALL FOR PROPOSALS 2022 ON BIOECONOMY IN THE NORTH (BiN)

Background and aims of the call

We are facing pressing global challenges that call for new ways of producing and consuming that respect our planet's ecological boundaries. A sustainable circular bioeconomy is considered necessary to build a carbon neutral future in line with the Climate objectives of the Paris Agreement and a sustainable use of forest resources will play a crucial role in this.

In the last decade, Europe has seen a great deal of coordination activities in the field of bioeconomy research. The respective activities cover almost all thematic areas of bioeconomy but differ in size of the consortia, project duration, scope and aim as well as in the instruments under which they were implemented. The majority of the initiatives address the entire EU including partners from Non-EU Member States and often somewhat disregard thematic and regional specificities (e.g. type and sources of biomass available).

Therefore, five research funders from Canada¹, Finland², Germany³, Norway⁴ and Sweden⁵ have decided to establish and conduct a joint funding initiative for the implementation of bioeconomy in the northern part of the globe. The partners recognize that their countries share somewhat similar challenges and similar assets with regard to climate, climate change, vegetation patterns, industry structure and cultural aspects. Following this consensus, the aim of Bioeconomy in the North (BiN) is to develop and deepen the cooperation of researchers in the field of bioeconomy in the northern part of the globe, to create critical mass, to generate synergies, to increase the quality of R&D by supporting excellent scientific communities.

The BiN 2nd Call for proposals aims to contribute to reaching the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs⁶) and to promote the development of the circular bioeconomy by encouraging and supporting the use of wood and wood-based biomass for the benefit of society. The primary goal of the call is to support excellent research and innovation through transnational collaborations leading to new products, technologies and strategies that contribute to net-zero emission goals, involving the use of wood-based biomass resources in the northern hemisphere. The projects are expected to contribute to BiN's aim of developing and deepening the cooperation of researchers in the field of bioeconomy in the northern part of the world.

¹ Natural Resources Canada

² Ministry for Agriculture and Forestry

³ Federal Ministry of Education and Research

⁴ Research Council Norway

⁵ Vinnova, Sweden's innovation agency

⁶ <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

Topics of the call

In the frame of a first call issued in 2018 the initiative selected a portfolio of transnational projects in the field of wood-based biomass production, lignocellulose conversion and governance issues in bioeconomy. Encouraged by the success the funders decided to publish a 2nd joint Call for transnational project proposals. Sustainably produced bio-based fuels, chemicals, and materials (SFCM) are essential to expanding the bioeconomies of countries in the northern hemisphere in a manner that is consistent with global net-zero emissions goals. Supporting research, development, and demonstration (RD&D) collaborations focused on forest biorefineries and novel structural wood technologies & products will help de-risk SFCM production while enabling an expansion of net-zero pathways. Projects in the frame of the BiN 2nd Call for proposals should significantly contribute to at least one of the two following topics:

1. Forest Biorefineries – Process and materials innovation involving wood-based biomass in support of a circular bioeconomy

Proposals submitted under this topic should scientifically address at least one of the following aspects of biorefinery innovation:

1. Creation of novel forest biorefinery technologies and/or processes high added value refined forest bioproducts
2. Optimization of forest biorefinery processes (cost, energy and water consumption, raw material efficiency, bio-material recycling)

2. Innovation in solid wood products in support of a circular bioeconomy

Proposals submitted under this topic should scientifically address at least one of the following aspects of solid wood product (including engineered wood and composites) innovation:

1. Improvement of existing or creation of novel high-value structural wood products and/or related building systems
2. Development of sustainable and competitive production technologies for high-value structural wood-based products
3. Use of digitalization and functionalization to support value-added strategies for wood-based products

Call characteristics

Eligibility

Following the submission of proposals, the funders will address aspects of formal compliance regarding the 1) BiN criteria and 2) the specific National Requirements (see ANNEX). Proposals that do not fulfill the initiative's or the national criteria will be excluded from scientific evaluation phase.

