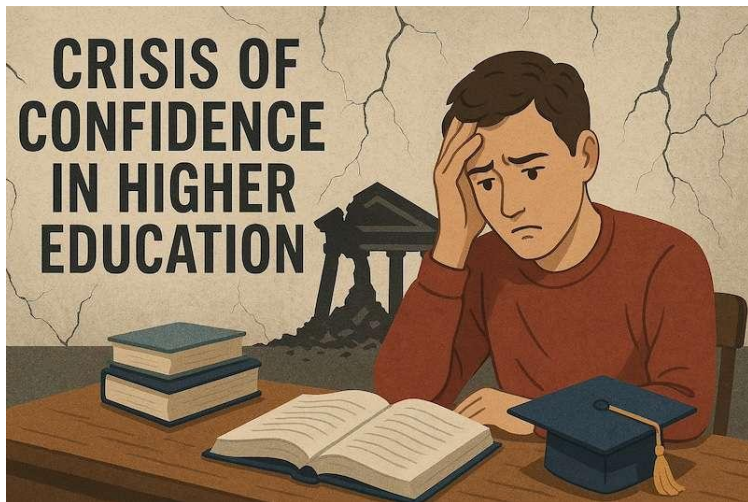


Strategic Compass for Troubled Times: Rebuilding Trust and Impact through Regional Ecosystems

Christophe Clément, Rector, University of Reims Champagne-Ardenne



- ★ **The Challenge:** Restoring societal trust in science.
- ★ **The Method:** The Research-Education-Innovation Continuum
- ★ **A solution:** The territorial anchoring

Diagnosis - The Crisis of Trust and the Role of Universities (1)

<https://www.lunion.fr/id831212/article/2026-10-01/timide-mouvement-des-etudiants-reims>



★ *The Challenge: Polarisation, misinformation, and a growing disconnect between science and society.*

- From growth to decline: demography, budget, public support
- Lower trust in universities: polarisation, misinformation and a growing disconnect between science and society
- Geopolitical shifts and tensions
- Technology: AI – big tech and data monopolies
- Open science, academic freedom and institutional autonomy endangered
- Institutional and internal coherence – **STEM – SSH nexus** (2 cultures) & research-teaching nexus /resistance to change, time management, integrating different missions
- Preparing student to a post-VUCA world: **In a post-VUCA environment, stability has eroded.** Economic disruption, geopolitical shifts and rapid advances in artificial intelligence are changing conditions faster than traditional planning models can absorb.

Diagnosis - The Crisis of Trust and the Role of Universities (2)



★ ***The Responsibility:*** *Universities as the ultimate safeguards of democratic resilience and social cohesion. Making the dialogue.*

★ ***The Paradigm Shift:*** *Moving from isolated institutions to "Cross-Sectoral Hubs."*

Our ambition must be clear: **not merely to respond to the polycrisis, but to empower our societies to navigate it** and build a more resilient, democratic, and sustainable future.

Training Tomorrow's Innovators to Transform Territories

- ★ **Beyond Knowledge:** Actively training students to become innovators and entrepreneurs.
- ★ **Holistic Mindset:** Preparing students to build sustainable solutions for territorial needs.
- ★ **Concrete Action:** The BioEco Camp Hackathon (leveraging INVEST Alliance).



Build & Preserve the Continuum Research, Education, Innovation as a solution



3 core axis of action

- Research
- Graduate School EXEBIO
- Innovation & partnership

 **10**
years

 **13**
Partners

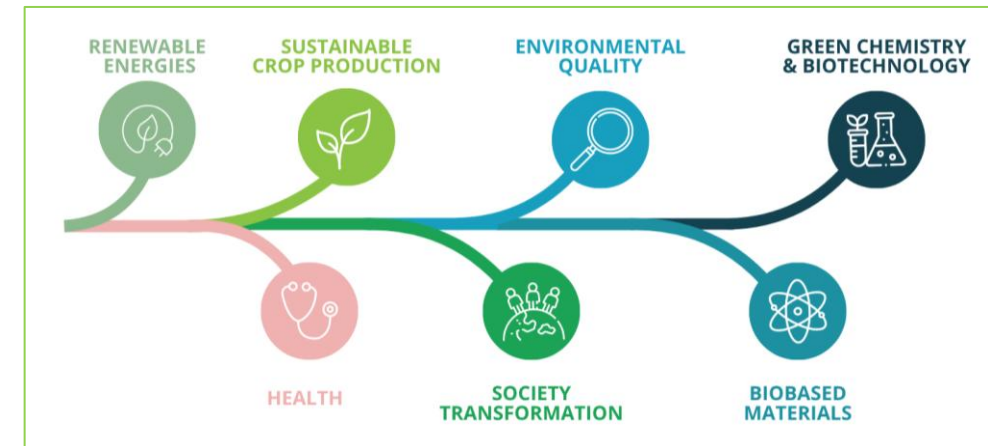
€ **46.6 M€**
Total budget

 **≈ 300 pers.**
Academic community

€ **21.7 M€**
state funding

 **1**
Institute

- ★ **Breaking Silos:** A seamless flow from fundamental research to sustainable innovation.
- ★ **The URCA Model:** The **EXEBIO Institute**
- ★ **Multi-scale Synergy:** Fusing exact, natural, and social sciences.



