What are the region’s strengths in terms of higher education, research and innovation?
Brittany has a network of establishments spread over some sixty sites, which encourages local provision and maintains a certain territorial balance. The two main sites of Rennes and Brest, which concentrate more than half the student population, are complemented by those of Vannes, Lorient, Saint-Brieuc, Saint-Malo, Quimper, Lannion, etc. With the presence of the main research organisations (CNRS, INRAE, Inria, Inserm, IRD, BRGM, Ifremer), Brittany ranks 6th in France for the number of researchers. According to the latest STRATER consolidated figures, Brittany ranks 4th in France for patent applications. At European level, 269 projects have been funded to the tune of €150m under the Horizon 2020 programme, an increase of 62% on the previous programme, FP7. Brittany is also well positioned in terms of the number of winners of ERC funding, Marie Sklodowska-Curie actions around the COFUND “Bienvenüe”, a European Commission programme that enables us to fund 75 post-doctoral students for 3 years.



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What are the areas of excellence in Breton R&D?
The Rennes cluster is recognised for its expertise in two areas: digital technology,

cyber security and AI on the one hand, and earth sciences, ecology and agro-ecology on the other. The Brest cluster stands out for its marine science and technology ecosystem (Ifremer, UBO, grandes écoles, etc.). The Lannion cluster stands out in the fields of digital technology and photonics, while the Vannes cluster is developing expertise in cyber security and defence. These themes are also reflected in the five university research schools (EUR): Marine Sciences and Technologies in Brest, Cyberschool, Digisport and Creative Approaches to Public Space (CAPS) in Rennes, Lumomat (Light, Molecules, Matter – Molecular Materials for Organic Electronics and Photonics) in association with the University of Angers.

Could you tell us about the main regional funding for public and private research?

In the field of public research, Brittany bases its funding on its priorities. Each year it co-finances 120 doctoral research grants (€5.5m), hosts post-docs (€3m) and allocates €1.5m to various networks, GIS (Marsouin on digital uses), life sciences platforms (Biogenouest, Cancéropôle Grand Ouest) and the Maison des sciences de l'homme en Bretagne (MSHB). The implementation of an ultra high-speed loop to complete the RENATER network, the development of a Digital Campus and a public data centre to house all the data from regional higher education establishments, the development of scientific, technical and industrial culture, support for participative research and educational innovation are also part of the Region's actions. In addition, there is the €400m consolidated CPER 2021-2027, whose higher education component includes energy-efficient renovation of university buildings, development of the accommodation and catering offer, and various infrastructure and research projects. In terms of private research, the Region offers a range of measures to help businesses make the digital, industrial, energy and ecological transitions: calls for collaborative projects to create joint laboratories, support for the development of low-tech, support for sectors (low-carbon automotive, wind power, maritime energy, offshore wind power, space, etc.) and players in the regional innovation ecosystem: SATT Ouest Valorisation, PFTs, technology parks and competitiveness clusters, with which it has signed contracts of objectives and resources.



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How is Brittany supporting the transitions underway?
At its meeting in April 2023, the Regional Council adopted a regional strategy for ecological and social transitions that integrates three plans into a single document: the strategy for economic development, innovation and internationalisation (SRDEII), the Regional Contract for the Development of Vocational Training and Guidance (CPRDFOP) and the regional plan for higher education and research (SRESR). This initiative, the only one of its kind in France, offers a high degree of political coherence, as it takes into account ecological and climate change, the region’s agricultural and industrial sovereignty, and social cohesion and inclusion. All the players in the academic and economic world have been involved in drawing up this strategy, which will henceforth guide the allocation of regional funding. Transitions are also the cross-cutting theme of the Region’s smart specialisation strategy (S3), recognised as a “strong strategy” by the European Commission. A good reason to persevere down this path!