



Scientific *Policy*



Institut de recherche Robert-Sauvé en santé et en sécurité du travail

Legal Deposit

Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec

2017

ISBN : 978-2-89631-929-9 (print format)

ISBN : 978-2-89631-930-5 (PDF)

ISSN : 0820-8409

February 2017

Production

IRSSST, Communications and Knowledge Transfer Division

© Institut de recherche Robert-Sauvé en santé et en sécurité du travail

February 2017

Table of Contents

1	Mission	2
2	Vision	3
3	Guiding Principles	4
4	Addressing Research Needs	5
	4.1 Needs Identified by Stakeholders	
	4.2 Needs Identified by Researchers	
	4.3 Needs Identified through Database Analysis and File Examination	
	4.4 Needs Identified through Scientific Watch Activities	
5	Supporting Research Activities	6
	5.1 Regular Grant Programs	
	5.2 Special Competitions	
	5.3 Contractual Agreements and Sponsored Activities	
	5.4 Partnerships	
	5.5 Research Units	
	5.6 Graduate Studies Scholarship Program	
6	Applying Research Evaluation Criteria	8
	6.1 Relevance	
	6.2 Priority	
	6.3 Scientific Merit	
7	Sharing Responsibilities	9
	7.1 Board of Directors	
	7.2 Administrative Committee	
	7.3 Executive Office	
	7.4 Scientific Advisory Board	

1

Mission

In the spirit of the *Act respecting occupational health and safety*, whose goal is to identify and “eliminate at the source... dangers to the health, safety and physical well-being of workers,” the IRSST’s mission is:

- To contribute, through research, to the prevention of industrial accidents and occupational diseases, and to the rehabilitation of affected workers;
- To disseminate knowledge and serve as a scientific reference centre and expert;
- To provide the laboratory services and expertise required to support the public occupational health and safety prevention network.¹

To fulfil this mission, the Institute:

- Carries out and funds research in its priority fields;
- Supports the development of research and new knowledge in occupational health and safety, in collaboration with the scientific community;

- Disseminates and promotes knowledge generated through research, in both the workplace and scientific communities;
- Plays a leadership and coordination role, anticipates emerging needs and serves as a driving force for occupational health and safety research;
- Contributes to researcher training in occupational health and safety;
- Provides laboratory services to the CNESST and its network;
- Contributes to the development of standards and regulations governing occupational health and safety;
- Responds to ad hoc requests for specific expertise originating from various occupational health and safety stakeholders.

1. Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CNESST), ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux (MSSS) and its network, and joint sector-based associations (ASPs).

2

Vision

Through its leadership in occupational health and safety research, the IRSST seeks:

- To consolidate its role as a reference centre vital to the operations and strategies of the CNESST and its network;
- To be used by all its partners in a spirit of joint collaboration;
- To win recognition at the national and international levels;
- To derive maximum benefit from a well-established network of research and development collaborators.

3

Guiding Principles

All the IRSST's scientific activities are guided by the following principles:

- They must meet rigorous scientific and ethical standards;
- They must be original. As such, the Institute avoids duplicating research conducted elsewhere, whenever the results of that research can be transferred or adapted to the Québec context;
- The Institute promotes interdisciplinarity as a means of more effectively tackling the often complex and multifactorial issues related to occupational health and safety;
- It encourages complementarity between its own scientific resources and those of universities and other research centres;
- Its activities must be closely aligned with the current needs of the CNESST, its partners and the Québec workplace community, while also anticipating future needs;
- The IRSST favours applied research leading to concrete improvements in occupational health and safety, without excluding more basic research whose results could eventually have an impact on the workplace;
- Projects carried out in workplaces are conducted using a collaborative approach, with the agreement and participation of the employers and workers in the companies involved;
- The Institute promotes the active participation of intermediaries² throughout the process of developing and conducting research activities and utilizing the results, in order to maximize the usefulness and spin-offs of these results for the Québec workplace community.

2. An intermediary is an occupational health and safety stakeholder (the CNESST, the ASPs, the MSSS and its network, employer associations, union associations, professional associations, consulting firms and educational institutions, among others) that transfers research results to the workplace community.

4

Addressing Research Needs

Given the highly diverse and complex challenges associated with occupational health and safety in Québec, the IRSST cannot conduct scientific activities with equal intensity in all research fields. To ensure that its efforts are channelled toward the most promising niches, the Institute continually identifies and updates priority needs.

4.1 Needs Identified by Stakeholders

The IRSST ascertains its partners' main concerns and expectations through formal and periodic exchange mechanisms, involving primarily the senior management of the CNESST, the ASPs, the MSSS and its network, and both employer and union associations. These needs play the key role in determining the Institute's priorities.

4.2 Needs Identified by Researchers

By conducting research, participating in various scientific events and serving on standardization committees, researchers affiliated with the IRSST stay at the forefront of knowledge. They are thus in an ideal position to point out persistent problems that require ongoing research, as well as emerging problems that may require close attention.

4.3 Needs Identified through Database Analysis and File Examination

In-depth statistical analyses using the databases of the CNESST and certain other Québec, federal, and international organizations allow the Institute to detect high-risk populations or industrial activity sectors. In addition, the examination of accident files involving death or serious injury helps bring specific problems to light.

4.4 Needs Identified through Scientific Watch Activities

Structured scientific watch activities help situate IRSST research in relation to research carried out elsewhere in the world. They also serve to identify emerging problems likely to affect Québec workplaces in the medium and long term.

5

Supporting Research Activities

In pursuing its research development strategy, the IRSST relies on both its own scientific resources and those available in universities and public or private research centres.

