

# "Economic Disparities and Development Challenges: A Comparative Study of France, some of Its Overseas Territories, and U.S. Dependencies"

## Introduction

This study presents a comparative analysis of the economic disparities between mainland France and its overseas territories, namely New Caledonia and French Polynesia. The purpose of this research is to understand how these territories differ economically from mainland France, despite their shared governance under the French Republic. By focusing on critical economic indicators such as income levels, economic structure, foreign debt, imports and exports, energy production, and infrastructure, this paper highlights the distinct challenges and opportunities faced by each region.

France's economy is highly diversified, with significant contributions from industries such as manufacturing, services, and technology. In contrast, the economies of New Caledonia and French Polynesia are characterized by a high dependence on specific sectors like tourism, mining, and agriculture, with limited diversification in comparison to mainland France.

Additionally, while France enjoys a relatively high GDP per capita its overseas territories face challenges such as higher unemployment rates, lower per capita income. The research also explores the energy production capacities of these territories, which differ significantly from mainland France's reliance on nuclear and renewable energy. In particular, New Caledonia is heavily reliant on the mining industry, while French Polynesia depends largely on tourism and the importation of energy.

The methodology for this research includes the examination of statistical data and economic reports, which offer insights into the economic structures of these regions. The paper adopts a comparative approach, drawing parallels and contrasts between the economic performance of mainland France and its overseas territories, offering a comprehensive understanding of the factors contributing to the economic disparities observed in these regions.

## Geography

### Area

This entry includes three subfields. Total area is the sum of all land and water areas delimited by international boundaries and/or coastlines. Land area is the aggregate of all surfaces delimited by international boundaries and/or coastlines, excluding inland water bodies (lakes, reservoirs, rivers). Water area is the sum of the surfaces of all inland water bodies, such as lakes, reservoirs, or rivers, as delimited by international boundaries and/or coastlines.

	France (metropolit an France)	New Caledonia	French Polynesia	Virgin Islands	Puerto Rico
total: sq km	551500.0	18575.0	4167.0	1910.0	9104.0
land: sq km	549970.0	18275.0	3827.0	346.0	8959.0
water: sq km	1530.0	300.0	340.0	1564.0	145.0

France has the largest total and land area, with a relatively small proportion of water, while the Virgin Islands have the smallest total and land area, but a larger water area. New Caledonia and French Polynesia have moderate land areas, with French Polynesia having a notably higher water-to-land ratio. Puerto Rico's land area is significantly smaller than France's, but it still has a larger land area than the Virgin Islands, with a relatively smaller proportion of water compared to New Caledonia or French Polynesia.

### Coastline

This entry gives the total length of the boundary between the land area (including islands) and the sea.

	France (metropolit an France)	New Caledonia	French Polynesia	Virgin Islands	Puerto Rico
km	3427.0	2254.0	2525.0	188.0	501.0

This entry refers to the length of the coastline or maritime boundary for each region. France has the longest coastline, followed by French Polynesia and New Caledonia, both of which have significant coastlines due to their island territories. The Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico have much shorter coastlines, with Puerto Rico's being slightly longer than the Virgin Islands'. This reflects the territorial differences, with larger island territories having extensive coastlines compared to smaller regions.

Natural resources

This entry lists a country's mineral, petroleum, hydropower, and other resources of commercial importance, such as rare earth elements (REEs). In general, products appear only if they make a significant contribution to the economy, or are likely to do so in the future.

France (metropolitan France)	coal, iron ore, bauxite, zinc, uranium, antimony, arsenic, potash, feldspar, fluorspar, gypsum, timber, arable land, fish;
New Caledonia	nickel, chrome, iron, cobalt, manganese, silver, gold, lead, copper;
French Polynesia	timber, fish, cobalt, hydropower;
Virgin Islands	pleasant climate, beaches foster tourism;
Puerto Rico	some copper and nickel; potential for onshore and offshore oil;

Land use

This entry lists three different types of land use for a country's total land area: agricultural land, forest, and other. Agricultural land is further divided into arable land (cultivated for crops that are replanted after each harvest), permanent crops (crops that are not replanted after each harvest, including land under flowering shrubs, fruit trees, nut trees, and vines), and permanent pastures and meadows (used for at least five years to grow herbaceous forage, either cultivated or growing naturally). Forest is land spanning more than 0.5 hectare with trees higher than five meters and a canopy cover of more than 10%, including windbreaks, shelterbelts, and corridors of trees greater than 0.5 hectare and at least 20 m wide. Land classified as other includes built-up areas, roads and other transportation features, barren land, and wasteland.

	France (2018 est.)	New Caledonia (2018 est.)	French Polynesia (2018 est.)	Virgin Islands (2018 est.)	Puerto Rico (2018 est.)
agricultural land: %	52.7	10.4	12.5	11.5	22.0
forest: %	29.2	45.9	43.7	57.4	63.2
other: %	18.1	43.7	43.8	31.1	14.8

This entry provides a breakdown of land use into three categories: agricultural land, forest, and other. France dedicates a significant portion (52.7%) of its land to agriculture, reflecting its extensive agricultural industry. In contrast, New Caledonia, French Polynesia, and the Virgin Islands have much smaller percentages of agricultural land, ranging from 10.4% to 22%. These regions, however, have a higher percentage of forested land, especially New Caledonia and French Polynesia, which have around 45-46% forested area. Puerto Rico, with 63.2% forested, emphasizes its natural landscapes over agricultural or developed land. The "other" category, representing urban areas and non-productive land, varies significantly, with the Virgin Islands having 31.1% and France having the lowest at 18.1%. This reflects the differing levels of urbanization and development across these regions.

Population

This entry gives an estimate from the US Bureau of the Census based on statistics from population censuses, vital statistics registration systems, or sample surveys pertaining to the recent past and based on assumptions about future trends.

	France (2024 est.)	New Caledonia (2024 est.)	French Polynesia (2024 est.)	Virgin Islands (2024 est.)	Puerto Rico (2024 est.)
total:	68374591.0	304167.0	303540.0	104377.0	3019450.0

France’s population of **68.37 million** vastly surpasses the other regions, reflecting its role as a major European nation. In contrast, Puerto Rico, with **3.02 million**, has the largest population among the territories, while New Caledonia and French Polynesia have comparable populations of around **300,000**. The Virgin Islands’ smaller population of **104,377** highlights its relatively limited demographic and geographic scale compared to the other regions.

Age structure

This entry provides the distribution of the population according to age. Information is included by sex and age group as follows: 0-14 years (children), 15-64 years (working age), and 65 years and over (elderly).

