

Norwegian Forum for Global Health Research

First meeting of the Interim Board
Thursday 9 February 2006. 10.00 – 14.00

Place: Meeting room 251, Section for International health, Institute of General Practice and Community Medicine, Ullevål University Hospital, Oslo

Present: Gunnar A. Bjune (GAB), UiO, Gunnar Kvåle (GK), UiB, Berit Rostad (BR), NTNU, June Jacobsen Steen (JJS) HiA, Tore Jarl Gutteberg (TJG), UiT, Nils Gunnar Songstad (NGS), UiB (secretary)

Observers: Karen Lieve Ria Hostens (KH), Research Council of Norway
Paul R. Fife, Norad from 13.20

Chair: Gunnar Kvåle

Agenda:

1. Constitution of the interim board – members – observers

Gunnar A. Bjune (UiO) was elected chair of the interim board.

Gunnar Kvåle (UiB) was elected deputy chair.

It was agreed that the institutions should appoint substitutes of the members of the interim board.

2. Functions of the Interim Board and tasks to be addressed during 2006

The interim board agreed on the main tasks as proposed by GK, i.e. preparing the for election of a board at the first annual meeting (October/November 2006), establish adequate modes of communication about the agenda of the Norwegian Forum for Global Health Research, represent the Norwegian research community in relevant international forums for global health research and communicate with relevant ministries concerning the need for improved funding for Global Health research in relation to the Government's budget for 2007.

3. Statutes of the Forum

A draft of the text for some of the main articles in the Statues prepared by GK was discussed (enclosed), and the following suggestions were made:

Article I Name

The interim board agreed on the name Norwegian Forum for Global Health Research.

Article II Objectives and strategies

It was suggested that the items listed under objectives and strategies should be revised and subdivided in main objective and strategies to achieve the objective. It was agreed that work to improve funding of Global Health Research (GHR) should be listed among the first items of the strategy. Establishing and maintaining a website should also be part of the strategy. TJG pointed out the importance of focusing on research and higher education in global health issues as the main objective of the Forum. Based on these inputs, GK will prepare a revised article II.

Article III Membership

Two alternative modes of membership were presented: 1) membership based on institutions, combined with personal memberships and 2) individual memberships. There was strong support for alternative 1.

The major research and education in global health takes place at the medical faculties at the four major universities. GAB argued that research groups in global health in the larger universities, e.g. in Bergen and Oslo, are based both *within* the medical faculties and at other faculties and that this could cause difficulties with institutional membership. This might be solved if universities/university colleges are registered as members of the Forum. Sub-units of these institutions (e.g. separate departments, institutes or centres) should then not register as separate institutional members. It was agreed that necessary arrangements securing participation of research groups within the universities should be established.

GK suggested that institutional members as specified in the draft for Article III should be allowed to register as members and to have a possibility to be represented on the board according to the specified rules and voting rights. An alternative suggestion by GAB was that representation on the board should be based on specified regional clusters, e.g. based on the major universities. GK and GAB will develop separate drafts of Articles III-VI based on their alternative suggestions and present the alternatives to the interim board for decision.

VII Secretariat

The interim board agreed on establishing a permanent secretariat for the Forum. It was agreed that the secretariat should be established at the Centre for International Health in Bergen.

Article VIII

GAB suggested that it might be suitable to have two board meetings per year, one of these in connection with the annual conference on GHR arranged in collaboration with the Research Council of Norway (RCN).

4. Funding of the Forum activities

A decision regarding potential funding of the Forum from the RCN is expected at the next board meeting of the programme for GHR (April 2006). It was agreed that funding through RCN probably is the most suitable model of funding, and that support from other sources (e.g. NORAD/UD, HOD) preferably should be channeled through the RCN. Funding should cover the cost of running the secretariat as well as other running costs such as travel, meetings of the Board, participation in international meetings and costs related to the arrangement of the annual conference of GHR over and above the basic costs covered by the RCN (e.g. costs for invitation of prominent keynote speakers). In the RCN program plan it is estimated that the annual funds needed will be in the order of NOK 1-2 million and that RCN should initially provide NOK 500.000 per year to get the Forum started.

