



The France-Australia research network - www.ambafrance-au.org/science/
A sub-group of FEAST

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Embassy of France in Australia

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INTRODUCTION AND GREETINGS

Dear FEAST-France Members,

It is my pleasure as a new comer to the French Embassy to introduce myself to all the FEAST-France networkers.

I began my new position as scientific assistant to the science & technology Counsellor, Prof. Michel Thibier, on 5 March 2007. I have succeeded Frédéric Vanhove, who is now working as an engineer in Sydney.

I will be in charge, for the year to come, of developing the FEAST-France network, organising events, and circulating the information. The network is becoming larger and more structured every day. It is an honour and a motivating challenge to be part of it and to work jointly with all of you.

For more information, don't forget to have a look regularly at the FEAST-France website <http://www.ambafrance-au.org/science/>. It contains many things you need to know about the French-Australian S&T cooperation and it is updated weekly.

Please feel free to send me any of your comments about this newsletter, so it can be continuously improved.

Enjoy the FEAST-France newsletter #16!

Armelle Blanchard
FEAST-France Bilateral Liaison Officer
French Embassy in Australia

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

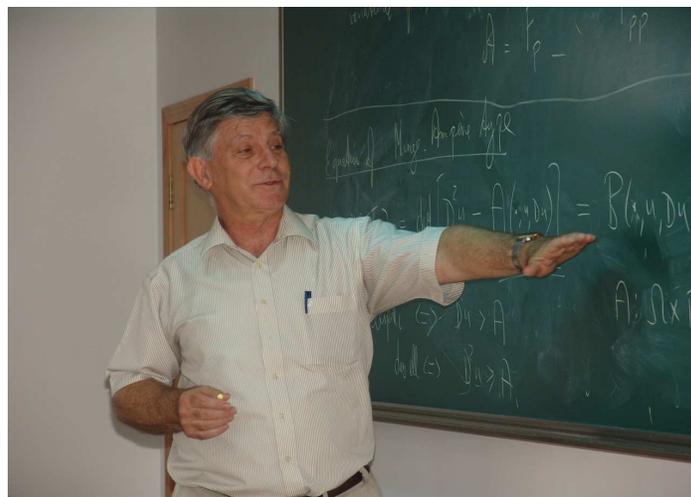
FAST stimulates mathematical research

In 2006-2007, FAST, the French-Australian Science and Technology Programme, is supporting a 2-years non-renewable mathematical research exchange program between France and Australia entitled “**Progress in geometric analysis and applications**”. The scholars involved are 13 from 6 different universities in France and 9 from the Centre for Mathematics and its Applications (CMA) at ANU Canberra. People in charge of the program are: Professor Neil Trudinger (CMA) and myself, Philippe Delanoë (CNRS at Nice University). Let me describe briefly how this program arose and what it is about.

The idea of such a programme was suggested to me by Neil Trudinger around Christmas 2004 after he checked the French Embassy website. Neil is an immense mathematician and a very nice person whom I first met in Philadelphia in the winter 1980, a year before I got my PhD at Université Pierre et Marie Curie (Paris 6). He was a visiting Professor at Penn (USA) and we would ride by train to Princeton with several young fellows once a week to attend Yau’s famous seminar at the Institute for Advanced Studies. Ever since, I have kept in touch with him. I became a CNRS researcher and, after a while, I left Paris 6 to develop geometric analysis (my specialty) in Nice – French Riviera. During some 20 years, we met occasionally abroad (in Europe) and I invited him a couple of times at Nice. But I never thought that I would travel some day to Canberra, so far away from France! Europeans live on a different scale than Australians as regards travelling. After Neil pointed out to me the possibility of a FAST program, we worked hard to unify into a single project several components of collaborations (already active or potential) between top geometric analysts in France and at the CMA (mostly young fellows). We applied, and won in early March 2006.

