

« A territorial Big Bang: the creation of a new economic area »

In recent months, major institutional changes have in turn changed our territory, whether they have been imposed by law, for example the creation of the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Region and the expansion of the EPCI community of communes, or created further to local political decisions, for example as with the Clermont Vichy Metropolis.

This change of scale offers our Community of Local Communes real prospects in terms of potential development. The second largest residential living area in the Auvergne with a favourable demographic dynamic, Vichy Val d'Allier can rely on its solid industrial fabric and a University Centre which has recently seen its missions consolidated and enhanced. In an exceptional setting, a mix of town and country, our conurbation is also a privileged destination for conventions and major sporting events.

In response to the challenges of the new regional landscape and to reinforce the importance of our territory, Vichy Val d'Allier has recently adopted its project for the conurbation with the horizon of 2025. It paints a portrait of the conurbation in the future, with an affirmed identity based on the values of sport, health and quality of life. A territory which is also open for business, as companies generate growth and create jobs. It is important to note that the Economic Yearbook published and distributed by *Vichy Val d'Allier Développement* plays an important role facilitating contacts between the labour pool in our conurbation and its employers.



Claude Malhuret, *Mayor of Vichy, President of Vichy Val d'Allier Community of Local Communes, Senator for the Allier Department*



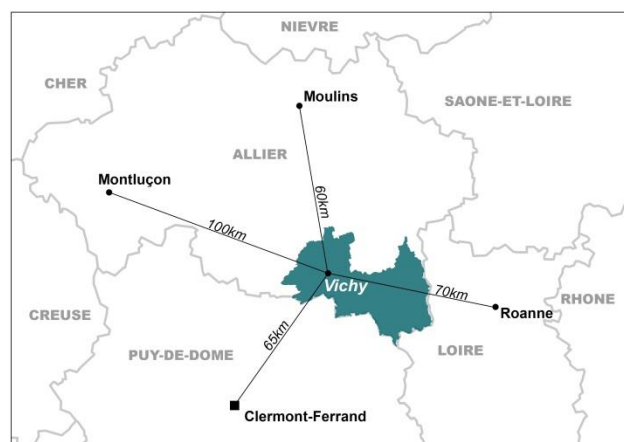
population 83,265 / 38 communes-local authorities / geographic area 729.6km² / 4,700 businesses / 2,300 students / www.agglo-vichyvaldallier.fr

(Figures include the Community of Local Communes of the Montagne Bourbonnaise- Source : Insee, Company and Business Directory -Sirene)

Between the river and the mountains, our conurbation is getting bigger !

The new plan for inter-communal cooperation in the Allier was made public by the Prefecture at the end of March 2016 [the Prefecture is the headquarters of the local Préfet - Prefect, who represents the State in the Department]. The number of associations of urban districts in the Department will reduce from 21 to 11 as of 1 January 2017.

The three Communities of Communes of Sioule-Colettes-Bouble, Pays Saint-Pourcinois and Bassin de Gannat are amalgamating based on their rural specificities, and the Community of Local Communes of Vichy Val d'Allier is taking to the high ground by integrating the Montagne Bourbonnaise.



The Community of Communes of the Montagne Bourbonnaise is located between Vichy and Roanne. It is a green and lush countryside destination well known in the region. Half of the renewable energy generated in the Department of the Allier is produced in this precious high environmental quality greenbelt area. The Community of Local Communes of Vichy Val d'Allier and the Community of Communes of the Montagne Bourbonnaise have already been working together for many years on common projects concerning tourism and environmental issues. Because of their complementarities, it is completely "natural" that our two territories should now decide to join forces to write together a new page in their development: a fusion which brings a lot of positives for our structures and inhabitants.

François Szypula, *President of the Community of Communes of the Montagne Bourbonnaise and Mayor of Arronnes*



With the Community of Communes of the Montagne Bourbonnaise, which is itself made up of 15 Communes with a population of around 6,500, the Community of Local Communes of Vichy Val d'Allier will be the only one in the Allier to see its population increase, and will now comprise 38 Communes. At the beginning of 2016 INSEE, the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies, published figures for the population of Vichy Val d'Allier at 76,714.

A multi-faceted attractiveness

With a « green and blue » identity as a guiding principle, Vichy Val d'Allier intends to promote its traditional strengths of spa waters, thermalism, shops and services and at the same time support the diversification of its industrial activities and its innate sense of innovation. Each time a new business chooses to open in, or move to its catchment area, Vichy Val d'Allier demonstrates its **ability to offer them a warm, pertinent and dynamic welcome**. This was the case with Percall, a Lyon based computer engineering and service company which celebrated its tenth year in Vichy in April 2016: similarly with the recent arrival of the Portuguese Group Renova specialising in high quality, coloured paper kitchen towels and toilet paper, who have taken over the old Candia site in Saint-Yorre.

