

BREEDING GROUND

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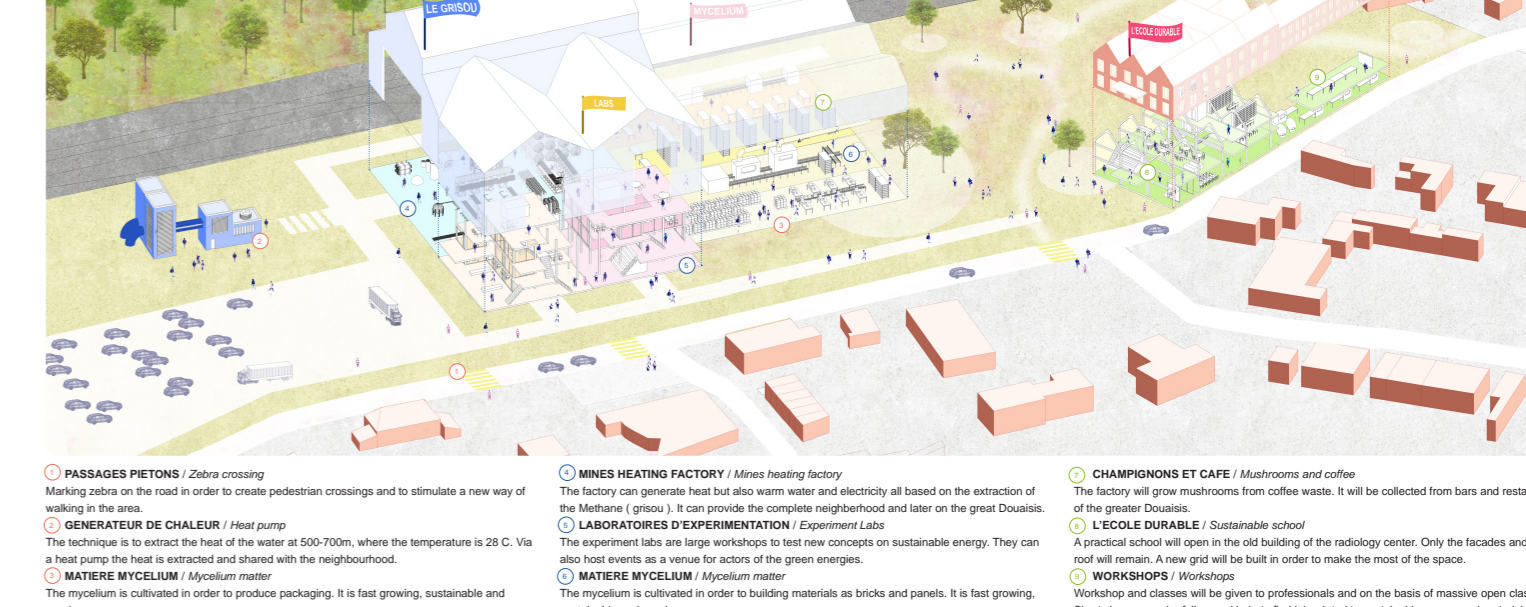
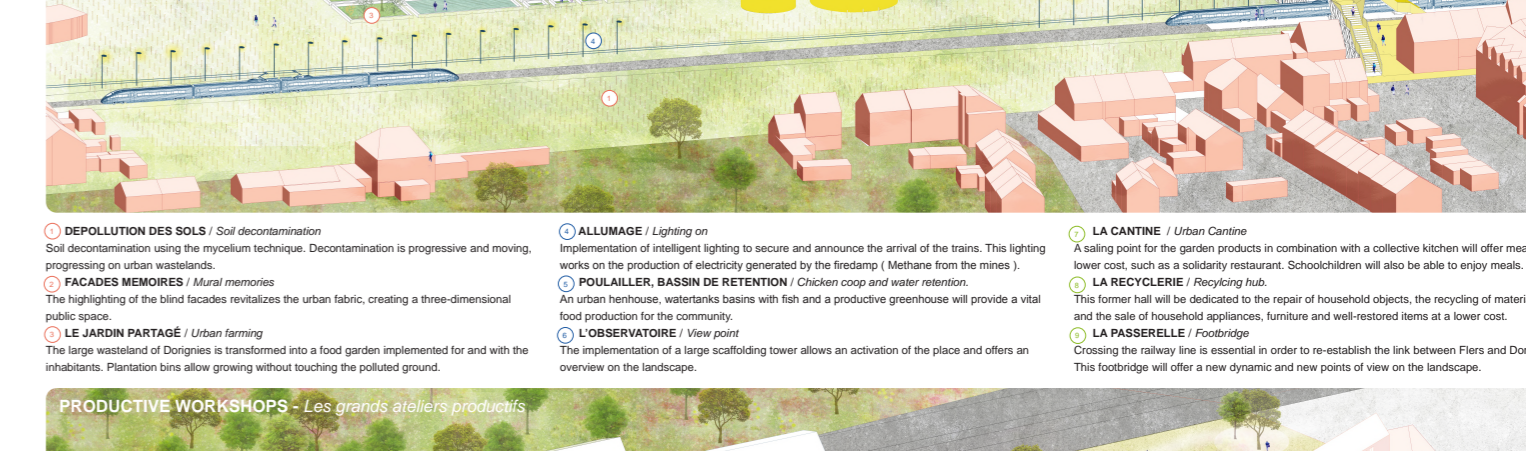
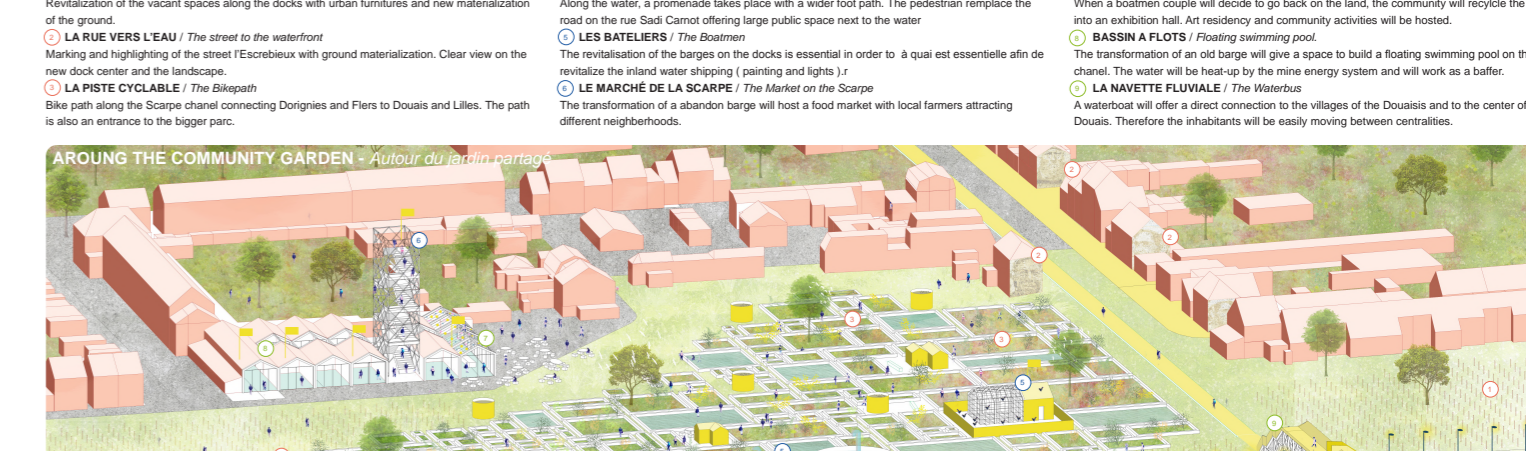
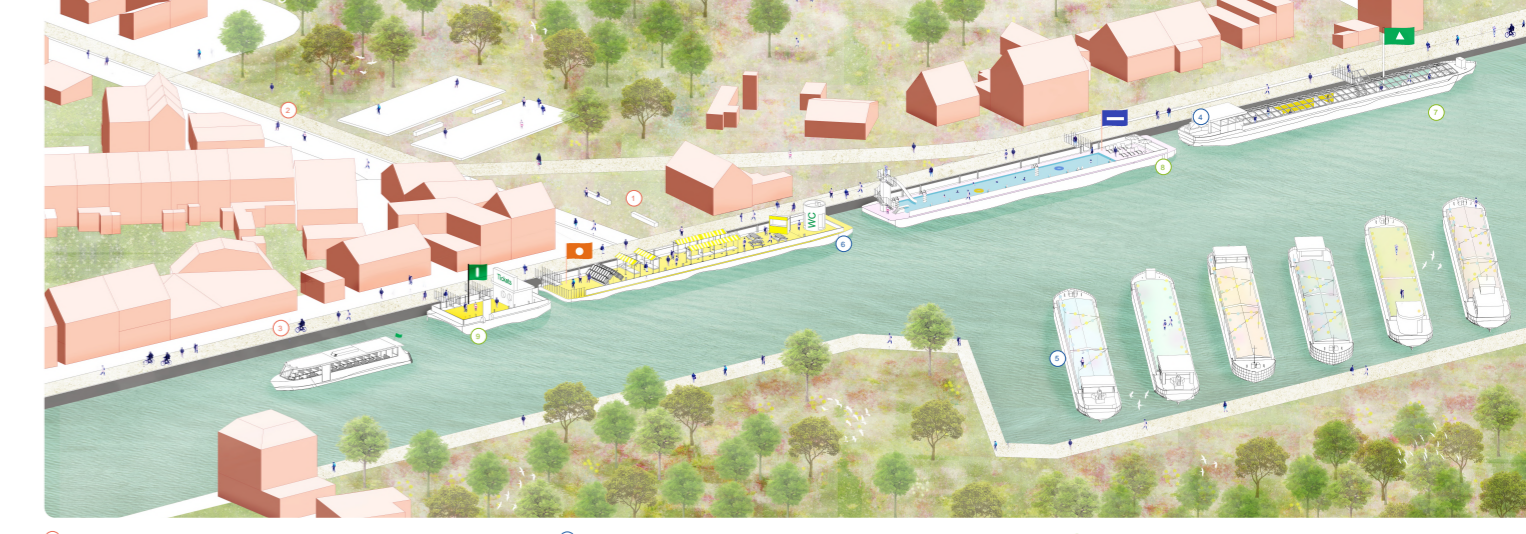
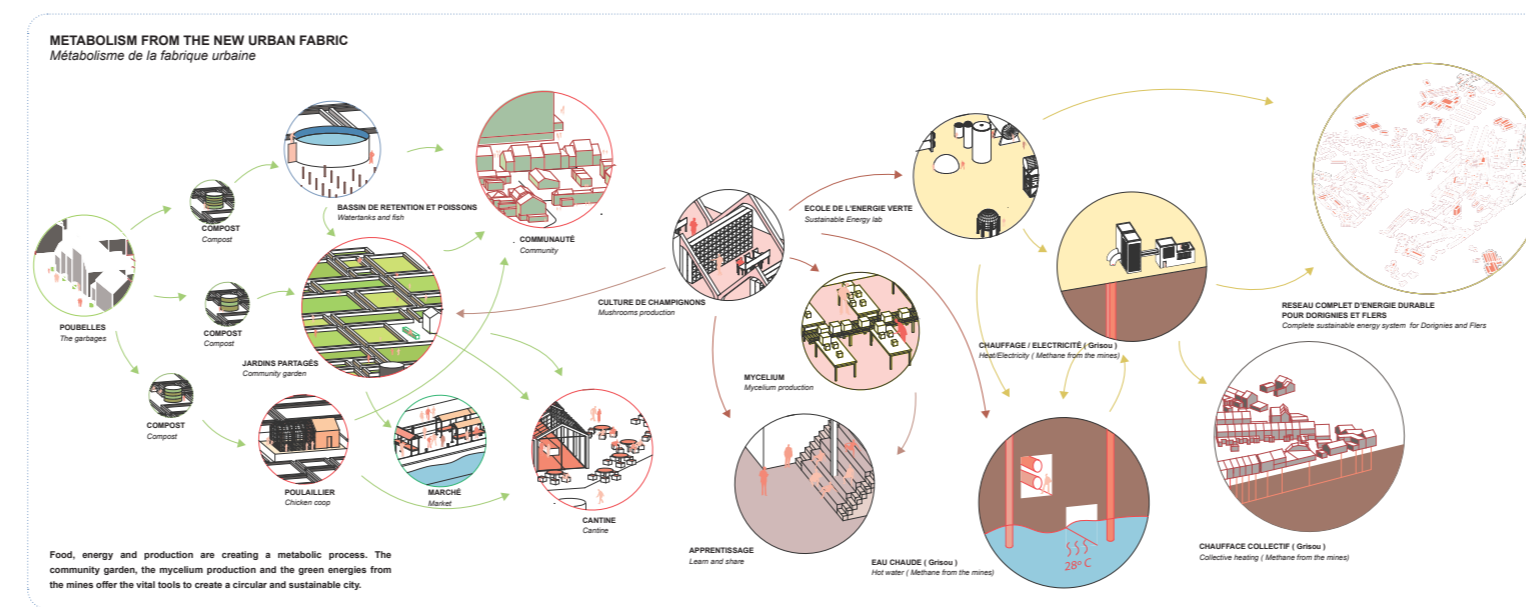
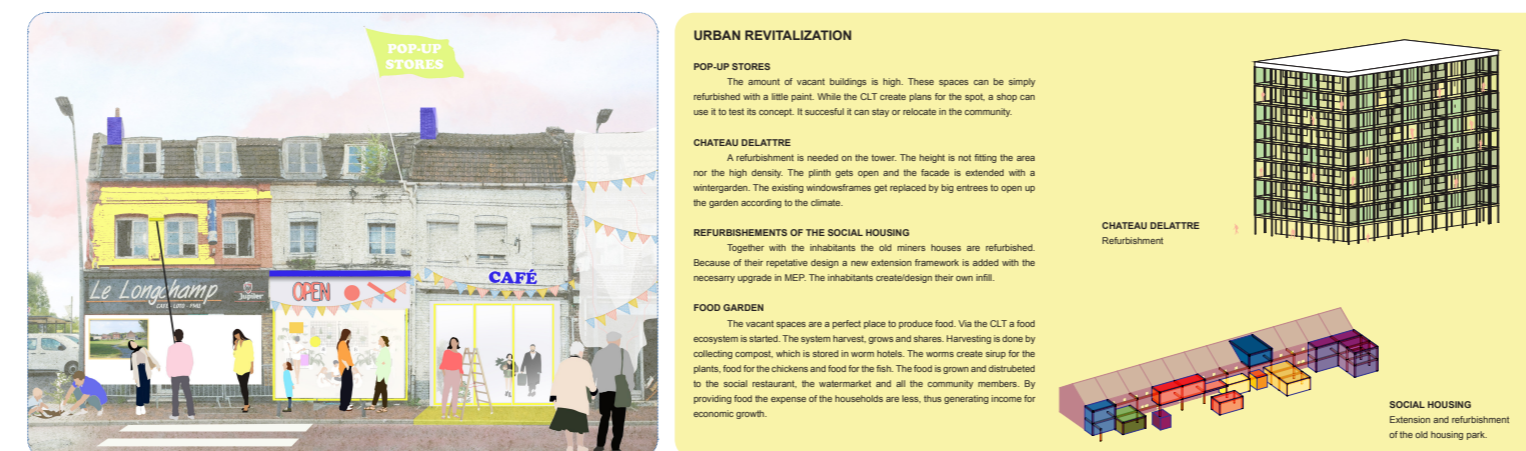
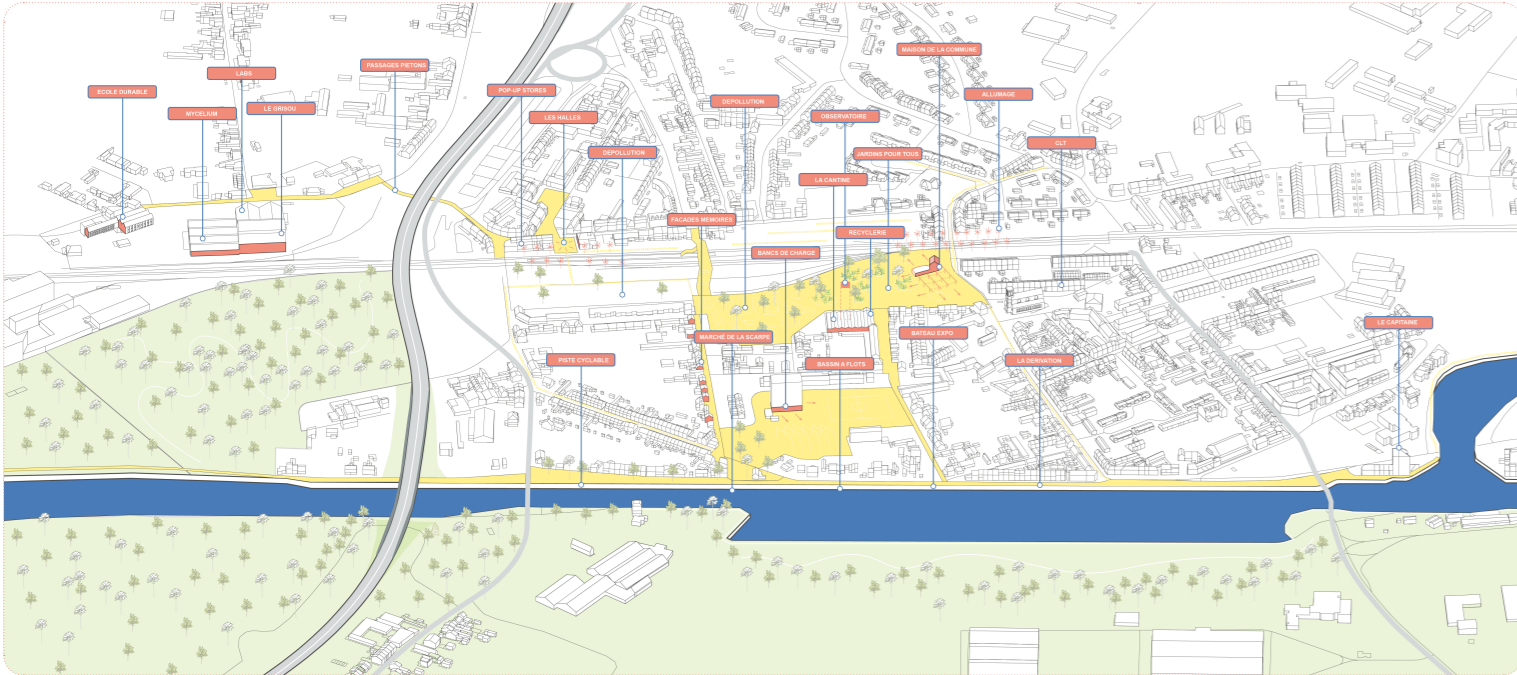
