Côte d'Azur: anchoring its leading position

The Côte d'Azur is often seen as a global leader in the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). Yet, its status has recently been jeopardized. In 2013-2015, côte d'azur witnessed the departure of a series of global leading tech companies, such as Texas Instrument and Samsung. The region became suddenly confronted to a shortage of digital talents as the firms' exit also meant losing their high-profile employees. Although Texas Instrument and Samsung were soon replaced by other large companies e.g. Intel and Huawei, their departure has reinforced the need to develop forward-looking policies, responsive to a fast-paced digital territory.

The digital strategy of côte d'azur aims to set the city as the ultimate destination for companies seeking to invest in the fields of excellence of the territory. Over the past few decades, the city has become a European leader in ICT, biotechnologies, e-tourism, e-energy and the silver economy. The priority given to the digital transformation of businesses is reflected by the multiple partnerships between the actors of the digital ecosystem which have spawned new initiatives, experiments and innovations. These successes were made possible thanks to the leadership of the local government who gathered all stakeholders to create a shared vision on the digital strategy of the territory.

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Key initiatives

The University of Nice Sophia Antipolis

The University of Nice Sophia Antipolis is the second largest multidisciplinary university in France. The university has developed a new concept and strategy to gather all the Côte d'Azur higher education components under the umbrella of **University of Côte d'Azur**. It also aims to strengthen its digital competence in order to attract internet-savvy students and researchers from all around the world. Through the reinforcement of its digital focus, the university strives to provide students with the right skillset for their future career. For instance, the university recently joined the **EIT Digital Master School Initiative** and created a partnership with 5 top European universities (EIT ICT Labs) to deliver a master degree in "data science".

A FabLab territory

Côte d'azur already includes no less than 5 Fab Labs. Based in Sophia Antipolis, **SoFab** is a FabLab located at the heart of the Sophia Tech campus. **Ecolab** is the brand new FabLab of the CEEI, the main incubator of the Métropole Nice Côte d'Azur. It gives access to digital and technological tools to makers, start-ups and the general public, and supports open innovation in the territory. The **Refabrique** is a personal FabLab created by a Cannes resident opening up access to his own digital tools to "makers" who cannot find them in the region. The Refabrique is a prime example of a citizens' initiative supporting the digital transformation of local businesses. The

NavLab of the Métropole Nice Côte d'Azur illustrates the adaptation of the FabLab concept to meet the needs of the professionals in the sailing industry, aleading sector of the territory. The NavLab or "Navigateur" Lab (SailorLab) offers a co-working space and a meeting point for sailors, entrepreneurs and creative artists of the French Riviera.

An Open Data

The launch of an Open data Portal is an important element of the digital agenda of côte d'azur. The Open Data Portal provides a wide variety of cultural, sport, administrative and environmental datasets related to the territory Côte d'Azur. The portal complies with the European DCAT (Data Catalogue Vocabulary) standard for data catalogues interoperability which facilitates the data access for regional businesses. City leaders have organised different workshops (notably during the annual Innovative City conference) in order to gather the insights of local citizens and businesses on their data needs. The aim of these workshop was to identify optimal services which would bring added value to the Open Data Portal.

A new Regional Campus of Learning

The new **Regional Campus of Learning** stands out as a reference point in the academic community. The 23,000 m² campus will open in 2017 and will welcome 2,000 learners at the heart of the "Eco-Valley" of the Côte d'Azur. The objective of the new campus is clear: Ensuring young people have the required skillset to meet the current and future needs of regional businesses.

The campus aims to prepare students for the occupations of the future by orienting its courses towards the tech sectors and the promising fields with high potential for growth in Cote d'Azur. Overall EUR 83 million will be invested to build the campus. The project benefited from public funding from the national, regional and local governments as well as the Chamber of Commerce and the PIA (Programme d'Investissements d'Avenir - Investments for the Future Programme) of the national government.

A network of accelerators and incubators

Nice hosts 3 accelerators and 9 incubators (PACA Est Incubator, Business Pole Sophia Antipolis, CEEI Nice Côte d'Azur, 27Delvalle and the school incubators PEPITE, Inkubateur, the incubator of SKEMA Business School, ParisTech Entrepreneurs and the EYE of EDHEC.

All these organisations participate in the digital transformation strategy of the territory. The added value of cote d'azur lies in the existence of company-led accelerators such as the accelerator of Allianz, the global insurance company, Vinci Autoroutes, (which designs, builds, finances and operates motorways in France) and the future "Village" accelerator of the French bank Credit Agricole.