



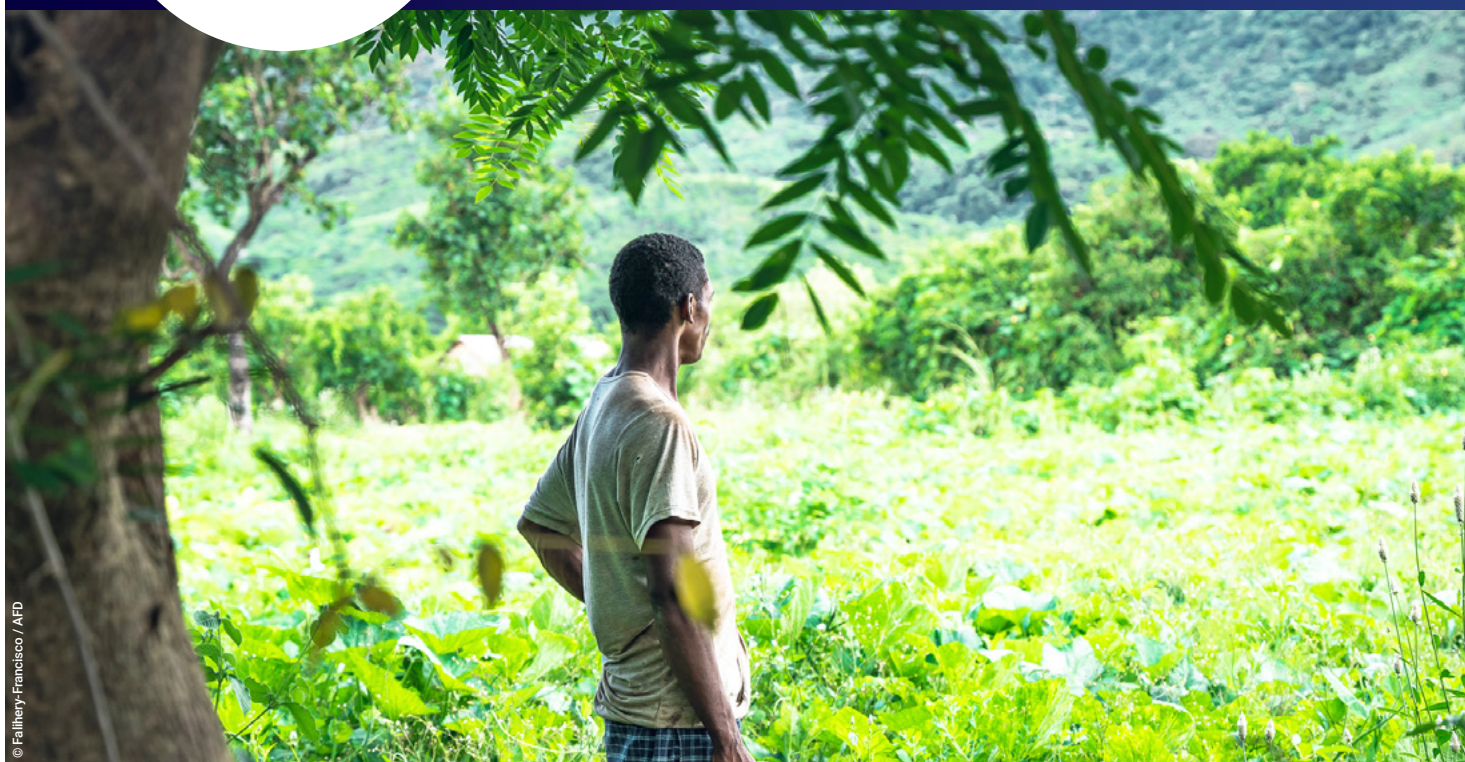
RÉPUBLIQUE
FRANÇAISE

*Liberté
Égalité
Fraternité*



AFD AND

Climate-health



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More than
€1 BN
invested in
climate-health
action between
2021 and 2024

68
funded projects
to SDG 13
(climate action)
since 2020

In 2024,
40%
of projects integrate
both climate and gender
considerations

Climate change not only has direct consequences for people's physical and mental health, but it can also disrupt entire national healthcare systems. Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs) are disproportionately vulnerable to these climate-health risks. This is why AFD continuously works to finance health and social protection projects that strengthen the resilience of people and healthcare systems to climate change, while also curbing greenhouse gas emissions.

