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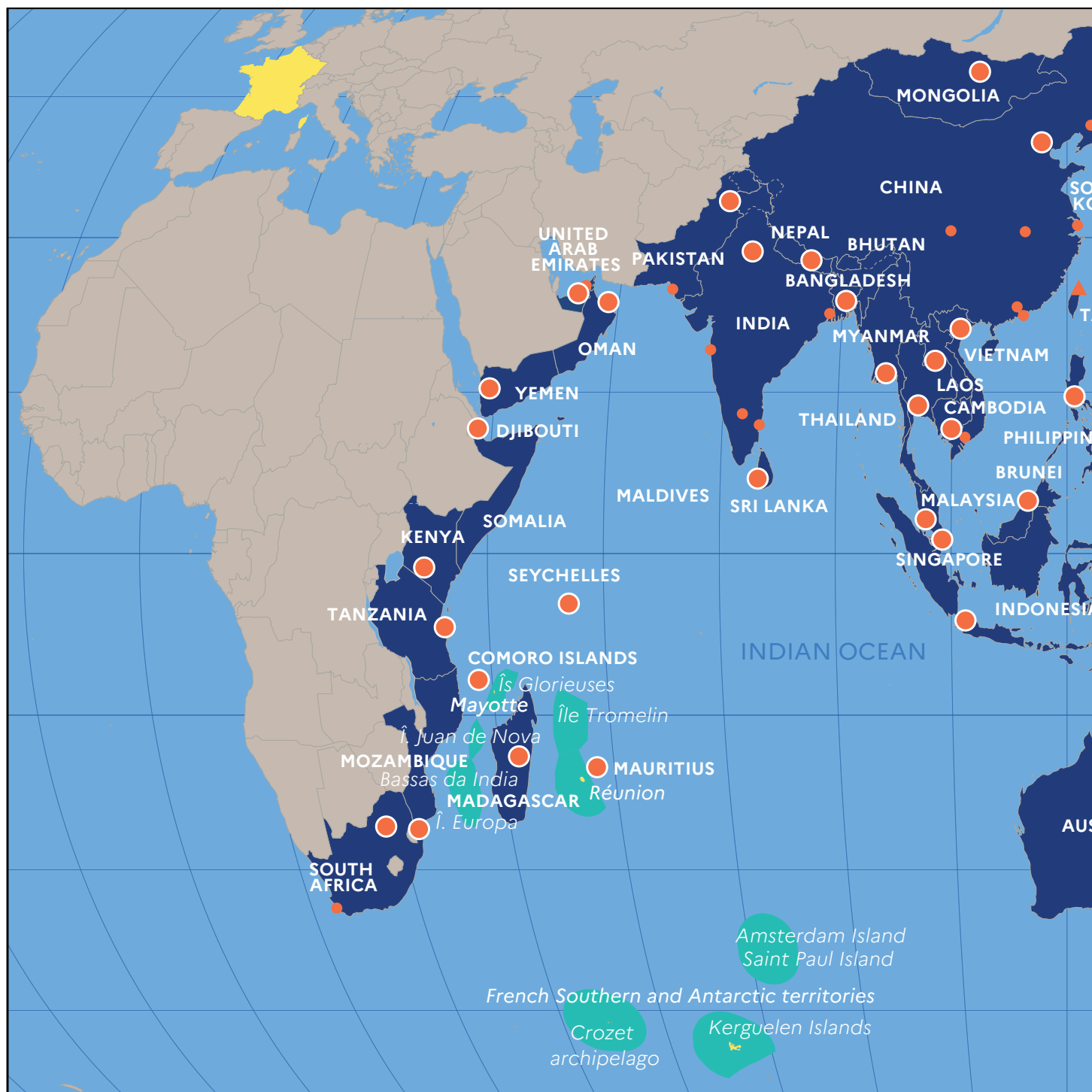
France's Indo-Pacific strategy

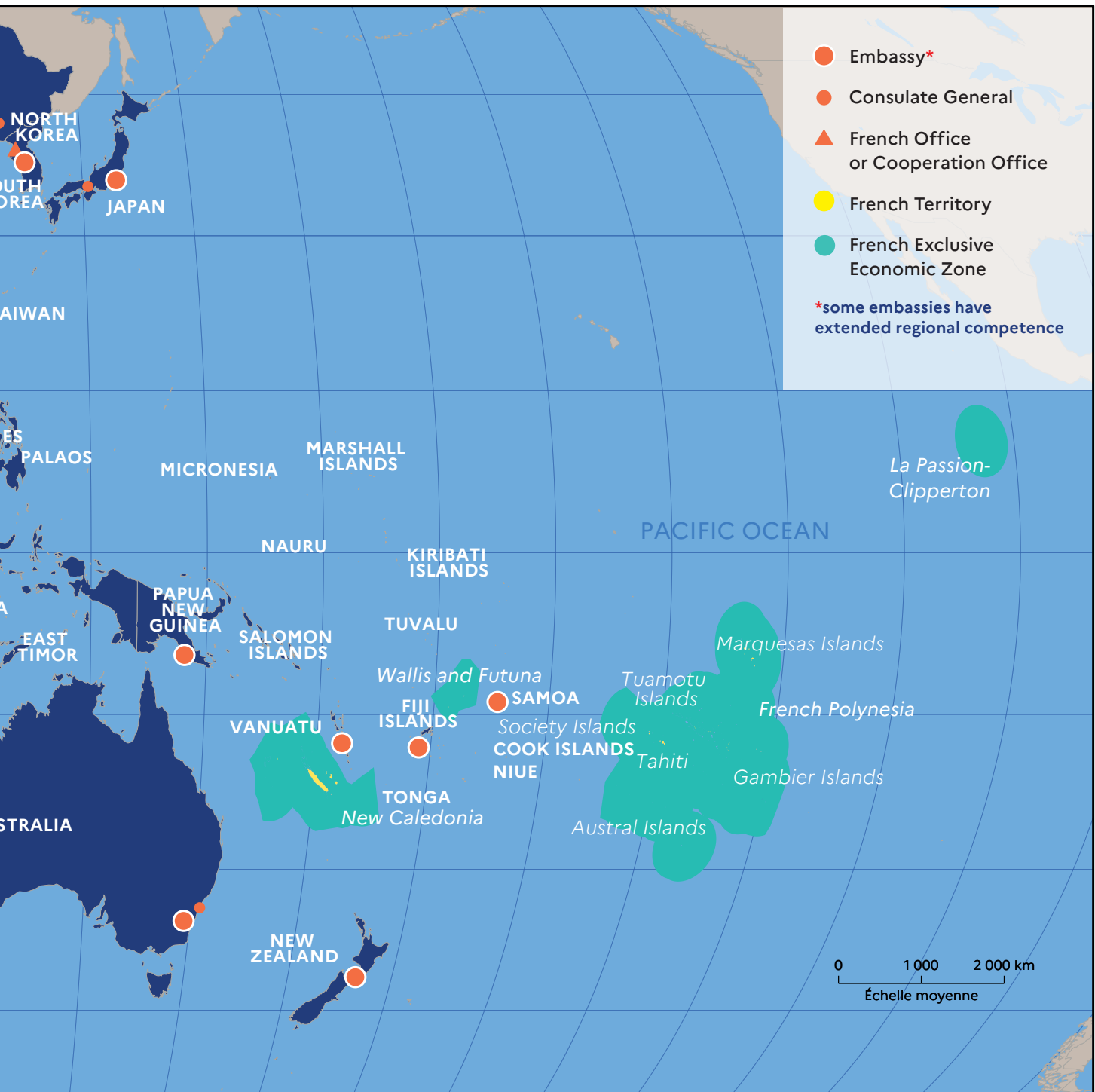
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French presence in the Indo-Pacific





Summary

A region vital to global prosperity, the Indo-Pacific is becoming increasingly tense. It is a stage for rivalries between great powers, China's growing assertiveness, and strong trade tensions. Our ability to meet environmental challenges and combat the erosion of multilateralism is at stake there.

As a European and Indo-Pacific nation, France is uniquely positioned in the region. It will continue to defend its interests and to increase its commitment to sustainable development, regional stability and the protection of common goods. Guided, together with its European Union partners, by the objective of strategic autonomy, France rejects a bloc mentality and the division of spheres of influence, and favors a non-confrontational, partnership-based approach. Faced with the risk of the establishment of spheres of coercion, in the Indo-Pacific as in Europe, France is promoting a coalition of independent states, in the form of sovereignty partnerships between these two regions.

