



**Governing Council
Sixty-sixth Session**

GC/66/5
4 March 2024

Lyon, 15–16 May 2024
Hybrid format

REPORT OF THE SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL ON ITS SIXTIETH SESSION

INTRODUCTION

1. The Sixtieth Session of the Scientific Council (SC) of the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), the first in-person session after the move to the new premises in Lyon-Gerland, was opened by Dr Manami Inoue (SC Chairperson), at 09:00 on Wednesday 7 February 2024. She welcomed the participants, including the ten new SC members: Drs Mohamed Berraho (Morocco), Valeriy V. Breder (Russian Federation), Roberta De Angelis (Italy), David Gisselsson Nord (Sweden), André Karch (Germany), István Kenessey (Hungary), Young-Woo Kim (Republic of Korea), Prashant Mathur (India), Pål Romundstad (Norway) and Orla Sheils (Ireland).
2. She also welcomed Professor Norbert Ifrah (Chairperson, Governing Council [GC], France) and Dr Bente Mikkelsen (Director, Noncommunicable Diseases, World Health Organization/Headquarter (WHO/HQ), WHO Representative), who attended the meeting remotely, Professor Beatrice Fervers (Centre Léon Bérard, Observer), and Dr Sonali Johnson (UICC Observer)¹.
3. Apologies for absence were received from Drs Ferrán Catalá-López (Spain), Jeanette Falck Winther (Denmark), Kalipso Chalkidou (UK), and Professor Jean-Yves Blay (Centre Léon Bérard).
4. For ease of reference a list of acronyms of IARC Pillars and Branches can be found in [Annex 1](#) at the end of this Report.

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

5. Declarations of interests were summarized by the Secretariat and available for consultation by SC members. Please refer to [Annex 2](#) at the end of this Report.

ELECTION OF RAPPORTEUR

6. Professor Valery Lemmens (Netherlands) was elected Rapporteur.

¹ Photographs: participants were not asked to sign a consent form. The Secretariat read a statement, at the opening of the session, informing participants that their presence on the steps for the Group photograph was taken as equivalent to their consent to have their picture displayed on the Governance website, and kept in the IARC archives for future use. This also covers consent for pictures taken during the meeting. Participants were asked to let the Secretariat know formally if they wished not to have their picture published by IARC, at the time of the meeting or in future.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Document SC/60/1)

7. The agenda was adopted.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT INCLUDING:

THE IARC BIENNIAL REPORT 2022–2023 ([Document SC/60/2](#))

8. The Director's presentation of the scientific highlights from the [IARC Biennial Report 2022–2023](#) was made available on the INDICO platform.
9. A companion webpage to IARC Biennial Report 2022–2023 can be found at: <https://www.iarc.who.int/biennial-report-2022-2023web/>
10. An IARC corporate video was projected, and the Director delivered a summary of her presentation available online in which comments and questions received prior to the meeting were addressed.
11. A summary of discussions and questions raised by the SC at the meeting and answers given by the Director and IARC staff is given below:
 - Carcinogenic, probably carcinogenic and possibly carcinogenic HPV types were established. Recent meta-analyses conducted in other Branches generated new epidemiological evidence inviting for a revision of the lists of the monographs.
 - The SC enquired whether these new data could result in amendments of the *Monographs* or will be integrated in new volumes of *Monographs*.
 - The Secretariat clarified that more than 30 HPV types have been evaluated in the *Monographs*, most recently in vol. 100B in 2009. The following 12 HPV types have been classified in Group 1: 16, 18, 31, 33, 35, 39, 45, 51, 52, 56, 58, and 59. All these types were found to have *sufficient* evidence that they cause cancer of the uterine cervix, although their associated risk can differ by an order of magnitude. Type 16 also has *sufficient* evidence of causing cancers of the oral cavity, oropharynx (including tonsil), anus, vulva, vagina, and penis and *limited* evidence of causing cancer of larynx. Type 18 also has *limited* evidence of causing cancers of the oral cavity, larynx, anus, vulva, and penis. Type 33 also has *limited* evidence of causing cancer of the anus and vulva.
 - HPV type 68 has been classified in Group 2A, and types 26, 53, 66, 67, 70, 73, and 82 have been classified in Group 2B, all with *limited* evidence that they cause cancers of uterine cervix. HPV types 5 and 8 have *limited* evidence for non-melanoma skin cancer (in patients with epidermodysplasia verruciformis). Other HPV genus beta and gamma, as well as HPV types 6 and 11, are classified in Group 3.

