

FINAL RESUME ON THE RESEARCH UNIT
INCIT - Immunology and New Concepts in
Immunotherapy

UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE
FOLLOWING INSTITUTIONS AND
RESEARCH BODIES:

Université de Nantes

Université d'Angers

Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique -
CNRS

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

EVALUATION CAMPAIGN 2020-2022
GROUP B



In the name of Hcéres¹:

Mr Thierry Coulhon, President

In the name of the experts committee²:

Ms Marie-Caroline Dieu-Nosjean, 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:	Immunology and New Concepts in Immunotherapy
Unit acronym:	INCIT
Current label and N:	UMR 1232
ID RNSR:	201722308D
Application type:	Création par restructuration
Head of the unit (2020-2021):	Mr Marc Grégoire
Project leader (2021-2025):	Mr Frédéric Altare
Number of teams:	4

EXPERTS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chair:	Ms Marie-Caroline Dieu-Nosjean, INSERM, Paris
Experts :	Mr Mathias Chamaillard, INSERM, Lille
	Ms Jocelyne Demengeot, Instituto Gulbenkian Ciência, Portugal
	Ms Isabelle Duroux-Richard, INSERM, Montpellier (supporting personnel)
	Mr Frédéric Gros, Université de Strasbourg (representative of CNU)
	Ms Virginie Lafont, INSERM, Montpellier (representative of INSERM CSS)
	Mr Daniel Olive, INSERM, Marseille
	Mr Jorge Manuel Rolo Pedrosa, University of Minho, Portugal
	Ms Elena Tomasello, CNRS, Marseille (representative of CoNRS)
	Ms Karen Willard-Gallo, Institut Jules Bordet, Université Libre de Bruxelles, Belgique

HCÉRES REPRESENTATIVE

Ms Sophie Ezine

REPRESENTATIVES OF SUPERVISING INSTITUTIONS AND BODIES

Mr Frédéric Delaleu, INSERM

Mr Olivier Grasset, Université de Nantes

Ms Sylvie Guerder, CNRS

Ms Évelyne Jouvin-Marche, INSERM

Ms Anne Royer, CHU de Nantes

Mr Philippe Simoneau, Université d'Angers

INTRODUCTION

HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF THE UNIT.

The INSERM unit named U892-CRCNA (for "Centre de Recherche en Cancérologie–Nantes Angers") was initially created in 2008, and headed by Mr. M. Bonneville (2008-12) and Mr. J. Le Pendu (2012-16). In 2017, this center became UMR1232-CRCINA (Centre de Recherche en Cancérologie et Immunologie–Nantes Angers) under the leadership of Mr. M. Grégoire. Six out of the eighteen current CRCINA teams decided to create a new and an independent research unit named INCIT (for "Immunology and New Concepts in Immunotherapy"). Five teams are located in Nantes, and one in Angers (it was historically settled there).

RESEARCH ECOSYSTEM.

The unit is involved in TransCan ERA-NET (partner), ARMINA (coordinator), 2 ANR (partners); Immunotherapy network of Cancéropole Grand Ouest, and the Institute for Dermatology of the Western Region IDGO.

The INCIT is involved in Excellence programs: LabEx Immuno-graft Oncology (IGO) as coordinator until 2019; RHU SUccESS on skin regeneration as coordinator until 2024; HealthChain project funded by PIA and BPI. Team 1 is supported by SATT/CNRS. Team 4 is "Équipe Labellisée FRM".

Three start-ups have been created (Affilogic, Ceeram acquired by Biomérieux, and In-cell-Art in 2005).

Ms. Marion is in charge of a network of laboratories in Africa (laboratory in Pobè; partner of a network of Buruli Ulcer driven by 'Institut Pasteur du Cameroun').

Five platforms are supervised by the unit members, all driven by SFR Bonamy (Nantes) and SFR ICAT (Angers).

Ms. B. Dréno is in charge of the CIC 'Biotherapies'. INCIT has access to the Clinical Research Center (CRC) of the Angers University Hospital.

INCIT is actively involved in an Immunology graduate program as a part of the labelled "Structuration de la Formation par la Recherche dans les Initiatives d'Excellence" (SFRI) program "Triton", and created by Nantes University, CHU, and INSERM.

HCÉRES NOMENCLATURE AND THEMATICS OF THE UNIT

SVE-3 Immunology

MANAGEMENT TEAM

The INCIT will be headed by Mr Frédéric Altare, supported in his duties by one deputy director, Ms Nathalie Labarrière.

UNIT WORKFORCE

Active staff	Number 06/01/2020	Number 01/01/2022
Full professors and similar positions	10	11
Assistant professors and similar positions	6	9
Full time research directors (Directeurs de recherche) and similar positions	5	5
Full time research associates (Chargés de recherche) and similar positions	3	5
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)	13	13
Permanent staff	37	43

Non-permanent professors and associate professors, including emeritus	3	
Non-permanent full time scientists, including emeritus, post-docs (except PhD students)	2	
PhD Students	8	
Non-permanent supporting personnel	15	
Non-permanent staff	28	
Total	65	43

GLOBAL ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIT

INCIT is a new immunology research unit composed of four teams coming from the CRCINA unit. The INCIT is mainly focusing on the comprehension of the immune response including the immune escape under physiologic and physiopathologic situations (i.e., inflammatory and infectious diseases i.e., Buruli ulcer disease, cancers i.e., melanoma, and autoimmunity) from basic and translational research programs to clinical trials.

The scientific output is excellent with 174 research articles and 103 clinical articles published. High-profile publications with an INCIT member as principal author were for instance published in *The Lancet Oncology*, *Gastroenterology*, *Biomaterials*, *Advanced Science*, *Annals of Oncology*, *Science Advances*. However, in-depth mechanistic studies would allow the unit to target high profile journals more often.

INCIT has also an excellent funding record mostly at the regional and national level (ARMINA program as coordinator, eight ANR grants, five as partners, two PHRC, one 'Équipe labellisée FRM', LabEx IGO, RHU, Cancéropole Grand Ouest, HealthChain project funded by PIA and BPI, Institute for Dermatology of the Western Region IDGO). The unit is also present at the international competitive funding (TransCan ERA-NET as partner).

INCIT has a good national recognition on all its research aspects but international visibility can be improved in such very competitive field by increasing the level of high-profile publications, by applying to competitive international funding as coordinator, by attracting young talented foreign researchers, by participation to international networks and conferences, and by further developing international collaborations. A recommendation is to target high profile journals which could be reached by focusing on promising (niche) projects adequate to workforce available and in-depth mechanistic studies.

One start-up has been recently created by INCIT members, in addition to two others created before 2015 and got seven patents including one licensed over the period. INCIT has developed strong interactions with pharmas. The clinical research is excellent with 55 clinical trials including nine that were launched by INCIT clinicians. In particular, Team 4 has an international recognized expertise in the field of Buruli ulcer disease (BUD), and developed the first mouse model reproducing the clinical features of human BUD, and their output for translational research is outstanding.

The involvement of INCIT in teaching activity is excellent. Many members participate to local and international programs of scientific and medical schools (i.e., Excellence programs of PI3) in the field of immunology and pathology. However, considering the number of HDR, the unit could further improve training through research, the number of PhD being rather low.

The future scientific project of INCIT aims at deciphering the dynamics of the immune responses in infectious diseases and cancer for developing original immunotherapy strategies, and new diagnostic tools. To this end, funds have already been secured. The development of more basic research projects is recommended to increase their attractivity and competitiveness at the international level.

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