

# COMMITTEES

## LABORATORY STEERING COMMITTEE (LSC)

Laboratory research is essential for IARC to conduct studies on the causes and mechanisms of cancer, to support cancer prevention. Research laboratories are embedded within five Branches within the new IARC organizational structure (Genomic Epidemiology; Nutrition and Metabolism; Epigenomics and Mechanisms; Early Detection, Prevention, and Infections; and Evidence Synthesis and Classification), and LSB provides global laboratory services, including biobanking. The IARC Labora-

tory Steering Committee (LSC) oversees the IARC core laboratory facilities and advises the Director on their most efficient use.

Significant tasks of the LSC during the 2020–2021 biennium, conducted in close collaboration with LSB and ASO, have concerned the establishment of rules for laboratory activities under COVID-19 constraints, the coordination of the acquisition of new equipment for the histopathology laboratory (one

automated slide staining system [Histostainer], one cryostat, and an upgrade of the digital scanner), the creation (with the Director's Office) of a decision-making framework for in-house laboratory capacity versus outsourcing, the overall maintenance of laboratory equipment, the contribution to the IARC donation campaign for laboratory equipment, the logistical preparation for the move to the Nouveau Centre building, and the organization of seminars on new laboratory technologies.

## 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.

During the 2020–2021 biennium, the BSC renewed its membership, welcomed a new chairperson, and completed the acquisition of a semi-automated liquid

nitrogen storage platform dedicated to cell line preservation. Other tasks during the biennium include the expansion of remote temperature monitoring capabilities for freezers, a review of operations under COVID-19 constraints, the creation of an Agency policy for the disposal of samples, operational alignment to the updated CODECOH regulations, the contribution to the

IARC donation campaign for laboratory equipment, and visits to the Nouveau Centre construction site.

The BSC has initiated planning for the move of the IARC Biobank to the Nouveau Centre building (in close collaboration with ASO) and has identified sample collections to be disposed of before the move.

## COMPUTATIONAL BIOLOGY, BIOINFORMATICS, AND BIostatISTICS COMMITTEE (C3B)

The IARC Computational Biology, Bioinformatics, and Biostatistics Committee (C3B) has continued to oversee the Agency's activities in these areas.

The overall structure of the C3B was changed, with the creation of the roles of responsible officers in bioinformatics, biostatistics, and scientific information technology (IT), carried out by Dr Matthieu Foll (GCS), Dr Vivian Viallon (NMB), and Mr Christopher Jack (ITS), respectively. These individuals take the primary responsibility for these activities across IARC.

The main activity of the C3B during the 2020–2021 biennium was the creation of the IARC Scientific IT platform, which provides access to shared centralized computing and storage resources. This shared and centralized approach has several advantages: the data are stored in a secure environment on the IARC premises, the platform facilitates collaborative work, it is cost-effective, and it helps data owners to comply with best practices required to store sensitive or personal data. This system has also been crucial during the COVID-19 pandemic, to enable IARC personnel to

work remotely. Scientific opportunities will be associated with further developments; in particular, IARC will become a data hub for some projects, with external collaborators able to use the platform remotely.

The C3B acknowledges the departure of Mr Christopher Jack (ITS) to pursue professional opportunities elsewhere. Mr Jack was instrumental in scientific computing at the Agency, and the C3B sincerely thanks him for his efforts and wishes him well in his future post.

## 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 and/or national ethical approval. Over the 2020–2021 biennium, the IEC was composed of 11 senior individuals from diverse backgrounds and nationalities. The IEC is chaired by Professor Samar Al-Homoud, supported by Dr Hans Storm (vice-chair from February 2020 to February 2021) and Dr Angeliki

Kerasidou (vice-chair in January 2020 and since February 2021) and assisted by Dr Chiara Scoccianti as secretary. An external Ethics Advisory Group (EAG) provides guidance on an ad hoc basis on areas where specialist expertise is required.

During the biennium (up to June 2021), the IEC evaluated 69 new projects and 52 resubmissions of projects previously reviewed by the IEC. During the COVID-19 lockdowns in 2020, the IEC strongly supported the IARC

principal investigators with its procedure for expedited review between official meetings, clearing 40% more projects than in 2019. The IEC updated its rules and procedures (RAPs) and standard operating procedures (SOPs) with changes to the procedures for regular submission and expedited review, to further facilitate clearance between IEC meetings by the IEC chairs with the support of the secretary. The IEC questionnaire and annual report template were also updated.

## 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, the IARC administration, and LSB, that optimal working conditions are provided for all IARC personnel.

Some of the main activities of the OHSC during the 2020–2021 biennium included

the replacement of old laboratory chairs, to improve working conditions in the laboratories, and the implementation of a fall detection sensor system in isolated areas of the IARC premises. In addition, the OHSC was involved in reviewing guidelines prepared by LSB for the reception of biological samples potentially contaminated with SARS-

CoV-2, and was part of a working group on the prevention and treatment of psychosocial risks, as part of the Quality of Work Life initiative. The OHSC also organized first aid training for personnel, to complement the role of the IARC Safety Team and help create a safer working environment.