

Foreign multinationals in 2023

Context

The French National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE) collects, produces, analyzes and disseminates information and data on the French economy. In the area of business statistics, INSEE can identify foreign businesses established in France. Based on this data, the institute carries out studies at national and regional levels, particularly through its regional offices, to contribute to a better understanding of foreign multinationals in public discussions.

Business France produces an Annual Report on Foreign Investment in France. This report includes firm decisions regarding foreign investment projects that create or maintain employment nationwide. These projects are detected by Business France, the monitoring of public announcements and the recording of projects by local authorities. Regardless of the method used for data collection, all projects are approved by the Regional Economic Development Agencies. In 2025, 1,878 investment decisions were made by foreign businesses in France, creating or maintaining 47,734 jobs.

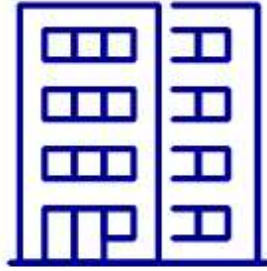
This collaboration between INSEE and Business France aims to provide an overview of foreign multinationals in France and the establishments involved in a project supported by Business France. A national picture of foreign businesses in France therefore aims to improve understanding of the footprint left by foreign firms across France's regions and, in particular, the establishments supported by Business France at least once since 2014. Twelve regional profiles also feature foreign businesses within their respective regions.

This data will enable a better understanding of the role of foreign businesses in the French economy and Business France's support in terms of their establishment and sustainability.

The partnership between INSEE and Business France for this report required methodological adjustments to match the data. The scope of this report therefore only covers a portion of the more than 7,800 foreign businesses that chose to invest in France between 2014 and 2025, according to data from Business France. The methodology and definitions are featured at the end of the report.

Foreign multinationals in France

19,600
businesses
operating in France in
2023



1,600

firms supported by
Business France
at least once since 2014
within the scope of the report

63% were **INVESTORS**

investments in physical assets intended for long-term use by the business
as a means of production

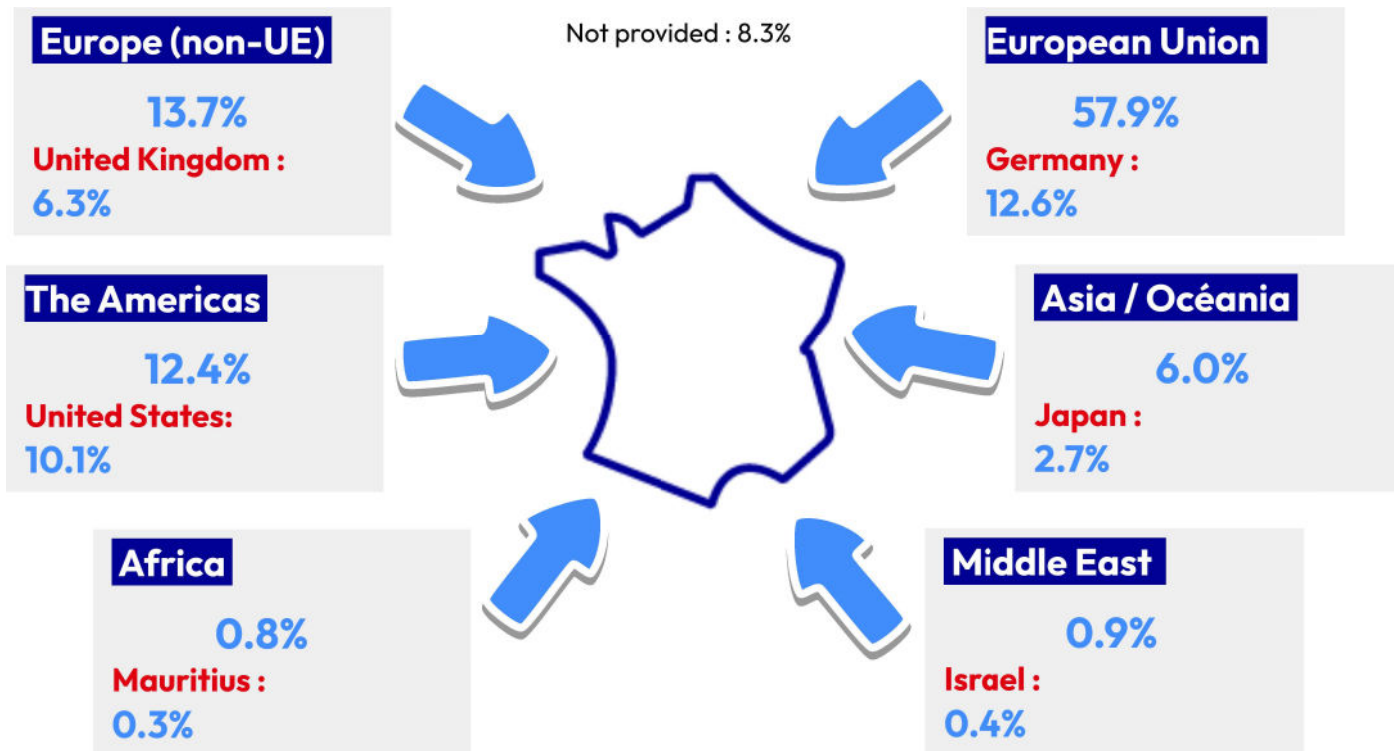


56% were **EXPORTERS**

sales declared by the business for export and including deliveries
within the EU



Geographical source area of businesses



*Scope: France, excluding Mayotte; all active establishments of non-agricultural commercial enterprises (excluding micro-entrepreneurs) belonging to a foreign multinational.
Source: Insee, Fare 2023, Flores 2023.*

