MARINE SABRES

School Competition Awards Ceremony

World Sustainability Day

28 October 2026 – 11:00 CET



Funded by the European Union

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Agenda

- **Welcome**

  Housekeeping and introduction

- **The Marine Sabres project**

  Objectives and main results

- **Education activities for schools**

  Approach and strategy
  School competitions and games
  Learning materials

- **Awards Ceremony**

  Certificates awarding

School Competition

Awards Ceremony

Marine SABRES – an introduction

In brief

- **Marine S**ystems **A**pproaches for **B**iodiversity **R**esilience and **E**cosystem **S**ustainability
- **Research** project funded by the European Union with **21 European partners**
- **Objective**: Sustainable management of marine and coastal areas by balancing what's good for the environment, human societies, and the economy.

Premises: nature's services

From the **clean air** we breathe to the **nutritious food** on our tables, a **healthy**, **biodiverse**, and productive **ocean** is vital to our well-being.

Nature spontaneously **offers** both material and non-material **benefits**, making life on Earth not only possible for us, but also enjoyable thanks to inspiring landscapes and endless opportunities for discovery and learning.

Problems: human activities

The **environment** is organised in complex and delicate systems where each and every element plays a role in ensuring **positive effects in the long run**.

Many **human activities,** including tourism, trade, transport, aquaculture and fisheries can **modify** natural processes and even **damage** the environmental capacity to provide the invaluable services we need.

Possible Solutions

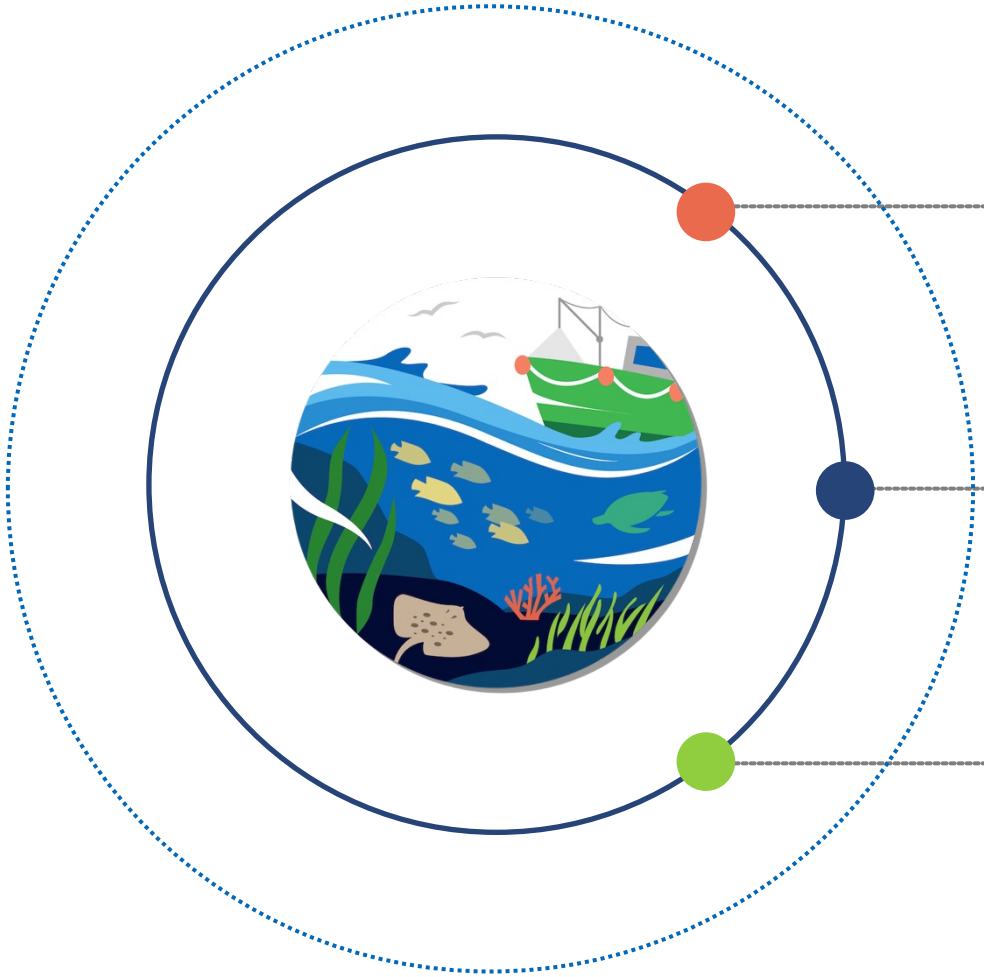
Marine SABRES brings together international **experts** across the **biological** and **social sciences** to develop **better ways to manage coastal areas** and reduce the negative effects of human activities on the ocean.

The proposed socio-ecological solutions are co-designed and tested in **collaboration** with **citizens** and focus on **local priorities**.

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Research Sites and Local Priorities

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1 Arctic Northeast Atlantic

FAROE ISLANDS, ICELAND, GREENLAND

Sustainable fishing

2 Tuscan Archipelago

CAPRAIA and GIANNUTRI

Tourism and seagrass conversation and restoration

3 Macaronesia

AZORES, MADEIRA, CANARIES

Ecotourism and protection of migratory species

Fu... European Un... Europe pr... r grant ag... 1058956.

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Systems Approaches for Biodiversity Resilience and Ecosystem Sustainability

Overarching Aim:

"To conserve and protect biodiversity by integrating Sustainable Ecosystems and a Resilient Blue Economy"

