

Minutes from NCMBM Board Meeting

Time: Wednesday 26th August 2026, 13.15 – 16.00
Place: Meeting room 7801, Livsvitenskapsbygningen

Board Secretary: Hanna Ekeli, Medical Faculty Director
Executive officer: Elizabeth Smethurst/ Ingrid Kjelsvik

	Present	Apologies
Professor Jan Bjålie , Faculty of Medicine, Chair	X	
Professor Øystein Prytz , Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences	X	
Professor Janne E. Reseland , Faculty of Dentistry	X	
Professor Melinka Butenko , Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences	X	
Professor Philippe Collas , Faculty of Medicine	X	
Dr Lars Eikvar , South-Eastern Norway Regional Health Authority (HSØ)		X
Dr Plamena Markova , EMBL		X
Professor Janna Saarela , Director, NCMBM	X	
Hanna Ekeli , Faculty Director, Faculty of Medicine	X	
In attendance:		
Anthony Mathelier , Associate Director, NCMBM	X	
Ingrid Kjelsvik , Head of Office, NCMBM	X	

Agenda: (O = information item, D = discussion item B = decision item)

	Declaration of conflict of interest No conflicts were declared.
Case 28 – 26D	Presentation from an NCMBM Group Leader: Janna Saarela Saarela's presentation was postponed to a later Board meeting due to time restrictions.
Case 29 – 26B	Approval of the minutes from the last meeting The minutes from the meeting 18 th June 2026 were available for review. No amendments were requested. Decision: The Board approved the minutes of the meeting 18 th June 2026.
Case 30-26O	Updates on actions from previous meeting 1) The NCMBM Senior presence working group had a meeting on 20 th August 2026. The group had discussed several concrete proposals aimed at strengthening synergy and integration. Smethurst has outlined some initial suggestions, which require further discussion within the group before being presented to the Board. Some time is also needed to develop the overall concept and define long-term objectives.

The Director had presented the LVB strategic proposal to the Senior presence working group. One proposed initiative is an LVB seminar series comprising 12 seminars before Christmas 2026, with two presentations per seminar, targeting life science researchers and promoting connections across the community under the theme “Get to Know Your Neighbours.” Presentations could include introductions to new instruments and their applications, as well as scientific talks demonstrating the use of new technologies. Saarela invited the Board to suggest potential speakers to be selected by the NCMBM Champions.

Collas stated that this initiative complements the upcoming IMB science fair, where several Life Science units have been invited to take part.

- 2) The Board has been issued a calendar invite to meet SAB on November 17 at 10:30 in Forskningsparken

Case31 – 260

Recruitment of new NCMBM Group Leaders

The Director updated on the recruitment campaign. The call opened in early July and was promoted through a LinkedIn campaign. The application deadline is 14 September, and several applications had already been received. Though most relevant applications are expected closer to the deadline, all applications will be reviewed after the call closes. Ineligible applications will be excluded, and the remaining applications will be shared with the international committee.

Subcommittees for each position will be responsible for preparing shortlists. The initial aim is to identify approximately six to eight candidates per position for further assessment, while avoiding an excessive workload for the committees. The Chair of the committee will conduct recorded video interviews with additional candidates. The target is to invite four candidates per position for on-site interviews, tentatively scheduled for 23–24 November.

No objections were raised by Board members to the proposed two-step selection process.

The proposed committee members include Wolfgang Huber (EMBL), Luis Serrano (CRG), Francesca Ciccarelli (CRICK), Alba Diz-Muñoz (EMBL), Oliver Billker (MIMS), and one more member that is yet to be confirmed. The internal committee includes Rafal Ciosk, Manuela Zucknick, and Anthony Mathelier. Backup arrangements will be established as required.

The Board discussed procedures for managing potential conflicts of interest (Col). Norwegian legal criteria for formal Col are narrow; however, the general principle is to consider whether a conflict could reasonably be perceived to exist.