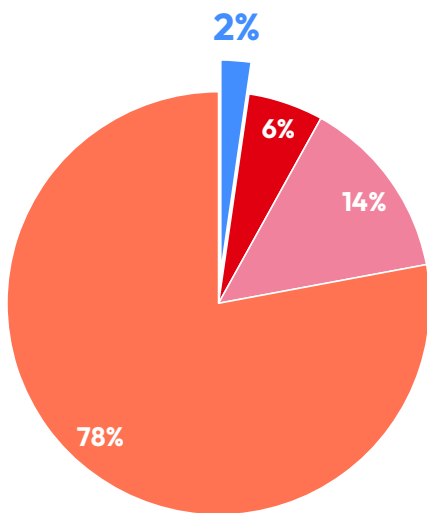
Source of establishments

2% of establishments in France are
under foreign ownership
(they belong to foreign multinationals)

Source of the establishment group

- Foreign multinationals
- French multinationals
- French group based in France
- French independent business

Establishments



91,510

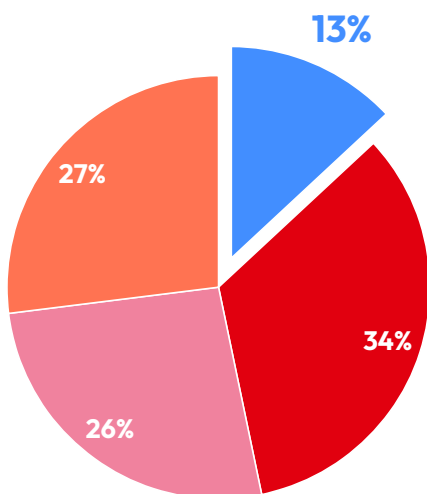
foreign-owned establishments
in 2023



3,180

supported by
Business France
at least once since 2014

FTE employees



1,937,700

full-time equivalent (FTE) employees
under foreign ownership
in 2023



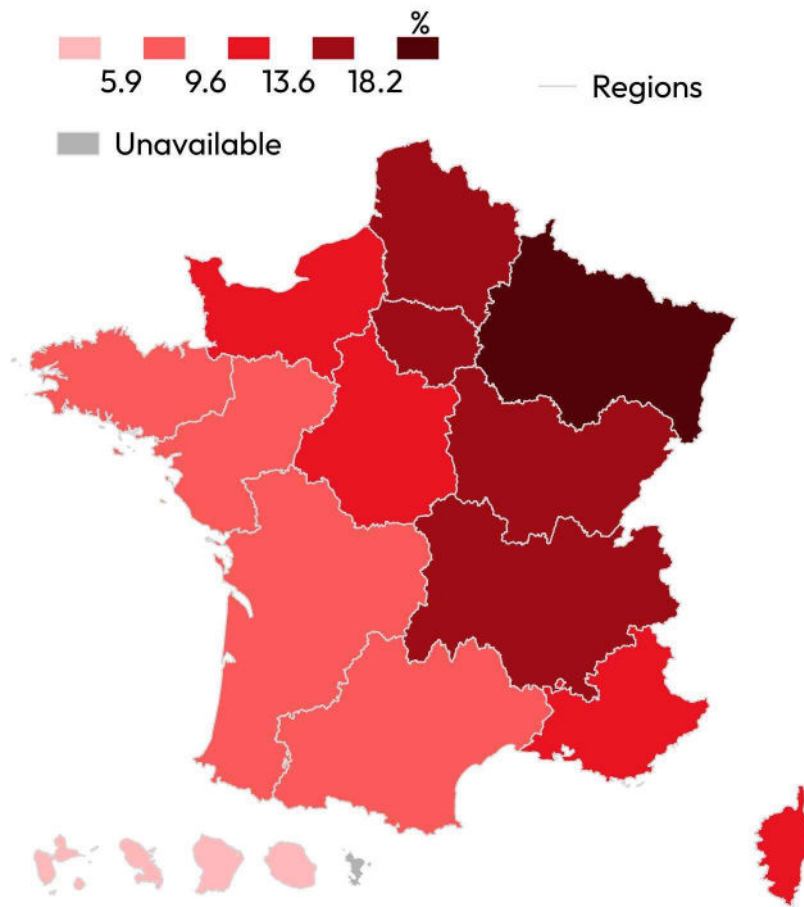
310,000

FTE employees of an establishment
supported by **Business France**
at least once since 2014

*Scope: France, excluding Mayotte; all active establishments of non-agricultural commercial enterprises (excluding micro-entrepreneurs).
Source: Insee, Fare 2023, Flores 2023.*

Employees under foreign ownership

Share of full-time equivalent (FTE) employees working for a foreign multinational in 2023 by region



