CNRS

Pushing back the frontiers of science

Cover photograph: Ripples sculpted by water on the Soulac-sur-Mer beach (southwestern coast of France). Researchers aim to anticipate the sedimentary evolution of the region’s sand beaches in order to protect the coast from erosion.

© Cyril FRESILLON/EPOC/CNRS Photothèque
The CNRS in brief

France’s National Center for Scientific Research is a public research institution under the responsibility of the French Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation.

A multidisciplinary organization, it covers all scientific disciplines, including the humanities and social sciences, biological sciences, nuclear and particle physics, information sciences, engineering and systems, physics, mathematical sciences, chemistry, Earth sciences and astronomy, ecology and the environment.

An interdisciplinary body, it promotes research at the interface between disciplines.

Each year, the CNRS awards its Gold Medal, the highest scientific distinction in France. Since 2011, the CNRS Medal of Innovation has been rewarding outstanding research in the technological, therapeutic, economic and social fields.

Revealing talents
21 Nobel prize laureates and 12 Fields Medal winners have worked in CNRS joint research units; 360 researchers have obtained an ERC (European Research Council) grant.

An international player
The CNRS contributes to the visibility of French research worldwide through 36 international joint units, a network of 8 offices abroad as well as partnership agreements with 71 countries and 192 international associated laboratories.

Generating knowledge
With more than 15,000 researchers and nearly 11,000 engineers and technicians, the CNRS is at the forefront of global research. First producer of scientific papers in the world with 50,600 publications, the organization tops several international rankings (Nature Index, Scimago Institutions Rankings, etc.)

Developing large-scale instruments
Telescopes, particle accelerators, computers and large databases are essential resources for modern research. The CNRS is involved in the design and development of very large-scale research facilities, used in all disciplines.

Driving innovation
CNRS researchers and engineers have contributed to the creation of more than 1,200 startup companies. With a portfolio of 5,629 patent families, the CNRS is France’s sixth-largest patent filer (INPI); it also holds a share in each of the 14 French technology transfer companies (SATTs).

Working hand in hand with industry
The CNRS has finalized framework agreements with 21 large industrial groups and shares 126 joint research facilities with industry.

Disseminating knowledge
The CNRS makes its results available to the widest possible audience through films, magazines, exhibitions, websites and social networks. It gives research players access to scientific information.

Leading scientific research
The CNRS is involved in the various sites heralding tomorrow’s main research universities. It is also a founding member of France’s 5 Research Alliances.

The CNRS has a budget of €3.2 billion

952 joint research units
32,000 researchers, engineers and technicians
135 service units
32 intramural research units
10 Institutes* orchestrate the organization’s scientific policy
97% of units are in partnership with universities, higher education institutions and other research organizations
18 divisions manage the CNRS laboratories in the regions

* INSB Institute of Biological Sciences, INC Institute of Chemistry, INEE Institute of Ecology and Environment, INSHS Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences, INS2I Institute for Information Sciences and Technologies, INSIST Institute for Engineering and Systems Sciences, INSMI National Institute for Mathematical Sciences, INP Institute of Physics, IN2P3 National Institute of Nuclear and Particle Physics, INSU National Institute for Earth Sciences and Astronomy