Exploring Managerial Perceptions of Stakeholders:
Case Study of a Project-based Non-profit Organisation

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Brenda Trespalacios
Summary

For the past couple of decades, third sector organisations have registered a fast growth over the world with a focus on social, economic and political concerns whilst holding a presence in public matters. This study is mainly focused on non-profit organisations (NPOs). Organisations supporting social concerns on a not-for-profit (NFP) basis. Nowadays, NPOs are a social trend where people with different backgrounds and purposes aim to get involved in. Their participation is to either assist a community or a cause (as a contributor), or to obtain assistance when being part of a community (as a beneficiary). Nonetheless, the challenges as well as the opportunities faced by NPOs are widely acknowledged in both practice and theory, with a special focus on the different organisation’s participants involved, that is, stakeholders. In order to “do the right project” whilst “doing the project right” (Williams & Samser, 2010, p. 38), NPOs need the support and collaboration of stakeholders to obtain funds, operate, meet a community needs, and survive in the market. Aiming to find out how are relationships between stakeholders and NPOs managers established and maintained, the study analyses the managerial approaches undertaken by the organisation’s employees towards stakeholders. Further, in order to identify the characteristics of entrepreneurial project-based NPOs, the study explores the organisation requirements to properly develop within the mentioned sector. By hence, the NPO concept is analysed within the entrepreneurial context to understand and recognise the stakeholder management practices employed in such scenario.

There is limited literature drawing on stakeholder management within NPOs. However, there is even less research done studying the link between NPOs and entrepreneurship. For the purpose of this study, which is to contribute to the general body of knowledge by analysing stakeholder management in an NPO within the entrepreneurship field, this study has selected a Swedish NPO as a main focus. With grounds on the existing literature discussing stakeholder classification and participation in the mentioned type of organisations, this study identifies the different groups of stakeholders and their different meanings to the organisation. At the same time, the lack of research in entrepreneurial project-based NPOs is highlighted, encouraging further research in related areas. This research is based on a single case study of an NPO operating in Sweden, given the particularity and uniqueness of the phenomenon studied. Qualitative data is collected through the implementation of unstructured and semi-structured interviews with top management team (TMT) members and managers in the NPO selected as study focus, a total of five people contacted out of twelve employees. Then data is analysed and the study findings are presented and linked to existing literature. Further, the suggestion of five propositions for further research are presented. Finally, the study conclusions are outlined, along with the managerial and theoretical implications, and the study limitations.

**Keywords:** stakeholder management, non-profit organisation, NPO managers, entrepreneurship, relationship strategies
### List of Abbreviations

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CRM</td>
<td>Customer relationship management</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSR</td>
<td>Corporate Social Responsibility</td>
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<td>ECC</td>
<td>Essentially contested concept</td>
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<td>HRM</td>
<td>Human resource management</td>
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<td>NFP</td>
<td>Not-for-profit organisations</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental organisations</td>
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<td>NPO</td>
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1. Introduction

Whether approaching public concerns, supporting social movements, or providing services, the various types of third sector organisations are now highly recognized worldwide (Lewis, 2001, p. 1). However, little attention has been given to their structure and management (Lewis, 2001, p. 2). The management of an organisation defines its performance and most importantly, its survival. As stated by Udoh James (1998, p. 229), “management capacity is the lifeblood of all organisations, irrespective of whether they are private entities, public agencies, NFP concerns or non-governmental varieties.” This means, that no matter the type of institution nor the field where it is developed, the organisation requires of strategic and accurate management practices to meet its objectives. For the purpose of this research, the study has a focus on third sector organisations, that is, the NFP sector. Because of the iterative economic development and changes in communities, as well as the increasing unconformity of people towards governments, NPOs are in constant growth (Liao & Huang, 2016, p. 21). This type of organisations upholds different grounds, acting mainly as a mediator “between social needs and government supplies” - Anthony and Young (1993, cited in Liao & Huang 2016, p. 21). Nonetheless, NPOs may often have an unclear vision organisation, which impacts on the organisation’s management strategies and by hence, on the management of the organisation’s staff (Liao & Huang, 2016, p. 20).

An NPO’s management does not only depend on its hired employees or its board members – group of members acting mostly as directors and decision-makers – but also on the other actors involved in the organisation’s financial, operational, and cultural processes, namely, stakeholders. Julian (2016, p. 509) recognizes three categories of stakeholders in NPOs: (1) donors, (2) implementing agency, and (3) local partners and beneficiaries. Three interdependent groups that need to maintain effective relationships in order to meet not only their own expectations but also those of the organisation in general (Khang & Moe, 2008, p. 74). This paper studies how relationships can differ amongst stakeholder groups, with a special focus from the managerial department of the organisation. Stakeholder management has been recognized as an area of interest in the general management literature from its concept introduction made by Freeman in 1984 (Jepsen & Eskerod, 2009, p. 336). Since then, a meticulous identification, classification and prioritisation of stakeholders (Forman & Discenza, 2012, p. 1) is known to be necessary for them to feel appreciated by the organisation and, therefore, to maintain an interest on a continued collaboration. Yet, the techniques and tools used to achieve the most convenient stakeholder management approach, may vary according to each organisation and to the projects they are involved in. For the purpose of this research, the authors discuss and evaluate the stakeholder management approach undertaken by the organisation studied.

Although it has been existing for the past 30 to 40 years (Landström, et al., 2012, p. 1155), it is until not long ago that the field of entrepreneurship has become a popular field of research amongst scholars. Academics would claim that entrepreneurship includes processes required to both exploit opportunities and people exploiting such opportunities (Landström, et al., 2012, p. 1155). At the same time, the field of entrepreneurship is considered as “a driver of economic growth and prosperity”, as defined by Baumol et al. (2007, cited in Lundqvist &
Williams Middleton 2010, p. 24). Same that is considered as a main motivator for various countries to embrace and support the application of entrepreneurial projects and models amongst their citizens. A good example of this kind of practice is Sweden, where its welfare system is closely comparable with the public sector, which is guided by the government (Lundqvist & Williams Middleton, 2010, p. 26). For the purpose of this research, the study is based in Sweden, in consideration of the field’s popularity and support within the country.

Overall, this paper aims to contribute to the general body of knowledge by analysing stakeholder management in an NPO within the entrepreneurship field. This study has selected a Swedish NPO as a main focus for research. It is important to mention that this research does not intend to define stakeholder management, but to explore it from a third sector organisation point of view, focusing on the organisation managers’ perceptions and their relationship with other stakeholders. More specifically, this research studies managers’ perceptions towards stakeholders, their identification, classification and prioritisation approaches, communication strategies, and outcomes of the organisation’s stakeholder management practices in general.

1.1 Research Question, Aim and Objectives

Various gaps were identified in the critical review of the literature related to this research. It was realized by the authors that there was a lack of knowledge on how should stakeholders be identified and analysed in non-profit sectors. In addition, an absence of information on the factors impacting stakeholders’ relationships was revealed, along with a deficit of understanding NPOs organisational behaviour (Bryson, 2004, p. 22; Banks et al. 2016, p. 19; Aldashev et al. 2015, p. 3). Consequently, the authors started posing questions to themselves in relation to stakeholder management best practices in NPOs – Are stakeholder management ideas shared and applied similarly by every employee within an NPO? Do NPOs implement a stakeholder culture? Are the organisational strategies understood and employed similarly by managers?... In addition to these interrogations, the lack of accuracy on entrepreneurial findings (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000, p. 219) caught the authors’ attention. By hence, they started to consider the outlined context as the study’s research core. Furthermore, as both authors started conducting the first round of interviews for data collection, they were able to get a more clear vision of the organisation’s current situation in terms of stakeholder management. Finally, as they would get a deeper insight, and by combining the earlier mentioned gaps in that specific field, the authors were able to modify and shape the study’s research questions several times until defining the final interrogations:

Why do managers’ perceptions differ in relation to stakeholders in an entrepreneurial project-based NPO?

What are the outcomes of the managers’ different perceptions about stakeholders?

The research aim is to explore the implications of stakeholder management in NPOs. This means, to understand why, the perception of some of the internal stakeholders – managers – towards other internal and external stakeholders can vary amongst themselves within NPOs
handling entrepreneurial projects and what would be the likely outcomes. To achieve this, the following objectives have been defined:

- Discover how NPOs practice (both internal and external) stakeholder management in entrepreneurial projects;
- Recognize the various stakeholder groups involved in the running of entrepreneurial projects in NPOs, as well as their classification; and
- Contribute to the NPO knowledge and increase awareness on benefits of a systematic stakeholder analysis in entrepreneurial projects.

This research has adopted an exploratory single case study strategy in order to analyse a rare and unique phenomenon likely to be replicated (O'Gorman & Macintosh, 2015, p. 84; Saunders et al. 2009, p. 147; Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 537). By hence, a Swedish NPO acting in the entrepreneurial sector is the main focus of study.

1.2 Delimitations of the Study

Delimitations to accomplish the objectives of this research and due to methodological decisions described in Chapter 3, this study has been limited to understanding the perceptions of employees in Organisation Z, which is a non-profit organisation implementing entrepreneurial projects, and which is based in Sweden.

1.3 Structure of the Study

Chapter 1 – Introduction
A presentation of the general topic is given whilst highlighting the need for such research. The research questions, aim and objectives are outlined. Key concepts are defined, the authors’ motivation to conduct the research is explained, as well as the methods used for literature review.

Chapter 2 – Theoretical Background
A critical review of the existing literature is provided establishing study propositions. Initially, the discipline of stakeholder management is generally presented, with a special focus on stakeholders theory, stakeholders classification and the analysis process drawn in literature. Secondly, management practices in the industry of NPOs are analysed, stressing stakeholder participation in such type of organisations. Lastly, details are given on NPOs handling entrepreneurial projects. Sweden’s strong emergence on entrepreneurship is also discussed.

Chapter 3 – Research Methodology
The complete methodology implemented in the study is explained. Theoretical grounds are given to justify the application of the philosophical strategies and research strategies applied. The research approach undertaken is accurately justified for the purposes of developing the existing theory in the fields related.
Chapter 4 – Data Collection
The data collection techniques used for the qualitative case study are introduced, justifying the research approach and objectives. The method templates are presented, and the selection of the sample is outlined. Further, the organisation studied is introduced to the lecturer.

Chapter 5 – Data Analysis
The process followed for data analysis is outlined and the unit of analysis is in-depth explained. The procedure followed by a coding and categorisation is carefully explained, finalising with the presentation of the data analysis reflecting a summary of the data analysed.

Chapter 6 – Findings
The authors expose the study outcomes by having a structured discussion. The findings are presented in different categories according to the data gathered and a sample of the data gathered is highlighted in tables.

Chapter 7 – Discussions
A comparison of the obtained findings with the originally identified theory is made whilst presenting the various study propositions made by the authors, and suggestions for further studies are presented.

Chapter 8 – Conclusions
A final overview of the research questions, aim and objectives is provided; whilst exploring their evaluation and connection to the findings of the study. To conclude, the theoretical and managerial contributions of the case study are presented. In addition, the authors explain the study limitations along with a call for further research.

1.4 Motivation for Research
Various are the factors that guided the authors in selecting the subject of the study. Both authors, with an academic background in business and strategic project management held different practical experience in the selected fields. One of the authors had been previously involved in entrepreneurship projects whilst the other one had been part of an international non-governmental organisation (NGO). With the aim of combining these two fields of interest, in addition to one common topic of attention (entrepreneurship), both authors then decided to explore stakeholder management practices within NPOs involved in entrepreneurial projects. The final purpose of research was modified as the authors were drawing deeper and deeper in the literature, as well as they were collecting data. Nonetheless, the more they would develop the research, the more relevant they would consider the study for the fields under consideration, given the limited information available and the increasing popularity of the concepts studied. Moreover, the authors considered this study as a unique opportunity to learn more about the topic under consideration and its employment in a country different from theirs; Sweden as this case study. This would also enable them to practice networking in the fields of interest.
1.5 Relevant Concepts

Below are listed the relevant concepts used as main focus in this study:

**Stakeholder:** “Any group or individual who can affect or is affected by achievement of a corporation’s purpose” (Freeman, 1984, p. vi).

**Stakeholder management:** Process to evaluate the alignment between the organisational strategies and stakeholders expectatives, verifying these are being met in accordance to the NPO’s operations and outcomes (Fletcher, et al., 2003, p. 508).

**Manager:** Responsible of handling relationships through the implementation of strategic decisions and allocation of resources in relevant and coherent manner, whilst meeting the interest and claims of all types of stakeholder groups (Hill & Jones, 1992, p. 134).

**TMT:** Team members at the top of the organisation holding individual authority to employ whilst making effective, comprehensive and faster strategic decisions (Talaaulicar, et al., 2005).

**Third sector organisation:** Organisations involved in diverse social and public matters (Lewis, 2001, p. 1).

**Non-profit organisation:** “An entity that legally prohibited from disturbing profits to its stakeholders or managers” - Hansmann (1980, cited in Shah et al. 2017, p. 3).

**Non-governmental organisation:** Sub-sector of the non-profit field that is commonly focused on the development and betterment of society at local, national and global scales (Lewis, 2001, p. 1; Aldashev, et al., 2015, p. 3).

**Entrepreneurship:** “The scholarly examination of how, by whom, and with what effects opportunities to create future goods and services are discovered, evaluated and exploited” (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000, p. 218).

**Project:** “A temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product, service, or result” (PMI, 2013, p. 3).

1.6 Literature Selection Methods

The goal of the literature review is to educate oneself in the interested area and to get better knowledge and understanding of the existing literature before modelling arguments or justifications. It seeks to analyse and summarize a body of knowledge by highlighting new research topics and identifying gaps (O’Gorman & Macintosh, 2015, p. 32). The exact purpose of reviewing the literature depends on the approach the authors plan to take in their research. An inductive approach, chosen for this study, considers collecting data and developing theories that will be afterwards linked to the literature. However, Saunders et al.
(2009, p. 61) believed that “such an approach cannot be taken without competent knowledge” of researched area.

The primary stage of literature review for this study was to define the parameters for the research questions and objectives (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 59). For the purpose of this research, the authors outlined the following parameters: language (English), subject area (stakeholder management), context (entrepreneurial field and non-profit organisation), and literature type (articles from peer-reviewed journals, dissertations, books, conference papers).

As a next step, keywords were generated, as the crucial step of planning a search for relevant sources (O’Gorman & Macintosh, 2015, p. 36). The main keywords used for the literature search for stakeholder management were (keywords were also used in combination): stakeholder theory, stakeholder management, identification of stakeholders, stakeholder classification, managers’ role in stakeholder theory, stakeholder management tools and techniques, process of stakeholder analysis, internal and external stakeholders, managers skills and competences. The keywords used for the literature search for NPOs and its link to stakeholder management were: non-profit organisation, management strategies in NPOs, stakeholder management in non-profit organisations, human resource management in NPOs. Lastly, keywords used for the literature search for entrepreneurial projects generally and then specifically in NPOs were: entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial projects, entrepreneurial projects in NPOs, entrepreneurship in Sweden. It should be mentioned that linking these topics was challenging in terms of literature search, since entrepreneurial projects were barely mentioned in relation of NPOs.

Based on a criterion sampling (Patton, 1990, p. 52), search was made in various platforms, such as universities’ library databases, Google Scholar and Google; also, the authors had a chance to use printed resources from Umeå University library. The sources used for gathering information were: (e)books, dissertations, textbooks, conference papers and mostly, peer reviewed articles. The majority of articles were listed in ABS rankings (Harvey, et al., 2015): “Organisational Dynamics”, “International Journal of Project Management”, “Project Management Journal”, “Management Decision”, “Management Decision Journal”, “Journal of Business Venturing”, “Non-profit Management and Leadership”, “International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal”, amongst others. To provide an initial inventory of articles searched, the authors used the list of keywords (outlined earlier) in the title, abstract, or keywords (Shepherd, et al., 2015, p. 13). Finally, the all-embracing literature search helped the authors to improve and adjust the research questions, and at the same time, revealed the massive gap existing in current literature justifying the purpose of the suggested study.
2. Theoretical Background

In this chapter, the theoretical background for the topic is presented. Firstly, the topic of stakeholder theory is introduced, emphasizing the managers’ role in this field. Secondly, the topic of NPO is introduced by presenting an overview of the third sector institutions, the differences and similitudes between the for-profit and not-for-profit sectors, as well as their categories and objectives. Next, strategies to maintain an adequate management in NPOs are presented, followed by the steps to follow by NPO leaders. Further, an in-depth discussion about stakeholder management in the not-for-profit sector is presented. Thirdly, the NPO concept is analysed with regards to the entrepreneurial field, followed by the identification and presentation of research gaps. Lastly, the authors discuss and elaborate upon the research areas studied by presenting a literature summary comprising the links, differences and similitudes identified.

2.1 Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholder management has received significant attention in both general management literature and project management literature since Freeman introduced the concept in his book “Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach” from 1984 (Mitchell, et al., 1997, p. 853; Jepsen & Eskerod, 2009, p. 336). For a long time, the purpose of the stakeholder approach has been to increase the vision of duties and roles of management team for profit maximization. In contrast, stakeholder theory aims to understand which individual or group of stakeholders requires attention from management and which one does not (Mitchell, et al., 1997, p. 855). Still, stakeholder theory can be considered as an umbrella concept rather than a distinct theory with multiple opposing interpretations (Miles, 2017, p. 21). The concept of stakeholder has become crucial to business; yet, the simple question What is a stakeholder? has not been answered with any degree of consensus, with more than hundreds of distinctive published definitions (Miles, 2011, p. 285; Mainardes, et al., 2012, p. 1862). This arises from the nature of theory itself as a mixture of various fields covering business ethics, strategic management, governance, marketing, human resource management, and other business-related disciplines. Serving different purposes and focusing on characteristics that are appropriate to specific context, emerge different definitions of stakeholder and conceptualizations of its theory (Freeman, et al., 2010, p. 211).

2.1.1 Definition of Stakeholders

According to Freeman (1984, p. vi), stakeholder is “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by achievement of a corporation’s purpose”, but the combination of different views on management literature suggest that the actual definition is more complicated. Broad definition would describe the concept of stakeholder as an individual (an agent, participant, partner, member etc.); a group (market, network, society etc.); or an entity (organisation, institution or corporation) that is not necessarily a human but for example, an environment. “Stakeholders may be allies, beneficiaries, benefit providers, benefit receivers, value chain participants, claimants, risk bearers or risk providers” (Miles, 2017, p. 24). Still, Mitchell et al. (1997, pp. 855-856) claimed that stakeholder as an entity can be described very easily and there is not much dispute about it. Nonetheless, the main area of argument is its existence.
and nature of stake. Miles (2012, cited in Miles, 2017, p.25) also considered stakeholders in terms of different eras in time: past, present and future. Stakeholders may be influenced, impacted, or affected by an organisation and vice versa. The impact can be at the same time positive or negative. Relationship between an organisation and stakeholders can have different forms like cooperation, involvement, interaction, contact, exchange; and it can be direct or indirect, implicit or explicit, formal or informal, internal or external, voluntary or involuntary, etc. Relationship arises from different reasons like interest, claim, stake, right, agreement, contract, and risk; these can be based on power, legitimacy, urgency, proximity or frequency of contact, etc.

