

The partnership with India in the Indo-Pacific region

France and India have been bound together by a strategic partnership since 1998. Its steady strengthening (defence, civil nuclear energy, space and security, including counter-terrorism, cyber security and digital technology) has paved the way for converging approaches to challenges and the future of the region. In 2023, to mark 25th anniversary of the strategic partnership, the two countries adopted an Indo-Pacific Roadmap building on the Joint Strategic Vision of India-France Cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region adopted in 2018.

France and India strongly believe that it is important to safeguard a free, open, inclusive, secure and peaceful Indo-Pacific region. Bilateral cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region aims to ensure the economic and security interests of the two countries and free and equal access to common public goods, as well as to build partnerships for the prosperity and viability of the region.

Enhanced cooperation in the area of maritime safety and ocean governance

India-France cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region focuses on maritime safety and State Action at Sea, by sharing information (cooperation with the Information Fusion Centre for the Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) in India), regular conduct of joint naval exercises, support for capacity building of the Indian Navy, and joint actions to the benefit of third countries in the region.

India-France cooperation is growing around the blue economy and ocean governance: France joined the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) in 2021. With Indonesia, France has taken the lead on its Maritime Resource Pillar. All cooperation activities under this Initiative aim to create a sustainable development ecosystem of maritime resources, which are based on effective curbing of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. In addition, France and India adopted a Roadmap on the Blue Economy and Ocean Governance in 2022 and hold an annual dialogue aiming to enhance bilateral cooperation in this area and within multilateral bodies.

A desire to tackle global environmental and health challenges together

With regard to global challenges, India and France are part of several flagship initiatives for sustainable development in the Indo-Pacific region. This cooperation benefits third countries in the region with tangible technical assistance projects.

The two countries created and co-chair the International Solar Alliance, which plays a driving role in deploying solar energy across the globe. They are also implementing the Indo-Pacific Parks Partnership, which aims to better protect biodiversity. Moreover, France followed in India's footsteps to join the Mangrove Alliance for Climate (MAC), instigated by the United Arab Emirates. In 2020, France also joined the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), upon India's invitation, of which it was co-chair from 2024 to 2026, supporting the Infrastructure for Resilient Island States (IRIS) programme, which aims to help strengthen the ability of Pacific Islands to cope with disasters.

In keeping with their commitment to the One Health approach, France and India launched a French-Indian Life Sciences Campus for Health in the Indo-Pacific region in 2022. It is based on cooperation between institutions and student exchange programmes. It aims to assist French higher education and research stakeholders to develop partnerships and to build a multi-disciplinary research ecosystem that is conducive to the development of multi-stakeholder

innovative cooperation activities (academics, innovators, clusters, start-ups, manufacturers, etc.).

Important action to help strengthen regional multilateralism

France and India are jointly using a project approach that is focused on multilateralism. In this way, the two countries help strengthen regional organizations of the Indian Ocean, such as the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC). The two countries both encourage the development of exchanges between these organizations and their counterparts in South-East Asia and the Pacific.

French-Indian cooperation is conducted in new formats, such as trilateral dialogues. The France-India-Australia trilateral dialogue, initiated in 2020, was relaunched at ministerial level in 2022 and is centred on common marine safety and security projects and environmental issues. Using the same model, a trilateral dialogue between France, the United Arab Emirates and India was officially launched in February 2023. The shared desire to promote stability and prosperity in the Indian Ocean region together, in connection with IORA, has made it possible to begin the design of cooperation projects regarding the fight against climate change and biodiversity protection, as well as academic and research cooperation, health and culture. Defence cooperation is also a priority and can be seen in the strengthening of interoperability of the armed forces of the three countries.