



## Energy & Environment

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### Introduction

The Energy and Environment sector of the Office of Science and Technology is located in Washington, DC, where the political and strategic dimensions of the field are concentrated, but its functions cover the entire United States. The scientific elements of its mission span across all disciplines, involving public, private, academic, and other actors from every field. Finally, socioeconomic impact are primary determinants of R&D priorities and educational outreach in the domain of environment and sustainable development.

### Context

The COP21 climate change conference in Paris and the accompanying international consensus to develop solutions for climate change has become a personal goal of President Obama, who has focused much more strongly on environmental protection and climate change action during his second term. The urgency and political will of the President was affirmed by the unprecedented November 2014 agreement with Xi Jinping's China, in which the U.S. announced a target for Paris: reducing greenhouse gas commissions by 26-28% below 2005 levels by 2025. The second half of President Obama's term saw majorities in both houses of Congress that are opposed to this agenda, limiting the actions the U.S. can take.

While Congress has blocked some federal leadership on the issues of climate change, the environment, and sustainable development, states and cities face the concrete realities and consequences of a changing planet. With a more involved citizenry and other parties, 35 states have set renewable energy targets; on June 8 2015, Hawaii's governor signed a bill setting a goal of deriving 100% of its energy from renewable sources by 2045. 10 more states have established carbon markets, and over 1,000 municipalities, including the largest cities in the nation, have established plans and targets from reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

Environmental and development science are by their nature highly interdisciplinary, especially when the socioeconomic implications are fully considered. Effective policy requires sound science, and the American scientific community is the strongest in the world. This leadership has been supported by the federal government, with nearly \$9 billion devoted to R&D on environmental issues in 2014, an increase of 7.8% of 2013.

Two thirds of the budget that fosters the science underpinning sustainable development and environmental policy is dominated by three agencies: The Department of Energy (26% of the total), NASA (20.4%), and the NSF (19.3%). The NSF's 2014 budget is 50% higher than in 2000, adjusting for inflation.

### Mission

Each scientific sector in the Office for Science and Technology has three primary missions. The Environment

and Sustainable Development sector is responsible for the following:

- Understanding and analyzing the scientific, technology, and regulatory developments in the U.S.,
- Supporting and enhancing Franco-American cooperation and partnerships,
- Relaying French positions and innovations, promoting French science and technology, and organizing events and other activities to support all its missions (FACTS: French-American Climate Talks, Global Debate on Climate, the National Council on Science and the Environment, and others)

The Environment and Sustainable Development sector and the rest of the Office of Science and Technology works closely with the other departments of the Embassy under the Environmental Task Force (Chancery, Economic Service, and CEA). It supports the reception of official delegations, including parliamentarians and members of the government when any of its mission areas are part of the objectives of the visit. Examples include climate change, shale gas, energy, biodiversity, and marine science.

## Contacts

Organization chart