A draft budget for the costs of the Forum activities for the first 2 years will be prepared and presented to the RCN before the meeting of the board of the GHR program in April.

5. Representation of the Forum in Federation of European Societies of Tropical Medicine and International health

It was agreed that the interim board should represent Norwegian Forum for Global Health Research in the Federation of European Societies of Tropical Medicine and International Health.

It was also suggested that the forum should participate in the Global Forum for Health Research conference in Cairo, Egypt, 29 October – 2 November 2006.

6. Funding situation for Global Health Research

The interim board exchanged views on available funding of global health research. Several of the members pointed out the fragmented financing. It was agreed that the Forum should work and lobby on coordinating the available financing of global health research. KH pointed out that RCN does a lot of lobby with the relevant ministries to secure increased financing of global health research.

The meeting discussed briefly the available funding in a range of programmes, e.g. the new period of the NUFU-programme, the NORAD fellowship programme, the “quota programme”, the 7th EU Framework Programme, European and Developing Countries Clinical Trial Partnership (EDTCP) and the recent allocation to vaccine research.

A draft document prepared by GAB on “Synergieffekter og komplementaritet i norske institusjoner og programmer” regarding GHR was discussed. It may serve as a basis for a more in depth discussion on how support for GHR from Norwegian sources could be better coordinated and strengthened. It was agreed to establish a working group with representatives from the research community (the Forum) and the most important Norwegian agencies and ministries responsible for funding of GHR (UD/NORAD, HOD/SHdir, KD, RCN, SIU), with the task of developing a proposal for an action plan for improving coordination and synergies between different funding mechanisms for GHR.

7. Establishment and use the e-mail network (list server) and a web site for the Forum

A ‘list server’ has been established and will be tested among the interim board members. After securing adequate financing of the secretariat a website will be established. It was suggested that the website should be located at www.global.no.

8. Planning of the first meeting of the Forum and a Conference on Global Health Research

It was agreed that the first meeting of the General Assembly for the formal establishment of the Forum with election of the board for the first period should be planned in conjunction with the annual conference on global health will take place in the fall of 2006. A date for the RCN global health conference will probably be decided at the next board meeting (April 2006) of the RCN GHR programme. It was agreed that GAB on behalf of the Forum follow-up the contact with RCN for the planning and organization of the GHR conference.

9. Information from board members and observers

Ministry of Education and Research has appointed a working group to propose a new structure of the medical ethical committees in Norway. GAB has been suggested and accepted as representative of the Norwegian Forum for Global Research.

10. Any other business

Paul R. Fife from NORAD who arrived at the end of the meeting was informed of the main conclusions arrived at by the interim board.

Norwegian Forum for Global Health Research

Minutes

Meeting of the Interim Board
Friday 18 August 2006, 10.30 – 15.00

Place: Centre for International Health, Armauer Hansen Building, University of Bergen

Present: Gunnar A. Bjune (GAB) -UiO, Gunnar Kvåle (GK) - UiB, June Jacobsen Steen (JJS) - HiA, Tore Jarl Gutteberg (TJG) - UiT, Nils Gunnar Songstad (NGS) - UiB (secretary)

Observers: Anne Liv Evensen (ALE), Norad. Karen Lieve Ria Hostens (KLRH), Research Council of Norway participated by phone in discussion of item 5 and 7 of the agenda.

Other participants: Bernt Lindtjørn (BL), Director, Centre for International health participated in discussion of item 4 of the agenda.

Chair: Gunnar A. Bjune

1. Approval of agenda

The agenda was approved with a change of the order of item 5, 6, 7 to 5, 7, 6 in order to facilitate participation of Karen Lieve Ria Hostens by phone on item 5 and 7.

2. Minutes from meeting in the Interim Board of 9 February 2006

The minutes were approved.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

Item 3: ALE pointed out that the information on the number of members of the board is not clear in the draft statutes. A revised version of the statutes will be distributed to the interim board.

Item 9: GAB gave a briefing on the medical ethical committees and informed the interim board that currently there is a requirement that applications for ethical clearance should be written in Norwegian. There is however a possibility that additional resources recently made available to these committees can facilitate additional committees to handle applications in English.