In France,

13,1%

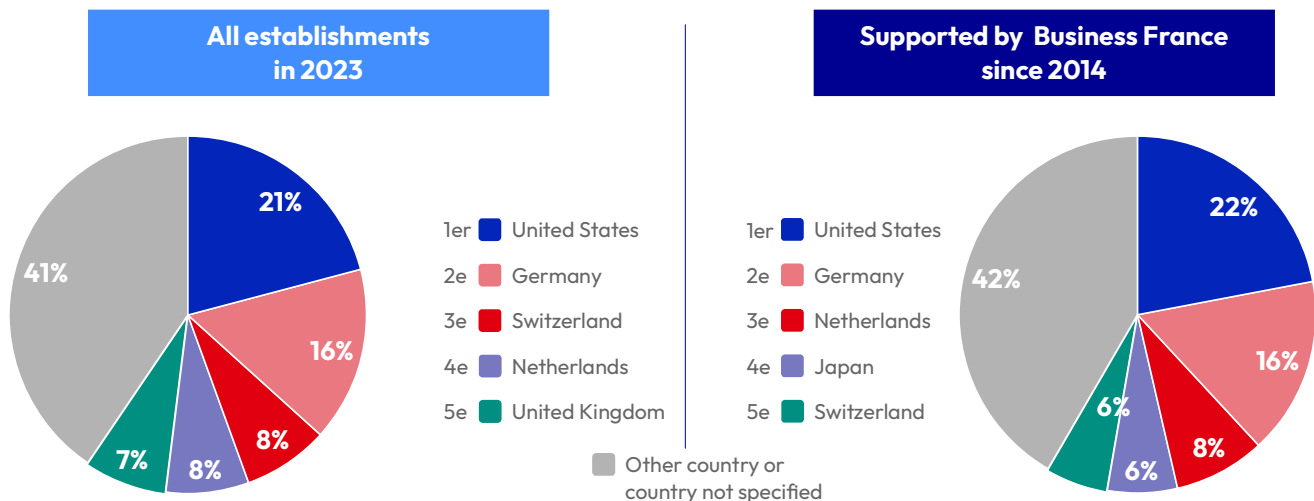
of FTE employees worked in **foreign-owned** establishments in 2023

Among them,

16,0%

worked for an establishment that had been supported by **Business France** at least once since 2014

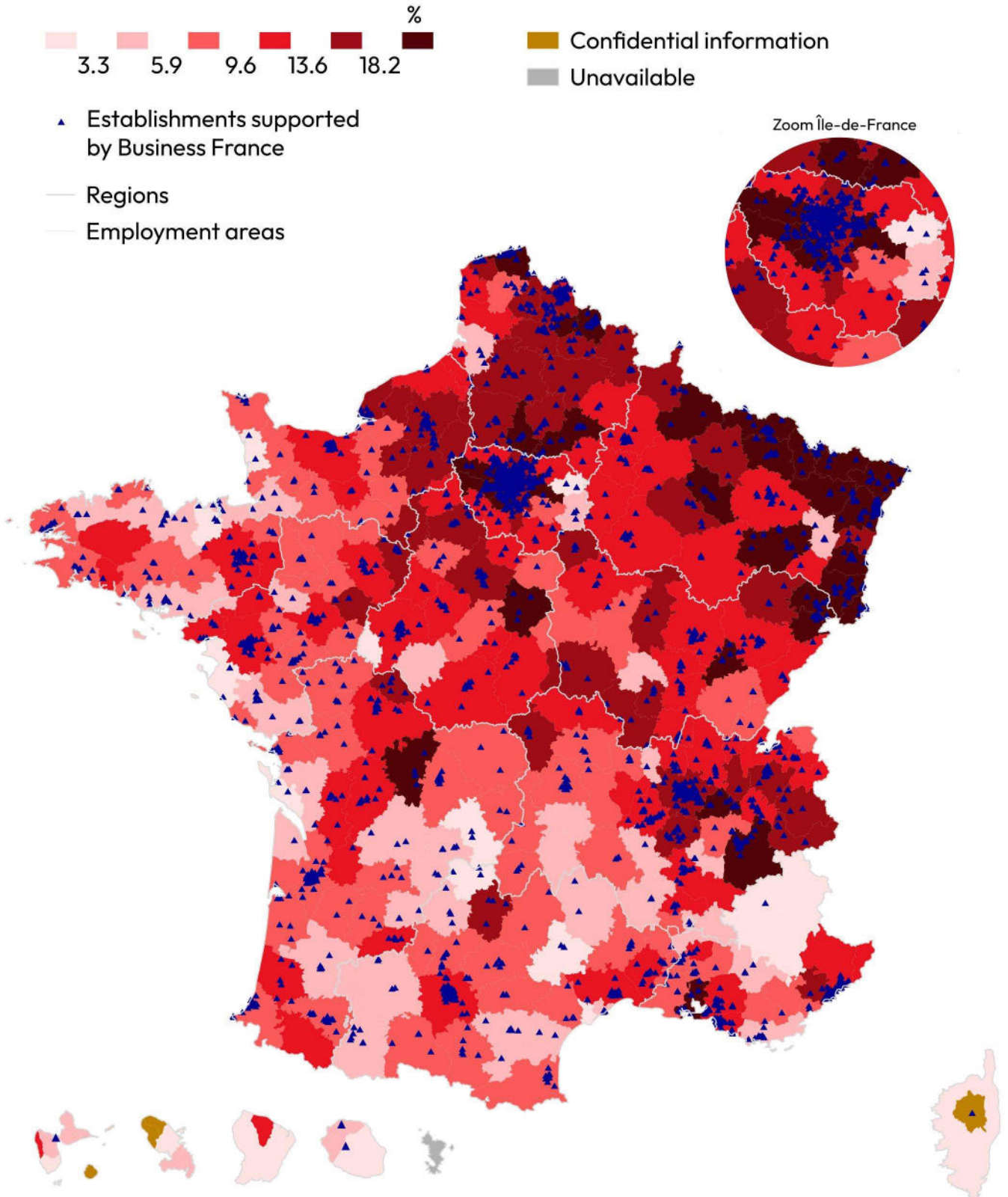
Share of full-time equivalent (FTE) employees under foreign ownership by the five main source countries



Scope: France, excluding Mayotte; all active establishments of non-agricultural commercial enterprises (excluding micro-entrepreneurs) belonging to a foreign multinational.
Source: Insee, Fare 2023, Flores 2023.

