



Research partnerships and collaborations helping to address the sustainable development goals

Below are examples demonstrating our response to Target 17.6:

Enhance the global partnership for sustainable development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the sustainable development goals in all countries, in particular developing countries

Our research into marine biodiversity and ocean resource users has successfully helped to create Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in Ascension Island, Gabon and the Ivory Coast. This has only been feasible due to close partnerships with government, third-sector and industry partnerships. For example in Gabon, by embedding researchers in national agencies also offered the opportunity to provide valuable training and ensure both scientific evidence and international best practice inform new legislation to protect the natural environment. Our support of and work with Gabon Bleu, a national Gabonese initiative established to address the issue of poorly protected marine biodiversity and ecosystems, has played a significant role in creating 9 new national parks and 11 aquatic reserves covering 56,000km². Gabon is the first African country to protect its marine resources in this way and its comprehensive network of marine protected areas is Africa's largest, safeguarding globally significant populations of marine vertebrates and fisheries resources.

From a global perspective Gabon's MPA network, which now covers 26% of its waters far exceeds efforts in 42 more economically developed (high-income) nations; as well as international commitments outlined by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Aichi Biodiversity Target 11, and UN Sustainable Development (SDG) Goal 14.5 that call for countries to protect at least 10% of their waters by 2020 and 2030, respectively (Figure 1). As a result of this success Gabon is now celebrated as a global exemplar and is at the forefront of international efforts to increase protection of the global ocean to 30% by 2030.

In addition, the comprehensive nature of the team's research activities in Gabon means that these data are also being used to address other key conservation challenges, with Wildlife Conservation Society Country Program Director Gaspard Abitsi writing "The University of Exeter's research has also been instrumental in enhancing fisheries management....contributing to implementation of fisheries zones, revision of the fisheries licensing process and infractions ,.....a ban on discards , and the legal requirement to deploy turtle exclude devices (TEDs) on all shrimp trawlers".