HR ACTION PLAN

Implementation of HR strategic framework document into 10 chapters

INRA
SCIENCE & IMPACT

INRA Excellence in Research
Human Resources Department Action Plan 2013–2017:

2014 Final Report

After consulting with a number of group managers and human resources personnel, INRA created a strategic framework document for the Human Resources (HR) Department in 2013. Three main strategic areas of action were identified:

Area 1: Establish an HR policy based on the organisation’s scientific priorities.
Area 2: Adopt an approach that seeks to continuously improve HR processes.
Area 3: Manage employee motivation and working conditions.

These areas are outlined in an action plan that is divided into ten chapters. The priorities and objectives, as well how they relate to the principles of the European Charter for Researchers, are described in this document with updates regarding progress made in 2014.

These chapters discuss some sixty actions developed following efforts by working groups and in meetings with various actors at all levels within INRA. Each chapter has been coordinated by a two-person team and has a corresponding technical document. Managers and contributors have been assigned to each action, monitored using a specific document, while a steering committee will meet twice a year to track progress. Results, some of which are obtained from tracking indicators used since 2010 as part of the European Charter for Researchers programme, will be published on a yearly basis. These indicators are not discussed in this document.

Chapter 1: Human resources policy on contractual staff

The HR policy on contractual staff maintains priorities in line with many of the principles in the European Charter for Researchers. The main priorities are:

- **Principle No. 17 on stability and permanence of employment**: compliance with the principles and conditions set out in the EU directive on temporary workers.
- **Principle No. 18 on funding and salaries**: researchers should enjoy salaries with equitable social security provisions which are commensurate with their level of qualifications and/or responsibilities.
- **Principle No. 20 on career development**, including for temporary workers, especially with regards to support for personal and professional development.
- **Principle No. 32 on recruitment**: entry and admission standards must be open, efficient, transparent and appropriate for the type of position.

INRA’s HR policy on contractual staff concerns all temporary workers employed by INRA regardless of their employment status.

It establishes a framework of mutual commitment between the Institute as employer and each contractual employee. This framework provides context for every contractual staff member’s position at INRA and outlines the related processes by clarifying the role of all those involved for greater efficiency.

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This approach considers the job prospects of anyone working for INRA and takes into account their future positions within the Institute as well as with other employers.

The field of research is becoming increasingly complex due to the wide range of available methods used in conducting research, and this chapter fits into that trend. External funding has a much greater importance today and covers a period of time that exceeds that of temporary work regulations. The Institute must therefore balance two priorities when planning staff policies: first, external constraints resulting from INRA’s multiple partnerships, and second, the Institute’s traditional management strategies. This dual context leads to four major requirements:

- Ensure consistent treatment within each staff category independent of the activity.
- Apply the Institute’s management framework.
- Adopt management policies that adequately address the demands of the activity situation and life cycle. This requires planning and analysis to determine short-medium- and long-term needs.
- Give purpose to those working at INRA.

Given these aims, we can further these goals by doing the following:

- Ensure adequate means are available (financial and HR) and that the Institute’s needs to fulfil its objectives are communicated, both key aspects of any negotiation process.
- Identify rare, strategic or emerging skills held by temporary staff; make these employees part of our Strategic Workforce Planning (SWP) over the short-, medium- and long-term, while taking account of the shifting nature of certain jobs.
- Ensure that the recruitment management process is known, fair, effective and adequate.
- Create a strong medium-term policy of inclusion for contractual staff, offer guidance and provide an assessment of skills acquired during their time at INRA.
- Establish individualised career paths according to the need fulfilled by contractual employees at INRA and develop their future employability according their skills profile, both for the benefit of INRA (SWP/creation of talent pools for long-term needs) and for staff, and give purpose to their assignments.

Review of actions planned for 2014:

- Publish a charter on contractual posts: completed in 2014
- Draw up a departmental memorandum on contractual staff management: completed in 2014
- Provide HR staff with training on contract workers: planned for 2015
- Revise contract type references, i.e., nomenclature: TBD
- Optimise recruitment conditions for contractual positions (Jobs portal): TBD

Charter on contractual posts

As part of its human resources policy on contractual employees, INRA has developed a framework to host, assist and follow-up with staff employed on a contractual basis. The principles outlined in the Charter must be translated into specific actions, with values and rules shared by all those at INRA. This Charter establishes a clear, mutual commitment highlighted by transparent and easily understood decision-making processes. It aims to provide assistance to employees from the start to the end of their contracts. Through this Charter, INRA reaffirms its desire to offer contractual employees straightforward, fair and responsible employment opportunities.
The principles in the Charter are detailed in a departmental memorandum pertaining to the employment framework for contractual employees.

**Departmental memorandum, management guide and standardised employment contract**

The departmental memorandum regarding how contractual employees are managed was completely revised in 2014. It will be published in the first quarter of 2015 after needs are determined in a memorandum regarding negotiation processes, which is currently being finalised. A management guide for HR staff will be published along with the departmental memorandum to provide explanations, details and other useful information to those responsible for implementing the changes to ensure a consistent application of the new measures.

The revisions to the employment contract that sets out the relationship between the Institute as employer and the hired staff member aim to standardize contract content. A revised management document will also be provided as part of a single employment file. The draft of the revised contract was validated in 2014. The final version is expected to be implemented in the first half of 2015, while a memorandum detailing how the process works and a contract management document will also be distributed.