Location

Share of full-time equivalent employees under foreign ownership by employment area in 2023 and location of establishments supported by Business France at least once since 2014



*Scope: France, excluding Mayotte; all active establishments of non-agricultural commercial enterprises (excluding micro-entrepreneurs) belonging to a foreign multinational.
Source : Insee, Fare 2023, Flores 2023.*

Business categories

In France, **51%** of full-time equivalent (FTE) employees work for a **mid-sized company** under **foreign ownership**

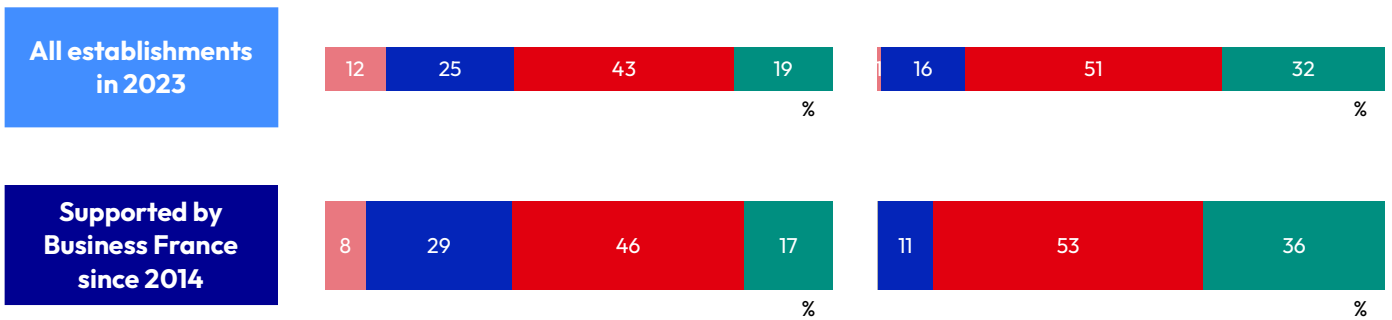
A business category applies solely to the French footprint of that particular firm.

Distribution of foreign-owned establishments and full-time equivalent (FTE) employees by business category

■ Micro-enterprises
 ■ SMEs (excluding micro-enterprises)
 ■ Mid-sized companies
 ■ Large corporates

Establishments

FTE employees



39,580 establishments under **foreign ownership** in 2023 belong to a

Mid-sized company

of which

1,450

23,060 establishments under **foreign ownership** in 2023 belong to a

SME

of which

910

had been supported at least once by **Business France** since 2014

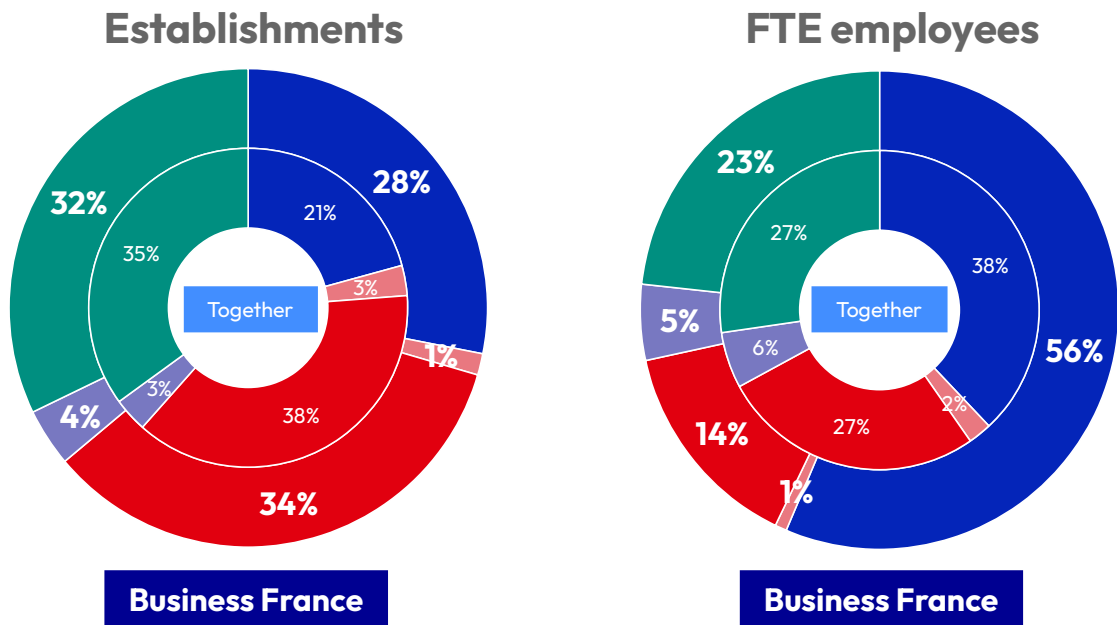
Scope: France, excluding Mayotte; all active establishments of non-agricultural commercial enterprises (excluding micro-entrepreneurs) belonging to a foreign multinational. Source: Insee, Fare 2023, Flores 2023.

