

Activities of the Institut Pasteur in the Indo-Pacific

With the first Institut Pasteur abroad created in Ho Chi Minh in 1891 and an institute with the status of secondary institution of the Institut Pasteur created in New Caledonia in 1954, the Indo-Pacific is a long-standing region for the development of the Pasteur Network. Both created at the instigation of the Parisian institute, they are strongly rooted in the local context. They are highly esteemed and recognized by regional and local authorities because of their public health role (vaccination, medical testing, etc.). Their actions are supported by the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and Expertise France, and are key instruments of the French strategy in the Indo-Pacific.

Many cooperation activities conducted by the Institut Pasteur in Paris and the nine member institutes of the Pasteur Network in the region with a One Health approach focus on global health issues, including the dangers of emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases. More recently, research teams have been collaborating on health issues of the elderly, particularly the effects of ageing.

A growing network of Instituts Pasteur in the Indo-Pacific region

The network of Instituts Pasteur in the Indo-Pacific region has nine members, which are all based on different models and types of collaboration with the Institut Pasteur in Paris, including six long-standing members very dedicated to national public health policy¹ and two more recent members taking part in the local innovation and research ecosystem.²

This network also includes a member directly linked to the Institut Pasteur in Paris which plays a key role for French presence in the region: the Institut Pasteur de Nouvelle Calédonie (IPNC) in Nouméa. This institute is a member of the Consortium de Coopération pour la Recherche, l'Enseignement Supérieur et l'Innovation en Nouvelle-Calédonie (CRESICA) and is developing public research and health activities in the Indo-Pacific region. It is spearheading an upcoming project for a cutting-edge infrastructure: a research centre on vectors and vector-borne diseases (Vectopôle) in collaboration with the Université de Nouvelle Calédonie. At regional level, many public health projects are being conducted, particularly with Vanuatu. The IPNC has also been cooperating with the Pacific Community (SPC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) for many years to support countries in the region.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the Institut Pasteur has boosted existing cooperation activities and begun partnerships in the region. The launch of the Institut Pasteur du Japon is under way, whose main partners include the University of Tokyo and the University of Kyoto. This institute will work on links between ageing and infectious diseases as part of the One Health approach. In Singapore, a collaboration was begun with the Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*Star), particularly with the infectious disease laboratory, A*STAR ID Labs, working on links between ageing and infectious diseases, and gut microbiota.

¹ The Institut Pasteur de Madagascar (Tananarive, Madagascar), the Institut Pasteur du Cambodge (Phnom Penh, Cambodia), the Institut Pasteur du Laos (Vientiane, Laos), the Institut Pasteur d'Hô Chi Minh Ville (Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam created in 1891), the Institut Pasteur de Nha Trang (Nha Trang, Vietnam), the Institut National d'Hygiène et d'Épidémiologie (Hanoi, Vietnam)

² University of Hong Kong-Institut Pasteur Research Centre (Hong Kong) and the Institut Pasteur de Corée (Seoul, South Korea).

A unique positioning in Team France on public health, monitoring and pandemic preparedness in a One Health approach.

The members of the Pasteur Network conduct projects to meet local needs in public health and capacity building regarding emerging infectious diseases and growing antimicrobial resistance. Their actions are part of major networking projects. The Institut Pasteur initiated and contributed to several networks of global health players in the region.

The ECOMORE network, which evaluates the risk of ecosystem modifications and emerging infectious diseases, financed by the Agence Française de Développement (AFD), aims to better understand the environmental impact of human activities and their possible link to the emergence of infectious diseases in Southeast Asia. ECOMORE is also interested in the assessment of real risks to people's health with the aim of making public health recommendations to local authorities in five countries in the region (Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar and the Philippines).

In cooperation with the Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD), the Research Institute for Development (IRD) and the AFD, the Institut Pasteur plans to strengthen coordination between three existing regional networks: the ECOMORE network in Southeast Asia, the Pacific Public Health Surveillance Network (PPHSN) of the Pacific Community (SPC), and the SEGA One Health Network of the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC). This "network of networks" aims to bolster regional health security by recommending public health measures and initiating synergies with the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases (ACPHEED).

The Institut Pasteur and the members of the Pasteur Network are also taking part in the international initiative PREZODE (Preventing Zoonotic Disease Emergence), which is being conducted in Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand, particularly via the GREASE platform, a network working on the prevention of emerging diseases in Southeast Asia.

In addition, the Institut Pasteur encourages cooperation among the Pasteur Network members under the recent "Indo-Pacific: Climate Change, Environment and Infectious Diseases" project. This project is directly coordinated with the ECOMORE network to increase environmental monitoring of infectious diseases that are impacted by climate change. It is expected to create synergies between Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean via the Institut Pasteur du Laos, the Institut Pasteur de Madagascar and CIRAD, and the Southeast Asia-Pacific Ocean via the Institut Pasteur du Cambodge, the Institut Pasteur de Nouvelle-Calédonie and the IRD.