

**Internship Report:**  
***Sustainable Tourism Certification in Tour Operators***



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**Internship Report:**  
***Sustainable Tourism Certification in Tour Operators***

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Internship Report conducted under the supervision of Professor Fernanda Maria Fernandes Oliveira and Professor Sofia Eurico

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## **Abstract**

Sustainable tourism is a current trend aiming at diversifying and preserving the global tourism industry by involving social responsibility, strong commitment to nature and native integration into any tourist operation or development, which means meeting the needs of the present tourist, whilst protecting and enhancing future opportunities. In a world of overbooking, habitat destruction and ever converging identical tourist products this concept has become a need to be achieved. Many companies have reached towards certifications, for a standardized process in order to best accomplished its goals.

Thus, following the internship at Ytravel and involvement in the Biosphere certification process, were chosen to achieve the main objective of this report, which is understand the role of companies in the tour operator level, how they interact with the remaining sectors and their impact, how does the certification impact their protocols and processes and how in turn that effect can affect the rest of the tourism industry.

As a means of self-regulation and when correlated with the sustainability concept, certification can be a great way not only of implementing regulated processes to attain a more sustainable system, but also a better way of convey/marketing it to the tourist. As major players in the tourism industry and indeed as collating players between the various tourism sectors and the tourists, tour operator level companies have the market power to drive sustainability further into the industry. This report analyses these concepts, possibilities and processes in order to make a sense of the reality behind the theory.

**Key-words:** sustainable tourism, certification, tour operator, Biosphere

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## Introduction

The internship was developed as part of the Internship / Project Course of the Master in Sustainable Tourism Management at the School of Tourism and Maritime Technology (ESTM) of the Polytechnic Institute of Leiria (IPL), beginning on November 12, 2018 and ending on the August 30, 2019. During this period of time, we performed the duties within the several brands of Ytravel, Lda, in order to establish an understanding of the company as a whole, as well as following and orientating the work involved into gaining the sustainable certification Biosphere.

The general objectives outlined for optional part of the Master in Sustainable Tourism Program was to not only give valuable insights into the professional and industry/oriented side of tourism in practice, but also to allow for a critical analysis of the company and how it stands against sustainable tourism. This was achieved through the work performed in obtaining the Biosphere certification, allowing for an investigation and insight on what it means, how it correlates and achieves that sustainability goal, and what be the impacts of said certifications on the tourism industry, particularly on a tour operator level. This was done not only by applying the knowledge acquired throughout the course, but also by acquiring knowledge and developing skills during the internship: by picking a tour operator, whose brands compose several sectors of the tourism industry, it allowed for a wider more comprehensive understanding of how these sectors play their part in the supply chain of the industry, how the connections in that supply chain are created, developed, sustainable and ultimately work together to bring the whole product to the tourist, and the most important part, how certification on this level impacts not just these sectors but the industry as a whole

To better understand the ideas and work, plus critical analysis performed during the internship, this report is divided into two chapters:

In Chapter I, we will take a theoretical approach that seeks to substantiate and support, through various bibliographic references, the work we have done in the context of work, which is explained in Chapter II. Thus, this first chapter will outline the concept of sustainable tourism, how certification is used to achieve it, how certification plays a role in

the tour operator level and what possible impact this collaboration can have on all the other sectors and in the industry of tourism as a whole.

In chapter II we will proceed with the practical approach, based on the theoretical foundations developed throughout chapter I, in order to show the work done in the work context. This experience includes a set of activities developed at the company where the curricular internship - Ytravel took place. In this context, we will begin by characterizing and analysing the curricular internship, with Ytravel and its underlying business areas - Portugal A2Z Walking & Biking, Bikotel and A2Z Tourism Consulting, as an example of a wide-reaching tour operator level company. Then we will make a detailed description of the certification process, how it was developed by Biosphere, the parameters established, changes made, as well as the indications/recommendation for the future collaboration.

After the contextualization of the work, plus the detailed description of the latter, there will be an analysis to combine all those ideas with the practical achievements. Firstly the company and work in general – how did the work performed correlate with the study area and report idea; what was the company's policies, protocol and work was before the certification - was it already trying to achieve sustainability; then on the certification and process – what were the requirements, where they a good representation of the sustainable concept, and how they affected the company's policies and work; and lastly on how both could impact each other, as well as the other tourism sectors/industry.

Finally, we will conclude the report by giving a summary of the achievements done, and how the theoretical ideas and the reality came together, as well as recommendations for the future not just of the company itself, but also of these collaborations of certifications / tour operator in general. In short, the final objective of this internship report will be to portray the experience and the knowledge acquired, leaving also my improvement proposal to be implemented in the company's sustainable role in the future, in order to attract achieve it as faithfully as possible.

## **Chapter I – Theoretical Framework**

Understanding the theoretical themes that involve the scope of the internship and the subjects under study in the present work is extremely important for the pursuit of the established objectives. Thus, the bibliographic review is fundamental to better understand the evolution of knowledge on the subject in question.

The Theoretical Framework is divided into 5 parts: the sustainable tourism concept, certification in the tourism industry, the role of certification in sustainable tourism; the certification on a tour operator level and finally a clarification on what the Biosphere certification is. Throughout this chapter a theoretical approach is made with the objective of substantiating the work we did in the work context and which is exposed in the following chapter.

### **1. Tour Operators – What they are and what they do in the Tourism System**

The tourism industry is amongst the most significant worldwide economic forces, producing significant, immediate and both indirect and direct financial benefits, even being classified by the United Nations as a means in ‘the war on poverty’. It is also a very particular industry; one could say an industry comprised of different industries. Tourism is a coordination-intensive industry in which different service products are joined together to form a final tourism product, kind of like an interconnected supply chain, that can be defined as network of tourism organizations involved in a series of diverse activities, ranging from providing an entire spectrum of components of tourism products in the tourism region, which includes both the private and public sector, and whose relationships evolve both vertically and horizontally. It is a complex and intricate industry which has been steadily become more and more so, with the increase in sales, travels, agents, customers’ expectations and demands, etc. throughout the years. Figure 1 (Sigala, 2008) demonstrates an example of how the “tourist product” is made, what connections are necessary and how the flows between different companies and sectors connect.

