DIGITAL GRENoble
FRENCH TECH IN THE ALPS

THE DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM OF THE FUTURE
Digital Grenoble: Turning Ideas into Action

Grenoble and its surrounding agglomeration were awarded the French Tech label in recognition of the region's strategic position as a digital metropolis. Given our history, this success was a natural step in the city's evolution. In the 1950s, Grenoble was one of ten cities worldwide to participate in the birth of computer science. Today, with its many powerful digital players, the city's IT sector is now recognized around the globe for its capacity to integrate hardware and software in products and adapt them to all fields, from economics to education, research, arts & culture, administration and other societal needs.

In 2011, the Grenoble-Alps Metropolis initiated a wide gathering of the region's actors. Of the 618 actors listed in our directory, the most active volunteered approximately 5,000 hours of their time to help with the application process. After the label was awarded in November 2014, these same volunteers offered another 5,000 hours of their time to help create an organization dedicated to implementing the vision of Digital Grenoble.

The French Tech label now includes 14 digital metropolises (in June 2015, four metropolises were added to the original nine) and four thematic ecosystems. The next step is to continue promoting and supporting the creation of digital start-ups and their evolution towards SMEs as well as encouraging the growth of existing SMEs.

Jean-Pierre Verjus, president of Digital Grenoble

Hard Work and Cooperation Leads to Concrete Results

The French Tech label awarded to Digital Grenoble almost a year ago not only recognizes the individual quality of each local actor, but also the dynamic and collaborative effort put forth by all, including the Metropolis, which supported the initiative right from the start.

Of course, this was a joint adventure. The Grésivaudan region and the Grenoble CCI joined the application process alongside the Metropolis. Since then, other territories such as the Voironnais and Savoie regions have also voiced their interest in joining Digital Grenoble. I must say that I am thrilled to see this collaborative spirit continue to spread.

Today, the Totem building embodies the dynamism of the region's start-ups and digital actors. My wish is to see this building become the locus of interactions between all of the region's actors so that they may enrich each other's practices and create a synergy between the ecosystem and all of its actors. I would like to highlight the work of all our partners and thank them sincerely for their efforts. Our work has already given birth to new accelerators and a location that will soon welcome and accompany businesses. In addition, new services are also on their way. I am fully convinced by the potential of our ecosystem and the Metropolis will continue to support Digital Grenoble by providing the organization with added visibility to help attract companies, funding and talent. Together, we will continue to create jobs and develop our region.

Christophe Ferrari, president of the Grenoble-Alps Metropolis

The French Tech Label Has Much to Offer Grenoble

Right from the start, the Grenoble Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) worked hand in hand with the entire digital ecosystem to successfully complete the application process for the French Tech initiative. As the birthplace of computer science in France and home to numerous innovative companies, the region of Grenoble is a fertile land for digital entrepreneurship. The region's many advantages allow it to unite a wide range of skills from digital material design to software development in fields such as e-commerce, healthcare, energy or connected objects.

Digital Grenoble was born out of the collaborative efforts of start-ups, SMEs, major companies, academic institutions, clusters and growth accelerators. The vibrant ecosystem created by this network of actors encourages and supports the development of digital champions. In addition, the Grenoble CCI supports the development of innovative companies through its school for IT systems (EMSI), its center for international commerce (Grex), and its Grenoble Ecohiz, Innovation and E-Business communities. The Grenoble CCI will continue to play a pivotal role in Grenoble's digital dynamic.

Digital Grenoble opens our region to new opportunities, both regional and international. We are proud to be a key partner in this ambitious project to grow Grenoble's international visibility and renown.

Jean Vaylet, president of the Grenoble Chamber of Commerce and Industry
The French Tech label, which Grenoble received last November, was marked by the mobilization of an entire region in support of this crucial digital ecosystem. The key objective was to reinforce the region’s ability to nurture new champions who will create jobs and added value for the territory.

Grenoble’s many actors were eager for the recognition provided by this label. The quality of their work and their collaborative efforts paid off on November 12, 2014. The capital of the Alps was one of the first cities to be awarded the label by the Minister of State for Digital Affairs. Aix-Marseille, Bordeaux, Lille, Lyon, Montpellier, Nantes, Rennes and Toulouse were also recognized by the government. However, according to experts with knowledge of the selection process, Grenoble’s candidacy distinguished itself as one of the best nation-wide. “While our digital ecosystem may not have as many companies or jobs as others, we are definitely one of the most complete ecosystems,” adds Jean-Pierre Verjus, who led the application process and is the president of Digital Grenoble.

Digital, the D in Grenoble’s DNA
The region surrounding Grenoble has several unique characteristics. Starting in the 1960s and 1970s, the region contributed to the development of computer science in France thanks in particular to the presence of Capgemini, Bull (now Atos-Bull) and HP. The region also brings together both software and hardware competences. The former are represented by companies such as Atos, Capgemini, Orange, Xerox RCE, and software development companies such as Bonitasoft, Cabrilog, Corys Tess, Digimind, Hardis, Metrologic and Winsoft. The latter have traditionally been represented by actors such as HP, Bull and STMicroelectronics.

