

Date: 20 03 2026

Place: 1520-732 (City View)

Subject: Research Committee meeting

Attendees: Lars Bojer Madsen (LBM) , Steen Brøndsted Nielsen, Karsten Riisager, Michael Drewsen, Hans Kjeldsen, Jan Arlt, Georg Bruun, Bjørk Hammer, Rikke Frydenberg (minutes).

Apologies: Philip Hofmann, Jeffrey Hangst

Absent: Yong Chen.

1. Briefing by Lars – News from NAT FU ER(20 min)

LBM presented an update on the work on defining the department's future research focus areas, including the three identified research focus areas and ongoing management processes. The aim was to provide context for current priorities.

FU requested greater clarity on:

- the overarching processes the department is engaging in.
- how to interpret the focus areas (strategic priorities vs. broad themes)
- the department's current position and future direction

Questions were raised about potential sector structures and the need to learn from comparable departments.

a. Additional updates and discussions:

- Partnerhuset:** A new hub in Universitetsbyen where companies and AU units can co-locate. The aim is to strengthen collaboration with industry and startups (including initiatives from the Kitchen), create a meeting point for dialogue and events, and provide a platform for student engagement.
- Science Bridge:** An initiative to strengthen the link between research and industry, supporting the transition from low to high TRL. It is intended to facilitate collaboration and innovation pathways. Ole Bækgaard Nielsen will provide more information at an upcoming VIP-meeting.
- Distinguished Senior Innovators:** Each faculty has appointed two ambassadors for innovation (at NAT: Christoffer Karoff and Ulf Ørum). Their role is to strengthen connections between research and external partners and promote innovation activities. A similar initiative for junior researchers is being considered.

There is a growing emphasis on integrating innovation into research activities. While basic research remains our foundation, we need to be better at identifying and developing innovation potential.



- iv. **AI Lab:** An open resource available to all. It was suggested to work more strategically with the lab, for example by defining concrete cases or datasets to ensure successful outcomes and create visible examples of value. E.g. presented at VIP meetings.
- v. **Thematic networks:** A new thematic network (NAIS), anchored at Computer Science, has been established to support collaboration across research areas.
- vi. **Merit framework (COARA):** New principles shift focus away from bibliometrics toward a broader assessment of contributions, including innovation.
There is a particular need to strengthen recognition and incentives for high-quality teaching. This will be a focus point moving forward.
- vii. **MSCA:** High number of applications for the last round of applications but low success rate. This points to a need for stronger focus on quality and possibly clearer internal processes for assessing applications before submission.
- viii. **iNANO:** Researchers remain physically in the iNANO buildings, but will be part CHEM.
- ix. **Research integrity code:** A new, more discipline-specific code is being introduced and will be presented at an upcoming VIP meeting.

2. RSO support

There was a discussion of the quality and use of RSO support across different types of applications, based on input from researchers who recently received RSO support.

a. Key points:

- i. RSO is generally perceived as strong on budgeting and administrative aspects.
- ii. There are challenges related to impact sections and communication, particularly in high-level applications (e.g. ERC interviews).
- iii. It remains unclear whether RSO has the necessary competencies to support all parts of the application process.

b. Suggestions:

- i. Strengthen support for impact writing, potentially by involving competencies from the Kitchen.
- ii. Increase the use of experienced researchers as sparring partners in the process.
- iii. Consider whether RSO should focus more on facilitating connections rather than providing direct advice.
- iv. Make better use of existing EU resources and guidance materials.
- v. Introduce clearer internal processes for quality assurance of applications (e.g. MSCA).



3. AOB

A broader discussion focused on the department's role in new strategic initiatives, including a cybersecurity centre.

a. Key points:

- i. The department tends to wait rather than engage proactively and often joins initiatives too late.
- ii. There is a lack of internal structures to capture ideas and channel them to leadership.
- iii. Greater clarity is needed on strategic priorities and how to position the department.

b. Additional inputs:

- i. Interest in contributing to new initiatives such as the cyber security centre, AU Cyber.
- ii. Potential to develop new research and teaching activities, e.g. within quantum mechanics/quantum cryptography, also targeting non-physicists.
- iii. Importance of engaging proactively in the university's upcoming strategy processes.
- iv. There was general agreement on the need to be more proactive and not wait to be invited into new initiatives, as well as the need for clearer mechanisms to bring ideas forward. The balance between broad staff involvement and a sharper strategic direction was also discussed.

c. Follow-up

A follow-up meeting in the Research Committee will be scheduled with a focus on establishing clearer processes for how ideas and priorities are coordinated and brought forward to leadership, enabling earlier and more proactive engagement in relevant initiatives.