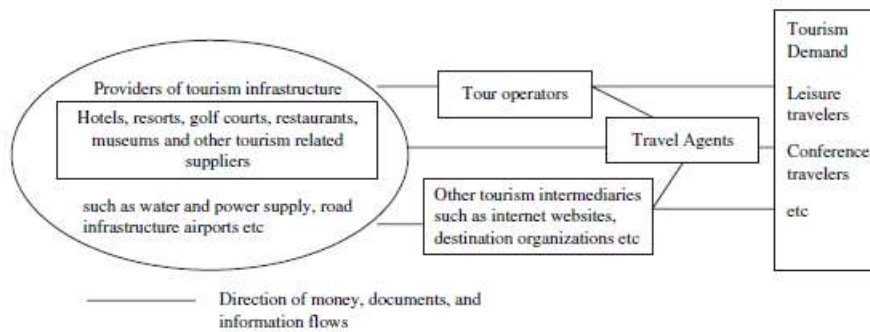


Fig. 1. Tourism supply chain.

A peculiarity for tourism is that the different components of the tourism service—accommodation, transport, excursions and entertainment—can be bought separately directly from their producers, without being necessarily linked together. This means there is a tremendous number of service suppliers, trying to accommodate separate, individual requests from an even greater number of tourists (Tepelus, 2005).

With the industry booming and with more and more people wanting and affording to travel, there was a niche for the development of a particular step in that chain – Tour Operators and a new trend of mass tourism. According to the Cambridge dictionary a tour operator is “a company that makes arrangements for travel and places to stay, often selling these together as package holidays” (Tour Operator, 2019). This concept can however, be traced to the late 1800s, with Thomas Cook and the development of the railways: he saw an opportunity to popularize and democratize the industry by allowing the lower middle and even working classes to travel, using targeted tours (Räikkönen, 2014). Tour operators became responsible for the first phase of mass tourism in the 1920s in the US, and then in 1950s in Europe, which were the previews of the 1980s and current mass tourism – no longer just a domestic phenomenon directed towards popular resorts or locals, but a global epidemic. Nowadays tourism consumption can even be separated into institutionalized (group package tours) and non-institutionalized tourism (individual travel), with tour operators essentially buying tourism services directly from providers, arrange them into attractive packages/products and then sell them to customers either directly or even through other retail partners or even bigger tour operators.

Since, on the contrary to tourists, they can buy in bulk and with frequency, they have a high purchasing power, being able to negotiate cheaper arrangements, exactly due to those economies of scale, which they then pass to their customers.

Essentially the tour operator's role is to provide the best possible prerequisites for the travel – attractive idea and product, while arranging a successful service process and then during the holiday providing a reliable, functioning service system. So even though the tour operators bundle the different products to create what could be considered a single tourist product/experience, the clients are still using the services offered by the multiple individual service providers. Their major activity is exactly that, the bulk purchase of products (e.g. accommodation, transportation, excursions), their bundling in tour packages and the latter's distribution–sale in a single package price that is lower than the prices' sum of the package's products. They have a central position in the supply chain by linking demand and supply, tour operators play a crucial role in promoting, distributing products and facilitating information sharing in tourism. In today's world, with the boom in the industry, the access to multiple accommodation (as well as other service) options particularly in the internet for independent travels, sometimes their activities can be a vital part in the survival of small and medium tourism suppliers (SMTS), since, due to their limited resources and competencies, SMTS cannot promote and distribute their products. In terms of destination they are also a source of promotion and local economic development by using and advertising local products and companies.

## **2. The Sustainable Tourism Concept**

The recent boom in the tourism industry has brought to light that some of the effects of this growing industry have become more negative and far from being properly managed, with for example, an increment in waste production, greenhouse effects, and a decline in the life quality of the nearby communities, besides the possible loss of character due to the guest volume and outside impacts, among others. "Mass tourism" as it has become known, due to the hordes of tourists in the last decades has given rise to upward pressure of prices for consumer goods, land and housing, and may take a disproportionate part of public budgets for the building of physical infrastructure, such as roads, airports, and harbours.

All these negative effects have had a hard impact on destinations, local communities and industry companies, and they threatened to end of some them all together.

The roots of sustainable tourism can be traced to the wider issue of global sustainable development, which first came to public attention during the 1980s with the creation of the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) (Jarvis et al, 2010). However, as this idea of sustainability grew, so did tourism, and its negatives effects. Sustainable tourism can be conceptualized by its definition as “Environmentally responsible travel and visitation to natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features, both past and present) in a way that promotes conservation, has a low visitor impact, and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local peoples.” (Pforr, 2001).

It stands in contrast with conventional tourism by deliberately planning from the “beginning” to benefit local residents, respect local culture, conserve natural resources, and educate both tourists and local residents. Sustainable tourism can produce the same profits as conventional tourism, but more of the profits stay with the local community, and the region’s natural resources and culture can be protected. In order to conceptualized it, three key components where select, which also give it it’s “triple bottom line” (Pforr, 2001):

1. Environmentally it has a low impact on natural resources - minimizes damage to the environment (flora, fauna, habitats, water, living marine resources, energy use, contamination, etc.) and ideally tries to benefit the environment.
2. Socially and culturally it respects local cultures and traditions, by involving local stakeholders (individuals, communities, tour operators, government institutions) in all phases of planning, development, and monitoring, while also trying to educate local stakeholders about their roles and how to do they more sustainably.
3. Economically it contributes to the economic well-being of the community, generating sustainable and equitable income for local communities and as many other stakeholders as possible.

Although these are meant to serve as a guideline to what sustainable tourism should be and follow, tourism is an intricate industry, and it has become apparent throughout the years that sustainability cannot be implemented as easily as it is for others industries. Intense competition forces companies to cluster and cooperate in supply chains in order to enhance flexibility and performance, while the multidimensionality and the variety of tourism packages (e.g. transportation, accommodation, events) needs collaboration and cooperation between competitors, suppliers, customers, and/or firms in order for a destination to survive and become sustainable (Sigala, 2008).

