

Beyond the numbers

Sustainable development 2025 review



Foreword

2025, FROM ACTION TO TRANSFORMATION

In 2025, Expertise France's Sustainable Development Department continued its commitment alongside a wide range of stakeholders, consolidating its role in international cooperation in support of ecological and social transitions. Thanks to the support of its technical and financial partners — foremost among which are the European Union and the French Development Agency (AFD) —, the department continues to support resilient, inclusive and sustainable transition pathways on the ground, and to contribute to the implementation of major international agreements, particularly those on climate and biodiversity.

This booklet sets out Expertise France's contribution to issues relating to climate, biodiversity, the energy transition, agriculture, urban development, the blue economy and the circular economy. It reflects a collective effort that extends beyond the boundaries of the Sustainable Development department alone.

Its aim is to demonstrate, in concrete terms, what these interventions actually achieve. Beyond key figures that underpin our areas of action, it brings together a selection of documented outcomes – changes in practices, institutional developments, and dynamics of cooperation – gathered from practitioners on the ground in the countries where we operate. These examples are by no means exhaustive; they have been chosen for their illustrative power and their ability to embody, in all their diversity, the changes we are hoping and helping to bring about.

It is this focus on real, measurable and tangible impacts that guides our approach to accountability and informs our collective thinking for the years to come.



Nicolas CHENET

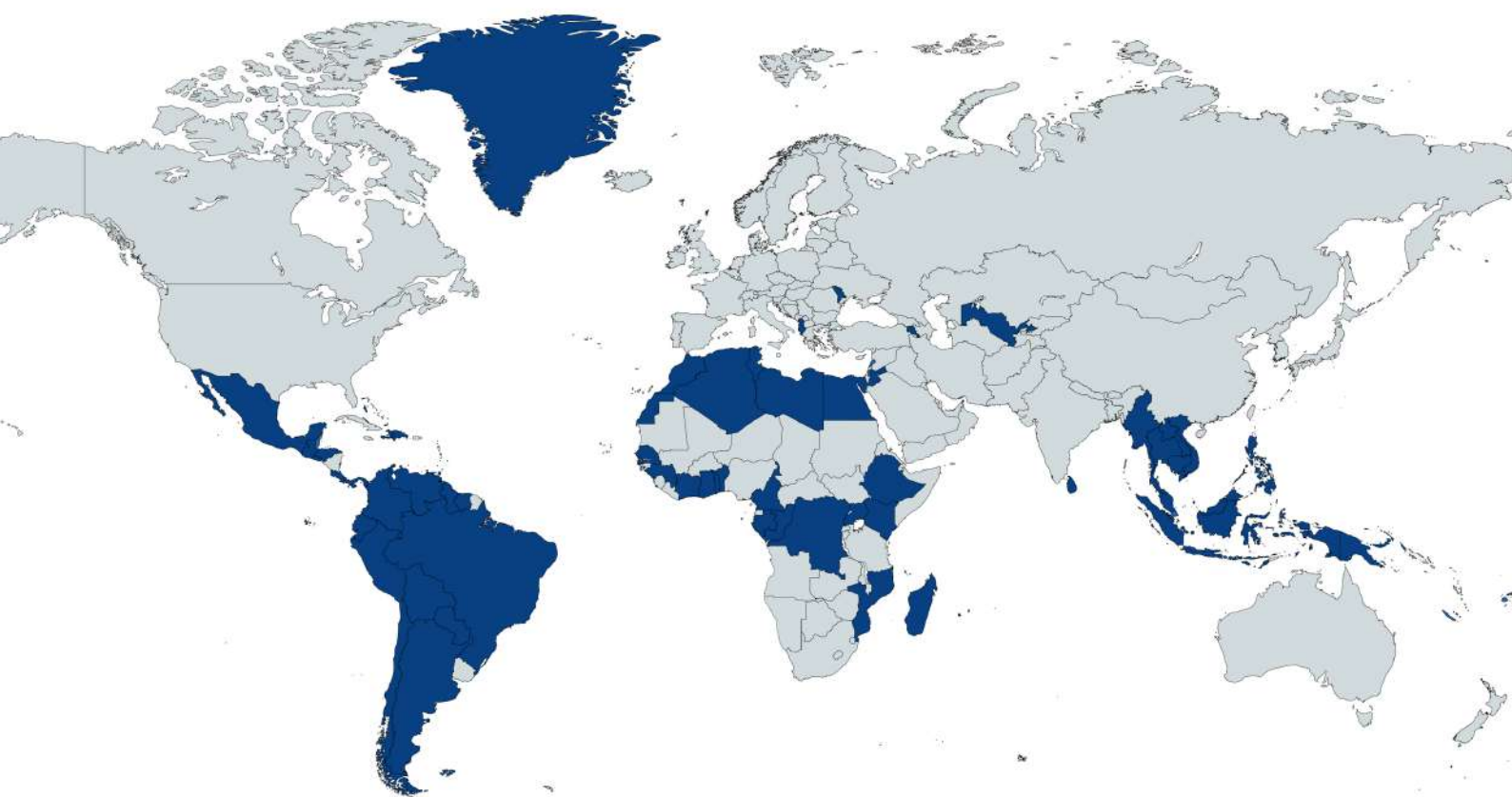
*Head of the Sustainable Development
Department*

