Purpose-driven companies in France

An overview of the progress of the "Société à Mission" quality in France since 2020 - key facts, wins and challenges

KPMG

September 2025

01

Société à mission: who are they?

***All through this document, the terms "purpose-driven company" and "société à mission" will be used in reference to the French legal designation of the "société à mission" framework as defined in the Pacte Law.**

Société à mission: what are we talking about?

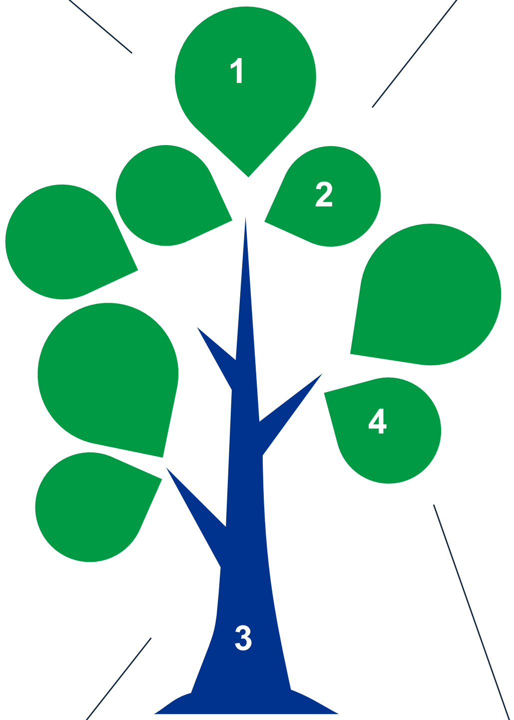
The status of purpose-driven (or mission-driven) company responds to a **fundamental trend** in the search for a business model that reconciles performance with sustainability. It is legally enshrined in the status of mission-driven company defined in the Pacte law and more specifically in Article L210-10 of the Commercial Code and its decrees.

Statutory purpose

- Included in the **articles of association**
- Reflects the **company's social purpose**, values, ambition, and how its business model enables it to contribute to the common good and address environmental and social challenges

Governance

- **Mission committee** responsible for monitoring mission objectives, that must involve stakeholders (at least one employee)
- **Separate** from other corporate governance bodies
- **Responsible for presenting an annual report (**attached to the management report) at the General Meeting approving the yearly accounts



Statutory objectives

- Included in the **articles of association**
- **Environmental and social objectives** that the company is committed to pursuing as part of its business activities.
- **Broken down into qualitative or quantitative operational objectives** (targets) and indicators over a specific time frame.

External verification

- **Verification by an independent third party** of the respect by the company of the mission objectives
- **First verification within 18 months of registration** in the trade and companies register, then **every 2 years** (24 months/3 years if fewer than 50 employees)

Société à mission: what are we talking about?

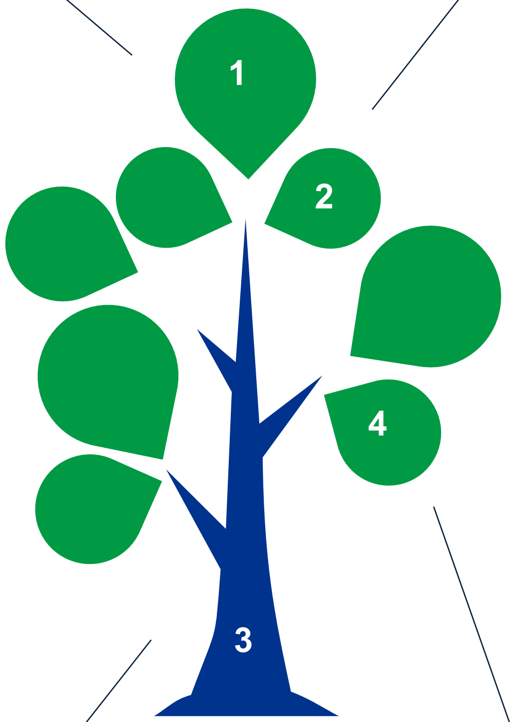
Companies are also given the option to adopt a statutory purpose (“raison d’être”), should they wish to affirm the value, principles and social contribution of their business model without going as far as becoming a “société à mission”. This however does not correspond to any official status / quality as per the Pacte Law. A lot of French companies also formulated a “raison d’être” without inscribing it into their articles of associations, with various levels of commitments.