- Reclassification of agents, including these HPV types, would require a new *Monographs* evaluation. As noted in the *Preamble to the IARC Monographs*, for agents that are already in Group 1, the evaluation could focus on identifying new cancer sites with *sufficient* or *limited* evidence. IARC is convening an Advisory Group meeting from 19-22 March 2024 to prioritize agents that have been nominated for first-time or new evaluations. In addition, as part of its future strategic planning, the *Monographs* programme is seeking funding for a large-scale parallel project, which would re-evaluate all the 128 agents currently in Group 1. However, this project will require substantial funding and would take place over a five-year period.

12. The SC congratulated the Director and her staff on the IARC Biennial Report 2022–2023.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 65th SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL (GC)

13. The documents and minutes of the 65th GC session are available on the event management platform (<https://events.iarc.who.int/e/gc65>). The main highlights were as follows:

- GC met in-person in the new IARC building in Lyon-Gerland and was present for the inauguration ceremony on 12 May 2023 in the presence of principal funders.
- GC selected Dr Elisabete Weiderpass to continue as Director for five years, from 1 January 2024.
- GC approved the 2024–2025 budget at a level of €48 683 313.

14. The SC thanked the Director for these highlights from the 65th GC session.

DIRECTOR'S UPDATE FROM THE 59th SESSION OF THE SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL

15. The Director mentioned that all items requiring follow-up will be covered in the next three days.

16. The SC noted the Director's update from the 59th SC.

17. The representant of the WHO, Dr Bente Mikkelsen (attending online) emphasized the strengthened cooperation, better coordination, and greater impact by IARC and WHO. The recent successes have been enabled by IARC's support, accelerated by routine dialogues at the senior management level, and solidified by successful implementation of the WHO-IARC joint workplan.

18. The SC thanked the Director for her update from the 59th SC session.

DISCUSSION WITH THE DIRECTOR, THE DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE (AD INTERIM) AND THE SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL ONLY ON “IARC CHALLENGES”

19. Different challenges were discussed in closed session.
20. The SC thanked the Director for this opportunity to discuss and made the following observations:
 - Regarding the situation vis-à-vis the outstanding assessed contributions from the Islamic Republic of Iran, the SC representative of Qatar agreed to refer to her counterpart in the GC for their feedback regarding potential support to restore the formal dialogue with the Islamic Republic of Iran.
 - The SC expressed concerns that currently, the IARC *Monographs* programme is supported at 60% by grants from a single country. This untenable situation puts this critically important and globally unique public health resource at increasing risk, should the priorities of the major funder change or should funding lines decrease. Accordingly, the SC applauds attempts by IARC to seek additional major sources of funding to diversify sources of support for the *Monographs*. It is essential that such funding, whatever the source, permits the *Monographs* programme to retain its strong independence from vested interests, which is necessary to ensure the high public confidence in the evaluations conducted by the programme.
 - The (unusual) joint IARC/JECFA communication strategy on the evaluation of carcinogenicity (hazard) and risk assessment of aspartame was discussed. Internal communication should be improved as it was quite frustrating for members of the Working Group of the *Monographs* meeting to have not received, ahead of time, any information about the outcomes of the risk assessment.

DIRECTOR’S RESPONSE TO THE NUTRITION AND METABOLISM (NME) BRANCH REVIEW, HELD REMOTELY IN JANUARY 2023

21. The details of action taken following the Nutrition and Metabolism (NME) Branch review were discussed.
22. The Director noted with great satisfaction NME’s outstanding overall evaluation.
23. The SC made the following observations and noted the Director’s response to the NME Review:
 - Collaboration with WHO might be considered in the area of nutrition and cancer, nutritional recommendations being similar to other Noncommunicable Diseases (NCDs). Such collaboration with WHO already exists, such as alcohol or industrial *trans* fatty acids.
 - Other Branches may capitalize on NME’s expertise (also in collaboration with external partners) on machine learning and Artificial Intelligence (AI).
24. The SC appreciated the efforts of the NME branch to address the recommendations.

