

# **Saint-Laurent du Maroni, The Urban Transition of a French City in the Amazon**

**From a Thousand Villages on the River to a Connected Cross-Border City**



## **Call for international applications**

**Call for applications to select 21 international participants for a workshop on territorial strategies and urban development projects**

**International workshop of urban planning, Saint-Laurent du Maroni, French Guiana  
6 – 20 May 2016**



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## Preamble

In 2015, the French Guiana Public Organization for Planning (EPAG), the City of Saint-Laurent du Maroni, the French Development Agency, and the association Les Ateliers de Cergy, partnered together to organize a workshop on the theme of territorial solidarity and urban development for the city of Saint-Laurent du Maroni, with regard to the rapid population growth it is witnessing. This topic has some similarities with the reflections concerning intense urban development such as the one within the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa), but with the uniqueness of being a French territory, ruled by European regulations, located in South America.

In the collective European unconscious, French Guiana historically represents the land of forced-labor camps and penal colonization which was initiated in 1852 to compensate for the lack of workers resulting from the abolition of slavery. Due to its position on the Maroni river, Saint-Laurent played a key role and became a *Commune Pénitencière Spéciale* in 1880, with the director of the camp serving as its mayor. Before this period, the site hosted indigenous tribes from the Pre-Columbian era, colonists and their slaves in the 17th and 18th centuries, and later the Bushi Nenges, descendants of slaves fleeing Suriname.

A mosaic, cross-border river town, Saint-Laurent du Maroni is a French *commune* located on the far western edge of French Guiana, bordering Suriname. The Maroni River can be said to be its real or abstract border, since it is a river originating from the Amazon Basin: it is a place of life and sharing; today criss-crossed, and traveled up and down by pirogues (dugout canoes). It is also a place in itself, a landscape, a gap in the heart of the Amazon.



Sunset on the Maroni river  
Credit: Les Ateliers de Cergy

To understand Saint-Laurent's geopolitical situation is to explore its rapid population growth of 3,5%, higher than the French Guiana average of 2,4% (INSEE data for the period 2007-2012), its geographic position in active interface with Suriname, and the securing of its future through economic engines that still need to be defined, reinforced, or invented.

What relationships can be established with Suriname and the city of Cayenne in this context of rapid development? How can the population growth be used as an opportunity for development, such as the creation of an innovative construction industry? What types of urban forms can be created for this city, composed of a community of villages whose residents remain still extremely rural? How can the area's resources and an identity such as the "City of Art and History" be used to develop tourism?

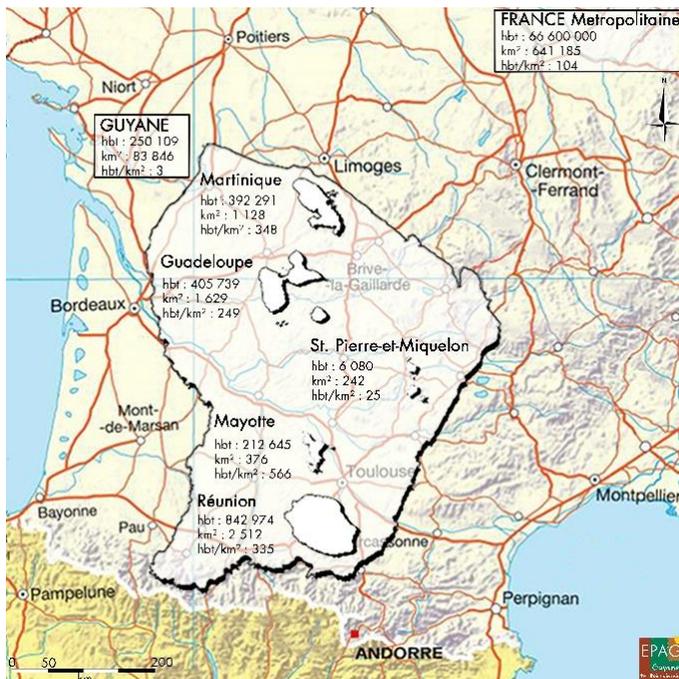
In order to answer these questions and many more, a long term outlook (by 2060) is necessary, to allow for the forethought of these phenomena of growth, whereas today, the responses to questions like those of housing and infrastructure can only be made in terms of recovery, as the needs are so exponential.

Les Ateliers is a non-governmental organization created in 1982 by the urban planning authorities of the new town of Cergy-Pontoise. They gather an international network of universities, decision-makers and professionals dedicated to planning, development and urban design. Since 1982, les ateliers have been organizing international workshops on topics related to city or regional planning. The association organizes collaborative workshops to foster new and creative concepts. In France and abroad, the workshops offer to local authorities innovative urban development proposals. These workshops are also a source of training for all the participants, whether they be local or international experts.

## I- French Guiana, a Land Full of Richness and Paradoxes

### 1) A Piece of France in the Amazon

French Guiana is a territory full of contrasts and paradoxes. Caught between industrialized and developing countries, on the historic fissure between the African and South American continents, an EU Outermost Region in South America, French Guiana reveals not only planet Earth's origins, its complexity and completeness, but also its future. At the junction between natural land resources and possible spatial prospects, it shelters in its center a small reservoir of exceptional biodiversity, that of the Amazon, with a wealth of natural but also multicultural and multiethnic richness.

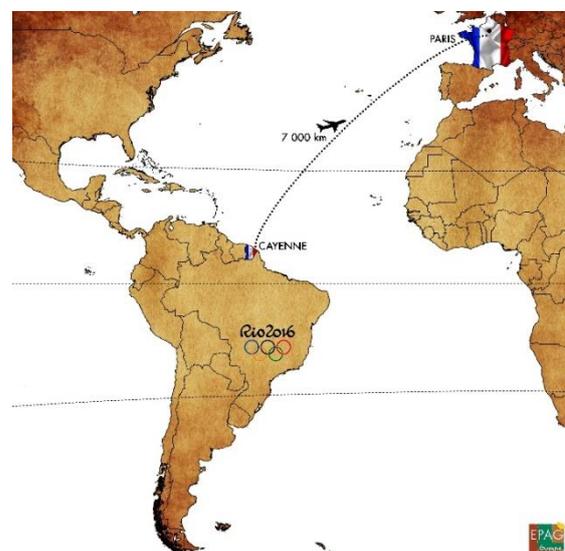


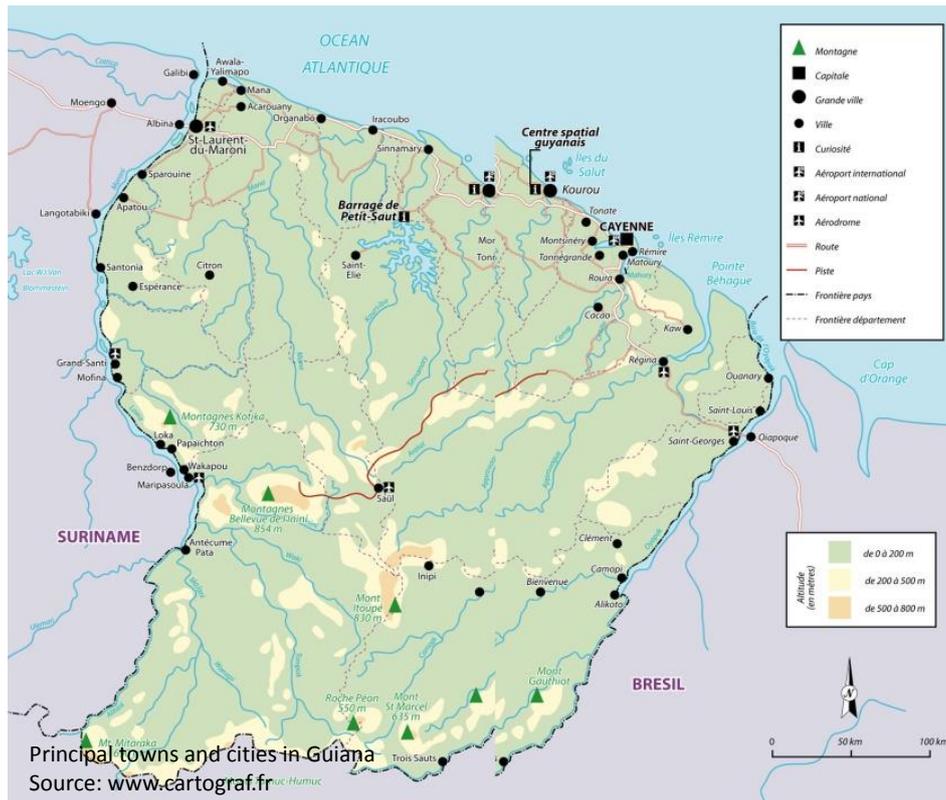
With a surface area of 83,846 km<sup>2</sup>, equivalent to the size of Portugal, French Guiana is France's largest department, alone representing 16% of France's territory. With a density of 3 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup> and an estimated 255,000 inhabitants in 2014, it is one of the 10 least populated "countries" in the world (0.38% of the French population). The majority of its inhabitants can be found along the coastline and National Route 1 (RN1), on an East-West axis. More than half of them are concentrated in Cayenne, the capital, and in its surrounding areas. The second population hub, projected to surpass Cayenne in ten years, is the west of French Guiana and the city of Saint-Laurent du Maroni.

A French overseas department, French Guiana has become, since the 2015 December elections, a territorial collectivity and the territory has approved the merger of the *départemental* and regional governments. The legislative branch of French Guiana now consists of representatives elected at the same time as the representatives of the newly reconfigured regions in metropolitan France.

A unique European territory possessing a land-based frontier on the American continent, French Guiana clearly distinguishes itself from the system of governance in metropolitan France but also from that of the neighboring countries that surround it, Brazil to the east and Suriname to the west.

French Guiana suffers from its status as a showcase for French and European laws while it must also think of its future in connection with its neighbors favored by its political sphere of inclusion. The porosity of its borders with its neighbors brings a permanent flux of immigrants to French Guiana's soil from practically every South American nationality, adding to the imbalance of its social corpus and also accentuating the different observable inequalities.





