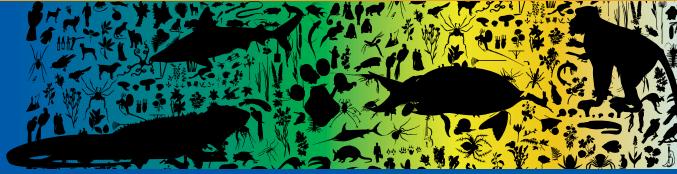


BEST

VOLUNTARY SCHEME
FOR BIODIVERSITY AND
ECOSYSTEM SERVICES
IN TERRITORIES OF
EUROPEAN OVERSEAS



BEST IMPACT FACTSHEET MACARONESIA • 2015 - 2023

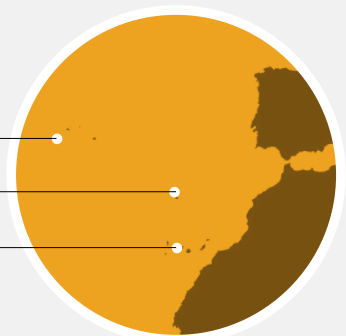
BEST IN MACARONESIA

STRENGTHENING LOCAL CONSERVATION

The Macaronesian region comprises one of the seven regions in the world, in which European Union (EU) Overseas entities are located: from the Arctic to the Antarctic, in the Atlantic, the Pacific, and Indian Ocean, and even in parts of the Amazon. Combined their Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) make the largest marine area worldwide, covering 15% of the ocean. They are home to 20% of coral reefs and lagoons, provide the last refuge to 6% of globally threatened and endangered species and are acknowledged as biodiversity hotspots for their immense diversity of species, ecosystems and landscapes. Together, the 9 EU Outermost Regions (ORs) and 25 Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) host more than 70% of Europe's biodiversity.



Azores
Madeira
Canary Islands



With the financial support from the LIFE Programme of the European Union, the French Office for Biodiversity and the French Agency for Development through the LIFE4BEST Programme

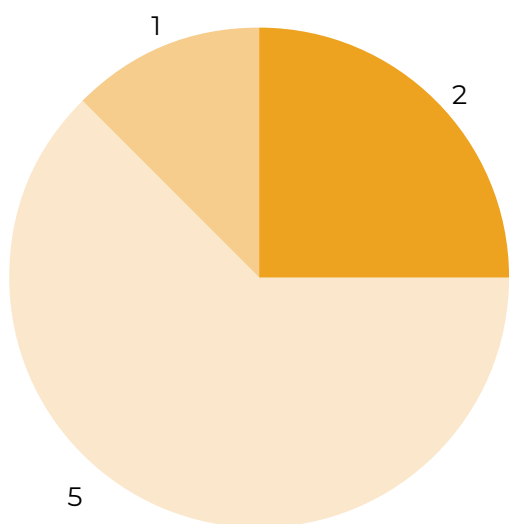
BEST IN THE MACARONESIA REGION

STRENGTHENING GLOBAL CONSERVATION

Macaronesia, comprising the Atlantic archipelagos and EU Outermost Regions Azores, Madeira, and Canary Islands, is a biodiversity hotspot of global significance. Its unique isolation has fostered the evolution of numerous endemic species found nowhere else on Earth. From the lush laurel forests of the Azores to the arid landscapes of the Canary Islands, Macaronesia's diverse ecosystems showcase a remarkable variety of flora and fauna. These islands are critical breeding grounds for marine life, including whales, dolphins, and sea turtles, while also supporting a rich avifauna, with many endemic bird species. However, Macaronesia faces environmental threats such as habitat destruction, invasive species, and climate change impacts, including sea level rise and extreme weather events. Conservation efforts are underway to protect and restore fragile ecosystems, including reforestation initiatives and the establishment of marine protected areas. Sustainable tourism practices are also being promoted to minimize the ecological footprint of visitors and ensure the long-term preservation of Macaronesia's natural heritage.

From 2011 to 2023, BEST programmes supported field actions to empower and strengthen local stakeholders committed to biodiversity conservation, local development, and sustainable use of ecosystem services – 8 projects worth € 466,574.

