



Territorial governance and the sustainability transition of logistics sector in Groix and Ushant islands (France): the implementation of a sustainable logistics plan

Virginie Augereau
CY Cergy Paris University, MATRiS
virginie.augereau@cyu.fr

Julien Le-Van-Suu
CY Cergy Paris University, MATRiS
julien.levansuu@cyu.fr

Marie Guingot
University of West Brittany, LETG
marie.guingot@univ-brest.fr

Following the implementation of an sustainability transition framework for logistics activities in several regional cities in France (Rennes, Brest, Lorient and Quimper), local actors on the Brittany islands have launched a similar approach.

In the French administrative context, urban and sustainable logistics charters serve as key instruments of dialogue and coordination among public and private stakeholders, facilitating the alignment of local logistics practices with national ecological and territorial objectives. Unlike rigid regulatory frameworks, these charters operate as voluntary, collaborative tools that foster negotiation, shared responsibility, and flexible governance, particularly valuable in complex, fragmented environments, such as island territories. Their flexibility allows them to bridge institutional gaps, integrate diverse interests, and support the sustainability transition by tailoring solutions to local realities, while remaining aligned with broader state-led decarbonization goals. This makes them



especially relevant in the Brittany islands, where logistical heterogeneity and geographic isolation demand context-sensitive, stakeholder-driven approaches. These charters particularly aim to promote sustainability transition in logistics, with government services providing strong incentives to decarbonize freight transport and the logistics sector.

The eleven Brittany islands, for which the Brittany Regional Council (the Transports Organizing Authority) ensures territorial continuity, form part of the Ponant islands, pre-continental islands off the Channel and Atlantic coasts that are inhabited all year round. Island services and maritime links facilitate exchanges between the islands and the mainland and support logistics chains involving island stakeholders. The eleven inhabited islands of Brittany vary significantly in size and population. Surface areas range from under 1 km² (e.g., Île de Sein) to over 85 km² (e.g., Belle-Île-en-Mer). Permanent populations range from fewer than 250 residents (e.g., Île de Sein; Ushant, approx. 850; Groix, approx. 2,300) to over 5,000 (Belle-Île-en-Mer). These islands face logistical challenges due to geographic isolation, seasonal tourism fluctuations, and fragmented supply chains.

In this research, territorial governance is understood as a coordination method that integrates various logistics stakeholders (Churchman et al., 2025), regardless of their positions and objectives related to project leaders. Thus, it can be studied in terms of conflicts and consultations, with a political approach developed by local actors as an alternative to the application of technical principles by local authorities and government departments (Fitzgerald & Palle, 2026). In Brittany, this approach is notable for being led by the Bretagne Supply Chain logistics cluster. This is a unique structure in terms of its role as a regional intermediary between public actors and businesses (Bourdin & Nadou, 2013), as well as its resources.

Given the heterogeneity and lack of standardization of the logistics chains of the 11 islands mentioned in the previous paragraph (Guingot, 2019), how can the sustainability transition of logistics, which has so far only been implemented in urban contexts, be achieved?

Within an established logistics management system that is based on established practices, the sustainability transition of logistics sectors can only be achieved by taking into account economic balances, stakeholder systems, and the specific characteristics of island services.



The approach's originality lies in its three-pronged analysis of planning documents, logistics governance and island services. These three areas enable the sustainability transition to be addressed while considering the islands' specific social, economic, and spatial characteristics.

Monitoring the Breton approach through documents and actions proposed by the state, local authorities, and Bretagne Supply Chain, as well as studying territorial governance and conducting field surveys through exploratory interviews on two case studies, will allow us to observe the Breton logistics project's process and how it considers island-specific characteristics. It will also enable us to examine the willingness to enable the sustainability transition of island services and the feasibility of decarbonization actions for these connections. This approach may encounter a complex administrative environment marked by fragmented competencies, multiple stakeholders and divergent interests. For example, the ports of the Breton islands, though historically belonging to the department, are now managed by a plurality of local, regional, and private actors. The Brittany Region, as the granting authority for maritime connections and responsible for territorial continuity, plays a central coordinating role in logistics policy implementation.

