



THE MAIA PORTAL IS OPEN!

Is www.maia-network.org a new Website? It's even better, it's a portal! The specificity lies in the fact that it combines innovative tools, such as the GIS viewer and the collaborative section, with a traditional website. And all three components are underpinned by a shared database.

A multi-lingual site for the North-East Atlantic MPA network

Open to the general public and published in four languages (French, English, Spanish and Portuguese), the editorial website of the European cooperation project MAIA - Marine Protected Areas in the Atlantic arc – features everything going on in the network: technical workshops, publications, news about MPA managers from the four partner countries and European information.

The site also includes a dynamic map tool, the GIS viewer, which can be used to submit geographical or attribute queries and to poll objects, etc. A summary datasheet presents each marine protected area with standard information (perimeter, status, etc.) common to national, European (CDDA) and global (WCMC-WDPA) databases, completed by qualitative data about site management.

Both user-friendly and flexible, this tool offers a geographic overview of MPAs in the Atlantic arc. Information for the database is currently being compiled and will eventually be used to regularly assess the network of marine protected areas in the North-East Atlantic.

A discussion room for MPA stakeholders

The collaborative space is open to Atlantic arc MPA managers, project partners and other members invited by the MAIA coordination team. Here they have access to working documents and the calendar; they can also update their site's datasheet and add input to the document database.

The MAIA portal is a shared information site. It is a real tool in MPA network coordination and will constitute the reference database for MPAs in the Atlantic arc.

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MAIA project's coordination

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Notes to Editors

- **MAIA: a European project**

MAIA is financed by the Interreg IV B Atlantic Area programme under priority 2 - “protect, secure and enhance the marine and coastal environment sustainability.” **MAIA gathers 9 partners involved in MPA designation and management** within the UK, France, Spain & Portugal. The purpose of MAIA is to create a **network of MPA managers and stakeholders** which will **take initiatives on an international level** in terms of designation, governance and management as well as being involved in the **development of a consistent, efficient and accepted network of Marine Protected Areas** within the Atlantic Arc.

- **MARINE PROTECTED AREAS**

The concept of the Marine Protected Area first appeared within the framework of the **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea** (1982). It was further clarified in the **Convention on Biological Diversity** in 2000 and by the **World Summit on sustainable development** in Johannesburg in 2002. Today Marine Protected Areas are omnipresent in the debate on preserving the marine environment both internationally and on the European level, with the **European Marine Strategy**, the **Common Fisheries Policy** or the **“Habitats” and “Birds” Directives**.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature defines a Marine Protected area as “a clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or effective means, to **achieve the long term conservation of nature** with associated ecosystem services and cultural values”.

The objective is sometimes associated with a local socio-economic development goal or developed in conjunction with **sustainable resource management**. Steering can be entrusted to different kinds of bodies (local or national) each having their own statutes and governance.