The agency's interventions on sustainable development themes in 2025

62 countries of intervention

25 Overseas Countries and Territories¹

including **13** countries supported in implementing their international environmental commitments (the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework)



31

millions of euros in contract volume

41

average implementation time in months

7.8

average budget per project in millions of euros

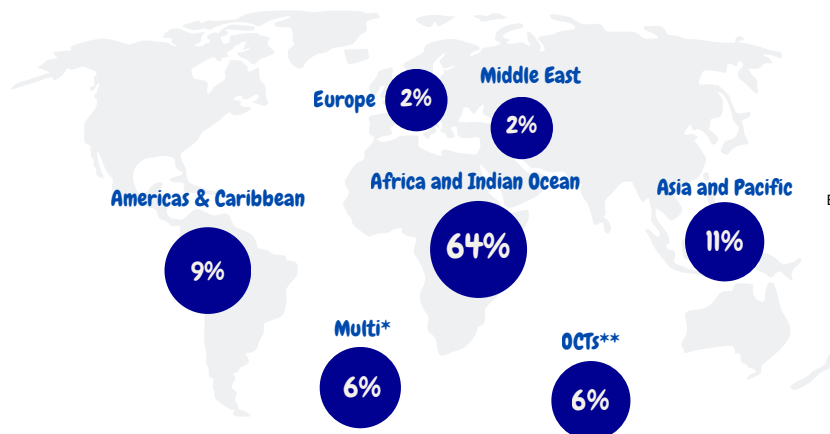
[1] The status of Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) applies to countries and territories that are constitutionally linked to a Member State of the European Union but are not part of the EU territory. For France, these are New Caledonia, French Polynesia, Saint Barthélemy, Saint Pierre and Miquelon, the French Southern and Antarctic Territories, and Wallis and Futuna. For Denmark, it is Greenland. For the Netherlands, it is Aruba and the Netherlands Antilles (Bonaire, Curaçao, Saba, Saint Eustatius and Sint Maarten, the Dutch part of the island of Saint Martin). The 12 British Overseas Territories are Anguilla, Bermuda, the Cayman Islands, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands, the Falkland Islands, Montserrat, Pitcairn Islands, Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha, British Antarctic Territory, British Indian Ocean Territory, Turks and Caicos Islands, and British Virgin Islands.

Our portfolio at a glance

2,528 organisations supported on sustainable development issues

Where do we operate?