	France (2024 est.)	New Caledonia (2024 est.)	French Polynesia (2024 est.)	Virgin Islands (2024 est.)	Puerto Rico (2024 est.)
0-14 years: %	17.3	20.7	20.3	18.7	12.5
15-64 years: %	60.7	68.4	68.7	59.8	62.6
65 years and over: %	22.0	10.8	11.0	21.5	24.9

Metropolitan France stands out with a more balanced age structure compared to its overseas territories, which highlights several advantages. While France has a substantial elderly population at 22.0%, indicating a mature economy and advanced healthcare systems, it also has a stable working-age population (60.7%), ensuring economic productivity. In contrast, the younger demographics of New Caledonia and French Polynesia (20.7% and 20.3% aged 0-14) reflect higher dependency ratios, which could strain resources for education and healthcare. France’s relatively lower proportion of children (17.3%) compared to its territories allows it to focus more on economic growth and social development rather than supporting a predominantly dependent young population.

Median age

This entry is the age that divides a population into two numerically equal groups; that is, half the people are younger than this age and half are older.

	France (2024 est.)	New Caledonia (2024 est.)	French Polynesia (2024 est.)	Virgin Islands (2024 est.)	Puerto Rico (2024 est.)
total: years	42.6	34.3	35.3	43.0	46.1

France, with its median age of 42.6 years, benefits from a more balanced demographic structure compared to its overseas territories. The relatively older population in mainland France indicates a more established workforce, higher levels of education, and more developed infrastructure, which contribute to stronger economic stability and a well-established healthcare system. In contrast, the younger populations of New Caledonia and French Polynesia (34.3 and 35.3 years, respectively) may face higher demands in terms of education, employment, and youth services. Meanwhile, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands have older populations (46.1 and 43 years), which could strain their social welfare and healthcare systems. This age-related advantage in France helps it maintain a more stable labor force and social services.

Population growth rate

The average annual percent change in the population, resulting from a surplus (or deficit) of births over deaths and the balance of migrants entering and leaving a country. The rate may be positive or negative.

	France (2024 est.)	New Caledonia (2024 est.)	French Polynesia (2024 est.)	Virgin Islands (2024 est.)	Puerto Rico (2024 est.)
%	0.2	1.1	0.7	-0.5	-1.2

France has a relatively low population growth rate of 0.2%, indicating stable population levels, while its overseas territories experience more significant variations. New Caledonia (1.1%) and French Polynesia (0.7%) show positive growth, suggesting a younger, expanding population. In contrast, the Virgin Islands (-0.5%) and Puerto Rico (-1.2%) are facing population decline, likely due to migration outflows and aging populations. France benefits from stable growth, which can be advantageous for maintaining a balanced economy, social services, and long-term demographic stability compared to the challenges in the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.

Birth rate

This entry gives the average annual births during a year per 1,000 persons in the population at midyear, which is also known as "crude birth rate." The birth rate is usually the dominant factor in determining the rate of population growth.

	France (2024 est.)	New Caledonia (2024 est.)	French Polynesia (2024 est.)	Virgin Islands (2024 est.)	Puerto Rico (2024 est.)
births/1,000 population	10.9	13.8	13.0	11.1	7.8

France has a moderate birth rate of 10.9 births per 1,000 people, reflecting a stable demographic trend. Its overseas territories, New Caledonia (13.8) and French Polynesia (13.0), have higher birth rates, suggesting younger populations with more children born annually. In contrast, the Virgin Islands (11.1) and Puerto Rico (7.8) experience lower birth rates, with Puerto Rico's particularly low figure indicating potential demographic challenges and an aging population. France benefits from a balanced birth rate compared to its territories, while the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico face lower birth rates that may contribute to slower population growth.

Life expectancy at birth

This entry contains the average number of years a group of people born in the same year will live, if mortality at each age remains constant in the future.

	France (2024 est.)	New Caledonia (2024 est.)	French Polynesia (2024 est.)	Virgin Islands (2024 est.)	Puerto Rico (2024 est.)
total population: years	82.6	79.3	78.9	80.7	82.1

France has a slight advantage in life expectancy at birth, with an average of 82.6 years, compared to New Caledonia (79.3 years) and French Polynesia (78.9 years). While Puerto Rico has a comparable life expectancy of 82.1 years, and the Virgin Islands also show relatively high figures at 80.7 years, France's overall healthcare system and infrastructure contribute to this small edge in longevity. The difference in life expectancy highlights the benefits of France's healthcare systems and social support structures.

## Environment

### Urbanization

This entry provides two measures of the degree of urbanization of a population. Urban population describes the percentage of the total population living in urban areas, as defined by the country. Rate of urbanization describes the projected average rate of change of the size of the urban population over the given period of time. It is possible for a country with a 100% urban population to still display a change in the rate of urbanization (up or down). For example, a population of 100,000 that is 100% urban can change in size to 110,000 or 90,000 but remain 100% urban.

Additionally, the World entry includes a list of the ten largest urban agglomerations. An urban agglomeration is defined as the city or town proper and also the suburban fringe or thickly settled territory lying outside of, but adjacent to, the boundaries of the city.

	France	New Caledonia	French Polynesia	Virgin Islands	Puerto Rico
<b>urban population: % of total population (2023)</b>	81.8	72.7	62.3	96.2	93.6
<b>rate of urbanization: % annual rate of change (2020-25 est.)</b>	0.7	1.7	0.7	-0.1	-0.1

France has a high urbanization rate with 81.8% of its population living in urban areas, which is higher than New Caledonia (72.7%) and French Polynesia (62.3%). These two territories have relatively lower urbanization levels compared to mainland France, reflecting their more rural or spread-out populations. Additionally, the rate of urbanization is more pronounced in New Caledonia (1.7%), indicating rapid urban growth, while France shows a slower annual urbanization growth at 0.7%. This suggests that France has a more established urban infrastructure, while its territories, particularly New Caledonia, are undergoing faster urban expansion.

## Economy

### Real GDP (purchasing power parity)

This entry gives the gross domestic product (GDP) or value of all final goods and services produced within a nation in a given year. A nation's GDP at purchasing power parity (PPP) exchange rates is the sum value of all goods and services produced in the country valued at prices prevailing in the United States in the year noted. This is the measure most economists prefer when looking at per-capita welfare and when comparing living conditions or use of resources across countries. Many countries do not formally participate in the World Bank's PPP project that calculates these measures, so the resulting GDP estimates for these countries may lack precision. For many developing countries, PPP-based GDP measures are multiples of the official exchange rate (OER) measure. The differences between the OER- and PPP-denominated GDP values for most of the wealthy industrialized countries are generally much smaller.

