

# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 17 - REVITALIZING THE GLOBAL ALLIANCE, ILLUSTRATED THROUGH A MARINE CONSERVATION CASE STUDY CARRIED OUT IN NORMANDY, FRANCE

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## ABSTRACT

*The seventeenth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 17) of the United Nations, “Partnerships for the Goals” aims to, “strengthen the means of the implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development”. The successful implantation of this goal will aid the execution and achievement of the other sixteen goals. This article explores the importance and viability of SDG 17, “Partnering for the Goals” through the analysis of one marine conservation case study. More specifically the applicability of SDG 17 was analyzed so as to assess the viability of SDG 14, “Life under Water”. This case study evaluated a marine conservation case study based in Normandie (France) that deals with the conservation of bottlenose dolphins. It presents a very interesting stakeholder situation, where we see that there are conflicting interests among governmental authorities, conservation organizations, recreational and commercial fishermen, among others.*

*A case study approach was undertaken for the data collection using desk-based research and semi-structured interviews. The interview process was performed between October 2019 and March 2020. In total, 19 different stakeholders were interviewed. For the data analyses, a stakeholder register, PI Matrices and a stakeholder map were used, and to complement the latter narratives were developed. It was found that most project stakeholders seem to be in favour of the Normand-Breton bottlenose dolphin conservation project, however the recreational and professional fishermen as well as the promoters of renewable energy projects did not appear to support it. Stakeholder engagement analyses are especially useful in the application of SDG at the project level. However, in some instances such as in the case study analysed, many obstacles may be encountered in the process of creating these global alliances and partnerships. Although this case study is specifically applicable to a marine conservation context, it may be extrapolated and applied to any other SDG context.*

**Keywords:** Global alliances, Marine conservation, Stakeholder Management, Sustainable Development Goals, Sustainability.

## INTRODUCTION

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were developed by the United Nations at the Millennium Summit in September 2000. They set out a path towards sustainable development through the establishment of eight goals that manifested common ground and set up social global timebound and achievable objectives to be complied with and achieved by the year 2015 (United Nations, 2020). After the fifteen years, there was widespread feeling among different stakeholders such as policy makers and civil society that “progress against poverty, hunger and disease (was) notable; (and) that the MDGs (had) played an important part in securing (this) progress and that

globally agreed goals to fight poverty should continue beyond 2015.” (Sach, 2012) Consequently, world governments decided to continue and to develop a new set of global priorities that are today known as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The United Nations (UN) Conference on Sustainable Development, also known as Rio+20, was held in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) between June 20th and June 22nd of the year 2012. The main objective of this summit was to create global goals that would resolve global environmental, social and economic challenges. Rio+20 marked the launch for the creation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known today as the “Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development”. Moreover, the conference was ground-breaking with discussion of all that concerns the topic of Green Economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, thereby contributing to the successful execution of the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals, 2020a).

According to the UN, the definition of Sustainable Development is “(to satisfy) the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to satisfy their own needs”. This definition of the term Sustainable Development is included in the Brunt land report from 1987 that was developed by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), with the aim of developing long-term solutions related to sustainable development and to pursue these goals in the 21st century.

The new Sustainable Development Goals became a reality in 2015. There were 17 goals and 169 targets to be achieved by the year 2030. They entailed “an urgent call for action by all countries – developed and developing – in a global partnership” (Sustainable Development Goals, 2020a). This need for global partnership is reflected in SDG 17, “Partnerships for the Goals”, which aims to, “strengthen the means of the implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development” (Sustainable Development Goals, 2020a). Through the development and execution of the 19 targets encompassed within this goal, and the creation of alliances between different stakeholders, the rest of the SDGs will be achieved. Furthermore, SDG 17, “recognizes multi-stakeholder partnerships as important vehicles for mobilizing and sharing knowledge, expertise, technologies, and financial resources to support the achievement of the sustainable development goals in all countries, particularly developing countries” (United Nations, 2020).

In 2020 the 2030 Agenda Accelerator was developed by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA) and The Partnering Initiative in collaboration with several other partners to “significantly help accelerate effective partnerships in support of the Sustainable Development Goals. One of the objectives of the 2030 Agenda Accelerator is to build and develop the partnerships between the relevant stakeholders in favour of the SDGs, thereby, “supporting organizations to develop their policy and strategy, systems and processes, legal agreements and culture to support collaboration” (Stibbe & Prescott, 2020).

This type of collaboration between different actors constructs a multi-actor type of governance that is the product of how different stakeholders such as individuals and institutions (*i.e.*, private and public) manage their affairs. This mode of governance is very different to traditional governance, which often is associated to only one set of actors, often at the governmental level. According to the 2030 Agenda Accelerator, a multi-actor governance scenario is necessary to achieve the rest of the SDGs, in projects from all sectors, and also involving non-state actors such as non-governmental organizations, the civil society and private businesses.

## PURPOSE

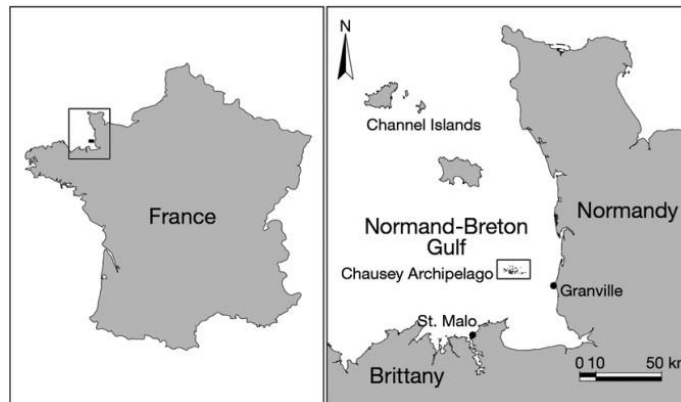
This article will explore the importance and *viability* of SDG 17, “Partnering for the Goals” through the analysis of one marine conservation case study. More specifically the applicability of

SDG 17 will be analyzed with regards to the *viability* of SDG 14 “Life Under Water”, and more specifically Target 14.2, “By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans” (Sustainable Development Goals, 2020b).

