

Conseil d'État

Annual Study 2025

Anchoring Public Action in the Long Term

SUMMARY

This annual study, devoted to anchoring public action in the long term, is the last in a series of three that examines the place and role of the State in the face of today's challenges. After examining how effectively public policies serve users over the 'last mile' (annual study 2023) and the conditions under which sovereignty is today exercised in a national and international context marked by crises (annual study 2024), the Conseil d'État is devoting its 2025 annual study to discussing the capacity of public institutions to act with a long-term perspective. In principle, the long term is the natural timescale for the modern State, founded on the very idea of continuity and constructed on the need to better foresee, organise and guarantee the future - and even the very survival - of the Nation. And yet achieving this goal is today wrought with many challenges, which part one of the study aims to analyse as objectively as possible with a view to formulating, in part two, suggestions for operational improvements, in compliance with the mission assigned to the Conseil d'Etat's studies by Article L. 122-3 of the Code of Administrative Justice. The Studies, Prospective and Cooperation Section organised a series of five public conferences, held over 200 hearings with leading figures in France, Europe and the world, and involved a broad spectrum of people in its work. The result was then submitted to the plenary session of the General Assembly of the Council of State, which deliberated and adopted this study.

Part 1 – Anchoring Public Action in the Long Term: today's challenges

The ability to think in terms of long-term public action, whether through public policy or projects, is faced with a number of challenges. These challenges arise from the inherent difficulty of properly factoring in the changes and upheavals that are part and parcel of long-term public action, but also from the constraints imposed on the determination and implementation of this action, as well as from the intrinsic weaknesses of the public players themselves in achieving this, particularly in terms of organisation.

1 - The first difficulty in framing public action in the long-term is correctly anticipating the issues at stake. Two main types of issues need to be taken into consideration. On the one hand, **major trends** exist whose consequences are sufficiently foreseeable to normally provide the framework for long-term action: these are what the study calls "tectonic movements". This term applies notably to ecological challenges (climate change and the erosion of biodiversity) and demographic challenges (changes in the size of the population, the prospect of an ageing population). On the other, there are the **sudden upheavals** that are harder to predict but nonetheless essential, which the study describes as "seismic upheavals", such as the current geopolitical shocks or accelerating technological changes brought about by artificial intelligence. For public authorities, this means being able to **coordinate science, expertise and political decision-making**, and **maintaining a systemic vision that cuts across all public policies**. In this respect, the long term is **anchored in the present and even in the past**, which must be properly understood (hence the importance of administrative memory). Long-term challenges can hence be translated into a series of short-term actions that need to be interconnected. Conversely, the most effective responses to emergencies may themselves require long-term measures such as choosing between purely short-term solutions (like budget cuts), or a more fundamental reorganisation of public action in response to the pressures created by deteriorating public finances.

In principle, the State is structurally equipped to deal with these long-term issues. Historically, the State has been built to guarantee a form of **institutional permanence across the territory** through administration, legal arrangements (such as concessions and public services), and the pursuit of public policies that are by their very nature long-term. These range from forestry policy, dating back to Colbert and even the Middle Ages, to social protection founded on intergenerational solidarity, as well as infrastructure, education, foreign policy, etc. This permanence is also encountered in the **logic of the rule of law**, where higher norms (i.e. laws, the Constitution) are intended to prevail over time and therefore form a stable legal framework for public action.

While it is essential to have the right tools for long-term public action, these tools must also be used to support a policy or strategy. With military origins, strategy consists in coordinating resources in order to achieve a goal. While strategy does not necessarily involve a long-term perspective, it does require the ability to **combine different timeframes**. Does the government have a strategy for its actions? In French institutional history, **the introduction of the Plan in 1946 still stands as an example**: it resulted in multi-year policies, based on powerful tools (notably statistics) and innovative tools (use of foresight). The study examines this sometimes idealised example, emphasising that its approach was primarily **pragmatic**, based on the involvement of all stakeholders. The momentum of the Plan **slackened from the 1960s** onwards with the broadening of its goal spectrum, the emergence of new players in the European and international arenas and the challenging of public instruments for steering the economy. Against this backdrop, the 1990s saw the emergence of the "strategic State" concept, which is ambiguous in that it signifies both the State's ability to adopt a strategy and the refocusing or even withdrawal of the State regarding design and assessment functions to the detriment of implementation functions, a separation whose deleterious effects have been highlighted by the study on the public policy 'last mile'. While reference to a "strategic State" seems to be more a source of confusion than clarity, the study underlines **the need for the State to develop a strategic vision, which more than ever implies the involvement of all players** aware of time constraints and acting on them, because, less now than ever before, the State is unable to think and act alone, particularly when it comes to long-term issues.

