



agence d'évaluation de la recherche
et de l'enseignement supérieur

Section des Unités de recherche

AERES report on the canceropole

Canceropole IdF

From the

Institut du Cancer

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Le Président
de l'AERES

Jean-François Dhainaut

Section des unités
de recherche

Le Directeur

Pierre Glorieux

February 2011



Canceropole

Name of the research unit: Cancéropole IdF

Name of the director: M. Armand TAVITIAN

Members of the review committee

Committee chairman :

M. Cristiano FERLINI, Danbury Hospital Research Institute, Danbury, USA

Other committee members :

M. Carlo LA VECCHIA, Istituto di Ricerche Farmacologiche Mario Negri, Italy

M. Paolo DELLABONA, San Raffaele Scientific Institute, Milan, Italy

M. Fabio EFFICACE, Università Degli Studi la Sapienza, Roma, Italy

M. François FUKS, Laboratoire d'Épigénétique du Cancer, Bruxelles, Belgique

M. Darius RAZAVI, Faculté Sciences Psychologiques et de l'Éducation, Bruxelles, Belgique

M. Yong-Jie LU, Barts Cancer Institute, Queen Mary University of London, Great Britain

Observers

AERES scientific advisor :

M. Nicolas GLAICHENHAUS

INCa representatives :

M. Fabien CALVO

Ms. Véronique ATGER



Report

1 • Introduction

Canceropole IDF includes the most relevant Research Center present in the country. The amount of clinical, translational and basic Research is of “world class level” and the aims to coordinate these activities in the area has been achieved through the opening of the available technological platforms and the development of a local research network. Unfortunately, the illness of the scientific director in the recent period partially affected the quality of the report. Without the details of where the canceropole funds were spent and the amount of money spent in each theme, it is difficult to judge the efficiency of individual initiations/themes. All the Reviewers appreciated the efforts of the rest of the team to supply to such deficiency.

2 • Overall appreciation on the Canceropole

• Summary

Overall the impact seems very good and the efforts in establishing a valid research network has been successful. The reviewers were very well impressed by the high quality of the scientific activities developed within Canceropole IDF. However, the visibility of the canceropole IDF is limited by the size of the main Research Institutes present in the area. A dedicated effort should be adopted to improve the visibility of the Canceropole project.

• Strengths and opportunities

- The presence of very strong research units within the area, and the fact that the IdF area accounts for more than 40% of the whole cancer research potential in France ; Small area, easy for face-to-face contact and share facilities/expertise ;

- Easy to access industrial companies ; Large canceropole funding support, which can be used for many network activities (keeping in mind that canceropole is to support network and collaboration for added value but not for projects).

• Weaknesses and threats

- The fact that some Institutes are self-sufficient could be an obstacle to more intergration ;

- Canceropole visibility is shadowed by the high visibility of some very strong Institutes.

• Recommendations to the head of the Canceropole

- Enhance collaborations with other Canceropoles. For example, the GO Canceropole has a strong chemistry program and could benefit from being more integrated with biological projects implemented in the IdF canceropole and the availability of high quality technological platforms to screen and monitor the effects of small molecules ;

- Improve the communication strategy and take action to increase visibility ;

- Increase the budget dedicated to management to promote these activities;



- Become a driving force and take action to help the weakest teams within and outside the IdF canceropole to improve the quality of their research ;

- Play a leading role in national and international collaboration programmes in addition of regional collaboration.

3 • Specific comments

- **Contribution of the canceropole to the structuration of research at the local level**

Integration of the research activities is evident and a dedicated strategy has been successful in integrating the research activities within the canceropole IDF. However, this process is made cumbersome by the high visibility of the main Institutions present in the Area. These reviewers suggest implementing a specific communication strategy to increase the visibility of the canceropole and its added value.

- **Appreciation on the project**

The project is well structured and the network of local Research well established in particular for what concerning sharing technological platforms. The increase in the number of Top1% publications from 62 of 2005 to 163 of 2009 is an indirect indicator of the success of the project (INCA priority 1).