What is geometric analysis ? Well, ancient geometers did not use analysis; they drew figures and argued directly on them, which was elegant but of limited applicability. After Descartes introduced (around 1640) the use of Cartesian coordinates to spot points in the Euclidean space, the geometrical figures were assigned equations. Analysis became a powerful tool to deal with geometry and physics as well, Newtonian mechanics in the first place. The drawback, though, was the limitation to particular coordinate systems. Newton’s laws of Mechanics, for instance, looked valid only for special observers, namely Galilean ones. It took another couple of centuries for mathematicians (often pushed by physicists) to figure out that the fundamental objects of analysis should be those which have some sort of *invariance under coordinate changes*. For example in Thermodynamics, all possible states of an isolated amount of ideal gas are represented by points with coordinates (P,V,T) (the pressure, volume and temperature of the gas) related by one state-equation (namely, the ratio PV/T proportional to a physical constant R): physicists would speak of a system *with 2 degrees of freedom* and, dealing with physical functions of the gas-state, like the entropy S, physicists would freely consider S as a function of, either (P,V) or (V,T) or else (P,T), depending on their needs. For a Cartesian analyst, the 3 functions $S(P,V)$, $S(V,T)$, $S(P,T)$ are *not the same*, although, when restricted to the surface of equation $PV=RT$, each takes the *same* value, namely the entropy of the gas in the state (P,V,T). Viewing S as a single function defined on that surface lies at the start of geometric analysis. This *intrinsic* viewpoint culminated in theoretical physics around 1911 with Einstein’s gravitation theory (general relativity), built upon tools forged some 50 years earlier by a mathematician of genius, Bernhard Riemann. It reconciled the ancient global approach of geometers with the modern effectiveness of analysts. Geometric analysis nowadays has become pretty wide a field; the solution of the celebrated Poincaré conjecture by Grigori Perel’man (see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poincar%C3%A9_conjecture) pertains to it. So does our FEAST program.

My colleague Ge Yuxin (from Université Paris 12 at Créteil) and I spent several weeks at the CMA in the winter 2006. We studied there new aspects of a problem addressed by Gaspard Monge in 1781: the **optimal mass transfer problem**. In rough terms, Monge was looking for the least consuming way of moving a certain number of marbles (say) from one assigned planar configuration to another. Inspired by fluid mechanics, Yann Brenier (now at Nice) has considered in the early 90's a new formulation of that problem, of wide applicability (to models for meteorology and cosmology, for instance). In 2005, dealing with continuous media with smoothly varying densities instead of discontinuous distributions of matter (like the marbles above), Neil Trudinger and his co-workers solved a whole class of optimal mass transfer equations, with classical elliptic partial differential equations techniques – a CMA specialty. They lucidly sorted the data from the unknown in this highly nonlinear context, and were able to reduce most difficulties to the verification of a single, fourth order, inequality bearing on the data.



Neil explaining his solution

Under the FAST program, some of us focus on verifying the critical inequality when the smooth mass transfer takes place, not in the Euclidean space, but on a closed surface – on a sphere to begin with. The sphere case was settled in 2006 by our first FAST visitor at CMA, Grégoire Loeper (from Université Lyon 1); Yuxin Ge and I are now studying the (conceivably trickier) case of smooth ovaloids. In brief: we are working on the optimal way of moving a mass density along shortest paths on a given ovaloid, in order to carry it from one assigned configuration to another. This is just one component of our FAST program.

Finally, let me stress that it is time for us to think of **future linkages**, once the FAST grants expire, for the geometric analysis collaboration between France and the CMA to keep on running, higher and higher. Sponsors are welcome!

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ABOUT THE FEAST-FRANCE NETWORK

➤ **Outcomes of the FAST Programme**

The 2007 FAST (French-Australian Science & Technology) programme opened on Monday 4 September 2006 and closed on Friday 13 October 2006. The FAST programme aims at supporting scientific and technological cooperation between French and Australian researchers in both public and private sectors.

In December 2006, the FAST selection board from the DEST (Department of Education, Science and Training) and from the French Ministries of Foreign Affairs and of Research met in Paris to select the applications. The programme was very successful this year since 92 applications were received! It has thus been a very competitive round.

The quality of the applications was very high. The following 14 applications were retained and are now under contract negotiation:

Field of research	Australian university	French Institute	Project Title
Oceanography	University of Queensland	Institut de Recherche Pour le Developpement	Evolution of habitats and biodiversity in coral reefs
Soil and Water Sciences	James Cook University	UMR MGS INRA- Université de Bourgogne	Production and fate of dissolved organic matter in forest ecosystems
Genetics	University of Melbourne	Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle	Unlocking the secrets of the dragon's venom
Biological Sciences	University of Melbourne	INSERM	Does anti-Mullerian hormone influence androgens in the developing testis?
Medical and Health Sciences	University of Wollongong	European Synchrotron Radiation Facility (ESRF)	Magneto-Microbeam Radiation Therapy: Effect of magnetic field on absorbed dose distribution and cell survival

