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AFD
AGENCE FRANÇAISE DE DÉVELOPPEMENT

Research AT AFD

In a world facing multiple crisis, identifying solutions to navigate ecological, economic, and social transitions has never been more urgent. It is with this ambition that AFD structures its research agenda. Cross-disciplinary, partnership-based, and action-oriented, it informs AFD Group's financing activities while generating evidence to support effective, inclusive, and sustainable development trajectories.



Why does AFD conduct research?

Designing and implementing effective public policies requires a sound understanding of economic, ecological, and social dynamics. This is why we conduct and fund research alongside our financing activities: to inform the work of AFD Group and its partners across the globe. At the intersection of academia and policymaking, our research pursues a clear ambition: **to translate research into action by producing knowledge that is both relevant and actionable for public decision-makers**.

1

Understanding

current and emerging dynamics to support decision-making grounded in data and scientific evidence

2

Informing

the work of change-makers with relevant, actionable knowledge to support effective projects and public policies

3

Strengthening

South-North and South-South research partnerships, and amplifying their contribution to international debates

What does research at AFD look like?

Bringing together researchers and institutional actors alike, our work analyses the interactions between ecological challenges and the economic, financial, and social spheres. Cross-disciplinary in scope — spanning economics, environmental sciences, sociology, demography, and political science —, it aims **to steer development models towards greater sustainability**.

This work is carried out by AFD researchers or entrusted to academic partners, most often from the Global South. It results in **studies, policy briefs, and tools** that feed into dialogue with policymakers in AFD's partner countries.

Our research is

Cross-disciplinary and committed to academic excellence

Innovative, built around 5 research programmes and the documentation of emerging phenomena

Spanning multiple Sustainable Development Goals and oriented towards **contributing to public policy**

Partnership-driven, at the interface between researchers and decision-makers, and between North and South

#WorldInCommon

5 research programmes,
COMPLEMENTARY BY DESIGN

FINANCING AND GEOPOLITICS OF DEVELOPMENT

Who finances development, how, and for what purpose? At a time when geopolitical balances are undergoing profound change, this research programme explores the transformations shaping international development finance — actors, strategies, instruments, and governance — to inform the strategic choices of donors and partner countries.

▶ PUBLIC DEVELOPMENT BANKS

AFD is involved in the Global Research Network (GRN) on Public Development Banks (PDBs), an international research network attached to the Finance in Common System (FiCS). Its aim is to advance knowledge on the role of PDBs in financing the transition towards a sustainable future.

This work, which has fed directly into the FiCS summits since 2020 and is part of the G20/G7 "finance" agendas, is organized around five themes: the international financial architecture; the mobilization of the private sector; the social and environmental alignment of finance; and the quantitative and qualitative analysis of PDBs.

▶ RECONSTRUCTION IN POST-CONFLICT ZONES

AFD has commissioned the French think tank IFRI to establish an observatory to analyse the scale of destruction and the prospects for reconstruction in Gaza, Lebanon, and Syria. Its objective is threefold: to understand local dynamics (needs, actors involved, etc.), to identify feasible and concrete reconstruction modalities, and to compare the positioning of external actors. A similar exercise will begin in autumn 2026 for Ukraine.

MACROECONOMIC DIAGNOSTICS AND FORESIGHT

Through country risk analyses and the modelling of States' macro-financial trajectories — which incorporate, among other factors, climate and biodiversity challenges — this programme produces analyses that inform public policymakers' choices on sustainable development pathways and associated financing strategies. A growing workstream tackles the integration in global value chains, among which critical minerals for the energy transition.

▶ COUNTRY RISK ANALYSES

For some sixty countries, AFD analyses ongoing development dynamics, characterises growth trajectories, and identifies the associated economic, social, environmental, political, and financial vulnerabilities. These assessments, which meet a regulatory requirement for banks, inform AFD Group's operational and strategic decision-making.

▶ SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF THE ENERGY TRANSITION IN VIETNAM

AFD supports decision-makers as they reflect on key economic policy orientations, particularly through the GEMMES and ESTEEM models. Through the GEMMES Vietnam project, AFD works with the Vietnamese government to study the socio-economic effects of climate dynamics and to inform the public policy choices needed to address them. More specifically, Phase 2 of the project examines the effects of extreme climate events, models the macroeconomic impact of the energy transition, and analyses the associated social challenges.

JUST TRANSITION AND ADAPTATION PATHWAYS

This programme analyses and models the multidimensional effects of climate change and biodiversity loss, and seeks to understand how these dynamics interact to transform societies, ecosystems, and economies.

▶ COASTAL ADAPTATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

Conducted with the University of Cape Town (UCT) and the French think tank IDDRI, the Track Adapt project examines water-related adaptation efforts (reducing the risks of drought, coastal erosion, etc.) in Cape Town and Nelson Mandela Bay, two South African coastal cities heavily affected by the consequences of climate change. The project also intends to yield a methodology for developing a shared understanding of adaptation challenges and potential solutions among all local stakeholders.

▶ BLUE ECONOMY IN THE PHILIPPINES

Conducted with the University of the Philippines Los Baños, the ISLANDS-Phil research project aims to generate robust data to inform the Philippine government's actions on small islands development. The project examines the various dimensions of societal, ecosystem, and infrastructure resilience in these territories. It also analyses the functioning of coastal value chains (particularly fisheries) and ways of improving their integration into the blue economy.

ECONOMIC INCLUSION AND INEQUALITIES

This programme examines the conditions under which public and private investments in value chains or infrastructure can become genuine drivers of inequality reduction and improvements in the living conditions of the most vulnerable.

▶ INEQUALITIES & PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT

The third phase of the EU-AFD Facility on Inequalities (2026–2028) examines the extent to which, and how, private investment projects integrate — or could integrate — inequality considerations from the design stage onwards. The programme focuses on a sample of projects across sectors covered by the European Union's Global Gateway strategy. One of the projects financed under the Facility is carried out in partnership with Proparco and assesses an equity investment in the Mexican digital sector.

▶ SOCIAL PROTECTION IN EGYPT

This action-research project aims to assess the impact of strategies deployed by the Egyptian Universal Health Insurance Authority (UHIA) to better include informal sector workers in the national health insurance system. The objective is to identify the barriers limiting their enrolment in the existing scheme (awareness and trust in the system, financial constraints, administrative hurdles, etc.); and to propose information and outreach strategies to overcome them. The findings are intended to inform the design of an AFD-funded project to scale up the health insurance programme in Egypt.

SOCIAL FRAGMENTATION AND THE COMMONS APPROACH

As socio-political crises and societal polarisation intensify, how can social cohesion be rebuilt and shared resources managed collectively? This programme explores the emergence of alternative models of governance and citizen participation, particularly through the commons.

▶ COMMONS & CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN LATIN AMERICA

AFD supports action-research projects to determine how commons can foster citizen participation and renew public action. In Brazil, AFD works with the Presidency on the Brasil Participativo platform – which aims to increase citizen participation in public policy debate –, as well as with the cities of Goiás and Goiânia on urban commons. In Colombia, AFD works with the municipality of Bogotá, which has formalised "public-commons" partnerships around care.

The teams from these three projects are involved in a network led by the Coop des Communs, the Casa Comum platform, and AFD, enabling cross-pollination of perspectives and knowledge-sharing across experiences in both Europe and Latin America.

▶ DYNAMICS OF AFRICAN YOUTH

Expertise France and AFD have developed a project to support research by and on young people in French-speaking sub-Saharan Africa. Its aim is to support the production of scientific knowledge driven by young African researchers, whilst contributing to informing public action and the practices of development actors on the contemporary dynamics of African youth. Funded by the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, it complements the EU's Africa-Europe Youth Academy (AEYA) initiative.

From research TO ACTION

In line with the thematic and geographic priorities of AFD Group, **our research enriches the Group's operations by providing cutting-edge expertise and fostering high-level dialogue with partners**. These "research-to-action" partnerships help build long-term bilateral relationships of trust around issues of shared interest.

Furthermore, through robust quantitative and qualitative analyses, our work helps to identify **new financing opportunities** and to develop **scenarios for well-informed public policy choices**.

A suite of tools FOR INFORMING AND ANALYSING PUBLIC POLICIES

- **Macroeconomic modelling**: assessing the macro-financial impacts (GEMMES model) or the structural dynamics (ESTEEM model) of ecological trajectories and the adequate policies to accompany these transitions
- **Ecological transition analyses**: measuring the environmental sustainability of a territory (ESGAP indicator), and assessing climate- and biodiversity-related socio-economic and financial risks
- **Inequality dynamics**: diagnosing multi-dimensional inequalities, conducting fiscal incidence analysis, and applying tools to assess the distributional effects of investments and infrastructure projects

Find out more

Learn more at afd.fr:

Follow "Savoirs AFD":

Toward a World in Common

The Agence Française de Développement (AFD) is France's solidarity-driven and strategic investment bank. Present across five continents and in France's Overseas Territories, it implements France's international cooperation and partnership policy.

The AFD Group's strength lies in the complementary roles of its three entities: AFD finances the public sector and civil society, Proparco supports private sector development, and Expertise France implements technical cooperation projects.

In a rapidly changing world, the Group invests where its partners' needs align with French and European interests. From health, education, and access to water and energy to strategic infrastructure, climate action, and job creation, its operations span many of the world's major development challenges.

Its lean banking model optimizes the use of public resources and leverages additional financing to maximize impact. The Group systematically measures and evaluates the results of its operations and reports transparently on its activities.

By mobilizing financing, private investment, and expertise to benefit our partners, France, and Europe, we are helping to build a world in common.

AFD
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