

BONJOUR

STARTUP

MONTRÉAL

2019 EDITION

STATE OF THE MONTREAL STARTUP ECOSYSTEM

JULY 2019



SUMMARY

Following the success of the State of the Montreal Startup Ecosystem event in Montreal in 2018, the Bonjour Startup Montréal team invited members of the startup community to reflect on our ecosystem's future for a 2nd edition, held during Startupfest 2019. Two themes were discussed this year: local connections and international connectivity. Thanks to this event, Bonjour Startup Montréal will be able to put in place various strategies to better position Montreal as one of the world's top ecosystems.

[Click here for an overview of the 2018 edition.](#) (only in french) 

■ FOLLOW-UP ON CERTAIN ISSUES RAISED IN 2018

As part of the 2018 edition of the State of the Ecosystem panel, we identified several actions needed to improve the performance of our ecosystem. A year later, more than a dozen of these actions have been successfully led or are in the process of being fulfilled.

For example, on the aspect of international connectivity, Bonjour Startup Montréal has led various actions to better position Montreal globally, among which it has hosted several foreign delegations since January and organized the deployment of a 150-member delegation to Collision, held in Toronto. The organization has also taken part in several events to build links with other ecosystems worldwide, including VivaTech in Paris with the delegation of the Ville de Montréal, the Web Summit in Lisbon and The Next Web in Amsterdam.

Finally, as an example for local connectivity, Bonjour Startup Montréal has worked with various key actors within the ecosystem to build bridges for innovation between startups and large companies. Those actors include Centech, which is developing significant links between its startups and major businesses like Thales, and OSMO, which has implemented open innovation programs, including with L'Oréal.



INTRODUCTION

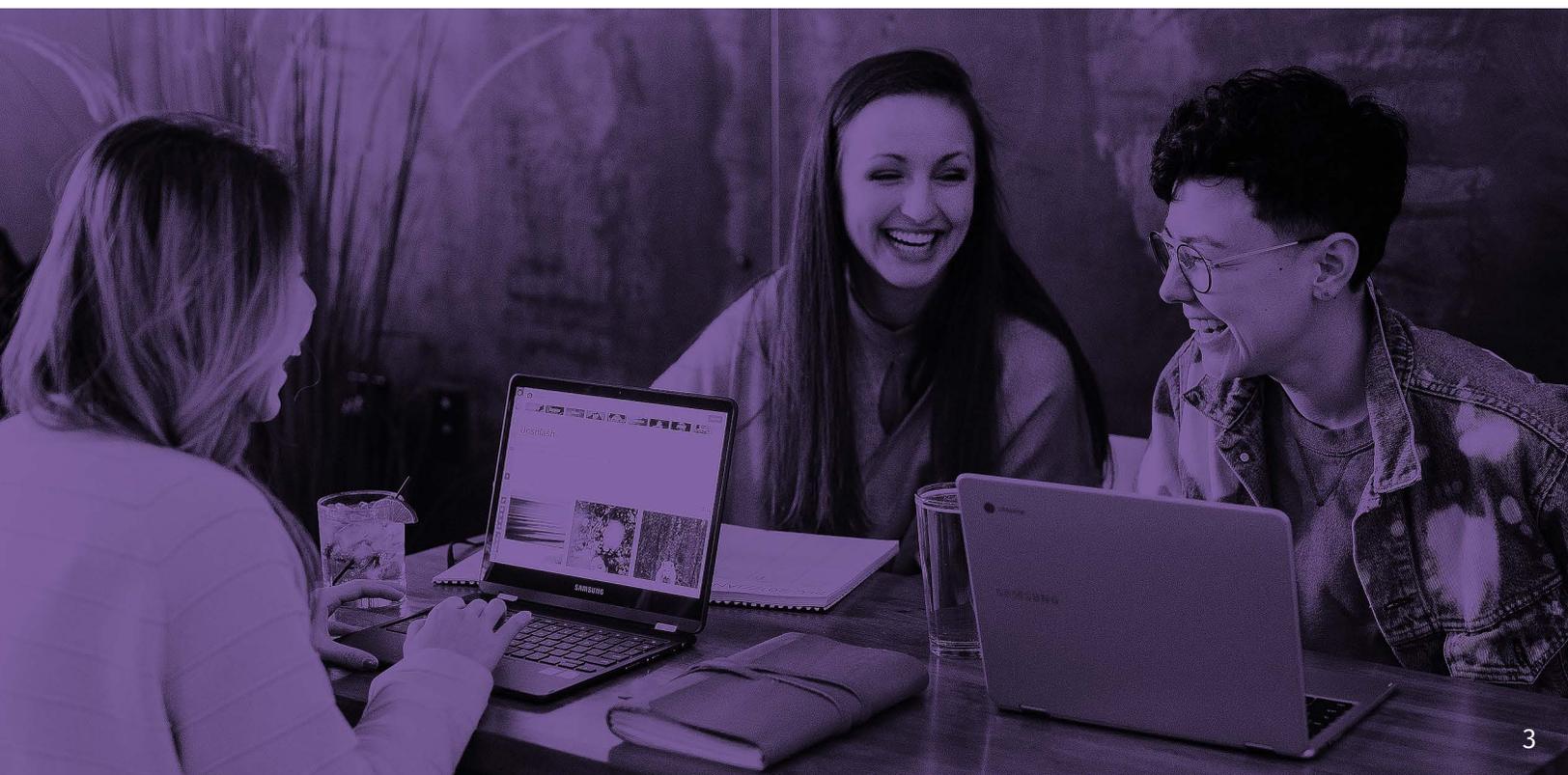
Entrepreneurship – and in particular startups – is now recognized as a key component of the city’s economic and social growth. In the last few years, major investments have been announced by the government, including towards the Scale.AI supercluster, the PME Montréal organization and various startup support organizations. On the other hand, in a context of globalization, where mobility is an increasingly popular trend, we face several major challenges when competing with ecosystems like those of London, Stockholm or Tel Aviv.

