



CULTURAL COOPERATION AND FRANCOPHONIE

Strengthening human and artistic exchanges in the Indo-Pacific

Cultural diplomacy and diplomacy of influence, and more broadly all cultural exchanges, are an essential component of France's international influence, including in the Indo-Pacific. Numerous players, such as the 34 Instituts Français, initiate cultural events, festivals and artist residencies, for example at Villa Swagatam in India.

French, the fifth most widely spoken language in the world with 320 million speakers, is not widely spoken in the region. It is one of the official languages in five countries: Comoros, Djibouti, Seychelles, Vanuatu and Madagascar. The latter is home to the largest French-speaking community in the region, with almost 8 million people. As a foreign language, it is the second most learned in the world (50 million learners, some of whom attend the region's 169 Alliances françaises).

EXTENSIVE NETWORK

To ensure the international influence of the French cultural model, the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, in conjunction with the Ministry of Culture, has a network of cooperation and cultural action departments (SCAC) that coordinate a variety of players, including the Instituts français and Alliances françaises. There is a SCAC in every French embassy in the region (*see Fact sheet No.3 – Diplomatic network and official visits*), with the exception of Brunei, Fiji, Mongolia, Nepal, Papua New Guinea and the Seychelles.

The French Institutes, which are public establishments, aim to amplify the reach of the French cultural network abroad. There are 34 in the Indo-Pacific, 36 percent of the world total, but not a single one in the insular Pacific. The mission of the Alliances françaises (AF), which are legally and financially autonomous, is to promote knowledge of French and French-speaking cultures. There are 169 in the region, representing 20 percent of the global network. The latest AF opened in Shenzhen in April 2023, bringing the number of AFs in China to 14. There are 34 in Australia, including one of the oldest in the world, founded in Melbourne in 1890, 28 in Madagascar and 17 in India.

FESTIVALS AND PROMOTION OF IDEAS

The organisation of joint cultural events, such as the Saisons culturelles, helps to promote and spread foreign cultures in France and *vice versa*. Recent partners include South Korea (2015/2016), Singapore (2015), China (2014), Vietnam (2013/2014), South Africa (2012/2013) and Thailand (2006).

Annual cultural festivals are organised with the support of the Instituts Français, such as the Croisements festival in China, Voilà! in Singapore and French May in Hong Kong. Other recurring events include Bonjour India, the gastronomic festivals Balade en France in Hanoi and Paris to Provence in Melbourne. The Alliances françaises also arrange numerous cultural events.

The promotion of ideas and knowledge and the influence of the French intellectual scene are supported through the organisation of colloquia and flagship events such as the Nuit des idées. In January 2021, it was organised in Cambodia, South Korea, the United Arab Emirates, Fiji, Mauritius and Pakistan. The cultural network, including the FAs, also plays a role in promoting and raising awareness of human rights (*see Fact sheet No.10 – Education and human rights*).

MUSEUMS AND EXHIBITIONS

Louvre Abu Dhabi, France's largest cultural project abroad, was inaugurated in 2017, two years before the Centre Pompidou x West Bund Museum Project in Shanghai. The National Museum of Modern Art will begin a 4-year cooperation with the Hanwha Foundation in Seoul in 2025.

Major exhibitions have been staged by French museums in the region, following the example of Musée d'Orsay, which exhibited 69 masterpieces from its collections in South Korea and then Taiwan in 2016 and 2017.

Indo-Pacific cultures are given pride of place in France, at Musée du quai Branly - Jacques Chirac and the National Museum of Asian Arts - Guimet in Paris, and at the museums of Asian arts in Nice and Toulon.

ARTIST RESIDENCIES



Since the creation of Académie de France in Rome in the 17th century, France has supported artistic and cultural development by encouraging its artists to immerse themselves in foreign cultures in order to enrich their creative work. This has been the case in Kyoto since 1992 with the Villa Kujoyama. A younger institution, the Villa Swagatam is a network of 16 residences spread across India, attracting the best of French creative talent.

The “Residency Factory” programme also provides technical and financial support to launch artists’ residency programmes. In 2021, six projects in the Indo-Pacific region were supported: the artistic residency at the Franco-Mozambican Cultural Centre (CCFM), the Druvi House in Saram, Sri Lanka, the Steppe Residency in Mongolia, the Arles-Penang artist residency in Malaysia, the Bandung-St Etienne Design City Project in Indonesia and the Jeju Residency in South Korea.

