

Case studies on digital transformation of social security administration and services

Reference Project: CHN/18/01/EUR - Improving China's Institutional Capacity towards Universal Social Protection

CASE STUDY
FRANCE

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1. INTRODUCTION

This case study on the digital transformation of social security administration and services in France consists of seven parts:

- The context of France, digitisation and social security.
- Governance, intergovernmental collaboration and coordination in relation to technology in the digital transformation of social security and social assistance.
- Legal and regulatory framework, standards relating to the digital transformation of the social security and social assistance.
- Front-end service delivery ecosystem for social security administration and services in France.
- Back-end service production ecosystem for social security administration and services in France.
- Skills and capabilities within social security entities and for social security clients and customers.
- Expanding coverage.

The case concludes by summarising lessons learned from the French experience.

The specific aim links to core research questions and draft questions to guide the case survey and /or interviews are outlined for each section of the case study.

2. CASE CONTEXT

France, in a European context, is a relatively large country by landmass. With some 68 million citizens, France has a high population density and a high degree of urbanization. French is the official language, and the country is considered a nation-state with a significant number of immigrants (8-10% of the total population in 2018 (INED - French Institute for Demographic Studies 2020). France is a high-income country with a corresponding standard of living and a more consistent GDP growth rate.

Population (July 2021 est.)	68,084,217
Territory (km ²)	643,801
Population density (2020) ¹	123
Official language	French
Life expectancy / median age (2021 est.)	82.39 / 41.7
Urbanisation (%) of total population (2021)	81.2%
GDP (PPP) (USD, 2020 est.)	2,832 trillion
GDP per capita (PPP) (USD, 2020 est.)	42,000
GDP growth rate (%) (2019 est.)	1.49%
Unemployment (2019 est.)	8.12%
Imports (billion USD (2020 est.))	803.66 billion
Exports (billion USD (2020 est.))	746.91 billion

Table 1: Socio-economic data (CIA - Central Intelligence Agency, 2021)

Social welfare in France is managed and services are provided, under primary jurisdiction of the Department's² allowances and education system (high schools). Local service delivery of state administration is organised on a departmental level. However, most social and welfare services have been moved to regional level since reforms of the 2000s, as shown in Figure 1.

¹ The World Bank (2021). Accessed 1-15 November 2021:
https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EN.POP.DNST?end=2020&locations=AU-CA-DK-FR&name_desc=false&start=1961&view=chart

² France has a three-tier public sector consisting of 18 administrative regions (13 in Metropolitan Europe), each further divided into from 2 to 13 departments, resulting in a total of 101 departments (96 in Metropolitan Europe).

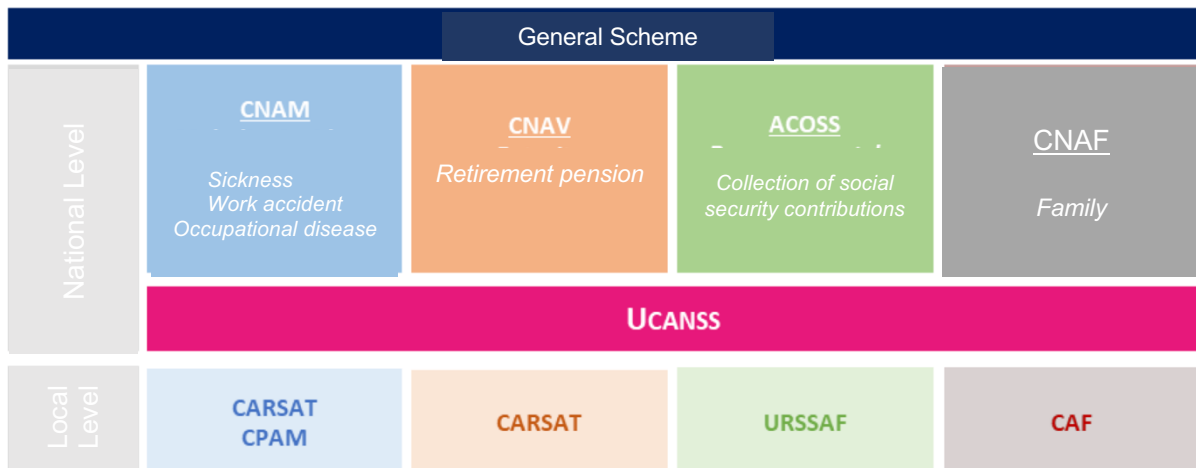


Figure 1. Social security organisations in France³

The general social security scheme is managed by a network of national, regional, and local institutions. Social security is organised according to social risks and is administered by representatives of employers and employees under the supervision of different ministries in charge of social security (the Ministry for Solidarity and Health and the Ministry of Economy, Finance, and Economic Recovery). Approximately 80% of the general scheme's total revenue comes from contributions and taxes deducted from earnings.

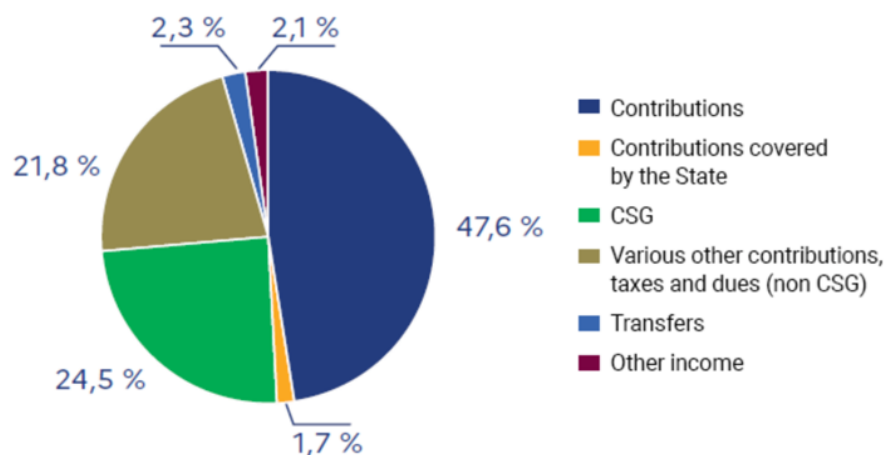


Figure 2. Social security accounts committee⁴

The compulsory general scheme covers private industry, trade, and service sector wage earners. As of 2018, its scope has been extended to include social risks for self-employed workers (e.g. tradespeople, manufacturers, merchants, and members of unregulated private-practice professions).

³ https://www.sia-partners.com/system/files/document_download/file/2020-08/insight2020_automatisation_et_digitalisation_des_services_des_organismes_de_protection_sociale_verite_et_idees_recues_0.pdf

⁴ https://www.cleiss.fr/docs/regimes/regime_france/an_0.html

Eligibility and coverage vary depending on the specific branch of social security and welfare benefits, as summarised in in Table 2.