Emma Verling

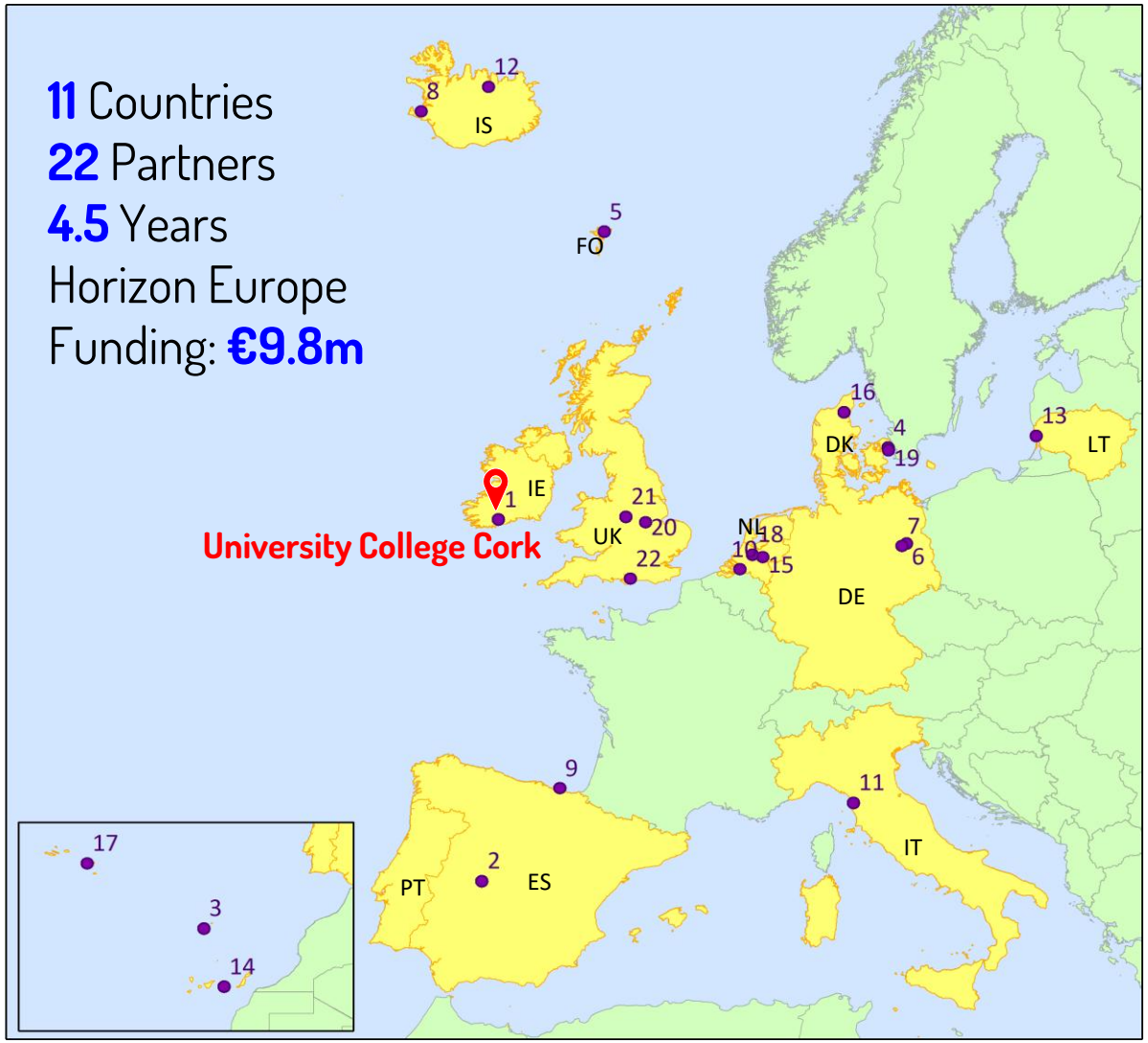
Project Coordinator

UCC
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh
University College Cork, Ireland

School Competition Awards Ceremony

28th October, 2026. 11 CET

WHO and WHERE?

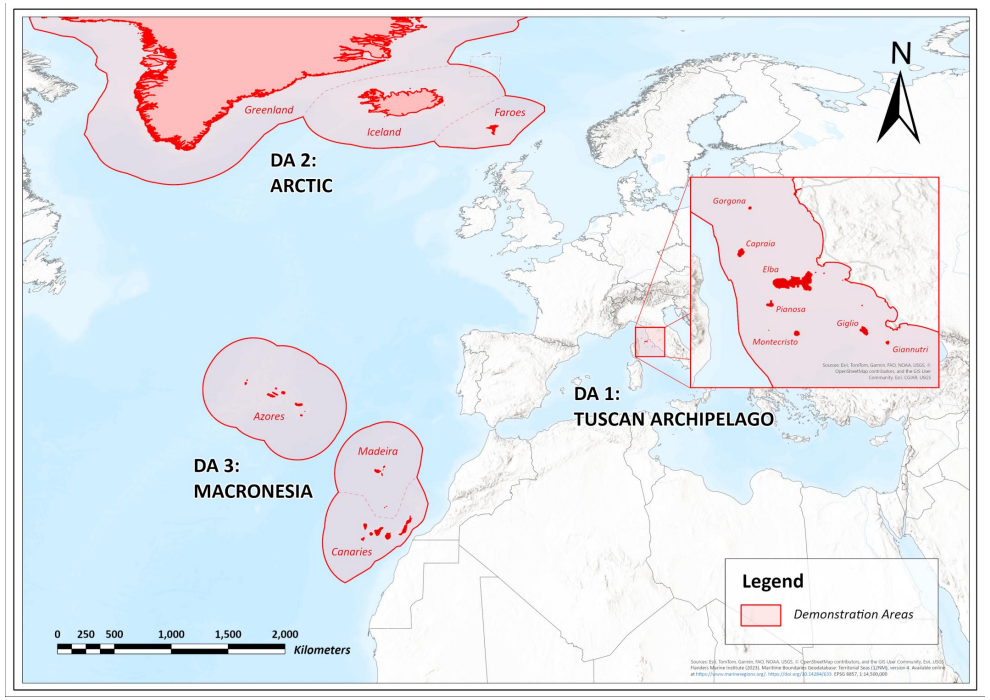


1. UCC (Coordinator)	12. SAI
2. Lifewatch ERIC	13. KU
3. ARDITI	14. ULPGC
4. DTU	15. WR
5. Blue Resource	16. AAU
6. ECOLOGIC	17. Uac
7. IASS	18. NIOZ
8. MFRI	19. WWF Denmark
9. AZTI	20. CEFAS
10. HuFoSS	21. IECS
11. UNIPI	22. UoP

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3 Demonstration Areas (DAs):