For several decades French Guiana has experienced a spectacular population growth. In the last 50 years, the population in French Guiana has multiplied by 5 and this trend should continue for decades to come, with a growth rate estimated to be around 2,4% per year. This impressive population growth resulting from high birth and immigration rates, serves as the starting point of the reflection at the heart of this workshop: on the one hand, this high population growth can be a provider of development opportunities for the French Guiana territory, but it is also a major challenge in organizing the resulting urban development and offer prospects for an ever increasing number of youth.

Today, French Guiana's population is composed of the following ethnic groups:<sup>1</sup>

- Amerindians, the term used in French Guiana for indigenous people originating from several different ethnicities and representing a small portion of the population
- French Guiana Creoles, the main population
- "Maroons" also called "Bushu Nenges," descendants of former slaves who fled Dutch plantations in neighboring Suriname beginning in the 17th century and who settled around the Maroni River. The Bushu Nenges predominately reside in the west of French Guiana and around Saint-Laurent du Maroni.
- Hmongs, originally from former Indochina and arriving after 1975, reside mainly in four villages in the east and west of French Guiana.
- Citizens from metropolitan France, many of whom are employed by the government.

<sup>1</sup> Based on information from INSEE and the Conseil Général de Guyane

- Other ethnic groups: Chinese, Lebanese, Brazilian, Haitian, Surinamese, Guyanese, Dominicans, South Asians, Javanese... The reasons for these immigrations to French Guiana differ from one group to the other: the Chinese immigration dating far back was due to economic and commercial reasons, and has been bolstered by a more recent wave of immigration, then there is the displacement tied to the civil war for the Surinamese, economic immigration for those coming from neighboring Brazil, etc.
- Clandestine immigrants whose numbers, origins, and paths are difficult to estimate.
- For Saint-Laurent du Maroni it is also necessary to take into consideration a population whose roots are tied to the former convicts of the penal colony who, even if they do not represent a significant number, still impact the city in terms of its urban heritage and the relationship to the river and the Amazon forest.

For the last several decades, new migratory trends have developed for populations attracted to Saint-Laurent for its better living and working conditions (minimum wage), European quality infrastructure (hospitals, maternity benefits, schools), and government assistance. These socioeconomic conditions, which differ from other South American countries, have created opportunistic strategies for migration on both sides of the river. Moreover, concerning Saint-Laurent du Maroni, it illustrates the complexity of a territorial collectivity physically detached from Europe, whose laws and regulations are dictated by the latter but then are applied to the economic, environmental, and human context unique to this territory. It is also important to note that some entrepreneurs are starting to move to Saint-Laurent due to its major potential for economic development.

This ethnic and cultural diversity constitutes one of French Guiana's greatest assets and could feed a cultural vision for the future development of Saint-Laurent du Maroni. A true ethnic melting-pot, this diversity examines the dynamics of inter-ethnic mixing and beyond that, it illustrates and questions the exchanges and interaction between communities that create an intercultural dialogue. In addition, it is interesting to note that not a single party representing the extreme right was present at the 2015 December regional elections.

## **2) Between Environmental Resources and International Spatial Influence, what are the Levers for the Development of French Guiana?**



French Guiana's abundance of richness is not limited to the sociocultural diversity of its population. Contrary to many areas considered victims of the general degradation of the planet, it offers enormous resources that could establish it as a "territorial motor" in the conservation of the planet. With 93% of its land covered by the Amazon rainforest, it is part of the "lung" of the planet and constitutes one of the greatest biodiversity reserves

on Earth. Paradoxically, French Guiana emits more CO2 than metropolitan France, if deforestation is taken into account.

French Guiana also hosts one of the largest aerospace industry hubs in the world, being where Ariane, Soyuz, and Vega rockets are launched. Spaceports close to the equator are found in Kourou and Sinamary. Digital and photographic data warehousing has also been developed in Kourou (photo satellites, etc.).

Nevertheless, even while the abundance of environmental resources could spark the development of a significant specialized tourism and the space center could be a major driver in economic development, neither of these assets seem to truly benefit local populations. French Guiana is currently a stalled territory, lacking an economic engine and strongly dependent on the aid of metropolitan France.

- A Broken Regional Economy, "Dependent" on Metropolitan France

Until the early 1990s, French Guiana possessed a strong economic growth tied mainly to the development of the aerospace industry. Since then, the strong growth maintained by the sector has not managed to surpass the exponential growth of the population, resulting in the stalling of French Guiana and an ever increasing economic lag compared to metropolitan France and the other overseas territories. Today, French Guiana is one of the European Union's weakest regions in terms of GDP per inhabitant.

This economic standstill also translates into a high rate of unemployment (21.3% in 2013), a significant distribution of social assistance in the average budgets of those living in French Guiana (on average 20.6% in 2006) and a preponderance of public sector jobs whose added value alone represents 35% of French Guiana's GDP.

French Guiana, in search of an economic engine capable of keeping up with the progression of its population, could orientate itself towards the establishment of a more dynamic domestic market and the development of an economy aimed at exports. Currently, French Guiana imports six times more goods than it exports, the majority of which comes directly from metropolitan France.



This situation of economic distress leaves the field open to the development of economic activities that are informal and often illicit, such as in the case of gold mining in west French Guiana where primitive gold panning is practiced, often calling on illegal immigrants as workers. As much as the government has attempted to combat this dangerous industry (-21% of illegal sites between 2014 and 2015), the number of these illegal sites has not dwindled in certain regions in the heart of the Amazon.

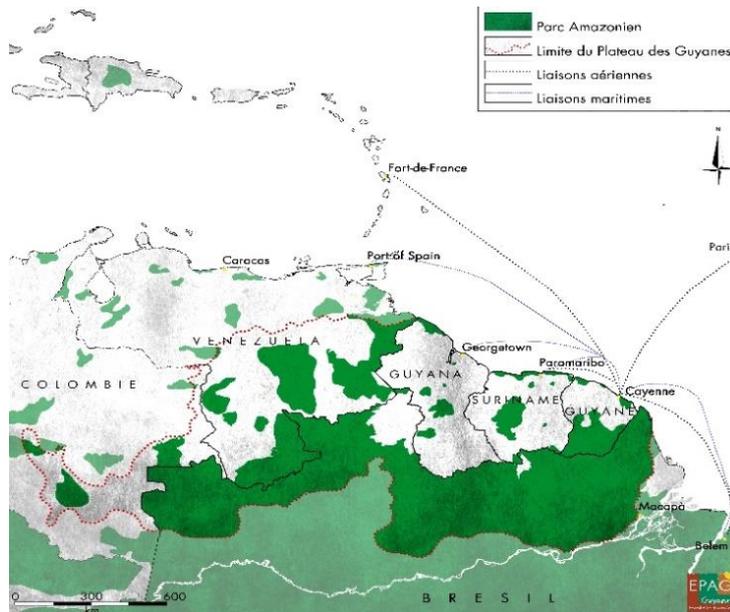
In this context, the city of Saint-Laurent du Maroni presents singularities that could feed both the potential vision of its territory and the establishment of an innovative urban structure, as much through a bottom-up process of creation, integrating residents far in advance, as in the structural interweaving of the landscape, the conservation of biodiversity and the establishment of local systems.

## II- Saint-Laurent, Capital City of the Maroni River

### 1) A City Trying to Find Its Place in the Regional Balance

- The History of an Exceptional Expansion

Saint-Laurent du Maroni, "Capital of the West," is located approximately 260 km to the west of Cayenne by way of the national highway RN1, near which are situated French Guiana's main urban centers. The town thus finds itself at the intersection of two major axes:



- East-West axis, the length of the coastline between Suriname's capital Paramaribo and Cayenne.

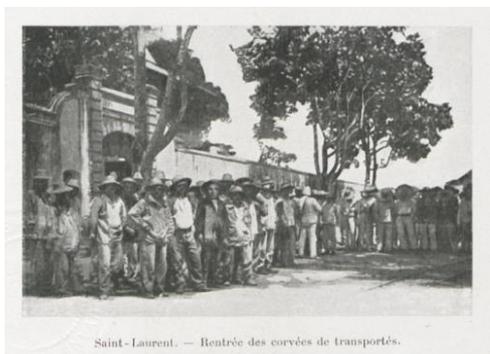
- North-South axis: Saint-Laurent was built along the banks of the Maroni River, not far from the river's mouth, offering potential possibilities in terms of shipping and leisure activities.

Saint-Laurent is also the gateway to the Amazon and the Bushi Nenge and Amerindian villages located further up the river.

In 1854, France decided to establish a penal colony in Saint-Laurent, on the banks of the Maroni across from the small Dutch town of Albina. At the time, Saint-Laurent was only connected to Cayenne by sea and found itself in almost complete isolation in relation to the rest of French Guiana and metropolitan France. The historic neighborhood that was constructed around the penal colony is the nerve center of the city.

The discovery of gold in the river basin quickly endowed the city with a greater stature of importance and led to an influx of people, notably those from the Antilles who were attracted by the economic prosperity. Beginning in the 1930s, the progressive closing of the penal colony and the decline of the gold mining industry led to a transformation of the city's population, receiving a growing number of both Amerindian and Maroon "river" populations. It was the start of an expansion that has yet to wane.

In the 1980s, the composition of the city's population changed once again as a consequence of the Suriname civil war. Between 9,000 and 13,000 Surinamese came as refugees to Saint-Laurent, doubling its population. Some of these new arrivals were Amerindians or Maroons, who had come from villages, on both sides of the river, that had long been established without the notion of international borders but considered places where people had just always lived.