The committee chair will manage potential Col issues as they arise. Under standard practice, a member with a conflict of interest would withdraw from, or refrain from participating in, the relevant discussion, with other committee members taking over as necessary. It was noted that, in some settings, a committee member with a Col may be required to step down from the committee entirely.

The Board recommended a cautious approach and recommended that the composition of the local committee should also be reviewed and adjusted if necessary. All committee members are expected to declare any potential conflicts of interest. Cases of uncertainty will be assessed individually in consultation with the committee chair. With six committee members available, members may be excluded from individual cases if required, and internal members can more easily be replaced.

Decision:

The Board noted the update of the recruitment process and the committee members.

Action:

- NCMBM will inform the Board when the last committee member is confirmed
- NCMBM will encourage a thorough discussion on potential CoIs with the committee as they begin their work

Case 32 – 26B

Closing the group for Computational Biology and Systems Medicine

The Computational Biology and Systems Medicine research group was established when Dr XXXXX joined NCMBM in October 2018. Following an evaluation in 2022/2023, the Board approved a second four-year period for the group in March 2023 (Case 9-23B). In line with NCMBM's 5+4-year recruitment model, the appointment of the Computational Biology and Systems Medicine research group has now reached the end of its term and is due to be closed at NCMBM.

The Director outlined the process for closing a group and noted that it was a loss to UiO and Norway that XXXX and group did not continue here. NCMBM will remind the surrounding scientific environments to be earlier at expressing their interest in NCMBM group leaders if they want to keep them in the country.

Decision:

The strategic initiative, the Computational Biology and Systems Medicine research group, will close in September 2027, in accordance with NCMBM's mandate and conditions.

Case 33 – 26D

Proposal for fostering collaboration in LVB

The Director presented a draft proposal for the UiO Science Open Call, focusing on building cohesion, collaboration and scientific convergence within the Life Science Building.

Collas noted that initiatives can lose momentum when they require substantial ongoing effort, and recommended starting with smaller, manageable activities. He offered to serve as a contact point for IMB in this matter.

Bjålie highlighted the importance of identifying individuals with responsibility for coordinating different activities, as this may represent a key challenge going forward. The potential benefits and incentives for those taking on these responsibilities should also be considered.

Butenko welcomed the initiative, while emphasising that staff who have recently moved into the building need time to settle in and should not be overloaded. She supported the idea to start with the proposed seminar series then gradually introducing additional elements. Saarela noted that the plan will be further developed and focused before the funding application is submitted, and that implementation will therefore take time. She stressed that co-location alone is not sufficient to ensure integration, and that NCMBM has a mandate to operate across the two faculties; the initiative is intended as a contribution towards this objective.

Butenko recommended that the plans be coordinated with the different Heads of Department. It was noted that the administrative staff already hold meetings for office managers in the building, and suggested establishing a similar meeting point for the Heads of Department.

	Decision: The Board noted the discussion and supports NCMBM in reaching out to LVB environments for further development of the proposal.
Case 34 – 260	Dates of NCMBM Board 2027 A Nettskjema with proposed meeting dates for 2027 has been circulated to Board members and is also linked below. The Board was asked to complete the survey at their earliest convenience: https://nettskjema.no/a/ncmbm-board-2027 Decision: The Board noted the update.
Case 35 – 260	NCMBM in the Life Science Building The Director provided an update on the most recent moving news. The relocation was completed successfully and took a total of three weeks, with the main physical move in week 33. There seems to be sufficient space for everyone, and unpacking has been completed. Most equipment and instrumentation are now in place, but not all is connected to necessary infrastructure. While some minor issues remain unresolved, overall satisfaction is high. Staff are particularly looking forward to being able to start working in the laboratories, and hopeful that this will happen soon. Decision: The Board noted the update.
Case 36-260	Any other business No items were reported.

Sincerely,

Jan Bjålie
 Chair NCMBM Board

Janna Saarela
 NCMBM Director