**Topic document
Call for applications**

recycled territories,

living territories

Interdependence and supply issues in the face of the climate emergency:
What choices need to be made for the northern Paris Region?

les Ateliers
maîtrise d'œuvre urbaine

Les Ateliers Internationaux de Maîtrise d'Œuvre Urbaine

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A non profit- organization since 1982, Les Ateliers – International workshops of planning and urban design – aims to develop the collective creation of ideas that tackle the challenges and processes of everyday city planning and design by promoting a process of collective and multi-disciplinary work that produces innovative and illustrative proposals relating to urban design and spatial development.

Whether it involves students or professionals, each "atelier" brings together people of diverse nationalities and disciplines: architecture and urban planning, but also geography, economics, landscape architecture, sociology, art, engineering, environment...

Year after year, Les Ateliers internationaux network has been growing: it includes more than three thousand former participants who are now professionnals, academics, and decision-makers in the urban field.

This 40th summer workshop is pursuing the reflections led in recent sessions, notably the workshops about «life in metropolises» (2018), «happy fringes» (2019), the role of water in urban planning (2020) and what is a habitable and desirable city nowadays (2021).

Partenaires de la 40ème session des Ateliers :

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Interdependence and supply issues in the face of the climate emergency:
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At a time when global warming is destabilizing natural balances, when the health crisis is exposing the vulnerabilities of globalization, and when international conflicts are weakening markets across various scales, rethinking cities in relation to their environment is becoming a vital necessity.

The degrees of interdependence between distant territories make the supplying of urban populations a fragile endeavour. At the same time, they underline the value of proximity and local resources, which are more accessible and more resilient. They invite us to look at the territory of a city and its population as living entities with their own systems of balances, capable of producing what is necessary for life without harming future generations.

This means engaging in a paradigm shift that alters our perceptions of life and the earth, transforms waste into resources and requires us to reconsider the links between the city and its hinterland. What kind of city models for what kind of lifestyle do we want?

There is still time to face up to the responsibility of the impending climate emergency and to react.

For this 40th session of the International Urban Planning Workshop for the Paris Region, Les Ateliers proposes to use the examination of a large-scale territory – the northern arc of the Île-de-France, the hinterland of the Parisian metropolis' beating heart – to illustrate the work and proposals of the workshop's participants.

The territory's role and its position, in direct contact with the metropolis, will be questioned and will have to be reexamined on several levels:

- At the level of territorial metabolism: From the supply of products and services to the treatment of waste

According to Sabine Barles, territorial metabolism refers to "all the energy and material flows involved in the functioning of a given territory".

This notion of metabolism is borrowed from the field of medicine and describes the city (or metropolis) as a body which consumes, distributes and transforms resources before eliminating the resulting waste. The major difference is that the metabolism of the human body cannot be modified, unlike that of the city.

In order to live, the city must be supplied with products and services in different forms: water, electricity, food, objects, etc. Some of these products and services are partly or wholly derived from or produced locally, such as certain foodstuffs, while others are imported from other territories on a massive scale.

At the end of the day, waste is what is discarded by territories in the broadest sense. It can be visible or invisible (pollution) and is defined by its almost zero or even negative value.

- From the point of view of lifestyles and consumption

Supply is strongly linked to uses, lifestyles and consumption patterns. The rule of supply and demand influences markets and sectors. In the face of the climate emergency, the growing awareness of consumers of the environmental and health impacts of their practices can lead to a systemic change in production and supply methods in territories. In a context of emerging uses driven by new technologies, these changes can be more or less rapid as well as more or less virtuous. Public policies and the actors who organize activities in territories interact with these practices and can accompany the movements already underway.

How can we transform our cities and their territories to make them more sensible, happier, more resilient and more alive?

How can territories be re-cycled and reintegrated into a more virtuous cycle?

What new decision-making tools should be used by local, political and civil actors to initiate the necessary changes in our societies?

