





French National Agency for Water and Aquatic Environments

Four missions in restoring water and aquatic environments to good ecological status

Liberté • Égalité • Fraternité
RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE

Ministère de l'Écologie, du Développement durable et de l'Énergie

ONEMA

A public agency to restore water and aquatic environments to good ecological status

Created by the Law on water and aquatic environments, dated 30 December 2006, and the implementation decree dated 25 March 2007, Onema is a public agency operating under the supervision of the Ecology ministry. It participates in implementing water policy, calling on its scientific and technical capabilities as well as its in-depth knowledge of aquatic environments and the stakeholders in the water sector.

The challenge of good water status

The European water framework directive (WFD), adopted in October 2000, set an ambitious goal for the water policy of Member States, i.e. restore water and aquatic environments to good status by 2015. In France, the WFD is incorporated in the law on water and aquatic environments voted on 30 December 2006. Following the Grenelle environmental agreement, the ambition of the French government is to avoid damage and to reach good status of at least two-thirds of all water bodies by 2015.

A second contract with the Ecology ministry

Onema signed its second goals contract with the French State on 22 July 2013, for the years 2013 to 2018. The goals contract sets the strategic objectives for the six coming years: technical support to public policies, reaffirmed water policy activity, and prioritisation of big projects on the water information system


© Daniel Maynadier - Onema


© Pierre Mangeot - Onema

1. MOBILISE RESEARCH ON SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF WATER AND AQUATIC ENVIRONMENTS


© Guillaume Czerw

Evaluating the chemical and quantitative status of water resources and the ecological status of aquatic environments, adapting to the effects of climate change, assessing the impact of human activities, detecting emerging pollutants present in very small quantities and determining their long-term risks, etc. are all major challenges for which new knowledge and innovative technologies are required. Sustainable management of water resources and aquatic environments must therefore be based on world-class targeted research.

Onema acts as a «ways and means» agency in that it stimulates French public research, sets priorities for research on water and ecosystems, and funds research projects in the public interest.

Thanks to the necessary scientific and technical personnel within its ranks to direct the research, the agency devotes 15% of its budget to R&D, science advice and training.

The Onema training centre participates in disseminating knowledge and in training the people in charge of managing water and aquatic environments. Training courses make extensive use of the results produced by targeted research.

2. GAIN KNOWLEDGE ON THE STATUS AND USES OF WATER AND AQUATIC ENVIRONMENTS

A core mission consists, first, of improving and gathering information on the status of water bodies in France for reports to the European commission and, secondly, of assisting in setting priorities for water-management policies.

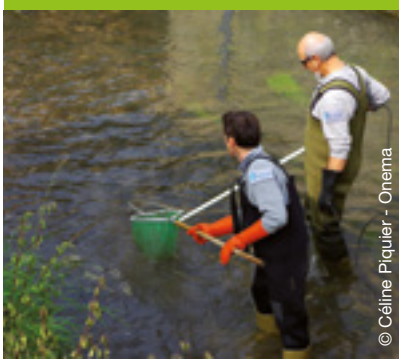
Onema coordinates the water information system

WIS-F (water information system for France) is the system that organises the production, collection, storage, use and dissemination of water data. Onema provides the necessary technical coordination in close collaboration with the Water agencies, research institutions and State services. The information is available via the Eaufrance portal. The purpose of the portal is to facilitate access to public water information on the status of water resources and aquatic environments, as well as water and sanitation services. WIS-F is part of WIS-E (water information system for Europe).

To improve management of water data, starting with its production and acquisition through to dissemination, Onema coordinated the creation of the national framework for water data which established a set of rules for all participants as well as a programme for the necessary work and funding. The agency is also in charge of developing the evaluation methods for water status in the framework of the monitoring program for aquatic environments required by the European water framework directive.

Onema, a producer of data

The territorial units of the agency produce certain types of data. They carry out surveillance monitoring on fish and the hydromorphology of rivers, continuous monitoring of temperatures, monitoring of rivers running dry, an inventory of obstacles to river flows, observation of flagship and non-indigenous species, and monitoring of contamination in aquatic fauna.


© Céline Piquier - Onema

Onema coordinates the national observatory on water and sanitation services. The internet site is open to elected officials and the general public to provide information on the 35 000 water and sanitation services in France. Each inhabitant can learn more about water prices and the quality of the services provided by their town.