2 – Public action is unfolding in a context marked by a long-term crisis. There are several dimensions to this crisis.

First and foremost, there is the **pressure of urgency**: while long and short timeframes are not necessarily opposed, public action struggles to take a long-term view when the pressure of urgency overwhelms all other timelines. Speed of action is a democratic requirement and, ever since the Revolution, the tension between democracy and the long term has been generating questions and thought. Today, tools such as social media and round-the-clock news channels are accentuating the pressure of short timeframes and even immediacy. Nevertheless, the study underlines the fact that **democracies have unique advantages when it comes to planning public action over the long term** (a legitimate institutional framework, public and organised political deliberation, a legal framework structured by the rule of law and the hierarchy of standards, etc.).

The instability of legal standards contributes to this crisis of the long term. This is not to say that the stability of a standard is in itself a guarantee of the success of public action over the long term: taking long-term issues properly into consideration may also justify a regular adaptation of the standard. On the other hand, when changes are made too frequently, especially if they are implemented without any real assessment and reflect rapid reversals without any overarching vision, the instability thus

engendered contributes to blurring the objectives, diluting the issues and demotivating public players, while also introducing the risk of promoting a sentiment of chronic public powerlessness.

To take a long-term view, public action needs to be accepted and even supported, but we are currently witnessing a **crisis of consensus on long-term action**. While public action has always been the subject of debate, the succession of economic and social crises that marked the end of the *Trente Glorieuses* (the three post-war decades of strong growth and prosperity) has been compounded by an 'archipelisation' of society and increased polarisation of opinion, making it more difficult to build consensus around public action, against a backdrop of weakening confidence in institutions. These factors help fuel the vicious circle engendered by favouring actions that have a rapid or even immediate impact, rather than those that are more long-term in nature. These developments tend to **undermine the scope for compromise** that is so necessary if public policies are to be implemented over the long term. The difficulties even go so far as to make it hard, if not impossible, to come up with a simple common - or at least objective - assessment (as shown by the debates surrounding pension reform), despite the useful role that collegiate bodies involving stakeholders (high councils, policy councils, etc.) can play to this end.

Another illustration of these difficulties is the way **long-term consistency is challenged in a volatile environment**, for instance by the shifting objectives of recent years in the energy sector, particularly regarding the balance between renewable and nuclear power, or in major investment and infrastructure projects, where decision-making processes are often too complex and fragmented.

At the same time, the **rise of many other players capable of adopting a long-term view alongside the State** is another decisive challenge for public policy. As the study points out, **the State cannot be a strategist on its own**: it must act, even more so than in the heydays of the Plan, in conjunction with other public institutions and private players.

Firstly at the **European level**: while the construction of Europe is in principle a long-term undertaking, the **European Union's** framework for action is a crucial factor for many public policies, whether they relate to the Union's exclusive competences (customs union and trade policy, monetary policy, etc.) or to the competences shared with the Member States. In addition to the gradual implementation of bodies within the European institutions that are able to contribute to long-term thinking, the guidelines adopted by the Union, backed up by powerful legal instruments, are proving to be highly formative in terms of the State's ability to frame its own actions over the long term.

Among other public players, **local and regional authorities** are also increasingly expected to think in terms of the long term when exercising their powers. With particular regard to development, mobility and urban planning policies, forward-looking studies are being carried out by major conurbations and metropolitan areas, as well as at regional level. At national level, long-term thinking has also been developed within **independent administrative authorities or public authorities** - particularly in the context of their control or regulatory tasks - as well as by **public establishments and operators** (i.e. work carried out in the energy sector by RTE or by the French Agency for Ecological Transition (ADEME), for instance). However, the instruments used to coordinate the operators' actions - notably contracts determining goals and the means employed to achieve them (CPOM) or objective and performance contracts (COP) - are not always suitable for taking long-term developments into account.

Within society itself, many players are now thinking and acting from a long-term perspective. This is true of **companies**, of course, especially the largest: even though their strategies may also be shaped by short and even very short-term issues, they may also carry out foresight work for their business sector, sometimes mobilising significant resources. This is true of the insurance and reinsurance industries, where long-term thinking can even play a benchmark role (i.e. producing long-term risk

maps). The development of **think tanks** has also helped to diversify work on long-term issues, even if the French landscape is still fragmented, heterogeneous and financially fragile. **Social partners** and major **non-profit organisations**, notably through the Economic, Social and Environmental Council where they are represented, are other players that contribute to diversification of long-term thinking.

