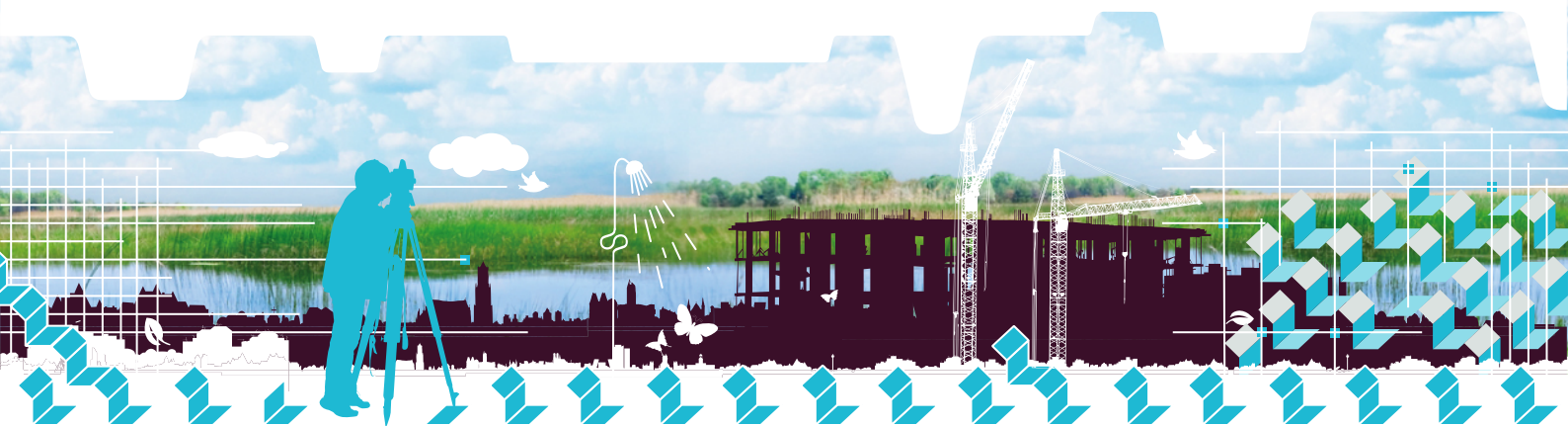# Urban Regions in the Delta

Case Study Paris Europa City, France: Implementation of a Large Private Project within the Triangle de Gonesse

Camille Gardesse

NWO
Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek

CONTEXT REPORT 3

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CONTEXT

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Acknowledgements

Contents

Executive Summary

This Paris case study concerns the analysis of the implementation of Europa City, a private sector led project, within the 'Triangle de Gonesse'; an 280 hectare or so greenfield public urban economic development project located in the Northern sector of the Paris Region (Gonesse municipality).

This project is now being marketed as a part of Grand Paris Transport project, designed to support territorial competitiveness objectives for in a global competitiveness. There are environmental constraints within the site including the trade-off between the preservation of agricultural land with other productive uses and the noise contours of both Paris Charles de Gaulle and Paris Le Bourget airports which don't allow any housing to be built.

Against this backdrop, a big commercial, cultural and leisure project is planed: Europa City, developed by the group Auchan (through its subsidiary Immochan). At the same time, a 'Triangle of Gonesse action group' has been formed by several civil society organisation to mobilise against the proposed changes of use. Europa City is the most controversial element of the Triangle de Gonesse development, but the viability of the overall project is still matter of discussion.

In this context of private investment in a development project promoted by public actors with a metropolitan dimension for Paris and from which the environmental issues are defended by actors of the civil society, the questions of governance and negotiations between the three types of actors of the city involved (with different or even divergent interests) are particularly relevant.

The irreconcilability of these actors has led to a great deal of uncertainty surrounding the project In this framework,law, procedures and regulations are crucial not just for public sector actors but also for private sector entities. These statutory elements are understood both as conditions for the realisation of the projects and in this case as 'markers' of compromise.

Thus, the construction of Europa City within the Triangle de Gonesse provides a relevant context for research into questions of governance, interactive processes and negotiation between the three types of urban actors involved : public, private and civil society actors. Interacting at different administrative levels.

- How is the governance of a territorial development project managed when it involves groupings that have different or even divergent interests?
- Does the context of this project (private-sector investment in a public-sector project with a local and metropolitan dimension, opposed by civil society bodies representing environmental interests) provides an opportunity for negotiation and debate?

– Do the regulations applicable to the project (in terms of territorial and sustainable development) constitute a constraint or a springboard for the different protagonists?

Project constructed through the convergence of differing interests

Even though the interests of the local players may initially have differed from those of central government, they ultimately converge within the framework of a project whose purposes seem simultaneously local and metropolitan. Indeed, we can see the gradual convergence of the interests of the different public players in the history of the introduction of Europa City into the Triangle de Gonesse project. In fact, the private scheme became an opportunity to legitimise the Triangle de Gonesse project, and also a good way to secure resources for the Grand Paris Metro station.

Regulations used as political instruments

Although the interests of local and central government actors converge in the private scheme, it is also an object of dissension with other public actors, notably actors at the regional scale. Indeed, a closer look reveals that there are tensions regarding this project between the various levels of public authority. Against this background, the regulatory documents (especially the Regional Masterplan, SDRIF) appear to provide a basis of negotiation between public actors, but also between public and private actors.

Lack of governance in the territory: the role of the Private Actor

All the actors complain of a 'lack of governance in this territory' and a problem of 'political backing', due to the fragmentation of the actor's system. The various actors stress the difficulty of "acting" in circumstances where there is a serious fragmentation of interests between the public and private forces in the territory. Arguably the Private-sector actor is deliberately contributing to the emergence of new modes of governance (adjacent to the state) as through ther involvement the Europa City project has prompted a process of interchange, partnership and collaboration.

Indeed, it might be supposed that the lack of local governance – and not just the opportunity to be involved in designing the project – is a good reason for public actors to participate in the process organised by Immochan. It gives them a space for dialogue, where private sector players can find a place on this fragmented playing field.

Ad'Hoc governance: a strategic alliance confined to the project

As a result of the convergence of interests, the public actors of urban development and the private owners of Europa City worked together. In this framework, the private-sector company become the coordinator of a developing partnership process with public actors in the territory. Nevertheless, this collaboration seems to be only temporary, as part of the strategic alliances around (and confined to) the project. This situation leads to an 'ad'hoc governance', informal but also short-lasting "fixes" rather than sustainable solutions.

Introduction

As part of the CONTEXT research program, this report presents the Paris case study conducted at Laboratoire Techniques, Territoires, Sociétés (Latts)[1] under the supervision of Christian Lefèvre. The subject of this case study is the Europa City project and its implementation within the Triangle de Gonesse development project.

This project is planned within Plaine de France, a sub-regional development area located in the northern part of the Paris region (12,012 km², 11.9 million inhabitants in 2011). Triangle de Gonesse is located some 25 km from the centre of Paris and just south of Roissy, between Paris-Charles de Gaulle and Le Bourget airports (see below, geographical context). Situated on land belonging to Gonesse municipality (26.260 inhabitants), it is also on the border between the Val d'Oise and Seine Saint-Denis Departments. This location, though apparently central, is in reality fairly isolated, since Triangle de Gonesse is trapped between the two airports to the North and South and cut off from the rest of the territory to the East by the A1 motorway, with few connections Westward to the town of Gonesse. At present, this is an exclusively agricultural area.

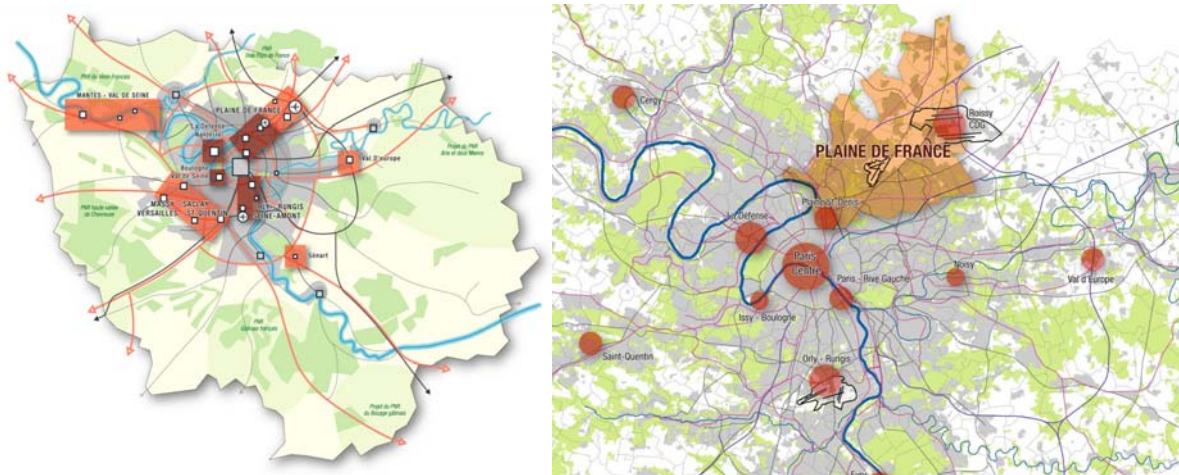*Fig. 1. Geographical situation of Plaine de France. Source: IAU IDF, 2007*
Key to Map 1: The Paris Île-de-France Region large development areas (red = innercity redevelopment; orange = fringe development)
Key to Map 2: Geographical situation of the Plaine de France and EPA Plaine de France perimeter (2007)

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[1] Laboratoire Techniques, Territoires, Sociétés, ENPC – CNRS – Université Paris Est Marne la Vallée

The Triangle de Gonesse Project is a 280 ha or so urban complex within a area of nearly 1000 hectare mainly used today for agriculture. It is being planed for largely economic purposes, more specifically to promote economic development through the creation of jobs and public transport and to further boost existing economic activity in Paris airport corridor. At its heart are transport facilities, particularly *le barreau de Gonesse* (the Gonesse rail link). The development project is now related to the Grand Paris Transport programme, and entails the construction of a Grand Paris Express metro station (part of the Société de Grand Paris' automatic metro project). This is why the Société de Grand Paris (SGP – a public company created in 2010 by the Government to develop the Grand Paris Express transport scheme) and the Grand Paris State Secretary are both involved in the project.

The Triangle de Gonesse project has been initiated by the Etablissement Public d'Aménagement de la Plaine de France, a State-led multi-actor development corporation, as part of the wider terri-torial regeneration of a 300 km² strategic territory between Paris and the Paris-CDG Airport. The Triangle de Gonesse projects is designed by EPA as an high-end sustainable development of 1,8 million m² (2030), including an international business district, a creative park (70 ha) and the Europa City project.

Indeed, within this scheme, there are plans for a major commercial, cultural and leisure hub, Eu-ropa City, which is expected to play a structuring role in the Triangle de Gonesse complex. The Auchan Group through its subsidiary Immochan is developing it. This 80 ha project would include approximately 170,000 m² of leisure activities, 50,000 m² of cultural facilities, 230,000 m² of offices and services together with hotels and associated amenities. The total investment is esti-mated at €1.7 billion. Europa City is expected to have both a metropolitan and international di-mension. It has been awarded the 'Grand Paris label', created to identify some of the iconic Grand Paris projects. According to the Auchan Group, the construction of this project now depends on the finalisation of the agreements with the public partners, on the operational commitment to develop the Triangle de Gonesse and above all, on the implementation of the public transport infrastructure.

While the vision plans of the project were being drawn up, a 'Triangle de Gonesse action group' (*Collectif du Triangle de Gonesse*) was formed in March 2011 to oppose the Triangle de Gonesse Project and particularly Europa City. This action group was created by 16 environmental and civil society bodies (from Val d'Oise and Seine Saint-Denis). It argues that the Europa City project will be located in agricultural land, and demands that the area be used exclusively for the purposes of agriculture and food production in Île-de-France and the creation of jobs in the community.

Neither the Europa City nor the Triangle de Gonesse projects have yet fully reached the opera-tional phase. Since 2006, there have been numerous studies, culminating in 2010 in a reference plan for the development of the Triangle and in 2012 in fairly detailed programmatic proposals for Europa City.[2] For the moment, however, this is still only a preoperational stage, which has prompted some to say that the project is currently an 'abstraction' or exists only 'on paper'. In fact, the development of this area is the outcome of a long process of urban planning that began in the 1990s.

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[2] The clients of Europa City will shortly announce the winner of the international urban and architectural design competition launched in 2012.
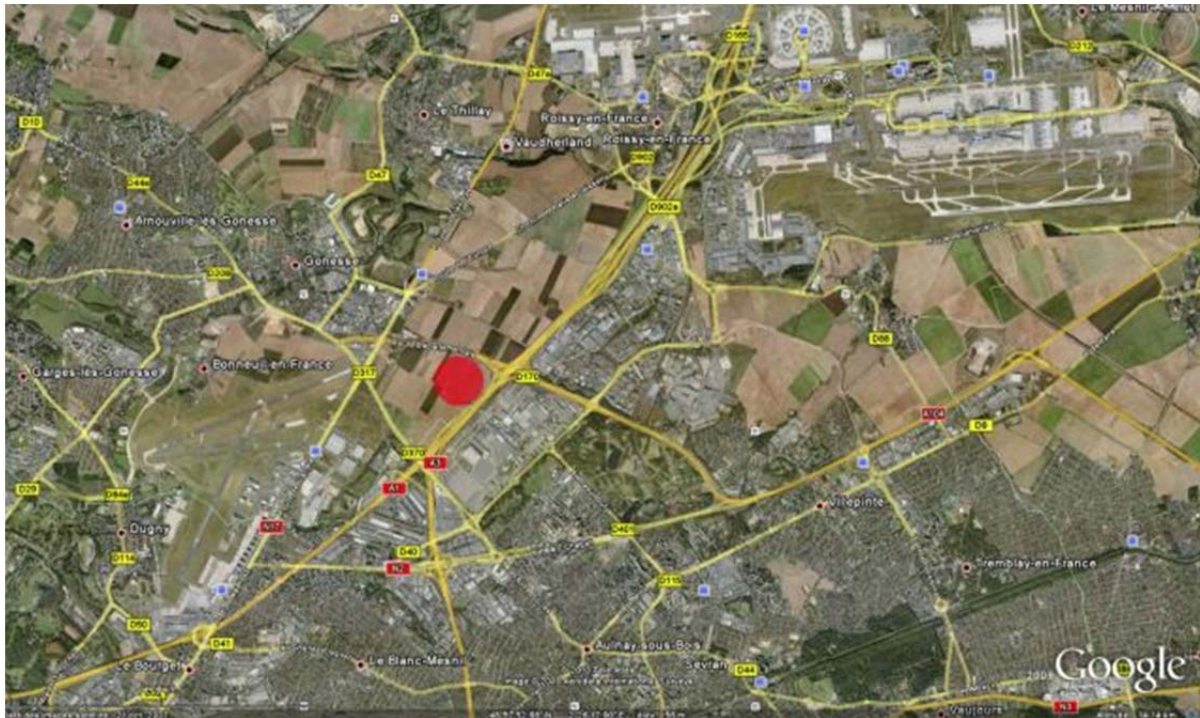
Fig. 2 Europa City location within Triangle de Gonesse. Source : Google – Lecroart 2013

The stakes of the project are both political and social, since the Plaine de France region suffers from a deficit of jobs and transport. This area is therefore, as the local actors often stress, something of a paradox: economically highly dynamic because of its proximity to Roissy airport, but one of the territories of Île-de-France with the biggest social problems. Indeed, the area is badly in need of economic development and the Europa City scheme is founded on the argument, put forward by Immochan, that it will attract jobs into the area. The political actors recognise the appeal in this claim, but nevertheless do not agree amongst themselves.

In addition, the environmental stakes in the area are also high, with ecological groups mobilising to oppose the Europa City project, not only on the grounds that it destroys agricultural land, but also that airports and roads will increase atmospheric and noise pollution. The questions raised by the Triangle de Gonesse in the Plaine de France "reveal the tensions – perhaps the potential contradictions – between a large-scale development strategy and other environmental and spatial planning issues[3]"

From the perspective of Paul Lecroart, our partner at the Institut d'Aménagement et d'Urbanisme de la Région Ile-de-France (IAU idF), "the main problem raised by the Triangle de Gonesse project is about the tensions or perhaps possible contradictions between a major development strategy and other environmental and planning issues. According to him, within the Triangle de Gonesse, the current Europa City Project questions the capacity of a private-led flagship project to fit the needs of economic, social and environmental development of one of the most socially vulnerable and the most fragmented territory of the Paris region[4]."

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[3] C.F. LECROART (P.). The Triangle de Gonesse Project in the Plaine de France, Paris case study: Case definition and study orientation for Context Project, IAU IDF, 2012.
[4] C.F. LECROART (P.). The Triangle de Gonesse Project in the Plaine de France, Paris case study: Case definition and study orientation for Context Project, IAU IDF, 2012.

These different factors mean that the construction of Europa City within the Triangle de Gonesse provides a relevant context for research into questions of governance,[5] interactive processes and negotiation between the three types of urban actors involved (public[6], private and civil society actors).

1 How is the governance of a territorial development project managed when it involves group-ings that have different or even divergent interests?
2 Does the context of this project (private-sector investment in a public-sector project with a local and metropolitan dimension, opposed by civil society bodies representing environmental interests) provide an opportunity for negotiation and debate?
3 Do the regulations applicable to the project (in terms of territorial and sustainable develop-ment) constitute a constraint or a springboard for the different protagonists?

On the basis of these questions, we can formulate a number of working hypotheses:

The different stakeholders have all advanced principles and objectives for the development of the area and for *sustainability*, which potentially form a basis for discussion and criteria for an under-standing of the project. However, they have neither the same function nor the same meaning for all the actors, and are not employed in the same way. *In particular, they can conflict with the development of the project.*

There might indeed seem to be a contradiction between the construction of a major shopping and recreational amenity and the objective of sustainability (in particular as Europa City encroaches on farmland and will undoubtedly generate more traffic). Nevertheless, aspirations for sustainable development (in particular public transport) could form a basis for dialogue and negotiation be-tween the actors. The political actors, in particular, use this argument as a means of persuading civil society representatives of the legitimacy of the Europa City project. If there are indeed con-tradictions between the project's sustainability goals and the regulations, they can be understood in terms of the interests involved and the project's unavoidable development constraints. The need to negotiate with the private-sector participants in the scheme and to accommodate the needs of private investors can make it harder to meet the stated objectives and to apply the rules. At the same time, sustainability requirements and aspirations can be used as weapons by activist bodies in their critique of the contradictions of the project. However, the evidence sug-gests that these civil society groups are largely left out of the equation.

The process of decentralisation in France led to a fragmentation of powers, through a "multiplica-tion of centres of power and a shift in the representation of systems of interest towards greater pluralism (public and private)" (Jouve & Lefèvre, 1999, p. 836, author's translation). With wider interests being represented, there is a greater need for negotiation, transparency and coordina-tion, yet the decision-making processes remain highly opaque and there is strong resistance to civil society involvement. If we consider the modes of coordination between actors and the possi-bilities of collective action, negotiation seems essential. However, this supposes equality between

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[5] The notion of governance raises the question of the casting and strategies of the actors, the new links and forms of regulation between the political, economic and social dimensions. For Gilles Novarina, governance is more precisely a "process whereby actors seek agreements" (Novarina, 1997, p. 216, author's translation).
[6] Several actors of public authority are involved: local (municipal and inter-municipal authorities), regional and central government.

the stakeholders (Faure et al., 1998), a supposition that is questionable in the context of historical French practice and a multiplicity of actors (Novarina, 1997). However, the contract development process says something about how decentralisation is perceived in France, with the assumption that the different parties are *de facto* equals. In fact, the hierarchical structures that exist can in reality produce a variety of outcomes. This situation demands an analysis of the resources available to the various actors (their understanding of the decentralisation process, their financial means, their technical expertise). It also demands close attention to the mechanisms whereby priorities develop and change as the different stakeholders interact.

The governance of territorial development depends not only on the leadership of the public actors, but on the balances of power between them and the other interested parties. Moreover, the public actors themselves are not a homogeneous entity; there can also be a balance of power between them.

It can be assumed that the nature of governance at both regional and national scale has an impact on the modes of collaboration that emerge. That is why it would seem essential to look more deeply into the legal and politico-institutional context, as well as into the emergence of new forms of dialogue (with private actors, civil society, inhabitants). In other words, whilst the framework established at central government level is broadly conducive to the formation of partnerships, there is also a local component to that same framework. This means that we need to explore the terms of the partnerships, the contracts, and also the allocation of resources. It can reasonably be assumed that the possibility of coordination between the actors depends on their ability to structure reliable relationships and to work interdependently (Bouvier, 2007). How effective this process is will depend on the balance of power at local level.

In the context of Île-de-France, horizontal interactions (between regional public actors, between these public actors and private actors, between public actors and civil society representatives, etc.) can be much more complex than vertical interactions (between central and local level). The division of roles in Île-de-France is tricky, as multiple authorities have overlapping prerogatives, and the competition and interface between them is extreme (Béhar & Estebe, 1999). This is further complicated by the fact that there are no formal hierarchical relationships between the different levels. On the other hand, the specific characteristics of the Île-de-France region might precisely contribute to greater negotiation between the actors, particularly on regulations (see characteristics of the SDRIF – Regional Masterplan *infra*).

Methodology

This report is based on a survey carried out from September to December 2012. The survey entailed the analysis of official documents relating to the Triangle de Gonesse and Europa City Project: programmes, studies, minutes of technical and steering committee meetings, but also public information documents (see below, Sources). Seventeen semi-directive interviews were conducted with a range of people involved in the projects, political leaders (the project owners, steering committee members), technical specialists (mainly from the public development agency – EPA) and heads of civil society groups. Five experts, members of the Institut d'Aménagement et d'Urbanisme de la Région Ile-de-France (Île-de-France Urban Planning and Development Agency) or other research institutes were also interviewed (see below, Sources). A thematic analysis and a

discourse analysis were carried out on these qualitative interviews. In addition, 5 events were observed in order to collect information on the projects and to familiarise ourselves with the public positions espoused by certain of the parties involved (lectures, political meetings, Activists Forum – see below, Sources).

Geography and history (context)

Geographical and planning context

Plaine de France is seen by the French government as a priority development sector of the Grand Paris Region. Its population consists largely of young, low-income and immigrant groups. Unemployment is high (14%) and education levels fairly low. 'Triangle de Gonesse' (1,000 ha) is one of the projects being planned in this area by the Plaine de France Development Corporation (an EPA[7] created in 2002) since 2006. It is located in the Gonesse (municipality) territory (Vald'Oise), below Roissy Airport, on the border of the *départements* (counties) of Val d'Oise and Seine Saint-Denis.

The area has several significant features: its location gives it both a regional and international dimension, as a 'gateway' to Paris. There are a number of strategic connections nearby: A1 motorway, 3 TGV Stations (Gare du Nord, CDG, Gare de l'Est) and 2 airports (Paris Charles de Gaulle and Le Bourget – Europe's leading business airport). However, there are still problems of mobility and accessibility because of heavy traffic and a shortage of local connections and public transport. Moreover, there are significant environmental issues, especially noise from airports and roads. This makes housing construction impossible in the area. Another environmental issue is agricultural land, which in this area has very high economic value under European definitions. Some believe that urban development on this land is ultimately inevitable, because of land pressure in Île-de-France, making it a 'land reserve'.