**Optimisation of hosting conditions, follow-up and assistance (interview and passport)**

One of the first actions aims to offer contractual employees recruited by INRA and their managers a way to formally discuss the professional outlook for employees over the duration of their contracts and to bolster their progress. As a result, contractual employees employed for more than six months at INRA will take part in a professional interview. The current interview structure for permanent employees will be used, with several changes being made to accommodate contractual staff.

A second action will implement a systematic exit interview with all employees at the end of their contracts. The goal is to move beyond the basic legal requirements and create a time for professional discussion for all employees ending their contracts. The third action, resulting from measures set out in the French Decree dated 3 November 2014, aims to formalise the reasons justifying the renewal of a trial employment period or the termination of a contract following the trial period. This will provide an opportunity to discuss with employees the reasons that led to the renewal/termination and obtain feedback that may enable them to make adjustments or improve their performance. These final two measures will be implemented along with a simple, one-page explanatory document designed to help reduce managers’ workloads.

The skills passport initiative is part of the integration and assistance approach for contractual employees at INRA. The goal is to assist employees in their professional development while at INRA, help them gain awareness of their skills and progress, facilitate learning and enrich their professional skills with their advisor and prepare their future.

The objective of this initiative is to provide a method and tool that gives contractual employees a way to monitor their actions throughout their entire time at INRA and assist them in strengthening their skills and future employability.

The principles and framework of this initiative have already been established. It will be offered to every employee who signs a contract of six months or longer and will require an advisor to be assigned. A training phase is essential and specific communication about the initiative will be created. Furthermore, a trial period has been planned before a general rollout. The practicalities of this initiative (duration, assistance, training, etc.) are currently being determined, as are initial units who are willing to participate.
Chapter 2: Management changes

The quality of an institute’s management is a major HR challenge. INRA’s management policies reflect the following principles from the European Charter for Researchers:

- **Principle No. 11** on supervision and managerial duties, particularly with regards to supervising and coordinating research.
- **Principle No. 12** on continuing professional development at all career stages.
- **Principles No. 15 and 16** on the research environment and working conditions with regards to employer responsibility.
- **Principle No. 26** on supervision, especially the clear identification of each person’s role and responsibilities.

Given the revisions to the management charter, the HR department is focusing on priority processes to ensure a shared framework that applies to all staff. The initial objectives will deal with transitioning to electronic records management and modifying the management interview process. Guidelines on senior management will be clarified, strengthened and completed. Training for unit directors, which must comply with national legislation, is regularly adapted. A national training programme for line managers was implemented based on feedback from training courses held previously by centres over the past few years. The intention is to gradually roll out this national offer centre by centre.

- To assist transition within working groups, “internal consultants” who have extensive managerial experience will be available to project leaders (unit directors, division heads, centre presidents). The role of these consultants will be to help improve transition processes within teams. Good practices in the HR networks, especially with regards to professional psychology services offered by the career guidance department, will be exploited.

These actions are important and aim to manage employee motivation, improving working conditions and preventing psychosocial risks. The proposed shift in management style is based on changes occurring over several years as well as experience gained by senior staff at INRA. This chapter aims for continuous improvement by helping managers better understand what to watch out for, the scope and limits of their actions, and the resources at their disposal to best fulfil their complex responsibilities.

**Review of actions planned for 2014:**

- **Train and assist unit directors:** completed in 2014
- **Train and assist line managers, developed in 2014:** to be implemented from 2015
- **Revise the management interview process:** planned for 2015
- **EPMRA initiative:** revised in 2014, sixth course held in 2015

**Activity interview: electronic records**

- A job position framework was created at the end of 2013 so that the DRH and Evaluation Delegation were both aware of the same needs and could work towards the same goals. An initial IS framework document was produced along with a general document on electronic record keeping, while work was carried out with a service provider to create a prototype. Expectations were better outlined and a revised IS management structure is currently being finalised.
Assisting senior management (EPMRA)

- Managing senior management involves analysing, tracking and planning for their future career prospects. The aim is to create attractive career paths and implement an institute-wide strategy and policy. Senior management oversee a considerable number of employees and include department heads, centre presidents and national support directors as well as the directors of large units, divisional heads and national deputy directors.
- Consequently, INRA is committed to making changes to its existing approach and has implemented a specific training programme: EPMRA (INRA’s own practical management school for agricultural research). A steering committee was formed to draw up specifications to address the desired changes. The upcoming tender was prepared based on prior meetings. Moreover, access to this programme was extended to other organisations (CIRAD, IRSTEA, Ecole d’agronomie, AfricaRice).

Training and assisting unit directors

- The aim is to provide unit directors with suitable resources that can help them manage their units while taking into consideration diverse situations and changes over time. In terms of training, there is a dedicated programme that will be adjusted based on needs, especially with regards to psychosocial risk prevention and the management interview. Furthermore, the feasibility and implementation conditions for individual assistance will be studied.
- This project was validated by senior management, like that for the proposed training for in-house consultants. Two consultants have already been trained and divisional heads have been informed about the training. Additionally, training for unit directors has already been updated to reflect certain changes, namely a session dealing specifically with psychosocial risks.

