



INRAE



Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan

2021 - 2024



Table of Contents

I – Diversity and Equality Policy: cross-cutting actions common to both action plans

- A. Adopting a participatory approach to policy-making [*AFNOR Specification Area 2*]
- B. Ensuring the diversity and equality in the workplace policy is applied in all centres [*AFNOR Specification Areas 2 and 6*]
- C. Launching a communication plan to raise awareness [*AFNOR Specification Area 4*]
- D. Training to cultivate a culture of diversity, inclusion and equality in the workplace [*AFNOR Specification Area 4*]
- E. Extending INRAE’s actions to partners [*AFNOR Specification Area 6*]



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II – Actions specific to the Diversity Action Plan

Focus Area 1 – Supporting all career paths at every stage [*Specification Area 5*]

- 1.1. Safeguarding our HR procedures: recruitment/promotion/mobility
- 1.2. Supporting and safeguarding incoming and outgoing international mobility
- 1.3. Raising awareness on the importance of social dialogue
- 1.4. Valuing career assessments and fostering knowledge transfer
- 1.5. Bolstering mid- and late-career phases and the end of mandates

Focus Area 2 – Ensuring a safe working environment for all [*Specification Area 5*]

- 2.1. Strengthening support for staff during a health crisis situation
- 2.2. Promoting an inclusive working environment for staff with disabilities
- 2.3. Advancing our prevention policy with regard to workplace health and safety

Focus Area 3 – Helping staff find greater professional fulfilment through a more flexible working environment and healthy work-life balance

- 3.1. Understanding staff perceptions to create objectives and actions
- 3.2. Reassessing working arrangements for greater flexibility
- 3.3. Advancing our social policy for all staff

Focus Area 4 – Preventing and eliminating discrimination, sexual and gender-based violence, psychological and sexual harassment as well as sexist behaviour [*Specification Area 3*]

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Foreword

This short document sets out the main thrusts of INRAE's "Diversity" action plan, developed by the Institute's governing bodies according to AFNOR specifications and in cooperation with INRAE's trade unions and in keeping with staff concerns.

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Preamble

A. Background and issues of the approach

INRAE undertook the AFNOR Diversity – Equality accreditation process as a natural next step following its actions to promote diversity, gender equality and anti-discrimination as well as those that were part of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R), for which INRAE was recognised in 2010 [<https://www6.inra.fr/label-hr-excellence>].

Even before undertaking the formal accreditation process, INRA was fully aware of the importance of strengthening its actions in this area. As early as 2013, INRA had decided to make diversity in its units one of the levers of its 2013–2016 HR action plan: “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.”¹

This approach promotes the Institute’s culture of shared values, acceptance and integration as well as drawing power and individual and group efficiency, all of which INRAE has long advocated. The Institute has made this approach a pillar of its research and support strategy and a factor of social cohesion to foster innovation and creativity.

The approach is one lever of its HR policy, which is outlined in the HR and Internal Communication Action Plan 2018–2021, and is a key feature of its strategy. This will also be the case in the forthcoming HR roadmap for the 2021–2024 period.

For INRAE, the objective is for the entire organisation to move from a mindset 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. INRAE thus affirms its inclusive vision of diversity as a factor of progress. This approach to diversity also improves social relations within the Institute and, through the positive effect on its external image, enhances its drawing power.

INRAE’s progress and commitment are also fully in line with the policy adopted in 2009 as part of the European HR Excellence award, which recognises policies promoting openness, transparency and equity, particularly in terms of recruitment, career development, social policy and the research environment.

After receiving the two “Diversity” and “Equality in the Workplace” accreditations in January 2020 for four “pilot” centres, INRAE (the new institute formed from the merger between INRA and IRSTEA) will pursue this approach and seek accreditation of all its 18 centres.

¹ HR Action Plan 2013–2016 – Implementation of the 10-chapter strategic framework document



B. Methodology

Even before working towards official recognition of its policies, INRAE had for many years been well aware of the progress to be made in terms of diversity and equality in the workplace. It worked tirelessly to develop actions designed to bring about changes based on initial observations in this area.

Along with the Label Alliance dual accreditation process, in 2019 INRAE rolled out two action plans, one focused on diversity and the second on equality in the workplace. Both action plans drew on an analysis of various sources of information:

- A desk review² of all the documents related to the measures, particularly HR, in force.
- Individual and group interviews³ with various management staff (centre presidents, division heads, unit directors, those in charge of the key AFNOR specification areas) and with INRAE's representative trade unions.
- Discussions led by the Institute's central management, particularly within the Human Resources Directorate and the Directors General.
- A study on diversity in work units carried out as part of the development of the 2013–2016 HR roadmap.
- Information collected for analysis during the workshops held as part of training sessions on eliminating discrimination and unconscious bias for line managers and HR staff.
- The outcomes of the Quality of Life at Work survey of all staff in 2019, with questions on three aspects, i.e. psychosocial risks; the quality of life at work; and change management, including a section that specifically covered eliminating discrimination. The response rate was about 44% of those interviewed.

