

EXCLUSIVE

French Tech: why public procurement is progressing with start-ups

The collaboration between start-ups and major accounts is intensifying, driven by a significant increase in public procurement. Still far from its objectives, the program "I choose French Tech" launches on this occasion new initiatives to support innovation and strengthen digital sovereignty.



In the wake of the "I choose French Tech" program created in 2023, public purchases from start-ups jumped by 33.4% in 2023. (Photo Laurent Grandguillot/REA)

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Is it time for optimism in the French entrepreneurial ecosystem? This is in any case the

message that Pierre Pelouzet, mediator of companies, wants to convey, with the publication of the second opus of the Observatory of relations between start-ups and major decision-makers.

Published in February 2026, this report submitted to Anne Le Hénanff, Minister Delegate for Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Digital, based on the figures of the year 2024 (for the private sector) and 2023 (for the public), highlights a dynamic of collaboration that is gaining momentum. Large groups make nearly 2% of their purchases from start-ups (compared to 1.43% in the public).

Small percentages but the figures are especially encouraging on the side of public procurement. Public procurement from start-ups jumped 33.4% in 2023, reaching 2.3 billion euros.

The JO effect

"It is above all the lever of public contracts at less than 100,000 euros [with a lighter legal framework, ed] that have been signed", points out Pierre Pelouzet who also notes a real "traction" due to the Olympic Games 2024 (with contracts signed in 2023).

This increase demonstrates the impact of proactive purchasing policies (especially ministries), and positions "the state as a powerful catalyst for the growth of start-ups," the report said. "Once you sign with a public actor, it accelerates. Administrations copy paste a lot," says Aurélie Toubol, co-founder of Troov RDV, who has [just signed with the National Fund for Family Allowances to optimize the appointment](#).

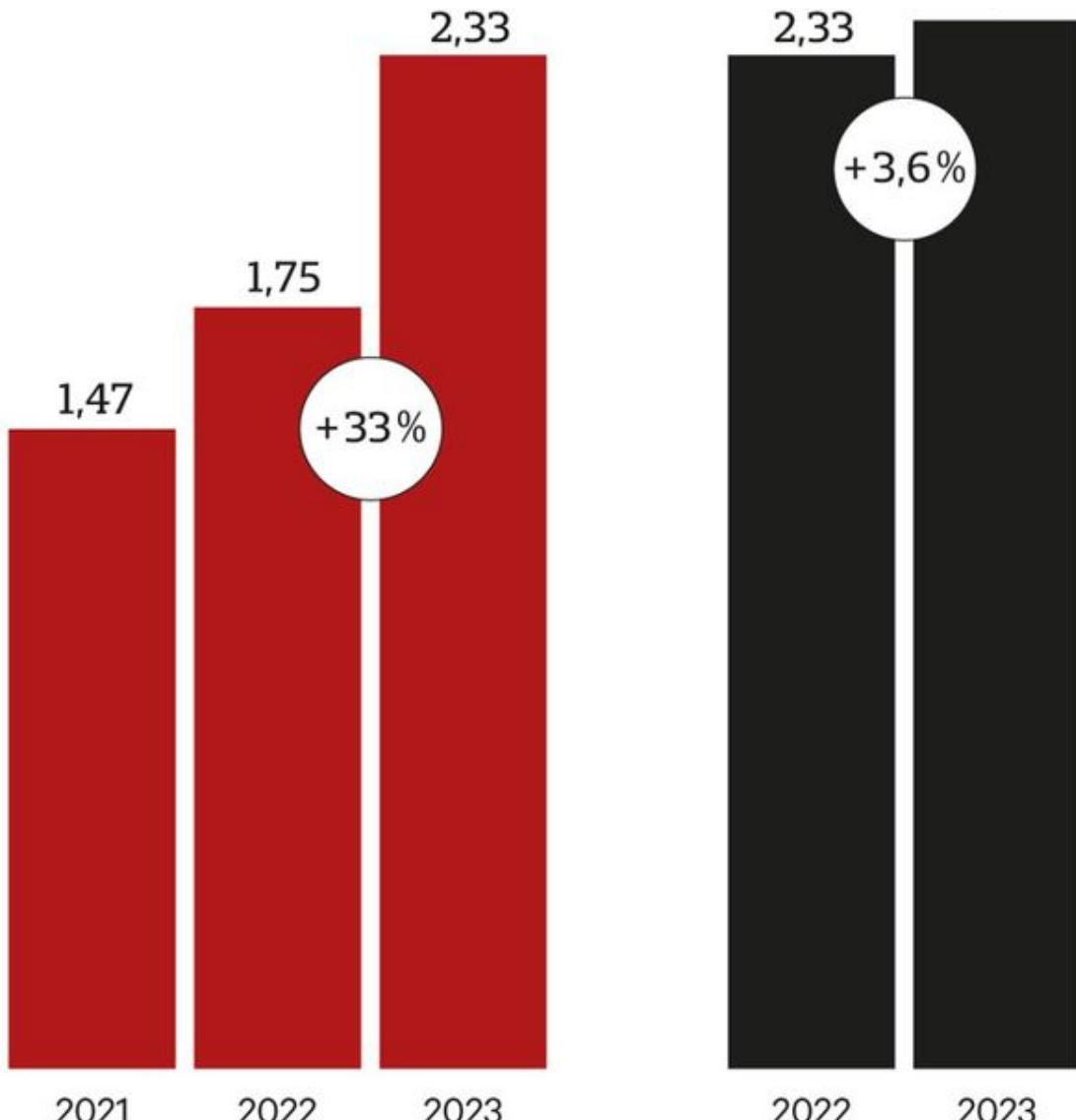
Les achats des grands comptes auprès des start-up ont été portés par le secteur public