Field of research	Australian university	French Institute	Project Title
Physical Chemistry (incl. Structural)	The University of Adelaide	Laboratoire des Mécanismes de Transferts en Géologie-Université Paul Sabatier	Transport of Metals in Hydrothermal Systems: Experimental and Numerical Frontiers
Hydrology	Monash University	INSA Lyon (Institut National des Sciences Appliquées)	Coping with uncertainty in stormwater quality models; new insights through the sharing of data and analytical methods
Geochemistry	The University of New South Wales	Centre Européen de Recherche et d'Enseignement des Géosciences de l'Environnement	Element uptake by rice – root iron plaque formation and implications to nutrient and toxicant uptake
Medical and Health Sciences	The University of Sydney	University of Tours	Development of Molecular Probes for Imaging Neurodegenerative Diseases of the Brain
Medical and Health Sciences	Prince of Wales Medical Research Institute	European Synchrotron Radiation Facility	Synchrotron microprobe analysis and speciation of trace metals in neuromelanin in the healthy and parkinsonian brain.
Biological Sciences	CSIRO Plant Industry	CIRAD	EPIDEV: Epigenetic control of developmental gene expression

Field of research	Australian university	French Institute	Project Title
Agricultural Veterinary and Environmental Sciences	AMWING Pearl Producers Association Inc.	IFREMER- Centre Oceanologique du Pacifique	Review of the state of knowledge of disease agents and other factors affecting the culture of Pinctada spp. in the Pacific and Indian Oceans
Biological Sciences	The University of Sydney	INRA Nancy	Determinants of water-use efficiency of plants
Immunology	Queensland Institute of Medical Research	Commissariat à l'Energie Atomique	Understanding Chikungunya virus disease and searching for new treatments

➤ **FAST: next round to be open in June 2007**

The French-Australian Science and Technology Programme will launch its 5th round on 1 June 2007. The programme, like the previous years, is jointly managed by the Department of Education Science and Training (DEST) and its French counterparts: the Ministry of National Education, Universities and Research (MENESR) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAE).



The FAST programme aims to promote and support scientific and technological cooperation between Australian and French researchers in both public and private sectors.

FAST will provide financial assistance, on a competitive basis, for small collaborative research projects (including project specific follow-up meetings) between Australian and French researchers. Activities that are eligible for funding support are only international travel and living expenses. Accordingly, funding does not extend to insurances, salaries and equipment expenses.

Under the 2008 FAST programme round, applications will be considered for research collaboration in the areas of materials and information and communication technologies.

Each partner must submit an application to their respective Government agencies (DEST for the Australian applicants, EGIDE for the French).

The promotion of young researcher mobility will be one of the most important criteria selection for the 2008 FAST round.

The 2008 call-for-proposals round will open on 1 June 2007 and close on 15 July 2007.

More information can be found on the French Embassy's website at: http://www.ambafrance-au.org/article.php3?id_article=1851.

➤ **Social Sciences Call for Proposals**

The French Embassy in Australia and the Academy of the Social Sciences provide a funded grant to initiate and enhance joint research activity in social sciences through an annual joint call for proposals.



Let us remember that the objective of the grant is to develop and reinforce collaborative research programmes between Australia and France in Social Sciences through :

- ▶ Projects with a clear collaborative research programme over one or more years between identified partners,
- ▶ Visits to help teams put a project together.

This call for proposals supports activities over a maximum of two years.

The 2008 round will close on 29 June 2007.

For more information and application form you can visit the French Embassy website at http://www.ambafrance-au.org/article.php3?id_article=1326&var_mode=calcul#assa.

➤ Victoria Fellowships call for proposals



In 2007, winners of the Victoria Fellowships will be invited to apply for a \$5,000 AFAS FEAST-France Fellowship as a supplement to their Victoria Fellowship. This award, from Embassy of France and the Australian French Association for Science and Technology (AFAS), aims to facilitate science and technology to mutually benefit France and Victoria.

The AFAS FEAST-France Fellowship may be used to:

- expand the French component of a Victoria Fellowship study mission proposals, or
- undertake a study mission in France.

