

ANNUAL REPORT 2014

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

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.

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 och hälsa, Vetenskapsrådet, Sverige
Det Frie Forskningsråd | Sundhed og Sygdom, Danmark

Each member country is represented by 1-2 council members and 1-2 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. The Nordic members of Science Europe Medical Sciences Committee were invited to join the meetings in 2013. Additional observers may be invited.

NordForsk has hosted the NOS-M secretariat since 1 January 2013.

Members:

Finland: Tuula Tamminen (Chair), Pauli Puolakkainen
Iceland: Jona Freysdóttir (JF left after NOS-M 1-2014)
Norway: Stig Slørdahl, Anne Husebekk (AH left after NOS-M 2-2014)
Sweden: Mats Ulfendahl, Birgitta Öberg
Denmark: Jørgen Frøkiær, Lars Køber

Administrative representatives:

Finland: Jarmo Wahlfors, Sara Illman
Iceland: Guðlaug Þ Kristjánsdóttir
Norway: Hilde Jerkø, Henrietta Blankson
Sweden: Johan Nilsson
Denmark: Charlotte Deleuran Nielsen (CDN left after NOS-M 1-2014), Ditte Nissen Lund

Observers:

Nordic Council of Ministers: Daniel Holmberg
NordForsk: Maria Nilsson
Latvia: Kristine Klavina
Estonia: Irja Lutsar
Lithuania: Diana Obelienienė

NOS-M Secretariat:

NordForsk/Maria Nilsson

Main activities during 2014

NOS-M has had two meetings during 2014:

- Helsinki 26-27 March
- Stockholm 6-7 November

Below are listed the different topics NOS-M has discussed during the 2014 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 2014 were:

- 1) *How do we handle more risky applications?*

Each country presented information on how risky project proposals are assessed in each country and if there are special support measures for this type of research. The NOS-M Committee supports funding of risky projects. The researchers should not be punished if the project fails. This may lead to loss of excellent researchers and applications for less risky projects. A new mindset was called for. Research environments could perhaps help with mentoring of young researchers.

- 2) *Strategic and basic research in the Nordic countries – a comparison*

The topic was a continuation on 1). Each country shared information regarding how strategic and basic research is handled in the respective countries which also included how risky project proposals are assessed. It was proposed that NOS-M continues to share information on the national funding systems possibly through the annual reports. How is the funding distributed - through which institutions - what is the role of our own institutions in this landscape?

Excursions

No specific excursions were arranged in 2014.

Harmonisation of the medical PhD education

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 Nordic working group developed a set of recommendations for harmonization of the PhD education which were discussed at the NOS-M 2/2012 meeting. The recommendations were later updated after consultation with the Nordic medical faculties and health schools.

A Nordic workshop aimed at the deans of the Nordic medical faculties was arranged in connection with the 2/2014 meeting to discuss the recommendations and how to move forward. It was proposed that NOS-M should focus on implementing a few of the recommendations. The participants were after the meeting asked to list the three most important recommendations. NOS-M will discuss the feedback received at the 1-2015

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meeting and decide on next steps.

White Paper on Medical Research

The Nordic White Paper "Nordic Potential in Medical Research - Cooperation for Success" was successfully launched in November 2014. The White Paper focuses on Nordic added value in medical research cooperation and emphasizes that together the Nordic countries are a strong actor in medical research. Enhanced strategic cooperation is however essential to realise the Nordic potential. NOS-M will discuss possible follow-up of the White Paper recommendations at the 1-2015 meeting.

Nordic Trial Alliance

The Nordic Trial Alliance (NTA) is a three-year pilot project funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers and NordForsk. NTA aims to increase cooperation on multi-centre clinical trials in the Nordic countries. NOS-M follows NTA activities with great interest but has not taken an active role since the funding of NTA's annual stakeholders meeting in 2013.

Joint Committee Secretariat

The secretariat was permanently transferred to NordForsk as of 1 January 2013.

The chairmanship rotates among the member countries in the following order: Denmark, Norway, Finland, Sweden, Iceland. 2015 will thus be the final year of the Finnish chairmanship.

Other topics

- Information from NordForsk and the Nordic Council of Ministers
- Information about activities in ESF/EMRC/Science Europe
- Information from the Baltic countries

Financial report

NordForsk has administered the finances of NOS-M during 2014. A financial report is attached to the annual report.

*/Maria Nilsson, NordForsk
February 2015*

Revised March 2015 after feedback given at the NOS-M 1/2015 meeting (section on Nordic Trial Alliance)