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Networked research - shared research:
The experience of the SITRASS¹ network in the transport sector of Sub-Saharan Africa

D.R.
E. Deliry Antheaume - IRD



Research and Expertise

The city – a potential heartland of expertise.

As I have been invited by the editor of the *Villes en Développement* bulletin to address the subject of expertise, I will get straight to the point as I see it, and not attempt to make an exhaustive review of all the possible meanings of this term which, like the word city itself, can embrace a wide variety of realities. If I had to convey an impression of the city in single word, I would opt for: fast! In town, there is no time to wait. And the bigger the town, the less it will let time drift along at its own pace.... We live, travel and work fast. And what is true for the average citizen is no doubt substantially true for policy-makers in charge of the management and destiny of these “population clusters”. They are so hard-pressed that they have no time to waver before they act. Obviously, the normal time-scale for research is hardly suited to this working pace. Research uses its own language (or should we say, specialized jargon for each branch). It questions the world (rather than providing a frontline response to society’s problems). But above all, it takes its time. It lives at its own pace, which is out of phase with the real

world. This enables it to stand back and gain a thorough understanding of phenomena – but this approach often makes it unable to respond to requirements in the heat of the action.

And yet researchers, if not research, harbour all that the “real” world really needs in real time! In fact, at all times, they are all custodians of all the world’s “living” knowledge. We merely need to develop and implement an appropriate “information retriever” to collect and “instantly” customize (i.e. within a few months), all the world’s relevant knowledge on any issue. This information retriever will take the form of the *open collegial expertise* procedures now being introduced in various organizations, such as those developed over the past few years in INSERM (National Institute for health and medical research) and used in the full-scale projects being initiated by IRD (Institute for development research). It is now the turn of the key urban players to give this tool its full legitimacy! ■

Philippe Lazar
President of IRD

Urban research in the new IRD approach

Dominique Couret, Françoise Dureau, Claude de Miras

Since 1998, the Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (formerly Orstom), "an EPST (public scientific and technological institution) for cooperation development", has been engaged in building a new scientific and operational approach designed to fulfil "a three-fold mission of excellence in research, training and collective expertise dedicated to development"¹.

In this context, research teams answered a call for proposals made by the IRD Management in October 1998 for Research Units (RU) and Service Units (SU). After validation by the Sectoral Scientific Commissions and by the Scientific Council set up in the second half year 2000, 78 RUs and 12 SUs are now about to become operational².

Four proposals were submitted for research units on the urban question:

- "Urban site-specific development. Dynamics and regulation"
- "The urban environment"
- "Mobility and urban recomposition"
- "The city and policy: actors, institutions and territories"

Based on a strong scientific and academic partnership covering sites in Brazil and West Africa, the proposal "The city and policy: actors, institutions and territories" aimed to federate, guide and elicit research projects that establish the city's position in its relations with state, socio-economic, institutional and deviant authorities, around the unitary concept of its government³. The approach to the policy arena and to new urban practices in the countries of the South, based on central or local government procedures, private initiatives or illegal practices, was a relevant addition to the three other theme entries. This RU project was not selected under the first IRD call for proposals.

Site-specific urban development. Dynamics and regulation

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Since the end of the "trente glorieuses", the era of post-war prosperity, the development paradigm has been marked by recomposition patterns and new global dynamics at a time when regional and socio-economic differentiations have become more pronounced. At the supranational level, globalization gives rise to contrasting, or even unstable, regional economic polarizations. And at the infranational level, specificities and heterogeneity in conditions of growth belie the traditional assumption that the economic space is homogeneous. Today's urbanization of the majority of the world's population gives cities a strategic function in these dynamics of differential growth, based on comparative advantages mainly in the built-up environment, positive externalities and organizational considerations in their widest sense. It is becoming urgent to co-ordinate and equalize these site-specific growth dynamics because centralized governmental regulation, as both a driving and a participating force in development, has shown its limits and undesirable effects. This Research Unit project, by proposing to integrate a new dimension into the IRD scientific framework, built around the idea of *urban site-specific development*, uses a

multidisciplinary approach to combine an analysis of the political, social, economic and geographic determinants of urban economic growth, an analysis of site-specific production systems and the conditions of formulating efficient regional development policies. Special attention should be paid to linkages between public and private fields of competence or action, and to new patterns of sociability – whether urban, community or entrepreneurial – and citizenship.