Business activity

In France, **38%** of full-time equivalent (FTE) employees working for a **foreign-owned** firm are in the **industrial** sector

Distribution of establishments under foreign ownership and full-time equivalent (FTE) employees by business sector

■ Industry ■ Construction ■ Retail ■ Transport ■ Services



34,520
foreign-owned establishments in
2023 in the
SERVICES sector
of wich
1,090

18,960
foreign-owned establishments in
2023 in the
INDUSTRIAL sector
of wich
890

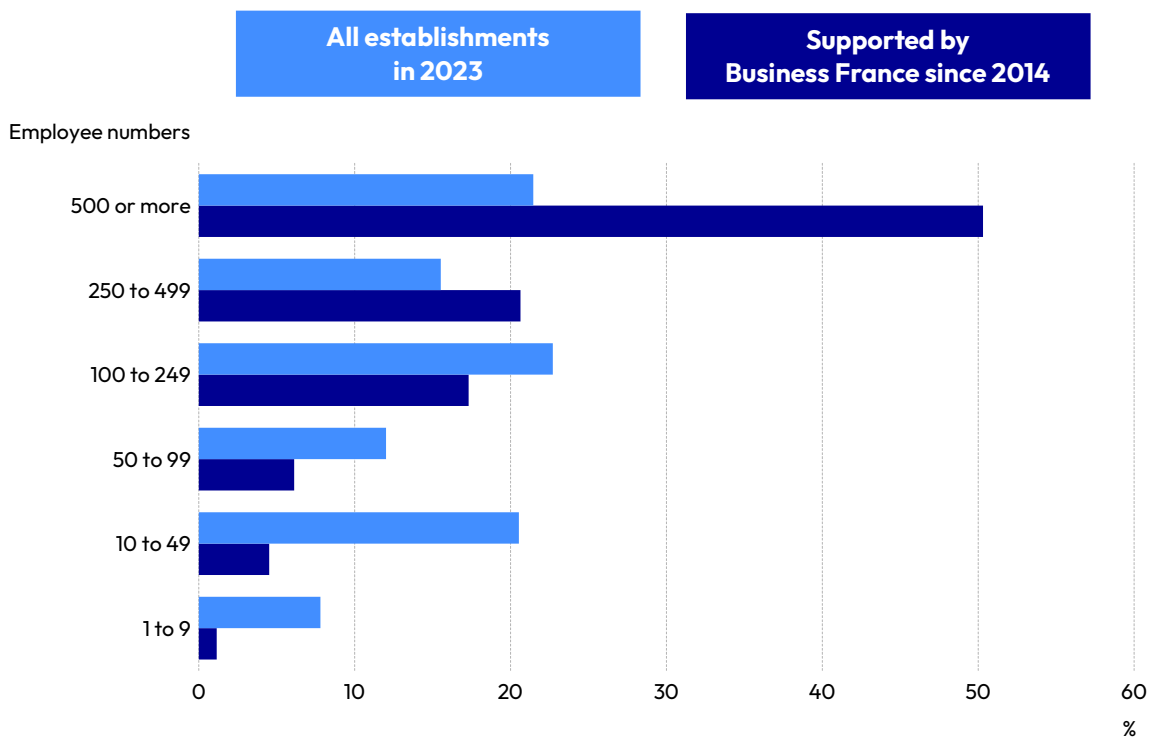
have been supported at least once
by **Business France** since 2014

*CScope: France, excluding Mayotte; all active establishments of non-agricultural commercial enterprises (excluding micro-entrepreneurs) belonging to a foreign multinational.
Source: Insee, Fare 2023, Flores 2023.*

Establishment sizes

In France, **23%** of full-time equivalent (FTE) employees work in **foreign-owned** establishments that employ between **10 and 49 people**

Distribution of full-time equivalent (FTE) employees working for a business under foreign ownership by the size of the establishment



359,000 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees worked for a **foreign-owned** business in 2023, with

500 or more employees

of which

141,600

worked for an establishment that had been supported at least once by **Business France** since 2014

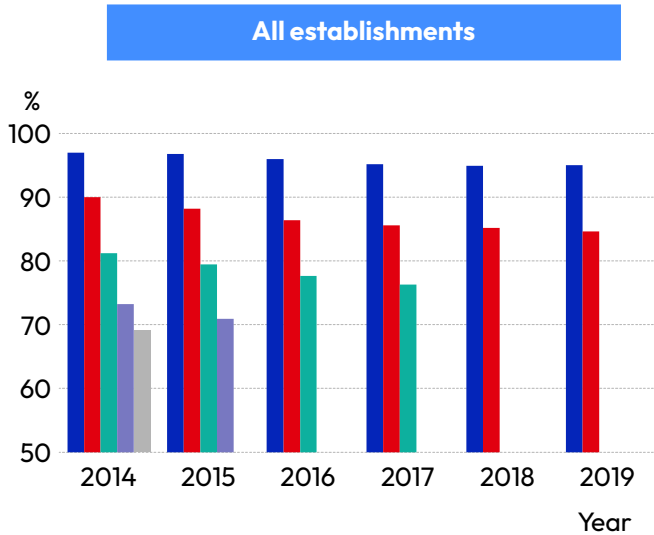
Scope: France, excluding Mayotte; all active establishments of non-agricultural commercial enterprises (excluding micro-entrepreneurs) belonging to a foreign multinational.
Source: Insee, Fare 2023, Flores 2023.

