



OCEANO AZUL FOUNDATION

PRESS KIT

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OCEANO AZUL
foundation

1. Introduction

Oceano Azul Foundation was established in 2017 by Sociedade Francisco Manuel dos Santos, with the ambition of creating an international leading entity in ocean conservation. Its goal was to promote an ambitious global ocean agenda with a disruptive vision of the blue economy and adjacent policies.

After seven years of successful work, which included various partnerships with organizations such as National Geographic, the Waitt Institute and Foundation, and the United Nations, Oceano Azul Foundation aims to achieve greater impact with its programs and to have a stronger voice in the international ocean agenda.

In 2024, the Foundation is focused on high-impact initiatives such as the [Blue Azores](#), the [Manifesto for a European Ocean Pact](#), the Scientific Expedition to the Gorrington Seamount, and preparation for the [3rd United Nations Ocean Conference](#), which will take place in Nice in June 2025.

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) have been a fundamental part of the Foundation's actions since its inception. A strategic objective is to promote MPAs based on scientific knowledge, ensuring broad community support, and the involvement of governments and local entities, which will enable their effective implementation.

Oceano Azul Foundation's disruptive approach to economic growth, promoting tools that support the transition to a sustainable blue bioeconomy - an economy that values natural capital - has been highly distinctive and will continue to be a focus in the near future.

Additionally, Oceano Azul Foundation continues to promote the creation of regulation, legislation and innovative public policies, their implementation, and the dissemination of best practices; to increase public knowledge, including that of new generations, through educational programs - for example, the [Educar para uma Geração Azul](#), a blue literacy program, whose nationwide expansion was recently announced by the Ministry of Education.

2. Areas of Action and Detailed Projects

With 2030 on the horizon, within the context of the Convention on Biological Diversity signed by over 180 countries at COP15 in Montreal, which established the goal of protecting 30% of the ocean by 2030, and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 14, Oceano Azul Foundation works to protect the ocean and promote sustainable management, accelerating science-based innovation with the aim of reversing the current decline in ocean health.

This work is structured into three fundamental areas: 1) ocean conservation; 2) international ocean advocacy, and 3) the economy, along with support areas such as literacy and community engagement.

1) **Ocean Conservation:**

In the face of current threats and the level of ocean degradation, the Foundation supports programs aimed at the protection, recovery, and enhancement of marine biodiversity and ecosystems. This is done by supporting the creation of effectively implemented and well-managed Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) that contribute to the development of a sustainable blue economy, promote blue jobs, and improve the standard of living for populations in adjacent areas. It is essential to increase the scale, speed, and impact of marine conservation measures to help reverse the effects of human impacts on the ocean.

Examples of programs and activities:

➤ **Blue Azores**

The Blue Azores program is an action plan aimed at promoting marine conservation in the Azores Sea, creating pathways for sustainable economic development, and enhancing the value of blue natural capital. Blue Azores is born from a partnership between the Regional Government of the Azores, Oceano Azul Foundation, and the Waitt Institute, united by a common vision—to protect, promote, and enhance the marine natural capital of the Azores. Their ambition is to ensure a healthy ocean as the foundation of a prosperous and sustainable blue economy.

Objectives:

1. **Protect 30% of the Azores Sea:** This includes establishing Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) with at least 15% fully protected zones.
2. **Develop and Implement Management Plans:** For all existing and newly designated MPAs.
3. **Contribute to Maritime Spatial Planning:** Supporting effective ocean use and conservation strategies.
4. **Support Fisheries Restructuring:** To ensure sustainable practices and enhance marine biodiversity.



Initiation and Development:

The program began in 2019, following two scientific expeditions to the Azores in 2016 and 2018. These expeditions identified significant natural values and provided conservation recommendations. Over the past five years, foundational scientific studies have been conducted in close collaboration with the University of the Azores. Additionally, an unprecedented participatory process was developed, involving more than 40 meetings with representatives of marine users, co-creating new MPAs.

Legislative Proposal:

The Regional Government of the Azores has approved a legislative proposal for discussion in the Legislative Assembly of the Autonomous Region of the Azores, aiming to establish the Azores Marine Protected Area Network (RAMPA). This new RAMPA will be a crucial instrument for the recovery and conservation of marine biodiversity, laying the groundwork for a truly sustainable blue economy.

For more information about Blue Azores please visit www.blueazores.org.

- **Marine Protected Area of Community Interest in the Algarve**
Marine Natural Park of the Algarve Reef – Pedra do Valado



ÁREA MARINHA PROTEGIDA
DO RECIFE DO ALGARVE
PEDRA DO VALADO

A PRIMEIRA ÁREA MARINHA PROTEGIDA
DO SÉCULO XXI EM PORTUGAL CONTINENTAL

OCEANO AZUL
fundação

A RIQUEZA ÚNICA
DO RECIFE DO ALGARVE

70%
DA BIODIVERSIDADE
MARINHA DO ALGARVE

45
ESPÉCIES NOVAS
PARA PORTUGAL

APROXIMADAMENTE
900
ESPÉCIES
CONHECIDAS

19
ESPÉCIES COM
ESTATUTO DE
CONSERVAÇÃO

12
ESPÉCIES NOVAS
PARA A CIÊNCIA

Last January, the classification act of the Marine Natural Park of the Algarve Reef – Pedra do Valado was approved, creating the first Marine Protected Area in mainland Portugal in the 21st century. The proposal for the creation of this area, which spans approximately 156 km² along the coast of Albufeira, Lagoa, and Silves, was presented to the Portuguese Government in 2021 by the Oceano Azul Foundation and the Algarve Centre for Marine Sciences. This initiative involved the active participation of these three municipalities.

