

French involvement in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) operations in the Indo-Pacific region

HADR operations are a key part of France's commitment to the Indo-Pacific region. With natural disasters expected to increase due notably to the growing effects of climate change and demographic pressure in the region, France is actively investing in prevention, emergency response and the resilience of partner countries, particularly vulnerable Small Island Developing States.

The FRANZ mechanism

In the Pacific, France's work mainly involves the FRANZ mechanism, comprising tripartite cooperation set up in 1992 between France, Australia and New Zealand. This Arrangement enables coordination in the event of natural disasters, through pooling of logistical resources, information and response capabilities. It covers an extensive area, including countries such as Fiji, Samoa, Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands. Annual meetings and joint military exercises are held to encourage interoperability between forces from partner countries and build their joint disaster response capabilities.

Among FRANZ's most notable work is its assistance to Vanuatu following Cyclones Judy and Kevin in 2023, to Fiji following Cyclone Harold in 2020, to Papua New Guinea in 2021 to fight the COVID-19 epidemic and to Tonga following the eruption of the Hunga Tonga volcano. To make the mechanism more efficient, France is promoting greater inclusion of Pacific Island States, e.g. by organizing sessions to raise awareness for States which have a crisis management bureau, with a view to letting them exercise their prerogatives in the implementation of the mechanism.

The Pacific Humanitarian Warehousing Program (PHWP)

France provides financial support to the PHWP, a project launched by Australia in collaboration with the Pacific Community (PC), which aims to pre-position humanitarian supplies in 15 Pacific Island States. France's first contribution was €1 million in 2023. In the same vein, the Blackrock regional centre in Fiji, which provides training on peacekeeping operations and humanitarian storage, also plays an important role. France is contributing to it by providing a defence and security cooperation officer.

The Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems (CREWS) initiative

Launched at COP21 in 2015, the CREWS initiative aims to strengthen early warning systems in countries which are particularly vulnerable to climate hazards. France doubled its annual contribution to CREWS in 2023, which now stands at €8 million.

The Pacific and Indian Ocean Academies

The French strategy focuses on local capacity building through training. The Indian Ocean Academy, which opened in 2025 on La Réunion, plays a key role alongside the Indian Ocean Regional Intervention Platform (PIROI) of the French Red Cross. It helps structure regional responses in terms of civil security and crisis management. At the same time, alongside Madagascar, France is coordinating the work of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) on HADR issues.

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In the Pacific, the Pacific Academy, launched in 2024, helps pool expertise and develop appropriate training for the specific needs of island communities, including in the areas of emergency rescue and civil protection.