



Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (HABITAT III)

National report

France



September 2015

This report was written by :

Maryse GAUTIER, General Engineer of Bridges, Water and Forests from the Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy (MEDDE), General Council of the Environment and Sustainable Development (CGEDD)

and

Jérôme MASCLAUX, Chief Engineer of Bridges, Water and Forests, Ministry of Housing, Regional Equality and Rural Affairs (MLETR), General Directorate for Development, Housing and Nature, Department of Housing, Town Planning and Landscapes (DGALN/DHUP/AD) ;

with the participation of Anne Charreyron-Perchet from the National Commission on Sustainable Development, and Delphine Gaudart, Jenny Pankow, Marc Calori and Franck Faucheux from the Directorate of Housing, Town Planning and Landscapes for the Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy (MEDDE) and the Ministry of Housing, Regional Equality and Rural Affairs (MLETR); with the support of the Department of European and International Affairs (DAEI) of the MEDDE/MLETR.

With contributions from :

the Prime Minister: the General Commission for Regional Equality (CGET), provided to the MLETR and the Ministry of Cities, Youth Programmes and Sports (MVJS); the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development (MAEDI): from the Department of Global Public Goods; the MEDDE/MLETR: from the National Commission on Sustainable Development, the General-Directorate for Development, Housing and Nature (DGALN), the General-Directorate for Energy and Climate (DGEC), the General-Directorate for Infrastructure, Transport and the Sea (DGITM), the General-Directorate for Risk Prevention (DGPR); the Ministry of Agriculture, Agribusiness and Forests: the General Directorate for Agricultural, Agribusiness and Regional Policies (DGPAAT); and the Social Union for Housing (USH); with the support of Marseille MIGT.

This report includes the comments and observations of the French Alliance for Cities and Territorial Development (PFVT).

Contents

Foreword.....	6
Introduction.....	15
I. Urban demography.....	16
1. Demographic growth in cities.....	16
2. Managing rural-urban linkages.....	17
3. Needs of young people in cities.....	19
4. The needs of the elderly in cities.....	20
5. Women's participation in urban development.....	22
6. Urban demography: present challenges.....	24
7. Future challenges and issues.....	25
II. Land and urban planning.....	27
8. Ensuring sustainable urban design and planning.....	27
9. Improving urban management, including preventing urban sprawl.....	29
10. Enhancing urban and peri-urban food production.....	30
11. Meeting the challenges of urban mobility.....	32
12. Improving technical capacities for city planning and management.....	34
13. Issues encountered and lessons learnt.....	37
14. Future challenges and objectives.....	39
III. Environment and urbanization.....	42
15. Climate change.....	42
16. Proactive risk management.....	43
17. Road congestion in France.....	45
18. Air quality.....	47
19. Lessons learned.....	48
20. Future challenges and objectives.....	49
IV. Urban governance and legislation.....	51
21. Factoring in urban environment and urban governance.....	51
22. Decentralization and local authorities empowerment.....	52
23. Human rights and participation in urban development.....	54
24. Safety in urban areas	55
25. Social inclusion and equity.....	57
26. Urban governance and legislation : lessons drawn.....	62

27. Future challenges.....	63
V. Urban economy.....	65
28. Municipal finance.....	65
29. Reinforcing access to housing finance.....	68
30. Supporting local economic development.....	70
31. Creating adequate jobs and means of subsistence.....	71
32. Integrating the urban economy in national development policies.....	73
33. Urban economy: challenges and lessons.....	74
34. Urban economy – Challenges for the future.....	76
VI. Urban services and housing.....	78
35. Improving unfit housing.....	78
36. Access to adequate housing.....	80
37. Sustainable access to drinking water.....	82
38. Sustainable access to wastewater treatment.....	84
39. Access to indigenous domestic energy.....	85
40. Access to sustainable public transport.....	86
41. Difficulties encountered and lessons learnt.....	88
42. Future challenges.....	89
Annexes.....	91
Annex 1. Land policies and implementation tools.....	92
Annex 2. Understanding urban mobility challenges in the Eco-Districts.....	93
Annex 3. The Eco-District Quality Mark.....	95
Annex 4. Eco-Cities and Forward Investment Plans.....	97
Annex 5. Energy transition for green growth and positive energy regions.....	99
Annex 6. Community participation.....	101
Annex 7. Implementing social mixing at local level/the regulatory approach (Article 55 of the Solidarity and Urban Renewal Act).....	103
Annex 8. Local planning and living space programmes.....	105
Annex 9. Glossary of Abbreviations and Acronyms.....	108

Foreword

Habitat II objectives

The Habitat II Conference, held in Istanbul in June 1996, took place in a world undergoing rapid urbanization where urban ways of life were becoming widespread. This event, also popularly called the “City Summit”, assessed the scale of the challenges, by identifying, in this rapid cycle of urbanization, the economic, environmental and social challenges and potential risks that would prevail over the benefits of urbanization in the eventuality management goes unchecked. Following a series of international conferences on the environment (Rio, 1992), population (Cairo, 1994), social development (Copenhagen, 1995), women in society (Beijing, 1995), the Istanbul summit was the natural forum for the coordination of all voices to lay the foundations of the principle of sustainable development.

In the final declaration, the Heads of State endorsed the universal goals of “ensuring adequate shelter for all and making human settlements safer, healthier and more liveable, equitable, sustainable and productive”. The two major themes of the conference were adequate shelter for all and sustainable development of human settlements. Acknowledging the continuing deterioration of urban settlements, the final declaration emphasized the need to provide everyone with access to adequate shelter, equal access to land and credit, and the right of women, children and youth to live in safe, healthy and secure conditions. The document also set forth the need to protect the global environment through sustainable patterns of production, consumption, transportation and settlements development. In addition to the objectives to combat growing insecurity, violence and vulnerability to disaster, the final declaration recommended measures in view of facilitating development funding, external debt, international trade and technology transfer.

The international context

Countless changes have taken place over the past 20 years: the economic development of intermediate countries, the BRIC nations in particular, the various economic and financial crises that have impacted the entire global economy (and the poorest countries in particular), further widening the GDP gap between countries, and the recognition of global warming, to name a few.

Yet the most dramatic change lay elsewhere and was brought to light in 2004 when, for the first time in history, the planet's urban population outnumbered its rural population. Urbanization has since continued at a sustained pace. Growing by 67 million citizens per year, the urban population will reach 60 per cent of the global population by 2030. Ninety-five per cent of this growth will be driven by developing countries through the combined effects of the mass exodus from rural areas and demographic changes.

These heavy trends are operating in a tough economic climate. In 2007, arising from a segment in ostensibly low demand, the American mortgage market targeting the least-solvent households (subprime lending) caused a meltdown in financial markets everywhere. At the end of 2008, the principal advanced and emerging economies experienced a marked slowdown in their economy. The European Union's rate of growth fell from 2.9% to 0.1% between 2007 and 2008, while China and Russia fell from 13.0 to 9.0 and from 8.1 to 5.6 respectively. The fragility and exposure of the banking system contributed to causing a global economic crisis. The problems experienced by the banks prompted the financial institutions to tighten lending conditions which significantly restricted access to credit for households and businesses. Facing limited financial

resources, cities were obliged to slow down investment, whether it be in public infrastructure, housing or private investment. In France and worldwide, the most vulnerable populations were the hardest hit. While demand for social or affordable housing increased during this period throughout Europe, supply saw no such adjustment.

Over the past 20 years, climate change has become a global reality. Of the hottest 15 years since weather records began, 13 occurred in the 21st century. Human activity's responsibility is no longer disputed and scientists collect data to compile reports for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) that form the basis of international agreements intended to reduce carbon emissions in the atmosphere and, consequently, the rise in the average temperatures of Earth's climate system.

However, the effects of climate change are already being felt, in different ways depending on the part of the world. While some cold regions will experience warmer climates and extended periods of agricultural productivity, most countries will see negative effects, the severity of which will vary by region. The impacts already measured relate to extreme temperatures, reduction of water resources, drought, the intensification of cyclones, rain and flooding, and the rise of sea levels.

An awareness-raising and educational study by the World Bank¹ examined the potential effects of an average 4°C rise in temperature around the globe. South-East Asia and the Mediterranean would be two of the most severely affected regions. The cities around the Mediterranean would see summer temperatures climb by 7°C. Possible consequences include, but are not limited to, water shortage, desertification, economic and social repercussions, migrations and outbreaks of violent conflict.

If the phenomenon has intensified in recent years, great strides have been made in raising awareness. The first report published by the IPCC in 1995 gave rise to the Kyoto Protocols and was assimilated for the Habitat II conference in 1996, sounding the first alarm regarding the urgent need to move towards the sustainable city. The most recent report, published in 2014, will undoubtedly serve as an important reference to the Habitat III Conference in 2016, as well as the conclusions of the COP 21 Climate Conference of December 2015.

In a global context in which poverty is on the decline, the effects of repeated economic crises and of climate change have nonetheless accelerated the process of human migration, to dramatic effect. At the same time, the percentage of individuals surviving on less than 1.25 dollars a day has dropped spectacularly in developing countries over the last 30 years, decreasing from a group equivalent to half of their inhabitants in 1981 to 21 per cent in 2010² — even while the population of these countries increased by 59% during the same period. Despite these results, there are still 1.2 billion people living in extreme poverty worldwide, one-third of whom are located in sub-Saharan Africa, 22% in India and 13% in China. Significantly, these are the same populations that contribute to the phenomenon of migration, often driven by a despairing need to find means of subsistence. South-North migration has also been accompanied by other occurrences of internal migration in European countries that equally reflects desperate political or economic circumstances in certain countries.

The worldwide economic crisis, combined with the environmental crisis, to which the reaction has been disproportionate to the enormity of the social stakes, has served as the catalyst to a sudden wake-up call regarding the urgent need for a profound behaviour change.

Inasmuch as the majority of the global population now lives in cities, the utmost must be done to

1 Turn Down the Heat, 2012

2 World Development Indicators, World Bank, 2013

ensure they remain the economic driving force they already were in the Middle Ages, at a time when they only housed 10 per cent of the population (see Le Goff³). The challenges we face today are therefore consequential.

The city, a place of opportunity and challenge

The populations of cities in developing countries increase by around 5 million new residents each month. Over the next four decades, cities in the southern hemisphere will absorb 95% of the world's growing urban population. The rapid development of cities in the South represents one of the global challenges humankind will be forced to confront through the course of the 21st century, one with major consequences in terms of social, economic and environmental balance.

Poorly managed urban growth would engender a process of spatial fragmentation and social segregation that in turn would exacerbate the problems of poverty, spatial planning, environmental protection and the precipitated disappearance of cultural specificities and the material and immaterial heritage of historic centres.

At the same time, cities are sources of opportunity for the local populations in terms of employment, income, access to services, facilities and information, culture and citizenship. Although they can exacerbate difficulties, cities can also provide their own solutions, by strengthening the role and capacities of local authorities.

This is why it is important to continue efforts to control land management and prevent urban sprawl (60% of urban spaces expected in 2030 have not yet been built); here, urban and spatial planning provide the instruments for an integrated approach. This explains why France was so attached to adopting, at the 25th UN-Habitat board meeting in April 2015, the guidance on urban and regional planning, which will represent a key topic of Habitat III.

It is estimated that 870 million people around the world already live in impoverished areas or slums that lack basic urban public services – water supply, sanitation and waste management facilities, a figure that could escalate to two billion by 2030 if corrective measures are not taken. These disadvantaged populations also suffer from tenure insecurity, a source of tension and uncertainty. They are also more exposed to risks posed by the degradation of the environment and the pollution of waterways, groundwater and the air, and by climatic events.

Cities in the Southern hemisphere thus hold up a magnifying mirror to the development challenges we face, in particular with a view to the realization of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and, in the future, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Regarding the negotiation of the latter, France hails the adoption of an explicit goal regarding the sustainable city that includes specific points defining the role of local authorities. Habitat III, which is taking place after the adoption of the SDGs, will then be able to present this SGD and its associated targets and indicators in operational terms.

The role of cities in the fight against climate change is also essential.

Cities are responsible for 75% of greenhouse gas emissions. They are also the most vulnerable, especially large cities situated in coastal areas. The solution is also to be found in the cities, by multiplying innovative solutions to combat climate change, such as urban transport, densification, energy efficiency in buildings, coordination with planning (local climate plans), at the right level for resilience policies.

3 *Pour l'amour des villes*, pub. Textuel, 1997: "This 10 per cent had the power of creation, the power of domination and the power of wealth distribution."

The key challenges of the sustainable city in France

In France, the rate of urbanization⁴ has changed little. It sits at around 78%, which is the European average. Large cities, however, continue to see demographic growth, at the rate of approximately 0.5% a year over the last ten years. However, in 2011, 95% of the French population were living under the influence of cities, which contribute to local growth and cohesion. They therefore represent a strategic challenge for France.

This urbanization of the national territory is organized through a framework of cities of all sizes. This framework has Paris at its centre, followed by the eleven conurbations most affected by the process of metropolization and the other regional and departmental capitals/cities connected to the other urban centres under their influence. All these urban areas have interdependent relationships with each other.

At the same time, the reality of French cities is evolving through a dual criteria of density and diversity, in which some relatively specific urban areas stand out: dense city centres that contain very different socio-economic categories and activities, problem neighbourhood (densely populated but with an essentially residential, poor profile) and suburban areas that are not densely populated.

This reading of the way predominantly urban areas operate highlights two main challenges for the next few decades. The first, which is systemic in nature, consists in **reinforcing the role of the city as an economic driver** and its capacity to be more efficiently integrated in the national and international networks. Taken as a whole, the main French conurbations are not significantly behind their European counterparts, particularly given the strategic leadership role played by France's capital region. Taken individually, however, they demonstrate average performance with a low level of specialisation; 78% of them have an average European profile and are predominantly "service"-oriented. To meet this challenge, the development of operational strategies for bringing French conurbations into networks at local and regional level must be a priority for combining and coordinating their potential, their productive functions and for bringing predominantly rural areas along with them.

The second challenge is related to the scale of each of the French conurbations (i.e. their urban area⁵) in terms of **regional sustainable development and equality**, which means meeting three main challenges: urban sprawl, the development of regional inequalities and institutional fragmentation, which harms good local governance.

Urban sprawl results from the growing suburbanization of territories and man-made landscapes (see the map of man-made surface area created between 2000 and 2006 listed in chapter II Urban and Regional Planning) which has reinforced the interdependent links between urban areas and their rural periphery. The density is therefore 400 inhabitants per square km on average in the urban area, compared to 600 up to 1962. There are many problems posed by the suburbanization of local areas: saturation of the transport infrastructure, increased commuting travel time, fragmentation of local areas, takeover of natural spaces, modification to the landscapes that represent the French lifestyle, in particular the commonplace appearance of suburban landscapes, increase in the costs of amenities and facilities, pollution and disturbances of all kinds, etc.

4 World Bank Indicators, 2014. Urban population refers to people living in urban areas as defined by national statistical offices. It is calculated using population estimates from the World Bank and city reports Urbanization Prospects of the global population of the United Nations

5 Definition of the urban area by INSEE : An urban area is a set of town, in one piece and without enclave, with of an urban center (urban unit) of more than 10 000 jobs, and rural towns or urban areas (urban periphery) with at least 40% of the resident population in employment works in the center unit or in town attracted by it.

The second challenge highlights **significant disparities within the conurbations and between French conurbations**. According to INSEE, the large French urban areas, of which there are 241, occupy a fifth of the French territory and contain nearly 80% of the population. 47.9 million people live in urban and suburban areas, 5.5 million in the new City policy priority districts (including just over 0.6 million in Overseas Territories). In 2014, the unemployment rate for 15-64 year-olds was 26.7% in these priority neighbourhoods (*Quartiers prioritaires de la politique de la ville* - QPV), i.e. nearly three times higher than that of their surrounding urban units. For 15-29 year-olds, the unemployment rate was 38.4% compared to 17% for the surrounding urban units. The QPV contain a majority of people on low incomes, i.e. less than 60% of the median income per household unit. They are characterised by significant socio-spatial segregation, as the ratio between the average financial income per household unit and that of their conurbation was 47.4% in 2011.

More generally, this urbanization also highlights the persistence of regional inequalities, even the emergence of new ones, related to recent changes (economic, social, technological, demographic, environmental, cultural, etc.). These differences between regions are apparent on several levels. The inequalities are exacerbated at sub-regional level between centres of conurbation, the suburban fringes and the rural areas, which are marked by difficulties in some sections of the agricultural economy, an ageing population, reduced employment, particularly in the public sector, and industrial restructuring.

The most important differences, however, lay between the metropolitan regions and the ultra-peripheral regions (*régions ultrapériphériques* - RUP). These overseas regions have to deal with common specific problems, such as distance, insularity (excluding Guiana), small surface area and high demographic pressure, difficult geography and climate, lack of valuable surface area, conflicts in use and resources, intensifying agricultural practices (challenges of managing large natural areas), delayed investments in policies relating to water, sanitation, waste management, risk management in particular meteorological risks, etc.

The third challenge is that of **optimizing the governance of French conurbations**. This is one of the keys to maintaining and improving the competitiveness and cohesion of these areas and the predominantly rural areas under their influence. The institutional fragmentation noted in urban areas by the public inter-municipal cooperation organizations and assessed either in terms of their urban unit (area of dense conurbation expressed through continued construction) or their urban area (urban unit and suburban periphery) must be reduced to enable these territories to meet the challenges and trends detailed above⁶. This will enable urban areas to draw up relevant, coherent projects and share methodological and operational tools.

Future challenges in France

In this context, the major urban challenges primarily lie in the capacity to respond to new demands, which may even contradict each other:

- **Management and protection of resources.** Cities require more land for a rising housing demand, whereas farmland and natural environments at the periphery of cities must be protected to fulfil their functions of producing food and providing green spaces. Public assets for which the city is responsible, such as aquatic ecosystems and air quality, are extremely fragile in urban environments and demand continuous attention;

⁶ This is one of the objectives of the Act of 27 January 2014 modernization of territorial public action and affirmation of the metropolis that creates a new status for the 12 cities to enable agglomerations of more than 400 000 inhabitants exercise fully their missions in economic development, innovation, energy transition and urban policy.

- **Shelter for vulnerable groups.** These groups are identified by either their low-income status or a specific demand (elderly, youth, displaced persons). They are unable to find a satisfactory solution to their needs without specific support, whereas their social integration into the city would be an important contribution to the city's prosperity;
- **Climate change to build a resilient city.** Cities are the biggest emitters of greenhouse gases and bear a huge responsibility at the global level to help reduce emissions. They need to play a critical role to raise awareness amongst its partners about these issues and should help them find the appropriate measures to adapt to changes the climate has already undergone;
- **Improved management of financial resources in a climate of restriction.** Cities bring together the ambitions of its citizens and of its businesses, which in exchange expect assistance growing in the local economy. It also bears the responsibility of the aforementioned environmental and social challenges but in a context of increasingly scarce budgetary allocations and increasingly restricted access to funding. It is important cities seek innovative solutions to foster partnerships between public and private actors in the social economy.

Our modes of consumption and development are not sustainable for future generations. They are also proving to be more and more problematic and inequitable for current generations, and will require each citizen to adapt their habits. Most of the general improvement in energy efficiency can in fact only be obtained by focusing on hyper-efficiency of the energy's end use, i.e. at individual level.

Cities are also the guarantors of equity and development, since a local economy that thrives provides the necessary resources for its inhabitants in terms of jobs, environmental quality, education and public services. However, the vitality of our economies is at risk. Climate change, a reduced rate of growth, the accelerated loss of biodiversity, and the growing scarcity of natural resources affect every region and threaten our social and regional cohesion.

France's commitments

This wake-up call has raised the issue of integration in the field of urban management, giving rise to the concept of the **sustainable city**, first formalized in the 2010-2013 Sustainable Development Plan which, for the period 2014-2020, was renamed the Environmental Transition towards Sustainable Development Plan.

The National Strategy for the Environmental Transition towards Sustainable Development (SNTEDD) aims to be all-embracing, insofar as it relies on existing thematic strategies (flood risk management, climate change, biodiversity) and thematic strategies in the planning stage (low carbon, environmental health, seas and coastal areas) which it is responsible for harmonizing. The 2014-2020 SNTEDD presents a common vision to shift society towards a cleaner version of itself by 2020 (priorities 1 to 3), by recommending appropriate levers to accelerate and accompany the transformation of the economic and social model (priorities 4 to 6) and strengthening education and governance to foster appropriation and action by all (priorities 7 to 9). For the last priorities, actions have been especially developed in France to encourage and support willing local authorities in their efforts to develop integrated regional projects and ensure these future goals are as tangible and realistic they can be.

In France as in the rest of the European Union, emissions have taken a downturn, but to meet the medium and long term objectives (e.g. Factor 4 in France consisting of slashing by four

emissions generated between 1990 and 2050) will require all sectors of the economy to undergo a rapid and profound change.

Faced with growing spatial disparities, regional equality has become a priority policy of the Government, with the creation in 2014 of the General Commission for Regional Equality (CGET), under the Prime Minister's Office, the result of a merger between the Interministerial Delegation for Territorial Development and Regional Attractiveness (DATAR), the General Secretariat of the Interministerial Committee for Cities, and the National Agency for Social Cohesion and Equal Opportunities.

The CGET coordinates **the City policy** that has been in place since the 1970s, reformed by the Law of 21 February 2014. This is a national policy with strong, cross-sectoral regional dimensions, through which the Government aims to achieve national solidarity and urban cohesion. Led by the Government, the local authorities and their associations, its aim is to ensure equality between regions, reduce development gaps between underprivileged neighbourhoods and their urban units, and improve the quality of life of their inhabitants. It is based on public action at inter-municipal level, involving all the public and private partners, and one of its principles is joint construction with local residents. It is part of an integrated project approach formalized by new City contracts (2015-2020), single contracts closely based on the pillars of "social cohesion", "quality of life and urban renewal" and "economic development and jobs" (see section 25).

As announced by France's President on 16 December 2014, **the New National Urban Renewal Programme (NPNRU)** is also part of a renewed approach to cities, compared to the previous PNRU programme, helping to improve the energy performance of buildings, the ecological transition of regions and the production of sustainable cities.

Finally, the challenge of institutional fragmentation is being met by continued decentralization, with the recent adoption of three laws: the Law of 27 January 2014 on the Modernisation of regional public action and establishment of metropolitan areas (MAPTAM); the Law of 16 January 2015 on regional boundaries; the Law of 7 August 2015 on the New territorial organization of the Republic (NOTRe). Although the first two laws focused on transfer of competence from the State to the local authorities, the objective is now to find ways to **simplify the local institutional landscape**, reinforce local democracy and adapt the structures to the diversity of the regions, thus encouraging the establishment of a more mature decentralization. Furthermore, the reforms integrate the constraints on public finances that have arisen since the economic and financial crisis that began in 2008.

Sustainable urban development and French international policy

France wishes to position itself on the international stage to raise awareness on climate change-related issues. The commitments undertaken by many countries are still wholly insufficient to hope to limit global warming to no more than 2°C, the target set by the international community. To reach this target, global greenhouse gas emissions will have to be reduced by half of their 1990 value. In this respect, the UN Climate Conference that France is hosting in 2015 (COP21) is crucial in reaching a global agreement commensurate with the challenges ahead.

Strategic urban planning has been developed since the 1990s to find solutions to complex modern urban challenges. Its reference corpus was first compiled from the experiences of cities in developed countries (e.g. Barcelona, London, Vancouver, Lyon, several cities in Germany and Italy, etc.) as well as those of international entities (UN Habitat, CGLU, Cities Alliance). It provides a global vision of the future of agglomerations. To this end, it undertakes the

responsibility of the spatial, social, environmental and cultural aspects of the regions concerned. In 2007, France drew up a “Democratic Governance Strategy”. Backed up by the support that France gives to the decentralization and deconcentration process, this strategy promotes democratic governance, defined as “the art of governing, by linking the management of public affairs at different regional levels, regulating relations within society and coordinating the intervention of multiple players.” In the light of an assessment of ten years of supporting the decentralization and deconcentration processes, a new regional governance support strategy will be adopted at the end of 2015.

Proposals for cooperation

The French urban cooperation framework offers strategic urban planning support to interested Southern cities. For this purpose, it has formulated a set of guidelines that can serve as a reference to French actors involved in urban cooperation and all participants. These guidelines, to be adapted to each local context, target five key objectives:

- Foster multi-actor dialogue and then the co-formulation of local policies by mobilizing linkages between different actors and local authorities;
- Help strengthen an urban planning management mechanism (financial capacities, regional analysis tools, public services management) underpinned by democratic governance processes;
- Encourage the adoption of an integrated approach to promote coherent policies by sector and the concerted formulation of a strategic, iterative and evolutive project at the city level;
- Support training and the raising of the standards of qualification of professional staff and administrators working in urban governance and more broadly all the actors in a given region; and
- Promote civic engagement in the different phases of preparing, monitoring and assessing projects, as part of a joint construction approach.

The methods and players involved

In early 2014, the French Development Agency (*Agence française de développement* - AFD), the pivotal operator in France in terms of public development aid, adopted a sectoral framework for intervention on the “sustainable city” which emphasises the importance of strong public project management. The AFD is one of the primary bilateral financial backers in the urban sector (nearly €1bn in annual commitments) and one of the only organizations to offer loans to local authorities without the State acting as guarantor.

France brings together a wide diversity of international urban players, to act coherently and in coordination on the international stage, representing the particular attention paid by France to the major challenge of constructing sustainable, equitable cities. All the French players involved in urban cooperation are brought together in an innovative platform: the **French Alliance for Cities and Territorial Development (*Partenariat français pour la ville et les territoires* - PFVT)**. This platform for sharing and capitalising on knowledge was founded in June 2011 in the presence of the Executive Director of UN-Habitat, Dr Joan Clos. The PFVT work focuses on **the central nature of strong, transparent and participative, i.e. democratic, urban project**

management. Several approaches have also been developed: support for local governance; support for strategic urban planning, etc.

In line with this approach, France also wanted to structure and organize national economic actors under the **Vivapolis** umbrella brand, to offer an adapted, contextualized and efficient solution to local decision-makers, either in France or abroad, to enable them to become operational. The aim of this approach is therefore to collectively promote French expertise internationally and to help set up joint ventures to offer a global urban solution.

French expertise is also mobilized in an original, significant way through multiple decentralized cooperation, valued at over 100 million euros per year.

The objective of this urban governance strategy is to lend support to the stakeholders concerned so they can meet the challenges of urbanization, and design and implement their own policies and strategies regarding sustainable urban development and planning and poverty. The following principles of action have been set :

- Support France's partners in adopting a global approach to the country and a coherent approach to the regions, taking into account existing networks between large, medium-sized and small cities;
- Put the entities of different sizes in relation, from the neighbourhood to the urban area;
- Help define the priority actions to take on the city;
- Strengthen public project management and intellectual investment in professional expertise, research and training systems.
- Facilitate civic engagement in city management.

Link these initiatives in a consistent, coordinated way on the international stage, to support an integrated approach to sustainable cities, reinforce and support project management prior to a project, and set up and manage urban services once the project is in place.

Introduction

The third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban development (Habitat III) is taking place in October 2016 in Quito, Ecuador, and will invite all participating governments to discuss the issue of sustainable urban development. The Habitat II Conference in 1996 had previously set ambitious goals to improve cities and the conditions for accommodating every population in a world undergoing accelerated urbanization.

The commitments formulated in the Rio +20 document, The Future We Want, recognized that poverty was the greatest challenge in today's world. The goals shared by every member with regard to the move towards a sustainable development approach demands the eradication of poverty, the development of sustainable modes of consumption, and economic and social growth led by the protection and management of natural resources. Cities, which today are home to over half the world's population, therefore face a major challenge.

To embark on preparations for the Habitat III Conference, UN Habitat wants every participating country to make a national contribution. Each government has been asked to draw up a status report on the progress made since the Istanbul summit and assess the issues and challenges to be overcome to further improve the capacity of its cities to meet the needs of inhabitants. The results of this process will serve as a foundation for identifying the future goals the conference participants will commit to over the next 20 years.

The framework of the present report therefore follows the recommendations set forth by UN-Habitat, which will then compile a summary of each topic discussed, identify recurrent challenges cities face and, during the conference, offer a global Habitat III report summarizing the information produced. It details the various sectors grouped into six chapters: Urban Demography; Urban and Regional Planning; Environment and Urbanization; Urban governance and legislation; the City economy; Urban services and Housing, the coherent management of which ensures harmonious development for a city and a good standard of living for its inhabitants.

Drafted by the government departments concerned by these topics, the report has also been the subject of a consultation carried out by the French Alliance for Cities and Territorial Development (PVFT). The report has been enriched with observations and comments obtained during this process.

I. Urban demography

1. Demographic growth in cities

What are the results achieved in this area?

Nationwide, the French population grew by 6.6 million inhabitants between 1990 and 2010, representing an average annual rise of 0.5 per cent.

France's demographic growth of the last 10 years essentially occurred in large metropolitan areas; it was proportionally higher in the commuter belts outside large urban cores (15.5%) than in the urban cores themselves (5.3%). The belts around large urban cores account for 2.7 percentage points of demographic growth, almost the same contribution as the large urban cores, which are home to 58.9 per cent of the population (see maps on page 26).

