

Annual Report 2024

The Nordic Cancer Union



Photo Jorunn Valle Nilsen / Board meeting April 2024

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NCU Financial statement 2024 (Appendix)

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Nordic Cancer Union

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NCU in short

Ingrid Stenstadvold Ross, NCU Chairwoman

The Nordic Cancer Union (NCU), established in 1949, aims to foster collaboration among the cancer societies of the Nordic countries. Its primary objectives include cooperation on strategic issues, sharing experiences, and serving as a source of inspiration for the Icelandic Cancer Society, the Swedish Cancer

Society, the Faroe Cancer Society, the Danish Cancer Society, the Cancer Society of Finland and the Norwegian Cancer Society.

Chair and secretariat

The Norwegian Cancer Society is responsible for the NCU chairmanship and the NCU secretariat from 2024–2026.

A board comprising representatives of each of the member organizations directs the NCU. The chairman of the board is responsible for the NCU's function during a three-year mandate period. The strategies and priorities for the NCU are stipulated by the board and should be valid during the three-year alternating chairmanship of the member organizations.

Strategic ambitions 2024 – 2026

Our ambitions for the chairmanship is to facilitate and strengthen Nordic research to ensure better patient benefit. We aim to increase the number of high-quality research applications and improve global collaboration by aligning our efforts to better contribute and advocate for our common international cancer cause with the EU and other international entities. Additionally, we seek to reinforce our ability to learn from our experiences as CEOs of national cancer societies and leverage each other's expertise to a greater extent.

NCU finances, including research grants

The total income of the NCU in 2024 was € 1 381 000 of membership fees. The Nordic Cancer Union has granted € 900.000 to cancer research and € 511.000 for strategic activities decided by the board. Research grants ranged from € 50.000 to € 100.000.

NCU 2024 activities

In 2024 the chairmanship of the NCU coordinated collaborative activities and organized:

- Three NCU board meetings
 - The first board meeting was held at the Norwegian Cancer Society's offices in Oslo. The second meeting was held in Bodø in Norway in conjunction with ANCR. The third meeting was an online, in December
- One NCU Scientific Committee meeting
- One meeting for the newly established Advocacy Task Force Group

In addition NCU organized:

A) Launch of CAPOC report in the Danish parliament



On November 13th the Nordic Cancer Societies launched a review rapport and policy paper with their recommendations for prevention of overweight and obesity among children in the Danish parliament. (See the review and the report below).

The project *Common actions for the prevention of overweight and obesity among children* is funded by NCU and is a collaboration between the Cancer Societies in Denmark, Norway, Sweden,

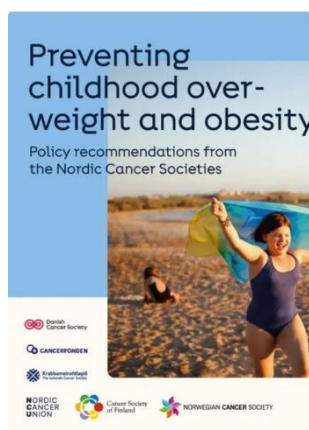
Iceland and Finland.



CAPOC - Review rapport

This report is a comprehensive umbrella review and systematic grey literature search, covering evidence on six policy topics: 1) Fiscal policies, 2) Marketing-restriction policies, 3) Labelling, 4) School health, 5) Availability, accessibility, and affordability, and 6) Early-childhood prevention.

The report summarizes current evidence on the effects of national and global prevention policies, aiming to contribute to the prevention of childhood overweight and obesity. It is based on a total of 70 systematic reviews and meta-analyses, as well as 54 grey literature publications. [Link to report.](#)



CAPOC - Policy paper

This policy paper presents five evidence-based recommendations from the Nordic Cancer Societies on preventing childhood overweight and obesity. The Nordic Cancer Societies urge Nordic governments to implement fiscal policies, marketing policies, labelling policies, school policies, and additional measures. These recommendations aim to support and enhance children's right to healthier lives and reduce health inequalities. [Link to policy paper.](#)

B) Nordic Cancer Conference in Stockholm

On October 7th, Dagens Medisin hosted a Nordic Cancer Conference in Stockholm, sponsored by NCU. The sponsorship aimed to highlight the importance of Nordic collaboration in the cancer field as part of NCU's 75th anniversary celebration.

The conference featured a comprehensive and well-structured professional program, emphasizing the value of Nordic cooperation in various aspects of cancer care and research. It began with a panel discussion among representatives from Nordic cancer associations.

Despite the strong program and marketing efforts by Dagens Medisin/Bonnier Healthcare and the various cancer associations, the conference did not attract the anticipated number of participants. A total of 55 attendees, including speakers, were present. Both the Nordic cancer associations/NCU and Dagens Medisin were disappointed with the turnout.

