

Note on the priority axes of a New Caledonian maritime strategy for the blue economy¹ (version of January 25, 2024)

The two volumes of the Blue Book², the result of the expertise of the Maritime Cluster of New Caledonia (CMNC): volume 1 on the reference state and volume 2 on the strategic axes to highlight, delivered in August 2020, considered the perspectives of 6 major working axes, issued 36 strategic proposals, and proposed 112 actions. A recent effort by the CMNC has re-examined this thinking base considering its alignment with recent fundamental national, European, and international strategic documents and reflections on blue growth and innovation:

- At the national level: i) the report of the Senate Delegation for Overseas (DSOM) on the place of overseas territories in the national maritime strategy presented at the end of February 2022³, ii) the priority intervention axes of the Maritime Investment Fund (FIM) of the Ministry of the Sea, established in February 2022 with three calls for proposals⁴, iii) the Overseas Innovation Plan (PIOM) of March 2022 (Banque des Territoires), iiiii) the upcoming launch of France 2030 calls for tender, especially its axis 10 focusing on deep-sea challenges⁵, iiiiii) the Pacific strategic plan of the AFD⁶ to be deployed from 2024.
- At the European level: iiiiii) the roadmap for the blue economy⁷ of the Overseas Countries and Territories Association (OCTA), produced in the fall of 2021.
- At the international level: iiiiii) the outcomes of the One Ocean Summit (OOS) in Brest in February 2022⁸ and iiiiii) those of two seminars of the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council: "Managing the Blue Economy"⁹ (PECC) in late May 2022 in Tahiti and "The deep sea, the state of play in Asia-Pacific"¹⁰ in June 2023 in Nouméa, and iiiiii) the organization in June 2025 in Nice of the UN Ocean Conference¹¹.

The result is the 6 strategic priorities outlined below, which also consider their potential for achieving visible factual results in the short term (3 to 5 years), their low cost, or the strong possibility of accessing support funds for studies or investments, especially in infrastructure, as well as their impact on job creation.

These priorities are designed to align New Caledonia with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 (Conserve and sustainably use the oceans). For each priority, potential impacts on other SDGs are mentioned.

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² [Livre bleu - CMNC \(clustermaritime.nc\)](https://clustermaritime.nc)

³ www.senat.fr/rap/r21-546/r21-546.html

⁴ <https://mer.gouv.fr/presentation-des-laureats-de-lappel-projets-2023-du-fonds-dintervention-maritime-fim>

⁵ <https://twitter.com/EmmanuelMacron/status/144791822422396436?s=20>

⁶ www.afd.fr/fr/ressources/strategie-regionale-ocean-pacifique-2019-2023

⁷ www.overseas-association.eu/fr/la-feuille-de-route-de-locta-pour-leconomie-bleue-a-ete-publiee/

⁸ [Results of the One Ocean Summit 2022 | The European Maritime Spatial Planning Platform \(europa.eu\)](https://europa.eu)

⁹ www.pecc.org/event-calendar/upcoming-events/event/668-pecc-international-hybrid-seminar-managing-the-blue-economy-what-measures-for-a-better-governance-and-a-sustainable-use-of-natural-resources

¹⁰ www.fptpec.org

¹¹ <https://sdgs.un.org/conferences/ocean2025> , Event preceded by the Year of the Sea from September 2024 to September 2025.

Priority 1: Governance.

It is necessary to quickly establish a maritime governance body or "maritime strategic committee," which does not yet exist for New Caledonia. The necessity and, above all, the obligation of such a structure for any sustainable development strategy related to the sea are particularly emphasized in the DSOM report, in the OCTA roadmap, and in the recommendations of the PECC. This organized governance system must be based on: a) a factual public/private partnership in decision-making and not solely on an ad hoc political committee. In this regard, the model of the "Comité France Maritime"¹² should serve as inspiration, b) breaking down barriers and consultation among major stakeholders (political world - administrative world of the state, government, provinces - economic world - scientific world - civil society). The establishment of this Committee and its links to the Congress and the Economic, Social and Environmental Council (CESE) for advice can be rapid and inexpensive. This governance tool must also rely on the tools mentioned in priority 2 below, tools that it will implement and on which it will also have the mission to legislate on their application.

The mentioned governance body is imperative if New Caledonia wishes to address, in addition to SDG 14, the requirements of SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth) and position itself at the forefront.

Priority 2: Equip ourselves with modern integrated management tools.