	France (2023 est.)	New Caledonia (2021 est.) note: data are in 2015 dollars	French Polynesia (2021 est.) note: data are in 2015 dollars	Virgin Islands (2021 est.) note: data in 2021 dollars	Puerto Rico (2023 est.) note: data in 2021 dollars
<b>\$ billion</b>	3764.0	10.3	5.7	4.9	137.8

France's Real GDP (PPP) of \$3,764 billion reflects its position as a leading global economy, far outpacing its overseas territories such as New Caledonia (\$10.3 billion) and French Polynesia (\$5.7 billion). This significant gap highlights France's advanced infrastructure, industrial capacity, and diversified economy, which collectively enable it to produce goods and services on a massive scale.

By contrast, the smaller economies of New Caledonia and French Polynesia are heavily reliant on specific industries like mining

(nickel in New Caledonia) and tourism, which limit their economic output and resilience.

Real GDP per capita

This entry shows real GDP, divided by population as of 1 July for the same year.

	France (2023 est.) note: data in 2021 dollars	New Caledonia (2021 est.)	French Polynesia (2021 est.) note: data are in 2015 dollars	Virgin Islands (2021 est.) note: data in 2021 dollars	Puerto Rico (2023 est.) note: data in 2021 dollars
\$	55200.0	35700.0	18600.0	46200.0	43000.0

France's Real GDP per capita is \$55,200, significantly higher than New Caledonia (\$35,700) and French Polynesia (\$18,600), showcasing France’s economic strength and higher living standards. While the Virgin Islands (\$46,200) and Puerto Rico (\$43,000) have GDP per capita figures closer to France, they still fall short, reflecting the sustained economic advantage of mainland France due to its diversified economy and robust infrastructure. Additionally, the disparity between France and its territories highlights the dependency of these regions on France for economic stability and development.

GDP (official exchange rate)

This entry gives the gross domestic product (GDP) or value of all final goods and services produced within a nation in a given year. A nation's GDP at official exchange rates (OER) is the home-currency-denominated annual GDP figure divided by the bilateral average US exchange rate with that country in that year.

	France (2023 est.)	New Caledonia (2022 est.)	French Polynesia (2022 est.)	Virgin Islands (2021 est.)	Puerto Rico (2023 est.)
\$ billion	3031.0	9.6	5.8	4.4	117.9

France's economy in 2023, valued at \$3,031 billion, significantly outpaces the economies of its overseas territories. New Caledonia and French Polynesia, with GDPs of \$9.6 billion and \$5.8 billion respectively, are much smaller in comparison to mainland France. Among the territories, the Virgin Islands has the smallest economy at \$4.4 billion, while Puerto Rico, although not a French territory, stands out with a GDP of \$117.9 billion. Despite these differences, France's economy remains dominant, showcasing its larger global economic footprint.

GDP - composition, by sector of origin

This entry shows where production takes place in an economy. The distribution gives the percentage value-added contribution of agriculture, industry, and services to total GDP after adding outputs and subtracting intermediate inputs. Agriculture includes farming, fishing, hunting, and forestry. Industry includes mining, manufacturing, energy production, and construction. Services cover government activities, communications, transportation, finance, and all other private economic activities that do not produce material goods. Figures may not total 100 percent due to non-allocated consumption, including financial intermediary services indirectly measured (FISIM) not allocated by industry, and taxes less subsidies on products.

	France (2017 est.)	New Caledonia (2017 est.)	French Polynesia (2009 est.)	Virgin Islands (2012 est.)	Puerto Rico (2017 est.)
agriculture: %	1.7	1.4	2.5	2.0	0.8
industry: %	19.5	26.4	13.0	20.0	50.1

<b>services: %</b>	78.8	72.1	84.5	78.0	49.1
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France benefits from a well-balanced economy with a dominant services sector (78.8%) and strong industrial base (19.5%), giving it resilience and stability. In comparison, its overseas territories, such as New Caledonia and French Polynesia, are more dependent on specific industries like mining and tourism, which makes them more vulnerable to sector-specific fluctuations. The Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, with industry-heavy economies (50.1% and 49.1% respectively), face challenges in terms of diversification, while France's diversified structure allows for more economic flexibility and growth potential. These disparities highlight France's economic advantage in having a more robust and varied economic landscape.

### GDP - composition, by end use

This entry shows who does the spending in an economy: consumers, businesses, government, and foreigners. The distribution gives the percentage contribution to total GDP of household consumption, government consumption, investment in fixed capital, investment in inventories, exports of goods and services, and imports of goods and services. Figures may not total 100% due to rounding or gaps in data collection.

household consumption consists of expenditures by resident households, and by nonprofit institutions that serve households, on goods and services that individuals consume. This includes consumption of both domestically produced and foreign goods and services.

government consumption consists of government expenditures on goods and services. These figures exclude government transfer payments, such as interest on debt, unemployment, and social security.

investment in fixed capital consists of total business spending on fixed assets, such as factories, machinery, equipment, dwellings, and raw materials, which provide the basis for future production. It is measured gross of asset depreciation, i.e., it includes investment that merely replaces worn-out or scrapped capital. Earlier versions of The World Factbook referred to this concept as Investment (gross fixed), and that data now have been moved to this new field.

investment in inventories consists of net changes to the stock of outputs that are still held by the units that produce them, awaiting further sale to an end user, such as automobiles sitting on a dealer's lot or groceries on the store shelves. This figure may be positive or negative. If the stock of unsold output increases during the relevant time period, investment in inventories is positive, but, if the stock of unsold goods declines, it will be negative.

exports of goods and services consist of sales, barter, gifts, or grants of goods and services from residents to nonresidents. imports of goods and services consist of purchases, barter, or receipts of gifts, or grants of goods and services to residents from nonresidents. *Exports* are treated as a positive, while imports are treated as a negative. Imports are entered as a negative item to offset the fact that the expenditure figures for consumption, investment, government, and exports also include expenditures on imports. These imports contribute directly to foreign GDP but only indirectly to domestic GDP. Because of this negative offset for imports of goods and services, the sum of the other five items, excluding imports, will always total more than 100 percent of GDP.

	France (2017 est.)	New Caledonia (2017 est.)	French Polynesia (2014 est.)	Virgin Islands (2016 est.)	Puerto Rico (2017 est.)
<b>household consumption: %</b>	54.1	64.3	66.9	68.2	87.7
<b>government consumption: %</b>	23.6	24.0	33.6	26.8	12.2
<b>investment in fixed capital: %</b>	22.5	38.4	19.4	7.5	11.7
<b>investment in inventories: %</b>	0.9	0.0	0.1	15.0	0.5
<b>exports of goods and services: %</b>	30.9	18.7	17.5	46.7	117.8
<b>imports of goods and services: %</b>	-32.0	-45.5	-37.5	-64.3	-129.8

Analyzing the GDP composition by end use for France and its overseas territories reveals key differences in spending patterns. France's household consumption accounts for 54.1% of GDP, which is significantly lower than in New Caledonia (64.3%) and



French Polynesia (66.9%), where a larger portion of GDP is directed toward consumer spending. In contrast, the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico have much higher household consumption rates (68.2% and 87.7%, respectively), suggesting a more consumption-driven economy. France stands out with a higher share of government consumption (23.6%), which supports public services and investments, while New Caledonia (24.0%) and French Polynesia (33.6%) allocate a larger share to government spending. Additionally, France's exports of goods and services contribute significantly to GDP (30.9%), while New Caledonia (18.7%) and French Polynesia (17.5%) export less, indicating France's greater global trade involvement. However, Puerto Rico's extraordinarily high exports (117.8%) and imports (-129.8%) reflect its distinct trade relationship, which can be linked to its political and economic ties to the U.S.

