

### **French Polynesia in the Indo-Pacific Strategy**

France Polynesia plays a key role in France's Indo-Pacific Strategy due to its location in the heart of the Pacific and the scale of its exclusive economic zone (EEZ), which accounts for half of France's total maritime surface area. It maintains close ties with countries in the region and participates in regional organizations in the Pacific, as a fully fledged member of the Pacific Community, the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme and the Pacific Islands Forum.

Through its economic vitality based on innovation, its engagement in regional cooperation and its support for the ecological transition, French Polynesia is both an important player and beneficiary of France's Indo-Pacific Strategy.

### **A driver of entrepreneurship, innovation and connectivity in the Pacific**

French Polynesia played, along with the French Government, a key role in organizing the first French Pacific Business Forum on 6 March 2023 in Auckland, New Zealand. The aim of the French Pacific Business Forum is to lay the foundations of an economic platform for the South Pacific, furthering direct trade between partners. In 2023, it brought together almost 160 businesses from French Polynesia, New Caledonia and New Zealand. Several major steps forward were announced, including the implementation of actions of the Joint Cooperation Plan between French Polynesia and New Zealand.

French Polynesia is also unique because of its structural engagement to further technological innovation that is adapted to island specificities. Along these lines, the aim of Tech4Islands Summit Tahiti is to bring together research, innovation and business stakeholders who are invited to share innovative solutions that could produce new island development models. Within this framework, the Tech4Islands Awards, held since 2019 by the French Tech Polynésie, is a pioneering initiative. Open to Oceania, Overseas France and the world, this competition brings together researchers, innovators and entrepreneurs around tangible solutions for resilient and sustainable development of island territories. It is the only innovation competition organized by and for the islands, aiming to foster innovative "Tech For Good" solutions that are environmentally friendly and sustainable.

Moreover, French Polynesia is very active in the deployment of submarine cables, in the Pacific, and thus plays a role as a relay platform for the connectivity of States in the region.

### **Initiatives to support the energy transition and environmental protection**

Committed to the energy transition, French Polynesia was one of the first territories to experiment with the use of Sea Water Air Conditioning (SWAC) technology. Established in Bora Bora in 2006, then in Tetiaroa in 2011, the first commercial SWAC systems have proved effective and can reduce air-conditioning energy consumption by up to 90%. Due to the appropriate seabed topography of the Polynesian islands, it is possible to reach the depths required to use this renewable technology rapidly. With this expertise, the French Polynesia Hospital Centre (CHPF) acquired a SWAC system that can produce 6 MW of cooling power, and is currently the most powerful installation of this type in the world. Since it was installed

in July 2022, this system has reduced air-conditioning electricity consumption of the hospital by ten, proving the worth of an energy model that is adapted, sustainable and exportable.

French Polynesia is also highly committed to biodiversity conservation and the sustainable management of maritime resources. Its action is conducted within ocean governance and conservation frameworks, through active participation in regional and international organizations and use of legal instruments such as the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) list of marine protected areas (MPAs), the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the commitment to the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement). At the Third United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC3) in June 2025 in Nice, French Polynesia announced the creation of the Tainui Atea Marine Protected Area covering all of its exclusive economic zone (4.55 million km<sup>2</sup>), including a portion of strict protection (1,100,000 km<sup>2</sup>, and at this stage, the biggest zone with this status in the world).