Demographic growth is particularly strong in coastal areas. Between 1990 and 2011, the population of coastal municipalities increased by 13.2 per cent compared to the 11.9 per cent national growth, which equates to almost one million additional residents in 20 years. Coastal municipalities were home to eight million residents in 2011. This population tends to rise due to frequent net migration gains in mainland France and high natural increase rates overseas.

What problems were encountered and what conclusions can be drawn?

In coastal municipalities where the population is expanding, a number of specific problems have emerged as the direct result of this larger population: saturated transport infrastructure; the proliferation of new constructions and the urban sprawl encroaching on natural areas (spreading of buildings in the countryside); strain on the property market and the pushing out of low-income populations. Interpreting the growth of the coastal population is therefore essential for understanding the vitality of coastal areas.

In general terms, urban areas undergoing demographic expansion consume proportionally more building land than is warranted by the population increase due to the process of diminishing density affecting urban extensions, which is eating into peri-urban agricultural land.

In cities where population growth is low or nil, generally medium-sized or small cities, the difficulties emerge from an ageing population and a lifeless property market. The phenomenon of urban shrinkage is however limited in France due to a very high rate of natural change in Europe (highest rate of natural change in absolute terms and second highest rate of natural change proportionally after Ireland).

In parallel to the growing population in France, we are seeing, since the 2008 financial crisis, greater inequalities across the country. Thus, between 2008 and 2011, the standard of living of 10 per cent of the poorest inhabitants fell by 3.5 percentage points whereas the standard of living of the richest 10 per cent increased by 2.5 percentage points.

Different future challenges have been identified at the level of large regions.

By 2040, the number of inhabitants is expected to rise by 13.5 per cent compared to 2010, i.e. an average rise of 0.4% each year (according to data from INSEE – France's national statistical institute). At 1 January 2040, the population of France should reach 73 million inhabitants, nearly 71 million of which will live in metropolitan France.

This population growth will vary by region:

- Growth of regions in central France and Basse-Normandie will be due to net migration while the rate of natural change will be negative;
- Conversely, Ile-de-France, Alsace, Haute-Normandie and Picardie will experience a high positive rate of natural change that will compensate for the migration deficit;
- The southern and coastal regions of metropolitan France will see a combination of natural balance and net migration gain;
- Overseas territories will continue to experience a rate of natural change far greater than the metropolitan France average.

In this framework, various challenges have already been identified :

- Land management and the regeneration of abandoned land in business parks (in order to combat urban sprawl and man-made landscapes and add “quality” to suburban areas to limit the risks of social breakdown and ghettoization; appropriate management of urban sprawl will also have the benefit of protecting agricultural land or suburban natural spaces;
- The re-qualification of market towns or the historic centres of small or medium-sized cities that make up a region's urban framework (challenges regarding land management, energy management, ageing housing, efforts to combat deteriorating housing, preservation of local heritage and economic development);
- Integration of fragile or marginal populations, such as migrants or refugees, through education and a health programme that encourages rapid economic integration;
- The reduction of insecure housing in order to combat discrimination and improve social and urban inclusion of marginalized people (by creating/renovating accommodation or day centres and mobilizing to provide shelter for travellers above all);
- Matching the supply of private or social housing with needs, particularly in regions where the strain on demand is strong and costs of production, especially land, are high, while guaranteeing social mixing across the region and in urbanized regions in particular.

2. Managing rural-urban linkages

In a country of which 95 per cent is under urban influence (INSEE, 2011), urban-rural linkage is considered through the relations between urban cores (66% of the population) and commuter belts or multi-polarized municipalities (29%) which, for the most part, have a rural morphology.

In a classification established by DATAR (French delegation for territorial planning and regional action) in 2012, rural areas on the fringes of cities and coastal areas or located in urbanized valleys, characterized by a high rate of residential growth, were home to 16.6 million inhabitants split between 10,442 municipalities. Their living conditions and the economy are linked to the vitality of the surrounding metropolitan areas and cities.

This urban influence is notably the result of high mobility (commuting to work; residential

mobility of retirees; in/out flow of second home-owners) that has resulted in a permanent interconnection between urban and rural areas. In addition to this increased mobility, there are money supply mechanisms (consumer spending, social security benefits, tourist expenditure, etc.) resulting from the separation of production areas, which are generators of GDP (mostly urban), and residential areas (mostly peri-urban and rural).

These regions with a 'residential' economy present different profiles depending on whether they draw their resources from the income of commuters, retirees, social security beneficiaries or income generated from tourism or combine a mixture of these different sources.

The urban-rural linkage can also be considered through the development of man-made areas, of which the proportion in metropolitan France in 2006 was 5.1 per cent according to the European Corine Land Cover inventory. It exceeded 10 per cent in 15 French departments. This rate has risen by 3 per cent since 2000, mostly at the expense of farmland but also natural spaces. Since 2000 it has increased in every French department with the exception of four departments in *Ile-de-France* that already contain large areas of sealed land (see map of man-made surface areas, page 26).

What problems were encountered and what conclusions can be drawn?

The persistent sprawl of built land can damage efforts to preserve agricultural and natural resources. The impact concerns not only land but also water, in particular by soil sealing. The shrinking of natural and rural spaces linked to the progress of artificial surfaces is also accompanied by the fragmentation and partitioning of natural environments, unfavourable to a variety of species.

In addition to the competition between different soil uses, the linkage between growth regions and developing regions has created true 'production/residential systems' (PRS) that operate at a larger scale than urban areas and employment areas, and combine urban space and rural space. By analysing the 131 biggest French urban units⁷, we were able to estimate, for example, the amount of income generated from work transferred between employment areas at 66 billion euros. If we add the money flow of income linked to second homes or departures following retirement, this figure rises to 100 billion euros a year. The sums of money circulating between- regions are therefore consequential.

An analysis of these systems shows a correlation between the economic vitality of urban agglomerations and the scope of the PRS, with the exception of the specific case of Paris. In other words, the most efficient urban areas are those that benefit from a favourable environment with which they have a high frequency of residential exchanges but which send their commuters, pensioners and secondary homeowners out to an area in close proximity (within 150 km), a positive synergy thus being established between this residential environment and the region's productivity. Conversely, the wider an agglomeration's PRS, the more income escapes the population centres and the less the circle of economic development is virtuous.

These elements of analysis are corroborated if we consider the relationship of reciprocity between the urban area (UA) and its hinterland (defined as the peripheral area within a 100 km radius of the centre of the UA). There is a positive correlation between the residential quality of the rural hinterland and the development of the urban area.

⁷ In France, an urban unit (administrative term) is a statistical category that empirically means a territory defined by the continuity of habitat or building.

Future challenges

This systemic functioning provides an objective basis from which to seek out synergies and complementarities between large urban areas and peri-urban and rural areas and the role of cities, especially small and medium-sized towns, in building a framework for life in rural environments and in local hubs. The structuring of regional or inter-municipality coherence schemes at the level of urban centres or populated regions appears, for example, to be good practice. Moreover, these synergies and complementarities aim to reduce land consumption (inclusion strategies for peri-urban systems in agglomeration projects: maintaining of public natural space, support for peri-urban agriculture, for energy planning and multimodal transport planning, support for the circular economy and urban logistics, development of short food supply chains).

These tiered approaches to development also show this model's inherent risk of failure in the context of the current economic climate and public spending cutbacks. The most specialized peri-urban and rural regions in the residential or remote economy of urban centres thus seem particularly vulnerable.

3. Needs of young people in cities

In 2006, 12 million young people between 15 and 29 years of age were living in metropolitan France. Young people in higher education or in their first jobs were concentrated in large cities. So the urban areas of Paris, Lyon, Marseille-Aix, Lille, Toulouse, Bordeaux, Nantes, Nice, Rennes, Strasbourg, Montpellier, Grenoble, Rouen and Nancy were home to half of France's 18-to-24-year-olds, but only accounted for one-third of the total population. After 25, young adults starting their working lives tend to move closer to the main centres of economic activity. In predominantly urban areas, young people aged 18 to 24 more frequently live in the city centre than those aged 15 to 17.

In sensitive urban zones (ZUS), the population is young compared to the rest of the country. In 2006, nearly 9 per cent of young people aged 18 to 24 lived in urban renewal areas (URAs), so some 486,000 people, while the proportion of the population in URAs only represented 7 per cent of the total population.

In cities, growing problems are observed with regard to access to housing for young people, who are further exposed to difficulties accessing autonomy and professional integration.

Half of students live outside the parental home. Some have the possibility of continuing their education while still living at their parents' house, often the case in Paris or Marseille, where 47% of students live with their family. Depending on the university city, only between 1 and 6 per cent of students have the option to live in student accommodation.

For them, access to property is problematic in large urban units. In Île-de-France, 14 per cent of households where the reference person is under 30 are homeowners compared to 48 per cent of households in Île-de-France. In Sensitive Urban Zones (ZUS), in 2011, 11 per cent of individual households under 30 years of age not living with their parents owned their own homes.

Young people in sensitive urban zones are confronted with various problems that are exacerbated in relation to young people in all cities combined :

- More frequent problems at school: in 2012, the average pass rate of the school certificate was 87 per cent in secondary schools where no pupils lived in ZUS compared

to 73 per cent in schools where over half the school population lived in sensitive urban zones.

- Tougher access to the job market for these young people of which a significant proportion leave the education system without any qualifications and are in some cases prematurely desocialized. Consequently, in ZUS, 45 per cent of active young persons between the ages of 15 and 24 are unemployed compared to 23.1 per cent in immediate proximity of these neighbourhoods. There are twice as many young people not in education, employment or work placements in sensitive urban zones.

Young job seekers experience problems of professional integration that they attribute to a lack of personal contacts, recommendations and experience and a scarcity of job opportunities. Furthermore, young people under the age of 30 who do work more frequently hold poorly qualified jobs and demand more flexibility than their older peers.

These observations prompted the government to put in place incentivizing mechanisms targeting young people in these neighbourhoods, such as the *emplois d'avenir* (Future Jobs), of which a proportion is reserved for this population group, or to recruit adult employment counsellors. Other mechanisms implemented in the education field include increasing educational resources and expanding academic success programmes.

Moreover, if they are characterized by a great deal of potential and talent and a sense of initiative that should be encouraged, young people from sensitive areas often experience difficulties in terms of mobility and autonomy, access to social security, job security, and access to leisure, sport and culture. Some young persons in ZUS are also exposed to risk behaviour and are victims of discrimination, often for multiple reasons linked to age, cultural origins and place of residence, which calls for appropriate responses.

In reference to the “Priorité Jeunesse” (Priority Youth) programme established by France's President in close coordination with the decisions made by the interministerial council for youth on 21 February 2013, this young persons' initiative is a key priority and a cross-sectoral priority of the new “City contracts” (2015-2020).

Regionally, the coordination and complementarity of actions aimed at young people must be a continuous effort that is constantly improved. The overriding aim is to meet the needs of these populations in terms of building pathways towards their integration and access to autonomy via mechanisms related to education, social integration opportunities, access to healthcare, housing, culture, sport and leisure, and civic engagement.

4. The needs of the elderly in cities

As in other European countries, France is observing an ageing population that is set to grow further over the next thirty years. Already, between 1975 and 2008, in Metropolitan France, the number of people aged over 75 years doubled, rising from 2.7 million to 5.4 million (i.e. 8.5 per cent of today's population).

As regards the priority neighbourhoods targeted in the “city policy”, while the population is on average younger than elsewhere, the elderly population is expanding: currently occupying 20 per cent of the social housing stock, the proportion of over 65s could reach 35 per cent by 2035.

In these neighbourhoods, the “City Policy Panel” enquiry broached a number of subjects related to concerns affecting the elderly:

- Accessibility to public transport: in 2011, persons over 65 years of age did not express a particularly more marked need than residents in other age groups (86 per cent said they were quite satisfied);
- Local safety: the rate of satisfaction is less (56%) but the proportion is equal to other age groups;
- Health: 70 per cent of the elderly assess their state of health as poor or quite poor. This concern relates to the problem of access to healthcare, the city policy priority neighbourhoods marked by a higher deficit of facilities and in particular healthcare facilities than other urban areas.

In cities, the following problems related to the growth of the elderly population are being observed:

- Increased loneliness exacerbated by ageing;
- Rising inequalities between pensions;
- The fact that households rich in capital but poor in income could monetize their personal holdings;
- Rising cost of dependency for local authorities and Departments in particular;
- Increased mobility of senior citizens although the majority of pensioners grow old where they live;
- A perceptible strain which is likely to increase in terms of housing in urban and residential centres;
- Conflicts of interest and uses between young and old;
- Growing vulnerability of the elderly faced with extreme climate risks and events that are going to increase with climate change.

In terms of regional planning, policies linked to the elderly face the following challenges:

- Improving access to public services in regions to facilitate administrative, social, transport and energy procedures for users in close proximity to their place of residence (with the deployment of 1,000 'public services centres' that will be of particular benefit to people with poor mobility);
- Supporting access to healthcare;
- Adapting the housing stock and their specifications to ageing;
- Supporting new digital uses;
- Developing intergenerational cohesion and strengthening social ties.

The 'silver economy' is a segment that needs to be organized and structured by grouping together and uniting businesses acting on behalf of or with senior citizens (potential pool of

300,000 jobs). As concerns challenges specific to the neighbourhoods targeted by the “city policy”, the consideration of the elderly is a recent and emerging subject in these regions :

- The issue of vulnerable persons, including the elderly, constitutes a cross-sectoral priority of the future “City contracts” for 2015-2020, confirmed in 2014 by the Minister for women's rights, city affairs, youth affairs and sports ;
- The problem of isolation among the elderly, mentioned in the three-year convention of objectives signed in 2013 by the ministerial delegate for urban affairs and the minister for social affairs, health and family. One of the main stipulations is supporting actions within the framework of the national strategy for combating social isolation among the elderly ;
- Special attention must be given to the situation of elderly immigrants, including “chibanis⁸”. To this end, the Planning Act of 21 February 2014 on city and urban cohesion provides for the implementation of measures concerning aid for the family and social re-integration of elderly migrants in their country of origin (access to their rights while being free to choose their place of residence after retirement).

5. Women's participation in urban development

Delivered on 19 June 2014 to the Minister for women's rights, city affairs, youth affairs and sports, the report from the Higher Council for Gender Equality observed that important gender, social and regional inequalities exist which concern both neighbourhoods targeted by the “city policy” and fragmented rural areas.

In this context, the study conducted by ONZUS⁹ and INSEE, made public on 24 April 2014, demonstrated that when inequality in urban growth occurs, women are the group first affected and all the more so under the effects of the financial, economic and social crisis that has continued since it exploded in 2008.

Growing difficulties in terms of employment and resources are observed among women living in the priority neighbourhoods of the “city policy”.

Women are gradually withdrawing from the labour world. Their participation fell from 57.8 per cent in 2008 to 52.6 per cent in 2012 in sensitive urban areas (ZUS). This decline of five percentage points is all the more remarkable given that, at the same time, the participation rate of women living outside these same areas was maintained, as did that among men in ZUS and outside these neighbourhoods.

Inactivity and/or job insecurity among women is far more readily accepted in fragmented regions, by inhabitants as much as public actors, due to the more prevalent impact of gender and gender stereotypes than in other areas. Thus, in ZUS, women become mothers earlier (one woman under 25 in every five has children, double the ratio for women living outside these sensitive urban zones).

Poverty is more acute among single mothers who are heads of their household. In ZUS, they account for one family in four and are twice as likely to live below the poverty line than the same group outside sensitive urban zones.

In this context, access to social security and public services is a vital support for the most vulnerable women in these marginalized regions.

8 Algerian term meaning 'old person'.

9 ONZUS: France's observatory of sensitive urban zones

However, such access is particularly limited today, above all due to inequalities to which these women and areas are subject. Thus, more than one woman in four has foregone medical attention in sensitive urban zones. Accessibility to other public services such as crèches is also difficult.

Women are also victims of physical, sexual, psychological and sexist abuse in both their private and public spheres. Thus, in ZUS, 3.8 per cent of women admit to have encountered domestic violence compared to 2.4 per cent in other areas. Migrant women are more highly or specifically exposed to this type of violence (forced marriage, female genital mutilation). In ZUS, nearly one woman in three says she feels unsafe in her neighbourhood and are the specific target of sexual harassment in the street.

While we have seen a real upswing in the involvement of women in collective and civic activities since the 1980s, these activities more particularly concern the socio-educational field (and facilitation) and women participate less in issues concerning urban development and in decision-making and dialogue bodies (for example only 37 per cent of community associations have female presidents).

In cities and the priority neighbourhoods of the “city policy”, different challenges have been identified :

- Combat under-employment of women, particularly prevalent in priority neighbourhoods of the “city policy” and promote business creation growth: this represents a solution for bringing an end to job insecurity and unemployment, particularly in priority neighbourhoods of the “city policy”, and paves the way for opportunities for women in terms of self-fulfilment and social recognition. The “Entrepreneur des quartiers” (Neighbourhood Entrepreneur) programme puts a special focus on women ;
- Support the creation of new community child care solutions for children aged from newborn to 3 that cater to the particular situation of isolated women ;
- Guarantee better access for women to information on their rights and the public services available to them ;
- Train up the various public and private actors on the objectives of gender equality and the means to achieving them ;
- In relation to the specific problem of female victims of violence, remove administrative obstacles or practices in the allocation of social housing that might obstruct their access to housing and above all pursue the dissemination of women's safety audits ;
- Support the participation of women in civic life and women's initiatives (in particular through their equal involvement in citizen's committees);
- Take action to combat multiple discrimination (linked to gender, cultural origins, age and place of residence).

The strengthening of the role of women will constitute one of the cross-sectoral priorities of the new “City contracts” (section regarding gender equality). In more general terms, gender equality will be one of the action priorities of the CGET (France's Commission for Regional Equality) which will take into account the recommendations put forward in the recent Higher Council report.

6. Urban demography: present challenges

Statistical data shows measured demographic growth in France over the past 20 years with annual growth over this period of 0.5 per cent. What this figure does not show, however, are the significant regional disparities that have occurred. Large urban agglomerations have monopolized a large proportion of this growth at the expense of areas spread around small and medium-sized towns with depressed economies (see map of urban areas, page 26). More specifically, these towns are frequently located in coastal areas which have seen their population increase significantly above the average measured for all cities combined.

The challenges related to urban demography will therefore vary by region. Cities experiencing low or nil growth face an ageing population, a sluggish property market and poor economic growth. These towns fail to act as economic growth drivers in the region where they are located and accumulate social difficulties that call for specific support from the local and national administration.

Large urban agglomerations and specifically coastal cities are conversely seeing a higher rate of demographic growth. In fact, the population has risen by 5.3 per cent in large French cities over the past decade. This growth is accompanied by strain on the property market that limits access to affordable housing, low-density development of the city that increases land usage and sealing at the expense of agricultural and natural spaces, and the necessity to renew central urban space and, depending on the specific case, regenerate industrial wasteland.

In addition, competition for use between urban development and agricultural land requires a unified, complementary approach designed to reduce the use of man-made landscapes, but also to increase short supply chains in commercial trade, support economic solidarity and improve urban logistics.

Demographic growth is not evenly distributed. Growth has been concentrated in peripheral areas, at a rate of 15.5 per cent in the suburbs of large urban agglomerations over the past 10 years. These areas experience a culmination of problems and neighbourhoods have been specifically identified as the recipient of actions developed in the “city policy”. These neighbourhoods are characterized by :

- A younger population than the national average ;
- Higher rates of unemployment and under-employment than the national rates ;
- An ageing category of the population that is imprisoned due to a lack of financial resources.

Overall, the young population is confronted with a recurrent housing problem in numerous cities, due to a housing stock in short supply and poorly suited to the needs of young people (see section 1-3). Furthermore, the 18-24 age group experiences an employment rate below the national average and those located in the priority neighbourhoods of the “city policy” experience unemployment rates as high as 45 per cent. These figures show the inadequacy of policies in terms of academic support, tailored vocational training, apprenticeship support and support of personal initiative.

Over 75s represent 8.5 per cent of the total population and their proportion is set to increase at a regular pace in France, estimated to reach 16 per cent by 2050. This phenomenon is common to other countries in Europe, where 18 per cent of the total population reached the age of 65 in 2012¹⁰. In consequence, the needs of this population are going to increase over the upcoming

10 Centre d'Information sur l'Europe, touteurope.eu

years and policies will need to be adapted accordingly. This growing demand will create a specific market, which will also be a source of job creation. This demand will concern adapted services, the construction of housing providing access to healthcare and nursing homes, as well as the development of leisure and cultural activities.

In addition to the aforementioned populations, INSEE studies have shown that when there is inequality in urban development, women are the first group to be affected – more so today in the wake of the economic, financial and social crisis that began in 2008. In the priority neighbourhoods of the “city policy”, we are seeing that the participation rate of women fell by 5 percentage points between 2008 and 2012, whereas it was maintained elsewhere in the country. This under-employment is accompanied by poverty and isolation, reinforced by the problems of access to healthcare and social assistance. In this context, women are poorly represented in associations and more broadly in collective and civic activities, while experiences in other countries prove that women can make a very dynamic contribution to community life, the overseeing of youth activities and the development of productive economic activities.

7. Future challenges and issues

Demographic growth represents, in its absolute sense, an economic asset which cities must be able to hold onto. However, it represents an issue of very different proportions across the country. In fact, depending on their location, some cities will experience a slight loss of population while others will see demographic growth due to natural change and/or positive net migration. Coastal cities and in particular those in France's overseas territories will rather see a demographic rise appreciably higher than the metropolitan France average, which will be the case especially in Mayotte and Guiana where the levels of demographic growth are much more similar to those of countries in stages of demographic transition than those of metropolitan France.

Cities need to facilitate the development of inclusive growth and find innovative solutions to meet new economic demand, such as automation or development of cutting-edge sectors for Europe, and offering education and economic integration to the population, appropriate to local needs.

The challenges cities face include housing, public services, financial support to vulnerable populations, which will be common to all regions although manifested in very different ways depending on the particular case.

A city's capacity to offer adequate shelter, accommodation and employment conditions will allow the most vulnerable populations to integrate into the economy, which will reap the benefits, and find the necessary means of subsistence to provide for their personal welfare. These populations include the young and the elderly, which will necessitate the constant adjustment of national and local public policy, but also populations that do not have access to urban public services, such as nomadic populations (travellers, Romas) and the homeless.

The issue of endemic unemployment among young people is becoming an international challenge. This is neither a problem specific to France nor anything new. The average rate is 22 per cent in the European Union and some countries are observing a rate of inactivity of 55 per cent. European statistical data now records NEETs (young people *not in Employment, Education or Training*), of which there are one million in France and two million in Italy, among comparable national populations. These rates, alas shared by many developing countries, are a

cause of growing inequality, exclusion and violence. They can also be the source of forced emigration, as observed particularly in the Southern hemisphere (migration to the North) but also in European countries most impacted by the economic crisis.

The problem of integration for young people is now recurrent and no solution has been found in the economic growth, which is not automatically synonymous with rising employment.

II. Land and urban planning

8. Ensuring sustainable urban design and planning

For 30 years, urbanism has been a decentralized process in France, i.e. local officials are responsible for formulating urban planning strategies and projects.

Since the early 1990s, France has undertaken an extensive reform of its regional planning structure, acquiring new instruments (Regional Development Directives) or updating existing instruments (Regional Coherence Schemes (SCOT) and Local Urban Development Plans (PLU)). This process is clearly in line with a sustainable development strategy, is adapted to every scale of region (the nation, challenged regions, urban areas, inter-municipalities and municipalities) and pursues four key objectives :

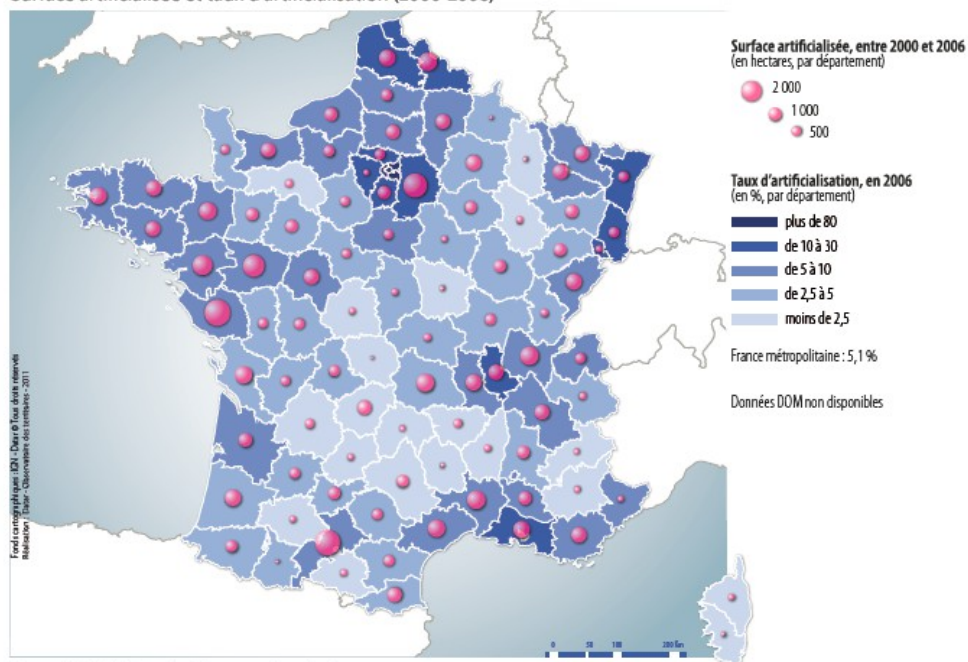
- Create balance between natural areas, agricultural areas to preserve and urban areas to develop;
- Create balance between settlements, economic activities and leisure activities;
- Promote access to facilities and services;
- Foster an outward-looking approach to the world in general and neighbouring regions in particular.

Profound changes to the institutional framework

The Urban Solidarity and Renewal (SRU) Act of 13 December 2000 (modified by the Town Planning and Housing Act of 2 July 2003) replaced the master plans and land use plans (POS), which had been the two basic documents in France since the late 1960s, with regional coherence schemes (SCOTs) and local urban development plans (PLUs) respectively. The purpose of these new town planning documents was to broaden their remit (notably integrating housing and transport), one at the inter-municipal level (the urban agglomeration), providing a structural framework for the Sustainable Development and Planning Project that underpins the decision-making process, the other at the municipal level (town or city). These urban planning instruments at the local level, a working basis for urban programmes, are a requirement for all building permits. The regulatory part of the PLU is a central instrument intended to prevent urban sprawl, increase building opportunities in urban areas to meet housing needs while optimizing land use, and ensure mixing, particularly social mixing. It also ensures the mandatory consistency with other higher level planning documents: the SCOT, established for greater areas (and which sets forth the key vocations of the regions and goals pertaining to functional mixing); the Community Development Programme (PLH, which sets a six-year plan for managing housing stock development targets), the climate plan (specifying greenhouse gas emissions targets and identifying potential heating networks and sources of renewable energy production); Regional Environmental Coherence Schemes (SRCE, which outline objectives regarding biodiversity taking into account green and blue belts). This is prompted by a desire to better coordinate sectoral policies between one another and make the PLUs and SCOTs **urban policy consolidated documents** in order to confer them more authority and make them more realistic.

Surface artificialisée en France

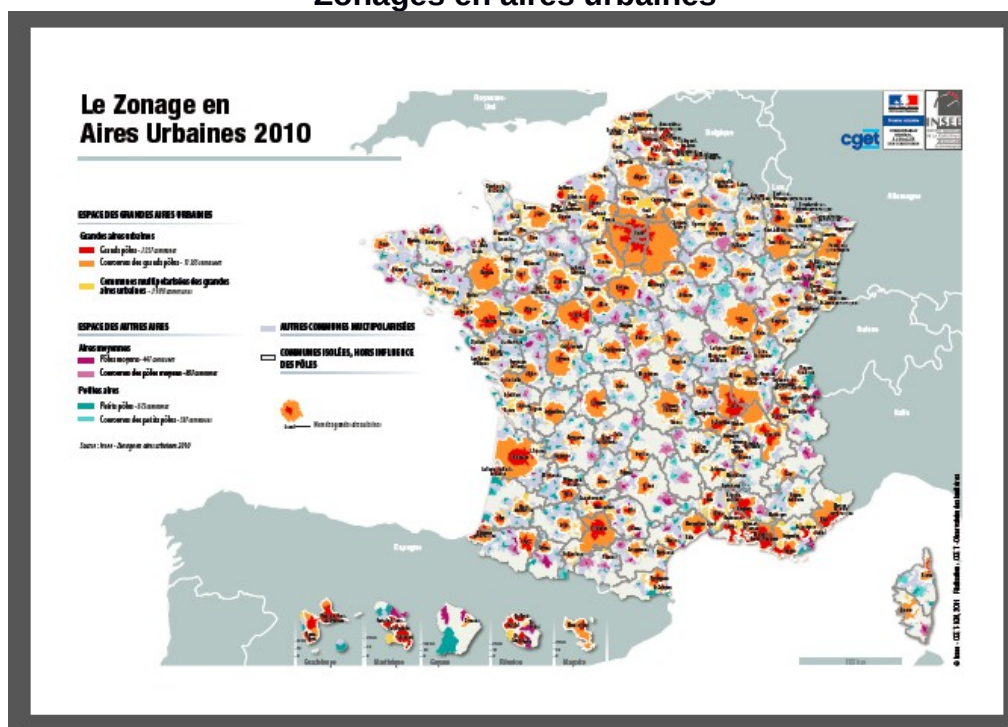
Surface artificialisée et taux d'artificialisation (2000-2006)



Source : UE - SOeS, Corine Land Cover, 2006, base des changements 2000-2006

Extrait du rapport de l'Observatoire des territoires 2011, Dynamiques, interdépendance et cohésion des territoires, CGET (Datati), La Documentation française

Zonages en aires urbaines



The government's latest ambition in the area of urban planning and urban development underpinned by the Housing and Renovated Urban Planning Act (ALUR) of 24 March 2014 is to find solutions to the housing crisis by building more and better, while protecting natural space and farmland. The recently-adopted ALUR Act accompanies the emergence of a city that is denser and consumes less space and launches a new process of modernizing urban planning documents to engage regions in the environmental transition by encouraging densification and ending the conversion of natural land to artificial surfaces.

