

## "ACTIVANTS" Regulations - French Cota Challenge – "FCOTAC"



### Challenge date 2026:

The 2026 challenge takes place from 01/01/2026 to 31/12/2026 .

### Objective of the AT COTA challenge:

The goal of this annual COTA (castle) challenge for France, Corsica, and its overseas territories is to promote one of our most beautiful heritage sites, generate activity on our airwaves, and offer operators the opportunity to earn COTA France Awards over time (Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum).

This annual challenge is organized and promoted in the "AT Spirit," giving as many operators as possible the chance to contact castles over the air.

Indeed, the aim of this "program" is to activate as many operators as possible, not to create a "race" for activation. Therefore, it is preferable to have one activity with a log of 40, 50, 80, or 120 contacts, rather than three with 30 contacts each.

### General organization of the challenge:

The challenge is open to everyone and is divided into two categories: "hunters" and "activators." Any Alfa Tango operator can "activate" one or more castles in mainland France, Corsica, or overseas territories and thus participate in the event.

To do so, simply contact Léo 14AT061, who manages registrations and castle validation.

The castles you plan to activate must be on the DFCF list. This list is available upon request from 14AT061.

You can propose up to three castles from the list. Each operator can therefore perform three castle activations. To activate additional castles, they must have validated the first three (a minimum of 30 QSOs for each activated castle). It is necessary to validate one castle before starting another.

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## **"Activator" stations:**

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### Special case:

Activation of a castle, alongside a SES station like the meeting.

All participants will be considered part of the "team," provided they made contacts from the SES station and logged in at the end of the activity. A summary sheet is strongly recommended to ensure no one is left out (available from the COTA manager).

## **Terms:**

To activate a location, simply notify 14AT061 Léo or 14AT065 Vincent (if the manager is unavailable) by SMS, WhatsApp message ("French COTA Challenge"), or email.

We ask operators to request activation approval in advance (preferably not the day before, but on average 3-4 days prior) to promote the event and ensure its success.

Castles may be added throughout the year. A 7-day processing time is required for approval of requested locations.

"Reactivations" are possible to give as many operators as possible the opportunity to contact their chosen location. Activators are asked to notify the managers when reactivating a location and to make as many QSOs as possible, depending on traffic conditions. The number of castle reactivations is limited to three. Beyond that, a specific agreement will be required.

The minimum number of QSOs required for the castle to be considered validated is 30 contacts. This is indeed a minimum, and as mentioned above, it is desirable to allow as many hams as possible to participate in this activity.

**Note that no "ITL" confirmation should be made via SMS, WhatsApp, Messenger, or any other means other than two-way radio contact.**

## Distance :

For the activity to be considered valid, the maximum distance between the castle and the radio station cannot exceed 4,000 meters (this distance is measured from the castle, manor, or tower itself).

You can plan your activity and check possible installation locations, and even measure the distance, on the "Géoportail" website (<https://www.geoportail.gouv.fr>). A castle located on a reef or island must be physically activated from that location and not from the mainland (even if the distance is less than 4,000 meters).

Activation can be performed from your fixed station if you have a castle within 4000m of your home (4000m maximum between your home, where the radio shack is located, and the referenced building). If you have several castles within this radius, you can activate a maximum of TWO from your fixed station. However, they cannot be activated simultaneously.

For example, you could activate one castle on Saturday and the second on Sunday. If you have other castles (more than two), you will need to activate them from a portable station, and not from your home.

**SPECIAL CASE: An expedition to an island, or a particularly difficult-to-access location, and involving multiple references may be granted an exemption for multiple activations (submitting several references simultaneously) with the agreement of the FCOTAC Manager.**

## Log Content:

There is no progressive number exchange.

The "In The Log" or "Log" system is used. To be considered valid, the QSO must include the date, GMT time, frequency, mode, and RS.

Each activated castle will be considered valid for your personal callsign for e-diplomas and awards.

Each castle activator will enter their callsign at the end of the log for the castle(s) they activate for their personal participation in FCOTAC.

It is strongly recommended to use Atlogger, or equivalent software, to provide the FCOTAC manager with a log in the ".adi" format.

## Restrictions :

There can be no FCOTAC activity during the national and world contests of the ALFA TANGO group (CQ11WW, WRM, Aldo Memorial, etc...) as well as on directives from the Asti HQ.

## QSL exchange:

QSL cards are created at the initiative of the "activators"; it's not mandatory since certificates are available for download at the end of the year. If the activators wish to create QSL cards for their activations, they must use an official Alfa Tango designer. No contribution can be requested, as this is a SES (Symbolic Events Service).

Under no circumstances should you mention "QSL manager," but indicate "QSL via 14ATXXX."

## Obligation of "activating" stations:

Each operator or team must provide evidence for each day of activation, including GPS location (using a GPS geolocation photo app from the Google Play Store), video, and photos posted to the French COTA Challenge 2025 WhatsApp group (one photo sent at the start of the activation and one video at the end). **This requirement applies regardless of the transmission method (fixed at the QRA, portable, etc.).**



examples of mobile phone applications

This evidence will be collected by 14AT061 Leo, who will compile the file of these documents for validation by the supercommittee.

No unofficial Facebook pages or groups disseminating information are permitted.

The official Facebook page is: FCOTAC.

Activators may post photos on their Facebook page, excluding GPS coordinates and copies or excerpts of logs, under penalty of having the castle rejected by the supercommittee.

Special attention must also be paid to the potential publication of photos of the castle. Many are on private property, and if they are not visible from the road, by posting photos without the owner's prior authorization, you assume full responsibility.

Similarly, during your activation, you are responsible for ensuring a safe location for yourself, road users, and pedestrians. Verify that you are not on private property without permission, or in a protected area (ZNIEFF, etc.).

The organizers of FCOTAC cannot be held responsible for any damage, violations of laws or rules, or any other reprehensible actions committed by the activators.

We advise you to keep the log and photos/videos of each activation in a computer folder. Even though we make backups, no one is immune to computer crashes

## Activity validation:

You must send the log(s) at the end of each activity to 14AT061 Leo (even if the COTA was only activated for one day).

If the log is not sent, the operator will not be authorized to activate any further COTAs until the situation is resolved.

## Rankings and awards:

Rankings will be established:

- 1) Single Operator
- 2) Multi-Operator (Team)
- 3) Best Department (single operator and multi-operator combined)

The top three in each category will receive awards.

Points will be calculated as follows:

Ranking will be based on the number of activated references:

- Each reference activated from home earns 4 points
- Each reference activated from a portable activity earns 6 points
- Each reactivation from home earns 1 point
- Each reactivation from a portable activity earns 2 points

Ties will be ranked first by the total number of QSOs, then, if necessary, by the number of DXCCs contacted, and finally by the number of continents.

## Annual diploma awarded:

Requests should be submitted by email to the challenge manager: 14AT061 Leo

## Awards :

They should be requested from the Award manager: 14AT061 Leo

Four award categories will be available:

- Bronze (12 Cota) ;
- Silver (25 Cota) ;
- Gold (50 Cota) ;
- Platinum (80 Cota).

For any questions, please contact the challenge manager:

14AT061 Léo : [14at061@gmail.com](mailto:14at061@gmail.com)

**Lexicon :**

**COTA : Castel On The Air**

**The diploma: it is annual and separate from the "Awards".**

**Awards : literally "rewards", 4 levels depending on the number of castles contacted.**

**DFCF List: List of castles included in the e-Diploma of Forts and Castles of France program**