The importance of players from the worlds of business and civil society is **all the more striking in view of the fact that long-term issues are being played out on a global scale**. These players include international financial institutions, sovereign wealth funds and rating agencies, in addition to very large companies, such as the digital giants, which are likely to influence long-term choices through the sheer scope of their actions. Plus, the determining role that international law can play over the long term is now being undermined by the assertion of new power logics by States and even private entities, as the sovereignty study revealed. However, the **international framework remains essential** in view of the global impact of many long-term challenges, such as the environment.

The need to further coordinate such a wide range of players, and to combine the different scales of action, means that the State must **work more closely as a network** and be able to **orchestrate its strategies with those of other players** when it comes to building long-term considerations into its actions. This also means having enough **room for manoeuvre** to act over the long term, through standards and the implementation of public policies. The public finance issue is an essential one: the burden of public debt and, perhaps even more so, the persistence of a **primary deficit** (revenue inferior to expenditure before paying interest on the debt) is hampering the State's ability to think and act in the long term, as the **sustainability of public finances** is clearly a determining factor in remaining on a long-term strategical footing. Nevertheless, the study quotes a number of examples of public policies that have been successfully implemented over the long term, including examples as diverse as the very high-speed broadband plan, the Grand Paris Express, the Cigéo project and the nominative social declaration (DSN).

3 - Finally, there are intrinsic difficulties in taking long-term issues into consideration in public policy, notably the interval between long-term thinking and public decision-making, and the lack of coherence or even an overall vision of these issues.

The State still holds real powers to think in the long-term. This is true of official statistics (i.e. ministerial statistical departments) or examples of foresight exercises carried out by certain administrations (i.e. the "red team" project, which became "RADAR", involving researchers as well as science fiction authors, set up by the Ministry of the Armed Forces). The difficulty stems from the **lack of sufficient institutional structure to link these studies and investigations to the decision-making process and to ensure genuine coordination**: the study calls this the "clutch" problem between long-term thinking and public decision-making. The structures that succeeded the Plan - i.e. the Centre d'analyse stratégique and then France Stratégie - have not been able to overcome this difficulty, despite the quality of their output. The founding of the new **Haut-Commissariat au plan et à la stratégie** (High Commission for Planning and Strategy) is intended to bring forward-looking thinking and the coordination of planning work closer together.

We are also obliged to acknowledge a kind of dispersion in long-term thinking within the public sphere, the disappearance of the Plan having given way to a multiplication of plans, making an overall vision more necessary than ever. There are currently a particularly large number of national strategies, with very disparate formalisations. **Sector-specific forms of coordination** have certainly been implemented for certain policies, focusing more on operational implementation: this is true of the General

Secretariat for Ecological Planning (SGPE) and the General Secretariat for Investment (SGPI). But these are only **partial answers**, and are highly dependent on the positioning of this type of structure.

Multi-annual budgeting is also essential if we are to develop an overall vision. Although the principle of budgetary annuality is justified by the very foundations of democratic systems and consent to taxation, there is still a strong need for visibility and predictability in public finances to ensure that public action is sustained over the long term. Sector-specific programming laws, apart from the Defence Programming Law, have tended to multiply without succeeding in becoming reference frameworks for the public policies involved, particularly in budgetary terms. Furthermore, **the public finance programming laws have not been able to structure budget sustainability over time**, due to a lack of legal scope with regard to both the annual finance laws and the sector-specific programming laws.

The study endeavours to make **international comparisons**, notably with European democracies, highlighting the **diversity of possible responses** to ensure that greater consideration is taken of the long term challenges. The case of Finland, marked by a number of original tools (including a special place for Parliament), is examined in particular. Moving on, the question of **coordination with the objectives set by the European institutions themselves is central**, with a view to ensuring the overall consistency of public action over the long term. European policies are based on their own strategic framework, a specific multi-annual financial framework and an autonomous long-term approach. This calls for **coordination at national level**, both at the design and target-setting stage and at the implementation stage (as illustrated by the ban on the marketing of internal combustion engine vehicles in 2035).

