Research evaluation

EVALUATION REPORT OF THE UNIT

SABNP - Structure et activité des biomolécules normales et pathologiques

UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE FOLLOWING ESTABLISHMENTS AND ORGANISMS:

Université d'Évry-Val-d'Essonne,
Institut national de la santé et de la recherche médicale – Inserm

EVALUATION CAMPAIGN 2024-2025
GROUP E

Rapport publié le 20/03/2025

Haut Conseil de l'évaluation de la recherche et de l'enseignement supérieur

In the name of the expert committee :

Ms Isabelle Landrieu, chairwoman of the committee

For the Hcéres :

Stéphane Le Bouler, acting president

In accordance with articles R. 114-15 and R. 114-10 of the Research Code, the evaluation reports drawn up by the expert committees are signed by the chairmen of these committees and countersigned by the president of Hcéres.

To make the document easier to read, the names used in this report to designate functions, professions or responsibilities (expert, researcher, teacher-researcher, professor, lecturer, engineer, technician, director, doctoral student, etc.) are used in a generic sense and have a neutral value.

This report is the result of the unit's evaluation by the expert committee, the composition of which is specified below. The appreciations it contains are the expression of the independent and collegial deliberation of this committee. The numbers in this report are the certified exact data extracted from the deposited files by the supervising body on behalf of the unit.

MEMBERS OF THE EXPERT COMMITTEE

Chairperson:	Ms Isabelle Landrieu, Centre national de la recherche scientifique
Experts:	Mr Helgo Schmidt, CNRS, Illkirch Mr Bertrand Seraphin, CNRS, Gif sur Yvette (representative of the CNU) Ms Valerie Serre, UP Cité - Université Paris Cité (representative of CSS1 Inserm)

HCÉRES REPRESENTATIVE

Ms Catherine Etchebest

REPRESENTATIVES OF SUPERVISING INSTITUTIONS AND BODIES

Mr Philippe Arhets, Inserm
Ms Roxane Brachet, Genopole Evry
Ms Carine Giovannangelli, Inserm
Ms Christell Monville, Université Evry UEVE

CHARACTERISATION OF THE UNIT

- Name: Structure/Activité des Biomolécules Normales et Pathologiques
- Acronym: SABNP
- Label and number: Inserm U1204
- Composition of the executive team: Pr David Pastré, Director, Dr Emilie Steiner, leader of theme I, Dr Ahmed Bouhss, Leader of theme II, Dr Alexandre Maucuer, Leader of Theme III, Dr Partho Ray, Leader of Theme IV

SCIENTIFIC PANELS OF THE UNIT

SVE Sciences du vivant et environnement
SVE3 Molécules du vivant, biologie intégrative (des gènes et génomes aux systèmes), biologie cellulaire et du développement pour la science animale

THEMES OF THE UNIT

The unit's research activities are primarily focused on the field of RNA biology, with a particular emphasis on the study of RNA-protein interactions. Research topics include splicing regulation, as well as mRNA/micro-RNA binding proteins in neurodegeneration and in translation regulation. Some research is focused on identifying new drug candidates that target RNA-protein interactions as well as novel drug targets.

HISTORIC AND GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF THE UNIT

The laboratory is located on the second floor of the Maupertuis building at Evry University, on the Genopole biocluster campus. It was established in 2007. The laboratory operates as a single team with different research axes.

RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT OF THE UNIT

Four of the laboratory's teacher researchers are affiliated with the University of Evry, which is part of the University Paris-Saclay. One member of the laboratory served as president of the University until 2023, and one researcher is a member of its scientific council. The SABNP laboratory is associated with the SDSV Doctoral School of the University Paris-Saclay. One member of the laboratory and the Unit Director serve on the doctoral school's scientific council. At the University Paris-Saclay level, the SABNP was part of the BioTherAlliance consortium within the framework of the 'Initiatives de Recherche Stratégiques,' which is developing genome-based therapies and biotherapies. SABNP members are engaged in ongoing collaborative interactions with other laboratories at U Paris-Saclay, including I2BC.
Inserm serves as a supervisory body, providing administrative support by its delegation. All patent applications are treated by Inserm transfer.
The research themes of the unit are also well aligned with the Genopole that supports the development of research in genomics and post-genomics.
The SABNP laboratory has established a robust partnership with the Genopole biocluster, resulting in the renewal of essential equipment (NMR) and the acquisition of new material (cell imaging platform for HCS). The laboratory also joined a successful call of the Genopole (ApogeeBio, MSCA CO-FUND) for European funding, benefiting from an additional postdoctoral fellowship on international mobility. One researcher is a member of the Genopole scientific council.
The Genopole biocluster provides a platform for interaction with numerous companies, and Synsight (now acquired by Iktos), the laboratory's spin-off, is located in its premises. SYNSIGHT is a company specialised in the discovery and development of therapeutic molecules, specifically targeting protein-RNA interactions.

UNIT WORKFORCE: in physical persons at 31/12/2023

Catégories de personnel	Effectifs
Professeurs et assimilés	2
Maîtres de conférences et assimilés	2
Directeurs de recherche et assimilés	1
Chargés de recherche et assimilés	2
Personnels d'appui à la recherche	7
Sous-total personnels permanents en activité	**14**
Enseignants-chercheurs et chercheurs non permanents et assimilés	1
Personnels d'appui non permanents	1
Post-doctorants	1
Doctorants	7
Sous-total personnels non permanents en activité	**10**
Total personnels	**24**

DISTRIBUTION OF THE UNIT'S PERMANENTS BY EMPLOYER: in physical persons at 31/12/2023. Non-tutorship employers are grouped under the heading 'others'.

Nom de l'employeur	EC	C	PAR
Inserm	0	2	5
UEVE	4	0	2
AUTRES	0	1	0
Total personnels	**4**	**3**	**7**

GLOBAL ASSESSMENT

The Unit's scientific overall objective is to advance knowledge concerning RNA biology and RNA-protein interactions, conducting research with therapeutic impact for the treatment of human diseases. The laboratory follows several research lines: mRNA-binding proteins in translation regulation and in neurodegeneration and early splicing regulation. Despite the unit's limited size, it has been active on several fronts: supervision, research, education and valorisation activities.

SABNP scientific output, focused on RNA-protein interaction, is overall very good. 43 publications were produced with some publications in highly-regarded journals. The following journals have published their research: Cell reports, EMBO reports, NAR, JMB, FEBS Journal, eLife, Communications Biology, CMLS. One highlight of SABNP research is an original model proposing that TDP-43 self-assembly allows RNA-binding cooperativeness and prevents TDP-43 aggregation. This research line has already secured robust funding and collaborative opportunities for the next period, including with companies to develop an automated detection pipeline to assess TDP-43 self-assembly combined to functional screen in living cells by using the in-house MT bench technology.

The laboratory has demonstrated an excellent attractiveness. At the international level, the laboratory has built bilateral collaborations, with support from Campus France. The laboratory was able to attract a researcher, on a 'chaire junior', on international mobility, with a strong track record of expertise related to the laboratory overall objective. The laboratory has also attracted and funded seventeen PhD researchers, the vast majority from other universities, including six on international mobility. In addition, three postdoctoral researchers joined the team, one on international mobility and two returning from a first postdoctoral experience abroad. Finally, the laboratory benefits from renovated spaces and of large equipment for SABNP research (e.g. high content

screening). The laboratory has shown an excellent interaction with its governing bodies, in the University of Evry and Inserm, by contributing to research governance (e.g. president of Evry University, member of CSS1) and to teaching. It is thematically well positioned in post-genomics research linked to the Evry Genopole. Accordingly, the laboratory has received a very strong financial support by the Genopole. With only one ANR, although as coordinator, the laboratory has not felt the need to be very active in its answers to calls for additional project support. The committee considers that outside funding should be increased, as it provides, in addition to the financial support, opportunities for building a network with complementary expertise.