As such, it uses a variety of means to mobilize a large number of researchers in its priority fields. Sometimes these means take the form of general grant or scholarship programs encompassing all of the Institute's priority fields. At other times, they take the form of more targeted initiatives aimed at developing specific fields.

5.1 Regular Grant Programs

The IRSST offers three regular grant programs:

- The aim of the Collaborative Research Grant Program is to support projects defined in collaboration with the Institute and that fit directly with its research priorities. This program is intended for IRSST researchers and researchers affiliated with Québec universities or research centres. Most of the research funded by the Institute falls under this program;
- The aim of the Collaborative Activity Grant Program is to support activities defined in collaboration with the Institute, and that usually lay the groundwork for or do follow-up on a research project (state-of-the-art reviews, feasibility studies, transfer activities, etc.). This program is intended for IRSST researchers and researchers affiliated with Québec universities or research centres;

- The Competitive Research Grant Program is intended exclusively for researchers affiliated with Québec universities or research centres who take the initiative of submitting occupational health and safety research proposals that the IRSST is likely to consider relevant, even if in some cases such projects go beyond the official bounds of the Institute's stated research priorities.

5.2 Special Competitions

The Institute holds special competitions when it seeks to develop new knowledge in specific fields where expertise is not readily available. These competitions attract new researchers to the field of occupational health and safety and lead to the creation of pools of researchers in targeted fields that are emerging as IRSST priorities.

5.3 Contractual Agreements and Sponsored Activities

If necessary, the IRSST may enter into contractual agreements, or sponsor research activities or working groups in order to meet specific ad hoc needs.

5.4 Partnerships

Research partnerships constitute a concrete means of increasing research capacity in occupational health and safety. The partnerships are formalized through agreements, whereby the Institute and other scientific organizations (e.g. funding agencies, research institutes or structured networks of researchers) join forces and make a common commitment to develop specific research sectors in occupational health and safety. Some of these agreements involve pooling resources and expertise. Others allow for financial commitments on the part of each partner in support of scientific activity.

5.5 Research Units

In specific cases and under certain conditions, the Institute supports initiatives aimed at the creation of university research chairs, centres of excellence or research networks whose interests include occupational health and safety. This involvement can take the form of a letter of support or a funding commitment from the Institute.

5.6 Graduate Studies Scholarship Program

The IRSST's Graduate Studies Scholarship Program is intended for master's-level, doctoral and postdoctoral students. Its objective is to expand the existing pool of scientists available to meet research needs. Complementing the support offered by other funding agencies, this program awards financial assistance to candidates who demonstrate a particular aptitude for graduate work.

The Graduate Studies Scholarship Program is not the only source of support for training future researchers in occupational health and safety. At the Institute, support is also provided through a variety of practices such as hosting trainees, integrating students into scientific activities and supervising their master's-level or doctoral research.

To respond to specific needs, the IRSST does not hesitate to adopt other strategies to increase research capacity in the field of occupational health and safety, as well as its impact on Québec workplaces.

6

Applying Research Evaluation Criteria

The IRSST applies three criteria when evaluating its research activities: relevance, priority and scientific merit. In addition, scientific activities requiring the participation of humans must comply with the provisions of the Institute's *Politique d'éthique de la recherche avec des êtres humains* (ethics policy for research involving humans).

6.1 Relevance

The relevance of scientific activities is determined on the basis of their compliance with the Institute's mission, vision and guiding principles.

6.2 Priority

The priority status of scientific activities is determined on the basis of their compliance with the Institute's stated research priorities (see Section 4) and the human, physical and financial resources available.

6.3 Scientific Merit

Scientific merit is evaluated by experts who have won recognition in their areas of expertise, on the basis of standards generally accepted in scientific circles. These experts may be recruited in Québec or elsewhere.

This endorsement provides the basis for the IRSST's credibility and leadership by giving greater weight to all the activities it undertakes with the CNESST and its network, as well as with its partners in the workplace community.

7

Sharing Responsibilities

In accordance with the provisions set out in the *Règlement général de l'Institut de recherche Robert-Sauvé en santé et en sécurité du travail*, the responsibilities for developing, adopting, amending and applying the Scientific Policy are divided as follows:

7.1 Board of Directors

The Board of Directors holds the decision-making authority over the adoption of the IRSST's Scientific Policy and any potential amendments to this policy.

7.2 Administrative Committee

The Administrative Committee examines the Institute's Scientific Policy and any potential amendments to the policy prior to their presentation to the Board of Directors.

7.3 Executive Office

The Executive Office is responsible for developing and applying the Institute's Scientific Policy, especially with respect to developing and coordinating research, delivering laboratory and scientific expertise services to the public occupational health and safety prevention network, and disseminating and transferring research results.

7.4 Scientific Advisory Board

The Scientific Advisory Board serves as an advisory body for the Executive Office, which must obtain the Advisory Board's opinion when developing and implementing the Scientific Policy, especially with regard to the following:

- General research orientations, and the defining of research priorities and practices regarding dissemination and transfer of research results;
- Projects submitted within the framework of the various IRSST programs and the orientations pertaining to these programs;
- Contractual agreements and sponsored activities designed to meet specific research and development needs;
- Scholarship applications submitted within the framework of the Institute's Graduate Studies Scholarship Program and the orientations pertaining to this program.

With respect to research, the Scientific Advisory Board is asked to express opinions on the relevance, priority and scientific merit of projects submitted to the Institute for funding. Its opinions on the scientific merit are generally based on the analyses and recommendations of experts recruited from scientific circles in Québec or elsewhere.

IRSST

505, De Maisonneuve Blvd. West

Montréal (Québec) H3A 3C2

Phone: 514 288-1551

www.irsst.qc.ca