

# REPORT OF THE 4<sup>th</sup> SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY BOARD (SAB) OF THE GLOBAL HEALTH AND TROPICAL MEDICINE RESEARCH CENTRE AT THE INSTITUTE OF HYGIENE AND TROPICAL MEDICINE – UNIVERSIDADE NOVA DE LISBOA (IHMT/NOVA)

Dates: 22-24 April 2023

Members of the SAB:

**Present on site (OS) or online (OL):**

Prof Sylvie Manguin (SM)-OS	Institut de Recherche pour le Développement, Montpellier, France
Prof Afranio Kritski (AK)-OS	Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Dr Mateus Webba da Silva (MWS)-OS	Ulster University, United Kingdom
Prof Umberto D’Alessandro, Chair (UDA)-OS	London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, United Kingdom

**Apologies for absence:**

Dr Maria do Rosário Bragança Sambo	Ministério do Ensino Superior, Ciência, Tecnologia e Inovação - República de Angola
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The meeting was held at the IHMT in Lisbon on Saturday 22 and Monday 24 of April 2023. The meeting was opened by Prof Filomeno Fortes, Director of the IHMT/NOVA, who welcomed the SAB members.

Miguel Viveiros (MV), the scientific coordinator of the Global Health and Tropical Medicine Research Centre (GHTM), provided an overview of the 2022 activities and outcomes, and of the implementation of the SAB’s recommendations formulated last year. The current GHTM project with the Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (FCT) started in January 2020, the contract was signed in September 2020, an interim evaluation is expected at the end of the 2022, and the project will end in December 2023. However, an extension up to December 2024 is expected. Highlights were the increase in competitive funding (from 5M in 2020 to 15M in 2022), with an increase in 2022 of the number of projects of whom 41% are international compared to 38% in 2021. Notably, the GHTM secured as coordinator a large proposal from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 program involving 29 countries, for a budget of 9M euros (CLIMOS). COVID-19 was an opportunity for research and higher visibility. In 2022, GHTM produced 203 publications, with a field-weighted citation impact of 1.70, compared to 179 articles and an impact of 1.30 in 2020.

**SAB discussion, feedback, and recommendations**

The SAB’s overall impression was extremely positive. The GHTM has continued to progress, with significant achievements by the different research groups. GHTM produced 203 publications, a substantial number of them on Covid-19. This was an opportunity for timely and impactful research that increased the visibility of GHTM. The publications cover all the SDGs. GHTM was successful in securing a few large research grants from the EU, less successful for national grants. Another positive point is the good gender balance with women at key positions in GHTM. There is the recognition by

the Portuguese government of the expertise on management of human health resources at GHTM. GHTM improved the collaboration with industry, with 11 patents so far. Of notice, the large EU project CLIMOS, the first to be led by GHTM. It is also positive to notice that GHTM was able to recruit new researchers. The SAB was also pleased to see that the IHC group has started the collaboration with the Clinical Research Unit (CRU) at the medical school of Nova University. The GHTM has also been extremely active in capacity building; there are 3 new MSc courses and one PhD programme that, despite some difficulties, were successfully implemented in Lusophone countries. Both VIASEF and Biotrop have progressed substantially; VIASEF human resources increased with 2 staff (1 part-time insectary technician and 1 junior researcher) and it hosted several projects. Biotrop has produced a website in Portuguese, with plans to have it in English. Moreover, Biotrop is planning to create a network of biobanks in Lusophone countries for capacity building. The SAB takes note that there is the plan to prepare a new application to FCT for renewal of the GHTM to be submitted by the end of 2023. The SAB recognises the unique position of GHTM in leading global health research in One Health vision.

After discussion, the SAB recommends the following:

1. Clinical trials - The IHC group has successfully established contact with the CRU of the medical school of Nova University, which has the capacities to run clinical trials, mainly on chronic diseases. The SAB considers this is a good opportunity as the IHC group has expertise in infectious diseases. The collaboration with CRU provides the opportunity for increasing the IHC portfolio on clinical trials.
2. Human resources – The SAB recommends re-evaluating the teaching commitment of the staff, particularly for IHC and PPS, so as non-research related activities are more fairly distributed among the scientific staff. The GHTM research portfolio is broad and should be supported by adequate tenured human resources, including junior scientists.
3. Viasef – the SAB recognises the important progress done over the last year and suggests support should continue as required while other national or international sources of funding are being secured.
4. The SAB recognises the importance of being part of REAL and suggests the development of a framework for integration.
5. It has not been possible to finalise a common laboratory platform. The SAB continues to recommend working in this direction.
6. Environmental research – This is an important area of research but it is hardly visible in the current One Health program. This could be part of the CCI “Genomic surveillance, population mobility and environment”.
7. The SAB notices the current positive impact of the CCI “Fair research partnership”. Outputs should be disseminated more widely through scientific publications.
8. The current organigram of the GHTM and its different groups and CCI is static and does not show their complementarity. Ideally, the VBD and THOP (PRIME) should be linked with IHC (CTM) for clinical research, which in turn should be linked with PPS for health system research. It would be helpful to reflect how these groups link together and highlight their connections and complementarity.
9. The SAB suggests considering establishing collaboration with other lusophone territories located in Asia, such as Timor Leste, Goa, and Macao.
10. The SAB suggests creating a new position to work specifically on Environmental Research and International Collaboration Affairs.