

ACTION PLAN

PORTUGAL, 2022



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This action plan was prepared by Alto Alentejo Intermunicipal Community – CIMAA, under Interreg Europe programme project Revitalizing Remote And Mountainous areas through Sustainable Alternative Tourism (RAMSAT). This project – RAMSAT- is supported under the European Union (Interreg Europe / ERDF).





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Part I – General information

Project: RAMSAT - Revitalizing remote And Mountainous areas through Sustainable Alternative Tourism

Partner organisation: Alto Alentejo Intermunicipal Community – CIMAA

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NUTSII region: Alto Alentejo

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Part II – Policy context

1. The Action Plan aims to impact:
 - Investment for Growth and Jobs programme
 - European Territorial Cooperation programme
 - Other regional development policy instrument**

2. Name of the policy instrument(s) addressed:
 - **Alto Alentejo Tourism Operational Plan;**
 - **Alto Alentejo Marketing Plan.**

3. Further details on the policy context and the way the action plan should contribute to improve the policy instruments:

Within an area of 6.065 Km², Alto Alentejo competitiveness factors in what regards regional tourism: The Natural Park of Serra de São Mamede, the city of Elvas (World Heritage Site since 2012), numerous walled cities, like Marvão, courtyards and gardens that witness Arab influences, which shaped people and nature.

The quantity, quality and diversity of heritage resources in Alto Alentejo are the value chains and the true key factors to support the consolidation of the region as a touristic destination, with the affirmation of this sector in the regional economy and in overall employment.

This economic relevance is strongly associated with the strategic importance of a set of resources as fundamental elements, which together with the people contribute to strengthen regional identity.

The current situation is characterized by a set of trends that are important constraints to the region, among which the following stand out: the recessive regional demographics, a social and economic devitalization of low-density territories, reduced dynamism of the business environment, weaknesses in what regards the attraction of new investments and the competitive disadvantages of mountain areas when compared to coastal areas.

The region's main challenge is to find tools for the identified problems (current and potential) namely in what regards difficulties in the articulation between local and central administration initiatives, in order to promote natural tourism, especially in mountain areas in a sustainable development perspective.

The identified policy instruments aim at promoting the natural and cultural heritage, affirming the region as an excellence touristic destination, especially in what regards remote mountain areas.



Therefore, Alto Alentejo Turismo Operational Plan (POTAA) materializes the regional Integrated Strategy for Tourism Development coinciding with the implementation of the programming periods of the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) in Portugal, namely, the current and still in force and the forthcoming, under conclusion.

This enables integration of the regional strategy with the objectives pursued at European level and also enables maximization of the mobilization capacity of resources that will be made available through the ESIFs, namely to support financially the implementation of the strategy adopted.

As previously identified, the main constraints identified to the region are:

- recessive regional demographics;
- social and economic devitalization of important agglomerations and territories;
- reduced dynamism of the business environment;
- weaknesses in what regards the attraction of new investments;
- competitive disadvantages of mountain areas when compared with other regions, namely coastal regions.

The priority ***Creation of operationalization instruments*** contributes to the promotion of natural and cultural heritage, affirming the region as a touristic excellence destination. In terms of improvement, the objective is to contribute to solving the major problem in the region concerning limitations and challenges that the European community is facing regarding ecotourism, especially in mountain areas, with important historical and natural value.

An important factor is that POTAA is already in line with 2020-2023 + Sustainable Tourism Plan.

2020-2023 + Sustainable Tourism Plan is the Portuguese Tourism office strategic plan. It aims to mobilise stakeholders and the overall society to the promotion of a sustainability Tourism in Portugal, over the next three years.

Resulting from the recovery plan "Reactivate tourism, building a future" and aligned with the objectives of the Tourism Strategy 2027, the + Sustainable Tourism Plan 2020-2023 aims to intensify the objective of sustainability in tourism, based upon the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

This plan includes one hundred and nineteen actions distributed along four strategic lines of action:

- Structuring an increasingly sustainable supply;
- Qualifying the sector's agents;
- Promoting Portugal as a sustainable destination;
- Monitoring the sector's performance for sustainability.

There are three targets to be achieved by 2023:

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- 75% of touristic resorts with energy efficiency, water and waste management systems;
- 75% of touristic resorts not using Single-Use Plastics;
- 25,000 adherents to the Clean & Safe Seal, 30,000 professionals trained and 50,000 professionals trained in the areas of sustainability.

In accordance with the global guidelines of the World Tourism Organisation, a responsible recovery of the sector, after COVID 19 pandemic, will enable the possibility of having an even stronger and more sustainable touristic sector under the commitment to do better and with greater safety, from an economic, social and environmental point of view.

