

Meeting Minutes NordForsk 79th Board Meeting

December 9th, 2024, 14:00-16:00 CET, Teams online meeting

Present:

Board Members

Risom, Jesper	Independent Research Fund Denmark (Chair)
Vauhkonen, Jussi	Research Council of Finland
Jónsdóttir, Guðbjörg Andrea	Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Innovation, Iceland (absent item 8)
Vistad, Rune	Research Council of Norway
Sølvará, Annika	Faroese Research Council (Vice Chair)
Kuylenstierna, Johan	Formas, Sweden
Nygård, Bo	Local Government of Åland, Department of Education and Culture
Halgrimsen, Håkon	Nordic Council of Ministers' secretariat (observer)

NordForsk Administration: Arne Flåøyen, Bjørnar Komissar (staff representative), Mikael Heimonen, Guttorm Aanes, Bodil Aurstad, Siri Bjarnar (minutes)

Apologies: Anders Hagfeldt, Nordic University Cooperation (NUS)

01 BM 24/1258

Welcome to new members and round of introductions

The chair opened the meeting and welcomed the participants and the new members of the board; Johan Kuylenstierna (member, representing Sweden) and Bo Nygård (observer, representing Åland). All participants introduced themselves briefly.

02 BM 24/1259

Approval of the agenda. Any conflict of interest to be announced

The chair informed the meeting that item 10, concerning the recruitment of new Director of NordForsk will be moved to the end of the agenda, and discussed without the NordForsk administration present.

Guðbjörg Andrea Jónsdóttir had informed of conflicts of interest on proposals to the call for Nordic Research Networks in Preparedness and Resilience (agenda item 8). No conflicts of interest had been reported with regards to the funding decision on Sustainable Fisheries from Healthy Seas (agenda items 7).

Action: The agenda was approved.

03 BM 24/1260

Quorum

The Board has quorum when at least 50% of the board members are present. The Board noted quorum with all but one member present at the meeting and 5 of 7 members to decide on funding of proposals to the call on Nordic Research Networks in Preparedness and Resilience.

Action: Quorum was confirmed.

04 BM 24/1261

Approval of the minutes from the Board meeting 24 October 2024

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.

05 BM 24/1262

Accounts per October 2024

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

Action: The Board was informed.

06 BM 24/1263

Budget 2025 and Action plan 2025

Director Arne Flåøyen presented the action plan for 2025, and Mikael Heimonen presented the budget. The board approved the action plan and proposed budget but asks the administration to consider adjusting the action plan to more clearly differentiate between concrete activities and processes or strategic directions.

The budget will be adjusted according to the funding decisions under item 7 and 8.

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

07 BM 24/1264

Funding Decision Sustainable Fisheries from Healthy Seas

The Board was reminded of the background of the initiative and informed about the call process and results. The initiative is funded through the virtual common pot model, with funding from Denmark, the Faroe Islands, Finland, Norway, Estonia and Lithuania. NordForsk received 13 proposals. The applications rated 6 (excellent) and 5 (very good) by the international peer review panel had been discussed by the call committee, who made their assessment of the proposals' contribution to call aims and Nordic-Baltic added value.

The call committee has recommended the Board to fund 4 applications which they deem to answer the call aims in an excellent manner. Funding the suggested four proposals will exhaust all the available national co-funding to the initiative, and funding a fifth project would need approximately 3.5 million NOK of additional funding to be covered from the respective national funders (DK, NO, IS).

Action: The Board decided to fund four research projects under the Sustainable Fisheries from Healthy Seas Call:

- 195963, Evaluating the effectiveness of time-area closures: the effect of stress on reproduction success of cod, with up to NOK 7 324 012
- 199120, Feasibility and effects of SpatioTemporal Closures on Baltic and Eastern North Sea herring stocks, with up to NOK 7 858 405
- 195518, Enhancing ecosystem assessment and the science-policy interface for sustainable pelagic fisheries in the Norwegian Sea, with up to 7 916 753
- 195538, Impacts of fishing throughout the ecosystem: consequences and mitigation methods, with up to NOK 7 992 445

08 BM 24/1265

Funding Decision Nordic Research Networks in Preparedness and Resilience

The Board was reminded of the background of the initiative and informed about the call process and results. NordForsk received 11 proposals by call deadline. The applications rated 6 (excellent), 5 (very good) and 4 (good) by

the international peer review panel had all been discussed by the call committee, who made their assessment of the proposals' contribution to call aims and Nordic added value.

The call committee has recommended the Board to fund the proposals rated 7 (outstanding), 6 (excellent) and 5 (very good). The committee found that in addition to being of high scientific quality, the networks suggested funding contribute to the call aims in a good way and has broad thematic and geographical coverage. Four of the six networks have partners from all Nordic countries.

Guðbjörg Andrea Jónsdóttir left the meeting prior to the discussion and decision due to conflict of interest.

Action: The Board decided to fund 6 research networks under the Nordic Research Networks in Preparedness and Resilience Call:

- 204260, Nordic Pandemic Resilience and Preparedness Network, with up to 3 MNOK.
- 209400, Nordic Pandemic Preparedness Modelling Network, with up to 3 MNOK.
- 209738, UNIting FAMIlies across Nordic countries for resilience, with up to 2,084,938 NOK.
- 210778, Nordic Health Crises University Network, with up to 3 MNOK.
- 211358, FAIR AND RESILIENT SOCIETIES – THE NORDIC MODEL INTO THE FUTURE? with up to 2,998,600 NOK.
- 211378, The Nordic Disinformation Resilience Network, with up to 2,973,225 NOK.

09 BM 24/1266

Expression of Interest: Nordic Research School in Innovation and Entrepreneurship

The Board had received the Expression of Interest on November 11th and was reminded of the background and focus, and of the special circumstance with a private foundation committing to co-fund the initiative.

Action: The Board decided to support the call with up to NOK 4.6 million and a maximum of 1/3 of the total Nordic call budget. The Board delegates to the NordForsk director to decide on additional funding within the 1/3 limitation should the initiative raise more support from national research councils. The Board delegates to the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board to formally appoint the Call Committee chairperson.

10 BM 24/1267

Recruitment of new Director of NordForsk

This agenda item was moved to the end of the meeting and the NordForsk administration was not present during the discussion.

Action: The board discussed the job advertisement as presented by the selection committee.

11 BM 24/1268

Information from the Nordic Council of Ministers

Håkon Halgrimsen, secretariat of the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM), updated the Board on recent developments and on-going processes.

NMC and the NCMS, together with the ministers for co-operation (MR-SAM), has identified priority areas to focus on in the coming years:

- Preparedness and resilience
- Democracy and digitalisation
- Competences for the future
- Circular economy
- Sustainable seas and oceans

Each sector under the NCM is currently developing work plans for the coming three years. The level of detail in these plans are up to the responsible sector to decide and will vary across sectors and work plans.

The NordForsk director informed of the situation with registration of board members in the Norwegian "Brønnøysundregisteret". The NCMS will follow up on the matter prior to the board meeting.

Action: The board was informed.

12 BM 24/1269

Information about per capsulam decisions

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

Action: The board was notified.

13 BM 24/1270

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 24/1271

Information from Board members and observers

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

Action: The board was informed.

15 BM 24/1272

Any other business

It was suggested and agreed that the board should follow up the discussions from the conference in Stockholm on Responsible research and internationalisation and discuss the development of a NordForsk policy. The board members are encouraged to share policies, guidelines or similar for information and inspiration prior to the meeting March 18-19.

The board was informed briefly of the results from the work environment survey of NordForsk, which are very positive.