Tuscan Archipelago,
Arctic North - East Atlantic
Macaronesia

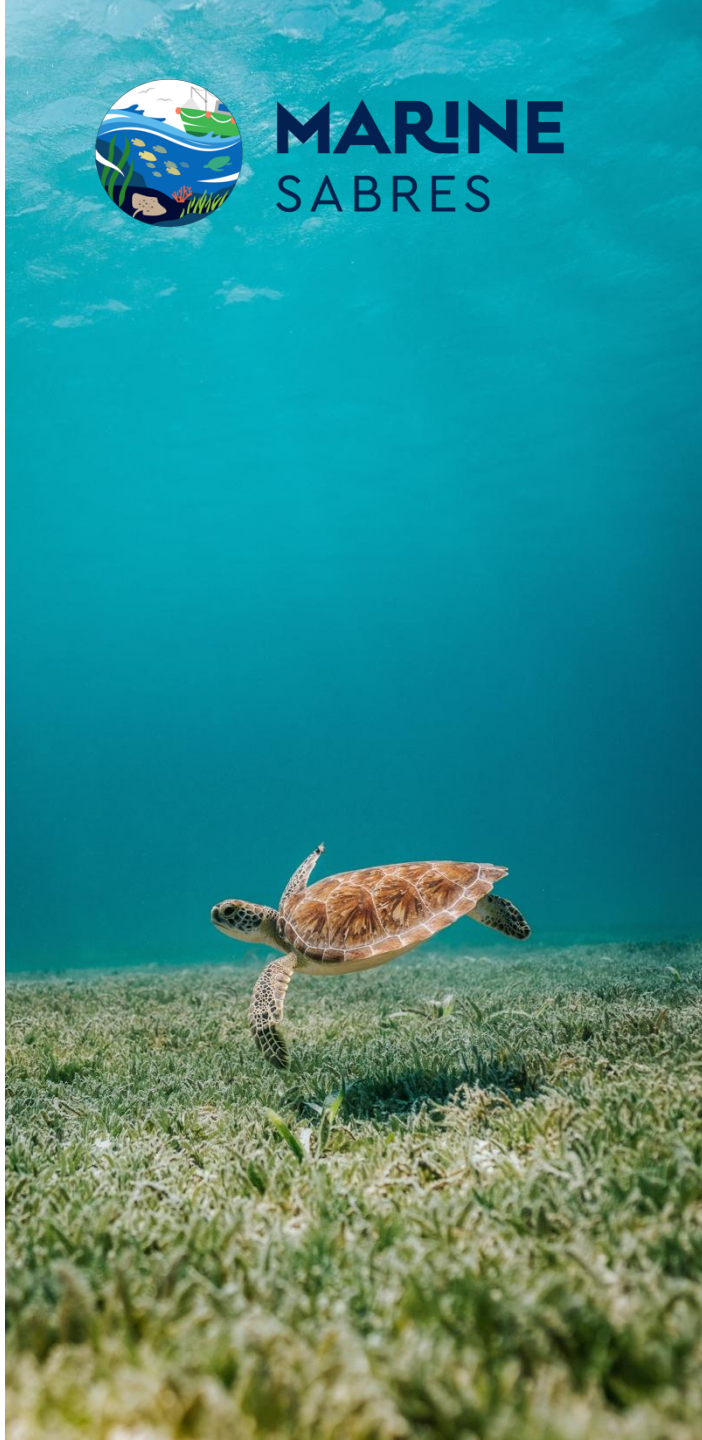


Funded by the European Union's Horizon Europe programme under grant agreement No. 101058956.

Ecosystem Based Management

*"**Ecosystem-Based Management (EBM)** is an integrated, adaptive resource management approach that considers the entire ecosystem—**including humans**—to balance ecological health with societal and economic needs."*

- Marine ecosystems do not stop at administrative or protected-area boundaries
- Species, habitats and ecological processes connect places across the wider seascape and oceans
- Human activities including fisheries, tourism, shipping and recreation create pressures on our marine environment
- Who is in charge? Governance varies in different sectors, institutions and jurisdictions
- **Ecosystem Based Management** connects all dimensions to support better management decisions



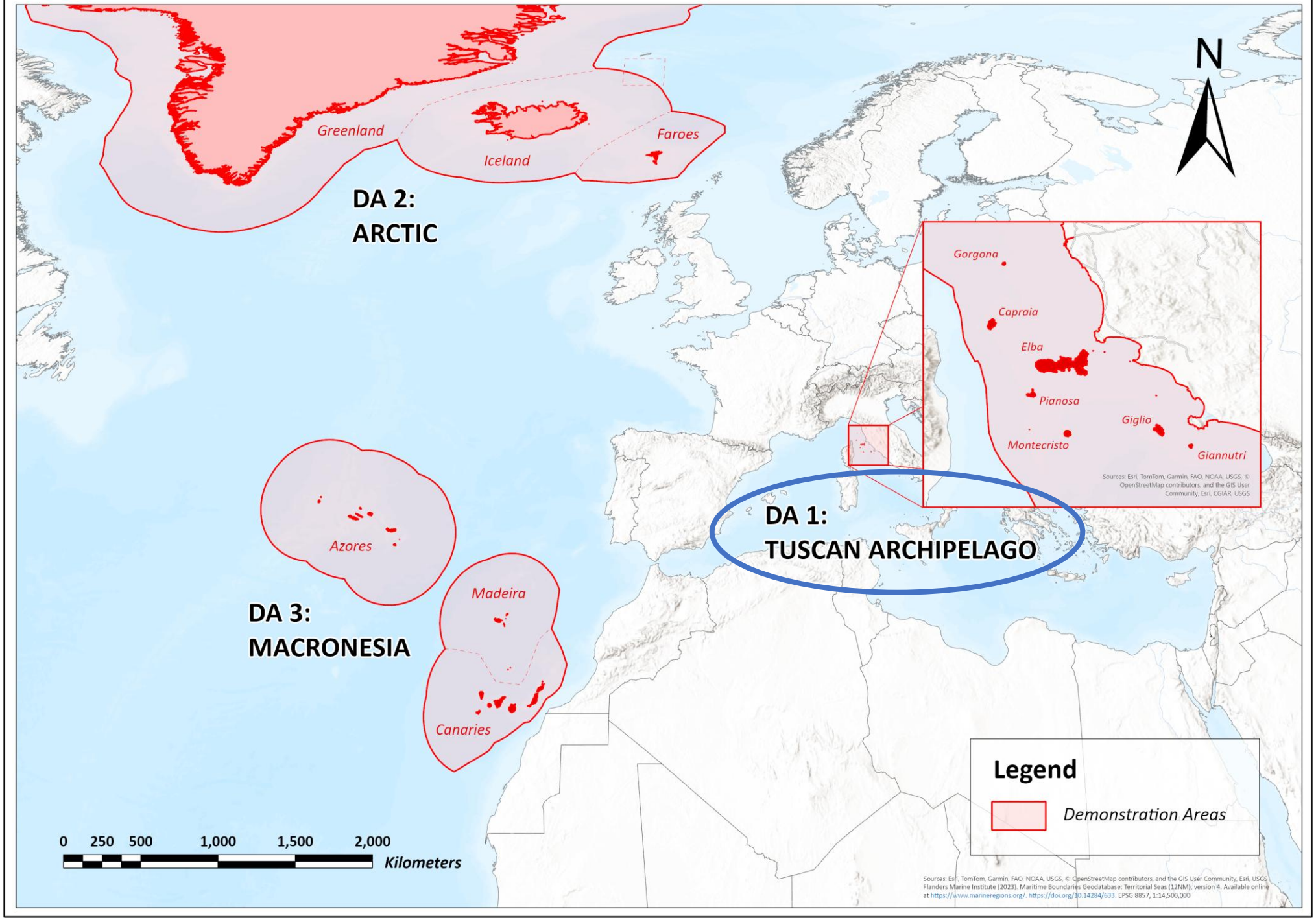
We worked with many different people……

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"….bringing **stakeholders** together from government, policy, business and coastal management, with marine scientists to co-design a **Simple Social-Ecological System (SES).** This Simple SES is designed to **improve uptake of Ecosystem-Based Management (EBM)** and **strengthen interventions and measures** for the **protection and conservation of coastal and marine areas,** their **biodiversity**….."

