

PROCEDURE FOR THE PREPARATION OF THE IARC MEDIUM-TERM STRATEGY 2021–2025, INCLUDING AN EVALUATION OF IARC

1. The Governing Council approves the IARC Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) on a five-year cycle. The MTS defines the overall scope of the Agency's activities and includes an implementation plan for each of the scientific and administrative units of the organization.
2. The IARC Programme and Budget is approved on a two-year cycle and describes the individual projects to be conducted and their attributed finances. All of the individual projects detailed in the Programme and Budget are mapped to the IARC Project Tree, which is an Annex to the MTS. The Project Tree therefore provides a logical framework for integrating the project activities with the overarching principles of IARC's vision, articulated through the MTS.
3. The Governing Council (GC) and the Scientific Council (SC) evaluate IARC's performance against the MTS. An evaluation was carried out at the mid-point of the current MTS (2016–2020). This evaluation permits an overview of how the different parts of the Agency's activities combine and enables a view to be formulated on the balance achieved across those different activities. The timing of this mid-term evaluation permits the analysis to be used in formulating the subsequent MTS.
4. The research activities of the Agency are evaluated through a variety of additional procedures that differ in scope and time interval, providing considerable flexibility and breadth in terms of review. These include annual reporting to the GC by the Director on a standard set of Key Performance Indicators; in-depth peer-review of each research Group and Section on a five-year cycle; annual reviews by the SC of selected topics; peer-review of scientific publications and grant applications when submitted; and additional reviews on specific topics through ad hoc mechanisms such as Advisory Groups and Working Groups.

Timeline for development of the MTS 2021–2025

5. The current MTS runs from 2016 to 2020; it is scheduled that the next MTS will cover the period 2021–2025. This would necessitate the MTS 2021–2025 being submitted to the SC by mid-December 2019, for discussion by the SC in January 2020 (56th Session) and adoption by the GC in May 2020 (62nd Session).
6. The above timeline would mean that the full procedure to develop the next MTS (public consultation with different stakeholders, deliberations of a Joint GC/SC MTS Working Group, evaluation with participation of external experts, as originally proposed by Finland and adopted

by the GC (see below) would need to be accomplished within the first year of the incoming Director's first term of office. This timeline is considered by the Secretariat to be unrealistic.

7. Given that the incoming Director took office on 1 January 2019, the Secretariat proposes adopting the MTS 2021–2025 at the 63rd Session of the GC in May 2021, with the Agency working within the scope of the existing MTS for an extra five months. This would permit the incoming Director time to consult fully on the development of the new strategy. The Programme and Budget for 2022–2023 would be adopted at the same session of the GC in May 2021. The start of the new MTS would also coincide with the Agency occupying the "Nouveau Centre" in 2021.

8. The detailed timeline for the development of the MTS 2021–2025, including an evaluation of IARC, is provided in Annex 1 (below and also as a separate A3 printable file).

Process for development of the MTS 2021–2025

9. The process for developing the MTS is decided by the GC, with implementation by the Secretariat. Development of the previous MTS development comprised several steps, overseen by a Joint GC/SC MTS Working Group, which included representation from WHO HQ, as well as consultation with SC and GC members and a wide range of external stakeholders.

10. In preparing the MTS (2021–2025) the Secretariat proposes the following components to be performed in chronological order:

- (a) Conduct an evaluation as proposed in Document [GC/60/12](#) and adopted by Resolution [GC/60/R11](#) during June to November 2019 through the creation of an Advisory Group, which would include SC and GC members as well as additional external experts.
- (b) Conduct a wide external consultation with stakeholders, including leading cancer experts in relevant fields, relevant professional groups and societies, civil society and concerned individuals. The consultation will be conducted by the Secretariat between February and May 2020. It could involve a mixture of one-to-one interviews, open-ended questionnaires, written submissions, webinars and social media tools. Parts of the consultation process may need to be outsourced to market research professionals.
- (c) Establish a Joint GC/SC MTS Working Group including representation from WHO HQ, through adoption of a resolution at the 62nd Session of the GC in May 2020. The Working Group would meet face-to-face and remotely during 2020.

