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International workshop in Saint-Louis, Benin, 2010.

Photo: Ateliers de Cergy

Producing a sustainable city together: Strategic Urban Planning

One of the first topics to interest the French Alliance for Cities and Regions, which was created in 2011 to bring together the French stakeholders in urban development in developing countries, was to devise policies for French public development aid that targeted the major challenges of urbanization.

It was decided that Strategic Urban Planning was an appropriate response to the issues in question. This sets out to go beyond “conventional” planned urbanism, which ignores the local dynamics which are set up in parallel, and project-centred urban planning which is usually sector-specific. In a manner that is consistent with sustainable development, Strategic Urban Planning aims to imagine and plan the future of a city by mobilizing a broad range of stakeholders (economic players, civil society, the public and private sector creators of the city), around the competent local authority.

The local authority, which becomes the “project owner”, responsible for the city’s development, is backed up by a multidisciplinary technical team and approaches the different stages of urban planning in close consultation with players whose goals are varied and often contradictory, which makes it necessary to negotiate and compromise. Knowledge sharing is key for identifying the problems facing local development and the potential for it. It then provides the basis for formulation of the development strategy and urban development project. The fact that it is the outcome of a process of negotiation means the strategic plan becomes an action plan that includes projects and programmes which have been prioritized on the basis of a

joint decision-making process and which are adequately funded. In addition, as the future is uncertain, this plan must be iterative and able to evolve.

The intention is not to produce a “one size fits all” urban planning model. The diversity and complexity of the economic, technical, social and the cultural complexity of urban social systems would make this impossible.

However, a number of important points concerning public policy in the area of cooperation and development ought to be stressed.

The need for sharing is fundamental: it needs to take place between the local actors between the public project owners and the project managers and between the local and external players providing technical assistance. Knowledge needs to be shared between the local and external universities providing training programmes and the local authorities involved in decentralized cooperation partnerships need to share their experience.

It is also necessary to set up local governance systems to create a public stage for negotiation on which to develop workable compromises and to monitor and assess projects. These systems, which are put in place by the local authority which is also responsible for them, are a genuine part of the process of learning about or deepening local democracy.

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French Development Aid Policies in support of Strategic Urban Planning

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The drafting of «French Development Aid Policies in support of Strategic Urban Planning» was the first partnership action for defining French strategy to be undertaken by the French Alliance for Cities and Regions (PFVT).

Urban planning was identified as a priority for the French strategy in support of urban governance that was published in 2009. It is also a priority for Joan Clos' term of office as Executive Director of UN-Habitat.

Five billion people, i.e. 60% of the world's population, will be living in a city in 2030. Ninety-five percent of this rapid irreversible urban growth will take place in developing countries. It has been observed that when such extensive urban growth is not planned and accompanied by inclusive policies it results in social and spatial segregation, which is a corollary of poorly controlled urban sprawl. It also has major environmental impacts. The next two decades will therefore be crucial for planning a sustainable urban future.

In response to these major challenges, "French Development Aid Policies in support of Strategic Urban Planning" sets out to present an approach and know-how that are unique to France on the international stage. France adopts a comprehensive and political approach towards cities that is based on democratic governance and consists of implementing partnership-based public action centred around local authorities.

The policies were developed in partnership within the PFVT working group led by FNAU (the National Federation of Town Planning Agencies) and GEMDEV (the Scientific Grouping for Globalization and Development Studies). The working group met on a regular basis, bringing together some twenty partners representing the range of stakeholders that make up the PFVT: the State, public institutions, the private sector, NGOs, universities, and research and training bodies. It has drawn its knowledge from on-going international debates and current practice and from case studies and urban planning projects in developing cities and France.

New approaches towards Strategic Urban Planning aim to achieve a balance between the goals of the productive city, the inclusive city and environmental protection, in a way that is consistent with sustainable development. They set out to develop a vision for the urban future which is shared by all the stakeholders and are thus a highly political exercise that is part of a process of urban democratic governance.