Future of establishments

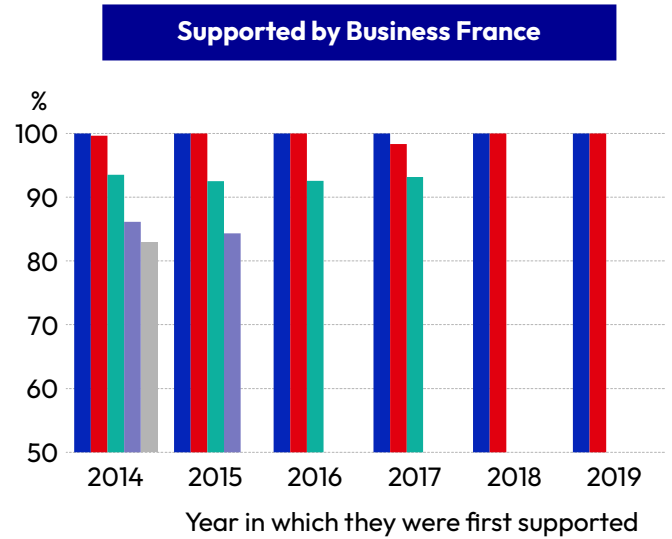
Sustainability of foreign-owned establishments

Survival rate :

■ 1yr ■ 3yrs ■ 5yrs ■ 7yrs ■ 8yrs



Note : 81% of foreign-owned establishments present in 2014 were still active five years later.



Note : 93% of foreign-owned establishments that received support for the first time from Business France in 2014 were still active five years later.

Average survival rate after 5 years

less than
80 %
for all establishments
under foreign ownership

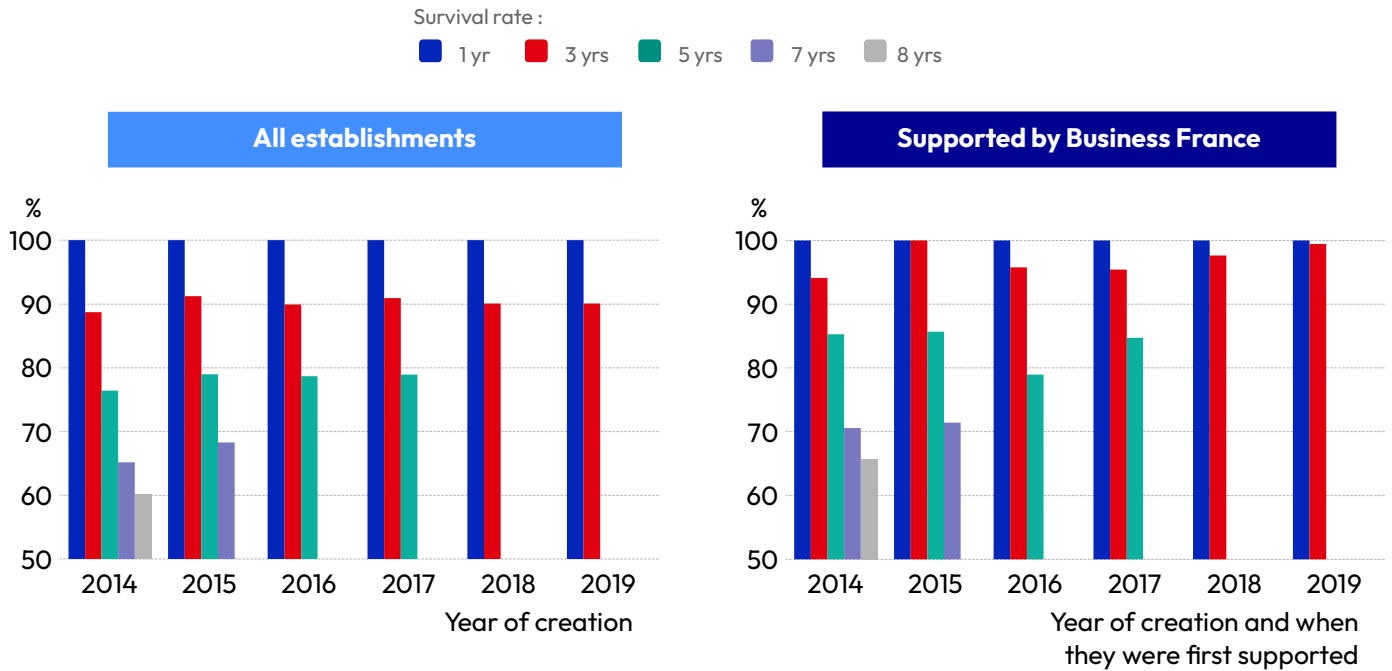
more than
90 %
for establishments supported by
Business France

from the 2014-2017 cohort

*Scope: France, excluding Mayotte; establishments belonging to a foreign multinational.
Source : Insee, Fare, Lifi, Florès.*

Future of establishments

Sustainability of newly created establishments under foreign ownership



Note : 77% of foreign-owned establishments created in 2014 were still active five years later.

Note : 85% of foreign-owned establishments supported for the first time by Business France in 2014 and created that same year were still active five years later.

