



Governing Council
Sixty-seventh Session

GC/67/7
18 April 2025

Lyon, 6–8 May 2025
Hybrid format

REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON SUSTAINABLE FINANCING OF IARC

1. As the *ex-officio* Secretary of the Working Group, the IARC Director presents the report of the Working Group on Sustainable Finance for IARC, in the following paragraphs.
2. This report outlines the progress made by the Working Group in advancing the mandate set forth by the Governing Council in May 2024, noting that this is still work in progress that requires continuity into the future.
3. In accordance with [Resolution GC/66/R10](#), the Working Group on Sustainable Financing for IARC met 4 times by teleconference, on 24 September 2024, 9 December 2024, 21 February 2025 and 15 April 2025.
4. The Working Group presents its finalized Terms of Reference (in Appendix) which have been drafted and agreed upon through a consultative process during the aforementioned meetings.
5. As part of the consultation on the Terms of Reference, the Working Group discussed its membership. It was agreed that the core membership of the Working Group be maintained as approved by the Governing Council in May 2024, offering other Participating State representatives the possibility to contribute to the discussions and support the work of the Working Group in its future meetings.
6. During all its meetings, the Working Group engaged in extensive discussions regarding the definition of sustainable financing for IARC. The Group also deliberated on the necessity of distinct strategies as well as clear objectives and deliverables, to ensure the Agency's long-term financial sustainability. In defining sustainable financing, the IARC Secretariat is adapting WHO's sustainable financing framework to meet its specific requirements. WHO's financing model emphasizes predictability, flexibility, and resilience, principles that are equally vital for IARC, particularly given the long-term nature of cancer research. In addition to these principles, IARC acknowledges that financial sustainability must extend beyond the WHO model to incorporate the principles of independence, transparency and endurance in research. These elements are essential for maintaining the Agency's scientific integrity and aligning funding with long-term research-to-policy impact.

7. The Working Group supported IARC's adaptation of the WHO financing model, while recommending that emphasis be placed on the growing economic burden of cancer globally, driven by aging populations and rising healthcare costs. It is important to underscore how IARC's research contributes to cost-effective public health solutions, thereby assisting governments in mitigating the financial strain on healthcare systems. The Working Group concurred that reinforcing the connection between IARC's research and healthcare cost reduction will strengthen the case for investment in IARC's research. The Working Group agreed that a clear definition of sustainable financing and the strategic direction of the framework are crucial for guiding its future efforts.

8. Based on the Working Group's guidance and as a result of the discussions, the Secretariat presented the following definition of sustainable financing which was approved by the Working Group:

"Sustainable financing at IARC refers to a funding model that ensures long-term growth, stability, and adaptability necessary to advance its core mission: conducting high-impact cancer research to inform global public health policies.

It provides IARC with the financial foundation to sustain scientific excellence, foster innovation, and uphold its role as a trusted global authority. By securing predictable and flexible resources, IARC can effectively achieve its objectives across its four scientific Pillars - Data, Discovery, Prevention, and Knowledge - while maintaining the resilience to navigate emerging challenges, the independence to uphold scientific integrity, and the endurance to drive long-term impact for Participating States, policymakers, and global health partners in cancer prevention, detection, and control."

9. The Working Group regularly reviewed the updates provided by the Secretariat regarding the IARC investment case which is one of the components of the Agency's sustainable financing agenda. The investment case is an initiative aimed at illustrating the impact of IARC's research on public health policies and support towards sustainable financing. It is intended to serve as a strategic tool for engaging with global health funders and reinforcing IARC's long-term financial sustainability.

10. To enhance clarity and impact, IARC has opted to focus the investment case on a specific thematic area, rather than attempting to assess the agency's broad and diverse activities in a single evaluation. The selected focus area is cervical cancer elimination, a field in which IARC has made significant contribution over the past several decades, starting with the identification of HPV as the primary cause of cervical cancer to classification efforts, vaccination research, and screening programs. IARC is partnering with Victoria Institute of Strategic Economic Studies (VISES), Australia, to develop the investment case. Major areas of work and initial findings will be presented at the Governing Council session in May 2025, with the final report scheduled for publication in May 2026, coinciding with IARC's 60th-anniversary scientific conference.

