

interview

Three questions for... Manuel Tunon de Lara

The University of Bordeaux Initiative of Excellence (IDEX) project was selected in 2011 under the first Investments for the Future programme (PIA1) managed by ANR. Manuel Tunon de Lara presents the main benefits of the system for his university.

What is the ambition behind your Initiative of Excellence?

The goal is to create a new university model in Bordeaux that meets international standards, is driven by the highest level of research and weaves a new ecosystem of innovation around it. Our strategic plan University 2025 (U25) translates this

ambition into ten priority goals. With major challenges on all sides pushing it towards renewal, the university must play a new role in the region. This is essential to remain competitive in the globalised context of higher education and research, and a duty if we are to continue to play a role in the production of advanced knowledge that can illuminate the future. This

evolution must take place with support from research organisations and partners with a stake in this transformation.

What has this funding from the Investments for the Future programme enabled you to do?

It was crucial in initiating the transformation. In terms of research, we consolidated all our strategic choices with a PIA mechanism (mostly Labex, but also Equipex, cohort, IHU etc.). The first Labex laboratories, evaluated highly in scientific terms, are coming to an end and we are trying to measure their impact on our trajectory in addition to the work done by ANR. We are now taking a new step in the structuring of research with the recent creation of about ten new departments, co-funded by IDEX, focusing on major programmes involving societal challenges. They will drive our research and innovation strategy. Finally, our image studies show that the creation of the University of Bordeaux and its IDEX label have improved the site's attractiveness, including at international level. We need to continue working on our identity, which involves our partners going in the same direction.

What did the final confirmation of IDEX Bordeaux in 2016 change?

We have moved from the management of a project evaluated by an international panel, very well supported by ANR, to the implementation of a strategy by a university that has to live up to its responsibilities. This new approach, perhaps more demanding, requires everyone to sign up to the defined trajectory. The freedom we now have is of course a major asset for the governance of this investment programme. In addition, the four confirmed IDEX at the universities of Bordeaux, Aix-Marseille, Strasbourg and Sorbonne-Université collaborate much more, without competition: we pool whatever we can and try to contribute together to the transformation of higher education, research and innovation in France.



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Manuel Tunon de Lara

President of the University of Bordeaux
and Chair of the Management Board
of IDEX Bordeaux

interview*Three questions for...
Marie-Bénédicte Romond*

Marie-Bénédicte Romond is a professor of bacteriology and virology at the Faculty of Pharmaceutical and Biological Sciences in Lille. She has chaired the Food and Food Systems Evaluation Panel (CE21) for the Generic Call for Proposals (AAPG) since 2017.

By what criteria do the scientific evaluation panels assess the projects they receive?

Scientific quality is the first criterion: we support innovative projects with clear objectives and well-targeted methodologies. But attractive ideas are not enough to be chosen: the concrete organisation of the project and the skills and resources allocated to it are also crucial. Finally, the project's impact is decisive, and especially its socio-economic effects: does it offer innovative solutions; does it respond to society's needs? Research oriented towards food typically has a rapid impact on people's everyday lifestyles.

“*Our training in the rules for evaluating, classifying and selecting projects takes place twice a year.*”

Who are the members of scientific evaluation panels?

They are scientists (researchers, academics) recognised in their area of expertise, even the most recent or interdisciplinary fields. Each one evaluates a portfolio of projects. Panel members have a one-year term, which can be renewed twice. One third of the panel is renewed every year. In this recruitment process, which is one of my responsibilities, I take inspiration from the practices of European scientific evaluation panels I belong to – I try to balance French and European colleagues and ensure parity between men and women.

During the evaluation, what guarantees do the panel chairs offer?

Our training in the rules for evaluating, classifying and selecting projects takes place twice a year. I remind the panel that our mission is to evaluate a project's novelty and the consortium's ability to fulfil its objectives. As the impact factor of publications cannot predict the success of a truly new project, I recommend evaluating the team's potential by analysing their work and their ability to communicate their ideas, in line with the principles of the San Francisco Declaration. I ensure that the project respects the best scientific practice, but also that our evaluation complies with the Agency's Code of Ethics and Scientific Integrity. Members with conflicts of interest do not take part in or even attend sessions evaluating projects to which they have links. Finally, as chair-representative, I take part in the continuous improvement of ANR's evaluation procedures throughout my term of office: I pass on feedback from coordinators and reviewers, including during the launch and mid-process review sessions, to which I contribute.



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Marie-Bénédicte Romond

Scientific Evaluation Panel Chair

interview*Three questions for...
Paul-François Fournier*

ANR and the public investment bank Bpifrance launched a strategic partnership in 2018. Paul-François Fournier, Bpifrance's Executive Director of Innovation, sets out the context and goals of the partnership.

How do you see the role of research in innovation?

We are experiencing a profound change in the dynamics of innovation. The movement of the last ten years, based on the emergence of digital and mobile technology, is reaching maturity – the equipment has been widely adopted and French innovation has been dynamic. In order to extend this wave to new industries, we must now return to the research laboratories to identify and support emerging technologies as early as possible – especially Deep Tech start-ups, which will contribute in all fields to resolving the big challenges of the 21st century, such as health and climate. Bpifrance and ANR are natural partners. ANR funds many research projects with potential for innovation.

“*Bpifrance and ANR are natural partners. ANR funds many research projects with potential for innovation.*”

Paul-François Fournier

Executive Director of Innovation,
Bpifrance

What makes the partnership strategic?

