



press release

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CONTACT
Caroline Borel
T. 33 (0)1 55 55 61 63
caroline.borel@hceres.fr

HCÉRES PUBLISHES THE CNES EVALUATION REPORT

On Thursday 7 January, Hcéres published the evaluation report on the French National Centre for Space Studies (CNES), covering the 2015-2019 period. Drafted by a panel of renowned experts, this report provides analysis and recommendations on the institutional positioning and strategy of the CNES, its governance and its various activities.

As the coordinator of space research in France, the remit of the CNES is to advise the government, implement the space policy decided on by the latter, and oversee space programmes. It puts its scientific and technological expertise into developing and guiding the work conducted in the 154 research laboratories involved in space research (in 2018), as well as involving them in French, European and international scientific missions.

In a fast-changing space sector that has become much more competitive, the CNES "has achieved in a satisfactory manner, and in some cases even brilliantly, the great majority of the strategic objectives set for it by the State in terms of its operations and resources," notes the conclusion of the report by the panel of experts chaired by Brigitte Plateau, a professor at INP Grenoble. "The CNES has successfully followed up most of the recommendations made in the last Hcéres evaluation,"¹ the panel also observed.

Basing its analysis on the institution's self-evaluation report and interviews with key contacts and representatives of its main French and foreign partners, the panel found that "the CNES has endowed itself with an organisation enabling it to take up the challenges it is facing and boost innovation." Its main asset "resides in its in-house skills and a network of collaboration, expertise and influence that the CNES is constantly cultivating," the panel stated.

Finally, the panel emphasised "the unique position of the CNES in Europe as both a programme agency and centre of expertise, as well as the high standard of its industrial and academic partnerships both nationally and internationally".

In light of the strategies defined by the institution for the upcoming five-year period and the great challenges it wishes to take up, the panel made a number of recommendations:

Strategy

- Pursue and step up its strategic planning efforts.
- Take account of the arrival of "low-cost" approaches in the new order in the space sector.
- Make a full assessment of the challenges for the CNES arising from environmental and climate issues.
- Consolidate strategic convergence with European partners and institutions.
- Tie in more closely with regional policies, especially in those regions that are home to its main industrial clusters.

¹ The previous evaluation of the CNES was the subject of a report published in April 2015.

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The French High Council for Evaluation of Research and Higher Education (Hcéres) is the independent administrative body responsible for evaluating all institutions of higher education and research, as well as approving the evaluation procedures implemented by other organisations. Through its analyses, evaluations and recommendations, it guides, advises and supports efforts to improve the quality of higher education and research in France.



- Pursue the development of international collaboration along existing lines and pay attention to new state players.

Governance and management

- Clarify the position of the CNES in the mixed research units and establish institutional dialogue with the directors of these units.
- Enhance internal communication on subjects of strategy and organisation, in particular on the methodology and objectives of management of change.
- Conduct in-depth work on a Strategic Workforce Plan and a Real Estate Master Plan.
- Carry on and step up reflection on ethics.

Activities

- Take part, with the supervising bodies, in clarifying the role of the COSPACE.
- Develop an intelligence procedure to track market trends.
- Accelerate and enhance technological and academic innovation processes.
- Roll out an organisation to take account of the needs of application users, similar to the Scientific Programmes Committee for the scientific community, and take account of the revolution underway in data processing.
- Explain the scientific roadmap guiding the various missions of the CNES to its academic partners.

In his letter of comments, CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall praised the remarkable work carried out, that “provides perfect insight into the complexity and changes of our ecosystem in a competitive environment, with a large number of stakeholders and high stakes.”

The “very comprehensive and constructive” report by the panel “is a perfect response to the expectations held by the CNES prior to the evaluation”, added Jean-Yves Le Gall, and “it contains many highly relevant remarks and recommendations that we will strive to make the most of, notably in negotiating our 2021/2025 Objectives and Performance Contract.”

FIND OUT MORE

- 📄 **Download the CNES evaluation report**
<http://hceres.fr/rapport-CNES-A2021>

- 📄 **The CNES in Brief**

- Status: A French Public Commercial and Industrial Institution under the supervision of the Ministries for Space, for Research and for Defence.
- Budget: €2,780M, half of which goes to the French contribution to the European Space Agency;
- Headcount 2,372 people, mainly at the Toulouse Space Centre.
- Based on 4 sites: Paris-Les Halles (Headquarters), Paris-Daumesnil (home to the Launchers Directorate, among others), the Toulouse Space Centre (with the Orbital Systems Directorate and the Digital Technologies and Operations Directorate in particular), and the Guiana Space Centre (for launch operations).