In the 1990s, these companies began to develop ties as hardware and software grew to
be intertwined. A trend which has continued to expand with the emergence of connected objects. In addition to the above mentioned companies, digital services and e-commerce companies such as Spartoo, Photoweb, Made in Design or Evioo have now joined this digital web. By adding education and public research institutions to the mix, the region was able to create the ideal environment for a French Tech label.

A digital vision since 2010
The second strength of Grenoble’s candidacy was without a doubt its vision. Anticipation was key. By 2010, the vice-president of the Metro, Geneviève Fioraso, had already given Jean-Pierre Verjus the mission of identifying Grenoble’s strengths in terms of IT technology and software. “This marked the beginning of a realization concerning the reality and importance of the word ‘digital’.” explains Cyril Isabelle, in charge of innovation and competitiveness for the Grenoble-Alps Metropolis.

From this point onwards, the first steps of this digital vision were launched: the scope of the Minalogic cluster was expanded to include software and Inria Rhônes-Alpes set up an office in the Scientific Polygon to reinforce the link between digital, micro and nanotechnologies.

At the same time, rumors began to emerge of a nation-wide call for projects focused on digital ecosystems. Thanks to the energy of Fleur Pellerin, deputy minister, and Axelle Lemaire, Minister of State for Digital Affairs, this potential call for projects evolved into the French Tech initiative. “By the time the national call for projects was launched in 2013, the level of awareness on this topic in Grenoble was already very high.” explains Jean-Pierre Verjus. The region was ready to mobilize all available resources to obtain the French Tech label.

Jean-Pierre Verjus - The Leader of Digital Grenoble
Few could have done better than Jean-Pierre Verjus to anticipate the importance of the digital evolution for Grenoble and more generally, the French economy. His experience provided him with invaluable insights. Starting in the 1960s, he studied applied mathematics and computer sciences in Grenoble, which at the time was one of the world’s top ten centers for computer science research. He founded several research laboratories in Montreal, Renne and Lausanne before creating and directing Inria Rhône-Alpes in 1992. As an emblematic leader of the digital ecosystem, he was able to rally the troops and unite the region’s actors around a common vision.

Laurence Ruffin - The Collaborative Spirit at Work
Laurence Ruffin leads Alma, a leading cooperative IT company. As a leader who embodies the values of solidarity, sustainability, transparency and proximity, the vice-president of Digital Grenoble was quick to implement the creation of a cooperative public interest company (SCIC) to meet the association’s need for a new status. This evolution helped Digital Grenoble unite the social and economic objectives of the region. Laurence Ruffin is also supporting the creation of an ethical growth accelerator program within Digital Grenoble. It is a concept Alma is already experimenting with via its support for ScopArtics.
Right off the bat, Digital Grenoble was able to count on the members of Grilog (Grenoble Alpes Logiciel—known under the name of Clust’R Numérique since last spring). Pierre Blangero, president of Clust’R Numérique’s Isère branch, invested time side by side with Jean-Pierre Verjus to help spread this digital vision and mobilize software companies. After the French Tech label was awarded, the CEO of Winsoft (90% international turnover) continued to help promote Grenoble’s international attractiveness and the digital transformation.

As the president of Inovallée, Christophe Mathevet is the digital representative for the territory. The Inovallée science park counts 350 companies, including 200 tied to the digital sector (8,000 of its 11,200 jobs). It also houses Tarmac, an incubator in which experienced company leaders help accompany the launch of digital start-ups. The incubator was created a year ago and the 27 start ups it launched already expect €5 million in turnover this year. Christophe Mathevet is also a digital player in his role as the CEO of Cotranet, a pioneer in collaborative online document management (founded in 1999).

The energy behind the application process went above and beyond all hopes. “We were ten when we started the mission in 2013. A year later, we ended up being more than 600” exclaims Jean-Pierre Verjus. The candidacy was launched by the Metro in partnership with the Grenoble Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI). The Grésivaudan, Voironnais and Vercors regions as well as the Isère Regional Council quickly joined the mission. The French Tech candidacy provided a strong image that brought together many of the region’s leaders as well as a community of start-ups that saw in this gathering a chance to meet, share and develop common goals. In the end, the label that was awarded on November 12, 2014 was simply a recognition of an ecosystem that was already in place. “This recognition provides reassurance for our agglomeration’s economy” said Christophe Ferrari, president of the Grenoble-Alps Metropolis. “We know that the digital sector represents an important solution to the demands of our country’s job market.” From the start, the Grenoble CCI was a key partner in this process and facilitated interactions between companies as well as contributed internal resources to develop the project.