1. A system that is still standing, but a planet that is on its last legs

Faced with the climate crisis, an ecological awakening and a desire for change have been germinating within societies and international organizations since the 1970s (the UN's first "Earth Summit" was organized in Stockholm in 1972). Thus, on an international scale, policies have and continue to emerge to combat global warming and to curb the overrunning of the planet's limits. Some governments are promoting the energy transition (renewable energies, energy efficiency, practices, etc.) and, more broadly, the ecological transition (elimination of waste, environment and food quality, local food systems, dematerialization, biodiversity, air, etc.).

At the local level, cities are trying to formulate responses on their own scales, thereby organizing spaces by emphasizing the prosperity, health and well-being that would come from greater self-sufficiency. At this stage, the push towards relative autonomy is only just emerging with regard to the interdependence between territories, but the signs are already here, having been only further accentuated by the recent chain of health and international crises.

The efforts made to date by public authorities are considerable, but they remain insufficient. Indeed, the latest IPCC report paints an alarming picture of the consequences of climate change. The need to adapt our current models and to anchor the principle of resilience in society, at all levels, is becoming an urgent, if not vital, necessity. This concerns not only the modes of use and consumption of goods and services within territories, but also the networks that affect them.

In addition to the efforts of public authorities, a growing concern for the environment is happening in our societies. For example, a study published by the WWF and carried out by the Economist Intelligence Unit demonstrates society's interest in these issues over the last five years, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic: since 2016, there has been a significant increase in online requests for sustainable products, with a clear uptick in wealthy countries such as the United Kingdom and Germany, but also an upsurge in emerging countries such as Indonesia and Ecuador.
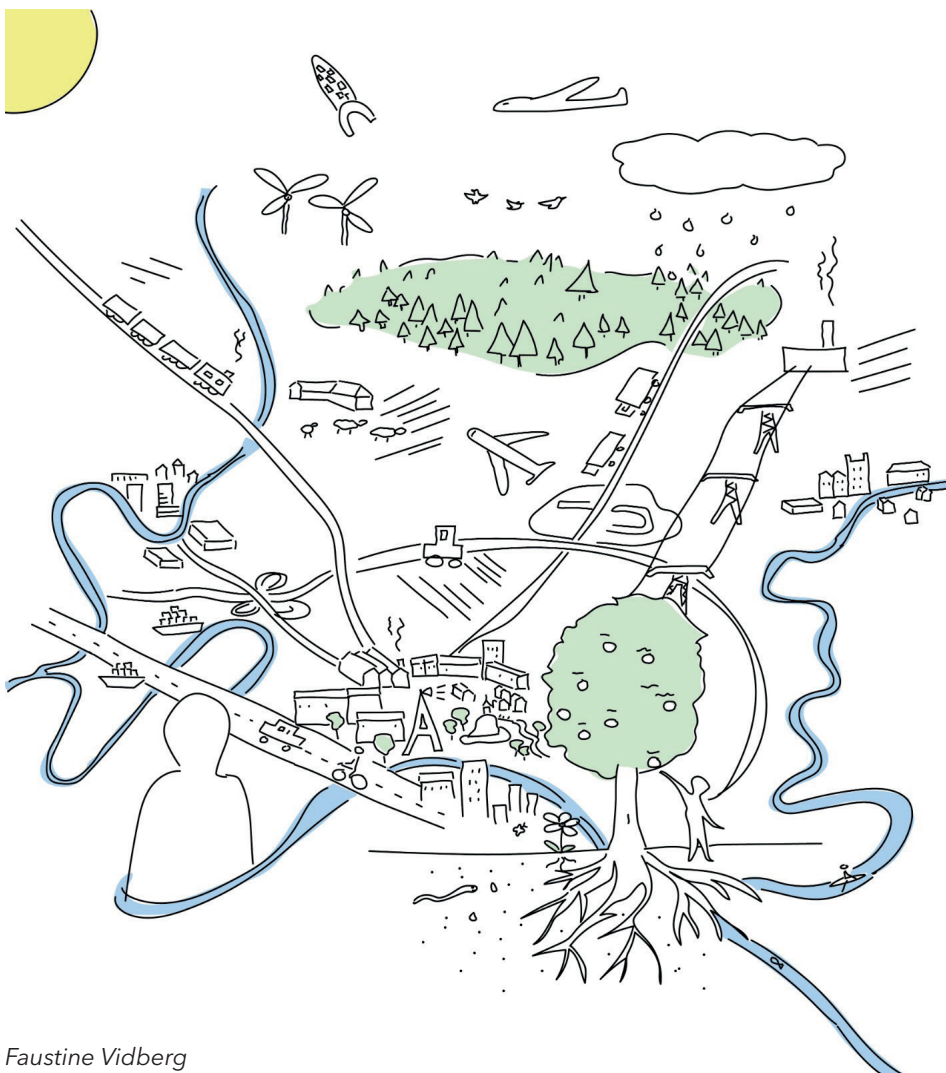
Faustine Vidberg

