

CURRENTS

5

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The magazine of a port in motion



TO WHAT EXTENT HAS A MIX OF USES BECOME A PREREQUISITE FOR DEVELOPING THE PORTECONOMY?

TWO DISTINGUISHED EXPERTS SHARE THEIR VISION AND ANALYSIS:

Erik ORSENNA, author, member of the Académie Française and President of the NGO Initiatives for the Future of Great Rivers.
Bruno DELSALLE, Director General of the International Association of Cities and Ports (AIVP).



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editorial



A few weeks ago, the first phase of works began on the Port Seine-Métropole Ouest (PSMO) multimodal platform. Located in the Yvelines département between Achères, Conflans-Sainte-Honorine and Andrésy, this new port has been designed as a genuine port district integral to the town and featuring a park, rewilded riverbanks and pedestrian and cycle paths. It exemplifies the increasingly close relationship between town and port, responding directly to expectations of the local population. It also reflects the accelerated transformation of ports, sources of significant economic benefits for their surrounding regions, as they face major challenges such as land scarcity, ecological transition, geopolitical tensions and the need to mitigate environmental harms.

That is why this issue of *Currents* has been devoted to mixed uses of port areas. This approach, which is developing fast across all five continents, makes port spaces multifunctional and has evolved beyond a mere planning choice: it is now a strategic requirement for the economic development and long-term viability of ports.

By hosting shops, restaurants, campuses, green spaces and cultural and leisure facilities, as well as offices, services, and residential districts – while at the same time opening up to locals and tourists alike – ports are adapting their model to 21st-century realities. In doing so, they can optimise their economic value and enhance both their contribution to collective well-being and the social acceptability of their operations. As you will discover throughout this issue, consideration of a mix of uses has now become an essential part of designing port development projects. At PSMO, as elsewhere, this relies on an increasingly intense dialogue between ports and their regional stakeholders, ranging from central government to individual citizens, from local authorities to businesses, from private investors to non-profit associations. We are convinced that this dialogue creates the conditions for balanced, long-term and shared development that generates wealth and jobs as well as accelerating societal progress.

We hope you enjoy this issue.

Benoit ROCHET,
Managing Director and Chairman
of the Board HAROPA PORT





“If **WATER**
is **VITAL**,
it is because it embodies
CONNECTION”

LONG AT THE HEART OF OUR DAILY LIVES AND COLLECTIVE IMAGINATION, RIVERS ARE ONCE AGAIN TAKING CENTRE STAGE: THEY BRING TOGETHER ECONOMIC ACTIVITY, PUBLIC SPACES AND LEISURE. THEY ARE BECOMING VIBRANT PLACES ONCE MORE, SERVING LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND FOSTERING MORE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. A CONVERSATION WITH ERIK ORSENNA.

“Sharing use not only helps defuse conflicts but also creates collective value and strengthens local regional resilience.”

Originally trained as an economist,
Erik Orsenna is a writer, a member of the
Académie française and president of the
NGO Initiatives for the Future of Major Rivers.

How would you define French "river culture"?

It seems to me that in the past rivers and waterways played a much greater role, for all sorts of reasons. Notably recreational. Watercourses were the preferred locations for holidays. People danced in traditional French riverside cafés, guinguettes, they navigated inland waters in rowing boats and pleasure craft – scenes extensively depicted by painters. Alongside this, rivers, being less domesticated, were feared for their rages and floods. Fear is part of culture. And lastly, cities had not yet turned their backs on them and had not hemmed them in between roads reserved for cars.

“ Just look at river waterfronts! Today, they are surely the local population's favourite places, especially for the young.”

River culture has been returning for around twenty years now. To some extent. Just look at river waterfronts! Today, they are surely the local population's favourite places, especially for young people. In short, French river culture is currently reinventing itself: more sensitive, more active, more aware of what rivers represent: memory, landscape, an essential service, and a promise for the future.

Your NGO shares "a multidisciplinary, systemic and balanced vision of the issues and uses". What about "shared uses"?

If water is vital, it is because it embodies connection. The non-profit association "Initiatives for the Future of Great Rivers" (Avenir des Grands Fleuves – IAGF), which I founded alongside the Compagnie Nationale du Rhône ten years ago now, promotes a profoundly multidisciplinary approach that overarches engineering, hydrology, economics, geopolitics, biodiversity, urban planning,

agriculture, culture, and even religious faiths.

A balance between economic, social, and environmental uses is central to our activities. Sharing use not only helps defuse conflicts but also creates collective value and strengthens local regional resilience.

The projects you endorse promote rivers as "carriers of solutions, connections and levers for development": what do you see as the levers for the Seine Axis?

I am absolutely convinced that a river is not just a natural environment – it is also a space for innovation, a vector for cooperation, a lever for climate adaptation and a driver of economic and cultural development.

The ecological transition of port activities, development of river-based mobility, improvement of water quality, strengthening cooperation between stakeholders and social revitalisation of the river are all challenges for the years to come.

We will need to increase regional dialogue, align visions for the future and combine different areas of expertise. In short, we need to COOPERATE, now and always!

Can a mix of uses be the lever for economic and social development at city-port interfaces?

Those interfaces concentrate modernised logistics, new services, innovation spaces, and attractive public areas. They can become economic drivers rather than focuses for friction if they are designed as diverse, collaborative spaces. A few key actions, often already in place at local level, could be stepped up: river festivals, artistic discovery trails, a cultural reclaiming of the riverfront, promotion of port and industrial heritage, river transport for "last mile" delivery, creation of new river-based services for the public (mobility, energy, recycling), and so on.

The local network of non-profit associations will be essential to achieving this through joint constructive effort with institutional stakeholders. And now more than ever, it needs to be underpinned in terms of public policy.

NEW USES FOR THE PORT AREA



SPORT & LEISURE

Sports competitions, swimming (river and pools), boating clubs and recreational fishing.

EXAMPLE: During the 2024 Olympic and Paralympics Games in Paris, the open-water swimming events for the men's and women's triathlon, mixed relay, marathon swimming and para-triathlon competitions took place in the River Seine. A challenge made possible thanks to the involvement of all stakeholders along the river and the Swimming Plan.



FOOD

Bars and restaurants.

EXAMPLE: The Marégraphes (tide gauges) area in Rouen hosts bars, restaurants, and brasseries in eight former warehouses, sharing the same site with the Seine-Normandy Water Agency, France 3 Normandie tv station, and even a laser tag centre.



CULTURE

Concerts, museums, exhibitions and Port Centers.

EXAMPLE: The 'Fluctuart' barge, moored at Port du Gros-Caillou in Paris, offers exhibitions, events and seminars focused on trends in urban art. It coexists with the Gisèle-Halimi promenade and the Niki de Saint-Phalle embankment archipelago garden.



RETAIL

Shops, professional trade outlets and shopping centers.

EXAMPLE: At Port de Javel in Paris, the Point.P construction materials store serves building industry professionals. The site is shared with the Cemex cement plant during the day, and the quayside promenade opens to the public after 5 pm.

Ports are often thought of as closed off, secure spaces used solely for freight traffic. However, port areas are vast and not limited to terminals alone! The port authority develops all the spaces for which it is responsible. While a port's core purpose continues to be centred on industrial, logistical, and multimodal activities, they are increasingly opening up to uses shared with the public. Such mixing of uses is transforming their economic model and the city-port relationship.



EDUCATION

Higher education institutions and training organisations.

EXAMPLE: The Le Havre Normandie Campus includes 10 prestigious higher education institutions. Sciences Po, the Normandy School of Management, the National Institute of Applied Sciences, the Higher Institute of Logistics Studies, the National Naval Academy and the National School of Maritime Safety and Administration are all situated in the heart of the port's docks.



NATURE

Conservation areas and walking paths.

EXAMPLE: In the Rouen port area, a landscaped pathway introduces visitors to the flora and fauna of the Aulnay marshland with walking routes that pass through a variety of environments, including woods, reed beds, ponds, and more.



BUSINESS AND SERVICES

The tertiary sector, administrative bodies and social & solidarity economy (SSE) organisations.

