

France's training initiatives in the Indo-Pacific

France's action in the Indo-Pacific is part of a strategic solidarity approach, in which it helps its partners build the capabilities of their civilian and military security forces. This commitment is particularly pertinent given the cross-cutting challenges facing the region, including illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, cyber threats, natural disasters, and climate change.

With this in mind, France has launched several training and cooperation initiatives, which build local capacity while furthering sustainable technical and strategic dialogue between States of the region.

The Regional Centre for Maritime Studies in Sri Lanka

The Regional Centre for Maritime Studies (RCMS), inaugurated in December 2024, is a joint initiative by France and Sri Lanka aiming to improve maritime safety and security as well as the protection of the marine environment in the Indian Ocean.

The RCMS tackles maritime challenges shared by the nations in the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA): illegal fishing, clandestine immigration, trafficking, climate disasters and marine pollution. Its main aims are building States' capabilities, sharing best practices, harmonizing procedures, facilitating regional cooperation and aligning international frameworks (UNCLOS, SOLAS, STWC, IMO). It has positioned itself as a regional training hub, coordinating with existing and developing centres in the region and promoting the sharing of best practices to further maritime safety and security in the Indian Ocean.

RCMS training programmes cover maritime safety (search and rescue, surveillance, ship safety), maritime security (the fight against illegal fishing, smuggling, asymmetric threats, cyber security), environmental protection (different types of pollution, marine protected areas), management (crisis management, quality), and contemporary issues (the blue economy, spatial planning, climate change, digital tools).

Pacific Academy

Announced in July 2023 during President Macron's visit to the Pacific, the Pacific Academy in New Caledonia and French Polynesia aims to address specific challenges met by Pacific island States and to assist these countries in managing their sovereignty when it comes to security, the climate and technology.

With a comprehensive approach to security, the Academy will offer training programmes and share experience throughout the security-defence continuum in maritime security (surveillance, the fight against IUU fishing, rescue, state action at sea), civil security (disaster preparedness, firefighting, pollution clean-up), military instruction (officer training, acclimatization, cyber defence, health), and public security (police training, fight against financial crime, drugs, corruption, domestic violence).

Since its inception, several hundred training programmes have been provided to partners in the region, mainly delivered in New Caledonia.

The Indian Ocean Academy (IOA)

On 24 August 2025 in Madagascar, at the Indian Ocean Commission Summit, President Macron announced the launch of the Indian Ocean Academy, bringing together civilian and military stakeholders, and associations supporting public authorities in La Réunion.

The Indian Ocean Academy is a project for labelling and structuring regional cooperation actions under the authority of the Prefect of La Réunion. It brings together many civilian and military stakeholders (Armed Forces, Gendarmerie, Police, Customs, the Directorate of the Sea, the Office of State Action at Sea, the Military Staff of the Zone, the French Red Cross). The Indian Ocean Academy wishes to become a key player in training and expertise and aims to bolster integration of La Réunion and Mayotte in the region, particularly through direct discussions with neighbouring countries (Seychelles, Mauritius, Madagascar, Comoros) that are interested in training and partnerships. The Academy also focuses on Southern Indian Ocean countries' exercise of sovereignty by addressing common security challenges.

The IOA is based on four pillars with capabilities for action and outreach:

- Civil security led by the Military Staff of the Zone (EMZ) and the French Red Cross Regional Platform for Regional Intervention (PIROI-CRF).
- Internal security led by the Command of the Gendarmerie (COMGENDRe), the Territorial Directorate of the Police (DTPN 974) and the Directorate of Customs (DRDDI).
- Maritime security led by the Directorate of the Sea (DMSOI), in connection with the Office of State Action at Sea (AEM).
- Maritime security led by the French Armed Forces in the Southern Zone of the Indian Ocean (FAZSOI), in liaison with the Office of State Action at Sea (AEM).