

# Is the border infrastructure a catalyst for implementation of a sustainable development management system within local authorities? The example of the community of townships of the Crêtes Pré-Ardennaises

*L'infrastructure-frontière comme catalyseur de la mise en place d'un système de pilotage du développement durable au sein des collectivités territoriales ? L'exemple de la communauté de communes des Crêtes Pré-Ardennaises*

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## ABSTRACT

Local authorities are essential actors in the implementation of local sustainable development (SD). However, we still do not see the modalities of this implementation. The objective of this paper is to propose an analysis of the management of the sustainable development of local authorities constrained by a plurality of actors by taking support on the concept of boundary-infrastructure. The connection of boundaries-objects into a boundaries infrastructure facilitates the management of an organization characterized by the presence of actors from different “cities” (Boltanski,

Thévenot, 1991). We rely on the study of the community of municipalities of the Pre-Ardenne ridges which has made sustainable development an essential lever of its territorial project. Based on interviews, we propose to present the role of boundaries-objects articulated in an infrastructure in the development of a sustainable development management system.

## Key-words

*Management Control; Boundary-object; Boundary-infrastructure; Sustainable development; Territorial organizations*

## RÉSUMÉ

Les collectivités territoriales jouent un rôle essentiel dans la mise en œuvre du développement durable local. Toutefois, on perçoit encore mal les modalités de cette mise en œuvre. L'objectif de cet article est de proposer une analyse de la mise en place d'un système de pilotage du développement durable des collectivités territoriales, contraint par une pluralité d'acteurs, en

prenant appui sur le concept d'Infrastructure-frontière. La mise en relation d'objets-frontière au sein d'une infrastructure frontière facilite la mise en place d'un système de pilotage d'une organisation caractérisée par la présence d'acteurs relevant de cités différentes au sens des économies de la grandeur (Boltanski, Thévenot, 1991). Nous nous appuyons sur l'étude de la communauté de communes des crêtes Pré-Ardennaise qui a fait du développement durable un levier essentiel de

son projet territorial. Nous nous proposons de présenter le rôle des objets-frontière, articulés au sein d'une infrastructure-frontière, dans le développement d'un système de pilotage du développement durable.

## Mots-clés

*Pilotage ; Objet-frontière ; Infrastructure-frontière ; Développement durable ; Collectivité territoriale*

The interest in meeting the requirements of sustainable development is widely recognized both nationally and internationally. France, in a roadmap presented on September 20, 2019, formalized this commitment which involves, in particular, a multiplication of projects initiated by local authorities (municipalities, departments, regions, Public Establishments of Inter-municipal Cooperation). Whereas the adoption of a sustainable development strategy is an accepted principle for the great majority of local authorities, at least in their display, analyses remain rare in terms of steering sustainable development and monitoring the effectiveness of their variations into concrete projects and actions. Thus, the concept of sustainable development largely present in discourse, in particular political, (Beurain, 2003) raises major questions when it comes to understanding the modalities of implementation and management.

The objective of this text is to understand how a public establishment of inter-municipal cooperation (EPCI) was able to render effective the deployment of a management system for a territorial sustainable development project (PTDD) even though it is constrained by a plurality of coalitions with different expectations and by the specificity of the political dimension of the management of sustainable development requiring the involvement of all stakeholders (Bouckaert, Halligan, 2008). To study this question, we use the theoretical framework of economies of size (Boltanski, 1990; Boltanski, Thévenot, 1991). This reading grid allows us to understand the difficulties of collaboration between coalitions but, above all, to question ourselves about the possible compromises between the coalitions in ensuring the convergence of actions. We will see that this compromise is made possible by the emergence of border objects within

the meaning of Star and Griesemer (1989) and their articulation within a border infrastructure.

Our work will be based on the study of the community of communes of the Pre-Ardenne ridges (hereinafter denoted CCCPA) located in the Ardennes department. This study is structured in four parts. The first part involves the recognition of the coexistence of multiple coalitions within local authorities and their weight on the governance of local sustainable development. In the second part, we present the case study carried out and the results obtained. In the third part, we come back at greater length to the role of border objects and the usefulness of border infrastructures for the establishment of a local management system for sustainable development. We discuss the contributions of this research in the fourth part before concluding.

# 1. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN LOCAL AUTHORITIES:

## from its deployment to its management

This first part starts by presenting the methods of implementing local sustainable development. Then, we study the internal and external coalitions of a community, crystallized in the form of three “cities”, which constrain the management of sustainable development. Finally, we propose to show how border objects and their articulation within a border infrastructure make it possible to constitute a stable compromise between coalitions, thus facilitating decision-making within the framework of partnership governance.

### 1.1. From sustainable development to local sustainable development

#### 1.1.1. The implementation of a sustainable development policy: between the national will and the local variation

The popularity of the concept of sustainable development is largely due to the success of the Brundtland report which emphasizes the need to balance three dimensions: economic development, social equity, preservation of natural systems. Most states have since embarked on policies to achieve this goal of balance. Thus, in 2015, France committed to implementing 17 sustainable development goals decided by UN member states and included in the 2030 agenda. The operationalization of these policies is based on a will expressed by the United Nations. 'Central State but also on actions undertaken by local actors (Decamps, Vicard, 2010). This Local Sustainable Development is defined by the ICLEI (International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives) as “*development which provides fundamental economic, social and environmental services to all the inhabitants [of a municipality or other municipal grouping] without compromising the viability the natural, real estate and social systems on which the provision of these services depends*”.

Local authorities are autonomous administrative structures which must take care of the interests of the population of a territory. Decentralization laws have given them powers in land use planning and local economic development, which are important levers for initiating sustainable development projects at the local level.

Approaching sustainable development through territorial entry is justified according to Theys (2010) by objective reasons (many debates have their origin in local dynamics and the responses provided must therefore be considered locally), economic (greater attractiveness of the territory) and pragmatic (interventions at the local level are more likely to bring results than global actions). To bring about a fundamental change in behavior, consumption and production patterns and local development and planning strategies, local communities are including their actions in a Territorial Sustainable Development Project (hereinafter denoted PTDD).

#### 1.1.2. The variation of sustainable development at the local level: the territorial sustainable development project (PTDD)

The PTDD is a voluntary process carried out by a community or a group of communities, which translates into a strategy and a territorial action plan. Its primary ambition is to engage the territory and its inhabitants in a continuous improvement process guided by the founding principles of sustainable development. It covers documents and projects aimed at the establishment of sustainable development at the level of the territory. Very often, the PTDD materializes in the form of a local Agenda 21 with 5 types of purposes (fight against climate change, preservation of biodiversity, development of human beings, solidarity between generations and between territories, development based on responsible production and consumption). Its operation requires the participation and commitment of social groups, the coexistence of a strong political support and an adapted and flexible organization, transversality between all areas of action of the community and all components of the territory, implementation of an assessment to verify the relevance of the policy pursued and a logic

of continuous improvement with regard to the goals of sustainable development.

Although the governance of local and regional authorities plays an essential role in the adoption of a sustainable development strategy, its operationalisation in the form of actions and the establishment of a steering system remains problematic.

## **1.2. Governance of sustainable development in local and regional authorities**

### **1.2.1. Sustainable performance management in local authorities: Towards a performance governance model**

Performance management and, consequently, the implementation of steering approaches and tools by French local authorities are relatively recent and there are still few studies devoted to it (Favoreu *et al.*, 2015). Carassus and Gardey (2009) situate this adoption in the mid-2000s in order to transcribe locally the general principles of the LOLF, the most emblematic formalisation of the New Public Management (NPM), which took administrations in a new direction by encouraging them to move from a culture of means to a culture of results and thereby introducing performance management in the public sector (Maurel *et al.*, 2011). Carassus *et al.* (2014) define public performance as “*the capacity of a public organisation to control its human, financial and organisational resources in order to produce an adapted public service offer, in terms of quality and quantity, meeting the needs of its stakeholders and generating sustainable effects for its territory*” (2011, p.17-18). This performance is characterised by its multiple dimensions and consequently calls for management and steering systems that are able to grasp this multidimensional character. A number of authors have attempted to account for this in public performance models (Hood, 1995; Demeestère, 2005; Bouckaert, Halligan, 2008; Bouckaert, Pollitt, 2011).

At the territorial level, local authorities have seized upon the principles of the NPM to strengthen evaluation and control and to launch performance

approaches adapted to their context (Carassus, Gardey 2009; Carassus *et al.*, 2014). The decentralisation process and the application of NPM principles have thus led to the creation of autonomous responsibility centres that bring together political and organisational (managerial) choices at a more operational level (Biondi and al., 2008). This has strengthened management practices within local authorities, particularly the implementation of costing techniques (Fabre, Bessire, 2008; Letort, 2015).

With the exception of the recent work of Heurteux (2017; 2019), there are few analyses of sustainable development management in French local authorities. This concept, which is largely present in discourse, particularly at the political level, raises major questions when it comes to understanding the methods of implementation and management, even going so far as to raise the question of the effectiveness of its development, which could ultimately come down to the greening of local authorities or the reclassification of already existing environmental policies (Goxe, 2005), a manifestation of a form of organisational hypocrisy (Antheaume, 2005; Heurteux, 2017; 2019, Cho *et al.*, 2015).

Favoreu *et al.* (2015) propose an analysis grid of territorial performance that links the four ideal-types of Bouckaert and Halligan (2008) with the instrumental and managerial characteristics of local performance approaches. More precisely, they develop a grid taking into account the implementation modalities of this approach, which is not limited to tools but is also based on an analysis of the level of integration of local actors in the management of the authority. This grid enables them to distinguish four models of performance management (Performance Administration, Performance Management, Performance Management and Performance Government) which differ both in the type of tools used and in the degree of participation of the various internal and external players in the steering process. Among other things, this study highlights a model of performance governance characterised by political steering of all the players in the organisation, open to the territory and the environment of the authority and thus following a co-constructed approach involving players from within and outside the authority.

The implementation of political steering induced by this mode of governance of sustainable development

performance constitutes a particular moment since it favours the perpetuation of actions undertaken under the strategy decided by the governance of the authority. In order to function effectively, this political steering system presupposes a sharing of representations between the various actors (internal and external) in the organisation (Drevet, 2009; 2014). However, in local authorities, the latter are part of various coalitions that develop representations and expectations that may be far removed from one another. In this respect, this study is in line with Lorino's steering paradigm (1995), which states that “*steering [...] does not mean controlling the actions of multiple actors in a deterministic way, but acting on interpretations, influencing interpretations*”. This vision translates into a more systemic approach to the organisation in line with the expectations of sustainable management.

### 1.2.2. The local authority: a plurality of coalitions...

According to Gustin (2001), steering “*allows the institution to be read from a dynamic perspective while recognising its great complexity and the weight of social expectations that weigh on it*”. In the case of local authorities, these social expectations are expressed by citizens, who can be divided into three categories: The “citizen-politician” who expects the community to make choices that will bring about improvements, the “citizen-taxpayer” who contributes to the financing of communal public services and the “citizen-user” who characterises the individual or group of individuals demanding a certain level of service quality from the community in terms of accessibility, reliability and transparency of public services.

