



PRESS RELEASE

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Organisations receiving donations

LA FÉDÉRATION FRANÇAISE DES BANQUES ALIMENTAIRES

The *Fédération Française des Banques Alimentaires* (FBBA) is a federation of 79 food banks (FBs) and 29 branches covering mainland France, Martinique, Guadeloupe and La Réunion. FFBA is one of the four network heads responsible for food aid in France, alongside *Restaurants du cœur*, the French Red Cross and *Secours populaire français*. It receives subsidies from the State and the European Union, as well as donations in kind, to redistribute foodstuffs through its network to food aid associations, local social action centres (*Centres Communaux d'Action Sociale* - Ccas) and community grocery shops, which then allocate them to the beneficiaries. In 2023, more than 6,000 organisations benefited from food bank supplies, enabling them to serve 224 million meals to 2.4 million beneficiaries, according to the FFBA. Against a backdrop of strong growth in its budget, the FFBA has not been able to drive forward the changes in its network that are necessary for the effective and secure deployment of its activities.

A growth crisis caused by sharply rising subsidies and organisational shortcomings

The FFBA's budget has increased fivefold between 2019 (€9.4m) and 2023 (€47m), mainly due to a sharp rise in public funding from the French government and the European Union since 2020, against a backdrop of a health crisis and high food price inflation. Against this backdrop, the FFBA had set itself the strategy of also increasing the resources it collected from the public (in particular by counting on the recognition of public utility obtained in February 2023) and diversifying its missions to go beyond food logistics. To do this, it had to strengthen its role as network leader and acquire new skills through a number of recruitments.

The context of rapid growth in the federation's overall resources, and the transformation of the network's economic and financial model from one based mainly on food donations to a diversified model seeking more financial donations, made it necessary to establish rigorous processes for collecting donations and monitoring their use. However, due to a lack of appropriate skills and recruitment of permanent staff to key positions, the federation's role as network leader has remained limited, with no real capacity to ensure the deployment of a common strategy by the network; and management processes have remained poorly defined, with a number of damaging consequences.

An organisation that has not allowed for the expected ramp-up and left budgets unused; poor traceability of subsidies

Public subsidies received by the FFBA have tripled between 2019 and 2023 (from €6.6m to €22.5m). They have been used at a slow rate, particularly between 2021 and 2023, as shown by the more than proportional growth

in funds carried over pending use between 2021 and 2023 (€4.2m, €17.8m and €23m), even though it was the urgency that had motivated the growth in public funds allocated. This situation is partly the result of the timetable for the payment of grants, some of which were paid at the end of 2022 and 2023, but above all of internal difficulties in increasing logistical capacity and optimising processing times. This is compounded by insufficient monitoring of the use of grants, due to the immaturity of the finance function, which lacks the necessary accounting tools.

Consequently, the Directorate General for Social Cohesion (DGCS) cannot maintain a high level of subsidies to a federation that is not in a position to use them in a timely manner with its network. From the next financial year onwards, the subsidies granted to the FFBA should be calibrated according to the latter's capacity to disburse them rapidly, under rigorous conditions of traceability.

Poorly applied accounting rules for the use of funds raised from public generosity, inadequate financial communication

The FFBA has not taken the measure of its accounting obligations as an association receiving resources from the generosity of the public.

Repeated shortcomings in the construction of reference accounting documents were noted, contributing to inadequate financial communication. The rules governing their construction have not been discussed or approved by the federal directorate or governance. They are arbitrary and unstable, leading to obvious errors, such as the recording of zero operating costs.

Public procurement rules not respected for purchases other than foodstuffs, purchasing organisation needs to be reviewed

The FFBA only complies with the public procurement code for its purchases of foodstuffs, and not for its other purchases such as IT services. However, its status as a contracting authority (since from 2019 to 2023, its resources from public subsidies provided for in its budgets exceed 50 % of its total resources) requires it to do so regardless of the subject of the order. In addition, the people who sign purchasing documents (contracts, quotes, invoices with companies) must have formal signing authority, which is not the case in most cases. In order to have legally secure and economically efficient purchasing procedures, the FFBA should therefore reform its entire purchasing organisation.

In short, despite the unwavering commitment of the many volunteers at its head office and in its network, whose work and dedication are not in question, and despite its central role in food aid, the FFBA as an institution has not been able to keep pace with the growth in funding allocated to it. It has not been able to spend its funding according to the desired timetable, to report accurately on the use of funds from state subsidies and public generosity, or to comply with accounting and public procurement requirements. This situation is linked to the lack of a rigorous management process within the federation, itself the result of an inappropriate human resources policy. It is also the result of being too far removed from the network to be able to present itself to the State as a partner guaranteeing the rapid and appropriate use of the subsidies entrusted to it. The FFBA now needs to take a firm grip on its operations as a whole.

[Read the report](#)

The Court of Accounts ensures that public money is used properly and informs citizens accordingly.

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