South Africa, Brazil, Mexico, India and West Africa are among the countries included in this comparative approach.

Urban environment

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The environmental question in urban areas has become a major development challenge that is mobilizing more and more players acting on and in the city (international financial institutions, municipalities, NGOs, neighbourhood associations). Two key local urban dynamics are at work in this field. On the one hand, urban development is a source of various types of transformation, damage or even destruction of the surrounding or pre-existing environment. Such processes may in turn be harmful to the inhabitants. For although many risk factors are natural elements, urban growth itself amplifies potential vulnerability and damage, particularly because of the demographic and

urban building pressures it creates on fragile areas. On the other hand, urban development cannot be dissociated from management policies, social movements and individual organization, planning, conservation and transmission practices that are concerned as much with natural features as the results of human action. These policies, social movements and practices can give rise either to consensual innovation or to conflict and are greatly influenced by changes in the representations of the parties involved. The aim of the RU is to help to define urban environment problems with a view to providing new, useful understanding and knowledge of urban management in the countries of the South. This will consist in identifying new practices, policies and management systems to respond to environmental concerns, and providing policy-makers with meaningful information on the urban environment.

Three intermediary scientific objects are being investigated by this 20-member team of researchers from France and the countries of the South, in dialogue or partnership with local operators and policy-makers: urban transformation of the land and its uses; development, conservation and creation of the urban heritage; the emergence and changing pattern of natural risks in the urban environment. The development of a common dimension requires a collective process for comparing, discussing and formalizing concepts, methods and subjects of analysis, and the concrete situations of the places studied, which are spread throughout the four geographic areas of the Southern Mediterranean, Sub-Saharan Africa, the Indian Ocean and Latin America.

Mobility and urban recomposition patterns

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The worldwide development of urbanization is marked by the emergence of large metropolises with singular dynamics. If we are to better understand the social and spatial changes involved, an interpretative system must be used that explicitly takes into account the inhabitants' practices as they interrelate with practices of the other social, economic and political players that shape the city. Mobility patterns are multifaceted phenomena that are at the origin and junction of new urban territorial organization patterns and relations within urban systems. If we are to improve our analysis of contemporary metropolitan dynamics, it is essential to gain better knowledge of the mobility practices of city-dwellers, on different space and time scales (from local to international, daily to biographical) and social scales (from individual to family, to group, to relational network).

The aim of the RU is to study people's mobility patterns and their linkages with new organisational structures in metropolitan areas. The first stage of the project aims to improve knowledge of mobility patterns by considering them as systems with all their space-time dimensions. The second stage is to use a dynamic, interactive approach to certain recomposition patterns of urban areas and how they are used and governed: forms of expansion, redistribution of population density, segregative processes, relations with urban centrality and governance methods. The RU brings together some fifteen IRD researchers and their French and foreign partners, with whom they are conducting research, using a comparative approach, on ten metropolises in West and South Africa, Latin America and Asia. The team membership and a plural partnership organized in synergy with networks of researchers and professionals (including *GIS Réseau Socio Economie de l'Habitat*), has made it possible to mobilize the



La Paz, Bolivia

tools and concepts of demography, geography, sociology, anthropology and economy. The applied research protocols adopt a joint longitudinal perspective and combine qualitative and quantitative approaches. They embrace various observation scales (metropolitan area, neighbourhood, family unit and individual) and prioritize the analysis of relations between these levels. The innovative na-

ture of some questions requires specific work to develop new analysis tools.

1. Extract from the introduction to the document "1998-1999 call for proposals for the creation of Research Units (RU) and Service Units (SU)" J.P. Muller, October 1998, Paris, 5p.
2. A second call for the creation of a RU and a SU was made on 14 December 2000, which will complete this architecture
3. For further information, consult <http://www.bondy.ird.fr/iss/r108projd.pdf>

Expert, researcher, consultant, development worker and exporter

Vincent Renard

"Intervention" in the field of urban management in developing countries or in countries "in transition" (partially overlapping concepts) can constitute highly contrasting "postures". These depend on the professional occupation of the intervener, the type of intervention, the local counterpart (or partner, or client, or specifier, etc.) in the country concerned, the practical conditions of the intervention, and the "deliverable", etc.

