

43rd international workshop on urban and territorial creativity

from 8 to 25 September 2025

 Cergy-Pontoise, France

Apply before
June 1st 2025 !



The River Seine as a Great Garden: The sources

Ecology and habitability of the Seine and its tributaries

International call for applications

les Ateliers
maîtrise d'œuvre urbaine

Les Ateliers Internationaux de Maîtrise d'Oeuvre Urbaine de Cergy-Pontoise

Les Ateliers de Cergy is a non-profit association created in 1982 at the initiative of the urban planners of the New Town of Cergy-Pontoise.

Ateliers de Cergy team

Véronique Valenzuela, director of Les Ateliers, geographer

Simon Brochard, project director, geographer and historian

Victoire Bayle, Administration and communication

Lhakey Tenzin, Administration and logistics

43rd Workshop team

Armelle Varcin, lecturer at ENSAPL, researcher on the interrelationships between risk, water and landscape, landscape designer, co-pilot of the workshop

César Silva Urdaneta, landscape and urban planning researcher at École Nationale Supérieure de Paysage de Versailles, architect, co-pilot of the workshop

Carole Adenka, assistant projet coordinator, geographer

Translation of the topic (pages 4 and 6): Susanna Hsing

Immeuble le Verger, rue de la Gare
95020 Cergy-Pontoise
Tel : +33 1 34 41 93 91
<https://www.ateliers.org/fr/>
seine@ateliers.org

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For over 40 years, the association has been bringing together twenty young professionals and students of various nationalities and background every September in Ile-de-France region. Together, they work in multidisciplinary teams and present at the end of the workshop their proposals and strategies to an international jury chaired by local authorities. The teams' proposals combine long-term visions and illustrated ideas for the territories, at disposal for the local decision-makers. For the past 25 years, the association has also been invited to work internationally to organize professional workshops. Over 100 workshops have been organized in France and around the world.



Illustration : Goddess of the river Seine, Séquana

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The 43rd Paris Region International Urban Planning Workshop : Great Seine Basin



**Apply before
June 1st 2025 !**

For this 43rd session of the International Urban Planning Workshop for the Paris Region, Les Ateliers de Cergy are launching a multi-year reflexion on the Great Seine Basin. 15 youngs professionals and students from all nationalities and disciplines will be selected for 20 days of teamwork in September 2025. After scientific preparation and visits of the Seine basin, the three teams will offer solutions and narratives for the Upper Seine Valley, focusing on both the Seine basin and local areas.

This **international call for applications document** presents the topic and main questions of the international creative urban workshop; it invites professionals and students from all nationalities and disciplines to apply to participate in this event.

The Seine River as a Great Garden: the sources

Faced with the simultaneous **threat of water scarcity** and the **risk of flooding** due to climate change, Les Ateliers de Cergy proposes that we take a fresh look at the Seine Basin. As the primary condition for life, water is at the heart of the relationship between geography, landscape, living organisms and minerals. Building on the hydrographic network, the **symbolism of water and the narrative power of gardens**, how can this Great Sequanian Garden be created?

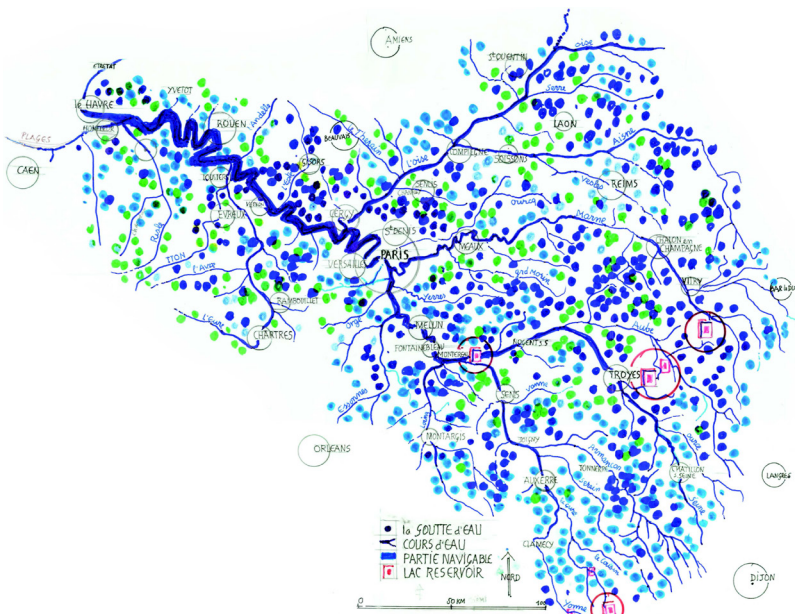
The aim of the workshop is therefore to contribute to the invention of this Great Sequanian Garden, to invent the **narratives of desirable, supportive and resilient territories** for the inhabitants of this vast watershed. Following the river from its source to its estuary, this 43rd session will focus on the **Upper Seine Valley-Seine Amont section**.