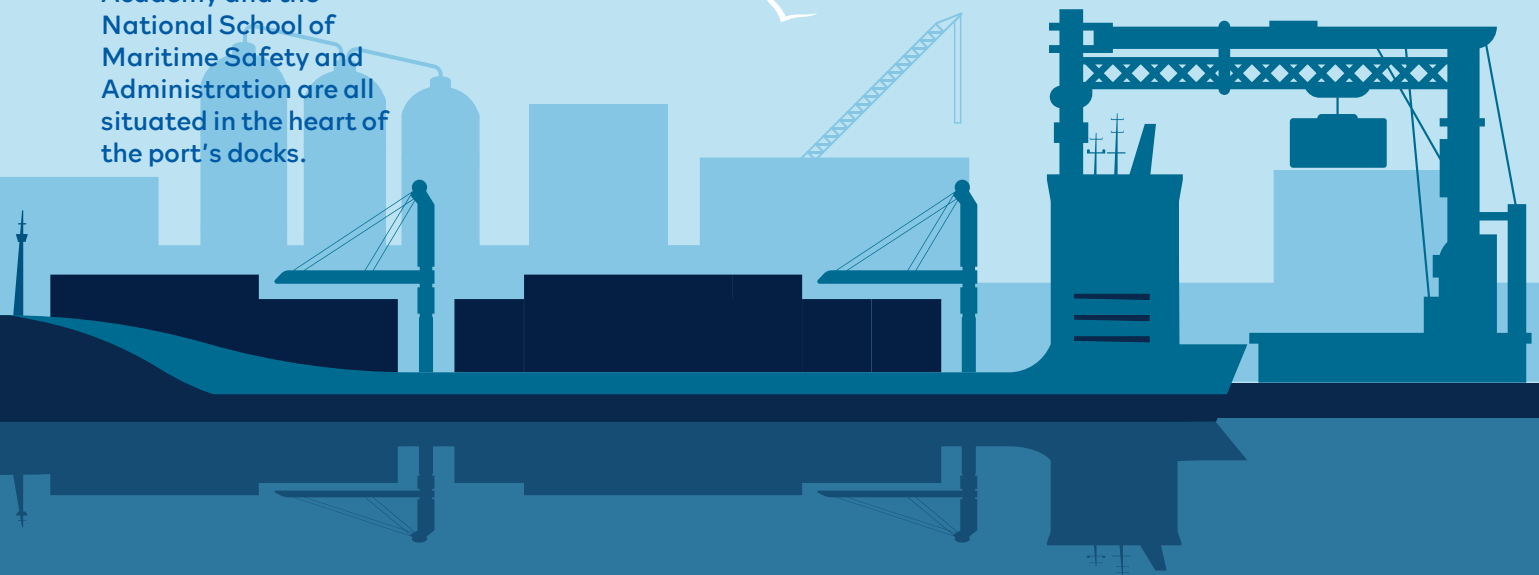
EXAMPLE: 'Village by CA Rouen Vallée de Seine', a member of the business incubator network supported by the Crédit Agricole bank, is home to 70 startups, associated alumni and private events in Rouen Port's Warehouse 107.



HOUSING

Residential buildings.

EXAMPLE: 1,300 houseboats and pleasure craft used as residences are moored at the Seine dock alongside various other port activities, such as freight transport, events and cruises, to name but a few.



Cities and ports, a bond restored



INSEPARABLE UNTIL THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION, CITIES AND THEIR PORTS SUBSEQUENTLY SPENT DECADES IN "DISTANT COHABITATION". WHAT AT ONE TIME WAS A GLOBAL PHENOMENON NOW APPEARS TO BE A THING OF THE PAST. ACROSS ALL FIVE CONTINENTS, THE BOND IS BEING RESTORED.

Bruno Delsalle explains that this movement is linked to the emergence of global economic, ecological and societal challenges prompting cities and ports to look beyond their administrative borders, and sums this up by saying that *"they have realised that the region was the appropriate level at which to address these issues and it was therefore in their best interest to build a common destiny based on a shared vision."* Key economic drivers include the sharp rise in freight traffic during the 2000s, coupled with increasing ship size. To accommodate these giant vessels and handle the resulting flows, ever-larger port industrial areas were set up on the seafront at the city outskirts. *"This eventually led to issues for social acceptability,"* he observes. The consequence? The expectations of the local populations, citizens and municipalities for an enhancement of these city districts – and port cities more generally – have become steadily more insistent. Even to the point of becoming a core electoral issue in some cases.



Bruno DELSALLE

The ecological emergency has been another decisive factor. He goes on to say that *"sustainable development initiatives, such as the energy transition, resource conservation, circular economy models and biodiversity protection, are inconceivable in the absence of collaboration between regional stakeholders. A port can decarbonise its facilities alone, but*

to go further, and install shoreside electricity for ships at berth for example, it needs the energy provider and, ultimately, local government."

DIVERSE INTERFACES

This new era of cohabitation is reflected in a growing number of interfaces of various types where *"mixed-use"* is gradually developing. According to Bruno Delsalle, *"such interfaces allow cities to reclaim ownership of their ports and make them once again part of the economic and social life of the city, a structural component of its identity, its attractiveness and its dynamism."* The hosting of events, the promotion of maritime archives and architecture,



Bruno Delsalle, a maritime geographer, helped establish the International Association of Cities and Ports (AIVP) in 1988 before becoming its Director General.



the opening of museums and 'Port Centers' are spreading. Initiatives of this kind help citizens get to know their ports better and highlight the value of the culture specific to port cities, "giving back to their populations a sense of pride in belonging to a community of interests."

“Interfaces allow cities to reclaim ownership of their ports and make them once again part of the economic and social life of the city, a structural component of its identity, its attractiveness and its dynamism.”

A mix of uses, when made an integral part of urban planning policies, testifies to the evolving relationship between cities and their ports. Port areas, their heritage and their outskirts are being rehabilitated, landscaped and enhanced before being opened to the public. Hybrid zones are becoming more common, such as shared waterfronts populated by both workers and families out for a stroll. Bars, restaurants, parks, shops, museums, cinemas and theatres are opening at these city-port interfaces. Such connective spaces also host corporate headquarters, start-ups, housing and convention centers, bringing together residents, tourists, cyclists, swimmers, fishers, and much else.

INSPIRATIONAL EXAMPLES

The trend originated in the English-speaking countries, but some early projects, such as the redevelopment of the London Docklands in the 1980s, proved controversial, with the Thames waterfront being effectively taken over completely by private luxury flats. In response, France, Spain, and Italy set out on a collective reflection on alternative ways forward more aligned with the public interest. "The AIVP was born in 1988 from the desire of urban and port stakeholders to build dialogue on how to transform city-port interfaces," Bruno Delsalle explains. "Projects have proliferated since that time. Some are really inspirational, and this led us to launch the AIVP Antoine Rufenacht Prize in 2024 as a reward for the most remarkable among them." In its inaugural year, the AIVP received 23 entries. The first prize was awarded to the Tangier City Port conversion project (see pages 32-33). The judging panel also granted a special mention to the redevelopment of Javel Bas port in Paris. Submitted by HAROPA PORT, this combines batch concrete production, storage and freight handling with a public promenade along the Seine. He concludes by saying that "this mix of city-port uses is a significant source of value for both the city and the port. It strengthens regional coherence and attractiveness. It offers the local population a sustainable, high-quality living environment - by combining workplaces and recreational spaces in a single district, for example - and it fosters public support for port industrial operations."

INTE-GRATE





Alexandra RUIZ

Redevelopment of **FLORIDA POINT:** an iconic project

“Alexandra Ruiz est directrice générale du GIP Le Havre Croisières’, maître d’ouvrage des trois nouveaux terminaux de croisière de la pointe de Floride.”

LOCATED IN THE HEART OF LE HAVRE, A SITE WHERE THOUSANDS OF CRUISE PASSENGERS DISEMBARK EVERY YEAR, FLORIDA POINT IS BEING TRANSFORMED BY AN AMBITIOUS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME. ALEXANDRA RUIZ SHARES THE DETAILS OF THIS PIONEERING PROJECT.

Why transform Florida Point?

There was a need to adapt port facilities to fast-moving changes in the cruise industry: bigger ships, higher passenger volumes and increased demands not only for security, comfort, and operational efficiency, but also for high environmental standards. It was for example important to install quayside electricity as a step in the direction of zero-emission stays in port to ensure that the people of Le Havre would continue to be proud of it and come – as I did as a child – to watch the ships dock. Florida Point is connected to the port and close to the city centre. It is the place where port and city gaze upon each other, the ideal location for taking forward a historic dialogue

established when French king Francis I created the Port of Le Havre in February 1517, followed by the city itself six months later.

What does the project involve?

We are creating three new cruise terminals, two of which are being developed from refurbished former warehouses. All of them feature high-quality architectural design. This is important, as the site provides cruise passengers with their first impression of Le Havre and can be seen from the city itself. The project also includes the creation of public spaces: a panoramic roof terrace on one of the terminals and a five-hectare park between the buildings – a place for walking and sight-seeing capable of hosting events such as concerts.

Designed to protect the environment and accelerate the energy transition, the project notably incorporates rooftop solar panels for greater energy

efficiency. Plans are also in place to enhance existing urban connectivity, which already enables three-quarters of passengers to reach the city on foot.

What role does mixed-use play here?

Currently, Florida Point caters only to cruise passengers. Once redeveloped, it will serve multiple functions for a variety of users: economic functions, given that the new facilities will boost cruise activity and strengthen the city’s appeal, creating growth and local jobs – and social functions, because the site will allow the residents of Le Havre to reclaim their port by coming here to walk and relax, thus helping enhance local quality of life.

*GIP (Groupement d’Intérêt Public / public interest group) Le Havre Croisières brings together the Le Havre Seine Métropole urban community and HAROPA PORT. It has been responsible for the management and operation of cruise activities since 2022.

“Florida Point is the place where port and city gaze upon each other.”