This diversity is obviously in the nature of international relations, whose spectrum extends from the pure altruism of humanitarian action to simple export sales support and implementation. No moral judgement is made but simply a statement of diversity. Naturally, it can also be said that export activities embrace corruption or support for suspect regimes, etc., that humanitarian action may be a

preliminary for politico-ideological designs, or a pretext for a variety of vested interests. This is manifestly sometimes the case.

But such is not the subject of this paper, which only seeks to point out the risk posed by the frequent confusion between possible postures in relation to the ambition of the projects. Theoretically, there is one posture that does not raise any ethical problems – that of the

exporter (or importer) who is in a strictly commercial relationship, governed by a body of laws and regulations and business practices. It is a known fact that most of the practices obey the law... of competition, but they are at least clear in their status and nature.

The real question is that of the continuum of activities that run from research to tendering via development aid. Academic interest *stricto sensu*, the altruism of disinterested development aid, a concern for political influence, business interest or merely profit-seeking, all combine together in varying proportions.

As not everything can be clarified before entrusting a mission, there is no choice but to rely on institutional mechanisms, which have their shortcomings and whose transparency is inevitably imperfect.

The most characteristic case in point generally brings together a donor (such as a French entity,

the World Bank or the European Union), the country involved, and the tenderers (where applicable). French networking of replies to calls for tenders is unstructured and often randomly links up academics, researchers (who are also salaried workers), the professions, consultants and contractor companies. This entails a risk of unfair competition, biased bids and weakening of the "French supply". A comparison with the Netherlands or Germany (the GTZ development aid agency, for instance) is instructive on this point.

There is also a degree of obscurity in French representations abroad, which may differ according to the country, often with a lack of consultation between the development aid departments, the commercial services and the trade offices, and with changes in policy priorities or direction that are not always consistent with long-term projects. This may not facilitate interchange

and the pooling of efforts.

There is also a problem in this connection arising out of the strategies of donors and the "doctrines" which they may develop autonomously or which may be at cross-purposes with the problems prioritized by recipient countries (for instance, the action by the World Bank or the EBRD in Russia during the first years of transition). The "consultant – development worker – researcher" often has no choice but to act in accordance with the terms of reference rather than address the actual problem. This will be a major difficulty in the future relations between the three partners.

Another problem is that of synergy between the partners and the frequent impression of a lack of pooled information – to say the least – particularly between university cooperation networks and technical cooperation networks. It is often not until they are on the job that two – or more – teams realize that they are working in

related areas. The French may not be the only ones to undergo such "line losses", but these losses are certainly substantial. There are naturally any number of reasons to explain this situation: a reflex to protect their "backyard", the lack of a structure for exchanging and capitalizing experience and information, the relative compartmentalization inside France between the different networks.

We are not naïve enough to think that transparency and pooling of information and networks will suddenly multiply. But we do think that the development of exchanges, the pooling of resources and networks, and the strengthening of ISTED and "Villes en Développement", should accelerate and form a priority for the years to come. For in all probability, the relative dispersion and compartmentalization between networks results in a weakening of the action undertaken. ■

Urban research support for development

Concerted incentive action

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has called on ISTED to be the project manager-operator of the research programme "Urban research support for development". The Scientific Interest Group, Gemdev, (concerned with the world economy, the third world and development) works as the scientific operator. The activities are scheduled over a three-year period as from January 2001. The budget proposed under the Priority Solidarity Fund (Fonds de Solidarité Prioritaire – FSP) is F15 million.

The project aims to be a concerted incentive approach in

the field of urban research support for development throughout the countries of the Priority Solidarity Zone (Zone de Solidarité Prioritaire - ZSP). It has three main objectives:

- activate urban research for development and integrate new problems and work areas
- produce new knowledge on urbanization to enlighten public cooperation projects on urban development
- restore or initiate partnership and interchange relations between the French scientific community and the ZSP scientific communities

It is thus planned to finance research projects selected under a call for proposals, covering

subjects considered as priorities for understanding how the urban question manifests itself in those cities of the South that are recognized as having a significant scientific knowledge deficit.

