

Meeting Minutes

NordForsk 75th Board Meeting
12 December 2023, 09:00-11:00
Virtual Teams meeting

Present:

Board Members

Björck, Jonas	The Swedish Research Council Forte (Chair)
Risom, Jesper	Independent Research Fund Denmark (Vice Chair)
Vauhkonen, Jussi	Research Council of Finland (online)
Jónsdóttir, Guðbjörg Andrea	Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Innovation, Iceland
Vistad, Rune	The Research Council of Norway
Hagfeldt, Anders	Nordic University Cooperation (NUS)
Sølvará, Annika	The Faroese Research Council
Mattila, Johanna	Åland University of applied sciences (observer)
Halgrimsen, Håkon	Nordic Council of Ministers (observer)

NordForsk Administration

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

Opening of the meeting

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed the participants.

01 BM 23/1203 Approval of the agenda. Any conflict of interest to be announced

No conflicts of interest were noted.

Action: The agenda was approved.

02 BM 23/1204 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 23/1205 Approval of the minutes from the Board meeting 24 October 2023

The Board had received written draft minutes with the possibility to suggest revisions prior to the meeting. No revisions were suggested.

Action: The Board approved the minutes.

04 BM 23/1206 Accounts per October 2023

Mikael Heimonen presented the case and informed that most activities are carried out according to plan.

NordForsk expects more interest income than budgeted and therefore a relatively large surplus to be transferred to next year. The administration will look into which of the costs budgeted for 2024, such as the funding of NelC and University cooperation projects, can be covered on the 2023 budget.

Funding decision for the call on Green Transition will be taken in 2024 and the call on Sustainable Development of the Arctic will open early 2024.

Action: The Board was informed.

05 BM 23/1207 Budget 2024 and Action plan 2024

Director Arne Flåøyen presented the action plan. The Board was pleased with the concrete actions planned for 2024 and no revisions were suggested. Mikael Heimonen presented the budget for 2024.

Action: The Board approved the budget and action plan for 2024.

06 BM 23/1208 Extension of NeIC MoU for 2024

At the NordForsk board meeting 24 October 2024 the Board decided to grant the Nordic e-Infrastructure Collaboration (NeIC) NOK 17 million for 2024. The NordForsk Director has previously proposed to NRICC and the NordForsk Board that the existing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that sustains the framework for NeIC is extended with one year (until 31 December 2024). A written extension of the MoU for 2024, to be signed by the NeIC partners, was presented to the Board for their approval. The Director informed that Sweden has nominated a new delegate which has been appointed through a Director's Decision (No 234), and thus the extension agreement will be revised accordingly.

The Board stressed the importance of 2024 being the last and final year of this construction.

Action: The Board approved the extension of the MoU for NeIC for 2024 to be signed by the NeIC partners.

07 BM 23/1209 Report on Nordic research infrastructure collaboration

In June 2022, NordForsk engaged Professor Sven Stafström to assist the director in mapping research infrastructure (RI) collaboration in the Nordic region (Director's Decision No 205). Stafström delivered his report to NordForsk on November 21st, 2023. The report presents an overview of the national systems and roadmaps for research infrastructure in the Nordic countries and the involvement of the Nordic countries in the European RI collaboration. It discusses the Nordic added value in RI collaboration and which measures can be taken to strengthen RI cooperation at the Nordic level. The report includes recommendations to NordForsk and NORDHORCS.

The Board discussed the report, which they find very interesting, and gave some input on the national situation. Some factual corrections are needed before the report can be published. The board members will inform the NordForsk administration per e-mail, and the administration will thereafter follow up with professor Stafström.

The Board stressed that the report should have a disclaimer stating that this is Stafström's report, which includes recommendations to the Board and NORDHORCS.

The board agreed that it could be a good idea to organise a seminar or workshop with the national funding organisations concerning research infrastructure priorities and Nordic research infrastructure cooperation.

Action: The Board asks the administration to send the report to the Nordic Research Infrastructure Co-operation Committee (NRICC) and ask for NRICC's suggestions on how NordForsk should follow up the recommendations in the report. The Board also asks the administration to send the report to Nordic University Cooperation (NUS) for their input. The Board approves that the report is published on the NordForsk website after some corrections have been made. The Board will revisit the issue at the meeting in March.

o8 BM 23/1210 Status new calls

The Board has recently supported three new calls for proposals: Sustainable Development of the Arctic, Nordic-Baltic research initiative on migration and integration, and Food from the Ocean as part of the Green Transition. The administration gave an update on the status of the calls concerning funding partners, budget, and timeline.

The first phase of the Arctic call (pre-proposals) is expected to open early February 2024. At the board meeting October 24th, the Board asked the administration to see if it could be possible to reach funding decisions in 2024. The administration has looked into different scenarios and does not deem it to be feasible without jeopardising the quality of the application and assessment process. Experiences and advice indicate that applicants should be given sufficient time to develop their proposals given the interdisciplinary aspect and not least the indigenous perspective asked for in the call.

Action: The Board was informed.

o9 BM 23/1211 Information from the Nordic Council of Ministers

Håkon Halgrimsen gave the following updates from the Nordic Council of Ministers:

- Áslaug Arna Sigurbjörnsdóttir, the Minister of Higher Education, Science, and Innovation of Iceland, presented a statement on Nordic research co-operation at the 2023 Session of the Nordic Council. The statement was well received and formally noted by the Nordic Council. The Council also expressed an interest in close political dialogue on Nordic research priorities. More information can be found [here](#).
- The grant letter for NordForsk for 2024 is closed to being finalised. There are no large changes from the previous year, except that the secretariat will try to avoid an excessive number of supplementary grant letters – the aim is instead to include all activities in the main grant letter.
- The Swedish Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers 2024 plans for a conference on responsible international research in Autumn 2024. The Secretariat will relay any relevant information regarding the presidency activities to the NordForsk administration, to be forwarded to the board.

Action: The Board was informed.

10 BM 23/1212 Information about per capsulam decisions

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

Action: The Board was notified.

11 BM 23/1213 Information about Director's decisions

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

Action: The Board was notified.

12 BM 23/1214 Information from Board members and observers

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

Action: The Board was informed.

13 BM 23/1215 Any other business

The administration gave a brief status update on the Green Transition call. 112 proposals were submitted by deadline: 27 proposals to the topic of Energy Efficiency, 8 to Climate and Gender and 77 to Democratic Engagement. Eligible proposals will go to peer review and later to the call committee before a funding recommendation is presented to the Board.