#WorldInCommon

AFD and the climate–health nexus



3.6 billion
people live in areas
at risk from natural
hazards.¹



Extreme heat is projected to cause a
20% increase
in cases of dengue,
Zika and chikungunya.²



Women and children are
14 times
more likely to die from
a natural disaster.³

Climate change is the greatest global health threat of the 21st century. It spreads infectious and vector-borne diseases; estimated to cause up to 15.6 million deaths from heat stress and climate events by 2050⁴, while worsening mental health worldwide. Rising air pollution further causes premature deaths, 90% of which occur in LMICs⁵.

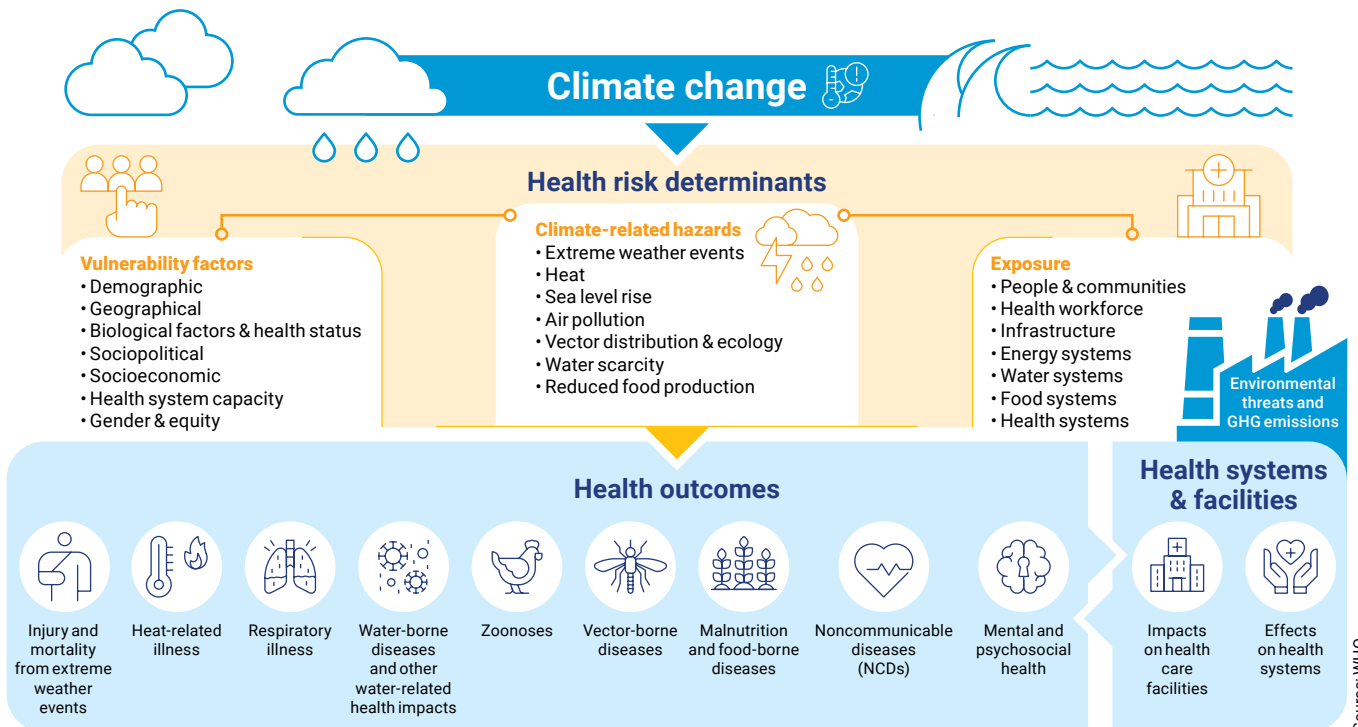
All countries are affected, but LMICs – specifically Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia – face the greatest burden, despite contributing least to emissions. In Africa, half of all primary healthcare facilities lack access to clean water, and 2/3 lack reliable electricity⁶, leaving systems highly vulnerable to climate shocks.

Addressing these challenges requires climate-resilient health systems. Adaptive social protection and health

financing mechanisms can also enhance adaptation capacities and ensure access to health services⁷.

Women and children are disproportionately affected due to biological differences and gender norms. Acting as a “threat multiplier”, climate change⁸ is projected to cause 250,000 additional deaths annually (2030-2050) from diarrhea, malnutrition, heat stress, and malaria⁹ – to which women are particularly vulnerable. Air pollution heightens the risk of miscarriage and ovarian cancer, while extreme events intensify gender-based violence, child marriage and trafficking. These impacts – compounded by inequalities – call for gender-responsive strategies.