11. The Secretariat would use the information from the three sources above to draft the MTS 2021–2025 for review and comment by the Joint GC/SC MTS Working Group prior to consideration by the full SC in 2021.

12. The comments of the SC would be taken into account in preparing the final MTS 2021–2025 submission for consideration by the GC at its 63rd Session in 2021.

13. The above process aims to ensure that the major themes of the Agency's strategy reflect the views of the wider community of cancer researchers, IARC collaborators and those who use IARC's research, including policymakers.

14. In order to permit the SC and GC to consider the proposal in 2021, the drafting of the MTS 2021–2025 would be conducted between January and November 2020. Internal consultation with IARC personnel will also be an integral part of this process.

15. During 2019 the incoming Director would analyse the current position and formulate future plans through internal discussions with the IARC Senior Leadership Team and IARC personnel, scientific retreats, and drawing on any external expertise needed in specific areas of activity.

Evaluation by an ad hoc Advisory Group

Background to the request for an evaluation

16. In 2017, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health of Finland sent a document to the IARC Director suggesting that an external evaluation of IARC be undertaken, focusing on the Agency's role in the international cancer research environment (see Document [GC/60/12](#)).

17. The Ministry noted that following such an evaluation, "its recommendations could be taken into consideration in the formulation of the Agency's medium-term strategy for the years 2021–2025."

18. The GC discussed the proposal at its 60th Session and requested (in Resolution [GC/60/R11](#)):

- "that an evaluation on the topics raised in the Finnish proposal be included into the preparation of the IARC Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) for 2021–2025 and be carried out by external experts, Governing Council and Scientific Council members";
- "the Secretariat to prepare a document that describes the scope and terms of reference to be used for this evaluation, to be discussed at the next session of the Scientific Council and to be submitted to the Governing Council at its 61st Session in May 2019"; and
- "the Secretariat to prepare a document with a detailed procedure for preparation of the MTS for 2021–2025, incorporating the evaluation options and a timetable".

19. The cost of this additional evaluation is to be funded from the Governing Council Special Fund as per Resolution [GC/60/R11](#).

Proposed composition and terms of reference of the Advisory Group

20. The proposed evaluation seeks a broad strategic overview by Participating States of the Agency's activities in relation both to WHO and to other organizations with a global cancer research remit.

21. The SC should play a central role in any strategic evaluation of the Agency; the proposed evaluation is directly in line with the SC mandate. The GC should also be involved, to ensure that the evaluation meets the requirements of the proposal adopted by the GC.

22. During the 55th Session of the SC in January 2019, the SC requested the Agency to ensure adequate SC representation, equal representation between SC and GC members, and sufficient expertise covering the breadth of areas of IARC research, while aiming to keep the group to a manageable size.

23. The Secretariat therefore proposes that an Advisory Group is created to conduct the evaluation, with the following composition:

- Two members of the SC representing a range of different disciplines to be selected in consultation with the SC Chair and Vice-Chair. At least one of the two members will also become members of the Joint GC/SC MTS Working Group.

- Two members of the GC representing different geographical regions and drawing on Participating States who have joined the Agency at different periods of its history. At least one of the two members will also become members of the Joint GC/SC MTS Working Group. These members will be selected during the GC 61st Session of the GC in May 2019.
- Five external experts covering areas of expertise complementary to those in the GC and SC. These could include regulatory science, science policy, health economics, patient and public involvement in research, noncommunicable disease control, sustainable human development, international biobanking, or resource mobilization (e.g. in the context of development assistance for health).

24. The IARC Director, together with members of the Secretariat from IARC (two senior scientists) and WHO (one representative, to be nominated by the Director-General) support the Advisory Group in preparing for this evaluation. The Secretariat will also provide administrative support to the Advisory Group, including meeting organization and travel arrangement.