This unprecedented participatory process also included local fishing associations, the hotel industry, maritime-tourism companies, and non-governmental organizations. It engaged more than 70 entities in a co-creation process that featured seven participatory sessions and over 60 bilateral meetings over the course of three years.

➤ **Marine Protected Area of Community Initiative in Cascais, Mafra, and Sintra**



The objective of this project is to create a Community Initiative Marine Protected Area (CIMPA) along the coast of Cascais, Mafra, and Sintra. Driven by these municipalities, this process, advocated and supported by Oceano Azul Foundation, is based on a solid scientific framework and knowledge of local communities. These will be the pillars of a participatory process that will enhance marine biodiversity, ecosystem services, and the socioeconomic activities that support local communities. Through a bottom-up approach and following the example of the pilot project Parque Natural Marinho do Recife do Algarve – Pedra do Valado, this model aims to unite people around the common vision of protecting marine biodiversity and ecosystems while promoting a sustainable economy.

➤ **Selvagens Islands Natural Reserve**



In 2021, the Regional Government of Madeira announced the creation of the largest fully protected Marine Protected Area in Europe and the entire North Atlantic, covering a territory of 2,677 km² within a 12-nautical-mile zone around the Selvagens Islands Natural Reserve, significantly expanding the area of this reserve, which was previously 94.71 km².

This measure was supported by Oceano Azul Foundation, National Geographic | Pristine Seas, and the Waitt Institute, whose support focused on obtaining data that scientifically backed this decision, which has become a global example of leadership in ocean conservation. More information [here](#).

2) International Ocean Advocacy

The International Ocean Advocacy axis of Oceano Azul Foundation is defined by the connectivity between its three main areas of action – 1) International Ocean Policy and Governance; 2) Government Relationships and Partnerships and 3) Capacity-Building at the International Level. The Foundation embodies a cohesive strategy aimed at addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by the ocean. International Ocean Policy and Governance, lays the groundwork for creating

integrated policies that advocate for ocean conservation and restoration. Complementing this, Government Relationships and Partnerships, emphasizes the foundation's role as a facilitator among national governments and international organizations. This creates a critical channel for advocacy, ensuring that urgent ocean protection initiatives are prioritized at the governmental level. Lastly, Capacity-Building at the International Level, focuses on empowering and collaborating with nations by offering tailored programs that enhance their understanding and implementation of ocean governance.

Together, these Action Areas create a synergistic approach: effective policies (Action Area 1) inform collaborative actions (Action Area 2), which in turn drive targeted capacity-building efforts (Action Area 3). The interdependence of these Action Areas is vital, as strong governance frameworks bolster partnerships, while empowered nations can better implement and uphold these policies, ultimately fostering comprehensive and sustainable ocean conservation efforts.

Examples of programs and activities:

➤ **International Ocean Policy and Governance**

Since its establishment in 2017, Oceano Azul Foundation has maintained a strong focus on influencing the international ocean agenda, actively participating in various intergovernmental international forums, and collaborating with different partners and European institutions. Despite the scientific consensus on the central role the ocean plays as a vital support system for Planet Earth, global, regional, and national actions for the ocean have lacked the necessary ambition and urgency. The ambition of the international ocean agenda is misaligned with the scale of action required, and despite progress on several global commitments, most remain unimplemented. With only five years left to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Foundation prioritizes promoting and supporting the development of ambitious actions and concrete measures with the necessary scale, level, and focus concerning ocean protection and conservation.

A recent example of this was the promotion of the Manifesto for a European Ocean Pact by Oceano Azul Foundation, in collaboration with Europe Jacques Delors. With the participation of



several prominent European figures, the manifesto outlines various measures and concrete goals for the next European Commission to establish a coherent political strategy based on ambitious actions to address environmental challenges and seize the economic opportunities the ocean offers to the European continent. This document was submitted to the European Parliament last April.

[For more information click here.](#)

3) Policies, Frameworks and Economics

The Oceano Azul Foundation is committed to developing policies and models that contribute to the valuation of blue natural capital. The Foundation aims to create a new paradigm: introducing the value of nature into the economies of societies, highlighting the importance of protecting these marine resources and their associated value. A healthy ocean ensures a system rich in living resources, such as fish, algae, bivalves, and sponges, which are extremely useful in developing sustainable solutions with high growth potential, i.e., economically scalable, in industries such as pharmaceuticals, food, textiles, construction materials, among others. Oceano Azul Foundation believes that work in this area is crucial for conservation, as incorporating the valuation of natural capital into economic models can demonstrate the significant importance of creating Marine Protected Areas for the growth of the blue economy.

➤ **Blue Bio Value**



The international acceleration program for startups and R&D projects in blue bioeconomy, with a focus on biotechnology, is promoted by Oceano Azul Foundation in partnership with the BLUEBIO ALLIANCE and implemented by Maze Impact. The program aims to support startups in scaling solutions that operate along the marine bioresource value chain and develop sustainable and decarbonizing products or services. Based in Portugal, Blue Bio Value contributes to positioning Portugal as a pioneering international hub in the development of blue biotechnology. More information [here](#).

Oceano Azul Foundation webpages:

Website - <https://www.oceanoazulfoundation.org/pt-pt/>

Instagram - <https://www.instagram.com/oceanoazulfoundation/>

LinkedIn - <https://pt.linkedin.com/company/oceano-azul-foundation>