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INCI - Institut des neurosciences cellulaires et intégratives

Rapport Hcéres

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HCERES

High Council for the Evaluation of Research
and Higher Education

Department of Research Evaluation

report on research unit:

Institute of Cellular and Integrative Neurosciences

INCI

under the supervision of
the following institutions
and research bodies:

Université de Strasbourg

Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique - CNRS

Evaluation Campaign 2016-2017 (Group C)

HCERES

High Council for the Evaluation of Research
and Higher Education

Department of Research Evaluation

In the name of HCERES,¹

Michel Cosnard, president

In the name of the experts committee,²

Juan Antonio Mico, chairman of the
committee

Under the decree No.2014-1365 dated 14 november 2014,

¹ The president of HCERES "countersigns the evaluation reports set up by the experts committees and signed by their chairman." (Article 8, paragraph 5)

² The evaluation reports "are signed by the chairman of the expert committee". (Article 11, paragraph 2)

Evaluation report

This report is the sole result of evaluation by the expert committee, the composition of which is specified below.

The assessments contained herein are the expression of an independent and collegial reviewing by the committee.

Unit name:	Institute of Cellular and Integrative Neurosciences
Unit acronym:	INCI
Label requested:	UPR
Current number:	3212
Name of Director (2016-2017):	Ms Marie-France BADER
Name of Project Leader (2018-2022):	Mr Michel BARROT

Expert committee members

Chair:	Mr Juan Antonio Mico, Universidad de Cadiz, Spain
Experts:	Mr Emmanuel BOURINET, University of Montpellier (representative of the CoNRS) Mr Laurent GROC, University of Bordeaux Mr Regis LAMBERT, University Pierre et Marie Curie, Paris 6 (representative of the CNU) Mr Jochen LANG, University of Bordeaux Mr Gareth LENG, University of Edinburgh, UK Mr Denis SCHWARTZ, University Pierre et Marie Curie, Paris 6 (representative of supporting personnel)
Scientific delegate representing the HCERES:	Mr Jacques NOËL
Representatives of supervising institutions and bodies:	Ms Florence NOBLE, CNRS Ms Marie SISSLER, University of Strasbourg
Head of Doctoral School:	Mr Jean-Christophe CASSEL, Doctoral School n° 414, « Sciences de la vie et de la santé »

1 • Introduction

History and geographical location of the unit

The “Institut des Neurosciences Cellulaires et Intégratives” (INCI) was created in Strasbourg in 2005 to become a national and international reference center to develop high-quality research specialized in basic neuroscience. The 2009-2012 and 2013-2017 periods were consolidation phases and 2018-2022 is expected to be a period of expansion.

All nine teams are located downtown Strasbourg, gathered in a CNRS building located on the Unistra “Esplanade” Campus. Research on human is conducted at Strasbourg Hospital, near the INCI.

The renovation of the building that hosts the INCI finished in June 2014. This structural renovation was an opportunity to open new possibilities for the renovation of laboratories and attract new research teams to reinforce the pain, rhythm and network axes.

Management team

The director of INCI is Ms Marie-France BADER. The future director is Mr Michel BARROT.

HCERES nomenclature

Domaine scientifique principal: SVE4 Neurologie.

Secondaires: SVE2 Biologie cellulaire, Imagerie, Biologie Moléculaire, Biochimie, Génomique, Biologie Systémique, Développement, Biologie Structurale; SVE5 Physiologie, Physiopathologie, Cardiologie, Pharmacologie, Endocrinologie, Cancer, Technologies, Médicales.

Scientific domains

Specifically, as a whole, INCI develops research in the field of neurobiology of communication and networks, of pain, and of rhythms.

Unit workforce

Unit workforce	Number on 30/06/2016	Number on 01/01/2018
N1: Permanent professors and similar positions	18	18
N2: Permanent researchers from Institutions and similar positions	29	25
N3: Other permanent staff (technicians and administrative personnel)	22 (21.3)	21 (20.3)
N4: Other researchers (Postdoctoral students, visitors, PH, etc.)	14	
N5: Emeritus	2	
N6: Other contractual staff (technicians and administrative personnel)	7	
N7: PhD students	48	
TOTAL N1 to N7	140 (139.3)	
Qualified research supervisors (HDR) or similar positions	36	

Unit record	From 01/01/2011 to 30/06/2016
PhD theses defended	53
Postdoctoral scientists having spent at least 12 months in the unit	20
Number of Research Supervisor Qualifications (HDR) obtained during the period	6

2 • Assessment of the unit

Global assessment of the unit

INCI develops its research in the field of neurobiology of communication and networks, of pain and of rhythms including: 1) the study of the spatial and temporal regulation of vesicular traffic in neuronal and neuroendocrine cells; 2) the study of the synaptic and operational network modes in two brains regions: the cerebellum and the olfactory bulb; 3) the cortical integration of pain with affective emotions, in addition to the study of the brain-spinal cord control network; and 4) the study of the physiological role of peripheral clocks in the control of major biological functions: metabolism, reproduction, vision and sleep.

From 2011 to 2016, the scientific production remains stable in relation to the previous period evaluated. The quality of publications has increased to reach 1 out of 3 publications in a journal of rank A. The INCI has obtained financial resources from different entities, public and private, national and international (ANR, FRM, NARSAD, Michael J Fox, IASP, SATT Conectus, etc.). The main part of its research resources comes from external grants. This is satisfactory, as the independence index is thus high. The ability to obtain such resources is a proof of the competitiveness and quality of the INCI. Moreover, the INCI has made a considerable effort in creating translational research networks (FMTS

(Strasbourg Federation of Translational Medicine) and FHU Neurogenycs (Federation Hospitalo Universitaire), etc.). However, the percentage of collaborative publications among INCI teams is low.

INCI members have participated in evaluation committees of prestigious national and international research projects. This gives an idea of the internationalization of the INCI and the good international recognition of its researchers. In addition, INCI researchers have editorial responsibilities as associate editors or section editors in prestigious journals. Several INCI teams have worked in collaboration with leading companies related to neuroscience innovation. The participation of INCI in national and international consortia (NEUREX network, EU INTERREG, ENI-NET a Network of European Neuroscience Institutes, ERANET Neuron II and III, etc.) aimed at solving important health problems is remarkable (sleep, circadian disturbances, Parkinson's disease, neurodevelopmental disorders and neuropsychiatric disorders, among others).

The overall organization of the unit is excellent with clear principles. It is flexible enough to allow for a smooth evolution of the teams and of the associated core facilities. The continuous training committee is adequate and allows for a regular training of the technical staff. The scientific animation is very good both at the local and international level with regular scientific meetings involving the students. The unit was also involved in the organization of multiple large workshops and participates regularly to events dedicated to lay public.

In the period 2011-2017, the INCI has trained more than hundred students, which is considered as excellent. The INCI is associated with international training programs (EU ERASMUS Mundus Neurotime Mundus joint doctorate program in Neuroscience, Neurex network in the upper Rhine valley).

Regarding the projects, the future director has a clear vision of an institute of highest scientific reputation with excellent technical facilities and that has a culture of collegiality and democratic governance supporting individual scientific ambitions.

The participation of INCI in the major European research programs H2020 is a low and INCI attracts few researchers from outside France, especially for tenure.

The institute has the expertise and facilities that would be attractive to a range of international stakeholders, however so far, they are only engaging with French stakeholders, thus missing good opportunities.

The relative aging of the staff, in particular of the technical staff, may impair the organization of the unit in the future, especially in the core facilities where technical knowledge takes a very long time to build.