

Minutes from NordForsk 68th Board meeting

31 March 2022, 13:00-15:00

Reykjavík

Present:

Board Members:

Björck, Jonas	The Swedish Research Council Forte (Chair)
Risom, Jesper	Independent Research Fund Denmark
Vauhkonen, Jussi	Academy of Finland
Danielsen, Kristin	The Research Council of Norway
Haanes, Vidar	Nordic University Cooperation (NUS)

Observers and guests:

Sølvará, Annika	The Faroese Research Council
Waller, Jonas	Nordic Council of Ministers
Knudsen, Marianne	NordForsk Administration (staff representative)
Adler Reimer, Gitte	University of Greenland (online, item 1-11)

Not present:

Helgadóttir, Ragnhildur	Science and Technology Policy Council of Iceland
Springfeldt, Christina	Nordic Council of Ministers
Mattila, Johanna	Åland University of applied sciences

Present from the NordForsk Administration:

Flåøyen, Arne
Aanes, Guttorm
Heimonen, Mikael
Bjarnar, Siri (Minutes)
Herou, Anna

01 BM 22/1093 Approval of the agenda. Any conflict of interest to be announced

The Chair opened the meeting. No conflicts of interest were noted.

The Board agreed that agenda item 12 will be discussed without the observers, and item 19 without NordForsk representatives present.

Action:

The agenda was approved.

02 BM 22/1094 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 5 of 6 board members present.

o3 BM 22/1095 Approval of the minutes from the Board meeting on 7 December 2021

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

Action:

The minutes were approved.

o4 BM 22/1096 NordForsk Annual Report and Annual Accounts 2021

Arne Flåøyen informed the Board about the annual report and highlighted that the administration has focused on reporting the Nordic added value created.

The board was pleased with the report.

Action:

The Board approved and signed the annual report and accounts 2021.

o5 BM 22/1097 Expression of Interest: NOS-HS

NordForsk received an Expression of Interest (EoI) to the Open Invitation deadline on 15 February 2022 for a call for NOS-HS project grants. The EoI was submitted by the NOS-HS and the proposal is for a new call for free, bottom-up SSH-projects. NOS-HS has committed 30 MNOK to the call and applies for MNOK 15 from NordForsk.

Action:

The Board decided to support the NOS-HS call for project grants with up to 15 MNOK, dependent on the funding from NOS-HS of 30 MNOK.

o6 BM 22/1098 Expression of Interest: Children and Young People in the Post-Pandemic Nordics

NordForsk received an Expression of Interest (EoI) to the Open Invitation on 7 February 2022 for a programme on Welfare among Children and Young People in the Post-Pandemic Nordics. The EoI was submitted by the Academy of Finland with support from The Swedish Research Council (VR), the Swedish Research Council for Health, Working Life and Welfare (Forte), The Research Council of Norway and The Icelandic Centre for Research (Rannis).

The proposal is for a Nordic collaboration widely focusing on the welfare of children and young people in the post-pandemic Nordics, including research questions related both to education and to the social, mental, and physical health and wellbeing of children and young people.

The total commitment from the funding partners is expected to be approximately 54 MNOK. The proposed funding model is a real common pot with no fair return.

Due to limited available funding in the NordForsk budget for 2022 and taking into account the initiatives in pipeline, the administration had initially proposed to co-fund the initiative with MNOK 20, which would be less than 1/3 of the total budget. The Board discussed the proposal and agreed not to go below the 1/3 share as the topic is so timely and important.

Action:

The Board decided to support the programme with up to 27 MNOK, dependent on the total funding from the programme funding partners of 54 MNOK. The board delegates to the Chair and Vice-Chair of the board to appoint the Programme Committee chairperson.

07 BM 22/1099

Status for new calls for proposals and new initiatives

Anna Herou presented the case. Currently there are 5 open calls for proposals:

- Nordic exploratory workshops under NOS-HS (MNOK 14, deadline 28 April)
- Sustainable Agriculture and Climate Change (MNOK60, deadline 19 May)
- Societal Security Beyond COVID-19 (MNOK 45, deadline 8 June)
- Societal Security and Antimicrobial Resistance (MNOK 6, deadline 8 June)
- Future Working Life (MNOK 46, deadline 21 June)

Four initiatives are under discussion:

- Green Transition
The Nordic Council of ministers has set aside 12 million DKK for a Nordic research initiative on green transition. The initiative was discussed by NORDHORCS and the NordForsk board at their joint meeting 31 March, where they asked the NordForsk administration to invite each national funder to nominate a representative to a working group mandated to bring up a suggested focus for a call.
- Arctic
NordForsk organised a funders' meeting on 28 March. There is significant interest in a new initiative, but further discussions are needed.
- Effects of Welfare Interventions
Forte plans to submit an Expression of Interest by the September deadline.
- Interdisciplinary
The Independent Research Fund Denmark plans to submit an Expression of Interest for a 2nd call under the NordForsk programme by the September deadline.