The buzz of a successful ecosystem
The Government’s recognition of this regional ecosystem was quickly transformed into concrete actions carried out by Digital Grenoble. In December 2014, one month after receiving the label, Digital Grenoble’s status and governance were officially set up. Various groups were set in motion to work on five key priorities: transforming the association into a collaborative public interest company (SCIC), setting up shop in Orange’s Totem building by September 2015, creating growth accelerator programs, finalizing a Small Business Act signed by major companies and regional authorities, and valorizing the attractiveness of Grenoble’s digital ecosystem. These five objectives highlight the community’s desire to move forward hand in hand under the banner of Digital Grenoble.
The digital economy has become a strategic stake for many regional economies. Studies carried out by France Digital highlight the fact that pure digital companies are responsible for 60% of new jobs in France. No other sector can boast such a performance. Thanks to its history, Grenoble has established its position as a city that has all the required characteristics for excellence in the creation of digital systems. Numerous leaders have underlined the strengths of this ecosystem. According to Christophe Baillon, founder of Sogilis: “Grenoble’s wide array of complementary skills provides the region’s actors with great opportunities to interact and cooperate. We’re lucky to be located here.” The president of Itris Automation, Éric Pierrel, adds: “Kelkoo, for example, built its success here and became one of France’s best examples of valorization.” Parker Harris, co-founder of Salesforce, a world leader in cloud computing customer relations located in Silicon Valley, highlights the region’s available skill sets: “We came to Grenoble because we wanted to find the best engineers in the world.”

The Strengths of a Digital Ecosystem

Why Develop a Digital Business in Grenoble?

The Grenoble region trains smart people capable of creating smart companies that offer smart services and smart systems. Digital Grenoble aims to build on this key strength to amplify the region’s capacities in years to come.

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Éric Pierrel is a Grenoble École de Management graduate who worked for a time at Polyspace with Daniel Pilaud. In 2008, they worked together on acquiring Itris Automation, which is specialized in software engineering for future factories (14 employees; 2014 turnover: €460,000). In addition to managing Itris Automation, he is also the vice-president and representative of Minalogic’s SMEs. “Creating links is at the heart of my work. A great day for me is when I am able to connect two people who can collaborate together and create added value.” To share his ideas and convictions, Éric Pierrel is also part of the working group on incubators.

Boris Saragaglia graduated from École de mines and HEC Entrepreneur. At 23 years of age, he created Spartoo with two co-founders. Almost ten years later, the company employees 350 people and has a turnover of more than €130 million in Europe. Jean-Pierre Verjus brought him onboard to participate in the Digital Grenoble French Tech candidacy. His vision of a successful ecosystem is based on three fundamental principles: to create a single easily identifiable entry point for those seeking to launch a project, to decentralize the region’s financial support system and to unite all of the region’s initiatives behind a single high impact brand. These three principles will provide a strong basis for the brand’s international success.
Five areas of excellence
The region’s digital ecosystem is banking on five areas of excellence: healthcare, energy, e-commerce, connected objects and the digital transformation. Digital Grenoble was the only metropolis to have identified healthcare as a key area in its French Tech candidacy. “In Isère, there are already 10,000 jobs focused on developing technological systems for healthcare, an area that represents a turnover of €4.1 billion.” highlights Vincent Tempelaere, president of the Medicalps cluster. The cluster unites more than 70 members, of whom 50% are less than five years old. Grenoble’s capacity to support emerging champions in this field could soon be bolstered by the creation of an incubator dedicated to this cause.

Energy, the second area of excellence, carries important stakes such as creating smart grids, producing and managing renewable energy, and processing energy and user data. These challenges will require new technology as well as innovative uses for existing technology. With Grenoble’s cutting-edge position in this field, Digital Grenoble aims to encourage initiatives and welcome experimental ideas in order to promote the ecosystem’s visibility above and beyond the region.

E-commerce and connected objects, a cornerstone for Digital Grenoble
In Grenoble, connected objects are a vibrant part of the ecosystem, in particular due to the CEA-Leti’s work. More than 30 start ups (Movea, Microoled, Aledia, Primo 1D, ISKN, etc.) have also been created in the region to develop new uses for connected objects. A few
of these start ups are already on their way towards large scale development. Grenoble’s activity in this sector is creating quite a buzz and by developing its incubator programs and uniting various skill sets, the region is ready to earn international recognition.

The fourth area of excellence is e-commerce. Back in 2000, the Kelkoo success story already highlighted the region’s excellence in this area. Thanks to the region’s competency in software development, Grenoble has successfully attracted several e-commerce pioneers. As a mix between commerce, marketing and software development, this area of excellence requires a specific combination of skills and it provides the region with many opportunities for new experiences.

**Going digital for a sustainable economy**

Grenoble’s candidacy for the French Tech label attributed critical importance to the digital transformation. This fifth area of excellence was underlined as a key priority. “Digital Grenoble provides a unique opportunity to raise awareness among all companies and help them prepare for the challenges of a digital transformation, in particular the digitalization of customer relations. This will be a critical challenge for certain ‘traditional’ sectors of activity if they wish to remain viable over the long term,” explains Jean Vaylet, president of the Grenoble CCI.

On June 18, the Grenoble CCI and Clust’R Numérique organized a day dedicated to raising awareness about the challenges of a digital transformation. Numerous actions are also being planned for the future. For example, The Digital Company is an incubator being set up in the Totem that will be specifically dedicated to this theme.

