

Press release

## Start of the application period for SMEs: CSEM supports digitalization projects with CHF 100,000 of technical support

**Neuchâtel, June 8, 2022 – CSEM launches the fifth edition of its "CSEM Digital Journey" competition, which has been explicitly developed for Swiss SMEs. In doing so, the innovation center will support a company trying to realize its digital project. CSEM's specialists will offer technological support worth CHF 100,000. Applications can be submitted from June 13 until September 5, 2022. The winners will be announced on November 3, 2022, as part of CSEM's Business Day.**

CSEM has supported the digitalization of Swiss SMEs through its "Digital Journey" competition since 2018. The competition provides companies with fewer than 250 employees with an opportunity to access CSEM's technological expertise to implement an important digitalization project. *"To make further advancements in the digital world, the economy needs networked, miniaturized, autonomous, and intelligent systems that simultaneously use less energy,"* explains Bahaa Roustom, (acting) Head of Marketing & Business Development and President of the Jury. *"Based on many years of experience, for example in micro-technology, CSEM has the required expertise for the development of such systems."*

*"We provide various technologies for SMEs,"* explains Alexandre Pauchard, CEO of CSEM. *"These include machine learning for industrial applications, health platforms, additive manufacturing techniques, wireless networking for the Internet of Things (IoT), as well as networked and intelligent laboratory solutions, to name just a few."*

Last year, CSEM awarded the prize to Digitel, a company specializing in refrigeration systems based in Cugy (Switzerland), as well as to the national sugar and salt producer, Swiss Sugar and Swiss Saltworks, who submitted a joint application. Both projects are presented briefly below by way of illustration.

### Artificial intelligence for predicting downtimes

Swiss Sugar (Schweizer Zucker), Switzerland's main sugar supplier, employs around 250 members of staff in its plants in Frauenfeld and Aarberg, where approximately 10,000 tons of sugar beet are processed per plant per day during the harvesting season. Swiss Saltworks (Schweizer Salinen) extracts, stores, and distributes up to 600,000 tons of salt a year and, with its three saltworks in Schweizerhalle, Riburg, and Bex, ensures the whole of Switzerland is supplied with salt. With the help of CSEM, both SMEs now want to get involved in a common challenge: The use of artificial intelligence to predict downtimes in their industrial pumps in which different types of fluids circulate – for example, Swiss Sugar owns more than 150 pumps over a total of 50 km of pipes. At present, the state of the pumps is not proactively monitored, which prevents the early detection of defects. This means that there is a delay in detecting weaknesses, which can lead to costly downtimes. With a prospective analysis, defects could be detected in good time, processes optimized, and energy saved.

### Reducing the energy consumption of refrigerator systems by 5–10%

Founded in 1989, Digitel SA specializes in the development and marketing of solutions for the regulation and remote operation of refrigeration systems for foodstuff wholesalers, the hotel trade, and industry. Such systems are extremely energy-intensive. In Switzerland, industry, supermarkets, and service companies alone consume around 11,000 GWh of electricity, which equates to a seventh of the total electricity consumption of Switzerland. Bearing this fact in mind, Digitel has now developed an initial solution with which excessive electricity consumption can be detected. Together with CSEM, the

company now wants to use artificial intelligence to bring a comprehensive energy efficiency solution to the market. The aim is to give end-users a tool with which to continually measure the energy consumption of a plant park and detect and report anomalies and the causes thereof so that the energy balance can be optimized. This solution could be implemented very soon at the Digital plants already in use and achieve energy savings of between 5 and 10%.

SMEs wishing to participate in the CSEM Digital Journey can submit their application **by 13th September 2022**. Five finalists will be selected in October and the winners will be announced in November at CSEM's Business Day. Application for the competition: [CSEM Digital Journey](#)

### The jury:

- President: Bahaa Roustom, (Acting) Head of Marketing & Business Development
- Silvio Bonaccio, ETHZ, overall management ETH transfer
- Nicolas Bürer, former CEO Digital Switzerland
- Ursula Oesterle, EPFL, Vice President for Innovation
- Raphaël Rollier, Federal Office of Topography Swisstopo, Head of Innovation and Product Management
- Robert Rudolph, Swissmem, Member of the Executive Board, Head of Digitalization and Innovation Division
- Christian Wasserfallen, National Councillor

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### CSEM – Facing the challenges of our time

CSEM is an internationally recognized Swiss innovation center developing disruptive technologies with a high societal impact, which it then transfers to industry. A public-private organization, its mission is to support the innovation activity of Swiss companies and strengthen the economy. CSEM is active in the domains of precision manufacturing, digitalization, and sustainable energy. Daily, CSEM's 550 employees from 44 countries collaborate with leading universities, research institutes, and industrial partners. Headquartered in Neuchâtel, CSEM also has sites in the cantons of Basel, Bern, Obwalden, Zurich, and the Grisons. [www.csem.ch](http://www.csem.ch)

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