Through these policies, the French stakeholders set out to provide assistance to developing cities and areas accor-



Photo: Groupe Huit

Consultation with the inhabitants of the El Mina District on the topic of housing, Nouakchott, Mauritania.

ding to local needs and conditions by:

- supporting the joint development of area-based policies by mobilizing all stakeholders around local and regional governments,
- strengthening the project ownership capabilities of local authorities and setting up multi-stakeholder consultation structures,
- adopting an integrated approach by aligning sector-specific policies, achieving spatial coherence between the area-based policies established by the different tiers of government and implementing an iterative and evolving process that allows interaction between the formulation and operational application of the strategy,
- training and enhancing the capacities of all the stakeholders that are active in the zones in question.

In particular, they propose to build up knowledge and skills with regard to Strategic Urban Planning by:

- identifying the innovative practices in the area of Strategic Urban Planning that have been implemented abroad by French players,
- creating an operational frame of reference from the above data and knowledge base,
- supporting the implementation of "local operational platforms" at the request of its partners, bringing together the stakeholders in Strategic Urban Planning around public project ownership,
- mobilizing academic research and training institutions in the North and South in the field of Strategic Urban Planning.

Strategic Planning, tools and expert networks in France

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A prerequisite for urban development, in France as elsewhere, is a strengthening of the capacities of its stakeholders and democratic local and urban governance which may be facilitated by the implementation of Strategic Urban Planning (SUP).

In our country, Strategic Urban Planning has provided the framework for development plans and programmes for more than 30 years and is constantly being re-affirmed as essential for coherence and effectiveness and a driver of cooperation between local and regional authorities. At the present time it is responsible for a large number of partnerships both in France and abroad via decentralized cooperation led by French cities and, particularly, two associations “Cités Unies France” (CUF) and “Métropolis”.

The decentralization of town planning that began 30 years ago in France, where traditionally the State has played a strong role, has been highly instructive for the nation’s 36,000 municipalities. It has been fairly successful in terms of increasing the dynamism of urban and non-urban areas, even if urban and landscape quality has not always been maintained as a result of excessive urban sprawl and the deterioration of certain sites and landscapes. A territory is better administered locally, but mediation still requires a distance, especially as regards taking account of interests that are seen as being exogenous to the administered area. The experience of the

last three decades has confirmed the benefits and necessity of strategic planning tools which have now become a priority as reaffirmed by their enshrinement in law and improved cooperation between different public authorities. This process is continuing and leading to national solidarity and improved systems of regional equalization that operate at the appropriate geographical scale.

The wide range of stakeholders, in particular as a result of our national commitment to the environment and sustainable development, means that it is constantly necessary to improve the coherence of the planning process which must take better account of spatial issues and the consumption of non-renewable land and resources. The involvement of a number of different professions is essential. The specific expertise of urban planners, which is centred around a diagnosis and varied types of analysis (architectural, landscape, social, environmental, etc.) must facilitate an integrated approach with policies that must be embedded in an area spatially and over a period of time and parsimonious management of resources and spaces that are becoming increasingly rare, fragile and sought-after.

The problems that face society require tailor-made analyses and responses. High quality community life in a city cannot be virtual. It must be real, and experienced and perceived collectively by residents and users. Cultural values influence what we decide collectively to protect and the way we represent the past, manage the present and imagine our future. Nowadays, the spatial development process must take account of cultural strategies. French public policy thus fosters the involvement of professionals who work in this field, supports their training and research and sets up advisory networks of architects and landscape designers, in order to provide planners with expert opinion on land use and enhancement issues, land being perceived as belonging to the Nation’s common heritage.

Urban governance must achieve better synergy between the different scales of action and sector-specific approaches through partnerships that are appropriate for the area covered by each project. In addition, such collective projects are to be constructed jointly by applying an approach that is closer to residents and more inclusive towards them. In this connection, decentra-

lized cooperation and exchanges of experience that permit mutual learning are fostered with a view to identifying responses that suit the diversity of the different contexts and the complexity of the issues to be tackled, particularly those of a technical and socio-economic nature. Association-based and professional networks of urban planners, and the entire community that is working to improve urban living conditions, whether in the public or private or non-governmental sectors, thus need to cooperate better with each other to meet these challenges. The French Alliance for Cities and Regions, which brings together all the French stakeholders with an involvement in urban development aid, illustrates this desire for exchanges and experience sharing that has produced sound French expertise, particularly in the area of Strategic Urban Planning.

