

STRENGTHENING ECONOMIC ECOSYSTEMS ACROSS A METROPOLIS

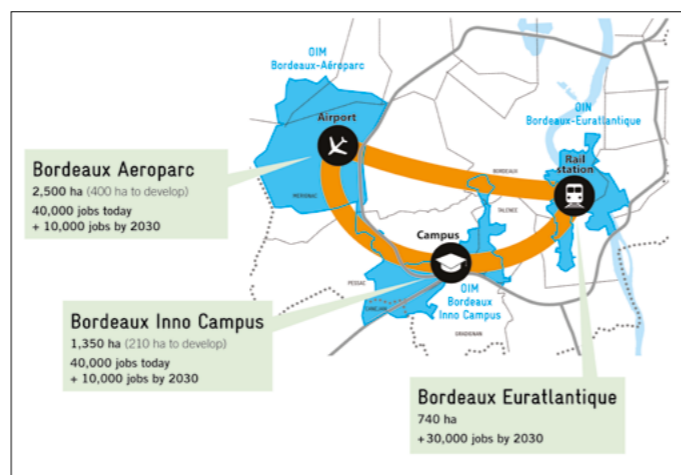
Key information

- Location: **Bordeaux (France)**
- Population: **774 930**
- Involved in URBACT network: **In Focus**
- More information: <http://urbact.eu/In-Focus>



Against a backdrop of massive expansion in population, the URBACT In Focus network gave Bordeaux a new opportunity to set up a metropolitan-scale “Smart Specialisation Strategy” to boost its local economic development.

The timing for Bordeaux could not have been better. On 1 January 2015, it became one of France’s eleven newly defined metropolises, and by national law automatically exercised increased powers in several key areas, chief of which is economic development. Right at the beginning of In Focus, Alain Juppé, who was once Jacques Chirac’s Prime Minister and had been mayor of the city since 1995, knew a good offer when he saw one: “When Bilbao offered us in 2016 to join a European project focused on improving our strategies to support the economic ecosystems of our territories, Bordeaux Métropole seized this opportunity to enrich and support the implementation of its economic roadmap.”



The three major development sites in Bordeaux Métropole

Making innovation manifest

In the scope of the In Focus network, Bordeaux sought to strengthen the “Economic Metropolis” as a driver of employment with the ambition to create 100 000 new jobs by 2030. To do so, Bordeaux Métropole gathered different stakeholders, from the region, the university, the Chamber of Commerce, and cluster organisations in an URBACT Local Group to seek synergies between these different stakeholders who are involved in innovation strategies.

Focusing on three development sites of metropolitan or national interest like **Bordeaux Euratlantique**, one of the largest urban regeneration project (740 hectares), now in France around Bordeaux’s central rail station: 2 500 000 m²

of housing, offices and public facilities, to welcome ultimately 40,000 new inhabitants and 30,000 new jobs; **Bordeaux Aéroport** (next to the international airport) in which 400 hectares have been designated to underpin the growth of the aerospace-defence cluster; and **Bordeaux Inno’Campus**, based in and around the university campus and hospitals focusing on the health sciences and high technology sectors. The URBACT Local Group came up with an Integrated Action Plan structured around 4 themes and several actions:

1) Support innovation

Within the Bordeaux Aéroport site, the URBACT Local Group has proposed the creation of a 7 500 m² flagship space

that will bring together innovation actors like start-ups, businesses, the university and students, to reinforce the aerospace-defence cluster of Bordeaux Métropole. Other actions include regular workshops bringing together the main actors of the three development sites to exchange on their needs and identify solutions that can serve different clusters.

2) Develop innovation projects and experiments

Looking at the specific needs of the development sites and of their users, the URBACT Local Group proposed pilot actions related to mobility, more specifically to facilitate the access of the sites to different groups, like seniors and patients.

3) Initiate innovative ways of doing things

As a result of URBACT, the local group aimed to bring innovation in public procurement and in the way public works are conducted. This is why public authorities now work on ‘innovation partnerships’: a new mechanism in EU law which allows contracting authorities to team up with either single or multiple partners to research and develop an innovative outcome, rather than simply hand contracts to a bidding company.

4) Encourage innovation from new talents

With the objective to upscale innovative projects and connect them with enterprises, the local group proposed a student contest in the university called ‘Hacketafac’, or ‘improve your faculty’. In 2017, the University of Bordeaux awarded prizes to nine projects selected for their quality and their relevance to the transformation of the University. Each received an endowment of EUR 10 000 to further develop the project. One of the winners, Albalet Frontage, proposed an interactive and programmable series of lights for building facades. The project has now been built and is raising public awareness of the growing impact of code in our environment. A second edition of ‘Hacketafac’ was completed in 2018 with another seven prizes going to worthy winners.

A long-lasting impact

The scale of Bordeaux’s new developments is massive, and as such the topline proposals will take a long time to play out – until 2030 under current proposals. But in the short-term bringing stakeholders together in an URBACT Local Group – while working with the network of In Focus cities – helped Bordeaux improve coordination between the Aéroport, Euratlantique, Inno’Campus and other areas of development.

As seen above, the outcome of this work is a list of feasible areas of action which avoid any overlapping between the leadership and the direction of the three different areas and government. The work aims to identify individual roles more clearly and to create performance-enhancing added value. Clear defined priorities for each area, clear leadership and a structure of ongoing meetings and collaboration to create synergy are now in place.

Though In Focus was officially completed in May 2018, the group of local stakeholders will continue to meet in order to follow up the implementation of the action plan.

Olivier Mauret, Director of Metropolitan Cooperations and Partnerships for Bordeaux Métropole, suggests In Focus is also fundamental to the evolving economic programme of the new metropolitan area. “Without URBACT In Focus, Bordeaux Métropole would have concentrated on implementing the new economic roadmap it approved in December 2016, which is already a lot. But thanks to URBACT, we could also refine the innovation policy mix with other relevant stakeholders such as the Region, the regional development and innovation agency and the University, among others.”

Olivier Mauret

