Desealing appears as an option to disartificialise soils. It embraces several territorial issues like water management, adaptation to climate change, the well-being of inhabitants and biodiversity. In practice, many desealing operations are carried out. The areas to be desealed are most often linked to opportunities such as development projects or target actions (like school playgrounds). There are in fact few potential maps to support desealing strategies. Existing methods systematically take certain criteria into account (e.g. water infiltration). Environmental criteria are however more or less considered.

The DésiVille project (2021-2024) aims to provide decision-making tools to support desealing strategies. In particular, it is preparing a methodological guide to map the potential for desealing, in order to propose a harmonized and concerted framework. The methodology considers 4 thematics: i) the characteristics of the sealed surfaces, ii) the potential of infiltration of soils, iii) the environmental risks and the protection of resources, and iv) the benefits of desealing.

The thematics linked to the potential of infiltration of soils and to the environmental risks consider information on the subsurface. In particular the presence of clay and the groundwater depth feed the potential of infiltration. The environmental risks and protection of resources integrate the presence of soluble rocks, the risk of soil pollution, the risk of flooding due to groundwater rise, the geotechnical risk, area of protection of the water resource. A multicriteria spatial analysis crosses the information per thematic on one side, and among thematics on the other side. The study case of Nantes Métropole (France) illustrates the influence of the potential of infiltration and of the environmental risks and protection of resource on the global potential of desealing maps.

The subsurface needs to be considered to build desealing strategies. More generally, it is essential to consider it in urban planning and development. Although out of sight, it must not be out of mind.