

ESC Strategic Plan
2023 - 2028



Future Scenarios



Our Values

- Integrity • Inclusivity, Respect and Empathy
- Innovation, Agility and Creativity • The Pursuit of Excellence

Our Mission: To reduce the burden of cardiovascular disease

Our Strategic Aims



A Welcoming Society with Fair and Transparent Governance

Nurture inclusivity, diversity and clear structures for collective decision-making



Trusted Knowledge Effectively Delivered

Provision of robust and unbiased, validated information in creative formats via communication channels adapted to the needs and preferences of a global audience



A Membership Experience Rich in Rewards and Benefits

Continue to build a strong community with valued year-round membership benefits for cardiovascular healthcare professionals in ESC National Cardiac Societies and across the world



A Focus on Person-Centred Healthcare

Emphasise the patient perspective in research, training and education, as well as guidelines and scientific documents



High Quality Data and Research

Support of collaborative research and active contributions to high quality data collection



Environmental Sustainability

Mindfulness of the environmental footprint and active pursuit of environmental sustainability across all ESC activities

Future Scenarios

Demographic Changes

Ageing of the population and increased multimorbidity

The Future of Cardiology

Precision medicine through increasingly refined diagnostic and therapeutic options

The Cardiologist of the Future

Subspecialisation shapes the professional landscape in cardiovascular medicine

Digital Health

Digital tools, artificial intelligence and big data analytics play a prominent role in medicine and research

Emphasis on the Patient Perspective

The patient at the heart of all that we do

Societal Changes

Evolving priorities and values include climate change and environmental sustainability, diversity and inclusivity, but also ethical conduct and freedom from bias and undue influence

Our Values

Integrity

Trustworthiness, transparency and adherence to strong principles

Inclusivity, Respect and Empathy

Integration of all stakeholders in cardiovascular medicine, in a community that is open and diverse

Innovation, Agility and Creativity

Inspired adaptation to emerging needs and evolving trends; ready to experiment

The Pursuit of Excellence

Focus on expert performance, our mission, our patients

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Introduction

The European Society of Cardiology (ESC) is a not-for-profit professional medical Society, based on the membership of 57 National Cardiac Societies and with more than 100,000 individual members across the world. Seven Associations within the ESC represent subspecialty areas in cardiovascular medicine, with further support by 6 Councils and 15 Working groups. The activities of the European Society of Cardiology have a global reach, supported by collaborative relationships with partner organisations such as the ESC 47 Affiliated Cardiac Societies.

Our mission is **'to reduce the burden of cardiovascular disease'**, which affects countless lives and remains the world's leading cause of death. Guided by this mission, the ESC serves the cardiovascular community and patients through congresses, education and professional development, guidelines and scientific documents, journals, research and registries, as well as advocacy, which has become key to reversing the slow decline in public investment in cardiovascular health.

The ESC Strategic Plan 2023-2028 provides guidance for the Society's continued success in a changing and dynamic environment. It provides clear, unifying aims and direction, based on a thorough analysis of current and future trends in cardiovascular medicine and beyond - trends which will influence our Society and shape the environment in which the ESC operates and evolves.

The Strategic Plan 2023-2028 is a strong expression of the ESC's commitment to cardiovascular medicine and its dedication to people: dedication to patients with heart and vascular disease and to the healthcare professionals who provide their care, and the volunteers. The new Strategic Plan will enable the European Society of Cardiology to optimally serve and support the cardiovascular healthcare community and patients for the next five years.



ESC Board 2022 - 2024

Process

The European Society of Cardiology Strategic Plan 2023-2028 is the result of an extensive effort which started in early 2021.

Early, systematic contributions by multiple stakeholder groups included:



ESC Board working sessions on “identifying ESC core activities in a changing environment”.



Workshops with representatives of the ESC National Cardiac Societies as well as Associations, Working Groups and Councils during the ESC Spring Summit in March 2021, where participants reflected on the future practice of cardiovascular medicine in varying environments, with a particular focus on obstacles to overcome and opportunities to be seized.