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[7] A Public Development Corporation (*Établissement Public d'Aménagement* – EPA) is a type of public industrial and commercial enterprise, consisting of a State-controlled operational structure responsible for urban development projects. In this case, Plaine de France EPA: Territory: 300 km², 990,000 inhabitants, 350,000 jobs, 55,000 students, 40 municipalities, 5 inter-municipal structures, 2 departments; Board of directors: Île-de-France Regional Council (President + 8 members), National Government (8 members), local authorities (16 members). The task of EPA Plaine de France is to take any action relating to the urban, social and economic development of the area, project coordination and implementation. Its original remit when created in April 2002 is to help the physical, social and economic regeneration of the deprived areas located between the two growth areas of the Plaine Saint-Denis and the Paris-CDG airport sectors
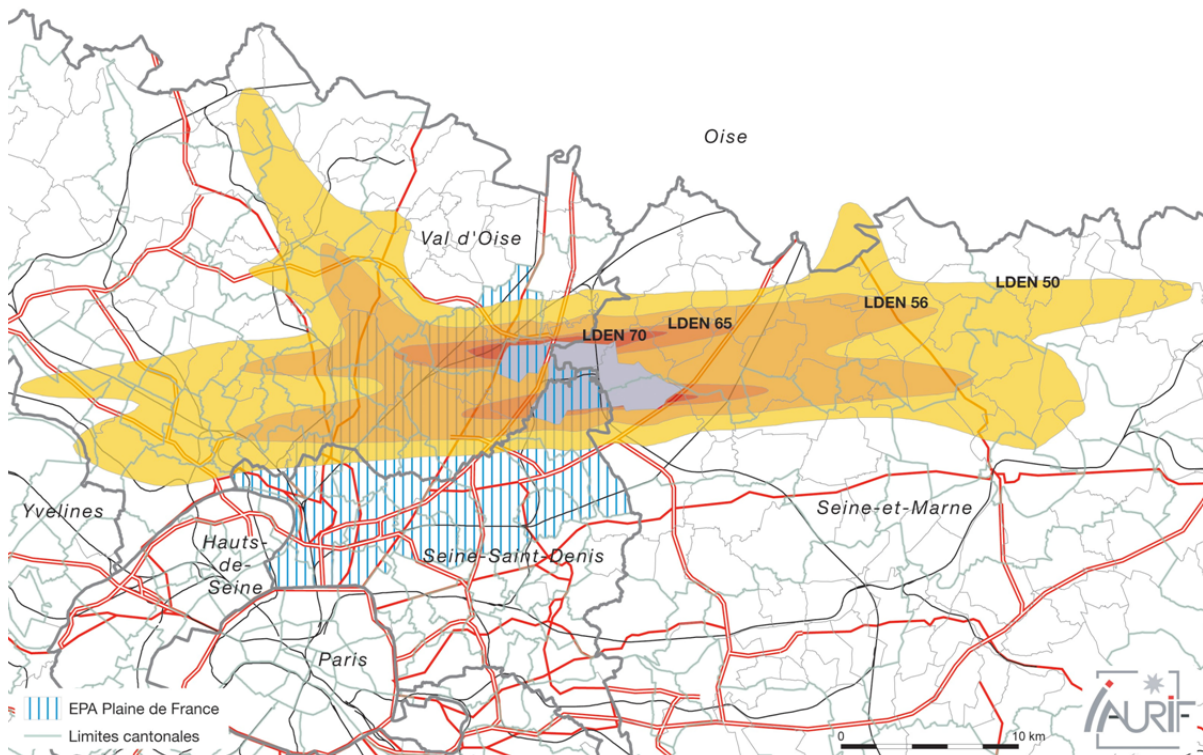
Fig. 3. Noise Contour Regulations of Paris CDG, 2007Source: ADP/Préfecture IDF/ IAURIF The Triangle de Gonesse is located in the dark orange area south of the airport where new housing is not permitted

Historical and political context

Planned in 1965 and open in 1974, Roissy Airport (Paris Charles de Gaulle) was initially though to remain clear of built-up areas, in order to avoid the mistakes committed with Orly. However, the 1976 masterplan included urban development south of the airport (Paris Nord II business park), at Tremblay-Villepinte, which was favoured by government because of the airport's ability to attract employment, though development actually took place in Seine Saint Denis – not related to airport. With the 1980s, the focus moved to the development of peripheral areas, with greater emphasis on urbanisation in the north of Île-de-France.

As IAU puts it "Triangle de Gonesse was therefore earmarked from the early 1990s as a 'strategic (greenfield) development area' for the Paris metropolitan region. This agricultural zone of almost 1000 hectares was designated in the 1994 Regional Masterplan (drawn up by central government) for future high value development. This Masterplan specifies that Triangle de Gonesse should seek to attract French, European and international corporations and to become a centre for international commerce, within a project that would nevertheless protect nature and the landscape. This long-term perspective was subject to the availability of good public transport access (still lacking

today) – at the time, there were plans for a tangential Roissy-Cergy train link, subsequently abandoned.

In 2002, a Joint Public Development Agency, the Plaine de France Établissement Public d'Aménagement (EPA), was set up to work on the physical, social and economic regeneration and development of a large area of land between Paris and Roissy Airport (today 300 km² and almost 1 million inhabitants). Established by the French government, this multi-actor Agency is chaired by the President of the Île-de-France Regional Council (Paris Region) and includes the two General Councils of Seine-Saint-Denis and Val d'Oise (*départements,* roughly equivalent British counties), 40 municipalities grouped into 6 inter-municipal entities (*communautés d'agglomération* or *communautés de communes*). In 2005, EPA Plaine de France approved a Strategic Development Plan for the Plaine de France, including ideas for the possible development of Triangle de Gonesse.

At the same time, the Region drew up a new Masterplan, adopted in 2008. It confirmed that the area would ultimately be developed, subject to the construction of a new rail link (*Barreau de Gonesse*) between two regional rail links, the RER B and D. This is why the area was designated a 'conditional urbanisation zone'. This Masterplan failed to obtain government approval, so the 1994 SDRIF (masterplan) remains valid until the publication of a further SDRIF, which is currently under review. Nevertheless, the options suggested for Triangle de Gonesse show the trend in ideas for this area.
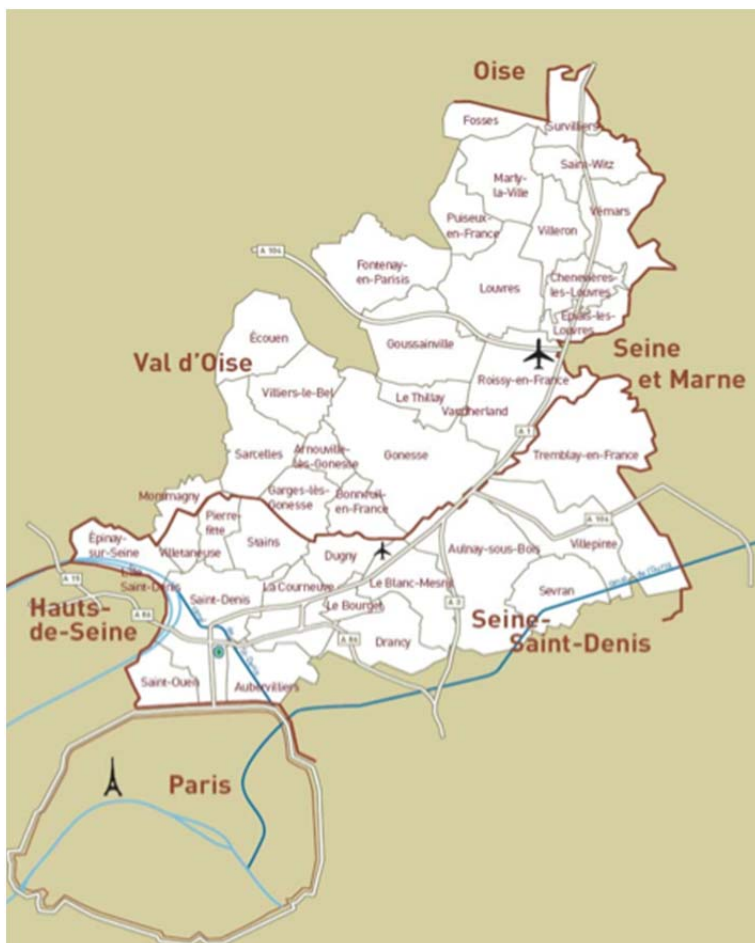

Fig. 4. EPA Plaine de France perimeter. Source: EPA Plaine de France

These different events took place in the context of reflection about the construction of iconic metropolitan amenities and projects for the Île-de-France region."[8]

During the 2000s, the Government clearly nourished a number of ambitions for the Île-de-France region. In June 2007, immediately after his election as President, Nicolas Sarkozy made a speech in which he mused about why "Paris is the only big urban area in France without an urban community".[9] In 2008, the French President launched an International Planning and Design Competition and appointed a Secretary of State for the Capital Region, pushing for the development of an "ambitious Post-Kyoto strategy for Grand Paris".[10] In April 2009, the President published the results of this competition. At the same time, the Secretary of State for the Development of the Capital region proposed a new metro system (nicknamed 'Le Grand 8' – Big Eight double ring) to serve a series of potential economic clusters mainly located on the outskirts of the metropolitan area.

In order to implement such a scheme, a new parliamentary instrument, the Grand Paris Act (*Loi sur le Grand Paris*), was passed in June 2010, shifting the balance of power in the governance of the city and region significantly towards central government (Lefèvre, 2012): First, the Act included a strategy for the construction of a 130 km automatic subway network to serve the region's major centres, in particular the airports;[11] second, this subway network would be built by a new entity called the 'Societé du Grand Paris' (SGP), a completely new state agency, centrally (well) funded; third, this public company would be responsible for the development of all the stations and their adjacent areas, but not in charge of its operation and maintenance.

Meanwhile, a new mayor of Paris, Bertrand Delanoë – from the left of the political spectrum – had been elected in 2001 and re-elected in 2008. In 2009 a new joint authority was created, the 'Syndicat Paris-Métropole', a grouping of more than 200 local authorities working on initiatives in four priority areas: development and solidarity, travel, housing and metropolitan projects. Its aim was to involve as many local actors as possible in an approach both operational and strategic. One of its concerns is the future of the area around Roissy-CDG Airport.

After two years of conflict between regional and national governments and a 3-month public debate, in December 2011 the Île-de-France Regional Council and Central Government finally agreed on a Grand Paris Express metro network (RTGPE) as well as on the need to revise the 2008 Regional Masterplan to integrate the 'Grand Paris' programme. The review currently underway should result in a new SDRIF, to be approved at the end of 2013, which should endorse the RTGPE station at the heart of Triangle de Gonesse and should thus help meet the legal conditions for the development of the area. However, this station was not initially in the plans: its inclusion is the outcome of several factors arising from the Triangle de Gonesse project.

In 2011, the Government introduced a new state-led autonomous instrument to promote development around the future stations, the so-called *Contrats de Développement Territorial* (CDT –

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[8] C.F. LECROART (P.). The Triangle de Gonesse Project in the Plaine de France, Paris case study: Case definition and study orientation for Context Project, IAU IDF, 2012.
[9] Nicolas Sarkozy, Speech 26 June 2007, Roissy Charles-de-Gaulles Airport.
[10] Nicolas Sarkozy, Speech about Grand Paris, 29 April 2009, Cité de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine, Paris.
[11] In the short term, the RATP teams are moving quickly to begin work on extending line 14 to Mairie de Saint-Ouen, which will do much to ease congestion on line 13, which passengers are impatient to see. The project, to be overseen jointly by STIF and RATP, will be 30% financed by the French government via SGP and 70% financed by the local authorities. The public inquiry took place from 16 January to 17 February 2012, and the line is scheduled to open in 2017.

territorial development contracts), which set the strategic principles for local development around the stations. These different territorial development initiatives brought a number of public actors into the game. Bypassing the Region and the Departments, the Government began direct conversations with the local authorities about the content of the CDT. The territorial development contract for Val de France-Gonesse, which includes the Triangle, is one of the 19 CDTs currently under discussion.
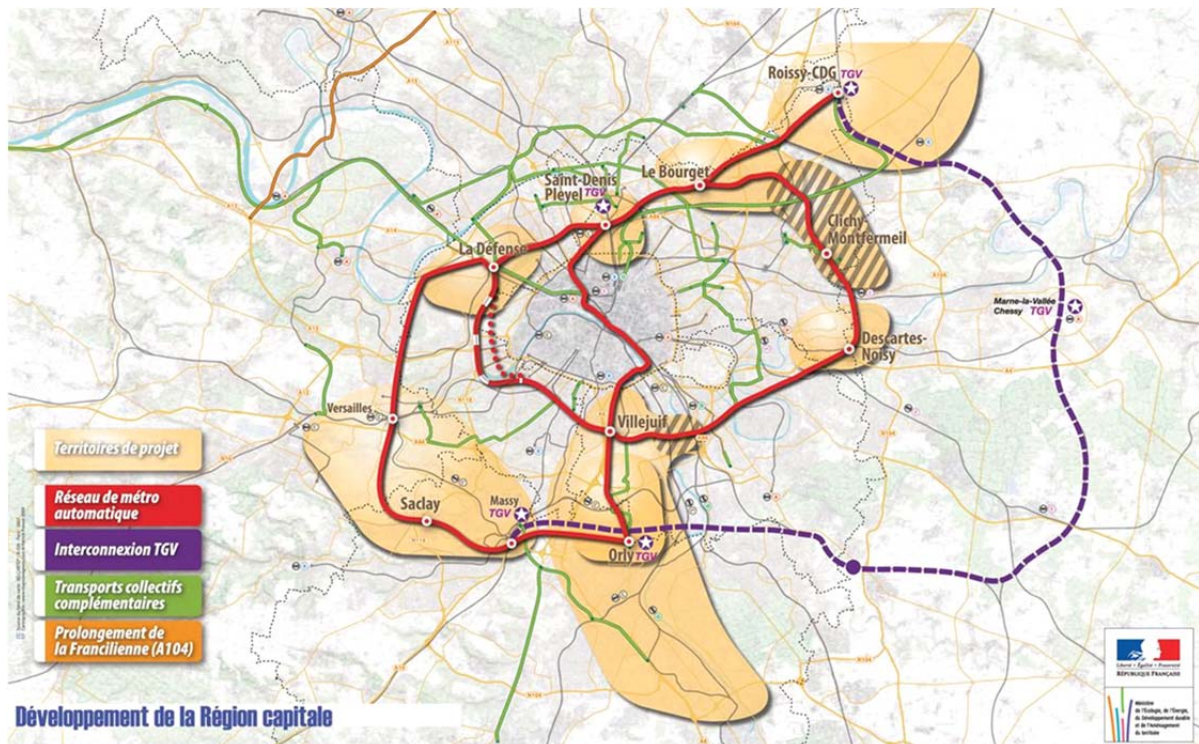
Fig. 5. Grand Paris Metro Project 2009. Source: Secrétariat d'Etat à la Région Capitale

The election of a new left-wing president in May 2012 changed the outlook for the Grand Paris programme. Indeed, The new government has decided to cut one billion euros from the original cost of building the metro. Nonetheless, the minister in charge has confirmed that the government wishes to pursue the project, and has commissioned a report to look into possible phasing and to set priorities. The report has been completed at the end of 2012. It recommends a phased implementation of the Grand Paris Metro, and the postponement of the building of the Triangle de Gonesse station to a much later date than planned – the government is expected to deliver its ruling in 2013.

Decision-making process

In our study of the project process, we have chosen to take a long-term approach by tracking the different phases in which the major problems, intentions and solutions emerged. This stage-by-stage approach can be defined as 'genealogical', in that it focuses on the main episodes and pivotal decisions rather than trying to understand every incident in the development sequence. Our objective is to link the stages chronologically with the essential moments in the project – focusing on the landmarks in the process associated with major discussions and decisions – without aiming for an exhaustive description. We were thus interested in developing a narrative by describing the key moments that structured the different sequences of the project.

This narrative approach shows how at least two parallel dynamics gradually come together to form an urban planning project. The chronological narrative is divided into five phases, each initiated by a kind of phase shift, in which both the directions of the project and the methods of governance changed. The guiding thread of the narrative is the development of the Triangle de Gonesse project as exemplified through the establishment of the Europa City scheme.
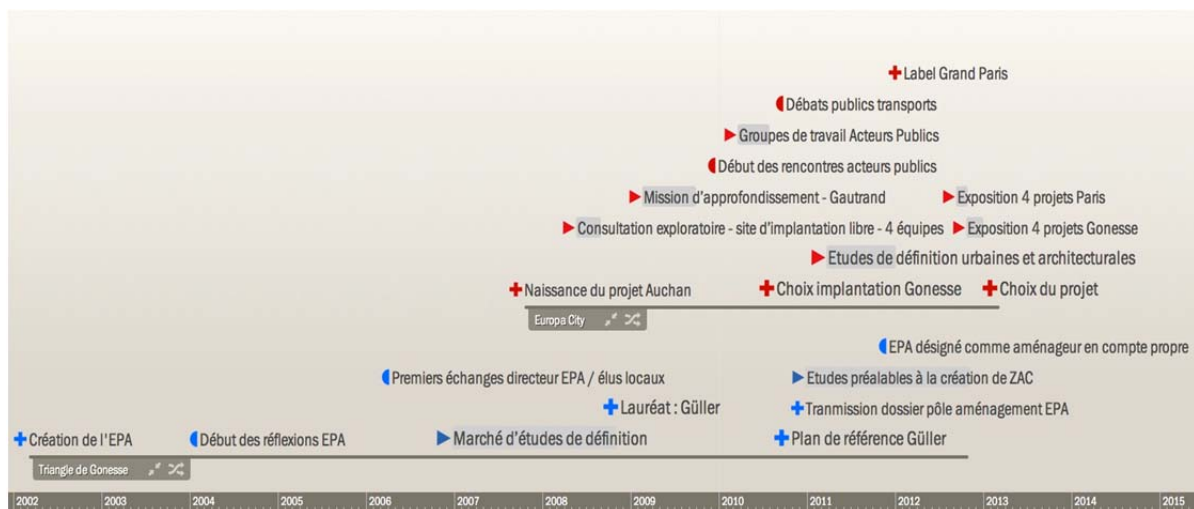

Fig. 6. Timeline of the Triangle de Gonesse/Europa City project.

Phase 1, 1990s–2006: First strategic reflections on Triangle de Gonesse

Strategic priorities	Development of transport across this area, which would require an urban plan
Scale of reflections	Territorial scale (local)
Actors involved	EPA, discussions and negotiations with the local elected representatives
Regulations	SDRIF 1994

Initial ideas: local transport project

In the 1990s, the priority was to develop the area south of Roissy, primarily around Seine-Saint-Denis. The Val-d'Oise Department then put pressure on the Government to develop projects in its area as well, since local politicians there also wanted their constituencies to benefit from the impact of Roissy Airport.

In 1992, an international competition of ideas entitled Euro Val d'Oise was launched by SIEVO (Syndicat Intercommunal d'étude de l'est du Val d'Oise, an organisation created by local authorities, which feared that the government, which was introducing multiple development zones around Roissy, might remove all municipal planning powers). The subject of this competition was the idea for an 'international business hub' between the two airports (Davoine, 1992). Shortly afterwards, in 1996, planning studies were launched jointly by Gonesse municipality, AFTRP (Paris Region Land and Technical Agency, which owns the land on the Triangle) and a government created 'Mission Roissy' structure. These events reflect the land pressure that was developing around the airport at that time. However, they led nowhere: for reasons that we do not manage to identify, the results of the competition and the studies never reached concrete form in a planning project. It is nevertheless noteworthy that they took place against the background of the development of the Masterplan, as is the case for the current project.

There was also joint pressure from Val-d'Oise and municipality of Gonesse when the EPA was created in 2002, which partly explains why the EPA began to take an interest in the area in 2004. Another factor is that the EPA had wanted to develop projects in Le Bourget – a sector between the two departments identified as having great potential for development and earmarked as a priority area – but had encountered difficulties arising from local opposition and inter-municipal conflicts.

Around 2004, in response to the pressure of local expectations, the EPA became interested in the idea of developing a project on Triangle de Gonesse, initially with a focus on the 'transport' issue. The EPA was divided into two sections: strategy and development. To begin with, it was the peo-

ple on the strategy side who were most interested in a project, with the idea of connecting the RER B and the RER D regional railway lines (Gonesse Link).

> "We suffer from planes' noise and all the inconveniences associated with atmospheric and noise pollution, so this would be some compensation. Moreover, we are 5 or 6 km from Roissy, so it is completely absurd that there is no direct public transport link." (Project Manager of EPA)

At the same time, the transport authority (STIF) and operator (SNCF) had commissioned studies that showed that there was no real market/need for this network, and that the construction and operating costs would be very high. In fact, the idea for the project emerged precisely to justify the construction of a link, because otherwise the projected traffic flows were not sufficient. The theory was that establishing an employment hub would increase passenger flows and justify a rail network in this zone.

The strategic EPA document 2005

This is why, in 2005, the EPA's strategic document already identifies Triangle de Gonesse as a development zone because of its "considerable development potential, held back by the absence of a structuring public transport framework (RER B and D link), which is essential to generate the dynamics of a major economic and urban project connected with the strategic functions of the airport platforms". The Triangle is mainly described here in terms of its potential economic function, and the idea of an 'excellence' project emerges.

Triangle de Gonesse: a strategic space for a large, regional scale development project
Its central position and considerable development potential give it exceptional advantages for the development of an economic and landscape area of exemplary environmental quality. Not a land reserve, not an urban wasteland, not an unadopted space, but a primary entranceway to the conurbation, this site now needs to see its aims and objectives confirmed.

There is a risk of "piecemeal" development, which could reinforce the land divisions and deprive this strategic central space of the "excellence" project that it is capable of accommodating. In this respect, it should be expected that the simultaneous construction of a development project for Triangle de Gonesse and the appropriate infrastructures, the construction of road connections and public transport infrastructures, beginning with the RER B/RER D Link, would provide a framework that could be attractive to investors.

Source: EPA, Strategic Document, 2005
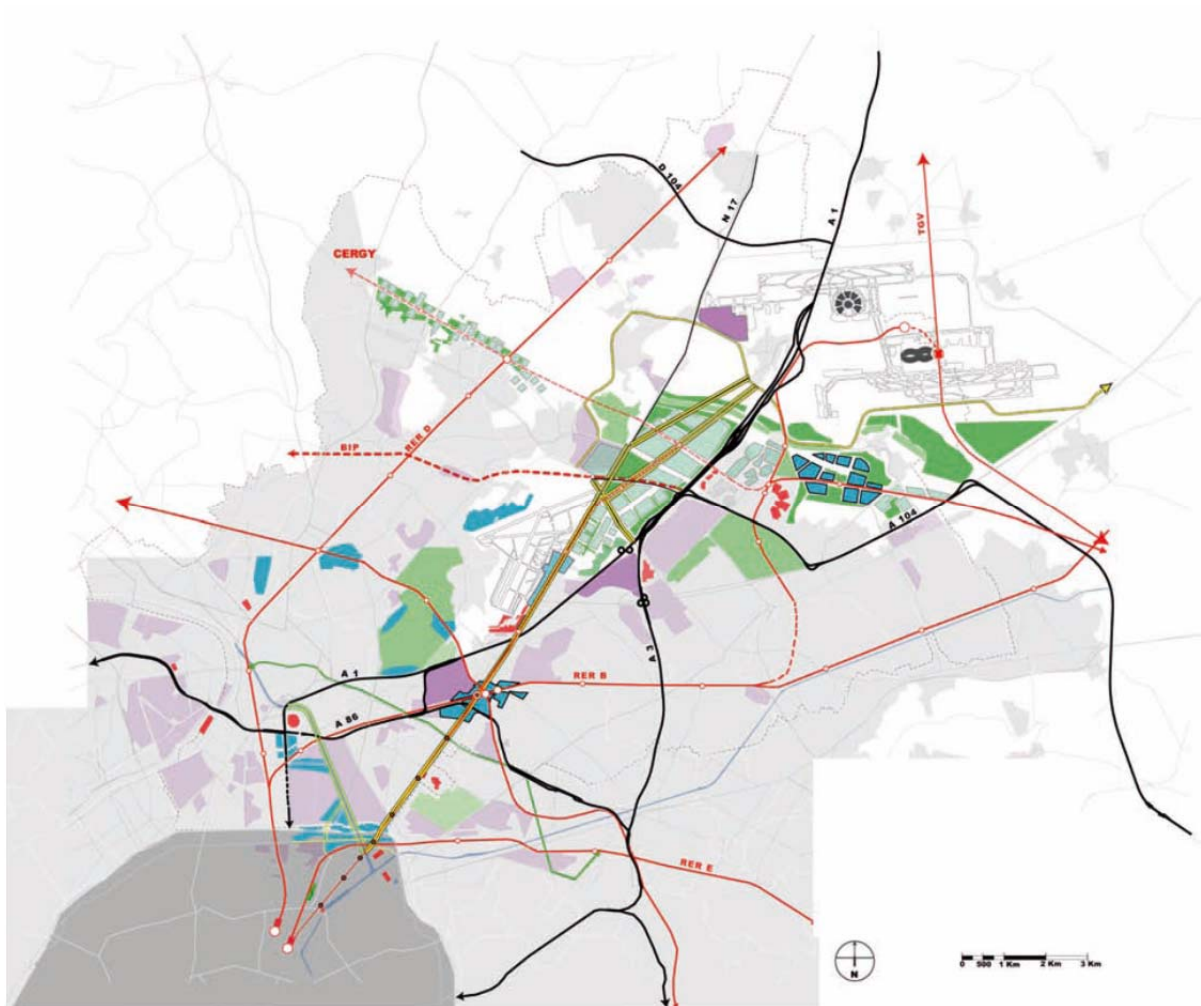
Fig. 7. Representation of the Triangle de Gonesse by the EPA in 2005 (Strategy Document). Source: EPA Plaine de France

As this document shows, the EPA's plans for the Triangle were ambitious from the start. In addition, the fear of unbridled development in the area seems to have been behind the desire for structured development. This was a recurring argument put forward by the EPA members in explaining the project. These arguments were often accompanied by the idea that without a proper framework of development, there was a risk that Triangle de Gonesse would simply become logistics hub, cut off from surrounding urban life, because of the land pressure that is inevitable in such an area.

Against this background, in 2006 the representatives of the EPA's development cluster strategy approached local politicians to begin discussions of a possible project for Triangle de Gonesse.

