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## **FRANCE 2030 : THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT FOR INVESTMENT SUPPORTS THE EMERGENCE OF A THIRD WAY FOR AI AT THE "AFRICA FORWARD" SUMMIT**

Three months after the AI summit in India, the General Secretariat for Investment has reaffirmed, as part of the France 2030 plan, its commitment to building a third hub for artificial intelligence. Against a backdrop of growing strategic rivalries on the continent, the « Africa Forward » Summit held on May 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> in Kenya confirmed a conviction: France and Africa prioritize democratic principles of cooperation for inclusive and resilient AI.

The remarks made by the French President at the "Africa Forward" Summit highlighted one certainty: Africa is not calling for unilateral aid, but for mutually beneficial investments that harness its potential, particularly in AI.

This vision is fully embodied in the partnership between the French Development Agency (AFD) and the General Secretariat for Investment on the "AI Convergence Challenges". Their groundbreaking collaboration aims to bring to life this African, French, and European vision of innovation—one that stands out for its ability to generate sovereign and equitable prosperity for all.

To achieve this goal, France is expanding its France 2030 "AI Convergence Challenges" initiative to Africa in order to strengthen the Franco-African AI ecosystem. This initiative involves setting up "field academies" where researchers experiment with developing more ethical and decentralized AI systems, where students are developing their AI skills, and where entrepreneurs are launching bold ideas.

### **THROUGH THE « AI CONVERGENCE CHALLENGES », FRANCE 2030 IS LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR JOINT INVESTMENTS BETWEEN FRANCE AND AFRICAN COUNTRIES**

In this context, the General Secretariat for Investment, in collaboration with the French Development Agency, announces the following challenges:

1. **A hackathon organized in collaboration with the Data Labelling Association of Kenya and Yale University, under the guidance of Professor Antonio Cassili of the Institut Polytechnique de Paris.**

**The goal of this hackathon is to address the imbalance in the AI model production chain, where data and value are captured by a handful of players:**

- by creating the first global map of all workers involved in the creation of the most widely used models.
- by experimenting with a way to track a task's contribution to the creation of a model in order to ensure fairer compensation and recognition for that work.
- by proposing new collaborative and decentralized governance models for AI production, based on the principles of transparency, value sharing, and inclusion, and tailored to local needs.

**2. A hackathon organized by Embedded France focused on *TinyML* technologies.**

In Africa, many areas suffer from limited or intermittent access to the internet and electricity. TinyML enables the deployment of AI solutions directly on microcontrollers or edge devices (sensors, low-end phones, drones, etc.), without relying on a constant connection to the cloud or data centers. This opens the door to robust local applications, even in rural or isolated environments.

**The goal of the challenge is to promote learning about concepts related to TinyML (models, optimization, deployment, energy metrics):**

- By expanding the embedded AI glossary, already available in French, with an English version ;
- By designing quizzes and workshops focused on resource-efficient optimization, to train students on the practical challenges of embedded AI. These workshops, which will be developed in collaboration with faculty members, will include TinyML datasets and synthetic data (audio, vision, noise and vibration sensors, etc.).

**3. Launch of a pilot project for Franco-African cooperation on AI with French Tech Nairobi, Qhala, and a French model provider.**

Africa faces a "valley of death" between its talent pool and value creation, exacerbated by a reliance on foreign AI models that exclude 88% of local languages and ignore the realities of the continent.

**Qhala Limited, French Tech Nairobi and a third French partner have signed an agreement as part of the "Africa Forward" Summit. This hybrid program will include both a bootcamp and a post-bootcamp phase, with the aim of creating a "Research-to-Venture" pipeline for the development of sovereign AI solutions in Africa.**

- The goal of the challenge is to transform prototypes into viable businesses by leveraging open-weight models, which are adapted to resource-constrained environments
- The Minimum Viable Intelligence (MVI) framework will be used to ensure that solutions incorporate local languages and contexts in the education, health, and agriculture sectors.
- As part of this partnership, Qhala Limited will provide technical coordination and French Tech Nairobi will facilitate ecosystem engagement and commercial opportunities.