The need for administrative simplification and the implementation of modern and "bridging" tools is particularly emphasized by the FIM, OCTA, and PECC. It is a matter of promoting, making known, and using preferred management tools such as maritime spatial strategic planning, networks of knowledge, exploration, monitoring, and surveillance of the sea (environments, resources, biodiversity, activities, climate change, quality...) and the structuring of knowledge bases (maritime data hub, economic observatories...) that are accessible and open (which will also contribute to the deployment of priority 5 below). These diagnostic tools on where we are and where we are going are almost nonexistent in a territory where the evaluation of public policies is a question and which, compared to the rest of the world, lags behind. Making geographical divisions coherent in a systemic approach, mapping the areas of responsibilities and decisions for optimizing management, exploring and inventorying potentials and assets, including lagoons and the deep sea, which occupy a privileged place, setting up alarm systems based on environmental, social, and economic indicators is a necessity. It is recommended to have 4 demonstrators in the next 3 to 5 years conducted on parallel methodologies: 1 in the Natural Park of the Coral Sea and 1 in each province. The FIM, PIOM (for climate change and resource exploration), France 2030 axis 10 for the deep sea but also Europe are funding sources to activate. The emerging jobs that will result from such a focus for our young New Caledonians will be precisely at the interface between the maritime and digital sectors. It is worth noting that the Maritime Geospatial Data Hub is one of the projects selected by the "Territoire d'Innovation" following the call for proposals of the Future Investment Program (PIA3).

This priority 2 built in relation to SDG 14 also addresses SDG 13 (better understanding of our human activities, better managing and taking action on climate change).

¹² [Comité France maritime | Gouvernement.fr](https://www.comite-france-maritime.fr/)

Priority 3: Becoming a strategic center for blue innovation through advanced technological platforms: the New Caledonian "Pôle maritime."

This line of work is initiated through two ways: the success achieved in the "Innovation Territory" and the current work known as the "Sea Center of Excellence," which align with a dynamic approach that New Caledonia has strategically decided to adopt. The objectives of this axis are fully in line with the recommendations of DSOM, FIM, but above all, OCTA advocates for European PTOMs to have a prominent position as future strategic centers for blue knowledge and innovation equipped with advanced technological platforms. This assumes that decisions on creating the necessary infrastructures, addressing factual needs such as ship maintenance/repair, dismantling, hosting specialized vessels (scientific port and technological deployment base)¹³, the City of Knowledge or "Oceanscope," infrastructure for cruise ships and luxury yachts, should be prioritized. It is an advantage that New Caledonia possesses the ability to be attractive, but one must not misjudge the target. The "Scientists' Quay" (unfortunately being dismantled for other inquiries), an "FED Quay" (welcoming large oceanographic vessels, training ships, cable ships) with no infrastructure opposite, an ongoing "sea cluster," should neither suffer nor be allowed to suffer from fatigue. The risk is to see regional competitors take the lead, notably the large Australian neighbor and insular entities like Fiji. Credits exist, and others are likely accessible. Within 5 years (preferably 3), feasibility studies and associated economic models must be completed, and a first quay and the first "obligatorily associated" infrastructures: air-conditioned docks, data center connections, accommodation for startups nearby, should have been constructed at a minimum. This is to ensure that the activity, given that this priority should be particularly conducive to creating new and specialized jobs, starts and can attract... The decision by the State to acquire a new oceanographic vessel, the "Michel Rocard," and the CPS decision to operate a tuna marking vessel, both based in Noumea, are two strong catalyst points. In addition to these objectives, there is the innovative development of coastal and littoral areas (anchorage, discovery trails, equipped beaches...). The recommended infrastructure in terms of energy and construction materials used will adhere to modern eco-construction solutions (PIOM). This raises the imperative question of decision-making that initiates and affirms things: cf. Priority 1.

This third priority, related to Sustainable Development Goal 14, must be closely linked to Sustainable Development Goal 8 (decent work and economic growth) but especially to Sustainable Development Goal 9 (sustainable industrialization that benefits all and promotes innovation).

Priority 4: Become pioneers in new maritime sectors, particularly through experimentation and the use of new energy technologies.

While renewable marine energies, widely discussed outside New Caledonia—for example, offshore wind in Europe or seawater air conditioning (SWAC) in Tahiti, Reunion, and the Caribbean—have not yet been considered in NC despite existing inventories and proven potentials¹⁴. This strategic axis takes into account rising external dynamics: decarbonization of maritime transport propulsion, sailboats, optimization of ship routing, natural hydrogen or "white" hydrogen, methanol, etc. In the context of climate change and global warming, New Caledonia could play a role beyond solar solutions. The strategic reports and seminars mentioned above all emphasize the need to initiate impulses towards clean maritime transport,

¹³ <https://archimer.ifremer.fr/doc/00734/84582/>

¹⁴ [Présentation PowerPoint \(enercal.nc\)](#)

a transition to decarbonized industries, and the issues of energy storage or new energy sources. For this axis, it is proposed that feasibility studies—such as electric plugs for ships at dock, innovative solutions for passenger or freight transport vessels, or an inventory of original energy resources (underwater natural hydrogen, which New Caledonia seems endowed with)—be launched within 3 years. An engagement with AFD, ADEME, Banque des Territoires (PIOM), France 2030, and Europe needs to be activated. This priority is also a factor in creating new and specialized jobs.