Supported organisations per region

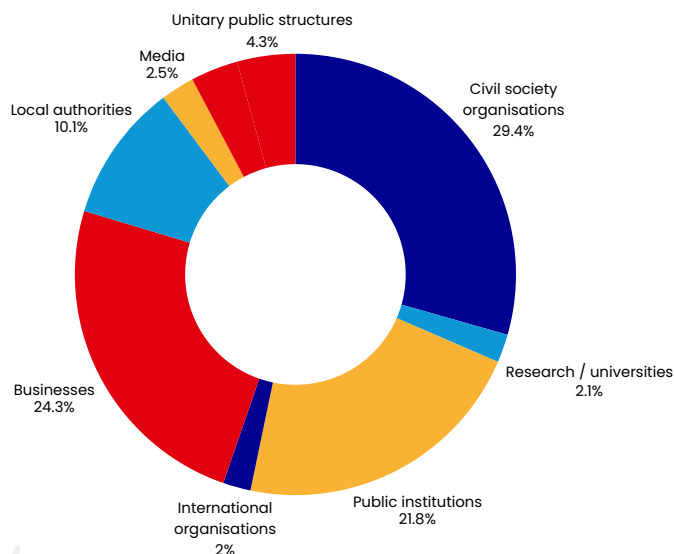


* multi-country organisations

** Overseas Countries and Territories

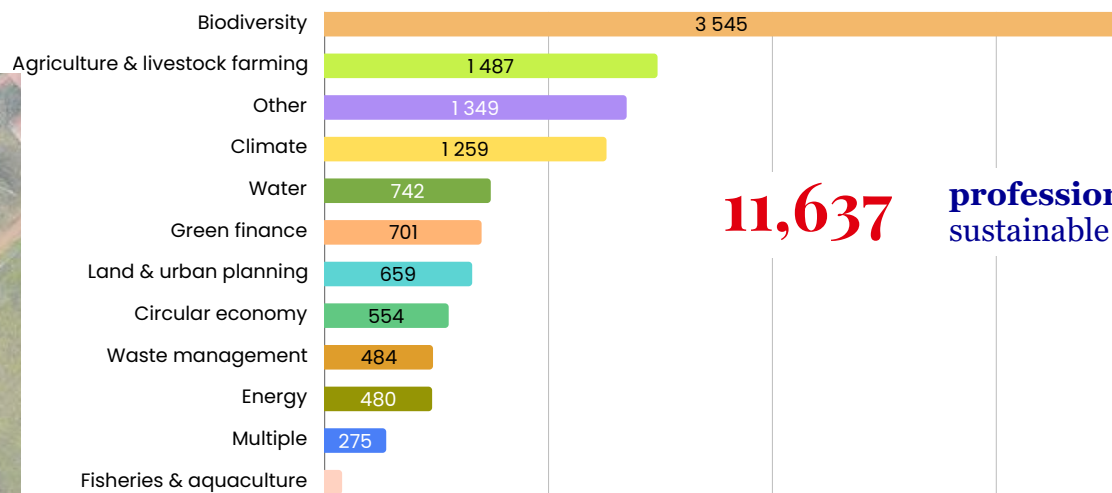
Who do we support?

Supported organisations per type



Who do we train?

People trained by sustainable development theme

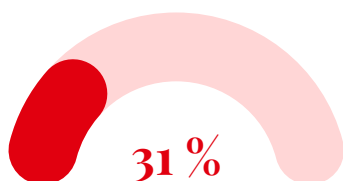


11,637

professionals trained on sustainable development issues

Our portfolio at a glance

161,001 direct beneficiaries
of transition
initiatives



of whom are boy and
girl students

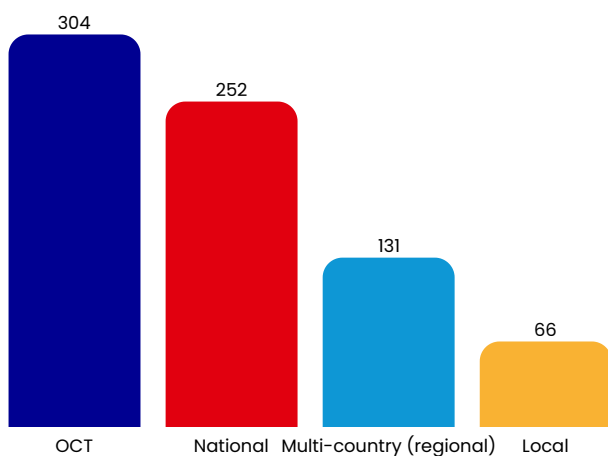


Land management training with the National Training Programme for Urban Professions, Yaoundé, May 2025; Plateforme Urbaine Cameroun project

855 documents produced to support
the transitions

At what scale do we operate?

International, national, local: a multi-level action



of which

4 out of 10

directly contribute to shaping
**regulatory or normative
frameworks**

11 millions

hectares of **marine protected areas**
with improved management



The figures and areas of intervention provide a picture of the breadth of the department's action. The following pages aim to convey its depth. Through an exercise derived from the outcome harvesting methodology conducted in 2026, a selection of outcomes were documented to illustrate what the projects actually produce: structured cooperation among stakeholders, strengthened public policies, visible transformations in local communities, investments triggered, and a contribution to climate action that runs across the entire portfolio. These five dimensions do not claim to be exhaustive; they showcase, through examples chosen for their illustrative power, the nature and reach of the changes to which the department contributes.