3. POLICING WATER AND AQUATIC ENVIRONMENTS


© Michel Monsay

Chronic pollution or acute incidents, obstacles to ecological continuity, work likely to destroy spawning grounds or to modify the physical characteristics of rivers, etc. are just some examples of alterations to aquatic environments that have serious consequences for the qualitative and quantitative status of water resources. Onema plays an active role in preventing damage and in inspecting how water resources are used.

Preventive measures and technical opinions

The agency carries out preventive work targeting installation owners and water managers, and provides technical advice to State services on the potential impact of installations, on civil-engineering work, the increase of activities on rivers and the status of aquatic environments. Onema also assists in identifying wetlands and spawning zones, and in recreating ecological continuity in rivers.

The police for water and aquatic environments

Onema ensures compliance with regulations governing use of water and aquatic environments and reports any observed offences. Inspections are carried out in the framework of the inspection programme set up in each department under the authority of the prefect. Offences result in administrative measures (e.g. forced halts in the operation of installations or forced implementation of decisions) or criminal proceedings (fines, imprisonment).

4. SUPPORT FOR WATER POLICIES


© Onema

Through its direct contact with the field, Onema makes its knowledge and know-how available for diagnostics and restoration of water and environments.

Providing technical assistance for implementation of water policies

Onema provides technical support to ensure better integration of ecological issues in water-policy planning and programming documents, notably RBMPs (river-basin management plans), sub-basin management plans, programmes of measures, major-river plans, etc. The agency is particularly competent in the fields of biology and hydromorphology. It also contributes to formulating national strategies for management of aquatic environments.

Onema assists in restoration operations for aquatic environments around the country. For example, it participates in projects to restore the habitats and free movement of migratory fish, the symbols of ecological quality in rivers. With the Water agencies, it stimulates the emergence of local project-management capabilities.

Funding priority policies

The agency provides financial support for the water sector in the overseas territories and Corsica by contributing, among other projects, to funding for sanitation and drinking-water infrastructure required to help those territories catch up with continental France. It also participates in financing the Ecophyto 2010 plan to reduce the use of pesticides.

Onema is one of the major players in the national action plan for river restoration, launched in November 2009. To assist in river diagnostics, the restoration of continuity and species preservation, Onema personnel inventoried obstacles on all rivers in France and provide technical support to evaluate the impact of obstacles and raise awareness on the need to undertake restoration efforts.

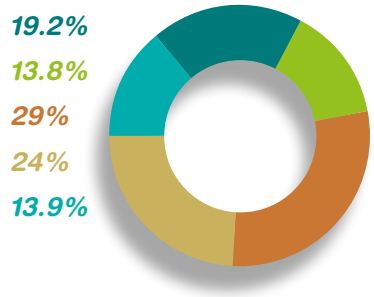
European and international partnerships

In Europe, Onema and its partners are involved in joint, operational R&D projects and act as the interface between the scientific sector and public decision-makers. The agency participates in the water information system for Europe (WIS-E) and drafts reports to the EU commission on implementation of the water framework directive and other directives.

It cooperates with its partners on the technical conditions governing implementation of EU water policies.

SALIENT FIGURES

A budget targeting the major priorities at Onema



Technical support to public policies
Research and studies
Knowledge on the status and uses of aquatic ecosystems and water resources
Inspections on use
Specific policies

BUDGET OF **147** MILLION EUROS DRAWN IN PART FROM THE WATER FEES COLLECTED BY THE WATER AGENCIES

WORKFORCE OF **909**

15 REFERENCE DATA BANKS ON WATER

6 865 OPINIONS IN SUPPORT OF POLICING ACTIVITIES

821 OPINIONS ON AUTHORISATION REQUESTS IN WATER MATTERS

25,196 INSPECTIONS CARRIED OUT IN 2013

300 R&D PROJECTS IN 2013 WITH VARIOUS RESEARCH ORGANISATIONS INCLUDING BRGM, CEMAGREF, INERIS, INRA, IFREMER, ETC.

25 MILLION EUROS IN 2013 FOR SANITATION INFRASTRUCTURE OVERSEAS AND IN CORSICA, AS A SOLIDARITY MEASURE



© Bruno Tissot - Remoray lake nature reserve

ONEMA HEADQUARTERS AND REGIONAL OFFICES

The staff of 900 carry out the missions of Onema in continental France as well as in the overseas territories. Using their know-how and in-depth knowledge of the field, engineers, technicians and technical personnel work on water and aquatic environments throughout the country, in the national headquarters, the nine regional offices and the local offices in all French departments.