This analysis was then discussed by several different bodies, i.e. the technical committee, the Diversity – Equality in the Workplace committee that brought together those involved in research support services, volunteer trade unions, pilot centre representatives and, for the independent counselling and reporting centre, the Central Health, Safety and Working Conditions Committee (CCHSCT).

Since then, several actions have been put into place, with particular attention paid to working closely with staff by creating a network of advisers in the 18 INRAE research centres. Consultations continued to be held, particularly within the staff representative bodies. For example, presentations were given of the three comparative status reports and the operating procedures of the counselling and reporting centre for discrimination and sexual and gender-based violence. Discussions also covered the results of the second Quality of Life at Work survey conducted in 2020.

INRAE wished to reaffirm and clarify its commitment to the accreditation process by presenting updated action plans.

² Review carried out by the consultant who supported INRA during the dual standard accreditation process: FACE – Fondation Agir contre l'Exclusion (Action against Exclusion Foundation).

³ Interviews also carried out by FACE

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The related budget, in addition to the resources already available for communication and training, was (excluding salaries) €105,000 in 2021.

These two action plans constitute our course of action for the 2020–2024 period.

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Cross-cutting actions common to both action plans

The two action plans, one on diversity and anti-discrimination and the second on gender equality in the workplace, include the common cross-cutting themes discussed below.

- **Adopting a participatory approach to policy-making**

A long-term commitment to a policy of inclusion and equality in the workplace can only be achieved through a participatory approach. Such an approach is crucial to getting all of the Institute's staff to embrace and support the policy, across all job categories, professional fields, scientific disciplines and geographical locations. To this end, a Diversity and Equality Committee, chaired by the head of gender equality and anti-discrimination, has been formed. The committee includes centre representatives (centre presidents, human resources officers, diversity and equality advisers, etc.), national support departments (Human Resources Directorate, Legal Affairs, the Evaluation Delegation and the Professional Conduct, Scientific Integrity, and Research Project Ethics Delegation) and volunteer trade unions. Its aim is to stimulate collective consideration of the guidelines for action. This committee is a forum for discussion and consultation, and its role is to monitor the implementation of the two action plans, suggest necessary adjustments and initiate new actions. It will meet twice a year for the duration of the action plan [2020–2023].

- **Ensuring the diversity and equality in the workplace policy is applied in all centres**

A network of advisers in the centres help ensure that the two action plans are implemented in close conjunction with staff. The creation of this network involved identifying advisers and determining their actions. An individual engagement letter co-signed by the centre president and the head of gender equality and anti-discrimination formalises their role and specifies their scope of action. As dynamic local liaisons for the national policy, the advisers in this network foster a greater sense of ownership among our diverse staff by advising and supporting the centre presidents and the communication and HR offices as well as participating in centre decision-making bodies where necessary. The advisers work in conjunction with all key teams to play a role in disseminating information to staff.

Network activities that aim to harmonise and facilitate the implementation of local diversity and equality in the workplace action plans have been put in place.



- [Raising awareness through an internal and external communication plan](#)

Raising awareness among staff about discrimination and promoting diversity and equality among external audiences are essential components of INRAE's policy. Accordingly, a communication plan was created to be rolled out in stages, internally and externally, with three main areas of focus:

- to give visibility to INRAE's commitment to preventing discrimination and supporting diversity and equality in the workplace;
- to help prevent discrimination;
- to promote and celebrate diversity and equality in the workplace.

The aims of these three areas of focus are to:

- establish points of reference on a regular basis and give meaning to our actions;
- break down stereotypes and share good practices;
- foster a culture of diversity and inclusion;
- make non-discrimination and equality in the workplace measures more visible;
- increase appreciation of people's diverse skills and backgrounds.

Various means are already being deployed to achieve these aims. A section of the INRAE intranet site was created specifically for issues of discrimination prevention, diversity promotion, and equality and diversity in the workplace, and news items are regularly published there.

INRAE's HR intranet site also has a dedicated section that goes into greater detail about all the actions implemented from various angles, such as recruitment, mobility, promotion, health, quality of life at work, the possibilities for support offered by the HR Directorate's Social Policy Department, social benefits, and a new psychological support unit (which was set up during the health crisis and will continue operating).

Some measures will be publicised more widely. For example, when the hotline for discrimination and sexual and gender-based violence was set up, a leaflet and a card were distributed to all staff reminding them of how to contact the hotline.

INRAE is also committed to fighting discrimination and stereotypes and promoting gender equality in the workplace outside the Institute. With this in mind, the Institute has created a dedicated section on its website entitled: "The INRAE Experience: Join a committed public sector employer". Press releases and articles on social media are also used to get the word out.