The marine case study is dolphin conservation and monitoring program based in Normandy in France. The specific aim of the project is to monitor the bottlenose dolphin population of the English Channel. Since 2007 the project holder organization Groupe d'Étude des Cétacés du Cotentin (GECC) has been studying the area's dolphins, which make up the largest sedentary bottlenose dolphin population in Europe. The Norman die dolphin project is a very interesting case study as it entails the interaction of a wide number of different stakeholders including commercial and recreational fishermen, regional and national authorities and NGOs.

Projects that are set in the marine environment pose challenges that go beyond national boundaries. It is for this reason that resolution of such large-scale environmental challenges has had to involve a realm of different actors, comprising not only governments (national and regional), but also non-state actors such as non-governmental organizations and private companies.

Although a multi-actor partnership context may seem ideal to resolve these environmental issues as suggested by Sustainable Development Goal 17 and the 2030 Agenda Accelerator, it might entail conflicts of governance concerning different spheres of authority. More specifically, this article will analyze the multi-actor governance approach in managing this marine conservation project based in Normandy, France (Figure 1).



**FIGURE 1**  
**NORMAND-BRETON GULF (FIGURE FROM GODET ET AL, 2008)**

The Common bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops Truncatus*) presently has a “vulnerable” conservation status according to the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN, 2012). The species has also been found to adapt easily to “anthropogenic” environments. For example, bottlenose dolphins often inhabit coastal waters where they are in close contact with human activity. Over time, *T. Truncatus* have come to learn how to obtain fish from trawls, gillnets and fish cages, behaviour which has, unfortunately, sometimes made them partially dependent on human activity. Consequently, dolphins are often by-caught in fishing nets, which leads to a considerable degree of conflict between fishermen and scientists (*i.e.*, conservationists). Bottlenose dolphins also display a general sedentary behaviour, with movements being limited to an average of about 80km. This is the case for the Normand-Breton bottlenose dolphin population.

The Normand-Breton Gulf has a long history of commercial fishing, most of which is essentially coastal. Fishing units are on the whole small and versatile and are mostly present in the maritime districts of Cherbourg, Saint-Malo and Saint Briec. Shellfish fisheries are of considerable importance in the Normand-Breton Gulf, with Granville being the main fishing port in Lower Normandy. Furthermore, fisheries specialized in cuttlefish and large crustaceans have also been well developed in the area.

Additionally, there are a number of renewable marine energy projects (Energies Marines Renouvelables – EMR), the economic viability of which is being studied in the area, namely two wind farms in the Seine Bay and the Saint-Briec Bay, as well as a tidal farm project at Raz Blanchard. Due to this strong anthropogenic pressure, there is a strong desire on the part of the GECC is this “the organization”) to protect the natural heritage of the Normand-Breton Gulf, *via* the creation and implementation of a marine park, whose aim will be to maintain and restore certain habitats and to find the right balance between the execution of anthropogenic activities and biodiversity preservation. It is for this reason that the GECC is carrying out the monitoring of the Normand-Breton gulf bottlenose dolphin population in order to be able to assess and evaluate the effect of human activities, specifically those of the renewable energy projects that are under way. All of these circumstances make this project very worthy of study.

## METHODOLOGY

A case study approach was undertaken for the data collection using desk-based research and semi-structured interviews. The case study analyzed was a bottlenose dolphin conservation project based in Normandy in France. The objective of this project was to study the Normand-Breton sedentary bottlenose dolphin population, which is the largest sedentary bottlenose dolphin population in Europe. Moreover, this case study presents a very interesting stakeholder situation, where we see that there are conflicting interests among NGOs, regional and national government authorities, recreational and commercial fishermen, among others.

The interview process was performed between November 2019 and March 2020. In total, 19 different stakeholders were interviewed. Among the interviewees were public officials with environmental responsibilities, fishermen’s associations, NGOs and university professors. The interviews were performed in French, transcribed (*i.e.*, in French) and subsequently analyzed to enable the development of narratives in English. The stakeholders that were especially difficult to access were the commercial and recreational fishermen and the stakeholders that were not interviewed were the members of the civil society.

The semi-structured interview questions related to

1. The context and professional background of the interviewee,
2. Their knowledge of each of the case studies being analyzed,
3. Their knowledge of project stakeholder analyses,
4. Their perception of the marine species being conserved, and
5. Their definitions of the terms power and interest, along with a small power-interest matrix exercise through which interviewees had to value the level of power and interest of the following stakeholder groups with respects to the project’s mission. All interviews were transcribed in French, and the narratives were developed in English.

The stakeholders interviewed included:

- Project holder organization members (*i.e.*, GECC)
- Whale-watching NGOs
- Universities
- Regional government
- National government
- Commercial fishermen
- Recreational fishermen
- Renewable energy companies
- Funders

The stakeholder analyses were based firstly on the development of a stakeholder register (Table 1), which encompassed the:

- Stakeholder identification information.
- Stakeholder classification information (*i.e.*, main expectations regarding the project, whether stakeholders were internal/external to the project, and whether they were supporters, opponents or neutral toward the project).
- Problems experienced by interviewed stakeholders regarding the project mission.
- Solutions to identified problems.

Based on the information gathered in the stakeholder register a stakeholder map was conceived using the 2002 Bonke and Winch stakeholder mapping model (Winch & Bonke, 2002). In this framework, the central asset is the project mission, and the identified stakeholders are positioned around it. Their position in the project is identified as being a supporter or opponent as well as the potential problems that may be experienced.

To complement these analyses, PI matrices were also developed to compile the PI matrix information collected in the different interviews. For the PI Matrix analyses, the stakeholders included in the PI matrices were grouped according to the stakeholder categories listed above.