Port area mixed-use: a driver for economic growth

**PORTS ARE A STRATEGIC ASSET FOR REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.
AND INCREASING DIVERSITY IN THE USE OF PORT LAND IS FURTHER
BOOSTING THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO VALUE CREATION.**

BELOW, AN OVERVIEW.

Acting as interconnection hubs between land and sea (or inland waterways) through which raw materials, goods and passengers transit, port areas have always created value for local, regional, and even national economies. In 2011, the authors of the collective study *“The Competitiveness of Global Port-Cities: The Case of the Seine Axis (Le Havre, Rouen, Paris, Caen), France”*¹ observed that the Le Havre/Rouen complex accounted for over a fifth of Normandy’s added value and 9.5% of regional employment, that it had substantial indirect impacts on a number of other sectors – such as transport, wholesale and retail trade, and construction – while also contributing to research and innovation programmes (particularly in logistics), and that it helps enhance port identity.

Fifteen years later, with €5.1 billion in wealth



César DUCRUET

generated annually and over 46,000 jobs², the economic impact of the industrial-port complexes of Rouen and Le Havre has further strengthened. As César Ducruet, one of the study’s co-authors, points out: *“Ports’ value creation depends on their ability to forge relationships with their cities.”* Since the early 2000s diversification of port uses has flourished,

further strengthening those ties. As ports face a structural decline in some of their traditional activities, particularly those related to hydrocarbons, this mixed-use approach allows them to continue to balance their business models by securing new sources of revenue. The activities that spring from diversification also increase ports’ contribution to the local regional economy.

¹ Merk, O. et al., *“The Competitiveness of Global Port-Cities: The Case of the Seine Axis (Le Havre, Rouen, Paris, Caen), France”*, OECD Publishing, INSEE Data 2024.

“
César Ducruet, geographer and research director at the CNRS, is a
member of ÉconomiX, a joint research unit affiliated with Paris Nanterre
University.”
”

FROM GREEN INDUSTRY TO CAMPUSES

The value created by mixed-use can take numerous forms. Like Bremerhaven in Germany, which was revitalised by offshore wind power, many seaports are committing to green industry and launching renewable energy production. Inland ports are increasingly part of urban logistics circuits (in Paris, for example) or circular economy loops converting waste into resources. Some ports attract visitors and tourists by developing the cruise sector (Florida Point in Le Havre is an example), by creating green spaces, cultural and leisure areas, or hosting events. Others are leaning into the knowledge economy, establishing training programmes with local partners. Such programmes frequently link up with port activities: in Genoa, Italy's Merchant Marine Academy trains students in sustainable mobility for maritime transport. *"However, this is not always the case, adds César Ducruet. The ultimate challenge is to offer generalist courses, as is done by the Normandy School of Management or the Sciences Po Asia-Pacific campus, both based at the port of Le Havre."*

NEW URBAN DISTRICTS

Another illustration of the expansion of mixed-use is that rising demand for land, combined with the objective of reducing greenfield take-up, is leading to the conversion of many industrial-port brownfield sites into new urban districts that can enhance a city's attractiveness. The project to completely overhaul the eastern entrance to the French city of Sète is a good example. Launched ten years ago by Sète Agglopolo Méditerranée, it is designed to provide a modern, convivial living environment for professionals and young households, combining 1,800 homes with commercial and service-sector activities. *"Similar projects are sometimes driven by central government, notes César Ducruet. In South Korea, for example, it was the government*

Rouen makes WAVES WITH 'L'ARMADA'

In the early 1980s, Rouen's waterfront had not yet been redeveloped. It was reclaimed thanks to a major event: L'Armada. For three decades, every 4 to 6 years, L'Armada allows the general public to visit tall ships and military vessels free of charge over a 10-day period. It has become one of France's most significant tourist events and now plays a leading role in Normandy's economy and reputation. In 2023, the 8th edition attracted 5 million visitors – more than any other maritime festival in Europe. It also created 1,700 direct jobs, generated over 9,000 mainstream and social media mentions in 18 months, and brought in €8.4 million in direct revenue. The overall impact of L'Armada for the Seine-Maritime département is estimated at €97.5 million.

that decided in 2001 to locate the new international airport on an island adjacent to the port of Incheon, about thirty kilometres from Seoul. The city authority then took over, planning the development of a mixed urban zone on a polder, bringing together some thirty activities including residential, retail, education, a container terminal, and high-value-added service activities. A successful strategy, given that 25 years on, the district enhances Incheon's international standing."

Repurposing brownfield sites for URBAN REGENERATION



Fadia KARAM

“Fadia Karam is CEO of Espaces Ferroviaires and head of Major Projects and Asset Enhancement at SNCF Immobilier.”

RAIL AND PORT REAL ESTATE SHARE SIMILAR LEGAL AND OPERATIONAL CONSTRAINTS. THE CORE TASK OF ESPACES FERROVIAIRES, THE SNCF GROUP'S PROPERTY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SUBSIDIARY, IS TO REPURPOSE RAIL LAND THAT LOST ITS OPERATIONAL UTILITY.

Why have brownfield sites now become a strategic land resource?

Redundant railway land now constitutes one of the last major land reserves located in the heart of major cities, and it is directly connected to transport infrastructure. Against the backdrop of the need to use land efficiently and the goal of Net Zero Land Take, its repurposing is a response to a straightforward equation: transformation of already developed land rather than consuming greenfield.

But the challenge goes further than mere scarcity. Brownfield sites allow us to use several tools at one and the same time: controlled densification of land occupancy, promotion of urban continuity between different city districts or residential areas and reincorporation of large technical complexes into the heart of the city. Brownfield redevelopment offers the opportunity to reconfigure structurally significant areas where infrastructure has long acted as a barrier.

The virtuous, all-out 'Net Zero Land Take' approach based on recycling urban real estate on these already

developed sites allows the land to be re-fertilised through strong biodiversity, along with the creation of low-carbon, vibrant neighbourhoods.

How is the potential real estate value of a brownfield site assessed?

The real estate value of a site on rail-owned land is not a given; it must be unlocked through development. It is the outcome of a trade-off between urban potential, technical constraints and an economic balance in favour of the project. Environmental diagnostics, easements, compatibility with rail network operations and site handover schedule are also decisive. Added to this is a major factor: ongoing trends in property markets. Radical change in the service sector where usage is evolving, the lack of housing supply and environmental requirements we are obliged to meet: all these naturally have an impact on the bottom line of planning and property development programmes. All of which means that real estate value depends on the project's ability to find the right economic model.

What constraints can hold back brownfield repurposing?

The mono-functional model is a thing of the past. The viability of projects of this type now relies on a hybridisation of site usage. Mixed-use is not a theoretical principle; it is a prerequisite for balance. It can cushion the impact of property cycles and ensure that city neighbourhoods continue to be lively, as well as reducing unavoidable commuting. It also fosters local acceptability by meeting a range of needs. On land of this strategic importance, occupation density becomes a factor in quality: it is accompanied by generously proportioned public spaces, renaturing and close attention to how the space is to be used. The main obstacle we encounter is time. Projects of this kind take longer to complete because they are more complex. Time can be managed, but its costs are difficult to offset.

What are the commonest models for rail brownfield redevelopment?

Our goal is to create sustainable,

“Mixed-use [...] can cushion the impact of property cycles and ensure that city neighbourhoods continue to be lively, as well as reducing unavoidable commuting.”

attractive and resilient cities. We develop mixed-use programmes that are always rooted in their context, and in which climate, social and health issues are integral components right from the design stage. Every property development project is a tool for responsible transformation. Whether it is housing, managed residences, offices, shops, campuses or hotels, we are looking for property that is fully rooted in its context and capable of allying architectural and environmental standards with the art of construction.

How can functional diversity be made compatible with rail infrastructure’s operational constraints?

That presupposes bespoke urban design that is contextualised relative to each site’s constraints. The most sensitive functions are kept away from the most operationally active infrastructure. Ground floors are in many cases devoted to less vulnerable activities. Innovative construction methods – noise abatement,

bioclimatic design, reversibility – allow the constraints to be handled from the outset. There is constant dialogue with rail operators to ensure safety, operational continuity and quality of use for future residents.

The Messageries project in Paris is an iconic example of this trend towards value enhancement. What does it involve?

The Messageries city district we are developing in the 12th arrondissement of Paris is a perfect illustration in that it is transforming a historic six-hectare railway site into a mixed-use neighbourhood comprising 300 homes, areas for work and services, a school and a nursery. It is a project that creates effective urban continuity all the way to the rail station, and it includes an 8,000 sq. m., 450-long public park.

The future district reflects ambitious environmental goals, including as it does a substantial reduction in carbon footprint and innovative monitoring of a series of indicators, along with

measurement tools such as ‘urbaprint’, which we are developing specifically with the CSTB (the scientific and technical centre for building). The Messageries project proves that a railway site can become a productive, green and open city district, creating regional and social value.

Across the Paris area, rail network land redevelopment represents 22 hectares currently being repurposed at five sites, eventually providing over 3,300 homes, a high percentage of which will be social housing.

