



PRESS RELEASE

Toulouse, 6 July 2021

CNES and Aerospace Valley launch 'SMEs Africa', to help promote the use of Copernicus data in Africa and support European export business towards 3 African countries

Launched on 22nd June by CNES (the government agency for shaping France's space policy and implementing it in Europe) **and operated by Aerospace Valley** (the world's first aerospace cluster, based in Toulouse, France), **'SMEs Africa' is a new initiative aimed at developing and promoting Copernicus Earth Observation data access to end-users in 4 African countries to help face climate change issues.**

'SMEs Africa' has 2 specific objectives :

- **Support export business for European SMEs towards 3 African countries (Senegal, Ethiopia and South Africa)** : after a call for interest launched last January, **15 SMEs from 7 European countries, covering all types of services to fight climate change, have been selected to take part in this project.**

The selected companies are : *VisioTerra, Pixstart, Action Air Environnement, Noveltis, Murmuration, TerraNIS SAS, SpaceSense, LuxCarta Technologie, DIGINOVE* (France) ; *Planetek Italia* (Italy) ; *Omanos Analytics* (UK) ; *Detektia Earth Surface Monitoring S.L* (Spain) ; *Big Terra* (Czech Republic) ; *Space4Good* (Netherlands) and *Soilwatch* (Belgium).

Business France (the French authority for fostering export growth by SMEs and mid-sized companies), will help these companies by preparing and helping them to sign trading agreements and generate sustainable export growth. A one year support mission (June 2021 to May 2022) will be fully covered by this provider.

- **Sensitise the actors in 4 African countries (Senegal, Ethiopia, South Africa and Gabon) to the use of Copernicus data** : Africa is currently facing many challenges in terms of sustainable development and resources, for which internet and space data can bring useful solutions. Missions carried out in the frame of 'SMEs Africa' will enable to sensitise and train these countries to the use of Copernicus data, thus helping Africa use largely unexploited data and remedy its lack of infrastructures.

Africa, an emerging continent full of internet and space opportunities - Key-data, according to the African Union Commission:

- The population in the 55 countries composing the African continent has doubled in the last 27 years.
- Around 8,000 people work in the Space industry in Africa : 2,000 in commercials companies and 6,000 in governmental organisations such as space programmes and research centres.
- African space industry value today : \$ 7.37 Bn / by 2024 : \$ 10.29 Bn (+ 40%)
- African expenditure to create its own digital wealth: \$ 5 Bn / African expenditure outside of the continent to access digital world services: \$ 400 Bn
- In 2019, Africa launched 35 satellites / by 2024, it will have launched 64
- In 2015, 16% of the African population used internet / by 2024 figures should raise to 50%

The 'SMEs Africa' project is funded by the European Commission, in the frame of the Caroline Herschel Framework Partnership Agreement. The project has been launched with the support of The African Union Commission, with Dr Tidiane OUATTARA, coordinator of the GMES and Africa Support Programme and Business France for the export growth support.

To discover more about 'SMEs Africa':
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RGspESTUksA>

*Copernicus is the European Union's earth monitoring programme, an ESA and European Union initiative, aimed at providing every citizen with free and easy access to space data. It provides free and openly accessible operational data and information services for a large range of applications. This data originates mostly from a constellation of satellites, the « Sentinels », developed in the frame of the Copernicus programme, but also from tens of tier satellites, qualified as « contributor missions ».

This action SMEs AFRICA is funded by the project « Copernicus/FPCUP » of the European Union and is acting within the frame of Connect-by-CNES ».

About CNES:

*CNES (Centre National d'Etudes Spatiales) is the government agency responsible for shaping France's space policy and implementing it in Europe. Its task is to conceive and orbit satellites, invent the space systems of the future and nurture new services to aid us in our daily lives. Founded in 1961, it is the initiator of major space projects, launch vehicles and satellites, and the partner of choice for industry fuelling innovation. CNES comprises some 2,500 men and women with a passion for space working to open up new and infinite fields of applications in five core areas of focus: Ariane, science, Earth observation, telecommunications and defence. It is a key player driving technology innovation, economic development and industrial policy for the nation. It also fosters scientific collaborations and has forged numerous international partnerships. France, represented by CNES, is the leading contributor to the European Space Agency .
More info on : www.cnes.fr*

About Aerospace Valley:

Based in France, Aerospace Valley is world's first aerospace cluster, dedicated to the strategic sectors of Aeronautics, Space and Drones, in the Occitanie and Nouvelle-Aquitaine regions. With its 5 excellency ecosystems – Embedded and Communicating Systems, Structures and Mechanical Systems, Propulsion and Embedded Energy, Data and Artificial Intelligence, Products and Services for the Industry – Aerospace Valley drives a supportive, competitive and attractive community, aimed at fostering innovation in view of growth.

Ranking among the top three clusters for the performance of its cooperative R&T projects (among which 619 have already been financed since the cluster was launched in 2005), Aerospace Valley is in charge of animating a dynamic network of international reputation, composed of 825 members (companies, research laboratories, training centres, universities and schools, local authorities, economic development structures).

Since 2017, Aerospace Valley is chaired by Yann Barbaux, Senior Vice President of Airbus and former Head of Innovation at Airbus.

More info on: www.aerospace-valley.com

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