

**FRANCE**

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Ministère de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherche

**IGAENR (Inspection générale de l'administration de l'éducation  
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France Update: new institutions and framework, a new evaluation process

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# Overview

- Up to 2005, the national system of research is globally centralised at the State level, except for some of the research organizations.
- Four main functions of the research system organization are not differentiated: steering, programming and budgeting, implementation, evaluation.
- A “dual system” in which one half of the researchers are full time in research organizations and the other employed by universities.

## Some intermediary steps (1)

- Whereas faculty staff used to be civil servants in universities, researchers employed in public research organizations were not, up to 1982.
- This legislation has increased the demand for recurrent funding in research organizations and may have contributed to develop a “supply-side steering” of Research, lacking of strength in strategy, except in specific issues such as defence and energy.

## Some intermediary steps (2)

- Raise of political awareness that innovation is a key issue in economics leads to the 1999 legislation on innovation and public research.
- Incentive measures taken towards researchers to increase the number of start ups from public labs, and for patents and intellectual property. Public grants to support the creation of nearly 200 start ups a year.
- Development of regional networks in favour of technological development.

# New developments from 2001

- The world is the current environment of researchers and, for many years, due to the increase of European funds (FP), researchers have become familiar with project-based funding and competitive research.
- Internationalisation of evaluation has spread.
- The LOLF (law on performance driven budget), French *avatar* of the US GPRA, has introduced, from 2001-2006, new standards and requirements in the fields of efficiency and accountability. Research organizations are concerned, as any public one's. Indicators are no more a job for specialists only and are (or should be handled) by the Parliament.

# Reshaping the research system.

- The new rules of efficiency and accountability have led to the political awareness of reshaping the research system by making a distinction between the actors in charge of the four main functions in the research system:
  - Steering
  - Programming and budgeting
  - Implementing
  - Evaluation
- A NEW LEGAL FRAMEWORK FROM 2005 ONWARDS INTENDS TO DEAL WITH THIS VISION.

# STEERING

- HCST (*Haut Conseil de la Science et de la Technologie*). Reports to the President. Advises on the main orientations.
- DGRI (*Direction générale de la recherche et de l'innovation*) and its *Direction de la stratégie*, in the ministry for Higher Education and Research.
- GCS (*groupes de concertation sectoriels*) to enhance steering efficiency in major issues such as IT, Health, Energy, Nanotechnologies or Sustainable Development.

# PROGRAMMING AND BUDGETING

- Increasing role of **ANR** (*Agence nationale de la recherche*), created in 2005, in charge of projects competitive funding (800 M € in 2007). “White Programms” represent 25% of the total.
- **AII** (*Agence de l'innovation industrielle*) being merged with OSEO.
- **INCA** (*Institut national du cancer*).
- Most of national Research Organizations (CNRS, INSERM, INRA, INRIA, etc...) still have this mission. A substantial debate.

# Research implementation (1)

- Two groups of operators, **higher education institutions** (universities and schools) and **research organizations**, have been for long the main stakeholders in research implementation .
- The need for developing companies investments in research (relatively weak in France) and the political will to empower the 85 universities (2007 law on universities autonomy) have led to promoting a new architecture of cooperation between actors.

## Research implementation (2)

- **PRES** (*Pôles de recherche et d'enseignement supérieur*). New large size public organizations gathering several universities and HE institutions, like engineering schools, to improve research capacity and international visibility. A PRES can be settled for one region or one city.
- **RTRA** (*Réseaux thématiques de recherche avancée*) and **RTRS** (*Centres thématiques de recherche et de soins*). Special fund of 300 M € for these networks of excellence in research.

# Research implementation (3)

- ***Pôles de compétitivité***: clusters aiming at changing the French usual approach in regional planning. New links between universities, research organizations and companies to increase the competitiveness of the economy at large, through the development of competitive research. Funding: 600 M €.
- ***Instituts Carnot***: label given to public labs significantly involved in partnerships of research with companies. An annual fund of 60 M € is available.
- Specialized institutes like INCA, or large research organizations (CNRS) still to be assigned both to programming and implementing or moving towards a new role in programming ?

# Evaluation

- The reform process which has been undertaken implied a change in evaluation practices and to create an independent and transparent agency of evaluation to meet international standards and to enhance evaluation efficiency.
- **AERES** (*Agence d'évaluation de la recherche et de l'enseignement supérieur*) was set up in 2007 in this purpose.
- AERES assignment is to evaluate
  - Research organizations, higher education institutions, and ANR
  - Research units activities of the former institutions
  - The training provided by the HE institutions
  - To check the procedures through which research staff is evaluated in the research organizations (the faculty staff is evaluated through an other process in universities).

# Remarks as a transition

- Universities and research organizations are now aware that evaluation is not only a methodological issue but a strategic tool.
- In this context, AERES responsibility is a very serious one.
- Universities may now compare evaluation practices at the European level since the Register of the accredited agencies of quality evaluation in Europe is now operational.
- AERES agenda is impressive for a young institution.
- But will one size fit all ?