To learn from this experience, an evaluation meeting was held between representatives from NCU and Dagens Medisin.

C) Participation in ANCR 2024

NCU Chairwoman Ingrid Stenstadvold Ross opened the ANCR conference, emphasizing that NCU has a close relationship with the cancer registries. NCU has worked closely with ANCR for many years and has been instrumental in the establishment of NORDCAN.

NCU has also provided financial support for a broad range of topics and projects. Nordic cooperation is crucial, and to address future challenges in the field of cancer, we need robust cancer registries!

D) The Board established a Nordic Advocacy Task Force Group

To enhance Nordic cooperation, the NCU Board decided to establish an Advocacy Task Force Group in August 2024.

Tasks:

- **Identify** common challenges and share best practices across Nordic countries.
- **Collaborate** and **exert** a unified lobbying force within the EU, utilizing NCU as an active agent in the European context, whether in the European Parliament or the European Commission, to influence changes in Nordic countries through the EU.
- **Exchange knowledge** about current events and agendas in various international arenas.
- Provide **recommendations** to the NCU Board on issues or areas where NCU should engage.

The Advocacy Task Force Group oversees advocacy projects and continuously reports back to the NCU Board. The Board remains the decision-making body for all NCU policies.

NCU's Inspirational Presentations: Dr. Lars Erwig, CRUK CDD

To enhance mutual learning, NCU Chairwoman Ingrid Stenstadvold Ross invited Dr. Lars Erwig, Director of Cancer Research UK's Centre for Drug Development (CRUK CDD), to the NCU board meeting on August 29th in Bodø. Dr. Erwig shared insights into CRUK CDD's activities, partnerships, and opportunities, highlighting potential benefits for NCU and its partners:

1. **Accelerating Research:** Collaboration with CRUK CDD can help cancer societies leverage expertise and accelerate the translation of research into high-benefit drugs.
2. **International Engagement:** CRUK CDD's partnerships with cancer societies like NCS and KWF offer opportunities for broader collaboration, facilitating more clinical studies and patient recruitment.
3. **Addressing Population Challenges:** For Nordic countries with smaller populations, collaboration can make them more attractive for clinical sites, especially for rare cancers.
4. **Supporting Innovations:** CRUK CDD supports early-phase clinical trials for promising innovations, aiding small biotech companies and drugs targeting rare indications.

Health Data: Anders Tunold-Hanssen, NIP

Anders Tunold-Hanssen from the Nordic Interoperability Project (NIP) presented their work at the NCU Board meeting in August in Bodø. NIP aims to create a seamless, cross-border healthcare ecosystem by implementing world-class Nordic solutions.

Key Developments in Health Data:

- **European Health Data Space (EHDS):** Aims to empower individuals with control over their health data, facilitate data exchange for healthcare, and create a single market for electronic health records. It also supports the reuse of health data for research, innovation, policy-making, and regulation.

- **European Artificial Intelligence Act (AI Act):** Effective from August 1, 2024, this regulation ensures trustworthy AI in the EU, protecting fundamental rights and fostering a supportive environment for AI innovation.

Nordic Ambitions:

- Trust is crucial for the success of EHDS.
- Finland and Sweden lead in digitalization and health data use.

NCU Strategic funds and projects

NCU has granted funding of € 511.000 in 2024 for high-standard strategic projects within the field of cancer. Funded projects must align with NCU's current general strategy and offer added Nordic value.

The purpose of the strategic projects is to gain knowledge about issues relevant to cancer in the Nordic region that are not necessarily covered through traditional research grants. Allocation decisions are made by the board following a dialogue with relevant stakeholders.

In 2024 the following strategic project was funded by the NCU:

- Prevent 2.0, granted € 480 000
- Nordic Cancer Conference 2024, granted € 31 000 (paid in 2024).

Short about granted projects in 2024:

The **PREVENT 2.0** project aims to enhance NORDCAN by integrating a module that includes comprehensive data on cancer risk factors and statistics to estimate the effect of prevention scenarios into the future. This module will provide evidence-based public health and economic arguments to support cancer prevention initiatives, helping policymakers make informed decisions and allocate resources effectively. The project is carried out in collaboration with the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC-WHO) Surveillance Branch. Collaboration with the Netherlands is planned to implement and test the module outside the Nordic region. Key features of the project include assessing the impact of preventative measures to reduce cancer rates in Nordic countries, thereby supporting a sustainable health system. It also combines public health and economic data to prioritize cancer prevention strategies and ensures an accessible and user-friendly interface for policymakers and researchers in the Nordic region and beyond.