**Agricultural products note: top ten agricultural products based on tonnage**

This entry provides a list of a country's most important agricultural products, listed by annual tonnage.

	France (2022 est.)	New Caledonia (2022 est.)	French Polynesia (2022 est.)	Virgin Islands	Puerto Rico (2022 est.)
1	wheat	coconuts	coconuts	fruit	milk
2	sugar beets	vegetables	fruits	vegetables	plantains
3	milk	fruits	root vegetables	sorghum	bananas
4	barley	maize	pineapples	Senepol cattle	chicken
5	maize	beef	eggs		tomatoes
6	potatoes	pork	cassava		mangoes/g uavas
7	grapes	eggs	sugarcane		eggs
8	rapeseed	yams	tropical fruits		oranges
9	pork	bananas	watermelon s		pumpkins/s quash
10	sunflower seeds	mangoes/g uavas	tomatoes		papayas

France's agricultural sector is highly diversified, with significant production of wheat, milk, barley, and potatoes, demonstrating its advanced and extensive agricultural system. In contrast, its overseas territories like New Caledonia and French Polynesia focus on tropical and subtropical crops, such as coconuts, fruits, and root vegetables, reflecting their tropical climates and smaller-scale agriculture. Puerto Rico has a more limited range of agricultural products, with emphasis on fruits like plantains and bananas, as well as livestock products like milk, showcasing its focus on food for local consumption. Overall, France benefits from a broad range of agricultural outputs that support both domestic and international markets, whereas its territories are more specialized in tropical produce, which also reflects their smaller-scale production and climatic conditions.

**Industries**

This entry provides a rank ordering of industries starting with the largest by value of annual output.

France	machinery, chemicals, automobiles, metallurgy, aircraft, electronics, textiles, food processing, tourism
New Caledonia	nickel mining and smelting
French Polynesia	tourism, pearls, agricultural processing, handicrafts, phosphates



Virgin Islands	tourism, watch assembly, rum distilling, construction, pharmaceuticals, electronics
Puerto Rico	pharmaceuticals, electronics, apparel, food products, tourism

France boasts a highly diversified industrial base, including advanced sectors like machinery, automobiles, aerospace, and electronics, reflecting its position as a global industrial leader. In comparison, New Caledonia is primarily reliant on nickel mining and smelting, highlighting its focus on natural resource extraction. French Polynesia combines tourism with niche industries such as pearl farming and agricultural processing, showcasing its reliance on both natural beauty and local production. Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands both emphasize pharmaceuticals and tourism, with Puerto Rico also excelling in electronics and apparel manufacturing, while the Virgin Islands focuses more on rum distilling and construction. Overall, France has the most diversified industrial sector, while its territories are more specialized and dependent on specific sectors linked to their local resources and economic conditions.

**Labor force note: number of people ages 15 or older who are employed or seeking work**

This entry contains the total labor force figure.

	France	New Caledonia	French Polynesia	Virgin Islands	Puerto Rico
(2023 est.)	31825000.0	119000.0	137000.0	46000.0	1154000.0

France has a labor force of over 31.8 million people, significantly larger than that of its overseas territories. New Caledonia and French Polynesia have labor forces of approximately 119,000 and 137,000 respectively, reflecting their smaller populations. The Virgin Islands has a labor force of 46,000, highlighting its limited workforce size. Meanwhile, Puerto Rico, with a labor force of approximately 1.15 million people, has a significantly larger workforce compared to the Virgin Islands but still much smaller than France’s. These differences emphasize the varying economic scales and workforce sizes across the regions.

**Unemployment rate note: % of labor force seeking employment**

This entry contains the percentage of the labor force that is without jobs. Substantial underemployment might be noted.

	France	New Caledonia	French Polynesia	Virgin Islands	Puerto Rico
% (2023 est.)	7.3	11.2	11.7	12.1	6.0
% (2022 est.)	7.3	11.3	11.9	12.7	6.0
% (2021 est.)	7.9	12.5	12.5	13.9	7.9

The unemployment rate in France for 2023 is 7.3%, which is relatively lower compared to its overseas territories. New Caledonia, French Polynesia, and the Virgin Islands face higher unemployment rates, ranging from 11.2% to 12.1%, indicating more significant challenges in their labor markets. Puerto Rico has a lower unemployment rate of 6.0%, closer to France's rate, though it still reflects substantial labor market issues. These figures highlight the varying economic conditions and the differing levels of labor market efficiency across these regions.

**Remittances note: personal transfers and compensation between resident and non-resident individuals/households/entities**

This entry includes personal transfers and employee compensation. Personal transfers consist of all current transfers in cash or in kind made or received by resident households to or from nonresident households. Employee compensation refers to the

income of border, seasonal, and other short-term workers who are employed in an economy where they are not resident and of residents employed by nonresident entities.

	France (2023 est.)	New Caledonia (2022 est.)	French Polynesia (2022 est.)	Virgin Islands	Puerto Rico
% of GDP	1.2	6.5	10.0		

In 2023, France’s remittances account for 1.2% of its GDP, indicating relatively modest outflows of personal transfers and employee compensation. In contrast, New Caledonia and French Polynesia see much higher percentages, with remittances representing 6.5% and 10.0% of their GDPs, respectively, reflecting the economic importance of transfers to these territories. While data for the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico are not available, such high remittance levels in the French overseas territories may suggest a reliance on financial support from residents abroad. These figures highlight the crucial role of remittances in the economies of New Caledonia and French Polynesia.

**Budget**

This entry includes revenues and expenditures. Revenues include central government receipts from taxes, social contributions, fees, and other income excluding grants. Expenditures are payments for operating activities of the central government, including wages for government employees, interest payments, subsidies, social benefits, and other outlays. Figures reported in local currency units have been converted to current US dollars using an average official exchange rate for the year indicated.

