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A new look at Innovation & development in a time of crisis

Antoine Macret is the Director of the Hauts-de-France region Innovation & Development Agency (HDFID) since March 2019. This UTC graduate reviews for Interactions the management of an unprecedented economic crisis, offering his views and, above all, relating his actions in the management of an unprecedented economic crisis. What role does the Hauts-de France regional development and innovation agency play in supporting companies and the Region's innovation strategy?

22 Jun 2021

A new look at Innovation & development in a time of crisis

The Hauts-de-France Regional Development & Innovation Agency aims to intervene at all points in the chain: helping young people to become entrepreneurs, whether it be traditional (Starter programme for the creation and takeover of businesses) or innovative (Innovation Park), to develop businesses through innovation, but also internationally (European programmes and networks). "Our three missions remain more essential than ever. It is up to us to continue to support start-ups and companies in their innovation and industrial performance projects. It is up to us to develop entrepreneurship and support the economic development policies of the Hauts-de-France Region," says Antoine Macret, who at the same time emphasises the importance of the fruitful collaboration with the Region. "Indeed, through its diversified skills, our agency provides an operational deployment of the strategic orientations (SRESRI, SRDEII, S3...) of the Regional Council." More than a thousand companies have been visited, five hundred projects receiving financial support, three hundred of which have been financed to the tune of two million euros via various regional schemes.

The ongoing crisis reshuffles the deck

With this crisis context, recovery is based on different foundations. "Entrepreneurship remains strong. Some even decide to take the plunge. The crisis becomes a trigger for them. For other business leaders, this is a time to activate dormant projects. They have the will to relaunch themselves through innovation," says Director Macret. The situation remains very critical in the aeronautical sector, which was already under great pressure before the pandemic. A group such as Airbus, which is always seeking better competitiveness, relies on numerous subcontractors, which are themselves very dependent on this highly specialised market. It is not surprising that these companies are collapsing with this crisis. "One solution among others is the notion of diversification. You have to learn to bounce back in other sectors. The same applies to railway companies, car companies and others. It's part of our job to make these companies visible to the major contractors via an industrial marketplace," says Antoine Macret, whose objective is to have a real impact on our economy. "Not only to maintain employment, but to develop it. We must rely on all the research and innovation players in the region and play a unifying role."

A UTC graduate heads the HDFID agency

Antoine Macret graduated from UTC with the Mechanical Engineer (GM) major. He has held positions as

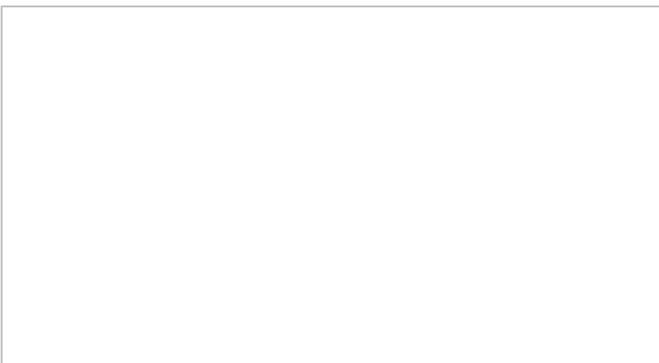
industrial project manager and design office manager in several large international groups (Bosch Braking Systems, Hutchinson, Faiveley Transport, now Wabtec), before becoming the industrial director for Induxial, a subsidiary of four mechanical machining companies working in the aeronautics field in the Albert-Méaulte region (80). He was also Vice-President of the aeronautical cluster of Hauts-de-France, PHMA - ALTYTUD. Aged 36, he decided to join the HFID Agency as director, to put his expertise at the service of the Region's economic development.

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