Research evaluation

FINAL RESUME ON THE RESEARCH UNIT:

Department of Developmental and Stem Cell Biology

UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE FOLLOWING INSTITUTIONS AND RESEARCH BODIES:

Institut Pasteur Paris

Centre national de la recherche scientifique – CNRS

EVALUATION CAMPAIGN 2019-2020
GROUP A

Rapport publié le 07/07/2020

In the name of Hcéres[1]:

Nelly Dupin, Acting President

In the name of the experts committee[2]:

Elizabeth Robertson, Chairwoman 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:	Department of Developmental and Stem Cell Biology
Unit acronym:	DSCB
Current label and N°:	UMR 3738
ID RNSR:	200621926L
Application type:	Renewal
Head of the unit (2019-2020):	Mr François Schweisguth
Project leader (2021-2025):	Mr François Schweisguth
Number of teams and/or themes:	16 teams

EXPERTS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chair:	Ms Elizabeth Robertson, University of Oxford, United Kingdom
Experts:	Mr Damian Brunner, University of Zurich, Switzerland Mr Renaud Legouis, CNRS Gif-sur-Yvette (representative of Inserm CSS) Ms Pura Munoz-Canoves, Pompeu Fabra University and ICREA, Barcelona, Spain Ms Ana Pombo, Max Delbrück Center, Berlin, Deutchland Mr Didier Stainier, Max Planck Institute for Heart and Lung Research, Bad Nauheim, Germany Mr Miguel Torres, Centro Nacional de Investigaciones Cardiovasculares, Madrid, Spain Mr James Turner, The Francis Crick Institute, London, United Kingdom Mr Juan-Manuel Vaquerizas-Erdocia, Max Planck Institute for Molecular Biomedicine, Muenster, Germany Mr Jean-Paul Vincent, The Francis Crick Institute, London, United Kingdom Ms Dominique Weil, CNRS Paris (representative of CoNRS) Ms Agathe Zouiouiech, Inserm Illkirch (supporting personnel)

HCÉRES REPRESENTATIVE

Mr Hinrich Gronemeyer

REPRESENTATIVES OF SUPERVISING BODIES

Ms Delphine Delacour, CNRS
Mr François Guillemot, Pasteur Institute
Mr Alain Israel, Pasteur Institute
Mr Ludovic Leconte, CNRS

INTRODUCTION

HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF THE UNIT

The Department of Developmental and Stem Cell Biology was last reviewed in 2015. Since this evaluation the Department has expanded significantly with the addition of 6 new junior G5 groups, largely made possible by the LabX Revive block grant, (originally lead by Mr Shahragim Tajbakhsh and Mr François Schweisguth). Additionally, Ms Laure Bally-Cuif joined the Department as a Senior Group leader in 2016, while more recently Mr Thomas Gregor (Princeton University, USA) has been recruited to initiate a new research initiative in the Physics of Biological Function. The Departmental focus remains on probing fundamental aspects of developmental biology and stem cell biology, using a variety of model organisms (mouse, quail, Zebrafish, Drosophila and C elegans) and *in vitro* cell culture models (stem cells and organoids). Three specific areas have been identified spanning gene regulation and epigenetics, morphogenesis and stem cell biology. A particular strength of the Department is its interdisciplinary approach and cross cutting themes.

MANAGEMENT TEAM

The Department is being very effectively lead by the Director Mr François Schweisguth, with the able help of Ms Laure Bally-Cuif, the Deputy Director and Director designate.

HCÉRES NOMENCLATURE

SVE2

THEMATICS

The scientific activities of the 18 teams of the Department of Developmental and Stem Cell Biology at the Pasteur Institute (16 teams for the new contract) aim at generating mechanistic insight into the fields of developmental biology, epigenetics and stem cell biology. They are focused on three main axes of research, (i) regulation of gene expression and epigenetics, (ii) morphogenesis and developmental decisions and (iii) stem cell biology in early embryos and adults, in both healthy and aging/repair contexts.

UNIT WORKFORCE

Department of Developmental and Stem Cell Biology		
Active staff	**Number 06/30/2019**	**Number 01/01/2021**
Full professors and similar positions	0	0
Assistant professors and similar positions	0	0
Full time research directors (Directeurs de recherche) and similar positions	13	12
Full time research associates (Chargés de recherche) and similar positions	14	9
Other scientists (“Conservateurs, cadres scientifiques des EPIC, fondations, industries, etc.”)	5	3
High school teachers	0	0
Supporting personnel (ITAs, BIATSSs and others, notably of EPICs)	70	40
Permanent staff	**102**	**64**
Non-permanent professors and associate professors, including emeritus	0	

Non-permanent full time scientists, including emeritus, post-docs (except PhD students)	47	
PhD Students	40	
Non-permanent supporting personnel	31	
Non-permanent staff	**118**	
Total	**220**	**64**

GLOBAL ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIT

The Department of Developmental and Stem Cell Biology continues to maintain its well-deserved reputation as one of the world leading centers in this area of science as evidenced by the impressive scientific output. The Department has been considerably strengthened over the past five years with the addition of new vibrant junior and senior research teams. Future plans for research are very exciting and well-articulated, with the prospect of high degree of success in the coming years.

One of the key achievements of the department is the coordination and renewal (2020-2024) of the LabEx Revive which had a major impact on the dynamic reshaping of the department and renewing of research teams. In particular, the recruitments, through international highly competitive calls, of two senior and four junior teams was largely facilitated by this grant. All teams are members of the LabEx. Three teams have closed and two teams have left or will leave; one team will be closed when the team leader will retire.

Illustrating the achievements and high-level scientific performance of the department, four members of the departments won prestigious ERC grants (3 Starting and 1 Consolidator grant) and multiple other prizes have been won by other team leaders, including but not limited to the CNRS Silver Medal, EMBO membership and EMBO YIP, Pasteur Chair of Excellence.

The department has implemented important activities to foster exchange of ideas, results and tools and generate a stimulating and collegial atmosphere. In addition to retreats (department, PIs), thematic clubs and chalk talks, they have established a mentoring scheme for the 8 young PIs.

The department has developed a gender equality plan, which introduced concrete internal actions, such as re-scheduling department activities earlier in the day, one-to-one mentoring sessions with woman scientists, and – remarkably – providing to woman G5 team leaders with a child additional funding to recruit laboratory personnel for help.

The department is very active in organizing international meetings and workshops, including meetings of stem cell research organizations, of which department PIs are founding member or members of the Scientific Board. Similarly, international courses and MOOCs on stem cell biology have been organized by members of the departments.

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