DISCUSSION ON THE EVALUABILITY ASSESSMENT OF THE IARC MEDIUM-TERM STRATEGY (MTS) 2021–2025 AND ITS WORKING GROUP MEMBERSHIP ([Document SC/60/3](#))

25. Olivier Exertier, Consultant, Director's Office, presented this item.
26. The Secretariat mentioned that in May 2021, the GC requested the Director to make a proposal for an evaluation approach of the MTS for 2021–2025 (see [Resolution GC/63/R4](#)).
27. The evaluation of the MTS will provide reliable and useful information which will serve as a basis for IARC to adapt its decisions and to share lessons for the formulation of the next MTS.
28. A dedicated Working Group (WG) will review the draft report on the evaluation of the MTS 2021–2025 and provide its recommendations to the SC in February 2025 and to the GC in May 2025. The Secretariat welcomed two IARC SC members as part of the Joint GC/SC MTS WG for the evaluation of the MTS 2021–2025. The SC nominated Pål Richard Romundstad and Luis Felipe Ribeiro Pinto to be part of the WG.
29. The SC thanked the Director for the presentation.

PREPARATION OF THE IARC MEDIUM-TERM STRATEGY (MTS) 2026–2030 AND ITS ADVISORY GROUP MEMBERSHIP ([Document SC/60/4](#))

30. Olivier Exertier, Consultant, Director's Office, presented this item.
31. The preparation of the MTS 2026–2030 will rely on a process of consultation which will start during the GC session in May 2024. The development of the new MTS will run in parallel with the MTS 2021–2025 evaluation to better consider and integrate its conclusions and recommendations.
32. The Secretariat welcomed two IARC SC members as part of the Joint GC/SC MTS Advisory Group for the development of the MTS 2026–2030. The SC nominated Satish Gopal and Louisa Gordon to be part of the Joint GC/SC & WHO/HQ MTS Advisory Group for the development of the MTS 2026–2030.
33. The SC thanked the Director for the presentation.

BIENNIAL REPORT ON IARC EDUCATION AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES, 2022–2023 ([Document SC/60/5](#))

34. Anouk Berger, Head, Learning and Capacity Building (LCB) Branch, made her presentation of the key achievements of the IARC Research Training and Fellowship programme (FEL) and of the IARC Courses programme (COR), covering the period 2022–2023, available on the INDICO platform ([Document SC/60/5](#)).
35. SC was asked to comment on the activities and achievements of the programme as well as to suggest areas for further enhancement or which may be reduced in emphasis.

36. In response, the SC made the following comments/suggestions/recommendations:

- The SC mentioned mandatory trainings for all PhD students on equity, open science, sustainability and the impact of professional activities on the environment and inquire whether IARC has similar plans. The Secretariat appreciated the suggestion and will consider proposing such trainings in the future.
- The SC stressed the importance of establishing an active alumni network, especially considering that many scientists trained at IARC may be currently located in Low-and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs). The Secretariat agreed with this comment as establishing such a network will be beneficial for the current ECVs at IARC and those who went back to LMICs.

37. The SC congratulated the Director and IARC staff for the report on Education and Training Activities.

SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL FEEDBACK ON FLASH TALKS

38. Scientists in Branches and in the Laboratory Support, Biobanking and Services were invited to prepare flash talks to showcase and present their work to SC members during a dedicated session, in the format: 5 minute presentation, 5 minute questions, 5 minute feedback by SC members per flash-talk.

General comments and recommendations

- Excellent overview from Branch Heads/high quality videos
- Relevant selection of presentations
- Excellent to outstanding presentations from scientists and scientific staff/high scientific quality
- Diversity of backgrounds highly appreciated
- Alignment with MTS very high
- Good collaboration across branches/high collaboration with external partners
- Catalyst role in LMICs/unique role of IARC
- High to very high anticipated public health impact/support to WHO Global Initiatives
- Very cooperative atmosphere
- Homogenized presentations
- Innovative approaches (such as COVID-19 initiative)

Suggestion for next year flash-talks session (SC/61)

- Given that the 61st Session of the SC (SC/61) will be held remotely, the Secretariat suggests that flash-talks be held online, early December 2024, as was done in the past for sessions of the SC held fully remotely.
- Overview of branch activities by Branch Heads (5-min video)
- 5 flash-talks per branch.