Might we see rail and port land becoming a testing ground for the productive, low-carbon city?

Yes, and that is precisely what makes it unique.

The proximity of this land to transport infrastructure means that it can host productive activities compatible with a densely populated city: urban logistics, the circular economy and new light industry models. Furthermore, its repurposing offers a unique opportunity to meet, from the outset, high standards for decarbonisation, the restoration of soil permeability, and biodiversity. Both rail and port sites can in this way become demonstrators for the post-carbon productive city, provided that environmental standards, economic robustness and regional cooperation are all combined.

Hybridity & Flexibility: urban planning's new pillars



AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF THE NEED FOR EFFICIENT LAND USE, COMBINING MULTIPLE FUNCTIONS AT A SINGLE LOCATION HAS BECOME A STRATEGIC PRIORITY FOR CITIES AND THEIR PORTS. BUT HOW ARE SUCH SPACES IN FACT DESIGNED AND CONSTRUCTED? VINCENT DUTEURTRE PROVIDES SOME INSIGHTS.

Vincent Duteurtre has been interested in mixed-use development since qualifying as an architect. For him, it led to successful urban planning. He considers that “it complicates project management, but it is also richer in terms of debate and added value.”

Indeed, it involves more than simply adding a series of uses: they need to be enabled to coexist in the same space, and they must therefore be “*thought through as a whole*” right from the initial design stage by finding a common denominator compatible with the site’s identity. Some locations are better suited to this than others. One such example is the Citadelle in Le Havre, a 26-hectare peninsula on port land that provides an effective link between the city and the docks. It is already home to the ferry terminal, a number of businesses, a non-profit association, the French National Maritime Academy (ENSM), and the Port Centre. And this is only a starting point: to capitalise on its strategic location, HAROPA PORT has initiated a study aimed at encouraging the emergence of new hybrid uses.



Vincent DUTEURTRE

COMPLEXITY AS A DRIVER FOR PROGRESS

If creating hybrid spaces is more complex, it is primarily because it gives rise to novel challenges, such as conflicts between uses. It is difficult, for example, to have the chemical industry and tourism cohabiting in the same space. Furthermore, planners must mitigate

the negative externalities (pollution, noise, traffic congestion, etc.) that accumulate across different functions. Vegetation-based solutions, for instance, can help overcome these difficulties by limiting noise transmission and visibility issues while at the same time improving air quality, biodiversity, water management and the human habitat.

Mixed-use development also increases the number of layers of regulations needing to be followed, ranging from generic – safety, accessibility, statutory requirements – to site-specific rules, such as the set of architectural, landscape and environmental design guidelines for the Seine riverside in Paris*. For Vincent Duteurtre, these are not constraints, but opportu-



Vincent Duteurtre, a government-certified architect, has headed the AURH (the Le Havre-Seine Estuary urban planning office) since 1 December 2025.





Julien RÉVEILLON,

Vice-President of the University of Rouen Normandy,
a specialist in environmental transition.

nities, observing that “these frameworks, which are positive in that they serve the public interest, push us to take our design further, obliging us to be innovative and creative. They contribute to the quality and sustainability of the developments.”

PRIORITISING EFFICIENT LAND USE

Certain construction techniques facilitate functional diversity by providing flexibility, modularity, reversibility and resilience. Vincent Duteurtre explains that “designing a building to be slightly taller or wider than necessary, giving it a post-and-beam structure, providing wide circulation areas to manage flows, opening up ground floors to the street – this all ensures that a building can adapt to changing needs.” He also advocates highly efficient use of the available land, including where technology is concerned, going on to say: “The less a place is regulated, organised and fitted with specific systems, the freer we are to assign it different uses” adding: “success is never guaranteed

“The less a place is regulated, organised and fitted with specific systems, the freer we are to assign it different uses.”

– that will be determined by what happens at the site when the project is finished, involving all relevant stakeholders.”

FROM CONSTRUCTION TO CO-CONSTRUCTION

All this also has a knock-on effect on the way the development process is managed. The old trio of engineer, town planner and architect and the tradi-

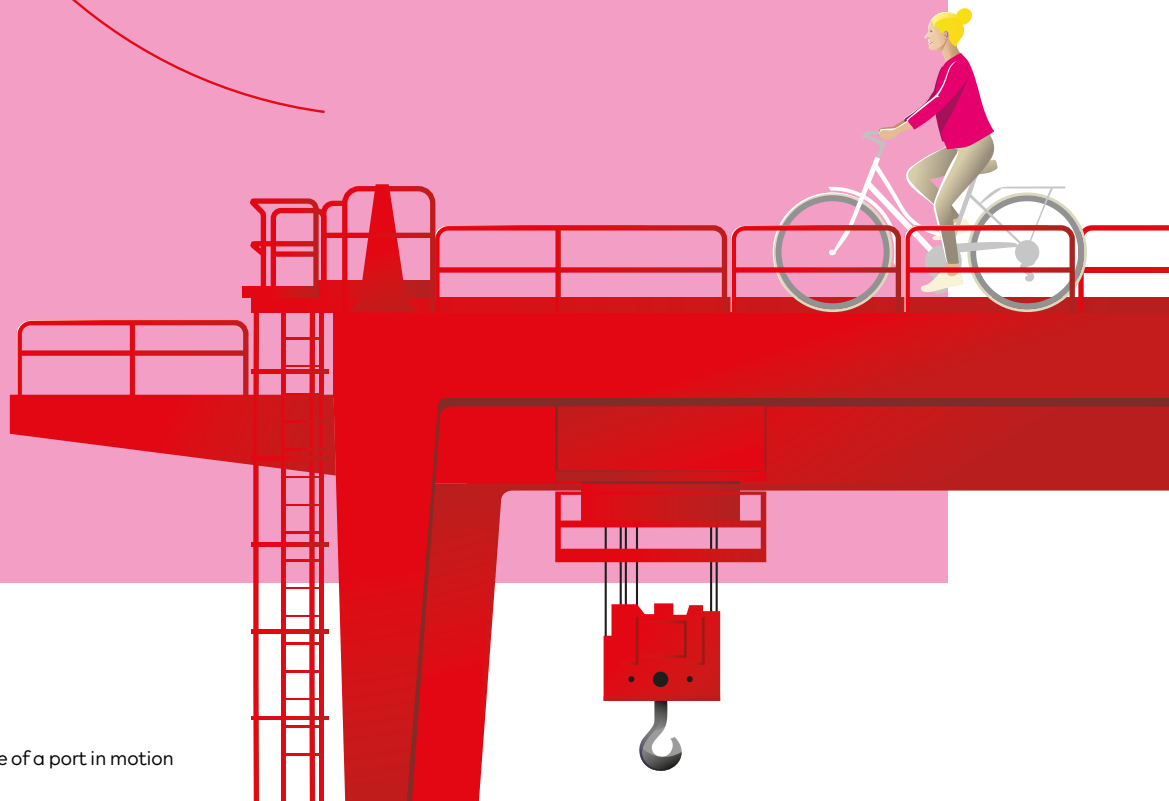
How does mixed-use affect climate risk management in ports?

“Mixing uses inevitably means combining vulnerabilities to be taken into account: those linked to traditional port and logistics operations, and those linked to the novel uses. In the event of flooding, We must, for instance, ensure the safety of families walking on the site. This is why a systemic approach to climate risk is essential. Those risks must also be covered by development design and operation, with crisis management plans in place to facilitate decision-making, featuring clear scenarios and assigned responsibilities. That said, hybrid spaces have advantages: a sea wall can provide both stronger port flood protection and a seaside promenade!”

tional “silo” approach are things of the past! Projects are now co-constructed by collectives formed by an increasing number of public and private stakeholders assisted throughout the building process by a variety of experts, ranging from ecologists to industrial risk specialists. He observes that “most importantly, project governance has changed. To the traditional roles of client and prime contractor are now added that of controlling the various uses of the site, a role that represents the end-users and is now an integral part of the design process.” All of which will lay the foundation for successful mixed-use development.

*This set of mandatory guidelines lays down a specific common vocabulary for the lower embankments along the Seine in Paris. Their purpose is to highlight the uniqueness of a site, over and above the various uses to which it may be put, and to ensure its consistency.

MIX



The port: a new city neighbourhood

AT A TIME WHEN PORT-RELATED ECONOMIC PLAYERS ARE DECARBONISING THEIR ACTIVITIES AND PRESSURES ON PROPERTY SUPPLY IS PUSHING RESIDENTS TOWARD THE CITY OUTSKIRTS, PORTS ARE INCREASINGLY NEW CITY NEIGHBOURHOODS. HOW HAS THE RECLAIMING OF THESE AREAS BY THE LOCAL POPULATION BECOME INEVITABLE? WHAT ARE ITS KEY FACTORS? VIANNEY DELOURME EXPLAINS.

