

FINAL RESUME ON THE RESEARCH UNIT:
Laboratory of Alpine Ecology (LECA)

UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE
FOLLOWING INSTITUTIONS AND
RESEARCH BODIES:

Université Grenoble Alpes

Université Savoie Mont Blanc

Centre National de la Recherche
Scientifique - CNRS

EVALUATION CAMPAIGN 2019-2020
GROUP A



In the name of Hcéres¹:

Nelly Dupin, Acting
President

In the name of the experts committee²:

Patrick Kestemont, 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 data submitted by the supervising body on behalf the unit.

UNIT PRESENTATION

Unit name:	Laboratory of Alpine Ecology
Unit acronym:	LECA
Current label and N°:	UMR CNRS-UGA-USMB 5553
ID RNSR:	199511994N
Application type:	Renewal
Head of the unit (2019-2020):	Mr François POMPANON
Project leader (2021-2025):	Mr Björn REINEKING
Number of teams and/or themes:	2

EXPERTS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chair:	Mr Patrick KESTEMONT, Université de Namur, Belgique
Experts:	Ms Annie BEZIER, Université de Tours (supporting personnel)
	Mr Denis COUVET, Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris
	Mr Frank D'AMICO, Université de Pau et des Pays de l'Adour, Anglet
	Mr Richard MICHALET, Université de Bordeaux (representative of CNU)
	Mr Xavier VEKEMANS, Université de Lille (representative of CoNRS)

HCÉRES REPRESENTATIVE

Ms Pascale GARCIA

REPRESENTATIVES OF SUPERVISING BODIES

Mr Didier BOUCHON, CNRS
Mr Hervé COURTOIS, UGA
Ms Isabelle DHE, CNRS
Mr Roman KOSSAKOWSKI, USMB

INTRODUCTION

HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF THE UNIT

The Laboratory of Alpine Ecology (LECA) was created in 2003 from the fusion of four entities: the Laboratoire de Biologie des Populations d'Altitude (LBPA, UMR 5553, population genetics and biology), the Groupe d'Études sur le Devenir des Xénobiotiques dans l'Environnement (GEDEXE EA 2945, ecotoxicology), Ecosystèmes et Changements Environnementaux (ECE, EA 3112, ecology), and the ATIP team of Sandra LAVOREL (functional ecology).

LECA is located in two distinct sites: Grenoble at UGA Campus, St Martin d'Hères and Chambéry at Savoie Technolac campus, Le Bourget du Lac. Both sites are separated by 60 km.

Management team

The head of the Unit for the current contract is François POMPANON. For the next contract, up to date there is no appointed director of the Unit. The deputy directors of the current contract are Wilfried THULLER, Stéphane REYNAUD and Christiane GALLET. For the next contract, the deputy directors will be Anne LOISON, Wilfried THULLER and Stéphane REYNAUD.

HCÉRES NOMENCLATURE

SVE1 Agronomie, biologie végétale, écologie, environnement, évolution

THEMATICS

The scientific scope of the Unit deals with societal concerns such as climate and land use changes, biodiversity loss, environmental health and sustainable development, as well as understanding of processes and search for solutions. In this context, the aim of the Unit is to understand the mechanisms driving the origin and maintenance of biodiversity, its spatio-temporal dynamics and associated functions at various organisational levels (i.e. from gene to landscape), and to predict their responses to a variety of drivers (climate change, pollution, land use change...). The researchers of LECA use concepts, theories and methods from ecology and evolutionary biology and set up observatory, experimental and modelling approaches. They also develop concepts, methods, and recommendations for evaluating and measuring ecosystem services, for predicting the response of biodiversity and ecosystems to environmental change and for setting up conservation strategies.

For the new contract, the Unit will be re-organized into two teams: MEEBIO (Macroevolution, Evolutionary Ecology & Biodiversity dynamics), which aims to address the diversification and evolution of biodiversity in space and time, and BIOM (Biodiversity monitoring), which aims to study the effects of global change on biodiversity, ecosystem functioning and services. Three cross-disciplinary axes (BEEFY for Bridging Evolutionary ecology and Ecosystem Functioning to understand biodiversity, COMICS for Concepts and methods associated with meta-OMICS, and RAMDAM for Navigating the theory-data-model continuum) will be set in order to bring bridges between both teams.

UNIT WORKFORCE

Laboratory of Alpine Ecology (LECA)		
Active staff	Number 06/30/2019	Number 01/01/2021
Full professors and similar positions	4	4
Assistant professors and similar positions	12	12
Full time research directors (Directeurs de recherche) and similar positions	6	6
Full time research associates (Chargés de recherche) and similar positions	7	7
Other scientists ("Conservateurs, cadres scientifiques des EPIC, fondations, industries, etc.")	0	0
High school teachers	1	0
Supporting personnel (ITAs, BIATSSs and others, notably of EPICs)	22	22
Permanent staff	52	51
Non-permanent professors and associate professors, including emeritus	1	
Non-permanent full time scientists, including emeritus, post-docs (except PhD students)	9	
PhD Students	31	
Non-permanent supporting personnel	16	
Non-permanent staff	57	
Total	109	51

GLOBAL ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIT

LECA is internationally recognized as a scientific leader on different but related ecological themes dealing with global change and biodiversity. Cutting-edge research, based on an excellent balance between modelling, experimentation and observations, is highlighted through an outstanding level of publications in top scientific journals (Nature, Science, Nature Climate Change, Nature Communications, PNAS, TREE, etc.). Moreover, several papers are highly cited and four researchers are recognized as highly-cited scientists. Responding to a high societal demand, LECA is excellent in attracting research funding from private and public, local and international, sources. However, due to its large number of major, but complex, ecological and evolutionary themes, there are few redundancies of research themes between people, making LECA vulnerable from any staff departure. LECA has strong interactions with the non-academic world, closely in line with the societal demand. LECA has an excellent involvement in education through research, at both Master and PhD levels, and most master and PhD students find a job at the end of their academic curriculum. As far as research is concerned, the unit's life and organisation are excellent. The technical platforms, administrative and IT teams are doing their best to support research, but the last two categories of staff are overstretched due to frequent turnover of contract staff and increased administrative workload. The new 5-year project, which will be conducted by the two newly organized teams (MEEBIO and BIOM), is original, innovative and timely, but also very ambitious, and some problems may arise from an increasing lag between new objectives to achieve and resources available.

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