

Global Health EDCTP3 Joint Undertaking

Report of the 5th meeting of the Scientific Committee

18-19 April 2024

Hybrid – Brussels, Belgium/Online

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Agenda	3
DAY 1 – Thursday 18 April 2024	3
DAY 2 – Friday 19 April 2024.....	4
Summary - updates, discussions, outcomes, follow-up and agreed actions	4
Session 1 – Welcome, Agenda and 4th meeting report adoption, Update on SC membership, rights and obligations	4
Session 2 – Updates on Work Programmes 2022, 2023, 2024 and response to Mpox outbreak	5
Session 3 – Annual Research Innovation Agenda (ARIA), presentation and discussions.....	6
Session 4 – ARIA topic specific group discussions.....	6
Session 5 – Plenary and feedback on ARIA, formulation on proposals for WP2025 Topics (and beyond)6	
Session 6 – Key Performance Indicators and associated measurements of their successful implementation for the Global Health EDCTP3	7
Session 7 – Forum 2025, discussion on Theme and content.....	7
Session 8 – 2023 SC Annual Report, and other updates/documents.....	8
Session 9 – Planning for the next SC meeting & AOB.....	8

Introduction

The purposes of the Fifth meeting of the Scientific Committee of the Global Health EDCTP3 Joint Undertaking were:

1. To clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Scientific Committee and to provide updates on steps being taken to fill vacant positions.
2. With reference to the GH EDCTP3 Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA), obtain scientific and strategic advice for the work programme 2025 (WP2025) through preparation of the Annual Research and Innovation Agenda (ARIA) for 2025.
3. To discuss the Key Performance Indicators and associated measurements of their successful implementation for GH EDCTP3.
4. To discuss and advise on the 12th EDCTP Forum to be held in Kigali, Rwanda in 2025
5. Discuss and advise on any other themes the Scientific Committee would like to address, considering its mandate and tasks as defined in the Council Regulation establishing the Joint Undertakings under Horizon Europe.

The meeting was held on 18 and 19 April 2024 in hybrid mode with in-person attendees meeting at the JU premises in Brussels, Avenue de la Toison d'Or 56-60, 1060.

Agenda

The agenda included the following sessions:

DAY 1 – Thursday 18 April 2024

- Session 1 – Welcome, Agenda and 4th meeting report adoption, Update on SC membership, rights and obligations
- Session 2 – Updates on Work Programmes 2022, 2023, 2024 and response to Mpox outbreak
- Session 3 – Annual Research Innovation Agenda (ARIA), presentation and discussions
- Session 4 – ARIA topic specific group discussions
- Session 5 – Plenary and feedback on ARIA, formulation on proposals for WP2025 Topics (and beyond).

DAY 2 – Friday 19 April 2024

- Session 6 – Key Performance Indicators and associated measurements of their successful implementation for the Global Health EDCTP3
- Session 7 – Forum 2025, discussion on Theme and content
- Session 8 – 2023 SC Annual Report, and other updates/documents
- Session 9 – Planning for the next SC meeting & AOB.

Summary – updates, discussions, outcomes, follow-up and agreed actions

Session 1 – Welcome, Agenda and 4th meeting report adoption, Update on SC membership, rights and obligations

The Chairperson of the Scientific Committee welcomed the members, the Executive Director and the staff members of the Programme Office and the two observers, the Chairperson of the Stakeholders Group and the representative of the World Health Organisation.

After a brief introduction by the SC Chairperson, the agenda of the meeting was adopted with two further items under AOB on the continuation of the already established working groups and the optimisation of the functioning of the Scientific Committee. The minutes and the report of the fourth meeting held on 7 November 2023 were adopted by consensus.

The Executive Director made a brief introduction, updated the SC on the organisational developments of the Programme Office, informed the SC members that he intends to propose to the Governing Board the publication of a new call for Expression of Interest in order to fill the vacant posts and also populate the reserve list.

The Programme Office presented an update on the membership, rights and obligations of the members of the Scientific Committee and more specifically on the confidentiality and conflict of interests' rules. The members had the opportunity to ask questions and raise points of concern. Further clarifications and explanations were provided. It was agreed that the Programme Office will develop a guiding document on the rights and obligations of the SC members, the confidentiality and the conflict of interests.

Session 2 – Updates on Work Programmes 2022, 2023, 2024 and response to Mpox outbreak

The Programme Office presented updates on the implementation of the Work Programme 2022 and the 2023 single-stage as the evaluations for the two stage topics (Vaccines and Diagnostics) are to be finalised later in Q2 2024. Nevertheless, an update on evolution of the two-stage call for proposals 2023 was also provided.

Following the presentation, the SC members had the opportunity to provide input on the statistics presented and made several suggestions such as including further statistics on equity and diversity, age and priority neglected population groups. The Programme Office took good note of the comments and suggestions and the Executive Director mentioned that a portfolio analysis is planned to be shared with the SC on an annual basis.

On the Work Programme 2024, the Programme Office presented a recap on the topics included and gave an update on the call for proposals status and the number of proposals received by topic at the first stage. Also, the timeline of the evaluations, the funding decision by the Governing Board and the invitations to grant preparation were indicated to the SC members for their information.

The Executive Director explained the situation regarding the re-association of the UK to the Horizon Europe and the subsequent increase to the JU budget that is expected to be confirmed in May. Furthermore, the Executive Director informed the SC members that the EDCTP has also confirmed that their contribution will be increased.