Statutory purpose

- Included in the **articles of association**
- Reflects the **company's social purpose**, values, ambition, and how its business model enables it to contribute to the common good and address environmental and social challenges

Governance

- **Mission committee** responsible for monitoring mission objectives, that must involve stakeholders (at least one employee)
- **Separate** from other corporate governance bodies
- **Responsible for presenting an annual report** (attached to the management report) at the General Meeting approving the yearly accounts



Statutory objectives

- Included in the **articles of association**
- **Environmental and social objectives** that the company is committed to pursuing as part of its business activities.
- **Broken down into qualitative or quantitative operational objectives** (targets) and indicators over a specific time frame.

External verification

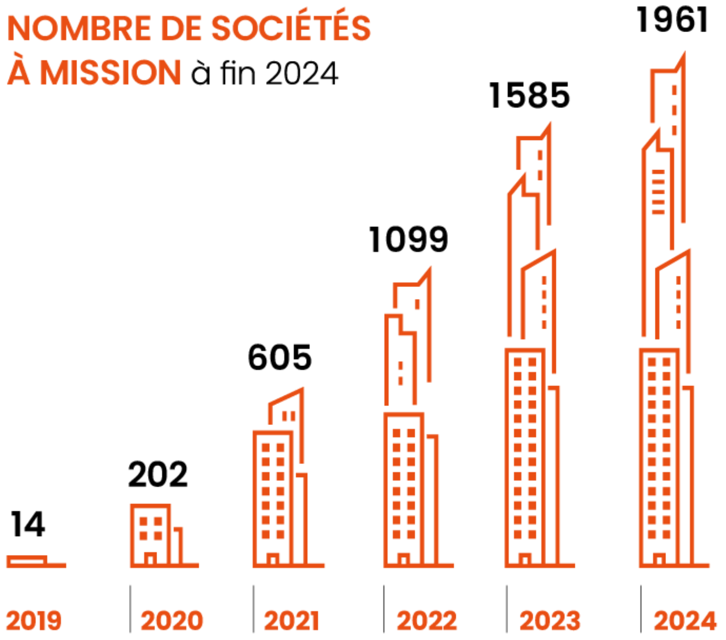
- **Verification by an independent third party** of the respect by the company of the mission objectives
- **First verification within 18 months of registration** in the trade and companies register, then **every 2 years** (24 months/3 years if fewer than 50 employees)

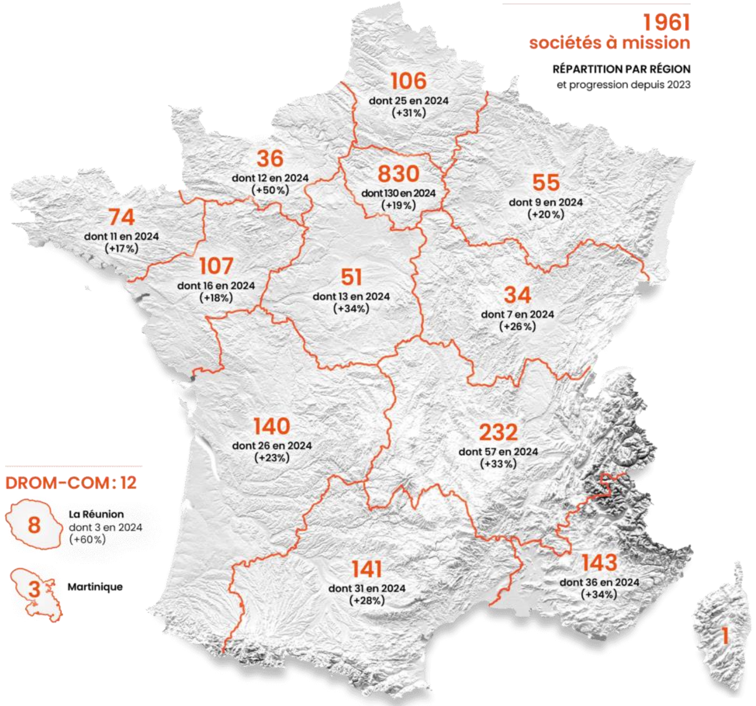
Société à mission: key figures, 6 years later

