# SciLifeLab

# Report to the SciLifeLab board from the Campus Solna action group

**Background:**

The SciLifeLab board decided in its meeting 2019-05-29 to set up a committee called "Campus Solna Action group", that should look into Campus Solna (CS) issues and SciLifeLab Fellows' issues (mostly at CS), as raised by the International Advisory Board (IAB). The CS action group was asked to explore IAB comments 4.3 c, e, f and h in particular, to identify issues that need action and come up with suggestions for solutions, and to give a first report of this at the next SciLifeLab board meeting on Sep 25, 2019.

The composition of the CS action group is the four SciLifeLab integration directors (IDs), Stefan Eriksson (KI), Amelie Eriksson Karlström (KTH), Ylva Engström (SU)(chair) and Mats Larhed (UU); Director Olli Kallioniemi; Co-director Siv Andersson; and administrative support by Anna Höglund-Rehn. The group has had three meetings, June 13, Aug 26 and Sep 12. The SciLifeLab Fellows were invited to come with a few representatives to the meeting on Aug 26, and the group had a fruitful discussion with Marc Friedländer and Claudia Kutter. The Fellows have also written up a document in response to the IAB report (IAB reflections_fellows 190528_IAB.docx).

## Issues and suggestions in relation to the IAB report

### IAB point 4.3 c:  "Two sites- one integrated centre"

SciLifeLab will enable and create excellent research environments throughout Sweden based on the national infrastructure. The IAB suggested a Stockholm-centric view, with a more defined role for Uppsala around bioinformatics. We will continue to create SciLifeLab research mission in collaboration between Uppsala and Stockholm. We envision excellent broad-scale research areas and programs that cover both Stockholm and Uppsala, and often across the country, such as continuation of the RCP projects. This goal will be included in the long-term strategy discussions and our group did not discuss at length the overall research strategy of SciLifeLab as a whole, nor specifically for Campus Solna.

### IAB point 4.3 e: "A functional centre needs a director with authority"

Many of the issues that are not working well at Campus Solna stem from the lack of a

clear definition of responsibility and mandate of and between the CS committee (which includes IDs, the scientific directors (SDs), and the Infrastructure Director), SciLifeLab Director/co-Director, the legally responsible host departments (about 30) and the leadership of the host universities.

Challenges also stem from an unusual complexity where independent research groups and national facilities, belonging to different departments and universities, are mixed together in one building. In most similar multi-university or multi-department buildings, areas and rental agreements are handled by each university or department, or by a broad research program. At Campus Solna, the unit is a single research group or one national facility. In many ways this is a systematic and organizational challenge, particularly as the building is getting full, and some groups (like fellows or growing national facilities) need substantial increases of space. This is a real challenge, but if present and daily problems can be solved, there is much to gain from the mixing of researchers with different background, knowledge and experience.

We suggest the appointment of a SciLifeLab Campus Solna Föreståndare (*Eng: CS site director or similar).*

- The CS föreståndare/director should be someone with an academic background, preferably with ample leadership and management experience, such as a previous head of department or similar.
- A three-year appointment (uppdrag) with 60% time seems reasonable for this task. The person should already be employed at either KI, KTH or SU, and the salary for the 60% appointment could be shared by the three host universities and by the national infrastructure, each funding 15%.
- We suggest that the Campus Solna action group writes a description/definition of the responsibility and mandate of the CS Föreståndare,  and how it relates to other directors, committees, operation office and other groups
- That the appointment/tasks as CS Föreståndare is evaluated after ≈2,5 years and possibly redefined, to adjust it to the future needs as they stand then.
- The CS föreståndare /director should enable and promote an excellent research environment at Campus Solna, but not be the one deciding upon the research directions or on infrastructure matters.
- The CS föreståndare /director should have the responsibility (as delegated by the Campus Solna Committee) for allocation of space at Campus Solna in the alpha and gamma buildings. Large changes/allocations/strategic directions need to be decided by the Campus Solna Committee with support from the dept heads.
- To CS föreståndare should have a mandate to execute decisions that are needed to coordinate operational matters within the premises. There should also be a CS intendent/manager working together with the CS föreståndare/director.
- The CS föreståndare /director should report to the Campus Solna Committee. CSC should allocate a budget and delegate practical matters for the CS director to handle on behalf of all SciLifeLab host universities.