In theory it is easy to postulate how this can be achieved, and what the best methods could be used to do it. However, practice and reality are different - the different goals and priorities of suppliers and operators, the low-cost focus in European markets and the complexity of the industry itself just compounds difficulty after difficulty.

Barriers and difficulties towards a more sustainable tourism industry include: financial cost of sustainability activities (perceived or real); resistance to change; lack of qualified staff and training programs; a lack of understanding and the inability to plan thinking about the bigger picture (the whole industry not just one company) (Baddeley and Font, 2011). Recent phenomena such as climate change, a hypermobile society, and new models of relationships through social media and the shared economy add new layers of complexity to tourism research and practice. And slowly there is an increased understanding of the sustainable concept's limitations, which has led to a wide agreement that societal transitions to sustainable patterns are multifaceted processes with multi-layered and interconnected aspects crease.

Despite the relative youth of tourism, the sector can be credited with moving quickly from its initial focus on economic benefits to a position of recognizing its wider sustainability implications (Budeanu et al, 2016). It has become an established part of corporate and governmental agendas, with some destinations and companies already having successfully implemented environmental management systems, and it is becoming central to the industry's future.

## **2.1 The role of Tour Operators in Sustainable Tourism**

In perspective, tour operators can have a big part to play in implementing sustainability in the tourism industry; significantly influence and promote sustainable tourism development due to their central distribution role and capability to direct tourists to destinations and suppliers. Tour operators can greatly influence the volume and direction of tourism flows; integrate and affect attitudes and practices of numerous tourism suppliers and stakeholders; and lead to widespread benefits due to their large size (Sigala, 2008).

As part of the supply chain of tourism, they can influence their distribution channels (e.g. travel agents and reps) to fairly distribute tourists to several regions and local suppliers. They can also promote and trigger suppliers' actions towards the implementation and co-development of sustainable tourism SCM practices, e.g. by contracting and including in tour packages, only suppliers complying with sustainable standards. Due to their direct contact in the consumer, they are also in an excellent position to educate and make travellers aware about the environmental and socio-cultural sensitivities of the destination, the potential impacts of their consumption, and the preventive measures and behaviour they should adopt for avoiding negative impacts.

They have a sometimes-negative image in the industry, accused of being always economically driven, pushing suppliers to the breaking point, resting the sole responsibility of regulating the destination on local companies and authorities, without acknowledging their own impact (Wijk and Persoon, 2006).

In concordance with the latter comment, studies have shown that tour operators are often less susceptible to sustainability measures and their implementation, mentioning hindrances such as tough market competition; lack of means to apply them; lack of means to enforce sustainable measures with the rest of the players, more specifically with suppliers and an absence of clear market demand for more sustainable tourist products – Although consumers often say they want more sustainability and even could be more susceptible to

eco-label and sustainable certifications brands, at the same time, and in particular for tour operators, tourists tend to shop around for the lowest possible price (with consumer loyalty not so often seen at this level) not considering sustainability as one of the criteria of choice.

The Dutch tour operator Holland International (part of TUI) stopped offering sustainable tourism packages because of a lack of demand (Wijk and Persoon, 2006). However, tour operators also need to understand their role and responsibility for tourism sustainability, because of the severe impacts assigned to their core business (mass tourism), i.e. the assembly of standardised low-cost tourism packages appealing to tourists' masses travelling to specific well-known geographical areas.

Examples of tour operators' sustainable activities include: policies for the recycling of brochures; providing customers with information leaflets; performing beach-cleaning activities; informing consumers on sustainability issues; sponsor local projects; and collaborate with non-governmental organizations (NGO's) and local government (Wijk and Persoon, 2006).

One can consider their main areas of action to be (Tepelus, 2005):

- Information: Both to tourist and even to their staff and partners. Materials such as leaflets, travel brochures, environmental reports, etc. can be produced by themselves, and/or in collaboration with consultants, scientific organizations, NGOs, academia, etc., which can incorporate information regarding the destination and sustainable practices that can/should happen.
- Education: It is key as it is the only productive way of effectively changing behaviour. Tour operators should educate their customers and/ or staff, through various methods such as courses, training seminars and workshops etc., designed with the purpose of changing behaviour towards less environmentally negative practices.

- “Tour operator-tailored” environmental criteria: It can be engaged into defining environmental performance criteria for themselves and their partners. Specific measures (usually related to water and energy savings) are being implemented, and the results are monitored on a continuous basis. This information can be available to the potential customers at the time of purchase, allowing the tourists to make an informed and responsible decision regarding their choice of accommodation.
- Environmental management work: implementing an environmental management system (EMS). Furthermore, it is only in exceptional cases that tour operators with improved organizational ability have reported pursuing the EMS certification according to the ISO 14001 standard.
- Environmental or social investments: Setting aside funds for environmental or social activities is particularly difficult in the tour operating business, due to the operating margins of profit, which are extremely low. Specifically, the environmental or social investments refer to grants, additional fees charged per tourist, and earmarked funds for projects related to conservation, promotion of local development projects, ecosystem preservation, etc.

Tour operators are a great tool to start implementing sustainability practices in the wider tourism industry, and can implement certain activities that other players in the industry can't. However, while tour operators are generally aware about the potentially negative consequences of their activities, they are mostly reluctant to act towards diminishing them, unless immediate positive economic outcomes can be anticipated. These outcomes can be either direct such as saving of costs (such as energy, water, etc.) or of an indirect, but not of less significant value, such as improved public image. Efforts in this direction should nevertheless be given proper support and recognition.

### 3. Certification's role in the Tourism Industry

Defined, by the Cambridge Dictionary (Certification, 2019), as “the process of earning an official document, or the act of providing an official document, as proof that something has happened or been done”, certifications and their mechanisms are supposed to guarantee, through auditing procedures, the compliance of organizational practices or accounts with specific standards. It is most commonly depicted as a formal, objective and rational process sustained by rigorous standards and institutional mechanisms. In the tourism industry certifications have been used, in the early days to ensure quality, which in the tourism industry typically consists of three parts: product quality; service quality and management quality. Certifications were used as an external consultancy that help companies streamline these three parts, in order to become more efficient, to rediscovered what quality means to them are they clients and to develop a vision/philosophy of how they can to be perceived, what is their selling proposition and how can this all be achieved by creating structures and processes that ensure the goals are reached and monitored.

