

Board, Centre for Molecular Medicine Norway (NCMM)
Oslo 23 October 2023

Minutes from Board Meeting 23 October 2023

Time: Wednesday 23 October 12:30-14:15
Place: NCMM meeting room KILO and on zoom

Executive officer: Ingrid Kjelsvik/Ragni Indahl

	Present	Absent
Professor Jens Petter Berg (UiO/OUS), Chair	X	
Professor Melinka Butenko (UiO), member	X	
Professor Hilde Nilsen (UiO), member	X	
Director Research & Diagnostics Lars Eikvar (HSØ), member	X	
Professor Magne Børset (NTNU), national deputy member		X
Dr. Torunn Berge (HSØ), member	X	
Professor Ola Myklebost (UiB), national member	X	
Senior Adviser Randi Vad (HSØ), deputy member		X
Professor Arnaldo Frigessi (UiO), deputy member		X
Group leader Anthony Mathelier (NCMM), Associate Director	X	
Professor Janna Saarela (NCMM), Director	X	

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

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Case 31-23B Approval of minutes from last Board meeting

Draft minutes from the Board meeting on 23 August were available.

Decision: The minutes were approved.

Case 32-23O EVALMEDHELSE 2023-2024

The Research Council of Norway (RCN) are just starting evaluating Norwegian medicine and health research (EVALMEDHELSE), as the second evaluation of two evaluations in their ongoing process of evaluating Norwegian life sciences 2022-2024. Newly hired ***** will coordinate NCMMs evaluation. NCMM will be evaluated as one administrative unit, and as one research group. The NCMM board approved of Terms of Reference for the assessment of NCMM, in June meeting. Two impact cases are to be prepared, in addition to the self-reports. The Director gave an update in the meeting.

Decision: The Board took note of the briefing.

Case 33-23O Personnel case – update

Exempt information cf. §13 Offentlighetsloven

An agreement has been made regarding the core facility. The Director gave an update in the meeting.

Decision: The Board took of the briefing and commented that the NCMM Board will work to ensure that agreements UiO has made with NCMM are actually honored.

Case 34-23O Work environment issue - Personnel case

Exempt information cf. §13 Offentlighetsloven

NCMM was informed of a serious work environment issue in August 2022. The case has been handled at UiO level, and a report is written. The NCMM Director gave an update on the case in the meeting.

Decision: The Board took note of the briefing.

Case 35-23O NCMMs financial report

NCMM finances after the second 4-month period in 2023. A report of NCMM finances by end of second 4-month period compared with prognosis was available at the meeting. Ingrid Kjelsvik gave an update.

Decision: The Board took note of the briefing.

Case 36-23B Long-term budget (LØP)

UiO is piloting a new tool for long-term budgeting, called LØP. MED and NCMM takes part in the pilot. NCMM's long-term budget (2025-2028) was presented and discussed at the meeting. Due to the uncertainties both regarding the future funding from HSØ and from UiO, and the freeze of positions in the interim period, the budget shows a variety of outcomes (bredde i utfallsområdet).

Decision: The NCMM long-term budget was approved, but the Board has several reservations. The Board wants to underline the how the variety of outcomes depends on the efficiency the NCMM mandate and funding scheme working group, as well as on what it decides; and on how NCMM will be allowed to work in the interim period – until the UiO Board finally has decided NCMMs new strategy and budget. All these aspects must be followed up closely.

Case 37-23O Strategy discussion on continuation of NCMM beyond 2024 - update

NCMM is in an interim period since RCNs decision to stop funding after 2024 – ongoing until UiO has decided on new mandate and funding scheme. The NCMM Director presented NCMM to the new Deanship at MED on March 6, and The Director and Chair of the Board attended a workshop organized by the Rector of UiO on March 17. There was also a workshop on June 26. Rectors' ambition for NCMM is to integrate NCMM better into UiO and he has set up a working group to put forth concrete suggestions for the future NCMM. The proposal to the UiO Board for setting up the working group describes the roles of the working group members and a timeline for work. The work group aim to finish this task in the first half of 2024. Which means a full year in an interim period. In this period, NCMM is hindered in keeping up the work by instructions from the Medical Faculty that NCMM must stop hiring until further instructions. The Director gave an update for the Board about the latest news. Because of the freeze of hiring, NCMM plans for a variety of outcomes, but all of them with a stagnation or reduction of activity. The good trajectory NCMM shows from

recent years, now risks to stagnate. Due to Boccaras ERC, some growth is still to be expected, so NCMM will fill up the lab space that are available. NCMM will also prepare calls, to roll out immediately – when the UiO Board makes their decision; hopefully to keep supporting a NCMM with a UiO budget on same level as before, in the spring of 24. Since NCMM will move to the new LS building – probably in 2026 – new group leader calls will be prepared for researchers who do not need a big wet lab.

Decision: The Board took of the briefing. It questioned why HSØ – as partner in the Consortium that runs NCMM – was not consulted before UiO started planning for the future NCMM or neither have been consulted by MED before they decided to freeze hiring at NCMM on the UiO-part of the budget. Even if NCMM is free to hire on HSØ-investment, the freeze effects the whole operation. The Board is also very concerned with the time of the process; delays will have strongly felt consequences. The Board supports NCMMs decision to prepare a call for computational biology or similar not-wet-lab group leader, to have ready, and are prepared to work efficiently when NCMM get the go to start hiring group leaders again.

Case 38-230 Miscellaneous

- Board meeting dates for 2024 – a doodle with suggested dates will be sent around soon.
- New hiring's at NCMM:
 - New HSE coordinator: *****
 - New permanent head for the section Strategy and communication: ***** – starts 15th of February 2024
 - Head for section Strategy and communication (substitute) – ***** has already started, to get some of the work started, and then overlap with *****. First tasks are EVALMEDHELSE and arrangement of the next Nordic EMBL partnership meeting

Sincerely,
Jens Petter Berg
Chair NCMM Board

Janna Saarela
NCMM Director