Dynamics of cooperation and partnership: creating the conditions for collective action

Faced with challenges as complex as the preservation of biodiversity, adaptation to climate change, access to clean energy for all and sustainable land management, no single institution can act alone. One of the key contributions of the department's projects is to create, strengthen or **sustain opportunities for cooperation between stakeholders** who previously often operated in isolation or in silos.

The observed outcomes show that these collaborative initiatives take various forms: professional networks, multi-stakeholder platforms, inter-ministerial dialogue, coordination mechanisms between technical departments or regional communities of practice. Beyond simply bringing stakeholders together, the projects help to establish a culture of collaborative working, encourage the exchange of experiences and build shared frameworks that endure long after the activities have ended.

Second national workshop in Tunisia, February 2025, BIODEV2030 project



“NGOs working on biodiversity, holders of traditional knowledge, government ministries, universities, businesses and banks, among others... all worked in isolation. Thanks to the workshops, we were able to collaborate more effectively. We've become a close-knit group dedicated to addressing biodiversity issues.”

National Focal Point for the Convention on Biological Diversity in Benin, Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development

The **Varuna** project, through *Réserves Naturelles de France*, has brought together 118 managers of marine protected areas from the island territories of the south-western Indian Ocean within a professional network that is now recognised at regional level. Thanks to peer-to-peer training and mentoring schemes, the managers now have a permanent forum for exchanging best practice and providing mutual support, strengthening their **collective capacity to address common challenges**.

This dynamic is also pursued in projects supporting public policy. In **Cameroon**, the dialogue platform created by the **Plateforme Urbaine Cameroun** project was transformed, on the initiative of its members, into a **National Association of Urban Stakeholders** (*Association Nationale des Acteurs de l'Urbain*). This transition from a project-led initiative to an autonomous structure reflects the stakeholders' own ownership of the approach and ensures that dialogue continues beyond the funding period.

Through **BIODEV2030**, ministries responsible for the environment, agriculture, fisheries, energy and mining have developed unprecedented working relationships, enabling **better integration of biodiversity issues into sectoral policies**. In several countries, these dialogue mechanisms have been institutionalised by decree – a structural legacy of the project which, by creating forums for coordination where none previously existed, set in motion dynamics of inter-ministerial cooperation intended to continue beyond the project's duration.

Similarly, the **REGUL** project in Kolwezi (DRC) has led the land and town planning departments to change their practices: applications for land titles and planning permission are now subject to cross-checks, thereby reducing administrative inconsistencies and improving **coordination between departments**.

“ It would be highly desirable to see [exchanges among marine protected area managers] continue, as they provide a space conducive to shared learning at the regional level. Despite differences between countries, we often face similar challenges, and these exchanges allow us to explore the various approaches implemented to address them.

Lisa Ah Shee Tee, Research Project Manager, Reef Conservation
Voluntary marine conservation area



Capacity-building session in the Philippines on engagement and public policies targeting the private sector to improve air quality, organised by the AFD-funded AQIP project, November 2025

At regional level, the **AQIP** project has fostered the emergence of an informal network of air quality practitioners across **ASEAN** member countries, where technical exchanges had previously been very limited. The contacts established during workshops and study visits continue to be drawn upon to share solutions and compare national approaches.

Strengthening public policy: influencing institutional frameworks to bring about sustainable social change

Sustainable social transformation requires changes to regulatory frameworks, institutional capacities and the ways in which public actors coordinate their efforts. It is precisely on these areas that the department focuses a significant part of its work: by **supporting legislative processes, equipping public administrations** to plan and make decisions based on reliable data, and **creating the conditions for dialogue between stakeholders**.

In 2025, several projets have helped to provide governments with an evidence base without which public decision-making would remain fragile. In the **British Virgin Islands**, the **RESEMBID** programme has enabled the expansion of the water quality monitoring network from four to 36 sites spread across several islands, with established protocols and maps of pollution sources – data that now informs planning decisions and lays the groundwork for the development of environmental legislation.

In **Sri Lanka**, with support from the **Green Recovery Facility** project, the Ministry of Industry and the operators of 16 industrial parks have jointly developed national guidelines on eco-industrial parks, an assessment framework and transformation plans, moving from a mere understanding of the concept to its operational adoption.



