STRATEGIC PLAN
2016-2020
STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-2020

Introduction

BY PROFESSOR FAUSTO PINTO, FESC,
PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN SOCIETY OF CARDIOLOGY (2014 TO 2016)

The European Society of Cardiology (ESC) is a not-for-profit medical society with circa 95 000 members drawn primarily from its 56 member countries, but not exclusively. Our mission is to reduce the burden of cardiovascular disease (CVD) in Europe. In pursuit of that mission, we undertake an impressive array of scientific, educational, and related activities. By exploiting a vast pool of expertise and capability, the ESC has become known as an innovator and thought leader, and has gained an enviable reputation for its contribution to the fight against cardiovascular disease. During the last year, over 5 000 healthcare professionals volunteered their knowledge, skills, energy, and commitment to ESC activities.

While our mission has always remained clear and well-defined, the infrastructure supporting the ESC’s scientific work and educational programmes has undoubtedly become more complex. It is therefore vital to ensure that the organisation remains fully aligned with the mission, and our strategic priorities remain relevant to the changing world. Accordingly, the ESC Board has recently carried out a strategic planning exercise to assess the external environment in which we operate and to establish an updated framework of objectives and priorities covering the next five years.

The thorough and robust strategic planning process we adopted results in an exciting new strategy for the ESC, and positions us well for the opportunities ahead. The key initiatives include an ambitious scheme for individual membership, an adaptive congress model to meet shifts in participant needs; the formation of a new entity to develop the ESC education portfolio; the creation of a research Think Tank to lead innovation efforts and coordinate research initiatives; and enhanced capabilities to ensure that we reach all external stakeholders and influence policy decisions favourable to our mission.

I would like to thank the many volunteers who have helped develop this plan, and the staff who tirelessly supported the process. The following pages provide a brief insight into the process itself; an introduction to the overall 2016-2020 ESC strategic plan, and highlights from the working-level task forces addressing each of the ESC’s focus areas of Membership, Research, Congress, Education, and Advocacy.
2 Background

This document is a brief summary intended to introduce the ESC’s strategic plan. It does not attempt to cover the full extent of the strategic review undertaken or expand on the many factors which have influenced the shape and direction of the plan.

The ESC is a volunteer-led, medical scientific society representing 95,000 cardiologists and allied professionals. One of the great strengths of the ESC is that it uniquely addresses the whole field of cardiology through its organisational structure of constituent bodies. As well as its focus on general cardiology, six ESC Associations, 15 ESC Working Groups and five Councils concentrate on specific aspects of cardiology and, collectively, these represent the complete spectrum of cardiovascular medicine.

The society delivers a broad portfolio of education and training programmes, and is a strong advocate for increasing care standards through professional development. The ESC is well regarded as a source of high quality, unbiased, evidence-based scientific information. Its experts are renowned and their opinions sought, and papers and articles written by members are regularly published. ESC Clinical Practice Guidelines are in widespread use around the world, while the ESC’s European Heart Journal family has become one of the leading cardiovascular-related publications worldwide. A large number of research activities are carried out, drawing together expertise from across ESC member countries.

ESC congresses and meetings are amongst the most important events in the global cardiology calendar, and are renowned for their world-class scientific programmes. Importantly, the ESC coordinates many registries and trials across Europe, offering expert analysis at every stage of therapy research. Key alliances and relationships have been formed with many external bodies to help shape policies which affect all aspects of cardiovascular health. These range from large EU institutions to groups representing other chronic diseases. Finally, through its Global Scientific Activities (GSA) initiative, the ESC has also forged deep relationships with its counterparts in other regions including the Americas, Africa, Asia Pacific, and the Middle East.
Strategic planning process

The strategic planning process adopted by the current ESC Board was developed to ensure that future objectives are fully aligned with the mission and vision, and that brand elements are fully exploited. The process has instigated a review of the external environment in which the society operates to identify threats and opportunities, and remedies. It also determined the most effective response to major trends such as profound shifts in demographics, the revolutions in social media and information technology, and the ongoing economic crisis impacting the funding of healthcare.