One of the most common and well-known worldwide, used for a variety of businesses. certifications are the ISO certifications. ISO certification aims to produce trust, legitimacy and accountability about the extent to which certain standards are appropriately established and followed by the organizations that adopt them. By 2008, nearly a million ISO 9001 certificates on quality management and 130,000 ISO 14001 certificates on environmental management had been issued across the world (Boiral and Gendron, 2011). Because organizations must renew their certification every 3 years, hundreds of thousands of ISO audits are carried out every year. Further, since the launch of ISO 9000 in 1987, ISO certification mechanisms have been increasingly structured, professionalized and codified (ISO, 2002, 2006). In particular, standards on auditing (ISO 19011) and professionalism of certification bodies (ISO 17041) have been developed. These standards apply to ISO 9001 and ISO 14001, which have become reference models for implementing certifiable management systems, including in the area of sustainability.

### **3.1 Certification's role in Sustainable Tourism**

Adjusting theory to reality has a challenge, due in part to the complexities of the industry, in part due to the different wants and needs of its players. Just having concepts in academia is not enough, they need to be implemented in the industries themselves. However, governmental regulations stimulating the private sector to improve its social responsible behaviour hardly exist, with the European Council being reluctant to design compulsory CSR regulation, actively promoting the voluntary adoption of CSR practices by firms instead, and few international initiatives provide the industry with suitable support in the implication of the sustainable concepts into their particular work and system. So, as the simple ideas would not lead to sustainability, the idea of having auditors certify tourism businesses as sustainable began to take hold.

They have been proposed has basically a way to connect the academic goals to the industry (Geoffrey, et al, 2016). Certifications develop standards, based on the academic data and concepts, to reach the specified goals, and then apply a formal, objective and rational process sustained by rigorous standards and institutional mechanisms in order to achieve them, whose implementation follows a rigorous and effective approach to making certified organizations more sustainable in their management and more accountable for their impact. A more direct and straightforward option for businesses.

Also, a consumer demand for more transparency and demonstrations of change and positive impacts, and as a means to distinguish legitimate sustainable businesses then their "greenwashed" counterparts, as lead companies to adopt this reliable and markable processes in order to in a way, "kill two birds in one stone": become more sustainable in their management and product, and appease and please the consumers. But what criteria and standards should be applied?

With more than 100 global sustainable tourism certification schemes already in place by 2002 (Medina, 2005), stakeholders have called for an international accreditation body to regulate such schemes. And although global standards would increase the legitimacy and impact of certification in the industry, efforts to establish working agreements on a global scale may conflict with the integration of local perspectives regarding equity and participation - national certification schemes are likely to produce more concrete,

measurable criteria that are more sensitive to the issues of local people. So in other to “accommodate specific local priorities, as well as the need for standardising certification criteria across programmes and national borders” (Medina, 2005), there should be a recommendation that this process should be shaped by internationally recognised guidelines on the required steps for successful certification, in order to prevent unfair practices, corruption, or the profit motive from overtaking local certification initiatives, but be developed locally via stakeholder processes that fully involve local communities and companies.

Some certification schemes such as the Eco-management and Audit Scheme and the International Standards Organization certifications have been adopted by large hotel chains and the cruise industry, with more and more companies joining (Geoffrey, et al, 2016). Certifications have emerged as non-government, market-based interventions to promote sustainability by encouraging the preferential consumption of goods and services from companies that adhere to high social and environmental standards in their production – and represent an increasingly important strategy for encouraging the sustainable production of goods and services. They provide many benefits such as helping business becoming more environmentally and culturally aware; Reduce water usage and improve waste management, which in part lead to economic benefits, such as lower energy, water and waste bills; marketing benefits, with increased media exposure and market appeal; etc. (Jarvis et al, 2010).

However, some are difficult for smaller companies to join, as certifications can create excessive entry barriers by raising the standards, and therefore cost, of applying for certification, so that the businesses that can afford to be involved in designing and implementing many of the certification programs are very likely to be transnational corporations, potentially disadvantaging small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that are particularly prevalent in supplying tourism. In particularly for SME’s besides the high cost of adhering to strict environmental standards, a lack of time available to owner-directors to pursue the process, limited knowledge and awareness of the scheme, a perceived high level of bureaucracy, and a lack of personal environmental expertise have all been highlighted as key reasons why they often fail to adopt sustainable tourism practices (Jarvis et al, 2010).

Certification schemes have also been criticised in the past for focusing too much on hotel or ecotourism providers, and for being weighted too heavily in favour of environmental benefit because they are more important to tourists (which is not what sustainability should be, it is a balance between the three key components, where one cannot take solo lead in relationship to the others). Research has also shown that more stringent certifications provide relatively little increase in consumer utility (Geoffrey, et al, 2016).

So sustainable certification faces many challenges in the implementation in the tourism industry, from the accreditation of standard criteria that fits both global concepts and local perspectives; to their adaptation to fit other tourism providers and agents, not just accommodation and transport providers as well as the general lack of willingness to change from both tourists and tourism companies, coupled with a lack of supportive funding, poor consumer knowledge, poor marketing support, and their perceived inflexibility by agents of the industry.

### **3.2 Certification on a Tour Operator level**

Current research offers very little in terms of the application of certification on a tour operator level. Probably because for the most part certifications are apply to service quality, management business, which in the tourism industry usually falls in the accommodation and transportation sector. Although it appears that some tour operator companies used certification schemes like ISO, they tend to be bigger companies, and the latter tends to be applied internally, as a method of making the administration of the company more efficient, not sometime that connects it to the tourism industries as a whole.

