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France's *Indo-Pacific Strategy*

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Foreword

by the President of the French Republic



The French Indo-Pacific strategy, whose principles and lines of action I set out in spring 2018, is based on the major ongoing strategic transformations observed in that space, and France's role through its overseas departments and communities. Over 1.6 million French citizens live in these overseas territories, while three-quarters of the French exclusive economic zone - the world's second largest - is located in the Indo-Pacific. Our armed forces provide a strong presence of over 7,000 soldiers, which is essential to defend our sovereignty and to contribute, alongside our main partners, to regional security.

As a fully-fledged Indo-Pacific country, France also wants to be a stabilizing force, promoting the values of freedom and rule of law. We aim to provide solutions to the security, economic, health, climate and environmental challenges facing countries in the zone. The French Indo-Pacific strategy, which turns these objectives into concrete actions, is based on four main pillars.

First, our actions take place in the area of security and defence. We want the Indo-Pacific to remain an open and inclusive area, with each State observing each other's sovereignty. In this zone, which is the epicentre of global maritime trade and where tensions are appearing regarding maritime borders, it is essential to ensure freedom of navigation and overflight, in full compliance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

The second main theme is economic, particularly the connectivity of physical and digital infrastructures, which are sectors in which Indo-Pacific countries have huge needs. Here too, promoting and complying with international standards, particularly regarding trade, is a priority.

The third pillar involves promoting effective multilateralism, based on the rule of law and the rejection of coercion. Multilateralism, which involves all stakeholders, is the best framework in which to reduce tensions and encourage cooperative approaches, rather than operating via blocks. And the need to work together has been all the more obvious due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We can only succeed

by working together to tackle the latest particularly tough global health challenges in the Indo-Pacific region.

The fourth essential component of our strategy is our commitment to common goods. It is largely the Indo-Pacific space that will determine our ability to meet our strict climate and biodiversity requirements. In this part of the world, France is promoting ambitious environmental diplomacy by mobilizing its partners around concrete initiatives for energy transition, the protection of biodiversity and sustainable ocean management.

Finally, the Indo-Pacific must be one of the main priorities of our European agenda. An increased European presence will enable us to better meet the challenges of this vast region, where the European Union has already forged strong partnerships. I welcome the adoption of an ambitious EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific.

This document presents an initial review of our work in the Indo-Pacific region. Many initiatives have been developed over the past three years, and our partnerships with countries in the region have reached unprecedented levels of cooperation. But much remains to be done. You can count on France's full commitment. We will continue to play a full role in contributing to the stability of this new strategic space, which is at the core of major global challenges. >>



Emmanuel Macron
President of the French Republic

Foreword

by the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of the French Republic



Because the Indo-Pacific region is becoming the world's strategic centre of gravity and because the security, economic, technological and environmental challenges emerging there are also ours, France and the European Union have interests to defend, values to promote and partnerships to forge there.

That is one of the priorities of the European and international action of France, now acknowledged as a fully-fledged nation of the Indo-Pacific, not only because of our overseas departments and communities and permanent military presence, but also because of our ability to take the initiative with our partners and regarding their cooperation needs, thanks to an exceptional network of diplomatic and consular posts, government agencies, higher education establishments and scientific research institutes.

Since the President of the Republic's founding speech in Sidney in May 2018, we have worked to unite and to act.


In this region marked by polarization and rising tensions, we have proposed to our partners to move forward, with us, on the path of multilateral cooperation based on law and respectful of all sovereignties. This approach clearly fulfils the aspirations of the main countries in the region, with which we have constantly strengthened our ties on the basis of converging views and shared interests. We have also started intensifying our cooperation with regional organizations, particularly ASEAN, which is set to remain central to building a multipolar Asia. We are now proud to be an ASEAN Development Partner.

Thanks to these partnerships, we have been able to carry out tangible actions to strengthen stability in the Indo-Pacific, contribute to settling regional crises, promote the rule of law and international standards, ensure balanced and sustainable economic development, foster the deployment of quality infrastructure and work to preserve our common goods: the climate, the environment and biodiversity, health, marine resources and maritime security, education and digital technology.

We have also supported the deployment of our companies towards the Indo-Pacific, convinced that they can contribute to that progress by entering markets which offer immense growth potential.

Lastly, we have advocated for the European Union to fully play the role it must have in the Indo-Pacific, addressing all the consequences of the geopolitical pivot that is taking shape and making greater use of its cooperation instruments. The adoption of an EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific crowned our efforts.

That intense diplomatic work, the first results of which are presented in this document, will naturally continue and be stepped up, particularly during France's Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first half of 2022.

A considerable share of the balances of tomorrow's world are today in play in the Indo-Pacific. We are determined to be there and ready for this historic shift. 



Jean-Yves Le Drian

Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs
of the French Republic



▲ State visit of President Macron to India (March 2018).

Section One

The Indo-Pacific: a region with polarizing tensions and significant global issues

The main principles and objectives of France's Indo-Pacific strategy were set out during President Macron's visits to India (March 2018), Sydney and Nouméa (May 2018) and Saint-Denis-de-La-Réunion (23 October 2019, at the Choose France Summit), as well as during the Ambassadors' Conference on 27 August 2019. The French approach presented by the President seeks to maintain a space that is open and inclusive, free of all forms of coercion and governed in accordance with international law and multilateralism, extending from the eastern shores of Africa to the Pacific. The President noted the importance of France's major partnerships and underlined the role that its overseas departments and communities play in regional cooperation in the Indian and Pacific Oceans. The French Indo-Pacific strategy aims to address the traditional and non-traditional threats to the region. •

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1.1. Changing geopolitical balances

Currently, the Indo-Pacific is an area that is seeing profound strategic changes. China's power is increasing, and its territorial claims are expressed with greater and greater strength. Competition between China and the US is increasing, as are tensions at the Chinese-Indian border, in the Taiwan Strait and on the Korean peninsula. All of these elements are changing regional balances of power, and making strategic calculations more complex. To this can be added persistent transnational threats, such as piracy; terrorism; trafficking (drugs, precious stones and wood, protected species, etc.); illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing; and unresolved proliferation crises, as well as the disastrous effects of climate change, which are already being felt in terms of security. All of these changes have a direct impact on the entire region, including on French territories.

In this area where seven of the ten largest defence budgets in the world are at play, the increasing strategic and military imbalances are a threat with global consequences, and could as such directly impact Europe – 30% of trade between Asia and Europe goes through

the South China Sea. Most of the States of the Indo-Pacific region have been rearming for over a decade. Combined with technological progress, this trend is causing a general hardening of operational environments and a potential fracture in both regional and global balances of power.

Oceans, at the heart of tensions

The Indo-Pacific is characterized by its maritime dimension. Maritime transit represents 90% of global trade flows and the oceans are crucial strategic spaces for guaranteeing supplies of goods and energy. Securing shipping lanes is therefore an absolute priority. International mobilization in the fight against Somalian piracy around 2010 was the first indication of the need for a multilateral response to these threats. Today, efforts are also being made to fight trafficking in drugs and weapons, as well as human trafficking, and also against IUU fishing, a practice that is on the rise and that some States use for destabilizing purposes but that is also a consequence of climate change and increasingly scarce resources in certain regions.

These non-traditional security threats are on top of conflicts around borders and maritime delimitations that are a source of great tension between States, including in the South China Sea and East China Sea. Since this concerns freedom of navigation in international straits, France is opposed to any attempted fait accompli, unilateral change in existing systems, or challenge to international law through the use of force.

Preserving an international order based on the rule of law through actions that are based on a multilateral approach

The United States and China are engaged in global strategic competition where the main areas of interaction are located in the Indo-Pacific. Initially centred on economics and technology, this rivalry has extended to the military sphere and, in the medium term, will determine most of the regional strategic issues. Chinese-American strategic competition and the behaviour of certain regional actors, giving priority to bilateral arrangements and power

relations in order to favour their own national interests, contribute to the breakdown of the international order, while global challenges are requiring greater cooperation from States. The risks of uncontrolled escalation are great in this region, which lacks crisis regulation mechanisms. In line with the principles and values demonstrated in its international commitment, France works for a multilateral international order that is based on the rule of law. It shares this goal with its main partners in the Indo-Pacific.

1.2. A structural element of the global economy

Strong economic potential

In two decades, the Indo-Pacific region has become the new driver of global economic growth. The Indo-Pacific includes six members of the G20, and the region generates almost 40% of global wealth. According to the IMF, the Indo-Pacific could represent more than 50% of global GDP in 2040, and its markets could represent 40% of global consumption.

Despite the internal economic heterogeneity of the region, it displays significant regional integration. Asian trade is buoyed by value chains that are increasingly concentrated, and 60% of Asian trade is inter-regional in nature. Financing for Asian start-ups from inside the region amounts to 70% of all financing sources. The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) free trade agreement was signed in November 2020 between 15 States (10 ASEAN countries, China, Korea, Japan, Australia and New Zealand). It will further strengthen regional integration, which for States also contributes to resilience in the face of global economic shocks.

Growth in the Indo-Pacific region is supported by a dynamic middle class that will soon represent three billion people in Asia. These people have a taste for high quality goods and services. They are mobile, connected, and increasingly live in urban areas (21 of the 30 largest cities on the planet are in Asia). These urban ecosystems are also laboratories for innovation, where the city of the future is being created, one that is more inclusive and more sustainable. The Indo-Pacific offers great opportunity for French companies, including those in the defence sector, as the region has become the largest global importer of military equipment.

Connectivity, a major challenge

The rapid economic development of this region has brought about the need for significant investment. This is particularly the case in the area of infrastructure for transportation, energy, and telecommunications, sectors where French companies have proven their skills. The field of infrastructure is one that is highly competitive across the region, including the Chinese Belt

and Road Initiative. France supports a set of norms and standards, and the deployment of multilateral tools for financing quality infrastructure. This includes, within the framework of the G20, seeking to promote environmental protection, social inclusion, respect of competition rules, transparency, and fiscal sustainability in order to avoid hidden or unsustainable public debt. At the European Union level, the EU-Asia connectivity strategy and the Global Gateway support the same regulatory goals. Alongside its European partners, France is working to maintain a good level of air connectivity between Europe and Asia, which has been undermined by certain airlines which provide indirect services between the two regions via their hubs situated in favourably located third countries.

An area on the cutting edge of innovation, including in the digital domain

Governments in the region actively support research and development of new cutting-edge technologies, as well as the digital transformation of their institutions. Now one half of the

population using the internet is located in Asia. This enormous source of digital consumers fosters innovation and investments in this sector. The region not only benefits from but also issues more than one half of all global investments. The COVID-19 crisis accelerated digital transition on a global scale: the communication, digital healthcare, mobile payments and e-commerce sectors experienced exponential growth in the Indo-Pacific region. Asia dominates the virtual reality, autonomous vehicle, 3-D printer, robotics, drone and artificial intelligence markets.