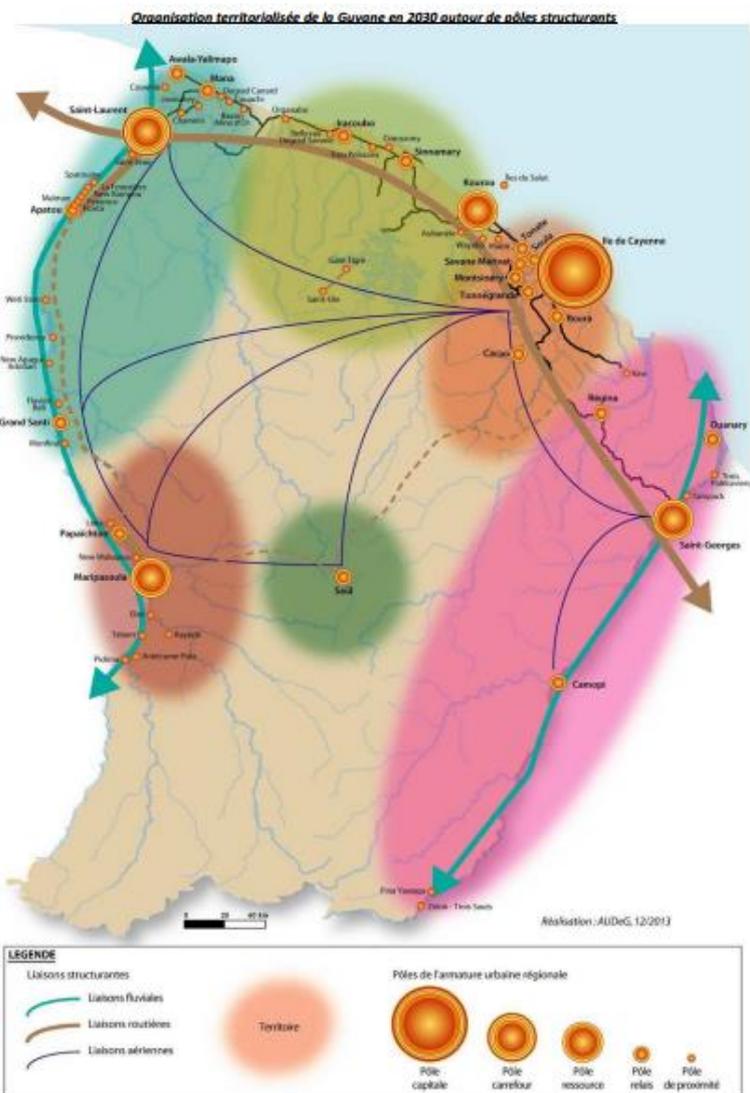


- Saint-Laurent du Maroni, a Geostrategic Territory at the Core of New Regional Balances

To reflect upon the strategy of development for Saint-Laurent is to assume the exceptional situation of a mid-sized city projected to become French Guiana's largest *commune* in terms of population, surpassing Cayenne, by 2020.

Three thousand inhabitants in 1949, the city grew to 45,000 by 2013 and projections place the number between 115,000 to 150,000 for the year 2030, based on three scenarios.<sup>2</sup>

Becoming French Guiana's main *commune* in terms of population, implies that Saint-Laurent du Maroni now takes on a new role in the French Guiana regional balance and redefines its relationship with Cayenne on one side and its neighbor Suriname on the other.



<sup>2</sup> Demographic Study produced by AFD: Demographic Dynamics and Urban Policies in French Guiana: a Case Study of Saint-Laurent du Maroni, 2014.

The Regional Development Plan designed for 2030 therefore calls for the strengthening of Saint-Laurent's role as the "nerve center of the West," an attractive hub in line with Cayenne and open to a reinforced cooperation with Suriname.

The often attributed nickname of Saint-Laurent as the "capital of the Maroni" bears witness to a reality that surpasses country borders and includes the Surinamese area in its governing. As such, Saint-Laurent du Maroni finds itself closer to Paramaribo by road than to Cayenne. And even if the village of Albina on the Surinamese river bank across from Saint-Laurent cannot compare to the latter in terms of population (4,000 inhabitants), it is no less essential in regards to economic exchanges and is, in fact, completely integrated into Saint-Laurent's residential zone.



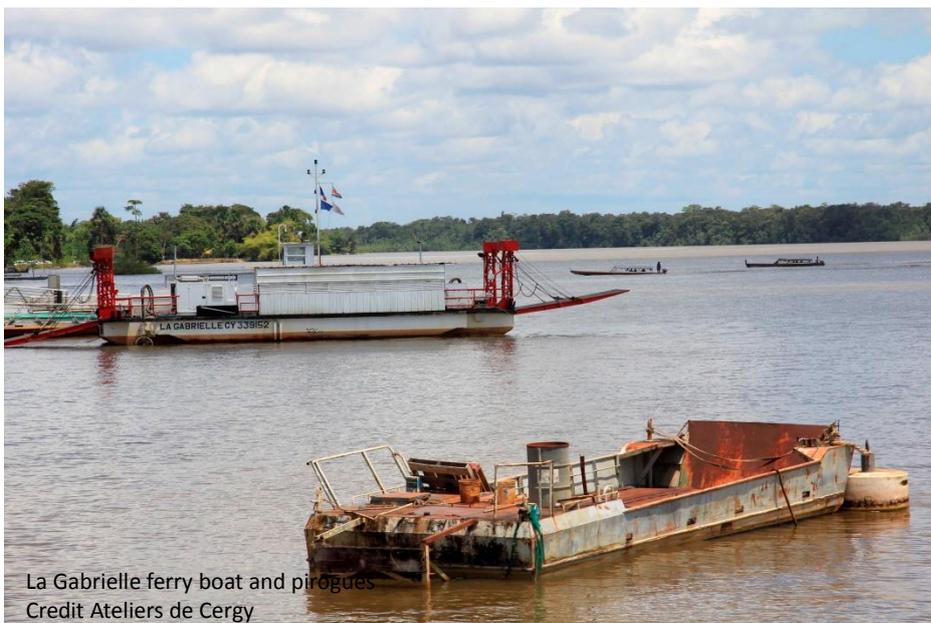
Saint-Laurent is a river town and its life thus rhymes with that of the Maroni and the exchanges which are created on both sides of it. For practical reasons, the real international border has been "displaced" deeper into the hinterland, therefore identity checks like those held along the Cayenne road are not common in Saint-Laurent.

People and goods cross the river several times per day and at dawn the Maroni sees numerous pirogues making incessant roundtrips between the two banks. The residents of Saint-Laurent and Albina cross the river for various reasons: the buying and selling of goods, schooling for Surinamese children in Saint-Laurent, the French quality of health facilities appeals to Surinamese and Bushi Nenge populations living on both sides of the river.



Albina from above  
Credit : Marten Schalkwijk

The majority of these trips are made in an informal manner via motorized pirogues. Although a ferry boat does exist, the need to carry out expensive visa procedures and conform to the obligations of international travel, along with the time it takes compared to the relative ease of organizing a pirogue "on demand," discourages the majority of travelers from using it.



La Gabrielle ferry boat and pirogues  
Credit Ateliers de Cergy

Between 2008 and 2010, about 120 pirogues were carrying almost 410 000 passengers per year, whereas the ferry boat would carry only 6 000 of them and would often cross the river without being full.

Concerning the goods that come from the two sides of the river, Albina and Saint-Laurent propose complementary products. Therefore, many well-to-do Surinamese come to the French Guiana side to procure higher quality products and luxury goods that are difficult to find on the other side of the river and numerous residents of Saint-Laurent du Maroni cross the river to find with greater ease and for less (thus profiting in effect from a bargain) construction materials and basic necessities without having to make the trip to Cayenne. Nonetheless, competition exists as well: as an example, the bananas illegally arriving from Suriname via Albina compete with the Guyanese bananas sold at a higher price in the Saint-Laurent market.



Arrival of the pirogues in Albina  
Credit: Ateliers de Cergy



Market in Saint-Laurent  
Credit : Ateliers de Cergy

In terms of the intense exchanges that are made between the two sides of the river, the question of the construction of a bridge has been posed and studies are being made to determine its feasibility. Currently the Surinamese authorities hope to focus their attention on eastern Suriname, the development of Albina and its opening (notably through the improvement of the road up to Paramaribo). The workshop will examine the keys to a strengthened and comfortable cooperation between the two banks, the partnership between two urban centers and the support for exchanges which are, for the moment, essentially informal.

Informal activities, such as economic activities, occupation of spaces or the displacement of populations from either side of the border, play an important role in Saint-Laurent. The question of taking them into consideration and their integration in the way of governing the city should be examined.

### **1) A Mosaic City: A City of Villages**

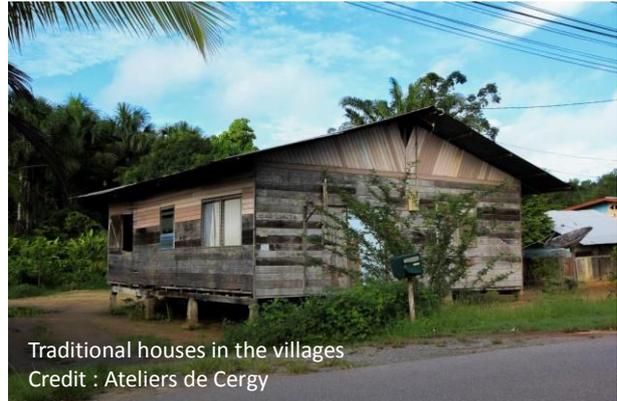
Saint-Laurent du Maroni, "Capital of the Villages," is composed, beyond the colonial city, of a collection of villages, each carrying the identity of the social or ethnic group that inhabits it. Anthropological-type reflections are at the base of certain types of homes, such as the buildings in the Charbonnière district.

Historically, these villages were developed in conjunction with the different waves of immigration, beginning around the 1950s. The first constructions by "black maroons" were established on pilings along the riverbanks behind the penal colony, practically creating a second town at the heart of Saint-Laurent. It can be noted that while the colonial city turns its back to the river, the villages of the "black maroons" face the Maroni, thus translating within this space the cultural frontiers between the different groups of people.