In the coming years, the initial communication plan will be adjusted, with the addition of a multi-annual schedule to include thematic events such as the European Disability Employment Week and International Women's Day. These events will be designed to tie in with national and local activities. Various options will be considered in the next few months.

The network of diversity advisers are undergoing training and awareness-raising to strengthen these national and local communication efforts. Tools will also be developed to raise awareness of the challenges of combating discrimination and promoting diversity. For example, in 2020 and 2021, the diversity advisers took part in a theatre-based forum and were trained on awareness-raising tools such as a digital serious game and card games.

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- **Training to cultivate a culture of diversity, inclusion and equality in the workplace**

Although central management is leading the way on INRAE's commitment to diversity and equality in the workplace, these values must be embraced by everyone within the Institute. Training is a key tool for building a culture of diversity and inclusion over time.

To this end, various staff were selected for priority training, including managers, HR personnel, the chairs and members of juries, diversity and equality in the workplace network advisers, and staff representatives. In the long term, all INRAE staff will undergo training.

The initial training plan included sessions for those selected for priority training. A session was included in the skills development programme for unit directors and made available to all INRAE managers. Consideration is being given to continuing it.

An initial awareness-raising campaign was launched during training courses for members of competitive entry juries. It may be further developed in the coming years. These themes may be integrated into the training programme for line managers as part of the programme's redesign.

These initial training plan actions will be expanded to make them relevant to a wider audience in all INRAE centres.

Additionally, awareness-raising efforts for new employees have been in place since 2018 during induction days organised at the national and local levels.

- **Extending INRAE's actions to partners**

Representation on the board of directors for the French Association of Diversity Managers (*Association Française des Managers de la Diversité – AFMD*)

Sharing best practices and experiences helps stimulate discussions and lets decision-makers gain perspective on existing measures to adapt them as necessary to encourage continuous improvement and amplify the momentum behind diversity and equality in the workplace.

This was the driving force behind INRAE's decision to develop a partnership to make its approach more efficient.

This is why INRAE sought to become a member of the board of directors of the AFMD, a forum for dialogue, sharing best practices and collaborating on actions. Joining this network of private and public organisations will strengthen INRAE's ability to innovate during its three-year term.

INRAE is also co-chairing a working group that brings together various organisations and companies to tackle the theme of "Diversity and Employer Brand" by exploring the following issues: (i) How can diversity help achieve recruitment objectives in terms of targeted skills while also strengthening the Institute's brand image? (ii) What defines an inclusive brand image? Can diversity be an employer brand asset? (iii) What tools should be used to ensure that diversity contributes to this employer brand and becomes one of its pillars?

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The working group's efforts will continue throughout the second half of 2021 to produce a deliverable sometime in 2022 that will combine reflections and analyses on the concept of an "inclusive employer brand". Practical aspects based on examples of actions put into place in the working group's various member organisations will be included, such as the obstacles to and levers for their implementation. The final format will be user-friendly fact sheets.

INRAE participates in two research organisation networks that support diversity

INRAE is an active member of the gender equality network that connects several public scientific and technological establishments (EPSTs): the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS), the French National Institute for Research in Digital Science and Technology (Inria), the French National Institute of Health and Medical Research (Inserm), and the French National Research Institute for Sustainable Development (IRD). This network, which meets quarterly, addresses issues specific to EPSTs. It has also developed e-learning modules on the risks of unconscious bias.

In addition to taking part in this network, INRAE will also be involved in a network on diversity and quality of life at work that brings together all research organisations, EPSTs, public institutions of an industrial and commercial nature (EPICs) and public institutions of an administrative nature (EPAs). Bilateral exchanges of best practices will also be promoted in the coming years.

Other potential partnerships at the local level will also be explored, in particular with partner universities and Grandes Écoles.

Additionally, partnerships will be sought with organisations working to promote vocational integration to enhance INRAE's efforts in this area.

Actions aimed at service providers

INRAE staff in charge of negotiating public contracts in the centres were also made aware by the Finance and Procurement Directorate of the need to take into account inclusion and anti-discrimination criteria. Consideration is being given to including criteria related to anti-discrimination and sustainable development in contracts signed with INRAE.

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Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan⁴

Focus Area 1 – Supporting all career paths at every stage

- *Protected characteristics: family status – place of residence – age – origin – health status – trade union membership*
 - **Safeguarding our HR procedures: recruitment/promotion/mobility**

The aim is to promote and ensure equal treatment of all staff, whether on permanent or fixed-term contracts or candidates in competitive hiring processes, and whatever their professional field, scientific discipline, geographical location or origin. Training managers on personnel administration rules as part of a process to simplify and harmonise practices will help INRAE meet this challenge.