BiN Eligibility criteria:

- Consortia must involve at least three partners from three different countries participating in the call;
- The participation of at least one industry partner per consortium (large company or SME) from countries member of the initiative is mandatory (also associated partners are allowed);
- Consortia must be balanced: the contribution of one country to the collaborative project must not exceed 60% of the total project costs in order to ensure balanced transnational partnerships;
- The duration of the project should not exceed a period of 36 months;
- Industry partners (from member or non-member countries) and other project partners can also join on their own costs. The respective financial commitment must be stated in a “financial commitment”.
- Proposals must be submitted via the BiN electronic submission system (ESS) exclusively by the project coordinator. Please note that failure to comply the submission rules (date, format and size of file) will cause ineligibility of the project. Proposal submitted via E-mail, fax or paper copy will not be considered for evaluation;

Applicants are strongly recommended to contact their respective National Contacts before submitting a proposal (see ANNEX “National Regulations”).

Funding and administration

The total budget for funding transnational research projects in the BiN 2nd Call for proposals will be approximatively about 7 million € (excluding Canadian contribution). The budget for individual project proposals will be restricted as stated in the respective National Regulations. Funding of the project partners is provided by the participating national programs according to their respective National Regulations. Requested funding may cover research and travel expenses (for example consumables, equipment, travel costs...) according to each institution's guidelines.

A consortium agreement among the project partners has to be consented before first instalments can be transferred. For more details, please contact your funding agency.

National Requirements

see separate Document “National Regulations” in the ANNEX

Submission of proposals

Proposals must be written in English and must exclusively be submitted via the ESS. The project coordinator will be responsible for the submission of the proposal.

The application process will be single-phased. Please see also the National Regulations for additional requirements (e.g. hard copies, forms, etc.) that may be required by national / regional programmes (see ANNEX).

Upon receipt by the BiN secretariat, proposals are registered and acknowledged.

Assessment criteria, evaluation and selection

The evaluation of eligible proposals is conducted by independent renowned international experts. Proposals are subject to a thorough quality and viability assessment with respect to the following equally weighted criteria:

- Relevance and potential impact related to the funding objectives of the call and especially to the SDGs;
- Innovation of the research approach, quality and originality of the proposed solution and excellence in scientific approach;
- Added value for each country and synergies achieved through the joint cooperative research project;
- Excellence and expertise of the applicants and the partners involved; consortium potential and project management capabilities;
- Prospects of success and applicability of the project results (in scientific and economic terms);
- Adequate size and structure of the project, quality and stringency of budget as well as time and work schedule, balance of workload and networking of partners.

The final funding decisions of recommended and prioritized proposal will be done by the funding agencies of BiN. The results will be made available and will be communicated to the project coordinators through the BiN secretariat.

Confidentiality

During the evaluation and selection process applications, project plans and any information related to them shall be kept confidential in accordance with any applicable national legislation and not used to any other purpose than evaluation of the applications, making funding decisions.

Proposals will only be read by the funders, the respective national evaluators and the commissioned international experts. The proposals will be handled by the BiN secretariat operated by Forschungszentrum Jülich GmbH, Germany.

Timeline

January 2022:	Call opening
04th May 2022 (13:00 h CEST)	Deadline for submission of proposals (ESS)
May – June	Eligibility check / National check
June – October 2022	Evaluation
November 2022	Communication of results to the applicants

Contact:**BiN secretariat:**

Veronika Jablonowski

Forschungszentrum Jülich GmbH, Germany

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National contacts:

see ANNEX "National regulations"

ANNEX:

National regulations applicable for 2nd Call of Bioeconomy in the North

Canada

- Due to challenges aligning national funding cycles, Canada has previously launched and awarded funding for domestic projects that align with the scope of the 2nd Call via NRCan's [Forest Innovation Program \(FIP\)](#). As such, eligible Canadian research partners are limited to those previously awarded FIP funding for FY22/23, or those who already have funding in place through another funding mechanism. There is no new dedicated funding in this call for Canadian researchers.
- Researchers from other Bioeconomy in the North jurisdictions who are interested in partnering with Canadian researchers are encouraged to contact the National contact for Canada to receive the list of research projects and contacts previously funded via the FIP program.
- The publications from the projects must be open for access by all.

