



2022 SME COUNTRY FACTSHEET'S EVIDENCE BACKGROUND DOCUMENT




France

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
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Factual SME-related evidence	Source
KEY NOWCASTS & FORECASTS	 KEY NOWCASTS & FORECASTS
In 2021, French SMEs grew by 9.1% in value added and by 1.2% in employment, following a decline of 8.3% and 1.0%, respectively, in 2020.	Estimates produced by JRC, based on figures from the Structural Business Statistics Database as well as provisional data for 2020-2021 from the National Accounts Database and the Short-Term Business Statistics Database.
The <i>construction</i> ecosystem is the only ecosystem in France that experienced positive SME employment growth in both 2020 and 2021, with growth rates of 0.1% and 2.8% respectively. In terms of SME value added, the ecosystem generated strong recovery growth of 14.6% in 2021, after falling by 10.6% in 2020.	Estimates produced by JRC, based on figures from the Structural Business Statistics Database as well as provisional data for 2020-2021 from the National Accounts Database and the Short-Term Business Statistics Database.
The <i>mobility – transport – automotive</i> and <i>retail</i> ecosystems experienced a typical pattern of recovery growth. In 2021, SME value added grew by 9.3% and 11.0% respectively, following a sharp drop of 10.2% and 11.1% in 2020. SME employment grew slightly by 0.1% in the <i>mobility – transport – automotive</i> ecosystem and 0.4% in the <i>retail</i> ecosystem in 2021, after declining by 1.3% and 1.5%, respectively, in 2020.	Estimates produced by JRC, based on figures from the Structural Business Statistics Database as well as provisional data for 2020-2021 from the National Accounts Database and the Short-Term Business Statistics Database.
Based on data from early 2022, it was expected that SME value added and SME employment in France would continue to grow by 5.4% and 0.7 % respectively, but the war in Ukraine will affect these estimates.	Estimates and forecasts produced by JRC, based on figures from the Structural Business Statistics Database, provisional data for 2020-2021 from the National Accounts Database and the Short-Term Business Statistics Database and forecasts from the AMECO database.
In 2021, French SMEs generated 51.0% of employment and 42.3% of value added, well below the corresponding EU averages of 64.4% and 51.8%.	Estimates produced by JRC, based on figures from the Structural Business Statistics Database as well as provisional data for 2020-2021 from the National Accounts Database and the Short-Term Business Statistics Database.
ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS OF SUSTAINABILITY	 ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS OF SUSTAINABILITY
The decarbonisation of industry is a major subject of the Recovery Plan as it devotes EUR 30 billion out of EUR 100 billion in total over 2020-2022. With this, the government supports energy efficient solutions for companies. As of October 2021, 12 enterprises have undertaken low carbon heat support (for more than EUR 100 million investment) and 49 enterprises have undertaken low carbon support (for about EUR 700 million).	Ministry of the Economy, Recovery plan data, 2021. https://www.economie.gouv.fr/files/files/direction_s_services/plan-de-relance/DP_03_09_2021_France_Relance.pdf https://www.economie.gouv.fr/plan-de-relance/tableau-de-bord
As part of France Relance, 'MaPrime Renov' helps households to renovate their dwelling to save energy providing work for building companies (usually SMEs). On 31/01/22, 656 840 files have been accepted in 2021.	Ministry of Economy, Recovery plan data, 2021. https://www.economie.gouv.fr/plan-de-relance/tableau-de-bord
As part of France Relance, ADEME, the operator of the ministry of the ecology, helps SMEs to start or transform their businesses to make them more sustainable. For example, 1650 companies have been supported in 2021 by ADEME for the transformation of their activity (ADEME budget of EUR 23 million for a total investment of EUR 80 million).	Ministry of Ecology, France Relance: an unprecedented support for SMEs committed to the ecological transition, 2021. https://www.ecologie.gouv.fr/france-relance-soutien-inedit-aux-pme-engagees-transition-ecologique
In 2021, the proportion of French SMEs with a turnover share of more than 50% generated by	European Commission, SME Performance Review Indicators, 2021.

