

La Réunion in France's Indo-Pacific Strategy

As a French community – both a department and a region – and a European Union outermost region in the Indian Ocean, La Réunion plays an essential role in France's regional presence. An Indo-Pacific roadmap, drawn up jointly by government departments and La Réunion, aims to strengthen synergies for the implementation of cooperation initiatives fostering La Réunion's stability, security and prosperity, as well as its regional integration. Moreover, La Réunion is already driving many structural projects in line with France's Indo-Pacific Strategy.

Growing integration within Indo-Pacific academic and scientific cooperation networks

La Réunion has cutting-edge infrastructure and a vibrant academic fabric. La Réunion University is internationally renowned and works with the major research centres present on the island, including the Research Institute for Development (IRD) and the Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD), which together have more than 500 researchers.

The island is also actively strengthening its academic and scientific partnerships with Indo-Pacific countries. It contributes to developing ties between academic institutions in Indian Ocean countries within regional organizations such as the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) – in the UNIOR network, with Australia, India, South Africa, Mauritius and Seychelles – and the Indian Ocean Commission – with the implementation of a mobility and vocational training programme. In 2023, a structural biotechnology and health programme, ILIADE, was launched with India, within the French-Indian Life Sciences Campus for Health programme, marking a new step forward in La Réunion's integration within the Indo-Pacific's major scientific cooperation networks.

Leadership in connectivity and innovation

La Réunion plays a key role in strengthening regional connectivity in the Indian Ocean. In maritime connectivity, it is developing transshipment capacities in liaison with the sector's main companies and is supporting regional cabotage projects. Air connectivity is also being strengthened: the opening of new links with India is now being considered, following that created with Bangkok. In digital connectivity, La Réunion is involved in regional submarine cable projects, like post-SAFE cables and T4 between Africa and South and South-East Asia.

La Réunion also aspires to becoming a genuine maritime hub thanks to projects to green its port infrastructure and strengthen its resilience to natural hazards, as well as active regional cooperation via the Association of Indian Ocean Island Ports (APIOI) and the Port Management Association of Eastern and Southern Africa (PMAESA).

The island is also positioning itself as an innovation hub. It is the first of France's overseas communities to have received the French Tech Capital label (2023-2025) and it is part of networks like Tech4Islands, showcasing its digital and technological expertise and fostering its regional economic integration. Similarly, the Bois-Rouge eco-technological port project will be the site of innovative activities to make use of deep ocean water, with two priorities:

- Electricity generation using thermal energy from the sea, while using sea water for air conditioning;

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- Development of adjacent activities (production of micro-algae, rare-species aquaculture, desalination and bottling of deep-sea water, cosmetics, thalassotherapy and industrial cooling).