The analysis and processing method is described as mixed (Grant et al., 2023): it provides access to multiple data sources and offers quantitative processing and text extraction from qualitative material. This approach has already been shown to be robust in enabling a detailed description of the evolution of mobility policies (Buhler & Lethier, 2020), and we propose applying it to a logistics case. Data is collected through participant observation of the development of the sustainable logistics charter and the Regional Council roadmap for the movement of goods and merchandise, running in parallel. To supplement this material, we will conduct 10-20 semi-structured interviews with officials, business representatives, island land transport operators, and shipping companies on two islands that have diverse logistics operations yet share common characteristics, such as the proportion of second homes and surface area: Ushant and Groix. The collected material will then be analysed using textometry as a discourse analysis method with IRaMuTeQ software, in accordance with previous research (Le-Van-Suu, 2024). This will highlight the spatial specificities or similarities of the transition approach (Hansen & Coenen, 2015) on the islands linked to the sustainable urban logistics charter and regional roadmap approaches.



Bibliography

Bourdin, S., & Nadou, F. (2020). The role of a local authority as a stakeholder encouraging the development of biogas: A study on territorial intermediation. *Journal of Environmental Management*, 258, 110009.

Buhler, T., & Lethier, V. (2020). Analysing urban policy discourses using textometry : An application to French urban transport plans (2000–2015). *Urban Studies*, 57(10), 2181-2197. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098019873824>

Churchman, P., Pangbourne, K., Dekker, T., & Sanchez Rodrigues, V. (2025). Purposive transition governance for road freight decarbonization. *Transport Policy*, 172, 103771. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tranpol.2025.103771>

Fitzgerald L. M. & Palle A. (2026). Answering the governance gap in energy transition policies. Finding “acceptancy”, a representation discrepancy? *Applied Geography*, 186, 103846. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apgeog.2025.103846>

Guingot M. (2019). L'île, l'entreprise et le navire. Etude de la desserte insulaire et des adaptations des entreprises du Ponant. Thèse universitaire. Université de Bretagne Occidentale. <https://tel.archives-ouvertes.fr/tel-02456036v2>

Grant, D. B., Shaw, S., Sweeney, E., Bahr, W., Chaisurayakarn, S., & Evangelista, P. (2023). Using mixed methods in logistics and supply chain management research : Current state and future directions. *The International Journal of Logistics Management*, 34(7), 177-198. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJLM-04-2023-0156>

Hansen T. & Coenen L. (2015). The geography of sustainability transitions: Review, synthesis and reflections on an emergent research field, *Environmental Innovation and Societal Transitions*, Volume 17, Pages 92-109, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eist.2014.11.001>



Hyland, M., Bou-Mjahed, L., Mahmassani, H. S., Verbas, I. O., Xu, X. (Alex), Smilowitz, K., & Johnson, B. (2020). Potential for a logistics island to circumvent container port congestion in a constrained environment. *Transport Policy*, 86, 50-59. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tranpol.2019.06.011>

Le-Van-Suu, J. (2024). Assessing organised proximity with textometry and network analysis. The case of logistics territorial governance in the Occitanie region. *Revue d'Économie Régionale & Urbaine*, Février(1), 47-75. <https://doi.org/10.3917/reru.241.0047>

Masson S. (2017). La gouvernance territoriale de la production des espaces logistiques : Enjeux, rôle des innovations territoriales et limites - Réflexions à partir de l'exemple français. *Revue canadienne des sciences régionales - Nouvelles controverses du développement territorial*, 165-173. <https://idjs.ca/images/rcsr/archives/V40N2-MASSON.pdf>

Rodríguez-Pose A. & Bartalucci F. (2024). The green transition and its potential territorial discontents, *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society*, Volume 17, Issue 2, Pages 339–358, <https://doi.org/10.1093/cjres/rsad039>