

emlyon business school launches the Alternative Futures Institute

As the world confronts unprecedented and interdependent geopolitical, environmental, and social crises—and as scientists have documented the crossing of a seventh planetary boundary—another equally critical challenge emerges: the ways in which we imagine, organize, and collectively decide. To support the development of corporate strategies aligned with planetary boundaries, **emlyon business school announces the creation of a new institute: the Alternative Futures Institute.**

An institute built upon the emlyon–Carbone 4 Chair “Strategy in the Anthropocene”

The current era, marked by climate disruption, biodiversity loss, and soil depletion—primarily driven by human activity—has led many scientific communities to designate it as the **“Anthropocene.”**

In response to this reality, **emlyon establishes the Alternative Futures Institute to foster a continuous dialogue among researchers, business leaders, and public decision-makers, aimed at designing robust strategies compatible with planetary limits.** The Institute builds on the [[emlyon–Carbone 4 Chair “Strategy in the Anthropocene”](#)], which develops strategic frameworks for reflection and action resilient to planetary constraints. The Institute will be led by [Thomas Gauthier](#), Professor at emlyon, in collaboration with IF Initiative by Carbone 4.

“Human societies have never been as technically powerful, nor as vulnerable to climate disruptions, biodiversity erosion, resource depletion, and social instabilities as those generated by this very power. We now know that our survival depends on fully integrating the Earth

system into decision-making processes and organizational activities.” — Thomas Gauthier

Four strategic pillars to transform corporate decision-making practices

1. Massively training for the imagination of futures compatible with planetary boundaries

Since 2018, more than 7,000 students in initial programs ([Global BBA](#), [Master in Management - Grande École](#)) and 700 professionals in [Executive Education](#) ([International MBA](#) and [Executive MBA](#)) have been trained in foresight and strategy in the Anthropocene. Each year, over 50 professionals and members of emlyon's [permanent Faculty](#) deliver this pedagogical pathway.

Dedicated programs include the [MSc in Management of Energy Transitions](#), the [MSc in Leading Sustainable Transformations](#), short courses (New Business Models), and customized corporate training.

2. Producing knowledge for corporate strategy in the Anthropocene

The Institute coordinates research that bridges Earth system sciences, social sciences, design, and management. In 2025, the workshop *Designing Alternative Futures: Strategy and Systems-Changes in the Anthropocene* gathered more than 50 researchers, executives, and professionals to

explore new foresight and strategic practices commensurate with Anthropocene challenges.

3. Building strategies with companies and economic actors

Since 2018, emlyon has enabled over 350 organizations to stress-test their worldview and explore multiple possible futures—reflecting an unprecedented, turbulent, and constantly evolving environment. Some have strengthened their decision-making systems by embedding strategic foresight into governance. The creation of Alternative Futures welcomes Institut Mérieux as an official partner, alongside Carbone 4.

4. Disseminating knowledge and methods to an expanded community of practice

In 2026, the Alternative Futures Institute will co-organize the launch event for the first collective work of the Atelier des Futurs community, *Les coulisses du futur*, bringing together over one hundred professionals committed to imagining, testing, and sharing anticipation techniques.

On December 11, 2025, a new episode of the podcast [no(s) limit(es)], created in 2022 to invite scientists, leaders, artists, and citizens to share perspectives, will be recorded live in Paris with Étienne Klein, physicist, philosopher of science, and research director at CEA.

Finally, the emlyon–Carbone 4 Chair and the Institute are currently developing a *Strategy in the Anthropocene Handbook*: a practical guide authored by emlyon faculty and senior Carbone 4 consultants to support companies in designing and implementing robust strategies truly aligned with planetary boundaries.

An initiative aligned with the School's purpose

The creation of the Alternative Futures Institute is fully consistent with the School's [purpose](#): "To educate and support enlightened leaders throughout their lives, capable of transforming organizations effectively for a fairer, more inclusive society that respects the Planet."

"As a mission-driven institution resolutely committed to placing social and environmental issues at the heart of its pedagogy and research, emlyon goes further with the creation of the Alternative Futures Institute. Powered by a team of world-class faculty, this Institute embodies a concrete ambition: to transform organizations, to decode major trends and weak signals, and to act more effectively toward an horizon of robustness rather than mere performance." — **Isabelle Huault, CEO and Chair of the Executive Board, emlyon business school**

"For 20 years, Carbone 4 has demonstrated that no organization can build a viable and prosperous future without integrating the physical reality of climate—and more broadly, the Earth system—into its decisions. With emlyon business school, we now take a decisive step forward: making the

*Strategy in the Anthropocene Chair we built together a foundational pillar of the new Institute.” — **Laurent Morel, President and Partner, Carbone 4***