

## **National Oceans Policy Discourse: Comparative analysis of national ocean policies**

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The conflict of users is rising due to the increase of the use of oceans and its environmental degradation. Additionally, oceans have no borders, thus the uses, living resources and pollution problems are transboundary in nature, forcing nations to cooperate. These circumstances are leading nations to develop inter-sectoral policy frameworks to manage the waters under their jurisdiction, i.e. National Ocean Policies.

At present, only a few states are developing and implementing NOP. The first States implementing a NOP were Australia (1998), and Canada (1997). Since then, others have followed the trend. At present, approximately 20 nations are at an early stage of NOP development or implementation. Such is the case of Portugal: the Strategy for the Oceans, drafted by the Portuguese Strategic Commission for Oceans, awaits approval by the Portuguese Prime Minister.

Both Australia and Canada are Federal Nations, with distributed powers at Federal and state/provincial levels, and encompass different marine realms. The implementation of their NOP has been carried out at Federal and State levels. Simultaneously, regional plans for NOP implementation are being carried out, in order to adjust management to the particular features of each ecosystem.

Portugal is one of the first 15 member states of European Union, and as many other EU states, it lacks a NOP. Portugal comprises three Regions: the mainland, where the central government rules nation-wide, and the Archipelagos of the Azores and Madeira. These Archipelagic regions have semi-autonomous governments. The development and implementation of a NOP in Portugal would require having this governmental structure in mind, not only from the jurisdictional perspective, but also because these two Archipelagos are remote places, with very distinct ecological realms.

This presentation illustrates the early stages of problem identification for the development of a dissertation proposal on the comparative analysis of NOP development and implementation.

Analogies can be established between the implementation process of NOP in Canada and Australia, and Portugal, although these nations have different governance systems. Likewise, analogies between states and regional levels within Australia and Canada, and Portugal will be made. Additionally, other lessons may be drawn from the experiences of Australia and Canada's ocean policy development and implementation framework.