	France (2019 est.)	New Caledonia (2015 est.)	French Polynesia (2012) (2011)	Virgin Islands (2016 est.)	Puerto Rico (2017 est.)
revenues: \$ billion	1427.0	2.0	1.9	1.5	9.3
expenditures: \$ billion	1509.0	2.0	1.8	1.5	10.0

In terms of budget, France's fiscal capacity far exceeds that of its overseas territories. In 2019, France generated \$1.427 trillion in revenues, while its territories such as New Caledonia and French Polynesia had much smaller revenues of \$2 billion and \$1.9 billion, respectively. The Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, with revenues of \$1.5 billion and \$9.3 billion in 2016 and 2017, still operate on a much smaller scale. Similarly, the expenditures also reflect this imbalance, with France spending \$1.509 trillion, while New Caledonia and French Polynesia spent \$2 billion and \$1.8 billion, respectively. This highlights the disparity in financial resources between France and its overseas territories.

**Public debt note: central government debt as a % of GDP**

This entry records the cumulative total of all government borrowings less repayments that are denominated in a country's home currency. Public debt should not be confused with external debt, which reflects the foreign currency liabilities of both the private and public sector and must be financed out of foreign exchange earnings.

	France (2022 est.)	New Caledonia (2015 est.)	French Polynesia	Virgin Islands (2016 est.)	Puerto Rico (2017 est.)
% of GDP	98.7	6.5	NA	53.3	51.6

A public debt ratio of 98.7% of GDP, while significant, offers France certain advantages. It indicates a relatively stable level of debt for a large, diversified economy, allowing for continued access to capital markets at favorable interest rates. France's robust economic sectors, such as machinery, chemicals, and tourism, help generate consistent revenue, which can service the debt and reduce risks of default. Additionally, France benefits from its membership in the European Union, which provides fiscal support and economic stability, allowing the country to manage its debt more effectively than smaller economies with less

diversified revenue sources.

**Taxes and other revenues note: central government tax revenue as a % of GDP**

This entry records total taxes and other revenues received by the national government during the time period indicated, expressed as a percentage of GDP. Taxes include personal and corporate income taxes, value added taxes, excise taxes, and tariffs. Other revenues include social contributions (such as payments for social security and hospital insurance), grants, and net revenues from public enterprises. Normalizing the data, by dividing total revenues by GDP, enables easy comparisons across countries and provides an average rate at which all income (GDP) is paid to the national-level government for the supply of public goods and services.

	France (2022 est.)	New Caledonia (2015 est.)	French Polynesia	Virgin Islands (2016 est.)	Puerto Rico (2017 est.)
% of GDP	24.6	20.4	NA	28.9	8.9

France's central government tax revenue, at 24.6% of GDP, is significantly higher than that of its overseas territories, which reflects the broader social services and public infrastructure France can provide. New Caledonia and French Polynesia have lower tax revenue percentages (20.4% and unreported, respectively), indicating that while they still fund essential public services, their fiscal systems are less reliant on taxes than mainland France. Puerto Rico's tax revenue percentage (8.9%) is notably lower, which points to its dependence on U.S. federal transfers rather than local taxation. The Virgin Islands, with 28.9% of GDP coming from taxes, face a higher tax burden compared to the other territories, likely due to the need to sustain local government functions without extensive external aid. Thus, France enjoys a more stable and comprehensive fiscal system compared to its territories.

**Current account balance note: balance of payments - net trade and primary/secondary income in current dollars**

This entry records a country's net trade in goods and services, plus net earnings from rents, interest, profits, and dividends and net transfer payments (such as pension funds and worker remittances) to and from the rest of the world during the period specified. These figures are calculated on an exchange rate basis, i.e., not in purchasing power parity (PPP) terms.

	France (2023 est.)	New Caledonia (2016 est.)	French Polynesia (2016 est.)	Virgin Islands	Puerto Rico (2017 est.)
\$ million	-22792.0	-654.2	412.0	NA	0.0

France's current account balance in 2023 shows a deficit of \$22.8 billion, indicating that it imports more goods, services, and capital than it exports. In contrast, New Caledonia also has a negative balance of \$654 million, but its trade deficit is far smaller in comparison. French Polynesia has a positive current account balance of \$412 million, suggesting it is a net exporter in terms of trade and income.

**Exports note: balance of payments - exports of goods and services in current dollars**

This entry provides the total US dollar amount of merchandise exports on an f.o.b. (free on board) basis. These figures are calculated on an exchange rate basis, i.e., not in purchasing power parity (PPP) terms.

	France (2023 est.)	New Caledonia (2021 est.)	French Polynesia (2021 est.)	Virgin Islands (2021 est.)	Puerto Rico (2022 est.)
\$ million	1052000.0	1920.0	162.0	4075.0	59787.0

France's exports of goods and services in 2023 are significantly larger at \$1.05 trillion, reflecting its diversified and robust

industrial economy. In comparison, New Caledonia's exports total only \$1.92 billion, mainly driven by nickel, a key export product, while French Polynesia exports just \$162 million, with limited diversification in its export base. The Virgin Islands export \$4.1 billion, driven mainly by tourism and rum production, while Puerto Rico's exports, at \$59.8 billion, are notably more substantial, largely due to its pharmaceutical and electronics industries. Overall, France and Puerto Rico lead in export volumes, while the other territories show more specialized and limited export sectors.

**Imports note: balance of payments - imports of goods and services in current dollars**

This entry provides the total US dollar amount of merchandise imports on a c.i.f. (cost, insurance, and freight) or f.o.b. (free on board) basis. These figures are calculated on an exchange rate basis, i.e., not in purchasing power parity (PPP) terms.

	France (2023 est.)	New Caledonia (2021 est.)	French Polynesia (2021 est.)	Virgin Islands (2021 est.)	Puerto Rico (2022 est.)
\$ million	1099000.0	2260.0	1660.0	4065.0	51509.0

France, with its robust and diversified economy, imports \$1.1 trillion in goods and services, reflecting its advanced industrial base, technology, and diverse consumer demands. In contrast, its overseas territories such as New Caledonia and French Polynesia have smaller economies and import far less—\$2.26 billion and \$1.66 billion, respectively—primarily focusing on essentials like food, fuel, and construction materials. The Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, while also importing smaller amounts than France, show a similar pattern of reliance on imported goods like fuel, construction materials, and consumer products to sustain their service-based economies. This stark difference in import levels highlights France's economic scale and diversity compared to its territories, which are more dependent on specific industries and essential imports.

**Debt - external**

	France (2019 est.)	New Caledonia (31 December 2013 est.)	French Polynesia	Virgin Islands	Puerto Rico (31 December 2010 est.)
\$ million	6356000.0	112.0	NA	NA	56820.0

France's external debt stands at a substantial \$6.36 trillion as of 2019, reflecting its large and diverse economy with international obligations in various sectors. In stark contrast, New Caledonia's external debt is relatively low at \$112 million, indicative of its smaller, more localized economy. French Polynesia and the Virgin Islands, with no available data, likely also maintain much lower external debt figures compared to France. Puerto Rico, with an external debt of \$56.8 billion in 2010, faces a significant debt burden, primarily from its reliance on public debt to finance its economy, highlighting the stark financial differences between France and its territories.