Water quality monitoring programme in the British Virgin Islands, supported by RESEMBID and implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of the Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change, 2025

In **Albania**, the publication of a national assessment of the potential for high-efficiency cogeneration and district heating and cooling provided, for the first time, a quantified picture of the country's energy efficiency gains – an essential prerequisite for targeted investment and alignment with the European directive as part of the EU accession process.

In **Guinea**, the **PEFFAG** project has developed a **functional database** listing nearly 1,300 poultry farms, the data from which is already being used by the Ministry of livestock as a decision-making tool: the first step towards a better understanding and governance for the sector.

These analytical foundations have, in some cases, directly led to the adoption of key policy and regulatory documents. In **Morocco**, the **Ghabati Hayati** project enabled the updating of the **Master plan for protected areas**, whose previous version dated from 1995: the new plan, adopted in December 2025, extends the network from 154 to 197 sites of ecological and biological interest and provides the authorities with an updated framework to guide national conservation policy and contribute to the objectives of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

In **Sint Maarten**, with the CORENA project supported by **RESEMBID**, a newly adopted procedures manual now incorporates **biodiversity data directly into works authorisation decisions**, thereby creating an institutional link between environmental knowledge and the regulation of development on the island.



Presentation of Bougainville's "Green and blue policy" in Papua New Guinea – whose revision was supported by the FCCB project in 2025 – at the 42nd meeting of the Green Climate Fund's Board of Directors

“*CORENA is based on the idea that our marine and coastal resources are not managed properly. This is due to limited capacity, limited data, limited regulations. CORENA wanted to build on all these areas and create evidence-based to work towards to more sustainable management of coastal zones.*

Ildiko 'Kippy' Gilders, Policy Officer, Ministry of Public Housing, Spatial Planning, Environment and Infrastructure (VROMI), Sint Maarten. CORENA - COastal RESilience Needs Assessment - was a project supported by RESEMBID between January 2023 and February 2025

At regional level, the **ASEAN** Member States have endorsed a joint strategy for the sustainable management of ship-generated waste, demonstrating the capacity of the Sustainable Development Department to support multilateral consultation processes culminating in a framework shared by several countries. The **AQIP** project has also contributed to shifting the very concept of air quality management from a single-institution function towards a **cross-cutting and cross-sectoral policy issue**, with several Member States beginning to incorporate its guidelines into their national policies even before their formal adoption.

Across the 15 **BIODEV2030** partner countries, structured dialogue between institutional and non-governmental stakeholders has led to concrete progress in public policy frameworks: **sectoral action plans** that directly incorporate the project's recommendations, including the Energy Action Plan in Uganda and the Plantation Regulations in Vietnam, and better alignment of national biodiversity strategies with the commitments under the Kunming-Montreal Global Framework.

Transformations at the local level: tangible changes in practices and territories



Support of the analysis of the silvicultural model for forest concessions with a view to the sustainable management of forests and biodiversity in Guatemala. This initiative is supported by Euroclima and implemented with the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources and the National Council for Protected Areas.

Beyond their contribution to public policy or cooperation frameworks, the projects generate **transformations that are directly observable at the local level**. The documented outcomes show changes in the practices of local authorities, government departments, natural area managers, businesses and even the beneficiary communities alike. These shifts are reflected in **better resource management, more effective public services and the emergence of new economic activities**.

In several Caribbean island territories, the **RESEMBID** programme strengthened the management of natural areas in concrete ways. On **Klein Curaçao**, a management plan led to the introduction of an annual visitor cap, a licensing system for tour operators, and a dedicated authority responsible for monitoring and managing this nature reserve.

In **Anguilla**, the six marine parks now have management plans, a common governance framework and better-equipped rangers to carry out ecological monitoring and protect habitats. At Lac Bay (**Bonaire**), rangers now maintain a permanent presence on site, seagrass beds are being restored and visitors are better informed thanks to new facilities. In each of these cases, the projects enabled a shift from largely theoretical protection to the active, **day-to-day management of natural areas**.

These transformations extend to urban areas as well. In Kolwezi (**DRC**), the **REGUL** project helped bring about a shift in local authorities' practices during relocation operations linked to mining. The need for public infrastructure — schools, roads, networks and collective facilities — is now **factored into negotiations with mining companies**, reducing the financial burden on local administrations.

