

## Research committee minutes

Present: Veerle Jaspers, Atle Bones, Inka Anglade, Siv Anina Etter, Bjørn Munro Jenssen, Lena Van Giesen, Glaucia Moreira Fragoso, Maja C. Haaker, Henrik Jensen

Not present: Vidar Grøtan, Daniela Sueldo, Aline M. Lee

Copy to:

Subject:

Time of meeting: 1400-1530

Place: D1-161

Signature:

### 1. Evaluation of PhD travel grant applications

Eight PhD travel grant applications were submitted to the Department of Biology (IBI). The applications are listed below. IBI will not fund any travels for PhDs from the Dept. of Biological Sciences (Ålesund) or the Dept. of Natural History (VM). Furthermore, the IBI leader group has decided that because of the economic situation at IBI, we aim to support travel of PhD-students once during their PhD-project. Given these restrictions, the evaluation criteria given in the application form were:

- Invited lecture, participation in training courses and extended research stays to learn new methodologies not already established at IBI, which are part of the organized academic training: 4 points
- Registered contributions conferences and summer schools: 3 points
- PhD students with no dedicated travel funds: 1 point
- PhD student with no prior travel funding from IBI and in the last year of their PhD: 1 point

Name	Supervisor	Travel to	When	Budget	Received before	Points	Comment
Gabrielle Häberli	Nicole Aberle-Malzahn	UK	6 wk	36000	No	5	
Christian Kraus	Basil el Jundi	USA	oct-nov 23	50000	No	5	
Ingeborg Bringslid	Kjell Inge Reitan	Austria	mar + sept 2023	13350	No	4	Only the conference, the rest was writing at location of supervisor's sabbatical and not a research stay to learn new methodologies (reduced from 41300)
Molly McPartland	Martin Wagner	USA	nov 23	26981	No	4	
Malin Stavridis	Bjørn Munro Jensen	Ireland	may 23	15000	Yes, 2022 (15000)	3	
Inka Anglade	Kjell Inge Reitan	Austria	sept 23	15000	Yes, 2022 (10600)	3	Max 15000 in Europe (reduced from 17700)
Saifullah	Yngvar Olsen	Nederland	mar-may 23	45630	Yes, 2019 (32192)		Supposed to finish summer 2023, and unclear why a research stay to learn new methodologies useful for the PhD is needed at this stage
Damaris Matten	James Speed	USA	aug 23	24950	No		IBI does not fund travels for VM-PhDs

After evaluating and discussing the proposals, the RC found that two of the applications did not fulfil the requirements, and that some of the budgets should be reduced. These changes are explained in the table above.

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Please address all correspondence to the organizational unit and include your reference.

Our recommendation is that funding is given to the PhD-students as indicated by the **green and yellow colours** in the table above. The cost for IBI for this alternative is **156,331 NOK**. This includes giving travel grants to two PhD-students who received travel grants also in 2022. However, the budgets for both travels were low, and the condition that PhDs should receive travel grant only once during their PhD was not announced on beforehand.

If this cost is too high for the available budget, we recommend that funding is given to the PhD-students indicated by the **green colour only**. The cost for IBI for this alternative is **126,331 NOK**.

If there is any money left after supporting the PhD-students with travel grants, we recommend that PhD-students are given some funds for a writing retreat.

Finally, the RC recommends that the conditions and criteria for receiving travel grants is clearly stated when the opportunity to apply for travel grants is announced, along with a tentative total budget.

## 2. Start-up of discussion about required coursework during the PhD education

The national Norwegian rules regarding PhD-education is that PhDs should be carried out in three years and include 30 credits (equivalent to 0.5 year) coursework. At IBI the practice has been that PhD-students can have up to one year additional time on their PhD-project if they have duty work such as teaching. Most PhD-students have used this opportunity to both get valuable teaching experience (relevant for career development) and extend the research-related work-time on their project (good for more time/seasons for experimental and field work as well as “scientific maturation”). Unfortunately, most PhD-students will because of the economic situation at IBI either lack this possibility or have major reductions in the addition of time due to duty work. Another challenge for many PhD-students is the mandatory MN8000 (Doing Science: Methods, Ethics, and Dissemination) course that runs intensively in January. This course has obligatory attendance and little flexibility, which means that PhD-students cannot do any experimental work or fieldwork in this period. Furthermore, feedback from some students suggest that although the content of the course in principle is relevant and interesting, the content can easily be condensed and parts of the course could be run more efficiently. Another option could be to have two versions of this course; one intensive and one which is spread across a longer time period to allow PhD-students flexibility and time to carry out research at the same time.