The CS föreståndare /director should also

- Promote the scientific environment at Campus Solna, together with the SDs, PIs/Fellows and Fellows' Research Coordinator.

- Develop and execute (with CSC) a plan to address the many challenges in CS operation, such as promote the development of a culture of sharing large equipment, and help to find solutions to fellow's needs for local/basic infrastructure, and when possible, access to national infrastructure.

- Interact with the SciLifeLab directors, infrastructure director, scientific and integration directors, the operations office as well as arrange regular meetings with host university department heads to ensure CS is always well integrated and embedded in the bigger SciLifeLab research environment.

## IAB point 4.3 f: Consider strengthening the leadership for the research mission of SciLifeLab.

This is an important strategic issue that will need further discussion. We have focused in clarifying the role of the CS föreståndare /director to get the practical challenges at CS sorted out first. The CS föreståndare /director is not a research director at CS. Research at CS should be better coordinated, but also integrated with Uppsala, as well as the national SciLifeLab research profile.

## IAB point 4.3 h: Fellows

Issues related to Fellows' (and other PIs) needs at CS; a number of issues are already dealt with right now:

- Space re-allocation plan is finished and ready to be implemented once the necessary risk analyses have been carried out, and all dept. heads have signed new rental contracts.
- A new IT intranet with more capacity is being built. KTH will take over the network from KI.
- A new dishwashing/autoclaving facility located in the beta building will most likely be possible to incorporate as a SciLifeLab unit.
- A number of local infrastructure changes are taking place and being planned.

Issues that we have identified that can be dealt with during the fall:

*In relation to recruitment:*

- Routines and working practices during the recruitment process, installment and first-year of fellows should be improved to ensure a good working environment for the newcomers. We also need to avoid mismatches of expectations, misunderstandings…This will be even more important with the new fellows coming in, who are less experienced (< 5 years post-PhD).

- A temporary working group with representatives of the Operation Office, SDs, IDs, Dept heads and Fellows should get the task of putting together a "Recruitment procedure" and a Quick Reference Guide (for each university).

-During the recruitment process/negotiation phase, candidate Fellows should visit Campus Solna and meet relevant people.

-Better planning of the whole process for the fellows already from the start, including plans for the years 5-6.


*In relation to local infrastructure and use of facilities:*

We suggest that Fellows' Research Coordinator is given a task to:

 Help fellows to find solutions how they could

- share expert technical staff who would be allowed to use some of the national infrastructure equipment when it is not it use for service
- use their funding to buy time/hire part time technical staff (instead of increasing the group size and the number of PhD students).
- Explore with fellows, SDs, and infra coordinator the rules and practices for sharing expensive equipment, and develop a system for how the costs of repair of shared equipment could be covered


*In relation to creating a better research environment:*

The Research Community Programs have fulfilled some of the gaps already, but they currently cover only a part of the CS community. The RCP program should be continued and expanded in the future. In addition, as stated above, the CS föreståndare/director should also have a task in promoting the scientific environment at Campus Solna, for example enabling seminar series, faculty clubs and annual meetings.

Until a CS föreståndare/director is appointed, some of the research community efforts need to be led and initiated within the Operations Office, along with SDs, potentially coordinated by the Fellows' Research Coordinator.

**IAB point 4.3: Centre of research excellence mission, linking to c, f and other parts in the IAB report**

This is part of a larger strategic discussion. The current overall strategy draft of the SciLifeLab states three broad areas: i) data-driven cell biology, ii) data-driven translational and precision-medicine research and iii) data-driven research on environment and biodiversity. Discussion on these fields will continue, but we may also need more defined programs under these broad areas. But further discussion is needed to settle: How many? For how long should each one run? How to decide upon which research areas? How should the research areas be lead?

