

DRAFT

NKS(22)6
2021-06-03



Minutes of the board meeting 23 May 2022 in Stockholm

Present: Sigurður M. Magnússon (Chair, IRSA), Carsten Israelson (DEMA), Pia Vesterbacka (STUK), Carol Robinson (DSA), Per Seltborg (SSM), Kasper Andersson (DTU), Ari Leppänen (STUK) and Finn Physant (meeting secretary, FRIT).

1 Opening

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed the participants. Everyone presented themselves as this was the first meeting the five board members attended together.

2 Practical remarks

Finn Physant was appointed meeting secretary.

Practical remarks about the meeting were given by the Chair and the host Per Seltborg. The meeting was in two parts. All meeting participants were to participate in the first part (meeting items 1 to 15). The second part (meeting items 16 to 21) was only to be attended by the board members.

3 Approval of the agenda

The agenda was approved.

4 Minutes of the last board tele meeting (2022-01-26)

The minutes were approved. The Action A noted in the appendix of the minutes of the January board meeting has been noted in parenthesis in these minutes when handled under meeting item 5.

5 News since last board meeting

a) Report by the chairman

The Chair reported that the running of NKS since the last board meeting had been characterized by business-as-usual except from the review of contracts to be handled under meeting item 11 and a complaint to be handled under item 12.

b) News from board members' organisations

The members informed each other about relevant news.

c) Administrative news

It was decided during the last board meeting that after the signing of the new NKS agreement for 2022-25 the two handbooks would be given a rundown by the coordination group in order to include any updates or revisions needed according to the new agreement. The group presented the new version of the "Handbook for NKS applicants and activity leaders", NKS(22)4, 2022-05-05 including changes to the board. The handbook will be part of the material in the upcoming CfP 2022 and has been uploaded to the website (Action A). The board took note of the revised handbook.

The group also presented the new "NKS Administrative Handbook", NKS(22)3, 2022-03-31. The handbook's Attachment 7 – Roles and responsibilities from the document "Rules of procedure for NKS" in the newest version 2021-09-21 had been included. The handbook has been uploaded to the website (Action A).

The board took note of the revised handbook.

6 Financial status for the current year

The Financial Statements 2021 and the Long-form audit report 2021 both dated 23 May 2022 were approved and signed by the board members.

Finn Physant presented the Financial status report dated 6 May 2022. The reserve at present is estimated to approximately DKK 730,000 / EUR 98,000 – in accordance with this year's budget decision of 26 January 2022.

The board took note of the financial situation.

The Chair asked if the board wanted the presentation of the financial programme specification to be continued at the board meetings. The board wanted the continuation of the presentation with focus on deviations from business-as-usual.

7 Status of the NKS R activities incl. Impact of Covid-19

Ari Leppänen made a presentation of the status of the ongoing R-part activities. Overall the work in NKS-R is lagging behind. Most CfP 2021 projects experience problems.

Status for the activities from CfP 2022: Contracts signed for all 6 activities. Some issues with contract template with KTH. A telemeeting had been held and it was agreed to modify the contract template to add all the partners in one contract. Status update was requested 16 March. WPS-MAF reported delays. Other projects running smoothly.

Status for the activities from CfP 2021: 1 (BREDA 2021) out of 6 activities from 2021 completed and report published on website.

- COCOS has requested more time due to delays in experiments done earlier.
- STATUS expected to have the final report ready in May.
- THEOS report most likely delayed until summer/fall. CfP2020 report published in September 2021.
- POMMI project is preparing a manuscript to "Journal of Plasticity" and hence the delay of the final report.
- WPS-MAF has difficulties with personnel. Two people have resigned, and report will be delayed until August-September.

BREDA and FEMMA are planning seminars to be organized at KTH.

Concerning travel assistance for young scientists: No requests or inquiries have been received so far.

The board took note of the R-part status.

8 Status of the NKS B activities incl. Impact of Covid-19

Kasper Andersson presented the status of the NKS-B activities. Overall the work in NKS-B is progressing well. Since the last NKS-B status report: 4 final reports published on the website plus 3 on request not yet published.