39. The SC appreciated the exercise and thanked the Director and her staff on the very informative flash-talks session.

UPDATE ON DATA SCIENCE ACTIVITIES – INCLUDING SCIENTIFIC IT PLATFORM ([Document SC/60/6](#))

40. The Secretariat was requested to update SC and GC on its data science activities on a regular basis, including computational biology, bioinformatics, biostatistics, and (supporting these areas) Information Technology (IT).
41. The presentation of this update was made available on the INDICO platform. Matthieu Foll, Vivian Viallon and Nicolas Tardy presented this item on behalf of the IARC Data Science Steering Committee (DSSC) that oversees the data science activities, including bioinformatics, biostatistics, computational biology, and scientific information technology. The DSSC is composed of three working groups (WG): the bioinformatics WG, the biostatistics WG, and the IT WG.
42. The SC supported the plan for the next phase of development of the Scientific IT platform, noted the update, looked forward to future such updates on a biennial basis, and made the following observations:
 - In light of the increasing amount of centralized data, the SC raised concerns about cybersecurity. It was noted that IARC has implemented various measures such as two-factor authentication and penetration testing to address these concerns.
 - The SC discussed whether additional resources are required given the complexity and intensity of the activity in this area. While more resources are welcome, IARC has good infrastructure management processes in place. The renewal of the computing centre is planned, however, it is noted that IARC is not a high performance computing centre and relies on collaboration with other institutions. Relying on Governing Council Special Funds (GCSF) was deemed unsustainable, but the current financial model that IARC is considered sufficient.
 - There was a question about whether IARC could become a hub for sharing data internationally. It was noted that IARC faces challenge as an international organization but can act as a data source or broker for specific studies. Developing privacy-preserving techniques such as federated learning is crucial for sustainable data use from various countries and institutions.
 - IARC hopes that open AI systems will be successful. However, the Secretariat reminded the SC that IARC has specific rules on engaging with the private sector, and there is a need to balance internal capacity development with external partnerships versus delegating to external third parties.
 - Concerns were raised about reusing patient data and whether dynamic patient consent should be in place. It was clarified that data sharing depends on nature of consent; and ethics committees support this process to determine what is feasible.
 - The Director thanked various IARC secretariat staff working on scientific computing.
43. The SC appreciated the presentation.

DISCUSSION ON THE REPORT ON IARC'S VISION FOR OPEN SCIENCE ([Document SC/60/7](#))

44. Matthieu Foll presented the report from the IARC working group on IARC/WHO vision for open science.
45. IARC/WHO aims to follow the principle of being “as open as possible, as closed as necessary”, seeking to reconcile the ethos of open science with the complex realities of the research environment. Under this principle, any restrictions on openness are not the default but are exceptions based on justifiable obligations.
46. The SC was invited to review the report, shared lessons learned and provided recommendations to IARC on the topic of “Open Science” as follows:
- Overall, the SC emphasized the importance of accessibility, openness, funding, data sharing, and re-evaluation of traditional metrics to enhance the impact of cancer research publications.
 - IARC has its own ethics committee and compliance framework. There is no centralized access vetting mechanism but a legal office and contract review mechanisms.
 - In IARC there are examples of data with controlled access (like the European Prospective Investigation into Cancer and Nutrition - EPIC), but there are other examples where IARC wants to release data completely openly, e.g. Global Cancer Observatory (GLOBOCAN).
 - The SC suggested organizing articles similarly to the Norway pre-print repository to improve accessibility for LMICs. Caution is advised when posting articles, considering some platforms such as HINARI, a WHO-private partnership giving access to LMICs.
 - IARC is eager to engage in new and more open models of publishing and reviewing.
 - IARC researchers are encouraged to include budget provisions for Open Access journal fees; with a small central fund available at the branch level.
 - As part of WHO, a specialized agency of the United Nations (UN), IARC is not able to rely on national structures. However, with its international collaborators IARC can leverage some of the funds they are able to access. IARC produces most of its own titles as open access.
 - Blue Books, while not open access, are noted for their potential public health impact, particularly with molecular data linking.
 - There was a discussion about IARC becoming a global hub for collecting, not only cancer incidence data but also screening and risk factor data. IARC acknowledges the lack of linkage between various data sets and the importance of interactivity.
 - IARC recognizes the need for a fully searchable repository and ways to increase openness of its Monographs information, potentially through AI integration.
 - Currently IARC does not see a need for revised authorship statement and tends to name individual authors unlike other UN agencies. Additionally, IARC aims to move away from using journal impact factor as an indicator of health impact.
47. The SC congratulated the Director and IARC staff for the presentation and discussion on IARC's vision for open science.

SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP OF THE REVIEW PANELS IN 2025

48. In 2025, the Epigenomics and Mechanisms (EGM) Branch, Head: Zdenko Herceg and the Early Detection, Prevention and Infections (EPR) Branch, Head: Partha Basu, will be reviewed.
49. Drs Walter Berger, David Gisselsson Nord and Orla Sheils will participate in the EGM Review Panel. It was agreed that Dr David Gisselsson Nord would Chair the EGM Review Panel.
50. Drs Satish Gopal, Sirpa Heinävaara and Young-Woo Kim will participate in the EPR Review Panel. It was agreed that Dr Satish Gopal would Chair the EPR Review Panel.
51. The external members will be chosen by the Secretariat in consultation with the Chairs of the Review Panels and the SC Chair.
52. The reviews will take place remotely (five half days) on 13-17 January 2025 for EPR and on 20–24 January 2025 for EGM.

REGULAR UPDATE ON THE COVID-19 AND CANCER INITIATIVE (IARC–C19)

53. Isabelle Soerjomataram, CSU Deputy Branch Head, presented an update of the IARC COVID-19 and Cancer Initiative (IARC-C19) which aims to provide over a four-year timeframe: i) a global platform to monitor national policies in the wake of the pandemic and their impact on cancer services and cancer outcomes, and ii) tools for countries to build back better.
54. The Secretariat thanked the Australian Department of Health and the United Kingdom Medical Research Council who have contributed to the IARC-C19 project. Over one fifth of the requested fund has been invested to IARC. IARC will proceed based on a stepwise manner focusing the activities on one main cancer type and seek council on priority research area from the SC.
55. The SC made the following observations, and gave feedback on which name of the initiative to use and cancer types to focus on:
 - It was emphasized to focus on breast cancer, colorectal cancer in high income countries, and oral cancer, particularly in specific regions;
 - The SC recommended to change the name of the initiative as it is no longer strongly related to COVID. Suggestions made included terms like “health resilience” and “health planning” to encompass a broader concept of health services disruptions by various causes;
 - Chronic impacts of COVID, such as its effect on vaccination activities and uptake (e.g. hepatitis B, HPV) should also be addressed.
 - The user-friendly tool should be disseminated to policy makers through partnerships within the network, and via WHO, particularly through technical assistance request from individual countries and organizing workshops. There is a need for a more widespread dissemination strategy, with an emphasis on governance structure.
 - The global inadequacy in addressing the interruption of essential services during pandemics is highlighted. The current tool participate in raising awareness of this issue.
 - Positive findings from the COVID experience, such as home tests screening, remote doctor/hospital visits, and improved legislation on data sharing should also be considered and integrated into the initiative.

56. The SC appreciated the update on the COVID-19 and cancer initiative.

MAXIMIZING THE IMPACT OF IARC: DISSEMINATION AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY “CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF IARC RESEARCH” AND PLENARY FEEDBACK ([Document SC/60/8](#))

57. Clément Chauvet, Strategic Engagement and Resource Mobilization officer, and Véronique Terrasse, Communications officer, presented this item.

58. To maximize the visibility of the Agency and deliver on the expected results, as defined in the Communication and Dissemination Strategy, IARC is embarking on a new journey by creating a year-long campaign to celebrate its 60th anniversary that will culminate in the organization of a Grand Scientific Conference in May 2026.

59. The SC made the following comments:

- A series of different events (conferences, exhibitions...) throughout 2025-2026 is appreciated.
- IARC should reach out to children and the young generation, including young researchers, by organizing low-cost events, interactive workshops and utilizing social media platforms.
- It is emphasized that dissemination outside the scientific world is crucial. Translations of short syntheses of the IARC Monographs can be valuable tools for policymakers.
- Suggestions include a catchphrase, or a primary prevention promotional media campaign, calling on ambassadors like sports players and musicians. Time investments and establishing a specific network is essential. It is proposed that IARC should have more visible presence, such as tables during international scientific meetings. The idea of creating a foundation for financial support of IARC was raised.
- Depending on the target audience, it may be beneficial to distinguish IARC from governments for the public, emphasizing that IARC represents science rather than politics.
- The SC suggested to learn from the experience and activities of the National Cancer Institute (NCI).
- Utilizing storytelling with narratives told by individuals other than researchers is recommended;
- IARC should increase visibility through more intense communication efforts, especially on occasion like World cancer Day, and by connecting with, and using regional and country-specific communication activities.
- The SC noted that the sustainability and clear definition of the target audience and goals of communication and media efforts is key for success.

