

Anticipating and preventing risks related to *climate change* for infrastructures

ALAIN ANDRÉ AND DIDIER GARDINAL

Bridges, roads, airports, stations, ports and energy and water distribution networks... infrastructure is omnipresent in our daily lives, enabling regions to function and develop and connecting citizens. Although essential, it is often inadequately maintained, sometimes for decades.

This lack of maintenance is compounded by more frequent and violent climatic events.

This cumulative delay in maintenance and renovation generates a 'grey debt' that makes infrastructure dilapidated and increases its vulnerability to accelerating climate change. Heatwaves, floods, clay shrinkage and swelling, landslides, coastal flooding... these increasingly frequent and intense phenomena are already causing accelerated deterioration and considerable costs for the community, particularly for overseas territories, which are exposed to them even sooner than mainland France, particularly in terms of rising sea levels.

There is an urgent need to invest and anticipate

In light of these findings, the CESE notes a growing awareness, as evidenced by the implementation of the National Climate Change Adaptation Plan (PNACC) 3 and the global warming reference trajectory (TRACC) of +4°C for France by 2100. However, this remains insufficient in view of the challenges. According to the High Council for Climate, the adaptation deficit is widening in our country: 'while the climate is warming rapidly, financing and governance are slow to be put in place'. Furthermore, despite their costs, these investments are also an opportunity for development and employment.

This is why the CESE is calling for massive and urgent investment in infrastructure adaptation to reduce its contribution to greenhouse gas emissions (mitigation objective) and to improve its resistance and resilience to global warming and climate hazards (adaptation objective).

The EESC has drawn up 21 recommendations to anticipate the considerable increase in infrastructure prevention and adaptation costs through prioritisation based on a systemic approach and a logic of solidarity.

Between €1.5 billion and €2 billion per year to be invested in anticipating and repairing damage caused by climate change to infrastructure

Source Carbone 4

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OPINION

1 BETTER MEASURE AND IDENTIFY RISKS

How?

→ By creating an up-to-date map of infrastructure assets categorized by type, under the guidance of government experts and in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders.

→ By accurately estimating the cost of adapting infrastructure across regions and including, as a separate item, the amount of “gray debt” owed by infrastructure owners and operators, with the support of Cerema..

2 IMPROVING GOVERNANCE

How?

→ By establishing integrated national infrastructure governance led by the government, based on an interministerial strategy overseen by the General Secretariat for Ecological Planning (SGPE) and through the coordinated implementation of investments by the General Secretariat for Investment (SGPI) and the High Commission for Strategy and Planning. It will involve the Infrastructure Steering Council (COI), which is open to civil society and stakeholders.

3 IMPLEMENT A SYSTEMIC INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT POLICY

How?

→ By scaling up investments by the government, local authorities, and operators based on their utility, as determined through a systemic

and forward-looking analysis. By immediately initiating preventive work to upgrade the most deteriorated infrastructure, and by incorporating an “adaptation mindset” that takes into account potential changes in usage.

→ Enact a multi-year funding law for PNACC 3.

4 SECURE THE NECESSARY FUNDINGS

How?

→ By significantly increasing public funding from the government and Congress, and redirecting those funds to support infrastructure adaptation. By establishing the Infrastructure Financing Conference on a permanent basis (through framework legislation and multi-year planning), securing funding for resilient infrastructure, and developing innovative business models.

5 STRENGTHEN THE CAPABILITIES OF THE INSURANCE SYSTEM IN THIS NEW CONTEXT

How?

→ By establishing a government-led “task force” on infrastructure insurability, spearheaded by public authorities and bringing together insurers and reinsurers, with representation from France Assureurs, elected officials, and civil society, as a follow-up to the Roquelaure report on regional insurability.

THE RAPPORTEURS

Alain André

(33)1 44 43 62 20 • alain.andre@lecese.fr

Alain André is an EDF executive and a member of the CGT-Force Ouvrière group, the union he represents on the CESE. He serves on the Committee on Regional Affairs, Agriculture, and Food; the Overseas Delegation, of which he is vice-chair; and the CESE's Temporary Committee on Cannabis.

Didier Gardinal

(33)1 44 43 62 20 • didier.gardinal@wanadoo.fr

Didier Gardinal is the former President of the Midi-Pyrénées Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) and Treasurer of CCI France, which he represents on the EESC. He serves on the Committee on Regional Affairs, Agriculture, and Food and on the Temporary Committee on End-of-Life Care.