

Board, Centre for Molecular Medicine Norway (NCMM)

Oslo, 11 December 2019

Minutes from Board Meeting December 11

Time: Wednesday 11 December 2019, 12:00-14:30

Place: NCMM, Oslo Science Park

Executive officer: Elisa Bjørgero

	Present	Absent
Professor Jens Petter Berg (UiO/OUS), Chair	X	
Professor Finn-Eirik Johansen (UiO), member	X	
Professor Hilde Nilsen (UiO), 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
Prof. Erlend Nagelhus (UiO), deputy member		X
Professor Janna Saarela (NCMM), Director	X	
Professor Hartmut Luecke (NCMM), Assistant Director	X	

NCMM CAO Ingrid Kjelsvik was also present.

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

Case 50-19B Approval of minutes from last Board meeting

Draft minutes from the Board meeting on November 1 2019 were available.

Decision: The minutes are approved.

Case 51-19B NCMM budget 2020

2020 is the first year in the third 5-year cycle for NCMM, and the budget has been prepared in accordance with funding agreements with the RCN, UiO and HSØ. The proposal provides the research groups with the agreed annual allocation for salary and operations. Furthermore, NCMM plans to invest in instrumentation for one newly recruited group leader in 2020, as well as for the Director to build up her research in Oslo. Some of the instrumentation purchases for the Assistant Director are delayed and will also take place in 2020. The reduction in funding from HSØ, effective from 2020, will be aimed compensated with funding from other health regions in Norway from 2021. The largest financial uncertainty for the Centre beyond the next 5 year period is the announced termination of funding from the RCN after 2024 and how to replace this going forward from 2025.

Decision: The 2020 budget is approved.

Case 52-190 Continuation of NCMM – update

The RCN in September 2018 confirmed that they will continue to fund NCMM for a third 5-year period as long as the two other current owners, UiO and HSØ, also commit to continue their funding. UiO in June 2019 confirmed their financial commitment for the period 2020-2024.

NCMM sent a position paper to HSØ regarding a strategic partnership between HSØ and NCMM in October. HSØ included financial support to a precision medicine initiative at NCMM in their upcoming budget and this budget was approved by the HSØ Board in their meeting on November 21. HSØ will commit for the third five-year period and a formal letter addressing this will be sent to NCMM.

NCMM is in the process of preparing a scientific and strategic plan, including milestones that address the recommendations from the RCN evaluation report last year as well as a financial plan and forward this plan to the RCN as requested before a new contract can be signed.

As a national Centre, NCMM in coordination with its current owners also wishes to include the other Health Regions and universities with medical schools as owners of the Centre for the upcoming five-year period. NCMM will write a short position paper addressed to the other regions and hope to be able to present this to all health regions at a strategy meeting for the research health regions. This work will have to continue in the beginning of 2020.

The Board asked for a draft activity plan for how to approach the other regions and how to reshape the NCMM national role within the next year. NCMM will prepare and present such a plan in the spring 2020.

Decision: The Board takes note of the briefing.

Case 53-190 Call for new NCMM group leader – Update

NCMM is in the process of recruiting a new group leader in precision medicine. The call was published in the beginning of July and when the call closed on September 15, 49 applications had been received. The selection committee in a phone conference on October 16 decided on rankings for interview and eight candidates were invited. All candidates accepted the invitation and interviews took place on December 2. In addition to the appointed evaluation committee, Prof. Hilde L. Nilsen and Dr. Anthony Mathelier were present during the interviews and together with the NCMM Director they constitute the local interview panel.

The statement from the evaluation committee has been sent to all the applicants with a 2 weeks deadline to comment. The local interview panel is in the process of preparing their assessment and recommendation to the Board. One candidate clearly stood out from the others and will be invited back for a second visit in January. Several of the highest ranked candidates have other offers or interviews and NCMM will have to be efficient in the hiring process. NCMM will therefore ask the Board to

approve the first ranked candidate by circulation before Christmas so an offer can be made to him for his second visit in January.

Decision: The Board takes note of the briefing.

Case 54-19D Upcoming INFRA call and cryoEM

In the plans for the new Life Science building, space has been allocated for cryoEM instrumentation. However, funding for the instrumentation has not been secured yet. UiO is currently preparing an infrastructure roadmap and with the plans for the new building, NCMM expects UiO to prioritize cryoEM highly in the new roadmap. In addition to the high initial investment cost, running a cryoEM facility will be expensive and requires specific expertise.

The next RCN application deadline for infrastructure is probably in less than a year with funding decisions in 2021-2022. A convincing cryoEM application to the next infrastructure call from the RCN will require a detailed financial and operational plan for development, usage and maintenance of the cryoEM core facility and a strong national consortium coordinating and supporting the national usage.

The focus and organization of such an application needs to be resolved at the highest UiO level, and the vice-rector should in collaboration with the research deans at MED and MN decide as soon as possible how to best organize a cryoEM application where UiO is lead and also where such an application should be rooted (e.g. Dept. of Chemistry). NCMM is willing to take the lead in organizing a solid national consortium as soon as possible and will support and contribute in the preparation of UiO's application.

The Chair of the Board will contact the vice-rector and will ask the NCMM management for input where needed.

Case 55-19O Recruitment of new SAB member

The NCMM Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) has 6 members, and since 2017 Richard Treisman is the chair. After the last SAB visit in October, Margaret Frame, who joined the SAB in 2014, rotated out and should be replaced before the next SAB visit. Since NCMM will have three group leaders up for evaluation end of 2020 / beginning of 2021, the next SAB visit should be scheduled as soon as possible.

A list of potential SAB members was prepared in 2018 when Prof. George Vassiliou was recruited. At least one and preferably two of the six SAB members should be female, and NCMM would therefore like to replace Margaret Frame with a new female member.

NCMM asks the Board for suggestions of new candidates that would fit with the NCMM profile within December 31. In addition, the SAB will also be asked for input, and an updated list of potential SAB members will be presented in the next Board meeting.

Decision: The Board takes note of the briefing.

Case 56-19B SAB report

The Scientific Advisory Board visited NCMM on October 22-23 and in the Board meeting in November the Director gave an oral summary from this visit and the initial feedback from the SAB. The final SAB report was released just before the last Board meeting, and the Board did not get enough time to read the report before the meeting. The report was therefore not discussed in detail in the November meeting and was discussed in more detail in this meeting.

In general, the SAB report was very positive and the most important task for this visit was the evaluation and extension of group leader ***. The SAB was also very satisfied with the visions and future plans of the new Director. Furthermore, the SAB members were impressed with the new group leaders and with the group leaders that are up for evaluation within the next year.

NCMM will use the SAB report as well as the RCN evaluation last year when preparing milestones and plans for the next 5 year period. The Board was satisfied with the report and the support NCMM receives from the SAB. In the meeting the importance of the clinical aspects were underscored. The lack of Norwegian group leaders was also addressed, and this is something NCMM and the Board need to discuss further in the next 5-period and when preparing new calls.

Decision: The Board acknowledges the report and will be available for the Director when she wants to address specific recommendations.

Case 40 Miscellaneous – parental leave Assistant Director

The Assistant Director will be on parental leave from the beginning of January 2020. He will be on a 60 % leave in the period January – June and plans to work 40 % in this period, sharing his working time between the assistant director tasks and leading his research group.

Sincerely,

Jens Petter Berg
Chair NCMM Board

Janna Saarela
NCMM Director