
The national board of Science for Life Laboratory

Minutes from board meeting no 52, 22 September 2021

Present members

Carl-Henrik Heldin (UU)(chair), Fredrik Elinder (LiU), Anders Gustafsson (KI), Anders Karlhede (SU)(§§ 1-5), Göran Landberg (GU), Lotta Ljungqvist (Cytiva), Katrine Riklund (UmU), Stellan Sandler (UU), Annika Stensson Trigell (KTH)

Other participants

Olli Kallioniemi (Director), Mia Phillipson (Co-Director), Annika Jenmalm Jensen (Infrastructure Director), Gunilla Westergren-Thorsson (chair NSC), Jenny Alfredsson (Acting Head of operations/OO), Per Arvidsson (§ 6), Håkan Billig (§ 6), Disa Hammarlöf (§ 3), Lars Johansson (§§ 2-4c, 6), Anna Lidin (§§ 1-4), Andreas Muranyi Scheutz (§ 5), Kristian Sandberg (§ 6), Staffan Svärd (§ 4b), Heidi Törmänen Persson (§ 5), Carolina Wählby (§ 5), Anna Höglund Rehn (secretary)

1. Meeting formalities

Carl-Henrik Heldin opened the meeting.

Items added to the agenda:

- 9a. Next chair of the board
- 9b Application for the SciLifeLab brand and logotype to be registered trademarks.

Decisions:

The SciLifeLab board appointed Fredrik Elinder to approve the minutes of the meeting in addition to the chair.

The SciLifeLab board approved the minutes from meeting no. 51.

2. Update from the Director

Olli Kallioniemi presented the quarterly update from SciLifeLab, including:

- Information from the Knut and Alice Wallenberg Foundation
- Recent news regarding Pandemic Center and MGI
- EMBL collaboration
- InfraLife Hub
- VR infrastructure grants to SciLifeLab affiliated units
- GMS (Genomic Medicine Sweden) support by Vinnova
- News from infrastructure platforms and the research community
- SciLifeLab training coordination
- ELSI (Ethical, Legal and Social implication) Advisor assignment

3. IAB visit 2021
VC-2020-0031

The International Advisory Board (IAB) has visited SciLifeLab on average every other year. The next meeting is planned to take place virtually on October 19-22, 2021.

Olli Kallioniemi informed about the final program for the upcoming IAB visit and the report to be sent to the IAB members.

Decision:

The SciLifeLab board approved the final program for the IAB visit on October 19-22, 2021, with one small adjustment.

The SciLifeLab board approved the report to be sent to the IAB members.

4. SciLifeLab national budget 2021 and 2022
VC-2021-0049, VC-2020-0030

4a. Platforms and Operations budget 2022 and reallocation of already budgeted funds for 2021
VC-2021-0049, VC-2020-0030

Jenny Alfredsson gave an overview of the financial status of the different funding streams, a forecast for 2021 and the current surplus available. The base budget for the Platforms part for 2022 has been presented to the board in a preliminary format as part of the 2+2-year infrastructure plan when discussed with the board earlier this year. Budgets will be finally approved in the November 11 meeting.

The launch of capabilities has been slightly delayed in 2021 and the suggestion is to reallocate unused budgeted funds from these initiatives to the ongoing TDP call for the infrastructure platforms.

Decision

The SciLifeLab Board approved the reallocation of 1 MSEK from the Precision Medicine Capability (2021) and 0.7 MSEK from the Environmental/Planetary Biology Capability (2021) to the TDP call (2021) that is currently underway.

4b. Pandemic Laboratory Preparedness budget 2022
VC-2021-0014

Staffan Svärd informed about the plans for using the funding for Pandemic Laboratory preparedness during 2022 and beyond.

4c. DDD budget 2022 and beyond
VC-2021-0049

The DDD platform has its own dedicated funding allocated from the government (LÄK). No changes to the amount of LÄK funds for DDD were indicated neither in the Research proposition nor in the regleringsbrev to KTH for 2021. DDD has expressed a need for increased funding to meet demands and increase services. In 2021, surplus of LÄK funds from previous years was used to increase the funding to the DDD platform, and for 2022 there are different ways and funds available to cover DDD costs. Though from 2023 and onwards there is a need to find alternative ways to increase funding to DDD.

Jenny Alfredsson informed about the funding available and various options.

4d. Campus Solna - national contribution
VC-2021-0049

Jenny Alfredsson informed that according to the current SciLifeLab steering document, Överenskommelse om Campus Solna, SFO-funds allocated to the three Stockholm Universities (KTH, KI and SU) are used to cover 'common costs' at Campus Solna. The common costs are costs that are not covered by the rent and service costs paid for by tenants at Campus Solna. Use of national funds for costs at Campus Solna should formally be requested by the SciLifeLab Board and over the years, about 15 MSEK has been allocated to this purpose annually for specific initiatives/costs as part of the Operations part of the Infrastructure budget. The Campus Solna Committee and the Campus Solna Director have proposed a new rational model for division of the Common costs at Campus Solna, based on the division of the common costs in an equal way between national funds (25%) and SFO-funds at KI, KTH and SU (25% each). The Board will need to approve the annual contribution to the common costs.

Decision:

The SciLifeLab Board approved the new model for division of common costs at Campus Solna to take effect 2022-01-01 and agreed to cover a quarter of the common costs with national funds starting the fiscal year 2022. The annual amount of national funding contribution to the common costs will have to be approved annually as part of national SciLifeLab Infrastructure budget.

5. SciLifeLab and Wallenberg program for Data-driven Life Science (DDLs)
VC-2020-0034

5a. DDLs update

Olli Kallioniemi presented an update from the DDLs program.

5b. DDLs budget 2022
VC-2021-0050

The DDLs program is regulated by the KAW donation letter (KAW 2020.0239),

and the SciLifeLab Board needs to approve the DDLS budget each year. At the Board meeting no. 49 on 3 February 2021, a tentative three-year budget for the entire phase 1 of the DDLS program (2021-2023) was agreed upon, and subsequently approved by the KAW. The detailed budget for the year 2021 was then approved by the Board on May 19 and by the KAW on September 13.

The Phase 1 DDLS budget is divided into five parts/operational areas:

- Recruitments 2022
- Data support and databases
- Interaction with WASP
- Advanced bioinformatics (WABI) including Cryo-EM
- Program coordination, networking and research school

Jenny Alfredsson informed about the suggested plans and activities for 2022.

Decision:

The SciLifeLab board approved the suggested plans and activities for 2022.

5c. DDLS-WASP joint call
VC-2021-0037

In the donation letter regarding DDLS from the Knut and Alice Wallenberg foundation (KAW), funds were allocated for collaboration with another major KAW financed research program, Wallenberg AI, Autonomous Systems and Software Program (WASP). The goal is to form multi-disciplinary collaborations and to bridge the gap between life science and data science communities.

At the Board meeting no. 51 on May 19, 2021 the Board approved the process for launching a 40 MSEK joint call between WASP and DDLS, as well as the suggested call text. The joint call was launched on May 27, 2021 and by the deadline of September 1, 72 collaborative project applications had been submitted. In total 246 MSEK of funding was applied for with an equal distribution between WASP and DDLS areas (51% and 49%).

Olli Kallioniemi informed about the ongoing process for the call. The decision on which applications will be granted funding will be made at the November 11 Board meeting.

5d. DDLS Fellows recruitment
VC-2021-0016

At the Board meeting no. 49 on 3 Feb 2021 the Board approved the general recruitment process and conditions for funding for the recruitment of DDLS Fellows. In the meeting on May 19, the Board approved the final recruitment profiles and recruitment timeline.

The first batch of 20 DDLS Fellow positions from all 11 host organizations were

jointly announced at a number of different international and national channels. Also, each DDLS partner organization carried out an independent campaign for distributing their own ads. The campaigns were active from mid-May until the deadline September 5, 2021. By the deadline, the partners reported receiving over 700 applications across the 11 sites, and across the four research areas. The number is not adjusted for the same applicant applying to multiple sites, nor for the eligibility of the applicants.

Carolina Wählby informed about the current status and next steps of the phase 1 recruitment process of DDLS Fellows.

Decision:

The SciLifeLab board approved the suggested process for approval of DDLS Fellow candidates (appendix 1) and gave the chair the mandate to approve them.

The SciLifeLab board also approved another recruitment round to be organized in the spring of 2022 for those host organizations that did not manage to find a top candidate in the first round.

The SciLifeLab board approved the suggested terms and conditions for releasing the funding (appendix 1). The board stated that the DDLS funding to the universities should be conditional on the chosen fellows starting as soon as possible after being offered a position, and within 6 months from the appointment being offered unless there are special reasons for doing otherwise.

6. DDD (Drug Discovery and Development) strategy

DDD has its own dedicated funding source allocated from the government which is part of the SciLifeLab budget. DDD carries out a specific governmental mission and the accompanying responsibility for continuous improvement to meet two core missions:

1. DDD should support academic scientists driving drug discovery programs
2. DDD should provide state-of-the-art drug discovery technologies to life science in Sweden

Per Arvidsson, Kristian Sandberg and Håkan Billig presented the revised DDD strategy. Discussions followed on how SciLifeLab and other actors could best support the role of DDD in the Swedish life science ecosystem.

7. SciLifeLab Fellow program survey - outcome

VC-2021-0051

In 2020-2021, SciLifeLab conducted a survey of the SciLifeLab Fellow program with the aim to gather information in order to measure how successful the SciLifeLab Fellow program has been, as well as finding out how the program can be developed further.

Mia Phillipson informed about the outcome of the survey.

8. Stärkt fokus på framtidens forskningsinfrastruktur - SOU 2021:65

The Tobias Krantz report on the steering of national infrastructures was recently published. This concerns infrastructure policy and steering broadly, on e-infrastructures. The report mentions SciLifeLab 28 times, and discussed many aspects of SciLifeLab. The report does not suggest major changes for SciLifeLab steering and financing models, but does propose e.g. that the role and responsibility of KTH as a primary host should be clarified and that legal challenges need to be addressed in the multi-university setting.

Olli Kallioniemi gave an introduction to the discussion.

9. Other issues

9a. Next chair of the SciLifeLab board

Carl-Henrik Heldin's mandate as chair of the SciLifeLab board ends September 30, 2021. The government appoints the chair of SciLifeLab and nominations for the new chair have been sent in. As the government has not yet made the decision, Carl-Henrik Heldin has been asked to stay as chair probably until December 31, 2021.

9b. Application for the SciLifeLab brand and logotype to be registered trademarks

VC-2021-0052

An application to the Swedish Intellectual Property Office (Patent- och registreringsverket) was sent in to protect the SciLifeLab brand (both *SciLifeLab* and *Science for Life Laboratory*) and the logotype as registered trademarks. However, the application needs to come from a legal person, in SciLifeLab's case KTH, as the principal of SciLifeLab.

Decision:

The SciLifeLab board approved the suggestion to pursue the registration via KTH.

Upcoming meetings

- Thursday November 11 (preliminary) in Solna

Anna Höglund Rehn, secretary

Minutes approved by:

Carl-Henrik Heldin

Fredrik Elinder

Appendix 1

Suggested process for DDLS fellow approval by the SciLifeLab board

Selection committees at universities and role of steering group members:

According to the KAW donation letter, SciLifeLab board approves the final nominations and the KAW financial support for the DDLS fellows. Each host is responsible for handling the evaluation in accordance with Högskoleförordningen and their local rules, including nominating the appointment committee for each of the DDLS fellow position. DDLS steering group members will act as adjunct advisory members to this committee, ensuring that the highest caliber of candidates with DDLS-compatible profiles are selected, and serving as a bridge between the local recruitment committees, the DDLS steering group and SciLifeLab board.

When external reviews are received, a shortlist for invitation to interviews will be made according to SOP at Universities/NRM with support from an adjunct DDLS steering group member. The non-ranked shortlist of candidates to call interviews, made according to SOP at Universities/NRM, should be summarized and presented to the SciLifeLab board by the adjunct DDLS steering group member.

Suggested approval process by the board of SciLifeLab:

Many of the host organizations will likely not be able to propose candidates for SciLifeLab Board-approval already Nov-Dec-21. As there is a need to make binding offers to top candidates quickly, the board delegates to the chair of the board to approve all (or part) of the candidates on the list as suitable for DDLS funding based on recommendation from the DDLS steering group. Thereafter, the hosts call to interviews and offer the position to the best candidate according to their SOP.

What if there are no great candidates to approve for a particular position?

If the university's selection committee i) finds no candidates that it wants to suggest for approval or ii) if the top candidates will not be approved by the board, or iii) if the top candidates eventually decline and decide to go elsewhere, the universities can immediately make a new offer to a candidate on the list approved by DDLS.

There will need to be another recruitment round in the spring of 2022 for universities that did not manage to find a top candidate in the first round.

DEI aspects:

The selection committees and the SciLifeLab board will pay attention to the diversity, equality and inclusion (DEI) aspects in the selection process. Each

selection committee will select independently only one final candidate in their own field. Hence, while this may not raise DEI issues at that stage, the final list of 20 candidates that the SciLifeLab board will be asked to approve might potentially be biased. The recruitment and steering groups have discussed this, but believe there is presently no legal way to have the appointments at different hosts depend on each other. If this becomes a concern, one potential future option is to reallocate funding in the next round to specifically target underrepresented groups. The SciLifeLab board will discuss on how to handle situations that may arise.

Conditions for releasing the funding:

Conditions for releasing the KAW funding to the universities and their support packages are suggested to state that the expectation is that each fellow and each department hosting a fellow will be asked to approve the DDLS data policy and that the fellows and their host departments/universities will be active participants in the national DDLS program, such as in the training activities, grant programs, policy actions, collaborative research etc.

Suggestion 1: Produce similar document as SciLifeLab fellows' introduction and integration document (appendix b) stating legal rights (from uhr.se), activities and responsibilities, rather than formal conditions.

Suggestion 2: Organize (and budget for) a national DDLS leadership training program with bi-annual off-site meetings for all fellows. The program should be a mix between general leadership training and more specific DDLS topics.

Suggestion 3: Create document with concise formal conditions for funding, including each fellow's approval of the DDLS data policy and active participation in the national DDLS leadership training program.