

Press release

ENVIRONMENT

Arcep and Arcom publish a general policy framework for the ecodesign of digital services

Paris, 17 May 2024

Arcep and Arcom, in concert with ADEME, have published the General policy framework for the ecodesign of digital services. The aim of this policy framework is to reduce, starting from the design stage, the environmental footprint of digital services such as websites, video streaming platforms, applications and AI tools. This document was drafted in collaboration with DINUM (the Inter-ministerial Directorate in charge of the State's digital transformation), Inria (the National Institute for Research in Digital Science and Technology), and CNIL (the Internet freedoms and innovation watchdog). It presented on Friday, 17 May at the National Council for Arts and Culture (CNAM), with special guests Marina Ferrari, Secretary of State for Digital Affairs, Arcep Chair, Laure de La Raudière, Arcom Chair, Roch-Olivier Maistre, and ADEME Chair, Sylvain Waserman (see below for event details).

A new policy framework resulting from networked authorities' collaborative work, produced in concert with the ICT ecosystem and civil society

The Act on reducing ICT's environmental footprint (the REEN Act) tasks Arcep and Arcom with defining, in tandem with ADEME (National Agency for the Environment and Energy management), the contents of a general policy framework for the ecodesign of digital services. A draft framework was published for consultation in autumn 2023, and collaborative workshops with the ecosystem's stakeholders and experts from civil society also helped in drafting this policy framework (see inset below).

Digital service publishers, developers and providers: 78 criteria to engage in an ecodesign process and track its progress

The ecodesign policy framework compiles a set of concrete criteria to be implemented, to ensure that environmental imperatives are incorporated into a service at the design stage. Each of the policy framework's 78 criteria is accompanied by a factsheet that sets out the method for implementing and validating it.

By following these instructions, ICT industry players can build their strategy for taking environmental considerations into account when developing a digital service, and record their process by publishing an ecodesign declaration of conformity. They can also calculate a progress score to help track the advancement of their ecodesign efforts, and measure them against the policy framework's goals.

A common foundation of best practices for more sustainable ICT

In 2023, [the ADEME – Arcep study on the digital environmental footprint](#) stressed that if no steps are taken to reduce ICT's impact on the environment, its carbon footprint could triple between 2020 and 2050. Ecodesign was one of the levers identified to reverse the trend.

The policy framework takes into consideration the key components of the digital service's life cycle, from defining its strategy to hosting it, by way of developing its architecture and contents. It has four key goals:

- **Extend devices' lifespan** by combatting obsolescence and ensuring that services can be used on any device, especially older ones. The aim is to curtail incentives to buy a new device (smartphones, computers, TVs and connected/smart objects);
- **Promote a mindset of environmental sobriety** in response to online strategies to capture and keep users' attention. The policy framework advises limiting the use of infinite content walls and pop-up notifications, as well as automatic video playback;

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- **Decrease the IT resources mobilised over the digital service's life cycle.** Achieving this goal can involve more efficient multimedia content (video, images, audio, text), using sustainable hosting solutions, and reducing the environmental impacts associated with the use of AI systems;
- **Increase transparency on the digital service's environmental footprint,** including with users to heighten their awareness of the impacts of their digital lifestyle.

An important stage in creating shared environmental responsibility between all of the digital ecosystem's stakeholders

To support the ecosystem's implementation of the policy framework and make it easier to share information and experiences, Arcep and Arcom will host an **"Ecodesign stakeholders' forum"** that will bring together digital industry players, experts from civil society and public authorities for progress check meetings.

The publication of this policy framework marks a significant step towards achieving sustainable digital consumption. Because the issues inherent in ecodesign extend well beyond national borders, the general policy framework for the ecodesign of digital services, which is available in [English](#) and [French](#), will be widely disseminated across Europe and around the world, to help fuel the work being done by other countries, transnational economic players and the European Commission.

A joint effort to reduce digital services' impact on the environment

The general policy framework for the ecodesign of digital services being presented today is the fruit of work carried out by a network of institutional actors (Arcep, Arcom, ADEME, DINUM, CNIL and Inria), in concert with the ICT ecosystem and civil society. It also draws on earlier work by the Inter-ministerial task force on sustainable ICT/*Mission interministérielle numérique écoresponsable* (MiNumEco) headed by DINUM and ADEME, in collaboration with the Ministry for the Ecological transition.

Consultation with stakeholders throughout the drafting of the policy framework helped to build a solid foundation of shared knowledge and understanding of ecodesign, and to develop tools to facilitate digital industry players' appropriation of the document.

The public consultation that Arcep and Arcom held in October 2023, in concert with ADEME and in collaboration with DINUM, Inria and CNIL, made it possible to obtain written feedback from 57 stakeholders from a variety of backgrounds: tech companies, ecodesign experts, associations and local authorities.

A [dialogue workshop on 30 October, hosted with the Institut du numérique responsable](#), brought together some 40 sustainable ICT experts from civil society, the digital ecosystem and partner authorities. Participants worked on the policy framework's technical and methodological aspects (priority levels, model for the ecodesign declaration of conformity, progress score, etc.) how to promote adoption of the policy framework within the ecosystem by sharing their field experience.

A multilateral meeting on 30 November was attended by tech companies and the main federations representing the sector's stakeholders to discuss how to facilitate economic actors' adoption of the policy framework. The tech sector joined in by voicing their support for the application and promotion of a policy framework for the ecodesign of digital services as part of a digital decarbonisation roadmap drafted in June 2023.

Following its publication the policy framework for the ecodesign of digital services will continue to evolve and to thrive, with the help of committed stakeholders, who will be invited to participate in the Digital ecodesign stakeholders forum, hosted by the authorities driving the policy framework.

Associated documents:

- [Download the complete policy framework](#) (English version - pdf – 2.79 Mb)
- [View the online version of the policy framework](#)
- [Contributions to the public consultation](#) (zip 12.09 Mb)

Arcep at a glance

The Regulatory Authority for Electronic Communications, Postal Affairs and Print Media Distribution (Arcep), a neutral and expert arbitrator with the status of independent administrative authority (IAA), is the architect and guardian of internet, fixed and mobile communications and postal networks in France.

About Arcom

Arcom is an independent administrative authority that guarantees freedom of communication in France. Its responsibilities include ensuring access to a pluralistic audiovisual offer that respects rights and freedoms, protecting creative works and helping in the fight against illegal and problematic content on the internet.

Policy framework presentation event, Friday, 17 May 2024

Introduction

Marina Ferrari, Secretary of State for Digital Affairs

Laure de La Raudière, Arcep Chair

Roch-Olivier Maistre, Arcom Chair

Sylvain Wasserman, ADEME Chair

Policy framework nuts and bolts

Snapshot of the policy frameworks' criteria (Sandrine Elmi Hersi, Arcep's Unit chief and Marianne Serfaty, Arcom Department head)

Demonstrations: the benefits of ecodesign

- Ecodesign of lossless images and videos: ecodesign before and after shot (Julien Wilhelm, analyst and trainer at TEMESIS and Vivien Guéant, expert at Arcep)
- Ecodesign and the battle against software obsolescence, a path to slowing smartphone replacement rates (Léa Mosesso, CNNum prize winner)

Roundtable: stakeholders committing to digital service ecodesign

Moderator: Mathilde Saliou, journalist Next.ink (formerly Next INpact)

- Marine Brogli, Numeum Executive Board member
- Nicolas Guérin, President of FFTélécoms
- Encarna Marquez, Chief Digital Officer, France TV
- Mellie La Roque, co-initiator of the Designers éthiques association