France: Mobility, Transport and Development Issues

Case Study of an improvement project: the Lorraine High Speed train station

1) The Lorraine train station is situated on the East European high-speed main line. It opened in 2007 between the cities of Metz and Nancy and is situated in rolling countryside. Since it is not well connected to these cities or the local railway network the value of this project is being increasingly questioned to the point where another train station is being proposed.

Translations

The East European TGV
Route of high-speed train line
Major cities served by the line
Journey times from Paris
Proximity to a national border

Lorraine-TGV, a new station
Lorraine high-speed train line station
Other new high-speed train line station on the line

2) Aerial photograph of the Lorraine-TGV train station

3) A low-cost offer

The low cost TGV train system is now opening at a second Parisian station on 7th July, the Gare de l'Est. Travellers can now reach the east of France from the centre of Paris in less than two hours and get to the stations as Strasbourg, Metz, Nancy, Colmar, Champagne-Ardenne-TGV and Lorraine-TGV.

This is a new stage in the deployment of the OUIGO reservation system intended to attract 10 million new passengers for a total of 26 million passengers annually which will represent 25% of high-speed train traffic in 2020. The price for adults is just 14€ for a one-way trip from Paris to Matz/Nanct/Lorraine-TGV.

4) A level of useage that does not match up to expectations
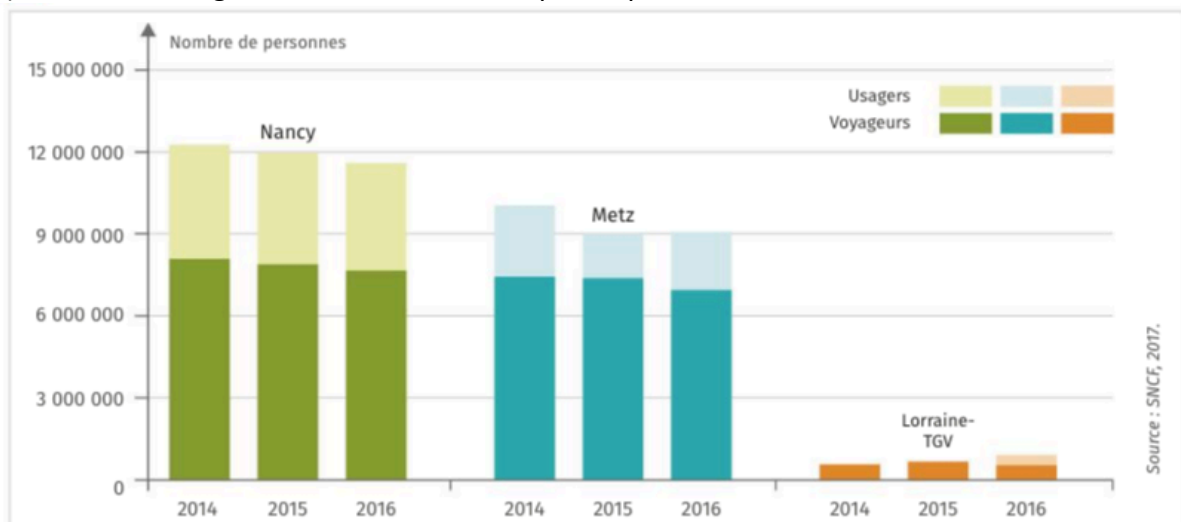
5) A beetroot station

The term beetroot station 'gare betterave' was first coined to describe a station poorly connected to the rest of the rail network in the middle of the countryside in reference to the TGV station at Haute-Picardie, a beetroot-growing region.

You have arrived at the Lorraine-TGV station. Welcome to the middle of a field where, since 2007, high-speed trains have been stopping at the little village of Louvigny (Mosselle), with 840 inhabitants. Passengers have no choice but to either drive or take a bus to reach the closest cities, Metz and Nancy, some 30 km away.

'Stopping at a town centre station takes between 15 and 20 minutes' according to Julie Taldir, head of the public relations unit at the SNCF. 'This includes the time to leave the main line to join the local network and decelerate then speed up again…'.

The creation of such stations on the urban fringe is a response to political considerations. In Lorraine, this solution meant the SNCF could have the most direct route possible between Paris and Strasbourg without any deviations. The 'SNCF played on the rivalry between Nancy and Metz' explained Valérie Facchinetti-Mannone 'there is no interest for the station to be located there in view of the population which it serves…'.

Matthieu Dehlinger 'Travelling in stations lost in the countryside' France TV, 2015.

Towards the creation of a new high-speed station in Lorraine?