Vichy is also the name given by L'Oréal, the world leader in beauty products, to its flagship range of products in its CAP [Cosmétique Active Production] division producing active cosmetics. Their production site in the Vichy-Rhue (Creuzier-le-Vieux) Industrial Zone has 340 employees, and the logistics and transport site at Creuzier-le-Neuf has over forty, dispatching products to over 40 countries.

Vichy Val d'Allier is the second largest Community of Local Communes in the Auvergne in terms of population size and activities, including plastics processing (CTL Packaging), metal working (Valmont the market leader for street lamps), automobile production (Ligier, the world leader in no-licence vehicles), electronics (NSE), call centres (Satel), electrical products (Peinta) and agro-foodstuffs (Arrivé Auvergne, Convivial). Not forgetting luxury leather goods (Fleurus Group, Sofama) and the Saint-Yorre and Vichy-Célestins mineral waters (Société Commerciale des Eaux du Bassin de Vichy).

Shops and shopping have always been important activities in the conurbation, and Vichy's status as a spa town allows the town's shops to be open on Sunday afternoons.

Making for a more dynamic conurbation

+ **inhabitants**: the population of Vichy has grown by 0.4% between 2008 and 2013 and now stands at 25,325. The same sort of growth has been seen in the bordering communes, such as Cusset (the second largest town in the conurbation with +259), Abrest, Charmeil, Cognat-Lyonne, Brugheas, Creuzier-le-Neuf and others.

+ **accessibility**: January 2015 saw the opening of the 14km section of the A719 between Vichy and Gannat. Over the year it averaged more than 4,000 vehicles per day, providing a rapid route to the Clermont Metropolitan area. The South-West section of the Vichy ring road, the RD906, opened in February 2016 between Saint-Yorre and the roundabout at the beginning of the Vichy-Gannat A719 section mentioned above. It has a junction specifically to service the Bioparc business activity zone. The remaining North-West section of the ring road is already planned, and may be the subject of an expropriation programme in 2018.

With its access improvement project almost completed, the conurbation can now fully appreciate and profit from its central position in the heart of France.

+ **visitors**: One of the advantages of business tourism is that it is spread out over the year. Because of this phenomenon, it accounts for more than a third of the Turnover for the Hotels in Vichy, with around 81,000 overnight stays. In fact the figures provided by the town's Tourist Office showed this Turnover to be around €1.2million for 2015, a 10% increase on 2014.

The major groups and businesses in the Auvergne regularly organise seminars and conferences at the **Palais des Congrès** in Vichy; for example Limagrain, Michelin, CAP l'Oréal, etc.. The recent fusion with the Rhône-Alpes region provides an extra 200,000 companies as potential customers. And this does not take into consideration the marketing undertaken to potential international customers.

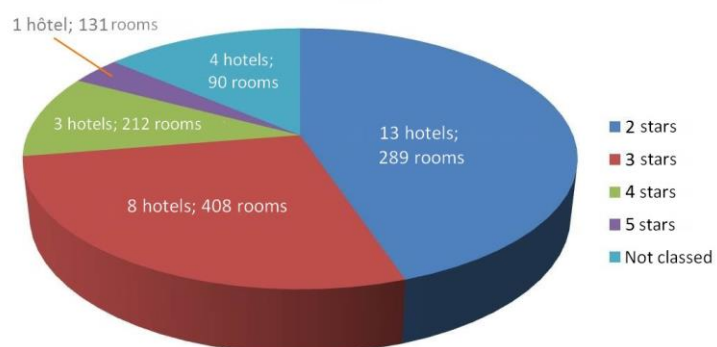
Number of businesses by sector of activity at 1 January 2014

	Nombre	%
Total	4 333	100,0
Industry	295	6,8
Construction	582	13,4
Commerce, transport, other services	2 798	64,6
<i>including automobile commerce and repairs</i>	<i>1 048</i>	<i>24,2</i>
Public administration, education, health, social services	658	15,2

Field: trading activities not including agriculture

Source : Insee, Company and Business Directory (Sirene)

Number and capacity of the hotels in Vichy as at 01/01/16



The conurbation also has the **largest one-site sports economy platform in France** in a 120 hectares wooded area along the Lac d'Allier. The Parc Omnisports Pierre Coulon comprises the CREPS Vichy Auvergne [Sports Resources, Expertise and Performance Centre]; the widened portion of the River Allier which is an officially recognised international water sports venue for rowing and canoe kayak; an 18 hole golf course; tennis courts; a racecourse with PMU betting race meetings, floodlit night meetings, a Trotting Festival and the Grande Semaine week-long festival of flat racing; as well as a water park centre with an Olympic accredited pool which regularly welcomes the best swimmers in the world. The conurbation has 550 hectares of sports sites, and nearly all the different sports are available and practiced at all levels.



