



# CDE Programme

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## **Urban design projects by integrating the expertise to use: Observation and assessment of contributions to a collaborative workspace to improve the public consultation**

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**Abstract:** Since decentralization, new groups of actors have emerged within the territorial organisations. At the same time, in each local election (regional elections in 2004, and local elections in 2008), elected officials and the technicians resort more and more to the topic of “participative democracy” (heard in a polysemous use being at the same time standard, procedure, slogan and idea), and for the use of “dialogue” (district committees, mandate assessment meetings, citizens’ juries, etc) Thus, these two movements come together to develop the participation of citizens, even in the upstream phase of projects (emergence and design), and to transform the traditional methods of public action. This experimental research aims at observing and evaluating a system of Co-invention and cooperation (EMA, described below), and at analyzing tools and methods which allow at the same time the training of the actors concerned and interested ( a changing public composed of elected officials, technicians, experts, associations and companies as well as citizens), and the design of urban projects. This research additionally aims at going beyond the traditional and restrictive methods of mobilizing institutional actors, and of integrating the participation of citizens, by calling in particular upon their expertise of use. “In comparison with the elected officials and the technicians, the participation of the inhabitants comes up from the start against an obstacle: that of the feared, supposed or proven incompetence of these inhabitants in technical or political matters. The intervention of the latter brings into play their concept of rationality, effectiveness, and expertise. To call on the inhabitants is also to recognize forms of knowledge and argumentation of a different nature to those which prevail in the political and administrative universe”. [Blondiaux, 04] Up to what point is the collective design of an urban project possible? Which methods can one propose to facilitate the dialogue between experts and laymen? How can the possible training be capitalized and mobilized from the realization of one project to another? The comparison between project design methods (with and without dialogue) on the same territory will also enable us to put to the test the idea according to which the dialogue would make it possible to improve the projects suggested by the control of work. It is also a question of developing methods of analysis of the negotiation processes and decision at the local level of a big city like Nancy, but also regional, of projects of urban development (restoration of areas, traffic organization, etc) the question of the articulation between the challenges of sustainable development and the participative democracy will be

also tackled, under the angle of the type of projects concerned (there is more often consultation within the framework of projects which deal with sustainable development) and techniques used (materials respectful of the environment, HQE certification, sustainable homes). It is about a research project over three years. We envisage two phases. The first phase for the observation of the development of a space of Co-invention and dialogue on the urban projects located in Nancy (EMA Space: Environment and Methods of Acceleration). Then a second phase of comparison with similar initiatives in various European cities and the town of Rabat, where we have a partner.

**Keywords:** dialogue - design of urban projects - participative democracy - innovation - sustainable development.