Lastly, the healthcare sector must address its own role, as it contributes to about 5% of global emissions¹⁰.



(1) IPCC (2022) *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability* (2) UNDP (2024) *The climate crisis is a health crisis - here's why* (3) UNDP (2022) *Women are hit hardest in disasters, so why are responses too often gender-blind?* (4) Climate Investment Funds (2024) *The Cost of Inaction: New study tallies the staggering health costs of climate change* (5) IPCC (2022) *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability* (6) African Development Bank (2022) *Strategy for Quality Health Infrastructure in Africa - 2022-2030* (7) Climate & SP brochure (8) World Health Organization (2023) *Climate Change* (9) Asian Development Blog (2024) *Safeguarding Women's Health in the Face of Rising Temperatures* (10) CDC (2025) *About One Health*

AFD's climate strategy in the health sector

November 2021 marked a turning point, as countries at COP26 recognized the links between climate and health and committed to developing sustainable, low-carbon, and climate-resilient health infrastructure. Drawing on its capacity as a public development bank to mobilize blended financing and foster dialogue among diverse stakeholders, AFD plays a key role in advancing climate-health action and supporting the implementation of these commitments.

AFD integrates climate considerations into its projects to enhance the resilience of health systems, reflected in a 74% increase in climate co-benefits between 2019 and 2024. At the same time, protecting vulnerable communities remains a core priority, which underpins AFD's commitment to gender-responsive programming. To achieve these dual objectives, the Health and Social Protection Division focuses on three core activities:



Common goods

- Strengthen the integration of the One Health approach into health policies.
- Enhance epidemiological surveillance and stakeholder coordination.
- Support pharmaceutical value chains and improve access to treatments.



Supply of health services

- Improve eco-design and access to healthcare.
- Strengthen the resilience and sustainability of healthcare infrastructure and reduce its carbon footprint.
- Increase the volume and improve the quality of human resources equipped to respond to climate change impacts.
- Ensure the existence of crisis response plans.

Contribution to SDGs

- SDG 1:** No poverty
- SDG 2:** Zero hunger
- SDG 3:** Good health and well-being
- SDG 5:** Gender equality
- SDG 13:** Climate action



Social protection

- Strengthen financing systems for universal health coverage.
- Make social protection systems adaptive to protect people from crises, especially climate-related.
- Mitigate the effects of transition policies and enhance adaptation measures.
- Support policies and systems on aging, dependency and disability.
- Support countries to reorient brown subsidies to increase fiscal space in favor of social protection.

In doing so, AFD supports its counterparts in shaping and financing their climate-health agenda, by delivering a qualitative, flexible and workable proposal based on:

- Diagnosis & a needs-based approach to ensure the project's viability.
- Integrated approach to secure operational services.
- Multi-level interventions: from public policy approach to project implementation.
- Access to a wide range of experts in diverse fields.

Offers and products

Technical support: technical advice and assistance, supply of goods and services, consulting, process enhancement, monitoring.

Subsidies: to the public sector and civil societies.

Loans: sovereign and non-sovereign, private sector, blended tools, long-term maturities.

Guarantees: to the public and private sectors.

Capital investment: direct and indirect equity investments, quasi-equity, growth and innovation equity.

Research & innovation: studies, research, evaluation, public policy dialogue, training, innovation and access to new markets, E&S risk management.

France's Global Health Strategy 2023-2027

France plays a leading role in global health policy and is committed to addressing key challenges by promoting equitable access to health services and innovations. This includes advancing universal health coverage (UHC), strengthening health systems, and combating diseases. Through collaboration with French and international stakeholders – including multilateral and bilateral partners – AFD supports the implementation of this strategy across its areas of operation. The strategy is structured around five priorities:

1. Promote equitable, sustainable, resilient, adaptable, and person-centered health systems to advance universal health coverage (UHC).
2. Support health and well-being for all by preventing and addressing diseases across all ages.
3. Strengthen prevention, preparedness, and response to public health emergencies and climate change through the One Health approach.
4. Contribute to a renewed global health architecture that leverages the complementarity of bilateral and multilateral action.
5. Mobilize research and public and private expertise as drivers of action and influence in support of the Global Health Strategy.

