



Research evaluation

FINAL RESUME ON THE RESEARCH UNIT
BRIC - Bordeaux Research Institute of Oncology

UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE
FOLLOWING INSTITUTIONS AND
RESEARCH BODIES:

Université de Bordeaux
Institut national de la santé et de la recherche
médicale - INSERM

EVALUATION CAMPAIGN 2020-2022
GROUP B

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High Council for evaluation of research and higher education



In the name of Hcéres¹:

Mr Thierry Coulhon, President

In the name of the experts committee²:

Ms Urszula Hibner, 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 certified data submitted by the supervising body on behalf of the unit.

UNIT PRESENTATION

Unit name:	Bordeaux Research Institute of Oncology
Unit acronym:	BRIC
Current label and N:	UMR
ID RNSR:	
Application type:	Restructuration
Head of the unit (2020-2021):	
Project leader (2021-2025):	Mr Frédéric Saltel
Number of teams:	11 (among which one junior team ATIP/Avenir)

EXPERTS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chair:	Ms Urszula Hibner, CNRS, Montpellier
Experts :	Ms Manuela, Baccarini, University of Vienna, Austria
	Ms Anne Blangy, CNRS, Montpellier
	Ms Fatima El Marjou, Institut Curie, Paris (supporting personnel)
	Ms Julie Gavard, CNRS, Nantes
	Mr Christophe Hennequin, APHP, Hôpital St Louis, Paris (representative of CNU)
	Ms Valérie Paradis, Hôpital Beaujon, Paris
	Mr Jean-Ehrland Ricci, Inserm, Nice (representative of Inserm CSS)
	Mr Curzio Rüegg, Université de Fribourg, Suisse
	Mr Giorgio Stassi, University of Palermo, Italy
	Ms Eliette Touati, Institut Pasteur, Paris

HCÉRES REPRESENTATIVE

Mr Jean Edouard Gairin

REPRESENTATIVES OF SUPERVISING INSTITUTIONS AND BODIES

Mr Pierre Dubus, CHU Bordeaux, partenaire
Mr Alain Eychenne, Inserm
Mr Alain-Pierre Gadeau, Université de Bordeaux

Mr François-Xavier Mahon, Institut Bergonié, partenaire

Mr Philippe Moretto, Université de Bordeaux

Mr Richard Salives, Inserm

Mr Martin Teichmann, Université de Bordeaux

INTRODUCTION

HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF THE UNIT

The BRIC project is a proposed merger of four local INSERM units (U1053: Bordeaux Research in Translational Oncology: BaRITOn (Ms Violaine Moreau), U1218: Actions for onCogenesis understanding and Target Identification in ONcology: ACTION (Mr Pierre Soubeyran), U1035: Biotherapy for genetic diseases, inflammation and cancer: BMGIC (Mr François Moreau-Gaudry) and U1029: Angiogenesis and Cancer Microenvironment Laboratory: ACML (Mr Andréas Bikfalvi)) and one university associated team (EA7435 – IMOTION (Mr Franck Couillaud)), all engaged in cancer research. The BRIC unit will be composed of eleven teams organized around three thematic axes: axis 1 “Microenvironment and tumor heterogeneity” (Teams 1 to 4), axis 2 “Molecular oncogenesis and cancer metabolism” (Teams 5 to 7) and axis 3 “Resistance to treatments and innovative therapies” (Teams 8 to 11). These eleven future teams are currently dispersed in eight buildings on three distinct sites. A new building, currently under construction on the Carreire campus, will bring together seven of the eleven teams of the new unit in 2022; longer-term plans should permit to relocalize the remaining teams to this common site. Appropriate actions are planned to maintain strong links with the clinic for this unit with a very significant translational research interest.

RESEARCH ECOSYSTEM

The BRIC project has been conceived in a very favorable context of a strong support from the local and national authorities. Indeed, cancer research had been defined as a priority both by the University of Bordeaux and by the Aquitaine Regional Council. Operationally, this was translated into the creation of a cancer axis within the Medical and Biological Sciences Department at the University of Bordeaux and the elaboration of a broad interdisciplinary project named "Oncosphere" that aims at constructing a rich scientific and medical environment focused on cancer research in a broad sense. This will include an impetus to develop new technologies, incubating start-ups, supporting social sciences and general public outreach.

