

Minutes from NordForsk 72nd Board meeting

29 March 2022

Copenhagen

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)
Sølvará, Annika (left at 11:00)	The Faroese Research Council

Observers and guests:

Mattila, Johanna	Åland University of applied sciences
Halgrimsen, Håkon	Nordic Council of Ministers
Komissar, Bjørnar Solhaug	NordForsk Administration (staff representative, minutes)

NordForsk Administration:

Flåøyen, Arne
Aanes, Guttorm

Opening of the meeting

Before the official opening of the meeting, Håkon Halgrimsen gave a general introduction to the Nordic collaboration, the Nordic Council of Minister and NordForsk, as well as the role of and expectations from the NordForsk board in this context.

01 BM 23/1154 Approval of the agenda. Any conflict of interest to be announced.

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

Action: The agenda was approved.

02 BM 23/1155 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 all members present.

03 BM 23/1156 Approval of the minutes from the Board meeting on 5 December 2022

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

Action: The minutes were approved.

o4 BM 23/1157

NordForsk Annual Report and Annual Accounts 2022

Director Arne Flåøyen presented the annual report. The report had been approved and signed by the Chair before submission to the Secretariat of the Nordic Council of Ministers on 13 February.

The Board appreciated the presentation and is satisfied with the results and achievements of NordForsk. The Board observed that regarding the specified goals and priorities, NordForsk has fully achieved close to all of them, which could indicate that the goals are not sufficiently ambitious. The administration noted this, but also clarified that the goals and priorities are specified in the grant letter. To the extent that NordForsk overachieves with respect to the goals and priorities, the Board and the administration could consider even higher ambitions for our work.

Action: The Board approved the annual report for 2022. The administration will send the report for electronic signature from all board members when the accounts are approved by the Auditor General.

o5 BM 23/1158

Budget 2023 and financial prognosis 2024-2027

The budget for 2023 was approved by the Board in December.

Action: The board was informed of the budget for 2023 and long-term financial prognosis 2024-2027.

o6 BM 23/1159

Expression of Interest: Green Transition

Director Arne Flåøyen presented the expression of interest, the background, process, and proposed funding commitment from NordForsk.

The Board was pleased with the initiative and glad to see the broad interest and participation from national research funders in the Nordic-Baltic region. The Board also appreciated the collaboration between the secretariat of the Nordic Council of Ministers and NordForsk, and that the national research funders responded well to such a top-down initiative.

Action: The Board decides to support the call with up to NOK 43.720.000 and a maximum of 1/3 of the total Nordic call budget. The Board delegates to the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board to formally appoint the Call Committee chairperson. The Director will appoint the Call Committee members based on nominations from the participating funding organisations.

o7 BM 23/116o

Future funding of Nordic e-Infrastructure Collaboration (NeIC)

Director Arne Flåøyen gave a presentation of the background, history organisation and activities of NeIC, including the roles and responsibilities of the NeIC Board, the NordForsk Board, and the national research funders.

The Board appreciated the presentation, but pointed out that the structure and organisation is complicated and difficult to fully understand, and that the formal responsibilities are unclear. The funding model is currently not very transparent, and there is also the fundamentally important question about whether the funding should be competitive. The Board also discussed NeIC and the Tier-1 collaboration in relation to research infrastructure collaboration in general, and the role of the Nordic Research Infrastructure Co-operation Committee (NRICC). While it is important to keep the value of NeIC and the Tier-1 collaboration, the organisation and funding model need to be discussed and clarified.

Given the current situation, the Board decided not to make decision regarding the future funding of NeIC (Item 7) or the Tier-1 collaboration (Item 8) at the meeting, since there are issues that should be discussed and clarified with NRICC and other stakeholders. The following action regards both items:

Action:

- 1. The NordForsk board invites NRICC to a workshop to discuss the future coordination and funding of Nordic Tier-1 collaboration. One will at this workshop also discuss future funding of NeIC and other Nordic infrastructures collaborations.**
- 2. NordForsk will after the workshop with NRICC, invite the national funders of research infrastructures to a meeting with the aim at entering into a new MoU regarding funding of Nordic Tier-1 collaborations and other e-infrastructure collaborations.**

o8 BM 23/1161

Tier-1 collaboration. Mandate for negotiation with the national funders of research.

Action: See previous item.

09 BM 23/1162

The future of the Nordic Committee on Bioethics (NCBio)

Director Arne Flåøyen's suggestion to the Board was to stop supporting NCBio after 2023. The reason for this is that NCBio over the years gradually has lost its connection to the Nordic Council of Ministers as a source of information and knowledge basis for the Nordic collaboration. NCBio therefore no longer has an active policy supporting role to the NCM.

The Board commented that the topics discussed by NCBio are still relevant and the work of NCBio have real value, and that there is some visibility in the research communities. The Board agreed, though, that the relevance and impact is not sufficient to justify continued funding.

Action: The NordForsk board thanks the members of NCBio for their interest and efforts taken to stimulate the discussion on bioethical questions in the Nordics. There are however other fora these days nationally and internationally where these topics are discussed, and the role and relevance of NCBio as a policy advisor to the NCM has been reduced over the years. NordForsk will therefore not continue supporting NCBio after 2023. The Board encourages NCBio to apply for grants from other relevant funding sources.

10 BM 23/1163

Statement on Nordic research policy (forskningspolitisk redegjørelse)

Senior adviser at the Nordic Council of Minister's Secretariat, Håkon Halgrimsen, informed the Board about the statement on Nordic research policy. The Nordic Council asked the NCM for such a statement to be presented at the Nordic Council's session in week 44, 2023. The Board appreciated the initiative to the statement, and hope that it will have a positive impact on Nordic research collaboration and strengthen NordForsk's role as a facilitator.

Action: The Board was informed.

11 BM 23/1164

Status Open Invitation

Flåøyen informed the Board of the status for initiatives in pipeline. The following four topics were highlighted as those where the discussions have made some significant advances:

- Arctic
- Oceans and fisheries
- Migration and integration
- Interventions, health, and welfare

Action: The Board was informed.

- 12 BM 23/1165** **Information from the Nordic Council of Ministers**
- Håkon Halgrimsen, Senior Adviser at the Nordic Council of Ministers' Secretariat, informed the Board of some relevant changes in the NCM. As already known to the Board, Karin Ellemann took up the role of Secretary General of the Nordic Council of Ministers on 1 January 2023. Helle Glen Petersen, Head of Department of Knowledge and Welfare, and Jonas Wendel, Chief of Staff at the Secretary General's Office, will both leave the secretariat. The process of replacing them at the NCM secretariat has started.
- Regarding the specification and outlining of the activities, the NCM decided in January that each of the sectors are to make a sectoral collaboration program. These programs are to be short and generic but will be accompanied with more specific action plans.
- Action: The Board was informed.**
- 13 BM 23/1166** **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 23/1167** **Information from the Administration**
- The information was presented in writing in the documentation to the Board meeting.
- Action: The Board was notified.**
- 15 BM 23/1168** **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 23/1169** **Any other business**
- The next meeting will be virtual and before the summer.
- Forte will host a physical Board meeting on 23-24 October.
- 17 BM 23/1170** **Evaluation of the performance of NordForsk and the Director**
- At the first Board meeting of the year, the Board evaluates the performance of NordForsk and the Director.
- Action: This item was postponed until the next meeting.**