

Minutes KUF Meeting 32

10 September 2009, 09.00-11.35 (GTM+1; Swedish, Norwegian, Danish time)

Video meeting.

Present

KUF members

Lena Andersson-Eklund, SLU (chair)
Morten Sørli, UMB
Yngvild Wasteson, NVH
Aija Ryyppo, JU-F
Marketta Sipilä, HU-AF
Outi Vainio, HU-V
Björn Þorsteinsson, LBHI
Henriette Giese, AU-DJF

Nova coordinators

Stina-Lena Hellgren, SLU (left in advance)
Frøydis Kvaløy, UMB
Guri Gjerde, UMB
Melanie Etchell, NVH
Sari Mikkola, HU-AF
Janna Koivisto, HU-V
Þorbjörg Valdis Kristjánsdóttir, LBHI
Elise Norberg, AU-DJF
Marianne Aarø-Hansen, AU-DJF
Jill MacDoughall Archer, LIFE
Helena Eklund Snäll, NOVA (secretary)

NSB

Meri Ojanen, HU-AF
Silje Heggebakk, NVH

Absent

KUF members

Grete Bertelsen, LIFE

32.1 Opening of meeting and approval of agenda

Lena Andersson-Eklund (chair) opened the meeting and the agenda was approved.

Presentation round including introduction of two new KUF meeting participants: Morten Sørli (new pro-rector at UMB) and Marianne Aarø-Hansen (future NOVA coordinator at AU-DJF).

32.2 Presentation of new NOVA coordinator

The new NOVA coordinator Helena Eklund Snäll introduced herself.

32.3 Follow-up of KUF meeting 31

The minutes from KUF meeting 31 were accepted, with a comment on item 31.4 that the conditionally approving of application 2 (Linear Models in Animal Breeding 2010) should have included a request to consider the Nordic dimension (i.e. NOVA teachers should contribute).

32.4 Half year account, including potential member fee reduction

A short background was given by Helena (NOVA) and the chair. No comments on the half year account were raised from the other meeting members.

Decision: To present the half year account to the board as KUF's suggestion.

32.5 Information from Nordplus application decision, including discussion on Nova guarantee

Information from Stina (SLU). 50 500 € have been received from Nordplus for this academic year. Of these, 31 000 € are for mobility, 13 500 € are earmarked for the course Sustainable pig production, and 6000 € are for Nordplus meetings (2 meetings/ year).

Last academic year, 28 000 € were granted for mobility. The amount used for mobility was nearly 72 000 €, and therefore the NOVA guarantee covered for ca 43 000 €. 85% of the Nordplus money was used by NOVA (17 students on normal mobility; 115 students and teachers on intensive courses). During a recent meeting in Kaunas, Lithuania, a decision was made to split the new Nordplus money for 2009/2010 between NOVA/BOVA members based on full-time students. It is not yet decided whether the money will be allocated to NOVA and BOVA organizations, or if the money should be divided between the member universities. If, towards the end of the year money is not spent, universities are urged to share with others.

Discussion about whether the NOVA-guarantee should be kept. Round-table for comments showed that all NOVA-members think it is important for the mobility of students that the guarantee is kept.

Reflection on future arrangement of the NOVA guarantee. The chair informed that according to national legislation it is not eligible in Sweden to pay scholarships funded by governmental money directly to students. Therefore, if the NOVA secretariat had remained in Sweden the arrangements would have had to change. LBHI was advised to find out how the situation is in Iceland.

32.6 NIMC and housing

The question was originally brought up by Meri (HU-AF) during KUF31, but postponed to the current meeting.

Background: Due to the fact that NOVA does not reach the goals for number of arranged courses, a call for suggestions to solve it was announced. In response, NSB suggested that money allocated for NIMC courses could be used to cover costs for accommodation. Reactions to this included a fear that increased use of money for accommodation may lead to a reduced quality of courses. After internal discussions NSB has concluded that as most courses are not using the maximum amount granted (5000 €), there should be "leg room" for allowing also student accommodation to be covered by the grant.

Following a discussion on the matter among the participants, no objection to a more flexible use of the NIMC grant (max 5000 €) was raised.

Decision: To put forward a suggestion to the board that the rules for NIMC grants should be revised, so that in the future it will be possible to use funding for NIMC also for accommodation, if the course leader chose to do so.

