

Observatory on public water and sanitation services in France

MONITORING THE PERFORMANCE OF PUBLIC WATER AND SANITATION SERVICES IN FRANCE FROM 2010 TO 2021

The Water Plan presented in March 2023 focuses on preserving water resources in terms of quantity and quality. This multi-year summary presents the main results of the regulatory performance indicators for public water and wastewater services presented in the Observatory's national reports.

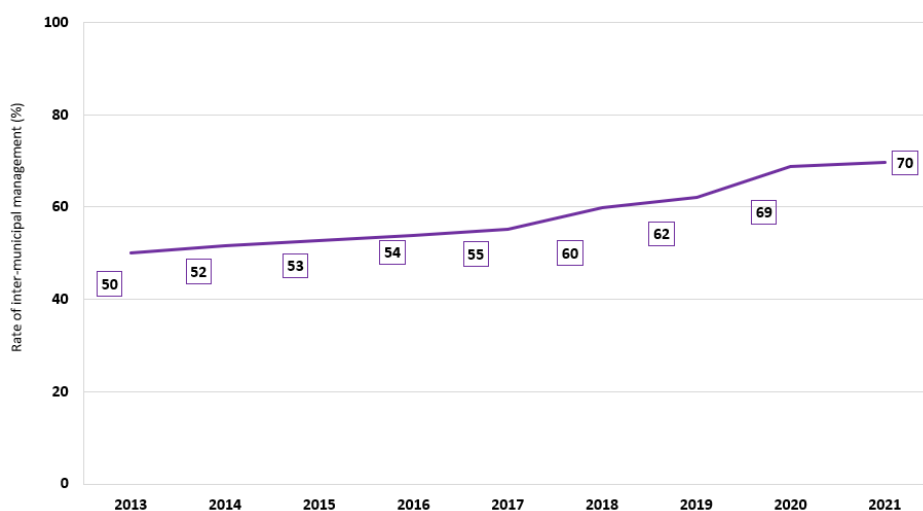
The National Observatory of Water and Sanitation Services aims to guide national water and sanitation policies, disseminate knowledge about the organisation and performance of services to users, and offer online services to local authorities to improve the management of their services. It is based on the Sispea database (water and sanitation services information system), which centralises the results of the 19 statutory indicators for collective sanitation and the 17 drinking water indicators published each year by the organising authorities.

Nota bene: this is a summary of trends in performance indicators, but it should be noted that the study samples differ from one year to the next, so trends may be partly due to changes in the indicators but also to changes in the samples. However, as the average values calculated are representative (due to the fact that the samples available are very representative, as shown by the adjustment calculations carried out on the main indicators), we can consider the trends mentioned to be reliable.

Towards a transfer of powers to inter-municipal level

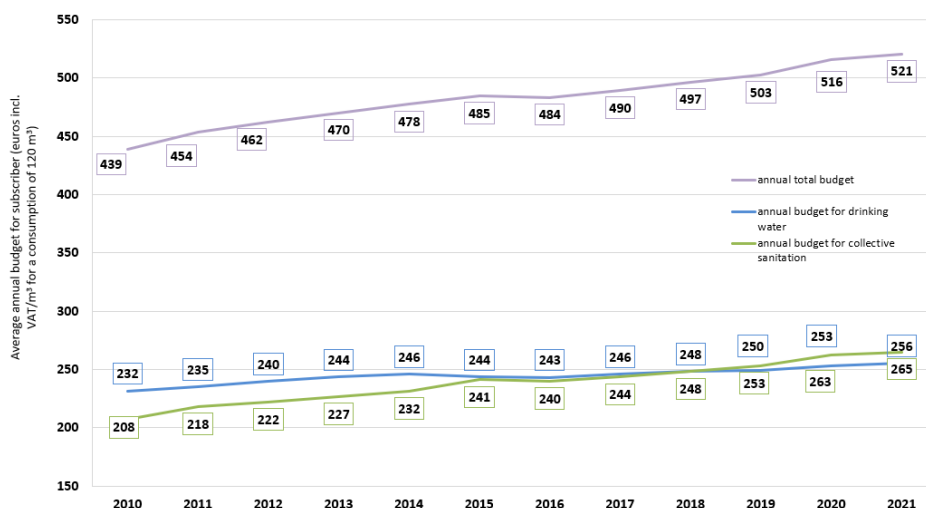
In France, 13,855 local authorities, comprising 25,651 public services, will be responsible for drinking water and/or wastewater treatment in 2021. Under the terms of the NOTRe law of 7 August 2015 on the new territorial organisation of the Republic, the transfer of these responsibilities from the municipal level to the inter-municipal level will continue until 1^{er} January 2026 at the latest.

The transfer of powers is steadily increasing and has accelerated since 2018, rising from 55% in 2017 to 62% in 2019 and 70% in 2021.



These transfers of responsibilities mean that local authorities have to reorganise, adopt the technical perimeters of the new grouped territories and harmonise prices in the medium and long term.