60. The SC appreciated the presentation and the discussion, including the preparation of IARC 60th anniversary.

SCIENTIFIC REPORT OF THE EVIDENCE SYNTHESIS AND CLASSIFICATION (ESC) BRANCH REVIEW AND DISCUSSION (Document SC/60/WP5)

61. The Scientific Report of the ESC Review was presented by Dr Marie-Elise Parent, Chair of the Review Panel (RP).
62. The external experts and SC members of the RP were thanked for their valuable contributions.
63. The RP noted the following concerning the IARC Handbooks programme (IHB):

Assessment of IHB's scientific quality (using the six-point scale below)¹

- IHB's past performance: Outstanding
- IHB's future plans: Outstanding

Assessment of the relevance of IHB's work to the mission of IARC²

- IHB's past performance: Perfect fit
- IHB's future plans: Perfect fit

64. Overall recommendations for IHB Programme:

- The IHB has selected important topics for the Handbooks completed to date and future Handbooks. It has also been responsive to suggestions for topics by partner organizations. It may be useful, in parallel with the IMO, to have a periodic advisory committee meeting (every 3 - 5 years) to provide high-level guidance and suggest priority topics for future Handbooks and methods of dissemination. These recommendations would not be binding but would reflect a more open and systematic process for developing priorities.
- If judged appropriate and feasible, IHB could expand the scope of selective Handbooks to include recommendations and guidance on policies for prevention and cancer screening based on the scientific evidence reviewed and analyzed by the experts on primary and secondary interventions.
- It is recommended to improve modes of dissemination so that the general public becomes aware of key approaches to cancer prevention. Integrative strategies with the entire branch to seek advice from external experts on dissemination could be helpful.
- IHB could innovate by introducing new pathways to disseminate information. Though the NEJM reviews are scientifically enriching there is scope to produce additional short communications underlying (1) recommendations for policy development at national level and (2) highlighting

¹ The following classification will be used:

O (Outstanding)	Outstanding work of the highest international calibre, pioneering and trend-setting. This score will only be applied to exceptional programmes of work, not because a programme was particularly topical or in an under-researched area.
F (Forefront)	Work that is at the forefront internationally and that, it is considered, will have an important and substantial impact.
C (Competitive)	Work that is internationally competitive, of high quality, and will make a significant contribution.
NC (Not competitive)	Work that is not considered competitive or high quality and is unlikely to make a significant contribution.
U (Unsatisfactory)	Unsatisfactory or poor quality work.
P (Preliminary)	Work that is too preliminary to rate, which should be continued and monitored/reassessed by the Director in the short-to medium-term with subsequent update to the Scientific Council.

² The following classification will be used:

- 1: **Perfect fit:** This type of work is ideally suited to the mission of IARC.
- 2: **Good fit:** This type of work is suited to the mission of the Agency.
- 3: **Questionable fit:** Uncertain.
- 4: **Poor fit:** Work which should not continue.

Scores should be accompanied by justifications and recommendations for action, where necessary.

gaps in evidence needing future research to enable better global preventive approaches. Production of a newsletter by IHB could also be a good approach to reach out to stakeholders.

- If feasible and appropriate, for selected Handbooks on primary prevention, another suggestion would be to integrate information such as co-exposures, attributable risk fractions, evidence gaps and cost-effectiveness of interventions.
- Maintaining sufficient resources to produce the Handbooks remains a permanent point of attention.

65. The RP noted the following concerning the IARC *Monographs* programme (IMO):

Assessment of IMO's scientific quality (using the six-point scale below)¹

- IMO's past performance: Outstanding
- IMO's future plans: Outstanding

Assessment of the relevance of IMO's work to the mission of IARC²

- IMO's past performance: Perfect fit
- IMO's future plans: Perfect fit

66. Overall recommendations for IMO Programme:

- IMO is on a very good course and the RP has no major recommendations for changes.
- IMO has managed in the past to focus on its core mission and not expand its scope beyond resources available. The RP recommend that IMO continues to do this despite opportunities and pressures for expansion without additional resources.
- IMO's should continue prioritizing the evaluation of agents of global relevance, including those commonly encountered in LMICs.
- The RP recommends that independence between IMO and WHO evaluations be maintained and recognized as equally important products.
- Monographs should be released as early as possible post-production, respecting IMO's internal processes.

