



Agenda for Cancer Research KI Reference group meeting and the Executive Board meeting

Tuesday April 22nd, 2025, 15:00-17:00 in Peter Reichard Biomedicum, Fika will be served.

(IP= information point, D=discussion point, DP=Decision point, A=Attached document)

Board members	<p>Chair and Director Elias Arnér, Department of Medical Biochemistry and Biophysics</p> <p>Co-Director Marco Gerling, Department of Clinical Science, Intervention and Technology – CLINTEC</p> <p>Simon Ekman, Department of Oncology-Pathology, joined at 15:33h</p> <p>Margareta Wilhelm, Department of Microbiology, Tumor and Cell Biology</p> <p>Ninib Baryawno, Department of Women's and Children's Health</p> <p>Eva Jolly, Karolinska Comprehensive Cancer Centre coordinator</p> <p>Carlos Rodrigues, Department of Women's and Children's Health, Junior faculty representative</p> <p>Dina Dabaghie, Department of Medical Biochemistry and Biophysics</p> <p>Liselotte Bäckdahl, Department of Medical Biochemistry and Biophysics</p> <p>Stefina Milanova, Department of Medical Biochemistry and Biophysics</p> <p>Pablo Martí Andrés, Department of Medical Biochemistry and Biophysics</p>
Invited Guests	<p>The reference group (RG) attendees</p> <p>Dhifaf Sarhan</p> <p>Therese Andersson</p> <p>Vanessa Lundin</p> <p>Bennie Lemmens</p> <p>Sahar Salehi</p> <p>Anna Nilsson</p>
Not present	<p>Co-Director Linda Lindström, Department of Oncology-Pathology</p> <p>Päivi Östling, Department of Oncology-Pathology, SciLifeLab</p> <p>Renske Altena, Department of Oncology-Pathology</p> <p>Matthias Löhr, Department of Clinical Science, Intervention and Technology</p> <p>Keith Humphreys, Department of Medical Epidemiology and Biostatistics</p> <p>Patrik Rossi, Managing Director, Cancer Theme Karolinska University.</p> <p>Jonas Fuxe, Department of Laboratory Medicine, Reference Group Chair</p> <p>Lise-lott Eriksson, Chair of the Blood Cancer Forum, Patient Group</p> <p>Joakim Dillner Department of Clinical Science, Intervention and Technology, Cancer Prevention Europe</p> <p>Sara Abu Ajamieh, PhD student representative, Department of Women's and Children's Health</p> <p>Lena Sharp, RCC Stockholm-Gotland</p>

1) The reference group meeting: (E. Arnér, 55 min) 15:00h Introduction by all present

1. Election of new chair for CRKI's reference group (20 min). DP (15:06h)

E. Arnér outlined the main responsibilities of the Reference Group (RG), emphasizing two key tasks:

- Each department should have two representatives who act as a link between Cancer Research KI (CRKI), the Executive Board (EB), and their departments and vice versa.



2. The group is responsible for nominating candidates to the EB when new members, including the Director and Vice Directors, need to be appointed. The Chair has the authority to meet with the RG without the EB and can take the lead in developing and introducing new ideas.

The current Chairman and Co-Chair, J. Fuxe and O. Hermanson, are unable to continue in their roles. So, the reference group needed to nominate and elect new people for the positions. CRKI unfortunately did not receive any nominations after requests were sent to RG prior to the meeting. Therefore, E. Arnér encouraged the group to nominate a new Chair and Co-Chair during the present meeting.

The group recommended Dhifaf Sarhan as the new Chair. D. Sarhan has agreed to consider the nomination and will respond before the next EB meeting. In the meantime, CRKI will circulate the current list of RG members and contact them individually to gather suggestions and nominations for both Chair and Co-Chair roles. These suggestions will be compiled and presented to the RG for discussion and decision. The final recommendations will then be submitted to the EB for approval.

2. KI and KS response to the national cancer strategy (15 min). D

The health ministry has produced a new Swedish Cancer Strategy. Specific comments from KI side were:

- A) One of the points is to integrate KI and KCCC with RCC. RCC handles healthcare plans and registries which are important for everyday clinical work.
- B) To change how patients become available for research and teaching, currently we have an opt-in system where the patient needs to be asked for permission for each new study. This is a problem for biobanks, new large-scale studies for example. Other countries have an opt-out system, one idea is to evaluate if we can have an opt-out system.
- C) Specific topics on prevention where J. Dillner gave input on this topic.