25. All external experts would be invited by the IARC Director after agreement with the GC and SC Chairs and Vice-Chairs and after completion and analysis of a WHO Declaration of Interests form.

26. The Advisory Group will be guided by specific terms of reference as proposed below:

- to evaluate and advise on IARC's remit and activities in the areas requested by the GC;
- to provide a draft report for review by the SC at its 56th Session in January 2020;
- to provide a final report for review by the GC at its 62nd Session in May 2020 incorporating the comments of the SC.

27. The final evaluation report will help to inform the preparation of the Agency's MTS 2021–2025.

Proposed scope and process for the evaluation

28. Taking account of the original proposal, subsequent discussion by the GC at its 60th Session, and the recent consultation with the GC and SC Chairs and Vice Chairs, the Secretariat has identified the following key areas to be considered in the evaluation:

- (a) the alignment of IARC's activities with its mandate, as described in the Statute and the prioritization of different areas;
- (b) the collaboration between IARC and other parts of WHO to ensure clear definition of roles and effective cooperation and coordination;
- (c) the contribution of multidisciplinary research to IARC's strategy, including the balance of laboratory equipment in-house and accessed through external collaboration;
- (d) the role and infrastructure for the biobank in IARC's research strategy; and
- (e) mechanisms to ensure the financial sustainability of IARC's research, including the laboratory research and the biobank.

29. A comprehensive evaluation on the value and impact of IARC's work was already carried out as part of the mid-term evaluation of the current MTS (2016–2020) and reported in Document [GC/61/7](#). Furthermore, the opportunity to add more value and impact could be identified during the consultation with stakeholders (see paragraph 10(b) above). For these reasons, the Secretariat does not include this area in the proposed scope of this evaluation.

30. The evaluation could be conducted through a mixture of review of IARC reports and documents, an online survey open to all IARC Participating States through GC and SC members, and questionnaires to the concerned units at WHO and to IARC staff, depending on the key areas above.

31. The Advisory Group would meet once in person, preceded by two remote meetings, the first to plan its work and the second to report on progress. During the first work planning meeting, the Advisory Group would select a Chairperson and agree on the division of labour, decision-making procedure, and other practical protocols to guide the process. Given the above timing for the MTS submission, the work of the Advisory Group should be conducted during June to November 2019.

Joint GC/SC MTS Working Group

32. The Secretariat proposes to create a Joint GC/SC MTS Working Group in May 2020 to oversee the development of the MTS 2021–2025, comprising representatives from the GC, the SC, and WHO similar to the previous exercise, as follows:

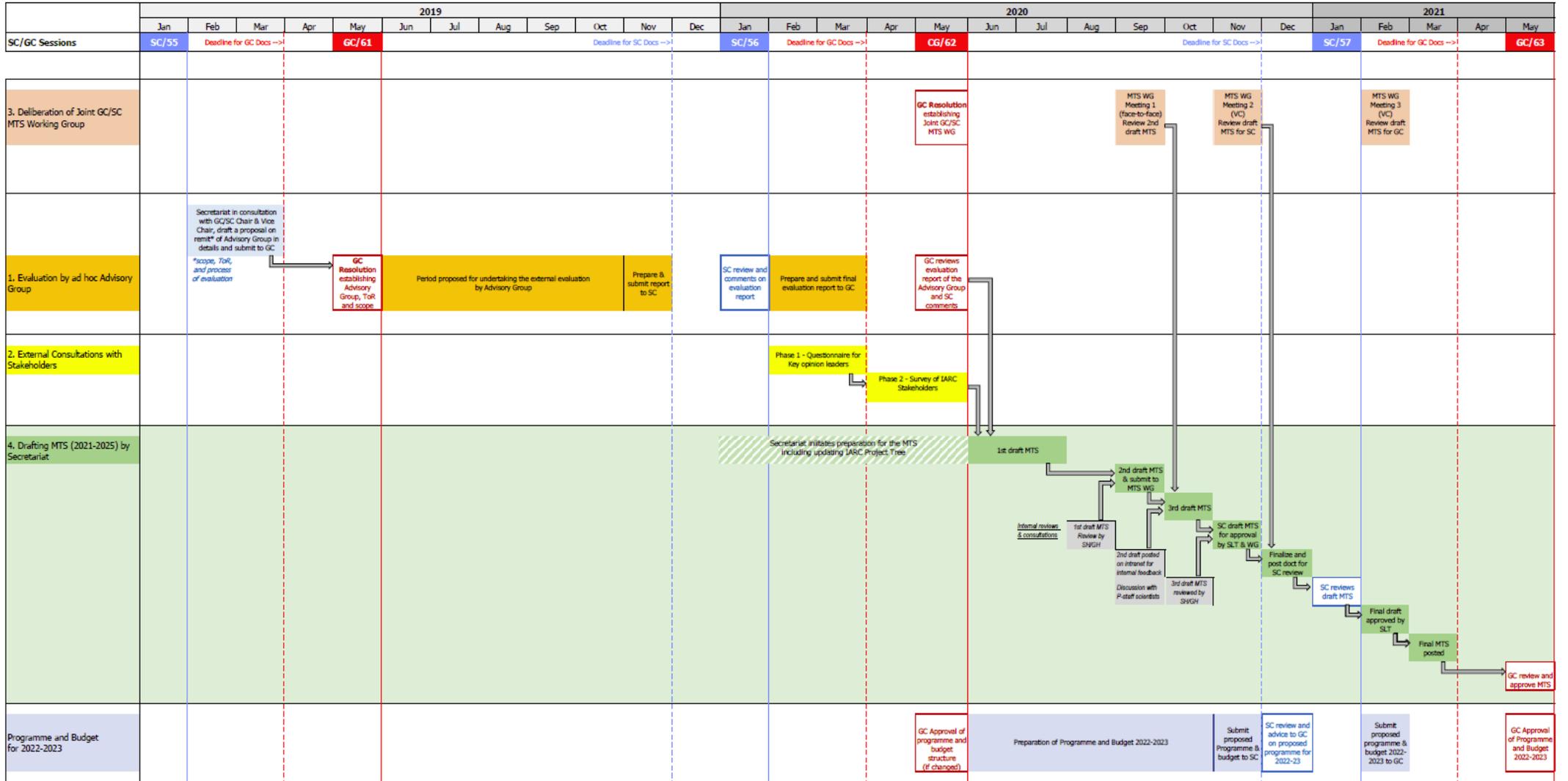
- Six GC members representing different geographical regions and drawing on Participating States who have joined the Agency at different periods of its history. At least one of the six members should also be members of the Advisory Group conducting the evaluation. These members will be selected during the 62nd Session of the GC in May 2020.
- Four SC members representing a range of different disciplines. At least one of the four members should be also members of the Advisory Group conducting the evaluation. These members will be selected in discussion with the SC Chair and Vice-Chair.
- One representative from WHO, to be nominated by the WHO Director-General.

Request to the GC

33. The GC is requested to endorse the following points:

- The proposed process and timeline for developing the MTS 2021–2025;
- The proposed composition and terms of reference of the Advisory Group, and to nominate two GC members to participate in the Advisory Group;
- The proposed scope and process for the evaluation of IARC;
- The proposed composition of the Joint GC/SC MTS Working Group; and
- The request to extend the current MTS 2016–2020 by five months.

ANNEX 1 TO THE DOCUMENT GC/61/8
 PROPOSED TIMELINE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF IARC MEDIUM-TERM STRATEGY (2021–2025)



Abbreviations:

GC Governing Council
 SC Scientific Council

GH Group Head
 SH Section Head

MTS WG Joint GC/SC Medium-Term Strategy Working Group
 VC Videoconference