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- 4: **Poor fit:** Work which should not continue.

Scores should be accompanied by justifications and recommendations for action, where necessary.

- Currently, the IARC *Monographs* programme is supported at 60% by grants from a single country. This is an untenable situation that puts this critically important and globally unique public health resource at increasing risk, should the priorities of the major funder change or should funding lines decrease. Accordingly, the review panel applauds attempts by IARC to seek additional major sources of funding to diversify sources of support for the *Monographs*. It is essential that such funding, whatever the source, permits the *Monographs* programme to retain its strong independence from vested interests, which is necessary to ensure the high public confidence in the evaluations conducted by the programme.

67. The RP noted the following concerning the WHO Classification of Tumours series (WCT) programme:

Assessment of WCT's scientific quality (using the six-point scale below)¹

- WCT's past performance: Outstanding
- WCT's future plans: Outstanding

Assessment of the relevance of WCT's work to the mission of IARC²

- WCT's past performance: Perfect fit
- WCT's future plans: Perfect fit

68. Overall recommendations for WCT Programme:

- The online version of the Blue Books' 5th edition should be printed soon, to avoid overlapping with the 6th edition.
- WCT should consider prioritization of its planned projects.
- WCT needs to work closely with LMICs pathologists to mitigate the impact of genetic molecular classification of tumours.
- The website represents a unique window through which WCT may reinforce its leadership in the pathology field. Together with the many collaborations and partnerships established, WCT can emphasize the training of pathologists, particularly in LMICs.
- WCT may have to consider diversifying its funding model in the medium/longer term.

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O (Outstanding)	Outstanding work of the highest international calibre, pioneering and trend-setting. This score will only be applied to exceptional programmes of work, not because a programme was particularly topical or in an under-researched area.
F (Forefront)	Work that is at the forefront internationally and that, it is considered, will have an important and substantial impact.
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- 2: **Good fit:** This type of work is suited to the mission of the Agency.
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- 4: **Poor fit:** Work which should not continue.

Scores should be accompanied by justifications and recommendations for action, where necessary.

- The WCT emphasized the need for more website support given the increasing utilisation of web-based applications. The RP also has concerns about the reliance of website maintenance activities on one member of personnel.

69. The RP noted the following concerning the ESC Branch:

Assessment of ESC's scientific quality (using the six-point scale below)¹

- ESC's past performance: Outstanding
- ESC's future plans: Outstanding

Assessment of the relevance of ESC's work to the mission of IARC²

- ESC's past performance: Perfect fit
- ESC's future plans: Perfect fit

70. Overall recommendations for ESC Branch as a whole:

- The RP recognizes the specificities of each of the three Programmes, but whenever appropriate, ESC should keep fostering the synergy between Programme resources, activities and developments;
- The RP strongly supports the integration of representatives from LMICs (IARC trainees, Visiting Scientists, Summer School attendees, observers, etc.) and early-career researchers in its activities;
- The RP encourages ESC to maintain its efforts towards increased dissemination. Advice from external experts in implementation and scientific communication could provide useful guidance. The RP suggests that ESC broadens its knowledge dissemination base to policy makers, stakeholders, and to the general public and patient groups who are increasingly exposed to disinformation;
- Editing is an integral part of evidence synthesis in the three ESC Programs. This is a highly labour - intensive, critical step leading to publications and dissemination. The RP encourages ESC to continue exploring ways to facilitate and speed-up the editing process;
- The RP encourages the diversification of external funding sources.

¹ The following classification will be used:

O (Outstanding)	Outstanding work of the highest international calibre, pioneering and trend-setting. This score will only be applied to exceptional programmes of work, not because a programme was particularly topical or in an under-researched area.
F (Forefront)	Work that is at the forefront internationally and that, it is considered, will have an important and substantial impact.
C (Competitive)	Work that is internationally competitive, of high quality, and will make a significant contribution.
NC (Not competitive)	Work that is not considered competitive or high quality and is unlikely to make a significant contribution.
U (Unsatisfactory)	Unsatisfactory or poor quality work.
P (Preliminary)	Work that is too preliminary to rate, which should be continued and monitored/reassessed by the Director in the short- to medium-term with subsequent update to the Scientific Council.

² The following classification will be used:

- 1: **Perfect fit:** This type of work is ideally suited to the mission of IARC.
- 2: **Good fit:** This type of work is suited to the mission of the Agency.
- 3: **Questionable fit:** Uncertain.
- 4: **Poor fit:** Work which should not continue.

