

In the face of climate change, *accelerating fair, systemic adaptation*

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International policies to combat global warming are gradually taking shape, but the current commitments made by governments will lead to a temperature rise of +4°C in France by the end of the century. This rise, already very noticeable in our country, will continue to increase as long as greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions remain unchecked. Beyond incremental adaptation to these changes, we need to rethink our territorial, social and economic organisations in a fair, systemic way to ensure their resilience.

Mitigation policies to prevent future warming, and adaptation policies to reduce the impact of current warming will need to be pursued at the same time. Mitigation seeks to limit GHG emissions and climate change arising from human activities, while adaptation aims for adjustment to the resulting effects and the limitation of our exposure to ever more likely extreme events and new, permanent climatic conditions.

2022: a year that could become the norm...

According to the French High Council for the Climate, the exceptional weather conditions in 2022 will become the norm in France by 2050-2060, with global warming reaching 2°C. France is not ready to cope. For the ESEC, the challenges of adapting to climate change are on such a scale that it is up to the public authorities – the State and local authorities – and society as a whole to take them on, accept them and rise to them. The challenge is to move from reactive to anticipatory adaptation.

In response to these impacts, France has a PNACC (National Climate Change Adaptation Plan). In a steadily warming climate, it is no longer enough to draw inspiration from past events to prepare for the future. The third plan currently being prepared proposes an adaptation trajectory of +4°C compared with the pre-industrial era.

With this draft opinion, the ESEC wishes to contribute to the development of the PNACC3 and makes 18 recommendations on adapting to climate change.

Adapting to

+4°C

in France



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Six key areas for a fair, systemic adaptation to climate change

I. Create a national legal framework for adaptation rooted in public policy

→ By including the PNACC in the future Energy-Climate Programming Act (LPEC), giving normative status to the reference warming trajectory for adaptation to climate change (TRACC) and building a grid of key indicators at national level with stakeholders for monitoring the PNACC.

Why? For the PNACC to become a component of ecological transition public policies, and for all projects and territories be able to rely on the new TRACC with indicators for monitoring continuously managed adaptation objectives.

II. Assess exposure to climate risks by involving all stakeholders

→ By carrying out climate change vulnerability studies for each region and sector, drawing up dedicated action plans for critical or already impacted sectors, and involving strategic sector committees, professional branches and employee representative bodies in the adaptation of businesses.

Why? To draw up an inventory of risks, support the most exposed regions and sectors, involve stakeholders and prevent various vulnerabilities based on gender, standard of living, place of residence, etc.

III. Avoid maladaptation

→ By building a reference framework for assessing maladaptation risks, involving civil society and incorporating the objective of social justice.

Why? To avoid the undesirable creation of new risks, the transfer of vulnerability and inappropriate investments, particularly in long-term developments.

IV. Build on biodiversity and preserve ecosystem services

→ By assessing the risks of loss of ecosystem services linked to global warming and giving priority to nature-based adaptation solutions in development operations.

Why? To ensure the resilience of the ecosystems that provide us with oxygen, water, food, etc., and because biodiversity is an asset for adaptation.

V. Systematise the analysis of adaptation issues in regional planning and projects

→ By analysing the exposure to climate risk of projects and planning documents at the various regional levels in mainland France and Overseas Territories, including town planning documents, by involving stakeholders in the social and environmental dialogue.

Why? Public, private and regional strategic documents must factor in the risks described by the new climate trajectory, while financing projects unsuited to the future climate or that lead to maladaptation must be avoided.

VI. Size a budget and sufficient resources to support territories and economic players

→ By backing up the LPEC with a multi-year public finance programme for the ecological transition that incorporates the needs associated with the PNACC, and by mapping the necessary skills and associated resources for the exposed sectors and the public services responsible for adaptation, with State support for regions and businesses.

Why? To provide financial and human support for vulnerability analyses of regions and sectors of activity, and then for adaptation plans, with solidarity mechanisms for those most at risk, and to anticipate requirements for applied research and local expertise.