



**INTERNATIONAL AGENCY FOR RESEARCH ON CANCER  
CENTRE INTERNATIONAL DE RECHERCHE SUR LE CANCER**

**Governing Council  
Fifty-first Session**

**GC/51/4  
20/02/2009**

*Lyon, 14–15 May 2009  
Auditorium*

**REPORT OF THE SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL  
ON ITS FORTY-FIFTH SESSION**

**INTRODUCTION**

1. The Forty-fifth Session of the Scientific Council (SC) of the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) was opened by Dr Jack Siemiatycki (Chairperson of the Scientific Council), at 13:45 on Wednesday 28 January 2009. He welcomed the participants, including new members of the Scientific Council, Dr Ian Frazer (Australia), Dr Karin Haustermans (Belgium), Dr Alex Markham (UK), Dr Hitoshi Nakagama (Japan) and Dr Marina Pollán Santamaria (Spain).
2. He also welcomed Dr L.E. Hanssen (Chairperson of the Governing Council (GC)), Dr J. Horvath (Acting Vice-Chairperson of the Governing Council, in the absence of Dr P. Puska, unable to attend), Dr A. Alwan (representing Dr Margaret Chan, Director-General of WHO), Dr A. Ullrich (WHO Representative), Mrs J. McKeough (Office of the Legal Counsel, WHO), Dr R. Zanetti (UICC Representative) and Professor G. Superti-Furga, who was nominated as an Observer by Austria, incoming Participating State in 2008. Dr T. Philip (Director of the Centre Léon Bérard) (Observer) was represented by Mme M. Rousseau-Tsangaris.
3. Apologies for absence were received from Dr V. Shanta (India) and Dr G. Forni (Italy).

**ELECTION OF RAPPORTEUR**

4. Dr A. Markham was elected Rapporteur.

## **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA** (Document SC/45/1)

5. The following modifications were agreed:

- ✓ Item 11 "Evaluation and discussion of the Scientific Report of the Molecular Carcinogenesis Cluster (MCC) Review": All members of the Cluster reviewed are requested to be in attendance.
- ✓ Item 12 "Presentation and discussion of IARC future strategy and activities with the Director as well as discussion on potential scientific developments, new directions and major strategic issues which are of relevance to the Agency's scientific programme": All members of staff could be in attendance for the Director's presentation but the discussion will be between the Director and the SC only.

6. **The agenda was adopted.**

## **ROLE OF THE SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL**

7. The Director presented the role of the Scientific Council as per IARC Statute.

8. He recognized the unique value of the SC advice to IARC. The need for transparency was emphasized. The Director hoped that having established excellent working relations with SC, he would be allowed to "get on with the job".

## **REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE 50<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL** (Document SC/45/3)

9. The Director presented the Report of the 50<sup>th</sup> GC to the SC.

## **REPORTS RECEIVED FROM THE OUTGOING DIRECTOR:**

### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT AND UPDATE FROM THE 44<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL AND DISCUSSION** (Document SC/45/4)

10. The Director presented the document.

## **IARC INTERIM ANNUAL REPORT 2008** (Document SC/45/2)

11. This document was applauded for its use of key performance indicators (KPIs) and a performance management approach. The Director planned to refine the measures of success to be adopted, over the next year. The Agency produced almost 300 publications in 2008, with numerous high impact publications between 2004–2008.

12. Inclusion of other KPIs (e.g. training contribution) as well as publication records, was recognized as an essential additional parameter. The SC looks forward to hearing from the Director in some detail what additional “measures” will be monitored. Scientific quality and relevance to the mission of IARC were recognized as the key considerations.

13. The scientific efforts of IARC staff in 2008 were commended by the SC.

**DIRECTOR’S RESPONSE TO BIOSTATISTICS AND EPIDEMIOLOGY CLUSTER (BEC) REVIEW, HELD AT IARC IN NOVEMBER 2007 (DETAILS OF ACTION TAKEN)** (Document SC/45/6)

14. Disappointment was expressed at the responses of the previous Director to the November 2007 Review. The current Director has indicated that he will respond to the Review.

**PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF CONSOLIDATED DOCUMENT REGARDING IARC SCIENTIFIC REVIEW PROCEDURES** (Document SC/45/7)

15. The Director introduced the document. Key items for SC included:

- ✓ Selection of the Review Group,
- ✓ Content of Review documents,
- ✓ Conduct of the Review itself,
- ✓ Review Group reporting,
- ✓ Approval of Review Group Report by SC and monitoring of follow-up actions by the Director and Cluster Coordinator.

16. A merged document was prepared as requested by the GC and this was accepted. An updated document (SC/45/7 – Revision) was then tabled and discussed. This was felt to be an improvement on the merged document after various proposed changes were clarified in open SC discussion.

