

Board, Centre for Molecular Medicine Norway (NCMM)

Oslo, 26 May 2020

Minutes from Board Meeting May 25

Time: Monday 25 May, 12:00-14:30

Place: Zoom meeting

Executive officer: Elisa Bjørgo

	Present	Absent
Professor Jens Petter Berg (UiO/OUS), Chair	X	
Professor Finn-Eirik Johansen (UiO), member	X	
Professor Hilde Nilsen (UiO), member	X	
Professor Bente Halvorsen (HSØ), member	X	
Director Research & Innovation Øystein Krüger (HSØ), member	X	
Førsteamanuensis Maria Perander (UiT, national representative), member	X	
Professor Ola Myklebost (UiB), national deputy member		X
Dr. Torunn Berge (HSØ), deputy member		X
Professor Arnaldo Frigessi, deputy member		X
Professor Janna Saarela (NCMM), Director	X	
Professor Hartmut Luecke (NCMM), Assistant Director	X	

CAO Ingrid Kjelsvik was also present.

Agenda (O = information item, D = discussion item B = decision item)**Case 20-20B Approval of minutes from last Board meeting**

Draft minutes from the Board meeting on March 6 were available.

Decision: The minutes are approved.**Case 21-19B Covid-19 outbreak and consequences for NCMM**

NCMM closed everything but a few critical lab functions from March 13. Only the zebrafish, the stem cells and some very valuable and time critical mouse work were upheld in the period from March 13 until April 14. From mid-April the Centre started preparing for a cautious reopening after a dialogue with the Faculty. The main rule in this period has been only one individual from each research group present in the lab at a time. Group leaders have applied for access for their employee(s), using a risk assessment template for each individual, provided by the Faculty. The NCMM Director has assessed the applications and demanded changes / modifications to the plans where necessary.

From mid-May NCMM has scaled up activities according to the new recommendations from the government, following guidelines and instructions from UiO and MED. Approx. 35% of NCMM staff is now allowed to be present at the same time, keeping social distancing and a safe working environment in mind also for joint

areas. All staff members that are allowed back have taken the mandatory UiO infection prevention course.

Since mid-March weekly zoom meetings with the group leaders have been held to keep all updated and be able to discuss on a regular basis. All NCMM group leaders have been very constructive during this period. It is still too early to conclude how much the research groups will suffer due to the corona outbreak.

Decision: The Board takes note of the briefing.

Case 22-200 Building plans in the Oslo Science Park and consequences for NCMM

The Oslo Science Park is planning to build some additional floors to building D as well as renovate the façade for this building. This will affect 50% of NCMM's rented space in the Oslo Science Park.

NCMM as well as the Property Dept. at UiO first heard about these building plans end of January / beginning of February this year. In the beginning of April, NCMM received a letter from the Science Park that the building process that they originally wanted to start April this year, has been postponed until February 2021. The same letter stated that NCMM's lease in the D-building that expires end of January 2021 will not be renewed. NCMM has been asked to find new locations for the activities in house D either in the Science Park or elsewhere.

NCMM is in dialogue with the Property department at UiO who is renting space for UiO in the Oslo Science Park. NCMM will not be able to move all our activities into existing areas in house E (former BiO areas) for 4-5 years before moving to the new LSB and a move will delay current research as well as affect future group leader recruitments as well as our 5-year national strategy.

NCMM will need a decision on whether part of the Centre activity will have to be moved and if yes, to where before the summer.

Decision: The Board takes note of the briefing.

Case 23-20B Overview of NCMM's finances

An overview of the NCMM accounts after the first 4-month period in 2020 compared to the NCMM prognosis at the end of the year was presented. Transferred funds from 2019 to 2020 are tied up and linked to obligations in relation to already employed group leaders, equipment investments and planned start-ups of new groups in the period 2020-2024.

The first 4-month period shows that NCMM is running according to plan and that the close down from mid-March has not yet affected the Centre finances significantly. Some larger instrument investments have been paused due to the uncertainty regarding the potential move, and the corona situation will most likely affect the second half of

the 2020 budget more than the first accounting period. It is still too early to know if NCMM staff will claim extensions due corona-related delays.

Decision: The Board takes note of the briefing.

Case 24-20B New call for NCMM Associate Investigators

The network of NCMM Associate Investigators (AIs) was established in 2011 and there have been altogether four open calls for new Associate and Young Associate Investigators. NCMM has now entered the third 5-year period and in March 21 AIs were reappointed after an application process.

The next step in the renewal of the NCMM Associate Investigator network is opening a fifth call for both senior and more early-career Associate Investigators, and a draft call text was presented in the meeting. Clinicians will be encouraged to apply. NCMM plans to open the call early June with an application deadline end of August.

The Board in the meeting suggested to make it clearer in the call text that NCMM is looking for both early-career group leaders as well as more senior PIs and also highlight that the applications will be evaluated in two separate groups. This to encourage also young group leaders to apply to this call.

When the call closes, a committee consisting of members from all regions in Norway, need to evaluate the applications and prepare a recommendation to the Board. NCMM is planning to ask Deans and Research Deans in all regions to be involved or to nominate a member to the committee. If a region does not suggest a member, NCMM will ask senior Associate Investigators from that region to assist instead.

Decision: The call text for new NCMM Associate Investigators is approved in line with discussions in the meeting. NCMM is given the mandate to contact the different regions to put together an evaluation committee.

Case 25-20B Recruitment of new SAB member

The NCMM Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) has 6 members, and since 2017 Richard Treisman is the chair. After the last SAB visit in October, Margaret Frame, who joined the SAB in 2014, rotated out and needs to be replaced before the next SAB visit in March 2021.

The Board in January approved a list of potential SAB candidates (Case 4-20B). With the recruitment of Sebastian Waszak as group leader and NCMM now having a strong computational team, the NCMM Director would like to add some computational biology expertise to the list and an updated list was presented in the meeting.

Decision: Recruitment of new SAB members will take place based on the approved revised list of potential candidates and in line with discussions in the Board.

Case 26-200 Continuation of NCMM – update

NCMM in March received the RCN contract covering the period 2020-2024 and in April also received a formal confirmation from HSØ regarding their funding of NCMM in the next 5-year period.

As a national Centre, NCMM also aims to include the other Health Regions and universities with medical schools as owners of the Centre from 2021. The plans to visit Tromsø, Bergen and Trondheim during the spring have been paused due to the Covid-19 outbreak but the Centre will contact all region and hopefully be able to start online discussions before the summer.

In the meeting, HSØ Director for Research and Innovation Øystein Krüger offered to discuss the position papers and strategy with the NCMM Director before other regions are contacted.

Decision: The Board takes note of the briefing.

Case 27 Miscellaneous

Sincerely,

Jens Petter Berg
Chair NCMM Board

Janna Saarela
NCMM Director