In 2016, Vichy Val d'Allier should host around 350 sports training courses and retreats, and around thirty official sporting events: a volume of activities which make an important contribution to the local economy and the international reputation of Vichy as a sports venue.

Among the most important events are: for Euro 2016, the Slovak football team and delegation were based in Vichy; the French Rowing Championship; the Jumping International showjumping event at the showjumping stadium; the French Open swimming competition; the French Parachuting Championship at the Charmeil aerodrome; the Vichy Ironman and triathlon events with nearly 3,000 athletes.

+ training and education: The first year of students at the **PLM Academy** (Product Lifecycle Management) were enrolled in October 2015 in Vichy. This one year sandwich course qualifies students to be a *PLM Functional Consultant* and is open to students, salaried workers and jobseekers.

The Vichy University Centre celebrates its 15th anniversary in September 2016, providing twelve courses from Bac+1 to Bac+5 in five major academic domains: Health-Nutrition, Multimedia-Communications, Economics-Management-Law, Technology-Management, and Business Studies.

Officially recognised as a « Higher Education Site », the **Lardy University Centre** had more than 700 students enrolled at the beginning of the 2016 academic year, added to which are the students doing the PACES preparatory year for medicine, pharmacy, midwifery and dentistry university courses.

This privileged site between the parks and the banks of the Allier river, is also home to the **CAVILAM – Alliance française**, which since 1964 has worked to promote Vichy and French culture abroad. Some 5,000 students from 120 different countries come each year to take advantage of the innovative methods used to teach languages. They add to the 2,000 students who, like the inhabitants of Vichy Val d'Allier, benefit from a green environment and a well maintained quality of life.

Near to the University Centre, stretching from the railway station to rue du Maréchal Lyautey, the strip of industrial wasteland of the **Docks de Blois** (1.4 hectare) is finally going to be developed to house the new Vichy Masso-Kinesitherapy Institute (IFMK), which should be welcoming the Institute's 400 students for the start of the academic year in 2018. The number of students has almost doubled, due to the increase in quotas and the extension of the Diploma period to four years.



Linking the town centre to the nearby countryside, a number of walks have been laid out along the banks of the Allier River, which runs through the territory. **Close to nature and cultural and sports sites, the conurbation intends to continue with its lifestyle and well-being, remaining fit and healthy.**

Make circular ripples in spa water which, starting from Vichy, get bigger, making concentric circles which reach the Clermont-Vichy-Auvergne Metropolis, the expanded Region and the rest of France, Europe and the World....

Because « *thermalism is in the DNA of the Compagnie de Vichy* », Jérôme Phelipeau (cf. photo) intends to pass on the genes which carry the future of his business: « *1st private employer in the town, for more than a century we have managed our health centres and welcomed our long and short stay clients. Skills and know-how and therapeutic benefits which the CEO tries his hardest to improve, support and promote. The care benefits come from the mineral salts extracted from the spa water during, or for the care treatments.*

« *Our subsidiary Vichy Spa International (VSI) specialises in consultancy and engineering services for the creation and rehabilitation of « Destination Medical Thermal Spa-Hotels », in France and abroad.* » After the first establishment opened under licence in Montpellier, the next ones will be in Qatar and the Czech Republic (Marienbad) in 2017, followed by two in Morocco, not forgetting a number of advanced projects in China.

Jérôme Phelipeau also promotes the project « Vichy Medical City » in the Vichy Val d'Allier Community of Local Communes Development Council: a sustainable concept which associates wellness and pure medical activities. He is looking to create an ensemble of « integrative treatments » constituted through partnerships with different public and private healthcare partners.

His aim is to **promote thermalism spa treatments being integrated into modern medicine**; to this end he helped create the Cluster « Innovatherm » in 2013. Approved by the Auvergne Regional Council in coordination with the French State and the EU, the **Innovatherm Cluster of Excellence** is part of the Region's EU initiated S3 Smart Specialisation Strategy. .



In collaboration with other clusters, Innovatherm is involved in two of the five **Strategic Innovation Domains (SID)** defined for the Auvergne, participating particularly in the project of creating an Auvergne Health Metacluster, the European Centre for Individualised Mobility.