Recruiting without discrimination

Contractual staff recruitment was identified as a priority area within the Institute’s HR policy in 2018 following a review carried out that same year as part of the Label Alliance dual accreditation process. The review highlighted the lack of formalised recruitment procedures for contractual staff and related risks, particularly in terms of discrimination and fair treatment.

This priority also aligned with a desire to pursue the actions undertaken within the scope of the 2013–2017 HR roadmap for the contractual staff policy, following a new internal charter on contractual staff and the development of a skills passport to support their career path at INRAE and their subsequent employability.

To address the areas in need of improvement and the risks underlying this lack of formalised procedures, the Institute wanted to revisit the recruitment process and support those involved in each stage of the hiring process, from the job vacancy request to the final choice of candidate. To this end, a kit on recruiting contractual staff was produced and set out the principles linked to anti-discrimination, highlighted the risks involved, explained essential concepts such as “skills” and “know-how”, and gave recommendations to promote objectivity. Grid analysis templates and videos drawing attention to unconscious bias were also created. These tools aim to ensure job candidates are treated fairly and help hiring managers make objective decisions based solely on the requirements of the position to be filled. The kit features an attractive design and is available to all from the HR intranet site.

⁴ The Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan refers to 25 characteristics protected by French law: mores, sexual orientation, sex, pregnancy, gender identity, belonging, whether real or supposed to an ethnic origin, nation, race or specific religion, national origin, physical appearance, last name, family situation, union activities, political and philosophical opinions, age, health, disability, genetic characteristics, loss of autonomy, place of residence, capacity to express oneself in a language other than French, economic vulnerability, and bank domiciliation.

This kit was released in conjunction with new functionalities on the INRAE Jobs website, where hiring managers can now publish their own fixed-term job offers using the website's back office system. Training sessions were organised for all INRAE centres and will be continued as necessary. Furthermore, additional videos will be produced to address a larger number of protected characteristics with regard to discrimination. The goal over the new few years will be to enhance communication on this new tool and raise awareness of the risks associated with unconscious bias.

In the future, further steps will follow with similar actions to increase the fairness of the permanent staff recruitment process (candidates are already hired exclusively through a competitive hiring process) and the approval of mobility assignments.

Making promotion decisions more objective for more equitable treatment

As part of changes in 2021 to INRAE's promotion system for engineers and technicians, a greater emphasis was put on making the evaluation of employees' professional value more objective and transparent.

Decisions on promotions, advancement and career development follow the management guidelines laid out in this new framework. The guidelines use evaluation grids to specify the methods by which the professional value and work experience of staff is assessed. In particular, their diverse career paths and positions held, the training they have undergone and the particular conditions in which they have worked are considered to determine their professional commitment, their ability to adapt and, where appropriate, their aptitude for team management. These methods also make it possible to take into account the professional activities staff members are involved in, including those that are part of a trade union membership and responsibilities outside their home institution. Training sessions for managers who use these grids were organised for all INRAE centres.

All staff must be aware of the evaluation grid that applies to them. If they are not given an opportunity for promotion or advancement, the reasons must be explained.

Additional contextual information can be provided to draw attention to the particular situation of an employee. Similarly, all employees can ask their local committee for feedback about the assessment of their situation.

Local committees perform an initial ranking of dossiers. The dossiers selected by these committees are then ranked at national level and submitted to central management for review following approval by the Human Resources Directorate. These approvals must take into account:

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- equal representation among male and female candidates in terms of those eligible for promotion and those promoted during each round;
- a general balance, if necessary by averaging figures over several years, of the ratio of those eligible for promotion to those promoted at the level of the professional fields, centres or departments to which they are attached, taking into account overall career development.

Each year, a report will be made to the governing bodies, giving the trade unions an opportunity to suggest possible readjustments of the terms and conditions of this renewed system. At the end of the first year of implementation, this evaluation, set to be presented to the technical committee and CCHSCT in October 2021, will be particularly important in considering possible changes.

Enriching careers with mobility schemes that balance staff desires with the Institute's skills needs based on explicit, transparent criteria

In accordance with the values INRAE espouses through its scientific strategy and related priorities, the Institute's mobility policy has the following general aims:

- to adapt skills to changes in professions and fields;
- to increase appreciation of people's diverse skills and backgrounds;
- to ensure greater professional mobility and career development within or outside INRAE;
- to promote gender equality in the workplace.

These general principles have been reaffirmed following work carried out in 2020 in consultation with the trade unions, in accordance with guidelines laid out in legislative changes in France. The criteria identified collectively were clearly and widely communicated. Thus, opportunities to enrich employees' careers that align with their professional development prospects as well as their personal goals and family lives are key factors considered by the selection committees.

INRAE has various mobility schemes:

- an annual mobility campaign based on a wide range of skills needs;
- the "Jobs of the Future" mobility scheme, in connection with the Institute's human resource planning approach to stay involved in new activities requiring the acquisition of novel skills by receiving tailored support through specific training, mentoring, tutoring, immersion, etc.;
- ad hoc mobility to meet skills needs.