As with the Victoria Fellowship, activities that could be supported by an AFAS FEAST-France Fellowship include:

- progressing start-up initiatives or a commercial idea which would be assisted by work or development within a professional environment not available locally;
- undertaking a short-term investigative activity of business or public benefit;
- undertaking specialised advanced technological courses or training not available in Victoria;
- attending a particular laboratory or industrial site(s) to learn practices which will assist with the rapid advancement of the Fellow's Victorian activities;
- attending an international meeting, in conjunction with other planned activities; or
- using test facilities not available locally.

The Embassy of France and AFAS can assist applicants to develop their proposed study mission by providing research and company contacts in France. This includes access to the 3000 member companies and professional organisations of UBIFrance (www.ubifrance.com), a French agency for international business development. UBIFrance may provide additional technical support, conferences and subsidised accommodation and travel to visiting Fellows. AFAS also offers subsidised French lessons in Melbourne prior to the study mission and Fellows will also receive complimentary membership of AFAS for two years.

The closing date for application is 10 April 2007.

For more information and application form you can visit the French Embassy website at http://www.ambafrance-au.org/article.php3?id_article=956.

➤ **Tasmanian Marine Science Fellowships call for proposals**



The Embassy of France in Australia, the Tasmanian Government and the University of Tasmania have jointly created an Award in the field of Marine and Antarctic Sciences. This program enables early career researchers to travel to France to undertake study missions to:

- acquire a specific training or qualification
- strengthen cooperation and expand international networks; and
- gain recognition for their work.

Applications are open to Tasmanian postgraduate students, young researchers and scientists working in marine science. The total amount available for 2007 is \$15,000. This will support between one and three fellowships for a stay (return ticket and living allowances) in France from one to three months.

Applications for a 2007 Tasmanian Marine Science Fellowship are opened from 5 March and close on 1 June 2007

For more information and application form you can visit the French Embassy website at http://www.ambafrance-au.org/article.php3?id_article=2198.

➤ **Scientific visits to Europe in 2007 and 2008**



The Embassy of France and the Australian Academy of Science invite applications from professional scientists, including early career researchers, to visit Europe between 1 July 2007 and 30 June 2008 to collaborate with European researchers.

Proposals in any field of natural science, basic and applied, including mathematics and engineering science, will be considered.

Applicants must hold a PhD degree or equivalent at the time of application. They should propose a collaborative research project, or a specific activity, which has been developed in consultation with host scientists in France. Under this scheme, applicants can request travel support to access international leading-edge small to medium research facilities and equipment. Support will not be provided for costs associated with the use of these facilities.

Successful applicants may receive from the French Embassy and the Academy a *grant-in-aid* of up to \$10,500. This is based on a *contribution* towards travel between Australia and the host institution(s) up to a maximum of \$2,500, and a living allowance of up to a maximum of \$200 per day for a period between 14 days and 40 days (maximum of \$8,000).

The next expression of interest will be called for in April 2007.

For more information and application form you can visit the French Embassy website at http://www.ambafrance-au.org/article.php3?id_article=956.

➤ **Australian-French Exchange Programs survey**

The Embassy of France in Australia is launching the “Australian-French Exchange Research Programmes Survey”. For a start and as a pilot survey, we wish to concentrate exclusively at this stage on the mathematics and physics field.

This survey will help us to know how many French and Australian researchers were involved in exchanged programmes, as exhaustively as possible, between 2004 and 2006, their research topics, and length of stay.

Anyone who has been working or collaborating in such exchange programmes can fill in the online survey at http://www.ambafrance-au.org/rubrique.php3?id_rubrique=203 and send it back to us at science@ambafrance-au.org.

The FEAST France network is more and more active and this survey will improve our knowledge of scientific collaboration between France and Australia and lead to increase links between France and Australia.

➤ **BestOZ articles now online!**

BestOZ is the "Bulletin Electronique pour la Science et Technologie en Australie". It provides regular news, in French, about Australian research. It is published every two months, and is available in either pdf or txt format.



Last issue comprised articles covering a wide range of topics, such as Astronomy, Archaeology, Environment, Mathematics, Medicine, Biology, Marine Sciences and much more...

A new tool just created on our website enables the reader to browse the contents of the current issue from the French Embassy website!

To do so, simply visit the following web page: http://www.ambafrance-au.org/article.php3?id_article=1758.

