

Regional Climate - Air - Energy Plans at the heart of the debate on the energy transition

On the eve of the introduction of the environmental assessment procedure for planning documents, almost all Regional Climate - Air - Energy Plans have now been published. This Climate Brief assesses regional climate strategies, which rely on significant commitment from those involved, including citizens by changing their behaviour, companies by improving their energy efficiency and the banking sector through financial support. Identification of these challenges and areas for action will feed into the national debate on energy transition which began last autumn.

Context: a strategic plan for the region

The Regional Climate - Air - Energy Plan (SRCAE – *schéma régional climat - air - énergie*) is a forward-looking document, drafted by the Conseil Régional and the decentralised state agencies, designed to steer French regions' energy and climate transition. Drawn up in collaboration with regional stakeholders, this document aims to provide a coherent regional framework for policies and actions in the fields of climate, energy and air quality. SRCAEs, which were introduced by article 68 of the Grenelle II law in July 2010, must first assess the current state before going on to define objectives and focus areas for 2020 and 2050 in terms of:

- development of renewable energies,
- management of energy consumption,
- reduction in greenhouse gas emissions,
- air quality and reduction in polluting atmospheric emissions, and
- adaptation to climate change.

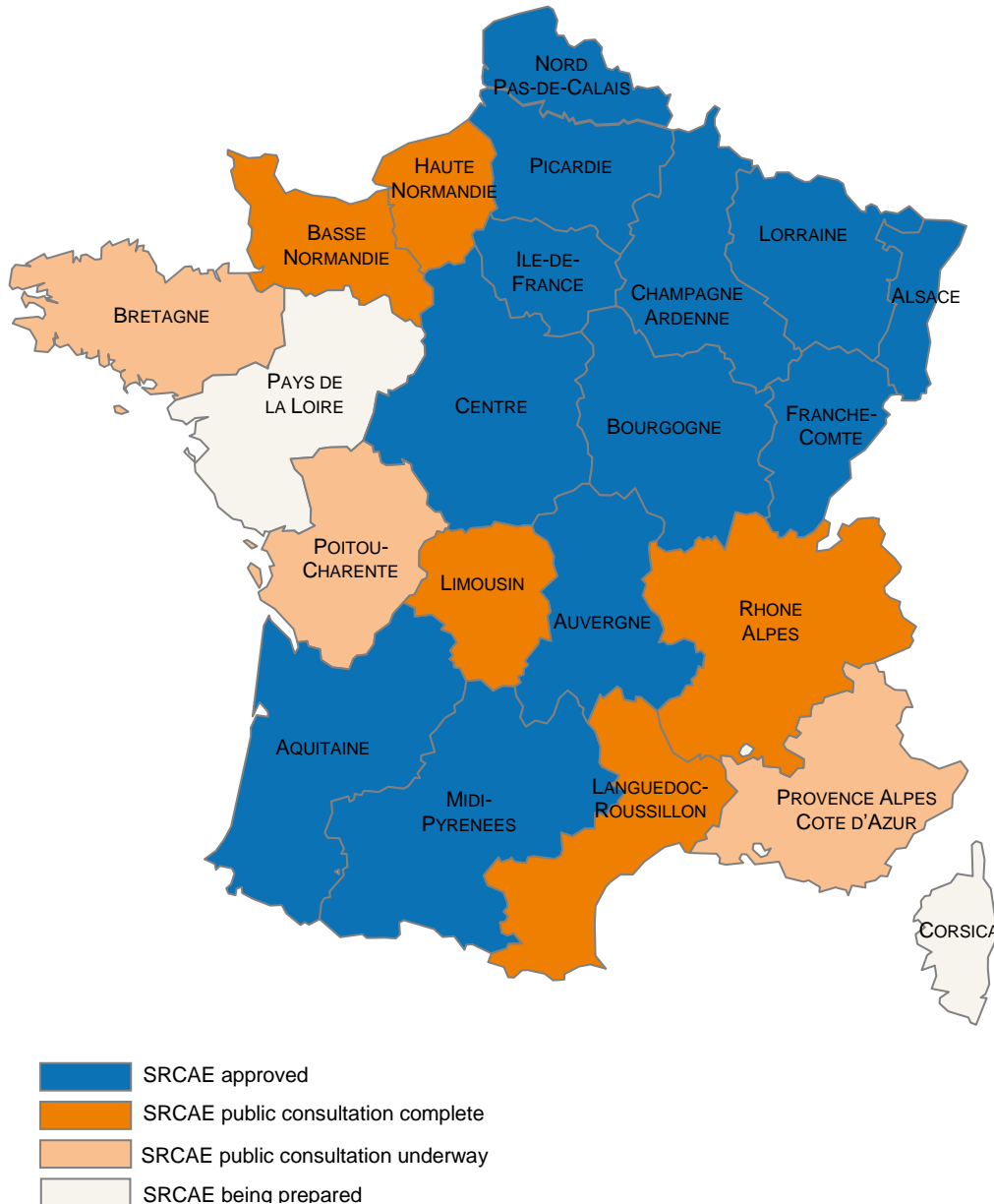
The strategies presented in SRCAEs will be implemented at a sub-regional level, particularly as part of local climate and energy plans (PCETs – *Plans Climat Energie Territoriaux*), which are compulsory for local authorities with more than 50,000 inhabitants, and whose actions must be compatible with SRCAEs.

News: final push for SRCAEs prior to environmental assessment

To date, almost all SRCAEs have now been approved and officially published. However, those SRCAEs submitted after 1 January 2013 are now subject to a statutory environmental assessment¹. This deadline seems to have accelerated the development of SRCAEs in 2012, as the numerous SRCAEs were finalized before the end of last year and thus were not subject to this obligation. Out of 22 metropolitan regions, 12 SRCAEs have been approved while the statutory public consultation periods have been completed in five regions and are underway in three others. Figure 1 presents the SRCAEs' progress as of 7 February 2013.

¹ See decree no. 2012-616 of 2 May 2012 relating to the assessment of specific plans and documents with an impact on the environment.

Figure 1 – Current state of regional climate, air and energy plans



N.B. In French overseas departments and territories, SRCAEs have been approved in Guyana and Guadeloupe. The public consultation for the Martinique's SRCAE has been completed, although it has not yet begun in La Réunion.

Source: CDC Climat Recherche based on MEDDE, as of 7 February 2013

In the Pays de la Loire region, an interim document has been published setting out the proposed focuses and objectives resulting from the consultation undertaken since 2011 and has been taken into account for this Climate Brief². Corsica, meanwhile, has an extra two years to prepare its SRCAE which will be coordinated by the Conseil Régional alone, in association only with the State.

² Given the progress of the work carried out by the Region, it has not yet been decided whether the Pays de la Loire's SRCAE will be subject to an environmental assessment.

Analysis: in-depth consultation emphasising involvement of all regional stakeholders

Throughout the Regions, preparation of each SRCAE has involved a range of tasks, themed workshops and preparatory groups in consultation with regional stakeholders. The final document is often the result of a long process which has led to identification of Regions' operational strategy and the main actions available to regional stakeholders depending on their local context. The process has equally identified a number of actions to be carried out at a supra-regional level.

The table below sets out the main actions for combating climate change in different sectors. It highlights strategies involving institutional initiatives, those requiring the involvement of regional economic players and those based on informing and raising awareness among citizens.

A Climate Report, published in September 2012, analysed the development of SRCAEs and the priorities adopted by 11 Regions, with a focus on methodologies used by the Regions and the transport and construction sectors³.

Table 1 – Main focuses of SRCAEs in mainland France

RESIDENTIAL-TERTIARY		
Institutional policies and actions	Involvement and support of sector players	Informing and raising awareness among citizens
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Renovating existing public buildings to improve their thermal performance - Undertaking an ambitious renovation programme - Combating fuel poverty - Encouraging the renewal of traditional heating systems, particularly wood, by promoting efficient technologies - Promoting and coordinating existing aid systems and developing innovative funding approaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training and qualifying construction sector players (project owners, companies, users, etc.) in new practices of sustainable renovation and construction techniques which incorporate renewable energies in buildings - Diversifying energy sources in regions for the production of renewable heat and recovery (excluding wood) in buildings - Structuring and supporting local supply chains of eco building materials to limit buildings' environmental impact - Definition and recognition of shared best-practice criteria: eco-conditions in public contracts, bioclimatism and eco-materials in new construction, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raise users' awareness and inform them about reducing energy consumption (behaviour and usage) - Improving the energy management of buildings and systems (usage, maintenance and monitoring) - Strengthening and increasing the availability of technical assistance for ambitious building rehabilitation - Promoting sustainable construction for new buildings, particularly by fostering the use of wood-based materials - Building on experience and raising awareness through demonstration projects and the actions of the State

³ See [Climate Report no. 36](#) "Regional climate, air and energy plans: a tool for guiding the energy and climate transition in French regions", by Jérémy de Charentenay, Alexia Leseur and Cécile Bordier.

TRANSPORT		
Institutional policies and actions	Involvement and support of sector players	Informing and raising awareness among citizens
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fully incorporating air and climate dimensions into regional development - Defining a regional plan for interaction between urban and rural areas - Combatting urban sprawl - Developing a suitable and high-quality public transport network - Creating conditions favourable to intermodality and the development of soft transport - Restrictions on use of private cars (taxes on non-residential parking, reduced access to city centres, etc.) - Using and channelling funding to develop alternative means of transport other than private vehicles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encouraging transporters by inviting them to commit to a voluntary charter - Optimising the freight transport system (eco-design of products, increasing stuffing efficiency, etc.) - Optimising urban logistics - Developing new mobility services - Encouraging modal shift of goods to maritime, rail and river transport - Supporting the development of new technologies and low-carbon vehicles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Influencing individual mobility behaviour through targeted information and awareness-raising - Limiting use of private cars and their impacts by promoting new mobility practices: eco-driving, car-sharing, car-pooling, etc. - Encouraging the use of less polluting and more efficient vehicles - Promoting soft transport (walking, cycling, etc.) - Encouraging journey planning within government agencies and companies - Encouraging consumers to prioritise local food production and distribution
INDUSTRY		
Institutional policies and actions	Involvement and support of sector players	Informing and raising awareness among citizens
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encouraging research, innovation and optimisation of procedures and promoting their distribution - Anticipating and supporting the emergence and implementation of innovative and disruptive industrial technologies - Encouraging exemplary actions - Supporting companies via the distribution of technical and financial tools (partnerships, calls for projects, etc.) - Using and developing financial engineering (white certificates, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing energy-efficiency measures in companies - Encouraging companies' social and environmental commitment - Encouraging synergies, exchanges of best practice and pooling of resources between companies. - Incorporating energy issues into industrial training courses - Developing industrial ecology and promoting eco-design and use of local raw materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raising awareness of corporate social and environmental responsibility

AGRICULTURE		
Institutional policies and actions	Involvement and support of sector players	Informing and raising awareness among citizens
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preserving grasslands, woods and natural environments to encourage carbon storage in the soil - Optimising use of forestry resources and adapting the choice of tree species and practices to current and future climate changes - Encouraging regional research and strengthening the link between the world of research and the world of agriculture - Developing the promotion of local non-food agricultural resources in the form of renewable energy products or insulation materials for buildings - Promoting existing aid schemes and providing information about financial data (time for return on investment, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Helping farmers and wine-makers reduce their dependency on fossil fuels - Reducing the use of agricultural inputs (feed autonomy, reduction in the use of phytosanitary products) and optimising management of livestock manure (anaerobic digestion, etc.) - Improving the energy efficiency of agricultural buildings and machinery - Encouraging the exchange of experiences and best practice between farmers through the dissemination of knowledge about innovative technologies and procedures - Incorporating climate change issues into agricultural training courses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encouraging more responsible purchasing behaviour (raising awareness of seasonal vegetables, food miles, etc.) - Promoting and developing local, organic and integrated farming

Source: CDC Climat Recherche based on SRCAEs in mainland France, approved or out for public consultation

The consultation work undertaken during the preparation of the SRCAEs is reflected in the priorities selected. A number of them rely on regional stakeholders for their successful implementation; as such success will depend on the ability of these actors to adopt new, more efficient techniques and develop their behaviour towards low-carbon practices. Examples include energy efficiency in companies, development of citizens' behaviour towards more responsible mobility and the adoption of new agricultural practices.

Ensuring the coherence of these issues within a larger regional policy framework, as well as equally engaging the necessary stakeholders, represents a first step towards achieving greenhouse gas emission reduction targets. A second point highlighted by all Regions is the deployment of financial resources to achieve their goals. The SRCAEs emphasised the need to raise awareness of existing aid schemes and to develop new financial tools to encourage investment in more efficient practices, particularly to address the major challenge of building rehabilitation. Further, given rising energy prices, leading to the problem of fuel poverty raised by most SRCAEs, the implementation of energy efficiency measures would limit economic, social and environmental costs, while at the same time supporting region's economic and industrial sectors.

The areas for action proposed by the SRCAEs, particularly in key sectors (building, transport, renewable energies deployment), equally stand to feed into the national strategy and debate on energy transition now underway.

For further information...

- All regional SRCAEs are available from the Regional Directorates for the Environment, Development and Housing (DREAL) website:
www.NOM_DE_LA_REGION.developpement-durable.gouv.fr
- The interactive website dedicated to SRCAEs, aimed at local stakeholders:
www.srcae.fr
- de Charentenay J., A. Leseur and C. Bordier (2012), “Regional climate, air and energy plans: a tool for guiding the energy and climate transition in French regions”, *Climate Report no. 36 from CDC Climat Recherche*.
http://www.cdcclimat.com/IMG/pdf/etude_climat_no36_le_schema_regional_climat-air-energie_un_outil_d_orientation_pour_la_transition_energetique_et_climatique_des_regions_francaises_.pdf

Publishing director: Benoît Leguet

To receive news about our publications please send your details to recherche@cdcclimat.com

Press contact: Maria Scolan – +33 1 58 50 32 48 – maria.scolan@cdcclimat.com

Disclaimer

This publication is fully-funded by “Caisse des Dépôts”, a public institution. CDC Climat does not contribute to the financing of this research. Caisse des Dépôts is not liable under any circumstances for the content of this publication.

This publication is not a financial analysis as defined by current regulations. The dissemination of this document does not amount to (i) the provision of investment or financial advice of any kind, (ii) or of an investment or financial service, (iii) or to an investment or financial proposal of any kind. There are specific risks linked to the markets and assets treated in this document. Persons to whom this document is directed are advised to request appropriate advice (including financial, legal, and/or tax advice) before making any decision to invest in said markets.

The research presented in this publication was carried out by CDC Climat Research on an independent basis. Organisational measures implemented at CDC Climat have strengthened the operational and financial independence of the research department. The opinions expressed in this publication are therefore those of the employees of CDC Climat Research alone, and are independent of CDC Climat's other departments, and its subsidiaries. The findings of this research are in no way binding upon, nor do they reflect, the decisions taken by CDC Climat's operational investment and broking services teams, or by its subsidiaries. CDC Climat is not a provider of investment or financial services.