*Working with **all interested parties** to come up with **solutions to problems** that **affect all of us** and the **environment***

DEMONSTRATION AREAS



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Tuscan Archipelago: *Posidonia oceanica* meadows

- Seagrass meadows have high primary productivity
- They also have high carbon storage capacity
- They are important for coastal protection, as nursery areas and for many other things...

- Habitats like *Posidonia oceanica* meadows face degradation from anchoring, pollution, climate change and tourism.
- Tourism multiplies pressures from the local population, straining marine and land-based systems.
- Economic focus on tourism often conflicts with long-term ecological goals.

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Tuscan Archipelago: Field activities

- Reforestation trials at Giannutri Island
- Transplanting healthy seagrass to other damaged areas
- Monitoring over time to assess success
- RESTORATION focus





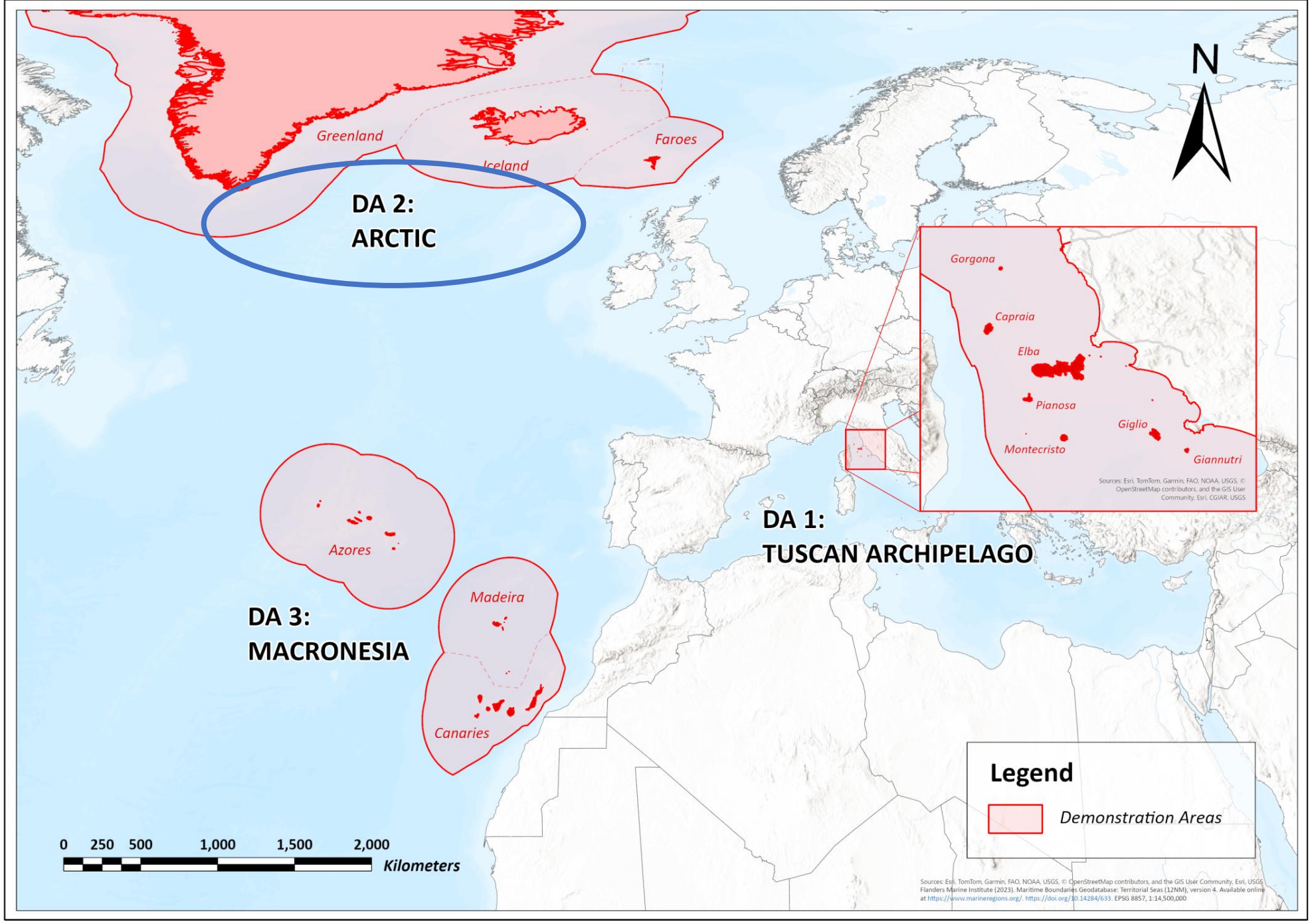


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Tuscan Archipelago: Important lessons

- **Preventing further degradation** is generally more effective and less costly than restoring lost habitat
- However, restoration is urgently needed where degradation has already occurred
- **Effective action** requires protection, restoration, enforcement and sustainable management of human activities
- Protection and restoration are **complementary**, not alternative strategies

DEMONSTRATION AREAS





Arctic DA - Overview

- **Countries involved:** Faroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland
- **Main focus: Pelagic fisheries – species:**
  - Northeast Atlantic mackerel
  - Blue whiting
  - Herring
  - Capelin