The results from the stakeholder register, PI matrices and stakeholder map, were further analyzed *via* the development of narratives. Organizational narratives are temporal in nature and are defined as being “discursive constructions that provide a means for individual, social and organizational sense making and sense giving” (Vaara et al., 2016). They helped to analyze the interplay between all the project stakeholders, making therefore plausible the development of multiple narrative analyses.

In the results and discussion section, the outcome of the different analyses (*i.e.*, stakeholder register, PI matrices and stakeholder map) will firstly be presented as well as the general trends that were extracted from the narratives that were developed for this study.

## RESULTS

The bottlenose dolphin case study analyzed aimed at studying and preserving the Norman-Breton sedentary population of the species, which is the largest sedentary population in Europe. The main objective of the project is to gather scientific data to better understand this dolphin population.

Nineteen project stakeholders were interviewed. It is important to highlight is to point out that the mapping captures the perspectives of stakeholders at a point where the project has been running for circa 14 years. The project’s stakeholder panorama is peculiar and encompasses a number of different stakeholder conflicts, one of which is related to the renewable energy projects that are planned for the area in the Baie de Seine area.

The only stakeholders that were not interviewed were the members of the civil society. The commercial fishermen were not interviewed directly, however the author was able to interview Normandy’s Center of Maritime Affairs that deals with and manages the marine activities in general in the area, which includes commercial fishing.

More specifically, the stakeholders interviewed included:

- Project holder organization members (*i.e.*, GECC): The Cotentin Cetacean Study Group is a non-profit association founded in 1997.
- Other NGOs – These included fellow marine mammal conservation organizations in the Normand-Breton area and also in Jersey, a British Crown island territory in the English Channel.
- British ecotourism company located in Jersey: This Company provides trips for tourists and local people from Jersey to see wildlife from March to November every year. Specifically, they go around the coast of Jersey, the offshore islands, and the Channel Islands.

- Collaborating researchers from different universities in France: Collaborating researchers involved in the modeling of the Normand-Breton bottlenose dolphin population.
- Normandy regional Fishing Committee: This committee helps commercial fishermen make decisions on regional regulations and represents them at the national level.
- Dinard Biological Station – Dinard’s Biological Station, which is the main marine station of the National Natural History Museum of Paris and which has 130 years of experience in research on the diversity and functioning of coastal marine ecosystems.
- Office Française pour la Biodiversité (OFB) – “French Biodiversity Office” – Part of the French environmental ministry, which is one of the project’s long-running funders.
- “Center for Maritime Affairs”: Deals with and manages marine activities in general, such as fishing, nautical and recreational activities, etc., in the Normandy area.
- Baie de Seine offshore windfarm project (*i.e.*, “Baie de Seine Eolien” project)
- Recreational fishermen – Three different representatives of different recreational fishermen associations were interviewed for this study.

From the interview information, a stakeholder register was developed as shown below (Table 1). For each of the identified stakeholders, his/her identification details were recorded, together with their main expectations, and problems they may have experienced with respect to the project mission, as well potential solutions to these problems.

**Table 1**  
**STAKEHOLDER REGISTER OF THE BOTTLENOSE DOLPHIN CONSERVATION PROJECT**

	Organization	Location	Role in Project	Stakeholder Classification			Problems experienced by these stakeholders	Solution to these problems
				Main Expectations	Internal/External	Defender/Neutral/Opponent	Problems experienced by these stakeholders	Solution to these problems
1	GECC	Normandie	Leading project, Ensure the running of the organization and of the projects, as well as the assurance of funding for the latter.	Wants his organization to become more scientifically sound though the collection of scientific data. He of course wants the running of his organization to continue and this is by the consecution of funding, etc., and adequate stakeholder management.	Internal	Defender	Problem of funding, problem in getting support from certain stakeholders such as the fishermen and the collaboration with other fellow conservation NGOs. Resources to effectuate the different project activities are also limiting.	Continue reaching out to funding bodies. Continue networking to get more allies and in this way improve the probability of getting more funding.
2	GECC and University of Mntpelier	Mntpelier	Predoctoral researcher	Interested in completing her PhD thesis ; in compiling and analysing the PhD data in collaboration with the GECC.	Internal	Defender	Problem is more research-related and data collection.	Continue working on data collection and continuing her PhD research.

3	GECC	Normandie	President GECC	Assuring the smooth running of the organization and ensuring the NGOs that funding is sustainable.	Internal	Defender	All the problems related directly to the organization " s survival and the problem of funding.	Improve networking skills and reaching out to funding bodies to get project financing from the AFB and other bodies.
4	AFB	Paris	Works at AFB	Wants to protect the population of dolphins in the Norman-Breton Gulf. He wants to ensure the running of the dolphin project in the long term, and therefore the continuation of the dolphin protection measures. He would also like the two NGOs working in the area to work together and collaborate, which is not the case 100% at the moment.	External	Defender	Ensuring that there is funding for the project and collaboration between the two NGOs that work with dolphin conservation in the area. Also ensuring that the Norman-Breton dolphin project continues long term as a conservation priority as after all it is Europe" s largest sedentary bottlenose dolphin presentation.	Continue funding of the AFB for the Bottlenose dolphin project and organise meetings between the NGOs that work with dolphin conservation. Perhaps even go visit the project, which he has not done to date.
5	AFB - Antenne de Granville	Granville	Works at the OFB in Normandie and works with the Sites Natura 2000	She would like more Site Natura 2000 to be created in the area, and therefore looks for greater collaboration between the different stakeholders surrounding the project such as the fishermen, the NGOs, etc.	External	Defender	Supports the dolphin project. The main problems for her is to ensure collaboration between the different stakeholders involved in the creation of the Natura 2000 sites in Normandie. This is a challenge, especially when trying to get the fishermen's support.	Continue with _the staging of more meetings. between the different stakeholders involved in the development of the Natura 2000 sites.
6	CRESO - Station Biologique de Dinard	Dinard	Director	External to the project, however he supports the project holding organization in its scientific works.	External	Defender	The main problem is outside the scope of the bottlenose dolphin project in Normandie and deals more with the management	With regard to the Dinard marine station, the director will need to continue with his current management strategy. With

