France – a pioneer in the digital revolution and artificial intelligence

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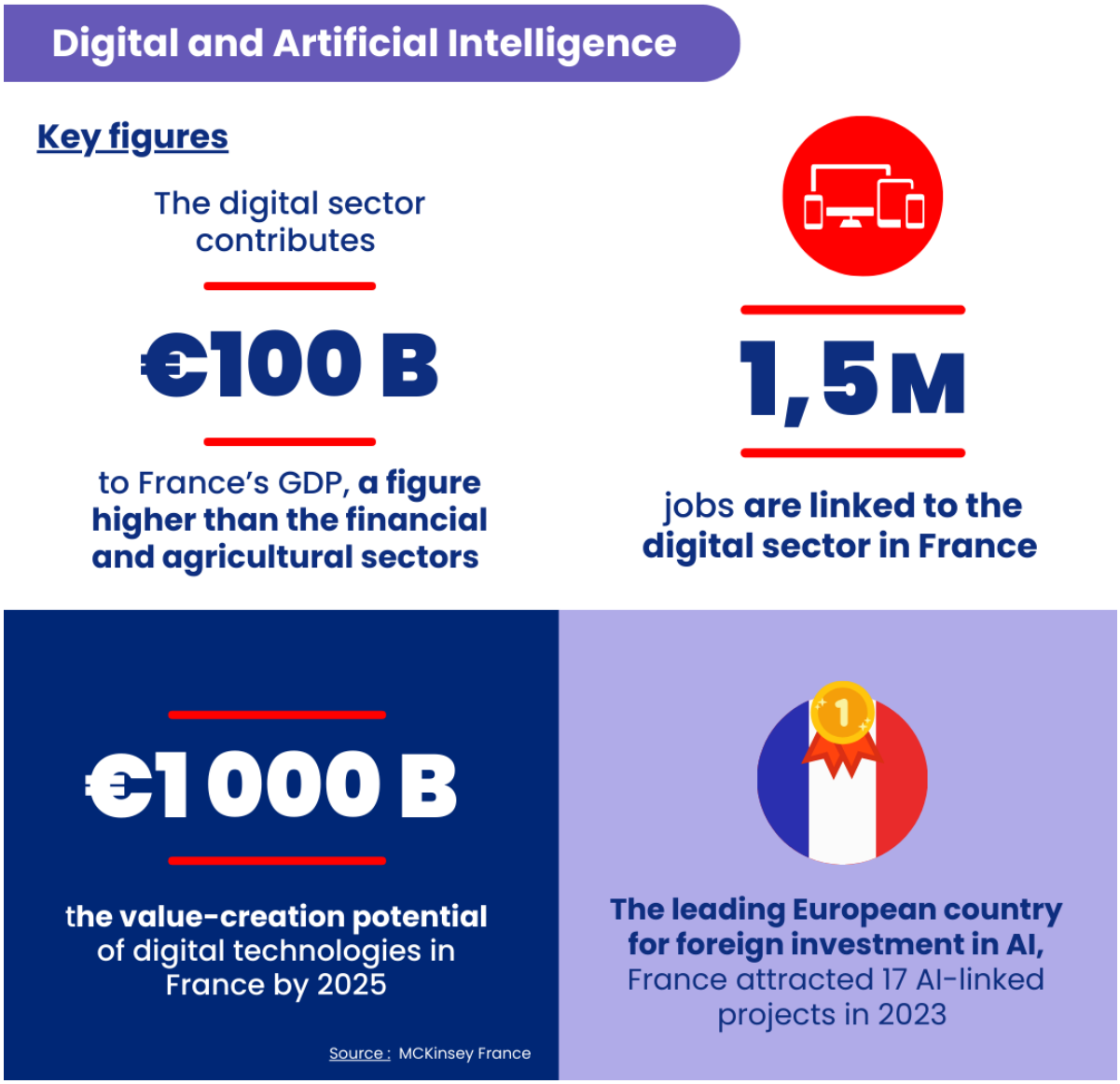
Digital and Artificial Intelligence bannière

A national priority

With its fast-expanding ecosystem, France is gradually cementing its place as a rising power in the artificial intelligence (AI) and digital sectors. Supported by public and private investment, the digital sector represents 5.5% of France's GDP, and this share could double in the coming years according to a study by McKinsey.
The French State has made AI a strategic priority and the country was one of the first (in 2018) to develop a national artificial intelligence strategy, which was accompanied by an investment of 1.5 billion

euros. A second plan, along with 2.2 billion euros of funding, was announced in 2021. In addition, the France 2030 plan earmarked a combined public and private investment of 2.1 billion euros in AI over the period 2021-25 in order to strengthen the country's AI research and training ecosystem.



A burgeoning ecosystem

On the strength of this proactive policy, France has become a leading technological powerhouse. To showcase this, in February, Paris hosted the AI Action Summit, which brought together hundreds of world leaders and numerous tech companies. Alongside Paris, Cannes hosted, for the fourth consecutive year, the World AI Cannes Festival, the world's leading event dedicated to artificial intelligence. Attracting leaders and innovators from around the world every year, it hosts conferences, workshops and exhibitions that highlight the latest technological advances and applications in the AI sector.
Home to names such as Hugging Face, Dataiku and Shift Technology, France has over 600 start-ups (including nine unicorns) in the AI sector. It has a particularly strong presence in two fields: machine learning and computer vision (the latter enabling computers to derive information from images and digital videos). The country is an attractive destination for research and has 81 AI laboratories, the largest number in Europe. In addition, numerous foreign companies such as Uber, Meta and Microsoft have chosen France to establish and expand their AI laboratories.

France’s *grandes écoles* and universities, such as Polytechnique, CentraleSupélec and INRIA, train a generation of specialists every year who go on to work for innovative companies and world-renowned start-ups such as Dataiku and Hugging Face.

Paris – the European capital for the digital and AI sectors

Paris is developing into a global hub for the artificial and digital sectors thanks to an ecosystem that combines innovation, research and a strong entrepreneurial spirit. The cradle for pioneering start-ups such as Hugging Face and Dataiku, the French capital also attracts global giants such as Google and Meta, who have set up their IA R&D centres here. Supported by initiatives such as **Station F**, the world’s biggest incubator, and renowned events that include **VivaTech**, Paris is at the forefront of digital transformation. Thanks to its talents and strong public-financed support, the city has a very bright future at the heart of the global technological revolution. A symbol of this revolution, OpenAI has chosen Paris for its new office, attracted by the hotbed of AI talent that France is able to offer.
“France is renowned the world over for its innovation and leadership in terms of technology and AI.” Sam Altman, CEO of OpenAI

Regions at the cutting-edge of technology

Outside of Paris, other French cities stand out for their technological expertise.
? **Lyon** is a city known for its digital acumen and is a major centre for IA and digital technology thanks to its innovative ecosystem and initiatives such as the Digital League cluster that brings together companies and scientists. Every year, the city hosts Sido Lyon, Europe’s largest show dedicated to IoT, AI and robotics, as well as BlendWebMix, a conference devoted to digital innovation and the web.
? **Toulouse** is renowned for its expertise in aeronautics and space technology but also as a central player in AI, in particular for its embedded system and intelligent mobility technologies. The “ville rose” is also home to DigitalPlace, the digital cluster for the Occitanie region.
? **Nantes** stands out for its rapidly expanding digital ecosystem, which is supported by dynamic start-ups and public-sector players. The city is also renowned for its innovations in AI applied to industry and the environment, plays host to Web2Day, an annual European festival for the digital sector, which brings together start-ups, investors and experts, and the Nantes Digital Week, dedicated to digital culture and innovation.