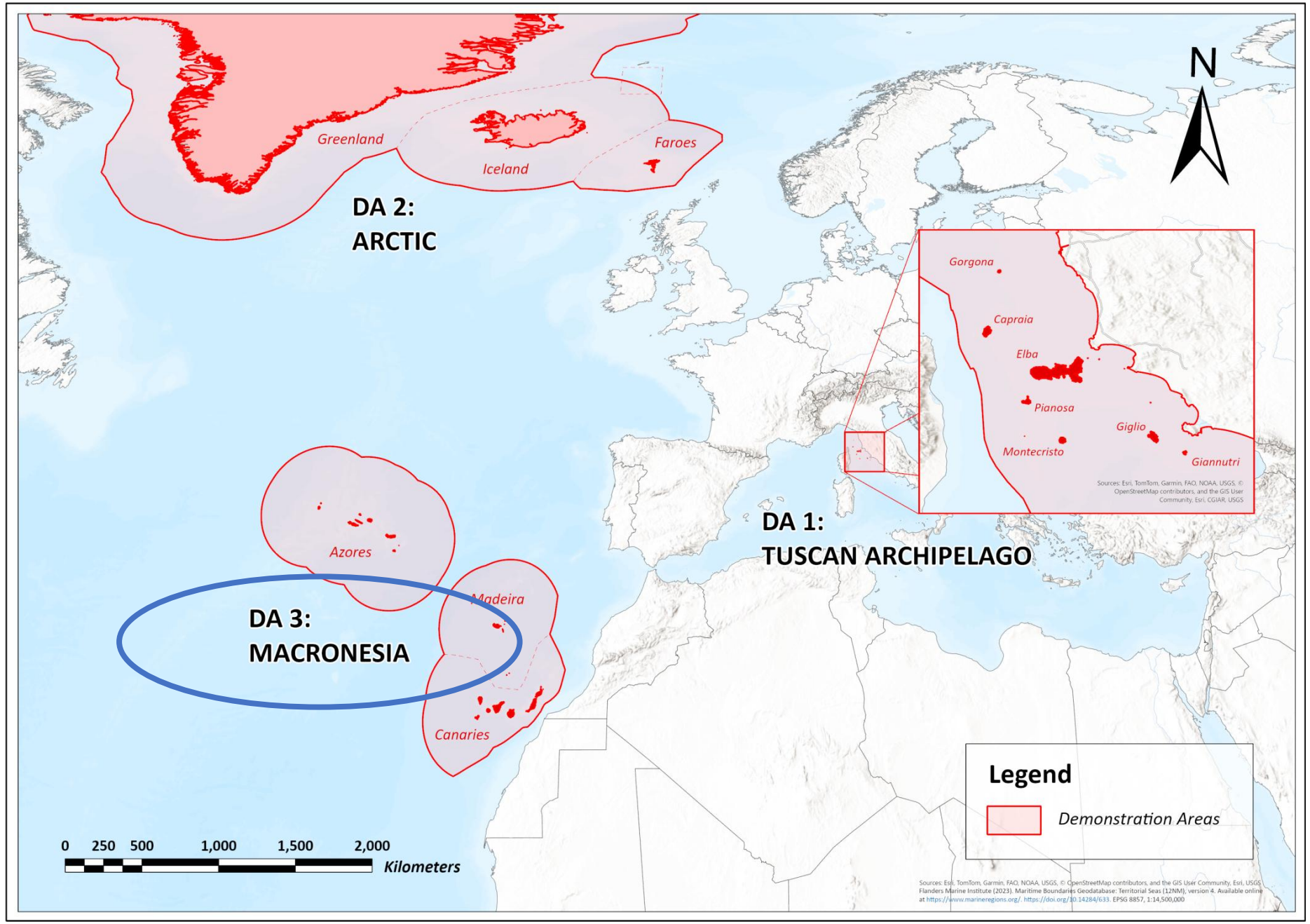
- **Background**
  - Fisheries are important economic sector for capture, processing, marketing, employment
  - Interconnection and integration of economic structures between countries

Arctic Northeast Atlantic

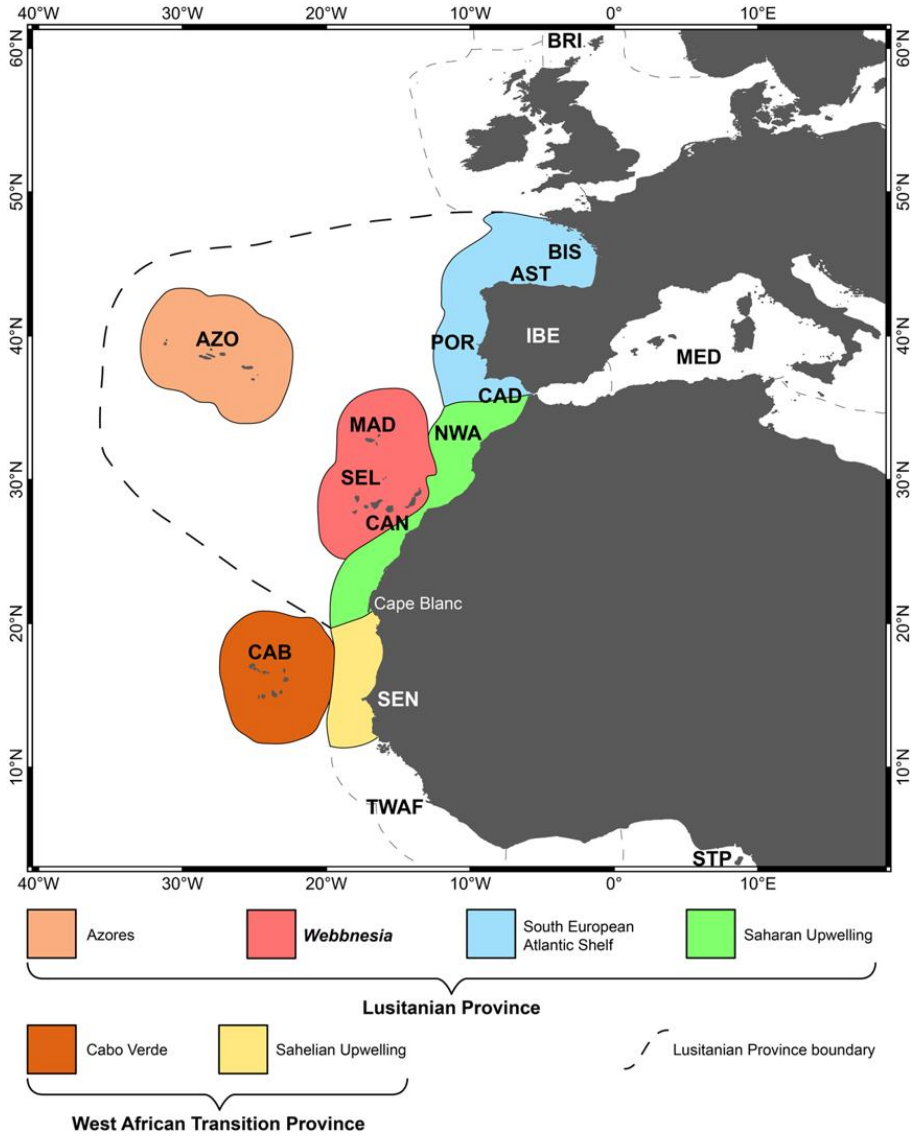
- Climate change and ecological variability are shifting the distribution of shared pelagic fish stocks
- Stocks move across jurisdictions, while quota allocation remains bilaterally negotiated between coastal states
- Disagreement over quota shares can lead to unilateral catches, overfishing and economic uncertainty
- Marine SABRES assessed different scenarios of agreements on quota allocation and their environmental, economic, social and governance consequences
- **Key lesson: adaptive and cooperative governance and international agreements are necessary for managing mobile ecosystems**



DEMONSTRATION AREAS



Macaronesia



Macaronesia: East Atlantic Ocean

- Volcanic genesis (Civiero et al., 2023)
- Remarkable biological features across archipelagos (Mclavor et al., 2022)
- Debated identity as a biogeographic unit (Freitas et al., 2019)

Hotspot for marine biodiversity research and conservation

(Florencio et al., 2021)

