



*The Official Representative
of New Caledonia to Australia*

Canberra, March 9, 2021

N° 11-2021 / AMB / New Caledonia Delegation

RE : Convention on Biological Diversity (COP) : Open day at the Embassy of France

Due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) announced, on 15 July 2020, that the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 15) to the CBD would take place from 17-30 May 2021.

The 15th meeting of the COP 15 to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is expected to address a series of issues related to implementation of the Convention and its Protocols. CBD COP 15 will review the achievement and delivery of the CBD's Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. It is also anticipated that the final decision on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework will be taken.

Within the context of the COP 15, the Embassy of France in Canberra will organise an open day (May 22) on French actions to preserve biodiversity. This will be an opportunity for New Caledonia to showcase the Coral Sea Park initiative on biodiversity preservation as an engine for economic growth

Link on the Coral Sea Park (Text below)

Creation

New Caledonia boasts a vast maritime area, with an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) covering 1.3 million sq. km. The Coral Sea Park, which encompasses the whole of New Caledonia's EEZ, was created in April 2014 at the instigation of the New Caledonian Government. (https://mer-de-corail.gouv.nc/sites/default/files/atoms/files/mer_de_corail_va3_logopnmc.pdf?bcsi_scan_858c91d0398e8bd7=0&bcsi_scan_filename=mer_de_corail_va3_logopnmc.pdf). It is France's largest Marine Protected Area (MPA), home to more than 2,000 species of fish, 310 species of coral, a third of the planet's pristine reefs, and more than 149 seamounts.

Objectives / Challenges

The Coral Sea Natural Park was created to preserve the exceptional biodiversity of the New Caledonian maritime domain, with the aim of:

- (i) increasing research activities, using innovation and new technologies to assess and monitor its resources;
- (ii) developing sustainable and environmentally-friendly activities (responsible fishing and tourism);
- (iii) promoting the Park as a model and vector of regional integration in terms of preservation and sustainable management of the oceans, in line with the *Pacific Oceanscape* and *2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent* strategies of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) on « Integrated ocean management and adaptation to climate and environmental change ».

Governance

The governance of the Park is ensured by a Management Committee, created in 2015, whose decisions are informed by a Scientific Committee, created in 2018.

The Management Committee is made of 32 representatives from France, the Government of New Caledonia, New Caledonia's Customary authorities, environmental NGOs, and professionals from the fishing and tourism sectors.

The Scientific Committee focuses on the Park's preservation and conservation, involving data exchanges with neighbouring countries (of which Australia) on environmental and maritime issues. The Scientific Committee's role also consists in seeking funds from research organisations and NGOs, with the aim of elaborating an innovative model that takes into account the economic value of biodiversity (by protecting it rather than harvesting it).

Funding

Thanks to France's « *Future Investment Programme* » (€5.96 million), a financial mechanism for innovation, New Caledonia can, since mid-2020, make the preservation of its marine biodiversity an engine for growth by showcasing the Coral Sea Park in the region.

Eventually, the New Caledonian initiative will benefit from an overall budget of about €15 million.

For more information :

<https://mer-de-corail.gouv.nc/>

[New Caledonia Delegation in Australia \(based at the French Embassy in Canberra\):](#)

yves.lafoy@diplomatie.gouv.fr