Over the last fifteen or so years, the port horizon has opened up to the city. With the decline of petroleum-related industrial activities, ports are less exposed to risks of industrial pollution. At the same time, logistics activities – which are more compatible with access for the general public – are expanding and moving closer to the end consumer within the city. Another strong trend: tight urban property supply is turning industrial brownfield into valuable land stock capable of accommodating housing, shops, and leisure facilities. Finally, Vianney Delourme notes, “today, the presence of a river with a developed waterfront is a significant factor in a city’s attractiveness.” Given the above, there are increasing numbers of port redevelopment projects that include a mix of different use cases. Javel Port in the Paris’ 15th arrondissement is a typical example. It has met the challenge of getting different users to coexist by reorganising its industrial, distribution and tourism port areas, while also creating



Vianney DELOURME

landscaped pedestrian squares and green spaces. The key to this project? A “usage charter” signed by the various port stakeholders to provide a framework guiding practical implementation.

Île de Nantes is another urban project embodying a successful mix of uses. This major urban project replaces shipyards that closed down in the late 1980s, combining housing, business premises and recreational activities.

FACILITATING DIALOGUE FOR BETTER PORT DEVELOPMENT

Vianney Delourme explains that “for the past ten years or so, we have been moving away from the idea of zoning and separation of different activities. This trend is linked to city expansion: faced with urban pressure, locals are moving away from the centre and closer to port industrial areas.” Certain events and mediation spaces are spurring this process of opening up. Vianney Delourme saw this himself in 2021 with his annual “Ménage ton

Vianney Delourme, chair of the “Enlarge Your Paris” media outlet, supports local authorities in the Greater Paris area in mastering “usage” of their urban projects.

canal” (Clean up your canal) operation in Paris’ 19th arrondissement. This programme has now been taken over by Paris city authority, bringing together the local population, non-profit associations, businesses, and public-sector stakeholders around a clean-up of canals and their banks, followed by a communal swim. “With global warming, urban swimming meets a genuine need, one currently being addressed by cleaning up the Seine and destined to grow.”

“Today, [...] a river with a developed waterfront is a significant factor in a city’s attractiveness.”

By adopting an educational approach to explaining the port industrial environment to locals and tourists, “port centers” also help improve coexistence. This is also true for the development of access points and routes, even if the continuity of pedestrian and cycle paths through port areas remains a work-in-progress. “The Marseille city trail is a good example: it winds its way over hills and alongside the city’s rocky sea inlets, or ‘calanques’, as well as crossing urban, peri-urban, and port industrial areas. For the Seine Axis, we might imagine a future reinstatement of possible routes through certain industrial zones in order to reconnect these areas.” As an organiser of hikes along the Seine Axis, Vianney Delourme dreams of a continuous path from Paris to Le Havre, passing through a succession of landscapes immortalised by the Impressionists, and the industrial areas that underpin the region’s economy. This idea of low-impact tourism on the Seine Axis is shared



Olivier JAMEY,

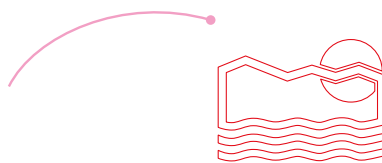
Chair, Communauté Portuaire de Paris

Reclaiming the Seine waterfront in Paris

“River entrepreneurs are keen to develop different use cases, but always with an eye to mutual compatibility. The creation of the Communauté Portuaire de Paris allowed a mix of uses to be promoted, for which it marked a turning point because all stakeholders began to talk to one another. The closure of the Seine’s quaysides in Paris to road traffic in 2016 initiated this movement, which accelerated further with the opening of river swimming spots after the Olympics. For me, a mix of uses enhances attractiveness: local residents love walking along the riverfront to watch the boats manoeuvring! Taking a boat to your swimming spot or having your drinks delivered by river craft: that, for me, is the model for a genuine mix of uses, one that is more than a simple juxtaposition of activities. I also think we need to involve locals in managing the river, giving them responsibility for turning it into a sociable place where all concerned abide by its shared use.”

by Entente Axe Seine, which unites Seine Valley local authorities around joint projects. Demand is growing and, for this regional ecosystem, “good relations” between the various users of the Seine’s ports and waterfronts depend as much on a shared identity as on territorial continuity.

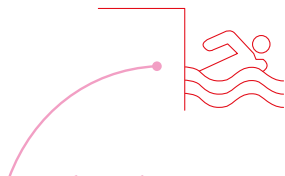
“Le Phare” reconnects Marseille to its port



In September 2025, the Port of Marseille-Fos unveiled Le Phare (The Lighthouse), a major architectural project to refurbish Halle J0, which will house its headquarters from 2028. Designed by the architectural firm ‘Corinne Vezzoni & Associés’ with an exceptional budget of €120 million funded through a public-private partnership, the project spans a total area of 8,800 sq. m. and is intended to reconnect the city of Marseille with its port.

In addition to office space, Halle J0 will host 3,000 sq. m. of mixed-use facilities, including an educational body and a 450-seat auditorium. Ultimately, another 20,000 sq. m. will be renovated to accommodate office buildings, a ‘Port Center’, a museum space, an extensive esplanade and a landscaped square, as well as shops and restaurants. The goal: to create a site open to the public while at the same time maintaining maritime operations and showcasing the port’s heritage.

The Seine: balancing an increasing number of uses



Historically, the Seine has combined a range of different functions: freight and passenger transport, waterfront leisure activities and the hosting of events. Today, all these need to coexist while continuing to ensure increasing biodiversity. As a legacy of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, swimming in the Seine was reintroduced in the summer of 2025 following an extensive clean-up programme led by central and local government. This new use must be reconciled with the river’s role as part of transport infrastructure. Thanks to a consultation process conducted by the City of Paris, central government departments, the French Waterways Authority (VNF) and HAROPA PORT in conjunction with river users, the location of swimming sites and the days and times for opening to the public have been fine-tuned to minimise disruption to boat traffic.

Harmonising waterway usage across Europe



Launched in January 2023, the European ‘Connected River’ project aims to improve the sharing of commercial, ecological and recreational uses of waterways in North-West Europe. The approach is centred on waterfront development and activity through four key focuses: inclusion of stakeholders typically absent from waterway governance bodies, experimentation with new project management methods, the setting up of pilot projects - six across Europe - to test the new solutions, and the establishment of a collaborative digital platform to bring together best practices developed throughout the duration of the project. The programme, funded by Interreg North Sea (a European Union programme), will conclude at the end of 2026. To date, it has brought together 13 partners across six European countries.

With Les Amarres, mixed-use reaches new heights!

A LOGISTICS FACILITY ON THE SEINE WILL SOON BE SEEING THE LIGHT OF DAY RIGHT IN THE CENTRE OF PARIS. ITS NAME? LES AMARRES (“MOORINGS”). WE LOOK BACK HERE AT THIS FLAGSHIP PROJECT WITH TWO OF ITS CREATORS: JONATHAN SEBBANE, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF SOGARIS, AND ARCHITECT CLÉMENT GY.

“Jonathan Sebbane took over, in 2015, as managing director of the Sogaris Group, a major player in urban logistics in the Greater Paris area.”



Jonathan SEBBANE

“Clément Gy is a member of Encore Heureux, an architectural firm committed to addressing ecological and social challenges.”



Clément GY

Can you introduce us to Les Amarres?

Jonathan SEBBANE :

The project involves refurbishing warehouses 1 & 2 of the old Magasins Généraux (General Warehouses) at Austerlitz port in the 13th arrondissement of Paris, combining river-based urban logistics, the social and solidarity economy, workspaces, and leisure services. A third of the programme’s 6,000 sq. m. are to be allocated to river-related operations and 1,000 sq. m. have been set aside for the Aurore non-profit association, allowing it to set up a day support centre. The remainder will be intended specifically for economic activities and shared public spaces. Les Amarres is an exemplary project in more ways than one. It supports the development of river-based urban logistics, thereby helping to decarbonise in-city transport and deliveries. It prioritises renovation over reconstruction in a spirit of sober, frugal land use, so much so that in 2025 it was awarded the “Exemplary Parisian Architecture” (APEX) label. It restores the link with the river and brings with it a new urban quality to a district undergoing a complete transformation. In short, it is an inspirational project.

Clément GY : Especially given that it allows us to conduct a practical experiment in what the city of tomorrow could look like in a very dense urban context. We are refurbishing a historic building – the first modern Parisian docks of the 20th century – in order to return it to its original use for logistics with the intention of enhancing this unique site not only in accordance with its original heritage, but also with the introduction of a hybrid development that will give it additional functions. As well as the day support centre, there will be spaces for dining and work, for instance. The roof of the building will also host an extensive planted terrace equipped with a sun canopy, which we have designed in the spirit of a public square – this being the ultimate mixed-use space. However, this particular square is high above street level, offering an exceptional view over the capital.

How did you become part of this adventure and what is your role?

J.S.: We formed a consortium to respond to HAROPA PORT’s call for projects, of which we were selected as winners.

Sogaris is the consortium's lead partner, with a triple role: investor, developer, and future user of the site, which will house our Parisian offices.