The idea of having stake was presented earlier in 1979 by Sturdivant (p. 54), who believed that every company has various groups of stakeholders that assess and respond to corporate actions from different perspectives. He described those stakeholders’ groups as “people who are affected by corporate policies and practices and who see themselves as having a stake in the business”. Later, a ten-years ethic-based definition was presented by Alkhafaji (1989, p. 36) who stated that stakeholders are groups to whom company should be responsible for. Stakeholders in corporations are defined as “the individuals and constituencies that contribute, either voluntarily or involuntarily, to its wealth-creating capacity and activities, and that are therefore its potential beneficiaries and/or risk bearers” (Post, et al., 2002, p. 19). In contrast, Phillips (2003, p. 29) underlined that stakeholders are those actors who managers are obliged to take into account in their decision-making.

In the project management field, stakeholders are “people or groups that have, or believe they have, legitimate claims against the substantive aspects of a project. A stake is an interest or share or claim in a project; it can range from informal interest in the undertaking at one extreme, to a legal claim of ownership at the other extreme” (Cleland, 1998, p. 55). A similar definition is used fifteen years later by PMI (2013, p. 29) where additionally, it is mentioned the positive and negative effect of stakeholder involvement and their interest on performance and completion of projects. Newcombe specified stakeholders were those who have an expectation or stake in projects including “clients, project managers, designers, subcontractors, suppliers, funding bodies, users and the community at large” (2003, p. 842). Johnson et al. (2017, pp. 133-134) also linked the concept of stakeholder to strategic decisions in organisations which are influenced by the expectations of people who have a stake on business. Stakeholders are dependent on the organisation to fulfil their purposes and at the same time, on whom the organisation depends. Moreover, stakeholders form the organisational strategy and before putting this strategy into action, their requirements are going through the ethical and governance screening. These organisational stakeholders are: “owners, employees, customers, supplier and communities” (Johnson, et al., 2017, p. 133).

Analysis show that the concept of stakeholder should be considered as an essentially contested concept (ECC). This explains why definitions of concept vary from each other and why looking for a singular definition is unattainable and inappropriate (Miles, 2012, p. 285). The theory of ECC was proposed by Gallie (1956, pp. 167-198). Decades later, an explanatory presentation of his assumptions on the concept of stakeholder was ECC and not simply vague or confused, was demonstrated by Miles in 2012 (p. 295). The concept of stakeholder is appraised in nature and internally complex as it consists of multiple components. At the same time, it can be described in various ways, and in addition, theories
are so diverse that they have been categorized. Stakeholder concept has been modified and developed over time, proving that it is open in character. Finally, the stakeholder theory is used aggressively and defensively as each party tries to contest – discuss, define and reject previous definitions. Another condition for the concept to be derived from authoritative exemplar – in this case in Freeman (1984), already mentioned above – is also met and hopefully, the constant debates about conceptual clarification will lead to a development of analytic framework (Miles, 2017, pp. 27-28).

2.1.2 Classification and Prioritisation of Stakeholders

There are many opinions on how to classify stakeholders. Kaler (2002, p. 91) divided stakeholder into three groups: claimant, influencer, and combinatorary. Some stakeholders have a claim on the business services, moreover, it can be claim based on ownership, which means that the business has some responsibilities for them. Influencer can be anyone who has any type of interaction with the business and its operations. Combinatory definition combines ethics and strategy whilst capturing both attributes of claimant and influencer (Kaler, 2002, pp. 94-96). Similarly, to Kaler (2002), Miles (2017, pp. 34-35) used claimant and influencer in her classification, but she also added collaborator and recipient. According to her, an influencer stakeholder has a strategy and capacity to influence the company’s actions. Such action can damage, collaborate, impact and at the same time, have some claims. Influence and legitimacy are high if the network is very strong and connection is legal/contractual. Claimant stakeholder has a claim and related strategy to pursue the claim, which may come from social or moral rights. Therefore, claimants have less power than influencers. A collaborator stakeholder does not have a strategy which can influence the firm but on the other hand, the actor possesses the ability to cooperate with the organisation. Lastly, the recipient stakeholders do not have a high power and do not actively pursue any claims, but they are impacted by the organisation’s activities. Nonetheless, Miles (2017, p. 37) clarifies that these four classes are not mutually exclusive.

Stakeholders are also classified as external and internal actors (Fletcher, et al., 2003, p. 510). External stakeholders can be grouped into five categories according to the type of relationship and potential effect they can have in the company’s strategy. These types are: economic stakeholders (suppliers, customers, banks, owners, distributors), social/political stakeholders (local councils, government, policy-makers), technological stakeholders (standards agencies, key adopters), community stakeholders (local citizens), and internal stakeholders (factories, local offices, employees of different departments). It is possible that some individuals represent more than one group and, simultaneously, influence of different stakeholder groups can vary according to situations (Johnson, et al., 2017, pp. 134-135). Internal stakeholders according to Freeman and McVea (2001, p. 22) are management and employees of the organisation.

Categorisation and prioritisation of stakeholders according to their influences on decisions is a very useful and accepted way to do stakeholder mapping (Johnson, et al., 2017, p. 136). As a first step, an assessment of the significance of expectations should include verdicts on three issues: What is the probability that a stakeholder group would impose its expectations? Does this stakeholder group have power? What is the impact of stakeholders on strategies? To
answer these questions Newcombe suggests a *Power/Interest matrix* (2003, p. 844). The power/interest matrix of Newcombe (2003, p. 844) differentiates stakeholders according to their *power* (high, low) and *interest* (high, low) and place them in different zones. It also shows that strategies project managers need to establish and sustain each of the stakeholder group. For instance, stakeholder group in Zone A has low power and low interest, so they require minimal effort. But stakeholders in Zone B with low power and high interest, require good communication so they are informed about main decisions. The most important stakeholders are those from Zone D with high power and interest; consequently, they need to be considered mostly while formulating strategies but often players from Zone C (low interest and high power), are the most problematic to manage (Newcombe, 2003, pp. 844-845). This allocation of stakeholders helps managers to evaluate the extent of the difficulty they may face whilst implementing the organisational activities.

More recently, Johnson et al. (2017, pp. 136-138) suggested a modified version of the *power/interest* matrix (see Figure 1) – replacing the term *interest* for *attention*. Power is described as “the ability of individuals or groups to persuade, induce or coerce others into following certain courses of action” (Johnson, et al., 2017, p. 136). Power can be originated from hierarchical positions, governance arrangements, holding resources, possessing knowledge, and skills. Power indicators can be statuses and claim on resources that individuals or groups have. Similarly, stakeholders can be differentiated according to the attention they pay to the company and to the specific issues within. The degree of attention can be caused by three factors: *criticality* (if an issue is very critical for stakeholders, they will pay extra attention); *channels* (if there are proper channels of information and effective communication, stakeholders will have a better will to pay more attention); and *cognitive capacity* (if stakeholders have enough cognitive capacity, they will be able to handle all information). The power/attention matrix is useful for prioritisation of stakeholders to understand who are the key supporters and blockers of the company’s strategy, to sustain the level of power/attention of some key stakeholders and to reposition certain stakeholders.

![Figure 1: Stakeholder mapping - power/interest matrix. Source: Newcombe, 2003, p.844](image)

Mitchell et al. (1997, p. 865) suggested that there is a need of evaluation of stakeholders according to their power, legitimacy and urgency for a better understanding of “The Principle of Who and What Really Counts”. Mitchell et al. (1997, p. 869) cited Weber (1947), who described power as a relationship between several actors in which one actor can “force”
others to do something without having a will and legitimacy - as a perception that actions of individual, group or company are needed and suitable within a social system. Urgency is explained as a degree of time-sensitivity and criticality of stakeholder’s claim (Mitchell, et al., 1997, p. 867). Stakeholder classes – seven in total – can be identified according to the possession of single or various attributes: power, legitimacy and urgency. Latent stakeholders only possess one attribute, whilst moderately salient stakeholders are expectants possessing two attributes, and highly salient are definitive stakeholders with all attributes. Each class has its descriptive name and special suggested managerial implications (Mitchell, et al., 1997, p. 873). See Figure 2.

![Stakeholder Typology](image)

**Figure 2: Stakeholder Typology. Source: Mitchell et al. 1997, p.874**

An adopted summary of the stakeholder salience model’s typology (Mitchell, et al., 1997, p. 875) was presented by Mainardes et al. (2012, p. 1866). The category of latent stakeholder includes: dormant stakeholders with power but lack of either legitimacy or urgency. Hence, this power is not optimally used with little interaction to organisation. Yet, management needs to be informed about this group to monitor and evaluate the potential gain of the second attribute, whereas the discretionary stakeholder holds only legitimacy. In this case, the company should take care of this group under corporate social responsibility, demanding stakeholder’s most important attribute is urgency and they require monitoring like dormant stakeholders. The second category, as mentioned, is expectant stakeholder group possessing two attributes: dominant stakeholders hold power and legitimacy. Consequently, they need to receive a lot of attention. Dangerous stakeholders do not have legitimacy, but power and urgency. This type of stakeholder might be considered as a threat to the company; dependent stakeholders depend on others as long as they only have urgency and legitimacy, but experience lack of power. The final category of stakeholders, known as definitive stakeholders, because of owning three attributes, require immediate and superior attention.

This dynamic stakeholder model considers that identification and relationship prioritisation of stakeholders is based on managerial perceptions according to unique situations. The model has various advantages. First of all, it is practical for operations because it qualifies
stakeholders. In addition, it is dynamic and considers potential changes of interest over time and space; and finally, it considers “the organisation as the result of conflicting and unequal interests” (Mainardes, et al., 2012, p. 1865). Moreover, stakeholder salience, is the most commonly used model amongst scholars and practitioners of stakeholder theory. Despite this fact, there are not a lot of studies that actually test the model (Mainardes, et al., 2012, pp. 1864-1866).

2.1.3 Process of Stakeholder Analysis

Stakeholder analysis requires several steps. Firstly, the stakeholder identification takes place, which can be done by brainstorming (Jepsen & Eskerod, 2009, p. 338), or by asking people in company to point them out (Pouloudi & Whitley, 1997, pp. 7-8). Second, is the characterization, including classification and prioritisation of stakeholders. This can be done according to one of the methods mentioned in section 2.1.2. The last step is choosing the strategy which will be useful to develop relevant relationship with stakeholders. These strategies should be formed according to the specific groups of stakeholders and their attributes and characteristics (Jepsen & Eskerod, 2009, p. 337).

2.1.4 Managers’ Role in Stakeholder Management

An intellectual capital is a well-known concept for management, which is the combination of human, structural and relational resources of the company. Human capital is the knowledge employees possess. Knowledge can be distinctive or general, like past experience, flexibility, creativity, motivation, or general training and education. Structural capital is the combination of organisational systems, its culture and duties. Lastly, relationship capital is linked to external relationships with stakeholders and perceptions they have towards the organisation. Therefore, intellectual capital is directly linked to management processes within the organisation, including stakeholder relationships - Sanchez et al. (2001, cited in Fletcher et al. 2003, pp. 505-506).

The role of manager, as human capital in stakeholder theory is crucial. Managers have the responsibility of manage relationships (relationship capital) by making strategic decisions and allocating resources in a way that is relevant and coherent with the interest and claims of all types of stakeholder groups (Hill & Jones, 1992, p. 134). Firms’ managers determine which stakeholder group is salient and which group should get attention from management. Accordingly, it is very subjective how managers perceive all of the stakeholders’ attributes. Therefore, the main question is: What role does managers’ characteristics play in stakeholder management? (Mitchell, et al., 1997, p. 871)

It is assumed that managers require to possess appropriate knowledge, capabilities and resources to conduct proper stakeholder analysis. On the other hand, research shows that the provided guidelines are too general to be useful for different types of organisations, and if the manager is not trained enough or does not have skills for data collection and analysis, it might not give a relevant and valid description of stakeholders (Jepsen & Eskerod, 2009, p. 341). According to Bourne and Walker (2005, p. 658), a special skillset – including knowing analytical and planning techniques – is required to manage stakeholders and to have an
understanding of their influences in order to respond appropriately. Managers must be able to recognize the potential risks and dangers of building early warning plans. Only managers are able to build credibility during critical situations and avoid crisis and failure. Therefore, leaders’ characteristics are necessary for managers to fulfil the required responsibilities of stakeholder management process (Bourne & Walker, 2005, p. 658).

Despite its complex and time-consuming nature, managers should undertake stakeholder analysis to have a clear idea on which stakeholders are important to collect information from, enquire about their expectations and prepare plans for delivering the required contribution and values (Jepsen & Eskerod, 2009, p. 342).

2.2 Non-profit Organisations

The past couple of decades have witnessed a worldwide growth in the amount of organisations involved in diverse social and public matters, namely, third sector organisations (Lewis, 2001, p. 1). With a high profile around the world, third sector organisations, receive this name with base on the cluster of social, economic and political activities with presence in public policies. In response to a constant development and diversification of our society, new challenges are redefining the role of business in both public and private sector, in addition to that of NPOs (Potluka, et al., 2017, p. 298). NPOs operate in various fields; e.g., charity, civil rights, environment, and other sectors where social concerns may be supported on a not-for-profit basis. This type of organisations has gained popularity within the past few years, becoming a major social trend, as stated by Drucker (1990, cited in Liao & Huang 2016, p. 21).

It is important to mention one popular and important sub-group of the third sector organisational cluster, that is, the non-governmental organisations (Lewis, 2001, p. 1). Such sub-sector of the non-profit field (Aldashev, et al., 2015, p. 3), is most commonly focused on the development and betterment of society at local, national and global scales, as has been highlighted by Lewis (2001, p. 1). On the other hand, most of NPOs’ core objective is to provide goods and services to people.

Hansmann (1979, p. 6) highlights the main distinction between a regular business (for-profit) and a NFP organisation, as the profit and control obtained by the shareholders through the presence of stocks. Considering the lack of shares in NPOs, the nature of NFPs is half public and half private, as argued by Williams & Taylor (2013, p. 568). It has been noticed the likely challenge for NFPs to achieve an equilibrium between their private and public nature (Chen, 2015, p. 1192), considering the competitive environment they are in and their need to meet both social and financial goals. Haigh & Hoffman (2012, p. 126) use the term hybrid organisation to combine both for-profit and NPOs with the purpose of handling social and environmental concerns. This type of institutions are also known as fourth sector organisations (Shah, et al., 2017, p. 3).

Similar to a business, an NPO has as purpose the generation of benefits; however, in this field, the results depend mostly on the organisation’s stakeholders and the operations content, as argued by Aviv et al. (2006, p. 455). Notwithstanding, and according to Hansmann (1979,
p. 65), NPOs not only generate benefits but also have responsibilities to meet. With base on the above mentioned considerations in the non-profit form, and their main relation to the organisation’s finances and control, Hansmann (1979, p. 7) categorises NPOs in donative versus commercial institutions, and in cooperative versus entrepreneurial institutions. Donative organisations would get their income in form of grants or donations, whereas the commercial ones are financed by their services’ revenues. It is important to highlight that not all NPOs would fall under one of these two categories, there are some institutions operating from donations in addition to their sales; i.e., universities (Hansmann, 1979, p. 8). The academic states that cooperative organisations would be controlled by their donors and customers (beneficiaries), whilst the entrepreneurial institutions have no obligations with the mentioned actors and are often controlled by a board of directors. For the purposes of this research, the case study selected falls under the NPO donative-entrepreneurial category.

An NPO is “an entity that legally prohibited from disturbing profits to its stakeholders or managers”, as defined by Hansmann (1980, cited in Shah et al. 2017, p. 3). Nonetheless, these organisations need to maintain an active interaction with stakeholders as well as a competent leadership to achieve an adequate management (Potluka, et al., 2017, p. 298), and an operational efficiency and effectiveness. Same that may result difficult based on the major challenge identified by Liao & Huang (2016, p. 21), which is the engagement of staff and access to funds for the organisation’s operation and growth. Overall, Liao & Huang (2016, p. 21) highlight peer competition, funding shortfall, and sustainable resource management as the main problems defying the NPOs’ management. It is important to emphasize that the organisation’s either positive or negative management, will not only affect its durability but also its reputation and, by hence, its likely grants. By hence, the need of an efficient and strategic management of the various departments conforming an NPO. Moreover, attention to stakeholders is paramount for strategic management process; should they be not satisfied, it can lead to negative changes, e.g., cutting budget, undermining new initiatives, damaging reputation (Bryson, 2004, p. 25).

2.2.1 Management Strategy

Organisations implement strategies not only to manage their resources, but also their people and relationships; all of which fall under the strategic management term suggested by Johnson et al. (2017, p. 7). Although there is a lack of organisational strategies for NPOs (Liao & Huang, 2016, p. 22), such institutions need them to operate and achieve their goals and objectives, as well as a link to their organisation performance. Due to different stakeholders’ interests causing conflict, to the misinformation about relationships between activities and objectives, and to be involved within a fast-changing environment, NPOs tend to have unclear goals (Hofstede, 1981, p. 194).

Moore (2000, p. 198) comments on a proposed strategy model where organisations need to center their attention on social goals, such as the public value and the organisation’s operational capacity to meet users’ demands; instead of working only towards a financial satisfactory performance in terms of clients and services. To achieve this, NPOs staff need to highlight and reflect the significance and singularity of the product or service provided; therefore, the management strategies to apply within NPOs, must consider differentiation and uniqueness as vital elements (Liao & Huang, 2016, p. 22). Then, how can these elements be
applied and evaluated at the management strategies in NPOs?

2.2.1.1 NPO Managers Needed Skills

In addition to the delivery of a differentiated and unique service, to maintain a competent leadership and workforce is another requirement to achieve a successful management in NPOs. The organisation leaders, capability often assumed by managers, require “not only a vision, but good communication skills, stakeholder involvement, strategic planning and coordination and popular support via public participation” – according to Potluka et al. (2017, p. 297). Potluka et al. (2017) compiled the requisites identified by various scholars and concluded by enlisting three essential requirements for successful leadership in NFP organisations: (1) organisation’s will to divide power and accept various actors’ participation; (2) leaders must be visionary in addition to hold communication and entrepreneurial skills; and (3) have a political funding, key relationships with stakeholders, and an open-mind. Moreover, NPO leaders need to establish and maintain strategic relationships not only within the organisation but also with all stakeholders in general. Should there be conflict between the organisation and its stakeholders, NPOs will face disadvantages at the risk of a negative decision-making and unconformity amongst the parties (Potluka, et al., 2017, p. 301).

In addition, managers are in charge of conducting internal evaluations within NPOs. Love (1998, p. 146) defined internal evaluation as “the process of using staff members (or persons closely connected to an organisation) to evaluate programs or issues of direct relevance to an organisation, including its managers, staff, and clients”. This relevant tool enhance managers to identify and address organisational issues, assess operations and outcomes obtained, in addition to a measurement of the NPO’s structure, employees and management (Love, 1998, p. 147). Simultaneously, the academic recommends that managers should be as well part of the evaluation and not only conduct it.