1 • NORTH-WEST
2 rue de Strasbourg
60200 Compiègne

2 • BRETAGNE-PAYS DE LA LOIRE
84 rue de Rennes
35510 Cesson-Sévigne

3 • NORTH-EAST
23 rue des Garennes
57155 Marly

4 • CENTRE-POITOU CHARENTES
9 avenue Buffon
Bâtiment Vienne
45071 Orléans Cedex 2

5 • RHÔNE-ALPES
Chemin des Chasseurs
Parc de Parilly - 69500 Bron

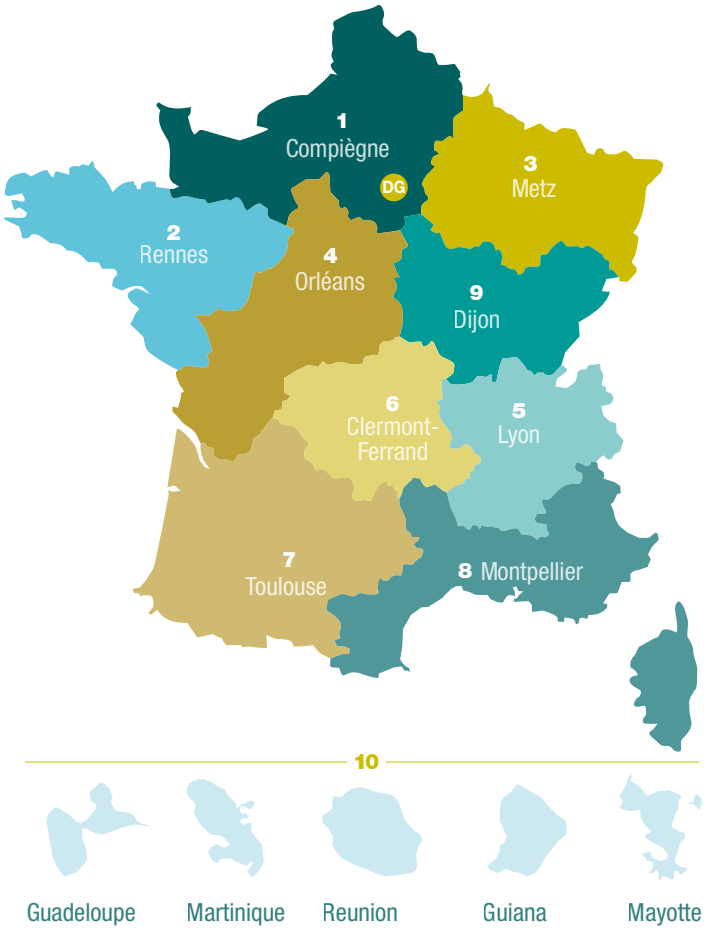
6 • MASSIF CENTRAL
Site de Marmilhat
63370 Lempdes

7 • SOUTH-WEST
Quai de l'Étoile
7 boulevard de la Gare
31500 Toulouse

8 • MEDITERRANEAN
55 chemin du Mas de Matour
34790 Grabels

9 • BOURGOGNE FRANCHE-COMTÉ
Boulevard Dr-Jean-Veillet
21000 Dijon

10 • MAYOTTE \ REUNION \ GUADELOUPE \ MARTINIQUE \ GUIANA
Onema - Inspections and territorial action department
Le Nadar, Hall C
5 square Félix-Nadar
94300 Vincennes - France



HQ

Headquarters :
Le Nadar, Hall C
5 square Félix-Nadar
94300 Vincennes - France
Tel. + 33 1 45 14 36 00
Tel. + 33 1 45 14 36 60
www.onema.fr

Design and editing: Information and communication department Production: www.kazoar.fr - March 2015

ONEMA
Office national de l'eau et des milieux aquatiques