1.3. The Indo-Pacific at the heart of global issues and the objectives of sustainable development

Effects of climate change

The Indo-Pacific is one of the global regions that is the most directly concerned and impacted by environmental issues and climate change. France supports a significant ambition in terms of climate, and the Indo-Pacific is a priority region for the actions that the country carries out with its partners. In 2019, the region's CO₂ emissions represented 45% of total global emissions, 30% of that coming from China. Out of the ten largest greenhouse gas emitters, five are located in the Indo-Pacific: China, India, Japan, South Korea, and Indonesia.

In the region, the frequency of natural disasters has greatly increased in the past few years. Extreme climate events caused by global warming and the degradation of ecosystems are having a significant impact on developing countries, and these countries lack the means to adequately face such events. As indicated in the Boe Declaration on Regional Security, the ways of life and identities of the two oceans' small island States are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, as well as to ecosystem deterioration risks. These

disasters increase the vulnerability of populations and constitute a major security risk. According to the UN, the Indo-Pacific region will be the region that will be the most impacted by climate-displaced persons, and up to 80% of these migrations will take place in this region.

Threats to the richness of biodiversity

The Indo-Pacific region is home to the richest and most fragile biodiversity reserves on the planet. Almost half of the critical biodiversity areas are in this region, where deforestation is reaching critical levels. Working with its partners, France is taking action to promote the protection of oceans and forests, and the understanding of links between biodiversity and public health risks.

Protecting the oceans is essential for the Indo-Pacific countries that depend on marine resources. More than 85% of the populations working in the fishing or aquaculture sectors live in Asia. In the South Pacific, more than half of fish species are exploited at non-sustainable levels. Plastic pollution of oceans is

another scourge of marine biodiversity. The five countries that make the largest contribution to this phenomenon are located in Asia.

Increasing healthcare needs

Healthcare needs are increasing as the population of the area ages due to demographic shifts and improving healthcare systems. By 2050, the number of people over 60 will double worldwide, and two-thirds of this increase will be from Asia. Infectious diseases continue to spread, and the urgency for investing in research and production of vaccines and other complex pharmaceuticals was particularly shown by the COVID-19 pandemic. To meet these needs, France can rely on recognized expertise from its research network, and from its bilateral partnerships.

Protecting human rights

In a global context where the universal nature of human rights is being called into question, France supports protecting these values, particularly under its commitment to the rule of law. Through its public development assistance, it is

committed to ensuring that the projects and programmes it finances do not infringe on human rights when they are implemented, and that they tend to produce a maximum of positive impacts for supporting human rights. It fosters projects and programmes for education in human rights, gender equality, protection of advocates, and access to the law and to justice. It continuously analyses progress in human rights in the Indo-Pacific region and uses the political dialogue that it maintains with the region, as well as the actions carried out in multilateral bodies, including within the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (OHCHR), to address the most concerning cases of violations and abuses.



Section Two

France and the Indo-Pacific, presence and influence

▲ Through the permanent ORSEC (Civil Security Response Organization) mechanism, New Caledonian armed forces annually perform large-scale maritime rescue scenarios.

2.1. Overseas territories, at the heart of the French strategy

With its overseas territories, France is an Indo-Pacific nation. During his visits to New Caledonia (May 2018), La Réunion (October 2019) and French Polynesia (July 2021), President Macron underlined the essential role that the territories play in French strategy through regional cooperation.

France is the only EU Member State with territories in the Indo-Pacific: La Réunion and Mayotte, New Caledonia and French Polynesia, Wallis and Futuna and the French Southern and Antarctic Territories.

Together, our territories there have a population of 1.65 million (of which more than a million in the La Réunion and Mayotte Departments in the Indian Ocean). This presence in the two oceans gives France the second largest exclusive economic zone (EEZ) in the world (10.2 million km²). More than 90% of the French EEZ is located in the Indo-Pacific, of which 60% approximately in the Pacific, mainly around French Polynesia. France is the only EU power that is actively present in the region, including with pre-positioned military forces (FAZSOI in La Réunion,

FANC in New Caledonia, and FAPF in French Polynesia), totalling more than 7,000 troops.

Under the 1988 Nouméa Accord, a third consultation (referendum) on New Caledonian independence was held on 12 December 2021. As they did in the referendums of 4 November 2018 and 4 October 2020, the New Caledonians voted against full sovereignty and independence. In accordance with the commitments made on 1 June 2021, a transition period of 18 months began following the third consultation to design a common project for New Caledonia and strengthen its position in the Indo-Pacific.

Sovereignty missions and strengthening of French territories

The protection of France's citizens and sovereign territory, and in particular its EEZs, is one of the strategic functions of the French government, with a particular approach in the Indo-Pacific.

The implementation of the Indo-Pacific strategy seeks to address the concerns

and needs of the territories. With a view to the regional integration of France's territories, it prioritizes:

→ support for strengthening economic and educational exchanges with the countries in the region;

→ development of potential in terms of attractiveness and innovation for the territories, including in the areas of the maritime economy, new energy sources, and digital technology;

FRENCH POLYNESIA, A DRIVER OF INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE PACIFIC

Pacific Business Day - In 2018, the first edition of this economic forum brought together the institutional representatives of countries in the Pacific, and Pacific Ocean entrepreneurial figures at the French Polynesian Presidency. The goal of this meeting was to provide the South Pacific with the foundations of an economic platform that fosters direct exchanges between partners, by highlighting expertise, production, and the specific assets of each country, as well as shared difficulties. Under the auspices of the Business Representation of the South Pacific (Représentation Patronale du Pacifique Sud), this event welcomed business and political leaders from Pacific 15 countries, as well as 70 international guests. It is scheduled to take place every three years in Papeete.

Tech4Islands Awards - Since 2019, the Tech4Islands Awards competition has been organized by French Tech Polynésie for Oceania, the overseas departments, territories and communities, and the international sphere. It is the only innovation competition organized by and for the islands, aiming to highlight innovative 'Tech For Good' solutions that are environmentally friendly and sustainable for the islands and for the planet. The co-construction of the competition with all of the entities working in research, innovation and business in Polynesia is essential, in order to promote innovative and appropriate solutions that help strengthen the resilience of island societies, economies and ecosystems. The second edition of the competition in 2020 received 186 proposals from the 37 countries and territories. •

- through regional cooperation, enhancing the expertise of local agencies and research institutes, including in terms of fighting climate change, as well as protecting biodiversity and sustainable management of marine resources.

The role of overseas departments and communities in the Indo-Pacific strategy

The significant role of the French territories in the Indo-Pacific strategy is based on:

- **Their strategic position**, their considerable maritime domain and the resources it contains, including fishing and mineral resources. The French territories have the potential to become “storefronts” for the blue economy in their regional environment.

LA RÉUNION AND MAYOTTE, AT THE HEART OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

La Réunion is globally renowned for its exceptional geography and its biodiversity. The island is a global biodiversity hotspot, with 60% of its territory made up of UNESCO world natural heritage sites. Sustainable development is making good progress: 35% of the island’s electricity comes from renewable energy sources. The blue economy should become one of the island’s growth drivers (large seaport, incoming and outgoing maritime links). For all of these reasons, La Réunion contributes to the planet’s sustainable

development, and shares its successful experience.

Mayotte, located halfway between the African coast and Madagascar, at the entry of the Mozambique Channel, is surrounded by a coral reef that makes it one of the largest lagoons in the world. The lagoon is perfectly adapted to the development of aquaculture, and is home to vulnerable species including sea turtles. Five protected areas make up the Mayotte Marine Nature Park. •

- **Their active role in regional cooperation:** French territories are at the heart of essential regional issues, such as defending and monitoring maritime species and fighting against illegal fishing; protecting the environment and fighting global warming; protecting biodiversity; supporting sustainable development and the energy transition; supporting access to research and innovation, and investment in technologies of the future. On all these subjects, French overseas departments and communities are pivotal for our regional cooperation.
- **France's extensive network of agencies and research institutes and centres** (IRD, IFREMER, AFD, Institut Pasteur) is an asset in promoting regional cooperation efforts, including protecting biodiversity, managing marine resources, and healthcare.
- **The French overseas territories also play a driving role in the ecological transition**, taking into account island specificities in terms of mobility, energy and food autonomy, waste processing and water supplies.
- **Lastly, the European dimension:** France aims for its departments and communities to be fully incorporated into the European Union's Indo-Pacific strategy. Specifically, it encourages the development of cooperation efforts between the EU or its Member States with the research institutes and universities that are located in French territories. The French territories should be bridgeheads for EU activities in the region.

NEW CALEDONIA, COMMITTED TO MEETING ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES

In New Caledonia, France has an extensive network of research actors, with the Research Institute for Development (IRD), French Research Institute for Exploitation of the Sea (IFREMER) and Pasteur Institute having bases there, as well as many other French and New Caledonian laboratories and consortiums and a university. The French oceanographic fleet also sails the Pacific with its ship, Alis, that helps year after year to advance knowledge of biodiversity and climate change in the region.

Oceanian culture and territorial attachment to biodiversity are at the heart of New Caledonian regional outreach policy. Beyond it being a territory with significant strategic nickel resources, New Caledonia aims to be a maritime hub

and a pioneer in protecting, enhancing and sustainably developing its marine environment. New Caledonia's renewable energy sources are a true asset for the development of the archipelago, which aims to become a pioneer in this domain in the region. Furthermore, the territory supports innovation in all sectors, and has a network of ambitious businesses that are looking to expand through their specific expertise and innovation. Some of them recently received the French Tech label, while others are managing a major project that received the Territoire d'Innovation award at the regional level. For example, the latter project offers development of autonomous underwater vehicles called "Rémoras", which analyse water quality as part of environmental monitoring. •

AN INDO-PACIFIC NETWORK OF MARINE PROTECTED AREAS COVERING MORE THAN 3 MILLION KM²

At the One Ocean Summit on 11 February 2022, the French President announced the creation of the nature reserve of the French Southern Lands, which will take the surface area of France's marine protected areas from 23.4% to almost 33% of the waters under its jurisdiction.

The nature reserve of the French Southern Lands (Crozet, Kerguelen, Saint Paul and Amsterdam Islands) now covers almost 1.6 million km², or 15% of France's maritime territory. The extension of the reserve also involves the delimitation of a highly protected area. The French Southern Lands are biodiversity sanctuaries with exceptional natural heritage, including the leading global population of royal penguins and many endemic species. These areas with high primary productivity also serve as carbon sinks.

