



Minutes for Cancer Research KI's Executive Board meeting

Tuesday November 11th, 2025, 13:30-15:30 online [Teams](#)

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

Board members	Chair and Director Elias Arnér , Department of Medical Biochemistry and Biophysics Co-Director Marco Gerling , Department of Clinical Science, Intervention and Technology – CLINTEC Co-Director Linda Lindström , Department of Oncology-Pathology Päivi Östling , Department of Oncology-Pathology, SciLifeLab Renske Altena , Department of Oncology-Pathology Ninib Baryawno , Department of Women's and Children's Health Dhifaf Serhan , Department of Laboratory medicine Patrik Rossi , Managing Director, Cancer Theme Karolinska University. Lise-Iott Eriksson , Chair of the Blood Cancer Forum, Patient Group Joakim Dillner Department of Clinical Science, Intervention and Technology, Cancer Prevention Europe. Liselotte Bäckdahl , Department of Medical Biochemistry and Biophysics Stefina Milanova , Department of Medical Biochemistry and Biophysics Pablo Martí Andrés , Department of Medical Biochemistry and Biophysics
Invited Guests	Ann-Britt Johansson , Karolinska Comprehensive Cancer Centre
Not present	Simon Ekman , Department of Oncology-Pathology Margareta Wilhelm , Department of Microbiology, Tumor and Cell Biology Matthias Löhr , Department of Clinical Science, Intervention and Technology Keith Humphreys , Department of Medical Epidemiology and Biostatistics Theodoros Foukakis , Department of Oncology-Pathology Eva Jolly , Karolinska Comprehensive Cancer Centre coordinator Carlos Rodrigues , Department of Women's and Children's Health, Junior faculty representative Sara Abu Ajamieh , PhD student representative, Department of Women's and Children's Health Lena Sharp , RCC Stockholm-Gotland

- 1) Welcome to the EB meeting and approval of minutes from the previous CRKI Executive Board meeting 2025-10-01(A) (E. Arnér, 2 min) DP

A tribute was paid to Prof. Ola Hermanson, who recently passed away. His significant contributions to Karolinska Institutet and Cancer Research KI were acknowledged, including his leadership in the election committee for many years, his active involvement in the culture board, and his support for students and impactful research.

A moment of silence was observed in remembrance of Ola Hermanson.

The minutes from the previous meeting were APPROVED.



2) Suggestion to the committee for research: the composition of the CRKI executive board 2026-2028 (E. Arnér, 5 min) IP

The mandate period for several Executive Board members needs renewal. A list of suggested candidates was sent to the Committee for Research, including renewals for current members and new proposals. It was noted that revisions may be needed during spring, which is acceptable as the Executive Board can be complemented during the mandate period. Mandates are for three years, starting from the actual start date, which may differ from election dates.

Specific cases discussed:

- Margareta Wilhelm's mandate ends in 2026 after two periods.
- Simon Ekman agreed to stay for two more years (a request for extension sent to the Committee for Research).
- Paivi Östling's continuation is still under discussion.
- Ninib Baryawno was proposed to continue as a regular member after serving as Junior Faculty representative.
- Linda Lindström announced her intention to step down after spring due to workload but will remain until a smooth transition is arranged.

The election committee is being assembled, with Theodoros Foukakis elected as chair; one more member from the reference group is needed.

Future revisions will include finding a new Co-director to replace Linda Lindström, which will be handled by the election committee and approved by the Committee for Research.

Following a discussion with the Academic Vice Director, the Board agreed to submit a new proposal for the Executive Board structure to the Committee for Research, rather than modifying the current one.

3) The new allocation model for government research funding for KI researchers and what it means for cancer research. (E. Arnér, 5 min) D

Karolinska Institutet has introduced a new model for allocation of faculty resources, including activity-based funding, a revised bibliometric model, and adjustments for rent support. The simultaneous implementation of these changes makes it difficult to predict exact consequences.

Concerns were raised about whether Cancer Research KI might be disadvantaged under the new system. The allocation formula considers journal rankings; ensuring cancer journals are well represented is critical. The current bibliometric approach uses the major index for journals, but changes are expected in the coming year.



Elias Arnér expressed optimism that cancer research will not be negatively affected but emphasized the need for monitoring. Ninib Baryawno suggested that CRKI should participate in the revision round when the model is circulated among the Heads of Departments, to safeguard cancer research interests. Elias Arnér agreed on the importance to ensure CRKI (and ideally all SFOs) participates in the revision round to provide input on the allocation model, as well as continuing tracking bibliometric changes to confirm fair representation of cancer journals.

