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1. Background and Purpose of the Call

"EXEBIO Excellence Call" is launched for the first time within the framework of EXEBIO, project winner of PIA4 "Excellences sous toutes ses formes" (ExcellencEs) for a period of 10 years. Financially supported by the program "France Relance 2030", this call is open to all the EXEBIO consortium composed of the following members: University of Reims Champagne-Ardenne, Grand Reims, Grand Est region, URD ABI AgroParisTech, Chaire Biotechnologie CentraleSupélec, INRAE¹, CNRS¹, INERIS¹, Pôle B4C, Pôle Qualitropic, TotalEnergies, Atos, L'Union.

The objective of the call is to encourage "Excellence" in emergent and interdisciplinary research projects, the creation of chairs as well as "Excellence" in the development of international and ambitious congresses.

The overall budget of **EXEBIO Excellence Call 2024** is 1,2 M€ with a duration of the projects of 3 years maximum.

The **EXEBIO Excellence Call** includes the 4 following calls:

- ✓ EXEBIO Emergence
- ✓ EXEBIO Interdisciplinarity
- ✓ EXEBIO Excellence Chairs
- ✓ EXEBIO International Congress

All the information related to the call is available at: www.exebio-calls.univ-reims.fr

2. Research themes and disciplines

The research themes and disciplines of the EXEBIO Excellence Call 2024 must relate to bioeconomy, the core identity of EXEBIO, and/or to any fields or areas that the implementation of the bioeconomy also directly influences or will influence in the future. Accordingly, the list provided below is not exhaustive, the call is open to all bioeconomy interconnected disciplines and research themes.

2.1 Research themes

Sustainable crop production, environmental quality, green chemistry and biotechnology, biobased materials, society transformation...

2.2 Disciplines

Biology, chemistry, physics, linguistics, management, sociology, economy, history...

¹ Only concerns laboratories hosted within URCA.

3. Calls description

3.1 EXEBIO EMERGENCE

The objective of the **EXEBIO Emergence Call** is to support project leaders in the development of all types of proposals: proposals with unprecedented objectives or concepts, breakthrough or exploratory proposals, proposals aiming to remove scientific obstacles or proposals to fill-in gaps well known by the community.

This call aims at:

- studying all types of proposals between research laboratories/platforms in the field of the EXEBIO project;
- promoting the development of projects highlighting the expertise, excellence, innovative research of consortium scientists from various fields;
- supporting the emergence of exploratory basic research projects, which may involve risk taking.

Projects may propose the resolution of new questions, theoretical advances or the implementation of new methods. It aims at funding exploratory and disciplinary research projects, still little or not investigated, which can serve as a basis for the construction of more ambitious collective projects (regional, national (ANR) or European (Horizon Europe)).

The duration of the project is one year, it can be extended up to 2 years in the case of co-financing.

Duration of the project:	1 year to 2 years (co-financing if 2 years)
Total amount:	170 k€
The budget allows to finance:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Staff recruitment (Post-doc positions, Internship of Master students, fixed-term employment contracts)✓ No equipment financed✓ Project expenses for labs experiments or organization of workshops (keynote speakers, seminars, discussions)
Composition of the consortium:	Laboratory/platform of the project leader can be the only unit of the consortium

3.2 EXEBIO INTERDISCIPLINARITY

The objective of the **EXEBIO Interdisciplinarity Call²** is to support project leaders in the development of interdisciplinary projects. The call is specifically aimed at genuinely interdisciplinary projects that combine distant disciplines that rarely collaborate

² In accordance with Horizon 2020 definition, interdisciplinarity means "the integration of information, data, techniques, tools, perspectives, concepts or theories from two or more disciplines. Disciplines may be from the natural sciences, technology, engineering, economics, social sciences and humanities."

or that pursue an original research question requiring the exact combination of competencies from these different disciplines.

This call aims at:

- promoting the elaboration of projects highlighting the expertise of URCA's and partners scientists from various domains and supporting initiative projects, which can be exploratory;
- develop interdisciplinary research to respond to major societal and scientific challenges;
- allow researchers to approach their research in a holistic way;
- build new scientific communities and support them on these topics.

