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Press release

Paris Region launches the “AI Challenge Paris Region 2018”: the first international challenge dedicated to startups

Today, after announcing it during the Las Vegas CES last January, Valérie Pécresse, the President of Paris Region, launched the **one-million-euro competition** “AI Challenge Paris Region 2018”, the first international challenge dedicated to startups, in the presence of Alexandra Dublanche, vice-president in charge of economic development at the Paris Region, Christophe Gégout, deputy managing director of the Alternative Energies and Atomic Energy Commission (CEA), Jérôme Snollaerts, CEO of CapDecisif Management and administrator of the Paris Region Venture Fund, and all the project partners : Dassault Systèmes, Atos, EY and Empruntis.

This outstanding competition is intended both for Paris Region companies and all the startups wanting to take root in the Paris Region. Unprecedented in its endowment, it is in keeping with the Region’s new attractiveness strategy in support of Artificial Intelligence, and illustrates the global ambition of the Paris Region ecosystem in the sector, notably in the fields of mobility and 4.0 industries (infrastructures, applications, platforms).

This defining event for the startup ecosystem participates in an overall strategy to turn Ile-de-France into a “**Startup Region**”, and more specifically to make it the **European capital of Artificial Intelligence**. It supplements the very strong involvement of Paris Region in the Digihall project, which deals with the creation of an international pole of reference for digital technology and artificial intelligence at Paris-Saclay, or in the development of the Atos Quantum Computing R&D laboratory in Clayes-sous-Bois.

The competition is aimed at the startups being able to display a product (software or hardware) that is at the minimum in the pilot phase, or, ideally, that was already deployed at some clients’. The product should be the result of a recent innovation using Artificial Intelligence, and have potential industrial applications. The company should be less than five years old, plan to raise funds within 24 months, and have risen less than €500,000.

For the Region, the “AI Challenge Paris Region 2018” has three objectives:

- Position Ile-de-France on the world stage as a key territory in the field of AI, in order to show that the Region is open to international cooperation in the sector, and that it meets all the necessary requirements to achieve it.
- Develop and capitalize on a top-tier innovative regional ecosystem in terms of AI.

- Take part in the acceleration of the Ile-de-France economical players' digital transition, notably in the industry.

The one-million-euro endowment (€700,000 for the winner, and €150,000 for the 2nd and 3rd), granted in the form of a capital injection, will enable the Region to support the strategic and commercial development of 3 emerging players of AI in Ile-de-France, in the long run, through the "Paris Region Venture Fund" and the "Investment" branch of the Alternative Energies and Atomic Energy Commission.

Applications should be submitted on the dedicated online platform "aichallenge.parisregion.eu" as of April 12th, and before June 17th.

At the end of the application process, **a jury of 15 partners and scientists** presided by Bertrand Braunschweig, Director of the INRIA Paris-Saclay, will **determine the 10 first winners on July 3rd, 2018.**

These 10 companies shall benefit from a very intensive support during three months. The first two recipients are to be more specifically coached by Ernst & Young. The industrial sponsors of the event (Dassault Systèmes, Atos, Empruntis) will step in subsequently in order to provide expert advice to the applicants on very precise problems, notably on the technical aspects of their products. Foreign applicants will also receive advice on implementation issues from Paris Region Entreprises, the enforcer of the Paris Region attractiveness policy.

The third month of coaching will be an opportunity for the applicants to solicit, on their own initiative, the partners, mentors, and experts involved in the Challenge on issues they judge are strategic for the output of their product and the development of their company (technical expertise, recruitment, market...).

On top of the criteria taken into account for the selection of the 10 companies (business model, relevance in relation to the AI thematic, social progress brought about by the designed product...), the final laureates will also be rated for the progress they achieved over the mentoring period.

The names of the 3 final recipients will be disclosed during the regional conference on AI, early October, a federative event for Paris Region AI and its international outreach, under the co-presidency of Bertrand Braunschweig.

Valérie Pécresse declared: *"As the leading Smart Region in Europe, rich with 1,300 research laboratories, 162,000 researchers, and close to 8,000 startups, we are proud to launch this competition in an environment conducive to innovation and Artificial Intelligence. It will allow us to speed up the development of the fledgling AI businesses in Ile-de-France, and to transform them into the champions of tomorrow's digital world."*

For the record, a few key figures and dates about the Challenge:

Endowment: 1 million €

Schedule: Applications open April 12th and close June 17th; winners will be announced in October 2018.