The efforts of French Polynesia and New Caledonia

In 2018, French Polynesia created a managed marine area for the sustainable exploitation of marine resources across the entire exclusive economic zone (4.5 million km²).

At the One Ocean Summit, the President of French Polynesia committed to creating

a network of marine protected areas within the Polynesian managed marine area. By 2030:

- There will be a biosphere reserve in the Southern Islands archipelago;
- Marine sites will be created in the Marquesas for the bid for UNESCO World Heritage status of the archipelago.
- Lastly, a marine protected area called "Rahui Nui" will be created in the eastern part of French Polynesia's exclusive economic zone (Austral Islands and East Gambier Islands).

This commitment by French Polynesia is a boost to the creation of marine protected areas in the French Pacific. In 2014, the government of New Caledonia created the Natural Park of the Coral Sea, covering 1.3 million km² and protecting many of the region's essential ecosystems, including coral reefs in totally protected areas.

As of February 2022, the Indo-Pacific network of French marine protected areas therefore covers more than 3 million km² (1.6 million km² in the Southern Lands nature reserve, 1.3 million in the Natural Park of the Coral Sea, 44,000 km² in the Glorioso Islands nature reserve, and 68,000 km² in the Mayotte natural park. By 2030, it could cover more than 3.5 million km² thanks to French Polynesia's pledge. •

2.2. The French State's network and its agencies

In the Indo-Pacific, the French State's network includes 25 embassies, some with an expanded geographical scope, ensuring representation with a total of 39 States. There are also 14 Consulates General and 2 representation offices (Taiwan and North Korea).

In French territories, the French State is represented by 2 High Commissions (French Polynesia and New Caledonia), 2 Prefectures (La Réunion and Mayotte), the Superior Administration of Wallis and Futuna, and the Administration of the French Southern and Antarctic Lands (TAAF).

The network of French government agencies is made up of 24 Business France offices, tasked with supporting French businesses abroad and foreign businesses for their investments in France, and 10 offices of Atout France, that ensure the promotion of French tourism abroad. The Agency for French Education Abroad (AEFE) manages 96 schools in the region. The Institut Français furthers French cultural outreach abroad and is established in 35 countries. The Agence Française de Développement (French Development Agency, AFD) is active in 24 Indo-Pacific countries and also

supports French overseas territories, with a presence in La Réunion, Mayotte, New Caledonia and French Polynesia.

The other agencies operating in the region include research bodies (see Section 2.5), as well as Expertise France, which designs and implements international technical cooperation projects; France Volontaires, which advises candidates hoping to participate in an international volunteering programme; and Campus France, which accompanies foreign students in pursuing their studies in France.

2.3. Military and security presence

France maintains a permanent military presence in the Indo-Pacific, spread across five high commands covering the entire region. These sovereign forces¹ are the keystone of French defence action in the region. They are central to cooperation efforts, through their participation in many joint operations and training programmes. They also play a leading role in evacuating French citizens and in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR).

The armed forces in the southern region of the Indian Ocean (FAZSOI) form a projection platform of forces in this region, which is subject to strategic competition, where allies and partners have limited capacity for action. In the South Pacific, the Armed Forces of New Caledonia (FANC) and the Armed Forces in French Polynesia (FAPF) allow France to ensure the security of its territories, its exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and its sovereign airspace. This capacity for protection and monitoring is extended to the territorial limits of Melanesia and Polynesia. This presence contributes to carrying out missions with a regional scope beyond French sovereign territory, in cooperation with the United States, Australia and New Zealand,

supporting the Pacific Islands Forum and island States.

French sovereignty forces closely monitor regional strategic changes, as well as changes in the defence environment. This recognized capacity for analysis supports cooperation with the major partners in the region. The permanent nature of France's capacities and infrastructure and the skills of its forces in the Indian and Pacific Oceans demonstrate the credibility of its presence, its contribution to regional security and stability, and its support to partners.

A network of 18 defence missions led by defence attachés, accredited in 33 countries, and about 15 liaison and cooperation officers, ensures geographical coverage that can ensure protection and security for French citizens and territories and implement defence cooperation activities.

Lastly, the network of internal security services, made up of 7 attachés, manages and develops bilateral, multilateral and regional cooperation actions with 27 regional countries in the fields of counter-terrorism, irregular migration and organized crime, as well as civil security and crisis management.

¹ 3 sovereignty forces (FAZSOI, FANC, FAPF) and 2 presence forces (FFEAU, FEDJ) totalling 7,000 troops and units of the army, navy and air force.

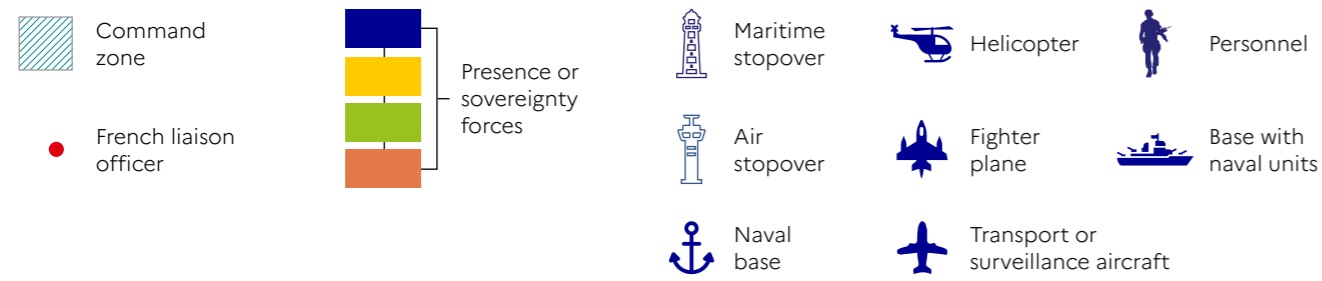
DEPLOYMENTS OF THE FRENCH ARMED FORCES IN THE INDO-PACIFIC

The permanent presence is occasionally strengthened by deployment of ships and aircraft from continental France. Following the deployment of the naval aviation group in 2019, the Marianne mission (deployment of the *L'Émeraude* nuclear attack submarine and the La Seine support vessel in 2021) demonstrated France's capacity to deploy strategic resources far from continental France and for extended periods, in spite of the difficulties caused by the public

health crisis. The French Air and Space Force (Armée de l'Air et de l'Espace) is also strengthening its presence in the region, in addition to its contribution to the missions of the sovereignty forces, through its participation in the *Pégase 2018* (South-East Asia), *Skyros 2021* (Indian Ocean) and *Heifara-Wakea 2021* (French Polynesia) missions.

These deployments are opportunities for high-level interactions in all fields with France's leading partners. •

Military presence



Source: Ministry for Armed Forces

2.4. Economic presence

France has forged significant economic ties in the Indo-Pacific², a dynamic region that accounts for 36% of current global GDP (19% excluding China) and will provide almost 39% by 2024, according to the IMF:

In 2019, about 18% of French imports came from the Indo-Pacific region (around 8.7% excluding China) and about 14% of French exports went to that region (10% excluding China). Trade with the Indo-Pacific represents more than a third of French trade in goods outside of the EU, and is dynamic. It has grown by 49% in 10 years (compared to 27% on average on a global basis)³.

France's direct investments⁴ in the Indo-Pacific represented about 8% of its global investments in 2019 (6% excluding China), amounting to €113 billion. The amount was multiplied by 1.7 between 2010 and 2019, compared to 1.5 globally, excluding the EU. In terms of development in the Indo-Pacific, excluding China, French direct foreign investment stock (€19 billion) grew more rapidly (x 2.3) over the same period. In 2019, the Indo-Pacific region represented 3.8% of investment stocks in France. It increased 1.7 times in 9 years.

In tourism, France welcomed 7.5 million visitors from countries in Asia and Oceania in 2018⁵, one of the highest increases in tourism (+7.4% compared to 2017) buoyed by India (+16%) and Japan (+11%).

France is mobilized to address the needs of the region with its export support instruments and development assistance. This includes sustainable infrastructure: according to the Asian Development Bank (February 2017), the infrastructure needs of developing countries in Asia and the Pacific will exceed USD 22.6 trillion by 2030, or USD 1.5 trillion per year. This estimation increases to USD 26 trillion, or USD 1.7 trillion per year when taking into account the expenses incurred to adapt to climate change. Support through aid, trade support and financing is through the following commitments:

→ The total investment stock of the AFD Group in Indo-Pacific countries was more than €9 billion in 2020, all sectors combined, or about a quarter of the global total. Excluding China (13% of the amount in the Indo-Pacific), it is divided equally between the two regional sub-groups made up of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia.

2. The figures cover the region from South Asia to the South Pacific, including the Indian Ocean.

3. Source: French customs, 2019 data compared to 2010, excluding military equipment (free on board/cost, insurance and freight).

4. Banque de France estimates for 2019, 2020 report.

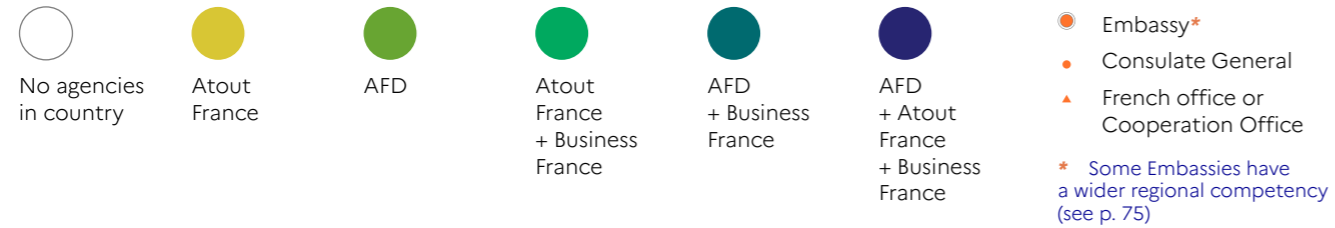
5. Latest information available, Sources: Atout France and Direction Générale des Entreprises.

In 2020, the AFD Group was active in 26 territories neighbouring the Indo-Pacific, for almost €3.9 billion. Its involvement prioritizes fighting climate change and supporting the blue economy and governance.

- At the end of 2019, in terms of credit insurance, the Indo-Pacific represented a total of almost €13 billion, or 19% of global commitments, all sectors of intervention combined. From the more limited perspective of infrastructure projects, the commitments were about €1.7 billion.
- Furthermore, the Indo-Pacific received a fifth of the global total of loans granted by the French Treasury from 2010 to 2020. More than 90% was related to infrastructure and digital connectivity. South-East Asia is the largest beneficiary of support granted to the infrastructure sector (15% of the global total). With 21 FASEP (Fund for studies and support of the private sector) projects from 2016 to April 2020, the Indo-Pacific also represented 12% of sums granted globally.