4. Establishment, funding and functions of the secretariat of the Forum

BL informed the interim board about the possibility of CIH running the secretariat of the Forum although the funding is less than optimal. An interim solution will be established for 2006. A person responsible for the secretariat in 2007 and 2008 should be identified.

5. Funding of other Forum activities

KLRH clarified that the term "fagkonferanseplanlegging", re. e-mail of 14 June 2006 is to be interpreted strictly to include preparing conferences, not participation in international conferences.

The funding provided by the Research Council of Norway, re. e-mail of 14 June 2006, does not allow funding of board meetings or participation in conferences. This will make it difficult to carry out the necessary activities of the Forum.

The lack of funding raises the issue of institutions (i.e. universities, university colleges) paying a membership fee. The issue will be considered and will be raised at the general assembly in November 2006.

The recent development of combining funding of global health and vaccination research (GLOBVAC) makes it possible to reconsider the funding of the Forum. This requires however a new application from the Forum.

6. Preparations for the meeting of the General Assembly

It was decided that an election committee consisting of three persons should be established. June Jacobsen Steen was appointed to serve as interim board's member of the election committee. In addition, the universities of Oslo and Bergen (represented by CIH) will both appoint one member to the election committee. GAB and GK will inform the respective institutions about this decision.

The election committee should encourage all relevant institutions to propose candidates to the board of the Forum. It was discussed several options on how the election of board members should be done to ensure compliance with the statutes of the Forum. The election committee should take the lead in planning the election of the board on the general assembly.

All relevant institutions will be contacted by the secretariat of the Forum and encouraged to register as members. Registration as recipient of e-mail information (list server) confirms eligibility of participation in the general assembly.

7. Conference on Global Health Research, jointly arranged by the Research Council of Norway and the Forum

KLRH gave a briefing on the status and plans for the conference (planned to take place 17 November) and confirmed that planning and practical management will be handled by the Research Council of Norway. The conference budget is NOK 150,000. KLRH pointed out that the aim is to get the best possible key note speakers to the conference.

The interim board suggests that a conference organising committee consisting of members of GLOBVAC and the Forum should be established. It was suggested that GAB and GK should represent the Forum in this committee. Due to GK's sabbatical and stay abroad another person will represent CIH.

The interim board suggested "Research needs for MDG 4 and 5" as a possible theme of the conference. This could be further divided in the three sub-themes:

- Vaccination research
- Child health and nutrition
- Maternal mortality

It was also discussed the importance of including Russia and former eastern Europe in the geographical scope of the conference.

A number of possible key note speakers were mentioned.

The suggestions of the Forum to members of the organizing committee and themes and key note speakers will be sent the GLOBVAC board before the meeting in September.

8. Representation of the Norwegian Forum in the meeting of the Global Forum for Health Research, Cairo, 30 October – 2 November 2006

GK will participate in the conference, and can serve as a representative of the Forum. Norad will also participate in the conference.

9. Establishment of a working group for improvement and co-ordination of funding for Global Health research (re. minutes from meeting on 9 February with Directorate of Health, item 5)

Formalizing establishing the working group should be finalized after election of a new board in November 2006. An updated memorandum by GAB should be presented at the general assembly.

10. Information for board members and observers

GAB gave an update the new GLOBVAC programme which is an extension of the Global Health programme following the additional funding for vaccination research
KLRH informed that a new board has recently been appointed and consists of members of the old board and new members.

GAB gave brief information on the developments in the Norad fellowship programme and the NOMA programme.

**11. AOB
FESTMIH**

The Forum has been invited to join FESTMIH, and GK will confirm by e-mail that the Forum will accept the membership. However, the practical issue of the payment of the membership fee (€1 per member) needs to be solved.

Norad

ALE informed about the ongoing organizational changes in Norad expected to be implemented by 1 October 2006. Further, ALE informed about the Norad conference on poverty 18 October. The three themes of the conference are

- Health personnel and capacity building
- Medicines and vaccines
- Poor women's health

ALE also informed about a conference organized by the Kunnskapssenteret 10 November on the theme of lay health workers in health care systems.