**Energy**  
**Electricity**

This field refers to a country's installed generating capacities, consumption, exports, imports, and transmission/distribution losses.

installed generating capacity - the total capacity of a country's currently operational electric power generation, expressed in kilowatts (kW). A kilowatt produces one hour of continuously run electricity, referred to commonly in many appliances as a kilowatt hour (kWh).

consumption - a country's total electricity generated annually plus any imports and minus exports, expressed in kWh.

exports - a country's total amount of exported electricity in kWh.

imports - a country's total amount of imported electricity in kWh.

transmission/distribution losses - the combined difference between the amount of electricity generated and/or imported and the amount consumed and/or exported.

	France	New Caledonia	French Polynesia	Virgin Islands	Puerto Rico
<b>installed generating capacity: million kW (2022 est.)</b>	148.9	1.1	0.3	0.3	6.6
<b>consumption: million kWh (2022 est.)</b>	425994.0	2666.0	654.0	625.1	18100.0
<b>transmission/distribution losses: million kWh (2022 est.)</b>	36223.0	66.3	42.7	50.0	1224.0

France has a vastly higher installed electricity generating capacity (148.9 million kW) compared to its overseas territories, reflecting its large and diverse energy infrastructure. New Caledonia, with 1.1 million kW, and French Polynesia, with 0.3 million kW, have significantly smaller capacities, as expected in smaller economies. Puerto Rico, at 6.6 million kW, has a relatively modest capacity but still far surpasses some of the territories. Transmission and distribution losses are a concern across all regions, but France's larger grid leads to higher absolute losses (36,223 million kWh), while New Caledonia and French Polynesia show lower losses in line with their smaller networks. The Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico also face losses, with Puerto Rico showing the highest relative losses at 1,224 million kWh in relation to its smaller consumption.

#### Electricity generation sources

This field refers a country's energy portfolio of fossil fuels, nuclear, solar, wind, hydroelectricity, tide and wave, geothermal, and biomass and waste. Portfolios are expressed as a percentage share of a country's total generating capacity.

	France	New Caledonia	French Polynesia	Virgin Islands	Puerto Rico
<b>fossil fuels: % of total installed capacity (2022 est.)</b>	12.1	83.4	67.5	97.4	97.4
<b>nuclear: % of total installed capacity (2022 est.)</b>	62.5				
<b>solar: % of total installed capacity (2022 est.)</b>	4.5	6.5	6.7	2.6	1.4
<b>wind: % of total installed capacity (2022 est.)</b>	8.5	2.0			0.8
<b>hydroelectricity: % of total installed capacity (2022 est.)</b>	9.5	8.1	25.8		0.3
<b>tide and wave: % of total installed capacity (2022 est.)</b>	0.1				

<b>biomass and waste: % of total installed capacity (2022 est.)</b>	2.7	0.1
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France's energy mix is dominated by nuclear power, which accounts for 62.5% of its installed generating capacity, alongside significant contributions from fossil fuels (12.1%), solar (4.5%), and wind (8.5%). This diverse mix reflects France's advanced energy infrastructure and commitment to low-carbon energy sources. In contrast, its overseas territories rely heavily on fossil fuels, with New Caledonia and French Polynesia depending on them for 83.4% and 67.5% of their capacity, respectively, while Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands have nearly identical reliance on fossil fuels at 97.4%. Solar and wind contribute modestly in New Caledonia and Puerto Rico, with New Caledonia using solar energy for 6.5% of its capacity, while French Polynesia and Puerto Rico rely less on renewable sources.

**Coal**

This field refers to a country's coal and metallurgical coke production, consumption, exports, imports, and proven reserves. These energy sources include anthracite, metallurgical, bituminous, subbituminous, lignite coal, and metallurgical coke. Proven reserves are the quantities of coal that have been assessed as commercially recoverable in the future based on known reservoirs and assuming current economic conditions. Data are reported in metric tons, and one metric ton is 1,000 kilograms.

	France	New Caledonia	French Polynesia	Virgin Islands	Puerto Rico
<b>production: million metric tons (2022 est.)</b>	2.4				
<b>consumption: million metric tons (2022 est.)</b>	13.0	1.0			1.3
<b>exports: metric tons (2022 est.)</b>	120000.0				3.0
<b>imports: million metric tons (2022 est.)</b>	10.2	1.0	0.0		1.3
<b>proven reserves: million metric tons (2022 est.)</b>	160.0	2.0			

France produces 2.4 million metric tons of coal annually but remains a net importer, bringing in 10.2 million metric tons to meet domestic consumption of 13.0 million metric tons. Despite its production, France's reserves are relatively modest at 160 million metric tons. In comparison, New Caledonia's coal consumption is relatively low at 1 million metric tons, with modest reserves of 2 million metric tons. Neither French Polynesia nor Puerto Rico report significant coal production or reserves, with Puerto Rico importing 1.3 million metric tons for its consumption needs. The Virgin Islands, too, have a minimal coal-related industry, importing only 1.3 million metric tons. This highlights France's larger coal market and energy infrastructure compared to its territories, which rely more on imports or have minimal local production.

**Petroleum**

This field refers a country's crude oil production, refined petroleum consumption, crude oil exports, crude oil imports, and crude oil proven reserves.

Crude oil data represent crude oil (including lease condensate), oil sands liquids, natural gas plant liquids, and other liquids. Other liquids include biodiesel, ethanol, liquids produced from coal, gas, and oil shale, Orimulsion, blending components, and other hydrocarbons. Refined petroleum data represent asphalt, petroleum coke, aviation gasoline, lubricants, ethane, naphtha, paraffin wax, petrochemical feedstocks, unfinished oils, white spirits, and direct use of crude oil.

Crude oil production, refined petroleum consumption, crude oil exports, and crude oil imports data are reported in barrels per

day (bbl/day), and one barrel of crude oil roughly equates to 42 gallons (roughly 159 liters). Crude oil proven reserves data are reported in barrels (bbl) and are those quantities of crude oil that have been analyzed as commercially recoverable in the future based on known reservoirs and assuming current economic conditions.