The laboratory has shown an outstanding ability to valorise its core expertise in RNA-protein interactions. The funding for doctoral theses through three Cifre contracts, with three different industrial partners, as well as the direct contracts for service or collaboration agreements, demonstrate a successful model of industry-academia collaboration. The presence of Synsight in-house spin-off within the laboratory provides a valuable opportunity for collaboration. The MT Bench technology, when used in conjunction with high-content screening capabilities, demonstrates significant potential for facilitating drug discovery.

DETAILED EVALUATION OF THE UNIT

A - CONSIDERATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE PREVIOUS REPORT

The still large diversity of the projects proposed might be limited by not enough manpower
Some research themes were not developed further, such as the research on Nanodiamonds and on bioinformatics. This has had a markedly beneficial impact on the direction of research, with a notable shift towards a more pronounced emphasis on RNA biology. It remains that there are still numerous research lines. The committee assessment indicates that some topics are not sufficiently competitive in regard to the related research field while new avenues have already been opened with the chaire junior who will develop a new topic on the effect of RNA/protein interactions on metastasis.

The manpower of SABNP could be further strengthened by the recruitment of an additional PI with recognised scientific expertise in RNA biology
The laboratory has received a 'Chaire Professeur Junior' position and a newly recruited researcher with expertise in RNA biology has joined the laboratory at the end of 2023.
In addition, the laboratory has been strengthened by the arrival of an engineer with expertise in protein/RNA interactions.

The stake for SABNP is now to gain international readability on its work on RNA.
The unit has had international activities, in particular co-supervision of PhD students with laboratories in Russia and Ukraine, and has welcomed a postdoctoral researcher with international mobility, on a very competitive European call (individual fellowship). It has received three mobility grants from CAMPUS France to establish international networks. It has attracted a researcher on international mobility to the 'chaire junior'.
However, it remains poorly represented at international conferences on RNA biology.

B - EVALUATION AREAS

EVALUATION AREA 1: PROFILE, RESOURCES AND ORGANISATION OF THE UNIT

Assessment on the scientific objectives of the unit

The laboratory has a clear focus on RNA-protein interactions that is well aligned with the genopole campus environment. It has developed methodologies that are strong opportunity to achieve its drug discovery goals. SABNP is supported by Inserm thanks to its research themes, its complementary approaches and its capacity for technological development.

Assessment on the unit's resources

The Unit has a number of large equipment that it uses efficiently. It has a newly acquired equipment for high-content high-throughput analysis, which will be a strong asset for its research and drug discovery goals. It now benefits from newly renovated, spacious facilities with high standards in terms of reducing energy consumption.

Assessment on the functioning of the unit

The unit is organised as a single team and shares resources such as the expertise of its engineers, budget and equipment. The laboratory follows the rules set by its supervising bodies. The members of SABNP benefits from an environment that encourages scientific discussion and collaboration between all members.

1/ The unit has set itself relevant scientific objectives.

Strengths and possibilities linked to the context

The laboratory conducts basic research aimed at a better understanding of RNA/protein interactions with biomedical applications. The focus on RNA biology is a strong differentiator that fits well with the unit's environment. The laboratory benefits from multidisciplinary expertise in biochemistry and cell biology. Research projects cover a wide variety of pathologies (cancer, neurodegenerative diseases) and biomolecular targets.

Weaknesses and risks linked to the context

Too many research lines are running in parallel for one team, limiting the visibility of the research and perhaps of reaching later stages of drug development, in a very competitive field (RNA biology).

2/ The unit has resources that are suited to its activity profile and research environment and mobilises them.

Strengths and possibilities linked to the context

The University of Evry supported the renovation of the Maupertuis building, where the laboratory is located, and the creation of a new room for the cellular imaging platform. The unit has hired dedicated contract staff to manage the HCS and NMR equipment. The engineers (4.2 full-time equivalent) with expertise in the operation of the various facilities of the laboratory are associated with all projects. The budget is used for common equipment, consumables, master internships and travel expenses to attend meetings. The direction of the unit has ensured that all topics are covered by sufficient staff by providing at least one PhD or postdoctoral fellowship when needed.