After debriefing the SC members on the background of the Mpox outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the relevant communique released by the Ministers of Health, the Programme Office and the Executive Director informed the SC that the JU intends to mobilise the emergency funding mechanism foreseen in the WP 2024. The SC members were requested to provide their agreement on proceeding with the activation of the emergency response funding increasing the budget from EUR 1 million to EUR 5 million and provide their input on the priorities that this emergency response call should include.

A representative of the European Commission from the Directorate-General for Research joined the meeting and updated the members on the actions taken from the Commission side in response to the Mpox outbreak, as well as the possibilities for providing complementary funding to projects that are already running.

Following an in-depth discussion, the SC agreed in proceeding with the emergency call with the proposed increased budget and that the priorities of the call should be defined within the existing discussions of the African task force and in coordination and alignment with the global partners. Further, it was decided that a working group will be constituted comprising four members of the SC and staff members of the Programme Office having as mandate to draft the emergency topic text within the deadline agreed with the Executive Director.

The Emergency Mpox draft topic text was finalised with input from SC members before submission to the GB for approval.

Session 3 – Annual Research Innovation Agenda (ARIA), presentation and discussions

Following presentation of the Global EDCTP3 prioritisation process, the purpose and objectives of the Annual Research and Innovation Agenda (ARIA) was explained. The strategy of how the ARIA was written was also outlined, including the literature reviews written by the Scientific team in the Programme Office, mapping of previous EDCTP3 funding, analysis of gaps, identification of potential contributing partners and the consultation with the Scientific Committee (SC) and the Stakeholders' Group (SG). The steps and the timeline for the writing of the topic texts are also outlined.

The Specific Objectives (SO) of the ARIA, as outlined in the SRIA, are introduced and outlined in detail. They are the following:

1. Advance biomedical interventions towards improved overall health.
2. Research capacity development.
3. Enhanced coordination.
4. Strengthen capacity for epidemic preparedness.
5. Networking, building partnerships and strategic alliances.

Session 4 – ARIA topic specific group discussions

The Scientific Committee members were divided into three groups to discuss the ARIA topics in detail. One Scientific Project Officer (SPO) per group moderated the discussions. A group rapporteur summarised the discussions and shared the feedback with the rest of the SC members in the main plenary session. All members re-discussed in the plenary and agreed to add written input to the ARIA draft.

The full version of the ARIA document with Input from SC members (merged with input from SG members) is available in a separate document.

Session 5 – Plenary and feedback on ARIA, formulation on proposals for WP2025 Topics (and beyond)

The details from this session are captured in the Meeting minutes and the feedback has informed the Executive Summary of the ARIA and formulation of the 2025 draft call topics which are confidentially shared in separate documents.

Session 6 – Key Performance Indicators and associated measurements of their successful implementation for the Global Health EDCTP3

The Executive Director outlined the JU specific KPIs as defined in the Single Basic Act and explained the context to the SC members.

The SC members provided the following specific inputs about the KPIs:

- **Input:**
 - o Processes and activities.
 - o Number, diversity and distribution of the research centres receiving funding within the countries.
 - o Investments in partnership building and community engagement.
- **Output:**
 - o Increased partnerships and interaction with the health services on the ground and the ministries of health for the planning and strategy.
 - o Increased partnerships and involvement of all interested parties: research, academia, industry, including end users (need to train and educate them in line with the cultural diversity).
 - o Indicators of good partnership practices between European and African teams (e.g. authorship).
 - o Outcome of investments in partnership building and community engagement.
 - o Ethics and regulatory capacity in SSA.
- **Impact:**
 - o Better translation and better utilisation of the outputs of the funded projects.
 - o Equity in terms of gender, language and regional differences.
 - o Continuous impact on the ground in the long-term.

Session 7 – Forum 2025, discussion on Theme and content

The Programme Office provided updates on the organisation of the next Forum that will be held in June 2025 in Kigali, in Rwanda, on the tentative dates, the venue and the organisational progress. The role and involvement of the Scientific Committee in the Forum were also explained, and the members were called to discuss and eventually propose potential themes and nominate two members that will join the Forum Programme Committee.

The Chairperson of the Stakeholders Group presented the discussions held within the Stakeholders Group, explaining the approach and methodology followed during their last meeting in order to draw a list of potential themes. The SG Chairperson explained that elements as the previous themes, the articulation evolution of the forum itself over the time, keywords of importance and the position of EDCTP3 JU were taken into account for the development of the proposed themes which following a vote were then grouped into four overarching themes.

Based on the overarching themes and the potential Forum themes discussed by the Stakeholders Group the Scientific Committee members discussed and agreed on a non-exhaustive list of suggestions for the potential themes of the Forum that will be shared with the SG. Also, they agreed that the members who are interested to join the Programme Committee may express their interest in the following days. *(Post meeting update: a few days after the SC meeting, the two members were nominated).*

Session 8 – 2023 SC Annual Report, and other updates/documents

The Programme Office presented the key documents related to the progression of WP2025 and introduced the Annual Activity Report 2023 of the Scientific Committee. The SC members were informed that as per the Single Basic Act (SBA), they should advise on the operational highlights of the previous year to be included in the Consolidated Annual Activity Report of the JU. These highlights will be extracted from the SC annual report.

The members approved the report by consensus and as foreseen in the SBA, the report will be submitted to the Governing Board for approval.

Session 9 – Planning for the next SC meeting & AOB

The SC discussed on the potential dates for the next meetings and agreed tentatively.

It was agreed that the working groups formed in March 2023 are to be reinvigorated with clear expected outputs. The Programme Office is expected to further reiterate at the next meeting the difference between the Scientific Committee and the Stakeholders' Group.

The Chairperson, the Executive Director and the Global Health EDCTP3 Programme Office staff members thanked the SC members for a productive meeting and the meeting was closed.