

IDENTIFYING STAKEHOLDERS IN THE PORT SYSTEM: LESSONS FROM A BRAZILIAN MULTI-CASE STUDY

RESUMO

The Brazilian port sector has evolved exponentially in recent years. This is evident in the operational and financial results, since various cargo handling records have been set by ports across the country. However, more than a transformation in the business sector, the true changes have been in the care taken by port authorities that understood the concept of Triple Bottom Line (3BL) and were able to give body and shape to sustainability policies. There are several considerations for ports that adopt sustainability initiatives and actions. These initiatives include concepts like Triple Bottom Line (3BL), Ecological Footprint, Circular Economy, and more recently, Environmental, Social, and Corporate Governance (ESG) strategies. This essay provides a road map for the Brazilian port system in identifying the port stakeholders involved in ESG practices. We have employed a multi-method technique, including analysis of data collected with and without mediation. Data sources include ports' publicly available reports; semi-structured interviews applied between October and December 2022; video conferences; secondary data analysis (e.g., Demographic Census, PNAD, etc.); technical visits in port sites; spatial data analysis (maps); and focus groups. The analysis was divided into public and private ports, identifying their differences. The stakeholder analysis is part of the guide "Best Practices Guide for Port Sustainability: An ESG Strategy", the result of a collaborative effort involving the LabPortos Research Group of the Federal University of Maranhão, the Association of Private Port Terminals (ATP), and the Brazilian Association of Port and Waterway Entities (ABEPH) and their sustainability committees. The ATP committee, the "Sustentar", comprises representatives from all TUPs (Private Use Terminals) associated, while ABEPH encompasses its Environmental Technical Chamber. These two committees indicated professionals to be interviewed, focusing the best sustainable practices mapping and, in the end, the Guide validation. The interviews gathered information to ensure that the Guide reflected the sector's vision, and not just that of the technical team responsible. In addition to the industry professionals, teachers, and researchers on sustainability were contacted. The Guide methodology comprised 11 steps (as shown in Figure 1) with the Stakeholder mapping process focused on steps 3 through 7 (Content Analysis, Digital Analysis, Interviews, Online Questionnaires; and On-site visits). The results of our research indicated that involving stakeholders in port management can potentially increase the efficiency of port operations while complying with regulations and addressing community concerns. Nevertheless, managing port stakeholders toward sustainability practices can indeed be quite complex process. This essay presents the best practices observed in research focusing on Brazilian ports, where was observed as in the existing research: it is possible to have a port stakeholder management without emphasizing the ESG aspects. However, the opposite is almost impossible, as the ESG strategy applied to ports must consider the stakeholder management beforehand. Our research has contributed to point directions in the process of stakeholder mapping and identification for Brazilian ports, and indicated the need for continuing research, especially, to measure the efficiency and effectiveness of ESG strategies and how they enhanced (or not) the interactions with port stakeholders.

Palavras-Chave: ESG / stakeholder / governance