



2010-09-13

Call for proposals

Citizen-Centric eGovernment Services

The first call for proposals within the Nordic-Baltic RTD programme **Citizens' Services** for Research and Innovation networks



1. General information about the Call

Swedish Governmental Agency for Innovation Systems -VINNOVA in collaboration with NordForsk, the Icelandic Centre for Research (RANNIS) and the Estonian Ministry for Economic Affairs and Communications launches the call “**Citizen-Centric eGovernment Services**” in order to strengthen the Citizens’ Services concept and collaboration in the Nordic-Baltic region.

The call is a result of the NordForsk funded project NORIA-net Citizens’ Services 2008-2009.

More information about the project and the programme can be found on www.VINNOVA.se/citizensservices

Within the programme, VINNOVA has opened a Nordic-Baltic joint call during 2010 entitled Citizen-Centric eGovernment Services.

The purpose of this call is to contribute to successful new cooperation models, organisational solutions and digitized service supplies in the field of e-government, working on the basis of users’ needs and participation.

Key objectives of the call are to

- Strengthen the knowledge and research on eGovernment and Citizen Centric service development in the Nordic-Baltic region.
- Establish new networks within the area in order to strengthen the Nordic/Baltic innovation system.
- Create a platform supporting transnational eGovernment activities. This includes components such as; new constellations and partnerships; exchanged knowledge and experiences; aiming to stimulate cooperation between research, industry and public sector, leading to improved work methods.
- Obtain a profound and publicly available knowledge on eGovernment and user-driven innovation; informing about the development of new tools, methods and processes for active user centric contexts; strengthening the competitiveness of the Nordic innovation system.

The overall objective of the research programme is to reach a more effective and citizen-centric public administration in the Nordic-Baltic region. The goal for the programme is to support the development of useful and effective national public e-services for the citizens. The projects should identify public e-services and related research issues of relevance for future Nordic-Baltic collaboration.

VINNOVA will be acting as the programme secretariat for this call 1. Information on this call, plus terms and conditions for participation, can be found on the call’s website that can be found under www.VINNOVA.se/citizensservices. Information can also be obtained from the

Steering Committee, see the call's website for contact information. The call's website also includes current details on deadlines and a link to the electronic application function in Swedish which is mandatory to use for applicants.

Note: VINNOVA reserves the right to adjust this call for proposals text at any time over the call for proposals period and without special information. However, no changes will be made over the last **two** weeks prior to the deadline. It is therefore recommended that all potential applicants download the current version of the call for proposals text from the call for proposal's website before the deadline.

2. Who are eligible participants in the proposal?

The call for proposals Citizen-Centric eGovernment Services is aimed at public administration, businesses, research organisations and non-governmental organisations in Estonia, Iceland and Sweden. Only representatives from these countries will be funded but representatives from all the Nordic and Baltic countries are welcome in the project consortia. For further details see chapter 6 "Application Requirements".

3. Description of the Call

3.1 Background and motivation

Citizens are increasingly becoming eCitizens, actively using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in their daily lives. Public services in the Nordic-Baltic countries are known to be advanced and generally efficient. In these countries there is not always a high trust in government, but yet higher than compared to the rest of Europe, and the world. Still, the majority of services, public or private, is developed from the service provider organisation's perspective, not the citizens'. So-called user-centric design has mostly affected the facade of the service, not the service itself, its structure or context. In particular there is a lack of integration between services that are meaningful and useful for improving citizens' lives.

A joint Nordic-Baltic research initiative will strengthen research network activities in the field of eGovernment Citizens' Services through a multi-disciplinary approach. It will thereby be creating synergies and added-value for the users of research, and ultimately better use of the research resources in the field.

To reach the goal of the programme Citizens' Services about a more effective public administration and useful national e-services for citizens there has to be a shift of focus, from the administrative perspective to the citizen's values and needs. Furthermore citizen's services should be developed in cross-border cooperation between stakeholders.

3.2 Purpose of the Call for proposals

The aim of this call is to establish research and innovation (R&I) networks.

Those networks will build a foundation for further cooperation and preparations for a full proposal to the planned, but not decided, Call 2, or proposals to international calls e.g. the EU 7th Framework Programme.

The project activities will focus on networking i.e. workshops, seminars, exchange of knowledge, study trips etc. Use of social media and videoconferences is encouraged.

The thematic focus is further described in annex 1.

The intended long term key objectives of the planned call 2:

- Multidisciplinary Nordic-Baltic cooperation and transfer of knowledge established, including academia as well as private and public organisations through e.g. an open democratic innovation strategy.
- Citizen-centric eGovernment services and public governance are developed with a European perspective that respects diversity.
- Disciplinary strengths of the various Nordic and Baltic research communities are built. The research should be publicly available and transferable.
- Sustainable and trust-generating citizen-centric innovations in governance and processes are reinforced, using ICT as an enabler.
- Conditions of usage are clarified on behalf of the users. Knowledge on favourable and hindering conditions for eGovernment usage is established.
- Methods /surveys are developed and tested to assess the public needs concerning e-services, and to evaluate the benefits of eGovernment services."
- e-services for the Citizens are developed.

