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Executive Director, Sustainable
Development Solutions



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Thomas MELONIO
Chief Economist of AFD Group
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Quiterie PINCENT
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Matthieu VASSEUR
Executive Director in charge of
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Cyrille BELLIER
Director, "Orient's" Department



Marie-Pierre BOURZAI
Director, Latin America
Department



Matthieu DISCOUR
Director, "Three Oceans"
Department



Sandra KASSAB
Director, Africa Department



Virginie DELISEE-PIZZO
Head of the Education,
Vocational Training and
Employment Division



Julie GONNET
Gender, Equality and Inclusion
expert



Lionel GOUJON
Head of the Water and
Sanitation Division



Matthieu LE GRIX
Head of the Agriculture, Rural
Development and Biodiversity
Division



Juliette GRUNDMAN
Head of the Civil Society
Partnerships Division



Nicolas GUICHARD
Head of the Energy Division



Audrey GUIRAL-NAEPELS
Head of the Urban Development,
Planning and Housing Division



Gaëlle MAREUGE
Cultural and Creative Industries
Lead



Romain REGULAIRE
Head of the Territories and
Enterprises Division



Audrey ROJKOFF
Climate and Nature Lead



Sandra RULLIERE
Deputy Head of the Agriculture,
Rural Development and
Biodiversity Division



Agnès SOUCAT
Head of the Health and Social
Protection Division



Reda SOUIRGI
Head of the Transport Division



Laureline TRIBY
Head of the "Social Link"
Division



Laurent Biddiscombe

Executive Director, Sustainable Development Solutions

Languages:  

Specialist topics:

- **Financing development:** mobilizing financial solutions to support governments, local authorities, and economic stakeholders.
- **Tackling inequalities:** eradicating poverty, promoting decent work, and strengthening social inclusion.
- **Scaling up sustainable finance:** channeling capital toward the Sustainable Development Goals and a just transition.

Media appearances:

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- [Development aid: France is falling short of its goal, to the detriment of the poorest countries](#), Alternatives économiques, 04 May 2026
 - ["AFD provides the bulk of France's financial contribution to COP," L'AGEFI](#), 2024.

Career:

Laurent Biddiscombe supports AFD clients in designing solutions to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. A graduate of ESSEC Business School, he began his career at Société Générale before joining AFD in 2006. He held various positions in Senegal and New Caledonia, before leading the Financial Institutions team. He later served as Deputy Chief Executive Officer of Banque Socredo in French Polynesia before returning to AFD to oversee sustainable economy and finance activities.



Thomas Melonio

Chief Economist of AFD Group and Executive Director for Innovation, Research and Strategy

Languages:  

Specialist topics:

- Macroeconomic analysis of African economies and growth opportunities.
- Economic impacts of geopolitical and international policy shocks on the Global South.
- North–South financial flows and strategic investment.

Media appearances:

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- [Climate Change: Is Somalia on the Brink of Famine?](#), 28 minutes, Arte, 24 June 2026
 - ["Africa's economic outlook according to AFD,"](#) TV5 Monde, 4 February 2026.
 - ["An African approach to AI: what for and when?"](#), RFI, 20 October 2025.
 - ["L'invité éco,"](#) France Info, 4 June 2025.
 - ["Will Trump end international aid? A lesson in geopolitics,"](#) ARTE, 18 April 2025.

Career:

An economist by training (HEC Paris and a PhD from Sciences Po Paris) Thomas Melonio joined AFD in 2005, where he quickly moved to the Research Department. From 2012 to 2017, he served as Deputy Adviser and then Africa Adviser to the President of the French Republic. He returned to AFD in 2017 to lead the Partnerships Department, became Executive Director for Innovation, Research and Knowledge in 2018, and was appointed Chief Economist in 2024.



Cyrille Bellier

Director, "Orients" Department (Asia, Middle East, and European Neighborhood)

Languages:  

Specialist topics:

- **Regional dynamics:** analysis of economic, social, and political trends, from Central Asia to countries in the European Neighborhood.
- **Access to essential services and reducing inequalities:** levers to improve access to water, energy, education, and health care.
- **Strategic outlook on regional developments and their impacts,** from the Middle East to the Balkans.

Publications:

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- ["Knowledge production as a key tool to support public policy in Africa,"](#) World Bank, 2016.

Career:

Since May 2022, Cyrille Bellier has served as Director of the "Orients" Department, overseeing countries with diverse development trajectories. He previously worked in the Research and Development Division. He has served as Head of Organizational Projects, Adviser to the Chief Executive Officer, and Deputy Director of the AFD representation in Tunis. He is a graduate of Sciences Po and the London School of Economics.



Marie-Pierre Bourzai

Director, Latin America Department

Languages:   

Specialist topics:

- **Regional dynamics: mobilizing public and private stakeholders and identifying best practices in cooperation.**
- **Socioeconomic development: regional trends and levers to strengthen education, health, and equal opportunity.**
- **The economic impact of climate change in Latin America.**

Media appearances:

- 
- "Who is the Corrèze-born executive overseeing €2.5 billion in investments in Latin America?", *La Montagne*, 24 September 2025.
 - "Colombia is one of our most important partners in Latin America, says AFD," *La República*, 2022.

Parcours :

An urban planner by training, Marie-Pierre Bourzai has led the Latin America Department since August 2021. She joined AFD in 2007, serving as Urban Development Project Manager, Country Director for Brazil–Southern Cone and Suriname, and later as Adviser for Strategy and Partnerships.

From 2017 to 2021, she headed the Territories and Enterprises Division. She also completed diplomatic training from 2017 to 2020 at the Diplomatic and Consular Institute of the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs.



Matthieu Discour

Director, "Three Oceans" Department (Atlantic, Indian, and Pacific)

Languages:  

Specialist topics:

- The French Overseas Territories: the territorial and economic realities of overseas regions, balancing geographic constraints and local dynamics.
- "Three Oceans": economic, social, and environmental challenges across the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Oceans.

Media appearances:

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- "[Le journal de 13h – Martinique](#)," *Martinique La Première*, 22 December 2025.
 - "[Taking an ocean-basin approach means building shared solutions](#)," *Outremers* 360, 30 May 2025.

Career:

Matthieu Discour has worked at Agence Française de Développement for more than 25 years, holding senior leadership positions at headquarters and internationally, in Africa, Asia, the Indian Ocean region, and within multilateral institutions.

A specialist in partnerships, climate, and development finance, he currently serves as Director of the "Three Oceans" Department. He is a graduate of Sciences Po and Paris Dauphine University and holds an international MBA.



Sandra Kassab

Director, Africa Department

Languages:  

Specialist topics:

- Africa's development challenges in the face of climate change, food security, and governance issues.
- How to foster growth and reduce inequalities in Africa.

Media appearances:

- 
- ["You have to put on a new pair of glasses to see the whole continent,"](#), Sandra Kassab, *Ecofin*, 13 May 2026.
 - ["AFD's greatest asset in Africa is the projects already underway,"](#) *La Tribune*, 15 December 2025.
 - [Backseat](#), broadcast of 14 December 2025.
 - ["Should Africa give up official development assistance?"](#), RFI, 22 August 2025.
 - ["What challenges lie ahead for Sandra Kassab, AFD's new Africa Director?"](#), Forbes Afrique, February 2025.

Career:

Sandra Kassab serves as Director of the Africa Department at AFD. She previously held several senior positions, including Deputy Director of the "Orient" Department and Director of AFD in the Dominican Republic from 2018 to 2022. With nearly 20 years of experience at AFD, she has structured development projects across multiple sectors. Before joining AFD, she worked at the World Bank and the African Development Bank. A lawyer by training, she holds a master's degree in international law from Paris I University.



Julie Gonnet

Gender, Equality and Inclusion expert

Languages:   

Specialist topics:

- Gender equality as a prerequisite for sustainable development and resilience in times of crisis.
- Integrating gender equality into public policy and development finance.
- Advancing women's rights and fighting resistance to gender equality.

Media appearances:

- 
- [Recul des droits des femmes dans le monde : une bascule qui n'est pas née avec Donald Trump](#), Le Monde, 27 April 2026
 - [Qui pour financer les droits des femmes?](#), 8 milliards de voisins, RFI, 07 April 2026

Career:

Julie Gonnet leads the implementation of AFD's strategy on gender equality and feminist diplomacy, and their integration into operations and partnerships with public, multilateral and civil society actors. With over 20 years' experience in sustainable development and development finance, she has led various projects in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the island states. She is a graduate of HEC Paris and holds an MSc in Environmental Management from SOAS University of London.



Jean-René Cuzon

Agriculture Project Team Manager

Languages:  

Specialist topics:

- Food sovereignty in Africa.
- Agricultural systems on the African continent.
- Risk analysis in cereal production in Africa.

Media appearances:

- 
- [Iran war : fertilizer shortage could send rice prices soaring, Les Echos, 02 April 2026](#)
 - ["Africa faces growing dependence on increasingly imported wheat," Les Echos, 6 October 2025,](#)
 - ["What do young people think about agricultural professions in Africa?" RFI, 28 July 2025,](#)
 - ["The war in Ukraine: soaring fertilizer prices weigh on Africa," La Croix, 2022.](#)

Career:

Jean-René Cuzon has served as Agriculture Project Team Manager since 2013 in the Agriculture, Rural Development and Biodiversity Division. He oversees several projects with ECOWAS and CIRAD. Before joining AFD, he worked as a technical assistant for 14 years at the Ministry of Cooperation and later at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in Grenada, Namibia, Senegal, and Burkina Faso. He is a trained agricultural engineer and a civil servant from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty and Forestry, seconded to AFD since 2009.



Lionel Goujon

Head of the Water and Sanitation Division

Languages:   

Specialist topics

- Integrated and sustainable water resource management: the full water cycle, climate change adaptation, wastewater reuse.
- Financial and geopolitical issues: in-depth understanding of investment needs, territorial dynamics, and water diplomacy.

Media appearances:

- 
- [Water prices: who should pay the bill ?](#) , 8 milliards de voisins, *RFI*, 28 January 2026
 - ["In the face of droughts and floods, can rain be cultivated?"](#) 8 Milliards de Voisins, *RFI*, 8 January 2026.
 - [Interview. Lionel Goujon: "The risk of water-related conflicts is increasing,"](#) *Ouest-France*, 2023.
 - ["Global water crises in focus at the United Nations,"](#) *Les Echos*, 2023.

Career:

Lionel Goujon joined Agence Française de Développement (AFD) in 2009 as a water and sanitation project manager. He worked in Morocco on infrastructure and climate change, then in Colombia as deputy country director. From 2020 to 2022, he served as deputy head of portfolio management in Paris. Before joining AFD, he worked in artificial intelligence and as a consultant at Boston Consulting Group. An award-winning author, he graduated as an engineer from Télécom Paris.



Nicolas Guichard

Head of the Energy Division

Languages:  

Specialist topics:

- **Access to electricity:** innovation in energy services in Africa, including solar energy development and storage, grid modernization, and renewable energy integration.
- **Energy efficiency:** adapting buildings to climate change, including renovation, insulation, and construction.

Media appearances:

- 
- "Solar, mini-grids, and energy efficiency: AFD's strategy in Africa," *PV Magazine*, 17 October 2025.
 - "Energy efficiency: what future for buildings?" *Tilt*, 4 April 2025.
 - "Energy: could African innovation hold the answers?" *Le Point*, 2023.

Parcours :

Nicolas Guichard, a graduate engineer of École Polytechnique and AgroParisTech, has led the Energy Division at Agence Française de Développement (AFD) since September 2021. He coordinates initiatives supporting the energy transition in developing countries, particularly in access to electricity, energy efficiency, and renewable energy. Before joining AFD, he led programs at Fondation Énergies pour le Monde, overseeing projects in West Africa and Madagascar.



Matthieu Le Grix

Head of the Agriculture, Rural Development, and Biodiversity Division

Languages:  

Specialist topics:

- **Food security and Zero Hunger:** public policies to address the impacts of conflicts and health crises, ensuring access to and availability of adequate nutrition.
- **Agroecology:** practices that promote both agricultural production and environmental preservation.

Media appearances:

- 
- ["Managing soil fertility to strengthen food sovereignty in Africa," C'est pas du vent, RFI, 2024.](#)
 - ["The transition of African agriculture: how can financing be mobilized?" C'est pas du vent, RFI, 2024.](#)

Career:

An agricultural engineer, Matthieu Le Grix has led the Agriculture, Rural Development, and Biodiversity Division at Agence Française de Développement (AFD) since 2021. After completing agro-economic studies in Chile and Mali, he worked for a decade in several AFD country offices (Burkina Faso, Cameroon, and Tunisia).

Since 2018, he has overseen sector operations in the Sahel, the Gulf of Guinea, the Maghreb, the Middle East, and Latin America, contributing to strategies on food security and agroecology.



Audrey Guiral-Naepels

Head of the Urban Development, Planning, and Housing Division

Languages:  

Specialist topics:

- **Sustainable cities:** how to ensure access to water, transportation, and electricity in rapidly growing urban areas.
- **Plastic pollution:** waste management and pollution control.

Media appearances:

- 
- ["What role do residents play in addressing challenges in African cities?"](#) *RFI*, 30 September 2025.
 - ["Following the UN Ocean Conference, AFD calls for progress to end the 'underfunding' of ocean protection,"](#) *AEF Info*, 2 June 2025.
 - ["Ocean protection: global hopes for the blue economy converge in Nice,"](#) *Le Monde*, 30 May 2025.

Career:

A geographer and graduate of Sciences Po and the Institut Français de Géopolitique, Audrey Guiral-Naepels has worked in urban development for 20 years, with expertise in urban renewal and housing in Africa, France, and the French Overseas Territories.

Before joining Agence Française de Développement (AFD) in 2012, she worked at SNCF on real estate projects and social housing renovation, and at Egis, advising local authorities on eco-districts and urban renewal.



Gaëlle Mareuge

Cultural and Creative Industries Lead

Languages:  

Specialist topics:

- Entrepreneurship and business models in Africa's cultural and creative sectors.
- Cultural mediation as a driver of social cohesion and inclusion.
- Heritage promotion for local development.

Media appearances:

- 
- ["Contemporary African art on the rise," RFI,](#) November 2024.
 - ["Promoting African performing arts: MASA, a creator of opportunities for young people,"](#) *Educarrière*, 2024.

Career:

Gaëlle Mareuge, a specialist in the Cultural and Creative Industries, has led AFD's "100% Social Link" strategy since 2021. She coordinates the Access to Culture and Creative Africa programs, reinforced at the 2021 Africa–France Summit, to integrate culture into AFD projects. A graduate of Sciences Po Aix, she has 15 years of experience as a project legal advisor and has contributed to several heritage projects in France and internationally.



Romain Régulaire

Head of the Local Authorities and Businesses Division

Languages:  

Specialist topics:

- Mobilizing French expertise to support international sustainable development projects.
- Engaging French businesses and local authorities internationally in projects aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals.

Media appearances:

- 
- ["In Mauritania, rehabilitating water systems flows naturally between Kiffa and Montpellier,"](#) RFI, 20 October 2025.

Career:

Romain Régulaire began his career as a lawyer, advising African governments and companies on development projects. He joined Agence Française de Développement (AFD) in 2010, first in the legal department and then at the Dakar office, where he worked on governance issues and the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs). From 2020 to 2023, he served as head of the Governance Unit at the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs.



Audrey Rojkoff

Head of the Climate and Nature Division

Languages:  

Specialist topics:

- Taking concrete action on climate change: supporting countries and territories in their ecological transition, combining adaptation, emissions reduction, and biodiversity preservation.
- What is climate finance for? Turning funding into effective climate action.

Media appearances:

- 
- [“France returns from COP,”](#) Backseat, 27 November 2025.
 - [“Climate change: who will pay?”](#) TF1 evening news, 10 November 2025, opening of COP30.
 - [“On the ground with Agence Française de Développement: France and its development policy,”](#) France Culture, 2024.
 - [“South Africa faces the challenge of a ‘just energy transition,’”](#) Le Monde, 2024.

Career:

A climate finance expert, Audrey Rojkoff has more than 20 years of experience in development and international cooperation. Since September 2025, she has led the Climate and Nature Division at Agence Française de Développement (AFD). Previously, she served as AFD regional director for Southern Africa. She was also secretary general of the Finance in Common initiative. Before joining AFD, she worked at the African Development Bank as an energy project manager and coordinator of Green Climate Fund operations.



Sandra Rulrière

Deputy Head of the Agriculture, Rural Development, and Biodiversity Division

Languages:  

Specialist topics:

- Improving production to better address food needs: agroecology for farmers and food security.
- Protecting land from desertification in Africa: climate, agriculture, and practical solutions.

Media appearances:

- 
- [COP17 on Desertification: A "Crucial" Summit for Restoring Soils, Our "Resilience Capital for the Future"](#), Libération, 17 August 2026
 - [Why is France so concerned about COP17 on desertification, which opens this Monday in Mongolia?](#), La Voix du Nord, 16 August 2026
 - [Tunisia: Désertif' action, seeking innovative solutions to combat drought](#), RFI, 28 March 2026
 - ["In Ethiopia, agricultural practices evolve to address land erosion"](#), Les Echos, 2024.

Career:

An agro-economist engineer, Sandra Rulrière has worked for more than 15 years in rural development and natural resource management, primarily in Africa. Following field studies in Nicaragua, she served as a technical advisor in Ghana and a project officer in Burkina Faso, before supporting agricultural advisory services in Benin. After working at the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, she joined Agence Française de Développement (AFD) in 2016 and became deputy head of the Agriculture Division in 2021.



Agnès Soucat

Head of the Health and Social Protection Division

Languages:  

Specialist topics:

- **Climate–health co-benefits:** how environmental policies can serve as immediate levers for improving public health.
- **Social protection:** building systems that reduce inequalities.
- **Scientific evidence and health governance:** strengthening policy-making and public trust.

Media appearances:

- 
- ["We plan to make direct investments to train industrial pharmacists and chemists,](#) Africa 24, 21 May 2026
 - [One Health, how human health depends on all living beings,](#) La Croix, 05 April 2026
 - ["Health and the fight against climate change: a win-win alliance,"](#) Le Monde, 24 October 2025.
 - ["In Paris: a summit to tackle malnutrition amid a funding crisis,"](#) Le Monde, 27 March 2025.

Career:

Agnès Soucat has led the Health and Social Protection Division at Agence Française de Développement (AFD) since 2021. A health economist, she works to advance access to care, social protection, and climate resilience. Holding doctorates in economics and medicine, she has more than 25 years of experience in Africa, Asia, and Europe. A former director at the World Health Organization, she has also held senior positions at the World Bank and the African Development Bank, contributing to major strategies such as the Ebola response.



Reda Souirgi

Head of the Mobility and Digital Division

Languages:  

Specialist topics:

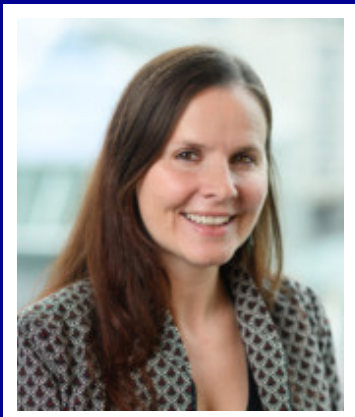
- Sustainable mobility – how to reduce urban congestion through low-carbon transport solutions.
- Territorial connectivity and reducing inequalities in access.

Media appearances:

- 
- ["France grants €1 million for certification of Ceylon tea's Protected Geographical Indication," CIRAD, 2021.](#)

Career:

Reda Souirgi leads the Mobility and Digital Division at Agence Française de Développement (AFD). He oversees financing for urban mobility programs, rural transport, national and international connectivity, as well as digital service infrastructure. After joining AFD in 2015 as a transport project manager, he became deputy head at headquarters and later country director in Sri Lanka. Prior to that, he worked for 10 years in engineering at SYSTRA. He graduated from École Polytechnique and École Nationale des Ponts et Chaussées.



Laureline Triby

Head of the "Social Link" Division

Languages:  

Specialist topics:

- Sport as a driver of social inclusion, education, and equality, particularly for young people and women in Africa.
- Gender equality – combating gender-based violence, women's health, and economic empowerment.
- Culture and reducing inequalities: creative entrepreneurship and inclusive approaches to strengthen social cohesion and access to opportunities.

Media appearances:

- 
- ["The IOC and AFD launch a new initiative using sport to tackle juvenile delinquency in Southeast Asia," International Olympic Committee](#), 1 July 2025.

Career:

Laureline Triby joined Agence Française de Développement (AFD) in 2007. After six years in the Communications Department coordinating web communication projects, she joined the Africa Department as a country manager, overseeing portfolio management and analysis for Niger and Guinea, and later Senegal, Cabo Verde, The Gambia, and Guinea-Bissau. Between 2021 and 2025, she led internal communications for AFD Group.