For each of the existing schemes, the same principles prevail in terms of openness and transparency. Offers are widely communicated and applications are considered on the basis of clear, shared criteria to ensure equitable treatment.

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The management guidelines that were revised in 2020 will be subject to an annual review, which will be presented to the governing bodies, so that possible changes can be considered. The Institute also plans to consider a system so that staff can express their desire for mobility, whether in geographical or functional terms, outside of existing mobility campaigns. The aim is for INRAE to have a database of these requests in order to better match the career aspirations of staff and the Institute's skills needs.

In addition, there are schemes implemented in response to individual emergencies or structural reorganisations that meet specific conditions.

- [Supporting and safeguarding incoming and outgoing international mobility](#)

Given the globalised nature of research today and INRAE's European and international strategy, one of the Institute's values is to be open to the international community by regularly welcoming foreign employees into its units and sending its staff on international assignments. These activities come with major management and support issues for the relevant HR offices and staff. Work is currently underway to improve hosting arrangements and awareness of intercultural differences based on two priorities: (i) to strengthen the support and onboarding of people taking part in a mobility scheme (incoming and outgoing) and (ii) to develop an international culture.

Accordingly, the main objectives are to:

- reduce risks associated with hosting and international mobility for the Institute and its staff;
- understand, measure and support hosting arrangements and international mobility in order to better assist, promote and manage international mobility;
- in the longer term, shore up internal skills in international concerns from a linguistic and cultural point of view.

Since 2020, when an office dedicated to international mobility and interculturality was created, the focus has been primarily on the first two objectives.

[Reducing risks associated with hosting and international mobility for the Institute and its staff](#)

Reducing the risks associated with hosting and international mobility has emerged as a key priority. International hosting is not without risks, both in legal terms (minimum income, health insurance coverage, occupational accident and civil and professional liability coverage, undeclared labour, etc.) and in terms of our employer brand image, particularly with regard to our commitments under the HR Excellence Award and the Label Alliance accreditation. To tackle this topic, we first had to clarify international hosting arrangements in our units by mapping the various types of arrangements and conducting a risk analysis. Several risk-reduction solutions have been implemented: hosting agreements and employment contract templates have been updated and are offered in a bilingual French/English version, an agreement has been signed with Campus France, and contracts have been signed with service providers for insurance coverage of incoming and outgoing international assignments. These risk-reduction solutions will be continued in the coming years.



Understanding, measuring and supporting international mobility and hosting

Reducing the risks associated with international mobility also requires processes and information systems that make it possible to measure, secure, track and analyse all activities relating to incoming and outgoing international mobility assignments. In view of this, steps have been taken to formalise international mobility processes and will ultimately help refine the requirements for a dedicated information system.

To this end, the foundations of the MobINRAE information system – which aims to identify, track and measure hosting arrangements and international mobility in order to better support, promote and manage incoming and outgoing international mobility assignments – have been laid for implementation by 2024.

This efficient information system will offer better visibility for tailored and responsive support, particularly in the context of exceptional actions put in place by the French government.

For example, INRAE set up a special scheme to host young Lebanese researchers in a show of solidarity after the events that struck Lebanon in 2020. As a result, INRAE was able to host seven doctoral students in difficult situations and plans to welcome six graduate students in 2021. INRAE also participated in the French national programme for the urgent aid and reception of scientists in exile (PAUSE) by hosting two Syrian nationals.

Stronger support for international researchers was also provided through specific measures such as a relocation package offered to the foreign winner of a research director competition; additionally, intercultural support was provided to help a doctoral student adapt to their new environment. Feedback will be gathered in order to consider expanding such programmes on a larger scale. These pilot programmes will be analysed with a view to creating an international mobility office.

Additionally, a Guide for International Scientists has been created to help interns, PhD students and researchers better understand the advantages of joining INRAE, facilitate their search for a host team and guide them through French administrative formalities. After a test period with a group of foreign nationals, the guide is set to be released by the end of 2021.

With regard to internal staff, an incentive scheme for international mobility was set up in 2020; however, given the pandemic and associated lockdown measures, it was not tested until 2021. Units received financial support in conjunction with the research divisions and metaprogramme managers. The scheme was renewed for 2022 and its permanent iteration will be developed jointly with the relevant stakeholders.

Embracing other practices through an approach of openness and continuous improvement

Several studies have been launched and the results will be thoroughly analysed. A note on the desirability of establishing an INRAE Alumni association will be drawn up and consideration will be given to the concepts of virtual mobility and internationalisation at home (a benchmark study for virtual



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mobility within reasonable limits was conducted in 2021). Deliberations on the ways in which digital technology could contribute to managing remote scientific communities have been initiated.

