

Monday 11 and Tuesday 12 May 2020

To be held by webconference (due to COVID-19 pandemic and travel restrictions)

DIRECTOR'S RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 56TH SESSION OF THE SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL

1. The Scientific Council (SC) of the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) has the essential roles of advising the Director and the Governing Council on the Agency's scientific strategy and its implementation, and evaluating the scientific quality of the research carried out at IARC through the participation of its members in the Peer-Review Panels.
2. Dialogues with and between the two Councils is promoted through regular teleconferences between the Director and The Governing Council and Scientific Council Chairs and Vice-Chairs, and by the Chair's attendance of the other Council's sessions.
3. The 56th Session of the IARC Scientific Council was held in Lyon from 5 to 7 February 2020. It was attended by the Vice-Chairperson of the Governing Council, Dr Stephen Robbins. The following sections of this document present a summary of the actions taken in response to the discussions and recommendations made during the 56th Session of the Scientific Council that are not addressed elsewhere on the agenda of the current session of the Governing Council.

Presentation of the Director's Biennial Report

4. The Director showcased highlights from the IARC Biennial Report 2018–2019. Furthermore, the Director reported on the discussions of the 61st Session of the Governing Council and on updates from the 55th Session of the Scientific Council.
5. The Director expressed her commitment and willingness to continue enhancing communication and increasing the impact and visibility of IARC, including for low- and middle income countries (LMICs), by increasing the use of social media. This intention was strongly encouraged by the Scientific Council.
6. The Scientific Council recommended to integrate biomarkers in future epidemiological studies. The Director mentioned that IARC is already active in this direction by conducting large epidemiological studies (e.g. the EPIC Study) integrating data from questionnaires (diet, lifestyle, clinical data), and laboratory markers (genetics, epigenetics, nutritional status, metabolism). The Director expressed her willingness to continue to combine biomarkers and questionnaires when possible and relevant in future epidemiological studies.

7. The Director of Administration and Finances updated on the continuous work of IARC to improve data protection and security measures in the context of the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). This update was appreciated by the Scientific Council.

Request for support from the Governing Council special funds

8. Mr Christopher Jack, Information Security Officer, presented the request for support from the Governing Council Special Fund (GCSF) for the scientific IT platform, to support the necessary infrastructure for the safe storage of all IARC's scientific data.

9. The Scientific Council recommended that the Governing Council approves the allocation of €350 000 from the GCSF for the scientific IT platform.

10. The Director welcomed the endorsement by the Scientific Council and asks the Governing Council to consider this recommendation in [Document GC/62/14](#).

Biennial report on IARC education and training activities

11. Ms Anouk Berger, Head, Education and Training Group (ETR), presented the Report covering the period 2018–2019.

12. The Scientific Council recommended, whenever appropriate, to offer online learning to reach a wider audience, contain costs, and decrease the carbon footprint of ETR activities. The Director agreed and consider expanding the development of webinars while exploring new opportunities for resource mobilization.

13. The Scientific Council congratulated the Agency and ETR for its activities and new developments.

Presentation of the outline of the new resource mobilization strategy to supplement funds available for IARC operations and activities

14. Mr Clément Chauvet, Strategic Engagement and Resource Mobilization Officer, presented the new resource mobilization strategy for alternative funding.

15. The Scientific Council enquired about restrictions with regards to working with corporate entities. The Director mentioned that, in line with the relevant WHO policy and regulations (Framework of engagement with non-State actors (FENSA)), exclusion criteria already exist (such as links to the tobacco industry). The private sector is not excluded from providing support to IARC and each industry sector will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

16. The Scientific Council suggested creating a Resource Mobilization Advisory Group to provide connections with potential donors and alternative sources of funding for IARC. The Director agreed and the Agency will explore the terms of reference and composition of this Advisory Group.

17. The Scientific Council strongly supported different mechanisms proposed for increasing funding from donors for IARC, as detailed in [Document GC/62/19](#).

Director's response to the review of the Section of Evidence Synthesis and Classification (ESC), held at IARC in January 2019

18. In line with the recommendations regarding the production of standard reports, the Director gave an oral presentation on the responses to the Peer-Review of ESC.
19. The Director noted with satisfaction the positive overall evaluation of the Section.
20. The strategic plans of each of the three groups have been updated. Internal and external collaborations have improved, particularly with WHO. The update of the Handbooks *Preamble* this past year was a major milestone. The main issue remains the funding of the ESC Section. The Section has been able to secure funding for the next Handbook on Cervical Cancer Screening. The Scientific Council encouraged IHB to continue seeking external funds to permit more rapid publication of the Handbooks. The Director agreed and IHB will continue exploring opportunities for funding.