- Furthermore, France supports the involvement of multilateral development banks (World Bank, ADB and AIIB) in the region, that carry out several public procurement operations, including for infrastructure, that are open to French businesses. As such, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), based in Manila, is a vital actor in economic development in the region. In 2019, its commitments amounted to USD 32 billion. In 2019, USD 56.6 million in bids were won by French companies, of which USD 37.2 million was for consultancy contracts and USD 19.4 million was for supplying goods and works. The World Bank is also very active in the region.

Economic and development presence



The **Agence Française de Développement** (AFD) is a public body central to French official development assistance.



Atout France contributes to the development of the tourism industry and all its actors.



Business France supports the international expansion of French companies and foreign investment in France, and promotes France's economic attractiveness.



2.5. Partnerships in education, research, and innovation

The Indo-Pacific is an essential region for the development of French educational institutions, student mobility, and cooperation in research and innovation.

Development of French education

Some 53,000 students (51.5% French students; 26.6% national students; 22.6% students from other countries) are enrolled in the 95 French educational institutions in the Indo-Pacific region. Since 2015, we have noted an increase of more than 9% in the number of institutions and staff numbers have remained stable. In terms of students, the percentage of national students is increasing.

While growth in numbers slowed or stopped in certain countries due to the public health crisis, the outlook remains positive in most cases: there is actually a growing demand in developing populations in the region for international education. The attractiveness of French schools is based on their capacity to develop a multilingual offer, which contributes to an increase in the number of

international classes. In order to better integrate students who do not speak French, France encourages schools to develop programmes for French as a foreign language or French as a language of education in coordination with the Agency for French Education Abroad (AEFE).

A significant student mobility challenge

Students in Asia and Oceania represent almost 45% of the global total of students studying abroad, i.e. more than 2 million students on study-abroad programmes. France hosts 50,000 of these students, including 37,000 Chinese students and 10,000 students from ASEAN countries (+28% in 5 years). The public health crisis had a dramatic impact on student mobility from the region going abroad.

The goal is a controlled return to mobility at a pre-crisis level, or if possible, to increase student mobility, by launching university attractiveness strategies:

- extension of the “Études en France” application platform to new countries (Malaysia, Cambodia, Thailand),

- strengthening of institutional discussions on structured student mobility;
- implementation of triple degrees, linking France to a partner that offers university capacities at the same level (Republic of Korea, Taiwan, Japan, Australia) and to a country with high potential (ASEAN countries and Pacific island States);
- making promotional efforts for the Campus France agency region-wide, in order to increase awareness of the French offer.

The institutions present in the French territories of the Indo-Pacific also offer a significant lever of influence: universities in La Réunion, New Caledonia and French Polynesia, as well as satellite campuses of French institutions, following the model of the ESMOD fashion institute (Japan, Korea, Indonesia, and Malaysia), the École 42 IT academy (Australia, Malaysia, Japan, and Thailand), the Cordon Bleu culinary academy (13 campuses in Asia-Oceania) or the Vatel hotel training school (9 campuses in Asia and 5 in the Indian Ocean region). Several initiatives are going to be launched, including the creation of regional “French excellence”

hubs, the implementation of an “Indo-Pacific label” within the framework of scholarships, and the development of a “France/Indo-Pacific Young Talents” framework programme.

On the cutting edge of research and development

The scientific cooperation in the Indo-Pacific reflects the growing efforts of Asian and Oceanian countries to assert themselves as great scientific powers.

In an increasingly competitive environment, France has a network of its own research bodies that are present in the Indo-Pacific region (National Centre of Scientific Research – CNRS, Pasteur Institute, National Institute of Health and Medical Research – INSERM, French Institute for Exploitation of the Sea– IFREMER, Research Institute for Development – IRD, Agricultural Research Centre for International Development – CIRAD, and joint research units abroad – UMIFRE), which have established solid partnerships and have recognized expertise in key areas such as health and environmental and oceanographic issues. The main goals

are to increase the visibility of these research agencies and to strengthen their coordination within the framework of regional initiatives with other partners. These research agencies are strengthened by the deployment of international technical experts, the staffing of which have been the object of significant effort, with a goal of quadrupling staff numbers by 2023.

France's influence also develops through the strengthening of its scientific cooperation efforts with strategic partners in the region: India, Japan (signing of a Franco-Japanese health roadmap in 2020 that included an Indo-Pacific component), Australia (signing in April 2021 of a science and innovation roadmap focused on our priority themes: health, energy, environment, space, and Industry 4.0), Indonesia and Singapore.

Strengthening synergies on priority themes is also accomplished through the deployment of major projects at the regional level: renewal of the Make our Planet Great Again Pacific programme in 2023, support for new solidarity funds for innovative projects (FSPI), and launching calls for regional research projects by

our financing agencies and research organizations (National Research Agency, Inserm, Pasteur Institutes network). It will also involve innovative themes such as the deep-water exploration, which are the subject of a national strategy and will give rise to the development of new partnerships (such as with Japan).

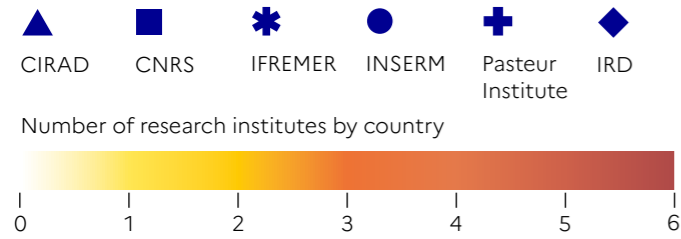
OCEANS, CLIMATE CHANGE, AND HEALTH, AT THE HEART OF THE IRD COMMITMENT

The IRD is deeply involved in the Indo-Pacific region via its network of representative offices abroad and in French overseas territories, with outreach in the Indian and Pacific Oceans, as well as its network of local partners (universities, research organizations, NGOs, etc.), organized via structural mechanisms, which welcome expatriate and visiting researchers, and its collaborations with key regional organizations in the area and with French research and development actors.

The IRD supports scientific projects on themes that cover cross-cutting issues within this vast area, distributed into three main areas:

- **Ocean, Coasts and marine resources:** consequences of plastic pollution, protection of coral reefs, sustainable management of coastlines and of the land-sea continuum, marine biodiversity observatories, fishing resources and exploited marine ecosystems, and food security;
- **Climate change and environmental risks:** impact of climate change and ocean feedback, environmental observatories, atmospheric pollution, and land-based risks and submersion;
- **Health:** the One Health approach, the fight against emerging infectious diseases, including COVID-19, the fight against vector-borne diseases (sterile insect technique), and environmental health. •

Scientific and research network



CIRAD produces and transfers new knowledge, to support agricultural development in tropical and Mediterranean regions and contribute to debate on major international agriculture issues.



The **CNRS** is a public research body active in all scientific, technological and social fields.



IFREMER is a public body contributing, through its studies and expertise, to knowledge of oceans and their resources.



INSERM is the only French public research body totally dedicated to human health. It aims to improve the health of all through advancing knowledge of living things and diseases, innovation in treatments and public health research.



The **Pasteur Institute** is a non-profit foundation aiming to contribute to preventing and treating diseases, particularly infectious diseases, through research, innovation, education and public health activities.



The **IRD** is a public research institution working on international development challenges including improving health, understanding the evolution of societies, and preserving the environment and natural resources.



Section Three

France's partnerships in the Indo-Pacific

Three years after its launch by the President of the Republic, the French strategy for the Indo-Pacific has started to produce tangible outcomes and significant progress. France's actions are built on major partnerships that it has developed with like-minded countries in the region, and with ASEAN, based on a shared vision of the issues and the solutions that need to be provided. •

▲ Through the FRANZ mechanism, medical teams were able to access remote villages to help with COVID-19 vaccination efforts in Papua New Guinea.

© French Embassy in Papua New Guinea

3.1. Strategic partnerships

Partnership with India

Bilateral relations between India and France have profoundly changed in dimension since the launch of the strategic bilateral partnership in 1998. The strengthening of the major areas of the partnership (including defence, civil nuclear power, space and security, including counter-terrorism and cyber security) recently saw a more rapid progression of bilateral cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, including in maritime safety and security (strategic exchange, cooperation between the two Navies and joint exercises, arrangements related to sharing of maritime information), renewable energy sources (the International Solar Alliance, an initiative founded by France and India) and the fight against ocean pollution. In 2021, France and India launched an Indo-French Year of the Environment.

France and India will also work together on illegal fishing, the blue economy, ocean governance (drafting of a roadmap ongoing) and humanitarian disaster relief, particularly in the framework of regional organizations of the Indian Ocean, such as the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and the Indian Ocean

Commission (COI). France joined IORA as a full member in December 2020 and India has had COI observer status since March 2020. In July 2020, France joined the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), which was launched by India. In April 2021, France endorsed the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI), launched in November 2019 by Prime Minister Modi and it proposed to spearhead the pillar Maritime Resources. Moreover, France is encouraging the European Commission to propose an air services agreement to India.

France and India also seek to coordinate within multilateral forums, including the United Nations Security Council, of which India is a non-permanent member in 2021 and 2022.

Partnership with Japan

The Franco-Japanese relationship is one of close political dialogue and cooperation efforts structured in a large number of areas. An example of this dynamic is the strategic bilateral partnership that was established in 1995, which was elevated in 2013 to the level of exceptional partnership.

Strengthening the Franco-Japanese cooperation efforts in the Indo-Pacific region is the first objective set by the bilateral roadmap adopted in June 2019 during President Macron's trip to Japan. The Franco-Japanese working group on the Indo-Pacific held its first session in October 2020, and focused its efforts on four priority areas:

- maritime safety and security;
- climate, environment, and biodiversity;
- quality infrastructure;
- health.

This agenda results in joint military exercises and joint projects between our development agencies (AFD and JICA), including upgrading infrastructure and fostering climate change adaptation. In South-East Asia, we work together on preventing natural disasters as well as on supplies of water and energy.

The implementation of this partnership is also based on space dialogue, Franco-Japanese comprehensive maritime dialogue (the first edition of which took place on 29 September 2019 in Nouméa), and on the memorandum of cooperation adopted by the AFD and the JICA in June 2019.

Other bilateral partnerships

France has developed special partnerships with many Indo-Pacific countries. In South-East Asia, strategic partnerships were concluded with Indonesia in 2011, Singapore in 2012 and Vietnam in 2013. There is also close cooperation on Indo-Pacific subjects with Malaysia, South Korea and New Zealand.

Australia's decision in September 2021, without prior consultation or warning, to break off the partnership of trust with France that included the Future Submarine Program (FSP), has led to a re-evaluation of the past strategic partnership the two countries. France will pursue bilateral cooperation with Australia on a case-by-case basis, according to its national interests and those of regional partners. France intends to maintain close relations with the United States, an ally and major player in the Indo-Pacific, and to strengthen coordination, including on issues raised by the announcement of the AUKUS agreement.

