



# GREEN GROWTH

*“Against the backdrop of the global credit crisis and economic change, the Grenelle Environnement will cause investment of some 400 billion euros and create more than 550,000 jobs in France.”*



**JEAN-LOUIS BORLOO**

is Minister of Environment, Energy, Sustainable Development and Land Management – France

While the world awaits its December date with destiny in Copenhagen, France intends to show that sustainable development is both possible and a source of well-being, competitiveness, growth and employment. Two years ago, spurred on by President Nicolas Sarkozy, the French Government launched a wide ranging concerted approach known as the ‘Grenelle Environnement’, a round table bringing together all sustainable development stakeholders, including the State, local authorities, non-governmental organizations, trade

unions and businesses. After several months of activities and negotiations, it produced a sectoral sustainable development strategy for the next 10–15 years. This aims to lay the foundations for a new growth model - ‘green growth’, based on efficiency and effectiveness, carbon and energy savings and quality of life.

The Grenelle Environnement has a series of goals that can be quantified and evaluated. They include cutting greenhouse gas emissions fourfold between 1990 and

2050, reducing the energy consumption of existing developed land by 38 per cent, cutting carbon dioxide emissions from transport by 20 per cent by 2020 and increasing the share of renewable energy used to 23 per cent by 2020. It is based on six major fields of work, three of which are directly related to efforts to combat climate change: buildings, transport and renewable energies.

Buildings are responsible for more than one quarter of our greenhouse gas emissions, so the strategy provides for the general introduction of a 'low consumption' standard (50 kWh/m<sup>2</sup>/year) for new buildings from 2012. By 2020 'positive energy' buildings – those that produce more than energy than they consume – will be widely introduced. There will also be a thoroughgoing thermal rehabilitation programme aimed at renovating some 400,000 homes per year. French tax policy has been amended to encourage people to finance such schemes, or buy particularly energy-efficient homes, with the introduction of an interest free eco loan.

As for transport, the Grenelle Environnement's goal is to provide a credible and sustainable alternative to road travel. This is not a question of imposing bans or restrictions, but of giving people the freedom to choose how they wish to move around. So it provides for constructing an additional 2,000 kilometres of high speed train lines, 1,500 kilometres of new public transport routes in towns and cities, three marine highways and two rolling roads (which carry lorries by rail) to encourage a modal shift in goods.

We have also tested the idea of a 'green price', as a result of the success of our 'green bonus' scheme. A tax on the most polluting vehicles means that cleaner ones are subsidized and cheaper. The aim is to entice consumers into buying the ones with the lowest carbon and fuel consumption and to encourage manufacturers to offer ever more energy efficient products. Just one year on the French automotive market is changing shape. Sales of vehicles emitting no more than 130 grams of carbon dioxide per kilometre have risen by half, while those of ones emitting more than 160 grams have fallen

by 40 per cent. The average emissions of new vehicles sold in France have fallen by 9 grams of carbon dioxide per kilometre in a single year, six times the previous rate of progress,

France also wants to encourage its automobile manufacturers to market vehicles that emit little pollution as swiftly as possible, given that these are universally accepted to be the future. The Government will therefore invest some 400 million euros over three years in researching them. And from this year, in its quest to set a good example, it will undertake a thoroughgoing review of its fleet with a view to replacing any vehicles over 10 years old with more energy efficient ones.

The Grenelle Environnement also marks a genuine watershed in the use of renewable energies. Last November, I outlined a significant renewable energy development plan to exploit our potential to the full. Over 12 years it will double our annual production of renewables increasing our geothermal energy capacities sixfold, our wind energy tenfold, and our photovoltaic solar energy 400 times over. We are also going to launch major energy infrastructure projects: renewing contracts for the 400 largest French dams, constructing at least one solar power station per region by 2011 and launching a major call for tenders to produce electricity from biomass, creating integrated power of 250 MW, equivalent to one fourth of the output of a large nuclear power plant. And we will spend 1 billion euros over the next two years on developing renewable heat with the goal of equipping some 2 million homes with heat pumps by 2020.

Against the backdrop of the global credit crisis and economic change, the Grenelle Environnement will cause investment of some 400 billion euros and create more than 550,000 jobs in France. The strategy is founded on three certainties. First, that our current growth model is not viable in the long term. Second, that an economy that consumes less energy is an economy that spends less money and is therefore more competitive. Third and last, that carbon neutrality, energy efficiency and quality of life are the three key competitive advantages in tomorrow's economic battle.