Coordination with local and regional authorities is another key factor in ensuring the coordinated integration of long-term issues into public action. Various schemes, plans or strategies are now prepared at each level of local authority in their respective areas of responsibility: the result is a landscape that is complex to understand, especially as it is part of the responsibility mix resulting from the various stages of decentralisation. However, the systems put in place to achieve this do not always appear to be effective or have a limited scope (setting up consultations and coordination tools, clarifying the hierarchical links between documents, contractualisation, etc.). The same is true for the **overseas authorities**, where a more structured approach to taking account of the challenges from a long-term perspective should be developed.

Part 2 - How to build a better long-term public strategy

The study makes a number of recommendations in this regard, aimed at supporting a shared democratic vision of the future, relying more on science and expertise, and ensuring more effective implementation of long-term public policies. The study presents these recommendations in chronological order of public decision-making, starting with the political institutions that design them and ending with the administrations that implement them.

1 - First and foremost, it is important to determine common goals and timelines, giving political authorities and democratic processes their rightful place, fostering the conditions for better-informed public decision-making and making certain that public strategies are implemented effectively.

In a democracy, decision-making power lies with the sovereign people and their elected representatives. It is therefore at this level that the long-term challenges of public policy must be taken into consideration.

In this respect, the study emphasises that **Parliament has an essential role** to play in thinking up, debating and setting the long-term direction of public action, through the passing of laws (including programming laws) and through its role in assessing and overseeing the activities of the executive. This dimension of Parliament's activity would benefit from being bolstered by focussing on the general legal framework, reinforcing the tools available to Parliament for this purpose, including through bodies specifically dedicated to long-term issues following the example of other countries (i.e. the Finnish Parliament's Committee on the Future). Furthermore, to make public action a shared democratic goal, the study proposes that Parliament, the Government and the stakeholders involved work together to produce "**tricolour books**" **outlining public action over the long term in areas where this dimension seems particularly essential (proposal no. 1).**

Thinking and acting in the long term is also clearly a responsibility of the **executive**, by combining the prerogatives of the President of the Republic with those of the Prime Minister and the Government. To this end, a regular debate on long-term issues should be held at the Council of Ministers, prior to a broader debate in Parliament. Government seminars could also help, where necessary, to ensure that these issues are taken into consideration at interministerial level. **(proposal no. 2).**

Strengthening the legal framework for public action, with a view to the long term, is also relevant. This applies especially to the ability to adopt a genuine **multiannual framework**, obviously for budgetary issues and even more broadly. For this purpose, the study considers two options: either, **within an unchanged constitutional framework**, by promoting the benchmarking role of the public finance programming law with regard to the annual finance laws and the sector-specific programming laws, notably by voting consensus at the beginning of the legislature and by specifying the framework of the sector-specific programming more clearly; or **by giving a stricter scope of action to the public finance programming laws or even by providing for framework organic laws as part of a revision of the Constitution**, which could be prepared by setting up a committee to reflect on the matter **(proposal no. 3).**

Consistent involvement of stakeholders, including the social partners, as well as the widest possible public, can also help to ensure that public policies are anchored in the long term, provided that certain conditions are met, particularly in terms of the methods employed. Notably, the study stresses the need to ensure the broadest possible representation of interested parties, to clearly define the purpose and timeframes of consultations, and to systematically provide information on the follow-up effort made on the resulting proposals. In this respect, the **role of the social partners** should be strengthened regarding the design of public policies, particularly in the social field, as well as in their implementation at regional level. Likewise, the use of **participatory democracy** tools, including citizens' conventions, would gain from certain guarantees and precautions regarding the method and organisation of work **(proposal no. 4).**

Transposing **the long-term requirement into legal terms** may also involve taking better account of certain legal principles (such as the prevention and precaution principles) or setting up long-term objectives and trajectories, as in the case of climate litigation, which requires an in-depth prior analysis of the scope of the objective and trajectory **(proposal no. 5).** With the emergence of new issues, anticipating long-term legal challenges may lead to certain concepts being explored in greater depth, such as the right of future generations or the protection of biodiversity: the study examines the challenges that these raise without making any proposals, believing that further reflection on these

subjects should be carried out by developing multidisciplinary approaches (between lawyers and scientists in particular).

The study makes a number of recommendations aimed at improving the conditions for more informed public decision-making. The initial aim is to **promote a scientific culture and a collective understanding of the scientific method among the general population**. This can be achieved by scaling up **education, starting at primary school**, by developing appropriate teaching methods and by bolstering teacher training for this purpose (particularly as part of the reform of recruitment procedures). As indicated by the Conseil d'Etat in its previous studies devoted to social media (2022) and sovereignty (2024), **the fight against disinformation and foreign influences is essential**, through special training and awareness-raising initiatives for all audiences on the use of social media and the risks of information manipulation (**proposal no. 6**).

