

# INTELLECTUAL OUTPUT 4

## Case Study IO4- Marketing

---

### Portalegre Tourism – A case study

Ana José; Carolina Oliveira Santos; Paulo Canário  
Instituto Politécnico de Portalegre

[anajose@ipportalegre.pt](mailto:anajose@ipportalegre.pt); [carolinasantos@ipportalegre.pt](mailto:carolinasantos@ipportalegre.pt);  
[pnuno@ipportalegre.pt](mailto:pnuno@ipportalegre.pt)

Key words: Tourism; Tourism marketing; Strategic marketing in tourism services

### 1. Summary

This is a case study that proposes to characterize the touristic offer in the North Alentejo region. It is an exploratory approach to the tourism sector and it aims to identify the intervention areas and define the steps to be taken in the elaboration of a Marketing Plan for the area of tourism supply.

### 2. Introduction

This case study has been elaborated within the context of the 3Economy+project, being its main objective to establish a framework for the establishment/dissemination of the services of a tourist company.

Although not fully identified, there are initially recognized needs in the Marketing and Communication strategy, which will be the subject of a plan when implementing the project.

We analyse one area involved into the project: North Alentejo (Portugal).

### 3. Literature Review

Tourism is, admittedly, one of the most important economic activities in the Portuguese country, which has seen in recent years a very significant growth, to which are associated several challenges and intervention needs, translated, in

a reflected and participative way, in the construction of the Strategy Nacional - Tourism 2027 (Turismo de Portugal).

Tourism is also recognized as a crucial tool for boosting local economies, for improving the quality of life of the population and for the preservation and valorisation of the indigenous resources of the territories, which is why it is important that, at the local scale, they are also intervention strategies defined, complementary and articulated with those defined at the national and regional level, and which aim above all, the creation of favourable context conditions for the development of private business initiative, central to the competitive and sustained development of tourism activity (Cunha, 2017)<sup>1</sup>.

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)<sup>2</sup> considers, in this regard, that the participation and active involvement of stakeholders directly involved and / or affected by the tourism development of a destination is a fundamental condition for the success of tourism policies and strategies, since only through this involvement and participation is it possible (i) learn the necessary knowledge and understanding of the complex dependencies that exist between the various sectors and economic activities that contribute to tourism development; (ii) recognize and fix the different, and legitimate, interests of the various stakeholders, which are often contradictory; (iii) ensuring the long-term viability and sustainability of the project, namely, by generating a spirit of belonging and identity on the part of all those involved.

The sustainable development of tourism still needs strong political leadership (Vieira *et al.*, 2016)<sup>3</sup>, that guarantees, among other aspects, the continuous monitoring of the impacts generated, the adequate adaptation to the local and specific conditions of each territory and destination, and the maximization of the benefits potentially generated by the tourist activity.

## A. Context

The municipality of Portalegre is located in the district of the same name, in the region of Alentejo and sub-region of Alto Alentejo. It occupies an area of approximately 447.14 km<sup>2</sup> (INE, 2018) divided by seven parishes (six rural and one urban). The seven parishes are Alagoa, Alegrete, Fortios, Urra, Union of