3.2. The partnership with ASEAN

Given ASEAN's essential role in the Indo-Pacific, intensifying relations with it and its members is a priority of the French strategy.

Strengthened partnerships in defence and security

France maintains enhanced cooperation efforts in defence and security with its ASEAN partners, particularly in areas related to maritime security, support for peacekeeping operations training centres, and the fight against transnational crime. It contributes to the strengthening of the strategic autonomy of its partners, with whom it shares a common understanding of the issues impacting the region, and promotes a coordinated regional approach within the existing regional security architecture. This includes it being a candidate for observer status on two ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus working groups. In terms of cyber security and the fight against transboundary crime, France became an observing member of ASEANAPOL, the regional law enforcement cooperation organization, in 2019.

France, development partner of ASEAN

Through its new status as a development partner, France is committed to deepening its relationship with ASEAN. This partnership was officially launched on 4 March 2021, and covers several sustainable development areas, including global public goods such as health or the environment. France's official development assistance in the region amounted to €1.5 billion between 2014 and 2017.

This new framework highlights the role played by all French government services, agencies and research institutes in South-East Asia (more than 140 sites), including the AFD. It also offers opportunities for French companies in sectors covered by the partnership, including energy, health, transport, sustainable cities and water management. Lastly, from an institutional perspective, the partnership helps France to be more closely associated with ASEAN's framework initiatives, such as the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Network, the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI), and the Smart Cities Network.

France has decided to increase its resources and its presence in the organization by deploying technical experts each year to the ASEAN Secretariat as well as in countries in the region by 2023.

The projects and actions undertaken demonstrate the diversity of France's actions in the region, covering, in addition to those already mentioned, the following areas: the blue economy, biodiversity, vaccine research, technical and professional training, the green and circular economy, connectivity and sustainable infrastructure, support for SMEs, security (including cyber security and the fight against transboundary crime), managing disasters, human rights, tourism and culture.

The AFD's actions in South-East Asia

For the 2015-2020 period, the AFD carried out 170 projects in the region for a total commitment of €3.7 billion. Beyond bilateral cooperation with each member country, the AFD has implemented regional projects: a biodiversity hotspot protection project in Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos as

well as an epidemiological monitoring project linked to climate change (the second phase of which began in 2018 for the fight against dengue fever and leptospirosis), to which a support element in the response to Covid-19 was integrated. Another example is the AFD's close collaboration with the Mekong River Commission that includes a project for implementing a network for collection and transmission of hydrometeorological measurements in real time (Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and Myanmar).

The AFD participated, alongside other donors, in the Energy Transition Partnership programme launched during the One Planet Summit in 2017. The programme seeks to accelerate the energy transition in South-East Asia by fostering development of sustainable infrastructure and renewable energy in the region. During Mr Jean-Yves Le Drian's visit to Indonesia in November 2021, the AFD announced the financing of renewable energy projects totalling €500 billion to support the country's ecological transition.

Furthermore, the AFD is financing an air quality improvement project in the cities or provinces of several countries

in South-East Asia, including advocacy efforts with ASEAN in order to take into account the air quality issues in public policy at the regional level.

Finally, the Agency joined in 2019 the ASEAN Catalytic Green Finance Facility (ACGF) when it started. It is an initiative of ASEAN and of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) that seeks to generate more than a billion dollars in investment in green infrastructure in South-East Asia.

PRIORITY TO HEALTH

Health is a priority in the actions that France is taking in South-East Asia, where it has, as is the case with the Institut Pasteur, hubs of excellence in research and training on emerging and re-emerging diseases. A solidarity fund for innovative projects (FSPI) in the field of these diseases has been implemented in the region. It helps carry out actions with rapid impact for the immediate benefit of local populations. It uses the One Health approach, which deals with human, animal, and environmental health in a coordinated and integrated manner. This initiative should help in understanding and preventing the development of infectious diseases, with a view to better informing policy-makers and strengthening the capacity to prevent and address future public health crises. This FSPI is part of the development partnership with ASEAN, and will concern all of the countries in the region. Moreover, in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, France is active in supplying vaccine doses to the region: more than 2 million doses have been donated bilaterally, and almost 9.5 billion have been delivered to ASEAN countries via the COVAX Facility (February 2022 figures). •

3.3. France's actions in the Pacific Ocean

France is the only EU Member State with territories in the Pacific. It has strengthened its commitment alongside its partners and actors in Oceania to address the region's challenges. France stands behind the call of the signatories to the Boe Declaration for a multilateral commitment against the threats faced by the communities of the Pacific family, in order to preserve their ways of life and identities. New Caledonia and French Polynesia are full members of the Pacific Island Forum (PIF), the main international organization in the Pacific, and Wallis and Futuna is an associate member. The three communities are members in their own right alongside the French State in the other regional organizations, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP).

An expanded mandate for the AFD

In order to increase France's influence in the region, the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs plans to dedicate at least 1% of AFD project grant authorizations (programme 209) to Pacific island

KIWA INITIATIVE

Kiwa is a multi-donor initiative. It was announced during the One Planet Summit in December 2017, and was officially launched in February 2020. It has a grant budget of €41 million over five years, and it is implemented by the AFD and covers 19 island States and territories in the Pacific that are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Within its governance, the Kiwa Initiative has five international donors (Australia, Canada, France, New Zealand, and the European Union), two regional organizations (Secretariat of the Pacific Community – SPC and the Pacific Regional Environment Programme – SPREP), an international organization (IUCN) as well as the representatives of the Pacific island States and territories around a common objective: the protection of biodiversity and adaptation to climate change using “nature-based solutions” in Oceania. For the first time in the region, the initiative helps support common solutions implemented in French territories and Pacific island States. •

States, i.e. €5 to €10 million per year, which will strengthen synergies with European financing. The Pacific is also an essential component of cooperation efforts developed with Australia and New Zealand.

The AFD's mandate for the Pacific was expanded for the first time in 2018 to regional projects in the sector of adaptation to climate change and biodiversity. A new modification of the mandate was decided by the French government in March 2021, to expand to mitigating climate change, via loans and/or grants. As part of its new mandate, the AFD can steer or participate in bilateral projects, and no longer only ones with a regional scope.

It will be able to increase its commitments in the region and to better respond to development-related needs. It can cooperate more closely with other bilateral donors such as Australia, Japan, New Zealand, and India, and multilateral donors such as the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank, and the European Union.

Substantially participating in the regional security architecture

Outside of their sovereignty missions, the Armed Forces of New Caledonia (FANC) and the Armed Forces in French Polynesia (FAPF) contribute to securing the maritime zones surrounding the French territories by participating in maritime surveillance operations in the EEZs and high seas adjacent to the island States of the Pacific, in close coordination with our Pacific Quad partners (Australia, New Zealand, and the United States) in support of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA). Several complementary initiatives, led by the United States or Australia, aim to build the capacities of Pacific island countries to ensure their sovereignty and resilience (such as the South West Pacific Initiative to support populations after natural disasters, Blackrock Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Camp in Fiji, and Pacific Fusion Centre in Vanuatu for security analysis) and France intends to take part in these initiatives in line with its positioning in the region. The French armed forces are also mobilized to respond to natural

disasters that happen in the region under the FRANZ mechanism with Australia and New Zealand. This mechanism has been an effective tool, as the frequency and intensity of the disasters are increasing due to climate change of which Pacific island States are the first victims. It has been activated several times since its creation. Lastly, France takes part in the South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting and is involved in regional thematic initiatives such as the Western Pacific Naval Symposium and the future Pacific Environmental Security Partnership.

Secretariat of the Pacific Community

In January 2021, France and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) concluded a partnership agreement, signed by the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs and the Director-General of the SPC. France is a founding member of the SPC, the largest intergovernmental technical and scientific organization in the Pacific. It has 26 members, 3 of which are French communities in the Pacific benefiting from SPC programmes and support, and is based in Nouméa. Its

bilingual character is an outreach tool for the francophonie, as well as for the integration of New Caledonia into its Oceanian environment.

This new partnership framework will help strengthen joint and multilateral actions in the four priority domains of public health, climate change, the ocean, and sustainable management of natural resources, and will foster the promotion of shared values, including gender equality. It benefits from the mobilization of French expertise in the Pacific (organizations based in our territories, such as the Pasteur Institute and Louis Malardé Institute, the IRD, CIRAD, the IAC, and CRIOBE for coral reefs).

Furthermore, the Pacific Community has been the preferred channel for aid provided to island States of the Pacific in the fight against COVID-19, with the delivery of an additional €2 million in subsidies through the AFD to the Pacific Public Health Surveillance Network (PPHSN) at the start of the public health crisis.

PACIFIC FUND

The Pacific Fund was created in 1985 and is one of France's main regional cooperation instruments in the Pacific. It works to foster regional integration for New Caledonia, French Polynesia, and Wallis and Futuna, through co-financing of economic, social, and cultural cooperation efforts made by our territories with the States in the region. Since 1985, more than 1,500 projects have been supported in these priority areas. In 2021 it has funding amounting to €2.85 million, and 55 projects were approved for this year. •

3.4. France's actions in the Indian Ocean

The Indian Ocean plays a key role in the French strategy for the Indo-Pacific, as was pointed out by President Macron when he visited La Réunion in October 2019. Two French territories, La Réunion and Mayotte (1 million citizens) are located in the region. The French Armed Forces in the Southern Zone of the Indian Ocean (FAZSOI), and the pre-positioned forces in the United Arab Emirates and in Djibouti, contribute significantly to regional security and to the deepening of our cooperation efforts, including with India. They carry out support missions for those living in the region and contribute to training efforts for the benefit of neighbouring countries. France has also developed a diversified economic presence in the Indian Ocean.

Indian Ocean Commission (IOC)

The IOC is the only political organization of the southwestern Indian Ocean and the only African organization of which France is a member. Its working language is French. It has considerable political potential for developing regional actions and for the regional integration of French

overseas communities and territories. The Secretary General, Velayoudom Marimoutou (a French citizen) is in charge of implementing the reform adopted in March 2020, which seeks to strengthen the role of the IOC. Since 2020, India and Japan have been admitted as observers, which should foster increased cooperation with these two partners. The IOC has shown resilience during the pandemic, upholding its institutional calendar and providing its Member States assistance via the AFD.