How can we achieve a circular economy, which "aims to change the paradigm of the so-called linear economy, by limiting the wasting of resources and the impact on the environment, and by increasing efficiency at all stages of the product economy"?

What ways can economic and urban development be reconciled with a more sensible approach in regards to resources, intelligence in the way things are done and a greater place given to people?

In short, how can we move from ideas to actions?

From Stockholm to Kyoto, a brief history of climate change

"The UN Conference held in Stockholm, Sweden, from 5 to 16 June 1972, also known as the first Earth Summit, adopted a declaration that established principles for the preservation and promotion of the human environment as well as an action plan containing recommendations for international action on environmental issues. In a section on the identification and monitoring of problematic pollutants, the Declaration raised the issue of climate change for the first time, calling on governments to be alert to activities that could lead to climate change and to assess the likelihood and magnitude of climate effects."

New IPCC report: What solutions for addressing global warming?

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has published the second part of its report on the impacts of global warming. This time the focus is on the vulnerabilities of human societies, ecosystems and socio-economic systems in relation to the climate crisis. In this report, the experts remind us that it is not too late to fight climate change, but that it is urgent, because each additional delay reduces the chances of building a liveable future. The IPCC pointed out the "lack of funding, political will, reliable information and sense of urgency" and called for "climate resilient development" as well as the need to "put human society on a path towards sustainable development". This includes, as Maya Elboudrari (TV5 Monde) summarizes, "clean energy production and healthy food from sustainable agriculture, but also circular economies, universal health coverage and social protection".

An ecological awakening: Level of collective awareness, commitment and action for biodiversity worldwide

The WWF published in May 2021 a new study, conducted by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), on public concerns for biodiversity over the past five years. The report demonstrates, as described by the WWF, an "ecological awakening" to a global threat which has resulted in a demand for concrete action to address biodiversity loss. This is reflected in digital activism, increasing internet searches related to nature and biodiversity loss, and an uptick in online queries about sustainable products.

*Evolution of the energy supply of
Paris over time (Barles & Kim, 2012)*

2. Dependence(s) and globalization

Cities are by definition dependent on other territories: territories from which water is drawn, agricultural territories which provide food, territories which produce energy or those from which materials are extracted, such as wood from forests and building materials; but also at the other end of the chain everything which is sent back in a processed version. Therefore, that which keeps the city alive comes mainly from elsewhere.

"Cities can be defined as groupings of populations that do not produce their own means of food subsistence." François Ascher, 2001, The New Principles of Urbanism

Although cities initially subsisted off their immediate territory (their hinterlands), the average distance from which products and services are supplied to urban areas has increased. For example, the average food supply radius for the city of Paris was 270 km in 1896 compared to 660 km at the beginning of the 21st century. Another example would be the smartphone, which, from mineral extraction to distribution, can travel up to several times around the world before reaching the consumer. Globalization seems complete: between 1950 and 2010, the volume of world exports increased 33-fold. The momentum has slowed since 2008, but the total volume of international trade (exports and imports of goods and services) still accounts for more than 50% of global GDP.