							of the CRESCO/marine station. He wants to ensure that the marine station becomes a founded structure as regards to scientific research.	regard to the bottleneck dolphin project, the CRESCO could provide the project with scientific expertise or resources.
7	Researcher at the University of Montpellier	Montpellier	Researcher working with conservation NGOs	Very interested in helping organizations with their conservation projects ( <i>i.e.</i> , especially with population analyses). Interested in the smooth running of the project to ensure the correct collection of the data.	External/Internal	Defender	The obtention of data and negotiation with the different stakeholders to ensure that everyone is on the same page. This is especially the case with project holding organizations like the GECC. Alignment is needed to ensure that the right scientific data is collected.	Organization of meetings for the recreational fishermen to show that the dolphins are really not the ones to blame for the potential lack of fish. However with regard specifically to the project, no specific actions should be endeavoured.
8	Entreprise des eoliens en baie de Seine	Normandie	Director of the ELA.. project in the Baie de Seine offshore windfarm project.	The main interest is for his offshore windmill project to become a reality because it hasn't been implemented yet. He is interested in collaborating with the GECC for the sake of the environmental impact assessment, to ensure that the GECC as a stakeholder supports the project of the building of the offshore wind farm.	External/Internal	Neutral/Opponent	The director's main objective is the EIA assessment and ensuring that all is ready for the construction of the offshore wind turbines. His main problem in doing this is to get everyone to negotiate and to gather all of the information from all stakeholders including in GECC.	Continue carrying out meetings with the different stakeholders affected/or affecting the offshore windmill construction project. With regard to the dolphins in the Norman-Breton gulf, the director is missing out on information as to how the implementation and the operation of the offshore wind farms will affect the dolphins. Perhaps more communication and a greater degree of transparency as regard to the company will help the acceptance of



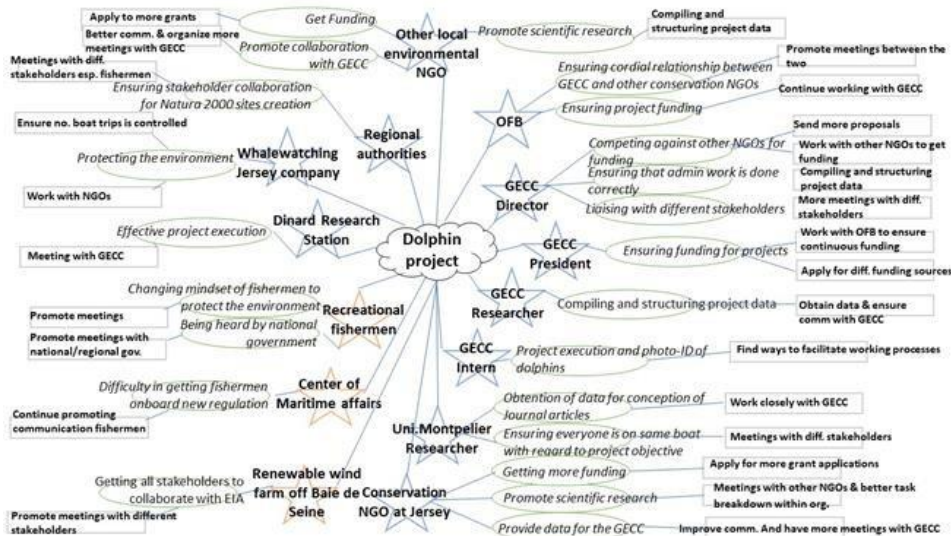
								this project from certain stakeholder groups.
9	GECC	Cherbourg	Project collaborator	She has been helping the GECC out for the last 7 months although her collaboration with the GECC ended this month of February. She is interested in the smooth running of the projects in order to ensure their long-term existence.	Internal	Defender	The main problem that Prune experienced during the 7-8 months that she helped the GECC is the actual work of identification of the dolphins.	Continue the photography activities of the dolphins and promote the ObsenMer project promoted by the GECC.
10	APAM	Cherbourg	President of NGO	Main interest, now that he is retired is recreational fishing. No real interest in the project.	External	Neutral/Opponent	The main problem is for their hobby which is recreational fishing to be recognized. Greater general awareness is therefore needed for the latter.	Continue the awareness activities and encourage more meetings with the town halls etc.
11	Association AI-Lark	La Rochelle	Scientific director at AI-Lark.	The scope of the work of AI-Lark. coincides with that of the GECC as they both are looking into protecting the dolphin.	External	Defender	One of the main problems of AI-Lark is actually ensuring funding for the survival of the organization. Furthermore, the organization wants to develop further its scientific research potential.	As regards to the funding, perhaps apply for grants from other organizations, and not only rely for funding from memberships and boat trips.
12	Association de Plaisanciers de la cote des lies	Normandie	President at the Association des Plaisanciers de la cote des lies	As president of his recreational fishing association, he looks into protecting his hobby first of all. However, he is also very much aware of the	External	Defender	Distanced from the bottlenose dolphin project in Normandie, His main problem is raising awareness among different stakeholders about their recreational fishing technique.	Continue the awareness activities and encourage more meetings with the town halls etc.