---

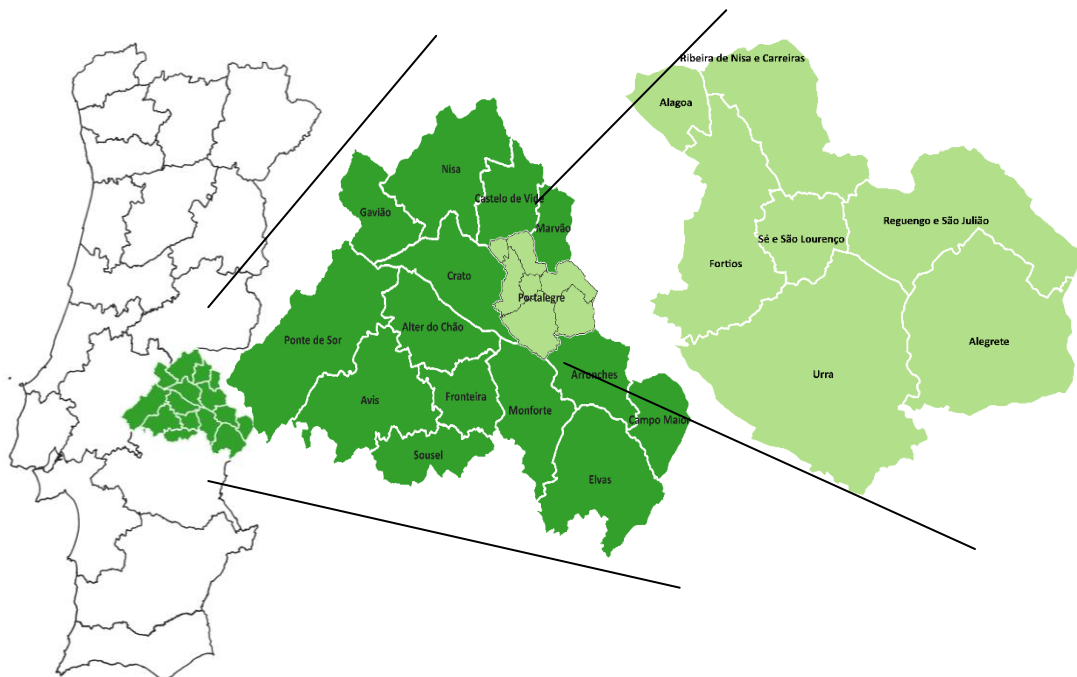
<sup>1</sup> Cunha, L. (2017). Turismo e Desenvolvimento: Realidades e Perspetiva. Capítulo 3: Turismo e Desenvolvimento Regional e Local, pp. 103-158. Edições Lidel, Portugal.

<sup>2</sup> UNWTO. (2019). *Communication and Participatory Approach*. <https://bit.ly/2YDasQ8>, consultado a 22 de julho de 2019.

<sup>3</sup> Vieira, I. Rodrigues, A. Fernandes, D. Pires, C. (2016). The role of local government management of tourism in fostering residents' support to sustainable tourism development: evidence from a Portuguese historic town. *International Journal of Tourism Policy*, Vol. 6, N.º 2, pp. 109-135.

Parishes of Reguengo and S. Julião, Union of Parishes of Ribeira de Nisa and Carreiras and Union of Parishes of Sé and S. Lourenço (the latter corresponding to the city of Portalegre). The municipality is limited to the north by Castelo de Vide, to the northeast by Marvão, to the east by Spain, to the south by Arronches and Monforte and to the west by Crato.

**Figure 1 - Territorial insertion of the municipality of Portalegre**



## B. Population and Demography

With regard to the population and demographic dynamics of the municipality, it appears that in the period between 2001 and 2017, Portalegre registered a trend towards a decrease in the resident population, similarly to what happens globally, in the country and in the Alentejo region, being, however, it should be noted that, comparatively, the municipality has a less pronounced decrease than that registered in the Alto Alentejo sub-region (-12.70% compared to -15.40%), but more accentuated than that observed in Alentejo (-12.70% compared to -8.30%). In 2017, 22,627 individuals resided in the

municipality of Portalegre, corresponding to about 21% of the total population of Alto Alentejo (INE, 2018)<sup>4</sup>.

Analysing the age structure, there is a trend towards an increasing aging population and a decrease in the number of young people living in the municipality. In 2017, the proportion of population living in the municipality of Portalegre aged 65 or over was 26.1%, a figure slightly below the sub-regional average (27.2%). Regarding the proportion of young people over 15 years old living in the municipality, this also represented, in 2017, 12.6% of the total population, however, it should be noted that, between 2001 and 2017, the negative variation of the resident population was especially high in the '15 -24 years' age group (-37%) (INE, 2018)<sup>5</sup>.

### C. Business Fabric

Regarding the business fabric of the municipality of Portalegre, and according to data for 2017 (INE), there were 2,803 companies in this municipality, which represented about 22.4% of the total companies in Alto Alentejo.

From a tourist point of view, Portalegre has a favourable location, due to its proximity to Lisbon airport and the city of Évora, the main tourist destination in Alentejo and a potential distribution platform for intra-regional tourist flows. The proximity to the Spanish city of Badajoz is also considered to be favourable to the tourism development of the municipality, due to the possibility of attracting a relevant market for national tourism. As an example, it can be mentioned that in 2018, the province of Badajoz had a resident population of 676,376 people (INE Spain, 2019).

The territorial insertion of Portalegre is not, however, accompanied by a sufficiently efficient transport infrastructure network, which, at least apparently, has prevented the municipality from capitalizing more strategically and strategically on the competitive advantages of its location.

