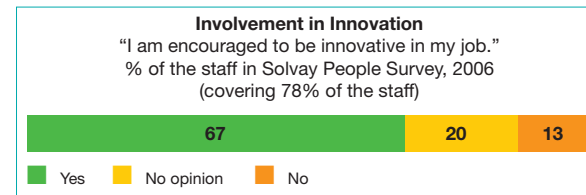


# The employees as actors of Sustainable development: skills and creativity

## 8

### Strategy

- Encouraging the development of skills relating to Sustainable development, and getting the Competence Centers involved.
- Including sustainability criteria in innovation processes.
- Encouraging the emergence, at each level of the Group, of a view of Sustainable development derived from discussions with the various stakeholders, and encouraging a creative approach through fora to share views.



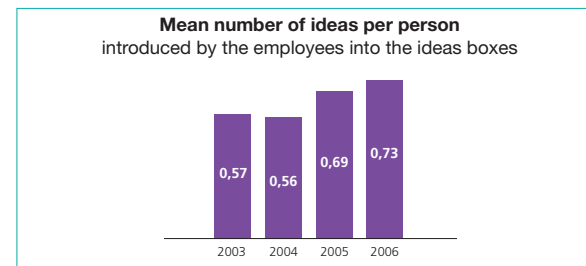
### Assessing innovative approaches: the Score Card used in each entity

This card brings together the key indicators that provide an overview of achievements in meeting innovation objectives. In particular, the Score Card takes account of the extent of employee participation in innovation projects and the proportion of projects carried out in collaboration with external partners, which is a key component of the Sustainable Development strategy.

### Innoplacement, managing creativity through a set of 127 interconnected ideas boxes

Innoplacement, Solvay's tool for managing innovative ideas from all over the world, won in France the 2006 best Intranet prize, in the e-Learning and Knowledge Management category, against 46 competing initiatives presented by large companies and other organizations such as Airbus, EADS, BNP and Caisse des Dépôts. The October 2006 Prize ceremony was organized by CEGOS, Entreprises & Carrières and Les Echos (France).

Innoplacement in the beginning of 2008 contained about 50.000 ideas.



The program to make managers and employees aware of the growing requirements in relation to products and practices that are more sustainable will shape the innovation programs. The Group's, together with the stakeholders outside the Group, are what drive innovation. Line managers, are responsible for ensuring that the challenges of sustainable development are taken into account, and that attitudes and behavior develop accordingly.

There is a Sustainable Development Steering Committee to support this process, suggesting methods and encouraging implementation. The first internal fora to raise awareness of sustainable development were convened in 2007, following the first seminar on this subject organized in 2005 by the European Works Council (see page 59). They brought aimed at establishing a shared view that has long-term validity in these areas.

Internal abilities relating to social, economic and environmental management will provide the foundations for the new Sustainable Development strategy. There are 250 people coordinating the management of health, safety and environment issues, liaising with the relevant Competence Center on these questions. We rely also on the internal abilities in process engineering, to develop safer and more (eco)efficient production processes. This has produced processes that are more sustainable, with production accompanied by recycling (for PVC and fluorinated products, etc.), heat-and-electricity cogeneration units, the use of biomass, and environmentally friendly technologies such as the NOVOSOL® process for treating polluted sediments (see page 55).

The Solvay Corporate University, created in 2007, is aimed at providing the skills and abilities needed to develop supervisory careers, involving for example management of teams and of people from a variety of cultural backgrounds, and serving a shared long-term view for the Group's

### Targets for 2012

- Establishing a discussion forum at each site, bringing together employees and management of all levels, to initiate and provide support to the Sustainable Development projects of each site.
- Including Sustainable Development in the training of employees at all levels.
- Developing multidisciplinary and networks, and encouraging employees to establish imaginative collaboration with outside people and organizations.
- Strengthening dialogue and coordination between installation designers, production supervisors and specialists in risk management and sustainability.
- Developing an internal network of people to take over Sustainable Development responsibilities.
- Ensuring 100% participation of the supervisory staff in at least one session (by 2010).

### Third Solvay Science for Innovation conference

One of the fundamental aims of Science for Innovation is to increase the number of contacts and opportunities for synergy between Solvay's internal and external scientists, and to develop networks of InnoCentive-type involving all the Group's Sectors. The 2007 conference was devoted to "Building up complex materials: from nanoscale to end-use properties", with Professor Jean-Marie Lehn, Nobel laureate in Chemistry 1987, and Robert B. Laughlin, Nobel laureate in Physics 1998. The conference drew over 150 high-level experts and researchers working for the Group in Europe, the United States and Asia, together with about 30 representatives of the international scientific community. The Science for Innovation program stresses the interactive nature of science, using numerous practical exercises linked to a specific problem or more general issue.



### Solvay Corporate University

Linking across the various organizational structures or regions, the Solvay Corporate University is a new institution aimed at supervisory staff training and development throughout the Group. The Solvay Corporate University aims at reinforcing the key skills and abilities that are necessary at a given stage of a career, reinforcing the competence in strategic areas, and assisting a shared approach to the Group's strategy, Vision and Values.

Ultimately, there will be a new instrument to monitor and quantify the effectiveness of this lifelong-learning initiative. The Corporate University's Leadership Pipeline is a fundamental stimulant to Solvay's corporate culture; it is based on the idea that there are latent managerial capabilities within the Group that can be exploited so long as the individuals are given appropriate preparation to develop their skills. The Leadership Pipeline comprises five levels of training - Applying, Implementing, Developing, Integrating and Changing - corresponding to the fundamental stages in a manager's career. Another important function of the Solvay Corporate University will be to familiarize new recruits to the Group, and executives in companies acquired, with Solvay's managerial practices and leadership style. It will be an important factor in attracting and recruiting new employees, and retaining them over the long term.

### Up for discussion

## Innovation as a break with the past... and a taste for risk!



"Our markets will be different tomorrow. We will be familiar with sources of motive power that are much more efficient than the internal combustion engine, and with revolutionary forms of lighting and printed display screens. Technological firms can no longer content themselves with just being suppliers of materials. Solvay cannot restrict itself to the products that made its fortune in the past and that are still doing so today. We need to make some clean breaks, get out of our old habits, reorganize our internal sources of expertise, and supplement them with contributions from outside. We can therefore no longer just occupy our own niches in a logistical sequence, however well it is performing.

"All of this calls for a change of direction. It is for each employee to feed into the system at that person's own level; to get involved by acquiring training and information. In other words, each person needs to think, and to be prepared to act differently, changing habits, becoming committed, and being prepared to take more risks - calculated ones! - in the course of work. This has already happened in the pharmaceutical sphere, being the price to pay for added value. And it is a narrow road, where we need to turn more in the direction of our customers, discover their unvarying needs over the long term, and provide usable technological solutions.

"Agreeing to test 10 ideas and then, with no implication of failure, selecting just one, constitutes another cultural revolution. This innovation culture demands more than a flabby consensus based on habits. It requires that we are ready for a clean technological break, and it requires leaders. In this sense, present circumstances are definitely inviting us to be part of a revolution. It is also a positive and fascinating challenge."

**Léopold Demiddeleer,**  
 Manager of the Future Businesses Competence Center.