It takes a whole village to help build a startup that will eventually become an established company, with a potential to support Montreal in shining internationally. The success of our ecosystem depends on the will of all actors to collaborate for the benefit of our startups and our economy as a whole.

“ YOU (STARTUPS) ARE THE LIFEBLOOD OF OUR ECOSYSTEM, AND THROUGH YOUR DAILY ACTIONS, YOU CONTRIBUTE TO QUEBEC’S ECONOMY. ”

– Daniel Gagné

General Director of Business and Entrepreneurship Services, Ministère de l’Économie et de l’Innovation du Québec (MEI)



FINDINGS

Montreal went from the 44th place in 2018 to the 34th position in 2019 in Startup Genome's annual *Global Startup Ecosystem Report* on the world's best startup ecosystems. Montreal can bet on various aspects of its unique identity order to reinforce its long-term competitiveness: the low cost of living, its Artificial Intelligence expertise, and a strong growth in the field of robotics and manufacturing 4.0.

" (OUR SUCCESS) RELIES ON THE CONVERGENCE OF ALL THE ACTORS OF THE ENVIRONMENT TO FURTHER THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR ECONOMY. "

– Véronique Doucet

Director of the Economic Development
Department, Ville de Montréal

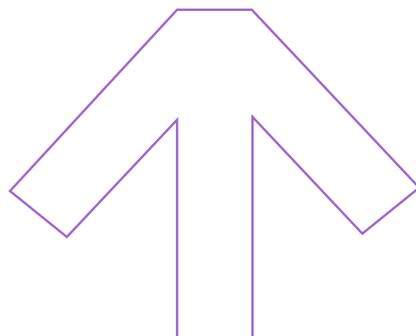
However, several other findings emerge from the most recent Startup Genome study published in May 2019. Montreal lags behind when it comes to funding available for early-stage startups, its ability to connect with the international scene and the local connectedness.

By developing specific strategies to target those aspects, Montreal will be able to improve its situation on an international scale, and offer better support for the development of its startups.

" WE ARE BUILDING THE ENGINE OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND JOB CREATION FOR OUR COMMUNITY, OUR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN. "

– JF Gauthier

Founder & CEO, Startup Genome



PANEL 1: INTERNATIONAL CONNECTEDNESS

Panelists

- David Furlong, Senior VP, Venture Capital and Blockchain, National Bank of Canada
- Jean-François Marcoux, Partner, WhiteStar
- Samer Saab, CEO, eXplorance
- Damien Silès, Executive Director, Quartier de l'Innovation
- *Anne Martel, cco-founder, Element AI - was unable to attend the panel for reasons beyond our control

Led by Sylvain Carle, Associate, Real Ventures

According to Startup Genome, "international connectedness" is defined as follows:

How many local startups are connected to the global fabric of knowledge, quantified through the number of relationships and local meetings with founders from top global ecosystems.

The discussion was focused on the measures to be implemented to better support startups in the development of their international network.

Ideas Put Forward by the Panel

- Facilitate the hiring of senior talent with international experience for our startups and scale-ups.
- Get a better understanding of tools like the startup visas created by Amsterdam and Estonia to possibly attract more talent to Montreal and Quebec.
- We must mobilize resources with an international network and a desire to share their contacts for the benefit of our startups.
- It is up to us, as investors or entrepreneurs, to go abroad and promote Montreal's ecosystem.
- Connectivity happens through a constant PR effort! Despite our successes, we are too modest, and we have a hard time selling what we have and can do.
- We need to promote our top startups locally and internationally.
- Startups must be given a space to experiment with their projects.
- We must harmonize our support programs to better accompany our entrepreneurs.

