

Board, Centre for Molecular Medicine Norway (NCMM)

Oslo, 22 April 2021

Minutes from Board Meeting 21 April 2021

Time: Wednesday 21 April, 12:00-14:30

Place: Zoom meeting

Executive officer: Larissa Lily/Elisa Bjørgero

	Present	Absent
Professor Jens Petter Berg (UiO/OUS), Chair	X	
Professor Arne Klungland (UiO), member	X	
Professor Hilde Nilsen (UiO), member	X	
Professor Bente Halvorsen (HSØ), member	X	
Director Research & Innovation Øystein Krüger (HSØ), member	X	
Professor Ola Myklebost (UiB), national member	X	
Professor Magne Børset (NTNU), 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 9-21B Approval of minutes from last Board meeting

Draft minutes from the Board meeting on January 27 were available.

Decision: The minutes were approved.

Case 10-21B Scientific Advisory Board visit

The SAB meeting on March 22-24 was held online due to the ongoing lockdown and travel restrictions. The SAB heard presentations from and discussed with three group leaders up for evaluation. A presentation by and discussion with the group leader up for the next evaluation was also scheduled. During the meeting, the SAB also talked to NCMM postdocs and PhD students, had one-on-one meetings with all the group leaders and had a meeting with NCMM Board members. Before the meeting, written material was also made available to the SAB both at a Centre level and from all research groups.

Overall, the SAB report was positive, and the SAB seems satisfied with the research activities taking place at the Centre. The SAB approves of NCMM's current research strategy and recommend continuing with this approach. Furthermore, the SAB recommend extension of all the three evaluated research groups for a second four-year period. The SAB also recognized some future challenges, including renewal of the

Nordic EMBL Partnership agreement, core funding of NCMM beyond 2024 and the move to the new Life Science building.

In the report, the SAB also list some recommendations, including reviewing NCMM's operational model to address the challenges listed above as well as strengthening the integration of group leaders into a wider research environment. The goal is to ensure that more NCMM group leaders rotate out of NCMM to permanent positions at the university or elsewhere in Norway once their term at NCMM ends. Recommendations were also made regarding the upcoming group leader recruitments. Moreover, the SAB included some practical suggestions such as strengthening the follow-up and mentoring of PhD students internally in addition to evaluations already offered by the UiO PhD programs.

In the meeting, NCMM's focus on precision medicine, and how the Centre best can align with already ongoing national initiatives within this area, were discussed. The Board will help to foster NCMM involvement where possible.

It was in the meeting decided that specific recommendations will be addressed as separate cases in future Board meetings. Furthermore, the Board also discussed what would be the optimal timing for future group leader evaluations, and the consensus was that the evaluation should take place around four years after joining NCMM when possible.

Decision: The Board acknowledges the SAB report and will be available for the Director when she wishes to discuss specific recommendations in the future.

Case 11-21B Processing of the application from and evaluation of *'s research group for reappointment in function as group leader. Personnel case - Exempt information cf. §13 Offentlighetsloven.**

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 September 2019 (Case 36-19B).

In line with the procedure for the renewal process, the SAB has performed an assessment of ***'s application and compared it with the scientific development during the years been at NCMM. Furthermore, the SAB has, together with the NCMM Director, in a meeting on 24 March gone through the expert assessments in order to be able to make a joint assessment set out in a separate statement.

The Board is grateful for the thorough evaluations by the external scientific experts and the SAB and is pleased to notice Dr. ***'s scientific progress and the positive reviews and recommendations. The Board supports the SAB recommendation unanimously.

Decision: The NCMM research group on *** is extended for a four-year period. Dr.

*** is reappointed as group leader for the same period and with a group budget as for previous renewals at NCMM.

Case 12-21B Processing of the application from and evaluation of *'s research group for reappointment in function as group leader. Personnel case - Exempt information cf. §13 Offentlighetsloven.**

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 September 2019 (Case 36-19B).

In line with the procedure for the renewal process, the SAB has performed an assessment of ***'s application and compared it with the scientific development during the years been at NCMM. Furthermore, the SAB has, together with the NCMM Director, in a meeting on 24 March gone through the expert assessments in order to be able to make a joint assessment set out in a separate statement.

The Board is grateful for the thorough evaluations by the external scientific experts and the SAB and is pleased to notice Dr. ***'s scientific progress and the positive reviews and recommendations. The Board supports the SAB recommendation unanimously.

Decision: The NCMM research group on *** is extended for a four-year period. Dr. *** is reappointed as group leader for the same period and with a group budget as for previous renewals at NCMM.