C. G. : Encore Heureux Architectes has been part of the adventure from the outset. We are responsible for project management and design, working in close collaboration with the other members of the consortium: Sogaris, Aurore, AREP, Éco+Construire, Fludis, Barges & Berges, Yes We Camp and Remix. We are a tight-knit collective, with a team spirit that embraces the project's other stakeholders.

“The project supports the development of river-based urban logistics [...], prioritises renovation [...], restores the link with the river, and brings with it a new urban quality [...].”

Jonathan SEBBANE

Les Amarres is an example of “vertical mixed-use” – i.e. integration of different functions within the same building – in a port area: have its specific characteristics changed the way you designed the project?

J. S. : Mixing different uses within a non-residential building is a recognised area of expertise for Sogaris. We are convinced that this is absolutely essential to its public acceptance. That being said, Les Amarres stands out for its radical approach: the higher you go in the building, the more diverse its occupancy. The ground, or “Seine”, level and part of the first floor host the logistics activities – the origin of the project – with access for goods entry and exit. Next, there are the spaces configured for the site's other users: workers, the Aurore non-profit and the individuals it supports. Finally, there are spaces which, like the roof terrace, are open to the

“With Les Amarres, we are conducting a practical experiment in what the city of tomorrow could look like in a very dense urban context.”

Clément GY

wider public, including visitors from outside. This high level of hybridisation involved us in planning for numerous circulation areas and in thinking about how the communal spaces should be handled, these being two key factors for successful cohabitation.

C. G. : Our ambition was genuinely to propose a new model for vertical urban planning in which flows and functions intersect harmoniously. We hollowed out the building, keeping only the post-and-beam concrete structure. Nothing is more effective for creating modular spaces that are reversible and easily adapted to different uses – all that is needed is lightweight partitioning. This also allowed us to increase the developable floor area. To gain even more space, we added an extra floor. In addition, since the building brings port activities into the city, we paid close attention to its integration into the urban context and limited as far as possible its impact on local residents and the environment, specifically through frugal architectural design.

In your opinion, will this type of project become more common?

J. S. : They are destined to multiply, given the scarcity of land and the increasing need for urban logistics. However, for this to happen, existing hurdles need to be cleared – particularly those related to increasingly restrictive regulations and the social acceptability of the activities involved.

For the port industry, mixed-use means progress!

CONCRETE BATCHING PLANTS OPERATING ALONGSIDE CYCLE PATHS ON THE PARISIAN RIVERFRONT? THIS IS JUST ONE PRACTICAL EXAMPLE OF THE GROWING TREND TOWARD A MIX OF USES IN PORTS. WHILE SUCH MIXING UNDOUBTEDLY GOES HAND IN HAND WITH CONSTRAINTS, IT ALSO GIVES THE BUSINESSES ON SITE AN OPPORTUNITY TO IMPROVE PERFORMANCE – SOMETHING CEMEX WOULD CERTAINLY AGREE WITH.

Major global player in the construction materials industry, the group operates ten port sites in the Greater Paris area, four of which are in Paris. At those locations it carries out two main activities related to river logistics: the collection, barge transport and recycling of construction spoil and waste – plus the delivery of materials such as ready-mix concrete. Janina Baigus points out that *“our sites are transit, production and sales hubs. By locating them in densely populated urban areas as close as possible to our clients, we reduce transport distances, thereby lowering the related costs and CO₂ emissions. Our transportation is already highly decarbonised, given that over 90% goes via waterway.”*

THE GOAL: INTEGRATION

Being based in the heart of the city requires Cemex to ensure its sites are well integrated into their



Janina BAIGUS

surroundings. This led to its commitment to the Charter for Port Improvement (CAP), supported by HAROPA PORT, the City of Paris, professional federations such as UNICEM*, and industrial companies. Janina Baigus explains that *“this allows us to continuously improve the urban, architectural and landscape integration of our facilities, while also managing their ecological impact.”* In 2024 and 2025, Cemex’s Paris sites

topped the rankings in CAP evaluations. This success is, in part, due to the company’s efforts to facilitate mixed-use. With the leadership of HAROPA PORT and the City of Paris, the capital’s river ports are opening up to local residents and tourists.

Janina Baigus goes on to say that *“the evolution of our sites reflects a trend seen elsewhere,”* adding that *“at Paris-Tolbiac, for example, goods*

* Union nationale des industries de carrières et matériaux de construction (National Union of Quarry and Construction Materials Industries).

*“
Janina Baigus is deputy director,
port operations at Cemex.
”*

are transhipped on shared quays that become promenade areas outside operating hours. At Paris-Bercy, when our site closes in August, it is transformed into a traditional riverside café (guinguette) as part of the 'Quai Sauvage' initiative."

SAFETY AS THE TOP PRIORITY

For Cemex, mixed-use goes hand in hand with novel management challenges. She clarifies that "our priority is to address the safety issues inherent in the co-existence of different activities and to minimise noise, visual and environmental disturbance." There are various solutions. Cemex adapts working routines and schedules to avoid disrupting residents' daily lives. The company has made changes in how it manages access and flows of people and goods, for example, by modifying traffic directions and creating lanes specific to each use. It also pays attention to the aesthetics of its buildings and landscaping the surroundings. She adds that "we have replaced ICE-driven hydraulic excavators with quieter and greener electrically driven types. We have also moved our storage areas for materials underground or covered them, and we systematically use misting systems to prevent dust and protect air quality."

A COLLABORATIVE, VIRTUOUS APPROACH

Irrespective of the point at issue, Cemex always acts in constant consultation with all stakeholders, from public authorities to local residents.

"Our priority is to address the safety issues inherent in the co-existence of different activities and to minimise noise, visual and environmental disturbance."



Sophie BARICHARD,

head of port land development at HAROPA PORT | PARIS

Mixed-use and port land occupancy agreements

"Responding to stakeholder expectations, HAROPA PORT encourages a mix of uses in its ports. Indeed, some of our calls for projects include mixed-use in the award criteria. When an industrial tenant proposes to develop a leisure activity on their site, they need to apply for approval and make operational commitments via a fixed-term amendment to their occupancy agreement. In all cases, the tenant retains sole liability for the management of co-existing activities and their impacts. The project must also be submitted to the Paris city authority, and all necessary permits obtained. Once the contract or the amendment has been signed, HAROPA PORT uses its field teams to monitor the site in order to ascertain that activities on the site are cohabiting without issue."

"These measures can be complex to implement and come at a cost, Janina Baigus admits. But this is very much offset by our presence in these ports and the positive knock-on effects for our brand image, expertise, innovation and performance. Working on ensuring a mix of port uses has clearly helped us consolidate our exemplary status for the Mineral Industries CSR Label, with an overall score exceeding 90 out of 100 and constant progress over the last ten years on issues related to our local integration. For a mission-driven company like ours, making progress on CSR is essential."

RECON- CILE



From port governance to governance of usage

GIVEN THEIR ECONOMIC, URBAN, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL FUNCTIONS, PORT AREAS ARE THE FOCUS OF MULTIPLE – IN SOME CASES COMPETING – EXPECTATIONS. THEIR OPENING UP TO NOVEL USES IS CHALLENGING TRADITIONAL MODELS OF GOVERNANCE.

In densely populated areas such as Paris, Rouen or Le Havre, the cohabitation of economic operations and social activities is increasingly complex. In Rotterdam, for example, underwater noise generated by maritime traffic becomes a nuisance for the local population once it exceeds a certain threshold. In Paris, if swimming is to be permitted in the Seine navigation, water quality and safety will all need to be reconciled. In Venice, intensification of cruise ship activities has highlighted the environmental and social consequences of governance focused on the short term.



Maurice JANSEN

A DIFFERENT APPROACH TO GOVERNANCE

These situations throw a spotlight on the limits of the European “landlord port” model, according to which the port authority manages the land and infrastructure while private operators handle their activities. Faced with a mix of uses, there are two ways forward: confrontation or cooperation. For Maurice Jansen, the answer cannot simply be based on who holds greater power. “Development of a mix of uses in ports is accompanied by a gradual shift towards a logic of co-operation. The issue is no longer reduction of environmental harms, but a search for shared positive outcomes.” With this approach, governance becomes a space for partnership and sustainable organisation.

AN EXPANDED ROLE

What is needed is not the invention of novel institutional models, but the adoption of different modes of action involving more horizontal relationships and the inclusion of long-marginalised local actors: local authorities, residents, non-profit associations, users, and even natural ecosystems. Maurice Jansen’s view is that “port authorities are being led to develop new mechanisms

for dialogue with indirect stakeholders and adopting a role as stewards of the city-port ecosystem, coordinating collective action programmes.”

THE ENERGY TRANSITION AS CATALYST

Port decarbonisation comes up against two barriers: the cost of alternative energies and regulatory instability. In Rotterdam, despite the goal of a “green port” shared by a coalition of actors, national political and fiscal logjams have slowed momentum. Indeed, port governance is dependent on choices that extend beyond the local level.

Faced with ecological and social pressures, ports are being called upon to move beyond a purely functional logic and to become guardians of the city-port ecosystem, tasked with preserving ecological resilience, organising co-management of diverse uses, and focusing their decision-making on the long term.

