

DEVELOPING NEW SPECIALIST CAREERS IN THE FIELD OF BIODIVERSITY

Raising awareness of biodiversity and learning to understand it better

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Despite a societal context that is favourable to the growth of biodiversity-related jobs (an abundance of effective training opportunities, the structuring of sectors, the development of general interest in biodiversity-related themes, etc.), the number of available jobs has stagnated since about 2010, and it has become difficult for graduates with ecology-related degrees to find stable employment.

While the need seems to be felt for a more coherent career structure in this sector (as recommended by a report on the subject issued by the French Economic, Social and Environmental Council), the authors of this note feel that one of the principal barriers is a widespread ignorance of biodiversity-related themes and a lack of contact with the natural world in French society. This situation is holding back the ecological transition process in all sectors of activity, and is thus also hindering the development of employment for young people with specialist training in ecology.

Increasing social awareness of biodiversity-related subjects will encourage a genuine ecological transition and further employment prospects in the field. Based on this observation, we are making two proposals for long-, medium- and short-term action.

1) **The creation of sites where everybody can learn about ecology and biodiversity:** the establishment of sites all over France that are accessible to all members of the public, where they can learn about the natural environment, the living world, how ecosystems work, etc. The note sets a target of 7,000 dedicated sites, to be hosted mainly by a network of environmental education associations.

2) **The development of digital training** as a catalyst for increased awareness, available to both the general public and those working in the sector, and based on tools already in existence such as MOOCs (massive open online courses).

SUMMARY

Since the 1970s, with the creation of France's first national and regional parks and legislation to protect the natural world, new employment opportunities related to biodiversity have arisen, thus creating a new professional sector. Today France counts some 22,000 jobs in key specialist areas, together with 48,000 jobs not directly linked to the preservation of biodiversity but which contribute to this objective.