## 4. Method

Considering that we have insufficient knowledge of reality, and what is requested is a first approach based on primary data, published statistical data and some empirical data.

---

<sup>4</sup> Instituto Nacional de Estatística. (2018). Estimativas Anuais da População Residente. INE, Portugal.

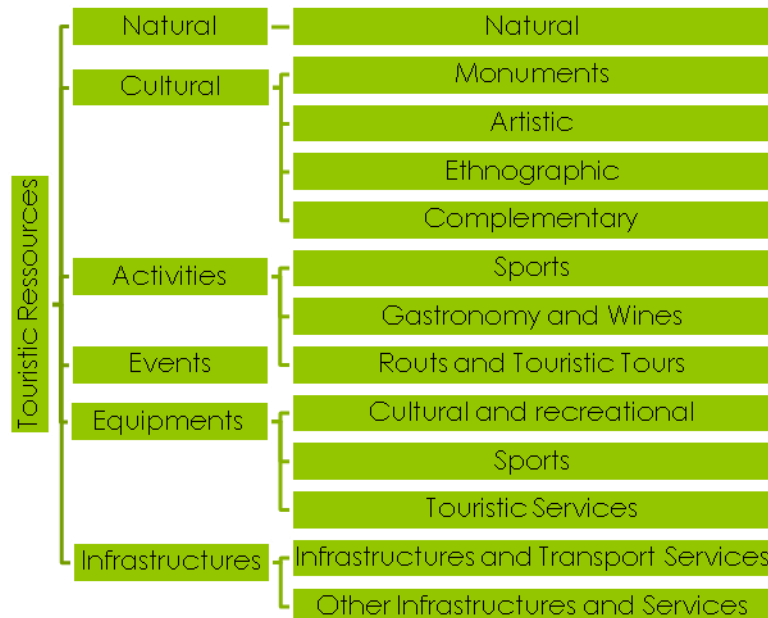
<sup>5</sup> Instituto Nacional de Estatística. (2018). Estimativas Anuais da População Residente. INE, Portugal.

## A. Resources

The inventory of tourist resources is a crucial component, since only through this inventory is it possible to assess the tourist potential of a territory, and to identify the areas for which that territory has a greater tourist vocation. It is, in fact, these resources that make the tourist activity possible and satisfy the needs of the demand, reason why the collection of detailed information about the various components of the offer (current and potential) proves to be fundamental in the identification of the tourist development opportunities of the territory.

The grid of tourist resources elaborated for this inventory was based on the guidelines of Inskip (1991)<sup>6</sup>, on the criteria defined by the General Directorate of Tourism (2006) when it elaborated the Inventory of Tourist Resources, in the identification of the characteristic products of tourism considered in the Satellite Account de Tourism (INE, 2008), and the methodology and grid created for the project to inventory the tourist offer of Alentejo, carried out between 2010 and 2013 within the scope of the Regional Observatory of Tourism of Alentejo, as shown in the following table.

**Table 1 . Tourism resource grid used in the inventory**



Fonte: Plano Operacional de Turismo de Portalegre (POTUP 2030)<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Inskip, E. (1991). *Tourism Planning: An Integrated and Sustainable Development Approach*. Wiley Editions.  
<sup>7</sup> Plano Operacional de Turismo de Portalegre - POTUP 2030 (2020) <http://www.cm-portalegre.pt/pt/turismo/publicacoes>





reputation or other characteristics that are due essentially or exclusively to the geographical environment.

With regard to DOP products, the district of Portalegre is the production area for North Alentejo Olive Oil DOP, Cheese from Nisa (municipalities of Nisa, Crato, Castelo de Vide, Marvão, Portalegre, Monforte, Arronches and Alter do Chão), and Cherry from São Julião - Portalegre DOP, whose geographical production area is limited only to the municipalities of Marvão, Castelo de Vide and Portalegre.

The Portalegre district is also the exclusive area for the production of 11 PGI products, essentially in the category of meat and sausage and smoked products, and the Apple from Portalegre PGI, whose production is limited to the municipalities of Marvão, Castelo de Vide and Portalegre, representing this territory is the only production spot for this apple variety in the south of the country. Despite the existence of certified products in the Portalegre district, it should be noted that, specifically in the municipality of Portalegre, there are practically no economic agents that produce these products.

