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## Introduction

The project aims at exploring both sustainable and quality ways of living between cities and countryside in periurban areas of Nord-Pas-de-Calais in the North region of France.

The project is at a very early stage. The intention is to set an action-research development process based on the idea 'regional acupuncture' or the sustainable transformation of a place through a network of local projects. The challenge of the experimentation is inspired by the metaphor of the traditional acupuncture which is to say to reach a transformation at a systemic level through the activation of a reduced number of local targeted initiatives with a synergetic potential between them (Jégou, 2010).

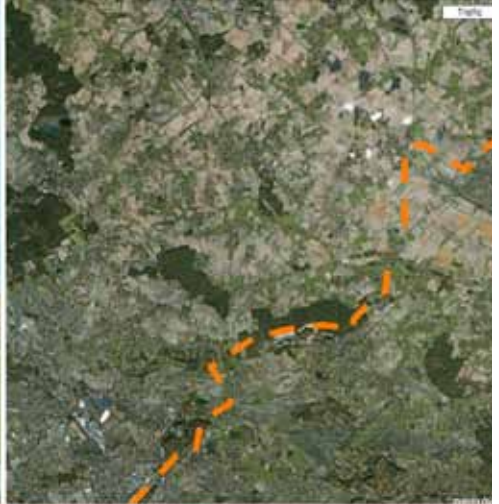
The project originated early 2008 with a collaboration between the Direction of Sustainable Development, Foresight and Assessment<sup>1</sup> (D2PE) of the Regional Council of Nord-Pas-de-Calais with the public innovation laboratory, La 27e Région<sup>2</sup> and in particular with Territoires en Résidences<sup>3</sup>, its programme of real scale innovation camps settled in public institutions in different French regions. La 27e Région in collaboration with the sustainable innovation lab Strategic Design Scenarios<sup>4</sup> are promoting a first experimentation of regional sustainable transformation through an acupuncture of residences. The Nord-Pas-de Calais Region with the help of a local development agency proposed to work on the future of the peri-urban area. This paper will describe the starting process of this project. It will outline the characteristics of the local context where the project starts and describe the first exploratory workshop with a group of students from ENSCI design school in Paris to investigate both possible areas of local projects and transformation strategies for the periurban areas. In conclusion the possible follow-up development in discussion at the moment when this paper is being written will be presented as well as the roles of design-based activities all along the project process.

<sup>1</sup> [www.sigale.nordpasdecals.fr/ACCUEIL/accueil.asp](http://www.sigale.nordpasdecals.fr/ACCUEIL/accueil.asp)

<sup>2</sup> [www.la27eregion.fr](http://www.la27eregion.fr)

<sup>3</sup> <http://territoiresenresidences.wordpress.com>

<sup>4</sup> [www.StrategicDesignScenarios.net](http://www.StrategicDesignScenarios.net)



## Context

The Pévele area between Lille, Douais and Valenciennes is typical of periurban areas and its related problems in the very densely urbanised region of Nord-Pas-de-Calais in the North of France: high request for buying houses; strong urbanisation pressure; villages developing along the roads and construction programmes of groups of small independent houses popping everywhere; destruction of agricultural land; difficulties to maintain social mix and balance between generations; local shops disappearing; strong commuting; heavy transportation traffic... all these phenomena together tend to generate a sort of unsustainable 'dormitory countryside' more and more shifting towards a urban sprawl with social tensions and poor living qualities.

This situation is pointing towards a wide range of challenges for the development of the periurban areas: population is expected to increase of 26% before 2015 turning 250 more hectare of agricultural land into concrete; the average income is rather high and average unemployment low but these economic analysis based on registered residents hides a very high differential between very poor areas inherited from the decline of carbon mining and middle-high incomes commuting from the cities with a very passive presence on the territory; the social dream of former urban population settling in the Pévele is to be able to buy it's own house therefore refuting collective housing and producing low density urbanisation; the mobility relies mainly on car to commute everyday with the cities around where main jobs are, to shop in decentred supermarkets and malls or event to joint the local towns' train stations and its over crowded parking; shops and public services are disappearing from villages and small towns of the Pévele and even when still existing, they are far to reach by foot or bicycle because of the sprawl urbanisation; agriculture has turned to extensive large exploitations completely disconnected form the local market; areas of nature, fields and woods are cut apart by urban barriers suffocating wild life and biodiversity...