The combination of all the above mentioned strengths provides Grenoble with a unique digital ecosystem. Many actors have already recognized these strengths and chosen to set up shop in the region. It is now up to Digital Grenoble to develop the region's visibility and communicate on these many strengths to continue attracting new talents and ambitions.

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**ISKN Unites the Advantages of Paper and Digital Formats**

“Despite the fact that nobody believed in our project, which aimed to transform paper into a digital format, our team didn’t take no for an answer and today we can see the result.” says Jean-Luc Vallejo, co-founder of ISKN. This CEA-Leti innovation combines the pleasure of writing or drawing on paper with a digital rendering of sketches or notes. In September 2013, the project successfully seduced an international community of actors who discovered iSketchnote on the crowdfunding platform Kickstarter. The initial goal of $35,000 dollars was quickly overrun and $346,000 were raised in record time. ISKN raised two million dollars in January 2015 thanks to investors such as Pascal Cagni, ex-vice president of Apple Europe, and Xavier Neil. The company launched the production of 10,000 Slates and this 100% made in France product can now be delivered to more than 50 countries.

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**Petzl Undergoes a Digital Transformation**

Petzl is dedicated to producing equipment for rock climbing, speleology, alpinism and work in high places. In 2012, the company launched a strategy for its digital transformation. The first step was to introduce a company-wide ERP. The second step was to completely revamp the company’s communication tools by going from print to web formats for both the general public and professional clients. The third step was to develop customer relations thanks to social networks. “The strategy continues to evolve. The changes created by this plan have forced us to review our processes and rethink our organization,” explains Christophe Cayot, head of IT systems at Petzl (700 employees; 2014 turnover: €140 million). This transformation was first discussed and imagined in collaboration with the company’s suppliers, but the process will also fit well with initiatives launched by Digital Grenoble.
By creating The Digital Company (20 employees in Paris and Grenoble), Claude Lemardeley created a second level accelerator. This project was motivated by the fact that it is very difficult for start ups to grow from one to ten million euros in turnover. The Digital Company offers support by leveraging sales. “Some start ups need funding, others need access to an international network. Our contribution is to help these businesses connect with strategic digital transformation programs at major companies. These are opportunities which they otherwise would not have been able to access.” The key to the process’s success is its combination of agile methods and digital technology. Following several successful missions, The Digital Company is now extending its offer beyond the Grenoble ecosystem.

The Digital Company: An Agile Accelerator

Digital Grenoble’s ten year ambition is threefold: First, to create at least one SME that will become a tech champion, second, to help dozens of companies create hundreds of jobs and third, to support the many businesses that will try to overcome the challenges of a digital transformation. Several essential tools will provide the means to achieve these goals.

The Grenoble region is an ecosystem that encourages the development of digital companies. However, it remains to be seen what concrete results the French Tech label will bring to this ecosystem. The members of Digital Grenoble expect high returns from this label.

Two key priorities

The first is to create a single entity that will coordinate and communicate on the region’s digital ecosystem. “There are so many actors and initiatives that it is difficult for people to clearly understand all of these opportunities. Digital Grenoble will be a success once it provides a clear and simple entry point for those seeking to launch projects. It has to provide access to an entire set of services tied to the digital world.” explain young entrepreneurs in the sector. This goal falls in particular to Totem, the building in which Digital Grenoble will be housed by the end of September 2015.

Breaking the glass ceiling

The second priority is based on the need to support growth. Between 17 and 24 innovative start ups are created each year in this region. While this highlights the fact that the ecosystem is one of the most fertile lands for digital start ups, there is still work to be done in terms of supporting growth. In Grenoble and France in general, most companies are faced with a glass ceiling of 100 employees.

Jerôme Giachino, who founded Starzik in 2004, explains that “to win the race and be recognized in the legal music downloading sector, it was essential to have a concentration of means that, for the moment, is only possible in the United...
Accelerating growth

Accelerating growth is the primary goal of the French Tech initiative. On a national level, this translates to providing targeted funding (€200 million) for programs designed to accelerate growth. In Grenoble, the region’s entrepreneurial culture has already created several such initiatives to support digital and non-digital companies. These initiatives include the Grenoble Angels, the Grenoble Ecole de Management Institute for Entrepreneurship, the Entreprendre Isère network and Inovallée. There are also many organizations focused on the transfer of technology such as SATT Gate 1 or organizations derived from the CEA-Leti, Inria Rhône-Alpes and INP-G. In addition, the ecosystem has seen a spew of recent initiatives dedicated to the digital world: Startup Weekend—an event for the ecosystem, Cowork in Grenoble to host or create events, La Casemate for fablab type tools, or growth accelerators such as Le Phare, Startup Maker, Le Tarmac in Inovallée, IncubaGEM, and the Ambition logicielle program overseen by Minalogic. The program provides numerous opportunities to accelerate company growth thanks to events such as innovation days, conventions designed to connect SMEs, start ups and major corporations, and special events such as the recent event organized with TCL/Alcatel One Touch. Minalogic also provides support for Rhône-Alpes companies participating in the Las Vegas CES trade show. The delegation has included 12 to 15 start ups each year, but will expand to include 20 start ups in 2016 as the Rhône-Alpes region expands to become the Rhônes-Alpes-Auvergne region. These companies will now also benefit from the French Tech label as they cross the Atlantic.