France's multi-dimensional Indo-Pacific strategy has four main parts:

- **strengthening its overseas communities** (i.e., La Réunion, Mayotte, New Caledonia, French Polynesia, Wallis and Futuna, the French Southern and Antarctic Lands and Passion Island-Clipperton), which are both the main players and the beneficiaries of this Indo-Pacific strategy. This is why France actively supports their participation in regional organizations such as the Pacific Community (SPC), the Indian Ocean Community (IOC) and the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF). It advocates improved regional exchanges and connectivity, whether digital, maritime or air-based, as well as support for local innovation. To guarantee its sovereignty against a backdrop of heightened strategic tensions, France's military posture has been strengthened and modernized, notably in the 2024-2030 military programming law, which allocates a projected budget of 13 billion euros to all overseas territories. To better combat hybrid and climate threats, a challenge shared with many Indo-Pacific states, protective measures have also been fleshed out in the French overseas territories, with an emphasis on cybersecurity, securing undersea cables, infrastructure resilience and combating information manipulation. Lastly, France is strengthening bilateral and regional cooperation in the fight against organized crime.
- **consolidating sovereignty partnerships** with Indo-Pacific countries, to mutually and collectively bolster our security and resilience. These partnerships cover key areas:
 - **Security and defense:** bilateral and multilateral military operations and exercises have been increased, enhancing interoperability with our partners. France also supports its partners' capacity-building initiatives, notably through the Regional Centre for Maritime Studies (RCMS), a bilateral French-Sri Lankan project created in 2024, and the development of Pacific Academies in New Caledonia and Polynesia, and the Indian Ocean Academy in La Réunion. France is also active on the humanitarian and emergency relief front, through its participation in the FRANZ mechanism (comprising France, Australia, New Zealand), and its contribution to the Pacific Humanitarian Warehousing Program (PHWP). In the Indian Ocean, the Red Cross's Indian Ocean Regional Response Platform (PIROI), based in La Réunion, contributes to better disaster risk management.
 - **The economy and energy transition:** France relies on sustainable sovereignty partnerships to support French companies internationally and meet the needs of Indo-Pacific countries. France supports the development of resilient strategic infrastructures such as rail networks, electricity grids and economic corridors like the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC). It supports the region's energy transition and ensures secure supply chains for strategic raw materials. France increases its support for regional initiatives such as the ASEAN Power Grid, aimed

at strengthening energy connectivity between the countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). In addition, France supports the development of energy efficiency, particularly in urban areas (transport and buildings).

- **Climate and health:** to meet climate and environmental challenges, the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) Group is mobilizing nearly 13 billion euros for projects such as the KIWA, CLIPSSA, BRIDGES and VARUNA programs, focused on climate resilience and sustainable development in the Indo-Pacific. France also supports the implementation of international agreements on climate and biodiversity, such as the Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity in Areas beyond National Jurisdiction, or BBNJ. It also supports scientific research, education and health through its operators, including the Instituts Pasteur and the «One Health» network.

- **Support for multilateralism:** France champions regional multilateralism based on international law, particularly by affirming the centrality of ASEAN. In concrete terms, it supports the regional organizations of which it is a full member or observer, whether by funding programs or making its expertise available, particularly in the management of common challenges. France is seeking to further increase its investment in regional formats, for example by applying for membership in ADMM+ and ASEANPOL, or eventually as an ASEAN Dialogue Partner. It also proposes to work with like-minded partners and to cooperate on concrete issues in mini-lateral formats, such as dialogues with India and the United Arab Emirates.

- **Supporting the European Union's strategy in the region:** France supports the establishment of stronger European partnerships, particularly with India and ASEAN, as well as ambitious trade agreements in the area of sustainable development including with countries of the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). It plays an active role in European naval operations such as Operation Atalanta in the Indian Ocean and Operation Aspides in the Red Sea. It contributes to the deployment of European capacity-building programs such as CRIMARIO II (Critical Maritime Routes Indo-Pacific), ESIWA+ (Enhancing Security Cooperation in and with Asia, 2024-2027) and the Global Ports Safety (GPS) program. It also supports European fair trade and connectivity initiatives, notably Global Gateway. France plays a leading role in the EU Indo-Pacific Ministerial Forum, supporting its continued existence and its elevation to the level of Heads of State and Government.

From the shores of Africa to the Pacific Ocean, the Indo-Pacific region is of crucial importance to France, as much for its potential for growth and innovation as for the major geopolitical issues that characterize it.

France's Indo-Pacific strategy, whose initial orientations date back to 2018 at the initiative of President Macron, was formalized in an interministerial public communication document first published in 2021 and updated in 2022¹. It is now being updated again, in parallel with the national strategic review, to take account of recent geopolitical upheavals, note the progress made in its implementation and renew its priorities.

This revision is based on an intangible parameter: the particular nature of France's positioning in the Indo-Pacific region, based on its demand for strategic autonomy, its status as an Indo-Pacific nation thanks to its overseas territories in the Indian and Pacific Oceans, and its activities in the region. France presents itself as a force for peace, stability, cooperation and prosperity. This positioning is based on four priorities: boosting the centrality of French overseas departments and regions (DROM-COM), consolidating sovereignty partnerships with Indo-Pacific countries, supporting multilateralism and the structuring of regional organizations, and actively contributing to the implementation of the EU Indo-Pacific Strategy established in September 2021².

1. [Link to France's Indo-Pacific strategy \(2022\)](#)

2. [Link to the EU strategy for the Indo-Pacific \(2021\)](#)

1. The intensification of strategic challenges

1.1. Tougher strategic competition and the erosion of multilateralism

The Indo-Pacific region includes several flashpoints, against a backdrop of growing rivalry between the United States and China. This dynamic is particularly evident in the arms race. China's growing assertiveness in the Taiwan Strait and China Seas, as well as tensions on the Korean peninsula and persistent disputes on the Indian subcontinent and in the Gulf, are undermining security throughout the region. The rapid buildup of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), among other things, with respect to its nuclear advances and its more assertive defense of global interests, are increasing friction with neighboring states and the U.S. The risk of an open crisis, with major consequences for the region, Europe and France – particularly the overseas collectivities where two million French citizens reside – is constantly growing. A high-intensity conflict in the Taiwan Strait would have major repercussions, both in terms of the global economy and the risk of geographic expansion.

The U.S. priority of containing China via the «peace through strength» doctrine is intensifying Sino-American competition. The link established by the new U.S. Administration between the economy and security guarantees is giving rise to uncertainties about their systems of alliances in the region. This accentuates the volatility of the strategic environment and encourages the potential fragmentation of the Indo-Pacific region.

In addition to Sino-American competition, the Indo-Pacific region is marked by the persistence of high regional tensions and growing uncertainties about the regional security architecture. In concrete terms, this translates into unprecedented levels of military spending and a heightened posture on the part of many regional players. The Indo-Pacific region features a number of trouble spots, often the result of unresolved territorial and maritime disputes. These crisis areas are also interconnected, due to networks of alliances and the risk of a rebound effect from one crisis to another, posing a risk of simultaneous conflicts. The military, economic and diplomatic ripple effects of a major crisis would have catastrophic consequences for Europe.

These dynamics are taking place amid the erosion of the multilateral system, which is particularly worrying in a region marked by a lack of security architecture. International law is regularly violated: the law of the sea and freedom of navigation are called into question by unilateral reinterpretations contrary to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and certain arbitration decisions are not respected. Furthermore, sanctions against proliferation decided on by the Security Council are openly flouted.

Nuclear issues occupy a central position in the Indo-Pacific region, given the presence of several nuclear-weapon states and possessor states, and the growth of their nuclear arsenals. The region is also facing a major proliferation crisis in North Korea, which is actively pursuing its nuclear and ballistic missile programs in violation of international law.

Finally, security issues are increasingly intertwined with economic, financial and technological ones, giving rise to hybrid forms of coercion: influence tactics, disinformation, economic warfare and lawfare, including on the seabed and in space. Against this backdrop, France is facing increasing interference in its overseas territories from countries such as Azerbaijan.

The deteriorating strategic context is undermining already fragile regional cooperation mechanisms, which are more necessary than ever. The Indo-Pacific is dealing with growing organized crime, including drug trafficking, human trafficking and online scams, as well as a resurgence of terrorism. In addition, the management of shared resources is complicated by increased competition and predatory actions involving fishing and mineral resources, including in shared areas.