We suggest that future SciLifeLab Fellows and senior scientists should be recruited in these scientific research directions. These scientists should also be prepared to move out when a research area is not active any longer.

We have also discussed the procedures for reviewing/evaluating existing research groups. There are already decisions taken for some of it and the CS action group as well as the Campus Solna Committee will continue to discuss this and come up with a suggestion for how and when to execute this. The CS Föreståndare should also be deeply involved in these processes.

# Campus Solna action group

- Director, Vice-director, 4 Integration directors, admin support

- 3 meetings so far

- Focus on IAB comments 4.3 c, e, f and h

- Discussions around long-term strategies and SciLifeLab's future direction

- Immediate actions needed at Campus Solna

- Immediate actions related to Fellows' situation

Open discussions, a bit of brain-storming, inspiration from other institutes, pinpointing the problems, finding solutions…we have come quite far

Questions remain to discuss and settle before implementation, but many of the Campus Solna and Fellows' issues can be sorted out relatively soon

# Long-term strategies and SciLifeLab's future direction(s)

**Two sites-one integrated centre (4.3 c)**
- The CS action group generally thinks that we should continue to work for an integrated Sthlm-Uppsala centre.

**Strengthening the research mission (4.3 f)**
- Research can be better coordinated

- Aligned research programs

Positive consensus but this needs more and broad discussions concerning:
How many, for how long/turn-over, how to decide upon them, how should they be led/ driven?

- Recruitments of Fellows and senior PIs can be done within defined research programs, but important to strive for a multidisciplinary approach to take advantage of the different strengths we have together

- More discussions are needed

# Actions needed at Campus Solna (4.3 e)

**Issues at Campus Solna:**

- Lack of clear responsibilities and mandates

- Complex organization with research groups as the specified unit, belonging to ≈ 30 departments and 3 universities

- Research groups are mixed, not aligned according to research interests  (or according to departments)

- Local infrastructure is lacking

- Space has become more and more critical, blocks flexibility, expansion of groups and blocks new recruitments, even of Fellows

- Slow process of re-building projects, via KI Facility management and Akademiska Hus, personnel with relevant mandate have been missing

# Actions needed at Campus Solna (4.3 e)

**Solution:**
**Appointment of a CS Föreståndare/CS (site) director**

- 3-year appointment, 60% time, salary 4 x 15%  (KI, KTH, SU, National)
- Academic background; leadership and management experience
- The CS Föreståndare should enable and promote an excellent research environment at Campus Solna, but not be the one deciding upon the research directions.
- More details on tasks in the report.

**Suggestions:**
- That the board decides on an appointment of a CS Föreståndare
- That the CS action group is requested to write a description/definition of the responsibilities and mandates of the CS Föreståndare, and how it relates to other directors, committees and groups.
- That the agreement documents are re-formulated accordingly
- That the appointment/tasks as CS Föreståndare is evaluated after ≈2,5 years, and possibly redefined

# Actions needed for Fellows' situation (4.3 h)

**Issues:**

- Routines during recruitment process, installment and 1$^{st}$ year should be improved

- Transparency regarding year 5-6 should be imporved

- Mismatches between Fellows expectations and what SciLifelab can offer/provide

- CS space allocation and CS local infrastructure

- Lack of access to expensive equipment present in research groups and/or facilities

- Lack of close-by research environment in the every-day work, seminars, work-shops…

**Solutions:**

Combinations of activities, as described in the report, by the Operation Office, SDs, IDs, the Fellow's Research Coordinator and later by the CS Föreståndare can solve many of the issues.

**Suggestion:**

That the CS action group is given the task to continue this process together with the SDs, the OO and other relevant parties, and to report back to the board.