The key provisions of the Act aim to :

- **Promote inter-municipal local urban development plans** : the ALUR Act establishes the automatic transfer, subject to a blocking minority, of the PLU's jurisdiction from municipalities to inter-municipalities and the precise associated terms (timelines, review clauses) and is thus adapted to the everyday mobility areas of populations. It also arranges the removal of former POS (land use plans); **the objective** is to progressively mobilize the 2,500 French inter-municipalities to exercise their power at the most pertinent regional level, where currently only a few dozen of them do. The strengthening of inter-municipal ties and the restructuring of these inter-municipalities (creation of metropolises and larger inter-municipalities, etc.) is a product of this same movement.
- Allow the **densification of suburban communities** by abolishing some of the measures that frequently restrict building and promote urban sprawl from existing urban planning documents (minimum plot size, plot ratio);
- **Preserve or create natural space and biodiversity in cities** by promoting their emergence and the consideration of unsealed surfaces or land for green use in the PLU, in order to draw on the most recent international experience in the matter;
- **Promote the reclassification into natural zones** of former zones for urban development which are too large in light of new urban guidelines adopted, prevent urban sprawl and preserve farmland and natural spaces;
- **Control commercial development** by making it obligatory for retail developers to arrange the rehabilitation of land or waste land, while limiting the size of parking areas attached to retail facilities;
- **Improve the treatment of polluted land** to manage the recycling of former industrial sites in view of meeting new construction needs associated with urban renewal strategies;
- Update the right of **pre-emption to free land resources**, encourage the development of land instruments such as **public land agencies (EPF)** and direct their action to supporting housing production, preventing urban sprawl and promoting sustainable development;
- **Strengthen the participation of citizens in the early stages of projects** by establishing a dialogue process from the pre-project phase and throughout the process for projects and urban development documents that have a significant impact on the environment;
- **Clarify the hierarchy of norms in urban planning documents and their coordination**, in the interests of simplification.

France has ratified the majority of the international texts on sustainable development (Action 21 Charter), greenhouse gas emission (Kyoto Protocol), renewable energy (the European Energy Package), biodiversity (the Nagoya Protocol), sustainable neighbourhoods (the Bristol European agreements), giving priority to sustainable urban development and underprivileged neighbourhoods (Leipzig Charter, charter on sustainable cities and solidarity).

At the same time, the cities themselves (Agenda 21s, Aalborg Charter, Sustainable Cities Charter) and the national and international networks (*Club Ville Aménagement*, ICLEI, etc.) are committed to sustainable cities.

Urban design that takes cultural heritage into consideration

Urban design and the implementation of sustainable city strategies are also the subject of substantial efforts, notably the mobilization of increasingly expert and well-informed leadership of sustainable development concerns. It also entails excellent urban project management, establishing direct contractual linkages with local authorities (therefore more independent of investors and developers) and thus being well placed to offer neutral and excellent advice to local authorities.

In France, the emphasis is placed on the context in which the project is formulated, its suitability to the site, the site's history, etc. To this end, France is one of the first countries to have studied, protected and developed its architectural, urban and rural heritage. This expertise contributes to its cultural influence while its heritage rouses a growing interest among States desirous to earn international recognition and reap economic benefits (in particular from tourism) that this implies and assert their individual identity in a globalizing world. The pertinence, impact and effectiveness of interventions on the urban heritage should be established, as well as the “cultural added value” that supports the effectiveness of interventions in terms of social and economic development. Within the framework of support to rehabilitation and development policies pertaining to historic centres, sustainable tourism should also be developed.

We must help local authorities design and carry out the preservation and promotion of their historic centres, vehicles of a comprehensive approach to managing urban areas. The values attached to heritage (history, urban identity, usage, structuring quality of outlines, etc.) in fact contribute to stimulating the development of cities as well as the economic and social development of inhabitants.

It is important these projects are supported by participative processes that allow the populations concerned to be the agents of the heritage challenges associated with their environment.

9. Improving urban management, including preventing urban sprawl

Presently, the policies put in place to control urban sprawl pertain in part to the measures taken regarding the urban growth boundary. These are instruments designed to restrict the spatial extension of the city by prohibiting development on land outside the demarcated boundary. They also require a land use policy intended to make the necessary land for high density urban development available to actors in the city.

Zoning policies developed within PLUs are an effective solution to the objective to control and manage development. **They need to be combined with other instruments** : related to tax (land value capture taxes), urban design and planning (to offer comparable alternative – in terms of amenities or cost – to households and businesses looking to develop in the suburbs) or instructional (complete cost of urban sprawl to the individual and to the local authority and

environmental challenges).

Public action, whether it concerns peri-urban development management, urban regeneration, the consideration of natural and technological risks, economic development or housing supply, and more generally the country's sustainable development, comes up against the issue of availability and cost of land, which is generally high in strained/dense areas. **Shortage of land at affordable prices** for project developers is above all the result of the insufficient supply of developed and constructible land, because even in very strained regions (large agglomerations and coastal areas), “raw” land remains relatively abundant.

One mechanism that is lacking is pre-emptive land use planning, the only solution to allow local authorities, developers and building firms to have suitable plots of land in the right place at the right time. If this land policy falls first and foremost under the responsibility of regional authorities to implement their project, the Government is also highly involved in the matter, given its strategic dimension. Furthermore, the technical competencies required must sometimes be so advanced, from the execution of complex legal procedures (compulsory purchase orders, land consolidation, etc.) to the deployment of major dismantling or remediation work, that small local authorities may have trouble putting them in place.

Based on this observation and in complement to more traditional land mechanisms (see [appendix 1](#)), dedicated instruments, **Public Land Agencies (EPF)**, were created in certain regions over 40 years ago to support large-scale industrial restructuring projects. These instruments pool technical and financial resources and put them at the service of local authorities, enabling them to work on extensive developments and complex projects. Over time, their field of intervention and scope of action have expanded, and more EPFs have been created across France, at the initiative of the Government or inclined local authorities, especially in the past 10 years when their number has doubled. Today half of the French territory is covered and some regions are discussing the possibility of implementing such instruments. EPFs are in place in regions where conditions are especially challenging in terms of housing needs, but also in terms of risks, polluted land and land recycling.

The EPF is a legal entity endowed with financial autonomy. Its resources are constituted from the levying of a local tax (the TSE) and borrowing of funds. Its responsibility is “land recycling”, i.e. the management, purchase, holding, handling and rehabilitation of land (and therefore its environmental remediation where necessary), as well as the management of all the studies required for land management purposes. It is authorized to acquire land by mutual agreement, compulsory purchase or right of pre-emption. The agency then holds the land acquired for a predetermined period of time before ceding it to the local authority that requested its acquisition. Its main aim is to pool human and financial resources in the area of land management to handle each case at the least cost possible and with the most competent services. An EPF is therefore neither a planner nor a property developer.

10. Enhancing urban and peri-urban food production

France does not presently face any problems regarding food security for its population, but the growing demand for agriculture that is in good condition (related to the concern for food safety), local (energy concerns), sustainable (economic and environmental concerns) and inclusive (social concerns) has recently led to profound changes to urban and peri-urban agriculture. While this produce can only cover a small proportion of needs in terms of food supply to cities and neighbouring agglomerations, it is nevertheless essential for the rapid expansion of organic production, certified by quality marks or sold in short food supply chains.

What results has France achieved in this area?

As for the rest of the country, urban and peri-urban agriculture is losing land, especially in urban centres. However, while 95 per cent of the French population now lives in areas under urban influence, according to INSEE, this form of agriculture represents 46 per cent of French farms (INSEE, 2010 data) and therefore holds an important place in the agricultural production system.

Between 2000 and 2010, urban centres (urban units with at least 1,500 jobs) lost 31 per cent of farms (compared to 26 per cent in large cities) and their arable agricultural land shrunk considerably more (down 6 per cent) than in other municipalities (down 3 per cent), notably due to permanent and intensive crops (vegetables, orchards, vineyards, down approximately 15 per cent, and market gardens that have reduced by 36 per cent).

The need for urban expansion combined with the financial opportunity for farms to earn income from **leasing their land**, including land value capture taxes, has automatically engendered a loss of agricultural land at the expense of other uses (housing, business parks, infrastructure). The resulting urban sprawl fragments existing infrastructure, jeopardizing the efficient running of remaining farms. The legislative mechanisms put in place aim to protect urban and peri-urban farmland by safeguarding the future of existing farms and finding new mechanisms to meet the demand for local agriculture. The legislature has formulated several instruments, notably through the lever of regional planning, as well as several specific instruments designed to protect and pre-empt farmland.

Furthermore, a taxation mechanism is now in place to limit the amount of land converted from farmland to building land, including a partial deduction of the capital gain generated to reduce the incentive. Also, a national observatory for agricultural land consumption was recently put in place to round off and extend the knowledge of public authorities and professionals regarding the development of farmland.

The development of local agriculture comes from a strong demand from inhabitants and local authorities, whose role is essential for the rapid expansion of these very context-bound mechanisms.

Several studies have been carried out within the framework of the “French Rural Development Network” (the national arm of the European Network for European Development, this network being associated with the “rural development” programme of the Common Agricultural Policy – the European CAP) on the subject of the development of local agricultural and food production resources, in order to identify the conditions for implementing short food supply chains.

In 2010, 21 per cent of farms sold their produce through short food supply chains¹¹, the primary channel of which was direct selling at farms, followed by markets and thirdly retail. While other community schemes for the regular purchase of produce from local farms (e.g. vegetable boxes) are in full development, they represent the primary selling channel of only 1 per cent of farms.

Agricultural production in areas close to cities present certain specific features: it mostly concerns market gardening, fruit growing and intensive farming in small-scale farms (while cattle farming and extensive agriculture remain the domain of rural areas). Nevertheless, we are observing the development of urban farming practices.

Among the new challenges is the development of innovative forms of agriculture in

¹¹ Direct sale or just one intermediary between producer and consumer

cities. In recent years we have seen a growing demand from citizens for space reserved for nature and farming within the city boundaries. This is primarily reflected in the boom in community gardens (which is not unrelated to the recent economic crisis and is also observed at the European level) and urban honey production.

This is why the national plan to regenerate and develop nature in the city, adopted in 2010 and led by the Government and its partners (associations and local authorities), which makes nature a key priority for tomorrow's urban development programme, reasserts the place of urban agriculture to meet public demand for multifunctional spaces (community growing spaces that are also places for leisure, socializing and brightening up the local landscape). The scarcity of urban land has also prompted the experimentation of roof gardens (e.g. TOPAGER that created an experimental roof allotment at AgroParis Tech, obtaining very positive results in terms of the health conditions of the produce harvested). Lastly, we are seeing the success of numerous community initiatives (urban orchards in France, the 'Incredible Edible' urban gardening project) that are experimenting with this underlying trend.

11. Meeting the challenges of urban mobility

Different laws have established the necessity to improve the organization of public transport, notably by adapting them to the emerging needs of populations while curbing the negative impact on public health:

- in 1982, Urban Transport Plans (PDU) were formalized for the first time in the Framework Law for Domestic Transport (LOTI),
- in 1996, Urban Transport Plans were made obligatory in the law on Air Quality and Sustainable Energy (LAURE),
- the Solidarity and Urban Renewal (SRU) Act, passed in December, strengthened the role of Urban Transport Plans.

The transport sector is a massive consumer of energy and alone accounts for 27 per cent of total greenhouse gas emissions in France, a figure which is constantly rising. Streets and parking areas consume a great deal of space and dictate the organization of neighbourhoods to the detriment of local amenities and pedestrians.

However, the transport system and its regulation depend on or influence the urban space and its social, heritage and cultural values. Consequently, transport is necessary for economic life, contributes to social balance and affects quality of life.

The sustainable development approach to urban transport aims to reduce the sprawl of urban agglomerations and reduce car travel, which generates greenhouse gases. Moreover, over the past twenty years investment by public authorities in the building of major public transport infrastructure has been cut back or stopped altogether (with the exception of surface transport such as tram lines) which has created the opportunity to rethink how transport is organized. These discussions are obviously central to new approaches to planning in France ([see appendix 2](#) – consideration of transport in Eco-Districts).

Alternative transport: calls for projects on public transport in separate lanes

The development of urban public transport and sustainable transport initiatives are measures undertaken to combat urban congestion and reduce air pollution by facilitating the modal shift to

more responsible modes of transport.

A major public transport programme in Île-de-France has been launched entailing the construction of an extensive automatic metro system through Paris' inner suburbs. The project consisting of nearly 200 km of new lines and costing 30 billion euros will be gradually carried out by Société du Grand Paris until 2030 (www.societedugrandparis.fr).

In complement, several calls for projects have also been launched by the Government since 2009: 450 million euros were released to support projects sponsored by local authorities in metropolitan areas (excluding Île-de-France) and French overseas territories. The following are entitled to subsidies: metro lines, tramway, bus rapid transit, river or sea transport services, transport by cable or rack railway; investments in cycling; innovative actions to promote sustainable mobility.

Applications are assessed based on their response to sustainable development challenges affecting living environment and accessibility, air quality, efficient management of space, the energy transition and social cohesion. To this end, projects contributing to the improvement of service to the priority neighbourhoods of the 'city policy' are entitled to subsidies which can be increased by up to 10 per cent.

The “One Road Network for All” (Une Voirie pour Tous) programme

The objective of improving the fluidity of traffic has guided the design of public road networks for many years. However, these roads, planned and maintained by the public administration, are far more than thoroughfares for traffic. Squares, public gardens, pavements and junctions organize the local environment and constitute places of social exchange and interaction. The road network is thus a public space in its own right to which nobody has an exclusive right. Consequently, planners need to ensure the road network is shared by all users.

The consideration of user needs and practices is complex because uses are increasing, competing and even conflicting in some cases. Sea changes in how we live, travel, transport and distribution are bringing new needs to light that overlap with essential public challenges :

- Accessibility for people with reduced mobility
- Safety of people and property
- Traffic flow management
- Urbanization management
- Quality of public spaces and urban landscape
- Fight against exclusion
- Environmental protection

Challenges for the future hinge on the following priorities:

- Promote global planning approaches at the city or regional level (speed limit reduction, development of soft transport, coordination with transport aspects),
- Further emphasize the benefits of these measures in terms of the economy (local

traders, regeneration), housing (rehabilitation, renovation, etc.), health, living environment, social cohesion and so forth.

The national **Une Voirie pour Tous** programme, initiated in 2006, was set up to create a common culture for the planning and management of the urban road network that:

- Re-establishes the important place of active transportation (walking, cycling) and opens up the public space to all users;
- Gives special attention to the most vulnerable in society;
- Promotes alternative modes of transport to individual motorized transport, to which priority has been given far too frequently in the past.

Cross-sectoral, it dovetails urbanization, transport, social and public space considerations. **Partnership** based, it brings together all actors involved in urban planning in villages, towns, cities or peri-urban areas: the Government and 11 partners (planning, engineering and other trade federations, local authorities, etc.).

The 70 days of meetings organized have brought together 7,000 participants since the programme started in 2006. They effectively met the very high expectations of elected officials and professionals in terms of providing support for the implementation of the new planning instruments.

The “Une Voirie pour Tous” meeting days alternated theory (regulatory advances, amenities for cyclists and pedestrians, accessibility) and examples of completed developments presented by elected officials and technicians representing local authorities. They aimed to :

- Present these new planning instruments,
- Show that they work (reference to local examples),
- Present associated documentation resources (guides, technical data, website, etc.),
- Direct participants towards training.

Some twenty publications approved by the Une Voirie pour Tous programme have been published. They outline concrete processes and recommendations for practitioners and decision-makers. Many other resources (brochures, posters, presentations, etc.) are available for distribution on different media, in particular the dedicated website : <http://www.voiriepour tous.developpement-durable.gouv.fr>

12. Improving technical capacities for city planning and management

In this context, French sustainable development strategies aim to promote a cross-sectoral and balanced approach to problems to be resolved at different levels.

The “Club EcoQuartier” (Eco-District Club) ([see appendix 3](#)) has, for example, compiled a cross-sectoral vision of all the aforementioned texts. The “Eco-District Chart” below provides a summary of the engagements whether they be voluntary (related to international commitments), regulatory (related to local laws) or contractual.

1	Réaliser les projets répondant aux besoins de tous en s'appuyant sur les ressources et contraintes du territoire	6	Travailler en priorité sur la ville existante et proposer une densité adaptée pour lutter contre l'étalement urbain	11	Contribuer à un développement économique local, équilibré et solidaire	16	Produire un urbanisme permettant d'anticiper et de s'adapter aux changements climatiques et aux risques
2	Formaliser et mettre en œuvre un processus de pilotage et une gouvernance élargie	7	Mettre en œuvre les conditions de la mixité sociale et intergénérationnelle, du bien-vivre ensemble et de la solidarité	12	Favoriser la diversité des fonctions dans l'optique d'un territoire des courtes distances	17	Viser la sobriété énergétique et la diversification des sources au profit des énergies renouvelables et de récupération
3	Intégrer l'approche en coût global lors des choix d'investissement	8	Assurer un cadre de vie sain et sûr	13	Optimiser la consommation des ressources et des matériaux et développer les filières locales et les circuits courts	18	Limiter la production des déchets, développer et consolider des filières de valorisation et de recyclage
4	Prendre en compte les pratiques des usagers et les contraintes des gestionnaires dans les choix de conception	9	Mettre en œuvre une qualité architecturale et urbaine qui concilie intensité et qualité de vie	14	Privilégier les mobilités douces et le transport collectif pour réduire la dépendance à l'automobile	19	Préserver la ressource en eau et en assurer une gestion qualitative et économe
5	Mettre en œuvre des démarches d'évaluation et d'amélioration continues	10	Valoriser le patrimoine local (naturel et bâti), l'histoire et l'identité du quartier	15	Favoriser la transition numérique en facilitant le déploiement des réseaux et des services innovants	20	Préserver et valoriser la biodiversité, les sols et les milieux naturels

The “Eco-District Chart” contains 4 sections, broken down into 20 commitments:

- Strategy and process: alternative ways of carrying out a project
- Quality of life and usage: improving everyday life
- Regional development: energizing the local region
- Protecting resources and adapting to climate change: responding to the climate and environmental emergency

These 20 commitments were written as a common reference to be shared by the various project stakeholders, whose responsibility it is to dovetail these with their own practices: linkage with the regional policy plan of the elected officials and the PLU regulations; linkage with the quality and performance targets set for the technical actors in the specifications documents and the contracts; linkage with the needs of associations, etc.

Other strategies in the form of clubs and networks for sharing the experiences of local authorities are also being developed by the Government, notably in relation to regional planning exercises: “CLUB PLUi” for planning strategies at the inter-municipal level; “Club SCOT Grenelle” for strategies at the level of the most exemplary population centres.

Engineering working for city planning and management

The major share of urbanization in France is done diffusely, via building permissions for individual houses on individual plots of land for people seeking an ideal in terms of quality of life and good neighbours, i.e. the only 'planning engineering' required for most 'projects' in France is that demanded by the building permission application process. Barely 20 per cent of building work is carried out within the framework of an organized operation (planning permission and urban development zone). The resulting urbanization distances inhabitants from each other and from public services, which detracts from quality of life. This state of affairs explain a many number of obstacles to an efficient urban environment :

- Urban sprawl of very low density areas and the ensuing consumption of farmland and natural spaces and gradual destruction of market towns,
- Under density of urban areas that makes essential facilities and services unprofitable (sanitation or school transport),
- Low appeal in terms of economic activity and lifestyle of suburban areas distanced from retail, leisure and employment centres,
- A paradoxical destructuring of social cohesion linked to the decline in social community relations.

In France, as regards planning engineering, we are observing a dichotomy between cities on the one hand, and isolated rural areas and small and medium-sized towns on the other. Metropolitan areas are better equipped in terms of methods, resources and engineering: there policies have already integrated the imperatives of the Solidarity and Urban Renewal Act (SRU, 2000) established to prevent urban sprawl and strengthen social and functional mixing. Conversely, we are seeing that rural areas and small and medium-sized towns are spreading out even more, urbanization occurring through peri-urban expansion and the scattering of housing is weighing more and more heavily on local authorities and cold weather services, school transport and waste management services. Rural areas and small and medium-sized towns are much more fragile in terms of public planning engineering. These local authorities have limited resources with few engineering services. Para-public engineering resources are also low since few "rural" urbanization agencies exist. As for private engineering, low demand is incapable of creating an attractive market.

Small towns face specific challenges :

- **major urban pressure** : small towns are subject to pressure that results in the construction of a succession of housing developments built without any real comprehensive approach to urban planning, in particular when these developments are located in the suburbs of large agglomerations.
- **necessary mix of traditional know-how and modern technology** : natural resources, know-how, culture and built heritage are important assets for regions that need to be analyzed thoughtfully to come up with new uses and develop them within modern projects that will invigorate the economy.

Medium-sized towns raise a number of different issues :

- **ailing centres** : from the conjunction of several factors, small businesses are slowly disappearing and the population is moving to the outskirts of towns, towards retail hubs

or transport nodes outside the region;

- **urban extension** : every 10 years, France consumes the equivalent of one Department of agricultural or natural land through urban extension, and medium-sized towns are the primary agents, along with rural municipalities, of this phenomenon;
- **difficulties organising viable functional mixing and public transport**, in a context of under-densification, major consequences of urban sprawl

In 2011, the projects that applied for the “Eco-District” quality mark represented over 200,000 housing units, including nearly 66,000 social housing units.



In 2014, these represented :

- 13 projects that had been awarded the quality mark (including overseas territories)
- 32 projects in the process of applying for the quality mark (“Engaged in the quality mark process”)
- 110 towns that had signed the “National Eco-District Charter”
- 700 local authorities involved in the “National Eco-District Club”.

13. Issues encountered and lessons learnt

A shared vision of the sustainable city, multiple initiatives but a cohesion yet to emerge.

The city represents a key factor in sustainable development and its regeneration meets environmental, social and economic objectives. It seems that the “sustainable city” is considered a societal issue that demands a specific approach. The sustainable city should be understood as an approach to the development and transformation process of an urbanized region, a systematic link connecting sustainable development and how cities are designed.

Even so, the individual understanding of sustainable development by each actor remains only partial and sectoral, connected to its specific area of expertise. Each institution intends to expand its scope of intervention to embrace the urbanization condition in its entirety, but drawing on its core skill to focus its attention on one or more preferred disciplines, so approaching the subject from a special-interest perspective. Consequently, even when they are cross-sectoral and integrated, State-led initiatives and its agents in the area of sustainable development are disparate and not bound by any particular synergy.

Such a proliferation can generate a growing risk of incoherence and competition between mechanisms that pursue similar objectives. It would be advantageous for all actors to draw on their complementarities.

Renewing urbanization practices to develop more effective policies. One-quarter of municipalities are not covered by a local urban planning document (in which case national regulations apply by default). This corresponds to 19.2% of the country's land area, home to 3.2% of the population. Areas which lack coverage mainly include remote areas, mountain regions and the third-ring Parisian suburbs.

As a large part of the French population retains a preference for individual, suburban housing, urban sprawl, which has significantly accelerated over the past 40 years, has been a major

turning point in the development of French cities, which the government has responded to with urban densification, a complex policy to implement.

Not only does urban sprawl signify the consumption and often irreversible conversion to artificial surfaces of natural and agricultural land and the destruction of biodiversity, it is also frequently a factor of insecurity, raising household fuel bills since for the most part residents use cars to get about. Extended distances between home and work also result in higher greenhouse gas emissions, rendering this form of urbanization a threat to public health through the erosion of air quality. Environmental problems must therefore be systematically considered in conjunction with social problems.

Recent legislative changes, both cross-sectoral (decentralization laws) and sectoral (SRU law, Grenelle legislation, ALUR Act, planning law for the city and urban cohesion, law on the future of agriculture and forests, etc.) set forth a revised framework in line with these objectives, strengthening in particular the role of inter-municipalities to establish plans at coherent regional levels and reinforcing the place of housing and urban settlements in these urban planning instruments, the State being the ultimate guarantor of the effective coherence of all local projects.

The sustainable city as an effective response to the economic and environmental crisis.

Sustainable city strategies, such as eco-districts or projects supported by the Programmes d'Investissement d'Avenir (PIA), in particular eco-cities ([see appendix 4](#)) create opportunities for the resolution of the economic and environmental crisis. For example, by developing local energy production (biomass, methanation, collective boilers), they also push the city towards a level of density that is compatible with service cost-effectiveness (schools, small businesses, promotion of local production (e.g. short food supply circuits, organic vegetable boxes¹²) and create a local and sustainable economy (creation of neighbourhood concierge services, regeneration of local craft industries, local agriculture). They develop regional inclusion and transform citizens into agents of change through new forms of social interaction (dialogue on projects, cooperatives, community gardens, car-sharing, etc.).

The green economy, sustainable planning and local initiatives are also beginning to provide practical solutions. For example, the capacity of local authorities to recommend local urban projects that offer an all-inclusive approach to a multi-faceted crisis. Through more environmentally-friendly urban services, accessible to the greatest number, and sometimes developed collectively in structured consultation processes, urban development is integrating both environmental and social concerns. However, since these best practices are presently still isolated, dispersed and not public, markets and important decision-makers are hesitant to invest. It is the State's responsibility to disseminate examples but also to provide solutions swiftly.

Finally, urban mobility is now considered from new angles. The design of public roads has long been guided by the objectives of fluid motor vehicle circulation. These roads, developed and maintained by the public authorities, are however much more than an area for traffic circulation. Consideration of users' habits and expectations has become more complex. Changes in lifestyle, travel, transport and distribution have given rise to new needs, in particular soft mobility, safety of people and property, quality and protection of natural spaces, combating exclusion, which are all added to the main collective challenges.

12 Association for the support of traditional agriculture

The challenge of peri-urban agriculture. The mechanisms and levers established by the State have, to date, not succeeded in sustaining peri-urban farms, even if actors are more frequently taking the objectives of urban growth control and the development of urban agriculture and short food supply chains into consideration.

The consumption of agricultural land remains high due to economic mechanisms that determine the location of residential and business developments even in spite of existing instruments in place (urbanization documents and specific tools – protected agricultural zones (ZAP), farming and natural (land) perimeter (PAEN)). Other regulatory mechanisms have therefore been introduced and important efforts to formulate and raise awareness of local integrated policies (urban planning; land use; economic development: creation of consumption chains, diversification of opportunities, local transformation; agricultural development: product diversification; training inhabitants, etc.) must be led.

The need for efficient regional planning engineering.

- Regions have to strike a balance of internal planning engineering competencies to be able to fulfil their role of urban project developer and private engineer. The local presence of parapublic engineering, sponsoring general interest missions (urban planning agency, CAUE, nature parks network, etc.) is essential for ensuring the regulatory changes imposed at the national level (such as the repercussions of the ALUR law in 2014, for example) and putting in place the relevant training. Local private engineering, if relevant, must complement these solutions.

- elected officials need to recognize professional expertise. The ambition of this engineering is to work for local authorities to help them put in place the conditions for ensuring successful completion of a project. The engineering must vary according to the region, as the needs of peri-urban areas are indeed different from those of large cities.

- Engineering must contribute to the skills development of project management. The growing power of inter-municipalities, global, national and local challenges, regulatory developments that will apply to regions with the ALUR Act, new decentralization laws, are all elements that elected officials must coordinate, despite their potential contradiction. That is why this two-pronged mission of action and training should be included in the code of engineering ethics in relation to its relations with elected officials. Engineering has everything to gain from working within a competent project management framework.

14. Future challenges and objectives

The challenge of effective takeover by the regions

As concerns decentralized urban planning and development expertise, the major challenge for the State, the guarantor of a coherent strategy for all parties concerned and the achievement of the national targets set down, is to stimulate a far-reaching and sufficiently rapid calling into question of urban design and development processes across all regions. It is important to take advantage of the complementary aspects and overhaul town planning practices. The development of the democratic debate around regional planning at all levels is more open and less technocratic, as it is led by the local authorities. This therefore confirms the need to move towards more decentralization by giving local authorities the necessary resources to reinforce the democratic approach favoured by the French government in terms of regional planning.

Pursuing a cross-sectoral public policy

The city can no longer be considered a mere object, a medium for sectoral policies; it needs to become the subject of public policy to be established, in favour of a more inclusive and comprehensive approach that breaks away from our current processes of producing and managing the urban space. Public policy must be based on:

Open governance, involving the State, urban project management, overseen by the municipalities, inter-municipalities and regions, the private sector, urban design and construction contractors, associations representing civil society and town planning professionals. In France, therefore, the planning system operates at various levels, justifying the subsidiarity between local authorities in order to link up these levels.