Norwegian networks

Prior to interim board meeting TJG suggested to include network building among Norwegian institutions on the agenda. TJG referred to the initiative of the Norwegian universities towards the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The issue raised by TJG was very much supported the interim board and will be a very important on the new board's agenda.

Norwegian Forum for Global Health Research

Referat

Konstituerende styremøte

Telefonmøte tirsdag 21. november 2006, kl 1200-1330

Møtedeltakere:

Gunnar A. Bjune, Gunnar Kvåle, Karen Marie Moland, Ottar Mæstad, Jon Øyvind Odland, Berit Rostad, Berit Schei, June Jacobsen Steen, Birger Sørensen og Nils Gunnar Songstad

1. Konstituering av nytt styre

Styret ble konstituert med Gunnar Kvåle som leder og June Jacobsen Steen som nestleder. Sekretærfunksjonen blir inntil 31. desember 2006 ivaretatt av Nils Gunnar Songstad.

2. Definisjon av observatørstatus

Statuttene skiller mellom medlemmer og observatører og det nye styret sluttet seg til et forslag om at det er hensiktsmessig å opprettholde denne distinksjonen. Styret vil ta stilling til hvilke institusjoner som er aktuelle å invitere som observatører.

3. Revidering av statuttene på bakgrunn av diskusjonen på generalforsamling

a. Sør-fokus

Styret slutter seg til forslaget om at dette inkorporeres i statuttene.

b. Tverrfaglighet

Styret slutter seg til forslaget om at dette inkorporeres i statuttene.

c. Institusjonell representasjon

På generalforsamlingen ble det stilt spørsmål ved om det er instituttene/fagmiljøene eller den overordnede institusjonen som utnevner kandidater til styret. Styret slutter seg til tolkningen om at det er hovedinstitusjonene som utnevner kandidater.

4. Oppretting av arbeidsgruppe for å utrede en bedre samordning og effektivisering av finansieringsmåter for global helseforskning

Styret skal oppnevne en arbeidsgruppe som skal utarbeide forslag til mandat for en arbeidsgruppe for å utrede en bedre samordning og effektivisering av finansieringsmåter for global helseforskning, jfr. møtet Sosial- og helsedirektoratet 9. februar 2006. Det ble foreslått at det utarbeides et forslag til mandat og sammensetning av en slik gruppe. Forslaget sirkuleres til styremedlemmene før gruppen etableres.

Et notat fra Gunnar Bjune, datert 30. november 2005 sendes ut til Forum styret i etterkant av styremøtet, som bakgrunnsinformasjon vedrørende behovet for å etablere en slik gruppe.

5. Medlemskap i Federation of European Societies for Tropical Medicine and International Health (FESTMIH)

Medlemskontingenten er EUR 1 pr. medlem. Sekretariatet tar kontakt med FESTMIH for å betale inn medlemskontingenten.

6. Oppretting av webside

Sekretariatet jobber videre med dette.

7. Brev fra Kunnskapsdepartementet datert 16. november om utredning av arbeidsforhold og arbeidsfordeling i de regionale komiteene for medisinsk forskningsetikk

Gunnar Bjune orienterte om delvis gjennomslag for behovet for å sende søknader på engelsk til de regionale komiteene for medisinsk forskningsetikk. I brevet fra Kunnskapsdepartementet står det blant annet ”Departementet slutter seg til prinsippet om at u-landsprosjekter skal fordeles på samme måte som ordinære prosjekter. I de tilfeller der prosjektene skal gjennomføres i andre land, bør saksbehandlingen foregå på engelsk.” UiO vil utarbeide et engelskspråklig forslag til skjema til bruk for søknader til de etiske komiteene.