Four Expert Task Forces commissioned by the ESC Board to explore the following topics:

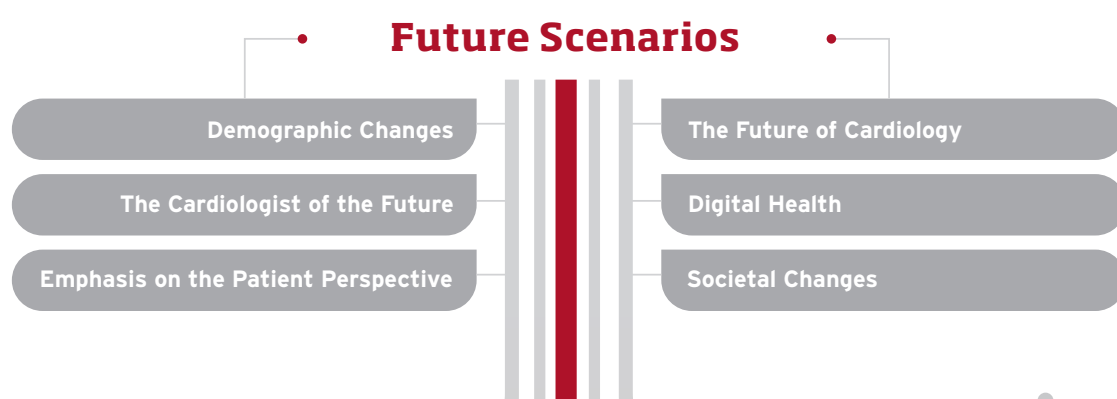
- Congress of the future
- Data and publications
- The evolution of cardiovascular medicine, education and training
- Innovation in cardiology



Subsequent to this preparatory work, a series of three workshops in close succession served to pursue a collaborative and structured process with representatives from all segments of the Society, including the ESC Board, representatives of ESC Associations, National Cardiac Societies, Working Groups and Councils, patient representatives, external advisors, Editors in Chief as well as of the Digital Health Committee and Committee for Young Cardiovascular Professionals. The workshops followed a systematic methodology and were complemented by periods of consultation from a wider audience. The final Strategic Plan was approved by the ESC Board on 15th December 2022.



Future Scenarios



A strategic roadmap requires the identification of future developments and trends that will influence the Society and the environment in which it operates. For the ESC, such trends include those immediately linked to heart disease, cardiovascular science, and the practice of cardiology but also medicine and the provision of healthcare in general, as well as general aspects of life and society. Based on the identification and ranking of future developments, scenarios were developed that describe their specific influence on our Society. These scenarios suggest actions to proactively address difficulties the ESC may face but they also identify opportunities that will enhance our ability to fulfil our mission.

The following six scenarios and reflected courses of action have been identified as particularly relevant for the European Society of Cardiology

SCENARIO 1:**Demographic Changes****Ageing of the population and increased multimorbidity**

ESC member countries face continuous growth of the elderly population segment, both in absolute numbers and relative to the overall population. Consequently, the incidence and prevalence of heart and vascular disease, along with its consequences such as heart failure will continue to grow. Furthermore, lifestyle changes create a large number of younger individuals with comorbidities putting them at risk for cardiovascular disease. Next to the growing burden of heart and vascular diseases, the number and severity of co-existing conditions will increasingly require tailored and individualised management, with a focus on patient-centred care.

**Identified courses of action for the European Society of Cardiology**

- 1** Revisit all ESC policies and activities to ensure that they reflect solutions for multimorbidity whenever appropriate.
- 2** Support and promote basic science on the molecular mechanisms of ageing as well as research, data collection, and clinical trials that address cardiovascular disease, the management of cardiovascular disease, and individualised care in the elderly and those with coexisting conditions.
- 3** Advocate for investment in the prevention, diagnosis and management of cardiovascular disease for the entire population, including specific aspects of cardiovascular disease prevention and care in the elderly.

SCENARIO 2:

The Future of Cardiology



Precision medicine through increasingly refined diagnostic and therapeutic options

Knowledge about cardiovascular disease mechanisms, underlying genomic principles, diagnostic approaches, therapeutic options, technology for imaging and intervention as well as surgical techniques continually evolve and advance. In addition, the borders between everyday life and screening, early detection of disease as well as lifelong monitoring become increasingly fluid. This offers numerous options to tailor the management of cardiovascular disease to the individual patient and their very specific, individual situation - the essence of "precision medicine". Fully leveraging this potential requires integrating specialty and subspecialty cardiology with general cardiovascular care. This must be complemented by an increasingly wide array of non-medical knowledge, skills and competencies, with the aim to provide optimal care to every single patient.