6) A degraded service

'Metz has never seemed so far away from Strasbourg' despaired Pascal Debout. This teacher goes three times each week to the Law faculty at Strasbourg where he teaches English. However the journeys are becoming more and more complicated. 'We have less trains and fewer direct connections since the imposition of a new timetable' he deplored. 'Whereas we used to have three connections, now there is only one…'.

SNCF in the Grand-Est, Le point, 2016

7) A problem of interconnections

The public and members of local councils will appeal for a new train station to the President of the Grand-East region, Jean Rottner (LR) this Thursday, 27 September 2018. He can decide whether or not to build this new station to connect the local TER service with the TGV. For Jean Rottner, the priority is to have a reliable daily train service.

Published in Le Républican lorrain, 2018

8) Vandières, a future high-speed train station?

Translations

**Territorial organisation**
TGV route
Motorway
Other rail tracks

From one station to another?
Lorraine TGV station
Commune of Vandières
Proposed future station

Exercises

1. What is the journey time from Paris to Strasbourg? What might be the consequences of this high speed line on the places situated between these two cities (Doc.1)?

2. What is the impact of low cost offers on travellers? (Doc.3)?

3. Justify the title of this document by comparing the figures it represents (Doc.4).

4. Explain why the Lorraine-TGV station has been described as a 'beetroot station'. To what extent is this description justified (Doc. 5)?

5. What factors account for the situation of this station (Doc. 1, 2 and 5)?

6. Show that the presence of a transport infrastructure does not necessarily equate to good connections (Doc.6).

7. What advantages would situating the new station at Vandières offer (Doc. 8)?

Territorial development project: the Lorraine-TGV station
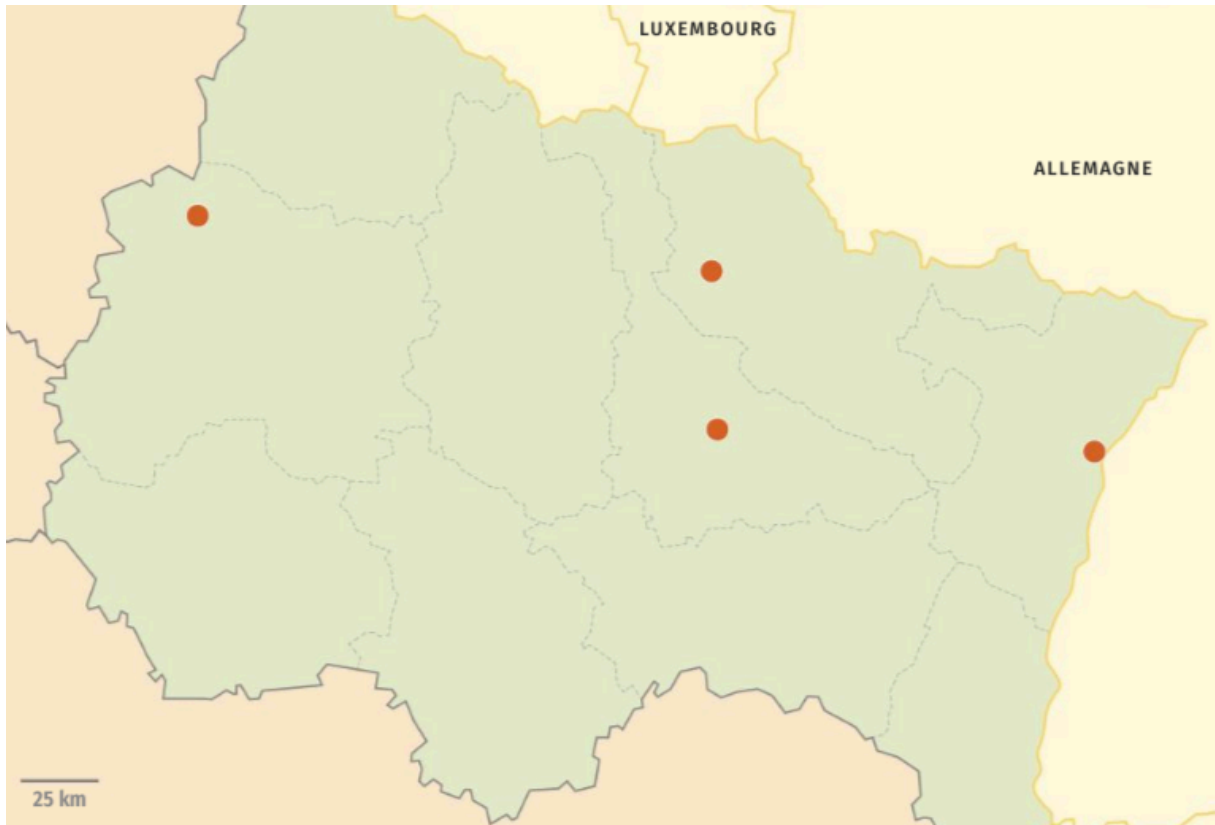
Legend

Add appropriate colours and figures to represent the TGV line and the regional cities.
Consider how you should best write the names of the departments and cities
Which documents will you need to construct the map?