- The digital revolution offers new technological tools and databases that can change town planning methods and professional practices.
- An understanding of the city in the context of its ecosystem, its linkages with the region; an assimilation of the constraints of the region that are imposed on the city, according to the principle of resilience ;
- Adaptability as an essential quality for the functioning of the city, in order to take into account longer time-scales, which are the reference for climate, energy and demographic challenges, but also the concerns and challenges of the here and now (new housing, public funding cuts); this is primarily assured through the generalization of monitoring, observation and then assessment practices, urban policies and the practices they engender.
- The integrated approach, so that the initial design can be used to plan ahead for the systemic functioning of the city, combining different thematic approaches to create a coherent regional project. The reduction in inequality poses the challenge of integrating the City policy neighbourhoods into the urban territory and understanding the questions of social and functional diversity.

Changes to peri-urban agricultural land and the development of urban agriculture.

The crucial question of urban sprawl and peri-urban agricultural land needs broad consideration and must be integrated into two major concepts and directions, multifunctional agriculture and the implementation of an agrifood governance system.

As concerns agriculture in cities, the most essential need is to support the growing trend for community gardens and experiments with productive agriculture. The proliferation of community gardens is being obstructed by the scarcity and high cost of urban land. This lever is in the hands of local authorities.

For its part, the State is leading several research studies and programmes (in the fields of social, economic and environmental science) and transdisciplinary studies and programmes, such as JASSUR (an urban community gardens programme, Dens'Cité, T4P, etc.), to understand how such community gardens operate and measure their social, economic and health impact.

As for the development of productive agriculture in cities, this is again hindered by the financial and energy cost of deployment. Vertical farms, urban ecological systems and high-tech farming are in the experimental phase but could round off the offering currently being deployed in peri-urban areas and on the outskirts of cities.

The challenges of developing regional planning engineering

Today, planning engineering needs to be reconsidered in the light of the reality of urban development in France. Faced with advancing and often uncontrolled urbanization, the objective is therefore to facilitate the harmonious development of regions (restrict urban sprawl and the disintegration of micro-centres, polycentrism, closer work-home ratios, reduce greenhouse gas emissions) which do not receive equal awareness and attention. Use of public-private partnership must be increased.

In France, the prevention of urban sprawl is particularly contingent on the availability of land within the boundaries of a given city. Furthermore, the demand for land has become all the more acute faced with the intensity of the housing crisis. The Government is therefore taking action to speed up the identification and mobilization of land it owns and which has become unusable, for the purpose of building housing.

The legislative system has also recently been updated and has made it possible for the Government (or its public entities) to sell land from its private holdings at a price below market value when this land is intended for social housing.

France is also attached to the identity of local areas based on their heritage and pluralistic culture. The human aspect of our cities, in particular their historical districts, is one of France's major assets. The Government therefore supports several programmes that reinvest in ancient centres and districts.

Assessment of results and public policies

The implementation of several dozen sustainable urban projects and the active support of the public authorities in such projects has progressively resulted in specific mechanisms for assessing performance and the public policies that facilitated the process, driven by the continual pursuit of improving project processes.

It is essential to implement a cross-sectoral evaluation programme for all public programmes.

An analysis of assessment methods and tools reveals areas that are still not sufficiently covered today in France, in particular assessments of the measurement of the impact of a planning project on the region, which links up with urban sustainable development programmes for large regions, such as Agenda 21 or RFSC. Environmental assessments must, however, be mentioned, as they enable an analysis and justification of the choices made and can also help to prevent damage. Finally, the Environmental Authority, created in 2009, is a body which gives opinions on the assessments of the impacts of major projects. It aims to increase the consideration of the environment in the projects, plans and programmes submitted to it, and to educate the public and the decision-making authorities on their consequences.

Also needed is the development of processes specifically designed to analyze 'working' neighbourhoods, in terms of socio-urban aspects as well as environmental performance and the neighbourhood's contribution to its immediate environment. The problem with this type of analysis is that they need to be sufficiently flexible to adapt to constantly changing contexts and, in consequence, it relies heavily on local competencies. It cannot be envisaged as an instrument that is either "standardized" or "turnkey".

III. Environment and urbanization

15. Climate change

Within the framework of the Kyoto Protocol, France agreed to stabilize its greenhouse gas emissions at 1990 levels between 2008 and 2012. In 2000, it formulated the PNLCC (Programme to Combat Climate Change) with the target of meeting its commitment to not emit more than 144 million tonnes of carbon equivalent (TCE) in 2010, based on the growth projection of 2.2 per cent during the period 2000-2010.

Currently, France produces 1.1 per cent of global greenhouse emissions whereas the country contributes 5.5 per cent to global GDP. In 2009, France's emissions were 8 per cent lower than in 1990 and made it one of the few industrialized nations to have already met the pledge made within the framework of the Kyoto Protocol.

Structurally-speaking, France consumes less greenhouse gas emissions than its neighbours, notably due to its nuclear installations. Currently, the economic and financial crisis plays a role in the declining energy consumption since 2009, since a reduction in industrial activity has been observed.

What problems were encountered and what conclusions can be drawn ?

The assessment of the PNLCC notes the absence of a carbon tax, which was however planned at the outset. The conclusion is irrevocable: France is “struggling to meet its targets for the period 2008-2012”. This is why a Climate Plan was adopted in order to respect its Kyoto commitment. The Climate Plan, published in 2011, set out ambitious cross-sectoral measures and policies targeting specific sectors: housing, transport, industry, agriculture and forestry, energy, waste, public and local authorities, as well as awareness, information and training on sustainable development.

Moreover, energy consumption in France has continued to rise steadily for the past 30 years. Its primary energy consumption was 180 Mtoe (millions of tonnes of oil equivalent) in 1973 and reached 275 Mtoe in 2010. While coal and oil consumption has fallen, primary electricity consumption multiplied by 15 between 1973 and 2007. Today, according to INSEE, the most consumed energy is primary electricity (42.8 per cent of total consumption), followed by oil (32.5 per cent) and gas (14.9 per cent).

The future challenges

To combat climate change, France very early on directed its policy to the energy transition and the reduction of its energy consumption. In addition to respecting the commitments undertaken, France sees the opportunity to reduce its energy bill. Other major challenges concern the development of renewable energies and the launch of the regional programmes intended to respond to the challenges of climate change.

The development of renewable energies must be accelerated to meet the target for renewable energies to make up 23 per cent of France's final energy consumption by 2020. This is the target allocated to France by the European Commission within the framework of the Climate and Energy Package. It is higher than that allocated to Germany (18 per cent) and Spain (20

per cent) and lower than that allocated to (Sweden (49 per cent) and Austria (34 per cent)).

To meet this objective, France must, by 2020 and based on 2009 levels, more than double its annual renewable energy production, increasing it from 17 to 37 Mtoe. It agrees above all to promote the widespread use of renewable energies in buildings, support a research and development programme, notably through the fund to support industrial demo plants, put in place a renewable “Heat Fund” overseen by ADEME, and involve regional authorities in the development of renewable energies via regional climate, air and energy schemes.

Cities also bear a direct responsibility in the efforts to combat climate change. The Grenelle legislation, passed in 2009, is right on target. It calls on urban centres to lead a high energy performance policy on buildings, urban planning measures that promote eco-districts in particular, a transport policy designed to reduce France's dependence on hydrocarbons, measures to respect and protect biodiversity, and commitments regarding water, in order to safeguard good environmental conditions of all bodies of water by 2015.

A vehicle for expressing local strategies, the PCET (Regional Energy Climate Plan) is a regional sustainable development instrument whose aim is to mitigate the environmental impact of local authorities on the region, but also to adapt to the consequences of climate change through the promotion of new ways of living. Local authorities have two levers of action to rise to this emerging challenge :

- Improved management of greenhouse gas emissions in their assets (public buildings, vehicle fleets, property, etc.),
- Increased vigilance with regard to the impact of climate change through powers exercised across the region under their administration.

The scope of the Regional Energy Climate Plans covers regional planning, urban settlements, transport, economic development, and waste, water and energy management. Committing to a Regional Energy Climate Plan necessitates the putting in place of a new internal organization to foster cross-sectoral cooperation between “départements”. Ultimately, the goal is to factor the climate aspect into all a local authority's policies.

The mobilization of all stakeholders in the region should make it possible to meet all national commitments. Every entity must be prepared to be actively involved in the process to ensure its sustainability and efficacy, since the local authority, taking action purely within its areas of expertise, could only envisage reducing greenhouse gas emissions by only 10 to 20 per cent. By working with its economic and social partners and citizens, this reduction could potentially reach over 70 per cent.

Launched in 2004, the PCET is one of the most ambitious instruments implemented by the French government to reach the “20-20-20” targets set by the European Union and meet the commitments undertaken under the Kyoto Protocol. This mechanism is appealing more and more to local authorities overseas, e.g. Brazil, Turkey and the Maghreb.

16. Proactive risk management

Risk events, in particular earthquakes, cyclones and technological disasters, regularly claim vast numbers of victims worldwide. Events that have occurred recently in France show that damage can be considerable. Two-thirds of France's 36,000 municipalities are exposed to at least one natural risk, 15,000 of which to the risk of flooding.

France's disaster management policy aims to meet three objectives in order to make people and property less exposed and less vulnerable:

- Prevent and reduce the scale of damage and repair existing damage;
- Inform citizens such they become stakeholders in this management;
- Manage crises and disasters effectively when they do occur.

It is underpinned by the following principles:

- Understanding of natural phenomena, hazards and risks through a better characterization of past events and technical studies that can be used to establish risk maps;
- Surveillance, in order to anticipate phenomena and alert populations when necessary;
- Preventive education and informing of populations through the development of information sites and dialogue;
- Application of risks in urban planning, which necessitates control of regional planning, avoiding increasing challenges in at-risk areas and reducing the vulnerability of existing structures;
- Reduction of vulnerability;
- Anticipating disasters by publishing information documents on major risks (DICRIM) or implementing ORSEC plans (emergency plans);
- Experience sharing: a post-disaster assessment is a helpful way to disseminate any findings drawn from an analysis of phenomena.

In the area of flooding, our nation's major risk, France completely reorganized flood forecasts by creating in 2002 the Centre for Hydrometeorology and Flood Forecasting (SCHAPI) and 22 Flood Forecasting Services (SPC) with a view to publishing a flood 'vigilance map' covering 20,000 kilometres of waterways monitored by the State. The State and its partners have also mobilized efforts to improve existing flood prevention strategies through the approval of flood preventive action programmes (PAPI) in different areas: protection, prevention, planning and crisis management. Risk management must also form part of the European regulatory framework. Accordingly, in 2014, pursuant to the necessary adaptation of the European flooding directive to French law, the National Flood Risk Management Strategy (SNGRI) was published.

Risk prevention challenges

At the national level, in the face of natural phenomena and technological disasters that appear increasingly complex and serious, public authorities are at the front line. They are responsible for reconciling urban planning and risk prevention, coordinating various public policies arising from different actors in the fields of regional planning, urban planning, environmental protection and risk prevention. In regions subject to strong pressure, the objective is to build a long-term strategic vision, at the early stages of projects, that demands a particularly integrated, seamless, non-sectoral and partnership-based approach.

The Government therefore has the responsibility to produce Natural and Technological Risk Prevention Plans (PPRNT), which regulate land use to reduce risks, depending on the hazards faced by the municipality. These documents are required for town planning documents which must, where applicable, be made consistent with the Risk Prevention Plans.

The challenge is to make these regions more resilient, resilience being defined as the capacity to adapt, organize and react rapidly to overcome a foreseeable disturbance while safeguarding growth.

In the interests of stimulating innovative thinking and supporting local authorities in these processes, the State launched in late 2013 a national workshop named “changing regions exposed to a risk” targeting 5 sites (rural, peri-urban and urban), illustrating the diversity of regional transformation in the long term and the way it can be tackled in consideration of the risks :

- Recovery of historic centres losing their appeal;
- Restructuring and urban renewal of cities by the transformation of former industrial or trading sites;
- Recovery of abandoned infrastructure: roads, rail, ports, waterways, etc.;
- Requalification of outlying areas in conjunction with open natural or agricultural spaces;
- Restructuring or recycling of declining industrial fabric (by seeking to preserve industrial purpose while promoting opening-up and urban diversification);
- Creation of new links (stations, multimodal hubs, economic and leisure).

The objective is to bring to light, through projects, very concrete urban planning and development solutions in order to build and live better in regions exposed to risks. The conclusions of these 5 workshops were delivered at a seminar in April 2015. The Government is continuing these discussions by launching a Development Award for “Best practices in flood plain construction.”

17. Road congestion in France

In France, roads are the main mode of mobility of people (88 per cent of transport) and good (87.6 per cent).

Since the 1990s, the road network has expanded extensively, opening up regions to each other and the rest of Europe, connecting the Channel and Atlantic coasts and the major sea ports to the biggest towns and cities, responding to growing traffic and reducing through traffic in the capital region. The goals of sustainable development are now an integral part of French transport policy and reducing congestion is a long-term programme.

To optimize the performance of road networks, the objectives to work towards include: ensure a greater level of traffic fluidity, and reduce local pollution, noise, consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

To reach these goals, different strategies have been developed :

- A global management framework aiming to promote the use of public transport;

- Implementing dynamic traffic management systems in the busiest sections of the road network;
- Maintaining a high level of security and comfort for road traffic;
- Extending road forecasts and information in real time.

We are seeing four major challenges in terms of maintaining, modernizing and developing transport networks also being tackled :

- Optimizing the existing transport network to limit the creation of new infrastructure ;
- Improving the network's regional reach ;
- Improving its energy performance ;
- Reducing the carbon footprint of transport infrastructure and facilities.

In urban regions in particular and the most congested regions, innovative solutions have been developed in these different areas in order to reduce congestion and restrict new infrastructures/optimize existing infrastructures: opening up the emergency lane as an additional traffic lane at times of congestion; special reserved lanes; variable allocation of central lanes; sharing of road network (reserving one traffic lane to public transport during congested periods), coordinated electronic toll systems.

The promotion of alternative transport solutions also contributes to easing congestion by reducing the number of vehicles on the roads:

- Carpooling, car-sharing ;
- Cycling and walking ;
- Public transport (developing networks, notably in dedicated lanes, which was considerably ramped up from 1995 onwards; reimbursement of half of subscriptions by employers to their staff).

For the most part, these measures are overseen at the national level, and effectively implemented at the local level, with specific provisions according to the city or region concerned to meet the needs of local inhabitants more closely.

In complement to the actions undertaken to improve the country's transport infrastructure, road information systems have been deployed to help ease congestion. The Bison Futé website, the government's public road information service, was given a complete overhaul and introduced new maps, real-time updates, improved usability and live information on road disruptions caused by planned roadworks. A mobile version of the site has also been created, allowing users to obtain accurate information during their journey. We are also seeing, at the local level, the implementation of multimodal information platforms that exploit data pooled from different sources to optimize the transport of people and goods in turn limiting congestion and providing an efficient public service.

The challenges and problems call for different solutions. For “traffic management” solutions, travellers are served by different instruments and mechanisms (information on routes, speed regulation, variable allocation of lanes) and systems must be easy to understand and use.

For "alternative" solutions, public authorities can only offer choice (car or bike or bus or tram or other). To reduce congestion, the aim is to bring about a modal shift, which means the alternatives offered must be attractive (cost, journey time, comfort) and that users are aware of the benefits.

18. Air quality

Within a European and even international framework, France monitors and models air quality in relation to concentration values in the air defined at the international, European and French level, and compiles emissions inventories. Action is undertaken at four levels:

At the national level through actions and sectoral regulations to effectuate structural actions on the different sources of pollutant emissions.

At the regional level through an integrated strategy: SRCAE (Regional Climate Air and Energy Schemes) formulated jointly by the regional prefect (State) and the president of the regional council (regional authority).

At the local level, in all areas exceeding their pollution limits, and in urban agglomerations of over 250,000 inhabitants, air protection plans (PPA) are defined in conjunction with local authorities and stakeholders. PPAs set out objectives and measures, both regulatory and voluntary, intended to bring the concentration of air pollutants below legal limits.

In the event of peaks in air pollution : A measurement or forecast indicating when a limit is exceeded can set in motion a special procedure for managing peaks in air pollution. Measures commensurate with the scale and origin of the pollution peak can be adopted.

Problems and conclusions

Air pollution has multiple sources and the emissions from most of the main point sources of air pollution (above all industrial) have been reduced substantially in recent decades either under pressure from regulations or thanks to technical advances. The reductions to obtain from hereon in require action to be taken in every sector, which necessitates the mobilization of very varied stakeholders and very diverse legal frameworks, competencies and restrictions.

Furthermore, the pollution to be treated is frequently produced from sources of diffuse or cumulative pollution, which presents specific problems. In fact, the cost per unit of pollution is higher, regulatory control more complex and the social acceptability of regulatory measures harder to obtain since the marginal contribution of each actor remains limited.

Lastly, air pollution is intimately connected with other long-term, structural public policies, such as energy choices (energies and heating methods), urban planning, transport, regional planning or even the choice of industrial and agricultural technologies. In order to improve air quality and take pre-emptive action, one source of improvement is establishing air quality challenges more firmly in these public policies.

Future challenges

The policy for restoring air quality is complex and its effects are not immediate. It has to mobilize all the actors involved, each in its particular area of competency. The action taken will have to encompass all sectors of activity. Three measures have already emerged as taking priority:

the replacement of inefficient and high-emitting wood-burning heating appliances: emissions from wood-burning heaters account for 30 to 45 per cent of national particles emissions.

Replacing an open fireplace with an efficient heating appliance can reduce particles emission by up to 92 per cent;

the replacement of old vehicles, particularly diesel run; the reduction of nitrogen dioxide emissions from transportation and the limitation of road traffic and its emissions, in the densest urban areas;

the undertaking of extensive actions to reduce agricultural emissions, in particular by putting in place best farming practices, covering holding tanks for animal effluent, using adapted manure spreading equipment and restricting the use of fertilizers.

Beyond sectoral actions, the objectives relating to the improvement of air quality cannot be met unless local authorities step up their engagement and all stakeholders collectively acknowledge the challenges in terms of air quality and shared responsibility.

19. Lessons learned

France has become highly urbanized over the last few decades. Three-quarters of the population now live in urbanized areas and towns and cities now occupy 22 per cent of the territory, a 19 per cent rise in 10 years. Urbanization has not occurred without consequence on the environment: towns and cities are the source of 70 per cent of GHG emissions and nearly two-thirds of total energy consumption comes from buildings and transport, and so are directly related to the phenomenon of urbanization. More specifically, transport and construction in these areas has increased by 53 per cent and 29 per cent respectively during the period 1981-2012.

The 1990s saw society at large waking up to the challenges presented by climate change, the effects of air pollution and the exhaustion of natural resources, which led to engagements being undertaken at the European level – through the “Climate and Energy Package” in 2008 and its “20-20-20” targets that were passed to raise the share of EU energy consumption from renewable sources to 20 per cent; to reduce EU greenhouse gas emissions by 20 per cent, and improve energy efficiency by 20 per cent by 2020 – and at the French level – through the Grenelle environmental legislation (2007). This initiative, spearheaded at the highest level of the State, set in motion a proactive approach to environmental issues which are now central to governmental policy and the action taken by local authorities, economic and social actors and inhabitants. Many commitments have been made, in particular concerning improving the energy standards of buildings, supporting the development of renewable energies, promoting alternative transport solutions to individual vehicles, offering zero-interest environmental loans for housing renovations, urban planning that promotes denser urban planning and demarcating green and blue belts. While it is regrettable that certain commitments undertaken by the Grenelle legislation did not come to fruition (e.g. the carbon tax), the Grenelle legislation did give impetus to action which continues today through the implementation of more specific measures in the areas of risk prevention and management, urban congestion reduction, building energy efficiency renovations and more efficient resource management.

While in a few sectors the measures put in place are beginning to produce results (improved air quality in urban environments from reducing sulphur dioxide (SO₂) concentrations; stabilization of final energy consumption of buildings since 2012; sharp increase of public transport usage (up 24 per cent compared to a 13 per cent rise in car use) major problems persist, whether this concerns the continued conversion of land to artificial surfaces, resulting in urban sprawl; the vulnerability of some regions subject to violent meteorological events attributed to climate

change; increasingly mounting pressure on resources (water, natural materials, etc.) or, at the social level, the emergence of new forms of insecurity (e.g. energy) and environmental inequalities.

In addition to results in terms of meeting targets, the experience gained through the actions taken over the past twenty years has enabled us to draw lessons to help guide future action and identify points of leverage.

In particular :

- The interest in integrate a national policy within a European framework to give it more impact and influence;
- The essential role of strong political will in favour of sustainable development, both at the national level (cf. Grenelle legislation) and the local level, where elected officials need to set the course, define objectives, free up resources, etc.;
- The necessity to step away from sectoral policies to tackle regions using an integrated approach and coordinate the various policies between them to reinforce their effectiveness. This is the case particularly as concerns combating climate change through actions associating urban planning and transport; as concerns risk management and prevention where planning needs to take full account of risks from the outset, and as concerns resource management with the development of the circular economy ;
- The interest in bringing all stakeholders together around the actions undertaken. The Agenda 21 action plans showed the benefits of formulating and implementing a process collaboratively; more specifically, bringing together existing and future residents in the planning stages of an eco-neighbourhood and involving stakeholders in defining and implementing a PCET are just some of the initiatives that can foster the appropriation of these processes and determine their success ;
- In addition to regulations, financial incentives and improvements achieved by installing more efficient technical systems, the necessity to change behaviour, above all with regard to energy consumption in buildings and mobility practices ;
- The importance of forward planning through monitoring and through measures designed for regions to adapt to climate change and not just designed to mitigate the effects, and more generally initiating strategic discussion on the future and vision of regions in a low-carbon economy.

20. Future challenges and objectives

Accelerating the movement towards sustainable cities is essential to engage regions in the environmental transition. In this perspective, cities will have to accept challenges obliging them to review their development model, to anticipate, to adapt, to innovate to achieve our goal for cleaner, more efficient and more desirable cities.

Developing sustainable urban models implies greater austerity in the use of resources at all levels (agglomerations, neighbourhoods, buildings). Particular attention must be given to the planning of urban areas in order to manage urban sprawl and its economic, social and environmental impact on the organization and functioning of cities and surrounding rural areas: increased energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions; loss of biodiversity; increased surface runoff and urban flooding; disappearance of local agricultural areas, spatial segregation

and so forth. It is therefore essential we promote smart growth, cities where biodiversity and breathing spaces find a place, and reinforce interconnections between the city centre and its suburbs, in particular through short food supply chains. The regeneration of disused land is a real opportunity for developing new urban models and reviving the appeal of cities. A more efficient system for managing resources must be put in place, promoting the recycling of resources, the use of renewable energies and energy savings, in relation to buildings in particular (low-carbon approach to buildings throughout their life cycle).

The implementation of resilience strategies to counter the transformation regions are undergoing must also be a priority. While cities are increasingly vulnerable to natural, technological and health risks, in a climate of sweeping social and economic change, resilience represents a crucial means to survive catastrophes and disasters and engage cities in a longer-term strategy that integrates risk and draws on local strengths and potentialities. Resilience needs to become engrained in the regional approach and be underpinned by a region's "capabilities". The identification and development of a region's potentialities (heritage, natural resources) and the leveraging of local strengths should constitute the preliminary stage of implementing any regional resilience strategy. Regions needs to show proof of adaptability, greater mutability, engendered by flexible strategic planning practices, even more modular buildings and reversible infrastructure. The establishment of a governance system shared by all actors (local elected officials and technicians, social and economic actors, inhabitants) also appears indispensable to formulate and implement integrated strategies to support inclusive projects.

A more sustainable city must still be attractive and desirable. Projects aiming to reclaim water or restore a city's natural landscape improve quality of life and contribute to adapting a city to climate change, reduce pollution, protect biodiversity and save energy. Similarly, action in favour of more sustainable mobility is an essential factor of urban appeal. The development of public transport, active mobility (walking, cycling), and increasingly ubiquitous car-sharing and carpooling are just some of the measures helping to limit the use of individual vehicles and in turn reduce noise and pollution. The use of new information and communication technologies through smart transport and multimodal information systems have also played a vital role in improving security and safety, optimizing the use of the transport infrastructure, reducing energy consumption and noise, and promoting a shift to more environmentally-friendly modes of transport.

A more efficient approach to urban management will also help produce better services at least cost (to the economy, society and environment) and harness synergies between mobility, urban planning and energy, water and waste management to improve a city's overall performance. The development of information and communication technologies can foster these synergies and participate in establishing more efficient cities by regulating the way in which energy, water and other networks function and optimizing urban management and travel.

And yet the deployment of new, more sustainable urban development models must not be pursued to the detriment of populations, whether living in cities or in peri-urban areas, but conjointly with them. It is important to guarantee access to amenities and essential services for all and prevent all forms of insecurity and exclusion caused by the rising costs of transport and housing, the development of pay-for goods and services and growing technologization caused by the development of information and communication technologies.

IV. Urban governance and legislation

21. Factoring in urban environment and urban governance

French legal corpus is particularly robust, rich and complex. Constantly adapted to changes in French society and changes at the regional level, it has satisfactorily evolved over two hundred years, taking into account developments that have considerably strengthened the place cities have within the French regional framework and the changing needs and situations of French citizens.

Local authorities are particularly involved in the formulation of this legislation:

- through their direct representation at the Senate (upper house of the French parliament);
- through the establishment of associations of local authorities at each level, to provide leadership and expertise and put forward proposed changes to existing legislation;
- through the creation of special control bodies (high national council in charge of controlling and regulating regulations applicable to local authorities, etc.) in charge of evaluating the cost to a local authority for any new regulation, prior to its enactment.

Most legislation thus applies to particularly diverse geographic locations and social situations and can, for example, be subject to specific variations based on the size of the municipality (institutional changes in the inter-municipality) or the distance to the centre of the agglomeration, the importance of projects (planning safety studies) or the characteristics of the host populations (city policy). Others are covered by national frameworks and guidelines but which are then subject to the principle of decentralization of power and come under the direct responsibility of local authorities for the enactment of legislation adapted to their local context (e.g. urban planning legislation).

France therefore prioritizes the issue of urban governance, which consists of adopting practices for taking a partnership-led approach to action and decision-making with local authorities, in particular by involving the most vulnerable citizens. The balanced participation of all stakeholders in formulating and implementing public policy is essential in order to best meet the needs of the majority. Through consultation, urban planning and development actions also represent a learning exercise in regional governance and the strengthening of local institutions, allowing democracy to be built from the “bottom up”.

Considered in this way, governance is multifaceted and relates to regional (from local to global), economic (public, private, mixed), societal (expression of needs and interests of users through their participation), environmental, political and cultural dimensions. It concerns the strengthening of capacities (human and institutional) and interaction between different spheres (social, economic, political, administrative, etc.) and different regional levels, right down to the neighbourhood.

At the local level, the fundamental level of democratic governance, governance appears as an essential condition to prioritize sustainable development adapted to the needs, interests and rights of populations, and aim towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals. The European Charter on Development Cooperation in support of local governance stipulates that local democratic governance constitutes a “decision-making and implementation process of public policy that, around local governments (elected in contexts of decentralisation),

encourages an equal participation of all stakeholders of a territory (State, citizen civil society, private sector), reinforces accountability towards citizens and responsiveness to social demands in seeking for the general interest”.

The decentralization processes described below are a necessary component of this movement.

22. Decentralization and local authorities empowerment

Decentralization is the process whereby administrative powers are transferred from a central authority (in this case the French government) to regional authorities, local authorities elected autonomously and embedded in the institutional framework. Article 1 of the Constitution specifies that “the organization of the French Republic is decentralized”. In transferring specific powers to an authority, the Government also transfers the corresponding resources. Consequently, regional authorities have a degree of administrative autonomy and their own staff, assets and services. Each authority may have specific areas of responsibility, but certain responsibilities can be managed at two or three different levels.

Decentralization milestones in France over the past 30 years

The two milestones in the decentralization process are the adoption of the 1982-1983 legislation (Act I) and the constitutional reform of 2003 that laid the groundwork for significant transfers of powers from the Government to regional authorities (Act II).

A new step in the process was initiated in April 2013 when a decentralization bill – made up of three texts – was introduced, setting in motion Act III of the decentralization process that addressed the establishment of metropolises, regional mobilization to foster growth and the development of regional synergies. The first bill, relating to the new regional structure of the Republic, has recently been adopted thus bringing down the number of regions from 22 to 13. France is now committing to a new regional organization.

The challenges and prospects of Act III of decentralization

Act III of decentralization is intended to mark a departure from the strategy pursued by the first two decentralization acts. While the previous acts chiefly focused on the transfer of powers from the Government to regional authorities, the objective is now to find ways to simplify the local institutional landscape, strengthen local democracy and tailor the institutions to France's regional diversity. Furthermore, the reforms factored in the heavy restrictions weighing on public finances in the wake of the financial and economic crisis.

