

## **New Caledonia in France's Indo-Pacific Strategy**

France's Indo-Pacific Strategy aims to promote its overseas territories, as both actors and beneficiaries. The French Government has involved New Caledonia in drafting and implementing the Indo-Pacific Strategy, contributing to regional integration and its influence policy. The transfer to Nouméa of France's Ambassador for the Pacific, who is also Permanent Secretary for the Pacific and Permanent Representation of France to the Pacific Community and the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, illustrates the importance of New Caledonia for France's regional presence.

### **Enhanced regional integration**

New Caledonia maintains close ties with Pacific countries and participates actively in regional multilateral forums. It is a full member of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), the main regional cooperation political organization, and also hosts, in Nouméa, the headquarters of the Pacific Community (SPC), the central body for regional scientific and technical cooperation. Moreover, in coordination with the French government, the Government of New Caledonia has a network of delegates in several French embassies in the region, enhancing its regional diplomatic presence. In this context, France's government is supporting New Caledonia in negotiating a trade agreement with Vanuatu.

### **An actor committed to science, the environment and sustainable development**

New Caledonia is also a major scientific and environmental hub in the Pacific. Thanks to the University of New Caledonia and a strong fabric of research bodies including the Research Institute for Development (IRD), the French Research Institute for Exploitation of the Sea (IFREMER), the Pasteur Institute and the French Coral Reef Initiative (IFRECOR), New Caledonia plays a key role in studying tropical ecosystems, the climate and regional health issues. IFREMER's oceanographic vessel, the *Antéa*, is based in Nouméa and travels around the South Pacific every year, enhancing knowledge of biodiversity and the impact of climate change. The replacement of the *Antéa*, announced by the French President when he visited New Caledonia in July 2023, illustrates the strategic importance attached to these scientific missions.

Moreover, the regional directorate of the Agence Française de Développement (AFD, French Development Agency), which is in Nouméa, plays a leading role in the development of the island and region. Its work aims to maintain the rebalancing momentum in terms of infrastructure and public services, improve quality of life and protect the environment.

### **Many actions and cooperation initiatives in the security and defence fields**

The French Armed Forces in New Caledonia (FANC) contribute to Pacific stability and security, working with several international and regional partners. They are particularly dedicated to sovereign functions related to state action at sea, in cooperation with certain Pacific States (maritime safety, general maritime surveillance, fisheries enforcement and the criminal policework fighting trafficking, for example). The FANC are also regularly deployed in the South Pacific for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) operations, including under the FRANZ Arrangement with New Zealand and Australia.

In addition, the creation of the Pacific Academy, announced by the French President during his visit to Nouméa in 2023, aims to address the specific challenges facing Pacific island States and to assist them, through training, in managing threats to their sovereignty when it comes to security, the climate and technology. Since its inception, several hundred training programmes have been provided to partners in the region, mainly delivered in New Caledonia.

In the cyber security field, a resource centre project led by New Caledonia has been selected by the French National Cyber Security Agency (ANSSI) to raise threat awareness among local digital actors, foster the development of contractors suited to local needs, and gradually and measurably address security incidents affecting businesses, local government bodies and associations.