In launching this planning cycle, the ESC Board aimed to establish a long-term framework to guide important decision-making, the ramifications of which extend far beyond Board terms-of-office. It also wanted to ensure that the ESC’s operational model is sustainable economically, and that revenue and investment forecasts are both viable and secure. Finally, the Board instructed that all strategic objectives and the consequential actions be measurable, and that the process should utilise business intelligence reports as evidence.

The detailed planning phase was undertaken at the functional level. It was decided by ESC leadership to concentrate on five focus areas: Membership, Research, Congress, Education, and Advocacy. These segments in particular reflect the ESC’s key outward-facing activities and the functions which enable and support them. The bottom-up process to develop a new plan for each of these areas was undertaken by dedicated task forces. A template was established to guide the process which followed the flow outlined below.

■ Define the intended outcomes
■ Analyse current processes and activities
■ Identify gaps
■ Create objectives
■ Establish measurable actions to deliver objectives

In addition, each of the focus areas was asked to ensure that its response considered a series of key strategic issues which, according to research, had the potential to impact the plan. These cover:

■ Demographic shifts within the cardiology profession
■ Technology revolution in IT and social media
■ Globalisation and geographic reach
■ Stringent regulatory environment
■ Membership engagement, retention, and recruitment
After deliberation, the five task forces established individual plans for their focus areas. These were independently reviewed to ensure that they were consistent in scope, scale, and reach, and did not conflict with each other. The high-level ESC strategic plan was then compiled and presented to the ESC Board for approval.

### Board 2014 - 2016

**Elected voting members**

**President**
Prof. Fausto Pinto, FESC, Portugal

**President-Elect**
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Prof. Dan Atar, FESC, Norway - National Affairs, Editors Network & Cardiologists of Tomorrow
Prof. Barbara Casadei, FESC, United Kingdom - Scientific Affairs (includes Working Groups, Councils and Women in Cardiology) & Research/Clinical Trials

**Councillors**
Prof. Carlos Aguiar, FESC, Portugal - Global Affairs/Communications
Prof. Stefan Anker, FESC, Germany - Scientific Affairs
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Prof. Ian Graham, FESC, Ireland - Global Affairs
Prof. Patrizio Lancellotti, FESC, Belgium - Scientific Affairs
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**Past-President**
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Prof. Gilbert Habib, FESC, France - President of EACVI
Prof. Karl-Heinz Kuck, FESC, Germany - President of EHRA
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Prof. Stephan Windecker, FESC, Switzerland - President of EAPCI
Prof. Héctor Bueno, FESC, Spain - President of ACCA

**Non-voting members**
Prof. Alec Vahanian, FESC, France - Chair of Education Committee
Prof. Geneviève Derumeaux, FESC, France - Chair of Congress Programme Committee
Prof. José Luis Zamorano, FESC, Spain - Chair of Committee for Practice Guidelines
Prof. Roberto Ferrari, FESC, Italy - Chair EORP
Prof. Frans Van de Werf, FESC, Belgium - Chair of European Affairs Committee
Prof. Thomas Lüscher, FESC, Switzerland - Chair of Publications Committee
Prof. Donna Fitzsimons, NFESC, United Kingdom - Representative CCNAP
Prof. Lina Badimon, FESC, Spain - Representative Council on Basic Cardiovascular Science
Dr. Gunnar Olsson, Sweden - Advisor
Dr. Nigel Clarke, United Kingdom - Advisor

Mrs Isabel Bardinet, France - Chief Executive Officer
Mrs Nathalie Lefebvre, France - ESC Chief Financial Officer
Ms Marina Ximeris, France - ESC Board Secretary
ESC Strategic Plan 2016-2020

The graphic shown overleaf summarises the key elements of the ESC’s 2016-2020 strategic plan. The five focus areas are organised in the graphic to emphasise that Membership is the foundation of the society. This crucial aspect underpins the core outward-facing activities undertaken by the Research, Congress, and Education areas, all of which are supported by Advocacy.

