



THE ENVIRONMENT

Arcep and Arcom launch a public consultation on a general policy framework for the sustainable design of digital services

Paris, 9 October 2023

The “REEN” Act on reducing the digital environmental footprint assigns Arcep and Arcom the task of defining, in concert with ADEME, the content of a general policy framework for the sustainable design of digital services. Today, the two authorities are launching a public consultation on a draft policy framework, established in collaboration with ADEME (the National Agency for the Ecological Transition), as well as DINUM (the Inter-ministerial Directorate in charge of the State’s digital transformation), the Internet freedoms and innovation watchdog, CNIL, and the National Institute for Research in Digital Science and Technology, Inria. It takes into account the preliminary work done by the Inter-ministerial task force on sustainable digital design (MinNumEco¹). The aim is to establish a new policy framework by the start of 2024, which will serve as a common base of best practices to reduce digital services’ environmental footprint.

Support digital service publishers, developers and providers’ voluntary sustainable design initiatives.

The draft policy framework being published today for public consultation seeks to provide a reference grid for digital industry stakeholders wanting to commit to sustainable design. It has four main objectives:

1. To design more sustainable digital services that will **help prolong the life of devices**;
2. To promote a **mindset of environmental sobriety in response to the strategies to capture and keep users’ attention** deployed by certain platforms in particular;
3. **To decrease the IT resources mobilised**, including by optimising data traffic and the load on digital infrastructures;
4. To increase **transparency on digital services’ environmental footprint**.

In practice, the draft general policy framework for the sustainable design of digital services assembles a set of criteria accompanied by factsheets, and so sets out a list of key questions for ensuring that a service incorporates environmental considerations from the design stage onwards (for instance: “can the digital service be used on old model devices?”). The policy framework factors in digital services’ diversity and their evolution. It was designed to apply as much to a website as an application, a video platform or an AI-based tool.

¹ Managed by DINUM, operating under the aegis of the Ministry responsible for the Transformation and the Public service, and the Ministry of Ecological transition

The policy framework will create the ability to calculate a progress score to track a digital service's environmental performance. It also invites stakeholders wanting to use the policy framework to issue a sustainable design statement to ensure a sufficient level of information for users on the actual steps taken to reduce the environmental footprint.

Gathering the ecosystem's feedback to finalise the publication of an exhaustive and robust policy framework, through a public consultation and a dialogue workshop.

Stakeholders have from 9 October to 9 November 2023 to share their opinions. Arcep will also host a dialogue workshop on 30 October, in collaboration with the *Institut pour un numérique responsable* (Institute for sustainable IT).

After having analysed the contributions to the public consultation and the feedback from the workshop, the final version of the general policy framework for the sustainable design of digital services will be published by early 2024.

Incorporating environmental considerations from the design stage of digital services: a lever for reducing the sector's environmental footprint

Often viewed as intangible, digital services nevertheless rely on infrastructures and hardware, and so on the use of resources. Digital technology accounts for 2.5% of the carbon footprint in France. The sector is also the source of other impacts on the environment, notably the depletion of abiotic resources (including metals and minerals).

Between now and 2030, if nothing is done to reduce the digital environmental footprint, digital technology's impact on the environment could increase during that time, which could include a 45% increase in digital's carbon footprint in France, and a 14% increase in the consumption of abiotic resources (metals and minerals) ([source: ADEME-Arcep study on the digital environmental footprint in 2020, 2030 and 2050](#)).

Sustainable design is among the levers identified in the study for curbing the trend and reducing the environmental footprint that can be attributed to the life cycle of digital services. The general policy framework for the sustainable design of digital services thus aims to support sustainable design initiatives deployed by the ecosystem's stakeholders.

Associated document:

- [Public consultation](#)