A retrospective of the GenAI hackathon for Public Good

As part of the Summit for Action on Artificial Intelligence, to be held from February 6 to 11, 2025, the French Interministerial Digital Directorate (DINUM), responsible for the State's digital transformation, organized the GenAI Hackathon for Public Good on February 5 and 6, 2025 in Paris. Read on to find out more about this unique 2-day international hackathon.

February 6, 2025

The aim of this hackathon was to **respond to challenges of general public interest** as part of the "AI Convergence" challenges led by the General Secretariat for Investment and the France 2030 initiative, aimed at **implementing sovereign AI solutions to meet critical challenges of public interest. Read on to find out more about this exceptional event.**

Over 100 digital professionals from the public and private sectors, from various countries such as Canada, Germany and the UK, alongside France, gathered at the Ministry of Public Action, Civil Service and Simplification.

Working in teams of 4 to 6 people, they took on **2 main challenges in the line with the French government's digital strategy**: further simplification, efficiency and sovereignty thanks to digital technology.

- "**High-Value Algorithms**: high value-added algorithms focused on fundamental advances in AI, such as machine translation, speech synthesis and geospatial analysis";
- "**High-Impact Use Cases with APIs**: high-impact use cases, applying AI to create practical tools providing new or better services to citizens, building on efficiency, simplicity and/or inclusivity".

3 high-potential winning projects per category from 17 entries

- **SONIC - Smart Open Navigable Intelligent Consultant** in the "High-Value Algorithms" category, designed to **make it easier for companies, researchers and decision-makers to understand and apply the European regulation on artificial intelligence**;
- **De Facto – mon assistant juridique** for the "High-Impact Use Cases with APIs" category, aimed at **reducing criminal case processing times for litigants and prosecutors**.

Special Jury Prize

Démarches Simplifiées: "L'IANE" is an innovative conversational agent designed to support public officials in their mission to simplify administrative procedures. This decision-making tool uses artificial intelligence to evaluate application forms and suggest improvements in line with the principles of simplicity and clarity of language.

See the list and description of other projects at the end of the article.

"Our goal was to collaborate with teams from France and other countries on how to use generative AI for the public good. We formed a diverse team of agencies and government bodies to tackle the challenge of promoting open data and better access to information. We focused on the issue of free information requests, which are time-consuming for government employees to process. It's difficult to determine what information can be publicly released. So, we developed a generative AI tool that scans documents for sensitive information, like personal data. If the document is clear of sensitive information, it can be easily released. This allows employees to quickly review highlighted documents, speeding up response times and increasing confidence in what can be shared. Ultimately, this tool helps make more data and information publicly available. Personally, I found this project incredibly valuable, not just for the tool itself, but also for the opportunity to work with international teams, exchange perspectives on AI, and learn about different AI strategies from various ministers." - **German Team**.

"It's really interesting to meet people here who are working on the same technologies as us, even if their approaches are sometimes different from ours. We're developing Albertine, Albert's little sister. It's an application with a Chrome extension that lets you interact with any website. You can chat with a chatbot, and it can even find information on the site by highlighting the important answers. We've tested it on government sites and it works pretty well. Basically, it's a bit like ChatGPT, but integrated into the web browser. Frankly, I'll definitely be back for the next Hackathon. It's true that we do a bit of the same thing in the private and public sectors, but the atmosphere in the public sector is nicer and more open." - **Fana Rakotoasimbola, MLOPS engineer at SFR**.

"We're really similar to the French incubator – we're an incubator in the UK civil service too. We're big fans of hackathons, especially those focused on public good, and this one has been fantastic. It's been so relaxed and the venue is gorgeous! We've been working on a tool to help streamline large infrastructure projects, making them more efficient and cost-effective. This hackathon has been incredibly valuable. Getting to use Albert AI, seeing other platforms (some very similar to our own), and working with different datasets has been great. The best part has been collaborating with the other teams, seeing the challenges they face, and learning how they approach problem-solving. It's been really insightful." - **UK Team**.

