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European Commission  
DG Research and Innovation  
Open Innovation and Open Science  
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The National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and Environment (INRAE) was created in 2020 by the merger of two French public research organisations – INRA and IRSTEA – both of which had already obtained the HR Excellence in Research award.

In this framework, I confirm INRAE's commitment to further implementing the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct by adopting the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) and taking every step needed for its implementation.

As we launched this approach more than ten years ago, we already apply a large number of HRS4R principles at our institute. As early as 2013, we indicated to the European Commission that our commitment applies not only to the scientific community but to all INRAE staff.

The continuous improvement of working conditions and career opportunities is a major HR policy priority at our Institute. The recent creation of INRAE was an opportunity to build on what we have already achieved, by applying at the new entity the most advantageous conditions for staff from each institute in terms of pay, company policy, and more.

INRAE pays particular attention to the career environment of its workforce while aiming to maintain the excellent quality of its research. We are convinced that the implementation of the principles of the Charter and the Code will contribute to further developing the European Research Area.

We therefore welcome the opportunity to take part in an audit as part of the HRS4R approach, and include this process in the wide range of actions that shape human resources policy at our institute.

  
Philippe Mauguin

Attached: Initial document formalising INRA's commitment to the HRS4R approach.

science for people, life & earth







## THE EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR RESEARCHERS

On 22 February 2006, INRA signed its undertaking to adhere to the European Charter for Researchers, thus reaffirming its desire to be a leading actor in construction of the European Research Area and reinforcing its commitment to the convergence of its practices with the ethical and transparency principles laid down with respect to recruitment and professional development. At the same time, INRA included this commitment among the priorities of its Contract of Agreed Objectives for the period 2006-2009.

By making this commitment, INRA emphasised that all the principles thus laid down are intended to apply to all the researchers it employs, whatever their status and the duration of their stay with the Institute.

In line with this approach, in July 2008 INRA published its own Charter for doctoral candidates and postdoctoral fellows<sup>1</sup>. This Charter is one of the first concrete indications of INRA's adhesion to the European Charter for Researchers. It aims to specify the conditions for the hosting and integration of doctoral candidates and postdoctoral fellows within the Institute, in terms of their recruitment, positioning in host units, training and the publication and valorisation of their results. Consistent with one of the European Commission recommendations, its implementation was the subject of debate with national associations of doctoral and postdoctoral researchers. It was also discussed in-house with staff representatives in the context of consultations with the Institute's Joint Technical Committee.

As a natural progression from this, in the autumn of 2008 INRA adopted the "HR Strategy" approach initiated by the European Commission, which led to a transparent declaration of its priorities and actions in terms of the hosting and integration of permanent and non-permanent research staff.

As one of the pioneering agencies in this respect, INRA has tried to address its practices from the broadest possible standpoint. Thus the Institute was the instigator of discussions with an inter-EPST (public scientific and technology establishment) working group (CNRS, INRA, INSERM) designed to analyse each of the items in the Charter and Code of Conduct. These discussions have given rise to a detailed analysis of the convergences and deviations that may exist between requirements and existing practices, and thus enabled a definition of areas for progress and a plan for their implementation.

This document first of all specifies the important actions that have been implemented by the Institute in terms of managing the employment and careers of its researchers. It then presents the identified areas for progress and the priorities for their implementation, as defined for the years 2010-2011.



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<sup>1</sup> (Cf. INRA website:)



## 1/ INRA is profoundly committed to an ambitious HR policy

INRA is implementing actions that will reinforce its human resources policies with respect to scientific staff in particular, and which have been developed in compliance with the principles laid down in the European Charter for Researchers. In this context, the aim is to improve not only the quality of the professional monitoring of scientific staff within the Institute, but also its attractiveness so that the best talents will be able to contribute to implementation of its research strategy.

Some important actions recently introduced can thus be described:

### Recruitment and career development

- The opening of recruitment to other countries –

INRA is one of the few French public research agencies to make such strong claims regarding its international recruitment policies, thanks to a broad-based communication strategy: bilingual website; broad advertising of employment opportunities in dedicated media, such as the international scientific press and major national daily publications in Europe; development of a network of international contacts; visual aids in English, etc. In its Contract of Agreed Objectives with the French Government, the Institute also expressed its ambition to increase the number of foreign – and particularly European – researchers recruited each year. ([Charter: # 14 – Non-discrimination – # 31 – Recruitment](#)).

