

Board, Centre for Molecular Medicine Norway (NCMM)

Oslo, 30 April 2019

Minutes from Board Meeting April 29

Time: Monday 29 April 2019, 12:00-14:30

Place: NCMM, Oslo Science Park

Executive officer: Elisa Bjørge

	Present	Absent
Professor Jens Petter Berg (UiO/OUS), Chair	X	
Professor Finn-Eirik Johansen (UiO), member	X	
Professor Hilde Nilsen (UiO), deputy member	X	
Professor Bente Halvorsen (HSØ), member		X
Director Research & Innovation Øystein Krüger (HSØ), member	X	
Førsteamanuensis Maria Perander (UiT, national representative), member		X
Professor Ola Myklebost (UiB), national deputy member	X	
Dr. Torunn Berge (HSØ), deputy member	X	
Professor Janna Saarela (NCMM), NCMM Director	X	

Assistant Director Hartmut Luecke and CAO Ingrid Kjelsvik were also present.

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

Case 10-19O Presentations by NCMM group leaders

NCMM group leaders have since the beginning of 2018 had the possibility to present their research to the Board in the beginning of each Board meeting. Each group leader gets 5 minutes for a short presentation + 5 minutes for discussion. The group leaders have been asked to outline their main focus areas as well as to highlight what their main challenges are.

Emma Haapaniemi presented the main lines of her planned research in the meeting.

Decision: The Board takes note of the briefing.

Case 11-19B Approval of minutes from last Board meeting – decision on circulation

A draft minutes from the Board meeting on February 13 2019 was available.

Decision: The minutes are approved.

Case 12-19B Appointment of new SAB member

The NCMM Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) has 6 members and since 2017 Richard Treisman is the chair. Erich Nigg rotated out of the SAB after the visit in 2018. A list of potential new SAB candidates was approved by the Board in November 2018 (Case 58-18B). The NCMM Director aims to strengthen the

precision and systems medicine expertise in the SAB and Dr. George Vassiliou, Head of the Haematological Cancer Genetics Group at the Wellcome Sanger Institute, Hinxton, UK has agreed to join the NCMM SAB.

SAB member Margaret Frame will step down as Director at the Edinburgh Cancer Research Centre in 2019 and has therefore also asked to be replaced after the next SAB visit in October. She will therefore be replaced by the end of this year.

Decision: Dr. George Vassiliou is appointed as NCMM SAB member.

Case 13-19D New call for NCMM group leader

NCMM will start the recruitment process of a new research group that will be placed in the NCMM Translational Research department. The SAB has previously recommended that NCMM in future group leader recruitments consolidate the Centre's profile rather than investing in completely new areas. Furthermore, the evaluation report from 2018 recommends NCMM to establish a clear theme-based research structure and expand the recruitment strategy to attract also clinician scientists.

NCMM plans to recruit 3 new group leaders over the next three years and the Director aims to strengthen synergies within the Centre and build a community where more people at the Centre benefit from each other. The NCMM Director has discussed the first upcoming call with Institute Heads at both the MED and MN Faculties as well as with the Research Director at OUH to identify future needs and plans to recruit a group leader with experience in and a research program focusing on precision medicine and individualized diagnostics and therapy in areas such as genetic and rare diseases and/or individualized cancer therapy.

The Board supports the focus on synergy and thinks precision medicine is a good fit for the upcoming call. However, the Board recommends NCMM to specify preferred disease areas clearer in the call text and also suggests that applicants are asked to describe in more detail how they fit both with the NCMM profile and with the current research groups at the Centre. Furthermore, the Board recommends that the call text specifies collaboration opportunities with the existing group leaders as one of the selection criteria.

A final draft of the call will be presented to the Board in the next meeting in June.

Decision: The Board welcomes the efforts to create more synergy within NCMM and supports strengthening of precision medicine in the upcoming group leader call.

Case 14-19B Group leader evaluation – update

Group leader Camila Esguerra's first five year period ends on November 30 2019. 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 approved by the Board in November 2018 (Case 59-18B). The procedure includes

individual external evaluation of 4-6 experts in the field that are chosen from a list of approved experts, followed by an assessment of the evaluations and the group's progress by the SAB. The NCMM Director will after this process promote a recommendation to the Board.