One large basin, 3 spatial sections, 3 years, 3 complementary workshops:

Upper Seine Valley-Seine Amont : an area of springs, tributaries, agricultural plains, hillside vineyards, rural and peri-urban areas, the water tower of the Paris metropolis.

Metropolitan Seine : the most urbanized valley along the river, the heart of a “world city” integrated in its metropolitan and geographical context.

Lower Seine Valley-Seine Aval : an archipelago of medium-sized cities, the transition from the peri-urban to the estuary, all the way to the sea.



The river Seine and its tributaries,
drawing by Bertrand Warnier



The Seine River basin

- Length of the Seine river : 777km (482mi)
- Basin size : 78 600 km
- 23 000 km of watercourses
- 18.3 million inhabitants
- 4 administratives regions : Bourgogne Franche Comté, Grand Est, Ile-de-France, Normandie
- 1 river-sea port : HAROPA (Le Havre, Rouen, Paris)

Of the **18.3 million inhabitants** of the Seine river basin (almost 30% of the population of metropolitan France), 11.8 million live in the Île-de-France region, concentrating most of the urban population of a multicultural population representing all social backgrounds. Around **85% of the population** lives in urban areas, leaving almost 15% in rural areas, spread out in cities where 90% have fewer than 2,000 inhabitants. (Agence de la Seine-Normandie)

The territory : Upper Seine Valley– Seine Amont

The Upper Seine Valley is defined as the area drained by the Seine and its tributaries from its source to its confluence with the river Marne. The upstream valley covers an area of 31,000 km², which represents **40% of the Seine basin**. The main urban areas (Troyes, Sens, Reims etc.) are located along the major tributaries. Less dense than Paris and the downstream, population densities fall to lower than 20 inhabitants per square meter in rural areas.

The Upper Seine Valley is a water tower, a reserve of drinking water whose quality and quantity are crucial to the survival of millions of people. It is an area that **generates wealth**: agricultural, industrial and, more broadly, economic activities through the flow of goods and people, and the tourism it generates.

Its **rich agricultural landscape**, stretching from the springs and headwaters of the Seine to the gateway to the Paris metropolitan area, is home to large-scale cereal crops - barley, wheat, rye, oats - as well as rapeseed and peas (for livestock), not to mention some of France's most renowned vineyards, **producing red and white Burgundy wines** in the Yonne and Champagne in the Aube and Marne departments. The area also produces timber from public and private forests.

Upstream alone, **500 industrial sites** (chemical, agri-food, pharmaceutical, electrical industries, Nogent-sur-Seine power plant) are liable to the Seine river.

Four lake reservoirs hold back the water of the Marne, Seine, Aube and Yonne rivers, to protect the downstreams area, and Paris in particular, of risks of flooding.

How can we reconcile human activities, the economy and production vital to local stakeholders, with the ecological challenges of which water is a major indicator?