En milliards d'euros

Achats du secteur public

Achats du secteur privé
(grands groupes)

2,41



« LES ECHOS » / SOURCE : RAPPORT DE L'OBSERVATOIRE DES RELATIONS ENTRE START-UP ET GRANDS COMPTES

The purchases of major accounts from start-ups have been carried by the public sector. (Les Echos)

On the private sector side, the increase is more moderate (+3.6%), with an average amount of 60 million euros spent on start-ups out of the 39 large companies surveyed. Small shares, certainly, but “multi-million contracts”, insists Pierre Pelouzet.

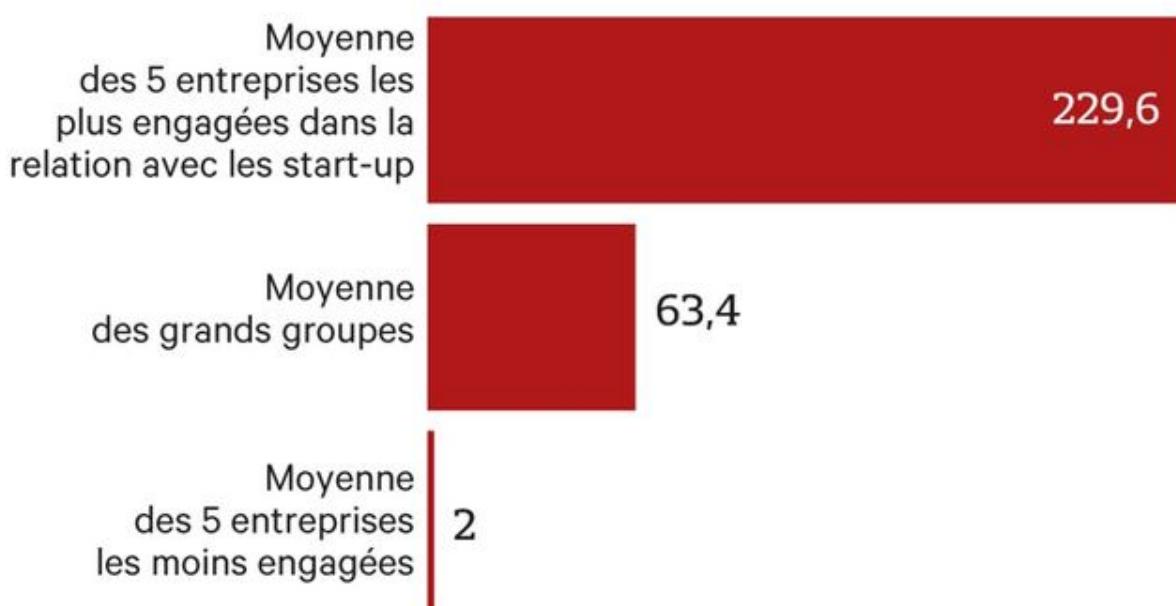
The report reveals that 65% of start-ups (335 surveyed in total) are already engaged with major accounts, proof of a solid dynamic (compared to 48% in the previous edition). To note, "innovative purchasing" is identified as a decisive lever to change scale for both established companies and start-ups.