<p>Health, maternity, paternity, disability, and death branch</p>	<p>Health, maternity and paternity insurance benefits are provided by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The local Health Insurance Funds (Caisses Primaires d'Assurance Maladie/ CPAM) in metropolitan France and by the General Social Security Funds (Caisses générales de sécurité sociale/ CGSS) in France's Overseas Departments; • France's universal healthcare system (PUMa – <i>Protection Universelle Maladie</i>) guarantees covering healthcare expenses for all individuals who are working, or have been residing in France (including Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Martinique, Reunion Island, Saint Barthelemy and Saint Martin) on a continuous basis for a minimum of three months. <p>The French health insurance system covers health expenses (i.e. reimbursement of healthcare costs) for insured persons and their minor dependents and cash benefits (e.g. daily medical leave benefits for temporary incapacity for work).</p>
<p>Industrial accident and occupational illness branches are managed separately by the National Health Insurance Fund (Caisse Nationale d'Assurance Maladie)</p>	<p>Benefits for accidents at work and occupational diseases are paid by the local Health Insurance Fund (in the case of Metropolitan France) or the General Social Security Fund (in the case of the Overseas Departments ('départements' in French).</p>
<p>Old-age branch, managed by the National Old-Age Insurance Fund (Caisse Nationale d'Assurance Vieillesse/ CNAV),</p>	<p>In France, private-sector employees' basic pensions are topped up by the compulsory supplementary pension scheme ARRCO-AGIRC, which is also financed on a pay-as-you-go basis</p> <p>Basic allowances under the general plan are awarded by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The (regional) retirement and occupational health funds (Caisses d'Assurance Retraite et de Santé au Travail/ CARSAT). • The Île-de-France national old-age insurance fund (Caisse Nationale d'Assurance Vieillesse d'Île-de-France) for the Paris region. • The general social security funds (Caisses Générales de Sécurité Sociale/ CGSS) for the overseas Departments. • The CSS in Mayotte. <p>Eligibility in view of France's statutory minimum retirement age is 62 for people born on or after 1 January 1955.</p>
<p>Family branch managed by the National Family Benefits Fund (Caisse Nationale d'Allocations Familiales/ CNAF)</p>	<p>The Social Security system's Family branch is organised into a network of 101 Department-level funds and one national fund.</p> <p>The Family Benefit Funds (Caisses d'Allocations Familiales/ CAF) pay family benefits to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees and comparable categories in all professions. • Non-agricultural self-employed workers. • All residents of France with children even if they are not employed. <p>For eligibility, the social security code stipulates that: "...any French or foreign person residing in France with one or more dependent children also residing in France is entitled to family benefits for those children." Family benefits are awarded to persons acting as the real and ongoing custodians (food, housing, clothes) for legitimate, illegitimate, adopted, or foster children up to the age of 20 years old (general rule).</p>
<p>Social security contributions collections branch, managed by Urssaf National Fund (Urssaf Caisse nationale)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This branch collects employers' and employees' social security contributions through local Urssaf funds.

Social security contributions collections branch, managed by Urssaf National Fund (Urssaf Caisse nationale)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This branch collects employers' and employees' social security contributions through local Urssaf funds.
Unemployment scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covers all employees who come under the general and agricultural schemes. • The Unemployment insurance system applies to metropolitan France and overseas Departments, except for Mayotte. • The unemployment insurance scheme is financed from contributions paid relating to earnings • The scheme applies to all companies' employees in geographical areas covered by the agreement. However, the eligibility for unemployment benefits is contingent on a certain number of conditions.

Table 2. The French Social security system⁵

Internet access and a minimum level of digital literacy and competencies are essential pre-conditions for online service delivery to succeed (Meyerhoff Nielsen 2017). Investments in internet and communications infrastructure ensure that France offers widely accessible online government services. France is among the most connected countries globally, with high internet usage rates and high-speed infrastructure availability.

Population covered by a mobile-cellular network (2020)	99%
Population covered by at least a 3G mobile network (2020)	99%
Population covered by at least 4G mobile network (2020)	99%
Households with Internet access at home (2019)	84%
Mobile-cellular subscriptions per 100 inhabitants (2020)	111%
Active mobile broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants (2020)	99%
Fixed broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants (2020)	47%
Individuals using the Internet (% of the population) (2019)	83%

Table 3: Connectivity and use of the Internet by households and Individuals (ITU, 2021)

Another essential element for social security and online protection services take-up is the country's general ICT skills. Data shows that 53% of the population in France possess basic ICT skills, while only 33% have standard levels of ICT skills.

Basic ICT skills	53%
Standard ICT skills	33%
Advanced ICT skills	6%

Table 4: Basic, Standard, and Advanced ICT skills 2019 (ITU, 2021)

The French government was also an early follower (and *early adopter*) of digital transformation. Social protection has an acknowledged history of innovation in information systems and data management.

⁵ https://www.cleiss.fr/docs/regimes/regime_france/an_5.html

3. GOVERNANCE

Social security governance is defined under dual supervision by the Department of Social Security (DSS) and the Ministry of Economy and Finance. Since 1996, they have been piloting the objective and management agreements considered as main roadmaps for social protection organisations. In the context of increasing control of public expenditure, these agreements relate as much to the means as to the objectives of social security and to be exact, the digital lever as a source of savings and productivity gains. The restitution of positions in each agreement has only become possible with accelerated integration of new digital processes.

At the same time, the General Secretariat for the Modernization of Public Action (SGMAP) has supported social security transformation projects since 2012, including the open data approach in family and health branches very recently. Organisational arrangements of social security in France are complex, all aspects with respect the digital transformation of social security in its multiple forms and actions are outlined in Table 5 below.

Governance	Social Programmes, roles and responsibilities
Ministry for Solidarity and Health	The Ministry for Solidarity and Health is responsible for the formulation of policies and strategies as a key driver for the social security system transformation in France.
Ministry of Labour, Employment, Vocational Training, and Social Dialogue	Regulation of unemployment benefits is taken on by Ministry of Labour, Employment, Vocational Training, and Social Dialogue.
Ministry of Economy and Finance	Ministry of Economy and Finance supervises implementation of social security regulations and controls the budget funds.
Central Agency of Social Security Institutions (ACOSS)	Collects general and specific contributions at the operational level.
Network of collection agencies (URSSAF)	Collects general and specific contributions on an operational level. Key role is financing the social model by collecting all social subscriptions and contributions.
National Old-Age Insurance Fund (CNAV)	Administers social insurance, old-age pensions, and survivor allowances for employees in the private sector.
Federation Agric-Arrco	Manages occupational pensions for salaried employees and managers in the private sector.
Deposits and Consignments Fund (IRCANTEC)	Administers occupational pensions for private-sector employees working under contract in the public sector.
National Health Insurance Fund (CNAM)	Administers the programme for salaried employees and manages sickness and maternity leave benefits and benefits for accidents, workplace and occupational disease. Supported by numerous Primary Sickness Insurance Funds and four Overseas General Sickness Insurance Funds responsible for registering insured people, paying cash benefits, and managing reimbursements of medical expenses
Allowance Fund (CNAF)	Manages the local funds and ensures financial equalisation for the family and household benefits. Supported by 102 Local Family Allowances Funds responsible for payment of benefits.
National Inter-occupational Union for Employment in Industry and Commerce	Administers and provides oversight for the social insurance programme. Responsible for collecting contributions, registering job seekers, and paying benefits. As of December 2021, the centre provides its services through 845 regional agencies in Metropolitan France and 56 overseas agencies.