Thus, Portugal, aims to increase demand for the destination, fight seasonality, increase the qualifications of the human resources in the sector, generate a positive impact on residents, promote energy, water and waste management efficiency in tourism activity.

Additionally, CIMAA finds important to consider Alto Alentejo Tourism Marketing Plan which aims to design and consolidate sub-regional scale tourism products and increase the levels of visibility, notoriety and recognition of Alto Alentejo - final version of this document was recently approved. The plan identifies a set of thirteen tourism products that are considered priorities for Alto Alentejo region.

Alto Alentejo Tourism Marketing Plan was prepared in the framework of PROVERE InMotion 2020 - Alentejo, Tourism and Sustainability, one of the Collective Efficiency Strategies (CEE) recognized in Alentejo Region.

In this context, it is established that inter-municipal entities (in this case CIMAA) are competent for the development of sub-regional internal tourism promotion.

This competence is to be articulated with regional tourism entities, with regional tourism plans and national tourism strategy, in order to ensure consistency and efficiency and to promote better territorialisation of tourism policies and strategies, with respect for the principle of specificity in regional intervention.

The improvement of the identified policy instrument will be made through the support to new pilots inspired by RAMSAT project good practices and through an effective monitorization of the implementation of regional plans.

Summarizing, this envisages the improvement of the selected policy instrument through the support and implementation of new projects in order to involve more actors and improve the communication between all parts identifying also relevant and innovative support services.

Regional organizations like CIMAA take part on the implementation of regional strategies and plans namely in what regards environment protection and resource efficiency through cooperation, execution of action plans and advising on the regional policy, funding and particularly on the implementation of actions.

Regional entities are always part of the process of discussion regarding a specific programming period.

Whit the proposed actions CIMAA aims at facilitating cooperation, at a regional level and ensure the articulation with national territorial management instruments.

Part III – Details on the actions envisaged

ACTION 1: Promotion of S. Mamede Natural Park Mountain areas through the creation of a new intermunicipal touristic product: electric mountain bikes.

Relevance to the project

In the framework of the RAMSAT partnership learning experience and inspired by the good practice presented by the Bulgarian Partner (Euroregion Pleven-Olt), good practice **Joint Adventure on the Mountain Paths – JAMP** (<https://www.interregeurope.eu/policylearning/good-practices/item/5403/joint-adventure-on-the-mountain-paths-jamp-robq-384/>), which developed the promotion of mountain areas through the creation of cross-border tourism product - mountain e-biking, CIMAA considers that the key elements presented are the right ones to be transferred to the Alto Alentejo Region.

The main goal of JAMP is to support the sustainable development of the cross-border tourism from Romania and Bulgaria and to increase the promotion of the mountain area from district Mehedinti and counties Vidin and Montana by creating new products and services and through the direct involvement of all stakeholders that are interested in tourism development. This practice will increase the number of the tourists in the region.

With this action, and taking into consideration the lessons learned, CIMAA aims to support the sustainable development of tourism in S. Mamede Natural Park and increase the promotion of the mountain area through the creation of this new product also promoting the direct involvement of all stakeholders that are committed to the development of sustainable tourism in the region. By this, action 1 will contribute to the improvement of the policy instrument addressed (Alto Alentejo Tourism Operational Plan) by improving its management and its content.

The improvement of Alto Alentejo Tourism Operational Plan will be accomplished thought the improvement of a specific type of action and thought the involvement of the stakeholders in this action taking into consideration that this action will function as an example of cooperation between entities and will be a learning example to be replicated also for other actions. This will make it possible to improve Alto Alentejo Tourism Operational Plan since the learnings in terms of management and implementation will be integrated in the Alto Alentejo Tourism Operational Plan monitoring and revision.

The promotion of mountain tourism activities and the previously created mountain bike routes will increase the number of tourists. Electric mountain bikes will contribute to nature protection and will enable a nature friendly attitude in the mountain region (e-mountain bike).

Nature of the action

It is intended, through the implementation of this action, to develop synergies/complementarities with the recently created Cycling Centres in the region.

These Centres, under Regional Tourism Authority responsibility can be found in the municipalities of Arronches, Castelo de Vide, Marvão and Portalegre.

The idea is to take advantage of these cycling stations already created (to support tourists), as well as the routes also already created in order to attract more tourists/enthusiasts. Therefore, the main goal is to promote and increase the touristic offer and to increase the number of mountain tourists.

