

Board, Centre for Molecular Medicine Norway (NCMM)

Oslo, 17 September 2018

Minutes from Board Meeting September 17

Time: Monday 17 September 2018, 12:00-14:30

Place: NCMM, Oslo Science Park

Executive officer: Elisa Bjørgero

| | Present | Absent |
|--|---------|--------|
| Professor Jens Petter Berg (UiO/OUS), Chair | X | |
| Professor Philippe Collas (UiO), member | | X |
| Professor Finn-Eirik Johansen (UiO), member | X | |
| Professor Hilde Nilsen (UiO), deputy member | X | |
| Professor Bente Halvorsen (HSØ), member | X | |
| Acting 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 Hartmut Luecke (NCMM), Acting Director | X | |

CAO Ingrid Kjelsvik was also present.

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

Case 36-18O All NCMM group leaders will throughout 2018 get the possibility to present their research to the Board in a 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.

Sandra Lopez-Aviles presented the main lines of her research in the meeting.

Decision: The Board took note of the briefing.

Case 37-18B Approval of minutes from last Board meeting – decision on circulation
Draft minutes from the Board meetings on June 11 and 19 were available. The UiO Hiring Board asked for approved minutes in relation to the recruitment of a new NCMM Director and their upcoming meeting in September. The minutes were therefore sent out in the beginning of August to get an approval via circulation.

Decision: The decision to approve the minutes from the Board meetings on June 11 and 19 made via circulation on August 13 was confirmed.

Case 38-18B NCMM Evaluation Report

NCMM is in its second 5-year period and was externally evaluated on June 18-19. The Research Council organized the evaluation and the evaluation report was released on September 13. Overall, the Centre as a whole has been rated as “very good/excellent”. The report highlights areas of particular excellence, including the successful recruitment of high-caliber group leaders, the Centre’s growing capacity - as evidenced by its outstanding technological platforms - and also its future scientific strategy. Other areas rated highly include the translation between basic medical research and clinical practice, and the strong collaborative links established with hospitals. Furthermore, NCMM’s financial strategy, as well as its organization and the strategic role it plays as a national Centre for molecular medicine research, were also rated as “excellent/very good”. The way that NCMM has adopted the EMBL model for recruitment, and the integral part that NCMM now plays in the University of Oslo’s Life Science initiative, were also highlighted as areas of excellence.

The evaluation committee has also incorporated several strategic recommendations in the report, including recommendations to expand the recruitment strategy to attract more clinicians, establishing a clear theme-based research structure, establishing a mentoring scheme to guide group leaders through career thinking, ERC funding and publications strategy as well as establishing a strategy for retention of successful talent.

The evaluation committee highly recommends the RCN as well as the other owners to continue their financial support of the Centre. The RCN has therefore decided to fund NCMM for a third 5-year period (2020-2024) with altogether 65 mNOK provided that NCMM follows up the recommendations made by the evaluation committee and a binding agreement with other consortium participants are in place. NCMM will now prepare a scientific as well as a strategic plan, including milestones where the Centre addresses the suggested recommendations. The RCN will prepare a new contract as soon as the above conditions are met.

The Board discussed the report extensively in the meeting and supports the conclusions. The Board will work together with the Acting Director, the NCMM administration as well as with the incoming Director so NCMM can deliver the requested material as soon as possible.

Decision: The Board supports the evaluation report and will collaborate closely with the NCMM management as well as the incoming Director in order for NCMM to deliver the requested material.

Case 39-18O 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. A possibility to expand the ownership of NCMM has been presented to representatives from the regional health authorities, university hospitals and universities with medical faculties. The aim is

for each region to take greater ownership of NCMM as a national center. The details of a potential extension on the ownership side and how the financial contribution would be organized will have to be subject of future negotiations.

On June 22, the Chairman 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 forward this fall. A strategy meeting with Per Morten Sandset is also planned on September 24. Now that the evaluation report has been released, it will be very important to secure financial commitment for the next 5-year period also from UiO and HSØ/other regional health authorities and universities with medical faculties and these process needs to be prioritized highly this fall.

Decision: The Board takes note of the briefing.