32.7 First discussion on Activity plan for 2010

New Areas: The meeting considered it a good idea to set aside some funding for projects in the new areas, and that the initiation of at least five projects is a realistic goal. The budget should allow for two (2) meetings per project, each at a cost of 3000-4000 €. There were mixed opinions on how high the total budget for starting up new networks within the new areas should be (ranging from 30 000 € to 50 000 €).

Decision: Funding for projects in new areas corresponding to ten to fifteen (10-15) meetings will be allowed in the budget. The secretariat will make calculations on how much one meeting costs.

A3a (NOVA windows): No news on the implementation of NOVA windows was brought forward. It was suggested by the chair that in preparation of a new strategy for 2011-2014 a discussion should be held regarding whether the idea of NOVA windows should be abandoned or whether more energy should be put into realising it.

C1 (NOVA Predictnet): The chair raised the question of what has happened to Predictnet which has a commission from the board and for which 10 000 € are set aside in the budget. Depending on the response from LIFE, a new person may have to be elected for the task. Jill (LIFE) shall follow up on what has happened, then contact Helena with information. The commission will be included in the activity plan 2010, and should also be included in the local plans.

C2 (question of video meetings in NSB): NSB has discussed the matter and it is partly a question of practical arrangements – uncertainty regarding how to do it and what it costs. NSB currently have three (3) meetings per year, plus e-mail contacts and Skype-meetings.

To save money and the environment, the chair suggested that NSB could have meetings two (2) times per year and two video meetings. The response from NSB was that there are advantages with face to face meetings (the meetings are important for encouraging students to engage, no other payment for the commitment, the social aspect is important for motivating students to carry out activities, etc.), and that there are even plans to start meeting four (4) times each year. Discussions have already been held regarding changing one (1) of three (3) meetings to a video meeting, but it was decided to be a bad idea. A suggestion from the chair to include a video meeting in next year's NSB activity plan and budget got a positive response from NSB.

Decision: to include expenses for a video meeting in NSB's budget for 2010.

C3 (Local annual plans): No objections to the current situation was raised, and there will therefore not be any changes in NOVA's activity plan for 2010.

C5. (NOVA/BOVA cooperation): The chair raised the question whether the BOVA-CC should be invited to Island for the annual seminar. The meeting participants thought that is a good idea. Björn (LBHI) remarked that that there is no technical problem, but that BOVA-members would have to pay their air fares themselves. An alternative option was brought forward: to invite the BOVA-CC to the KUF-meeting in Helsinki in June. However, since that will be a busy meeting due to the work with applications it would have to be a two (2) days' meeting. From NOVA's perspective Iceland is therefore a better alternative.

Decision: The secretariat shall suggest Iceland, but present Helsinki as a second choice.

C7 (Annual seminar): Björn (LBHI) suggested that the annual seminar 2010 takes place 6-7 May (arrival 5 May, departure 8 May). No objections to the suggested date were raised, and the suggestion will be passed on to the board.

Decision: KUF shall suggest to the board that the annual seminar is held on Iceland 6-7 May 2010.

C8 (Targeted summer courses): None of the meeting participants were aware of any incoming applications for BSc summer courses. The chair urged the local coordinators to spread information about and promote the summer courses.

Other comments on the annual plan: Jill (LIFE) informed about a decision that NorPATH will not start a joint programme (A1). Sari (HU-AF) gave an update on NorPATH cooperation between SLU and HU-AF.

Helena (NOVA) raised the question about hosts for next year's meetings, and none of the suggested hosts had any objections.

Decision:

- That KUF shall suggest to the board the following meeting localities and dates 2010:
LBHI: Board meeting in May; AU-DJF: board meeting in October.
- That next year's (2010) KUF meetings will take place as follows:
HU: KUF-meeting in June; UMB/NVH: KUF-meeting in November.

CONCLUSION: The activity plan will mainly be an update since it is within the frame of the current strategy. Helena (NOVA) will update the plan and, when necessary, contact the local coordinators for information before the board meeting.

32.8 How to proceed with the "new areas"

A table in which each of the "new areas" is listed and associated with fields where contact persons at each NOVA member can be filled in was discussed. It was suggested that it should be indicated in the table whether the initiative has already started and by whom. The chair responded that the local coordinators should present this as an offer, and urge people to inform them about their interest and which people have already initiated network.