Bœuf (2012) argues that it was the decentralisation laws of 1982 that conditioned the taking into account of social expectations, which he calls the ‘quarteron de la décentralisation’. However, it is the effective entry into force of the LOLF in 2005 that anchors these social expectations in public management. The LOLF introduced a new budgetary nomenclature and the programmes implemented were based on the definition of performance objectives divided into three ‘targets’ corresponding to the three categories of citizens previously distinguished, namely the citizen-politician, the citizen-user and the citizen-taxpayer

(Sinnassamy, 2014). Socio-economic effectiveness objectives meet the expectations of the first; service quality objectives concern the second and efficiency objectives target the third. This triptych is subsequently reflected in the methodological guide to performance, which integrates these three dimensions in the definition of indicators for measuring public performance. Mordacq *et al.* (2006) state that public performance must be measured at various levels of the ‘public action chain’ by integrating this triptych of beneficiaries.

The community also shows great complexity in its functioning and decision-making because it is not always easy to identify the internal decision-makers, as they are rarely unique. It is therefore preferable to speak of ‘contributors to the decision’ (Bartoli, 2005). Faced with social (external) expectations, the local authority proposes a steering system based on a triple coalition supported by a specific rationality (Chatelain-Ponroy, Cellier, 2005). We can thus distinguish between the coalition of elected officials, which deploys a political rationality (the satisfaction of the citizen-politician), the coalition of officials, which obeys an economic rationality in order to satisfy the citizen-taxpayer, and the coalition of agents (in the sense of contributors to the services offered by the municipality), which develops an operational rationality in order to offer quality of services to the citizens-users.

Whether internally or externally, each coalition of actors will thus seek to target objectives and to do so will mobilise its own rules, resources and principles. These actors, even if driven by a common goal, express expectations that may diverge. In order to analyse and understand how external expectations relate to internal coalitions, we believe that Boltanski and Thévenot's (1991) approach to the “*économies de la grandeur*” is appropriate.

### 1.2.3. ... which crystallise around three *cités* (cities)

The presence of different social representations of the same object or tool is often the reflection of rationalities which themselves diverge or, to use the concepts of Boltanski and Thévenot (1991), emanate from individuals or groups from different worlds. Boltanski

and Thévenot use the model of the economy of conventions, which is based on the idea that for there to be exchange, coordination or cooperation between agents, there must be conventions between the people concerned, i.e. a system of reciprocal expectations between people about their behaviour. These shared systems of equivalence, these common magnitudes, allow the different individuals or coalitions to find the necessary reference points to establish a relationship within worlds governed by the coherence of the principles that are implemented there.

In the model developed by Boltanski and Thévenot, the logics of argumentation (justification) are described as a set of persons and objects linked within a situation characterised by the presence of different representations. In these situations the actors refer to a common higher principle: one does not justify one's expectations only by what one wants for oneself, but by general principles that can be opposed to others in the name of a conception of what is right in this situation.

For the actor this abandonment of the defence of his or her own particular case for an argument of more general scope, which consequently applies to others,

is characteristic of what Boltanski calls the rise in generality. This can continue as long as the actors fail to agree on a principle; they can thus try to go back to a higher common principle. Boltanski and Thévenot distinguish 6 major principles, each constituting the central element of a logic of justification that they call *cit *.

Each *cit * then becomes a frame of reference enabling the authority's internal and external actors to justify their actions. The study of local authorities has enabled us to identify three main forms of justification carried by specific rationalities to which coalitions are attached. We will mention: the civic, industrial and domestic *cit * (see Table 1).

The **civic *cit *** is characterised by the pre-eminence of collective over particular interests. The important notions revealed are those of solidarity, equity and the collective. The objects here are numerous: they are laws, decrees, protocols, codes, criteria to slogans, leaflets, etc. The 'words' of the civic world are: collective, laws, participate, solidarity, State, public policies, democracy, ... Internally, the elected representatives belong to this world. They are there to act for their territory, to initiate projects whose objective

GOVERNANCE OF A TERRITORIAL COMMUNITY			
	<i>Civic Cit�</i>	<i>Domestic Cit�</i>	<i>Industrial Cit�</i>
Internal Actors	Elected officials	Agents <sup>1</sup>	Functional staff <sup>2</sup>
External Actors	Political citizens	Citizen-users	Citizen-taxpayers
Rationality	Political	Op�rationnel	Economic

Table 1 – Partitioning of rationalities within a territorial governance

Source: Prepared by the authors

<sup>1</sup> Etymologically, an agent is an individual who acts (Latin "agens"), at the service of the organisation, who serves as an intermediary between the organisation and the users. In this study, agents include all the individuals at the service of the community, responsible for providing a service to users. According to Mintzberg's typology, we could describe them as operational.

<sup>2</sup> We call functional (technostructure in the sense of Mintzberg) all the actors who have to assume tasks of support, assistance and support to the operational activities of the organisation, such as the accounting department, human resources, IT, purchasing, legal services...

is to satisfy the citizens. Externally, the citizen-politician checks the validity of the choices made. This citizen seeks to propose useful projects for the community and puts pressure on the elected representatives.

The **industrial *cité*** is the city of technical performance, science and technical progress. People are reliable, productive and operational. Measurement, in all its forms, is omnipresent through the statistics of the rule. The “words” of the industrial world are: expert, control, system, measurement, standard, tools, methods. The functionalists come from the industrial world by seeking to implement tools and methods to ensure the efficiency of decisions taken. The budget is the emblematic tool. Externally, the citizen-taxpayer is attentive to the way public funds are used.

The **domestic *cité*** is based on a higher principle linked to tradition and personal relationships. In the domestic world, the common principle is respect for hierarchy. The 'words' of the domestic world are: tradition, loyalty, trust, pedagogy, support. The domestic world is made up of agents in the service of the community who, because of their greater attachment to the practices of their profession than to the political vision, appear as the guardians of the temple. They have a sense of duty and aim to produce a quality service. Externally, the citizen-user uses the services of the community. He or she will point out any malfunctions in the services offered so that corrections can be made.

As each city operates on the basis of a specific higher principle, it is difficult for the organisation to homogenise its actions. Thus, the industrial city rejects both the civic city because it considers administrative procedures inefficient and the domestic city because it sees tradition as a brake on progress and efficiency. Conversely, the civic city criticises the technocracy and bureaucracy of the industrial city and rejects the favouritism of the domestic city. Finally, the domestic city rejects the idea of standards specific to the industrial city and refuses the collective but anonymous 'we' of the civic city. Consequently, although necessary for the smooth running of the organisation, dialogue between these different worlds is difficult. Forms of agreement can nevertheless appear (Boltanski, Thévenot, 1991), whether by arrangement, an ad hoc and informal agreement implemented in situations where the different worlds are

unable to find a common principle of justification, or by compromise, which is a more lasting form of agreement in that it allows for the emergence of, for example, a practice, or a person likely to be perceived as legitimate in the different worlds in conflict.

Objects play an important role in this process of finding a compromise, as they often constitute external referents around which trials will take place and serve as an instrument of justification. Objects are essential in supporting the arguments of public justification, arranged in 'cities'. When the city is supported by its own objects, it becomes a world in the vocabulary of Boltanski and Thévenot. The nature of the objects thus contributes to defining the whole of the interaction (the situation) and thus the world concerned. Hence, for example, in the civic world, the objects will frequently take a legal form such as a text of law, whereas in the industrial world, methods, tools or qualifications will be invoked. Among these objects, border objects (Star, Griesemer, 1989) can play a fundamental role, as we shall now see.

### 1.3. *Boundary objects for local authority governance*

#### 1.3.1. **Border objects as a point of contact between these different cities**

Cooperation does not necessarily imply a consensus or a prior agreement but can take the form of a sharing of representations around objects with sufficient interpretative flexibility to establish communication between different social worlds or different communities. Star and Griesemer (1989), investing the field of the sociology of science and technology, initiated in particular with the work of Callon and Latour (1981) and Callon (1986), have taken an interest in the supports of collective action, in intermediate objects and more particularly in border objects. Border-objects, like intermediate objects, qualify the artefacts that circulate between members of a network but, whereas intermediate objects highlight the translation work of an innovator whose objective is to enlist other actors in order to stabilise the process of diffusion of the innovation, the border-object translates more a dynamic and participative reading of the process. Indeed, while the translation theory

develops an asymmetrical reading of translation operations, work on the construction and implementation of border-objects develops, on the contrary, a vision of the organisation where none of the points of view present is privileged but where, instead, each one can keep their vision while making it cohabit with that of other individuals.

Star and Griesemer (1989) define the boundary object as “*an object, concrete or abstract, whose structure is sufficiently common to several social worlds (or communities of practice) for it to ensure a minimum of identity at the level of the intersection while being sufficiently flexible to adapt to the specific needs and constraints of each of these worlds*”. We can see that although in everyday language an object has a material dimension, it must be understood here in a broader sense, its materiality being sought in its use or the action that people carry out on this object. In this conception, the border object is “multiple”, at the same time abstract and concrete, general and specific, conventional and adapted to the user. The term border, while often suggesting a limit or a separation, should be seen here more as a contact zone or a shared space. Therefore, the border-object represents a compromise that allows different groups to work together without prior consensus by allowing a common understanding, without losing sight of the different worlds and their specificities. (Star, 2010). More specifically, it must be 'sufficiently plastic' to adapt to the local needs and constraints of the various groups using it, while being 'robust' enough to maintain a common identity from one site to another' (Star, Griesemer, 1989, p. 393), or in the words of Détrie: “*To resemble each other no, to come together ye*” (Détrie, 2009, p.93).

Four types of border objects can be distinguished:

- The **repertory** (or data warehouse) constitutes a set of objects classified and indexed in a standardised way, allowing heterogeneity to be managed in a modular manner. The content is the same for everyone (robustness) but it can contain elements that can be interpreted differently by everyone (plasticity), for example: a database, a website or a newsletter which, by their format, facilitate the information storage of information, the communication and the reconciliation of various contents;
- the **idéal-type** represents a general model that leaves aside local or singular specificities, and which can be adapted and completed by the participants in the collective action space. It is something that has no concrete reality and that is shared by a set of actors, to which all can refer, but which does not mean the same thing for everyone. Briers and Chua (2001) cite the example of the ABC method, where many actors share the vision of what it is supposed to achieve but do not apply it in the same way;
- the **envelope** (or object with common borders) designates objects that share the same borders with different internal forms. It is characterised by a container that is identical for all actors (robustness) and a content whose form varies according to the actors (plasticity). The association is a good example of an envelope; its form is defined by the 1901 law, but everyone joins for personal reasons;
- The **standard format** (or the standardisation of collection methods) is an object that facilitates communication and the rapprochement of diverse contents. A good example of this is the cash register receipt: it has the same shape in all shops (robust side) but it reflects a significant heterogeneity of purchases (plastic side) - the shared medical file also illustrates this type of border object.