3. The Improvement plan OECI: KCCC responses to OECI's action points (10 min). D

KCCC reaccreditation has gotten a 98% improvement rate, the highest one. The board of KCCC has made an improvement plan. E. Arner presented the different action points that were asked for by OECI. We have responded to each of these topics. Specifically,

- A) The strategy on which type of research should be prioritized. KI works on a bottom-up approach and peer review basis on which research should be done.
- B) Another point is on how to better quantify the output and how to do that, and if we can follow our research in a quantitative manner.
- C) One criticism has been regarding funding and a small number of positions. They had a problem understanding the funding system at KI.

4. The Karolinska hospital's new FoUU strategy (10 min). D



The new research strategy of the hospital has been circulated to the RG members. The decision was taken by the FoUU hospital and reinforced by KI. Several strategic plans have been approved in recent months. It is now necessary to initiate a discussion on how to prioritize ongoing and future activities across KI, KCCC, and CRKI. A clear overview of priorities will help ensure coordinated efforts and efficient use of resources.

Bennie Lemmens noted that although many strategies have been outlined, few have been implemented so far. He raised the question of whether additional funding could be secured through donations. In response, E. Arnér shared that he has contacted the deans to explore the possibility of raising funds through private donations, like the model used by DKTK. Bennie Lemmens also proposed identifying potential donors in the United States who may be interested in supporting research at KI. S. Ekman highlighted the potential for increased collaboration with companies. He suggested that building stronger ties with industry could help facilitate clinical research and raise the visibility of KI researchers. A more targeted approach may be needed to attract company investment. Regarding the strategic plans, it was agreed that more practical steps need to be taken. The RG could play an important role in identifying and prioritizing these actions. Given that the government has now approved combined academic and clinical positions, Marco Gerling recommended that these positions should allow for greater flexibility, rather than strictly divided into 50% academic and 50% clinical work.

The reference group left the meeting at 16:00h

- 2) Welcome to the EB meeting and approval of minutes from the previous CRKI Executive Board meeting 2025-03-19(A) (E. Arnér, 1 min) DP – **16:06h. Minutes were approved.**

3) Selecting new members for KCCC's SAB (L. Bäckdahl, 5 min) IP

L. Bäckdahl gave an overview of the selection process for the members of the SAB. The nominations were suggested by EB, BoD and the European Academy. 7 has accepted (Kjetil Tasken, Åslaug Helland, Lodewyk Wessels, Heinz-Peter Schiemmer, Suzett Delaloge, Mary Wells, Christina Peters, 3 will continue from the previous board (Laura Esserman, Julian Downward, Nancy Berliner), Charles Swanson has declined, 1 missing answer (pathology expertise), back up is ready to be contacted. It was noted that expertise in gene and cell therapy is currently missing from the SAB. Five candidates have been nominated for this category. It was proposed to consult with Stephan Mielke to review the current nominations and help prioritize the most suitable candidates for this area.

4) KI-Mayo Synergy grant update (E. Arnér, 10 min) IP

We have currently the budget for SEK 2.5 million per year from KI side and a matching amount from the U.S. partner institution. The funding is planned for a total duration of three years. The call for applications is currently being prepared, the current plan is to have the grant open and awarded to start on 1st of January 2026. Discussions are ongoing regarding the focus of the projects eligible for funding, as consensus on the topics has not yet been reached. In parallel, efforts are being made to raise additional funds, with the goal of supporting more than one project under this grant scheme.

5) Update on CRKI sponsoring a CKC research nurse. (E. Arnér, 5 min) IP



Since 2011, an annual allocation of SEK 600,000 from the budget has been directed to support the CKC research nurse position. Questions were raised regarding how these funds have been utilized, however, the representatives involved have not attended EB meetings so far. It was reported that an online meeting had taken place, during which it was clarified that the allocated funds had been distributed among several individuals. As a result, only a limited portion of the funding directly supported the intended purpose. E. Arnér proposed that a decision be made at the next EB meeting on whether to continue this financial support. He suggested that it may be more effective to discontinue the current arrangement and redirect funds towards research funding or other strategic priorities.

