Beat: Business

CHOOSE OUTRE-MER LAUNCHED by MINISTER NAIMA MOUTCHOU HOSTED AT BANQUE DE FRANCE

JOBS, PROJECTS, EXPORTS &PRIVATE CAPITAL

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USPA NEWS - At the Banque de France in Paris, the first edition of Choose Outre-mer opened with a simple but ambitious proposition: France's overseas territories should no longer be discussed only through their difficulties, but also through their economic potential. On 1 October, businesses, investors, public institutions, territorial delegations, candidates and entrepreneurs gathered to connect projects with capital, jobs with skills, and local companies with regional and international markets. The summit was organised by the Ministry for Overseas Territories and inspired by the Choose France model.
More than 150 companies, including international firms, participated in the event, which combined territorial stands, business meetings, job-dating sessions and round tables. The government announced 100 identified projects representing nearly €6 billion in potential public and private investment across energy, water, waste management, decarbonisation, infrastructure, tourism, agri-food, digital technology, space and the blue economy. These are announced and identified projects not funds automatically paid out and their success will depend on financing, permits, implementation

FROM CHOOSE FRANCE TO CHOOSE OUTRE-MER
Choose Outre-mer is built on the method of Choose France, the annual investment summit established by President Emmanuel Macron and first held in 2018. Its purpose has been to bring major international companies directly into contact with French decision-makers and to explain the country's economic reforms and industrial ambitions. The Elysée presents Choose France as an initiative designed to showcase France's economic attractiveness to international companies. (Source : Elysee French Preidency)
That strategy now takes on special political importance. Speaking at a Franco-Spanish economic forum in Madrid during his state visit, Macron announced a further Choose France summit for 18 January 2027, at the Château de Versailles. It will be the final edition held before his presidential term ends in May 2027. He invited Spanish businesses and investors to deepen their engagement in France, presenting the summit as part of the country's continuing effort to attract international investment.

The January meeting is therefore likely to act as a final economic marker of Macron's presidency: a bid to end two five-year terms with a message of confidence, investment and industrial partnership. That message comes at a difficult time. France's public debt reached €3.596 trillion at the end of June 2026, equal to 119 percent of GDP; government projections expect the ratio to rise further in 2027. (Source : Le Monde)

A SUMMIT BUILT AROUND PROJECTS AND JOBS
Choose Outre-mer brought this national attractiveness strategy closer to the economic realities of the territories. The projects announced range from a €250 million energy-recovery and industrial-development program in Macouria, French Guiana, to €225 million in waste-treatment and organic-recovery investment in Martinique and a €100 million solid-recovered-fuel facility in Guadeloupe. Other proposals concern potable water and naval maintenance in New Caledonia, sea-water air-conditioning solutions in French Polynesia and advanced medical technology in Réunion, Martinique.
A new impact fund, Outre-mer One, was also launched with an initial €35 million, above its original €30 million target. The stated goal is to channel private capital toward economically viable projects that have measurable benefits for overseas territories, particularly SMEs and start-ups.

Employment was another central part of the day. Job-dating sessions in Paris and five overseas departments and regions mobilised 2,000 candidates, 1,000 job offers and more than 180 businesses, according to the Ministry for Overseas Territories. A partnership with France Travail is intended to reinforce recruitment and skills development, while the agreement signed with Business France is designed to help overseas companies reach regional and international markets through export support, training, prospecting and mobility. (Source La1ere, France Travail, Ministry of Outre Mer)

BUSINESS FRANCE: TURNING GEOGRAPHY INTO OPPORTUNITY

The Business France agreement addressed one of the defining challenges for companies in the overseas territories: their distance from mainland France can make business support and market access difficult, yet their geography gives them direct proximity to major regional economies. The ambition is to provide firms with better tools to export, identify partners and develop activity beyond their domestic market.
French Guiana faces South America. Guadeloupe, Martinique and Saint-Martin are part of the Caribbean. Mayotte and Reunion are anchored in the Indian Ocean, while New Caledonia and French Polynesia belong to the Pacific space. The policy objective is to turn this geography into a commercial advantage enabling overseas businesses to work with neighbouring markets rather than remaining economically isolated.

In her closing remarks, the Minister Naima Moutchou emphasised the practical nature of the event:
“I saw job-dating, I heard discussions about attractiveness, imports, exports and partnerships. This is exactly what I wanted: concrete connections.”
“We have begun creating connections that did not previously exist on the map.”
“All projects are not the same size, but they all deserve to be better supported.”
The minister framed the day as a change in doctrine: public support remains essential, but it must be accompanied by a long-term investment strategy. Her message to potential backers was direct:
“Nearly €6 billion in identified projects, 2,000 candidates mobilised, and businesses, investors and territories brought together: this first edition shows the scale of what we can achieve.”
“For too long, overseas territories have been viewed primarily through their constraints. Today, we must also see the value they create, the markets they open and the strength they give to France.”

Quotes from field notes taken during Minister Naima Moutchou’s closing remarks, Banque de France, Paris, 1 October 2026. The event’s official results confirmed nearly €6 billion in projects and the participation of 2,000 candidates.

THE CLOSING MESSAGE: CAPITAL, TALENT AND CONFIDENCE
Emmanuel Moulin, Governor of the Banque de France, used his closing remarks to place the event within a broader national and European strategy. He argued that the overseas territories give France and Europe an exceptional global presence, with three oceans, major maritime zones, rich biodiversity and strategic opportunities in renewable energy, water, the blue economy and space.
“France’s overseas territories are a concrete expression of France’s and Europe’s openness to the world.”
“They are a strategic asset: three oceans, immense maritime spaces, biodiversity, and opportunities in renewable energy, water, the blue economy and space.”
Moulin also acknowledged the obstacles. High living costs, delayed payments, financing difficulties, structural vulnerabilities and limited regional economic integration can hold back firms and discourage investment. His message was that optimism must be matched by practical action:
“Their potential is considerable, but we must not ignore the obstacles: high living costs, lengthy payment delays and regional economic integration that is still too limited.”

“The success of Choose Outre-mer rests on a shared conviction: overseas territories need private investment to prepare for the future.”
“This first edition is only a first step. The Banque de France will remain alongside you, in the overseas territories, year after year.”
Quotes from field notes taken during Emmanuel Moulin’s closing remarks, Banque de France, Paris, 1 October 2026. Moulin hosted the event as Governor of the Banque de France.

FROM AMBITION TO DELIVERY
Choose Outre-mer has created a public showcase for an idea that has long been present in government policy but is now being expressed more forcefully: France’s overseas territories are not peripheral spaces. They are central to its maritime reach, ecological transition, strategic autonomy, international presence and economic future.
But one day of announcements does not guarantee transformation. The true measure of success will be whether the 100 identified projects obtain financing and become operational; whether job offers become stable employment; whether small and medium-sized businesses gain access to regional markets; and whether residents see tangible progress in transport, water, energy, health, housing, technology and opportunity.

The government wants Choose Outre-mer to become an annual event, with Choose New Caledonia announced for early 2027. The first summit has made its case: investment, employment and exports must become concrete tools for development. Its next test is delivery.
By Rahma Sophia Rachdi, Field Reporter, Banque de France, Paris.

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