One Health: building regional epidemiological surveillance networks

The Indo-Pacific's economic and demographic development has led to rapid environmental modifications, resulting in the emergence of infectious diseases, particularly zoonoses. Rising temperatures and the increasing frequency of extreme climate events further facilitate the spread of such diseases into previously unaffected areas.

The project supports member states and territories of the Indian Ocean Commission and the Pacific Community, as well as ECOMORE partner countries in Southeast Asia (Cambodia, Lao PDR, the Philippines, Vietnam) in preventing and responding to epidemics through a collaborative approach. The project specifically aims to: (i) enhance the integrated human, animal, and environmental health approaches of three surveillance networks – ECOMORE, ROSSP, and SEGA ONE HEALTH – that AFD has historically supported; (ii) and establish a framework for inter-network cooperation around four core pillars:

- **“Laboratory”**: Scaling up the diagnosis and quality assurance of the laboratories involved in integrated monitoring.
- **“Health/Climate”**: Developing the integration of climatic and environmental factors in integrated monitoring.

- **“Surveillance”**: Strengthen the One Health approach within infectious diseases surveillance strategies.
- **“Response”**: Reinforce One Health devices to improve the response to public health emergencies.

With a strong focus on adaptation, it will generate and disseminate new evidence on the links between climate change and health risks – including zoonotic diseases, waterborne illnesses, non-communicable diseases (such as chronic respiratory conditions, and climate-related mental health disorders). Additionally, reducing gender inequalities in health security is a cross-cutting objective of the project (e.g. implementing a Gender Action Plan).



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Fighting air pollution in South-East Asia

Air pollution poses a major threat to human health, contributing to increased premature mortality and reduced life expectancy. It is responsible for an estimated 7 to 9 million premature deaths globally each year. According to the World Health Organization, 99% of the world's population breathes air that exceeds safe pollution levels – making it a critical health, environmental, economic, and social issue. In response, AFD has allocated a €5 million grant to support the design of a multi-country initiative targeting air pollution in South-East Asia – the region most affected. The program is structured around two main components:

- Support the development of local programs in Cambodia and Thailand to implement public policies and actions that promote air quality. This includes raising awareness among authorities and communities, strengthening data on air pollution (including emissions inventories), reducing pollutant sources, and evaluating the effectiveness of related policies.
- Assist ASEAN member states in reinforcing public policies and institutional capacities at regional, national, and local levels. Activities include building national capacity for air quality management, supporting advocacy efforts, and delivering technical assistance through leading French institutions such as AirParif and CITEPA. This involves developing policy tools, producing regional guidelines, and facilitating knowledge sharing and capacity building on air quality management.

Strengthening health systems with a climate approach

AFD is committed to supporting the transformation of health systems, particularly the hospital sector, in response to the escalating climate crisis. The mission is twofold: to improve infrastructure resilience, and to reduce its carbon footprint.

Rwanda

Strengthening the health system's resiliency

In Rwanda, where strengthening the health system is a national priority, AFD is supporting a flagship initiative: the construction of a modern, bioclimatic hospital in Musanze with 550 beds, backed by €80 million in financing (loan and grant). Designed to reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions, the facility is also built to withstand future climate-related challenges such as flooding. AFD supports project stakeholders throughout the planning and construction phases to ensure climate resilience and sustainability are fully integrated.

To further strengthen the resilience of Rwanda's healthcare system, AFD is providing €39 million to support the development of a comprehensive crisis management framework. This includes establishing a Climate Desk within the Ministry of Health, tasked with identifying climate risks and integrating them into public health policy. The partnership has also led to the creation of a dedicated, costed action plan aimed at building more climate-resilient healthcare infrastructure.

AFD is also supporting a joint assessment with the Clinton Health Access Initiative to evaluate the climate vulnerability of healthcare facilities and to develop guidelines for the construction of climate-resilient hospitals and health centers.



Tunisia

The project aims to strengthen healthcare delivery in the Gafsa Governorate by reducing regional health disparities and improving the quality of care. It includes: (i) the construction and outfitting of a new regional referral hospital in Gafsa; and (ii) technical assistance, partially financed through Expertise France, to support health system governance and prepare for the hospital's opening.

The project is primarily funded through an €80 million grant under a debt conversion mechanism. An additional €1 million grant from the European Union covers part of the extra costs associated with the building's energy efficiency.

