MINUTES

Health, Medical & Research Committee Meeting

14 November 2025 (7am-10am EST)

Virtual meeting

Participants:

Prof. Lars Engebretsen, Chair
Prof. Takao Akama
Prof. Xavier Bigard
Prof. Francesco Botré
Dr. Matthew Fedoruk
Dr. Audrey Kinahan
Dr. Katja Mjøsund
Prof. Yannis Pitsiladis
Dr. Malav Shroff
Dr. Yuhan Tan (Athlete Council member)
Prof. Bruno Le Bizec (ex-officio member)
Dr. Olaf Schumacher (ex-officio member)
Prof. Carl Johan Sundberg (ex-officio member)

Apologies

Prof. Wayne Derman (recommendations sent by email on 13 November 2025)
Prof. Andrew McLachlan (recommendations sent by email on 12 November 2025)

Absences

Prof. Susan White (ex-officio member)

WADA staff

Prof. Olivier Rabin, Senior Director, Science and Medicine
Dr. Léonie Egli, Senior Manager, Research
Dr. Irene Mazzoni, Associate Director, Prohibited List
Dr. Luciana Meirotti, Head of Research
Dr. Lisa Starr, Coordinator, Scientific Research

Meeting summary:

Item 1: Update on financial situation

- Dr. Luciana Meirotti (LM) updated the HMRC on the 2025 research budget. After funds committed for research projects (including targeted projects) and costs, $ 1.1 M USD remains in the budget for 2025. Prof. Olivier Rabin (OR) noted there are funds from past research projects that were approved but did not lead to contracts and therefore would be available for research funding.
- OR updated the HMRC on the 2026 research budget
- A budget increase of $ 1 M is anticipated for next year mainly coming from a donation from the Ministry of Sports and Youth in Qatar.
- The Committee discussed a contribution from the Ministry of Sports and Youth in Qatar. Prof. Yannis Pitsiladis expressed his concerns with WADA receiving funds with conditions for allocation. OR clarified that the same evaluation criteria will be used as for any other proposals received, and grants will follow the usual approval process, including review by the HMRC before approval.

Item 2: Review and recommendations for the 2025 cycle 3 WADA Call for Scientific Research Projects

- Discussion of 15 full applications (FA) selected from 35 Expressions of Interest (EOI) submitted for Cycle 3 of the 2025 Research Program. One FA was also received from a previous cycle. The 16 applications, totaling a $1.76 million USD requested budget, were reviewed across multiple categories, including DBS, gene doping, and ABT. LM, Dr. Léonie Egli (LE), and Dr. Lisa Starr (LS), presented a summary of each research proposal, a compilation of the three external reviews, the score and WADA remarks, if appropriate. All FAs and their respective reviews were shared with the HMRC members ahead of the meeting.
- Due to conflicts of interest, Prof. Yannis Pitsiladis disconnected during discussions of proposal 253E06SV and Prof. Francesco Botré disconnected during discussions of proposal 253C04EI. Prof. Lars Engebretsen refrained from discussions of proposal 253C02AG.
- The HMRC considered the recommendations from the external reviewers and WADA comments (if any) for each grant and discussed each grant. As a result, 10 projects were selected for a total of $1.054 million USD and recommended for funding.
    - Two projects from Category A: Detection of doping substances/methods: methodologies in analytical chemistry
    - One project from Category B: Detection of doping substances/methods: affinity-binding and biochemical methodologies
    - Three projects from in Category C: Pharmacological studies of doping substances/methods
    - No projects from Category D: The Athlete Biological Passport.
    - Three projects from Category E: Detection of doping substances/methods: molecular biology, “Omics” and miscellaneous methodologies
    - One project from Category F: Scientific innovations to improve anti-doping programs
- Some conditions were imposed on some grants, such as on sample size and budget reduction.
- Some feedback was provided to improve some of the non-approved grants, such as to use *in-vivo*, rather than *in-vitro* systems, etc.

- The HMRC concluded the discussions on the projects and would submit the recommendations for approval of funding of the selected projects during the WADA ExCo meeting on 2 December 2025, in Busan (Korea).

Item 3: Research Strategic Plan for the next 5 years

- LM presented comments received from the committee on the five-year Scientific Research Strategic Plan (2026–2030). The main points identified were:
  - Identification of research needs.
  - inclusion of research on contaminants and contaminations.
  - use of Dried Blood Spots for the detection of substances with Minimum Reporting Levels (focusing primarily on stimulants/substances of abuse) for in-competition testing, as well as threshold substances.
  - priorities identified by working groups and legal cases.
  - Encouraging collaboration: high interest in a consensus meeting for discussions on areas and priorities, encourage labs that have not traditionally applied or been successful.
  - Research visibility/dissemination: publicize work in scientific journals and social media.
  - Process to evaluate collaborations on a regular basis: with researchers and other partners (WHO, pharmaceutical companies, etc.).
- Two additional topics were raised by the committee: an analysis of gaps in WADA-funded research and channels to exchange research ideas and results with athletes.
- OR outlined the next steps for the Strategic Plan, including completing the document, circulating for final approval by the HMRC and the Executive Committee, in March 2026. The Plan will continue to be developed over the next 5 years with the guidance of the HMRC.

