

REPORT ON THE RESEARCH UNIT:  
Langage, langues et cultures d'Afrique noire  
LLACAN

UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE  
FOLLOWING INSTITUTIONS AND  
RESEARCH BODIES:

Institut national des langues et civilisations  
orientales – INALCO

Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique -  
CNRS

**EVALUATION CAMPAIGN 2017-2018**  
GROUP D



In the name of Hcéres<sup>1</sup> :

Michel Cosnard, President

In the name of the experts committees<sup>2</sup> :

Birgit Hellwig, Chairwoman of the  
committee

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

<sup>1</sup> The president of HCERES "countersigns the evaluation reports set up by the experts committees and signed by their chairman." (Article 8, paragraph 5) ;

<sup>2</sup> 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

<b>Unit name:</b>	Langage, langues et cultures d'Afrique noire
<b>Unit acronym:</b>	LLACAN
<b>Requested label:</b>	UMR
<b>Application type:</b>	Renewal
<b>Current number:</b>	8135
<b>Head of the unit (2017-2018):</b>	Mr Mark Van De Velde
<b>Project leader (2019-2023):</b>	Mr Mark Van De Velde

**Number of teams or themes:**

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**Chair:** Ms Birgit HELWIG, Universität zu Köln, Deutschland

**Experts:** Ms Anne DAGNAC, Université Toulouse 2 (représentative of CoNRS)  
Mr Antoine GUILLAUME, CNRS (représentative of CNU)  
Mr Lutz MARTEN, University of London, United Kingdom  
Mr Frank SAJOUS, Université Toulouse 2, CNRS (représentant des personnels d'appui à la recherche)

**HCERES scientific officer:**

Ms Anne CARLIER

**Representatives of supervising institutions and bodies:**

Ms Hamida DEMIRDACHE, CNRS

Mr Jean-François HUCHET, Vice-Président Inalco

## INTRODUCTION

### HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF THE UNIT

Founded in 1994, *Langage, Langues et Cultures d'Afrique Noire* (LLACAN, UMR 8135) is a joint research unit of the CNRS and the *Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales* (INALCO) whose premises are located on the Villejuif Campus at the Centre André-Georges Haudricourt.

### MANAGEMENT TEAM

Head (Directeur): Mr Mark VAN DE VELDE  
 Deputy head (Directrice Adjointe): Ms Yvonne TREISS  
 Administrative head (Directrice administrative): Ms Jeanne ZERNER

### HCERES NOMENCLATURE

SHS4\_1 Linguistique  
 SHS5\_2 Littératures et langues étrangères, Civilisations, Cultures et langues régionales

### SCIENTIFIC DOMAIN

The unit comprises the majority of contemporary French Africanist researchers, and it continues to be the most important entity in this field, with a high international visibility. It is not organized into teams, and instead has chosen a structure around three thematic fields that allow for multiple and dynamic interactions between the researchers: grammatical analysis, comparative linguistics and literatures in African languages. A transversal theme on Corpora and databases provides additional opportunities for exchange. Originally, the geographical focus was restricted to sub-Saharan Africa, but it expanded over the years to include the whole of Africa.

Since its foundation, the unit has been actively engaged in a large number of research initiatives. It is a member of Labex EFL and of the Fédération Typologie et Universaux Linguistiques of the CNRS (FR 2559). It is also a member of the Consortium CORLI (corpus, langues, interactions) as well as of the GIS "Études Africaines". It hosts a number of national (e.g., ANR) and international (e.g., ELDP - Endangered Languages Documentation Programme, ERC – European Research Council) projects, which bring together LLACAN researchers, colleagues from other French research units and international colleagues.

### UNIT WORKFORCE

Unit workforce	Number 30/06/2017	Number 01/01/2019
<b>Permanent staff</b>		
Full professors and similar positions	3	3
Assistant professors and similar positions	3	4
Full time research directors (Directeurs de recherche) and similar positions	4	5
Full time research associates (Chargés de recherche) and similar positions	8	12
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)	6	7
<b>TOTAL permanent staff</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Non-permanent staff</b>		
Non-permanent professors and associate professors, including emeritus	NR	
Non-permanent full time scientists, including emeritus, post-docs	8	
Non-permanent supporting personnel	NR	
PhD Students	19	
<b>TOTAL non-permanent staff</b>	<b>27</b>	
<b>TOTAL unit</b>		
	<b>51</b>	

## GLOBAL ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIT

LLACAN is a very dynamic unit with an impressive level of scientific productivity. It has an excellent publication record in terms of both quantity and quality, thereby making strong contributions to both general linguistics and specialized African studies. Its activities in the digital humanities are especially commendable, testifying to its capacity for innovation and its commitment to the sustainability of data and the verifiability of analyses. The unit takes an active part in outreach activities, having a policy of dissemination to the larger public both in France and in various African countries. And it is successfully engaged in research training by integrating a large number of PhD students into its projects and providing them with training opportunities, as well as by contributing to capacity building in Africa. The unit is well-organized and structured, conveying an exceptionally strong sense of identity and inner coherence.

LLACAN has articulated an excellent and convincing scientific strategy, building up on its recognized strengths. It is to be commended for continuing its fundamental research of documenting African languages and literatures, analyzing them from functional-typological, historical-comparative and anthropological perspectives, and for contributing to developments in language technology. Since the last report, LLACAN has made a major transition from an organization according to thematic areas to a more flexible organization structured around smaller projects.

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