Training and assisting line managers

- The aim is to strengthen managerial skills for line managers and offer a common foundation for all managers.
- A measure was drafted and a service provider has been chosen. A trial period is currently underway at six research centres, with two training sessions of two days given by two trainers. The programme was widely communicated to the centre presidents; a slideshow presentation of the project was designed for centre directors; and a brochure and poster for line managers have been created.

ETMI Technical School for Units and Experimental Centre Management

- In 2014, a training programme was specially developed for unit and experimental centre managers to reinforce their line management skills; clarify the roles between unit managers and staff; and facilitate a team management approach. The programme was finalised and an initial session was held with 14 team managers participating from three scientific divisions. The programme features seven thematic modules discussed over 16 days throughout the year. An informational brochure was distributed to the divisions and the HR network in addition to an article published in the National Commission for Experimental Units (CNUE) newsletter.

Chapter 3: Implementation of the Strategic Workforce Planning policy

The Strategic Workforce Planning (SWP) framework policy is centred on the Institute’s scientific priorities and helps ensure compliance with two important principles of the European Charter for Researchers:
• Principle No. 17 on stability and permanence of employment, by ensuring that the Institute’s short- and long-term employment needs are clearly communicated.
• Principle 21 on the value of mobility in all its forms, by improving visibility of possible career paths.

The SWP policy aims to plan ahead for INRA’s future staffing and skills requirements. As it applies to INRA and specifically to research, it is chiefly based on the Institute’s scientific priorities. These are supported by the divisions through project proposals and led by the Deputy Director General in Charge of Scientific Affairs and the Management Board Unit. The Human Resources Directorate (DRH) also supports this policy, namely by working with the scientific supervisors to identify clear skill sets and create relevant grade levels.

DRH is working with the divisions to establish the most suitable methods, whether on an individual or collective basis, to recruit corresponding talent. These methods range from increasing outreach to professional communities and working groups to planning career paths backed by training and assistance or external recruitment when the Institute’s needs cannot be met by the existing talent pool.

The DRH is also responsible for offering and applying HR processes such as training, internal competitive exams and mobility that make it possible to:

• Create a working environment that promotes a clear vision of the priorities of all divisions over the long term, and which respects the decision-making processes between senior staff and Central Management.
• Make job summaries known to the entire organisation so that employees can make their own career choices and position themselves to achieve their professional goals.
• Allow HR staff to target their career guidance activities, whether collective or individual, to future needs and offer continuous skills renewal, one of INRA’s responsibilities as an employer.

Review of actions planned for 2014:

• Develop a skills/talent pool/solutions matrix for the targeted scientific priorities: completed in 2014
• Host a seminar on the skills required for the scientific priorities: completed in 2014
• Establish the HR department’s action plan following the seminar: completed in 2014

The analysis of staff needs and the skills of researchers, engineers and technicians at INRA was completed in 2013. This institute-wide analysis was communicated and presented to the unit directors in autumn 2014. A more operational phase was begun with the divisional heads in line with the scientific priorities that were considered strategic and relevant to all divisions: develop integrated, systemic approaches based on global ecology; gain relevance in the field of mass biology; develop modelling approaches; and develop an IT and data engineering expertise.

Divisional proposals helped identify various needs that can be characterised and grouped together into more than a dozen skills-set goals. The divisions also highlighted different solutions to developing these skills internally through collective or individual initiatives for more than half of the identified skills. These skills proposals and their possible solutions were also characterised in terms of units, disciplines and type of employment.

This operational phase will continue with an in-depth analysis of the proposals and solutions based on each of the skills objectives, taking into consideration staffing needs and demography. As at each stage, the results will be shared with the divisional heads and communicated to senior management.

Chapter 4: Roll-out of the process approach

The process approach aims to incorporate the principles of the European Charter for Researchers by providing a clear and dynamic framework on how the management and human resources processes fit together. More specifically, it contributes to compliance with the following two principles:

- **Principle No. 15 on the research environment.**
- **Principle No. 16 on working conditions, by creating a clear and transparent HR management framework for all staff.**

Based on past experiences, this approach will make it possible to:

- Determine the functional governance of the HR department by highlighting the role it plays, its responsibilities, and the mutual expectations of staff in the units, centres, divisions and DRH.
- Implement monitoring and management indicators for the HR department as well as performance indicators for management controls and central management.
- Increase the reliability of certain procedures.
- Use a document management system to update and increase the reliability of INRA’s standards and regulations management with regards to HR and legal issues.

The chosen driver for change, which will concern all departments and positions, is a “process approach”, inspired by the ISO 9001 standard for quality management systems but without the formal requirements.

The process approach will facilitate the Institute’s shift away from procedure-based actions, mainly detailed in departmental memoranda, which tend to be very descriptive and static. We will move towards process-based actions, which are more dynamic and better involve all those affected by the changes.

The identified processes, organised and managed by operational purpose, will be regularly assessed to measure their progress, relevance and success.

They are being developed through a participatory approach with input from experts in each professional sector. Significant results are expected with regards to:

- Defining and sharing responsibilities, especially between units, centres, divisions and DRH
- Formalising relations with our major external partners
- Achieving a more participatory management structure within the HR department
- Improving the communication of reliable and updated information (newsletter, promoting the website dedicated to the Unit Management, electronic document management)
- Improving the HR department’s records management and decision accountability
- Improving the reliability of INRA procedures and protection vis-à-vis third parties (consideration of litigation risks)
• Improving reactivity with regards to questions from HR colleagues and regulatory changes
• Implementing internal controls and the necessary tools for management oversight.

