

ANNUAL REPORT 2015

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 2015:

Finland: Tuula Tamminen (Chair), Pauli Puolakkainen
Iceland: Þórarinn Guðjónsson
Norway: Stig Slørdahl, Kåre Birger Hagen
Sweden: Mats Ulfendahl, Birgitta Öberg
Denmark: Jørgen Frøkiær (left after 1-2015), Lars Køber, Kaare Christensen

Administrative representatives:

Finland: Jarmo Wahlfors, Sara Illman
Iceland: Guðlaug Þ Kristjánsdóttir (left after 1-2015), Ása Guðrún Kristjánsdóttir
Norway: Hilde Jerkø, Henrietta Blankson
Sweden: Johan Nilsson
Denmark: Ditte Nissen Lund, Franziska Wolf

Observers:

Nordic Council of Ministers: Daniel Holmberg
NordForsk: Maria Nilsson
Latvia: Kristine Klavina
Estonia: Irja Lutsar
Lithuania: Diana Obelienienė
SE-MED: Håkan Billig

NOS-M Secretariat:

NordForsk/Maria Nilsson

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. Sweden will take on the chairmanship from 2016.

Main activities during 2015

NOS-M has had two meetings during 2015:

- Helsinki 4-5 March
- Copenhagen 14-15 September

Below are listed the different topics NOS-M has discussed during the 2015 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.

Invited guest(s)

1-2015: Dr Tom Kenny, Director of Research Delivery and Impact, NETSCC* was invited to present NETSCC activities. NETSCC manages evaluation of research programmes and activities for the NIHR, and plays an important role in improving the health and wealth of the nation through research. *The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Evaluation, Trials and Studies Coordinating Centre (NETSCC)

2-2015: The Chair of the European Commission's Scientific Panel for Health (SPH) Professor Karin Sipido was invited to present the work of the Panel. SPH is a science-led expert group based on the provisions of the Horizon 2020 Specific Programme that has been tasked with helping to achieve better health and wellbeing for all. Professor Sipido later invited NOS-M member Stig Slørdahl to give a presentation on lessons learned from Nordic research cooperation at a joint conference between the Scientific Panel for Health and the EC in January 2016.

Themes

One topic of special interest is brought forward at each meeting. The special themes in 2015 were:

- 1) *How funding instruments can be used to promote basic and strategic research*

Each country shared information on the theme "How funding instruments can be used to promote basic and strategic research" including basic rules and guidelines for funding and gave examples of how the different funding instruments are being used including eligible costs. NOS-M took note of the information.

- 2) *Follow up of the Nordic White Paper for Medical Research*

The Nordic White Paper "Nordic Potential in Medical Research - Cooperation for Success" was 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. At the 1/2015 meeting, the Finnish chairmanship and the

NOS-M secretariat agreed to develop an implementation plan describing possible follow-up activities. This implementation plan was discussed at the 2/2015 focusing on the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1: *Efforts should be extended to increase and improve cooperation in medical research and research policy to take full advantage of the valuable assets we already have and their inherent potential.*

Recommendation 2: *Attention should be paid to removing obstacles for using Nordic research infrastructures such as biobanks and registries in joint Nordic research to make the best possible use of our unique resources and facilitate world-class research in this area.*

Recommendation 3: *Each country should strive to implement the ESF recommendations on personalised medicine. Funding should be focused on this area, on-going initiatives should be supported and possibilities for cooperation should be investigated.*

Recommendation 4: *Nordic medical PhD education should be harmonised to enhance the quality of education through synergistic effects of shared experiences and expertise. Further, researcher mobility should be supported at all career stages to increase quality of research.*

Recommendation 5: *Gender equality should be supported by allowing all researchers to participate on equal terms at all stages along the career path up to the most senior positions.*

NOS-M will discuss follow-up of the recommendations at the 1-2016 meeting.

Harmonisation of the Nordic medical PhD education

NOS-M initiated a pilot project on harmonisation of the Nordic PhD education in 2012. 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 harmonisation 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.

“Harmonisation of the Nordic medical PhD education” is one of the recommendations found in the Nordic White Paper and NOS-M will continue to work on the issue in 2016.

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. The NTA project will come to an end in 2016.

Other topics

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

Excursions

No specific excursions were arranged in 2015.

Voksenåsen Seminar

NOS-M co-arranged a seminar at Voksenåsen on Nordic health co-operation 4 February 2015 in Oslo. The event was jointly arranged by NOS-M, NordForsk, Nordic Council of Ministers, the Embassy of Sweden in Oslo and the Swedish-Norwegian Cultural Centre, Voksenåsen. Mats Ulfendahl took part in a panel discussion on antibiotic resistance.

Financial report

NordForsk has administered the finances of NOS-M during 2015. A financial report is attached to the annual report.

*/Maria Nilsson, NordForsk
April 2016*