

Minutes

NordForsk 73rd Board Meeting
24 May 2023, 10:00-12:00
Teams

Present:

Board Members:

Risom, Jesper	Independent Research Fund Denmark (Vice Chair)
Ögmundsdóttir, Margrét Helga	University of Iceland
Vauhkonen, Jussi	Academy of Finland
Vistad, Rune	The Research Council of Norway
Walls, Mari	Nordic University Cooperation (NUS)
Sølvará, Annika	The Faroese Research Council

NordForsk Administration:

Flåøyen, Arne	
Komissar, Bjørnar Solhaug	staff representative
Aanes, Guttorm	
Heimonen, Mikael	
Bjarnar, Siri (minutes)	

Apologies:

Björck, Jonas	The Swedish Research Council Forte (Chair)
Mattila, Johanna	Åland University of applied sciences
Halgrimsen, Håkon	Nordic Council of Ministers

Opening of the meeting

Vice chair Jesper Risom chaired the meeting in the absence of Jonas Björck.

01 BM 23/1171 Approval of the agenda. Any conflict of interest to be announced.

The chair opened the meeting. No conflicts of interest were noted. The Board members had prior to the meeting checked for conflict of interest in relation to the funding decision (items 4 and 5).

Action: The agenda was approved.

02 BM 23/1172 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 6 of 7 members present.

03 BM 23/1173 Minutes from the Board meeting on 29 March 2023

The Board had approved the minutes by written procedure prior to the meeting and there were no further comments.

Action: The Board was informed.

04 BM 23/1174 Funding Decision NOS-HS project grant

Siri Bjarnar reminded the Board about the background of the initiative and that the Board had decided to support the call with up to NOK 15 million at their meeting March 2022 (05 BM 22/1097). The Board was informed about the call process and result. Seven proposals of 155 were deemed outstanding by the peer review panels and given the best possible grade of 7. Following the peer review, the NOS-HS committee discussed the top-rated and ranked proposals, with regards to contribution to call aims, Nordic added value and the aim of having a balanced portfolio of funded projects.

The NordForsk administration investigated the NOS-HS accounts to see if there could be under-spending and surpluses sufficient to fund all applications graded 7. The administration found that sufficient funding could be made available as there have been higher income than budgeted due to currency exchange rates and returned funds. On this background, the NOS-HS committee decided on May 23 to allocate further funding of NOK 5.283 million (equivalent to 2/3 of the total project budget) and to recommend the Board to fund all applications rated 7 (outstanding) by the expert panels by increasing the NordForsk contribution to amount to 1/3 of the total call budget.

Action: The Board decided to fund 7 research projects under the call for NOS-HS project grants and thereby increasing the NordForsk contribution with NOK 2.642 million:

- **143926, *PastForward: The political uses of the past in digital discourses about Nordic futures*, with up to NOK 7 998 124**
- **150106, *Making a Warrior: The Social Implications of Viking Age Martial Ideologies*, with up to NOK 7 466 005**
- **151687, *Exploring homelessness among young care leavers: Addressing challenges and finding potentials in a Nordic welfare context*, with up to NOK 7 966 456**
- **152188, *To integrate or return? Policies, aspirations and outcomes for Ukrainian refugees in the Nordic countries*, with up to NOK 7 995 580**
- **152607, *Nordic Law Books: The Production and Use of Vernacular Law Manuscripts in the North from 1100 to 1600*, with up to NOK 7 560 000**
- **153306, *Banal (Non)Religion: Secular Imaginaries in Contemporary Pop-Culture*, with up to NOK 7 499 922**
- **153248, *Healthy communities in ageing societies – participatory research with elderly immigrants and refugees living in a Nordic society*, with up to NOK 7 925 465**

05 BM 23/1175 Funding Decision Welfare among Children and Young People in the Post-Pandemic Nordics

Siri Bjarnar reminded the Board about the background of the initiative and that the Board had decided to support the call with up to NOK 27 million at their meeting March 2022 (06 BM 22/1098). The Board was also notified that additional funding has been allocated to the call from a surplus of the Education for Tomorrow initiative as well as from the Nordic Council of Ministers, allowing for 8 projects to be funded under the call.