The relocation of certain types of production is a complex undertaking because of the levels of interdependence and the costs associated with the process. It is therefore necessary to develop trajectories of anticipation and adaptation and to choose which activities to relocate and which to keep.

The pursuit of yields and a poorly regulated system of productivity has also gradually transformed our landscapes. It has even often impoverished them, especially as agricultural consolidation and farming conditions have reduced the number of farms and farmers, by favouring large farms who employ heavy fertilizer-use and a high dependence on mechanization and fossil fuels, while also reducing biodiversity by eliminating natural hedges and overexploiting plots of land.

At the same time, the fringes of cities have developed based on a rationale of logistics: the "commercial zones" at the entrance to cities are characterized by a series of sheet metal warehouses built to accommodate the trucks that criss-cross the French territory. Adding to this landscape are now Amazon's "mega-warehouses", which are located near major motorway junctions on the outskirts of towns, and by the emergence of small-scale logistics spaces within cities.

Amazon warehouse opened in 2020 in Senlis(Amazon)

Agricultural landscapes in Seine-et-Marne (Département de Seine-et-Marne)

The logic of globalized supply, uprooted from a territorial context, is now being challenged, particularly in regards to its environmental impact in terms of greenhouse gas emissions. In 2020, 57% of France's carbon footprint resulted from imported goods. Interdependence also fuels fears of shortages, as illustrated by the pressure on raw materials since the COVID crisis and the war in Ukraine.

How can we simultaneously meet energy needs more locally, anchor the food supply, decarbonize the construction sector and envisage an urban development that does not come at the expense of nature?

Can a reorganization of the logistics chain be a lever for transforming the urban framework? Should logistics spaces be reintegrated into the heart of the city?

How can the development of cities and living areas be designed to be more in harmony with their environment?

3. Société(s) de l'instantané

"Everything is changing: space is shrinking, time is getting shorter, borders are disappearing, the world is becoming a single body."
Paul Hazard, Les Français en 1930

Over the last century, urban systems and the ways in which they are represented have evolved along with the economy. Identical distances are no longer perceived in the same way. The revolutions brought on by trains and cars have been followed by the digital revolution and its promise of ubiquity. Today's world is one of instantaneity, of immediate access to information, of remote working and rapid delivery from one end of the planet to the other. As a result, production and supply systems are both complex and fast-moving, constantly changing. Public policies have gradually divested themselves of this responsibility in favour of a complete liberalization and privatization (individual and entrepreneurial) of trade flows and their governance. The links between speed, mobility and the economic system have thus become in themselves determinants and structure entire areas of economic activity, while also governing daily life and even the location of populations.

New urban forms are accompanying the rise of hyper-connected uses. Whether it be Paris or other cities, the signs of increasingly flexible and rapid supply chains are already well established with the emergence of "quick commerce", which has come to supplement meal delivery platforms. Quick delivery of a dish or groceries within 10 minutes is now a reality with just a few clicks of a smartphone.

In city centres, these uses are reflected in the dark kitchens and dark stores that have begun to flourish. The latter are outpacing regulations, with public authorities finding themselves powerless to act. Indeed, in France, the boom in meal and grocery deliveries has led to the emergence, particularly since the beginning of the health crisis, of commercial establishments which are not intended to cater directly to the public: hyper-rationalized kitchens, located for the most part in premises covering hundreds of square metres, designed to prepare dishes for delivery, in front of which are crowded dozens of scooters and bicycles of delivery personnel, most of whom are facing job insecurity and paid on commission per errand to satisfy the wishes of so-and-so, whether they are 100 metres or several kilometres away. The same goes for dark stores, warehouses whose sole function is to prepare express orders placed on the Internet. The result is noise pollution for local residents, the occupation of the public space by deliverers, competition with traditional shops and, in the longer term, town centres without shop windows.