France: Mobility, Transport and Development Issues
Case study: La Réunion: an island of constraints in terms of mobility

The island of Réunion is a French DROM (Department or Region Overseas) situated in the Indian Ocean. Since the island is faced with pronounced natural constraints, high population growth and increasing mobility, transport is a major issue.

1) Links connecting La Réunion with the rest of the world

Translations

Réunion island

Countries/Towns linked by plan to La Réunion

Air routes

Number of flights per day

2) Traffic jams

The car is the principal form of transport around the island with some 350 000 vehicles circulating on the roads. Despite a variety of improvement works to make the traffic more fluid, the network is at saturation point. Traffic jams happen each rush hour in certain places and especially town centres (such as Saint-Denis, Saint-Paul and Saint-Benoît). During torrential downpours or when the coastal road (which is the most heavily used route on the island) is closed, the island can quickly become paralysed and experience monstrous traffic jams.

3) A coastal-based transport network

Legend

Constraints

Principal settlements

Mountainous centre

Large corries

Highest summits

Coastal transport network

Airports

Large port

Passenger port

Dual carriageways

Main roads

New Projects

Note: a corrie is an armchair-shaped hollow found on the side on a mountain

4) Run rail: a new public transport solution

Crossing St-Dens and arriving in St-Marie in only 20 minutes. The first part of Run Rail will go to the airport and there will be 10 stops in total. With a completion date of 2024, this initial trunk will cost €300 million.

France TV info
11/3/19

5). The path of the new coastal road
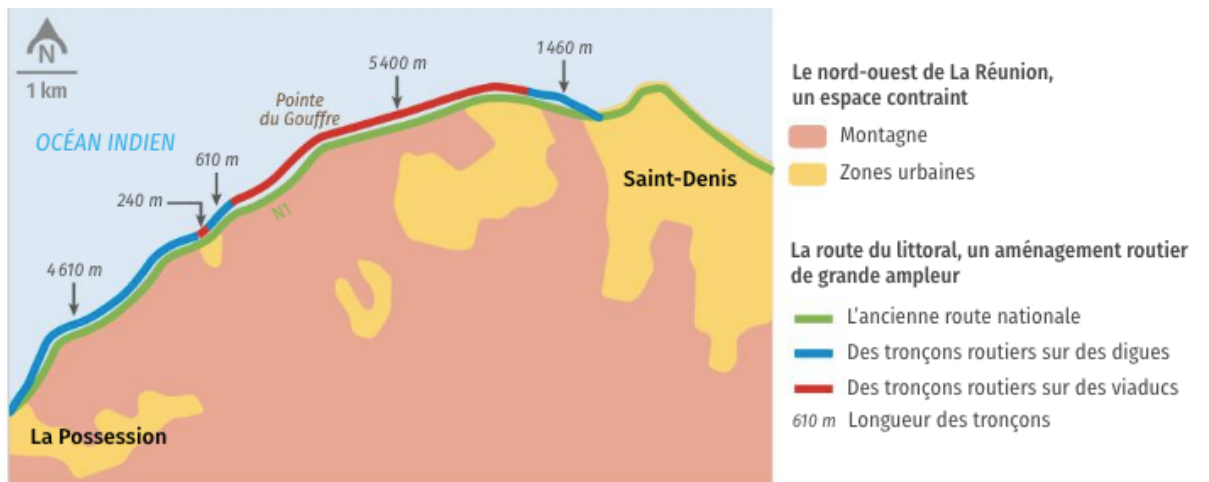
Translations
Spatial constraints in the north-west of La Réunion
(Rose colour)   Mountains
(Yellow colour)   Urban zones

The coastal road
(Green line)   Former dual carriageway
(Blue line)   Stretch of carriageway mounted on a dam
(Red line)   Stretch of carriageway on a viaduct
figure   Length of stretch

6. The new coastal road

This new viaduct will connect St-Denis and La Possession. The longest single stretch is 5.4km and it will be one of the most expensive road projects in the world.