Rennes (France): Reinforcing the “Archipelago City”

The Area Development Plan (Schéma de Cohérence Territoriale - SCoT) for the Pays de Rennes which covers 67 municipalities and 450,000 inhabitants, was approved in December 2007, and followed three Master Plans that covered the previous, smaller, administrative zone. The fact that planning has been extended to cover the entire “Pays de Rennes” area could have raised concerns in Rennes Métropole (Rennes conurbation committee) that it would be forced to be less ambitious than in previous planning operations. The other municipal groupings in the Rennes area, whose populations were much smaller, were afraid that they would lose their freedom to make decisions.

In order to dispel these doubts, it was decided to undertake forward-looking analysis. “Future workshops” were set up during which elected officials and local stakeholders engaged in work and discussions which led to the emergence of a shared view of the issues affecting the Pays de Rennes and its future and the development of strong strategic policies.

In a context of fast urban and economic growth, the SCoT reinforces the “Archipelago City” concept, which is an important contributor to the attractiveness of the Rennes metropolis. In particular, the concept provides for the enhanced protection, or even the re-establishment, of wildlife corridors and sets quantified targets for space saving in order to preserve farming in the outskirts of the city.

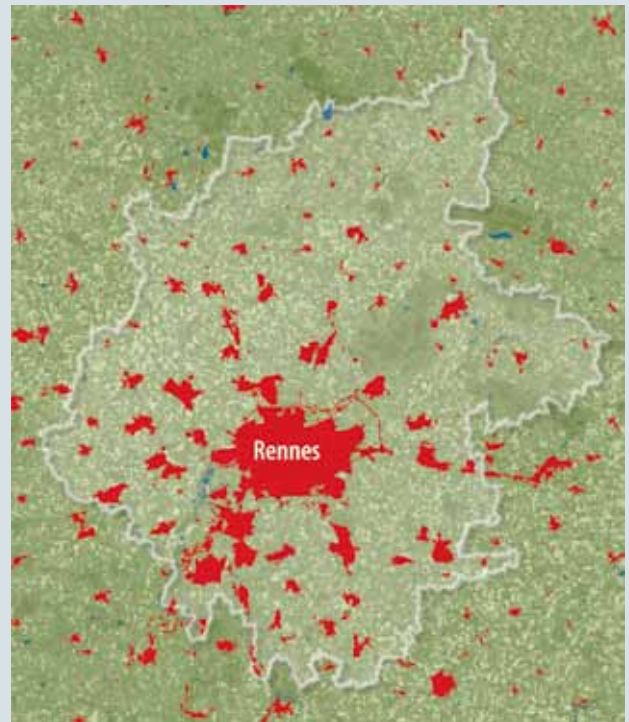


Illustration: Syndicat mixte du SCOT du Pays de Rennes

Rennes, or the concept of “Archipelago City”.

Rennes Urban Planning Agency (AUDIAR)
www.audiar.org/scot

French Development Agency (AFD) and Strategic Urban Planning

François Tiro

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Funding from AFD no longer entails just a straightforward financial commitment but means there is an opportunity to define a local development strategy. For this reason, almost all AFD's urban cooperation projects are part of an area-based planning process.

AFD's know-how in the field of urban development in the countries of the South has gained much from its experience of working alongside the local authorities of French Overseas Provinces and the French urban plan-

ning community. Its overseas presence has allowed AFD to engage in fruitful dialogue with local elected officials. As a result, AFD has been able to steer clear of the sector-specific approaches usually favoured by donors and implement

an urban development strategy that employs an integrated approach towards cities, regions and local players, under the leadership of elected officials.

The strategic approach to urban planning is ideally suited

to this desire to foster dialogue with local elected representatives in order to help their city or region.