				importance of nature conservation. He is also involved in the negotiations for the creation of the Site Natura 2000.				
13	Association des Plaisanciers et pêcheurs à pied de la côte ouest	Normandie	President of NGO	Joelis very much external to the project and does not really have an interest in the latter.	External	Opponent	Joelis very distanced from the actual dolphin project.	Organization of meetings for the recreational fishermen to show that the dolphins are really not the ones to blame for the potential lack of fish. However with regard specifically to the project, no specific actions should be endeavoured.
14	OFB	Le Havre	Person in charge of the Natural Heritage Marine Habitats in the Norman-Breton Gulf area	Supports the conservation of the Norman-Breton Gulf dolphin population and of the creation of the Sites Natura 2000.	External	Defender	The biggest problem is actually trying to get everyone on board the creation of the Natura 2000 sites.	More meetings with of the different stakeholders including the fishermen (professional and recreational fishermen).
15	CRPrv EMin Normandy	Normandie	Coordinator of the rvlission Natura 2000 project, which entails the setting up of Natura 2000 protection areas	Her main interest at the moment is the creation of the Sites Natura 2000.	External	Defender	Has been working on the creation of Natura 2000 sites and dealing with a varied range of stakeholders. One of the main challenges that she needs to deal with is the problem is dealing with the fishermen.	Continue the organization of meetings with the different stakeholders that are in one way or another affected or affect the development of the Nautra 2000 sites in the Norman-Breton area.
16	POie des Affaires Maritimes, "Center for maritime affaires	Normandie	POie des Affaires Maritimes, "Center for Maritimes affaires	Doesn't have a very good perception of the dolphin and the concept of dolphin conservation in the Norman-Breton area. He considers that the area would be the same without	External	Opponent	Difficulty to get everyone on board new legal norms with regards to fishing etc. As regards to the actual dolphin project, there is really no problem as he doesn't consider the presence of the	Organise more meetings between Sebastian and the conservation organizations to demonstrate to him the importance of the Norman-Breton bottlenose

				dolphins.			dolphins as necessary and argues that the area would be the same without dolphins. There also seems to be a lack of awareness from his part as regards to the bottlenose dolphin project.	dolphin population. This way he will be able to instruct his team's accordingly,
17	Independent	Bretagne	Independent recreational fisherman	External to the project, Supports the concept of nature conservation. However as regards to the actual dolphin project, he doesn't really have an opinion on the latter.	External	Defender	External to the project, he really does not have any problem with the project,	Continue the awareness activities and encourage more meetings with the town halls etc.
18	Guernsey Biological Records Centre	Guernsey	Director	Admires the work of the GECC and supports the project fully. As regards to the project her task is to share her organization's data with the GECC. PJ. the level of her own organization, her main objective is to ensure that her organization has enough funds to survive and carry out its projects.	External	Defender	The main problem that she is facing at the moment is really pushing forward and making her organization progress. With regard to the project, the real challenge that she has is time management and finding the time to send the GECC Jersey's bottlenose dolphin data,	Increase the communication between the Biological Records Center and the GECC. This will perhaps encourage her to send her dolphin data to the GECC.
19	Jersey Seafaris Ltd.	Jersey	Director	Interested in continuing with the organization's environmental recreational boat trip activities. Supports the project as having dolphins in the area is a plus.	External	Defender	The main problem here is to ensure that the environment is protected (i.e. and the dolphins as well)	No real solution needed - continuation of communication between the GECC and Jersey Seafaris Ltd.

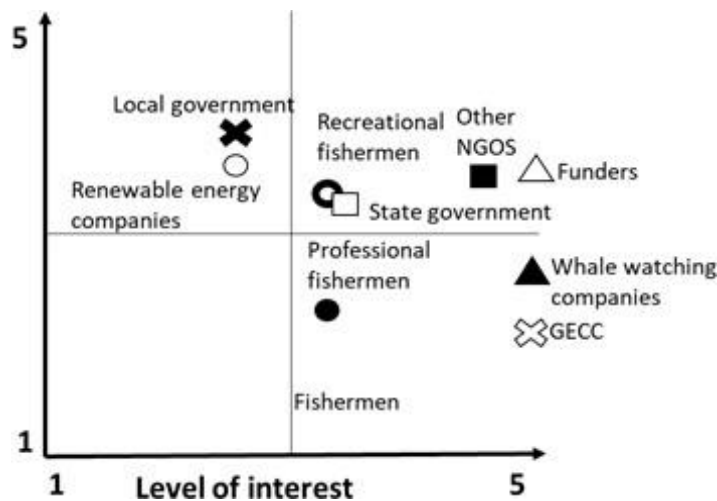
The stakeholders listed in Table 1 were also categorized as being internal or external to the project, as well as whether they supported or opposed the project. In total there were four internal stakeholders and twelve external ones. Furthermore, the information compiled in the stakeholder

register was further analysed *via* the development of a stakeholder map for the project, whereas shown below in Figure 2, project supporters were characterised by stars and project opponents by hexagons. Although the trends extracted from the stakeholder map are further described in the Discussion section below, it is possible to observe that most of the interviewed stakeholder groups supported the project mission. As will be later described, the fishermen (*i.e.*, both recreational and commercial fishermen) were probably the stakeholder groups that were more reticent and most opposed to the project. The recreational fishermen for example felt as though conserving the dolphin prevented them from carrying out their hobby, and therefore they did not support the project.



**FIGURE 2**  
**STAKEHOLDER MAP OF NORMANDY BOTTLENOSE DOLPHIN PROJECT**

The perspectives of the different stakeholder groups interviewed were compiled so that trends could be extrapolated on how the different groups evaluated the respective power and interest levels of the project stakeholder groups (*i.e.*, including themselves). An example of the latter with the perspective of whale-watching company in Jersey in Figure 2.



**FIGURE 3**  
**POWER-INTEREST MATRIX GENERATED FROM THE INTERVIEW WITH JERSEY'S WHALE WATCHING COMPANY**

The PI matrices were developed to reflect the perspectives of the:

- Members of the project holding organization - GECC.
- French and British conservation NGOs
- Universities
- Regional government
- National government
- Project funders
- Renewable energy companies
- Whale watching companies (Ecotourism)

In the matrices, as shown in the NGO example above, each stakeholder group was represented with a symbol as shown in the given in Figure 3.

Furthermore, the Power-Interest matrices results are shown in Table 2 here below.