Case 40-18B Overview of NCMM's finances

An overview of the NCMM accounts after the second 4-month period in 2018 compared to the NCMM prognosis at the end of the year was presented. The finances at NCMM are mainly as budgeted but the income from the Chemical Biology Platform is significantly lower in 2018 than first budgeted. Furthermore, there was originally a substantial allocation of funds for investment in new instrumentation linked to new group leaders, as well as to replace essential instrumentation when the Taskén-group rotates out. These funds have still not been used. The moving date for the Taskén-group is set for 17 October and it is therefore still unclear if all the investments will take place in 2018. The prognosis for end of the year 2018 has been updated to reflect these changes.

Decision: The Board takes note of the briefing.

**Case 41-18O Recruitment NCMM Director – assessment. Personnel case
Exempt information cf. §13 Offentlighetsloven**

The NCMM Director in November 2017 handed in his resignation to become Head of the Institute of Cancer Research at OUH from January 2018. In a transition period until 30 June 2018, Taskén had a 40% position as NCMM Director and 80% position at OUH. From July 2018 Hartmut Luecke is Acting Director at NCMM.

The Director position was advertised in February with an application deadline 15 March. Interviews took place on June 7 and the local interview committee in their assessment ranked two candidates for the position. The NCMM Board in their meeting on June 19 recommended the ranking made by both the evaluation committee and the local interview panel. Furthermore, the Hiring Board at the Faculty of Medicine on June 26 approved this recommendation. A final decision will be made by the University Hiring Board on September 25.

The chairman of the Board has started negotiations with the first ranked candidate that visited Oslo for a second time on August 31. A formal offer will be sent to the candidate as soon as an official decision has been made by the University Hiring Board.

Decision: The Board takes note of the briefing.

Case 42-180 RCN Research Infrastructure Call

The RCN currently has an open call for research infrastructure where qualified applicants who submitted their mandatory outlines in May now can submit their applications within October 10.

Researchers at NCMM are involved in three different infrastructure applications to be submitted within October 10: NOR-OPENSSCREEN Phase 2 (Chemical Biology Platform), CryoEM (Luecke) and LABFISH (Esguerra).

Decision: The Board takes note of the briefing.

Case 43-180 New call for NCMM AI/YAI seed grants

The Board in November 2017 appointed altogether 11 NCMM Associate and Young Associate Investigators (Case 38-17B). NCMM now wants to stimulate closer collaboration between NCMM group leaders and the extended network. 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. NCMM therefore plans to allocate 4-5 million NOK to new collaborative projects between NCMM's group leaders and AIs/YAIs in 2019. NCMM will inform group leaders and AIs/YAIs this fall and open a call for seed funding in December 2018.

Decision: The Board takes note of the briefing.

Case 44-18B Mentoring of NCMM group leaders

Each group leader at NCMM has in cooperation with the Director established contact with both a local and an international mentor. Whereas the international mentor should give general career guidance as well as scientific advice within a certain research field, the local mentor should in addition facilitate networking locally and help with understanding the host organization and career development in the host institution, making it easier for the international group leaders to settle into the Norwegian university system.

NCMM sees a need to engage local mentors more thoroughly and wanted to discuss how to best do this. Most NCMM group leaders are recruited from renowned institutions abroad and sometimes there is an expectation gap as well as cultural differences that can result in misunderstandings and disappointments.

The Board suggests to do a survey among the group leaders and ask them what they would like their local mentors to help them with. Furthermore, it was suggested that NCMM schedules 2-3 initial meetings between new group leaders and their local mentors to make sure they get to know each other. The mentorship arrangement should also be formalized more than what is the case today, and NCMM should therefore prepare a mentor instruction with detailed to-the-point information regarding the start-up phase and the needs of the group leaders at the Centre.

Decision: The Board recommends NCMM to prepare a survey among the group leaders to identify the most important needs. Furthermore, the Board recommends NCMM to prepare a detailed mentor instruction to be distributed among all the local mentors.

Case 45-180 Nordic EMBL Partnership network meeting

NCMM on September 11-14 hosted the 9th Nordic EMBL Partnership Meeting. The conference took place at Soria Moria and 140 participants from the three other Nordic nodes and EMBL participated.

Decision: The Board takes note of the briefing.

Case 46-18 Miscellaneous

Sincerely,

Jens Petter Berg
Chairman NCMM Board

Hartmut Luecke
NCMM Acting Director