

DDLS Steering group meeting no. 46, 2026

Date: January 28, 2026

Time: 13.00 - 16.00

<https://uu-se.zoom.us/j/61280102365?from=addon>

Attending members:

Erik Kristiansson (Chalmers/ Göteborg University)

Tuuli Lappalainen (KTH, Royal Institute of technology)

Janne Lehtiö (Karolinska Institutet)

Gunilla Westergren-Thorsson (Lund University/WCMM. National SciLifeLab Committee chair)

Carolina Wählby (Uppsala University)

Members not attending:

Oliver Billker (Umeå University, MIMS director)

Matts Karlsson (Linköping University)

Erik Lindahl (Stockholm University)

Sara Hallin (SLU, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences)

Other participants:

Jan Ellenberg (Director of the DDLS research program), Chair of the meeting

Siv Andersson (KAW representative)

Olof Emanuelsson (DDLS Research school director)

Peetra Magnusson (DDLS Research School director)

Lukas Käll (DDLS Research School director)

Sandra Falk (Head of Operations Office SciLifeLab)

Heidi C. Howard (Bioethicist and ELSI Lead at SciLifeLab and DDLS)

Johan Rung (Head of SciLifeLab Data Centre)

Wojtek Potrzebowski (Data Science Coordinator, SciLifeLab Data Centre)

Björn Nystedt (Manager Bioinformatics Support Peer Review track (WABI))

Hanna Kultima (Vice Head of SciLifeLab Data Centre)

Heidi Törmänen Persson (DDLS collaboration manager, Operations Office SciLifeLab)

Titti Ekegren (DDLS coordinator, Operations Office SciLifeLab)

Ulrika Wallenquist (DDLS coordinator, Operations Office SciLifeLab)

Mojgan Seraji (Collaboration manager, Operations Office SciLifeLab)

Elvan Helander (DDLS Controller, Operations Office SciLifeLab)

Johan Inganni (Communications officer, Operations Office SciLifeLab)

Nicholas Pearce (DDLS Fellow, Linköping University)

Next meeting: March 25, May 6, August 26, September 30, November 10, 2026

Agenda 2026-01-28

All documents including presentations from the meeting can be found on NextCloud:
<https://nextcloud.dc.scilifelab.se/s/8PmB9ZpNWiQTQzs>

1	Meeting formalities <i>Tuuli Lappalainen was chosen to attend the minutes.</i> <i>The DDLS Steering group approved of the previous minutes.</i>	<i>Presenter: Jan Ellenberg</i> Appendix: <i>1. Previous minutes, 25-12-15</i>
2	Update from the Director (See presentation "January 28_DDLS SG", page 3-26 for details) Update about the SciLifeLab AI strategy, the implementation of Integrated Data Services, and related ongoing recruitment efforts. Capacity building within DDLS is actively ongoing, driven by the community. In Phase 3 of the program, we need to capitalize on the critical mass that DDLS has achieved to become more than the sum of our parts. SciLifeLab continues the site strategy process to strengthen individual sites and improve their integration by highlighting site complementarity and encouraging collaboration across sites. Another key strategic priority is enabling each site to contribute to the SciLifeLab' data infrastructure. Progress is also being made to the SciLifeLab training strategy. The Training Strategy Working Group is currently defining the objectives for a pan-SciLifeLab training strategy. A SciLifeLab Training Survey has been launched to gather input from all parts of the SciLifeLab community. Deadline: February 6. Survey link: https://forms.gle/Q5ddAwmuprbbRr4q9 The Call for Academic and Industrial Postdoctoral Fellowships in Data-Driven Life Science 2026 is now open. Read more: DDLS Research School Postdoc call 2026 - SciLifeLab	<i>Presenter: Jan Ellenberg</i>
3	Update from DDLS Program office (See presentation "January 28_DDLS SG", page 27-38 for details) Presentation of the DDLS operational plan, strategic objectives and activities of the program. The Steering Group is welcome to give input about the strategic objectives and planned activities for 2026.	<i>Presenters: Heidi T. Persson, Johan Inganni</i>