These changes are also instrumental in determining the requirements for the HR information system, which will ultimately lead to later changes (i.e., additional needs and specifications for the future Human Resources Information System – HRIS, launched at the same time as the new HR Access version). The processes we will focus on are those that serve a as a structure for the entire institution; those that are strategic, either initially or when modified; or those that are dysfunctional or affected by organisational drift.

Following efforts made in 2013 as part of this approach, considerable changes suggested by those working in the units regarding human resources negotiations, mobility or contractual employee management were included in 2014 in the principles and operational standards pertaining to these topics.

Review of actions planned for 2014:

• Develop a competitive exam website for researchers: started in 2014
• Implement an integrated mobility process: principles established in 2014
• Consolidate and distribute negotiation and mobility flow charts: completed in 2014
• Establish HR department management indicators and select indicators for some macro processes: completed in 2014

Make current HR reference documents available via an electronic document management tool

In order to have a reliable, updated body of documents without duplicates, an organisational system will be gradually developed to have all reference documents easily accessible to all HR staff. The documents will be those used by the HR Department and which are not confidential. These documents have been categorized and the main sources defined. Specifications have been developed to create a framework for the necessary IS system and IT solutions are being explored. Additionally, staffing needs are currently being evaluated to ensure the proper functioning of this service.

Keep staff abreast of changes

The need for straightforward information that can be easily understood by non-specialists regarding changes is an ongoing need. Changes are a major part of employees’ professional lives; they are sometimes challenging and demotivating, both at an individual and collective level. As such, it is essential to provide a clear and concise vision of the overall system to improve understanding. The goal is to create one or more documents aimed specifically at all employees so that everyone can understand where they are in their careers. In 2014, a working group began drafting a document which will incorporate various communication materials such as brochures, technical documents and video clips. This work was undertaken following research into how other institutions, such as CNRS and INSERM, have approached the issue.

Identifying and categorising ongoing needs
Revising the negotiating processes is a key objective. One essential aspect is particularly important: defining and revising ongoing needs under a new process that includes communicating, qualifying and validating the needs. Negotiation can be improved if needs are more clearly expressed by type and prioritized by level within the unit, project, division and Institute. The scope of action has been established and the key actors identified. Action will focus on identifying each actor’s responsibilities based on job type, the process of qualifying ongoing needs and the process of revising such needs.

HR Department management indicators

A working method was developed to identify relevant indicators and revise the processes for the entire action plan.

Chapter 5: Diversity management at INRA

This priority reflects several principles of the European Charter for Researchers:

- **Principle No. 14** on non-discrimination, with regards to gender, age, ethnic, national or social origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, language, disability, political opinion, social or economic condition. Article L. 1132-1 of the French labour code has a wider scope than the European Charter for Researchers regarding non-discrimination. Diversity includes origin, gender, customs, sexual orientation and identity, age, family situation and pregnancy, genetic traits, an affiliation with – whether real or assumed – an ethnicity, nation, or race, political opinions, union activities, religious beliefs, physical appearance, surname, health, or disability.
- **Principle No. 16** on working conditions, including for people with disabilities, and actions that promote work-life balance, especially for individuals with children. In addition to the idea of family (i.e., women/children), employees should be able to achieve a balance between their personal and professional lives.
- **Principle No. 19** on gender balance at all staff levels including at supervisory and managerial levels, as well as for each employment category.
- **Principle No. 33** on participation in decision-making bodies, which must reflect a balance of men and women.

This chapter of the action plan deals with how diversity is handled within the work units. It has a wide scope, covering issues from the hosting and integrating of new staff in the units to characterising and representing diversity at INRA. The objective is for the entire organisation to move from a mind-set of non-discrimination to one of inclusion. Integration means creating an organisation that is open to all and encouraging all staff to abide by the rules that govern the Institute, whereas inclusion means considering and appreciating differences. From this point of view, diversity in all its aspects both reflects our society and is a source of intellectual wealth that positively affects our capacity to explore new scientific horizons. An inclusive vision of diversity is a factor of progress for INRA. This approach to diversity also improves the quality of social relations within the Institute. It impacts our image in a beneficial way both in France and around the world, helping improve the Institute’s attractiveness.

Our top objective is to develop a policy on the hosting conditions of new recruits by creating an integration process framework applicable to all staff. It will incorporate specific key points which can be applied to certain categories, such as staff on fixed-term contracts or foreign employees. This integration process may include meetings with HR personnel and
distributing informational documents or brochures on such general topics as rights, obligations, holidays, or career development, or more specific information such as liaisons in the centres. We plan to continue our diversity policy development by adding an objective regarding compliance with the Institute’s diversity charter and the related certification criteria. This policy will also include age-related measures. With the retirement age being extended, work activities of senior and junior staff can differ and intergenerational relationships have changed. Managing these age differences, assisting each generation with their various needs and expectations, helping them feel included and work together harmoniously are all major HR issues INRA must tackle. Additionally, assisting staff following major life changes is a significant concern and is part of our policy on taking a personalised approach to managing special circumstances. As professional and personal time increasingly overlap, due in part to the development of new technologies, and careers are increasingly longer, INRA faces a number of considerable challenges. These include managing various work activities and working hours at all stages of a person’s career, as well as making accommodations after a major life change.