Winning the race for international renown and growth.

Minalogic: A Complete Accelerator

Created in 2005, the Minalogic cluster was initially focused on micro and nanotechnology as well as embedded systems. However, since then this internationally recognized cluster has opened its range of action to include software and the entire digital sector. The cluster counts 300 members in the Rhône-Alpes region. “If we define the term ‘digital’ as being the intersection between hardware and software, then 100% of the cluster’s projects fall within this category,” underlines Philippe Wieczorek, Minalogic’s software technical director. “By expanding to include the entire digital sector, the cluster opened its doors to new methods for innovation, including for example lean start ups and agile methods. This was a fantastic evolution for us as these new contributions served to boost the entire innovation process,” explains Isabelle Guillaume, the cluster’s general delegate.

Ambition logicielle and the Pass French Tech

Minalogic is responsible for leading the Ambition logicielle program created by Inria. The program aims to support the rapid growth of software companies. Each year, dozens of companies in the Rhône-Alpes region receive support under this framework. Since December 2014, the cluster has also been responsible for running the Pass French Tech program for Digital Grenoble. Its mission is to accompany companies undergoing rapid growth. The program provides numerous opportunities to accelerate company growth thanks to events such as innovation days, conventions designed to connect SMEs, start ups and major corporations, and special events such as the recent event organized with TCL/Alcatel One Touch. Minalogic also provides support for Rhône-Alpes companies participating in the Las Vegas CES trade show. The delegation has included 12 to 15 start ups each year, but will expand to include 20 start ups in 2016 as the Rhône-Alpes region expands to become the Rhônes-Alpes-Auvergne region. These companies will now also benefit from the French Tech label as they cross the Atlantic.

Daniel Pilaud Sets a Path for Accelerators

Daniel Pilaud, the vice-president of Digital Grenoble, is an expert on the matter. Ex-professor and researcher at Ensimag and co-founder of Polyspace Technologies, he now leads the company IT-Translation which provides seed-funding for technology-oriented digital companies. His vision also guides his contributions to the working group on accelerators. “The weakness of the French digital economy is costing us. We have to admit that the Americans know how to buy start ups. Why should we not try to consolidate certain sectors?” This will be one of the missions given to accelerator programs supported by Digital Grenoble.
Funding for tech champions
Access to risk capital and funds for development were two fundamental principles for Grenoble’s French Tech candidacy. Despite a significant increase in fundraising (€17 million in 2010, €46 million in 2012, €90 million in 2013), the region still has to provide more support. “If we want Grenoble to be home to a champion, the region must provide access to greater financial support.” insists Boris Saragaglia, CEO of Spartoo. “Grenoble has the economic weight necessary to attract high-level financial support for high-potential start ups.” adds Jean Vaylet, president of the Grenoble CCI.

The creation of a “fund for funds” is underway to create a tool for shared funding that will boost support for the most promising companies. The region, with its strong culture of technology, will also have to learn to balance investments in R&D, marketing, business and partnerships so to emulate practices that are already successful in Anglo-Saxon regions. Digital Grenoble is committed to promoting this new spirit which is essential if the region wishes to develop a tech champion.

Accelerating start ups by providing access to risk capital.

Sogilis: A Software Success Story
Christophe Baillon is a self-taught visionary. He created Sogilis in 2008 with the goal of designing long-lasting, efficient and low maintenance cost software. To do so, he relied on agile methods. The reliability of the work created by Sogilis teams soon attracted the interest of the Thales Avionics group. As a result, the company was given several aeronautical projects and ended up receiving the highest grade amongst all of the group’s suppliers. However, to go even further, the company’s founder created an innovative management model: a company without managers where teams decide for themselves which projects to pursue all the while taking into account economic constraints. The success of this model led to the launch of subsidiaries in Lyon, Australia and the United States as well as the creation of Startup Maker, a growth accelerator that notably supported Squadrone System. The company is strongly invested in the region’s digital ecosystem.

Mathieu Genty - Promoting a Digital Culture
In 2012, Mathieu Genty, the founder of Cowork in Grenoble, wanted to create a place dedicated to digital start ups. “My vision of what was being done abroad encouraged me to try and break the loneliness of entrepreneurs.” Over the past three years, 1,000 companies with a total turnover of €10 million have passed through the doors of Cowork in Grenoble. “These companies can succeed by creating new uses. Their experiences demonstrate that there is real economic value behind their innovative models. We will pay a high price if France does not bet on the digital ecosystem,” Mathieu Genty is a self-taught man with the desire to share his experiences. As a result, he expanded his concept and created a school for entrepreneurs that is based on learning by doing. In addition, Cowork in Grenoble, which is now located in the Totem, provides an accelerator program for start ups.
Digital Grenoble: International Visibility and Attractiveness

How can we make Digital Grenoble an internationally recognized brand? The first steps towards accomplishing this goal were the creation of a “French Tech in the Alps” slogan as well as policies and strategies focused on developing attractiveness and creating international partnerships.

