



**Think tank on infectious diseases in the Pacific :**

**European Union - Pacific region cooperation**

**November 12 -14, 2014 -Tahiti, French Polynesia**



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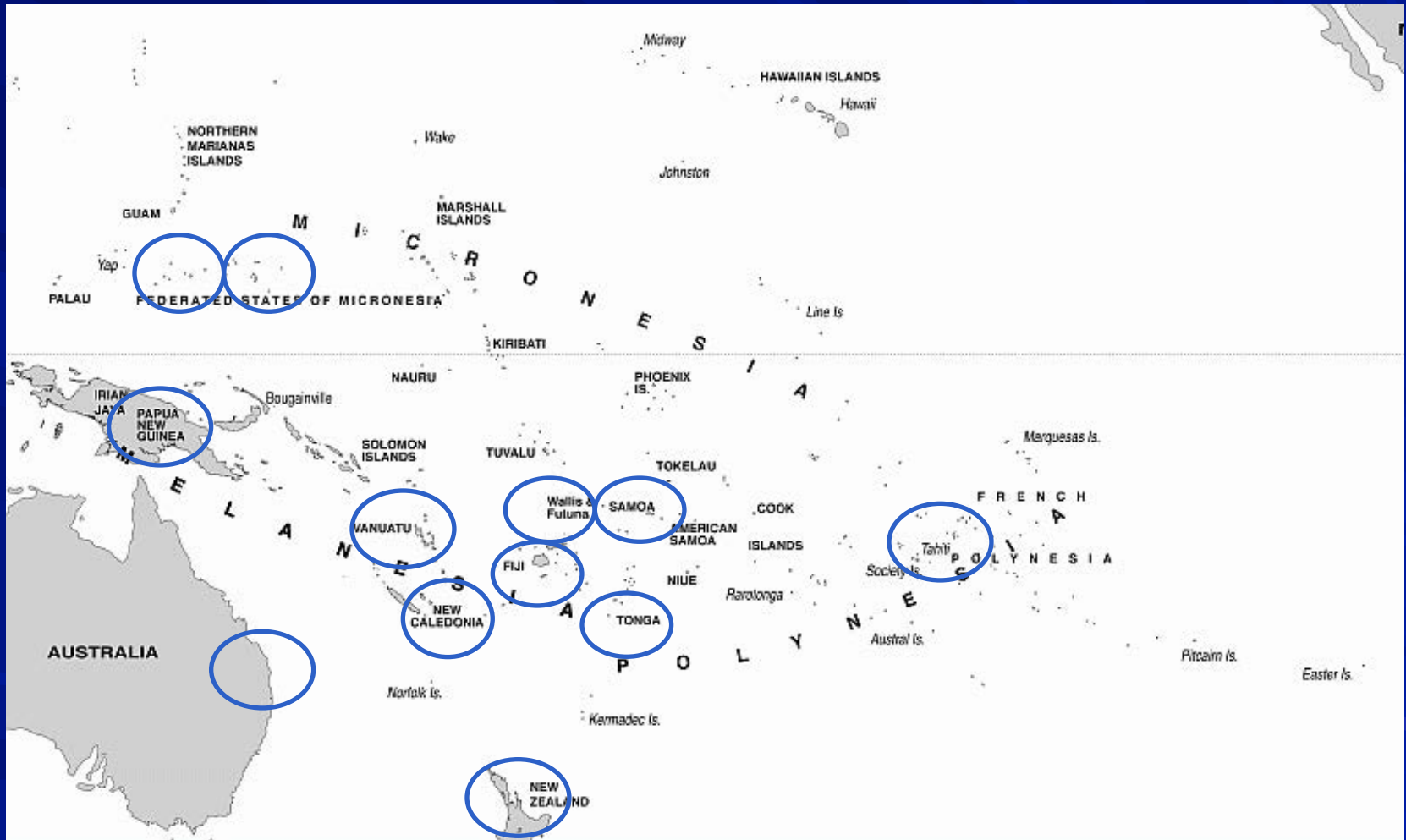
“Aims and expectations of the think tank :  
why and what for ?”