Faced with this, local and regional authorities remain powerless:

"Between the moment when a phenomenon is discovered, the moment when a law is passed, then the writing of legislation to implement the law, generally three or four years have elapsed. And generally, regulations comes more quickly from the market than by public authorities."
Emmanuel Grégoire, First Deputy Mayor of Paris

Beyond just representing a market share for investors and operators, these ghost shops can represent an opportunity for local authorities to reappropriate the management of logistics flows at a local level and (re) integrate logistics spaces in the heart of cities (last mile logistics).

The Internet is radically transforming the world of commerce and its economy: 85,000 jobs are said to have been destroyed in 10 years as a result of non-food-related online commerce, while the logistics sector continues to grow. Physical shops, particularly in town centres, are being debilitated. However, the Internet can also be seen as a platform for collective organization through non-institutional, free, participatory, efficient and instantaneous media for the development of direct links between producers and consumers. A parallel market, outside of traditional markets and well-established marketplaces, is already promoting short supply chains, encouraging repair rather than purchase, fighting in its own way against programmed obsolescence, facilitating bartering and donations. In short: sensible instantaneity.

What is the role of public actors in anticipating, framing and managing certain emerging models as well as their associated flows and effects?

How can the new uses generated by new technologies help to reshape the city and its environment?

Finally, can digital tools be a vehicle for the deployment of an already existing, difficult to quantify economy of second-hand goods, bartering, donations, repairs and mutual aid? WIn other words, an economy that is based on contemporary, more collective lifestyles, and which can be part of a response to the need for proximity and resilience in territories.

How can we change consumption patterns and practices to make them more resilient?

Dark Kitchen et dark store

Dark Store
According to Bathelot, dark stores refer to "distribution centres of an e-commerce operator where delivery fleets come to stock up". These are warehouses, mostly on the outskirts of large cities or in the heart of them (where a high population density is present), which are not intended to receive customers directly and whose shop window is virtual (e-commerce platform). The interface between the customer and the product is ensured by two actors, the order preparer (who works in the dark store) and the delivery person who usually travels on two wheels (motorized or not) to ensure the delivery within 10 to 15 minutes.

Dark Kitchen
Dark kitchens, or virtual kitchens, are catering establishments which, like dark stores, are not intended to receive the public since their shop window is also online via food delivery platforms. Dark kitchens have grown in popularity with the COVID-19 pandemic in France. From a purely functional point of view, the dark kitchen model and the way they operate is similar to that of dark stores, the difference being that a single dark kitchen usually hosts several different establishments, some of which hope to increase their customer reach in areas where their "physical" restaurants are not yet present.

A few figures
According to a study conducted by the Atelier Parisien d'Urbanisme and on the city of Paris alone (Jan. 2022):
At least 30 dark kitchens
60 dark stores
57 Stand-alone drive-thrus

From top to bottom: New city center landscapes for grocery delivery (Apur), and drop-off of local organic baskets in Cergy (Panier Bio Cergy)

Smartphone purchasing and delivery is changing the face of cities (opengeekslab)

4. Recycled and living, the territories of tomorrow...

Recycling is commonly described as a set of techniques whose objective is to recover waste and reintroduce it into the production cycle from which it came. The term is also used in French for workers who undergo further training to adapt to the developments in their professions or to convert to a new activity (as defined by the Larousse dictionary). In both cases, it is a process of reintegration into a cycle via an intervention, be it technical in terms of production or training for one's professional career.

By extrapolation, if the notion of recycling is extended to the territory, it could be a process of reintegration for the territory into a cycle – of life – through an intervention, be it political or social for example. The notion can also be applied to an urban and/or architectural space (a wasteland, abandoned buildings) which can be recycled through a re-qualification, a rehabilitation or a renewal (i.e., the notion of urban recycling). To return to its original definition, recycling also concerns waste, the main output (as opposed to input) of cities: household waste, waste water, demolition materials, etc.