It is a question of boosting an incubation dynamic to develop interdisciplinary and/or multisectoral scientific collaborations internal to the URCA and its partners on original scientific issues and structuring. This call is intended as a first springboard for the construction of competitive projects in response to calls for regional, national (ANR) or European (Horizon Europe) projects.

The duration of the project is one year, it can be extended up to 2 years in the case of co-financing.

Duration of the project:	1 year to 2 years (co-financing if 2 years)
Total amount:	228 k€
The budget allows to finance:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Staff recruitment (Post-doc positions, Internship of Master students, fixed-term employment contracts) ✓ No equipment financed ✓ Project expenses for labs experiments or organization of workshops (keynote speakers, seminars, discussions)
Composition of the consortium:	At least 2 laboratories/platforms present in the EXEBIO consortium from different disciplines

3.3 EXEBIO EXCELLENCE CHAIRS

EXEBIO Excellence Chairs Call aims to strengthen the key scientific fields in which the initiative already has significant visibility and to bring out skills and centers of excellence in new fields, and thus contribute to the development of academic excellence. It helps develop scientific potential and visibility, by attracting top-level researchers to cutting-edge themes.

The objective is to welcome researchers of high scientific level whose work has a strong international influence and to strengthen the attractiveness and competitiveness of the university. The projects supported must be part of a perspective of stabilization of the beneficiary of the chair of excellence.

The chair can originate from a single research unit, or cross-units and involve several units, or be the result of an EXEBIO consortium collaboration.

It thus embodies a shared vision of promoting a scientific sector of excellence that merits specific support, or a theme with major short-term application prospects and international influence. This must also be in line with the joint dynamic that EXEBIO is developing with its public and/or private partners.

Each chair will allow to recruit a Lecturer position (2/3 teaching discharge) and will be granted with a PhD fellowship, a 2-years post-doc position and accompanying expenses, allowing the recruited scientist to strongly focus on the implementation a high-quality research project.

The frame of the EXEBIO Excellence Chair allows the funding of 3 chairs on the 10 years duration.

Chair creation is subject to the approval of the Academic Council and the Board of Administration of the University of Reims Champagne-Ardenne according to the URCA Chairs charter (document available by contacting drv@univ-reims.fr).

This call aims at chairs:

- supporting projects of scientific excellence;
- developing and strengthening Research-Education-Innovation continuum;
- strengthening the international influence of EXEBIO Consortium researchers.

Duration of the project:	3 years
Total amount:	817 k€
The budget allows to finance:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Lecturer position (2/3 teaching discharge) ✓ Financing of a thesis ✓ Funding of a post-doc ✓ No equipment financed ✓ Operating costs
Composition of the consortium:	Laboratory of the project leader can be the only unit of the consortium

3.4 EXEBIO INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS

EXEBIO International Congress Call aims at supporting exchanges and relations between its scientific community and regional, national, European and international counterparts. Each year, an international congress (100 attendees as a minimum) is expected to be organized in Reims on the EXEBIO topics. This congress has a major objective to bring together scientists and/or industrials and technical institutes on all related bioeconomy themes. Additionally, this congress financed by the call will be part of the Master degree curricula and therefore the Master students should be able to attend the financed congresses for free.

This call aims at:

- promoting “Excellence” of research from EXEBIO consortium;
- spreading regional, national and international collaborations;
- bringing together scientists, industrials and technical institutes from the region and abroad;
- highlighting work of young researchers.

The amount of aid from this call can only support the project as co-financing: the budget of the congress must specify the financial support requested and obtained, in addition to EXEBIO funding. The funding requested from EXEBIO must not exceed 50% of the total cost of the event.

Only projects with an international scope will be funded (keynote speakers and participants from abroad). An “event bonus” is foreseen for the project leader of the event.