Beyond this rather difficult situation, the analysis of Pévele area

◀ Figure 1. Overview of the Pévele region characteristic of the periurban area in the Nord-Pas-de-Calais.

reveals a series of potentials and possible directions of investigation towards improved sustainability and living qualities in these periurban areas. Relocation of ways of living is of course limited because of low employment available in the periurban but still revitalisation of towns and villages centres, better mix between habitat, commercial and service areas and development of local distant / co-working facilities can be achieved. The concerns for the reduction of the average transport intensity seems to push emergence of more dense forms of habitat and a richer mix of populations around public transport infrastructures. The potential of social solidarity is very high starting from the strong community and associative dynamic inherited from former worker fabric till the new emerging shared resources of car-sharing, third places, community gathering places, etc. The strong industrial past leave a large number of unused infrastructures and buildings that begins to be slowly refurbished in multi-purpose creative places mixing cultural infrastructures, social centres with logging or hosting facilities. The cultural dynamic is still very strong with vivid popular festivals and local annual events where for instance the contemporary art scene is developing with unexpected success. Although already lacking of clear zones of nature, the Pévèle landscape and its architectural heritage reveal potentials for local tourism. Part of the active farms slowly involves in organic traditional quality products distributed in local food networks and derived hosting and gastronomy activities.







## Explorative workshop

The workshop organised at the ENSCI Les Ateliers, Paris by Strategic Design Scenarios proposes to explore in vitro how a network of local micro-projects working in synergy, could organise as a sort of acupuncture of the region and generate a systemic transformation towards new and more sustainable ways of living.

The context of the Pévèle and the periurban situation in Nord-Pas-de-Calais in general has been documented carefully in collaboration with the Syndicat Mixte du SCoT di Grand Douaisis<sup>5</sup>, a local development agency and was introduced by a responsible form the D2PE department of the Regional Council.

The workshop activity is in line with design approaches to support social innovation towards new and more sustainable ways of living (Jégou & all 2009 and 2008; Manzini 2009, Mulgan 2006 and 2007, Thakara 2005): Collaborative neighbourhoods; local food networks; alternative mobility; exchange and mutual help platforms; active welfare; multi-services centres; community-based tourism... a large range of examples collected worldwide by the design schools of the DESIS network<sup>6</sup> were discussed to see if and how they could inspire new sustainable living in the region.

How to re-qualify a suburban station, a professional college, a post office or a neighbourhood collective house... the public innovation lab La 27e Région came to debate the question of the design of public institutions and services (Jaouen, 2010; La 27e Région, 2010) so that they also support this transition movement towards sustainability...

<sup>5</sup> [www.scot-douaisis.org](http://www.scot-douaisis.org)

<sup>6</sup> [www.desis-network.org](http://www.desis-network.org)

◀ **Figure 2. Workshop organised at the ENSCI Les Ateliers design school in Paris to explore first in vitro possible developments towards a sustainable and quality living in Nord-Pas-de-Calais periurban areas.**



## Project aims and tentative vision

Each new tentative solution was positioned on a map of the Pévele area, then visualised and discussed... Which potential synergies between these independent projects? How to organise them in a system of distributed innovations in the region? More than 30 solutions have been generated and presented in the shape of short video-sketches.

They organise in 7 strategic points to open the debate on which framework strategies could generate synergies between local initiatives. For each of the 7 points presented below, a tentative description of a framework strategy is proposed referring each time to the different service initiatives –between parenthesis– imagined by the students.

### **Services at the station:**

To facilitate the life of commuters, local train stations as Orchie heading towards larger cities around need to become hubs of services for instance integrating systems of shopping delivery ('free hands'; 'shopping train'); offering services of personalised baggage room ('cloakroom') or stimulating interaction between travellers through information exchange systems ('urban playlist'; 'good news').

### **New social activities:**

Periurban places need to re-invent their own appeal, offering activities and reasons for the residents to live there beyond the attractiveness of the large city nearby for instance creating distant co-working spaces in existing places such as 'school-office' stimulating social life ('the shared canteen'), generating networks of cultural activities ('Fline house') or developing initiatives of disseminated museum ('nomad art').

### **Systems of localised information:**

Periurban areas are characterised by relatively long distances and less density in terms of social and cultural fabric, something that local social networks can improve: they may support identification

◀ Figure 3. The main exploration workshop output were based on more than 30 video-sketches of new services organised in 7 promising strategic points towards social and sustainable transformation of the periurban area.

of cultural events in the area ('Around us') and social initiatives ('My Radio'; networking of social local resources as 'Our kraftmen' and lending of personal equipments as for 'Share your stuff'). Also they may enable the pooling of local knowledge ('Golden books' service or in the local 'Day-to-day library')...

