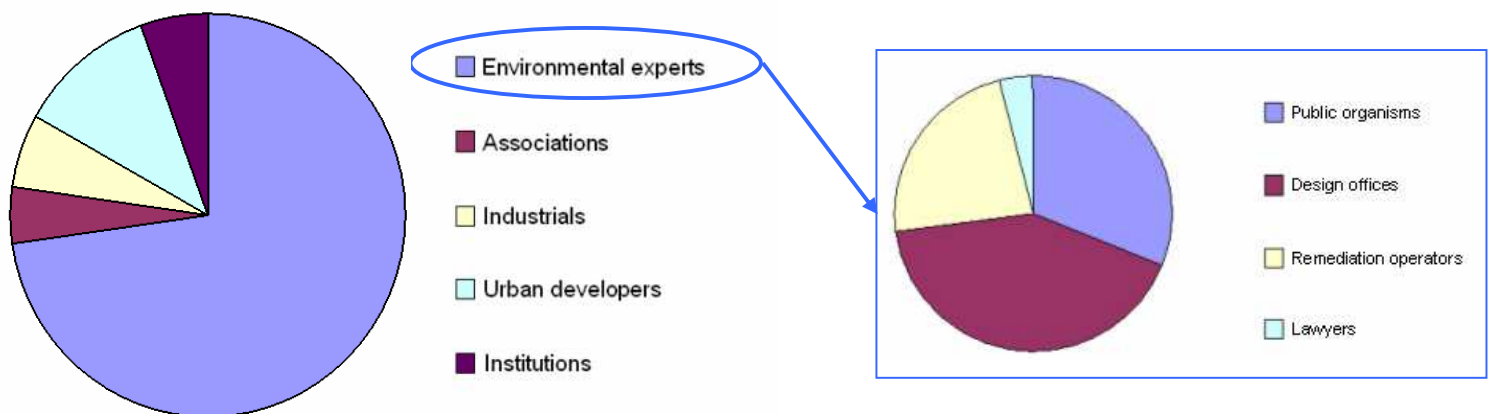


French CityChlor Workshop June, the 24th 2010

French CityChlor workshop: a successful step towards an integrated management of urban sites polluted by chlorinated solvents.

French CityChlor workshop, which took place June the 24th 2010, raised a strong interest from French actors involved into management of urban sites polluted by chlorinated solvents. Despite national strikes recently planned for the same day, more than 82 participants came to share their vision and to propose leads for solutions.

Among them, industrials using chlorinated solvents, environmental experts (soil and ground decontamination, health, researchers, lawyers), associations of inhabitants, representatives of State, towns, cities and local authorities, urban developers...



Ventilation of the registered actors for the French regional workshop in June the 24th 2010

This workshop has been built in order to carry through two missions. The first one was to raise the actors' awareness on CityChlor's issues by presentations of study cases. And the second one was to reach a common vision for current state of practices in France that we could share to European partners.

A prior investigation has been made thanks to accounts given by many actors involved in the management of such sites. These 30 shorts documents deal with 3 types of contributions: real study cases feedbacks and bottlenecks, position of professionals and innovative approaches or R&D projects. Facts have been picked up from these testimonials in order to describe the current situation in France in terms of strengths, weaknesses, needs and expectations from different actors. These points, listed in the attendee's file / regional introductory note (129 pages) and presented to participants in the morning, aimed to be used as matter for the reflections and discussions in the afternoon.

A recap of the day, for those who were unable to attend:

The day started with a quick presentation of CityChlor project and the specific behaviour of chlorinated solvents in urban soils and groundwater.

Then, three study cases were presented in order to illustrate concretely strengths and weaknesses of the French approach.

First, the ADEME presented the case of an historical pollution by a former dry-cleaner industry settled in a residential area. Indoor air sampling campaigns made in private houses showed a degradation of indoor air quality. Operations of remediation are supervised by the ADEME in a confined urban area.

Then, the City of Massy presented an innovative approach in France developed to insure a responsible economic mutation of a huge area polluted by organo-halogenated compounds. This method, allowing durability of information and technical measures for building (prevention from soil/indoor fluxes), reconcile the Urban Code with Environment Code.

To conclude, the City of Sevran presented a mechanism which has been set-up in order to inform and even more, to involve populations from the discovery of pollution to the redevelopment of the site.

The OVAM, made a presentation of VLABOTEX asbl which is an association aimed to guide and help financially professionals within the framework of a polluted site remediation. This association targets dry-cleaners who use frequently chlorinated solvents. This presentation gave the audience an example of potential solutions set-up abroad and increased its awareness on the fact that such a solution could be applied in France.

Presentations in the morning were ended by the overview of the situation in France. This first draft was based on the analysis of written testimonials from different actors, appended to the attendee's file. This synthesis of the strengths, weaknesses, needs and expectations gave matter and points to react on during the three workshops of the afternoon.

After 90 minutes of discussion and reflection the points head lighted in each thematic workshops were listed during a brief return by each workshop leader.

To conclude with the day, the CityChlor's agenda was presented. An umbrella European workshop on November the 16th 2010, at which first results from the regional workshops and project inventory will be examined and compared. We hope to be able to greet many guests from France from many sectors.



Main conclusions of the day:

The day was very fruitful in terms of exchanges and propositions towards an integrated approach. A remarkable thing was the fact that participants from various sectors attended each thematic workshop.

- Workshop #1: Technical solutions in urban environment

Discussions were shared between three main topics which are “diagnostic”, “risk assessment” and “remediation”. Many questions, related to the diagnostic phase, merged as the problem of representativeness of soil gas samplings, comprehension of soil/indoor pollutant fluxes, the take into account of the “urban background noise”, the lack of methods in order to realize in-situ measurements of degradation kinetics, the need of new portable characterisation tools, the take into account transports via pipes in the urban ground. Concerning risk assessment, the attendees put in relief the fact that there is no official threshold clearly defined. They often wonder between the AFFSET, OMS and site-specific values. Concerning remediation operations, light was putted on the fact that only few things are known on remediation consequences on geotechnical behaviour of soils (by groundwater drawdown) and accumulation of metabolites in case of incomplete degradation process.

- Workshop #2: Responsibility, finances and economic development

This workshop essentially dealt with the integration of remediation projects in urban environment was naturally articulated around the three topics: responsibility, finances and economic development. Firstly, there still are many problems linked to investigation phase. In fact, there is no legal tool in order to legitimate the access at individual's home for measurement. How far can the authorities go to establish it (in terms of property)? Moreover, iterative expertises lead to an additional waiting incompatible with the urgency of the situation because of legal procedures and, sometimes, some legal arguments. The second point concerns the fact that new tools are needed to make durable solutions for management. If easement and restriction for use of water seem to be the best tools nowadays, they still remain unused in France and there is no plan to check if they are well respected. Finally, environmental constraints must be inserted into local planning documents. The suggestion of a sectoral fund dedicated to solve chlorinated solvents problems received a positive welcome from the participants. Everybody admitted the fact that urban developers sometimes don't have all the professional competences to secure technically and legally the mutation of a site impacted by chlorinated solvents. They must be guided, maybe, by a new policy at a cross between the environmental code, the urban code, and the French methodology for polluted sites, or by training session.

- Workshop #3: Communication: since information to involvement.

Finally, the third workshop was structured essentially around five themes. It began with a common statement that even if the goals are the same, modalities are different whether it's an environmental alert or a sanitary alert. In the first situation, the pollution is detected and actors have the time to weigh the pros and cons of any solution. In the second case, urgency measure must be taken and the situation can't be anticipated. The interlocutors and communication ways are not the same ways for communication according to the case. However, in urban environment, alerts are both environmental and sanitary due to habitations near the polluted site when they aren't on site. Time perception and objectives are not the same for every actor (developers/population/local authorities). Faced with a mass of different interlocutors, a neutral ombudsperson or group is needed to facilitate communication between different actors and to avoid any conflicts of interests. Therefore, this person or entity shouldn't belong to local or public authorities and should be the same anytime. The expertise must be neutral too in order to avoid the case of the “controlled controller” and must integrate population's concerns. Besides, anybody came to the conclusion that a huge work of synthesis must be done by design offices so as to make diagnostics and risk assessments understandable by anybody.

One of CityChlor's assumptions is that working together, using creative approaches and maximum regional know-how is a relevant way to arrive at a truly integrated solution. Actually, we can say that French workshop was an important path in this direction.