Camila Esguerra has been informed that she can apply for renewal of her function as group leader by June 7, 2019. She has also been given the opportunity to suggest scientific experts for the evaluation process and her suggestions have been added to the list.

Based on the input received, a list of experts was presented to the Board and minor adjustments were made.

Decision: The Board approves the list according to discussions in the meeting.

Case 15-190 NCMM AI/YAI seed grants

The NCMM Associate and Young Associate Investigator network currently consist of 34 researchers. The NCMM Director has previously been authorized to allocate some strategic funds annually and the Centre also has a budget allocation for national activities every year. A call for seed funding of new collaborative projects opened end of 2018 and by the time the call closed March 15, NCMM received 13 applications. The total amount of funding applied was almost twice the amount earmarked for this.

The NCMM Director together with the Assistant Director has evaluated all the applications. One application where there was a CoI was evaluated by the Director and the Chair of the Board. Since there were many very good applications, and from so many different areas that direct comparison between them was challenging, the Committee decided to fully fund only the few best and partially fund most of the applications to allow initiation of the interesting projects proposed in the applications. Eleven new collaborative projects have been granted altogether 4 mNOK in seed-funding.

Decision: The Board takes note of the briefing.

Case16-190 Strategy discussion on continuation of NCMM – update

The Board already in the spring 2017 started a strategy discussion regarding the continuation of the Centre for a third 5-year period. As a national Centre, NCMM in coordination with its current owners wishes to explore the possibility of including all four Health Regions and all four universities with medical schools as owners in the Centre for the upcoming five-year period.

Rector Svein Stølen discussed an extended ownership of NCMM with the other university rectors at the U5 meeting in Tromsø in December 2018. He also invited the new NCMM Director and the Chair of the Board to discuss the continued process in a meeting in January. The NCMM Director visited Bergen in March and met both

the Research Dean at UiB as well as representatives from Helse Bergen. The plan is to also visit Tromsø soon and the NCMM Director has also been invited to present the Centre at the national Dean meeting in Lillehammer end of May.

It is critical to secure continued funding from the health region sector beyond 2019 and NCMM and the Board need to decide on a strategy very soon. An alternative to getting all health regions on board is to reach out to university hospitals. Furthermore, a new agreement should make sure that funding from other regions may stay locally as long as it is used for collaboration with NCMM.

Decision: The Board takes note of the briefing.

**Case 17-19B Upcoming group leader evaluations - Personnel case
Exempt information cf. §13 Offentlighetsloven

Decision: The upcoming evaluations end of 2020 will take place as planned.

Case 18-19O NCMM Board members

NCMM Board member Philippe Collas, representing UiO/MED, stepped down in January. Deputy member Hilde Nilsen has attended the Board meetings but the Faculty will have to appoint a new member or new deputy member as soon as possible. NCMM Board member Finn-Eirik Johansen, representing UiO/MN has stepped down as research dean but will continue as NCMM Board member.

Decision: The Board takes note of the briefing.

Case 19-19O Short briefings

1. *Annual NCMM network meeting*

The 4th annual NCMM network meeting for NCMM group leaders, Associate and Young Associate Investigators, Board members and stakeholders took place at Thon Hotel Opera on February 26-27. The meeting included a key note session about big data and its uses in basic research as well as a motivational talk on how good and effective communication can help to get the best out of your colleagues and team.

2. *NCMM Annual Report 2018*

The annual report for 2018 is in preparation and the printed reports will be ready for distribution in mid-May.

3. *EMBL Partnership Conference: Perspectives in translational medicine*

The 3rd EMBL Partnership Conference “Perspectives in Translational Medicine” will take place in Barcelona from 25-27 September 2019. The conference brings together EMBL and its partner institutes operating in the field of molecular medicine to enable exchange of expertise and build new collaborations and research networks.

4. *Dialogue meeting Faculty of Medicine*

NCMM management on April 9 had a dialogue meeting with the new Dean at the Faculty of Medicine and the Faculty management.

Decision: The Board takes note of the briefing.

Case 20 Miscellaneous

Sincerely,

Jens Petter Berg
Chairman NCMM Board

Janna Saarela
NCMM Director