Macaronesia



- Ecological **connectivity** links the Azores, Madeira and Canary Islands across a wider Atlantic seascape
- Fishing, shipping, tourism and other pressures operate within and beyond individual protected areas
- Existing MPAs need to be **managed as part of a wider** ecological and governance network

- Marine SABRES explored a **corridor approach** linking protected and conserved areas
- The aim is to maintain **connectivity**, reduce pressures at the scale where they occur and improve coordination across jurisdictions
- From **protecting individual places to managing ecological connections**

Macaronesia Demonstration Area

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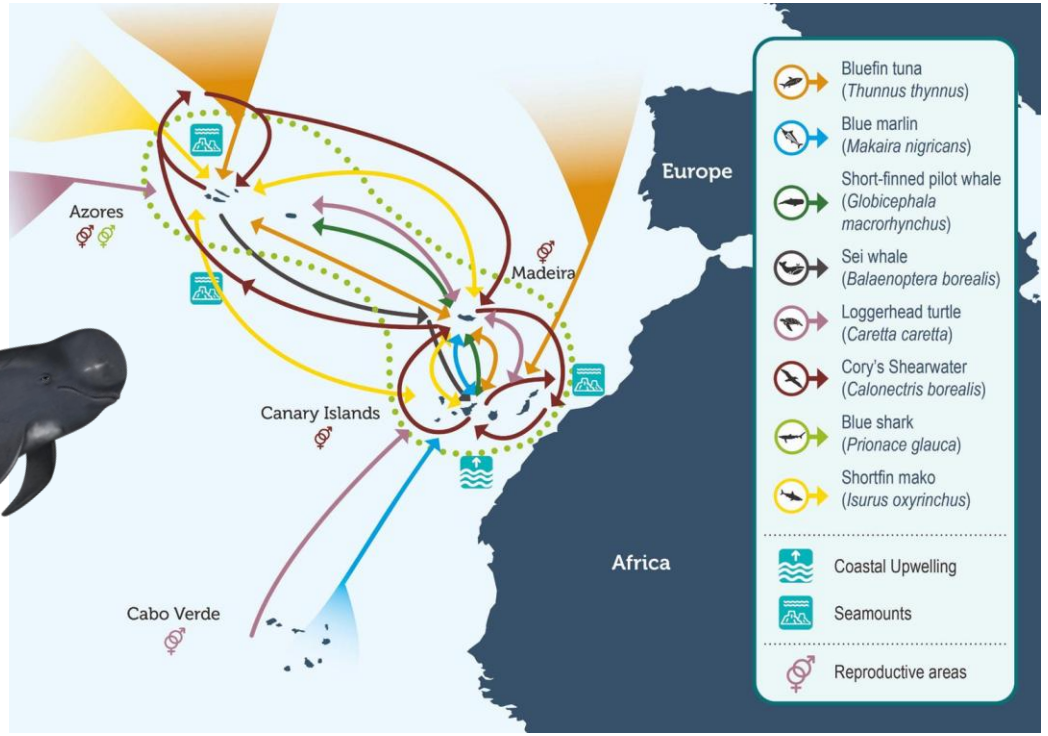
Scientific publications

Towards a Marine Biological Corridor in the European Macaronesia: Status, Conservation Synergies and Opportunities

Jesús Padrón-García[a*], Filipe Alves[b,c], Inma Herrera[a], Paola Parretti[b,c], Gustavo M. Martins[d,e], Marc Fernandez[b,c], Daniela Casimiro[d,e], Nuno Vaz Álvaro[f], Maria da Anunciação Mateus Ventura[d,e], Andrea Zita Botelho[d,e], Manuela Isabel Parente[d,e], Ana Cristina Costa[d,e], Yaiza Fernández-Palacios Vallejo[a], Lyanne Ampuero-Merino[g,h] & Ricardo Haroun[a]



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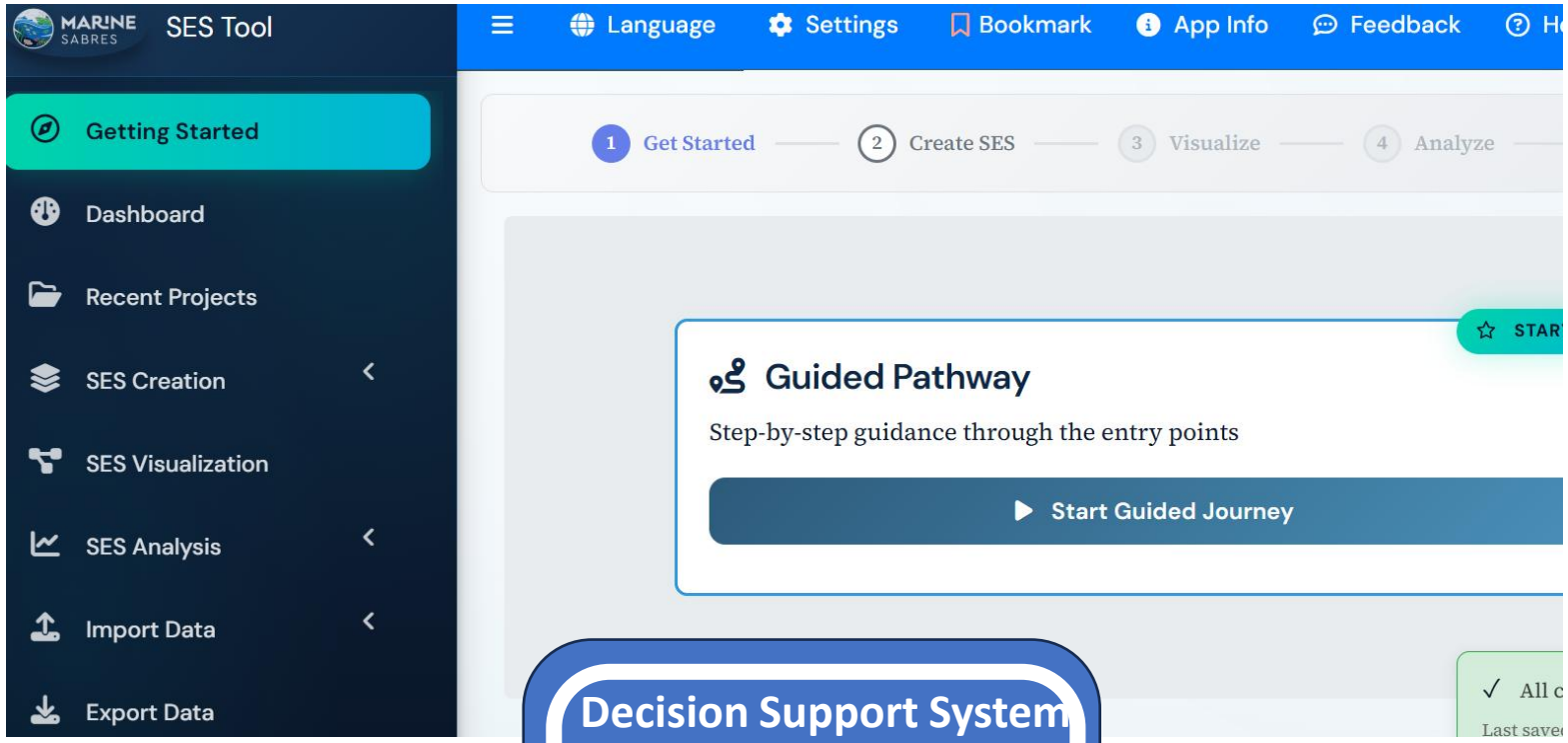


USEFUL OUTPUTS: bringing things together

Marine SABRES developed tools and guidance to transfer the approach from our Demonstration Areas to other marine systems – for example in South Africa, Martinique and the Wadden Sea.