Table 5. Governance of social security in France

In terms of the digital agenda, roles and responsibilities are decentralised and are managed directly within each entity presented. However, the **Ministry for Solidarity and Health and the DINUM and DITP, responsible for formulating strategies and policies**, make efforts to prioritise digital transformation of the social and health sectors and so transforming public services. A number of strategic activities have been instrumental initiatives for supporting digital transformation of social services related to the assisted living and healthcare, including:

- Creation of a ministerial delegation for digital health (“DNS”) and transformation of ASIP Santé into a digital health agency (“ANS”)
- Nominating the “Digital Health Council” as a consultation body for the digital shift in health and creation of a digital health ethics unit

Like social security, digital transformation in France is also managed de-centrally. The key development and implementation of sectoral ICT strategies are summarized in Table 6.

Year	Coordination of social security implementation	Wider coordination for developing the information society
Vision	Ministry for Solidarity and Health Ministry of Labor, Employment, Vocational Training, and Social Dialogue	Prime Minister, Ministry of Economic and Finance
Strategy	Ministry for Solidarity and Health Ministry of Labor, Employment, Vocational Training, and Social Dialogue	Prime Minister, Ministry of Economic and Finance, DINUM, DITP, ACOSS, URSSAF
Implementation of action plans	ACOSS, URSSAF, CNAV, CNAF, National Inter-occupational Union for Employment in Industry and Commerce	DINUM, DITP
Implementation of individual initiatives	Primary Sickness Insurance Funds, Local Family Allowances Funds, Regional employment agencies, etc.	ACOSS, URSSAF, DINUM, DITP

Table 6. France's approach to social security since 2020

On an operational level, two crucial directorates are mandated with coordinating public administration reforms and digital transformation of government services. First, the Inter-Ministerial Directorate for Digital Affairs (DINUM) plays an essential role in coordinating all Digital initiatives and the actions of all Directorates for Digital Affairs in Social security-related entities (FR1). It is responsible for ensuring the high quality, efficiency and reliability of services provided and the ICT systems. In order to do so, DINUM directs, coordinates, and supports digital transformation of social security authorities, providing advice and developing shared services and resources, such as the Inter-Ministerial State Network (RIE), FranceConnect and api.gouv.fr (European Commission 2021). Second, the Inter-Ministerial Directorate for Public Transformation (DITP) is mandated with coordinating implementation of the Public Action Program 2022 and provides support to all government authorities in transforming their services. DITP provides expertise, supports cross-department projects, and coordinates initiatives with a high impact. It also leads and supports innovative ideas and projects. DITP operates under the Minister of State Reform and is led by the Inter-Ministerial Delegate for Public Transformation (European Commission 2021).

Apart from the formal governance structures and coordinating digital transformation of social security in France, other institutions play a significant role and impact the quality of digital transformation. Some of these institutions or forums are formally part of the general governance structure, while others are independent authorities or non-governmental. These supporting elements are summarized in Table 7.

Organisations	Coordination of digital transformation of social security
French Network and Information Security Agency (ANSSI)	ANSSI is mandated with prompt reaction and responses to cyber-attacks, surveillance of sensitive governmental networks, preventing threats through trusted products and services from French operators, implementation of appropriate defence mechanisms and measures, and providing support to governmental entities and operators of critical infrastructure.
Directorate of Legal and Administrative Information (DILA)	DILA is mandated with disseminating laws, regulations and administrative information.
National Digital Council (CNNum)	CNNum's primary role is to advise government on the digital economy and digital technology issues. As part of the legislative process, CNNum is consulted on any new proposed law or regulation that might impact digital transformation of public services.
Public Interest Group 'Modernisation of Social Declarations' (GIP-MDS)	GIP-MDS bring together different social security institutions and business federations, to develop joint services enabling businesses to file their social declarations electronically.
Computer Security Incident Report Team (CERTA)	CERTA is France's primary point of contact for all computer-related security incidents.
National Commission for Informatics and Liberties (CNIL)	CNIL is an independent body responsible for overseeing implementation of the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in France, the French Personal Data Protection Act of 2018, and the Law on Informatics and Liberties.

Table 7. Other institutions impacting the digital transformation of Social security in France

With respect to services provided by local authorities, digital transformation is supported by two government entities:

- **National Agency for Territorial Cohesion (ANCT):** aimed at tightening links between state and local governments to facilitate implementation of various projects (for example, broadband coverage and Wi-Fi installation in public places).
- **National Centre for the Management of Territorial Service (CNFPT):** mandated with providing training and career support to local government executives, to speed up digital transformation of local public services.

The development and implementation of digital policies and strategies, including wider coordination, is presented in Table 8.

	Coordination of strategy implementation	Wider coordination for the development of information society
Vision	Prime Minister and Secretary of the State for Digital Sector	Ministry for Transformation and Public Service, DINUM, DITP, CNNum
Strategy	Prime Minister, Secretary of the State for Digital Sector DINUM and DITP	ANSSI, DILA, CNNum
Implementation of action plans	DINUM and DITP	ANSSI, CNIL
Implementation of individual initiatives	Central Government Departments, Regional and Local Administrations	DINUM, DITP, ANSSI, and CNIL

Table 8. France's eGovernance and coordination model since 2020

The governance of social security is an important topic in France and is increasingly politically sensitive, and subject to public debate in recent years. To maintain citizen trust while attempting to reform social security for future economic sustainability, while minimising potentially adverse socio-economic impacts remain key challenges. Increasing use of IT and digitalisation in France is defined under the umbrella of social security reforms.

Social security governance remains fragmented. For each branch and each individual service scheme, the national fund negotiates the COG bilaterally with the Social Security Department (DSS). DSS may adopt a different position on similar issues as a result, with respect to different individual organisations or even with respect to individual service areas under the auspices of the same organisation. Fragmentation is a key risk, developing synergies becomes more problematic, conflicting timelines are often observed. The key challenge in the context of digital transformation of social security is thus how to improve a coordinated approach. For individual social security organisations, a shared common vision of digital transformation and implementation of a system of governance, management and action plans in order to support social security organisations' adapting to the digital society, will go some way towards providing a coordinated approach, as seen in the case of CNAF and CNAV.

However, some guiding principles in governance of social security and digital transformation of the French public sector would facilitate greater continuity and sustainability of trust, and the tacit agreement of the social security system and citizens that are sometimes considered constraints to innovation. It would also facilitate greater efficiency and more effective use and impacts of ICT projects, and digital transformation of the public sector at large. Past recommendations for improving governance of the digital transformation of social security included:

- Reviewing the role and responsibilities of social security.
- Broadening the focus from productivity and short-term management goals for a more whole-of-government and user-centric strategic vision.
- Reviewing the role of social security as a financial support role but also supporting citizens in their development and growth and ensuring more autonomy.
- Refocusing digitalisation to extend beyond cost-saving and productivity gains to service improvements and user-centred governance (FR1).
- Involving more researchers and universities in the process of innovating social security.

- Increasing the level of collaboration and improving the transverse relationships among social security entities with respect to innovation and digitalisation, increasing the exchange of knowledge and experience, data exchange, improving accessibility, fighting corruption and fraud, improving productivity and reducing the administrative burden.