1.2. A certain porousness between the European and Indo-Pacific theaters exacerbated by the war in Ukraine, but with their own dynamics

By undermining the foundations of an international order based on law and the principles of the United Nations Charter, Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine has had a disinhibiting effect, heightening threats to international peace and stability, including in the Indo-Pacific. It has encouraged certain regional players to engage in unilateralism, force and protectionism, and to close borders, thereby reigniting existing tensions.

Europe and the Indo-Pacific now face increasing interpenetration in terms of security challenges, resulting in accelerating change and shrinking strategic spaces. The war in Ukraine highlighted this increased porousness, despite the very distinct dynamics between the two areas. The role played by China has been essential in facilitating Russian aggression since 2022. The rapprochement between Russia and North Korea, initiated by Moscow to fuel its war effort (with North Korea sending ammunition and troops), and the supply of critical goods by third countries to Russia's Defense Technological and Industrial Base (DTIB), are the most visible examples. The de facto alignment between Russia and North Korea, reflected by the signing of a comprehensive strategic partnership treaty in June 2024, has profoundly destabilizing effects. In this context, North Korea's increasingly provocative stance is heightening tensions on the peninsula.

Russia also conducts military activities from the Indian Ocean to the Pacific, alone or in joint exercises, demonstrating its capacity for projection while putting pressure on certain States such as Japan. It takes part in actions aimed at undermining French sovereignty, notably by manipulating information, strengthening its influence in the immediate vicinity of French territories, and supporting the destabilizing actions of third-party States.

1.3. Trade tensions in an area that's crucial for the global economy

At a time when the Indo-Pacific is asserting itself as the main engine of global growth (accounting for 60% of world growth in 2025, and 35% of world GDP) and is a strategic zone for international trade (50% of world container traffic and 70% of energy raw materials transit through the Indian Ocean; the Strait of Malacca accounts for 18.5% of maritime flows, ahead of Taiwan), it is facing growing challenges and tensions. With more than half of all trade being intra-regional, economic integration is progressing unevenly, despite the existence of inter-regional agreements (i.e., the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP)) and a network of bilateral agreements. The region is economically diverse, with a mix of very open and protectionist economies, large G20 emerging economies and less developed countries.

This economic vitality goes hand in hand with increased economic structuring around China, both commercially and financially. Many countries are commercially and financially dependent on China, which is both their number one export market and their number one supplier (particularly in ASEAN), with its export capacity driven by overproduction. On the financial front, we are witnessing the development of alternative systems (for example, the Cross-border Interbank Payments System (CIPS) and swap agreements by the Central Bank of the People's Republic of China).

American measures (such as tariffs and export restrictions) are likely to weaken economies already vulnerable to external shocks and the effects of climate change. In response, companies are adapting their value chains, with targeted relocations – particularly to certain ASEAN countries. These

strategies of maintaining a presence in China while redeploying certain production sites to other countries (known as «China +1»), may encourage the emergence of new economic clusters. However, at least in the short term, they do not fundamentally alter the dominance of Chinese industry in value chains.

Sino-American tensions, rising protectionism and the instability of US economic policies underline the fragility of the geoeconomic positioning of many countries in the region. These countries suffer from the trade unilateralism of both of the world's two leading powers, with surpluses towards the United States³ and deficits towards China. This dual dependence is a constant feature of the Indo-Pacific, whatever the level of development of the countries concerned.

1.4. Worsening effects of climate change and biodiversity loss

The Indo-Pacific is a priority area facing the triple global crisis of climate change, biodiversity collapse and pollution. While this region accounts for a significant share of the world's challenges, it is also a key to the development of solutions, whether in terms of decarbonization technologies and industries, innovative financing, nature-based solutions, the fight against plastic pollution or adaptation to climate change.

The region now generates more than 50% of the world's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, largely due to China's growing coal consumption. It is also home to some of the planet's richest and most fragile biodiversity reserves: 50% of critical biodiversity areas and 70% of coral reefs, threatened by the effects of climate change (ocean acidification, coastal erosion) and human activities (urbanization, deforestation, overexploitation, environmental crime). Pollution, particularly air and ocean pollution, is also alarming, with air pollution the leading cause of premature death, and the «7th continent» of plastic (1.6 million km² in the Pacific).

Local societies and economies are directly impacted by this crisis, experiencing the intensification of typhoons, rising sea levels, flooding and drought. Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are struggling to build up their resilience. For the Pacific states, climate change is a major threat. According to the World Bank (2021), East Asia, the Pacific and South Asia could, in the worst-case scenario, have up to 89 million internally displaced persons by 2050. Environmental degradation also fuels poverty and tensions over access to water and fishery resources. In the Pacific, more than half of all fish species are overexploited. Biodiversity loss jeopardizes economic models based on tourism and the exploitation of natural resources.

3. Vietnam has the fourth-largest trade surplus with the USA, at \$123.5 billion in 2024. It is followed by Taiwan (\$73.9 billion), Japan (\$68.5 billion), South Korea (\$66 billion), India (\$45.7 billion) and Thailand (\$45.6 billion).

2. The distinctiveness of France's Indo-Pacific strategy

As an Indo-Pacific nation, France's future is intimately connected with that of the region, and it is determined to make a lasting and growing commitment to it. France intends to be an independent, singular voice in defense of an open, secure and inclusive space, free from all forms of coercion, founded on respect for international law, multilateralism and national sovereignty. We are guided by a consistent need for strategic autonomy in our ability to analyze, decide and take action within this space where we have major sovereign interests to preserve, and where we intend to fully assume our role as a trusted partner power.

2.1. Guaranteeing France's sovereignty and responding to the accelerating pace of strategic confrontation

In terms of security and defense, France's main objective is to guarantee the protection of its nationals, respect for the sovereignty of its territories, the integrity of its exclusive economic zones (EEZs), the preservation of supply flows and communication routes, and regional stability. To this end, it relies on a permanent military posture, divided into five commands covering the entire Indo-Pacific, which is currently being modernized as part of the 2024-2030 military programming law. (This law includes a provisional budget for the Overseas Territories of 13 billion euros aimed at financing, in particular, the ongoing delivery of 6 Overseas Patrol Boats and a first corvette, as well as the renewal of the multi-purpose helicopter fleet.) France is continuing its efforts to strengthen its ability to secure its environment and combat all forms of interference in the French overseas departments and territories (DROM-COM). It will continue to enhance its projection capability (strategic transport) and its pre-positioned forces to serve as an operational base in the event of deteriorating security.

This system of pre-positioned forces is reinforced by regular deployments of high-end capabilities in the Indo-Pacific, whose frequency and scale have intensified in recent years (there have been at least two deployments per year since 2020, such as the CLEMENCEAU, MARIANNE and PEGASE projection missions⁴). These deployments, which are part of a non-confrontational approach, send a strategic signal to our competitors, including the planning of joint bilateral and multilateral exercises. In 2025, the deployment of the carrier battle group around the aircraft carrier Charles de Gaulle to the Philippine Sea, as part of the CLEMENCEAU 25 mission, illustrated France's ability to produce effects in all environments and fields in the Indo-Pacific. In this way, France aims to ensure full respect for the application of international law, in particular the freedom of navigation and overflight guaranteed by UNCLOS, and guaranteed access to common spaces.

4. CLEMENCEAU: deployment of the French naval air group for presence, cooperation and combat operations. MARIANNE: deployment of French Navy vessels, including a nuclear attack submarine, to assert France's presence in the Indo-Pacific. PEGASE: rapid deployment of the French air and space force. It serves to demonstrate France's ability to project its air power over long distances.

2.2. A resolutely partnership-based approach to our work

France is developing its approach in close coordination with its allies and partners in the region, given the need to collectively address regional challenges. In order to develop initiatives with a regional dimension, France relies on priority strategic partnerships with several countries in the region, including India, Japan, Australia, Indonesia, Singapore, Vietnam, South Korea and the United Arab Emirates. Taking advantage of our strong similarities, France is working with these special partners to expand cooperation and coordinate additional actions with third countries within the Indo-Pacific region as well as regional organizations. The French-Indian partnership, based on a shared commitment to the development of both countries' strategic autonomies, is a prime example of this. The Indo-French Roadmap for the Indo-Pacific, adopted in 2023, formalizes our joint approach in all strategic areas. France also intends to take full advantage of the trilateral formats set up with India and Australia on the one hand, and with India and the United Arab Emirates on the other, to facilitate the implementation of concrete initiatives.

