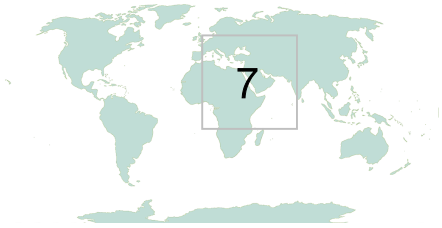
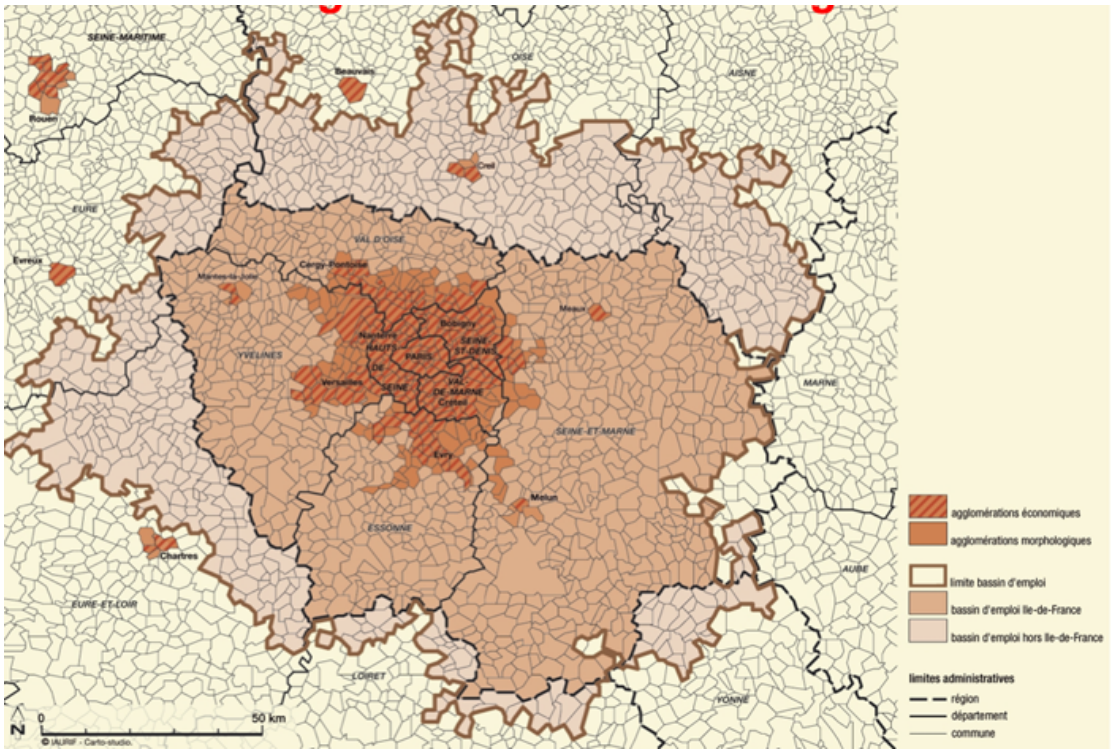
IN-Between Metropolitan Strategies Programme
Interview #7 | Paris, France



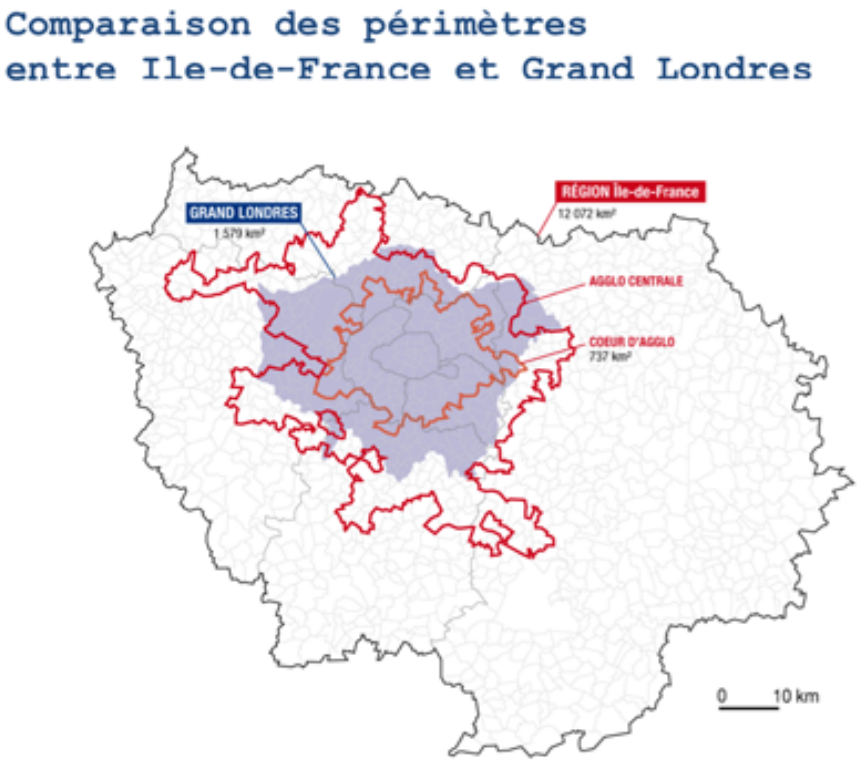
Within the context of the activities of the Community of Competence on Metropolisation[1], INTA and Deltametropool Association joined forces to design the programme In-between Metropolitan Strategies pursuing earlier discussions and exchanges on metropolitan strategies ongoing in a worldwide spectrum.
During the first phase, a series of interviews have been realised to several metropolitan cases covering various themes: the scale of the metropolitan area, the governance and cooperation, new forms of urbanity and metropolitan environments, the innovative economical sectors within the metropolitan area and how to develop the metropolis sustainably.