This policy resulted in a substantial increase in the number of foreign candidates for competitive entry between 2003 and 2009, rising from around thirty candidates (or some 13% of the total) to more than 130 candidates of foreign nationality (or 26%). In parallel, this openness has been accompanied by a diversification of the nationalities represented.

- Monitoring of newly-recruited researchers –

In order to optimise the integration of young, newly-recruited researchers, INRA has set up a monitoring system for junior researchers throughout their first year of employment; this system has grown in importance since it was first deployed in 2003. Monitoring is based on three interviews at key time points in this first year:

- During the month that follows their arrival, in order to determine what is expected of them;
- Halfway through the first year (i.e. about 6 months after arrival of the new recruit) in order to draw up an interim appraisal; this may reveal the need for adaptations to the targets fixed during the first interview;
- At the end of the probationary year (or 12 months after arrival of the new recruit). This interview is accompanied by an oral presentation to a group of researchers, chaired by the head of the Division or his or her representative.

This monitoring is formalised in a document that accompanies a newly-recruited junior researcher throughout the first year of employment and contains all elements that will enable examination of their eligibility for full-tenure status by the competent Specialised Commission at the end of this probationary year.

([Charter: # 26 - Supervision](#)).





- Improvement in career development

For several years now, INRA has been committed to improving career development, which has notably resulted in an increase in the number of opportunities for promotion to the grade of second class senior researcher. Thus, in less than ten years, the number of positions available each year has risen from 30 to 47. It can therefore be seen that 40% of researchers at INRA are senior researchers, and about three-quarters of all researchers complete their careers in the senior grade.

- Compliance with equality –

In addition to strictly applying the regulatory requirements with respect to the composition of juries for competitive entry examinations and on consultative bodies, INRA has tried to pay particular attention to the success rates of women in competitive examinations for junior and senior researchers. Through these efforts, the success rates for female junior researchers were identical to those of men between 2000 and 2008, and for the first time in 2008, the number of women qualifying as a second class senior researcher exceeded that of men.

In addition, INRA is also an active member of the Ministry of Research Mission for Equality and Discrimination, the purpose of which is to promote equal opportunities for men and women in scientific training and the research professions, and an education system based on qualified and diversified training without any social exclusion. This Mission is based on a network of correspondents, mainly in research organisations and higher education establishments. ([Charter: # 19 – Gender balance – # 33 - Selection](#)).

## Personal development

For some years now, INRA has focused on developing a certain number of actions designed to support researchers at each stage in their careers, and to encourage the diversity of career paths. The following actions form part of this policy:

- Taking account of requests regarding career orientation and evolutions in competencies by providing researchers with an opportunity to pursue their careers as engineers, or enabling engineers to apply for competitive entry as a senior researcher.
- In addition to statutory obligations to take account of mobility in promotions to the grade of first class senior researcher, a postdoctoral attachment in another country is also a criterion examined during monitoring and at promotion to the grade of first class junior researcher.
- Organisation of a one-to-one mentoring system for researchers who encounter problems, in order to help in their resolution and a return to a normal situation.

([Charter: # 20 – Career development - # 21 – Value of mobility - # 23 – Access to career advice](#))





## Social policy

INRA has tried to increase the possibilities to aid staff and their families by proposing support and assistance that are more extensive than those strictly provided for by the regulations. Among the measures implemented in this respect, the following can be highlighted:

- More possibilities for the granting of social benefits linked to children and the family. One example of this is the universal service employment vouchers that are made available to help with the care of children below the age of 6 years and disabled individuals.
- Accommodation: support and assistance in the search for accommodation; grants for installation; subsidised mobility loans for agents who move following the restructuring, relocation or closure of their unit; the availability of accommodation for foreign researchers, trainees and students.
- A system of exceptional grants and social loans.
- Implementation of social support services.
- A mechanism for the payment by the Institute of deposits required to rent accommodation for foreign researchers is currently under study.

