



DIRECTOR'S UPDATE FROM THE FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL

1. The following is a brief report updating on the follow-up to the 48th Session of the Scientific Council and relating to items not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

Changes to Scientific Council Meetings

2. Changes in the structure and focus of the Scientific Council meetings were introduced as from the 48th Scientific Council to increase scientific discussion; in particular the current and planned initiatives of the Agency's research Groups/Sections.

3. Another change introduced in 2012, with the same aim as above, was the scheduling of the peer-review meetings of the two Sections in parallel and immediately before the Scientific Council meeting. This was judged successful as it allowed immediate discussion on the findings of the Review Panels.

4. These changes have been maintained for the current Session and will be fully assessed at the 50th Scientific Council in 2014.

Presentations on current scientific activities

5. All scientific Sections, except the Section of Cancer Information (CIN) and the Section of Environment and Radiation (ENV) which were the subject of a separate Review, presented their current scientific initiatives (i.e. MCA, MPA, INF, NME, GEN, EDP and IMO).

6. These presentations had proved a valuable opportunity to stay in touch with the work of the Sections concerned, encouraged stimulating discussions and provided feedback for the staff. This feedback has informed the development of the research programmes at the Agency.

7. As a general comment, the Scientific Council encouraged the Section Heads and the Director to further explore the possibilities for inter-Section collaborations.

8. A number of mechanisms are in place to support in-house exchange of ideas and collaborative research: the Laboratory Steering Committee organizes a series of "Technology Watch Seminars" where new research tools available at the Agency are explained and the opportunities for researchers from all Sections are highlighted; the Research Forums have been continued with the latest one dedicated to Head and Neck Cancer attracting over 60 participants

from Groups/Sections across the Agency; the regular series of Science Cafés and IARC Seminars encourage more presentations from scientists in-house to illustrate on-going work and opportunities for collaboration.

Scientific topics of importance to IARC

9. Two topics were selected for discussion and advice by the Scientific Council during its 48th Session, namely "Next Generation Sequencing (NGS)" and "Rare and emerging cancers". As with the discussions of the topics presented by the Sections, the comments from the Scientific Council are taken into account as the Agency's research programmes develop.

10. With respect to next generation sequencing, the Scientific Council highlighted the challenges of rapidly changing technology. Indeed, the Agency has recently upgraded its next generation sequencer (from a LifeTechnologies 5500XL to 5500XLwildfire), which has expanded sequencing capacity and decreased costs. Capacity has also been added to the memory of the high performance cluster to cope with the volume of data generated.

11. Further to a comment on appropriate staffing in the area of bioinformatics, a P staff bioinformatician is being recruited on the regular budget and links have been strengthened with the bioinformatics facility in Lyon, which has been mutually beneficial.

12. In relation to "Rare and Emerging Cancers", the role of IARC in such studies will continue to be one of bringing groups together, achieving reasonable numbers of cases, and enabling interaction between different disciplines.