Identified courses of action for the European Society of Cardiology

- 1 Maintain a rich educational programme to train and qualify cardiologists and allied professionals in evolving areas of cardiology and beyond, particularly in genetics and precision medicine.
- 2 Intensify interaction beyond the traditional healthcare space, by reaching out to companies and universities.
- 3 Increase engagement in and contributions towards European regulatory affairs.

SCENARIO 3:**The Cardiologist of the Future**

Subspecialisation shapes the professional landscape in cardiovascular medicine

As the development of cardiovascular medicine continues, subspecialty knowledge and skills will become increasingly diverse. On the other hand, patients and at-risk individuals require an integrative approach to cardiovascular care and practice in “silos” must be avoided. Furthermore, the ESC must develop tools and measures adapted to varied socio-economic environments since not all healthcare settings may be able to support highly specialised practice within cardiology. Subspecialty development and general cardiology therefore need to be balanced and equally represented within the European Society of Cardiology.



Identified courses of action for the European Society of Cardiology

- 1 Position the ESC as a highly recognised professional home for all cardiovascular specialists and generalists.
- 2 Ensure adequate balance and seamless cooperation between general cardiology and cardiovascular medicine subspecialties within the Society as well as potential for growth and development of all constituents through clear and transparent governance.
- 3 Support the creation of disease-oriented management teams and develop disease-oriented education pathways.
- 4 Offer training, qualifications and benefits for general practitioners and allied professionals.
- 5 Provide an attractive, affordable certification programme for cardiovascular institutions.
- 6 Ensure that ESC clinical practice guidelines provide ‘prioritisation’ advice for settings with limited resources or potential for specialisations.

SCENARIO 4:

Digital Health



Digital tools, artificial intelligence and big data analytics play a prominent role in medicine and research

Digital technology, with its potential to store and analyse very large amounts of data, will increasingly penetrate research and medical practice. Artificial intelligence applications such as machine learning will become common tools to enhance scientific and clinical work. In addition, digital communication tools will impact clinical practice, medical decision making, communication with patients, and the ability to monitor patient well-being over extended periods of time. This will profoundly impact the relationship between patients, physicians and other healthcare providers. In order to participate in this development, the integration of specialists in digital technology into all aspects of cardiovascular research and medicine is required, as is the provision of respective competencies and knowledge for cardiovascular healthcare professionals.



Identified courses of action for the European Society of Cardiology

- 1 Partner with data specialists to be a European driver for data definition and harmonisation in digital health in the area of cardiovascular medicine.
- 2 Set standards and train cardiovascular health healthcare professionals in digital technologies.
- 3 Increase the use of simulation and virtual reality in ESC education and training.
- 4 Ensure that clinical practice guidelines and scientific documents can be integrated in IT-based management algorithms, which will improve care and build a strong business model.

SCENARIO 5:**Emphasis on the Patient Perspective****The patient at the heart of all that we do**

An even stronger focus on the individual patient, their specific clinical situation, but also individual needs and expectations will become possible through vastly improved diagnostic and therapeutic options. Additionally, shared decision making with patients is increasingly ingrained as a societal value. This requires thorough information about the patient gathered through validated methods and benefits from enhanced integration of the patient perspective in the training and education of cardiovascular healthcare professionals, research, clinical practice guidelines and scientific documents. Active patient involvement is one component in achieving the above.

**Identified courses of action for the European Society of Cardiology**

- 1** Provide attractive educational materials for patients.
- 2** Actively involve patient representatives in the development of scientific documents and guidelines.
- 3** Mandate the inclusion of patient-reported outcome measures (PROM), Patient-Reported experience measures (PREM), and quality of life (QoL) in clinical practice guidelines and research.
- 4** Work towards global recognition of the ESC as a driver for patient-centred management and decision-making in cardiovascular disease.

SCENARIO 6:**Societal Changes**

Evolving priorities and values include climate change and environmental sustainability, diversity and inclusivity, but also ethical conduct and freedom from bias and undue influence

Values and priorities in society constantly evolve. Climate change is a growing concern and environmental sustainability is an increasingly important value across the world and in all segments of the population. Other societal values of growing importance include diversity and inclusivity as well as ethical conduct and absence of undue bias. With ubiquitous availability of information, reputation as a trustworthy and reliable source of knowledge is key. In the coming years more than ever before, any organisation will only be able to harness its full potential when it promotes and actively lives values that speak to all individuals.