Strategic Innovation Domains	Examples of existing collective projects
Health and prevention, and care and comfort for patients	Nutravita Cluster: food and health IRP Cluster [Pharmabiotics Research Institute]: probiotics Analgesia Partnership Cluster: analgesics Innovatherm Cluster: thermalism spa treatments and health Cereal Valley Business and Research Cluster: the cereals of the future
Sustainable agricultural systems	Cereal Valley Business and Research Cluster
Sustainable living areas	Le Damier Cluster: musical and audiovisual businesses Innovatherm Cluster: thermalism spa treatments and health E2IA Cluster: eco-industries The Auvergne Nouveau Monde Label
Physical and digital traceability	Auvergne TIC Cluster [Information Communications Technologies] Governance of the Digital Economy in the Auvergne
High-performance and Intelligent Systems – Factories of the Future	VIA MECA Business and Research Cluster [design, production and integration of intelligent mechanical systems] Industrial Efficiency Cluster AVIA aeronautics Group

Source: Auvergne Regional Council Report 001- Session September 2014

Development Council: citizens as actors in their territories

Development Councils bring together different actors from civil society who give up their time and energy for the benefit of their local territory; whether from local associations, local entrepreneurs, from universities, etc.

Development Councils are tools of a participative democracy, created by the Voynet Legislation in 1999. They have recently taken on an enlarged role (Cf. Article 88 Law NOTRe-2015). As part of a nationally coordinated group, they are put in place by Communities of Local Communes, Metropolises, and Project-based territories [Pays].

A minimum of 20,000 inhabitants is necessary to create such an entity, which has the right to demand that electors register a choice in an election concerning major decisions on local public policies.

Making sure that the projects we want actually do progress

« We meet regularly every six months in a plenary session to discuss the progress of the works in process, as well as monthly steering committees. We have been consulted, in particular, on the project for 2025 for the Vichy Val d'Allier Community of Local Communes. » Elected by the Council members, Alain Da Conceição, is President of the **VICHY VAL D'ALLIER Development Council**; he is one of the 30 representatives of the civil society requested to sit on the council by Claude Malhuret.

Although the Vichy Val d'Allier Development Council's conurbation project places it resolutely on the axis Clermont-Vichy, five of the Council members are also on the similar Council for Greater Clermont. Following the Local Municipal Elections in 2014, Claude Malhuret is the President of the Vichy Val d'Allier Community of Local communes and is also at the head of the Clermont Vichy Auvergne Centre.

As Alain Da Conceição says, « with this sort of focus at the Metropolis level, we can form a coherent approach to the directions taken by territorial policies. We can also react in addition to the local authorities, with each one of us bringing their specific skills and know-how.

Because of our capacity to submit projects ourselves, which is approved by the authorities, and the expansion of our mission perimeter, we can also work on projects we have selected ourselves. The way we work is that each project has a dedicated project management team. As we are independent, we don't have to wait for projects to be passed on to us. We can, therefore, always be reactive when a project presents itself. »

Alain Da Conceição, President of Vichy Val d'Allier Development Council



Creating a stakeholder dynamic

Associations of urban districts should consider creating a network of existing Development Councils. They must, however, continue their legal obligations of « monitoring that their missions are carried out properly ». Furthermore, such networks must collaborate and coordinate on a regional and local basis.

This is how the Presidents of Vichy Val d'Allier Development Council, Alain Da Conceição, and the Vichy Auvergne "Pays", Jean-Claude Mairal, work together to advance their projects. « We work together as stakeholders and partners to create a dynamic which can deliver and mobilise the necessary human and material resources. » Jean-Claude Mairal is a fervent believer in discussing and exchanging opinions, which allows for « an approach to territorial development which is multi-actor, multi-level and multi-sector. This synergy between the actors and concrete actions is capable of uniting the dynamic forces in the territory. They form the basis of any method, procedure and approach, and are indispensable for the success of collective projects. »

« Speaking French is important for our territories. The "Pays" Development Council concentrates its efforts on education and training, culture and cooperation, whereas the Vichy Val d'Allier Development Council is more involved in terms of economics. »

In 2016 the Vichy Auvergne "Pays" launched the project « The Future of Youth in the "Pays" Vichy Auvergne », making youth a priority.

Whatever the subject or sector involved, and the funds used*, it is important that the **prime aim is making sure the territories and their populations progress!**

*The "Pays" is in charge of the European LEADER Programme, whose aim is to reinforce local rural development strategies; its pilot projects are financed by Feader, European Funds for Agriculture and Rural Development.

Jean-Claude Mairal, President of the "Pays" Vichy Auvergne Development Council





population 342,911 / geographic area 7,340.1 km²
 15,500 businesses / 130,000 workforce / 4,500 students
www.allier.fr

The Department : combining proximity and reactivity !

