

## **Managed realignment projects on land owned by the Conservatoire du littoral: two examples in Normandy**

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Against today's backdrop of rising sea levels and climate change, the Conservatoire du littoral, the French public agency in charge of coastal protection and France's largest owner of polders, is considering managed realignment as a strategy for adapting and managing its land. It is hence anticipating future changes to habitats located in areas likely to be flooded and taking steps to accompany them.

Artelia has conducted managed realignment studies on two polders located at estuary mouths on behalf of the Normandy shoreline division of the Conservatoire du littoral. Several key stages of the study and evaluation approach that was proposed and tested deserve special mention:

- A significant amount of time was devoted to project representation and social acceptance aspects;
- The objectives were reformulated and ranked in collaboration with the stakeholders involved in the approach;
- The criteria for evaluating the restoration scenarios were defined and weighted by a technical committee;
- The stakeholders interviewed at the beginning of the study were consulted again at the end, enabling them to express their opinions regarding the approach.

The managed realignment of the terrains François (20 ha) on the Orne estuary has three main objectives: restore the salt marshes in the framework of adapting coastline management strategies to address the impacts of climate change; maintaining the existing habitats with heritage interest across the estuary, which is classified as a Special Protection Area under the EU Birds Directive; restoring the estuarine character of the landscape and the associated uses.

Among the various methods for reconnecting land and sea that are proposed, evaluated and compared, the project to be implemented includes opening a 30 metres wide breach. This ambitious measure will benefit birds within the SPA and bring functional improvements for fish in the downstream section of the river Orne.