

# Minutes from NordForsk 70<sup>th</sup> Board meeting

12 October 2022

Oslo, Hotel Continental and via Teams

## Present:

### Board Members:

Björck, Jonas	The Swedish Research Council Forte (Chair)
Ögmundsdóttir, Margrét Helga	University of Iceland
Risom, Jesper	Independent Research Fund Denmark
Vauhkonen, Jussi	Academy of Finland
Vistad, Rune	The Research Council of Norway
Walls, Mari	Nordic University Cooperation (NUS)

### Observers and guests:

Sølvará, Annika	The Faroese Research Council
Mattila, Johanna	Åland University of applied sciences (Item 6-16)
Knudsen, Marianne	NordForsk Administration (staff representative)
Flock, Solveig	The Research Council of Norway (Item 6)

### Not present:

Helle Glen Petersen	Nordic Council of Ministers
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### Present from the NordForsk Administration:

Flåøyen, Arne	
Nilsson, Maria	(Item 6)
Høst, Gudmund	(Item 6)
Heimonen, Mikael	
Bjarnar, Siri (Minutes)	

**01 BM**      **Approval of the agenda. Any conflict of interest to be announced**  
**22/1120**

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

#### Action:

**The agenda was approved.**

**02 BM**      **Quorum**  
**22/1121**

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 for items 1-6, and 6 members present for items 6-16.**

03 BM  
22/1122

#### **Approval of the minutes from the Board meeting on 9 June 2022**

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.**

04 BM  
22/1123

#### **Updates from the NORDHORCS meeting**

Jonas Björck gave a brief update on the discussion held during the NORDHORCS meeting and the joint meeting between NORDHORCS and the Board. The main discussion points of relevance to the Board concerned alignment of national policies to identify areas of strategic importance for future Nordic research collaboration and the potential for cooperation with the UK.

NORDHORCS asked the NordForsk administration to send an update on the status of the initiative on Green Transition to see if it can be possible to find a common ground for a call.

Innovation Fund Denmark (IFD) raised the idea of joint Nordic/Baltic call on democratic involvement of citizens in large scale national Energy investments and investments in secure critical energy infrastructure, which NordForsk will follow up on in collaboration with IFD.

**Action:**

**The Board was informed.**

05 BM  
22/1124

#### **Funding Decision: Societal Security and Antimicrobial Resistance**

Director Arne Flåøyen presented the case. In autumn 2021 the Nordic Council of Ministers allocated the DKK 4.45 million for a call on social security with a special focus on antimicrobial resistance under the auspices of NordForsk. The call for Societal Security and Antimicrobial Resistance was launched in March 2022, with deadline 8 June 2022. NordForsk received two eligible proposals which were assessed by an international expert panel. Based on the scientific evaluation from the panel, an assessment of the potential for Nordic added value, and the project's contribution to the overall aims of the programme, the Programme Committee recommended both projects to be funded.

**Action:**

**The Board decided to fund two research projects under the Societal Security and Antimicrobial Resistance Call:**

- **137087, Tracking of Antimicrobial Resistant Genes in Environmental reservoirs in the Nordic Countries, with up to 3 MNOK**
- **139086, Wastewater Treatment plants as a trusted Source of Timely information on antimicrobial resistance threat (TruSTme), with up to 3 MNOK**

**o6 BM**  
**22/1125**

### **Presentation of the evaluation of Nordic e-Infrastructure Collaboration (NeIC)**

On 27 June 2022, Faugert & Co Utvärdering (The Technopolis Group) submitted their external evaluation report of Nordic e-Infrastructure Collaboration (NeIC). The evaluation covers the period 2012–2022 and aimed to assess how:

- NeIC has succeeded in its tasks and created Nordic Added Value through e-infrastructures for science and research.
- NeICs benefits can be improved in terms of strategy, organisation, resources, activities, and project management.
- NeICs strategy and organisation are prepared for a future development for e-infrastructure collaboration that creates Nordic Added Value.

Maria Nilsson presented the main conclusions and the evaluators' key recommendations to the Board. Solveig Flock, the Research Council of Norway, and Chair of the Nordic Research Infrastructure Committee (NRICC), presented NRICC's comments and recommendations to the Board based on the findings presented in the evaluation report. Gudmund Høst, Director of NeIC, answered questions from the Board regarding Tier 1 activities and other NeIC activities, and gave examples of scientific excellence and Nordic added value.

