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INTEGRATING CORAL REEFS INTO NBSAPS: FRENCH OVERSEAS TERRITORIES

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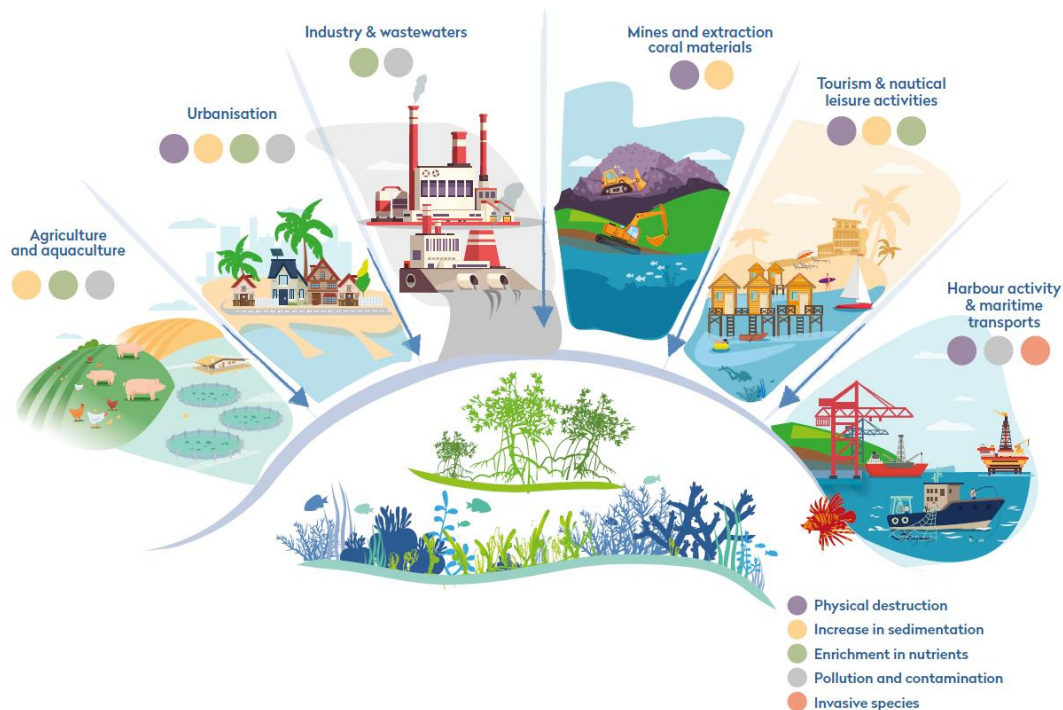
The coral reefs of the French overseas territories

- **58 000 km² of coral reefs, 10% of the global coral reef area, (4th largest coral reef area) in 3 oceans** (Atlantic, Indian, Pacific).
- **11 overseas territories with different constitutional status** (different degrees of autonomy).
- **90% of these coral reefs are found in New Caledonia and French Polynesia.**
- Important responsibility and commitment to **protect coral reefs through national policies and regional cooperation.**



Pressures and impacts of human activities on the coral reefs

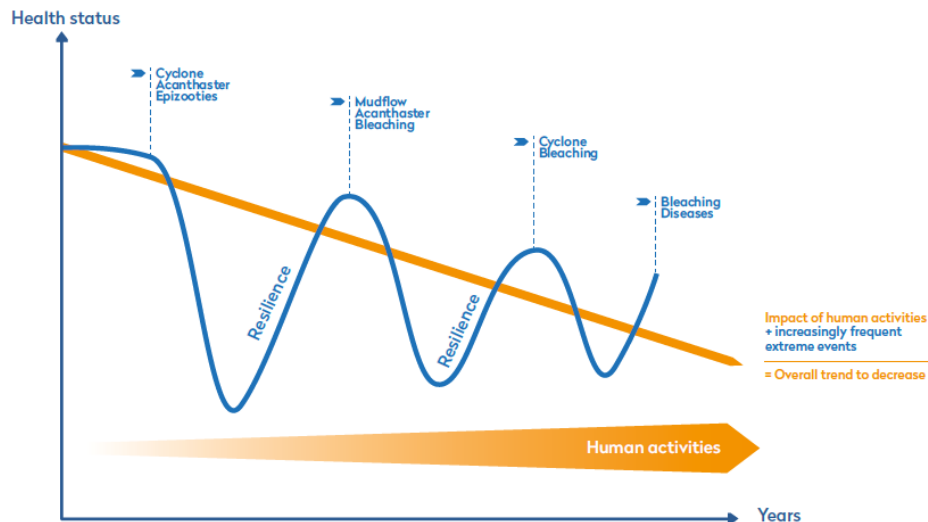
- The French overseas territories are subject to a range of pressures that have impacts on coral reefs and associated ecosystems.
- The most important drivers of coral reef loss are :
 1. Coastal activities & urbanization (cause the degradation of coastal water quality);
 2. Activities at sea (fisheries, anchoring, leisure and tourism);
 3. Local/regional drivers (diseases, non-indigenous species, etc.).