Delayed activities (from before 2021): CRESCENT (final report expected by 31 July).

Activities commencing in 2021: All final reports approved and activities finalised.

Activities commencing in 2022: All 8 contracts signed and work on schedule except from RNSARCARDS. The project group needs to propose a new timeline and adaptations due to consequences of the war in Ukraine. The proposal is expected 31 May and the PC-B will notify the NKS board asap with a final adaptation plan.

NKS-B seminars 2022:

ECOFOOD: The activity will produce recorded training "events" and materials for ECOFOOD software users.

NORDICNANO: Workshop 7-9 June in Gothenburg (announced) and seminar planned for November – latter can be held virtually if needed.

RNSARCARDS: Two workshops (participation by invitation only), but also a table top exercise, where "secondary" training audience participation is considered. Table top exercise in Bodø (N) 29-30 September 2022.

CRESCENT: Second seminar planned for 8-9 June 2022 (participation by invitation only).

NUPFLIGHT: Workshop is planned for around 15 June (participation by invitation only).

The board took note of the B-part status.

9 Call for Proposals 2022 and expected funding of NKS 2023

The Chair and Kasper Andersson informed the board about this year's call for proposals (CfP). There will be a CfP for both the B- and R-part opening on 1 September with deadline 14 October. The deadline for submission of evaluations from board members will be 15 November.

The Chair proposed the budget for 2023 for each programme's activities to be set to DKK 3,000,000. The board agreed to this.

The board members indicated that contributions from their organisations in 2023 will be at the same level as in 2022 subject to confirmation at the January 2023 board meeting. The Chair will contact the co-financiers in September regarding their contributions to NKS in 2023.

10 NKS R and B seminar

The PC's had presented the finalised seminar program as meeting material. 75 persons have registered as seminar participants. Everything is ready for carrying out the seminar over the next two days 24 and 25 May.

11 NKS contracts and agreements

Per Seltborg had been asked by the Chair to address two contractual questions, which had appeared during NKS work in the spring 2022.

One question concerns the fact that NKS does not receive invoices for all activities carried out by organisations receiving NKS grants. Per Seltborg informed the board that SSM handles this possible problem in SSM's grant letters by limiting the grant/payment period by formulations such as: "If SSM has not received the invoice by (date) at the latest the contractor voids the right of remuneration for that year".

The Chair will look into this and present a proposal, including new contract text, to the board stating that the limitation for invoicing will be for instance 6 months after the finalization of activities.

The second question concerns the fact that KTH requests all activity participants (organisations) in activities, in which KTH participates, to sign the contracts, which KTH enters and signs. Per Seltborg and Ari Leppänen had just earlier in May participated in a meeting with KTH representatives and the conclusion of the meeting had been to let all organisations participating in an activity, including KTH, sign such contracts.

The board decided that “KTH-contracts” for the time being can be handled with flexibility according to the above conclusion. Ari Leppänen will inform KTH that the question had been attended by the NKS board.

12 NKS evaluation process – complaint received

After the board’s decision in January 2022 on new activities the PC-B received a formal complaint addressed to NKS concerning an activity proposal which didn’t receive any grant. The PC-B (in consultation with the Chair) explained, why no grant had been given, to the complainant. The communication between the complainant and the PC-B (and the Chair) had been shared with the board and a unanimous board fully backed up the handling of this complaint by the NKS representatives. The Chair will inform the complainant about the board’s decision.

13 NKS Framework

The discussions, started at the last board meeting, were taken up again. The Chair reminded the board that the NKS-R and NKS-B framework documents are living documents always open for development. The documents are ready for this year’s call for proposals and will be presented again for the Advisory Group at it’s next meeting in January 2023.