While Grenoble’s micro and nanotechnology sectors have earned international recognition, the region’s digital sector remains undervalued. Digital Grenoble’s leaders and experts alike agree that Grenoble has the potential to become an international player in the digital sector. “The French Tech label provides Grenoble with a unique opportunity to capitalize on a specialization other than micro and nanotechnology. This is our chance to place digital innovations and technologies in their rightful place.” says Daniel Pilaud, director of the seed-funding company IT-Translation.

French Tech in the Alps, creating a world-renown image
To help increase its international visibility, Digital Grenoble benefits from Grenoble’s excellent ranking as the fifth most innovative city in the world (just behind Malmo, Sweden, and in front of Stuttgart, Germany). The slogan “French Tech in the Alps” also builds on Digital Grenoble’s easily recognizable location in the French Alps.

Connecting its existing networks
The Isère region includes a network of 122 companies with international backing. In addition, 60 of the network’s companies are solely focused on the IT and software sectors and include companies such as HP, with its European expert center for cloud computing, Xerox RCE, Salesforce and Rolls-Royce. Many local players such as Schneider Electric, Orange and Capgemini are not only active members of Digital Grenoble, but also international leaders in their field.

Laurent Ponthieu - Kick Starting International Networks

"Digital Grenoble provides us with an opportunity for development. Its platform provides a network of digital skills and talents that is very valuable," states Laurent Ponthieu, in charge of the Rolls-Royce civilian nuclear activity in Europe. Whether it is in Meylan with digital distributed control systems or in Derby with aviation equipment, digital technology is crucial for Rolls-Royce. Thus it was natural for Laurent Ponthieu, who also holds a doctorate in artificial intelligence, to lead Digital Grenoble’s international actions. His project is to create ties that open the doors to major corporations and help develop connections with other metropolises. “To be attractive, we have to know how to promote our successes.”

Renaud Cornu-Emieux - Brand Leadership

Following the application process, Renaud Cornu-Emieux has played a key role in Digital Grenoble’s communication strategy. He holds a doctorate of engineering from INPG, leads the GEM-Orange Digital Natives Chair and founded EMSI, Grenoble Ecole de Management’s school for IT systems. He now also dedicates part of his time to managing Digital Grenoble’s website and social networks. In collaboration with Digital Grenoble’s team, he is setting up the brand’s values, charter and logo guidelines. As a staunch supporter of digital technology, Renaud Cornu-Emieux also organizes GEM’s digital day, which will change format in December 2015 to address issues surrounding the digital transformation.
addition, Digital Grenoble aims to interconnect with networks such as alumni associations, researcher networks in companies like Microsoft, Amazon, Google or Apple, and international networks created by the region’s universities and business schools. As a result, Digital Grenoble’s teams often say: “The map of our networks covers the entire world.” This address book of possible ambassadors opens the way to communicating the Grenoble French Tech brand around the world. In addition to going global, these networks are also aimed at helping companies set up shop in the region.

An initiative to mobilize the entire ecosystem Digital Grenoble is also focused on developing relations with international Tech Hubs. To help achieve this goal, the region has elaborated a range of convincing arguments and created its first relations with London, Helsinki and Lausanne. Digital Grenoble will also be working together with all the French Tech metropolises to create a major digital event. The fact that France sends many companies to the Las Vegas CES trade show every year (120 in January 2015) suggests that such an event would be successful in France. The Rhône-Alpes region is well represented with 12 companies in the latest 2015 delegation. To provide even greater support for digital companies, organizations such as Grex, which is dedicated to accompanying companies in their development, have all lent their support in order to create future tech champions.

### French Tech Glossary

- **French Tech Hubs**: Regions with international metropolises and major development opportunities for start ups. These regions received this label from the French government on the basis of their application which had to meet the requirements of the Ministry of State for Digital Affairs.
- **French Tech Label**: To earn the French Tech label, a metropolis must demonstrate several key characteristics: a leading French digital ecosystem that favors entrepreneurship, a united front on the part of regional players, an ambitious development strategy for its ecosystem, operational programs that support the growth and visibility of start ups and companies in the region, and specifically designated locations and organizations dedicated to encouraging and supporting these companies. Each metropolis received its label for one year. In 2015, a review of the year’s actions will determine if the label is awarded for the next three years.
- **Pass French Tech**: A program designed to support companies that are experiencing rapid growth.
- **Tech Champion**: A company with an ambitious project for growth that mobilizes a wide range of partners who will support the project. A project’s potential is analyzed in terms of its capacity to become an international leader within a few years.
- **Small Business Act**: A policy initiated by major corporations and local authorities to govern cooperation and purchasing in a way that supports start ups.
Creating a Digital Region to Generate Economic Value

In June 2015, Digital Grenoble finished elaborating its strategy for creating economic value. The region’s ecosystem now has a clear roadmap for upcoming years. The first significant step in this plan is the inauguration of the Totem building in September 2015. Setting up shop in the building rented by Orange in Pasteur Square is without a doubt one of the most visible actions implemented by Digital Grenoble.