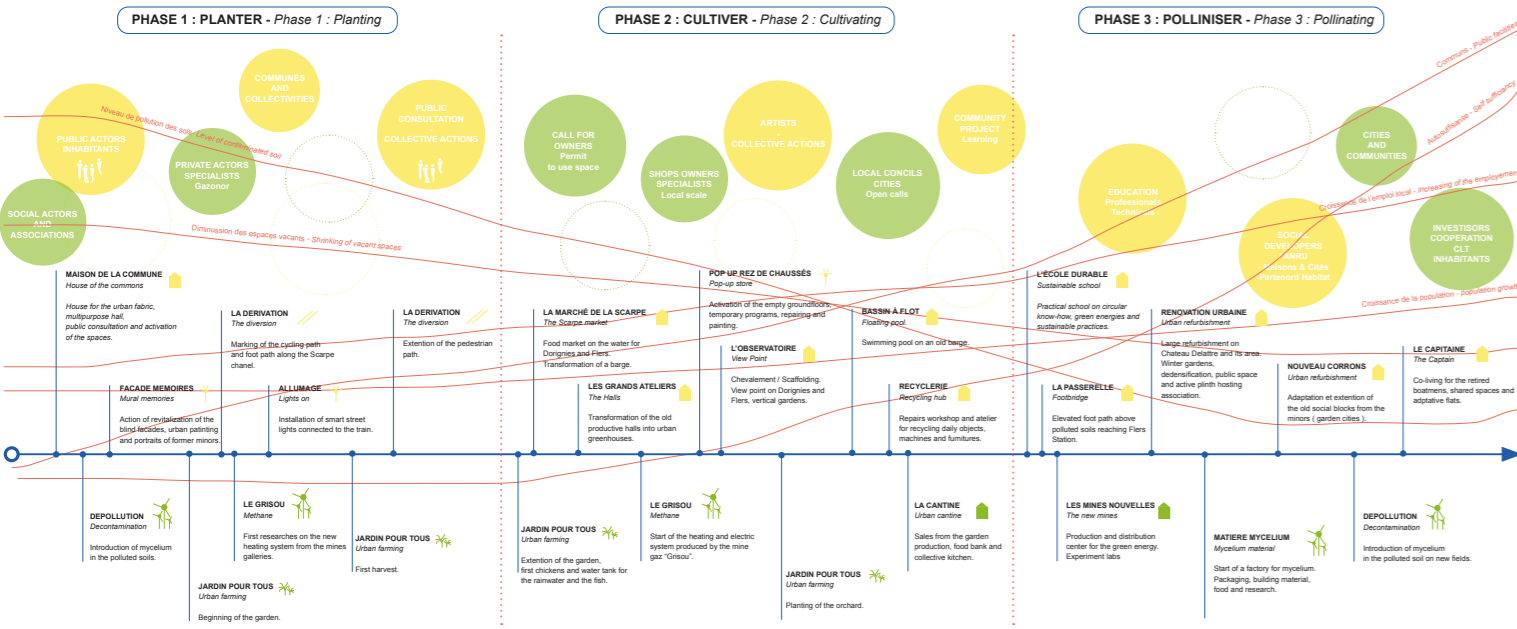
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SHRINKING CITIES - Context
The concept of "Shrinking Cities" was born in Germany at the beginning of the 2000s, with the proof of the effects of the decline on the economic and demographic growth of the cities of the Eastern Germany. Dougries and Fiers are part of this decrease mainly because their prosperity was based on a mono-economy. Coal mining was not only a source of the big economic and demographic growth, but also the cornerstone of a lifestyle and a social identity. Fourteen years after the closure of the coal mines, those parts of the city are still experiencing a decline in both their population and their economic attractiveness. The high rate of unemployment, the lack of public spaces and facilities, of jobs and of income enforces the area and isolates the population. If shrinking cities appear as direct results of the end of the coal crisis, they are certainly the breeding grounds for a new metabolism based on circularity and sustainability. The industrial past has shaped the architecture and the urban planning of these spaces, revealing large wastelands and strong infrastructures. These components are nowadays perceived as fractures and scars of the city. Yet the extension of waterways, railways and urban voids are a substantial wealth for the territory, allowing intelligent densification and profound economic changes.

