Orange launches digital centre in Tunisia

Orange, a key player engaged in digital transformation in Africa and the Middle East, launches its first Orange Digital Centre in Tunisia.

Orange Digital Centre opening in Tunisia.

The Orange Digital Centre has been set-up as a centre to provide wide-ranging support for startups. From training young people in coding to more direct guidance, as well as startup acceleration and investment in early-stage companies, these new sites are intended for all kinds of different people.

It once again highlights Orange's capacity as a responsible entity, supporting digital transformation and local innovation in all the countries within the operator's footprint.

Attending the launch were Anouar Maarouf, Tunisian Minister of Communication Technologies and the Digital Economy, Abdelkoddous Saadaoui, Tunisian Secretary of State for Youth, Alioune Ndiaye, chief executive officer of Orange Middle East and Africa, Christine Albanel, senior executive vice-president of CSR, Diversity, Partnerships and Philanthropy and deputy chair of the Orange Foundation, and Thierry Millet, chief executive officer of Orange Tunisia.

Ndiaye explained: "I am very proud to launch the first Orange Digital Centre in Tunis. By the end of this year, we will set-up similar centres in Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Jordan, Cameroon, Burkina Faso and Sierra Leone.

"From 2020 onwards, Morocco, Egypt and the rest of the countries in the Middle East and Africa region will have their own Orange Digital Centre. Dedicated to our countries' digital development, these new spaces aim to consolidate Orange's standing as a key player in the digital transformation of the countries where we operate.

"Functioning as a network, these sites favour sharing experiences and expertise in a way that will benefit not just entrepreneurs but also students, young people with or without degrees, and young people undertaking a career change. We will therefore work in close collaboration with all our stakeholders, including governments and academics, to strengthen the employability of these young people and to encourage them to run businesses and to innovate."

Albanel, deputy chair of the Orange Foundation, said: "The mission of the Orange Foundation in the countries where the Group operates is to use digital technology to provide everyone with a chance. This new initiative is part and parcel of the ambition to make digital inclusion the key focus of our social commitment. The FabLab Solidaire, which is part of the Foundation's inclusion programmes, is a gateway that will enable young people to develop new skills and firmly establish their career path."

Catalyst for innovation

The Orange Digital Centre houses four strategic programmes under the same roof: the coding school, the FabLab Solidaire, Orange Fab and Orange Digital Ventures Africa:

1. **The coding school** is a freely accessible and totally free-of-charge technological centre that offers training and events for the community of young developers, geeks and people with ideas for projects. It is particularly aimed at students, young graduates and young entrepreneurs.
2. **The FabLab Solidaire** is a digital production workshop for creating and prototyping with digital equipment, such as 3D printers, milling machines and laser cutters. It brings together both young people who are unemployed and have no qualifications as well as students, young graduates and young entrepreneurs.
3. **Orange Fab** is a startup accelerator with an aim to build national and international business partnerships with the Orange Group and the international Orange Fab network. This programme helps improve managerial capabilities and provides support for the commercial development of promising startups, and it is mainly aimed at entrepreneurs.
4. **Orange Digital Ventures Africa** is a 50-million euro investment fund for financing innovative startups in Africa and the Middle East (fintech, e-health, energy, edutech and govtech), and it targets entrepreneurs.

Twenty-seven partner universities make up the system in Tunisia, alongside five centres in the region. Their aim is to offer access to and support for the best uses of networks to the largest number of people possible.

Thierry Millet, chief executive officer of Orange Tunisia, says: "Orange Tunisia's commitment to young people, ever since its launch, is a real success story, and four figures illustrate this perfectly. Through our programme, 16,000 young Tunisians have been trained and given support with digital technologies, 1,800 have benefited from career change work experience courses, 800 secondary school students have been taught coding and 95 % of them have been employed in Tunisia or abroad."

Orange operates in 19 African and Middle Eastern countries and has 120 million customers as of the end of 2018. With revenues of 5.2 billion euros in 2018, this area is a strategic priority for the Group. Orange Money, its mobile-based money transfer and financial services offer, is available in 17 countries and has over 40 million customers. Orange, a multi-service operator and benchmark partner of the digital transformation, provides its expertise to support the development of new digital services in Africa and the Middle East.