Re(claiming) Mayottes Knowledge to Adjust Place-Based, Material, Ecological, and Social Practices

Reknowledge seeks to uncover and reactivate local, often invisible knowledge on Mayotte as a vital resource for a resilient and future-oriented development. Not only materials should be sourced and processed place-based and circularly – knowledge, awareness, and ecological responsibility must likewise be understood as interlinked cycles. Only through this holistic integration can the island's ecological heritage, architectural and cultural identity, and local value chains be protected and strengthened.

A central step in this concept is actor mapping: it brings to light existing forms of expertise, local know-how, and places of material extraction and transformation. These are assembled into a coherent landscape of actors and actions, structured by thematic clusters and phases of work. Only once these resources become visible can strategies emerge that truly respond to place – enabling a resilient transformation of Dembéni that weaves together diverse knowledge practices.

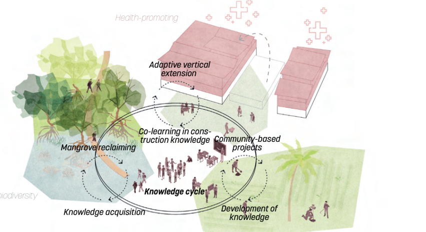
The notion of the actor is purposefully expanded: beyond classical institutions, materials, infrastructures, and environments are understood as active agents – inspired by the theory of social practices and Bruno Latour's actor-network thinking.

In this way, a dense ecology of relations emerges, where knowledge, material, and territory co-shape one another – forming the groundwork for actionable spatial strategies. This approach acknowledges that human actions, knowledge systems, and the use of natural resources are always entangled with their material environment. These relationships must not remain extractive but should be rethought and consciously reshaped. Things are not separate from us – they must be understood and activated in relation.

Reknowledge thus represents a strategic approach that connects existing knowledge frameworks with material dimensions – making them visible, legible, and spatially operative, from theory to the scale of built architecture.

„The Earth is becoming sensitive to our actions and we humans are becoming, to some extent, geology."