- 4) Call for applications, Timelines for Translational seed funding grant and Taskforce network grant for Specific Topics in Cancer Research. (L. Bäckdahl, 3 min) IP

Two new grants are being announced following the completion of the Blue Sky grant:

- **Taskforce Network Grant:**
 - Announcement: 17 November on CRKI website.
 - Submission deadline: January 20, 2026
 - Grant start date: April 1.
 - Topic broadened beyond tumor types to include areas such as immuno-oncology and other specific cancer research topics.
 - Review by five members from the reference group.
- **Translational Seed Funding Grant:**
 - Announcement: December 1 on Prisma and CRKI website; also featured in next week's newsletter.
 - Submission deadline: February 2, 2026.
 - Review process begins: February 5 with external review board (same model as Blue Sky grant).
 - Consensus meeting: April 2026
 - Grant start date: June 1, 2026

Both grants follow established models used in previous years.

- 5) The 2026 CCE yearly meeting in Stockholm will be a joint meeting arranged with the Karolinska CCC day as a two-day event, 23-24 March 2026 (E. Arnér, 3 min) IP

The 10th Cancer Core Europe (CCE) Annual Meeting will be held in Stockholm on 23–24 March 2026. To avoid scheduling conflicts, the meeting will be combined with the Karolinska Comprehensive Cancer Centre (KCCC) Day as a joint two-day event.

Objectives:



- Create an engaging program for both CCE and KCCC participants.
- Increase visibility of CCE at Karolinska and showcase KCCC activities to CCE institutions.

The meeting will take place at Aula Medica, and the Cancer Research KI administration team is currently working on the website and registration, which will be launched soon after KCCC Board approval of the framework schedule.

Suggestions for Keynote Speakers from the members of the Board are welcome.

6) Mayo Clinic Collaboration Update (E. Arnér, 3 min) IP

The Mayo Clinic Collaboration, previously paused due to uncertainty around NIH funding, has resumed, and the PI-to-PI collaborative grants for the Mayo program have been launched, albeit with a few months' delay.

Regarding synergy grants:

- Mayo Clinic expressed strong interest in proceeding.
- They requested an additional emphasis on Big Data and AI in cancer research, leveraging their newly developed supercomputing capacity.
- This requires updating the original grant descriptions to include AI collaboration between Karolinska and Mayo.

While this development is positive and includes potential for significant funding, it introduces further delays as adjustments are made to the grant framework. Discussion between Mayo Clinic and KI on how to incorporate AI and Big Data into the synergy grant descriptions and how this will affect the general timeline of the grant.

7) NIO Collaboration Update (E. Arnér, 3 min) IP

The Memorandum of Understanding between Karolinska Institutet/Cancer Research KI and the National Institute of Oncology (NIO), Budapest will expire in April 2026. Previous collaborations included joint workshops and research schools. The key question now is whether to terminate, prolong under current terms, or expand the collaboration.

NIO management confirmed they are committed to continuing and expanding the collaboration, with interest in more workshops focused on additional areas beyond precision cancer medicine and radiotherapy, such as pathology. NIO requested more time to provide a detailed proposal for next steps.



The Board agreed to wait for written input from NIO before deciding on the future scope.

8) PCM future activities (P.Östling, 3 min) IP

The Precision Cancer Medicine (PCM) program is under review for its future structure and activities. Strategic funding from *Radiumhemmets Forskningsfonder* is ending after 10 years, and discussions are ongoing on how to sustain and develop the program with special focus on:

- Strengthening translational and implementation research.
- Coordinating efforts between research and clinical applications.

The planned actions include:

- Surveying the field to identify current needs and guide program development.
- Continued dialogue among leadership (meetings scheduled next week) to define the program structure and future activities.

Educational activities are not a primary focus at this stage, though previous workshops and doctoral courses have been organized in collaboration with SciLifeLab.

Input from board members and stakeholders on priorities and opportunities is welcome.

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

Patrik Rossi and Ann-Britt Johansson presented the updates on behalf of Eva Jolly.

