SPPIN - Saint-Pères Paris Institute for Neurosciences

Rapport Hcéres

Research evaluation

REPORT ON THE RESEARCH INTERDISCIPLINARY UNIT:

Saint-Pères Paris Institute for Neurosciences (SPPIN)

UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE FOLLOWING INSTITUTIONS AND RESEARCH BODIES:

Université Paris Descartes
Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique - CNRS

EVALUATION CAMPAIGN 2017-2018
GROUP D

In the name of Hcéres[1]:

Michel Cosnard, President

In the name of the expert committee[2]:

Thomas Oertner, Chairman of the committee

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

[1] The president of Hcéres "countersigns the evaluation reports set up by the expert 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).

This report is the sole result of the unit's 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 PRESENTATION

Unit name:	Saint-Pères Paris Institute for Neurosciences
Unit acronym:	SPPIN
Requested label:	UMR CNRS & Université Paris Descartes
Application type:	Restructuration
Current number:	
Head of the unit (2014-2018):	Ms Isabel LLANO, Mr Claude MEUNIER and Ms Valentina EMILIANI
Project leader (2019-2023):	Mr Martin OHEIM
Number of teams:	4 + 2 recruited

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chair: Mr Thomas OERTNER, Hamburg University, Germany

Experts:

Ms Anne CANTEREAU BECQ, Université de Poitiers (supporting personnel)

Mr Laurent FAGNI, Institut de Génomique Fonctionnelle de Montpellier

Mr Stefan HALLERMANN, University Leipzig, Germany

Mr Thomas MISGELD, Technische Universität München, Germany

Mr David PERRAIS, Université de Bordeaux (representative of CoNRS)

HCERES scientific officer:

Ms Catherine HEURTEAUX

Representatives of supervising institutions and bodies:

Ms Catherine LABBE-JULLIE, Université Paris Descartes

Ms Clarisse LEFORT-DAVID, CNRS

Mr Stefano MARULLO, Université Paris Descartes

Mr Bernard POULAIN, CNRS

INTRODUCTION

HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF THE UNIT

The unit is a merger of three CNRS laboratories (Llano, Meunier and Emiliani) under the name Saints-Pères Paris Institute for Neuroscience (SPPIN). All teams are located at the St-Pères University Center.

MANAGEMENT TEAM

During the least report period, Ms Isabel Llano, Mr Claude Meunier and Ms Valentina Emiliani served as unit leaders of the three laboratories. The new unit will be directed by Mr Martin Oheim.

HCERES NOMENCLATURE

SVE4_1 Neurologie

SCIENTIFIC DOMAIN

The unit conducts research in fundamental neuroscience, focussed on motor systems, neuro-glia interactions and synaptic transmission, enabled by interdisciplinary technology development in imaging, electrophysiology, and molecular tools. The restructured unit combines electrophysiology, molecular biology and imaging approaches to address fundamental questions in neuroscience, ranging from the biophysics of single synapses to the control of animal behaviour. A special focus is the function of the motor system in health and disease (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, Huntington's disease) that is studied in animal models and in human 3D tissue culture systems.

UNIT WORKFORCE

Unit workforce	Number 30/06/2017	Number 01/01/2019
Permanent staff		
Full professors and similar positions	2	2
Assistant professors and similar positions	4	5
Full time research directors (Directeurs de recherche) and similar positions	7	5
Full time research associates (Chargés de recherche) and similar positions	10	8
Other scientists ("Conservateurs, cadres scientifiques des EPIC, fondations, industries, etc.")	0	0
High school teachers	0	0
Supporting personnel (ITAs, BIATSSs and others, notably of EPICs)	11	13
TOTAL permanent staff	**34**	**33**
Non-permanent staff		

Non-permanent professors and associate professors, including emeritus	2	
Non-permanent full time scientists, including emeritus, post-docs	7	
Non-permanent supporting personnel	6	
PhD Students	9	
TOTAL non-permanent staff	**24**	
TOTAL unit	**58**	

GLOBAL ASSESSMENT OF THE INTERDISCIPLINARY UNIT

An outstanding strength is the expertise and creativity in developing novel optical imaging techniques and probes, including two-photon and super-resolution microscopy and nano-biosensors, which enables the unit to uncover subcellular details of nanodomain signalling and contributes to the high international visibility of its research. Excellent collaborations with industry ensure commercial development of new inventions.

Compared to the topics of the predecessor unit, there is a new focus on intracellular signalling processes and glia cell biology, which are topics of obvious relevance for a number of neurodegenerative diseases. This direction with greatly benefit from the newly developed microscopes and probes and will also increase the medical and societal relevance of the unit's research program. If the unit succeeds in attracting new teams with expertise in systems neuroscience and behaviour, and/or computational modelling, it would complete the unit's portfolio of techniques for state-of-the-art integrative brain research.

The production, visibility and impact of the teams in the last evaluation period have been excellent to outstanding as detailed below. A challenge for the unit is the distribution of individual teams on different floors of a large building. There is a lack of common social rooms to foster unit cohesion and informal discussions. To counter this challenge, the teams have implemented frequent meetings and committees to encourage internal collaborations. Several renovation projects have improved the quality of the infrastructure, although some facilities appear to be understaffed and further loss of technical staff, e.g. due to retirement, needs to be prevented. In response to the recommendation to develop an integrated PhD program in neuroscience, the unit leader has initiated negotiations about a transnational (Franco-German) PhD program.

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