



XL-CHEM News

GSR XL-Chem bi-annual newsletter

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The management team of the XL-Chem Graduate School of Research (GSR) is pleased to present in this newsletter **the actions that have been carried out this semester following the welcoming of the first XL-Chem Master's and PhD promotions in September 2020.**

COMMUNICATION

After the XL-Chem website has been put on line in 2020 (www.xl-chem.fr) and the provision of flyers and brochures to students and potential partners, new communication kits and networks have been further amplified. XL-Chem now has accounts on social networks: **Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram.**

A **promotional video** has also been produced, in partnership with Benjamin Salley. A "**communication kit**" is available on the website to present the XL-Chem project to students or potential partners.

Finally, Pierre-Yves RENARD, scientific leader of the XL-Chem project, gave an **interview on Radio Phénix** (campus radio in Caen) on April, 15th.

FIRST XL-CHEM SPRING SCHOOL

The **first XL-Chem GSR Spring School** was held on **April, 16th 2021** in a virtual format. The objective of this event was to promote the programme and to present to potential master's students the topics offered by the mentors for the 2021-2023 M1 (Master 1) & M2 (Master 2), and the 2021-2022 M2 XL-Chem promotion. In total, 22 M1 and 7 M2 mentoring topics were presented. Nearly **fifty participants** (students, mentors, laboratory directors, etc.) took part in this half-day event, with a positive and encouraging feedbacks from the students. Taking into account the amount of mentoring projects proposed, a thematic presentation of the projects will be proposed for the next spring school.

GOVERNANCE

International Scientific Advisory Board

The **first Scientific Advisory Board meeting** took place on **December, 4th 2020** (by videoconference). Its objectives were to validate the process and results of the external evaluations of the second international PhD projects co-financing call. This Advisory Board is composed of **5 experts**, selected for their experience and achievements in the fields of research, education, international and socio-economic relationship:

- Dr. Ivan HUC (Maximilian Ludwig Universität München)
- Pr. Anne MILET Université Grenoble-Alpes)
- Dr. Yves QUENEAU (INSA Lyon)
- Pr. Annie-Claude GAUMONT (Labex Synorg)

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- Dr. Jonathan CLAYDEN (Bristol University)

In total, 13 PhD projects were evaluated by 3 external referees and then submitted to the Scientific Advisory Board. **8 projects were selected** to be submitted to the RIN Label XL-Chem 2021 project, and 5 others will be submitted to the Normandy Region's RIN Doctorant 50% 2021 call.

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee of the GSR met on **March, 30th 2021**, by videoconference. This committee is composed of representatives of Normandie University, of its member institutions involved in the XL-Chem project, of the CNRS, but also of the DRARI (Regional Academic Delegations for Research and Innovation), of the Normandy Region as well as representatives of the XL-Chem Master and PhD students. This first meeting of the Steering Committee focused in particular on an **overall assessment of the first year** of the project, on the students' opinions on the training, on the communication of the project in order to reach students with high potential in France and throughout the world. Mention was also made of the impact of the COVID 19 crisis on the project. The institutions were thus able to propose communication avenues via some of their networks, but also to give their opinion on the proposed training offer.

Concurrently, the **project management team meets once a month** to further elaborate the project within the scope of the four thematic sub-committees (teaching, research, development, communication).

XL-CHEM RELATED RESEARCH

The **RIN Label XL-Chem project, submitted in 2020** to the Normandy Regional Council, has been modified following the withdrawal of the co-financing institutions of Penn State (USA) and Nottingham (England). The project **now includes 6 PhD thesis projects** co-financed by the universities of Le Havre Normandie, Macquarie (Sydney - Australia), Munich and Munster (Germany), Montreal (Canada) and Copenhagen (Denmark). The theses have all **started between October and December 2020**. The students will join the partner country for the second part of their thesis in early 2022.

A **new RIN Label XL-Chem 2021 project** was **submitted in April** to the Normandy Regional Council. Following the recommendations of the Scientific Advisory Board, one of the proposed PhD thesis project was finally withdrawn from the project, as the partner did not obtain the co-financing. **7 PhD projects** are therefore proposed for co-financing in partnership with the universities and institutions of São Paulo (Brazil), Haïfa (Israel), Thessaloniki (Greece), Targu Mures (Romania) and the University of Le Havre Normandie, Brown (USA), Liège (Belgium), Southampton (England) and Montreal (Canada). This project should be submitted to the authorities of the Normandy Region this summer, with the aim of starting the PhDs at the beginning of the 2021 academic year.

The third call for co-financed PhD projects will be launched in July 2021.

MASTERS XL-CHEM

The **first classes of XL-Chem Masters started in September 2020**. The XL-Chem "Managers" course was open to 9 M1 students, who were able to choose the courses they wished to follow from the portfolio of courses offered by the Normandy institutions, in order to best meet their professional project. They have also each integrated a laboratory and are involved, with their mentor, in an international research project throughout their Master's year, in the framework of self-guided formation. In **April and May 2021, the students started their M1 internship**, accompanied by their mentor.

The "Analysis and Spectroscopy" curriculum was opened to 19 M2 students, including **4 students in work-study program**. The 15 other students are involved in a **mentoring project** throughout the year and will also complete an internship.

The **double degree agreement for a Master's degree in Chemistry between the University of Florence (Italy) and the University of Rouen Normandy** has been finalised. It must soon be validated by the various decision-making authorities in order to be implemented for the start of the 2022 academic year.

CONSORTIUM AGREEMENT

The Consortium Agreement of the XL-Chem project has been negotiated between Normandie University, its member institutions and the CNRS. It was **signed in May 2021**. This agreement sets out the terms of organisation and governance of the project between the various stakeholders.

XL-CHEM PROJECT BUDGET

The XL-Chem GSR is financed by the **ANR – French National Research Agency (4.1 M€)** over the duration of the project from 2019 to 2028. A first co-financing was obtained from the Normandy Region via the **RIN Label XI-Chem 2020 project (968.6 K€)** for the first three years of the educational programme (October 2020 - December 2023), including co-financing for communication, excellency allowances for Master students, and international courses and lectures and 8 PhD thesis (an amendment is currently underway to revise the allocated budget downwards following the withdrawal of funding for two PhD projects). The **new RIN Label XL-Chem 2021 project**, if financed by the Normandy Region, will provide **new co-financing**, covering the financing of 7 PhD projects.

