

2023-02-20



Minutes of the Advisory Group and board meeting in Copenhagen 17 January 2023

Participants: Sigurður M. Magnússon (IRSA, Chairman); Antti Daavittila (STUK); Nici Bergroth (Fortum); Christian Linde (SSM); Roberta Concilio Hansson (Vattenfall); Ingrid Helen Hauge (IFE); Mikael Meister (Vattenfall); Kresten Breddam (SIS); Peder Kock (SSM); Aleksi Mattila (STUK); Pia Keski-Jaskari (STUK); Carsten Israelson (DEMA); Carol Robinson (DSA); Per Seltborg (SSM); Kasper Andersson (DTU); Finn Physant (FRIT, meeting secretary)

Excuses: Astrid Liland (DSA); Ari Leppänen (STUK)

- 1 **Opening**
The Chair welcomed all the participants to the meeting, which was the first physical meeting of the group.
- 2 **Practical remarks**
Practical information about the meeting was given by the Chair and the host, Carsten Israelson. All the participants presented themselves. Finn Physant was appointed meeting secretary.
- 3 **Approval of the agenda**
The agenda was approved with the inclusion of "Industry involvement in NKS projects" under meeting item 13 "Other issues".
- 4 **Approval of the minutes of the last Advisory Group meeting (2022-01-24)**
The minutes were approved.

5 Follow up from the last Advisory Group meeting

The Chair informed about the revised NKS-R Framework, which was the result of the last Advisory Group meeting. The following two texts had been added: "and to innovations which can be seen as future steps in nuclear technology" and "including next generation plants". The further development of both the NKS-R and NKS-B frameworks will be addressed under meeting item 9 "NKS Framework Program".

6 NKS R-part

A: status

Kasper Andersson made on behalf of Ari Leppänen a presentation of the status of the ongoing R-part activities. Overall the work in NKS-R is progressing satisfactorily.

Status for the activities from CfP 2022:

Most of the activities are on schedule. FEMMA is ahead of schedule. WPS-MAF is delayed at least 6 months due to delays in making testing and personnel changes. Final report will be significantly delayed for this activity.

Status for the activities from CfP 2021:

5 activities from CfP 2021 have been completed. 5/6 reports published by December 20th 2022. Delayed reports from POMMI and THEOS were published in November. WPS-MAF is experiencing problems due to personnel change; final report from CfP 2021 is still pending.

For the activity STATUS an internal seminar was scheduled for mid-December 2022.

One travel grant had been admitted as young scientist travel assistance.

B: CfP 2023 proposals: evaluation and funding of new activities

Kasper Andersson presented on behalf of Ari Leppänen the evaluation results and funding recommendations for CfP 2023. NKS-R received 10 proposals this year (four continued and six new proposals), with a total funding request of 5164 kDKK. Four funding alternatives were presented based on the evaluations with an expected budget of 3000 kDKK. After some discussions the Advisory Group supported the funding of alternative #4 including the following six activities in 2023: BRED2023, STATUS, FEMMA 2023, INSOLE, TRIO and DATA4DECOM. The funding request is 3109 kDKK (with a cut of 3% this amounts to 3016 kDKK).

The Chair concluded that the Advisory Group recommends funding of Ari Leppänen's alternative #4 recommendation to the NKS Board.

7 NKS B-part

A: status

Kasper Andersson presented a status report for ongoing activities. In an overall view the work in NKS-B is progressing well. Delayed activities (initiated before 2022): none.

Activities commencing in 2022: all activities progressing according to (in some cases revised) schedule. Four young scientist travel claims in 2022. NKS-B seminars in 2022: ECOFOOD, NORDICNANO, RNSARCARDS, CRESCENT, NUPFLIGHT.

B: CfP 2022 proposals: evaluation and funding of new activities

Kasper Andersson presented the evaluation results and funding recommendation for CfP 2023 – a total of 19 (none of these continued) proposals were received. The total amount requested was 8851.25 kDKK from an expected budget of 3000 kDKK. One funding recommendation and four alternatives were presented.

Kasper Andersson recommended funding of the following seven activities in 2023: TEMEDET, GAMMASKILL, REALMORC, ANTHROPIC, DISARM, PRICOMOB, AMSPECNORDOS (total applied for 3000 kDKK with a 3,3% reduction). Based on this recommendation some discussions followed in the Advisory Group.

The Chair concluded from the discussions that the Advisory Group recommends funding of Kasper Andersson's recommendation noted above of seven activities.

8 NKS seminar 2022 and 2025

On behalf of the coordination group Finn Physant presented the results and conclusions of the survey carried out after the May 2022 seminar including comparisons with the results and conclusions of the surveys carried out after the 2013, 2016 and 2019 seminars.

The responses and results of the surveys were reported to the board concerning: overall rate, seminar attendance, relevance, usefulness, quality of presentations, seminar organization, scheduling, timing, facility/venue, handouts of books of abstracts and pamphlets, networking possibilities/opportunities and poster session. Finally one outstanding response - out of the many very positive responses - was the average rating of 4,5 (of 5) on "How likely are you to attend future NKS seminars?"

Extensive support was expressed by the Advisory Group and the board to start the planning of a 2025 seminar with the same venue as in 2022.

It was concluded that the upcoming seminar should be planned for the second part of May 2025.

The Chair informed the group that he already had made first initial contacts to candidates as VIP speakers at the upcoming seminar.

During this meeting item Nici Bergroth asked for the nationalities of the registered participants in the May 2022 seminar. The nationalities were (the meeting secretary): SE: 31; FI: 10; NO: 8; DK: 6; IS: 3; UK: 3; CH: 3; others (only one each): 9.