Phase 2, 2007–2009: Two parallel projects: development scheme defined by the EPA/internal discussions at Immochan for Europa City

Strategic priorities	Development of a high status service project/Development of a private commercial and leisure project
Scale of reflections	Territorial scale (local) – towards metropolitan/metropolitan – international
Actors involved	EPA and local actors/Immochan and central actors
Regulations	SDRIF 1994–2008 Scot SIEVO 2006 PLU Gonesse

'Scoping studies' and choice of the Güller project: farmland preservation

In 2007, the EPA launched an international competition, appointing three teams of architects and designers – SEURA-Mangin, Fortier and Güller – to work simultaneously on 'scoping studies' for a potential development plan for Triangle de Gonesse. The competition lasted until April 2008. During this period, the Region drew up a new masterplan, which defined the Triangle as a conditional urbanisation zone. The EPA development plans were thus legitimised, although the transport condition remained crucial.

The competition winner was the architect Mathis Güller, who prevailed because his project achieved greater density than two others: indeed, the Mangin and Fortier projects proposed urbanisation across the whole Triangle, whereas the Güller project would retain farmland across at least half the area. So, it was the only project to propose sufficient density/compactness "to turn part of the agricultural space into a sanctuary" (EPA Project Manager). This is why Güller's project was strongly supported by local government representatives, particularly the Mayor of Gonesse, although the EPA members would not initially have chosen it. Another convincing argument in favour of farmland preservation was that it maintained a sort of long-term strategic land reserve. Some like to quote the phrase used by Güller – 'the boss's reserve' (EPA Project Manager) – to describe the preserved farmlands.
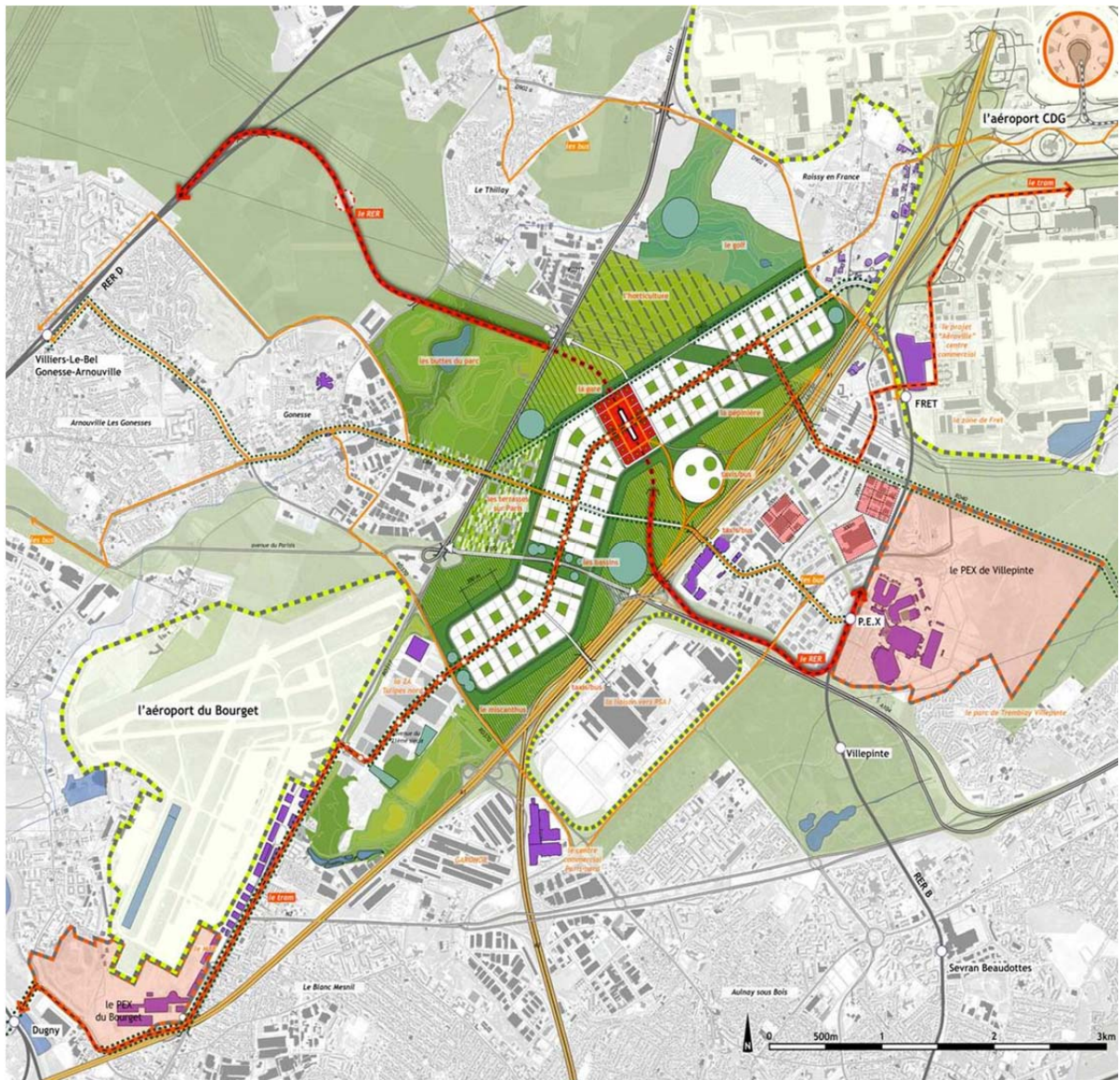
Fig. 8. The SEURA-Mangin team project, 2007. Source: EPA Plaine de France

Labels on map:
développements hôteliers
PARC DE GONESSE
équipement culturel
gare RER du barreau B/D
TCSP du BIP
(Garcelles/Garges - Roissy CDG fret)
LA PROMENADE CENTRALE
Couverture de l'autoroute
grand équipement
Secteur de Projet
les Tulipes
développements du Bourget
PARC DU SAUSSET

Fig. 9. The Fortier Architect Project, 2007. Source: EPA Plaine de France

Clarification of the project priorities: tertiary sector, high-end, metropolitan scope and international competitiveness

During the competition and in the winning project, clear priority is given to the role of the development as an employment hub, for the high-end tertiary sector. The Gonesse transport link would serve this tertiary hub.

After the competition, in December 2008, the EPA commissioned Mathis Güller to produce a 'reference plan', in which the architect was asked to take into account the recommendations and observations of the Jury and steering committee:

"Regarding the territorial strategy:
– To stress the positioning of the project with respect to the Île-de-France projects and to treat it as a space that will contribute to the development of Roissy-Charles de Gaulle as an international hub;

– Beyond the Roissy Gonesse Triangle, to propose a development with a very large-scale approach." (p. 2)

Proponents wanted a project with a metropolitan and internationally competitive dimension. In presenting the project, planners sought to combine two arguments, one relating to metropolitan priorities and international competitiveness, the other to local priorities and economic development.

A new private project concept: Europa City

While discussions about the development of Triangle de Gonesse were underway, and in a quite separate process, a large French retail developer, Immochan (Auchan Group), came up with a 'new' concept for a major retail and leisure project: Europa City.

This was an idea conceived in-house by Immochan around 2006/2007, which described the concept as a 'laboratory', structured by a cultural dimension and with a strong European identity. Europa City was presented as an innovative metropolitan community with a diverse mix of functions: culture, retail, leisure, and hotels. The objective emphasised in the sales pitch was to respond to the new forms of consumption: department stores, concept stores, temporary businesses, new brands. It would form a 'new urban centrality'. It was also defined as a new tourist hub in Île-de-France and as a major gateway to Paris.

In summer 2008, Immochan launched an exploratory competition for an undefined development site with 4 teams of architects and landscape architects. Their remit was to come up with a vision for the project based on a programme and general principles of organisation already defined by Immochan.

In 2009, already with a well-defined programme, Immochan's representatives began to meet representatives of Central Government (President) and of the Region (Chairman) to promote their project and explore possible locations. Christian Blanc, state secretary for Grand Paris, and his team, suggested several sites, the most interesting of which were Triangle de Gonesse and Le Bourget, because of the proximity of Roissy Airport.

From March to September 2009, Manuelle Gautrand Architecture was commissioned to carry out an in-depth study, based on its initial proposal, on two sites: Triangle de Gonesse and Jean Mermoz industrial zone, in the municipalities of La Courneuve and Le Bourget. Nonetheless, at this stage, the Europa City backers had still not chosen the site for their project.

Phase 3, 2010: Urban programming and convergence of the two projects

Strategic priorities	High-end metropolitan tertiary hub, which could contain several leisure or commercial amenities, especially Europa City
Scale of reflection	Metropolitan – international scales: international models
Actors involved	Governance by local partnership (EPA + local actors) /Governance by public-private partnership
Regulations	SDRIF 2008

Convergence/confluence of actors: governance in partnership

In January 2010, Immochan contacted the EPA for the first time. The private-sector company became the coordinator of a developing partnership process with public actors in the territory – Gonesse municipality, the Plaine de France inter-municipal association and the General Council of Val-d'Oise – 'to study the feasibility of incorporating Europa City into the Triangle de Gonesse development project'.[12] Immochan also continued to communicate with central government representatives. Indeed, Nicolas Sarkozy made a very positive preliminary announcement on the Europa City project in an interview for the magazine *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui* (February 2010):

> "Auchan Group wishes to build a very large commercial, cultural, sports and entertainment complex, a unique amenity dedicated to the European cultures, which would possess an exceptional architecture. This prototype of a new 'commercial planning with a human face' could constitute an important marker of a new Paris and I would be happy to see it happen in an underdeveloped area of Parisian northeast, between Paris and Roissy. (…) it is time for a revolution in commercial and industrial planning, and it is something we need to encourage." (author's translation)

Between April and August 2010, Immochan sets up three working groups, which sat for ten sessions and covered three topics: urban integration, concept and programming, accessibility. Represented on these working groups were Gonesse municipality, the Val de France inter-municipal association, the Val-d'Oise General Council, the Île-de-France Region and central government.

Güller's 'reference plan' for the EPA: high-end metropolitan service hub and international models

After a 2-year study by Swiss urban designer Mathis Güller, in November 2010 the Plaine de France Joint Development Agency adopted a reference plan for the Roissy-Gonesse Triangle. This plan identifies the Heart of the Triangle (*Coeur du Triangle*) as the most strategic area for the development of 'high-value tertiary and innovative activities' (210 ha, a minimum of 1.5 million

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[12] Interview with an EPA's project manager

m^2 of economic development expected in 2035), with 400 hectares preserved as a *'Carré Vert'* (Green Square) for agriculture. A landscaped garden would be created at the heart of the project, with a 'green and blue corridor' for strolling in natural surroundings. In the plan, agricultural land is perceived as a 'strong fabric of greenery', forming part of 'the green lungs of Paris', but it is also presented as a factor of attraction for companies and economic development.

Indeed, the project lays heavy stress on the concept of a high-end service sector hub. The idea is that the Triangle de Gonesse will become a 'techno-service park', with the emphasis on the strategic service operations of multinational companies, within easy access of airports. International cities and models are cited as references for the project:

> "An analysis of major European cities such as Amsterdam, Berlin, London or Madrid shows that airports are one of the most powerful drivers of polycentricity. Areas situated between these cities and their airports, the 'airport corridors', become the new vectors of metropolitan economic development." (M. Güller, Plan de Référence, p. 13, author's translation)

The project's ambition is that 'the Parisian airport corridor' between Roissy, Le Bourget and Paris should 'play a strategic role in Île-de-France and in France as a whole' (M. Güller, Plan de Référence, p. 15, author's translation. By reducing the economic imbalance in the region, the corridor would become 'an essential lever of development for the whole territory' (M. Güller, Plan de Référence, p. 18, author's translation). These objectives show that the scale of the ideas had widened well beyond their original scope.

Nonetheless, territorial coherence and the link between Val-d'Oise and Seine Saint Denis, as well as distribution of the wealth created within the corridor, remained major objectives of the project. The Triangle was to play 'a leveraging role for the entire territory' (M. Güller, Plan de Référence, p. 16 , author's translation). However, there would also appear to have been a structuring component to the positioning of the project at metropolitan level: 'Plaine de France is one of the main forces Grand Paris has in strengthening its rank as a world metropolis' (M. Güller, Plan de Référence, p. 13, author's translation). It is specified that the development strategy for Triangle de Gonesse is more than a 'simple municipal project because it proposes organising the structural elements of the contemporary metropolis' (M. Güller, Plan de Référence, p. 14, author's translation) by including issues of international competitiveness.
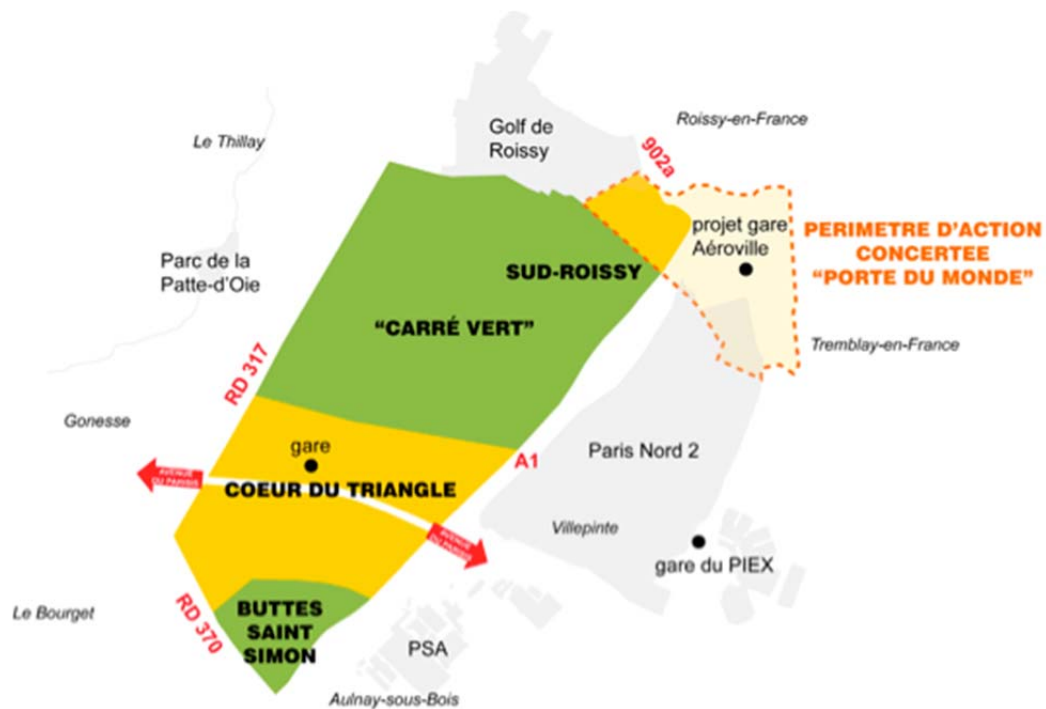
Noms des différents sites et projets urbains et paysagers du Triangle de Gonesse.

Fig. 10. Spatial layout of Triangle de Gonesse in the Reference Plan. Source: Plan de reference, EPA Plaine de France, Güller

Finally, the Reference Plan specifies that, during its preparation, several projects were announced by public and private sector organisations wishing to set up in the Triangle. These notably included:

– A racing circuit (already abandoned after the site has been rejected after integration studies);
– Roland Garros French Tennis Academy: evaluations underway in November 2010 (site finally rejected);
– Europa City, a large-scale retail and cultural project, an Auchan Group initiative. The Reference Plan states that checks should be made and are in progress on the concept and programming, on the size of the complex, and its compatibility and synergy with the other programmes and enterprises in the Corridor, road access and public transport, urban integration in the south of the Heart of the Triangle, considering the size of the project.

Project guidelines
– International scale: high-end positioning and international dimension directed to high added-value sectors and activities
– Increased compactness and density to ensure value creation
– Quality of public transport
– Attractiveness of the agricultural and natural landscape (farmland preservation)
– Stimulating working environment with a high-level facilities and services for companies
– A pleasant urban atmosphere, thanks to a strong mix of functions, in particular cultural amenities and leisure facilities

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The Reference Plan is 'evolutive and adaptable'. It defines the structuring elements of the project in terms of programming, balances, infrastructure and environmental quality. It defines an action plan and establishes the general organisation of the project.
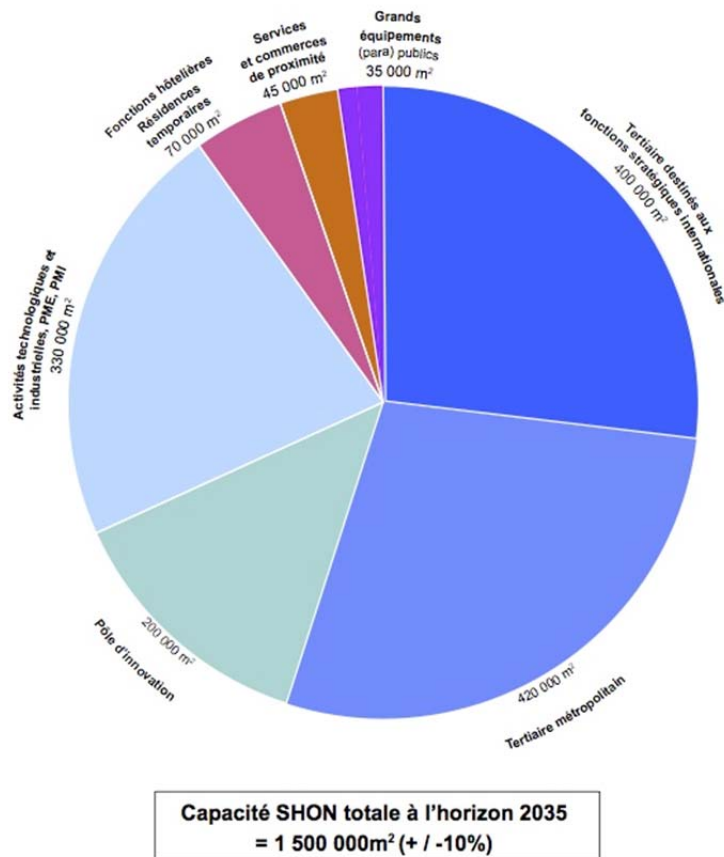
Fig. 11. Distribution of the activities proposed in the Reference Plan. Source: EPA Plaine de France

Partnership governance for Triangle de Gonesse

According to the EPA, the preparation of the Reference Plan gave rise to 'a process of co-production between the different territorial entities' (EPA Project Manager).[13] Indeed, technical meetings involving local government (Departments, inter-municipal groupings, municipalities – Gonesse, Roissy-en-France, Tremblay-en-France, Villepinte), regional authorities and central gov-ernment (Prefecture, DRIEA) were held over a 15-month period (until February 2010), and culmi-nated in the production of an intermediate report in July 2009. Other organisations, such as AFTRP, ADP, STIF, RFF, Hubstar Paris and the Île-de-France Farmers' Association, were also in-volved. The steering committee included a range of public sector participants: the EPA, adjacent municipalities, inter-municipal groupings, decentralised departments, the Departments, the Re-gion.

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[13] Interview EPA actor.

In addition to this essentially public sector governance, the Reference Plan recommends the implementation of a structure of 'adaptive governance' – a primary condition for the success of the project – dedicated to the development of the Triangle, possibly of a mixed public-private nature. Another possibility envisaged was the 'creation of a financial and legal public-private partnership grouping to manage infrastructure projects (Parisis Boulevard, RER station/subway)' (M. Güller, Plan de Référence, p. 189, author's translation).

Grand Paris Metro: re-emergence of the transport theme

While the Reference Plan was being sketched out, the Government, through Nicolas Sarkozy and Christian Blanc, announced the Grand Paris Metro project. Initially, it was not part of the government's plan to create a station in the Triangle de Gonesse sector. That is why the EPA and local politicians began negotiations with central government on linking the Triangle de Gonesse project in with the automated metro plan. At the time when the Reference Plan was approved, two stations were mentioned between Le Bourget and CDG. In fact, a study conducted in autumn 2009 by the EPA showed that taking the metro route through Triangle de Gonesse was technically feasible. That is why the Reference Plan proposed placing a station at the heart of the Triangle.

Nevertheless, the RER B-D Link was still presented as the main transport component, the primary impetus for the urbanisation of the Heart of the Triangle: 'if this were not built, the Triangle's economic position would be untenable' (EPA Project Manager)

Phase 4, end of 2010–2012: pre-operational phase, convergence of projects – Europa City becomes the driving force of the Triangle de Gonesse programme

Strategic priorities	Europa City becomes the structuring project, high-end tertiary hub, inclusion of the Grand Paris Metro Station
Scale of reflection	Metropolitan and international focus which should also drive local development
Actors involved	Multi-level public + private governance
Regulations	Grand Paris Act/CDT 2013 SDRIF

Constructing Europa City in Triangle de Gonesse: 'the driving force' of territorial development

In reality, even before the Reference Plan was completed, Immochan's preferred location for Europa City was Gonesse (summer 2010). However, this decision was not yet fully official and was not stated as such in Güller's study, only being revealed at the end of 2010. There followed a chain of consequences, which shifted the priorities of the project.

First, the Reference Plan had to be updated to incorporate Europa City and the economic programme inevitably had to be modified, no simple task for the technicians and architects. At this point there was perhaps a sense that Europa City had been 'imposed' on the Triangle de Gonesse project. Nonetheless, it would seem that it was quickly identified by the backers of the EPA's hub strategy and by the public actors as an opportunity to bring real credibility to the development of Triangle de Gonesse.

Ultimately, the addition of Europa City gave the project legitimacy, in particular in terms of the possibility of a Grand Paris Metro station. That is why the public actors initially responsible for the development project talked up the complementarity of the projects – especially because Europa City would accommodate a 'mixing' of functions. In fairly short order, the Europa City project became the 'driving force' of Triangle de Gonesse, the impetus and structuring component of its territorial development.

Partnership between the EPA and private and public sector actors

From this point on, the EPA and Europa City began working together, along with public sector actors at different levels. The main issue was the urban and territorial integration of Europa City. Local politicians were interested in the way that Europa City might enhance the image of the northern Île-de-France area, whereas the EPA representatives hoped that it would constitute a business district and service hub that would transform Triangle de Gonesse into a proper urban zone.

> "Initially, we were a little sceptical, like everyone else. We saw Auchan turn up, and we said, yeah, they're going to build a shopping mall… And we don't need a shopping mall. I met the design teams and told them about the area and its needs. And I said to them: we absolutely do not need a shopping mall. If Europa City were a shopping mall, we would have said no. If Europa City were EuroDisney, I think we would also have said no. Disney is the closest thing, we need an urban area that says "Northern Paris is great". It is halfway between Disney and the Opera, it is a continuation of the city." (EPA strategist)

In November 2010, Immochan-Europa City and the municipality of Gonesse signed an agreement (protocol), in which the company states that the Europa City project will preferentially be built in Triangle de Gonesse and the municipality agrees to allow its construction in their territory. The agreement also defines the forms of cooperation, stating that the project specifications would be finalised by Immochan, with its own architects, but in close consultation with the municipality and other local partners. It gives the Auchan Group the exclusive right to develop the project on the site, and the municipality undertakes not to approach any other operator. The municipality also

agrees to provide the information Immochan needs to conduct feasibility studies and prepare the project. Finally, the protocol recognises that the Grand Paris transport network remains the prior condition for the construction of the project.

