

FINAL RESUME ON THE RESEARCH UNIT
MOBIDIC - Microenvironment and B-cells:
Immunopathology, Cell Differentiation, and
Cancer

UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE
FOLLOWING INSTITUTIONS AND
RESEARCH BODIES:

Université de Rennes 1

Institut national de la santé et de la recherche
médicale - Inserm

Établissement Français du Sang - EFS

EVALUATION CAMPAIGN 2020-2022
GROUP B



In the name of Hcéres¹:

Mr Thierry Coulhon, President

In the name of the experts committee²:

Mr David Kent, 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 experts committees and signed by their chairman." (Article 8, paragraph 5);

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

Tables in this document were filled with certified data submitted by the supervising body on behalf of the unit.

UNIT PRESENTATION

Unit name:	Microenvironment and B-cells: Immunopathology, Cell Differentiation, and Cancer
Unit acronym:	MOBIDIC
Current label and N:	UMR 1236
ID RNSR:	200816540Y
Application type:	Restructuration
Head of the unit (2020-2021):	Ms Karin Tarte
Project leader (2021-2025):	Ms Karin Tarte
Number of teams:	3

EXPERTS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chair:	Mr David Kent, University of York, UK
Experts :	Mr Lionel Apetoh, Inserm, Dijon (representative of Inserm CSS) Ms Florence Cymbalista, Université Paris 13, Bobigny (representative of CNU) Ms Isabelle Duroux-Richard, Inserm, Montpellier (supporting personnel) Mr Daniel Hodson, University of Cambridge, UK Mr Ulf Klein, University of Leeds, UK Ms Daniela Krause, Georg-Speyer-Haus and Goethe University, Germany Ms Almudena Ramiro, Spanish National Centre for Cardiovascular Research (CNIC), Madrid Ms Hélène Salmon, Institut Curie, Paris

HCÉRES REPRESENTATIVE

Ms Sophie Ezine

REPRESENTATIVES OF SUPERVISING INSTITUTIONS AND BODIES

Mr Bruno Danic, EFS
Mr Alain Eychene, Inserm
Ms Valérie Lecureur, Université de Rennes 1
Mr Philippe Mabo, Université de Rennes 1
Mr Nicolas Mevel, CHU de Rennes
Mr Gregory MARCH, EFS

INTRODUCTION

HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF THE UNIT

The monothematic INSERM unit U1236 "Microenvironment, Cell Differentiation, Immunology and Cancer (MICMAC)" was created in January 2017, and originated from the INSERM unit U197 Microenvironment and Cancer (MICA) which ran from 2008-2017. The current proposal sets out to create a new pluri-thematic unit entitled "Microenvironment, and B-cells: Immunopathology, Cell Differentiation and Cancer" (MOBIDIC). The unit is located in a building of the University of Rennes and is in close proximity to the Rennes University Hospital.

RESEARCH ECOSYSTEM

The MICMAC unit has its research laboratories as well as an immunostaining and translational research program, called SITI. It is involved in three national consortia of the ANR: eCellFrance (using mesenchymal stromal cells for cell therapy), LabEx IGO (training and research in immunotherapy) and the Carnot Institute CALYM (to identify novel lymphoma biomarkers). It is hosted by the Rennes Medical School and University Hospital and is part of the university vision to expand its cancer research programs. Core facilities are present through interaction with the SFR BIOIT (UMS CNRS 3480/US INSERM 018). The unit is also aligned with CNRS GDR3697 MicroNit which is a national academic research network exploring the tumor microenvironment.

HCÉRES NOMENCLATURE AND THEMATICS OF THE UNIT

The unit's main theme of research (regulation of normal and malignant B cells) would fall under SVE-3: 'Microbiologie, Virologie, Immunité' and SVE-5 'Physiologie, Physiopathologie, Pharmacologie, Endocrinologie, Cancer, Technologies Médicales'.

