




Studies & Research

ACTIVITY REPORT

2020



At the heart of AFD Group research are inequalities and efforts to reduce them, the environmental transition, management of shared resources and economic diagnoses of countries where AFD operates. The results of our research can be of use not only to decision-makers, but also to the public at large, while also highlighting the pertinence of AFD Group's operational and strategic decisions. To achieve the objectives set by the Group, the research underscores the need to work more closely with stakeholders in developing countries, at both the national and international levels.

Conducted by multi-disciplinary teams, our research allows us to co-design development trajectories with our partners and to identify public policies best suited to the contexts and geographies in question.

This 2020 report lays out the main trends in AFD Group activity in terms of geographical distribution, volume, priority areas, and value-added products. This inaugural annual edition illustrates the distinct position that research holds in the Group, notably around five flagship programs.

AFD Group's strategy for studies and research

The AFD Group's strategy for studies and research is in line with the priorities of its Strategic Orientation Plan (SOP). Divided into five flagship programs, it emphasizes public policy dialog and research in developing countries.

Why does AFD do research?

- To provide our partners with high quality research results that inform and support public policy.
- To enhance the visibility and reach of our operational and strategic activities.
- To increase our cooperation with research partners in developing countries.

Multi-disciplinary,
with a focus on
academic excellence

Innovative,
with flagship
programs and the
documentation
of emerging
phenomena

Addressing
several Sustainable
Development Goals
and contributing to
public policy dialogs

With and for
research in the
Global South



Our flagship programs

1



Inequalities

2



Commons

3



Sahel

4



Economic
analysis

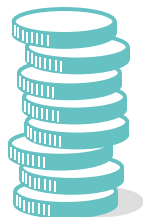
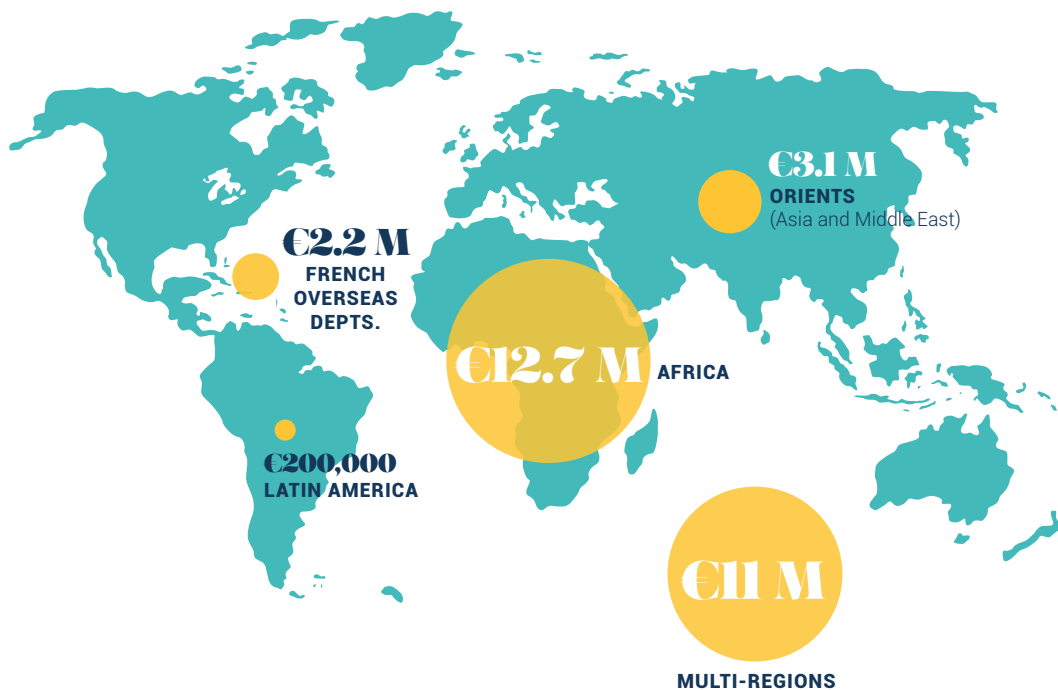
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Environmental
transitions