At the same time, a public debate on the Grand Paris Metro was being held. At the public meeting in Gonesse, Immochan announced that it would be prepared to contribute to the financing of a station in Triangle de Gonesse. Following the public debate procedures, the Region and central government came to a political agreement (February 2011) on the concept and financing of the Grand Paris Metro project, which included a specific intention to build a station in Triangle de Gonesse (rather than a mere possibility, as previously).
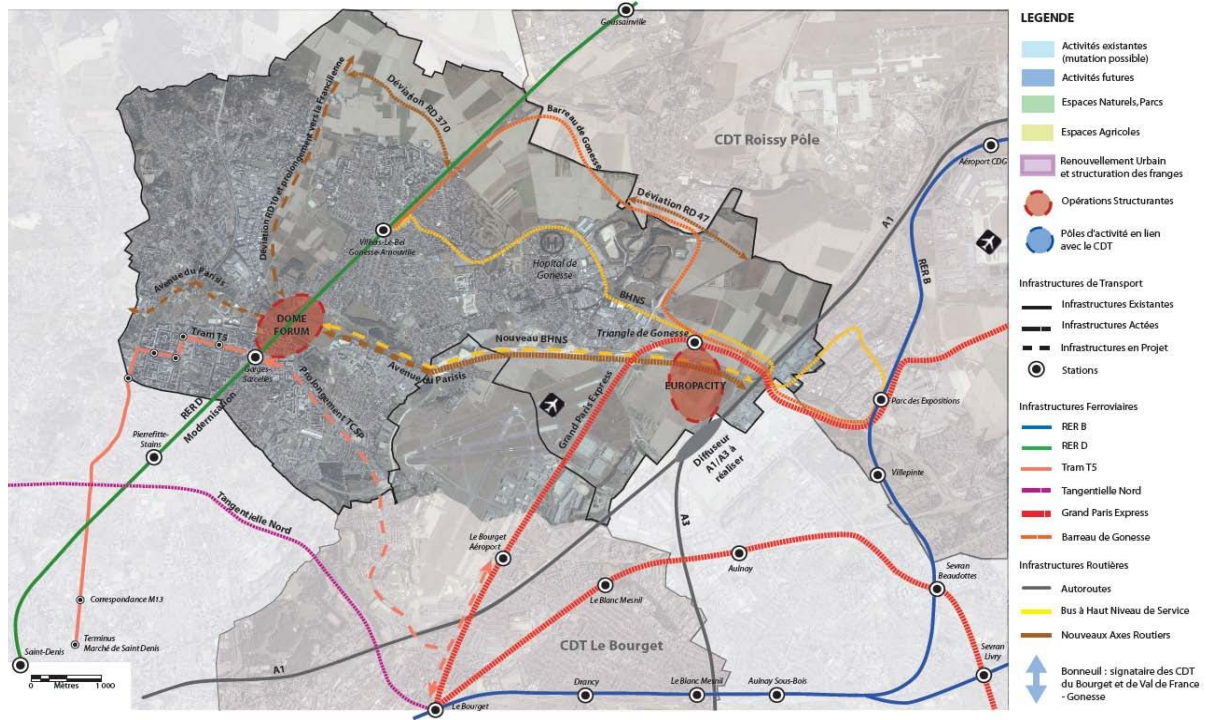
Fig. 12. Transport in the Triangle de Gonesse project (with Europa City). Source: CDT April 2012

Gonesse municipality also manifested its interest in a territorial development strategy by commissioning a study by the Castro design office, which drew up a territorial development plan (in April 2011) for Gonesse municipality and the Val de France inter-municipal association (Arnouville, Garges, Sarcelles, Villiers-Le-Bel). This plan explores ways to become part of the Grand Paris metropolis and to enhance the attractiveness and image of the area. Triangle de Gonesse is quoted here as playing the role of an 'international showcase at territorial and metropolitan scale, the gateway to the metropolis'. The multifaceted Europa City amenity is included in the project and described 'as the key operation at the Heart of the Triangle, a new Grand Paris destination and attraction capable of increasing current tourist traffic and creating a culture and leisure offering unique in the world' (Castro, 2011, p. 109, author's translation.

In October 2011, the EPA and Gonesse municipality also signed an operational implementation protocol for the Triangle de Gonesse project, a further step in the operational process that would be pursued via an Urban Development Zone (ZAC).

Project objectives defined in the October 2011 EPA-Gonesse protocol
The urban strategy laid out in this plan takes into account the need to preserve agricultural areas by avoiding opportunistic day-to-day land development, without improved access to Roissy-Charles de Gaulle Airport. Within the perspective of long-term economic and urban development, it sets out the following objectives:
– To develop new jobs;
– To optimise the introduction of new public transport by appropriate and controlled urbanisation;
– To develop economic activities that complement existing activities in Paris's airport corridor;
– To confirm its commitment to the preservation of agricultural areas;
– To maintain territorial coherence by developing an urban project that links the Roissy and Le Bourget, Val d'Oise and Seine-Saint-Denis hubs.

Under the protocol, the municipality agreed to provide the EPA with the land needed for the development operation. The agreement specifies that the designs for this project will have to include the urban integration of the Europa City project, developed by the Immochan Group, which is currently working on the formal architectural design of the complex.

Preoperational work on the Triangle de Gonesse project(s)

These various programmatic (Europa City, Grand Paris Metro) and organisational (protocol signatures) advances brought the project to a preoperational phase. From 2011, responsibility for its management shifted from the EPA's strategic section to its development section, following a decision on by the EPA's Board of Directors on 9 December that the latter would take over the full planning role. At this time, the preliminary studies for the creation of the 'Urban Development Zone' (ZAC) were launched by the EPA, and are currently underway.

The ZAC will consist of:

– Service sector activities
– An innovation hub
– A training hub
– A services hub
– Hotel activities
– A large commercial, cultural and leisure complex (Europa City)
– A green area ("green square")

As it moved into this pre-operational phase, the EPA began to rethink the governance of project: besides the steering committees, which had been in place since the first competition in 2007, and a number of technical committees, the development section wanted to set up other technical committees as well as a 'consultation' process (still pending).
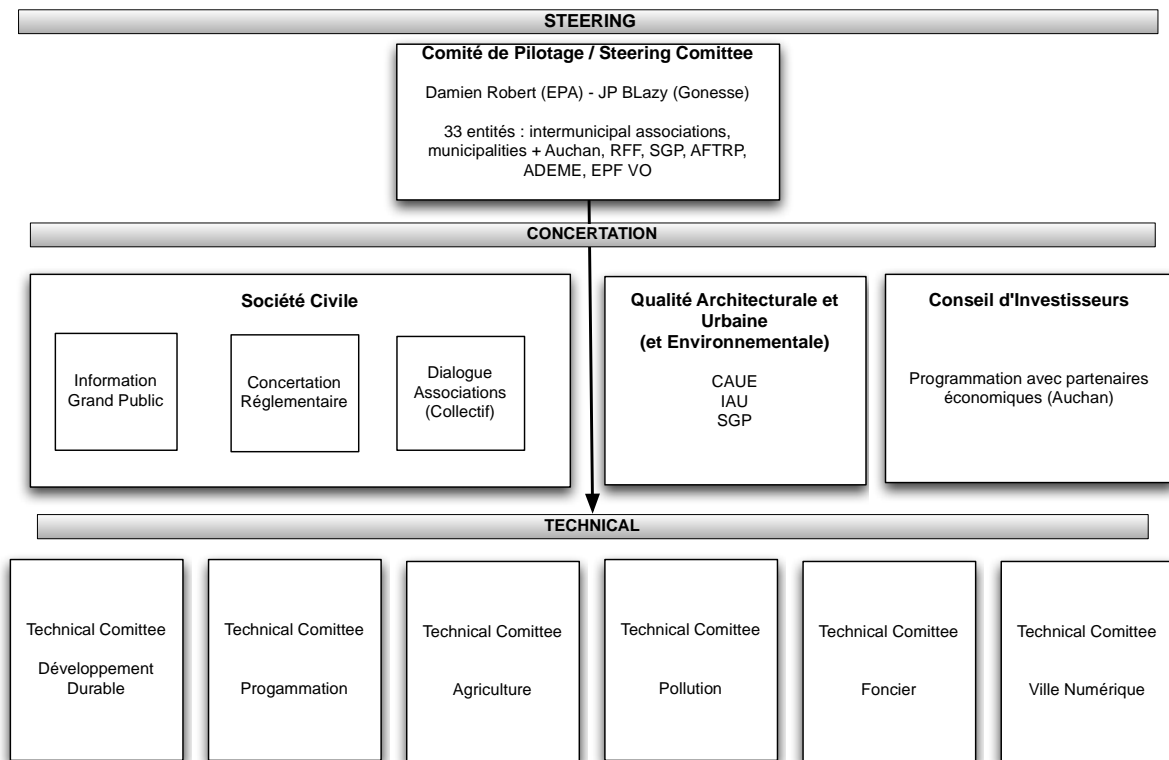
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                              STEERING

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              │  Comité de Pilotage / Steering Comittee │
              │                                        │
              │  Damien Robert (EPA) - JP BLazy (Gonesse) │
              │                                        │
              │  33 entités : intermunicipal associations, │
              │  municipalities + Auchan, RFF, SGP, AFTRP, │
              │  ADEME, EPF VO                         │
              └──────────────────────────────────────┘

                             CONCERTATION

┌─────────────────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────────┐
│       Société Civile        │  │ Qualité Architecturale et │  │ Conseil d'Investisseurs │
│                             │  │       Urbaine          │  │                        │
│ ┌──────┐ ┌──────┐ ┌──────┐  │  │ (et Environnementale)  │  │                        │
│ │Info. │ │Concer│ │Dialog│  │  │                        │  │ Programmation avec     │
│ │Grand │ │tation│ │Assoc.│  │  │        CAUE            │  │ partenaires            │
│ │Public│ │Régle.│ │(Coll)│  │  │        IAU             │  │ économiques (Auchan)   │
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                               TECHNICAL
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Fig. 13. Project governance according to the EPA (in progress)

Europa City becomes a 'reality': international competition, Grand Paris label, exhibition

Immochan too moved on to the next stage in the definition of the project. A legal structure was specifically created for the Europa City project and a new international competition was launched in April 2011, to explore the urban development plan and architectural outline. This competition ended in January 2012, with submissions from 4 multidisciplinary teams of architects, urban planners, landscape architects, economists and sustainable development specialists:

– Manuelle Gautrand (Paris), David Besson-Girard, Franck Boutté Consultants, SNC Lavalin, le Troisième Pôle
– BIG (Copenhagen/New York), Base, Tess, Transsolar, Transitec
– Valode&Pistre (Paris), Michel Desvignes, Egis, Iosis, Elioth
– Snohetta (Oslo and New York), Gehry Technologies, RWDI

The consultation was organised into two phases: An initial urban scoping phase (launched in May, 2011) focusing on the project's integration into the Roissy area and into the planned Triangle de Gonesse programme. This first phase was submitted on 22 September 2011. A second phase focusing on an architectural and landscape development plan, submitted to the Steering Committee on 17 January 2012.
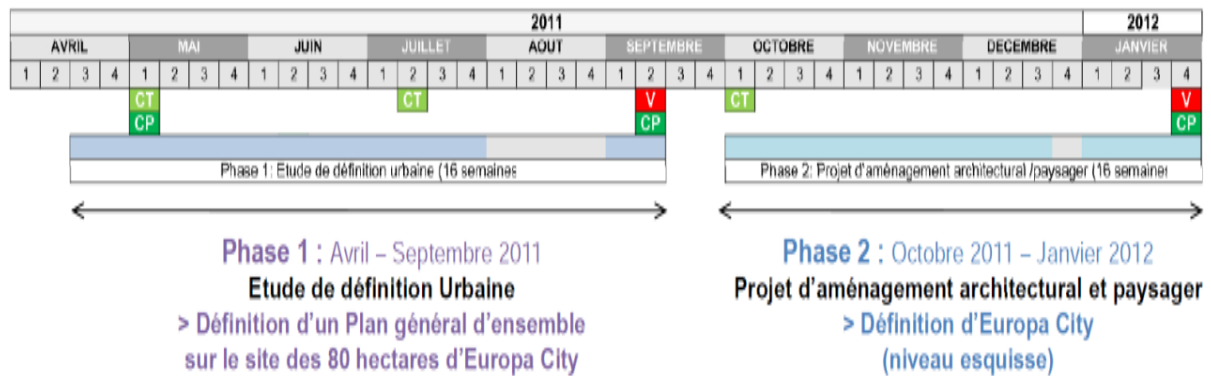
Fig. 14. Timeline of international Europa City competition, 2011–2012. Source: Europa City

During this process, there were four steering committee meetings and five technical committee meetings, co-chaired by the Prefect of the Île-de-France Region and the Mayor of Gonesse, and including representatives of the IDF Region prefecture, the Val d'Oise area prefecture, DREIA (decentralized government department), the Region, the Val d'Oise Department, the Val de France inter-municipal association, Société du Grand Paris, Paris Métropole, EPA, Auchan Group.

The steering committee met monthly to track the progress of the project, notably the studies and follow-up to the international competition. One of the topics that received particular attention was the Europa City programme and its contributions to the area. Representatives of the EPA claim to have been closely involved in the analysis of the projects:

"Europa City conducted its own analysis of the projects and also asked for analyses from several other parties to assist in the decision-making process and ensure that the final decision would be a joint one. This is how we worked with them, and the idea was also that the Europa City project should fit in with the wider Triangle de Gonesse programme, which is why there was a strong emphasis on the project's urban integration, so that it wouldn't just be an UFO dropped into the middle of the operation. So we worked closely with them at all levels." (EPA development team member)

Characteristics of the Europa City project after the competition (January 2012)

The investment is estimated at €1.7 billion. The project will stand on a 80 hectare area along the A1 motorway, at the heart of the Triangle de Gonesse operation, and offer 5 main functions:

– Leisure and entertainment: 170,000 m²
– Business and service activities: 230,000 m²
– Cultural amenities: 50,000 m²
– Hotels, seminar and convention centres 2,700 rooms (10 hotels)
– Public Space: 100,000 m²

The project is expected to create a new urban centre attracting 60,000 to 80,000 visitors a day. It should contribute to the economic and urban development of north-east Île-de-France. Economically, Europa City will make the IdF conurbation more attractive in the competition with other world cities. It will also benefit local people by creating jobs. In addition, it should also make Île-de-France more attractive to tourists.

On 7 February 2012, Europa City received the Grand Paris label, awarded to the projects with the most iconic status in terms of metropolitan dynamics. At this time, the project seemed to be 'in vogue'. Between 20 September and 27 October 2012, the four competition proposals were exhibited at the *Maison de l'Architecture* in Paris, with the aim, according to Europa City, of presenting it to the public, but the exhibition also attracted press attention and gave reality and substance to the project. The plan is that the exhibition will be transferred to Gonesse Town Hall over the winter, and should be a subject of workshops, in particular student workshops.

The four Europa City proposals

Fig. 15. BIG Team. Source: Europa City, exhibition catalogue

Fig. 16. Manuelle Gautrand. Source: Europa City, exhibition catalogue

Fig. 17. Snohetta Team. Source: Europa City, exhibition catalogue

Fig. 18. Valode & Pistre. Source: Europa City, exhibition catalogue

Phase 5, End of 2012–…: Operational phase? Uncertainties and negotiations continue…

Uncertainties arising from the Regional Masterplan and the Grand Paris contracts/project

While the Europa City project was on display at *La Maison de l'Architecture*, negotiations were underway about the regional masterplan, to ensure that it included the urbanisation of Triangle de Gonesse. The different backers fought to defend the project, whereas some of the regional councillors were hostile to it. Ultimately, the draft regional masterplan published in October 2012 globally matched the EPA's Reference Plan.

However, a new uncertainty arose, with the new government casting doubt on the phasing of the Grand Paris Metro. It was clear for Europa City that their project would not be realised without the Grand Paris Metro station. Again, negotiations were organised between local actors, the private

sector participants and government representatives, in particular about the contents of the Plaine de France-Gonesse Territorial Development Contract (tied in with the Grand Paris project).

The project is therefore currently in a state of uncertainty, although certain things should become clearer in early 2013.

Projected timetable

Europa City:
Early 2013: choice of the team of architects to produce the overall project masterplan, in collaboration with local political representatives and EPA Plaine de France.
2013: Additional technical studies/Final masterplan/Project management studies.
2014: Preparation of the regulatory specifications file based on the general masterplan.
This phase will be followed by further competitions to appoint the architects for the different parts of the programme. This will be done in collaboration with local actors, as with the earlier international competition, under procedures still to be jointly decided.
2014/2017: public inquiries on the project (CNCDP) and building permit applications.
2018/2021: construction phase.
2021: opening.

EPA:
2013: Executive decision on the URBAN DEVELOPMENT ZONE (ZAC)
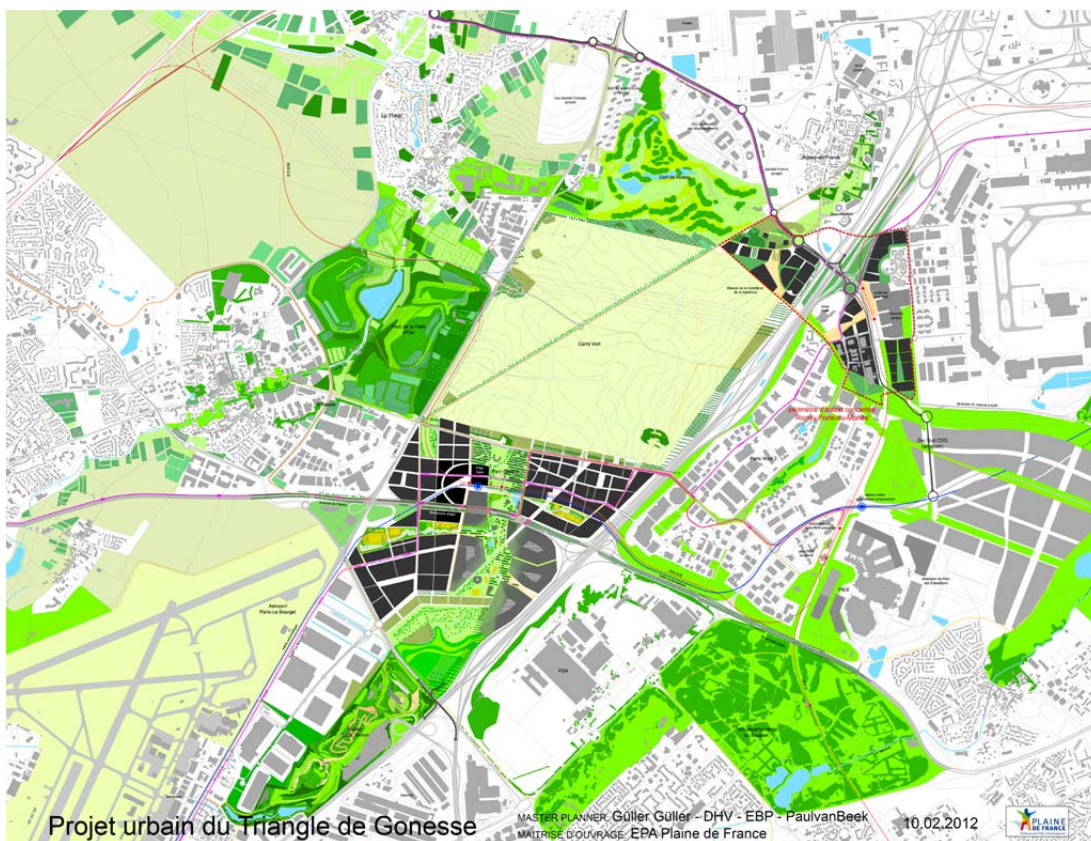Preceded by "statutory consultation" (cooperation and discussion)

Fig. 19 The Triangle de Gonesse – Güller – EPA : maquette et plan masse. Source : EPA Plaine de France, 2012

Interim conclusion

We can see a shift in the project's aims towards greater generality (Boltanski & Thévenot, 1991) in terms of the scales and people involved: the project becomes metropolitan in scale, through the link with the idea of international competitiveness (although the local actors remain attached to the potential of regional economic development), it overcomes a problem of transport and Europa City ultimately becomes identified as a driving force (based on the assertion of a high-end tertiary identity).

Phases	Projects steps	Projects orientations	Scales of reflection	Actors involved/governance	Regulations
Phase 1 1990s – 2006	Strategic reflections EPA	Transport, would require a development project	Regional (local)	EPA – discussions with local actors	SDRIF 1994
Phase 2 2007 – 2009	Development scheme defined by the EPA/internal discussions at Immochan on Europa City	High-end tertiary hub/private commercial and leisure project	Territorial scale (local) – towards metropolitan/ metropolitan international	EPA and local actors/Immochan and central actors	SDRIF 1994 – SDRIF 2008
Phase 3 2010	Urban programming and convergence of the two projects	High-end tertiary hub which could contain several leisure or commercial amenities, notably Europa City	Metropolitan – international scales	Local partnership governance (EPA + local actors)/Public-private governance	SDRIF 2008 –
Phase 4 End of 2010 – 2012	Pre-operational phase, confluence of both projects	Europa City becomes the structuring project (driving), high-end tertiary hub, addition of the Grand Paris Metro Station	Metropolitan and international orientation permitting local economic development	Multi-levels public + private governance	Grand Paris Act SDRIF 2013
Phase 5 End of 2012 – ...	Operational?				CDT/Grand Paris Metro SDRIF 2013

Key moments

2006	EPA's development cluster strategy actors' approach local politicians to begin discussions of a possible project for Triangle de Gonesse.	Phase 1
2007	Europa City project is conceived in-house by Immochan	Phase 2
2008 (April)	Choice of Güller's project (by EPA after international consultation)	
2009	Immochan's representatives begin to meet representatives of Central Government (President) and of the Region (Chairman) to promote their project and explore possible locations.	
2010 (January)	Immochan representatives contact EPA and begin discussion about Triangle de Gonesse	Phase 3
2010	Government announces the Grand Paris Metro project. It is not part of the government's plan to create a station in the Triangle de Gonesse sector. That is why the EPA and local politicians begin negotiations with central government on linking the Triangle de Gonesse project in with the metro plan.	
2010 (summer)	Immochan's preferred location for Europa City becomes Gonesse – but this decision is not yet fully official and is not stated as such in Güller's study	
2010 (November)	"Plan de reference" (Reference Plan) – Güller for EPA	
2010 (end of)	The choice of Triangle de Gonesse for Europa City's location is revealed by Immochan - the Reference Plan had to be updated From this point on, the EPA and Europa City began working together, along with public sector actors at different levels. Europa City project became the "driving force" of Triangle de Gonesse	Phase 4
2011	Responsibility for Triangle de Gonesse management shifted from the EPA's strategic section to its development section	
2011 (February)	Region and central government came to a political agreement on the concept and financing of the Grand Paris Metro project, which included a specific intention to build a station in Triangle de Gonesse (rather than a mere possibility, as previously).	
2012 (January)	International competition was launched in April 2011, to explore the urban development plan and architectural outline. This competition ends in January 2012, with submissions from 4 multidisciplinary teams.	
2013	Choice of the team of architects to produce the overall project masterplan by Immochan-Europa City, in collaboration with local political representatives and EPA Plaine de France. Executive decision on the ZAC	Phase 5

Issues

The Triangle de Gonesse operation and the emergence of Europa City casts light on four general issues, which reflect the project's internal contradictions and the opposition between the actors.

Transport/Grand Paris Project

Accessibility and transport is an essential problem in this area and represents the starting point of the operation (plays a role in justifying the project). Initially, the idea of a connecting link between RER B and D justifies a project to create an employment hub. However, disagreements gradually emerged about this Gonesse[14] rail link and the urban development project seemed to become more important than the question of transport (even though the transport argument continued to be used to justify the project).

The emergence of the Grand Paris Metro project was a catalyst: the exploration of transport issues moved beyond local level because it was now tied in with a metropolitan dimension (and indeed, an international dimension with the Grand 8 project). Moreover, the issue also became linked in with development, because part of the Grand Paris Metro project involves development around stations. That is why Immochan is ready to fund a part of the Triangle de Gonesse station.

At this point, transport becomes a further structural factor in the Triangle de Gonesse project, not only because it will improve mobility within the territory, but also because the Grand Paris station becomes the condition of the construction of Europa City. Now, Europa City is gradually coming to be defined as the structuring project – the 'driving force' – of Triangle de Gonesse.

That is why, despite sometimes differing interests, a joint dynamic emerged in favour of the station, as the interests of private sector figures and local politicians converged in dealings with central government.

Negotiations are still in progress about the phasing of the construction of the station. Nevertheless, the Val de France/Gonesse Territorial Development Contract (CDT) lays down clear transport objectives. The CDT expresses two main priorities, through several projects:[15]

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[14] The Barreau de Gonesse rail link project 's main remit is to help give access to the CDG area jobs for the people of Val d'Oise. Many experts including the SNCF and RFF are reluctant to this project as it does not address this issue and that the socio-economic profitability of this project is seen as negative. It is only justified in a 'political' sense.
[15] Other Contract priorities are: economic development, housing, education and training, environment and sustainable development, and culture.

- Connection of the area to the Grand Paris Metro *via* the construction of an automatic subway station in Triangle de Gonesse;
- Opening up of the territory via three projects: Avenue du Parisis, a structural highway which will form the 'backbone' of the project (completion planned for 2025, Val d'Oise Department project); the 'Gonesse Link', which will be preceded by a bus line in 2013 (completion planned 2020, Île-de-France Transport Syndicate project); and extension of the T5 tramline.
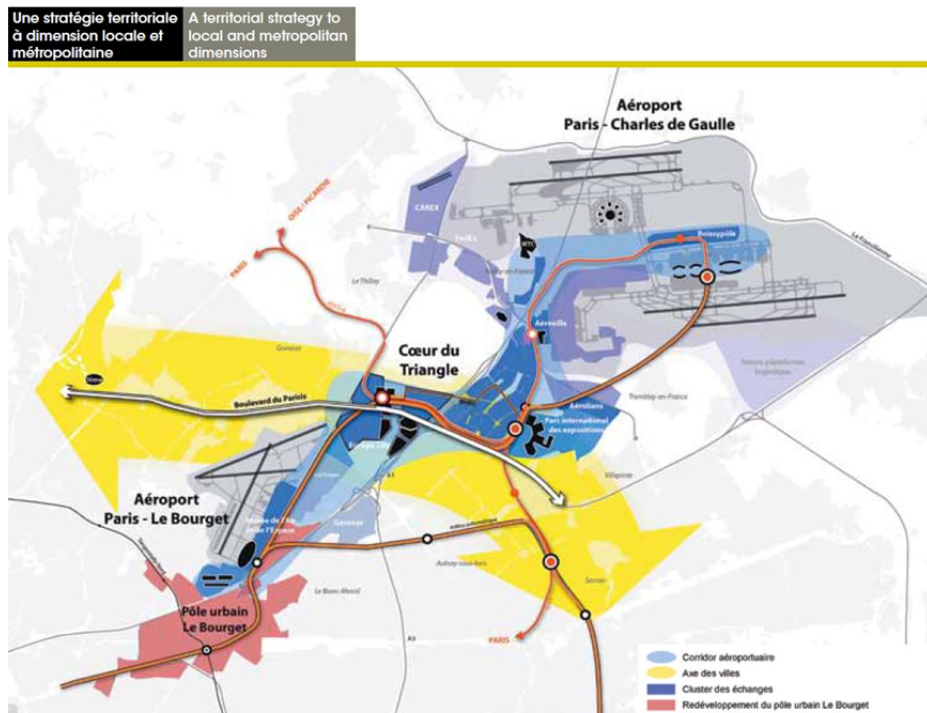

Fig. 20. Territorial strategy to local and metropolitan dimensions of EPA Plaine de France. Source : EPA Plaine de France 2012

Economic development: international competitiveness and local employment

Overall, the primary focus of the Triangle de Gonesse project is economic development, and the Europa City scheme accords perfectly with this priority. In reality, however, this economic objective is associated with two different scales reflecting two different political priorities: the metropolitan scale, where the priority is international competitiveness, and local scale, where the priority is job creation. In their speeches and rhetoric, the different actors responsible for the project visibly seek to connect these two dimensions, although the two levels of argument are not necessarily adopted by the same actors, or at least not by the same authorities.

