

Board, Centre for Molecular Medicine Norway (NCMM)

Oslo, 18 September 2020

Minutes from Board Meeting 18 September 2020

Time: Friday 18 September, 12:00-14:30

Place: Room Aqua, Oslo Science Park

Executive officer: Elisa Bjørgo

	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
Professor Arnaldo Frigessi, deputy member		X
Professor Janna Saarela (NCMM), Director	X	
Professor Hartmut Luecke (NCMM), Assistant Director	X	

CAO Ingrid Kjelsvik was also present.

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

Case 28-200 Presentations by NCMM group leaders

In the fall 2019, the Board decided to invite group leaders to present regularly at Board meetings where they will be given the opportunity to present e.g. key points regarding group leader issues.

Sebastian Waszak, who joined NCMM in March, attended the beginning of the meeting and shortly presented his research program to the Board.

Decision: The Board takes note of the briefing.

Case 29-20B Approval of minutes from last Board meeting

Draft minutes from the Board meeting on May 25 were available.

Decision: The minutes are approved.

Case 30-190 Overview of NCMM's finances

An overview of the NCMM accounts after the second four month period in 2020 compared to the NCMM prognosis at the end of the year was presented. Transferred funds from 2019 to 2020 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 2021-2024. CAO Ingrid Kjelsvik gave an update in the meeting, also describing the economic consequences of covid-19 and the ongoing moving process at NCMM.

Decision: The Board takes note of the briefing.

Case 31-20B Appointment of new SAB member

The NCMM Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) has 6 members and since 2017 Richard Treisman is the chair. Margaret Frame rotated out of the SAB after the last SAB visit in October 2019.

The Board in May approved a list of potential new SAB candidates (Case 25-20B) and there suggested that NCMM in the recruitment process considers diversity both regarding research fields, age bracket of members and where in Europe they are located, when recruiting a new member.

Dr. Judith Zaugg, Head of the personalized genomics research group to study genetic basis of complex diseases, at EMBL-Heidelberg, Germany, in August agreed to join the NCMM SAB.

Decision: The Board appoints Dr. Judith Zaugg as NCMM SAB member.

Case 32-200 Call for new Associate Investigators

The network of NCMM Associate Investigators (AIs) was established in 2011 and altogether four calls have previously been open for new Associate and Young Associate Investigators. NCMM is now in its third 5-year period and in March, the Board reappointed 21 AIs after an application process.

NCMM in June opened a fifth call for both senior and more early-career Associate Investigators with an application deadline end of August. Clinicians were especially encouraged to apply. When the deadline closed, NCMM had received altogether 42 applications, located in Tromsø, Trondheim, Bergen and Oslo.

The Board in May gave NCMM the mandate to contact the different regions to put together an evaluation committee, and in addition to the NCMM Director, the research deans Marit Bakke (UiB), Pål Romundstad (NTNU) and Johanna Sollid (UiT) as well as Hilde Nebb, vice-dean for internationalization and innovation at UiO has agreed to be part of the evaluation committee.

The committee is in the process of evaluating the applications individually and a TC will take place on October 7 to decide on ranking of candidates in both the senior and

early-career bracket. The committee will present a recommendation to the Board in the October meeting, and the Board will decide on the total number of new appointments.

Decision: The Board takes note of the briefing.

Case 33-20B Upcoming group leader evaluations

Three group leaders are in their final year of their first 5-year period at NCMM. 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. The procedure includes individual external evaluation by 4-6 experts in the field, followed by an assessment of the evaluations and the group's progress by the SAB. Finally, the NCMM Director will promote a recommendation to the Board.

In June, the three group leaders were invited to apply for renewal of their function as group leaders by 1 December 2020. Furthermore, they have also been given the opportunity to suggest scientific experts for the evaluation process as well as list experts they would prefer excluded from an expert list. For the latter a justification must be included.

NCMM is now asking both the Board and the SAB for suggestions of international scientific experts that NCMM can ask to contribute in the evaluation process. NCMM plans to present final lists of scientific experts in the next Board meeting.

Decision: The Board takes note of the briefing and will forward suggestions of international scientific experts to the NCMM management before the next Board meeting end of October.

Case 34-20O Building plans in the Oslo Science Park - update

The Oslo Science Park is planning to both build some additional floors to building D as well as renovate the façade for this building. This will affect 50% of NCMM's rented space in the Oslo Science Park. The building process will start in February 2021.

The NCMM Director gave an update in the meeting. NCMM will not be able to move all activities into existing areas in house E (former BiO areas) before moving to the new Life Science Building in 2025. In June, it was decided that the research group of Hartmut Luecke will be relocated to IBV and renovation of the new lab space there is in process. The two other research groups in the D-building will move into NCMM's current lab areas in house E. The visiting research group of Lorena Arranz, who have partly stayed in Oslo due to the temporary closing of the animal facility in Tromsø, will move back to UiT by the end year. Furthermore, NCMM will get some additional office space in the Oslo Science Park. NCMM has since August hired a temporary moving coordinator that will follow up on practical matters and that will also monitor the renovation process at IBV to avoid delays in a very tight time schedule.

Decision: The Board takes note of the briefing.

Case 35-200 Life Science Building – update

End of August, the UiO rector sent an e-mail to all UiO staff, informing about the challenges related to ground conditions and Statsbygg's planning work in connection with the Life Science Building project. The government has informed Statsbygg/UiO that the project must take significant cuts in order to stay within its economic frames. The Ministry of Education and Research has therefore commissioned Statsbygg and UiO to review the project as well as highlight consequences of cuts.

A UiO working group headed by the vice-rector Per Morten Sandset and where NCMM is represented, are currently preparing a response to the Ministry, suggesting possible scenarios to significantly reduce costs, including down-scaling of areas and activities as well as relocation of some activities to other areas at UiO. Statsbygg is also preparing their suggestions to cut costs. Statsbygg/UiO will send a final response to the Ministry within 30 September, highlighting also the consequences of the suggested cuts.

Decision: The Board takes note of the briefing.

Case 36-200 National role of NCMM - update

As a national Centre, NCMM aims to include the other Health Regions and universities with medical schools as owners of the Centre from 2021. The plans to visit Tromsø, Bergen and Trondheim early fall have been paused due to the increased Covid-19 infection rates in Norway. The other universities have, however, been contacted and have received a position paper, addressing a strategic partnership with NCMM. The health regions will also be contacted in the near future, and the NCMM Director will reach out to all regions and suggest online meetings to initiate more detailed discussions.

One of the national functions of NCMM is to coordinate the Norwegian EATRIS (European Research Infrastructure for Translational Research) network. Norway became a full member of EATRIS in 2016 for a period of 5 years (2016 – 2020), and the annual membership fee has so far been funded by the eight partner institutions UiO, UiB, NTNU, UiT and the four health regions. Continuation of the EATRIS membership is currently up for discussion and it seems unlikely that the current partners are willing to continue to fund the EATRIS membership fee moving beyond 2021. NCMM is in dialogue with the vice-rector of UiO, HOD and the Research Council regarding the challenges of finding funding for the membership fee going forward and consequences for projects initiated in collaboration with EATRIS.

Proposed

Decision: The Board takes note of the briefing.

Case 37 Miscellaneous

Sincerely,

Jens Petter Berg
Chair NCMM Board

Janna Saarela
NCMM Director