Eco-design and the sustainable management of hospital infrastructure are central to the project, supported through the Programme for Energy Efficiency in Buildings (PEEB). The program has facilitated a carbon footprint assessment and an initial environmental evaluation, ensuring the project meets stringent eco-design standards. At the national level, it also contributes to the development of a best practices guide for the eco-design and sustainable operation of hospital facilities, in partnership with Tunisia's National Energy Management Agency (ANME).

In addition, in partnership with the German development agency *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (GIZ), guidelines have been developed to help reduce the carbon footprint of hospitals and to support effective adoption by project stakeholders – reinforcing a coherent approach that aligns health and climate objectives.



Initiatives promoting a climate-health approach

Programme for Energy Efficiency of Buildings

Launched in 2018 by AFD and the German development agency GIZ, the Programme for Energy Efficiency in Buildings (PEEB) focuses on developing climate-resilient, low-carbon, and energy-efficient infrastructure – including in the health sector. As part of its implementation, AFD provides direct technical assistance, mobilizes engineering firms to support effective project management, and covers additional investment costs to ensure the construction of resilient, low-carbon facilities.



Future of hospitals initiative



This platform acts as a forum for dialogue and knowledge-sharing on innovative solutions to the healthcare challenges posed by climate change, while aligning development banks' agendas toward building resilient health systems. With a specific focus on health infrastructure and institutions, it promotes collaboration among development banks, hospitals, universities, the International Hospital Federation, non-profit organizations, and other stakeholders. The initiative is co-led by AFD, the International Hospital Federation, and the Aga Khan Development Network.

One Sustainable Health

The One Sustainable Health (OSH) Forum gathers professionals from the human, animal and environmental health sectors. Launched in 2021, it brings together the scientific community, civil society, and public- and private-sector decision-makers to develop concrete solutions through a “One Health” approach that integrates the fundamentals of planetary health.

Its objectives are to:

- Build an international community of public- and private-sector experts from multiple disciplines, focused on the challenges of One Health / Planetary Health, in line with the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

- Develop and coordinate thematic International Working Groups (IWGs) to produce operational recommendations supported by pilot projects and to inform the evolution of public policies.

- Organize events and awareness-raising initiatives to promote the OSH approach and highlight the importance of jointly and equitably addressing health, environmental and social issues.



AFD at the center of multilateral initiatives

Development banks (DBs) play a key role in advancing countries’ climate-health agendas by helping integrate climate considerations into public health policies. As both climate and health are global challenges, addressing them requires cross-border collaboration – which is why AFD actively participates in multilateral partnerships. These alliances strengthen collective capacity to drive investment strategies by combining technical assistance with tailored financing solutions.

Finance in Common and its Coalition for Social Investment

Finance in Common (FiCS) strengthens collaboration among public development banks (PDBs) by promoting the exchange of standards and best practices. Its objective is to align global financial flows with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement. Within FiCS, the Coalition focuses on the interlinked challenges of health, climate change, and socio-economic stability. It advocates for integrating health and climate priorities into national policies and emphasizes capacity building to empower local communities.



Development banks’ working groups for climate finance

This initiative strengthens collective action to address the health impacts of climate change. It promotes the health sector’s role in both adaptation and mitigation, while leveraging a global network of financial institutions to accelerate progress.

Alliance for Transformative Action on Climate and Health

ATACH works to build climate-resilient, low-carbon, and sustainable healthcare systems – in line with commitments made at COP26 – by fostering collaboration among WHO member states. It places the climate-health nexus at the center of national, regional, and international strategies, and supports countries in translating their commitments into concrete actions.



Just Energy Transition Partnerships

JETPs support coal-dependent economies in their transition towards cleaner energy, addressing both climate mitigation and social impacts (social protection, training, job creation, etc.) They support trajectories for reducing emissions while recognizing the significant investment needs involved. The approach is built on the cooperation of donor countries, development banks, and the private sector.



Agence Française de Développement (AFD) helps advance France's policy on sustainable investment and international solidarity. Through its public sector and NGO financing operations, research and publications (Éditions AFD), sustainable development training programs (AFD Group Campus) and awareness-raising activities in France, AFD finances, supports and drives the transition to a fairer, more resilient world.

Alongside our partners, we provide sustainable solutions for – and with – communities. Our teams are working on over 2,700 projects in the field, in over 115 countries, including France's overseas departments and territories, to support projects for the climate, biodiversity, peace, gender equality and global health. Together with Proparco and Expertise France, AFD supports the commitment of France and the French people to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Working by your side, toward a world in common.

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