

Board, Centre for Molecular Medicine Norway (NCMM)

Oslo, 14 February 2019

Minutes from Board Meeting February 13

Time: Wednesday 13 February 2019, 12:00-14:30

Place: NCMM, Oslo Science Park

Executive officer: Elisa Bjørngo

	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 1-19O 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.

Judith Staerk and Janna Saarela presented the main lines of their research in the meeting.

**Decision:** The Board took note of the briefing.

**Case 2-19B Approval of minutes from last Board meeting – decision on circulation**

A draft minutes from the Board meeting on November 26 2018 was available.

**Decision:** The minutes are approved.

**Case 3-19B Overview of NCMM's finances**

The final accounts for 2018 were as planned and the results are according to the information given in the previous board meeting. Transferred funds from 2018 to 2019 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 2019-2023. These transferred funds are included in the next five-year budget and are necessary for the long-term budget to be in balance between 2019-2023 and for the Center to fulfill its obligations also beyond the current five-year period for NCMM Translational Research (after 2019). In January 2019 UiO:LifeScience informed NCMM that the two recruitment positions (1.6 mNOK per year) NCMM BiO has had since the MLS days, will be terminated with effect from 2019 and NCMM has cut planned costs accordingly. These positions will go into the Life Science portfolio and will be distributed via open calls in the future.

An overview of external funding was also presented. No NCMM group leaders currently have external funding from HSØ, and the HSØ Board members encourage NCMM group leaders with OUH affiliations to apply for external funding also from HSØ. The next call is in September 2019.

**Decision:** The Board takes note of the briefing.

**Case 4-190 SAB – update**

The NCMM Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) has 6 members and since 2017 Richard Treisman is the chair. Erich Nigg retired in 2017 and has previously informed NCMM that the SAB visit in February 2018 would be his last visit. The recruitment of his replacement as well as the planning of the next SAB visit has been postponed until a new NCMM Director was in place.

SAB member Margaret Frame was recruited to the SAB in 2014 and has also been involved in the recruitment processes of both the Assistant Director and the new Director. She will step down as Director at the Edinburgh Cancer Research Centre in 2019 and has therefore also asked to be replaced. She has agreed to continue until after the next SAB visit in 2019 but NCMM should start thinking about replacing her as well.

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 system medicine expertise in the SAB through the next recruitment.

Note that after the meeting, George Vassiliou, Head of the Haematological Cancer Genetics Group at the Wellcome Sanger Institute, Hinxton, UK agreed to join the NCMM SAB.

The next SAB visit will take place on October 22-23 2019.

**Decision:** The Board takes note of the briefing.

**Case 5-190 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 dealt with 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 in a letter dated January 22 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 within February 20.

NCMM welcomes suggestions on scientific experts also from the Board and will also contact the SAB. A list of 10-12 experts will be presented to the Board in our next meeting in April for approval.

**Decision:** The Board takes note of the briefing.

**Case 6-190 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.

The former NCMM Director visited the health regions in the spring to meet with representatives from the regional health authorities, university hospitals and universities with medical faculties. In June the Chair of the Board, the NCMM Director and Finn-Eirik Johansen had a meeting with UiO rector Svein Stølen, vice rector Per Morten Sandset and the Dean Frode Vartdal to inform them about the ongoing process and to ask the UiO leadership to drive this process towards the other regions throughout the fall. Moreover, a strategy meeting with Per Morten Sandset was also held in September to discuss the evaluation report and the continued process.

Rector Svein Stølen discussed an extended ownership of NCMM with the other university rectors at the U5 meeting in Tromsø on December 18 2018. He also invited the new NCMM Director and the Chair of the Board to discuss the continued process in a meeting on January 29.

The Board had a good discussion on how to move forward and NCMM will in collaboration with UiO management and HSØ follow up in the coming months.

**Decision:** The Board takes note of the briefing.

**Case 7-19D New call for NCMM group leader**

NCMM group leader Preben Morth in the spring 2018 informed NCMM that he had accepted a Professor position at DTU, Copenhagen from August 2018. Morth still has a 20% position at NCMM until August 2019 to phase out his research group here.

NCMM now wants to 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.

The NCMM Director has had initial discussions about the group leader recruitment with the group leaders and aims to build a community where more people at the Centre benefit from each other. The Director would like to strengthen precision medicine in different forms as well as expertise in bioinformatics and machine learning/deep learning.

The Board also specified that NCMM needs to have a strategy that looks into the future and that also plans for where NCMM should be from 2024 when the Centre moves into the new life science building. It was suggested that NCMM also considers opening a topical call for the next recruitment.

The NCMM Director has initiated discussions with the Faculties and will also contact OUH before drafting a call text. A draft call text will be presented in the next meeting and NCMM aims to open the call before the summer.

**Decision:** The Board takes note of the briefing.

**Case 8-19O New Life Science Building – update**

NCMM will move into the new Life Science building in 2024.

Detailed planning of lab space a.o. is in process and the planning of NCMM's areas has been merged with the planning of the general life science labs, led by Carl Henrik Gørbitz. Due to the placement of the structural biology unit close to NCMM, part of the NCMM area has been moved to level 6 and this will affect our planning somewhat. NCMM should also collaborate closely with the structural biology unit about future needs.

Janna Saarela has had a meeting with Carl Henrik Gørbitz to discuss NCMM areas and she will also take part in the continued process throughout the spring.

The NCMM Director fears that the planning is too detailed at this stage and emphasizes that the most important thing is to build a flexible building where needs are easy to adjust when research groups rotate in and out of the building.

**Decision:** The Board takes note of the briefing.

**Case 9-19    Miscellaneous**

Sincerely,

Jens Petter Berg  
Chairman NCMM Board

Janna Saarela  
NCMM Director