Greater Paris, France
Interview with Vincent Fouchier, Deputy Director IAU-IF (Urban Planning Institute of Ile-de France Region)

1. The metropolitan area
How extensive is the metropolitan area and how are the metropolitan values and identity formed for this the area? What makes your metropolitan area internationally attractive?



[1] *http://www.inta-aivn.org/en/communities-of-competence/metropolisation/metropolisation-home*



There is a debate about the extension of the metropolitan area: the region (administrative region created in the 80's) or only the built urban area (for example, the Syndicat Paris Métropole is saying: governance should be only on this perimeter)
The Regional Planning Agency IAU-IF thinks that the good scale for metropolitan strategies is the Region (11.5 millions inhabitants), because its perimeter is wider than just the built area, and therefore takes into account other metropolitan objects (forests, agriculture areas, periurban…).

There is not a proper regional identity as the Region, as administrative entity is quite new, and people from this region are coming from everywhere. There are very mixed, varied sources of identities.

It is a real challenge for the Region to create a real regional brand that has been totally hidden by the Grand Paris initiative led by the State.
Indeed, there is a good branding for the Grand Paris, which is known internationally, and very well developed within political and economic actors.
From the citizen's point of view, they present themselves as Parisians or coming from the Paris region, but not from Ile de France (name of the Region) or Grand Paris.

2. Governance and Cooperation
Is there a form of metropolitan strategy in place and what fields of policy does it entail? Which stakeholders are involved and what is their role and responsibility in this metropolitan strategy? How are the different territorial levels associated to the metropolitan governance? And how is the cooperation of different territorial levels maintained in the planning process that is increasingly subject to a rapid changing economic, social and technological environment?

Ile de France Region is leading the metropolitan strategy through the Regional Masterplan (SDRIF, Schéma Directeur Régional de l'Ile de France). This SDRIF has started to be reviewed in 2004 but has been stopped because of the political conflict between the State

(Grand Paris, led by the former President Nicolas Sarkozy) and the Region (SDRIF, led by Jean-Paul Huchon from the Socialist Party). The Regional Council has just voted SDRIF. In order to be effective, a public consultation has to be undertaken and afterwards the SDRIF has to be validated by the Council of the State.
There is a debate between the Region and the State about this strategy, but with the last change of government, the Region can be back on the front of the stage to be the leader of the metropolitan strategy. From the IAU perspective the Syndicat Paris Métropole (1 local authority, 1 vote) is unable to build a common strategy, as the elected representatives have not found a consensus on the governance of the territory.
Paris as capital and heart of the metropolis has initiated a metropolitan cooperation between officials of the region and especially neighbouring cities, and still has a strong role to play.

3. New Forms of Urbanity and Metropolitan Environments
What are the key development projects (flagships, major infrastructure, social or cultural equipment, etc.) and programs (information, incentives, investments), of your metropolitan strategy? How is the dialogue carried between the specific ambitions of local key projects and the ambition of the metropolitan territory?

Big project: Grand Paris Express (a consensus between the State and the Region to obtain this final project)
Major projects as well on retrofitting existing networks
Impact of metropolitan strategy and coherence of local project: The Regional Masterplan by law imposes to the local authorities to comply with its orientation.
The major participatory process with the local authorities of the Region launched in 2004 when they started to review the masterplan has helped to change the practice of local authorities and include the values of the Masterplan in their local projects (densification is now accepted by everyone…)
Local project serve the metropolitan dynamics
Negociation between different stakeholders

4. Innovative Economic Sectors
Is the regional level competitive enough in a globalized economic and innovation-led system clusters and does it remove the obstacle of the vertical organisation of public policy?

A metropolis is a system and therefore, very specialized clusters cannot be the only answer to this system. There is a need of economic mix with some industrial and/or service sectors or business lines that are very specialized and of excellence.
Paris metropolitan area has a worldwide influence, therefore, there is an economic diversity, and almost all business lines have a level of excellence.

5. Sustainable Development
On which central themes and key policies is your metropolitan strategy set upon? How do these themes and policies overcome the short-term instability of any long-term vision and deliver a performing and resilient territorial development?

In the Regional Masterplan, sustainability is part of the process and climate change is taken into account with implementations of different policies:
- energy efficiency with promotion of public transportation, intensification of the urban areas to avoid to much mobility
- reducing space consuming building around transports nodes to stop urban sprawl, maintain biodiversity…

- resilient city: adaptability, programmation of the Masterplan is adaptable to accelerate or reduce the rhythm of implementation and development in case of crisis

V. Fouchier stresses out that currently, the major blocking point is that the Masterplan (SDRIF) exists but is still not applied. He strongly believes that the Region is the right perimeter to govern and manage the metropolis.