We will also continue to share best practices and experiences with our counterparts at the CNRS, IRD, Inria, Inserm, the Magellan Circle and the French Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation in order to promote consistent practices among institutions and, in so doing, the functioning of our joint research units.

- [Raising awareness on the importance of social dialogue](#)

Consultation with the trade unions highlighted the challenges they face, such as considerable difficulty in getting staff involved and consistently declining membership numbers. INRAE therefore intends to enhance its communication actions aimed at staff and managers by reminding them of the role of the Institute's governing bodies and the importance of maintaining strong social dialogue that is conducive to progress not only in terms of how the Institute works but also with regard to its strategic priorities (scientific and support-based). Thus, INRAE's CEO issued a message to all staff during the elections held in 2020 to renew staff representatives in the governing bodies (joint administrative commissions; technical committee; health, safety and working conditions committee; scientific and management advisory boards), reminding them of the importance and the role of the trade unions in social dialogue. This type of communication will continue. For example, during the new arrivals seminar in 2021, specific slots for trade unions were included in the programme.

- [Valuing career assessments and fostering knowledge transfer](#)

The five years before an employee retires is a pivotal time for both individuals and employers. Individuals at this stage may be asking themselves many questions about the purpose of their work, its usefulness in the short term, and the legacy they will be leaving behind at their unit and at the Institute. For work units, this is a key period during which they can ensure that the knowledge of these experienced employees gets passed on to the next generation. For the Institute, it is a chance to capitalise on years of work carried out by those who will be leaving.

INRAE's Human Resources Directorate understands how crucial these issues are and has made them a priority. Research into these topics has been carried out, including an extensive literature review. The situation was then analysed from various human resources management angles: training, career guidance, prevention, evaluation and social policy (in connection with the actions of the network of social service assistants) based on the activity reports of the various relevant networks.

The aim of helping older employees in thinking about their work, ensuring they feel a sense of purpose at the end of their career and fostering the passing on of knowledge led the Institute to continue, at national level, a trial programme implemented in 2017 and 2018 that included seminars with a three-pronged focus: (i) supporting older employees in a deliberative process, (ii) facilitating the transfer of knowledge and activities during this phase of their careers, and (iii) contributing to actions in their work unit.

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Evaluations of the programme concluded that it was worthwhile. It provides an opportunity for everyone to plan and reconfigure their work activities during the final years of their career. Meanwhile, several entities (Human Resources Directorate, Evaluation Delegation, scientific divisions) have been working together to determine how to continue and systematise this programme at the national level.

In the coming months, a working group led by the Human Resources Directorate and composed mainly of local stakeholders from various INRAE centres will create a variation of this system for technicians in all the centres.

This programme would complement the actions carried out on a recurring basis in the centres, which aim to (i) prepare staff before they retire through training and dialogue with human resources offices; (ii) support intergenerational management.

- **Bolstering mid- and late-career phases and the end of mandates**

The aim is to make the mid- and late-career phases more dynamic, particularly for those in positions of management. The first step will be to discuss the career paths of managers and how to handle the end of their mandate. This will include examining ways to make the most of their experience by passing on knowledge and skills, including through mentoring and other INRAE-related activities (providing expertise, teaching, etc.), and exploring the HR levers necessary to implement such activities.

Focus Area 2 – Ensuring a safe working environment for all

- *Protected characteristics: health status – disability – family situation – loss of autonomy*

In addition to INRAE's policy on workplace health and safety, which helps all employees find their place, regardless of their health status, two actions fall fully within the scope of the Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan:

- strengthening support for staff during a health crisis situation;
- continuing and strengthening our disability policy.

- **Strengthening support for staff during a health crisis situation**

The public health situation has accelerated the arrangements already in place to facilitate remote work for all staff.

The remote working conditions in force until March 2020 were adapted to the pandemic and the related support measures were strengthened. During the first lockdown, staff whose activities could not be carried out remotely were given special leave, while they retained their leave entitlements and the same level of pay. The same was true for parents who had children under 16 to care for. They could also choose to continue their duties by making arrangements with their manager that would allow them to

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adapt their work rhythm around family obligations. This possibility was maintained during the successive lockdowns.

Support for remote working has been strengthened with the publication of a guide entitled “Remote working: A handbook on good practices” and the creation of a new system of webinars for people in management positions. These webinars address the various needs expressed by managers and provide them with guidelines on supporting remote management arrangements. This system provides forums for learning, sharing and encouragement between peers. This support is intended to continue as part of the new remote working conditions implemented from September 2021.

A helpline has also been available to all employees since spring 2020. Staff can ask questions related to their work situation in complete confidentiality and receive support in dealing with lockdowns, working from home, childcare, family and marital relations, concerns about personal health and the health of loved ones, uncertainty about the future, etc. The hotline will continue operating in the years to come, outside of any health crisis situation.