In many ways, all cities have to face the same set of challenges with regard to spatial

expansion, risk management, social cohesion, access to services, the management of urban services, taxation, etc. The public authorities everywhere, starting with local governments, have to tackle these by drafting strategy documents. The strategy that is formulated must address all levels (district, municipality, region) and different timescales: what are the short-term priorities? How should medium-term projects be prepared? What are the goals for the long-term development and transformation of the area?

Strategic planning is the local approach which allows these issues to be addressed, by placing the emphasis on dialogue between the various stakeholders, including the donor. Even if it is unable to play a direct part in building the local development strategy, the donor can (and should?) provide those that benefit from its funding with the support they need to be able to implement a strategic planning process.

In the countries of sub-Saharan African, for example, the role of the donors goes further than the strict role of a development bank. In view of the scant financial and technical resources at the disposal of project owners, AFD provides assistance with the

development of local strategies. Setting up funds for surveys, financing consultation workshops to examine the issues, paying for local audits and diagnoses are essential for cities that lack financial resources. Need we remind ourselves that Ouagadougou's budget, with a population of 1.5 million, is half that of a French town such Rodez, with a population of 24,000, and that Lomé's investment budget is one Euro per inhabitant per year?

The strategic documents that are drawn up in the context of the projects are part of a strategic approach that combines planning with the ranking of priority projects. One example is Kisumu in Kenya where AFD is providing the funding for a strategic urban plan, the Integrated Strategic Urban Development plan – ISUD, which precedes a major urban project. This plan is the basis for deciding which actions will receive project funding. Drawing it up provided an opportunity to rethink urban public policies: controlling urbanization, increasing density, environmental hazard management, providing a commercial structure, urban renewal in precarious districts...

In emerging countries or countries with intermediate



Photo: Thomas Dworzak - Magnum Photos

View of the city of Medellín, Colombia, from the aerial tramway, built with AFD support.

income levels, the cost of projects and the financial capacities of local authorities usually mean that it is possible to finance and develop approaches which are similar to those that are applied by local governments in the North: the use of spatial planning documents, geographic information systems, urban databases and observation units, for example.

AFD makes sure this strategic planning process takes place within the context of the broadest possible consultation. The stakes are often more social and political in nature than technical, as the local authority's legitimacy depends on the strategic planning process. On the basis of local attitudes towards consultation and the legislation that is in force, appropriate consul-

tation procedures must be put in place: workshops, surveys, communication, exhibitions, etc. There are three goals here: understanding the behaviour of the local stakeholders, gaining their support for the process, and identifying and removing potential barriers.

So, for a donor like AFD, supporting the implementation of a Strategic Urban Planning process has three benefits: it stimulates dialogue between local stakeholders, it strengthens the political backing for projects and leads to the creation of a strategy that allows the Agency to provide long-term funding. All these are essential for the success of the projects AFD finances.

Strategic Urban Planning and access to essential services

Dominique HERON
Director of Partnerships, Veolia Environnement

Without accessible urban services, urban areas do not achieve urban efficiency and the most vulnerable groups cease to experience the benefits of urban areas as a place of economic and social interaction. In order to respond to this challenge, it is vital to apply an area-based,

intersectoral and partnership approach to development.

Strategic Urban Planning is both a technical tool and a political process. It brings all urban stakeholders into the process of developing a shared vision and sets up operational synergy in which urban services assist

the transformation of areas. More is involved than just providing infrastructure: the essential services must be well integrated within a spatial framework that is coherent within the area in question in order to reduce poverty and inequalities of access, and at the same time improve the effectiveness of the services

and preserve the environment. Operators are involved in the joint production of urban space, and by applying their expertise create socially innovative solutions for meeting the challenge of providing universal access to essential services.

The Cergy International Workshops on Urban Planning and Development: An innovative structure created by the French urban engineering community

Luc Rimbault, Deputy Director General of the Urban Community of Cergy-Pontoise, Board member of the Ateliers and
Nicolas Détrie, Director of the Ateliers de Cergy

Set up in Cergy-Pontoise in the dynamic of the new towns, the International Workshops on Urban Planning and Development, often known in French as the Ateliers de Cergy, disseminate a French multidisciplinary approach to town planning throughout the world.