MANAGEMENT TEAM

The unit director is Ms Karin Tarte. The deputy director is Mr Thierry Fest.

UNIT WORKFORCE

Active staff	Number 06/01/2020	Number 01/01/2022
Full professors and similar positions	10	12
Assistant professors and similar positions	5	4
Full time research directors (Directeurs de recherche) and similar positions	0	0
Full time research associates (Chargés de recherche) and similar positions	2	3
Other scientists ("Conservateurs, cadres scientifiques des EPIC, fondations, industries, etc.")	1	1
High school teachers	0	0
Supporting personnel (ITAs, BIATSSs and others, notably of EPICs)	21	23
Permanent staff	39	43
Non-permanent professors and associate professors, including emeritus	1	
Non-permanent full time scientists, including emeritus, post-docs (except PhD students)	5	
PhD Students	11	
Non-permanent supporting personnel	6	

Non-permanent staff	23	
Total	62	43

GLOBAL ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIT

Overall, the one-team unit was assessed to be a one-of-a-kind national scientific research unit focused on normal and malignant B cells and their microenvironment with translation of fundamental findings to the clinic with the support of their immunomonitoring and translational research platform (SITI).

The unit has produced more than 250 articles across the clinical (174) and biological (85) research themes of the unit. There are some top-quality research papers over the last five years and the scientific output was regarded as excellent with significant improvement since the last evaluation.

The unit essentially raised fund from national sources either public (ANR, INCA, Contrat Plan Etat Region -CPER, PIA), or charities (Fond ARC, ARSEP), with the exception of an international LLS grant.

The members are very well connected to the national clinical research networks which allow them to carry out top-level clinical and basic research on clinical samples and engage productively with numerous industrial partners (Roche, Cellgene, BMS, etc). Multiple patents/inventions have emerged from the unit. The unit was engaged in ten multi-centre clinical trials. Team leaders (as well as younger members of the teams) are strongly involved in the French lymphoma research community. This is underscored by their broad involvement in the Lymphoma Study Association (LYSA) and the Carnot Institute network on lymphomas (CALYM) and their investment in driving the eCellFrance National Infrastructure for academic/industry clinical trials.

Involvement in training through research has been good, with a specific emphasis recently on expanding post-graduate training of medically related personnel, although the number of PhDs trained overall remains relatively low considering the size of the unit. Number of HDR accredited researchers has also been expanded which should help in this latter aspect.

The organization of the unit and laboratory life were considered to have strengths in management structure, communication strategies, and researcher training, however, there were weaknesses in gender parity and process transparency for career progression.

The five-year scientific plan which will be accompanied by a three-team frame is deemed to include some very exciting science, some excellent areas of inter-team cross-fertilization and involves a wide range of exciting and cutting-edge technologies such as CyTof and single cell RNA-sequencing. This plan is nicely complemented by research strengths in both the basic science (e.g., normal human/mouse B cell biology) and clinical science areas (numerous B cell related diseases), which is a clear strength of the unit and nicely underpinned by the 'Suivi Immunologique des Thérapeutiques Innovantes' (SITI) laboratory which has a wide-range of clinical and industrial partnerships.

Team 1 (B-DEVIL) has a leading strength in human B cell biology, Team 2 (HONEYCOMB) has a strong international reputation in the B cell microenvironment, and Team 3 (BIGRES) are pioneers in B cell Ig gene re-modelling and engineering. Whereas the team leaders have achieved a good level of international recognition illustrated by for example the Ita Askonas Prize, from the European Federation of Immunological Societies and the European Journal of Immunology awarding a leading female immunologist, the profile of the unit and its other members could be boosted by increasing the number of top quality visible papers, undertaking grant/article evaluation and applying to a broader range of competitive grants (European and international ones) to enhance its attractiveness to international scientists for relocation and for collaboration with the unit in an effort to ensure that new ideas and approaches are constantly being sampled and best practice adopted.

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