Maurice Jansen is a researcher at Erasmus University Rotterdam. He devoted his doctoral thesis to ports as catalysts for positive transformation and is an acknowledged expert on port governance and city-port relations.

Consultation as **TOOL** for **PROJECTS** co-design



Gilles-Laurent RAYSSAC

“ Founder of the consultancy *Res publica*, Gilles-Laurent Rayssac was formerly an associate professor at the University of Caen, specialising in stakeholder management and consultation. ”

BECAUSE MIXED-USE, BY DEFINITION, INVOLVES USERS WITH DIVERSE VIEWPOINTS AND VERY DIFFERENT GOALS AND ISSUES, DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS OF THIS KIND REQUIRE ROBUST CONSULTATION PHASES TO BE PLANNED AT EVERY STAGE OF THE DESIGN PROCESS.

What is the role of public consultation in a development project?

Public consultation should be central to project design as a way of adjusting its configuration to ensure that it meets the challenges and needs of the various stakeholders. It is not about obtaining validation for a project (following a logic of “acceptability”), but about shaping it: dialogue between stakeholders, often with (very) different views, makes it possible to maximise the value of the project for all concerned. Which is in the public interest. And the public interest is not simply

the sum of the individual interests! Conflicting interests will always remain, and the objective must therefore be to put in place compensation mechanisms – financial, for example.

“It is not about obtaining validation for a project, but about shaping it so that it corresponds to the general interest.”

In light of the opposition encountered, is consultation essential for development projects today? Is it possible to point to a “NIMBY” syndrome”?

Firstly, consultation is mandatory in some cases: every project that impacts urban planning and the environment must undergo public consultation, occasionally with the involvement of the CNDP². Two legal instruments have accelerated an expansion of consultation processes. Article 7 of the 2007 Charter for the Environment specifies that everyone has the right to participate in public decision-making regarding projects

¹NIMBY is an acronym for “Not In My Back Yard”, referring to the attitude whereby a project is approved so long as it happens elsewhere, or refusing a project near one’s place of residence.

²CNDP: Commission nationale du débat public (National Commission for Public Debate). This independent public authority is responsible for ensuring compliance with statutory participatory procedures when developing projects and public policies with an environmental impact; in some cases the CNDP itself organises the consultation.

“For none of these projects is it possible to simply force things through; today more than ever, it is a matter of social cohesion!”

with an environmental impact. The August 2016 Ordinance added a “right of initiative”: the possibility of requiring a developer to organise a consultation

process. There are also voluntary consultations, undertaken by the developers themselves.

As for the NIMBY syndrome, it does exist, but it isn't new. People are more vigilant when a project comes close to home. And that vigilance intensifies when

the consultation process is poorly organised or when dialogue breaks down. In addition, anyone can now act as a channel for information against a project, mobilising opposition via social media much faster than in the past. Developers need to take this into account.

What are the key ingredients for a successful consultation process?

It is necessary to clearly define its objective and identify all the stakeholders the project concerns – positively or otherwise – (local residents, landowners, environmental groups, industry, local government, and so on). This involves identifying each stakeholder's goals and issues

and ensuring that they are debated, with the aim of finding the most suitable solutions both for the project and collectively for all stakeholders. Stakeholders' viewpoints have real value: they are familiar with the context of the project, and when they are also the future users, involving them can substantially improve the design! Naturally, the developer must be prepared to act on the results to allow the project to evolve.

What are the different stages and methods of a consultation process?

We first carry out a contextual study to understand the environment in which the project will be conducted and describe its consequences for that environment. Next, an information mechanism needs to be established. It will then be possible to define the key issues that will act as “levers” for the project, before going on to facilitate dialogue. Public gatherings, workshops, urban visits, on-site meetings, online discussion platforms: many methods and facilitation techniques can be used. The goal is always the same: to facilitate dialogue not only between the developer and participants, but also between the participants. Finally, a consultation report is produced, this being the



deliverable for the developer. Even if not all the consultation's results are approved, the developer will be able to explain its positions.

Do consultation processes for long-term, mixed-use port projects have specific features?

The development of long-term projects can be accompanied by a number of consultation phases timed for key moments: upstream, followed by completion of project studies, with the aim of involving stakeholders at different levels of the decision process. In essence, mixed-use increases the number of stakeholders for a port, which, in principle, has a less direct relationship with the population than a local government authority. Major port expansions and road traffic, for example, affect local residents. In such cases, consultation can even add a new dimension to the project by revealing new potential users and uses. In Paris, for example, consultation of the public regarding urban ports led to an overhaul of the Seine's riverside infrastructure to allow for greater mixed-use. For none of these projects is it possible to simply force things through; today more than ever, it is a matter of social cohesion!

Three questions for CHARLOTTE LOCQUET, head of local regional dialogue and consultation at HAROPA PORT

Which HAROPA PORT projects involve consultation?

Every project involving environmental and social issues is subject to continuous, organised dialogue with stakeholders: elected officials, the local population, economic players, environmental groups and residents' associations. For example, in Val-de-la-Haye, near Rouen, we undertook a consultation process as part of a project to restore wetlands and enhance the Seine's riverside landscape. This includes the creation of a promenade area but it also involves felling 175 diseased trees and removing a dyke, which could raise concerns for residents. Consultation made it possible to involve these end-users in the decisions and future developments.

How does HAROPA PORT organise consultation?

The goal is to allow viewpoints to be compared and contrasted and to co-construct solutions within stable, open and lasting discussion frameworks. For major projects, in addition to consultation on the finished project, which is mandatory, we organise voluntary consultation early on. We have also created permanent consultation bodies (IPCs) with stakeholders in the ports of Bonneuil-sur-Marne, Gennevilliers and Limay-Porcheville.

What is the benefit of public consultation?

The success of port projects increasingly depends on their ability to be understood, shared and accepted in the surrounding region. Every dialogue process seeks to provide input for projects and make them more robust. Consultation has become an effective guide for our organisation: we have even initiated a consultation process for the drafting of our 2026–2030 strategic plan.

The city-port protocol: a framework for the future

THE INTERFACE BETWEEN THE PORT AND THE CITY CENTRE OF LE HAVRE, A UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE, HAS BEEN DEVELOPED UNDER A CITY-PORT AGREEMENT SINCE 2014.

Bringing together the Le Havre city authority, the federation of municipalities 'Le Havre Seine Métropole', the protocol was first signed in 2014 for a three-year term. Véronique Hauchecorne explains: "Even without a formal framework, city-port cooperation has continued in recent years," adding: "In 2024, we decided to reaffirm our collaboration with a new protocol validated by all stakeholders. The objective: to work across all three key domains – attractiveness, forward-looking innovation and responses to potential risks. Projects must be designed using an ecosystem-based approach because local stakeholders face shared constraints such as technological risks, flooding and security, as well as the need to be included in transport networks." The protocol, which includes sector-specific roadmaps, reaffirms a common vision for a strategic space. "A steering committee meets several times a year, alongside technical committee and working group meetings. Our partners, including the AURH (the urban planning agency for the Le Havre region and the Seine Estuary), 'Le Havre Seine Développement' and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, are involved in these discussions. But above all, we keep open various discussion channels that provide input for our day-to-day decisions."



Véronique HAUCHECORNE

LE HAVRE AND ITS PORT: INTERTWINED DESTINIES

A mix of uses is central to these relations: the city of Le Havre shares 500 years of history with its

port. Véronique Hauchecorne goes on to say that "they are mutually interdependent: to develop, the port needs a skilled workforce, and the city benefits directly from the port economy." However, ISPS regulations¹ created a separation between them by putting port facilities behind a secure perimeter. Today, "we must make the port (once again) visible and help people understand it – something that society now expects."

Renewed visibility is notably the objective of redeveloping Southampton Quay, a flagship project for Le Havre's city-port relations. Formerly the site of the cross-Channel terminal, it now serves urban, commercial, and recreational functions while retaining the capacity to host port activities. Other examples include the Escaut project with the redevelopment of the commercial docks, the siting of the marina in a basin formerly used for the coal trade, and the creation of a river garden. Véronique Hauchecorne concludes by saying that "The renewal of the protocol makes it possible to carry this dynamic forward and maintain a constructive, win-win dialogue. In addition to providing support for the ongoing transitions and emphasising the economic potential of the region, this cooperation is now faced with a new challenge: scarcity of real estate."

¹The International Ship and Port Facility Security code was adopted in 2002 and regulates maritime operations to ensure the security of ports, cargo, ships, and crews on board.

Véronique Hauchecorne heads the major development project unit in the industrial-port area transformation division of HAROPA PORT's regional office in Le Havre.

Redeveloping port areas: a global trend



THE REDEVELOPMENT OF LAND FOR A MIX OF USES AND OPEN TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC IS A WORLDWIDE PHENOMENON LINKED TO A TREND TOWARD PORT AREA MUTATION. PAUL TOURRET PROVIDES SOME KEY POINTS OF REFERENCE.