Pressures and impacts of human activities on the coral reefs

- **Climate change and its effects** add up to these local/regional pressures and are the **main indirect drivers of ecosystem loss**.
- The **accumulation of pressures** is key to understand loss and degradation, and the overall dynamic of coral reefs' evolution over time.

Dynamics of the coral reefs' evolution over time



Dynamics of the coral reefs' development over time, in particular of coral coverage, under the cumulative impacts of human activities and extreme events

What is the current status of French coral reefs?

- The **Biodiversity Law (2016)** requires the **French Coral Reefs Initiative (Ifrecor)** to **assess and report on the health status of coral reefs** and associated ecosystems every five years.

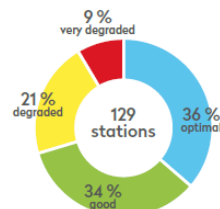


- The **2020 report** presented its results using **two classes of territories**: territories with **low population densities**, subjected to **low or moderate anthropogenic pressures**; and territories with **higher densities and pressures**.

THE PACIFIC AND SCATTERED ISLANDS: GENERALLY GOOD CONDITIONS

In 2020, the majority (70%) of the reefs inventoried on the whole of these territories are in good condition (classes 1 or 2).

Current state of the reefs (Pacific and Scattered Islands)



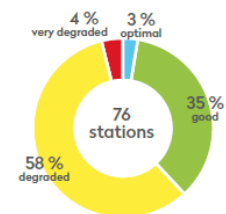
Since the last assessment in 2015: Percentages of stations by health status class

- 16% stations show an improvement
- 69% remained stable
- 15% are degraded

FRENCH WEST INDIES AND INDIAN OCEAN (EXCEPT SCATTERED ISLANDS): MORE ALARMING SITUATIONS

In 2020, the majority (62%) of the reefs inventoried in these territories are degraded (classes 3 or 4).

Current state of the reefs (Antilles, Mayotte, Réunion)



Since the last assessment in 2015: Percentages of stations by health status class

- 10% stations show an improvement
- 57% remained stable
- 33% are degraded

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Coral reefs in the French Biodiversity Strategy

- The **National Biodiversity Strategy 2030** is France's main contribution to the implementation of the **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework**.
- It is structured around **4 strategic axes** containing **40 measures** and **200 actions**.

Axis 1: Reduce the pressures on biodiversity

Axis 2: Restore degraded biodiversity wherever possible

Axis 3: Mobilize all stakeholders

Axis 4: Guarantee the means to achieve these ambitions

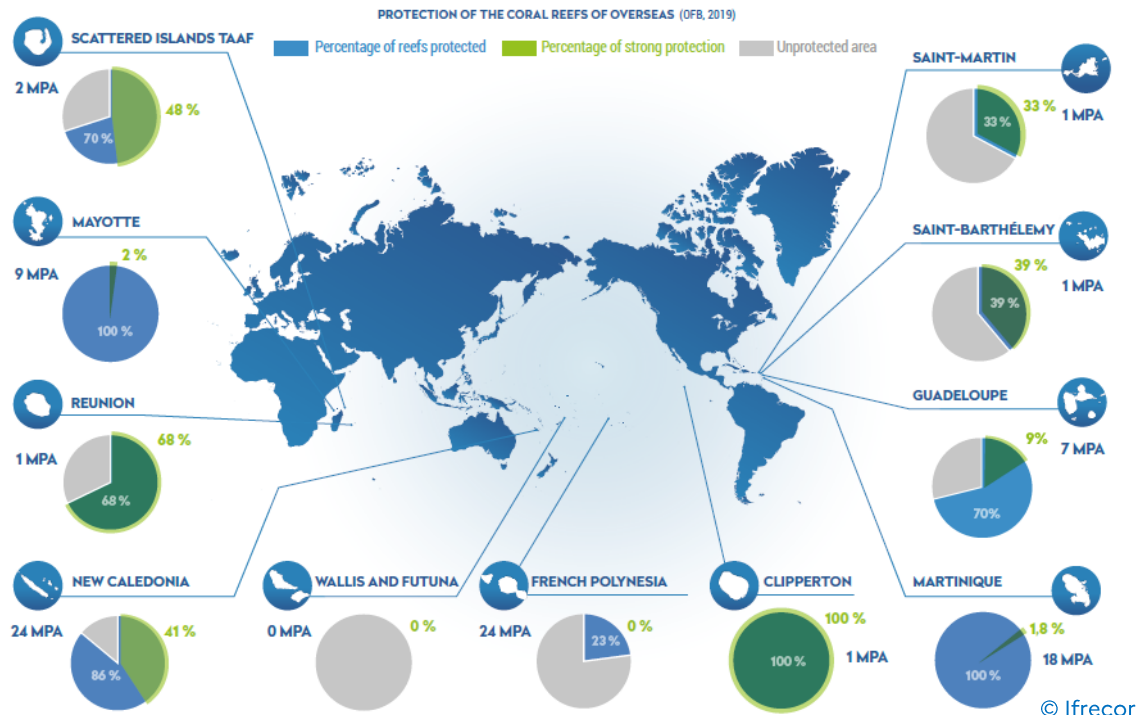
- **Coral reefs are integrated under Axis 1 – Measure 1** (Strengthening the **National Strategy for Protected Areas** to reach 30% of lands and seas under well managed protected areas, and 10% under strong protection).
- More specifically, **Action 7** is dedicated to “**strengthening the protection of coral reefs in the overseas territories**”.