However, tour operators are essential to complete the “sustainable tourism cycle”, as it can be seen on Figure 1, an important connecting part of the supply chain of the industry. And certifications seem to be the way forward in regards to implementing sustainability in tourism industry companies, representing an increasingly important strategy for encouraging the sustainable production of goods and services’, not least because they are designed specifically to encourage consumers to buy goods and services from companies that adhere to high social and environmental standards in their production.

But the vast majority of certification programmes in tourism either focus on the concept of 'sustainable tourism' applied broadly to the industry, or are way too specific to suppliers such as hotels and transport companies. Tour operators are a more complex management system than the latter normal candidates, with many more external services and connections, that are not completely controlled by the tour operator.

Another challenge comes from the fact that in order for certifications to connect the academic goals to the industry and to usher a more sustainable tourism industry, they need to be able to implement the same criteria and standards to all the sectors and players alike, in order to achieve a coherent direction. As aforementioned although global criteria would be harder to specify, there is still need to be a set criterion that allows each company and each sector to be connected by the same concepts, to be implementing activities under similar ideas and goals. But with the industry having such different management systems and company structures, how are those criteria supposed to fit all?

So, questions arise on how can certifications can be applied at the tour operator level, and what are the general goals and possibilities this could bring not only for the sustainability development of tour operators, but the whole industry itself. This report aims exactly to provide some insight into those questions, combining the theoretical framework of sustainability of the tourism industry, with their need for certifications and the role an important player like a tour operator can have in latter's development.

### **3.3 Biosphere: an example of Sustainable Tourism certification applied to tour operators**

The BIOSPHERE© certification is granted by the Responsible Tourism Institute (RTI), an independent body created in 1995 with the aim of promoting sustainable development actions and programs in tourist destinations and companies. (Biosphere, 2019) They develop sustainable certifications to guarantee an adequate long-term balance between the economic, socio-cultural and environmental dimensions of a Destination, reporting significant benefits for a tourism entity, society and the environment. While ensuring compliance with a series of requirements based on the principles of sustainability and continuous improvement, this certification supposedly offers the opportunity for a company

to design their own products/services with a new model of non-aggressive tourism, satisfying the current needs of customers and users, without compromising future generations. On their website they advertised it is a unique approach that integrates and unites tourism companies, destinations, tourists and tourist communication.

It appears there are two overarching objectives in the RTI agenda, that have become the two general ideas for the Biosphere certification:

1. To guide the sustainable development of the tourism industry through the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other guidelines and precepts on sustainable development promoted by the United Nations;
  - The Biosphere standard is therefore the adaptation to tourism of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), through the analysis and indicators of the UNWTO, Global Compact, the EU indicators and the criteria of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC).
  
2. To engage all tourism stakeholders and the general public and raise awareness on the importance of improving the contribution of tourism to sustainability.
  - A necessity in order to have the full impact, is an open communication and sharing of information with all the local stakeholders.

Their standards are meant to follow the general concept that tourism sustainability consists of considering the current and future repercussions on the economic, socio-cultural and environmental aspects when designing a tourism system. In this way, it is possible to satisfy the current needs of tourists and host regions, without compromising future generations, protecting and guaranteeing the conservation of resources for long-term use and enjoyment. For this, Biosphere has created the following standards to guide any entity that wants to develop its activity under the principles of sustainability in all its dimensions, promoting among its customers, users and workers their awareness and the adoption of responsible behaviour. It also provides their services for an array of entities in the tourism industry, ranging from Tourism Destinations, offering help to local tourist management; to Accommodations, such as hotels, campsites and holiday rentals; Tourists sites and Centres (Museums; Convention centres, theme parks; golf; shopping centres and stores; restaurants, and events and general tourist sites); Tour Operators; as well as entities that

offer sports, nature or cultural experiences in the field of Active Tourism and Adventures and Transport companies.

However, although their standards follow a general concept, mean to unify the different entities or organizations within the same ideas, always within 5 main ideals: Climate Change; Environment; Social; Economy and Culture, each of them connecting to specific SDGs; For each entity it has however a different purpose attached to it. As an example although for both a Tourism Destination and Hotels it has a Climate ideal, which is connected to the SDGs 7, the goal of affordable and clean energy, for a Tourism Destination it interprets the latter's activities to tailor what they should for this goal, which in this case are three initiatives that aim at encompassing the whole of the destination and its companies:

1. Develop programs and initiatives for the efficient use of energy in the destination's tourism sector.
2. Commit to the use of renewable energy sources within the destination and the industry, including self-production, procurement of green energy, passive systems in construction, as well as proactive regulatory frameworks and incentives.
3. Develop awareness campaigns, guides, and training and information resources on energy saving for tourists, visitors and the tourism industry of the destination.

On the other hand, for Hotels, it is because a lot more specific since it is a business, which should have more specific activities to diminish their impact, resulting in two initiatives:

1. The responsible use of energy by workers and users/clients of the entity is promoted and requested directly. The entity develops measures of saving and maximum water efficiency.
2. The entity has analysed its energy consumption data and, consequently, defined reduction goals for this consumption, as well as monitoring indicators.

As it can be seen, Biosphere uses its globally accepted guidelines and then adapts for the particular touristic actor. For the purposes of this report, we shall focus on the initiatives particular to Tour Operators (Biosphere, 2019):

### **Climate Change:**

- ❖ *SDG 7. Affordable and Clean Energy:* “The responsible use of energy by workers and users/clients of the entity is promoted and requested directly. The entity develops measures of saving and maximum water efficiency. The entity has analysed its energy consumption data and, consequently, defined reduction goals for this consumption, as well as monitoring indicators.”
  
- ❖ *SDG 13. Climate Action:* “As a goal to fight against Climate Change, the entity measures its carbon footprint and shares and informs the user, collaborators, and workers. The entity promotes the use of public or low emissions transports in the destination by offering its customers, prior to their arrival to the entity, up-to-date and accurate information on the available itineraries and alternative means of transport in the destination.”

### **Environment:**

- ❖ *SDG 6. Clean Water and Sanitation:* “The responsible use of water by workers and users/clients of the entity is promoted and requested directly. The entity develops measures of saving and maximum water efficiency. The entity has analysed its water consumption data and, consequently, defined reduction goals for this consumption, as well as monitoring indicators.”
  