- [Promoting an inclusive working environment for staff with disabilities](#)

The long-standing disability policy will be continued and strengthened in three main areas: recruitment, integration and retention, and career development support.

[Strengthening support for individuals making hiring decisions](#)

The main focus will be on enhancing training on disability for all managers. A study will be conducted in the second half of 2021 regarding the feasibility and possible methods for a digital training solution that could be integrated into the induction programme for anyone in a management position.

[Strengthening support for local liaisons: unite and equip](#)

[A network of disability advisers](#)

For many years now, the Institute has had a network of disability advisers in all the centres. The network strives to inform, advise and support employees with disabilities and their work units. INRAE wants to do more to help them further develop their skills. Over the next three years, additional efforts will be made to train network members, systematise mentoring for new disability advisers, strengthen knowledge sharing with shared tools and initiate discussions on setting up working groups on specific themes. Conferences will be held to keep staff current on all disability-related issues. Additionally, partnerships will be strengthened, in particular with the Fund for the Integration of Disabled Persons in the Public Sector (FIPHFP) at both national and local levels.

[Members of the Central Health, Safety and Working Conditions Committee](#)

The members of the Central Health, Safety and Working Conditions Committee will receive training on key concepts and on INRAE’s policy in this area. They will be regularly informed about the implementation of the corresponding action plan, and the results and prospects of the plan will be presented to them annually.

[Mentors](#)

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Where necessary, awareness-raising actions for mentors and trainee managers on the different types of disability and the appropriate behaviours to adopt will be reinforced to support them in their work.

Strengthening the onboarding and inclusion of people with disabilities

The onboarding and integration of people with disabilities are key moments that have an impact on the rest of their professional careers. The probationary period during the first year of their employment is an especially crucial period.

It is essential that any difficulties are identified as early as possible so that measures can be put in place to enable those affected (staff and hiring managers) to address them and help new employees better settle into their positions. A system had been in place where follow-up interviews were held at six and ten months; following a trial programme conducted in 2019, this system has been reinforced with interviews at one and three months and is systematically applied.

In the coming years, this system will be supplemented by closer monitoring of the compensation measures put in place within the scope of job accommodations. This monitoring will be formalised in the recruitment document and in the probationary period follow-up document. This will also be the case for contractual positions.

Accessibility is an important issue when it comes to improving the quality of onboarding and inclusion of people with disabilities. INRAE also intends to do more in this area. Several approaches are envisaged: an accessibility guide will be distributed to all centres, the property management department will ensure that accessibility is taken into account in all building permits, and accessibility diagnostics will be carried out by specialised organisations.

Moreover, IT stakeholders will be kept up to date on issues regarding the accessibility of information, and consideration must be given to the accessibility of INRAE's digital tools, with the possible intervention of a service provider to assist in this process.

Strengthening career-long monitoring

For many years, the Institute has pursued a policy aimed at retaining employees with disabilities. There are several measures in place, such as remote working conditions or the use of external service providers to best meet the needs of each individual. In addition, an ergonomics specialist is brought in for any request for funding of more than €6,000 for workstation adaptations, which complements the expertise of the members of the disability unit.

To step up its efforts in this area, INRAE plans to formalise and systematise the portability of equipment made available to employees with disabilities when they benefit from internal or external mobility. The chosen measure will be the subject of a procedure that will be widely disseminated within all INRAE centres.

Developing new partnerships to provide more training through research

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As a public research institution, INRAE has a duty to provide training through research and, in so doing, to help people with disabilities gain more advanced qualifications. Accordingly, the Institute plans to promote new partnerships with specialised organisations involved in training apprentices with disabilities, mainly at the local level; the possible integration opportunities within the Institute with regard to expressed skills needs will be reconsidered.

Focus Area 3 – Helping staff find greater professional fulfilment to foster a healthy work-life balance

➤ *Protected characteristics: the 25 protected characteristics, and more specifically, place of residence and family status*

Promoting professional fulfilment and fostering a healthy work-life balance are integral components of quality of life at work, one of the pillars of INRAE’s HR policy, as mentioned in the 2017–2021 and 2021–2024 HR roadmaps. This theme is also a priority in the plan to modernise support services, called “Promoting the quality of life at work to increase both job appeal and staff motivation”.

INRAE’s focus on quality of life at work aims to reconcile the various factors that can influence employees’ health and motivation, including work environment, work demands, social relations, values and ethics, socio-economic security and physical workload. Quality of life at work thus extends beyond a single topic, combining working conditions and quality of service. INRAE wishes to pay particular attention to this issue, which will be reflected in the following areas.

