

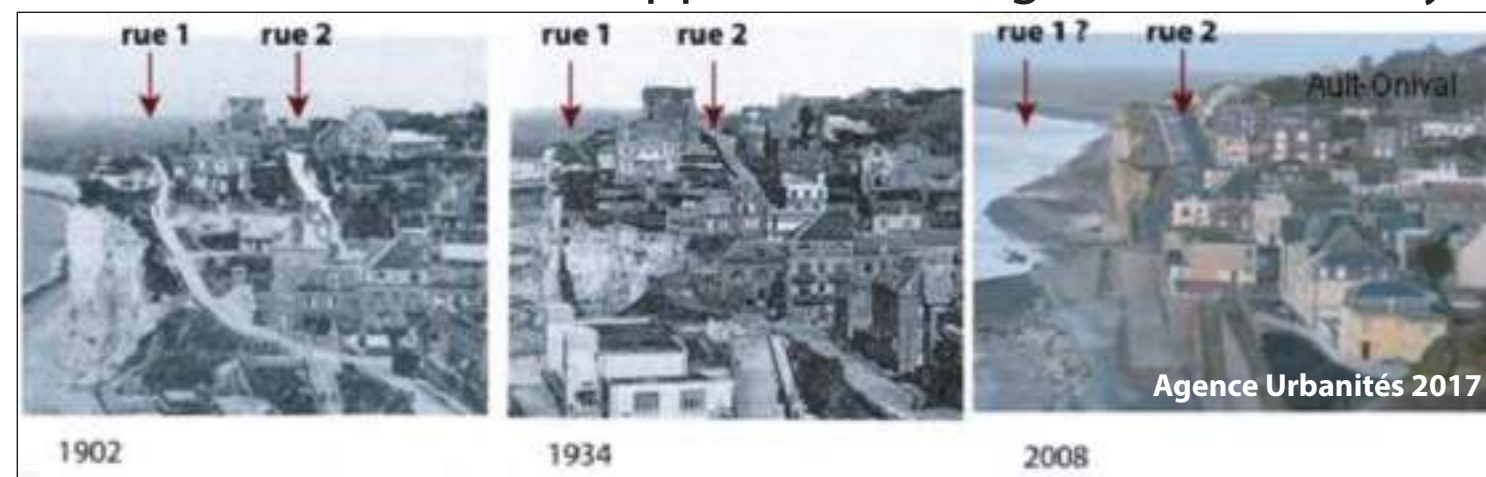
A city in face of coastal erosion



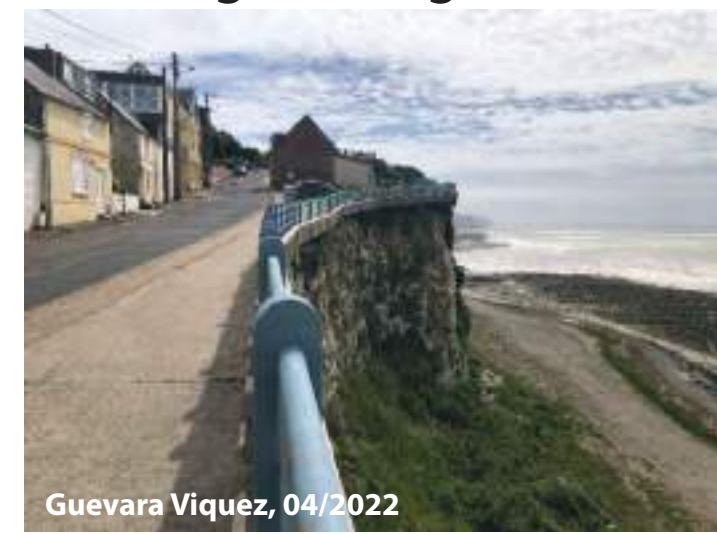
Ault is located on the coast-line, in the Somme department at the North of France. The chalk cliff, on which this town of less than 2000 inhabitants is located, is retreating at a rate of 10 to 70 cm per year (DDTM80, 2001).

Bonnefond, 04/2022

Several streets have disappeared during the last century



Civil engineering works to manage erosion



Guevara Viquez, 04/2022



Bonnefond, 04/2022

Throughout its history, the town council has used civil engineering works to manage erosion. The "casquette" is an example of this: a sort of concrete balcony, in the continuity of the cliff.

ARE WITHDRAWAL STRATEGIES AN OPTION?

Lessons from the case of Ault (France)

The withdrawal strategy...



Credits: Syndicat Mixte de la Baie de Somme/DRP

In 2012, the commune of Ault is selected at national level for an experiment seeking to encourage **withdrawal strategies to manage coastal erosion in France**. Local authorities could benefit from a determined area to plan relocation of inhabitants and activities: the "ZAC du Moulinet", property of the *Syndicat Mixte Baie de Somme - Grand littoral Picard*, inter-municipal actor in charge of planning at the scale of the bay of Somme.



Credits: Syndicat Mixte de la Baie de Somme/DRP

The so-called "revisitation" project plans the withdrawal strategy for the longer term.

The project generated a great **conflict between local stakeholders**. Thus, today, it is no longer presented as a «relocation» project, but rather as an revitalisation project. Several actions are also deployed to reduce erosion. It is possible to mention:

- waterproofing of public spaces,
- adaptation of **sewage networks**,
- soft water works** in agricultural fields to reduce run-off.

...and its debates

Citizens mobilisation against the Moulinet project questions the delocation strategy, and more precisely:

- Its lack of **transparency**. Citizens learned about the project on the media.
 - Choosing not to finance the **civil engineering infrastructures**.
- Their modes of action include: public meetings, leaflets, t-shirts, sound trail along the coastline, exhibitions.



Credits: <https://www.ault-environnement.com>



Exhibition
HISTOIRES DE FALAISES
Des origines géologiques à nos jours, le littoral aultin
réalisé par l'association Ault-environnement
Guevara, 04/2022

Sound trail
Guevara Viquez, 04/2022

T-shirts
Guevara, 07/2022

The mobilisation **produced knowledge** based on expert reports, not calling into question the risk of erosion. In their productions, citizens articulate expert knowledge to knowledge in history, in heritage, folk knowledge (from fishers), art. The objective is to present the cliff not only through the question of risk. This enlargement of the debate answers to an objective of its democratisation

We wanted to retrace the whole history of the constitution of the cliff, of the sea level which descends and rises [...] to say to ourselves: let's understand the evolution of the history of this place to take part in the debate which, we hope, will take place in a democratic way in the future... [Ault, 04/2022].

The project provides learning on:

- The challenges of **involving citizens** in adaptation measures.
- It also sheds light on the **social challenges** raised by adaptation measures as radical as relocation.
- It also provides learning on **how to communicate expertise**.

References
Agence Urbanités, 2017, "Plan Local d'Urbanisme. Rapport de présentation," Ault, Mairie de Ault.
DDTM 80, 2001, "Plan de Prévention des Risques aturels Falaises Picardes, Note de présentation," Somme, DDTM 80.

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National Conservatory of Arts and Crafts

Funders
ANR, Région de Normandie, etc.