2.2.2 Stakeholder Management in Non-Profit Organisations

Even though NPOs do not have owners or shareholders to report to, and have a public purpose to meet instead (Potluka, et al., 2017, p. 300); NFP organisations usually select a board of directors through various elections, which may act independently and as an endless body (Hansmann, 1979, p. 6). In addition to the board members, various other stakeholders are involved within NFPs, holding different expectations, which may regularly cause conflict, as explained by Unnerman & O’Dwyer (2010, p. 481). By hence, the urge of stakeholder management. Such process, allows managers to evaluate the alignment between the organisational strategies and stakeholders expectatives, verifying these are being met in accordance to the NPO’s operations and outcomes (Fletcher, et al., 2003, p. 508).

From the stakeholder theorists’ point of view, organisations are a collection of stakeholders (Jones, et al., 2007, p. 137) and as such, it is fundamental to recognize every single partner and to aim for their individual and collective satisfaction. NPOs have multiple strategic relationships to handle – many more compared to the for-profit sector – as argued by Drucker (1990 cited in Vázquez et al. 2002, p. 1024), complicating the identification of strategic
matters – Bryson (1995 cited in (Fletcher, et al., 2003, p. 509). Stakeholders groups vary in a large scale in NPOs, going from donors and employees to beneficiaries, namely, clients.

Jones et al. (2007, p. 137) define stakeholder culture as “the aspects of organisational culture consisting of the beliefs, values, and practices that have evolved for solving problems and otherwise managing stakeholder relationships”. With base on Mitchell et al.’s (1997, p. 854) stakeholder attributes framework – power, legitimacy, and urgency – and with the aim to appreciate why stakeholders are needed by organisations and how decisions are made in relation to the various partners, Jones et al. (2007, p. 137) propose a typology of stakeholder culture, comprising agency, corporate egoist, instrumentalist, moralist, and altruist. It is necessary to highlight that such tipology is mostly suitable for NFPs, being focused on shareholders and profitability. However, it is possible to adapt it to the NFP context by adjusting the culture types above mentioned. A suggested replacement of shareholders by funding agents and of non-shareholder stakeholders by beneficiaries is presented; two groups identified by Ebrahim (2003, p. 814) as creators of tension in stakeholder management in NFPs. Dolnícár et al. (2008, p. 115) highlight that instead of having an efficiency-vision, NFPs must aim for effectiveness to properly satisfy the beneficiaries’ needs and stick to the NPO objectives.

Julian (2012, 2016) identifies three different stakeholder groups within NPOs, whose influence and participation in the decision-making will vary according to their interests and the life cycle stages of the project – concept, design and planning, implementation, and close and evaluation (Khang & Moe, 2008, p. 76) -. The three stakeholder groups are: (1) donors, with a stronger impact at early stages of the project due to their financial means; (2) implementing agency, presenting various roles simultaneously whilst trying to maintain a balance amongst the other two groups expectations and assuring their own interests are being met; and (3) local partners and beneficiaries, this group does not influence directly the decision-making, however plays a key role when delivering impact. A comparison amongst the different stakeholder groups is made with base on their participation on the activities and decision-making along the four different stages of the projects. By hence, it is clear to notice the constant interdependence amongst the three groups and how necessary is to maintain an equilibrium between all of the parties to achieve the organisation’s objectives. Regardless on the main interest for each of the stakeholder groups, their general and in-common objective is to contribute to the organisation whilst demonstrating competences and making a difference (Julian, 2016, p. 510).

2.2.2.1 Internal and External Stakeholders in Non-Profit Organisations

Similar to public and private organisations, in the NFP sector, stakeholders will be mainly divided in two groups with base on their participation and link to the organisation – internal and external. Internal stakeholders are the NPO’s managers and employees, whilst the external group is confirmed by funders, donors, suppliers, regulators, clients, and beneficiaries in general (Fletcher, et al., 2003, p. 510). Both groups need to be efficiently managed independently as well as conjointly, aiming for every single group to achieve a clear understanding on every other cluster’s tasks and on the collective achievement of objectives.
First, the authors focus on the internal group of stakeholders. Drucker (1990, cited in Liao & Huang 2016, p. 23), argues that the more relevant investments in organisations are those made in people and their knowledge. The management of internal stakeholders, that is, the organisation’s human resources, is a key factor for NPOs efficient management. As such and as the main point of contact of NPOs with external stakeholders – as much partners, as beneficiaries - it is essential for organisations to keep employees and staff satisfied and engaged to their activities. In order to achieve an efficient overall management, as previously outlined.

The academics Ridder & McCandless (2010) have created an analytical framework of human resource management (HRM) in NPOs with base on the existing non-profit literature and concluding that depending on the human resources of the organisation and its strategic goals, the HRM will be planned and implemented differently. See Figure 3 to visualize the HRM types, categorized as: administrative, motivational, strategic, and values-driven.

![Figure 3: Analytical framework of human resource management in NPOs. Source: Ridder & McCandless, 2010, p.134](image)

According to Frumkin & Keating (2010, p. 269), commitment is one of the elements NPOs rely on, in addition to generosity and good will. Therefore, and considering that NFP sector is a fast-changing environment, NPOs need to adjust their human resources practices accordingly. Practices that often rely on the organisation’s mission, values, and objectives. (Ridder & McCandless, 2010, p. 126). Empirical evidence show that in addition to having the elements above mentioned, NPOs employees share various attributes which enable them working for a third sector organisation with a limited financial capital, and therefore, a limited compensation for its employees. Such attributes are: a nonmonetary orientation, personality characteristics, values, and occupational spirit (Ridder & McCandless, 2010, p. 130). Regularly, NPOs employees rather to have a full commitment to the social cause instead of an evident compensation, stated Handy & Katz (1998, p. 249). Nonetheless, and considering that “employees are the mainstay of an organisation” (Mazumder & Mazumder, 2013, p. 40), institutions aim to provide them with various incentives for motivation towards an effective performance and to recognize their value for the organisation.

The other group of stakeholders – the external one – whose actors make meaningful donations to enhance NPOs to achieve its objectives, is mainly conformed by donors, funders, volunteers, or beneficiaries (Gerhard, 2003, p. 278). However, each partner would look after their own interests whilst aiming for the prioritisation of their own goals (Ridder & McCandless, 2010, p. 129).

2.2.3 Non-Profit Organisations in Entrepreneurial Projects
Entrepreneurship has been initially perceived as a complex phenomenon representing great risks for people practicing it. For some researchers, there is not enough theory developed, the collection of data is complicated and limited and the known findings are quite similar to those of other business’s areas (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000, p. 219). In spite of these challenges, entrepreneurship has positioned itself as an evolving area for research gaining popularity within the past few decades (Landström, et al., 2012, p. 1154).

The phenomenon is defined by Shane & Venkataraman (2000, p. 218) as “the scholarly examination of how, by whom, and with what effects opportunities to create future goods and services are discovered, evaluated and exploited”. Nonetheless, debate exists amongst academics regarding the term non-profit entrepreneurship. Cordes et al. (2004, cited in Huarng & Yu 2011, p. 284) would find it contradictory, whereas Benz; Chappelle (2009; 2010, cited in Huarng & Yu 2011, p. 284) relate entrepreneurship with non-profit actions. As a matter of fact, multiple currently existing NPOs fit under the entrepreneurship definition and operate accordingly in an altruistic way, as signaled by Tan et al. (2005, p. 353). A common example of this, are the entrepreneurship centres created by universities giving access to their staff and alumni. Similar situation to the origins of this paper’s case study.

Casson; Kirzner (1982; 1997, cited in Shane & Venkataraman 2000, p. 220) identified entrepreneurial opportunities as ideal circumstances to present new goods, services, materials and processes in a better, more practical, and attractive way. Comparably, Drucker (1985, cited in Shane & Venkataraman 2000, p. 220), recognized three different classes of opportunities: (1) the invention of new information, (2) the development of market ineptitudes, and (3) the reaction to regular changes in costs and benefits on related resources. The authors consider that entrepreneurial projects – no matter which opportunity they are focused on – require of both strategic operational and organisational management to achieve their objectives.

It is important to mention that not much literature was found regarding NPOs in the entrepreneurial field. Therefore, the confirmation of this topic being a research gap.

2.3.3.1 Entrepreneurship in Sweden

Sweden is one of the countries where entrepreneurship is mostly encouraged and supported. Currently, there are multiple entrepreneurial projects within the nation supporting different types of entrepreneurship. Empirical studies implemented by Lundqvist & Williams Middleton (2010) have analyzed the social, public, community, amongst other types of entrepreneurship with a societal approach in Sweden. Findings from such study, revealed seven entrepreneurial discourses related to social matters taking place in Sweden: (1) community entrepreneurship, (2) civic entrepreneurship, (3) social entrepreneurship, (4) public entrepreneurship, (5) social economy, (6) corporate social responsibility (CSR), and (7) traditional entrepreneurship. The NPO studied in this research falls under the discourse of community entrepreneurship, also known as ‘old societal entrepreneurship’. Further details regarding the NPO studied are outlined later in Chapter 4 Data Collection.
Societal entrepreneurship is a common practice in Sweden. Such activity involves people engaging to social projects whilst having an official and paid employment in a solid institution (Lundqvist & Williams Middleton, 2010, p. 30). By doing so, the volunteer, does not only contribute to the public good, but also to his personal and professional role. See Figure 4 to observe the collaborative and collective approach of entrepreneurship in Sweden:

![Conceptual map of societal entrepreneurship in Sweden](source: Lundqvist & Williams Middleton, 2010, p.30)

2.3 Research Gap

Based on the limited knowledge on the determinants of personnel practices in an organisation (Ridder & McCandless, 2010, p. 124), along with the narrow understanding of NPOs governance and their organisational behaviour (Aldashev, et al., 2015, p. 3), this paper is focused on an NPO’s personnel point of view. In addition, considering the scarcity of guidelines in public and non-profit literature on the systematic identification and analysis of stakeholders (Bryson, 2004, p. 22); this research aims to highlight the NPOs managers’ perceptions on stakeholders and their likely impact on stakeholder management practices. Moreover, the deficiency of attention to firm-specific factors impacting stakeholder’s relationships (Banks, et al., 2016, p. 19), as well as the lack of accurate findings in the field of entrepreneurship (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000, p. 219); lead this study to a project-based perspective in the entrepreneurial field. The study purpose is to understand why the perception of internal stakeholders, managers per se, may differ from manager to manager within the NPO, and what are the outcomes of such difference. It is based on this final point, that authors considered appropriate to focus this research in Sweden, considering the country as a hub of innovation and entrepreneurship.

2.4 Literature Review Summary

This theoretical background is a general overview of the different topics this study is focused on: stakeholder management and managers’ role; NPOs; and such organisations within the
entrepreneurial field. According to the study’s exploratory approach, the literature review went through various changes of scope as relevant insights were appearing and new literature considerations were being evaluated by the authors. With base on the objective of developing the theory by filling the identified gaps within NPOs in the entrepreneurial field, the critical review of such literature enabled the comparison with the findings. Nonetheless, there were also literature conflicting findings, which would be seen as an opportunity, making the authors think beyond the initial philosophies and having an open mind to reveal unconsidered outcomes.

For the purpose of this inductive research approach, no framework is presented at the beginning. On the contrary, it is necessary to have an accurate and proper knowledge of the relevant concepts. However, not all literature should be reviewed prior the collection of data (Saunders, et al., 1997, p. 39). In order to find a balance between their original ideas and the literature ideas, the authors would constantly compare concepts emerged from literature review against data collected, changing the research scope accordingly.

In summary, the literature review here undertaken provided the authors with a rich and well-structured notion of the main stakeholder management concepts and their relevance in a context of NFP organisations within entrepreneurial projects. In the next chapter, the authors explain the study research methodology implemented.
3. Research Methodology

This chapter presents the philosophical and methodological viewpoints that underlie this study. Overall, the ontology, epistemology and axiology approaches are overviewed by the authors, followed by their implementation to this study. Moreover, a detailed description of the chosen methodologies – research strategy, approach and research design – is provided.

3.1 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy is an overarching term which relates to the knowledge development and its nature, standing as a base of research design (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 107; O’Gorman & Macintosh, 2015, p. 50). Adopted research philosophy for a particular work includes assumptions about the way authors see the world. These assumptions, which are influenced by subjective perceptions about relationship between knowledge and the process of acquiring this knowledge, underpin the research strategy and methodology (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 108). The decision about research philosophy is based on the research questions authors pursue to answer. The following sections discuss two major philosophical considerations: ontology and epistemology, and additionally axiological considerations, which guide choices about the strategy and design of this thesis (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 109; O’Gorman & MacIntosh, 2015, p. 52).

3.1.1 Ontological Considerations

According to Long et al. (2000, p. 190), “ontology refers to assumptions held about the nature of social reality”, which tries to answer the questions about the way world is operated (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 110). Ontology can be described in two ways: as an objective - independent to individual perceptions where reality is apart from social actors; or as a subjective - built on an individual basis, formed from the actions and perceptions of social players (Bryman & Bell, 2015, p. 34; Saunders et al. 2009, p. 110; Long et al. 2000, p. 190). Management can be considered as an entity in reality external to social actors (objective) as long as managers have the fixed job descriptions, operating procedures to follow and they are part of formal organisational structure. However, the way managers perform and relate themselves to their jobs should be studied from a subjectivist point of view. The understanding of this reality is often associated with the term social constructionism (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 111).

For the purpose of this study, the authors see reality – stakeholders management – as subjective and formed by the communication of social entities. Social actors, such as the company managers and stakeholders, may have different perceptions about relationships, motives, influences, and interests according to their own view of the world and may place different interpretations on the situations (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 111). Based on the views of Ward and Chapman (2008, p. 564), “stakeholders are a major source of uncertainty” and an organisation is a collection of stakeholders (Jones, et al., 2007, p. 137). Thus, using objectivism as an ontological viewpoint is not relevant.
3.1.2 Epistemological Considerations

Epistemological assumptions refer to the “basis of knowledge and in what manner knowledge can be transmitted to others” (Long, et al., 2000, p. 190). O’Gorman & Macintosh (2015, p. 58) differentiated four epistemological positions: positivist, critical realist, action research, and interpretivist. Objective ontology is generally connected with a positivist epistemological approach, whilst subjective ontology tends to be aligned with an interpretivist epistemology. “Positivists positing and explaining principles, and interpretivists interpreting and understanding relationships” (O’Gorman & Macintosh, 2015, p. 60). Critical realists consider that what we get is exactly what we see and “what we experience are sensations” (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 115). Action research is described as an umbrella term which unites various research types with the aim to foster change through collaboration of managers and researchers (O’Gorman & Macintosh, 2015, p. 63). Interpretivism states that it is curtail for researchers to realize differences between individuals as social actors and underlines the difference between conducting research amongst humans rather than objects (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 116). According to the identified interpretivism’s characteristics by O’Gorman & Macintosh (2015, p. 60):

- Focuses on meanings;
- Tries to understand what is happening;
- Considers totality of each situation;
- Develops ideas according to data induction;
- Uses multiple methods to establish different views of phenomena; and
- Uses small samples for deep investigation.

In regards of this study, interpretivist epistemology approach is adopted. Considering the study aim is to increase the understanding of how stakeholder management is implemented in NPOs with a special focus on entrepreneurial projects; at the same time as exploring why perceptions about stakeholder can differ amongst the members of managerial department and their impact on stakeholder relationship strategies. Therefore, interpretivist stance is directly aligned with this purpose.

3.1.3 Axiological Considerations

“Axiology is a branch of philosophy that studies judgments about values” (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 119), which at the same time includes ethics, aesthetics, or religion (O’Gorman & MacIntosh, 2015, p. 54). According to the different researchers, authors values may create biases at all stages of the research process and their personal experiences can influence decisions about the research (O’Gorman & Macintosh, 2015, p. 69; Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 116). It is assumed that the research process – based on positivist axiological approach – is value-free and unbiased; whilst interpretivism – approach chosen by the authors – is more value-bounded and biased (O’Gorman & Macintosh, 2015, p. 70).

The authors believe that they are value-laden and the designed study will deliver credible theoretical and practical contributions to the field linking stakeholder management and NPOs with a special focus of entrepreneurial projects. The next section will present the chosen research methodology for this study.
3.2 Research Approach

The choice of authors of the research approach is influenced by the way the paradigm is defined (Long, et al., 2000, p. 191). Saunders et al. (2009, p. 124) differentiated two approaches: *inductive* and *deductive*. Deduction involves testing theory and owes more to positivism, while induction is about building theory linked more to interpretivism. The deductive approach is mostly used in natural sciences and is often assumed to be scientific research (Bryman & Bell, 2015, p. 23). An alternative approach, induction, states that “theory would follow data rather than vice versa as with deduction” (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 126). Therefore, theory is the outcome of the conducted research (Bryman & Bell, 2015, p. 25). The induction operates from specific to the general; however, even though observation reveals some of the trends used to formulate new ideas about theory (Adams, et al., 2007, p. 29), it does not follow the tendency to construct an inflexible methodology. It permits alternative explanations of what is happening and is concerned with the context where actions take place (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 126). Despite of the rigid differences of these two approaches (shown in Table 1), it is also possible to use a combination of both induction and deduction approaches (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 127).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deduction Emphasizes</th>
<th>Induction Emphasizes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scientific principles;</td>
<td>Gaining an understanding of the meanings human attach to events;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving from theory to data;</td>
<td>A close understanding of the research context;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The need to explain causal relationships between variables;</td>
<td>The collection of qualitative data;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The collection of qualitative data;</td>
<td>A more flexible structure to permit changes of research emphasis as the research progress;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The application of controls to ensure validity of data;</td>
<td>A realization that the researcher is part of the research process; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The operationalization of concepts to ensure clarity of definition;</td>
<td>Less concern with the need to generalise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A highly independence of what is being researched; and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The necessity to select samples of sufficient size in order to generate conclusions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1: Major differences between deductive and inductive approaches to research (adapted from Saunders et al. 2009, p. 127)*

On the other hand, Bryman and Bell (2015, p. 27) argued that distinctions between these approaches are not very clear and suggested a third type of research approach: *abductive*. Approach that aims to overcome the drawbacks of inductive and deductive approaches. Abductive approach captures and takes advantage of both systematic character of the empirical world and theoretical models (Dubois & Gadde, 2002, p. 556). It is productive if the “researcher’s objective is to discover new things — other variables and other relationships” (Dubois & Gadde, 2002, p. 559).

The main purpose of this study is to improve the understanding of the link between stakeholder management and NPOs in a specific context - entrepreneurial field. However,
existing tools and techniques of stakeholder analysis can be useful to guide the development of a strategy and help build management plan (Forman & Discenza, 2012, p. 2). Nonetheless, literature does not pay attention to the firm-specific factors impacting stakeholders’ relationships and the reasons why there is a huge difference in approaches of stakeholder management in different companies (Banks, et al., 2016, p. 19). On the other hand, the increasing importance of NPOs, knowledge and understanding of their governance, measures of performance (Aldashev, et al., 2015, p. 3), and influences that shape HRM in NPOs is still limited (Ridder & McCandless, 2010, p. 125). Additionally, should be also mentioned that, entrepreneurship has already placed itself as an evolving area (Landström, et al., 2012, p. 1154) and not enough theory is developed as a guideline (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000, p. 219). Therefore, “specifying gaps and holes in existing theory” the ultimate goal of this study is advancing theoretical explanations (Ridder 2016, cited in Ridder, 2017, p. 287). According to this, an inductive approach is taken and observations are made during the interviews held during the research process. But research questions were identified according to existing gaps in literature and more specifically described during data collection (Ridder, 2017, p. 287).