Despite the high dispersion of the teams that work on cancer in the current Bordeaux landscape, their potential has been recognized by awarding the site the competitive national SIRIC (Site de Recherche Intégrée sur le Cancer) label (INCa and DGS financed comprehensive Cancer Centre). They also benefit from the support of the “Cancéropôle Grand Sud Ouest”. Finally, very extensive links of the research laboratories with the clinical departments of the Bordeaux University Hospital and the Institut Bergonié merit to be highlighted. Although cancer research is not one of the core projects of Bordeaux University IdEx, it benefits from a strong support and the BRIC teams have profited from common projects of the IdEx and the SIRIC BRIO. One of the future BRIC teams is a member of a local LabEx (TRAIL), while some others are associated with an inter-regional LabEx (GRex).

HCÉRES NOMENCLATURE AND THEMATICS OF THE UNIT

SVE5 - Oncology

MANAGEMENT TEAM

The unit will be directed by Mr F. Saltel assisted by Ms S. Lannelongue as a general secretary. A deputy director remains to be nominated.

UNIT WORKFORCE

BRIC - Bordeaux Research Institute of Oncology		
Active staff	Number 06/01/2020	Number 01/01/2022
Full professors and similar positions		36
Assistant professors and similar positions		27
Full time research directors (Directeurs de recherche) and similar positions		7
Full time research associates (Chargés de recherche) and similar positions		13
Other scientists (“Conservateurs, cadres scientifiques des EPIC, fondations, industries, etc.”)		28

High school teachers		0
Supporting personnel (ITAs, BIATSSs and others, notably of EPICs)		53
Permanent staff		164
Non-permanent professors and associate professors, including emeritus		
Non-permanent full time scientists, including emeritus, post-docs (except PhD students)		
PhD Students		
Non-permanent supporting personnel		
Non-permanent staff		
Total		

GLOBAL ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIT

The four INSERM units and the university team that are under evaluation in the framework of the BRIC project globally performed very well in the previous contract. These units, some of which have been pursuing their themes of research for several decades, regularly produced very good publications and efficiently ensured funding for their research. They developed and/or maintained strong links with the medical community, in fact many clinicians actively participate in the research conducted by many of the teams. This is highly commendable. The national recognition of the different teams is attested by the creation of the Bordeaux Comprehensive Cancer Centre, a highly competitive label accorded by INCa, the National Cancer Institute. While some of the researchers also benefit from a very good and even excellent international reputation, globally speaking the international visibility of the research conducted by the BRIC's teams needs to be improved. This is undoubtedly a major motivation behind uniting their forces to create what for the time being is going to be a medium-size institute with a strong cancer research focus.

While gathering most of the teams at the same location should indeed create a new dynamic that would be expected to increase the unit's attractiveness towards PhD students, postdoctoral fellows and junior researchers, which by itself will be a major plus, it remains to be seen what additional benefits will be created by the reorganization. Indeed, many of the teams involved in the project already engaged in collaborations and it is not entirely clear from the proposed project what new synergies are to be expected in the new unit. In fact, with a few exceptions, most of the proposed research appears as continuation of previous projects, there is little evidence of a major impetus provided by the move. Part of the problem might be that, rather disappointingly, the proposed unit does not include any new blood, apparently the project was constructed by adhesion of existing local teams, without a call for external applications. The choice of this strategy was likely dictated by a rather limited space that will initially be available for the BRIC research unit. However, it is to be hoped that these shortcomings represent a transition phase and will be overcome when the full Oncosphere project comes to life. The committee notes that this is a medium- rather than a short-term perspective.

Another major benefit associated with grouping teams at the same geographical location is the possibility of sharing common resources in terms of running technological platforms. Importantly, many of the BRIC's scientists assume the responsibility of scientific direction of several platforms. However, currently, most of the core facilities are organized in a common technical unit (UMS) and it is unclear in what way their functioning may be improved by the BRIC project.

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