9 NKS Framework Program

The Chair stressed that the views of the Advisory Group on the present NKS Framework Program were important for the NKS board's future development of these.

The NKS-R Framework was revised at last year's meeting, and a further change of this new text was agreed on in the last sentence of the section under the heading "NKS-R programme". Here "... waste disposal and new nuclear facilities including next generation plants" is replaced by "... waste disposal and new nuclear facilities including next generation plants such as small modular reactors".

Revisions to the NKS-B Framework were presented by Kasper Andersson.

The first sentence, in 3rd paragraph on page 3, starting with "In addition to the threats from potential nuclear accidents, threats related to the possibility of malicious uses of radioactive substances" was before the meeting proposed to continue with "and even use of tactical or strategic nuclear weapons" before returning to the original text "are now seen as a major concern...". It was at the meeting agreed to modify the sentence to "In addition to the threats from potential nuclear accidents, threats related to the possibility of malicious uses of radioactive or nuclear substances and even use of nuclear weapons are now seen as a major concern...".

Further, it had been agreed before the meeting to include the following bullet point under emergency preparedness examples of possible NKS-B activities: "Potential warfare use of radiological or nuclear devices: characteristics and emergency response". This insertion was changed at the meeting to read "Potential use of radiological or nuclear explosive devices: characteristics and emergency response".

10 The evaluation process (both for proposals and final reports)

The Chair informed that the NKS board had decided to review and revise the NKS evaluation processes and procedures both with regard to proposals and final reports. These have been in place for a long time and a complaint was received one year ago concerning the evaluation of proposals. This is the first time that NKS receives such a complaint and the NKS Board takes the complaint seriously. The discussion focused on the evaluation process for proposals. The Chair asked if the present evaluation criteria are still fit for purpose? Especially the criteria "Nordic value" and "young scientists" were discussed. Transparency and impartiality in the process were also discussed. Furthermore the ranking and rating of the proposals were discussed focusing on if the evaluators should continue to rank projects or that should be done by the board. Also, it was discussed if maximum rating should be changed from "7" to "5", and if there is a need for clarification in the instructions to evaluators on the meaning of the numbers used in the rating of proposals.

The discussion reflected very different views with regard to the evaluation criteria used and their relative importance as well as ranking and rating.

The discussion on impartiality focused on if evaluators could/should evaluate proposals either originating from own organization or where own organization is involved. The discussion highlighted the challenge for smaller countries where the available pool of experts is very small and limited to very few organizations or even one organization. The Chair thanked for a very good and constructive discussion which will be continued in the NKS board. The evaluation process for final reports will be addressed at the next joint meeting.

30.1.2023

The NKS board decided at it's meeting on 18 January to revise the instructions for evaluators. The aim is to share a mature draft with the NKS Advisory Group for comments in early May and to approve at the NKS Board meeting in June.

SMM, NKS Chair

11 The content of and the interface between the program areas

Kasper Andersson presented the "Note on the content of and the interface between the program areas", concluding that content and interface seem to be well fit for purpose. The discussion showed broad support for that conclusion.

There was also good support for maintaining broadly the present balance between the two program areas, that prioritized areas are not needed and that there will not be less need for preparedness projects in the future.

There is a broad agreement that the present structure of NKS works well and serves NKS well, At the same time it is recognized that it is quite costly given NKS budget. One possibility to reduce cost is to move to a structure with one PC coordinating both program areas. Reservations and concerns were expressed as this may well have a negative impact on the quality of the NKS program. Any proposals towards such change need to be carefully

evaluated for impact before a decision is taken. The Chair thanked for a very good and constructive discussion which will be continued in the NKS board.

12 The length, funding and number of projects

Kasper Andersson presented the note on "NKS in the future: Length, number and funding of projects – discussion paper". The discussion reflected very different views on length, funding and number of projects in a similar way as when this issue was discussed in the NKS Board in 2018. While some were in favor of longer, fewer projects being more cost effective and having more scientific impact others favored the present system with a mix of one or two years projects as better suited for the aims of NKS providing good flexibility. It was suggested that the board should address if there is a need for a time limit for continuation of same or similar projects as some projects have been ongoing for several years i.e. BREDA on the R side and Gammaseminars on the B side. The Chair thanked for a very good and constructive discussion which will be continued in the NKS board.

13 Other issues

Mikael Meister raised the issue and problems with the current lack of involvement from the co-financiers in NKS-B activities. The topic was discussed, but no solutions were identified. It was agreed that the PC-B would together with Mikael Meister consider the point further and try to identify a way forward for the next Cfp.

Finn Physant presented on behalf of Ari Leppänen "Experiences of Google analytics in the NKS website". Questions were asked: Who are the end-users of NKS reports? Who are the people downloading NKS reports? Where do they live? In order to provide answers Google Analytics statistics were obtained. By identifying in which regions relatively low percentages of visitors immediate leave after entering the website it is possible to identify regions, where report downloads are more common than in others. One example is the region Clifton in New Jersey, USA - a region with nuclear facilities and universities. The analysis shows that NKS has a significant international audience outside the Nordic countries and that the NKS reports are downloaded globally.

14 Next meeting

Next meeting will take place in Copenhagen on Tuesday 16 January 2024 followed by a board meeting on Wednesday 17 January 2024 with DEMA as host for both meetings.

15 End of meeting

The Chair thanked Carsten Israelson/DEMA for the meeting arrangements and all the participants for the good and constructive discussions during the meeting.