France shares the approach of its partner countries in the Indo-Pacific region, the vast majority of which refuse to be forced to choose between great powers and the division of the world into spheres of influence. What France offers is a diversification of partnerships that helps preserve freedom of action and increases partners' room to maneuver in an environment increasingly subject to strategic competition.

2.3. Seeking areas of complementarity with allied and like-minded countries

In keeping with the principle of «ally, but not aligned,» France is ready to work with the United States on areas of common interest, and on the basis of our comparative advantages, in order to contribute together to the stability of the zone. That was this spirit in which a French-American dialogue on the Indo-Pacific was launched in 2024. The aim is to extend cooperation beyond the security and defense sphere, where it is already dense and concrete.

At the March 2023 Summit, France and the UK confirmed their shared commitment to deepening dialogue on Indo-Pacific issues, and to working in a coordinated fashion on maritime security and climate resilience, as well as on our military deployments in the area. Similarly, the Canada-France Declaration on a Stronger Defense and Security Partnership adopted in 2024 lays the foundations for active cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, particularly on multilateral exercises.

Our position on the role of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in the Indo-Pacific remains guided by the framework set out in the Alliance's Strategic Concept in 2022: the Alliance remains extremely vigilant to the risks and challenges emanating from the Indo-Pacific insofar as they have implications for the security and defense of the Euro-Atlantic area, and particularly in the context of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. NATO remains a defensive alliance whose mission is to guarantee the security of the Euro-Atlantic area against all threats, wherever they come from. In this context, France calls on regional powers to act responsibly by not supporting Russia's war effort or undermining European security.

2.4. Pursuing a rigorous dialogue with China

Finally, France's strategy takes into account the growing power of China, which is a key factor in the development of the Indo-Pacific region and, more broadly in international relations. In line with the three-pronged vision endorsed by the European Council in 2020, France sees China as a partner, a competitor and a systemic rival. It maintains a close and rigorous dialogue with the Chinese authorities at the highest level, seeking convergence on international crises and global issues wherever possible. In particular, France has expressed its concern about China's role as a facilitator of the Russian war effort. Like its European partners, France is opposed to any economic decoupling and supports an agenda to reduce China's economic and trade imbalances, notably by re-establishing a framework of fair competition and reducing excessive strategic dependence.

France reaffirms its unwavering one-China policy and expresses its attachment to the preservation of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait. It opposes any unilateral modification of the status quo, particularly through the use or threat of force or coercion, and calls for the peaceful resolution of disputes. In the South and East China Seas, France does not take sides in territorial disputes, but calls for the respect of international law as defined by UNCLOS. It opposes any use of force, as well as any form of coercion or destabilizing actions, including the militarization of disputed elements, and affirms the need for safe and professional behavior in all areas of maritime law.

3. Enhancing the value of French Overseas Communities in the Indian Ocean and Pacific

France's strategy in the Indo-Pacific is based on its overseas departments, regions and communities, which are both players and beneficiaries. Seven of the 13 overseas territories are located in the Indo-Pacific zone: La Réunion, Mayotte, New Caledonia, French Polynesia, Wallis and Futuna, the French Southern and Antarctic Lands (TAAF) and Passion Island-Clipperton. These territories are fully committed to implementing the strategy, thanks to their geographic location, their strengths and influence.

3.1. Overseas France, a driving force in implementing France's Indo-Pacific strategy

3.1.1. *Strengthening synergy between the State and the various players involved in regional cooperation*

In order to strengthen synergies with stakeholders involved in regional cooperation, the French government includes overseas communities in the development and implementation of its Indo-Pacific strategy. It supports their regional integration and their efforts to expand their own influence, while respecting the strengths of each. Thanks to its overseas communities, France is a member of several regional organizations, including the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC), the Pacific Community (SPC), and the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP). France is also a member of Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) focusing on tuna, among them the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), in which French Polynesia, New Caledonia, and Wallis and Futuna have Participating Territory status. New Caledonia and French Polynesia are members of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), in which France has the status of Dialogue Partner (see 5.3), and of the Pacific Island Chiefs of Police (PICP, which Wallis and Futuna would also like to join). France is a founding member of the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), and would like Mayotte to be fully involved as an Indian Ocean territory facing the same challenges as the rest of the Indo-Pacific region.

A basin strategy for regional cooperation will be adopted at the 2025 Ocean regional cooperation Conference (CCROI). This strategy will complement existing arrangements, including an ambassador for regional cooperation, the CCROI, the French Indian Ocean Coordination Platform (PCFOI), and the Regional Cooperation Fund (FCR). A Mayotte Regional Integration Committee (CIRM) was also established in 2024.

In the Pacific, the establishment in Nouméa of the posts of Ambassador, Permanent Secretary for the Pacific and Permanent Representative to the SPC and SPREP, in 2023, facilitate exchanges with regional authorities and organizations. The Pacific Fund supports economic, social and cultural partnerships, promoting the integration of French communities into their regional environment. Within regional organizations, the aim is to create effective mechanisms for consultation and coordination between the State and local authorities. France also supports local authority executives in their efforts to gain access to positions of responsibility within these organizations.

In addition, the secondment of local government representatives to French embassies in neighboring countries, already the case for New Caledonia and La Réunion, is being studied for other territories and will be launched shortly for Mayotte. A network of «overseas points of contact» for Indo-Pacific overseas communities has been set up for the diplomatic posts most concerned. The strengthening of the network of diplomatic advisors to regional prefects (CDPR) in overseas France, with the recent creation of the post to the High Commissioner in French Polynesia, complements these partnership and support mechanisms.

Strengthening these synergies, an effort involving all ministerial departments, helps foster concrete cooperative projects that enhance the stability, security and prosperity of the overseas territories and Indo-Pacific basins. The joint construction of Indo-Pacific roadmaps for each territory, such as the one currently being finalized with La Réunion, should help make this ambition a reality.

3.1.2. Supporting key projects in priority areas for regional development

The territories will continue to play a key role in shaping French and European strategies in the Indo-Pacific region with an expanded capacity for action, based on an effort recognized by our neighbors in regional partnership forums.

France's overseas territories are key drivers in the development of economic, scientific, cultural and academic exchanges in the Indo-Pacific. The integration of the universities of La Réunion and Mayotte into the IORA university network (UNIOR) illustrates the strengthening of ties in the Indian Ocean. The implementation of a mobility and vocational training program through the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) is underway, with financial support from France. It will complement the REUNION program financed by the EU through the INTERREG program, which targets the wider Indian Ocean basin. In the Pacific, France, in collaboration with the universities of New Caledonia and French Polynesia, plans to implement a mobility program for students and researchers from the region through the Pacific Islands Universities Research Network (PIURN). Building on the success of the annual International Oceanian Film Festival (FIFO) in Papeete, it has also initiated a project for an audiovisual support fund, with a dual emphasis on creativity and heritage, that could be supported by the Pacific Community (SPC).

Economic and scientific projects are being developed to meet the environmental challenges of France's overseas territories. SWAC (Sea Water Air Conditioning) technology, for example, enables French Polynesia's expertise in renewable energies to be exported for sustainable regional development. In terms of health safety, epidemiological monitoring networks will be interconnected to improve the resilience of these territories.

Overseas France also plays a key role in humanitarian assistance (through Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief, or (HADR)), which provides support bases for regional partners. One example of this was the assistance it provided during the December 17, 2024, earthquake in Vanuatu. France is strengthening its training capabilities through the Indian Ocean Academy in La Réunion, by supporting the Red Cross Indian Ocean Regional Response Platform (PIROI) and by leading the work of the Indian Ocean Rim States Association (IORA) on HADR with Madagascar. As part of the Pacific Academy, France relies on the relevant expertise of the French government and New Caledonia to implement its civil protection training programs.

Finally, the French Overseas Territories support the internal security forces of neighboring countries, both to make the region safer and for their own security. France is stepping up its efforts against drug trafficking through agreements with several States (including the Republic of Mauritius in February 2024).

3.2. The Indo-Pacific strategy for the benefit of the French overseas territories

The Indo-Pacific strategy is designed to meet the specific needs of overseas territories, particularly in terms of threat protection, regional integration and economic diversification.