France is holding the IOC Presidency from May 2021 to March 2022. The objective of this Presidency is to restore regional cooperation in the Indian Ocean after interruptions due to the pandemic, to above previous levels. It is part of a favourable context for France in the Indian Ocean, which includes membership in the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and chairing the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) in 2021. There are four key goals for the IOC Presidency, aligned with the commitments made by the French President in La Réunion in 2019, and those of the Summit for the Financing of African Economies in May 2020:

strengthening economic ties through the creation of a network of businessmen and women in the region; increasing human exchanges, including in academia and vocational training; strengthening the maritime safety and security architecture, including through the EU's MASE programme, and developing a better regional response to natural and human disasters.

Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)

In December 2020, France became a full member of IORA, which brings together Indian Ocean States from South Africa to Australia, within a lightweight structure and facilitating exchanges of technical expertise, particularly in the fields of the environment and sustainable development. Its working groups focus on specific sectors, such as the blue economy and fisheries management. In La Réunion in 2021, France organized a workshop on the fight against illegal fishing, with the aim of producing fisheries' guidelines.

The IOC and IORA share values and objectives, and France will work to foster

dialogue between their secretariats and exchanges of expertise. The actions of the IOC can inspire the work of IORA, which also has to find recovery solutions for cooperation efforts in the Indian Ocean.

The Regional Cooperation Fund (FCR) in the Indian Ocean

The Regional Cooperation Fund (FCR), created by the Act on overseas France of 13 December 2000, contributes to the regional integration of La Réunion and Mayotte by supporting cooperation projects with neighbouring countries. The two territories were granted €200,000 and €185,000 respectively in 2021. The FCT also finances regional cooperation conferences involving the diplomatic missions of Indian Ocean countries.

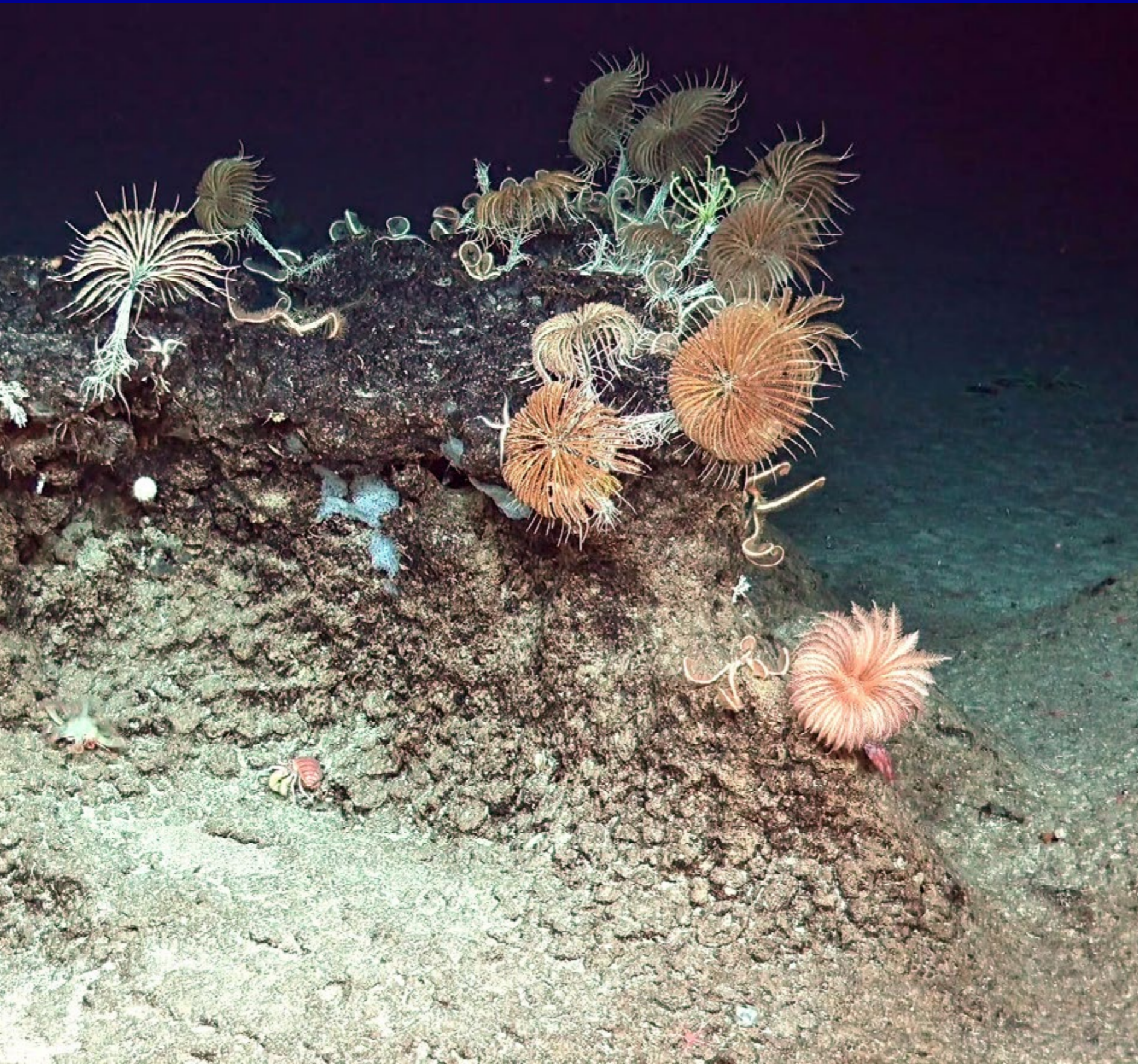
A determined action to promote the development of a regional maritime security architecture

France supports the strengthening of the regional maritime security architecture

that gives priority to implementing bilateral and trilateral cooperation, and the widening of regional knowledge and information sharing. Among other things, it contributes to the strengthening of maritime information fusion centres in Madagascar and New Delhi and, in June 2021, France took over as chair of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS), the only forum bringing together the 24 navies of the Indian Ocean.

LA RÉUNION, FOCUSED ON INNOVATION

La Réunion inherited the pioneer spirit of its first inhabitants, who developed virgin land in a very short span of time. It is now recognized as a technology hub in the Indian Ocean, with its infrastructure (cyclotron, etc.), its university which has international outreach, its research centres (IRD, CIRAD, more than 500 researchers), its labels (French Tech Santé, etc.), its competitiveness hub on the tropical bio-economy, its Technopôle, and its excellence hubs (construction in tropical environments, digital technology, renewable energy sources, etc.). Services represent about €300 million in exports, more than sugar cane and its derivative products. The wide variety of initiatives (Digital Réunion, Club Export, green cluster, etc.) show the degree of development potential for services for export, demonstrated by the success of the “Choose La Réunion” event supported by President Macron in October 2019. •



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▲ In Nouméa, IFREMER and its Japanese partner JAMSTEC are working to create a permanent seafloor observatory in New Caledonian waters, aiming to assess the impact of climate change and fishing on seafloors.

Section Four

France's objectives and actions in the Indo-Pacific

France's Indo-Pacific strategy is a response to a political project: making France and Europe stakeholders in a region where their interests are significant and the risk of destabilization is growing, and where there is a proven need to clearly support the values of freedom and defending human rights, as well as protecting the environment.

The implementation of the Indo-Pacific strategy is established through actions that are concrete and diverse in nature. France develops these actions from the bases of its overseas departments and communities, and through its partnerships in the region. These commitments meet specific objectives and are the subject of regular monitoring.

The examples that follow offer illustrations of the actions carried out in four areas or "pillars": security and defence; economy, connectivity, research, and innovation; multilateralism and the rule of law; climate change, biodiversity, and sustainable management of oceans. •

Pillar 1: Security and Defence

Main objectives

Five main objectives were defined in the French defence strategy in the Indo-Pacific.

- ▶ Ensuring and defending the integrity and sovereignty of France, the protection of its citizens, its territories, and its EEZ.
- ▶ Contributing to the security of regional areas by promoting military and security cooperation.
- ▶ Preserving, alongside its partners, access to common areas in a context of strategic competition and increasingly restrictive military environments.
- ▶ Participating in the maintenance of strategic stability and military balances of power through international action based on multilateralism.
- ▶ Anticipating security risks brought about by climate change.

Examples of actions

Sovereignty, protection of our interests

- ▶ Monitoring and controlling direct approaches of French territories and adapting the monitoring system for their sovereign areas.

Contributing to regional security through military and security cooperation

- ▶ Organizing significant multilateral exercises, such as the “La Pérouse” exercise in the Gulf of Bengal, and the “Croix du Sud” exercise in New Caledonia, and French armed forces participating regularly in bilateral and multilateral exercises (the “Varuna” and “Garuda” exercises with India, for example).
- ▶ Participation of the French armed forces in post-natural disaster rescue operations in the Pacific under the FRANZ agreement, and elsewhere when necessary.
- ▶ Policing of fisheries in EEZs and their adjacent high seas for the island States of the Pacific, in coordination with our Australian, New Zealand and American partners of the Pacific Quad, and in support of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency.
- ▶ Active participation by France in bilateral and regional cooperative law enforcement actions and the fight against terrorism and radicalization, organized crime, irregular migration and cyber crime.

Preserving access to shared spaces alongside our partners

- ▶ Affirming compliance with international law and the freedom of navigation through the deployment of air and naval resources from our overseas territories and continental France, like the “Marianne” mission (deployment of a nuclear attack submarine across the Indo-Pacific region), the “Jeanne d’Arc” mission (deployment of an amphibious group all the way to Japan), our sea crossings in the South China Sea (at least twice per year since 2014), or the “Pégase” and “Skyros” missions of the French Air and Space Force.
- ▶ Cooperating with our partners in sharing maritime information and contributing to the development of regional capacity in this area (maritime information fusion centres in Singapore, Madagascar and New Delhi).
- ▶ Cooperating with our partners in the space field to forge: in the short term, a shared strategic culture in order to bring awareness of the changing strategic context and increasing risks; and in the medium term, synergies concerning Space Situational

Awareness (SSA), where cooperation is beneficial in ensuring wide coverage.

- ▶ Participating in regional cooperation between the coast guard structures (France has observer status at the Head of Asian Coast Guard Agencies’ Meeting – HACGAM since December 2021).

Maintaining strategic stability

- ▶ Pursuing the deepening of interoperability with the armed forces of the major partners in the region, in particular India, Japan and Western countries.
- ▶ Strengthening of exchanges in fighting proliferation, in particular nuclear proliferation. France actively participates in surveillance operations concerning compliance with international sanctions against North Korea.
- ▶ Strengthening of the French presence within the security bodies of ASEAN (ASEAN Defence Ministers’ Meeting and ADMM+; ASEANPOL) and membership of the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP).

Environmental security

- ▶ Mapping of climate risks in the Indian Ocean, to anticipate their consequences in the areas of security and defence.
- ▶ Cooperating in the area of climate and environmental security with the Member States of the South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting.
- ▶ Participating in the Pacific Environmental Security Forum/ Partnership, a significant US initiative in the area of environmental security in the Indo-Pacific.
- ▶ Cooperating in the area of civil security in order to support the States in the region in facing threats that can impact populations and the environment.

