Committees

Laboratory Steering Committee (LSC)

Laboratory research is essential to support various epidemiological projects conducted at IARC on the causes and mechanisms of cancer. It involves six Groups at IARC (BMA, EGE, GCS, ICB, LSB, and MMB). The IARC Laboratory Steering Committee (LSC) oversees the IARC core laboratory facilities and advises the Director on their most efficient use and requirements for future investment.

Significant tasks of the LSC over the biennium have concerned coordinating the acquisition of new equipment (sequencer, robot for chromatin extraction, freezers, and nitrogen tanks), defining priorities, and establishing a plan for replacement of obsolete small and medium-sized laboratory equipment. A plan for securing the power supply for critical laboratory equipment was set up. An inventory of all maintenance contracts for laboratory equipment was made, and priorities were established for coverage of the corresponding costs under the LSB budget. Some good practices for use of shared equipment and the procedure for reception of biological samples were revised. The Laboratory Services website on the intranet was reviewed and updated.

Biobank Steering Committee (BSC)

The role of the IARC Biobank Steering Committee (BSC) is to support biobanking activities at the Agency and advise the Director regarding the strategic development of the Biobank both internally and with external collaborators and projects, including the growing involvement in international biobanking capacity-building in low- and middle-income countries.

During the biennium, the structure of the committee was revised and the number of members reduced from 18 to 12 to better match the needs of the Agency.

The BSC advised and approved the request of LSB to apply to the Governing Council for new storage equipment for the Biobank. The requested purchase of new equipment was staggered over 3 years and was based on the evaluation of the future plans of the scientific Groups.

The BSC also participated in the preparation of *Common Minimum Technical Standards and Protocols for Biobanks Dedicated to Cancer Research*, which was published as an IARC Technical Publication (No. 44) in 2017. The information from the 2007 publication (IARC Working Group Report No. 2, known as the "Green Book") was updated, and a new section on ethical, legal, and social issues (ELSI) was included.

The BSC continued to participate in discussions about the design of the Biobank in the new IARC building, according to the future needs of the Agency, and participated in the development of the Business Continuity Plan for the Biobank. A document was circulated to laboratory groups for the prioritization of samples. The intended purpose was to evaluate the degree of priority for samples stored in freezers on the different laboratory floors.

Computational Biology, Bioinformatics, and Biostatistics (C3B) Steering Committee

The IARC Computational Biology, Bioinformatics, and Biostatistics (C3B) Steering Committee (formerly the Bioinformatics Steering Committee) continues to oversee IARC's activities in these relevant areas. IARC has recently reviewed and reinforced its capacity in terms of personnel and technical capabilities. The C3B, chaired by Dr James McKay (GCS) with support from vice-chairs Dr Jiri Zavadil (MMB) and Dr Pietro Ferrari (NMB), meets quarterly to consider strategic matters and developments and advise the Director accordingly.

The vibrant day-to-day activities happen within three Working Groups: on Bioinformatics, led by Dr Matthieu Foll (GCS) and Dr Magali Olivier (MMB); on Information Technology, led by Dr Matthieu Foll (GCS) and Mr Christopher Jack (ITS); and on Biostatistics, led by Dr Pietro Ferrari (NMB). These Working Groups promote and sustain a sense of community, and facilitate and foster across-Agency and interdisciplinary interactions, also involving collaborative partners. They organize seminars and discussion blogs, develop training sessions in collaboration with the Education and Training Group (ETR), and undertake expansions of IARC's high-performance computing capacity.

Ethics Committee (IEC)

The IARC Ethics Committee (IEC) ensures that research conducted or supported by IARC conforms to international ethical standards for research involving humans. The IEC ethical review is complementary to local/national ethical approval. Over the biennium, the IEC was composed of 11 senior individuals from diverse backgrounds and nationalities. The IEC is chaired by Dr Béatrice Fervers, supported by Dr Paolo Vineis as vice-chair and assisted by Dr Chiara Scoccianti as secretary. The Ethics Advisory Group provides guidance on an ad hoc basis on areas where specialist expertise is required.

During the 2016–2017 biennium (up to September 2017), the IEC evaluated 81 new projects and 39 resubmissions of projects previously reviewed by the IEC. To improve support to IARC scientists, the IEC developed simplified procedures and a template for informed consent. A platform for improved submission, processing, and review of projects was implemented. Training of IEC members and a course on biomedical research ethics for IARC personnel were organized. The IEC re-evaluated the European Prospective Investigation into Cancer and Nutrition (EPIC) cohort (initial evaluation in 1995). A discussion paper on the ethical issues raised by incidental findings in genomic studies, prepared by the IEC, was submitted for publication.

Occupational Health and Safety Committee (OHSC)

The mission of the IARC Occupational Health and Safety Committee (OHSC) is to ensure, in close collaboration with the Staff Physician and the IARC administration, that optimal working conditions are provided to all IARC personnel.

The activities of the OHSC during 2016–2017 include (i) some developments for the easy visualization of Safety Data Sheets of all laboratory chemicals (collaboration with LSB), (ii) some preliminary work on risk assessment of all IARC activities, and (iii) regular and specific training, such as courses on chemical hazards and biological risks, as well as a first aid training course organized jointly with the Staff Association and attended by 43 participants.

As a fun way to fight sedentary behaviour at work, in spring 2017 the OHSC launched the first IARC pedometer challenge; it was a great success, with 270 participants and 57 782 323 steps recorded over a month. Finally, the OHSC drafted a code of good health and safety practice, which will be implemented at the end of 2017.