

ANNUAL REPORT 2012

NOS-M is a cooperative body for the medical research councils in Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Denmark.

Composition of NOS-M

Member councils

Forskningsrådet för Hälsa, Finlands Akademi, Finland
Rannsóknamiðstöð Íslands (RANNIS), Island
Divisjon for Vitenskap, Norges Forskningsråd, Norge
Ämnesrådet för medicin, Vetenskapsrådet, Sverige
Det Frie Forskningsråd | Sundhed og Sygdom, Danmark

Each member country is represented by one or two council members and administrative representatives.

Observers from the Nordic Council of Ministers as well as NordForsk are invited, and as of 2005, observers from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania may take part in NOS-M meetings and activities. Additional observers may be invited. The Research Council of Norway has hosted the secretariat in the period 1.1.2010 – 31.12.2012.

Members

Finland: Tuula Tamminen, Mikael Knip
Iceland: Jona Freysdóttir
Norway: Stig Slørdahl (chair), Anne Husebekk
Sweden: Mats Ulfendahl, Birgitta Öberg
Denmark: Jørgen Frøkiær, Lars Køber

Administrative representatives

Finland: Sara Illman (- spring 2012)
Iceland: Magnus L. Magnusson (- spring 2012), Guðlaug Þ Kristjánsdóttir (spring 2012 -)
Norway: Hilde Jerkø
Sweden: Teresa Ottinger
Denmark: Anne Christiansen

Observers

Nordic Council of Ministers: no representative appointed
NordForsk: Maria Nilsson, Harald Botha
Latvia: Iveta Ozolanta
Estonia: Irja Lutsar
Lithuania: Limas Kupcinskas

NOS-M Secretariat

Norway: Henrietta Blankson

The objective of NOS-M

The objective of NOS-M is to further develop the committee as a joint forum for promotion of medical research in the Nordic countries and to strengthen the international status of Nordic health research. Enhancement of Nordic cooperation has been of increasing importance in science policy issues; especially in relation to the European Research Area and the establishment of NordForsk, a platform for joint Nordic research and research policy development.

Main activities during 2012

NOS-M meetings

NOS-M has had two meetings during 2012:

- Stockholm 22nd – 23rd of March
- Reykjavik 18th – 19th of October

Below are listed the different topics NOS-M has discussed during the 2012 meetings.

Country reports

Country reports from each Nordic national research council are given at each NOS-M meeting. These reports are important in the mutual information exchange between the councils and also prominent in the feedback to the individual research councils.

Themes

One topic of special interest is brought forward at each meeting. The special themes in 2012 were:

- 1) Medical research education, PhD programmes and carrier paths. The presentations and discussions were based on the following keywords:
 - Institutions offering PhD education within the field of medicine
 - Requirement for enrolment as a PhD student
 - PhD fellowships/funding
 - Thesis, academic supervision and awarding of the PhD degree
 - PhD schools and programmes
 - Student research programmes
 - Internationalisation of the PhD education
 - Number of PhD students within the field of medicine
- 2) Funding strategies. The presentations and discussions were based on the following keywords:
 - Funding schemes for young scientists
 - Different funding instruments
 - Grant levels
 - The balance between “good ideas” and strong “CVs”
 - How to support risk projects
 - The fraction of thematic instruments to bottom-up instruments

Excursions

- DeCode Genetics, presentation by Ingileif Jonsdottir, Reykjavik October 2012

Harmonisation of the medical PhD education

Introduced by the discussion about the medical research education at NOS-M's spring meeting, NOS-M has initiated a pilot on harmonisation of the Nordic PhD education.

Today the requirements for the medical PhD education are quite different, but we do regard them as equal when evaluating the competence of Nordic researchers. Similar requirements in the Nordic countries could enhance Nordic collaboration in evaluating PhD degrees, but also increase the quality of the PhD degrees.

A working group, consisting of one representative from each of the Nordic countries, has agreed on several recommendations for a possible harmonisation of the Nordic medical PhD education. NOS-M has endorsed the recommendations and has approached the medical faculties and the health schools for consultation of the recommendations.

White Paper on Medical Research

The White paper on Medical Research "Present Status and Future Potential for Medical Research in the Nordic Countries", published in 2011, has been further followed up in 2012.

The strategy memo identifies areas in which the Nordic countries would benefit from strengthening cooperation in order to meet the major health-related challenges they are facing, including an ageing population, new lifestyle diseases, complex ethical questions related to new technology, and social inequality in health. The document pinpoints two specific areas of medical research in which the Nordic countries have competitive advantages, placing them in an excellent position to become leaders in the field. These are research using biobanks and health registries on the one hand, and clinical medical research on the other. The document also provides specific recommendations on how to enhance Nordic cooperation to boost the quality of research in the medical sciences.

Presentations of the White paper during 2012: for the EMRC core group, for the NordForsk board and at NordForsk's Kick-off seminar for Health and Welfare.

Nordic Trial Alliance

Clinical trials has decreased in all Nordic countries the last decade, both industrial and academically initiated. A critical resource to halt and turn this negative development is open access to research infrastructures connecting research communities sharing competences and resources.

To halt and turn the present development, a Nordic clinical research network – Nordic Trial Alliance - has recently been initiated, and a stepping stone phase has been financed by NordForsk. As a part of the stepping stone phase, a workshop in order to involve key stakeholders from the Nordic countries is planned. NOS-M decided to fund the workshop with 240 000 NOK.

Joint Committee secretariat

Responsibility for the Joint Committee secretariat has historically rotated among the Nordic countries at three-year intervals. In order to secure the continuity of the NOS-M secretariat and to strengthen the link between NOS-M and NordForsk, the secretariat is permanently transferred to NordForsk from 1.1.2013.

The chairmanship will still rotate among the member countries in the following order: Denmark, Norway, Finland, Sweden, Iceland.

Other topics

- Evaluation of Biology, Clinical Medicine and Health Science in Norway
- Sport science in the Nordic countries
- Information from NordForsk
- Information about activities in ESF/EMRC/Science Europe
- Copenhagen Research Forum
- Statement of Principles for Scientific Merit Review, Global Summit on Scientific Merit Review
- Nordic Research – key data 2012
- Nordic Education – key data 2012

Financial report

The Research Council of Norway has administered the finances of NOS-M during 2012. A financial report is attached to the annual report.

Signature

Henrietta Blankson

Oslo, February 2013