<b>GECC Members</b>	<b>Other NGOs</b>	<b>Local Government</b>	<b>Recreational Fishermen</b>
- The OFB is considered powerful, being one of the main project funders, considered to have a medium-high interest in the project. Like the national government, the regional government was also considered to have considerable power and interest.	- The two non-profit organizations interviewed considered the GECC as having a lot of interest but med-high power.	- The GECC was considered to have both high power and interest, similarly to the other NGOs.	- The national government was viewed as having little interest and high power.
- The GECC considered itself to have med-high power and interest.	- The funders were differentiated from the OFB, and they were thought to have high power with varying levels of interest.	- The renewable energy companies were considered to have medium-high power.	- The local government was equally considered to have low power and medium power.
- Although not all GECC interviewees shared their perspective on the fishermen.	- The local government was found to have medium-high interest and power.	- There was no apparent general trend regarding the fishermen.	- The general public was perceived as having low interest and power.
	- The renewable energy companies that have med-high power and interest.	- The national government was perceived as having medium Interest and varying power.	- The professional fishermen were thought to have a medium power level and a varying level of interest.
<b>Professional fishermen</b>	<b>Scientific researchers</b>	<b>Whale watching companies</b>	<b>Renewable companies</b>
- No professional fishermen were interviewed for this research. The opinions below are based on the stance of the maritime affairs administrator that marks the regulatory framework of the fishermen.	- The GECC was considered to have high interest but middle-high power.	- There was only one whale watching company interviewed.	- The government (both national and local) were perceived to have relatively high interest and low power.
- All stakeholders were found to have a medium level of interest.	- The funders were also considered to have high power.	- No stakeholder was considered to have high power.	- High on the power list with a "4" are the whale-watching companies and the

			recreational fishermen.
- In the range of medium power, were the national and regional governments, the GECC and the renewable energy companies.	- The national government was also considered to be of high influence ( <i>i.e.</i> , as the project funder). They were however considered to have little interest.	- The GECC, the funders and the whale-watching company itself had high interest and medium power.	- All NGOs including the GECC were found to have high interest and medium power.
- They described themselves as having high interest and low power, and the recreational fishermen as having medium power and low interest.	- The other environmental NGOs were found to have low interest and power.	- The government was found to have medium power and medium interest.	- The funders of the dolphin project were found to have no power and interest.
	- The whale watching companies were considered to have high interest and medium power.		
	- No patterns were found with regards to the power and interest of the renewable energy companies.		

## DISCUSSION

The Normandy Bottlenose Dolphin project is a conservation project that has a very peculiar and very varied stakeholder panorama. The peculiarity of this context is nurtured by four elements that are presently threatening the project, which are:

- The potential construction of the offshore wind farms of Baie de Seine and St Brieux.
- The fishing pressure exerted by both professional and recreational fishermen.
- The pressure coming from the tourism industry from whale watching activities.
- The elevated levels of pollutants found in the ocean.

Presently, more scientifically sound information is needed regarding the dolphin population so as to better be able to assess the impact that these elements will have on them, and thereby the necessity for this project. The goal of the project holding organization, GECC, is to get the maximum amount of knowledge on the Normand-Breton sedentary bottlenose dolphin population.

This bottlenose dolphin population inhabits a fragile geographical location, straddling two administrative regions, that is Brittany and Normandy, an area that is presently not protected. France at present has eight marine parks, the first of which was created in 2007 and the latest in 2017, and in principle ten were initially planned. There is one in particular that did not see the light of day that was to cover all of the Normand-Breton Gulf regions, as well as the entire area inhabited by the bottlenose dolphin population. A few years back, the two administrative regions agreed to the creation of this marine park, however there were regional elections and administrative changes, leading to the two administrations no longer being able to agree to creating a protected marine park and the project was abandoned. This was truly a pity as had this marine protected area been established, the whole of the Normand-Breton population would have been protected. Now in the region there are only a few Natura 2000 sites, which are too small and do not cover the whole of the area covered by the dolphin population. Natura 2000 sites aim to monitor and improve marine ecosystems (*i.e.*, just like marine natural parks), and help to reduce the various pressures exerted on them. Before the Normand-Breton marine park project was abandoned, nobody really worried about the creation of the Natura 2000 sites, as everyone assumed the project was going to go forward.

It must be made clear that the French Ministry of the Environment, “l’Office Française pour la Biodiversité (OFB)” that funds the project, does not want the bottlenose dolphin population to disappear. “We know that (the disappearance of the dolphin population) can happen as it has happened elsewhere, and that’s what we don’t want. So, it is very difficult to know what is going to be the reaction of these groups upon all of these pressures. We cannot isolate one pressure from the others as these pressures happen at the same time, there are a multitude of factors which are exerted upon the dolphins” (OFB representative, Personal Communication, January 2020).

The project holding organization “GECC” has a big challenge ahead. At the strategic level, the NGO needs to professionalize its research to become an NGO that is based more on sound scientific research rather than scientific dissemination. At the project level, the organization will need to compile and analyze statistically the maximum amount of data to provide to different project stakeholders such as the French national government, which will, with this information, have the means to effectively measure the impacts of the different anthropogenic pressures on the Normand-Breton dolphin population and consequently take the preventive/corrective measures to ensure its protection.

The role of the OFB in the GECC dolphin project is two-fold; it firstly represents the government that develops and implements national conservation regulations. On the other hand, the OFB is also the main project funder. This is an unusual context, as for most conservation organizations, the core funding is provided by private foundations and international public/private organizations.

What further complicates the Normand-Breton bottlenose dolphin conservation scenario is its international context. Although the dolphin population is described as sedentary and mainly inhabits French waters, some dolphin movement has been noted in UK waters, for example in some of the Channel Islands such as Jersey and Guernsey. The complications in this respect are very much associated to Brexit, which came into being on the 1st of January 2021 and the consequent reglementary changes, for example with respect to fishing activities and conservation initiatives. It is due to this international context that two British stakeholders were included in the study; an environmental NGO in Guernsey and a tourism company in Jersey that carry out whale watching as part of their business. Both stakeholders were found to support the dolphin project and were willing to collaborate in any way possible. The environmental NGO in Guernsey collaborates with the GECC in their research by providing the French organization with identification data of the dolphins from the British waters of the Channel. Moreover, the tourism company in Jersey wants the bottlenose dolphin to remain present in the Channel, as the latter contributes to its business objectives.