	France (2023 est.)/(2023 est.)/(2021 est.)	New Caledonia (2022 est.)	French Polynesia (2022 est.)	Virgin Islands (2022 est.)	Puerto Rico (2022 est.)
total petroleum production: bbl/day	80000.0				
refined petroleum consumption: bbl/day	1554000.0	16000.0	6000.0	16000.0	80000.0
crude oil estimated reserves: million barrels	61.7				

France's petroleum industry is significant, with a crude oil production of 80,000 barrels per day, though it relies heavily on imports, consuming 1,554,000 barrels per day. Its crude oil reserves are estimated at 61.7 million barrels, which are relatively small in comparison to its consumption. New Caledonia and French Polynesia have minimal production, with New Caledonia's consumption at 16,000 barrels per day and French Polynesia consuming 6,000 barrels per day. Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands show similar dependency on imports, with Puerto Rico consuming 80,000 barrels per day and the Virgin Islands 16,000 barrels per day, reflecting a shared reliance on external sources for petroleum despite limited local production capacity.

Natural gas

This field refers to a country's natural gas production, consumption, exports, imports, and proven reserves. Proven reserves are those quantities of natural gas that have been analyzed as commercially recoverable in the future based on known reservoirs and assuming current economic conditions. All data reflect only dry natural gas and exclude non-hydrocarbon gases, as well as vented, flared, and reinjected natural gas. Data are reported using cubic meters.

	France	New Caledonia	French Polynesia	Virgin Islands	Puerto Rico
production: million cubic meters (2022 est.)	20.1				
consumption: billion cubic meters (2022 est.)	37.0				1.4
exports: billion cubic meters (2022 est.)	15.3				
imports: billion cubic meters (2022 est.)	56.3				1.4
proven reserves: billion cubic meters (2021 est.)	7.8				

France's natural gas production is relatively modest at 20.1 million cubic meters, yet it consumes significantly more—37 billion cubic meters—relying heavily on imports, which totaled 56.3 billion cubic meters in 2022. The country's proven reserves are estimated at 7.8 billion cubic meters. New Caledonia and French Polynesia do not produce natural gas and have no recorded consumption data for this resource. Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands each consume 1.4 billion cubic meters, reflecting their



dependence on imported natural gas for energy needs.

Carbon dioxide emissions

This field refers to the amount of carbon dioxide released in a country by burning coal, petroleum, and natural gas. Data are reported in metric tonnes of CO2.

	France	New Caledonia	French Polynesia	Virgin Islands	Puerto Rico
million metric tonnes of CO2 (2022 est.)	311.9	4.8	0.9	2.3	17.3
from coal and metallurgical coke: million metric tonnes of CO2 (2022 est.)	27.3	2.4			2.9
from petroleum and other liquids: million metric tonnes of CO2 (2022 est.)	207.8	2.4	0.9	2.3	11.6
from consumed natural gas: million metric tonnes of CO2 (2022 est.)	76.8				2.8

In 2022, France emitted 311.9 million metric tonnes of CO2, with the majority of these emissions (207.8 million metric tonnes) coming from petroleum and other liquids. The emissions from coal and metallurgical coke were 27.3 million metric tonnes, while natural gas consumption contributed 76.8 million metric tonnes of CO2. New Caledonia, with a much smaller scale of energy consumption, emitted 4.8 million metric tonnes of CO2, mostly from petroleum (2.4 million metric tonnes) and coal (2.4 million metric tonnes). In comparison, Puerto Rico emitted 17.3 million metric tonnes of CO2, with petroleum and natural gas as the dominant sources, while the Virgin Islands and French Polynesia had much smaller emissions of 2.3 million and 0.9 million metric tonnes, respectively. This highlights the significant difference in CO2 emissions between France and its overseas territories due to their varying scales of industrial and energy activities.

Communications

Telephones - mobile cellular

This entry gives the total number of mobile cellular telephone subscribers, as well as the number of subscriptions per 100 inhabitants. Note that because of the ubiquity of mobile phone use in developed countries, the number of subscriptions per 100 inhabitants can exceed 100.

	France (2022 est.)	New Caledonia (2021 est.)	French Polynesia (2022 est.)	Virgin Islands (2021 est.)	Puerto Rico (2022 est.)
total subscriptions:	76807000.0	260000.0	328000.0	80000.0	3896000.0
subscriptions per 100 inhabitants:	119.0	90.0	107.0	80.0	120.0

In 2022, France had 76.8 million mobile cellular subscriptions, with a penetration rate of 119 subscriptions per 100 inhabitants, reflecting the high level of mobile phone usage in the country. New Caledonia had 260,000 subscriptions, corresponding to 90 subscriptions per 100 inhabitants, indicating moderate mobile usage. French Polynesia saw a slightly higher rate of 107 subscriptions per 100 inhabitants, totaling 328,000 subscriptions. The Virgin Islands had 80,000 subscriptions, with a relatively

low penetration rate of 80 per 100 inhabitants. Puerto Rico, on the other hand, had 3.9 million subscriptions, with a high penetration rate of 120 per 100 inhabitants, similar to France. This data shows that mobile phone usage is widespread in both France and its territories, though the territories generally exhibit slightly lower or comparable rates of penetration.

Internet users

This entry gives the total number of individuals within a country who can access the Internet at home, via any device type (computer or mobile) and connection. The percent of population with Internet access (the penetration rate) helps gauge how widespread Internet use is within a country. Statistics may include users who access the Internet at least several times a week and those who access it only once within a period of several months.

	France (2021 est.)	New Caledonia (2021 est.)	French Polynesia (2021 est.)	Virgin Islands (2022 est.)	Puerto Rico (2021 est.)
total:	55900000.0	237800.0	218100.0	67508.0	2564100.0
percent of population: %	86.0	82.0	72.7	64.8	77.7

In 2021, France had 55.9 million internet users, representing 86% of its population, indicating widespread internet access. New Caledonia had 237,800 users, with 82% of its population connected, showing strong internet penetration but slightly lower than France. French Polynesia had 218,100 internet users, covering 72.7% of the population, reflecting a moderate internet penetration rate. The Virgin Islands, with 67,508 users, had a lower penetration rate of 64.8%, suggesting more limited access. Puerto Rico had 2.6 million users, representing 77.7% of its population, a relatively high rate compared to the Virgin Islands but still below France's level. These figures highlight varying levels of internet access across France and its territories, with France having the highest penetration, followed by New Caledonia and Puerto Rico.

Transportation

Airports

This entry gives the total number of active airports or airfields and includes both civilian and military facilities. The runway(s) may be paved (concrete or asphalt surfaces) or unpaved (grass, earth, sand, or gravel surfaces). Airports or airfields that are closed are not included. Note that not all airports have accommodations for refueling, maintenance, or air traffic control.

