

## Board Assessment

### MRC-University of Glasgow Centre for Virus Research

Medical Research Council

Infections and Immunity Board (IIB)  
24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> February 2016

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

DIRECTOR:	Professor Massimo Palmarini
NAME OF UNIT/LOCATION:	MRC-University of Glasgow Centre for Virus Research
TYPE OF REVIEW:	Quinquennial Review
FORM OF SUPPORT:	University Unit
START DATE & DURATION:	01/04/2016 for 60 months
DATE OF SUBCOMMITTEE SITE VISIT:	12 <sup>th</sup> and 13 <sup>th</sup> November 2015

BOARD SCORE (CVR future overall):

<b>9</b>	MRC CONTRIBUTION REQUESTED BY THE UNIT (£K, INDEXED):	██████████	
	MRC CONTRIBUTION RECOMMENDED BY THE SUBCOMMITTEE (£K, INDEXED):	£26,300k	
	REVISED REQUEST FROM THE UNIT	£26,300k	
	IIB FUNDING DECISION:	<b>£26,300k</b>	

CVR became officially operational in April 2010 and in August 2010 its newly appointed Director, Professor Massimo Palmarini, took up his post. CVR’s mission was to carry out multidisciplinary research on viruses and viral diseases of humans and animals, translating the knowledge gained for the improvement of human and animal health. The interdisciplinary expertise within the CVR was to provide the environment to attract the best researchers and deliver sustained excellence in scientific research from basic science to clinical and veterinary application. In 2013, the MRC – University of Glasgow CVR became a University Unit with the university as the main employer.

A Strategic Review of Virology conducted by the MRC in 2008 emphasised the need to maintain the UKs strength in basic virology research but to link this better with more clinically relevant. It also highlighted the need to diversify the UK virology research portfolio through rebalancing the large investments in HIV, influenza and herpes virus with other clinically important viruses (hepatitis C) and emerging viruses (arboviruses, neglected tropical diseases).

The scientific priorities below were set by the Director as part of the CVR Strategic and Developmental Plan in October 2010:

- Priority 1: Develop the CVR research portfolio. The CVR’s research programmes were to cover the themes of emerging viruses including arboviruses, innate and intrinsic immunity to virus infection, hepatitis C virus, viruses and cancer, structural virology, viral genomics and bioinformatics
- Priority 2: Develop the management structure, community and identity of the CVR
- Priority 3: Construct the new CVR research building
- Priority 4: Develop training programmes in Virology
- Priority 5: Develop strategic partnerships locally, nationally and internationally

These priorities would enable the CVR to:

- Demonstrate scientific leadership in key research areas including hepatitis C virus, RNA and arboviruses, emerging zoonotic viruses, herpes viruses, animal retroviruses;
- Facilitate close co-ordination across disciplines by bringing together a critical mass of

researchers studying human and animal viruses with clinical colleagues and an international cohort of epidemiologists and mathematical modellers;

- Develop methods and technologies which could facilitate collaboration across the UK virology community including cyro-electron microscopy, virus bioinformatics and high throughput virological screening;
- Nurture and develop future research leaders through training programmes for basic and clinical virologists.

## BOARD ASSESSMENT

### **CVR overall:**

The Board [REDACTED]. The Board [REDACTED]. The CVR has broadened its remit from its prior focus on Herpes viruses and hepatitis. With the enhanced infrastructure provided in the new building, the personnel and team leads were now better equipped to deliver on the proposed programmes, as set out in the report.

The [REDACTED]. The Unit has achieved many of its aims during this period of transition. The CVR was now better positioned to undertake research and impact human and animal health. The Director had established excellent links with the university that would support his future vision.

The Board agreed that the themes presented were good areas for collaborative research, and that the specific programmes provided research examples with potential international impact.

The CVR [REDACTED].

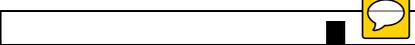
[REDACTED] The Board encouraged greater interactions with other centres overseas, such as in the Gambia, especially in the areas of emerging infections and zoonoses.

### **Individual programmes**

The Board focussed its attention on those programmes where there were important matters to discuss; on all programmes the Board fully endorsed the conclusions and recommendations (including scores) of the Subcommittee.

The Board [REDACTED].

**Summary scores**

<b>CVR overall</b>
Score - Future Proposal 

**INDIVIDUAL SCIENTIFIC PROGRAMMES**

**Theme 1 - Chronic and community acquired viral infections**

Prog	Programme Leader /Leader Track	Programme Name	Score Future (out of 10)
1	Pablo Murcia (Thomson, Gifford collaborators)	Respiratory Infections	
2	Andrew Davison	Congenital, Genital and Transplant Acquired Infections	
3	John McLauchlan, Arvind Patel, Emma Thomson	Viral Hepatitis	

**Theme 2 – Emerging and Zoonotic viral infections\***

Prog	Programme Leader /Leader Track	Programme Name	Future score (out of 10)
4	Alain Kohl (PLT) (Schnettler, Pondeville collaborators)	Arthropod-borne Infections	
5	Daniel Streicker (PLT), Emma Thomson	Emerging Virus Infection in High Risk Areas	

**Theme 3 – Host Immunity to virus infection**

Prog	Programme Leader /Leader Track	Programme Name	Future score (out of 10)
6	Roger Everett, Chris Boutell (Past); Chris Boutell (Future)	Intrinsic Immunity	
7	Massimo Palmarini, Wilson, Gifford	Innate Immunity and Host Species Barriers	

**Cross cutting theme**

Prog	Programme Leader /Leader Track	Programme Name	Future score (out of 10)
8	Frazer Rixon, David Bhella (Past); David Bhella, Edward Hutchinson (Future)	Virus Structure (Cross Theme Programme)	

**PL:** Programme Leader; have long-term ('tenured') appointments, they lead the group and plan and direct the science.

**PLT:** Programme Leader Track; are developmental appointments, with a decision on 'tenure' taken within 6 years, they lead the group and plan and direct the science. PLT in post for 2 or more years are scored, programmes are not scored for PLT in post for less than 2 years.

**Level of Support Recommended**

The CVR accepted the subcommittee recommendations for level funding (£26.3m) for the next QQR [REDACTED]



As recommended by the subcommittee the CVR has:

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

In light of the sub-committee’s recommendation and the CVR’s response, the Board recommended that the CVR be provided with level funding