### 3.3 Research Design

“Research design refers to the steps which will be embraced to relate the study’s questions to the data collection and analysis stages in a coherent way” (O'Gorman & Macintosh, 2015, p. 82). Complementarily, Saunders et al. (2009, p. 139) define research purposes which are the most often used in literature, these are: exploratory, descriptive and explanatory. A study is explanatory, if it analyses causal relationships between variables by emphasizing on a specific situation in order to explain that relationship (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 140). Descriptive studies give a clear picture of people, activities, or situations (Robson, 2002, p. 59) that have a very important place in business and management. A study can also be a precursor to explanation, which additionally, forms combination of descripto-explanatory studies (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 140). The last research purpose, chosen for this research study, is the exploratory one, which seeks to understand what is happening and evaluates facts in a new light (Robson, 2002, p. 59) by searching literature and interviewing experts or focus groups (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 140). Qualitative data is collected to explain how managers cope with stakeholders within the organisation for the realisation of entrepreneurial projects and explores the reasons why stakeholder relationship strategies are dependent on perceptions about stakeholders.

Saunders et al. (2009, p. 141) consider the following research strategies: experiment, survey, case study, action research, grounded theory, ethnography and archival research. After evaluating its advantages and disadvantages (see Table 2), case study was selected for this study. Case study “involves an emperical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple source of evidence” (Robson, 2002, p. 178). Generally, the case is a constrained entity; like a person, an event, an organisation, specific policy, etc. (O'Gorman & Macintosh, 2015, p. 83). An NPO in Sweden is considered a case in this research. Solitary focus on single cases will lead to comprehensive answers about particular research questions. As a justification of single case, authors assume practical reasons, like the opportunity to gain access to a rare and unique reseach phenomenon (O'Gorman & Macintosh, 2015, p. 84; Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 147). Besides, a multiple
case study approach requires more time and resources, which is a current limitation for the authors (Yin, 2003, p. 47) as further explained in chapter 8.4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Useful for exploring novel behaviours or practices and under-researched</td>
<td>Case studies are typically conducted by one individual, so researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phenomenon. Therefore, they are ideal of theory building and testing.</td>
<td>subjectivity can influence the results. Therefore, they have been accused of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lacking rigour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case studies are holistic and offer an all-encompassing description of real-</td>
<td>Single case have limited ability to generate generizable conclusions. A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>life situations which is often not captured by other approaches.</td>
<td>question often posed is: How can you generalise from a single case? – Yin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2009, p.15).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allows the researcher to demonstrate the intricacies of social life, and</td>
<td>Can be time-consuming and costly. Access to the focus of study may be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to explore alternative interpretations and meanings within the evidence.</td>
<td>problematic if continual contact is required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takes advantage of multiple techniques to gather data.</td>
<td>The high quantities of data gathered can be overwhelming.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 2: Advantages and disadvantages of case research (adapted from O’Gorman & Macintosh, 2015, p. 93)*

At the same time, the authors found such strategy specifically interesting because they aspire to gain a rich understanding of the research outline – Wood (1991, cited by Saunders et al. 2009, p. 146) and to realize how processes and behaviours of organization managers and stakeholders affect and are affected by this context (O’Gorman & Macintosh, 2015, p. 81), such as organisation status, field and location. A case study generates answers to the questions Why?, What?, and How?: being this the reason why it is mostly used in both explanatory and exploratory research. In addition, the obtained understanding about an existing problem is used to develop a new theoretical stances or explanations (O’Gorman & Macintosh, 2015, p. 81). Data collection techniques used for case study research are most likely to be observation, interviews and documents (Stake 2005, cited in Ridder, 2017, p. 289); in this study specifically, interviews are deployed. In-depth details are provided in chapter 4.

Furthermore, holistic and embedded case studies are distinguished by both Yin (2003, p. 52) and Saunders et al. (2009, p. 146). If the research considers organisation as a whole, then it is said to be treated like a holistic and if only sub-unites are examined – like departments or single groups – the case study is embedded (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 147). In this case study, specific groups are selected for analysis: TMT and regional managers, hence an embedded case study is implemented (Yin, 1994, p. 41).

Data is analysed according to a categorising approach using open and axial coding of collected data with “in vivo” labeling (Strauss and Corbin (2008, cited by Saunders et al. 2009, p. 509). Emerged codes are classified into first and second order categories and later grouped in five core categories. Besides, findings are presented and linked to existing theories, followed by suggested study propositions.
Limited ability of generalization conclusions is a central disadvantage of the case study approach and more particularly, the application of a single case, which questions the capability of testing or developing theory in a trustful way. However, this case study was mostly focused on analytical generalizatons and previousley developed theories were used to better understand and contrast the outcomes of case research study and contribute to the theory (O’Gorman & Macintosh, 2015, p. 92).

3.4 Research Strategy

The decisions about data collection techniques and data analysis procedures drive from research philosophy – ontological and epistemological considerations (Long, et al., 2000, p. 191). Qualitative and quantitative are the most commonly used terms in management and business research which support investigators in this matter (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 151). Quantitative research is linked to objective ontology with a positivist epistemological approach, whilst research study articulating a subjective ontology with an interpretivist approach tends to be associated with a qualitative methodology (O’Gorman & Macintosh, 2015, p. 59). A simple way for differentiation is the main focus on data, for qualitative it is non-numeric data and for quantitative is numeric data (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 151). Quantitative research is associated with deductive approach which is linked to theory testing through analysis of relationships measured with specific technique and quantification of data (Bryman & Bell, 2015, p. 26). Qualitative research collects and interprets data, “making the researcher as much a part of the research process as the participant” and it uses flexible and open design (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 4). According to Corbin and Strauss (2015, p. 5) there are several reasons why researchers choose qualitative rather than quantitative methods:

- To explore and better understand the inner experience of research participants;
- To explore how different meanings of concepts, situations and circumstances are formed and transformed;
- To explore areas which are not yet researched;
- To find relevant variables and test them later with quantitative methods; and
- To take a holistic and complete approach to the study of phenomena.

The authors adopted a qualitative methodology, which is aligned with a subjective ontological and an interpretivist epistemological stance of study (O’Gorman & Macintosh, 2015, p. 59) by overcoming its limitations; like biased and subjective views of researchers and exploiting its advantages. The qualitative research allowed to study phenomena of stakeholders as perceived by TMT and regional managers participating in this research. Furthermore, this methodology enabled the understanding of limitations and contextual circumstances of NPOs in the entrepreneurial field. Detailed information about data collection and data analysis according to qualitative methodology is provided in the following sections.
4. Data Collection

This chapter explains the research tactics implemented, that is, the specific details of data collection and data evaluation (Bourne & Walker, 2005, p. 138). As well, the research techniques used are introduced and their templates design described. Further, the sampling technique implemented is introduced followed by the organisation as well as participants selection.

4.1 Data Collection Method

Research is a wide concept covering different perspectives on what knowledge is and the constitution of social realities (O'Gorman & Macintosh, 2015, p. 75). Various techniques are implemented within the research process for analysis and collection of data; techniques which have as objective to answer particular subjects (Weathington, et al., 2012, p. 41), establishing what is known as research scope. The collection of data looks to find an equilibrium between a certain new phenomena and what can be actually achievable within the research project limitations in terms of resources and time (O'Gorman & Macintosh, 2015, p. 85).

Through the implementation of a case study approach, the authors were able to compare theory and data constantly (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 534), same process that started with the collection of data. The understanding of a specific situation will be achieved by conducting this exploratory research strategy selected (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 139). As such, the authors considered appropriate to focus on a single and embedded case study (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 146) for the purposes of this research. Research based on managers’ perceptions regarding stakeholders acting in entrepreneurial projects within an NPO in Sweden. Despite being regarded as ‘unscientific’, the case study approach, has proved to be an efficient way not only to explore existing theory (Saunders, et al., 1997, p. 77), but also to develop it. This exploratory study has initially focused on the specification of constructs – managers’ duties, organisation-stakeholder aligned purposes, for instance – to design the initial outline of the theory generation (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 536).

For the purpose of generating a theory (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 535) whilst comparing with the data collected, the authors have opted for a qualitative analysis using only primary data. Considering the nature of primary data, having new data only produced for the research purpose (Saunders et al. 1997, p. 158; O'Gorman & Macintosh, 2015, p. 77); the use of secondary data – records already existing for other purposes (Saunders, et al., 1997, p. 158) – was only initially considered, however, not used. Saunders et al. (2009, p. 152) distinguished two categories of methods choices for data collection: mono and multiple method. Due to this study’s limited timeframe, the application of further techniques would have resulted a challenge. Moreover, the suitability and effectiveness of the chosen method with the research approach, enabled the authors to undertake a mono method, that is, a single technique for data collection and analysis (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 152).

Independently of the data collection technique selected, or the research strategy implemented, research studies have two different time horizons (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 155). For this
particular research, the authors were granted access to analyse stakeholder management in the NPO of interest, for a certain period of time. Meaning it is a *cross-sectional* case study; which is described by Saunders et al. (1997, p. 77), as the analysis of a specific situation at a given time. It is important to mention that the authors appreciate the further insight on the various NPO’s stakeholder groups relationship that could have been obtained through a *longitudinal* study (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 155), whilst observing the NPO’s organisational development, for example. Nonetheless, the authors rest assured on obtaining and analysing the necessary data within a cross-sectional research with a special focus on the time being, by asking strategic questions capturing relevant data from the NPO’s past experiences and future plans.

With base on the interpretivist epistemology approach (Long, et al., 2000, p. 190) adopted, and within the various available sources for the generation of primary data (O’Gorman & Macintosh, 2015, p. 77); the technique selected for this study were the qualitative interviews. The technique’s design and application is explained in the following paragraphs.

Data has been collected in two rounds of interviews. During the first round, the application of *unstructured interviews* took place. The also called ‘in-depth interviews’ are frequently used in exploratory studies with the purpose to realize what the situation is and to identify unknown concepts (Robson, 1993, p. 42). Prior this introductory approach to the organisation, the authors defined what they were trying to explore, enabling interviewees to express freely about various aspects of the topic area (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 321). Despite the liberty the interviewees had during the discussion, this was a *participant interview*, since the authors did have a list of questions that were guiding the conversation (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 321). This first encounter, allowed the authors to create a relationship with interviewees (O’Gorman & Macintosh, 2015, p. 119), specially with those ones who were able to meet personally. It was also noticed that extensive and likely-to-be irrelevant information was brought out during the discussion, yet, this allowed the authors to have a good understanding of the organisation itself to and of the interviewees points of view regarding the topic area. Most importantly, the organisation’s relevance and suitability as focus of case study as well as the choice of the previously identified sample were confirmed.

The first round of unstructured interviews generated the necessary data to outline the research purpose and, consequently, to prepare and design the second round of interviews. *Semi-structured interviews* were held during the second encounter. Being this an exploratory study, the application of semi-structured interviews would result advantageous enabling interviewees to elaborate on their specific responses (Saunders, et al., 1997, p. 215) in addition to increase the data reliability and scope for comparisons (O’Gorman & Macintosh, 2015, p. 119). To select the most suitable type of interview can be a crucial success factor for a research (O’Gorman & Macintosh, 2015, p. 120). By hence and with a strategic purpose, the authors chose semi-structured interview as second approach to obtain a clearer vision and understanding of the managers consciousness of stakeholder management in the NPO studied. With this type of interview, the authors would have had enough flexibility to adjust the order of questions asked as well as the themes to focus on based on the interviewees insight along the discussion (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 320). Overall, the combination of semi-structured and unstructured interviews are the two most common types of interview undertaken in exploratory studies (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 323), where the various
objectives of description, explanation, prediction, and control (Woodside, 2010, p. 11) are likely to be achieved. See Figure 5 to visualize the data collection process followed.

4.1.1 Sample

Weathington et al. (2012, p. 158) introduced the topic of sampling, as the source of our knowledge in most of circumstances. The academics provide common examples in a person’s everydaylife, concluding that the theories a person creates for him/herself is the result of the data collected. For the purpose of this study, and based on time, access and budget constraints, the authors decided not to collect and analyse data from the whole population, process known as census (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 210). Instead, according to the research questions and aiming to obtain more accurate data – as argued by Henry (1990, cited in Saunders et al. 2009, p. 212) – the authors decided to take a ‘good’ sample out of the representative population (Weathington, et al., 2012, p. 159). In light of this study research, the population are NPOs located and operating in the country of Sweden, and involved in entrepreneurial projects. Considering that for a couple of decades now, the country of Sweden has strongly supported social concerns as well as entrepreneurial initiatives, the thought of taking a sample was appropriate (Lundqvist & Williams Middleton, 2010, p. 26).

According to Saunders et al. (2009, p. 213), there are two different categories of sampling techniques. Probability and non-probability samples. The former provides a known and equal probability for each case chosen from the population; whereas the latter cannot provide a known probability of each case chosen and does not require the application of statistics about the population features (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 213). In light of this case study’s research questions, the authors had to held a comprehensive study focused in a unique case to study (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 233). This means, that a non-probability sampling was undertaken. In addition to explore the research objectives, such sample will provide with theoretical insights (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 233). Considering the complexity of sampling a population as a whole, researchers suggest the use of a sample resulting from a ‘sampling frame’ coming form the target population (Weathington, et al., 2012, p. 61). The representative sample is supposed to have similar characteristics to the target population and it needs to be controllable in size (Weathington, et al., 2012, p. 62). In this research, population is formed by NPOs in Sweden, narrowed down to a sampling frame, that is,
entrepreneurship based-projects NPOs in Sweden, and finally, having the sample of TMT as part of a Swedish NPO running entrepreneurial projects.

Saunders et al. (2009, p. 235) identified five different techniques of non-probability sampling: (1) quota, (2) purposive, (3) snowball, (4) self-selection, and (5) convenience. The most appropriate technique for this research was the **purposive sampling**, or as also known ‘judgemental’. With such technique, and as it is regularly done in a case study research, the authors were able to select the most appropriate case to study based on their own criteria (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 237) and interest (Ridder, 2017, p. 282). The purposive sampling was seen as appropriate for the case study with a small sample following the strategy of **typical case sampling**, which even though is not a definitive sample, it can provide a clear vision of a regular situation in a specific matter (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 240).

Initially, the sample size was not very clear to the authors. The sample needed to be of a convenient size enabling authors to not spend a long time studying this one research but it also needed to be large enough to properly embody the population (Weathington, et al., 2012, p. 62). Therefore, and with base on the research questions – as suggested by Patton (2012, cited in Saunders et al. 2009, p. 233) – the sample size was selected. For the purpose of this research, the sample size was of five people.

**4.1.1.1 Organisation Selection**

With a main concern on the suitability and appropriateness for the research questions (Bryman & Bell, 2015, p. 442) as well as following their own criteria (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 237) and interest (Ridder, 2017, p. 282), the authors selected the organisation which would be the focus of the exploratory case study. The authors’ thesis supervisor had suggested the attendance to an entrepreneurship-related event in Umeå, Sweden. The authors attended such event and that was their first point of contact with Organisation Z.

In addition to the attractive and innovative image of the organisation, the authors considered the following criteria for the selection to take place:

- The organisation is an NPO;
- The organisation is handling entrepreneurial projects;
- The organisation has multiple internal and external stakeholders;
- The organisation is based and operating in Sweden; and
- The organisation’s employees are fluent in English language – enabling to establish a smooth and accurate communication with the authors whom do not speak Swedish language.

Below is available a brief summary providing background information of Organisation Z. This information has been obtained from the NPO’s website and some of the data gathered through communication between the authors and the organisation’s participants. See Appendix 3 for further characteristics on the selected organisation.

Organisation Z is an NPO holding as purpose to be the natural choice for everyone with new business ideas in Sweden. Funded in late 90’s, the organisation has a strong national presence.
with four branches spread over the county. The organisation’s objective is to stimulate entrepreneurship through the arrangement of events, workshops, competitions and lectured around the country throughout the year. By doing this, its purpose is to connect people with ideas to experts and the crowd, boosting the creation of new businesses and empowering the growth of Sweden. As of the end of the year 2017, the organisation has collaborated with thousands of business ideas and entrepreneurs. With a team of 12 employees, Organisation Z is currently offering two main annual competition projects.

4.1.1.2 Participants Selection

After attending the event mentioned above - and considering that the city of Umeå was the authors’ place of residence when the research was conducted - the authors got in touch with the manager of the Umeå branch. The authors expressed their interest in starting this research collaboration with organisation Z, to which the manager reacted positively and like this, marking the start of this study with the NPO selected. In order to initiate the process, the authors introduce themselves to the rest of managers and TMT members through emails, considering they were all located in different locations. Like this and maintaining a regular communication – mainly with the organisation’s CEO and Umeå based staff – the authors expressed desire on conducting the first round of interviews. As outlined, in light of the research questions, the participants had to be holding a managerial position, therefore the choice on managers and TMT members only as interviewees. See Table 3 for information on the participants and the second round interview duration. Is important to mention that the same five selected employees were the interviewees during both first and second rounds.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Educational Background</th>
<th>Years in Z organisation</th>
<th>Interview duration in minutes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant 1</td>
<td>Regional Manager</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>00:20:33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 2</td>
<td>CFO</td>
<td>Service Management</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>00:23:45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 3</td>
<td>Regional Manager</td>
<td>Literature and Arts</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>00:32:02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 4</td>
<td>Regional Manager</td>
<td>BA and Master in Entrepreneurship</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>00:17:51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 5</td>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>BA in Media &amp; Communications Project Management, Leadership, Economy, and Law Trainings</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>00:35:14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 3: Interviewees' position and background*
4.1.2 Interviews Design

O’Gorman & Macintosh (2015, p. 118) initially defined interviews as “a conversation between the researcher and the subject towards developing understanding of central themes and research questions”; which is later described as “a simple dialogue between two people”. As such and based on various factors, Saunders et al. (2009, p. 320), differentiated various styles on how interviews can be implemented. As early stated, the style adopted by the authors was the non-standardised unstructured and semi-structured interviews. According to Saunders et al. (2009, p. 321), non-standardised interviews can be undertaken either on a one to one or a one to many basis. Because the two rounds were applied to the TMT members and the regional managers of the NPO, all of the interviews were conducted on a one to one basis. This provided the authors with the opportunity to establish personal contact (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 323) with every single one of the interviewees, whilst building a mutual relationship of trust and interest amongst the two parties; especially with the organisation’s CEO, whose contributions along the study were very valuable. In addition, the five individual encounters, provided the authors with a clear overview on the research purpose and enabled them to lead the interviews as appropriate. Moreover, Saunders et al. (2009, p. 321) distinguished three types of one to one interviews: (1) face-to-face, (2) by telephone, and (3) internet-mediated. Because of the interviewees’ various places of residence, both rounds of interviews were conducted through both face-to-face and internet-mediated methods.

4.1.2.1 Unstructured Interview

Indeed, the two first interviews applied during the first round of unstructured interviews were following this method, which enabled the authors to establish a personal and friendly relationship with the interviewees residing locally; same that facilitated the start of such research collaboration between the authors and the organisation. Because of the rest of the interviewees were geographically dispersed around the country of Sweden, the other three interviews were held electronically in real time, namely, synchronous (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 349). With the help of Skype, the online application facilitating video and audio calls, the remaining interviews were conducted in a practical and smooth way. Thanks to the software’s added advantages, the authors were able not only to communicate with the interviewees, but also to appreciate their responses in addition to observe their body language and behaviour, both relevant factors for the data analysis. In order to not miss any piece of information, the authors took notes of all information shared during the informal interviews, same data that was later used for analysis and that helped to properly modify and shape the final research questions. Most likely, both authors would be asking the questions, at the same time as taking notes in order to not miss any piece of information and to assure the accuracy of the responses.