green products or services was below (14.50%) the EU-27 average (23.30%).	
SOCIAL ASPECTS OF SUSTAINABILITY  ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS OF SUSTAINABILITY	
Every year, 800 million tonnes of materials and nearly 350 million tonnes of waste are produced in France, of which nearly 120 million tonnes are not recycled.	Ministry of Ecology, National strategy to accelerate the recycling of plastics, composites, textiles, strategic metals and paper and cardboard, 2021. https://www.ecologie.gouv.fr/strategie-accelerer-recyclage-et-transition-vers-economie-circulaire
The government will devote EUR 370 million to the National strategy to accelerate the recycling of plastics, composites, textiles, strategic metals and paper and cardboard in 2021. The funds will come from PIA 4 (the 4 th investment programme).	Ministry of Ecology, National strategy to accelerate the recycling of plastics, composites, textiles, strategic metals and paper and cardboard, 2021. https://www.ecologie.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/13.09.2021_BP_APR_DP_Strategie%20recyclabilite_VDEF.pdf
DIGITALISATION  DIGITALISATION	
France is the country which deploys the fastest optical fibre (ftth) in Europe. On 31 March 2021, 25.6 million dwellings and offices were connected to an optical fibre plug (6 million new dwellings in 2020). As of 30 September 2021, 28.3 million dwellings and offices were connected to an optical fibre plug (27% more than a year ago).	National agency for territorial cohesion, August 2021. https://www.gouvernement.fr/upload/media/default/0001/01/3d333867dcfc8900abe8e0ded5d1dc0246b913e0.pdf
In Q3 2021, 13.4 million dwellings were using an optical fibre (4.1 million new users in one year).	ARCEP, Marche haut et très haut débit fixe, 2021. https://www.arcep.fr/actualites/les-communiqués-de-presse/detail/n/marche-haut-et-très-haut-debit-fixe-091221.html
In a time of containment measures due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the e-commerce has accelerated. For example, the e-commerce for food has advanced by 4 to 5 years in a few months.	FEVAD, E-commerce alimentaire : la consolidation après l'accélération, 2021. https://www.fevad.com/e-commerce-alimentaire-la-consolidation-apres-lacceleration/
In 2020, 76% of the French population aged twelve and over have declared having made at least one purchase of goods on the internet in the last 12 months, compared to 62% in 2019.	Labo Numerical society, 2021 digital barometer: the main results, 2021. https://labo.societenumerique.gouv.fr/2021/07/01/barometre-du-numerique-2021-les-principaux-resultats/
In 2021, there has been a very strong growth of digital activity in companies. 66% of SMEs present their activity on a website, excluding social networks, i.e. 29 points more than before the crisis. 43% also have an online document exchange platform for their employees (+26 points). 33% have professional collaboration tools (+12 points), and 20% have their own online sales website (+11 points).	FranceNum/ Ministry of the Economy, FranceNum poll 2021: digital technology in SMEs (0 to 249 employees), 2021. https://www.francenum.gouv.fr/comprendre-le-numerique/barometre-france-num-2021-le-numerique-dans-les-tpe-pme-0-249-salaries
INNOVATION  INNOVATION	
Between 2016 and 2018, 41% of merchant companies with 10 or more employees located in France and included in the scope of the INSEE survey, have innovated in terms of product innovations, production processes, and R&D activities. The expenditure related to innovation activities represents 4% of the turnover of innovative companies, of which two-thirds is for research and development (R&D).	INSEE, Les entreprises en France, Édition 2021, INSEE références, 2021. https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/5758764?sommaire=5759063