### *Support for disabled researchers*

For several years, INRA has followed deliberate policies in favour of disabled staff by developing global measures through the provision of support at all stages of their careers. This commitment can be illustrated in particular by the following actions:

- Reorganisation of working areas and maintenance in employment: human and technical assistance is available to disabled researchers to enable them to carry out their everyday tasks. Actions are also implemented by the Disability Unit and the Disability and Accessibility Group (bodies made up of experts) which advise respectively as to the reorganisation of working areas and access to premises.
- For the years 2009-2011, a partnership agreement was signed with Fund for the Integration of Disabled Persons in the Public Sector (*Fonds pour l'insertion des personnes handicapées dans la fonction publique*, FIPHFP) aimed at deploying a deliberate policy on the integration of disabled staff. This agreement made particular mention of the measures that form the basis for INRA's duties in this respect. INRA is the first public research institution to have signed an agreement with the FIPHFP, under which the Fund helps to finance actions undertaken by INRA in four areas: recruitment; integration and maintenance in employment; increasing the awareness of actors, and the development of partnerships with Establishments for Service and Aid through Work (*établissements et les services d'aide par le travail*, ESAT).
- The recruitment on contract of disabled staff, including researchers, based on a one-year, fixed-term, renewable contract at the end of which they may obtain full-tenure status, on condition that they fulfil the conditions for aptitude to carry out their work. INRA is the first public research establishment to have thus recruited disabled researchers under contractual arrangements.

(Charter: # 14 – Non-discrimination - # 15 – Research environment - # 16 – Working conditions).





## **Professional training and career advice**

In order to adapt to contextual changes, and consistent with the challenges faced by the Institute, INRA has developed an institutional training policy based on four strategic areas: support for the scientific policy and its priorities; dynamism of collective leadership and management; support for changes to competencies and careers; promotion of individual rights. Its implementation is enabled by an annual budget of nearly 4 million Euros (or 2.7% of total staffing expenditure).

- Since 1999, training actions, developed jointly with scientific managers, have aimed to support technological changes and the development of structural programmes that contribute to construction of the European Research Area.
- As early as 2000, INRA set up a system allowing its agents to follow training courses to enable them to obtain qualifications.
- A Career Guidance Department, open to all members of staff, was set up in 2004 and has been operating successfully since then. This department is unique in the French research landscape.
- In addition to its institutional policy on continuous training, INRA is committed to taking account of the personal needs of doctoral candidates and postdoctoral fellows regarding construction of their career plan, and implements specific actions which include the organisation of professional integration seminars and personalised support for career development.
- Implementation of a specific training programme relative to the responsibilities and activities of research unit directors, including sessions on constructing the unit's scientific project, financial management and human resource management.

(Charter: # 22 – Access to research training and continuous development - # 23 – Access to career advice)

## **Prevention, health and safety**

INRA has set up specific operating procedures and structures in order to ensure the safety of persons, goods and the environment. The principle is that of managerial responsibility benefiting from appropriate resources (prevention delegates, prevention physicians, prevention agents) and bodies that are competent in this field.

Some important areas of prevention policy include: the welcome and training of new arrivals; the availability of appropriate equipment and buildings; risk assessment and the implementation of corresponding action plans; medical monitoring and targeted actions for certain agents (e.g. those over the age of 50 years who have been in contact with asbestos); provisions for the follow-up of accidents at work (analysis and implementation of corrective measures, emergency plans). [Charter: # 15 – Research environment](#).

## **Intellectual property rights**

- INRA adheres to the international charter on literary and artistic ownership and implements a policy of incentives for collaboration.
- The Institute ensures preservation of the freedom of researchers to publish their work and be cited as authors or joint authors. A specific clause to this effect is thus included in the great majority of contracts.

(Charter: # 24 – Intellectual property rights - # 25 - Co-authorship)



**2/ For the years 2010-2011, INRA is committed to developing its HR policy in terms of recruitment and career development, social policies and the research environment.**

*(Refer to the document appended herewith relative to identified areas for progress).*

All actions implemented during recent years will be pursued and, in some cases, reinforced, during the years to come. To these arrangements, which mainly concern full-tenure researchers employed by the Institute, should be added the deployment of measures aimed to support the careers of non-full-tenure researchers (notably doctoral candidates and postdoctoral fellows).

### **Recruitment and career development**

In its Contract of Agreed Objectives for 2006-2009, INRA affirmed its intention to enhance the attractiveness of its external competitive examinations for researchers, particularly at the European level and more generally at an international scale. To achieve this, strategy and communication tools were developed that would improve the visibility of the job opportunities available. Thus, following the competitive examinations for entry as junior researchers in 2009, 21% of the candidates recruited were not of French nationality, versus 17% in 2006. In the future, the main objective will thus consist in pursuing and reinforcing this policy of international openness with respect to researcher recruitment, by means of targeted communication actions: international employment websites or specialised scientific websites, circulation of information on the posts available to French embassies via the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, as well as to universities in other countries. ([Charter: # 31 – Recruitment](#)).

