



Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche  
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# FRANCE :

## How to Improve a Decentralized, Ambiguous National System

# Issues arising

- OECD Workshop in Tokyo (2007) as a starting point.
- Back to France : nothing was done really to maintain integrity and deal with cases, except in one University and one Research Organism :
  - INSERM – biomedical research – 4000 scientists has a dedicated office and one University (U. Lyon Claude Bernard) has a Code
  - Institution deal quasi « secretly » with cases *or* don't know or do nothing
- Main challenges :
  - How to avoid what had been stated in many other countries : *increase of fraud ?*
  - How to establish a realistic *system and procedure ? Need for clear rules or guidelines.*

# Detailed challenges

- Potential consequences of an ambiguous system
  - Unfair and unequal treatment of cases
  - No serious knowledge about Fraud and RI
  - No serious comparison possible with other countries
  - Future problems with public trust ?
- Barriers/Limits
  - Scientists think that Fraud is a very minor phenomenon, so it is not important; and some others think that it is a TABOO
  - Topic should be treated within Research institutions before being published in the media
  - Not to transform a value based action into a bureaucratic system (living by its own) / Cost for value

# A national mandate by ministry of higher education and research

- Goal : to deal with RI, based on education and on public fair procedures
- Main steps
  - international connections\* and literature to correctly *define* what is misconduct and fraud, national survey to have some *statistics*, report with *recommendations*, *implementation* (to base propositions on evidence as much as possible) – 2 years at least

\*Relevant connections with ESF Forum and ALLEA proposal for a Code and OECD guidelines

# Current results / mid 2010

- Survey/ main results:
  - Less than one case a year by institution (?), INSERM declares 6/year
  - Legal base does exist already
  - Prevention is weak
  - Acceptance for clear rules
  - Acceptance for an appeal level
  - In general good will to do better

# Report to Ministry includes

- How fraud arises : pressures (to publication, to innovation, outreach) on individuals create situations where classical rules are transgressed
  - Charter proposal based on science values,
  - Definition (FFP),
  - Comparison of national situation with other countries in terms of law, processes, nr of cases, ...
  - Recommendations for
    - Prevention mainly by Universities
    - Guidelines for treatment by institutions (July 2010) –Whistleblowers, allegation place, protection of both parties, legal base for expertise, conclusions, decision by employer
  - Appeal level (national)
  - Yearly national report
  - Plan for future implementation
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- Under discussion by FAS, Ethics Committees, personalities,...to disseminate the questions to be solved and find some allies/supporters

# Next steps 2010-2011

- Dissemination of report to institutions (to increase awareness after survey)
  - Autumn 2010
- Workshop dedicated to governance of Ministry, Funding agencies, Research organisms and Universities
  - in 2010
  - Rules to be adopted in the first semester of 2011 by each institution
- Public national conference in 2011

# Recommendations for a successful approach

- To focus on a very few strong arguments
  - RI is full part of research activity and has to be promoted as such, law is not always necessary
  - Fraud in science is a failure to one self, to colleague, to public
  - Harmonisation is a necessity in (frequent) international collaborations
- About the process to start a system
  - The « taboo » situation of fraud : to have a open discussion, to find allies,
  - Step by step approach : many actors involved/ search for a common basis takes time for information, for proposal and its discussion and for implementation

# Summary

- As a cultural behaviour, RI needs attention from national authorities (national and international coherence), but the main responsibility stays in labs
- In a no man's land situation or in an ambiguous atmosphere, the goal is to establish clear common rules, and even more to have them adopted
- Research institutions need to give attention to training, detection and treatment of fraud
- Take time to convince, avoid forced decisions