The ultimate driver for the revised strategy is shown at the top of the graphic, represented by the re-affirmed ESC mission and vision statements. A number of objectives have come out of the planning exercise and they are each backed up by a detailed and measurable action plan covering implementation and ongoing progress monitoring. Of those objectives, five have been identified as core elements of the ESC updated strategy, one per focus area.

The core elements are key initiatives which, when successfully implemented, will improve the efficiency and sustainability of the ESC and transform the way in which it pursues its mission. The core elements are:

**Individual membership:** A direct membership scheme will be launched at ESC Congress 2016 to augment the current system of indirect membership. This is expected to encourage closer engagement in ESC activities and offers four levels of membership: Member, Professional Member, Professional Plus Member, and Fellow of the ESC. The Member category is free and is automatically provided to members of National Cardiac Societies. The other categories are subject to a fee. The list of benefits and access to services depend on category and are designed to incentivise the new scheme.

**Education portfolio:** Needs assessment initiatives will be undertaken to ensure that the training and lifelong learning content available properly reflects the requirements of cardiology professionals, and there will be a focus on increasing the engagement of ESC educational courses by national and affiliated cardiac societies. Organisation and infrastructure will be further enhanced to support our
efforts to become the reference in cardiovascular CME and CPD, with relevant accreditations. Our new frontier will be “Performance Improvement and Quality Improvement”.

**Research coordination:** An ESC-wide Think Tank will be established to lead innovation efforts and oversee all research activities with emphasis on management and coordination. This new approach will focus the ESC on Research and Development, and also increase the visibility of projects to the membership to allow better access. The Think Tank will also consider how to improve the way in which cardiovascular research is covered during training.

**Congress model:** While scientific excellence and innovation will remain as the pillars of the ESC’s congress and meetings portfolio, the model will be adapted to suit the changing requirements of audiences. Features will be adopted to counter demographic shifts amongst cardiologists and develop a programme to test a virtual congress concept with live online streaming.

**Advocacy management:** This broad area covers lobbying, relationships, PR activities, and all related communications supporting our efforts to influence favourable cardiovascular policy and reach out to relevant stakeholders in support of our mission. A new methodology will be introduced to coordinate all advocacy elements and ensure that the ESC leverages its brand, and brand attributes, to ensure that essential information is clearly and concisely disseminated to those that need it.
European Society of Cardiology
Strategic Plan 2016 - 2020

OUR MISSION: To reduce the burden of cardiovascular disease in Europe
OUR VISION: The ESC will be recognised as the leading authority for scientific and educational programmes which improve cardiovascular health. To achieve this, it needs to:

KEY OBJECTIVES:
• To improve coordination and management of all ESC Advocacy activities
• To provide faster, more effective response to requests for comment and opinion on relevant matters
• To improve promotion of cardiovascular-related topics relevant to ESC and its work

KEY ACTIONS:
• Form ESC-wide Research Think Tank
• Develop new process for internal and external communications
• Establish ESC Scholar programme

RESEARCH
Encourage excellence and manage research innovation

KEY OBJECTIVES:
• To improve research coordination and prioritisation
• To improve research visibility and access
• To increase quality and value through training
• To provide better focus on innovation
• To exert more influence on research regulatory frameworks
• To exert more influence on research funds distribution

KEY ACTIONS:
• Form ESC-wide Research Think Tank
• Develop new process for internal and external communications
• Establish ESC Scholar programme

MEMBERSHIP
Engage with cardiovascular professionals and grow our membership

KEY OBJECTIVES:
• To recruit 22,000 Professional Members by 2020
• To widen awareness of the individual membership initiative
• To offer an organisation capable of promoting, developing & supporting the initiative

KEY ACTIONS:
• Launch an ESC individual membership initiative at ESC Congress 2016
• Establish a compelling value proposition for ESC membership
• Implement a communication plan that reaches out to potential members