Recently, central government has launched a number of key initiatives aimed at modernising public service delivery. In this context, DINUM is coordinating digital transformation of social security services and facilitating collaboration, integration and is trying to foster digital transition and innovation among social security organisations (FR1). A centralised dashboard system has been implemented to monitor digital services from a number of perspectives including the back-end, front-end, accessibility, compliance with standards and the legal and regulatory framework, service quality, user satisfaction etc. (FR1).

4. LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK, STANDARDS

Successful digital transformation of government and public service delivery requires more than merely applying technology and moving services from offline to online scenarios. Digitisation-ready legislation is essential to achieve the full potential of digitalisation and adoption of technologies. It must establish the legal basis for key enablers, reengineering and integrating administrative processes, and re-thinking the overall concept for service production and delivery to take full advantage of new digital platforms.

The legal social security framework regarding use of digital technology is aligned to the national regulatory framework and implementation of key enablers of digital transformation. The French regulatory, social security framework is heavily influenced by mandatory and unified EU supranational rules. A more uniform legal framework across EU member states is key, for facilitating single European markets, including the movement of labour. This includes deepening and strengthening the EU Digital Single Market. Thus, the EU legal framework regulates many key aspects of digital transformation, such as re-use of Public Sector Information (PSI) and data protection and privacy through GDPR etc. EU legal acts are adopted as Regulations or as Directives. This requires transposing EU acts into the national legal system by each EU member state, but a nation's implementation may vary as long as the stated aims of EU acts is achieved.

In addition to EU regulations applying directly in all member states, social security complies with several pieces of legislation to enable large-scale digitisation. Table 9 summarises the most important legal acts that are in use across France.

	yes/no	Name of acts and regulations	Description
General Digital transformation legislation	yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law for a State in the Service of a Society based on Trust (2018) • Law for a Digital Republic (Digital Bill) (2016) • Ordinance on the Right of Users to Communicate with the Administration via Electronic Means (2014) • Decree on the Exchange of Information and Data between Administrations within the Context of Administrative Procedures (2019) • Ordinance on Electronic Interactions between Public Service Users and Public Authorities and among Public Authorities (2005) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law for a State in the Service of a Society based on Trust (2018) The Law establishes the principle of the right to make errors and includes a series of measures to simplify administrative formalities. • Law for a Digital Republic (Digital Bill) (2016). The Law promotes innovation and development of the digital economy and an open, reliable digital society, while protecting the rights of citizens. It also aims to ensure access for all, in all territories, for all opportunities relating to digital technology. • Ordinance on the Right of Users to Communicate with the Administration via Electronic Means (2014) The Ordinance effectively defines the conditions and procedures for users to exercise the right to communicate electronically with different administrations, simplifying the relationship between the administration and users. • Decree on the Exchange of Information and Data between Administrations within the Context of Administrative Procedures (2019) The objective of the Decree is to organise the exchange of information or data between administrations wherever necessary, to process declarations or requests submitted by the public. The Decree determines the fields and procedures concerned by exchange of information or

			<p>data, the list of administrations by which the demand for communication is made according to the type of information or data, and security and confidentiality criteria necessary to guarantee the quality and reliability of exchange, as well as the retention period for information and data which applies for each exchange system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ordinance on Electronic Interactions between Public Service Users and Public Authorities and among Public Authorities (2005) This Ordinance establishes a comprehensive legal framework for shifting to 'electronic administration', creating simple and secure electronic interactions between citizens and public authorities.
eID and PKI legislation	yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU Regulation No. 910/2014 on electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the internal market (eIDAS Regulation) (2014) • Law for a State in the Service of a Society based on Trust (2018) • Law on Electronic Signatures (2000) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU Regulation 910/2014 Legal Framework provides mandatory unified legal rules within the EU for electronic identification (eID) and electronic trust services (such as electronic signatures, seals, time stamping, delivery services, and website authentication). • Law for a State in the Service of a Society based on Trust The Law establishes the 'Tell Us Once' principle to simplify the French administrative formalities based on trust and simplicity, aimed at all users in their daily dealings with administrations. Its implementation is operationalised through two decrees. The Decree on Exchange of Information and Data between Administrations introduced a major change in relationships between users and administrations. Users are no longer required to provide certain information or supporting documents if the administration already holds the information. • Law on Electronic Signature. The Law of 2000 was the first to grant legal effect to electronic signatures and electronically signed documents, transposing EU Directive 1999/93/EC on a Community framework for electronic signatures into French law. The Law was abrogated by a new decree in September 2017, following the adoption on 23 July 2014 of Regulation (EU) No 910/2014 on electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the internal market (repealing EU Directive 1999/93/EC).
Access to Public Sector Information	yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law on Access to Administrative Documents (1978) • Disability Act (2005) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law on Access to Administrative Documents The Law grants everyone access to administrative documents held by public entities. Public entities must respond to requests for documents within one month. A Commission for Access to Administrative Documents (CADA) is tasked with supervising implementation of the Law. • Disability Act (2005) The Act repeals the European Directive on digital accessibility of websites and mobile applications for public sector bodies into French law.
Security, Data Protection and Privacy legislation	yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 • Personal Data Protection Act (2018) • Law No. 2018-133 of 26 February 2018 on Various Provisions for Adapting to European Union Law in the field of security (2018) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 GDPR replaces the Data Protection Directive 95/46/EC, and its goal is to harmonise data privacy rules in the EU, protect EU citizens' privacy by bringing a new approach to data privacy and imposing new regulations and standards, especially relating to the territorial scope, data subjects' rights, consent standards, fines, etc. GDPR strengthens data subjects' rights by establishing clear rules and standards, such as the rights to information, access, rectification, on withdrawing consent, to object (in

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law on Informatics and Liberties (1978) 	<p>general), to object to automated processing, erasure (Right to be forgotten) and data portability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Data Protection Act (2018) The Personal Data Protection Act adopted in 2018 amended EU legislation on data protection packages, including GDPR and Directive (EU) 2016/680 (so-called Police Directive). • Law No. 2018-133 of 26 February 2018 on Various Provisions for Adapting to European Union Law in the field of security (2018) The Law contains a series of provisions to amend Directive 2016/1148 to implement measures for common high-level security of network and information systems. • Law on Informatics and Liberties (1978) Adopted in 1978, the Law provides a legal framework for using identifiers in databases and processing personal data by public and private sector organisations. The mandate of the data protection regulator (National Commission for Informatics and Liberties (CNIL)) was established through this Law. In addition, the Law created a National Commission for Informatics and Liberties (CNIL). The Law was amended several times to transpose the new data protection legislation in the EU into French Law.
Re-use of Public Sector Information	yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law on Modalities of Re-use of Public Sector Information (2015) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law on Modalities of Re-use of Public Sector Information (2015) The Law supports the re-use of public data, promoting free access for opening and re-using public data, known as open data. This principle applies to state and local authorities.
eCommerce legislation	yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law For Trust In Digital Economy (2004) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law For Trust In Digital Economy (2011) The Law implements the EU Directive on electronic commerce (2000/31/EC) and sets the legal framework for developing eCommerce services in France.
eCommunication legislation	yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law On Electronic Communications and Audio-visual Communication Services (2004) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law On Electronic Communications and Audio-visual Communication Services (2004) This Law sets the basis for digital communications in France and implements the EU regulatory framework for electronic communications, namely: Directive 2002/21/EC (Framework Directive); 2002/20/EC (Authorisation Directive); 2002/19/EC (Access Directive); 2002/22/EC (Universal Service Directive); and 2002/58/EC (Directive on privacy and electronic communications).

