

Priority Research Programme (Programme Prioritaire de Recherche - PPR) on antibiotic resistance

Call for proposals

"Observatory of discourses, norms and practices related to antibiotics and antimicrobial resistance".

BACKGROUND

The fight against antibiotic resistance requires analysing, understanding and describing the contextual determinants and social factors, economic and political logics, individual or professional practices, legal frameworks and discourses related to the problematic of antibiotic resistance and the appropriate use of antibiotics.

In France, few research studies in the social sciences (sciences humaines et sociales - SHS) and public health fields focus on antibiotic resistance, in comparison to other countries. There, historians, sociologists, anthropologists, political scientists and language specialists, among others, are actively involved in the fight against antibiotic resistance through their research. It is essential to bring together the interdisciplinary skills of such researchers, whose advances, tools or methodologies can help understanding the social, economic, environmental and public policy issues of antimicrobial resistance. The challenge is to federate the different sectors of SHS and public health research in order to facilitate pooling skills and expertise.

The purpose of an observatory is to promote a research focused on antibiotic resistance amongst public health and SHS researchers, and to make the results available to life sciences and health professionals. Moreover, this work will prove useful to support public decision-making, public and media communication, company engagement and strategy development, in order to deal with diverse situations, such as the anticipation and management of health crises.

To meet the above-mentioned needs, in agreement with the General Secretariat for Investment (Secrétariat Général pour l'Investissement - SGPI), the Priority Research Programme (Programme Prioritaire de Recherche - PPR) on antibiotic resistance envisages the implementation of an observatory integrating all sub-disciplines of the SHS related to antibiotic resistance. The main mission will focus on understanding the socio-cultural and socio-economic roots of antimicrobial resistance in the human, animal and environmental sectors. The observatory will also focus on the links between the SHS and researchers in the health sector, on the attitudes and practices of the actors involved, and on the doctor-patient, veterinarian-animal and farmer-animal interactions that lead to antibiotic prescription.

OBJECTIVES OF THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS

The observatory will carry out two complementary activities: 1) the collection and analysis of data from different sources to produce knowledge on the discourses, norms and practices related to antibiotics

and antibiotic resistance; 2) the implementation and animation of a multidisciplinary scientific community, that will include all SHS and professionals of human health, animal health and the environment, thus providing guidance to orientate the production of data and their discussion.

1- Collection and analysis of data related to information, knowledge and communication on antimicrobial resistance

The problematic of antibiotic resistance generates numerous data on communication, information and knowledge sharing, both professional and non-professional, which are available within the public domain. These discourses concern, among others, the problematic of antibiotic and biocide usage, the logics defining their administration in human and animal health and their impact on the environment. Such information can contribute to the understanding of the historical and socio-cultural roots of public policies and regulations aimed at reducing antibiotic use.

The collection and analysis of these discourses will concern multiple types of data, both digital and non-digital, emerging from field surveys, broad opinion polls, media studies, social networks, analysis of controversies in the scientific literature, etc.

This action will allow the documentation of discourses, norms and practices on antimicrobial resistance and the computational analysis of the data. This information will then help define and orientate themes of discussions to be addressed during the animation of an interdisciplinary community built around professionals of the SHS and the human, animal and environmental health sectors focused on antimicrobial resistance.

This axis will include the following elements:

- Identification, monitoring and collection of relevant data from various sources: media, political and scientific discussions, social network, non-governmental organizations, international agencies, opinion and field surveys, analysis of controversies in the scientific literature, etc.,
- Inclusion of social sciences research data on antibiotic resistance and on the digital and non-digital methodologies for analysing data relevant to the subject,
- Computational analysis of textual and visual data,
- Creation of a website,
- Make results available to a broad community (scientists, politicians, professionals, industrialists, etc.),
- Selection of results to be provided to an interdisciplinary community (as define in the objective of axis 2) for the organization of workshops and seminars,
- Collection of requests and needs for new data from researchers,
- Identification of gaps that the observatory could aim to fill.

2- Implementation and animation of an interdisciplinary community on antibiotic resistance built around SHS

To tackle antibiotic resistance, including related scientific and societal issues, in a holistic manner, it is essential to build a community that unifies the actors of the different social sciences and of the human, animal and environmental health sectors. The animation of such a community will occur in a broad framework covering the SHS-antibiotic resistance field, and will develop in particular around the themes identified through axis 1.

This interdisciplinary community will allow, among others, to foster collaborative scientific work between SHS and health sciences (animal, human and environmental sectors), to develop innovative communication and regulatory tools, and to implement public policies in line with contemporary socio-economic and cultural changes.

This axis will include the following activities:

- Identification of potential researchers and teams relevant to the subject,
- Provision of the existing literature,
- Organisation of workshops and seminars to discuss the data produced by the observatory and to integrate the researcher's requests and needs for new data,
- Organization of conferences to share the data and the work carried out,
- Fostering the creation of consortia to respond to national and international calls for projects.

FINANCING ARRANGEMENTS

In agreement with the proposal of the PPR directorate, an overall budget of €300 k granted by the SGPI will be allocated for the creation, development and animation of the observatory for the first 4 years. For the following 6 years, an annual support of €50 k will allow the activities of the observatory to be maintained.

The funding will be distributed amongst the two axes described in the "Objectives" section:

1. Implementation of the data collection and analysis platform (including its hosting by a university or centre, the means and tools for data collection and analysis, optionally a website serving as interactive platform, etc.).
2. Establishment, coordination and animation of a community of professionals from SHS and the human, animal and environmental health sectors (including organization of meetings, workshops, conferences, etc.).

ELIGIBILITY AND SELECTION CRITERIA

Applicants may respond to the call for proposals by proposing solutions to one or both of the axes described in the "objectives" section.

Candidate prerequisites for objectives 1 and 2:

- To be a recognized scientist in the fields of the social sciences and/or public health and/or antimicrobial resistance-related topics in human, animal or environmental health, affiliated to the public sector (private parties may be project partners),
- To have proven capacities in dialogue with professionals of the various SHS and health disciplines,
- To be based in France.

Specific criteria for axis 1 :

- To have the means to host the IT functionalities necessary for activities of the observatory.

The selection of candidates will be made considering, among others, the following elements:

- The applicant's abilities to participate in collaborations, demonstrated by current or past development of multidisciplinary projects involving multiple partners from SHS and human, animal or environmental health disciplines,
- The excellence of the research conducted by the team in its field, demonstrated by the number and quality of publications on the subject,
- The proposal of a multidisciplinary project characterised by a "One Health" approach, enabling collaborations and exchanges between the disciplines of the SHS, public health, and human, animal and environmental health sectors.