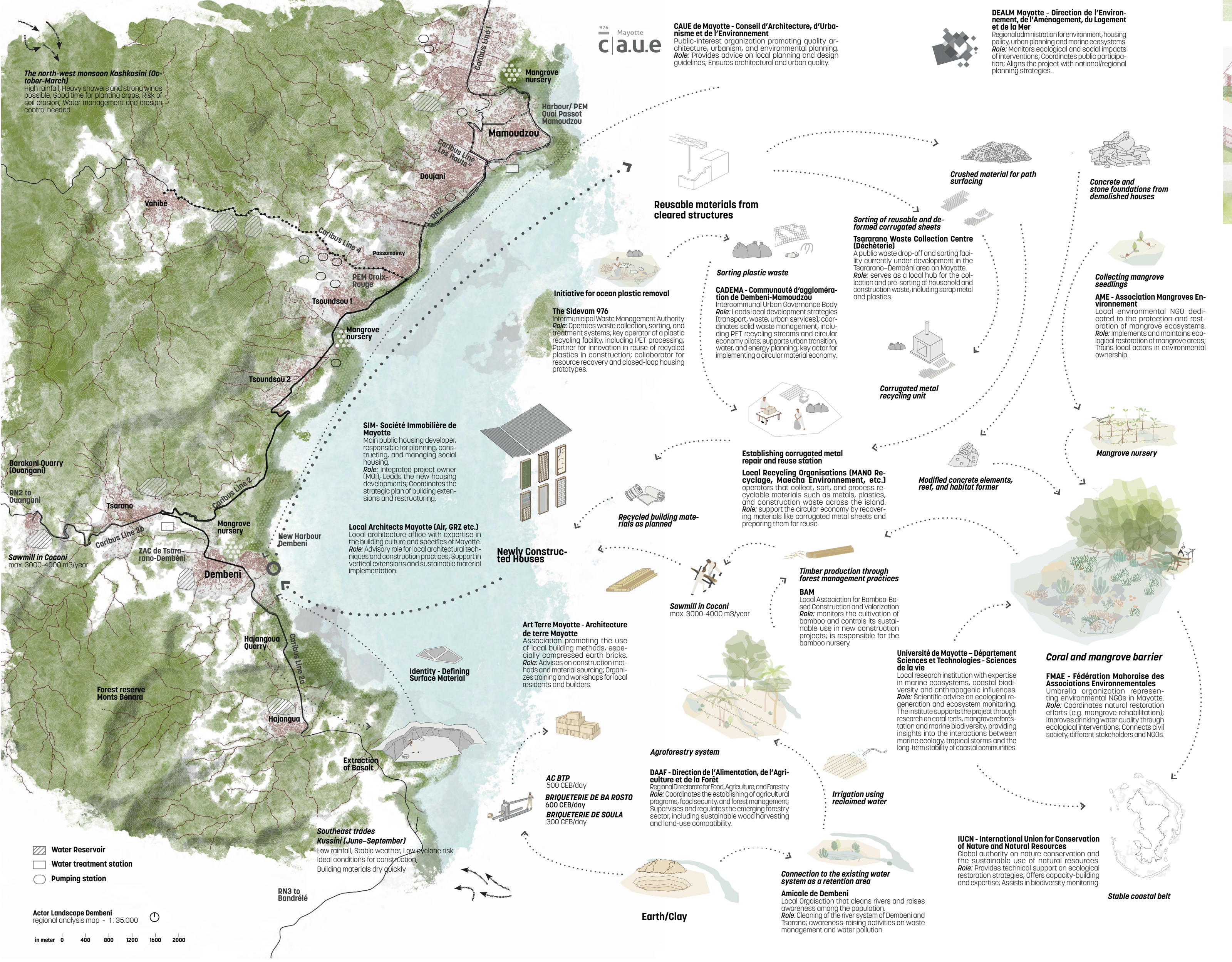
– Bruno Latour, Facing Gaia



Chapter 1: Understanding Existing Relations & (Re)connecting Structures

Noteworthy Actors and Spatial–Institutional Dyanamics in Mayotte's Social, Ecological and Material Network

The monsoon is regarded as a subject of world-making. This means that the monsoon is not only understood as an object of observation, but as a living, dynamic actor that:
1. creates relationships
2. influences processes – such as agriculture, climate, cultural rituals or economic cycles.
3. shapes the world – through its unpredictable movements and interactions that shape both nature and human society.

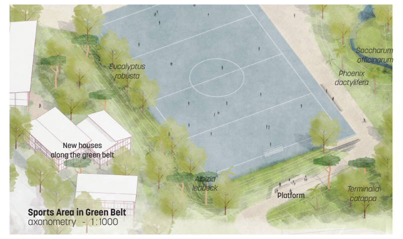


Chapter 2: Of Belts, Corridors, Loops and Law

A Gradual Materialisation Towards a Resilient Ecosystem

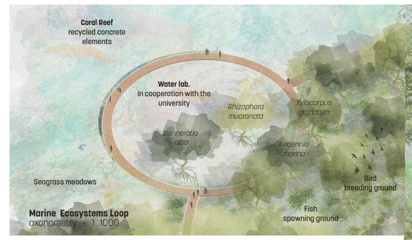
Adaptive Architecture and Collective Spaces

In the south, temporary housing is constructed on land designated for development, supported by existing infrastructure. Designed for adaptive reuse, these structures will later accommodate university extensions. A central library links both phases and functions as a third place for Dembéni. All buildings are elevated on stilts, with dense vegetation mitigating erosion—firmly rooting architecture in the local terrain and climate.hier der Text für unter den Plan.



Ecological Infrastructure and Urban Resilience

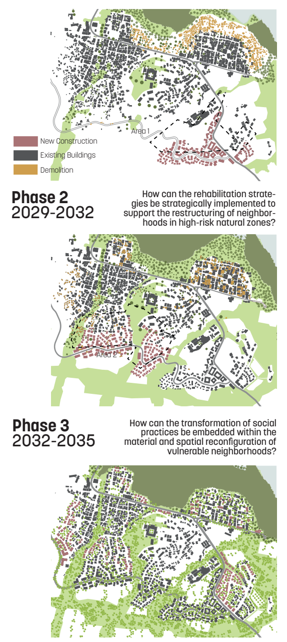
A green belt, blue-green corridors, and ecological buffers structure the territory and reconnect the city to its natural systems. The mangrove forest is consolidated into a continuous ecological belt, acting as a protective barrier against flooding, erosion, and cyclones. This belt, including the mangroves, is linked to re-meandered rivers and newly created retention zones, enhancing water absorption, biodiversity, and climate resilience. Equipped with community gardens, play areas, and educational trails, the green belt serves both ecological and social purposes.