Pillar 2:

Economy, connectivity, research, and innovation

Main objectives

- ▶ Ensuring diversification of supply of strategic goods and reducing dependencies.
- ▶ Promoting and enforcing existing international standards in order to establish a fair competitive framework.
- ▶ Meeting needs in terms of connectivity and infrastructure.
- ▶ Supporting efforts of French companies in the Indo-Pacific region.
- ▶ Deepening partnerships in research and innovation.

Examples of actions

Diversifying the supply of strategic goods and reducing our dependencies

- ▶ Looking for partnerships with countries in the region in order to secure supply chains, including for critical goods.
- ▶ Providing support, including financial support (recovery plan, European loans) for development of the agri-food sectors in the French territories in order to reduce dependence on imports.

Promoting international standards in order to establish a fair competitive framework

- ▶ Promoting sustainable practices for financing development and implementing the common
- ▶ Fighting corruption (OECD Convention).
- ▶ Defending the rules of international trade, and modernizing the WTO.
- ▶ Giving priority to the implementation of the G20 Principles for Quality Infrastructure Investment (environmental protection, compliance with the Paris agreement, social inclusion, competition rules, transparency, and sustainability) and supporting the deployment of multilateral tools to help prepare infrastructure projects (specifically, the Source platform⁶).

Connectivity and infrastructures

- ▶ In order to better address the needs of the region in this priority area, pursuing the implementation of the “Europe-Asia Connectivity Strategy”, including under the EU-ASEAN air services agreement.

6. Digital platform for preparing infrastructure projects, directed and financed jointly by the multilateral development banks

- ▶ Particular effort on renewable energy production infrastructure within France's bilateral partnerships (India, Indonesia, Japan, Pacific island territories) and in French overseas departments and communities.
- ▶ Recent expansion of the AFD's mandate in the Pacific to mitigation and bilateral projects, which will help it to better address needs.

Supporting French businesses

- ▶ Supporting our businesses using export support tools.
- ▶ Carrying out outreach efforts on the Indo-Pacific strategy, aimed at businesses.
- ▶ Mobilizing Team France Export in areas such as the blue economy.
- ▶ BPI and AFD intervening in the overseas territories in the Indo-Pacific region.

University, research, and innovation partnerships

- ▶ Deepening of university and scientific cooperation and mobility in these areas with our major partners, including India, Australia, Japan, Singapore, Indonesia, and Vietnam, including through use of the Erasmus+ programme.
- ▶ Strengthening of cooperation in health research, a major area given the context of the COVID-19 pandemic; highlighting actions of the international network of the Institut Pasteur's local bases in the region in their development of innovative projects.
- ▶ Continue discussions with ASEAN members on public health issues that began during the COVID-19 crisis.
- ▶ Mobilizing French agencies in the region (IRD, CIRAD, CNRS, and INSERM) on research cooperation efforts with a regional scope in priority areas: oceans and management of marine resources; climate change and biodiversity; health.

FIGHTING THE ZIKA VIRUS AND THE RECURRING EPIDEMICS IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC

After its emergence in Latin America at the end of 2015, the World Health Organization declared that Zika an “international public health emergency. The Pacific, and specifically French Polynesia, was the centre of a series of events that led to the global mobilization to fight Zika. French Polynesia thus contributed greatly to improvements in diagnosing, monitoring and overall knowledge of Zika. The studies carried out by the Institut Louis Malardé in Papeete provided crucial data on the epidemic dynamic of Zika in the Polynesian context. The technologies and approaches used for these studies can be transposed to other contexts.

The “Risk factors for the emergence and recurrence of epidemics linked to the Zika virus in the Pacific region (R-ZERO PACIFIC)” programme was carried out at 4 sites (French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Fiji and Samoa). It took place over 3 phases, from 2017 to 2020, and was built to evaluate the risk of re-emergence and recurrence of Zika epidemics in the Pacific. The data collected and the results of the studies contribute to forecasting future public health emergencies for continental tropical regions that have recently been affected or that are at risk. •

Pillar 3:

Multilateralism and the rule of law

Main objectives

- ▶ Promoting multilateralism in countries in the Indo-Pacific region.
- ▶ Contributing to strengthening regional centres of cooperation.
- ▶ Fostering strong involvement and better visibility of the European Union.
- ▶ The central importance of the rule of law and the primacy of the law of the sea.
- ▶ Promoting the rule of law, particularly when it comes to international human rights law, environmental and social standards, rules of international trade and freedom of navigation, all while ensuring respect for the sovereignty of nations.

Examples of actions

Promoting multilateralism

- ▶ Strengthening coordination between international organizations and like-minded partners in the region.
- ▶ Supporting a multilateral response to the COVID-19 pandemic in the Indo-Pacific region: strengthened communication with the

G20 countries, French presence in regional health organizations (regional offices of the WHO, and ASEAN working groups).

Strengthening regional centres of cooperation

- ▶ Enhancing the partnership with ASEAN: implementation of the development partnership concluded in 2020 and appointing a seconded expert to the secretariat of the organization; launch of a regional solidarity fund for innovative projects (FSPI) focusing on infectious diseases.
- ▶ Supporting the increased power of the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) during the 2021/2022 French presidency. Simultaneous development within the new status as a full member of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and within this framework, developing joint projects with interested Member States, including in the areas of the fight against illegal fishing, the blue economy, and maritime safety.
- ▶ Support provided through the AFD to the COVID-19 response within the framework of the Indian Ocean Commission. Regional actions in

the Pacific in support of island countries (for example, mobilization in March-April 2021 of the FRANZ mechanism for Papua New Guinea and in January 2022 for Tonga).

Indo-Pacific strategy of the EU

- ▶ Implementing an ambitious EU strategy on the basis of the Joint Communication published by the Commission and the EEAS on 16 September 2021, addressing the significance of Indo-Pacific issues and the expectations of partners in the region; seeking thus to increase EU visibility; taking the Indo-Pacific into account in the leading priorities of the French Presidency of the Council of the EU in the first half of 2022.
- ▶ Contributing to the highlighting of the EU/ASEAN strategic partnership with a view to the 45th anniversary of their relationship in 2022.
- ▶ Promoting EU partnerships with regional organizations: Indian Ocean Commission, Pacific Community, Pacific Island Forum.

The central importance of the rule of law and the primacy of the law of the sea

- ▶ Promoting the French models of ocean governance and maritime security, using bilateral dialogue (global maritime dialogue with Japan, development of similar formats with Indonesia and India), and participating in multilateral initiatives (HACGAM, PACSAR programme for search and rescue at sea in Oceania).

FRANCE AS CHAIR OF THE IOC IN 2021/2022

After having met the emergency aid challenges in 2020 due to the pandemic, France will take action in 2021 and 2022, with the Member States and observers, including India and Japan:

- To open up cooperation in the region, focusing on relationships between institutions, such as the IOC and IORA, or the regional agencies of the United Nations, and by reinforcing links between multilateral programmes led by the IOC and other actors in the area of the blue economy or maritime safety. During France's term as chair, the private sector and civil society, within the IOC and beyond the organization, are also being involved through initiatives covering the African and Indian neighbourhoods.
- To mobilize the States and all the actors in the region around selected clear

objectives in four central sectors for the future and recovery post-COVID: maritime safety, sustainable economy, natural risks, and mobility of young people. In 2019, in his speech in La Réunion, President Macron outlined strategies for the Indian Ocean in different areas that are deeply interconnected, in the larger Indo-Pacific context.

- To associate the main stakeholders, the agenda of the French presidency will be dynamic, event-based, and shared between Mayotte and La Réunion, where several official and informal meetings will highlight their contribution to the region, as well as with the island States and the neighbouring African countries through events in Institut français and Alliance française branches. •

Pillar 4: **Climate change, biodiversity, sustainable management of oceans**

Main objectives

- ▶ Increasing partner involvement in the region in fighting climate change and in making progress on energy transition.
 - ▶ Fostering strengthening of actions for biodiversity.
 - ▶ Developing partnerships for ocean protection.
 - ▶ Contributing to improving natural disaster response.
 - ▶ Enhancing the use of the skills of our territories and regional cooperation on all of these issues.
- ▶ of coal, particularly for Japan, and stopping grants for fossil fuels.
 - ▶ A specific effort for solar energy, through bilateral partnerships and support to the International Solar Alliance (ISA, of which France is the co-founder alongside India), including the STAR-C programme (training of solar energy experts).
 - ▶ Actively participating in the Indian Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) initiative and invitation to join the Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction (Global ABC).

Examples of actions

Fighting climate change, and promoting the energy transition

- ▶ Mobilizing countries in the region, through bilateral dialogue, on the fight against climate change in the areas of mitigation and adaptation, and on the ambitious objectives aiming for climate neutrality and reaching an emissions peak as soon as possible.
- ▶ At a high level, supporting all initiatives for transitioning away from fossil fuels and advocating the phasing out

Strengthening of actions for biodiversity

- ▶ Mobilizing countries in the region including through bilateral dialogue, to adopt an ambitious global framework as outlined in COP15.
- ▶ Continuation of the KIWA initiative on adaptation to climate change and the protection of biodiversity in the Pacific.
- ▶ Promoting the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People, in particular with the ASEAN countries.

- ▶ Launching a Franco-Indian initiative on a moratorium on single-use plastics as part of the Indo-French Year of the Environment in 2021.

Partnerships on governance of oceans and on the blue economy

- ▶ Implementing partnerships with our main partners on the blue economy, through a maritime dialogue, including with Indonesia and India, and the cooperation in the regional bodies in the Pacific and in the Indian Ocean.
- ▶ France participating in the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative as leader of the “maritime resources” pillar.
- ▶ Mobilizing in the region the States that are party to negotiation on the Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) on conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas that are international jurisdictions.

Response to natural disasters

- ▶ Contributing to the improvement of Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems (CREWS) and response capabilities in the Pacific (positioning of humanitarian aid supplies),

the ASEAN countries, and the southwestern region of the Indian Ocean.

Putting the skills of our territorial communities and regional cooperation efforts to use

- ▶ Supporting regional partnerships with French research centres located in the territories, including in the area of the management of maritime resources.
- ▶ Increased involvement within the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP).
- ▶ Implementation of the Franco-Japanese project for a “deep marine observatory” in Nouméa, which seeks to measure the impact of climate change and fishing on marine ecosystems.