Recycling therefore comes into play at several levels for territories: from its waste (from companies, households, urbanization and urban renewal) to its spaces (wastelands, buildings, neighbourhoods), but it can also be applied to inhabitants and workers with, for example, the identified need for training in future ecological sectors or even the need to adapt uses and lifestyles to current and future contexts. Can recycling uses be therefore a point of discussion? And for what purpose(s)?

Introducing the notion of a cycle into all the processes of a given territory would mean rethinking the modes of supply, urban metabolism and waste management. It would also mean thinking of the territory as being in perpetual renewal (or recycling) where nothing is lost but everything is transformed.

In order for the necessary trajectory to be achieved for a city that is reconciled, sensible, guided, anchored and in harmony with its environment, the complete and sustainable transformation of a territory through its urban metabolism could take the form of various actions:

- Relocation of production based on the territory's potentials
- Rebalancing of supply and thereby of territorial metabolism
- Redirection and promotion of alternative lifestyles and consumption patterns
- Investment, innovation and promotion of a real circular economy
- Establishment of land and planning policies to serve this ambition.

For several years, territories have been reinventing themselves: urban farms engaged in local food systems, organization of the reuse of materials, heating networks with local production units, etc. These initiatives can be considered as faint signs of an announced and necessary change. However, they push for a more global and integrated reflection of our supply and consumption models.

Schematic representation of the northern Paris Region arc (Faustine Vidberg)
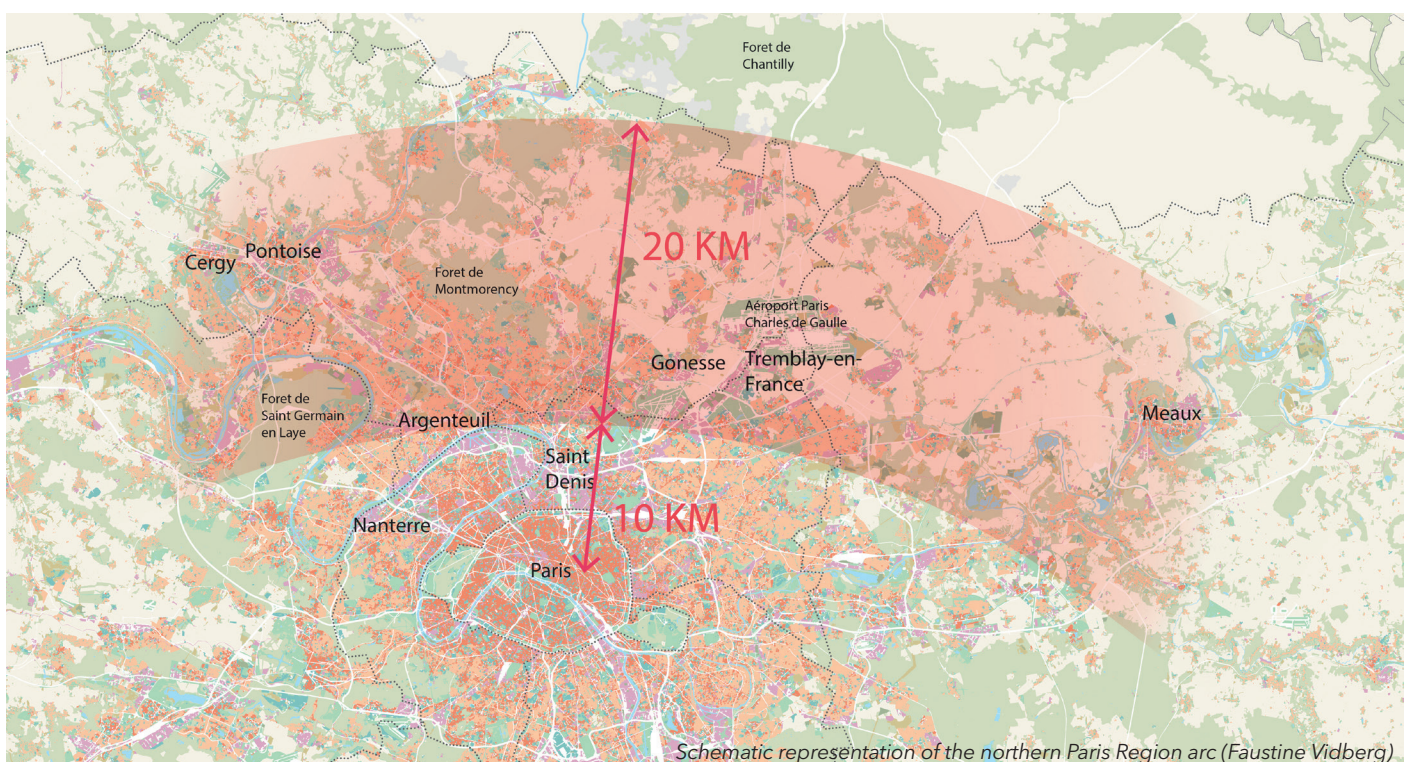
5. Focus on the northern arc of the Paris Region