Bpifrance is represented on ANR's Governing Board, and we realised, along with Thierry Damerval, that we had to go further. For France to take advantage of the paradigm shift driven by disruptive innovations, we have to offer a funding continuum, investing equally in very basic research projects and in particularly innovative young start-ups.

We are leading the thought process together in the form of seminars and shared working groups to highlight avenues for collaboration on innovation funding, and we are preparing a Deep Tech plan that will occupy us in the coming years. Everyone benefits from knowing their colleagues better in order to play their own part. Bpifrance will gain a better understanding of which sectors, trends and priorities ANR supports, and how. ANR will be able to identify the needs, logic and priorities of an investor who wants to bring projects to market.

What will the partnership contribute to research and innovation?

It will open new possibilities. Not all research is immediately likely to penetrate the business world, of course. But some research needs new forms of support. A global approach is under way to provide this, including the PACTE law, for example, which makes it easier for researchers to get involved in business.

Bpifrance is convinced that start-ups, innovative young groups of 10 to 30 people, are the ideal tool for transferring technologies and developing practical applications for research due to their agile operation. In 2018, the government commissioned Bpifrance to oversee the SATTs (technology transfer acceleration companies), which smooth the transition between research and enterprise. Our ambition is to double the creation of start-ups arising from academic research. Together, ANR and Bpifrance will enable the most innovative research to take flight.

Sandrine Codis, “Young Researcher” in astrophysics

Three years after obtaining her doctorate, the astrophysicist Sandrine Codis, a CNRS researcher at the Institut d’Astrophysique de Paris, submitted her first research proposal to the **Young Researchers (JCJC)** instrument of the 2018 Generic Call for Proposals. Her project, SPHERES, was selected. Its aim is to model the “cosmic web”, the filaments of gas and dark matter along which galaxies form. The work should help us understand the massive structures of the universe and interpret the images from the European EUCLID space mission, scheduled for 2021, in which France plays an active part. The JCJC funding will give new momentum to the career and work of this graduate of the École Normale Supérieure, who is forging collaborations with researchers of all ages across the world.

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*My laboratory helped me put the administrative part of the application together,” remembers **Sandrine Codis**. “First of all, the funding enabled me to start recruiting a post-doctoral researcher. I was also able to run a workshop in Japan on my research themes, three-quarters-funded by the SPHERES project as planned in my grant application. What’s more, ANR is a springboard: it enables us to carry the responsibility for a project within the scientific community, and perhaps consider applying one day for a large European call for proposals – like the European Research Council, why not!*

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Find out more:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e425mc3fu04&list=PLBGAVVGzrPkE9EB5xj443kKb18iWRKKBq&index=4&t=0s>

The LERAM LabCom, between public and private research

The story of LERAM, the laboratory for the study of the rheology and adhesion of adhesives for medical applications, tells of the long-lasting complementary relationship between a public research team and a mid-sized French company. In 2013, when ANR launched its first **LabCom** call for proposals, the Urgo group was beginning a collaboration with the polymers team at the IPREM mixed research unit (University of Pau and the Pays de l'Adour/CNRS).

The team had research expertise in the creation of polymer materials, particularly for adhesion to skin. Identifying many common areas of interest, the two sides conceived LERAM, which was selected for LabCom 2013 and received a LabCom Consolidation extension in 2018. The agreement between Urgo, CNRS and UPPA was renewed until 2022.

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*LabCom makes it possible to unite two cultures, bringing out new ideas,” explains **Christophe Derail, the LERAM coordinator.** “The spirit of LabCom is to release each partner’s potential. This synergy has generated knowledge, and a patent submitted in 2018 for a technique to measure adhesion that could ultimately be introduced directly to an industrial production line. Urgo is planning to sign an operating licence with our academic sponsors. A new adhesive formulation has also been discovered, which should be patented very soon. The Nouvelle-Aquitaine region is supporting LERAM by co-funding a thesis involving Urgo and LVMH on products that can be used for plasters and cosmetics.*

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The POLAR project, from MRSEI to H2020

The POLAR project (POLice and ARchaeologists against the trade in cultural artefacts) emerged from the CNRS call for proposals for research on terrorist attacks in 2015. Faced with the growth in pillaging and trading in cultural goods, including the “blood artefacts” exported from the Middle East, archaeologists, the police and players in the art market decided to pool their knowledge and skills. The interdisciplinary network’s project was granted an ANR

MRSEI funding in 2018, supporting it to grow transnationally and secure an H2020 funding of about €1.5 million over two years in 2019 under the acronym NETCHER (NETwork and digital platform for Cultural Heritage Enhancing and Rebuilding).

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*ANR’s support for this original network was decisive,” summarises **Patrick Laclémence, coordinator of the POLAR MRSEI project and director of the research centre at France’s National Police College (ENSP)**. ANR helped us identify the best European call for our project. We then received support to consolidate our European consortium involving the police’s central cultural heritage office, ENSP and the Maison de l’Orient et de la Méditerranée.*

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*We then had very little time to set up a huge European programme,” continues **Véronique Chankowski, professor of Greek history at the University of Lyon 2, director of the HiSoMA laboratory until 2018 and coordinator of the NETCHER project**. “Thanks to the MRSEI grant, we were able to bring our disciplines together, draw on the services of a firm specialising in preparing H2020 projects and deploy the network concept on a European scale.*

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