

DIRECTOR'S RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 50th SESSION OF THE SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL

1. The Director values the advice of the Scientific Council on the Agency's scientific direction and strategy, both through the discussions at the annual Scientific Council meeting, and through participation of Scientific Council members in the Section peer-review meetings.
2. Scientific Council members also advise on specific projects of the Agency by participating in *ad hoc* advisory groups, including the participation of the Scientific Council Chair, Professor Mads Melbye, as a member of the Scientific Advisory Board of the Chrysotile study in Asbest, Russia, the participation of Professor Martyn Smith in the Advisory Group to Recommend on Quantitative Risk Characterization for the IARC Monographs [18–19 November 2013], and the participation of Dr Luis Felipe Ribeiro Pinto in the Advisory Group to Recommend Priorities for IARC Monographs during 2015–2019 [7–9 April 2014]. Dr Pinto also joined the IARC Fellowships Selection Committee as from 2014.
3. Regular teleconferences with the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Governing and Scientific Councils provide a means for dialogue and exchanges between the two governance structures of IARC, which is reinforced by the presence of the Governing Council Chair and Vice-Chair at the Scientific Council and the Scientific Council Chair (Outgoing and Incoming) at the Governing Council.
4. The Director noted with satisfaction the positive response from the Scientific Council concerning changes made to the annual meetings in order to engender more scientific debate. The Agency personnel have also been enthusiastic about the increased value of these meetings in the planning and conduct of their research projects.

The IARC Biennial Report 2012–2013

5. The Director presented the Biennial Report and its highlights of scientific activities in the key areas of the Agency's activity. The Director notes with satisfaction the congratulations of the Scientific Council on the impressive achievements over the past two years.
6. In the discussion that followed the presentation, the Scientific Council expressed its support for the overall focus of the Agency's research strategy on cancer prevention. The Council expressed its satisfaction with the implementation of metabolome research at IARC and with the development of a new initiative to support the development of biobanks in low- and middle-income

countries (LMICs). The Scientific Council noted that given how common prostate cancer is, the Agency appears to have limited research on the topic. In light of the comments, there will be an in-house Research Leadership Forum on prostate cancer over the coming year to assess what opportunities might be open to the Agency.

7. The Scientific Council received and noted the documents entitled: "Report of the meeting of the 55th session of the Governing Council" (SC/50/3) and "Director's update from the 49th session of the Scientific Council" (SC/50/4), without additional comment.

Biennial Report of the Occupational Health and Safety Committee (OHSC), 2012–2013

8. The report was presented by the Chair of the Committee, Dr Le Calvez-Kelm. The Scientific Council thanked Dr Le Calvez-Kelm and noted the report.

Director's response to the Reviews of the Sections of Nutrition and Metabolism (NME) and Early Detection and Prevention (EDP), held in January 2013

9. The Scientific Council noted with satisfaction the responses and actions taken by the Director and the Heads of the two Sections subsequent to the Reviews.

10. In relation to the NME Section, the Scientific Council noted the opportunities for studies in countries undergoing significant changes to nutritional practices, particularly in the context of large cohorts in Latin America, and in other regions, such as in the WHO EMRO Region. The Scientific Council further noted the importance of the future sustainability of the EPIC study; the Agency continues to seek extra-budgetary infrastructure funds for the study.

11. The Scientific Council underlined the importance of IARC's research on prevention and early detection, and encouraged EDP to continue their leading role in this area. The Scientific Council noted the opportunities and challenges presented by expanding the Section's activities in the areas of implementation science, particularly in LMICs. The EDP Section is being restructured and expanded to allow additional focus on these areas of research.

Scientific Peer-Reviews

12. A full cycle of Section peer-reviews was discussed and approved, extending the series of reviews through the full duration of the next IARC Medium-Term Strategy, from 2016–2020.

13. The Scientific Council approved the Director's suggestion for the review of the Gambia Hepatitis Intervention Study (GHIS) during the 51st Session of the Scientific Council, along the same model as the review of the activities and future directions of the Education and Training Group (ETR) undertaken last year.

Discussion on a special scientific project of importance to IARC: Tumour Seminars – a potential new IARC Publication Series

14. The aim of this initiative would be to bring together a group of experts covering a broad spectrum of expertise for a particular cancer site, and to produce an e-publication summarizing recent insights/breakthroughs and outlining challenging questions and research priorities.

15. The Scientific Council supported the initiative as a pilot, suggesting careful consideration of the scope of the topics discussed and plans for updates, and encouraged the inclusion of primary and secondary prevention in the discussions as well as the prioritization of under-researched cancers or cancers of particular interest for LMICs. The use of webinar technology should also be considered to maximize the audience for key presentations. The Scientific Council requested to be updated on progress with this project at its next session.

16. The Director was pleased with the Scientific Council's endorsement of this initiative and will proceed with plans for the forthcoming meeting on renal cancer, to be organized in collaboration with the National Cancer Institute, USA. The Director will use this meeting to further evaluate the broader development of such a publication series.