Average survival rate after 5 years

less than

80 %

for all new created **foreign-owned** establishments

more than

80 %

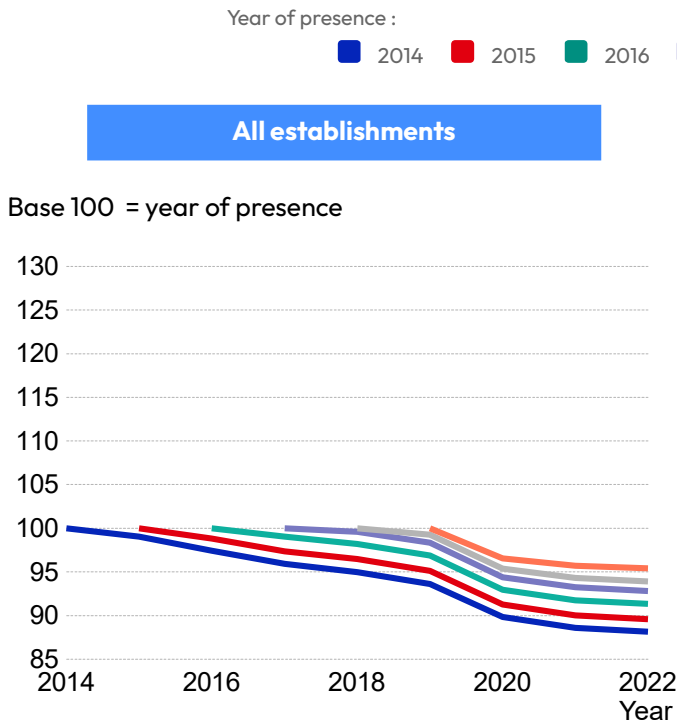
for newly created establishments supported by **Business France**

from the 2014-2017 cohort

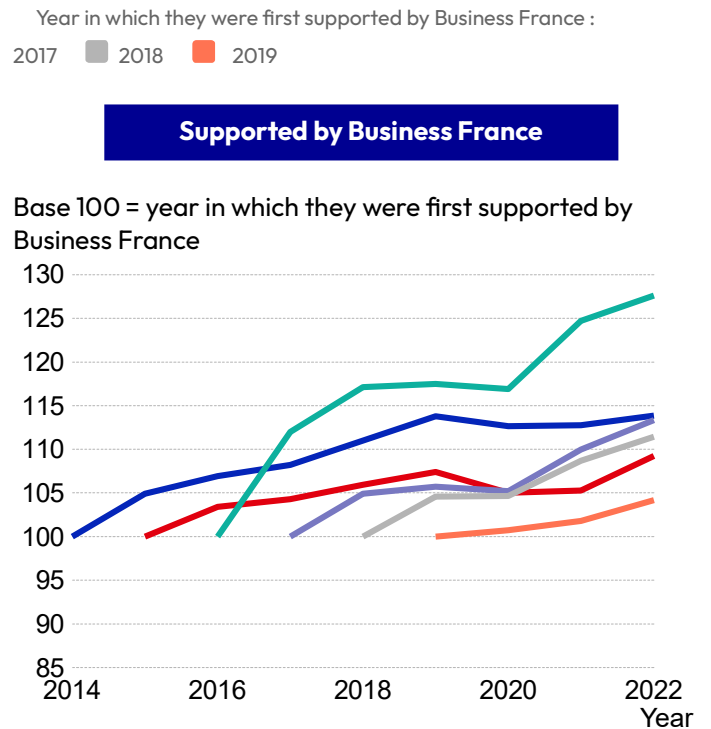
Scope: France, excluding Mayotte; establishments belonging to a foreign multinational. Source : Insee, Fare, Lifi, Florès.

Future of establishments

Change in the number of employees in foreign-owned establishments



Note : Over a five-year period, the number of employees in foreign-owned establishments present in 2014 has decreased by 6%.



Note : Over a five-year period, the number of employees in foreign-owned establishments supported for the first time by Business France in 2014 has increased by 14%.

Average changes in the number of employees over 5 years

less than

-5 %

for all **foreign-owned** establishments

more than

+ 10 %

for establishments supported by **Business France**

from the 2014-2017 cohort

*Scope: France, excluding Mayotte; establishments belonging to a foreign multinational.
Source : Insee, Fare, Lifi, Florès.*

Future of establishments

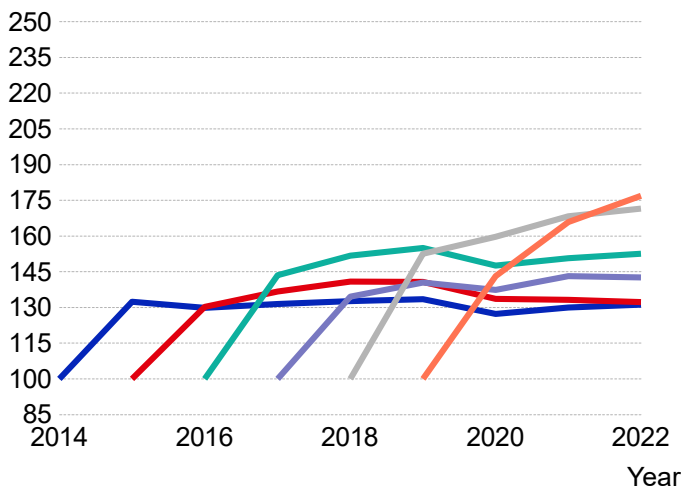
Change in the number of employees in newly created establishments under foreign ownership

Year of creation : 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019
 Year of creation and when first supported by Business France :

All establishments

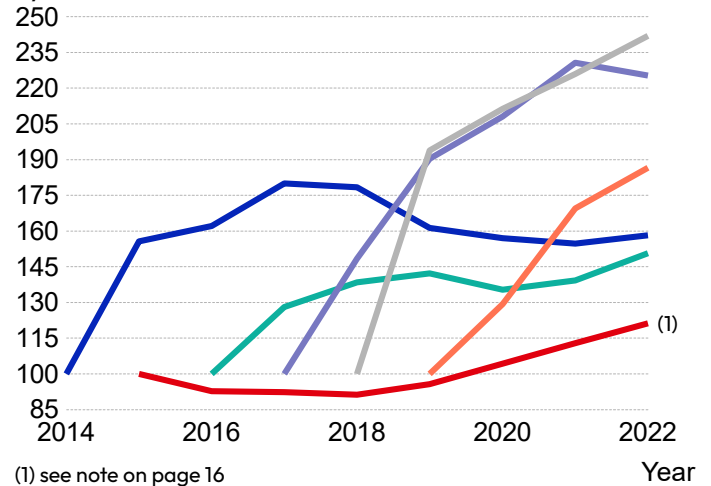
Supported by Business France

Base 100 = year of creation



Note : Over a five-year period, the number of employees in foreign-owned establishments created in 2014 has increased by 33%.

