



National and international Theme call 2023

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The LINXS Institute of advanced Neutron and X-ray Science invites original, innovative, and pioneering Theme proposals that will advance science using X-rays, neutrons, and complementing techniques. Multi-disciplinary and multi-technique proposals that link experimentalists, theoreticians, and modellers to provide new perspectives are strongly encouraged. LINXS Themes typically fall within (or between) the focus areas of hard condensed matter, soft matter, and life sciences but it is accepted that rigid definitions of these areas are not always possible or helpful. For this call we encourage applications relating to hard and soft condensed matter. Themes should be designed to progress the proposed topic by resourcing interactions between different groups/areas through scientific and strategic activities that make the network more than the sum of its parts. It is expected that applications will involve relevant scientists from different organisations. We particularly encourage Theme proposals that expand the scope of research into new areas and/or involve new user groups.

Potential applicants are strongly encouraged to contact the LINXS management /staff or people currently active in Themes to find out more about how LINXS operates and for further information and advice.

Read more about LINXS and Themes in the [FAQ](#) and the [LINXS Handbook](#).

WHAT IS A THEME?

LINXS Themes are funded for 3 years and aim to bring research communities together. A Theme does not fund research per se but facilitates research by bringing together active teams focusing on specific subtopics in the form of Working Groups (WG). Themes receive some funding to boost the formation and activities of the network. The scientific topics of a Theme should relate to the development/application of neutron and X-ray science and associated techniques. They may cover fundamental science, data acquisition, experiments, data analysis, simulation, and/or theory. The Theme is coordinated by a Core Group (CG) containing at least representatives from each of the Working Groups leaders and chaired by the Theme Leader.

Apart from their research priorities, Themes should plan specific outcomes, aiming towards sustainability and impact of the network of researchers beyond the three-year duration of the theme itself (e.g., attracting external research funding, development of new initiatives, translational and social impact).

Participants in the Core Group or Working Groups of a Theme may be from either a Partnering Organisation or a non-partnering organisation. A Partnering Organisation is one for whom a formal commitment of resources to the Theme is made for participant time and/or other activities. A non-partnering organisation would typically participate through in-kind staff contribution (e.g., using their own research time).

In a typical Theme, about half of the people active in the Core Group and Working Groups are from outside the partnering organisations. Theme applications are encouraged to show broad national and/or international engagement.

LINXS welcomes diversity amongst the members of the Theme - this is regarded as a strength and an asset. In assembling a Theme, gender balance of at least 60/40% is expected.

ELIGIBILITY, THEME LEADERSHIP, CORE GROUP AND WORKING GROUP MEMBERSHIP

LINXS welcomes Theme applications from everywhere.

Anyone who currently has a tenure, tenure-track, or relevant long-term position and who is an established principal investigator (PI) can apply as the lead applicant for a Theme (Theme Leader). A formally approved commitment of resources by the host organisation of the Theme leader is required for the duration of the Theme, and as such this organisation is designated as a Partnering Organisation.

As part of a Theme proposal, the Theme Leader may propose the composition of a Core group and of the Working Groups, bearing in mind the importance of interdisciplinarity and national/international institutional diversity.

THEMES, PARTNERSHIP, AND OPERATION

Any organisation contributing resources to a Theme is a LINXS partner for the duration of that Theme. A Theme generally has some resources formalised by Partnering Organisations to contribute (according to the resourcing model of the organisation) to the time/salaries of key persons that are central to the operation of the Theme. The majority of people contribute their time in-kind. The partnership between these organisation(s) and LINXS will be governed by a collaboration agreement.

As an example, previous Themes have had resources of about 20% full time equivalent per year spread among people leading the Core Group and the Working Groups, as well as a budget for activities.

In summary:

- The Theme leader (main applicant) can be from any organisation prepared to contribute, for example person-months, travel, etc, to the resources of the Theme, and leads the Core group. Working group leaders can also be from any organisation.
- Any organisation can contribute to funding staff participating in a Theme and becomes a partnering organisation in doing so.
- The activities of a Theme with several partnering organisations are co-funded in accordance with a collaboration agreement.

APPLICATION PROCESS

The call follows a two-stage application process:

Stage 1 consists of the submission of a concept application by the lead applicant using a template – this is a short application describing the key aspects of the proposed Theme. An application at this stage requires endorsement by the head of department (or equivalent) of the prospective Theme leader proposing it. Applications will be evaluated by an external and independent Science Advisory Board (SAB). Successful applicants will be invited to proceed to Stage 2.

Stage 2 consists of a more detailed application, which includes a development plan with the timeline of operations, complete descriptions of initial working groups and their members, the level of engagement of the Core Group and Working Group members, and details on foreseen activities. To proceed, a commitment from partnering organisations is required, via a Letter of Support from a faculty Dean, Vice-Chancellor, or equivalent position within the partnering organisations, detailing the resources committed. Stage 2 applications will be prioritised by the independent LINXS SAB. If a proposal passes Stage 2, a collaboration agreement detailing the commitments is expected to be drawn up and signed.