3.2.1. *Enhanced protection against threats, risks and interference*

In the face of growing attempts to destabilize the French overseas territories through hybrid threats, France is stepping up its protection of the French overseas territories. This involves developing the cybersecurity ecosystem through the deployment of the Resilience law and support for the creation of incident response centers – two are active on La Réunion and in New Caledonia. Limiting the vulnerability of submarine cables and their exposure to sabotage is also essential. Securing them in conjunction with the EU through physical redundancy and by strengthening maintenance capabilities is a priority, depending on the legal status of the overseas territories in the Indian and Pacific Oceans⁵. Overseas territories also receive dedicated support in the fight against information manipulation and special attention in terms of transnational law enforcement.

Overseas France contributes to the regional maritime safety and security architecture (RMSA) in the Indian Ocean. France, along with Indonesia and the EU, has contributed to the IORA guidelines against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing; over 60 joint patrols have been carried out as part of the IOC's Regional Fisheries Surveillance Program (PRSP). The French Armed Forces in the Southern Indian Ocean Zone (FAZSOI) are involved in coordinating maritime operations in this basin. The creation of academies in the overseas communities focusing on stability/defense, maritime security, internal security and civil security, is part of this effort in support of regional initiatives (see 4.1.).

France is stepping up its efforts to anticipate climate risks and promote strategic co-management with local authorities in the French overseas territories. The KIWA initiative, launched by the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) in 2020 and renewed in 2023 (see 4.3), facilitates access to financing for adaptation to climate change. France also supports the Climate Risk and Early Warning System (CREWS) initiative, in conjunction with Weather Ready Pacific (led by Australia and New Zealand) for early warnings of natural disasters.

In addition, airport and maritime infrastructures will be adapted to security and natural crises. Increasing the capabilities of the armed forces, as well as making greater use of European space solutions, are designed to guarantee the sovereignty and digital resilience of the French overseas territories.

3.2.2. *Pursuing the regional economic integration of overseas territories*

The French strategy aims to expand regional trade and reduce dependence on French markets. In particular, France is developing an interministerial strategy to boost regional trade between La Réunion and Mayotte. Similarly, the negotiation of a free trade agreement between New Caledonia and Vanuatu, supported by the French government, should help strengthen New Caledonia's regional integration. The regional integration of the overseas territories relies on increased support for exports by overseas companies through collective actions, support for first-time exporters and models adapted to island realities (see the roadmap for the blue economy). Ongoing support for the economic attractiveness of the French overseas territories has led to the signing of Team France Export agreements with New Caledonia and French Polynesia, and the organization of business trips to neighboring countries such as Fiji and New Zealand.

France contributes to improving all aspects of connectivity in the French overseas territories: digital (through post-SAFE submarine cables, T4 in the Indian Ocean), maritime (transshipments and secondary cabotage lines) and air (Singapore-Nouméa and Bangkok-Nouméa links, and Air France

⁵. With a difference in integration within the EU between outermost regions (ORs) such as Mayotte and La Réunion, and overseas countries and territories (OCTs) such as New Caledonia, French Polynesia, the French Southern and Antarctic Lands (TAAF), and Wallis and Futuna.

return flights on the Paris-Manila and Papeete-Wallis routes). France promotes safe connectivity by taking part in regional meetings of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and by supporting the European INTERREG and Global Gateway programs. In this context, La Réunion is positioned as an air and maritime hub and French Polynesia as a digital connectivity hub.

Finally, promoting and protecting the expertise and know-how of overseas territories is essential. Tools such as those of French Tech (see the Capitale French Tech certification awarded to La Réunion for 2023-2025), the Tech4Islands Summit Tahiti, and the Bois-Rouge technoport project (La Réunion), as well as the new tech hubs and data centers in Papeete, Mayotte and La Réunion, are contributing to the regional integration of overseas territories by promoting innovation.

4. Developing sovereignty partnerships

France is committed to meeting the challenges of the Indo-Pacific region through a partnership-based, multidimensional approach. It offers the countries of the region partnerships based on respect for the sovereign equality of States. These sovereignty-based partnerships help to reduce the risk of dependence on the great powers, whose unilateralist tendencies are on the increase, and to guarantee the capacity to exercise sovereign choices. They also aim to strengthen the resilience of the countries concerned. These sovereignty partnerships are intended to fuel a positive agenda in areas deemed priorities by the region: security and defense; the economy, connectivity and energy transition; and climate, the environment and health issues.

4.1. Mutually beneficial security-defense capability partnerships to enhance interoperability

Defending France's sovereign interests in the Indo-Pacific is inseparable from active participation in regional security efforts. France is strengthening its security and defense partnerships in order to develop greater interoperability with its allies and partners, while consolidating its credibility as an actor committed to regional stability.

4.1.1. Strengthening operational cooperation

France's operational cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region is designed to facilitate joint engagements. In particular, they are based on the development of military exercises with partner armed forces. French deployments in the area, such as CLEMENCEAU, MARIANNE and PEGASE, are accompanied by regular participation in bilateral and multilateral exercises, which test and improve the interoperability of French forces and promote their integration into regional security systems. The quality of these partnerships, developed over many years, also makes it easier for France to have access to strategic support points in the event of a major crisis.

As a member of the South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting (SPDMM), France shares the priorities of the region's States: strengthening interoperability, ensuring resilience in the face of climate change, combating overfishing, and training in the fields of defense and security. In line with its Global Strategy to combat IUU fishing, France has drawn up a legal framework to enable fisheries inspectors from partner countries to embark on French military vessels (shipriding), facilitating controls and procedures in EEZs.

France also participates in the Pacific Quad Coordination Group alongside the United States, Australia and New Zealand, in support of maritime surveillance and the fight against IUU fishing, notably through the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency. It initiated the Pacific Coast Guard Network (2021), which meets annually in French Polynesia and New Caledonia.

Finally, as part of the FRANZ mechanism, France coordinates natural disaster relief with Australia and New Zealand. It supports greater inclusion of island states in the governance of this mechanism, while ensuring that it is properly coordinated with the Pacific Humanitarian Warehousing Program (PHWP), to which it also contributes.

4.1.2. Supporting our partners' capacity development

France supports capacity-building initiatives aimed at shaping and modernizing the armed and security forces of partner countries. The Regional Centre for Maritime Studies (RCMS), a bilateral Franco-Sri Lankan project set up in 2024, is designed to train civilian and military personnel from partner countries in the challenges of government actions at sea, from maritime surveillance and anti-trafficking missions to protection of the marine environment.

The creation of the Pacific and Indian Ocean Academies aims to strengthen training in the fields of security and defense, and to promote the sharing of doctrines. These initiatives contribute to the shaping of coherent and effective French training in response to expressed needs.

4.1.3. Contributing to maritime safety and security

France is promoting a regional maritime security and safety architecture to enable a collective response to piracy, maritime terrorism, trafficking and IUU fishing. In 2021, it joined the Heads of Asian Coast Guard Agencies Meeting (HACGAM), which brings together 22 countries and two associate members (the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)). It also contributes to Maritime Domain Awareness, notably through the presence of liaison officers in the various Information Fusion Centers in Madagascar, India and Singapore, as well as at the operational coordination center in the Seychelles.

The Maritime Information Cooperation & Awareness Center (MICA Center), based in Brest, supports these actions by monitoring, alerting and supporting players in the maritime industry. This contribution is coordinated with that of the European Union (see 6.1). In the context of the development of the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC), the expertise of the Ministry of the Armed Forces could be used to strengthen the protection of submarine cables, in coordination with the relevant partners.

4.1.4. Promoting greater resilience to cyber risk and digital interference

Faced with an increasing number of cyberattacks, France is developing cybersecurity partnerships, notably via the French Cybersecurity Agency (ANSSI), which joined the Pacific Cyber Security Operational Network (PaCSON) in 2024, enabling the sharing of best practices, specialized training and greater coordination of responses to cyber threats.

France also supports the establishment of national cybersecurity centers in places such as India and Indonesia, as well as specific training programs for Pacific Island states (ACAPAC). It is deepening its strategic cyber partnerships with key countries in the region, notably through inter-ministerial dialogues (with India, Japan and the United States), and operational cooperation (with Singapore and South Korea). Within the framework of the South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting (SPDMM), France supports its partners' ability to gather, process and analyze information to ensure their cybersecurity.

The deployment of a specialized international technical expert (ITE), based in Thailand, supports the fight against cybercrime, particularly online child pornography.

Furthermore, in the face of increasingly sophisticated campaigns to manipulate information, France is developing partnerships to combat the information threat.

