Describing, Analyzing, Understanding Human Beings and Societies across the World

The research carried out in the joint units under the scientific coordination of the CNRS Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences (INSHS) contributes to the development of theories and analytical tools indispensable for describing, analyzing, and understanding societies and human beings, whether it be in the past or present. Throughout their history, human beings and societies have acted as the creators of speech, languages and signs. They have devised forms of expression and representation, sustained and transmitted cultures, and built up knowledge and theories. They have also been players in complex political, social, legal, and economic arenas. They have lived on Earth, explored it, made use of its land and seas. They have occupied it, often triggering conflict and impacting other living species and the resources of the planet. It is this entire set of elements that the INSHS research units aim to grasp, by constantly thinking up new topics, with particular emphasis on interdisciplinary research.
MISSIONS

The INSHS implements the CNRS scientific policy in its research fields. In partnership with universities and major research establishments, it promotes multidisciplinarity within the humanities and social sciences, as well as interdisciplinarity with other scientific disciplines. It fosters networks that organize research at both the site and national level, through specialized centers (Maisons des sciences humaines) as well as the creation of multidisciplinary thematic networks, research groups and federations, and scientific interest groups. Finally, it contributes to giving French humanities and social sciences an international dimension.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

At the heart of a constantly evolving academic and scientific landscape, the INSHS acts through joint research units that it coordinates and co-manages with its partners, drawing on both their common and individual expertise. Within these units, it more specifically supports:

• areal and global studies, comparative approaches, and transnationalization
• formalization, quantification, modeling and simulation
• digital humanities
• gender and sexuality studies

It also promotes research in social and cognitive behavioral sciences, education, human security, and religious studies.

RESOURCES/INSTRUMENTS

Sharing scientific and technological information is one of the Institute’s main concerns. The INSHS is committed to developing a large network of platforms (Maisons des sciences humaines, Instituts des systèmes complexes), Research Infrastructures (IR) and Very Large-Scale Research Infrastructures (TGIR). These resources contribute to fuelling and even driving France’s contribution to European initiatives.

The INSHS also implements and supports an array of dissemination tools aimed at increasing the visibility of its researchers and showcasing HSS research, such as the RIBAC Observatory, the INSHS newsletter, the Journalbase platform, thematic schools and HAL-SHS open archives. In parallel, it is setting up an open-access publishing strategy for scientific works through the portal Revues.org, Calenda, OpenEdition Books portals and Hypotheses.org academic blogs developed by the OpenEdition Center. This policy is part of the European project developed through the Dariah infrastructure.

The INSHS facilitates the dissemination of knowledge to society, especially through economic or social initiatives, as well as cultural partnerships. Since 2013, it has organized three Innovatives SHS fairs aimed at economic and industrial players. The last two editions opened up to international research.

Finally, the Institute takes part in the technology transfer consortium (CVT) of the Athena Alliance in the humanities and social sciences.

INTERNATIONAL PRESENCE

The INSHS contributes to the internationalization of social sciences and the humanities through a five-fold strategy:

• managing a network of research units abroad, in partnership with the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other research institutions, in and outside of France. These units provide opportunities for the mobility of researchers, academics and PhD students, by means of temporary assignments or research leaves within the CNRS joint units.
• promoting the internationalization of French humanities and social sciences journals by providing on-line English versions of the most emblematic publications.
• supporting research programs within the framework of international cooperation tools, such as bilateral cooperation agreements, researcher exchange agreements, International Programs for Scientific Cooperation (PICS), International Research Networks (IRN), Joint Research Projects (PRC) and International Associated Laboratories (LIA).
• soliciting European funding for research projects.
• encouraging the international mobility of researchers and PhD students working within joint units through an annual campaign for project funding.

KEY FIGURES

9 585 researchers and academics, including 1 653 CNRS
2 641 engineers and technicians, of whom 1 403 are from the CNRS*
12 000 PhD students and postdoctoral fellows*
273 research and service units, et 12 federative research structures*
9 research networks and 1 service network*
7 associated research laboratories
40 start-up
40 patents
73 licences
3 international joint units, 23 international programs for scientific cooperation
30 international research networks
14 international associated laboratories
7 joint research projects

* Source : Zento Institute, May 2018 (personnel attached to INSHS units)