At the same time, it will be necessary to pursue the efforts already under way regarding career development, through three main actions: the organisation of competitive examinations for access to the grade of "non-assigned" first class junior researcher (access to examinations not based on job profiles but on the presentation of well-argued scientific projects); pursuit of reorganisation of the staff "pyramid" by introducing annual procedures for promotion to the grade of first class senior researcher (DR1) combined with an increase in promotion rates to 20 per year; implementation of bonuses for scientific excellence that will be paid to 20% of researchers; taking better account of previous career achievements at recruitment under the heading of career reconstitution. ([Charter: # 18 – Funding and salaries](#)).

INRA's commitment to its non-full-tenure staff is embodied by efforts to enhance its mission as an organisation for training through research and through the introduction of Young Scientist Contracts. These are "contracts of excellence" that guarantee the holders of funding for their thesis project and postdoctoral activities. The selection of candidates is organised by doctoral schools working in partnership with INRA on research projects that are a priority for the Institute. The holders are supervised by managers in the INRA research units to which they are allocated. After defending their theses, they are invited to pursue their scientific careers by completing a postdoctoral attachment in another country. ([Charter: # 17 – Stability and permanence of employment](#)).

In addition, Joint Consultative Committees will be set up to provide a forum for debate on the course and follow-up of the careers of non-full-tenure researchers at INRA. Measures will also be implemented to ensure the preparation and monitoring of their professional integration following their fixed-term contract with INRA. ([Charter: # 29 – Complaints/appeals](#)).





## Social policy

In order to reinforce the strategy that has already been in place for several years, priority shall be given to actions in favour of disabled staff, mainly through deployment of the actions specified in the plan defined for the years 2008-2011, such as the reorganisation of working areas, support for the accomplishment of professional activities, improvements to living conditions, the funding of interventions by organisations that encourage their integration (e.g. sign language interpretation organisations) and also the training and information of staff who may work alongside agents who are disabled. (Charter: # 14 – Non-discrimination).

## Research environment

The focus for the next two years will consist in reinforcing the efficiency of the policies implemented with respect to health, safety and the environment, in three areas: the assessment of occupational risks, managerial responsibility and management arrangements in emergency situations. (Charter: # 15 – Research environment).

Finally, with respect to social aspects of the sustainable development policy, particular attention shall be paid to monitoring the professional integration of disabled staff, to taking account of cultural and gender diversity in the everyday operation of the establishment and to the professionalisation of non-full-tenure staff, including monitoring of their career paths.

Implementation of the policy changes thus engendered, and their effects, will be the subject of monitoring using a table of indicators in order to establish an annual assessment (Cf. Table appended herewith). Wide-ranging consultations will then be initiated in order to define any readjustments that are necessary in terms of objectives and priorities.

Finally, reflecting its commitment to the European Charter for Researchers, INRA wishes to raise the awareness of all actors, at the same time as facilitating the approval and deployment of the actions programmed. In this respect, a communication plan regarding the Charter will be initiated, both in-house and targeting the Institute's partners.





**EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR RESEARCHERS**  
**GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND REQUIREMENTS APPLICABLE TO EMPLOYERS AND FUNDERS**