The RC discussed some of the challenges related to a short PhD (in reality, only 2.5 years of research time). Our overall aim must be to help our PhD-students to finish their PhD-projects on time, as this is in the interest of everyone. However, we suggest that the pros and cons of having a 3-year PhD with 30 credits of coursework in Norway (which is considerably shorter than in most other western countries) should be discussed at the national level. For example, is 30 credits course work really necessary? It would be good if Kjetil can bring this up for a discussion in Biofagrådet. Furthermore, we should at IBI evaluate and discuss what we shall “demand” from a PhD-project. The expectations from the 2.5 year PhD research project should be realistic, for example regarding the number of (published) scientific papers expected in a PhD-thesis. This should be discussed in the different sections at IBI, so that expectations are aligned with realistic

opportunities within the PhD time-frame. Finally, Henrik will present our views on the MN8000 course to the NV Forskningsutvalget.

### **3. Information from sections about who will apply for RCN and ERC grants this winter/spring**

The representatives from each of the sections informed the rest about planned research project applications. In general, there seem to be a lot of activity within sections to develop new projects. Marine: Several project applications are planned for the RCN and ERC. For example, Maja Hatlebakk is applying for a Researcher Project for Young Talents, Bengt is involved in a salmon lice project proposal, Glaucia is applying for an aquaculture project and plans an ERC StG in the autumn. Animal Physiology: Jeff and Zara Cowan are applying for Researcher Projects for Young Talents, and Basil is applying for an ERC CoG. Envitox: Veerle and/or Bjørn are involved in a RCN climate change grant proposal (lead by NINA), and a polar research grant proposal with UNIS. CBD: Aline is applying for an ERC CoG and a RCN grant, and she, Vidar and Henrik are involved in a RCN grant proposal lead by NINA.

Glaucia informed us on the possibility to apply for NTNU Oceans seed projects, cross-disciplinary projects with small amount of funding. Deadline for this is February 13<sup>th</sup>. See more information here: <https://www.ntnu.edu/kalender/detaljer/-/event/0920949d-1e56-300f-b189-5ff61170eb57>

Anyone who are working on project applications (especially if they are applying for young researcher grants) and want feedback on their proposals can contact Veerle and Henrik.

### **4. Brief information about EVALBIOVIT, Cristin, Bookitlab-faglærermøte, technical resources mapping, project funding opportunities**

Information from Henrik.

- Thanks for all the help with the EVALBIOVIT. The self-assessments of our sections were submitted December 5<sup>th</sup>, and the IBI self-assessment was submitted on January 16<sup>th</sup>. There might be interviews in the autumn, and we will most likely get feedback from the EVALBIOVIT next spring.
- Deadline for Christin was the 20<sup>th</sup> of January. There is a small decrease in number of publications at IBI from in 2021 to in 2022. However, our proportion of level 2 publications is still high ().
- The planned faglærermøte about Bookitlab has been moved to later this year.
- Stig has mapped our technical staff resources, and Henrik informed on how the resources are divided between tasks and sections. Note that the numbers reflect the situation in 2022. We have in total ca. 16 person-years of technical assistance at IBI. Our technical staff spend

36% of their time on teaching support, 23% on research support, 18% on running our labs, 10% on common administrative tasks, and the rest (13% on HSE, Communication and other tasks). The 23% research support (ca. 4 person-years) is divided 32% to MSB, 31% to Marine, 15% to Envitox, 12% to Cell/Mol, 8% to Animal Physiology and 2% to CBD. Two important questions are: 1) Is this division between support functions (e.g. teaching vs. research) what we want? 2) Is the division between the sections fair and strategically OK? The also RC wonders whether there will be a higher demand on technician-assistance in teaching in the coming years because fewer PhDs will have duty work?

## **5. Any other business**

- Augustine will meet instead of Bjørn in the RC from now on.
- The RC meeting time should be at 1300 on a Tuesday around the 1<sup>st</sup> each month.