

FINAL RESUME ON THE RESEARCH UNIT:  
Physiology and physiopathology of endogenous  
and infectious retroviruses (RETRO-ENDO)

UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE  
FOLLOWING INSTITUTIONS AND  
RESEARCH BODIES:

Université Paris-Sud

Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique -  
CNRS

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**EVALUATION CAMPAIGN 2018-2019**  
GROUP E



In the name of Hcéres<sup>1</sup>:

Michel Cosnard, President

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

Zsuzsanna Izsvák, Chairwoman of the  
committee

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

<sup>1</sup> The president of Hcéres "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 experts committee". (Article 11, paragraph 2).

Tables in this document were filled with data provided by laboratories and supervising bodies in the unit's application and in the Excel files "Données du contrat en cours" and "Données du prochain contrat".

## UNIT PRESENTATION

<b>Unit name:</b>	Physiology and physiopathology of endogenous and infectious retroviruses
<b>Unit acronym:</b>	RETRO-ENDO
<b>Requested label:</b>	UMR
<b>Application type:</b>	Renewal
<b>Current number:</b>	9196
<b>Head of the unit (2018-2019):</b>	Mr Thierry HEIDMANN
<b>Project leader (2020-2024):</b>	Ms Odile HEIDMANN
<b>Number of teams and/or themes:</b>	1

## EXPERTS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

<b>Chair:</b>	Ms Zsuzsanna IZSVÁK, Max-Delbrück-Center for Molecular Medicine in the Helmholtz Society, Germany
<b>Experts:</b>	Mr Gaël CRISTOFARI, Institute for Research on Cancer and Aging of Nice Mr Stéphane EMILIANI, Institut Cochin Paris (representative of CoNRS) Ms Delphine RICHER, Institut de biologie moléculaire et cellulaire de Strasbourg (supporting personnel) Mr Els VERHOEYEN, ENS de Lyon

## HCÉRES REPRESENTATIVE

Mr Théophile OHLMANN

## REPRESENTATIVES OF SUPERVISING INSTITUTIONS AND BODIES

Mr Etienne AUGE, Université Paris Sud  
Mr Bruno LUCAS, CNRS  
Mr Eric SOLARY, Institut Gustave Roussy

## INTRODUCTION

### HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF THE UNIT

The RETRO-ENDO Unit (CNRS/U Paris 11) is a thematically focused laboratory composed of a single research team. It was created in 1998 - and directed since then - by Mr Thierry Heidmann at the Institut Gustave Roussy "IGR" in Villejuif. The unit focuses on infectious and endogenous retroviruses.

### MANAGEMENT TEAM

Proposed management team for the next contract:

Head of the unit: Ms Odile Heidmann. Deputy Head: Mr Thierry Heidmann.

### HCÉRES NOMENCLATURE

SVE3

### SCIENTIFIC DOMAIN

The RETRO-ENDO research unit studies the physiology and physiopathology of infectious and endogenous infectious retroviruses, with a particular emphasis on the role and activities of their envelope proteins, and their modulation in vaccine development.

### UNIT WORKFORCE

Unit workforce		
RETRO-ENDO		
Active staff	Number 30/06/2018	Number 01/01/2020
Full professors and similar positions	0	0
Assistant professors and similar positions	0	0
Full time research directors (Directeurs de recherche) and similar positions	2	1
Full time research associates (Chargés de recherche) and similar positions	5	4
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)	5	4
<b>Permanent staff</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>9</b>

Non-permanent professors and associate professors, including emeritus	0	
Non-permanent full time scientists, including emeritus, post-docs	6	
<i>PhD Students</i>	2	
Non-permanent supporting personnel	0	
<b>Non-permanent staff</b>	<b>6</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	

## GLOBAL ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIT

The RETRO-ENDO unit is highly reputed. The excellent research of the team is demonstrated by an outstanding record of publications. The currently running projects are aiming at understanding the molecular and cellular mechanisms underlying the immunosuppressive activity of retroviral envelopes, and have the potential to contribute even to new breakthroughs in the field. Following the successful generation of the FeLV vaccine, the unit is now engaged in developing novel optimized vaccine strategies against other retroviruses (FIV, HTLV and HIV). Research aspects regarding the potential role of immunosuppressive domains in tumor development or feto-maternal tolerance are also highly competitive.

The team masters a broad range of experimental models and has established a long-standing academic and industrial collaboration network. The unit has filled 5 patent applications (3/5 patents are licensed) in the evaluation period. A pre-clinical trial for a measles virus-vectorized HIV vaccine has been completed. The unit has established strong connections with the industry through collaborative contracts, and was involved in launching a start-up, Viroxis.

The unit is organized as a single team of about 20 people with a balanced structure of sex ratio and an equilibrium between permanent and non-permanent staff. Currently, four researchers have accreditation to supervise research of junior scientists. The unit is in transition regarding its scientific leadership. The current director would act as a deputy director in the initial phase of the new contract.

The location of the research unit at the IGR provides access to biological resources and core facilities. Financial support is secured until 2020. The unit has obtained multiple research grants from national sources, including industrial collaboration funds. The team would be competitive to recruit international funding (highly recommended). The research unit has received reduced financial resources from its supporting bodies in the last 5 years. A further decline could jeopardize ongoing projects.

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2 rue Albert Einstein  
75013 Paris, France  
T. 33 (0)1 55 55 60 10

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