Metropolitan level: project identified with the label of regional and international competitiveness: rhetoric adopted by the EPA in submitting its project (with references to foreign cities), but also by Europa City (in particular because of project's tourist potential).
This rhetoric is in line with the original government discourse on the Grand Paris project.

Local level: an essential argument to promote the project with local people, and strongly emphasised by local actors.

Europa City promises that the project will create jobs, which will go preferentially to local people. In a study carried out for Europa City by the Semaphore consultancy, the following estimates emerged:

– For construction of the buildings over 4 years: 12,600 direct jobs/6300 indirect jobs
– For operations: 11,580 direct jobs/5600 indirect jobs

In other words, the construction of Europa City in this area, a genuine labour pool, is presented as an opportunity for the local population. This will only happen, however, if the region invests heavily in training young people to the necessary level (30% of young people in the area have no skills).

By contrast, environmental associations in the *département*, which joined forces in 2011 to oppose the project (the Triangle de Gonesse Collective), denounce the claims about employment as 'lies'. According to their representatives, the figures reported relate to the region as a whole. For them, the employment argument is a mirage, a political illusion, whereas they fear that the development of 'shopping malls' will lead to deterioration in working conditions and the casualization of labour.[16]

> "It is scandalous to talk about 11,000 jobs. Maybe 11,000 people in all will work sometime during the construction phase, but not for 4 years. For four years there will maybe be 2000 or 3000, but the people building the foundations won't work at the same time as the people doing the finishing! I had the opportunity to speak with a guy at Semaphore, the consulting firm. I said to him: do your figures include all the other jobs that will be lost? He told me that that was not his remit." (Collective representative)

So the arguments employed show where the different parties stand: the activist groups are more interested in the environmental case (they want to protect farming in the Triangle), but this does not seem to carry much weight compared with the economic argument of employment, which seems to trump any other considerations. Some activists are trying to develop an agricultural project on the grounds that it would also create employment, but the political actors perceive this project as less credible than Europa City.

> "The community will then lose land that is capable of offering the whole population of Paris a healthy and diverse diet as well as providing high quality products for major business sectors such as catering and restaurants. Building this project will destroy local, sustainable, skilled jobs, which could have been created on this land." (Declaration by the Collectif pour le Triangle)

In addition, certain actors involved in exploring ideas about the development of this area (in particular at the IAU) question the economic viability of the project, quite apart from arguments about the environmental issues. Paul Lecroart explains that : "There as been no independent assessment of the spatial, environmental and socio-economic foundations of the Triangle de Gonesse project. Studies are ordered by EPA to justify the project, not to look into more sustainable alternatives" .

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[16] Triangle de Gonesse Collective Forum, 22 September 2012, Jobs and Europa City

Indeed, there seem to some question of the credibility of the Europa City project: some even wonder whether it is not simply a publicity move by Immochan. These criticisms are based on the fact that no feasibility study has been done for the project and that it has not been proved that such a project would be suitable for this area. Unlike the environmental groups, the observers who hold this view are not against all urban development of the Triangle: however, they think that the project as it currently stands is not the right one and that other areas located near Roissy Airport and which already possess transport infrastructures, should be preferred.

Farmlands, environment and sustainable development

The members of the Collective think that the 'green square' does not protect farmland. The action group is demanding that the whole area should be set aside exclusively agricultural purposes, for the development of food production in Île-de-France and the creation of jobs in the community. Its members are also opposed to the STIF's planned route for the 'Gonesse Link', which in their opinion fails to meet local needs.

Demands of the Action Group Collective
No to the project of concreting over the Triangle de Gonesse with Europa City
No to the creation of a pointless Metro station in the middle of the fields (Auchan condition)
Yes to a Triangle de Gonesse dedicated to agricultural use
Yes to farming and food production in Île-de-France

In fact, some of the institutional public actors hold positions close to those of the Collective on the question of farmland and more widely on environmental issues and sustainable development. According to them, a study carried out in 2010 and commissioned by the EPA showed the real advantages of preserving farmland in Triangle de Gonesse. However, these findings were apparently ignored. Indeed, although the surface area of the 'green square' matches the area recommended in the study, this space is isolated on the edge of the zone, while what is at stake in the preservation of agriculture is precisely how to connect it with the wider territory and to transform it into a structuring element, by establishing real zones of contact between agriculture and urban fabric.

According to the former EPA project leader, the Triangle de Gonesse operation corresponds to a classic economic model: "The government does what it has always done, taking advantage of the fact that local government representatives are not well organised." The main criticisms regarding the failure to take environmental concerns into account are as follows:

– The project contributes to urban encroachment into officially protected agricultural areas;
– The project ignores the environmental risks facing the Grand Paris area: global warming, road traffic.

Criticisms concerning the neglect of agricultural issues:

- Protected farmland (400 ha) constitutes a compensatory measure, but without any long-standing plan or status to ensure longevity;
- Farmland will be surrounded by urban development, which will inevitably encroach in the future;
- No development of the local agricultural sectors for the benefit of the big food-processing and commercial groups (Auchan).

Certain observers of the territory share this view. For some members of the Institut d'Aménagement et d'Urbanisme of the Ile-de-France Region, therefore, the question that arises with the Triangle de Gonesse in the Plaine de France, is "about the tensions or the possible contradictions between a major development strategy and other environmental and planning issues, such as:

- Making full use of the capacity of existing and projected urban areas for airport-related and concomitant development (including Airport Core, South Airport and Le Bourget areas, all served by rail) before developing a greenfield location requiring new high-capacity transport investment that will not benefit the (poorly accessible) existing communities;
- Preserving highly productive agricultural land as a food-producing resources and provider of green services and landscape amenities, locally and at regional scale (Metropolitan Green Belt);
- Preserving the accessibility of the Roissy-CDG airport road, which already experiences major congestion;
- Favouring mixed-use fine-grained urban and social regeneration in the centre of Plaine de France, versus new mono-functional office and retail-led development in the fringe area: there is no housing allowed in Triangle de Gonesse because of its location within the noise contours of Roissy-CDG airport and Le Bourget business airport, and in the proximity of major motorways (A1 and *Boulevard Urbain* du Parisis, or BIP);
- Reducing the footprint of local and metropolitan development: on water systems (Croult Valley), CO_2 and greenhouse gas emissions, energy consumption, etc.[17]"

This means, therefore, that financial actors may perceive sustainability as a constraint on investment (Theurillat, 2012). For the political ambitions of central government and the Region, the objectives of sustainable development are to develop a denser urban fabric (compact city), to integrate the area into the transport system and to introduce mixed-use buildings and neighbourhoods in order to counter the spatial segregation of social activities (mixed rather than mono-functional city). In addition, sustainable development is perceived as a social process embedded in civil society involvement (DaCunha, 2003). Yet none of these different elements seems to be present in the Europa City project, except for the development of the transport network.

Nonetheless, the project's actors seem to share significant environmental and sustainability objectives. The Territorial Development Contract specifies that environmental and heritage factors must be taken into consideration in all the projects. Under this contract, all projects and operations must be conducted in compliance with sustainable development regulations. The projects must include initiatives to limit noise pollution from air traffic. Particular attention must be paid to natural spaces and to the water system for the 'green and blue corridor' linking with the Seine-

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[17] C.F. LECROART (P.). The Triangle de Gonesse Project in the Plaine de France, Paris case study: Case definition and study orientation for Context Project, IAU IDF, 2012.

Saint-Denis area. Farmland must be preserved and enhanced within the 'Green Square'. The project actors are also keen to reduce the development's carbon footprint.

In addition, the choice of the Güller project can largely be explained because of its farmland preservation component. The development of public transport would also seem to be another environmental argument. Finally, Europa City is proposed precisely as a means of demonstrating the intention not to build a mono-functional project.

Indeed, Europa City presents itself as 'a sustainable project':

– Through its commitment to environmental protection and energy efficiency;
– Through the economic activity and jobs it will create;
– Through its ambition, its mixing of functions and its cultural scope;
– Through the innovation present in all its elements;
– Through the participatory approach with all the public partners;
– Through the preparation of an Agenda 21 scheme covering all aspects of sustainable development, including the establishment of a 'consultation programme' and 'participation charter'.

Uncertainties and negotiations around statutory documents and planning procedures

Procedures and regulations are crucial not just for public sector actors but also for private sector entities. These statutory elements are understood both as conditions for the realisation of the projects and in this case as 'markers' of compromise.

They also embody the uncertainties that surround the project. The most recent uncertainty was associated with the SDRIF (Regional Masterplan), which entails negotiation at several levels (between local and regional public actors, between regional public actors and central government, between private actors and regional actors). The draft established in October 2012 authorises the development of the Triangle de Gonesse project, although framed in terms of the creation of an 'urban front' (urban growth boundary) and a "adapted public transport access decision". The Region seems *de facto* to be the entity with the greatest uncertainty about the project, because of opposition by political groups such as the Greens and the Left Front, which tabled amendments against the urbanisation of Triangle de Gonesse.

A new uncertainty emerged recently around the construction of the Grand Paris Metro station and discussions relating to the CDT. This uncertainty, and the preparation of these new statutory documents, has led to a new round of negotiations at various levels.

According to the private sector stakeholders, the fact that the CDT will result in a revision of all the town planning documents is not 'very reassuring' to investors. The Europa City representatives stress that there is a "swarm of procedures and regulations" that they depend on and over which they have no control, despite multiple meetings with the authorities. According to them, only a group like Auchan, a family business robust enough to take its time, could risk facing the uncertainty associated with regulations.

Legal framework

In France, regional and local authorities have since decentralisation, largely established the regulations that structure the implementation of urban projects through different planning instruments: the Regional Masterplan (SDRIF – Schéma Directeur de la Région Ile de France), Departmental Masterplan (SCOT – Schéma de cohérence territoriale), and Local Masterplan (PLU – Plan local d'Urbanisme). They are governed by the Planning Code (amended by the Solidarity and Urban Renewal Act of 2000).

Because they are primarily established by local authorities, these regulatory documents give the latter extensive scope to change them in order to guarantee the implementation of urban projects: this is the great flexibility of public planning law in France. It means that if a planning instrument prevents the construction of an infrastructure, it is usually enough to make a change in that instrument to remove the restriction (after public consultation procedure) – a common practice amongst local politicians, especially for local masterplans. In fact Gonesse municipality will have to change its PLU (local masterplan) to include the Triangle de Gonesse Urban Development Zone (which will be subject to public enquiry): it will then be able to take measures to approve the construction of Europa City.

This process is made possible by the great flexibility of public planning law, which is very unspecific overall about the measures required to comply with the standards it lays down. This enables local actors and also judges to adjust their decisions specifically to local conditions. This peculiarity is only possible in France because public law (which structures the existence and application of public authority) is distinct from private law (which governs relations between citizens).

Beyond this system, there are of course national legislative instruments that take priority over planning laws, such as noise regulations, embodied in the Noise Exposure Plans, construction safety rules, public health rules. Overall, however, these regulatory guidelines are familiar to local officials and are therefore incorporated into the project preparation phase. Being built into projects from the start, they pose no problem for project development, which is devised to take account of the framework they impose.

Nevertheless, it can happen that developers fail to take account of certain regulatory requirements. For example, creating an Urban Development Zone requires a whole series of compulsory preliminary studies: land and geological surveys, archaeological surveys, etc. These often take place after the project has been thought out and programmed: this is the case for the Triangle de Gonesse, were these surveys are just getting underway (2012–2013). However, if in the course of these surveys the developer discovers, for example, the existence of groundwater, the project will have to be modified. In this respect, these compulsory surveys can impose constraints, though it

is extremely rare that they result in the cancellation of a project. Usually, the developers simply redefine certain aspects of the project or find technical solutions to bring it into line with the regulations. For the Triangle de Gonesse and Europa City, the areas concerned are so large that it is a safe bet that, even if a problem arose on a particular plot, it will be possible to get round it by a small adjustment to the plan. This means that the project could be adjusted to meet national standards, which should not therefore hamper its implementation. Nevertheless, it will be interesting to follow the results of these preliminary surveys, and to see how they are submitted to public enquiry.

There are also documents that provide broad normative guidelines, such as the Environmental Charter incorporated in into French constitutional law in 2004.[18] In the environmental sphere, the fundamental legislation in recent years has been the Grenelle de l'Environnement (Grenelle I and II, passed in 2009 and 2010).[19] It is interesting to see how the different players use and apply it in their projects. In the case of the Triangle de Gonesse and Europa City, it would seem that this law was included in the early ideas on the project: this is evidenced by the "sustainable development" criteria developed by Immochan in presenting its project, but also the plan for a green and blue zone at the heart of the Triangle, as well as the commitment to renewable energy buildings.

Following the introduction of the Grenelle Act (2009–2010), planning law has had to incorporate new sustainable development objectives:

– Combating urban sprawl, which leads to shrinkage of agricultural and natural land, energy wastage, greenhouse gas emissions and high infrastructure costs;
– Preservation of diversity through the protection, restoration and creation of ecological continuities;
– Encouraging the implementation of measures to improve the energy performance of buildings;
– Taking a global approach to urban design and creating a link between density and public transport provision;
– The goal is also to simplify the pyramid of planning regulations, to clarify the relations structured by these instruments and to reinforce the inter-municipal scale;
– Moreover, central government will encourage regional and local authorities to carry out exemplary sustainable development projects.

As can be seen, these recommendations are fairly wide and socially 'normative'. Nevertheless, certain measures are made compulsory. In particular, in the domain of Urban Planning, the Grenelle Act requires local authorities:

– To incorporate sustainable development at the heart of their urban planning instruments (SCOT, PLU and municipal maps) *(Loi Grenelle 1 article 7 – Loi Grenelle 2 article 14)*;
– To emphasise the role of the SCOT (regional masterplans) as guidelines for the inter-municipal level by giving them, as well as the PLU (local masterplans), more measures that reflect the sustainable development objectives prioritised in the Grenelle, in particular with regard to the

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[18] With this Charter, the right to the environment becomes a fundamental constitutional freedom. Indeed, the Charter now places the same priority on the principles of environmental protection as on Human and Citizen Rights in the 1789 Constitution and economic and social rights in the Preamble to the 1946 Constitution.
[19] The 57 articles of this Act propose measures relating to the sectors of energy and construction, transport, biodiversity and the natural environment, to governance and finally to environmental and health risks.

consumption of space, density, the protection of biodiversity and the fight against global warming *(Loi Grenelle 1 article 7 – Loi Grenelle 2 article 17)*;

– Support for the preparation of inter-municipal local masterplans with powers extended to housing and transport *(Loi Grenelle 1 article 7, Loi Grenelle 2 article 19)*;

– Planning measures designed to prohibit the installation of domestic systems for the production of renewable energy or any renewable material that prevents greenhouse gas emissions do not apply to planning permits or preliminary declarations relating to these projects *(Loi Grenelle 1 article 7 – Loi Grenelle 2 article 12)*;

– Inclusion of green and blue areas in planning documents and projects, involvement of local and regional authorities in the definition of these green and blue areas at different scales (national guidelines for the protection and restoration of ecological continuities, regional ecological coherence schemes…) *(Loi Grenelle 1 article 21 – Loi Grenelle 2 article 121)*;

– Strengthening of the role of the Prefects in monitoring the sustainable development objectives set out in the SCOT and PLU *(Loi Grenelle 2 articles 14–17 and article 19)*;

– Planning documents subject to environmental assessment *(Loi Grenelle 2 article 16)*;

– New rules on wider publicity to ensure better control of the impact of projects on human habitat and landscape, and more connection between local regulations and planning documents *(Loi Grenelle 2 article 36)*;

– Possibility of creating territorial planning and sustainable development directives (DTADD) that cannot be directly contested in their totality; they may be implemented as public interest projects (PIG), the use of which is specified *(Loi Grenelle 2 articles 13–15)*;

– Permission to exceed land-use density rules up to a maximum threshold of 30%, to facilitate the implementation of projects that meet high-energy performance criteria or which are supplied by efficient renewable energy systems *(Loi Grenelle 2 article 12)*.

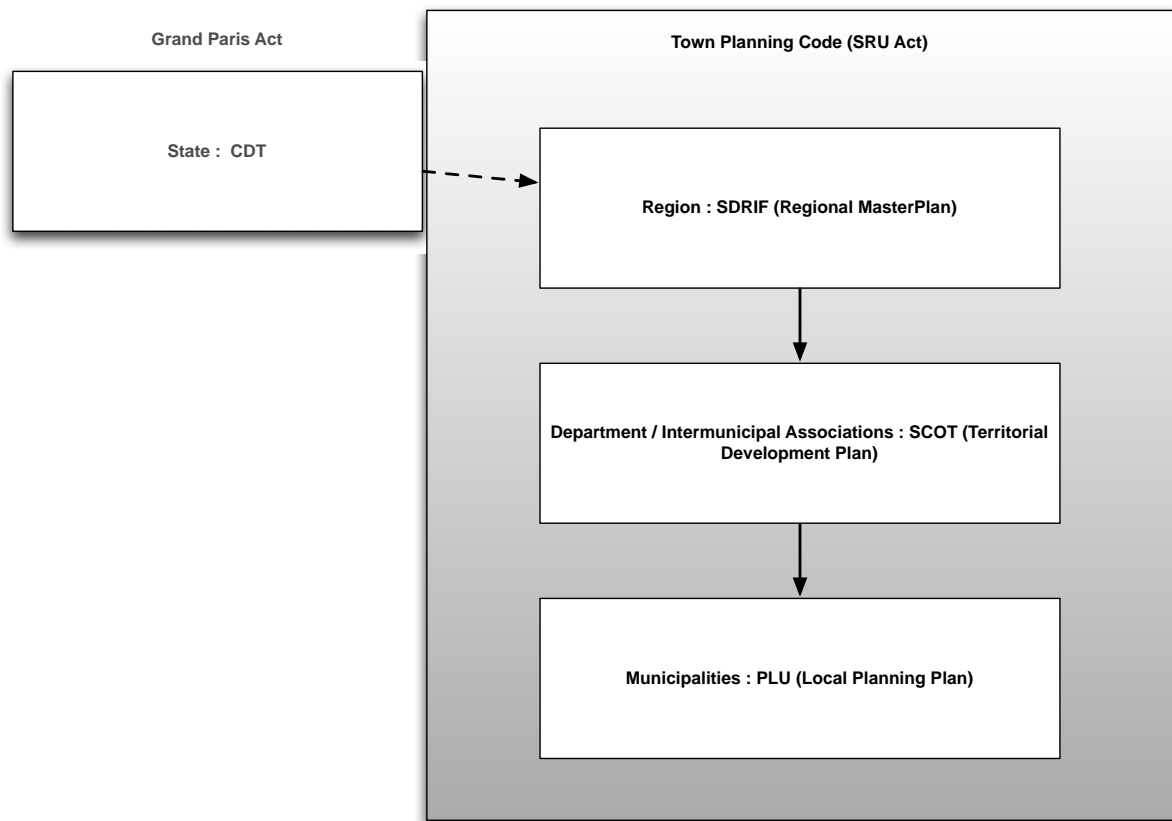# Urban planning rules that can be legally enforced/challenged

Grand Paris Act	Town Planning Code (SRU Act)
State : CDT	Region : SDRIF (Regional MasterPlan)
	Department / Intermunicipal Associations : SCOT (Territorial Development Plan)
	Municipalities : PLU (Local Planning Plan)

Fig. 21. Île-de-France regulatory planning system

SDRIF – Schéma directeur régional Île-de-France – Île-de-France Regional Masterplan (Planning Code)

As the document that governs planning and development in the Île-de-France region, under the Town Planning Code (SRU Act 2000), the SDRIF provides a strategic long-term vision for housing, services, mobility, leisure activities, air quality, and natural spaces. As stipulated in Article L. 141-1 of the Town Planning Code, "this plan notably determines the general purpose of various parts of the region, the means for protecting and developing the environment, the location of large transport infrastructures and major facilities. It also determines the preferential location of urban extensions, as well as of industrial, agricultural, forestry and tourist activities".

In 1995, responsibility for drawing up this masterplan was transferred from central government to the Region, but its implementation still has to be approved by government decree. Legally, therefore, the authority that remains in charge of its application and has the capacity to impose it is still central government.

In 2008, the Region drew up a new SDRIF, which failed to be ratified by government decree, and therefore, in principle, does not exist. In theory, the current SDRIF is the 1994 document drawn up by central government. However, a law of June 2010 provided an exemption from the Town Planning Code under which the 2008 SDRIF can be applied for certain projects by derogative anticipation under certain conditions.

The 2008 SDRIF includes several objectives globally relating to sustainable development:

– Creation of 60,000 new dwellings per year;
– Conservation of farmland and woodlands;
– Development of public transport.

The development priorities set by the regional masterplan are binding on local level planning documents drawn up by the intermunicipal associations (SCOT) and municipalities (PLU), which have to be compatible with the orientations of the SDRIF. In other words, this document governs local development by setting limits on construction areas. However, there are no hierarchical relations between the Region and local authorities, so implementing the SDRIF conditions entails a great deal of negotiation.

Following the agreement with the Government of 26 January 2011, the SDRIF is now being reviewed in order, in particular, to bring it into line with the Grand Paris Metro projects and the Territorial Development Contracts (*infra*). This means that the Grand Paris Act, passed in 2011, has to be incorporated into the SDRIF. The vote on the new SDRIF will take place in 2013, and the plan will be accompanied by a SRCE (Schéma Régional de Cohérence Ecologique – Regional Ecological Coherence Scheme), a new procedure arising from the Grenelle d'Environnement environmental programme.

The new draft SDRIF drawn up by the Region was published in October 2012, and will be discussed with the other public partners and submitted to public enquiry before the regional council vote in 2013.

Fig. 22. SDRIF revision timetable. Source: Île-de-France Region

The SDRIF is the document that governs the planning and development objectives of the Île-de-France region up to the year 2030. It also sets out the means for implementing those objectives, i.e. the construction of 70,000 dwellings and the creation of 28,000 jobs a year.

With regard to Triangle de Gonesse, the 2008 SDRIF defined it as a 'conditional urbanisation zone', the condition being the construction of public transport infrastructures. There were exten-

sive negotiations and pressures from local stakeholders to ensure that the new SDRIF permits the development of the planned EPA project. There are currently several debates underway on this subject, since the Region published the first version at the beginning of October. Political groups have already filed amendments to the Triangle de Gonesse project presented in the SDRIF.

To this day, the Region's project roughly corresponds to the EPA's reference plan. The Triangle is still a conditional urbanisation zone, indicated by yellow diamonds on the general layout map. It includes plans for the maximum urbanisation of 300 hectares in the south of the Triangle, though this urbanisation is still conditional on the introduction of public transport. It is restricted by a 'regional interest urban front' protecting an area of 400 hectares of farmland in the North of the Triangle, with the aim of maintaining their integrity and preventing any further fragmentation. Continued long-term agriculture is a condition of the development of the Triangle. These latter factors reflect pressures from the Greens on the regional council, who were largely opposed to the Triangle de Gonesse project. Europa city is not mentioned in the SDRIF.