Weaknesses and risks linked to the context

Costs and maintenance of the lab's equipment are heavy burdens for the laboratory.
The laboratory makes the decision to support all projects, which allows some less competitive research that would not meet the standard for competitive funding to endure.

3/ The unit's practices comply with the rules and directives laid down by its supervisory bodies in terms of human resources management, safety, environment, ethical protocols and protection of data and scientific heritage.

Strengths and possibilities linked to the context

The research team at SABNP benefits from an environment that encourages scientific discussion and collaboration among all members. The laboratory director provides scientific input to all projects.
The renovation of the building caused many inconveniences during the 18-month period, but on a positive note, the laboratory now benefits from the renovated space design in addition to limiting consumption and energy losses. Air conditioning has been installed only in the rooms with large equipment.
'Safety and hazards are addressed in the laboratory by a dedicated person, and a document is updated annually with identified risks and proposed corrective actions. New members of the laboratory have been informed of the risks. Researchers on international mobility are supported in the administrative process and in finding accommodation. Some procedures are in place to welcome incoming staff.
The unit has a laboratory council and a seminar meeting every two weeks.
The laboratory's data is stored both in the university's data centre (more than 100 TB) and on the laboratory computers in two separate locations.
The laboratory is aware of the need to limit product consumption and to sensitise its members.

Weaknesses and risks linked to the context

Opportunities to share organisational concerns, logistical ideas, and personal concerns are not formalised, for example, through specific meetings and/or during annual reviews.

EVALUATION AREA 2: ATTRACTIVENESS

Assessment on the attractiveness of the unit

The unit has demonstrated its ability to attract researchers to its project, including international mobility. The 'chaire de professor junior' is a remarkable achievement and a great opportunity. Participation in international bilateral mobility actions at the European level is a promising step to improve the visibility of the unit at this level. The visibility of the team project could be improved by taking advantage of increased networking opportunities at national and international levels. The attractiveness of the unit is considered excellent by the committee.

Strengths and possibilities linked to the context

The SABNP provides a very good environment for the ongoing research projects. The different lines of research benefit from the accumulated expertise in RNA-protein biochemistry as well as access to key infrastructure such as NMR spectroscopy, two Atomic Force Microscopes (AFM) and the screening/characterisation of compounds that disrupt RNA-protein interactions via the innovative MT-bench technology. In addition, efforts are underway to adapt the MT-bench technology to high-throughput cell imaging, which will make this platform even more attractive in the future, particularly for drug discovery projects targeting RNA-protein interactions. The unit has decided to share access to the equipment and provide small consumables to all researchers in order to provide low-level core funding for all ongoing projects.

Concerning personnel recruitment and development strategies in the unit, the SABNP benefits from its association with Paris-Saclay/Evry University and the Genopole campus, which offers access to special funding schemes to recruit postdocs from abroad. Such funding can then be used to give researchers time before securing a stable position through recruitment by Inserm or Paris-Saclay University. The co-head of research theme I, is a successful example of this approach. The unit was also able to attract an experienced researcher as demonstrated by the recruitment on international mobility of a 'Chaire Professeur Junior', which will allow the development of the new research theme 'RNA-protein interactions in cancer metastasis'. Two engineers were promoted to exceptional class, one research engineer passed 1st class and one teacher/researcher became professor.

Researchers at the SABNP are involved in teaching, creating the opportunity to identify motivated and talented students that could join the SABNP for a PhD. The SABNP is part of the SDSV postgraduate school of Paris-Saclay University, which will give PhD student candidates the opportunity to apply for their own fellowship (4 SDSV fellowships in the review period). The unit has created a supportive environment by helping PhD students to search for accommodation. Furthermore, experienced engineers are actively involved in knowledge transfer so that newly recruited PhD students get a head start in the lab. The attractiveness of the unit is also reflected by the fact that 6 international PhD students were recruited during the last evaluation period.