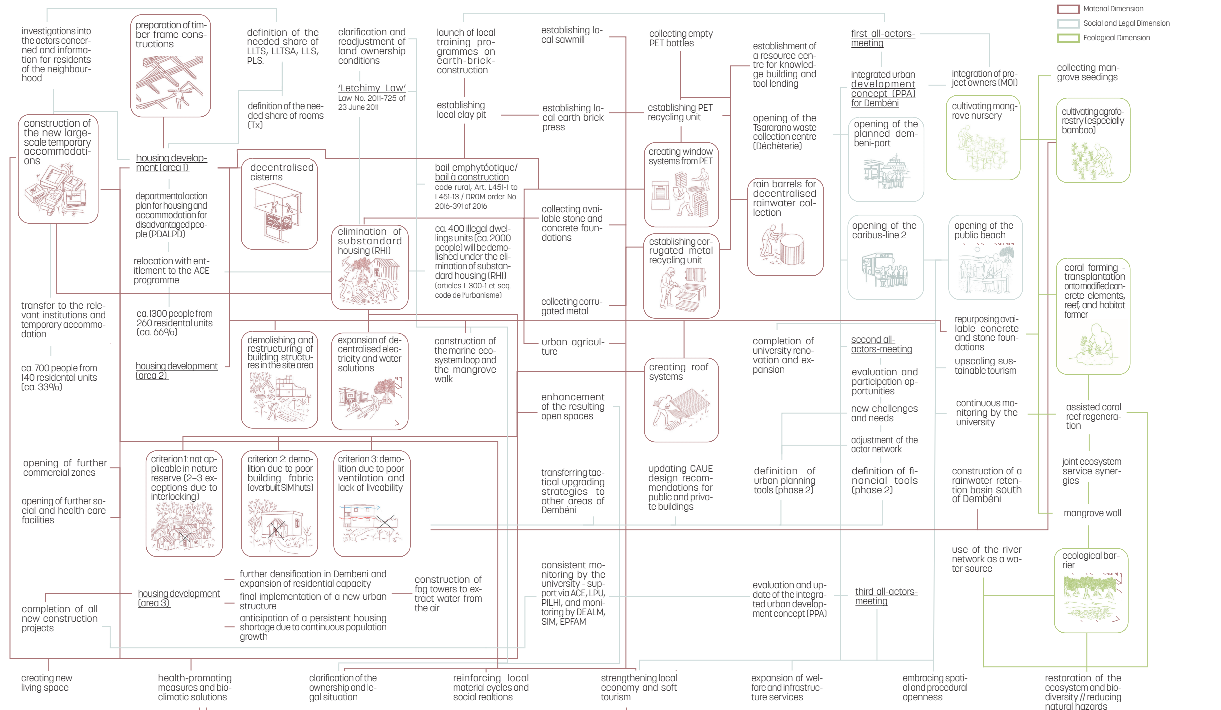


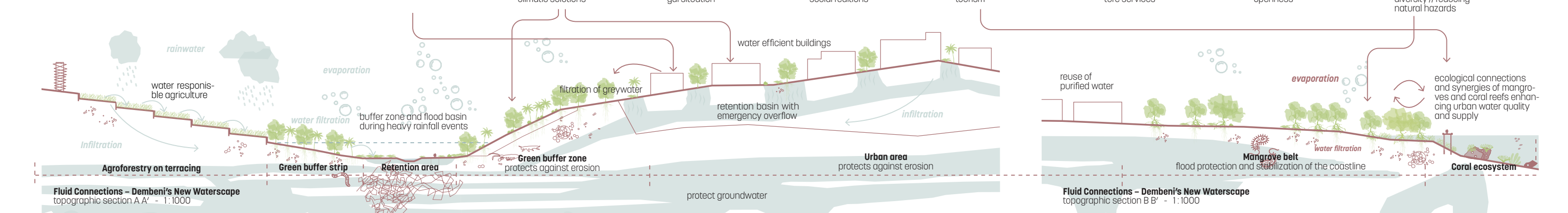
Phase 1 2025-2029

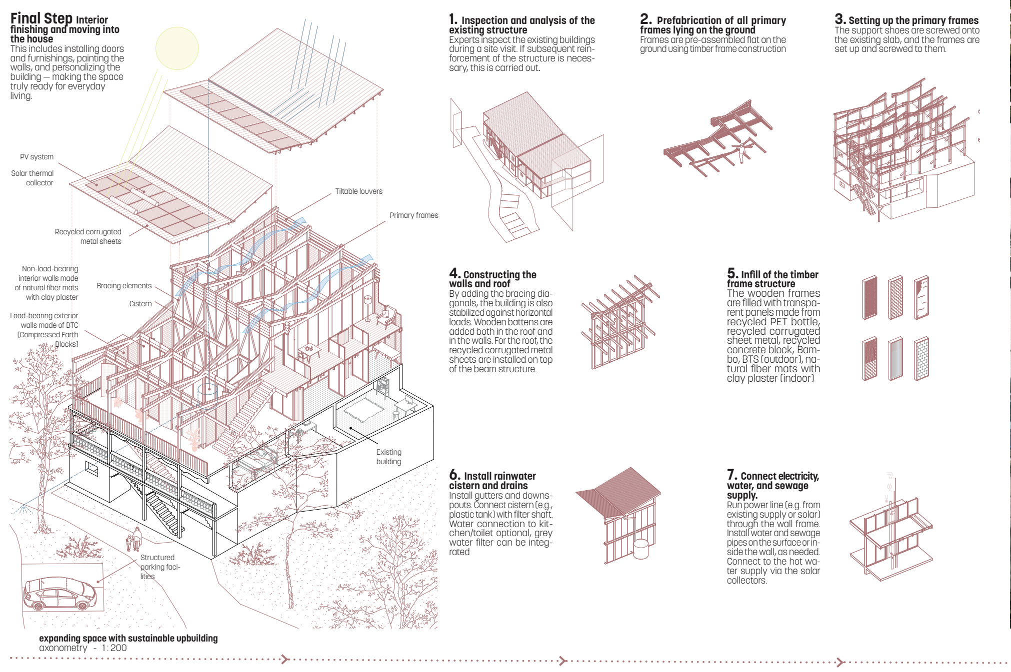
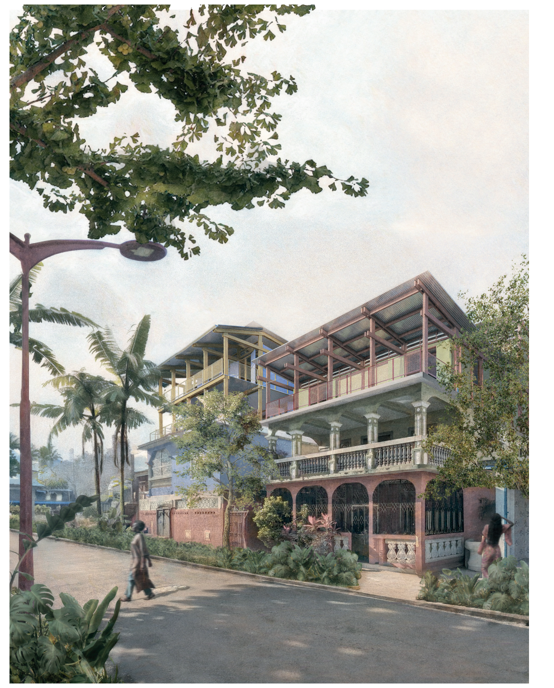
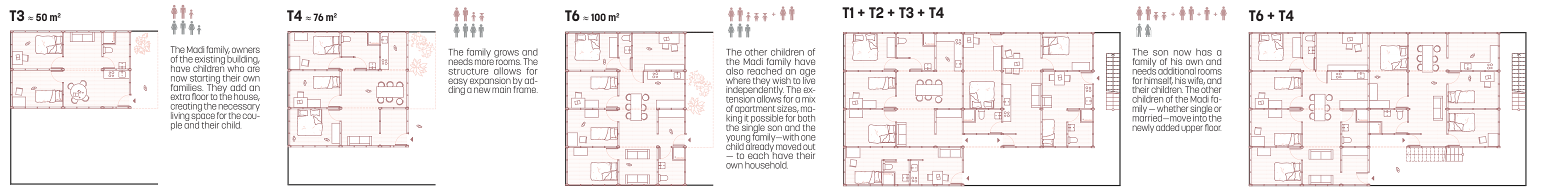
Phase 2 2029-2032

Phase 3 2032-2035







Chapter 3: Between Mangrove Roots and Urban Roofs

Health-Driven Renewal through Circular Materials and Ecological Repair