- ❖ *SDG 12. Responsible Consumption and Production:* “The entity applies measures to minimize the use of disposable products and consumables. The entity has a sustainable purchasing and subcontracting policy, which includes criteria and requirements related to social, cultural and environmental factors (local suppliers, ecological, zero-mile, fair trade, certified and recognized products and services, etcetera). The entity foments selective collection of its waste. It maximizes recycling (including food waste) and the proper disposal of the waste prior to its treatment.”

- ❖ *SDG 14. Protection of Aquatic Ecosystems:* “If the development of the activity of the entity involves direct contact with aquaculture and/or marine resources: The entity has information and awareness resources to increase the degree of knowledge and respect for aquatic and/or marine ecosystems available to users and customers.”
- ❖ *SDG 15. Biodiversity and Protection of Terrestrial Ecosystems:* “If the development of the activity of the entity involves direct contact with terrestrial resources: The entity has information and awareness resources to increase the degree of knowledge and respect for terrestrial systems available to users and customers. If the development of the Experience involves, partially or entirely, the visit, exposure or contact of plant and/or animal species: Trained personnel applies measures to guarantee the correct treatment of the species and avoid the introduction of invasive species.”

#### **Social:**

- ❖ *SDG 1. End of Poverty:* “The entity informs and/or involves its clients/users in the social campaigns and projects in which it participates.”
- ❖ *SDG 3. Good Health and Well-being:* “There is a protocol defined and known by all employees to inform and respond to possible emergency situations. The users/clients and workers are encouraged to adopt healthy life practices (physical exercise, healthy eating, cycling, etc.).”
- ❖ *SDG 4. Quality Education:* “Sustainability training and awareness-raising resources are offered to workers and customers/users of the entity.”
- ❖ *SDG 5. Gender Equality:* “Non-discriminatory language usage guidelines are applied in all the informative and promotional material of the entity.”
- ❖ *SDG 10. Reduced Inequalities:* “Universal accessibility measures have been adopted in the cases where the physical, structural and legal conditions allow for the provision of quality services.”
- ❖ *SDG 17. Partnerships for the Goals:* “The entity participates in networks or collaborative projects for the exchange of experiences and knowledge in

sustainability with other entities or organizations. The agents and suppliers that collaborate or provide services to the entity are requested to adopt a sustainability commitment, in line with the commitment of the entity.”

### **Economy:**

- ❖ *SDG 8. Decent Work and Economic Growth:* “The entity develops measures to support local entrepreneurship. Decent work conditions are guaranteed, and work-life balance measures are applied to the employees of the entity. Priority is given to the incorporation of local agents and services to constitute the value chain of the tourist experience (guides, accommodations, restaurants, transport, etc.).”
- ❖ *SDG 9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure:* “The entity prioritizes innovation during the development and creation of its activities and services.”

### **Culture:**

- ❖ *SDG 11. Sustainable Cities and Communities:* “The users of the entity are provided with responsible behavior guidelines that they should assume regarding the environment and the local community, thus favoring a respectful attitude towards the Destination. The users of the entity are provided with information on the environment, the values and the socio-cultural identity of the Destination, and its natural and cultural heritage. If the entity has catering services or commercializes food products: The entity includes elements of the local gastronomy in the offer of catering and/or commercialization of food products and/or provides information on restaurants of traditional/local food of the Destination. If the entity has spaces for the development of activities related to visual or performing arts: The entity prioritizes the participation of local artists for the development of cultural activities in their spaces and facilities.”
- ❖ *SDG 16. Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions:* “The entity publicly manifests its fight against any form of abuse, exploitation or harassment, particularly to vulnerable

groups and minorities. There is a Responsible Tourism Policy documented, approved, accessible and translated into the most common languages of the users and customers of the entity. This document is permanently communicated to all employees, workers, suppliers, and customers of the entity, as well as to any interested party. There is person/s responsible for applying the sustainable management system of the entity. These personnel receive guidance and information periodically on their functions and responsibilities. The user is permanently informed of the sustainability practices and initiatives developed by the entity and its sustainable commitment towards the Destination in which it is located. This information is published in easily accessible and visible places. The promotional messages of the entity contain clear, updated and reliable information. The entity periodically collects the recommendations and suggestions of its employees and uses this information to improve the provision of its services.”

As a certification they claim to bring multiple advantages to their clients such as:

- Increase efficiency: Increase efficiency by reducing environmental impact and costs and, improving profitability in the medium and long-term.
- Improve Positioning: Consumers increasingly demand new non-aggressive tourist models. Position your entity as a sustainable business and communicate your commitment with the Biosphere seal.
- Online Certification: As a member of Biosphere, you will receive tools and support to manage an online certification, with personalized attention and a compilation of a history of reports, recommendations, and evaluations.

Besides the certification process, Biosphere also provides several other complementary services, in order to help any company on path to sustainability. These include: The Creation and Development of Tourist Brands; Carbon Footprint Tracking; Biosphere Strategic Plan for Sustainable Tourism; Tourism Product Development; Tourism Marketing and Dynamization plans; Sustainability Diagnosis of a Tourist Destination; Sustainability Training Program.

## **Chapter II – Characterization and Analysis of the Internship**

Knowing that the production of knowledge is associated with observation and experimentation, it is essential to continue this report with the characterization and analysis of the results obtained in the scope of practical activities developed in the curricular stage.

Thus, this second chapter is divided into three points: characterization of the internship entity, description of the activities developed and critical analysis. We begin by characterizing the entity where the internship took place, Ytravel, Lda. We then identify and describe in detail each activity developed during this time period and, finally, make a critical analysis regarding the curricular internship performed.

### **1. Introduction**

The internship was developed as part of the Internship / Project Course of the Master in Sustainable Tourism Management at the School of Tourism and Maritime Technology (ESTM) of the Polytechnic Institute of Leiria (IPL), beginning on November 11, 2018 and ending on the August 30, 2019. During this period of time, we performed the duties within the several brands of Ytravel, Lda, in order to establish an understanding of the company as a whole, as well as following and orientating the work involved into gaining the sustainable certification Biosphere.