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Jean-Christophe BENOIST



La Bassée

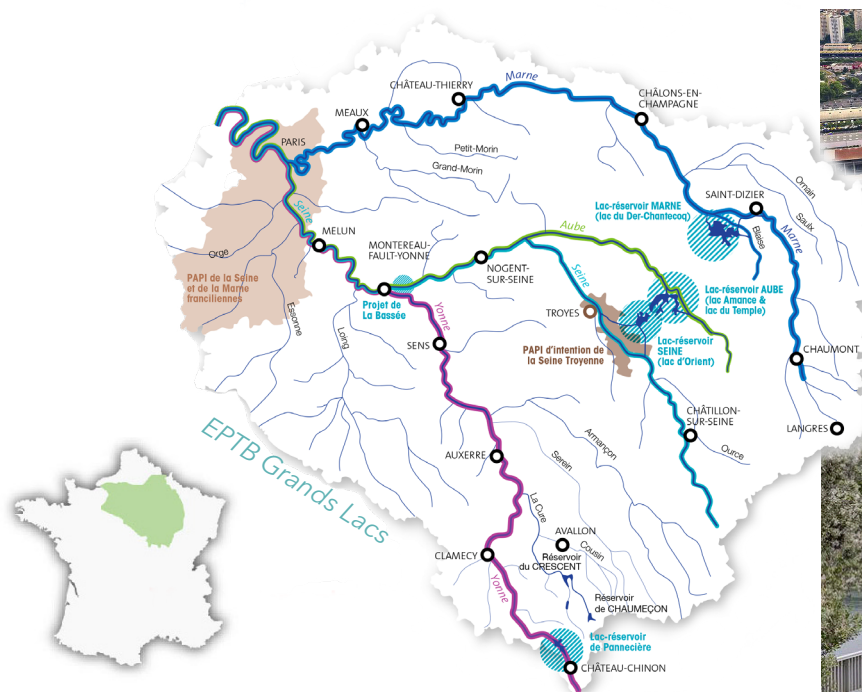


Daan KLOEG

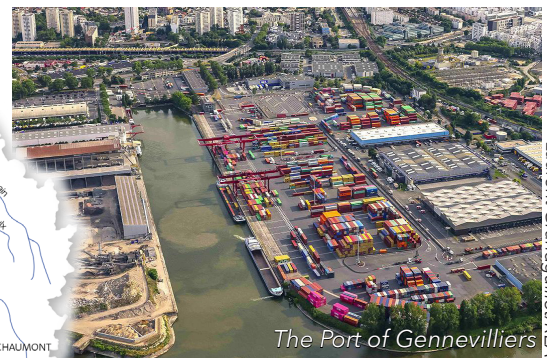
The workshop challenges

Cultivating the Water of the Great Sequanian Garden: Questions

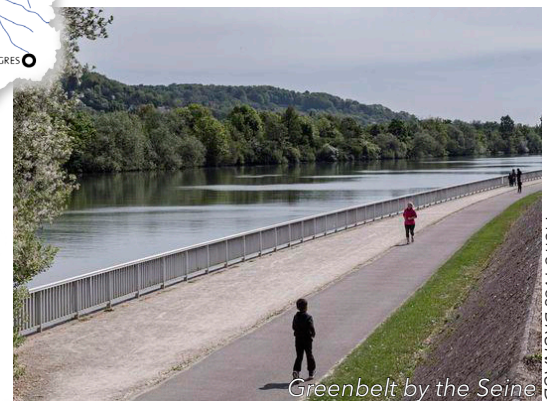
- Foster a shared water culture : What can be done to reconcile uses, reduce conflicts and conserve water resources?
- Imagine elements of a territorial narrative : How can the imagination be stimulated through storytelling mechanisms? What can they be based on? How can they be embodied and made collective?
- Mobilize knowledge for territorial development : To encourage the application of proven knowledge, what strategies are needed to integrate this knowledge into territorial projects?
- Raise awareness of hydrosolidarity : How can interdependence be translated into new forms of action and governance?



Seine Amont and its 4 lake reservoirs



The Port of Gennevilliers



Greenbelt by the Seine

Key Themes

Living in the basin

Water as a common good, a vector of resilience and territorial solidarity.

Cultivating a sense of belonging

Building a shared narrative and vision around the river network.

Envisioning strategies for action

Exploring ways to implement solutions and take concrete action.

By exploring the **levers of action** – financial, institutional, cultural or participatory – that would allow them to be applied on the ground, the workshop invites participants to **imagine mechanisms, forward-thinking prospects** and methodologies capable of bringing to fruition approaches that have already been tried and tested in local areas. The aim is not to seek innovation for its own sake, but to identify and activate the conditions conducive to its implementation, by **stimulating cooperation** between stakeholders and co-constructing application scenarios tailored to **each local context**.