The 1940s to 1950s saw the creation of the three first Amerindian villages of Balaté, Paddock and Terre-Rouge, still in existence today and which have added on the villages of Espérance and Pierre. They benefit from additional areas of land identified as collective usage zones (ZDUC) intended for hunting or food-producing agriculture and are governed by village chiefs, called "captains," who organize life in the communities. The operating secular laws authorize village captains (male or female), to manage their own villages in an autonomous manner, sometimes superseding French law. Therefore, for example, the captain, in accordance with his village council, has the right to accept or rejects candidates who wish to build new constructions in the village. This decision is based on previous social relations and the new arrival's intentions for future relations. Moreover, Balaté is the only village subject to a deed of ownership.

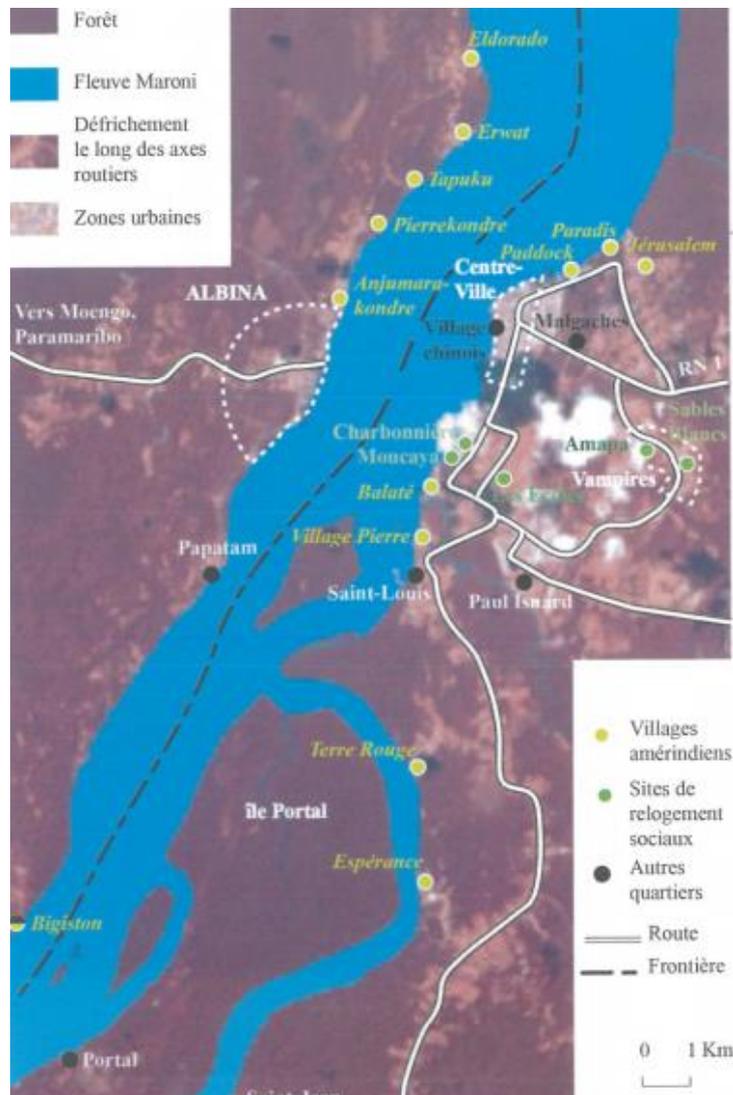


Traditional houses in the villages  
Credit : Ateliers de Cergy



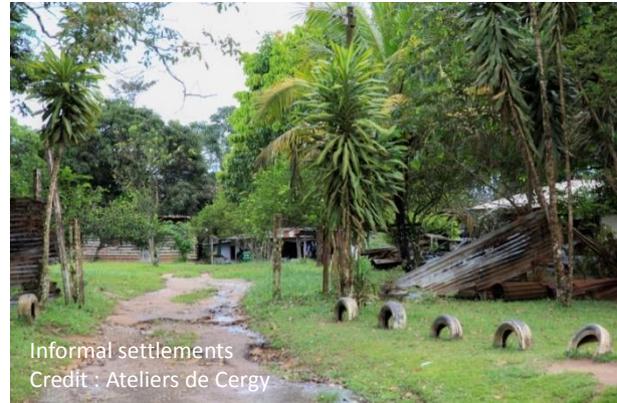
Traditional houses in the villages  
Credit : Ateliers de Cergy

The ZDUCs, located at the exterior of the urban area when they were created, have been caught in the urban development of Saint-Laurent and now find themselves integrated into the urban shadow, thus posing the question of the chances for survival of these spaces in the heart of the city, subjects to increasingly intense real estate pressure.



Map of the different districts and villages, created by Clémence Léobal in "Saint-Laurent du Maroni, une porte sur le fleuve", Ibis Rouge Editions, 2013

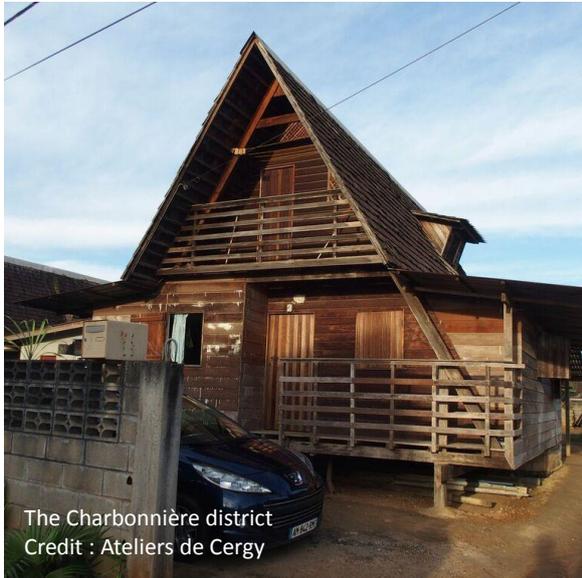
Other situations present themselves in the case of illicit settlements hoping to obtain legal status following a more or less long and structured occupation on land destined for other uses in the *commune's* development plans. Moreover, individuals well aware of the relocation system sometimes exploit its flaws by subletting apartments that have been granted to them, they then illegally occupy new territory in the hope that a new regulation will offer them an economic advantage and additional social assistance.



The "Chinese village" district, called this because it was initially inhabited by former slaves coming from Indochina, quickly became a dynamic neighborhood tied to the gold business and activities related to the river (fishing/fish sales, etc.). As for the downtown, constructed on an orthogonal framework from the colonial period, is reinforced through its function as the city's administrative and service center.



Finally, the construction of the "Charbonnière" district began between 1982 and 1984 as a response to the lack of available housing during the period of high population growth and as a way to reduce the number of neighborhood settlements along the riverbanks, considered unsanitary by the government. The Charbonnière district, created on the principles of "self-building, suitable housing, and the revitalization of the Maroon culture" remains today one of the nerve centers of Saint-Laurent. If the colonial center appears relatively sleepy, the Charbonnière is the center of liveliness and activity, as witnessed through the numerous restaurants and nightclubs that open at night along the river.

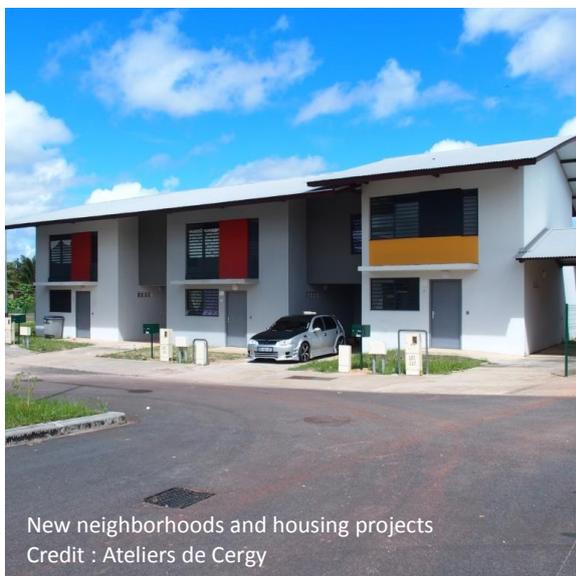


The Charbonnière district  
Credit : Ateliers de Cergy



The Charbonnière district  
Credit : Ateliers de Cergy

During the last several decades, government officials have been led, in a state of urgency, to develop new neighborhoods and housing projects to deal with the growing population.



New neighborhoods and housing projects  
Credit : Ateliers de Cergy



New neighborhoods and housing projects  
Credit : Ateliers de Cergy

The Saint-Maurice ZAC has been in construction for over ten years and should provide, upon completion, approximately 3,600 housing units. Nonetheless, these numerous construction programs do not suffice in providing a comprehensive response to Saint-Laurent's population growth nor in shaping an all-encompassing project of a stable city as the capital of the Maroni. Moreover, the commune possesses few financial resources, therefore construction programs are often made based on financial opportunities and government aid and do not always favor the coherence of a global project.

Passing through this web of networks and villages, each with its own strong sociocultural characteristics, it can be seen how the entire city is organized into more or less isolated reservoirs. Residents coming from metropolitan France, employed by the government or hospital, find themselves at night in the cafes and restaurants of the colonial city or in some locally known private spots set up by other "Métros," while young Maroons assemble around soccer fields or on the beach of the Charbonnière district, and Amerindians organize village gatherings at their premises next to the soccer fields or not far from the river.