Keeping in mind the study area, as well as my personal interests, I research several companies, and discovered first the brand Portugal A2Z. I liked what they offered as a tour operator, and imagined it would be a great fit to what I wanted to do during this internship, since it is based on active and nature tourism activities and my qualifications. Once I did more research and discovered that it belongs to the company Ytravel, mother to the other brands: A2Z Consulting and Bikotel, I realized the possibilities of getting even more insight of different sectors, which made it perfect. I contacted Luís Coelho, head of Operations and Sales, presenting my case, qualifications and interested in the possibilities of doing an interesting internship with them.

After some emails and phone conversation, we agreed to meet and discuss it further, where we had the opportunity to converse about the opportunities of working for all three brands, as well as the upcoming development of acquisition of a sustainable certification, Biosphere. This meeting really allowed me to see the scope of the company and see all the potential an internship with Ytravel had to offer. It also was the foundation of the idea behind this report, investigating the collaboration between sustainable certification and a tour operator company. In short, I believed that by doing the curricular internship in this company would be to combine the useful with the pleasant, since the outdoor/adventure activities, combined with the tours and consulting work were something I was already interested to gain insight, and because this company was always striving to be more sustainable and was embarking on one more step to achieve it, it allow me to make use of the knowledge acquired during this masters studies.

As already aforementioned, this chapter will characterize the internship entity, to give a general view of what the company stands for; what are its main work areas and in what sectors of the tourism industry it works; then give an summary of the main activities developed, challenges given, with a more detailed description of the certification process. To finalize the chapter a critical analysis of the work performed, the limitations or constraints that may have been encountered and how well the theoretical expectation of the collaboration between a sustainable certification and a tour operator level company met with the reality of the industry.

## **2. Characterization of the internship's entity**

This subchapter refers to the entity in which I had the opportunity to undertake the internship. Thus, we characterize Ytravel, Lda., The parent company of several underlying business areas, including Portugal A2Z Walking & Biking, A2Z Tourism Consulting and Bikotel.

### **2.1. Ytravel, Lda and its Brands.**

Ytravel, Lda, headquartered at Rua das Oliveiras, in Marinheiros, Leiria, is a company that since 2006 has established itself in Portugal and in the World as a reference in initiatives that promote Active Tourism, namely hiking, cycling and tourism.

The mission of this company is to provide travellers with unique experiences and emotions that are in tune with nature and local communities in a sustainable and socially and environmentally responsible manner. And its vision is: to be a national and international reference in the active tourism market, capable of providing its clients with excellent tourist experiences. Want to assert itself as innovative in products permanently betting on highly motivated and inspired employees, who contribute to its sustainability of the company and the recognition by all partners of the competence and professionalism of an organization that is passionately dedicated to its projects (Ytravel.com, 2019). For years, under the leadership of Pedro Pedrosa, a group of friends who shared a passion for traveling to remote locations in search of authenticity and the adventure it provided, dreamed of creating a differentiating project in terms of tourism offer. With the continual growth of the company, it started to shift into a more national perspective, with the creation of excellent tourism products, offering customers the best and most authentic Portugal, in terms of walking or cycling travel solutions. It aims to be a national and international reference in the active tourism market, where it has been present since 2006. Its mission is "To provide travellers with unique experiences and emotions in harmony with nature and local communities in a sustainable manner with social and environmental responsibility". In this goal it created two brands: Portugal A2Z Walking & Biking and A2Z Consulting.

Ever-growing and with the force of ambition and innovation Ytravel has grown into other complementary areas within the same level, choosing to focus on consulting, as well as the launching a new lodging concept: Bikotel. At the moment, the company has around 20 permanent employees, divided into all three brands (more detail in the following sections). Online the company can be found at: <http://www.ytravel.com.pt/>. It also has offices in Leiria, Penela, Fundão and Porto, two of which, Leiria and Porto, have also warehouses (mainly for the storage of bicycles and other tours equipment from the brand Portugal A2Z Walking & Biking, but also roadside and roadwork equipment from A2Z Consulting). Figure 3 represents an Organizational Chart of the Organization, composed of the brands and their main activities.



Figure 2 - Ytravel Logo (Ytravel, 2019)

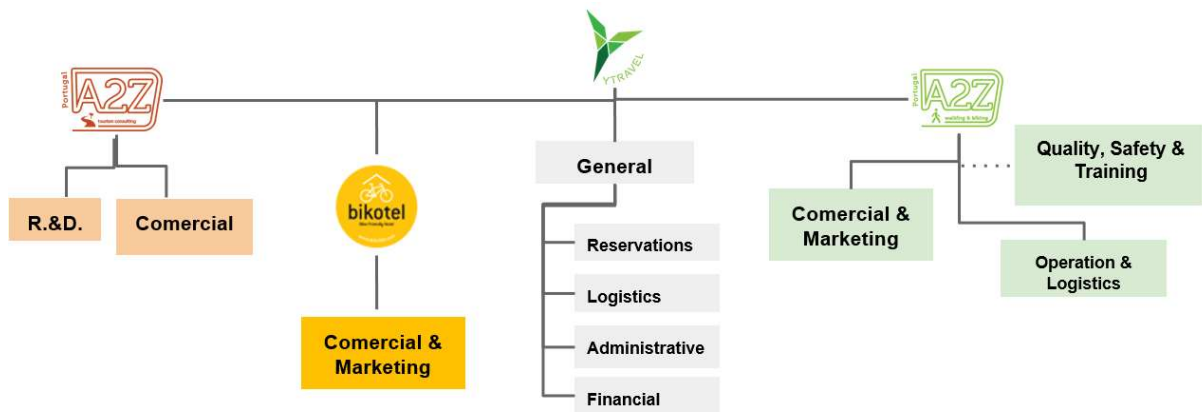


Figure 3 – Ytravel's Organizational Chart

### 2.1.1 Portugal A2Z Walking & Biking

Portugal A2Z Walking & Biking was the first brand of the Ytravel family. Moved by the travelling passion of the founders, it was born in 2006, initially with another name - A2Z Adventures - with the purpose of traveling with national clients in remote destinations such as Alps, Sicily, India, Morocco, Patagonia, Romania and Turkey, always with the associated walking and cycling activities (Portugal A2Z.com, 2019). After a few years the company was rebranded, changing this ideology, betting on the promotion of Portugal and showing to those who visit it a wide range of pedestrian or bicycle tourism solutions, from the north of the country to the Algarve and islands, with the main objective of providing unique experiences to their visitors.



