To achieve the first sixteen Sustainable Development Goals, we need a sound basis of partnerships, cooperation and financing that includes and goes beyond the official development assistance funds. All stakeholders and sectors – public, private, local, regional or international – must be involved if these goals are to be met.

Science is key to understanding the issues related to the SDGs and addressing them. The aim of a scientific partnership is to pool complementary knowledge, expertise and know-how and financial, human and material resources to do more together. The CNRS operates globally and locally, with a strong focus on partnerships with universities, research centres, companies and social stakeholders in France and abroad. A thousand of the CNRS’s 1,100 laboratories are joint research units (UMR) with partners and 91% of the CNRS’s patent portfolio is co-owned.

The CNRS supporting the 2030 Agenda – a few examples:

The CNRS at the heart of multiple networks

‘Environment, Health, Societies’ (ESS), the first international research laboratory in sub-Saharan Africa, operates in a network.

Founded in 2009, the ESS groups bring together the CNRS and four scientific partners located in Senegal, Mali and Burkina Faso. Research at the ESS analyses interactions between the environment, the health of populations and the transformation of societies in the Sudano-Saharan zone. It benefits local populations by improving their health and resilience to environmental crises, meeting for example the goals on health (3), water (6), climate change (13) and terrestrial environments (15). Winner of the World Bank’s ‘African Excellence for Development’ call for proposals, the laboratory will receive €5 million in funding between 2019 and 2022 to address these challenges through training, research and development.

Tools the CNRS uses to structure partnerships

The CNRS has led the way with the structuring, labelling and financing of many of its partnerships to establish well-identified collaborative tools, which have inspired many partners. The tools differ depending on the type of lead partner (academics, scientists, industrialists, etc.), the purpose of the partnership (research, technology and innovation transfer, scientific coordination) and the form it actually takes (laboratory at a partner’s premises, international research project, network, research collaboration).

This book is the result of a partnership between the CNRS and Comité 21. It aims to further understanding of the issues related to climate change and put forward solutions.
The Eco-Efficient Products and Processes Laboratory (E2P2L), an international research laboratory based at an industrial site in China.

The E2P2L is based in Shanghai, at the Solvay research and innovation (R&I) centre. The laboratory was set up to boost collaboration between the chemical industrial giant and French laboratories in Lille and Lyon, and Chinese laboratories from East China Normal University and Fudan University. The E2P2L is specialised in sustainable chemistry and has registered about twenty patents. Its objective is to develop innovative eco-efficient products and environmentally-friendly processes capable of reducing dependence on oil and fossil resources, thus responding to the SDGs on innovation and infrastructure (9), consumption and production (12) and on tackling climate change (13).

FUTURE EARTH, A RESEARCH COORDINATION TOOL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The presence and expertise of the CNRS researchers on European and multilateral consultation bodies means the organisation makes an active contribution to scientific subjects of global importance and, first and foremost, the SDGs. The French Future Earth platform is a global programme that aims to be the primary instrument for coordinating research for sustainable development and decision support. The Secretariat is divided over five platforms based in the United States, Canada, Sweden, Japan and France. In France, the CNRS works in coordination with the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MESRI), the National Research Alliance for the Environment (AllEnvi) and the Agence National de Recherche.

The Institut NeuroMyoGène (INMG), a new laboratory located in the Lyon Healthcare Cluster and open to civil society.

The INMG is a fundamental and clinical research centre focused on the neuromuscular system, founded in 2016. Combining the complementary skills of researchers, lecturers, doctors and engineers, the laboratory's aim is to understand the physiopathology of neuromuscular diseases, identify new therapeutic targets and foster the emergence of innovative treatments. It forges strong partnerships with local authorities and civil society and is financed by the French Muscular Dystrophy Association (AFM-Téléthon). It regularly runs scientific mediation initiatives.

RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURES, CUTTING-EDGE AND FAR-REACHING TECHNOLOGIES TO ADVANCE KNOWLEDGE

The CNRS coordinates several research infrastructures that are strategic for France and Europe. For example, it administers ECORD, a European consortium of 15 countries on scientific ocean drilling, which participates in an international programme (International Ocean Discovery Program – IODP) involving 23 countries. ECORD, the United States and Japan share access to ships and drilling platforms, which they also open to other countries participating in the programme. These are essential tools for understanding and predicting the functioning of the earth system, its dynamics and the interactions between land and ocean environments, ecosystems and human activities.

HUMAN AND SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH ON THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR THE SDGS AND ITS FINANCING

About twenty CNRS laboratories involved in the human and social sciences, including the CIRED centre for research on environment and development, the CERDI research centre on international development and the CERI centre for international research, provide knowledge on development economics, social and environmental changes around the world, the involvement and participation of the public and private sectors in the development process, and the impact of these changes on the environment. Other centres, such as the Western Institute of Law and Europe (IODE) and DICE (international, European and compared law), provide knowledge on law, a crucial discipline for the standardisation of international relations in response to global challenges.