Duration of the project:	1 year
Total amount:	20 k€ + 3,5 k€ (event bonus for project leader)
The budget allows to finance:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Event bonus for the project leader (3,5 k€) ✓ Expenses of guest speakers ✓ Award prizes ✓ Catering ✓ Traveling expenses ✓ Accommodation ✓ Communication ✓ Social Event ✓ Event organiser agency
Composition of the consortium:	Laboratory/platform of the project leader can be the only unit of the consortium

4. Administrative and scientific eligibility criteria

4.1 Administrative eligibility criteria

Common administrative criteria to the 4 calls (failure to comply with the requirements will lead to the rejection of the application)	
-	Projects have to be within EXEBIO research themes;
-	Applications must be submitted only through the official EXEBIO Calls Platform: www.exebio-calls.univ-reims.fr Any other way of transmission will be rejected;
-	Applications must be written in English except for the International Congress call;
-	Project leader must be a member of the URCA Academic Community or EXEBIO partners;
-	Applications must respect the deadline (see timetable in section 7) and all mandatory attachments must be uploaded;
-	Partners inside the EXEBIO consortium are eligible to EXEBIO funding;

-	Partners outside the EXEBIO consortium can be involved in the project but should bring complementary funding;
-	Maximum 2 projects per laboratory/platform for each call (emergence, interdisciplinary, chairs and congress);
-	Project leaders cannot be involved in more than one project, even as partners;
-	Projects will address themes identified by the research laboratory/platform, in line with its strategy and prioritized by the laboratory/platform director;
-	Project partners must not be members of the EXEBIO evaluation committees/workpackage committees involved in the call;
-	Project leaders must provide 3 names of experts and must not have any publications or joint projects with the leader of the appraised project within 5 years;
-	<i>Only applicable to EXEBIO Interdisciplinarity Call:</i> projects must bring together at least 2 laboratories/platforms from different disciplines present within the EXEBIO consortium.

4.2 Scientific eligibility criteria

4.2.1 EXEBIO Emergence scientific eligibility criteria

Scientific criteria (evaluated by external experts using the following mark grid out of 15 points)	
Scientific excellence and ambition of the project	
5 points	Relevance of the project and the announced objectives; novelty, originality and quality of the proposal compared to the state of the art; clarity of research objectives and hypotheses; relevance of the methodology, scientific risk management; complementarity and quality of the partners and researchers involved; project innovative character, emergence of exploratory basic research projects (innovative character, new approach, risk taking).
Impacts	
5 points	Scientific impact of the project and potential impact in the economic, social or cultural fields; dissemination strategy and promotion of results; contribution from the French and international scientific community.
Organization and means implemented	
5 points	Adequacy between the proposed budget (aid requested and contributions from the host and partner establishments) and the objectives set; feasibility: data accessibility, relevance of the project schedule, consistency of deliverables, feasibility of the proposed steps; availability of necessary tools.

4.2.2 EXEBIO Interdisciplinarity scientific eligibility criteria

Scientific criteria (evaluated by external experts using the following mark grid out of 15 points)	
Scientific excellence and ambition of the project	
5 points	Relevance of the project and the announced objectives; quality of the proposal compared to the state of the art; clarity of research objectives and hypotheses; relevance of the methodology, scientific risk management; complementarity and quality of the partners and researchers involved; project innovative character, relevance of the choice of disciplines to answer the scientific questions.

Impacts	
5 points	Scientific impact of the project and potential impact in the economic, social or cultural fields; dissemination strategy and promotion of results; contribution from the French and international scientific community.
Organization and means implemented	
5 points	Adequacy between the proposed budget (aid requested and contributions from the host and partner establishments) and the objectives set; feasibility: data accessibility, relevance of the project schedule, consistency of deliverables, feasibility of the proposed steps; availability of necessary tools.

4.2.3 EXEBIO Excellence Chairs scientific eligibility criteria

Scientific criteria (evaluated by external experts using the following mark grid out of 15 points)	
Scientific excellence and ambition of the project	
5 points	Relevance of the emerging point of scientific excellence in the research unit(s) concerned; promoting a scientific sector of excellence that merits specific support; or a theme with major short-term application prospects and international influence; in line with EXEBIO research themes and disciplines; high-level training component with an international focus. The existence of international partnerships linked to the project will be considered as an added value.
Impacts	
5 points	Scientific impact of the project and potential impact in the economic, social or cultural fields; dissemination strategy and promotion of results; contribution from the French and international scientific community, future of the structure.
Organization and means implemented	
5 points	Adequacy between the proposed budget (aid requested and contributions from the host and partner establishments) and the objectives set; feasibility: data accessibility, relevance of the project schedule, consistency of deliverables, feasibility of the proposed steps; availability of necessary tools, adequate conditions must be implemented by the host establishment for the integration of the chair and the project within the research teams and structures.

