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). Own financing of a minimum of 5% 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 2022	Date call is made active
November 16th 2022 kl. 13:00 (CEST)	Application submission deadline
April 1st 2023	Earliest permitted project start
October 1st 2026	Latest permitted project end

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

Financial framework
The total amount of funding presumed available for this call for proposals is NOK 16 000 000. This amount may be adjusted according to the 2023 budget.

About the call for proposals

The aim of the Norwegian Taxonomy Initiative (NTI) is to strengthen the knowledge about species in Norwegian nature, with a special emphasis on taxonomic groups where our 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: "To identify which species that occur in specified geographic areas. For the poorest known species groups this means revealing which species in the taxonomic group that exist in Norway". See "Artsprosjektet. Definisjoner og avgrensninger" and "Kunnskapsstatus for artsmangfoldet i Norge 2020" (*only available in Norwegian*).

The 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 contribute to strengthen our knowledge of Norwegian species.
- describe how the project will contribute to strengthen the 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 named person (project administrator) that has the authorisation to represent and commit the project manager towards NBIC. The project owner 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 can you seek funding for?

The Norwegian Biodiversity Information Centre can grant funding to inventory which includes the following phases:
- a) collection,
- b) sorting,
- c) species identification and
- d) taxonomic revision (if needed) and/or publication.

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

Funding is _not_ granted to:
- Project proposals that only applies for funding to taxonomic revisions and publication (see phase d above).
- Projects focusing mainly on ecology, behavior, genetics (metabarcoding), populations trends or detailed species distributions.

What costs can be applied for?
- A single project can apply for up to 3.5 million Norwegian kroner (NOK).
- Own financing must be included and must amount to a <u>minimum</u> of 5 % of total project budget.

You can apply for funding to cover the actual costs necessary to carry out the project. The Project Owner must obtain information about costs from each project partner. These costs are to be entered in the cost plan under the relevant category.

The following cost categories must be used:
- **Payroll and indirect expenses**
  Please fill in the payroll and indirect costs for the Project Owner's participation (own internal R&D personnel in the project). R&D personnel as used here means the project manager as well as scientific and technical staff. Payroll and indirect costs encompass salary and social security costs for R&D personnel taking part in the project and indirect costs related to the performance of the R&D activities, such as rent, administrative support functions, ICT, etc.
- **Procurement of R&D services**
  The procurement of R&D services from universities, university colleges and research institutes that are not the Project Owner should be entered here.
- **Other operating expenses**
  All costs that are necessary for the execution of the project, but that do not belong under the cost categories above, should be entered here. These will include costs for materials and equipment, project-related travel and accommodation as well as project-specific dissemination activities, including costs associated with making data from the project available.

Conditions for funding
- The project duration has an upper limit of three years. Earliest permitted project start is April 1st 2023, and the latest permitted completion date is October 1st 2026.
- The 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 account report documenting incurred project costs and their financing.

Application outline requirements

Your application has to be written in English with a Norwegian project summary and has to be submitted through the 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) that complements the information given in the online application form,
- budget (using NBIC's budget template)
- a confirmation of approval of the application from the project administrator of the institution,
- CV for the project manager and key project participants/collaborating partners,
- confirmations/Letter of intent from binding collaboration partners,
- confirmation of agreement with a university museum for long-term repository of collected material.

Assessment criteria

The 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 the taxonomic expertise in Norway.
  - Potential for knowledge transfer between taxonomists, e.g. from older to younger taxonomists, 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 .
  - Feasibility of progress plan and budget.
  - National/international collaboration.

Each of these three criteria will be assessed and given a score of 1-5 points by an external expert panel. 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 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 with other related 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.

Under equal conditions (equal total score), project proposals will be prioritised after:
1. The knowledge status of the taxonomic group in the project proposal. Species groups with a lower taxonomic knowledge will be prioritised higher than species groups with higher taxonomic knowledge, according to «Kunnskapsstatus for artsmangfoldet i Norge 2020» (only available in Norwegian).
2. Portfolio considerations regarding earlier and ongoing species inventories funded by the NTI.

Application deadline and procedure
To create, edit and submit a project proposal, go to:
https://soknad.artsdatabanken.no/

The applications must be finished and submitted to NBIC within Wednesday 16th of November 2022 at 13:00 CEST. Applications submitted after the deadline will not be evaluated.

Applications that do not comply with the 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. Support letters from parties not actively collaborating in the project shall not be submitted.

Applicants from institutions must contact a university museum early in the application process, to make an agreement on the transfer of material from the project for long-term repository. Costs in connection with this must be entered in the application's budget.

Evaluation process
The final formal decision on whether an application is granted or rejected are made by the NBIC board by the end of February 2023.

The applications will go through a comprehensive evaluation process before deciding which projects are granted funding. NBIC will use an external panel of international experts in taxonomy that assess each of the project proposals based on the three above mentioned criteria; excellence, impact and implementation. Thereafter, the project proposal's relevance is assessed by the NTI project group ("Artsprosjektets prosjektgruppe"). The NTI project group make a proposal to the NBIC board for for

which applications that 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 or rejected are made by the NBIC board. The NBIC board shall ensure that the applications that are granted in total cover the purpose of the NTI.

Information regarding which projects that are granted funding will be published on the NBIC webpage. The granted projects will receive a 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, these terms and conditions apply: "Vilkår for tilskudd til kartlegging av arter gjennom Artsprosjektet" Vilkår for tilskudd til kartlegging av arter gjennom Artsprosjektet" (only available in Norwegian).

The grant recipients commit themselves to follow the NBIC "Generelle regler for tilskudd" (also only available in Norwegian).

Useful information
The NTI was established by The Norwegian Ministry for Climate and Environment in 2009. The project is coordinated by NBIC and is an important element that contribute to strengthen the knowledge base for management of Norwegian nature. Through annual calls for project proposals focusing on inventories of species, the knowledge and competence of Norwegian biodiversity gradually improves. The inventories contribute to update and revise the NBIC register of species names, the scientific collections at the University Museums and improve the knowledge about the distribution of species. Data from the NTI projects also contribute to fill the digital encyclopedia of NBIC with high-quality information about species, and at the same time builds 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

Definitions and limitations of the NTI (*only available in Norwegian*):
http://artsdatabanken.no/Files/17843/Artsprosjektet_-_definisjoner_og_avgrensninger_(v._feb._2017)_(.pdf)

Overview of earlier projects with funding from the NTI (*only available in Norwegian*):
http://artsdatabanken.no/Pages/213341

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

https://www.artsdatabanken.no/Files/41806/Kunnskapsstatus_for_artsmangfoldet_2020_(pdf)