STRATEGIC TRENDS
• Gender flip (70% of cardiologists in training are women)
• Generation gap (leading to cultural changes)
• Geographical reach
• Increasing economic pressure in health care
European Society of Cardiology

**Key Objectives:**
- To improve research coordination and prioritisation
- To improve research visibility and access
- To increase quality and value through training
- To provide better focus on innovation
- To exert more influence on research regulatory frameworks
- To exert more influence on research funds distribution

**Key Actions:**
- Form ESC-wide Research Think Tank
- Develop new process for internal and external communications
- Establish ESC Scholar programme

**Key Objectives:**
- To recruit 22,000 Professional Members by 2020
- To widen awareness of the individual membership initiative
- To offer an organisation capable of promoting, developing, and supporting the initiative

**Key Actions:**
- Develop an inventory of events and launch a detailed coordination, management, and tracking process
- Appoint and train a cadre of expert, credible spokespersons to speak on behalf of ESC
- Provide training for ESC staff so they can rapidly adapt responses to suit all target audiences and channels
- Develop plans to fully exploit all media channels, including social media

**Key Objectives:**
- To improve coordination and management of all ESC Advocacy activities
- To provide faster, more effective response to requests for comment and opinion on relevant matters
- To improve promotion of cardiovascular-related topics relevant to ESC and its work

**Key Actions:**
- Develop world-class scientific programmes and ensure that the format of congresses adapts to audience needs
- Design and implement initiatives to engage new audiences
- Develop, test, and pilot virtual congress concept
- Diversify congress-related derivative products

**Our Mission:**
To reduce the burden of cardiovascular disease in Europe

**Our Vision:**
The ESC will be recognised as the leading authority for scientific and educational programmes which improve cardiovascular health. To achieve this, it needs to:

- Be the prime resource for professional development of cardiovascular health care professionals
- Be a key facilitator of excellence in research and innovation
- Be the voice for the ESC membership
- Advocate the highest standards of cardiovascular patient care and promote cardiovascular health

**Strategic Drivers:**
- Promote the ESC family as a single, cohesive entity and reinforce ESC brand values
- Be the prime resource for professional development of cardiovascular health care professionals
- Be a key facilitator of excellence in research and innovation
- Be the voice for the ESC membership
- Advocate the highest standards of cardiovascular patient care and promote cardiovascular health

**Strategic Trends:**
- Gender flip (70% of cardiologists in training are women)
- Generation gap (leading to cultural changes)
- Geographical reach
- Increasing economic pressure in health care
- Stringent regulatory environment
- IT revolution
- Member engagement, retention and recruitment

**Advocacy**
Exert influence, manage our brand and leverage our reputation

**Education**
- arning and professional development
- an educational blueprint
- art technology enhanced learning to
- offer based on needs assessment and validated instructional design principles

**Congress**
Organisation of successful congresses which offer the best scientific content and attract the best people

**Key Objectives:**
- To make ESC congresses ‘must attend’ events
- To widen audience participation
- To exploit new technology for virtual congress concept
- To launch tailored products and seek non-healthcare industry support

**Key Actions:**
- Develop world-class scientific programmes and ensure that the format of congresses adapts to audience needs
- Design and implement initiatives to engage new audiences
- Develop, test, and pilot virtual congress concept
- Diversify congress-related derivative products

**Membership**
Engage with cardiovascular professionals and grow our membership

**Key Objectives:**
- To gain CME and CPD accreditation and deliver relevant education and training
- To protect the ESC’s reputation for delivering robust, unbiased education programmes from national and affiliated cardiac societies product portfolio
- To respond to demand from national and affiliated cardiac societies
- To extend the education product portfolio

**Key Actions:**
- Develop and implement an educational blueprint
- Engage in state of the art technology enhanced learning to develop robust educational programmes
- Develop educational offer based on needs assessment and incorporating robust validated instructional design principles
Focus area highlights

