



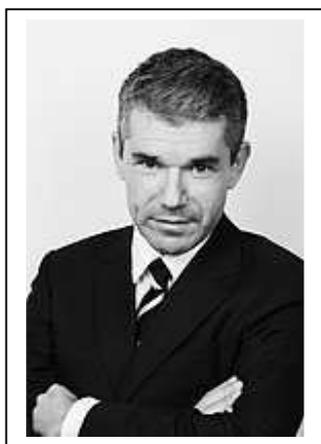
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

# Actualité en France

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## Jean Ballandras, Renewable Energy Unifier

**In December 2012, the French Government introduced a sector-based export strategy. Six families were created: sustainable cities, health, agrifood, communication, cultural and creative industries and tourism. They unify SMEs from each sector to create a comprehensive range of French exports and an export brand. Renewable energy is the seventh family; Jean Ballandras was appointed as the unifier on 21 May 2015, by Laurent Fabius, French Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Development and President of COP21, and Matthias Fekl, French Minister of State for Foreign Trade, the Promotion of Tourism and French Nationals Abroad.**



Several years spent working in prefectures, in metropolitan and overseas France, inspired in Jean Ballandras an interest in regions and their historic, social and cultural features. A graduate of the French National School of Administration and Sciences Po, he considers proximity, realism and pragmatism to be essential when running local affairs, including close collaboration with socio-economic stakeholders. The shift from territorial management to administration in the renewable energy sector is not a career change: in both cases, the aim is to find appropriate, lasting solutions. In his view, *“developing renewable energy sources means setting up a long-term project, in harmony and agreement with the local people, who support the project and take ownership of it”*.

**What role does the Renewable Energy Unifier play in foreign trade, particularly in the run-up to COP21, which will be held in Paris in December?**

The renewable energy family is a fairly small sector that is growing rapidly; it is a sub-sector of the energy industry, which is largely dominated by major groups such as EDF, Engie, Areva and Alstom. Its stakeholders are very different from one another and both their development models and their needs vary. My role is to encourage and streamline dialogue between businesses (and more specifically the French renewable energy union, SER) and the government, so that the schemes that apply to these businesses can be adjusted, enabling the growth of their international activity.



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As COP21 approaches, it makes complete sense to turn the renewable energy sector into an export priority, for there, France will need to demonstrate its commitment to combatting global warming and especially its exemplary support of this cutting-edge sector.

**How does energy-related innovation promote innovation in other sectors?**

Innovation is first and foremost technological and is becoming increasingly diverse. A few years ago, wind and solar power were the mainstays of this sector. Now other solutions are emerging, such as energy storage and marine renewable energy. These low-carbon techniques are becoming more and more efficient and effective: they give isolated and island territories access to a stable, green and non-intermittent basic energy source. Combining these technologies offers the private sector new development prospects.

Innovation also enables the design of more comprehensive renewable energy projects that are integrated into their environment. Agrinerie®, a programme developed in La Réunion, is a good example of this. It combines green energy production and greenhouse farming. The solar farms promote local production and short supply chains involving organic products that grow under solar panels.

**What do businesses in the sector expect of COP21? How are they approaching it?**

Globally, businesses are expecting the major emitters to clarify their position on renewable energy by making commitments at international level. In France, they are expecting COP21 to raise awareness of climate issues and result in the creation of a detailed road map setting out the expectations and challenges for all energy sectors. The global spotlight on Paris in December will make all of this possible. The energy transition is possible if the public and private sectors join forces. COP21 will also enable us to identify development prospects on emerging markets and measure the commitment of different countries to renewable energy.

**How is the development of low-carbon solutions and renewable energy a source of opportunities?**

In France, green electricity accounted for 20% of final consumption in 2014. The target is to increase the share of renewable energy in the French energy mix to 32%, and its share in electricity production to 40%, by 2030; the potential for the development of renewable energy sources is therefore very high. Some technologies that have reached maturity, such as hydro-, wind and solar power, are competing with fossil fuels and nuclear energy in certain regions. In France, renewables therefore drive growth and create jobs, including abroad, and contribute towards its climate change targets. In overseas France, which has to deal with unstable power grids, renewables offer new solutions that increase energy security, such as storage or the multi-technology approach.

**What are the assets and advantages of overseas France for the development of French renewables?**

The cost of producing electricity in overseas France is on average three to four times higher than in metropolitan France, where the energy mix costs 60 euros per megawatt hour. In overseas territories, renewable technologies are competitive from their earliest stages of development. These places are therefore real laboratories of experimentation and innovation. There are more and more projects in La Réunion, from solar power with storage to Agrinerie®, while in Martinique, ocean thermal energy projects are being developed.





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Moreover, there is less land available on these island territories, which forces businesses to be inventive in order to find appropriate solutions. Agrinerie®, which combines solar power and farming, was born out of this set of constraints and continues to be developed. Lastly, in overseas France, real territorial projects can be designed and co-developed with the local people, who, as a result, accept them. These projects are an opportunity to test innovative renewable energy solutions, in real conditions, on a reduced scale.

**Marine energy is less well-known than solar or wind power but seems to have greater potential. What is France's position in this field and on this market, which is still young?**

France has the second largest maritime area in the world, with 11 million km<sup>2</sup>. Its four coastlines, its overseas territories and in particular, its inter-tropical exclusive economic zone, are great assets. According to GICAN, the French Marine Industry Group, renewable marine energy could account for 10% of the French electricity mix by 2030, with an installed capacity of 20 GW. Many technologies are being developed and tested in France: offshore fixed or floating wind turbines, marine turbines, wave energy converters and ocean thermal energy conversion (OTEC). However, these innovations have not yet led to installations on an industrial scale. In the coming years, the challenge will be to combine operational demonstrations with the creation of a showcase in order to export these technologies successfully.

Laureline Felder

N.B.: The claims and opinions contained in this article, which aims to provide information on contemporary France, have no official value.