The unit was able to raise money to pursue its research project, the main source remaining the local Genopole that contributed to three postdoctoral fellowships, including one with EU funds, two research projects, equipment renewal (NMR) and acquisition (high content screening) and five Master fellowships. One ANR PRC was obtained as coordinator during the period (an additional ANR PRCE was obtained in 2024), which enables exchange of complementary expertise. Notably, the team has obtained an EU individual fellowship to recruit a postdoctoral researcher.

Weaknesses and risks linked to the context for the four references above

As pointed out in the self-evaluation, the engineer responsible for the high-throughput cell imaging platform does not have a permanent position currently. Clearly, maintenance and running of one of the key technology platforms in the unit will require dedicated personnel with a long-term perspective. The responsible engineer of the NMR platform, another key facility of the unit, might leave the SABNP, which could severely compromise the use of this equipment.

Funding by the ANR was low and even if funding was evaluated to be sufficient, presenting projects to competitive call is also an excellent manner to challenge their quality and an opportunity to set the network with complementary expertise and to ensure long-term diversity of funding.

The researchers had a very low participation to national/international conferences.

The team members do not take sufficient advantage of networking opportunities provided by learned societies (e.g. SFBBM).

EVALUATION AREA 3: SCIENTIFIC PRODUCTION

Assessment on the scientific production of the unit

The laboratory had a very good scientific production and was able to tackle some topical projects in a highly competitive field, thanks to its expertise in RNA biology and use of a multidisciplinary approach, supported by a number of well-chosen large equipment. The MT-bench is an original approach, now even more attractive by its development into high content screening capabilities.

Strengths and possibilities linked to the context

The laboratory has made a significant contribution to the advancement of knowledge by making efficient use of its equipment and knowledge in RNA technology. They are developing original lines of research in highly topical areas such as the combined use of NMR/ITC with functional cell analysis to understand the balance between TDP-43 assemblies along GU-rich RNA repeats and TDP-43 aggregation (eLife 2021), with implications for the drug discovery process for ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis). Structural data, combined with cellular assays, on the cold shock domain (CSD) of YB-1 in association with RNA obtained by NMR spectroscopy and atomic force microscopy are also of interest for their insight into the function of YB-1 (and Lin28) in cancer cell resistance to stress and proliferation (NAR 2019, Communications Biology 2021). They also discovered by NMR a druggable pocket located at the interface between YB-1 and found by the MT bench approach some YB-1 inhibitors that do not affect HuR and FUS interactions, two other mRNA-binding proteins (eLife 2023). These initial results support an ongoing collaborative research project.
The laboratory had a very good scientific production for its staff of three full-time researcher and four researcher teachers. Laboratory members produce 43 publications in international peer-reviewed scientific journals, half of them as principal authors, mostly in well-regarded journals (Cell reports, EMBO reports, NAR, JMB, FEBS Journal, eLife, Communications Biology, CMLS). Collaborations led to co-authorships of a high-profile publication in Nature on the substrate specificity of the human kinome and, with another team in Paris-Saclay, in PNAS, on binding of CPAP to tubulin.

Weaknesses and risks linked to the context for the three references above

The research topics are not all at the same level of competitiveness in their field of research.
Some collaborative projects are published in journals known for their fast-track process, which can diminish the reputation of the published research, regardless of its quality.

EVALUATION AREA 4: CONTRIBUTION OF RESEARCH ACTIVITIES TO SOCIETY

Assessment on the inclusion of the unit's research in society

SABNP has demonstrated an outstanding ability to transfer its specific expertise to industrial applications. Despite its small size, the unit has made excellent efforts to reach out to the general public and is involved in education through its strong links with the university.

Strengths and possibilities linked to the context

The laboratory has established strong partnerships with biotechnology companies within the Genopole biocluster, leading to funding and collaboration opportunities. Funding for doctoral theses through three Cifre contracts, with three different industrial partners, and direct contracts for service or collaboration agreements, demonstrate a successful model of industry-academia collaboration.
The presence of Synsight's in-house spin-off researchers in the laboratory fosters a dynamic and collaborative environment that enhances research capabilities and project outcomes. Synsight's development of the MT Bench technology and its application to RNA research represent significant technological advances with the potential for impactful discoveries and applications in biology and medicine.