Act III of decentralization is now divided into two key blocks :

- **The MAPTAM Act (modernization of regional public action and establishment of metropolitan areas)** set in motion, through the creation of metropolises, a proper clarification of powers exercised at the local level. As of 1 January 2015, a new map of France will be presented including more integrated metropolises, in Lyon and a dozen other large cities. Maps of Grand Paris and Aix-Marseille-Provence will be issued on 1 January 2016. These new entities will replace existing inter-municipalities and will be given more power above all in the areas of economic development, urban planning, housing and transport. The new measures introduced by this act will be the notion of

tiered regional commitment: under a single name, there will be a multiplicity of metropolises whose boundaries will be adapted to specific regional realities.

- The key proposals in the ensuing texts will be to reconfigure the map of French regions, specify their powers and support the strengthening of inter-municipal powers, in the long run doing away with the present departmental structure :
 - Key stakeholders in the country's economic recovery, **the regions will be strengthened by being reduced from 22 in number to 13**. The French regions will be of equivalent size to other European regions and will thus be capable of building stronger regional strategies. To this end, they will be endowed with extended strategic powers and instruments to help businesses grow. They will steer education and employment policies and take action in the area of transportation. They will manage middle and secondary schools and be in charge of planning and large infrastructure. They will have their own dynamic financial resources to do all this with.
 - **The inter-municipality needs to be a local and efficient entity for local action** : the inter-municipality denotes the different forms of existing cooperation between the municipalities at the service of region-wide projects. Since 1 January 2014, the 36,700 municipalities in France have become part of an inter-municipality: communities of municipalities, urban agglomerations or future metropolises. But due to their different sizes, these inter-municipalities are often too poorly resourced to bear large-scale projects. Consequently the proposed reform aims to expand and pursue the process of municipal integration to change the size of inter-municipalities: each will encompass at least 20,000 inhabitants from 1 January 2017, compared to 5,000 today. Adjustments will be made for mountain areas and sparsely populated regions. A new inter-municipality map, based on population centres corresponding to actual realities, will come into force on 1 January 2018.
 - The reform of departmental councils will be carried out according to the regional characteristics, either by maintaining them or merging them with the metropolitan area, or by a federation of municipalities.

As concerns Government departments, sweeping reforms have also been conducted in parallel over the past decade to strengthen devolution and initiative at the regional level, in complement to these decentralization reforms.

France factors these reforms more broadly into an international perspective pursuing decentralization and local democratic governance, prioritizing above all the international guidelines established by UN-Habitat and spearheading various multilateral and bilateral relations with regard to these issues. In so doing it aims to involve citizens more in the definition and implementation of regional policies and thus enhance the legitimacy of public action. The expected benefit is first and foremost to stimulate growth that best meets the rights and needs of populations, through democratically legitimized local authorities working closely with citizens and capable of mobilizing local stakeholders.

23. Human rights and participation in urban development

France considers the participation of its citizens to be an essential component of its integrated approach to sustainable urban development.

French regulatory framework as regards civic participation has been greatly expanded over the past twenty years.

The urban planning code enforces consultation on planning projects, bringing together local residents, local associations and other people stakeholders. Numerous legislative provisions recommend the participation of citizens and associations in the early stages of and throughout procedures and projects regarding sustainable development, environmental protection and urban policy (cf. [appendix 5](#)).

Furthermore, **the urban renewal policy** introduced in 2003 to extensively regenerate rundown neighbourhoods has paved the way for numerous overarching initiatives involving residents in urban projects, the main objective being above all to improve living environments. Project sponsors have thus been invited to come up with innovative actions to encourage civic participation, although these remain few and far between. In order to put the importance of civic participation at the centre of the national debate on urban renewal, the planning law of 21 February 2014 for the city and urban cohesion placed the residents of the priority neighbourhoods at the heart of the city policy reform. Thus, at the local level, citizens will be included in the formulation, monitoring and assessment of the “**2014-2020 city contracts**” which will give rise to the set-up of “**citizen councils**” in each priority neighbourhood.

Challenges and problems concerning public participation in urban projects

Civic participation in public debate in France is first and foremost a solution for tackling the problem of civic disengagement by re-engaging inhabitants in politics, but also a process of democratic legitimization that shores up the institutional decision-making process.

Legislation concerning participation in the field of urban planning, even if it has been extended over twenty years remains a general framework that on its own is not always capable of **guaranteeing proper and effective dialogue**. Thus more and more local authorities are working beyond the legal framework by implementing **non-compulsory initiatives**, prompted by grassroots demand from citizens or community organizations or demand from elected officials and institutions, eager to revise decision-making practices (cf. *appendices*).

This is the particular case with **the Eco-District projects** that are today supported by over 500 local authorities committed in varying degrees to sustainable and participative urban development strategies. These projects are an opportunity for a significant number of authorities and professionals to address in different ways the place of residents in the project cycle.

The conditions for improving public participation in urban projects primarily relate to :

- access to clear, relevant and transparent information (choice of operational instruments and methods tailored to the various types of public concerned);
- the selection and representativeness of stakeholders, which relates to the question of inclusion in deliberation, the diversity of participative processes being itself a factor of inclusion. Generally speaking, formal equality of opportunity (status, sex, equal speaking time) is difficult to guarantee in public debate, as shown in practice. The personal means of expression employed depend largely on the scope of the debate (local or global), the nature of the subjects addressed (whether technical or not) and the structure of the

dialogue procedure (whether professionals or the general public are involved);

- the importance of educational tools and participation and leadership mechanisms for debates in place (extending the power of citizens in terms of area of intervention and civic responsibility);
- strong local political will;
- governance structures that are sufficiently flexible to make decisions and sufficiently open to promote dialogue, debate and shared decision-making.

We are also seeing that in the face of mounting operational complexity, many authorities are tempted to hand over responsibility to third parties (urban planners or project managers) as quickly as they can and tend to abandon their role of urban contracting authority despite the sustainable development goals expecting on-going commitment from authorities upholding the values promoted in the definition and implementation of the project results.

The challenge of emerging innovative models of public participation: devising urban projects integrating user experience

While urban production practices in France have for many years conferred public planning authorities (political stakeholders and contracting authorities) and economic stakeholders (planners and project managers) **a major and dominant role, the expertise of citizens is gaining increasing recognition**. Participation practices are becoming commonplace and the related processes have changed considerably in recent decades, from the traditional “public meetings” or open debates to alternative forms that encourage creativity from participants (artistic or cultural processes), foster group facilitation or conflict mediation and, more generally, increasingly prioritize “engineering” from designers and leaders.

Many public institutions have been experimenting with extremely diverse consultation processes over the past several years such as, for example, **the formulation of “participation charters”**, initiative mechanisms not prescribed by law that allow **user experience** to be factored in to provide clearer assessments and offer alternate points of view from professionals. Formalized through “local resident training” actions, its **new user authority** status now offers the resident a unique place working with institutional actors. This “user experience” of residents is now becoming a basic step in giving clearer assessments and contributing alternative points of view from those of professionals.

The National Commission for Public Debate (CNDP) also helps to make residents’ voices heard. It does this for large projects through the public debates it organizes, or as part of a consultation process, for which it appoints a guarantor.

24. Safety in urban areas

Growing social demand and recent regulatory requirements

French Government and local authorities prioritize the issue of safety in urban design. The action undertaken by the Ministry of Housing, Regional Equality and Rural Affairs (MLETR) in the area of crime prevention is primarily geared towards “situational crime prevention” which is one of the priorities of France’s national crime prevention strategy. To improve crime prevention in public spaces, an objective was set to identify vulnerabilities and anticipate risks, above all through more public safety studies.

Since 2007, a **preliminary public safety and security study** must be carried out on all major infrastructure and planning projects to assess any risks associated with the operation and plan for measures concerning the construction, development and management of spaces. Established conjointly within the framework of an interministerial steering group, this law designates **planning professionals (contracting authorities and project managers) as stakeholders in the co-provision of safety**. These public safety studies represent an opportunity to promote requirements in terms of the urban sustainability and quality of projects and to allow intervention in the design phase. The principle of safety in planning projects is furthermore a criterion used to assess quality of life for the “Eco-District” quality mark issued by the Government.

These studies also provide measures for the sharing of responsibilities between law enforcement and planning stakeholders and help establish a **tailored approach to the local context and challenges by prioritizing urban planning quality and social relations**. In this sense, it is working towards greater equity in terms of access to cities, problems of urban safety tending to affect marginalized and vulnerable people in particular.

Thus the establishment of this policy is largely contingent on the operational implementation of these studies carried out by experienced professionals. Government departments help authorities and planning professionals in this exercise. A national support unit was set up within one of the Government's scientific and technical institutions, CEREMA, which serves as a resource centre, observatory support facility and methodological reference. Moreover, the foundations and concrete processes laid down for the implementation of this policy are frequently reviewed from an operational and scientific perspective.

From research to experimentation

Firstly, it was important to further the understanding of phenomena relating to safety in the urban environment. That is why the PUCA, a public body dedicated to applied research on urban issues, launched in 2007 a consultation to question researchers on space and its design, use and maintenance. This study resulted in a new hypothesis : **current “defensive” forms of urban planning can be superseded by a more open approach to planning and managing public spaces**. By promoting more fluid traffic, urban activity and use of public spaces, professionals will be best placed to contribute to the improvement of safety conditions.

A pilot programme launched in 2010 and led in partnership with the FFSU (French Forum for Urban Safety), entitled “Quality and safety of urban spaces”, set out to encourage innovative urban projects that provided solutions to safety problems experienced by local authorities in planning and managing community spaces. It concerned more specifically relations between space and safety. The clear aims were to improve comfort in using the spaces, the well-being of residents and the resolution of concrete problems, whether concerning the direct consequences of crime or – more commonly – conflicts of use, “vulnerable” situations or lack of comfort. **The objective was to rely on the contracting authority/project manager pairing to discuss, together, the problems encountered by residents and users and ultimately to define suitable urban and architectural actions**. Ten local authorities and one private contracting authority, recommending 13 study sites, were chosen to represent a range of different and contrasting real-life situations: shopping centres, neighbourhoods undergoing urban regeneration, areas around train stations, underground car parks, squares, etc. Over a year, teams of experts worked with local authorities and came up with a number of innovative operational recommendations.

This research programme enriched knowledge in two key areas. Firstly, all of the experiments confirmed that the feeling of insecurity is not always – and even seldom – a problem directly related to the “field of safety” in terms of response and public actors. In other words, **it is just as much an issue concerning the local environment, the quality of the public space and management problems as it is anti-social behaviour or crime, even on sites where crime levels are alarmingly high**. For instance, an elected official at one workshop said that the everyday concerns of his constituents, despite them being confronted with acute crime problems, were equally related to the cleaning and upkeep of public spaces.

Secondly, this approach to urban planning from a safety perspective slightly skews **the work of designers towards a responsibility to identify and address concrete problems**. The work led by the Réussir l'Espace Public (Efficient Public Space) association in Lille clearly highlighted the added value of bringing together safety and management professionals, more directly geared towards finding solutions to real problems. In a sense, experimentation has shown a different approach to designing an urban project, one that factors in everyday life and attempts to provide open spatial responses which are able to bypass the traditional “canons” of urban renewal, which are neighbourhood regeneration, the creation of a “new centre” and functional mixing. **Safety provides a very tangible opportunity to think about the use of space or buildings and recommend answers to the problems of local citizens**, including minor changes that do not necessarily require the complete regeneration of a neighbourhood, in accordance with general measures dictated by the latest urban-planning trend : we were able to recommend turning around the station halls here, a simple clarification of domainality here, and keeping a neighbourhood square close to a small shopping centre over here when everything was pointing to it being removed altogether to densify and “open up” the area. In this sense, several proposals formulated as part of this programme invited designers to enrich the traditional categories of action in urban planning, which are often too generic and poorly suited to strictly local needs.

Lastly, several teams brought about **the idea of working on the project timeline**, to move away from the before and after vision. Projects being very long and frequently a source of disturbance and insecurity, it was important to reconsider the concrete implementation of urban projects by creating the **conditions for a gradual transformation**, relying on the local resources, developing existing practices and allowing gradual adjustments. The “project strategy” defined by Paul Landauer in Strasbourg is exemplary in this respect, but this principle is also at the heart of the work conducted in Le Havre or Sevran. Philippe Panerai in Aubervilliers also introduced the variable of time and recommended immediate changes to Dalle Villette and others further out. These initial immediate actions, announced, discussed and then realized relatively rapidly, help **to restore the climate of trust** that has all but disappeared today. In every example, the work is taken outside the scope of simple “project management”. Above all it is a form of democratization of the urban-planning process, no longer designed through the traditional process of consultation but through exploiting the project timeline so **the transformation is mutually assumed. By harnessing the skills of residents and users, often “disenchanted” with regard to public action, the aim is to abolish the inevitable sense of relegation, and then vulnerability and then insecurity**.

25. Social inclusion and equity

The urban environment in France is notably characterized by several hundred neighbourhoods in difficulty, most often located in the suburbs of urban agglomerations and mostly built during the periods of construction of large housing estates in the fifties, sixties and seventies (period of

reconstruction after the Second World War and resorption of temporary housing, and period of high economic and demographic growth in France, leading to the industrialization of urban production). These neighbourhoods are generally poorly connected to the rest of the city; the quality of construction is average to mediocre and sometimes poorly maintained, frequently composed of social housing that is often rundown; synonymous from the start with social diversity, they are now home to a high concentration of low-income people struggling to integrate socially and economically.

For several decades, deteriorating living conditions in these urban neighbourhoods impacted by high social insecurity has prompted the Government and regional authorities, within the framework of a contractual partnership, to lead actions to combat exclusion among the residents of these neighbourhoods and improve living conditions. These operations constitute what is commonly known in France as a “politique de la ville” or City Policy which has been fleshed out over more than thirty years with legislation and many regulatory measures. However, despite concerted efforts, many residents of these vulnerable neighbourhoods remain the victim of profound and persistent inequalities. This state of affairs has made republican equality between regions a priority action of the Government, enacted in 2013/2014 by a reform of the “city policy” to strengthen its clarity, coherence and efficacy. This re-establishment of city policy is specifically based on the adoption of the Law of 21 February 2014 on cities and urban cohesion.

The City Policy, two decades of reforms

In 1996, the City Regeneration Pact had prioritized job creation. 751 sensitive urban zones (ZUS) were created with a population totalling 4.5 million. Some 400 urban regeneration zones (ZRU) were also created, areas where businesses could benefit from tax and social charges breaks, plus 44 urban free zones (ZFU) that offered additional advantages, most importantly tax breaks to businesses setting up there.

In 1999, the government shifted its focus to quality of life. Fifty sites were selected to receive major city projects and global funding of 840 million euros was earmarked over six years. Government effort to City Contracts rose by 44 per cent. In 2000, the Solidarity and Urban Renewal Act (SRU) (see section 8) aimed to distribute social housing more evenly and reduce rundown accommodation, the urban sprawl of suburban areas and to implement an urban transport policy that was consistent with sustainable development. It obliged agglomerations and isolated municipalities of over 15,000 inhabitants to ensure social housing accounted for 20 per cent of primary homes, if justified by demographic growth conditions. This proportion was increased to 25 per cent by the law of 2013 for municipalities with struggling property markets.

In 2003, the Law on Cities and Urban Renewal Guidelines and Planning prioritized urban renewal with its National Urban Renewal Programme and the creation of the National Agency for Urban Renewal (ANRU). The National Urban Renewal Programme was given 30 billion euros over five years, eventually increasing to 47 billion euros, of which 11.6 billion were subsidies from the ANRU, which launched a vast demolition/regeneration programme in neighbourhoods to remove the stigma of ghettos. The urban free zones programme was extended for a further five years and extended to a total of 85 areas. It will be further expanded to 100 neighbourhoods.

After the November 2005 riots in the suburbs, the Law of 9 March 2006 on Equal Opportunities created the National Agency for Social Cohesion and Equal Opportunities, which focused on funding the social development of neighbourhoods. Urban regeneration loans were increased and the policy to reduce financial assistance to associations was challenged. In 2006, the Law on the National Commitment to Housing encouraged the increased supply of rent-controlled

housing and home ownership assistance for low-income households.

New “**urban social cohesion contracts**” were introduced from 2007 (extended until 2014) to assure the coordination of all the policies funded in the priority neighbourhoods.

In 2008, the “suburban hope programme” included an “**autonomy contract**”, offered to unemployed young people under 26, the aim of which was to teach them “the necessary codes for integrating into a company” and “second chance schools” for young people who had failed school. As part of this approach, Prefectoral representatives were introduced in the priority neighbourhoods: 325 posts were in place by early 2015, to which 45 additional posts should be added following the Interministerial Committee meeting of 6 March 2015.

Persistent inequalities and inadequacies and a governance system to transform

After a decade marked by a proactive urban renewal policy targeting these neighbourhoods and extensive investment (a demolition programme for 146,000 housing units, 140,000 new housing units, refurbishment of 321,000 housing units, 356,000 housing units converted into residential properties, opening up to the urban environment, diversified supply, etc.), some transformations have been genuine successes. However, other neighbourhoods, despite undergoing major regeneration, have failed to fully “re-integrate” into the city or offer all the services the population expected to receive. Moreover, the Sensitive Urban Zones Observatory, created in 2004, indicated that the poverty level in sensitive urban zones is almost three times higher than in other regions, the unemployment rate nearly two and a half times higher in these zones, their residents say their state of health is poorer and they frequently have difficulty accessing healthcare and, in the area of academic success, departures from the average tend to increase in general streams. Even if the sentiment of insecurity is decreasing, it is still commonplace in sensitive urban zones.

As noted in several public reports, including the Court of Auditors in July 2012, the failure of the public authorities to reduce the differences suffered by residents of disadvantaged neighbourhoods is largely attributable to:

- the lack of sufficiently strong interministerial coordination in the context of a constantly growing population;
- the dilution of actions and financial resources across too many regions;
- the imprecise distribution of roles between regional authorities: the inter-municipalities have not found their place despite their decisive role, while the “départements” and “régions” are unequally involved;
- urban renewal efforts poorly coordinated with the social and economic programme of interventions and the absence of comprehensive and coherent contracts for city planning;
- weak mobilization of public policies (employment, education, health, environment, transport, etc.) in the neighbourhoods.

Prospects offered by the Law on City Planning and Urban Cohesion

Promulgated on 21 February 2014, this law plans a sweeping reform of the instruments of the “city policy” by prescribing for the first time **the fundamental principle of co-formulating the City Policy with local citizens**, seeking to redefine certain priority neighbourhoods based on a

single criterion, putting in place a comprehensive urban contract and initiating a new stage of urban renewal (new National Urban Renewal Programme with 5 billion euros) that is indissociable from the social programme.

In terms of participatory democracy, the aim is to make citizens integral stakeholders in these processes by :

- creating citizen councils in the City Contracts, who will participate in the definition, monitoring and assessment of projects;
- putting in place a college of representatives of local associations and residents in National City Councils (CNV);
- the presence of representatives of tenants on the board of the National Agency for Urban Renewal (ANRU);
- supporting innovative initiatives to promote participation and the capitalization of experiences to create a common methodology.

To target resources more directly at the most struggling regions, the reform puts in place:

- a single parameter : the priority neighbourhood of the City Policy ;
- a single, clear and objective criterion: the urban concentration of poverty through the income of residents and the use of a refined and innovative statistical network.

A comparative analysis of this new methodology has allowed the identification of 1,300 priority neighbourhoods with over 1,000 inhabitants out of 700 municipalities in metropolitan France, including 100 new priority municipalities to date not included in the City Policy (in particular small and medium-sized towns in rural areas).

The new City Contract, unique and covering the entire inter-municipality, will mainly target the following :

- an integrated approach mobilizing all public policies (education, employment, transport, health, etc.) closely linking the pillars of “social cohesion”, “quality of life and urban renewal” and “economic development and jobs”;
- the integration of priority neighbourhoods into the regional system working around a joint project;
- a regional project covering a smaller number of priority neighbourhoods with a concentration of resources.

The interministerial dimension of the City Policy has also been re-asserted and reinforced. By entering into target agreements with the Minister for Cities, around a dozen ministries have undertaken to make resources available that are commensurate with the needs of each region and lobby for actions specific to their area of competence.

The new generation of urban projects aims to put the inhabitants at the heart of the process and factor in the social and economic aspects of the City Policy. The following actions will lead the new direction:

- a concentration of actions in the priority neighbourhoods presenting the most serious urban problems;

- the creation of a “project centre” for each operation such that local residents have a dedicated place to go and make their contributions;
- the contribution to the sustainable renewal of neighbourhoods and the improvement of the energy performance;
- the promotion of economic growth and the creation of activities in the neighbourhoods covered by the city policy.
- The management of City policy has been reinforced by the regrouping, in mid-2014, of the General Secretariat of the Interministerial Committee for Cities and the National Agency for Social Cohesion and Equal Opportunity into the General Commission for Regional Equality (CGET), under the Prime Minister’s Office¹³.
- The terrorist attacks of 7 and 9 January 2015 further highlighted the intensity of social unrest caused by feelings of exclusion, poverty and democratic disengagement, fed by a crisis in values and social cohesion which France is experiencing.
- In this context, the Government held an Interministerial committee on 6 March 2015, chaired by the Prime Minister Manuel Valls, titled “Equality, citizenship: the Republic in action.”
- This Interministerial committee approved 60 measures promoting equality and citizenship, covering a very wide spectrum of topics divided into four major themes: citizenship policy, settlement policy, education and economic activity.
- These topics and the related measures concern the whole country, although there is a particular focus on problematic neighbourhoods, but also on rural and suburban areas and small towns, which too often feel forgotten about. This committee forms part of an approach which “concerns the whole country”, with another interministerial committee meeting on 13 March 2015 devoted to rural areas.
- Although all the interministerial committee’s “Equality, citizenship” measures concern those living in urban neighbourhoods, some of them are more specifically related to the measures of the City Policy: living, working, studying, staying healthy, living safely in public areas, combating all forms of discrimination and continuing the fight against gender inequality, supporting associations that encourage social cohesion (an additional grant of 100 million euros), promoting the development of digital access, focusing efforts to promote mastery of the French language, culture and sport, respect for the secular system to develop citizenship.
- Some of the most symbolic measures include those relating to housing, aimed at promoting “diversity” and “combating segregation”. Firstly, in 216 municipalities identified as not having complied with their obligations under the Urban Solidarity and Renewal (SRU) Act, the Prefects will be able to issue construction permits to the municipality. However, “instructions will be given to the Prefects to limit the construction of social housing in the 1,500 city policy priority neighbourhoods, once the social housing rate exceeds 50%.” Finally, it has been decided to “no longer rehouse in city policy priority neighbourhoods people whose resources are below the poverty threshold”, including families entitled to an enforceable right for housing (DALO).

13 And the Interministerial Delegation for Regional Planning and Regional Attractiveness (DATAR)

26. Urban governance and legislation : lessons drawn

- **The decentralization of urban planning does not imply any disinterest or disengagement on behalf of the Government :**

- small municipalities lacking planning engineering services will encounter problems drafting effective urban planning documents ;
- the content of urban planning documents produced by municipalities can either facilitate or encourage urban sprawl or, on the contrary, obstruct the construction of new housing, in turn exacerbating the housing crisis a number of agglomerations are experiencing.

To oversee the discretionary powers of municipalities and ensure the coherence of all local policies and their fit with national strategies and directives, the Government has had to gradually adjust legislation concerning local urban planning documents in order to, for example, include peri-urban urbanization (ALUR Act, urban planning component). This desire for a new coherence between the projects of each authority and national guidelines and the implementation of regulatory mechanisms by the Government or upper level of authority is established through intense legislative action, which may be the reason for some confusion among local stakeholders.

- **Urban sprawl, which has sharply accelerated over the past 40 years**, constitutes a major phenomenon in the development of French cities. To curb it, cross-sectoral (decentralization laws) and sectoral (SRU Act, Grenelle legislation, ALUR, future law for agriculture and forests, etc.) legislation promotes **urban densification**, which is complex to put into practice. Creating the “dense city” and “making it desirable” requires promoting urban quality, which depends both on the quality of spaces and buildings but also complicated sociological factors, a significant proportion of the French population having a large preference for suburban areas and individual housing.

- **Housing and shelter occupy a growing place in urban planning instruments :**

- The ALUR law aims to promote new-build housing ;
- The Town Planning and Urban Cohesion Law has a broader scope than housing but it incorporates housing by focusing on priority neighbourhoods and social housing;
- The creation of metropolitan areas (MAPTAM law) is also a response to the urgent housing problem in large urban agglomerations and the necessity to ensure local institutions are capable of dealing with the housing problem at an appropriate level.
- The Government will be the last recourse for arbitrating in the case of conflicts of use between agricultural activities and the mobilization of land on which to build housing (cf. Article 12 of the bill on the future of agriculture and food);
- The law maintains the powers of the Prefect as concerns the Community Development Plans (PLHs): they are tasked with making the Government's housing goals known to regional authorities.

- **The inter-municipality is an incomplete structure.** While our European neighbours reduced the number of their municipalities a long time ago, French administrative geography has in fact evolved very little since the *Ancien Régime* [18th century]. While local areas, such as the neighbourhood or the municipality remain important in everyday life, **the city now functions at the inter-municipal level** and it seems logical that the governance of cities is exercised at the level where the key questions are posed and no longer at just the municipality level. Thus the Government has endeavoured to promote more integrated inter-municipal processes of cooperation. Noteworthy advances were made recently (cf. above: MAPTAM Act, ALUR law) to ensure that many subjects affecting the operation and functioning of cities are handled at the most appropriate regional tier. Nevertheless, inter-municipality will not be dictated; it will be constructed over the long term.
- **The inclusion and participation of residents in urban planning decisions** allows for greater consideration of **user experience**. From information to consultation via the co-formulation of an urban programme with local residents, France has seen the introduction of ambitious processes designed to harness the direct participation of residents in project design. The authorities concerned with Eco-Neighbourhood projects have begun organizing integrated processes in which they are involved throughout the planning/design/execution process and representatives of the contracting authority, builders, managers, experts and representatives of associations and residents are regularly involved in the pre-planning and decision-making phases.
- Government operators act on issues relating to cities, settlements and housing. This mainly involves the ANRU (National Agency for Urban Renewal), which has operated an exceptional common law policy since 2003, and the ANAH (France's national housing agency), which has been a common law operator for the private sector since 1971.

Even when conducted effectively, these processes are not always enough to prevent opposition to a project, which can be manifested by disputes attempting to have decisions made by the competent authority revoked by the court. Disputes concerning urban planning have today reached significant numbers and have become almost a matter of course in some cities. The issue of combating legal action in urban planning is regularly addressed by public authorities. Regulatory measures were taken mid-2013 to improve the situation and new partnership arrangements in the early stages of projects are also designed to limit these situations, which are highly obstructive to project schedules.

27. Future challenges

We can see that in the matter of urban governance and legislation the following are mutually sustained :

- a demand for **the simplification of the legislative and institutional landscape** from civil society (businesses, citizens, professional stakeholders, local elected officials) ;
- consideration of the multiple dimensions of **sustainable development and its challenges** (integrated approach) **combined with a strong project culture and an iterative planning and decision-making process** ;
- a concern for **democratizing public action** combined with a demand for **more effective and tailored regional public action and therefore the establishment of greater subsidiarity, which implies** :

- on the subject of community, more involvement of residents in the early stages of the decision-making process and thus a generalization of the co-formulation policies led by urban planning professionals appointed by local authorities – but without undoing the everyday ties that unite them with local citizens;
- on the subject of efficacy, improved governance of municipalities by reinforcing the inter-municipality and pursuing efforts undertaken to achieve this: by establishing identical perimeters of urban areas and a definition of the inter-municipality as a true supra-municipal power (and not just the sum of the interests of the municipalities). Election of elected officials by direct universal suffrage appears as a viable way to raise the credibility of this level of authority in the eyes of citizens, marked by a deep cultural and historic attachment to their municipalities.

In this context, contractualization between the Government and local authorities has developed with decentralization. The greater diversity of actors intervening in similar fields requires method and coordination in order to conduct coherent action in a given region (e.g. urban social cohesion contracts, Government-region plan contracts, regional contracts, regional development contracts). In fact, a contractualization policy, in keeping with the integrated approach advocated by urban sustainable development policies, can help :

- adapt public policies to the realities of the regions in a climate of growing scarcity of resources, the optimization of public action and the rapprochement of the conduct of regional public action (provided this does not jeopardize the rights of citizens in accessing public services);
- identify struggling regions and share out resources more equitably in view of treating all regions equally;
- from the level of the citizen, promote coherent public action by encouraging stakeholders to unite around a joint assessment of the needs of the region and its inhabitants;
- subscribe to a system whose governance system is guided by the principle of subsidiarity and promotes clear and strategically coherent public action.

V. Urban economy

28. Municipal finance

What results has France achieved in this area?

On the landscape of French administrative history, one consequence of the recent development of inter-municipal cooperative entities (metropoles, urban communities, communities of agglomerations, communities of municipalities) is that responsibilities previously exercised by municipalities are now, since being transferred (either by law or voluntarily), exercised by public intermunicipal cooperation organizations (EPCI).

The biggest of these are endowed with resources of similar scale to those of municipalities. It is therefore important to take an overarching look at the “municipal sector” to understand the funding of local authorities. The data presented below thus concerns, for the year 2012, the “municipal sector” and provides a complete overview of:

- 35,305 municipalities belonging to an EPCI with tax-levying powers
- 2,581 EPCIs with tax-levying powers

The income of the “municipal sector” totalled €129 billion. The first elements of classification make a distinction between operating income (€103 billion) and investment income (€26 billion). As its name indicates, operating income funds everyday actions: administrative management, services provided to residents, and financial transfers to associations or even households.