Efficiency was the primary guiding principle for Digital Grenoble. Eight months after receiving the French Tech label, Digital Grenoble had already finalized its offer for digital players and entrepreneurs while the entire ecosystem demonstrated its readiness to collaborate on the initiative.

Totem inauguration planned for September 2015

The building is located in downtown Grenoble at the intersection of many sites with strong digital activities (Inovallée, Montbonnot and the Scientific Polygon) as well as a multitude of public transportation options. The Totem will be ready to welcome its first visitors in September 2015. The location includes 300 square meters of coworking space, a space for events, meetings and exchanges, and Digital Grenoble’s first set of services aimed at entrepreneurs.

Over the long run, Digital Grenoble’s location will include 1,700 square meters of office space dedicated to innovation and digital activities. By opening this location, the digital

Salesforce Bets on Grenoble’s Ecosystem

This American company is a perfect illustration of what champions expect from French Tech metropolises. Founded in 1999, the company is an international leader of cloud-based CRM solutions. Created in San Francisco, Salesforce now has 16,000 employees worldwide. The group works with all types of French companies, small and large. In 2013, Salesforce opened an R&D center in Meylan. The center’s director, Pierre-Yves Chevalier, alerted the AEPI (Invest in Grenoble-Isère Network) of the need for a well-thought sales pitch to convince Salesforce of Grenoble’s high potential. Since then, the company’s R&D center has grown rapidly with 15 engineers. “Salesforce discovered the region’s high level of expertise. Local talent is well-trained, autonomous and loyal. This is a real advantage compared to Silicon Valley where the digital fever causes high turnover rates,” says Pierre-Yves Chevalier, who is also involved in Digital Grenoble.

André Meyer - Point Man for the Small Business Act

As the vice-president of the Grenoble Angels, André Meyer built his career around major players in the telecommunications and software industries (Ericsson, Philips, HP, Cegetel, etc). In 2001, he created a start up which has since been sold to an American group. Thanks to the wide range of his experiences, he participated on several aspects of Digital Grenoble: international attractiveness, accelerator programs, etc. His conviction is that French digital companies have the potential to excel at “going to market” if they are ready to interact with markets earlier on in order to test their solutions. André Meyer also provided key support for the Grenoble Small Business Act.


**Digital Grenoble Performance Indicators**

Digital Grenoble’s ambitions and success will be evaluated over the next ten years according to the following indicators:

- **Indicator 1** - Growth of jobs in digital companies, balance between major companies and SMEs, and the digital transformation of consumer goods companies.
- **Indicator 2** - Number of companies experiencing rapid growth (goal: 300% growth by 2024).
- **Indicator 3** - Number of digital SMEs with more than 100 employees, their growth in terms of turnover, and their percentage of international business.
- **Indicator 4** - Statistics on fundraising operations for start-ups and SMEs (how many/how much), fundraising by accelerators and Grenoble’s digital investment funds.
- **Indicator 5** - Measuring the impact of major companies on start-ups and SMEs (turnover created by corporations that have signed the Small Business Act).

**Orange: Strong Commitment from a Major Player**

Orange (155,000 employees; 2014 turnover: €39.4 billion) is a 100% digital group. "In our industry, product uses change at lightning speed. Our company is constantly rethinking its innovation management in order to continue improving product life cycles and how fast we develop new solutions. The French Tech initiative is therefore in perfect alignment with our strategic objectives," explains Didier Chaminade, Orange’s regional delegate in the Alps.

Connecting the ecosystem to Orange’s programs

Thanks to Orange Fab France, the company opens innovation to lightweight agile organizations specialized in specific sectors. Twice a year, the company reaches out to start-ups and launches a call for projects via its website: orangefabfrance.fr. Among the 150 candidates, seven are given the opportunity to benefit from the accelerator program. “This year, no laureates came from the Isère region. My goal is to spread information about this program throughout our ecosystem so that local companies can benefit from it. We can easily picture a couple dozen candidates from the Alpine region and therefore several potential winners as well,” adds the regional delegate.

Orange also created a capital venture fund with €20 million in funds each year. “The fund can contribute to the birth of a European champion that could become an international leader, and why not a company from Grenoble,” says Didier Chaminade. The company has also invested in Digital Grenoble’s activity. The Totem building belongs to Orange and the group is funding 60% of construction costs for office space. The company is also behind the launch of the Digital Natives Chair created in 2012 with Grenoble Ecole de Management. Didier Chaminade is committed to closely following Digital Grenoble’s development.

Mobilizing an ecosystem to encourage the growth of champions.

**French Tech in the Alps: Seeing the big picture**

This first year of activity included meaningful work on Digital Grenoble’s primary mission to support the creation and development of digital companies. These advances were made possible by the active involvement of local players in the organization’s working groups. The enthusiasm born of the application process continues to bolster the organization’s work.