Towards sustainable transport management at La Réunion
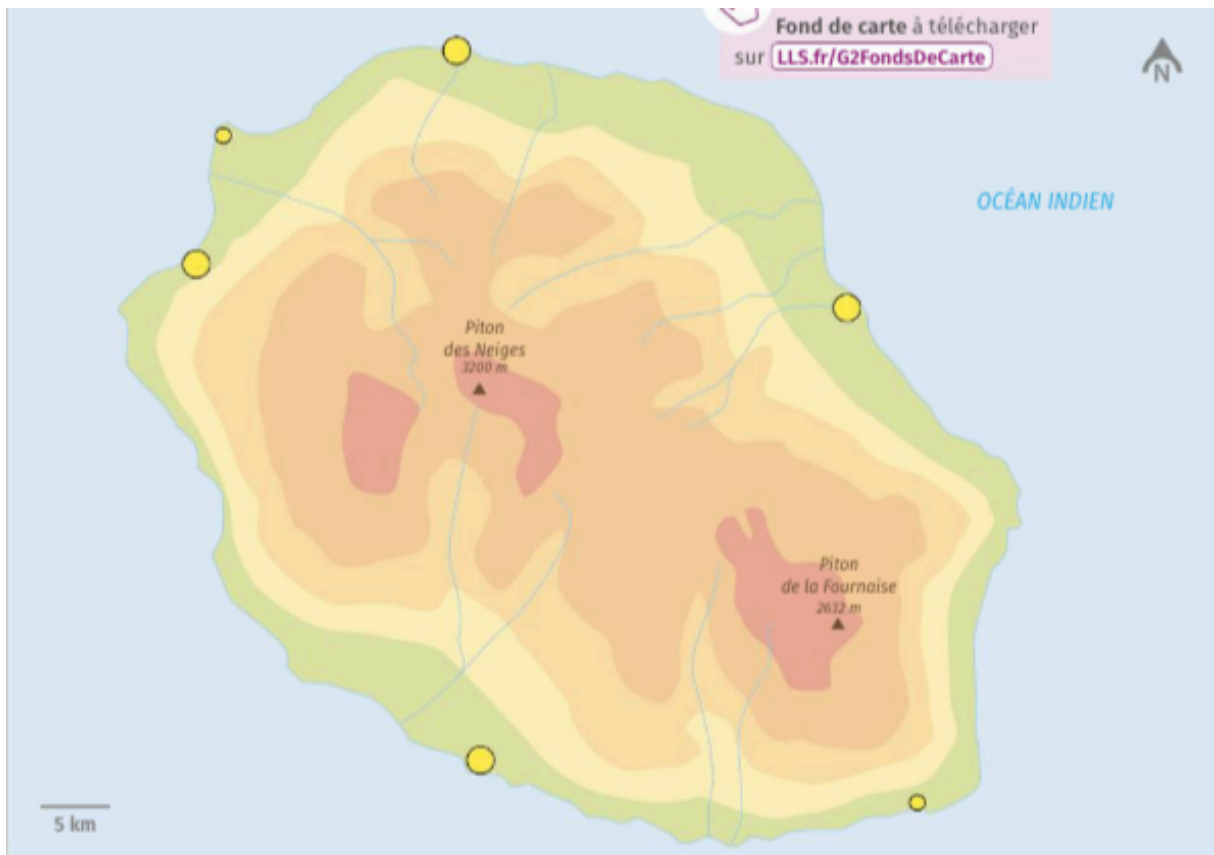
Legend

Exercises

1. Highlight the constraints facing Le Réunion at national, regional and local scales (Doc.1, 2 and 3).

2. How could the transport project evoked in document 4 address the problems identified in document 2 (Doc. 2 and 4)?

4. What are the reasons for this project (Doc.5 and 6)?

3. Write a short summary (8-10) of the transport constraints faced in La Réunion and the measures taken to improve the situation.

