

# Scientific expertise in support of public policies in France

Réunion AVRIST – 8 décembre 2010

Claire Sabbagh  
INRA - Délégation à l'expertise,  
à la prospective et aux études

## Scientific expertise and public decision making A paradoxical situation

- A persistent distrust in expertise in the public opinion
- A growing need for scientific expertise

Climate Change assessment assessed...



We are all experts!



## The expertise resources

National house public expertise Level of ministries	Comités consultatifs Inspection générale ad hoc committees Boards (HCB, HCSP)
Level of government (premier ministre)	Haut Conseil de la science et de la technologie
National external public expertise Institut de France (académies) Research organizations and research agencies	CNRS, INSERM, INRA, IRD, ADEME, OSEO, CNES
Universities Security agencies (health and environment)	ANSES
National external expertise public/private Foundations Think tanks	Institut Pasteur, Institut Curie... Institut français des relations internationales (IFRI), Institut Montaigne... FNE
NGO s Private advice offices Régional public expertise Local authorities	Regional advisory councils (universities)

## Scientific expertise

### How to handle it?

- A great diversity of situations, practices, formats...
- An uneasy access to expertise
- A lack of definition of what expertise is

## An societal framework boosting the evolution of expertise practices

- The involvement of civil society
- The implementation of a normative framework

## Normative framework

The right to information and public participation in environmental projects (Law Barnier, 1995),
White Paper on European governance on the involvement of civil society in decision-making process (European Commission) (2001)
AFSSA, INVs (1998), AFSSE (law 2001)
Implementation of the National Public Debate (2002)
Standard AFNOR (NF X 50110) (May 2003)
The Environmental Charter, which includes the precautionary principle is incorporated into the preamble of the Constitution (2005),
Parliament report on the scientific expertise (OPECST, 2005)
Law of research (2006) adds scientific expertise in the public interest mission of research staff,
Grenelle de l'environnement. Debates with politics, stake-holders, professionals, NGOs on various topics : pesticides, biodiversity, research, expertise...
National Charter of scientific expertise (2010)
Laws Grenelle I et II : national commitment for environment and sustainable development (2009 , 2010)

## Scientific expertise Key achievements

- Separation between risk assessment and risk management
- Link between expertise and public debate
- Need for a common standard of expertise

« Experts opinions must be clear  
for the non-specialized reader »

Governance white paper, EC, 2001



## Rebuilding the expertise process

- Expertise, a mission for public research
- A national charter of expertise
- Controversy, a core issue
- A culture of expertise to be shared by policies, experts and society

## Experts at work Consensus is always a risk!



## Controversy, a core issue

- Social controversy, cognitive controversy
- How to sort out the scientific controversies?
- Multidisciplinary approach
- Plurality of points of views

## Conclusion

- Building up expertise process : work in progress
- The need for benchmarking the practices
- A European network for providing scientific expertise?

Thank you!

