

## Minutes of the Board meeting in Helsinki, 6 June 2024

Present: Per Seltborg (Chairman, SSM), Sigurður M. Magnússon (IRSA), Carsten Israelson (DEMA), Pia Keski-Jaskari (STUK), Carol Robinson (DSA)

Via Teams for agenda items 7-16:

Kasper Andersson (DTU), Finn Physant (FRIT), Ari Leppänen (STUK)

- 1 Opening of the meeting
- 2 Practical remarks  
Carsten takes notes of this morning's meeting
- 3 Approval of the agenda  
The agenda was approved.
- 4 Minutes of the last board meeting (2024-01-17)  
Minutes from the last board meeting. Per took additional notes from last board meeting. There were no other comments on the minutes from the last board meeting 17 January 2024.
- 5 News since last board meeting
  - a. Report by the chairperson. Since last board meeting in January, Per had an online meeting with PCs and secretariat about preparation to this meeting.
  - b. News from our organization. Each board member presented news from their organizations. Both Sweden and Finland reported growing interest in nuclear power and both countries expect applications for new builds. Sweden are hiring

up to 70 new employees to deal with this. Nothing else of major importance for NKS was presented.

## 6 NKS in the future

Preparation for the next contract period (2026-2029). Board members discussed the following ideas that could be included in the new text for a contract:

- i. Go towards one PC- or program manager – because evaluation process is simpler and does not require so much work from the PCs. Further, Board could ask Advisory group to review and approve reports. This would remove another task from the PCs.
- ii. Should we include radiation protection (RP) as a new area in NKS or should we just keep it at a part of the other subjects? Board agreed that RP should not be a subject by itself. However, RP could be included as a test for a single year and we could see how it goes. No decision was made.
- iii. The NKS R-program consists very much of the same projects and players year after year. How can we expand and renew the R program? NKS is an important source of funding for B-projects but only one among several other funding options for R-related projects. There are so many workshops, seminars and conferences in the R-area not funded by NKS.
- iv. Board should be aware of new subjects and changes that could be relevant to fund. These include use of nuclear weapons, the nuclear security situation in general and emerging new technologies (e.g. SMR's).
- v. Board should consider expanding the board with co-financiers and the coordination group. This could give valuable inputs to the strategic discussions in NKS. Be aware that all decisions on funding, economy and employees of NKS lie with the owners = present board).
- vi. Call for proposals 2025 (potential adjustments of the evaluation process to be applied). The board agreed to keep the present evaluation criteria and process. However, the board wants to encourage the evaluators to write comments about each proposal (fx funding recommended, too expensive etc.). Some wording of this will be included in the instructions for evaluators (Board will implement this). Eventually it is the board that decided on the funding based on both the evaluation criteria and possible other factors.
- vii. Principles for programme funding. Should co-finansiers receive funding for projects? In theory, they could receive more than they provide. The board discussed the principle for funding and decided to continue this discussion in the future. Arguments for supplying more funding to nuclear safety research is the new geopolitical situation and threats and emerging technologies.
- viii. Shared responsibilities among the board members. Per presented a text where the tasks and responsibilities for board members was presented.

## 7 Financial issues

- Signing of the accounts 2023.  
The accounts for 2023 were signed. Pia will send the signed accounts to the NKS Secretariat for further distribution.

- Financial status: Financial status report and financial programme specification, both dated May 2024.

Finn noted that the Finnish owner's contribution still had not been received, that the Finnish NKS account is empty and that Finnish invoices in relatively strong EUR will be paid in relatively weak SEK from NKS Swedish account. Pia had received the message that the payment of this contribution now was in process. Finn presented the Financial status report and financial programme specification dated 27 May 2024. The reserve at present is estimated to approximately DKK 510,000 / EUR 68,000 – in accordance with this year's budget decision at the January board meeting. The board took note of the financial situation.