Apply to the workshop !

The workshop's program

The workshop is organized according to the original method of Les Ateliers, which brings together young professionals from different countries and disciplines in **multidisciplinary teams**. The workshop approach is **multiscalar**, ranging from the great Seine river basin to the local scale, with a focus on the river's affluents.

The first few days will be devoted to **visits in the area** and **meetings** with local actors as well as to **working sessions** that will allow everyone to better understand the topic and the different scales of the workshop. The teams will then start working in teams. The Exchange Forum will also allow discussions and debate with local stakeholders.

At the end of the workshop, a jury composed of **local and international experts** and **local decision makers** will be brought together to listen to and analyze each team's proposals and approach.

The presentations will be open to the public. The jury's role is not to select a specific proposal, but to emphasize the best ideas and share strategic analyzes that will push forward your production and create **complementarities** between the different groups.

The preparation of the participants will be accompanied by a context document presenting the region and the **challenges of the workshop**, as well as by a series of recorded roundtables. At the end of the workshop, a booklet will be produced containing all the workshop proposals, followed by a final document called the **synthesis sharing the main lessons** from the workshop.

Place and Date

The workshop will be held in **Cergy-Pontoise** and in the **Seine river Basin**, from **08 September to 25 September 2025**.



For who?

The workshop is open to young professionals of **all nationalities and disciplines**, including students enrolled at least at a Masters level, from all disciplines (urban planning, sociology, arts, economics, agronomy, engineering, architecture, history, landscape design, etc.) of a **maximum age of 30**. Participation is on a voluntary basis. Proficiency in English is required to work in an international team.

How to apply ?

Consult the **topic document on the workshop page** :

<https://www.ateliers.org/fr/workshops/243/>

Complete the **application form online** :

<https://www.ateliers.org/l/apply-seine>

- Prepare your **CV** (one or two pages) and a presentation of yourself in 80 words
- Prepare a **personal work** or an extract from a personal work (max. 6 pages) related to the topic of the workshop. We invite you to share your thoughts on your local river and water systems through a short personal work. The form of this work is open and may include drawings, texts, photos and other graphic productions.

Registration conditions

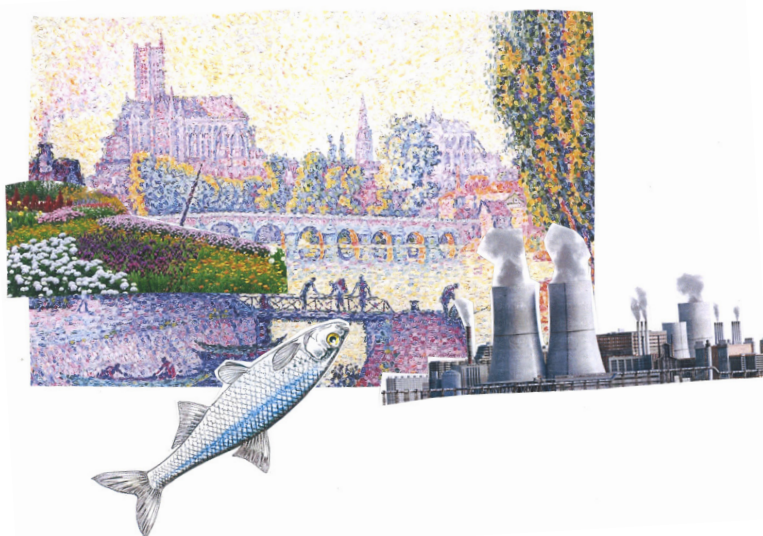
The application process is free of charge. The cost of the workshop (including membership to the association) is 150 euros and includes accommodation in Cergy-Pontoise for the duration of the workshop, local transport and organized visits, some group meals, lectures and drawing materials.

Deadline for application

Sunday 1st of June 2025 à 11:59 (Paris time)



Hydrography of the Seine as a tree of life, drawing by Bertrand Warnier



Request for information and/or documentation : seine@ateliers.org