4.2. Economic and commercial partnerships for sustainable development

France is developing partnerships to meet the challenges of economic diversification and resilience. The economic component of France's Indo-Pacific strategy has four objectives:

- To contribute to our economic sovereignty and resilience by diversifying strategic supplies and export outlets, and pursuing the regional economic integration of overseas France.
- To support the positioning of French economic interests in a zone of growing economic importance by promoting the expertise and know-how of French companies, including overseas companies, SMEs and ETIs, and by mobilizing institutional support, Team France Export and financial instruments to the greatest possible extent with a view to supporting exports to strategic sectors and priority locations. France finances this support through loans and guarantees provided by the French Treasury (at the end of 2023, Indo-Pacific export credit insurance outstanding was close to 9 billion euros, i.e., 15% of the global total, and between 2020 and 2024, 25 projects received a total of 12 million euros in funding from the French Private Sector Study and Aid Fund (FASEP)).
- To meet the Indo-Pacific's needs in terms of connectivity and sustainable, high-quality infrastructure, particularly in the energy, urban, and transport sectors, in line with the objectives of the Paris Agreement and the promotion of French know-how, with the aim of contributing to the prosperity, sustainability and sovereignty of all economies.
- To contribute to balanced multilateral trade and financial governance based on fair competition rules. France actively promotes sustainable sovereign debt policies via the Paris Club Secretariat.

It is strengthening its bilateral economic dialogues with India, Indonesia, Vietnam, the Philippines and Thailand, as well as its support for the multilateral development banks active in the region (the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank).

It supports the implementation of the Paris Pact for People and the Planet (4P) agenda, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, of which the Paris Agreement is an essential component, in keeping with France's policy of solidarity and sustainable investment.

To support French companies in high-performing sectors, France is increasing the visibility and clarity of its export supports, notably through enhanced synergies between Bpifrance, the French Treasury, the relevant technical ministries and AFD, for the benefit of partner countries, their companies and authorities. Particular attention is paid to supporting Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) and Intermediate-Sized Enterprises (ISEs) by directing aid instruments toward sectors with high-tech expertise.

4.2.1. Accompanying and accelerating the energy transition

French expertise is being mobilized to strengthen local capacities, promote sustainable cooperation and develop low-carbon infrastructures to promote energy security. The French energy sector is involved in a number of projects to decarbonize the energy mix in South Asia, and to strengthen electricity interconnections in Southeast Asia (ASEAN Power Grid), an initiative considered a priority both for its contribution to the energy transition and energy security, and for its impact on regional integration.

France is helping to finance country platforms and just energy transition partnerships (JETP) in Indonesia, Vietnam and South Africa, and co-chairs the International Solar Alliance with India, with particular support for the STAR-C (Solar Technology Application Resource Center) capacity-building program.

France is strengthening its existing cooperation (India) and developing new cooperation (Vietnam, Singapore, Indonesia) in the field of civil nuclear energy, particularly with regard to the development of small modular reactor technologies. It is offering its expertise in nuclear safety to support the development of this sector in accordance with international obligations.

It also supports its partners in the development of the low-carbon hydrogen sector, as illustrated by the signing of a joint roadmap with India. The mobilization of research institutions and the private sector is encouraged through, for example, the Franco-Australian Centre for Energy Transition. Finally, through its contribution to the Green Climate Fund, the largest multilateral climate financing mechanism, France is actively participating in decarbonizing the region.

In terms of energy efficiency in cities and buildings, France is strengthening its cooperation with Japan, India, China, Vietnam, Singapore, and all countries supporting the Déclaration de Chaillot.

4.2.2. Meeting the need for sustainable, resilient infrastructure and connectivity

France supports the development of rail transport infrastructures, both long-distance and urban. In the Indo-Pacific region, the need for such infrastructure is considerable, and meets both social inclusion and carbon footprint reduction objectives. France's internationally renowned rail industry is mobilizing to support high-speed rail projects in several countries in the region: Australia, Cambodia, India and Vietnam. A Rail Summit will be held in France to showcase French expertise and promote public-private partnerships.

France is a signatory to the Memorandum of Understanding for the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC), which will link India to the port of Marseille. It actively supports the corridor's construction in various partnership formats, and appointed a Special Envoy for the IMEC in November 2023. By leveraging French industrial know-how in the development phase of this corridor, the IMEC will become a project of national interest aimed at strengthening France's economic footprint in the areas concerned, while promoting connectivity, sustainable growth trajectories and access to clean energy. In the long term, the IMEC corridor aims to provide additional options to existing trade routes between India, the Middle East and Europe. France is also examining the feasibility of alternative connections, in addition to the initial route between India and the Arabian Peninsula.

In the maritime sector, France is engaged in the decarbonization of transport and logistics corridors, with the aim of reducing net greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to zero by 2050, in line with the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) 2023 strategy. It calls on its Indo-Pacific partners to vote in favor of the decisions taken at IMO under MEPC 83 concerning the decarbonization of maritime transport. To this end, it is developing strategic bilateral partnerships, notably via the renewed Maritime Partnership with Singapore in 2025. France is also actively contributing to the maritime decarbonization initiatives deployed as part of the European Global Gateway strategy (see 6.2).

France promotes the highest standards for sustainable infrastructure projects, including the development of access to drinking water, sanitation, the circular economy and waste management. It supports the G20 QII Principles, the deployment of the SOURCE platform and the dissemination of the FAST-Infra label in the Indo-Pacific region. France encourages countries to join the FAST-Infra Group, the label's governing association. Since 2020, France has also been a member of the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), which it has co-chaired with India since April 2024, and which is expanding cooperation with IORA to strengthen infrastructure resilience in the region.

4.2.3 Working to ensure energy security and diversify supplies

France is committed to developing diversified, resilient and balanced supply chains for ores and critical metals. To this end, it has forged partnerships with several resource-rich countries (Australia, Mongolia) and countries involved in mineral processing (Japan). The nickel industry in New Caledonia is set to play a central role, and strategic partnerships must be sought, in consultation with the New Caledonian government, with countries sharing the same economic security objectives. An initial industrial rare earth separation project, co-financed with Japan, was inaugurated in March 2025 in the Pyrénées-Atlantiques region, marking a significant step toward European and Japanese sovereignty over critical materials.

4.3. Partnerships for an integrated and innovative approach to global challenges

In the Indo-Pacific, perhaps even more than elsewhere, our collective ability to meet the challenges of sustainable development, at the heart of the United Nations' Agenda 2030, is at stake.

4.3.1. Supporting adherence to international environmental, climate and biodiversity instruments

France reaffirms its commitment to implementing the Paris Agreement, in particular by supporting a just transition away from fossil fuels in energy systems and to accelerate the phase-out of coal in the Indo-Pacific.

France calls on its partners to publish ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and associated long-term strategies, based on the latest scientific data and the results of the global assessment. It encourages them to present emission reduction targets that cover all greenhouse gases, all sectors and all categories, as part of the five-year review process for NDCs, which is crucial to the success of COP30 and subsequent conferences.

It is also committed to supporting the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, in particular by supporting the development of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) and the target of protecting 30% of land and seas by 2030. It pays particular attention to preserving biodiversity reservoirs and carbon sinks such as the forests of the Borneo-Mekong basin and Papua New Guinea, the mangroves of India and Bangladesh, and ocean areas. In 2023, as part of its trilateral dialogue with India and the United Arab Emirates, it joined the Mangrove Alliance for Climate (MAC), an Emirati initiative promoting mangroves as a Nature-Based Solution (NBS). It actively supports the creation, expansion and strengthening of marine protected areas. It supports the fight against deforestation, particularly in the context of promoting sustainable value chains.

Finally, it calls for the development of the circular economy, and for waste reduction and treatment. It supports the fight against plastic pollution throughout the entire life cycle, including production, particularly in South-East Asia, and is campaigning for the adoption of a legally binding global treaty on this issue, in coordination with like-minded states, in particular the countries of Oceania. In 2024, France and the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) signed the Bridge to Busan Declaration on primary plastic polymers, thus continuing Pacific efforts in favor of a legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment.