Credit : Ateliers de Cergy



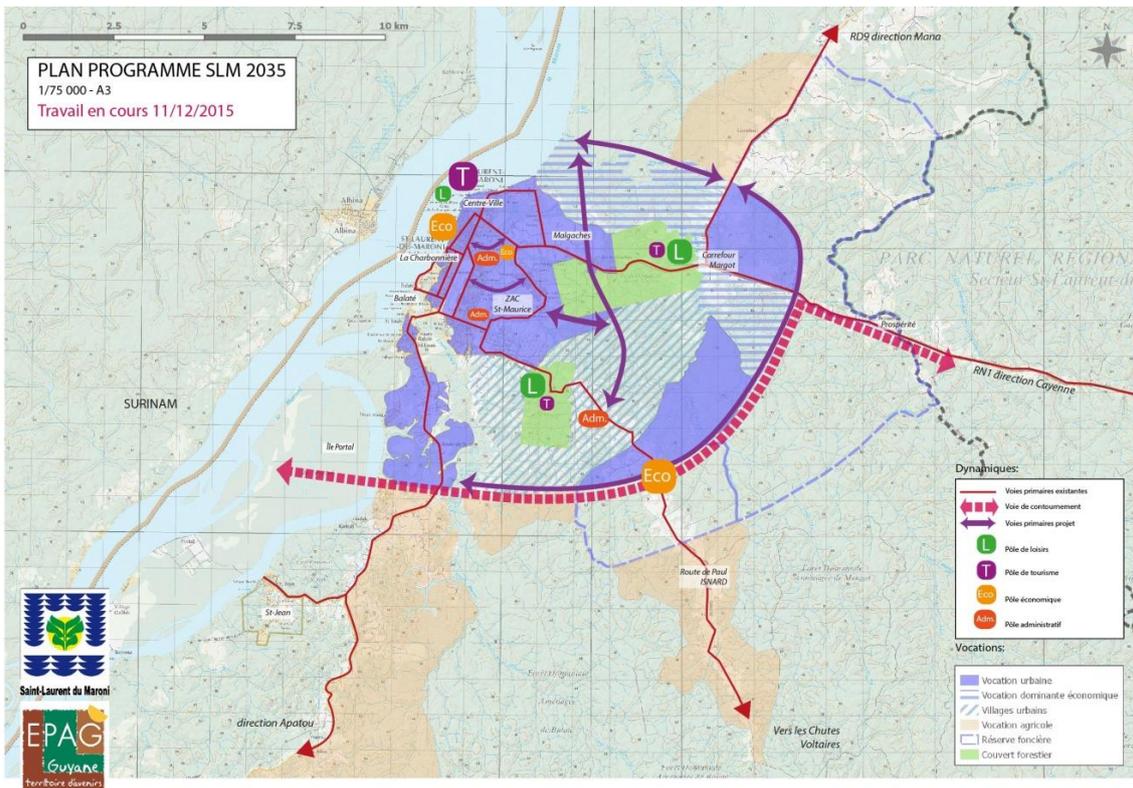
Credit : Ateliers de Cergy

With such a wealth of multiculturalism, its expression can be seen at the city scale only during Carnival or a few special festivals, while its everyday force is seen only at the district or village scale.

## **2) A City in Construction, a City Under Pressure**

In the last ten years, the *commune* of Saint-Laurent du Maroni has been the subject of several studies and regulatory and urban development plans in various sectors including housing, services, economy, infrastructure, landscape, etc.

- The Local Urban Development Plan, approved in 2013, envisions five action axes starting from the historic center of the *commune*, that will address urban development, transportation improvement and the impetus of a new economic dynamic, all within a vision of conservation and promotion of the environment and way of life.
- The Program Plan developed by the Commune and in partnership with EPAG, aims to define and map the needs and challenges of the commune's development by 2035. Studies will supplement the data to better identify and define the organizational constraints which apply to the territory and provide working guidelines, by identifying the difficulties that need to be resolved which include, in particular, the border issue and the possibilities of public and private actions. The objective is to provide the commune with an operational tool for guiding the urban development.

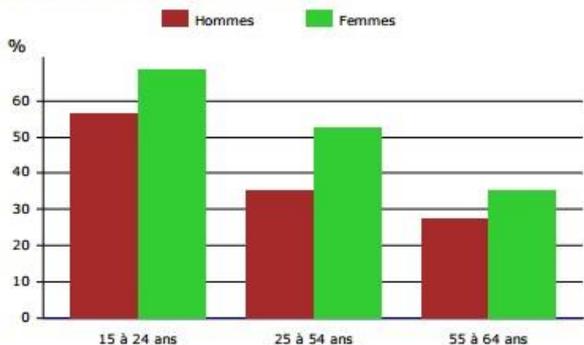


At the same time, an urban renewal project is going to allow for the re-qualification of three of the commune's sectors: downtown, the city's entrance, and the Charbonnière-airfield belt. The ANRU's (National Agency for Urban Renewal) outline proposes a series of projects based on a "connected city" and offers itself as a catalyst for other programs coming from the city project. A protocol is in negotiations with the ANRU. In addition, a National Interest Program is also evaluating the *commune* of Saint-Laurent du Maroni.

In parallel to these tools and documents, major projects are already in construction: the creation of an attractive cultural and touristic center in the downtown, the construction of housing and service facilities in the Saint-Maurice and Chinese Village ZACs, the creation of housing in the Malgaches district, the Lycée IV (high school), etc.

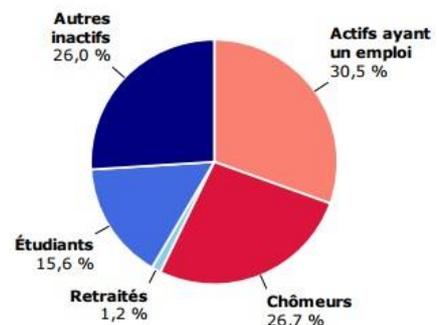
Despite all of these projects being put into action, Saint-Laurent is a *commune* under pressure. This pressure is firstly economic and social since an economic engine has yet to be found to cope with the considerable population growth. According to INSEE, 26.4% of Saint-Laurent's population was unemployed in 2011. Among the younger generation (15-24 years old), only 59% are either working or looking for a job and 68% of them are unemployed.

EMP G2 - Taux de chômage (au sens du recensement) des 15-64 ans par sexe et âge en 2012



Source : Insee, RP2012 exploitation principale.

EMP G1 - Population de 15 à 64 ans par type d'activité en 2012



The economic fabric of Saint-Laurent is largely marked by the domination of the public sector (67% of employees) and the decline of productive activities which though once were developed, now represent only 9% of establishments. Social assistance from the government represents the only source of revenue for a large section of the population, leading to long waiting lines at the desks of public administration offices the first week of each month.

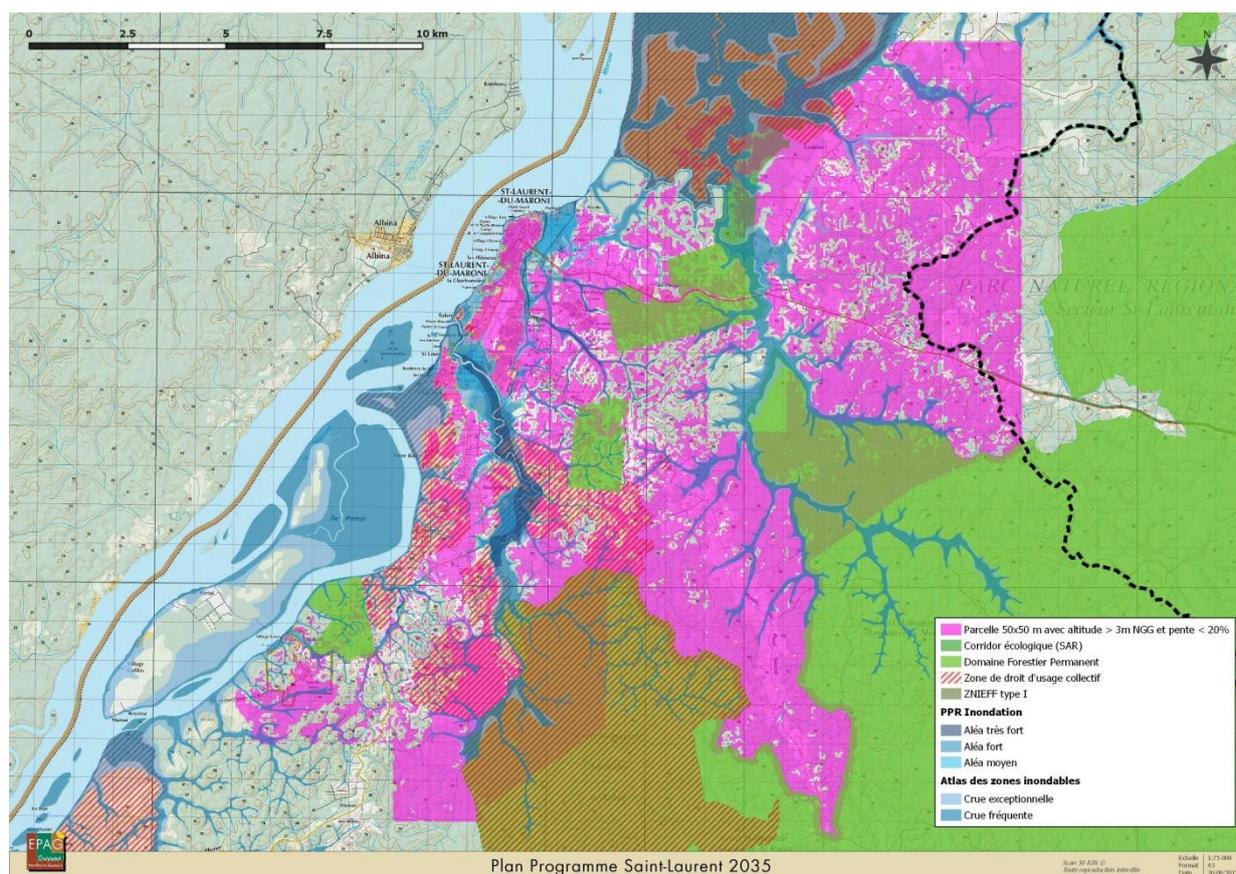
As for agriculture, it occupies less than 1% of the commune's territory and is divided into 3 types:

- Itinerant food-producing agriculture on previously forested lands (forest clearing through burning) on the immediate periphery of the city; it is an activity of multi-job holding citizens and acts as an additional revenue source through the occasional sale of products.
- Industrial agriculture is present in the commune's greater periphery and includes some crops destined for export.
- The Saint-Maurice distillery' sugar cane crop, in the south of the city, is designed around an agro-industrial model and the majority of its production is absorbed by the Guyanese market.

The exploitation of the forest, mining and gold resources, as well as tourism, are three areas of activity that exercise an indirect impact on the urban fabric, but whose development could have significant consequences in the near or distant future.