## Acknowledgments to all participants

*PACE-NET plus Tahiti, November 12 - 14, 2014*

## Pacific participants



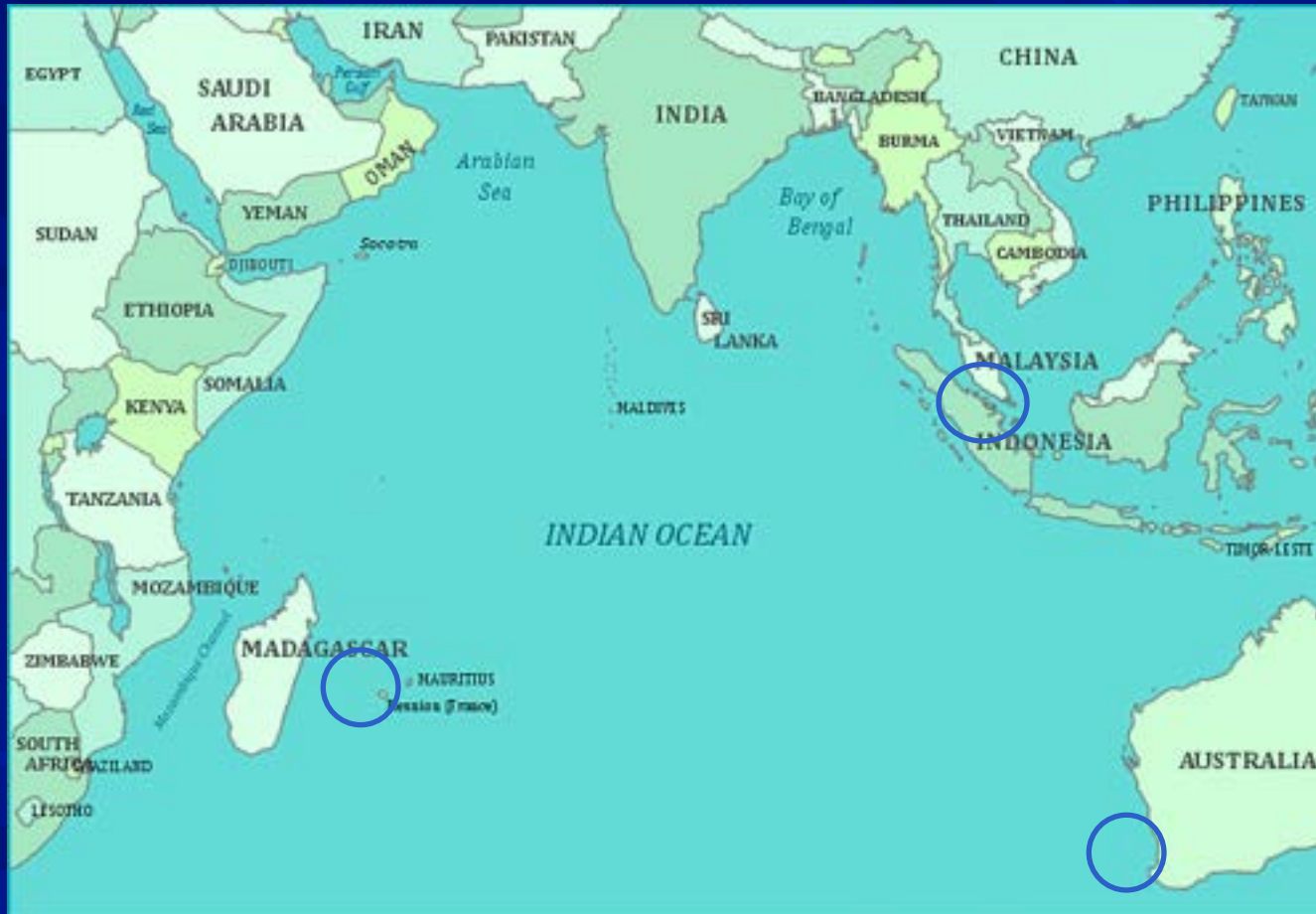
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## European participants



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## Special thanks

- Government of French Polynesia (especially Mrs. T. Frogier, Ministry of Research and Mr. P. Howell, Ministry of Health) for supporting our work and collaboration with other Pacific countries
- Organization team
  - Mai, Marie ...
  - Edouard, Jean François, Pascal ....



## Institut Louis Malarde

- French Polynesian public health and research Institute
- Several activities including the “Unit of Emerging Infectious Diseases”
- Small but dynamic team
- Diagnosis, surveillance, epidemiology and research studies on infectious diseases
  - locally
  - regionally
- Collaboration with reference centers
- Provide technical support to other Pacific countries