‘The French Tech label is a wonderful initiative that will provide Grenoble with many opportunities,” notes Jean Vaylet. ‘The Grenoble innovation ecosystem is expanding to include everything digital. It’s a real chance for value creation and growth.’ adds Isabelle Guillaum, Minalogic’s general delegate. Everyone agrees that this initiative aims big. “We have to be ambitious and look to the distant future. If we have to buy a start up with 50 employees somewhere else in Europe in order for us to create a tech champion, then why not do it?” asks an entrepreneur in Grenoble.

**Three accelerators in the works for 2015**

Digital Grenoble also set in motion a clear strategy for the creation of accelerator programs. “We had to start by examining all existing initiatives. This evaluation was certainly more difficult for us than for metropolises with fewer such services. But now we are ready to play our role and coordinate the development of new accelerators that will meet needs not answered by existing solutions.” explains Jean-Pierre Verjus.

As a result, three accelerators are in the works for 2015 and other initiatives will certainly follow in 2016. The end-game is to develop companies with new jobs and create economic value for the territory by consolidating sectors such as e-commerce, connected objects, healthcare or energy. To analyze and follow
up on these initiatives, a whole battery of performance indicators have been implemented for French Tech metropolises (see box on performance indicators). In addition, Grenoble has decided to follow an additional indicator, the digital transformation of companies, as this evolution is essential for the entire economy.

Digital Grenoble, the digital region
The region's ecosystem has everything to gain by collaborating on the French Tech initiative. The new links created between major groups such as Rolls-Royce, Capgemini or Schneider Electric, and digital start ups will without a doubt lead to value creation, in particular thanks to the Grenoble Small Business Act. “The success of Digital Grenoble is an advantage that will help attract clients, talent and investors as well as convince major groups to invest here rather than elsewhere. The quality of the network we've developed in the region leads me to believe that we will be able to create products and services that will be even more successful and ready for export.” says Laurent Ponthieu.

Ambitious programs such as a smart grid campus are in the works and make for a promising future. The Grenoble region is ready to shine well beyond its borders thanks to the dynamism and quality of its entrepreneurial players. From Christophe Baillon to Jonathan Bonzy, Mathieu Genyi, Stéphane Lavallée, Christophe Lecante, Claude Lemardeley, Philippe Matthia, Eric Pierrel, Boris Saragaglia and many others, all have worked hard to set up the economy of the future and launch new projects. Such investment can only bring about new digital players and tech champions. Over the next five to ten years, the building blocks are in place to turn this ecosystem into a true digital region.

Digital Grenoble: Concrete Actions in 2015

**Action 1 : Creating a collaborative public interest company (SCIC)**
Digital Grenoble will transform into a collaborative public interest company (SCIC) in the fall of 2015. The SCIC’s capital was funded by participating local players.

**Action 2 : Opening the Totem building**
The Totem provides a unique location for all of Digital Grenoble’s services:
- **Coworking services:** The Cowork in Grenoble company is changing locations to set up shop in the Totem. Other coworking companies will also join the movement.
- **French Tech Meetings:** Organized since February 2015, these meetings are designed to help SMEs overcome barriers to growth. Starting in October 2015, they will take place in the Totem.
- **Innovation showcase:** The Totem will offer traditional companies the opportunity to discover new ideas and evolutions thanks to an experimental space with showcases for new technology (expected in 2016).
- **Office space:** The Totem will house accelerators as well as consulting services for companies (to be deployed between 2015 and 2017).
- **Brasserie:** A restaurant will be opened to reinforce the Totem’s role as a place for exchange and advice.
- **Event organization:** Starting in 2015.

**Action 3 : Setting up growth accelerators**
- Two accelerators answered the call for projects during the French Tech application process:
  - **Startup Maker** - Dedicated to supporting the creation of start ups geared towards becoming international digital champions.
  - **The Digital Company** - Focused the digitalization of client relations and client experiences.
- Digital Grenoble carried out an analysis of existing accelerators and highlighted areas for further development (connected objects, healthcare, energy and a regional accelerator to invest in digital companies).
- The Pass French Tech and the coordination of various existing accelerator initiatives is underway to support the growth of start ups.

**Action 4 : Signing a Small Business Act**
The goal of this agreement was to obtain concrete commitments from major companies and regional authorities in order to support the region’s start ups and SMEs. At least eight major groups and two regional authorities are expected to sign the agreement in 2015.

**Action 5 : International**
Several actions were implemented in 2015, in particular:
- A website and social networks accounts were created to communicate on an international level (Digital Grenoble participates in foreign Tech Hub social networks and is also planning to create an English language version of digital-grenoble.com).
- Efforts to welcome and encourage foreign talents to stay in the region thanks to a partnership with the Young Ambassadors network which works to welcome foreign students to the Rhône-Alpes region.
- Set up international partnerships with Tech Hubs, foreign economic organizations and other international organizations.
Entreprises adhérentes
Member Companies