**Action:**

**The Board was informed. The Board congratulates NeIC on the excellent evaluation.**

**o7 BM**  
**22/1126**

### **Status Open Invitation and financial prognosis**

Arne Flåøyen informed the Board that NordForsk did not receive any new Expressions of Interest within the deadline 15 September 2022.

The NordForsk administration is currently working on four initiatives for potential new calls: *Green Transition*, *Fisheries and ecosystem-based management*, *Arctic*, and *Indigenous Research* (the two latter possibly in combination).

**Action:**

**The Board was notified.**

**o8 BM**  
**22/1127**

### **Report to the NCM for the first half of the year including accounts per June 2022**

Mikael Heimonen informed the Board that the report to the NCM for the first half of the year was sent according to schedule. The report consists of two parts: accounts and comments to deviations from the plan. NordForsk had no major deviations to report. The report was discussed at a dialogue meeting with the NCM in September.

**Action:**

**The Board was informed.**

09 BM  
22/1128

### **Increasing the power of attorney for the director's decisions**

Since the year 2006 the NordForsk Director has had power of attorney from the Board to make funding decisions for projects up to 500 000 NOK. The amount has not been adjusted for the last 16 years. The administration suggested to the Board to increase the power of attorney for the director's decisions to 1 000 000 NOK.

Upon question from the Board concerning the total annual amount of director's decisions, Arne Flåøyen informed that only a handful of the decisions concern funding (many concerns appointment of programme committee members or formalities in the project follow-up). There will, however, be several director's decisions that concerning funding in 2023 due to funding decision on NOS-HS workshop grants.

**Action:**

**The Board decided to increase the power of attorney for the director to make funding decisions for projects and activities up to 1 000 000 NOK.**

10 BM  
22/1129

### **Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair of the NordForsk Board**

Jussi Vauhkonen led this part of the meeting, and the administration left the room.

**Action:**

**The Board appointed Jonas Björck as Chair and Jesper Risom as Vice-Chair of the NordForsk Board.**

11 BM  
22/1130

### **NordForsk Strategy 2023-2026**

Arne Flåøyen presented the proposed changes in the revised strategy distributed prior to the meeting. The changes are quite minor, and thus the proposed new strategy is very similar to the current one.

The Board discussed the strategy document and highlighted that:

- NordForsk's vision should not be a copy of the vision of the Nordic Council of Ministers, but rather focus on research and development of new knowledge.
- The subgoals can be developed to support the main goal more explicitly.
- The role as facilitator in developing new calls is the role of NordForsk, not the Board
- NordForsk must become more visible in the research communities and especially in the national research councils. A new strategy can sharpen the profile and goals of NordForsk.

The Open Invitation mechanism was discussed, and the Board agreed that this should be revisited again separately from the strategy discussion. It is still seen as the preferred mechanism for developing new calls but has some shortcomings that should be further addressed. The question of the need for a supplementary tool was raised.

**Action:**

**The Board discussed the draft version of the new strategy. The final version should be decided at the Board meeting in December.**

**12 BM**  
**22/1131**

**Information from the Nordic Council of Ministers**

Helle Glen Petersen from the NCM was prevented from attending the meeting.

Arne Flåøyen informed that the Nordic Committee of Senior Officials for Education and Research (EK-U) has recommended the Nordic Council of Ministers for Education and Research (MR-U) to give the Faroe Islands status as member of the NordForsk Board.

**Action:**

**The Board was informed.**

**13 BM**  
**22/1132**

**Information about Director's decisions**

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

**Action:**

**The Board was notified.**

**14 BM**  
**22/1133**

**Information from the Administration**

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

**Action:**

**The Board was informed.**

**15 BM**  
**22/1134**

**Information from Board members and observers**

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

**Action:**

**The Board was informed.**

**16 BM**  
**22/1135**

**Any other business**

The Board agreed to hold their next meeting virtually on **Monday 5<sup>th</sup> of December** starting at 13:00 CET. The main agenda items are NelC, decision on a new NordForsk strategy and Action Plan for 2023.