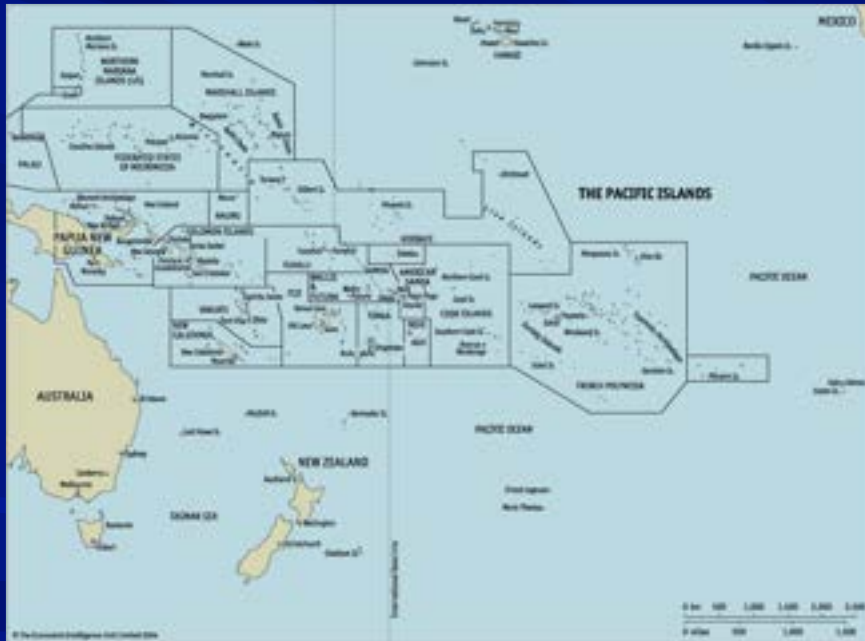


## The Pacific region

- 22 Pacific Islands Countries and Territories (PICTs): American and Western Samoa, Cook, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Northern Mariana, Marshall, Nauru, New Caledonia, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Pitcairn, Samoa, Solomon, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Wallis and Futuna
- Australia, New Zealand, USA (Hawaii)
- 3 sub regions: Melanesia - Polynesia - Micronesia

Large geographic area

PICTs



French Polynesia



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# Infectious diseases surveillance in the Pacific region

## The main challenges



## PICTs



- Different health authorities
- Different health strategies and recommendations
- Different languages (English, French, local languages  $\pm 1.200$ )
- Different cultures
- Different funding capacities (developed and developing countries)
- Collaboration with different reference centers
  - CDC, Australia, NZ, France
  - Lack of centralization of data
- Coordination :
  - WHO - SPC
  - But : no global authority

## 22 PICTs

- Papua New Guinea :  $\pm$  7.5 millions inhabitants; Pitcairn :  $\pm$  70
- Remote areas ( $\pm$  25.000 islands and islets)
- Some countries are archipelagoes
  - Example French Polynesia: about 90 inhabited Islands
  - larger than Europe but only 280.000 inhabitants
- Different infectious diseases
  - Example malaria: public health problem in North West PICTs, not in other countries
- Same disease but different problems
  - Example tuberculosis:
    - in the PICTs : diagnosis, access to first line anti TB treatment ...
    - in Europe : MDR-TB, TB and HIV ...

Same strategies and protocols cannot be applied to all countries



The first step in the surveillance of infectious disease is the identification of circulating pathogens:

Its requires

- funding
- laboratory tools
- If not:
  - Identification of circulating pathogens ?
  - Incidence and prevalence of infectious diseases ?
  - Immune status of the local population ?
  - Identification of etiological agents of outbreaks ?
  - Prevention of the circulation of pathogens within the different PICTs ?
  - Management of patients during the acute phase of the disease according to clinical presentation ?
  - validation of algorithms based on clinical presentation ?



## Laboratory tools in the Pacific (WHO - SPC 2013) +++

- Level 1 lab: local labs, screening testing
- Level 2 lab:
  - regional labs, confirmation testing for level 1 lab
  - Fiji (Mataika House) - Guam - French Polynesia (ILM)- New Caledonia (IPNC)
- Level 3 lab:
  - reference lab with diseases specific roles
  - Australia (4) - New Zealand (1) - Hawaii (1) - French Polynesia (ILM) and New Caledonia (IPNC) for TB

But:

- a lot of people (how many ?) don't have access to routine laboratory testing
- most of the time shipping biological specimens to reference lab is impossible +++
- If possible: expensive, delay of transportation are very long
- Organization with level 2 and 3 labs can be suitable for epidemiological studies when shipment of samples is possible, but not for acute phase diagnosis

Infectious diseases surveillance in EU and in the Pacific requires totally different strategies

PICTs :

- Infectious diseases are major public health problems
- PICTs need technical support
- What do they expect from EU, what kind of support do they expect ?

European countries

- Can provide technical support
- What kind of support they can provide ?



## Collaborative projects

- Relevance for PICTs
- Relevance for EU
- Not limited to the duration of the project: technology transfer at the end
- Support of the EU need to be adapted to PICTs



## Aims and objectives of the think tank

- Discuss together
- Pacific Islanders: explain your queries
- EU reference centers: how can you adapt your protocols to the specificities of the Pacific region



# Welcome to French Polynesia



**Warning: ongoing outbreaks : Chikungunya and Dengue serotype 1**