Table 9: eGovernment Legal Framework in France (Source: Adapted by authors from European Commission, 2021)

France has successfully rolled out all major key enablers regarding technical infrastructure, such as Digital ID, national Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) schemes, Single-Sign-On (SSO) etc. Key information and social security services are available online, the once-only principle is increasingly applied and the supporting infrastructure and data exchange platforms are also in place. In order to align user interfaces and create a monolithic brand experience, social security in France has adopted a usability guide and standards. This builds on a tradition of providing user-friendly, personalised and proactive services. Table 10 summarises the availability of key enablers in France.

	yes/no	Solution	Description
Electronic ID	yes	Multiple providers FranceConnect	FranceConnect federates multiple identity providers and offers an identification scheme for online public services and 30 private organisations (banks, insurance, utilities, etc.). It currently unifies six identity providers that users can choose from when logging in to a social security service, such as AMELI (social security) or La MSA (social security). FranceConnect also allows France to implement the European eIDAS Regulation (Electronic Identification and Signature).
Public Key Infrastructure (PKI)	yes	FranceConnect and Common eSignature solution	The social security scheme was developed and used for various services. The online services are supported by one standard electronic signature solution. Moreover, FranceConnect allows users to connect to various government online services with simple authentication, using the authentication page.
Single Sign-On (SSO)	yes	FranceConnect	The FranceConnect Platform is a Single Sign-On (SSO) solution, providing users of social security services with a certified identification mechanism.
National data exchange platform	yes	Inter-ministerial Network of the State (RIE) and Secure Inter- ministerial Intranet for Governmental Synergies (ISIS).	Data exchange within and between government Ministries is carried out through the Inter-ministerial Network (RIE) and the Secure Inter-ministerial Intranet for Governmental Synergies (ISIS).
Once-only principle	yes	Tell-Us-Once: API catalogue and Etat platform	The once-only principle is realised through the API catalogue and the government platforms. The API catalogue is a unique point of access to all public APIs. The catalogue is intended for service creators and API consumers. It consists of two main hubs: API Enterprise (business hubs) and API Particulier (citizen hub). The Etat platform (State as a Platform) is an architecture of social security services to simplify the relationship with citizens through opening of APIs by large public providers of data, free flow of data between social security, and flow control by users through FranceConnect.
Digital post	yes	FranceConnect+	The upgraded FranceConnect+ enables safe and secure two-way communication between government authorities and citizens or businesses.
Usability service standards	yes	General Interoperability Repository General Accessibility Improvement Framework - RGAA Version 4.1 General Safety Reference System (RGS)	General Interoperability Repository (RGS) RGS sets out technical rules to ensure interoperability of information systems. In particular, it determines the data directories, norms and standards that administrative authorities must use. General Accessibility Improvement Framework - RGAA Version 4.1 Standards for general accessibility for people with disabilities. General Safety Reference System (RGS) Sets the security rules imposed on administrative authorities for securing their information systems.
Personalised and proactive services	yes	Through Service- Public.fr and any other specialised portal	'Service-Public.fr' as a national one-stop platform allows users to increase personalisation levels through the "my page" section.

Table 10: Availability of the major key enablers and standards in France

The legal and regulatory framework in France had an important impact on digital transformation of social security. Some key examples include:

- Services complying with regulations, particularly authentication of social security contributors and recipients. However, there are still risks associated with the

authentication method and online services in relation to fraud, identity manipulation, privacy, data protection and compliance with the law on computing and freedom. The old age and retirement branch engages by using the FranceConnect solution. However, other social security branches are not yet compliant due to perceived security issues and have developed alternative secure digital services.

- The degree of changes in the social security regulatory framework is a key barrier and obstruction to digital transformation of social security, particularly if the frequency of changes increases and if this contradicts the mid-term social security digital strategy (FR1).
- The regulation framework on personal data usage ensures security and protects confidentiality and privacy. However, it is one of the main barriers to the expansion of digitalisation in social security organisations.⁶
- Regulation rigidity is also at the root of the current delays in social security service delivery, as automated services can cope with processing up to 30,000 services per day (FR1).

⁶ EU regulation of 2018 could be a solution to simplify some elements and harmonize rules applied in the EU. Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016.

5. BACK-END SERVICE PRODUCTION ECOSYSTEM

Although organisational responsibility for service provision is decentralised, France has established a centralised model for back-end service production by adopting general frameworks and standards, mandatory for all public bodies. The national one-stop-shop portal **service-public.fr** provides information about all services provided by the national government (only), life journeys and events, the procedures and all relevant information for the services, including information, forms and links to the social security services. However, each entity is responsible for service production and delivery within its mandate and jurisdiction.

A specific social security portal **mesdroitssociaux.gouv.fr** centralises all the information about the members and facilitates procedures undertaken with social protection bodies. Using digital ID and FranceConnect, users can access numerous social security services or simulate scenarios and determine their rights and obligations. Another important integrated portal for social security contributors (employers, individuals, businesses) is the **urssaf.fr** portal, where users can find calculations for contributions and payment information. Lastly, **pole-emploi.fr** is the centralised portal for employment services where citizens can register for a job, training, or can apply for benefits.

Several key elements are essential in terms of social security service delivery. The provision of social security services is strictly connected to the NIR (National Membership Registry number), commonly known in France as a social security number. All people born in France must be registered in the National Directory for the Identification of Natural Persons (RNIPP) and are automatically assigned an NIR by INSEE (France's National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies). Foreign nationals moving to France must apply for an NIR before starting work in France. The NIR is also equivalent to and is used as a National Health Number (INS). The NIR (or INS) is a permanent number and can only be modified in very limited circumstances. Apart from the NIR, each administrator of the schemes (CANV, CANM and CANF) established internal identifiers to facilitate identification and prevent fraud and mistakes.

The other important national portals that include social security services includes:

- **API Platform (api.gouv.fr)** - Portal that references public service APIs, and is made available to communities, ministries and businesses to build IT services for everyone. It includes [Individual API](#) and [Enterprise API](#) to enable exchanging information between the different departments and agencies.
- **FranceConnect (franceconnect.gouv.fr)** - Single-Sign-On Platform
- **Open Data Portal (data.gouv.fr)**.

The **eID and digital signatures infrastructure** are key for identity management, including validation, security, trust, privacy and fraud prevention. The FranceConnect is the **Single Sign-On (SSO)** solution in France allowing users to use one of the six different certified digital ID solutions. Launched in June 2016, the platform counts around 21 million users as of January 2021 (of a population of some 68 million). In order to use the FranceConnect service, individual users should be registered on the national identification register of natural persons

(RNIPP) of INSEE, and should be registered with the social security providers, ameli.fr or msa.fr.

