

## **Towards a Low-Carbon Society in France**

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So far the performance of France on meeting climate change targets has been satisfactory. GHG has been kept below the Kyoto target. From 1990 to 2005, there has been 5% increase in CO<sub>2</sub> but it has been more than offset by 18% decline in other GHGs. However, Transportation and Buildings are two challenging sectors as they have witnessed increase in CO<sub>2</sub> emission by 18% and 11% respectively.

Some of the medium and long term targets for France are as follows:

- 20% reduction in 2020 (EU Commission mandate)
- 'Factor 4' in 2050 (requirement of the National Energy Law)
- A trajectory compatible with 450ppm CO<sub>2</sub> pathway and a Contraction and Convergence scheme for burden sharing (long-term international commitment)

There have been positive changes in the institutional structure in France to facilitate the desired climate and related actions. One such change is the setting up of a new ministry of 'environment, sustainable development and sustainable planning'. This ministry is responsible for promoting environment friendly and sustainable choices in the sectors of buildings, transportation, and infrastructures. Another example is the creation of a broad consultation forum called 'Grenelle de l'Environnement' that involves diverse communities like NGOs, administrations, unions, local authorities and scientists.

Despite such positive developments, France faces several challenges to achieve low carbon society. Some of the ideas and schemes under consideration are as follows:

- Reorientation of infrastructures: This could involve re-evaluating the need for highways, extension of high-speed networks, and assessment of new carbon value profile for cost-benefit analysis
- Establishment of new standards: This includes decreasing emission standards for vehicles, major renovation plan for existing buildings, and upgrade of construction standards for new buildings
- Broad fiscal reform: This includes a proposal for climate-energy tax currently under study, and an ongoing debate on the need for broader taxes
- GHG information on all products: This proposal, if implemented, would raise the climate awareness of consumers and citizens manifold