

MAIA: Profile of a New Network of MPA Managers in the Northeast Atlantic

MPAs that exist in the same general region often share similar ecosystem features and management challenges. In that light, the idea behind building regional networks of MPA managers is to help these practitioners share their common experience and best practices, and to develop supportive relationships with one another.

MedPAN (in the Mediterranean) and CaMPAM (in the Caribbean) are the longest-established and perhaps best-known regional networks of MPA managers. In contrast, one of the newest networks is MAIA. Established in 2010, MAIA is a network of MPA managers in the “Atlantic arc”, an area of the northeast Atlantic that stretches from the northern tip of the UK southward to the Strait of Gibraltar. The MAIA network currently includes 454 coastal and marine protected areas in five countries: Ireland, the UK, France, Spain, and Portugal.

The following is a profile of the MAIA network:

Objective:

To develop a consistent, efficient and accepted network of MPAs in the Atlantic arc. In doing this, the network of MPA managers will promote the sharing of experience and approaches, and coordinate international initiatives in support of designation, governance, and management.

Financing:

MAIA has been financed by the Interreg IV B Atlantic Area programme, an EU initiative between 2010 and 2013.

The project's first three years (2010-2012):

A) Workshops and conference: MAIA organized three technical workshops on management issues common to MPAs in the Atlantic arc:

- 2010: Establishing indicators and monitoring strategies; held in Sessimbra, Portugal
- 2011: Involving stakeholders in MPA designation processes; held in Totnes, UK
- 2012: Defining and implementing management plans; held in La Coruña, Spain

After each workshop, full-day site visits to MPAs were conducted to enhance knowledge transfer among countries and MPA managers.

The first full conference of MAIA network members was held in December 2012.

B) Documents and website: The project has produced numerous publications, including field studies and global overviews, such as on applicable MPA legislation. These documents are available for download on the MAIA web site (www.maia-network.org). The project website also includes a private collaboration space for members of the network to interact and plan, as well as a GIS database and GIS viewer of all MPAs in the Atlantic arc.

C) Database: The network's GIS database provides site-by-site information on MPA governance, management, and resources. By informing an evaluation (in progress) of spatial coverage and management effort among MPAs in the region, the database is establishing a baseline on the status of Atlantic arc MPAs. Results of the evaluation are expected to be presented at the IMPAC3 conference this October.

Working with other networks and institutions:

“We are a little brother of MedPAN,” says Amandine Eynaudi, project manager of MAIA and a staff member of the French MPA agency. “We are working very closely with them: for example, MAIA and MedPAN have developed our GIS databases on the same core attributes — to be able, one day, to compare the two networks.”

Following in MAIA's footsteps, another neighboring project — this one to the north, developing a network of MPA managers in the Channel and North Sea, and called PANACHE — was launched by the French MPA agency in November 2012.

MAIA is also now recognized by the OSPAR regional convention as relevant technical support: at the May 2013 OSPAR Head of Delegation meeting, contracting parties agreed the MAIA architecture will be useful for the development of the OSPAR MPA database. The French MPA agency and the MAIA team will be in charge of coordination.

For further information, please contact the MAIA team at maia@aires-marines.fr or visit www.maia-network.org 

Notes & News

IMPAC3 website releases call for content

The website of the Third International Marine Protected Areas Congress (IMPAC3), scheduled from 21-27 October in Marseille and Corsica, France, is up and running at www.IMPAC3.org. In addition to providing information on the conference, the website aims to offer content on MPA developments worldwide, as well as ocean conservation in general. To fulfill that aim, the congress organizers invite the

MPA community to submit news, photos and videos reflecting the full diversity of MPAs, related programs, research, events, and techniques around the world. “IMPAC3 is a congress for and by the MPA community: we all stand to gain from pooling experience and knowledge,” says Paul Gouin, who is handling communications and multimedia for IMPAC3. To share content, contact him at paul.gouin@aires-marines.fr.

Abstract submissions for the IMPAC3 program closed on 10 May. More than 700 abstracts were received.