

Season 2 Launch of the AI Convergence Challenges

February 2026

« A World tour of AI challenges for Fairness and Dignity »

Abstract: France is launching an ambitious international initiative to reinvent global AI value chains, reorganize the job market around dignity and equity, and promote the emergence of skills adapted to the challenges of tomorrow. This initiative is a continuation of the AI Convergence Challenges and the Paris 2025 AI Action Summit, with a stronger geopolitical and social dimension: AI should not be a tool for domination, but a lever for cooperation and shared prosperity.

As part of the Paris AI Action Summit in 2025, the French General Secretariat for Investment highlighted “challenges” focused on ambitious technological problems or societal issues that have been solved by the international community. These solutions have revealed a concrete foundation of promising innovations in AI, demonstrating its usefulness for humanity as a whole, benefiting our societies, our economies, and the environment, in the general interest and with respect for the common good

Supported by public, private, and academic stakeholders in a dozen countries, involving more than 600 teams (startups, laboratories, NGOs, local authorities), these challenges have made it possible to overcome technological barriers while strengthening the acceptability and accessibility of AI, particularly in the following areas: agriculture, culture, the environment, training, robotics, and health.

Building on the resounding success of the first edition—which generated exceptional momentum with 120 challenge proposals submitted in just four working days—the Minister of Labor and Solidarity, the Minister of AI and Digital Technology, and the Secretary General for Investment, in partnership with the French Development Agency and INRIA's LaborIA, are launching a new season of AI Convergence challenges at the AI Impact Summit in New Delhi.

This season's ambition lies in **pursuing a fair global sharing of the value generated by AI**. The value created by AI is currently concentrated ¹around a few major platforms and a few links in the chain (R&D, cloud, IP), while the efforts, data, and resources that fuel it are much more diffuse and remunerated in a heterogeneous manner². Balancing this sharing requires action on the structure of the value chain, the rights of contributors, and explicit redistribution mechanisms

¹ 80% of the value created by AI is captured by a handful of countries, while most countries around the world remain confined to the roles of consumers or suppliers of raw data (UNCTAD 2025).

² This inequality reinforces economic dependencies and limits local benefits: most workers in this value chain are in the informal sector, often without social protection or prospects for advancement (OECD, 2024).

Through the AI Convergence challenges, France aims to promote:

- groundbreaking AI projects in which local communities participate in the co-governance of data and models for projects in health, climate adaptation, agriculture, education, culture, and security.
- highly concrete building blocks (metrics, protocols, architectures, tooling) capable of measuring who contributes (data, work, resources) to a model/service, and a system capable of automatically routing a share of the value to its contributors:
 - Provenance recording methods: standardized identifiers and metadata for corpora, labeling tasks, models, and API calls
 - Methods for estimating the marginal contribution of a dataset or cohort to a model's performance (inspired by Shapley value-type approaches for data), counting mechanisms—who used what, how much, in which pipeline—with privacy and scalability constraint...
 - Open source tools (SDK + dashboards) enabling labs, startups, and public institutions to automatically document provenance and, more broadly, an open source “data coop in a box” kit: access governance, consent, pseudonymization, federated computing, usage traces
 - Cryptographically secure mechanisms to prevent fraud and protect workload confidentiality.
- Projects to adapt professional skills and practices to new technological and organizational realities. Productivity is intrinsically linked to the ongoing transformation of professions and sectors of activity. This economic paradigm shift brought about by AI (P. Aghion, 2025) can be an opportunity for economic growth for all countries, thereby addressing several challenges.

Furthermore, France 2030, as part of the National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence, will ensure that it **acquires all explicit information relating to the transparency of the value chains involved (“fair value share”), which is necessary for the assessment of AI projects.** This explicit criterion will be added to France 2030's general assessment criteria derived from the RDI regime usually implemented: strong ability to overcome technological and innovation barriers, fill market gaps, confer competitive advantages on a group of users or on an industrial or economic sector, effective collaboration with emerging players, real accessibility of results, but also **consideration of societal impact, including aspects such as inclusion, diversity, and ethics in technological development, transparency and accountability in their use, etc.**

APPENDIX – FAQ

What are the objectives that these challenges must tackle?

Regional challenges (located in France) must enable technological breakthroughs or achieve structural objectives for a sector, particularly in economic, social, and organizational terms (acculturation and adoption for sectors initially distant from AI).

The international challenges should also be designed as cross-disciplinary, but the jury will pay particular attention to the “fairness of the AI value chain” component.

What is the expected format of a challenge?

The challenge must involve setting up a competition, either open or closed, to address a specific issue (e.g., a series of hackathons).

What is the timeline of the AI Convergence Challenges?

The call is organized as follows, with communication time allocated to the French Government to highlight the challenges that have been selected:

- February 10 to April 10, 2026, at 11:59 p.m.: applications open and submission of applications
- April 22: selection committee
- May: kick-off of the Tour de France challenges, kick-off of the international challenges, awarding of the label, and sharing of the communication kit
- Starting in May: completion of challenges by project leaders with presentation of initial progress to the selection committee in early June
- June 17, 2026: presentation of the initial results of challenges as part of Vivatech summit

What are the rewards?

The Convergence AI challenges offer official certification by the General Secretariat for Investment and visibility at various AI summits as winners of the Convergence AI challenges.

If my challenge has already been launched, can I still apply?

Yes, if it meets the certification criteria, your challenge can be certified, as can its results.

What are the selection criteria?

The proposed challenge must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- **The consistency and control of the challenge implementation process will be carefully examined.**
- We aim to promote challenges that demonstrate a high level of risk-taking and responsibility, with justification and relevance, addressing issues for which current solutions are not yet mature, proposing atypical, particularly innovative or disruptive alternatives to the state of the art, or likely to be firsts, with a view to future commitment. While the thematic scope is not restrictive, we are particularly looking for projects in the following areas: health, ecological transition, work, and mobility.

- We aim to promote challenges that have a transformative impact and create value for French/European/international society. The expected results of the challenges will increase the economy's growth potential, accelerate the ecological transition, contribute to sustainable growth, and strengthen the resilience of a country or region's socio-economic organization. Challenges may also aim to raise awareness among actors unfamiliar with AI so that they can address the issues at stake.
- We aim to promote challenges that have the capacity to mobilize and promote an ecosystem of innovation (scientific, economic, and cultural) and include a commitment to inclusion and impact.
International challenges must be able to mobilize actors from several countries (stakeholders, databases, etc.). Projects submitted by French project leaders are strongly encouraged to partner with international actors.