

France's progress towards the five Sustainable Development Goals for the Planet

**Extract from France's 2021 Environmental Performance
Review**



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In 2015, 193 states committed to defining, monitoring and achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the UN 2030 Agenda. These goals represent a universal and cross-cutting approach. Five SDGs contribute to the Planet theme of the agenda: SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation), SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production), SDG 13 (climate action), SDG 14 (life below water) and SDG 15 (life on land). Best progress is visible in SDGs 12, 13 and 14 given recent indicator trends. The majority are making positive progress towards the goals (*Figure 1*).

CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

France's involvement in the freshwater sector has been strong since the 1992 Water Act which defined water as the "common heritage of the nation". Efforts in sanitation have significantly increased the compliance rate of collective and individual sanitation systems. However, for progress towards SDG6, actions upstream in the water cycle and for water use are necessary. In 2018, 46% of 760 plant protection substances were found at least once in groundwater. Nearly 80% of the country monitored by the groundwater quality testing measures were concerned by levels of these substances. As a result, in 2018, tap water supplied to 2.3% of the French population did not comply with recommended physico-chemical quality limits. Water withdrawals are decreasing, but efforts are still required to meet objectives set in the 2019 Assises de l'Eau convention to reduce withdrawals for all uses by 10% in 5 years and 25% in 15 years.

RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

SDG12 has the most positive results with six out of seven indicators making good progress. Employment in the circular economy and industrial and regional ecology projects are increasing, in step with quantities of waste treated. At the same time, per capita material consumption is decreasing, with a decrease in the material footprint of 0.1 tonnes per capita between 2013 and 2018. These indicators are still very sensitive to economic activity, particularly in the construction and agriculture sectors. In the meantime, individual and collective needs struggle to decrease. The future challenge is to shift consumption patterns towards more sustainable goods and services.

RELATIVE MEASURES FOR FIGHTING CLIMATE CHANGE

SDG13 shows significant progress for greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions but progress needs to be stepped up. In 2019, France voted the energy and climate law which aims to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 by dividing emissions by more than six compared to 1990. The national low-carbon strategy, revised in 2020, defines the reduction trajectory to achieve this goal. Between 2015 and 2018, GHG emissions exceeded the budget defined by the first version of the national low-carbon strategy (2015) by 3%. On the other hand, GHG emissions for the period of 2019 to 2020, when the pandemic took place, were lower than the annual average of the 2019-2023 budget.

The carbon footprint provides a more detailed assessment of France's progress in fighting climate change. When taking into account the GHG content of imports, it is possible to assess the overall pressures of French domestic demand on the climate regardless of the geographical origin of the products consumed. Between 2015 and 2020, the carbon footprint decreased by 11.8% (or 2.5% per year) in proportion with the population. 49% of the carbon footprint was generated by emissions from imported goods and services.

LIFE BELOW WATER

Challenges in the marine environment is still very high, but significant progress has been observed. According to the latest available report from 2015, 51% of coastal waters have good or very good ecological status, compared to 30% of transitional waters. The 21 bodies of water ranked as having moderate or poor ecological status are mainly concentrated in the bays of Brittany (5 bodies of water) and in the Antilles (10 bodies of water). The marine environment is fragile due to land-based activities and resulting sea pollution. Between 2015 and 2020, marine protected areas covered an additional 7.1% of the total marine area. By the end of 2021, three quarters of the coastline and overseas basins featured in a strategic document.

LIFE ON LAND




































While forests and protected areas tended to progress, this is not the case for systems with low impact from human activity and specialist common bird populations. The latter significantly reflect the state of biocenosis and the biotope, and therefore progress towards SDG15. With more stringent ecological requirements than generalist species, their abundance is closely linked to degrees of habitat disturbance. Between 2014 and 2019, the number of so-called "specialist" common birds decreased by 3% in metropolitan France. This is due to habitat degradation or loss and decline in insect populations. These trends are causing the homogenisation of bird communities and the depletion of species.






FOR MORE INFORMATION

- [The 17 Sustainable Development Goals - Agenda 2030](#)
- [Indicateurs pour le suivi national des objectifs de développement durable - INSEE](#)

Fact Sheet: France's progress towards the five Sustainable Development Goals for the Planet

Figure 1: Examples ⁽¹⁾ of developments⁽²⁾ in some of the 5 Planet SDG indicators

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION 	 Collective sanitation systems compliant to performance: 98.6% ³	+5.7 points between 2013 and 2018	
	 Volume of water withdrawals ⁴ : 32.3 billion m ³	3.5% between 2013 and 2018	
	 Population with water supply that does not meet physico-chemical standards: 2.3%	+1.3 points between 2013 and 2018	
12 RESPONSIBLE PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION 	 Circular economy jobs: 1,217 million FTEs	+6.7% between 2013 and 2018	
	 Domestic material consumption per capita: 11.6 tonnes	-3.3% between 2013 and 2018	
	 Material footprint per capita: 13.9 tonnes	0.7% between 2013 and 2018	
13 RELATIVE MEASURES IN COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE 	 Carbon footprint per capita: 8.2 t CO ₂ eq ⁵	-11.8% between 2015 and 2020	
	 Greenhouse gases per capita: 5.4 t CO ₂ eq ⁵	-15.6% between 2015 and 2020	
	 Compensation for natural disasters: €1,515 million	103.4% between 2015 and 2020	
14 LIFE BELOW WATER 	 Marine protected areas ¹ : 23.3%	+ 7.1 points between 2015 and 2020 ¹	
	 Nitrogenous nutrient flows to the sea: 461 kt/an	-4.4% between 2014 and 2019	
	 Transitional and coastal water mass in good condition: 40.5%	One data in 2015	
15 LIFE ON LAND 	 Land protected areas in Metropolitan France ⁶ : 1.50%	+0.15 points between 2015 and 2020	
	 Specialist common bird population Base index value 100 in 1989: 64	-3.0% between 2014 and 2019	
	 Natural habitats in favourable conservation status: 20% in 2018	Unable to indicate progress	

Trend towards the SDGs evaluated according to Eurostat methodology					
	Significantly favourable		Moderately unfavourable		Method not applicable
	Moderately favourable		Significantly unfavourable		

¹This table includes 15 of the 36 indicators related to the 5 Planet SDGs analysed.

²Trends observed over a period of 5 years since the last available value. According to data availability, the duration of the observation period may vary.

³The proportion of collective sanitation systems compliant with performance is 98.6% in 2018 (last known value). It increased by 5.7 points since 2013.

⁴Trends compared with numerical objectives of public policy.

⁵Provisional data.

⁶"Terrestrial protected areas" provides the proportion of French land benefiting from strong protection. This indicator does not cover all the types of protected areas, only national parks, nature reserves, biological reserves and sites subject to a prefectural decree for the protection of biotopes or geotopes.

Source: Insee, Indicateurs pour le suivi national des objectifs de développement durable, January 2022. Treatment: SDES, 2022