All other councils in the area were considered outside the service's area of attraction. The contribution of endogenous resources and certified products to the tourist development of the territories is widely recognized, due to the differentiation they give to each destination, arising from their unequivocal association with local culture, habits and traditions, and also because of the potential they contain for the development of experiences. of a sensory character, increasingly valued by tourists. At the same time, the appreciation and commercialization of this type of products in tourist contexts, can also stimulate the local economy, encourage the creation of small businesses, and, consequently, contribute to increase the quality of life of local communities.

According to Sims (2009), cited by Velissariou & Mparas (2014), local products can be an element of attraction for tourists at different levels, from the simple search for typical products that can be purchased and consumed as local symbols, to the complex and deeply rooted search for the authenticity of the places visited. The promotion and promotion of tourism in local (certified) local products from Portalegre will thus be an issue to revisit within the scope of the intervention proposals defined of the Plan.

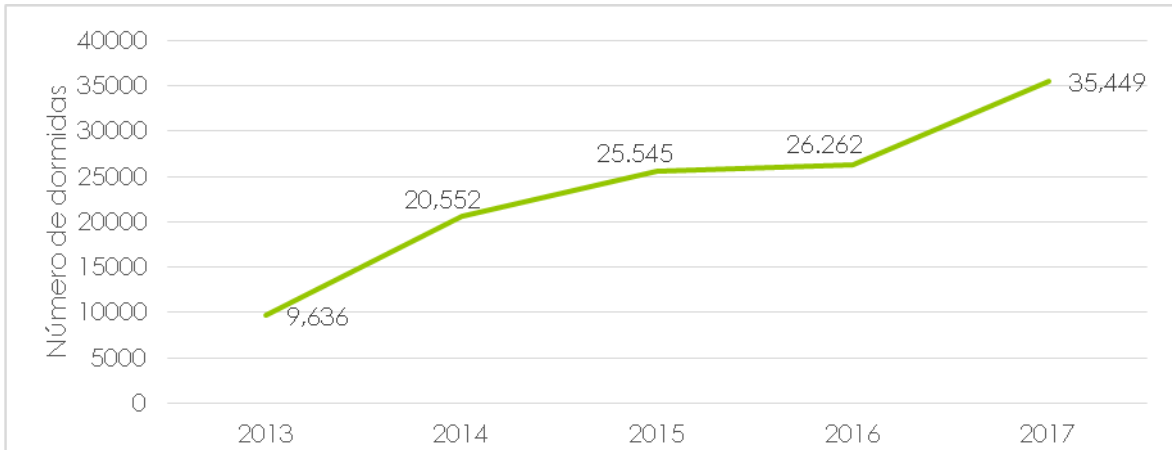
## 5. Results

In Portalegre, the demand for tourist accommodation, between 2013 and 2017 (figure 4), reached a record value of 35,449 overnight stays in 2017, following a positive growth trend that had been accentuated since 2013.



Comparing the number of overnight stays in 2013 and 2017, there is a substantial increase of about 267.9%.

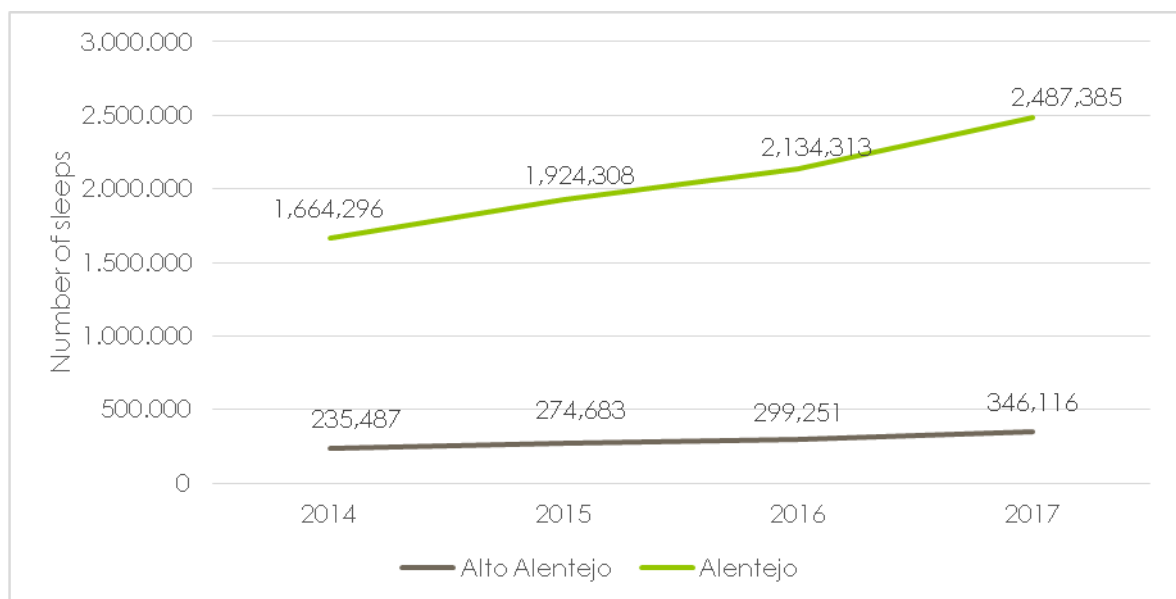
**Figure 4. Number of sleeps in touristic accomodations – Portalegre**