The first priority concerns urban action: projects concerned with "metropolization", the environment and the heritage, the development of facilities and urban services. The second priority concerns the logics and strategies of stakeholders in urbanistic projects. There are two important aspects: the interaction of everyone involved, faced with questions of governance, decentralization and local democracy; the role of exper-

tise with respect to professional knowledge and national and local urban cultures. ■

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or www.isted.com

CERTU intervenes in Abidjan and Ivory Coast with funding from the World Bank

At the request of the Ivory Coast Ministry of Transport, Certu (French centre for studies on road networks, transportation, urban planning and public construction) is conducting a study on dysfunctions in the Abidjan urban transport system. One of the main aims of this work is to make a city-wide assessment of the social cost of traffic accidents, congestion, obstacles to mobility, and traffic-related noise and air pollution.

A paper on the methods of monetarization used is available from Certu.

It highlights the difficulties and limits of the assignment. The air pollution problem particularly shows the problems posed by the transfer of foreign concepts and techniques to a developing country. The two possible approaches to monetarization of

the effects of traffic-related air pollution, which are the cost assessment of pollution-related damage or the cost assessment of pollution abatement – “avoidance cost” – have their limits in the Abidjan context:

- Firstly, there are practical problems of collecting information and calibrating models.
- Then the methods themselves - monetarizing damage or determining realistic depollution strategies - have considerable theoretical limits.

This study has thus aimed to account for its methodological choices by testing the sensitivity of the results to the design assumptions. Modelling was used to make up for the lack of data, but it had to be adapted to the local modelling context.

SITRASS - Amakoé P. Adoléhouné



Abidjan - mini-bus for collective transport

The sustainability of this type of work will be ensured through a list of sound, easy-to-collect indicators that will enable a transport observatory in Abidjan to be monitored and maintained. ■

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Networked research – shared research: The experience of the SITRASS¹ network in the transport sector of Sub-Saharan Africa

Amakoé P. Adoléhouné

This article written for “Villes en Développement” will focus on the urban part of the SITRASS network. But the activities of the SITRASS network do not solely cover the urban transport sector. They extend over the entire transport sector and moreover, at its origins, the network was concerned with non-urban freight transport.

Origins and development of the SITRASS¹ network: the relevance of the World Bank’s SSATP² programme

The SITRASS network evolved out of a combination of cooperation and skills in Francophone Africa and France. In the mid-eighties, it benefited from a catalyzing element, the launching of the SSATP programme of the World Bank and

the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), with financial support from bilateral donors (French Development Aid in this instance). In 1987, an initial study on trucking costs was entrusted to the Transport Economy Laboratory (Laboratoire d’Economie des Transports - LET) and to the National Institute for Transport and Safety Research (INRETS). The observation made at that

time by both these institutions was simple. Owing to the complexity of a transport system – which itself forms part of the still larger system of society as a whole –, it is impossible to have a full knowledge of it unless we have a full knowledge of that society. Whether for research or expertise, we cannot achieve high-quality results without input from precisely those local researchers and experts who, “*ever since their childhood, have been initiated, as it were, into the many dimensions of their society*”. It is therefore essential for local capacities to be developed in the area of transport economy research and expertise in Sub-Saharan Africa. The scientific justification for this requirement is the very foundation of the SITRASS network. The LET and INRETS thus considered that the time was well-chosen to involve African researchers from the various countries (Ivory Coast, Cameroon and Mali) in this initial study. It was an extremely productive collaboration and when the work was completed, it was decided at the result presentation and discussion seminar to continue the operation by setting up a research network. SITRASS thus came into being with the creation of a team in each of the three African countries. Since then, the network has further

expanded. Various local African teams have grown up around SITRASS, ad hoc cooperation has been implemented with African institutions, the most recent being EAMAU (African school of architecture and urban planning in Lomé) and the statistical observatory AFRISTAT (Bamako). SITRASS now encompasses eleven African teams: ACRETAT (Congo), AIdET (Ivory Coast), ANRET (Niger), APCAT (Benin), ARETRANS (Mali), ASECTRA (CAR), ASERT (Senegal), ATDTR (Chad), CEDRES (Burkina Faso), GIRET (Cameroon) and GRETAT (Togo). It also reaches out to some 1,500 people who regularly receive information on our activities. And it has a nucleus of more than 450 active participants. Lastly, it has undertaken a succession of research projects and seminars on subjects that have given us a better overall insight into African transport systems and consequently more efficient tools to try to control costs. Although the SITRASS network was initially developed around freight transport, urban problems are nonetheless among its members’ main concerns. Since the early nineties, the SITRASS network has thus been involved in a number of studies and discussions on the urban transport sector with a view to gaining a

better understanding of how this sector works and enabling informed decisions by the many stakeholders.