Action:**The Board was notified.**

08 BM 22/1100

Funding Financial prognosis 2022-2026

Mikael Heimonen informed of the budget for 2022 and the long-term prognosis. After the decisions on the submitted expressions of interest (item 5 and 6), 5 MNOK of the 2022 budget remains unspent.

Jonas Waller informed of the ongoing budget negotiations between the Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers. There will be cuts in the coming budget, but there are signals that funding for research, education, and culture will be given priority.

Action:**The Board was notified.**

09 BM 22/1101

Status for the evaluation of NordForsk

Jonas Waller presented the case. The Danish Technological Institute tasked to evaluate NordForsk will submit a final report by the end of April. The report will be important when NordForsk develops the new strategy 2023-2026.

Action:**The Board was notified.**

10 BM 22/1102 Process for NordForsk Strategy 2023-2026

2022 is the last year of the current NordForsk strategy period. A new strategy for the period 2023 –2026 should be developed and approved by the Board before the end of this year.

Arne Flåøyen suggested a process for developing the new strategy:

- The evaluation of NordForsk will be submitted by end of April
- Board meeting number 2 (June) will be devoted to discussing strategic areas and priorities based on the evaluation report and documents developed by the NordForsk administration.
- Board meeting 3 (October) will discuss the first draft of the new strategy and give its feedback to the administration.
- The evaluation of NeIC will be published before the end of October 2022.
- The board will at meeting 4-2022 (December) decide the new strategy.

The June meeting will be in Sigtuna, Sweden, 9-10 June. The new representatives from the Research Council of Norway, Iceland and NUS are invited to participate.

Action:

The Board decided to adopt the proposed process.

11 BM 22/1103 New Instrument for University Cooperation: Letter from the cooperation bodies to the Secretary-General of the Nordic Council of Ministers

Arne Flåøyen presented the case. Jonas Waller underlined that the Nordic Council of Ministers is well aware that the NordForsk board has followed the instructions given by the NCM in the process of developing the instrument.

Action:

The Board was informed.

12 BM 22/1104 Application from Faroe Islands for membership in the NordForsk Board

The Government of the Faroe Islands applied on March 3rd, 2022, the Nordic Council of Ministers for membership in the NordForsk Board. The Nordic Council of Ministers has asked for the Boards opinion before the matter is taken forward to the EK-U.

Annika Sølvará and Jonas Waller gave their comments before all observers were asked to leave the room and the Board discussed the application in light of the opportunities that exist under the Open Invitation mechanism and NordForsk funding rules and the consequences of full membership.

The comments from the Board can be found in the addendum. Jonas Waller will take the comments forward to EK-U and thereafter to MR-U.

Action:

The Board discussed the matter and agreed on comments concerning the application for membership from the Faroe Islands. A statement from the Board will be sent to the Secretariat of the Nordic Council of Ministers.

- 13 BM 22/1105** **Information from the Nordic Council of Ministers**
- Jonas Waller informed that Secretary General Paula Lehtomäki will resign after end of term. Christina Springfeldt will leave her position in June.
- The secretariat of the Nordic Council of Ministers is, as NordForsk and other institutions, currently working on a half-way report on how the NCM is contributing to the 12 goals action plan (2021-2022).
- There will be a ministerial meeting in May in Trondheim on academic freedom of expression.
- Action:**
The Board was notified.
- 14 BM 22/1106** **Information about Director's decisions**
- The information was presented in writing in the documentation to the Board meeting.
- Action:**
The Board was notified.
- 15 BM 22/1107** **Information about Per Capsulam Decisions**
- The information was presented in writing in the documentation to the Board meeting.
- Action:**
The Board was notified.
- 16 BM 22/1108** **Information from the Administration**
- The information was presented in writing in the documentation to the Board meeting.
- Action:**
The Board was notified.
- 17 BM 23/1109** **Information from Board members and observers**
- The Board members gave a short update from their respective country/organisation.
- Action:**
The Board was notified.
- 18 BM 24/1110** **Any other business**
- The upcoming NeIC conference, *Nordic Models for Open Science Collaboration*, marking NeIC's 10-year anniversary was raised. The programme includes the Secretary General in the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, and the Secretary General of the Nordic Council of Ministers, and the Board was surprised that the national research councils had not been informed of the event prior to registration deadline.

19 BM
25/1111

Evaluation of the performance of NordForsk and the Director

There was not sufficient time left of the meeting for the Board to discuss the matter properly. The performance of NordForsk and the director will be discussed at the Board meeting June 9-10.