DECISION SUPPORT SYSTEM

- Online system to help **decision makers**
- **Co-designed with stakeholders** and tested in three **Demonstration Areas**
- Being tested in other areas, to establish whether our learnings can be applied in a wider sense.



Decision Support System in final stages of production – project finishing in February 2027

USEFUL OUTPUTS

- **Four policy briefs produced to HELP POLICY-MAKERS:**
  - An overview of Marine SABRES Approach to development and Integration of a Simple SES Framework
  - Building Resilient Pelagic Fisheries in the Arctic Northeast Atlantic Demonstration Area
  - Balancing Tourism and Conservation in the Tuscan Archipelago
  - Seagrass Restoration in Tuscany and in Macaronesia
- **Marine SABRES Documentary finalised**



Challenge

How to transform the project's complex concepts:

- Social-ecological system;
- Ecosystem-based management;
- Policy co-design.

Into this:

- An informal education activity for lower and upper secondary school students;
- Let them discover how **human communities can manage, protect, and benefit from the ocean.**



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Solution: a 3-step approach

1

OCEAN LITERACY

Basic elements of marine physics, marine biology, and marine ecology.

2

OCEAN CITIZENSHIP

Human activities and their impact on the ocean and our well-being.

3

OCEAN LEADERSHIP

Measures for a good marine management plan.

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2024
21 November
World Fisheries Day
Participants: 10 teachers

2025
21 November
World Fisheries Day
Participants: 13 teachers

2026
22 May
World Biodiversity Day
Participants: 3 teachers

A series: 3 serious games for 3 school competitions

STRATEGY

- **Involve the teachers** as mentors and facilitators.
- Select **relevant international days.**
- Break down each game into **3 objectives.**
- Produce supporting **learning materials** with clues and answers.



Objectives: Why the ocean matters

1. The ocean makes Earth habitable:

The ocean is one, with many features. Ocean life shapes our planet and influences our weather and climate.

2. The ocean supports a great diversity of life:

The many features of the ocean support animal species and plants, from micro to macro.

3. The ocean and humans are inextricably interconnected:

The delicate and complex marine ecosystems support our livelihood and wellbeing in many ways. Some human activities, in return, are damaging marine nature. Knowing the ocean better is the first step towards respecting it and taking action to protect it.

Objectives: How we change the ocean

Game 2

1. Human activities:

Human actions and interventions, such as fishing, aquaculture, shipping, and coastal development, have a strong impact on the marine environment.

2. Human-induced pressures and changes in the ocean:

Human activities exert direct and indirect pressures on the marine environment and, as a result, marine biodiversity and ecosystem services get altered.

3. Impact of ocean changes on human welfare:

The consequences of ocean state changes on human well-being include impacts on human health, livelihoods, cultural values and societal goods and benefits.





Objectives: How to manage the ocean

1. Why we act: our behaviour towards the ocean:
Understand the internal and external motivations that make us choose to protect or harm the sea.

2. The human-ocean puzzle:
A good, long-lasting marine management plan should make people happy, be legally, technically, and economically possible, and, most of all, respect the ocean.

3. The marine manager's toolbox:
Managers use many tools to regulate how we interact with the sea: laws and technical rules limit the total amount of human pressure, while incentives and education can change our behaviour for the better.

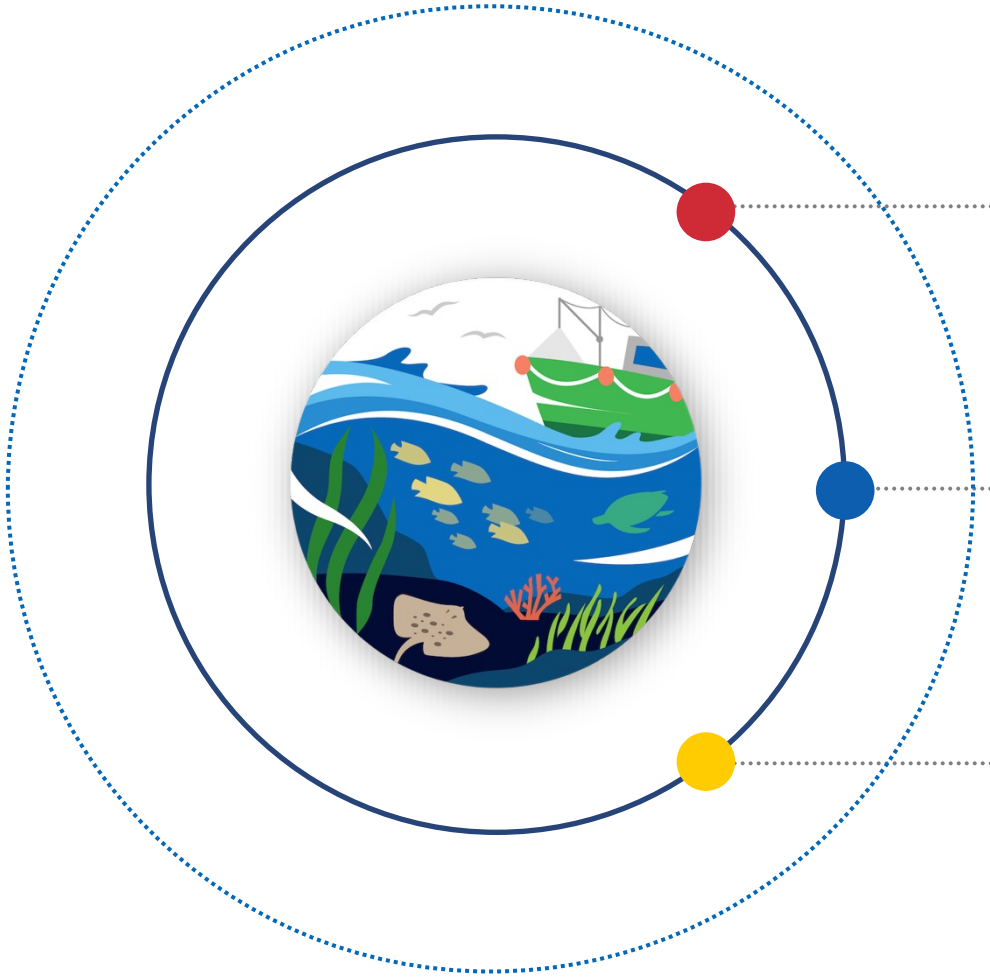


Games and learning materials

- Game 1: https://training.lifewatch.eu/games/marine_SABRES_fisheries/#!/
- Game 2: https://training.lifewatch.eu/games/marine_sabres_pressures/#!/
- Game 3: https://training.lifewatch.eu/games/marine_sabres_2026/#!/

