La French Tech, France's startup ecosystem government-backed initiative, announces the launch of French Tech Johannesburg, a new community of start-ups joining a network of over 50 cities around the world supporting tech entrepreneurship. *The launch of La French Tech Johannesburg comes after three years of a very successful implementation in Cape Town.*

The new combined French Tech Cape Town-Johannesburg community will be officially inaugurated during an event taking place at the Global Entrepreneurship headquarter (GEN) 22 on Sloane, in presence of the French Ambassador in South Africa, H.E Aurelien Lechevallier and the MMC for Economic Development for Johannesburg, Cllr Leah Knott.

The French Tech brand was launched by the French government in 2013 to improve the visibility of French innovative entrepreneurs in France and abroad and to enhance the development of coherent start-up ecosystems. In 2018, French Tech start-up companies have raised more than R58 billion with 657 deals in France (a new record), compared to R9 billion and 143 deals in 2013.

Since the selection of Cape Town as one of the 21 international French Tech hubs in 2016, the French Tech community, with its dozen of South African start-ups led by French nationals, has been very active in South Africa, notably with the successful launch of the French South African Tech Labs accelerator with investment from Methys and SEDA. Through this initiative, **France and South Africa are bridging their ecosystems enabling collaborations between French and South African entrepreneurs and fruitful business opportunities.**

The development of the French Tech community in Johannesburg will provide combined support from the French Corporate and Investor Community, and will certainly mean more investment from French tech companies in the growing South African digital economy.

Reflecting on the experience of three years of development of the French Tech in Cape Town, Christophe Viarnaud, CEO of French Digital Innovation company Methys, declared :
« With a mindset of very strong cooperation with local ecosystems such as Silicon Cape and a public & private partnership approach, French Tech Cape Town has, in just 3 years seeded half a dozen technology startups, with a combined turnover of more than a hundred million rand and over 300 jobs, developed a partnership with Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA), and Technology Innovation Agency (TIA) to deploy over R10m in support of primarily underprivileged entrepreneurs in the Cape Town area. With AfricArena, we have created the largest pan African tech investor event making South

Africa a leader in attracting international investors, and connected it with European major tech events such as Vivatech and Hello Tomorrow. We look forward to accelerate this impact in Johannesburg and Gauteng with many projects on the horizon."

South Africa is home to over 370 French businesses employing over 65,000 people, the majority of which are located in the Gauteng region, the traditional business hub of South Africa.

Antoine Paillusseau, co-founder and CEO of JHB Ai startup FinChatBot, added « With Johannesburg being a thriving business hub and one of the most dynamic and fast growing African metro, it is a natural progression for French Tech Community – supported by French Corporates and Investors – to develop in the Gauteng area and double our efforts to foster the French and South African cooperation around tech entrepreneurship"

Aurelien Lechevallier, Ambassador of France to South Africa, concluded:

"Innovation is a major priority for the French government. President Macron has adopted a strong and ambitious plan of action to help France succeed in being the 1st innovation ecosystem in Europe in line with its industrial and scientific history. The development of eco-innovation systems is also an important priority of our cooperation policy, in particular with the African continent. The Choose Africa program, announced in March 2019 by President Macron, is a strong signal, with some 2.5 billion euros to be invested on the continent by 2022, including 65 million euros to support the development of start-ups. The commitment of the French Embassy in South Africa is more than ever part of these priorities. Partnership opportunities are numerous and actions implemented in the areas of digital, artificial intelligence, robotics and more broadly technology transfer meet common challenges on which we will continue to work."

During the event, a panel including Tervern Jaftha (SEDA), Dieter Herbst (Sanofi), Abu Cassim (Jozi Angels) and Antoine Paillusseau will discuss on the needs of the tech sector in Johannesburg and the potential offered by the new local French Tech Community.

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About La French Tech: is the nickname of the French startup ecosystem and all those in it—from bioscience to online marketplaces—wherever in the world they come from. It is also a government-backed movement bolstering France as one of the best countries in the world to start and scale global tech champions. More on: https://medium.com/frenchtech

About La French Tech Cape Town-Johannesburg: the French Tech Community in South Africa is composed of a dozen technology startups operating in various sectors, such as FinChatBot (AI), Ozow and PayGenius (Fintech), Powertime (mCommerce/energy), AfricArena (investment platform), as well as the French South African Tech Labs (FSATLABS), a partnership between DSDB SEDA and French Technology company Methys.