The French Institute gives dozens of foreign artists the opportunity to reside for several months at Cité internationale des arts in Paris. In 2022, four of the 62 winners were from the region.

ARCHEOLOGY

The MEAE’s Archaeological Research Abroad Commission has supported 34 projects in 20 countries in the Indo-Pacific, among the 167 projects selected in 2023. Five new projects are starting up in Madagascar, Nepal, the Philippines, Thailand and Vanuatu. One of the emblematic projects is the Angkor site, for which France co-chairs the International Coordination Committee for Safeguarding and Development (CIC-Angkor) with Japan. The Quaternary and Prehistory Mission in Indonesia (MQPI) is carrying out excavations on the first settlements of Homo erectus in the archipelago (see *Fact sheet No.11 – Scientific cooperation and innovation*).

FRANCOPHONIE

Of the 52 member states and governments of the Organisation internationale de la francophonie (OIF), nine are in the Indo-Pacific, including Cambodia, Laos, Vanuatu and Vietnam. There are also three observers – South Korea, Mozambique and Thailand – and two associates – the United Arab Emirates and New

Caledonia. There are eight million French speakers in Madagascar, almost a million in Mauritius, 700,000 in Vietnam, and 500,000 in Cambodia, Djibouti and Thailand.

When it comes to language learning at the Alliances françaises, four countries are in the world’s Top 12: Madagascar (1st, 37,000), India (2nd, 27,500), China (8th, 17,000) and Australia (12th, 10,500). The second busiest AF in the world is in Tananarive (10,300¹). The Diplôme d’études en langue française (DELFF) and Diplôme approfondi de langue française (DALF) can be taken at any of the 182 examination centres in the region².

French educational establishments abroad play a key role in disseminating the French language (see *Fact sheet No.10 – Education and human rights*), as does the MEAE’s Directorate for Security and Defence Cooperation (see *Fact sheet No.5 – Security and police cooperation*).

French-speaking authors are the focus of the Grand Prix de la Francophonie awarded by Académie Française. Since 2010, five writers from the region have been awarded the prize, including Vietnamese Thuan Trinh Xuan in 2022.

MEDIA AND PRESS FREEDOM

France Médias Monde (including France 24 and Radio France Internationale – RFI) and the TV5Monde group promote French-speaking and are emblems of the defence of pluralism and press freedom. Even non-French speakers in the region can access the programmes, as RFI offers broadcasts in English, Chinese, Khmer, Kiswahili, Portuguese and Vietnamese.

A subsidiary of France Médias Monde, CFI, the French media development agency, acts to promote media development with, for example, the Naye Thit project since March 2023, which aims to protect press freedom in Burma and help the country’s journalists in exile. This effort is important because, according to the Reporters sans Frontières ranking, the three countries with the worst press freedom records are in the region.