3.3 Effect goals

The call for proposals has effect goals – both short-term and long-term – in order to describe what the projects, in the call, intends to achieve and how the projects being funded contribute to sustainable growth.

The results are expected to come in closeness with the activities in the projects. The results will come as new networks, reports, proposals for prototypes of new public services for the citizens and processes.

The expected results of this call will be that:

- the regional Nordic-Baltic networks between researchers, public administration, businesses and non-governmental organisations are strengthened
- needs-driven citizen centric public e-services are established and used by citizen´s to a wider extent.
- new knowledge about how to develop citizen centric knowledge intensive services is given to both private and public service providers.

4. Schedule

The following dates apply to the call. Please note that there may be changes. For updated information, please see the call website.

Opening date: Monday 13 September 2010

Closing date for proposals: Tuesday 19 October 2010, 14:00 CET

Expected decision date: Friday 26 November 2010

Expected project start date: Monday 3 January 2011

5. Budget

The budget for the call of proposals will be approximately 2,7 MSEK (2 168 kNOK) 2010 to cover the 12 months project period in 2011. The funds will be used to provide funding of maximum 5 projects, totaling 500 000 SEK per project.

The call is funded through a common pot provided by the funding partners plus top-funding from NordForsk. VINNOVA is responsible for the Programme Secretariat and administration of the call. Applicants are demanded to calculate their budget in SEK.

6. Application requirements

The following requirements must be met in order for applications to be considered:

- Applications should show clearly how the applicants intend to meet the programme objectives. www.VINNOVA.se/citizensservices
- Proposals have to be written in English.
- The project must be in line with the focus of the call for proposals and clearly contribute to fulfilling the goals of the call.
- In terms of content, the project must be in the field of e-services.
- The projects must be implemented by a project team, in active cooperation, consisting of legal entities from public administration, research institutions, businesses and non-governmental organisations.
- The projects have to be carried out within the year 2011.
- The proposed duration of projects is 6-12 months.
- The projects should be networking projects in order to stimulate cross-border cooperation.
- The projects should aim at carrying out research through the planned, but not decided, second call or plan for applications to other national and international research calls e.g. the EU 7th Framework Programme.

7. Applicants Requirements

Applicants must meet the following requirements:

- The applicant must be a representative of public administration, research institutions, businesses or non-governmental organisations within the funding countries Sweden, Iceland and Estonia. Projects must include one representative from each of the above mentioned countries.
- The team in each project must be put together with relevant experiences, knowledge and interest in public e-services and innovation projects and be a cooperation between public administration, businesses and research institutions.
- Applicants, who are not from one of the funding countries, can be allowed to participate in projects on their own budget.
- Applicants may be requested to take part in monitoring, assessments and impact analyses regarding resources used, participants, networks, also after the project has ended.

8. Conditions

The conditions for contributing to Citizen-Centric eGovernment Services are regulated under VINNOVA´s General Subsidy Conditions (condition 1).
(correct link to be inserted in published version of this document)

What can be accepted in costs appears in the current version of VINNOVA´s General Guidelines on Approved Costs in Grant Awards (reg. no.2004-00123).
(correct link to be inserted in published version of this document)

Eligible activities in the projects concerned may comprise combinations of direct collaboration costs, such as:

- Joint research activities
- Networking and mobility costs
- Personnel costs that will provide added value to the Nordic and Baltic cooperation
- Extra management costs
- International scientific conferences (participation and/or organisation)
- Meeting costs – direct costs for conferences, seminars, courses, meetings and workshops (not including overhead costs)
- Travel expenses according to governmental rules of the home country
- Other costs e.g. dissemination

For commercial participants the general EU state aid rules apply (COMMISSION REGULATION (EC) No 1998/2006).

http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/legislation/compilation/index_en.html

The grant will be distributed according to the budget of the project. Research institutions, public bodies and non-governmental organisation participation may be funded up to 100% of their budget.

Financed projects are obliged to publish a final report summarising the conclusions from performed activities.

9. How to apply

Applications are submitted electronically through the application service on the VINNOVA e-Service Portal (“Intressentportalen”) This can be accessed on the call’s website selecting “To the application service”.

To submit an application, you must first create a user account with VINNOVA, then use it to log on to the application service. If you already have a VINNOVA user account, please use this.

Please observe that the application service is in Swedish. Applicants who don’t understand Swedish are offered individual help with the application process. For more information, see the web page for this call.

The last date for submission of applications is Tuesday 19 October 2010. Please note that applications should be received no later than 14.00 CET on this date. No additions may be made to applications after this unless VINNOVA requires them.

For information about the content of the application, see “Application content“ below.

10. Assessment

The assessment process is organised by the programme secretariat at VINNOVA. The secretariat cooperates with the Steering Committee consisting of representatives from all organisations contributing to the budget of the call. For the evaluation of proposal an external assessment group of experts will be engaged by the secretariat.