Untapped potential and persistent obstacles

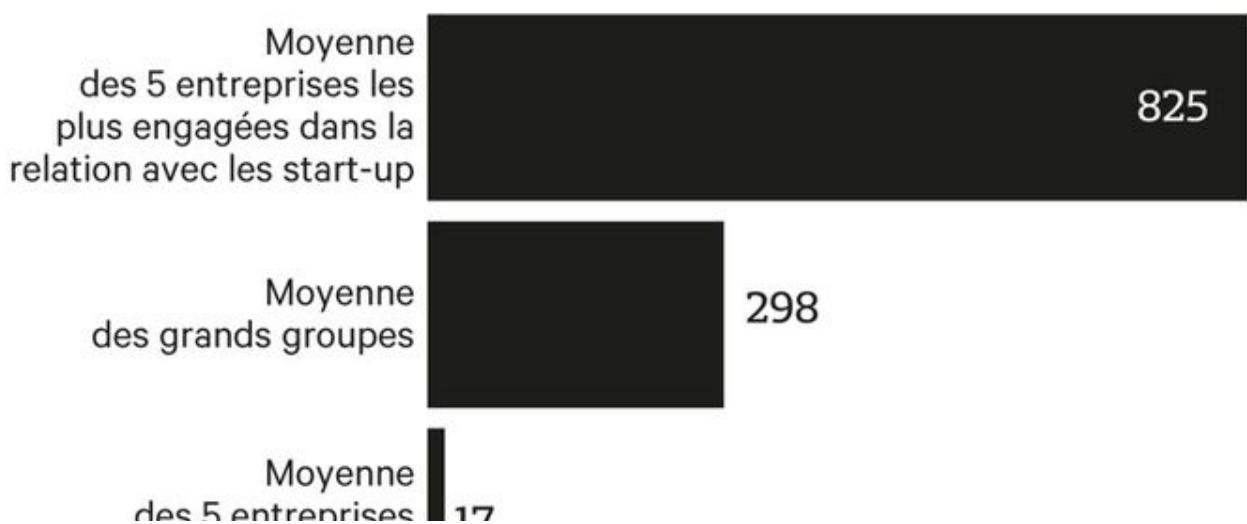
Nevertheless, significant margins of progress remain, particularly for the public sector. Beyond the big accounts, a reservoir of opportunities also opens with SMEs, SMEs and mid-caps, facing economic tensions and in search of solutions for their digital transformation.

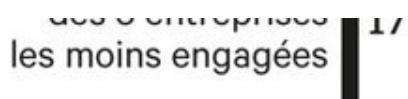
Une grande disparité entre les acteurs

Montant moyen d'achats aux start-up, en millions d'euros



Nombre de startup par grands comptes





« LES ECHOS » / SOURCE : RAPPORT DE L'OBSERVATOIRE DES RELATIONS ENTRE START-UP ET GRANDS COMPTES

The private order encompasses a great disparity of actors, with "a large gap on the amounts of purchases", emphasizes Pierre Pelouzet (.Les Echos)

Structural obstacles, already identified in the previous edition, persist: long decision-making cycles (about 4.5 months for a first contact, 8 for a contract), lack of readability of the processes and imperfect knowledge of the offers are all obstacles that start-ups still have to overcome.

"We note that the time perceived as excessively long for start-ups is considered standard, on the big account side," comments Pierre Pelouzet. Before adding: "These are not insurmountable barriers, we have a lot of room for maneuver! »

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To try to remedy this, the company mediator proposes six good practices aimed at streamlining the relationship between start-ups and major accounts, such as the generalization of a start-up referent (a "key role", underlines Pierre Pelouzet) and the clarification of innovation needs and adaptation of contractual frameworks. On the start-up side, it is a question of strengthening trust, increasing visibility and proposing modes of collaboration to invent "on an equal footing", points out Pierre Pelouzet.

One report, three actions

This report sounds like a call for collective mobilization to accompany the growth of the ecosystem at a time when digital sovereignty is no longer taboo.

By following these recommendations, the government program "I choose French Tech"

(more than 700 member companies) announces three new concrete actions. First, the creation of a network of ambassadors in the ministries (in the manner of the "M and M ^{me} start-up" of major groups) to encourage public procurement from start-ups.

Then, two major players, Renault and La Poste, join the program, committing, with 12 other major groups, to devote one billion euros to the start-ups and scale-up of French Tech by 2027. Finally, the program also opens up to innovative SMEs (from four verticals: AI, cybersecurity, office suite and cloud) and aims to support the expansion of French start-ups in European markets, relying in particular on the network of French Tech communities internationally.

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