FRANCE:
How to Improve a Decentralized, Ambiguous National System
Issues arising


- Back to France: nothing was done really to maintain integrity and deal with cases, except in one University and one Research Organism:
  - INSERM – biomedical research – 4000 scientists has a dedicated office and one University (U. Lyon Claude Bernard) has a Code
  - Institution deal quasi « secretly » with cases or don’t know or do nothing

- Main challenges:
  - How to avoid what had been stated in many other countries: increase of fraud?
  - How to establish a realistic system and procedure? Need for clear rules or guidelines.
Detailed challenges

- Potential consequences of an ambiguous system
  - Unfair and unequal treatment of cases
  - No serious knowledge about Fraud and RI
  - No serious comparison possible with other countries
  - Future problems with public trust?

- Barriers/Limits
  - Scientists think that Fraud is a very minor phenomenon, so it is not important; and some others think that it is a TABOO
  - Topic should be treated within Research institutions before being published in the media
  - Not to transform a value based action into a bureaucratic system (living by its own) / Cost for value
A national mandate by ministry of higher education and research

- Goal: to deal with RI, based on education and on public fair procedures

- Main steps
  - international connections* and literature to correctly define what is misconduct and fraud, national survey to have some statistics, report with recommendations, implementation (to base propositions on evidence as much as possible) – 2 years at least

*Relevant connections with ESF Forum and ALLEA proposal for a Code and OECD guidelines
Current results / mid 2010

- Survey/ main results:
  - Less than one case a year by institution (?), INSERM declares 6/year
  - Legal base does exist already
  - Prevention is weak
  - Acceptance for clear rules
  - Acceptance for an appeal level
  - In general good will to do better
Report to Ministry includes

- How fraud arises: pressures (to publication, to innovation, outreach) on individuals create situations where classical rules are transgressed
- Charter proposal based on science values,
- Definition (FFP),
- Comparison of national situation with other countries in terms of law, processes, nr of cases, …
- Recommendations for
  - Prevention mainly by Universities
  - Guidelines for treatment by institutions (July 2010) – Whistleblowers, allegation place, protection of both parties, legal base for expertise, conclusions, decision by employer
- Appeal level (national)
- Yearly national report
- Plan for future implementation

- Under discussion by FAS, Ethics Committees, personalities, … to disseminate the questions to be solved and find some allies/supporters
Next steps 2010-2011

- Dissemination of report to institutions (to increase awareness after survey)
  - Autumn 2010

- Workshop dedicated to governance of Ministry, Funding agencies, Research organisms and Universities
  - in 2010
  - Rules to be adopted in the first semester of 2011 by each institution

- Public national conference in 2011
Recommendations for a successful approach

- To focus on a very few strong arguments
  - RI is full part of research activity and has to be promoted as such, law is not always necessary
  - Fraud in science is a failure to one self, to colleague, to public
  - Harmonisation is a necessity in (frequent) international collaborations

- About the process to start a system
  - The « taboo » situation of fraud : to have a open discussion, to find allies,
  - Step by step approach : many actors involved/ search for a common basis takes time for information, for proposal and its discussion and for implementation
Summary

- As a cultural behaviour, RI needs attention from national authorities (national and international coherence), but the main responsibility stays in labs.
- In a no man’s land situation or in an ambiguous atmosphere, the goal is to establish clear common rules, and even more to have them adopted.
- Research institutions need to give attention to training, detection and treatment of fraud.
- Take time to convince, avoid forced decisions.