A POSITIVE SHRINKING - Intentions
If the term "degrowth" often describes an image of an area in decline, it is also a substantial keyword to sustainability. Therefore "Breeding Ground" is inspired by a positive and sustainable degrowth. The vacant and sparse urban fabric of Dougries and Fiers offers suitable spaces. Those are able to host a wide variety of programs and substantially accelerate new forms of economy. Vacant spaces, fine of the inhabitants, energy resources and lack of jobs are the driving forces behind a rapid transformation of economic and social practices. Therefore we must consider this decrease as an opportunity to re-invent these neighborhoods. The economic development of the area, still based on local resources (mine for example) seems still weakened. Breeding Ground aims to be the driving force of a new economy based on sustainable energies and social vitality. The exploitation of Methane, but also of renewable materials such as the cultivation of mycelium are keys for the new economy. In the meantime a transition from the social housing park (renting) to a community land trust system will bring a new lease of life to the city. These proposals are based on the investments relying on existing infrastructure, such as transport (road and railway), mine galleries or garden plots. Building a renewable city means rethinking a social economy, embedded in the territory and meeting its needs: space, roof, energy, food and social interactions.

THE COMMONS - Concept
"Stair sur les restes un ou qui sera très accueillant"
- Alain Vialan lors de la dernière remontée des mines de la fosse d'Olgrès.
The collective memory written by the mining past reveals existing social mechanisms based on a will to do and a capability to reinvent itself. Sharing, mutual aid, and social structure have been the core of the urban fabric of these mining districts. The closure of the mines has forced these territories to renew themselves and despite a national desire to regenerate an economy, these territories reveal a nostalgia and an immense need for revitalization. What if the collective memory of mines was the key to a new social economy? In this way, the mines wealth of the past will become the engine of tomorrow. Polluted land will be the site of new know-how and shared agriculture. The practical school will train professionals on circular know-how, inviting sustainable ways for the new economy. Dougries and Fiers will have their metabolism as a Community Land Trust in response to the old garden cities. The inhabitants will be the actors and the protectors of these possible spaces, where time and learning will be valued as such as generating economy. These new vitalities will be sources of sharing and social revitalization.

MAKE DO - FAIRE AVEC - Methode
Make Do is building with the community, the resources and the available space. The process will urge to think-up, to locate, to program and to activate before starting building. Inhabitants, municipalities and design teams must create a tool box in order to weave the vital synergy between programs and needs. Breeding Ground symbolizes the growth of a territory rich in knowledge, time, resources and landscape. Therefore, the process is based on the logic of farming (planting) to cultivate to produce (generating) the vital needs for the community. At the heart of the process, clear project phases must be established, starting with a first vital intervention: the permanent lab on house of the Commons. This phase 1, "to plant" responds to the urgency and the need to start revitalization tomorrow. A strong activation process can also be the first implementation of the project in a modest and evolving economic framework. The involvement of the community is at the heart of the process. The second phase, "to cultivate" aims to engage projects on a larger scale. Directly inspired by the first phase of activation, these urban interventions are established in a lasting and permanent manner. They will become the perennial components of the Douaisis. The third phase "to pollinate" marks the clear transition towards a deep urban renewal made possible by a new economy. The impact of this profound revitalization will attract and produce a growing economy enriching the urban and social renewal.



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