Facing this lack of economic prospects, the informal sector has taken on a very important role in the local economy. The "jobs" economy and resourcefulness, in effect, allows for the maintaining of a social consensus and yet do not carry sustainable solutions. Therefore, numerous inhabitants work in agriculture, construction, or illegal services.

The commune is also experiencing extremely strong pressure on its real estate due on the one hand to significant natural constraints (flood zones, marsh lands, protected natural zones), the erosion of developable land by informal activities and housing, and to the fact that the majority of developable land is owned by the national government and not the *commune*. One of the consequences is that there are no immediately available lands to host the businesses and necessary facilities needed for the development of the *commune*. In addition, a certain number of restrictions are applied to land development (topography, hydrology, regulatory constraints), thus further constraining the constitution of available land for construction.



These various approaches emphasize:

- A powerful identifying image of the historic downtown and its unifying role at the local level (facilities and structural services), as well as at the national level (historic, heritage, and touristic qualities).
- Extremely important needs for the immediate or near future, in terms of housing and infrastructure development, which require a significant surface area, thus creating a risk of weakening the balance between urban and natural spaces, while complex issues arise in regards to substandard and illicit housing.
- An urban mobility that is already showing signs of running out of steam (saturation of principal urban axes), while keeping in mind the growing population and urban expansion that will generate more travel, an increase in pollutants and pollution, and the fear of a deterioration in the quality of life.
- The interest to further develop the relations between French Guiana and Suriname (a bridge, hypothetically), in as much as the current economic fabric has been reduced to a "trading post" economy: retail trade, the absence of enterprises and activities that truly create employment, poor clarity in terms of exchanges with the rest of French Guiana and Suriname.
- Saint-Laurent du Maroni's exceptional natural environment that houses an immense diversity of natural spaces, landscapes, remarkable species of flora and fauna, but that also suffers from intense demographic pressure (pollution and pollutants, lack of viable services).

In the general context of a French Guiana confronted by its own socio-economic unraveling resulting from the gap between the two contour lines of "population" and "employment", Saint-Laurent's situation can be seen as

that of a commune in a state of emergency, not only through the significant gap between these two contour lines, owing to a population growth higher than the national average", but also due to the sociocultural complexity of its territory.

With regards to the *commune's* new structures, there is thus a sense of urgency to:

- Provide a framework for the *commune's* socioeconomic development.
- Offer supports adapted to the dynamics and informal characteristics of economic activities.
- Accompany the development of projects in construction, while preserving the cultural richness and natural qualities of the current situation.

## 5) Creating an Urban Transition While Preserving the Specificities of Saint-Laurent du Maroni

Saint-Laurent is a small commune about to realize its urban metamorphosis in terms of the size of its population. For all that, it still functions as a village, indeed an conglomeration of villages, both in terms of the institutional plan (development strategies, urban organization, structuring of services) and in terms of the inhabitants (a still very communal and rural manner of functioning, minimal urban culture, the population's attachment to the villages, and a weak rate of social and economic mobility).

Today, this urban transition is designed over the long term in order to allow for the absorption of the extremely high demand for facilities and services as much as for housing and employment, while self-subsistence, a rural and informal economy, and community and village organization often take the relay from social aid and national assistance, and make a social equilibrium possible in Saint-Laurent.

In total, the EPAG estimates the need for around 10,000 ha of space to be developed for housing and public facilities (3,500 ha - 30,000 housing units), economic activities (1,000 ha) and agriculture (several thousands of hectares). In terms of investments, it is estimated that 1.5 million euros of spending is needed for the urban development and 3 million euros for construction. These numbers and the exponential development expected in Saint-Laurent du Maroni recall the challenges encountered during the creation of certain new towns in metropolitan France.

This new urban development should take into account a collection of the commune's unique traits in regards to generic themes, in particular density, transportation and mobility, economy and public facilities.

- Density: Constructing New Buildings Versus Converting Available or Negotiable Real Estate



In terms of population, the density of the *commune* of Saint-Laurent du Maroni is incredibly low.

In 2012, it was barely 8.4 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>. But this number does not reflect the reality lived on the ground, since the *commune's* actual surface area is so large (close to 5,000 km<sup>2</sup>).

As a comparison, French Guiana had a density of 3 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup> during the same period, but with 88% of its population concentrated along the length of the coastline, which means that the density lived by these populations was actually

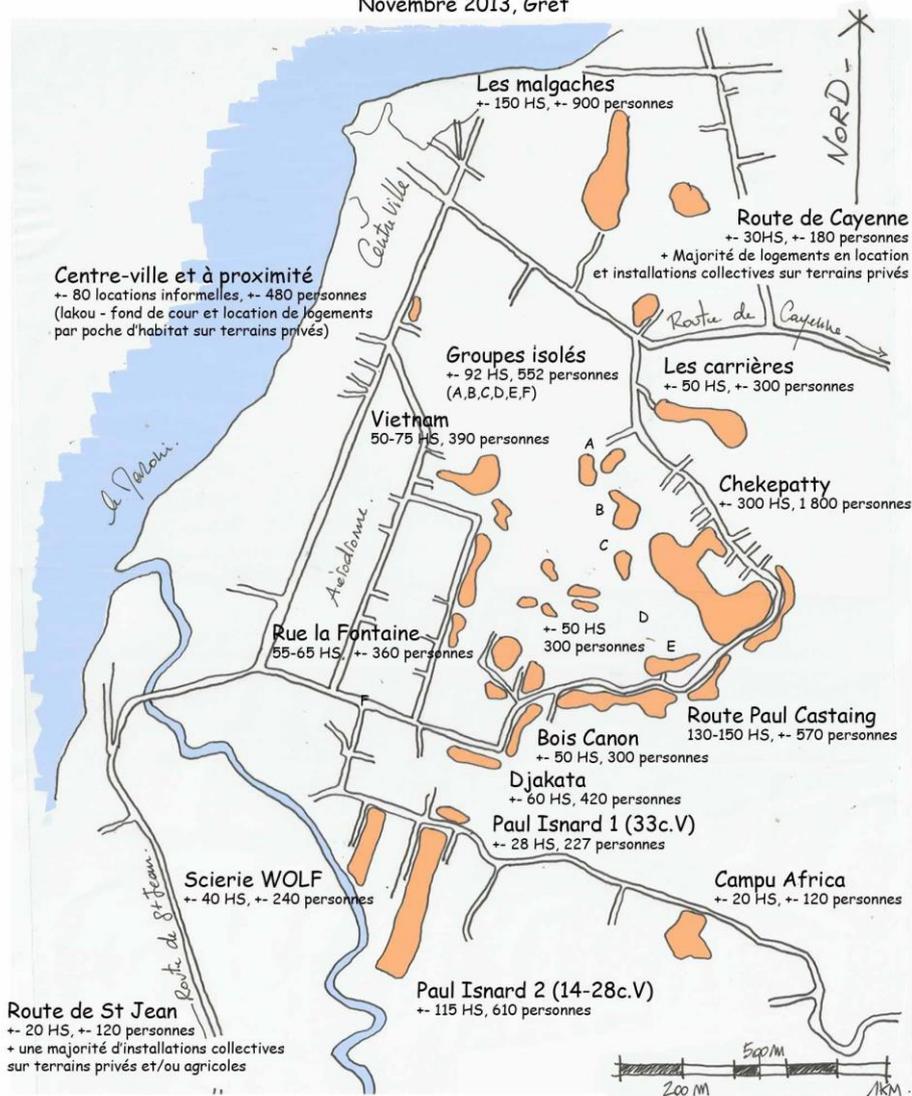
closer to 19 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>, which remains nevertheless far lower than the national average.

In structural terms, facing the urban sprawl along transportation routes, the devouring of lands that shelter natural resources by illegal constructions, and taking into account natural risk zones, the densification of building structures is an objective to negotiate with consideration to existing morphologies:

- The historic district with its triangular urban layout orientated towards the river
- The former penal district, along the riverbanks, and its imposing outer wall
- The colonial district, constructed in a grid pattern
- Recently formed districts which function as small entities and develop their orthogonal layout through an autonomous manner, with a highly heterogeneous development in terms of public space.

In this context, the controlling of spontaneous constructions and the practical and regulatory difficulties that public authorities encounter when trying to intervene, seem to be priority issues.

## Repérage - estimation de l'habitat spontané à Saint-Laurent du Maroni Novembre 2013, Gret



**Estimation de l'habitat spontané :** +- 1 270 habitats spontanés, soit plus de 7 389 personnes  
Un taux de croissance des quartiers de 10 à 12% par an (selon la police municipale)  
Aussi : Des locations de fond de cour et des installations collectives (locatives ou non) en centre-ville ou à proximité et le long des axes majeurs, le plus souvent sur des terrains privés et/ou agricoles

HS = Habitat spontané - 1 habitat = 6 personnes en moyenne (estimation municipale)  
Sources croisées (estimations 2009 - 2011 - 2013) : mairie SLM, service fiscal de la CCOG, police municipale, repérages par ULM Gret

- Mobility: Public Transportation Versus Alternative Modes of Transportation



In a historic perspective and one of greater scale, "the socio-spatial dynamics in the river basin system of the Maroni highlight the crossing of the disciplinary fields of migration and environment... [Mobility] remains a condition of the exploitation of resources—gold-related in the valley and commercial in the estuary—and is a charged issue in terms of the social resources of territorial appropriation which participates in the formation of relational spaces..."<sup>3</sup>

Beyond river and port infrastructures, airports, French Guiana's inter-urban transportation lines (TIG), and measures benefitting professional mobility or people with reduced mobility, the question of daily mobility presents itself in terms of:

- Public versus private transportation
- Technical and financial limitations for both of them
- Urban traffic congestion on the principal road axes
- Alternative transportation models in relation to the means and economy of the country and individuals while taking into consideration the scale of the territories concerned, the population density along highways, and the difficulties in maintaining infrastructure facing an invasive and destructive natural environment.