14 Information activities

Finn Physant informed the board about the website, newsletters etc. – Website visitor statistics were presented concluding that the level of use of the website had been rising during March and April towards the May seminar. The top ten list of downloads of reports shows the presence of 2 of the 4 Bo Lindell books together with relatively old NKS reports. Since the last board meeting five NewsFlashes have been distributed. On February 2: Summary report from the January board meeting. On March 25, April 8, May 4 and 11: R and B seminar announcements, young scientist travel assistance and NKS on LinkedIn. A Newsletter was distributed a week before this board meeting including upcoming seminars, new publications, young scientist travel assistance and NKS on LinkedIn. There is a list of more than 540 e-mail addresses, to which NKS electronic letters are distributed.

NKS has now 159 followers on LinkedIn.

15 Other issues

Report from EU Nuclear Materials – PC-R. Ari Leppänen informed the board that there were no news from the European program.

Any other business: None.

Sigurður M. Magnússon
Chair

Finn Physant
Meeting secretary

Draft minutes from NKS Board meeting May 2022, agenda items 16-20.

16 The Oxford Report revisited

17 NKS 2021-2023 – discussion paper by AH

18 NKS after 2023 – discussion paper by AH

The recommendations and conclusions of the Oxford report were discussed as well as the discussion paper developed by AH and the strategic issues raised by board members before the meeting.

One of the recommendations of the Oxford report addresses the quality assurance procedures of NKS. There was a decision to initiate a review of the NKS evaluation process both regarding evaluation of activity proposals and evaluation of final reports from NKS projects. The first step is a discussion at the January 2023 meeting of the Advisory group. There was an initial discussion of potential major changes in the structure and functioning of NKS. These include the role and cost of the chair, secretariat, and PC's, as well as content of and the interface between the program areas and length, funding, and number of projects.

There was an agreement that the major changes discussed need to be presented to the Parties for reflections and input as well as the Advisory Group. The chair will inform the Parties of the discussion at the Chefsmeeting in August and report back to the board at the 2023 January meeting. It was agreed to include the number of program areas, interface between programs and length, funding, and number of projects in the agenda for the Advisory Group at the January 2023 meeting.

During the discussion an agreement emerged that the optimal time to implement major changes in the structure and functioning of NKS would be when a new agreement enters into force on 1 January 2026 rather than in the middle of the present agreement period when the term for the NKS Chair comes to an end (at end of 2023).

The Chair was asked if he would consider continuing for two more years until a new NKS agreement enters into force. He replied that he would be willing to do so.

The discussion of NKS strategy and function will continue at the January 2023 Board meeting. The chair will share a discussion paper well before the meeting.

The Chair will also share outcomes of the NKS discussion at the Chefsmeeting with the NKS board in good time before the meeting.

19 Other issues

No other issues were raised.

- 20 **Next meeting**
The next meeting of the NKS board takes place in Copenhagen at “Kastellet” on 18 January 2023 with the meeting of the Advisory Group taking place at “Kastellet” the day before, 17 January.
- 21 **End of meeting**
The Chair thanked Per Seltborg for the excellent arrangement and wished all good summer.

Sigurður M Magnússon
NKS chair and secretary for this part of the NKS board meeting.

Appendix A: Actions from the board meeting.

Appendix A

Actions from the board meeting (if nothing else is mentioned the actions will be carried out by the coordination group)

Action A - ref. item 11: The Chair will look into this and present a proposal, including new contract text, to the board stating that the limitation for invoicing will be for instance 6 months after the finalization of activities.

Action B – ref. item 11: The board decided that “KTH-contracts” for the time being can be handled with flexibility according to the above conclusion. Ari Leppänen will inform KTH that the question had been attended by the NKS board.

Action C – ref. item 12: The Chair will inform the complainant about the board’s decision.

Action D – ref. item 13: The documents are ready for this year’s call for proposals and will be presented again for the Advisory Group at it’s next meeting in January 2023.

Action E – ref. item 16, 17 and 18: The discussion of NKS strategy and function will continue at the January 2023 Board meeting. The chair will share a discussion paper well before the meeting. The Chair will also share outcomes of the NKS discussion at the Chefsmeeting with the NKS board in good time before the meeting.