The FranceConnect solution does not aim to replace public identities suppliers, but federates the various social security accounts. Users have open access to their medical files with the newly upgraded platform, FranceConnect+. FranceConnect allows France to implement the European eIDAS Regulation (Electronic Identification and Signature), requiring interoperability of identification systems used by Member States to access their online services.

A number of relevant **standards** governing the back-end ecosystem, including interoperability and data exchange, web accessibility, security, and most social security branches have been adopted and are presented in Table 11.

Back-end Standards	Name of acts, regulations or standards	Description
Interoperability	General Interoperability Framework (RGI)	<p>RGI regulates data exchange on various interoperability levels (political, legal, organisational, semantic and technical) and defines three main interoperability use-cases (exchange between administrative authorities, interaction between an administrative authority and a company or a citizen). (European Commission 2016):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RGI 2.0 version was approved in 2016. • Applied in all administrative authorities. The basis for adopting the RGI is the Ordinance on electronic interactions between public services users and public authorities, and among public authorities. • Provisions on both the security of exchanges and interoperability of information systems.
Data Exchange	General Repository for archive Management (R2GA)	<p>R2GA regulates issues concerning archive storage, communication, re-use and related roles & responsibilities. Increasing Data exchange between social security branches and other public services prevents citizens from entering the data more than once and may avoid fraud and errors, regarding realisation of the once-only principle (FR1).</p>
Web accessibility	General Repository for Administration Accessibility (RGAA); Charter for Ergonomics of Public Websites	<p>RGAA regulates citizens' access to social security services and content provided, regardless of possible disabilities. The current version 3.0 was approved in 2015 to include international standards for web accessibility, including recommendations for using modern web technologies (ex. HTML5) and improved tools for testing accessibility (European Commission 2016).</p> <p>Charter for Ergonomics of Public Websites in 2008 aimed at regulating the minimum standards of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and the principles of interoperability, accessibility and safety of general guidelines.</p> <p>The Charter is mandatory and applies to all government entities or bodies providing public services. More specifically, the Charter regulates the information and content on social security websites and online services (online processes and requirements).</p>
Security	General Security Repository (RGS)	<p>RGS was adopted in 2014 to define minimum security rules applied in Social security information systems and to provide best practices in the area of security of public administration.</p>

Table 11. General standards for back-end services in social security

Coordination of Interoperability is the responsibility of DINUM. As an Inter-Ministerial Directorate, it provides guidance and assists ministries, other government bodies, and local

authorities in implementing the General Interoperability Framework (RGI). This includes directing, leading, supporting and implementing frameworks and actions to ensure data exchange and interoperability across all sectors.

Electronic payments (ePayment) are realised through the unified payment platform PayFiP (payfip.gouv.fr) established by the General Directorate of Public Finance (DGFIP). The platform provides public authorities with an enhanced, secure and modern online payment service. It allows citizens and businesses to pay all invoices (excluding taxes) issued by national and local authorities (state, regions, municipalities) or Health services and hospitals using bank cards or bank deposits. According to interviewees, this platform accelerates the workflow for paying benefits at the back-end. It improves productivity by removing a significant part of manual activities (FR1).

The back-end is considered the weak point for digital transformation of social security services in the French context. To improve the back-end, an important shift in mindset and a more holistic and whole-of-government approach should be cultivated (FR1). Key challenges currently include:

- Obsolescence of technology used in the back office. The most advanced branches (CAF) still rely on 1990's versions of Cobol coding, which limits flexibility, openness and inter-connectivity of systems. As a result, processing and calculating benefits and simulations are at times repeated and this happens in parallel with existing workflows for work, reducing productivity and increasing costs.
- Social security legislation and regulation limit automated processing. Regulatory and organisational silos and fragmentation limit the exchange and reuse of data while subjective and non-binary assessment criteria result in more resource-consuming manual processing.
- Internal processes and consensus between operational, technical, and financial departments increase the length and cost of internal decision making, with control, reporting and auditing requirements, slowing down the phase of back-end innovations and technical developments (FR1).

Changing the back-end is considered a significant challenge. Back-end transformation projects have been initiated, and interviewees comment on difficulties realising these changes while maintaining the full potential activities of branches of social security (FR1). In parallel, significant investment has been made to modernise the front-end of social security branches (FR1), as described in the upcoming section. Several changes are proposed to transform and align the back-end to expectations.

Branches	Objectives for back-end
Health insurance	<p>Health insurance is planning to change the back-end system with a more agile and performant IS, reinforcing the IT function, better alignment of tasks performed by CNAM and the Networks department, capitalising on the network initiatives to support the new developments, as well as the proposed new service such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health insurance extension. • Leverage E-Santé platform. • Development of online services for business. • Increasing the number of services on the Ameli platform. • Leveraging the Vital card (Carte Vitale in French)/

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generalisation of the shared medical file. • Better governance of IT centres of Health insurance for coordinating IT and IS projects by deploying adequate tools.
Old age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The old-age branch faces several back-end challenges such as improved processing for beneficiaries, partners and collaborators, managing systems, identifying the key performance drivers to meet the goals of activities, and improving productivity. Changes will notably include IS, HR and organisation at the back-end, which are required. • Redesigning IS and integrating inter-schemes dimensions, ranges of services for all front office communication channels, including career management tools, and reengineering the liquidation management tools based on the retirement benefits calculation engine. • Redefining the methods for managing IS projects, to add efficiency and gain agility, including tools for measuring and monitoring. • Establish an application and technical architecture to guarantee both the agility and robustness of IS.
Family	<p>Family branch of French social security is acknowledged as being the most advanced regarding digital transformation (FR1).</p> <p>During the 2013-2017 COG, the DSI of the family branch was able to develop its application architecture, modernise its hardware infrastructure and unify its execution model by integrating IT sites within a national DSI.</p> <p>For COG 2018-2022, the DSI will need to overcome three major challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT departments' ability to respond to organisational requirements of ICT capacities and maintain the quality of processing (security, speed, etc.), facilitating interactions with both internal and external end-users (business needs, workflows and external customer digital journeys) and integrating new regulations, changes and amendments. • Current information architecture of systems does not meet business requirements and has only limited capacity to handle increased user volumes (FR1). Complex back-office processing limits the development of an integrated and interactive 24/7 digital system, standard applications (workflow management, customer management, etc.). Support functions are explicitly developed for a specific scenario and not for more scalable software packages, while a "family" oriented data model makes it very complex to manage benefits for the individual (FR1). • Current investments in skills development and staff within IT departments limits the digital transformation phase, holding it back.
Social security contributions collections branch	<p>ACOSS is aimed at significant changes and back-end redesign, to reduce costs though ICT enabled innovation. COG 2018-2022 encompasses an important number of changes, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing a new, more flexible technical infrastructure. • Developing a more service-oriented architecture capable of handling regulatory changes and business requirements. • Redesigning or replacing the national treasury system with a software solution. • Harmonising the IT department's plan to better match actual workflows and practices, and increase the capacity to carry out all projects (digital/reengineering/regulatory) in a logical, efficient and effective manner.