➤ French scientific magazines

The CCSTI (Association of the French centers for scientific, technical and industrial culture) and the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs publish a letter of information intended to nourish and initiate cultural scientific and technical projects. You can now zoom in on a researcher lecturer or look at an example of collaboration between research laboratories, fall for a video, a CD-Rom, a book. Check out an announcement of a theatrical creation, spot highlights of an event in Dakar, in Bucharest, in Santiago or in Beijing... not to forget news of the current events and tours.

The “Science and Culture Info” newsletter #12 is now downloadable at http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/actions-france_830/recherche-sciences_1029/colonne-droite_1699/publications_11231/lettre-science-culture-infos_7814.html.

This newsletter is only available in French.



You can, as well, read the “CNRS International Magazine”, available in english at <http://www2.cnrs.fr/en/2.htm> or le “Journal du CNRS” available in french at <http://www2.cnrs.fr/presse/>.

Every three months, the CNRS (the French National Center for Scientific Research) presents in English an overview of the research programmes in CNRS laboratories. In the current edition you will read the outstanding results, interviews of foreign researchers that are working at CNRS, useful information to work in a CNRS laboratory, get a grant and funding or apply for a position in CNRS.

NEWS

➤ **French Chemistry Nobel Prize Laureate held a series of conferences in Australian universities**



Prof Jean-Marie Lehn was in Sydney on 6-7 March 2007 and gave conferences at the University of Sydney on Tuesday 6 March and on Wednesday 7 March at the University of New South Wales. He also gave a conference at the University of Queensland in Brisbane on Friday 9 March.

Professor Lehn, who is Professor of Chemistry at the Collège de France in Paris, shared the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1987 for his studies on the chemical basis of molecular recognition (the way in which a receptor molecule recognises and selectively binds a substrate), which also plays a fundamental role in chemistry.

Over the years his work has led to the definition of a new field of chemistry, which he calls “supramolecular chemistry” as it deals with the complex entities formed by the association of two or more chemical species held together by non-covalent intermolecular forces (whereas molecular chemistry concerns the entities constructed from atoms linked by covalent bonds).

Subsequently, the area has developed into the chemistry of 'self-organization' processes and more recently into 'constitutional dynamic chemistry.'

Professor Lehn has discussed these concepts during lectures in several Australian Universities.

➤ **Pr Michel Thibier's visit to biological and medical institutes in Melbourne**



Prof Michel Thibier, Scientific Counsellor at the French Embassy and Dominique de Gasquet, Cooperation and Cultural Action Attachée, visited the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research (WEHI) in Melbourne. They were welcomed by Prof Suzanne Cory, Director of the WEHI, Prof Alan Cowman, Director of the Infection and Immunity Division and Dr Emanuela Handman, Principal Researcher

During this visit, the WEHI and Institut Pasteur cooperation was underlined. A project, in Malaria field, is currently happening between these Medical Research Institutes.



Prof Michel Thibier, Scientific Counsellor at the French Embassy and Dominique de Gasquet, Cooperation and Cultural Action Attachée, visited also the Bio21 Molecular Science and Biotechnology Institute in Melbourne. Prof Dick Wettenhall, Director of the “Bio21” and Dr Peter Goss, director of the Development. Welcomed

them

The Bio21 Institute is a multidisciplinary research centre, specializing in medical, agricultural and environmental biotechnology.

The main research axes of the “Bio21” are:

- Biomedical
 - Degenerative diseases
 - Cancer
- Nanobiotechnology
 - Bio sensors
 - Nano-particles for tooth decay treatment
 - Nanoencapsule medicinal treatment
- Environment and biotechnology
 - New pesticides
 - Insects adaptation to stressing factors study



The Six young winners of the Victoria Fellowships, who are planning a study mission in France were awarded in Melbourne in October 2006 and have received a \$5,000 AFAS/Feast-France Fellowship as a supplement to their Victoria Fellowship. This award from the Australian French Association for Science and Technology (AFAS) and the Embassy of France aims to facilitate science and technology to mutually benefit Victoria and France.

➤ **Cooperation Between Pasteur Institute and Australian Researchers**

Last January two scientists from the Pasteur Institute visited Australia to expand research networks in the field of infectious diseases : Dr. Paul Martin, Director of the Pasteur Institute Noumea and Dr. Paul Brey, Regional Adviser of the Pasteur Institute for the Asia-Pacific Area.

