

CALL FOR DOCTORAL CONTRACT APPLICATIONS

Doctoral student (M/F) in Geography

Pérennis Project - Maintenance of the Built Environment

General information about the job offer

Publication date: 27/10/2026

Name of scientific manager (thesis supervision): Lydia COUDROY de LILLE and Laetitia MONGEARD

Type of contract: Doctoral contract

Contract duration: 36 months

Thesis start: 04/01/2027

Working hours: Full time

Remuneration: €2,300 gross per month

Workplace: Université Lumière Lyon 2 – Campus Berges du Rhône - 14, avenue Berthelot, 69007 Lyon.

Laboratory of affiliation: UMR Environnement Ville Société

Doctoral school: ED 483 Sciences sociales

Languages spoken: French, English

Frequency of travel: occasional (departmental - regional - national - international area)

Driving license required: NO

Description of thesis topic

The Pérennis project

By bringing together environmental, economic, and social issues, the project proposes to examine a little-studied topic in order to explore how cities can adapt to climate change: the maintenance of urban technical heritage. Maintenance is understood as a series of technical actions and as a vehicle for transforming urban practices and knowledge. We examine how these practices can reconcile the sustainability of the built environment with adaptation to contemporary constraints and opportunities. The project highlights the strategic role of maintenance in the ecological transition and will explore the forms of knowledge, governance, and innovation that underpin it.

The building and public works sector is a key area for addressing the climate challenge. As France's largest energy consumer, it accounts for 23% of national GHG emissions and 69% of all national waste, according to ADEME (2024). In this context, strategies for the maintenance and upkeep of urban infrastructure are key drivers for a transition to a low-carbon economy, given that activities during the operational phase account for the largest share of this environmental footprint. Extending the service

life of structures and preventing the need for major repairs—particularly through reparability—are promising alternatives for reducing environmental impacts.

Emerging from the convergence of research on infrastructure (Florentin, 2015), the materiality of urban production (Desvaux, 2017; Mongeard, 2018), and low-tech (Tanguy, 2023), the project explores maintenance practices within the context of diverse urban forms. Maintenance strategies are rooted in a logic of material and energy efficiency and adaptation to climate change, serving as a precursor to major renovations that are resource-intensive and reliant on complex technological solutions (Florentin, 2019). The study will examine the stakeholders involved, the public policies that govern these practices, and the production and circulation of knowledge related to this heritage. Particular attention will be paid to different configurations: public and private properties, large-scale structures, sometimes subject to significant heritage-related constraints.

By linking the scales of the building, infrastructure networks, and the urban region, we aim to identify professional and “resident” maintenance and repair practices in order to highlight the adaptations needed to address the climate context and to foster a “low-tech” urbanism that is less vulnerable to external risks and multiple dependencies (supply disruptions, resource shortages). The project will examine the coexistence of different modes of maintenance—collaborative or competitive—by focusing on the role of sophisticated technologies versus low-tech practices. This approach integrates technical, social, and organizational perspectives by drawing on methodologies from engineering and environmental sciences, as well as the social sciences and humanities (SHS) and science and technology studies (STS). The concurrent nature of these research topics is designed to foster their integration, as the adaptation of buildings and that of networks are directly linked (Tabourdeau and Debizet, 2017).

Working environment

The doctoral student will be recruited by Université Lumière Lyon 2 for a period of 36 months. He/she will be enrolled in the doctoral program of the doctoral school ED 483 Social Sciences

This work is part of the Pérennis project (Sustainability of Buildings and Infrastructure in the Face of Climate Stresses), which was selected through the PITT (Interdisciplinary Projects and Thesis Trios) call for proposals in the context of research funding PEPR Sustainable City and Innovative Building program. The Pérennis project is part of the PEPR VDBI initiative and is linked to other scientific projects carried out within the PEPR: the TRACES project (TRansforming to Adapt Existing Structures: a Multiscale and Systems-Based Approach), the Villegarden project, and the NESPAMEX project (New Public Spaces: From Planning to Operation).

The Pérennis project is linked to an academic network made of Université Lumière Lyon 2, the École Nationale des Ponts et Chaussées, and the École des Mines de Saint-Étienne. The thesis will be conducted also in partnership with non-academic bodies such as the Rize (City of Villeurbanne), The National Police Academy.

A thesis committee will be formed, comprising the two supervisors and Dr Pierre Desvaux (University of Le Mans, UMR Espace et société).

Candidate profile

- First thesis registration in **2026-2027**
- Not be enrolled in a doctoral program at another French or foreign higher education institution (excluding cotutelle)
- Hold a Master's degree or equivalent (Geography, Urbanism, Regional planning, Political Science, Sociology, Anthropology, Architecture) and meet the eligibility requirements set by the doctoral school (see [doctoral school 483 Social Science](#))

How to apply

- Resume (max. 2 pages)
- Covering letter (max. 2 pages) briefly explaining the applicant's background and its relevance to the thesis project
- A thesis proposal (max. 12,000 characters, including spaces) based on the utilization of this opportunity, including how it fits within the EVS research unit
- Master's degree transcripts
- A summary of your Master thesis (max. 5,000 characters, including spaces)
- The examination report of your Master's degree
- The master's final dissertation (if relevant) in pdf format
- Applications must be sent to lydia.coudroydelille@univ-lyon2.fr; laetitia.mongeard@univ-lyon2.fr; pierre.desvaux@univ-lemans.fr; before 27/11/2026 at 6 PM.

Calendar

- 27/10/2026: publication of call for applications
- 27/11/2026: deadline for receipt of applications
- 04/12/2026: eligibility
- From 14 to 18/12/2026: auditions

Composition of the selection committee

- Prof. Lydia Coudroy de Lille (Université Lumière Lyon 2)
- Dr. Laetitia Mongeard (Université Lumière Lyon 2)
- Dr. Pierre Desvaux (Université du Mans)