



**Governing Council
Sixty-sixth Session**

GC/66/10
2 April 2024

Lyon, 15–16 May 2024
Hybrid format

WORKING GROUP ON SUSTAINABLE FINANCING OF IARC

Proposal for the creation of a formal working group and its membership

1. The concept of sustainable financing for the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) has emerged as a crucial agenda item, reflecting the commitment of Participating States (PS) to ensure the agency's continued effectiveness in combating cancer globally. The recent meetings of an informal working group, chaired by Professor Norbert Ifrah (France), underscored the significance of sustaining IARC's mission and the need for PS to collectively explore avenues to secure its future.

2. The rationale behind establishing this informal Working Group (WG) on sustainable financing in 2023 stemmed from the growing recognition of the challenges faced by IARC in maintaining its operations and pursuing its crucial research initiatives.

The formal Working Group (WG) on Sustainable Financing for IARC would:

- Explore and recommend strategies to ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the agency in fulfilling its mission of cancer research on cancer prevention to support globally the implementation of cancer control strategies and policies;
- Aim to develop a comprehensive framework for sustainable financing that aligns with the objectives and priorities of IARC and its Participating States (PS).
- Identify elements in framing IARC's case for sustainable financing effectively, leveraging strategic partnerships, exploring direct funding mechanisms, and fostering an alumni network to amplify IARC's impact and communicate its significance are among the proposed strategies.

3. The discussion also underlined the importance of defining “sustainable financing” for IARC and articulating a compelling rationale for increased support. Key considerations include outlining clear objectives, defining deliverables, and justifying the necessity for IARC's unique contributions in global cancer research. The urgency of action is emphasized, particularly in light of the rising cancer burden worldwide.

4. As part of the initiative, the Secretariat intends to formalize the Working Group (see proposed Terms of Reference in Appendix) at the 66th Session of the Governing Council in May 2024, with an emphasis on early engagement for program budget preparation and proactive financing dialogues. Drawing parallels with the World Health Organization (WHO)'s approach, there is a proposal to create an investment case for IARC, leveraging external expertise and exploring various scenarios of sustainability to substantiate the agency's funding needs.

5. Moving forward, WHO's experience in sustainable financing will provide valuable insights, while IARC will develop concrete proposals based on the discussions to advance the agenda. The collaborative efforts of PS and stakeholders in this endeavour are critical in ensuring the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of IARC's vital mission in cancer research and prevention.
6. Working Group activities shall be guided by principles of transparency, inclusivity, and accountability, with decisions made through consensus-building processes.
7. The GC is kindly requested (i) to endorse the establishment of a Working Group to discuss and define potential strategies to strengthen the financial sustainability of IARC, and (ii) to decide the composition of the Working Group.

APPENDIX

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

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

The WG will be composed of:

- Representatives from IARC's Governing Council
- Members of the Secretariat nominated by IARC Director
- External stakeholders with expertise in finance, fundraising, public health, and international development
- Membership may also include external experts and advisors with specialized knowledge in sustainable financing and global health financing.

The ToRs would be as follows:

- 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;
- Define the concept of "sustainable financing" for IARC and establish measurable criteria for assessing financial sustainability;
- Develop an investment case for IARC, highlighting the agency's impact, value proposition, and funding requirements to support its core activities and strategic priorities;
- Explore innovative financing 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, and
- Engage with key stakeholders, including PS, donors, international organizations, and private sector partners, to garner support for sustainable financing initiatives.

Responsibilities:

Conduct regular meetings and teleconferences to discuss progress, share insights, and make recommendations on sustainable financing strategies.

Review and provide feedback on the development of the investment case for IARC and other relevant documents.

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.

Prepare reports, presentations, and other communication materials to disseminate findings and recommendations to the Governing Council, Participating States Official Representatives, and other stakeholders.

Duration and Reporting:

The WG shall operate for an initial period of one year, providing clear feedback to all IARC PS during the Governing Council Session in May 2025.