At the current stage the project lacks of focusing on a given cancer. This activity could help in concentrating at least the effort in a restricted number of diseases for cycle in a way to achieve a focus in a given topic that cannot be obtained in all the tumor types for budgeting reasons (INCA priority 2).

Valorisation of the project should be enhanced by adding a specific communication strategy. The most proficient groups in the collaborative network should be awarded and incentivated (INCA priority 3).

A most effective efforts of inducing the participation to european grants should be adopted and a specific strategy should be developed in the next program (INCA priority 4). Also in this case successful applicants should be specifically incentivated and awarded.

SWOT analysis is effective and well represents strengths and weaknesses.

Reviewers feel that the visibility of the project is a factor that should be further promoted and developed.

4 • Appreciation theme by theme

- **Research activities were divided in seven main Hubs:**

- Hub 1: Tumor Identity Cards (molecular profiling of tumors); Committee members: Sigaux, Delattre, Feuteun, Lidereau and Thomas;

- Hub 2: From basic tumour biology to innovative treatments; Committee members: de Thé, Feunteun, Israel and Romeo;

- Hub 3: Host tumor interactions; Committee members: Debre, Amigorena, Leclerc, Chouaib, Fridman;

- Hub 4: Genetic predisposition to cancer and gene-environment interactions; Committee members: Demenais, Agut, Beaune, Leclerc, Sarasin;



- Hub 5: Functional imaging; Committee members: Louvard, Boccara, Tavitian, Merlet;

- Hub 6: Clinical research; Committee members: Pujade-Lauraine, Calvo, Chevret, Khayat, Marty, Rouëssé, Vassal;

- Hub 7: Cancer and society; Committee members: Amiel, Asselain, Consoli, Dolbeault, Hirsch.

- **Appreciation on the results**

Overall the quality of the science performed was very high with an outstanding number of publications in the top ranked journals. However, the visibility of the canceropole project should be enhanced at the national and international level. A specific communication strategy should be developed as mentioned above. Also an initiative to award the most excellent achievements obtained in the framework of canceropole IDF should be promoted.

- **Relevance and impact of the initiatives aiming at the scientific animation and at the emergence of cutting edge projects**

Presentation of the results particularly in the written report has been affected by the illness of the Scientific Director. The efforts of the rest of the Team has been acknowledged and appreciated by the Reviewers and particularly the high quality of the oral presentation.

Articulation of the project and his focusing on three well-integrated Hubs is a plus of the project and a sign of the increased maturity of the canceropole IDF. The three integrated Hubs are here following:

- Hub 1: Integrative Research in Oncology (Solary);

- Hub 2: Translational cancer medicine (Roman);

- Hub 3: Health Disparities in Cancer (Amiel).

Quality of the science and feasibility of the projects make "the whole" very valuable. Although it is not in the duty of these Reviewers to allocate the funding, the Reviewers fully endorse the support of the canceropole for the acquired achievements. Only hub 3 could benefit of some specific implementation as advised in the general suggestions to the INCA director.

Due to the prominent value of the canceropole IDF, in the next Research program it is strongly advised to take actions to open the tech platforms to other canceropoles and to coordinate a research effort to stimulate a successful collaboration between canceropoles. To stimulate such activity the funding of the management Team should be enhanced. At judgement of the Reviewers, the full potential of increasing the value of Research in France could benefit by a more proactive and coordinating role played by canceropole IDF.

Le Conseil d'administration du Cancéropôle IdF lors de sa réunion du 30 mars 2001 souhaite apporter la remarque suivante en réponse à l'évaluation de l'AERES :« le fait que les experts n'aient pas eu accès au bilan financier des axes n'est pas dû à l'absence de ces rapports dans les documents remis en réponse à l'appel d'offres, mais à leur non transmission par l'AERES ».