

Nordic Academic Forum 2026

Trondheim, 7–9 September 2026

The Nordic Academic Forum brings together representatives from the Nordic academic organisations to strengthen dialogue and cooperation on issues affecting academics, research, innovation and working life.

The main conference day explores how Nordic research excellence can be translated into innovation, commercialisation, scaling and stronger Nordic competitiveness. Building on the conference discussions, the final workshop will identify priorities for stronger Nordic cooperation and develop concrete recommendations, possible follow-up actions and input to the Nordic joint statement.

Monday 7 September: Arrival and informal get-together

- 17:00–17:30** Welcome gathering at the Scandic Nidelven Hotel
 - Light refreshments
- 17:30–19:00** Guided tour & visit the Archbishop's Palace Museum
- 20:00–22:00** Informal get-together with food & drinks at the hotel

Tuesday 8 September: Academic Conference Day

Nordic edge: from excellence to scale

Part I – NTNU / Kavli Institute: Excellence as the starting point

- 08.15** Shared transport from Scandic Nidelven Hotel
- 08:45–09:00** Arrival coffee (Kavli Institute for Systems Neuroscience, NTNU)
- 09:00–10.00** Academic session: ***Excellence to competitiveness: what it takes to build world-leading research in the Nordics***
 - Opening: Lise Lyngsnes Randeberg (President, Akademikerne)
 - Speakers: Bjarne Foss (Head of Institute, Kavli Institute, NTNU) + senior researchers (TBC)
- 10:05–10:20** Walk/transfer to Teknostallen

Part II – Teknostallen: Main conference venue

- 10:30–10:40** Presentation of the day's main theme: From excellence to scale
Lise Lyngsnes Randeberg (President of Akademikerne)

Session 1 – Universities as engines for innovation

10:40–11:10 *From research to innovation and societal impact: what universities must do*

- Toril Nagelhus Hernes (Vice President Research and Innovation, NTNU)

11:10–11:25 *Scale infrastructure: how we build pathways from research to new companies*

- Andreas Krüger Enge (Director of Societal Impact, Siva)

11:25–11:40 **Coffee break with light refreshments**

Session 2 – Nordic competitiveness through research-based innovation

11:40–12:05 *Nordic competitiveness through research-based innovation*

- Elena Salmaso (Lead Economist, Copenhagen Economics)

12:05–12:30 Moderated conversation:

What must change to strengthen Nordic competitiveness?

Session 3 – Teknostallen in practice: cluster and companies

12:30–13:00 Company showcase (3 × 10 min): *Scaling in a tech cluster: three company stories*

- Vitalthings: Bård Benum (CEO)
- NaDeNo Nanoscience: Ýrr Mørch (CTO and Co-founder)
- Arm Norway: Edvard Sörgård (Graphics Architect)

13:00–13:15 Moderated conversation: *Why Teknostallen? The benefits, challenges and potential of a shared tech environment*

13:15–14:15 Lunch

Session 4 – Student entrepreneurship

14:15–14:45 Practical snapshot: *Student entrepreneurship: building skills and turning ideas into action*

- Lars Reyes-Gjølme (Senior Advisor NTNU)
- Student case (TBC)

Session 5 – Crossing the valley of death: capital, capability, customers

14:45–15:05 *Crossing the Valley: A State Investor's View of Norway's Scale-Up Challenge*

- Sten-Roger Karlsen (CEO, Investinor)

15:05–15:25 Scaling case: *From crisis innovation to a scalable diagnostics company*

- Magnar Bjørås (Professor NTNU) and Tonje Strømmen Steigedal (CEO, Lybe Scientific)

15:25–15:40 Private capital perspective: *What investors need to support growth and scaling*

- Lars Lydersen (Partner Futurum Ventures)

15:40-15:50 Moderated conversation:
What will it take to scale? Aligning capital, capabilities and companies

15:50-16:05 Break

Session 6 – Research to scale

16:05-16:45 *The value of research and PhDs – pathways to better commercialisation*
- Key findings from Akademikerne's three-part Menon project

- Leo A. Grünfeld (Partner, Menon Economics)

Session 7 – Nordic leaders' reflections

16:45-17:10 Nordic academic associations leaders panel: *What do we take forward?*

17:10-17:20 Closing remarks & summary (Akademikerne)

17:30 Shared transport to Scandic Nidelven Hotel

20:00 Joint dinner at Restaurant Rive Gauche

Wednesday 9 September: Presidents' meeting and follow-up workshop

08:00-11.00 **Presidents' meeting**

This meeting is for presidents and secretaries general.

09:00-11:30 **Nordic Action Lab Workshop**

This workshop is for all participants not attending the President's Meeting. Building on the discussions and insights from the previous day, participants will identify areas where stronger Nordic cooperation can create added value and develop concrete recommendations and possible follow-up actions. The workshop will also provide input to the further development of the Nordic joint statement.

11:30 **Lunch and departure**