- The Connection to the Natural Environment

Organizations defending nature or publicizing exceptional moments in this still considered virgin forest are numerous. This touristic and economic potential, huge in terms of its size and likely developments, nonetheless hides a daily reality that makes up one of the most complex traits of the city of Saint-Laurent du Maroni. The relation between nature and the urban development is being negotiated day after day, at every level of society, whether it be by inhabitants, the newly arrived or those long settled, or by the authorities charged with preserving the balance between natural and constructed spaces for the well-being of the commune and its inhabitants. Here, nature is considered a resource, but also a constraint with which it is necessary to compromise daily. The recreational relationship to nature is still emerging in the way it is used. The natural environment is also a depository for waste, with waste treatment industries in the process of being created.

Various items constitute this relationship to nature, among which:

- Natural versus cultivated spaces
- Water and resource management

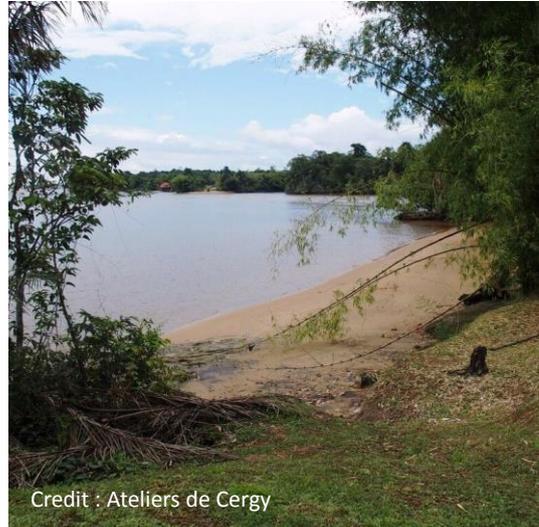
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<sup>3</sup>Revue Européenne des Migrations Internationales – Vol 18 n°2 – 2002 “Migrations et Environnement”- Excerpt from “Relation Mobilité – Environnement” Frédéric Piantoni

- Biological corridors and nature within the city
- Topography, geology, hydrology, climate
- Local systems for urban agriculture
- Pollution and pollutants



Credit : Ateliers de Cergy



Credit : Ateliers de Cergy

- Major Infrastructure and Public Facilities

*"The level of Saint-Laurent du Maroni's public facilities and services does not fully correspond to that of a commune that hosts more than 40,000 inhabitants. In fact, in order to more closely follow the significant demographic changes, the commune has essentially concentrated itself on the creation of educational facilities and services. Yet, even if the offering of sport, recreational, and cultural structures cannot be considered a priority in comparison to the demands in housing and education, the deficiencies are, today, problematic, especially in the districts on the periphery.*

*The Saint-Maurice ZAC, which extends over 262 hectares (or 30% of the commune's urbanized surface area), will constitute, when completed, a genuine piece of the organized city, equipped with the whole of urban services. Therefore, a plan for public amenities has been defined to respond to the needs of the population at varying levels.*

*Indispensable for the population to thrive, the provision and access to public facilities and services should be researched in regards to the diversification and abundance of local structures in districts, along with the improvement and development of transportation means for reaching larger facilities (easy circulation, reliable public transportation...).*<sup>4</sup>

Apart from this assessment of demand, the development of such public facilities clashes with the reality on the ground. For example, the case of the Lycée IV, which was put on hold following the reactions by residents present at the site, is emblematic of the real estate challenge faced by the commune for all of its projects.

Other strategic questions are presented on historic and heritage bases, such as:

- The construction of a new hospital and the transformation of the current one which is part of the remarkable heritage of the *commune*

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<sup>4</sup> PLU Saint-Laurent du Maroni 2013

- The reinforcement of the port's infrastructure in terms of varying boat models and pirogues, while also taking into account the ways in which it is used and the characteristics of both formal and informal commerce
- The creation of a new cemetery and the urban development and landscaping of the current one
- The creation of a new airfield as an efficient extension of the existing one in the downtown
- The closure of roads to ensure the continuity of natural corridors in terms of flora, fauna, and water flow

### III- The Workshop's Topic and Focus Area

#### **How can Saint-Laurent du Maroni's urban transformation be supported while preserving the commune's unique traits?**

The workshop offers participants the opportunity to reflect on Saint-Laurent du Maroni's development strategy, on both sides of the river, for the year 2060. It suggests the further development of a vision to support the commune's transformation into an appealing regional center, which in a few decades will reach 150,000 inhabitants. This problematic, placed deliberately at a rather distant horizon, allows for the transition from a logic of catch-up to a development strategy of projection.

Between a predetermined scenario via the realization of a Project of National Interest and the establishment of new bottom-up urban development practices, how can a well thought-out scenario be constructed based on the experiences and diverse practices proposed by the Saint-Laurent territory, while relying upon the contrasting models of its urban economic and social situation? How can noted traits be beneficial and establish a unique dynamic for the construction and development of this commune that possesses such a dramatic demographic growth? How can perception be changed, including Saint-Laurent's position, compared to Cayenne and Kourou, in its cross-border relationship with Suriname? What is the role of Saint-Laurent in the eyes of the Surinamese and those in Cayenne, or even for metropolitan France?

**The problematic suggested by the workshop provides the possibility to take a new look at the role and weight of Saint-Laurent du Maroni in the French Guiana equilibrium, while considering its development that is not only unique in regards to relationships between Saint-Laurent and Cayenne but also in terms of the entire Maroni river basin, all the way to neighboring Suriname and its opening to the world. The city's relationship to its river, the principal force behind Saint-Laurent and the incontestable trump card for the commune's future development, thus constitutes the starting point of the reflection asked of the teams.**

**Three viewpoints related to the river in the Saint-Laurent commune overlap today and nourish the reflection that will accompany the metamorphosis into the cross-border river city that Saint-Laurent hopes to become:**

- A natural and original vision of the river: As the principal artery of the residential and commercial zones, it is the river around which the villages are established, on the two banks, on either of its sides; it ignores the question of administrative borders and instead weaves links between the two banks.
- A historic, post-colonial view: That of a river considered as access point for metropolitan France from the port in Cayenne. The city is tied to its river by its landing dock but it also sits with its back turned to it.
- A contemporary vision: That of arrivals made essentially by road to a commune constructed against the river on the western edge of French Guiana. This vision gives a first impression of having reached the "far ends" of France, wedged between mangroves and the Amazon forest.

**The development of the commune should above all resolve this dichotomy of a central village that sits with its back to the river and a city made up of a mosaic of villages that live through the river, and find the way to create a development that unifies and changes the relationship of the city to the river.**

The river, a structural element of the landscape, a population center, and place of settlement, carries with it the different themes of reflection that will be addressed in the framework of the workshop: 1/ The question of

economy, coupled with that of residential and commercial zones, 2/ The construction of the built environment, 3/ Infrastructure and public facilities and services.

The issues tied to the river highlight the duality of the practices that preside over it, between formal and informal, between solutions strictly formulated by French and European legislations and situations of mutual assistance and co-construction, and between a city constructed along ecological corridors on both sides and a centralized city.

**1/ The river, the commune's anchor: What is the role of the city in relation to its river, including its social, economic, and structural dimensions?**

The river refers to different dimensions that should be mobilized in this problematic.

- The cross-border dimension, both in the idea of an urban conglomeration and its de facto way of functioning
  - A cooperation that is both institutional and actual, formal and informal
  - The economic exchanges that are both official and informal
  - The notion of a lived territory, beyond that of the institutional area; the residential zone
  - The study of territorial symbiosis as opposed to competition
- ***A North-South approach, favoring an urban conglomeration that extends both up and down the Maroni river, including the Apatou and Mana communes***

Saint-Laurent is a gateway to the Amazon, a repository for the development and exploitation of renewable energies and biodiversity: in terms of the economic development that corresponds to this approach, the difficulty will be to create a balance between the potential prospects (wood, ecological, and hydro-powered industries, gold mining, etc.) and the risks of environmental imbalance provoked by the exploitation of resources.

- ***An East-West approach: Saint-Laurent/Albina***

What relation can be constructed/developed with Suriname through an approach of territorial symbiosis to allow Saint-Laurent to consider its cross-border role as a force and pillar of development?

How can economic, social, and cultural activities on both sides of the river be supported and how can a strategy of exchange be created, not just the continuation of existing practices that are often informal? How can a residential economy tied to the energy of exchanges and youth be materialized?

How can a cross-border urban conglomeration be constructed that reinforces the East-West axis in a dynamic and interactive relationship with bordering countries and satellite cities, positioning Saint-Laurent as an access point for French Guiana and Cayenne from Suriname and the Guiana Highlands?

- ***An industrial approach: Saint-Laurent, a territory facing the river***

How can the immediacy of the river, with the potential that it holds in terms of the development of river exchanges and the establishment of new public facilities and spaces, allow for the reinforcement of the downtown? How can the city be reopened to its river when today it seems to have turned its back to it?

**2/ How can innovative practices be established in the construction of a built environment and new urban forms, that integrate the rural aspect and connection with nature and the river, which is characteristic of Saint-Laurent's traditional urban development?**

The current demographic explosion and the demands in housing and public facilities that it implies, has pushed government officials into a state of urgency to provide development projects for the city and its surrounding areas. The issue is that of the types of urban forms that should be developed and the urban development models that should be established in terms of the socio-cultural specifications of Saint-Laurent du Maroni, AKA the "Capital of Villages." The importance of self-building traditions, sometimes self-managed, and traditional forms of housing that still exist in Saint-Laurent du Maroni is, in this sense, put into balance with the new desire to adopt a lifestyle and quality of life that is more contemporary and standardized.

Beginning with existing construction and management models of the built environment, from Amerindian villages to self-built areas, and from Bushi Nenge villages to the current ZAC projects, the workshop endeavors to propose new practices that favor collective intelligence and examine different social and solidarity economic models.

This problematic tied to the quality of life also leads to the examination of all of the aspects of the commune's relationship to the natural and rural environment (uses, construction, resources, integration into the city) and its deviations, which present themselves in a very different manner in Saint-Laurent than in metropolitan France.