Further information:

- The application should be written in English.
- Applications are submitted by email in one (searchable) pdf file to submission@linxs.lu.se.

An acknowledgement of receipt is sent to the lead applicant who will be responsible for keeping other people involved in the Theme informed of the application and outcomes.

TIMELINE

- Deadline for Stage 1 applications: **2024-01-26**
- LINXS will invite Stage 2 applications by **2024-03-01**
- Deadline for Stage 2 applications: **2024-04-26**
- LINXS will send the final decision by **2024-05-31**
- Earliest date for Theme start is **2024-09-02**

COSTS THAT CAN BE COVERED

Please note that approval of the Theme does not entail approval of all submitted potential costs. Activities are discussed, planned, and budgeted for in anticipation of any coming year. Theme participants are then expected to execute that plan.

Personnel costs: Typically, a contribution is made to the time/salary of the Theme leader and key coordinating participants (such as Core Group members and/or Working Group leaders), if they are employed at a partner organisation. Core group and Working group members from non-partner organisations can have travel and accommodation covered for specific activities if needed but are required to contribute their time in-kind.

Activity costs can be for: conferences (including hosting and travel of keynote speakers), Core Group and Working Group meetings, workshops, hackathons, hosting and travel of guest researchers, schools, seminars, training, and outreach activities. The list is non-extensive and LINXS welcomes new activity ideas that contribute to the success of the Theme.

Applicants are encouraged to contact LINXS for more information on costs that are typically covered.

DIVISION OF COSTS IN THEMES WITH PARTNERSHIPS

People – Each organisation funds its own people. LINXS can contribute for any person employed at Lund University with a maximum of 0,1 FTE per person, and a total of 0,2 FTE per year per Theme. The contribution to salaries is specified in the application and is typically divided up among participants with around 5%-10% of an individual's time funded. This contribution is traditionally meant to cover coordination. Most people participating in a Theme do so on their own time, out of direct benefit to their research.

Activities – All partners are encouraged to contribute to activities in their localities, as set out in the collaboration agreement. LINXS can contribute up to 250 kSEK/year for activities connected to its locality, the specific year's budget permitting.

Other – LINXS contributes with baseline costs to each Theme, including administration, communication, and web support. If a Theme is led by a partner organisation (i.e., the Theme leader is based at that organisation), that organisation is expected to contribute an administrator at the level of at least 0,1 FTE/year.

REPORTING

Each Theme is expected to report annually, listing activities, expenditures, and scientific achievements, as well as a final report at the end of the Theme duration. The final report should list the Theme's scientific contribution, impact, and scientific activities. The basic reporting of resources spent among partner organisations is specified in the collaboration agreement. The Theme leader is ultimately responsible for reporting and for ensuring feedback from all CG and WG activities.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Applications will not be distributed or published by LINXS by default, but are not, in principle confidential. LINXS does not encourage the inclusion of confidential material in any proposal.

EVALUATION PROCEDURE AND ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

The LINXS Management will gather the applications received and check the formal eligibility of applications. All eligible applications will be evaluated by the LINXS SAB. The external evaluation of the applications will consider the potential contribution of the Theme and its proposed activities to the mission of LINXS.

The SAB will evaluate and rank all applications based on the criteria listed below, as well as the balance of the total contribution of resources made to the Theme.

1. Scientific excellence, impact and timeliness, and potential to contribute to the advancement of, and breakthroughs with, X-ray and neutron science at large-scale facilities.
2. Relevance to one or more of the LINXS focus areas, and potential to bring different scientific communities together and exploit interdisciplinary, intersectorial and/or inter-methodological engagement.
3. Potential to enhance existing user communities and/or develop new user communities (including industry and the public sector, if relevant) for synchrotron and neutron-based science.
4. Relevance to LINXS' mission, and strategic complementarity in relation to existing Themes and the diversity of activities at LINXS.
5. Excellence, networks and capacity of the suggested Core Group and potential Working Groups. It is expected that these include members external to the partnering organisations. The target (but not a strict requirement) is ~50% fellows from non-partner organisations active in Core and Working Groups. Diversity and gender equality (60/40% acceptable) will be considered.

The SAB submits their recommendations for Stage 1 to the LINXS Management Group which then invites applications to Stage 2.

The Stage 2 evaluation is performed by the LINXS SAB. The LINXS Management informs successful applicants.

CONTACT PERSONS

Potential lead applicants are encouraged to contact the LINXS management to discuss their ideas prior to submission, the relevant contacts are:

- Trevor Forsyth, LINXS Director, (trevor.forsyth@linxs.lu.se)
- Marie Skepö, LINXS Vice-Director, (marie.skepo@linxs.lu.se)
- Jörgen Larsson, LINXS co-Director, (jorgen.larsson@linxs.lu.se)
- Oxana Klementieva, LINXS co-director, (oxana.klementieva@linxs.lu.se)
- Anna Ntinidou, LINXS Head of Administration, (anna.ntinidou@linxs.lu.se)

APPLICATION DEADLINE STAGE 1

2024-01-26, 17:00 PM CET