To read more about the **Nordic Cancer Conference 2024**, see page 5.

NCU Scientific Committee's recommendations

The annual NCU grant call closed 16th of November 2024. This year we received 35 applications. The amount of funds available for research grants in 2024 was 900 000 euros.

The NCU peer review committee meeting was held in Copenhagen 7th of November 2024. The committee's assessment is based on a thorough discussion of the applications, based on scientific quality, quality of researchers, level of Nordic synergy, and relevance to NCU's strategy. 12 projects were recommended for funding (table 2).

Table 1 provides an overview of the number of applications received and the level of funding granted from 2020 -2024.

Table 1: Number of applications and level of funding granted

	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
Applications recieved	35	22	21	28	30
Applications funded	12 (34%)	13 (59%)	10 (48%)	12 (43%)	16 (53%)
Applied funding	9,524,807	4,932,590	2,166,355	4,910,193	4,821,440
Granted funding	900,000	900,000	750,000	750,000	750,000

Location of principal investigators

Figure 1 shows the number of applications from each Nordic country in 2024 as determined by the affiliation of the principal investigator. Figure 2 shows the number of applications from each Nordic country in 2024 as determined by the affiliations of the co-applicants. There were no applications or co-applicant from the Faroe Island. We will look into if this can be increased to next year's call. We will also work to maintain the number of applications for 2025.

Figure 1: Number of applications (recommended and not recommended) by PI location in 2023.

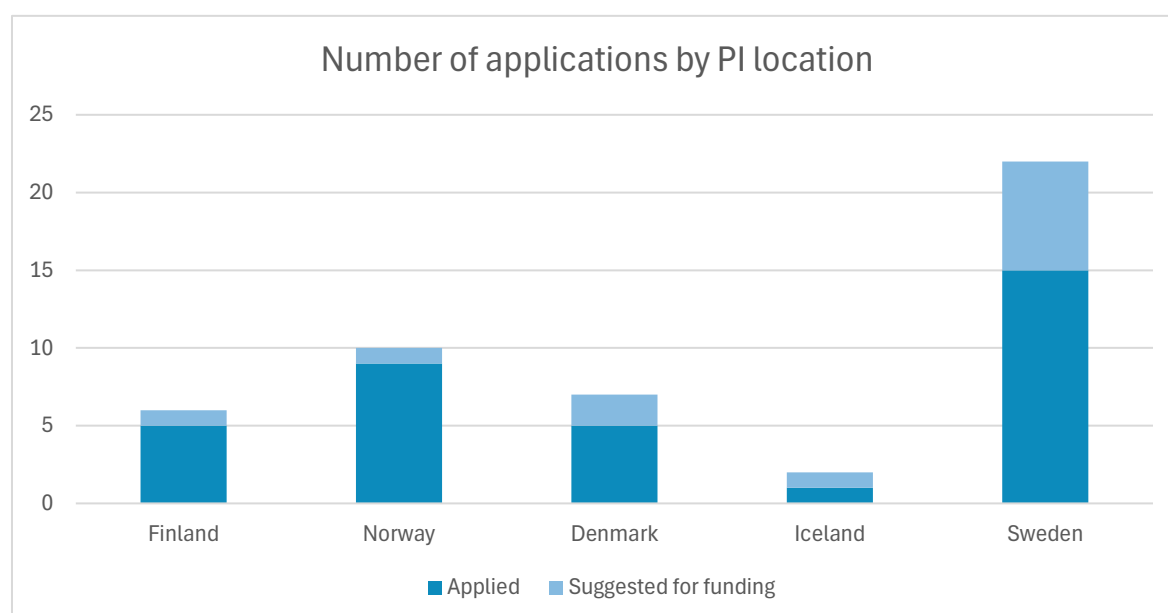


Figure 2: Number of applications (recommended and not recommended) by co-applicant location in 2024.