Dr Martin came to Australia to develop relations between the New Caledonian Pasteur Institute and Australia in the field of medical entomology. Dr Martin specialises in the dengue and yellow fever, diseases carried by the mosquito *Aedes aegypti*. Dr Martin hopes to create "a study and monitoring network for entomology in the Pacific Region". He met with the entomology team of the QIMR (Queensland Institute of Medical research), the CSIRO entomology section, the Australian National Collection of Insects in Canberra, and specialists at the Westmead Hospital in Sydney. Dr Martin also took advantage of this opportunity to establish links with other research organisations of interest to the Pasteur Institute in Noumea, including bodies studying marine biotoxins, molecular epidemiology, classical epidemiology and bacteriology.

Hanoi-based Dr. Paul Brey is developing scientific networks among the seven Pasteur Institutes across Asia, focusing on emerging and re-emerging viral infections. He is interested in expanding the research network in Asia, in collaboration with Australian scientists. Accompanied by Prof Thibier, Scientific Adviser to the French Embassy, Dr. Brey visited in particular the John Curtin School of Medical Research in Canberra.

➤ **Prof Michel Thibier's visit to Hobart**

As a follow up to previous interactions between the embassy of France in Australia and the Australian research organizations in Tasmania, Prof Michel Thibier spent half a week visiting various laboratories involved in Antarctic and marine sciences. He was very impressed by the excellent quality of cooperation between Australian and French scientists. More will be reported in the next FEAST-France newsletter.

➤ **Prof Thibier's animal cloning speech to AFAS ACT**

Animal cloning is the fourth generation of modern reproductive biotechnologies used in farm animals, following artificial insemination, embryo transfer, and in vitro fertilization. Research on cloning really started when the former generations were well enough under control, i.e. by the mid-eighties.

This technology is followed by that of transgenesis with which there must be no confusion.

Cloning received the attention of the public when the existence of Dolly was revealed, the major breakthrough that Dolly showed was that it was possible to obtain clones from somatic cells (adult cells) and not like until that stage, from embryonic cells (totipotent or at least according to stage of development, multipotent cells).

This breakthrough was in fact totally empirical but it broke the dogma that differentiated cells could not reinitiate the complete differentiation process. This was then proven to be wrong.

Clones have now been obtained from several species such as mice, rabbits, horses and donkeys, pigs, sheep and goats and cattle. The efficiency of the technique is yet very low (in the magnitude of 1%. in cattle for example).

Cloning is a fascinating area of research, because it is a very potent model to understand genetic and epigenetic effects on the expression of a given molecule, function of cells etc. with references to a greater understanding of the development of embryo and ageing and perhaps age-related diseases...

The timing of this discovery was probably the most inconvenient as it was a stage at which the world population was concerned by the BSE crisis, the plant GMO and then cloning so there has been a total confusion between those problems quite different in essence with the result that it caused a lot of controversy in general public.

In addition to its major interest in research, cloning has some advantages for animal breeding but it will be mostly used as a tool in conjunction with transgenesis.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

- FAST: next round will open in June (cf [ABOUT THE NETWORK...](#))
- Social Sciences call for proposals (cf [ABOUT THE NETWORK...](#))
- Victoria Fellowships call for proposals (cf [ABOUT THE NETWORK...](#))
- Tasmanian Marine Science Fellowships call for proposals (cf [ABOUT THE NETWORK...](#))
- Scientific visits to Europe in 2007 and 2008 (cf [ABOUT THE NETWORK...](#))
- Chaires internationales de recherche Blaise Pascal
- “Initiative Post-Doc” programme call for proposals
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- Ifremer doctoral grants
- Cemagref thesis contracts

➤ Chaires internationales de recherche Blaise Pascal



The Ministry of Education and the Ile-de-France Region are establishing new International Research Chairs to accommodate highly qualified, internationally acclaimed, foreign research scientists in Exact or Applied sciences, Natural, health and ageing sciences, Environmental sciences, New technologies, human and social sciences.

Each Chair allows the foreign scientist to be hosted for 12 full months, possibly spread over 2 years, in one or more well-known Higher Learning or Research Institutions in Paris/Ile-de-France that are focused on a particular scientific project and are able to provide the suitable environment, equipment and means required.

A multi-disciplinary jury, in association with the French Institute, will select 5 applicants or less for 2007 depending on the scientific interest of the proposed project and the quality of the application.

The closing date for application is 25 April 2007.

For more information and application form you can visit the Chaires Blaise Pascal website at <http://www.chaires-blaise-pascal.org/uk/appel.htm>.