4.2.4 EXEBIO International Congress scientific eligibility criteria

Scientific criteria (evaluated by external experts using the following mark grid out of 15 points)	
Scientific excellence and ambition of the project	
5 points	Relevance of the Scientific Congress theme(s) with EXEBIO research themes and disciplines; in line with the sustainable development objectives and the policies carried out at the local, regional, national, European and international levels; addressing transdisciplinary research topics to respond to major societal challenges.
Impacts	
5 points	Expected outcomes on the events will be considered in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - global scientific impact; - international impact (keynote speakers and participants from abroad); - research impact (collaborations, research programs, etc.);

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - attractiveness for the territory (welcoming “talents”, economic benefits, etc.); - collaborations with companies (commercial stand, speakers, etc.); - promotion in the general and/or specialized press and publication of proceedings and posters; - dissemination strategy (promotion to bring together students, scientists and/or industrials and technical institutes on all related bioeconomy themes).
Organization and means implemented	
5 points	Adequacy between the proposed budget (aid requested and contributions from the host and partner establishments) and the objectives set; feasibility, relevance of the event schedule, consistency of deliverables, feasibility of the proposed steps; setting-up of organization and scientific committees; specify a dedicated communication plan and necessary event tools (website, diffusion, press-releases, etc.)

5. Funding

Common to the 4 calls:	
-	Project leaders are strongly encouraged to seek other funding outside EXEBIO to complete the financial package of their project; external funding have to be included in the total budget of the project;
-	The objective of the call is to strongly encourages the development of partnerships with INVEST leading to co-financing;
-	The distribution of the budgets between the partners must be indicated at the time of the application by the project leader;
-	The amounts in the financial grids must exclude tax.
Specific to EXEBIO International Congress Call:	
-	The budget of the event must specify the financial support requested and obtained (when possible), other than EXEBIO. The funding requested from EXEBIO must not exceed 50% of the total cost of the event, based on the proposed budget plans.

6. Selection & Assessment

6.1 Selection & Assessment for Emergence, Interdisciplinarity and Excellence Chairs calls

EXEBIO Emergence, Interdisciplinarity and Excellence Chairs calls have a one-stage procedure.

The aim of the selection process is to select projects which contribute most to the achievement of call objectives. It begins with the received project applications and finishes with the selection of the projects.

The Scientific Evaluation Committee (SEC) will assess the project applications and is composed of:

- the president of SEC;
- representatives of the academic community;
- representatives of socio-economic actors.

And follows the four phases of the selection process:

Phase 1: project application submission

Laboratory/platform directors will address their appreciation on the project and prioritize if two projects from the same laboratory/platform are submitted. Director's appreciation will then be uploaded with all the mandatory documents when applying.

Phase 2: assessment process – administrative criteria

Eligibility will be checked by the Scientific Evaluation Committee following the administrative criteria (referred to in section 4.1). Scientific Evaluation Committee will then appoint 2 experts per project and an examiner will be assigned to compile the 2 evaluation reports for each project.

Phase 3: assessment process – scientific criteria

The project will be assessed by 2 experts and an examiner according to the scientific criteria: scientific excellence and ambition of the project, organization and means implemented, innovation, impacts.

Phase 4: final evaluation

The Scientific Evaluation Committee will carry out a ranking of the projects that will be presented to the Steering Committee.

Specific for EXEBIO Excellence Chairs: the final decision of the ranking of the projects will be approved by the Academic Council and the Board of Administration of the University of Reims Champagne-Ardenne.

6.2 Selection & Assessment for the International Congress call

EXEBIO International Congress call has a one-stage procedure and will be in line with the internal call organized by the Research and Development Department of URCA. The application document must be submitted in French.

The assessment process will be done by the Scientific Evaluation Committee and will aim at foregrounding respective congresses with an EXEBIO certification/label towards the Research and Development Department of URCA.

For any event gathering less than 100 attendees or without an international scope, the regular procedure from Research and Development Department of URCA applies.

7. TRLs and SRLs

If applicable we kindly ask you to assess the maturity level of your project using Technology Readiness Level (TRL) or Societal Readiness Level (SRL) grids.

