

## THE CHALLENGE: TO REDUCE FRANCE'S DIGITAL DIVIDE



### in a village tucked away in the forest ...

Not so long ago, in a village tucked away in the forest, lived André, one of the left-behinds of the digital economy. For André lived in a part of France with no internet access: a digital black spot as they say - no network, not even a bar.

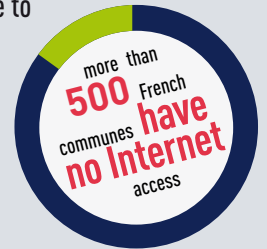


Indeed without the internet, the village was unable to attract new residents and many locals had been forced to move to the city. And it was the same story for businesses: unable to make the change to digital, they too were moving away.

So what can be done to provide the services needed: telehealth and secure contactless payments, for instance?

And what can be done to halt the desertification of rural areas and to bridge the digital divide?

And lastly, what can be done to ensure that Andre and his village do not feel left behind in this digital divide?



## THE GOAL: TO HELP SHRINK THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

SUEZ Consulting's teams, which branched out into this sector around 10 years ago, were among the first to address this issue as Engineer, and over time have positioned themselves as telecom experts.

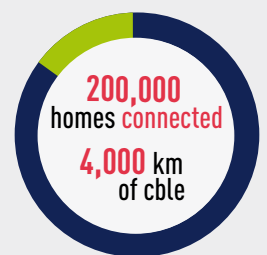


Today our teams help local authorities roll out their fibre networks. More generally, the challenge is to take just 10 years to do with Fibre to the Home what it took 30 years to do with the electricity grid. To rise to that challenge, we need to be at the heart of the rollout process and be a real driving force behind our clients' projects.

## THE SOLUTION

Our teams design optical fibre networks and help operators and local authorities manage the rollout process and oversee the maintenance work.

To date, we have helped bring superfast broadband to more than 200,000 homes, with the installation of 4,000 km of cable and 100,000 cabinets. We have also provided services to more than 10 départements of France and above all enabled hundreds of businesses to survive in rural areas and dozens of rural communities to attract businesses to their area.



## DID YOU KNOW?

- More than 500 French communes are located in internet black spots (places with no internet access).
- There are two Frances: one that is home to cities of 10,000 plus people where 95% of the population have internet access; and one populated by villages of fewer than 1,000 people where that percentage drops to 69%.
- According to consumer watchdog URC-Que Choisir, 6.8 million people in France lack even "minimum-quality internet access".