Lastly, we will continue expanding our disability and gender balance policies put in place over the last several years. We need to strengthen our disability policy by adding additional measures to ensure the inclusion of disabled staff within our organisation. This will be carried out through our partnership with the Fund for the Integration of Disabled Persons in the Public Sector (Fonds d’insertion des personnes handicapées dans la fonction publique, FIPHFP). An outside assessment (as an audit) will be carried out in the short-term, in line with our commitments to the FIPHFP. With respect to gender balance policies, we will focus on the distribution of responsibilities and promotions affecting all staff and will reinforce our oversight measures.

Review of actions planned for 2014:

- Develop a hosting process for new hires: started in 2014
- Conduct a cross-disciplinary assessment of diversity: started in 2014
- Evaluate the assistance provided to staff with disabilities and working groups, suggest measures for change and implement them: started in 2014
- Implement an oversight measure to ensure gender equality: started in 2014
- Study work activity with regards to age: started in 2014
- Study diversity within working groups: planned for 2015
- Examine the consequences of major life events: planned for 2015

Develop a hosting programme for new hires

A study of relevant initiatives within the units and centres was conducted in 2014.

Conduct a cross-disciplinary assessment of diversity

- An initial analysis of the Charter and certification criteria was carried out in addition to a review of initiatives implemented in other institutions. In addition to in-house contributors, external contributors, such as the Agence de mutualisation des universités et des établissements, Entreprises et Personnel and the Observatoire de la responsabilité sociétale des entreprises, also assisted in this assessment.
- In 2014, documentary sources were identified and two seminars attended on this subject. The main focus was twofold: (i) identifying INRA’s positioning with regards to the Diversity
Charter, and (ii) identifying INRA’s values to take diversity management further than the simple issue of fighting discrimination. Indicators were also established and an oversight programme was implemented.

**Evaluate the assistance provided to staff with disabilities and working groups**

INRA’s many actions in recent years illustrate INRA’s commitment to developing initiatives that benefit employees with disabilities by instituting a global policy of inclusion within working groups. That said, these actions continue to be a priority and central management wanted to conduct an audit of its disability policy.

By auditing the disability policy, INRA will be able to use a detailed analysis of data gathered from the various departments and interviews of different actors involved in the Institute’s policy to strengthen the policy by integrating all new measures and initiatives. By doing so, the HR Department can ensure continual progress and the inclusion of disabled employees within the working groups. Four areas in particular will be audited: recruitment, assistance, communication/awareness, and the partnership with the ESATs.

As part of this goal, a service provider was selected to carry out this audit in 2014. A presentation was held with HR staff and union representatives. The audit will take place during the first half of 2015.

**Implement an oversight measure to ensure gender equality**

Implementing an oversight measure to ensure gender equality with regards to career advancement is a priority to ensure certain practices evolve. The current situation at INRA needs to be examined before being able to develop tracking indicators and suggest changes. An initial assessment made it possible to identify existing data at INRA. Additional indicators have been identified to show the effects of gender on career advancement.

**Study work activity with regards to age**

The aim is to gauge and analyse the interest, constraints, difficulties and drivers for integrating employees of all ages in working groups. Multi-generational dynamics, the impact of age on work activities and accommodations that can be made to make the working environment better for employees of all ages will also be studied. An assessment will be made of INRA’s means that can be used to implement initiatives that promote the successful integration of young people and earn their loyalty in addition to those that use the professional skills and experience of senior employees in the best way, while also preventing discrimination. With these goals in mind, age-related issues at work have been examined and initial analyses carried out. A bibliographic review helped determine various existing approaches and several possible actions.

**Chapter 6: Managing employee work-life balance**

*Managing employee work-life balance takes into consideration two principles from the European Charter for Researchers:*

- **Principle No. 15 on the research environment:** employers must create a stimulating research environment and provide adequate resources.
- **Principle No. 16 on working conditions, which should allow employees to achieve a balance between their professional and personal lives.**
Before moving forward on this topic, which will become increasingly important in the near future, we must:

- Better understand how employees manage their time at INRA; this entails putting an integrated tool into place
- Issue a guide of recommendations on information technology use
- Review our practices, carry out a study on other organisations’ practices and collect their feedback to sidestep major problems that have already encountered
- Assess our possibilities according to the French government’s framework on the public sector and fully understand the potential challenges and opportunities.

**Review of actions planned for 2014:**

- Propose new work organisation methods: not started
- Increase time management reliability: not started
- Study how other organisations implement telecommuting: not started
- Analyse the existing charters and recommendations for using new technologies: not started

The relevance of this chapter became increasingly clear during several discussions in 2014 as well as from information gathered informally about the topic from various organisations. Implementing an integrated time management tool will not be possible in the near future. With regards to technology, an assessment of email frequency and hours was undertaken but the resulting data are difficult to interpret. Possible actions will be considered in 2015.

**Chapter 7: Physical, chemical, biological and psychosocial risk prevention**

*This chapter of the action plan is dedicated to ensuring the following principles of the European Charter for Researchers are applied:*

- Principle No. 7 on good practice in research, especially in terms of health and safety.
- Principle No. 15 on the research environment, particularly for health and safety.

INRA’s prevention policy aims to keep its employees healthy, reduce accidents and professional illness, and continuously improve safety and working conditions over the long-term.