Coral reefs in the French Biodiversity Strategy

PROTECTION AT SEA

- The Strategy supports the implementation of the **Coral Reef Action Plan (2020)** and targets the protection of 100% of French coral reefs by 2025.
- It sets a new target of having **50% of coral reefs under strong protection by 2030**.
- **67% of French coral reefs are protected by a MPA.**
- **27% are strongly protected.**



Coral reefs in the French Biodiversity Strategy

REDUCE LAND-BASED PRESSURES

- The Strategy also aims to **improve coastal water quality** by **reducing land-based pollution** coming from the watershed.
- The Coral Reefs Action Plan includes :
 - **Raising the coral reefs issues** in every **water management policy** at national and local level;
 - **Support projects** that reduce land-based pollutions, including **Nature-Based Solutions**;
 - Strengthening the **ability of MPAs to constrain development projects in the catchment area** to ensure their compatibility with the reefs' protection targets.

PROTECTION OF MANGROVES

- The Strategy aims to protect and restore mangroves: **Action 8** targets the **protection of 65% of the mangroves** through efficient conservation measures.
- The **protection and restoration of buffer ecosystems** will contribute to the **improvement of coastal water quality**.



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Final thoughts

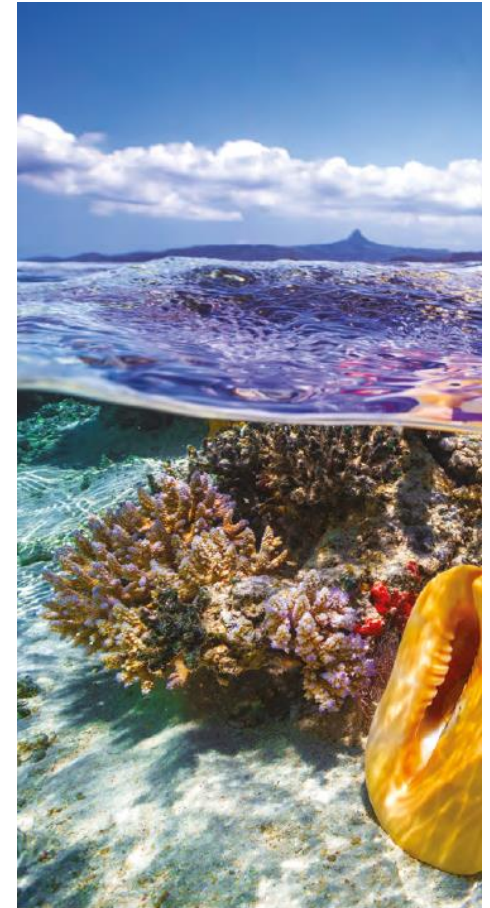
The integration of coral reefs into France's National Biodiversity Strategy 2030 was an important step to:

- Reaffirm the preservation of coral reefs as a national priority;
- Strengthen the links between the existing plans and strategies contributing to the preservation of coral reefs, and their joint implementation;
- Better integrate land and sea issues.

FURTHER THOUGHTS ON CLIMATE CHANGE

By addressing both sea and land-based pressures, the National Biodiversity Strategy will enable a greater resilience of coral reefs to the damages caused by climate change.

These actions do not replace the necessary efforts to mitigate climate change. Climate action is needed to ensure the long-term preservation of coral reefs.



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Additional resources (hyperlinks)

- [National Biodiversity Strategy 2030](#)
- [National Strategy for Protected Areas](#)
- [Coral Reefs Action Plan](#) (FR only)
- [Health Status of Coral Reefs, Seagrass Beds, and Mangroves of the French Overseas Territories in 2020](#)
- [France's member page on ICRI's website](#)
- [Ifrecor's website](#) (FR only)



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