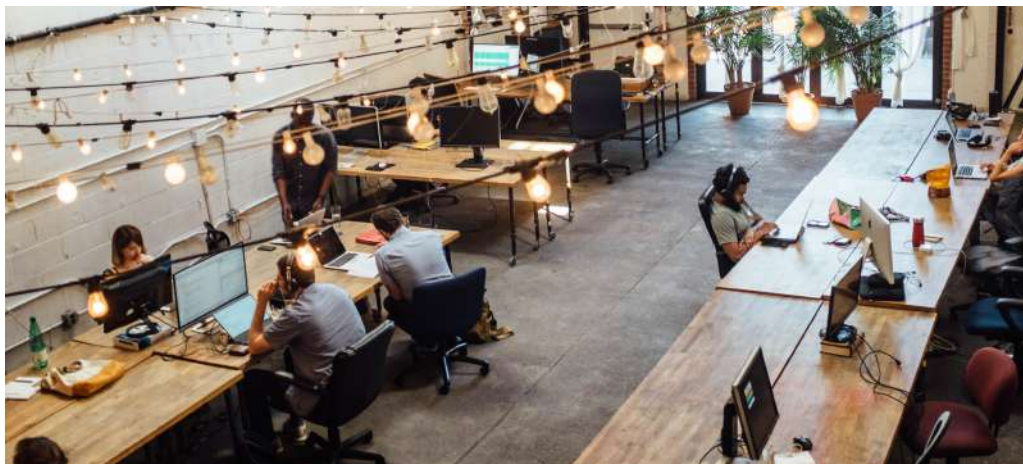


Choose NC interviews Mme. Margaux Loche, Manager of OPEN NC

OPEN NC is a cluster of Caledonian companies in the digital sector that decided to federate to promote the emergence of a sector, develop synergies and respond to the digital issues and challenges of the country.



__In just a few years, the digital sector has reached a growth peak in Caledonia, it represents 2.64% of the GDP. What is the current situation of the digital sector, challenges and opportunities?

With regard to the share of digital in GDP, we estimate that it should double its volume of activity in the next five years. This room for improvement is not only an opportunity for all digital players, but also a structuring and essential contribution to a lasting economic recovery. The major challenge that we must take up to achieve this is the low level of digital maturity of New Caledonian companies. New Caledonian companies need strong support in their digital transitions. As part of this dynamic, we succeeded in obtaining the support of BPI France, which is supporting us within the framework of the French State's Revival plan, to carry out an awareness program involving more than 1,600 Caledonian VSEs/SMEs in the digital transformation until the end of 2022. In addition to the State, all the institutional and economic players have joined forces with us to set up various mechanisms of innovation, export and training allowing us to project ourselves quickly to a regional digital benchmark.

__OPEN-NC was created in 2015 with the aim of developing the digital sector. To learn more about the history of OPEN NC, what were the key stages in its development in New Caledonia?

The Cluster was born in 2015 under the impetus of around twenty companies working in the digital world. In 2017, after a merger with the Organization of Digital Economy Professionals (OPEN PF) in Polynesia, the cluster was renamed OPEN NC. Since 2019, the OPEN NC cluster has a permanent member of the association to lead it. The first commission, dedicated to Cybersecurity, was created the same year. Since then two other commissions have been created, one focused on training and another on the digital transition. The DATA commission is being set up this year. These working groups enable us to move forward on concrete issues, always with the aim of developing the digital sector in NC. A new permanent member recently joined our team, which will allow us to keep pace and ensure a sustained level of activity to meet the expectations of the 100 members by the end of the year.



__Open NC, now brings together 210 Caledonian companies focused on digital or using digital as their core business. What are your goals for the next 3 years?

OPEN NC currently counts with 90 members out of a volume of 210 companies. Our main objective remains to develop the digital sector by further increasing its growth. We wish to continue our work within the committees, to respond to calls for projects and to strengthen the work in collaboration with the institutions. We hope to improve support for the digital sector by drawing inspiration from the best existing systems in the most attractive regions at national and international level by adapting them to our context. Promote Caledonian skills and digital solutions through exhibitions and competitions, for example. Improve the offer of initial and continuous training in our sector and bring it closer to demand. Seek to create sectors of excellence such as cybersecurity and software development.

__Digital companies are struggling to recruit, while the sector is booming. What is OPEN-NC doing in terms of training?

We do not offer training within OPEN. We are not a training organization and we are not meant to be. However, we do work with member OFs, most of whom are also members of the training commission. We also interact with the various local actors such as the DFPC, the DTE, the FIAF. We sponsored the web developer training launched by the CCI. We are also

working with our partners to best guide the implementation of new training courses.

__Since last December, the Open cluster has become a certification body for the international digital standard ICDL (International Computer Driving License). Can you tell us more about the ICDL certification and its importance?

Formerly PCIE, the ICDL certification is an international certification of digital skills. It consists of fifteen different modules ranging from computer essentials to cybersecurity, including word processing and web marketing. Some modules such as word processing or spreadsheets offer advanced levels. We work in collaboration with OPEN member training organizations to offer these certifications. ICDL offers a 4-step circuit:

the assessment test, which identifies the candidate's level, a training program adapted to the candidate's actual level, the preparation test, and the certification test. Note, certifications can also be done as a free candidate if there is no need for training. This certification is a real advantage over a CV, thus proving the level of digital knowledge to the recruiter. It is also an important way to check the level of its staff for all private or public organizations in areas generally neglected such as computer security, office automation or more targeted according to the activity of the organization concerned.

__Your final message for potential investors interested in the digital sector in New Caledonia? What do you think are the main assets of this region?

It is often said, by virtue of its territory and its small size, the NC is a real playground for experimenting with digital technology, like a human-sized laboratory for innovating, testing and launching new digital solutions! New Caledonia is increasingly open to its region and fully nourishes an ambition for strong regional economic and political integration.