From Cergy-Pontoise to Meaux, the agricultural, urban and economic territories of the Paris metropolis' hinterland seem to have maintained few links with their immediate environment and with the centre of the metropolis. Instead, they seem to be more outward-looking, more world-oriented. The infrastructures (airport, motorways and railways) allow rapid international exchanges, constituting means of support for a world of speed and the mobility of materials, products and energy.

From top to bottom: the new town of Cergy (Vincent Tournière), the Roissy airport area (David Monniaux), the rural surroundings of Meaux (Le Parisien) and the Oise-Pays de France Natural Park (PNR Oise Pays de France)

Brief typology of spaces

Cities, centres of interest

The northern arc of the Paris metropolis, like the whole region, is under the influence of the French capital. A large proportion of the population works in the heart of the metropolis, while the entire transport infrastructure converges on Paris. Nevertheless, a few major cities manage to be high employment areas and act as secondary centres within the Île-de-France. To the west, there is Cergy-Pontoise, a conurbation of more than 200,000 inhabitants structured around two urban centres: Cergy, a new town 35 km from Paris built in the 1970s, and Pontoise, a historic town on the banks of the Oise. To the east, Meaux is the most populous town in the Seine-et-Marne department with almost 100,000 inhabitants.

The airport district

In the middle of this axis are two airports: Roissy–Charles De Gaulle Airport, the largest airport in France and second largest in Europe, located 25 km from Paris between rural villages and agricultural areas; and Paris–Le Bourget Airport, a business airport with limited traffic, located 13 km from Paris, and surrounded by residential and business areas. This zone also plays the role of a logistics hub for Greater Paris: it alone accounts for 26% of the available warehouse space in the Île-de-France, with the presence of players such as DHL and nearly 67,000 of the sector's employees.

Rural and agricultural areas

Rural areas are characterized by a low density, a significant vegetation cover and very often the existence of an agricultural activity. They are based on a strong network of villages. Agricultural areas occupy 53% of the Île-de-France, even more so in the areas on the fringe of the region. Large-scale crops (wheat, barley, rapeseed, beetroot) characterize the greater Paris region: they cover more than 90% of the region's agricultural land and represent the main activity of more than two thirds of the farms in the region. While most of the production is destined for export, 18% of the farms sell through local food systems.

Protected areas

Large natural zones are protected to preserve certain areas from urbanization, to enhance a rich and threatened heritage, and to contribute to biodiversity. Two regional nature parks are located in the northern arc, the Vexin Français Regional Nature Park and the Oise–Pays de France Regional Nature Park, which straddles the Île-de-France and Hauts-de-France regions to the north. Forests such as the Montmorency forest are also protected.

Initiatives working towards the transition of the territory

This is the territory of a new project called Agoralim, which is the second Marché d'Intérêt National (MIN) in the Île-de-France. Since the 1960s, MINs have been major supply points for French cities, with the Paris markets being supplied by the Rungis market in the south of the region. Today, the public operator (SEMMARIS) is being asked to set up a new MIN in the north of the Île-de-France. Agoralim aims to be more than a market: it defines itself as a "new place for sustainable food", a centre of food and agricultural excellence, which aims to create a sustainable ecosystem "from the land to the plate", enabling the development of greater share of short food supply chains for the inhabitants of the Île-de-France.