### **Neighbourhood relationships:**

A large part of the population living in periurban areas is working in the city nearby. It is hardly there during the day therefore it is important to support means to reinforce social boundaries for instance through the constitution of local social hubs and connectors ('Neighbourhood collective houses'; 'Landlord of the spot'), the creation of meeting places between neighbours ('Evening canteen'; 'letter kiosk'), the setting of local media ('through there') of citizens mutual help networks ('Public credit') or of logistic neighbourhood services ('Post-plus').

### **Local tourism:**


Putting forward periurban areas means also to rebuild its appeal as a place for local tourism for the cities around for instance refurbishing valuable architectures to provide infrastructures ('Disseminated hotel') or create working spaces in the green ('The anthill'); promoting initiatives of tourism coming from the inhabitants themselves ('The seniors of Douai') or the participative edition of local touristic guides ('co-lonely planet of the Pévele')...

### **Local mobility:**

Promotion of commuting with public transports implies to facilitate a sustainable local mobility towards the local stations through initiatives towards car pooling in Orchie ('co-parking') and for circulation within the periurban area through initiatives of bicycle bus from the police on bike ('accompanying shallows') or facilitating the mobility of the teenagers on the area ('eBus').

### **Short food circuits:**

Agricultural land appears to often in periurban areas as not more than a stock of available land for building. Switching part of the industrial agriculture to short food networks providers means a



great potential to rebuild the relationships between cities and the countryside based for instance on promotion of orchards ('Grow-up') or of direct purchase ('Short circuits').

These more than thirty ideas grouped in seven strategic points are not more than scratching the surface of the periurban questions but all together, they represent a different vision of the daily living in this type of area, they constitute a sort of 'simulation' likely to prompt the social conversation on sustainability in periurban areas between local stakeholders, users and the Region...



## Design role

The Nord-Pas-de-Calais periurban project is at a particular stage of transition for La 27e Région. The Territoires en Résidences programme started in 2008 will conclude at the end of 2010. These 2 years were dedicated to the experimentation of the residences as a new format of innovation for local public institutions. About 15 residences will have been conducted in very different contexts. These multiple experimentations allow to better understand the strengths, limits, conditions of applications, possible improvements, open questions... relating to this new tool. A more detailed presentation and analysis of the residences will be made below. It concludes that residences have a clear potential to activate local contexts, prompting participative innovation, gently hacking established structures, dynamising both the social fabric inside and networking outside, implementing tangible change in the local innovation and projects development process and finally, retrofitting field experience to renovate public action modes and policies.

The new programme about to be launched by La 27e Région to follow Territoires en Résidences and temporarily called (Re)designing the Regions will aim at using the residences as a new format of innovation in the regions. The scale focused by the new programme is larger than the previous one: residences are not anymore the object of investigation to focus on but the means, the main instrument by which to implement transformation at a regional scale.

We will analyse below the different aspects of the role of design in the Nord-Pas-de-Calais periurban project along 7 directions: leading; investigating; facilitating; envisioning; systemizing; enabling; communicating. This project is at the moment when this text is being written, at a very early stage. Only an exploratory workshop has been conducted. But already 2 years of experimentation of residences and we will refer to this experience to extrapolate on the future possible settings and organisation of this Nord-Pas-de-Calais periurban project.





## Design leadership

### A PARTNERSHIP WITH PUBLIC AUTHORITIES...

The genesis of the project is a progressive interplay between the Regional Council of Nord-Pas-de-Calais represented by the Direction of Sustainable Development, Foresight and Assessment (D2PE) and La 27e Région in collaboration with Strategic Design Scenarios. There is no specific leadership in that case but more a mutual stimulation process. Until now La 27e Région and especially its main activity of organising the Territoires en Résidences' programme is based on co-funding (by the ARF Association of French Regions, the Europact European Programme the Caisse des Dépôts public venture capital and the FING think tank). This ensures a partnership posture with each of the regions hosting a residence with possibility to negotiate orientation and keep a freedom space compared to a subcontractor position.