Table 12. Transformations of Digital services of social security

6. FRONT-END SERVICE DELIVERY ECOSYSTEM

Social security has had a problematic relationship with all customer groups in France. Investing in front-end service improvements is considered by many to be the most successful aspect of digital transformation of French social security provision. To foster innovation, competition between branches is encouraged, with branches providing online service quality, and the highest levels of user satisfaction being rewarded, and their solutions and experiences widely communicated to their peers (FR1).

France has established an ecosystem of specialised portals for service delivery, as summarised in Table 13. Three important milestones in digital transformation of the social security services in France include (FR1):

- The 2013 implementation of interactive digital portals for users with full information to improve their autonomy and avoid multi-channel use of information.
- In 2016, the digital front-end was completely redesigned and reengineered.
- In 2021, a more security and citizen-centric front-end enriched with personalised service was launched.

	yes/no	Portal
Citizen and business portal(s)	Yes	https://www.service-public.fr/
Health	Yes	https://www.service-public.fr/dmp.fr (personal medical accounts) https://www.ameli.fr/ (reimbursement of medical costs)
Jobs and vacancies	Yes	https://www.fonction-publique.gouv.fr/ https://www.pole-emploi.fr/ (plus unemployment benefits) https://labonneboite.pole-emploi.fr/ https://www.net-entreprises.fr/ (social security contributions) https://www.france.interieur.gouv.fr/particuliers (work permits for foreigners)
Legal repository, consultation, government gazette	Yes	https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/ https://www.journal-officiel.gouv.fr/
Participation, engagement, consultation portal	yes	https://www.vie-publique.fr/ https://observatoire.numerique.gouv.fr/ (dashboard for the quality of public services) https://www.data.gouv.fr (open data) https://www.api.gouv.fr

Table 13: Specialised portal ecosystem in France

In terms of social services, citizens can find helpful information on the national portal, [service-public.fr](https://www.service-public.fr). However, organisational fragmentation has led the French government to establish three key portals:

- [mesdroitssociaux.gouv.fr](https://www.mesdroitssociaux.gouv.fr) contains relevant information and services for insured persons and facilitates the procedures undertaken with social protection bodies.
- [urssaf.fr](https://www.urssaf.fr) contains relevant information and services for contributors to social security such as employers, individuals, businesses.
- [pole-emploi.fr](https://www.pole-emploi.fr) focuses on information and services for job seekers including registering for a job, training, or applying for benefits.
- [caf.fr](https://www.caf.fr) contains information and services relating to family allowances.

- **info-retraite.fr** [*Practical Pension Information*] contains information relevant for retirement, and access to the personal retirement account.
- **ameli.fr** focuses on reimbursement or direct settlement of medical costs.

In addition to online service delivery, France offers social services for citizens through local and regional branches (e.g. employment centres).

While the front-end service delivery ecosystem for social security in France is undergoing digital transformation, and important investments have been made, there is still room for improvement. Social security organisations are increasingly seen to be working on continuous improvement. Such initiatives focus on

- Websites and portals where statistics are collected, systematised and analysed. Data mining is a key tool. Both to identify user behaviour, user needs, patterns and trends and for fraud detection (FR1). Data is also used for measuring and monitoring service delivery and user satisfaction (FR1).
- Data exchange between social security branches and other public services, which is on the rise, both for internal decision-making processes but also for reducing administrative burdens for customers by sourcing existing data from base registries or other social security organisations or branches, via the data exchange infrastructure (using the once-only principle) (FR1).
- Service accessibility and usability, which is improved through application of RGA standards and of frequently used and newly launched services, which are audited and improved in continuous improvements cycles (FR1). This is enabled by a toolkit for monitoring and measurement, incl. dashboards with key performance indicators on costs, operations, user satisfaction etc. For instance, DNUM has developed a specialised platform and portfolio of tools for user engagement and feedback (rating, commenting, surveys, analysis of sentiment) (FR1).

7. SKILLS AND CAPABILITIES

The French public sector and social security organisations have difficulty recruiting and retaining qualified ICT expertise. This is compounded by a shortage of IT skills in general. The Covid-19 pandemic accelerated the demand for ICT skills in both the public and private sector and it is increasingly difficult to recruit and retain highly skilled experts within the public sector and across social security organisations (FR1).

Continuous investment in Human Resources and their skills and capacities is crucial for an efficient and effective public sector and successful digital transformation. Appropriate policies and initiatives are required to attract and retain highly skilled professionals to work in the public sector and to direct and channel investments for current staff, to update and re-skill their capabilities. However, besides highly qualified and experienced IT professionals, digitalisation requires minimum ICT skills for any job, including for civil servants (OECD 2016).

The “Administration Publique 2022” programme and its target of improving public administration and to offer 100% digital services by 2022, will require adapted infrastructure and improved readiness of the civil service. One of the key pillars of Administration Publique 2022 is Human Resources Management (HRM). The objective of this pillar is to transform public administration into a modern and skilled entity, ready to adapt to new trends and challenges. The Strategy for HR renewal 2022 (SIRH) looks at the potential of digitalisation to improve management, transform public professions into a digital environment and improve the employee experience (OECD 2019). Table 14 summarises key skills and capacity development activities.

Activities	Description
Training	Within the scope of its mandate, DINUM (formerly known as a DINSIC) implements training for senior civil servants, including the social services.
Community of practices	Facilitate a community of practice of Information System Directors (DPSI), to increase their potential to manage and communicate about the projects.
Skills and capacity development	A particular focus of the Administration Publique 2022, is increasing the skills and capacities of senior civil servants, as detected by DINUM as a key requirement for speeding up digital transformation. Several initiatives, such as 'Digital Mentors' and ENA's initial training curriculum through the Public Innovation Chair (CIP) on public innovations, addressed the challenges to public administration skills and capacities, especially for senior civil servants.
Continuous development programme	Public institutions in France invest in continuous training programmes to improve civil servants' digital skills and capacities. These programmes are available to all levels of public administration (including senior civil servants) at the central or territorial level.

Table 14. Skills and capacities activities

Social security in France is fully aware of the potential of digital transformation and the need for a highly skilled, efficient and effective civil service. As a result, digital skills and competences related to digital transformation (e.g. technical, innovation, change and risk management skills) are at the centre of modernisation of social security administration. The different branches are defining for the digital transformation of the public sector, as part of modernisation processes, aimed at increasing productivity, effectiveness and transparency. Multiple programmes and initiatives have been used over the last five years to provide

technical and financial support for capacity building, and to promote innovations across branches of social security. Despite having access to highly skilled people, staff retention and career development remain challenging.

As a result of skills shortages, and a complement to existing national skills and capacity development programmes, social security branches have created different initiatives to attract and retain IT skills, such as recruiting more interns, in order to train and recruit them while they are studying (FR1).

8. EXPANDING INCLUSION AND COVERAGE

Digital transformation of public services modifies the relationship with the user by requiring him to actively participate in service delivery via the internet. It requires a connection to the internet and requisite digital literacy and skills required to manipulate the tools and access the contents of digital information, and understand it. While internet access (fixed and mobile broadband coverage) has improved over the years, 16% of the population does not use the internet, and 13% only use the internet occasionally, due to a lack of the skills required.⁷ The risk of exclusion continues to be a risk in relation to social security in France, but also in terms of the digital divide in general. This risk is accentuated for beneficiaries of social security services who tend to be more vulnerable or marginalised than mainstream society.