6) Yvonne Wengström will steps down as suppliant in CPE. (E. Arnér, 5 min) D

Joakim Dilner has suggested Svetlana Bajalica Lagercrantz and she has expressed interest in the position. The EB supports Svetlana Bajalica Lagercrantz as a suppliant in CPE.

7) Karolinska Comprehensive Cancer Center Update (Eva Jolly, 10 min) IP

There has been no feedback from the OECI regarding the submitted improvement plan. A decision is expected from the OECI Board of Directors BoD next month. If the plan is approved, accreditation will be granted automatically, and the institution will then have one year to implement the proposed improvements. To initiate this process, a workshop will be organized in September involving members of EB of CRKI, representatives from Tema Cancer, MDK, and patient organizations. The purpose of the workshop will be to begin implementing the improvement plan by setting clear priorities, defining budgets, and assigning responsible persons (RP) for each task.

Additionally, it was noted that a new strategy document for KCCC will need to be developed. Eva Jolly informed the group of a National Meeting to be held on 8 May in Uppsala, bringing together other CCCs in Sweden and showcasing inspiring examples from across the country. She encouraged all members to participate. A Nordic-Baltic CCC meeting is also scheduled to take place in Copenhagen. Eva Jolly will distribute more information in due course. Lastly, the KCCC Board of Directors will decide regarding the composition of the SAB as soon as possible.

8) Cancer Research KI organization: IP

All WG leaders, update on working group progress (3 min each, 18 min total) IP

- **WG1 Research (L. Lindström)** – not present. Pablo Martí Andrés provided updates on behalf of the group. He noted that registration for the upcoming retreat at Djurönäset is now open. An update was also given on the confirmed invited and keynote speakers.
- **WG2 Education (M. Wilhelm)** – Carlos Rodrigues has been elected as a member of the FoTo steering group. The group has finalized the course package for the upcoming autumn term, including a possible IPSCC-related offering. The PhD Cancer Meeting in Manchester is scheduled to take place. The CCE Summer School is currently looking for a new Chair; nominations should be submitted to the CRKI network as soon as possible. The programme for participants in Heidelberg and other locations is also being renewed.



- **WG3 Outreach (R. Altena)** – not present, Liselotte Bäckdahl provided the updates. Two seminars have been held recently: one in collaboration with Cancerfonden and another organized as a patient organisation workshop. The next patient workshop will focus on male cancer and is scheduled for 23 October 2025. The fourth edition of En Dag för Cancerforskning will take place on 12 November 2025, with a focus on the future of cancer research.
- **WG4 Precision Cancer Medicine (P. Östling)** -not present
- **WG5 Industrial Collaboration (S. Ekman)**- The group recently held its first joint seminar with KI Science Park, which was fully booked and considered a great success. An upcoming seminar on Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) targeted at young researchers will take place on 13 May, with Sara Abu Ajamieh as moderator. Another industry-focused seminar is being planned for 4 June 2025, involving company participation. The group is also seeking a patient representative to join the WG. The WG plans to revise its existing strategy document and update the timeline for implementation. Strategies to increase company interest in funding cancer research are being explored
- **CPE Cancer Prevention Europe (J. Dillner)** – not present.

9) Cancer Research KI administration update (L. Bäckdahl, S. Milanova, P. Martí Andrés and D. Dabaghie, 5 min)

The 1st Cancer Mission Fair will be organized in Warsaw 21st-22nd of May 2025, with focus on Citizen and Patient Engagement. The event will be available online on the 21st May, link will be distributed

10) Seminar and workshops by CRKI and relevant organisations:

- a. Radiotherapy workshop with NIO, 12-13 May Stockholm
- b. IPR seminar for young researchers 13 May Biomedicum
- c. Swedish Cancer Research Meeting SCRM Malmö, 22-23 May 2025
- d. Seminar series on Industrial Collaboration, 4 June 2025
- e. Djurönäset 22-23 September 2025
- f. En dag för Cancerforskningen 12 November 2025

11) Any other issue?

12) End of meeting – 16:55h