In addition, this area is deemed a 'territory of metropolitan interest' (TIM), an infra-regional zone in which the main actors are encouraged to share a common vision. By designating an area a TIM, the region identifies it as a place with particular development priorities and potential.
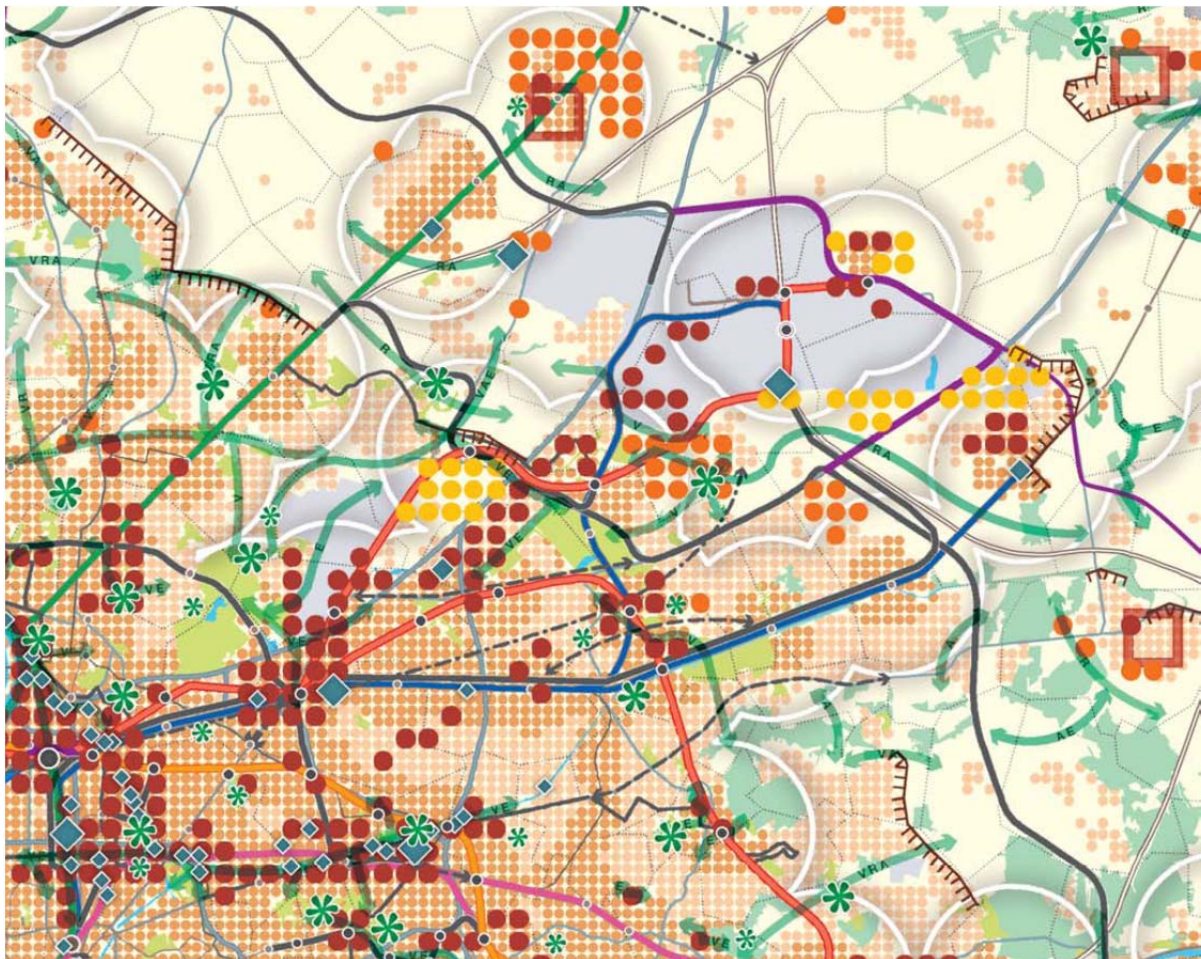

Fig. 23. SDRIF Project for the Triangle de Gonesse area, October 2012. Source: Île-de-France Region, website

SDRIF, SCOT and PLU must be compatible or take into account european environmental directives (Directive Habitats, Directive Oiseaux, Natura 2000), national environmental and planning laws & regulations (including Law on Water –Loi sur l'Eau 1992; Law on Air and energy –Loi Laure 1996, Planning Code –Code de l'Urbanisme) and plans (including Plan de prévention des risques -PPR 1987, Regional mobility plan –PDUIF 2013, Regional climate air & energy plan adopted 2012).

Contrat de Développement Territorial – CDT – Territorial Development Contract/Grand Paris Act (2010)

To accompany the Grand Paris project, a new urban development planning and management instrument – the Territorial Development Contract (Contract de Développement Territorial or CDT) – was introduced in 2010. There are to this day 19 of these legal agreements in all, due for signature in 2013 by the State and municipal or inter-municipal authorities, after consultation with the Île-de-France regional council, the departmental councils and the Paris Métropole Association (syndicat Paris Métropole). The public actors responsible for drawing up the contracts come from the Regional Prefecture, a decentralized government department. The Société du Grand Paris is also responsible for developing the content of these contracts.

These 19 contracts concentrate on the following objectives and priorities: urban planning, housing, transport, economic development and environment. They relate to multi-municipality geographical groupings. Some observers see the CDT as primarily a framework for governance rather than for concrete action. Indeed, although some framework agreements have already been signed (in particular for the Triangle de Gonesse territory), the CDTs themselves will only be signed in 2013. It is only after this has been done and after a public inquiry that they will become documents that can be legally challenged. Nevertheless, the new SDRIF was drawn up with reference to the CDTs, so they have already had some influence on the direction of spatial planning and development.

Triangle de Gonesse is part of the CDT covering Plaine de France/Gonesse/Bonneuil en France. The framework agreement was signed in January 2012. It covers three issues:

– Sustainable mobility, with the development of a green corridor to enhance and protect the environment;
– Economic development, with the creation of 30,000 jobs by 2025;
– Housing and the development, with the construction of 710 dwellings a year over 20 years.

Two projects are cited in the official presentation of the CDT relating to the area: Europa City, a 'metropolitan amenity and a key actor in the economic development of the territory', and Dome de Sarcelles.

PEB – plan d'exposition au bruit – Noise Exposure Plan

The Noise Exposure Plan (PEB) is a statutory document required under Law 85-696 of 8 July 1985, relating to any area close to an airport, where planning rules are subject to a number of restrictions. The purpose of this plan is to prevent new populations being exposed to noise pollution from airport activity and in some cases to set soundproofing standards for construction projects.

The PEB defines 4 zones around airports:

– Zones A and B are considered to be high noise area. Only authorised facilities associated with airport activity, service accommodation and essential agricultural buildings can be built within these zones.
– Zone C is considered to be a moderate noise area, where separate individual buildings are authorised provided that they are already in a built-up area with existing public amenities.
– In zone D, buildings of all kinds are authorised, but must be soundproofed.

The PEB is much more binding on local development than the SDRIF, because it contains specific building standards. It is a national regulation applied at local level. In this particular case, the SDRIF, as a regional planning document, has to take into account restrictions imposed by the PEB. In the case of the Triangle de Gonesse, there are actually two PEB: one for Charles de Gaulle (2007) and one for Le Bourget (under study).

Nevertheless, the PEB does not come up in the context of Triangle de Gonesse project (the Mayor of Gonesse tried to request a relaxation of the rules in the negotiations on the CDT, in order to build housing in his municipality, but this did not affect Triangle de Gonesse). Because no housing is involved, the Triangle de Gonesse and Europa City projects will not really be affected by the PEB, except in terms of building heights and probably special noise protection building regulations. This means that the PEB, although recognised by the different parties to development projects as the most binding of all the regulatory instruments, is not seen as an obstacle in this case. The restrictions that it imposes seem to have been fully integrated and accepted.

Urban planning rules that cannot be legally enforced/challenged, but which provide standards and models as a basis for negotiation between actors

Charte du développement durable de la Plaine de France – Plaine de France Sustainable Development Charter

The Plaine de France Public Corporation intends to establish a 'sustainable development charter' as a framework for its projects. In any case, the Territorial Development Contract specifies that environmental and heritage factors will be taken into account in all projects. Under this contract, all planning operations should be conducted in the light of its sustainable development recommendations. A charter, however, is a policy instrument, not a legal document that can be challenged in court.

Le Plan de Protection de l'Atmosphère (PPA) – Atmospheric Protection Plan

This instrument was introduced by the law on the atmosphere and energy use of 30 December 1996. Its contents were further defined by the Council of State Decree of 25 May 2000. It applies to urban areas with more than 250,000 inhabitants and to areas where air quality thresholds are exceeded. Its aim is to reduce pollutant concentrations in such areas below the threshold value. Particular provisions relating to the different sources of emissions (boilers, factories, road traffic, wood burning) are applied by prefectural order.

The PPA does not specifically apply to urban planning documents, but its provisions can be incorporated into them.

Rules on citizen participation in urban projects

European basis of the rules on participation: predominance of the environmental aspect

Planning and environmental law is often cited as one of the primary spheres for citizen participation in decisions associated with public action (Hostou & Struillou, 2007). In France, with regard to land use planning, the obligation on central government to involve local authorities in its decisions was introduced in 1976 and the decentralisation process that started in 1983 led to a redefinition of powers in favour of local authorities. However, this represents only a limited approach to participation, affecting relations between different levels of government rather than citizens directly. Environmental law seems to have gone further on these issues. In reality, it was built on relevant European law.

Indeed, it was in the 1970s that international rules on the right of participation began to emerge: Stockholm Declaration in 1972, final act of the Helsinki Conference in 1975, Principle 10 of the Rio Convention in 1992. The Aarhus Convention, signed on 25th June 1998 by 39 countries, on access to information, public participation in the decision-making process and access to the courts in environmental matters, constitutes the most formal reflection of the rising importance of citizen participation in European law (Drobenko, 2007; Jadot, 2007).

The Aarhus Convention is an international agreement that seeks to:

– improve the information provided by public authorities relating to significant environmental data;
– promote public participation in decisions that have environmental consequences (this is probably the most innovative aspect of the Convention, Drobenko, 2006);
– extend the conditions of access to the courts on matters of environmental law.

Article 6 of the Convention provides for public participation in decisions relating to particular activities *'early in the procedure, when all options are open and effective public participation can take place'*, then *'throughout the decision-making process'*. Article 7 covers public participation in re-

gard to plans, programmes and policies relating to the environment: 'each party shall endeavour to provide opportunities for public participation in the preparation of policies relating to the environment'.

It is also stated that the 'public concerned', in other words any person affected or likely to be affected by the decisions taken or simply having an interest in the decision-making process (Article 2-5) should 'have access to a review procedure before a court of law and/or another independent and impartial body established by law, to challenge the substantive and procedural legality of any decision, act or omission, subject to the provisions of article 6'.

The European Union adopted two directives in order to comply with the Aarhus Convention. The first requires Member States to introduce public participation on 'plans and programmes' relating to the environment (Directive of 28 January 2003 on public access to environmental information, Article 3). The second establishes new requirements for citizen participation in the assessment of the environmental impact of public and private projects, recommending that the public should be informed 'early in the procedure for the taking of a decision or, at the latest, as soon as the information can reasonably be provided'. It also requires that 'the public concerned shall be given early and effective opportunities to participate in the environmental decision-making procedures referred to in Article 2(2) and shall, for that purpose, be entitled to express comments and opinions when all options are open to the competent authority or authorities before the decision on the request for development consent is taken' (Directive of 26 May 2003 (2003/35/CE) on public participation and access to justice, Part 3).

Development of laws and regulations in France since the 1970s

This supranational legal arsenal led to a certain number of changes in French law, although community law has done little to impose an obligation or restrictive provisions on Member States to ensure public participation.

The first legal moves towards citizen participation emerged in France in the mid-1970s and continued into the 1980s.

First, in 1976 the public enquiry procedure was extended to public participation (whereas it had previously concerned only property owners under compulsory purchase orders) and acquired an environmental dimension. *Decree No. 78432 of 14 May 1976 (Official Journal of 19 May 1976*) on public enquiry reform places the emphasis 'on providing the public with good information in advance of the enquiry' which could entail 'consulting with civil society associations, press conferences, meetings, debates, exhibitions…'. The Decree stipulates the need for 'broad' and 'active' information before any enquiry.

The law of 12 July 1983 on the democratisation of public enquiries and on environmental protection – the so-called *Bouchardeau Act* – further extended the scope of the public enquiry. This law attributed greater importance to the opinion expressed by the commission of enquiry based on the information in the consultation phase. The public enquiry then emerged as the legal medium for a new citizen right to environmental information (Hostou & Struillou, 2007), as a procedural framework through which citizens could obtain information and, where applicable, put forward proposals and counterproposals.

The *spatial planning law of 18 July 1985* is very important from a planning perspective, because it created *Article L. 300.2 of the Planning Code*, the ultimate legal reference for the organisation of public participation in urban planning. The authorities were now obliged to hold consultations before any development operation that would 'substantially change the living environment'. While this law 'defining and implementing planning principles' refers to the need for 'consultation' with the stakeholders in a project, including civil society associations and local people, its application nevertheless remained limited to the amendment or revision of a Land Use Plan, the creation of an Urban Development Zone or to development operations carried out by municipalities or other public entities meeting particular criteria. However, it extended public access to information, since 'its purpose is to provide information to the public on the preliminary studies for planned projects'.

The scope of application of this law was extended in 1991 by *the Blueprint Act on the City (Circular No. 91-97 of 31 July 1991*), which introduced a requirement to consult on 'actions or obligations, which, by their scope or nature, change the living conditions of inhabitants of residential districts or estates'. Although this provision might give the impression of affecting any district-scale operation, it in fact applied to particular procedures associated with City Policy: 'housing improvement projects, slum clearance operations, real estate restructuring'.

The so-called *Local Democracy Blueprint Act for the Territorial Administration of the Republic of 6 February 1992* lays down an even more general duty of transparency on the part of elected officials towards citizens as an 'essential principle of local democracy'. It asserts 'the right of the inhabitants to be informed (…) and to be consulted (…)'. Finally, the law on the conduct of big national infrastructure projects, *the so-called Bianco Circular of 15 December 1992*, introduces a more global process, introducing a new preliminary debate on the purposes and economic and social benefits of a project.

A shift occurred in the mid-1990s, particularly relating to the environmental sphere: in 1995, a public debate process was added to the public enquiry procedure.

The Barnier Act of 2 February 1995 provides for the possibility of organising a 'preliminary public debate for large public development operations of national interest, for operations that have large socio-economic implications or a significant impact on the environment during their implementation phase'. It therefore provides for the possibility of garnering public views ahead of the public enquiry process for large development operations by mixed-economy companies that have large socio-economic implications or a significant impact on the environment. This Act is more specific than its predecessors on the forms that public participation may take, though goes no further than the consultation stage. In addition, it recognises citizen participation as being inherently of public interest.

In 1996, this Act led to the creation of a National Public Debate Commission (CNDP), which promoters are required involve prior to their projects and which can be called in by civil society bodies to organise a democratic debate on a project with the help of mediation. The primary role of the CNDP is to organise, ahead of the public enquiry, a debate on the benefits, objectives and main characteristics of development projects. This Commission does not issue a ruling but is simply responsible for ensuring that the conditions of the debate are fair (i.e. that all points of

view are heard, on the understanding that it is ultimately the administrative authority backing the project that will decide whether or not to go ahead).

CNDP involvement is only compulsory for projects of a certain financial scale, in excess of €300 million (for other projects, its involvement is optional).[20] In addition, the CNDP has discretionary powers to organise a debate: it can assess for each project whether a debate is required or not. The criteria established by the Act are wide and leave the Commission extensive discretion.

It was not until the late 1990s and the early 2000s that the French government introduced a certain 'levelling' in the requirements for citizen participation in development projects affecting their living conditions (rather than projects with an environmental impact), by promulgating three laws:

– *The law on Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development (Voynet Act, 1999):* it states that public participation can take the form of a public debate. This debate relates to the 'objectives and chief characteristics of the project'. Public participation continues 'throughout the whole preparation phase of a project, from the start of the preliminary studies through to the closure of the public enquiry'. This law reflects the influence of the recently signed Aarhus Convention.
– *The Solidarity and Urban Renewal Act (2000) amends Article L. 300-2 of the Planning Code* and extends it 'to any addition to or revision of the land development plan or land use plan'. Nonetheless, it does not change the terms of the Article apart from this amendment.

ARTICLE L-300 2 – Planning Code
The municipal council or public intermunicipal structure decides on the objectives and procedures of the "consultation", and local people, associations and other stakeholders are consulted in the run-up to the project, prior to:
Any addition to or revision of the land development plan or land use plan;
Any decision to set up an urban development zone (ZAC);
Any development operation carried out by or on behalf of the municipality, which, because of its size or nature, significantly alters the community's living environment or economic activity.
The local authority must also provide a report on the consultation.

– *The Local Democracy Act (Vaillant, 2002, Art. L. 2143-1)* creates the requirement for the establishment of district councils in towns with a population of 80,000 or more. It is the municipal council that decides the name, membership and operating procedures of these councils. They can be consulted by the mayor and can submit proposals to him or her on any issue affecting the neighbourhood or community. The mayor can choose to involve them in the preparation, implementation and assessment of initiatives affecting the neighbourhood, in particular those conducted under the town's urban policy.

In accordance with the provisions of the Aarhus Convention, the law includes a new section entitled 'public participation in the preparation of development or infrastructure projects that have a significant impact on the environment or spatial planning'.

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[20] The list of categories operations relating to development or infrastructure projects in which the involvement of the National Commission of Public Debate is a legal requirement is given in Article L. 121-8 of the Environment Code.

Finally, the Local Democracy Act recognises the possibility of debate on the actual principle of an operation; public debate now covers not only the objectives and main characteristics of the project, but even its implementation – something that politicians had previously always rejected, since it can threaten the very existence of a project. Under the Act, the National Commission of Public Debate becomes an independent administrative authority.

A relatively minor constraint for project owners
Under these rules (notably Article L 300-2), 'consultation' will be compulsory for the creation of the Triangle de Gonesse Urban Development Zone (ZAC). However, this can take various forms, depending on the preferences of local politicians and the EPA. Furthermore, given the scale of the Europa City project, it has to go to a public debate (Barnier Act 1995). In this case, the National Public Debate Committee will be called upon to monitor the organisation of the debate.

All this shows that the regulations on local stakeholder involvement can act as a restrictive framework for public and private sector actors (in theory, it is possible to block a project by proving that these regulations were not applied, especially Article L-300-2 and the requirement for a public debate), although the procedures they entail remain very vague because of the absence of a clear definition of the terms (participation, dialogue). For example, in Article L 300-2, because 'consultation' is not precisely defined, the local authority only to has organise two public meetings in order to comply.

The 'consultation' required in these laws and in the Planning Code would seem above all to be a formal exercise whose organisational procedures must be approved by the local authority before it begins. Nothing is said about the terms of this 'consultation' and its scope quickly proved to be fairly small. As evidenced by a decision of the Council of State of 3 December 1993 in favour of the City of Paris, 'consultation' can be equated to 'information given to the promoter that is not binding on its decisions'.

Article L 300-2 introduces a two-step mechanism: a nationwide legal obligation of general scope but largely undefined content, which essentially covers the procedural requirements that local authorities must follow in organising a 'consultation'. It is then left to these local authorities to decide freely, on a case-by-case basis, on the content of this obligation. This directive therefore give the local authority's total freedom to adapt the content and form of the participatory process to the local context.

That is why Article L 300-2 of the Planning Code is seen as a simple obligation to establish 'consultation' procedures. For this reason, a number of researchers note that the Code is in a tricky position with regard both to international undertakings and to European law (in particular the Aarhus Convention – Hélin, 2007).

As for the public debate process, it is both a highly institutional form of participation, having been established by the law, and very largely undefined, since neither the law nor the decrees specify its procedures, which can be freely devised by the CNDP and adapted to the particular local conditions.

Regulatory strategies of the civil society representatives

Outside these regulations, which seek to structure public participation in urban projects, civil society representatives have other legal tools through which to make themselves heard: dispute procedures submitted to administrative jurisdictions. The vast majority of civil society bodies have neither the financial nor human resources to undertake legal proceedings: 'it is a technical and costly process, with financial risks' (Busson, 2004, p. 130, author's translation). That is why civil society groups prefer to take part in the preparation of planning documents, counting on the application of the above-mentioned rules, and it is only when consultation or public debate fail that they consider a recourse to the courts.

Indeed, in the case of the Europa City project in Triangle de Gonesse, the civil society collective is only considering legal proceedings as a last resort:

> "We haven't yet reached that point and I hope that we won't have to go to law. I'm waiting, I think we need to continue fighting but that the project can't go through. I'll wait and see what the EPA proposes." (Chair of the Collective)

That is why its members have not yet thought about the regulations or laws that they could cite in a legal opposition to the project. For the moment, they think that they cannot use the PEB because the project does not infringe it.

Nevertheless, the organisation of a public debate by the National Public Debate Commission (compulsory under the Barnier Act of 1995) is seen by the civil society collective as one legal means for opposing the project. It is up to Europa City to call in the Commission to organise the public debate – something that the private company has not yet done. So the civil society groups are watching, and if the company does not call in the Commission, they are ready to act themselves to ensure that the debate takes place. In fact, the Collective's representatives say that for the moment they are 'waiting for the consultation': depending on how this goes, they will decide whether or not to go 'as far as' legal proceedings. According to them, they should first see how the 'debate' goes (in particular through the public enquiry), then wait for the decisions, before considering recourse to the courts. So this decision will depend on whether they have the sense that the project backers have listened to them and engaged in dialogue.

So the civil society representatives are certainly considering legal action as one possibility in their fight against the urbanisation of the Triangle de Gonesse, declaring that they 'may go as far as legal proceedings' if they are 'obliged to consider court action' (if dialogue with the promoters comes to nothing). With regard to their claims, if it should go to the courts, they say that 'if we have to, we will try to claim legal precedents on the need to protect farmland'. Indeed, they are aware that there is a social norm (normative discourse) on this issue, in particular in the planning recommendations for the Île-de-France Region (SDRIF): 'this recommendation should not just be fine words, but a reality', asserts the Chairman of the Collective.

In fact, it would seem that, for the moment, they primarily see the SDRIF as the regulatory basis on which to oppose the project. For example, they also quote an amendment passed on 25 October 2012 preventing a bus using a farm track: 'if this amendment is not recognised, we will point it out' – even though, at the same time, the 2012 SDRIF plan includes the urbanisation of the Triangle as envisaged by the EPA.

Actors

As evidenced by the narrative of the decision-making process, there is a multiplicity of actors involved in the project. When we observe their functions/prerogatives in relation to spatial development, their function in the project and their attitude to it and particularly to the Europa City project, it becomes easier to understand the conflicts and convergences of interests and the relationships between these different types of actors (public, private, civil society).

Public actors

State

President – government

Territorial development prerogatives: Political and legislative objectives (draft legislation), general directives.

Urban planning in France remains attached to processes in which the government plays a dominant role. However, while this policy is based on laws, regulations and budgets managed at national level, its implementation entails contractual plans agreed with the Regions, which allow a measure of autonomy. As for the European Union, its intervention in the development of Regions is increasingly governed by its regional policy. As a result of this two-way movement of decentralisation and European construction, all levels of territorial organisation are increasingly involved today in urban planning policy.

Function in the project: Particular government departments may have a role in various aspects of the development projects, notably the Grand Paris State Secretary (for transport) and the Ministry of Sustainable Development, Transport and Housing.

Position on the planning and implementation of the Europa City project: Between 2007 and 2012, the fundamental focus for government actors was the need to generate a metropolitan dynamic that will maximise the impact of the Grand Paris programme. According to the then President (UMP, right) and the Grand Paris Minister, the Europa City project constitutes an opportunity to develop a structurally significant project, and indeed that project was first announced by Nicolas Sarkozy.[21] In addition, the Europa City project was an argument that persuaded Christian Blanc's team to consider building a station in Triangle de Gonesse.

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[21] in *Architecture Aujourd'hui*, February 2010

However, the government's position could change, because of the change of the majority that occurred in May 2012 (PS, left). The new government has so far not clearly stated its view, but undoubtedly feels some reticence regarding the Grand Paris project as a whole.

Préfecture de Région/Regional Prefecture

<u>Territorial development prerogatives</u>: The prefecture's role is to ensure that government action is coherent at regional level and to implement central government policies in the regions. In applying the directives received from central government, therefore, the Regional Prefect has the task of heading and coordinating public policies and in particular reinforcing the region's attractiveness and economic and social development. Working with the Chairman of the Regional Council, the Prefect is responsible for drawing up and signing contracts between central government and the region, which set out the commitments of both partners for seven years.

Because of the specificity of Île-de-France, the prefecture of the Île-de-France region has wider prerogatives with regard to development and urban planning. This is why the Prefecture is involved in the drafting of the Regional Masterplan (SDRIF).

<u>Function in the project</u>: The Prefecture works with the steering committee and technical committees for the Triangle de Gonesse project and for Europa City. It is thus involved in the governance of the project, and its involvement in the CDT is more substantial, with a specific project manager designated for the Plaine de France -Gonesse CDT.

<u>Position on the planning and implementation of the Europa City project</u>: Supports the Triangle de Gonesse project and the implementation of Europa City, in particular because it is an important part of the CDT. The project manager designated for the CDT thinks that Europa City "enhances/boosts the Triangle de Gonesse project".

DRIEA – Regional and Interdepartmental Development and Infrastructure Department

<u>Territorial development prerogatives</u>: The Île-de-France Regional and Interdepartmental Development and Infrastructure Department (DRIEA-IF) was created on 1 July 2010. Placed under the authority of the regional prefecture, the DRIEA is one of Île-de-France's three departments reporting to the Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development, Transport and Housing (MEDDTL). The DRIEA implements government planning policy across Île-de-France, by "applying the objectives of the Grenelle de l'Environnement environmental programme" and by "contributing to the Grand Paris scheme". The DRIEA's mission is to ensure safe transport conditions in all circumstances and to coordinate risk and threat prevention by implementing different safety and security plans, and to develop the national road network in Île-de-France.

