The New Technology Venture Accelerator (NETVA) initiative wrapped up last week (October 19-23) after another successful program, organized by the Office of Science and Technology at the French Consulate in Boston, Massachusetts.

NETVA was launched in 2011 to help facilitate French startups expanding or developing their businesses in the United States as well as familiarizing the winning entrepreneurs with the Boston startup culture and resources. The program offers each winning startup a personal mentor who also assists in arranging initial meetings with potential investors, partners, academics, and relevant industry contacts.

This year’s winners were **EHTech**, a startup that develops a plumbing system to reduce heating costs by recapturing the heat from used shower water; **ideXlab**, a platform and service that connects businesses with hard-to-find specialists to better facilitate R&D; and finally **Algama**, a startup that researches and develops ways to use microalgae as a substitute in food to address expected global food shortages.

The week was filled with informative workshops led by a number of experts from the field; one-on-one meetings between American companies, potential investors, lawyers, and the startups; as well as an intense pitch battle, organized in partnership with **Marie Landel**, at the renowned **MassChallenge**.

After first meeting this summer in Paris with American startup expert, **Barry Horwitz**, the entrepreneurs reconvened in Cambridge along with representatives from a French bank and Horwitz’s American business veteran colleague, Paul Levine. The workshop was focused on pitch presentations followed by critiques and feedback from the room. The startups introduced their French businesses to the Americans receiving vital information about presenting to American audiences in order to best prepare them for the MassChallenge pitch battle.
Monday night, after meetings with lawyers from Pepper Hamilton in the afternoon, the Consul of Boston, Mr. Valérie Freland, hosted a welcoming cocktail at the Résidence de France in Cambridge. The event thanked the French-American business startup community for their work in organizing NETVA and contributing to the everyday cooperation between the two nations, highlighting the remarkable work happening in Boston. Representatives from Business France, the New England Foreign Trade Advisors, the [French-American Chamber of Commerce of New England – http://faccne.org/], and the newly created French Tech Hub based in Boston, were in attendance, presenting themselves to and networking with the NETVA winners.

Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday morning consisted of more strategy workshops while the afternoons were dedicated to one-on-one meetings with potential American partners, investors, and customers. The workshops consisted of business modeling, sales and marketing, and financing new ventures sessions to familiarize the entrepreneurs with American practices. Through presentations from more top American specialists, the NETVA winners learned about cultural and strategic business differences between France and America. Differences were noted such as hiring practices, less risk averse and less hierarchical American markets, and legal matters in the event that these startups opened branches or began selling in the United States. A panel of American investors on Wednesday gave feedback to the startups as well, giving these entrepreneurs the chance to understand how American VC’s, view their businesses and the feasibility of expansion on the continent.

The Pitch Battle on Thursday night allowed the companies to give 1 minute pitches followed by a 3 minute Q&A for the finalists. The pitch battle on Thursday night was the introduction of these companies to the American startup world, many for the first time, allowing the companies to highlight their innovation and to network with and compete against their American peers. The entrepreneurs met dozens of investors, hundreds of fellow entrepreneurs, American business leaders, and countless conference attendees looking to “get-in on the next big thing”.

The week came to a close on Friday with final lunches with our French-American business community as well as a closing dinner to thank the entrepreneurs for their participation in the program. Farewells were bid and a door for continuing conversation and collaboration with these startups was opened. Read their testimonies here.