Finally, France supports the fight against plastic pollution, particularly in Southeast Asia, in coordination with like-minded countries, especially Pacific Island countries. It supports the ratification and the implementation of a legally binding international instrument against plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, taking into account the entire life cycle of plastics, including their production. As signatories to the "Bridge to Busan" declaration since 2024, France and the Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP) call for a reduction in the production and consumption of primary plastic polymers. Affirming their ambition, France and several countries in the Indo-Pacific region (Armenia, Australia, Cambodia, Cook Islands, Cook Islands, Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands, Maldives, Micronesia, Mongolia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu) signed the French-initiated declaration "The Nice wake-up call for an ambitious plastics treaty" in 2025 to conclude negotiations on an effective and ambitious treaty.

4.3.2. Implementing innovative partnerships to adapt to climate change and protect biodiversity

On all these crucial issues, France helps develop innovative partnerships, notably through its operators.

The Agence Française de Développement (AFD) Group is expanding its presence in the Indo-Pacific region, where its outstanding commitments now total €13 billion⁶. Its mandate has been extended to include climate change adaptation projects in the Pacific Island states. Its regional presence has been extended with the opening of offices in Vanuatu, Fiji and Papua New Guinea.

⁶. 13 billion euros in AFD financing for the Indo-Pacific was signed for 2019-2023, including 11.4 billion euros in contributions to the climate SDGs and 1.8 billion euros in contributions to the biodiversity SDGs.

AFD leads key projects focused on societal resilience and the protection of biodiversity. Among them, the Kiwa Initiative, co-financed by the European Union, Australia, Canada and New Zealand, covers 19 Pacific Island states and territories and promotes nature-based solutions. France also supports the implementation of the Country Package for Forests, Nature and Climate in Papua New Guinea, the world's third-largest primary forest reserve.

These objectives also involve other French operators, which work together on joint projects through equitable scientific partnerships to further sustainable development. For example, in the Pacific, the Pacific Climate, Local Knowledge and Adaptation Strategies program (CLIPSSA) brings together the French National Research Institute for Sustainable Development (IRD), Météo France and AFD to provide island states and territories with climate data predictions, which are essential to their ability to adapt to rising sea levels. In the Indian Ocean, the Varuna program (whose partners include AFD, IRD, the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD), and Expertise France) aims to strengthen the management of marine protected areas. The BRIDGES program, led by the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS), IRD and the French National Institute for Ocean Science and Technology (IFREMER), is developing new regional scientific cooperation on marine conservation, climate resilience and food security.

Finally, as the first contributor to the Loss and Damage Fund (with the Philippines as host country of the Board of Directors), which was operationalized at COP28 in Dubai and which it has co-chaired since April 2024, France is actively involved in supporting countries in the region facing the impacts of climate change.

4.3.3. Contributing to the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean

Together with its partners, France is implementing Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG 14) of the United Nations Agenda 2030, which is dedicated to the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans.

As the host country of the 2025 United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC3) (which will be held in Nice in June 2025) France, along with Costa Rica, has encouraged the Indo-Pacific countries to make commitments at the highest level. It will continue to promote the rapid entry into force of the Agreement on Marine Biodiversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ), and combat unregulated deep-sea mining.

France advocates a science-based approach by supporting the development of ocean sciences and marine research. It also supports Indo-Pacific states in their marine conservation initiatives, with projects such as the Sea Academy in the Philippines, which is dedicated to the creation of marine protected areas, or the extension of the use of the Sustainable Island label in Indonesia. This support includes maritime surveillance training, participation in oceanographic campaigns, the implementation of sustainable marine resource management plans, and support for the development of sustainable coastal tourism.

4.3.4. Promoting resilient health architecture

France also plans to mobilize its expertise in support of key health projects. The Institut Pasteur and the Pasteur Network, which comprises nine member institutes in the Indo-Pacific⁷, are helping to strengthen local prevention and epidemiological surveillance capabilities as part of the One Health approach, which recognizes the interdependence between human health, animal health and ecosystems. The Institute plans to strengthen its strategic partnerships in the region (notably in Singapore) and, in cooperation with CIRAD, IRD and AFD, reinforce coordination between three existing regional networks: the Pacific Public Health Surveillance Network (PPHSN), the ECONomic development, ECOsystem Modifications, and emerging infectious diseases Risk Evaluation (ECOMORE) program in Southeast Asia, and the Indian Ocean Commission's SEGA One Health Network.

⁷. Antananarivo, Phnom Penh, Vientiane, Ho Chi Minh City, Nha Trang, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Seoul, Nouméa. The launch of the Pasteur Institute of Japan is underway.

This network of networks aims to strengthen regional health security by recommending public health measures and creating synergy with the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases (ACPHEED).

AFD finances projects in the region via the international initiative for PREventing ZOonotic Disease Emergence (PREZODE), including via its first operational initiative PREACTS. In 2022, France also launched the French-Indian Campus for Health in the Indo-Pacific, which is dedicated to the health applications of the life sciences and which aims to become a regional hub for researchers and academics.

4.3.5. Promoting people-to-people and academic exchanges

France maintains an ongoing conversation with its partners to identify the most appropriate ways of facilitating people-to-people mobility, including through student scholarship programs, the legal immigration of talented young people, international volunteering programs, Expertise France, and French Institute programs. These efforts also involve global agreements on immigration, in particular agreements negotiated at the European level, as well as joint efforts to combat irregular migration. The Joint Research Units of French Research Institutes Abroad (UMIFRE), five⁸ of which are based in the region, help to strengthen mutual understanding and scientific links between France, Europe and Indo-Pacific countries. UMIFRE supports collaborative research, particularly on sustainable development issues, and employs a multidisciplinary and intercultural perspective that takes into account the social consequences of climate and digital transitions.

4.3.6. Boosting exchanges on digital technology and AI

France champions the use of artificial intelligence (AI) to further the public interest, as well as economic, social and environmental progress. To this end, France co-chaired with India the Summit for Action on AI held in Paris in February 2025 and supports the organization of a Summit in India in 2026. The two countries launched a joint roadmap for the development of safe, open, secure and trustworthy AI.

France is in advanced talks regarding the possibility of its partners in the region joining the Current AI foundation, which is dedicated to public interest AI and aims to address inequalities in access to AI. The investments announced at the AI Action Summit (totaling 109 billion euros) will, in particular, allow for the establishment of sovereign data centers in the Indo-Pacific.

France has established itself as a key player when it comes to digital technology and innovation. It promotes the convergence of quantum research ecosystems, and ensures that European and Indo-Pacific interests are represented in forums such as the Quantum Development Group (which is comprised of Australia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, Korea, UK, USA). France invites its partners to help define future standards for quantum technology. In the field of semiconductors, France is committed to resilient supply chains based on the diversification of sources, cooperation and common standards.

⁸. Pondicherry, New Delhi, Hong Kong, Bangkok, Tokyo.

5. Supporting regional multilateralism and dynamics

France is fully committed to an effective multilateralism that is based on respect for the UN Charter and the rule of law. It supports regional organizations in managing common challenges and encourages complementary mini-lateral cooperation. This flexible, targeted and like-minded-based form of cooperation helps strengthen regional dynamics founded on shared priorities. However, we must avoid all forms of polarization and the duplication of existing efforts.

5.1. The Indian Ocean

France is stepping up its participation in Indian Ocean regional organizations, notably the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), which it joined as a full member in 2021, the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI), which it joined in 2021, and the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), whose presidency it will assume from 2026-2027. As a coastal state, France is also a full member of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS). France is also an active member of regional fisheries management organizations (RFMO), such as the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA), which is headquartered in La Réunion, and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC).

France supports these organizations' activities, develops initiatives with them, and encourages better coordination of their activities. To this end, France leverages La Réunion's expertise and infrastructure (see 3.2) in coordination with European Union programs (see 6.1). As a member of the IOC, France is keen to strengthen sustainable development cooperation in the Indian Ocean region. It is also committing human and naval resources to the Safe Seas Africa program, which is funded by the European Union. This program aims to finance the operationalization of the regional maritime safety and security architecture that was set up by MASE agreements in the Indian Ocean by strengthening regional maritime information centers' capabilities and operational coordination (in Madagascar and the Seychelles, respectively).

France also supports the implementation of IORA's Outlook on the Indo-Pacific via financial support for the organization's 2024-2027 action plan provided by AFD

5.2. Southeast Asia

France supports the central role of ASEAN⁹, where it became a Development Partner in 2020. The views shared in the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (2019) largely align with France's approach and form the basis for numerous partnerships in areas such as the energy transition, the environment, health, the blue economy and training.

The development partnership action plan broadens and deepens this cooperation, notably through training programs for young diplomats (ASEAN Junior Fellowship Programme), civil security trainings, and energy integration projects.