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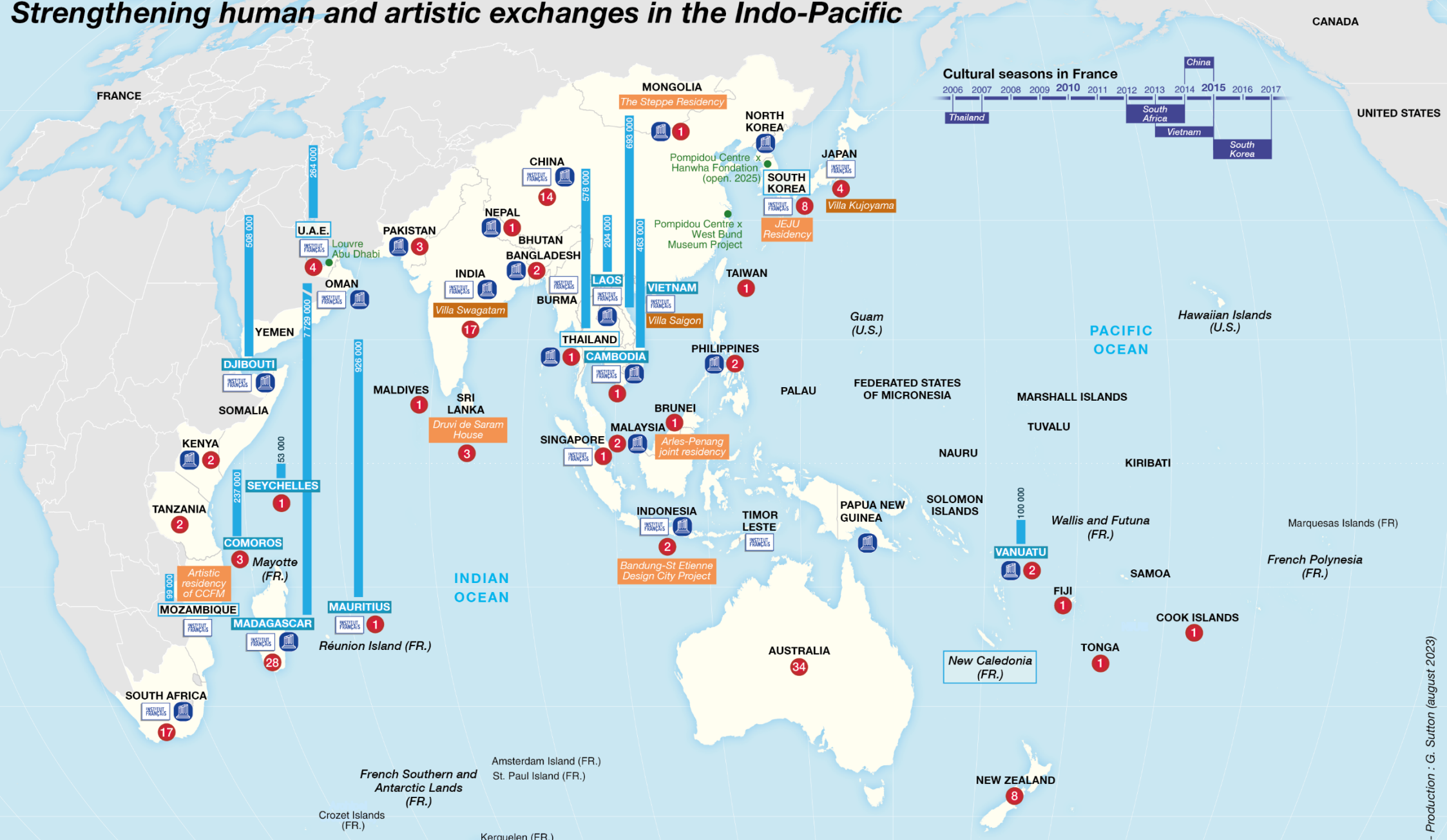
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1 Figures from the Alliance Française Foundation.
2 Figures from France Éducation International.

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ABOUT THE PROJECT

France in the Indo-Pacific - Proactive power and solutions provider is an unprecedented research project that consolidates, synthesises and maps France's actors and actions in a region of vital importance to national interests.

It consists in a dozen **thematic fact sheets** intended to provide greater visibility and to highlight what is being done in overseas territories for the benefit of the French people and local populations by ministries, other state actors but also French business and NGOs.

This project ties in with research by FRS, including **two policy papers**: “La France, une puissance d’initiatives en Indo-Pacifique” (November 2022)⁴ and “Reconceptualizing French foreign and security policy in the Indo-Pacific” (July 2023)⁵.

List of Fact Sheets as of September 15th, 2023

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The Foundation for strategic research (FRS), founded in 1992, is a foundation with public utility status (decree of February 26, 1993) that operates in complete independence. Its mission is to analyse strategy and international security issues, and to contribute to the strategic debate in France and the promotion of French thinking abroad.

FRS conducts research on and in the Indo-Pacific through regional and thematic approaches, publishes policy papers and reports, organises international conferences, conducts high-level strategic dialogues (bilateral and trilateral), pilots a European exchange platform on the Indo-Pacific and has signed cooperation agreements with the region's leading think tanks.

⁴ <https://www.frstrategie.org/publications/notes/france-une-puissance-initiatives-indo-pacifique-2022>

⁵ <https://www.frstrategie.org/en/publications/notes/reconceptualizing-french-foreign-and-security-policy-indo-pacific-2023>