Among innovative companies, 44% received funding for innovation between 2016 and 2018. 26% of innovative companies have benefited from: tax credits (research tax credit, innovation tax credit), or other tax and social exemptions dedicated to innovation (young innovative company, young university company, etc.) or to R&D (excluding tax credit for competitiveness and employment - CICE) among the most used financing methods. This is followed by recourse to equity capital or loans (23%) and grants or subsidized loans, whether they come from national bodies, local authorities or the European Union (15%). These funding sources can be accumulated.	INSEE, Les entreprises en France, Édition 2021, INSEE références, 2021. https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/5758764?sommaire=5759063
In 2019, domestic research expenditure and experimental development (R&D) of companies based in France amounted to EUR 35.2 billion. It represented 66% of the overall domestic expenditure on research and experimental development (GERD). The GERD of administrations amounted to EUR 18.2 billion. The total overall research effort amounts to 2.19% of GDP in 2019.	INSEE, Les entreprises en France, Édition 2021, INSEE références, 2021. https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/5758762?sommaire=5759063
SKILLS  SKILLS	
In 2021, despite the COVID-19 crisis, the lack of skilled workers is felt by employers. 45% of the companies (-5 points compared to 2019) anticipate difficulties to fulfil their job positions according to the national agency for employment 'Pôle Emploi'.	Pôle Emploi, Enquête Besoins en Main-d'œuvre, 2021. https://statistiques.pole-emploi.org/bmo
In October 2021, hiring difficulties remain the first concern of managers, cited by 58% of them, a higher proportion than before the crisis (53% in Q4 2019) and close to the peak reached in Q3 2019 (59%).	Bpifrance and REXECODE (economic studies institute), SME poll, 2021. https://lelab.bpifrance.fr/enquetes/barometre-pme-novembre-2021-tensions-d-appvisionnement-et-difficultes-de-recrutement-freinent-leur-croissance
Many unemployed people are being retrained through the "Plan d'Investissement dans les Compétences" (PIC) with a total budget of EUR 15 billion over 2018-2022. About 1.4 million people have started a training in 2020. The PIC funding supported 1.129 trainees in 2020 (1.329 in 2019). A new funding instrument, the personal formation account (CPF), helped PIC by attracting 307 000 trainees to reach together 1.4 million people.	DARES, second report from the scientific committee for the evaluation of the Skills Investment Plan, 2021. https://dares.travail-emploi.gouv.fr/publication/second-rapport-du-comite-scientifique-de-levaluation-du-plan-dinvestissement-dans-les-competences
ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN  ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN	
Introduced in January 2009, the 'micro-entrepreneur' status reached 2.230 million registrations in June 2021 (+ 17.2%) for a total of about 4.1 million companies in France (INSEE). The status encourages new business creation and enable business transfer by simplifying administrative requirements such as the registration or the collection of taxes and social contributions.	URSSAF, ACOSS STAT publication, Stat'UR n° 337 – 2022. https://www.urssaf.org/home/observatoire-economique/publications/acoss-stat/2022/staturn337.html INSEE, Les entreprises en France, 2021. https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/5758812?sommaire=5759063
Information and formalities for companies are scattered on many websites. This situation creates for entrepreneurs a lack of readability and continuity between the search for information and the completion of online procedures. Since the end of	French Government, Plan pour les indépendants, 2021. https://www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/contenu/piece-jointe/2021/09/20210916_dp_plan_independants.pdf