Synthesis sketch of France's Transport Networks
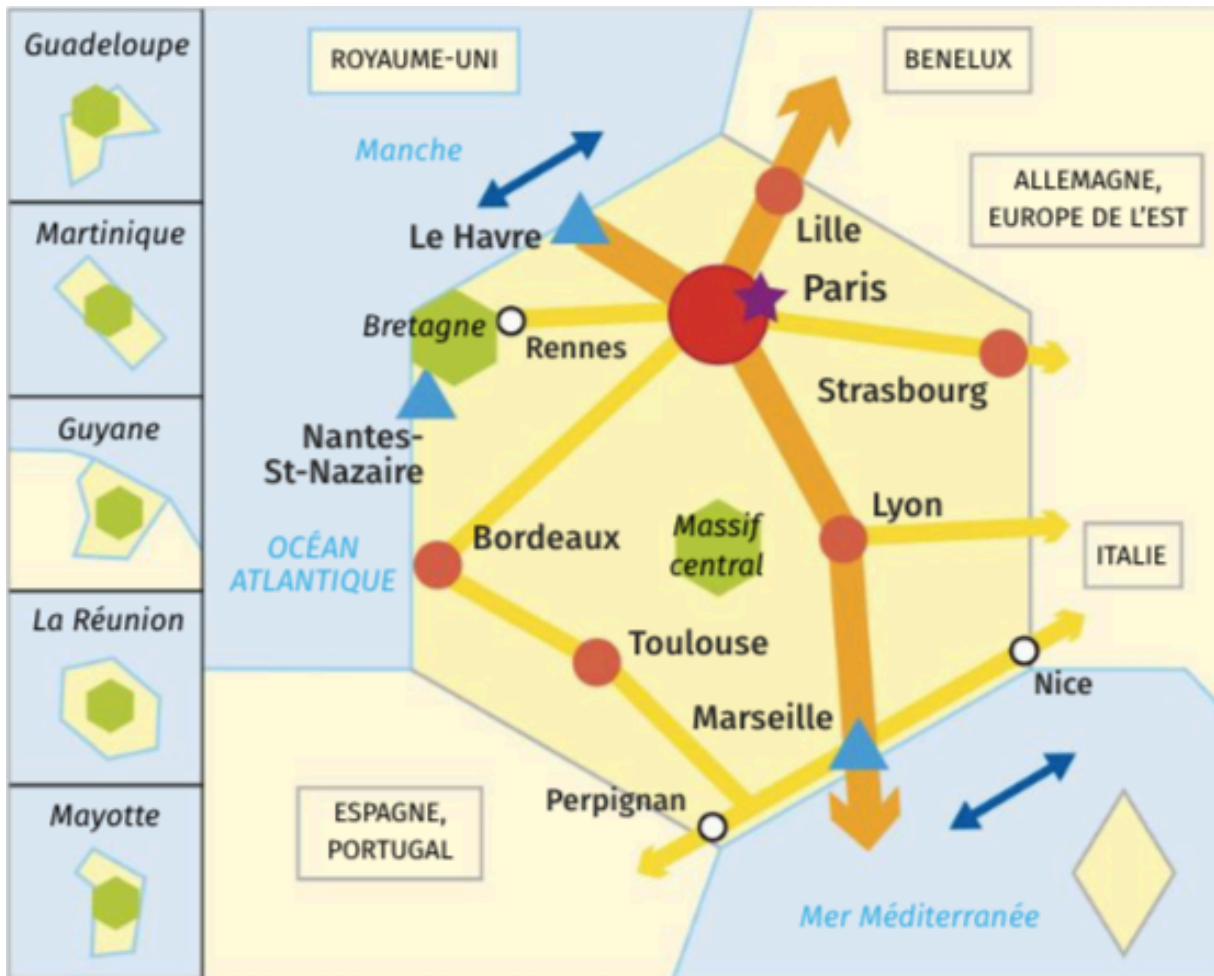
Transport turned towards Europe and the world

- Terrestrial European axis
- Global maritime routes
- Principal ports
- Paris International airport
- Paris, European and global crossroads

Unequal national transport network

- Secondary terrestrial axis
- Regional cities
- Spaces that are poorly serviced

Key Facts regarding French Mobility

o   75% of all daily displacements are made using a car, 11% take place on public transport, 7% on foot and 5% on bike. The average journey to works lasts for 55 minutes.

o   Around 12% of the French population change their place of residence each year. This may be to undertake undergraduate or postgraduate studies (in town centres) for work related reasons or due to familial changes (births, marriage, divorce, retirement).

o   The fastest growing areas in France are the suburbs and in the areas immediately surrounding the towns. This leads to significant daily commuting as people drive into town centres to places of work.

o   86% of goods are transported by road in France and only 9% on the railways.

o   There are numerous inequalities regarding transport in France. Certain categories (the elderly, poorer people, those in a situation of handicap) often have difficulty accessing the transport network and this in turn has impact of their degree of integration into society.

o   Certain transport networks also discriminate against rural areas (the so-called tunnel-effect) because a territory may be crossed by a communication axis but there is no way to access it.