In the field of urban services, the **GEDEC** project supported five Togolese municipalities in **structuring their waste management systems**. The municipalities now have technical officers, management tools and functional infrastructure enabling them to exercise their responsibilities. Field surveys show an **improvement in the regularity of waste collection, a reduction in illegal dumping and a more positive perception of neighbourhood cleanliness** among residents, although challenges remain around waste recovery and the long-term sustainability of equipment.

In **Guinea**, the **PEFFAG** project built the technical capacity of the poultry sector at two levels: staff in the **regional laboratories** and the **central veterinary laboratory** in Conakry are now able to independently carry out and interpret serological tests for avian diseases; and 20 teachers from the **four national schools of agriculture and livestock farming** have been accredited to deliver training to farmers, laying the foundations for a sustainable training offer that will remain accessible beyond the project's lifetime.



Support for the development of the waste management sector in the cities of Tsevié, Atakpamé, Sokodé, Kara and Dapaong in Togo, through the GEDEC project, implemented between June 2023 and July 2026

Local economic dynamics are also affected. In **Ivory Coast**, the **MAX** project demonstrated that improved access to electrical appliances could transform energy use in rural areas. The acquisition of freezers, blenders or other appliances not only led to several thousand new applications for connection to the grid, but also encouraged the **creation of numerous income-generating activities** – including the sale of ice, fish preservation, food processing and small local services – mainly run by women. Access to energy thus becomes a **driver of local economic development**, extending far beyond domestic use and ultimately enabling the energy supply service to become both profitable and sustainable.

Taken together, these outcomes show that the projects are gradually changing the way territories are managed, services are provided and resources are used. Whilst these changes are often local and gradual, they represent the first tangible signs of the transformations sought through the department's interventions.



A Biodiversity Fresk workshop at Rogers firm, a winning project of the Indian Ocean Business Biodiversity Fund (FBBOI) which aims to integrate biodiversity into the Rogers Group's development strategy through an ecosystem-based approach, in partnership with the Mauritius Chamber of Agriculture and Reef Conservation

Leverage effect and mobilisation of investment: creating the conditions for scaling up

The department's projects are most often implemented upstream of investment. Their contribution is therefore not measured solely by the funding they directly mobilise, but also by their **ability to create the conditions enabling other stakeholders – governments, development banks, and public and private investors – to commit to larger-scale investments**. The documented outcomes indicate that this 'investment readiness' function represents a key driver of change. The projects produce the data, analyses, feasibility studies, economic models and governance frameworks that **reduce technical and financial uncertainties and bring projects are sufficiently to the level of maturity needed to attract funding**.

In Ecuador, as part of the **Euroclima** programme, support for the production of the first national assessment of forest degradation and its socio-economic impacts provided the government with a **robust scientific basis on which to strengthen its environmental policies**. This work directly contributed to the mobilisation of **30 million dollars from the LEAF Coalition** in 2025, illustrating the leverage that well-targeted technical assistance can generate.

Strengthen research in the forestry sector, the dissemination of good practices, and the creation of forums for exchange, in order to support the implementation of Ecuador's Nationally Determined Contribution; this initiative is supported by Euroclima programme with the Ministry of the Environment, Water and Ecological Transition from July 2023 to September 2025





This logic is also evident in **Sri Lanka** through the **Green Recovery Facility**. The project supported the authorities in preparing two investment projects on energy recovery from biomass and effluent management in industrial parks. Technical studies, economic analyses, governance mechanisms and financing options were developed to the point where the projects became genuinely **'ready to invest'**. The Sri Lankan Board of Investments now has sufficiently well-developed proposals to open discussions with investors and financial institutions **« à investir »**.

In other contexts, the outcomes are more focused on creating the preconditions for future investment. In **Uzbekistan**, AFD-funded technical assistance helped to introduce geothermal energy into national discussions on the modernisation of district heating. As this technology had not featured in initial government strategies, technical exchanges with the French Bureau of Geological and Mining Research led the authorities to commission, in collaboration for Expertise France, an initial study of the country's geothermal potential. This represents an **essential prerequisite for any investment decision** and opens up the prospect of diversifying the country's energy sources and infrastructure.

By generating reliable knowledge, structuring projects and supporting decision-makers through to the stage at which an investment becomes viable, the department's teams help to **transform intentions into concrete funding opportunities**. This **leverage effect**, which rarely features in traditional indicators, nonetheless represents a significant contribution of the projects.