Data source: INE- Inquérito à Permanência de Hóspedes na Hotelaria e outros Alojamentos;  
Source: PORDATA; Last update: 2019-03-04

In the 2014-2017 period, as illustrated by figure 5, Alto Alentejo and, in particular, Alentejo, registered relatively sharp growth trends. Overnight stays in the region have been increasing, and in 2017, overnight stays in Portalegre represented 10.2% of overnight stays in Alto Alentejo and 1.4% of overnight stays in Alentejo.

**Figure 5. Sleeps in touristic accommodations: Alentejo and North**



Source of data: INE- Inquérito à Permanência de Hóspedes na Hotelaria e outros Alojamentos;  
Source: PORDATA; Last update: 2019-03-04

Regarding the average stay, in the period between 2014 and 2017, there is, overall, a trend towards the stabilization of the values recorded in the various geographic territories analysed, with the exception of Portugal, where the value decreased from 2,8 to 2,7 nights.

In Portalegre, the average stay registered, in this period, a slight increase, going from 1,5 nights in 2014, to 1,6 nights in 2017.

The same growth trend is registered in the sub-region of Alto Alentejo, passing the value from the average stay from 1,6 nights in 2014 to 1,7 nights in 2017. In the Alentejo region, the average stay remained constant throughout the period under review (1,8 nights). Although the average stay recorded in Portalegre is slightly lower than that recorded in Alto Alentejo and Alentejo, it is worth noting the growth recorded in the period under review.

## 6. Discussion

Without pretending to repeat and/or systematically exhaustively analyse the contents of analysis already explained in previous sections, this chapter presents a schematic summary of the main diagnostic elements identified, with special relevance for the definition of the Tourism Development Model proposed for the municipality of Portalegre within the scope of this Plan.

The diagnostic elements are organized into two types: Weaknesses and Opportunities, considering that this is the format that will allow a more reflective and critical interpretation. It should also be noted that working versions of this synthesis were previously discussed and validated during the various work sessions held.

**Table 2. Synthesis of the diagnostic: Main weaknesses and opportunities**

<p>Opportunities</p>	<p>Presence, in the territory, of Universities with formations in the fields of tourism, management, communication and design that may contribute to the qualification of Human resources and fostering of partnerships.</p> <p>Reduced presence of touristic animation companies working in the region, with effects in the reduced exploitation of resources and existing touristic attractions.</p> <p>Territorial insertion, near transport Hubs and touristic markets and relevant attraction poles in regional context (Badajoz, Lisbon, Évora).</p> <p>Existence of very relevant touristic resources, specially natural and cultural.</p> <p>Very rich cultural heritage (material and intangible) and little explored in touristic context, what enhances the development of inovating products and touristic experiences settled in local culture and identities.</p> <p>A potential de development of touristic products in gastronomy and wines, mainly by the known quality of wines produced in this region.</p> <p>Regular making of known events, some of them international, that may leverage complementary touristic flows.</p> <p>Recent evolution of the touristic dynamics of municipalities in the sub-region and in Portalegre surrounding.</p> <p>International recognition of Alentejo brand.</p> <p>Significative dynamic of public and private investments in tourism, in the frame of EU supports.</p> <p>Growth perspectives in main source markets.</p> <p>International trend in serach for tourism in less touristic exploited destinations, with valuation of senses, gastronomic, cultural and creative experiences.</p>	<p>Weaknesses</p>
	<p>Aged population and reduced social dynamics, with eventual implication in the environment of municipalities</p> <p>Weak coverage of public transport, in connections intra and extra municipality, with possible negative effects in touristic accessibility.</p> <p>Global negative image of the territory, by local agents, or by some vistors or tourists, regarding cleaning of public spaces, few people and reduced commercial dynamic of the municipality.</p> <p>Apparent loss of relevance in sub-regional and regional context, specially in the last decades. General perception of all the agents consulted.</p> <p>Period of visiting and signage of some resources and touristic attractions not always adequate and with need of intervention.</p> <p>Period of work of restaurants little adequate to tourist flow.</p> <p>Reduced offer of shops, mainly those of endogenous products or traditional and certified from the region.</p> <p>Little presence in digital platforms and social networks, that are not, apparently, being optimized to the dinamisation of the tourism in the municipality.</p> <p>Networking and regular collaborative practices between local touristic agents, where it is still noticed a focus in individual purposes and a lack of a common and shared view to a future touristic development of Portalegre.</p> <p>Weak business fabric, specially in shops and tourism.</p> <p>Some lack of articulation in Municipality services and reduced capacity of mobilization and articulation with local agents.</p> <p>Very reduced offer of structured tourism programmes/products, oriented towards specific public segmentation.</p>	

