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THE LOIRE VALLEY DIGITAL OPEN JOINT SYNDICATE SELECTS TDF TO ROLL OUT AND OPERATE FIBER IN RURAL AREAS

The *Syndicat Mixte Ouvert Val de Loire Numérique* (Loire Valley Digital Open Joint Syndicate) recently selected TDF to roll out and operate optical fiber in French counties *Indre-et-Loire* and *Loir-et-Cher*.

A big project covering 306,000 connections and 513 communities

Following a tender lasting several months, TDF has won the contract to roll out, operate and market the fiber network of French counties *Indre-et-Loire* and *Loir-et-Cher* under a 25-year public service concession. The project runs over a five-year period, entails installing 306,000 connections serving 513 communities (excluding 'AMII' areas) and will provide ultra high-speed broadband for local inhabitants and businesses alike.

The Loire Valley Digital Open Joint Syndicate's digital development project is challenging: under a total €490 million budget, which includes a state subsidy, by 2022 TDF is due to have installed an ultra high-speed fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) network throughout the territory of the two counties involved.

A game-changing project for the counties

There is a lot at stake, namely bringing ultra high-speed internet to everyone's homes throughout the territory under terms promoting development of market-based services for both individuals and business. Both counties' Joint Syndicate seeks to make *Indre-et-Loire* and *Loir-et-Cher* more appealing to business, especially the tourism industry and foreign tourists who are attracted to the stunning cultural sights in the Loire Valley.

A 25-year TDF and Loire Valley Digital partnership

TDF will invest some €490 million to install the new network and in the next few days will set up a special purpose company, which will be agent and partner for the Loire Valley over the forthcoming 25 years. The municipalities involved and the Loire Valley Digital Open Joint Syndicate saw TDF as a firm able to further digital development goals in the territory and a reliable operator backed by robust finances meaning it could rapidly install fiber throughout both rural counties.

This contract is TDF's third successful public tender just a few months after winning the Val d'Oise 'RIP' (public initiative network) and the Yvelines 'AMEI' (investment commitment appeal), which bolsters the company as a newcomer on the fiber market and helps to further its strategy to market itself as an ultra high-speed broadband provider in rural areas.

Bernard Pillefer, Chairman of the Loire Valley Digital Open Joint Syndicate, exclaimed proudly: *"Backed by all our partners, we have completed a huge job to pave the way so that fiber can be installed in Loir-et-Cher and Indre-et-Loire. By 2022, all homes and businesses will be able to tap into ultra high-speed optical fiber-based broadband. This is a digital game-changer that will make our rural counties much more appealing. We were successful due to our councilors' unwavering determination backed by our local municipalities and first and foremost, the counties! I have every confidence in TDF which won the project tender by ticking all the boxes to ensure they could carry out this extraordinary job, which can be likened to building the power grid in the 1950s. "*

Olivier Huart, TDF Group CEO, said: *"2017 comes to an end as it began, with a success story! I am thrilled at this exciting news for TDF and would especially like to thank everyone who I'm sure will do their utmost to ensure the project is a rip-roaring success. Fiber has now become TDF's third source of growth alongside TV/Radio and Telecoms. This project shows we can bounce back and, with our shareholders' strong support, we are well placed and have the funds to realize our goals. We invest heavily and in the medium term, we will strive to win tenders covering a million connections throughout France".*

About Val de Loire Numérique (Loire Valley Digital)

In Loir-et-Cher, the unwavering determination of county councilors to introduce ultra high-speed broadband throughout the county resulted in 2014 with setting up the *Syndicat Mixte Ouvert Val de Loire Numérique* (Loire Valley Digital Open Joint Syndicate). From 2014 through 2017, Loir-et-Cher Digital carried out close to a hundred bandwidth upgrades throughout the county. Impressed by Loir-et-Cher's successful experience and skills, Indre-et-Loire contacted Loir-et-Cher with a view to launching a planned public service outsourcing concession so as to introduce optical fiber for all inhabitants. In 2017, the two counties teamed up and converted the joint syndicate into *Val de Loire Numérique* (Loire Valley Digital), which is responsible for introducing optical fiber in both counties (excluding 'AMI' areas). The joint syndicate comprises the regional council, county councils and all Loir-et-Cher and Indre-et-Loire 'EPCIs' (municipality joint ventures).

About TDF

As a transparent and impartial operator, TDF helps digital firms in mainland France and French overseas territories meet their strategic transmission goals. For radio and DTT broadcasting, mobile broadband coverage and rolling out optical fiber, TDF, market leader with 11,800 sites, brings customers in-depth operational expertise, a mix of unique and ground-breaking technology and an exceptionally widespread local presence. In an ever more connected world, over the last four decades or more TDF has enabled telecoms and media companies to connect the French regions and people everywhere and faster.

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