

## Corporate University Partnership: Designing and Delivering Executive Development to Accelerate Business Transformation



### The organisation

EDF is one of the world's largest energy companies with a fleet of 58 nuclear power stations in France supplying the bulk of its national fully integrated provision. Beyond France, EDF has subsidiaries and major interests across Europe. In addition to nuclear, it also owns and operates coal and CCGT stations, hydroelectric plants, wind farms and solar panel installations, is spearheading development of biomass generation and fossil-fired plants and is building its gas interests. Not surprisingly, its ambition includes being a major global player in the use of non-CO2 emitting technology. The Group employs around 155,000 worldwide, enjoys a global turnover around €71bn (2016) and is 83% owned by the French state (having been the national monopoly electricity supplier of France, an IPO was successfully concluded in 2006). All EDF entities now operate within liberated competitive markets.

### The business

Through a bold strategy of targeted acquisitions, including the 2008 purchase of British Energy for £12.5bn, EDF has transformed itself from an exclusively French utility to an international concern. Its incorporated entities include EDF SA (France), EDF Energy (100% owned: UK), EnBW (45% owned: Germany) and Edison (50% owned: Italy). Additionally, EDF has selective investments in Europe (Poland, Hungary, Belgium, Austria, Slovakia, Switzerland, Spain) as well as USA, South Africa, China, Laos and Vietnam, leveraging its expertise as premier nuclear operators and engineers.

The Group's commitment to sustainability, energy security and carbon neutrality is underpinned by its development of alternative generation sources, spearheaded through EDF Energies Nouvelles.

### The development programme

In 2004, recognizing itself as a capital-intensive operator, accelerated transformation and cohesion of the Group were viewed as essential for meeting the challenges created by:

- EDF's internationalization as a major "merit good" player in a global market

- Increasing competition in the deregulating French energy market
- Necessity to improve Group performance in order to provide for future needs.

Thus, the EDF Corporate University was established and Cranfield was chosen within a year of its inception as one of three founding business school partners.

Our aim was to engage participants from EDF's diverse entities in focused exchanges, to give them an outside-in view of the management fundamentals of commercial reality (markets, strategy, people, performance), to expand their commercial skills as highly educated managers and leaders and to drive learning into practice, partnering EDF in its increasingly impressive performance.

## The approach

In partnership with executives from EDF's Corporate University and operational units and collaborating with specialists from other business schools such as Insead, IMD, London Business School and ESCP-EAP, Cranfield's Centre for Customised Executive Development designed a suite of four inter-related programmes, that, contextualised to EDF:

- Provide provocative yet pragmatic content
- Attract participants from subsidiaries, leveraging diversity and enhancing unity through shared understanding across the Group
- Blend in the contribution of senior executives to ground the learning
- Create a participative, safe learning environment - in a culture that is largely reflective, accustomed to formal teaching and structure
- Challenge participants to translate commercial thinking into practice in their part of the business.

## In addition to the suite of four programmes, our partnership has:

- Contributed expertise on core transformational subjects (such as Corporate Social Responsibility and brand innovation) to build shared awareness and competence throughout the three top management ranks, namely: Talent, Executives and Senior Executives
- Established an EDF funded research project that explored Social and Environmental Responsibility across the European energy sector
- Researched and ran workshops to explore brand development and brand creation in light of the new commercial agenda
- Developed a business case study that captures the creation of the new EnBW brand (Yello) in the German electricity market.

## Making a difference

The programme suite has:

- Given momentum to a forward-looking and global dialogue
- Raised open debate on strategic issues
- Created new informal networks across functions, business units, subsidiaries and management layers in the wider Group
- Grown the perception of EDF as an international Group that includes cultures beyond that of France
- Challenged mind-sets and encouraged participants to do likewise
- Successfully blended internal knowledge and experience from EDF with that of external expertise from Cranfield and other business schools.

### Facts and Figures

600 EDF managers and leaders from France, England, Germany, Italy, Poland and Hungary have attended the suite of four inter-connected programmes designed in partnership with the EDF Corporate University to enhance future leaders' understanding of Markets, Strategy, People Management and Performance Management in EDF. Programmes are held at Cranfield in the UK and the EDF Corporate University at Chataou, Paris.

## Why Cranfield?

*"Management Fundamentals with Cranfield School of Management has been a recurrent success for EDF corporate university. The unique Cranfield blend of cutting edge theory and constant focus on implementation has been at the core of the success. On top of that, the constant interaction with the Programme Director has added to the unique dimension of these Four Pillars modules. It is part of our 'must do' for young managers at EDF."*

**David Jestaz, Director, EDF Corporate University**