11. In one of its meetings, the Working Group reviewed the status of the IARC Working Capital Fund (WCF). The primary purpose of the WCF is to address short-term cash deficits arising from delays in receipt of contributions from Participating States. However, the

Governing Council (GC) may authorize alternative uses if deemed necessary. The Working Group emphasized that the WCF should be utilized solely for funding short-term deficits and not for addressing long-term arrears. Following the Working Group's advice, the Secretariat agreed to undertake a benchmarking exercise within the UN system and reviewing the reports of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) on this topic, to explore potential solutions suited to IARC's specific circumstances. Discussions on this matter will continue in future Working Group meetings, with the goal of identifying a solution and providing recommendations to the Governing Council in upcoming sessions.

12. The Director expresses gratitude to the members of the Working Group for their dedicated efforts over the past year, which have established the foundation for a more sustainable and effective financing structure for IARC in the future. With continued support from Participating States, stakeholders, and the wider cancer research community, the Agency is committed to advancing its crucial mission in cancer prevention and research.

13. The Director requests the Governing Council to i) approve the proposed Terms of Reference of the Working Group on Sustainable Financing for IARC, and ii) reaffirm the mandate of the Working Group.

APPENDIX

Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Working Group on Sustainable Financing for the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC)

These ToR outline the objectives, scope, composition, responsibilities, and governance framework of the Working Group (WG) on Sustainable Financing, providing a roadmap for its activities in supporting IARC's financial sustainability objectives.

Composition:

- Representatives from IARC's Governing Council; and
- A representative from the World Health Organization

The IARC Director will be *ex-officio* Secretary of the WG and may delegate these functions to other members of the Secretariat as deemed appropriate.

The WG may also invite representatives from other Participating States as guests or observers for the benefit of the discussions.

The WG may invite persons from the following categories to attend WG meetings and participate, as requested and appropriate, to advise in their respective areas of expertise on matters within the responsibility of the WG:

- External stakeholders with expertise in finance, fundraising, public health, and international development.
- External experts and advisors with specialized knowledge in sustainable financing and global health financing.

Objectives:

- Define the concept of "sustainable financing" for IARC and establish measurable criteria for assessing financial sustainability;
- Consider a Secretariat-developed investment case for IARC, highlighting the Agency's impact, unique value proposition, and funding requirements to support its core activities and strategic priorities; and
- Provide regular updates to the Governing Council Sessions that include recommendations on Participating State and Secretariat actions that could augment existing assessed contributions.

Responsibilities:

- Assess the current financial landscape of IARC, including funding sources, budgetary constraints, and financial challenges faced by the Agency;
- Review and analyze past funding models and mechanisms employed by IARC and similar international organizations to identify best practices and lessons learned;
- Conduct regular meetings and teleconferences to discuss progress, share insights, and make recommendations on sustainable financing strategies.
- Explore innovative financing methods, mechanisms and partnership opportunities to diversify IARC's funding sources and enhance financial resilience;
- Identify potential risks and barriers to sustainable financing and propose mitigation strategies to address them effectively.
- Collaborate with the Secretariat to facilitate information sharing, data collection, and analysis necessary for decision-making.
- Liaise with WHO and other partner organizations to leverage their experiences and expertise in sustainable financing.
- Explore opportunities for efficiency and cost savings through further collaboration with WHO.
- Review:
 - The development of the investment case for IARC and other relevant documents.
 - Reports, presentations, and other communication materials prepared by the Secretariat to disseminate findings and recommendations to the Governing Council, Participating States official representatives, and other stakeholders.
 - Relevant organization rules, regulations and policies around the financing of IARC including the use of IARC Working Capital Fund (WCF).

Duration and Reporting:

The WG shall operate for an initial period of one year, providing clear recommendations to the Governing Council, and will be subject to renewal at its 67th Session in May 2025.