Briers and Chua (2001) add a fifth category to the above: **Visionary objects**, which generate similar feelings and responses within the community and therefore carry a strong legitimacy. They cite as an example the desire of any leader to implement accurate cost systems. Rocher (2008) goes even further by proposing a sixth category, moral objects, covering the values and principles shared by actors from different social worlds who may therefore develop a different materialisation of these values or principles. He cites accounting principles as an example of such moral objects.

The capacity of the border object to make actors from different worlds work together results from its characteristics of abstraction, versatility, modularity and standardisation (Wenger, 2000). These characteristics make it a partial and temporary bridge

between worlds, with meanings that vary from one world to another but are nevertheless sufficiently structured to be intelligible to others. Indeed, the border object constantly oscillates between weak and strong structuring. At the intersection between several worlds it appears weakly structured so as to be accepted by all, but within each world it is used in a more structured way to be more adapted to a local use

The concept of the boundary object has been used quite extensively in accounting and management control. Amongst these, we can mention the work of Briers and Chua (2001) on the ABC method, Hansen and Mouritsen (2005) on the Balanced Scorecard, Caron *et al.* (2007) on the role of the budgetary process in the implementation of an eco-control system, or more recently Baille (2015) on the role of the dashboard within a network of car dealerships. Indeed, because of its characteristics, it seems able to promote the development of control tools in contexts marked by the coexistence of actors developing different logics, such as that of the local authorities mentioned above.

While the properties of boundary objects have been widely studied, their incorporation into an infrastructure based on a set of conventions, standards or norms supporting a community of practice seems to have been somewhat underestimated, even though these infrastructures have an important role to play in ensuring the coherence of multiple and heterogeneous boundary objects.

### 1.3.2. Border infrastructures or the overall coherence of a system of border objects

Bowker and Star (1999) point out that border objects need infrastructure to function properly and fulfil their role. Star (2007) points out, for example, that it is a misinterpretation to emphasise the interpretative flexibility that characterises border objects without a proper appreciation of the infrastructure in which they are embedded. She summarises this thinking with the following image: “*Study a city and neglect its sewers and energy sources (as many have done) and you lose essential aspects of distributive justice and the power of planning. Study*

*an information system by neglecting its standards, cables and parameters, and you miss the equally essential aspects of aesthetics, justice and change*” (Star, 2018, p.3).

At first sight, infrastructure evokes a set of facilities necessary for human activities (roads, ports, networks, etc.) but beyond pipes or cables, infrastructure also encompasses more abstract elements such as protocols, standards, shared values or beliefs (Bowker *et al.*, 2010). More generally, border infrastructures represent communities of practice that maintain stable social structures. They constitute means of interaction that authorise and facilitate the passage of border objects from one city to another. In this respect, they represent “*both the material and symbolic frameworks of communities and... the way in which they are constituted as the invisible underpinning of action*” (Trompette, Vinck, 2009). The border infrastructure can thus be read as a material artefact elaborated by man and which conveys a representation of the world (Star, 1999).

In concrete terms, infrastructure corresponds to structures supporting the physical handling of border-objects and can be seen as the articulation between material resources, organisational routines and coordination mechanisms and in general any form of articulation accomplished, often invisibly, between the different border-objects. It takes the form of work practices, technical norms or labelling practices, but also of moral values or legal frameworks on the basis of which institutions carry out their activity. Once the infrastructure is sufficiently established, it is perceived by outsiders and the uninitiated as a self-evident object to be learned about, with new members of the community of practice acquiring a familiarity that becomes natural as they participate. It thus ends up constituting a 'common knowledge' in the sense of the economy of conventions. Nobody really owns the infrastructure and it cannot be modified from above. It evolves only through negotiation and adjustment. It thus has a marked collective and participatory dimension. Through its plasticity and its capacity to facilitate contacts and interactions between users of border objects, the border infrastructure also makes it possible to re-establish inter- and intra-city stability and to maintain an overall coherence that has been compromised by the multiplication of these border objects.

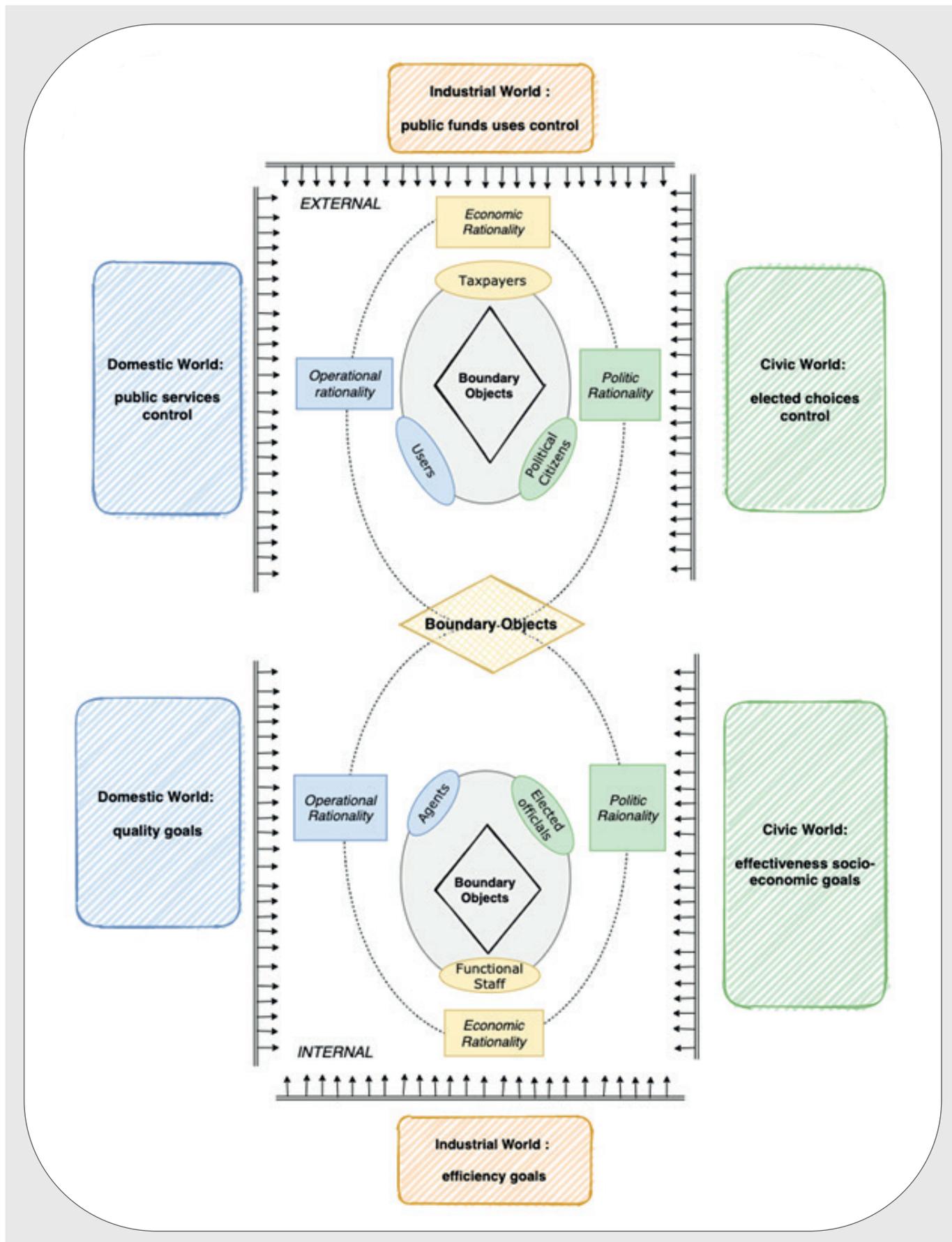


Figure 1 – A governance model for sustainable performance  
 Source: préparé by the authors

All in all, the relational properties of the objects and border infrastructures allow them to act as a medium of mediation and translation in the cooperation processes of heterogeneous cities. As these cities exist both within each category of actors (internal actors and external actors) and between the two categories, the implementation of a steering system associating these different actors will be all the easier if border objects are deployed at different levels, as can be summarised in Figure 1.

In the second part, we will see a concrete translation of these concepts of border-objects and border-infrastructure in the framework of the implementation and management of a PTDD of a community of municipalities marked by the coexistence of several worlds developing heterogeneous expectations and representations.

## 2. EMPIRICAL STUDY: the implementation of the territorial development plan of the Crêtes Pré-Ardennaises

To illustrate the elements developed in the previous section, we will use a study carried out in a community of municipalities concerning the implementation of a Territorial Sustainable Development Plan. After presenting the data collection method and specifying the context of the study, particularly with regard to the reading grid in terms of cities (2.1), we will return at greater length to the development of the project and its particular mode of political steering (2.2).

### 2.1. *Presentation of the data collection method and the context of the study*

#### 2.1.1. Methodology of the study

All research must specify the researcher's position with respect to the research object. These choices form what Bateson calls a “net of premises” in which the researcher is caught, i.e. a set of postulates, implicit or explicit presuppositions concerning reality and the way to study it (Burrell, Morgan, 1979).

We position our research in an interpretativist perspective insofar as we seek to understand the meaning that the actors of a territorial authority attribute to the reality of the governance of sustainable actions in a context marked by the coexistence of several rationalities.

According to Giordano (2010), it is possible to distinguish three positions of the researcher in response to the three most frequently mobilised research paradigms:

- An external position for the positivists,
- A distanced position for the interpretativists,
- A reciprocal interaction for the constructivists.

Our work led us to adopt a neutral, distanced and non-influential position within the framework of a

long-term study, in order to collect information on the actions and steering methods implemented by the community of communes. This was a first step in understanding and diagnosing a longer research process aimed at helping this community of communes to implement a steering system for its Territorial Sustainable Development Plan.

The objective here was to interpret the results of the research fieldwork and to draw conjectures about the modalities of steering sustainable development. This exploratory research is part of a qualitative approach to the search for meaning (Paillé, Mucchielli, 2012) based on abduction, which consists of “drawing conjectures from observation that should then be tested and discussed” (Koenig, 1993, p.7). Indeed, our study starts from the exploration of a context, a situation (the implementation and governance of a Territorial Plan for Sustainable Development by a community of municipalities), from which we wish to propose a conceptualisation of the role of border objects and a border infrastructure in this implementation. In order to move towards the rule, our conceptualisation will have to be tested afterwards.

This research is based on a case study which aims to collect information about a person, an event or a social system (group of individuals or organisation) in order to enable the researcher to understand how it works and/or to discover new causalities (Yin, 2003; Barlatier, 2018). We chose a single case study as our research design because it is the pilot case for a long-term research.

To carry out this field survey, we relied on semi-structured interviews, lasting an average of one and a half hours, with members of the community's steering committee. The choice of interviewees is justified by the composition of the steering committee in charge of issues related to sustainable development and energy transition. This committee meets once or twice a year to review the year's progress and to reflect on the prospects and actions to be taken in the future. We selected the representative members of this committee, namely: the project manager, two political players at two different levels: a vice-president, a member of the bureau and a community delegate, a member of the community council; and the deputy director. The number of people interviewed, while it may seem small, nevertheless allows us to understand the work

of the Steering Committee in its entirety and to envisage a complete analysis of the different rationales mobilised internally.