- Ocean literacy and marine ecosystem services: https://training.lifewatch.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/Marine_SABRES_Learning_material_Ocean_literacy_and_marine_ecosystem_services_2025.pdf
- From ocean citizenship to ocean leadership **(IN REVIEW – AVAILABLE SOON)**

9 winning schools from 3 countries



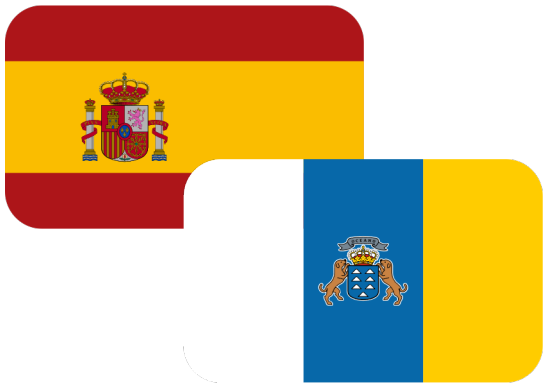
ITALY

GREECE

SPAIN –
THE CANARY
ISLANDS







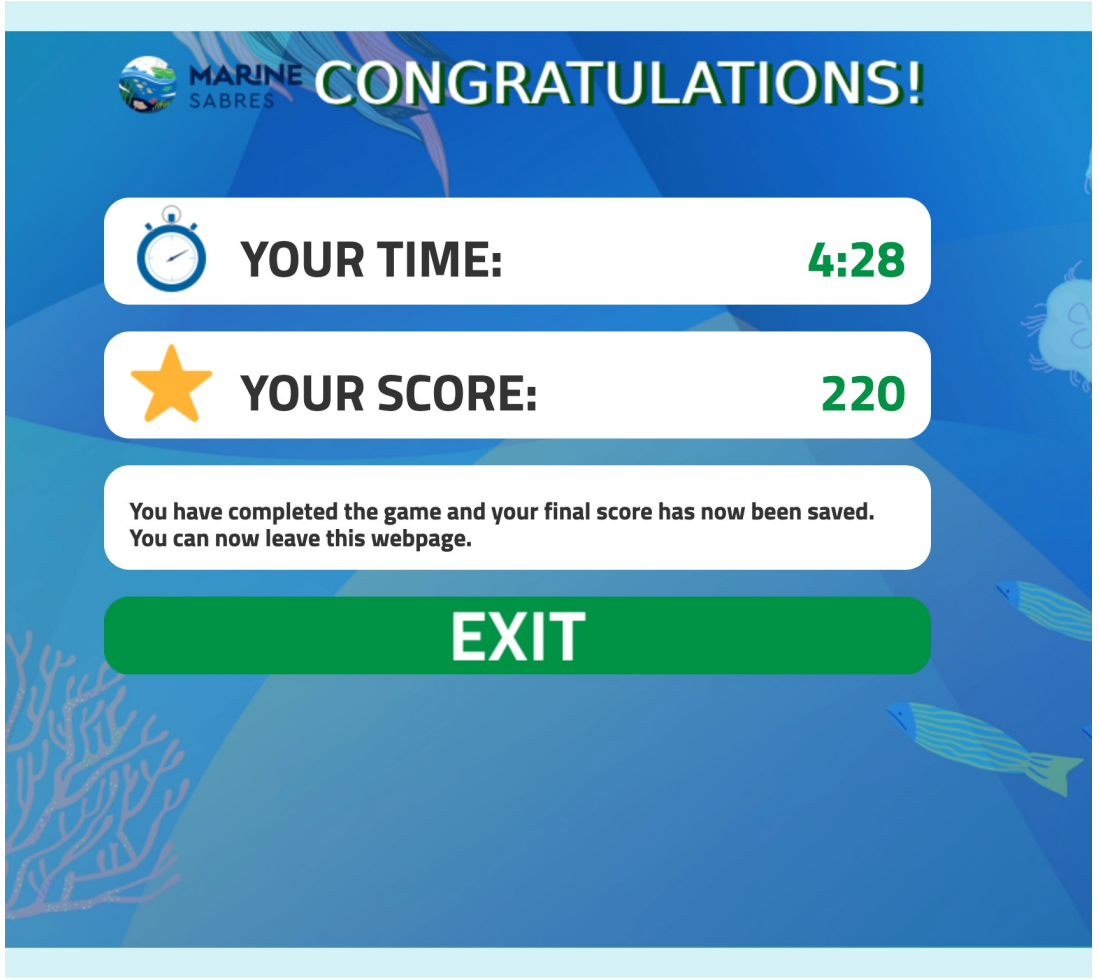
Two winner categories

The most engaged schools

Schools that played the competition games with more than one group of students. We celebrate the teachers who facilitated the participation of their fellow teachers and mentored as many pupils as possible.

The highest scoring student groups

An individual group of students who won a competition with the highest score, with their teacher's support. We celebrate the students' enthusiasm and curiosity.



Marine Scientists

You are the curious minds exploring the unknown. Your mission is to decode the ocean's secrets, study biodiversity, and collect the data needed to understand our planet. You are the scientific compass: without your discoveries, no one would know how to protect the blue.

Explore the deep, protect the blue future.



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2024

Blue Crews

You are the driving force, the hands, and the heart of the ocean. Whether you manage sustainable fisheries, navigate open-sea shipping routes, guide tourists along the coast, or protect marine biodiversity, you live and breathe the sea every day. You are the ultimate link between the economy, the people, and marine life.

Live the ocean, drive a sustainable economy.



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2025

Ocean Leaders

You are the visionaries and the voice of change. Your goal is to look beyond the horizon to unite people, draft new policies, and make sure laws defend our waters. You transform Marine Scientists' data and Blue Crews' real-world needs into concrete action and a better tomorrow.

Understand the currents, lead the change.



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2026



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CONGRATULATIONS!

The ocean needs everyone!

Marine Scientists study it;
Blue Crews live it;
Ocean Leaders guide it.

Three teams, one big blue mission!

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