The laboratory actively communicates its research through various media channels to ensure broad dissemination and visibility of its work.
The laboratory actively participates in well-established public events such as the university's 'Fête de la Science' and 'Journées portes ouvertes', effectively opening its doors to the community and showcasing its research. All laboratory staff, including engineers and graduate students, are involved in the organisation and execution of these activities, which have an educational impact, inspiring school populations and potentially guiding students toward scientific careers.

Weaknesses and risks linked to the context for the three references above

None

ANALYSIS OF THE UNIT'S TRAJECTORY

The laboratory will support a new line of research initiated with the appointment of a junior professorship in the field of RNA-protein interactions in cancer metastasis. This brings new opportunities in terms of expertise and visibility, coupled with the challenge of establishing new collaborative networks, particularly for the translational aspects of the project, obtaining funding and developing the ambitious project. The excellent international network that this researcher has already established, with advanced expertise and visibility in the field, will be a valuable asset in meeting these challenges.
The recent funding of the project related to TDP-43 pathophysiology project, including the ANR PRCE 2024, the Association pour la Recherche sur la SLA 2024-2026, and the Inserm RAPID (2021-2025), demonstrates the project's attractiveness and potential success of the project. The collaboration with BioCIS, and I2BC will strengthen the local network and provides valuable complementary expertise. A drug discovery project to prevent TDP-43 LLPS is currently underway, with Synsight and Inserm UMR U1253 (UMR 1253) engaged as partners. Their contributions will include the provision of neuronal models and translational capabilities. This will ensure the valorisation of the fundamental research interest, in line with the outstanding valorisation capacity of the laboratory. In general, other projects could similarly benefit from building on their promising results to translate into disease models and to bring additional medical expertise through collaborations.
Recent results obtained in the SPIRIT ANR network are also promising for the development of new compounds targeting cold shock proteins to impair cancer cell resistance and for their interest in providing structural and functional insights into the role of these proteins that bind to mature mRNA and microRNA to control translation and stress granule assembly/disassembly.
The committee believes that SABNP is not optimally positioned to meet the challenges of spliceosome research, which is both highly competitive and complex. Overall, the unit develops many research axes. Focusing research on a smaller number of topics should increase scientific output and speedup drug development.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE UNIT

Recommendations regarding the Evaluation Area 1: Profile, Resources and Organisation of the Unit

The laboratory would benefit from increase interactions with scientific networks such as national GDR, European COSTS, learned societies and ANR collaborative projects to strengthen their visibility and own resources. The laboratory makes the choice to support the less funded projects but allocating resources to the most competitive research would increase visibility, funding by research agencies and strengthen the long-term prospects of the laboratory. The Unit director and researchers need to be more active in support of the enforcement of Security and Hazards rules. Given the ever-increasing administrative requirements, strong involvement of the unit director in the support of personnel involved in preventing and monitoring safety risks is recommended. It may be worthwhile to organise additional social activities and more technically oriented laboratory meetings.

Recommendations regarding the Evaluation Area 2: Attractiveness

The visibility and identity of the laboratory would benefit from a stronger presence of researchers in scientific gathering in France or abroad.

Recommendations regarding Evaluation Area 3: Scientific Production

The committee recommends a clear communication concerning journals of quality that need to be privileged for publication.

Recommendations regarding Evaluation Area 4: Contribution of Research Activities to Society

Continue the outstanding work that has been performed during the current period.

