



France Active launches the 1st Seed Fund fully devoted to social innovation entrepreneurs.

Obtaining financial assistance and counselling at the first and critical stage of commercial introduction, is often difficult, especially for those embarking on social innovation. To give social entrepreneurs the means to face this high-risk stage, France Active launches the first seed fund of 10 Million Euros.

Under the French Impact banner (an initiative led by the French government), the brand new Seed fund, has been selected by the European Commission to strengthen France Active's ability to advise and invest in committed social entrepreneurial projects. This project is also supported by the High-Commission for Social and Solidarity Economy and Social Innovation (HCESS).

This Seed Fund was officially launched on February 4th, 2020, in presence of Ann Branch, Head of the « Job Creation » Unit, in the « Employment, social affairs and inclusion » Directorate. Christophe Itier, High-Commissioner for Social and Solidarity Economy and Social Innovation, and Christophe Genter, director of the Social Innovation and Territorial Cohesion Department at the Bank of the Territories.

Objective : Finance 100 companies for a total amount invested of €10 million

The crucial first fundraising that will allow a project to be launched concretely or to scale up is the most stressful phase for the entrepreneur. A recent OpinionWay survey for France Active showed that while 42% of 18-30 year olds say they want to start their own business, nearly 80% of them acknowledge that they would not be able to do so without help. 31% of them mention a need for financing, 21% want support to access a professional network, 20% want to be supported by a coach, etc.

Therefore, France Active decided to hasten its action in favor of social entrepreneurs, especially those in seed stage, with:

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- the mobilization of 12 advisors who will provide tailor-made advice in each region to entrepreneurs who place social innovation at the heart of their project.

- the creation of this Seed Fund, a solidarity-based seed capital offer dedicated to social innovation structures that will enable them to obtain equity financing of between 50,000 euros and 200,000 euros, as well as support during the first round of financing.

Over the next two years, France Active aims at financing and supporting 100 social business in metropolitan France as well as in its overseas territories, for a total investment of €10 million.

As part of the official launch of this new fund, France Active organized an event on February 4th, 2020 with 6 social entrepreneurs who benefited from a fundraising. Thus, Simplon, Label Emmaüs, Moulinot, Eco-Mégot, Le Drive Tout Nu, Ecov, were invited to talk about their experience with other future entrepreneurs.

- Simplon is a social company that intends to make digital technology a lever for inclusion, revealing different talents whom are currently little represented in the digital economy. It accompanies organizations, to make their digital transformation inclusive and providing them with technical solutions (high-performance and responsible websites and applications). Today, Simplon builds a network of digital factories in France and abroad. Since its creation in 2013, more than 6200 trainees have been trained, including 40% of women and 50% of whom have few or no qualifications.
- Label Emmaüs : This cooperative is a web-based e-commerce platform, which belongs to the Emmaüs Movement, created in 2016. It enables a multitude of items sold in the Emmaus shops to be purchased online. More generally, the label supports a digital solidarity transformation project within the movement, by offering a new distribution channel for items sold by the communities. It is also helping to build Emmaüs companions' capacities by teaching them new trading techniques. The cooperative also builds professional integration programs for the job fields of the future such as web development, web marketing and logistical support.
- Moulinot : is a solidarity-based company pioneering in the management of food waste also called "biowaste". As early as 2014, it came up with an innovative solution to an insolvable issue, by proposing to raise awareness and train restaurant owners located in Ile-de-France to set up a waste sorting system in their kitchen. The company comes, collects these wastes on a daily basis thanks to the use of ecofriendly vehicles, and bring it back to the firm in the region. From that point, Moulinot has developed 2 ways to reuse it, either as compost, or by transporting it to agricultural methanizers to make biogas or electricity. This activity is also supporting a social project, aimed at bringing marginalized people back to employment through training and construction of integration programs. Supported during the seed stage by France Active in 2014, the company is now the leading player in this sector among all the Parisian region.

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- EcoMegot provides a complete, professional and local solution to raise awareness, collect and reuse cigarette butts for both private and public actors. To this end, it sets up specific ashtrays from where these butts will be collected and treated afterwards. It follows a twofold objective: on the one end it contributes to the depollution in urban and natural spaces, on the other end, it creates local employment.
- Ecov is an innovative, social and solidarity-based start-up. Its objective is to use cars as a collective means of transportation by developing local solutions for carpooling, with and on behalf of local collectivity. Ecov offers local car-sharing lines in peri-urban and rural areas, providing a solution to the issue of desertification, public transportation shortage, and the subsequent isolation in those areas.

Le Drive Tout Nu : Opened in 2018 next to Toulouse, thanks to solidarity-based finance, Drive Tout Nu is the first zero waste drive, 100% responsible. It offers food, cosmetics, and household products in zero-waste version. By combining the bulk with the convenience of the drive, Drive Tout Nu aims to democratize a more responsible and ecological consumption for everyone. At least 60% of the products are sourced within a 100km range, and are produced organically or assimilated. 100% of the products are provided within a reusable packaging, and 10cts are offered as a voucher for each returned container. For an equal amount, the products are 10 to 40% cheaper than their packaged equivalent.

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