

ANSES and IFREMER renew their partnership

On 4 April 2023, Benoît Vallet, Director General of ANSES, and François Houllier, CEO of IFREMER, signed a new five-year framework partnership agreement. The two organisations have therefore undertaken to continue their collaborative research and expertise appraisal work on the health of fish and molluscs and the safety of foods derived from them. They are also planning to carry out their joint initiatives as part of a cross-cutting approach that is more open to society.

In view of the complementary nature of their missions and activities focusing on the epidemiological surveillance of shellfish and fish and the safety of food from these sectors, IFREMER and ANSES have committed to strengthening the collaboration that has been in place for several years. Under this new agreement, they will endeavour to adopt a more cross-cutting approach to the topics they study, in keeping with the “One Health” concept – integrating human, animal and environmental health – with the aim of jointly developing projects dealing, for example, with the marine exposome, the health and environmental risks associated with microplastics, and antimicrobial resistance.

Both organisations have signed the charter on openness to society. They intend to carry out joint communication campaigns and implement participatory approaches as part of shared projects that reflect their commitment in this area.

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This partnership also aims to strengthen the support that both organisations provide to the public authorities. After they signed the first agreement in 2018, IFREMER and ANSES started pooling some of their skills, for example those relating to the toxin emergence monitoring network. This network works to prevent shellfish contamination by the main groups of biotoxins listed at the international level; it is also involved in assessing the associated risks. Future areas of collaboration may extend beyond the clearly identified field of marine biotoxins to include chemical and microbiological contaminants.

Another goal is to increase IFREMER's involvement in ANSES's calls for projects and ensure that each organisation's recommendations and research results are effectively disseminated within the two agencies. The scientific personnel of both organisations will also be encouraged to participate in the expert bodies and working groups they each set up when carrying out their respective missions.

According to François Houllier, CEO of IFREMER:

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“This new agreement is the natural continuation of our partnership, which began five years ago and has led us to develop joint methods for detecting bacteria, viruses – in particular, SARS-CoV-2 – and parasites in marine organisms, and acquire new knowledge on the microplastic contamination of seafood, to give but a few examples. IFREMER works every day to better understand and assess the health of the marine environment. It is essential that this knowledge be shared with ANSES to help protect human health”.

According to Benoît Vallet, Director General of ANSES:

“Extending and strengthening our unique partnership with IFREMER will enable us to consolidate the strong synergies and complementarity that have developed between our teams. Going beyond our joint work focused on the health of shellfish & fish and consumer safety, this framework agreement is also an opportunity to give practical effect to our two agencies’ commitment to openness to society. This commitment will take the form of initiatives such as joint feedback days, the integration of citizen science and research approaches into our joint projects, and the strengthening of contributions to public debate in our areas of work”.

By signing this framework partnership agreement, IFREMER and ANSES will be able to pool their expertise in eight areas of key importance to health:

- Marine biotoxins
- Organic and inorganic chemical contaminants
- Microplastics
- Marine bacteria and bacteria of human origin
- Viruses in food
- Fish parasites
- Mollusc health
- Fish health

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About:

IFREMER. Recognised worldwide as one of the leading marine science and technology institutes, IFREMER is committed to both sustainable development and open science. It conducts research, innovates, and carries out expert appraisals to protect and restore the ocean, responsibly exploit the ocean’s resources, and share marine data and knowledge to create new opportunities for economic growth that respects the marine environment.

Present on all the coastlines of mainland and overseas France, its laboratories are spread out across some 20 sites in the Indian, Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. It operates the French Oceanographic Fleet on behalf of the French State, and its 1,500 researchers, engineers and technicians work to advance knowledge on one of the last unexplored frontiers of our planet.

www.ifremer.fr

Press release

april 2023

ANSES. The French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety (ANSES) provides public decision-makers with the scientific benchmarks needed to protect humans and the environment from health risks. It studies, assesses and monitors all the chemical, microbiological and physical risks to which humans, animals and plants are exposed, thereby helping the public authorities take the necessary measures, including in the event of a health crisis. A national agency working in the public interest, ANSES comes under the responsibility of the French Ministries of Health, the Environment, Agriculture, Labour and Consumer Affairs.

<https://www.anses.fr/en>

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