Urban transport: amplification of the urbanization phenomenon, growth of transport requirements and crisis of supply

Not all the work performed by the SITRASS network on the urban environment will be presented here. We will simply mention some solutions put forward by SITRASS to problems caused by the urban transport crisis in African cities, and the analytical agendas that have been drawn up. One of the significant developments of African cities in the nineties has been the gradual disappearance of large, structured public transport companies, with small-scale artisan structures increasingly filling the void left vacant.

The SITRASS teams have thus sought to draw lessons from the transport policies implemented in the eighties (cf. study on public transport in Abidjan, Bamako, Brazzaville, Conakry, Dakar and Pointe-Noire), to make a more in-depth study on specific urban situations, to consider whether the use of non-motorized two-wheeled vehicles could be a solution to the urban transport crisis (cf. study on Ouagadougou/

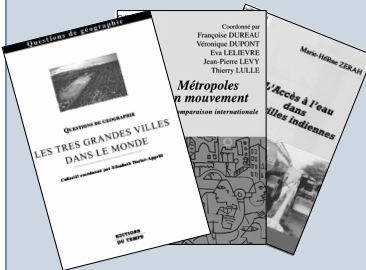
Koudougou, Bamako/Sikasso, Dakar/Kaolack/Ziguinchor), and to examine how to help the urban transport micro-business sector become sustainably more efficient and cost-effective (cf. study on Abidjan, Bamako, Harare and Nairobi). An analysis of dysfunctions in this sector, particularly due to road safety problems, has also been a focal point of network activities (cf. study on the implementation of a common road safety policy in the eight member countries of the West African Economic and Monetary Union, and study on the protection of vulnerable road users in traffic in Ouagadougou and Harare).

Training and informing men (and women) towards greater efficiency of the transport system in Africa

The transport sector, particularly ill-prepared for change, has had a hard time weathering events arising out of the economic crisis. In both public and private sectors, and at all levels, a training deficit has been diagnosed among the many organizational and operational deficiencies of the transport system.

In the senior management levels, this training deficit has had damaging effects on the entire sector, especially as the senior management has the task

Publications



Les très grandes villes du monde, co-ordinated by Elisabeth Dorier-Apprill.- Paris: Editions du Temps, 2000. – 382 p. (Questions de Géographie coll.). Nearly 150 cities in the world now have 2 million inhabitants. This poses a problem of the methods and concepts required to describe the generalization of very large cities throughout the world and the new forms of urbanization. This work covers the very big city from historical, demographic, spatial, functional, social, political and cultural angles and shows the interaction between these components. Price: F145
 ➔ Contact: Editions du Temps, 70 rue Hermel, 75018 Paris, France, www.editions-du-temps.com

Metropoles en mouvement. An international comparison, co-ordinated by F. Dureau, V. Dupont, E. Lelièvre, J-P. Lévy, Th. Lulle.- Paris: Anthropos; IRD, 2000. – 656 p. (Villes coll.). Publication of an international workshop held in 1998 of forty French and foreign researchers, which yielded recent, original information structured by a joint analysis framework. Spatial mobility, as a total social fact on which to base metropolitan organizations, is key to a clear understanding enabling this international comparison of nineteen metropolises on various continents. Price: F 198
 ➔ Contact: Diffusion IRD, 213, rue Lafayette, 75010, Paris, France.

Accès à l'eau dans les villes indiennes, by Marie-Hélène Zerah. – Paris: Anthropos, 1999.- VI- 192 p (Revised version of the thesis presented in 1997 to the Paris Urban Planning Institute under the direction of Rémy Prud'homme; Villes coll.). The author mainly uses a study made in Delhi to throw light on the qualitative dimensions of water supply for households connected to a municipal network, to assess the effects of a lack of a reliable supply on the behaviour of households and to measure its cost. Price: F150
 ➔ Contact: Diffusion Economica, 49 rue Héricart, 75015 Paris - France.

of determining and applying the broad guidelines for transport (public and private). A top-down training programme for senior managers has therefore proved necessary.

