



**INRAE**



**Ethics, Scientific Integrity,  
and Code of Conduct Charter**



## Ethics, Scientific Integrity and Code of Conduct Charter

INRAE, the French National Research Institute for Agriculture, Environment and Food, is a public targeted-research institution focussing on the above fields and related issues touching on areas such as energy, chemistry, health and land management. Such research is carried out in collaboration with a wide range of academic, socio-economic, government, association and other partners, as well as with fellow citizens. INRAE's mission is to produce and disseminate knowledge to respond to the challenges confronting society in the areas of food, agriculture, and the environment and to put that knowledge to work to foster innovation, provide expertise and lend support to public policies. The complex questions that society is seeking answers to require that a rigorous scientific approach be taken at all times and that careful consideration be given to the ethical implications of such work and its consequences. As a public institution, INRAE has a responsibility to serve the common good through the efforts of its research units and research assistance and support services. Through this Ethics, Scientific Integrity and Code of Conduct Charter, INRAE wishes to highlight the core values that act as guidelines to ensure that all staff place the goal of serving the common good in an impartial and upright manner at the very heart of their duties and activities.

The Code of Conduct, defined as the set of rules and duties that govern a profession and the conduct of those who practice it, shall be understood here as applying mainly to the rules of personal conduct and group functioning expected within a public institution. Scientific integrity is considered to be a professional code of conduct specific to the generation of knowledge, above and beyond the code of conduct linked to a public service employee status. As for ethics, this involves giving due consideration to the values, ultimate aims, and consequences of the actions undertaken. These concepts are, by their very nature, linked in theory as well as in action and contribute to the shared objective of ensuring that an equivalent quality of service is provided to all citizens by safeguarding the common good and building trust.

This convergence of the concepts of ethics, scientific integrity and a code of conduct for research projects, both in principles and issues, has led INRAE to develop an integrated vision of those topics that brings together normative aspects and matters of epistemology, social and environmental responsibility, and research ethics. Within that framework, an Ethics, Scientific Integrity and Code of Conduct for Research Projects delegation has been placed under the authority of INRAE's Chair/Chief Executive Officer to ensure management support for actions designed to promote such values and develop respect for them.

This document is part of efforts to steadily improve professional practices and is backed by a range of legal provisions, regulations and institutional policies that establish and specify each of the points dealt with. By committing all staff members, whether tenured or on contract, to behaving, both individually and as a group, in ways that put into practice the principles laid out in this document, INRAE is highlighting our desire to strengthen the bond of trust we have with society.



## Code of Conduct

Act no. 2016-483 dated 20 April 2016 pertaining to the code of conduct and public service employees' rights and obligations recalls the core principles that apply to every individual employed by a public institution. All those who work at INRAE must carry out their duties with dignity, impartiality, integrity and probity, observe the obligation of neutrality, uphold the principle of secularism, and refrain from expressing their religious opinions during the performance of their duties. All employees contributing to INRAE's work must treat equally all those they may interact with as part of their professional duties and respect their freedom of conscience and their dignity. In line with those principles, INRAE fosters the development of personal and collective skills by taking into account the wide range of career paths. INRAE places special emphasis on respect for diversity, non-discrimination, balanced representation based on the skills and capacities of the men and women in scientific and administrative leadership roles and at our national and regional centres. INRAE Management is committed to preserving researchers' freedom within the framework of the directions the Institute has taken, empowering project and team leaders in the role they play as managers in developing group dynamics that respect those principles and are mindful of the contributions and progress of each member.

Priority has been given to the importance of serving the common good as part of INRAE's various mandates and in all the components of our operations. For that reason, special attention is paid to declaring and taking into account any ties that may lead to conflicts of interest, with specific procedures pertaining to the type of activity under consideration. This is especially true for research activities with partners, expertise and public policy support activities, and for recruitment and evaluation processes. Ties that may give rise to conflicts of interest are to be understood here in the broad sense including relations with a variety of parties (e.g. companies in competing market sectors, professional organisations, associations, etc.). As part of INRAE's expertise activities (collective, individual, evaluation of third-party content etc.), the Institute is committed to ensuring the quality and transparency of our processes and to fulfilling the requirements of objectivity and impartiality in compliance with the principles set out in the French national consultancy charter<sup>1</sup>.

The goal of preserving the common good is also underpinned by the implementation of a whistle-blower mechanism to allow anyone to report any situation that may pose a serious threat to public interest.