Unprecedented resources

To achieve this, they had access to **cutting-edge technical resources**, notably the Albert API, which uses H100 GPUs to provide optimized computing power, adapted to generative AI tasks such as text creation, audio transcription and semantic search. They also benefited from **CNRS infrastructures and collaborative platforms such as Onyxia Datalab and INSEE's public statistical system - SSP Cloud**, designed to meet the demands of projects requiring intensive processing capacity and advanced data manipulation.

The technical teams were guided by coaches from INSEE, DINUM and beta.gouv.fr.

Next steps

Winning projects will benefit from immediate resources from DINUM teams, enabling them to go to scale, in particular support from the ALLiaNCE incubator and access to the Albert API.

By organizing this hackathon, **the French government is not only creating the conditions for stimulating innovation and demonstrating French expertise in AI, but also laying the foundations for responsible AI that serves the common good, while paving the way for tomorrow's challenges.**

Find out more about DINUM

List and description of other projects

Parle à ma loi	This project aims to facilitate access to legal texts and case law through the development of an innovative voice recognition and semantic analysis solution. With a simple spoken question, users will be able to query the legal database and obtain a precise and relevant response, formulated in clear and accessible language.
urbAIn	The aim of this project is to optimize the appraisal of building permit applications by automating the analysis of their compliance with local urban planning schemes (PLU) and current regulations. It is based on a database of applicable urban planning regulations, and identifies potential points of compliance and non-compliance for a construction project.
ExtractDoc	The aim of this project is to develop an innovative solution based on generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) to facilitate the extraction of relevant information from digitized documents, particularly those derived from photographs.
4theGreaterGood	This project is designed to support local authorities and prefectures in controlling the legality of their acts.
TrustRelease	The aim of this project is to develop an innovative application capable of assessing the level of sensitivity of government documents, in order to facilitate the opening up of public data in compliance with current regulations. The tool will automatically identify information that can be freely disseminated, that requires prior anonymization, and that must remain confidential.
Impocalypse	This project aims to modernize access to technical and legal documents, such as legal texts, by using artificial intelligence to make them more accessible, understandable and secure. The project is part of a drive to continuously improve the quality of public services and simplify administrative procedures for citizens.
Starclay	This project aims to optimize the drug prescription process by facilitating communication between doctors and patients, and simplifying the work of pharmacists. It is based on the development of an innovative tool for transcribing medical conversations, focusing initially on the precise capture of information relating to prescribed drugs (name, dosage).
brIsebureAU	This project aims to improve the efficiency of architectural design by reducing the time needed to create plans. It is part of a drive to modernize working tools and methods, in response to the growing challenges of speed, quality and complexity in the construction sector.
ZenIA	Faced with the fact that 25% of students reorient themselves, which is a sign of difficulties in orientation, the project aims to develop an innovative digital platform. This will enable students to interact with an advanced artificial intelligence (AI) system called ZenIA. Students will be able to enter their profile, interests and skills. Thanks to its algorithms and constantly-updated database, ZenIA will then suggest training paths and professions adapted to the user's profile.
ThinkDeep AI	This innovative digital tool facilitates access to information contained in your commune's Local Urban Planning Scheme (PLU). Thanks to an intuitive navigation interface, users can query the PLU based on their geographical location. The application uses Géoportail cartographic data to identify the parcel concerned and extract the relevant regulatory and environmental information from the PLU.
Simplifier.info	This project aims to facilitate access to information and public services for all citizens, particularly those with a poor command of French or who have difficulty with administrative language. The aim is to develop tools and methods to automatically simplify administrative texts, making them clearer, more concise and more educational. The aim is to create information supports that are easy to understand, using clear language adapted to different audiences.
Albertine	This project aims to facilitate access to digital services and information for all citizens, especially those who have difficulty with digital tools or surfing the Internet.
Docs	This project involves developing and deploying a sovereign AI platform, respectful of personal data and the administration's security requirements, which will integrate with the word processing tool used by agents. This platform will provide advanced writing assistance functionalities.
SouverAin	This project aims to provide public entities and economic players with a decision-making tool for the acquisition of sovereign technology solutions, by highlighting the local products and services on offer.
kidikoi	The aim of this project is to develop an audio transcription solution that identifies and differentiates speakers within a recording. This cutting-edge technology will improve the accuracy of speech recognition systems and facilitate the analysis of complex conversations.