We have focused on the perception by the decision-makers of the positions of the other cities, insofar as it is these decision-makers who set up the political steering system for sustainable development, even if the Community's decision to adopt such a strategy is the result of a process involving all the stakeholders who have expressed the rationalities of the three cities concerned. The operationalisation of this strategy and the implementation of the political steering system for sustainable development performance are initiated by the political decision-makers. It therefore seemed important to us to retain only the accounts of the decision-makers, the main designers of this steering system. These interviews were conducted using a guide on the structure of the CCCPA, governance and steering of the territorial sustainable development project (see interview grid in Appendix 2), which was then transcribed.

In order to ensure that the results obtained were not the sole reflection of the methodology used, we implemented a triangulation of the data by relying on a large corpus of texts (Appendix 3) collected from the community (territorial project, LEADER programme of the community, minutes of the deliberations of the community council, etc.). These materials are freely accessible on the portal of the community of communes. We supplemented these resources with other materials produced by UNADEL (Union Nationale des Acteurs du Développement Local), an independent organisation committed to sustainable development issues which has conducted studies on the community. All these materials were collected in digital format and could therefore be used directly.

These different materials were subjected to a content analysis using the following steps (Bardin, 1977, cited in Wanlin, 2007):

- Reading of the documents and transcripts to identify the essential themes in relation to the topics addressed by the research question;
- Cutting and grouping the corpus around these themes in order to produce a simplified representation of the raw data;

- Coding where the categories are applied to the previously cut and grouped corpus. Given the small number of interviews conducted, manual coding was used (see Appendix 4: extract from the coding manual). The aim of this coding was not to prepare statistical treatments that were not very relevant due to the small number of interviews, but to facilitate the link between the material obtained from the transcriptions of the interviews and the reading of the corpus of documents on the one hand, and the themes addressed by the study on the other (territory, sustainable development, governance, etc.);
- Interpretation of the results based on the results of the coding in order to develop a finalised reading of the corpus based on the answers to the questions asked.

### 2.1.2. The context of the study: The community of communes of the Crêtes Pré-Ardennaises and its *cités*

Our study is based on the Communauté de communes des crêtes Pré-Ardennaises (CCCPA) located in the Ardennes department. Although we initially chose the communes as the field of study, after some research and numerous exchanges with local actors, we realised that, even if sustainable development was a real concern for them, the lack of means, resources or projects and their diversity did not allow for a thorough and coherent analysis. We therefore preferred to focus on the higher level of the community of communes, whose competences, ambitions and motivations are more in line with our research. Indeed, the communities exercise a certain number of competences defined by law and by their statutes (General Code of Territorial Authorities, Art. L 5214-1) in place of the member municipalities. These compulsory competences include, in particular, in the context of sustainable development, spatial planning, water management and waste collection, to which are added optional competences such as environmental protection, sanitation or energy transition, and optional competences such as green tourism. The

community of municipalities is thus an essential level for the management of sustainable development.

We chose the CCCPA because for nearly 20 years it has made sustainable development a determining lever in the implementation of its development. Its current territorial project very clearly promotes the three pillars of sustainable development. The four challenges chosen (creating wealth from resources, aiming for environmental excellence, developing soldiers and strengthening territorial coherence) underline this. The territory has a development council whose main mission is to generate ideas and proposals for local planning and sustainable development. Lastly, this territory is multiplying the number of agreements linked to actions related to sustainable development. In this respect, the CCCPA demonstrates a real specificity in terms of sustainable development.

This community of 22,000 inhabitants was created at the end of 1995 as an extension of a pre-existing association of cantons. Covering an area of 1,000 km<sup>2</sup>, it includes 94 small rural<sup>3</sup> communes (only 8 have more than 600 inhabitants), divided into 7 sectors (the former cantons.) 75% of the area is agricultural, 22% is natural and only 3% is urbanised. The area is bordered to the north by the Sedan-Charleville Mézières conurbation and to the south by the Greater Reims conurbation. Over the last 30 years, the area has undergone significant deindustrialisation with the closure of small industrial units.

The CCCPA is managed by a community council made up of 116 community councillors from the member municipalities, each having at least one seat. It is managed by a bureau of 34 members (1 president, 9 vice-presidents, 2 delegate councillors and 22 other members) and proposes 35 working committees made up of elected representatives, technicians and inhabitants who develop and propose actions and projects.

#### *Cités* within the CCCPA

Within the CCCPA, the different coalitions and cities presented above are reflected in concrete terms (see Table 2).

<sup>3</sup> Important characteristic of the community. The term appears 30 times in the Leader programme application; in the Unadel article, the title uses this notion and in the local gazette, the word appears between 5 and 6 times in each publication.

Internally, the three coalitions can be presented as follows:

The **civic cité** is represented by the community council or the board. These bodies convey a political rationality. The elected members work in the general interest and seek to satisfy the demands of public opinion.

The functional staff are characteristic of the **industrial cité**. They include, among others, the project managers responsible for steering projects (“dossiers”) linked to the themes undertaken by the community. In this respect, they must respect procedures, propose organised work, rely on monitoring indicators, .... The support activities then consist of, among others, the accounting department, the billing department (household waste, etc.), the administrative department and the human resources department. These various support services are subject to strict compliance with professional procedures (accounting, invoicing, payroll, etc.). They are specialists who guarantee the reliability of the information system.

Finally, the agents and, at their head, the Vice-Director, mobilise an argumentative logic from the **domestic cité**. They are made up of a whole group of actors at the service of the community, including operational agents (reception agents, technical agents, maintenance agents, early childhood workers, etc.) who represent the community and are in direct contact with the inhabitants, but also the Vice-Director, who contributes to the supervision of actions in the field. These agents and their superior (the Vice-Director) have recognised experience in their respective fields and their actions are part of a process aimed at improving the quality of services for citizens.

The external coalition also includes many diverse actors representing the civil society:

- The inhabitants (citizen-politicians) convey an argumentative logic of the **civic cité**. They represent the living force of the community. They have been contributing to the dynamism of the territory for over 20 years. They actively participate in the requests of the elected representatives via workshops, meetings, surveys, etc. The

feedback indicates high participation rates at the various meetings. This contribution testifies to the desire of the inhabitants to participate in the construction of their territory. They were the ones who initiated the first territorial project at the beginning of the community of municipalities in 1995. Their opinion is important and listened to by the elected representatives.

- The region relies on a dense network of associations to mobilise local players and initiate public actions (for example, the Leader application). This mobilisation of citizens, combined with the community's political choices, has led to the creation of numerous associations serving the population. They develop according to the aspirations and expectations of the territory's inhabitants and encourage the mobilisation of the population through the numerous events organised for noble causes (senior citizens' outings, pink October, cinema meetings, etc.). They thus advocate values that are also part of the argumentative logic of the **civic cité**.
- The users/consumers (the citizen-user) advocate values that respond to the grammar of the argumentative logics of the **domestic cité**. In this *cité*, justification is based on the search for what is right, on fidelity or loyalty, on personal relationships between people. The domestic aspect echoes the idea of belonging to a 'house' and sharing in the family. The “house” here is the territory and the users constitute the “family”, i.e. inhabitants who live on the same territory, who are neighbours, who are friends. In this “house”, the users wish to promote the local heritage and the territory. For example, the direct sale (short circuits) of local agricultural products is developing. In addition, the territory supports family activities, encourages families and seniors to stay in the territory (reception conditions) and strengthens links with neighbouring territories by developing cooperation projects. Numerous initiatives have also been undertaken to encourage individual responsibility (responsible local consumption, responsible purchases from local businesses, etc.). On a daily basis, in order to install local living habits, users are demanding new modes of mobility, easily accessible services to the

population, development of digital tools, energy sobriety.

- Taxpayers (citizen-taxpayers) express an economic rationality of the **industrial cité**: The taxpayer is more concerned than in the past about the use of public money and the authority must legitimise and justify its actions to the taxpayers. To this end, the authority regularly publishes the decisions of the president or the board on its website.

Although the two categories of actors have always been complementary, with the civil society accompanying the actions of the Community of Municipalities, each category does not target the

same projects. Boundaries are therefore established between the categories, and even within the categories. These boundaries reflect the specificities of each group and lead to distinct motivational levers. Thus, between operational staff (agents) and politicians (elected representatives), dialogue does not develop spontaneously: *“there are heads of department who consider that their department is quite autonomous but they do not see what they are going to do with the community... We manage to communicate better with the inhabitants than with the municipalities. I feel that there is more mistrust on the part of the communes and the town hall secretaries in particular, but also on the part of the mayors in relation to the small commune”* (Vice-President).

		GOVERNANCE OF CCCPA		
		<i>Civic Cité</i>	<i>Domestic Cité</i>	<i>Industrial Cité</i>
<b>Internal actors</b>		The Community Councillors; the President and Vice-Presidents make policy choices, propose and initiate the PTDD...	The agents (reception, maintenance...) headed by the Vice-Director, represent the community on the ground, the values...	Users (individuals, associations, etc.) mobilise available resources, check quality and availability, ensure that local heritage is promoted
<b>External Actors</b>		Residents and associations are interested in the political choices made, and verify that they lead to improvements for the community	The project managers (transition, etc.), the accounting, billing and payroll departments, etc. define procedures and control budgets...	Taxpayers inform themselves about and monitor the proper use of local tax resources
<b>Rationality</b>		Politique	Opérationnel	Economique

Table 2 – The three cités inside CCCPA

Source: prepared by the authors

## 2.2. The Territorial Sustainable Development Plan and its political steering

### 2.2.1. A multi-faceted commitment to a Territorial Sustainable Development Plan supported by multiple actors and rationales

For several years, the CCCPA has been developing a territorial project which targets four challenges (creation of wealth from the territory's resources, environmental excellence, improvement of services to the population and accessibility of the cultural and leisure offer, reinforcement of citizen involvement and of elected representatives) and in which sustainable development appears as an omnipresent transversal axis. The current project was built over 2 years and was adopted in December 2016 for a period of four years. *“The actions and achievements implemented over the last 20 years have created a certain attractiveness of the Crêtes Pré-Ardennaises territory, which is now known and recognised by all for its dynamism and the unity of all its members. In order to maintain this dynamic, a territorial project has been drawn up based on contributions from elected representatives and inhabitants”* (President of the CCCPA, territorial project of the community of communes).

Under the banner of this territorial development project, the CCCPA carries out in the same times a large number of different programmes that contribute to the territory's policy on economic, social and environmental sustainability:

- LEADER programmes *“Liasons Entre Actions de Développement de l'Economie Rurale”* (Links between Actions for the Development of the Rural Economy) set up and financed by the European Union to encourage the development of rural areas. The community council (decision of 25 June 2020) has, for example, unanimously decided to apply for financial aid from this programme to finance the project *“les sabots du relais<sup>4</sup>”* or the mobility project *“Rézo Pouce<sup>5</sup>”*.

