

Minutes from NordForsk 63rd Board meeting Zoom-meeting, 19 October 2020, 12:00 – 16:00 CEST

Present:

Board Members:

Kloo, Lars	Swedish Research Council (Chair)
Danielsen, Kristin	The Research Council of Norway
Haanes, Vidar	Nordic University Cooperation (NUS)
Helgadóttir, Ragnhildur	Science and Technology Policy Council of Iceland
Vauhkonen, Jussi	Academy of Finland

Observers and guests:

Begtrup, Jens	NordForsk Administration (staff representative)
Björck, Jonas	The Swedish Research Council Forte (Item 1)
Holmberg, Daniel	Nordic Council of Ministers
Sølvará, Annika	The Faroese Research Council (until 13:15)
Mattila, Johanna	Åland University of Applied Sciences
Mogensen, Johnny	Danish Ministry of Higher Education and Sciences
Reimer, Gitte Adler	University of Greenland

Not present:

Agerhus, Gitte	Danish Ministry of Higher Education and Sciences
Springfeldt, Christina	Nordic Council of Ministers

Present from the NordForsk Administration:

Flåøyen, Arne
Aanes, Guttorm
Heimonen, Mikael
Minge, Marianne Aastebøl (Minutes)
Bjarnar, Siri
Herou, Anna (Item 8)

01 BM 20/1001

Approval of the Agenda. Any conflict of interest to be announced

The Chair opened the meeting and the meeting participants presented themselves. Ragnhildur Helgadóttir declared a conflict of interest for Item 7: "Funding decision: Nordic Health Data Research Projects on Covid-19".

Action:

The agenda was approved. The conflict of interest was noted (see also 07 BM 20/1007).

02 BM 20/1002

Quorum

The Board has quorum when at least 50% of the board members, i.e. minimum three members, are present.

Action:

The Board noted quorum with four board members present for Item 7, and five board members present for the other items.

03 BM 20/1003

Approval of the minutes from the Board meetings on 2 June 2020

The Board has had the chance before the meeting to make corrections and changes to the minutes. No further modifications were suggested.

Action:

The minutes were approved.

04 BM 20/1004

Report to the NCM for the first half of the year including accounts per June 2020

Arne Flåøyen presented the half year report submitted to the Nordic Council of Ministers. The report consists of two parts: accounts and comments to deviations from the plan. No major deviations are reported. The report was discussed at a dialogue meeting with the NCM in September this year.

Action:

The Board was notified.

05 BM 20/1005

Researchfish

In the per capsulam decision 4-2020 (see 15 BM 20/1015), the Board decided that NordForsk should enter into a licence and services agreement with Researchfish for three years. Guttorm Aanes presented Researchfish, and informed that NordForsk will implement Researchfish in the fourth quarter of 2020. The Board gave their input to the process and implementation, emphasising the importance of carefully considering the concept of impact to avoid a simplistic approach.

Action:

The Board was notified. The NordForsk administration will take into account the comments given from the Board in the implementation and development process for Researchfish.

06 BM 20/1006

NordForsk 2021-2024

Arne Flåøyen presented the status for open invitation, the long-term prognosis, and the documentation that was the background for the discussions that took place in the joint NordHorcs-NordForsk Board meeting 8 October. The Board discussed the issues, addressing specifically the Open invitation mechanism and how to develop this further.

Action:

The Board was notified of the status for open invitation and the long-term prognosis. The Board asked the NordForsk administration to contact the national funders for feedback on how the Open invitation mechanism can be developed to better align with the national processes for budgets and prioritisations.

07 BM 20/1007

Funding decision: Nordic Health Data Research Projects on Covid-19

Ragnhildur Helgadóttir had declared a conflict of interest for this board item. She left the Zoom-meeting and was not part of the discussions or decision.

Arne Flåøyen presented the recommendations from the Call Committee regarding funding of projects under the call for Nordic Health Data Research Projects on Covid-19.

Action:

The Board decides to fund five research projects under the Nordic Health Data Research Projects on Covid-19 Call:

- **105544: Addressing the smoking paradox in the etiology of COVID-19 through population-based studies with up to 9.96 MNOK**
- **105545: SCOPE- Scandinavian studies of COvid-19 in Pregnancy with up to 10 MNOK**
- **105572: Data streams and mathematical modelling pipelines to support preparedness and decision making for COVID-19 and future pandemics with up to 9.33 MNOK**
- **105668: Mental morbidity trajectories in COVID-19 across risk populations of five nations with up to 9.99 MNOK**
- **105670: Nordic Collaborative Health Register Network for Covid-19 Epidemiology with up to 9.95 MNOK**

08 BM 20/1008

Status for calls and upcoming funding decisions

Anna Herou and Arne Flåøyen presented the status for the calls under the Nordic Programme for Interdisciplinary Research and the Nordic Research and Innovation Programme for Sustainable aquaculture, respectively. Funding decisions are expected in the Board meeting in December.

Action:

The Board was notified of the status for the two calls. The Board asked the NordForsk administration to approach the national funding agencies to investigate if they are willing to contribute with additional funding to the common pot of the Nordic Programme for Interdisciplinary Research, highlighting the benefits of the project graded 6 or higher and emphasising the Nordic added value.

09 BM 20/1009

New call for research projects within Societal security on Covid19

Arne Flåøyen informed that the initiative for a programme for transnational research on pandemic preparedness (see also 06 BM 20/981) was put on hold when the Nordic Council of Ministers could not commit to contribute to funding during the spring 2020. However, on 10 September, the Ministers for Nordic Cooperation (MR-SAM) decided a new Action Plan for NCM for the years 2021 – 2024. In this plan, the ministers agreed to allocate 7 million DKK to research on covid-19 and societal security, and NordForsk will be invited to co-fund the project in collaboration with the national funders of research.

Action:

The Board discussed the initiative and decided to re-open the process to develop a call/programme. The Board asked the NordForsk administration to contact the national funders to ask for financial contribution to a new call on pandemic preparedness.

10 BM 20/1010

NOS-HS - status

Arne Flåøyen informed about the status for the plans for transferring the NOS-HS secretariat from the Academy of Finland to NordForsk. In their meeting in June 2020, NordHorcs asked Heikki Mannila to participate in new discussions between NordForsk and NOS-HS, with the aim of coming to an agreement between NordForsk and NOS-HS. Heikki Mannila presented the plan for the transfer in the NordHorcs-NordForsk Board joint meeting 8

October. The plan has been approved by the national funders, NOS-HS and NordForsk. See also annex 1 in the meeting documentation.

Action:
The Board was notified.

11 BM 20/1011

Nordic cooperation bodies – status

Arne Flåøyen presented the status for the process for establishing contract and practical arrangements regarding the administrative follow-up of the Nordic cooperation bodies. The discussions will proceed in October and November, and contracts will be signed during November/December.

Action:
The Board was notified.

12 BM 20/1012

Outstanding receivable from the NCM

Arne Flåøyen reminded the Board about the outstanding receivable of approximately 124 MNOK from the Nordic Council of Ministers. The receivable dates to the year 2017, when the Nordic Council of Ministers withheld the NordForsk basic funding for the whole year. This was done in agreement with NordForsk.

Action:
The Board asks the NordForsk administration to contact NCM for re-payment of the outstanding receivable of 124 MNOK.

13 BM 20/1013

Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair of the NordForsk Board

Lars Kloo presented the board item and reminded the Board of the discussions that took place regarding this item at the June meeting.

Action:
The Board appointed Jonas Björck as Chair of the NordForsk Board, from 1 December 2020 – 30 November 2022. The Board appointed Ragnhildur Helgadóttir as Vice-Chair of the NordForsk Board, from 19 October 2020 – 18 October 2022.

14 BM 20/1014

Information from the Nordic Council of Ministers

Daniel Holmberg informed about the ongoing work on the new vision for the Nordic Council of Ministers. He also informed that EK-U will appoint one new member to the NordForsk Board (Johnny Mogensen from the Danish Ministry of Higher Education and Sciences) and re-appoint one member (Kristin Danielsen from the Research Council of Norway).

Action:
The Board was notified.

15 BM 20/1015

Board decisions taken per capsulam

The information was presented in writing in the documentation to the Board meeting.

Action:

The Board was notified.

16 BM 20/1016

Information about Director's Decisions

The information was presented in writing in the documentation to the Board meeting.

Action:

The Board was notified.

17 BM 20/1017

Information from the Administration

The information was presented in writing in the documentation to the Board meeting.

Action:

The Board was notified.

18 BM 20/1018

Information from Board members and observers

The Board members gave a short update from their respective country/organization.

Action:

The Board was notified.

19 BM 20/1019

Any other business

No other business was brought up at the meeting.