

# The EcoQuartier initiative

## EcoQuartier calls for projects: the emergence of sustainable planning projects

The EcoQuartier initiative is designed to foster the emergence of a new way of designing, building, and managing cities: it encompasses every aspect of sustainable development, from the project planning phase (governance, management, localisation, assessment, etc.), to the more technical aspects related to the local environment and uses (social diversity, living together, solidarity, density, urban forms), economic and regional development (functional mix, jobs, mobility, etc.), and the conservation of resources and adaptation to climate change (water, biodiversity, energy, etc.).

## Two calls for projects, multiple national competitions, a club and more: gaining momentum

The calls for projects between 2009 and 2011 had a single objective: to promote exemplary operations in the area of sustainable development, genuine levers for the city of tomorrow, showcase them in national competitions and enable the distribution of best practices and innovations in terms of urban development.

In 2010, the ministry wanted to pool the knowledge acquired to stimulate the initiative and set up the 'Club National EcoQuartier', a nationwide operation supported by special-interest workgroups, training sessions and conferences/visits, a monthly newsletter and an extranet site where visitors can find all the tools and materials produced by the Club. The regions also run local workshops.

These competitions have rewarded some 50 French local authorities out of over 500 candidates. The operation benefits both local authorities, which see their sustainable operations and expertise promoted, and the government

and its partners, which compiles an EcoQuartier reference document based on operational criteria.

## ...And now, a national EcoQuartier Label to recognise truly sustainably urban projects

The opportunity to create an EcoQuartier Label has been discussed with all stakeholders (public, private, NGO, residents, etc.). After a test phase, the national EcoQuartier Label was officially launched on 14 December 2012 by Cécile Dufflot, Minister for Territorial Equality and Housing. It builds upon all the work related to the reference document and the feedback from the EcoQuartier club.

Three priority objectives have been subscribed to the label: encourage sustainable development projects, guarantee the quality of the projects based on objectives and special indicators, and safeguard the operation by leveraging regional development policies. The label certification process has 3 phases:

- The local authority signs a charter of 20 commitments agreeing to promote a sustainable planning policy.
- When work begins, the project is entered for label certification if its objectives are sufficiently ambitious with regard to the EcoQuartier charter's commitments.
- Upon delivery of the project, the national EcoQuartier label may be awarded to the project sponsor if the results correspond to the project's ambitions.

## The first EcoQuartier-approved initiatives: a diverse range of projects

On 9 September 2013, Cécile Dufflot awarded the national EcoQuartier label to 13 exemplary completed projects and recognised another 32 projects still under construction

as "entered for label certification." These projects reflect the diversity of urban settings covered under the label: new urban construction or urban renewal, urban renovation of sensitive neighbourhoods, projects in suburban and rural surroundings as well as major metropolitan areas.

### 2014: a 2<sup>nd</sup> round of label approvals

In January 2014, the minister officially launched the 2<sup>nd</sup> wave of label approvals. More than 160 applications presented by local authorities in metropolitan and overseas France are being considered in this 2<sup>nd</sup> session, whose results will be released in autumn 2014. Meanwhile, more than 100 cities and inter-municipal associations of all sizes have already signed the EcoQuartier charter, which is the first step toward receiving the label.

### And an assessment campaign has been launched for the first 13 label-approved projects

To ensure the quality of the initiatives over time, the ministry has set up a process to assess label-approved projects. The national assessment methodology looks at commitments related to water, energy, and waste. It is currently being tested on the first 13 label-approved initiatives and will be available to all local authorities by the end of 2014. Assessment methods for the other commitments are currently being developed.

*To find out more: [link to the EQ page on the METL site](#)*



Hédé Bazouges – Les Courtils (Credit: Stéphane Spach)



Monconseil towers (Credit: F. Paillet)



Mulhouse – Wolf Wagner (Credit: City of Mulhouse)



Forcalquier – historical EcoQuartier (Credit: J. Helies/HPI-2013)