- The 2013 Climate Plan, which has become a PCAET, (Plan Climat Air Énergie Territoire), a framework document for the energy and climate policy of the collectivity, is a territorial project for sustainable development whose primary purpose is the fight against climate change. The Communauté de Communes des Crêtes Pré-Ardennaises has had a voluntary Territory Climate Energy Plan on its territory since 2013. This plan was updated in 2017 (minutes of the community council of 19/12/2017) with, in particular, the consideration of the “Air” theme.
- The Cap Cit'ergie label, a scheme intended for municipalities and inter-municipalities that are committed to continuous improvement of their sustainable energy policy in line with ambitious climate objectives (Decision of the Community Council of 12 April 2017, for validation of the Cit'ergie programme).
- Validation and implementation of the CLIM'AGRI® programme. This is an energy/greenhouse gas diagnostic for the territory's agriculture and forestry. It has made it possible to measure the carbon impact of all its activities, but also their nutritional performance, their protein autonomy and the level of carbon storage.
- Finally, the CPPPA is one of the forty or so French local authorities that have joined the Territoires à Énergie POSitive (TEPOS) movement, which brings together local authorities involved in projects contributing to the reduction of energy consumption, the production of renewable energies, sustainable mobility, the preservation of biodiversity and the mobilisation of citizens (decision of the bureau of 17 June 2019 authorising participation in the TEPOS 2019 meetings and decision of the bureau of 8 September 2020, authorising participation in the TEPOS 2020 meetings). Its investment in this movement is reflected in particular by its participation in the Board of Directors.

This active policy of sustainable development implemented within the CCCPA is carried out by numerous

<sup>4</sup> The association Les Sabots du Relais is committed to safeguarding and promoting the Ardennes draught horse breed.

<sup>5</sup> Membership of the association in order to promote hitchhiking as a solidarity and sustainable mobility.

and diverse actors who develop multiple rationalities (see 2.1). Despite the presence of different rationales, the CCCPA has implemented a transversal and participative governance of the territorial sustainable development project.

### **2.2.2. The operationalisation of the territorial project: between internal transversality and citizen participation**

In general, the president and the director general of services ensure the cohesion and smooth running of the CCCPA. The dynamics around the territorial project are relayed at the political level by a vice-president in charge of sustainable development issues. On a technical level, there is no sustainable development department as such, but the energy transition process involves four people. Finally, this entire team benefits from the technical support of the Ardennes Local Energy Agency, in particular for the implementation of a watch on calls for projects likely to strengthen the dynamics and coordination of projects (*Écoutes territoriales*, August 2018, p.17).

The pilots of the sustainable development projects are constantly concerned with involving all the actors in the area in their development, implementation and monitoring: the project managers, technicians, all the elected representatives of the area, the inhabitants and the associations. This is one of the keys to the success of the Crêtes. “*All the projects are set up in a participatory manner: we have a fund of 150 people involved in making proposals on each of the 4 challenges of the territorial project*” (President CCCPA, *Écoutes territoriales*, August 2018, p.19). Thus, the governance of the territorial project follows a participative and transversal scheme both with the community's internal actors (elected representatives, agents of the community's services) and external actors (inhabitants, economic world and associations). As an example, the community of municipalities has set up a *béguinage* with the Ecoquartier label for seniors in one of the municipalities. This project is intended to be participatory in order to best integrate the new constructions and their future inhabitants into an already existing neighbourhood (*Gazette Ligne de crêtes* n°42, December 2019, p.5).

### **Internal coordination: mobilisation of elected representatives and transversality of services**

The CCCPA is marked by the permanent concern to associate all elected representatives of the territory, i.e. nearly 1,000 municipal representatives who represent a very important relay of information to a population of 20,000 inhabitants. This representation of the municipalities is, first of all, reflected in the composition of the CCCPA board, which includes the president, vice-presidents, each representing one of the sectors of the community, and two other representatives from each sector. The municipal level participates in the project through the community delegates. These delegates (111 in number) represent the member municipalities of the CCCPA within the cantonal commissions which are held before each Community Council (1 per quarter), commissions to which municipal councillors from the municipalities in which they are held are invited in turn. Finally, since the beginning of 2017, a monthly electronic letter to the municipal councillors completes their information and facilitates their adhesion to the projects of the community of communes.

The CCCPA also wishes to deepen the involvement of local elected representatives in the dynamics of the territory because they are the ones who make it possible to defend the projects: “*... all these programmes move forward, often it is because there is a strong elected representative somewhere who pulls the trigger. There has to be political support. In fact, we often say that the elected representative must be there!*” (Vice-President). It is therefore necessary to ensure that the latter are well aware of the steps taken by the community: “*The community delegates do not always explain what is happening at the community to their municipal council. How can we make sure that the elected representatives at the grassroots level have better information and feel more involved?*” (President, Territorial Listening, August 2018, p.23). This would seem to involve greater participation by elected representatives in sector commissions, by providing education and training for community delegates to transcribe what is happening at community level to their municipal councils. Similarly, there is talk of reviewing the way sector meetings operate to enable them to be more participatory but also more conducive to the ecological transition project: “*The sector meeting is*

*still rather top-down: we are working on making the debates and decisions more shared, for example the wish to debate the CCCPA's funding for associations, it is really about co-constructing projects» (Vice-Director).*

Concerning the participation of the Community's departments, each programme has its own steering committee which, in addition to the Vice-Presidents, includes project managers and the Vice-Director, as well as actors from various departments of the CCCPA. No action is therefore the prerogative of a single department. This need for transversality encourages the decompartmentalisation of the organisation. For example, the CCCPA's "energy and ecological transition" communication plan, which, among other things, makes it possible to communicate on this label, mobilises the CCCPA's Vice-Director, the PCAET project manager and the communication officer.

### **Territorial coordination: involving the civil society**

The governance of the territorial project is not limited to elected representatives. The CCCPA also mobilises thematic groups on all the problems of the territory. Members of these groups, trained in facilitation, conduct reflections in order to set up actions in a collective manner. Civil society representatives. In 2000, it wished to have its territory recognised as a Country. It began by carrying out a participatory diagnosis followed by a collective feedback. One of the objectives is to detect people who want to be active for their place of life and who believe in its future. Working groups of these groups meet in a more transversal approach of the territory and form the first development council<sup>6</sup> of the Pays des Crêtes Pré-Ardennaises. A reflection took place to find a harmonious functioning with the community council. The result was a Pays charter, the creation of territorial associations, a wind development charter, tools and a method for mobilisation, and this led to the development of the territorial project (Experience sheet, A culture of participation).

The territory was recognised as Pays in 2002. However, the mobilisation that had prevailed until

then ran out of steam a few years later (*Écoutes territoriales*, August 2018, p.16). It was the membership of the LEADER programme that revived the local dynamic, partly through the creation of a Local Action Group (LAG), a group of private and public socio-economic partners based in rural areas (local elected representatives, representatives of public establishments, businesses and consular chambers or associations) and responsible for implementing an organised development strategy in accordance with the European Leader programme. Similarly, the Programming Committee, the body that deliberates on projects submitted for co-financing under the LEADER programme, brings together public and private players.

In addition to the institutional participation of external actors in the community's bodies, the participatory governance desired by the CCCPA's leaders takes the form of collective consultation or the implementation of more informal bodies. Thus, public information meetings are also proposed, as for example in 2018 on the occasion of the project to install a second photovoltaic "village power plant" on the territory. *"Today, we cannot envisage a programme, or at least the latest one, the climate plan, without a public meeting, which is something that is absolutely necessary"* (Vice-President in charge of Sustainable Development). Furthermore, depending on its action plan, the CCCPA organises fun or participative workshops (elected representatives, inhabitants, associations, companies, partners, etc.). The community of communes has thus deployed participative workshops to find new ideas to reduce the territory's energy consumption. These workshops are considered to be *"fun and constructive and involve around twenty people"* (*Gazette Ligne de crêtes* n°42, December 2019, p.11).

### **A multiple and also participatory evaluation**

The implemented programmes are subject to official evaluation by external bodies, but also to internal evaluation by monitoring committees.

For the LEADER programme, an Evaluation Monitoring Committee was created from the members of the

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<sup>6</sup> A space for dialogue between civil society, local elected representatives and citizens, at the level of inter-municipalities and project territories, in conjunction with the municipalities.

Programming Committee (5 members from the public college, 5 from the private college) to steer and monitor the evaluation of the programme and, in particular, to work on the elaboration of the evaluation questions and the implementation of the tools, to regularly monitor the data resulting from the evaluation and, finally, to contribute to the writing of the evaluation report.

An *in itinere* evaluation system (carried out throughout the programme) is implemented (Leader application file). This type of evaluation, which allows for better monitoring of the programme and its progress, can also be a real steering tool on which the LAG can rely to make adjustments to its strategy. This interim report is also an excellent preparation for the final evaluation of the programme, both in terms of methodology (evaluative questioning, search for relevant indicators, etc.) and in terms of the data collected, as this report can then be used to observe changes or make comparisons between two phases of the programme. Numerous evaluation tools were used: questioning grid, monitoring table and indicators for the different axes and projects developed.

At the level of the steering process, the strengthening of local democracy is essential because everyone is directly concerned by the choices made by their community. It enables the implementation of a participatory evaluation process. To this end, evaluation indicators have been chosen that are meaningful to the inhabitants, who can thus judge the process and the actions and which help to share the local political objectives of sustainable development. Therefore, from the moment it is implemented, the evaluation is participatory and contributes to enriching the territory with collective work spaces.

It clearly appears that despite the presence of different coalitions expressing diverse expectations, the CCCPA has succeeded in implementing a Territorial Sustainable Development Plan and its management involving all its components, both internal and external. We will now return to a certain number of devices implemented by the community that have enabled this collective participation and that constitute border objects articulated within a border infrastructure.

### 3. THE ROLE OF BOUNDARY OBJECTS AND THE NEED FOR A BOUNDARY INFRASTRUCTURE in the establishment of a steering system for sustainable development at local level

In order for relations to be established in this territory, in different contexts and faced with different problems, each actor or category of actors concerned and interested seeks or proceeds to translate the situation into their own language so that the problem is intelligible and does not offend their rationality. This means that within the network several simultaneous translation processes operate, which can pose problems of consistency. Cooperation will then take place thanks to “border objects” which facilitate autonomy and communication between the actors of the different cities. They must allow a common understanding, without losing sight of the specificity of the different actors and categories. It is therefore a question of putting in place the means to organise the coexistence of these groups.

So, the mechanisms deployed by the CCCPA to ensure steering can be interpreted at three levels:

- **Externally**, at the level of civil society, to involve and make the different actors (inhabitants, associations, companies) understand each other;
- **Internally**, at the level of the CCCPA, to encourage cooperation between the different actors (elected representatives, agents, delegates);
- Finally, at the **global level**, to ensure a global coherence allowing the cooperation of the 2 categories of actors, knowing that they have intrinsically specific objectives.