➤ **“Initiative Post-Doc” programme call for proposals**

Operated by the deputy ministry in charge of higher education and research, the Postdoc Initiative programme aims at encouraging and helping the best French postdoctoral researchers abroad to come back to France and enter the national system of research and innovation.

On the basis of quality scientific records and return objectives, the programme gives a grant ranging from € 3,000 to € 5,000€ to successful candidates, so they can go and visit possible French host laboratories.

The closing date for application is 16 April 2007.

For more information and application form you can visit the French Embassy website at <http://www.abg.asso.fr/display.php?id=1364>.

➤ **The « Charcot » scholarships**

The « Charcot » scholarships are open to young researchers and academics in the field of medical studies. They have been created to enable foreign applicants to spend for one year in France to conduct a medical research.

The applicant needs to be already an academic or researcher, up to 40 years of age. It is not compulsory for the applicant to speak French. The program is also open to English speaking applicants.

The length of the scholarship is a maximum of 12 months from November 2007 up to October 2008 (shorter stays are possible, but the scholarship should be finished on 30 October 2008 at the latest).

The amount of the scholarship is € 1400 per month.

The return trip to France is not included in the scholarship.

The closing date for application is 1 May 2007.

For more information and application form you can visit the French Embassy website at http://www.ambafrance-au.org/article.php3?id_article=2234 or contact Stéphane Grivelet at education@ambafrance-au.org.

➤ **Ifremer doctoral grants**



The French Research Institute for Exploitation of the sea, is offering doctoral grants for PhD students.

The closing date for application is 23 May 2007.

For more information and application form you can visit the Ifremer website at http://www.ifremer.fr/ds/animation_scientifique/bourses/doctorales/appele/index.html or contact Marie Michèle Pédel at +33 2 98 22 46 95.

➤ **Cemagref thesis contracts**



Cemagref is dedicated to engineering for sustainable development. It focuses its research work for the coming years on natural hazards and interactions between agriculture and hydrosystems. As an institute of advanced research, Cemagref studies practical subjects requiring methodological skills in modeling (linking experiments to models) and in processing and analyzing geographical information.

Students are tied to Cemagref by a fixed-term contract, which gives them normal social welfare rights. The contract is for three years. The gross monthly remuneration is €1,673.15, whatever the amount of cofinancing.

Candidates must hold a postgraduate or master's certificate, or equivalent, when the contract is signed. The age limit is fixed at 27 for the year of application with exceptions possible up to 30 years of age.

Candidates are invited to contact the persons in charge of the subjects given on the list.

Applications must be submitted before 14 May 2007 to the head of the subject concerned.

For more information and application form you can visit the Cemagref website at <http://www.cemagref.fr/Informations/Actualites/theses/2007/ev/thesujetsprop.htm>.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

➤ **Farewell to dr Neil Hamilton**

The role of FEAST has been intimately associated with French-Australian cooperation since its first days in 2001. This relationship has been nurtured and developed by Neil Hamilton, executive director of the forum since 2005 to the extent that French researchers (in both Australia and France) constitute a substantial proportion of FEAST members. The FEAST-France network is the largest of all the European S&T networks in Australia. Alain, Robert and now Michel have supported FEAST in all we have done during the important start up phase.

Neil created a momentum around FEAST and now the organisation gathers more than 3,000 active members. As never before, FEAST engages strongly with Europe: the European RTD research framework programme as demonstrated by the commitment of the Commission toward the FEAST conference last November, with COST, the European Science Foundation, the new European Research Council and the Joint Research Centre. FEAST has become a key partner for the Australian Community: FEAST is National Contact Point for the framework programmes and maintains tight relationships with the 4 Academies, ARC, NHMRC, and DEST Neil tirelessly crossed the continent for seminars certainly in most of the Australian Universities and many of the other research centres and agencies. Today FEAST is also closely associated with Australia in many major French agencies including CIRAD, INRETS, INRA, INSERM, CNRS, etc. With Neil in the driving seat, FEAST has become an important vehicle in creating a vibrant European-Australian Research Community.

Above all, Neil's leadership on FEAST is a style made of an unbreakable will to push boundaries and to give better opportunities to the research community. For all his colleagues and hundreds of you we met in the past few years his cheerful nature made him a pleasure to work with. Dr Hamilton is now heading the Arctic environment and conservation programme of the WWF in Oslo (Norway).

J-F D-H