



MBG Research Committee meeting – 3 Mar 2026, 11:30-13:00

Location: 1870-816

Attendees: Torben Heick Jensen (THJ), Anne Færch Nielsen (AFN), Mikkel Heide Schierup (MHS), Claus Oxvig (CO), Rune Hartmann (RH), Tinna Stevnsner (TVS), Daan van Aalten (DvA), Jens Stougaard (JS), Jørgen Kjems (JK), Gilles Vanwalleghem (GV)

Guest: Ulf Andersson Ørom (UAØ)

Non-attendee: Bjørn Panyella Pedersen

Agenda:

1. **Approval of the agenda** – *the agenda was approved*
2. **Approval of minutes from the previous committee meeting – appendix 1** – *the minutes were approved*
3. **Innovation activities at MBG** (Guest: Ulf Andersson Ørom)
 - a. *UAØ summarized recent activities from his role as Senior Distinguished Innovator at NAT, including 1:1 meetings with Heads of Department at Chemistry and Biology and meetings with SDIs for the other faculties at AU. The interface between the SDIs, Kitchen and NAT's new ScienceBridge is currently being defined.*
 - b. *During 2026, Kitchen plans to open a new programme that provides salary for junior researchers who need time to develop business ideas or IP. The details of the programme and the application procedure will be published later this year.*
 - c. *MBG's research committee had a general discussion of how to identify and encourage projects with innovation potential and how the SDI can supplement the business developers from Kitchen. UAØ sees a role for himself in strengthening the local innovation support pre-patent (since conversations with Kitchen quickly turn to patents and IP). The committee suggested that UAØ meet with MBG's section coordinators at a regular basis to increase visibility and identify projects with innovation potential at an early stage. UAØ will also continue to visit MBG's research committee twice per year.*
 - d. *JK: iNANO has had good experience with events such as hackathons, the dean's challenge and Brainnovation day to connect basic research and innovation.*
 - e. *RH: it would be beneficial to bring junior researchers into contact with clinical or company-based research to make them aware of limitations with approvals/ethics that may not apply in the more basic, molecular projects.*
 - f. *The committee discussed formats for advertising innovation activities more broadly and agreed to invite Ole Bækgaard (NAT), Morten Foss (iNANO), NAT's SDIs and a contact from Kitchen for a theme event focused on innovation (aimed at both group leaders and young researchers). JK emphasized that while internal meetings can be beneficial for overall awareness of innovation, they may not help start new collaborations since there are no companies present.*
4. **Announcements**



- a. Summary of recent applications: *MBG's researchers continue to be very active in submitting grant applications, both for project grants, investigator grants and collaborative projects.*
- b. Update on recruitment. *One of the chosen candidates for the tenure-track position in Molecular Biology and/or Molecular Medicine has unfortunately accepted a competing job offer from a university in Germany and therefore declined the offer from MBG. The other candidate has tentatively accepted, pending current negotiations.*
- c. Open positions for council members in FNU and FSS. *TVS will step down from her position in FNU at the end of the year. The research committee discussed possible MBG candidates for the positions in FNU and FSS that will open during 2026.*
- d. Renaming of sections and internal rearrangements. *The following name changes were decided based on the recommendations from the research evaluation in 2025 and will come into effect in March 2026: BiRC will be renamed Bioinformatics and Computational Biology (keeping the acronym BiRC) and Cellular Health, Intervention and Nutrition will be renamed Molecular Health.*

5. News from NAT's research committee

- a. *THJ summarised the main news from NAT's research and business committee: AU has received government funding earmarked for innovation and a working group consisting of AU's rector, AU's head of innovation and the deans from TECH and HEALTH will decide how this funding is used/distributed internally at AU.*

6. Format for candidate selection and interviews:

- a. *The three open calls for tenure-track positions in Molecular Health, Plant Molecular Biology and Bioinformatics have deadlines in March and April with interviews expected in May and June. AFN summarised the timeline and process for each call, including the composition of the search committee, evaluation committee and hiring committee.*
- b. *The committee discussed pros and cons of different formats for interviews and decided to apply a two-step interview process for the currently active call. The chosen candidates are initially interviewed online, and very promising candidates are then invited for a physical visit and second-stage interview before the final decision is made.*

7. MBG plans/ideas for D NRF center of excellence applications

- a. *AFN outlined the timeline for the next round of D NRF centre applications. The deadline for pre-proposals to the D NRF is 11 Sep, the deadline for full proposals (if invited) is 1 April 2028. Three group leaders at MBG have expressed (tentative) interest in applying.*

8. Core facilities at MBG

- a. *The core facility managers have been consulted on the status of their facilities relative to NAT's general requirements for core facilities. The conclusion is that MBG's facilities function within the scope of NAT's programme, but the facility managers would appreciate increased support from NAT/TECH finance in defining the price structure for internal and external users of the facilities.*

9. Upcoming funding deadlines

10. AOB