An international panel of experts (representatives of research, businesses and society) will review the scientific quality and the impact of the proposals and will report to the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee will rank the incoming proposals taking the external expert reviews into consideration. The final decision on which projects will receive funding will be made by VINNOVA based on the review process, described above, and the recommendation from the Steering Committee. VINNOVA informs the applicants. Projects can start when the funding decisions have been made and contracts signed with VINNOVA.

Regarding criteria for assessment, see “Assessment criteria” below in paragraph 12.

11. Legal information

VINNOVA is covered by the right-of-access principle. However, the authority has an obligation to protect trade secrets – among other things – in accordance with the Official Secrets Act.

Project applications with appendices and allocation decisions compiled by VINNOVA, with justifications for those decisions, are generally public documents. This means that the general public is entitled to view these. However, this right will be limited by the provisions of the secrecy legislation.

VINNOVA is liable to classify information in public documents regarding the commercial and operating conditions, inventions or research results of individuals (“individuals” also including legal persons) if it may be presumed that the individual will suffer financial loss if the information is published.

It is not possible to give an overall specification of precisely what information should be classified. VINNOVA must test the circumstances for issuing documents in each individual case. To aid the secrecy assessment, applicants might advantageously draw attention to information about commercial and operational conditions, inventions or research results in cases where the operation would suffer loss if information were published. Sensitive information may also be attached in a separately marked appendix.

12. Assessment criteria

Eligibility criteria for each application are checked by the programme secretariat staff before the assessment begins. Applications which do not fulfill eligibility criteria will not be included in the assessment.

For this call an application will only be considered eligible if it meets all of the following conditions:

- It is received by the the Secretariat before the deadline given in the call
- It involves at least the minimum number of participants given in the call
- It is complete (i.e. both the requested administrative forms and the proposal description are present)

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The following criteria will be applied in assessing applications:

1. **Relevance.** Applications will be assessed based on how the proposed project relates to the Call description and supports the effect goals of the call and programme
2. **Quality.** Applications will be assessed on the level of Nordic-Baltic cooperation, innovativeness of the project plan and soundness and quality of aims. The ability to contribute to scientific related development within the scope and focus of the call for proposals will be assessed
3. **Implementation.** Competence of the applicant, project leader and project management

- Feasibility of the project in relation to proposed resources, such as human resources, budget and timeframe
- Networking capacities
- Ethical perspective, i.e., projects should follow good ethics
- Gender perspective, i.e., efforts should be made to increase the participation of gender in minority
- Cross-sector and cross-country cooperation are encouraged
- Level of interdisciplinary interaction

4. *Intended outcome and potential impact*

- Expected outcome
- Potential impact
- Level of ambition
- Dissemination and communication of results
- Preparation for the planned 2nd call
- Relation to current or planned activity within the EU's Framework Programme and other major international initiatives

These criteria will also be used for monitoring, evaluation and impact analyses of the selected projects.

13. Application content

The application service consists of a number of electronic form pages to be completed by the applicant with assistance from VINNOVA.

A **project description** and a **personnel appendix** should be attached to the application. Only these attachments will be considered for the application.

Attachments should be in PDF format.

The **project description should be approximately 5 x A4 pages of 12 point text**. It must be written in English and include the following:

- Project title
- Abstract
- Aims of the project linked to those of the Call for proposals and the programme
- Objectives of the project related to the Call for proposals and the programme

- Description of the focus of the networking project, relationship of the research to the state of the art within the research field and how it is envisaged to relate to a citizen centric public e-services
- Description of the team partners
- Description of the planned activities, work shops etc
- Expected result and impact of the project
- Description of the need that the project will solve
- Project plan incl time and activity plan
- A budget for the project

The **personnel appendix** should include up-to-date CVs for the project manager and key people on the project team (max. one A4 page per person). For all participants, a name, age, gender, title/function and scope of contribution to the project should be provided.

14. Contact

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Annex 1

(For more details see Programme Citizens' Services www.VINNOVA.se/citizensservices)

The thematic focus of the Nordic/Baltic call on eGovernment Services in a Nordic and Baltic context

(i) Citizens Participation, directly including citizens

The following research questions may be in focus:

- Knowledge on Citizens needs and wishes
- Defining what conditions on behalf of the users are favourable/hindering in e- gov usage?
- Establish forums and methods for citizens to participate in the design and development of services.
- Focus on diversity of services

(ii) Networked Government Services

The following research questions may be in focus:

- Innovative methods for cross-organisational services
- Development of coordination of public administrations
- Addressing issues on flow of information between institutions

(iii) Service providers

The following research questions may be in focus:

- Defining what in the design, marketing etc. of the services themselves are favourable/hindering e. gov usage?
- More efficient ways for project management
- Survey on public-private cooperation
- Knowledge on the value chain

(iv) Common infrastructure and security

The following research questions may be in focus:

- Development of infrastructure systems
- Methods on legal aspects
- Focus on digital signatures systems

(v) Impact of Government services

The following research questions may be in focus:

- Study of legal and organisational changes for PPP

- Survey on awareness and increased use of existing e-services
- Measures for customer satisfaction
- Methods/surveys to assess the public's needs concerning e-services, and to evaluate the benefits of e-gov services."