



**Governing Council
Sixty-fourth Session**

GC/64/5
02 March 2022

Lyon, 12–13 May 2022
By web conference

DIRECTOR'S RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 58TH SESSION OF THE SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL

1. The Scientific Council 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 Review Panels.
2. Dialogues with and between the two Councils is promoted through regular teleconferences between the Director and the Governing and Scientific Council Chairs and Vice-Chairs, and by the Chair's attendance of the other Council's sessions.
3. The 58th Session of the IARC Scientific Council, the second to be held remotely, was held from 9 to 11 February 2022. It was opened by Dr Janne Pitkaniemi (Scientific Council Chairperson) and was attended by the Chair (Dr Stephen Robbins, Canada) and Vice-Chair of the Governing Council (Professor Pål Richard Romundstad, Norway). The following sections of this document present a summary of the actions taken in response to the discussions and recommendations made during the 58th Session of the Scientific Council that are not addressed, either in the Report of the Scientific Council ([Document GC/64/4](#)), or elsewhere on the agenda of the current Governing Council session.

DISCUSSION WITH THE DIRECTOR, THE DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE AND THE SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL ONLY

4. The Scientific Council enquired about gender equality at IARC.
5. The Director expressed her willingness to continue *ensuring equity, diversity, and inclusion in all IARC's activities*. The Director described new measures to address gender equality at IARC including how internal committee and external meeting participations are considered, as well as the Equity and Diversity Advisory Group (EDAG) initiative. Mandatory training on gender equity and diversity is already in place at IARC. Current arrangements about paternity leave measures are being guided by practices within the WHO, which are quite progressive in this respect.
6. The Director thanks the Scientific Council for its strong support of the implementation of the EDAG initiative and confirmed that the EDAG initiative will be placed on the IARC external website to increase its visibility.

UPDATE ON DATA SCIENCE ACTIVITIES

7. The Secretariat was requested to update the Scientific Council and the Governing Council on its data science activities on a regular basis.
8. A [video presentation of this update](#) was made available on the INDICO Platform and discussed during the Scientific Council.
9. The Scientific Council noted the update and supported the plan for the next phase of development of the Scientific IT Platform.
10. The Director noted with satisfaction the support of the Scientific Council and confirmed that such updates will be presented to the Scientific Council on a biennial basis.

COVID-19 AND CANCER INITIATIVE: A BUILDING BACK BETTER PROPOSAL (IARC-C19)

11. Dr Freddie Bray, CSU Branch Head, and Dr Isabelle Soerjomataram, CSU Deputy Branch Head, presented the IARC-C19 initiative which aims to inform IARC's Participating States on mitigation and recovery strategies.
12. To implement IARC-C19, a budget of €6 million is needed over a four-year period, two-thirds of this funding (€4 million) will be sought from IARC Participating States, the remaining funding (€2 million) will be based on in-kind support, via the secondment of one or more staff.
13. The Scientific Council understood the critical importance of the IARC-C19 project and fully endorsed its strategy and its mode of operation, with a strong emphasis on knowledge transfer and capacity building for Participating States.
14. The Scientific Council recommended that the Governing Council looks carefully at the project IARC-C19 to identify resources needed for its implementation.
15. The Director welcomed and thanks the Scientific Council for its endorsement and asks the Governing Council to consider this recommendation.

SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS FOLLOWING POSTER (FLASH TALK) REVIEW

16. Scientists in the Branches not undergoing review and in the Laboratory Support, Biobanking and Services were invited to showcase and present their work through flash talks to the Scientific Council members during dedicated teleconferences, held on 18 and 19 January 2022.
17. The Scientific Council acknowledged the excellent work performed, the quality of presentations, as well as the design of the virtual session and the interaction with young scientists.
18. The Scientific Council recommended having some talks which more specifically illustrate cross-branch structure and inter-disciplinary interactions.
19. The Scientific Council recommended a short summary of the Branch or Deputy Heads of the respective activities of their respective Branch prior to the other flash talks.
20. The Director thanked the Scientific Council for their contributions and took note of these recommendations that will be taken into account in the next poster session for SC/59.

BIENNIAL REPORT ON IARC EDUCATION AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES

21. The Scientific Council recommended constructing a permanent alumni programme to help build and sustain networks.
22. In response, the Director explained that IARC is exploring this aspect and determining what is required to launch and maintain such a programme in a long-term capacity.
23. The Scientific Council supported the proposal to convert the 12-month Senior Visiting Scientist Award into shorter Mid-Career Visiting Scientist Awards, with the request of reallocation of funding from the Special Account for Undesignated Contributions to be submitted to the current Session of the Governing Council.
24. The Scientific Council recommended some flexibility in the duration of the Mid-Career Visiting Scientist Awards, with an average of six months but varying from three months to 9–12 months depending on the project, while increasing participation from low- and middle-income countries.
25. The Director thanks the Scientific Council for its consideration of the proposed conversion of the 12-month Senior Visiting Scientist Award into shorter Mid-Career Visiting Scientist Awards as well as for its recommendation regarding flexibility in their duration and looks forward to the Governing Council's discussion of DRAFT Resolution GC/64/R4 on this subject.

SCIENTIFIC REPORT OF THE CANCER SURVEILLANCE (CSU) BRANCH REVIEW

26. The Director thanked the 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 Branch, reflecting the outstanding quality of the past work and future plans of the CSU Branch, as well as the perfect fit with the Agency's mission and strategy.
27. The Director congratulated Dr Freddie Bray and Dr Isabelle Soerjomataram, as well as all members of the Branch, for this outstanding review.
28. Responses to the comments and recommendations from the 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 ENVIRONMENT AND LIFESTYLE EPIDEMIOLOGY (ENV) BRANCH REVIEW

29. The Director thanked the 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 Branch, reflecting the outstanding quality of the past work and future plans of the ENV Branch, as well as the perfect fit with the Agency's mission and strategy.
30. The Director congratulated Dr Joachim Schüz and Dr Valerie McCormack, as well as all members of the Branch, for this outstanding review.
31. Responses to the comments and recommendations from the 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.