[Observatoire des Sociétés à Mission](#)

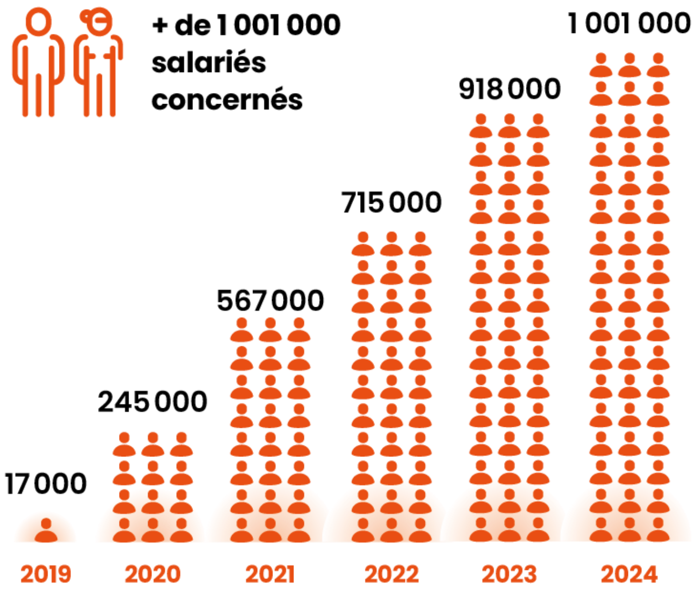
Today: 2,207 "sociétés à mission" officially registered

NOMBRE DE SOCIÉTÉS À MISSION à fin 2024





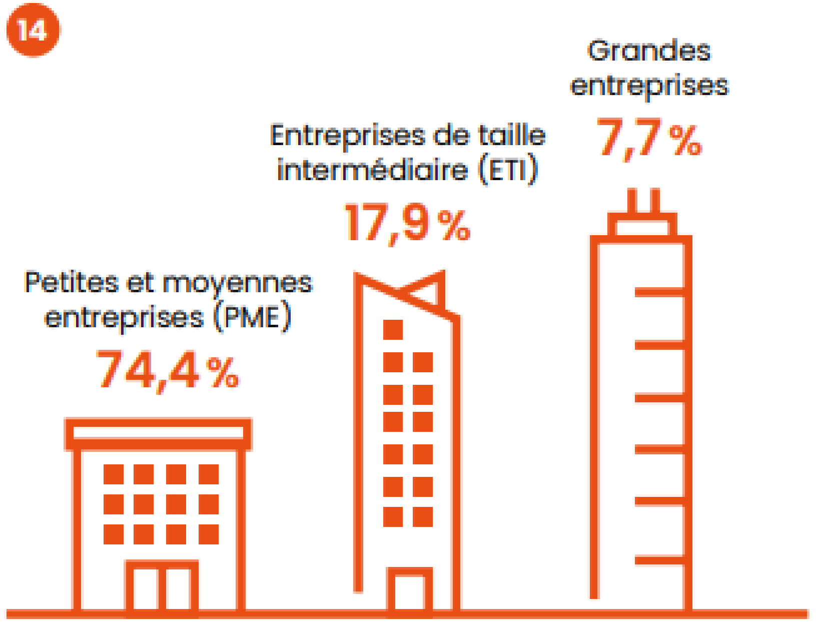
NOMBRE DE SALARIÉS en 2024 travaillant dans une société à mission ou dans un groupe dont la maison-mère est société à mission.



