France did well in this category largely due to its participation in European Union (EU) actions. Under the EU’s Energy Efficiency Directive, France has made a commitment to reduce energy consumption 20% by 2030 relative to 2012. The country also has a goal to reduce GHG emissions 37% below 2005 levels by 2030. France’s National Energy Efficiency Action Plan contains energy efficiency provisions that go beyond those implemented by other members of the EU. The plan includes the White Certificates Trading program, which requires suppliers of energy to meet government-mandated targets for energy savings.

France ranked second in the buildings category with a score of 21 points. It has comprehensive residential and commercial buildings codes, which are mandatory across the country. The country’s Energy Efficiency Action Plan outlines aggressive policies to increase the number of low energy buildings and commits to the deep renovation of 500,000 dwellings per year. France requires building rating systems and the disclosure of energy use for both residential and commercial buildings. It also has building performance standards for residential and commercial buildings. Of the countries evaluated in this report, France has the most ambitious building retrofit program, but could still benefit from the creation of implementation regulations.

As in the 2018 Scorecard, France placed fifth in the industrial rankings, although it still has plenty of opportunities for improvement. It has a low percentage of installed capacity from CHP, which suggests that the country could benefit from establishing a CHP target and enacting strong incentives aimed at helping to ramp up deployment. Moreover, France’s industrial energy use could be managed more effectively if the country were to enact a requirement to have an energy manager on-site in large industrial facilities.

France ranked first in transportation. The National Low-Carbon Strategy for Climate has spurred much of France’s progress on transportation energy efficiency. The strategy outlines a path toward a 29% reduction in transportation-sector greenhouse gases by 2028 from 2013 levels. To achieve this aggressive goal, France is employing a comprehensive approach that includes increasing the overall efficiency of vehicles by adhering to the EU passenger vehicle standards and encouraging the purchase of more-efficient vehicles, curbing the demand for mobility services, and promoting more-efficient transportation alternatives. France participates in the EU’s ambitious emissions reduction target for new vehicles. It spends approximately 3% more on rail development and maintenance than it does on roads, indicating an effort to ensure that rail is a reliable option for both passenger and freight movement.