For that, CIMAA will:

- develop a common strategy for mountain e-bikes identified trails;
- will purchase, with the support of the four municipalities, 8 e-bikes and associated charging stations, as well as safety devices/bicycle locators;
- organize seminars with regional stakeholders to disseminate the action;
- perform joint trainings with tourism operators;
- develop a promotion and publicity campaign.

These bicycles (and charging stations) will be available at the Tourism Offices of the Municipalities involved (at least 2 bicycles/post) and can be requested by tourists.

Stakeholders involved

CIMAA will take the leadership of the implementation of this action with the collaboration of the following stakeholders:

- ERTA (Alentejo Regional Tourism Authority) - as promoters/responsible for the cycling centres;
- ARPTA - Alentejo Promotion Office - as the promoter of the initiative abroad;
- Arronches, Castelo de Vide, Marvão and Portalegre Municipalities - as supporters of the action.

The main stakeholder's role will be related to the assistance in the development of the action. Also, the stakeholders will have a special role in what regards

communication and dissemination related to the implementation and main results of this action.

Timeframe

12 months, aiming to have it available after this period.

Activities	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8	M9	M10	M11	M12
Development of the common strategy	■	■										
Purchase of e-bikes and associated charging stations and safety devices/bicycle locators			■	■	■	■	■					
Seminars organization								■	■	■		
Development of trainings action									■	■	■	
Development of the promotion and publicity campaign					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

Costs

Costs will be related to human resources, organization and hosting of meetings, promotion and dissemination costs and acquisitions of equipment. The budget to cover costs will be around 12.000,00€.

Funding sources

CIMAA own resources, namely in what regards human resources, and support from the municipalities, directly involved in the equipment acquisition.

ACTION 2: "Bonelli's Wings" Passport.

Relevance to the project

In the framework of the RAMSAT partnership learning experiences and inspired by the good practice presented by the Spanish Partner (Provincial Government of Teruel), namely the good practice **Museum passport in the County Council of Jiloca** (<https://www.interregeurope.eu/policylearning/good-practices/item/5702/museum-passport-in-the-county-council-of-jiloca/>).

The good practice's main objective is to offer visitors who pass through Peracense Castle relevant information about the history of the historic place and the possibility to take a similar route through museums and sites of other towns in the region.

For this reason, the design and implementation of a museum passport in the territory was proposed, to promote an internal flow of visits between the different existing museum and site spaces.

With this action and taking into consideration the lessons learned, CIMAA aims to complement Action 1 of the present action plan (Promotion of the mountain areas of S. Mamede Natural Park through the creation of a new intermunicipal touristic product: electric mountain bikes) by introducing another supporting tourist product in the region: the "Bonelli's Wings" Passport.

By this, action 2 will contribute to the improvement of the policy instrument addressed (Alto Alentejo Tourism Operational Plan and Alto Alentejo Marketing Plan) by improving its management and its content.

The improvement of Alto Alentejo Tourism Operational Plan will be accomplished through the improvement of a specific type of action and through the involvement of the stakeholders in this action taking into consideration that this action will function as an example of cooperation between entities and will be a learning example to be replicated also for other actions. This will make it possible to improve Alto Alentejo Tourism Operational Plan since the learnings in terms of management and implementation will be integrated in the Alto Alentejo Tourism Operational Plan monitoring and revision.

Nature of the action

Implementing this action will enable offering tourists who request electric bicycles information regarding the region and municipalities involved and the possibility to continue and to cycle in other routes/cycle paths.

This way, besides promoting the practice of sports in the region, regional endogenous products and cultural tourism will also be promoted.

This is due to the fact that, in addition to acting as a passport, this document will include a summary of each cycle route and information about the municipalities involved (with additional information in a QR Code, in order to be permanently updated).

Thus, CIMAA will develop the graphic design/printing of the passport, which will work as follows: whoever does a route/tour in each one of the four municipalities integrated in action one is entitled to have a stamp in the passport, given in the Tourism Office where the bicycle was requested. Whoever gets the four stamps in the Passport is entitled to a promotional "tourist gift" from the territory (an endogenous product).

This way, besides promoting the practice of sports in the region, endogenous products will be promoted (support for local producers) and also fostering cultural tourism.

CIMAA will develop all the design and contents of the passport and will also implement specific and dedicated communications actions.

Stakeholders involved

CIMAA will take the leadership of the implementation of this action in cooperation with the following stakeholders:

- ERTA (Alentejo Regional Tourism Authority) - as promoters/responsible for the cycling centres;
- ARPTA - Alentejo Promotion Office - as the promoter of the initiative abroad;
- Arronches, Castelo de Vide, Marvão and Portalegre Municipalities - as supporters of the action one.

The main stakeholder's role will be related to the assistance in the development of the action. Also, the stakeholders will have a special role in what regards communication and dissemination regarding implementation and results of the action.