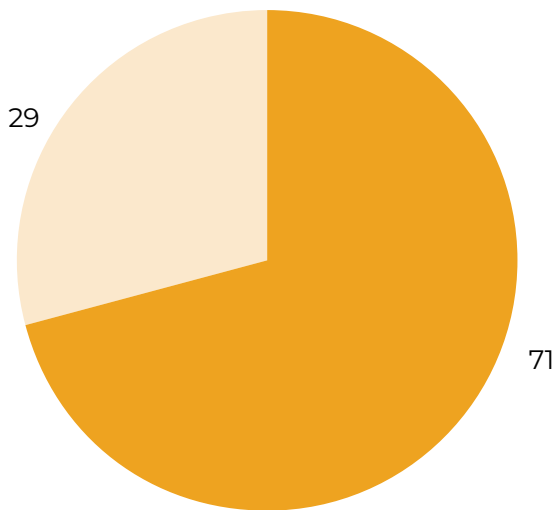
Total funding
€ 466,574



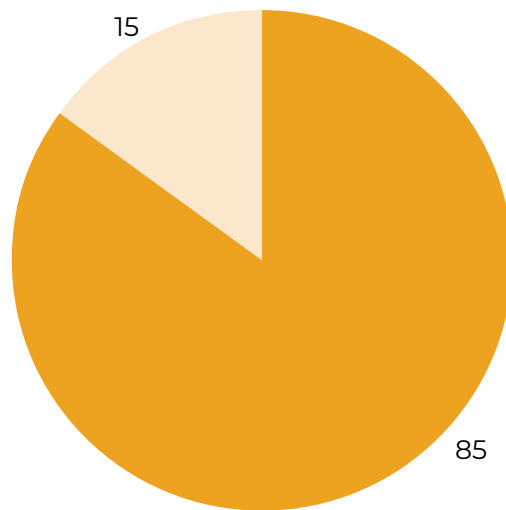
Geographical Scope

1. Canary Islands	2 projects
2. Madeira	5 projects
3. Azores	1 project

TOTAL **8**



Grant Beneficiaries		%
1.	NGOs	71
2.	Local government	29



Main objective and areas of intervention		%
1.	Biodiversity conservation	85
2.	Protected areas	15



Projects Results (LIFE4BEST)

Fauna species with an updated status	111
New species assessed	13
Rhodolith bed mapping	35 km ²
People with improved scientific / technical knowledge thanks to trainings	117
People reached by in-person awareness activities	>1400
Educational / awareness-raising events held	39
People reached online	>700,000
Collaborations	9
Activities lasting beyond grant end	15% of projects
Actions plans	3

ABOUT BEST

The [BEST initiative](#) started as a follow-up to the ‘[Message from Réunion Island](#)’, which called for a dedicated funding mechanism to support the conservation of EU Overseas’ biodiversity. The [BEST Preparatory Action](#), adopted by the European Parliament in 2010 (BEST PA), provided seed money to fund 16 projects via two calls for project proposals known as [BEST I-2011](#) and [BEST II-2012](#). The work enabled through the BEST PA stimulated further investment in the EU Overseas through [BEST RUP](#), in the French Outermost Regions (ORs) and [BEST 2.0](#), in the Overseas Countries and Territories² (OCTs). In 2019-2020, LIFE4BEST and BEST 2.0+ followed the end of BEST RUP and BEST 2.0 respectively, supporting 40 projects in the ORs and 23 in the OCTs. Both programmes support field actions that aim to enable, empower and strengthen local authorities and civil society organisations committed to local development, biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of ecosystem services. A new programme BESTLIFE2030, expected to award over 200 grants in both ORs and OCTs over four calls for proposals, was launched in February 2023.

For more information on the BEST Initiative:

<https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/best>

<https://www.best2plus.org>

<https://www.life4best.org/>

<https://bestlife2030.org/>



This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of IUCN and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.



1 Outcome of the Conference “European Union and its Overseas Entities: Strategies to counter Climate Change and Biodiversity Loss” held under the French Presidency in 2008.

2 As a result of Brexit, the number of Overseas Countries and Territories associated with the EU has been reduced from 25 to 13.