The building block contributed by SITRASS consists mainly in organizing a continuous training programme under the responsibility of the Lyon Transport Economy Laboratory. This programme, which was set up in 1991, is particularly intended for senior managers and decision-makers working in the transport sector in Sub-Saharan Africa: civil servants in the Ministries responsible for transport and public works, local authorities, transport company managers, research teachers in universities and post-graduate colleges, etc. The overall result of this programme is positive: after ten sessions, more than 150 African senior managers from 20 countries have already taken part in this training. Information and outreach are an important aspect of SITRASS activities. Even if dissemination of information is implicit in networked study and research, a few specific means of communication have been implemented which include not only seminars but also an in-house newsletter, the publication of seminar proceedings and research findings, and a regularly updated directory of members. Overall, SITRASS is a reality

and a reference in the transport sector in Sub-Saharan Africa. In just a short time, the network has mobilized the stakeholders in this sector and enabled them to work together: researchers, Administration officers and transport professionals. We can but affirm that the North-South partnership and cooperation has worked well through SITRASS. As regards the progression of scientific knowledge, networked research has particularly benefited from the diversity of contexts and fields of observation. An adaptive approach has been implemented that has worked in both directions, for in some cases, the analyses and lessons distilled from developing countries have been useful for analysing situations in developed countries (cf. the World Bank debate on deregulation and privatization of public transport). This is an answer to those who continue to hold that the North-South partnership is outmoded and dangerous. Outmoded because not in line with the requirements of today's harsh international competition (and it would therefore be dangerous to maintain the illusion of real cooperation). Dangerous because resulting, at best, in a waste of time for the North in its fundamental internal competition, and at worst, in a "brain drain" problem for the



SITRASS - Amakoé P.

Ouagadougou, eastern district : various faces of urban mobility

South. INRETS and LET form a bridgehead that has ensured the preservation of a genuine, efficient partnership, but it must nonetheless be consolidated, particularly as regards the local teams which require further enhancement of research.

1. SITRASS: Solidarité internationale sur les transports et la recherche en Afrique Sub-saharienne (International solidarity in transport and research in Sub-Saharan Africa)
2. SSATP: Sub-Saharan Africa Transport Policy Program

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Conferences Training

- French meetings for multilateral development aid.
- The priorities of the local community. Unity Congress.
- Informality and illegality in developing cities

French meetings for multilateral development aid

A meeting in Paris on 2, 3 and 4 April 2001 should enable several hundreds of French operators interested in multilateral or Community financing to hold discussions together and with the relevant Administrations with a view to improving their capacity to respond to calls for tenders and calls for proposals, or to express interest in Community or multilateral programmes, and to better converge their bi- and multilateral approaches.

→ Contact: Ministry of Foreign Affairs: www.diplomatie.fr, international cooperation section, or Laurence Marzal: laurence.marzal@diplomatie.gouv.fr

The priorities of the local community. Unity Congress

As a follow-up to the City Summit, Habitat II, in 1996 in Istanbul, and as a response to the Mayors Appeal of the First World Assembly of Cities and Local Authorities, to create a single world organization of local authorities, the 16th Congress of the World Federation of United Cities and the 35th Congress of the International Union of Local Authorities will take place from 3 to 6 May in Rio de Janeiro at a FMCU-IULA Unity Congress, which will provide an opportunity to initiate a new organization, based on the community agenda.

→ Contact: www.rio.rj.gov.br/iula/fmcu
fax: (55-21) 2869246

Informality and illegality in developing cities

The seminar of the ESF/N-AERUS network will take place in Leuven and Brussels, Belgium, from 23 to 26 May 2001. The discussions will focus on informality and illegality of human settlements in cities in developing countries, covering land use, urbanism, facilities and construction, non-compliance with rules on safety, environmental protection and health standards, and the institutional framework and legal and administrative standards. The seminar will analyse the basis, contents and characteristics of public policies on neighbourhood illegality.

→ Contact: www.naerus.org

Scientific cooperation and research on changes in political life, the economy, society and the city in Africa.

