

ANNUAL REPORT 2016

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 between 2013-15. The committee later ceased to exist. Additional observers may be invited.

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

Members 2016:

Finland: Jorma Toppari, Pauli Puolakkainen
Iceland: Þorsteinn Loftsson, Bryndís Eva Birgisdóttir
Norway: Stig Slørdahl, Kåre Birger Hagen
Sweden: Jan-Ingvar Jönsson (Chair), Mats Wahlgren, Louise von Essen
Denmark: Lars Køber, Kaare Christensen

Administrative representatives:

Finland: Jarmo Wahlfors, Sara Illman
Iceland: Ása Guðrún Kristjánsdóttir
Norway: Hilde Jerkø, Henrietta Blankson
Sweden: Johan Nilsson
Denmark: Bjørn Martin Luff, Allan Hegeland

Observers:

NordForsk: Maria Nilsson
Latvia: Kristine Klavina
Estonia: Irja Lutsar
Lithuania: Diana Obelienienė

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 took on the chairmanship in 2016.

Main activities during 2016

NOS-M had one meeting in 2016:

- Reykjavik 17-18 April

Below are listed the different topics NOS-M discussed in the 2016 meeting.

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 theme in 2016 was "*Personalised medicine*".

The theme for the meeting was a direct follow up of the White Paper recommendation that each country should strive to implement the ESF recommendations on personalised medicine. Each country has been asked to report on existing national strategies for personalised medicine and other related activities. NOS-M took note of the information.

It was decided that NOS-M should have a workshop on the theme in the autumn of 2016. The target of such workshop could be research council representatives in the national councils. Potential for Nordic and international cooperation on the theme should be explored.

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. An implementation plan focusing on how to implement the following recommendations has been developed. Its status will be a standing NOS-M agenda item:

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 discussed the follow-up of the recommendations at the 1-2016 meeting. NOS-M supports the work of NordForsk related to recommendations 1 and 2. The theme for the NOS-M 1-2016 meeting, personalised medicine, was a direct follow up of recommendation 3. NOS-M would like to see that the Nordic deans takes lead on recommendation 4, and is willing to support a meeting for the deans.

A meeting with the administrative members of NOS-M was held in June 2016 to discuss concrete activities and plan for the workshop on personalised medicine.

Other topics

- Information from NordForsk and the Nordic Council of Ministers
- Information about international activities
- Information from the Baltic countries

Workshop on Personalised Medicine

NOS-M arranged a workshop targeting Nordic common strengths and future potential within personalised medicine in Stockholm on 23 November 2016. The workshop's aim was to discuss the potential of Nordic research cooperation targeting personalised medicine, including e.g. networking, academy-industry cooperation and joint research funding opportunities. The day included presentation of lessons learned from Nordic clinical research and research infrastructure projects and a visionary outlook on how the Nordic region can become a hotspot for sharing and linking sensitive research data.

Excursions

No specific excursions were arranged in 2016.

Financial report

NordForsk has administered the finances of NOS-M during 2016. A financial report is attached to the annual report.

*/Maria Nilsson, NordForsk
February 2017*