IRD is a French public scientific and technological research institute (EPST). It is jointly controlled by the Minister for Research and the delegated Ministry for Overseas Aid and Francophony.

**Missions**

IRD carries out research whose aim is to foster sustainable development of southern hemisphere countries, particularly in the inter-tropical zone. It works in close cooperation (mixed units, federative institutes) with French higher education and research institutions and southern hemisphere partners, into the following three fields:

- Earth and environment
- Living resources
- Societies and health

The Institute offers its skills to governments, administrations and public and private, overseas or international organizations. It contributes to the reinforcement of southern hemisphere scientific communities providing training and support. IRD currently carries out research in Africa, in the Indian Ocean, Latin America, Asia and in the Pacific. For this it has thirty five offices, including five in metropolitan France (Bondy, Brest, Montpellier, Orléans and Paris) and five in the overseas territories (Guyane, La Réunion, Martinique, New-Caledonia, French Polynesia).

**Fields of Activity**

Main areas of research:

**in the field of earth and the environment:**

- the development of the Earth’s crust in tropical regions, with particular attention to natural risks and their direct consequences on the populations
- climates, their secular development and variability, their impact on the economy and the environment
- water resources, soils and their sustainable management

**in the field of living resources:**

- bio-diversity on macro and microscopic scales
- genetic resources and their preservation
- land and maritime ecosystems and their non-destructive use

**in the field of development, societies and health**

- massive urbanization and economic, social and health consequences
- demographic change particularly in terms of migratory phenomena on a worldwide level
- major infectious and parasitic epidemics.

**Key Figures**

- a budget of 158 million euros (2001)
- 2,300 employees: 1,530 tenures, including 780 researchers, 750 engineers, technicians and administrative
staff and 770 people with different statutes, including local employees

- sites in 25 foreign countries in the intertropical zone, 5 in metropolitan France and 5 in the overseas territories
- almost 40% of tenured employees in place outside metropolitan France, above all in Africa, in the overseas territories and in Latin America
- 90 research and service units (on January 1st 2001)