

Press release

Thursday December 16, 2021

France Digitale, the French Standardization Association (AFNOR) and the General Secretariat for investment (SGPI) announce an unprecedented partnership allowing technological startups and SMEs to have a voice in the debates around the regulation and standardization of artificial intelligence in Europe



The European Commission aims to adopt specific regulations to govern certain uses of artificial intelligence. At the same time, numerous standardization and standardization bodies are working to define new technical standards for AI. Thus, France Digitale, AFNOR and SGPI are mobilizing to support small technology companies in deciphering these new regulatory and normative requirements in terms of artificial intelligence.

This partnership is launched as part of the Grand Challenge "Securing, certifying and making systems based on artificial intelligence reliable"¹ of the Future Investment Program (PIA), and more specifically its action on AI standardization led by AFNOR. Its ambition is to raise the voice of startups and SMEs and guarantee a balance between innovation and regulation in order to preserve the meteoric rise of French Tech nuggets.

The objective is to promote and defend the vision of small technological companies and thus guarantee the necessary protection of security and fundamental rights, while preserving their capacity for innovation. Concretely, the partnership will lead to the production and publication of work aimed at specifying the needs and expectations of the startup/SME ecosystem in the field of standardization and regulation in Artificial Intelligence. For **Julien Chiaroni, Director of the Grand Défi 'Securing, certifying and making systems based on artificial intelligence more reliable' at SGPI**: "We consider it fundamental to strengthen the maturity of the startup ecosystem on regulatory and standardization issues in AI."

Thanks to the partnership with AFNOR, France Digitale will thus integrate, for the first time, standardization bodies (the AI Standardization Commission in France, then at the European level CEN-CENELEC and internationally ISO), in which the participation of startups has until now been rare. For **Franck Lebeugle, Director of AFNOR standardization activities**: "We are delighted with this partnership which allows us to continue to integrate technological nuggets into strategic AI standardization discussions. It is important that the standards that will define tomorrow's artificial intelligence reflect the values and technological environment of French startups."

The three organizations will jointly lead an awareness campaign on standardization issues among technological gems, and will offer content aimed at facilitating compliance with the new rules. For **Maya Noël, Managing Director of France Digitale**: "We anticipate that certain projects integrating artificial intelligence will have additional costs due to new rules and standards. This

¹<https://www.temporel.fr/grand-defi-securer-certifier-et-fiabiliser-les-systemes-fondes-sur-l-intelligence-artificielle>

partnership allows us to begin to best prepare the companies concerned. We must not underestimate the burden that this will represent for the smallest players.”

As a reminder, [cartography](#) revealed by France Digitale in November 2021 indicates that AI startups are booming in France. France has 502 AI startups in 2021 (+11% vs. 2020). They are **youth**- 73% of them were created less than 6 years ago. They are attracting more and more investors - they have already **raised twice as much funds as last year** (€1.6 billion in 2021 vs. €708 million in 2020). They **create jobs**: 13,459 people work in AI startups in 2021 (for 70,000 indirect jobs generated), this is more than 35% increase compared to 2020 (10,008 employees). They are going **massively recruit in 2022** with 9,312 job creations planned.

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About the Future Investment Program (PIA)

Involved for 10 years and managed by the General Secretariat for Investment under the Prime Minister, the PIA finances innovative projects, contributing to the transformation of the country, sustainable growth and the creation of tomorrow's jobs. From the emergence of an idea to the dissemination of a new product or service, the PIA supports the entire life cycle of innovation, between public and private sectors, alongside economic, academic, territorial and Europeans. These investments are based on a demanding doctrine, open selective procedures, and principles of co-financing or returns on investment for the State. The fourth PIA (PIA4) has €20 billion in commitments over the period 2021-2025, €11 billion of which will contribute to supporting innovative projects as part of the France Relance plan. The PIA will continue to support innovation over the long term, in all its forms, so that our country strengthens its positions in sectors of the future, in the service of competitiveness, ecological transition, and the independence of our economy and our organizations. »

More information on: www.temporel.fr/secretariat-general-pour-l-investment-sgpi @SGPI_avenir

About France Digitale

Founded in 2012, France Digitale is the largest startup association in Europe, with more than 1,800 French digital startups and investors. The association's mission is to create European digital champions and to lead the startup ecosystem in France.

France Digitale is co-chaired by Frédéric Mazzella, founder of BlaBlaCar, and Benoist Grossmann, CEO Eurazeo Investment Manager.

More information on : <https://francedigitale.org/> - @FRdigitale

About AFNOR

A partner of economic players, the French Standardization Association (1901 Law) works to create a common language and the interoperability of sectors of excellence. It brings together those who want to develop a sector under the best conditions and brings together the entire value chain around them. Together, they define the guiding principles of an activity and develop a shared and voluntary standard. Nearly 20,000 representatives of companies, associations, federations and the State participate each year in this co-construction exercise. An essential tool to promote progress and promote French innovation, since AFNOR represents France in European and international standardization bodies.

Franck Lebeugle is the director of AFNOR's standardization activities.

More information on: <https://normalisation.afnor.org/>