## 8 Status of NKS R activities

Ari presented the status report for NKS R activities dated May 2024. During the presentation Ari informed the board that it was now clear to him that the activity WPS-MAF may not be completed and finalized. The activity has received its first 50% of NKS funding. The board took note of the status of the R activities.

As part of Ari's status presentation he and Kasper informed the board about the 2025 seminar planning:

Venue: unfortunately Finlandshuset stops its activities and a new venue has to be found. Per will find another venue in Stockholm, present some proposals and try to keep the dates 21 and 22 May 2025.

Title: "Nordic nuclear collaboration; adapting to new realities" was the proposal the board favoured the most.

Rapporteur: Sigurður was asked to act as rapporteur during the seminar. Sigurður will consider this.

VIP speakers: Kasper proposed a high-ranking speaker and asked the board to suggest more candidates.

Themes: a number of themes were discussed.

Per will to get back to the PC's concerning the above and with the intention of keeping the seminar advisory group active.

## 9 Status of NKS B activities

Kasper presented status report for NKS B activities dated May 2024. The board took note of the status of the B activities.

## 10 Call for Proposals 2025 and expected funding of NKS 2025

- CfP plan and expected funding.

Call for Proposals for 2025 will open on Monday 2 September and close on Tuesday 15 October. Evaluations are to be received by Friday 15 November 2024.

The board members had expressed the expectation of funding at the same level in 2025 as in 2024 except from Finland, where a decrease is expected.

Expected funding is expected to be the same to B and R.

- CfP documents.

A proposal for changed ranking of new proposals was rejected. Per concluded that the board would like to open for additional comments from the evaluators to the board and additional text may also be needed.

The documents, which are to be updated if needed are: the handbook for applicants and activity leaders, instructions for evaluators and proposal forms. The Board will define/implement the needs.

The B and R framework documents are ready for CfP 2025.

11 NKS seminar 2025

The seminar was handled under meeting item 8.

12 Co-financiers and NKS-B CfP

Mikael Meister is on behalf of the Swedish co-financiers after last year's failure looking for a new initiative to better include the co-financiers in NKS-B projects. An idea came up and was presented by the PC-B: if possible to bring co-financiers and any interested representatives of the R&D community together for a virtual meeting to discuss the possibility of a collaborative project to assess possibilities for enhanced collaboration in NKS proposals. The project funding should come from either the co-financiers or through NKS CfP if the proposal is selected for funding. NKS would by no means give priority or special treatment to project proposals submitted on the basis of this new initiative should it be implemented – all submitted project proposals are evaluated according to standard procedures. Mikael Meister has arranged a meeting with the co-financiers and the PC-B on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August, and the Board will inform the PC-B of its view on the new initiative in good time before that meeting.

13 Information activities

Finn provided information on the website, statistics, NewsFlashes, LinkedIn etc.

14 Other issues

- Incident with Copyright Agent A/S

The incident concerned copyright infringement of an image used for an NKS seminar in 2008 and uploaded to nks.org. The demand was to pay 5,750 DKK as a compensation and remove the image from nks.org. It was decided to do this.

The board discussed the many relatively old presentations and considered if we still want these present at the website. For the future it is needed to ask authors and lecturers if they have the right to use, what they are presenting. After some discussions it was decided to discontinue website availability of presentations more than 5 years old.

- Any other business.

Ari informed the board that he soon will start in a new position in an EU organisation in Germany, but he will be assisting the new PC from STUK for some time. The board congratulated him and wished him good luck in his new position.

SSM will look for a new PC for the R side. If SSM does not get a new PC for 2025 then STUK will try to find a person to do the job for 2025.

15 Next meeting

It had been noted in the minutes of the Advisory Group and board meeting on 16 January 2024:

Tentatively the next meeting will take place in Copenhagen on Tuesday 14 January 2025 followed by a board meeting on Wednesday 15 January 2025 with DEMA as host for both meetings. NKS will host the dinner on Monday 13 January 2025.

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#### End of meeting

The Chair thanked Pia / STUK for the meeting arrangements and all the participants for a good meeting.