

For the past five years, the RTE Foundation has extended the company's commitment to promoting the development of rural communities. In 2012, it supported 47 new projects, bringing the total number of projects aided since its creation to 246, for a total amount of €4.7 million.

5 YEARS OF ACTION FOR THE RTE FOUNDATION



The RTE Foundation supports community projects which focus primarily on combating all forms of exclusion, protecting the environment, conserving the rural heritage and creating jobs. Numerous examples include the refurbishment of buildings, a variety of social and economic initiatives to help people in difficulty, farming and market gardening activities, management of green spaces and waste and the development of social inclusion activities intended to encourage access and return to the labour market.

A FOUNDATION TURNED TO THE FUTURE

A new team took over running the Foundation in 2012 and its Executive Committee was partially renewed.

Three priority projects launched in 2011 were taken further. A system for skills patronage has been designed and a first experiment will be launched in 2013. A "gateway" system enabling structures supported by the Foundation to offer their services to RTE has been rolled out. The RTE Foundation also set up an agreement with France Active, the leading financier of social enterprises in France and leader for guaranteed microcredit loans, to help encourage innovative projects. In 2012, RTE renewed its support for a not-for-profit organisation, Solid'action. Created in 2001, Solid'action

believes that the time factor is a key element in the integration process, and has introduced a scheme which allows reintegration contracts to benefit from a special dispensation to extend the two years currently considered to be the maximum legal length of a social integration contract to five years.

The Foundation has put a dynamic new communications strategy in place with a new intranet, six video interviews with project instigators, sponsors and instructors, and the organisation of an event featuring ten project instigators shortlisted for a special award. At the end of this event, the French writer Patrick Viveret opened the discussion, putting into perspective the challenges facing the rural world in the general economic and societal context.

The RTE Foundation was one of the four finalists in the Admical Oscars for Corporate Philanthropy 2012, a wonderful achievement for all those who have shown great enthusiasm for the Foundation and its projects. ●

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
www.fondation.rte-france.com



Promoting mutual support in rural areas and helping to meet community needs and foster level development: these were the objectives that RTE set itself in 2008 when it created the first foundation of its type in France. It has been a consistent way of bringing the company's values to life.

Viewpoint

A foundation that promotes a caring rural society

ROBERT SAVY

MEMBER OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE RTE FOUNDATION,
HONORARY PRESIDENT OF THE LIMOUSIN REGIONAL COUNCIL
AND MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL OF STATE



How do you look on the first years of the Foundation?

In a very positive way. The Foundation has succeeded in defining its objective, which is one to which I completely subscribe: "Contributing to the caring and balanced development of the regions". As someone who has represented the Limousin region in politics for many years, I am very concerned by the growth in competition between regions, which weakens the most fragile ones and increases inequalities. I appreciate the fact that a network-based company like RTE, where the values of public service are very much alive, is mindful of the need to preserve social and territorial cohesion in our country. In this spirit, I am also impressed by the commitment of many RTE employees to support projects backed by the Foundation as "sponsors". It's yet another advantage for the projects, and a way for the company to appreciate concretely the reality of its actions on the ground.

How do you see the development of the Foundation?

Remaining faithful to a few principles that these first few years have allowed to emerge. In the first place, an integrated and sustainable concept of development. Different regions are different and call for very diverse projects, but it's always desirable to incorporate economic, social, cultural and environmental dimensions. Then, a desire to promote innovation. The Foundation doesn't exist to support the same initiatives in different places, but to promote the invention of projects adapted to each region. I also think it should favour support for intangible investments. And it seems to me that, in the medium term, it will have to evaluate the results of its earliest actions so that, if necessary, it can adapt its aims and its methods.

47
new projects.

€746,730
attributed in 2012.

€4.7 m
attributed since 2008.

380
jobs created, of which 291
on back-to-work programmes.

100%
with a positive impact
on the environment.

Beyond the financial support it offers, the RTE Foundation also offers support on a local level to those responsible for projects through the involvement of RTE employees who serve as sponsors. On a voluntary basis, they undertake to support a project in their regions over the long term. This approach has proved successful: for the second year running, the rate of sponsoring is around 90%. After five years of existence, the RTE Foundation now wants take the sponsor system further and establish still more innovative pathways between the structures it supports and the company itself.

Personal accounts

RTE employees at the heart of projects



HERVÉ EGGER
RTE South-West, sponsor of Dispo-Services

Social integration workshops allow people in need to return to employment and help them construct their own personal projects. The reconstruction of dry stone walls, for instance, requires a great deal of patience and perseverance. But the result can be seen and recognised by everyone, which is very rewarding. Beyond the skills and know-how that the participants acquire, they are aware of taking part in a lasting way in the rehabilitation of a small piece of history. The energy and enthusiasm you see throughout this organisation help to give these people fresh impetus. Through my visits to the site and the contacts I have had, I have been able to appreciate the dimensions of the project on a human level and in terms of preserving our heritage, and I have seen the vital role that Dispo-Services has played in making a success of the project in a rural setting. By volunteering to be a sponsor on behalf of the Foundation, I will follow the development of the project with interest.



CHRISTINE LOMBARD
RTE North-East, sponsor of Somme Nature

We met the director of Somme Nature in the first half of 2011. During a series of discussions, we raised the subject of the RTE Foundation with him. In northeastern France, no project had been put forward for the Somme department, although there is so much that needs to be done in this region. With Les Chemins de l'Espoir, things are starting to move. By creating these work opportunity workshops, Somme Nature is also helping to protect the environment and is playing a part in local and social development by putting people at the very heart of the action.



close-up on... Three projects supported in 2012



THERAPEUTIC DOGS PROJECT WINS FRENCH MAYORS' PRIZE IN 2012

WESTERN FRANCE /

At the annual Exhibition for Mayors and Local Authorities, a not-for-profit organisation called Compagnon d'Un Jour, Compagnon de Toujours, based in Marennes on the Island of Oléron, won the French Town Halls' "judges' favourite" award. Founded in 2010 by Leslie Bergeron, a young woman who is herself disabled, the organisation carries out visits to elderly people, children and severely disabled adults with specially trained dogs. The therapy has proved itself extremely beneficial, especially for people suffering from Alzheimer's disease.



WOOD SALVAGING SCHEME PROVIDES WORK OPPORTUNITIES

BRITTANY /

Inspired by a research project completed by a student working as an intern, the not-for-profit organisation KOAD Énergie Verte developed a local initiative linking professional integration and the development of the timber sector in the Lorient region. The Lorient region has many suburban districts which have remained largely rural, rich in hedgerows and trees that homeowners have to maintain pruned. The resulting scrap wood is normally incinerated along with household waste, discharging its carbon. So why not recover it and transform it into wood chips, logs and mulch for local authorities and private customers? This idea was the start of a project to create platforms for salvaging and transforming scrap wood from tree pruning throughout the Lorient region. The project has provided work opportunities for people suffering from social exclusion, with the creation of jobs with no threat of relocation.



AN INNOVATIVE WATER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR SMALLHOLDERS

SOUTH OF FRANCE /

BEDE is an international not-for-profit organisation that helps to protect and promote smallholder farming. This project consists in working with a local smallholder cooperative in the Minervois region to install three model irrigation managing systems for training purposes, adapted to the irregular rainfall of the region. They are economical and easy to replicate. Installed in Gimios, Mailhac and Azillanet, they will accommodate training workshops for around fifty smallholders per year, in conjunction with partners from the world of agriculture: the chamber of agriculture, the Upper Languedoc natural park, Bio Civam, etc. During summer droughts, it will be possible to take advantage of any storms that do occur.