Identified courses of action for the European Society of Cardiology

- 1 Aim for all ESC operations to have a neutral environmental impact, and establish the ESC as a leader and think tank for environmentally sustainable medical practice.
- 2 Ensure freedom from bias and undue influence in all products and activities through enforcing and monitoring clearly designed and transparent conflict of interest (COI) and ethical conduct policies.
- 3 Ensure attractiveness to individuals of all ages and diverse populations, through pertinent policies and by actively advocating for diversity and inclusivity.

Our Strategic Aims



Strategic aims for the Society are fundamental targets that have been identified as overarching principles which will drive the Society towards success in the scenarios outlined above. Applicable in a translational fashion to guide all ESC activities, they constitute the essential core elements of the strategic plan and provide direction for all activities of the European Society of Cardiology, its Associations, Working Groups and Councils.

The following **strategic aims** have been defined:



A Welcoming Society with Fair and Transparent Governance



Nurture inclusivity, diversity and clear structures for collective decision-making

Representation of all relevant stakeholders and recruitment of diverse talent are assets for the Society. Robust and clear governance principles along with transparent decision-making processes are required to achieve a strong sense of collaboration and fairness within the Society. Finally, clear governance rules and transparent decision-making ensure continuity of projects and are vital for credibility and trust in the Society. The unity of the European Society of Cardiology is one of its strongest assets and must be maintained.



Specific objectives include:

- 1 Review, and revise where needed, governance procedures aiming for transparency and harmonised decision-making processes to further strengthen the unity of the Society.
- 2 Provide set of requirements, qualifications and responsibilities for all leadership positions and Board roles.
- 3 Implement equality, diversity, and inclusivity (EDI) policies across processes and activities, in respect of the ESC values.
- 4 Enhance communication about ESC structure, governance, and policies.
- 5 Position the Society as a fair and transparent Society in our public policy interactions, advocate for equality and access.



Trusted Knowledge Effectively Delivered



Provision of robust and unbiased, validated information in creative formats via communication channels adapted to the needs and preferences of a global audience

Providing robust, unbiased and validated scientific and clinical information is one of the core principles that underlies the activities of the European Society of Cardiology. Target audiences have rapidly evolving expectations and preferences regarding channels, convenience and interactivity. The ESC must adapt to changing needs and behaviours in order to remain competitive and reach new audiences. The criterion of trustworthiness is still extremely important.



Specific objectives include:

- 1 Create and deliver robust, unbiased and scientifically validated information.
- 2 Issue time-sensitive updates on clinical and research knowledge to match the dynamic nature of scientific evidence.
- 3 Identify and explore Open Science opportunities to strengthen transparency of, and access to, ESC scientific content.
- 4 Ensure global reach and dissemination of ESC messages and channels by strengthening the relationship with National and Affiliated Cardiac Societies.
- 5 Further integrate and harmonise resources for education and dissemination of science across ESC and its Associations, Working Groups and Councils.
- 6 Encourage the development and use of tools for effective knowledge-delivery to patient and public stakeholders.
- 7 Certify individuals and accredit centres across Europe.
- 8 Equip policy makers with the evidence-based solutions to global problems.



A Membership Experience Rich in Rewards and Benefits



Continue to build a strong community with valued year-round membership benefits for cardiovascular healthcare professionals in ESC National Cardiac Societies and across the world

The strength and reach of the European Society of Cardiology, along with its Associations, Councils and Working Groups, depend on the size and diversity of its membership base. ESC Membership, both through National Cardiac Societies and on an individual level, as well as membership in Associations, Councils and Working Groups must be perceived as thoroughly rewarding and attached to appealing, year-round benefits on a professional and personal level. Along with a strong and credible brand, augmented ESC Membership benefits will help to gain and retain members from the global cardiovascular community, which includes everyone working in cardiovascular science, providing care for patients with cardiovascular disease, or serving at-risk populations.



Specific objectives include:

- 1 Emphasise year-round value of membership.
- 2 Engage young professionals as leaders in the design of the membership offer and create specific initiatives for this audience.
- 3 Expand membership to allied professionals and other healthcare professionals working in cardiovascular medicine and science with cardiovascular disease patients and populations at risk.
- 4 Explore a free membership offer for patients.
- 5 Create rewards and benefits which are diverse to respond to the different individual needs of the ESC community.
- 6 Address and take position on issues that directly affect ESC members.
- 7 Enhance activities that facilitate inter-generational support, career opportunities, and easier access to participation in ESC committees.
- 8 Advocate for National Action Plans on cardiovascular health to ensure members have the resources they need to provide the best treatment for their patients.