Scores should be accompanied by justifications and recommendations for action, where necessary.

- The RP strongly supports ESC's constant efforts and its maintenance of strict policies to stay clear of conflicts of interest to maintain the integrity and credibility of the Branch's outputs and evaluations.
- The RP was concerned about the difficulties associated with the short-term contracts for some staff members and wondered whether there were some opportunities to help with this.

71. The overall recommendations for the ESC Branch were discussed and approved.

72. The Director congratulated the Branch Head, Deputy Branch Heads and the personnel of ESC for their outstanding performance as reflected in the report.

73. The Director also acknowledged the tremendous work of the RP.

74. The Branch and Deputy Heads greatly appreciated the commitment of the RP and thanked the RP for their input.

75. SC comments on the Review Report:

- SC underlined the inspiring and high-quality work performed by IARC's ESC branch.
- Sustainable funding and continued independence of the *Monographs* is of key importance, the future budget remains a serious concern.
- The essential output of the three programmes may not reach the target audiences, potentially affecting prospects of future funding. Dissemination could be improved by translation of summaries of ESC outputs beyond the languages currently used.
- Lessons learned from the IMO aspartame communication experience should be considered for future high impact hazard assessments.
- Network-based solutions for capacity building for molecular diagnostics are needed especially for LMICs.

76. The ESC Branch Review Panel Report was formally accepted by the SC.

ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON AND VICE-CHAIRPERSON FOR THE 61ST SESSION OF THE SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL IN 2025

77. Dr Luis Felipe Ribeiro Pinto was elected Chairperson.

78. Dr Sirpa Heinävaara was elected Vice-Chairperson.

DATE OF NEXT SESSION

79. The 61st session of the SC will take place on Wednesday 12, Thursday 13 and Friday 14 February 2025 and will be fully remote. Considering budget constraints, scientific reviews will be fully remote until further notice while sessions of IARC SC will be held in-person every other year. Proposing additional in-person meetings will depend on budget decisions taken by IARC GC.

ADOPTION OF THE SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL REPORT (Document SC/60/9)

80. The report of the Sixtieth Session of the SC was **adopted**.

CLOSURE OF THE SESSION

81. The customary expressions of thanks were exchanged.

82. Dr Weiderpass thanked the outgoing members of the SC, Drs Marc Arbyn (Belgium), Ferrán Catalá-López (Spain), Kalipso Chalkidou (UK), Louisa Gordon (Australia) and Manami Inoue (Japan).

ANNEX 1 – LIST OF ACRONYMS OF IARC PILLARS AND BRANCHES

ACRONYM	PILLAR / BRANCH
	Pillar I: DATA FOR ACTION
CSU	Cancer Surveillance Branch
	Pillar II: UNDERSTANDING THE CAUSES
GEM	Genomic Epidemiology Branch
NME	Nutrition and Metabolism Branch
	Pillar III: FROM UNDERSTANDING TO PREVENTION
ENV	Environment and Lifestyle Epidemiology Branch
EGM	Epigenomics and Mechanisms Branch
EPR	Early Detection, Prevention and Infections Branch
	Pillar IV: KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION
ESC	Evidence Synthesis and Classification Branch
LCB	Learning and Capacity Building Branch
LSB	Laboratory Support, Biobanking and Services
	DIRECTOR'S OFFICE
SSR	SERVICES TO SCIENCE AND RESEARCH

ANNEX 2 – DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Declarations of interest were provided by all Scientific Council members.

Interests were declared by a minority of Scientific Council members and include:

- Research support from the private sector;
- Investment interests in the private sector;

The list of declared interests was available for consultation, upon request to the Secretariat.

Upon review by the Secretariat none of the declared interests were considered to represent a potential or significant conflict of interest with respect to the content of the meeting.

The individuals reporting interests were asked to check the contents of the table below, which they all subsequently approved.

Scientific Council member	Disclosure statement
Marc Arbyn	Reports that his Institute benefits from research funding for VALGENT and VALHUDES protocols to perform HPV testing and statistical analyses
Walter Berger	Reports having a commercial interest in P4 Therapeutics in his capacity of co-founder and stakeholder
Young-Woo Kim	Reports that his unit at National Cancer Center Korea benefits from research funding from IMBdx and Novomics