



Destination / Country:

Azores, Portugal

Name of Presenter (author):

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Theme

Choose a theme from the dropdown list

Sustainable destination management and development of green products to spread tourism (space/time)
Tourism to support local communities, culture & tradition

Title

Insert a title for your good practice story, 2 lines max.

The Azores have been pioneer on the creation of the first Marine Park in the Atlantic Ocean. The awareness of marine ecosystem degradation has been spread worldwide since 1980s. It was marked with the establishment of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). Portugal is one of pioneer nations who start this initiative. The existing MPAs did not have coherence and territorial integration to organize and integrate these protected areas not only MPAs, but also NATURA 2000 and OSPAR MPAs. OSPAR is the mechanism by which 15 Governments & the EU cooperate to protect the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic.

Main challenges

Describe here the main problem/issue(s) that were solved with your good practice.

o The governance system of Azorean MPAs are not only vertically fragmented such as EU, national, regional, and local levels of government, but also horizontally fragmented refer to different administrative departments in marine issues. The problem and conflict are emerged from different vision and strategies in managing fisheries and environmental protection. Sometimes it caused overly bureaucratic administrative systems and lead to little political will to implement as too many stakeholder and governance layer in the system.

o There is lack of legal assignment or support on management plans which caused no enforcement for stakeholder/interagency cooperation to implement the plan.

Solutions

Explain here the main action(s) your destination did in order to solve the problem.

o The Government of the Azores has been pioneer in the creation of the first Marine Park on the Atlantic Ocean outside its territorial sea, with 11 OSPAR Marine Protected Areas. Moreover last year (2016) it approved an extension of this Marine Park with the classification of 1 new marine protected areas. Its area of protection includes now 17 Marine Protected Areas, like the submarine archipelago Great Meteor, Princess Alice Bank or Condor Seamount. A new model or integrated regulation was established as the result of implementation scientific knowledge that ecosystem functions are interconnected. It is being implemented by working group on MPAs towards MPA network aiming national level. The Marine Park of the Azores is the main instrument of conservation for the MPAs beyond the territorial waters (12nm).

Results

What were the results? Both quantitative and qualitative.

The importance of adequate financing across the MPA process is one lesson from the Azores. General political support and engagement of the scientific community have been a characteristic of the Azorean case study across its three decades, ultimately enabling the region to engage in the MPA experience.

From the point of view of the MPA network definition, achieving representativeness is a major challenge in highly fragmented and diverse systems typified by islands states. In the Azores, reaching such a goal has arguably been the hardest caveat within a system that encompasses nine inhabited islands, a variety of habitats from coastal reefs to deep-water hydrothermal vents to dynamic multispecies pelagic hotspots, and different fisheries coexisting with other extractive and non-extractive activities. Yet, reaching current level of legal representativeness has been a very long process requiring multiple steps, sometimes even undoing what had been done (e.g., legislative actions).

Recognitions

If applicable, mention here the recognitions and praise that you received for your solution.

WWF recognized this measures with the award - The Gift to the Earth. This is WWF's highest award for a globally significant conservation achievement, which addresses WWF's conservation priorities. Gifts to the Earth provide international recognition of, and support for, globally significant conservation actions such as the protection of the Lucky Strike and Menez Gwen hydrothermal vents in the Azores.

Key Success Factors

How did your destination overcome these issues? Please resume in 3 points.

Integration

Colaboration

Implementation