Karolinska Comprehensive Cancer Center (CCC) is currently involved in networking activities at multiple levels. KCCC is actively engaging with the European CCC community, as well as Swedish and Nordic-Baltic networks. In Sweden, the focus is on strengthening collaboration in clinical studies, including the FOCUS basket study on precision medicine and interventions, and prostate cancer studies from EMU, which have strong financial backing. These efforts aim to reinforce research networks both at the PI and managerial levels.

A new Swedish cancer strategy may be announced before Christmas, although details remain unclear. In addition, work has started on the Regional Comprehensive Cancer Network for Stockholm-Gotland. A working group has been established, and the next steering meeting is scheduled for December. The goal is to achieve OCI accreditation for this regional network.

Preparations for the annual CCC report are underway, led by Liselotte Bäckdahl and Ann-Britt Johansson, in collaboration with hospital-side teams. The CCC patient network is also growing, with its next meeting scheduled for December 8 and 22 members currently involved from various working groups.



Finally, the Board was informed that the new Senior Advisory Board for the CCC will conduct an on-site visit on January 15–16. The visit will include a review of CCC activities and Cancer Research KI initiatives, although the detailed program for the visit is still being finalized.

10) Cancer Research KI organization: IP

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

- WG1 Research (D. Sarhan or N. Baryawno)

Ninib Baryawno informed the Board that planning has started for the 2026 retreat, scheduled for the end of September, and efforts are underway to secure keynote speakers. The PI retreat, which has already been announced, currently has only 41 out of 90 spots filled, which is unexpectedly low. The group will work to increase marketing for the retreat and encouraged Executive Board members to register and inform eligible colleagues.

The group has also been involved in activities related to the Taskforce Network Grant and Translational Seed Funding, which were covered earlier in the meeting. Regarding the Blue Sky grant, reviews have been completed, and the next step will be determining final funding decisions; more details will be shared at the next meeting.

Dhifaf Sarhan added that discussions are ongoing within the reference group about leadership roles and other positions, and input from the group will be important moving forward.

- WG2 Education (M. Wilhelm)

No updates since Margareta Wilhelm was not present.

- WG3 Outreach (*Vacant*)

The Outreach Working Group update was provided by Renske Altena. The main focus was the upcoming “En dag för cancerforskning”, which will feature researchers from KI, and is expected to attract a large audience (around 800 registered participants and increasing). Last year’s event had around 1,000 attendees, and expectations are high for an even larger turnout this year.

There was a brief discussion about ensuring the event is well-promoted through social media and other channels. The moderator for the event will be Pamela Andersson, who also serves as an ambassador for Cancerfonden.

- WG4 Precision Cancer Medicine (P. Östling)

Päivi Östling did not provide any other updates.

- WG5 Industrial Collaboration (S. Ekman)

Simon Ekman was not present during the meeting. Elias Arnér reported that the group recently held a successful seminar on collaborations with the pharmaceutical industry,



attended by more than 120 participants, including representatives from major companies, being the most attended event in the seminar series so far. The seminar generated numerous ideas for future collaboration and was considered highly productive.

- CPE Cancer Prevention Europe (J. Dillner)

Joakim Dillner provided an update on the working groups within Cancer Prevention Europe, which aim to strengthen collaboration between universities across Europe. These groups focus on primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention, and member recruitment is ongoing. A new working group has been established on “Infrastructure related to Comprehensive Cancer Centers for prevention research”, inspired by systematic approaches used in CCCs for hereditary cancers. Its main goal is to motivate relatives at high genetic risk to undergo testing, thereby reducing cancer incidence. The long-term objective is to create a European cohort of relatives of patients with hereditary cancers who are interested in genetic testing. This new group will be led by Svetlana Lagercrantz.

Educational and networking activities are ongoing, and recorded webinars and other materials are available online.

11) Cancer Research KI administration update (L. Bäckdahl, S. Milanova, P. Martí Andrés, 5 min)

The administration team is currently focused on the organization of “En dag för cancerforskning”, which will take place at a professional studio in the city center and will be broadcasted live.

In addition to this event, planning is underway for the combined Cancer Core Europe (CCE) Annual Meeting and Karolinska CCC Days, which will be held in March 2026. The administration team is also working on preparations for the upcoming PI retreat.

12) Seminar and workshops by CRKI and relevant organisations:

- a. En dag för Cancerforskningen 12 November 2025
- b. Joint Scientific meeting CCE annual meeting and Karolinska CCC day 2026 in Stockholm, 23-24 March 2026

13) Any other issue?

No other issues were discussed.

14) End of meeting



The meeting ended at 14:27.