<u>Function in the project</u>: see regional prefecture

<u>Position on the planning and implementation of the Europa City project</u>: DRIEA, like the regional prefecture, welcomes the establishment of a project like Europa City in the region, because it generates an internationally competitive metropolitan dynamic. The DRIEA project manager stresses its importance for the Grand Paris scheme, its attractiveness and the important role of public transport ('Grand Paris marks a reversal in attitudes by placing the emphasis on public transport' (Interview DRIEA Project Manager).

At the same time, the regional Prefecture and DRIEA are responsible for protecting regional balances and, as such, worry about the possible impacts of Europa City on the territory, in relation to other development projects.

Île-de-France Region – Presidency and Regional Council

<u>Territorial development prerogatives</u>: Development and transport: The Region implements the Regional Masterplan (SDRIF) and finances the main public transport upgrade projects.
Economic development (the Region provides support for company creation or development), Environment (protecting natural spaces and biodiversity, combating environmental damage and pollution and developing renewable energies), Housing and urban renewal.
The regional green space agency, Agence des espaces verts, plays an important part in the preservation of the Paris region Green belt, including the control or acquisition of over 2000 hectares of agriculture land South of the CDG airport and North of the Triangle de Gonesse.
<u>Function in the project</u>: The Region (technical representative) is represented on the steering committees and technical committees for the Triangle de Gonesse and Europa City projects. Furthermore, the Region's political actors decide on urban development priorities through the SDRIF.

President

In Île-de-France, the vice-presidents constitute the executive board, which is headed by the President of the Regional Council, Jean-Paul Huchon. They are responsible for a number of areas, reflecting the prerogatives of the Region.
Jean-Paul Huchon (Socialist) has been President of the Île-de-France Regional Council since 1998. The president prepares and executes the rulings of the regional assembly and manages the regional administration. He also chairs the standing committee of the regional assembly.
According to both private and public sector sources, Jean-Paul Huchon was enthusiastic about the Europa City project when it was introduced to him in 2010. However, he has given a clear statement of his position since. It is therefore not easy to identify the Region's attitude to this project.
Alain AMEDRO is Vice-President for development and urban planning, interregional cooperation and rural contracts. He represents the Green Party, which means that his position on the Europa City project may differ from that of Jean-Paul Huchon.

Regional Council

Elected for 4 years by universal direct suffrage, 208 regional councillors meet approximately six times a year, to vote on the budget and discuss the direction of regional policies.
Disagreements have emerged between regional councillors about the Triangle de Gonesse project and particularly the Europa City scheme. The Green and Left Front groups have filed amendments to the project presented in the draft SDRIF of November 2012. They are public actors who are concerned with ecological and environmental issues at stake in the project.
It would seem that there is still vigorous debate within the Region Council to define a clear position on the Triangle de Gonesse project.
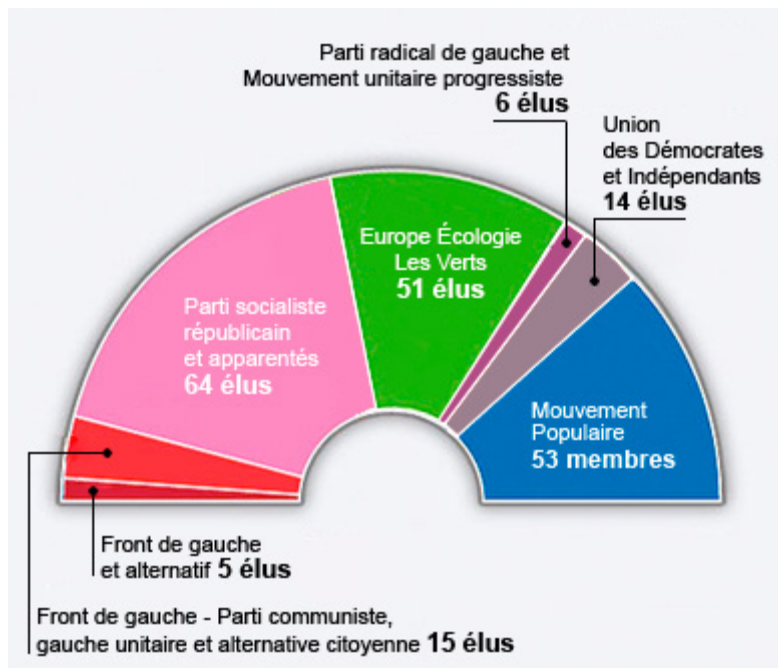
Fig. 24. Composition of the Regional Assembly. Source: Region Ile-de-France

Departments – General Council – Val d'Oise and Seine Saint Denis

Territorial development prerogatives: In France, the General Council is the deliberative assembly of a *département*. Councillors are elected for six years, and elections are timed so that half of the members are re-elected every three years. The General Council has fewer prerogatives regarding the development of *départements* than the Region. These essentially relate to the public road network, the management of departmental and local roads, and some transport (in particular school buses).

Function in the project: Although their prerogatives do not appear to give them direct involvement, the *départements* are local government bodies which are keen to be involved in discussions on the Triangle de Gonesse project. In fact, they sit on the steering committee and technical committee for the Triangle de Gonesse and Europa City schemes.

Position on the planning and implementation of the Europa City project: It would appear that both départements are in favour of the Europa City project, but their opinions are less frequently cited in the project process.
From the perspective of the Val-d'Oise Department, this project reflects their wish to develop economic projects within their area.

Inter-municipal associations

The inter-municipal associations (*intercommunalités*) are local authorities or municipalities that have grouped together to form larger legal entities in order to cooperate in one or more public policy spheres.

Since 1999 (Chevènement Act), inter-municipal associations have been divided into 3 categories:

– The 'communauté de communes' (municipalities) (less than 50,000 inhabitants), which has only two compulsory prerogatives: territorial development and economic development;
– The 'communauté d'agglomération' (conurbation) (at least 50,000 inhabitants around towns of more than 15,000 inhabitants). Besides economic and territorial development, its compulsory prerogatives are urban public transport, a balanced social mix in housing, the environment and 'town policy';
– The 'communauté urbaine' (status reserved for urban areas with more than 450,000 inhabitants) which is legally endowed with additional prerogatives, including: urban planning, public road network, car parks, waste recycling, water, sewage, cemeteries, slaughterhouses.

Their internal organisation is similar to that of the regions with a measure of autonomy, including a deliberative structure. This structure consists of delegates elected by the municipal councils of the member municipalities. These delegates have to be members of municipal councils.

The Val de France Communauté d'Agglomération
Territorial development prerogatives: The Val de France Communauté d'Agglomération encompasses the municipalities of Sarcelles, Villiers-le-Bel, Arnouville and Garges-lès-Gonesse, more than 137,000 people in total.
The prerogatives of the Val de France Communauté d'Agglomération are: economic development, territorial development (drafting of masterplan and sector plan, creation and implementation of an Urban Development Zone), implementation of a local housing environment programme in their territory, creation, development and maintenance of public road networks and car parks, protection of the environment (combating noise and atmospheric and land pollution).
President: Didier Vaillant: General Councillor of Val-d'Oise, Deputy Mayor of Villiers le Bel.

Roissy Communauté de communes
Territorial development prerogatives: The Roissy Porte de France Communauté de communes was formed in 1994 by municipalities close to Roissy Charles-de-Gaulle Airport. Roissy Porte de France encompasses 18 municipalities with 53,338 inhabitants. The special legal status of the *communauté de communes* gives this public entity the right to coordinate actions of an inter-municipal nature on public services, economic development and the environment.
President since 2008: Patrick Renaud, Deputy Mayor of Roissy-en-France

Function in the project: As local elected representatives, the chairs of intermunicipal associations are directly involved in the informal discussions around the Triangle de Gonesse and Europa City projects and in steering committees. Didier Vaillant seems particularly involved (Gonesse is probably going to become a member of its conurbation).

Position on the planning and implementation of the Europa City project: Strong support for the Triangle de Gonesse and Europa City projects. Indeed, the local elected representatives see these projects as a way to change the image of their territories, to encourage job creation and to obtain a Grand Paris station.

Fig. 25. Val de France conurbation. Source: CC Val de France

SIEVO

The SIEVO (Val-d'Oise mixed planning federation) is a kind of inter-municipal association for the development of the area east of Val-d'Oise. It encompasses 25 municipalities east of Val-d'Oise, around Roissy-Charles de Gaulle International airport:

– the Val de France Communauté d'Agglomération (Sarcelles, Villiers-le-Bel, Arnouville-lès-Gonesse, Garges-lès-Gonesse),

– the Roissy Porte de France Communauté de Communes (Chennevières les Louvres, Epiais-lès-Louvres, Fontenay-en-Parisis, Fosses, Le Thillay, Louvres, Marly-la-Ville, Puiseux-en-France, Roissy-en-France, Saint-Witz, Survilliers, Vémars, Villeron, Vaud'herland),

– And the municipalities of Le Plessis-Gassot, Bouqueval, Goussainville, Gonesse, Bonneuil en France, Ecouen

Territorial development prerogatives: The SIEVO draws up the SCOT (territorial coherence scheme), an urban planning document which sets local strategic development priorities. These priorities have to take the SDRIF priorities into account and ensure that they are applied in municipal urban policies (Local Urban Plans, PLU). The purpose of the SCOT is to establish a common vision of the area east of Val-d'Oise.

The other role of the SIEVO is to specify the consultation procedures under the provisions of Article L.300-2 of the Planning laws.

Function in the project: Representatives of the SIEVO as sit on the steering committee and technical committees, because they are de facto the actors who decide the Strategic priorities of the SCOT. Nevertheless, there is less reference to the SCOT in the project than to the SDRIF.

Position on the planning and implementation of the Europa City project: unknown

Municipalities

Gonesse

Territorial development prerogatives: The mayor represents the municipal authority. French mayors are important players, because they perform a dual role, simultaneously representing the State and the municipality. They implement the rulings of the Municipal Council but they have significant powers of their own, in particular relating to urban planning and local policing.

Function in the project: The Mayor of Gonesse is particularly active in the Triangle de Gonesse project, but also in the Europa City scheme, co-chairing all the steering committees. Since the project is being planned within his municipality, he is officially responsible for the decisions taken on its development. He is accompanied or represented by his office manager, Nicolas Morère. Other municipalities and mayors are also involved, but to a lesser degree: Aulnay-sous-Bois, Villepinte, Roissy en France, Tremblay en France, Villiers-le-bel, Bonneuil, le Bourget, le Blanc-Mesnil.

Position on the planning and implementation of the Europa City project: The Mayor of Gonesse sees the Triangle development project as an exciting opportunity for his town, and Europa City as a further boost to this ambition. The arguments on employment and on local image are important for Gonesse.

Moreover, the majority of local elected representatives are in favour of the Triangle de Gonesse and Europa City projects, because they represent a source of economic development, in particular with the construction of the Grand Paris station.

EPA – Etablissement public d'aménagement – Joint Public Development Agency

Territorial development prerogatives: an 'établissement public d'aménagement' is an operational structure set up by the government. Its role is to conduct development operations for the government, for a local authority or for a public agency.

With regard to the prerogatives of local authorities as well as other spatial planning into these (SEM, AFTRP), and in application of the Article R. 321-20 of the planning code, the EPA Plaine de France is authorised in particular to:

– Conduct the necessary studies for projects in the territory within the framework of its remit;
– Coordinate these projects;
– Make sure that these projects have appropriate funding and, when needed, contribute financially through subsidies;
– Carry out operations and initiatives that contribute to development (in the meaning of Article L. 300-1 of the planning code) on its own account or on that of the government or the local authorities

The EPA might be seen as representing central government (the State appoints the director), but it is chaired by the President of the Île-de-France Regional Council (Paris Region) and includes the two general councils/departments of Seine-Saint-Denis and Val d'Oise, and 40 municipalities (17 in Seine-Saint-Denis and 23 in Val d'Oise) grouped into 6 inter-municipal associations.

The Plaine de France EPA was set up in 2002 to work on the physical, social and economic regeneration and development of a large area extending from Paris to Roissy Airport.

Function in the project: Contracting client of the Triangle de Gonesse project. The EPA representatives negotiate the size of the programmes with the territorial players (they handle the coordination of all parties involved in the project) and work with the project managers and architects (Güller) on the technical aspects. As the project owners, they also have a privileged relationship with the Europa City representatives.

Importance of the role of the EPA: small municipalities with not enough financial and urban planning resources – EPA: financial and human resources.

Position on the planning and implementation of the Europa City project: The EPA's representatives are strongly in favour of the Europa City scheme and present it as a structural feature and 'driving force' of the Triangle de Gonesse development. They see the emergence of Europa City as an opportunity to legitimise their project. Indeed, the discourse on the development of the Triangle is strongly based on the idea of international competitiveness, modelled on major foreign cities. There is a further argument regarding the local advantages of the project, especially in terms of job creation. These themes are particularly frequent in public speeches by the director of the EPA and the director of its strategy section.

Some actors believe that the EPA is taking advantage of this large-scale project to play a strategic role in the territory, operating as a 'corporate player' in its own right, in order to legitimise its existence.

In these public structures, differences of positioning can appear between the individual actors, especially when their functions are political or technical.

Private actors

Auchan/Immochan/Europa City

Characteristics: As an Auchan Group subsidiary specialising in commercial real estate, established in 1976, Immochan is one of Europe's leading shopping mall developers, owners and operators:

– 328 shopping malls
– more than 1.8 million m^2 of shopping space under rent
– revenues of €503 million in 2011
– present in 12 countries
– 550 employees

Immochan's representatives describe Auchan as a "family business" (owned and run by the Mulliez family) and insist on the fact that it is not a stock market listed company (2012 revenues: €56 billion).

Function in the project: Owner of the Europa City project.
Immochan's representatives have set up working groups and steering committees with the different public structures at local and national level.

Position on the planning and implementation of the Europa City project: Immochan wants to build its project in the Triangle de Gonesse because it is near Roissy Airport and Europa City is a metropolitan and international project (and a potential tourist destination). The project owners are

also keen to have support from the public sector partners, especially for access to public transport services.

Civil society actors

The Triangle de Gonesse Collective

Characteristics: Grouping of 16 environmental groups, mostly operating at the level of the *département* (none from Gonesse municipality), which joined forces following the announcement of the Europa City project. Some of these environmental organisations have experience of opposing development projects (major infrastructures).

The representatives of these groups know some of the local public actors, in particular representatives of The Greens – some are even party activists.

Function in the project: No official function, but Collective representatives use a wide range of tactics to put their points across: petitions, demonstrations, website, forums, letters to politicians, official or informal meetings.

Position on the planning and implementation of the Europa City project: Against the urbanisation of Triangle de Gonesse, in favour of farmland preservation. Against Europa City: believe that the arguments on employment are dishonest.

Levels of governance/types of actors	Actors involved	Interests/Arguments relating to the project	Regulatory documents	Position re EC Project
State	President/Government	Metropolis/Grand Paris/international competitiveness	CDT	Support
	Prefecture/DRIEA	Metropolis/Large-scale territorial approach/Transport	CDT	Support
Region	President	Territorial regional approach/Transport	SDRIF	Support assumed
	Council	Territorial regional approach/Different interests: Transport, environment	SDRIF	Positions unclear
EPA	EPA Plaine de France	Metropolitan dimension, international competitiveness, top-end service hub, Transport	X	Support – BACKER
Department	Chairman/Council	Development of departmental area	SCOT (SIEVO)	Support
Inter-municipal structures	Chairs	Local economic development (jobs), improved area image, Transport	SCOT	Support
Municipalities	Gonesse: Mayor	Local economic development (jobs), Transport	PLU	Support
Civil society	Collective of associations	Environment, farmland	X	Against
Private sector	Immochan	Development of a new commercial and leisure concept, metropolitan and international scale	X	Support – BACKER

Project constructed through the convergence of differing interests

Even though the interests of the local players may initially have differed from those of central government, they ultimately converge within the framework of a project whose purpose seem simultaneously local and metropolitan. Indeed, we can see the gradual convergence of the interests of the different public players in the history of the introduction of Europa City into the Triangle de Gonesse project.

At the beginning, there was a decision by central government, which 'imposed' Europa City on the Triangle de Gonesse area by giving Immochan's representatives the green light to consider building a complex there. At this stage, the local public actors and the EPA had different priorities in mind. In January 2010, when the EPA representatives met Immochan's, they were not convinced by the scheme nor by the idea of seeing it dumped into their project. This unforeseen new arrival might have generated problems, since it required a revision of the Reference Plan. Nevertheless, the local political players quickly saw Europa City as an opportunity for development in their territory. In other words, central government action converged with the interests of local government and this is why it seems that overall there is no conflict between local and central government levels on the project. Indeed, after a period of adjustment,[22] a consensus emerged around the Europa City project between local government players, central government representatives and the EPA.

In fact, the private scheme became an opportunity to legitimise the Triangle de Gonesse project, and also a good way to obtain the Grand Paris station.

"The Europa City scheme arrived in the midst of the battle to obtain a Grand Paris metro station. The Triangle de Gonesse project was not convincing enough, and there were still no investors. The Europa City scheme gave some credibility to the Triangle de Gonesse project." (Head of the Gonesse Mayor's office)

Thus, the station emerged as a primary objective for the territorial authorities. And Immochan was an influential player in the negotiations for this station, in particular after offering in 2010 to part finance it. As Ludovic Halbert emphasises, if public actors support private schemes, it does not necessarily mean that they support private mechanisms for developing urban spaces, but that 'for them it is more a question of flexibility in finalising development projects by relying on private actors who at the same time help to limit the risk borne by the public authorities and to obtain the capital they are lacking' (Halbert & Le Goix, 2012, p. 40, author's translation).

Thus, the private scheme appears to be a basis for the convergence not only of different public interests but also of public and private interests. Indeed, in 2010 the local public actors and the private actors acted in unison in negotiations with central government on the grand Paris metro station, and are currently doing so again.

This does not mean that all the actors are unanimous in their approval of the project: in this particular case, the DRIEA representative now thinks that particular care needs to be taken that the Europa City project "does not impact negatively on the other development projects" in the territory. Similarly, it is interesting to look at the different reasons why each actor supports Europa City, even if they all agree on the need for the Grand Paris Metro station (see above).

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[22] It seems that initially Mathis Güller was not very pleased to see the Europa City project turn up, since it forced him to revise his economic programming. The EPA and the local actors apparently also asked for details. At first, they only agreed that studies could be undertaken (to participate in the studies led by Europa City) – but they quickly came to see Europa City as an asset for the Triangle de Gonesse. Nevertheless, we probably need to differentiate between the 'strategic' players in the EPA, who strongly support the Europa City project, and the 'technical' players, for whom the project presents problems of technical integration and who are, apparently, not all convinced.

Regulations used as political instruments

Although the interests of local and central government actors converge in the private scheme, it is also an object of dissension with other public actors, notably the Region. Indeed, a closer look reveals that there are tensions regarding this project between the various levels of public authority. Despite the agreement between local and central government, the Region is less convinced, because there is no consensus between regional councillors.[23]

Against this background, the SDRIF appears to provide a basis of negotiation between central and regional government.

In 2010, there was a consensus about the incorporation of central government's Grand Paris projects into the SDRIF, by including the CDT and the Grand Paris Metro. At this stage, therefore, the State held the ascendancy over the regional and local projects by means of the Grand Paris Act. Under these circumstances, keeping the Triangle de Gonesse as a conditional urbanisation zone in the 2013 SDRIF gives the Region a negotiating tool (the condition remains public transport): it allows the Region to delay the development of this territory. It also allows it to keep control of areas covered by the CDT – that is why the Region designated Triangle de Gonesse a 'territory of metropolitan interest' and created an 'urban front' beyond which urbanisation is not allowed.

Moreover, the SDRIF is also a basis for negotiation between regional and local public actors (departments, inter-municipal associations and municipalities). Indeed, the SDRIF controls territorial development in particular by defining the urban development zones. The development priorities defined by the SDRIF are binding on local level urban planning instruments (SCOT and PLU), which have to be 'compatible' with the orientations of the SDRIF. Through the SDRIF, the Region sets out the strategic planning directives, which the municipalities and departments have to obey. *That is why the central-local relation could be as important between the region and the municipalities as between central and local government.* Indeed, the SDRIF is useful for the Region, because the latter has no power of oversight over other local government entities. There is no hierarchical relationship between the Region and local authorities, so the conditions of the SDRIF demand a great deal of negotiation.

In this context, local government representatives negotiated with the Region to ensure that the SDRIF made the implementation of the Reference Plan possible – according to the head of Mayor of Gonesse's office, they "fought like cats and dogs", because an initial version of the SDRIF submitted at the beginning of summer 2012 left the whole zone grey, i.e. 'to be negotiated'. By meeting Alain Amédro, e-mailing Jean-Paul Huchon, pestering the people in charge of the Region all summer long and by negotiating right up to the wire before the publication of the SDRIF, local government representatives successfully pushed for the southern part of Triangle de Gonesse to be a 'conditional urbanisation zone' (conditional on the presence of public transport).[24] However, private actors and Immochan's representatives also negotiated with the Regional political players for the urbanisation of Triangle de Gonesse.

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[23] As the same time, there is a problem with multiple mandates, because local government representatives can also be regional councillors.
[24] It would seem that a 'deal' was made with the Region: since Güller's project contained 150 hectares less than the zone defined in the 2008 SDRIF, local public actors apparently suggested that the Region remove these 150 hectares but leave the zone 'with conditional urbanisation'.

In this regard, as we saw, the Grand Paris Metro also plays a role as a negotiating tool between private actors, local public actors and central government. *In other words, the statutory documents are used as political instruments and as the basis for negotiation between the various actors involved in the Triangle de Gonesse project.* Within the framework of the Triangle de Gonesse project, therefore, we can state that the *tensions between public authorities at different levels can be embodied in statutory documents imposed by higher levels* such as the Grand Paris Act – CDT (Centre/Region tensions) – and the SDRIF (Centre/Region and Region/Local tensions).

The PEB is also a statutory document that imposes constraints on the project, but it is not an object of negotiation within the context of the Triangle de Gonesse project. The PEB is much more binding on local development than the SDRIF, because it contains precise specifications for building standards. It is a national regulation applied at local level. In this particular case, the SDRIF, as a regional planning document, has to include constraints imposed by the PEB. So, the territory has to comply with the PEB, which prohibits house building and therefore goes against the desire of the Mayor of Gonesse for more housing. The PEB is thus a real constraint for local actors and planners. At present, under the negotiations on the CDT, the Mayor of Gonesse wants to relax the PEB in order to be able to build housing. But this is outside the Triangle de Gonesse and Europa City projects, which do not include residential development, a factor that seems to be completely accepted and to go unquestioned by the different players.

However, it is still interesting to see that *the sustainability principles form a hierarchy*: the dominant factor is exposure to noise pollution (in terms of functional mix and the need for housing).

Governance and democratisation of urban planning processes

As a result of the convergence of interests, the public actors of urban development and the private owners of Europa City worked together (in particular through steering committees and technical committees – which seemingly led to a modification in the Europa City project). It would seem that they are now able to work together.

Nevertheless, it seems likely *that this is only temporary, as part of the strategic alliances* around (and confined to) the project: in particular, the private players say that they don't need the local government actors to negotiate with central government, while at the same time, local government players may be ready to work with the private sector because Europa City seems to be a strong argument in their discussions with central government. The various stages in the urban project process show *that where there is convergence of interests, these can depend on different factors at central, local and private level*. Indeed, there are even differences in interests and priorities between local actors. In fact, *all the actors complain of a "lack of governance in this territory" and a problem of "political backing".* The various actors stress the difficulty of 'acting' in circumstances where there is a serious fragmentation of interests between the public and private forces in the territory.

At the same time, local public actors talk about the need "to work together" and their desire to do so. But they also say that governance is not "imposed" and cannot be "announced" but has to be

built. And in reality, they find it very hard to work together in a highly fragmented territory. In this particular case, they have started with a plan to decide on governance or at least to provide the conditions of territorial governance: as a result, the type of governance that emerges looks 'ad hoc'. Nevertheless, concurrently with the Triangle de Gonesse project, ideas have begun to emerge on new governance structures: the DRIEA launched a study on this question for the Grand Roissy area (Acadie – Güller),[25] which resulted in the creation of a new entity encompassing government of all levels, economic stakeholders and civil society representatives (*conseil de pôle*), although for the moment this structure does not really seem to be working. At the same time, with the creation of a 'Grand Roissy association' we can see local elected representatives joining forces to prevent the government imposing decisions. In addition, private organisations are contributing to the emergence of new modes of governance: the Europa City project has prompted a process of interchange, partnership and collaboration. Indeed, it might be supposed that the lack of local governance – and not just the opportunity to be involved in designing the project – is a good reason for public actors to participate in the process organised by Immochan. It gives them a space for dialogue, where private sector players can find a place on this fragmented playing field.