2021, entrepreneurs have access to a single website based on a simple user experience.	
In 2020, it took 4 days to start a business in France, compared to 12.17 days for the EU-27 average.	World Bank Doing Business, 2020 Report.
REGULATORY OBSTACLES  REGULATORY OBSTACLES	
The number of legislative and regulatory texts in force have continued to grow. These figures reached 89,185 articles of law and 242,663 articles of regulation in 2021 compared to 53,207 and 161,995 respectively in 2002. That is an increase of 65% for legal texts and nearly 46% for regulatory texts.	Prime minister, "Indicateurs de suivi de l'activité normative", 2021. https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/contenu/Media/Filles/autour-de-la-loi/legislatif-et-reglementaire/statistiques-de-la-norme/indicateurs-de-suivi-de-l-activite-normative-2021-format-pdf-4-3-mo.pdf
The Construction and Housing Code provides a good example of increasing norms. Since 2002, the number of words it contains has exploded, from 297,170 to 678,881. The trend is similar for the Tax Code, the Labor Code or the Town Planning Code, which leads to a multiplication of the number of requirements for SMEs.	Prime minister, "Indicateurs de suivi de l'activité normative", 2021. https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/contenu/Media/Filles/autour-de-la-loi/legislatif-et-reglementaire/statistiques-de-la-norme/indicateurs-de-suivi-de-l-activite-normative-2021-format-pdf-4-3-mo.pdf
ACCESS TO FINANCE	
EUR 106.8 billion State Guaranteed Loan (PGE- "Prêt Garanti par l'Etat") have been disbursed to 653,000 SMEs on 26 November 2021.	Ministry of the economy, PGE, 2021. https://www.economie.gouv.fr/files/files/direction_s_services/covid19-soutien-entreprises/PGE_20211126.pdf
In October 2021, the conditions of access to credit remained favourable, whether in the short or medium term. The proportion of SME managers who say they encountered financing difficulties for their current operations has been stable for several months at the low level of 13%. The proportion of executives reporting difficulties in financing their investments fell to 17% (-3 points), close to the pre-crisis level.	Bpifrance and REXECODE (economic studies institute), Barometre PME November 2021, 2021. https://lelab.bpifrance.fr/enquetes/barometre-pme-novembre-2021-tensions-d-approvisionnement-et-difficultes-de-recrutement-freinent-leur-croissance
In 2020, the annual average of interest rate for small loans in France was below the EU-27 average (1.09% compared to 2.72%).	European Central Bank, 2021.
LATE PAYMENTS  LATE PAYMENTS	
The crisis brought higher payment accidents (for example to landowners). The payment delays increased from 11.24 days in January 2020, to 15.3 days in August 2020, before falling to 12.84 days in December 2020. This deterioration affected all company profiles and all sectors, but more particularly accommodation and food services and information and communication activities.	Banque de France, Rapport de l'Observatoire des Délais de paiement, 2021. https://publications.banque-france.fr/liste-chronologique/rapport-de-lobservatoire-des-delaix-de-paiement
In 2019, insolvency proceedings saved more jobs in France than in Germany: 68% of jobs were affected by social plans in France (i.e. 145,000 jobs), against 10 % of jobs in Germany. The insolvency proceedings in France also saved more companies from bankruptcy. At the end of the procedure, 39% of the cases have escaped liquidation in France, against only 8% in the Netherlands, 5% in Germany and 2% in the United Kingdom.	Conseil national des administrateurs et des mandataires judiciaires, Procédures collectives: - 19 % en France au 1er trimestre 2021 et une législation plus protectrice, 2021. https://www.affiches-parisiennes.com/procedures-collectives-19-en-france-au-1er-trimestre-2021-et-une-legislation-plus-protectrice-12202.html Conseil national des administrateurs et des mandataires judiciaires, Quelles sont les particularités de chaque pays en matière de procédures collectives ?, 2021.