News on cooperation

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A social science research programme has recently been funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This project will be supervised by the African Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) and by IRD, under a North-South partnership. Twenty-eight projects have been selected, seven of which cover the urban question. They bring together Francophone and Anglophone French and African researchers. The "city" projects are as follows (only the organizations of the leaders are mentioned):

- Urban-dwelling families and residential practices in the mobility challenge: prospective Anglophone and Francophone issues in West Africa (leader: Monique Bertrand, IRD),
- Urban integration in Africa: a socio-demographic survey of Greater Nairobi (leader: Philippe Bocquier, IFRA),
- Information on the municipal decision: a tool for decentralized urban management and a marker of social and spatial dynamics: Mali and Benin urban contexts (leaders: Claude de Miras, IRD and Amadou Ballo (Mali Univ.),
- Emerging citizenships in the cities of Abidjan and Durban (leader: Ousmane Dembele (Tropical Geography Inst., Abidjan),
- Poverty, inequalities and economic policies in Senegal (leader: Abdoulaye Diagne, UCAD-CREA, Senegal),
- Territories, margins and urban dynamics: South-African lessons (leader: Frédéric Giraud, IRD),
- Urban management and local development policies in Southern Africa (Cape Town, Durban, Lusaka, Walvis Bay (leader: Sylvie Jaglin, ENPC, Paris 8),
- The Senegalese city boundary: revelations of change and urban invention (leader: Jean-Luc Piermay, Strasbourg Univ.),

Three other thematic entries were selected: The paths followed by the government and the politician; The African economy in the globalization process; Changing societies. Because of the cross-linking nature of the "society" and "city" topics, a number of projects will make substantial contributions to knowledge of urban societies and how they are changing.

For further information, see the IRD website: www.ird.fr/fr/info/propositions.shtml

Habitat II + 5

In the run-up to the United Nations Habitat II + 5 conference, to be held from 6 to 8 June in New York, AITEC (International Association of technicians, experts and researchers) has devoted a page of its website to this subject: <http://www.globenet.org/aitec/chantiers/urban/habitat2/habpres.htm>

You will find reference texts, links to the main websites, input for discussion and, in particular, the latest provisional version (23 November 2000) of the final Habitat II+5 political declaration.

World Bank urban strategy

Two strategy documents can be consulted and downloaded from the World Bank website:

- Cities in transition, a strategy document for local and urban development
- The chapter (50 p) on urban poverty, taken from the reference work on strategies for poverty reduction

→ Contact: <http://www.worldbank.org/html/fpd/urban/>

Micro-credit

Micro-enterprises

The Ministry of Economy and Finance organized a European conference "Micro-credit, micro-enterprises, for growth and employment" on 11 and 12 December 2000. The workshops addressed the following questions: How to improve the institutional and regulatory framework of self-employment and micro-enterprises. How to set up an institutional and regulatory framework conducive to the development of micro-credit. How to meet funding and monitoring requirements and the need to disseminate good practices. Addresses, contributions and summaries of the workshops and a list of participants are on line.

→ Contact: http://www.finances.gouv.fr/DICOM/manifestations/microcredit/som_intervent.htm

Asia Urbs programme

Local governments in a number of Asian countries are eligible to propose projects or feasibility studies in urban development for funding by the European Asia Urbs Programme. Proposals must be supported by a partnership of at least three local governments – two from the European Union and at least one from South or South-East Asia.

Forms and application guidelines can be downloaded from the Urbs Asia Programme website. The first deadline for sending in projects in 2001 is 15 February 2001, the second is 15 June 2001. For the first call for proposals, project were approved from sixteen Asian cities, including Sylhet (Bangladesh), Phnom Penh (Cambodia), Rajkot (India), Colombo (Sri Lanka), Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City and Hue (Vietnam), in partnership with Lille and Lyon (France).

→ Contact: Asia Urbs Secretariat, E-mail: secretariat@asia-urbs.com <http://www.asia-urbs.com>

Urbanews

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation is now publishing a newsletter on the urban sector "Urbanews".

→ Contact: Mrs Françoise Lieberherr: francoise.lieberherr@deza.admin.ch

World Habitat Awards

Awards amounting to £10,000 for two projects per year, in developed or developing countries, which ensure sustainable development and propose practical and imaginative solutions to housing problems, are offered by the Building and Social Housing Foundation (BSHF). All innovative solutions are welcome, large or small, urban or rural. Submissions should be sent in before 1 July 2001.

→ Contact: BSHF, Memorial Square, Coalville, Leicestershire, LE67 3TU, United Kingdom, E-mail: BSHF@compuserve.com <http://www.bshf.org>