Presentation of posters by IARC Scientists

21. The Scientific Council appreciated the opportunity to discuss the research projects with the IARC scientists, particularly the junior scientists, at the poster session.
22. Specific members of the Scientific Council were assigned to report on posters directly to each poster presenter within the poster session.

Comments and recommendations on the evaluation report from the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on the evaluation of IARC activities vis-à-vis its mandate

23. Dr Adèle Green, member of the ad hoc Advisory Group, presented the Evaluation Report.
24. The Scientific Council Chair noted that the evaluation was very rigorous. The Scientific Council suggested that recommendations #5 and #6 be expanded regarding their coverage of needs and options, and proposed specific rewording (see [Document GC/62/4](#)). The Director agreed.
25. The Scientific Council appreciated the Evaluation report and generally agreed with the recommendations therein.
26. Beatrix Lahoupe, IARC focal point to the ad hoc Advisory Group, provided an update on the development of the activities that are being undertaken for IARC's next Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2021–2025, as reported in the [Document GC/62/9](#).
27. The Scientific Council nominated four Scientific Council members as representatives to the MTS Working Group which will oversee the MTS development. The SC representatives to the MTS Working Group will be supported in their function by four respective subcommittees of the Scientific Council, which will provide scientific advisory support as appropriate.
28. The Director thanked the IARC personnel involved in the preparation of IARC's new MTS and Beatrix Lahoupe who is coordinating these efforts.

Cross-cutting scientific themes: presentation, conclusions and recommendations

29. Two cross-cutting areas of future growth were presented in a plenary session: i) Social inequalities and cancer, presented by IARC Scientists across participating Sections; and ii) Health economics in cancer research, presented by IARC scientists from participating Sections and one participant from WHO/HQ.
30. The Scientific Council gave suggestions on how these research activities could be enhanced in IARC's existing activities and concerned IARC staff took note.
31. The Scientific Council suggested that IARC could provide data and expertise and capacity building for LMICs in this area, subject to available resources. The Director agreed and mentioned that IARC will continue to develop programmes on social inequalities in LMICs through the development of new research priorities.
32. The Scientific Council strongly endorsed the new cross-cutting themes and congratulated the scientists for their work and their presentations.
33. The Director appreciated the rich discussions and the good guidance received. The suggested ways forward on the two proposed cross-cutting themes were noted and will be taken into account in the development of the MTS 2021–2025.

Update on the "Nouveau Centre"

34. An update on the "Nouveau Centre" was presented. The demolition/remediation phase is completed. The projected date for the physical move is planned towards 2022.
35. The "Nouveau Centre" Investment Case was presented and discussed. Due to the difficulty to find funding sources for the new building, at the request of the Governing Council Working Group on Infrastructure, a renewed resource mobilization strategy focused on new potential donors and alternative funding has been developed, as reported in [Document GC/62/8](#).
36. The Scientific Council thanked the Resource Mobilization Officer for his presentation and supported the suggestions that had been made.
37. The Director noted the continued strong support of the Scientific Council for a renewed resource mobilization strategy.

Scientific report of the Section of Infections (INF) review and discussion

38. The Director thanked the Peer-Review Panel and the Scientific Council for the excellent quality of their review and recommendations and noted with satisfaction the high rating received by the Section, reflecting the outstanding quality of the past work and future plans, as well as the perfect fit with the Agency's mission and strategy.
39. Responses to the comments and recommendations from the Peer-Review Panel have been approved and will be addressed over the coming year. The Director will report back on these actions at the next session of the Scientific Council.

Scientific report of the Section of Mechanisms of Carcinogenesis (MCA) review and discussion

40. The Director thanked the Peer-Review Panel and the Scientific Council for the excellent quality of their review and recommendations and noted with satisfaction the high rating received by the Section, reflecting the outstanding/forefront quality of the past work and future plans, as well as the perfect fit with the Agency's mission and strategy.

41. Responses to the comments and recommendations from the Peer-Review Panel have been approved and will be addressed over the coming year. The Director will report back on these actions at the next session of the Scientific Council.