Not all the actors involved in negotiation have the same power, be it statutory, political or financial. Moreover, Europa City is a source of dissension with other public actors and with civil society. In this context, it is interesting to observe how the civil society representatives try to forge themselves a role in these negotiations and how the private sector actors approach the participation of local people in the planning and governance process.

Regulations on resident participation can constitute a binding framework for public and private actors. Indeed, because of its scale, there has to be an official public debate about the Europa City scheme (Barnier Law 1995). In addition, there will be statutory 'consultation' on the creation of the Urban Development Zone (ZAC) for Triangle de Gonesse under Article L-300-2 of the Planning Code – Law SRU 2000). Another relevant instrument is the 2009 Grenelle Act (Article 49) which recommends a governance system involving five entities – environmental associations, national and local authorities with expertise in environmental issues, public monitoring and research bodies, municipalities and inter-municipal associations, government representatives (including EPA) – "for public decisions likely to have an impact on the environment".

The governance process devised by the EPA involves consultation with civil society and a continuous dialogue with citizens' organisations. For Immochan too, citizen participation is a natural part of the project process. In fact, at present Immochan is the only player planning to talk to the environmental organisations, in the hope of winning them over. Moreover, the private actors are officially developing a participatory approach by considering the setting up an Agenda 21 process.

At present, the statutory procedures have not yet been organised: the measures so far reflect the desire of the participants to minimise conflict with civil society about their plans (the implementation of an Agenda 21 process by a private actor is fairly exceptional and possibly ambitious).

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[25] MEDDE, DRIEA, Acadie, Güller, July 2012, *Etude d'orientations et schéma d'aménagement durable du grand territoire de Roissy*, Rapport final

Conclusion

While the contextual origin of the project is 'local' – the problem of transport – it has gradually evolved towards a more 'metropolitan' operation, notably because the Europa City project has become the driving force of Triangle de Gonesse. Europa City's backers are trying to emphasise the argument of employment to legitimise the project within the local context. This argument is rejected by opponents (citizen groups), who criticise its lack of relation to the local territory and local needs. Against this background, the statutory urban planning instruments, in particular the Regional Masterplan, are used as a basis for discussion between the various actors seeking to adapt the Masterplan to the context of the Europa City project. This project can therefore be contextualised at a dual spatial scale, the local and the metropolitan, depending on the posture of the actors concerned.

The factors that appear to have contributed to the success of this dual scale contextualisation are notably the gradual convergence of interests between actors, who join forces occasionally to support the Europa City project (for the purpose of obtaining a Grand Paris Metro station). In these circumstances, the absence of a hierarchy between the actors and the lack of strong local governance can paradoxically emerge as success factors. At the same time, this lack of governance also leads to a lack of consultation with the civil society actors. As a consequence, this process fails to guarantee 'contextualisation' in the sense of a project defined to reflect the needs and expectations of the populations of the area (this would also seem to be a weakness in the approach based on contextualisation).

As regards the regulations, the flexibility of the urban planning instruments may also be seen as a success factor for the project, because the different parties can negotiate for them to be adapted in favour of the project's development. Similarly, the existence of norms (both statutory and social) intended to encourage citizen participation prompts the project's backers to enter into dialogue with civil society. Nevertheless, with regard to the contextualisation of the project, the imprecision of these norms and the fact that they are not really binding means that the project's promoters do not need to bring civil society into discussions about the programming and desirability of a project like Europa City within the territorial and social context.

The Europa City project within the Triangle de Gonesse scheme seems to be highly characteristic of the problems currently facing the metropolis of Paris. Indeed, it is a project in which the economic, social and environmental stakes are significant. It is also a project that reflects the current dynamics of the Grand Paris programme and the CDT. And finally, it is a subject of debate in the context of the current revision of the SDRIF (2012–2013).

Against the background of these on-going political and statutory processes, it is a project that generates conflicts of interest, but also strong convergences of interest, which for the moment are sufficient for it to go forward. Nevertheless, numerous uncertainties remain and there are a number of ways that the project could go in the future. Its implementation is not guaranteed and depends on forthcoming decisions, in particular the State's decision on the phasing of the Grand Paris programme (2013). With exception of the regional masterplan's (SDRIF 2013) conditional green light, the project is still at an unformal planning stage. To start being implemented, it will need to go through successfully a whole range of formal planning procedures, public consultations and decision-making processes.

In these circumstances, two themes seem particularly important, because they highlight the governance and regulatory problems raised by this case: the modes of governance of the project through public-private relations (a) and the interactions between the backers of the project and civil society (b).

The last fifteen years or so have seen the emergence of this two research fields relating to urban governance: one on the relations between public and private actors and the other on citizen participation in urban projects. At the moment, however, few studies have attempted to combine these two approaches.[26] If research on participation seems disconnected from that on private sector urban production, it is precisely because the actors of urban production consider the two processes separately.

Yet what we find interesting in the case of Europa City and in relation to the topics of the CONTEXT programme, is this new research question: the role of the private actor in governance procedures involving civil society (c).

a) Globalisation and the role of private companies in spatial planning

Research has shown how the increasing need to pool public and private resources is modifying the position of political actors in urban development policies (Lefèvre, 2009). As Christian Lefèvre has written, 'the last decade has brought the phenomenon of globalisation to the fore as a structuring factor not only for economic issues but also for politics and contemporary societies' (Lefèvre, 2009, p. 35, author's translation). Politicians are adopting a strategic discourse against a background of competition between cities, liberal principles have infiltrated public representations and liberal urban projects are springing up in cities (Lorrain, 2012).

According to Thierry Theurillat, in these circumstances, urban projects are assessed quantitatively with the aim of determining, through market analysis (jobs, populations, transport networks), their potential for economic, commercial and financial profitability (Theurillat, 2012). Urban space is then seen as a medium for infrastructures that will generate positive economic effects for the city. By contrast, a sustainable city would not simply be a spatial medium, but an integrated terri-

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[26] This was underlined by the *Observatoire National des Agendas 21 locaux* in its 6th publication on "Agenda 21 and Participation, a voice for all for the public interest", in which it specifies that Business was "a pivotal but still underused actor" both in the study and practice of participatory processes.

tory. Since private investors are by definition mobile and external, the attraction and insertion of capital into the city can be seen as a vertical and top-down movement, from the financial sphere towards the local space (Theurillat, 2012). Nevertheless, private actors need public authorities to find a location for their projects.

Indeed, although the involvement of economic players in urban policy (Lefèvre, 2009c) has undoubtedly increased and, in the past two decades, a small number of large firms have grown into major 'partners' of public urban authority (Vanier, 2011b), private actors cannot do anything without a form of 'congruence, strategic adequacy or even valuable complicity with the world of public action, which is the agent of regulating principles of all kinds' (Vanier, 2011b, p. 19, author's translation). Public actors (and their planning partners), whether supported by civil society or not, have the capacity to encourage, to negotiate or to resist the funding of urban production (Halbert & Le Goix, 2012).

When we look at the Grand Paris projects, we can ask ourselves a number of questions. Is legitimacy is being redistributed (Lefèvre, 2012)? Is there an acceptance of the intervention of economic players in the territories of Île-de-France? Can we speak about the 'involvement of economic actors' in the Gonesse project in the same way as in projects in London or New York (Lefèvre, 2012)?

Are we seeing the emergence of new formal and informal structures that may lead to a relaxation of the traditional institutional demarcations (Walsh et al., 2012)?

We can approach the questions from the perspective of 'interactive forms of governance'. We can conclude that Auchan's involvement in the Triangle de Gonesse Project does not signal its entry into politics, as it can be when private actors are involved in the Anglo-Saxon world, because public actors remain primarily in charge of the project; nevertheless the private player has the capacity to influence strategic choices and development priorities for the territory.

b) Urban planning and local democracy

As a number of studies have shown, the 'social acceptability' of large urban projects has become a major question for those involved in urban planning (Lecourt & Faburel, 2005; Blanc & Levy, 2003; Rui et al., 2001). A territory is a vector and resource for collective action. When a development project bursts upon the scene, it often triggers conflicts by 'threatening the organisation of an appropriate territory in the literal and/or figurative sense by a social group' (Lecourt & Faburel, 2005, p.4, author's translation).

At the same time, the French national rules for producing 'citizen' participation (i.e. involving the inhabitants in project processes) is not without impact on the positioning and practices of the political and technical players (Gardesse, 2011). However, it is recognised that the logic of public action in France is still largely political and institutional. Therefore, the development of experiments in participation does not mean that roles and decision-making prerogatives are being redistributed (Gardesse, 2011). Public authorities, mostly municipalities, continue to organize and determine the possibilities of citizen participation.

The capacity of inhabitants to intervene in projects depends, therefore, on how much leeway they are given and also on their own access to technical and legal expertise. Often, in fact, civil society actors come to play a role in projects through a process of spontaneous mobilisation (Gardesse, 2011).

c) Private investors and civil society participation: new modes of governance and the implementation of regulatory changes (social and legal norms)

The need for public sector representatives to negotiate with the private sector on finance can make a participatory process difficult to implement (because it restricts the possibility of transparency). We can therefore assume that, in the case of public-private partnerships, it is difficult to extend the scope of governance to local participation, whatever it says in the rules.[27] In France, however, PPP (public-private partnerships) currently play a growing role in urban development processes, while at the same time rules on citizen participation are becoming increasingly defined. Moreover, civil society participation is one of the major issues at stake in sustainable development. At the same time, private investors want to avoid public appeal processes, because the time they take threatens their projects (this was highlighted at the international La Fabrique de la Cité seminar in Amsterdam on 29–31 August 2012).

In the context of the Triangle de Gonesse project, we can note, following Dominique Lorrain, that the institutions of governance of private firms are based on 'private property rights, with the principle of 'one share, one vote' and 'on professionalisation' (Lorrain, 2012). By contrast, the political institutions of cities (or territories) are (in principle) open to all inhabitants and are based on the principle of "one person, one vote", regardless of tax contributions or wealth (Lorrain, 2012).

Actually, the governance process devised by the EPA (public actor) involves consultation with civil society and a 'continuous dialogue' with civil society organisations. For Europa City too, citizen participation is emphasised as a natural part of the project process. Europa City's backers know that they will have to talk to local inhabitants, so they have taken several pre-emptive initiatives. The company claims to have organised its own so-called participatory procedures. In other words, it is rethinking the governance of urban production, a role in principle incumbent on the project's public actors.

So far, the participatory initiatives have been confined to information and consultation processes of limited scope. Moreover, the conditions for a public debate are not in place: from the beginning, the project was planned behind closed doors, with no civil society input, with no representatives of local people or farmers being involved in the project planning meetings. In addition, Europa City is not a response to any specific programmatic purpose, but is being introduced into the area to legitimise the Triangle de Gonesse Project and thereby the Grand Paris station. Negotia-

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[27] In these circumstances, the challenge for the civil society structures is to play some kind of role in the project process. In order to do this, they have focused their activities and arguments on environmental issues. However, these do not seem to carry sufficient weight compared with the argument on jobs.

tions are difficult and opaque because of the many uncertainties surrounding the project (difficulty of obtaining comprehensive information). In these circumstances, civil society involvement would seem difficult.

The statutory procedures have not yet been put in place. Furthermore, the procedures and practices imposed by the regulatory documents remain very vague in the absence of clear definitions of the terms employed (participation, consultation). This means that the project promoters can be content with establishing information procedures, since the regulations are relatively relaxed and give them wide leeway. Often, they make do with the bare legal minimum (Gardesse, 2011).

In this context, it is interesting to observe whether the statutory and social norms have an impact on the actions of these private actors, precisely by studying what systems they will put in place to involve the inhabitants,[28] and how the regulations on this issue will be interpreted and applied.

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[28] Some procedures are to be introduced at the beginning of 2013 (in particular 'workshops' around the exhibition on the Europa City project on display at Gonesse town hall).

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List of interviews (conducted between September and December 2012)

EPA – Etablissement Public d'Amenagement :

Director of strategy section

Project Manager – strategy

Project Manager – strategy

Project Manager – development

Project Manager – development

Project Manager – economic development

Project Manager – environment

State:

Project Manager DRIEA – Direction Régionale et Interdépartementale de l'équipement et de l'aménagement

Project Manager CDT Contrats de Développement Territorial – Regional Prefecture

<u>Region:</u>
Councillor Front de Gauche
<u>Europa City</u>
Director
Project Manager
<u>Gonesse</u>
Head of the Mayor's Office
<u>Tremblay</u>
Development director
<u>Triangle de Gonesse Collective</u>
President
Representative
Representative
<u>IAU</u>
Project Manager – North-East Île-de-France
Project Manager – Roissy territory
Project Manager – regulations, SDRIF Schéma Direction de la Région Ile de France
<u>Acadie</u>
Project Manager – working on Roissy territory
Project Manager – working on Triangle de Gonesse

Events observed – speeches of involved actors

22/09/2012: Triangle de Gonesse Collective Forum – Bernard Loup (President of the Triangle de Gonesse Collective), representatives

11/10/2012: conference on Roissy territory – Daniel Behar (Acadie), Damien Robert (EPA Director), Mathis Güller (architect), Didier Vaillant (President of Val de France inter-municipal association)

15/10/2012: Front de Gauche meeting – elective representatives, regional councillors

18/10/2012: Conference on Northeast IdF – Didier Vaillant (President of Val de France inter-municipal association), Damien Robert (EPA Director), Patrick Renaud (President of Roissy inter-municipal association), Bernard Loup (President of Collectif pour le Triangle de Gonesse)

20/10/2012: Forum for the "consultation" about Grand Paris – Jacqueline Lorthiois (representative of the Triangle de Gonesse Collective)

Annexe

Institut d'Aménagement et d'Urbanisme de la Région d'Île-de-France
Urban Planning & Development Agency for the Paris Region

Context Project/Paris Case study

The Triangle de Gonesse Project in the Plaine de France: Case definition and study orientation

Paul Lecroart
October 1st, 2012

Project context

For the proposed research within the CONTEXT Project, the Paris case study will concern the analysis of the Triangle de Gonesse Project within the Plaine de France, a sub-regional development area located in the Northern sector of the Paris Region (12012 km², 11,9 million inhabitants in 2011).

Located between the Roissy-Charles-de-Gaulle International Airport and the Paris region urban core, and bordered by the A1 motorway, the Triangle de Gonesse has been identified since the beginning of the 1990s as a "strategic (greenfield) development area" for the Paris metropolitan region. This agricultural area of almost 1000 hectares was designated as such in the 1994 Regional Masterplan for a future high value development. This long term profile was submitted to the condition of a good accessibility by public transport (the area has no access now), at the time a tangential Roissy-Cergy train link was planned but was later abandoned (replaced by the *Tangentielle Nord* light-rail project).

In 2002, a Joint Public Development Agency, the Etablissement Public d'Aménagement (EPA) Plaine de France, was set up to work on the physical, social and economic regeneration and development of a large area of going from Paris to the Roissy airport (today : 300 km² and almost 1 million inhabitants). Set up by the French State, this multi-actor Agency is chaired by the president of the Regional Council of the Ile-de-France (Paris Region) and includes the two *conseils généraux* of Seine-Saint-Denis and Val d'Oise (*départements,* similar to the Dutch Provinces or

the British Counties), 40 municipalities grouped into 6 inter-municipal associations (*communautés d'agglomération* or *communautés de communes*).

In 2005, the EPA Plaine de France approved a Strategic Development Plan for the Plaine de France. In 2008, the Regional Council adopted its Regional Masterplan (*Schéma directeur regional d'Ile-de-France* or SDRIF 2008) confirming that the area could be developed on the long run, if and when a new train link between two regional trains lines, RER B and D (*Barreau de Gonesse*), is built. But this Masterplan did not get approval from the National Government -so the SDRIF 1994 remains valid until a future SDRIF currently under revision. In 2008-2009, the French President launched an International Planning & Design Consultation and created a Secretary of State for the Capital Region, pushing for a (more) "ambitious Post-Kyoto Grand Paris strategy". This lead to the outcome of a new "super metro" system –designed between closed doors– to serve a series of potential economic clusters mainly located on the outskirts of the metropolitan region. Nickednamed "Le Grand 8" (double ring), this metro system was designed to challenge the Arc Express ring metro project that was then being designed by the Regional Council with the Regional Transport Authority (the STIF or *Syndicat des Transports d'Ile-de-France*) to serve the dense inner suburbs of Paris.

In June 2010, the National Government got the approval by Parliament of the Grand Paris Law which anticipates the implementation of a new 200-km metro system for the Paris region including a new major station in the heart of the Triangle to serve a future "excellence node" within the "Grand Roissy" region.

After two years of conflict between regional and national governments and a 3-month public debate, the Regional Council of Ile-de-France and the National Government finally agreed in February 2011 on a Grand Paris Express metro network (RTGPE) as well as on the necessity to revise the 2008 Regional Masterplan to take into account the "Grand Paris". The undergoing revision should lead to a new SDRIF being approved at the end of 2013 which will endorse the RTGPE station in the heart of the Triangle de Gonesse and should thus help remove the legal condition for the development of the area. A completely new State Agency, centrally (well) funded, was created in July 2010 to design and implement the Grand Paris Express metro system, the *Société du Grand Paris* (SGP).

In 2011, the Government set up a new state-led autonomous instrument to consider development around the future stations, the *Contrats de Dévelopment Territorial* (CdT), and started direct conversations with the local authorities about their contents, bypassing the Region and the Departments. The *Contrat de Dévelopment Territorial* Val de France-Gonesse which includes the Triangle is one of the 17 CdT currently being discussed.

Meanwhile, after a 2-year study by Swiss urban designers Güller & Güller, the Joint Development Agency EPA Plaine de France adopted a *Plan de Référence* for the Triangle de Roissy-Gonesse in 2010. This Plan identifies the Heart of the Triangle (*Coeur du Triangle*) as the most strategic development area for "high-value tertiary and innovative activities" (210 hectares, a minimum of 1.5 million m² of economic development expected in 2035), preserving 400 hectares as a *"Carré Vert"* (Green Square) for agriculture.

In the past few years, a large French retail developer, Immochan (Auchan Group), has come up with a "new" concept of a major retail and leisure concept for the Triangle with a private investment estimated at 1.7 billion Euros for a 80-hectare development which would, if built, dwarf Disneyland Paris in terms of global tourist attraction (30 million visitors expected in 2030!). An international architecture competition set up by Auchan Group with a made-to-measure Steering Committee (National Government, City of Gonesse, Conseil Général of Val d'Oise [*Département*], Conseil Régional d'Île-de-France, Atelier international du Grand Paris, Société du Grand Paris, EPA Plaine de France) is currently taking place to design the project (Autumn 2012).

Despite a seemingly large multi-actor consensus on the development of the Triangle de Gonesse, there is today a lot debate and conflict between major players on the subject, including within the Regional Council and within State Agencies.

In 2011, 17 local and national non-governmental environmental organisations got together to protest against this project, the *Collectif pour le Triangle de Gonesse*. Their goals are to preserve the agriculture in the Triangle.

The future of the Roissy-CDG Airport region has triggered a lot of debate in the last years, including within the new arena of the *Syndicat Paris Métropole*, a forum of discussion between 200 local and regional authorities set up in 2010.

Problem description

The context of planning the Paris Region and, specifically, the area of the Plaine de France is somewhat different from the Dutch case studies selected for the current CONTEXT project. We do not have here a (good) locally-led project which would meet (unflexible) national or European environmental norms or regulations.

The question with the Triangle de Gonesse in the Plaine de France is about the tensions or perhaps possible contradictions between a major development strategy and other environmental and planning issues, such as:

– Making full use of the capacity of the existing and planned urban areas for airport-related and induced development (including Airport Core, South Airport and Le Bourget areas, all served by rail) before developing a greenfield location needing new high-capacity transport investments which will not benefit the (poorly accessible) existing communities;
– Preserving a highly productive agricultural land as a food-producing, a green services- and landscape amenities provider, locally and at the regional scale (Metropolitan Green Belt);
– Preserving the Roissy-CDG airport road accessibility which is already facing major congestion;
– Favoring mix-use fine-grain urban & social regeneration of the centre of Plaine de France, versus new mono-functional office and retail-lead development of the fringe area: there is no housing permitted in the Triangle de Gonesse due to its location in between the noise contours zones of Roissy-CDG airport and Le Bourget business airport, and in the proximity of major motorways (A1 and Boulevard urbain du Parisis, or BIP);
– Reducing the footprint of local and metropolitan development: on water systems (Croult Valley), CO_2 and GES emissions, energy consumption, etc.

Within the Triangle de Gonesse, the current EuropaCity Project questions the capacity of a private-led flagship project to fit the needs of economic, social and environmental development of one of the most socially vulnerable and the most fragmented territory of the Paris region.

Scope of study

The research will focus on the Triangle de Gonesse Project (1000 ha) within the context of the Plaine de France (300 km²).

But the study will also consider different spatial scales with their planning and government networks:

– The operational level: The Heart of the Triangle (210 ha), a future EPA Plaine de France-led development area (ZAC) including the EuropaCity private development Project (80 ha);
– The local level(s): City of Gonesse (in charge of the *Plan Local d'Urbanisme-PLU* or land-use Plan), Val de France-Gonesse (in charge of CdT) and the future South of Airport region including the existing airport corridor East of A1 (Paris Nord-II/Parc des Expositions, ZAC Aerolians development project, the future of Citroën plant, etc.);
– The sub-regional level(s): *Syndicat mixte d'étude et de programmation pour le développement de l'Est du Val d'Oise*, an association of 25 cities East of Val d'Oise in charge of the Sub-regional Masterplan or SCOT); and of course the EPA Plaine de France territory between Paris and Roissy-CDG which includes the Le Bourget Airport development area;
– The regional/metropolitan level(s): the Regional Masterplan (1994, 2008 & 2013) and other (sub-)regional policies and instruments piloted by the Regional Council; the Grand Paris process, the instruments set up by the National Government and conducted by the Regional State (Prefecture d'Ile-de-France), such as the Grand Roissy Conference around the CDG-Airport or the SGP; Paris Métropole may also come into the picture.

The study will also need to consider the non-governmental, public-private and private networks involved in the area's development, such as Aéroports de Paris, Air France-KLM, the Chambers of Commerce, etc. (23 private and public parties are part of the Hubstart association), the Chamber of Agriculture, the environmental associations (17 of them are part of the Collectif pour le Triangle de Gonesse), the Auchan Group, the professional organisations and of course the citizens.

The Triangle de Gonesse is still a project, not a reality, but there have been reflections on the development of the area since the late 1980s. The study needs to cover the period from 1990 to this day and take into consideration the current horizon of development (2030-2035).

Study orientation

From an IAU perspective, the study should deal with the following aspects:

– Understanding the project's elaboration process at different scales and with different dimensions (transport decisions, land-use & development procedures, legal requirements for public participation, image-building strategies, etc.), and how the project fits into the strategy of each player involved, including the spatial, economic, environmental, social and political justifications each one gives for supporting or opposing the project;

- Identifying the European, National or Regional environmental & planning commitments or regulations that the development project should take into consideration or which could affect the decision-making process but may be currently ignored by the decision-makers;
- Revealing the tensions within the project: for instance between urban development strategies and environmental laws, rules and planning policies; between different levels of government or governance; or between long-term strategic objectives and short-term operational decisions; etc.
- Revealing the current project's uncertainties (or weaknesses) from a sustainable development perspective, and research their relationship to the (dysfunctional) planning governance or decision-making process. How the different instruments framing the project (SDRIF, SCOT, CdT, PLU, and other) or enabling it (*Contrat de Projet Etat-Region* and other) are used in the process will need to be understood, as well as the role of informal networks (Hubstart, EuropaCity Steering Committee and other).

The project-building process of the Triangle de Gonesse in the Plaine de France raises many questions that the study should help to answer, including:

- How important is the fact the development is located in the Val-d'Oise *Département*? How important is the political leadership of the mayor of Gonesse? How important is the institutional fragmentation, specifically the absence (or weakness) of a metropolitan governance or even an airport-region governance?
- How does the project relate to the missions and leadership of EPA Plaine de France? How does the decision-making process work within EPAPF between the State, the Region, the *Départements* and the local authorities? Is EPAPF more of a strategic territorial coordinator or more of an area-based developer?
- Could the absence (or weakness) of governance explain the current apparent support for the EuropaCity project, in the context of the Plaine de France? Is there any negotiation going on? With whom and on what grounds? How does this interfere with the support for the other parts of the development project and the station(s) project?
- Was the location of a station of the Grand Paris Express Network project in the heart of the Triangle de Gonesse designed to support the local development project? Is the development project now used to justify, in reverse, the need for a station? Does the project fit the need of future business users? Do the real estate markets back the project?
- Have the spatial, socio-economic and environmental impacts of the Triangle de Gonesse project been examined in depth? Where any overall alternatives to the project examined by EPAPF? How solid is the economic and financial model behind the project? What could happen if some components of project are postponed or withdrawn?

The examination of the available documentation, the chronological analysis of press coverage and political positions on the subject, the interview of a range of actors involved in the project should help to answer some of these questions as regards to the Triangle de Gonesse in the Plaine de France.

Urban Regions in the Delta