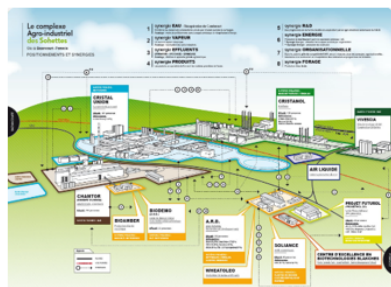
Territorial Anchoring as a Lever

★ **Territorial Symbiosis:** Innovation hubs require a strong regional foundation...

POMACLE-BAZANCOURT BIOREFINERY

A « Local living lab » since 1990

- 10 industries,
- 400 researchers,
- 1300 direct jobs,
- 4 Mt/year wheat/sugarbeet transformed into starch, sugars, ethanol, CO2 capture and fine chemicals
- 1 B€ turnover



**GRAND
REIMS**
COMMUNAUTÉ URBAINE

A BIOECONOMY STRATEGY IN GRAND EST REGION

A **regional priority** to become European leader in bioeconomy by supporting the development of production and transformation of regional resources

Grand Est Region labelled by EU as “European Innovation Valleys”

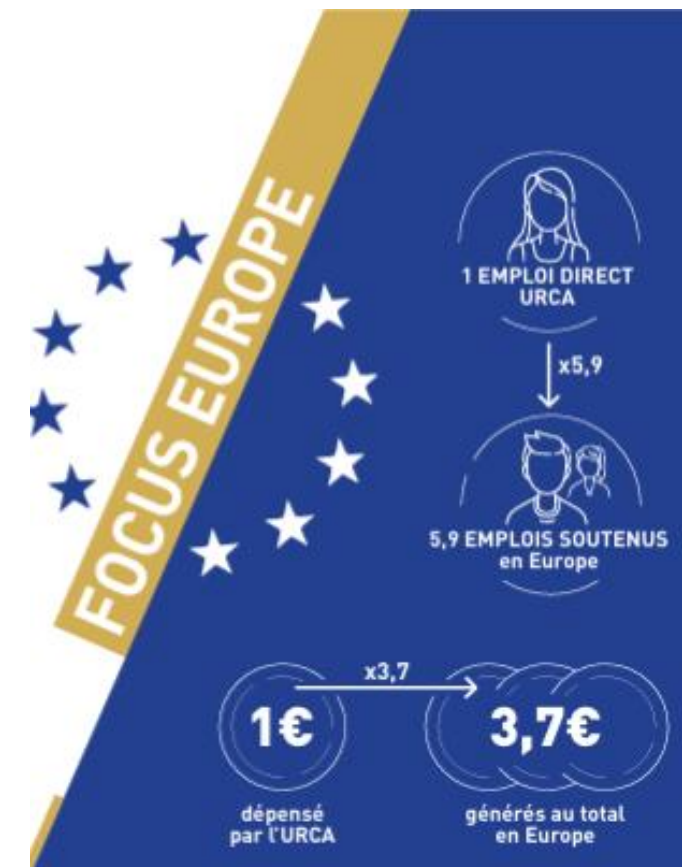


La Région
Grand Est

BIOECONOMY FOR CHANGE (B4C) CLUSTER

A unique network of members operating along the entire value chain of the bioeconomy, from upstream agriculture to the marketing of finished products to make France one of the world's leaders in the use of biomass.

- 500 Partners
- 2 billions € investment
- 350 funded projects



...to generate real changes for Society:

> 20000 employments

> 818M€ GDP

Uniting Our Forces within



★ **Mutual Learning:** Sharing best practices to turn local ideas into European success.

★ **Political Leverage:** Uniting to lobby the European Commission.



★ **The Red Line:** Preserving fundamental research funding (FP10 & ECF independence).

	Commission proposal (current prices)	Commission proposal (2025 prices)	Irish negotiation box (current prices)	Irish negotiation box (2025 prices)
Horizon Europe	€175 billion	€154.8 billion	€158.1 billion	€140 billion
ECF	€275.5 billion	€242.8 billion	€245 billion	€215 billion
Erasmus+	€40.8 billion	€36.18 billion	€39.16 billion	€34.71 billion
Euratom	€9.79 billion	€8.7 billion	€8.75 billion	€7.78 billion