Faial, February 28th 2019 – The Regional Government of the Azores announced the implementation of new marine protected areas covering 15% of the Azorean Exclusive Economic Zone. This decision corresponds to a new international alliance between the Regional Government of the Azores, the Oceano Azul Foundation and the Waitt Institute under the aim of promoting marine conservation, the sustainable use of the Azores, and the valorization of the region's unique natural heritage, through the Blue Azores program.

According to the President of the Regional Government of the Azores, Vasco Cordeiro, this partnership will span generations, because this “work will not conclude in the time defined in this memorandum. We should view this work not as a point of arrival, but rather as one more step in the larger goal of preserving the Azores for generations to come."

Ted Waitt, Founder and Chairman of the Waitt Foundation and Institute said «The vision and leadership of the Regional Government of the Azores is why we are here. With this path to Blue Prosperity, the Azores can be global leader in advancing both marine protection and growing the blue economy. Our partnership will accelerate the Azores’ efforts to improve the long-term prosperity of the people while safeguarding the unparalleled marine resources that make the Azores unique.»
José Soares dos Santos, Chairman of the Oceano Azul Foundation, believes «The Azores can be an example on a global scale, in which natural capital is protected, promoted, and valued, with the integral involvement of its major stakeholders: the Azorean community. And, more and more, the world calls for joint actions, concerted efforts. The Blue Azores Program depends only on the will of the parties who want to fulfill it.»

The Blue Azores program focuses on the conservation and sustainable use of resources, involving education, economics and fisheries management, as well as various local, regional, national and international partners. The Blue Azores is based on the following main actions:

- Declare 15% of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of the Azores as new marine protected areas;
- Create and implement management plans for the new marine reserves and all existing marine protected areas;
- Develop and legally adopt a marine spatial planning plan;
- Develop innovative studies and approaches contributing to the sustainable management of fisheries;
- Identify new areas of interest for conservation, supporting scientific processes;
- Implement a blue literacy program for schools and the community.

In order to strategically create new opportunities for the development of a sustainable blue economy in the region, the Blue Azores program will also support the Azores and Portugal to achieve the international objectives established by the United Nations Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the objectives of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature.

About the Oceano Azul Foundation
Founded in 2017 with the motivation to promote healthier, more productive oceans through literacy, conservation and capacity building, the Oceano Azul Foundation serves as a voice for the sustainable use of the ocean.

Based in Portugal, the Oceano Azul Foundation works to position the country as an international leader in ocean-related issues by developing a blue generation and blue economy, while supporting innovation in scientific research. The Foundation has an international reach, strategically partnering on a global scale with other countries, foundations, academic institutions and civil society organizations, as well as with intergovernmental organizations such as the United Nations and the European Union. The Oceano Azul Foundation works toward a sustainable future for both humans and the ocean, under its motto, “From the ocean’s point of view.”

About the Waitt Foundation and Institute

The Waitt Foundation, established by Gateway, Inc. co-founder Ted Waitt in 1993, specializes in public-private partnership and supports high impact global ocean initiatives with the ultimate goal of sustainable, resilient and thriving seas that benefit all by partnering with unique coalitions of government, foundations & philanthropists, NGOs, academics, and businesses. The operational arm of the foundation, the Waitt Institute, partners with committed governments to develop and implement comprehensive, science-based ocean management plans that benefit both the economy and the environment. More at www.waittfoundation.org (@WaittFdn) and www.waittinstitute.org (@Waittinstitute).

For media requests, please contact:

Regional Government of the Azores
Pedro Caetano | Pedro.AF.Caetano@azores.gov.pt | Press Advisor of the Office of the President of the Regional Government |
+351 91 9130314
Gina Macedo | Gina.MA.Macedo@azores.gov.pt | Press Advisor of the office of the Regional Secretary of the Sea, Science & Technology |
+351 91 7425055

Oceano Azul Foundation
Maria João Soares | mjsa@jlma.pt | +351 914 237487
Maria Roquete | maria.roquete@jlma.pt | +351 962 068 300

Waitt Institute
Shayna Brody | sbrody@waittinstitute.org | +1 719 229 5237