

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Sixth edition of the “Choose France” Awards: Ecolab, Knauf and Prysmian rewarded**

Since 2019, the “Choose France” Awards have rewarded foreign businesses that have chosen France and its regions. Organized by Business France, under the supervision of the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, the Ministry for the Economy, Finance and Industrial and Digital Sovereignty, as well as the Ministry for Regional Cohesion and Relations with Local Authorities, and in collaboration with the États de France, the “Choose France” Awards have become the unmissable event for investors. This sixth edition focused on the theme of “France, land of champions”.

The winners were selected by a jury chaired by Pascal Cagni, Ambassador for International Investment and Chairman of the Board of Directors of Business France. The jury was made up of institutional representatives and experts from the business world. To be eligible for the “Choose France 2024” Awards, businesses must have already completed the investment that they had previously announced at Versailles.

“The winners of the ‘2024 Choose France’ Awards reflect the tangible and structuring impact that foreign investors have on the French economy. Since the first ‘Choose France’ summit organized in 2018, a total of 178 announcements have been recorded. These establishments once again confirm that France is economically attractive and that the country inspires confidence on the international stage.

“These businesses, through their projects, actively contribute to innovation, the competitiveness of our regions and the construction of a more sustainable and inclusive economy. We’re pleased to celebrate the commitment made by Ecolab, Knauf and Prysmian and their role in enhancing the international profile of France,” said Pascal Cagni.

Business France has chosen to showcase three investments that have made a significant contribution to the French economy. They have been awarded the following prizes:

**The Choose France “Talents and training for the future” prize** was awarded to the American water, hygiene and infection prevention solutions and services business, Ecolab, which opened its European research and development center in Sainghin-en-Mélantois (Hauts de France region), alongside Anios Laboratories. This investment of €25 million dedicated to healthcare currently employs more than 40 people.

The group is also very present in France, where it employs a total of more than 1,900 people, with three production sites in the Grand Est (home to the largest factory in Europe), Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur and Hauts de France regions, as well as two major R&D sites, including that of Sainghin-en-Mélantois.

**The Choose France “Ecological transition and decarbonization” prize** was awarded to the German firm Knauf, a leader in the field of construction materials, which dedicated €100 million to the opening of a new mineral wool ceiling tile manufacturing unit in Illange (Grand Est region), generating 50 new jobs.

The Knauf group stands out as a leading family-run multinational firm in France, thanks to its strong presence and significant contribution to employment, with 40 manufacturing sites employing more than 2,000 people. The group is pursuing an ambitious set of objectives in terms of sustainable development, particularly with regard to decarbonization, by aiming to reduce scope one and two carbon dioxide emissions by 50% by 2032, to reduce scope three carbon dioxide emissions by 30%, and achieve carbon neutrality by 2045.

**The Choose France “Innovation and innovative technologies” prize** was awarded to the Italian firm Prysmian, which specializes in the production of cables for use in the energy and telecommunications sectors. To respond to the change in electricity uses and the energy mix for new interconnections, the Prysmian group invested €76.6 million in the Gron site (Bourgogne-Franche-Comté region) between 2020 and 2022, obtaining €5 million in state aid as part of the “Relaunch France” plan, generating 70 jobs.

The leading Italian cable manufacturer has also invested €55.5 million in the Montereau-Fault-Yonne site (Paris/Ile de France region) since 2020, generating 40 jobs, with full deployment planned by 2026. Most of these jobs are dedicated to the manufacture of extra-high voltage cables and have enabled the deployment of P-Laser technology, a 100% recyclable, eco-sustainable and high-performance cable used in the “German Corridors” project, the longest underground electrical connection in the world. This massive investment serves as essential support for the sustainability of the group’s social, environmental and technological ambitions across its nine industrial sites in France.

## **About Business France**

Business France is the public consulting business serving the international development of the French economy. It is responsible for fostering export-led growth by French businesses, as well as promoting and facilitating foreign investment in France.

It promotes France’s firms, business image and nationwide attractiveness as an investment location, and also runs the VIE international internship program.

Business France has more than 1,400 personnel, both in France and in 53 countries throughout the world.

In 2023, support from Business France made it possible to generate €3.3 billion in additional export revenues for French SMEs and mid-size companies, accounting for more than 27,111 jobs created or planned. Business France supported 58% of the 1,815 foreign investment decisions in 2023, accounting for 67% of the 59,254 jobs created or maintained nationwide.

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