We fully subscribe here to the interface between Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 mentioned earlier and SDG 7 (clean, reliable, and modern energy), SDG 9 (sustainable industrialization benefiting all and fostering innovation), and SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production) ...

Priority 5: Train and strengthen maritime culture.

This axis is strongly emphasized in the strategic documents mentioned above, at the national level (DSOM, FIM, and PIOM), at the European level (OCTA), and internationally (OOS and PECC). UNESCO's decision in Brest, that all member states should include the sea in their school curricula by 2025, further supports this axis. It involves enhancing human resources, particularly the existing but still hidden New Caledonian maritime know-how, professional training in maritime professions, and, above all, efforts to develop sea and ocean acculturation. This strategy is based on four main points: a) educating about maritimity and raising awareness among youth and the population about the challenges and professions. It is a fact that this is currently starting with the launch in September 2021 of an educational sea program¹⁵ (a partnership between the Vice Rectorate and the two clusters CMNC and Committee 3E) which is the FIM laureate for 2023, with its decision to continue locally in 2024 and to be taken as a model by the French Maritime Cluster in a national program on "job attractiveness"; b) developing a suitable training offer (jobs in demand, GPEC, adaptation of local professional titles...), c) promoting gender equality in education and entrepreneurship¹⁶, d) promoting the sea in all areas (City of Knowledge, knowledge indexing, "Wikipedia sea"...). The FIM and PIOM should particularly focus on this specific strategic axis, which is notably the 3rd action theme of the FIM, one of the flagship recommendations of the DSOM, the 6th thematic axis of the PIOM, an integral part of the European project "STARFISH"¹⁷, and a dynamic initiated by the Albert 1st Foundation of Monaco if New Caledonia proposes projects to them.

Here, we align SDG 14 with SDGs 4 (education) and 5 (gender equality).

Priority 6: Establishing a Regional Presence

This is specifically highlighted in the DSOM and OCTA report, along with various calls from the PECC. The goal is to position New Caledonia, alongside its Pacific PTOM neighbors, as a pilot, innovative, and demonstrative territory in terms of sustainable maritime development through better integration into an Indo-Pacific axis¹⁸ while enhancing our visibility. This strategy is based

¹⁵ [EDD - Lettre d'information n° \(ac-noumea.nc\)](https://www.ac-noumea.nc/IMG/pdf/EDD_Lettre_d%27information_n%C2%B0_2021.pdf)

¹⁶ [Le CMNC : au cœur des « Elles des lagons ». - CMNC \(clustermaritime.nc\)](https://www.clustermaritime.nc/)

¹⁷ <http://starfish2030.ifremer.fr>

¹⁸ <https://archimer.ifremer.fr/doc/00755/86673/>

on four key points: a) supporting and, above all, better valorizing the Territoire d'Innovation label than it currently is; b) strengthening a Francophone and European Pacific axis¹⁹: NC - W&F - Pf and opening up to the Indian Ocean: Réunion - Mayotte, with particular support from PIOM; c) positioning ourselves as a regional attraction center due to the "testing grounds and marine and maritime laboratories" we represent, from the coast to the deep sea, and promoting the establishment of an international center for the blue economy in New Caledonia (we host the headquarters of the SPC: Secretariat of the South Pacific Community!), d) proactively engaging with European dynamics, especially OCTA and the aforementioned STARFISH European project, for strategic and financial support. The axes 1 to 5 mentioned above will feed into this regional strategy through the exemplarity they will bring. The holding of the first Indo-Pacific Maritime Economy Forum²⁰ in October 2023, initiated by the Government of New Caledonia and the local Maritime Cluster, is a highlight of this strategy, with the signing of a memorandum of cooperation between the maritime clusters of Réunion, Mayotte, New Caledonia, and French Polynesia²¹.

In this regard, this strategic axis is aligned, in addition to SDG 14, with the Sustainable Development Goal 10 (inequalities between countries) and Goal 17 (partnership for sustainable development) of the United Nations.

¹⁹ Work in this direction by the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC) and its two Committees, New Caledonia and French Polynesia, could make sense.

²⁰ www.clustermaritime.nc/assises-de-leconomie-maritime-indopacifique/programme-et-interventions/

²¹ <https://www.clustermaritime.nc/protocole-dentente-entre-les-clusters-maritime-indopacifique/>