“ This initiative had had a real and measurable impact on our communities, demonstrating that even small changes can lead to substantial savings in both energy consumption and household expenses... Since the cost of living is a major concern for both residents and policymakers, empowering individuals to adopt energy-saving practices is not only sensible, it is essential.

Kristen Smith, Senior Energy Advisor at the Cayman Islands Ministry of Sustainable Development

Meeting between the French Bureau of Geological and Mining Research and an Uzbek delegation comprising representatives from the Ministry of Energy, the Ministry of Geology, the Uzbek Fund for Reconstruction and Development, and the district heating operator, November 2025



Contributions to climate challenges: co-benefits supporting the transition

Climate issues permeate the department's entire portfolio. From the energy transition to the circular economy, from changes in agricultural practices to the sustainable management of natural resources, and the integration of climate considerations into public policies and regulatory frameworks, the projects led or supported by the department contribute, to varying degrees and in various ways, to the ecological transition of territories and systems in which they operate. Some are directly aligned with partner countries' **Nationally Determined Contributions** (NDCs), supporting their capacity to fulfil their commitments under the Paris Agreement. This section aims to highlight this contribution in all its diversity.

In the **Ivory Coast**, the **Low-carbon Transition** project illustrates what long-term technical support can achieve in terms of a country's climate governance. In June 2025, the Climate Act was passed, accompanied by a decree establishing the National Climate Transparency System: for the first time, climate monitoring and reporting were enshrined in Ivorian law. At the same time, late 2024, the Ivory Coast submitted its first Enhanced Transparency Report to the UNFCCC, compiling consolidated data from 12 ministries. These two developments signal a fundamental shift: climate transparency has become a state responsibility, rather than an externally driven process.

Project to integrate renewable energy and energy-efficiency technologies in Anguilla, supported by the RESEMBID programme from August 2022 to April 2025: development of an integrated resource management and resilience plan and an action plan to support the national energy policy, renovation of 26 buildings, etc.



“

Since 2007, we had focused primarily on the energy supply side. But this [macroeconomic] analysis [prepared by the GRF Sri Lanka project] opened our eyes to the demand side - an angle we hadn't sufficiently taken into account. It led our teams to develop a programme dedicated to SMEs, to integrate them into the energy transition process. This shift in perspective stemmed from a review of the macroeconomic analysis report.

M. Harsha Wickramasinghe, former Director General of the Sustainable Energy Authority of Sri Lanka

In the Caribbean Overseas Countries and Territories, the **RESEMBID** programme transformed local pilot schemes into policy drivers. In the Cayman Islands, a pilot scheme to refurbish ten social housing units – which reduced electricity consumption by around 40% – provided the evidence base needed for the adoption of national energy efficiency guidelines in April 2025. In **Anguilla**, the project produced the country's first integrated national energy roadmap – a resource plan extending to 2050, an updated energy policy and a plan for the transition to electric vehicles – which is already shaping legislative reforms and grid investments.

In **Albania**, a national assessment of the potential for efficient district heating and cooling was carried out, a prerequisite for investment decisions aligned with the European Energy Efficiency Directive. In addition, two laws on waste management and extended producer responsibility were adopted, laying the foundations for a circular economy dynamic that had previously been absent from Albanian law.

“ When designing the projects in the [sustainable energy and climate] action plan, we adopted a very inclusive approach. We divided the territory into municipalities, then the municipalities into neighbourhoods, and at the neighbourhood level, we formed civil society-based consultative groups comprising representatives of women, youth, tradition institutions and neighbourhood development committees.

Hamadou Yalcouye, Director of the
Bamako Regional Development Agency

At the local level, the **Covenant of Mayors Programme in Sub-Saharan Africa** (CoMSSA), implemented in **Uganda**, **Togo** and **Ivory Coast**, illustrates climate action firmly rooted in local communities and territories. By supporting cities and medium-sized towns in drawing up **Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans**, the programme has generated lasting momentum: municipal teams now have a **better understanding of the climate and energy challenges** facing their territories, a strategic framework for taking action, and enhanced legitimacy to engage with international partners. The current phase builds on this by moving from planning to demonstration through pilot projects – air quality monitoring, solarisation of public buildings, and urban design measures to combat heat islands — conceived to pave the way for scaling up.

Support for the management of single-use plastics and expanded polystyrene in Sint-Maarten, by the RESEMBID programme





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