

PRESS RELEASE

## THD42 Public Initiative Network soon to pass milestone of 100,000 subscribers

Two years after its delivery, the THD42 Public Initiative Network, built by the SIEL-Territoire d'énergie energy authority for the Loire department and operated by Axione Infrastructures subsidiary THD42 Exploitation, is set to reach the 100,000<sup>th</sup> subscriber mark.

**This milestone reflects the ability to collectively carry out a project that supports regional development and serves new digital use cases.**

The Loire department in east-central France has shown itself once again to be a model of digital development thanks to the THD42 Public Initiative Network and the fibre-to-the-home technology covering all of rural Loire. The SIEL-TE energy authority, which is driving this ambitious project, has been engaging since 2015 with public players to secure funding of €283 million and with 18 partner companies in order to deploy fibre infrastructure over a 5-year period. The infrastructure is intended to serve 274 municipalities outside of "AMII"<sup>1</sup> areas, making more than 190,000 premises eligible for superfast broadband. This strong commitment from SIEL-TE and local authorities ensures digital coverage for everyone as well as a unique pre-connection scheme available to all residents free of charge until 2025.

This collective success was achieved by properly coordinating shared tasks between SIEL-TE and THD42 Exploitation, the company responsible for operating the network and marketing it to partner operators, specifically to 11 consumer ISPs (Internet Service Providers). THD42 Exploitation operates within the framework of a 15-year concession contract and pays a €100 million fee to SIEL-TE.

With more than 13,000km of optical fibre deployed and 250 technical sites, THD42 Exploitation teams inspect the public infrastructure and keep it in good working order, thus delivering service continuity to subscribers. This is critical at a time when, regardless of where people live, connectivity is key to the expansion of practices like home working, telemedicine and remote learning. Of course, the health crisis has accentuated this need, leading to a sea-change in both personal and professional habits.

In passing the milestone of 100,000 subscribers, the THD42 network has shown how enthusiastic Loire residents are about having access to superfast, high-quality broadband in rural areas. A trailblazer, the Loire department is leading the way in terms of rural areas with full fibre coverage, even as France as a whole ramps up fibre deployment in view of the development implications.

The Loire department's exemplary digital development is a response to the need to find solutions to tomorrow's challenges. With the scheduled switch-off of the traditional copper network, SIEL-TE and THD42 Exploitation are taking steps to digitise the whole region in keeping with public policies promoting inclusion and access for all, so that the societal and environmental challenges facing us can be met.

### **Marketing**

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<sup>1</sup> A densely populated area in which one or more mobile network operators have expressed an interest in rolling out fibre without public funding to provide consumer services. In the Loire department, Orange has positioned itself in municipalities belonging to Roannais Agglomération (6 municipalities) and to Saint-Étienne Métropole (43 municipalities).

In accordance with national regulatory requirements, the THD42 network is open to all ISPs. To date, 11 consumer mobile network operators have signed up to offer their services (listed in alphabetical order):

Bouygues, Coriolis, Free, Illyse, Knet, Nordnet, Orange, Ozone, SFR, Vidéo futur and We-Acces.

More than 170 business providers are also offering value-added services via the local public infrastructure, with guaranteed network recovery time.

### **Fibre areas**

6 “EPCI” or public establishments for cooperation between local authorities (Roannais Agglomération, Communauté de communes Pays d’Urfé, Communauté de Communes Vals D’Aix Isable, Communauté de Communes Monts Du Pilat, Communauté de Communes entre Loire et Rhône, Communauté de Communes de Forez Est) have been awarded the “fibre area” label by Arcep, the French telecommunications regulatory authority.

“Fibre area” status, which is enshrined in law, designates areas where a fibre broadband network is fully deployed and operational, offering favourable conditions for mass migration from a copper network to fibre.