France also participates in the security bodies set up by ASEAN. Since 2019, France has been an observer at ASEANPOL focused on combating transnational crime. In 2024, France was granted

⁹. Since the February 1, 2021, coup d'état, France has not recognized the government of the military regime in Myanmar.

observer status at the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus) in the Maritime Security and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) working groups, for the 2024-2027 period. Building on the development partnership's achievements and the experience acquired therein, France aims to become a full member of ADMM-Plus and eventually an ASEAN Dialogue Partner.

5.3. The Pacific

In conjunction with its overseas collectivities, France plays an active role in Pacific regional organizations and supports their initiatives, particularly in terms of sustainable development and resilience in the face of global challenges.

France is a founding member of the Pacific Community (SPC), which is headquartered in Nouméa, and, along with its territories (New Caledonia, French Polynesia and Wallis and Futuna), is the largest contributor to the organization. New Caledonia has signed a framework partnership agreement for the 2024-2027 period and French Polynesia hosted the SPC Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations meeting in November 2024. France's expert organizations in these territories (Institut Pasteur, Institut Louis Malardé, IRD, CIRAD, New Caledonian Agronomic Institute (IAC), and the Island Research Center and Environmental Observatory (CRIOBE)) are regularly involved in SPC cooperation efforts. The Pacific Ocean Initiative, implemented by the AFD in partnership with the SPC, supports small island states' efforts to protect biodiversity and foster resilient development.

New Caledonia and French Polynesia have been full members of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) since 2016, Wallis and Futuna became associate members in 2018, and France is a PIF Dialogue Partner. France supports the implementation of the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent that was adopted by PIF members. It supports the Boe Declaration's call for a collective response to the threats faced by Pacific communities and the preservation of their way of life. As a PIF Dialogue Partner, France wishes to join in deliberations on sovereignty issues and increase its participation in PIF's work while respecting the rights and obligations that the communities enjoy as full members.

France, along with its three communities, is also a member of the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP). In partnership with SPREP, AFD supports the Sustainable Waste Actions in the Pacific project (SWAP), which aims to strengthen sustainable waste management in the region. The 2025 opening of a French embassy in Apia, Samoa, where SPREP's headquarters are located, will enable cooperation with the organization to be stepped up.

5.4. Mini-lateral cooperation

Regional cooperation is enhanced by mini-lateral cooperation, and trilateral dialogues in particular.

The India-France--Australia Trilateral Dialogue, which began in 2020, is based on a shared vision of respect for international law. This vision is reflected in the countries' joint projects on maritime safety, the environment, and coordinated action in multilateral forums.

In 2023, a trilateral dialogue began between France, India and the United Arab Emirates. This dialogue is based on the countries' shared desire to promote stability in the Indian Ocean. It paves the way for cooperation on climate change, biodiversity protections, emerging technology, research and culture. One key priority of this dialogue is defense cooperation, namely efforts to strengthen military interoperability.

6. Contributing actively to the implementation of the European strategy

The European Union (EU) and its member states are the leading providers of development aid and foreign direct investment in the Indo-Pacific. The EU is also the region's leading trading partner. What's more, now, the EU is a leading political force in the region, as demonstrated by the numerous agreements on strengthening partnerships, fostering political dialogue and deepening cooperation.

The implementation of the EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, which was adopted in 2021, remains a priority for the new Commission (2024-2029). The EU is committed to building lasting partnerships with countries and multilateral organizations in the region. The EU's outermost regions and overseas countries and territories are recognized for the important role they play in this approach. France also actively supports the prioritization of strengthening EU-India and EU-ASEAN relations, in order to jointly defend respect for the sovereignty of States and promote an open world and sustainable trade.

6.1. Contributing significantly to European Union operations, missions and programs

France will fully play its role in implementing the European agenda, in line with its own strategy and with respect for the respective competences of the EU and its Member States. France will do so primarily through its overseas territories, which will become intermediaries for Europe's actions.

The French armed forces have made decisive contributions to European naval operations aimed at securing the shipping lanes linking the Indo-Pacific to Europe. France founded Operation ATALANTE in 2008 and remains committed to fighting piracy and illicit trafficking in the Indian Ocean. In response to attacks on shipping in the Red Sea, France played a leading role in the 2024 launch of Operation ASPIDES, which aims to restore freedom of navigation and secure trade flows. In an effort to ensure consistency among European naval initiatives, France is currently advocating for the streamlining of EU maritime operations in the northern Indian Ocean, while maintaining their defensive, non-escalatory and strictly proportionate posture.

France is mobilizing its expertise in capacity building to help its regional partners. The public operator Expertise France is implementing the Critical Maritime Routes Indo-Pacific (CRIMARIO II) program mandated by the European Commission. This program, which was extended to the Pacific beginning in 2022, supports the development of maritime knowledge and surveillance capabilities via the Indo-Pacific Regional Information Sharing (IORIS) platform, which is already used by 33 regional maritime agencies. A third phase, scheduled for the summer of 2025, will connect IORIS with other information-sharing systems.

Alongside Germany, France is supporting the European program, Enhancing Security Cooperation in and with Asia (ESIWA+), which runs from 2024-2027. This project, which is being jointly implemented by Expertise France and the German development agency GIZ, is designed to strengthen security cooperation between the EU and nine Asian countries in the fields of cybersecurity, counter-terrorism, crisis management, hybrid threats and maritime security.

France also supports the civilian and military missions of the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) in Somalia, which are aimed at reforming the security and defense sector and combating piracy. This has made it possible to establish the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) in Mogadishu, as well as provide equipment and training support for its personnel and the Somali coastguard.

France helped found the Global Ports Safety (GPS) program, which was launched in 2024 as part of Team Europe. This program, which contributes to the safety of shipping corridors in Asia, aims to improve port safety, the logistical flow sustainability and environmental risk prevention in eight South and Southeast Asian countries.

France's experts also participate in civil aviation cooperation programs financed by the EU. France plans to include all the Pacific small island states in the air safety projects it has undertaken with Asia.

Lastly, France is involved in several Team Europe Initiatives (TEI): the EU-ASEAN Sustainable Connectivity Team Europe Initiative, the regional Green Pact, and the Green-Blue Alliance for the Pacific.

6.2. Providing ongoing support for trade and connectivity initiatives

At a time of rising trade tensions and protectionist retreat, the internal European market remains one of the most open, stable and predictable markets in the world. It promotes trade based on fair rules and high social and environmental standards.

France supports the EU's objective of concluding ambitious trade agreements, incorporating demanding clauses on sustainable development and climate objectives that are along the lines of the agreements concluded with Vietnam and New Zealand. France encourages the EU to successfully conclude its ongoing negotiations with India, and supports the restarting of discussions with Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines. France is also in favor of considering EU-ASEAN sectoral agreements, particularly on digital tools and the rapprochement between the EU and the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).

As part of the Global Gateway strategy, which aims to offer a credible European alternative for sustainable infrastructure, France is committed to developing flagship projects, such as green shipping corridors between the Indo-Pacific and Europe, and improving digital connectivity in the Pacific and Indian Oceans. France co-directs the Indo-Pacific branch of the Digital Development Hub (D4D) with the European Commission, which implements connectivity projects (on topics such as submarine cables and space).

6.3. Serving as a driving force in defining Europe's future strategy

In order to ensure the implementation of European strategy over the long term, during its EU Council presidency, France took the initiative of creating a Ministerial Forum for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, which was inaugurated in Paris on February 22, 2022. This innovative, independent flagship forum, subsequent editions of which were held in 2023 in Stockholm and in 2024 in Brussels, provides an opportunity for dialogue between the EU and its Indo-Pacific partners.

The forum addresses major economic, connectivity and global challenges (among them climate change, biodiversity, and sustainable ocean management), as well as security and defense issues. It exemplifies Europe's specific approach in the region. Of particular note is the strengthening of the EU and ASEAN's strategic partnership, which was highlighted at a ministerial meeting held in conjunction with the 2024 Forum.

France would like to see the key role of the Ministerial Forum strengthened in the future, with the increased involvement of regional organizations and partners from East Africa and the Indian Ocean. In addition, France is in favor of organizing an edition in the Indo-Pacific region that could possibly include a summit of Heads of State and Government.

**Ministry for Europe
and Foreign Affairs**

37 quai d'Orsay
75007 Paris

diplomatie.gouv.fr