EUR – vague 1
Final report

Project : **EIPHI** (Comue Université Bourgogne Franche Comté)

Detailed appreciation of the graduate school

The conduct of the EIPHI Graduate School in the Physical Sciences and Engineering fields has been so highly professional and efficient that the original objectives have already been exceeded. Despite political and strategic disagreements among some founding institutions of the Université Bourgogne-Franche-Comté (UBFC), the EIPHI project has crafted for the BFC region a GS that is perfectly integrated with other PIA and France 2030 programs. Remarkably, it has opened up for its students valuable gateways to international mobility and employment that, in France, are more commonly encountered among schools in the Paris area.

EIPHI was built up and out of the Labex ACTION, and is supported by multiple institutions (universities and Engineering schools, all grouped under UBFC) as well as several other PIA-funded structures. In this sense, EIPHI has had a federative impact (as initially intended), grouping initially 9 MSc programmes (now 16) and 2 doctoral schools in the domains of Physics, Maths & Applications; Energy; Computer Science; Smart Systems & Structures; and Material Science. In 2021, 4 additional institutes joined EIPHI (ICMUB, ImViA, UTINAM, LmB), bringing 5 additional international Master tracks including an Erasmus Mundus Master in medical imaging. A second, newly-selected Erasmus Mundus in quantum technologies was additionally started in 2022.

The very accurate and comprehensive 2023 self-evaluation report gives a clear picture of what EIPHI initiatives and distinctive training strategies have achieved in five years for the benefit of its students. Two particularly good features deserve to be highlighted:

i) 40% of training hours are dedicated to research activities involving immersion in the laboratories;

ii) the 5 additional international Master's, including the two Erasmus Mundus in medical imaging and in quantum technologies, have greatly enriched the international appeal of the School and its multi-disciplinary education/training offer – which was otherwise previously more restricted to the UBFC area of "Advanced materials, waves & smart systems".

EIPHI has important longer-term ambitions, all comprehensively described in the 2023 self-evaluation report and therefore not all worth listing here. However, it would have been be helpful to bring clarity to the important distinction between ambitions that EIPHI can hope to attain under its own steam, and goals that are instead subject to external individuals and political decisions. As an example, the intention to promote long-term contracted industrial partnerships with big companies falls into the first category. With more than 70 patent applications and 7 start-ups created over the last 5 years, plus several industrial partnerships such as innovation projects, innovation awards, CIFRE PhDs, EIPHI has already worked hard for disseminating the graduates from the Graduate School into the job market. This activity could be more systematically promoted and developed in the next five years within the GS itself. More

emblematic of the second category are discussions at the political level of UBFC proposing the conversion of each GS into a Faculty. A change of EIPHI legal status could perhaps transform the GS from a finite duration project into a long-term official entity. One important consequence would be to convert the finite duration jobs of the project manager and of the administrative and financial staff into permanent positions employed by UBFC, thus securing a part of the much praised and prized EIPHI operational team.

Key strengths

- Capacity to reshape its academic environment and to offer high-quality perspective to MSc and PhD students.
- Cross connections between EIPHI Master's degrees and Engineering degrees.
- Remarkable international academic partnership. International master tracks and joint PhD theses with foreign universities, including very prestigious ones, are offered to students.
- Successful transition from the Labex ACTION to a well-structured Graduate School with increased interdisciplinarity.
- Broader vision for the next years to include humanities and social sciences, thereby enabling new integrative synergy.

Main weaknesses

No major weaknesses detected.

Summary recommendation

This EUR has achieved, and in many cases exceeded, the initial objectives. It provides highly original and exciting educational programs with innovative aspects such as open labs, entrepreneurships, and more. The evaluation panel believes this GS is a great investment and has no objections to further supporting it. EIPHI is on a solid path to maturity.

The panel **recommends continuation of funding for the remaining years of the EUR program**.