



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

**Governing Council
Fifty-first Session**

**GC/51/5
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Auditorium*

**DIRECTOR'S RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS
OF THE SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL**

Introduction

1. The Forty-fifth Session of the Scientific Council of the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) was held in Lyon on 28–30 January 2009. In making this response, the Director thanks the Scientific Council for its work and especially for the useful comments and advice on IARC future priorities.

General remarks

2. Over the last few years, the Scientific and Governing Councils have requested the Agency to draw up key performance indicators (KPIs) appropriate to the Agency's role as both a research centre and a provider of information and support. The Director is planning to refine the measures of success to be adopted. The Director noted the comment from the Scientific Council that "Scientific quality and relevance to the mission of IARC were recognized as the key considerations." It is important that the KPI measures are therefore broader than those typically considered in national higher education establishments or research institutes (e.g. impact factors of journals, grant income). Whatever KPIs are adopted, these need to be transparent, and the quality of information as well as the analysis need to be to the highest standard available.

Responses to specific items and recommendations

3. Biostatistics and Epidemiology Cluster (BEC) Review, held at IARC in November 2007: Disappointment was expressed at the responses of the previous Director to the November 2007 Review. The current Director indicated that he would respond to the Review, partly through the new planned scientific structure. In the reorganization, a new Section of Cancer Information has been established, focusing on cancer registration and related information. This provides a focus which was not possible in the former Cluster structure. Further review of the structure within the Section will continue

throughout 2009. A post for a Head of Section has been created and the recruitment process for an individual with international recognition in cancer registration and epidemiological methodology initiated. These initiatives should help strengthen this vital area of the Agency's activities. The Information Technology Services (ITS) have been transferred from BEC to the supervision of the Director of Administration and Finance to reflect the comment in the BEC review that this was more of a support group. The Radiation Group (RAD) has been moved from BEC to a Section on Environment where there are more synergies with other research groups. The Nutritional and Database Resource Team (NTR) has been moved to a new Section on Nutrition and Metabolism and recruitment for a Head of this Section is underway. Finally, the Epidemiology Methods and Support Group, led by Dr Autier has been renamed the Prevention Group and will be part of a new Section of Early Detection and Prevention. The Director noted the need to plan a repeat BEC Review, focusing on the components now in the new Section of Cancer Information, in late 2010.

4. Consolidated document regarding IARC Scientific Review Procedures: this item will be fully discussed during the 51st Session of the Governing Council (please refer to document GC/51/13). The Director welcomes the efforts made by the Scientific and Governing Councils to have a precise and structured approach to peer-review in the Agency.

5. Presentation of the work of the Ethics Review Committee (ERC): this item will be fully discussed during the 51st Session of the Governing Council. The Biennial Report 2007–2008 of the ERC will be presented (please refer to document GC/51/15). At the request of the Scientific Council, the Director has made recommendations to the Governing Council on proposed future changes to the Ethics structure at IARC (please refer to document GC/51/16).

6. A number of points were raised by the Scientific Council with respect to specific Cluster presentations. These points will form part of the reorganization and setting of priorities in the new Sections over the coming year.

7. Evaluation of the Scientific Report of the Molecular Carcinogenesis Cluster (MCC) Review: the Director noted the points raised by the Scientific Council and he will report on the actions taken as a result of the Cluster Review at the next Scientific Council session.

8. Future priorities: the Director thanks the Scientific Council for a fruitful discussion and for its general support of the directions outlined in his presentation. He is also grateful for the encouragement from the Scientific Council to take the action he felt necessary to restructure IARC. The new structure is summarized in the Director's Report (see document GC/51/3).

9. Proposal for the use of Voluntary Undesignated Contributions to be presented to the Governing Council: this item will be fully discussed during the 51st Session of the Governing Council (please refer to document GC/51/12). The proposals are part of

placing priority on research in low and middle-income countries but in the context of specific projects with both short- and long-term outcomes. The Director thanks the Scientific Council for the interesting debate over the proposals and for the recommendation that the suggestions be approved by the Governing Council.

10. Proposed Programme (2010–2013) and Budget (2010–2011): although the 2010–2011 budget was prepared by the previous Director, the Scientific Council was reassured that the new Director would have adequate scope to reassign individual budgetary components if necessary, including the use of vacant positions to support the new initiatives reflected in the scientific reorganization. The modest increase in budget due to new Participating States was noted. The Director thanks the Scientific Council for the recommendation that the proposed budget be approved by the Governing Council.

11. Process to develop the IARC Medium Term Strategic Plan (2010–2014): 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 the Director's intention to initiate a process of consultation with the Scientific Council to develop the IARC Medium Term Strategy for 2010–2014. The proposal will be presented to the Governing Council (see document GC/51/14). It is hoped that the Governing Council will accept this process leading up to their May 2010 meeting.

Concluding remarks

12. The Director thanks the Scientific Council for its rigour and its positive approach to the work of the Agency. In particular the Director thanks the outgoing Chair, Dr Siemiatycki and the Vice-Chair, Dr Comber, of the Scientific Council and the Chair of the Governing Council, Dr Hanssen, for their support and guidance during the transition period.