

COMMITTEES

LABORATORY STEERING COMMITTEE (LSC)

Laboratory research plays an indispensable role in facilitating IARC's investigations into the causes and mechanisms of cancer, a cornerstone of the Agency's cancer prevention efforts. These research laboratories are intricately woven into five Branches: Genomic Epidemiology (GEM); Nutrition and Metabolism (NME); Epigenomics and Mechanisms (EGM); Early Detection, Prevention, and Infections (EPR); and Evidence Synthesis and Classification (ESC). The IARC Laboratory Steering Committee (LSC) serves as a vital body, overseeing the core laboratory facilities at IARC and providing guidance to the Director on their optimal use.

During the 2022–2023 biennium, the LSC, working closely with Laboratory Support, Biobanking, and Services (LSB) and the Administrative Services Office (ASO), assumed several pivotal responsibilities and conducted scheduled and ad hoc meetings. These responsibilities encompassed the smooth and efficient relocation of laboratory resources to the new IARC building with minimal disruption to ongoing scientific endeavours, the coordination of the procurement and installation of state-of-the-art laboratory equipment, diligent monitoring and reporting of technical challenges arising during the resumption of activities and/or in relation to the new building, active

participation in devising safety protocols and corresponding standard operating procedures (SOPs), the orchestration of comprehensive maintenance for laboratory equipment, and the organization of technical and scientific seminars. These seminars served as a platform to explore emerging laboratory technologies and local scientific resources, fostering opportunities for potential partnerships and collaborations.

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 2022–2023 biennium, many of the activities of the BSC were dedicated to supporting the transfer of the IARC Biobank to the new IARC premises in Gerland. This transfer required an intense logistic effort from Laboratory Support, Biobanking, and Services (LSB) and the Administrative Services Office

(ASO), not only in the physical move of the samples but also in the setting up and compliance with strict standard operating procedures (SOPs) and national regulations. Furthermore, the BSC supported the inaugural implementation of the sample disposal policy, with the aim of identifying collections that needed to be disposed of before the move; this policy was successfully implemented and will be maintained.

In addition, the BSC supported the ongoing compliance with French regulations

(Conservation d'éléments du corps humain; CODECOH), the organization of the logistics of the move, and the request for the certification of the IARC Biobank by Infrastructures de recherche en biologie, santé et agronomie (IBiSA). Importantly, the BSC has strongly encouraged and successfully obtained the outsourcing of the roster for the IARC Biobank to an external, highly specialized company.

COMPUTATIONAL BIOLOGY, BIOINFORMATICS, AND BIOSTATISTICS COMMITTEE (C3B)

The IARC Computational Biology, Bioinformatics, and Biostatistics Committee (C3B) is composed of three working groups, which have continued to oversee the Agency's activities in these areas.

The Bioinformatics Working Group and the Biostatistics Working Group facilitate interaction and promote skills development and knowledge sharing in bioinformatics and biostatistics across Branches in the Agency, between collaborative partners, and, more generally, across the

cancer research community. The move to the new IARC building has enabled the working groups to resume in-person meetings, and the new state-of-the-art conference rooms have facilitated the organization of hybrid seminars at a reduced cost and with a smaller carbon footprint.

During the 2022–2023 biennium, the main activity of the Informatics Working Group was the opening of the IARC Scientific IT Platform to external collabo-

rators to facilitate data sharing and collaboration between research institutions, in line with internationally recognized data protection standards. This platform will enable external collaborators to remotely access and analyse data from epidemiological studies such as the European Prospective Investigation into Cancer and Nutrition (EPIC), the Lung Cancer Cohort Consortium (LC3), the International Lymphoma Epidemiology Consortium (InterLymph), and other consortia initiatives.

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. During the 2022–2023 biennium, the IEC was composed of 11 senior individuals of diverse backgrounds and nationalities. The IEC is chaired by Professor Samar Al-Homoud, supported by the vice-chairperson Dr Angeliki Kerasidou and by Dr Chiara Scoccianti as the 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 2023), the IEC evaluated 73 new projects and 51 resubmissions of projects previously reviewed by the IEC. The IEC continued to support the IARC principal investigators with its procedure for expedited review, clearing an average of 50% of projects between official meetings. Given the recorded consistent rise in the number of projects cleared between official meetings, the IEC agreed to set the maximum number of expedited reviews to two every two weeks.

The IEC updated its standard operating procedures (SOPs) with clarifications of responsibilities by the IEC secretary and by the IARC principal investigators. IEC members received training on the United Nations data protection principles applicable to IARC/WHO and on WHO ethical guidance on artificial intelligence. Finally, the IEC continued to monitor progress on the Asbest Chrysotile Cohort Study, a large-scale retrospective research study of risk of oncological disease caused by occupational exposure to dust containing chrysotile asbestos, as per document GC/56/5.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE (OHSC)

The IARC Occupational Health and Safety Committee (OHSC) was restructured in 2023 to adapt its composition to the new IARC building. The OHSC consists of 10 members, who represent each floor of the building, the Staff Association Committee (SAC), the Administrative Services Office (ASO), the Laboratory Safety Officer, and the Staff Physician.

During the 2022–2023 biennium, the OHSC met seven times. The minutes of each meeting are posted on the IARC intranet.

Several major contributions of the OHSC during the biennium were linked to the move and the resumption of activities in the new IARC building, to help ensure optimal working conditions. They included

the organization and implementation of a global risk assessment of the premises and all associated activities (in accordance with French law), the implementation of a communication and alarm system, and the contribution to the building manual and security guidelines. In addition, the guidelines for laboratory activities during pregnancy were revised in collaboration with the Staff Physician.

The mission of the IARC Staff Association is to foster the aims of the Agency in cooperation with management and to ensure that staff employment conditions conform with the principles established in the IARC Statute and in the Staff Rules and Regulations and, in particular, to ensure that these conditions permit the efficient discharge by the staff of their duties.

It is the remit of the IARC Staff Association Committee (SAC) to safeguard the collective and individual rights and interests of staff members, to promote staff welfare, to aid staff members who find themselves in difficulties, and to organize social, sporting, and recreational activities for its members.

The SAC is a group of staff members, elected by the staff, that meets regularly with management and with representatives from the other WHO Regional Staff Associations to carry out its various duties.