### A MULTIDISCIPLINARY DESIGN-DRIVEN APPROACH...

La 27e Région's activities largely relates on design-based approaches but not only. It is defining as a public innovation lab relating on multi-disciplinary design-driven methodology. Which is to say that the core methodological process and tools are coming from the service design, participative and user-centres design. But other and different approaches with a potential to renew public action are considered such as social entrepreneurs; collective of architects; project-oriented sociology; alternative planning; public art and happening... The result is a different multidisciplinary collaboration according to each different teams of residents but where leadership to ensure project development and delivery relay on a design approach.

### RESIDENCES AS A PROCESS TO RENEW PUBLIC INNOVATION...

The residences and the enthusiasm this innovative approach in public sector is triggering constitute the main 'trust engine' for public authorities to support this initiative and engage with larger projects. Today still, actions in the public area tend to be compartmentalised preventing cross-fertilization between sectors and paradigmatic changes. The methods inherited from management, auditing, consulting and techno-economic innovation tends

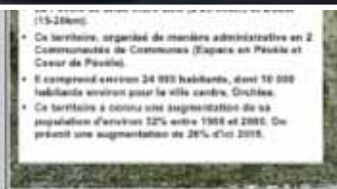
◀ **Figure 4. Compared to classical public action, residences proposed a light, hands-on collaborative action-research approach oriented to quick experimentation and capacity building.**



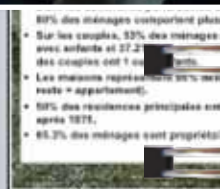
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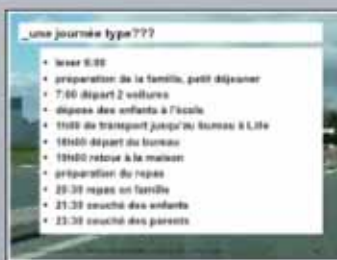
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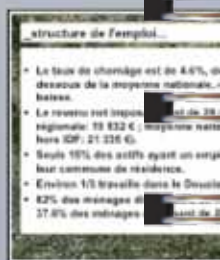
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to demonstrate their inefficiency in front of the increasing complexity and interdependence of environmental, social, economic, cultural and technological issues. Residences appear then as light, hand-on, collaborative action-research approach oriented to quick experimentation, capacity building and progressive dissemination of the innovation process.

### **Investigating**

(the exploration and mapping of existing local social initiatives oriented toward the inspiration of new solutions or systems of solutions...);

A 'SAFARI' IN THE PÉVÈLE REGION...

Logistical constraints with the organisation of the first exploratory workshop at the design school Les Ateliers ENSCI in Paris did not allow a real in-depth field investigation of the Pévèle area in general and of the fabric of social innovations available. Instead, the D2PE department of the Regional Council delegates the staff who is currently managing a Foresight approach on the future of the periurban area conducted by an external consultancy. D2PE develops a macro-understanding the critical challenges of periurban areas in the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region but pointed a local development agency, the Syndicat Mixte du SCoT du Grand Douaisis for more information on the local dynamic of the Pévèle.

As a preparation step for the exploratory workshop, a sort of 'photo safari' in the Pévèle area was organised to quickly get an overview of the key-topics for the future of the Pévèle area and generate the related iconographic support. Concretely, both staff from the D2PE and the local development agency were embarked in a car for a half day visit of the Pévèle area. This investigation setting allow to trigger a rich exchange between their respective macro and micro point of view, capturing photographic evidences directly from the car. The safari allows to quickly generate a synthetic and illustrated overview to brief the group of students participating to the exploratory workshop.

◀ **Figure 5. Quick and light field investigation through a photo safari-like journey in the Pévèle area.**

**GUIDED TOUR**



**WEEK 1**



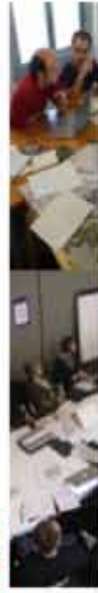
**INTER-RESIDENCE**



**WEEK 2**



**INTER-RESIDENCE**



**WEEK 3**



**INTER-RESIDENCE**



## Facilitating

### RESIDENCES AS IMMERSIONS AND EMERSIONS...

The residences are a succession of sessions deeply rooted in a local context and remote analysis and knowledge building work. They are normally composed of 3 iterations between one-week immersions and 2 weeks emersions over a period of about 4 months. A preparatory phase is made of discussions between La 27e Région, the place hosting the residence and the co-financing region. Also 2 preliminary visits on the field are organised to both define and catalyse the team of residents and to start the collective identification of areas of common interests between all the stakeholders involved. No specific briefing is set but a general process to be followed is proposed in the resident guide (see below under Enabling).