## A. Tourism Development Strategy of Alentejo - Horizon 2014-2020

Within the scope of the current cycle of community support (2014-2020), Tourism do Alentejo (and Ribatejo), ERT, as an entity in charge of the integrated management of the tourist destination Alentejo, which includes the

municipality of Portalegre, defined a set of guidelines, strategic priorities and lines of intervention, with a view to pursuing the defined vision for tourism in the region.

To this purpose, it was developed the strategic document “Tourism do Alentejo 2014-2020” with a global vision for the region, but not defining, however, guidelines at the sub-regional or municipal scale. It aims at “a certified tourist destination along the entire value chain and internationally recognized for its identity and differentiation of the experiences offered”, having defined a set of eight Strategic Priorities for this purpose. (PE):

- Affirm the tourism cluster
- Work for a regional intersectional vision
- Managing the destination with enhanced skills
- Create and promote the tourist territory
- Institutionalize supply networks in the territory
- Requalify and create new tourism products
- Reinforce promotion
- Digital marketing (Alentejo 3.0)

Tourism do Alentejo, ERT, has in the meantime developed a “**Multi-Year Activity Strategy 2016-2022**” broadening the timeframe of the Development Strategy defined for the 2014-2020 period, which identifies a set of Structuring Actions that have been supported, in largely by Portugal 2020 in general, and by the Regional Operational Program Alentejo 2020 in particular.

## **B. Portalegre's Strategy and Operational Model for Tourism Development**

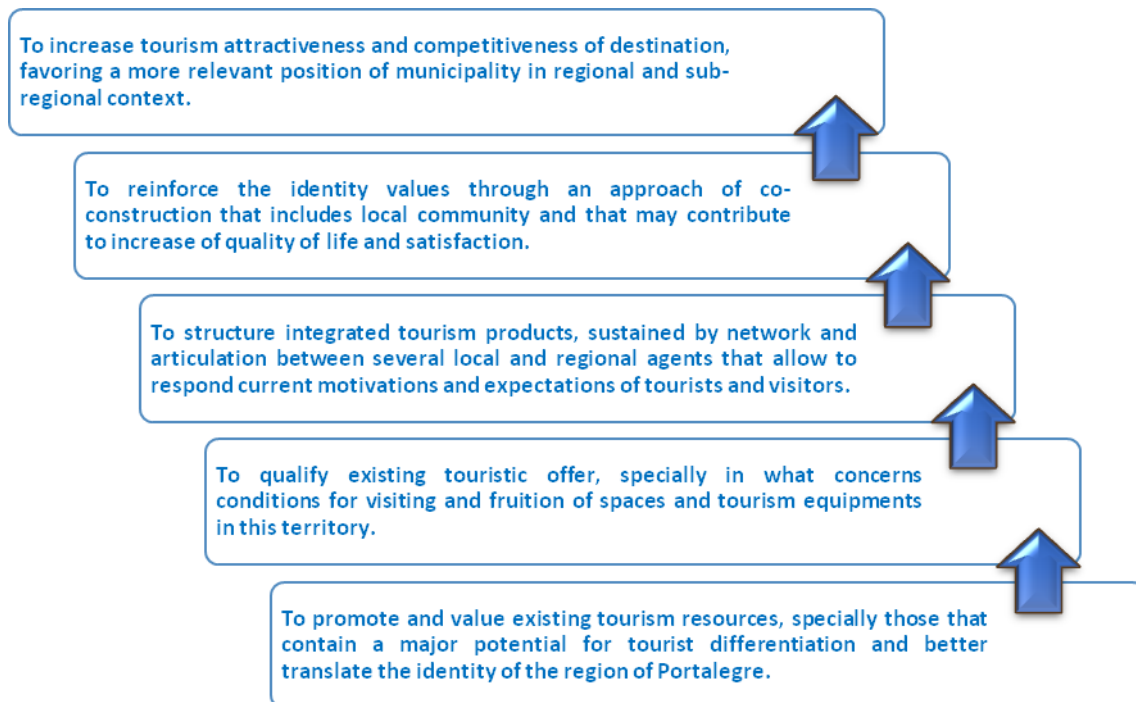
The Portalegre Tourism Development Strategy and Operational Model is structured in 6 Strategic Intervention Lines (LEI), which translate, in aggregate, the domains in which a more assertive and integrated intervention is considered necessary, with a view to thus, a path of continuous improvement of the fundamental conditions to increase the attractiveness and tourist competitiveness of the municipality. Each of these LEIs will integrate a more or less diverse set of actions.

