

Banks act for a responsible and sustainable world

*Banks act for
a responsible
and sustainable world*

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Banks contribute to the development of the economic and social fabric of their regions through a close relationship with all their customers. They respond to their needs and support them in their projects and in times of crisis. Their mobilization throughout the health crisis, to support economic activity, was an example of this!

For many years, French banks and their more than 355,000 employees have been committed to integrating corporate social responsibility (CSR) requirements: they have adapted their strategies and structures, and have developed their offerings and services towards responsible and sustainable finance.

Financing the energy transition is a collective challenge for French banks, which support their customers in their low-carbon projects and take great measures for the climate. Eco-responsible and committed at national and global levels, they also strive to preserve biodiversity.

As major players in innovation, French banks also support their customers in their digital transformation, while maintaining a high demand for cyber and financial security.

Financial inclusion and support for financially vulnerable customers are the subject of ongoing attention by French banks. They also implement proactive integration policies and support their employees in their professional lives and the transformation of their professions.

Many initiatives demonstrate the French banking industry's commitment to participate in the great cause of gender equality, with more than one in two bankers in France being a woman.

While not exhaustive, this summary document aims to illustrate the main actions and collective contributions of the French banking industry to sustainable development objectives. French banks are proud to work tirelessly alongside their customers and with all their employees to provide solutions to build an inclusive and sustainable future.

Maya Atig
Chief Executive Officer of the FBF



Financing the local economy and responsible growth



97%

**of SMEs are granted,
all or more than 75%,
the investment loans
requested.**

Source: Banque de France,
Q2 2024



more than
100,000

**microloans approved
in 2023. In each
department, banking
partnerships are
possible for microfinance
institutions.**

Source:
Financial Inclusion Observatory

Banks - businesses: a close relationship

Cash flow, investments, project financing, payment flows, the banks are committed to supporting their customers with a personalized and sustainable approach.

- Banks' **regional roots** enable entrepreneurs to build a close relationship with their bankers and gain easy access to banking services*.
- Thanks to their **universal model**, banks can offer a full range of services and financing solutions tailored to cash flow and investment needs.
- The 1.3 million SMEs established in France can receive efficient **access to credit**.

Loans for individuals' personal projects

From home loans to energy consumption and renovation, banks are working with their individual customers to finance their projects responsibly.

- **42.7% of households** had at least one loan in 2023.**
- **1 in 2 loans** goes to individuals in France.***
- **Home loan financing** accounts for nearly 85% of outstanding loans to individuals*** and is based on:
 - growth in outstanding loans and favourable interest rates,
 - analysis of the borrower's repayment capacity,
 - mainly fixed-rate loans.
- Household **debt levels** are very well controlled.



Further reading at lesclesdelabanque.com
> 4 guides on "Financing my VSE"
> 20 guides for "PROs"

* See reports from the Corporate Finance Observatory

** Household Loans Observatory

***Banque de France, December 2023

A commitment to social cohesion

French banks contribute to the economic and social development of their regions.

- Banks are partners and **finance players in the social and solidarity-based economy**.
- Several banks are part of the **Collectif d'entreprises pour une économie plus inclusive** (Corporate collective for a more inclusive economy).
- **Professional integration and business creation** are promoted: financing, partnerships (with France Active, Adie, Initiative France, Les Déterminés, etc.), microloans, skills sponsorship, etc.
- Solidarity-based savings products help **finance the local economy**.



**€37
bn**

**in loans to businesses
in the social and solidarity
economy**

Source: Banque de France, 2023



During the Covid-19 crisis, French banks implemented strong measures, in record time, to support the economy and its recovery.

- **Massive extension of corporate loan repayments:** €20bn in loan payments deferred in 2020 (source: FBF).
- **Continuity of banking services:** opening of branches, development of remote services, maintenance of aid payments to people with the lowest incomes.
- **Limit for contactless payment increased to €50.**
- **Government-Backed Loan (GBL):** more than €144bn granted for 686,000 companies, 88% of which were VSEs (source: Minefir, end-June 2022).
- **Development and distribution of Stimulus Equity Loans: €3bn to over 500 SMEs and intermediate-sized companies** (source: France Stratégie, January 2024).
- **Restructuring of GBL within the framework of the Médiation du crédit aux entreprises:** the 2022 agreement has been extended to 2026.



**FIGHTING
CLIMATE CHANGE**

Contributing to the development of a low-carbon and sustainable economy



**€73
bn**

**for the financing of renewable
energies in 2023 i.e.
+74% in two years.**

Source: FBF

A global presence

The actions of French banks in the fight against global warming and the transition to a low-carbon economy are recognised worldwide.

- French banks are **among the world leaders** in renewable energy financing and green bond arranging.
- They contribute to international climate initiatives, and in particular adhere to the UN's Principles for Responsible Banking.
- France's major banks are part of the Net-Zero Banking Alliance (NZBA), of which the FBF is an official partner, to align their portfolios with a **net carbon neutrality** approach by 2050.
- The FBF, a **member with observer status of the Conference of the Parties (COP) on climate change**, contributes to international discussions.

Ambitious climate strategies

French banks incorporate environmental criteria into their strategies and promote the financing of renewable energies.

- **Extra-financial transparency** has been strengthened.
- **Low-carbon strategies** and consideration for the climate risk are transforming business models.
- Strong measures are accelerating the **financing of the energy transition**: development of renewable energies, withdrawal from the most carbon-intensive energies (coal, hydrocarbons, etc.).
- The major French banks are **upholding the unique commitment** they made in 2021 to limit the financing of unconventional hydrocarbons.

The Institute for Sustainable Finance, of which the FBF is a member, coordinates the Paris Financial Centre's action on sustainable finance to achieve the energy transition and the transformation of the economy.

4

**French banks
in the world's top 10 market
for green loans**

Source: Dealogic, 2023



Simplified energy transition for customers

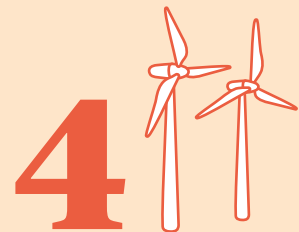
French banks are offering solutions to encourage the ecological transition of their customers, who must take advantage of the subsidies and financing solutions that are available.

- Banks **finance individual customers' low-energy equipments** and energy efficiency home renovations: bank loans, specific green loans, regulated loans, etc.
- Banks support local businesses and authorities: **thermal renovation, wind and solar projects, low-carbon mobility**, etc.
- **Major transition projects** and climate change research are funded.
- Products enable customers to **invest in solidarity-based and sustainable savings**.

Banks: sustainable companies

French banking companies are implementing sustainable development protocols to reduce their environmental footprint.

- Banks are **reducing the carbon footprint of employees**: soft and low-carbon mobility, more efficient workstations, renewable energy sources.
- The management of buildings, networks and resources is **optimised**: water, electricity, IT equipment.
- Paper consumption has been **significantly reduced**: recycling, digitalisation, etc.



**French banks
in the world's top 10 in
renewable energy financing**

Source: IJ Global, 2023



Further reading at lesclesdelabanque.com
8 "climate" guides



PROTECTING BIODIVERSITY

Supporting the preservation of natural terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems

Reducing the footprint of human activities

French banks can help their customers to reduce the impact of their activities on biodiversity:

- By financing companies and local authorities' projects to **restore and preserve natural spaces**;
- By incorporating the impacts of certain projects on biodiversity and natural ecosystems into the **credit risk analysis**;
- By measuring the **biodiversity impacts** of financed infrastructure projects;
- By excluding financing for projects on **sites with a rich biodiversity**, in particular sites classified by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).



Faced with the alarming observation of the loss of biodiversity, the French financial sector is taking action to reverse the process, both through its customers' activities and its own direct impacts.

Products and services focused on nature

French banks are developing innovative financing solutions that respect natural ecosystems.

- Products incorporate **specific biodiversity objectives**: green bonds, sustainability-linked loans, etc.
- Investment solutions are **dedicated to natural capital**.
- Public/private financing promotes **agroecology and agroforestry** in emerging countries.

The banking sector contributes to the market's work, particularly in terms of the National Biodiversity Strategy, which implements the Kunming-Montréal agreement in France.



over
55%

of global GDP depends on healthy biodiversity.

Source: Swiss Re Institute, 2020



69%

of vertebrate populations have disappeared in less than 50 years.

Source: WWF, 2022

Biodiversity strategies in banks

French banks can integrate biodiversity, alongside climate, into their internal policies to reduce their environmental footprint.

- **Natural spaces** are being incorporated into buildings: shared gardens, urban vegetation, installation of beehives, etc.
- **Recycling facilities** have been developed to reduce plastic pollution: single-use objects, computer and telephone equipment, etc.
- Employees are **trained and made aware** of biodiversity issues.
- The **banks' own impacts** are measured, in particular those linked to the artificialisation of soil.

Joining international initiatives

The major French banks contribute to various initiatives aimed at preserving and restoring biodiversity and natural resources.

- As part of the **Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD)**, they contribute to the implementation of a global framework for managing and reporting nature-related risks, dependencies, impacts and opportunities for financial institutions.
- They signed the **Finance for Biodiversity Pledge**, thereby committing to protect and restore biodiversity through their financial activities and investments.
- Specific objectives are being developed to combat degradation and restore natural capital as part of the **Act4Nature International** initiative.
- Banks are committed to the international **Equator Principles** initiative, which involves taking ESG criteria into account when financing projects, including biodiversity issues.



Innovating for customers, with a concern for maximum security



94%

of French people use their bank's website or app

Source: FBF-IFOP survey,
February 2024

Innovation in customer offerings

The digitalisation of banking services extends and enhances customer relations.

- Digital portals are the main **entry points** for customer relations.
- The number of **innovative solutions** are increasing: contactless payment, instant transfer, cards with dynamic or biometric cryptograms, etc.
- The offering is enhanced by advances in **digital identification**, artificial intelligence, blockchain, big data, etc.

At the heart of the digital ecosystem

French banks, the drivers of the digital financial ecosystem, are supporting their customers' digital transformation.

- Banks finance innovative companies and the digitalisation of their customers.
- **Ad hoc structures** (innovation centres, incubators, accelerators) and partnerships with start-ups have been established.
- Banks drive **dynamic ecosystems**: acquisition of start-ups, equity investments, open API platforms, etc.
- The banking industry is **a member of the Finance Innovation cluster** and contributes to its work.



72%

of French people have total confidence in banks in the security of their personal data, far ahead of telephone operators, high-tech companies or GAFAs.

Source: FBF-IFOP survey,
May 2024



+63%

of suspicious activity reports to Tracfin from credit institutions over a 4-year period.

Source: Tracfin, 2023

Cyber and financial security

Mobilisation is ongoing to ensure the security of the financial system and a high level of protection for data and funds.

- Strong authentication is applied to all **online purchases**.
- **Prevention actions** are carried out: European cybersecurity month, *Les clés de la banque* programme, communication to customers, etc.
- **Investments are constantly made** for the effectiveness of financial security.
- The proportion of **compliance, control and risk professions** (8.8% of employees and 8.6% of recruitments in 2023) is essential.

Banks: digital companies

All aspects of banking companies are impacted by the digital transformation.

- **Branch digitisation** is organised around the customer.
- **Information systems are transforming**: architecture, cloud, API, big data, etc.
- **Working methods are evolving**: collaborative tools, e-learning, innovation labs, intrapreneurship projects, etc.
- **Professions are transforming**: development of digital skills, recruitment of new profiles, etc.



Further reading

- > 7 "Security" guides at lesclesdelabanque.com
- > Studies on blockchain, AI, business transformation at observatoire-metiers-banque.fr

Codes, passwords and bank details.

NEVER GIVE THIS DATA!

2024 communication campaign signed
Ministère de l'Économie et des Finances,
Banque de France, FBF and Observatoire
de la sécurité des moyens de paiement
(OSMP)



Meeting customers' needs and providing support to the financially vulnerable



99.25%

of French people have a bank account compared to 95.3% on average in the eurozone

Source: Cour des comptes, 2021



1

in 3 branches in the eurozone is in France

Sources: ECB, Eurostat, 2023

Over

71,500

cash points in mainland France

Source: Banque de France, December 2023

Banking services for all

With more than 355,000 employees and its relationship-focused model, the French banking sector is offering more and more services to meet the needs of customers and their evolutions.

- The **regional presence** of French banks, among the densest in Europe, is a key asset of inclusion: more than 99% of the population is less than 15 minutes away from a cash withdrawal point in mainland France. (Banque de France, 2023)
- France is one of the best European countries in terms of the availability of financial services.
- The **right to an account** guarantees everyone free access to a bank account and essential services: French banks had more than 186,000 active accounts opened in this context at the end of 2023.*
- **Tariffs transparency** promotes access to banking services and mobility.**

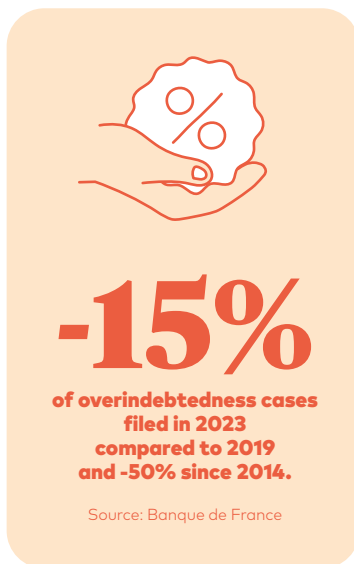


Further reading at lesclesdelabanque.com

"Managing your account in the event of an incident", a guide on the specific offer for financially vulnerable customers

*"Pilote Budget"
and "Pilote Dépenses":
2 free apps to make it
easier to monitor your
accounts on a daily
basis! ****

French banks share the goal of combating overindebtedness alongside citizens who have encountered difficult life situations: banking services are maintained for the customers concerned, and partnerships are established with social actors so as to support them.



Support for vulnerable customers

For financially vulnerable customers, solutions exist to limit incident fees and help a return to financial stability.

- Banks offer a **specific range** of services and payment methods to customers identified as financially vulnerable: 4.3 million individuals are concerned.*
- They strengthen **dialogue**: personalised examination of the situation, adaptation of authorised overdraft if necessary, account alerts, capped incident fees for vulnerable customers, etc.
- **Cheaper offers** are designed to limit incidents: card with systematic authorisation, account without an authorised overdraft, etc.
- To aid a return to financial stability, **support** is available in dedicated structures, partner associations, Budget Advice Centres (or ‘PCBs’), etc.

* Financial Inclusion Observatory, end-2023

** See professional standards on pricing guides and the comprehensibility of bank statements

*** Applications launched by 10 financial inclusion players, including the FBE.

Offering sustainable jobs and contributing to professional integration for all



The AFB-APEC partnership aims to promote the employment of managers in banking and throughout France, and promote banking professions among candidates.

Banks: *diverse melting pots*

Integration in the French banking sector is facilitated by dynamic policies in favour of diversity.

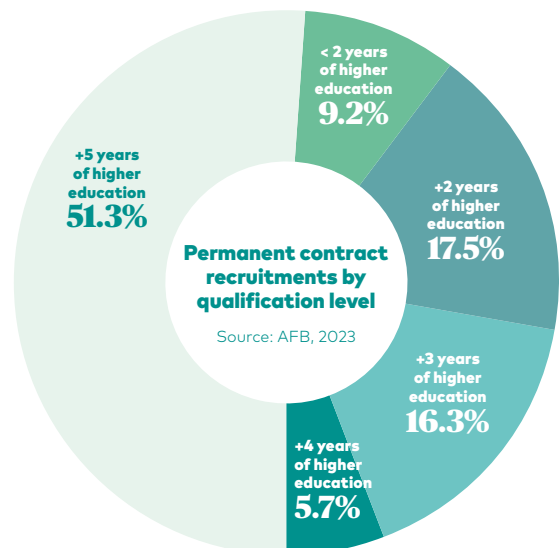
- Partnerships contribute to the **integration of young people with poor employment prospects** (APELS' "Déclics sportifs" programme) and highly qualified refugees ("each One" programme) in the banking sector.
- **Disability policies** are based on company agreements and non-profit partnerships.
- **AFNOR's diversity label** has been granted to several banks.
- **LGBTQ+ policies** have been implemented.

Banks, social ladders

The French banking sector offers sustainable, highly skilled jobs.

- **Over 98% of employees have permanent contracts.** Two thirds of people hired on permanent contracts have **managerial status** and nearly 50% are **young people under the age of 30**.
- **14,900 promotions** were granted in 2023: more than 46% of promotions concern **technicians** and 16% of those promoted **become a manager**.
- Young people with **post-graduate qualifications** account for more than half of new recruits (57%).

Source: AFB, 2023





Respect for human rights

The UN's Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the Global Compact for corporate sustainability are central to French banks' actions.

Quality of life in the banking sector

Agreements contribute to good working conditions in the French banking sector.

- **Wage policies** are favourable.
- Profit-sharing, quality of life at work and the prevention of harassment and violence are covered by **company or branch agreements**.
- The creation of **Interbank Occupational Health Services** (SSTIB) is the result of a branch agreement on occupational health policy.



Further reading: social banking data

- > more at [AFB.fr](https://www.afb.fr)
- > more at [observatoire-metiers-banque.fr](https://www.observatoire-metiers-banque.fr)



14,900

**promotions
in the banking sector
in 2023**

Source: AFB

44,500

people hired in 2023

Source: FBF scope



€44,720

**This is the median base salary,
excluding profit-sharing and
incentives.**

Source: AFB, 2022



Encouraging access to lifelong learning and training for all



Over

112,100

students
have participated in the
"Invite a banker to class"
initiative since 2015.

Over 20 years of financial education

Understanding day-to-day banking and managing a budget is essential to prevent difficulties. The French banking industry has been working towards this for more than 20 years.

- The FBF's **Les clés de la Banque programme*** offers many free educational resources.
- Throughout France, the 101 territorial committees of the FBF raise awareness among **social actors and partner associations** on financial and budgetary education, particularly with the *Écoles de la 2^e Chance* (E2C) network.
- Each year, thousands of children take part in the **"Invite a banker to class"** initiative.**
- The sector is involved in the "Educ Fi" module of the **General National Service (SNU)**.

Academic success and access to culture

The banking profession is committed to equal opportunities in education and culture.

- French banks participate in **support schemes for students** in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.
- They support secondary school pupils and students from **disadvantaged backgrounds**: dedicated programmes, partnerships with schools and universities, etc.
- **Cultural and sports sponsorship** programmes are in place: fight against illiteracy, access to sport, music and museums, etc.

*The partnership
between the FBF
and the Rectorat de
l'Académie d'Île-de-France
is designed to help
students enter the world
of work when they leave
the education system.*

To promote banking professions among young people, French banks are present at student job fairs, on social networks, and as school partners.

In 2024, the FBF, the AFB and the OPCO Atlas are running a national campaign to promote the attractiveness and value of the banking professions.



Discover banking professions on AFB's YouTube channel and at jinvestislavenir.fr!



19,650

work-study participants in the banking sector at end 2023

(FBF scope)



More than

€500 million

spent on employee training and more than 5 million hours in 2022.

(FBF scope)

Work-study and training programmes in the banking sector

As a responsible employer, French banks support young people and employees in their careers and the transformation of their professions.

- Banks have an **active work-study policy**. They also took on 6,300 student trainees in 2023 and more than 450 Volunteers for International Experience (VIEs) in foreign subsidiaries (AFB scope).
- Each year, 4 to 5% of the payroll is set aside for **professional training**: 99.5% of employees went on at least one training course in 2022.
- To anticipate changes in banking professions, **branch agreements** have been signed on professional training (2020), the Pro-A scheme to develop the employability of employees with less than 3 years' higher education (2022), and the overhaul of the banking industry's benchmark professions (2023).
- The FBF, the Syntec Federation and France Assureurs make proposals on **apprenticeship and retraining** to adapt skills to the challenges of tomorrow. (White Paper, January 2024)

* Part of the National Financial Education Strategy

** Under the Distinguished Patronage of the Ministry for National Education and the Educ Fi label from the Banque de France



GENDER EQUALITY

Promoting gender equality and combating violence against women

Financing women's entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is a powerful driver of growth and employment. French banks provide financing for the projects of female entrepreneurs.

- The approval rate of bank loans for **women entrepreneurs** is more than 95%, the same as for men.*
- Banks are stepping up initiatives to **promote female entrepreneurship** in all areas: innovation, agriculture, services, etc.
- Banks are **partners of associations** for female entrepreneurship: France Active, Action'elles, etc.

Banks support associations for promoting women and diversity in companies: Financi'elles, #JamaisSansElles charter, Women in Cyber (WiC), Women & girls in tech, etc.



Further reading at lesclesdelabanque.com

- > guide on "Female entrepreneurship"
- > guide on "What to do in the event of separation"
- > infographic "Preserving your financial autonomy"

Preventing violence against women

The banking profession carries out educational initiatives and is taking action against violence against women.

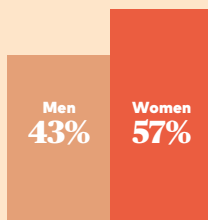
- **Families are made aware of the economic consequences of domestic violence**, and receive information on managing bank accounts in the event of separation, under an agreement between the CNAF and the FBE.
- Banks **support associations** such as: OneInThreeWomen, StOpe, etc.



86.9

a high gender equality index in finance

Source: AFB, 2022



Finance workforce

Source: AFB, 2023

Banks: a highly feminine workforce

In France, more than one in two bankers is a woman. The percentage of female managers is growing steadily.

- Women account for **57% of the workforce** in the banking sector.
- **50% of bank managers** are women compared to 43% of the overall “management” population (AFB 2023, INSEE 2021).
- Nearly **60% of employees promoted** are women.
- The **gender equality index** is at the high level of 86.9 (in 2022).
- **Agreements** for gender equality are signed in French banks and AFB banks.

To combat stereotypes and sexist behaviour, or sexual harassment, the banking profession is raising awareness among employers, bank employees, trade unions and partners.

*Source: FBE, Neufilze/Asterès study, 2021

**See the videos
on AFB's YouTube channel!**



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