

Interdisciplinary research project

# PEGASE

Environmental Assessment Governance:  
Air, Landscapes, Ecosystems

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**ITTECOP programme**

ITTECOP (Land Transport Infrastructures, Ecosystems and Landscapes) is an incentive research program led by the Ministry of Ecological and Solidarity Transition (MTES), in coordination with the French Environment and Energy Management Agency (ADEME). Its main objective is to confront the technical challenges of transport infrastructures and their rights-of-way (ILTe), whether road, rail, water or energy infrastructures, and their interfaces with territories (railway stations, seaports, airports, etc.) while including landscape and ecosystem dimensions.

<http://www.ittecop.fr/>



# Part A – Investigation of comparative law and administrative systems

The first part of the research includes an analysis of comparative law and institutions in time and space.

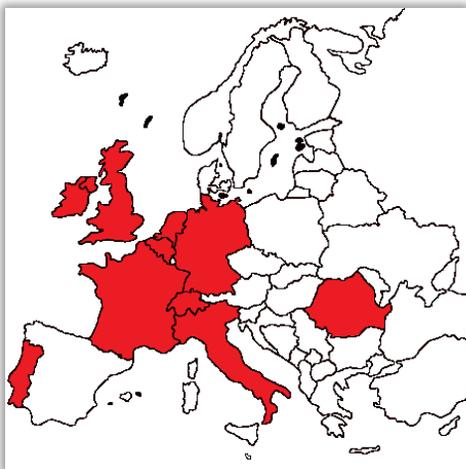
**1. This analysis has a socio-historical dimension:**

It involves, in particular through work on archives, retracing the genesis in France of the obligation of environmental impact assessment in the law relating to the protection of nature of 1976. We are more specifically interested in the debates and options considered, in 1976 and thereafter, to guarantee the quality of these EIAs.



**2. This section also includes an investigation of comparative law and institutions within and outside the European Union.**

12 national contexts are studied on the basis of a documentary and bibliographical analysis. The database is supplemented by a series of interviews with four categories of actors: institutions in charge of environmental assessment, project owners, engineering consultants & environmental associations.



**3. An analysis of European litigation** complements these two entries:

The aim is to determine how the Court of Justice of the European Union interprets the applicable directives and imposes compliance with them on the Member States.

# Part B - Analysis of practices: Fieldwork and case studies

This part will include an analysis of the functioning of the Environmental Authority in France in its different configurations.

1. Through interviews, documentary analysis and observation phases, the aim is to study both **the processes for producing advices and the conditions under which they are taken into account by stakeholders.**

The operationalization of ecological knowledge in the relationship between engineering consultants and project owners and the place of ecological knowledge in the "quality control" operated by the Environmental Authority are studied in depth.



2. Beyond the analysis of the production and trajectory of advices, **the more general functioning of the French Environmental Authority**, its visibility, capitalization and networking activities, etc. are studied, in the course of the various reforms it has undergone in France since 2009.

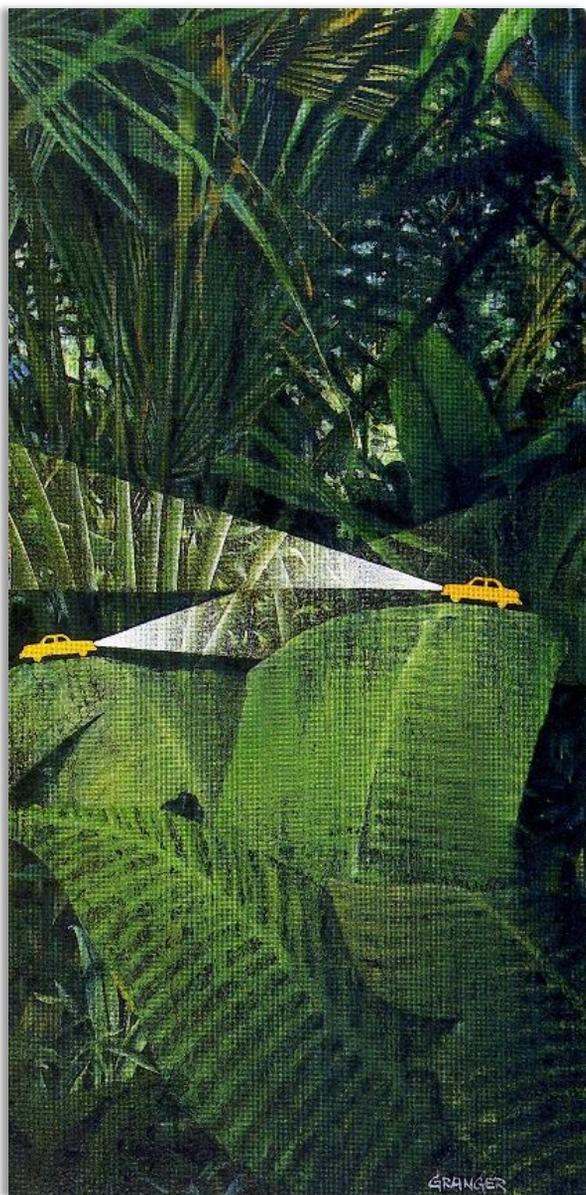
To this end, the analysis of stakeholders' practices is carried out through a series of case studies that will enable us to understand the diversity of stakeholder systems, territories, the Environmental Authority configurations and Projects/Plans/Programs. In order to define the limits of the analysis, three types of ecological issues are targeted: biodiversity, landscapes and air/climate. Particular attention is paid to the effects from the point of view of public participation in environmental matters.



3. **Analysis of French litigation relating to the quality of the environmental impact assessments.**

From a corpus of several thousand decisions of the Council of State, the Administrative Courts of Appeal or the Administrative Courts, the aim is to highlight the main trends in the control of the quality of environmental impact assessments carried out by the administrative judge, as well as the influence of the Environmental Authority advices on this control.

# PEGASE - Project outline



*Lucioles, by Michel Granger, courtesy of the artist.*

© Michel Granger - Collection of the Musée du Vivant - AgroParisTech.

Michel Granger regularly collaborates with the Musée du Vivant and the Interdisciplinary Centre for Ecological Research. He has donated 183 objects (posters, calendar, postcards...) to the Musée du Vivant, including 23 original prints. Link to the collections on the museum's inventory: <http://poleimage.agroparistech.fr/musee/category/549>

The obligation, since 1976, to carry out an impact assessment for any project likely to have significant impacts on the environment has led to the progressive consolidation of the tool and the structuring of a whole professional field.

Environmental assessment (that is, environmental impact assessment for projects; strategic environmental assessment for plans and programs) was consolidated at the beginning of the 2000s by European directives requiring Member States to set up an Environmental Authority responsible for issuing an advice on the quality of environmental assessments, from the point of view of taking into account ecological issues in all their diversity.

**What are the effects of environmental assessment, in the sense of assessing the impacts on the environment and the quality assurance system for these impact assessments?**

The aim of PEGASE research is to contribute to the improvement of processes from the point of view of taking environmental concerns into account in public action.

To this end, it combines **ecology, political science, environmental law, geography**, etc. It approaches the instruments from the point of view of public policy instruments, but also instruments specific to scientific research and knowledge of the environmental impacts.

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