“In order to truly understand port cities of today and tomorrow, we need to look at the economic history of ports. Ports expanded from city centres out to the periphery, from docks to port industrial areas in the 1950s.” For Paul Tourret, contemporary port redevelopment involves the “grey zone” between the city centre and the port industrial area, where the docks were notably located.

Internationally, cities are taking advantage of these vast areas to expand and address the pressure on land stock by refurbishing existing buildings. As for port authorities, they see this as a way to derive economic value from their brownfield sites. The spaces concerned are then allocated to various urban services: retail outlets, recreational and tourist spaces, housing, offices, and so on.

DIFFERENT USES ACCORDING TO CULTURE

Paul Tourret explains that *“at the global level we can see that redevelopment projects depend on how ports and cities are configured, but they also have*



Paul TOURRET

a cultural dimension.” In Northern Europe, these waterfront areas often become highly sought-after residential areas. In Wales, Cardiff’s port area is an example of urban redevelopment that embraces housing, offices, shops and leisure spaces. Cardiff Bay has also become a tourist district.

Similarly, in Hamburg the still ongoing ‘HafenCity’ urban project in the port area provides for the arrival of over 10,000 residents and the creation of tens of thousands of jobs. In the countries of the south, where the relationship with the sea and rivers is different, locating housing in these port districts seems less self-evident. Projects tend to focus more on culture, tourism, retail, and services. This is the case in Bilbao, Spain: the former industrial port became a stronghold of contemporary art with the arrival of the Guggenheim Museum in 1997, attracting tourists from around the world and revitalising the city. As for ‘Euromed’ in Marseille, this city district has begun its transition by hosting a hotel, shops and leisure facilities.



Paul Tourret who holds a PhD in Geography, is the Director of the Institut Supérieur d’Économie Maritime (ISEMAR), an observatory that studies developments in ports, maritime transport and the shipbuilding industry.



A RESPONSE TO ECONOMIC AND URBAN CHALLENGES

Looking beyond the cultural relationship with water, the redevelopment of port areas also depends on the challenges facing a country. In Asia for example, where pressure on real estate is high, ports have hosted a mix of uses since the 1980s, and these districts are increasingly densely occupied. In Singapore, in the wake of the Marina Bay district – which houses residential high-rises, businesses and tourist facilities – the Greater Southern Waterfront project is set to transform 120 km of coastline, starting from the Pasir Panjang port terminal. In Yokohama, Japan, the Minato Mirai 21 port area – literally “*port of the future*” – has been a business, tourism and retail district since the 1980s. Over the years, occupation density has increased, in particular with high-end housing. Paul Turret adds: “*In these cities, the old port becomes a waterfront with an emphasis on architecture and identifying the city through its port.*” This is also true in the United States, in San Francisco and Baltimore, for example, where port redevelopment follows the “*festival marketplace*” model, geared to tourism, leisure (parks and museums) and retail, as well as allocating significant space to pedestrians.

“Looking beyond the cultural relationship with water, the redevelopment of port areas also depends on the challenges facing a country.”

The model RECONVERSION of Tangier CITY PORT

Initiated in 2010, the Tangier City Port reconversion, which places the port at the service of the city and its citizens, has become an international benchmark for urban integration. It has transformed a legacy port area into an attractive hub. The walls of the medina have been restored, new cultural spaces have sprung up, and 30 hectares of public areas have been developed at the port as promenade and recreational spaces. This project has established Tangier as a leading tourist, cruise and yachting destination, helping create thousands of jobs.

This project was the winner of the AIVP Antoine-Rufenacht Prize 2024.

Does this trend toward mixed-use port spaces have a bright future? “*Against the backdrop of climate change, access to water – and therefore to cooler air – is sought after by local people; it is very much an asset for these cities,*” confirms Paul Turret. And the reindustrialisation currently underway in certain port areas is unlikely to affect this trend, which is essentially to be seen at the city-port interface. If flood risks are taken into account by building on elevated terrain, as has been done in Hamburg’s ‘HafenCity’, the port can be an attractive and relatively well-protected zone. If approached in this way, as envisaged by researchers in the Infraport foresight project (see next page), it could even become a place of refuge.

“The Festival Marketplace is a mixed-use urban development model developed in the United States, beginning in the 1970s. It includes speciality commercial outlets, restaurants, entertainment and public gatherings in architecturally attractive spaces – historic buildings or waterfront sites in many cases – to boost tourism and city-centre revitalisation based on a festive and experiential atmosphere.

The centrality



Frédéric DESCOMBES

“Frédéric Descombes is the head of the Ideas Laboratory at France's Alternative Energies and Atomic Energy Commission (CEA).”

of MIXED-USE to the port of the FUTURE

WHAT MIGHT PORTS LOOK LIKE IN 2070? THE CEA'S IDEAS LABORATORY WORKED ON THE INFRAPORT PROJECT, DEFINING THREE SCENARIOS THAT ADDRESS ECOLOGICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIETAL CHALLENGES. FOR EACH OF THESE, A MIX OF USES IS CENTRAL TO THE PORTS OF THE FUTURE.

INSIGHTS FROM FRÉDÉRIC DESCOMBES.

“Ports are at the heart of climate and economic challenges, and how they change needs to be considered over the long term.”

How did the Infraport project come about?

At Ideas Laboratory, we explore the future in light of societal issues and major scientific and technical advances. We chose to focus on ports because they are at the heart of climate and economic challenges, and how they change needs to be

considered over the long term: port infrastructure is built to last 100 years! Infraport is based on a 50-year horizon – far enough ahead to assume the actuality of radical climate and economic shifts. It is a collaborative initiative supported by the

Union of French Ports, Cerema, Bouygues, Vicat, Schneider Electric, EDF, Bergerat Monnoyeur, Eneria and the CEA.

What major challenges will ports be facing in the coming years?

We identified eleven challenges as our starting points for envisioning

how tomorrow's ports will respond. Among these, two massive shifts will have a structural impact on ports. To begin with, they are on the front line where climate disruption is concerned because they will be affected by rising sea levels – along with risks of coastal sea incursions – as well as intense events like storms. This means that their infrastructure will need to be completely overhauled. The other issue is economic: given the predicted decline in hydrocarbon transport, ports will need to find a new business model. The Infraport project looks at how ports can adapt to these changes.

How did you approach the conception of the ports of the future and their economic activities?

Once we had looked at the challenges, we defined new port functions to meet them. For example, in the face of water scarcity, ports can play a key role by producing drinking water from seawater and industrial wastewater.

“These ports can produce decarbonised energy and drinking water, transform waste [...], make use of ecosystem services: all of which are interconnected economic activities.”

Similarly, by moving away from a model based on fossil fuels to the production of renewable energies – offshore wind or osmotic power, for example – ports can become local suppliers of decarbonised energy. By offering more robust resistance to adverse climate events, they can protect coastal cities. They are also ideal locations, as we are beginning to see today, for the development of a circular economy based on local stakeholders adopting a collaborative approach.

Can you describe the different scenarios for us?

The three scenarios represent three ways of adapting to changes in the climate. The “Oyster Port” is a bunker withstands violent events. The “Island Port” adapts to the changes. As for the “Polymorphic Port”, it is relocated!

Can you tell us more about the “Oyster Port”?

This model is based around constructions linked to weather forecasts which, like an oyster, can close up to protect themselves from extreme conditions, allowing activity to continue during a storm. Built from bio-sourced materials, they can also filter water and produce their own materials. Water also becomes a resource for the production of electricity via turbines and osmotic energy. Equipped as they are with dykes and impressive breakwaters, this type of port can protect coastal towns.

What are the particularities of the “Island Port”?

The Island Port has been constructed

on two levels over the now buried historical port. The infrastructure is underwater, and logistics activities are conducted in tunnels. At the surface, islands and islets are bases for housing and become tourist spots where biodiversity, in the form of mangroves, has returned to its rightful place. This port also produces its own energy using offshore wind platforms and PV solar panels.

How might we visualise the “Polymorphic Port”?

Firstly, it is a floating port made up of modules created from ships and barges that have reached the end of their useful life, connected to the mainland by mobile tunnels for the transfer of goods. It can produce its own water, food and energy from offshore wind farms. It is also a reception facility for climate refugees settling in its interconnected vessels.

What role does mixed-use play in each of these models?

Mixed-use is essential because, more than ever before, these ports have been conceived as genuine local ecosystems. Vulnerability to extreme weather events inevitably leads to a search for autonomy. They produce decarbonised energy and drinking water, transform waste into energy and raw materials, and make use of ecosystem services: all of which are interconnected economic activities. Furthermore, by becoming a location where the local population can find shelter and migrants can be housed, as well as a hub for a novel form of tourism, ports are effectively making mixed-use central to their new models.

ONE RIVERSIDE, MANY USES

In Paris's 13th arrondissement, the port of Tolbiac is an industrial port situated in a decidedly modern neighbourhood. Here too, a shared management system for time and space has been put in place to make the banks of the Seine accessible to the public. It is therefore not uncommon to see joggers strolling amongst the cement works at the end of the day.

