

REPORT ON THE RESEARCH UNIT:
Evolution of Endocrine Regulations (ERE)

UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE
FOLLOWING INSTITUTIONS AND
RESEARCH BODIES:

Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle - MNHN

Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique -
CNRS

ÉVALUATION CAMPAIGN 2017-2018
GROUP D



In the name of Hcéres¹:

Michel Cosnard, President

In the name of the expert committee²:

Helgi Schioth, 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 expert 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).

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

Unit name:	Evolution of Endocrine Regulations
Unit acronym:	ERE
Requested label:	UMR
Application type:	Renewal
Current number:	UMR 7221
Head of the unit (2017-2018):	Mr Giovanni LEVI
Project leader (2019-2023):	Mr Laurent SACHS
Number of teams:	3

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chair: Mr Helgi SCHIÖTH, Uppsala University, Sweden

Experts: Mr Marc AUBRY, Université de Rennes (supporting personnel)
Mr Maurice ELPICK, Queen Mary University of London, United Kingdom
Ms Bérengère FROMY, IBCP Lyon (representative of CoNRS)
Mr Luc PENICAUD, Stromalab, CNRS, Toulouse
Mr Pascal VAUDIN, Université Tours (representative of CNU)

HCERES scientific officer:

Mr Jean-Paul LALLÈS

Representatives of supervising institutions and bodies:

Ms Armelle LETURQUE, CNRS

Mr Jean-Denis VIGNE, MNHN

INTRODUCTION

HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF THE UNIT

The Laboratory of Physiology of the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle (MNHN) is the first laboratory of French physiology. It is located in the heart of Paris, in the "Jardin des Plantes". It was founded in 1837 by Mr Frédéric CUVIER. Among his successors, one could find illustrious scientists like Mr Marie-Jean-Pierre FLOURENS and, in the 20th century, Mr Maurice FONTAINE who became director in 1943. He initiated the interest of the laboratory for comparative endocrinology. It was under his direction that the laboratory was associated with the CNRS and became an UMR.

In more recent years, this unit renamed "Évolution des régulations endocriniennes" was under the direction of Ms Barbara DEMENEIX and Mr Giovanni LEVI (CNRS) successively. It is part of the MNHN department « Adaptations du Vivant » and belongs to the CNRS « Institut des sciences biologiques » (INSB).

The unit is located in the historical buildings of MNHN, 7 rue Cuvier, 75005 Paris.

MANAGEMENT TEAM

Director: Mr Giovanni LEVI. Deputy heads: Ms Barbara DEMENEIX and Mr Laurent SACHS; future director: Mr Laurent SACHS.

HCERES NOMENCLATURE

SVE5_1; SVE2_3.

SCIENTIFIC DOMAIN

The main objective of the unit is to understand physiological processes that control development, tissue homeostasis, regeneration and aging. More precisely, the unit analyses how thyroid hormone controls metabolic responses and developmental processes, and how endocrine disruptors impact on the thyroid hormone signal.. The other two main areas of research relate to the role of homeobox genes in the control of metabolism, reproduction and cognition, and to the assembly and annotation of the transcriptome of amphibian models and evolutionary studies of neuropeptides.

UNIT WORKFORCE

Unit workforce	Number 30/06/2017	Number 01/01/2019
Permanent staff		
Full professors and similar positions	6	4
Assistant professors and similar positions	6	6
Full time research directors (Directeurs de recherche) and similar positions	2	2
Full time research associates (Chargés de recherche) and similar positions	1	1
Other scientists ("Conservateurs, cadres scientifiques des EPIC, fondations, industries, etc.")	0	1
High school teachers	0	0

Supporting personnel (ITAs, BIATSSs and others, notably of EPICs)	17	14
TOTAL permanent staff	32	28
Non-permanent staff		
Non-permanent professors and associate professors, including emeritus	0	
Non-permanent full time scientists, including emeritus, post-docs	0	
Non-permanent supporting personnel	3	
PhD Students	6	
TOTAL non-permanent staff	9	
TOTAL unit		
	41	

GLOBAL ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIT

The unit has a high international recognition with number of very strong scientific accomplishments, thanks to efforts of the leaders of the current and previous management team. There is a proven track record of publications with high inherent quality and impact. The overall output of the unit continues to meet the expectations considering the size and historic achievements. Overall, the unit has an excellent record in attracting both European and national grants as well as participation in European networks.

High profile senior staff members will be retiring over the next few years and the unit is undergoing a transition, with new teams being formed and a rearrangement of the scientific structure. This transition is an opportunity to maintain and further build upon the high scientific standards of the unit, but it also represents a major challenge. The new organization of research groups represents an opportunity for the talented younger generation emerging in the unit. However, currently this generation has limitation in their experience of leading reach and obtain grants in their own name. Further development of the new scientific leaders is crucial for the future success.

Renovations of the facilities will be important for enhancing the strength of the unit and its competitiveness within the scientific community. The unit should continue improving the quality and maintenance of the core facilities, in particular the animal facilities. Evaluation and renovation of the animal facilities should be a very high priority for the unit and attracting top rank researchers to the unit; not doing so could potentially endanger the unit. While the overall research is of a high standard, there are several issues raised in this report that suggest that some of the researchers may need to have a more prominent role in important scientific projects. Some of the projects may lack competitive edge to attract funding or generate high impact publications, and some research projects require more manpower and expertise to materialize their ambitions. Some groups may not be at a critical mass to produce the highest quality research and there is a need for improved integration between groups. The proportion of international researchers is low and stronger outreach is warranted. There are only few activities that aim to attract industrial funding. It is important to further develop strategies for implementation of novel methodologies as well as for purchasing new equipment, which is crucial for maintaining high scientific standards. Integration and synergy between groups and some individual researchers are somewhat lacking.

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