### 3.1. Border objects to manage external rationalities

#### 3.1.1. Border objects of the "envelope" type: the workshops for thinking process

In its preparation phase, the territorial project is based on numerous workshops in which all the actors of civil society are invited to participate in order to share their ideas on the major themes of the economy, social issues, the environment, culture, etc. The local authority has defined 5 workshops: "Heritage"; "Living better on the Crêtes"; "Renewable and local energy"; "Regional planning"; "A local and innovative economy"; "Regional planning"; "A local and innovative economy". For each workshop, meetings organised within the community are planned at intervals of 3 to 4 weeks. Similarly, in order to redefine its objectives and strategy for the development of its Climate-Air-Energy Plan (PCEAT) and its Positive Energy Territory (TEPOS) approach, the CCCPA is also organising fun workshops on these two themes. The CCCPA wishes to open up its reflections to everyone in order to address issues such as: how to reduce energy consumption? How to produce renewable energy to cover consumption? How to move around tomorrow?

The commune also organises citizens' meetings to encourage exchanges between members of civil society (and with the community). This is an opportunity to explain certain actions, to listen to comments and even to benefit from new proposals. *"Generally speaking, it is people who need, I think, debates, who need to enrich themselves, who need to share, to have a common action as well, or in any case to participate in a common objective, well, I think that this is shared by all the people, whether in the workshops, or via the film debates, and all that, it is people who live in this territory and who say to themselves that there are things to be done there and that is great, it is perhaps not true everywhere, so let's take our place"* (Vice-President).

These different mechanisms constitute devices that make it possible to provide information for each rationality within "robust" frameworks. The format (citizens' meeting, workshop, etc.) is established,

but everyone goes there for their own reasons. It is possible to assimilate these devices to border objects belonging to the category 'envelope'. For example, actors who favour economic rationality seek information on local taxes, their evolution, the level of the budget, etc.; actors who favour operational rationality seek information on the services produced by the Community of Municipalities, the level of user satisfaction, the services that are little or not used; finally, actors who favour political rationality seek information on the degree of progress of the projects implemented by the Community of Municipalities, those that have been completed or not, whether the projects are coherent with the territorial project, etc.

#### 3.1.2. A "repertory" border object: the Internet portal

The CCCPA offers an internet portal accessible to all which provides a wealth of information. The home page of the portal is organised around several entries: the structure of the community (competences, organisation chart), the main local actions undertaken by the community around the themes of the environment; services to the population; the economy; housing & heritage and tourism; the "News" of the territory, etc... One entry allows you to benefit from all the official minutes of the different meetings of the bureau, councils, etc.

As far as the territorial project is concerned, it is particularly well highlighted on the site. This portal classifies and organises a whole range of heterogeneous resources. There is a complete presentation of the project and for each programme (Cit'ergie, Leader, Climate Plan, etc.):

- a presentation of the programme,
- the necessary resources such as the project sheets and action sheets submitted by the Community of Municipalities,
- a detailed description of the procedure for submitting and examining projects,
- a presentation of the actions undertaken,
- the assessment of the project.

A set of modules is available to respond to the different rationales. This portal constitutes a border tool belonging to the “directory” category. Actors who favour an economic rationality have access to up-to-date figures on subsidies obtained, on the use of funds, on the status of expenditure commitments (decisions of the community council, for example); actors who favour an operational rationality can obtain information on the current status of services linked to the implementation of programmes relating to the project, in particular in the *ligne de crêtes gazette* (e.g. installation of charging stations for electric vehicles in the communes (*gazette* n°39)): installation of charging points for electric vehicles in the municipalities (*gazette* n°39, p.5), setting up a solar cadastre to study the potential of one's roof (*gazette* n°39, p.17), etc.). Finally, the actors who are politically rational have information on the projects undertaken (construction of the micro-crèche or the village power stations of the crests (*gazette* n°40, p.8), etc.).

The civil society, which is the bearer of a three-fold rationality, has at its disposal several mechanisms (public meetings, workshops, Internet portal, Community newspaper, etc.) implemented by the CCCPA to obtain information in line with their objectives and expectations.

### 3.2. *Border objects to manage internal rationalities*

Internally, the CCCPA must encourage the cooperation of elected representatives and staff. Each must retain their objectives and have information to help them move forward. Several mechanisms are used.

#### 3.2.1. **Border objects of the "envelope" type: Community institutions**

Institutions such as the community council, the community office, thematic commissions and sector commissions are all situations that encourage cooperation between the actors of the Community of Municipalities. *“The secret of the launch of this dynamic [...] is a freedom of speech, a very horizontal operation and a good mix of elected officials and technicians”* (Director of the Local Energy Agency,

*Écoutes territoriales*, August 2018, p.21). *“This sectoral operation allows us to clear up the issues and understand the choices before the Community Council deliberates”* adds the vice-president. It is also a tool that allows the elected representatives to be mobilised on projects such as, the establishment of a CFA in Poix-Terron, a competitor to the one in Sedan. *“It is also a place for debate and dialogue. When there are different positions in the sectors, it is regulated in the Council or the Community office”* (vice-president).

These devices provide a lot of information to satisfy each rationality. The format is established but each goes there for their own reasons. It is a boundary object belonging to the category “envelope”.

#### 3.2.2. **An example of a "directory" border object: the Cit'ergie label scorecard**

As with any programme relating to the territorial project, the steering of the Cit'ergie label is the responsibility of a committee whose role is to prepare the application (Bureau decisions of 28 January 2019) before it is presented and validated by the Community Council. The steering committee for this label relies on a shared scorecard to indicate the actions to be carried out, the objectives to be reached and the degree of progress. Each person responsible for an aspect of the label can intervene and enter the data concerning them.

The scorecard is accessible online. The scorecard makes it possible to manage financial (e.g. community energy expenditure), environmental (pollutant emission rate) and societal (e.g. proportion of renovated buildings) aspects. It refers to different rationales: economic with cost elements, operational with, for example, physical indicators on the photovoltaic power installed on the territory or political with, for example, an indicator on the coverage of the territory by public transport. In fact, the scorecard must serve as a global strategy which is shared, or at least shared by all the players, heads of department, project managers and even politicians, and to make it possible to say: *“Here we have the territory of the crests project, a project with an ambition on the transition”*

(vice-president in charge of sustainable development). Each project manager or actor has access to the same content, the same framework (robust dimension) and can enter information specific to the actions carried out (plastic dimension of the scorecard) and collect new information (evaluation of their action, updating of their objectives, creation of new objectives, etc.). This scorecard is, in this way, a “directory” type of object that allows for collaboration between departments, which was previously difficult: *“CITERGIE will allow the administrative team to get involved in the territorial project, which has also stirred up real dissension between departments. We realised that some people had a silo approach to their work and had great difficulty listening to the person next to them because they don't do the same thing and had trouble seeing the interference”* (vice-president).

In addition to border objects that make the expectations of the different actors within the same world compatible (civil society and the community of municipalities respectively), the CCCPA implements border objects that lead the two worlds to working together.

### **3.3. Cross-cutting border objects to involve civil society and the Community of Communes**

However, the establishment of mechanisms to encourage local cooperation does not solve the final major problem: that of ensuring the overall coherence of the various coalitions. Indeed, the various 'local' mechanisms only make sense because they are part of a common global approach. This allows all actions to be federated and, justifies that all the means implemented go towards the same direction. To achieve this, the CCCPA has several mechanisms that guarantee this coherence. Each actor will find in them the wherewithal to keep on the right course. During the course of the interviews, two main mechanisms were highlighted.

#### **3.3.1. The Pays charter, a border object of the "Standard Format" type**

The recognition of the territory as a Pays (in the sense of the Voynet law) was materialised by the elaboration

and signature of a Pays charter (Experience sheet, A culture of participation). This charter testifies to the commitment of the Community of Municipalities to the territory and to all the actors and makes it possible to set the challenges and objectives of the country. It acts as the internal “Constitution” of the Pays, which is divided into 5 axes: Sharing a country identity, Encouraging a culture of entrepreneurship, Creating conditions for the development of the youth, Developing services for the inhabitants, Valuing local resources). It has the characteristics of a border object, namely robustness and plasticity. The charter is a strong, framed, formal legal document. At the same time, it has a certain plasticity since it has many articles (modules) which provide answers to everyone one. The charter gives meaning to the territory and allows each stakeholder in the territory to find information specific to their problems. It thus belongs to the “standard format” category of border objects, facilitating communication and the bringing together of diverse contents.

#### **3.3.2. The Leader strategy, an "ideal-type" border object**

More than just a financial envelope allocated to a territory, the LEADER programme “*Liaisons Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale*” (Links between Actions for the Development of the Rural Economy) is also a method for mobilising the actors of the territory around the implementation of a locally decided development strategy. (Leader application programme, 2014-2020). Thus, it is the local actors who define the type of development and the projects they wish to support financially. This work is done within a LEADER programming committee, composed of representatives of civil society (the majority) and elected representatives of the territory. This territorial project can also be assimilated to a border object belonging to the “ideal-type” category.

In total, the articulation between the *cités* present within the CCCPA and the different implemented border objects can be represented by figure 2.

