

4 February 2022

World Code Against Cancer Framework

Questions and Answers (Q&A)

On the occasion of World Cancer Day 2022, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) has launched the website of the World Code Against Cancer Framework (<https://cancer-code-world.iarc.who.int>).

1. What is the World Code Against Cancer Framework?

The World Code Against Cancer Framework is an IARC-led initiative to develop and disseminate Regional Codes Against Cancer to promote cancer prevention globally. The framework provides an umbrella strategy, based on a common and rigorous methodology, to maintain the coherence of the different Regional Codes Against Cancer.

Each Regional Code Against Cancer will offer an exceptional public health tool that provides evidence-based recommendations to educate the population on healthy behaviours and to encourage participation in prevention programmes, as well as to guide and support governments in the implementation of cancer control strategies.

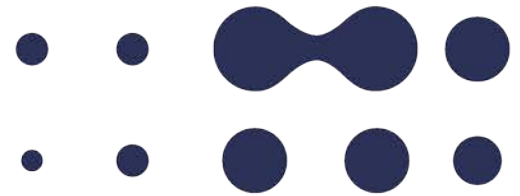
Regional Codes Against Cancer will focus on regions that are sufficiently large but also distinct enough to merit the development of versions adapted to differences in risk factors and cancer patterns, as well as economic, social, and cultural conditions (e.g. Latin America and the Caribbean, South-East Asia, East Africa).

2. Who is involved in this initiative?

Each Regional Code Against Cancer has the participation of multiple stakeholders, including: technical working groups of independent experts from the region, which will propose cancer prevention recommendations following a rigorous methodological process; a regional Scientific Committee, which will oversee the process, revise what the working groups produce, and eventually approve the recommendations; and the advocates and disseminators, who will be instrumental in the implementation of the corresponding Regional Code Against Cancer in their respective countries.

Each Regional Code Against Cancer includes the involvement of scientists who are experts on cancer risk factors (e.g. tobacco, diet, air pollution, infections) and preventive interventions (e.g. vaccination, screening), experts in public health policies, and communications experts, supported by experts in systematic literature reviews.

Each Regional Code Against Cancer will be produced *by* the regional experts *for* their region.



3. How does the development of Regional Codes Against Cancer work?

The World Code Against Cancer Framework provides the common strategy and methodology to develop region-specific recommendations on cancer prevention. Regional Codes Against Cancer will be developed independently and will be based on reviewing and summarizing the latest scientific evidence on lifestyle, environmental, occupational, and infectious risk factors and effective medical interventions, to translate this evidence base into cancer prevention recommendations.

These recommendations will be targeted to the general population and policy-makers, tailored to the context and needs of a specific region. This approach will offer: (i) the effective communication of scientifically up-to-date evidence; (ii) a stimulus for the empowerment of communities and a good framework for education programmes about cancer prevention; (iii) a strong evidence base and regional data; (iv) ownership and political impact, through the endorsement of the recommendations by the countries in a region; and, last but not least, (v) a united voice to call for cancer prevention.

4. Why is it important to have scientists working on cancer prevention recommendations?

It is important that cancer prevention recommendations are based on the latest scientific evidence and developed following a rigorous methodology. This will ensure that by following those recommendations, which are scientifically proven, people can reduce their risk of developing cancer and dying from cancer. The aim is to provide clear, evidence-based messages and actionable recommendations. The more recommendations people follow, the lower their risk of cancer will be.

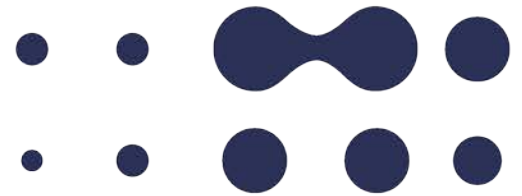
5. Why was the World Code Against Cancer Framework created?

Some risk factors are common worldwide. However, epidemiological patterns (e.g. certain infections) are region-specific, and, more importantly, socioeconomic and cultural conditions and access to effective cancer prevention interventions vary across regions.

Regional Codes Against Cancer will assess the needs of the specific region, considering not only epidemiological factors but also social inequalities and economic barriers, the availability and accessibility of health-care systems' portfolios of services (e.g. early detection and subsequent access to and quality of care), and challenges in implementing the recommended policies and innovations.

All of these considerations highlight the need to adapt each Regional Code Against Cancer to the reality of the specific region, by developing a set of key cancer prevention recommendations tailored to the region's needs.

The World Code Against Cancer Framework gathers all of the independent Regional Codes Against Cancer under the same umbrella strategy and methodology.



6. What is the European Code Against Cancer?

The European Code Against Cancer is an initiative of the European Commission to inform people about key actions they can take for themselves or their families to reduce their risk of cancer. The current 4th edition consists of 12 recommendations that most people can follow without any special skills or advice. The more recommendations people follow, the lower their risk of cancer will be. It has been estimated that almost half of all deaths due to cancer in Europe could be avoided if everyone followed the recommendations.

More than 80 experts across the European Union contributed over a 2-year period to a multidisciplinary collaborative effort to produce the 12 cancer prevention recommendations and related materials, which are available in all European Union languages (<https://cancer-code-europe.iarc.fr/index.php/en/>).

7. What will the Latin America and the Caribbean Code Against Cancer include?

The Latin America and the Caribbean Code Against Cancer project is the first regional adaptation of the European Code Against Cancer, under the umbrella of the World Code Against Cancer Framework.

It will offer unified and clear evidence-based messages, suited to the epidemiological, economic, social, and cultural conditions of Latin America and the Caribbean, to educate the population on cancer prevention. It will also include guidance on cancer prevention for primary health care providers and policy-makers.

More than 60 experts across Latin America and the Caribbean are currently involved in the development, implementation, and dissemination of the first Latin America and the Caribbean Code Against Cancer.

The Latin America and the Caribbean Code Against Cancer is expected to be launched in 2023.

For more information, please contact

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The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) is part of the World Health Organization. Its mission is to coordinate and conduct research on the causes of human cancer, the mechanisms of carcinogenesis, and to develop scientific strategies for cancer control. The Agency is involved in both epidemiological and laboratory research and disseminates scientific information through publications, meetings, courses, and fellowships. If you wish your name to be removed from our press release emailing list, please write to com@iarc.fr.