**" IF YOU WANT GREAT IMPACT, YOU
NEED GREAT RESOURCES."**

— Sylvain Carle
Associate, Real Ventures



PANEL 2: LOCAL CONNECTEDNESS

Panelists

- Francis Baillet, VP Corporate Affairs, Ubisoft
- Noor El Bawab, Director of Programs, Zú
- Éléonore Jarry-Ferron, Associate, Brightspark Ventures, and Co-Founder, Front Row Ventures
- Kim Furlong, CEO, Canada's Venture Capital & Private Equity Association (CVCA)
- Raff Paquin, Data & Commerce, Shopify

Led by Liette Lamonde, Executive Director, Montréal inc. and Co-Founder, Bonjour Startup Montréal

According to Startup Genome, "local connectedness" is defined as follows:

How much support startups receive locally (measured as founders-helping-founders, as well as investors and experts helping startups). Meaningful local relationships (among founders, inventors, and experts), and collisions (number and density of local tech events).

The discussion during this panel was focused on the need for the Montreal ecosystem to support its startups in maximizing their local connectedness.

Ideas Put Forward by the Panel

- By 2020, there will be 220,000 unfilled jobs in startups across Canada.
- Students studying in Montreal should be encouraged to spend 3 to 6 months in local startups in internship programs (e.g. COOP programs). They are more likely to work here and not move elsewhere following the end of their studies if they are already connected to members of our ecosystem.
- We need to encourage mentoring for promising talents who have little or no experience.
- Peer-to-peer (P2P) networks must be developed to encourage the personal and professional development of employees and founders of startups.
- We must cultivate the habit to coach one another. Share your successes and failures with others!
- Links must be created between Canada's startup ecosystems. We have a lot to learn and gain by being more connected to one another.

" WE WANT PEOPLE TO START COMPANIES, AND WE WANT THEM TO START THEM HERE. ON THE OTHER HAND, WE ARE NOT ABLE TO SUPPORT THEM WHEN THEY ARE GROWING AND ARE LOOKING FOR SPECIALIZED TALENT. "

– Éléonore Jarry-Ferron

Associate, Brightspark Ventures, and
Co-Founder, Front Row Ventures

- We need to connect innovation ecosystems that are not necessarily active in the technology field (cultural, social impact, etc.).
- When AI remains in its own silo, it does not benefit anyone.
- We must demonstrate a multidisciplinary approach.
- As an ecosystem, we have the responsibility to encourage large companies to invest in our startups, for example by developing more open innovation programs to connect both worlds.

" FOUNDERS DO NOT HAVE THE LUXURY OF LEAVING THEIR COMPANY TO SEEK EXPERIENCE ELSEWHERE. "

– Raff Paquin

Data & Commerce, Shopify



CONCLUSION

The issues outlined above are considered as major opportunities to better position our ecosystem in Startup Genome's Top 20 in the upcoming years.

■ **BONJOUR STARTUP MONTRÉAL'S COMMITMENT FOLLOWING THE EVENT**

Over the upcoming months, Bonjour Startup Montréal is committed to implementing various initiatives to meet the needs voiced out by stakeholders during this event, including:

- Foster peer learning.
- Represent our ecosystem internationally (its successes, its startups).
- Create and nurture our links with other ecosystems to learn from their best practices and discuss avenues of collaboration.
- Working on our ecosystem's PR efforts: implement concrete communication efforts, a strong media outreach plan, etc.
- Facilitate collaboration between different domains represented in the Montreal startup ecosystem (cultural, social, environmental, technological, etc.).

■ **HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT BONJOUR STARTUP MONTRÉAL'S MISSION?**

- Follow Bonjour Startup Montréal on social media ([Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#)).
- Share publications, initiatives and opportunities offered by Bonjour Startup Montréal.
- Use the #bonjourstartup hashtag in your publications to ensure visibility to the Montreal startup community.
- Do you want to participate in any of the current or future initiatives? [Contact us](#).

THANKS!

A warm thank you to the panelists and participants involved in this event. Thank you to the Ministère de l'Économie et de l'Innovation du Québec, the Ville de Montréal, OSMO and Startup Genome for their valuable input.

Finally, thank you to everyone who attended the 2019 edition of the State of the Montreal Startup Ecosystem and contributed to the success of this event.

Written By

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- Charlotte Blouin-Arbour, Director of communications, Bonjour Startup Montréal



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