The 1st immersion session is dedicated to participative exploration of the social fabric inside and outside the hosting institution; to map official and implicit relationships and identify the potential of on-going initiatives and projects.

The following emersion period focuses on the digestion of the initial impregnation and socialisation work; on the consolidation of the long term vision emerged from the various interactions;

The 2nd immersion session starts a participative concrete project, small size but supposed to be finished before the end of the residence to demonstrate a first concrete development towards the implementation of the long term vision.

The following emersion period matures a programme of short-medium term projects starting from the already existing initiatives also heading towards the long term vision.

The 3rd immersion session is giving priorities and organises with all the local forces in presence the implementation of the programme of projects.

The final emersion is providing to the dissemination of the lessons learned and to organise a support activity for further projects development and consolidation of the new innovation culture.

The first residence foreseen for the Nord-Pas-de-Calais periurban project would be hosted by the local development agency that took

◀ **Figure 6. Action plan for residences as a succession of immersion co-design sessions and emersion sedimentation periods.**



## Services aux transports publics...



part to the Investigation activities. The Syndicat Mixte du SCoT du Grand Douaisis is a joint resource between 7 Pévèle municipalities. Its task is to negotiate the application of the Schéma de Cohérence Territoriale (SCoT), a scheme for cohesion of the local development agreed by the 7 municipalities. It plays an important role in the regulation of the strong urbanisation pressure threatening periurban areas and in coordinating joint initiative for sustainable development. Its weakness lays in the fact that it evolve only at an institutional level, cut from the user level. Running a residence there would be interesting to both grasp a more comprehensive overview of the periurban challenges, roots the Foresight studies and investigate possible innovation in the tools and procedures used by local development agencies to demonstrate alternative sustainable and quality living in periurban areas and advocate at the interplay between elected politicians, local institutions and the population.

### **Envisioning**

(scenario, proposals, simulation and rapid prototyping are used to stimulate and orientate the design partners and stakeholders in the design process).

#### A BRAINSTORMING OF VIDEO SKETCHES...


The main design exercise and output of the exploration workshop was to generate as many service ideas as possible towards a more sustainable quality of living in the Pévèle area. A selection of promising cases of social and public services innovations were given as starters to stimulate the brainstorming between the students. All tentative services ideas generated were immediately formalised through the realisation of a short video sequence mimicking the interview of a typical user in context. After 3 days of intense work, more than 30 different sequences were generated.

The wrap-up phase of the workshop objective was to integrate all these creative inputs gathered in this video-sketch brainstorming into a coherent vision for the Pévèle area. Service ideas were organised in clusters around 7 strategic points and localised on a map of the Pévèle area: supports for commuters around the local

◀ **Figure 7. Example of possible services to be organised around the local train station in order to support commuting by public transports.**







train station; revitalisation of local farming through a combination of short food circuits and hosting of local tourism; development of local activities and of an information network to enhance social life between inhabitants; etc.

The strategic point generated constitute a first attempt to suggest possible area for the definition of framework projects and stimulate the strategic conversation about it among the different local stakeholders and promoters of sustainable transformation of the periurban areas.

## **Systemizing**

INTER-RESIDENCES CROSS-FERTILISATION SESSIONS...

Residences are based on a succession of sessions of immersion in the context, generating empathy with the inhabitants of the place, kicking-off of collaborative innovation process with them and periods of emersions dedicated to sedimentation of the knowledge acquired, to the elaboration of the projects and to the decision making to orient the whole process.

During the periods of emersion, specific session of discussion and exchange between the different residences in progress have been organised during the first 2 years of experimentation of Territoires en Résidences. These Inter-residences sessions were then very beneficial both to help the residents' team 'to take the head out of water', to take some distance from the local context, to regenerate a strategic level of control of the residences, etc, and to incentive comparisons between the residences, to inspire alternative approaches, to exchange tips and tools, etc. Considering the case of territorial framework projects in particular the value of Inter-residences sessions will address a third and more strategic level of raising synergies at a framework level. In the case of the Nord-Pas-de-Calais project, Inter-residences sessions will play a decisive role at the interplay between the framework project level and of the local projects activated each by a residence: synergies between local projects will be strengthened and consolidate the framework project; new levels of synergies may arise between the different local contexts involved and generate additional facets to the framework project.

