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<http://www.grtgaz.com/nos-engagements/etre-une-entreprise-socialement-responsable/actions-pour-le-climat-et-lenvironnement/preservation-de-la-biodiversite.html>

GRTGAZ'S INDIVIDUAL COMMITMENTS IN *act4nature*

GRTgaz is a limited company that owns and operates Europe's longest high-pressure natural gas transmission network (in France). The company currently has around 3,000 employees and has three major missions: transporting natural gas for its customers; delivering it to the recipients directly connected to the transmission network, and developing the capacity of the transmission network.

The public service missions carried out by GRTgaz are defined in accordance with the French Energy Code, and are covered by a three-year renewable public service contract with the state. These missions relate in particular to the safety of people and facilities, the country's supply security, environmental protection, the energy transition and balanced territorial development.

The commitment in context

GRTgaz currently operates 32,500 km of high-pressure pipelines, and one of the biggest challenges in the coming years will be to ensure the long-term acceptability of its network. Indeed, this network, which links territories and provides access to high-capacity energy storage, is an asset when it comes to implementing the energy transition: reception and transportation of biomethane, renewable energy storage, solidarity between energy surplus and deficit regions, etc.

This requires GRTgaz to incorporate nature into its strategy and its business models (environments, fauna, flora, ecosystems, interactions, genetic inheritance, etc.), while taking concrete action to develop solutions for the preservation, restoration and sustainable exploitation of biodiversity, and the equitable use of the benefits derived from it.

Adopting a proactive approach to biodiversity is one of the prerequisites for achieving this goal. GRTgaz's activities will only be sustainable in the long term if there is clear evidence that they are not harmful to ecosystems.

With this in mind, action is being taken to ensure that the transmission network is a key link in France's Trame Verte et Bleue (Green and Blue Infrastructure network) and hence an additional asset in the deployment of the future energy mix. This is all the more pertinent as the preservation of biodiversity and the fight against global warming are interdependent and require mutual consideration.

Thus, GRTgaz is engaging voluntarily in the *act4nature* initiative to help build a global momentum for positive corporate action on environmental issues and biodiversity in particular, while fostering solutions through constructive dialogue with stakeholders.

GRTgaz therefore fully supports the common objectives set out in the *act4nature* initiative and has defined an action programme for the 2018-2020 period, with the aims of developing the positive role that its green footprints can play in biodiversity and identifying and implementing alternatives to any of its practices that are likely to cause damage to ecosystems.

Commitment

The action programme proposed by GRTgaz for the *act4nature* initiative was designed based on the input of stakeholders in the company. It integrates recent regulatory, societal and organisational developments relative to biodiversity, including the Regional Ecological Coherence Plans, the ordinance on environmental dialogue and the bill to restore biodiversity, nature and landscapes. The latter has introduced new fundamental principles into the French environment code and established the French Biodiversity Agency, along with several other governance bodies.

The six objectives and twelve actions associated with the programme are aligned with several of the strategic goals set out in the French National Biodiversity Strategy (NBS). These actions will be implemented at all GRTgaz sites that are regarded as priorities in light of the issues at stake. The midway point for their completion is 2019 and the final deadline is 2020:

■ "Preserve and create new ecological continuities" in accordance with strategic goal B of the NBS.

Proposed actions:

Introduce differentiated management on easement strips; create synergies with the agricultural sector; investigate all possibilities for partnership-based management. By 2020, GRTgaz proposes to identify 10 sites where an easement overlaps the Green and Blue Infrastructure network and to determine, with the help of a natural scientist, the maintenance method most favourable to biodiversity on each of these sites.

This is a pilot project and will be carried out in partnership with local players; the aim is to evaluate the constraints, benefits and effects of differentiated management on GRTgaz's easements, and hence study the possibility of rolling out the project on a larger scale after 2020.

- "Initiate a plan to deploy alternatives to plant protection products (pesticides)" in accordance with strategic goals B and F of the NBS.

Proposed actions

ban the use of these products in sensitive areas; increase employee awareness; participate in experience and knowledge sharing.

- Thus, 450 field installations (gas stations) belonging to GRTgaz will be pesticide free by 2020.
- Again, this is a pilot project aimed at assessing the constraints and benefits of various "pesticide-free" maintenance methods and encouraging the development of new methods so that they can be implemented by all installations after 2020, if so required.

- "Continue to create ecological niches on industrial sites" in accordance with strategic goal B of the NBS.

Proposed action:

Implement a biodiversity action plan for all priority sites. Thus, 27 industrial sites and compressor stations have already joined forces with local stakeholders to implement a biodiversity action plan adapted to their specific context, or are planning to do so in 2020.

- "Support the preservation of pollinating insects" in accordance with strategic goals A and B of the NBS.

Proposed actions:

Support and promote employee initiatives and open up sites to bee-keepers looking for a place to set up their hives; support the overall improvement of practices. GRTgaz now accommodates 135 hives on 21 sites (including one at the Head Office) and encourages the provision of land to bee-keepers living near its facilities.

- "Support knowledge improvement" in accordance with strategic goal F of the NBS.

Proposed actions:

Participate in research on relationships between biodiversity and linear infrastructure, and share the results of the research. GRTgaz, as a member of France's Linear Infrastructure and Biodiversity Club, is currently committed to a plan to support 15 research projects on interactions between linear infrastructure and biodiversity, via the environment ministry's ITTECOP programme and the Foundation for Biodiversity Research.

- "Enhance the environmental dialogue" in accordance with strategic goals B, D and E of the NBS.

Proposed actions:

Systematically conduct upstream consultations on projects subject to an impact assessment.



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