Base 100 = year of creation and when first supported by Business France



(1) see note on page 16

Note : Over a five-year period, the number of employees in establishments under foreign ownership, which were supported by Business France for the first time in 2014 and were created that same year, has increased by 62%.

Average change in the number of employees over 5 years

more than

+40 %

for all establishments under foreign ownership

more than

+55 %

for establishments supported by Business France

from the 2014-2017 cohort

Scope: France, excluding Mayotte; establishments belonging to a foreign multinational.
 Source : Insee, Fare, Lifi, Florès.

Sources

Fare : The É sane (preparation of annual business statistics) Approximate Results Database (Fare) is a tool that produces structural statistics for businesses. Fare contains individual accounting data. It combines administrative data and data from the annual sectoral survey (ESA) and the annual production survey (EAP) .

<https://www.insee.fr/fr/metadonnees/source/serie/s1188>

Florès : Set of microdata files that describe salaried employment at the level of establishments.

Lifi : The Lifi information system describes the financial links (shareholdings) between companies. It identifies and characterizes corporate groups operating in France and establishes their boundaries within the country. Lifi therefore serves as the French register of corporate groups.

Definitions and Scope

Foreign multinationals

In this publication, the term “foreign multinationals” refers to businesses owned by foreign multinational firms (92%) but also to foreign independent units (8%).

A foreign multinational firm is a group of companies whose decision-making center is located abroad and which controls at least one subsidiary (a legal entity, of which more than 50% is owned by another foreign legal entity) in France.

The scope covers all non-agricultural foreign commercial enterprises (excluding micro-entrepreneurs) with at least one active establishment in France (excluding Mayotte) in 2023.

Foreign-owned establishments

All active establishments located in France (excluding Mayotte) belonging to a foreign multinational in 2023.

In the “Future of establishments” section, the report focuses on establishments under foreign ownership for at least one year during the period 2014 to 2022.

Establishments supported by Business France

Establishments that were supported by Business France at least once between 2014 and 2023, under foreign ownership and still operating according to INSEE data in 2023.

In the “Future of establishments” section, the report focuses on establishments that received support from Business France at least once between 2014 and 2022 and belonging to a foreign group for at least one year during this period. For establishments supported multiple times during the study period, the year considered is that in which they first received support.

The Business France investment decision database includes all projects identified since 2014. Retail projects are not included in this report as they are based on an independent establishment strategy.

Source of the business’s parent group

- **Foreign multinational** : see above;
- **French group based in France** : A business with its decision-making center and all its subsidiaries in France. ;
- **French multinational** : A multinational firm with a decision-making center in France and at least one foreign subsidiary ;
- **French independent business** : A firm with a decision-making center in France and which does not belong to a group.

Full-time equivalent (FTE)

Total number of hours worked in the relevant activity divided by the annual average of hours worked in full-time jobs nationwide.

Business categories

A business category applies solely to the French footprint of a particular firm.

- **Small and medium-sized enterprises** (SMEs) are those that, on the one hand, employ fewer than 250 people and, on the other, have annual revenues not exceeding €50 million or a balance sheet total not exceeding €43 million ;
- Among these, **micro-enterprises** employ fewer than 10 people and have annual revenues or a balance sheet total not exceeding €2 million ;

Methodology

- **Mid-sized companies** (ETIs) are businesses that do not belong in the SME category and that, on the one hand, employ fewer than 5,000 people and, on the other, have annual revenues not exceeding €1.5 billion or a balance sheet total not exceeding €2 billion ;
- **Large corporates** are businesses that are not classified in the preceding categories.

Services

Service activities here exclude transport and retail. They encompass business services, personal services, mixed services (hotels and restaurants, real estate activities, information-communication), and principally non-market services.

Survival rate

The survival rate of establishments at n years is the proportion of establishments present in a given year that have been operating for n years.

Note

Change in staff numbers in newly created establishments

The changes in staff numbers in firms created and supported by Business France in 2015 was largely influenced by two establishments. Founded in 2015 with a sizeable workforce, their number of employees fell during the period studied.



Business France is the public consulting business serving the international development of the French economy. It is responsible for fostering export-led growth by French businesses, as well as promoting and facilitating foreign investment in France. It promotes France's firms, business image and nationwide attractiveness as an investment location, and also runs the V.I.E international internship program. Business France has more than 1,400 personnel, both in France and in 55 countries throughout the world.

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The National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE) conducts its work with complete professional independence.

In coordination with the statistical services of government ministries, the institute collects, produces and analyzes data on the French economy and society, based on surveys of households and businesses, as well as administrative data. It makes all the information produced freely available on insee.fr.

INSEE also conducts the population census and manages major national registers, such as the Sirene business register and the single electoral register.

INSEE coordinates French statistical activities for the statistical service of the European Commission (Eurostat) and provides a large portion of its French data.