Purchase of scientific equipment

17. The Scientific Council strongly recommended that the Governing Council approves the proposed requests for purchase of scientific equipment, emphasizing the importance of investing in new cutting-edge equipment to maintain IARC's leading scientific role, and commending the plans for sharing equipment between several IARC Sections.

18. The Director welcomed the endorsement by the Scientific Council and asks the Governing Council to consider this recommendation in document GC/56/16A.

Update on new building for IARC

19. The Director noted the satisfaction of the Scientific Council with the reported progress on the project for the construction of a new IARC building ("Nouveau Centre"). The Director stated his intention to seek input from the Scientific Council on the design of the new building, when the planning of the project has reached an appropriate stage.

Discussion on "Study of chrysotile asbestos in Russia"

20. The Director welcomed the support of the Scientific Council both for the scientific value of the study and for IARC's participation. The Scientific Council recognized the quality of the study design, the large size of the cohort, the high proportion of females and the detailed exposure information, among other strengths.

21. The Director highlighted the additional measures put in place to safeguard the scientific quality and integrity of the study, notably the presence of an independent Scientific Advisory Board and continuing oversight by the IARC Ethics Committee. The Director and IARC Principal

Investigators will continue to closely monitor the conduct of the study in response to advice from the Scientific Advisory Board, the IARC Ethics Committee and from the Scientific Council.

22. The Council acknowledged the potential risks of conducting a study on this sensitive subject, but was reassured by the measures put in place to mitigate the risks. The Scientific Council strongly advised IARC to withdraw from the study if the design, conduct or analysis of the study is compromised.

Presentation of cross-cutting themes and discussion

23. Proposals for three new multidisciplinary projects involving several IARC Sections were presented, in order to seek input and advice from members of the Scientific Council on technical and scientific aspects, and on the appropriateness of these projects within the overall mission and scientific strategy of IARC.

24. 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 suggestions were made in the Report from the Scientific Council and these will guide the Agency in the further development of the projects discussed.

Scientific Peer-Review of the Sections of IARC Monographs (IMO) and Molecular Pathology (MPA)

25. The Director welcomed the conclusions of the peer-review panels, which rated IMO and MPA highly with regard both to the scientific quality and the fit with the Agency's mission and strategy. The Director greatly appreciates the review panels' constructive comments and recommendations noting their clear support for the future plans of both Sections.

26. A number of suggestions are being addressed in the future conduct of the IARC Monographs programme, including: the way in which the increasing volume of mechanistic data is incorporated into evaluations; the extent to which quantitative risk characterization is included; and optimal communication of Monograph findings to the widest audience.

27. The Director was pleased with the recommendation to re-launch the *IARC Handbooks of Cancer Prevention* as a core project of the IMO Section, and with the endorsement of the overall strategy and activities of the Monographs programme. The *Handbooks of Cancer Prevention* provide vital information to policymakers in setting cancer control measures, as evidenced by the continued reference to the Breast Cancer Screening and Weight Control and Physical Activity volumes published 12 years ago.

28. The Director noted the recommendation of the Scientific Council to explore opportunities for independent additional funding from Participating States to implement future plans and to ensure the sustainability of these flagship IARC programmes. In this context, the Director thanks the National Cancer Institute (INCa), France for the generous support for the first of the re-launched *Handbooks of Cancer Prevention*, on the subject of Breast Cancer Screening.

29. High priority topics for future Handbooks are: weight control and physical activity; cervical cancer screening; aspirin and other NSAIDs; and lung and prostate cancer screening, among others. However, to protect the core IARC Monographs activities, these Handbooks will only go ahead if additional resources are identified. The Director would welcome, therefore, advice from the Governing Council on resource mobilization for this highly sought after series.

30. The Director noted the positive evaluation of the MPA research activities and the clear advice for areas of future activity where IARC can make a specific contribution. Access of MPA scientists to new sequencing technologies and bioinformatics expertise will come through investments in these areas, structured in a way to support activities across the Agency.

31. The Director was pleased with the Scientific Council's support for the '*Blue Books*' programme. The importance of this series as a foundation to cancer registration, epidemiology and clinical oncology is acknowledged, as is the high profile this brings to WHO and to the Agency. The Director noted the recommendation to provide stable and sustainable funding for the *Blue Books* programme and the need for additional resources and senior staff to support their timely production.

32. In terms of securing improved resourcing of the *Blue Books*, the Agency is exploring three approaches. First, the Director is in discussion with WHO Press concerning a revision of the exclusive contract for sale and distribution of IARC publications and an alteration to the proportion of book sales royalties passed to IARC, in order to maximize return while fostering proactive marketing efforts. Second, the Agency has commissioned a consultant to review the IARC publications processes and business model, in light of the general move towards less print productions and more e-publications and online databases for dissemination of information, with a view to improving the average cost-recovery ratio for IARC publications. Third, the Director is requesting the removal or adjustment of the €525 000 cap on the 75% share of the royalties that are automatically assigned from the Governing Council Special Fund to the programme (see document GC/56/15), while also assessing the proportion of revenues assigned to the *Blue Books* in comparison to more general support to the Agency's publications.