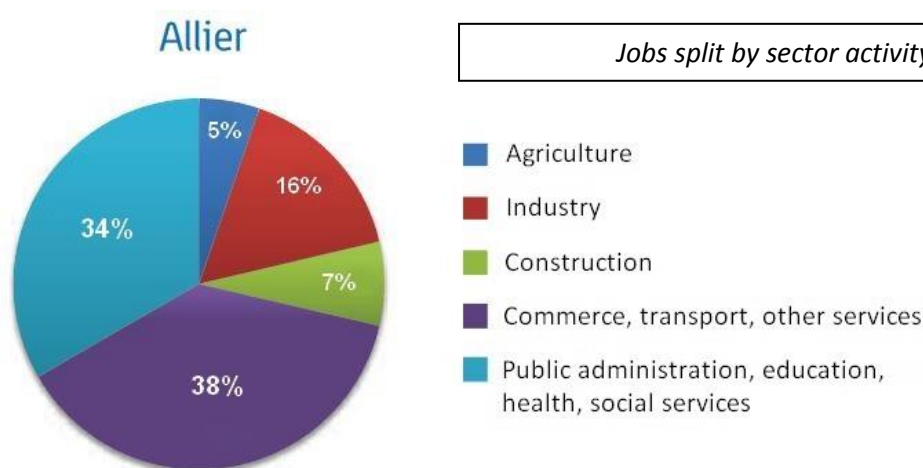
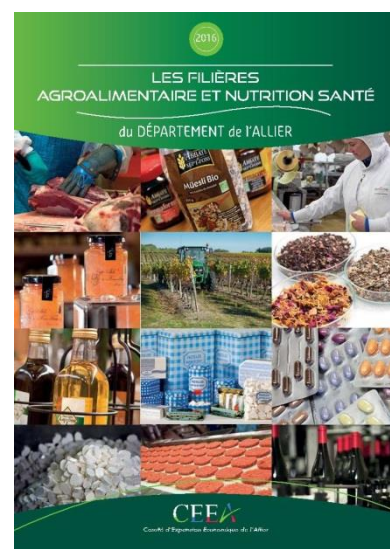
Concerning helping the creation or expansion of economic activities, the NOTRe Law concerning a New Territorial Organisation for the French Republic, gives full authority to the Regions. However, the Department Council also has considerable experience in this area and wants to be associated with the Regional Scheme for Business Economic Development, Innovation and Internationalisation. They also want to fully participate in the attractiveness and promotion of their territory, particularly concerning tourism and spa thermalism...

In the Allier, the Department, through its Economic Expansion Committee (CEEA), continues each day to show that it is capable of supporting and accompanying businesses in the field. « *We have a strong relationship with our businesses. Since the creation of the CEEA in 1956, we have developed a relationship which works well, based on mutual confidence and respect.* » Pierre Guyot, the new Director, knows perfectly well what he is talking about, as he has been part of the CEEA for the last 25 years.

« *Historically we have always been a close and local actor in this area; the CEEA is capable of being a source of collaborative projects fitting into the Regional strategy.* » Potential future activities « *always involving complementarity* » says its President, Bernard Coulon.

Prospection by the CEEA as well as animation and facilitation, and making introductions both early on and afterwards, facilitates **the development of the activity sector**. This dynamic by « sector » is an excellent way for promoting economic development in the territory. « *We are working on a global offer which encourages proposing inter-regional projects, some of which should come to fruition.* »

NB : The CEEA regularly publishes a trade directory which provides precise details of the economic size of each sector.



In the Allier, the 20,000 salaried jobs in **industry** represent **16% of the workforce**, which is higher than the national average at 13%. Of the 15,550 businesses in the Department, around 1,400 are in the industry sector, representing **9% of all local businesses**. (Source: CEEA 2016 Agro-foodstuffs and Nutrition-Health Trade Directory)

Concerning the automobile sector, the fourth business forum took place at Vichy in July 2005, bringing together businesses from the Auvergne, Burgundy, Centre and Limousin regions. The PSA Peugeot Citroën factory at Sept-Fons in the "Bourbonnais" area of the Allier, has received a public fund grant of over €2 million, to help reduce by half their production of waste sand.



population 544,000 / 2 communities of local communes
13 associations of urban districts / 250,000 jobs / 40,000 students
www.clermontmetropole.org