The main assistance from the Government is the central government block grant (DGF). The way in which it is divided between the municipalities and groups of municipalities is rather complicated given that it meets a number of objectives stratified over time:

- provide block funding based on a given number of residents (or more precisely the grant per resident increases with the population);
- factor in certain physical features (surface area, located in a national park);
- ensure inclusion mechanisms to municipalities or groups of municipalities considered 'poor';
- guarantee that from one year to the next there is no major decrease to the grant;
- “compensate” for the creation of inter-municipal groups and the development of their activities as municipalities;
- compensate for the effects of tax reforms.

The main sources of tax income are the following :

- *taxe d'habitation* (TH) (housing tax, €19 billion) that every resident pays in accordance with the “rental value” of their accommodation, i.e. an estimation of the rental value of the property on the rental market;

- *taxe sur le foncier bâti* (TFB) (property tax, €16 billion) paid by all residential property owners, the tax base being the rental value;
- *taxe sur le foncier non bâti* (TFNB) (tax on undeveloped land, €1 billion) paid by all land owners based on its type and rental value.

These three taxes are essentially supported by households. Municipalities and inter-municipalities are free to set (subject to a number of framework rules) the rate each year.

Next come:

- *cotisation financière des entreprises* (CFE) (a local tax paid by businesses, €7 billion) paid by businesses based on their land base. Municipalities and inter-municipalities are free to set (subject to framework rules) the rate each year.
- *cotisation sur la valeur ajoutée des entreprises* (CVAE) (€44 billion). This is based on an estimation of the economic added-value of each business in the given region and a national rate fixed at 1.5 per cent.

Other taxes and fees are linked to a specific activity carried out in municipalities or inter-municipalities, in particular the *taxe d'enlèvement des ordures ménagères* (household waste collection tax) (€6 billion) and the *versement transport pour financer les transports collectifs* (mobility payment to fund public transport) (€3 billion). Lastly there is a long list of fees and taxes which can represent a sizeable source of funding.

Furthermore, investment income will fund actions that alter the holdings of a local authority (land acquisition, purchase or construction of buildings or works on lands or existing networks). They are essentially constituted of loans (€11 billion) and grants and subsidies (€11 billion).

Use of debt is relatively flexible: municipalities and inter-municipalities can borrow from competitive credit institutions, from the *Caisse des dépôts et consignations* (Deposits and Consignments Fund, a financial organization under parliamentary control) or directly from financial markets. Local authorities must however respect balanced budget rules that only allow use of debt for funding investments and prudential rules regarding available financial products.

A majority of subsidies are contributed by the Government through a partial reimbursement of VAT paid on investment expenditure, but also from “départements” and “régions” that support local investment made in their region. European funds can also be made available.

Income will fund investment policies, fuelled by important structural needs, above all in the areas of urban public transport, the development of new technologies, upgrading and the environment.

All types combined, authorities carry out nearly 70 per cent of public civic investment to the tune of 55 billion euros annually. By level of authority, investments, excluding repayment of debt, in 2011 totalled :

- €24.3 billion for municipalities, or 25.8 per cent of their total expenditure;
- €12 billion for “départements” or 17.2 per cent of their total expenditure, of which €4.3 billion was spent on secondary schools;
- €8.8 billion for “régions” or 32.2 per cent of their total expenditure, of which 6.1 billion was spent on education.

The impact of this investment on national economic growth is therefore guaranteed, particularly

in terms of activity and employment in the building and public works sector.

The funding of municipalities and inter-municipalities have been impacted by three major developments over the past few years:

- While funding allocated by the Government has for a long time been indexed on some of the growth or at worst on inflation, the Government's budget problems prompted it to freeze and now decrease funding, making the conditions for their distribution between local authorities and authorities at the same level even more problematic.
- A sweeping reform of the tax system in 2011 resulted in the abolition of the *tax professionnelle* (business tax) of which the tax bases -in macro-economic terms – were rather dynamic and on which local authorities had the power to determine the rate. The taxes introduced to replace it (in particular the CVAE) offer none or little room for manoeuvre on rates and tax trade-offs put in place are poorly evolutive.
- At the time of the 2007-2009 financial crisis, local authorities faced a credit crunch: the primary lender to public authorities, DEXIA, encountered huge financial problems and the other lending institutions reduced their operations. The *Caisse des dépôts et consignations* was called on to come to the rescue to provide loans required for local funding.

Overall the municipal sector is facing declining funding and is going to have to reconcile its spending more drastically and control it more effectively.

Future prospects

- It is probable that harmonization mechanisms of local taxes (TH, TFB, TFNB, CFE) in place between municipalities located in the same EPCI are going to be expanded. The nagging question of readjustment between 36,000 French municipalities is going to be simplified to a readjustment between 2,000 EPCIs with tax-levying powers.
- The reform of land rental values, calculated in the 1970s, will represent a tough challenge: the levelling of the tax bases will redistribute tax wealth and call for a reform of tax equalization instruments.
- A wider reform of local taxes in the “municipal sector” as well as taxes levied by “départements” and “régions” is regularly called for. The aims sought vary according to the political stakeholders:
- Give local authorities more tax freedom ; and put in place mechanisms for sharing key taxes between central government and local authorities (VAT, income tax, etc.)

Lastly the reform of local authorities and their powers, undertaken within the framework of the decentralization process, will lead to the transfer of funding between the Government and regional authorities, but also between regional authorities themselves. The principle of allowing greater specialization of expertise should result in the disappearance of “cross financing” and co-financing of several regional authorities around a same project. Moreover, with the growing scarcity of financial resources, it will encourage authorities to think more about pooling services and technical expertise, such that their prerogatives are organized and exercised efficiently and coherently but also at the least cost.

29. Reinforcing access to housing finance

The housing sector carries substantial weight in the French economy. It represents 5 per cent of national GDP¹⁴ and employs 1.5 million people. It is split between private construction, financed by the market, and social housing, funded by the Government and local authorities. New construction totalled nearly 350,000 housing units under construction in 2012 while 116,000 social housing units¹⁵ were financed or authorized in the same year.

In France in 2011, there were 33.7 million housing units of which 28 million were primary homes, for a population of nearly 65 million, with 57.7 per cent of homes owner-occupied.

Public financial assistance, totalling 44.9 billion euros in 2011 or just over 2 per cent of national GDP, comes from the Government, regional authorities or the participation of employers in the building programme. In particular, building grants (*aides à la pierre*), which represent over half of financial assistance and were introduced 70 years ago, contribute to financing investment – construction, rehabilitation, renovation – in social housing organizations and natural persons, tenants and home-buyers. Individual assistance (*aides à la personne*), established in 1977, aims to reduce the housing costs for low-income tenants or home-buyers. This accounts for nearly 17 billion of public money.

The French system is by tradition “universalist” and not targeted or residual as in other European countries. Families therefore have access to social housing in respect of income limits, which are quite high. In 2006, 71 per cent of French households were eligible and the income cap for a two-child household and an average home was €40,000. In 2008, this figure rose to 75 per cent. That same year, 35 per cent of households potentially had access to cooperative housing and 80 to 89 per cent to intermediary housing¹⁶.

However, and in spite of these “universalist” policies, the social housing stock is providing a roof to more and more poor and very poor households. Social tenants have lower income than tenants in private housing. Immigrant households occupied 22 per cent of the social housing stock in 2002 while they only represented 9.5 per cent of the population. The proportion of low-income households in the social housing stock has therefore regularly increased over the last few decades. A recent study showed that the income of households occupying social housing was 20 per cent below the approved limit.

In reality, the social housing stock in France is only composed of 4.5 million units, or 17 per cent of the national housing stock, and therefore cannot accommodate all eligible households. This is an average rate in Europe, midway between that in Latin countries, where the rates of individual ownership are typically higher, and Germany and northern European countries (Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden) where this rate can be substantially higher.

The allocation of housing is governed by the triple responsibility of the Prefect, the Government's local representative, which, in certain cases, may delegate this responsibility to the municipality or inter-municipality; the municipality in return of a contribution to the funding of this housing, and the CIL (inter-professional housing councils), bodies in charge of collecting a tax base on employee income and as such represent the interests of employees and their

14 For the housing sector, that means the construction and rehabilitation of housing construction by outside tertiary.

15 This includes the restoration of the supply of social housing demolished under the national urban renewal program

16 OECD Economic Department Working Paper, N°862, French Social Housing in an international context.

employers and which also fund construction. The final decision is made by the adjudicating committee in the social housing body that is authorized to adjust allocations in its housing stock in accordance with its own constraints.

Lastly, the law of 1990, known popularly as the “Loi Besson”, introduced the notion of right to housing, made enforceable by the DALO law in 2007, stipulating that any family exposed to any particular problems accessing housing has the right to receive public aid to allow them to access adequate shelter. The implementation of this policy since 2008 has seen social housing allocated more to low-income households. However, the other initial objectives of fostering social mixing have not yet been attained.

To complement the supply of rental accommodation, the French system offers financial assistance to encourage first-time buyers and stimulate the residential construction market. Zero-interest loans (PTZ) introduced in 2011 have replaced three financial assistance mechanisms previously aimed at home buyers and were designed to simplify the process. A victim of its success, the system was reviewed and restricted in 2013. Zero-interest loans were redirected to new builds, where the prices had shot up, and then re-opened to a limited extent for older housing stock. They were also re-targeted at low-income households, for whom the cost of buying property was prohibitive in this market segment. Consequently, and according to the Crédit Logement/CSA Observatory, under 35s only represented 44.8 per cent of home buyers compared to 52.4 per cent in 2009. This backward surge is also linked to the fact that only 1 in 5 of these young households (20.4 per cent) benefited from a 25-year-or-more mortgage compared to 1 in 3 (31.3 per cent) in 2011.

Social housing estate organizations also contribute to facilitating access to property for their residents by offering the right to buy of their accommodation. The home buyer benefits from a very competitive market price and secure conditions including a buy-back guarantee and relocation guarantee. These sales operations were initiated in 2003 and led to an average of 4,600 housing units being sold each year, which accelerated to an average of 6,000 units sold between 2010 and 2012.

Other mechanisms, mostly based on tax exemptions, aim to encourage French citizens to invest in rental properties, in return for a medium-term rental commitment and capped rents. Such mechanisms have become less advantageous in recent years due to a greater concern regarding cumulative tax burden. Low-income households, whether buyers or tenants, can receive individual financial support that makes them solvent enough to pay their mortgage or rent.

Objectives and challenges

Absence of residential mobility. While social housing stock was introduced after the war as just one step in a household's residential pathway, helping it to find temporary accommodation before entering the private housing market or buying a property, this system no longer works. In fact, the difference in rent between the private and social markets in vulnerable areas is too wide while the economic difficulties encountered by households is preventing them from rapidly climbing the revenue ladder. Households become imprisoned by social housing and the absence of rotation presents problems meeting new demand.

An opaque rental system. Rents in the social housing stock are fixed by a system of rules that are poorly understood by the public and rather independent of the contributive capacities of households and the property market. This system has resulted in a rather broad range of rents being charged, notably contingent on geographic location (Paris being the region with the

highest rents), but above all on the means by which the construction or renovation was financed. Rents vary therefore in accordance with criteria that have nothing to do with the quality of the accommodation or its location in a city.

Difficulties applying the DALO law. In practice, the application of the DALO law (enforceable right to housing) has met with difficulties essentially due to the low availability of social housing units, in areas where pressure on land is high. Thus many households, recognized as priority households by the committees in charge of assessing applications, are not offered social housing or they are but after a long wait. The situation has worsened since 2012, when households that had experienced an abnormally long wait were also designated as priority households.

Fall in the number of home buyers. Despite mortgage interest rates being lowered and conditions for allocating loans being eased, the number of home buyers has fallen since 2013. The unemployment rate and the proportion of unstable jobs partially explain this phenomenon.

High national expenditure on housing. While the financial resources of central and local government are shrinking, the efforts to increase housing expenditure presents a real problem, in particular given that a proportion of this financial assistance is capped and provides income¹⁷ for property or land owners ("ratcheted" market approach, structural adjustments to adapt to new market conditions not having occurred yet).

30. Supporting local economic development

In 2012, in France, the business creation rate was 15.1 per cent (in metropolitan France), all commercial activities combined, excluding agriculture (20.3 per cent in sensitive urban zones) and 17.6 per cent in urban free zones (ZFU), priority regions targeted by the City Policy.

As concerns the priority neighbourhoods of the City Policy, economic development was until recently envisaged through exogenous growth, by attempting to attract businesses through tax incentives (in urban free zones). Today, the approach is more regionalized, richer, and draws from a region's specific resources and its residents. Economic development is based on the region, by adjusting its negative externalities (e.g. transport) and relying on its specific potentialities (e.g. know-how), which requires global, partnership-based action embracing all public policies.

The challenge of local economic development is now to place the neighbourhood in the region's broader economic growth, to re-integrate it into the agglomeration's strategy. It is no longer merely a matter of supporting it in a compensatory way, of "attaching" it to growth that is happening elsewhere.

More generally, all regions and all authorities are able to undertake economic growth action, directly or via parapublic and private instruments (public institutions, SEMs, various stakeholders in employment, training, social and professional integration, etc.). With the growing scarcity of financial resources and opportunities, local authorities are being forced to devise and implement overarching economic growth strategies, beyond their traditional role of planner or funder, which are coherent between the different regional tiers and also uniting employment, integration and education policies.

The City Policy has encountered two major difficulties in its implementation phase:

¹⁷ For example, the APL (personal housing subsidies) on production of student housing, or tax breaks for construction.

- The lack of engagement in the economic development of these neighbourhoods and inadequate harmonization of the different associated public policies. For this reason, the new City Contracts (for the period 2015-2020) will have to further prioritize jobs and economic growth and unite the public policies concerning the neighbourhood within a partnership-based approach involving public, institutional and private stakeholders. Supporting local authorities, the Government has also recently deployed several initiatives to foster economic growth in the priority neighbourhoods: engaging businesses with the “Business and Neighbourhood Charter”, strengthening EPARECA (national public institution for the planning and regeneration of commercial and trade premises), PIA (Forward Investment Programme), functional mixing, etc.
- The poor fit between work opportunities and qualification of residents in struggling neighbourhoods. Forward planning of jobs and skills is encouraged nationally, in order to better anticipate the needs of businesses and point people towards the appropriate training. Conducted for each population centre, it should help the residents of priority neighbourhoods in particular and constitutes an instrument to encourage the re-integration of these populations in the agglomeration's growth.

At the neighbourhood level, the success of local economic growth policies requires all-embracing action that addresses all its potentialities to create a traditional, face-to-face, social and inclusive productive economy. This draws on local resources and thus constitutes a particularly practical lever to drive growth in the priority neighbourhoods. Some initiatives clearly illustrate the conditions for success:

- the appeal of regions to attract foreign capital: an “inclusive” growth model that creates non-transferable jobs and social ties in the regions;
- the dissemination of the PTCE model (regional economic cooperation clusters) that contributes to the current policy of regional equality. In rural areas as in the priority neighbourhoods of the City Policy, these models help stimulate the regions and create non-transferable jobs in different sectors and industries;
- the skills sponsorship programme for SMEs in a given region: the ALIZE network (local inter-enterprise action in business zones) help large employers in the region come together to offer their skilled managers and technicians to SMEs with development projects;
- the development of entrepreneurship in regions via local centres for hosting, guiding and supporting project sponsors;
- support to all economic sectors, notably the circular and social economies.

31. Creating adequate jobs and means of subsistence

In a context of mounting economic and social difficulties, vulnerable regions are more severely exposed to unemployment, in particular in the priority neighbourhoods of the City Policy (24 per cent, double the national rate of unemployment with a 40 per cent rate of inactivity among women and nearly 45 per cent among young people). In 2012, part-time workers accounted for 18 per cent of the workforce, close to the average of other countries in the EU. Almost one-third of part-time workers are so involuntarily, a situation that more frequently concerns women, young people and poorly-educated employees. The share of active workers in employment who

indicate they work part time is higher in sensitive urban zones (ZUS: 21.4 per cent) where women are even more exposed (34.5 per cent compared to the 30.2 per cent national average).

In 2011, in France, 8,279,000 people lived below the poverty line (€977 a month), equal to 14.3 per cent of the population. In sensitive urban zones, this poverty level was 36.5 per cent in 2011 and as much as 51.5 per cent among under 18s (the national average was 19.5 per cent).

In light of this reality and specific enduring obstacles to employment, a number of mechanisms have been put in place. 'Assisted contracts', which have 500,000 beneficiaries nationwide, are deployed in particular in these priority neighbourhoods (especially the 'future jobs' targeted at poorly qualified or unqualified young people offering extra support, 30 per cent of which are targeted at these neighbourhoods).

Employment is the priority of the new City Policy that is committed to fostering stronger mobilization of the Government and the public employment service, local authorities and economic actors: the aim is to halve the gap in the employment rate between the priority neighbourhoods and the rest of the country.

To combat exclusion even further, a new pilot scheme is underway: the Youth Guarantee programme, aimed at young people particularly excluded from job market. It provides extra support and payment of an amount equivalent to the Active Solidarity Income (RSA) during periods where the young person is not in employment or training.

In addition to the difficult economic climate, **the lack of qualifications and poor employability are the main obstacles to employment**, problems that require support and careful monitoring by the public employment service of people experiencing particular difficulty integrating into the workforce. Within this framework, substantive efforts were made with local associations to try and abolish the obstacles to employment, including mentoring, mobility benefits, childcare.

The second difficulty consists of reaching those people who are so far removed from the job market they do not know such schemes even exist. From the reform of the priority areas in the City Policy based on the single criterion of poverty, the specific populations will be more effectively targeted, notably through specific identification actions (mediation) aimed at NEETs (young people not in education, employment or training), of which there are twice as many in priority neighbourhoods.

The priority areas for promoting employment must involve :

- Developing human capital (which is one of the key priorities of the ESF). It aims to increase participation in education and training through a person's life time, notably through actions that aim to reduce the number of young people dropping out of school and gender discrimination and wider access to initial, vocational and higher education of a high standard and designed to develop workers' employability;
- Improving access to employment and longevity: providing financial assistance for setting people up as independent workers or creating businesses, implementing proactive and preventive measures on the job market and modernizing and reinforcing job market institutions;
- Reducing discrimination on the job market based on gender, cultural origins and/or place of residence;
- Developing empowerment and people's capacity to take action which is one of the key priorities of the new City Policy and which is mainly supported by the establishment of citizen councils;

- The creation or taking over of businesses that is underpinned by a spirit of initiative and entrepreneurship above the national average in these neighbourhood. Public authorities can play a facilitating role in this area (promotion of an entrepreneurship culture, offer of guidance and training to project sponsors, support keeping new businesses in operation).

32. Integrating the urban economy in national development policies

Coordination and linkage between housing, urban planning and local economic policies: the National Urban Renewal Programme

The National Urban Renewal Programme (PNRU) has laid the groundwork for unprecedented national efforts to transform neighbourhoods classified as Sensitive Urban Zones (ZUS).

The goal of this programme (2004-2015), placed under the responsibility of a public operator, the National Agency for Urban Renewal (ANRU) is to create “fresh appeal” to rundown regions in terms of housing and urban planning.

By the end of 2013, almost 490 neighbourhoods were in the process of being extensively regenerated, improving the quality of life of nearly 4 million inhabitants (at an overall investment of 45 billion euros for projects subsidized by the ANRU at nearly 26 per cent).

In total this operation renovated 610,000 housing units (demolition, reconstruction, renovation). The building, extension or renovation of public amenities and planning operations also received funding.

The measures taken to foster economic growth included the creation or renovation of commercial and trade premises. The ANRU often carried out these initiatives in association with a specialized public operator, EPARECA (national public institution for the planning and regeneration of commercial and trade premises).

The primary objective of the ANRU's intervention to abolish the rundown image of these neighbourhoods by reducing the stigma attached to housing and changing the urban planning landscape has in large part been achieved. However, its long-term sustainability cannot always be guaranteed:

- the fit between urban supply and needs of the population (allocation of social housing, access to services and jobs, etc.) and their support remains insufficient;
- specific neighbourhood problems need to be treated at the appropriate regional level (travel, accessibility to employment centres, sustainable development);
- while the issue of employment is crucial in these priority neighbourhoods, there are few measures for fostering economic growth in place and those that exist are still not appealing enough to private investors (shift in effects over time);
- there is a lack of operators capable of integrating the different facets of public procurement (social, urban and economic) and translating it into operational terms at the various local and national levels;
- all of these actions mainly rely on public intervention at a time where resources are increasingly restricted.

For these reasons, the new City Contracts will have to produce neighbourhood projects integrated into the rest of the country, granting a bigger place to employment and economic

growth and coordinating all public policies and public and private actors.

The objective is also to shift from a reparative approach and discourse in relation to neighbourhoods to an approach that fosters the emergence of the potential value of the neighbourhoods (attractive location or land, improved public transport, redesigned and safer neighbourhoods).

The regions covered by the City Policy usher in new intervention and innovation strategies in terms of urban economic and regional inclusion practices.

Different objectives can be identified for piloting :

- a governance system supported by better partnerships in view of coordinating different public policies and engaging public and private actors ;
- the establishment of flexible forms of general planning operator (partnership-led urban projects, etc.) that bring together, in the early stages of the project, financial backers, designers and city producers/contractors as well as local residents ;
- financial and regulatory innovations, supported by public budget allocations, which foster long-term financial partnerships (Caisse des Dépôt, public investment bank, etc.) or balanced set-ups with private actors, such as planning partnerships, public-private acquisition of holdings, regional investment companies, etc. ;

In addition to experiments in urban renewal, **other objectives have been identified in the area of the urban economy in relation to regional equality :**

- Ensure all regions have the capacity to build a partnership-led strategy, diversify sources of funding (including public/private, micro credit) and develop projects of varying sizes and scope;
- simplify standards and procedures and harmonize regulations (simplifying access to public aid for businesses, improving their economic environment, more clarity and accessibility);
- encourage growth in struggling areas through project support in these regions (strengthening regional cohesion, regional planning grants, etc.);
- strengthen business clusters that structure industries and support innovative projects and participation in the Forward Investment programme directed at future growth industries (including energy transition) by mobilizing, in a given geographic area, the economic and academic stakeholders around joint development strategies and common projects.

33. Urban economy: challenges and lessons

Economic trends in cities vary with a landscape that reflects their demographic variation. They can act as economic drivers in some regions while in others they are subject to economic and social problems that require particular support at the national level.

Laurent Davezies¹⁸ identified four key regions marked by very different urban characteristics

¹⁸ La crise qui vient, la nouvelle fracture territoriale, Seuil, 2012

which accentuate striking regional inequalities. These differences, arising from the specialization of regions, have always existed in France but the economic crisis exacerbated inequalities that have widened the gaps between regions. These four key regions are :

- a “productive, trading and buoyant France concentrated in the biggest cities where the countries new levers of competition will be forged”, where 36 per cent of the population live;
- a “non-productive, non-trading but buoyant France, located to the west of the Cherbourg-Nice line” “which lives on a combination of tourism, pensions and public wages”, where 44 per cent of the population live;
- a “productive, trading and struggling France, composed of depressed industrial areas, mainly in the northern half of the country” “whose decline seems difficult to curb” where 8 per cent of the population live;
- and lastly a “non-productive, non-trading and struggling France also in the north-east of the country and made up of regions so affected by the industrial decline that they essentially depend on the injection of social income,” home to 12 per cent of the population.

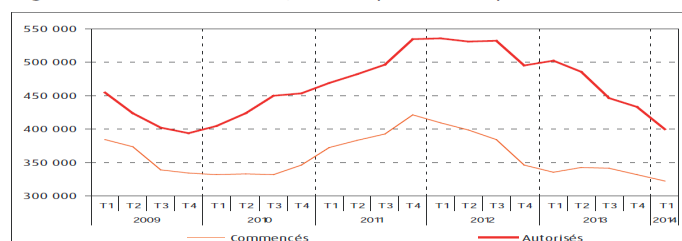
This regional analysis fully justifies the national strategy for supporting local authorities, the key objective of which is to adjust to the scale of local needs. The policies of local authority funding, housing funding and local economy assistance are illustrations of the strategy.

In 2012, local authorities had funds of €129 billion from Government contributions (€28 billion or 21.7 per cent), various sources of income and tax contributions (€75 billion or 5 per cent) and use of debt (€11 billion or 6.6 per cent). The remainder (€11 billion) came from the Government through a partial transfer of VAT and in the form of grants and subsidies aimed at supporting local investment in the region. These sources of aid can be strengthened by subsidies from other local or regional authorities or European funding.

Local authorities hold an important place in the economy thanks to the investment capacity they possess. All combined, they account for €55 billion (70 percent) of public civic investment, almost half assured by municipalities and inter-municipalities, the remainder split between “régions” and “départements”.

Graphique 4 : autorisations et mises en chantier de logements (France entière)

Logements cumulés sur un an, date de prise en compte



Source : SOeS, Sit@del2

The housing sector carries substantial weight in the French economy. It represents 5 per cent of national GDP and employs 1.5 million people. It is split between private construction, financed by the market, and social housing, funded by the Government and local authorities. New

construction totalled just below 500,000 authorized housing units in 2012 while 116,000 social housing units¹¹ were financed or authorized in the same year, including the replacement of social housing demolished in urban regeneration operations.

Public housing assistance represented 2 per cent of national GDP in 2011, or 45 billion euros. This is split between building grants (*aides à la pierre*), which represent over half of financial assistance and contribute to financing investment – construction, rehabilitation, renovation – in social housing organizations and natural persons, tenants and home-buyers. Individual assistance (*aides à la personne*) at 17 billion euros, established in 1977, aims to reduce the housing costs for low-income tenants or home-buyers. The lowering of the cost of housing to promote “decent housing for all”, which also includes land, is a feature of French policy.

In addition to its role supporting the housing sector, the authority also helps to support and reinforce the local economy. Its role is to maintain, develop and revive the local economy from local potentialities, revitalize neighbourhoods in particular difficulty, and promote employment.

Local authorities have specific instruments but the efficacy of their action would be greater if the different development policies, local (urban planning, development of services such as new technologies, transport and mobility, business taxation) and national (initial and permanent education and training) were fully integrated in order to achieve coordinated results.

Between 2004 and 2015, 490 neighbourhoods in difficulty targeted by the Government benefited from renovated or rebuilt housing, the construction or renovation of public amenities, and the creation or regeneration of commercial or trade premises. Structures for housing businesses and providing financial assistance for business creation were also set up.

In these priority neighbourhoods, the unemployment rate is an average of 24 per cent, double that of the rest of France. Action on these neighbourhoods is at the heart of the City Policy whose ambition is to promote real growth that creates economic flows and creates jobs for the benefit of agglomerations in these neighbourhoods. The new challenge is to reintegrate these neighbourhoods in the broader economic development of the region and reintegrate it into the agglomeration's strategy.

To meet the objectives announced to halve the employment rate gap between the priority neighbourhoods and the rest of the country, the Government introduced Assisted Contracts for over 500,000 people at the national level and a new scheme, Youth Guarantee, a programme intended to help young people who are far removed from the job market.

Furthermore, the Government is working more closely with associations to strengthen the role of the social economy. Mentoring, mobility benefits and childcare are targeted in particular.

34. Urban economy – Challenges for the future

Support developing the local economy depends on the complementarity of national and local policies. In addition to the establishment of national policies designed to foster a favourable local climate, the Government has in parallel adopted a policy of regional reform intended to strengthen the capacities and resources of local authorities. In fact, the 36,000 municipalities and 27 “régions”, 22 of which are in metropolitan France, are not big enough to take effective action. This is shown easily by comparing France with other European countries: Spain and Italy each have 8,000 municipalities, Germany has 16 Länder for a population of 82 million.

The regional reform and decentralization policy pursue the following objectives:

- regroup municipalities so that the inter-municipal institutions reach a sufficient size to take on their role of leading and managing the economy. Today, 2,581 inter-municipal

institutions have been created with tax-levying powers. Their responsibility extends to new sectors including urban planning, which has been even more widely devolved to the municipalities by Government delegation, and to the management of social housing loans and the ANAH, which came under national jurisdiction until recent legislative changes introduced in 2014;

- increase the size of regions and, in consequence, their economic clout and position at the European level. A regional reform law was approved on 25 November 2014 by Parliament to reduce the number of French “régions” to 13.

The challenge for France in the years to come will be to pursue its policy of decentralization to attain a good level of subsidiarity by accompanying decentralization with a distribution of responsibilities and transfer of resources needed to reinforce regional policies.

The housing funding policy, currently generous, will also have to undergo reforms to restore social housing as a step in the residential pathway, meet the growing demand for basic social housing and improve the transparency of the social rent system, while simplifying the very complex system of grants.

The biggest challenges of the future will continue to be concentrated in neighbourhoods in difficulty, marked by wage gaps and unacceptable economic isolation at the city level. The challenge needs to be addressed as an opportunity, as the potentialities of these neighbourhoods, presently under used, represent a resource. Surveys have shown that capacity for innovation, creativity and the dynamic attitude of young people living in these neighbourhoods is above the national average.