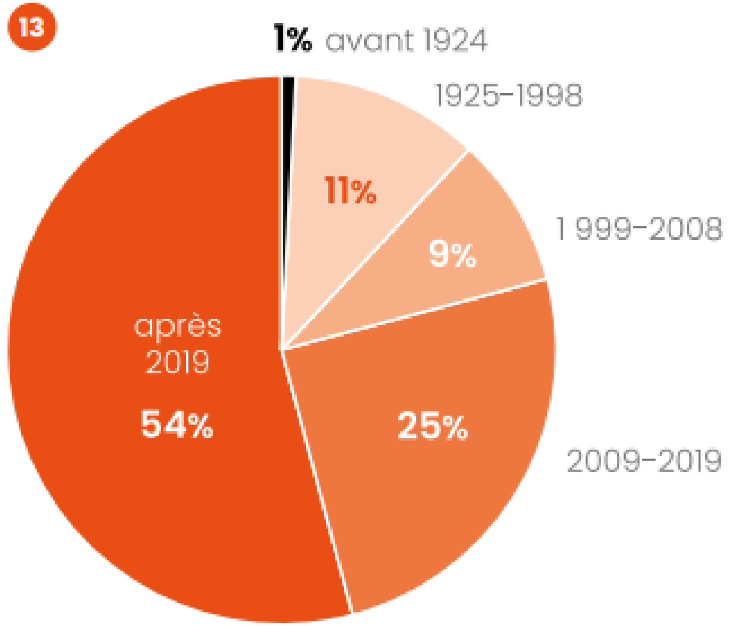
Société à mission: key figures, 6 years later

Observatoire des Sociétés à Mission

RÉPARTITION DES 376 SàM DE 2024 PAR CATÉGORIE D'ENTREPRISE



RÉPARTITION DES 376 SàM DE 2024 PAR ANNÉE DE CRÉATION



02

Insights from committed companies

A model that has proved its relevance but needs to move beyond the experimentation stage

- **More than 2,000 companies** that committed to the model, with a variety of sizes and industries
- A welcome **flexibility in the approach** – looking for differentiation, not comparison – although it can feel confusing to some
- A momentum slowed-down somewhat by **stronger ESG-related regulations** (e.g., CSRD)
- A **lack in capacity to control** whether registered “société à mission” comply with the 4 criteria

+ One key question:
what is the difference between a “mission” and a “CSR strategy”?

Distinction de la mission entre « coeur d’activité » et « spectre large »

20%
des entreprises présentent principalement une raison d’être et des objectifs considérés comme « spectre large »

40%
des entreprises présentent une raison d’être et des objectifs hybrides, à la frontière entre « spectre large » et « coeur d’activité »

40%
des entreprises présentent une raison d’être et des objectifs principalement considérés comme « cœur d’activité »

Feedback from purpose-driven groups (large companies)

Expected benefits

- **Singularity** from the competition (clients, government, candidates, etc.)
- **Employee engagement**, esp. in unfavorable job markets
- **Protection** of the founder's values / the company's DNA
- **Improved reputation** toward stakeholders esp. in B-to-C markets
- **Long-term vision** of the company's transformation toward a sustainable model

Actual wins

- **Employee engagement** when the company managed to get them onboard
- **Improved capacity for innovation** thanks to the Mission Committee and "thinking long-term"
- **Better monitoring** of the impacts and objectives of the mission (trajectories)
- **Higher consciousness** at top management level of ESG-related issues