Financial partners: the Paris Region Venture Fund governed by CapDecisif Management, the Alternative Energies and Atomic Energy Commission

Industrial partners: Atos, Dassault Systèmes, EY, Empruntis

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APPENDIX

About...

Paris Region Venture Fund

In the framework of its #Leader for growth, employment and innovation# strategy, Paris Region appointed the Paris Region Venture Fund as the strategic financial instrument contributing to the creation and development of innovative and high-growth-potential companies in Ile-de-France. The fund aims at nurturing tomorrow's frontrunners in sectors as diverse as digital, mobility, health, or sustainable and smart urban design, but also Artificial Intelligence, since two spinners of the PRVF (Navya and Linkfluence) are listed in the Top-10 French AI startups.

Paris Region Entreprises

Paris Region Entreprises is the agency of the Paris Region Council in charge of promoting its attractiveness internationally.

Through its presence in Paris, the United States (Boston, San Francisco and New York) and China (Shanghai and Beijing), the agency provides support every year for several hundred international companies with development projects in the Region and helps to build close to a thousand technological connections among international companies, major corporate groups and R&D laboratories in the Paris Region.

CEA Investissement

Created in 1999, CEA Investissement is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the French Alternative Energies and Atomic Energy Commission (CEA) for which it serves as the startup financing arm: it provides equity investments in innovative companies that make significant contributions to CEA's crucial missions. Underwriter of various funds, it accompanies these companies through each stage of their growth. CEA Investissement is advised by Supernova Invest, an authorized management company that it created in 2017 alongside Amundi Ventures.

CEA is a major player in research, development and innovation, whose mission is to be the cradle of tomorrow's industries. Through one of its institutes, CEA LIST, CEA is focusing its research on intelligent digital systems and developing an innovation ecosystem with partners and startups around research and development platforms, including DigiHall, a project underway at Saclay Plateau.

DigiHall

DigiHall is a vibrant interdisciplinary community gathering 5 key actors of the digital sector (CEA, Inria, IRT SystemX, the Systematic hub, Telecom ParisTech/ParisSud) entirely devoted to digital research and innovation, to reinvent the industry and accelerate the transformation of all the companies.

ATOS

Atos is the world leader of digital transition, employing some 100,000 people in 73 countries, and the European leader in the fields of Big Data, cyber security, supercomputers, and

connected work environments. Atos also is a key player of European Artificial Intelligence through its investment and innovation program in partnership with Siemens. A precursor in the uptake of new technologies, Atos works alongside Paris Region to enable the emergence of new uses for artificial intelligence.

Cap Decisif Management

CapDecisif Management is an independent Venture Capital firm investing in early-stage companies, mainly in the digital and healthcare sectors. Since its inception in 2001, CapDecisif Management has backed over 83 companies in Western Europe, while generating consistent returns for its investors. As a trusted partner, CapDecisif Management's team is valued by entrepreneurs for its complementary skills and business network.

Dassault Systèmes

"The 3DEXPERIENCE Company" provides companies and individuals with the virtual environments they need to design sustainable innovations. Its market-leading solutions transform the way their clients design, manufacture and maintain their products. The 3DEXPERIENCE portfolio of Dassault Systèmes, which enables realistic 3D virtual explorations, includes social and cooperative applications, as well as 3D-design, simulation, content, and information valorization applications.

EY

EY is among the global leaders in transaction audit, counsel, taxation, and law. Everywhere in the world, their expertise and high-quality services contribute to create the conditions for trust in the economy and financial markets. They nurture today's talents so that they can together carry the structures toward a perennial growth.

Empruntis

Empruntis.com supports and advises private individuals and professionals needing funding for their projects. Its clients have access to a website, Empruntis.com, providing insight into all the fields of financing (mortgage loan, consumer credit, debt consolidation, and insurance), as well as a platform of specialized digital brokers. Empruntis is a mark of the Compagnie Européenne de Crédit, a French leader in credit brokerage.

Dechert

Dechert is a global law firm who deliver deep legal expertise and practical commercial judgment for high-stakes matters in sectors with the greatest complexities, intricacies and regulatory demands. With 28 offices around the globe, they are a global and mobile workforce of diverse skills and areas of expertise. Their work is widely recognized within the legal industry, including top global-wide rankings for corporate investigations, international arbitration, investment funds and life sciences.

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