The Clermont Vichy Auvergne Metropolis: promoting transversal cooperation

« The **Metropolis being constructed to bring balance to the west of the region** will be a new type of metropolis, special, particular and original, with more than one decision making centre, and shared authority. It will ally itself with the indisputable metropolitan dynamic and its typically Auvergnat humanist identity. It will bring together and manage in a new way a strong industrial identity, new aspects of rurality, our exceptional natural and agricultural heritage, the presence of two major, regional natural parks, a strategic positioning in the digital sector, and a multitude of cultural and sporting jewels... »

(Cf. Note March 2016 - Clermont Métropole Urbanism and Development Agency)

The foundations of a real Auvergnat Metropolis were laid as soon as the Clermont Métropole Urbanism and Development agency was created in 1998. As an organisation specialising in research which also acts as a think tank, it has helped and supported the **Clermont Vichy Auvergne Metropolis public authority joint venture** in the general organisation and coordination of its development work.

Presently Claude Malhuret is President of the metropolitan centre which, as from February 2016 comprised four urban areas in the Auvergne: Clermont/Riom, Issoire, Thiers and Vichy, comprising fifteen communities of communes or conurbations [EPCI] associated to the Auvergne International Chamber of Commerce [CCI]; namely the two Communities of Local Communes of Clermont and Vichy and 13 Communities of Communes.

After Riom (2012) and Clermont-Ferrand (2013), Vichy hosted the third Metropolitan Conference in June 2016.

Corresponding to a geographic and demographic reality, the metropolitan centre intends to ensure its visibility in the new, expanded Region of Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes. The Clermont Vichy Auvergne Metropolis concerns a population centre which extends from Brioude in the South, to Vichy in the North, including Issoire, Clermont and Thiers. Although new members can always join, more than half the population of the Auvergne are already involved.

The different public and private actors will develop **joint strategies** to reinforce their attractiveness and performance.

A team effort

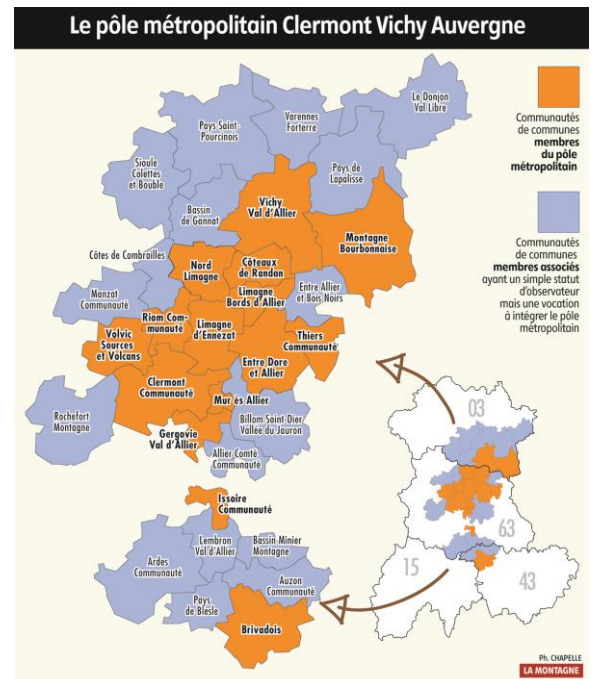
In fact it was the sporting sector which led the way with the fusion in the Summer of 2015 of the two professional basket ball teams of Clermont-Ferrand and Vichy. Now called JA Vichy-Clermont Métropole (JAVCM), the new entity, with a red and yellow strip, is our flagship club with an increased budget and increased ambitions. The team alternates training sessions and matches between the two sites.

A united economic front

It is in this spirit that the **three Bio Business Parks in the Auvergne have signed a partnership agreement** in February 2016. These three sites bring together the majority of the bio-industry businesses in the Auvergne, a positive sector for the territory. Each site has its own identity but has decided to work together to optimise their efficiency: the **Biopôle Clermont-Limagne** with 43 businesses and around

20,000m² of laboratories and 1,400 jobs in 3 sites, Saint-Beauzire, Riom and Clermont-Ferrand; the **Bioparc Vichy-Hauterive** with 13 businesses and around 160 salaried jobs; and the **Naturopôle at Saint-Bonnet de Rochefort** with 5 businesses and 230 jobs. With a common identity, website, and logo and not forgetting marketing and presence at trade fairs, the synergies between their businesses are presently managed by a joint steering committee. This type of partnership should be copied in the metropolitan centre.

Another major project for Clermont Vichy Auvergne is the creation of an ethanol production unit at the Monpertuis site, Bellerive-sur-Allier. Depolluted in 2015, then acquired by Vichy Val d'Allier, the site could house a business cluster specialised in innovative new forms of «green chemicals».



