

Investing seriously in health strategy with AI as high priority

France is at the forefront of AI in Europe and actively seeking international cooperation. As early as March 2018, President Macron set out his plan to invest €1.5 billion in AI over the following 5 years, highlighting health as a priority area. A strategy to transform the healthcare system was also launched, Ma Santé 2022, with a €3.24 billion budget, of which €500 million for the digital transition.

The form the transition will take was given further shape with the launch in 2019 of the roadmap for digitalization in health. Since then, the Covid-19 crisis has demonstrated all-too-clearly the importance of digital tech solutions such as AI. Which is why in 2020 the government launched the Ségur de Santé, a major consultation process to examine the future of health services in France in the aftermath of the pandemic, which saw €2 billion dedicated to digitalizing the healthcare system.

Data-driven healthcare

In December 2019, the Health Data Hub was launched to foster the development of AI projects and help improve quality of care. The hub will bring together all French health data sources and make the data available for researchers, patient associations, institutes, startups and other health sector stakeholders. The strategy is to leverage existing initiatives and use local platforms to create this national data infrastructure. The data is hosted by a cloud provided by Microsoft.

AI Institutes

In the implementation of Macron's strategy, four interdisciplinary AI institutes were set up to arrange AI courses and research: MIAI (Grenoble), 3IA Côte d'Azur (Nice), PRAIRIE (Paris Artificial Intelligence Research Institute) and ANITI (Toulouse). The first three have a particular focus on health.

Together the institutes will receive €100 million over 4 years, the business community matching public

investment euro for euro. PPPs are seen as key. At PRAIRIE, for example, the National Centre of Scientific Research, Inria and the PSL University have joined forces with private companies such as Amazon, NAVER LABS, Google, Microsoft and Nokia Bell Labs.

AI in the healthcare ecosystem

France has a vibrant AI ecosystem, from fundamental research to startups and scale-ups. In response to Macron's strategy, several major corporates, including Philips, have now located their AI R&D center in Paris. And numerous healthcare providers are actively developing AI, a good example being Institut Curie, a cancer research institute that has four projects on big data and AI.

AI Mission

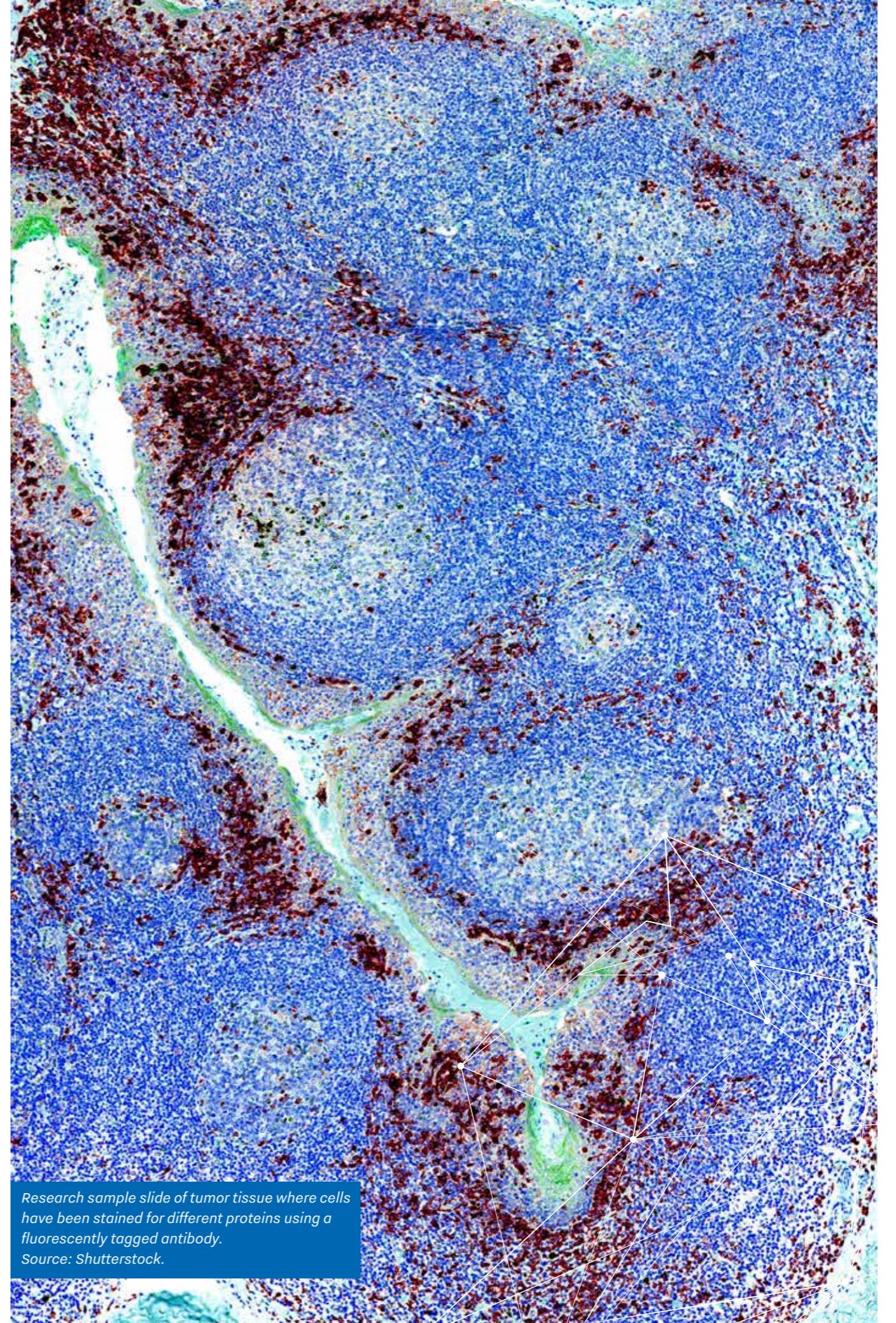
The NIN has been working on AI & health since 2018¹. Examples of activities include:

- The Erasmus-Descartes AI conference in 2018, with a special workshop on health;
- The startup mission to the AI for Health Fair in October 2019;
- In January 2021, State Secretary Mona Keijzer will lead a virtual AI mission organized with the NL AI Coalition, with Health as one of the priority themes;
- An innovation mission on AI & Health to France is planned for 2021;
- The Netherlands intends to join the Global Partnership for AI (GPAI), an initiative of France and Canada.

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¹ For more information, see our sector study [Digitalisation of the Life Sciences and Health Sector France](#) or our blog <https://nost-france.org/>.



Research sample slide of tumor tissue where cells have been stained for different proteins using a fluorescently tagged antibody. Source: Shutterstock.