Digital inclusion with respect to social security has only recently gained traction in political deliberations. The government launched a plan for inclusive digital technology in 2018. For social security, the challenges of digital inclusion are considered in management agreements between operators (social security funds and “pole emploi” [*Employment Centre*]) and social security organisations, however no measurable objectives and performance indicators are outlined. Interestingly CNAF and CNAV were key in bringing digital inclusion in social security to the attention of the International Social Security Association.

Despite a relatively recent focus area, social security branches have initiated a number of internal policies to complement agreements with operators. All social security organisations in France now have digital inclusion activities organised around four areas: simplification of user interfaces, providing non-digital alternatives, support for such people who need it, ensuring that users know their rights and obligations. Table 15 summarises the key actions and achievements to date.

Actions	Descriptions	Results
Simplifying digital services for the user as much as possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • User experience approach to the development of digital UX experts (User Experience). • User-friendly and ergonomic apps. • Once-only principle. • Integrated workflow with exchange of data to facilitate service to users' full access rights (RSA/CMU-C). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant improvement of accessibility for users with special needs. Only digital services comply with RGAA standards. • Limited compliance of teleservices to CERFA standards for ideal-type online services prescribed by DINUM (51%). • Multiple and repeat entering of information remain high, particularly for resource declaration. • The regulation requires systematic entry of unknown information.
Maintaining a provision combining traditional and digital channels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dominance of digital as the privileged channel for service delivery (80% for CNAF, 64% for MSA). • Face-to-face service require an appointment and justification. • Abolition of a certain number of old-age insurance funds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using traditional channels is important for social security services. • Paper-based services remain dominant for retirement services (>65 years), 58% Vital card, RSA 37%. • Reduction of access to social security services (-27% Family branch, -39% healthcare, -50% old age).

⁷ https://www.igas.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/2019-033r-tome_1_rapport.pdf

Identifying and supporting people with difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction of social service operators. • Developing tools to identify non-user of digital services. • Digital pass service. • PIMMS. • France Service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of support or training for non-users of Internet services. • Limited access to operator increases the charges for 1st line of social services.
Developing proactive actions to improve the use of rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CNAV and CNAF developed proactive services using Data mining to identify potential beneficiaries of rights. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This approach remains limited and experimental, not diffused. • Important improvements relating to exchange of data between branches through RNCPS or Monthly Database of resources (BRM).

Table 15. Digital services inclusion policies⁸

Current activities are critical for improving social security coverage in an increasingly digital society. However, results summarised in Table 15 above, indicate that more can be done to improve digital inclusion with respect to French social security. While simplification has played an essential role in facilitating access to digital services for all users and has ensured greater digital inclusion (FR1), further simplification of regulations would be beneficial. If combined with improved accessibility and usability for people with special needs, this would also help increase the level of independence of an important group of recipients of social security. An enhanced and coordinated multi-channel strategy for all types of financial and non-financial social security services would help ensure a common message and could be aligned with a whole-of-government strategy. Partners and networks such as Maison de France or social action community centres could play a significant role in promoting the digital service channel but also for communicating non-digital alternatives, support and digital skills courses, thus facilitating improvements in digital inclusion. Additional support and training is also required, with CAF is already introducing workshops and individual follow-up calls.

⁸ https://www.igas.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/2019-033r-tome_1_rapport.pdf

9. LESSONS LEARNED

France is well-known for being a strong welfare state with robust and highly centralised government components. France began digital transformation of government early, with the “Electronic Administration” strategy.

Digital transformation of social protection and social security in France is driven by increasing demand for social security services. An ageing population, increasing immigration and an urgent need to improve productivity and efficiency of the public sector are key drivers. France has accelerated its digital transformation progressively over the last couple of years. Progress was made in respect to the integration of emerging technology.

Digital transformation of social security is incorporated into the national digital strategy. Governance of social security and the digital transformation is nonetheless fragmented. Some aspects are defined by the central government strategy, while other aspects are covered in strategies specifically for social security. Several ministries are involved in digital transformation of social security, including the Ministry for Solidarity and Health, DINUM and DITP. The French government does indeed facilitate, and ensure that regional and local government authorities align their strategies and policies with national policy and EU recommendations. While the autonomy of social security branches to develop their own digital strategies and services allows for greater contextualisation, creativity and innovation, this also limits whole-of-government thinking, hampers integration and often results in fragmented and duplicated solutions and costs. A more uniform approach to service design across social security silos and platforms would benefit users by offering more recognisable and common look-and-feel services (FR1). Whole-of-government and user-centric thinking both limit the effect, unless social security is considered as a whole. While the social security system adheres to a logic of salaried employment or self-employed status, and is based around a multiplicity of organisations and schemes, such compartmentalised and siloed thinking neither favours the design and application of a common and coherent digital strategy, nor does it take full advantage of ICT.

France made significant efforts to define relevant and clear legal and regulatory parameters and standards for national digital transformation, including development of social security services. EU regulations and recommendations strongly influence it (e.g. eIDAS for eID, EIF for IOP, once-only for data reuse plus TOOP pilot for cross-border services, GDPR for privacy, WCAG AA for web accessibility). The French have also aligned regulations with international standards such as WCAG AA.

Concerning the back-end service production ecosystem, a more centralised and consolidated approach is pursued with respect to IDM, where single national identifiers for citizens/residents, businesses, and various items have been implemented. Back-end systems are developed based on national standards. However, the government allows social security organisations at local and regional level a high degree of operational autonomy to foster innovation though indirect competition. Data distribution is consolidated at central government level and within social security. It also extends across borders for exchanges with EU and other international partners (based on bilateral agreements with non-French social security organisations). France also consolidates social security organisations through a series

of data exchanges and IOP programmes. One of the main challenges for the next five years, is to fully transform the back-end, to alleviate barriers and obstacles to modernisation of service delivery and concretise productivity gains. This is particularly challenging due to the main social security actors and stakeholders. One strategic objective is to automate 30-60% of all processes (FR1), and further the system's agility.

The front-end service delivery ecosystem for social security continues to be fragmented. While several specialised one-stop shop portals have been launched to create a more uniform and consistent user experience, these are numerous and specialised service sites exist for different social security and welfare services. French social security organisations apply web accessibility standards (WCAG AA) and apply design guide recommendations from the International Social Security Association.

The French government and social security organisations have adopted a voluntary opt-in approach to eID/eSignature, digital post, and online service use, including for social security services. This partially explains the relatively slower take-up of social security services online, in comparison to e.g. Denmark.

Finally, the French government invested significantly in skills and capacity development. Their strength lies in the presence of and ability to retain highly qualified and skilled civil servants. The government implemented several training programmes for senior civil servants and to educate people. They also developed pilot projects, partnership capabilities and shared innovation facilities to foster innovation. Furthermore, the government used digital transformation of social security and technology successfully, to increase inclusiveness and diversity in accessing social services and benefits.

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