Current challenges

- **Keeping the momentum** after several years (employee onboarding, targets revision, top management's interest…)
- **Making stakeholders aware** of what the mission is, and how it goes beyond "just CSR"
- **Finding the right articulation** between the mission and new, stricter ESG regulations
- **Exporting the "mission"** in countries other than France (esp. versus global labels)

A few perspectives

- How to ensure minimal homogeneity of practices between purpose-driven companies in order to preserve the credibility of the Société à Mission model?
- …while protecting the very flexibility that made the SAM an attractive approach in the first place, in an increasingly constraining landscape ESG-wise?
- How can the “mission” concept be deployed to areas other than companies, e.g., cities, regions?
- How to make sure the controls and sanctions planned in the Pacte law can be used, and will be used, but only in relevant cases?
- How to support an expansion of the model beyond France, also relying on initiatives from other countries (e.g., Italy, Spain, etc.)?

While the “Société à mission” model is not meant for every company, the community that was built over the past 6 years is mostly celebrating their commitment, but wants to ensure it will remain possible in the future

05

Appendices

Study available here

Study KPMG – 2023

50 purpose-driven companies

within the studied panel, having published at least one mission report in October 2022.

+60 factors

analyzed to determine the major trends of purpose-driven companies and formulate our recommendations.

+1000 companies

have now become purpose-driven companies and will be able to benefit from this initial feedback on best practices to structure their approaches.

Étude en partenariat avec

OBSERVATOIRE des SOCIÉTÉS à MISSION

KPMG France, the first "purpose-driven" Big Four

Link to our [2024 mission report]

We are convinced that the requirement for sustainability is an extraordinary lever for development and performance for our clients. This is why KPMG, in France, has adopted the status of a "purpose-driven company," placing its new purpose at the center of its strategy:

“ At the heart of the economy, territories and society, we work and innovate with passion to build trust, combine performance and responsibility, and nurture talent.

All our decisions and choices are guided by our purpose, a sincere testament to our “raison d’être“. We are thus on an ambitious trajectory in terms of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as the first major audit and consulting purpose-company in France, through five commitments and, above all, concrete actions to transform our business model and our organization.

Our commitments	Our actions and our impact
Talents Within an inclusive, attentive culture rooted in our values, we aim to nurture all our talents towards excellence.	• **40 000 hours** of ESG training • Parental **four-day** workweek • **57%** of women at KPMG and 42% in its leadership • Equality index M/W **86/100**
Sustainable prosperity Encouraging and supporting our clients and partners towards sustainable performance.	• ESG Center of excellence with +**130 experts** • **+1 000 ESG missions** in 2023
Planet Acting together to preserve the planet and its resources.	• Carbon intensity (vs 2019) : **-13%** France, **-20%** international • Carbon trajectory aligned with SBTi 1,5°C : **-50%** vs 2019 in 2030 and Net zero in 2050 • Nearly **60%** of top suppliers are signatories of the Responsible Purchasing Charter
Citizen engagement We commit to the common good, education, inclusion, and entrepreneurship in the territories.	• **6 days** of skills sponsorship per employee per year • **+5 000** young people and **300** entrepreneurs supported each year • **15%** of employees engaged and over **13,000 hours/year** of mobilization
Governance Living our values, exercising collaborative and open governance that promotes ethics.	• **100%** of employees trained in ethics • A Next Gen committee • EcoVadis Platinum – **Top 1%** of evaluated companies

PLATINUM Top 1% ecovadis Sustainability Rating OCT 2024

> More than ever, sustainable economic performance is associated with greater human, social, and environmental responsibility. This is the purpose of our commitment as a purpose-driven company alongside all our clients and stakeholders.

Marie Guillemot,

Chairwoman of the Executive Board

KPMG

Fanny Houlliot
Partner
ESG Center of Excellence
+33 6 29 78 68 08
fhoulliot@kpmg.fr

Nathalie Rondeau
Senior Manager
ESG Center of Excellence
+33 6 28 79 54 25
nathalierondeau@kpmg.fr

kpmg.fr