

FRANCE

France demonstrates solid science and innovation performance in a number of areas, such as human resources in science and technology (HRST). It had 8.4 researchers per thousand employment in 2007. This is slightly above average; however, the growth rate has slowed in recent years. It also performs above the average in terms of the share of HRST in total employment and the 27.6% share of science and engineering degrees in all new degrees.

The 12.9% of firms collaborating on innovation activities is marginally above average, and the comparatively high 21.4% of patent applications with foreign co-inventors suggests strong links. In 2008, around 8% of GERD was financed from abroad.

Some aspects of France's innovation performance have softened in recent years. Gross expenditure on R&D (GERD) has declined steadily since the 1990s and was below average at 2% of GDP in 2008. In constant terms, GERD declined by 0.4% in 2007 and by 0.6% in 2008. On a current purchasing power parity basis, GERD was USD 669 per capita in 2008, below the OECD average of USD 786. Government-financed GERD dropped from over 50% in the early 1980s to 39% in 2008. Industry financed about half of GERD. Business expenditure on R&D (BERD) was 1.3% of GDP in 2008 and has been declining since the 1990s. In real terms, BERD has fallen since 2003. Venture capital was 0.13% of GDP in 2008, above the average (0.1%).

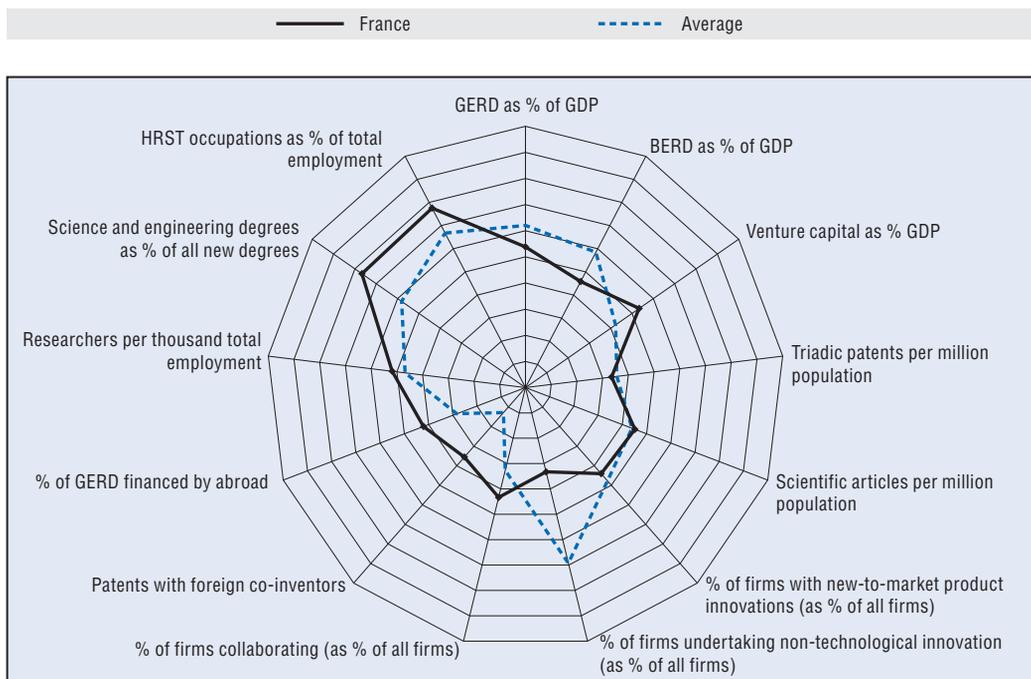
In 2008, France had almost 5% of total triadic patent families, but at 38 per million

population its triadic patents were marginally below the OECD average. France is in the top five for scientific articles published in 2008, with 800 per million population and 3% of world output. During 2002-04, 13% of firms undertook new-to-market product innovations, slightly below the average, and only one in five undertook non-technological innovation. Although the latest available average annual growth rate of high- and medium-high-technology exports was modest, France had a 17% export market share in the aerospace industry in 2008, second to the United States.

France's real GDP growth rate slowed from slightly more than 2% in 2006 and 2007 to only 0.4% in 2008. GDP contracted by 2.3% in 2009 and the unemployment rate increased to nearly 10%. Relative to the United States GDP per capita was 70% in 2008, but labour productivity was 94%.

France's innovation policy is based on legislation passed in 1999 and 2003. During 2008 and 2009 the implementation of the National Research and Innovation Strategy provided an overview of the state of play in innovation. The overall aim of innovation policies is to increase support to business R&D and innovation, focusing on three priorities: the strengthening of the incentives for the private sector; the setting up of synergies between key actors of the innovation process in competitive clusters; and support for competitiveness in small and medium-sized enterprises. The strategy will be updated every four years.

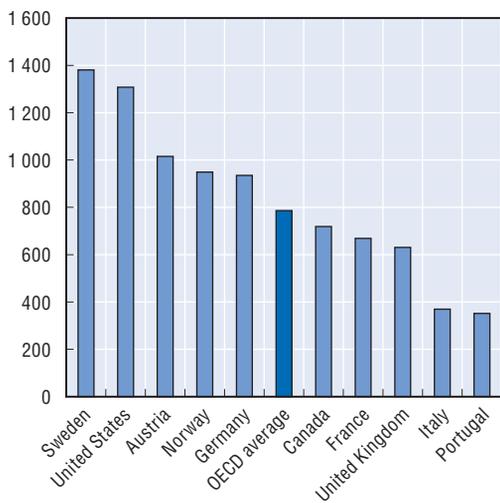
Science and innovation profile of France



StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932333690>

GERD per capita

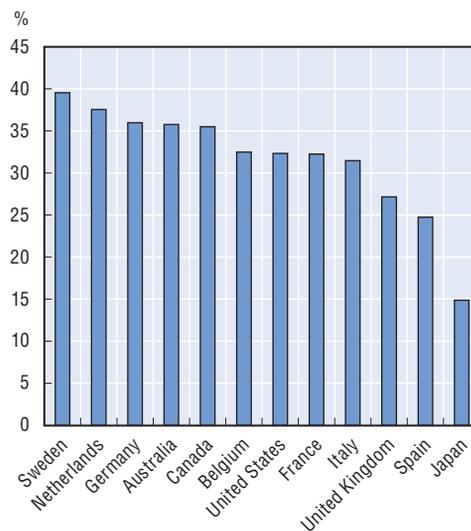
Current PPP USD, 2008



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HRST occupations

As a percentage of total employment, 2008



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