



## DIRECTOR'S RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 48<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL

1. The key role of the Scientific Council in advising the Director and the Governing Council on the Agency's scientific direction and strategy is acknowledged. The Director values the ongoing support from members of the Scientific Council to the work of the Agency, through their participation in peer-reviews or in *ad hoc* advisory groups, and appreciates the good dialogue established with and between both Councils through the regular teleconferences with their Chairs and Vice-Chairs.

### ***Changes to Scientific Council Meetings***

2. As requested last year by the Scientific Council and approved by the Governing Council, the structure and focus of the Scientific Council meeting were modified to increase the emphasis on scientific discussion. The agenda of the 48<sup>th</sup> session of the Scientific Council had therefore a much greater focus on the discussion of scientific topics and in particular of the current and planned initiatives of the Agency's research Groups/Sections.

3. Another change introduced in 2012, with the aim of promoting scientific discussion, was the scheduling of the peer-review meetings of the two Sections in parallel and immediately before the Scientific Council meeting. Even though this represented a significant effort in terms of the organization of the meetings it was judged to be successful and allowed immediate discussion on the findings of the review panels.

4. Several items on the Scientific Council agenda were presented in written form by the Director and were taken as read by the Council, unless specific additional clarifications were requested. This created some of the additional time assigned to scientific discussion.

5. The Director was pleased with the extremely positive feedback received from the Scientific Council members regarding the above changes. The Scientific Council is a key asset of the Agency and the new format and focus of the annual meetings should allow the Council to take a much more active role in advising on IARC's scientific direction and strategy. These changes will be maintained for the next Session, as planned, and then fully assessed.

### ***The IARC Biennial Report 2010-2011***

6. The Director presented the Biennial Report, followed by discussion on some of the scientific highlights outlined in the report and presentation. The Director notes with satisfaction the congratulations of the Scientific Council to the Agency's direction and staff on the improvements in research performance and staff morale over the last four years.

### ***Update on research programme of Genetic Cancer Susceptibility (GCS)***

7. As requested at the previous Scientific Council session, Dr James McKay presented an update report on the activities and medium-term plans of his Group.

8. The Director congratulates Dr McKay on the extremely positive comments received from the Scientific Council regarding the progress to date of the GCS Group and on its future plans.

### ***Presentations on current scientific activities***

9. All scientific Sections, with the exception of the two Sections undergoing peer-review, made a short presentation on current leading projects and outlined a number of key questions of their future strategy where they sought input from the members of the Council.

10. The Director was pleased with the excellent feedback this initiative elicited from the members of the Scientific Council and congratulates all the Group and Section Heads for the comments they received. A number of constructive suggestions were made in the Report from the Scientific Council and these will guide the Agency in the further development of the projects discussed.

### ***Open session on scientific topics of importance to IARC***

11. The Director noted with satisfaction the Scientific Council's support for the Agency's strategy for the use of Next Generation Sequencing and thanks the Council for their constructive comments and suggestions on this topic and on the area of Rare and Emerging Cancers.

### ***Director's response to the Section of Genetics (GEN) review, held in October 2010***

12. The Section Head, Dr Paul Brennan, outlined the steps that had been taken to address the review panel's comments, particularly in relation to the provision of bioinformatics and pathology support. Notably, a P2 Bioinformatics post was included in the GCS Group as a part of the 2012–2013 budget. A new extra-budgetary P2 post for a pathologist was created in the Genetic Epidemiology Group [to the end of 2012] and further improvement of the capability for histopathologic characterization of specimens was sought through the proposed acquisition of a digital slide scanner; the requirement for digital slide scanning is presented to the Governing Council for its consideration in document GC/54/14B.

13. The Director noted with satisfaction that the Scientific Council recognized the positive actions taken following the peer-review of the Section of Genetics and expressed confidence that the major issues raised had been addressed.

***Scientific report on the Sections of Cancer Information (CIN) and Environment and Radiation (ENV) review and discussion***

14. The Director thanked the review panels for their constructive comments and recommendations and noted their clear support of the research strategies of both Sections. Furthermore, he expressed his satisfaction at the rating of "outstanding" and "perfect fit" awarded to both Sections. Responses to the specific suggestions of the Scientific Council will be addressed over the coming year and the Director will report back to the 49<sup>th</sup> Session of the Scientific Council in 2013.

***Purchase of scientific equipment***

15. The Scientific Council noted the essential need for constant upgrade and acquisition of scientific equipment in order to allow the Agency's research to remain competitive at the highest level, and considered that the proposed investments were important to make the best use of the equipment acquired in previous years. The Director welcomed the endorsement by the Scientific Council of the proposed requests for purchase of equipment (see document GC/54/14B).