RESPONSES TO SUPERVISING BODIES CONCERNS (IF ANY)

N/A

CONDUCT OF THE INTERVIEWS

Date

Start: 15 novembre 2024 à 08h00

End: 15 novembre 2024 à 19h00

Online

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

8:30 – 8:45	Preliminary meeting of the expert committee (closed hearing) (Private Link 1)
8:45 – 9:00	Presentation of the Hcéres evaluation to the unit (SO/SVE3) (Public link)
9:00-9:30	Unit main outcomes (15'+ 15' Q/A) (Unit Director) (all unit members present) (Public link)
9:30-10:00	Unit trajectory (15'+ 15' Q/A) (Unit Director) (all unit members present) (Public link)
	THEMES PRESENTATION
10:00-10:20	Biotechnology (10'+ 10' Q/A) (Past) (Public link)
10:20-10:35	Short Debriefing/Break (Private Link 1)
	THEMES PRESENTATION (CONTINUING)
10:35-11:10	Theme 1: Translation regulation by mRNA-binding proteins (15'+ 20' Q/A) (Public link)
11:10-11:45	Theme 2: Molecular interactions in spliceosome assembly and splicing regulation (15'+ 20' Q/A) (Public link)
11:45-12:20	Theme 3: Structure: function of mRNA-binding proteins involved in neurodegeneration (15'+ 20' Q/A) (Public link)
12:20-12:40	Theme 4: RNA-protein interactions in cancer metastasis (Trajectory) (10'+10' Q/A) (Public link)
12:40-1 p.m.	Interview of PI Alone (5 mn /PI) (Private Link 2)
1 p.m.-2 p.m.	Short Debriefing (Private Link 1) & LUNCH

SPECIFIC MEETINGS (PRIVATE)

2 p.m.-2:30 p.m.	Meeting with technical and administrative staff (in French), No PI, No observer (Private link 3)
2:30 p.m.-3 p.m.	Meeting with PhD students and post-docs (No PI, No observer) (Private link 3)
3 p.m.-3:30 p.m.	Meeting with researchers and teaching-researchers (No PI, No observer) (Private link 3)
3:30 p.m.-4 p.m.	Meeting with supervising bodies (Public link)
4 p.m.-4:30 p.m.	Break/Short Debriefing (Private Link 1)
4:30 p.m.-5 p.m.	Meeting with the head of the unit/deputy director (Public Link, UD only)
5 p.m.-6 p.m.	Committee meeting/final debrief: overview of all teams, Unit Trajectory update of the reports etc..

PARTICULAR POINT TO BE MENTIONED

N/A

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS OF THE SUPERVISORS

**DIRECTION DE LA RECHERCHE,
ET DES RELATIONS INTERNATIONALES**

1re Vice-présidente de la Recherche
Christelle MONVILLE

2nd Vice-président de la Recherche
Guillaume TIFFON

Affaire suivie par : Carole TROUSSIER

Téléphone : 0169477171/ 0782671707
Courriel : carole.troussier@univ-evry.fr

Evry, le 28 février 2025

A l'attention de Mme Isabelle LANDRIE
Présidente du comité d'experts HCERES

Rapport d'évaluation HCERES
DER-PUR260024937 - SABNP
Structure et activité des biomolécules normales et pathologiques

Madame,

Nous avons pris connaissance avec le plus grand intérêt du rapport détaillé du comité d'experts HCERES concernant l'activité du Laboratoire SABNP (Structure et activité des biomolécules normales et pathologiques, UMRS-1204) dans le cadre de la campagne d'évaluation 2019-2023 vague E.

Nous tenons à remercier tous les membres du le comité d'évaluation HCERES pour leur travail.

Nous avons bien noté les points positifs énoncés par le comité mais aussi les points à améliorer.

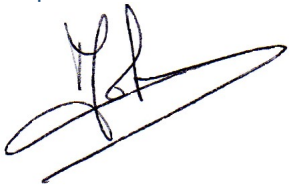
Dans le cadre de cette évaluation, nous souhaiterions aussi apporter une réponse et une correction concernant un point qui a été levé et dont vous trouverez les détails ci-contre.

Pour le prochain mandat, le laboratoire va poursuivre ses objectifs en termes de compréhension des mécanismes pathologiques liés aux interactions ARN:protéine et d'applications de notre expertise pour développer de nouvelles technologies et des inhibiteurs d'interaction ARN :protéine d'intérêt thérapeutique.

