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OPINION

What kind of *energy transitions* for France's Overseas Territories?

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The overseas territories largely import energy that is still highly carbon-intensive (coal, fuel oil). Particularly affected by climate change, the French Overseas Territories must reconcile the inseparable and complementary objectives of energy "transition" and "autonomy". During the consultation on the energy sovereignty bill, the government stated its ambition to achieve a 100% renewable energy electricity production mix in the overseas departments and territories by 2030, and energy autonomy by 2050. These objectives are achievable provided that all public and private players are properly mobilised.

Assets for new energy ambitions in France's overseas departments and territories

To achieve this autonomy, the Overseas Territories have considerable assets in terms of renewable energies: photovoltaic and thermal solar energy, biomass, geothermal energy, renewable marine energies, and so on. Improving energy efficiency (including changes in transport and housing) represents significant potential for innovation, training and the development of local jobs.

Transitions to meet the challenges of the overseas territories and their specific characteristics

To achieve these objectives by making the most of available resources, the ESEC stresses the many different transitions that need to be made and identifies three challenges: supporting, decarbonising and developing a diversified electricity mix (with a majority of renewable energy sources) based on a dual rationale: Territorial, by adapting energy policies to the potential of each region; Transversal, by mobilising all the sectors of activity affected and providing them with specific support (financial, technical and organisational skills) with the backing of the State, public and local authorities to support this policy, which is crucial to their development.

15 recommendations

operational and financially earmarked to enable each region to adapt its decarbonisation strategy, the deployment of renewable energies and the rise of energy autonomy as much as possible, to best meet local challenges and specificities, both in terms of the timetable and the sources of production to be mobilised

1/3 of the electricity mix

in the French West Indies and Réunion will come from renewable energy sources by 2022

50%

of the energy consumed in the overseas territories is linked to mobility

THE RAPPORTEURS

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ESEC recommendations

Energy transitions adapted for overseas territories

OPINION

1 AN ENERGY MIX THAT WILL CHANGE DRAMATICALLY IN THE COMING YEARS

→ **Modernise and develop the capacity of regional electricity networks in line with changing needs** (security and efficiency of the electricity system, resilience of the network in the event of natural disasters, connection of renewable energy production to electricity distribution networks, intelligent management of the network, recharging points for electric vehicles, etc.), through dedicated funding from the State and the local authorities responsible, in the multi-annual energy plans, according to their public service obligations.

→ **Extend the national drilling risk guarantee mechanism for geothermal energy to the overseas territories, and compensate companies if their exploratory research fails**

2 TOOLS FOR A REGIONAL ENERGY TRANSITION

→ **Ask local authorities and the State to publish, for each overseas territory, the multi-annual energy programme (PPE) updated in 2024**, taking into account changes in legislation, to set out the various scenarios for development at regional level, ambitious, realistic energy transition targets, with figures (over 10, 15 and 20 years) indicating how they will be financed and implemented, and including citizens, associations and businesses.

→ **Make the multi-annual energy programme (PPE) a subject for public participation in each region** by consulting civil society, the CESERs and citizens at a very early stage (from the planning stage at regional level and locally before each project is carried out for the largest projects): debate on the deployment of electric vehicles in each overseas territory, on the social, environmental and economic acceptability of setting up small nuclear reactors in certain territories (La Réunion and New Caledonia), in order to gain a better understanding of the expectations of the population and representative organisations (citizens chosen by lot, CESERs, environmental associations, etc.)

→ **Set up training courses in electricity and renewable energies at all levels** (vocational baccalaureate, higher technician diploma, vocational degree, engineering diploma) in line with local job opportunities. Map the needs and training courses to be set up in each area by the Regions, Consular chambers, representatives of the energy industry, the Ministries of Education and Higher Education and Research.

→ **Create a mechanism for funding carbon emission avoidance actions by the Energy Regulation Commission to redirect the funding received from electricity** (formerly the CSPE - contribution to the public electricity service) from carbon-based production to low-carbon renewable production.

→ **Open a discussion on the consequences of the energy transition for local taxation** (tax on fuel consumption), in particular on a financial contribution based on the energy installation (installed power) to compensate for the shortfall in revenue for local authorities.

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