National contact Canada:

Matthew Schacker

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Finland

Funding agency: Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

- The national requirements are explained in the general terms and instructions for research and development activities funded by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (<https://mmm.fi/en/research-and-development/funding-for-projects>). The maximum total funding for an individual project for all Finish partners is 300 000 EUR.

National contact Finland:

Mikko Peltonen

Tel. +358 29 516 2296

mikko.peltonen@gov.fi

Germany

Funding agency: Projektträger Jülich

- Funding is awarded as non-repayable project grant;

- The total funding amount per project for all German partners within a single project proposal (with partners from abroad) must not exceed € 500,000 (including “Projektpauschale” for German universities).
- The funding regulations for German applicants, the follow-up and reporting are regulated according to NABF (Nebenbestimmungen für Zuwendungen auf Ausgabenbasis des BMBF zur Projektförderung), BNBest (Besondere Nebenbestimmungen für Zuwendungen) and NKBF 2017 (Nebenbestimmungen für Zuwendungen auf Kostenbasis des Bundesministeriums für Bildung und Forschung an Unternehmen der gewerblichen Wirtschaft für Forschungs- und Entwicklungsvorhaben);
- Each of the proposed projects must provide added value to the National Bioeconomy Strategy;
- Co-financing of project by industrial partners has to be secured before the project start
- All details can be found in the German announcement “[Richtlinie zur Förderung internationaler Verbundvorhaben im Rahmen der Nationalen Bioökonomiestrategie „Bioeconomy in the North 2022“](#)

National Contact Germany:

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Norway

Funding agency: The Research Council of Norway (RCN)

- The national requirements are explained in the general terms and instructions for research and development activities funded by the Research Council of Norway:
<https://www.forskningsradet.no/siteassets/generelle-krav-og-vilkar-for-foiprojekter/oppdatert-februar-2021/generelle-vilkar-01012021-engelsk-oppdatert-februar-21.pdf>
- The maximum total funding for an individual project for all Norwegian partners is 300 000 EUR.
- Funding rate for industrial partners must be in compliance with the EU state aid rules.
- The publications from the projects must be open for access as described here:
<https://www.forskningsradet.no/en/Adviser-research-policy/open-science/plan-s/>
- No application to RCN is needed. When a formal decision on funding has been given, Norwegian participants will be contacted by RCN on further formalities.

National contact Norway:

Rune Groven

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rune.groven@forskningsradet.no

Sweden

Funding agency: Vinnova

- The maximum grant amount to Swedish partners is 300 000 EURO per project. The exchange rate to be used is 10.3 SEK per EURO. The grant is a contribution to the projects' total eligible costs or parts thereof. *Individual* partners may have different funding rates (see table below) but the maximum funding rate is 70 % of the Swedish partners' total eligible costs in the project.
- Swedish partners can only apply for funding of Industrial research and Experimental development according to the definitions in the Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014, Article 25
- Funding is only granted to legal entities in Sweden, this includes international entities that have a branch or place of business in Sweden. The costs of the project must be attributable to the branch's place of business's operations.
- Participation of Swedish enterprises is encouraged. By enterprises we mean enterprises with active business operations. Research institutes in company form, university holding companies and incubators are in this context not considered as enterprises.
- Vinnova's general terms and conditions for grants, multiple partners, apply. Grants to organizations engaged in economic activity, like enterprises, are subject to state aid rules. Grants to project partners engaged in economic activities must follow the maximum funding rates below. Get more information at <https://www.vinnova.se/en/apply-for-funding/rules-for-our-funding/terms-and-conditions-for-our-funding/>
- Maximum funding rates per organization type in this call:

Type of research	Large enterprises	Medium enterprises	Small enterprises	Universities and research organizations
Industrial research	50 %	60 %	70 %	100 %
Experimental development	25 %	35 %	45 %	100 %

More information on definitions of enterprise size, type of research at:

<https://www.vinnova.se/en/apply-for-funding/rules-for-our-funding/state-aid-to-companies/>

- Proposals that are recommended funding will be required to be submitted to Vinnova *after* the call's evaluation process. Based on the recommendations Vinnova will take the formal funding decision.

National contact Sweden:

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