

## MINUTES

Health, Medical & Research Committee Meeting (Virtual)

11 February 2026 (7am-8:30am EST)

### Participants:

Prof. Lars Engebretsen, Chair

Prof. Xavier Bigard

Prof. Francesco Botré

Dr. Richard Budgett

Prof. Wayne Derman

Dr. Matthew Fedoruk

Dr. Audrey Kinahan

Prof. Yannis Pitsiladis

Dr. Malav Shroff

Mr. Cyrille Tchatchet II (Athlete Council member)

Prof. Bruno Le Bizec (ex-officio member)

Dr. Olaf Schumacher (ex-officio member)

### Apologies

Prof. Takao Akama (recommendations sent by email on 7 February 2026)

Dr. Katja Mjøsund (recommendations sent by email on 10 February 2026)

Prof. Carl Johan Sundberg (ex-officio member) (recommendations sent by email on 11 February 2026)

### 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: Introductions and conflict of interest

- Prof. Lars Engebretsen (LE) introduced two new members of the committee: Mr. Cyrille Tchatchet II, member of WADA's Athlete Council and International Weightlifting Federation Athlete Commission, Olympian from Tokyo 2020, and registered psychiatric nurse, and Dr. Richard Budgett, Medical and Scientific Director for the International Olympic Committee until the end of 2024 and current part-time Scientific Advisor to the International Paralympic Committee.
- The members approved the minutes of the previous meeting and had no conflicts of interest to declare.

### Item 2: Research Strategic Plan for the next 5 years

- Dr. Luciana Meirotti (LM) presented the final draft of the 2026-2030 Scientific Research Strategic Plan.
- The document was very well received by the Committee and has been recognized as significant milestone to advancing anti-doping science.
- The committee raised the importance of addressing inadvertent doping cases to minimize harm to innocent athletes, the limits of artificial intelligence (AI) in identifying gaps, stronger collaboration with international federations and the pharmaceutical industry, key performance indicators (KPIs) to track annual progress, and current gaps in translating complex science into practical knowledge for Anti-Doping Organizations.
- The HMRC approved the final version for presentation to the WADA Executive Committee in March 2026. LE stressed the long-term nature of the Plan and that success means progressing on most planned items over several years.

### Item 3: Update on financial situation

- Prof. Olivier Rabin (OR) updated the HMRC on the 2026 research budget. The budget is set to increase by \$1 million in 2026 to \$5.7 million owing to special contributions from some countries. The increase will allow more targeted and more innovative research projects, including riskier but potentially higher-reward studies.
- OR confirmed that the full research budget was spent in 2025, indicating strong demand and quality of projects. The recruitment of Dr. Lisa Starr (LS) in 2025 supported research coordination and new software integration forecasted in 2026 aims to enhance efficiency.

### Item 4: Review and recommendations for the 2026 cycle 1 WADA Call for Scientific Research Projects

- Discussion of 7 Full Applications (FA) selected from 17 Expressions of Interest (EOI) submitted for Cycle 1 of the 2026 Research Program. An additional FA was received from a previous cycle of EOIs. The 8 FAs, totaling a \$1.58 million USD requested budget, were reviewed across multiple categories, including EPO detection, gene doping, and AI models. A summary of each research proposal, a compilation of the three external reviews, the scores and WADA remarks were presented. All FAs and their respective reviews were shared with the HMRC members ahead of the meeting.
- The HMRC considered the recommendations from the external reviewers and WADA comments (if any) and discussed each grant. As a result, two projects were selected and recommended for funding: 261F01HP (fully approved) and 261B02CR (conditionally approved). The condition to approve 261B02CR is to include samples containing endogenous VAR-EPO in the analysis, with a suggestion to collaborate with another anti-doping laboratory.

- One Proposal as referred to the Gene and Cell Doping Expert Advisory Group (EAG) for further consideration, who recommended not to fund.
- Two proposals were recommended for resubmission in a following cycle, with major modifications to narrow the project scope.
- Feedback was provided to improve some of the non-recommended grants.

#### Item 5: Review and recommendations for the Special Call for Synthesis of Reference Material

- Discussion of 17 full applications (FA) submitted for the Special Call for Synthesis of Reference Materials. The 17 applications, totaling a \$1.2 million USD requested budget, were reviewed. LM presented WADA's priority substances, a brief summary of each research proposal, a compilation of the external reviews, and remarks from external reviewers and the Lab EAG. All FAs and their respective reviews were shared with the HMRC members ahead of the meeting.
- The HMRC considered the recommendations from the external reviewers and LabEAG, and as a result, 4 projects were selected for a total of \$135,943.00 USD and recommended for funding (26RM04GS, 26RM09PR, 26RM12CR and 26RM13GS). The recommended projects covered the synthesis of the following substances:
  - Stable isotope-labelled alpha-hydroxy-salmeterol
  - Epimer of AC-262,536
  - Hydroxymetabolite of ACP-105 (M1b metabolite 2)
  - Metabolite of gestrinone
  - Asialo EPO
  - Alpha-Naphtoflavone M1 and M2, and their respective glucuronides.
- The HMRC concluded the discussions on all projects and will submit the recommendations for approval of funding of the selected projects during the WADA ExCo meeting on 17 March 2026, in Baku (Azerbaijan).

#### Next meeting

- 20-21 August 2026: in-person meeting including review and recommendations for 2026 Cycle 2 full applications.

#### Closing of meeting

PROJECT INFORMATION		HMRC meeting		
Project	Duration	Funding Recommendation	Recommended budget (USD)	Comments
DopingLake – A Raw Data Repository OLAP to ground Anti-Doping Science	2 years	Fund	\$80,760.00	Will need to confirm how much of work has already been done
False positive rEPO results due to degradation of VAR-EPO in urine samples?	1 year	Fund conditional	\$50,600.00	
6 Full Applications		Do not fund		

		PROJECT INFORMATION		HMRC meeting	
AdminCode	Name	Project	Duration	Funding Recommendation	Recommended budget (USD)
26RM04GS	Georg Schitter	Synthesis of Alpha-Hydroxy-d5-Salmeterol	1 year	Fund	\$ 26,175.00
26RM09PR	Phillip Rendle	Synthesis, purification, characterization, delivery and stability of targets B, C and D in the Request for Applications	3 years	Fund	\$ 65,463.00
26RM12CR	Christian Reichel	Asialo EPO: Synthesis and doping-relevant characterization by SAR-, SDS- and IEF-PAGE	1 year	Fund	\$ 14,500.00
		Synthesis of alpha-Naphtoflavone M1 & its glucuronide and alpha-Naphtoflavone M2 & its glucuronide	1 year	Fund	\$ 29,805.00
26RM13GS	Georg Schitter	13 Full Applications		Do not fund	