**Identified areas for progress retained among the priorities fixed for 2010-2011**

| Principles laid down           | Identified areas for progress                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Actors                                                                                        |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| # 14 - Non-discrimination      | Pursuit and development of actions initiated in recent years in favour of disabled staff, in accordance with the plan defined for 2008-2011: communication actions (brochure for external use to present the Institute's policy in this respect); increase in employment rates, etc.                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Human Resources Directorate – Social Policy Department.                                       |
| # 15 – Research environment    | Reinforce the efficiency of the policies applied with respect to health, safety and the environment, in three areas: the assessment of occupational risks, managerial responsibility and management arrangements in emergency.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Human Resources Directorate – Central Office for Occupational Safety, Health and Environment. |
| # 16 – Working conditions      | For full-tenure researchers: broadening the scope of free-interest loans for mobility to any geographical mobility, whatever the reason, and not just for mobility following the relocation, restructuring or closure of units.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Human Resources Directorate – Social Policy Department.                                       |
| # 18 – Funding and salaries    | Pursue efforts to improve the career paths of researchers: introduction of open competition for the recruitment of first class junior scientists based on the presentation of a scientific project; maintenance or increase in the number of senior researchers (DR) (notably, increase in opportunities for access to the grade of DR2; annual procedures for promotion to the grade of first class senior scientist (DR1) and increase in promotion rates); implementation of bonuses for scientific excellence. | Human Resources Directorate – Foresight and Management Control Department.                    |
| # 19 – Gender balance          | Implementation of a monitoring system in this area (composition of panels, promotion committees, joint discussion bodies, balance in terms of recruitment, promotion and advancement, etc.). Put on-line a table to monitor data with respect to equality.<br>Improve the monitoring of equal management responsibilities to ensure a more equitable balance within research units.                                                                                                                                | Human Resources Directorate – Recruitment and Mobility Department.                            |
| # 20 – Career development      | Introduction of Young Scientist Contracts                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Human Resources Directorate – Recruitment and Mobility Department.                            |
| # 23 – Access to career advice | Improve interactions with HR actors in research centres and scientific divisions in order to implement the career plans of agents.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Human Resources Directorate – Career Guidance Department.                                     |
| # 29 – Complaints/appeals      | Introduction of Joint Consultative Committees whose members represent all contracted members of staff.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Human Resources Directorate – Legal and Statutory Affairs Department.                         |
| # 31 - Recruitment             | Pursue the policy regarding openness of the recruitment of researchers, through targeted communication actions.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Human Resources Directorate – Recruitment and Mobility Department.                            |
|                                | Reinforce communication on policies regarding recruitment through the redevelopment of a dedicated website.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Communications Department.                                                                    |



## EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR RESEARCHERS

### GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND REQUIREMENTS APPLICABLE TO EMPLOYERS AND FUNDERS

#### Identified areas for progress not retained among the priorities fixed for 2010-2011

To the priorities identified for 2010 and 2011 should be added areas for progress where, in the medium term, INRA has decided to delay implementation of the corresponding actions. The aim is to determine objectives that can be achieved in terms of both the time and the human and financial resources required, so that they will be introduced under optimum conditions. If these priorities are over-extended, there is a risk that the quality of these actions, and the efficacy of their effects, may be attenuated. An initial, detailed analysis of the conditions for their deployment is also necessary.

| Principles laid down                           | Areas for progress not retained among the priorities for 2010 2011                                                                                                                        |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b># 5 – Contractual and legal obligations</b> | Develop training courses for researchers who are unit directors on the contractual and legal obligations (minimal information on intellectual property rights, ethical principles, etc.). |
| <b># 16 – Working conditions</b>               | Development of arrangements for the hosting of foreign researchers                                                                                                                        |
| <b># 20 – Career development</b>               | Monitoring of the career development and outcome of non-full-tenure staff following their time with INRA.                                                                                 |

#### Identified areas for progress outside the scope of INRA decision-making

The analysis thus carried out has revealed that INRA, as a public sector research establishment, cannot be the sole actor regarding the progress to be achieved with respect to the careers of researchers. In parallel with actions that can be instigated by the Institute, some desirable changes in terms of improving recruitment policies and career development require appropriate regulatory provisions.

| Principles laid down                        | Areas for progress outside the scope of INRA decision-making                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b># 2 – Ethical principles</b>             | Generalisation to all research projects of questionnaires on the application of ethical principles as established with respect to European projects.                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b># 13 – Recognition of the profession</b> | In terms of reconstituting career paths, take better account of activities carried out in the private sector prior to recruitment.                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b># 14 -Non discrimination</b>             | A change to French law no. 94-665 of 4/08/1994, the so-called Toubon Law, may allow research establishments, notably in the context of recruiting researchers, to organise oral interviews in English.                                                                                                           |
| <b># 20 – Career development</b>            | Harmonisation of assessment methods and remuneration between researchers and engineers to encourage cross-overs between the two groups.                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b># 21 – Value of mobility</b>             | 1/ Take better account of mobility in terms of career and appraisal, and particularly inter-sectoral mobility (between the public and private sector) and inter-disciplinary mobility.<br><br>2/ For non-full-tenure researchers, take account of posts held in other countries when determining pension rights. |



