

Roger Genet

Director General
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Benoît Vallet

Chair of the Board
of Administrators

Conversation



What lessons can we learn from ANSES's work and challenges for 2021 and early 2022? **Roger Genet**, Director General, and **Benoît Vallet**, Chair of the Board of Administrators, give you their analysis through five key themes.

Commitment

BENOÎT VALLET

Although the epidemic waves of COVID-19 have had a profound effect on our lives in recent months, the ANSES teams have shown great resilience and commitment throughout this period. The Agency has been a constant source of scientific, organisational and ethical proposals, in order to better fulfil its missions for the benefit of society. Its laboratories were particularly active in supporting health crisis management and, in some cases, contributing to vaccine approaches. On behalf of the Board of Administrators, I would like to pay tribute to the commitment of ANSES's teams and expert groups. This commitment is reflected in the annual work programme, its activity indicators and the confidence of the public authorities, which entrust the Agency with new tasks each year. The Board welcomes this with interest but also with caution regarding the resources allocated.

New expert appraisal missions

ROGER GENET

Indeed, ANSES's missions are expanding and strengthening every year. In 2021, we were given new responsibilities in the areas of quality monitoring of drinking water, swimming pool treatment processes, and embalming, in application of the ASAP Act of 7 December 2020. On 1 January 2022, new missions concerning assessment of the environmental impact of organisms and products derived from biotechnology, as well as a new field of expertise in socio-economic analysis, were taken on by ANSES. These de-

velopments have required us to strengthen our expert groups and our own skills, especially in the human and social sciences, but also to reflect on the changes needed to further improve dialogue with stakeholders on societal and environmental issues of particular concern in public opinion.

Dialogue

BENOÎT VALLET

While science is and must continue to be the basis for public decision-making by producing reliable benchmarks for assessing the various options available to the decision-maker, we are well aware - and the COVID-19 crisis has illustrated this perfectly - that the trust of our fellow citizens requires total transparency and constant dialogue with all stakeholders. ANSES has been striving to ensure this ever since its creation, and knows from experience that the implementation of these two values needs to be constantly adjusted to changes in society and its concerns. With this in mind, I welcome the initiatives taken by the Agency in 2021 to enter into two partnerships designed to strengthen dialogue and openness to public participation, respectively with the National Commission for Public Debate (CNDP) and the Economic, Social and Environmental Council (CESE), in order to better align its expert appraisals with the debates and consultations organised by these national reference bodies.

Research and partnerships

ROGER GENET

A "One Health" agency par excellence, at the crossroads of interactions between humans and their

environment, ANSES is a scientific expert appraisal agency, but also undertakes its own research and is a research funding body. This threefold mission is all the more unique in that it covers a wide range of health issues, both locally and globally. Our position as a catalyst for scientific output serving public decision-making means that we are constantly strengthening and improving our partner networks and our practices, both on a national scale with our sister agencies (Santé Publique France and the ANSM in particular), research organisations and technical institutes, and on a European scale. The quality of these partnerships goes a long way to explaining the success of the Horizon Europe framework programme, which in 2021 achieved a 28% success rate for projects involving ANSES, a score well above the European average.

Europe

ROGER GENET

Our work and scientific synergies are increasingly taking place at a European scale, whether in the area of risk assessment, where we work closely and share competencies with the European agencies, or in our mobilisation of the scientific communities on research programmes addressing the challenges of health and environmental policies. In this respect, 2021 saw intense activity in preparing the Partnership for the Assessment of Risks from Chemicals (PARC), and its official launch on 1 May during the French Presidency of the European Union. This €400 million programme, co-funded by the European Commission and coordinated by ANSES, brings together nearly 200 partners in 28 countries. This is the epitome of the role that ANSES needs to play in stimulating international research in its fields of expertise. 🍀