	https://www.cnajmj.fr/quelles-sont-les-particularites-de-chaque-pays-en-matiere-de-procedures-collectives/
The payment delays decreased in public services (at government level) from 19.4 days in 2019, to 17.3 days in 2020. This improvement shows the level of attention devoted to the private sector during the COVID19 crisis. The payment delays are at 19.2 days in regional and local levels of public services.	Banque de France, Rapport de l'Observatoire des Délais de paiement, 2021. https://publications.banque-france.fr/liste-chronologique/rapport-de-lobservatoire-des-delaix-de-paiement
ACCESS TO MARKETS  ACCESS TO MARKETS	
In October 2021, the monthly external balance of goods fell to -EUR 7.5 billion (based on a three-month moving average). This is below the record levels of the first COVID-19 wave in 2020. The sustained growth in imports since the start of the year, combined with a more moderate post COVID-19 recovery in exports, explains the sharp deterioration in this balance.	French customs (Douanes), France's foreign trade results in October 2021, 2021. https://www.douane.gouv.fr/actualites/resultats-du-commerce-exterieur-de-la-france-octobre-2021
The High Commission for Planning has analyzed 914 items for which there is a trade deficit (deficit of more than EUR 50 million in 2019) to identify France's weaknesses. Many of these weaknesses are related to the economic imbalances that are usually found in developing countries. The country is often producing primary goods and not their underlying transformed products. For example, France is the world's largest exporter of potatoes, but the country has a serious deficit in crisps, mashed flakes and other processed products from the same agri-food sector.	Haut Commissariat au plan, Reconquête de l'appareil productif: la bataille du commerce extérieur, 2021. https://www.gouvernement.fr/reconquete-de-l-appareil-productif-la-bataille-du-commerce-exterieur
START-UP ENVIRONMENT  START-UP ENVIRONMENT	
During the first semester 2021, about 7% of all French start-ups are deep tech start-ups (1,384 more precisely). They capture more than 24% of the amounts raised (EUR 1.7 billion in 2021).	Deep tech observatory, 2021. https://observatoire.lesdeeptech.fr
The French Tech is becoming the leading ecosystem of the European Union in terms of fundraising: + 7% between 2019 and 2020. In 2020, 620 French start-ups conducted fundraising for a total of EUR 5.4 billion.	French Government, Forte croissance des startup françaises en 2020, malgré la crise, 2021. https://www.gouvernement.fr/forte-croissance-des-startup-francaises-en-2020-malgre-la-crise EY, Baromètre EY du capital risque - Bilan annuel 2020, 2021. https://www.ey.com/fr_fr/services-aux-entrepreneurs/frenchtech-bilan-des-investissements-en-2020
In 2021, French start-ups conducted fundraising for a total of EUR 10 billion. 12 new unicorns were funded for a total of 24 unicorns by end of 2021 (26 in January 2022).	Les ECHOS, 2021 année faste pour la French Tech, 2022. https://www.lesechos.fr/start-up/next40-vivatech/2021-annee-faste-pour-la-french-tech-1378343
SCALE-UP ENVIRONMENT  SCALE-UP ENVIRONMENT	
Scale-up Europe is a French initiative and study to accelerate the emergence of 10 European technological champions, particularly in the field of digital technology valued more than EUR 100 billion by 2030. The study formulates 21 recommendations. More than 150 scale-up founders, investors,	Scale-up Europe study, 2021. https://scaleupeurope.tech