This border shared between rural and urban areas is the ideal territory to rethink the productive links between the two types of spaces: the inter-municipal authorities have recently launched Territorial Food Project (TFP) initiatives, texts that provide a strategic framework for relocating agriculture and food by supporting the installation of farmers, local food systems or local products in canteens (examples: the TFPs of Roissy–Pays de France or Cergy-Pontoise–Vexin Français).

Other initiatives have been launched in the Nord Est Parisien region, such as the "Cycle Terre" project in Sevran, which aims to transform the soil of Greater Paris into building materials with a very low environmental impact, in short, to transform waste into a resource.

Between medium-sized towns (Meaux), new towns (Cergy-Pontoise), villages, natural and agricultural land, and commercial and logistics areas, the northeast arc raises questions about the adaptation of lifestyles and consumption, production methods, and supply and distribution methods (logistics) in this context of crises.

From top to bottom: first visualization of Agoralim (Semmaris), logo of the Territorial Food Projects (Ministry of Agriculture), productions of Cycle Terre (Cycle Terre)

How can development be carried out in a way that does not harm territories, while also addressing the climate emergency and developing resilience?

How can the socio-ecological transition be based on exchanges and urban–rural relations as well as be embodied in the territory of the northern Paris Region?

What new political and social relationships can be built through a process of collective learning and working together?

How can the territory find inspiration and maximize its capacity to rebuild itself for the future through a collective learning process that promotes "acting together"?

Participating in the workshop

Place and date

The workshop will be held in Cergy-Pontoise and in Île-de-France from 5 to 23 September 2022.

Roundtables gathering national and international experts are being held online in May and June 2022. Preparatory documents introducing the territory and more details will be published before the workshop.

How the workshop unfolds

The workshop is organised according to the original method of Les Ateliers, which consists of bringing together professionals from different countries and professions in multidisciplinary teams.

The approach of the workshops is multi-scalar, ranging from the Île-de-France region as a whole to the scale of the communes and neighbourhoods, and even to the scale of the street.

The first few days are devoted to fieldwork, meetings and visits allowing everyone to discover and appropriate the territory and its different scales for the workshop. The teams then start working in groups.

At the end of the workshop and after working with computers and other technological tools, a jury composed of local and international professionals and local decision-makers is gathered to listen to and analyse the proposals and approaches of each team. The presentations are public. At the end of the presentations, a jury deliberation is organised, the objective of which is not to choose a project, but to pinpoint important and strategic information that will allow the work to be continued as well as to find and create complementarities between the different groups. These exchanges will make it possible to draw up an initial summary of the workshop, highlighting the jury's recommendations and the work of the three teams.

How to apply?

The workshop is open to young professionals of all nationalities and disciplines, and to students with at least a master's degree: Urban planners, designers, architects, economics, geographers, sociologists, environmentalists, engineers, photographers, landscape architects, artists, journalists, etc.

Only conditions

Proficiency in English (must be able to work within an international team), full availability for the workshop dates, and a maximum age of 30 years.

Preparing your application

To apply to be participant of the workshop, you must gather
- the application form available on Les Ateliers' workshop webpage
- your CV (one or two pages)
- a personal work or an excerpt of a personal work (max 6 pages), preferably linked to the topic of the workshop or on the territory where you live.
Send these three documents as one PDF to candidatures@ateliers.org

Registration

The registration fee is 150€, which includes association membership fee, accommodation in Cergy-Pontoise for the whole duration of the workshop, local transportation, certain group meals, site visits, conferences, and design materials.

Deadline

29 May 2022 at 11:59 PM (UTC+2)
Results will be announced from 31st May 2022.

Do you have some questions ?
Do not hesitate to write to 40ans@ateliers.org