17. What was agreed in principle was:

- ✓ A symmetrical review of past and proposed work,
- ✓ An assessment of scientific quality, including a summary score on a four point scale,
- ✓ An assessment of relevance to IARC mission, including a summary score on a four point scale,
- ✓ An assessment of the performance of the Group Head.

18. Drs J. Siemiatycki and H. Comber were mandated to complete the drafting of the document to reflect the SC's views. This will be circulated to the SC members for approval and submitted to the GC along with the original merged document (merged from documents GC/50/9 and GC/50/7 as requested by the GC at its 50<sup>th</sup> session).

### **SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP OF CLUSTER REVIEW GROUP IN 2009**

19. The Epidemiology and Biology Cluster (EBC), coordinated by Dr Silvia Franceschi, was selected as the next Cluster to be reviewed.

20. Review Group members need to be identified as soon as possible to ensure a timely process.

21. Dr Ian Frazer, Dr Marina Pollán and Dr Bart Kiemeneij (Chair) will participate in the Review Group. It was agreed that the external members should be chosen by the Secretariat in consultation with the Chair of the Review Group and the Chair of the Scientific Council.

22. The Review will take place at IARC, provisionally October/November 2009. This will be confirmed as soon as possible by the Review Group.

23. There is a need to plan a repeat BEC Review in late 2010.

### **PRESENTATION OF THE WORK OF THE ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE AT IARC** (Document SC/45/11)

24. Markus Pasterk presented this item. IARC now has two bodies: the IRB and the ERC. Details of their composition are included in document SC/45/11.

25. The IRB meets bi-monthly in Lyon to review all submitted IARC projects. The ERC's role is to ensure that there is international consistency in IARC's ethics decisions, particularly in view of IARC's activities in many countries and cultures. It meets bi-annually in different international settings. Joint IRB/ERC meetings are organized in Lyon. ERC reports back to GC every two years.

26. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) have been approved. The initial committee memberships are due to end in December 2009. Therefore it is timely to review whether these arrangements have proved satisfactory and whether members need to be renewed/replaced.

27. A report will be presented to GC in May 2009.

28. The ongoing need for the ERC was questioned, given the existence of other international expert Ethics Bodies. It was not clear exactly what value the ERC has added. One example of ERC input has been in clarifying "informed consent" issues. Another benefit is the engagement of these very influential international stakeholders.

29. Some members of the SC did not see a continuing role for ERC.

30. The Director was invited to make recommendations to GC on proposed future changes to the IRB/ERC structure.

## **PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF DETAILED SHORT (FOR THE COMING YEAR) AND MEDIUM-TERM (FOR THE NEXT THREE YEARS) FUTURE PLANS OF ALL CLUSTERS**

### **BIOSTATISTICS AND EPIDEMIOLOGY CLUSTER (BEC) – COORDINATOR, P. AUTIER**

31. The Cluster Coordinator presented the short and medium term plans in brief. The SC briefly discussed the following points:

- (i) The feasibility of cancer registration in low-resource countries.
- (ii) The collaboration between IARC Groups regarding screening efficacy projects.
- (iii) The need for RCTs on vitamin D and cancer and the role of IARC in it.
- (iv) The possibility of alternatives to cancer registries in low-resource countries, such as cross-sectional studies.
- (v) Plans to continue childhood cancer registries.
- (vi) The recruitment of staff in the Radiation Group.
- (vii) The Interphone study and the need to publish the findings soon.

### **EPIDEMIOLOGY AND BIOLOGY CLUSTER (EBC) – COORDINATOR, S. FRANCESCHI**

32. The Cluster Coordinator presented the short and medium term plans in brief. The SC briefly discussed the following points:

- (i) Potential for collaboration with pharmaceutical industry.
- (ii) The relevance of studying other viruses.
- (iii) HPV vaccination of males.
- (iv) The possibility of a focus on H. pylori.
- (vi) The need of a stronger focus on cancer immunology.

**GENETICS AND EPIDEMIOLOGY CLUSTER (GEC) – COORDINATOR,  
P. BOFFETTA**

33. The Cluster Coordinator presented the short and medium term plans in brief. The SC briefly discussed the following points:

- (i) The place of the current genetic association studies in the identification of modifiable cancer risks and the identification of high risk groups.
- (ii) The necessity of precise environmental exposure data in such studies.
- (iii) The importance of careful communication of results of these studies to the public.
- (iv) The integration with other existing consortia (e.g. Breast Cancer Consortium).
- (v) Methods to prioritize tumour sites to study genetic targets.
- (vi) IARC's role in providing mutation databases.
- (vii) The combining of epigenetic and genetic studies in some of the GEC cohorts.
- (viii) The IARC Tobacco Control programme.

**PATHOGENESIS AND PREVENTION CLUSTER (PPC) – COORDINATOR,  
H. OHGAKI**

34. The Cluster Coordinator presented the short and medium term plans in brief. The SC briefly discussed the following points:

- (i) The applicability of the IARC "Blue Books" (with respect to specific diagnostics) in low-resource countries.
- (ii) The methods to evaluate screening programmes in the absence of cancer registries.

