

Minutes from NCMM Board Meeting

Time: Wednesday 20 March 2024, 11:00-14:00

Place: Room Kilo, Forskningsparken

Executive officer: Elizabeth Smethurst

	Present	Absent
Professor Jens Petter Berg (UiO/OUS), Chair	X	
Professor Melinka Butenko (UiO), member	X	
Professor Hilde Nilsen (UiO), member	X	
Director Research & Diagnostics Lars Eikvar (HSØ), member		X
Professor Magne Børset (NTNU), national deputy member		X
Dr. Torunn Berge (HSØ), member	X	
Professor Ola Myklebost (UiB), national member		X
Senior Adviser Randi Vad (HSØ), deputy member	X	
Professor Arnaldo Frigessi (UiO), deputy member		X
Group leader Anthony Mathelier (NCMM), Associate Director		X
Professor Janna Saarela (NCMM), Director	X	

In attendance: Ingrid Kjelsvik, CAO

Agenda: (O = information item, D = discussion item B = decision item)

Case 11-24B Approval of minutes from last Board meeting

Draft minutes from the Board meeting on 7 February were available.

Decision: The minutes were approved.

Case 12-24O NCMM external funding 2023

The Board reviewed NCMMs current portfolio of externally funded research projects. The Director described the portfolio as diverse, both in terms of the type of research conducted, spanning from basic research to clinical research, and in the sources of funding. NCMM encourages applications to prestigious EU and Norwegian funding schemes and several group leaders have projects in the pipeline targeting EU schemes. The Medical Faculty grants office has recently given a presentation to NCMM group leaders, outlining their support offering and encouraging further applications.

The Board commended NCMM for its success in securing competitive research funding, particularly highlighting the recent successes in securing funds from the Norwegian Cancer Society and the European Research Council. The Board noted that the portfolio provided does not include projects where NCMM group leaders are co-applicants or grants that have been awarded with hospital affiliation, and requested an update to be made to the list as inclusion of these projects will further demonstrate the Centre's funding successes and the collaborative nature of the Centre.

Decision: The Board requested a revised overview of the NCMM research portfolio for the next meeting.

Case 13-24D Strategy discussion on continuation of NCMM beyond 2024 - update

The Director updated the Board on the progress of the working group appointed by UiO to propose a revised structure and scientific profile of NCMM beyond 2024. The Director emphasised that the working group will provide a recommendation on the future direction of the Centre, but is not tasked with making a final decision. The working group will complete its report by the end of March 2024. The report will be reviewed by the rector and a decision is expected from the University Board in May 2024. The accompanying budgetary decision will be made in June 2024.

The Director outlined considerations made by the working group, including scientific focus, enhancing links with the University faculties, and structure of the Centre. The Board acknowledged the large amount of work that the working group has put into their review of the Centre. The Board emphasised the role of NCMM as an incubator for research excellence and development of early career researchers as being a key strength of the Centre, and noted that the utilisation of the EMBL model is central to maintaining this. The Board further noted that amplifying the existing links with the medical and natural sciences faculties would be positive for NCMM in this context. The Board raised concern regarding the lack of involvement of Helse Sør-Øst (HSØ) in the working group and emphasised that maintaining the relationship with HSØ and the University Hospitals will be important for NCMM going forward.

Decision: The Board noted the briefing.

Case 14-24O NCMM in the Life Science building

The Director gave an update on the progress of the Life Science Building, outlining the groups which are involved in the planning of the ultimate move and NCMMs representation in those groups. There have been changes to the NCMM footprint within the building since the original plans were made, and there is likely to be further changes, including which other groups may be co-localised with NCMM, before the move takes place. The build is currently on schedule to be completed in time for NCMM to move in over the summer, 2026.

The Board queried if there are updates pertaining to NCMMs current space in Forskningsparken. The CAO outlined ongoing concerns relating to the ventilation, and noted that improvements are planned by Forskningsparken for the summer, 2024. Work on the building façade is expected to begin in the summer of 2026, and it is anticipated that this will cause significant disruption to work at NCMM. It is hoped that the work to the façade will coincide with or follow the Centre's move to the Life Science Building, thus avoiding major disruption to the research. The Board recommended that the Director and the CAO are mindful of this and take immediate action should plans regarding building work in Forskningsparken change.

Decision: The Board noted the briefing.

Case 15-240 Joint postdoc call - update

The Director and the CAO updated on the progress of the joint postdoc call, noting that 7 projects were supported, and, of these, 6 are in recruitment or have completed recruitment. The Board noted that there should be an evaluation of the first round of the scheme, but that it is a good initiative as recommended by the Centre's Scientific Advisory Board in 2023. The Director provided details of NORPOD, a second joint postdoc scheme that the Centre is participating in alongside the other Nordic EMBL partnership nodes. Here, the projects will be shared between two nodes of the Nordic EMBL partnership and the postdoc will spend time in both labs during their appointment.

The Board queried the intention to run a second call for projects to the scheme. The Board noted upcoming changes to appointment regulations that will require some changes to the scope of the scheme. The Director intends to bring this to a subsequent meeting of the Board as a discussion item.

Decision: The Board will discuss the possibility of a second joint postdoc call at the Board meeting in autumn 2024.

Case 16-240 Miscellaneous

The Board is asked to review dates for the autumn meetings as circulated by email at earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Jens Petter Berg
Chair NCMM Board

Janna Saarela
NCMM Director