

Press release

Paris, June 11th 2025

Orange Middle East and Africa and risingSUD join forces to facilitate the establishment and development of startups in the South of France

At the Viva Technology trade show in Paris, Orange Middle East and Africa (OMEA), represented by its CEO Jérôme Hénique, and risingSUD, represented by its President Bernard Kleynhoff, signed a strategic partnership to support the establishment and growth of African startups in the Orange Digital Center network in the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region, in the South of France.

This three-year partnership aims to bring together innovation ecosystems in Africa, the Middle East, and the South of France. Specifically, startups from the Orange Digital Center network will benefit from tailored support from the teams at risingSUD, the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region's economic attractiveness and development agency, to establish themselves in the South of France. They will thus join a dynamic region that is already home to 500,000 companies, including global leaders and startups that are inventing the world of tomorrow.

With this partnership, OMEA strengthens its support for the internationalization of startups from Africa and the Middle East and reaffirms its commitment to developing the continent's entrepreneurial ecosystems. Deployed in 17 countries in Africa and the Middle East and eight countries in Europe, the Orange Digital Center network is a free and accessible ecosystem for all. It brings together, in one place, digital skills training for young people, support for project leaders, incubation, acceleration, and startup financing.

In 2024 alone, risingSUD supported the establishment of 14 African companies in the South of France, including the startup from the Orange Digital Center in Tunisia, Guépard, which opened an office in Marseille. This partnership will allow more startups from Africa and the Middle East to benefit from risingSUD's expertise, ranging from project development to access to financing and networking with international partners. It will also facilitate access for talent and startups from the South region to the Orange Digital Centers network.

Jérôme Hénique, CEO of Orange Middle East and Africa, commented: "This partnership with risingSUD marks a key step in our ambition to promote African innovation internationally. It is a continuation of the support we offer startups through our Orange Digital Centers. By facilitating their establishment and acceleration in France, particularly in the South region, we are giving young African companies the means to accelerate their growth."

Bernard Kleynhoff, President of risingSUD and President of the Economic and Digital Development, Industry, Export, Attractiveness and Cybersecurity Commissions of the Sud

Region, added: “Thanks to its strategic position, its historical trade flows and its commitment to innovation, the South of France is a natural bridge between Europe, Africa and the Middle East. It is now the leading French region for hosting African investment projects. This partnership opens up new economic opportunities and constitutes a real springboard for the development of businesses on both sides of the Mediterranean.”

About Orange

Orange is one of the world's leading telecommunications operators with revenues of 40.3 billion euros in 2024 and 125,800 employees worldwide at 31 March 2025, including 69,700 employees in France. The Group has a total customer base of 294 million customers worldwide at 31 March 2025, including 256 million mobile customers and 22 million fixed broadband customers. These figures account for the deconsolidation of certain activities in Spain following the creation of MASORANGE. The Group is present in 26 countries (including non-consolidated countries).

Orange is also a leading provider of global IT and telecommunication services to multinational companies under the brand Orange Business. In February 2023, the Group presented its strategic plan "Lead the Future", built on a new business model and guided by responsibility and efficiency. "Lead the Future" capitalizes on network excellence to reinforce Orange's leadership in service quality.

Orange is listed on Euronext Paris (symbol ORA).

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About Orange Middle-East and Africa (OMEA)

Orange is present in 18 countries in Africa and the Middle East and has 161 million customers at 31 December 2024. With 7.7 billion euros of revenues in 2024, Orange MEA is the first growth area in the Orange group. Orange Money, its flagship mobile-based money transfer and financial services offer is available in 17 countries and has more than 100 million customers.

Orange, multi-services operator, key partner of the digital transformation provides its expertise to support the development of new digital services in Africa and the Middle East.

About risingSUD

risingSUD is the economic attractiveness and development agency for Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, in the South of France. With a team of 50 people, risingSUD supports more than 400 companies each year through key moments of their growth: setting up, raising fund, exporting... The agency also supports nearly 70 strategic projects per year and attracts investors and talent from around the world to strengthen the territories and sectors of excellence in the South of France.

For more information: www.risingsud.fr

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