Studies and research funded in 2020

Amounts devoted to studies and research by region

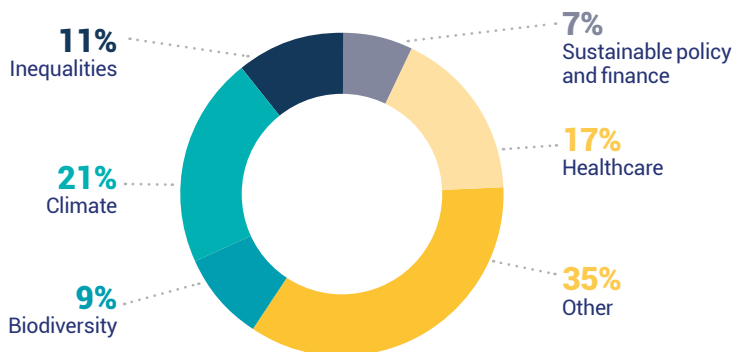


212 studies and research projects financed in 2020 for a total of:

€29.2 M

■ In 2020, 212 studies and research projects were identified, amounting to €29.2 million, which is up from 2019 (€16.5 million committed). *Mainly focused on the African continent*, the studies and research funded relate to climate, healthcare and inequalities. Most of them involve partners working in countries or territories where AFD Group operates. In addition, they are in line with the commitments made by the Group as part of its five-year strategy.

Breakdown of studies and research by topic



Focus on Africa



of studies and research in 2020 focused on Africa

THE SAHEL is a top priority for our research work



In line with AFD Group's geographic priorities, studies devoted to Africa's challenges increased significantly in 2020. Inequalities and healthcare, climate and fragility were the main topics of these studies. Several of these research programs were carried out through the Savoirs Sahel project, whose main goal was to identify and strengthen Sahelian stakeholders involved in knowledge production.

Supporting research in developing countries

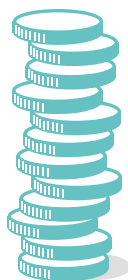
The expertise and innovation produced locally enable us to address the specific sustainable development issues of the countries concerned as closely as possible and contribute to defining their public policies. Nevertheless, research is underfunded in most of the countries where we operate: if researchers and research spaces exist, they are generally isolated, not very visible, and not well connected to the public debate and decision-makers.



With this in mind, AFD Group is now focusing on supporting national research, and consolidating networks of researchers in developing countries, in line with its objective of increasing research partnerships and carrying out projects to strengthen and promote research capacities in the countries where it operates.

The Group supports and assists research in developing countries in various ways:

- by systematically involving teams from developing countries in the research it finances
- by financing projects to reinforce research capacities in developing countries
- by supporting numerous initiatives to assist young researchers
- by producing knowledge on research in developing countries through publications or events



€24 M

is the financial equivalent of studies and research work carried out with the involvement of at least one partner from the region concerned (i.e. 82% of projects)

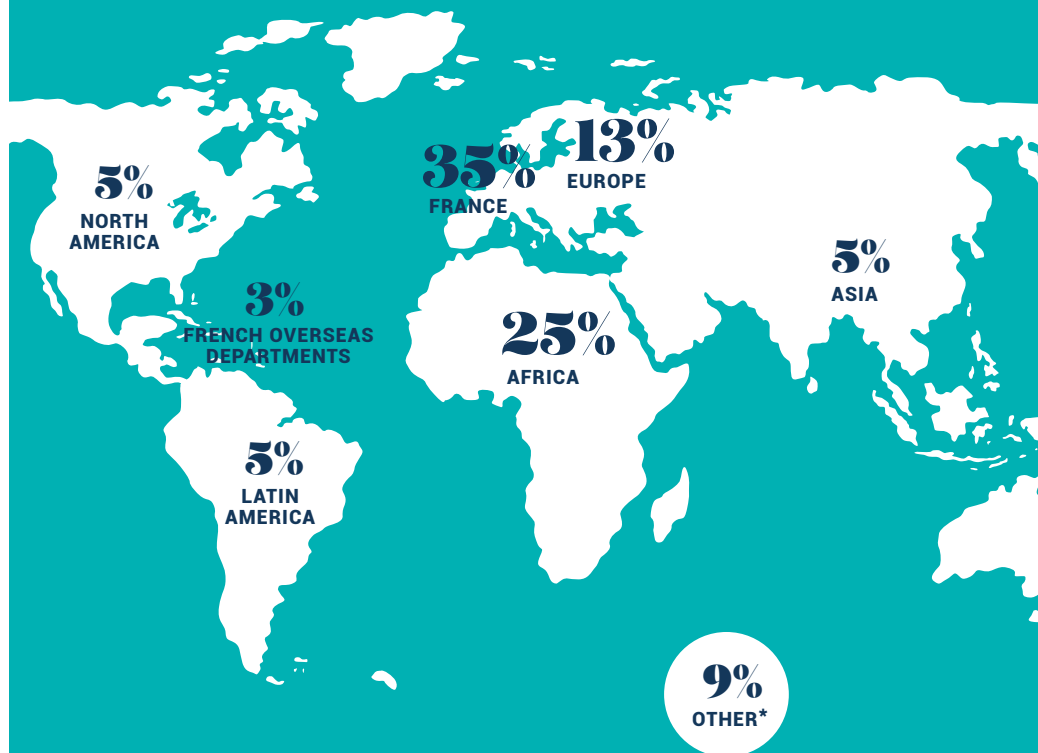
Rethinking international funding for African research, a key issue