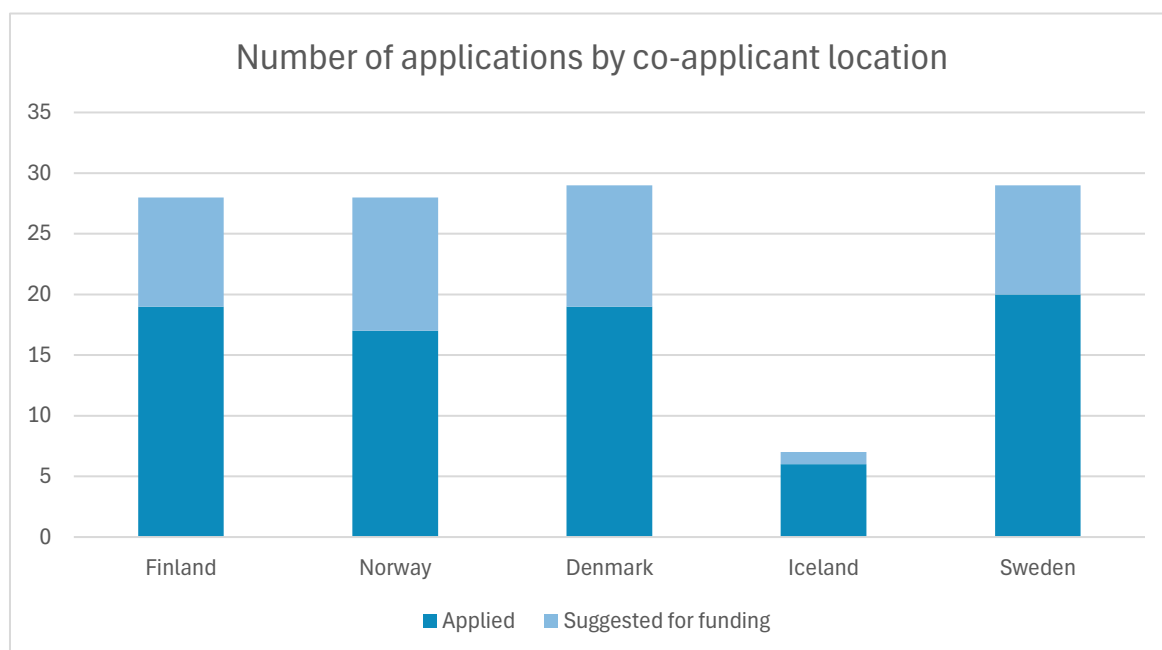


Table 2: Projects recommended to the NCU Board for funding in 2024

Principal Investigator	Project title	Project institute	Participating NCU countries	Applied amount	Recommended amount	Funded years
Magnus Tobiasson	Minimal residual disease targeted treatment to improve outcome of transplantation for patients with myelodysplastic syndrome the Nordic trial NMDSG14B, part 2	Karolinska University Hospital	Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland	160000	89000	1 (Ongoing)
Roger Olofsson Bagge	Regional treatment and modern immunotherapy for patients with uveal melanoma metastasis - a phase III randomized clinical trial	University of Gothenburg	Sweden, Finland, Norway	491549	100000	1
Sara Alkner	The T-REX trial: Tailored regional external beam radiotherapy in clinically node-negative breast cancer patients with 1-2 sentinel node macrometastases	Lund University	Sweden, Iceland, Norway, Finland	302500	90000	1
Øyvind Holme	Fecal blood testing versus colonoscopy for post-polypectomy surveillance	Sørlandet sykehus HF	Norway, Finland, Denmark	290471	90000	1
Jakob Hedberg	EPI-Block trial - Randomised Phase III Trial of Epidural analgesia versus paravertebral Block in minimally invasive esophagectomy for cancer	Uppsala University	Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Norway	308150	90000	1 (Ongoing)
Niels Frstrup	Multicenter Randomized Trial of Deferred Cytoreductive Nephrectomy in Synchronous Metastatic Renal Cell Carcinoma THE NORDICSUN TRIAL	Aarhus University Hospital	Denmark, Norway, Finland, Sweden	165000	55000	1
Ingrid Glimelius	TREATMENT OF MALIGNANT LYMPHOMAS: BALANCING CURE AND LATE EFFECTS	Uppsala University	Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Norway	325000	80000	1
Sigurður Yngvi Kristinsson	Improving free light chain testing for the diagnosis and risk stratification of plasma cell malignancies	University of Iceland	Iceland, Denmark, Norway	140199	80000	1 (Ongoing)
Jesper Lagergren	Long-term medication with proton pump inhibitors and risk of gastric cancer.	Karolinska Institutet	Sweden, Iceland, Norway, Denmark	138079	50000	1 (Ongoing)
Francesco D'Amore	The Nordic PANTHEON study - a randomized clinical trial evaluating post-induction maintenance therapy and the use of ctDNA in peripheral T-cell	Aarhus University Hospital	Denmark, Finland, Sweden	215000	60000	1
Satu Mustjoki	The function of natural killer (NK) cells in leukemia patients	University of Helsinki	Finland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden	315000	60000	1 (Ongoing)
Annika Malmström	Phase 3 trial of temozolomide/lomustine vs. standard TMZ therapy both with tumor treating fields for MGMT promoter methylated glioblastoma	Department of Biomedical and Clinical Sciences,	Sweden, Norway, Denmark	225000	56000	1

NCU member information



Kræftens Bekæmpelse

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krabbameinsfelagið

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