Decisions:

- Helena (NOVA) shall write an introduction about what a NOVA network is etc. (e.g. how to build up a network, requirements for a network, what is a network for, funding etc., appeal to inform local coordinators about already existing networks), and then distribute it to local coordinators for circulation.
- Helena (NOVA) shall write a short introductory text for each of the "new areas" explaining what they are intended for (a few sentences; the aim etc.). For this she will need input on what the "new areas" are intended for from the persons who suggested them.
- Local coordinators should collect names of interested contact persons and pass them on to Helena (NOVA) in reasonable time before the next KUF-meeting (19 November).

32.9 Discussion on budget for 2010. Changes compared to 2009

The chair asked for input regarding changes in the budget for 2010 compared to 2009. No suggestions were made, and the chair therefore urged participant to contact Helena (NOVA) or herself if any issues/suggestions/ideas come up before the October Board meeting when the draft budget will be discussed.

Björn (LBHI) confirmed that a Euro-account will be used for administrating NOVA during the Icelandic chairmanship. As a consequence currency loss will not be budgeted for 2010.

The chair remarked, regarding budget post “Projects and mobility”, that although the prognosis is that only 68% of the money will be used 2009, the NOVA-guarantee will probably cost more next year and projects in “new areas” could also be included in this budget post. Therefore the same amount as for 2009 should be budgeted for 2010.

32.10 Application: NORBE

The question whether NORBE’s application should be approved was discussed. A KUF-decision is needed since the applied amount exceeds 5000 €.

Round-table discussion showed that although some criticism were put forward (the lack of evident results despite a large monetary input, gradually lowered project ambitions, etc.), NORBE is considered to be a good initiative within an important field, and it was pointed out that Aarhus could make a significant contribution to the project.

Decision: The application was approved, with the comment that the project leader shall be informed that NOVA requests results in number of students in the report.

32.11 Update: Decision on funding by EC

The chair informed about four decisions by the EC, and acknowledged that the project “Linear Models in Animal Breeding 2010” should have been reminded of the Nordic dimension, that there should always be a strong Nordic involvement in NOVA projects (se 32.3). A comment that there is a problem with the regulation that allows funding for external teachers but not for Nordic teachers (no economic incitement for using Nordic teachers) was brought forward by Elise (AU-DJF).

32.12 Overlapping coordinators (in Sweden and Iceland) in preparation of Icelandic chairmanship

Björn (LBHI) informed that Ulf Jonsell (former NOVA coordinator) visited Iceland in June to go through all important points related to the shift of chairmanship. LBHI has prepared for an overlap during the end of the year, at least part-time, and considers it advantageous to appoint a person who can participate in the KUF-meeting in November. The chair pointed out that it is a cost that has to be accepted with this rotating system.

Decision: LBHI may appoint one (1) person at 50% for two months (= 1 month’s salary).

32.13 Student survey from seminar; compilation of material

Information regarding the situation with the questionnaire from the annual seminar 2009: Guri (UMB) informed that there are separate reports on the questionnaire from all institutions. She suggested that a report is compiled that summarises the most important findings, including conclusions on recommendations. At UMB the conclusion is that the assignment would be too big for one (1) ordinary staff to carry out, and that the best option would be to hire someone for an estimated one (1) month’s work (depending on the background of the person). They have no specific suggestion on who could do it.

A suggestion was brought forward to hire the Icelandic coordinator full time, so that this person can carry out the work with the report. Björn (LBHI) will look into the possibility to hire the candidate full time and let the secretariat know.

Decision: A report should be produced based on maximum one (1) month's work, under the condition that the outcome will be something hands-on, that includes concrete recommendations and that will be included both in the yearly report and used for the new strategy.

32.14 Other issues: Survey of number of students/ subject areas

Jill (LIFE) put forward a question raised by Grete (LIFE): is there any interest in exchanging information on trends in the different universities on how many students have been admitted in the various fields of studies etc.?

KUF agreed that this question could be part of the input for the annual seminar.

32.15 Reminder of autumn call for applications (dead line October 15)

Helena (NOVA) reminded about the autumn call for applications, and asked the local coordinators to pass on the information locally. The chair pointed out that it may be especially important to promote the BSc summer courses.

32.16 End of meeting

The meeting was ended at 11.35 by the chair.



Lena Andersson-Eklund
Chair



Helena Eklund Snäll
Secretary