The aim of the International Workshops is to allow the local authorities in an area to construct Strategic Urban Planning themselves on the basis of proposals generated by a multi-player participative process.

The underlying idea is that the city is by its very nature a collective construct and that the implementation of a long-term participative iterative project formulation process is more important than a succession of fixed projects, which are necessary but reductive.

The urban planning and development method employed in the workshops provides a way of making a large number of professions that are involved in urban issues work together within a systems approach, based on collective creativity, in order to gain a better picture of the complexity involved and imagine the city of tomorrow.

A response to a request from a local authority that is committed to and involved in the process

Each workshop is organized at the express request of a local authority in order to respond to a concrete urban issue in its area. The strong involvement of local elected officials in each stage of the process, which takes place over a full year, is an essential condition

for a workshop to be put in place. The involvement of the largest number of stakeholders in the area is sought.

Participative production that involves local and international executives

A workshop is an international meeting during which several multidisciplinary teams that are in friendly competition with each other meet in order to draw up urban development strategies and propose planning projects. A workshop does not produce a single expert appraisal, but a non-restrictive set of strategic directions and planning projects for different geographical and temporal scales. Each team includes local professionals and the participants are all unpaid. A workshop thus provides a professionally disinterested international perspective on the studied urban issue. Those taking parts in the Workshops are free to express their views, but high quality, responsible professionalism is the order of the day. At the end of the session, the work is presented to an international jury, chaired by the local authority, whose role is to help the project owner identify the most appropriate proposals. Each workshop itself lasts between two and four weeks.

The proposals constitute a "suggestion box" which elected officials and players from



Photo : Ateliers de Cergy

International workshop in Saint-Louis, Benin, 2010.

the area can dip into in order to work together to develop Strategic Urban Planning.

The project owner is completely free to take on board or ignore the proposals and recommendations.

An experience and training which strengthens local urban engineering

A workshop involves ongoing training, multidisciplinary professional practice and research, and provides the participants with an exceptional opportunity to exchange and share experience with professionals from different cultures and other disciplines.

Each workshop helps to train new generations of town planners, in particular in countries which are undergoing particularly marked urban development, and allows local executives to join an international network of professionals.

A process that encourages the emergence of democratic urban governance

A workshop brings together all the stakeholders who are involved in an area, whether they belong to institutions or civil society in a context which is devoid of power struggles and financial pressures in order to discuss and share a forward-looking vision for cities.

During the forums that punctuate this process, an intense dialogue builds up between the area's local authorities and its movers and shakers. Local elected officials and decision-makers are able to become familiar with the fundamental concepts of town planning, which therefore become democratized, and dialogue confidently with professionals.

This involvement fosters the development and setting up of expanded, durable, local and regional governance that takes account of the major issues and is able to build a shared project for the area.

The documents that are generated during the workshops

(the issues file, context file and session journal – the last of which contains all the proposals made by the teams and the jury) provide a means of continuing the dynamic that is created, in particular with decentralized cooperation partners.

The Workshops' approach – a dynamic that has been extended to all the continents

More than 70 workshops have been held over the last 30 years, and five new ones are scheduled for 2012:

- A workshop was held in the Mexican city of Puebla in May, with the theme "City

centre and metropolis". What form of sustainable development and reclamation of public space is appropriate for a metropolis that is undergoing continual radial development?

- A workshop held in Porto-Novo in Benin studied how it is possible to integrate a large wetland ecosystem within a project for sustainable urban development.

- An exceptional workshop, to mark the association's 30th anniversary, is to be held in Cergy in September with the participation of ten of the world's metropolises. The theme will be "Representing and staging the metropolitan landscape" and calls into question the

"Grand Paris" project. How can we encourage the emergence of a desired metropolitan landscape?

- In October a workshop organized in Thiès, in Senegal, will deal with the attempt to identify new environmental compensation zones that function at different spatial scales for this rapidly growing city.

