

INCUBATOR

Lennig Pedron, Trust Valley Director



THE TRUST VALLEY: A CENTER OF EXCELLENCE IN DIGITAL TRUST AND CYBERSECURITY TO CREATE A UNIQUE ECOSYSTEM IN WESTERN SWITZERLAND

The "TRUST VALLEY" is an alliance for excellence, supported by multiple public, private and academic actors, launched on Thursday, October 8, 2020 during a meeting "for" the partners "by" the partners broadcasted online. Cantons, Confederation, academic institutions and captains of industry, both local and international, work together to co-construct this pool of expertise and encourage the emergence of innovative projects. Cooperation is built around three main areas: the influence of this unique ecosystem, innovation, and the networking of regional players in the field of digital trust and cybersecurity.

On June 19, 2020, the Cantons of Vaud and Geneva announced their commitment to the "TRUST VALLEY" initiative in a historical agreement. This alliance, created in support of the regional economic development, allows the partners to pool their resources in the field of digital trust, to position and give a global resonance to the region of Lake Geneva. Today, manufacturers have followed suit. Since the announcement of launch 3 months ago, the initiative has become a public-private partnership actively supported by captains of industry such as ELCA, GCSP, Kudelski, SGS, SICPA and WISEKey, SMEs, large groups, startups, scale-ups, as well as academic institutions of the region (IHEID, HEIG-VD, HES-SO Geneva, EPFL, UNIGE, UNIL). Other strategic partnerships are currently under discussion.

Strategic alliances for concrete actions

Several alliances have also been established with new partners such as the CyberPeace Institute, PwC Switzerland and WISEKey. But also since June:

- 38 companies and organizations have expressed their interest in joining the "TRUST VALLEY".
- 14 organizations have been added to the regional mapping in the field of digital trust, which is displayed on the "TRUST VALLEY" website.
- More than 12 projects have been submitted to the initiative.

The ecosystem is also growing thanks to the support and involvement of startups such as Aequivalent, ProtonMail, Yes We Hack; scale-ups such as Sysmosoft; SMEs such as eXpert Solu-

tions, Exoscale, MSF Partners, AdNovum, Netguardians, Uditis; as well as the Transports Lausannois.

In the German-speaking side of Switzerland, the initiative attracts the support of Sygnum Bank. "TRUST VALLEY" contributors are PwC Switzerland, Fortinet and the CyberPeace Institute.

Clear international support has been expressed

"We need to work together. It is always important to find the best local solutions to local problems. I am aware that what you (the "TRUST VALLEY") do is of fundamental importance to the world. I don't think there are many nations on earth that are as trustworthy as Switzerland; there is no part of Switzerland that is more important than this region of Lake Geneva. Thank you for what you are doing. I hope that we, Microsoft, can continue to be a part of it, to support you and, for my part, continue to learn from everything you do." said Brad Smith, President of Microsoft.

3 flagship projects already underway

1. "TECH4TRUST"

"TECH4TRUST" is the first Swiss acceleration program dedicated to innovative startups committed to fostering digital trust in our society and economy. The 2nd edition has just been launched: 47 applications received and 27 selected startups. Most projects are Swiss but 5 of them are based in the main European hubs in the field with which "TECH4TRUST" has continuous exchanges.



Vaud and Geneva Ministers of Economy, Philippe Leuba and Pierre Maudet, together with Lennig Pedron, Trust Valley Director

"TECH4TRUST" is supported by public, private and academic partners, and merged with PwC Switzerland "SecTech Award" to become the unique Swiss acceleration program in digital trust.

- *"The Canton of Vaud is proud to support "TECH4TRUST", a unique Swiss acceleration program for start-ups that develop innovative and indispensable solutions for the digital transformation of our society and economy, which has accelerated further with the coronavirus pandemic," said Raphaël Conz, Head of the Enterprise Unit of the Service de la promotion de l'économie et de l'innovation (SPEI).*

Thanks to the support of over 30 high-level mentors and coaches, "TECH4TRUST" will provide selected startups the expertise and energy to evolve quickly and grow throughout the winter by increasing their strengths, turnover and human resources. An Advisory Committee will also assess the involvement of participants in the program. "TECH4TRUST" is committed to bring them to the next level regardless of their initial maturity stage. The companies taking part in "TECH4TRUST" are not only looking for funds but mainly talent, access to the "TRUST VALLEY" unique ecosystem, cutting-edge expertise and peer-to-peer support. The mission of "TECH4TRUST" is to allow startups to emerge stronger and boosted from the 5-month experience in order to be able to better respond to market demand.

The "TRUST VALLEY" is an economic development initiative helping the region to move forward and attract new players. The goal is to show that if a company active in digital trust and cybersecurity comes to the region, business will grow naturally.

2. Food by "TRUST VALLEY"

Food by "TRUST VALLEY" aims to develop trust and digital tracking solutions in the agritech and agrifood sector to meet UN sustainable development objective "Zero Hunger", SDG2 (Sustainable Development Goal). The whole sector is considered and room for improvement identified through digitalization, cybersecurity by design, but also emerging technologies, such as drones or identification.

SICPA, one of the funding members of the "TRUST VALLEY", has developed a strong expertise in this sector. The "Campus of the Economy of Trust" scheduled to be inaugurated at the

beginning of 2022 in Prilly will be a hub particularly favourable for the development of this kind of projects.

Partners: SICPA, Nestlé and the Center for Digital Trust of the EPFL (C4DT).

3. Health by "TRUST VALLEY"

The third flagship project is related to health. Health is the "TRUST VALLEY" second strategic focus, echoing the UN SDG3, "Good Health and Well-Being". In current times, this seemed essential.

This mapping initiative is meant to work on post-COVID-19 projects. The partners involved are the CyberPeace Institute, which brings international complementarity thanks to its "Cyber4Health" initiative, Biopôle and the Cantons of Geneva and Vaud. The goal is to map the changes in direction implemented by companies, SMEs, startups and large groups with a particular focus on how these players are migrating their technology, diverting it towards health and post-COVID matters and how it can help them overcome the crisis.

Collaborative, cooperative projects and cooperation

Following the announcement of the "TRUST VALLEY" launch in June, the financial sector has also expressed a strong interest in the initiative. In Geneva and Switzerland in general, financial institutions hold a central position and have developed leading-edge expertise in terms of data protection, trust and human factors with a real potential for knowledge transfer. It is essential to take the lead and build on these strengths when it comes to digital trust. To seize this opportunity, the "TRUST VALLEY" is working on joining forces and bringing together the key players in the financial sector.

The aim of the "TRUST VALLEY" is to turn competition into collaboration, as coopetition. Lennig Pedron, Head of the "TRUST VALLEY" initiative, mentions a concrete example of a company in the canton of Vaud which is active in physical and data security solutions: "A local company attracted the attention of an international giant which had a very specific request to set up a laboratory. Unfortunately, the local company could not meet this request on its own, so they called on us, the "TRUST VALLEY", and we put them in touch with HEIG-VD. Today, our two partners are working together on this joint project. This shows the concrete added value and impact that this initiative can bring". ■