Although most project stakeholders clearly supported the GECC bottlenose dolphin project, there are two stakeholders (as shown in Figure 2) that clearly opposed the project. These were the recreational and the commercial fishermen. To the recreational fishermen for example, dolphins are a supposed threat as they pose a burden to their fishing activity. The recreational fishermen’s associations of Normandy mainly comprise retirees of an average age of 70 years who occupy their free time fishing. They represent a generation that is not sensitive to ecology, and do not hold the same perception of nature and what the latter entails, as would the younger generations of fishermen. In earlier times there were no fishing quotas, and the fishermen could take from the ocean as much fish as they wanted. The generalized perception is that if there are dolphins then they can’t fish because dolphins are predated upon the fish stocks in the region. In France strict laws have been promulgated with regards to the quotas of certain species like the mackerel. Despite there being strict regulations in place, there is still a lot of abuse by recreational fishermen. From all of the above, it is therefore not a surprise that there have been difficulties in getting the Norman-Breton fishermen to negotiate in favour of the protection of the bottlenose dolphin in the region. The GECC for example has an initiative called OBsSenMer, which is a collaborative digital platform project (<https://www.obsenmer.org/>), which aims to facilitate the

collection, storage and sharing of observations made at sea on the dolphins and other sea mammals. A further difficulty from the legislative perspective is getting the recreational fishermen onboard in the process of establishing Natura 2000 sites in the area.

Not only were the recreational fishermen against the dolphins and the dolphin conservation issue. They had another conflict and that was with the professional fishermen. In an interview, the president of one recreational fishing association described the commercial trawlers as “bateaux usines” or “factory boats”, arguing that the commercial fishermen, “(took) the food of the dolphins as well as the mackerel, they take the whole of the food chain, they take everything” (Recreational fishing association president, Personal Communication, January 2020). The recreational fishermen in turn do not feel protected under French jurisdiction, feeling that the French central government only listened to the professional fishermen, and they therefore wanted a ban on trawl fishing.

To get the professional fishermen’s perspective, it was possible to interview the region’s maritime affairs administrator who works for France’s environmental ministry and regulates the region’s maritime activities (*i.e.*, and supervises the professional fishermen boats). The Pole Maritime regulates activities at sea in the Channel, their control, their regulatory and legal framework as well as the management of professional sailors. The marine affairs’ administrator recognized that one of the main problems associated to the bottlenose dolphin conservation project is the conflict that needs to be dealt with the fishermen. He went on to say that at present there was not much evidence of bottlenose dolphins being trapped in fishing nets, and said that those that actually got caught, were a mere consequence of the different fishing activities. Furthermore, chief maritime officer argued that I was not in the professional fishermen’s interest to have marine mammals caught in their nets. As a solution to the latter the Administrator mentioned the possibility of implementing clingers in the commercial fishing boats. Clingers are a system installed in fishing nets which sends waves which interfere with the dolphins’ sonar, or with their ability to find their way underwater and helps to keep them away from the fishing boats, thereby preventing them from being captured. However, among the fishermen there is also quite a bit of discussion against the use of the clingers, as the fishermen think that apart from scaring off the dolphins, they will also scare off the fish, and are therefore often deactivated by the fishermen. As regard to the actual conservation status of the dolphins, the chief maritime officer argued that the dolphin was just one element in the marine. “Objectively, it is important that the dolphins “survive” and are fully integrated in the maritime legal framework that we protect them, but it is of no interest. Economically, there is no interest in protecting them, perhaps at the touristic level...” (Center of Marine Affairs, Personal Communication, January 2020).

This takes us back to the importance of aligning project stakeholders to be able to accomplish the project mission; however in this case, this does not seem to be the case. As suggested by the Agenda 2030 accelerator, transparency and the establishment of a common ground is needed to ensure that all stakeholders are on the same boat with regard to the project mission.

According to the 2030 Agenda Accelerator, a holistic aligned approach is necessary to help accelerate the development of partnerships to achieve the Sustainable development goals. The SDG 17 stresses that global efforts are needed, which includes a realm of different institutions and organizations. In the Normand-Breton bottlenose dolphin conservation project, alignment and collaboration from all of the project’s stakeholders are thereby difficult. Even at the level of regional collaboration between different environmental organizations is not easy. “The main problem that we encounter is the problems of working with other organizations on marine project in the same area ... have conflicts with other associations working on the same subject. It is very difficult to collaborate. Collaborations are very difficult.” (GECC General Director, Personal communication, January, 2020).



What further complicates the situation for the GECC and the Norman-Breton bottlenose dolphin conservation projects are the renewable energy projects in the area. The interest in the area for energy producing projects is not new, and since the 20th century, energy producers have taken an active interest in the Norman-Breton Gulf. The attraction towards marine renewable energies in the region has led to the potential installation of offshore wind turbine projects in the Saint-Brieuc and Seine bays, as well as the development of a tidal farm project at Raz Blanchard. The Baie de Seine Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Project Manager was interviewed for this study. Part of the EIA was to determine the impact that the wind turbine vibrations would have on the marine life, such as the fish stock, shellfish and marine mammals (*i.e.*, specifically for the dolphins, there is presently a considerable lack of knowledge in this respect).

This offshore windmill project spans 10,500 km<sup>2</sup>, 8,075 are in the Baie de Seine, which coincide with the bottlenose dolphin population area. However, there is considerable uncertainty with regard to how the turbine sound levels of the turbines are going to affect the animals (*i.e.*, as at present this is difficult to evaluate). “In the end we have some clues but not all the clues and because nobody wants to test the noise level on live animals in a fishpond” (Renewable energy project manager, Personal Communication, January 2020).