Item 4: 2026 Research priorities

- LE presented the 2026 research priority topics. Higher priority is granted to:
  - Detection/improvement of detection/quantification of peptide and protein hormones and growth factors;
  - Improved window of detection of prohibited substances/methods;
  - Pharmacokinetic studies to establish thresholds or minimum reporting levels to distinguish permitted from prohibited use, natural sources vs. intended use or contamination;
  - Detection of autologous blood transfusion;
  - Further development of the Athlete Biological Passport;
  - Advancement of DBS program;
  - Detection of gene and cell doping;
  - Synthesis of selected Certified Reference Materials;
  - Studies on weight management drugs, cannabis and contamination substances;
  - Data analytics and artificial intelligence.
- The HMRC noted that e-sports and research on weight management medications, both for side effects and performance enhancement will need to be discussed based on several new types of medications

developed. The HMRC also noted that a change in the 2027 code will increase clarity on when anti-doping samples can be used for research. A suggestion was made to encourage labs to develop non-targeted/suspected screening approaches, as well as testing the interactions of drugs.

Next meeting

- February 2026: virtual meeting to review and recommendations for 2026 Cycle 1 full applications

Closing of meeting

PROJECT INFORMATION						HMRC meeting		
UniqueID	AdminCode	Name	Project	Duration	Requested budget (USD)	Funding Recommendation	Recommended budget (USD)	Comments
u3386-app4757	253E03ER	Edward Ryder	Development of multiplexed screening and confirmatory assays for gene doping transgenes in human plasma within an ISO17025 accredited laboratory	2 years	$ 134,931.00	Fund	$ 134,931.00	
u3361-app4827	253C04EI	Eduard Isenmann	Characterization of Anabolic Properties and Mechanistic Actions of Laxogenin and Turkesterone in Dietary Supplements (253C04EI)	1 year	$ 40,000.00	Do not fund		Not suitable at this time while performance enhancement data are not yet available
u196-app4754	253A01JL	Jianghai Lu	In Vivo Metabolic Profiling of the Novel Designer Steroid 6β- Bromo-Androst-4-3,17-dione and impact on Human Urinary Steroid Profiles Using Quadrupole-Orbitrap LC-MS/MS and GC-MS/MS	1 year	$ 30,000.00	Fund	$ 30,000.00	
u1124-app4792	253F01JH	James Hopker	Multivariate Modelling for Anti-Doping in Sports	3 years	$ 201,633.20	Fund	$ 201,633.20	There will be many confounding factors (espcially in triathalon). There is a need to distribute to NADOs, to separate true violations from other types, and for a maintenance plan for software
u2703-app4765	253C01CG	Costas Georgakopoulos	Metabolic Evidence for the Interpretation of Adverse Findings Against Environmental Contamination for Stanozolol and Methandienone	2 years	$ 93,500.00	Fund conditional	$ 93,500.00	Should include both genders for each of three ethnicities, remove sweat samples
u3285-app4823	253C03CC	Christoforos Christoforidis	Metabolic and Excretion Profiling of Emerging Doping Substance LGD-3303	1 year	$ 99,600.00	Fund conditional	$ 74,600.00	Need to justify 7 days of sample collection, reduce staffing time and budget
u3411-app4766	253A06KHK	Ki Hun Kim	An Integrated Sample Preparation Approach for Multi-Menu Anti-Doping Analysis Using DBS	1 year	$ 80,000.00	Fund conditional	$ 80,000.00	Clarifications needed (clinical trial numbers, availability of samples for ref material)
u3398-app4752	253E08LL	Leonid Livshits	Combined RBC Profiling: A New and Robust Approach for Detecting Autologous Blood Doping.	2 years	$ 139,320.00	Do not fund		Previous similar studies have not given results, in vivo samples are needed
u3412-app4762	253C02AG	Astrid Gjelstad	Investigating Furosemide Pharmacokinetics for Enhanced Doping Test Interpretations	2 years	$ 126,350.00	Fund conditional	$ 126,350.00	Add a lower dose
u2612-app4795	253E06SV	Sven Voss	Enhancing Detection of Transdermal Testosterone Administration: A Comprehensive Biomarker and Genomic Profiling Study Across Diverse Biological Matrices	1 year	$ 110,943.00	Fund conditional	$ 85,943.00	Remove nail samples and -omics analysis
u1109-app4767	253E05SA	Slim Azouzi	IGHV Mutation Signature: A Promising Marker for Autologous Blood Transfusion Detection	1 year	$ 108,000.00	Fund	$ 108,000.00	
u195-app4850	253B01RV	Rosa Ventura	Detection of rEPO using cellulose-based DBS cards	2 years	$ 141,280.00	Fund conditional	$ 141,280.00	Address reviewer comments; reduce duration if possible
u3410-app4774	253E04NS	Neveen Salem	Improving Gene Doping Detection Method for multiple target genes in exosomal fraction of biological fluids using an in vivo mice model	2 years	$ 25,000.00	Do not fund		Should reapply addressing the reviewer comments
u3120-app4750	253D01WCC	William Chih-Wei Chang	Measurements of ABP haematological and steroidal markers in micro liquid blood: Sampling from fingertip and upper arm	2 years	$ 128,300.00	Do not fund		Data are already available
u3352-app4758	253B06FOPF	Flavio Orlando Plentz Filho	Label Free Detection of Erythropoietin Receptor Agonists using Aptamers and Cost Effective Graphene Field Effect Transistor Biosensing Platform	2 years	$ 222,450.00	Do not fund		There is little evidence of aptamer applicability in anti-doping
u3414-app4761	253A07FN	Faisal Nawaz	Design and Synthesis of Dansyl Amino Acid Derivatives as Novel Markers for Nandrolone Metabolite Detection in Blood	3 years	$ 83,000.00	Do not fund		
				TOTAL	$ 1,764,307.20	TOTAL	$ 1,076,237.20	