Objectives are set at each hierarchy level to involve all staff, support initiatives and ensure continuous progress in prevention. The Institute’s committees on hygiene and safety monitor compliance with these objectives and propose improvements in line with the prevention programme framework.

The annual risk prevention programme incorporates this policy by making sure that HR personnel are involved in the following areas:

- Encouraging senior staff involvement to achieve a top-down prevention management strategy. Managers will be assisted to ensure that they are also involved in promoting the prevention policy. Prevention actions should be focused on staff – the target of the measures – by reinforcing training and communication materials.
- Bolstering the risk prevention structure and organisation, including in partner-hosted units, in coordination with the central prevention department. The committees on
hygiene, safety and working conditions should work with the centres to help them establish their risk prevention activities. Prevention officers should be assisted to strengthen cooperation with the centres and enhance their professionalism. Cooperation with the preventive health department will be strengthened to ensure health monitoring services for all staff and to integrate work health initiatives into the prevention programme framework, especially with regards to musculoskeletal disorders and the prevention of psychosocial risks and difficult working conditions.

- Improving awareness about injuries, feedback and traceability. Feedback procedures should be developed, and the information received should then be incorporated into the evaluation section of the risk prevention document. Managing human resources networks will contribute to better analysis of accidents and incidents. Staff and committee members will participate in proposals for improvements through occupational health and safety records.

- Developing risk assessment practices and ensuring they are properly carried out. Risk assessment remains a priority in the DRH’s occupational health and safety policy. HR staff, including risk prevention officers, will provide assistance to senior staff in taking responsibility for and carrying out risk prevention assessments as part of the prevention process, making sure that action plans include organisational, technical and staff-focused measures. The DRH will help implement a sustainable prevention policy for psychosocial risks with a view to improving working conditions. All risk prevention staff will help implement this policy and local committees will oversee their involvement. This policy will begin with an assessment of risk factors and an analysis of work organisation to develop action plans based on concrete situations. DRH will draw up a more general action plan based on feedback from centre presidents and the psychosocial risk committee. DRH staff will work to objectively characterise difficult situations and create a formal process in which every employee and responsibility level are valued.

**Review of actions planned for 2014:**

- Provide assistance in dealing with difficult situations: carried out in 2014 according to planned measures
- Implement a psychosocial risk assessment on a trial basis at the unit level: completed in 2014, continuing in 2015
- Assist the centres in rolling out INRA’s occupational health and safety management tool (OPPI): carried out in 2014 according to planned measures
- The 2014 action plan was implemented as planned. A review will be presented to the Committee on Hygiene, Safety and Working Conditions in March 2015.

**Assist the centres in rolling out INRA’s occupational health and safety management tool – OPPI**

The tool is currently being revised to integrate methods for assessing physical, chemical and biological risks into an online interface. It will be rolled out during the first semester of 2015.

**Implement a psychosocial risk assessment on a trial basis at the unit level**
As part of the Institute’s risk prevention policy, the aim of this action is to assess psychosocial risks to then identify necessary prevention measures according to risk factors in compliance with current regulations.

A trial period is underway in 154 pilot centres. A guide to explain the method was created and training sessions held for those involved, especially centre presidents. Assessing psychosocial risks is now possible, which enables unit-wide action plans to be developed. Following a national survey, the method was adjusted and a national action plan created, along with a dedicated guide that was widely distributed, particularly to centre presidents. This action plan meets the requirements of the 2013 French public service agreement on psychosocial risks. Additional training sessions will be held with those involved locally in risk prevention. Moreover, the action plan will take into consideration feedback from future risk assessments in order to continually improve it.

Provide assistance in dealing with difficult situations

Technical documents have been drafted and need to be finalised. This timeline was necessary given the complexity of situations that needed to be understood. The DRH hosted a seminar on difficult situations on 15 January 2015 to share good practices and discuss proposed procedures for handling difficult situations.

Chapter 8: Legal risk prevention for staff, groups and the Institute

Preventing legal risk is a cross-organisational concern that reflects the following principles of the European Charter for Researchers:

- Principle No. 5 on contractual and legal obligations, especially regarding regulations governing training and working conditions
- Principle No. 18 on funding and salaries: researchers should enjoy salaries with equitable social security provisions which are commensurate with their level of qualifications and/or responsibilities and legal status.
- Principle No. 24 on intellectual property rights, in terms of legal protection, including copyrights
- Principle No. 29 on complaints and appeals, with regards to promoting fair and equitable treatment within the institution and improving the overall quality of the working environment.

Legal risk prevention falls under employee motivation and working conditions management. It is part of our goal to continuously improve HR processes and increase flexibility and reliability.

Legal risk prevention is centred on three areas:

- Staff and their employment status, rights and obligations as related to their work. This requires continual monitoring of new or modified government legislation in order to improve and update regulatory measures, create new tools to communicate information and initiatives to all staff, and develop and harmonise rules related to employment and working conditions.
- The whole organisation and how it operates (founding texts, organisational chart, decision-making bodies). First, efforts need to be made to improve how responsibilities are delegated, including signatory rights, the right to organise, procedures on staff consultations (electronic voting, communication tools, data reliability) as well as to modernise decision-making bodies and their scope.
As a research institution, INRA has its own a legal personality and as such must manage potential litigation. The Institute needs to develop a coordinated, cross-organisational legal strategy, expand its legal expertise regarding crisis management, implement general legal oversight, and improve handling of litigious risk prevention to deal with a wide range of challenges. These include civil and criminal responsibility with regards to occupational health and safety or the Institute’s public image. The Institute needs to create a more secure system to handle private interests (ethics, public/private relations), protect scientific and technological heritage, and balance data access in order to simply relations between the administration and the public.