◀ **Figure 8. during the emersion periods, Inter-residences sessions allow cross-fertilisation and exchanges and synergies between the different residences.**



#### A SIMPLE DAILY BLOGGING...

The Territoires en Résidences programme favour a simple easy access digital tool and emphasizes the regular publication of narrations. A single shared blog common to all the residences privileged a chronological approach with a daily publication of progress achieved in each residences. More than a discussion platform, this setting is appropriated to broadcast the Territoires en Résidences' programme to a large arena of observing stakeholders. The apparently messy blog mixing posts from all the different residences emphasized the program level and the experimentation of residences as a format beyond the development of each single residence case.

The development of the Nord-Pas-de-Calais framework and local projects may require a more sophisticated collaboration platform although the current simple settings achieved, probably also because of its simplicity, a remarkable level of restitution and retains attention of a very large range of stakeholders from civil servants in the Regional Council to the hosting population in the residences.

#### Enabling

##### THE RESIDENT GUIDEBOOK...

The 2 years of experimentation of Territoires en Résidences programme were thought as an action-research progressive definition of the residences as a tool. The idea of residences as immersive and participative project-oriented sessions is not new. Artists hosted in residences are offered the appropriate conditions to co-develop a new creation more or less in interaction with the hosting place and its inhabitants. Territoires en Résidences programme takes inspiration from the setting of residences of artists for the immersive and collaborative project development posture. But unlike them, the purpose of Territoires en Résidences is to come up with a range of projects in terms of new services, organisations modes, changes in infrastructures... to serve the social and sustainable development of the hosting place. The original methodology of this new type of residences in public institutions was progressively developed through an iterative learning process capitalising on the experiences of the first 5 residences. At this stage, a first toolkit was edited in order to facilitate the sharing of the first ex-

◀ **Figure 9. Resident Guide as a shared toolkit to sediment lessons learned between the residences and to facilitate the orientation of new teams of residents.**



periences and accelerate the briefing of the new residents teams. This toolkit was presented as a Resident Guide based on a series of pages posted online for a shared use and upgrade between all the participants to the Territoires en Résidences programme. Hard copies in forms of a booklet or separate deck of cards to facilitate personalisation of the methodology are given to each new resident teams. The Resident Guide is based on 3 sections: a general overview of a residence defining the approach and main features; a chronological narration of a typical residences process; a toolbox with compulsory tools, favourite and other ones.

### **Communicating**

A VIDEO DEMONSTRATOR TO PROMPT STRATEGIC CONVERSATION...

The final presentation of the workshop outputs is proposed in the form of a virtual visit of what a sustainable periurban area could look like, browsing a map of a typical portion of this area in Nord-Pas-de-Calais where a coherent distribution of the hypothesis of new services are popping-up. Although, each single proposal is still at a very early stage of a simple suggestion, all together, they reach the momentum to outline an alternative perspective for the future of the Pévèle area and reach the status of a 'demonstrator', a virtual simulation of the potential results of framework and local projects.

The request of building a 'demonstrator' came from the preparatory discussions with the local developing agency. The Syndicat Mixte du SCoT du Grand Douaisis is a regulation and organisational infrastructure which is lacking tools to advocate for the feasibility of a different and more sustainable living in periurban area. They are looking for both more creative, inspirational and at the same time concrete and convincing examples of the scheme for cohesion of the local development (SCoT) they represent and manage. Beyond the specific use that local stakeholders may do of such sustainable development oriented supports, the simulation of a framework and related local projects in a realistic and highly visual and communicative way is a promising tool to effectively prompt the stakeholders to take action. A tentative presentation of the changes expected in the situation allows each different player to project into an alternative situation and assess its desirability. A

◀ **Figure 10. A brainstorming of sustainable services resulting into a 'demonstrator' of sustainable and quality living in periurban areas.**

sample of promising ideas indicates possible directions of implementation towards a feasible change. The both realistic and still open form of the demonstrator prompts the social conversation. In the case of the Nord-Pas-de-Calais project, the first demonstrator produced by the exploration workshop allows to start the discussion with the Regional Council towards the concrete deployment of a first set of residences.



## Follow-up perspectives

After this first exploratory stage, a follow-up programme of field and implementation activities and in particular a local development of the Territoires en Résidences programme is discussed between the Regional Council of Nord-Pas-de-Calais, La 27e Région and Strategic Design Scenarios.