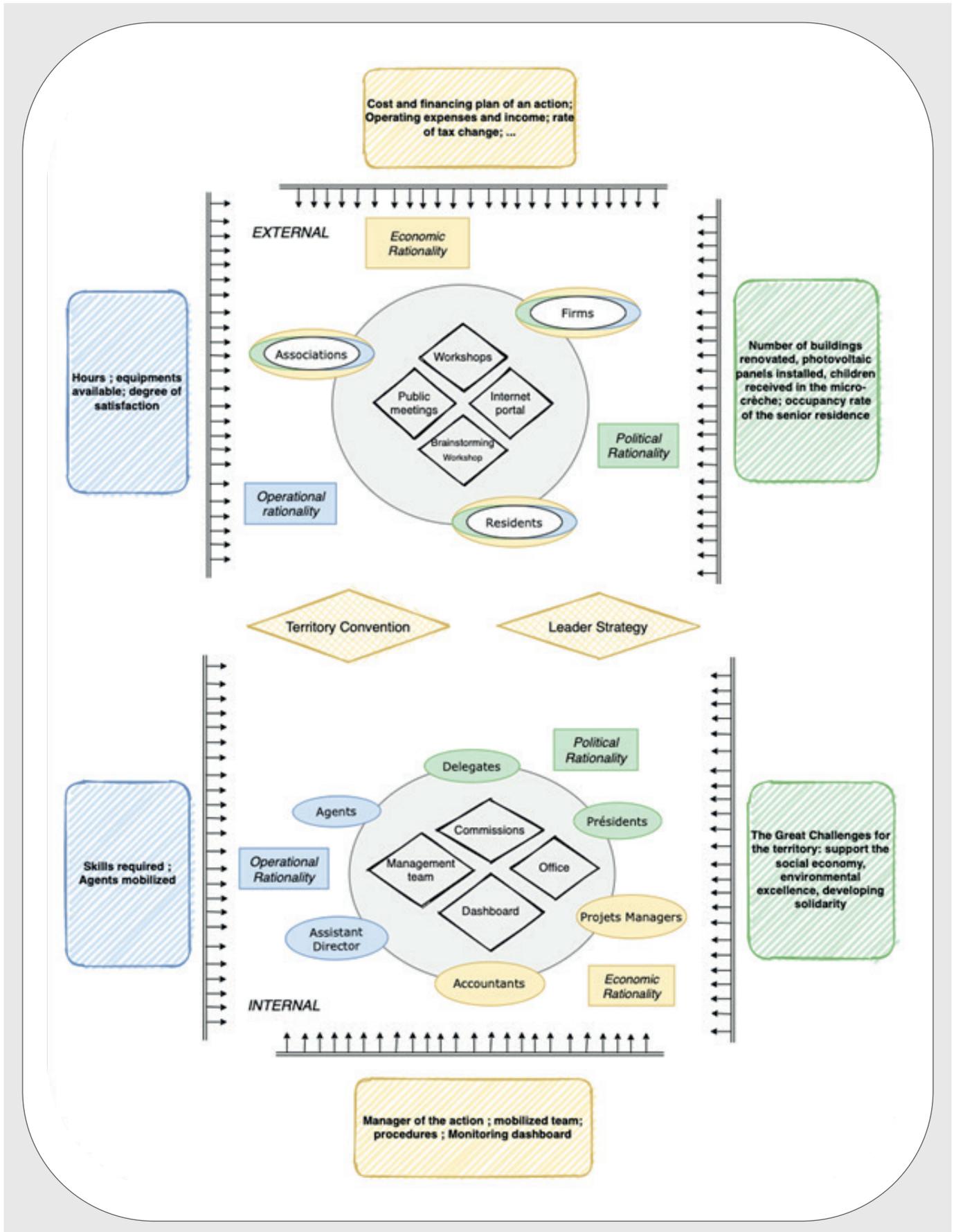


Figure 2 – CCCPA sustainable performance governance model

Source: préparé by the authors

### 3.4. The formation of a border infrastructure

All deployed border objects can only really play their role if their use is inserted into the framework of a global coherence. We then find ourselves with a real system of interconnected border objects. This system characterises the border infrastructure that the community mobilises to build its territory. The latter is made up of visible elements (a structure) and invisible elements (a culture and values).

#### 3.4.1. Visible infrastructure

The decompartmentalisation within the two “worlds” (civil society on the one hand and the community of municipalities on the other) is achieved by the juxtaposition of structures at different levels. Thus, within civil society, the working groups and the Development Council allow exchanges between the different rationalities emanating from members of this civil society (inhabitants, associations, companies, etc.). Symmetrically, exchanges between elected representatives and the community representatives take place through the municipal delegates, sector meetings, thematic committees, the Community Bureau and ultimately the Community Council. Finally, the Local Action Group of the Leader programme (decided by the vote of the Community Council on 16/07/2020), composed of half elected representatives and half representatives of civil society, as well as the development council, provides the link between the two worlds.

#### 3.4.2. The invisible infrastructure: the Pays and its identity

Beyond a visible component (the structure), it emerges that the cement of the different border objects lies in the values carried by the CCCPA, under the banner of the notion of country. Indeed, before being grouped together in a community, the communes that today form the CCCPA had created a Pays, a French administrative category of geographical development designating a territory with a “*geographical, economic, cultural or social cohesion, on the scale of a living or employment area*”. The Pays makes it possible to express “*the community of economic, cultural and social interests of its members*”

and to allow the study and implementation of development projects.

Originating from the ancient notion of geographical “*Pays*” (social belonging to a place, a valley, a culture, etc.), these territorial units are the result of a bottom-up and voluntary approach by local actors wishing to unite around a relevant perimeter (catchment area) in order to revitalise the territory through a number of projects (employment, health, quality of life, tourism, housing, heritage, land use planning, the environment, etc.), and they refer to a common identity for a territory.

This is clearly evident within the CCCPA, heir to the Pays des Crêtes Pré-Ardenaises. This was founded on the sharing by its member communes of a vision of rurality in reaction to the conurbations surrounding the country (the Crêtes Pré-Ardenaises are bordered by several urban agglomerations; Reims, Charleville-Mézières, Sedan) as well as a desire to rehabilitate the remarkable or ordinary heritage of this territory: heritage sites (built, natural or landscape), intangible heritage (gastronomy, know-how). In 2019, the community council signed an offensive growth and employment pact (POCE) with the Grand-Est region, where objective 2.1 aims to make tourism a vector of economic development by taking advantage of this desire to “*enhance the richness of our heritage*” (Decision of the community council of 04/07/2019). According to its president, “*the Crêtes Pré-Ardenaises CCCPA is a truly rural territory... We feel an attachment to the land and a desire to seize every opportunity to develop the territory*” (*Écoutes territoriales*, August 2018, p.16).

This defence of an identity specific to the territory plays a role as a catalyst to the different projects proposed, and constitutes an invisible thread between the different actions developed within the Community of Communes. For example, on 22 October 2020, the Community Council prescribed the elaboration of the intercommunal PLU, one of whose objectives is “*to promote the development of the territory's heritage identity in order to develop tourism*”. This identity meets the characters of the infrastructure presented by Star (2018): At the same time largely invisible, relational, embedded in other administrative structures, shaped by local practices, built on the history of the territory and to be learned by the uninitiated

(people not from the Crêtes). It does not belong to anyone but is everyone's business. This culture of the country shapes the invisible infrastructure and adds an extra dimension to the visible infrastructure to cement the set of implemented border objects.

## 4. DISCUSSION

The present study provides both theoretical and managerial contributions.

On the theoretical level, the use of the framework developed by Boltanski and Thévenot to identify and characterise different stakeholders of local authorities seems to us to be fruitful. The stakeholders or partnership approach to the organisation is historically based on the work of Freeman, who defines stakeholders as 'any group or individual who affects, or is affected by, the achievement of the organisation's objectives' (Freeman, 1984). The organisation is the sum of coalitions whose complementarities enable the organisation to achieve its objectives. Classically, we find typologies based on a distinction between stakeholders internal and external to the organisation (Caroll, Nasi, 1997; Martinet, 1984). Mitchell *et al.* (1997) propose a classification and gradation of stakeholders according to three criteria: power, legitimacy and urgency, in other words, according to the attributes possessed. Clarkson (1995) distinguishes between primary and secondary stakeholders according to whether or not they are essential to the organisation's activity.

Although in this approach, which contrasts largely with the shareholder vision, all groups of people who have legitimate interests and participate in the organisation's activities can look forward to their expectations being met, we feel that the previous classifications are insufficient in order to study the stakeholders of the public organisation and the forms of cooperation that take place within it. Indeed, based largely on a the distinction (opposition) between different stakeholders according to their attribute or whether or not they belong to the organisation, they do not allow for the integration of other lines of demarcation, in particular those based on the logics or rationalities of these stakeholders, nor, on the contrary, the possibilities of transversal cooperation

between internal agents and external partners. The analysis of the public organisation based on Boltanski and Thévenot's reading grid makes it possible to establish a classification of stakeholders that adopts a different sociological viewpoint focusing on the rationalities of actors according to argumentative logics. This view breaks with the classic groupings that can be made within an organisation (functions, internal/external, status, etc.) and proposes a more transversal view, all the more in line with the perspective approached by sustainable development.

Still on a theoretical level, the study shows the complementarity of the framework developed by Boltanski and Thévenot with that of objects and border infrastructures. The economy of magnitude offers us a grid for reading the stakeholders whose actions lead to the division of the governance of the organisation into coalitions. Stakeholders are seen as centrifugal forces that lead to a 'splintering' of governance. To maintain stability in this system and counterbalance this dispersion, the boundary objects act as a centripetal force that seeks to refocus the different positions. According to this perspective, border objects ensure the coherence of the system (Baille, 2015), they are objects that introduce a logic of assembly between the stakeholders. Thus, the LEADER programme in its second programming period 2014-2020 was totally co-constructed with the inhabitants. The latter, according to their argumentative logic (and therefore their belonging to a city) proposed ideas that had to be submitted to the elected representatives in charge of implementing this programme. The citizens' consultation lasted 4 months, with 2 meetings per week, most of which were attended by about 40 people. 5 groups worked with the inhabitants in a progressive approach going from the state of affairs to the proposals. This programme, an "ideal-type" border object, made it possible to refocus (assembly logic) all the proposals and ideas emanating from the citizens, a source of fragmentation of the system.

On a more practical level, this study shows that the steering of sustainable development is part of a managerial approach of the public organisation by relying on a transversal mechanism that mobilises different coalitions inside and outside the organisation. In this respect, this system illustrates the thesis of Zampiccoli (2011) who mentions four forms of public management, each of which is based on a specific

Forms of Public Management	Related Component
Management of public power	Production of public organisations (outputs and outcomes)
Management of political power	Satisfaction of collective interests
Management of public organisations	Rationalisation of actions undertaken
Management in the face of public opinion	Legitimisation of decisions taken

**Table 3** – Forms of public management according to Zampiccoli  
 Source: prepared by the authors and inspired by Zampiccoli (2011)

component of the management of public organisations (table 3):

- The **management of public power** must make it possible to target two production functions: the production of outputs from means and the production of impacts from these outputs. The project carried out by the CCCPA pursues the effective realisation of these two functions. Since 2002, the CCCPA has been involved in ensuring that the territory takes ownership of the energy issue. Thus, for example, in 2004, a citizen wind farm project (experience sheet, les ailes des crêtes) was launched and the installation of 3 wind turbines (outputs). These supplied 250 households with electricity (outcomes) and provided about 1,600 megawatt-hours per year.
- The **management of political power**: the political power seeks to make its organisation more dynamic and to transform its territory. To do this, the local authority positions itself on a logic of action. The management of sustainable development proposed by the CCCPA bears witness to this desire to change the territory by taking a long-term sustainable approach based on specific measures whose benefits will last over time. The PCET influences all the policies of the Communauté de Communes and the territory wishes to go beyond the European environmental objectives by covering 100% of its energy needs with renewable energies by 2040.
- The **management of public organisations** is found in various sustainable projects where the CCCPA shows a real desire to rationalise

practices. The Citergie label is conditional on the implementation of tools and indicators, periodic gap analyses and corrective actions. The Local Action Group (LAG), which steers the Leader programme, is required to carry out regular in itinere and final evaluations.

- The **management in the face of public opinion**: the organisation legitimises its actions by multiplying the communication media for all stakeholders (meeting, workshop, website, local magazine, etc.). A close relationship is established and exchanges are multiplied. In 2014, the CCCPA formalised in its application file for the Leader programme “*the need for increased communication on the programme with all the actors in the territory, and in particular with private project owners*”.