To ensure the quality of public service as part of INRAE's mandates, the Institute pays close attention to both the principle requiring all public service employees to spend all their work time on the duties assigned to them and application of the exemptions in force concerning staff holding more than one position. To the same end, special attention is paid to protecting the freedom of opinion and expression of each member of the institution, within the legal framework of public service, by recalling the obligation of discretion, confidentiality and neutrality required of every employee. INRAE undertakes to ensure corporate communications based on clear messages that are understandable to both partners and the lay public, by specifying the status of the message delivered (e.g. scientific results, summary of results, outcome of a collective expertise or expert opinion, etc.), by providing the sources and without concealing any uncertainties or differing visions about the subject matter. The same rules for indicating the nature of messages applies to communications issued by INRAE researchers, who are also expected to state whether they are speaking on a personal or professional basis and whether or not the topic they are dealing with is directly related to their research work or area of expertise.

## Scientific Integrity

Scientific integrity consists of all the rules and values that must govern research activities in order to guarantee that they are both genuine and scientifically rigorous. It is based on vital principles such as honesty, reliability, rigour, and transparency and is one of our responsibilities to future generations of scientists and fellow-citizens. The key challenges of compliance with those rules and values are to ensure the reliability of every new contribution to the body of knowledge and to foster confidence in research findings and the insights they provide for actions and public decision-making. The basic tenets of scientific integrity detailed in the 2010 Singapore Statement on Research Integrity<sup>2</sup> and reiterated in the French National Charter of Ethics for Research Professions<sup>3</sup>, have been explained in detail with a view to harmonising integrity policies at the European level into a European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity<sup>4</sup>.

In a specific Scientific Integrity Policy document<sup>5</sup>, INRAE wants to reaffirm the great importance it has accorded this concept and detail the organisation and actions the Institute is implementing to promote it and ensure compliance with it. The Institute is convinced that scientific integrity is a fundamental quality of the staff involved in our various mandates, first and foremost the production and dissemination of knowledge. Respect for this value is based on the trust placed in all staff members in their exercise of this individual responsibility, which is a mark of professional achievement. INRAE reaffirms the key role of team leaders play in communicating the core principles of scientific integrity to the interns and staff they are responsible for, carefully monitoring implementation of those principles, and sharing such values within the academic and non-academic partnerships INRAE is involved in.

In keeping with that aim, INRAE will continue to implement an evaluation and guidance policy for our staff that fosters a wide range of career paths and values the quality and diversity of accomplishments, by taking into account the full range of activities related to INRAE's mandates, such as the production and dissemination

of generic knowledge, the production and dissemination of operational knowledge and tools for action, innovation, expertise, public policy support, education and training, and providing meaningful insights to the public debate.

The values of transparency and sharing at all stages of the life cycles of data and knowledge championed by open science combine with the reliability, honesty and responsibility that form the basis of scientific integrity. In line with the principles set out in the French National Plan for Open Science, led by the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, the forward-looking policy of opening research data INRAE has implemented is a potent means for promoting scientific integrity.

## Ethics

Humanity and the planet are faced with global change that has given rise to new expectations in research such as climate change mitigation and adaptation, food and nutrition security, agricultural transitions, protection of natural resources, biodiversity restoration, and disaster preparedness and management. Such challenges, which INRAE must help overcome, call for research strategies whose ethical issues may deserve close study. This approach takes its lead from the work of the Joint INRAE-Cirad-Ifremer-IRD Ethics Advisory Committee, which examines issues of ethics brought about by research strategies and programs, both in France and abroad, in the areas of food, agriculture, the ocean, the environment and sustainable development. The committee, which has been given the tasks of studying, advising, fostering awareness and, when needed, raising alerts, looks into matters submitted to it and issues public opinions clarifying institutional governance.

Vigilance and adherence to requirements in regards to the ethical issues of research carried out at INRAE are also expected in terms of the research projects led by INRAE staff. Research project leaders are asked to analyse ethical issues in depth from the project design phase on and INRAE is committed to assisting them in that task.

1. <https://url.inrae.fr/35kKczv>

2. <https://url.inrae.fr/3jlNTKq>

3. <https://url.inrae.fr/35p0szw>

4. <https://url.inrae.fr/2lITpr8>

5. <https://url.inrae.fr/359Kfzj>



**INRAE**

147 rue de l'Université  
75 338 Paris cedex07  
Tel.: +33 (0)1 42 75 90 00

Find us at :



[inrae.fr/en](https://www.inrae.fr/en)

**French National Research Institute for  
Agriculture, Food and Environment**



**RÉPUBLIQUE  
FRANÇAISE**

*Liberté  
Égalité  
Fraternité*

**INRAE**