**Congress:** ESC’s extensive portfolio of congresses and meetings demonstrates its scientific leadership and innovation credentials, and is a powerful projection of its brands. They are also a clear statement of the ESC’s unique value proposition addressing the whole spectrum of cardiology, and they provide extensive networking and collaboration opportunities. However, major changes are expected in the way in which congresses are funded, and in audience demographics and preferences. In addition, the ESC needs to ensure that its congresses remain ‘must-attend’ events. The strategic review, therefore, investigated the effectiveness of the current congress model and its long-term sustainability. While scientific excellence and innovation will never be compromised, the task force identified a number of fresh ideas to evolve its model and these were examined further. A series of strategic objectives together with measurable action plans has now been agreed. The key objective is to enhance the ESC’s reputation for world-class scientific content and to broaden the congress format to address the needs of diverse audiences.

**Membership:** The ESC currently operates an indirect membership scheme in which members of National Cardiac Societies from ESC countries, and those of the Associations, Working Groups and Councils of the ESC, automatically qualify for ESC membership. The rationale to adopt a new direct membership scheme is driven by the need to better engage members in ESC-led initiatives and to encourage their contribution and expertise. The ESC wants to enhance the sense of ownership and belonging within its membership so that more of them volunteer to participate in ESC-led activities. The new scheme, which will be launched in August 2016, offers four categories of membership: Member, Professional Member, Professional Plus Member, and Fellow of the ESC. All but the first are subject to a fee, and the list of benefits and services which can be accessed has been increased. This new cadre of direct members will bring powerful, collective influence on the ESC’s activities and make a strong contribution to delivering its mission. Key elements of the strategy include enhancing membership rewards, a communications programme to promote the new scheme, and ensuring that there are procedures in place to process applications.

**Education:** The ESC is a highly respected provider of education and training programmes designed to meet the lifelong learning needs of cardiologists, cardiologists-in-training, and other physicians and healthcare professionals with an interest in cardiology. A key objective in our approach is to activate the ESC Virtuous Circle by linking increasingly with ESC Practice Guidelines, Scientific Publications and Surveys & Registries to optimise effectiveness. Many of its educational products
generate revenue that is used to support the ESC and its overall mission. The ESC’s position in this sector is, however, being challenged by other providers. The new strategy has been designed to strengthen our capabilities and develop supporting infrastructure so the ESC delivers robust, unbiased, education programmes built on a strong evidence-based foundation and contribute to reinforcing the sustainability of the business model, and engage new stakeholders.

**Research:** The ESC’s key aims in this area particularly include incubation, innovation, and management of world-class cardiovascular-related research programmes, and prioritisation of research topics that address the unmet needs of cardiovascular medicine. The task force reaffirmed that activities need to address the complete research life cycle; from basic science through applied and clinical research, through epidemiological studies, to health economics. The strategic plan includes initiatives to improve coordination and communications of research activities, prioritise research training, exert influence over the research regulatory environment, exert influence over EU funding and ensure it is appropriately distributed, and create a framework for ESC-wide research interaction.

**Advocacy:** The ESC has a diverse and complex footprint in respect of its external relationships. To achieve its mission, it has to constantly ensure that all stakeholders are aware of the latest scientific evidence. It also needs to exert influence in many areas and communicate and interact with a large number of organisations and bodies, associated societies, EU institutions, press and media, and – increasingly – patients. Its messages need to be consistent and always reflect the ESC’s priorities and mission. The task force considered the key requirements for a strategy and these included reinforcing the ESC’s reputation as a valid source of unbiased scientific information, positioning its spokespersons as experts to a wide number of external bodies, continuing to warn about the burden of CVD, and ensuring that the ESC’s voice is heard on matters such as prevention and care standards. The strategic objectives which were developed will ensure improved coordination and management of all advocacy activities, a training programme for ESC spokespersons, and a far-reaching awareness campaign of ESC initiatives and its work.
The ESC wishes to recognise and thank the ESC 2014 - 2016 Board Members, the ESC volunteers and staff members for their contribution and commitment to this strategic plan.