Review of actions planned for 2014:

- Secure the Institute’s management responsibilities by ensuring compliance with delegation of authority and signatory rights: completed in 2014
- Develop and coordinate a cross-disciplinary action with INRA’s legal department: started in 2014, including a seminar with INRA legal staff
  - Implementation of a consistent, well-communicated initiative regarding the rights and obligations of INRA staff in terms of private activities: guide created and training completed in 2014
  - Harmonising and ranking of INRA’s internal standards: review completed in 2014

Secure the Institute’s management responsibilities by ensuring compliance with delegation of authority and signatory rights

In 2014, a survey of regulatory actions requiring delegation of authority and signatory rights was taken to implement greater oversight and secure these actions. Furthermore, a database and secure automatic delegation system associated with specific resources (e.g., computers, accounting staff) was implemented to have certified measures in place at every responsibility level.

Develop and coordinate a cross-disciplinary action with INRA’s legal department

This action was implemented in late 2014 through a seminar for legal staff in INRA’s central offices. The aim was to discuss the role of legal staff at INRA and to review how the department currently functions within the Institute. This initial seminar was followed by meetings to build a common institute-wide framework for INRA’s legal department. This project will be presented to central management in 2015.

Implement a consistent, well-communicated initiative regarding the rights and obligations of INRA staff for private activities

The goal is to make public staff aware of their obligations with regards to professional activities outside of INRA. To do so, a guide was created and distributed to research centres and scientific divisions. Additionally, training sessions were held with individuals involved in partnerships or as courses aimed specifically at management.

Harmonising and ranking of INRA’s internal standards
The various regulation levels will be examined and tools developed based on a review of INRA’s internal standards to support the proposed measure. A review was carried out and results presented to central management in 2014 in order to shed light on how standards were ranked and the Institute’s various internal texts. Once validated by central management, the results will be discussed with staff representatives during meetings scheduled in the first quarter of 2015.

Chapter 9: Increasing international awareness and attractiveness

Because research is no longer confined within national borders, and researchers are able to move freely within the European Union, several principles of the European Charter for Researchers must be taken into consideration:

- **Principle No. 14 on non-discrimination, based on nationality and other criteria.**
- **Principle No. 17 on stability and permanence of employment: employers must commit to improving the stability of employment conditions.**
- **Principle No. 18 on funding and salaries: employers must ensure that researchers enjoy fair and attractive conditions of funding and/or salaries with adequate and equitable social security provisions.**
- **Principle No. 32 on recruitment procedures, which should be open, efficient and transparent.**
- **Principle No. 33 on selection committees, which should bring together diverse expertise and competences.**
- **Principle No. 35 on judging merit during the selection process, which must take into consideration candidates’ overall potential, their creativity and their level of independence.**
- **Principle No. 37 on the recognition of mobility experience (e.g. a stay in another country), which should be considered as a valuable contribution to the researcher’s professional development.**

The need for INRA to be more competitive internationally, the development of projects comprising a greater number of international teams, and the increasing willingness of young researchers to move to complete their thesis or post-doctoral studies all change and reinforce the international component of both the Institute and a career in research. International scientific concerns must be central to INRA’s priorities, both in terms of the research it carries out as well as the career paths of its researchers. Until now, international attractiveness was mainly focused on researchers. However, this viewpoint must be expanded to include all employees independently of their employment status.

For the HR department, the challenge is to enhance INRA’s international attractiveness by encouraging the international mobility – both to France and abroad – for researchers and other employee categories at all stages of their careers.

We have made considerable progress over the past few years in terms of international recruitment of permanent researchers. There has been an increase in foreign candidates registering for competitive recruitment exams, foreign researchers now participate on exam selection juries, international announcements are made when the registration period opens for competitive exams, and English descriptions of positions to be filled via competitive exams are posted on INRA’s website. Moreover, a new programme to recruit young researchers on contract (Agreenskills) was started in 2012, and thanks to which around thirty young researchers of many different nationalities were recruited.

However, there is progress to be made. For example, we still need to:
• Develop an integrated tool for online applicant registration for competitive entry exams.
• Identify, translate into English and publish online all documents relating to hosting conditions for non-French candidates applying for permanent or fixed-term positions.
• Reorganise online information so that the national website and INRA centre websites offer complementary information. We should also encourage partnerships with outside associations which provide hosting services to researchers looking to relocate (Euraxess France association, France Diplomatie, Campus France and the Kastler Foundation).
• Improve the exchange framework for researchers between INRA and a foreign institution.
• Initiate dialogue on the use of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) as a vector for communication for certain sectors as part of INRA’s existing e-learning programme.

In terms of hosting conditions and mobility assistance provided to incoming researchers, two specific measures have been implemented in addition to full access to the Institute’s social policy measures. These are Executive Relocations, a customised mobility support offer and the Rental Risk Guarantee (GRL) programme, where INRA covers the costs of the GRL contract.

