

Standard operating procedure: NordicAST projects

Background

As stated in the [bylaws](#), NordicAST's objectives include initiating, conducting and funding scientific studies on methodological issues. The term "NordicAST project" denotes a scientific study or project initiated, funded, organized, conducted and/or promoted by NordicAST. This document describes the standard operating procedure for proposing, approving, organizing, conducting and publishing data from NordicAST projects.

Proposal and approval

NordicAST members are entitled to propose topics for new NordicAST projects. Proposals may represent novel ideas/initiatives, or originate from preexisting projects in which at least one NordicAST member is a central and active participant. Proposals should be presented for NordicAST in a regular meeting, after announcement through the meeting agenda. A brief description of background, scientific needs, objectives, suggested study design, and a list of internal and external collaborators and their roles should be distributed to the group prior to the meeting. Proposals should also include an invitation to interested NordicAST members for active participation.

If NordicAST decides to support the proposal, the project is formally acknowledged as a NordicAST project. A NordicAST member involved in the proposal should be appointed as project leader. The project leader may also fill the role as principal investigator. The principal investigator (if different from the project leader) does not necessarily have to be member of NordicAST.

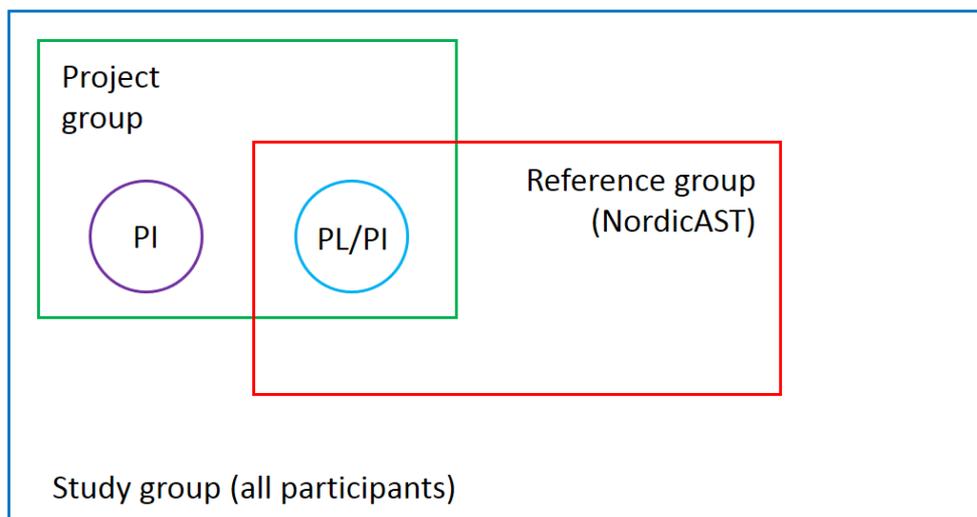
The project leader is responsible for establishing a project group. The project leader should collaborate with the principal investigator and the rest of the project group on drafting a protocol and (if NordicAST is supposed to contribute with funding) a preliminary budget. The budget should contain information on additional funding sources. The project leader is responsible for presenting the draft protocol and the preliminary budget (if required) in a regular NordicAST meeting, and for revising the drafts in accordance with discussions and decisions in the meeting. Revised versions should be distributed to NordicAST with a deadline for additional comments.

Final approval of the protocol and the budget should be based on full agreement in NordicAST, and the decision should be confirmed and minuted in the next regular NordicAST meeting.

Organization (Figure)

The project leader is responsible for the scientific quality of the project and that the project is conducted in line with the protocol and the budget. The project leader is also responsible for coordinating project activities, facilitating communication within the project group, and reporting to the reference group (see below). The role of the principal investigator is to run the project on daily basis, with support from the project leader and the rest of the project group. The project group should ideally include NordicAST members from at least three countries and may include external collaborators. All members of the project group should be active participants in the project.

Figure. Organization of NordicAST projects. The project leader (PL) should be member of NordicAST. The project leader may also fill the role as principal investigator (PI).



NordicAST constitute the reference group for NordicAST projects. The project leader is responsible for providing information to the reference group on the progression of the study at least once yearly. NordicAST may request additional status reports when deemed necessary.

When the study design requires contributions from additional external participants, a study group should be formed. The study group is composed of one representative from all participating institutions, in addition to the members of the project group and the reference group. The project leader is responsible for providing external participants with updated information on the progression of the project. As a minimum, status information should be available on the website.

If the project leader should leave NordicAST before the project has been finished, one of the remaining NordicAST members in the project group should be appointed as project coordinator. The project coordinator will fulfill the project group's obligations to NordicAST, including status reporting and ensuring adherence to the protocol and the budget.

Authorship and publication

ICMJE rules for authorship (icmje.org) should be followed. As a general rule, all members of the study group (when such group is formed) should be given the opportunity to fulfill the criteria.

Data from NordicAST projects should be published by the members of the project group “and the NordicAST [Project name] Study Group”, with all members listed as authors. The project group is entitled to suggest order of authors, but the order should be approved by the reference group.

Version history

Version	Changes
1.0, 2018-12-20	New document