The real challenge will therefore be for the different tiers of authority to draw together all the conditions to develop and foster this dynamic resource. The keys to success depend on:

- policies planned and developed over the long term. These actions must be developed over time, independently of the terms of political office;

the constitution of a partnership, led by the local authority, between all the actors in the city, above all in the private sector, businesses and banks, and the inhabitants, for whom the initiatives and support will act as catalysts.

VI. Urban services and housing

35. Improving unfit housing

Context

Although in limited quantity in metropolitan France today, the phenomenon of unfit housing represents a national and local public priority in terms of the health and safety of citizens. In France's overseas departments, there has been a long-standing tradition of forming neighbourhoods of varying sizes from spontaneous or informal settlements.

Today, **unfit housing in France is estimated** at 420,000 units (or 1.25 per cent of the total housing stock) based on data concerning potentially unfit private housing¹⁹. The current deployment of ORTHI (unfit housing identification and regeneration tool) across every "département" in metropolitan France and its information centre will provide a more reliable assessment of this stock by 2015.

Following the serious fires that broke out in Paris during the winter of 1997-1998 in extremely rundown buildings, killing occupants, the Solidarity and Urban Renewal Act (SRU) introduced in December 2000 significantly modernized the wording relating to unfit and unsafe housing.

The concept of the **fight against unfit housing**, which covered both problems related to the health and safety of dwellers as well as third parties, and measures against "slum landlords", appeared in 2002 in the public action priorities and in the Government's commitments.

On the back of the SRU Act, a series of legislative measures significantly reinforced the resources of the State and the municipalities in their efforts to combat unfit and dangerous housing: the mobilization act of 25 March 2009 for housing and anti-exclusion provided a legal definition of unfit housing, until then a merely political concept. Unfit housing includes premises and amenities used for shelter and by their nature unsuitable for this use and housing in such poor condition that its dwellers are exposed to clear risks to their health and safety. These measures target the risks that would require public intervention: it therefore excludes lack of comfort and the "decency" component which arise from relations between landlord and tenants.

Recently this 'toolkit' was supplemented by several measures of **the Access to Housing and Urban Planning Reform Act (ALUR) of 24 March 2014** which aims to make existing procedures more efficient by allowing the president of the EPCI (public intermunicipal cooperation organization) to be the sole person in charge of the fight against unfit housing, through the automatic transfer of the mayor's responsibilities (risks, furnished hotels, collective buildings) and the possibility to delegate police powers regarding unfit standards exercised by the Prefect when the President of the EPCI has been delegated with overseeing building grants. The President of the EPCI then has all the available powers at their disposal: right to define the housing policy; incentivizing tools, notably the allocation of subsidies to low-income owner-occupiers, and coercive action through the exercising of special policing powers.

Furthermore, some dishonest buy-to-let landlords rent out unfit housing at high prices to vulnerable people, exploiting their desperation and difficulty accessing housing. In order to curb the activity of "slum landlords", legislation has introduced a new penalty aimed at prohibiting this group of landlords from purchasing property and an administrative penalty for dishonest

¹⁹ statistical indicator from Filocom data crossing in 2011 relating to the quality of the private housing stock (cadastral classification) and occupants of income.

landlords instructing them to carry out works stipulated in police orders. The protection of occupants of unfit or inadequate housing has been reinforced through their relations with their landlords.

As a priority of public action, the Fight against unfit housing also constitutes an important element in the local housing policy. The identification and renovation of unfit housing must be integrated into the content of Community Development Programmes (PLH) (see section 36), which establish a six-year plan for housing actions at the inter-municipality level, and “building grant” delegation agreements. The “unfit housing” component is also mandatory in Departmental Actions Plans for the Shelter and Housing of Vulnerable People (PDALPD).

The deployment of an electronic tool for the identification and renovation of unfit housing (ORTH) underway will help regions set up their own local observatories, mandatory following the “national commitment to housing” law of 2006. ORTH is currently used by 85 “départements”.

Measures aimed at eradicating unfit housing can be incentive-led or coercive. The ANAH (France's national housing agency) which helps home-owners finance improvement works at their property, in particular funds the renovation of unfit housing through work or engineering grants, within the framework of programmed operations, and also intervenes in more extensive operations. In 2013, grants for works were used to renovate 12,150 unfit and severely rundown homes for a total amount of €132 million.

Because incentive-led measures alone are incapable of preventing properties falling into disrepair and initiating the decision to begin works, they are complemented by coercive measures. Within the framework of the special police powers granted to mayors (notably as regards risk), to prefects (notably as regards unfit housing) and soon, pursuant to the ALUR Act, to the president of the inter-municipality, these consist of official powers of a public authority instructing home-owners to carry out works to bring unfit housing to an acceptable standard and, to provide accommodation to the tenants during the works or to rehouse them permanently. In 2012, 2,637 orders were issued by prefects.

A complementary tool, Unfit Housing Reduction (RHI) is an operation, under local public project ownership, designed to eradicate irreparable or dangerous unfit housing in a block, building or group of buildings. Such an operation provides for the necessary acquisitions, renovation work, the rehousing of occupants and their social support. Land arising from the RHI operation must be allocated for housing in view of promoting social mixing. In 2013, €12 million was earmarked for funding the RHI.

In the overseas “départements” (DOM), unfit housing commonly exists as areas of spontaneous or informal settlements, comprising diverse structures and facilities to be used as housing and for commercial and trade use. These buildings are erected by people with no right to ownership of the land, public or private, with or without building permission, land that is not at all or poorly served by basic public transport. The law of 2011 recognizes, within a certain limit, this state of affairs and provides administrative institutions the tools to take action on the owner and find solutions for the residents of these neighbourhoods. The ANAH budget in the fight against rundown housing and the improvement of private housing in the DOM was €9.5 million in 2013.

Challenges for the future

The relatively small amount of quantified results concerning the number of properties potentially concerned reflects the difficulties encountered by local authorities: problems identifying

properties; complex social or property situations to tackle; lack of supply of homes for rehousing families in sensitive zones; difficulty signing off finance plans for works concerning low-income owner-occupiers. But also political problems, a lack of involvement and interest of certain partners, poor information channels between the different departments concerned, reinforcing the sense of impunity felt by dishonest landlords. The 'state of disrepair chart' used by the ANAH concurrently with the 'state of unfitness chart' already used should give operators more visibility on the housing to improve and the level of assistance to allocate.

36. Access to adequate housing

Context

The ambition of the national housing strategy is to give every stratum of the population the means to access adequate housing at an affordable price. Regionalization mechanisms (modulation of rates, maximum prices) adjust financial tools (budget allocations, tax incentives, etc.) more closely to the conditions of the local housing market. They aim above all to concentrate the grants allocated in the most vulnerable zones, to redress the imbalance between housing supply and demand.

Public intermunicipal cooperation organizations (ECPI) are tasked with implementing the national home-building programme. Their role as lead partner in local planning projects has been progressively strengthened over time.

The Community Development Plan (PLH), now established at this level by the EPCIs for a period of six years, has become the strategic programme document for implementing local development policies. Although the Plans are not legally binding, they now include provisions on rights and responsibilities. In 2013, Community Development Plans covered 68% of the French population (45 million inhabitants) and applied to 26% municipalities, figures that are rising.

The Plan serves as a basis for local housing policies (residential new builds and planning region by region, improvement of existing housing, populating, etc.) and also a basis for the possible multi-annual delegation by the Government of the building subsidies used to fund the building of new social housing and improvement of existing housing. For new buildings, these grants, combined with other national grants (tax, subsidized loans) in particular help to lower rents by around 30 per cent compared to the private rental market (and even more in sensitive urban zones). This offers an opportunity for low-income households to access adequate housing. The alternative – unfortunately more popular for many households in vulnerable areas who do not benefit from social housing and where rotation is infrequent – is in fact to rent privately. This then leads to a significantly higher affordability ratio²⁰, a range of housing less suitable to the family profile due to the high price, and even being forced to a residual supply of unfit and dangerous housing (cf. section 35).

In addition to the lack of new social housing, and to a lesser degree the fact that its distribution is not appropriate to needs, the difficulties in accessing adequate housing in France, in particular among low-income people, is a result of a general obstruction in the residential pathway, especially in vulnerable areas. There are many reasons for this obstruction, the main one obviously being an insufficient supply of new housing in France in recent decades. New construction offers accommodation to replace obsolete demolished homes, support the demographic growth and residential migration of the population and also compensate for the

20 The median cost ratio tenants of the private park (1st quartile) is 34% against 20% for tenants of the social housing. It even exceeds 40% to 19% of tenants in the private park.

phenomena related to concentration (size of average household decreasing, surface occupied per person increasing). Today we estimate 500,000 new homes, all types combined, are needed each year for the next decade while actual construction oscillates between 60 and 90 per cent of this target.

The Solidarity and Urban Renewal Act and particularly Article 55 (cf. appendix 6) has become a powerful tool for the construction of social housing in vulnerable areas. It promotes a greater distribution of social housing across a given region for the benefit of the most vulnerable areas. It has also raised awareness among municipalities of the need to provide housing at lower rents to cover the needs of all segments of the population.

Furthermore, while the production of new social housing is proportionally on the agenda (a share which increases with regard to primary homes), the housing market appears today further obstructed by the gradual disappearance of intermediate housing to rent or buy. Institutions invested in this type of housing around 20 years ago although construction of intermediary housing has been practically non-existent since then. This category of housing allows households in social housing with incomes that are higher but not sufficient to enter the free housing market to get on to the property ladder and free up space for lower-income families. With the sharp rise in property prices, the gap has become too wide, which has further reinforced the need for an intermediate stage.

While we wait for this segment of the housing market to be built, in recent years we have observed a slow-down of the annual rate of rotation of tenants in the social housing stock, down from 12.5 to 10 per cent and even less in the most vulnerable areas (6-7 per cent in Ile-de-France). This slow rotation has a consequence on the number of allocations made, which has shot down to the equivalent of more than one year of production of new builds! While some rotations are internal to the social housing stock and so do not afford the possibility of freeing up properties for new households, they do however manage to satisfy the needs of the residents concerned in terms of location, size of property, cost, etc. and are therefore a better fit for these households. In particular, the inhabitants of the neighbourhoods targeted by the Urban Regeneration Programmes, notably demolitions of old properties, are offered rehousing. These operations target neighbourhoods where the average population is poorer and more precarious than those living in social housing or in priority areas (survey carried out by the Social Housing Union). To this end, a poll of their wishes and contributive faculties was taken and suitable proposals made, subject to availability. Several studies showed that, overall, the urban renewal policy led actively for the past decade has in fact allowed for **a better fit between available housing and the needs of rehoused households (with regard to over or under occupation)**, not to mention the quality aspect of housing (recent or new builds identified for most families rehoused).

These Urban Regeneration Programmes are also an opportunity for households to leave social housing and **access the social housing ownership market**, which has developed principally within the neighbourhoods thanks to specific grants and especially the Prêt Social Location-Accession (Social Housing Ownership Loans). These provide support and guarantee home-ownership for low-income families. It has not truly succeeded in attracting inhabitants from other neighbourhoods, but **it has helped low-income households attached to the neighbourhood or municipality to get on the property ladder**.

Objectives and challenge for the future

The disappearance of obsolete but very cheap housing and rising rents and charges of new

builds (built to current regulations and standards) as part of the urban regeneration programme is shrinking the stock of low-cost housing and consigning the most vulnerable households to old public housing estates (as less expensive). A study by the Social Housing Union shows that, in 60 per cent of cases, rent had increased for rehoused families, but this was in part compensated by lower or equal charges.

Long-term housing sustainability is most particularly challenging for vulnerable households. Although greater support measures have been implemented in most cases (e.g. rehousing in a *maîtrise d'œuvre urbaine et sociale* [urban and social work] scheme), the practicalities of intervention by local social services can still be problematic.

37. Sustainable access to drinking water

Context

France generally has abundant water resources thanks to average rainfall of 480 billion cubic metres/year (according to Météo France) and underground water stocks in the region of 2,000 billion cubic metres. France's internal water resources correspond to around 2,800 cubic metres per capita per year.

The quality and quantity of water varies by geographic area in France. In the west and in Brittany in particular, there are problems concerning the quality of water run-off (polluted by pesticides and parasites) which has a direct impact on the natural environment (presence of green algae). The south of France has a warm climate where temperatures have risen continuously over the past 50 years (which could go up further with the effects of global warming) and which has engendered more and more frequent restrictions. In the urbanized areas of large cities, demand can occasionally outstrip the supply of natural water resources within its boundaries and enforce restrictions and important and costly compensation systems. Water report 2009 in France (source MEEDDM, Agence de l'eau, ONEMA).

The quantity of water consumed that is not returned to the natural environment is constantly rising and today represents around 6 billion cubic metres out of 33 billion cubic metres of water consumed in France in XXXX. This consumption is broken down by sector of activity as follows:

- 49 per cent for irrigation;
- 24 per cent for drinking water consumption, with an average of 150 litres per citizen per day;
- 23 per cent for energy production;
- 4 per cent for industry (excluding energy).

The French legislative and regulatory context is consistent with European directives that lay down standards and targets. The key directives concern the treatment of waste water for which a secondary treatment is required before being disposed; the quality of water in aquatic environments (that must meet quality targets by 2015), and the quality of water intended for human consumption.

French water legislation was introduced in 1964 with the first law on water resources and distribution and pollution (Article L.211-1 of the Environmental Code). It set down the framework for managing water by hydrographic basin. The Water Act of 3 January 1992 set down the principles for an inclusive and balanced approach to water management (usage practices, preservation of aquatic ecosystems and wet zones, water recycling, drinking water supply).

This resulted in two planning instruments, the **Water Planning and Management Programme (SDAGE)** that sets out the basic guidelines for a balanced management of water resources in the general interests of the population and compliant with the Water Act for each hydrographic basin, and the **Water Planning and Management Plan (SAGE)** that is a local tool used to manage urban planning. A SAGE is made up of two essential documents: a Sustainable Management and Planning Plan (PAGD) and regulations. The PAGD and its cartographic documents are enforceable by the administration in the broadest sense, including regional authorities. The regulation of the SAGE and its documentation is enforceable by third parties and administrative acts.

This act also made it compulsory for municipalities to create a wastewater treatment programme (decree of 3 June 1994). The most recent laws of 2004 and 2009 integrated the European directives into French legislation. They enforce a performance obligation with regard to the quality of bodies of water for 2015. Cities therefore are required to integrate these targets into the regional coherence documents, the SCOTs, the planning tools, the PLUs and to coordinate them with the SAGEs.

Challenges ahead

In France, the conversion of land to artificial surfaces has increased by over 40 per cent in 20 years and is unfortunately happening four times faster than demographic growth. This level of urbanization therefore has consequences on water that urban planning needs to factor in:

- strain on ecosystems, in particular those in aquatic environments;
- concentration of pollution threatening the balance of the quality of water resources (increased consumption of drinking water and disposed waste water, increased shift to impervious surfaces);
- increased flood risk (changes to waterways, removal of flood basins, use of permeable surfaces for urban development) accentuated by climate change;
- impact on the moisture content of soil (soil drainage) and, on a larger scale, an overall change of the water cycle which already only naturally takes in 25 per cent of precipitation.

Cities are going to have to factor the following objectives in to their development policies

- manage water resources sustainably;
- protect aquatic ecosystems and underground water from pollution.
- supply clean drinking water to the population;
- reduce all types of polluting discharges;
- plan and programme water management;
- involve users.

38. Sustainable access to wastewater treatment

With its second National Wastewater Treatment Plan (for 2012-2018), France prioritized the efficient functioning of its wastewater treatment systems and the works necessary for it to meet the quality of water in the environment. The following principles have been established in France :

- optimize investment in and guarantee the efficient working of wastewater treatment systems in keeping with environmental and regulatory targets;
- promote, for smaller municipalities, the development of efficient, easy-to-maintain and economic agricultural or extensive wastewater treatment systems;
- strongly encourage municipalities to ensure compliance of their systems (performance and facilities) over time (3 per cent of centres have to be renovated each year due to non-compliance);
- be transparent to the general public regarding the performance of wastewater treatment systems (municipal treatment portal).

This national plan has a regional version and one for each overseas department (DOM). Inter-basin cooperation is pursued to fund wastewater treatment programmes in the DOM, adapting this cooperation to the local standard of living and the possibility for the DOMs to receive European funding.

Following the change of Mayotte's status to an ultra-peripheral region²¹, time frames for implementing the European directive on “urban residual water” were negotiated to factor in the specific socio-economic characteristics of the island.

Statistical data in this sector includes the following :

- Wastewater of 15 per cent of housing is treated in non-collective systems, so 5 million home;
- 19,600 agglomerations have wastewater treatment systems and centres;
- 16,200 agglomerations have wastewater treatment systems of under 2,000 PE (population equivalent), representing 83 per cent of agglomerations;
- 76 million PE generated by agglomerations and 97 million PE of purification capacity;
- 300,000 km of network or 43 per cent of agglomerations of over 2,000 PE are in combined or separate sewer systems, which represents 66 per cent population equivalent;
- 5 billion cubic metres of wastewater generated each year.

21 Changing the territorial status of Mayotte in the outermost regions (ORs), on 1 January 2014.

Challenges for the future

In terms of organic pollution, for example, an indicator of urban residual waste water discharges, only 2 to 3 per cent of our 4,800 river measurement points did not meet the environmental quality target.

However in the event of rain, our wastewater treatment systems still release too much untreated water into France's rivers and coastal waters. Areas used for bathing and shellfish farming are often the first sites to suffer from this kind of problem.

39. Access to indigenous domestic energy

Context

France is committed to an ambitious energy consumption reduction policy formalized in the French Energy Policy Guidance Programme (POPE) of 1 July 2005 that laid the groundwork to reduce final energy intensity at **an annual rhythm of 2 per cent by 2015 and 2.5 per cent by 2030**. The future Energy Transition Act (2014) should help drive the country further along the path of reducing final energy consumption.

Energy efficient renovations of homes is one of France's key priorities. France is committed to meeting **the target to lower the energy consumption of buildings by 25 per cent between 2010 and 2030**. This equates to raising a million properties, both new builds and existing stock, to current energy standards every year. The building sector in fact accounts for 40 per cent of final energy consumption. Furthermore, domestic renewable energies is strongly encouraged, notably with the help of local authorities and tax credits, to meet the target of 23 per cent renewable energy in final energy consumption between now and 2020.

Actions

French public authorities have started to gradually redress the balance of the energy efficiency renovation policy in favour of collective housing, from 60 percent individual properties and 40 per cent collective housing today to 50 percent individual properties and 50 percent collective housing by 2030.

This rebalance is supplemented by **the energy efficient renovation of an average 500,000 housing** units a year and a greater penetration of the most energy efficient heating and hot water appliances (heat pumps, thermodynamic or solar power water heating systems, photovoltaic electricity embedded in the building).

France also launched the *Plan de rénovation énergétique de l'habitat* (Housing Energy Efficiency Programme) supported by a network of 450 info-service energy efficiency centres, zero-interest eco-loans, tax breaks for individuals and special training platforms for building professionals. This programme is accompanied by an ambitious policy to reduce electricity consumption of in specific areas, aimed at home appliances (fridges, washing machines, dishwashers, etc.).

More generally, France is also committed to reducing the impact of urbanization on the conversion of land to artificial surfaces through the densification of already urbanized areas.

Future challenges

French households face increasing fuel poverty. A household Fuel Poverty Observatory has been established and surveyed 3.8 million households in France that are facing difficulties in meeting their everyday energy requirements, notably due to inadequate resources (over 10 per cent of their income spent on energy) or the unfit state of their housing or inefficient heating system.

An audit was carried out and emergency solutions recommended, notably with the creation of an “energy credit” and support given by specialist entities (AEME, ANAH) as part of the *Habiter Mieux* (Better Living) programme which entailed the renovation of 300,000 rundown homes over the period 2010-2017, mobilizing the Local Public Energy Management Services that bring together social workers, and a special public subsidy system.

The second challenge facing France concerns **the national innovation and deployment of ambitious construction and renovation projects. In this area, the “Positive Energy and Minimum Carbon Footprint Buildings and Blocks” and “High Performance Buildings and Blocks” Forward Investment Programmes**, backed by ADEME, are providing concrete solutions.

Similarly, the launch of a research call for projects entitled “Towards Responsible Buildings by 2020” will contribute to more sustainable urban spaces.

40. Access to sustainable public transport

Several laws have indicated the need for improved organization of our public transport, notably by adapting them to new needs while limiting their negative effects on public health :

In 1982: *Plans de déplacements urbains* (Urban Travel plans) were formalized for the first time in the Domestic Transport Framework Act (LOTI) ;

In 1996, the Urban Travel Plans were made compulsory with the Law on Air and Rational Use of Energy (LAURE) ;

Finally, in 2000, the Solidarity and Urban Renewal Act (SRU) strengthened the role of the Urban Travel Plans.

The transport system and its regulation influences the urban environment and its social, heritage and cultural values. Consequently, travel is vital to economic life, contributes to social balance and influences quality of life. The sustainable development approach of urban transport aims to limit the urban sprawl of agglomerations and use of cars, which generate greenhouse gases. Also, the reduction and in some cases the termination of investment to build heavy public transport infrastructure by public authorities over the last twenty years or so (with the exception of surface transport such as trams) has provided an opportunity to redesign our transport system.

Urban Travel Plans (PDU)

The obligation to formulate an Urban Travel Plan in France is defined by the following terms in the Transport Code: *“The establishment of an Urban Travel Plan is compulsory for urban transport systems within urban agglomerations of over 100,000 inhabitants as described in the second paragraph of Article L. 221-2 of the Environmental Code.”*

The Urban Transport Plan is a **10-year planning programme** that enforces coordination between all the stakeholders concerned to formulate a comprehensive regional planning and transport plan. It serves as a framework tool for:

- the harmonious and controlled development of a given region;
- the emergence of a common culture regarding urban and inter-municipal travel.

The ambition of the Urban Travel Plan is to ensure a **sustainable balance between the travel needs of local citizens and the protection of the environment and public health**. The measures to put in place concern :

- improving the safety of all travel;
- reducing car traffic (or road traffic);
- developing public transport and promoting economical and more environmentally friendly transport, especially cycling and walking;
- planning and operating networks and road network in agglomerations in view of making them more efficient, notably by sharing them between different modes of transport and prioritizing the implementation of traffic information services;
- organizing parking on roads and in car parks;
- the transportation and delivery of goods by streamlining delivery transportation in agglomerations in order to maintain commercial and trade activities;
- establishing integrated pricing and automatic ticketing system for all forms of transport;
- encouraging businesses and public authorities to create a company travel plan to promote transport among their employees, notably through the use of public transport and car-sharing.

The “Une Voirie pour Tous” (One Road Network for All) programme

- The national “Une Voirie pour Tous” programme, initiated in 2006, was set up to create a common culture for the planning and management of the urban road network that:
- Re-establishes the important place of active transportation (walking, cycling) and opens up the public space to all users;
- Gives special attention to the most vulnerable in society;
- Prioritizes alternative modes of transport over individual motorized transport.

Cross-sectoral, it dovetails urbanization, transport, social and public space considerations. Partnership based, it brings together all actors involved in urban planning in villages, towns, cities or peri-urban areas.

The “Une Voirie pour Tous” meeting days alternate theory (regulatory advances, amenities for cyclists and pedestrians, accessibility) and examples of completed developments presented by elected officials and technicians representing local authorities.

The continuation of the programme is expected in the following areas, as expressed by the partners :

- continue and extend existing actions;
- promote overarching approaches to planning at the local or national level (slower speed limits, development of soft transport, integrated transport networks;
- promote the benefits of these processes in terms of the economy (businesses, regeneration), housing (regeneration, renovation, etc.), health, living environment, social cohesion.

41. Difficulties encountered and lessons learnt

The fight against unfit housing. The Solidarity and Urban Renewal Act (SRU) of December 2000 significantly modernised the wording relating to unfit and insecure housing. Over the past 20 years, the legal and financial base necessary to implement ambitious policy initiatives has been largely put in place.

Nevertheless, implementation remains difficult and represents a long-term work.

Access to adequate housing. Many studies show that urban regeneration has allowed for a better fit between available housing and re-homed families (with regards to over or under-occupation).

There is a danger, however, that higher rents and charges in new housing built during urban regeneration could lead to a decrease in low-cost housing, consigning the most vulnerable households to old public housing estates.

Those developments concerned with access to ownership, have come mostly from within the districts themselves in the form of public housing project ownership and Prêt Social Location-Accession initiatives (Social Housing Ownership Loans). These developments have been made possible by VAT reductions, in concurrence with incentives by the National Agency for Urban Renewal.

However, they have not really been able to attract inhabitants from other areas, but have provided a residential pathway for households of modest means within the municipality.

Sustainable access to drinking water. France is not really faced with major quantitative challenges due to sufficient rainfall and underground water stocks. However, there are qualitative challenges in certain areas where used water run-off impacts the natural environment and, consequently, affect water quality. The legislative and regulatory context now provides a well-structured framework for programmes aimed at protecting drinking water quality. Municipalities bear a large responsibility for this, one which is shared with the agricultural and industrial sectors. In effect, urbanization decisions must contribute to reducing the impact on ecosystems, limit impervious surfaces and manage flood risk.

Sustainable access to wastewater treatment. Collective wastewater treatment in France affects 81 per cent of the population. The remaining 19 per cent mostly affecting municipalities with fewer than 2,000 inhabitants, is treated by bespoke systems. These water treatment centres have very high performance standards. This puts France amongst the best European countries in terms of physicochemical river quality.

Access to indigenous domestic energy. France is committed to an ambitious energy consumption reduction policy, notably through building energy upgrades. The target is to reduce the energy consumption of buildings by 25 per cent between 2010 and 2030. The challenge is to concentrate on the most vulnerable who face fuel poverty. A household Fuel Poverty Observatory has been established and has surveyed 3.8 million households in France who are facing particular difficulties in meeting their everyday energy requirements.

Access to sustainable transport. Public transport is vital to facilitating access to public services and employment, especially for the poorest and most vulnerable sectors of the population who do not own their own transport. Additionally, transportation makes large spatial and energy demands. It represents 27 per cent of France's total greenhouse gas emissions and this figure is constantly increasing.

Roads and parking places occupy significant amounts of space and impact on urban planning to the detriment of pedestrians and local facilities.

42. Future challenges

Tackling unfit housing. Future policy challenges will focus mainly on achieving a level of operational implementation that meets the quantitative challenges identified and that can address emergency situations. This will be best achieved by

- sharing knowledge and intervention capabilities across localities ;
- requiring landlords to meet their responsibilities ;
- improving tenant protection.

Additionally, France's overseas departments require particular attention. Although less significant in the national context, there are certain towns where the situation is under pressure.

Access to adequate housing. Long-term housing sustainability is particularly challenging for vulnerable households. Although greater support measures have been implemented in most cases (e.g. rehousing in a *maîtrise d'œuvre urbaine et sociale* [urban and social work] scheme), the practicalities of intervention by local social services can still be problematic.

France's second Wastewater Treatment Plan 2012-2018 prioritises the efficient functioning of wastewater treatment systems and the work necessary to meet environmental quality targets.

France's stated principles for the coming years focus on developing effective agricultural and extensive wastewater treatment processes that are easy to maintain and economical for small communities to run ; ensuring the consistent performance and facilities of treatment centres; transparency as regards the general public.

Access to indigenous domestic energy. A key priority is thermal housing renovation. The aim is to bring one million residences (both new-build and existing stock) up to energy standards each year.

Domestic renewable energy usage is strongly encouraged, notably with the help of local municipalities and tax credits, to meet the target of 23 per cent renewable energy in Final Energy Consumption between now and 2020.

France must also meet the challenge of innovation and roll-out of ambitious planning projects in the areas of construction and renovation.

Access to sustainable transport. The challenge will be to ensure a balance between residents' transportation needs and environmental protection. A shared town management culture must be established, giving consideration to active travel (walking, cycling) and to alternatives to individual motorised travel.

The Urban Travel Plans (Plans de déplacements urbains or PDU) aim to ensure a sustainable balance.

Future objectives include :

- promoting global approaches to planning on a local or national scale (lowering speed limits, developing 'soft' modes of transport, integrated transport networks) ;
- promoting the economic benefits of these measures (local shops, revitalisation etc.), living space (rehabilitation, renovation etc.), health, quality of life, social cohesion etc.

Annexes

Annex 1. Land policies and implementation tools

An Authority's land policy must meet many objectives :

- Housing needs
- Sustainable town planning and efficient land use
- Preservation of natural and agricultural spaces
- Risk prevention

It must also allow for :

- Purchasing at a controlled and predicted price
- Construction of services and housing in suitable locations.
- Land availability ahead of the project
- Coherence and target setting in its land policy

The property 'toolbox' :

Property Observation : Using fiscal or land-transfer data (primarily notarial data), understanding and observing property markets is indispensable to effective public action. One of the most useful first stages for regional authorities and decentralized departments is to establish lasting property oversight mechanisms to assist them in sustainable land-use and in establishing or advising on land strategies that are based on a real understanding of the area.

Planning : The majority of current planning documents do not give sufficient attention to the land component. The *Plan local d'urbanisme* (Local Development Plan) includes numerous tools (public facilities, reserved areas, plot size, density regulations) that assist in land management. The challenge is to encourage discussion of land management, to develop tools that are integrated with planning initiatives, and to make the Local Development Plans, which are the reference documents for local urban policy, the start and finish points for land policy. This development depends on the quality of the land studies that preceded the Local Development Plans (and Community Development Plans). Integrating land management policies with planning is also a major challenge.