African research is still poorly represented globally. A policy paper, published in March 2020, describes its characteristics and challenges, the procedures and implications of the international aid that funds research in Africa, as well as the tensions tied to strategic choices around aid. The paper proposes steps that donors and policymakers can take to put in place measurement, evaluation, and incentive systems, and build a coalition of stakeholders in this area.

Our partners

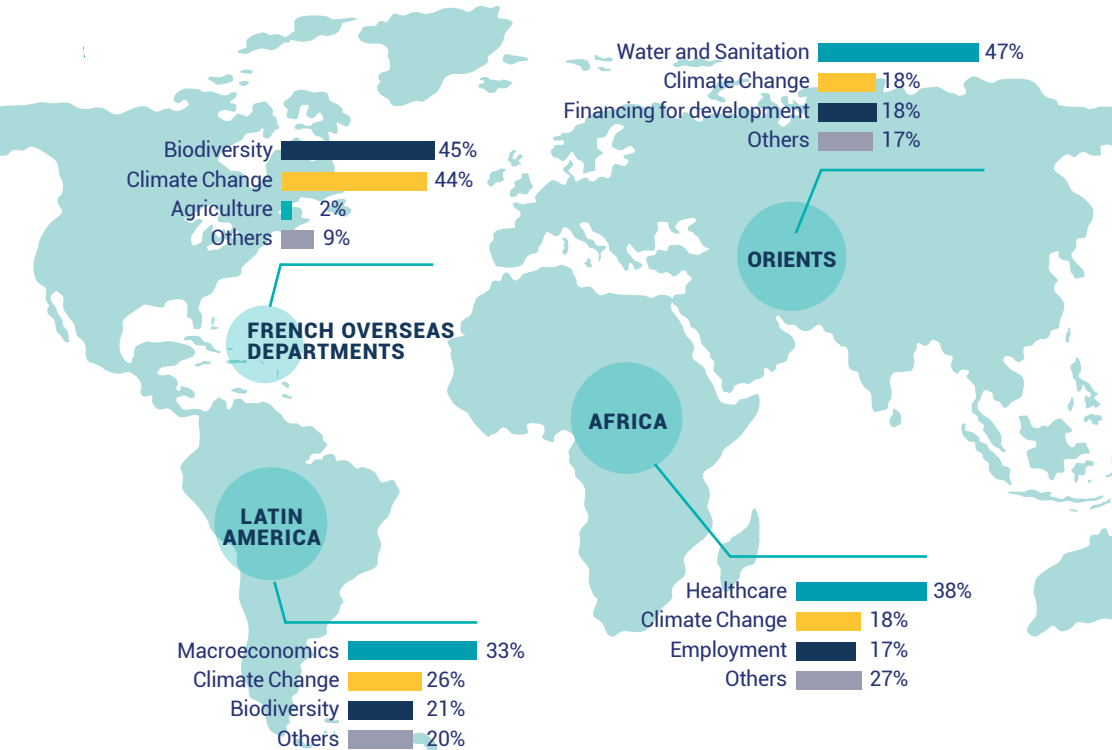
AFD Group partners in studies and research in 2020

As a % of the number of partnerships



* Partnerships with international organizations

Studies and research aligned with AFD Group's strategic priorities



Covid-19, healthcare challenges to be studied

Several studies and research papers were launched in 2020 to document the healthcare challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic **around a variety of questions:** **how are hospitals preparing to deal with Covid-19?** In Ivory Coast, how can rumors and misinformation circulating on social networks be an obstacle to testing? **What are the consequences of Covid-19 on social cohesion in the French Overseas Departments?** How can healthcare systems in Africa better prepare for health crises?

Our leading projects

GEMMES



The program aims to model environmental transition trajectories and to understand the interactions between the economy and socio-ecological ramifications (as regards agriculture, climatology or energy for example). GEMMES contributes to public policy dialog on measures that can contribute to these transitions in partner countries.

Facility on Inequality



The EU-AFD Research Facility on Inequality is a program funded by the European Union and coordinated by AFD. Its objective is to improve knowledge on socio-economic inequalities and to contribute to the development of public policies that are most likely to reduce them.

Savoirs Sahel



The project's goals are to identify and support initiatives, think tanks and opinion leaders, and to promote learning in communities, networking and public debate in the Sahel of the future.

Commons

Since 2015, the Commons research program has been observing original approaches to shared governance in different policy fields. It contributes to discussions on public action by examining the role of citizens. Based on distributed usage rights, it goes beyond sole ownership, especially in the field of knowledge-based goods.



Economic analysis



The work of AFD's economists helps shed light on the economic trajectories of the countries in which the Group operates. These analyses focus on understanding the growth models of the target countries, assessing the quality of their public finances, the stability of their financial systems, and the potential vulnerabilities of their balance of payments.

ESGAP



The ESGAP project provides a diagnosis of the state of natural capital using science-based measures of sustainability. Tested in Kenya, Vietnam and New Caledonia, the ESGAP highlights gaps between the existing environment and its optimum sustainable state, and proposes ways to monitor and manage natural resources.

Public policy dialog

At AFD Group, research is positioned at the intersection between the academic world and the world of decision-makers in order to contribute to public policy dialogs and to public debate.

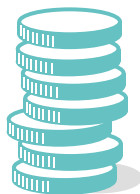
Through its research, its networks of academic partners and think tanks and its operational experience in the field as a public development bank, AFD Group seeks to contribute to debates on public policy options that are compatible with sustainable development trajectories, taking into account planetary limits and societal thresholds.

Biodiversity and public policy dialog in Mauritius

AFD Group is financing a project to strengthen dialog on marine and land biodiversity issues, implemented by the Business Mauritius think tank with assistance on three levels: a research component, a dialog component with national authorities and the public (co-building and coordination of dedicated spaces), and a reflective approach to evaluate the contribution of stakeholders to public policy dialogs.



5 countries
are working with AFD
Group on Strategic
Dialog Memoranda
(SDM)



More than
€3 Million
mobilized to finance
these SDMs since
their implementation



Our strategic dialog memoranda

AFD Group has agreed on a preferential dialog on public policies with five countries: **Ivory Coast (2017), Tunisia (2018), Morocco (2019), Mali (2019) and Lebanon (2020).**

A dedicated governance structure has been set up around jointly defined research programs involving local and international researchers to debate the results of the research and identify public policy recommendations.

Assessing the value of studies and research work

AFD's studies and research are used in a variety of ways: organizing conferences and webinars, and numerous publications for both expert and lay audiences.



**research-related
events were held in 2020**



**opinion columns
and publications in 2020**



Research Conversations

Research Conversations webinars are bi-monthly meetings organized by AFD Group to share research approaches, projects and results with researchers, practitioners and experts. These webinars, held in French and English, are a discussion platform focused on development-related research. They address different topics such as global warming, biodiversity preservation and the re-creation of social cohesion.

● Learn more:



Research Conversations,
a new online meeting place



The African Economy 2020

For the first time in 2020, AFD Group presented new analyses on the major economic and social issues affecting the African continent in the "Repères" collection published by La Découverte. The 2020 edition, the first in the series, presented macroeconomic trends in Africa and its regions, and took a multi-disciplinary look at major structural issues, both continental and country-specific (urbanization, migration, and industrialization).

Towards a World in Common

AFD Group implements France's policy in the areas of development and international solidarity. The Group includes Agence Française de Développement (AFD), which finances the public sector and NGOs, as well as research and education in sustainable development; its subsidiary Proparco, which is dedicated to private sector financing; and Expertise France, a technical cooperation agency. The Group finances, supports and accelerates transitions towards a fairer, more resilient world.

With our partners, we are building shared solutions with and for the people of the Global South. Our teams are at work on more than 4,000 projects in the field, in the French Overseas Departments and Territories, in 115 countries and in regions in crisis. We strive to protect global public goods – promoting a stable climate, biodiversity and peace, as well as gender equality, education and healthcare. In this way, we contribute to the commitment of France and the French people to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Towards a world in common.



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