Prior the interviews, the authors would contact each of the interviewees via email. In the message, the authors would firstly introduce themselves and provide a brief summary of the research specifying their interest on having the NPO collaboration, and by hence, their individual contributions. After obtaining positive feedback from each of the employees, the authors proceeded to arrange a convenient date and time for the interview. In the same email, they would provide a general list of topics to be discussed during the interview. Despite this,
it did occur that one of the interviewees was unable to respond a specific question, therefore, the authors modified the same making it more appropriate by following the ethical considerations (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 325). The interview guide was created by the authors in advance based on information obtained at the organisation’s website regarding the NPO’s operations and running projects, as well as at one event previously held by the NPO where the authors participated as attendees.

The 45-minute to one-hour interviews were mostly held in three different stages. Initially, the authors would introduce themselves, thank the interviewees for their participation and briefly talk about the research project and data collection method. Next, authors would start a discussion enquiring about the interviewee’s position in the NPO and background, as well as general queries about the organisation’s structure and the current projects. In the third stage, general questions about stakeholder management practices in the NPO were asked. Depending on the fluency and context of the responses collected, the questions asked would be modified, as well as omitted or added. See Appendix 1 for the unstructured interview template.

Because the organisation selected is located in Sweden and for none of the two authors is Swedish their mother tongue, all interviews – as well as all form of communication - were conducted in English. Language that as much the authors as the interviewees would feel comfortable with and be fluent at. Therefore, no evident language barrier nor communication issues were observed.

4.1.2.2 Semi-Structured Interview

For the purpose of the second round of semi-structured interview, the encounters were similarly conducted face-to-face and internet-mediated depending on the interviewees’ geographical position. One interview was held face-to-face and the rest via Skype. It is important to mention that during this second round, the face-to-face encounter was particularly beneficial for the complex nature (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 324) of some of the questions asked to the organisation’s CFO. Prior the creation of the semi-structured interview questions, the authors had to consider various resources. An in-depth review of the existing literature in the fields of stakeholder management, non-profit organisations, and entrepreneurship was carefully done by the authors. See Table 4 to visualize the questions according to the theoretical framework topics and their relationship. Based on the theoretical background, and the data collected from the first round of unstructured interviews, the authors were equipped with the proper knowledge to produce strategic questions which would guide them towards the response of the study research questions and objectives (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 24).
**Table 4: Semi-structured interview guide - theoretical framework**

With a duration of 17 to 35 minutes, the second round of interviews were held in four different strategies. Similarly done as in the first round, the first stage was introductory, having authors thanking participants collaboration and requesting their permission to audio-record the interview. During the second stage, specific stakeholder management questions were asked with main focus on the subtopics: communication channels, strategies, and value-drivers. In the third stage, the discussion was related to stakeholder management in NPOs. Finally, in the last stage, queries related to entrepreneurial projects in an NPO context were asked. The nature of the answers would guide the order for the questions to be asked. Likewise, new emerging questions could be added or deleted should they be found irrelevant to the topic. Based on the importance of capturing accurate and authentic data through the interviews, these were audio-recorded followed by a transcription; as suggested by Saunders et al. (2009, p. 350). Naturally, the authors made sure all ethical matters were being respected. See Appendix 2 for the semi-structured interview template.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder Management</th>
<th>How are the organisation’s stakeholders identified and by whom?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What are the reporting procedures undertaken between managers and stakeholders?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>On what do communication and reporting strategies depend?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is the manager who decides how to communicate with stakeholder or are there agreed strategies amongst all employees? If yes/no – How?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How participative are stakeholders in decision-making?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Which factors do you recognise as motivators and value drivers in the organisation’s stakeholder management?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder Management + NPOs</td>
<td>Do you think managers have similar perception about stakeholder management in the NPO? If yes/no – Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurship + NPOs</td>
<td>Is selection of entrepreneurial projects linked to stakeholders? If yes/no – Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do you think entrepreneurial field influence stakeholder management strategies? If yes/no – Why?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Data Analysis

In this chapter, the data analysis process is explained according to data analysis approach undertaken. Next, the criteria for qualitative research and ethical principles are emphasised.

5.1 Data Analysis Approach

One of the main challenges with qualitative research is to analyse a large amount of database, such as notes and interview transcripts (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 571). An initial step in qualitative analysis is listen to audio records of interviews, prepare transcripts and write notes for developing ideas about the categories and their relationships (Maxwell, 2013, p. 105). There are three analytical options offered by Maxwell (2013, p. 105): (1) memos, (2) categorising, and (3) connecting strategies. Memos reflect authors’ goals, methods used during research, theory and practical relationships with interview participants. Thus, they can be used as a fundamental technique for qualitative analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994, pp. 72-75). The categorising strategy tries to capture similarities and common features, it defines categories and then groups them to make comparison analysis. The connecting strategy aims to analyse contiguity-based relations and study connections between different parts of the text and their influences on each other (Maxwell, 2013, p. 106). For this study categorising strategy is chosen. Categorisation – derived from collected data – indicates the most important topics and helps to point focus to areas which are linked to the research questions and unit of analysis (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 511).

Open coding is used as the main strategy of categorising approach. Open coding is the “disaggregation of data into units” – Strauss and Corbin (2008, cited by Saunders et al. 2009, p. 509) and it is later provided with labels (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 509). The same labels are given to similar units of data, which are related to words, a line, a sentence, or a paragraph from interview transcripts. For labelling “in vivo”, the actual terms used by participants are utilized. The main reason has been the authors’ desire to decrease subjectivity and the possibility of interpreting data according to their prior knowledge, rather than giving the specific meaning being placed on such units of data. As result, a big amount of code labels was generated; therefore, these needed to be refined (according to the scope of research), compared and categorized into broader themes. The codes are combined into two-order codes that are equally labelled by the participants’ own ideas. First order categories (lower-level), in total 27, has combined similar codes; whilst second order categories (higher-order), in total 13, has combined only first order categories to form wider and theoretical relevant categories (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 507; Maxwell, 2013, p. 107). As final step, it was necessary to identify the connections between categories to be able to answer the research questions. By hence, the authors turned to axial coding, with the objective to be “looking relationships between the categories of data that have emerged from open coding”, as defined by Strauss and Corbin (2008, cited by Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 509-511). As a result, 5 core categories had emerged: criteria for stakeholder selection; stakeholder identification, classification and prioritisation; managers’ role in stakeholder management; organisation-stakeholder relationships; and stakeholder management for entrepreneurship project-based NPO.
Core categories are firstly described in the chapter 6 according to the respondents’ answers and later compared to existing literature in chapter 7. Analysis are conducted with the aim to explore and explain the phenomenon of managers’ perceptions about stakeholders through the identification of: what is happening, why is it happening, and what are the outcomes (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 511).

It should be mentioned that authors revised the codes/categories in different ways. During the revision of results, some new codes were inserted into the hierarchy, and some others were deleted as needed. Simultaneously, some codes were reclassified to a different category (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 507).

5.1.1 Unit of Analysis

O'Gorman & Macintosh (2015, p. 83) highlight the relevance of having a clear understanding on the unit of analysis as it “enhances the probability that research, the questions being probed and the data gathered, remain within the parameters of the focus of interest”. Also, by clearly acknowledging the unit of analysis, the authors can distinguish what information to include in a study and what to exclude (Bryman & Bell, 2015, p. 316).

Unit of analysis is directly linked to the study’s dimension – holistic and embedded – as suggested by Yin (2003, cited in Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 147) for the strategies of case study. For this single-case study, one specific organisation – NPO in Sweden – was chosen. Even though the authors’ purpose was to make research and were concerned with the use of one company, their main focus was to examine logical sub-units inside the organisation, that is, work groups, like TMT and regional managers. Therefore, an embedded case study was considered to be relevant for this research (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 147). More specifically, data was sampled from the TMT and regional managers by conducting interviews to reflect their most accurate perceptions about stakeholders and their management; considering they are handling stakeholders according to their various entrepreneurial projects on a daily basis. Consequently, the unit of analysis of this research are the perceptions about stakeholders from TMT and regional managers’ perspectives in an NPO.

5.2 Quality Criteria of the Study

The authors agree with Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 277) thinking that the qualitative research study, selected for this research, takes place in a real social world; being therefore more likely that to have consequences in individuals’ lives. For this reason, it was necessary to consider the prerequisites this study had to meet as relevant quality criteria to the type of study chosen. Consequently, the study’s credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and authenticity were evaluated (USBE, 2017, p. 18).

5.2.1 Credibility

This criteria questions if the findings of the research study are credible (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 277). Reducing the probability of mismatching to this requirement authors paid attention to reliability and validity. Reliability shows how data collection techniques and
process of data analysis produce consistent results (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 156). Threats of reliability like participant error, participant bias, observer error and observer bias, presented by Robson (2002, cited in Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 156), were eliminated. Suitable candidates were selected for research, such as regional project managers and TMT, who are actually handling stakeholder management in the studied organisation. Also, interviews were conducted separately with each participant and the anonymity of respondents to questions was ensured. Moreover, both authors were participating in the interview process. Considering the unstructured and semi-structured nature of the interview methods selected, they were both actively asking questions to improve the interpretive quality of the collected data and diminish biases. Validity “is concerned with whether the findings are really about what they appear to be about” (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 157). Considering, “natural” validity requirements, findings studied were not modified or changed by the presence and actions of researchers (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 278). To be mentioned, the authors understand that interviews were the only method for data collection and no variety sources like triangulation were required. Nevertheless, considering the time limitations of this research, the authors think that the deployed methodology was suitable and it produced credible results.

5.2.2 Transferability

Qualitative research focuses on depth analysis rather than the breadth with the aim of studying unique contexts and different significant aspects of social world (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 398). By hence, a produced “thick description” – Geertz (1973a, cited in Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 398) can be potentially transferred to different contexts. For this reason, such criteria questions if the study conclusions have a larger import and if they can be generalized (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 278). There is a debate on whether qualitative research findings from little amount of cases can be generalised (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 335) or not; as mentioned before, this single case study’s findings are subject to analytical generalisations. Moreover, previously developed theories were used to better understand and contrast the outcomes of the case research study whilst contributing to the theory (O’Gorman & Macintosh, 2015, p. 92).

5.2.3 Dependability

Guba and Lincoln introduced the criteria of dependability (1985, cited in Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 398) in parallel to reliability in qualitative research, which is reached by adopting an auditing approach. With regard to this criterion, the authors conducted the study including the decisions influenced by the research philosophy and design. They ensured that complete reports were saved of all the stages of research activities like notes, data analysis decision, transcripts, emails, amongst others. (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 398). Furthermore, all interview participants were recorded using smartphone’s dictaphone in order to avoid any risk of losing important data.
5.2.4 Confirmability

Confirmability, also known as objectivity, is concerned with ensuring that research is not biased and acts in good faith (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 398). The authors fulfilled this criteria by familiarizing themselves with the research topic through an intensive literature review. As result, they were both neutral during both interviews (unstructured, semi-structural) process, followed guidelines and the sequence of data collection and analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 278).

5.2.5 Authenticity

The last criteria for this research, suggested by Guba and Lincoln (1985, cited in Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 398) includes a wider set of issues, including fairness and ontological authenticity (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 398). In order to answer the question if this research fairly represents different opinions amongst the members of NPO and to analyse the possible outcomes, the authors highlighted the their selection of employees from different organisational levels (TMT and regional managers) from different geographical locations to guarantee of representativeness during the interviews. At the same time, the research results helped to better understand the social environment of stakeholders’ management with a lot of actors involved. Similarly, the authors tried to be honest about the challenges they faced during research process, considering the sensitive nature of a single case study approach and the lack of previous experience of conducting research projects. However, high motivation as well as full engagement and commitment to this research, led to the delivery of the desired outcomes.

5.3 Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues in this study were considered to be a fundamental aspect, similarly to any other business and management researches (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 122). There are three main reasons why authors should be clear about ethical dimensions in their research study, these are: (1) improving research outcomes, (2) ensuring professional conduct, and (3) navigating sensitive topics (O’Gorman & Macintosh, 2015, p. 197). In addition, two types of ethical considerations were addressed: (1) ethical principles regarding participant and data collection, and (2) the use of existing literature.

As long as, “the central to most of the ethical principles is the well-being of research participants” (O’Gorman & Macintosh, 2015, p. 200), ethical approval should include participants harm prevention, their rights to privacy, informed consent, avoidance of deception and fraud, and academic misbehaviour (O’Gorman & Macintosh, 2015, p. 200; Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 128). The researchers’ obligation is to decrease the risk of any physical harm, stress, threat to development and self-esteem, and participants future employment (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 128). By following these main principles, interviewed participants were informed in advance about the research area and purpose of the research study via emails. To eliminate potential biases affecting the study, the authors conducted two round interviews. Furthermore, transcripts were used as the basis for data analysis. During the first round of in-depth interviews, notes were prepared by the researchers whilst the
second round of semi-structured interview was recorded, this was agreed between parties beforehand. Also, the researchers committed to use the responses confidentially and only for the purposes of the current research maintaining the objectivity necessary. To reflect the principles of confidentiality, all participants names were anonymized, being addressed to as “Respondent 1, Respondent 2...” In addition, it should be mentioned that all respondents were informed that the finalised research document, after obtaining approval from university, will be available publicly and potentially published. Therefore, the anonymity of the organisation’s name was also agreed, being referred to as “Organisation Z”. Moreover, all the participants were given the opportunity to review the thesis report before being submitted to the thesis supervisor. According to Sanders et al. (2009, p. 194), personal contact with participants should also include ethical considerations. Therefore, the authors tried to build up a trustful and reliable relationship with every single participant. The interviews (face-to-face, skype/phone calls) were arranged according to their availability and location preferences. Also, updates and feedbacks were disseminated via email during the process of the collaboration.

Regarding the literature sources used in this study, the thesis manual of the Umeå School of Business and Economics (USBE, 2017, pp. 38-44) guided authors to ensure proper citation and referencing procedures, preventing any fact of plagiarism.
6. Findings

After reviewing the previous chapter, where the in-depth analysis undertaken for this study has been explained, this chapter will now explain the study’s results whilst aiming to respond the research questions. With the data analysis already outlined, the second and first order codes were identified, leading to the construction of their respective core categories to reflect their relationship using representative quotes collected from the sample interviewed. Further, the authors present the general overview that organisation Z’s managers have regarding stakeholder management in the entrepreneurship field.

6.1 The Perception of Stakeholder Management in Organisation Z

In this part are highlighted the more relevant topics identified from the sample, in relation to stakeholder management within the NFP sector in entrepreneurship projects, whilst similitudes and differences of opinions and perceptions are being explored. See Appendix 6 to explore the detailed data analysis with the interviewees’ quotations.

6.1.1 Criteria for Stakeholder Selection

In light of the non-lucrative purposes of the organisation, and the fact that there are no services or products for sale, NPOs need partners who would be able to sponsor and support the organisation initiatives and ideas. Such partners are required to either provide funds or assist with the facilitation of services for the accomplishment of the organisation objectives. Yet, for partners to be considered as such, they would need to have goals aligned to those of the organisation. As explained by one of the interviewees: “They (stakeholders) have to match our values and have the same purpose” (Respondent 3). This will facilitate the relationship between the two parties aiming to “enhance their feeling and experience of supporting the organisation Z” (respondent 2). Nonetheless, whilst holding the organisation’s core values, managers may operate following distinct objectives, as respondent 2 stated: “we work with individual goals, but we have business goals to fulfil”. The sample also emphasised the most relevant differences when managing stakeholders in an NFP sector in relation to other sectors, being the organisation’s financial complexity recognised as the main one by all of the respondents (see Table 5 below). Because the organisation Z does not count with its own private capital, it needs of various financial partners. Financial partners can contribute to the organisation’s operations and development with different sums of money according to their partnership categorisation – further explained in the category 6.1.4. Certainly, as respondent 2 claims: “We look at partners who invest a lot of money”. By hence, managers are focused on identifying mainly partners with funds; yet, they also consider other smaller likely candidates to build a partnership with. As already outlined, in addition to financial partners, the collaboration of other stakeholder groups to the organisation are vital for the NPO operation – other stakeholder groups identified by the organisation are mentioned in the next category.
### Table 5: Core category "Criteria for stakeholder selection"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Second-Order Categories</th>
<th>First-Order Categories</th>
<th>Interviewees’ Quotes Examples</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| **Aligned purposes based on core values** | Stakeholder matching values with those of the organisation | | ▪ They (stakeholders to be considered) have to match our (organisation) values and have the same purpose, which is to help entrepreneurs and support entrepreneurship. So, they need to cooperate so we can work together for the same purpose.  
▪ We all have worked in different regions and have different backgrounds so it (strategies) might change and maybe it is different from regional partners than national partners, but I think the core values remain the same.  
▪ I would say we work with individual goals, but we have business goals to fulfill. |
| **Dependence on financially well-off stakeholders** | NPO’s stakeholder management complexity and need of funds | | ▪ Yes, I think it is different (stakeholder management) because we do not sell a product so it’s more like partnerships, so yes, it is different (to find partners in this kind of organisations).  
▪ Yes, I believe it is different. In NPOs you have (an) agreement that can be... We do not have any money to put in partnership and we don’t have like our product is kind of complex itself.  
▪ If we have an event, we need partners for it because we do not have a big budget for ourselves. |

6.1.2 Stakeholder Identification, Classification and Prioritisation

Ideas about stakeholder definition differ amongst the various respondents: “Stakeholder can be anyone who is interested in what organisation does and results it performs” (respondent 2); “Individuals or companies having the same purpose and values to help entrepreneurs” (respondent 3); “Partners funding our activities” (respondent 1); and “Companies which have agreements with organisation Z, including paying and non-paying partners” (respondent 4). Similarly, each of the interviewees, has provided a long and rich list of stakeholders for the organisation, which differs from every respondent’s point of view. Students, universities, paying partners, board members, “friends of organisation” (contributing less money, but offering different services) and academic partners, which are also members of organisation and hold the right to vote are identified by respondent 3, who also distinguishes national and regional partners. Respondent 2 additionally, mentions different groups like employees, entrepreneurs, alumni, media and feedback network. More stakeholders were revealed by respondent 4, like competitors, guests, legal, and free consultancy. Speaking about regional level, the governmental support is highlighted. Significance of banks as stakeholder and their funding is furthermore discussed by respondent 1. When it comes to classification and grouping of stakeholders, interviewees opinions are divided into two sets. Some of the interviewees state that the organisation does not go through this procedure: “No, we don’t classify them (stakeholders). (...) It’s different
from partner to partner; every partner thinks differently” (respondent 1); and others who think stakeholders can have similar features. The features stated were: the level of contribution; demographic characteristics including age, location (national and regional partners), experience in entrepreneurship (specifically for stakeholders group of entrepreneurs), and size of business (specifically for stakeholders group of sponsors); and lastly, financial purposes, being private and governmental organisation or academic partner with the purpose of getting students involved. Another identified group was “Contestants and people who give feedback (jury) on a voluntary base” by respondent 5.

Prioritisation of these groups is another challenging factor. “Entrepreneurs are the most important, second one is partners, third (are) professional network and of course, employees and board”- affirms respondent 2. Respondent 1 gives more attention to bigger stakeholders, the ones who give more funds and universities. Whereas, respondent 4 notes that sometimes “big” partners only expect to get a report once a year; thus, they don’t need much attention. As a matter of fact, Organisation Z handles a big amount of stakeholder groups with respectable limited number of employees. Overall, interviewees proved to have different opinions about the criteria needed to be met by stakeholders, as well as the guidelines to follow for their identification, classification and prioritisation. The table 6 represents a sample of some related data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Second-Order Categories</th>
<th>First-Order Categories</th>
<th>Interviewees’ Quotes Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Criteria for stakeholders’ identification** | Stakeholder interest and motivators | ▪ The criteria are that they have any kind of interest in what we are doing and the results we are performing.  
▪ They have to match our (organisation) values and have the same purpose, which is to help entrepreneurs and support entrepreneurship. So, they need to cooperate so we can work together for the same purpose.  
▪ From my personal view, I would say building relationships and networking. |
| **Financial contribution from stakeholders** | | ▪ I would say that all the partners and partners that are paying and non-paying partners that we have agreement with. |
| **Criteria for stakeholders’ classification** | Characteristics of stakeholder groups | ▪ How you group them. Groups: demographic. Depends on types (of) stakeholders: age, location study, experience entrepreneurship. Sponsors: regional, national, size of business. There are different grouping depending on which type of stakeholders.  
▪ (There are) financial partners: (Swedish government - 50% funding), private partners (bank), academic partners (money and students), X (basic partner) some give services. contestants, and people who give feedback (network, jury, voluntary base). |


<table>
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<tr>
<th>Criteria for stakeholders’ prioritisation</th>
<th>Stakeholder attributes</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Depends on how much money they want to contribute with.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The power and also the goals because that defines students and the ones what we want to have in the competitions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The most relevant stakeholders are the bigger ones, the ones who give you more money and universities. (...) It depends on how much money they give us.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 6: Core category “Stakeholder identification, classification and prioritisation”*

6.1.3 Managers’ Role in Stakeholder Management

Considering nature of NPOs explained in category 6.1.1, and according to the respondent’s answers, managers are mainly focused on establishing new partnerships and finding different ways to collaborate with them. Managers handle existing partners whilst scouting for new potential partners. Respondent 4 highlights the importance of sales in the organisation: “A lot of people in organisation, (about) 70% of the people working for some kind of sales in their roles... I would say that maybe around 5 people in the organisation have sales as a first priority and maybe 5 more have sales as a side thing...”. At the same time, managers have to make sure that with their activities, they deliver the expected value to their partners, which must be aligned to “Get what you pay for strategy” (respondent 2), according to prior agreement. Managers are also responsible of keep partners updated and permanently provide them with all the news and invitations for upcoming projects; in addition, after receiving their feedback on the corresponding activities, stakeholders make changes on the needed basis. Out of five respondents, three have highlighted the importance of being creative, open-minded and ready for new challenges while reaching individual goals for handling partners: “We all try to be creative and find new types of partnerships. (...) We are not afraid of trying new things” (respondent 3); “You have to walk in to each partner with an open mind and see what they want” (respondent 4); and “We work with individual goals... we have to have a feeling (of) how to deal with specific cases” (respondent 2). Interviewees mention that stakeholders are assigned to the different managers according to their location and managers have the freedom to choose the strategy to deal with them.

In addition to be independent in their strategies selection and implementation, managers are responsible to focus and follow the existing action plan of the organisation. It should be outlined that one respondent emphasised the role of CEO in connection to external, and at the same time, internal stakeholders – employees. The CEO, as well as the regional managers, are accountable for managing some groups of stakeholders but also “(CEO) has responsibility to encourage the managers in different levels to do their job in a best way ... to work for motivation and structure” (respondent 2).

When it comes to respondents believes about understanding of stakeholders, they think that all employees in the organisation have a similar picture of stakeholder management. As a fact, they state that both regional managers and TMT work very closely with each other and share important information (though CRM – Customer Relationship Management – system) and their experiences. This doesn’t explicitly mean that managers have one unique strategy – “We have some kind of synchrony, even though we do not have a recipe to handle
Another important aspect expressed by respondents 2 and 3 were the differences in their backgrounds and locations: “We all have worked in different regions and have different backgrounds, so it (perception) might change and maybe it is different from regional partners than national partners”; “I know they (perceptions) are different between different regional managers around Sweden, because (the) system works differently in each region.” On the other hand, employees within the same region are considered to have more similar perceptions if compared to another region. Nonetheless, the understanding of national partners is claimed to be homogeneous. A pattern of positive assessment is noticed about the existing different approaches and communication strategies amongst the regional managers, CEO and CFO. Despite the fact, that the organisation does not have a distinct strategy to follow, different opinions, various tools of communication and different partnership experiences were considered as an advantage of organisation – stated by respondent 4. According to respondent 3, “It is always good to have other opinions and (to) get inspired about how others work”. Only one of the participants has stated that should managers have different perceptions, this could be both positive and negative; whilst highlighting the importance of having difference perspective and being open-minded to better see what specific stakeholders’ needs are. An example of the some of the different answers collected from interviewees are visible in Table 7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Second-Order Categories</th>
<th>First-Order Categories</th>
<th>Interviewees’ Quotes Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internal stakeholders’ responsibilities</td>
<td>Managers look for new stakeholders and take care of value-matching partners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Responsible employees for each stakeholder.  
- We always have to look for new partners that can pay for what we have done.  
- If they need to, before the agreement, you (manager) need to make sure that the money they pay matches for the work we have to do for the activities. And also, that it matches our values and that we work for the same goal. |
| Managern work creatively to reach individual goals |  
- We all try to be creative and find new types of partnerships.  
- We are always open to try new things. To reach the goals and we can, have a good idea generated.  
- You have to walk into each partner with an open mind and see what they want. |
| CEO manages organisation’s structure and motvates internal stakeholders |  
- CEO who is responsible to have conversation with some(partners).  
- CEO is responsible for internal stakeholders.  
- It is (the) CEO who has responsibility to encourage managers in different levels to do their best of job. (…) CEO responsibility to work for motivation and structure. |
| Managers perceptions | Managers perceptions |  
- Yes, we have kind of similar picture of that. And we are working very closely all the regional managers so we share a lot of information and help each other. We have |
about stakeholders | about national partners | some kind of synchrony even though we don’t have a recipe to handle stakeholders.
- I think they (managers) have similar (perception about stakeholder management), but I know they are different between different X (managers) around Sweden, because system work differently in each region.

Managers’ perceptions about regional partners | I think so (managers have similar perception about stakeholder management), but we all have worked in different regions and have different backgrounds so it might change and maybe it’s different from regional partners than national partners, but I think the core values remain the same.
- I think they (managers) have similar (perception about stakeholder management), but I know they are different between different X (managers) around Sweden, because system work differently in each region.

Outcomes of working according to the different perceptions | It is always good to have other opinions and get inspired about how others work.
- I think it (managers having different perceptions) would be positive, I think, but of course we do not think exactly the same way.

| Table 7: Core category "Managers’ role in stakeholder management"

6.1.4 Organisation-Stakeholder Relationship

After identifying stakeholders with matching values to those of the organisation, the draft of the partnership agreement, also known as contract, takes place. The agreement depends on the partnership categories terms and conditions, the higher their contribution and support is, the more value and more networking is provided by organisation Z. Thus, four main partnership categories were highlighted by the respondents (see Table 8 below). Starting from the basic kind of partnership, where little effort is done by the organisation, (mostly the partner’s brand advertising); passing by intermediate categories where contribution required is higher and stakeholders get specialized attention from the NPO; and finally, the highest level category, where in exchange of a considerable sum of money, stakeholders obtain the finest service, becoming the main focus of attention for the organisation. Indeed, it is the fourth kind of partnership, the one that has been identified by all interviewees as the current organisation’s target point for new relationships. By hence, it would be based on the partnership category, the type of contract the two parties will have to agree and sign. However, it was stressed the importance of doing “A negotiation before the agreement. (...) Need to find out what they want with the partnership” (respondent 1), in order to “Set agreement really clear, about what we do for them. (...) We will not change anything if it is not agreed in the contract” (respondent 2), and avoid possible misunderstandings and conflicts. Initially, the contract is valid for one year, this is with the objective to test the partnership; should it be not successful, then it can be easily terminated. On the contrary, should both parties be satisfied with the results, “A new agreement with a duration of 3 years is draft” – according to respondent 5.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Second-Order Categories</th>
<th>First-Order Categories</th>
<th>Interviewees’ Quotes Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics of stakeholder communication</td>
<td>Communication channels with stakeholders</td>
<td>Email and phone and meetings at the beginning of the year and to evaluate.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|                        | Frequency and content of reports to stakeholders | Two times a year, we send a report where we tell them what was done.  
|                        |                                                    | It is different because all of the partners have different agreements. |
|                        | Contract-based stakeholder communication strategies | Communication and reporting strategies depend on a contract.  
|                        |                                                    | It’s different because all of the partners have different agreements. (…..). |
|                        | Personalised stakeholder communication | Communication with each stakeholder is really unique and within the group of certain stakeholders is unique too.  
|                        |                                                    | I think it is about employees, how they communicate best to partners. There is no strategy. |
| Stakeholder relationship agreements | Delivering values according to “get what you pay for” strategy | It depends on how much money they give us.  
|                        |                                                    | X (partnership type 4) - no effort from the organisation, just mention the name, X (partnership types 3 and 2) - require a lot of effort from the organisation, and X (partnership type 1) – get the most specialized attention from the organisation. |
|                        | Agreements are predetermined and fixed | They have to do a negotiation before the agreement. (…) Need to find out what they want with the partnership. |
|                        | Possibility of cancelling/renewing of agreement | Maybe it will not be a good partnership, we can try for a while and then we don’t continue.  
|                        |                                                    | If they want to continue with us, we need to find a new agreement. |
|                        | Agreements are based on partners’ interests | We decide contract according to interest of partner. |
|                        | Action plan is based on stakeholder prioritisation | The action plan depends on if they pay more, they get more privileges to contribute more to the partnership. |
| Stakeholder relationships variations | Outcomes of employing different stakeholder relationships | It affects, but in a positive (way), we can learn from each other’s experience – it did not work in my region you can try another, so it is like |
sharing of experience and the ways of communication with stakeholders.

- I think it is both. I think sometimes it is positive and sometimes it’s negative.

| Existence of different perspectives inspire managers work | It is always good to have other opinions and get inspired about how others work. |

Table 8: Core category “Organisation-stakeholder relationship”

Once the partnership has been established, an action plan is created for each new partner, where the manager’s focus is “To keep the partner and prioritize those partnerships we think are lasting. (...) If they pay more, they get more privileges to contribute more” (respondent 3). The action plan offers a platform for both parties to discuss about the partner’s involvement in current projects, as well as evaluate the work done and plan for the following year. Equally, interviewees have identified different grounds for the strategies to implement in order to maintain an active communication with the various stakeholder groups. Some of the participants consider that the organisation’s communication and reporting strategies depend on the contract and on the partner’s interest – “We have different strategies, initially we get to know the stakeholders, so it depends on how much they want to know about us” (respondent 1); whilst the rest believe that “It is about employees how they communicate best to partners. There is no strategy” (respondent 4). Considering that “Managers have their flexibility and present different kinds of solutions for different partners” (respondent 2); interviewees 2 and 4 consider beneficial the employment of different strategies according to the situation and the partner. Regardless the strategy implemented, interviewees recognize the independence managers have when selecting what they would consider the most convenient approach to communicate with stakeholders, as well as consider the manager-stakeholder communication as a personal and delicate human relationship. Various tools of communication were mentioned, being meetings and email messages the most common ones. Although the advantage on having face-to-face meetings was stated: “We want to meet most of the stakeholders in person, because we see we create stronger band between each other but it is sometimes very hard to meet many people” (respondent 2), it was recognized as sometimes challenging depending on both parties’ agendas and localisation. On the other hand, all respondents concluded that the frequency and style of reports to stakeholders, would be personalised for each partner based on their needs and on the partnership agreement, highlighting that most commonly “Two times a year, we send a report where we tell them what was done” (respondent 1). Overall, respondents proved to have a different opinion on the communication strategies implemented; however, they do appreciate the autonomy they have whilst making their own decisions to select the most appropriate tools and criteria to use according to the partner.

6.1.5 Stakeholder Management for Entrepreneurship Projects-based NPOs

Considering the entrepreneurship focus of the organisation Z projects, the identified stakeholder groups tend to have a specific interest in the outlined field, assure some of the interviewees: “Stakeholders we have are linked to either entrepreneurship, or they are
learning themselves about entrepreneurship, or getting in touch with entrepreneurship” (respondent 3); “Partners are interested in getting to know more entrepreneurs” (respondent 1). On the contrary, other respondents do not consider stakeholders being mainly interested in the field as a pattern, but only as one point of interest, which may change according to the different projects’ objectives. Still, the entrepreneurship field is considered advantageous when it comes to attract new stakeholders’ participation, as respondent 2 affirms: “(The) start-up world is really popular nowadays, everyone is talking about that. So, it is easier to get collaboration”. Stakeholders having entrepreneurship as main approach in their collaboration, can express their interest in either local, regional, or national areas. Similarly, it will be mostly depending on their location, age, experience in entrepreneurship, and size of business what they will want to obtain from the organisation: “If they are interested in different type of things connected to entrepreneurs, some of them are more into arranging events, inspiring and educating students; (whilst) others think that we only have to be the engine to create projects” (respondent 2). For this specific case study organisation, regardless their main purpose, organisation Z is constantly looking for new stakeholders around the country. As a matter of fact, the full sample agreed on considering an advantage for the organisation to be based in Sweden, “A great start-up environment” as defined by respondent 4 – see table 9 for the interviewee’s full statement. Same environment that, according to all interviewees, does not have any influence in the stakeholder management strategies applied within the organisation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Second-Order Categories</th>
<th>First-Order Categories</th>
<th>Interviewees’ Quotes Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Stakeholder’s interest in NPO projects | Stakeholders have multiple types of interest in entrepreneurship | ▪ Stakeholders we have are linked to either entrepreneurship or they are learning themselves about entrepreneurship or getting in touch with entrepreneurship or that is something they want.  
▪ Partners are interested in getting to know more entrepreneurs. |
| Importance of organisation’s location | The start-up environment creates location advantages for the organisation | ▪ Organisation can exist anywhere but its advantage to be in Sweden, (is that) it is a great start-up environment, I think Sweden has good rhythm. When it comes to start-ups and entrepreneurs for example, we have a lot of contestants comparing other countries. |
| Stakeholder management dependence on context | Entrepreneurial field does not influence stakeholder management strategies | ▪ No, I don’t really.  
▪ No. |

Table 9: Core category “Stakeholder management for entrepreneurship projects-based NPOs”
7. Discussion

In this chapter are discussed the key findings explained in the preceding chapter. The similarities and differences from the interviewees’ responses are highlighted in relation to the data analysis and theoretical grounds reviewed. The data analysis has proven the existence of different opinions and approaches taken by the organisation’s employees, making of this case study organisation, a point of reference for similar situations in the context of NPOs in entrepreneurship field. The study’s findings are compared to the literature grounds with the aim to suggest propositions for further studies whilst responding the research questions. Finally, the discussion is grounded on the key topics outlined in Chapter 2 Theoretical Framework.

7.1 Criteria for Stakeholder Selection

The presence and support of stakeholders in the organisation, as well as an active interaction between them and managers, is recognized by every interviewee as being fundamental for the operational efficiency and effectiveness of the organisation. This is in line with the findings of Potluka et al. (2017, p. 298). Funds, services, network, and publicity are some of the mentioned benefits to obtain from various stakeholders. Regardless the partner’s form of contribution, this study findings have highlighted the need for both parties – stakeholders and managers – on having aligned goals and objectives. Same which corresponds to the significance of a strategic employment of stakeholder management (Fletcher, et al., 2003, p. 508).

It was stressed by the interviewees that managers act according to their own understanding of the organisation’s objectives and their individual goals, causing a non-uniform implementation of strategies for stakeholder selection and management. This is in line with Liao & Huang’s (2016, p. 22) theory on the necessity of employees’ having a clear understanding of the organisation’s vision. Another similarity found with the literature reviewed, was the managers’ perception of stakeholder management complexity in the organisation, in relation to for-profit institutions. Public and NPOs sustain more delicate relationships than private and for-profit organisations – as argued by Drucker (1990 cited in Vázquez et al. 2002, p. 1024) – and a higher number of stakeholder groups, difficulting the identification of the organisation’s issues and definition of goals (Hofstede, 1981, p. 194; Fletcher et al. 2003, p. 509).

Moreover, the NPO’s financial dependence on stakeholders emphasised by the interviewees, concurs with Hansmann’s (1979, p. 65) statement of NFPs relying “largely upon donations, retained earnings and debt for capital financing”. Overall, this matches with the theoretical stakeholder management approach in NPOs outlined in chapter 2.2.2 affirming the purpose and advantages of defining stakeholder culture (Jones, et al., 2007, p. 137) in order to understand the significance and value of stakeholders collaboration within NPOs.

Given the dependency level of NPOs on stakeholders, the organisation has to ensure the compatibility of goals between the two parties to enhance a continued and successful collaboration. The implementation of such goals will be based on each of the manager’s perception, that is, their individual goals and understanding of the organisation’s vision. Therefore, according to these findings, the first proposition of this study is: Different managerial perceptions about stakeholders are a potential factor leading
to inaccurate alignment of goals between the organisation and stakeholders, to whom the organisation has a strong financial dependence on. These findings contribute to meeting the third study objective.

7.2 Stakeholder Identification, Classification and Prioritisation

Findings show that interviewed employees of organisation Z put a lot of effort and resources to both find new partners and to maintain strong relationships with the existing ones. This can be easily explained by theory through the comparison between the attention given to stakeholders resulting paramount for the strategic management process, and how success in non-profits depends on key stakeholders’ satisfaction. If stakeholders are not satisfied, prejudicial changes may take place, like cutting budget, undermining new initiatives, damaging reputation (Bryson, 2004, pp. 24-25). Although, the importance of stakeholders is agreed amongst the organisation’s employees, a different understanding and multiple interpretations of its concept were revealed, as earlier explained in 6.1.2. Therefore, the question – Who are the Organisation Z’s stakeholders? – has not been answered with any degree of consensus. This fact, supports the results of analysis conducted by Miles (2012, p. 285) which demonstrates that concept of stakeholders can be considered as an essentially contested concept, explaining the existence of its various definitions. As an outcome of this matter, authors were not surprised to have different lists of stakeholders from each interviewee including several methods for their classification and prioritisation. It is a fact that theory suggests numerous approaches on how to classify stakeholders according to their different attributes. These attributes, for instance, can be external or internal contact (Fletcher, et al., 2003, p. 510); claimant, influence or combinatory (Kaler, 2002, p. 91); have some influences on organisational decisions (Johnson, et al., 2017, p. 137); own combinations of power and interest (Newcombe, 2003, p. 844); or additionally, legitimacy and urgency (Mitchell et al. 1997, p. 865) described in chapter 2.1. In the case of organisation Z, unstructured but unique strategies of stakeholder grouping were revealed, underlining the distinctiveness of its context being an NPO implementing entrepreneurial projects in different regions of Sweden, supporting the first and second objectives of this research. The following criteria was mentioned: level of contribution (funds or other services), demographic characteristics, interest in entrepreneurship, experience in entrepreneurship, governmental or private companies, and distinctive purposes of partnership. It is also evident that employees do not work according to one similar hierarchy of stakeholders. Theory assumes that managers are responsible to define the types of stakeholders and allocate resources according to their claims (Mitchell, et al., 1997, p. 873). Thus, each manager in organisation Z allocates resources in a different manner. Still, a justification of these variances, such as being part of different regional working groups, could be considered valid if there are not perceived different results from the same region.

These findings lead to the second proposition of this study: The existence of different managerial perceptions regarding stakeholder criteria is a factor leading to the employment of various approaches of stakeholder identification, classification and prioritisation, which also impact resource allocation decisions. This proposition can be tested by longitudinal observation on Organisation Z. On the other hand, lack of guidelines in public and non-profit literature on how systematically stakeholders should be identified and analysed (Bryson,
can be disambiguated by agreeing on using the same stakeholder concept, as well as a uniform classification and prioritization approaches.

7.3 Managers’ Role in Stakeholder Management

Theoretical belief that the role of managers in stakeholder management is crucial, is in line with findings on NPO’s managers and TMT roles and responsibilities. Considering that Organisation Z is reliant on funds coming from different stakeholders, managers are handling sales with the combination of other managerial responsibilities. As explained in literature review (section 2.1.4), managers have the responsibility to manage relationships in a way that is consistent with the interest and claims of all types of stakeholder groups (Hill & Jones, 1992, p. 134). In this regard, managers of Organisation Z are responsible for active communication with partners and for the adjustment of strategies according to their feedbacks. In addition to the highlighted essential skills – analytical, planning, communication, and coordination skills - (Bourne & Walker, 2005, p. 658; Potluka et al., 2017, p. 297); the study’s results show that creativity, adoptability, and readiness for new challenges are highly required in NPOs. It is obvious, that managers are equipped with leaders’ characteristics as they act independently to deal with stakeholders to fulfill their individual goals. Moreover, the role of TMT and specifically, the role of CEO was discussed in relation to internal stakeholders, as accountable for managing structure and employees’ motivation. This is in line with ideas of Love (1998, pp. 146-147) about the importance of internal evaluation, which is the tool measuring the effectiveness of NPOs’ structure, employees and management.

According to the responses gathered, managers believe that all of them have a similar understanding of organisational stakeholders. However, the findings show the opposite: different stakeholder definitions are recognized by all interviewed employees with various approaches of stakeholders’ classification, prioritisation and by hence, relationship strategies; highlighted in sections 6.1.2 and 6.1.4 respectively. An explanation of this matter is partially aligned with findings in theory. According to Sanchez et al. (2001, cited in Fletcher, et al., 2003, pp. 505-506) the knowledge of employees can be unique; e.g., previous experience, background, flexibility, motivation or general, information from trainings, meetings or guidelines. Nonetheless, this does not include differences according to locational factors, which is the case for Organisation Z.

Findings about the likely effects of implementing stakeholder management in various ways according to managers’ perceptions, were unique and specific to this case. The fact that employees do not follow one same strategy, was assessed positively and several advantages were underlined; like the share of best practices, learn from others’ mistakes, understand situations from different perspectives, get inspired from others’ work, amongst others.

Therefore, the following third proposition is considered to be relevant: Managers’ individual goals and their high level of autonomy is a potential factor leading to the development of different perceptions about stakeholders. Aligned with the research questions and objectives of this study, these findings encourage researchers to implement further studies to test proposition and also reveal the more accurate outcomes of having different perceptions.
7.4 Organisation-Stakeholder Relationship

In order to maintain interactive and successful relationships with stakeholders, it is found that the case study organisation relies on the agreement’s conditions agreed between the organisation and stakeholders. The study findings reflect a trend for managers to only identify as stakeholders to the various types of cooperating partners the organisation has – identified stakeholder groups in section 6.1.2 – over other internal stakeholders, or even, clients. This finding corresponds to Julian’s (2012, 2016) stakeholder groups identified in NPOs; however, it differs from the theoretical approach to skills needed by managers in chapter 2.2.1.1 emphasising the need of strategic relationships with all stakeholders involved in the organisation. By hence, and considering the main focus of interviewees’ responses was put on donors, the data analysed reflected different opinions from managers on the organisation’s communication strategies depending on the contract type and on their own initiatives. This is in line with Potluka et al.’s (2017, p. 1004) stakeholder circle methodology, where it is mentioned that after the identification and prioritisation of key stakeholders, it is necessary to select and implement the most appropriate communication strategy. Truly, theory also recognizes that managers communication may become complex due to the use of multiple communication and reporting styles (Potluka, et al., 2017, p. 1010). In fact, the findings revealed a debate of opinions amongst the interviewees in relation to various types of organisational strategies, such as reporting procedures and methods, communication frequency, looking for new partners, amongst others. This lack of uniformity of ideas is in line with Hofstede’s (1981, p. 194) findings on NPOs’ tendency to have unclear goals due to stakeholders’ different interests, misinformation and to not keep the pace within fast-changing environments. Nonetheless, it is important to mention that despite the contrast of opinions, all managers and TMT members recognised and appreciated the autonomy they all have to make decisions and act as they would consider appropriate. In addition, managers will make mostly use of digital means of communication; however, the advantages of face-to-face meetings were stressed, followed by the recognition of their challenges.

Contributing to the first study’s objective, these findings indicate the fourth proposition of this study: Managers’ independence in decision-making leads to the selection of partnership agreements according to their distinctive perceptions of stakeholders, resulting in the existence of various styles and strategies of communication between the organisation and stakeholders. In this specific case study, it is according to the relationship agreement (i.e., contract for partners or internal stakeholders, agreements with beneficiaries, board members, partnership categories, etc.), that managers will communicate with stakeholders on the basis and style they find more convenient. By hence, the use of multiple styles may generate distinct outcomes.

7.5 Stakeholder Management for Entrepreneurship Project-Based NPOs

Considering the lack of accurate findings in the field of entrepreneurship (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000, p. 219) and the absence of research about the link between NPOs and the entrepreneurship field, this study’s findings have been used to provide a more clear idea of the case study situation; which may be common in similar contexts. The findings suggest
managers assuming that the organisation’s stakeholders’ collaboration can be both based on their inclination to the outlined field, or just as part of their general interest to collaborate in a project. Although a preference for the field was not proved in the findings, the various field-related objectives that stakeholders may have when collaborating with the organisation were stressed. This is in line with Huarng & Yu’s (2011, p. 295) findings on the different types of entrepreneurship drivers. Nonetheless, the study’s findings reflect an unanimous perspective of Sweden seen as an advantageous place to develop entrepreneurship projects. This matches with the theoretical grounds mentioned in chapter 2.3.3.1 in light of Sweden’s entrepreneurship opportunities and societal entrepreneurship emerging practices (Lundqvist & Williams Middleton, 2010, p. 30).

Based on those stakeholders with specific entrepreneurship purposes, these findings contribute to the study’s third objective and lead to the fifth and final proposition: The context of entrepreneurial projects is a potential factor determining stakeholders’ interest; whilst the level of their contribution and involvement vary according to the partnership agreements developed by managers holding different perceptions. Aligned with the research question and objectives, further research is encouraged to test the proposition, suggesting conducting the research in locations with economies and cultures different from the one used in this study.
8. Conclusions

This final chapter presents a summary of the study’s findings where the answers to the research questions and objectives are stressed. Further, both theoretical and managerial contributions of the study are listed. To conclude, a detailed explanation of the study’s limitations is done by the authors, whilst suggesting future research topics.

8.1 Conclusion

The overall objective of this thesis was to call researchers’ attention into an emerging combined sector, which despite the popularity of both fields on their own, the grounds and likely outcomes of the link between NPOs and entrepreneurship has not been fully explored yet. Mainly, from the managerial point of view in terms of stakeholder management practices and strategies. To reiterate, the research questions used as main focus of study were:

**Why do managers’ perceptions differ in relation to stakeholders in an entrepreneurial project-based NPO?**

**What are the outcomes of the managers’ different perceptions about stakeholders?**

With base on the study’s research questions, the authors were able to develop the existing theory by describing the procedures followed throughout the practice of stakeholder management in the case studied organisation. The process starts with managers recognising the organisation’s need of stakeholders and highlighting the importance of sharing values, whilst appreciating their various forms of collaboration and the differences of NPO principles in comparison to other kind of institutions. Next, depending on managers individual perceptions, a certain criteria will be employed for stakeholders’ identification, classification and prioritisation. For instance, stakeholders will be classified in groups depending on their interest and mean of contribution. Similarly, the level of prioritisation they will get, will be most likely based on their power (financial contribution) and interest (active interaction). Having identified stakeholders, managers need to maintain a strategic and strong relationship with them. In order to do this, managers are responsible of preserving an active and clear communication with them. This will depend on the type of agreement amongst the two parties and on the manager’s desired strategies to implement according to his/her criteria. This way, the relationship between the organisation and its stakeholders will be initiated and depending on the expectations and outcomes for both parties, the relation can be either continued or finalized.

In summary, the study’s conclusions have revealed what the authors have identified as causals for the Organisation Z’s managers to hold different perceptions towards stakeholders and their likely effect within the same organisation and amongst stakeholders. Based on the five authors’ propositions outlined in the previous chapter, it is evident that managers perceive stakeholders differently. This action takes place because each manager is working on individual goals and has enough autonomy to make decisions under the criteria he/she will consider more suitable and appropriate according to the stakeholder’s level of importance for the organisation. The fact that managers take different approaches to practice
stakeholder management within one same organisation leads to various outcomes, clearly identified through the study’s data analysis section. The first outcome identified is the inaccurate alignment of goals between the organisation and stakeholders. It is fundamental for both parties to share the same values and objectives in order to maintain a successful collaboration and achieve both parties’ objectives. The second outcome is the implementation of multiple approaches for stakeholder identification, classification and prioritisation by managers; meaning that communication, agreements and in general, the organisation-stakeholder relationship would be different from manager to manager. Finally, and with a focus on the study’s fields, the third outcome revealed that the context of entrepreneurial projects may determine stakeholders’ interest; this is considering that such interest and participation would depend on the partnership agreement, same that as already outlined, is developed according to the different perceptions managers hold.

Overall, the study reveals that due to the fast-changing entrepreneurship environment added to the NPOs’ complex and resources-limited nature, managers may not have a uniform understanding of the organisation’s goals and by hence, implement different organisational strategies and best practices. The different perceptions of managers reflected in the findings towards various stakeholder management aspects, are interpreted by the authors as an effect of the lack of attention given to the whole context itself, namely, entrepreneurship project-based NPOs. Finally, the authors recognize that stakeholder management does not necessarily need to be applied similarly by all managers; however, the employment of contrasting strategies and inconsistent communication channels may generate unconformity and disorientation amongst stakeholder groups, creating a negative effect in the organisation.

### 8.2 Theoretical Contributions

The research aim is to explore the implications of stakeholder management in NPOs. More specifically, to understand why the perception of some of the internal stakeholders towards other actors vary and how can this impact the organisation. As highlighted in the literature review, up to date there was lack of studies exploring stakeholder management within the project-based NPOs (Bryson, 2004, p. 22), and a scarcity of findings in the field of entrepreneurship (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000, p. 219). Hence, using a qualitative case study approach – considered to be appropriate for theory development – the establishment of five propositions are suggested to be tested in future studies. Moreover, throughout the exploration of the real practices within project-based NPO – and more specifically entrepreneurial context – this research contributes to the body of knowledge of stakeholder management as well as organisational decision-making by analytical generalisation. During the research the authors proved that, although stakeholder management has been researched by scholars, the subject in new and emerging contexts is still under an investigated area.

It is already well-recognised in stakeholder literature that organisations are a collection of stakeholders (Jones, et al., 2007, p. 137) and it is essential to acknowledge every single partner and to aim for their satisfaction. Also, the role of skilled managers is considered to be crucial in this process (Jepsen & Eskerod, 2009, p. 341), whose responsibility is to manage relationships by making relevant strategic decisions and allocating organisational resources efficiently (Hill & Jones, 1992, p. 134). However, theory does not focus on managers’
perceptions about stakeholders and likely effects of their differences within the same organisation. Therefore, this research tried to expand the understanding of this area by showing reasons why do perceptions amongst managers differ and what are the outcomes for the organisation and other stakeholders.

Moreover, by clarifying the importance of adopting a systematic stakeholder analysis and its implementation strategies, the authors contributed to the knowledge of firm-specific factors impacting stakeholders’ relationships and causing different perceptions amongst managers (Banks, et al., 2016, p. 19). Overall, the study prepared a platform for further research with the aim to expand the knowledge of stakeholder theory in the non-profit organisation within the specific contexts.

**8.3 Managerial Contributions**

The managerial perspective is taken into consideration with the believe that the findings of this research may provide practical insights to the stakeholder management. Employees of Organisation Z may find it beneficial to reflect upon this study findings, considering the potential various impacts of the existing different perceptions in the same working environment. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that because of the nature of the cross-sectional, this single-case study employed a qualitative research strategy and collected data form interviews; being complemented with analytical generalisation, where findings were transferred into different contexts requiring a deep and cautious analysis. The authors therefore suggest the following recommendations to be only considered as possible insights that managers handling stakeholders may consider in NPO running entrepreneurial projects.

Firstly, organisation management should be aware that there might be a different understanding of stakeholders within the same organisation – as revealed in this research – which might be impacting positively or negatively the organisational operations. Secondly, they should recognize the importance of systematic stakeholder analysis in non-profit organisations, specifically focusing on entrepreneurial projects. This study demonstrates how essential and beneficial it is to keep stakeholders satisfied. Otherwise, failed stakeholder management may lead to undesirable results that can cause unsuccessful implementation of projects, and in worst scenario, a lack of funding, which managers would undoubtedly be intending to avoid. In addition, managers should be aware that stakeholder management is not a simple task. Some of the challenges that managers might face include the increase of time and resources, lack of knowledge and experience, difficulties to reach consensus, amongst others. Therefore, a third and last recommendation is to consider having one agreed stakeholder management strategy which will guarantee a uniform and consistent understanding of stakeholders and procedures to follow while classifying, prioritising and choosing the relationship strategy.

**8.4 Limitations and Ideas for Further Research**

In spite of the relevant findings already outlined, various limitations have impacted the final outcomes of this study. The relevant data obtained from all ten interviews conducted from a sample of five TMT members and managers in the NPO used as case study, enabled the
authors to contribute to the existing body of knowledge of stakeholder management in the context of entrepreneurial project-based NPOs. However, further understanding in the NFP field in relation to entrepreneurial projects could have been achieved with the application of a broader and more in-depth research.

The most obvious limitation was time. Due to the limited time frame for the thesis research and development, the authors had to implement a cross-sectional study. For the purpose of the research, the study of the particular phenomenon in that particular time was appropriate. Nonetheless, a longitudinal case study would have provided a more comprehensive research and analysis on the change and development over variables (Saunders, et al., 1997, p. 77). Indeed, a longitudinal study would have enabled the authors to better explore the Z Organisation’s relationship between TMT and managers, with the NPO’s stakeholders over a longer period of time. Time is closely related to another strong limitation: information sources. Given the brief period authors had to collect data, they were unable to implement a method different to interviews, excluding the possibility of data triangulation. As highlighted by (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 326), three issues are mainly related to qualitative interviews: reliability, forms of bias, and generalisability. Considering the unstandardized nature of the interviews, reliability and generalisability on data gathered may be put in doubt in relation to obtaining similar information from further research and to accurately generalise the results gathered to all the sampling population (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 327). Amongst the likely bias to arise within interviews, these can be either response bias, based on how the respondents perceive the interviewers, and interview bias, where the tone or even, non-verbal communication of the interviewers create an effect on the respondents’ answers (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 326). Both forms of bias may have arisen in the study. Moreover, the lack of information related to entrepreneurship project-based view of the NPO made difficult the use of other information sources. Nevertheless, should a longitudinal case study on this research topic be applied, researchers would be able to apply other techniques. Different techniques such as participant observation (Saunders, et al., 1997, p. 187), where researchers become part of the organisation to not only observe but also feel the experience on the NPO’s projects and competitions handled at that moment; as well as focus groups (O’Gorman & Macintosh, 2015, p. 123) where beneficiaries – competition participants – could easily share their opinions and impressions with the researchers. This would provide wider insights to the study through the gathering and analysis of data from various stakeholder groups.

As explained in Chapter 4, the interviewees were the organisation’s TMT and managers. Despite the initial interest the authors had in also approaching other stakeholder groups – such as funders and board members – the lack of time available, required authors to select only the organisation’s managerial department as participants. This may result as a study limitation, considering that data was gathered from only one group of stakeholders out of the multiple groups identified in the NPO. However, to appreciate and recognize managers’ way of thinking was fundamental for the focus of this study, considering the research questions purpose on understanding NPO managers perceptions towards stakeholders and their outcomes.

Bearing in mind the support given by the local government to the industry this case is based on, in addition to the geographical location of the authors at the moment of the research, Sweden perfectly fit as the case study location for the study. In addition, and with the purpose
to have further awareness on the topics, future research is suggested to take place in other countries where entrepreneurial projects may not be as strongly supported as in Sweden. This could enhance the identification of new challenges NPO may face as well as the recognition of unconsidered opportunities. Moreover, the comparison of stakeholder management practices in entrepreneurship-focused NPOs in different countries, would provide noteworthy hints on the social, cultural and industry views of the economies. This could allow a broader applicability of the research findings.

The qualitative methods undertaken, along with the single case study research strategy implemented, might have driven authors to present interpretative bias in findings. In order to avoid this, the authors did a cautious review on methodological approaches in addition to a careful analysis and categorisation of data. However, the subjective interpretation of the qualitative results may have not been fully respected, leading to possible bias. Finally, the occasional technical difficulties presented by the communication technologies used for some of the interviews – such as telephones and Skype video calls – in addition the use of English language in the research – being neither the authors’ nor the participants’ mother tongue – may have contributed to possible data misinterpretation. The actions employed to overcome this limitation have been explained in Chapter 5.2. By hence, complementary quantitative research is strongly suggested with the purpose of obtaining statistical and more objective outcomes.

Whilst doing the analysis of data, the authors held as main objective, firstly the identification of relationship patterns between the answers collected and the study’s unit of analysis (O’Gorman & Macintosh, 2015, p. 83), namely, managers’ perceptions; and secondly, its interpretation against existing literature. Nonetheless, considering the little number of theoretical studies existing in the context of entrepreneurial projects within NPOs, and the fact that this study’s propositions are not tested yet, it is encouraged further research to better explore the factors causing NPO’s employees to have different perceptions and implement different strategies in terms of stakeholder management.

Overall, the study findings suggest that managers do have different perceptions in terms of identification, classification, prioritisation and communication with stakeholders. Although they recognize and appreciate how relevant their collaboration is for the NPO operations and survival, they all implement different tactics and techniques for the management of stakeholders. Therefore, further research is proposed in similar contexts where the organisation-stakeholder relationship can be better and more in-depth analysed in terms of strategies and outcomes.
List of References


Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview guide for the first interview round

- Unstructured interviews conducted from November 2\textsuperscript{nd} to November 16\textsuperscript{th}
- Via face-to-face and electronic (Skype) with TMT and Regional Managers of NPO
- Duration: 45-60 minutes

Unstructured Interview Guide

Part I – Introduction
- Authors introduction and expression of appreciation towards participants
- Brief summary on the research project
- Authors notify interviewees that notes will be taken for the purpose of data collection

Part II – Exploratory questions on interviewee’s position and background, NPO structure and current projects
- Main duties and responsibilities in NPO;
- Seniority;
- Background and experience;
- NPO’s main partners;
- Organisation’s number of employees; and
- Current projects held by the organisation?

Part III – Discussion about stakeholder management
- Organisation’s stakeholders
- Stakeholders classification
- Stakeholders prioritisation

Closing note: Authors thank participants and ask their availability for a second interview.
Appendix 2: Interview guide for the second interview round

- Semi-structured interviews conducted from December 6th to December 13th
- Via face-to-face and electronic (Skype) with TMT and Regional Managers of NPO
- Duration: 20-35 minutes

Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Part I – Introduction
- Authors thank to interviewees for their participation
- Authors ask permission to audio-record the interview

Part II – Stakeholder Management Practices
- How are the organisation’s stakeholders identified and by whom?
- What are the communication channels between managers and stakeholders?
- What are the reporting procedures undertaken between managers and stakeholders?
- On what do communication and reporting strategies depend?
- Is the manager who decides how to communicate with stakeholder or are there agreed strategies amongst all employees? If yes/no – How?
- How participative are stakeholders in decision-making?
- Which factors do you (as manager) recognise as motivators and value drivers in the organisation’s stakeholder management?

Part III – Stakeholder Management in Non-Profit Organisations
- Do you think managers have similar perception about stakeholder management in the NPO?
- Do you think that stakeholder management in NPO is different from other types of organisation? If yes/no – Why?

Part IV – Entrepreneurial Projects in NPO
- Is selection of entrepreneurial projects linked to stakeholders? If yes/no – Why?
- Do you think entrepreneurial field influence stakeholder management strategies? If yes/no – Why?

Closing note: Authors thank participants for their continued assistance.
### Appendix 3: Organisation Z characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Status</td>
<td>Non-profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewees</td>
<td>CEO, CFO and three regional managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishment of organisation</td>
<td>Late 90s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>12 employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main scope</td>
<td>Stimulate entrepreneurship, connect people with business ideas to experts to support creation of new businesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>Entrepreneurial events, workshops, lectures, competitions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Appendix 4: Data display and categorisation for analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First order categories</th>
<th>Second Order Categories</th>
<th>Core Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▪ Stakeholder matching values with those of the organisation</td>
<td>Aligned purposes based on core values</td>
<td>Criteria for stakeholder selection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ NPO’s stakeholder management complexity and need of funds</td>
<td>Dependence on financially well - off stakeholders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| ▪ Stakeholder interest and motivators  
   ▪ Financial contribution from stakeholders | Criteria for stakeholders’ identification | Stakeholder identification, classification and prioritisation |
| ▪ Characteristics of stakeholder groups | Criteria for stakeholders’ classification | |
| ▪ Stakeholder attributes | Criteria for stakeholders’ prioritisation | |
| ▪ Managers look for new stakeholders and take care of existing value-matching partners  
   ▪ Managers work creatively to reach individual goals  
   ▪ CEO manages organisation’s structure and motivates internal stakeholders | Internal stakeholders’ responsibilities | Managers’ role in stakeholder management |
| ▪ Managers’ perceptions about national partners  
   ▪ Managers’ perceptions about regional partners  
   ▪ Outcomes of working according to the different perceptions | Managers’ perceptions about stakeholders | |
| ▪ Communication channels with stakeholders  
   ▪ Frequency and content of reports to stakeholders  
   ▪ Contract-based stakeholder communication strategies  
   ▪ Personalised stakeholder communication | Characteristics of stakeholder communication | Organisation - stakeholder relationship |
| ▪ Delivering values according to “get what you pay for” strategy  
   ▪ Agreements are predetermined and fixed  
   ▪ Possibility of cancelling/renewing of agreement | Stakeholder relationship agreements | |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agreement</th>
<th>Stakeholder relationships variations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agreements are based on partners’ interests</td>
<td>Stakeholder relationships variations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action plan is based on stakeholder prioritisation</td>
<td>Stakeholder relationships variations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes of employing different stakeholder relationships</td>
<td>Stakeholder relationships variations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existence of different perspectives inspire managers work</td>
<td>Stakeholder relationships variations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholders have various interests in entrepreneurship</td>
<td>Stakeholders interest in NPO projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder interests are depended on location</td>
<td>Stakeholders interest in NPO projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The start-up environment creates location advantages for the organisation</td>
<td>Importance of organisation’s location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurial field does not influence stakeholder management strategies</td>
<td>Stakeholder management dependence on context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of organisation’s location</td>
<td>Stakeholder management dependence on context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder management for entrepreneurship projects-based NPO</td>
<td>Stakeholder management dependence on context</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix 5: Data display and categorisation for analysis with quotations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Category</th>
<th>Second-Order Categories</th>
<th>First-Order Categories</th>
<th>Interviewees’ Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Criteria for stakeholder selection | Aligned purposes based on core values | Stakeholder matching values with those of the organisation | ▪ They (stakeholders to be considered) have to match our (organisation) values and have the same purpose, which is to help entrepreneurs and support entrepreneurship. So, they need to cooperate so we can work together for the same purpose.  
▪ If they need to, before the agreement, you need to make sure that the money they pay matches for the work we have to do for the activities. And also, that it matches our values and that we work for the same goal.  
▪ We all have worked in different regions and have different backgrounds so it (strategies) might change and maybe it is different from regional partners than national partners, but I think the core values remain the same.  
▪ I would say we work with individual goals, but we have business goals to fulfil. |
| Dependence on financially well-off stakeholders | NPO’s stakeholder management complexity and need of funds | | ▪ Yes, I think it is different (stakeholder management) because we do not sell a product so it’s more like partnerships, so yes, it is different (to find partners in this kind of organisations).  
▪ It is very different to find like partners in this kind of organisations ... And we have to find many different ways to collaborate with partners.  
▪ Yes, I believe it is different. In NPOs you have (an) agreement that can be... We do not have any money to put in partnership and we don’t have like our product is kind of complex itself.  
▪ We are trying to make them happy, but we look at partners who invest a lot of money, we always try to set agreement that are really clear, about what we do for them. Of course, we have to enhance their feeling and experience of supporting organisation. |
If we have an event, we need partners for it because we do not have a big budget for ourselves.

The criteria are that they have any kind of interest in what we are doing and the results we are performing.

Employees - internal, board, members of organisation, partner or sponsors, names you want to use, companies who want us to use their names, entrepreneurs, alumni, feedback network, media

They have to match our (organisation) values and have the same purpose, which is to help entrepreneurs and support entrepreneurship. So, they need to cooperate so we can work together for the same purpose.

I think they need to feel like a support for us and for the partners. They need to feel like they’re doing something good and also getting something out of it.

From my personal view, I would say building relationships and networking.

Information, to keep them updated and what is going on and making sure they have all the news and all the invitations and that they are ok with logos.

Depends on how much money they want to contribute.

We have stakeholders but they just give us money... Yes, the ones supporting with funding the organisation.

I would say that all the partners and partners that are paying and non-paying partners that we have agreement with.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria for stakeholders’ classification</th>
<th>Characteristics of stakeholder groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▪ General stakeholders are managers, like university,... the ones who give you more money and universities,... companies, they’re all kind of different stakeholders. Companies like X, like the bank, they give us money and also like companies.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Students, partners, universities, paying partners, board members. ... like national partners ... regional partners, and then we also have X (another stakeholder group) that can contribute with less money or there are services that we need, so they have something to do. (…) (We) have academic partners, and the local partners. Academic partners are also members of the organisation. (…) The academic partners are also like members of the organisation, they get to vote for the membership.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Employees - internal, board, members of organisation, partner or sponsors, names you want to use, companies who want us to use their names, entrepreneurs, alumni, feedback network, media.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Our competitors, legal, free consultancy, advisory, guest, something like that.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ How you group them. Groups: demographic. Depends on types (of) stakeholders: age, location study, experience entrepreneurship. Sponsors: regional, national, size of business. There are different grouping depending on which type of stakeholders.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ National and regional partners of X (organisation). (…) The academic partners.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ The academic partners are also like members of the organisation, they get to vote for the membership.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ No, we do not classify them (stakeholders), really.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Depends on how much money they want to contribute with.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ (There are) financial partners: (Swedish government -50% funding), private partners (bank), academic partners (money and students), X (basic partner) some give services, contestants, and people who give feedback (network, jury, voluntary base).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Criteria for stakeholders’ prioritisation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Stakeholder attributes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§ The power and also the goals because that defines students and the ones what we want to have in the competitions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§ The most relevant stakeholders are the bigger ones, the ones who give you more money and universities. (...) It depends on how much money they give us.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§ Yes, I will say that yes, some of them require a lot of attention some less attention. And sometimes its depending on how much they actually pay but sometimes I have some big partners that they only want report once year. So, they don’t need much attention.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§ We must look to groups: entrepreneurs are the most important, second one are partners, third professional network and of course, employees and board they are linked to need to be. So those three are most important.</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Managers’ role in stakeholder management</strong></th>
<th><strong>Internal stakeholders’ responsibilities</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>§ Responsible employees for each stakeholder. Who contact to companies A, B, C.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§ We are working mainly with partners, working with both existing paying partners, and scouting for new potential partners. (...) A lot of people in organisation 70 % of the people working of some kind of sales in their roles. (…)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§ We always have to look for new partners that can pay for what we have done.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§ If they need to, before the agreement, you (manager) need to make sure that the money they pay matches for the work we have to do for the activities. And also, that it matches our values and that we work for the same goal.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§ I think information, to keep them updated and what’s going on and making sure they have all the news and all the invitations and that they’re ok with logos. And also, evaluate the activities we do so we get feedback like a good or bad thing. So we can act different.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§ So, we prioritize that action plan and we need to focus on that action plan to keep the partner and prioritize those partnerships</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
we think are lasting and good relationships because sometimes we get a new partner and as we work together, we see this is not what is expected and the relationship is maintained to keep the money. (...) You must have an action plan for them and you talk about it and always have a meeting afterwards to evaluate.

| Managers work creatively to reach individual goals | § We all try to be creative and find new types of partnerships.  
§ We are always open to try new things. To reach the goals and we can, have a good idea generated. Come up with new ideas and new ways of getting stakeholders attention and get involved…. But I think we are not afraid of trying new things and we also have an entrepreneurial way forward.  
§ You have to walk into each partner with an open mind and see what they want.  
§ I would say we work with individual goals. |
| CEO manages organisation’s structure and motivates internal stakeholders | § CEO who is responsible to have conversation with some (stakeholders).  
§ CEO is responsible for internal stakeholders.  
§ It is (the) CEO who has responsibility to encourage managers in different levels to do their best of job. (...) CEO responsibility to work for motivation and structure. |
| Managers’ perceptions about stakeholders | § Yeah, maybe (managers have similar perception about stakeholder management).  
§ Yes, we have kind of similar picture of that. And we are working very closely all the regional managers so we share a lot of information and help each other. We have some kind of synchrony even though we don’t have a recipe to handle stakeholders.  
§ I think so (managers have similar perception about stakeholder management), but we all have worked in different regions and have different backgrounds so it might change and maybe it’s different from regional partners than national partners, but I think the core values remain the same. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Managers’ perceptions about regional partners</th>
<th>Outcomes of working according to the different perceptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I think they (managers) have similar (perception about stakeholder management), but I know they are different between different X (managers) around Sweden, because system work differently in each region.</td>
<td>I think it (managers having different perceptions) would be positive, I think, but of course we do not think exactly the same way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is hard to talk about stakeholders in wide perspective, it could be similarities in some of the stakeholders if you look different regions, some kind of stakeholder group the suppliers I think the view of suppliers may be same in whole X (organisation), but if you look entrepreneurs in X (city name) and in X (city name), it is different.</td>
<td>It affects, but in a positive (way), we can learn from each other’s experience – it did not work in my region you can try another, so it is like sharing of experience and the ways of communication with stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think so (managers have similar perception about stakeholder management), but we all have worked in different regions and have different backgrounds so it might change and maybe it’s different from regional partners than national partners, but I think the core values remain the same.</td>
<td>Yes, I mean we have like CRM system we need to fill in what are we doing with partners, we do not have a strategy to follow, but we can read examples and share examples within the group to see how it works with partners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think they (managers) have similar (perception about stakeholder management), but I know they are different between different X (managers) around Sweden, because system work differently in each region.</td>
<td>I think it is both, I think sometimes it is positive and sometimes it’s negative.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Yes, we have kind of similar picture of that. And we are working very closely all the regional managers so we share a lot of information and help each other. We have some kind of synchrony even though we don’t have a recipe to handle stakeholders.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation - stakeholder relationship</th>
<th>Characteristics of stakeholder communication</th>
<th>Communication channels with stakeholders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Email and phone and meetings at the beginning of the year and to evaluate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mostly digital, like though email. we have of course newsletter, campaign though social media, we want to meet most of the stakeholders in person, because we see we create stronger band between each other but is sometime very hard to meet many people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency and content of reports to stakeholders</td>
<td>We have like meetings like two times a year, sometimes email conversations. Two times a year, we send a report where we tell them what was done.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>It is done year after year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>It is different because all of the partners have different agreements. (....). Sometimes the private sector do not need that much reporting. (...) Some of them are part of jury decide which ideas will win, it is more of networking relationship with them, like private one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Present report with pages writing everything down and report the whole project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(We report) how many participants in each competition, how many females, males, all statistics from registration that partners are interested in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Have meetings after to discuss action plan and evaluate plan for next year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Some stakeholders would want a report and some just want like a meeting where we tell them what we’ve done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract-based stakeholder communication strategies</td>
<td>Some (communication strategies) depend on the contract and others on the foundations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Communication and reporting strategies depend on a contract.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Personalised stakeholder communication** | **Communication with each stakeholder is really unique and within the group of certain stakeholder is unique too.**  
| | **I think it’s about employees how they communicate best to partners. There is no strategy.**  
| | **With stakeholders, you have to have a human relationship either way.**  
| | **I think it’s good to have the same (communication) strategies but sometimes it is different from place to place.**  
| | **It’s different because all of the partners have different agreements. (…). Sometimes the private sector do not need that much reporting. (...) Some of them are part of jury decide which ideas will win, it is more of networking relationship with them, like private one.**  
| **Stakeholder relationship agreements** | **Delivering values according to “get what you pay for” strategy**  
| | **It depends on how much money they give us.**  
| | **If partner is interesting in investing a lot in X (organisation), we always offer more values for those - more report, more events connecting to partners - so it is you get what u pay for strategy.**  
| | **X (partnership type 4) - no effort from the organisation, just mention the name, X (partnership types 3 and 2) - require a lot of effort from the organisation, and X (partnership type 1) – get the most specialized attention from the organisation.** |
| **Agreements are predetermined and fixed** | • They have to do a negotiation before the agreement, when you negotiate with the partner, you need to find out what they want with the partnership.  
• We always try to set agreement that are really clear, about what we do for them.  
• We will not change anything if it is not agreed in the contract.  
• So that does not mean we have to do other activities outside the competition, it should be written what we have to do.  
• It is often agreed if we always sign agreement of the partners. |
| **Possibility of cancelling/renewing of agreement** | • Maybe it will not be a good partnership, we can try for a while and then we don’t continue.  
• If they want to continue with us, we need to find a new agreement.  
• Contract is one year. Renew them again. (We) try to make it longer, (for) 3 years. |
| **Agreements are based on partners’ interests** | • They have to do a negotiation before the agreement, when you negotiate with the partner, you need to find out what they want with the partnership.  
• We decide contract according to interest of partner. |
| **Action plan is based on stakeholder prioritisation** | • To be partners, they do like an action process to be partners. What we have to do for each partner. So, we prioritize that action plan and we need to focus on that action plan to keep the partner and prioritize those partnerships we think are lasting and good relationships because sometimes we get a new partner and as we work together, we see this is not what is expected and the relationship is maintained to keep the money.  
• The action plan depends on if they pay more, they get more privileges to contribute more to the partnership. |
| **Stakeholder relationships variations** | • I think it (managers having different perceptions) would be positive, I think, but of course we do not think exactly the same way.  
• It affects, but in a positive (way), we can learn from each other’s experience – it did not work in my region you can try another, so
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Stakeholder management for entrepreneurship projects-based NPO</strong></th>
<th><strong>Stakeholder interest in NPO projects</strong></th>
<th><strong>Stakeholders have multiple types of interests in entrepreneurship</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Existence of different perspectives inspire managers work</strong></td>
<td>You have to walk in to each partner with an open mind and see what they want but sometimes it is good to have different perspectives.</td>
<td>Stakeholders we have are linked to either entrepreneurship or they are learning themselves about entrepreneurship or getting in touch with entrepreneurship or that is something they want.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Importance of organisation’s location</strong></td>
<td>It is always good to have other opinions and get inspired about how others work.</td>
<td>There is no link between choosing entrepreneurial projects and stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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"it is like sharing of experience and the ways of communication with stakeholders.

- Yes, I mean we have like CRM system we need to fill in what are we doing with partners, we do not have a strategy to follow, but we can read examples and share examples within the group to see how it works with partners.
- I think it is both. I think sometimes it is positive and sometimes it is negative.
- Yes, we have kind of similar picture of that. And we are working very closely all the regional managers so we share a lot of information and help each other. We have some kind of synchrony even though we don’t have a recipe to handle stakeholders.

Existence of different perspectives inspire managers work

- You have to walk in to each partner with an open mind and see what they want but sometimes it is good to have different perspectives.
- It is always good to have other opinions and get inspired about how others work.

Stakeholders have multiple types of interests in entrepreneurship

- Stakeholders we have are linked to either entrepreneurship or they are learning themselves about entrepreneurship or getting in touch with entrepreneurship or that is something they want.
- There is no link between choosing entrepreneurial projects and stakeholders.
- No, we try to find projects in natural and sometimes we have to change some of the things depending on the project. So, it’s different from time to time. I think.
- I just think the partners are interested in getting to know more entrepreneurs but no (entrepreneurial projects doesn’t influence stakeholder management strategies), they’re not so into our work like that.
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### Stakeholder management dependence on context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>advantages for the organisation</th>
<th>Entrepreneurs for example, we have a lot of contestants comparing other countries.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>I don’t think it makes it harder, sometime its easier, on some stakeholders like start-up world is really popular nowadays in Sweden, everyone is talking about that. So, it’s easier to get collaboration with some companies. I would not say it’s easy, but easier comparing to other projects.</em></td>
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<tr>
<th>Stakeholder management dependence on context</th>
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<td></td>
<td><em>No, I don’t really.</em></td>
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<td><em>No.</em></td>
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