The core idea of Territoires en Résidences is inspired from residences of artists hosted for long periods in a particular context from which to generate new projects in collaboration with the populations located there. In the case of Territoires en Résidences, it's a multidisciplinary team that settle for 3 weeks over a period of 4 months in a college, a health care centre, a neighbourhood digital centre, a rural train station or in the regional council administration itself. Their goal is to co-design with local stakeholders a future vision articulated in a set of long-term scenarios and a program of concrete short-medium term actions. Since 2008 and the beginning of the programme, about 15 such residences have been experimented in different need areas, hosting situations and configuration of resident's team. Immersion, it appears, is one way of starting a healthy dialogue and encouraging stakeholders' capacity building, co-elaboration, ongoing progress and rapid prototyping of new public services or services of general interest.

Beyond this localised innovation potential, residences appears as a promising format of activation of local projects to address systemic sustainable transformation at a larger scale (Jégou, Vincent, 2010). Residences relate to an intermediate level of action between micro and macro level: on the one hand, they represent a light process (in time, budget, risk, involvement...) and are strongly localised (rooted locally, based on field work, on participation of people...). On the other hand, they have the critical size to be considered at the regional scale. They acquire the status of 'demonstrator': a concrete, sufficiently developed experiment both with enough tangible results and a critical quantity of people involved to represent a significant step forward: residences are the delicate 'needles' to activate the local acupuncture!

Starting from this core idea and experience, the following issues are considered to build a coherent action plan.

### **Framework perspectives from the regional future studies**


The D2PE Direction of Sustainable Development, Foresight and Assessment is the first interlocutor at the Regional Council and its main activity is to develop medium-long term investigation on critical questions for the future of the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region. Such a long-term study on the future of periurban areas has been launched in 2009 in collaboration with the firm RCT<sup>7</sup>, an external Foresight consultant. This type of investigation is likely to build macro-vision of the region, point key area for actions in this complex system and identify particular leverage variables on which to act to fluidify a critical perspective or to get a synergic effect within the interplay of local stakeholders. If we may come back to our metaphor of acupuncture, regional future research is likely to identify the meridian of vivid energy crossing the region, point along them on local initiatives with a strategic potential and indicate the possible mechanism that may activate this vivid potential.

### **A network of residences in synergy**

Whereas regional future research is able to show potential strategies at a framework level, it is not likely to connect with the field, whether to capture in-depth local specific knowledge as a user-centred ethnographic-like approach would do or, and even less, to activate and support local initiatives. A programme of 10 co-ordinated residences per year is foreseen to tackle with this issue of field experimentation and implementation. The progressive results of the ongoing study on future of periurban areas will be brought together with the seven strategic points proposed during the creative exploration workshop in order to identify promising residences and draft directions to orient them. The scheme of a residence as experienced since now within the Territoires en Résidences programme will allow to explore promising interactions between the macro perspectives and local context: does the vision suggested by the regional future studies represents a meaningful orientation from the local context hosting the residence? Can the population there with the help of the residents identify a series of projects

<sup>7</sup> [www.rct-territoires.com](http://www.rct-territoires.com)





linking bottom-up existing initiatives with top-down regional opportunities? What can be inferred from this local experience and what are the lessons learned to reshape the vision developed through the future studies? Such iterative loops between macro and micro perspectives along the residence should both catalyse the local development of local projects in synergy with a more rooted framework vision. More residences will be held in the same or similar hosting contexts to allow comparison and cross-fertilisation. More visions will be explored through residences localised in closed areas in order to foster possible synergies between them and build a network of experimentations.

### **Embedded public innovation lab in the Region**

The D2PE is not the only department of the Regional Council to take part in this development process. Other sectors covered by the regional authority such as the Direction of Colleges showed their interest. This involvement from the perspective of different need areas will both enrich the possible synergies explored at a local level through the residences and promote transversal collaboration within the services of the regional authorities. In order to facilitate these cross fertilisations, a spin-off of La 27e Région will be developed within the Regional Council. This local embedded public innovation lab will be initially embodied by a single staff detached from La 27e Région and installed for a one-year period in the Regional Council. His task will be to programme and co-ordinate the different residences, to foster the involvement of the different Directions and Departments of the regional administration, to enlarge the focus of the process and engage with more stakeholders within the local administration and finally to sediment this process of innovation through an acupuncture of residences within the normal procedure of the Region.



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