	France	New Caledonia	French Polynesia	Virgin Islands	Puerto Rico
2024	689.0	21.0	54.0	2.0	20.0

689 note: Includes 27 airports in French overseas departments (French Guiana, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Mayotte, Reunion)

France has 689 active airports, including 27 in its overseas departments like French Guiana, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Mayotte, and Reunion. New Caledonia has 21 active airports, reflecting a smaller, more focused network for its population and geographical needs. French Polynesia boasts 54 airports, highlighting its archipelagic nature and the demand for air connectivity across its islands. The Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico each have 2 and 20 active airports, respectively, with Puerto Rico's greater infrastructure catering to both domestic and international flights. These figures underscore the varying scales of air travel infrastructure, with France having the largest network by far, followed by its territories with more limited but regionally vital airport systems.

Heliports

This entry gives the total number of heliports with helicopter pads and no runways available for fixed-wing aircraft.

	France	New Caledonia	French Polynesia	Virgin Islands	Puerto Rico
2024	290.0	2.0	0.0	3.0	38.0

France has a substantial heliport infrastructure, with 290 facilities, emphasizing its developed transport network and the integration of helicopter services for both civilian and government use. New Caledonia, with 2 heliports, and French Polynesia, with none, reflect limited reliance on helicopters in these territories. The Virgin Islands has 3 heliports, catering to its small-scale transport needs, while Puerto Rico has a notable 38 heliports, indicating a more significant role for helicopters in its transportation system. This disparity highlights the varying degrees of helicopter infrastructure development across France and its territories, shaped by geographical, economic, and logistical factors.

### Roadways

This entry gives the total length of the road network and includes the length of the paved and unpaved portions.

	France (2022)	New Caledonia (2006)	French Polynesia (1999)	Virgin Islands (2008)	Puerto Rico (2012)
total: km	1090059.0	5622.0	2590.0	1260.0	26862.0

France’s extensive roadway network of 1,090,059 km underscores its robust infrastructure, enabling efficient connectivity across a large and economically diverse nation. In contrast, its territories, such as New Caledonia (5,622 km) and French Polynesia (2,590 km), have significantly smaller networks, reflecting geographic challenges and smaller population needs. The Virgin Islands (1,260 km) and Puerto Rico (26,862 km), while more developed relative to their land size and population, still fall far behind mainland France. This disparity highlights the significant influence of geography, population density, and economic development on roadway infrastructure, with overseas territories and island regions prioritizing localized transportation over extensive networks.

### Merchant marine

This entry provides the total and the number of each type of privately or publicly owned commercial ship for each country; military ships are not included. There are five types of merchant marine ships:

bulk carrier - for cargo such as coal, grain, cement, ores, and gravel

container ship - for loads in truck-size containers (a transportation system called containerization)

general cargo - also referred to as break-bulk containers, for a wide variety of packaged merchandise

oil tanker - for crude oil and petroleum products

other - includes chemical carriers, dredgers, liquefied natural gas (LNG) carriers, refrigerated cargo ships called reefers, tugboats, passenger vessels (cruise and ferry), and offshore supply ships

	France	New Caledonia	French Polynesia	Virgin Islands	Puerto Rico
total: (2023)	553.0	23.0	24.0	2.0	
by type: bulk carrier					
by type: container ship	32.0				
by type: general cargo	48.0	5.0	14.0	1.0	
by type: oil tanker	25.0	1.0			
by type: other	448.0	17.0		1.0	

France’s merchant marine is extensive, boasting 553 ships, with a diverse fleet that includes 32 container ships, 48 general

cargo ships, 25 oil tankers, and 448 ships classified as “other,” reflecting its global economic and maritime influence. In comparison, New Caledonia and French Polynesia have smaller fleets (23 and 24 ships, respectively), dominated by general cargo and “other” ships to support their localized economies and transport needs. The Virgin Islands has only 2 ships, while Puerto Rico lacks a notable fleet, relying instead on international shipping. This contrast underscores France’s global shipping role compared to the more regional focus of its territories and U.S. dependencies.

Ports

This entry gives the number of ports in a country based on harbor size, a classification that is derived from factors such as area, facilities, and wharf space. Ports are usually multi-use, with activities that can include container shipping, military transport, and ferry or cruise ship transit. The total number of oil terminals located at these ports is noted but does not include standalone facilities that may be separate from ports. Liquified natural gas terminals are not listed because they are usually located at a distance from ports for safety reasons.

	France	New Caledonia	French Polynesia	Virgin Islands	Puerto Rico
total ports: (2024)	66.0	3.0	6.0	6.0	14.0
large:	6.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
medium:	12.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.0
small:	22.0	1.0	1.0	3.0	4.0
very small:	26.0	2.0	5.0	3.0	7.0
ports with oil terminals:	31.0	1.0	1.0	3.0	7.0

France's port infrastructure is robust, with 66 ports, including 6 large and 12 medium-sized ports, underscoring its position as a key player in global maritime trade. Many of these ports have oil terminals (31 in total), reflecting France’s capability to handle diverse and large-scale shipping needs. In contrast, New Caledonia and French Polynesia have modest port facilities (3 and 6 ports, respectively), with most categorized as very small, serving regional trade and transport needs. The Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico have 6 and 14 ports, respectively, primarily catering to regional and local shipping, with Puerto Rico benefiting from 3 medium-sized ports and a higher number of oil terminal-equipped facilities (7), demonstrating its strategic position within the Caribbean.

Summary

This study concludes that the economic disparities between mainland France and its overseas territories, particularly New Caledonia and French Polynesia, are evident across multiple dimensions. Mainland France's well-established, diversified economy contrasts sharply with the more narrowly focused economic systems in its territories. While France benefits from a robust and diversified economy driven by advanced industrial, technological, and service sectors, New Caledonia and French Polynesia rely heavily on sectors like tourism, mining, and agriculture, with limited economic diversification. French Polynesia faces challenges, with a high reliance on imports for energy and goods, and a limited industrial base to support sustainable economic growth. Both territories struggle with lower per capita income compared to mainland France, reflecting differences in the level of industrialization and market access. Another important finding from this study is the stark contrast in energy production. While France has a significant portion of its energy derived from nuclear and renewable sources, New Caledonia and French Polynesia are much more dependent on fossil fuels and imports for their energy needs, which exposes these territories to greater economic vulnerability due to fluctuations in global energy markets. However, the study also identifies potential opportunities for economic growth in these regions. New Caledonia has substantial mineral resources, particularly nickel, which could be leveraged for economic development if managed sustainably. Similarly, French Polynesia’s reliance on tourism can be expanded with strategic investments in infrastructure and diversification of the tourism sector. In conclusion, while economic disparities exist between mainland France and its overseas territories, the study highlights that

tailored policies and strategic investments in key sectors such as energy, infrastructure, and industrial diversification could bridge some of the gaps. Each territory has its own set of challenges and opportunities, and the research stresses the importance of addressing these with a focus on sustainable economic development and improved integration with the global economies.