We also need to **bring scientists and public decision-makers closer together**, for instance by appointing scientific advisers or councils to the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister and even to each minister, with the aim of developing links with universities and scientific bodies. Another option is to step up the involvement of the academies and their work, which could take the form of regular discussions with members of parliament and government departments. In a more general sense, the scientific training of elected representatives, public decision-makers and civil servants remains a challenge that calls for specific actions. (**proposal no. 7**).

To plan for the long term, **public action must be based on diagnostics that are as objective as possible**, which raises the issue of **expertise** in assisting decision-making. The role of "high council" type bodies would benefit from being clarified in this respect, which raises the questions of their overall consistency in terms of fields of expertise and response time, the formalisation of the methods used and the guarantees of their independence, without excluding dialogue with the administrations to better present the work and articulate the timetables and needs for expertise. (**proposal no. 8**).

Impact studies of draft legislation are another way of calling on expertise to take account of the long term: the scope of impact studies can be improved in terms of process and methodology. For this purpose, the Haut-Commissariat à la stratégie et au plan (High Commission for Strategy and Planning) could be tasked with completing the applicable methodological corpus in conjunction with government departments, **so that the long-term effects (including on future generations) can be better identified and taken into account** in impact studies and the substantiation of choices (**proposal no. 9**).

Expertise must also be strengthened within the administrations themselves. Notably, **guarantees of objectivity and independence concerning the ministerial statistical services and data production** must be maintained, just as it is essential to increase an **open attitude to scientific knowledge** and to draw on all the technical resources available within the administrations to **assess public policies** from a long-term angle (including by keeping track of past reforms) and to **develop knowledge tools** to support the inclusion of long-term issues into public policies (**proposal no. 10**).

The participation of the various stakeholders, both public and private, as well as the general public, also helps to ensure that public policies are carried out over the long term. To ensure that democratic debate is better informed **during major national elections, a regular independent foresight exercise** should be ritualised every five years to set out the issues involved in a twenty-year vision of France (for instance, an exercise entitled "France in 2040 or 2050" aimed at 2027): this exercise could be handled by the Haut-Commissariat à la stratégie et au plan (High Commission for Strategy and Planning) (**proposal no. 11**).

Foresight work is also intended to fully inform decision-making in a long-term perspective. Although France has a long history of expertise in this area, which dates back to the Plan era, the role of foresight as a decision-making tool is still very unevenly implemented. For this purpose, it seems essential to **consolidate, and even develop and diversify, training and university courses enabling the acquisition of foresight skills**, including the training of public servants likely to be more directly concerned by this work as experts or decision-makers. To upscale the use of foresight in government departments, a **centralised monitoring system** could be set up as well as regular dialogue, both within the State and with private players who think in terms of the long term (think tanks, major companies, etc.): the **Haut-Commissariat à la stratégie et au plan** (High Commission for Strategy and Planning) should have a role as a point of reference. **Foresight work should be promoted** within central government - for example, by requiring each government department to carry out a thematic foresight exercise at regular intervals - as well as within local authorities and overseas authorities (**proposal no. 12**).

The study also highlights the importance of making the right choices to build relevant public strategies. To achieve this, it is especially important to **make public strategies clearer and better coordinated** in view of the risk of excessive fragmentation: this implies formulating strategic orientations more clearly, justifying them by taking account of long-term issues, providing intermediate milestones to ensure that the objectives set are visibly transposed, rationalising public strategies and strengthening their coordination by major public policy area, and ensuring interministerial coordination of strategies under the State's responsibility. It is also desirable that **each administration, notably the central administration directorates, regularly carry out a multi-year review of its strategy under the authority of the ministers (proposal no. 13)**.

It appears necessary to improve the **combination of the various levers of State action** by associating a tool with a specific objective. In the case of **investment support**, for instance, we need to prioritise operating sectors more effectively in the light of long-term issues, by defining a limited number of clear objectives, and to strengthen evaluation methods so as to integrate these issues into investment choices. **Experimentation** can also help to identify the right means of implementing long-term objectives, just as it is appropriate to develop the use of levers other than unilateral standards or budgetary measures, above all by **working on the operational implementation of public policies (proposal no. 14)**.