Timeframe

12 months, and to be available after this period, as it is an action contributing to the promotion/dissemination of the region.



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Activities	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8	M9	M10	M11	M12
Development of the passport design	■											
Development of the passport contents		■	■									
Passport printing				■								
Passport presentations					■	■						
Development of the promotion and publicity campaign						■	■	■	■	■	■	■

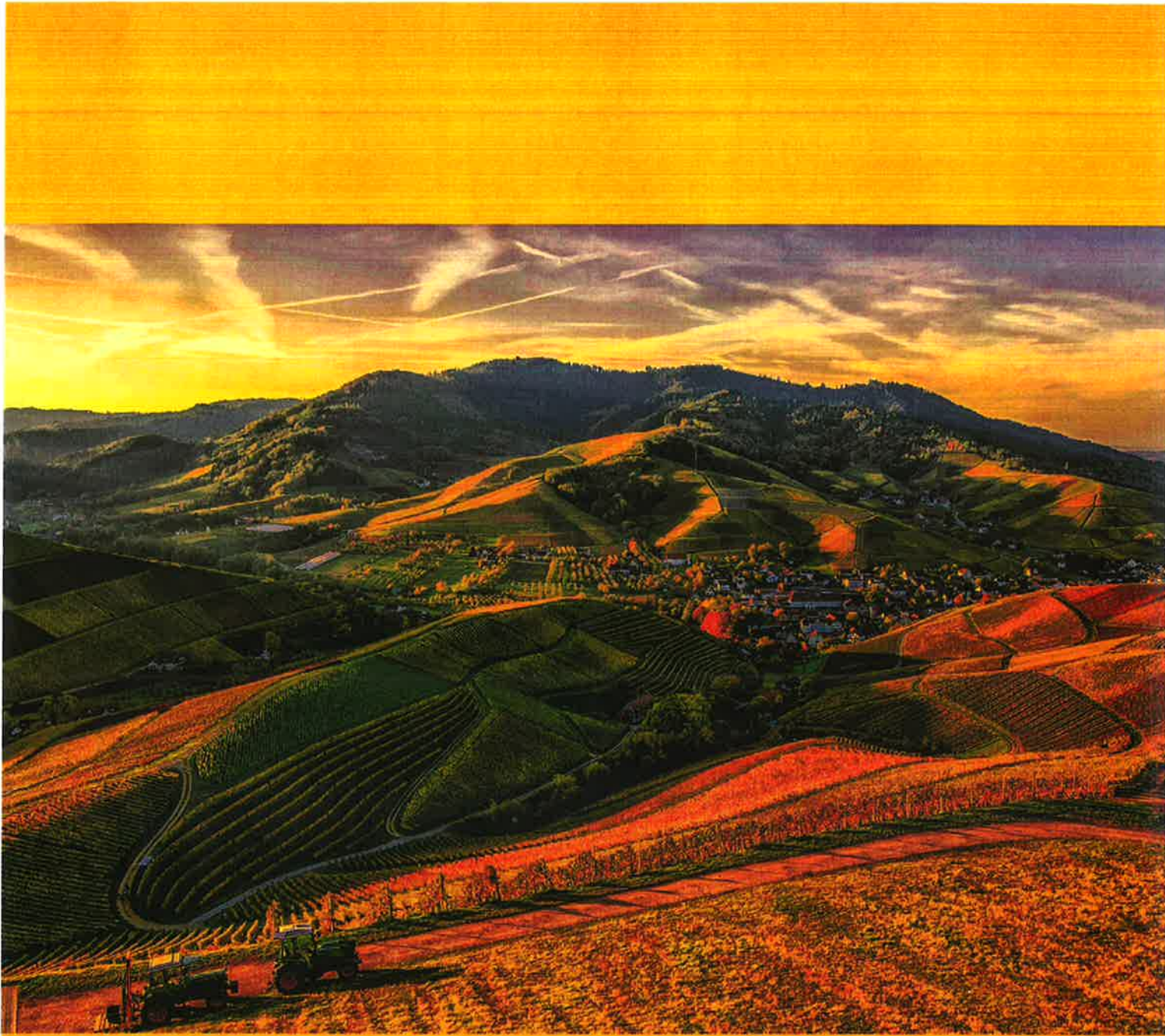
Costs

Costs will be related to human resources and promotion and dissemination costs and the budget will be around 4.500,00€.

Funding sources

CIMAA’s own resources, namely in what regards human resources.

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Date: May 2022 – Final

Name of the organisation: Alto ALENTEJO Intermunicipal Community – CIMAA

Signature: