

Board, Centre for Molecular Medicine Norway (NCMM)

Oslo, 20 June 2022

Minutes from Board Meeting 15 June 2022

Time: Wednesday 15 June 2022, 12:00-14:30

Place: Room Aqua, Forskningsparken

Executive officer: Elisa Bjørge

	Present	Absent
Professor Jens Petter Berg (UiO/OUS), Chair	X	
Professor Arne Klungland (UiO), member	X	
Professor Hilde Nilsen (UiO), member	X	
Professor Bente Halvorsen (HSØ), member		X
Director Research & Innovation Øystein Krüger (HSØ), member	X	
Professor Ola Myklebost (UiB), national member	X	
Professor Magne Børset (NTNU), national deputy member		X
Dr. Torunn Berge (HSØ), deputy member		X
Professor Arnaldo Frigessi, deputy member		X
Professor Janna Saarela (NCMM), Director	X	

CAO Ingrid Kjelsvik was also present.

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

Case 14-22B Approval of minutes from last Board meeting

Draft minutes from the Board meeting on 5 April were available.

Decision: The minutes were approved.**Case 15-22O Call for new NCMM group leader in machine learning – update**

NCMM in March re-opened a call for a new group leader with a start-up package in machine learning. The call was adjusted according to discussions in previous Board meetings. When the application deadline closed 18 April, 10 applications had been received. The Evaluation Committee reviewed all candidates individually, and based on their accomplishments, potential to develop and sustain vibrant research programs as well as their compatibility with the scope of NCMM's current research, two candidates were invited for a digital interview. Based on the these interviews, the Director together with the Committee decided to stop this recruitment process and rather open the position again at a later stage. Both of the candidates have received individual feedback.

Decision: The Board took note of the meeting.

Case 16-22O Recruitment of Assistant Director – update

The former Assistant Director left NCMM in the fall 2021 and how to best fill this function in the future, has been discussed in previous Board meetings. With three computational research groups currently at NCMM and the wish to recruit also machine learning / AI expertise in the future, one option is for NCMM to hire an Assistant Director / senior PI with computational biology expertise. This would help strengthen NCMM's strategy and give further opportunities for both national and international collaboration. NCMM will prepare a call text and present it to the Board for feedback in the next meeting, where a more detailed time line for this recruitment process will also be presented.

The Board in the meeting emphasized NCMM's need to find its own niche and engage with already existing local and national environments rather than duplicating expertise. Furthermore, the Centre will benefit from hiring an Assistant Director with strong networking capabilities.

Decision: The Board took note of the briefing.

Case 17-22O Upcoming Group Leader evaluation. Exempt information cf. §13

Offentlighetsloven (Personnel case)

Group leader ***** joined NCMM 1 October 2018 and is approaching the fourth year in her first 5-year period. Criteria for the assessment for renewal in function as group leader at NCMM have previously been prepared as well as a procedure for the renewal process that was last dealt with by the Board in June 2019 (Case 23-19B). The procedure includes individual external evaluation of 4-6 experts in the field, followed by an assessment of the evaluations and the group's progress by the SAB. The next SAB visit is scheduled for 28 February – 1 March 2023. The NCMM Director will after this process promote a recommendation to the Board. In the beginning of May, ***** was invited to apply for renewal of their function as group leader by 1 November 2022. They were also given the opportunity to suggest scientific experts for the evaluation process as well as list experts they would prefer excluded from an expert list within 15 June.

NCMM asked the Board for additional international suggestions for scientific experts that NCMM can ask to contribute in the evaluation process of ***** (computational biology & systems medicine). Please send suggestions to NCMM before the next Board meeting. The Director will also ask the SAB for suggestions.

Decision: The Board took note of the briefing.

Case 18 -22O Overview of NCMM's finances - update

An overview of NCMM finances after the first 4-month period in 2022 compared to the NCMM prognosis at the end of the year was presented. Transferred funds from 2021 to 2022 are tied up and linked to obligations in relation to already employed group leaders, equipment investments and planned start-ups of new groups in the period 2022-2024. Overall, activity is getting back to normal. The biggest

uncertainty for NCMM is future financing as the RCN will not be able to continue contributing to the Centre's core funding beyond 2024.

Decision: The Board took note of the briefing.

Case 19-22O Strategy discussion on continuation of NCMM beyond 2024

NCMM currently is in its third 5-year funding period and receives core funding annually from UiO, RCN and HSØ until the end of 2024. The RCN has communicated that they will not be able to fund NCMM beyond 2024. NCMM on April 8 had a meeting with the rectorate at UiO to discuss the future of the Centre as well as renewal of the Nordic EMBL Partnership agreement (2023-2032). In general, UiO is positive about supporting NCMM, but future commitments are still to be discussed in more detail. The rectorate in the meeting also mentioned a need for an evaluation of NCMM before any decisions are being made, and NCMM is awaiting more information about this.

HSØ funding has previously been linked to the RNC funding, but future decisions can be based on NCMM's strategic positioning in relation to the health region's and health service's future expectations and needs. Board member Øystein Krüger volunteered to initiate an internal discussion at HSØ.

Decision: The Board took note of the briefing.

Case 20-22O Life Science Building - update

The building of the Life Science Building is ongoing, but due to the global situation, prices on building material etc. have increased significantly. The government in their revised national budget stopped or postponed several large building projects. For the LSB it has been decided to continue the building process until a closed shell is finished and reconsider the situation again then. The building process was already significantly delayed in 2020-2021, and there is a considerable risk that the LSB will not be finished by the end of 2026 when NCMM's lease with the Science Park expires.

The Science Park has previously communicated that the lease will not be extended beyond 2026, and NCMM will need support from UiO and in particular the Property Department to change this decision. UiO needs to re-negotiate the contract with the Science Park early enough so NCMM does not risk another eviction before the LSB is finished. NCMM is asking the Board to bring the matter to the Dean and the rectorate in order for UiO as part owners of the Oslo Science Park to start negotiations as soon as possible.

Decision: The Board took note of the briefing.

Case 21-22O Board meetings fall 2022

HSØ member Bente Halvorsen will be on a one-year sabbatical from 1 August 2022. In the meeting, the Board suggested that deputy member Torunn Berge should be asked to step in as member the next year.

Larissa Lily will schedule meetings for the autumn 2022.

Decision: Øystein Krüger will check with deputy member Torunn Berge whether she will be available as NCMM Board member the next year or not.

Case 22-22 Miscellaneous

The Board thanked Elisa Bjørgo for her service at NCMM as she is leaving her role at the end of July.

Sincerely,

Jens Petter Berg
Chair NCMM Board

Janna Saarela
NCMM Director