Case 13-21B Processing of the application from and evaluation of *'s research group for reappointment in function as group leader. Personnel case - Exempt information cf. §13 Offentlighetsloven.**

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 September 2019 (Case 36-19B).

In line with the procedure for the renewal process, the SAB has performed an assessment of ***'s application and compared it with the scientific development during the years been at NCMM. Furthermore, the SAB has, together with the NCMM Director, in a meeting on 24 March gone through the expert assessments in order to be able to make a joint assessment set out in a separate statement.

The Board is grateful for the thorough evaluations by the external scientific experts and the SAB and is pleased to notice Dr. ***'s scientific progress and the positive reviews and recommendations. The Board supports the SAB recommendation unanimously.

Decision: The NCMM research group on *** is extended for a four-year period. Dr. *** is reappointed as group leader for the same period and with a group budget as for previous renewals at NCMM.

Case 14-21O Personnel case - Exempt information cf. §13 Offentlighetsloven.

Case 15-21D New call for NCMM group leaders

Two NCMM research groups are in their final year at NCMM, and the Centre therefore plans to open new group leader positions in June 2021. The SAB has previously recommended that NCMM in future group leader recruitments consolidate the Centre's profile rather than investing in completely new areas. In the most recent SAB report, it is also recommended that NCMM keep a strong base of researchers working with cell-based systems to complement work on disease genetics, informatics and computation. 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 upcoming group leader recruitment with the group leaders. Furthermore, meetings with institute heads both at MED and MN as well meetings at OUH and Ahus have been held in February-March to discuss the upcoming call, future plans for NCMM and to see if there are matching interests in the wider Oslo region. NCMM aims to get more Norwegian candidates to apply.

A draft call text has been prepared, suggesting recruitment of future scientific leaders in areas complementing the current strengths of NCMM: AI/Machine Learning tackling human diseases, Stem cell / iPS cell science and disease, High Throughput Single-Cell and Cell-based Systems approaches. NCMM plans to open the call in June and a final call text will be presented in the next Board meeting. The application deadline will be in September and the aim is to organize interviews before Christmas this year.

Decision: The Board supports the suggested research areas in the draft call text and gives NCMM the mandate to continue the process as suggested in the meeting.

Case 16-21O Life Science Building - update

Parts of OUH's research activities will be localized in the Life Science Building and discussions are now ongoing, regarding localization of both OUH and UiO environments. Furthermore, as a result of less space for UiO activities, cuts and internal moves are also being planned. This is affecting NCMM that risks to both become fragmented as well get a significant reduction in the allocated space.

The UiO leadership has confirmed that NCMM will be given sufficient space in the Life Science Building. However, until a dedicated area has been specified, NCMM is still concerned about future operations in the new building.

Decision: The Board supports NCMM's request to have sufficient space in the Life Science building to be able to continue its operations at the same level as today.

Furthermore, the Board agrees that the allocated space should be as collected as possible and not distributed across several fields of the building.

Case 17-21O 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. A position paper, addressing a strategic partnership with NCMM has previously been sent to the health regions as well as to UiB, UiT and NTNU. On March 4, the NCMM Director presented the Centre at a meeting for the regional health authorities' strategy group for research, but little time for discussions was available after the presentation. Øystein Krüger will contact the working committee (AU) and ask how to best follow up on this matter going forward.

The NCMM Director is currently also discussing with Tromsø on how to increase collaborations between UiT and NCMM. One possibility is that UiT allocates some funding for a seed-funding call for collaborative projects.

Decision: The Board takes note of the briefing.

Case 18-21B Overview of finances

An overview of NCMM accounts for 2020 was presented. Transferred funds from 2020 to 2021 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. Due to the pandemic, less funding than planned was spent on travels, conferences and other gatherings. Furthermore, infrastructure investments have been delayed due to the move and reduced available space. The moving has also delayed research activities, especially for one of the research groups.

Decision: The Board takes note of the briefing.

Case 19-21O Health, Safety and Environment – regular updates

The annual HSE report was submitted to the Faculty 1 March. In addition, an overview of reported deviations in 2020 was included as previously requested by the Board. No serious incidents were reported in 2020. CAO Ingrid Kjelsvik gave an update about this and ongoing HSE issues in the meeting, including an update about the asbestos situation at Kristine Bonnevie's House where the Luecke group is now located.

Decision: The Board takes note of the briefing.

Sincerely,

Jens Petter Berg
Chair NCMM Board

Janna Saarela
NCMM Director