**Click here to submit a "AI Convergence Challenge" proposal:**

<https://demarche.numerique.gouv.fr/commencer/defis-convergence-ia-internationaux>

## IMPACTFUL AI PROJECTS FOR THE AFRICAN CONTINENTS

### 1. Our « AI Pionniers »

The third phase of the "AI Pioneers" initiative, supported by France 2030, is launching in strategic partnership with Current AI, whose investment strategy focuses on societal impact and accessibility for developing countries. This potential collaboration accelerates the deployment of sovereign and inclusive AI solutions in Africa, in line with the priorities of the "Africa Forward" Summit.

### 2. France 2030 award winners are ready to commit to Franco-African cooperation

Regular tracking of the winning France 2030 projects—whose AI systems are specialized in optimizing use cases relevant to Africa—will help build strategic partnerships, particularly in the **fields of infrastructure, industry, energy, and agriculture, as well as in education**. ALT EDIC, a France 2030 award winner, is working to deploy AI models for education by creating learning environments designed to improve models using data specific to the teaching of local African languages. For example, the ALT EDIC could ensure that the training corpus dedicated to African languages reflects the continent's cultural diversity and protects users' rights against the dominance of foreign proprietary models, while also ensuring that the story of the African continent is showcased in a manner commensurate with its power and richness.

### 3. The French « IA Clusters », pillars of France's AI research and innovation ecosystem, and a model that is gaining traction abroad

Our "IA Clusters", supported by France 2030 with nearly €360 million in funding, represent a dynamic response to global governance of artificial intelligence by **promoting technology transfer and international partnerships**, particularly with Africa.

As part of the "Africa Forward" Summit, the network of the nine French "IA clusters", in collaboration with INRIA, is strengthening its commitment with several partners to contribute to the development of African AI clusters. To put this commitment into action, several collaborative initiatives are already underway as part of the creation of an Africa-France cluster network called "Africa Forward," which will be built on significant partnerships between African universities and French stakeholders. In Benin, Ghana, Morocco, Egypt, Kenya, and South Africa, a letter of intent regarding the gradual establishment of clusters has been signed, paving the way for significant structured cooperation in the future, with the support of French authorities and, in some cases, partner countries:

1. Signing of a cooperation agreement between the MIAI Grenoble UGA Cluster and the University of Yaoundé, and official inauguration of the GAYA Lab at the University of Yaoundé (Cameroon): AI addressing major global health challenges, "One Health," an integrated and unifying vision aimed at ensuring the accessibility, equity, and sustainability of health programs.
2. Signing of a letter of intent between the DataIA Paris-Saclay Institute and the RAIL laboratory at KNUST University in Ghana.
3. Promotion of the DataIA Paris-Saclay Institute's BrevetAI as a tool for widespread AI literacy, adaptable for use at partner universities. It enables users to learn about the fundamentals and major challenges of artificial intelligence through an online platform.
4. Establishment of a joint chair between CentraleSupélec and the University of Nairobi.

### Press Contacts

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## The France 2030 investment plan

- **France 2030 is unprecedented in its scale:** €54 billion is being invested so that our businesses, our schools, our universities and our research organizations fully succeed with their transitions in these strategic sectors. The challenge is to enable them to respond in a competitive way to the world's future ecological and attractiveness challenges, and to showcase the future champions of our sectors of excellence. France 2030 is defined by two overarching objectives, which will see 50% of expenses given over to the decarbonization of the economy, and 50% to emerging key players, those at the forefront of innovation, without neglecting the environment (in the sense of the "Do No Significant Harm" principle).
- **France 2030 is being implemented collectively:** designed and deployed in consultation with economic, academic, local and European key players to establish strategic guidelines and decisive action. Project holders are invited to submit their entries via the current application process, which is a demanding and selective one, to benefit from state support.
- **France 2030 is being led by the French General Secretariat for Investment, in charge of France 2030,** on behalf of the Prime Minister, and in partnership with the relevant government ministries.
- **France 2030 is being implemented** by the French National Research Agency (ANR), the French Agency for Ecological Transition (ADEME), Bpifrance and the Caisse des Dépôts et consignation (CDC).

More information : [france2030.gouv.fr](https://france2030.gouv.fr)