A Focus on Person-Centred Healthcare



Emphasise the patient perspective in research, training and education, as well as guidelines and scientific documents

Patients and populations at risk are the ultimate focus of healthcare provision. Increasing complexity of patients with cardiovascular disease as well as enhanced diagnostic and therapeutic options both require and allow more individualised and inclusive care. Within the ESC, an increased focus on person-centred healthcare can be achieved through emphasis of the patient perspective in research, training and education, as well as guidelines and scientific documents. Active patient involvement across ESC activities is one component to achieve the above.



Specific objectives include:

- 1 Expand the size and role of the ESC Patient Forum to ensure patient involvement in all main ESC activities.
- 2 Network with patient organisations to support ESC activities requiring patient input and to further disseminate ESC messages among patients.
- 3 Carry the voice of the patient everywhere via education of patients and healthcare professionals.
- 4 Includes Patient-Reported Outcome Measures (PROM) and Patient-Reported Experience Measures (PREM) in clinical practice guidelines and research output.
- 5 Ensure that multidisciplinary expertise is a component of every clinical practice guideline.
- 6 Introduce patient representation in the development of scientific documents.
- 7 Provide patient education material with every clinical practice guideline.
- 8 Direct inclusion of patient priorities in public policy positions.



High Quality Data and Research



Support of collaborative research and active contributions to high quality data collection

Active engagement in research activities, particularly the definition of data standards, provision of high-quality and broad scale data, as well as support and coordination of research projects in cardiovascular medicine are in direct support of the ESC mission. They will strengthen the European contribution to global cardiovascular research and may help National Cardiac Societies engage in scientific activities. ESC-led and coordinated research will attract members and may be a source of revenue.



Specific objectives include:

- 1 Create an ESC data centre as a source of validated data standards and high-quality data.
- 2 Offer opportunities to train and improve skills on data science and research activities.
- 3 Set clear research priorities and become a trusted partner for the European Union and other funders to advance cardiovascular disease research.
- 4 Review and expand scope of ESC research grants to facilitate international collaboration and professional development opportunities.
- 5 Actively influence research grant work programmes via advocacy.



Environmental Sustainability



Mindfulness of the environmental footprint and active pursuit of environmental sustainability across all ESC activities.

Environmental sustainability of operations and activities will be a necessity in the future, with a particular responsibility towards environmental sustainability in the context of cardiovascular disease and health. Credible efforts towards environmental sustainability furthermore constitute an increasingly important component of an organisation's reputation and brand. Finally, environmentally sustainable operations will be financially beneficial.



Specific objectives include:

- 1 Establish the ESC staff position of an environmental officer and create an overall sustainability plan for the Society.
- 2 Aim for carbon neutral operations.
- 3 Prioritise the provision of education on sustainability in cardiovascular healthcare.
- 4 Actively engage with National Cardiac Societies around topics on sustainability.
- 5 Actively engage with industry, regulators, and healthcare providers around sustainability of cardiovascular practice.
- 6 Make environmental issues a priority in research funding.
- 7 Prioritise environmental impact on cardiovascular health in the advocacy agenda and introduce and use of the term "cardio-hazardous".
- 8 Publish official scientific statement(s) around sustainability and environmental impact of cardiovascular practice.

Our Values

Values are an essential component of strategy. They define the way in which the organisation wants to achieve its aims. The European Society of Cardiology is driven by the following values:

Integrity

- Be trustworthy through rational, enlightened, and transparent decisions
- Adhere to strong principles and the transparency of motivation, processes, and leadership
- Doing what we say we will do
- Be responsible for our Society, the cardiovascular community, and the environment

Innovation, Agility and Creativity

- Adapt quickly and creatively to emerging needs and evolving trends
- Be ready to experiment, learn from failure, and improve

Inclusivity, Respect and Empathy

- Acknowledge and include all stakeholders in cardiovascular medicine
- Welcome and nurture an open and diverse community that is attractive to all
- Cultivate a strong sense of team spirit that drives the Society

The Pursuit of Excellence

- Focus on our mission
- Always keep the patient front of mind
- Leverage our expertise to provide the best possible answers for cardiovascular health
- Maintain and enhance the professionalisation of ESC activities



The ESC wishes to thank its
volunteers, without whom this
would not have been possible.