8. Orienteringssaker (referat fra møter interimstyret 9. februar og 18. august 2006 og møte med Sosial- og helsedirektoratet 9. februar 2006)

Møtedeltakerne fikk orientering om møter i interimstyret

9. Eventuelt

a. *Forskerskoler*

Bernt Lindtjørn har tidligere tatt kontakt med interimstyret angående dette, saken vil bli fulgt opp av styrets leder.

b. *Funding*

Styrets leder vil ta kontakt med og søke Forskningsrådet om tilleggsfinansiering for nødvendig aktivitet.

c. *Sekretariatsfunksjonen*

Nils Gunnar Songstad vil få en formell henvendelse om å fortsette som leder for sekretariatet fra 1. januar 2007.

d. *Konferanse HIV-TB coinfeksjon mars 2007*

Gunnar Bjune orienterte om at invitasjonen til denne konferansen vil bli sendt gjennom nettverket.

Norwegian Forum for Global Health Research

Minutes

Board meeting by telephone

Wednesday 20 December 2006, 1300-1410

Participants: Gunnar Kvåle, June Jacobsen Steen, Gunnar A. Bjune, Karen Marie Moland, Ottar Mæstad, Jon Øyvind Odland, Berit Rostad, Birger Sørensen

Absent: Berit Schei

Observers: Karen Lieve Ria Hostens and Kårstein Måseide. Absent: Observer from Norad

Secretary: Nils Gunnar Songstad

1. Approval of agenda

Item 7 *Application to Research Council of Norway for support to the Forum* was moved to the end of the agenda and it was agreed that the observers should not participate in the discussion of this issue.

2. Matters for information

Newsletter of 7 December and information on the web

Gunnar Kvåle informed about the newsletter and other information on the temporary webpage.

Establishment of web-page and letterhead

Gunnar Kvåle informed about the plan to define a logo and letterhead. Nils Gunnar Songstad informed about the status of establishing a website. It was suggested that a web domain for the FORUM should be secured. A temporary web site has been established at www.cih.uib.no/index.php?valg=sql&id=151

3. Minutes of meeting 21 November 2006

Observers from the Research Council of Norway questioned why the observers had not been invited to the telephone meeting 21 November 2006. Gunnar Kvåle informed that the major aim of the meeting was to constitute the new board. It was agreed that the Research Council of Norway and Norad will be invited to future meetings as observers. Other observers will be invited when necessary.

It was further agreed that the board members are responsible to contact their deputies in case of difficulties in attending the meetings. The agenda and documents for the meetings will be sent to both members and deputies.

4. Statutes - Proposed revisions (attachment 2)

The Statutes were discussed and there was agreement on a few minor revisions. The chairman of the board and the secretariat will finalize the statutes for approval in the 2007 General assembly.

Birger Sørensen raised the issue of the definitions of the chairperson and president and it was agreed to look further into the issue.

5. Establishment of a working group for increased effectiveness of investments and improved co-ordination

The board seconded the suggested ToR and the composition of the working group which had been proposed by the chairman of the board. The board concluded that it is crucial that the working group is appointed at the highest possible level, preferably by the Ministry of Foreign

Affairs/Norad. Gunnar Kvåle will contact Norad regarding the establishment of the working group. Ottar Mæstad suggested that a discussion of strengths and weaknesses of the current funding mechanisms should be included in the ToR.

The report should be finalised by 2008. Karen Lieve Ria Hostens informed that the document will be subject to comments from relevant institutions.

6. Nomination of members of a working group to develop a proposal for the establishment of a national research training school in Global Health Research

The board agreed to appoint a working group consisting of Director Bernt Lindtjørn, Centre for International Health and the following three members of the board, Gunnar A. Bjune, June Jacobsen Steen and Jon Øyvind Odland. In addition a member from NTNU will be appointed. The working group will constitute itself and develop a proposal that should be presented to the board of the Forum in time for preparing an application of funding of support in 2007. According to current information, call for applications for supporting research training schools will be announced through the Research Council of Norway in 2007.

7. Application to Research Council of Norway for support to the Forum

The board agreed to apply for additional funding in 2007 and 2008 as presented in a budget proposal in order to increase the capacity of the FORUM secretariat and to accommodate expenses related to board meetings and international travel.

8. Dates for board meeting of the Forum for the spring semester of 2007

The board agreed on the following dates for meetings

15 February 2007 (at 1300 by phone)

19 April 2007 (at 1300 by phone)

15 June 2007

9. Any other business

It was suggest that planning for the GLOBVAC conference tentatively scheduled for October/November should start as early as possible.