Definitions are provided in the following sections.

7.2 Technology Readiness Levels (TRLs)³

Technology Readiness Levels are a type of measurement system used to assess the maturity level of a particular technology. Each technology project is evaluated against the parameters for each technology level and is then assigned a TRL rating based on the projects progress. There are nine technology readiness levels. TRL 1 is the lowest and TRL 9 is the highest.

7.3 Societal Readiness Levels (SRLs)⁴

Societal Readiness Levels are a type of measurement system used to assess the level of societal adaptation of, for instance, a particular social project, a technology, a product, a process, an intervention, or an innovation (whether social or technical) to be integrated into society. If the societal readiness for the social or technical solution is expected to be low, suggestions for a realistic transition towards societal adaptation are required. Naturally, the lower the societal adaptation is, the better the plan for transition must be. SRL 1 is the lowest and SRL 9 is the highest.

8. Timetable

Stages	Dates
Call Info day	13 July 2023
Call Launch – Opening of submitting platform	28 November 2023
Deadline for submitting applications	15 January 2024 at 12 PM (CET ⁵)
EXEBIO Scientific Evaluation Committee	1 February 2024
Return of the expertises	1 April 2024
EXEBIO Scientific Evaluation Committee	16 May 2024
EXEBIO Steering Committee	30 May 2024
Information to applicants	End of May/Early June
Establishment of the financial agreement	June/July

9. Project reporting

A report will be provided by project leaders as following:

- for EXEBIO Emergence, Interdisciplinarity and International Congress Calls: final report within 3 months following the end of the project;
- for EXEBIO Excellence Chairs Call: annual report during the 3 years duration of the chair.

All project partners will have to deliver input for this report. The project leader is responsible for timely deliverable and content quality of this report. Information

³ <https://www.nasa.gov/directorates/somd/space-communications-navigation-program/technology-readiness-levels/>

⁴ <https://www.inshs.cnrs.fr/fr/cnrsinfo/un-nouvel-outil-devaluation-de-la-maturite-des-projets-en-sciences-humaines-et-sociales>

⁵ CET : Central European Time

on the reporting procedure as well as template will be provided to the project leader of the funded projects.

Project leader of the funded projects will have to present the project at an end-term seminar.

As part of long-term project monitoring and as part of the quality process of EXEBIO, project leaders will be requested to provide elements relating to the project such as publications, patents, larger projects resulting from the funded project.

10. Individual Data Management Plan (IDMP)

Each selected project will be subject to an Individual Data Management Plan related to the EXEBIO Data Management Plan. The schedule for submitting IDMPs will be specified in the agreements established between the different partners.

These IDMPs must detail for each project the type and origin of the data concerned (collected or produced; observation, experimental, simulation data, etc.); the method of collecting new data and/or the conditions for reuse of pre-existing data; data processing methods; conditions implemented for the storage and protection of data as well as the sharing methods at the end of the projects.

11. Communication

Beneficiaries must clearly acknowledge the EXEBIO contribution in all publications or in conjunction with activities for which the grant is used by indicating **“financed by EXEBIO - ANR-22-EXES-0007”**.

12. Promote EXEBIO Excellency

12.1 Promoting research projects during events with local stakeholders

The project leaders of the funded projects will be required to participate in various local, national (open doors, science promotion events, ...) and European events, as well as « 1 scientific - 1 meeting » conferences with the civil society and researchers. Their participation in these events aims at promoting the results of their research and the activities of the institute.

12.2 Addressing the science with and for society challenges

Development of a mediation offer for science with and for society, relying on local partnerships. Participation in the following events will be possible:

- workshops to train bioeconomy experts in mediation and scientific communication (training, media-training, support in the creation of mediation tools, etc.);
- workshops to inform the non-specialists (high-school students, secondary school teachers, elected officials, journalists, general public) about the concepts of bioeconomy and its consequence on the daily life.

13. EXEBIO Calls Platform

Applications must be submitted only through the official EXEBIO Calls Platform:
www.exebio-calls.univ-reims.fr any other way of transmission will be rejected.

14. Contact

For any question related to the call or the EXEBIO Calls Platform please contact:
exebio.calls@univ-reims.fr