In other words, how can a "developed" rural city be made, while preserving the natural and/or agricultural spaces in the heart of the city (urban agriculture, for example), in order to integrate an ecological system into an urban area within the tropics? It will be necessary to rely on specific land reserves (ZDUCs, ZNIEFF, ravines, water management and PPRI (Flood Risk Prevention Plans), riparian forests, etc.).

It is also necessary to consider the development of pre-existing urban structures (the colonial town, Amerindian villages, Bushi Nenge villages, the linear city form, informal districts, etc.) in order to integrate a metropolitan system and find a balance between informal housing and the ZACs, between self-building and social housing, for example.

**3/ What strategic choices should be made in terms of infrastructure and planning that prioritize the creation of a multi-faceted ecosystem and positioning of major structural works (hospital, port, bridge, cemetery, air field) within an interwoven vision of the territory?**

What infrastructure is needed for this future urban conglomeration of 150,000 inhabitants, a participatory commune, with laws adapted to French Guiana's specific features and its wealth of natural and human resources, as opposed to a model regulated by international laws?

**This should be based on:**

- A mixed-use downtown unifying specific urban elements, open to the city (transportation center, former hospital, etc.) and to the river.
- Mini-networks, adapted to the commune's urban complexity and topography, including an intelligent city, interlinked and connected to satellite cities (Apatou and Mana).

**The responses to these three problematics could provide the bedrock for a commercial territorial marketing strategy for the area. This vision of the territory's development could lead to a project, possibly even guiding political decisions, for the economic and territorial plan.**

In fact, the absence of an economic engine, outside of the subsistence and service sectors, is a real problem for the development of a city project. An examination of this economic engine could bring together agriculture, technology, natural resources, research and development, tourism, reinvestment, recycling and the construction industry into a strategy of urban expansion.

It is necessary to determine how to use not only the resources, natural and human, but also the existing models of mutual assistance and collective intelligence, reinvestment and limited budget, in order to propose economic industries and urban development guidelines that would permit residential and commercial zones to correspond to a metropolitan scale and ensure Saint-Laurent's place in the Amazonian equilibrium.

**The focus area of the workshop:**

**A base of strategic reflection**

We suggest that the teams work within a scope of reflection that extends across residential and commercial zones and revolves around the river.

In fact, as mentioned in previous paragraphs, the river is a key element in the development of Saint-Laurent, for both its past and future. To better understand this notion, as much industrial as societal, it is necessary to take into account the full depth of the territory: its connection to the Amazon, the Maroni river and Saint-Laurent's landing dock, which for a long time served as its only access point, and its link to Cayenne and metropolitan France. The relationships between these different centers has begun to evolve, first with the recent construction of the road to Apatou, then through the aviation network that connects the different villages located along the river or in the heart of the Amazon forest; and through exchanges with Suriname, due to the relatively close distance of Paramarimbo in comparison to Cayenne. The appeal of French and European institutions compared to those in Surinamese villages shape a socially and economically balanced territory that extends to both sides of the river, from Albina to Babel (on the Suriname side), from Apatou to Mana (on the French Guiana side), while taking into account the link by the RN21 and D9 to Cayenne.



**The project areas are divided across three working scales, from urban projects to the strategic planning of territorial projects:**

**1/ The area dedicated to urban projects, a hundred hectares, provides the possibility to appropriately examine and explore the unique situations of:**

- The city and the river, in terms of exchanges with Suriname, the potentials of tourism development, and the reinforcement of historical significance
- The eastern access to the city / Carrefour Margot, in connection to future commercial development, and the relationship with Cayenne and Mana
- The southern access to the city, in terms of the relationship with Apatou, today linked by roadway.

**2/ Territories with approximately 10,000 hectares allow for the possibility to examine sustainable development practices, local systems, the presence of nature within the city, ecological continuities, urban ecology and mini-networks, etc**

- Inlets and ravines
- Areas of felled trees
- ZDUCs
- Agricultural areas

**3/ A planning zone targeted for 2060 that will be on a metropolitan scale (100,000 ha), tied directly to the previously defined scope of reflection.**

Also present in the greater Saint-Laurent du Maroni territory are decisive and indivisible pre-operational working areas that respond to other problematics, but of which it would be coherent to understand globally in terms of the previously defined scales.

Participants are not limited to the areas/fields proposed here.

## **How to participate to the workshop in Saint-Laurent du Maroni?**

### **Composition of teams**

The 2016 Saint-Laurent du Maroni session brings together three teams of seven professionals. Each team will be composed of two professionals from French Guiana, ideally one professional from Suriname and four other professionals who are members of Les Ateliers' international network.

### **Language requirements**

The 2016 Saint-Laurent du Maroni will be held primarily in English. Participants, and therefore candidates, are expected to be fully proficient in English. The documents produced by the groups during the workshop will be bilingual in French and English. Proficiency in Dutch and/or French is also welcomed.

### **Candidate applications**

Completed candidate applications must be submitted by email to the following address: [guyane@ateliers.org](mailto:guyane@ateliers.org), by 21<sup>st</sup> February 2016 at 11pm Paris (metropolitan France) time.

Applications must be written in French or English and must include:

- the completed application form (available for download on the website)
- a CV/Resume, 2-page maximum
- a short essay (two to three pages, maximum) in which the candidate can freely discuss the problematic and explain what his/her expertise and profile bring to the session. The team at Les Ateliers encourages candidates to give their first impressions on the subject and to show an understanding of the problematics, which can be expressed graphically (designs, charts,...) for those who have mastered these forms of expression.

Candidates should submit a single application (PDF format) comprised of the elements listed above and titled LAST NAME\_First name\_Guyane

Important: Applications are for individuals and cannot be submitted in teams.

### **Candidate profiles**

Les Ateliers' pilot committee will meet to make its selection among the applications, with the intention to form multidisciplinary teams composed of professionals of all ages and nationalities. The committee prioritizes gender equality, the diversity of approaches and experiences, and of course the ability to work in groups. Participation at the workshop is open to all professionals practicing a profession or possessing experience tied to urban planning such as architects, urban planners, economists, sociologists, engineers, landscape architects, environmentalists, agronomists, geographers, artists,...

Important: The session in Saint-Laurent is for professionals who have already had several years of professional experience. Candidates with less than 4-5 years of professional experience are invited to apply to sessions organized for young professionals (available on Les Ateliers' website).

### **Workshop schedule**

The session will be held from May 6 to 20, 2016 in Saint-Laurent du Maroni. The first three days of the workshop will be devoted to meetings with local actors and tours of the area. These visits include: the tour of Albina and a trip down the river (in a pirogue), exploring the urban fabric by foot and by bus and tours of the Mana and Apatou communes. Participants will then be divided by the workshop's organizational staff into three teams and will begin their group work. An exchange forum will be organized the following Friday for the teams to be able to present their ideas thus far to local actors and partners. The exchange forum is a decisive moment in the session as it allows different representatives from local institutions to clarify their vision of the territory, to exchange with participants on the basis

of emerging problematics and to bring together, for the first time, the work of all of the teams, often complementary to one another.

The end of the first week gives way to a free day. The second part of the session will aim for an intensification of the collective production. As the workshops serve to be a source of inspiration, it is thus important to showcase the collective aspect of the project's propositions, innovations, new dynamics, as much at the local as at the regional scale.

At the end of the second week, a jury composed of local and international professionals and local decision makers will be assembled to hear and analyze the propositions and methodologies of each team. The presentations will be open to the public. At the conclusion of the presentations, a deliberation by the jury will be organized. Their objective will not be to censor the teams but to study pertinent information and strategies which could provide a continuity to the work and create a bridge between the different groups. A day of restitution and exchange with the jury may be organized before the participants' departures. This day will allow for the establishment of a first synthesis that prioritizes the indications given by the jury and the work of the three teams.

### **Projected calendar**

06/05/2016	Participant arrivals
07/05/2016	Area visits and conferences
08/05/2016	Area visits and conferences
09/05/2016	Area visits and conferences
10/05/2016	Official opening and start of the team work
11/05/2016	Team work
12/05/2016	Team work
13/05/2016	Exchange forum with workshop partners and evening event
14/05/2016	Free day
15/05/2016	Team work
16/05/2016	Team work
17/05/2016	Team work and preparation of documents to be submitted
18/05/2016	Team work and completion of written documents
19/05/2016	Completion of final presentations
20/05/2016	Presentation of projects to the jury and the workshop closing ceremony
21/05/2016	Debrief and departure of participants, assistants and the pilot team

### **Financial conditions:**

During the session, the following costs will be assumed by Les Ateliers: international flights in Economy class, on-site housing, meals, area visits, resource documents, work materials. However, participants should bring their own computers.

Workshop participants work on a voluntary basis and must pay the association's annual membership fee (80 euros for professionals residing in France which comes to 26.40 euros after tax deductions) and 30 euros for professionals residing outside of France.

### **Contacts:**

For any information, please send an email to: [guyane@ateliers.org](mailto:guyane@ateliers.org)  
Les Ateliers de la Gare, 1 rue de la Gare, BP90047, 95000 Cergy  
[www.ateliers.org](http://www.ateliers.org)

We hope to see you soon in Saint-Laurent du Maroni!

## Acknowledgement

Les Ateliers wishes to thank all the people who participated in writing this topic document:

- EPAG team in Saint-Laurent du Maroni and in Cayenne
- The municipal team of Saint-Laurent du Maroni
- The Scientific Committee of Les Ateliers
- The workshop's pilots Olivier Bastin and Florence Bougnoux and the professionals who participated in the exploratory mission in July 2015: Vincent Bourjaillat, Thomas Pendzel, Léa Morfoisse

Les Ateliers also wishes to thank the partners that make possible the realization of the workshop:

- The City of Saint-Laurent du Maroni
- EPAG
- The French Development Agency



Les Ateliers also thanks the numerous people that were involved in the organization of the exploratory mission and agreed to meet the team of Les Ateliers during its stay in Saint-Laurent.

Les Ateliers thanks its structural partners, who contribute actively to shaping new workshops and identifying innovative issues:

