BLUE CONNECT

blueconnect-project.eu

DEMO SITES NEWSLETTER

#2 - SEPTEMBER 2026

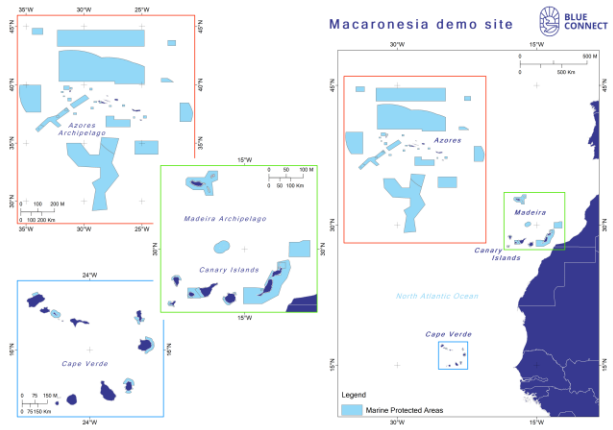
MACARONESIA

ONE REGION · FOUR ARCHIPELAGOS · A SHARED OCEAN

AZORES · MADEIRA · CANARY ISLANDS · CABO VERDE

2 YEARS CONNECTING SCIENCE, PEOPLE AND ACTION

From in-situ fieldwork and capacity building to regional participatory planning and international recognition, the Macaronesia Demo Site is laying the foundations for more connected, inclusive and resilient marine conservation across the four archipelagos.



Macaronesia Demo Site Endorsed as an UN Ocean Decade Action

2021 2030 United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development

This recognition highlights Macaronesia's role as a transboundary living laboratory for collaborative ocean governance. Through stakeholder engagement, capacity building, science-based tools and collaborative actions, BLUE CONNECT is contributing to more connected, inclusive and resilient MPA networks, while fostering knowledge exchange with ocean initiatives across Europe and beyond.

BLUE CONNECT maps impact of key human pressures across demonstration sites – read full report **HERE**

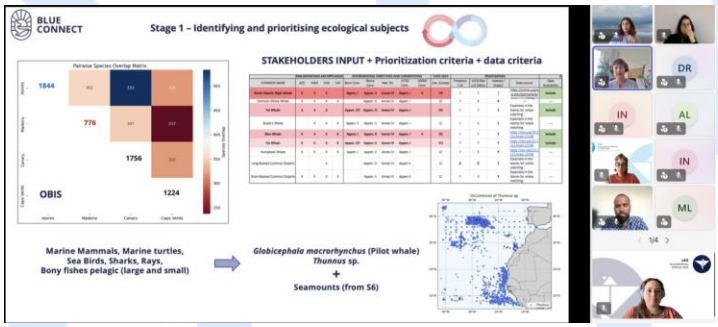
UNDERSTANDING HOW THE OCEAN CONNECTS US

Fieldwork in Azores in collaboration with CIBIO-UAc and Futurismo

The campaign held in São Miguel since September 2025 combined **water sampling, zooplankton collection and drifter deployments**, generating data to support biophysical modelling and conservation planning.

READ MORE







A shared vision starts with listening

A major focus of the past year has been strengthening the **Local Stakeholder Working Group (LSWG)** and establishing three thematic Working Groups:

CONNECTIVITY
MARINE PROTECTED AREAS
CO-MANAGEMENT

Together, 34 participants validated BLUE CONNECT's new tools and exchanged experiences to identify shared challenges and **opportunities** across the region.

READ MORE

Turning participation into action

The first national **Guardians of the Sea** workshop brought together artisanal fishers and NGO partners to Maio Island (Cabo Verde) to strengthen the programme and validate its Code of Conduct and Standart Operating Procedures. The initiative supports fishers in collecting data on illegal activities and marine megafauna, strengthening their role in marine conservation.

READ MORE



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FROM STAKEHOLDERS TO CO-OWNERS

PUTTING PARTICIPATORY PLANNING INTO PRACTICE

MACARONESIA DEMO SITE IN COP-30



In November 2025, Macaronesia Demo Site represented BLUE CONNECT at the **COP30 event in Brazil**, contributing to international discussions on Maritime Spatial Planning, Marine Protected Areas and sustainable ocean governance. READ MORE

EVENTS in UAc | PONTA DELGADA

In March 2026, **Azores Wave Conference** brought together researchers, policymakers, civil society and ocean advocates to discuss coastal protection, sustainable ocean use and integrated marine governance in the Azores. READ MORE

In May 2026, a **SeaSketch Workshop** brought together 20 specialists and practitioners with the UCSB SeaSketch team, followed by a **public discussion on ocean planning and conservation**. READ MORE

FROM MAPS TO MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION
KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE → CAPACITY → ACTION



COLLABORATIVE CAPACITY-BUILDING IN CABO VERDE

In March and July 2026, the Macaronesia Demo Site strengthened collaboration in Cabo Verde through knowledge exchange and capacity building to local MPAs managers.

READ MORE HERE and HERE

This work was carried out in partnership with local initiatives, including PaMAR - Strengthening Marine Conservation in Cabo Verde, led by Fauna & Flora, and the Management of Threats to Marine Ecosystems project of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment, coordinated by the National Directorate for the Environment (DNA), highlighting the value of connecting regional and local efforts to advance effective marine conservation across the Cabo Verde archipelago.

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The FUTURE is BLUE and CONNECTED



What's our destination?

The coordinates are now in place and we will continue to:

→ Advance the Macaronesia Action Plans

→ Strengthen the three thematic WGs

→ Support MPA managers and local stakeholders through capacity building

→ Improve understanding of ecological connectivity

→ Advance co-management and co-ownership approaches

→ Strengthen cooperation across the four archipelagos

Protecting the ocean requires more than protected areas! It requires connected ecosystems, connected knowledge and connected people.

JOIN US!

Are you interested in the BLUE CONNECT Project in Macaronesia?

Please take a moment to answer this short QUESTIONNAIRE and join us on this journey of cooperation to create a sustainable future for our OCEAN!

Curious to learn more about the project? Join the next LSWG meeting, scheduled for NOVEMBER 2026!
Send an email to debora.gutierrez@uac.pt and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

Sending warm ocean hugs,
The Blue Connect Team in Macaronesia

THANK YOU FOR READING

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