- In November a workshop is scheduled to take place in the Indian city of Naya Raipur in order to develop a systems approach to the duopoly formed by the new city and its traditional neighbour.

Urban planning in the context of rebuilding: a first in Port au Prince

Virginie Rachmuhl

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Baillergeau, a precarious settlement in Haiti's capital city was built informally on a dangerous site in the midst of unimproved ravines. Geographical factors combined with poor quality buildings made it particularly vulnerable to the 2010 earthquake, and 60% of the area was destroyed. For the first time in Port au Prince, planning procedures are being applied in order to rebuild housing without jeopardizing the district's development. In the absence of local data, local operators and public policies, GRET, a French development NGO, and its partners⁽¹⁾ are implementing an innovative bottom-up step-by-step approach which relies on neighbourhood organizations. A plan has been approved and improvement and rebuilding works are getting under way. A governance framework is being created in order to align all the initiatives.



View of the district of Baillergeau, Haiti.

Photo: GRET - Alexis Doucet

(1) This project is financed by the AFD, the European Union and the Fondation de France, in partnership with the Interministerial Committee on Town Planning (CIAT), the Fondation FOKAL, the Ministry of Public Works, Transports, Communication and Energy (MTPTCE), the city council of Port-au-Prince and the Unit for Housing and Public Buildings Construction (UCLBP).

In brief

The French Ministry for Regional Equality and Housing has launched the competition for the fourth Young Urban Planners Award. This competition is held every two years and rewards young professionals by making their work known to the general public. Applications are open until 19 September:

<http://www.developpement-durable.gouv.fr/Depot-des-candidatures-2012.html>

On 14 September, the professional association Adp – Villes en Développement is holding a day of meetings on Sustainable Cities in developing and emerging countries at the Conservatoire National des Arts et des Métiers (CNAM). The approach will be thoroughly practical and players from the South and North will speak and fuel discussions which will focus on concrete experiences.

The programme and application form can be downloaded from:

<http://ville-developpement.org/actualites/actualites/773-villes-durables-une-approche-operationnelle-pour-les-villes-du-sud->

Last from 25th August to 28th September, to mark the 30 years of the association's existence, the *Ateliers de Cergy* are organizing a series of seminars and symposiums around a theme "Revealing metropolitan landscapes" and a question: how do we view our cities? Further information is available at:

<http://www.ateliers.org/content/reveler-et-mettre-en-scene-le-paysage-des-metropoles-0>



This issue is financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the French Development Agency

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Printed by

Imprimerie Centrale de Lens

ISSN 1151 – 1672

Subscription: 4 n^{os} per year : 20 euros

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Publications



• **Impulser la ville**
Palmarès des jeunes
urbanistes MEDDTL,
ed: Parenthèses
144 p - 2012

This publication provides interwoven portraits of young urban planners who have won the Young Urban Planners Award with abundant examples of their ideas, methods and projects, showing the variety of ways in which it is possible to act in order to enhance quality of life and cities. Eleven aspects of the urban planning profession are thus presented as different approaches for understanding and energizing the city, propelling new projects and programmes, etc.

the central concept of diversity. To what extent is the attempt to create diversity (both in terms of social diversity and programmes) shaping new urban forms? And what maintenance and governance issues will the resulting new urban forms raise in the medium and long terms?

This architect and historian adopts a practical and forward-looking approach to these issues, referring to a large number of urban projects in France.



• **Report of the fifth**
Session of the World
Urban Forum
The Right to the City :
Bridging the urban
Divide, UN-Habitat,
108 p. - 2010

Before World Urban Forum 6, which is to be held in September 2012, this report presents an account of the fifth session which took place in Rio de Janeiro on 22 to 26 March 2010.

It features a summary of the discussions and the various events (dialogues, roundtables, special sessions, etc.) which took place during this essential meeting for thinking about the city.



• **Où va la ville**
aujourd'hui ?
Formes urbaines et
mixités
Jacques Lucan,
ed: De la Villette
195 p. - 2012

In his new book *Où va la ville aujourd'hui ?*, Jacques Lucan considers