It emerges that sustainable development calls for a hybrid management approach borrowing from the four forms of management described by Zampiccoli (2011)

More fundamentally, the implementation of the territorial development project by the CCCPA illustrates a new form of legitimacy for public action. For Laufer, the sources of legitimacy for public action have evolved considerably over time (Laufer, 1977). In the 19th century, it was public power that conferred all the legitimacy on state action, while in the first half of the 20th century it was the production of public services. Since 1945, this legitimacy is now based on the methods the state uses and the skills it employs. The objective is now to be 'accountable' to citizens. We consider that today a new source of

legitimacy for public action is emerging: stakeholder participation. The legitimacy of public action, particularly at the local level, is based on its capacity to mobilise and manage multiple stakeholders in order to implement projects. Public organisations can no longer act alone. The mobilisation of stakeholders will make it possible to give meaning to the actions undertaken and ensure that the choices made are understood. The legitimacy of public actions depends on extended governance.

This active participation of stakeholders is made possible by the decompartmentalisation of the public organisation. Public organisations are characterised by their complexity in terms of their mission, their size and their organisation (Santo Vierato, Verrier, 2007). This complexity creates a tendency to verticalise strategies and compartmentalise services (Bartoli, 2005). The implementation of sustainable management encourages the decompartmentalisation of the organisation and promotes collaborative work.

In this context, boundary objects appear as levers likely to make the organisation's operation more fluid, by facilitating cooperation insofar as they allow each person to clearly direct his or her actions towards the organisational objectives while maintaining his or her representations. These objects act as mediators. The CCCPA implements several boundary objects of varying scope and nature. It can be seen that within each sphere (public vs. citizen) two categories of boundary objects are implemented: an envelope boundary object and a directory boundary

object. On the other hand, to make the two worlds work together, two other types of boundary object are used: a standard format and a standard ideal. The combined use of the different categories of boundary objects makes it possible to cover the full spectrum of situations as summarised in Table 4.

Thus, within each coalition, boundary objects are implemented that allow for an identical content for all but from which each member can draw the module that interests them (repertory object) or, conversely, to allow the different members to look for a different content within an established object that is identical for all (envelope object).

To make the two coalitions cooperate with each other, border objects different from the previous ones (ideal type and standard format) refer to general issues and, in a way, translate the rise in generality conceptualised by Boltanski and Thévenot and allowing the identification of a point of contact between coalitions pursuing potentially different objectives.

As this rise in generality is linked to border objects that do not offer a guarantee of durability (what about maintaining cooperation after the implementation of the Leader strategy?), the CCCPA has added a layer in the form of a border infrastructure that has a much more stable character. Indeed, both the invisible and visible infrastructures tend to institutionalise and, consequently, to perpetuate the logic of cooperation and initiated co-construction.

	<b>Identical content</b>	<b>Different content</b>
<b>Format Modular</b>	<b>OBJECT DIRECTORY</b> Internet Portal Scorecard CITERGIE	<b>IDEAL TYPE</b> Strategy Leader
<b>Established Modular</b>	<b>STANDARD FORMAT</b> Charter Pays	<b>OBJET ENVELOPE</b> Workshops CCCPA Institutions

**Table 4** – Typology of border objects implemented by the CCCPA  
 Source: prepared by the authors

## CONCLUSION

Sustainable development has become everyone's business and is now being implemented locally by local authorities. They must therefore integrate and implement an additional skill, to set up structures and tools capable of developing actions in this new field of competence and evaluate their validity.

This obligation of structuring and steering is constrained by a context characterised by the presence of multiple rationalities, both on the part of civil society and the authorities themselves.

If they want to act effectively, local authorities must therefore devise mechanisms that allow these different rationalities to coexist and interact without, nonetheless, erasing their specificities at the risk of losing the essence of local authorities. They are thus led to deploy tools that are sufficiently flexible to enable the representatives of these different rationalities to understand each other and act together, but also sufficiently robust to allow them to continue to express themselves. It is the characteristic of border objects to achieve this skilful balance between robustness and plasticity. The Communauté de Communes des Crêtes Pré-Ardennaises, which has been committed for 20 years to a policy of local implementation to promote its territory in the direction of greater sustainability, is a representative example of such a strategy of deployment of border objects. It thus implements numerous border objects of different types (envelope, directory, ideal type, standard format) capable of bringing together the different rationalities present within each community (civil society on the one hand and the community of municipalities on the other) and between these same two communities.

The coordination of these different border objects is made possible by the constitution of a border infrastructure. This infrastructure has two dimensions: the first dimension refers to the organisation of different layers of exchange and cooperation structures, while the second, more invisible dimension refers to the sharing of the same identity and certain cultural values that are capable of mobilising all energies in the pursuit of the same objective.

Although the infrastructure implemented seems to work well, we can nevertheless wonder about the role

and impact that the “political” level of leadership can play in this dynamic. Indeed, the community relies on the presence of 1000 elected representatives for a total number of inhabitants of about 20,000, i.e. 1 for 20. This is probably a success factor that reinforces the effectiveness of the border objects deployed, but its effect must be assessed. The replication of a study such as this one with communities of communes of various sizes and configurations would undoubtedly provide some answers to this question.

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## APPENDIX 1

### General data on the interviews

5 initial interviews were conducted between September and November 2019 at the community of communes:

Function	Gender	Age	Date of meeting	Rationality and city	Time spent
Policy Officer for Energy Transition and Climate	F	[30 ; 45]	September 2019	Economical (industrial city)	1h30 in average
			Novembre 2019		
Vice-President of the community in charge of sustainable development issues	M	[50 ; 65]	September 2019	Political (civic city)	
			November 2019		
Community delegate (and mayor of a member municipality)	M	[50 ; 65]	September 2019	Political (civic city)	

An additional interview was carried out at the beginning of 2021 on the premises of the community of communes:

Function	Gender	Age	Date of meeting	Rationality and city	Time spent
Assistant Director	F	[30 ; 45]	March 2021	Opérationnel (domestic city)	45 mn

## APPENDIX 2

### Interview guide

→ **Preamble: Questionnaire**

- Name - First name - Age group
- Position in the community of communes
- Since when have you been a member of the Com-Com?
- Other functions outside the community of communes

→ **Begining question**

*Could you explain to me the reasons that have led the community of communes to commit itself for several years to the theme of SD?*

→ **Topics to be discussed during the interview**

Topics	Questions (relances)
<b>Territory</b>	<p>→ What stages did the construction of the territory follow?</p> <p>→ Over what period of time, under what impetus?</p> <p>→ Is the territory defined by a specific culture?</p> <p>→ On which levers was the construction of the territory project based? (e.g. Leader programme?)</p>
<b>The administrative structure of the CCCPA</b>	<p>→ •What is the functioning of the administrative structure of the community (which services? which people? which missions?)</p>
<b>Governance of the CCCPA in general</b>	<p>→ What are the decision-making bodies?</p> <p>→ What is the place of civil society in these different bodies?</p>
<b>The CCCPA's sustainable development policy</b>	<p>→ What are the current sustainable actions (Cit'ergie, PCAT)?</p> <p>→ What are the selection procedures for sustainable actions?</p>
<b>Governance of sustainable development projects</b>	<p>→ Who are the actors involved in SD?</p> <p>→ What is the role of citizens in sustainable action?</p> <p>→ What is the role of other municipalities?</p> <p>→ What are the mechanisms for informing PPs (before, during, after)?</p> <p>→ What measures of satisfaction are implemented?</p>
<b>Management and coordination of sustainable development</b>	<p>→ How are the actors coordinated? What coordination mechanisms are planned?</p> <p>→ What evaluation mechanisms have been implemented?</p> <p>→ What difficulties have been or are being encountered?</p>

### APPENDIX 3 Textual Corpus for Triangulation

Documents	Title	Author	Date	Source
Experience Sheet – “La participation comme levier de transition”	“Les Crêtes Pré-Ardennaises : une culture de la participation”	The community of communes of the Crêtes Pré-Ardennaises	November 2017	Portail du Territoires et Conseils UNADEL <a href="https://unadel.org">https://unadel.org</a>
Expérience Sheet – “La participation comme levier de transition”	“Les Crêtes Pré-Ardennaises : les ailes des Crêtes, parc éolien citoyen”	The community of communes of the Crêtes Pré-Ardennaises	November 2017	Portail du Territoires et Conseils UNADEL <a href="https://unadel.org">https://unadel.org</a>
Monograph – “Écoutes Territoriales”	“Les Crêtes Pré-Ardennaises : un territoire rural très soudé autour de la transition”	Cécile de Blic and Catherine Lapierre	August 2018	Portail du Territoires et Conseils UNADEL <a href="https://unadel.org">https://unadel.org</a>
Summary and analysis document	“Transition et conduite du changement”	V. Chassagne, C. Grivel and C. Lapierre	May 2019	Territoires et Conseils UNADEL <a href="https://unadel.org">https://unadel.org</a>
Territory project	“Nos ambitions pour demain”	The community of communes of the Crêtes Pré-Ardennaises	2017	Portail de la Communauté de communes <a href="https://www.cretespreardennaises.fr">https://www.cretespreardennaises.fr</a>
Application form	“Programme LEADER 2014- 2020”	The community of communes of the Crêtes Pré-Ardennaises	2014	Portail de la Communauté de communes <a href="https://www.cretespreardennaises.fr">https://www.cretespreardennaises.fr</a>
Local newspaper	“Lignes de crêtes”	The community of communes of the Crêtes Pré-Ardennaises	Published quarterly	Portail de la Communauté de communes <a href="https://www.cretespreardennaises.fr">https://www.cretespreardennaises.fr</a>
Decisions of the President <sup>1</sup>	Set of decisions	President of the community of communes	years 2019 and 2020	Portail de la Communauté de communes <a href="https://www.cretespreardennaises.fr">https://www.cretespreardennaises.fr</a>

<sup>1</sup> Following the COVID 19 crisis, in order to ensure the continuity of the functioning of communities without having to physically bring together elected officials, law n° 2020-290 of March 2020 and ordinance 2020-391 of April 2020 have made it possible to entrust all the powers of the deliberative assembly to the President of the EPCI.

### APPENDIX 3

#### Textual Corpus for Triangulation

Documents	Title	Author	Date	Source
Decisions of the Board	Set of decisions	Board of the community of communes	years 2019 and 2020	Portail de la Communauté de communes <a href="https://www.cretespreardennaises.fr">https://www.cretespreardennaises.fr</a>
Community council minutes	Set of minutes	Community Councils	Years 2017 to 2020	Portail de la Communauté de communes <a href="https://www.cretespreardennaises.fr">https://www.cretespreardennaises.fr</a>
Portail de la Communauté de communes	PCEAT	Vice-Président de la Communauté de communes	2020	Portail de la Communauté de communes <a href="https://www.cretespreardennaises.fr">https://www.cretespreardennaises.fr</a>

## APPENDIX 4 Extract from the Coding Manual

Category	Qualification	Code name	Définition
<b>Territory</b>	Territory	DEL_TERR	Geographical delimitation of the territory (Communes)
	Territory Project	DD_PT	Building the territory project
<b>Governance and Stakeholders</b>	Elected representatives	PP_ÉLUS	Actor who manages the strategy of the municipality
	Citizen mobilization	Mob_CIT	Citizen participation in governance
	Communes	PP_COM	Members of the Community
	Management	DIS-PIL	Coordination devices of actors