

Board, Centre for Molecular Medicine Norway (NCMM)
Oslo, 28 January 2022

Notice of NCMM Board Meeting

Time: Friday 4 February 2022, 12:00
Place: Zoom

Executive officer: Elisa Bjørgo

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

Case 1-22B Approval of minutes from last Board meeting

Draft minutes from the Board meeting on December 13 were available (Attachment 1).

Proposed

Decision: The minutes are approved.

Case 2-21O Hiring of NCMM group leaders – Update

Exempt information cf. §13 Offentlighetsloven (Personnel case)

NCMM is in the process of recruiting two new group leaders within the field of precision medicine. Interviews were held on November 22-23, and in the assessment from the local interview panel, four candidates were ranked for the position. The Board in their December meeting 2021 supported the recommendation from the committee and decided that the two highest-ranked candidates, *** and ***, should be offered the positions as research scientists in precision medicine with function as Group Leader (position code SKO 1109) on a five-year renewable contract, according to the call text.

The Director has had initial discussions with both candidates, and they both seem very positive to join NCMM. Contracts will be handed over to both candidate in the first half of February. Dr *** will come to Oslo for a second visit on February 7-8 and will have several meetings at NCMM as well as with potential collaboration partners at the Institute for Cancer Research at OUH. Dr *** has visited NCMM a second time already, and we are also organizing some additional meetings with potential collaboration partners for her. The Director will give an update in the meeting.

Proposed

Decision: The Board takes note of the briefing.

Case 3-21O New call for group leaders

NCMM in June 2021 opened a call for 2-3 new group leaders with start-up packages in precision medicine. In particular, NCMM was looking for candidates within AI/machine learning as well as within cell-based approaches. After the evaluation of all the applicants, the Evaluation Committee concluded that the quality of the applications for the AI/machine learning position was not good enough, and NCMM is therefore

now in the process of re-opening a call to recruit 1-2 group leaders with AI/machine learning expertise.

The Board in the December meeting supported the suggestion to open a more targeted call and a revised call text is enclosed (Attachment 2). NCMM welcomes input to the draft call text and aims to publish the call in February.

Proposed

Decision: The Board takes note of the briefing.

Case 4-210 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 already at the evaluation in 2018 communicated that they would not be able to continue funding NCMM beyond the third five year period through the current mechanism, and this was also repeated in a dialogue meeting in June 2021. The RCN would have to establish a new funding mechanism to be able to fund Norwegian EMBL Partnerships.

Before starting discussions with other funders, it will be important to have a clear funding commitment from UiO from 2025, and NCMM will initiate discussions with MED and the rectorate about future funding of NCMM in 2022. The Director will give an update in the meeting.

Proposed

Decision: The Board takes note of the briefing.

Case 5-210 National role of NCMM – update

1. Seed-funding call UiT

In June NCMM and UiT agreed to open a joint call for seed-funding of collaborative projects between NCMM group leaders and young researchers at Helsefak, UiT. Altogether, 1.2 mNOK has been allocated for this collaborative, and UiT opened the call in October. In December, four new collaborative projects were awarded seed-funding and the projects will run in 2022. This is a pilot project co-funded by NCMM and UiT and the Centre would be happy to discuss similar opportunities with UiB and NTNU.

2. ESFRI-memberships EATRIS and EU-OPENSREEN

NCMM is coordinating the Norwegian participation in two ESFRI-RIs: EATRIS and EU-OPENSREEN. The EATRIS membership fee has in the period 2016-2021 been covered by UiO, UiB, NTNU, UiT and the four Regional Health Authorities. However, end of 2020 the Regional Health Authorities and UiT and NTNU decided not to continue their contribution to EATRIS. UiO and UiB have guaranteed to cover the 85 000 Euro membership fee for 2022, but UiB has communicated that they will not be able to contribute to the 2023 fee. In December it was decided and NCMM and MED together will guarantee

for the 2023 EATRIS membership fee. Norway will, however, depend on a broader commitment to be able to stay a member state beyond 2023.

NOR-OPENSSCREEN is the Norwegian participant in EU-OPENSSCREEN and the membership fee for the first five years (2018-2022) has been covered through an RCN infrastructure grant. How to cover the membership fee from 2023 is now up for discussion. If the four Norwegian nodes together cannot find funding for the membership fee, Norway will have to send in a resignation letter to EU-OPENSSCREEN within March this year. An update about both memberships will be given in the meeting.

Proposed

Decision: The Board takes note of the briefing.

Case 6 Miscellaneous

Sincerely,

Jens Petter Berg
Chair NCMM Board

Janna Saarela
Director NCMM