



FACT SHEET

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# MPA X-ray: Assessment of Portuguese Marine Protected Areas

## The importance of Marine Protected Areas

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) are an important part of marine conservation and management strategies, tools that aim to stop or reverse the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services related to these areas.

A healthy ocean also generates benefits to people by providing oxygen, carbon dioxide sequestration, food, coastal protection, among others. These benefits, or ecosystem services, support means of subsistence, food and financial security.

## Ocean protection in the world and in Europe

In recognition of the potential benefits of MPAs, several international agreements determined that 10% of global oceans should be conserved through MPAs with efficient and fair management (e.g. CBD 2010, Aichi Target 11).

Despite the considerable increase in the number and area of MPAs, particularly over the last decade, there is great concern about whether these MPAs are effective.

The IUCN Protected Planet Report 2016 reports that 10.2% of the waters under jurisdiction are already MPAs. In global oceans, however, including the high seas, the coverage is only 4.1%. Less than 1% of the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ) are protected.

## Ocean protection in Portugal

Portugal is a signatory to international agreements. As a traditionally maritime nation, the sea is a priority.

Over the last decade, thanks to global recognition of the importance of ocean conservation, several MPAs were established in Portugal. Along with the other States that signed the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Portugal has committed to establish new MPAs in priority places by 2020 towards the 10% AICHI target. Portugal has predominantly coastal MPAs, and only more recently (like other countries) has defined MPAs in ocean areas.

I  
**84%**

of MPAs are partially protected, allowing different activities, including activities of high negative impact

II

many of the areas are extensive and remote which makes efficient supervision difficult

III

even moderate or small coastal areas do not have management plans/regulations, or are not efficiently managed and supervised (paper parks). All these factors may lead to a false sense of protection if the degree of protection is only assessed in percentage of coverage area.

## The role of WWF, the Oceano Azul Foundation and the Oceanário de Lisboa

WWF, the Oceano Azul Foundation and the Oceanário de Lisboa are committed to contributing to the implementation of efficient MPAs with effective and equitable management, as well as with the achievement of the goal of 10% of the oceans protection. In this way, WWF in Portugal, the Oceano

Azul Foundation and the Oceanário de Lisboa intend to strengthen their contribution to more and better MPAs in Portugal.

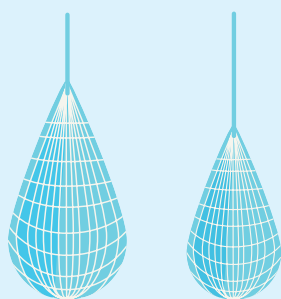


## The MPA X-ray Report - Assessment of Portuguese MPAs

The WWF report “MPA X-ray – an assessment of Portuguese MPAs”, considers the type of protection, distribution and area of the MPAs in Portugal as well as their governance model. The report is supported by the Oceano Azul Foundation and the Oceanário de Lisboa.

The report focuses on national, regional and local MPAs (only nationally designated) and clarifies some of the more relevant and urgent questions about the MPAs.

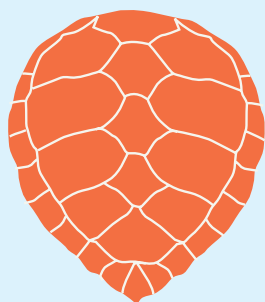
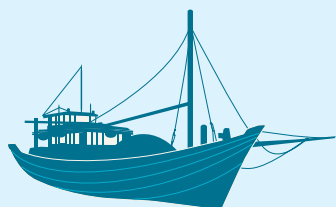
The report also encourages the Portuguese Government and the institutions responsible for the implementation of more efficient MPAs to ensure the ocean’s sustainability.



## Diagnosis of the Portuguese MPAs - outcomes

- The current protection of the vast Portuguese marine area is far from achieving the 10% goal for MPAs;
- MPAs must be effective, efficient and equitably managed;
- Many Portuguese MPAs are “paper parks” without appropriate regulations for the effective conservation of species and habitats;
- The lack of MPAs’ own funding is a significant limitation
- Existing and future MPAs should be effective tools for oceans conservation, resulting in benefits for ecosystems and people;
- More efficient supervision and management should more highly integrate MPA local users, and ensure better cooperation and sharing of experiences between managers and between these and other relevant players;
- The competencies of each entity, as well as communication between them is not clear;
- A simple, clear and validated governance model is necessary;
- There is some confusion and uncertainty regarding the new territorial management paradigm;
- Own funding is needed, as well as the allocation of clear responsibilities so that MPA objectives are achieved.

## WWF, Oceano Azul Foundation and Oceanário de Lisboa: recommendations for Portuguese MPAs



- Portugal should increase the quantity and quality of its MPAs to meet its international commitments. This process should be based on the best information and scientific knowledge available.
- The type of protection of existing and future MPAs must be appropriate. Most of the MPAs should be highly protected rather than moderately protected.
- A significant increase in the total protection area is recommended, i.e., the areas without any activity (for example, in the Mediterranean there is already a commitment of 2%).
- These areas promote important services and goods to the surrounding areas and are essential for the conservation of species and habitats.
- To comply with international commitments and good practice recommendations, MPAs
  - must be properly implemented, with efficient management and supervision. This step is essential so that they can be effective and efficient MPAs and not just “paper parks”.
- The Natura 2000 network for the marine environment must be strengthened with efficient and effective regulations and management, and should be subject to the same concerns as the national MPAs.
- A public database of Portuguese MPAs should be created, allowing their regular assessment.
- There is an urgent need for clarification and simplification of the Portuguese MPAs governance model, which includes the definition and understanding of the responsibilities and competencies shared between entities.
- Means and resources should be reinforced and/or these should be efficiently concentrated or shared, particularly in implementation and supervision.
- Key local stakeholders should be integrated in management (e.g. co-management) and surveillance to promote the success of the MPAs, particularly in a country with reduced supervision means.
- There is an urgent need to clarify the regulatory and management plans of MPAs under the new maritime spatial planning instruments, following the legal transformation of the spatial plans for protected areas.
- To ensure that existing and future MPAs are not reduced to “paper parks”, the various stages of their implementation (designation, regulation, management and supervision) must be ensured and clarified. This would be the first step for efficient and effective MPAs.
- Appropriate funding for MPAs must be provided so that they can be efficiently implemented.
- A national authority that collects information, coordinates management and guides MPAs conservation policies must be recognised.
- Each MPA must define the responsible management entity, supported by

other entities, with competencies and means to implement protection measures, define and manage their needs as well as the role of the other entities, particularly regarding supervision.

- The elaboration of an MPA implementation best practices guide is recommended. This may be based on the results and recommendations of this diagnosis.
- The creation of a Portuguese MPAs managers network (PtPAN) is suggested, with the collaboration of stakeholders like the MedPAN network. This would contribute to overcoming many of the weaknesses detected in this assessment.
- Together with the different national stakeholders, the recommendations of this report may be prioritized in phases and, therefore, a roadmap of the Portuguese MPAs for 2020 could be developed. A national commitment should be undertaken, just like the international commitments, which should be mandatory and independent from political directions.
- A listing and assessment of the ecosystem services provided by Portuguese MPAs is suggested, which can help to increase awareness about the MPAs.
- WWF in Portugal, the Oceano Azul Foundation and the Oceanário de Lisboa offer to contribute to the success of the proposed recommendations and associated initiatives



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This executive summary is part of the full report “MPAs XRay: Diagnosis of Marine Protected Areas in Portugal” by Bárbara Horta e Costa (consultant), reviewed by Angela Morgado and Rita Sá, WWF. February 2017

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