En tant que tutelle, nous serons particulièrement vigilants à accompagner le laboratoire dans l'amélioration de son positionnement dans l'environnement de Paris-Saclay et dans une stratégie scientifique commune à l'unité.

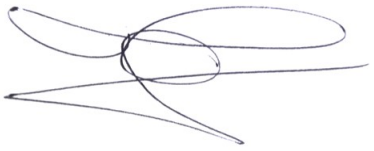
En vous priant d'agréer, Madame, l'assurance de nos salutations les plus distinguées.

1ère Vice-présidente de la Recherche



Christelle MONVILLE

2nd Vice-président de la Recherche



Guillaume TIFFON

Response to the HCERES Evaluation of the SABNP/INSERM U1204 Unit

We would like to thank the HCERES committee members for their time and effort in evaluating our unit. The theme leaders of the SABNP laboratory appreciate the overall positive evaluation of the unit but respectfully disagree with some of the comments and recommendations provided by the HCERES Committee.

Disagreement on Splicing Research Assessment

Actually, we disagree with the committee's assessment that our work on splicing is "poorly positioned given the complex and competitive nature of this field."

Since the discovery of the dramatic impact of splicing factors mutations in cancer, this research field has gained further interest and competitivity. In this context, our work on splicing factor regulations is of major interest and our publications and citations demonstrate our competitiveness at the international level. Among achievements, our group has had a decisive contribution to the determination and characterization of specific interactions among key splicing factors (SF1, U2AF2, RBM39) and recently extended the repertoire of interactors for U2AF2 that is central to the network of splicing regulators that are mutated in cancer. Beside this, our progress to identify molecules targeting splicing factors for cancer therapy are highly promising.

Altogether, the scientific output of the splicing group is significant, with a notable publication in *EMBO Reports* and an essential contribution to the kinases research published in *Nature*. At the most recent French RNA meeting in Lyon, the only abstract on splicing selected for oral presentation was from our group, and a manuscript based on our most recent work is under review in a highly reputed journal.

Since its establishment in 2015, the splicing group has secured diverse funding from Genopole, the University of Évry, and Paris-Saclay University, enabling the acquisition of essential laboratory equipment and the support of doctoral and postdoctoral researchers. This track record underscores the group’s capacity to sustain and expand its research.

Altogether, these accomplishments, that may not have been fully highlighted during the discussions, reinforce our confidence in the relevance and quality of the splicing research conducted in our laboratory.

The Value of a Diverse Research Portfolio

The HCERES committee suggests that several topics in the unit should not be sustained.
However, the SABNP laboratory values the existence of different research themes focused around the central theme of “RNA-protein interactions” but investigating different mechanisms of post-transcriptional regulation such as splicing and translation.
A diverse research portfolio contributes to the scientific richness and stability of our unit, fosters innovation but also enhances our ability to secure funding from a wide range of sources. This rich environment, coupled with the strong commitment of our engineers, researchers and students, positions the laboratory for a promising future.

Altogether, while understanding the position of the committee, the SABNP researchers are convinced that all research projects of the unit are scientifically sound and competitive in their field and in fact deserve a better support in terms of funding and human resources.

Final Remarks

As the research committee all along the rapport suggests that limiting the number of projects should be considered but in the trajectory paragraph surprisingly specifically focus on the splicing project, we consider it would be much more appropriate to keep with a general recommendation.

We therefore respectfully suggest that the last paragraph

"The committee believes that SABNP is not optimally positioned to meet the challenges of spliceosome research, which is both highly competitive and complex. Overall, the unit develops many research axes. Focusing research on a smaller number of topics should increase scientific output and speedup drug development."

could be replaced with a more general conclusion like this one:

"The committee believes the SABNP unit develops many research axes. Focusing research on a smaller number of topics could be considered to increase scientific output and accelerate drug development."

With the greatest respect,

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