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France – a strategic hub for IT and ICT

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Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

Infographie ICT

A blooming digital ecosystem

France occupies a central role in Europe's digital technology landscape. Its start-ups, innovative SMEs and tech giants have resulted in France becoming a destination of choice for IT professionals which stands out thanks to:

- **A dynamic digital market**, generating a turnover of 70 billion euros in 2023 according to Syntec Numérique.
- The ICT market in France is expected to post a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 13.50% for the period 2024-2032.
- **A growing community of unicorns**, showcased by standout companies such as Pigment, Ledger, Alan, Doctolib and Mirakl, and supported by initiatives such as the French Tech ecosystem.

- **Leadership in key technologies** such as artificial intelligence (AI), cybersecurity, blockchain and the cloud.

Paris-European capital for tech and innovation

Often labelled “Europe’s Silicon Valley”, Paris is the beating heart of the French IT ecosystem thanks to its highly-qualified talent, its top-quality infrastructure, and solid government support since 2017, involving an injection of 10 billion euros to support the ecosystem. The capital is also home to **Station F**, the world’s largest campus for start-ups, and hosts major events such as **VivaTech**, the international technology show, which attracts over 90,000 visitors and 2,000 start-ups every year.

State-funded support for a sustainable digital transition

France is at the cutting-edge of the digital transformation world as a result of ambitious public policies and massive investment. The **France 2030** plan allocated 7 billion euros to digital transition, with a specific focus on strategic sectors such as AI and quantum computing. As well as attracting tech companies, these initiatives also entice event organisers keen to focus on cutting-edge themes.

In terms of sustainability, France is committed to eco-responsible digital solutions. French data centres, for example, have incorporated eco-cooling technologies, while start-ups such as Back Market promote the circular economy in electronics. These efforts strengthen France’s attractiveness as a destination for events which are fully in tune with environmental concerns.

Regions at the cutting-edge of technology

“One visible advantage for us is that the French word “entrepreneur” is in common usage around the world. Therefore, we must have something within us, another type of DNA, which means that we are entrepreneurial at heart. The second key element is that we are home to incredible universities and graduate schools producing the world’s best scientists in artificial intelligence.” Xavier Niel, founder and main shareholder of Iliad, the French telecoms group.

Outside of Paris, other French cities stand out for their technological expertise, offering a variety of opportunities for MICE events:

- **Lyon** is renowned for its dynamism in digital technologies. The city hosts shows such as BlendWebMix, boasts a centre of excellence in the cybersecurity sector, courtesy of the Digital League cluster, and is also

home to superb facilities at the Eurexpo Lyon convention centre.

- **Sophia Antipolis,** located in the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur (PACA) region in the south-east of the country, is recognised as Europe’s leading technopole. It extends across 2,400 hectares, is home to over 2,500 companies, and employs some 38,000 people representing 80 nationalities. Key sectors here include computing, telecommunications, pharmacology and biotechnology.

- **Toulouse** is a city which, in addition to its leadership in the aeronautics sector, is a key player for embedded systems and connected objects, and also hosts events such as La Mêlée Numérique.

ITC visuel

A pool of talent at its fingertips

France has at its disposal a huge pool of talent in the digital sector, supported by a network of renowned higher education institutions. These include the École Polytechnique, ENS Paris-Saclay and the CNRS (National Centre for Scientific Research) which produce highly trained engineers and scientists year on year. In 2023, the French digital sector created a net total of 47,000 jobs, representing one in six jobs in France.

As part of the framework of the France 2030 plan, the “Skills and Professions of the Future” Call for Expressions of Interest, representing a total investment of 2 billion euros, aims to strengthen France’s sovereignty and reindustrialisation by supporting training courses which are tailored to strategic sectors, including digital technologies. Launched in December 2021 and overseen by the Agence Nationale de la Recherche and the Banque des Territoires, this project aims to anticipate needs in terms of skills, and to certify training courses and to fast-forward their development, both for initial and ongoing training. It also contributes to making these professions and skills more attractive by providing information and raising awareness vis-à-vis different sectors of society (ranging from high school students to entrepreneurs), in order to meet the requirements of the technology sectors of the future.