However, there are considerable differences in hosting and integration conditions for new foreign colleagues joining our research centres. This is why we need to analyse the hosting practices and needs for new foreign employees in the centres and units. We can then create and implement a formal hosting procedure. This initiative will be part of the chapter on diversity and handled specifically in terms of hosting new recruits in the units. Numerous issues that are specific to fixed-term contracts are detailed in Chapter 1 (Human resources policy on contractual staff).

Review of actions planned for 2014:

• Translate all useful documents in English and publish them online: started in 2014
• Reorganise online information in a more helpful way for foreign candidates: started in 2014

Chapter 10: Internal HR communication

Expanding internal communication on the human resources management policy correlates with the spirit of responsibility, transparency and equitable treatment at INRA as advocated by the European Charter for Researchers, especially with regards to the following principles:

• Principle No. 14 on non-discrimination, which includes shared values.
• Principle No. 16 on working conditions, which must be clear, transparent and known by all.
• Principle No. 20 on career development, which must be based on an equitable and transparent human resources management strategy.

As part of the process approach that aims to modernise our HR initiatives, value the work of all staff and groups, and provide a clear and shared working environment, internal HR communication must make these different areas, as well as all resulting actions and values, consistent and clear.

Internal HR communication should bring all human resources working groups together in the broadest sense: HR professionals, managers, unit heads and other HR personnel. It must also convey messages and information that is relevant to all INRA employees.
The objectives are as follows:

- Increase INRA’s attractiveness by improving its image as an employer
- Give purpose to HR initiatives by sharing its vision and values with different audiences
- Create links between the different careers in the HR networks
- Facilitate the communication and recognition of the various HR initiatives
- Provide access to information that is clear and easily understood by all staff.

The first two objectives are essential in that they help all INRA employees achieve a sense of belonging and allow us to measure the organisation’s strengths in terms of working environment and conditions and shared values in interactions between colleagues.

The third and fourth objectives aim to give value to, share and optimise relations between the different areas of HR, thereby highlighting consistency with the framework document and expanding the scope of HR initiatives.

The final objective seeks to facilitate access and encourage the sharing of clear information, as well as ensure fair treatment, for all staff.

**Review of actions planned for 2014:**

- *Develop an internal communication network within the DRH: completed in 2014*
- *Inform staff about the framework document: completed in 2014*
- *Build an HR communication plan: started in 2014*
- *Inform staff about the action plan: completed in 2014*

**Inform staff about the process approach**

In line with initial commitments, a dedicated intranet site was created. It is now up to date and includes all of the information and indicators established with the macro-process coordinators. The process objectives were updated following the steering committee meeting in December 2014.

Short news updates aimed at unit managers are regularly published on the intranet site. In spring 2014, the HR intranet site also added a visual chart for all HR Department processes, which was published in a special issue of the “HR Focus” newsletter.

**Inform staff about the HR policy**

The aim is to get all staff involved in the HR policy and its related actions, as well as to provide them with the necessary means and resources to take ownership of the intention and strategy of the policy. This section of the action plan is different in that it is challenging to establish a set schedule as it depends on current events and approval of the policy directives from top management.

Several other actions were carried out in 2014. They are:

- Create a visual identity to make subjects covered easier to locate
- Create a communication kit
- Publish information (in-house newsletter, “INRA news in brief”)
- Creation of an HR Department section on the HR intranet site
- On the HR internet site: publish current news regarding the strategic framework document (in French and English)
- Communicate all major priorities or directives regarding the HR policy
- Assist structural changes within the DRH: revised organisational chart, editorial by the DRH
Build and implement an HR communication plan

The HR communication plan aims to establish and manage the internal HR communication strategy. The goal is to set a directive and priorities for action that can be broken down into four major objectives:

- Give purpose to HR action
- Create a link between the various responsibilities
- Provide access to information that can be understood by all
- Contribute to INRA’s attractiveness

Review of actions planned for 2014:

- Identification of HR points of contact: completed in 2014
- Identification of priority actions: completed in 2014
  - Give purpose to HR action (systematic communication about actions stemming from the strategic framework document)
  - Greater efforts on the part of the DRH to explain HR policy
  - Create a link between the various responsibilities (inter-network seminar, inter-network alias)
  - Create a two-person communication team within the DRH
  - Provide access to information that can be understood by all (creation of a newsletter, “HR Focus”)
  - Publish communication materials to distribute information locally
  - Publish a functional organisational chart for the DRH
  - Restructure and manage the HR intranet
  - Contribute to INRA’s attractiveness (promote HR actions via internal and external media channels).

Restructure and manage the HR intranet site

Among the tools available for communicating HR information and promoting the work done by HR staff, the HR intranet site plays a central role. Its management and revision fulfils a need to have access to updated information and an appealing format for new developments. The objectives are:

- To ensure the HR intranet site:
  - Is a major communication point for the HR policy
  - Showcases the activities carried out by HR staff
  - Is a tool that facilitates and simplifies access to HR information for all employees
  - Publish interesting content on a regular basis
  - Increase site traffic and the number of news subscribers

Following a review of the current situation, the first actions have focused on updating and breathing new life into the HR intranet site. These actions are:

- Get the site up and running and start making updates
- Regularly publish new information and editorials by the DRH
- Use two-person communication teams to make content interesting

These actions have helped increase site traffic (60% more visitors) while new subscriptions to HR news have risen each month.