

Plans, Projects and Trajectories through the Lens of Agroecology and Landscape

*Âge2SCoT Symposium – November 6th & 7th, 2025
University of Reims Champagne-Ardenne – URCA, Habiter Research Unit
Croix-Rouge Campus, Reims*

Call for Papers

Keywords: spatial planning, agroecology, landscape, trajectories, narratives, project

Twenty years after their creation, and despite the apparent success of “Schemas de coherence Territoriale” (SCoTs)—at least in quantitative terms, with 370 SCoTs approved in France, covering 86% of municipalities and 97% of the population—they remain contested instruments, surrounded by doubt and uncertainty (Dugua, 2017). The deployment of SCoTs in France is part of a broader European trend of renewed territorial planning activity (Motte, 2005; Zepf, Andres, 2011). Since 2022, the French government has reintroduced the idea of “ecological planning” into the political agenda in response to environmental and climate challenges, though without clearly defining its meaning or practical implications. Simultaneously, the concept of “ecological transition trajectories” has spread across political, professional, and academic spheres. The National Low Carbon Strategy (SNBC), introduced by the 2014 Energy Transition Act, defines a “trajectory for reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 2050,” supported by numerous studies and publications by Ademe (2019). Transition theories, particularly the multi-level perspective (Geels and Schot, 2007), also emphasize this idea of a transitional trajectory. Yet, there remains a certain semantic and conceptual ambiguity—and thus operational uncertainty—regarding how planning and trajectories interact, even though planning and project-based approaches have historically been two key instruments in urban planning (Novarina, 2003; Dugua, 2022).

This call for papers marks the conclusion of the research project “Âge2SCoT: Adapting Planning to Agroecological, Landscape and Climate Challenges,” led by the Habiter research unit at the University of Reims Champagne-Ardenne (URCA). The research project is funded by the French national ecological transition agency - Ademe (2022–2025) under the PACT²e research program: “Planning and Designing Territories in the Face of Climate Change.”¹ The central hypothesis is that territorial planning—understood as a process for coordinating actors, territorial scales, and temporalities—can be a strategic instrument of public policies in response to environmental and climate issues, provided its paradigm and methods of conception and implementation are rethought. The Âge2SCoT project explores the (debatable) hypothesis of a “second age” of SCoTs and aims to

¹ The Âge2SCoT project focuses on two study areas in France, the Greater Reims SCoT and the SCoT of the Lyon urban area.

sketch its early outlines². This seminar will be structured around four research axes, each reflecting a working hypothesis that could prompt the evolution of territorial planning instruments in France. In addition, the symposium aims to open up comparisons with other national contexts, putting French-style planning into perspective with other European and international case studies and experiences. Agriculture and landscape offer particular lenses through which it is relevant to question how SCoTs are formulated in light of global changes. The four axes aim to explore the relationship between plan/project and trajectory through three interrelated prisms: agroecology, (large-scale) landscape, and counter-narrative(s) in the field of spatial planning.

Axis 1. How does agroecology renew planning thinking and methods?

Agroecology, which promotes the design and management of agricultural systems as ecosystems, is now internationally recognized (Leippert et al., 2020). Building on the work of Tornaghi and Dehaene (2021), we hypothesize that agroecology also offers a renewal of urban and spatial planning methods by approaching territories through their metabolism and a systemic lens. By proposing the ecological and landscape reintegration of agricultural systems, agroecology offers important lessons for the necessary renewal of planning thinking. Faced with the challenges of climate change and the erosion of biodiversity in urban, agricultural and agro-urban systems (Leippert et al., 2020), Tornaghi and Dehaene (2021) propose an integrative approach they call “agroecological urbanism”. We would like to discuss its implications for spatial planning, in particular for understanding territories systemically through their relationships, resources, actors and metabolisms. This idea resonates with Janin’s (2018) work on the foundations of the “agricultural city” and Ambrosino’s (2023) research on “the permacultural foundations of future urbanism.” It also aligns with Marot’s (2024) work on integrating agriculture into architectural design through “deepening territories by agriculture.” How does scientific ecology—particularly agroecology—renew the “planner’s imaginary” (Chalas, 2004) or “planning thinking” (Cordobès et al., 2020)? What transformation of the core planning tools—the plan and the project—does agroecology imply? How can agroecology reshape the treatment of non-built spaces in planning documents?

Axis 2. What role can territorial planning play in the ecological transition trajectory of agricultural systems?

Let us take a historical detour: the post-war decades, often dubbed the “golden age” of state planning, demonstrated strong transformative capacities in agriculture and land-use policy, supported by major institutions like the Interministerial Delegation for Spatial Planning and Regional Attractiveness (DATAR)³. This success stemmed from a convergence of social, technical, and economic factors around the shared narrative - “feeding the world” - still present in agricultural discourse today⁴. Fifty years later, planning seems caught in a paradox: its traditional forms are increasingly seen as ineffective or irrelevant to contemporary agricultural challenges. Planning tools may help preserve land or support green infrastructures, but the SCoT cannot directly guide agricultural activity⁵. Meanwhile, territorial food projects (PATs), introduced by the 2014 law on the future of agriculture,

² The hypothesis of an ‘age 2 of SCoTs’ initially comes from an action research project commissioned by the National Federation of SCoTs (Faure and Vanier, 2016).

³ The Reims urban area in the heart of the Champagne region, identified by the State as a “Zone d’appui nord champenoise” (ZANC) in the 1970s, is an emblematic area of the transformations resulting from this particular form of planning (Bazin, 1990).

⁴ See Floris Schruiver and Nathan Pirard’s documentary film ‘Tu nourriras le monde’ (2023) on the Champagne region.