	<u>Comments from the Steering Group:</u> DDLS could and should be more active in the policy and society objectives. We should discuss in the future how to achieve impact in the policy/ society area. An overview was given of decisions taken in 2025 by the SciLifeLab Director/ the DDLS Director/ the DDLS Research School Directors and the Head of Operations. All decisions made in 2025 will be presented to the SciLifeLab board at their next meeting. The SciLifeLab glossy is a short booklet based on the KTH report including 2 pages about DDLS. For 2025 DDLS would like to have more space to include statistics over fellows/PhDs/postdocs, funding and interviews. The Steering Group members are welcome to send ideas to Johan Inganni.	
4	Surplus Allocation Guidelines (See presentation "January 28_DDLS SG", page 39-46 for details) Presentation of the updated Surplus Allocation Guidelines needed for Phase 2 and onwards to allow for operative areas to fund long-term initiatives across phases and re-allocate unspent funding. 1. Any unspent funds within an Operative Area at the end of a Phase may be carried forward to the subsequent Phase for the same Operative Area. 2. Any uncommitted surplus funds from OAs, if applicable, may then be allocated accordingly with priority to other program needs. ➤ The use of remaining surplus funds from OAs will be allocated with priority given to strategic funding needs and then to emergent activities. Technically the funding will stay anchored in the same funding phase. To ensure continuity of long-term initiatives extending across phases the use of remaining funds can be prolonged. The SciLifeLab board will at the next board meeting be informed about the proposed Surplus Allocation Guidelines and decide about the final version in April or June. A prior decision is needed at the next SciLifeLab board meeting regarding WABI: <i>Decision regarding the expected Phase 2 WABI OA surplus to be made available for the period April–November 2026 to fund and maintain the SU-recruited WABI positions.</i>	<i>Presenter:</i> Sandra Falck Appendices: 4a. <i>Surplus Allocation Guidelines - background</i> 4b. <i>Comparison of Surplus Allocation Guidelines - Phase 2 and onwards vs Phase 1.</i>

5	DDLS Research school PhD call update (See presentation “January 28_DDLS SG”, page 47-57 for details) Presentation of the 3rd PhD call that closed Nov 17, 2025. After a national pre-screening to exclude non-data driven applications (about 25%), the applications were sent for an external international review. About 1/3 were female applicants and around 30% applications from females were suggested for funding. Funding was suggested for 7 industrial applications even though there were 8 positions. The steering group discussed the difficulties in attracting industry engagement. Several possible reasons were identified, including potential issues with the funding model, the wording and framing of the call, or unidentified structural barriers. There might be a lack of clarity around requirements and expectations from an industry perspective, particularly concerning confidentiality, intellectual property, and publication rights. It was noted that the open academic research model may create hesitation among industrial partners. Could these issues be raised with the pan-SciLifeLab legal group to explore clearer and more attractive agreement structures for industry collaborations? The Steering group recommended reviewing international examples of industrial PhD programs, such as those at Oxford (https://www.sabsr3.ox.ac.uk), and continuing discussions with WASP and industrial representatives within the RSMG. The current advertising strategy was also discussed, with a noted need to address gender imbalance through more proactive outreach and maybe targeted headhunting for good candidates.	<i>Presenter:</i> <i>Erik Kristiansson</i>
6	DDLS - WASP joint call (See presentation “January 28_DDLS SG”, page 58-65 for details) Presentation of the planned third call for joint research projects and some new aspects of the call, such as: • 3-year projects • PI’s previously awarded that haven’t submitted the final report are not eligible to apply • Evaluation criteria include Novelty and Originality, including the high risk/high gain nature of the project • Novelty of the PI constellation will also be considered The Steering Group discussed if novelty should be emphasized and by that discharge “old” projects and PI collaborations already ongoing that are successful? Key would be to be open to both new teams and older teams with established track records. That part is important to formulate in a good way in the call.	<i>Presenter:</i> <i>Ulrika Wallenquist</i>

	PhD students included in a funded project will be automatically assigned to the DDLS/ or WASP research school. The previous joint DDLS-WASP projects should be presented to the SG and summarized for strategy discussions.	
7	DDLS - WASP-HS joint call (See presentation “January 28_DDLS SG”, page 66-72 for details) Presentation of a new call for joint DDLS – WASP-HS research projects. These are smaller projects with seed money for collaborations. A new aspect for this planned call is that the projects should be visionary and aim for significant impact in Data-Driven life sciences and/or the humanities/ social sciences (scientific, medical, industrial, or societal impact) not necessarily including both the DDLS impact and the humanities/social sciences impact. The Steering Group discussed ways to attract more applicants and suggested that publishing success stories on the website, linked to the call, could provide useful inspiration. The group also proposed presenting a few themes or examples of ongoing international projects, while noting the importance of doing so with care so as not to steer applicants. It should be clearly communicated that these examples are intended solely as inspiration. Additionally, it may be beneficial to send information about the call beyond the PI community, for example to postdoctoral researchers.	<i>Presenter:</i> <i>Ulrika Wallenquist</i>
8	Update from Data Centre (See presentation “January 28_DDLS SG”, page 73-81 for details) An update was provided on new recruitments at Data Centre (DC), bringing in expertise that will further advance work in e-infrastructure and data services. The content and scope of the SciLifeLab Serve platform, now fully aligned with open science principles, were briefly presented, along with the available data repositories. Current events and ongoing training activities were also highlighted. The Steering Group discussed how smaller datasets in the repository could be made more accessible. One suggestion was to create a “Top SciLifeLab” list to help users from other research domains discover relevant datasets. It was noted that such an initiative would require careful curation.	<i>Presenter:</i> <i>Johan Rung</i>
9	Update about Integrated Data Service (See presentation “January 28_DDLS SG”, page 82-93 for details) A brief update was provided on the ongoing implementation of the Integrated Data Service (IDS) initiative and the current recruitment efforts.	<i>Presenter:</i> <i>Björn Nystedt</i>

	The Infrastructure Strategy Group has identified four areas that need to be improved to meet the pan- SciLifeLab infrastructure data service needs: • Accessible, FAIR and AI ready data • High quality tools and methods for data exploration, analysis, and integration • Strong e-infrastructure • A common user interface The latest Technology Development Project call, aiming to join forces around good development projects for new services, received 67 applications. Approximately 20 projects have been shortlisted, and final decisions will be made in February. The funded projects will start from March 2026 and will involve staff from the Platforms, NBIS, DC, and IDS. It was also noted that the AI competence support is being structured and positive discussions initiated. A full-day meeting is planned for mid-March.	
10	Emerging item- Tools for impact (See presentation “January 28_DDLS SG”, page 94-99 for details) Brief presentation of previous discussions about impact for the DDLS program and how to develop tools, instruments, and processes that enable DDLS to promote excellence, demonstrate impact, and support strategic decisions. How can impact be evaluated? This item will be part of the strategy meeting on March 25 and subject to deeper discussions.	<i>Presenter:</i> <i>Erik Kristiansson</i>
11	Emerging item - Criteria to be part of DDLS Research School? (See presentation “January 28_DDLS SG”, page 100-104 for details) Short presentation about the need to define who is eligible to be part of the DDLS Research School (RS), the purpose of the RS and the goals of the DDLS program. Questions suggested for further discussions at the Strategy meeting in March: ➤ Should externally funded PhD students be granted DDLS status on the same terms as DDLS-recruited PhD students? ➤ If so, what is the added value of a selective recruitment process with open calls and international peer review for identifying exclusive DDLS projects? ➤ How do we balance openness and collaboration with maintaining a strong core DDLS community? ➤ How do we preserve a coherent DDLS identity with a clear Data-Driven focus and alignment with DDLS strategy?	<i>Presenter:</i> <i>Mojgan Seraji</i>

12	Emerging item - Evolving the Data Science Nodes (See presentation “January 28_DDLS SG”, page 105-115 for details) An update was provided on the ongoing discussions regarding the Data Science Nodes (DSNs). The focus is now primarily on how to develop and operate data services and how to best utilize the expertise available at the different sites, rather than defining the activities of individual, siloed DSN teams. The role of the sites needs to be defined to align with the directions of SciLifeLab’ data infrastructure and utilize the competences at each site. Items suggested for further discussions at the Strategy meeting in March: • Moving towards Integrated Data Services across whole SciLifeLab, aligning DDLS and infrastructure efforts • Structured processes for needs assessments, through interactions and community and data service users • How to organize and support the thriving national data science community? Roles of sites?	<i>Presenter:</i> <i>Johan Rung</i>
13	Other issues Note: Please fill in the SciLifeLab Training Survey by February 6, 2026 (and/or spread it within your networks): https://forms.gle/Q5ddAwmuprbbRr4q9. No further issues. The chairman thanked all participants for a nice meeting.	<i>Presenter:</i> <i>Jan Ellenberg</i>



Jan Ellenberg, chair of the meeting

Tuuli Lappalainen, Attending minutes

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