

# MARCET Project:

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## International and Multidisciplinary Network for the conservation of cetaceans and the promotion of a sustainable tourism associated with whale watching activity in the Macaronesian waters

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The Macaronesian region is an important biodiversity hotspot located in the North Atlantic Ocean, between Europe and Africa, conformed by four archipelagos (Azores, Madeira, Canary Islands and Cabo Verde Islands). Among the species that inhabits this area, cetaceans occupy a remarkable place in terms of abundance and diversity, having confirmed the presence of 32 different species residing or transiting their waters.

MARCET project (Interreg MAC 2014-2020) was conceived with the objective of create and consolidate a multidisciplinary and interregional network for the conservation of Macaronesian cetaceans and to achieve a good environmental status of the marine areas where they reside. This network comprises 20 partners from Canary Islands (Spain), Azores and Madeira (Portugal), Cabo Verde Islands and Senegal, and brings together specialists in monitoring and health surveillance of cetaceans and operational oceanography with the purpose of integrating, harmonizing and optimizing knowledge, infrastructures and good practices in the region.



In addition, the MARCET network aims to transfer and disseminate state-of-the-art science and technology to promote the growth and sustainable development of tourism associated with whale watching activity, through the creation, demonstration and generation of new eco-innovative products and services, as well as sustainable business models.

MARCET is structured in three specific objectives: The first two are fundamental to the establishment of ecological and environmental sustainability criteria, integrating knowledge transfer activities and procedures in monitoring and health surveillance of cetaceans (O.1), as well as advanced techniques in operational oceanography (O.2). The third (O.3) studies the socio-economic impact of the whale watching activity and the transfer of new eco-innovative products and business models.

Transversally, a detailed program of knowledge transfer and training is being performing, and a powerful ICT tool is being creating, a Collaborative Virtual Community (CVC), to harmonize and share data, information and methods to overcome territorial fragmentation.

