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France 2030: the CNRS and the IRD launch a national research programme on the habitability of the Earth

At the interface between the social sciences, ecology and Earth sciences, the goal of the TRANSFORM exploratory research programme is to better understand and address the interactions between human societies and their environments in the context of global change. Launched on 29 September, it also aims to identify the conditions required to maintain or restore the habitability of these environments. With funding of €50 million over ten years as part of the France 2030 investment plan, this new national programme is led by the CNRS and the IRD, and managed by the ANR. It will be based on experimental sites bringing together, in particular, scientists and local communities.

Understanding the conditions for a habitable Earth

The heat waves and wildfires of the summer of 2026 served as a stark reminder of the challenges associated with the habitability of different environments: this concerns not only the ability to live there, but also to thrive, under conditions that meet the needs of humans as well as of other species.

Globally, habitability can take many different forms. The goal of the TRANSFORM programme is to study and map this diversity, by analysing how socio-ecosystems work and the interactions that contribute to their habitability across a broad range of very diverse local contexts.

Research areas closely linked to local environments

The programme will set up experimental sites in France and abroad, bringing together researchers in the social sciences, ecology and Earth sciences, as well as local communities and NGOs, local authorities and economic stakeholders.

The TRANSFORM programme will be based on the following specific initiatives:

- Mapping environments and their habitability, in order to generate new knowledge directly from local areas.
- Drawing on the knowledge of local communities and stakeholders and involving them in the research process, from the formulation of key questions right through to discussion of the findings.
- Engaging cultural actors and making scientific data more accessible and understandable to the general public.
- Identifying the conditions that enable certain initiatives to circulate and inform public policy, ensuring that locally based experiments drive change at regional and national levels.

- Ensuring wide, innovative dissemination of the results of the research carried out under the programme, and training new generations of students and decision-makers.

Bringing together science, the arts and society

Theatre, visual arts, design, cinema and writing can be harnessed to highlight the changes underway in different regions, and to stimulate debate on socio-ecological issues as well as solutions aimed at improving the habitability of environments in a changing world. These initiatives should offer a fresh perspective on scientific findings and help a wider public engage with them.

The France 2030 investment plan:

- **The France 2030 investment plan reflects a dual ambition:** it aims to bring about sustainable transformation in key sectors of the French economy (health, energy, and the automotive and aerospace industries) through technological innovation, and position France not merely as a player, but as a leader in tomorrow's world. From fundamental research and the emergence of an idea through to the production of a new product or service, France 2030 will provide support for the entire life cycle from innovation to industrialisation.
- **It is unprecedented in its scope:** €54 million will be invested to ensure that France's companies, universities and research organisations successfully complete their transitions in these strategic sectors. The aim is to enable them to respond effectively to the environmental and competitiveness challenges of the future, and to foster the emergence of future leaders in France's areas of excellence. France 2030 is defined by two cross-cutting objectives, namely, to allocate 50% of its funding to decarbonising the economy, and 50% to emerging players that drive innovation without expenditure that is harmful to the environment (in accordance with the *Do No Significant Harm* principle).
- **It is implemented collectively:** the plan is designed and deployed in consultation with French and European economic and academic players with a view to determining its strategic priorities and flagship initiatives. Project leaders are invited to submit their applications via open, rigorous and selective procedures in order to benefit from State support.
- **It is steered by the General Secretariat for Investment** on behalf of the Prime Minister and implemented by the Ecological Transition Agency (ADEME), the National Research Agency (ANR), Bpifrance and the Banque des Territoires.

[Further information is available on the French Government's website](#) and @SGPI_Avenir

About the CNRS

A major player in fundamental research worldwide, France's National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) is the only French organisation operating in every scientific field. Its unique position as a multidisciplinary organisation enables it to bring together different scientific disciplines in order to shed light on and understand the challenges of the contemporary world, in conjunction with public and socio-economic players. Working together, the different sciences contribute to sustainable progress that benefits society as a whole.

About the IRD

The French National Institute for Sustainable Development, the IRD, works to strengthen the resilience of societies in the face of global upheavals. It operates in more than 50 countries in Africa, Latin America, Asia and the Pacific, as well as in mainland France and its overseas territories.

Its research activities provide practical responses to priority needs such as climate change mitigation and adaptation, the fight against poverty and inequality, the preservation of biodiversity, and access to healthcare, while taking into account social factors. Research projects are developed in collaboration with grassroots actors and local communities. The teams bring together different perspectives, disciplines and areas of expertise through long-term partnerships in order to build robust, high-impact solutions.

The IRD champions research that benefits as many people as possible. It shares the findings of its research projects and uses science to drive action. In this way, it supports the transformation of societies towards fairer and more sustainable social, economic and environmentally-friendly models.

Contact information

CNRS Press Office | Augustin Baudier | Tel. +33 1 44 96 51 26 | augustin.baudier@cnrs.fr

IRD Press Office | presse@ird.fr

Secrétariat général pour l'investissement (General Secretariat for Investment) | presse.sgpi@pm.gouv.fr