In the context of this Strategy, tourism products that have the greatest potential to contribute to the competitive positioning of the municipality's tourism offer are also identified, in the context of this Strategy, while considering the main resources and attractions present in the territory, and those which

appear as the main opportunities for the development of these same resources and attractions.

Finally, and in a global way, it is intended that this Strategy and Operational Model can contribute to increase the tourist attractiveness and competitiveness of the destination, favouring a more relevant positioning of the municipality in the regional and sub-regional context. For this general objective, other more specific, interconnected and mutually dependent objectives converge, as summarized in figure 6.

**Figure 2. Objectives of Strategic Operational Model for tourism development of Portalegre**



## 7. Conclusions and Recommendations

The approach that can be taken to the case described here is diverse. However, the importance of tourism for the local and national economy cannot be overlooked. Some attention to the sector is essential for economic characterization and the design of regional and national development strategies.

The region, which for centuries had an agricultural-based economy, currently has the tourism sector as its economic lever.

A view of the state of the art of the sector, the evolution and the projection of scenarios are tools of foundation for a marketing approach to the tourism sector.

The products that resulted from the region's previous economic leverage – agro industrials - are and can be distinguishing factors of the new economy. Regional products can serve as a marketing tool for the tourism sector and this promoter of those same products.

The characterization of the region and the sector also leads us to consider the creation of networks since no single player has the capacity to truly impact the market.

The case of tourism is, in itself, of relevance for the analysis of the region but it is also a case that can be transferred to other sectors and to other regions.

## 8. References

- Cunha, L. (2017). Turismo e Desenvolvimento: Realidades e Perspetiva. Chap. 3: Turismo e Desenvolvimento Regional e Local, pp. 103-158. Edições Lidel, Portugal.
- UNWTO. (2019). Communication and Participatory Approach. <https://bit.ly/2YDasQ8>, obtained in July 2019.
- Vieira, I. Rodrigues, A. Fernandes, D. Pires, C. (2016). The role of local government management of tourism in fostering residents' support to sustainable tourism development: evidence from a Portuguese historic town. *International Journal of Tourism Policy*, Vol. 6, N.º 2, pp. 109-135.
- Instituto Nacional de Estatística. (2018). Estimativas Anuais da População Residente. INE, Portugal.
- Instituto Nacional de Estatística. (2018). Estimativas Anuais da População Residente. INE, Portugal.
- Instituto Nacional de Estatística. (2018). Sistema de Contas Integradas das Empresas. INE, Portugal.
- Plano Operacional de Turismo de Portalegre - POTUP 2030 (2020) <http://www.cm-portalegre.pt/pt/turismo/publicacoes>, obtained in February 2020

Registo Nacional de Turismo, desenvolvido pelo Turismo de Portugal, I.P.,  
obtained from <https://bit.ly/2m5bl0B>.

Inskeep, E. (1991). *Tourism Planning: An Integrated and Sustainable  
Development Approach*. Wiley Editions.

Velissariou, E., Mpara, E. (2014). Local products and Tourism gastronomy in rural  
areas. Evidence from Greece. 9th MIBES INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE.