Summary

AE&CC is engaged in contributing to the international reflections on the need to adapt architectural and environmental design theories and practices to the current global issues - climate change, population growth, migration, rapid urbanization and land liveability - with the prerequisite of establishing conditions for governance and resilience to foster eco-friendly and affordable habitats, while promoting equity, diversity and peace (United Nations SDG for 2030).

Through the notion of Building Cultures, AE&CC focuses on place-specific resources and constraints, physical characteristics, economic and social activities, cultural traditions and ways of life. This emphasis on the local is seen as an appropriate principle to shape answers that are adapted to the needs of the populations whilst also addressing the major global challenges.

In this perspective, AE&CC was founded on the sharing of attitudes and common postures resulting in the development of multidisciplinary research in architecture conducted in partnership with local, national and international stakeholders and organisations (public, private, NGOs) with an emphasis on field realities, experimentation, and on design as a process and culture.

In addition to strengthening the links between its two research teams, the Labex status has allowed to increase the number of researchers and lecturers (including accredited to directing research) as well as the range of disciplines involved. It has also allowed to strengthen and multiply scientific collaborations, in particular with other departments of the University of Grenoble, including active participation in two IDEX funded Cross Disciplinary Projects: Life and Risk@UGA.

R&D partnerships have also been expanded with central government as well as with UNESCO, UN-Habitat, ICCROM, and leading international NGOs such as IFRC and FAP. AE&CC is often invited to provide expertise for the identification of solutions specific to territories and also to help organisations and systems of actors reflecting on their practices in the field (45 countries in 2017).

These partnerships facilitate the confrontation between theoretical developments and realities on the ground as well as the worldwide dissemination of research results.

The most important activities that have benefited from the support of Labex are:

- victory in the Solar Decathlon 2012 competition (Madrid), then its organization in 2014, in Versailles;
- development of SHERPA, habitat project evaluation tool with UN-Habitat, GNSH network and a series of “good practices” guides with IFRC;
- shaking table set up at the 3SR laboratory (PHITEM-UGA);
- organization of nine international conferences including one with and at UNESCO on World Heritage built with earth (2012), and the Terra 2016 World Congress which brought together 750 participants from 70 countries in Lyon;
- major increase of PhD students (16) and Master students (91) involved and housing of three new Chairs: Chairecoop, Territorialisation, Habitat du futur;
- the development of international partnerships with prestigious universities (eg. Oxford) that directly benefit students at the masters and PhD level;
- improvement and diversification of our scientific production and online visibility (websites, HAL).
Labex AE&CC is now in a position to reach another stage in a program with a maintained structure but having new priorities and objectives, among which, the multiplication by 2 of the annual number of thesis and articles in peer reviewed journals. In addition, the supervision of thesis in partnership with international organizations and linked to “projects” will be further explored. Beyond the commitments in the framework of the two CDPs, other collaborations are envisaged within IDEX-UGA, in particular with the IUGA, the Labex ITEM, the Centre de nouvelles pédagogies and the Maison de l’innovation et de la création. The response to call for projects, including European ones, will also be strengthened.