The Board was informed about the call process and result. Of 63 eligible proposals, 17 were rated 6 (excellent) and 2 were rated 7 (outstanding) by an international peer review panel. All these applications were discussed by the call committee, focusing on contribution to call aims, Nordic added value and the aim of having a balanced portfolio of funded projects. The committee also considered the involvement of children and youth in the research. 8 projects were recommended for funding by the call committee.

Action: The Board decided to fund eight research projects under the Welfare among Children and Young People in the Post-Pandemic Nordics Call:

- 147386, *Post-Pandemic Vulnerability and Resilience: A bioecological approach towards youth wellbeing in Nordic schools and communities*, with up to NOK 10 999 897
- 148806, *Children First: Nordic policies and children's well-being*, with up to NOK 10 999 581
- 155419, *Mental health and life satisfaction among youth with disabilities and experiences of services in the post-pandemic period*, with up to NOK 10 968 576
- 155478, *EXPECT: Exploring Practices in Early Childhood of Tomorrow Develop resilience in social sustainable childhoods after Covid-19*, with up to NOK 10 207 093
- 156298, *Post-pandemic mental health: Risk and resilience in young people*, with up to NOK 10 981 125
- 156778, *Children's and adolescents' responses to the pandemic–future risks of increasing inequalities in learning and mental health*, with up to NOK 10 978 328
- 156839, *Education of Refugees and Asylum Seekers under and post the Pandemic in Nordic Countries*, with up to NOK 10 981 498
- 156858, *Psychosocial problems, service barriers, participation, and interventions during crises: solutions for children and young people*, with up to NOK 10 977 077

Some minor errors in amounts stated in the supporting documentation sent to the Board prior to the meeting have been corrected in the above list.

o6 BM 23/1176 NordForsk Gender Equality Policy

Siri Bjarnar gave the Board a brief introduction to the proposed updated policy. The Board discussed the policy and asked that it is revised to be more ambitious concerning gender balance in groups and committees appointed by NordForsk, acknowledging that this is not always possible in the case of peer review panels. Furthermore, the Board asked that the policy also requires applicants (research institutions) to have a gender equality plan (GEP) which should be in place before they can receive funding from NordForsk. Lastly, it was suggested that the policy could relate explicitly to national policies on gender equality and/or to gender equality objectives within the European Research Area.

Action: The Board asks the administration to revise the proposed policy and present a new version to the Board for approval.

o7 BM 23/1177 Employee Survey

Arne Flåøyen informed the Board of the positive results from the employee survey, which staff representative Bjørnar Komissar confirmed. The Board was pleased to hear about the good results. The Board asked to have the survey annexed to the meeting documents the next time, but NordForsk is hesitant to do so as Avonova Census has made a clear recommendation not to share the survey documentation. However, the administration can ask Avonova Census to present the survey results to the Board at another meeting if the Board wishes.

Action: The board was informed.

o8 BM 23/1178 Information from the Nordic Council of Ministers

Håkon Halgrimsen was absent from the meeting and thus there were no information presented from the NMC. However, Arne Flåøyen informed that the NMC is currently working on the new cooperation programmes forming the basis of the NMC's work in the final period of Vision 2030. The national research councils have been invited to send comments on the cooperation programme on research.

Action: The board was informed.

09 BM 23/1179 Information about per capsulam decisions

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

Action: The Board was notified.

10 BM 23/1180 Information about Director's decisions

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

Action: The Board was notified.

11 BM 23/1181 Information from the Administration

The information on ongoing initiatives was presented in writing in the documentation to the Board meeting. Guttorm Aanes, chief of communications, informed the Board of the report [Nordic added value in Nordic research co-operation](#), conducted as part of the university hub [Reimagining Norden in an Evolving World](#) (ReNEW).

Action: The Board was notified.

12 BM 23/1182 Information from Board members and observers

The Board members gave a short update from their respective country/organisation. Mari Walls informed the Board that this is her last meeting and that a new representative from NUS will be appointed. The Board thanked Mari for the fruitful collaboration.

Action: The Board was informed.

13 BM 23/1183 Any other business

N/A