WHO AM I? TRANSVERSAL PROGRAM _ CALL FOR INTEREST

The objective of the Who Am I? transversal program is to take advantage of the unique combination of expertise gathered in the consortium to tackle transverse scientific questions, that couldn't be addressed by individual groups. This program is designed as a tool to guide the emergence and development of large scale projects within the labex consortium and not as a top-down call for proposal with predefined themes.

More precisely, the key features of a transversal project are the following:

- A transversal project is collaborative and interdisciplinary, co-developed by an association of labex teams. Importantly, this program is not a funding source for the teams' recurrent work. A transversal proposal should be tightly integrated, ie not a juxtaposition of projects from individual teams.
- The scientific theme of the project should be included in the scientific axis of the labex and be of interest for a number of Who Am I? teams
- Although led by a restricted number of teams, this project should also benefit to the Who Am I? community.
- The total budget allocated to the transversal program is 3 MEuros, to fund a maximum of 3 transversal themes. In addition to the organoïd pilot theme (see below), up to 2 themes will therefore be selected in the fall 2020.

The Executive Committee of Who Am I? is now launching this call for interest in order to collect ideas of transversal themes, to identify the existing expertise and potential interest in the consortium and therefore allow the development of such transversal projects.

The first transverse program emerged on the theme of 'organoïds', with the following rational:

- Organoids are models of intermediate complexity allowing to address a number of questions related to identity at various scales (cell division, epigenetics, differentiation, migration, morphogenesis, infection and microenvironment, signaling pathways and diseases…)
- It is a topic of interest for a number of Who Am I? teams, including the SHS partners (history of the definition of a model in biology, the concepts of scale, duplications…).
- A group of teams working on organoïds could develop not only shared tools but also integrated scientific questions. Importantly, there is an existing expertise in the consortium, which could benefit to other teams.

At this point of the call, there is no need to build a formal consortium. Once the themes are selected, the theme's leaders will work together with the Executive Committee to identify interested teams, allow them to connect and to engage into the construction of a transverse project. As an example, for the Organoïd theme, the EC organized a half-day workshop with the potentially interested teams then formed an 'organoïd working group' composed of 15 teams leaders from all the labex units.

Two transversal projects emerged, each gathering 5-8 teams, aiming at investigating mechanical and transcriptional cues impacting cell division, shape and fate in the context of either development or maintenance of tissue integrity.

The Organoid projects' construction is here only given as an example, not as a strict procedure to follow. While the goal is defined, ie allow a collective construction of the project in close interaction with the Executive Committee, the method remains flexible and could be adapted to each theme.