



**Scientific Council
Sixty-first Session**

SC/61/4
12 February 2025

Lyon, 12–14 February 2025
By Web conference

**REQUEST FOR SUPPORT FROM THE GOVERNING COUNCIL SPECIAL FUND:
COMPUTING INFRASTRUCTURE FOR THE IARC SCIENTIFIC IT PLATFORM**

1. The IARC Scientific IT (SIT) platform was developed to provide a cost-effective shared centralized infrastructure for storing and analyzing scientific data. It offers researchers access to secure and high-performance computing resources based on modern tools and best practices, ensuring compliance with worldwide data protection standards and supporting the Agency's efforts in collaborative and data-centric cancer research.
2. The SIT platform is a cornerstone of IARC's scientific work, enabling researchers to handle increasingly complex datasets efficiently. It is aligned with the IARC Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2021–2025 by fostering high-quality research, promoting collaboration across scientific disciplines, and supporting open-science initiatives.
3. The SIT platform was initially funded by the Governing Council Special Fund (GCSF) in 2020 (see document [SC/56/4](#) and [Governing Council Resolution GC/62/R15](#)), with additional contributions from various IARC branches since then. Since its inception, the platform has experienced a regular growth in terms of projects hosted, data stored, and computational demands, becoming an essential scientific infrastructure for IARC (see the [Scientific IT platform case study document](#) for more details).
4. The SIT platform also contributes to IARC's move into Open Science (see document [SC/60/7](#)), specifically by developing a means to allow access to IARC-held data to third-party investigators remotely in a secure fashion. This objective also addressed demands from various funding agencies that require IARC to share scientific data generated within funded projects to external investigators. This vision aligns with the principle of making scientific data and resources "as open as possible, as closed as necessary," fostering global collaboration while respecting legal and ethical constraints.
5. The SIT platform is operated as a shared resource provided by the IT Working Group of the Data Science Steering Committee (DSSC), with the Director of Administration and Finance (DAF) being formally the governing authority for the SIT platform, and the DSSC serving in an advisory capacity to provide strategic guidance on key decisions. The DSSC works closely with the DAF to align the platform's development with IARC's strategic objectives, ensuring efficient resource allocation and operational management.
6. The computing servers that form the backbone of the SIT platform were installed in January 2018 and are now approaching the end of their operational lifespan. The current infrastructure is no longer sufficient to support IARC's scientific activities effectively, and replacing these servers is crucial to ensure continuity, efficiency, and scalability of the platform.

7. This funding request amounts to €250 000 for the purchase of new computing servers, including some with high-performance graphics processing unit (GPU) designed for artificial intelligence analyses, as well as general infrastructure (network, power supply, cables) and maintenance of the servers for a period of five years. These servers aim to provide 2000 compute cores, 15 TB of RAM, and a 25 GBps network, integrated with the recently upgraded storage system (see document [SC/60/6](#)). In parallel, the DAF, the Budget and Finance Office (BFO), and DSSC members are developing a cost-recovery system to support the operational cost and the long-term sustainability of the SIT platform. This investment will secure the SIT platform's capacity to meet the current and future computational demands of IARC's scientific projects while supporting its open-science mandate.
8. The Scientific Council is requested to consider this proposal for support from the Governing Council Special Fund and to make its recommendations to the Governing Council.