**MOLECULAR CARCINOGENESIS CLUSTER (MCC) – COORDINATOR,  
P. HAINAUT**

35. The Cluster Coordinator presented the short and medium term plans in brief. The discussion of the presentation took place under the following item.

**EVALUATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE SCIENTIFIC REPORT OF THE MOLECULAR CARCINOGENESIS CLUSTER (MCC) REVIEW** (Document SC/45/WP5)

36. Dr K. Husgafvel-Pursiainen (Review Group Chair) presented the Report.
37. The Review Group composition was noted (external and SC members). Past work and recent MCC organizational changes were noted. The high productivity (100 papers) of the Cluster was acknowledged.
38. Dr Hainaut and the Group Heads responded to several points on the Review Report.
39. In general discussion, the following points were raised:
- (i) A separation of the management and leadership tasks of the BioBank.
  - (ii) The need to find the appropriate balance between in-house technology and outsourcing.
  - (iii) Perhaps the focus should be on analysis and the BioInformatics challenges that MCC will face, rather than on maintaining the in-house equipment base at the cutting edge.
  - (iv) Historically, IARC has been relatively constrained in developing its own trainees into permanent positions.
40. There was general SC agreement that:
- (i) IARC Biobank should be further developed with clear governance arrangements and rules of access (particularly with a developing world focus).
  - (ii) IARC could lead in establishing an epigenetic database (and review the need for mutation databases in other cancers, and IARC's role by the Director).
  - (iii) IARC BioInformatics and biostatistics provision needs further consideration.
41. **The Scientific Council accepted the Cluster Report.**

**PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF IARC FUTURE STRATEGY AND ACTIVITIES WITH THE DIRECTOR AS WELL AS DISCUSSION ON POTENTIAL SCIENTIFIC DEVELOPMENTS, NEW DIRECTIONS AND MAJOR STRATEGIC ISSUES WHICH ARE OF RELEVANCE TO THE AGENCY'S SCIENTIFIC PROGRAMME** (Document SC/45/10)

42. The Director presented his ideas for future directions, including nutrition, cancer registration, biomarkers and behavioural sciences in secondary prevention.

(Agency staff left the meeting)

43. The SC provided some comments and ideas.

44. The SC was generally supportive of the directions outlined by the Director.

45. The Director was encouraged by SC to take the action he feels necessary to restructure IARC.

**PROPOSAL FOR THE USE OF VOLUNTARY UNDESIGNATED CONTRIBUTIONS TO BE PRESENTED TO THE GOVERNING COUNCIL** (Document SC/45/12)

46. The Director presented three project proposals to spend US\$ 1 million from this fund. The Scientific Council endorsed his proposals after detailed debate on the 'Behavioural Change' component.

**47. The SC recommended the document be approved by the GC.**

**PROPOSED PROGRAMME (2010–2013) AND BUDGET (2010–2011)** (Document SC/45/5)

48. The Director introduced this critical item. General Services represent 24.1% of the proposed budget with 75.5% for the Research Programmes. The headcount increases by four support/secretarial posts whilst the number of professional posts is unchanged. The 2010–2011 budget was prepared by the previous Director but the Scientific Council was reassured that the new Director would have adequate scope to reassign individual budgetary components if necessary. The modest increase in budget due to new Participating States was noted.

**49. The Scientific Council recommended that the Governing Council adopt this budget.**



## **DISCUSSION OF THE PROCESS TO DEVELOP THE IARC MEDIUM TERM STRATEGIC PLAN 2010–2014**

50. The current plan runs to 2009. There is an urgent need to prepare a new Plan for the Governing Council by the end of 2009.

51. A process of consultation with the Scientific Council will be defined and implemented during 2009. This will be reported to the Governing Council (GC) in May 2009 for information. The Scientific Council wished to ensure that the 2010–2014 Strategy is 'owned' by the new Director, with appropriate input from Scientific Council members. It is hoped that the GC will accept this process leading up to their May 2010 meeting.

## **ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON AND VICE-CHAIRPERSON FOR THE 46<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL IN 2010**

52. Dr H. Comber was elected Chairperson.

53. Dr E. Rivedal was elected Vice-Chairperson.

## **DATE OF NEXT SESSION**

54. Wednesday 27, Thursday 28 and Friday 29 January 2010.

## **ADOPTION OF THE SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL REPORT (Document SC/45/8)**

55. **The report of the Forty-fifth Session of the Scientific Council was adopted.**

## **CLOSURE OF SESSION**

56. The customary expressions of thanks were exchanged.

57. Dr Wild thanked the outgoing members of the Scientific Council, Drs Demenais and Siemiatycki.

58. Dr Siemiatycki, on behalf of SC, expressed his thanks to the Agency staff for their efficient support of the work of the Council and the warmth of the welcome the members of the SC had enjoyed.