

### **The central role of ASEAN in France's Indo-Pacific Strategy**

France is defending regional multilateralism based on international law by supporting the central role of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

ASEAN is unique in its ability to bring together States in South-East Asia and beyond in a wide range of dialogue and cooperation formats (the ASEAN Plus Three, with South Korea, China and Japan; the Eastern Asian Summit, with 18 States; the ASEAN Regional Forum, with 26 European Union States), using an inclusive approach that converges with France's approach. The main lines set out in the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific, a strategic document focused on the region, and the mechanisms crafted by ASEAN institutions provide a solid base for strengthening partnerships.

### **The France-ASEAN Development Partnership**

France and ASEAN took a significant step forward in 2020 in their relations by establishing a development partnership that aims to enhance cooperation in the areas covered by ASEAN's three pillars (political-security, economic and social-cultural) as well as in the area of connectivity. This partnership is implemented through a jointly approved action plan for the period 2022-2026, which concerns the areas of regional security, sustainable development, health, culture, connectivity and support for regional integration as well as the environment. Projects are implemented in these areas via agencies such as the Agence Française de Développement and a France-ASEAN fund created in 2024 by the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs.

This partnership positions France as one of the external partners recognized by ASEAN and provides a framework for formal political interaction, while involving it more closely in ASEAN's technical and sector-based initiatives. This new framework also highlights the role played by all French government services, agencies and research institutes in South-East Asia (more than 140 sites). It also enables, in addition to government services, all French public and private stakeholders, including companies and cultural and scientific stakeholders, to develop their relations with the regional stakeholders and take advantage of new opportunities in a region driving global growth.

### **Projects to further the energy transition and sustainable development**

With more than €10 million pledged since 2023, France is implementing projects on themes of common interest with ASEAN partners, including air quality, the blue economy, maritime transport waste management, energy efficiency, and cultural and creative industries. France also helps strengthen regional integration in ASEAN by supporting such initiatives as ASEAN Power Grid, which aims to develop the regional interconnection of power grids in order to increase the portion of renewable energies in ASEAN's energy mix and to bolster energy security in the region. At their meeting on 28 May 2025 in Jakarta, the President of the French Republic and the Secretary-General of ASEAN also agreed to conduct cooperation projects in the area of cultural and creative industries.

### **Enhanced defence and security cooperation**

France conducts enhanced cooperation in defence and security with most ASEAN members, particularly in areas related to maritime safety, support for peacekeeping operations training centres, and the fight against transnational crime.

France's participation as an observer in working groups at the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus) for the period 2024-2027 once again testifies to France's desire to contribute to the regional security architecture and the credibility of this ambition. Within the ADMM-Plus, France also participates in the maritime security group and the humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) group.

In 2019, France was also admitted as an observer in ASEANAPOL, the annual meeting of police directors-general of ASEAN Member States that contributes to the fight against transnational crime. This status helps to increase exchanges with ASEAN police forces with a special focus on cooperation actions to fight terrorism, drug trafficking, human trafficking, cyber crime and environmental crime.