Elsewhere, building public policies for the long term increasingly involves thinking about how they **relate to the European framework**. On the one hand, it would appear desirable for European institutions to **regain their ability to think and act more effectively over the long term**. The aim here would be to factor these issues into European policies to a greater extent by drawing on recent documents written with this perspective (such as the Letta and Draghi reports), by encouraging further reflection in this area and even by contemplating the goal of a Europe with full strategic autonomy by the year 2050. Furthermore, this means that we need to be able to think in terms of the long term ourselves and to be able to share this ability by **strengthening France's position as a source of European long-term thinking**, including by developing strategic interaction with our partners and institutions, and by participating fully in European bodies devoted to strategic thinking and foresight. The aim is to form an effective link between national strategies and the European framework, especially by paying attention to this issue at the level of the ministries and the High Commission for Strategy and Planning, with the involvement of the General Secretariat for European Affairs (**proposal no. 15**).

2 – Anchoring public action in the long term also means being able to ensure that public strategies are implemented effectively, both by government administrations and the other public players involved, while retaining the ability to adapt in the course of time at every stage.

On a more organisational level, the challenge consists in **securing continuity of action by the administrations over time**. **Strengthening the administrations' study and research functions** in relation to long-term issues is a crucial aspect of this, and can be achieved in a number of ways: i.e. by promoting the coordination of long-term thinking in the ministries (for instance through a body set up for this purpose, while remaining pragmatic); by enhancing the value of these functions in the careers of civil servants; by facilitating correlation between the studies produced and the decision-making processes within the ministries and at inter-ministerial level (for instance by making long-term thinking a strong element of inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms, particularly in the area of intelligence); by developing links with universities and research and by strengthening foresight capabilities when certain deficiencies are identified (for instance in the areas of health or national education). It also seems useful to **develop the tools** that administrations can use to think and plan in terms of the long term by researching new methods and by interministerial management of resources in terms of digital data and the use of artificial intelligence (**proposal no. 16**).

Within the State more specifically, there are several other levers that can be used to make sure that decisions are made with greater consideration for the long term. One of these is **departmental structuring**, in particular by ensuring that directors are in office for at least three or even four years, by adapting the organisational structures to ensure that technical skills are robust, by strengthening coordination procedures (notably with operators) and by drawing on feedback. **In terms of human resources**, forward-looking management of the workforce and skills and the development of staff skills in relation to long-term issues are also key aspects demanding further study. The time dimension must also be genuinely built into the resources used to support public action, such as **public procurement and multi-year property strategies (proposal no. 17)**.

The commitment of local authorities, stakeholders (including businesses), and citizens is also a key factor in long-term action, which means **giving them a share of the responsibility**. This is why the proposal is made to guarantee the conditions for improved territorialisation of strategies over the long term, by strengthening the mechanisms for associating local authorities and their room for manoeuvre (in terms of finance and standards) and by bolstering synergies in terms of engineering capacities at local level. The State also has an important role to play regarding civil society by encouraging and empowering private-sector players to take a long-term view of their own actions and by involving them in the implementation of national strategic guidelines through appropriate partnership mechanisms. This also applies to the general public, for instance in the context of prevention policies and with a view to ensuring society's resilience over the long term (**proposal no. 18**).

Implementing public policies over the long term also involves **maintaining the capacity to adapt** to uncertainties and changing contexts: full use should be made of **assessment methods** for this purpose, particularly in-itinere evaluation, and **tools offering flexibility** such as rendezvous clauses or milestones should be used. It is also essential that the assessment of public action be **based on indicators that better factor in the long term**, which implies continuing the work already undertaken to integrate qualitative issues into the assessment of national wealth and to encourage, in the spirit championed by the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Commission, the development of a long-term qualitative approach at European, international and global level (**proposal no. 19**).

To conclude, the study makes a final recommendation, calling for the creation of "tricolour books" in order to develop a shared long-term framework for public policies that particularly require such a dimension. Therefore, this exercise should be carried out on a priority basis in the following sectors: **education, research and the transformation of professions; defence and security; the ecological and energy transition; population policy; industrial and research policy in the digital field and in particular artificial intelligence (proposal no. 20).**

Taken together, the 20 proposals of this study ultimately underscore that anchoring public action in the long term requires that **three decisive conditions be met**: first, **allowing time** to imagine possible futures, share the issues at stake, and define desirable strategies democratically; second, ensuring **coherence** across different time horizons and across public policies; and third, conceiving of State action as a **networked process** involving and engaging all key actors, both public and private, as well as citizens, so that the long-term perspective can be embodied in a 'strategic Nation' within a strong Europe.