An increase in the annual budget for drinking water and wastewater services



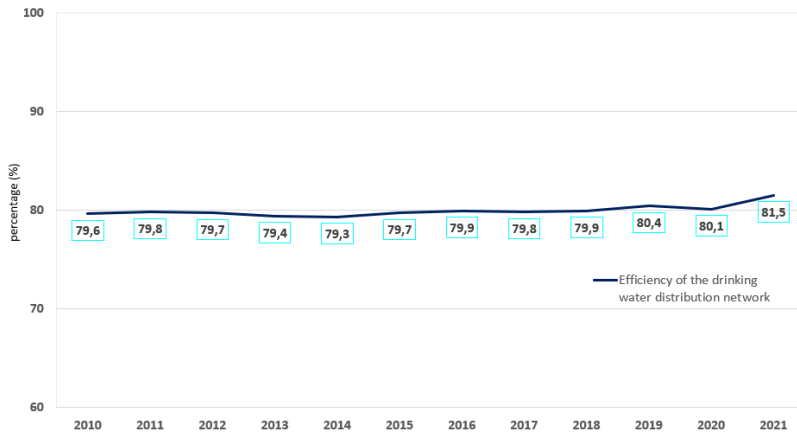
Over the last 12 years, the price of collective sanitation has risen from 1.73 € incl. tax/m³ at 1^{er} January 2011 to 2.21 € incl. tax/m³ at 1^{er} January 2022 (+0.48 euro cents) for a reference consumption of 120 m³.

The price of drinking water has also risen, but to a lesser extent, from 1.93 € incl. VAT/m³ at 1^{er} January 2011 to 2.13 € incl. VAT/m³ at 1^{er} January 2022 (+0.2 euro cents).

The average monthly budget for a customer in 2021 will be 43.40 €, or 521 € including VAT. In terms of the household budget, this budget represents a share of around 1.5%, which is less than the share devoted to energy used for housing (4.7%). The north-western and south-western fringes of France have the highest average prices (water and sewerage), while the south-east has the lowest. However, these differences can be explained by a number of factors : urban policy, distance, quality and availability of water resources, the cost of operating networks and plants, investment to maintain the performance of facilities and meet the requirements of increasingly stringent regulations, as well as the rates of charges.

Performance of drinking water networks

For drinking water networks, the average distribution network efficiency indicator reflects losses due to leaks in the network.

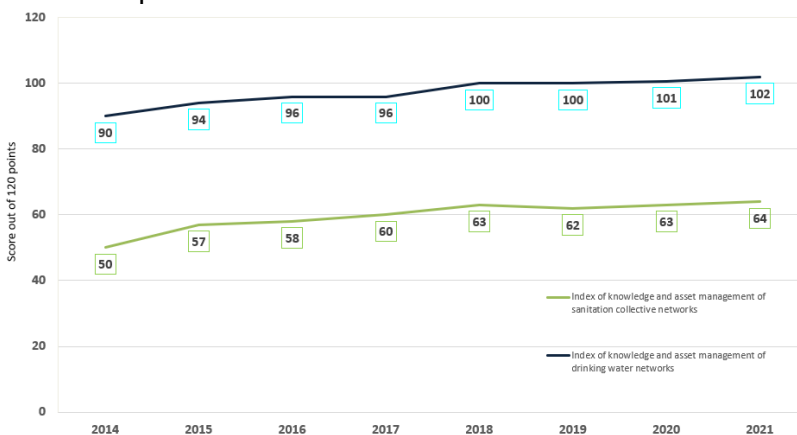


Stable since 2010, it now stands at an average of 80%, despite the financial assistance provided by the water agencies to support local authorities in renovating or renewing their networks. On average, 1 litre of drinking water out of 5 is lost and returns to the natural environment without reaching consumers. However, there will be a slight improvement by 2021 (81.5%).

The need to understand and manage network assets

There are 910,000 km of drinking water networks to maintain (2021 estimate), the equivalent of almost 23 times around the Earth. More than 60% of this network was laid after the 1970s.

Since 2014, **the index of knowledge and asset management of drinking water networks** has risen by 12 points, from 90 to 102 out of 120 points. For wastewater networks, this index is well up, ranging from 50 points in 2014 to 64 points (+14 points) out of 120 points in 2021.



Satisfactory knowledge and management of the network assets means that drinking water distribution can be made safer, and losses through network leaks can be limited.

Wastewater services of all sizes need to make progress, particularly in terms of detailed descriptions of related equipment, knowledge of connections, work on the network, the renewal programme and modelling. Investment also needs to be planned to rehabilitate and renew networks.

Key figures for 2021

The national report Panorama de l'organisation des services d'eau et d'assainissement et de leurs performances was published in June 2023. It presents the results of indicators on pricing, financial management, drinking water quality and asset management for public drinking water and wastewater services in 2021.

It is based on data published by local authorities and extracted from the Sispea database in January 2023:

- 6,403 water services have filled their data (60% of water services in the reference system, 83% of the population covered)
- 6,554 collective sanitation services have filled their data (53% of collective sanitation services in the reference system, 82% of the population covered)
- 1,246 non-collective sanitation services have filled their data (50% of the services in the reference system, 79% of the population covered)

- > **Average monthly budget for customers up on 2020 : 43.40 € incl. VAT/month, of which 21.30 € incl. VAT for drinking water and 22.10 € incl. VAT for wastewater treatment.**
- > **Average drinking water consumption: 148 liters/inhabitant/day (54 m³/inhabitant/year) for domestic consumption and 150 m³/subscriber/year for domestic and non-domestic consumption.**
- > **Quality of drinking water at the tap: 98.5% for microbiological compliance and 96.7% for physico-chemical compliance.**
- > **Average efficiency of the drinking water distribution network: 81.5%.**
- > **Average index of knowledge and management of network assets (out of 120 points): 102 points for drinking water, 64 points for wastewater treatment.**
- > **Average network renewal rate (annual average of network length renewed over the last 5 years): 0.66% for drinking water, 0.48% for wastewater.**

Director of publication : Olivier Thibault (OFB)

Coordination: Sophie Portela (OFB)

Written by: Sophie Portela (OFB) and Jeanne Dequesne (OFB)

Access to the national Sispea report: <https://www.services.eaufrance.fr/rapport-national>