AUVERGNE – RhôneAlpes*

population 7.8 million / geographic area 70,700 km² / 3.2 million jobs

GDP of €230 billion / 300,000 students / www.auvergnerhonealpes.eu

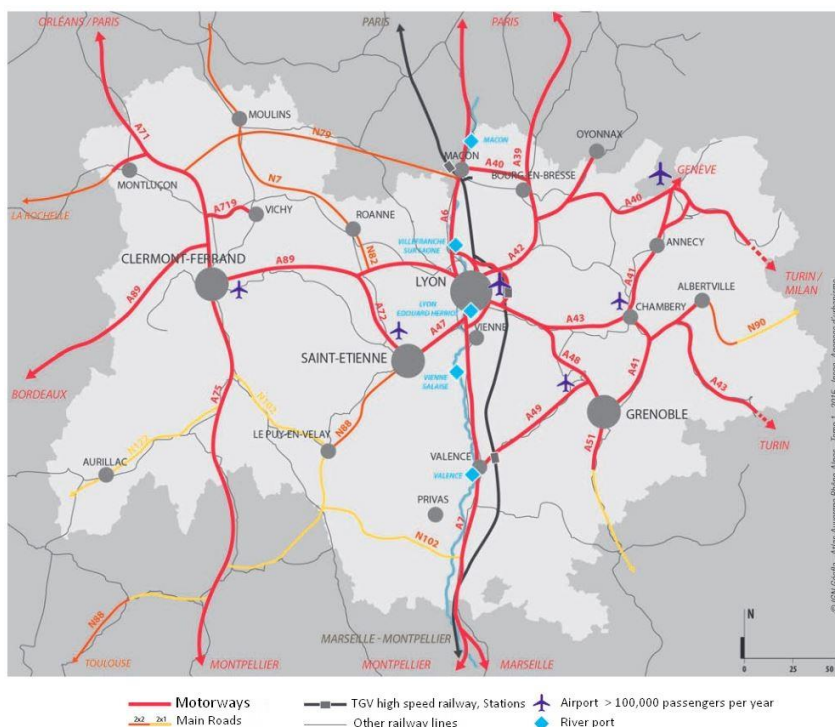
* Provisional name : the definitive name of the Region will be decided by Decree of the Conseil d'Etat before 1 October 2016, based on the recommendation of the Regional Council/Conseil Régional.

The Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Region: complementary strengths

In second position behind the Ile de France region, the expanded Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Region has numerous arguments in its favour. Its success is based on a harmonisation of its identified strengths and weaknesses, whether economic, demographic or geographic.

In the framework of the NOTRe law, the Region will be responsible for the directions taken in terms of economic development, through a prescriptive Regional Scheme for Business Economic Development, Innovation and Internationalisation [SRDII]. Taking into consideration regional strengths which need to be promoted, as well as providing a fair territorial equilibrium, it fixes the priorities established by the 204 members of the Regional Council of the new expanded Region, elected in December 2015 for a 6 year mandate until March 2021.

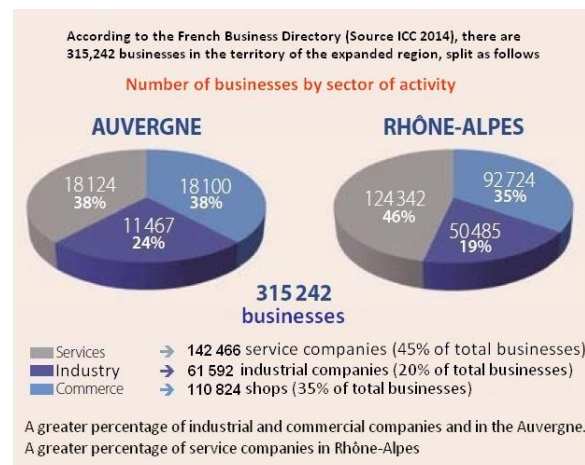
Only the expanded Region can allocate grants and aid to businesses, however, this can be delegated to local inter-communal authorities. Furthermore, the expanded Region is responsible for coordinating economic action plans and the activities of business and research clusters.



Number of Clusters, Business and Research Clusters, Clusters of Excellence

Themes	Auvergne	Rhône-Alpes	Together
Energy, environment, "green" chemicals, sustainable development, wood	3	10	13
Microtechnology, engineering, aeronautics, transport	3	8	11
Biotech, health, cosmetics	5	4	9
CIT, automation, information security	4	3	7
Agriculture, agro-foodstuffs	2	3	5
Materials, chemicals	2	2	4
Other (sport and tourism)		2	2

It is important to note that although the industrial sector is bigger than the national average, the services sector is by far the biggest sector, followed by commerce.



