



## PRESS RELEASE

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Entities and public policies

# THE ECOLOGICAL TRANSITION

**As warnings from the international scientific community (IPCC, IPBES) multiply, the impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss intensify, and public policies implemented to address these challenges take on increasing importance, the Court of Accounts has published the first annual report by financial oversight bodies devoted to ecological transition. This report provides an overall assessment of public action, seeks to evaluate its coherence and effectiveness, and puts forward recommendations to speed up the implementation of the transition, in a context of strained public finances. This publication follows on from work already carried out by the financial oversight bodies, in particular the 2024 annual public report devoted to adaptation to climate change. It aims to become an annual reference document on these policies and their effects, providing decision-makers and the public with accessible information based on the findings of the oversight bodies. This first edition does not claim to cover all aspects of the ecological transition, but it does establish a number of findings that the Court intends to follow up and explore in greater depth in its future work.**

### **Real but still insufficient progress**

France has committed to reducing its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 55% by 2030 and to achieving carbon neutrality by 2050, while protecting biodiversity, air quality and water resources. With regard to these objectives, some positive results are worth highlighting: GHG emissions have fallen by more than 30% since 1990, several atmospheric pollutants have declined and structural policies have been implemented in the areas of water and waste. However, this progress remains insufficient. The rate of emissions reduction has slowed and achieving carbon neutrality by 2050 seems increasingly uncertain. France's total carbon footprint, which includes imported emissions linked to domestic consumption, is on the rise. The decline in biodiversity is accelerating, as shown by the 31% decrease in specialist bird populations since 1989. Adaptation to climate change is lagging behind at an alarming rate, while its effects are multiplying: heatwaves, droughts, fires and floods. In these circumstances, the Court calls for stronger evaluation and greater coherence in the policies pursued. In particular, it recommends setting quantified targets for reducing the carbon footprint in the National Low Carbon Strategy (SNBC), broken down by sector, in order to better reflect the reality of France's environmental impact.

### **Multiple public policy levers, still too fragmented**

The success of the ecological transition requires the joint mobilisation of various levers – regulation, taxation, energy efficiency, expenditure planning – which must be coordinated in a coherent manner. At the institutional level, the creation of the General Secretariat for Ecological Planning (SGPE) in 2022 marked an important step forward. Reporting to the Prime Minister, it has produced a low-carbon roadmap and coordinated interministerial action. The Court recommends that its role be strengthened so that it retains its full capacity to drive, monitor and support decision-making. At the local level, local authorities play a decisive role. However, greater convergence between national objectives and local dynamics is needed. The financial oversight bodies have noted inconsistencies and a lack of coordination in areas such as responding to coastal

erosion and waste management. The Court calls for better coordination of existing instruments and enhanced dialogue between the State and local authorities. Sustainable financing and digital monitoring tools are also needed to ensure the transparency and effectiveness of local policies

### **A considerable investment effort, in need of better targeting**

Achieving carbon neutrality by 2050 will require doubling current investments by 2030. The requirements amount to more than €200 billion per year, including approximately €100 billion in additional funding for climate change mitigation, plus expenditure related to adaptation, biodiversity protection, the circular economy and the fight against pollution. Today, private actors – households and businesses – account for nearly three-quarters of these investments. The Court stresses the importance of identifying their financial capacities and defining comparative scenarios in order to target the most effective and least costly incentive tools for public finances. It recommends strengthening the Multiannual Strategy for Financing the Ecological Transition (SPAFTE), published for the first time in 2024, and from now on submitting it to Parliament in the spring, before the budget debate. The “green budgets” of the State and local authorities must be consolidated to become genuine decision-making tools and enable rigorous selection of expenditure. The ecological transition must be part of a multi-year budgetary programme that is consistent with climate commitments, based on clear priorities, enhanced coordination and sustained political will.

### **An indisputable fact: the cost of inaction is higher than that of transition**

Global warming is already weighing heavily on public finances, economic growth and the quality of life of French citizens. Agricultural crises, the costs of heatwaves to the health system, the floods in Hauts-de-France in 2023 and Cyclone Chido in Mayotte in 2024 represent several hundred million euros each year, and projections indicate that the annual cost of climate-related disasters could almost double by 2050. Conversely, every euro invested in prevention saves up to three euros in avoided damage. The Banque de France and the Network for Greening the Financial System (NGFS) emphasise that the transition to carbon neutrality is much less costly than inaction: in France, the status quo would result in a loss of 11.4 percentage points of GDP by 2050, while an orderly transition would limit this decline. Globally, the cost of the transition is estimated at 1.2 points of GDP, compared with 15 points for inaction, confirming the urgency of acting without delay. The choice is clear: investing early and heavily in the ecological transition is both an environmental imperative and a rational and economically sound decision. The ecological transition is not just one public policy among many: it must permeate all policies, both national and regional, and be based on specific governance, systematic integration, credible and multi-year trajectories, and effective and equitable methods of action. With this first annual report, the Court aims to contribute to the public debate and promote a faster, more effective and fairer transition.

[Read the report](#)

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

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## **4<sup>e</sup> CAMPAGNE de participation citoyenne**

**de la Cour et des chambres régionales  
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