Mission statement
The IUCN SSC Macaronesian Islands Plant Specialist Group (MIPSG) will act as a mechanism for driving and implementing urgent conservation actions across the region, supported by solid and updated scientific evidence, in a collaborative framework that encompasses regional Universities, Botanic Gardens and Administrations.

Projected impact for the 2017-2020 quadrennium
Considering that two of the main weaknesses previously identified for the Macaronesian Region are ‘Lack of laws or enforcement’ and ‘Poor education and awareness’, by the end of 2020 we envision to have accomplished several public outreach activities, and to have promoted meetings with political actors, aimed at an effective application of scientific results for improving and enforcing existing nature protection laws. We also aim to have completed assessments for all Azorean endemic species, in order to provide environmental government stakeholders with a tool to implement conservation actions in the archipelago.

Targets for the 2017-2020 quadrennium
Assess
Red List: (1) complete and publish new Red List assessments on Macaronesian plants on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species website; (2) update existing assessments on Macaronesian plants on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species website.
Research activities: (1) monitor populations of Critically Endangered and Endangered taxa and diagnosis of their current threat status; (2) monitor the distribution ranges of invasive plants, animals, and other consequences of global changes; (3) develop completed cartography of habitat types; (4) develop activities such as enrichment of public biological databases, and seed and herbarium material held by different institutions; (5) application of genetic and taxonomic information to reveal populations, cryptic species or lineages worthy of increased protection; (6) monitor populations of Critically Endangered, Endangered, and Vulnerable taxa.

Plan
Planning: (1) upscale the application of multi-disciplinary research results (reproductive biology, genetics, taxonomy, ecology) in the planning of reinforcements, reintroductions and/or assisted migrations of plant endemics; (2) develop Critically Endangered and Endangered species recovery plan documents in the Canaries.

Act
Conservation actions: (1) in situ and ex situ conservation (seeds and living collections) of Critically Endangered and Endangered plants and preventive sampling of seeds of more widely distributed plant taxa; (2) eradication/control of invasive plants and mammals in protected natural spaces.

Network
Synergy: (1) network with research institutions related to the conservation of insular floras; (2) develop an early warning network for the detection of invasive alien species.

Communicate
Communication: develop different outreach programmes aimed at stimulating actions and social awareness of the importance and degree of threat of insular floras.
Scientific meetings: (1) organise periodical meetings of the MIPSG panel members by video-conference or in the Macaronesian archipelagos, during FloraMAC congresses;
Activities and results 2018

Assess

Red List

i. Two reassessments were carried out for endemic Azorean plant taxa: Euphorbia stygiana H.C. Watson subsp. santamariae H. Schaeff. and Pericallis malvifolia (L’Hér.) B. Nord. subsp. caldeirae H. Schaeff. Assessment of new Umbilicus taxa described for Cabo Verde and reassessment of Umbilicus schmidtii. (KSR #1)

Research activities

i. In Azores, the Seed Bank collection of Faial Botanic Garden was enriched, as well as the collections of the Universidade dos Açores herbaria (A2B and AZU). In Madeira, exchange of seeds and herbarium material was conducted with two national and foreign institutions (University of Madeira and Jardín Botánico Viera y Clavijo, Canary Islands). A list of native trees from Cabo Verde was compiled. (KSR #43)

ii. Publication of checklist of crop wild relative (CWR) species for Cabo Verde. (KSR #18)

iii. Monitoring was achieved by the Faial Botanic Garden for two species in three islands of the Azores in 17 project areas (areas under Project LIFE VIDALIA (LIFE17 NAT/PT/000510)). Additionally, monitoring of 19 species was also conducted under seed banking activities and of four species, in the islands of Faial and Pico. (KSR #12)

iv. Monitoring was achieved in Azores by the Faial Botanic Garden for invasive species present in 17 project areas (areas under Project LIFE VIDALIA (LIFE17 NAT/PT/000510)) in three Azorean islands. Additionally, monitoring of 30 invasive plants was achieved in Terceira by the University of Azores. (KSR #13)

Act

Conservation actions

i. Thirty-seven samples of 19 taxa were collected, processed and stored in the Azores Seed Bank. In Canaries, in situ actions were conducted during 2018 for species with “approved recuperation plans” (Helianthemum bystropogophyllum, Helianthemum inagineum, Isoplexis chalcathana, Kunkeiliellia canariensis, Lotus kunkeli, Pericallis appendiculata var. preauxiana, Pericallis hadrosoma, Sideritis discolor, Solanum vespertilio ssp. doranum). (KSR #31)

ii. In Azores, Faial Botanic Garden developed control activities in five protected natural spaces on the island of Faial. In Madeira, within the scope of the Life Recover Natura Project control of Phalaris sp., about 5.7 ha at Desertas Grand Island were controlled and within the scope of the After LIFE LIPS Project, maintenance work on the Nicotiana glauca species was conducted in ilhéu de Cima (Porto Santo Island). Control of Carpobrotus edulis, Arundo donax and Rcinus communis was also conducted at Dunas da Piedade (eastern Madeira Island) in about 10 ha and control of Ulex europaeus and Cytisus scoparius was also conducted at Paúl da Serra (central plateau area at Madeira island), in about 150 ha. (KSR #13)

Communicate

Communication

i. A kick-start meeting took place 29–30 November 2018 in Gran Canaria. (KSR #28)

ii. A communication was presented at FloraMac 2018 Madeira. (KSR #28)

Acknowledgements

We thank the Cabildo de Gran Canaria for sponsoring the kick-off meeting of the group on 29–30 November 2018 through the budget of the Jardín Botánico Canario "Viera y Clavijo" – Unidad Asociada al CSIC. We would also like to thank Dirección Regional de Ciencia e Tecnologia and Dirección Regional del Ambiente, Gobierno Regional dos Açores, for helping cover the costs of a training workshop that will take place during 2018 in the Azores archipelago and the SSC Internal Grants for co-sponsoring this workshop.

Summary of activities 2018

Species Conservation Cycle ratio: 4/5

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Main KSRs addressed: 12, 13, 18, 28, 31, 43

KSR: Key Species Result