



REQUESTS FOR SUPPORT FROM THE GOVERNING COUNCIL SPECIAL FUND:

A. SCIENTIFIC EQUIPMENT

B. CORE IT INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

A. Purchase of scientific equipment

1. The proposed Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) for 2021–2025 ([Document GC/63/6A](#)) requires high quality laboratories and state-of-the-art scientific equipment. It also requires support to research platforms, of which histopathology is increasingly important to most cancer research studies across the Agency.
2. Three pieces of equipment have been identified as necessary to purchase: a) to undertake moderate throughput digital imaging of histology slides (digital scanner); b) to perform automated staining of slides (Haematoxylin and Eosin) while protecting staff from hazardous chemicals, including carcinogens (histostainer); and c) to replace outdated facilities for frozen sections of tissue samples (cryostat). Covering the cost of new major equipment on the regular budget has not been feasible over the last 15 years and obtaining designated funds through competitive grant applications has proven difficult for such platform technologies given the limited number of such opportunities open to the Agency as an international organization.
3. The histopathology laboratory within the WHO/IARC Classification of Tumours (WCT) Group provides essential support to a number of high-profile projects within the Agency, including Mutographs [Genetic Epidemiology Group (GEP)], the Study of Tattoo Ink related Toxins relevant to Cancer in Humans – STITCH [Environment and Radiation Group (ENV)], the Epidemiological iNvestigatIon of Gastric MAlignancy – ENIGMA [Prevention and Implementation Group (PRI)] and the Genomic analysis of inherited Lung cancer – GeniLuc [GCS], to name but four. The tissue samples from these projects are all dealt with within the histopathology laboratory, which provides critical support and services in obtaining material for examination of the tumour and molecular analysis.
4. The annual maintenance costs of the requested equipment will be covered through the histopathology cost recovery scheme.

B. Core IT infrastructure and services

5. Information Technology (IT) is a fundamental resource enabling IARC to deliver its strategic goals. This proposal aims to outline the technological investments needed to foster a modern IT organizational culture and practices, in line with the new MTS and the Information Technology Roadmap 2021–2025.
6. Core IT infrastructure and services are, *inter alia*, institutional web sites, research web sites, web applications, file services, administrative tools such as our ERP, workflows and business intelligence platforms, email services, printing and development environments.
7. This request will allow ITS, following the Information Technology Roadmap 2021–2025, to:
 - a) Adopt a cloud-first strategy, meaning that we will consider cloud-based technological solutions before all others. Cloud-based solutions will bring higher levels of service availability than our current on-premises solutions and increase flexibility for capacity growth. They will also provide enhanced security functionality and enable IT staff to concentrate more time on added-value activities.
 - b) Replace our current on-premises hardware with modern, highly performant servers and storage systems to run the services and tools that will not be migrated to the public cloud. This will mitigate the risk of running critical services on older second-hand equipment, as well as increasing their performance and reliability.
 - c) Identify the most effective way to provide disaster recovery (DR) services to ensure our ability to recover from major technical issues. Currently IARC maintains a second server room in another building on the campus, which is primarily dedicated to restoring IT services in the case of a disaster in our principal computer room. This generates costs due to the need to maintain redundant IT hardware as well as the electrical, physical and air conditioning costs associated with a server room. One option is to move the DR site to public cloud providing IARC with a more cost-effective, modern model as well as moving the physical location further away from our premises, again mitigating risk. If this is not possible, we will modernize the equipment currently used to provide on premises DR service.
8. The funding requested for this proposal is €350 000 for a period of four years. To ensure that we can cover the full scope of this proposal some additional funds will be made available from internal IT budgets previously associated with maintenance contracts of core infrastructure. Given that the execution of this project will take place 6 to 12 months after its potential approval and that the exact split between cloud and on-premise solutions will be specified in finer detail closer to the execution of the project, coupled with the significant saving which can be negotiated from public cloud providers when entering into long-term agreements, we propose to report back in full transparency to the Governing Council the final breakdown of costs once the project has been completed.

C. Review by the Scientific Council

9. The Scientific Council queried whether the slide scanning resources requested would be sufficient. Dr Ian Cree indicated that this would be sufficient for several years based on current requirements.

10. The Scientific Council noted that the annual maintenance costs of the requested equipment will be covered through the histopathology cost recovery scheme.

11. The Scientific Council noted that IT is a fundamental resource enabling IARC to deliver its strategic goals. This proposal aims to outline the technological investments needed to foster a modern IT organizational culture and practices, in line with the new MTS and the Information Technology Roadmap 2021–2025.

12. The Scientific Council recommended that the Governing Council approve the allocation of €420 000 from the Governing Council Special Fund (GCSF) in support of the Director’s requests.

D. Requested budget

13. The Governing Council is requested to approve, at its 63rd Session in May 2021, the allocation of €70 000 from the GCSF for the purchase of the scientific equipment described under Section A, as well as the allocation of €350 000 for core IT infrastructure and services (for a period of four years), described under Section B.

	Approximate cost (€)
Equipment for the Histopathology laboratory	
Digital imaging upgrade	20 000
Histostainer	30 000
Cryostat	20 000
Sub-total for equipment	70 000
Core IT infrastructure and services	
Cloud Services	
Storage Systems	
Servers	
Software Licenses (Virtualization, Disaster Recovery, Backup, Monitorization)	
Sub-total for Core IT infrastructure and services	350 000
Total requested budget	420 000