Theoretically there is a solution to the sound issue, which is to develop a bubble curtain, which is apparently is a classical manner of reducing sounds from windfarms. This is effective however only effective when there is no current, which is a very different scenario to the Norman-Breton Gulf context, which has a lot of current. “But once you have current it is quite impossible to make these bubble curtains. It’s not impossible but it is hard” (Renewable energy project manager, Personal Communication, January 2020). At the time the research project was being executed, the EIA was being carried out and entailed participatory approach to get to know the real status quo of the situation and the perspectives of the different stakeholders associated to the project.

The Norman-Breton bottlenose dolphin project is an example that a multi-actor governance context that is considerably difficult to deal with. The mission of the project is clear, which is to conserve the dolphin population, however there are many different interests at stake:

- Conflicting interests with fellow conservation organizations
- The development of the wind farm projects in region.
- The opposition both recreational and professional fishermen (*i.e.*, and not forgetting to mention the conflict between these two stakeholders).
- The project’s international context, which may have reglementary implications due to Brexit.

## CONCLUSIONS

The bottlenose dolphin case study analyzed aimed at studying and preserving the Norman-Breton sedentary population of the species, which is the largest sedentary population in Europe. The main objective of the project is to gather scientific data so as to better understand this dolphin population. This case study is an excellent example of a multi-actor governance context that involves not only the scientific community (*i.e.*, universities, scientific institutions, and NGOs)

The Rio+20 Summit aimed at creating global goals that would resolve global environmental, social and economic challenges. It also marked the launch for the creation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known today as the “Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development”.

According to SDG 17, a holistic perspective is therefore necessary when developing laws to implement sustainability policies in an effective way. However not only are the regulatory authorities needed to implement change, but a global effort is more than necessary.

The very nature of the case study analyzed, being a marine conservation project with, at the geographical level, no land boundaries makes it a case with implications beyond the actual area being studied. The Normand-Breton bottlenose project is presently affected by

1. The potential construction of the offshore wind farms of Baie de Seine and St Brieux,
2. The fishing pressure exerted by both professional and recreational fishermen,
3. The pressure coming from the tourism industry from whale watching activities, and
4. The elevated levels of pollutants found in the ocean.

In 2020, the United Nations developed the “SDG Partnership Book”, which helps stakeholders to build high-impact multi-stakeholder partnerships to achieve the SDGs. Through the latter, it is hoped that the process of the creation of partnerships towards delivering the 2030 Agenda will be facilitated and accelerated. According to this document, effective partnering can be executed successfully through:

- (i) Self-awareness,
- (ii) Contextual awareness and
- (iii) Awareness of the complex interplay between oneself and one’s context.

For the Normand-Breton bottlenose dolphin case study, the project stakeholders were evaluated from a systematic perspective through the analysis of individual stakeholders and their interactions *via* the development of the stakeholder maps. This case study is therefore worthy of study to analyze the viability of SDG 17 in achieving specifically Target 14.2 of SDG 14, which aims to “by 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans”. To ensure the continuity of this project, a greater level of communication is necessary between the many different stakeholders in the project including environmental representatives, recreation and commercial fishermen, NGOs, renewable energy companies, companies and NGOs in British territories in the English Channel, and university researchers.

From the different analyses that were carried out, it was found that most of the stakeholders interviewed did seem to support the project. However, there were three main stakeholders that did not support the project, which were (1) the recreational fishermen, (3) the commercial fishermen, and (3) the renewable energy companies, whose main interest was to be able to build the windfarms in the area.

To the recreational fishermen, the dolphins were considered to be a threat to them and a burden to their fishing activity. Most of the recreational fishermen in the Normand-Breton Gulf area are retirees who occupy their free time fishing. They are used to the old times when there were no fishing quotas, and when they could take from the ocean as much fish as they wanted. Their generalized perspective is that if there are dolphins in the area, they are unable to fish. This consequently has led to a feeling of frustration and anger amongst the recreational fishermen. This whole situation is very unfortunate in the sense that it has made difficult the collaboration of this stakeholder group for certain conservation initiatives such as the creation of the Natura 2000 sites that aim to create a network of core breeding and resting sites for rare and threatened species, as well as the protection of specific habitat types which are protected in their own right (European Commission, 2021).

It was unfortunate not to have been able to interview the commercial fishermen. It was however possible to interview the regional Center of Maritime Affairs, which regulates the region’s maritime activities (*i.e.*, which includes the management of the professional sailors). According to the person interviewed, it was not in the professional fishermen’s interest to by catch marine mammals and this was therefore considered to be a mere consequence of fishing.

Furthermore, the dolphin, according to this stakeholder's perspective, was perceived to be really of no interest, perhaps only at the touristic level.

What complicates the conservation situation of the Normand-Breton sedentary bottlenose dolphin population even further is its international context as there is still some dolphin movement in Channel waters. The Brexit situation that came officially into being on the 1st of January 2021 is bound to affect the legal framework with regards to fisheries and conservation policies.

Finally, the renewable energy projects that are planned in the area are bound to have an effect on the dolphins (*i.e.*, specifically the noise of the wind farms). To date it is not known how the Normand-Breton bottlenose dolphin population will actually be affected, and this is why it is very important to ensure the longevity of the GECC dolphin conservation project.

GECC's bottlenose dolphin conservation project is an example of how multi-actor governance is essential, especially when we consider the various conflicts (as aforementioned) that the project is presently facing. A multi-actor governance approach helps to;

- (1) Ensure stakeholder participation,
- (2) Identify the barriers that could hinder this engagement,
- (3) Develop a multi-actor network, which is something that is so much needed in this project.

Most public collective governance initiatives are based on facilitating transparency, accountability, and participation (of stakeholders). These three critical ingredients are essential to strengthen governance at all levels, especially in projects such as the bottlenose dolphin conservation project in Normandy. It is therefore an example of a marine conservation project that has no geographical boundaries and where multi-actor type governance involving a multitude of stakeholders is essential to ensure its success, thus mirroring the kinds of situations found in many conservation and non-conservation projects worldwide.

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## **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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