FRANCE'S COMMITMENT TO THE BLUE ECONOMY IN THE INDIAN OCEAN

In September 2019, the Indian Ocean Rim Association's 22 Member States unanimously adopted the Dhaka Declaration on Blue Economy, which highlights IORA's role in ending poverty, supporting food security, mitigating and adapting to climate change, preserving marine and coastal biodiversity, and improving livelihoods. For the countries in the southwestern Indian Ocean, the blue economy is recognized by the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) as an objective to be promoted.

The blue economy therefore enjoys a strong institutional framework and concrete commitments. One of the main IORA working groups is devoted to it, and the IOC is adopting a regional action plan for the blue economy.

France supports the practical implementation of commitments made regarding the blue economy in the region. This theme is fundamental as part of the French presidency of the IOC (April 2021 – April 2022) which supports synergies between the IOC and IORA. Through the AFD, France also supports IORA in

this area, by financing a programme for strengthening its capacities, including in the area of the blue economy (€1 million over three years).

In 2021, France held the Blue Year of the Indian Ocean, a civil society support programme in the area of the blue economy, by financing projects led by local NGOs, such as beach clean-up days or fisher training. During France's term as chair of the IOC it also proposed to declare 17 July Blue Economy Day in the Indian Ocean. Furthermore, the AFD, through its programmes and financing, supports the protection of marine protected areas, as well as the resilience of coastal areas. A research project led by the IRD will produce a research report on the blue economy in the Indian Ocean, to be published in early 2022 and sent to the IOC.

France aims to be a leader in the fight against IUU fishing and overfishing. It launched an initiative in this area at the 2022 One Ocean Summit in Brest, with a view to structuring state responses to the issue. •



Section Five

Reinforcing the commitment of the European Union in the Indo-Pacific

The ongoing strategic and economic shifts in the Indo-Pacific have direct repercussions for the prosperity and security of the European Union, which can provide solutions to the security, economic and environmental challenges faced by the region. That is why the Indo-Pacific is a priority of France's European agenda, including through its support for the EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific which is a further step forward in Europe's engagement in this strategic region. •

▲ Teams from the EU Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid at work after Typhoon Haiyan hit the Philippines in 2013.

5.1. The EU's presence in the region

The EU is already very present in the Indo-Pacific region, which ranks second in the regions receiving EU exports. The Indo-Pacific includes five of the EU's strategic partners, and four of its ten main trade partners. The EU is, moreover, the region's leading investor and leading development cooperation partner. The EU's commitment in the Indo-Pacific is seen in a positive light, and its major partners in the region – India, Japan and ASEAN – want it to be more involved, including contributing to peace and stability in the region, offering development alternatives and promoting rules-based multilateralism.

Historically, the European Union's will to engage in dialogue with Asia has been around for some time: the ASEM (Asia-Europe Meeting) dialogue was launched in 1996, and is the result of a joint initiative of the former French President Chirac and Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Kuan-Yew. Since its founding, the ASEM has expanded, going from 25 members in 1996 to 53 partners: 30 European countries, 21 Asian countries, and two international organizations (the European Union and ASEAN).

This intergovernmental framework for informal dialogue fosters exchanges, including on the three political, economic and financial, and socio-cultural pillars, with this last pillar being directly handled by the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF).

Concerning trade, the EU has signed an Economic Partnership Agreement with Japan, which is currently the broadest agreement in terms of free trade. It took effect in February 2019. Other free trade agreements have entered into force signed with countries in the region (South Korea, Singapore, and Vietnam), as has an EPA with Pacific States. Negotiations are underway with several Indo-Pacific partners. The European Union should strengthen its trade links with ASEAN countries in particular, as it steps up its economic and trade presence in the Indo-Pacific. The EU will also continue to develop its already close trade and investment relations with its key partners in global value chains, such as Taiwan.

Furthermore, the European Union is working to develop concrete sector cooperation efforts with its partners: in the area of connectivity, a specific strategy, "Connecting Europe and Asia", was launched in 2018, in order

to promote sustainable, high-quality connectivity based on rules and high social, environmental, and sustainable standards. This strategy guided the European approach to connectivity, which was expanded to global level in 2021. The EU has also concluded connectivity partnerships with Japan (2019) and India (2021), and signed a joint declaration with ASEAN (late 2020) to develop concrete cooperation projects with its partners, particularly in the Indo-Pacific.

Lastly, the EU's commitment also involves its presence in regional forums. In 2021, it became the first permanent observer at the Pacific Community, and it is a member of the ASEAN Regional Forum. The EU has also developed bilateral cooperation under the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), including Operation ATALANTE to fight piracy off Somalia, and through the ESIWA (Enhancing Security Cooperation in and with Asia) project. More generally, the presence of European armies and navies in the region provides additional cooperation opportunities alongside the EU's action.

5.2. A European strategy for the Indo-Pacific

At the instigation of France and other Member States, including Germany and the Netherlands (which adopted in 2020, on a national level, broad policy lines for the Indo-Pacific), discussions began within the EU in 2020 with a view to adopting an ambitious European strategy for the Indo-Pacific, mobilizing all European instruments. On 19 April 2021, the European Council adopted conclusions identifying the EU's priorities for the Indo-Pacific and inviting the European Commission and the High Representative/Vice-President to publish a Joint Communication to deepen these political guidelines.

The Joint Communication (EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific) was published on 16 September 2021, recalling the Indo-Pacific's growing strategic importance. The Communication commits the EU to deepening solid, lasting partnerships with the region's countries and regional organizations on the basis of shared values and principles, and to promoting a rules-based international order to make the Indo-Pacific a free, open region.

Under its Indo-Pacific strategy, the EU will also liaise with the United States, another major actor in the region, while defending its own interests.

The Joint Communication identifies seven priorities:

- **Sustainable and inclusive prosperity:** resilient value chains; consolidated and diverse trade relations (implementation of existing trade agreements and finalization of ongoing negotiations); developing cooperation in strategic sectors; enhancing rules to protect global trade from unfair practices such as industrial subsidies, economic coercion and forced technology transfers; and better protecting intellectual property.
- **Green transition:** working with partners to fight, mitigate and adapt to climate change and to counter biodiversity loss, pollution and other forms of environmental degradation
- **Ocean governance:** strengthening ocean governance in the Indo-Pacific in full compliance with international law, in particular UNCLOS; continuing to support Indo-Pacific partners in fighting IUU fishing; and implementing

partnership agreements in the field of sustainable fishing.

- **Digital governance and partnerships:** expand the network of digital partnerships with Indo-Pacific partners and explore opportunities for setting up new ones; strengthen cooperation on research and innovation with regional partners sharing the same values under the “Horizon Europe” programme.
- **Connectivity:** promoting all dimensions of connectivity (transport, energy, digital technology, interpersonal exchanges) with Indo-Pacific partners; help partners establish a high-quality regulatory framework; and facilitate funding to improve connectivity between Europe and the Indo-Pacific.
- **Security and defence:** promoting an open and rules-based regional security architecture, including secure sea lines of communication, capacity-building and enhanced naval presence in the Indo-Pacific; studying means to step up naval deployments of EU Member States in the region; supporting the capacity of Indo-Pacific partners to ensure maritime security; lastly, facilitate partners’ capacity building for

the fight against cyber crime.

- **Human security:** supporting healthcare systems and the fight against pandemics in the least developed countries in the Indo-Pacific; strengthening the EU’s involvement in disaster risk reduction and prevention in the region.

This new European strategic framework was endorsed by the European Council meeting of 21 and 22 October 2021. The infrastructure and connectivity dimensions will be supported directly under the Global Gateway strategy that was announced on 1 December 2021. The Indo-Pacific is also a priority of the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first half of 2022. The European strategy and the EU’s partnerships with regional countries will be highlighted during the Ministerial Forum on 22 February 2022, which will bring together the Foreign Ministers of the EU and the Indo-Pacific for the first time in this format.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP OF THE EU WITH ASEAN

The European Union has formed several strategic partnerships with like-minded States and organizations in the Indo-Pacific, the most significant of which is the partnership with ASEAN. A new step was taken on 1 December 2020 with the relationship between the EU and ASEAN upgraded to the level of a strategic partnership. In 2022, the EU and ASEAN will celebrate the 45th anniversary of their bilateral relationship.

The strategic partnership shows a joint commitment to hold regular summits with leaders. Founded on shared values and principles – respect of international law, promotion of multilateralism and strengthening of the cooperation of the two parties – it has five major priorities:

- Cooperating in health, including vaccination (the EU announced a budget of more than €800 million dedicated to ASEAN countries);
- Promoting trade founded on rule and with specific attention given to sustainable development;
- Promoting connectivity that is sustainable, and rules-based (adopting the joint declaration on connectivity during the 23rd ministerial meeting in December 2020);
- Promoting effective multilateralism and a rules-based international order;
- Security, including on non-traditional issues (maritime safety, cyber security, the fight against terrorism).

Other strategic partnerships were established, including with India (2004), Japan (2001), and South Korea (2010). Lastly, the European Union is renewing the institutional and legal framework of its relationships with the States of the South Pacific. It can of course count on France's territories in the region to strengthen these relationships. •

Glossary

ACRF	Asean Comprehensive Recovery Framework
AEFE	The Agency for French Education Abroad
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AFD	Agence française de développement
ADB	Asian Development Bank
HRC	Human Rights Council
CDRI	Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure
CIRAD	Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement
CNRS	Centre national de la recherche
IOC	Indian Ocean Commission
SPC	the Pacific Community
ITE	International Technical Expert
FANC	Armed Forces of New Caledonia
FAPF	Armed Forces in French Polynesia
FASEP	Fund for studies and support of the private sector
FAZSOI	French Armed Forces in the Southern Zone of the Indian Ocean
PIF	Pacific Islands Forum
FLE	Français langue étrangère
FLESCO	Français langue de scolarisation

FSPI	Fonds de solidarité pour les projets innovants
FP	Fonds Pacifique
IDE	Investissement direct à l'étranger
IFREMER	Institut français de recherche pour l'exploitation de la mer
INSERM	Institut national de la santé et de la recherche médicale
IONS	Indian Ocean Naval Symposium
IORA	Indian Ocean Rim Association
IPOI	Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative
IRD	Institut de recherche pour le développement
PROE	Programme régional océanien pour l'environnement
RCEP	Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership
TAAF	Terres australes et antarctiques françaises
UMIFRE	Unités mixtes des instituts français de recherche à l'étranger
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone

Embassies with wider regional competency

French Embassy in Fiji: Kiribati, Nauru, Tonga and Tuvalu

French Embassy in India : Bhutan

French Embassy in Indonesia : East Timor

French Embassy in Kenya: Somalia

French Embassy in New Zealand: Cook Islands and Samoa

French Embassy in the Philippines: Micronesia, Marshall Islands and Palau

French Embassy in Sri Lanka: Maldives

French Embassy in Vanuatu: Solomon Islands


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