Land planning and management tools : Negotiated purchases, compulsory acquisitions, and pre-emptions (Right of First Refusal, Designated Development Zones) are the main tools. Designated Development Zones (ZAD) were specifically conceived for securities regulation (fund blocking) in areas designated for eventual urban development. Pre-emptions prevent long-term land reserves. Land value evaluation (reference dates) remains a key factor in land management policy.

Public Land Agencies (*Etablissements publics fonciers - EPF*): In addition to the above planning tools, city operators also have the support of the EPF. These institutions assist local authorities in their land or real estate purchases. By providing land management and holding services, their time and resources are freed up for preparing their development project. The local facilities tax levied on the EPF's area of competence is one of the EPF's main financial resources. The EPF can be either central or local, in the latter case resulting from decisions by the EPCI. They can also be regional, such as the one in Mayotte which is currently being set up. There are now 13 central EPF and 23 local EPF.

Annex 2. Understanding urban mobility challenges in the Eco-Districts

What is expected of an Eco-District?

Over the past five years, France has encouraged the development of new, more sustainable, urban areas of integrated land-use projects that factor in social, economic and environmental aspects, along with wider governance and procedures that meet the needs of demographic and economic growth – these areas are known as Eco-Districts.

Eco-Districts deprioritise car use. In line with measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, Eco-Districts projects must reduce motorised vehicle use, or ensure deprioritization of car use. They also aim to reduce the amount of motorized traffic outside the geographical area of the Eco-Neighbourhood. Collective car use, such as car-sharing or co-driving is strongly encouraged to reduce the number of car journeys as much as possible.

For this modal shift to take place, a balance must be found between the reduction in the importance of the car, development of public transport, promotion of soft transport options and parking management.

In this way, Eco-Districts aim to reduce reliance on the private car by prioritizing other means of transport.

The provisions of the cross-party discussions known as the Grenelle Environmental Round Table (*Grenelle de l'environnement*) encourage planning developments that prioritise short-distance travel. The Grenelle guidelines seek to promote alternatives to car usage such as development of public transport and soft transport models in line with town population density, in order to reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. Combating climate change puts the onus on decision-makers and urban planning professionals to use space and energy more sparingly and to place particular emphasis on renewable energy.

Within this context, Eco-Districts are, by their very nature, experimental zones bringing together all such initiatives, in particular those dealing with transportation of people or commodities within the districts themselves, as well as their links with neighbouring districts and the wider area.

What is the current situation regarding urban mobility and travel within Eco-Districts?

Although most of the Eco-Districts are not yet fully implemented, and we cannot make a totally objective assessment of their success, we can, nevertheless, identify strong moves towards transport options other than the private car. Many of the planned measures aim to develop public transport usage, encourage walking and cycling, and implement new modes of transportation such as bike hire, car-sharing, etc.

Although these ideas are not new in themselves, lessons can be learnt from the combination of different measures within one plan. We hope that these lessons will be useful to all professionals, whether within regional authorities, research bodies or Government departments, or other Eco-District and that they can be transposed to other situations to further develop sustainable towns overall.

Some French Eco-District that are suggesting alternatives to car usage are :

- Les Berges du Lac, Ginko (Bordeaux Nord)
- Villeneuve district in Cognin (Chambéry)
- Quartier de l'Union (Roubaix, Tourcoing, Wattrelos)
- Centre 2 Joint Development Zone in Échirolles (Grenoble Sud area)

Other Eco-District working to decrease the importance given to car usage are :

- Bonne Joint Development Zone in Grenoble
- Grand Cœur Joint Development Zone in Nancy
- Adamswiller Expansion Project (Alsace)
- Danube district in Strasbourg
- Andromède District in Blagnac and Beauzelle (Toulouse Nord)

Multimodal transportation approaches closely linked with district planning:

- Opération Gare Confluence (Station Convergence Project) and riverside district in project in l'Île-Saint-Denis (Plaine Commune authority in the Île-de-France department)
- Castellane district in Sathonay-Camp (Lyon Nord)
- Sainte-Marthe Joint Development Zone in Marseille
- "Combes-Jauffret" District in Ramatuelle

Annex 3. The Eco-District Quality Mark

An Eco-District Quality Mark for all : The national “Eco-District” Quality Mark exists to encourage, guarantee and embed the sustainable town concept within French urban planning.



The Eco-District initiative, in operation since 2008, promotes exemplary sustainable planning projects. There was great interest in both project calls in 2009 (160 applications) and 2011 (394 applications) and more than 700 regional authorities have joined the national Eco-District Club since its creation.

In 2013, an “Eco-District” Quality Mark was established to promote environmental change and provide an impetus for new home-building to tackle insufficient existing provision. The aim is to advance from simply recognizing good planning practice in isolation, to inspiring its adoption by others.

The Eco-District in figures

In 2011, the projects that applied for the “Eco-District” quality mark represented over 200,000 housing units, including nearly 66,000 social housing units.

In 2014, these represented:

- 13 projects that had been awarded the quality mark (including overseas territories) at the first session in 2013
- 32 projects in the process of applying for the quality mark (“Engaged in the quality mark process”)
- 110 towns that had signed the “National Eco-District Charter”
- 700 local authorities involved in the “National Eco-District Club”.

The Quality Mark has three aims :

- **to encourage** authorities to develop more integrated and responsible urban plans and to make these Eco-District Projects accessible and visible;
- **to guarantee** the long-term quality of the projects, promote procedural excellence and to demonstrate the quality of French planning practice internationally;
- **to embed** the original projects and qualitative commitments, to encourage towns to sign up to continuous improvement initiatives and to increase these experiences in their areas

A key characteristic of the initiative is the principle of shared governance as the foundation of sustainable development.

The “ Eco-District Grid”, which summarises the work of the National Eco-District Association, outlines twenty commitments divided into four strands: procedures and processes; quality of life and habits; territorial development; and environmental performance/climate change. These commitments are intended as a common framework for each project, which can then be adapted in line with local context and expectations, whilst changing practices overall. These commitments then form the project specifications. These standard objectives, whilst common to

all, are well adapted to the local context, the skills of the implementers and the needs of the local population etc.

The question of funding the Eco-District remains crucial. Increases in construction and land costs require shared finance models to limit the impact on exit prices and to maintain performance objectives. In many Eco-Districts, material and infrastructure initiative costs are shared (at a planning, rather than a construction level). Such resource pooling can, for example, apply to heating and hot water generation, Wi-Fi connections, reclaim and local treatment of rain water and grey water, or parking.

The credibility of the Eco-Districts Quality Mark depends on adhering to the objectives that have been fixed and in achieving the expected results. Because of the difficulty in creating robust and measurable indicators and performance criteria, the *Centre Scientifique et Technique du Bâtiment* (Scientific and Technical Construction Centre) will undertake evaluation of the quality-marked projects, commencing with an initial tranche in 2014.

Annex 4. Eco-Cities and Forward Investment Plans

As of 2010, the "Cities of Tomorrow" Forward Investment Plan (PIA) specifically supports the innovative spatial projects known as "Eco-Cities", that model sustainable urban development in larger French metropolitan areas.

A call for projects resulted in 19 spatial projects being approved in 2009 and 2010, with 146 projects receiving Government funding to date.



The initiative mainly supports technical innovations with major urban impact that are potentially reproducible elsewhere. The complexity of the planned innovations, involvement of financial stakeholders in action plan development and preparedness of certain authorities for the administrative requirements, determine the length of time taken to complete the legal and financial preliminaries, preliminary studies, policy decisions, etc.

The fact that many initiatives are still in the implementation or pilot phase in various areas makes it all the more difficult to review "technical" progress to date. The emphasis on reproducibility, or at least comparability, of steps implemented requires specific evaluation and validation of the initiative's added value.

Forward Investment Plans also provide for other, more sectoral, innovation. For example, ADEME (the French Environment Agency) has many urban sustainability programmes and, additionally, incorporates cross-sectoral support for regional authorities.

In 2014, ANRU, France's National Agency for Urban Regeneration, was entrusted with a new programme dedicated to very high environmental performance and innovation in urban renewal, with the aim of implementing innovative actions concerning environmental and energy transition and in line with the new national programme that it is introducing into vulnerable districts.

These programmes function on by calling for project proposals and have some overlap in their common characteristics as follows:

- voluntary participation by authorities or project sponsors;
- national steering groups backed by a government department or a dedicated lead agency (such as the Deposit and Consignment Office [CDC], ADEME or ANRU) with full stakeholder involvement (regional authorities, business, researchers, etc.);
- a national project selection committee which is supported by a “scientific committee” and expertise provided by government departments and public bodies;
- maintenance of formal/informal good-practice networks

Annex 5. Energy transition for green growth and positive energy regions

The call for “positive energy regions for green growth” projects was launched in September 2014 by Ségolène Royal, Minister for Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy. The regions involved must actively contribute to [the targets set by the Law on Energy Transition for Green Growth](#) of August 2015.

The objective is to accelerate and encourage practical action that could help to reduce the effects of climate change, encourage the reduction in energy needs and develop local renewable energies, as well as facilitating the establishment of green sectors, to create 100,000 jobs in the next three years.

A positive energy region is a region of environmental excellence that has drawn up an action programme. It has set itself objectives in the following areas:

- reduction in the energy consumption of buildings;
- reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from transport;
- more sustainable waste management;
- development of renewable energies;
- conservation of biodiversity;
- environmental education and civic engagement.

1. The candidates

528 applications were received, divided into:

- 116 municipalities including 68 with at least 10,000 inhabitants;
- 235 Public intermunicipal cooperation organizations (ECPI);
- 44 “pays “(local communities) ;
- 19 General Councils;
- 41 Natural Parks, out of the 50 in existence;
- 1 National Park

212 applications were designated winners, 162 were considered as “in progress” and the others will receive a local energy transition agreement.

2. Assistance for the winners

Positive energy regions for green growth

A special energy transition fund, with a budget of 1.5 billion euros over three years. The winners were given a grant of €500,000, within the limit of 80% of eligible expenses.

These subsidies should rapidly fund projects that will be effective in reducing energy consumption in the region, producing renewable energy and engaging citizens. This support will complement the existing sectoral support methods: fiscal aid, subsidies from ADEME and ANAH, budget programmes, local authority loans, purchase prices, etc.

Positive energy regions in progress

The local authorities that were chosen as “positive energy regions in progress” will be invited to meet the teams from the regional working community, to receive technical and financial support to complete their application as part of the regional energy transition agreement. The objective is to support the elected officials to help their local authorities become a “positive energy region for green growth”.

Local energy transition agreements

Several local authorities decided to present a targeted project that contributes to energy transition (an amenity, a renovation, a mobility service, etc.). They will be supported by the Government (Prefecture, Regional Departmental Directorate) to implement their project and access funding. To receive this support, the local authorities will be offered local energy transition agreements signed between the Government, ADEME and the elected officials in the local area.

Annex 6. Community participation

Involving citizens in decision-making: a process underway for several decades

- In 1983 a **public consultation procedure** was introduced to ensure information provision and public participation, and to consider third-party interests. The **public debate** procedure also aims to disseminate information and provide a community voice.
- All projects of more than 300 million Euros must be referred to the independent National Commission for Public Debate, which was established by France's "Barnier Law" on 2 February 1995 and the Local Democracy Law" in 2002.
- Civic engagement is included in the 1999 Framework Law on Land Use Planning and Development from its very first Article and states that communities must be involved in developing and implementing land planning and sustainable development policies and in all ensuing projects.
- The 2000 Solidarity and Urban Renewal Act (SRU) requires statutory public consultation for urban planning documents such as the Urban Development Plans (PLU), Land-Coherence Planning Scheme and the local boundary map.
- The 2002 Vaillant Law on Local Democracy allows community councils to be created in municipalities with more than 80,000 inhabitants and for the appointment of officials with responsibility for one or more districts. This law also brings French legislation into conformity with the principles of the **Aarhus Convention** on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, which was signed by 39 countries, including France, in 1998 and ratified by France in 2002.
- Article 7 of the 2004 **Environmental Charter**, which is appended to the French Constitution, states that "each person has the right, within the conditions and limits defined by law, [...] to participate in any public decision-making that impinges on the environment".
- **The Grenelle 1 and Grenelle 2 Laws of 2009 and 2010** strengthened the formal consultation requirement contained in the Solidarity and Urban Renewal Act's Urban Planning Code for all urban planning documents, Joint Development Zones and planning initiatives impacting on quality of life or economic activity. Inhabitants, community groups and all affected stakeholders must be consulted at every stage of the project planning process.
- The 2014 Access to Housing and Urban Renewal Act (ALUR) has strengthened **the principle of pre-project community participation**, by establishing a consultation mechanism that starts from the preliminary project outline and continues throughout the whole process, for all projects and urban-planning documents that impact on the environment.

- The Law on Town Planning and Urban Cohesion of 21 February 2014 sets out the principle of joint construction of the City policy with its primary beneficiaries: the inhabitants. With this in mind, it provides for the creation of citizen councils which will be involved in the preparation, monitoring of implementation and assessment of the new City contracts (2015-2020).

Examples of community involvement, over and above regulatory requirement, in exemplary urban development projects.

1 / Community involvement in the “Nancy Grand Coeur” Eco-District project

The Greater Nancy area researched the renovation of a public square in consultation with various stakeholders, traders, sociologists and local users (research carried out via panel discussion). A 20-person workshop collated the site’s technical requirements and formulated 15 guidelines, which then influenced the specifications for the project management tender process.

Many of this type of Eco-District project opened community “Eco-District Hubs” to provide information brochures and pamphlets about the project and to answer local residents’ questions. Models, audio-visual materials and other information helped the wider public to understand the project and the future plans.

2 / An urban renewal district

A participation strategy was developed in the Blosne district of Rennes, to help consultation with a maximum number of inhabitants, including those not used to participation processes.

The strategy relied on the following principles :

- Information : via an educational and entertaining 3D virtual internet model
- community planning participation: a creative workshop bringing specialists, users/inhabitants and town planners together for six months, which prepared an analysis and developed area planning proposals; project management workshops for students, professionals and local inhabitants to help people to ‘preview’ new usages and spatial configuration;
- co-implementation of temporary structures: an open-access site involved the local community in imagining and constructing open spaces;
- shared work on land-use: entertaining activities for young people on overarching themes such as cleanliness and biodiversity, call for community projects to develop temporary usages for new open space.

A brochure and video were eventually produced to provide feedback on the plans to the wider community.

Annex 7. Implementing social mixing at local level/the regulatory approach (Article 55 of the Solidarity and Urban Renewal Act)

Feedback on the Solidarity and Urban Renewal Act (SRU, 2000)

Some 2013 national statistics on the provisions of the Solidarity and Urban Renewal Act: out of just over 36,000 municipalities in France, 1,872 were potentially affected by the Act:

- 1,022 municipalities (55 per cent) fell under the provisions of Article 55 (including 56 in the overseas territories);
- 779 municipalities were subject to avoidance levies (including 26 overseas);
- 30.9 million euros of total net avoidance levies have been collected.

“Article 55” provisions in the Solidarity and Urban Renewal Act

Article 55 of the Solidarity and Urban Renewal Act enacted in 2000, aims to promote social mixing, an essential pillar of French housing policy, in all urban areas. It forms part of the public policy response to meeting housing needs, especially of the most vulnerable citizens who have been hit hardest by the economic crisis.

The Act specifies a minimum provision of 20 per cent social housing (measured against main owner-occupier residences) for all municipalities having more than 1,500 inhabitants in the Ile-de-France (Greater Paris) area, or municipalities having more than 3,500 inhabitants elsewhere. The threshold applies to municipalities that form part of greater metropolitan areas or cross-border public authorities of more than 50,000 total inhabitants that also have at least one municipality with more than 15,000 inhabitants. The Act of 18 January 2013 on the Activation of Public Land for Housing and the Reinforcement of Social Housing Provision (*Loi relative à la mobilisation du foncier public en faveur du logement et au renforcement des obligations de production de logement social*) increased this minimum social housing obligation to 25 per cent.

Non-compliant municipalities are subject to three-yearly catch-up obligations as regards social housing (calculated in such a way that the legal target may be achieved by 2025) and must pay an annual financial avoidance levy calculated in accordance with their social housing deficit. This levy can be increased (five-fold) if the three-yearly requirements are not met following an evaluation of the reasons for non-compliance.

Each year, government departments evaluate the application of the legal provisions annually. The evaluations examine discrepancies between the social housing inventories undertaken each year by central government and local municipalities (on 1 January of the year “N-1”). The evaluation also examines the total levies payable by municipalities revealed to be non-compliant as a result of these inventories, payable over the year “N”.

The application of “Article 55” provisions in the Solidarity and Urban Renewal Act since its enactment.

More than ten years after the enactment of the Solidarity and Urban Renewal Act in 2000, the application of Article 55 within the affected municipalities has been a powerful tool for building social housing. Analysis of the initial three periods (2002-2004, 2005-2007, 2008-2010) as well as inventories and levies since the implementation of the Act, show that municipalities are becoming progressively aware of the need to develop social housing and are implementing proactive policies which are contributing towards national legal targets.

The number of municipalities meeting their catch-up targets for the construction of low-cost rental housing has increased steadily since 2002, reaching 63% as of the last available three-year figures²²), demonstrating increasing awareness.

	2002-2004	2005-2007	2008-2010
Nombre de communes soumises au bilan :	728	730	977
Nombre de communes ayant atteint leur objectif :	359	405	613
Nombre de communes n'ayant pas atteint leur objectif :	369	325	364
Taux de communes ayant atteint leur objectif :	49%	55%	63%
Objectif-logements	61 965	61 767	79 567
Logements réalisés ou financés	87 353	95 055	130 537
Taux de réalisation	141%	154%	164%
Nombre de constat de carence	140	239	197

Municipalities' commitment is also demonstrated by an increase in social housing construction, from 87,000 units in 2002-2004 to more than 130,000 units in the period 2008-2010. This means that since 2002, these municipalities have invested in more than 310,000 housing units.

Additionally, the amount of avoidance levy required has been steadily decreasing over the same period. This decrease can be explained by municipalities choosing to invest in spending that is then offset against their levies. The provisions of Article 55 that allow for the charging of levies and the possibility of offsetting some spending against these levies has led municipalities to commit spending in favour of local low-cost rental housing enabling them to reach the legal social housing targets.

The Solidarity and Urban Renewal Act has been instrumental in encouraging municipalities to engage in actions supporting social mixing. Despite this, the proportion of social housing within those municipalities that are subject to Article 55 of the Act has remained relatively static since 2001 and has risen by only one percentage point to reach 14 per cent by 1 January 2012.

One reason for this is the parallel increase in main owner-occupier residences, which means that despite the municipalities' efforts, the percentage of social housing within the overall housing stock, remains unchanged. Although the national trend is towards building more local social housing, improvement is not uniform and some municipalities are not adhering to the catch-up targets that the Act requires.

²² Data on the 2011-2013 triennial assessment are not yet available.

The Act of 18 January 2013 (Activation of Public Land for Housing and the Reinforcement of Social Housing Provision) fixes 2025 as the delivery date by which municipalities must reach the minimum targets for social housing stock. This deadline aims to tackle variations in implementation and encourage insufficiently committed municipalities to guarantee social mixing as appropriate to their size. The Law reinforces the obligations for building low-cost social housing and increases the legal minimum for social housing from 20 to 25 per cent of total housing stock. For those municipalities affected by the Act, this raises their annual catch-up target from 22,000 to 62,000 social housing units and increases penalties for municipalities that default on their three-yearly catch-up targets.

Social mixing initiatives are most important for the most vulnerable households, who are unable to access social housing units in the highest rent bands. The Act now requires those municipalities that are falling short of their catch-up targets to set aside a proportion of low-cost social housing in all large-scale projects for the most vulnerable tenants.

Annex 8. Local planning and living space programmes

Feedback on Community Development Plans (*Programmes locaux de l'habitat* - PLH)

Community Development Plans: a housing policy tool based on inter-agency cooperation

Établissements publics de coopération intercommunale or EPCI (public inter-municipal cooperation organizations) are tasked with implementing the national home-building programme. Their role as lead partner in local planning projects has been progressively strengthened over time.

The French Law on Distribution of Competencies of 7 January 1983 introduced Community Development Plans following local pilot projects. The Plans function as optional documents allowing regional authorities to fix provisional 5-year living space priorities and to take the initiative in implementing these priorities. They also provide a local perspective to decentralised government building subsidy programmes.

Community Development Plans have progressively become the strategic programme document for implementing local development policies and their legal and institutional status has been greatly increased. Although the Plans are not legally binding, they now include provisions on rights and responsibilities. In 2013, Community Development Plans covered 68 per cent of the French population (45 million inhabitants) and applied to 26 per cent municipalities. The number of Community Development Plans has increased three-fold in less than ten years and continues to grow, with 660 in place on 1 January 2014.

However, although the statistics show that regional authorities have largely adopted Community Development Plans, not all EPCI and municipalities which are legally obliged to develop a Plan have yet done so. (Community Development Plans are required by urban districts or areas; metropolitan areas; communities of municipalities that have legal competence over local planning and have more than 30,000 inhabitants with one town having more than 10,000 inhabitants; isolated municipalities of more than 20,000 inhabitants that have legal competence over local planning). No legal sanctions currently exist for agencies not meeting their obligations.

Community Development Plans as the expression of local authority planning

For regional authorities, living space remains a key factor in local development with the same importance as urban planning and displacement. Community Development Plans outline an EPCI or municipality's strategic policy as regards living space for the next 6 years and, as such, is an essential decision-making tool.

To this effect, the Community Development Plan approach provides a framework of planning choices which the regional authority must use to evaluate the housing and accommodation needs of households within the municipality (or zone) according to the local context. The authority must take into account demographic and economic change, residential developments and local business and must, in response to the challenges presented, create an annualised

programme covering the 6-year life of the PLU. This must include classifying housing to be built (low-cost or medium-cost rental, social access, etc.). Targets and actions must be localised and list, municipality-by-municipality, the number and type of housing units to be built, the funding available to achieve these targets and the provisional action plan. Each regional authority is free to choose which combination of tools, actions and activities they use.

Additionally, a Community Development Plan allows a regional authority to:

- coordinate stakeholders and projects within their area, by structuring the local debate and expressing sectoral policies, notably as concerns particular sectors of the population (young people, senior citizens and those with additional needs, travelling communities, etc.) and to take into account other aspects of local planning;
- formalise targets and the conditions for their implementation. These are agreed with the central government (by signing the agreement for delegation of powers to the local authority or inter-agency group in matters concerning living space and housing [see infra, setting SRU Targets, see ad hoc page] in the area of the Community Development Plan) and with the social landlords (by defining the zones within the housing stock where rent increases for more well-off households may or may not apply, whilst taking into account the Plan's objectives according to the social improvement agreements signed with central government and landlords).

Community Development Plans are guidance and planning policy programme documents for the geographical area that they cover. It forms the basis for agreeing a delegation of powers to districts and inter-agency groupings as regards housing and accommodation, particularly in relation to building subsidies. The Government has demonstrated, notably by means of recent legislation, its intention to devolve increasing responsibility to EPCIs as implementers of ambitious local living space policy that meets local demands.

In practice, by 1 January 2013, 14 per cent of the EPCIs (namely 83) that had developed Community Development plans had opted to take on delegated power in these areas. These were primarily the EPCIs in the most populated areas. In this way, Delegation of Powers Agreements covered 55 per cent of low-cost social housing programmes and more than 45 per cent of grants from the National Housing Agency in favour of private stock.

Although building and planning regulations provide the general framework for implementing a Community Development Plan and its linked action plan (requiring a mid-term evaluation and a final report at the end of 6 years) it is important that a functioning document is achieved by adapting its actual content to the local context.

Community Development Plans - consistency with planning documents

Unlike urban planning documents, Community Development Plans are not enforceable against third parties. They remain programme documents. This means that they must be consistent with Urban Development Plans, in particular, as these latter are enforceable against third parties and make provision for operating leverage enabling regional authorities to support their stock development policies and respond to local needs.

It is important, therefore, for there to be consistency between the programming and planning documents, so that these operational levers can be adapted to achieving the programmed

objectives as relates to areas of social mixing; defining plots reserved for low-cost social housing programmes, etc.

Recent legislation, such as the Law on Mobilisation for Housing and the Fight against Exclusion of 25 March 2009, “Grenelle 2” on 10 July 2012 and the Law on Access to Housing and Urban Planning renewed on 24 March 2014), has sought to more closely align Community Development Plans and Urban Development Plans closer by using intercommunity Urban Development Plans overseen by the EPCIs so that Community Development Plan objectives are reflected in urban planning documents, to provide an overarching view of the local housing market and to promote social mixing at the most fundamental level.

Annex 9. Glossary of Abbreviations and Acronyms

	<i>Definition</i>
	Agence nationale pour la cohésion sociale et l'égalité des territoires - (National Agency for Social Cohesion and Regional Equality)
	Agence pour la maîtrise de l'énergie - (Environment and Energy Management Agency)
	Agence française de développement - (French Development Agency)
	Accès au logement et un urbanisme rénové (loi ALUR) - (Access to Housing and Urban Renewal) (ALUR Law)
	Association pour le maintien d'une agriculture paysanne - (Association for the support of traditional agriculture)
	Agence nationale pour l'habitat – (National Housing Agency)
	Agence nationale pour la rénovation urbaine - (National Agency for Urban Regeneration)
	Aire urbaine - (Urban Area)
	Conseil d'architecture, d'urbanisme et de l'environnement - (Architecture, Town planning and Environment Council)
	Caisse des dépôts et consignations - (Deposits and Consignments Fund)
	Centre d'étude et d'expertise sur les risques, l'environnement, la mobilité et l'aménagement - (Centre of Research and Expertise on Risk, Environment, Mobility and Planning)
	Commissariat général à l'égalité des territoires - (General Commission for Regional Equality)
	Cités et gouvernements locaux unis - (Unified Cities and Local Governments)
	Conférence des parties (<i>Conference of parties</i>)
	Droit au logement opposable - (Enforceable right to housing)
	Départements d'outre-mer - (French Overseas Departments)
	Droit de préemption urbain - (Right of first refusal)
	Équivalent habitant - (Population equivalent)
	Etablissement public national d'aménagement et de restructuration des espaces commerciaux et artisanaux - (National Public Body for the Planning and Restructuring of Commercial and Non-Industrial Spaces)
	Etablissement public de coopération intercommunale - (Public intermunicipal cooperation organization)
	Etablissement public foncier - (Public Land Agency)
	Forum français pour la sécurité urbaine
	Gaz à effet de serre - Greenhouse Gas
	Conseil international pour les initiatives écologiques locales - (International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives)
	Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques - (National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies)
	Loi sur l'air et l'utilisation rationnelle de l'énergie - (Law on Air and the Rational Use of Energy)
	Lutte contre l'habitat indigne - (Fight against Unfit Housing)
	Loi d'orientation sur les transports intérieurs - (Framework Law for Domestic Transport)

	<i>Definition</i>
	Loi de modernisation de l'action publique territoriale et d'affirmation des métropoles - (Law on Modernisation of regional public action and establishment of metropolitan areas)
	Périmètres de protection et de mise en valeur des espaces agricoles et naturels périurbains - périurbains (Agricultural and natural land protection perimeters)
	Programmes d'action et de prévention des inondations - (Flood prevention and action programmes)
	Plan climat énergie territorial - (Regional Energy Climate Plan)
	Plan de déplacement urbain - (Urban Travel Plan)
	Partenariat français villes et territoires (National Partnership for Cities and Regions)
	Programme d'investissement d'avenir (Future Investment Plan)
	Programme local de l'habitat (Community Development Plan)
	Plan local d'urbanisme (Urban Development Plan)
	Plan local d'urbanisme intercommunal (Inter-municipal Urban Development Plan)
	Plan national de lutte contre le changement climatique (National Programme to Combat Climate Change)
	Programme et orientation politique énergétique (Energy Policy Programme and Guidance)
	Plan de protection de l'atmosphère
	Plan urbanisme, construction, architecture (Town planning, construction and architecture plan)
	Référentiel pour les villes durables européennes Reference Framework for European Sustainable Cities)
	Région ultrapériphérique (Ultra-peripheral region)
	Schéma d'Aménagement et de Gestion des Eaux (Water Planning and Management Plan)
	Service central d'hydrométéorologie et d'appui à la prévision des inondations (Centre for Hydrometeorology and Flood Forecasting)
	Schéma de cohérence territoriale (Policy Cohesion Scheme)
	Société d'économie mixte (Mixed Investment Company)
	Stratégie nationale de gestion des risques d'inondation (National Flood Risk Management Strategy)
	Service de prévention des crues (Flood Forecasting Services)
	Schémas régionaux de cohérence écologique (Regional Environmental Coherence Schemes)
	Solidarité et renouvellement urbains (Solidarity and Urban Renewal)
	Taxe spéciale d'équipement (Local Facilities Tax)
	Zone d'aménagement concerté (Joint Development Zone)
	Zone d'aménagement différé (Designated Development Zone)
	Zone agricole protégée (Protected Agricultural Zone)
	Zone franche urbaine (Urban Free Zone)
	Zone urbaine sensible (Sensitive Urban Zone)