⁵ Article L101-3 of the French Town Planning Code: ‘Town planning regulations govern the use of land other than for agricultural purposes, in particular the location, access, layout and architecture of buildings’.

can help initiate local dialogue around food and farming, but their limited resources often undermine their effectiveness (Maréchal et al., 2018; Néel et al., 2023). Moreover, PATs are still relatively rarely mentioned in urban planning documents such as SCoTs (TEV, 2021). What is the real power of territorial planning to influence agricultural transformation, especially in the face of global agro-industrial markets? At what scale(s)? Should we consider reviving agricultural planning? Might a new major agrarian reform be a prerequisite to transforming agriculture on the scale required by 21st-century societal challenges?

Axis 3. How can we reconnect with (large-scale) landscape approaches and, more broadly, with expanded spatial and temporal scales?

Transitions, particularly agro-ecological transitions, will necessarily be accompanied by landscape transitions, which is why landscape-based approaches (projects, plans, atlases, landscape charters) are becoming crucial (Folléa, 2019). We hypothesize that landscape-based or “landscape urbanism” approaches (Bonneau, 2016) represent key levers for collaborative, resource-aware territorial planning (particularly agricultural and food resources). Their holistic and relational view of territories makes them strategic for a “second age” of SCoTs (Dugua et al., 2022)⁶. Planning must foster connections and strategic navigation (Hillier, 2011) across different territorial scales, from the parcel to the large landscape. Historically focused on urban development sites in major metropolitan areas, planning must now also prioritize open, non-built spaces as new strategic places in the face of climate emergency. This posture implies a ‘landscape inversion’ (Cogato-Lanza, 2005), in particular through the structuring of green and blue grids, but also through an increased interest in the edges and interfaces between town and agriculture, which can constitute ‘transactional places’ (Dugua and Chakroun, 2019) from which to rethink the town, or ‘agroecological lighthouses’ from which to rethink agriculture (Nicholls and Altieri, 2018). Which tools support this co-planning process (reciprocity contracts, agri-urban pacts, agroecological corridor agreements, etc.).

Landscape enjoyed its golden age in 1990s France, but was later overshadowed by biodiversity-based approaches (Toublanc et al., 2022). While landscape architects now play key roles in urban design and public space quality, long-term “large landscape” approaches (Pernet, 2014) seem to have lost traction⁷. In societies marked by “social acceleration” (Rosa, 2015) and a “presentist regime” (Hartog, 2003), short-term and small-scale actions (temporary, transitional, tactical) often prevail over long-term, large-scale strategies, despite the proliferation of planning norms. At the same time, climate urgency demands rapid, visible actions—sometimes at the expense of the historical inquiries needed for a deeper understanding of territorial dynamics. What are the consequences of this spatial-temporal narrowing in planning? How can large-scale landscapes, projects, and territorial planning resonate again? How can we reconnect with “retro-prospective” approaches amid environmental urgency?

Axis 4. What counter-narrative(s) in the field of spatial planning?

Planning, and especially SCoTs, are often seen as outdated or overly normative. Their effectiveness often stems more from legal constraints (e.g., urbanization limits in the absence of a SCoT) than from enthusiasm for long-term strategic thinking. We suggest that a “second age” of SCoTs would require planning to be intentional and valued—promoted and supported (and primarily by local residents) by stakeholders by adhering to the vital issues of soil health and, more broadly, public

⁶ The landscape approach is presented as “accelerating the agro-ecological transition” in a recent French governmental report (Michel et al., 2020).

⁷ The award of the Grand Prix National du Paysage 2024 for the Landscape Plan of the SCoT of the Metz urban area, produced by the Omnibus agency and the Syndicat mixte du SCoT, is an exception.

health. While planning instruments and exercises are multiplying, and scholars note a “narrative turn” in urbanism (Ameel, 2021), territorial planning in France—particularly through the SCoT—seems to suffer from a lack of narrative drive or a “crisis of imagination.” Déléaz (2015) describes a “loss of readability” in SCoTs, which have grown more complex with successive reforms—especially those integrating environmental and climate issues. Some scholars question whether this form of planning has reached a dead end (Loubière & Vanier, 2018). How new counter-narratives in the field of spatial planning might be built—especially in light of post-war policies and today’s socio-ecological context (Hou, 2019). Do SCoTs and planning exercises lack “narrative substance” (Matthey et al., 2025)? Beyond regulation, how can planning documents help create shared meaning and collaboration? In other words, how can planning processes become more tangible, legible, and credible? How do landscape and agro-ecological approaches diversify the narratives in the field of spatial planning and transform the “grand narratives” that have shaped the history of urban planning?

Timeline:

Launch of the call for papers: June 23, 2025

Submission of abstracts (via the dedicated [SciencesConf page](#)): August 25, 2025

Notification of acceptance: September 8, 2025

Submission Guidelines:

Proposals should include:

- First and last names of the author(s) and their affiliations, specifying for each, if applicable, the institution of affiliation and full contact details (email address, postal address, phone number). One main corresponding author must be clearly identified;
- Title of the paper;
- Five keywords;
- The axis addressed by the proposal (from among the three outlined in the call);
- An abstract clearly identifying the central argument of the proposal, the research methodology, and the main results (maximum 3,000 characters, including spaces);
- A short bibliography.

Papers in English are accepted. French will be the main language used during the conference.

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Organizing Committee

Benoît Dugua, Université de Reims Champagne-Ardenne, EA Habiter

Sébastien Piantoni, Université de Reims Champagne-Ardenne, EA Habiter

Myrtille Schlur, Université de Reims Champagne-Ardenne, EA Habiter

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