researchers, business and institutional leaders were brought together for this study.	
France doesn't count any decacorn in 2021, but at least one is predicted in 2022 and 5 in 2025, while the number of unicorns will grow to 60.	SIFTED, predictions for French tech in 2022, 2022. https://sifted.eu/articles/french-tech-2022-predictions/
IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 CRISIS  IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 CRISIS	
The debt ratio of non-financial corporations has declined in Q2 2021 due to the rebound of GDP (82.8% of GDP), but it remains well above their pre COVID-19 levels (73%).	National bank, Ratio of debt of non-financial agents - International comparisons, 2021. https://www.banque-france.fr/statistiques/credit/endettement-et-titres/taux-dendettement-des-agents-non-financiers-comparaisons-internationales
In October 2021, the cash flow of SMEs is considered favourable as in the previous quarter. However, in a context of rising commodity and energy prices, and while public support mechanisms are gradually coming to an end, the balance of opinion on the evolution of cash flow over the next three months will decline.	<p>Bpifrance and REXECODE, Baromètre PME novembre 2021: tensions d'approvisionnement et difficultés de recrutement freinent leur croissance, 2021. https://lelab.bpifrance.fr/enquetes/barometre-pme-novembre-2021-tensions-d-approvisionnement-et-difficultes-de-recrutement-freinent-leur-croissance</p> <p>Bpifrance, Baromètre trimestriel: les difficultés de recrutement des PME/TPE, 2021. https://lelab.bpifrance.fr/get_pdf/2679/barometre_pme_bpifrance_rexecode_2021t4_vf.pdf</p>
NATIONAL RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE PLAN  NATIONAL RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE PLAN	
The French national recovery and resilience plan includes investments for the climate transition (50%) and the digital transition (25%). Out of the EUR 100 billion foreseen in total for the plan, the country has requested EUR 40 billion to the EU.	French government, National Recovery and Resilience Plan, 2021. https://www.economie.gouv.fr/files/files/PDF/2021/PNRR-SummaryEN.pdf
NATIONAL INDUSTRIAL ECOSYSTEMS *  NATIONAL INDUSTRIAL ECOSYSTEMS	
146 industrial territories initiatives ("territoires d'industrie") are under implementation in September 2021 for a total budget of EUR 1.3 billion. The programme aims to provide, in and through the territories, concrete answers to the challenges of supporting industry: development of skills in the employment area, mobility of employees, availability of land to set up or expand. Public funds are rechannelled accordingly.	National Agency for cohesion of territories, 2021. https://agence-cohesion-territoires.gouv.fr/territoires-dindustrie-44
Introduced in November 2021 by the French Prime Minister, the "Destination France Plan" sets a 10-year trajectory for the tourism sector to rebound and remain the first holiday destination. The tourism sector in France is mostly made up of SMEs and has been heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The plan should help to recruit talents through a communication campaign and other actions (currently facing labour shortages), provide targeted state aid, spread digital and ecological support, and organise community support. The total budget of the plan is EUR 1.9 billion. Since March 1st 2020, the government has supported the sector with a total of EUR 38 billion.	<p>French Government, « Destination France », le plan de reconquête et de transformation du tourisme, 2021. https://www.gouvernement.fr/destination-france-le-plan-de-reconquete-et-de-transformation-du-tourisme</p> <p>French Government, Destination France, Plan de reconquête et de transformation du tourisme, 2021. https://www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/contenu/piece-jointe/2021/11/dossier_de_presse_-_plan_de_reconquete_et_de_transformation_du_tourisme_-_20.11.2021.pdf</p>

<p>According to the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) relocation index, the increase in the transportation cost (+ 400% between 2019 and 2020) upsets the competitiveness equation. It allows France to be judged competitive (i.e. to be in the top 5) against other countries - in six industries: agrifood (# 2), consumer goods (# 4), fashion (# 5), petrochemicals (# 3), automotive (# 4) and chemicals (# 2).</p>	<p>Boston Consulting Group, 1st edition of the BCG relocation index: an unprecedented window of opportunity to boost France's competitiveness, November 2021:</p> <p>https://www.bcg.com/fr-fr/press/25november2021-1st-edition-bcg-relocation-index</p>
<p>OTHER RELEVANT TOPICS</p>	
<p>EY ranks France as the most attractive country in Europe for the second year in a row for foreign investments in 2020. The country is ranked first notably due to the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 341 new industrial establishments, far ahead of their competitors; - 115 new R&D centers in 2020; - 30,558 new jobs created in 2020, up 21.6% since 2017. <p>In addition, 58% of executives believe that France can become a world leader in environmental matters within 5 years.</p>	<p>Poll from EY for the government, Investissements internationaux: la France reste le pays le plus attractif d'Europe, 2021.</p> <p>https://www.gouvernement.fr/investissements-internationaux-la-france-reste-le-pays-le-plus-attractif-d-europe</p> <p>EY, Barometre de l'attractivité de de la France, 2021.</p> <p>https://www.ey.com/fr_fr/attractiveness/barometre-de-l-attractivite-de-la-france-2021</p>
<p>France is the 1st global destination with 90 million foreign tourists in 2019 (+ 4%) but the 3rd destination in terms of international revenue with EUR 57.9 billion in 2019. This represents 8% of the French GDP and 2 million people directly employed. In 2020, only 40 million foreign tourists came to France (-56%).</p>	<p>French government, French destination, 2021.</p> <p>https://www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/contenu/piece-jointe/2021/11/dossier_de_presse_-_destination_france_-_plan_de_reconquete_et_de_transformation_du_tourisme_-_20.11.2021.pdf</p>

* "National industrial ecosystems" refer to the national aspects of the industrial ecosystems as defined by the EC.

<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/6355326c-ae95-11eb-9767-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>