- **Understanding staff perceptions to create objectives and actions**

To measure staff perceptions of their working conditions and the impact of actions taken to improve them, INRAE conducted a quality of life at work survey in 2019 and 2021. This survey not only provides insight about perceptions at a given time of the year but it is also a diagnostic tool that is useful for monitoring social relations in the Institute and initiating a continuous improvement process. Both surveys included questions on discrimination. The 2021 survey also included questions about work-life balance during the pandemic lockdown periods. The analysis of the results takes into account perceptions that differ by gender; this will make it possible to identify the main areas of action to be addressed in the medium and long terms.

- **Reassessing working arrangements for greater flexibility**

To promote professional fulfilment and work-life balance, regardless of employees’ family situations, the Institute has allowed remote working arrangements since 2019. By making it easier to balance professional and personal needs and limiting the number of journeys between home and work, remote working can significantly improve quality of life at work.

The implementation of remote working takes into account INRAE’s research activities, which primarily revolve around work units. As a result, conditions have been established to allow the Institute to remain a place of socialisation and teamwork by alternating in-person and remote work to guarantee the necessary social connection.

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Since 1 September 2021, remote working arrangements have been extended (subject to the collective choices of the unit) to give staff the option to work more days remotely, to have more flexibility, to broaden the conditions of eligibility and to expand the locations for remote work. All staff, whether permanent or contractual, will be allowed to work remotely without any length-of-service requirements.

Meanwhile, by the end of 2021, a study on flexible working hours will be conducted to consider different organisational methods that can further support work-life balance.

- [Advancing our social policy for all staff](#)

INRAE is committed to supporting all employees at the key stages of their lives, providing them with the assistance they need to alleviate the constraints of daily life and to cope with personal, professional or financial difficulties.

More broadly, INRAE's social actions seek to promote professional fulfilment through a healthy work-life balance, in particular by proposing a diverse range of services aimed at improving well-being. For many years, the Institute has offered an array of services in the areas of parenthood, leisure activities, staff canteen services, health and welfare, housing and more. To do this, INRAE relies on a network of experts in the centres who work closely with both staff and external partners.

This is particularly true of the network of social service assistants in all INRAE centres. They are available to listen, advise and support staff by helping them with various procedures and exploring different solutions. The social service assistants are also tasked with responding to requests for information relating to the social services and aid offered by the Institute.

INRAE will also expand its offer with a financial contribution for staff who sign up for supplementary social protection schemes.

[Parenting guidance and support](#)

Parenting guidance and support is a key component of INRAE's social policy as it relates to staff. From 2022, INRAE plans to offer access to an expanded range of childcare spots through INRAE's membership in the interministerial social action scheme and its regional chapters.

[Support for family carers](#)

Since 2020, INRAE has extended the possibility for staff to give days off to another public-sector employee. Initially, days could only be given to a staff member whose child had a serious illness. Now,

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days can be given to any employee who cares for a person with a particularly serious loss of autonomy or who has a disability. The beneficiary staff member continues receiving their pay during their leave period, which may be up to 90 calendar days per child/person per calendar year. The beneficiary staff member may combine their own annual leave or time off in lieu with the “donated” leave.

Additional communication will help raise awareness about this recent scheme that fosters solidarity and intergenerational support.

Enhanced communication

In the coming years, INRAE will strengthen its communication to all staff to further increase awareness of all existing schemes. This is especially important following the merger between INRA and IRSTEA in January 2020.

Focus Area 4 – Preventing and eliminating discrimination, sexual and gender-based violence, psychological and sexual harassment as well as sexist behaviour

➤ *Protected characteristics: the 25 protected characteristics*

Focus area common to the Gender Equality in the Workplace Action Plan

In line with governmental-level guidelines, set out in major regulatory changes, INRAE is committed to a proactive policy of preventing and eliminating all forms of discrimination and violence. An independent counselling centre dealing with both discrimination and sexual and gender-based violence has been in place since 2019. INRAE chose to outsource these services to guarantee neutrality and independence with regard to the Institute and to complement the existing internal arrangements: (i) local HR officers [network of human resource staff, social workers, risk prevention representatives, occupational health doctors]; (ii) staff representatives; (iii) reporting lines; (iv) difficult personal situation analysis and monitoring through a counselling centre.

This counselling centre is available to all staff who believe they have been victims or witnesses of sexual or gender-based discrimination or violence, regardless of their status, as well as to interns and people who have taken part in a competitive hiring process. The unit is composed of specialised lawyers who can analyse the situation and answer any questions, provide useful information and offer guidance on next steps.

INRAE communicated extensively about the counselling centre when it was set up (e.g., a slide show was presented in all centres; presentations that discussed the unit’s operating procedures were given at meetings of centre presidents, support services directors, human resources managers in the centres, network of diversity and workplace equality advisers; a leaflet and card were sent to each employee



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with their pay slips; posters were put up). Regular communication activities will inform staff of the existence of this centre.

This action will continue with a yearly review that is shared with staff representative groups during meetings by governing bodies.

After two years in operation, the agreement with the current service provider will expire in September 2021.

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