Focus on digital technologies; a sector of excellence reorganising its structure

According to the 1st edition of the Observatory of the regional digital technologies sector, published on 27 April 2016 by Clust'R Numérique & EY*), **Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes is the second region in France in the digital technologies sector by number of jobs, with 60,000.** Laurent Wauquiez, the President of the Region, has the ambition to « *make the European Silicon Valley* » in Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, favouring a certain number of directions for development.

« The digital technologies sector is one of the priorities for the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Region. If it provides excellent prospects in terms of innovation and economic development, it has also become a concrete element of our daily lives. The budget attributed for installing fibre-optic networks has increased by 39% compared with 2015, with an extra €46 million of investment credits. » Charlotte Benoit stresses that, « *the Region is conscious of the importance of developing infrastructures to improve services to users, and is actively pursuing the generalisation of high speed internet connection by choosing fibre-optics. At the same time, improving mobile phone coverage across the whole of the territory remains a priority. The Region has also considered closely the question of education and training, with the creation of a campus for digital technology skills which will include initial training, continuous vocational training, and services to businesses. With students from across the expanded Region, as well as from the rest of France and Europe, it will be able to provide, among other services, recruitment solutions for many businesses, regardless of size and activity.* »

In the framework of the territorial reorganisation, rural and periurban territories will also benefit from the leverage provided by digital technologies. It is planned that they will be supported and accompanied, with the necessary engineering services being provided, to develop new digital technology services; for example a "smart city" integrating ICT solutions to manage schools, libraries, transportation systems, hospitals, power, etc...

Charlotte Benoit, Regional Councillor, Vice President of the « Digital Technology » Commission



In order to keep its position as a leader nationally and internationally, the digital technology sector **regrouped its existing forces**: from the beginning of July 2015, the Numélink (Saint-Étienne) and RhoneAlley (Drôme-Ardèche) Clusters merged. In April 2016, Numélink was joined by Auvergne TIC, subsequently counting more than 300 members.

Its counterpart in Lyon, Clust'R Numérique, also received the label of European Cluster of Excellence, and also has more than 300 business members. The figures provided by the Regional Department for Business, Competition, Consumption, Work and Employment [DIRECCTE] in January 2016, showed it counted for nearly 50% of the economic weight of the digital technologies sector in the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Region with 22,000 jobs and a consolidated Turnover of €2.2 billion.

The "fusion" on 1 January 2017 of these two main French clusters, supported by the expanded Region, should allow them to **create one of the major digital technology clusters in Europe.**

Encouraged by local and regional authorities, there are more public/private initiatives being created,

like **Bivouac**, a start-up booster, created by the Clermont Community of Communes and the Auvergne Region, in partnership with major private groups like Michelin, the bank the Caisse d'Épargne et de Prévoyance Auvergne and Limousin, the La Montagne newspaper, Limagrain, the bank Crédit Agricole Centre France, Orange, EDF, Engie, Numelink.

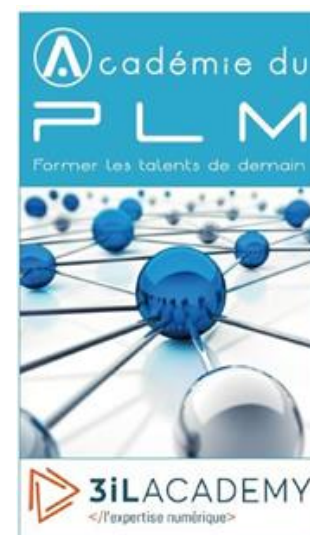
Based in Clermont-Ferrand, this structure supports, accompanies and accelerates the development of start-ups with a large element of digital technologies in their business, making sure they achieve their market share plan.

Bivouac is a fundamental tool for structuring the sector's ecosystem in order to obtain the label « French Tech », which is the objective of the Clermont conurbation, with the theme « digital technologies and mobility ». A candidature supported by Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, which could subsequently become the first French Tech region in Europe, if not the world.

Anxious to maintain its visibility at the European level, the 2nd largest Region in France endeavours to reduce the disparities between its different territories. The example of « Digital Technologies » proves the capacity of the different actors, both public and private, to coordinate their actions and progress collectively.

The Lyon based company Percall, with an office in Vichy, is specialised in product lifecycle management (PLM), and should create, between 2016 and 2018, 160 more jobs than the 230 already created in Vichy, Europe and Northern Africa.

Because PLM is a 360° information management system, the majority of manufactured products are defined, designed, simulated, manufactured and managed by digital technologies for their entire lifecycle.



Texts : Véronique Durupt (VD Redac)/ Translation : David Tottey