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ALYSAI - Activation du lymphocyte T, surveillance du stress et auto-immunité

Rapport Hcéres

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HCERES

Haut conseil de l'évaluation de la recherche
et de l'enseignement supérieur

Research units

HCERES report on research unit:

Activation du LYmphocyte T, surveillance du Stress et
Auto-Immunité

ALYSAI

Under the supervision of the following
institutions and research bodies:

Université de Bordeaux

Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique - CNRS

HCERES

High Council for the Evaluation of Research
and Higher Education

Research units

In the name of HCERES,¹

Didier HOUSSIN, president

In the name of the experts committee,²

Muriel MOSER, chairwoman of the committee

Under the decree N.º 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 result of the evaluation by the experts committee, the composition of which is specified below. The assessments contained herein are the expression of an independent and collegial deliberation of the committee.

Unit name:	Activation du LYmphocyte T, surveillance du Stress et Auto-Immunité
Unit acronym:	CIRID (past)/ALYSAI (future)
Label requested:	UMR
Present no.:	UMR-CNRS 5164
Name of Director (2014-2015):	Mr Jean-François MOREAU
Name of Project Leader (2016-2020):	Ms Julie DECHANET-MERVILLE

Expert committee members

Chair:	Ms Muriel MOSER, Université Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium
Experts:	Ms Lena ALEXOPOULOU, Centre d'Immunologie de Marseille-Luminy (Marseille)
	Ms Armelle BLONDEL, Paris (representative of the CoNRS)
	Mr Matthias EBERL, Cardiff, UK
	Ms Myriam LABALETTE, Lille (representative of the CNU)
	Ms Marion VORMS, Pantheon-Sorbonne University

Scientific delegate representing the HCERES:

Mr Kamel BENLAGHA

Representatives of the unit's supervising institutions and bodies:

Ms Gaëlle BUJAN, CNRS

Mr Pierre DOS SANTOS, University of Bordeaux

Mr Bruno LUCAS, CNRS

Mr Roger MARTHAN (representative of the Doctoral School n° 154)

1 • Introduction

History and geographical location of the unit

The UMR-CNRS 5164 was created in January 2003 and renewed in 2007 and 2011, and is headed by the same unit director, Pr MOREAU, since 2003. It associated two teams: Team 1, with immunologists studying mechanisms of T cell activation and Team 2, with stem cell biologists analyzing the pluripotency of stem cells and early developmental processes. As the structure has evolved in two independent teams for research interests, models and tools, the Team 2 decided to split and the Immunology Team ALYSAL represents now the restructured entity focusing on cellular and molecular mechanisms of human T lymphocyte activation in different patho-physiological models with a special focus made on $\gamma\delta$ T lymphocytes and on autoimmune diseases.

The evaluated research unit is composed of 30 members with 14 researchers and 9 research assistants with several recruitments during the past period (one MCF position from the University of Bordeaux; one researcher recruited as CR1 in 2014 by the CNRS; a technician by CNRS dedicated for flow cytometry). Regarding non permanent staff, two AHU and five post-doctorants were recruited. Several researchers and physicians share their time between the Team 1 and the University Hospital in different departments which facilitates the bench to bedside translation of works and the development of clinical trials.

One specific feature of the unit is to combine basic research addressing mechanistic issues about T cell activation, and clinical research to translate basic data into therapeutic trials or patient monitoring.

Management team

The leadership is changing, but Pr Moreau, PU-PH will stay in the team. The unit will be directed by Julie Dechanet-Merville.

The team comprises 30 staff members including 14 researchers and 9 research assistants and is based on three subgroups with complementary interests and expertise. Six members were recruited in the past years (C. CONTIN-BORDES, C. RICHEZ, P. DUFFAU, E. LAZZARO, M. MANAMI-MATSUDA, S. GONZALEZ). A new researcher (T. PRADEU CR1 CNRS) was recruited in October 2014 to develop a conceptual approach of the immune response.

All management and strategic decisions are discussed in monthly “senior meetings” involving all PI and co-PI. Weekly “work group meetings” take place with all participants of common or related projects, and weekly “journal clubs” are organized with students and young researchers.

HCERES nomenclature

SVE1_LS6 Immunologie, microbiologie, virologie, parasitologie

Unit workforce

Unit workforce	Number as at 30/06/2014	Number as at 01/01/2016
N1: Permanent professors and similar positions	9 (4.5 FTE)	10 (5)
N2: Permanent researchers from Institutions and similar positions	2	3
N3: Other permanent staff (without research duties)	10 (8.8 FTE)	10 (8.8 FTE)
N4: Other professors (Emeritus Professor, on-contract Professor, etc.)		
N5: Other researchers (Emeritus Research Director, Postdoctoral students, visitors, etc.)	3	7
N6: Other contractual staff (without research duties)		
TOTAL N1 to N6	24	30

Unit workforce	Number as at 30/06/2014	Number as at 01/01/2016
Doctoral students	5	
Theses defended	12	
Postdoctoral students having spent at least 12 months in the unit	6	
Number of Research Supervisor Qualifications (HDR) taken	4	
Qualified research supervisors (with an HDR) or similar positions	7	9

2 • Overall assessment of the unit

Global assessment of the unit

Very good scientific record of the unit in basic research (as principal investigators) and in clinical studies (mainly as collaborators); well-thought management; long-term potential social and economic impact; excellent training; recruitment of young researchers; focusing on $\gamma\delta$ T cells in which the unit is recognized internationally; high potential of the combination basic/clinical research.

Strengths and opportunities in relation to the context

Good positioning, based on previous data on $\gamma\delta$ T cells, to translate the results into the clinic. Unique opportunity to develop a theoretical approach of the regulation of immunity versus tolerance.

The representatives of the CNRS and the university consider the unit as the only force in Immunology in Bordeaux, showing a strategic, long-term commitment, especially when considering recruitment of new PIs, including at professor level who will all join ALYSAI and thereby strengthening the unit further.

Weaknesses and threats related to the context

The projects are risky or in a highly competitive environment. The unit is the only center of Immunology in Bordeaux (which is an opportunity and a weakness).

Recommendations

The commission was impressed by the quality of the work and the originality of the projects of the unit and advises to simply continue.