*Figure 4 – A2Z Adventures and Portugal A2Z Walking & Biking Logo (Portugal A2Z.com, 2019)*

Associated with this change, it was also necessary to change its name to something that would better suit the new direction, thus appearing: Portugal A2Z Walking & Biking. As a tour operator it organizes unique cycling, hiking and even mountain biking programs all over Portugal. Its clients are mostly foreign, from big operators like Exodus and Headwaters (more detail in the Relevant Partners section), as well as direct clients namely from the following nationalities; American, Canadian, British, German, French and Brazilian. It has an array of offers, both guided and self-guided solutions: the guided are groups between 4 to 16 people and are mostly commonly sold via our partner Exodus; the self-guided options have are usually done with a minimum of 2 people, but can also be done as a solo traveller, and are usually done by selling directly through the website (<https://www.portugal-a2z.com>)

or through our partner Headwaters. In terms of tours, they range over several destinations such as: Porto, Douro, Atlantic Coast, Historical Villages, Schist Villages, Lisbon, Alentejo, Vicentine Coast, Algarve and, more recently, in the Azores, more specifically in Terceira Island. As a travel agency, the trademark is registered in the Register of Travel and Tourism Agencies (RNAVT 3014) and in the National Register of Tourism Animation Agents (RNAAT 45/2006).

The main activities are: the marketing and selling of tours via the direct promotion (website, blog and social media promotion of the destination, routes, tours and company) or via secondary partners (other blogs, media promotion via Press trips, other tour operators); creation and execution of the self-guided and guided tours. Currently it has around 11 permanent employees, located at the Leiria and Porto office mainly, although during the high season (between April and October) it may higher contractual workers, mainly in the capacity of tour leaders and guides for the partnered Exodus tours. It has a strong online presence, starting with their with a website (<https://www.portugal-a2z.com/>); and it can be found on social media mainly through Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/portugalA2Z/>) and Instagram ([https://www.instagram.com/portugal\\_a2z/](https://www.instagram.com/portugal_a2z/)).

### **2.1.2 A2Z Tourism Consulting**

A2Z Tourism Consulting is dedicated to the study and development of tailor-made Active Tourism solutions. Whether studying for a recreational network (pedestrian or cycling), designing a nature tourism development project, or defining your tourism animation strategy, the team of technicians and consultants is ready for any challenge, finding and running the best solution for each of them.

This business area is especially dedicated to the creation and implementation of walking routes, the creation and implementation of mountain biking centres, studies and projects with a special focus on nature / active tourism, consulting and advice on tourism animation plans, Nature Tourism Development Strategies and Planning and Organization of Nature Sport / Active Events ([a2zconsulting.com](http://a2zconsulting.com), 2019).

The consulting department holds the Public Works Contractor Permit No. 71743-pub. Some activities include: the preliminary study of a route and grant application; the georeferencing intervention and implementation of signage, as well as its coordination and monitoring. Its activities and projects can be found in greater detail in their website: <http://a2z-consulting.com.pt/>.



*Figure 5 - A2Z Tourism Consulting Logo (a2zconsulting.com, 2019)*

### **2.1.3 Bikotel**

Founded in 2012, Bikotel a new lodging concept that created a Bike Friendly Network- a certification for bike friendly accommodation, investing in a differentiated tourist offer for bike-loving customers. which guarantees a number of very useful facilities for those traveling by (or with) bicycle. A Bikotel is a cyclist-friendly accommodation unit that translates into a range of services, specially designed with the needs of those in mind for whom cycling (road or mountain) is the most important thing in the world (Bikotel, 2019).

Thus, this business area of Ytravel, Lda. allows lodgings throughout the country to have the necessary conditions to accommodate not only the cyclist, but also his bicycle. This requires that latter has an interest in being part of this network and respects the good practices by which the Bikotel brand is governed, such as having a closed and covered compartment for storing bicycles securely; conditions for bicycle washing; menus suitable for cyclists; daily washing and drying of cyclist's clothing; mini workshop with basic tools and tire inflation; outdoor bicycle parking; Mountain biking and / or cycling trails available (maps, technical data and GPS tracks).

Apart from these mandatory good practices, there are also the optional options that each accommodation can include in its space always with the ultimate goal of meeting the needs of the rider: bike rental and GPS equipment; specialized guides to accompany or advise on the routes; helpline in case of need / emergency; associated shops for more complex troubleshooting; special massages for cyclists; weather forecasts; transfers to / from Bikotel; medical treatment (Bikotel, 2019).

Since it is a relatively new concept in the company, the Bikotel brand is usually administrated by the commercial and marketing department of Portugal A2Z Walking & Biking, with occasional help from the consultants at A2Z Consulting. Each new admission is through a qualification study firstly analysed, and their ability to match the essential requirements established. Usually if there are some adaptations required such as trails, or a bike washing station, the projects are carried out by the other brands in Ytravel, to ensure that everything is up to standard.

The lodgings are then annually checked, to ensure the continuation of good service and maybe for further development, and a new catalogue is produced to advertise the network every year. With over 127 hotels, it is a growing brand within the company, a new concept in the country, filled with possibilities for the future. More details on the requirements and for a full view of all the current “certified” lodgings can be found at their website: <http://www.biketels.com/>.



*Figure 7 - Bikotel Logo (Bikotel, 2019)*

## 2.2. Relevant Partners

### 2.2.1 Portugal Outdoor Alliance

Founded in 2012, the Portugal Outdoor Alliance, otherwise known as POA, was founded by three of the most relevant Portuguese outdoor tour operators: Portugal A2Z Walking and Biking; Portuguese Green walks and Bike Tours Portugal. This alliance was forged out of many years of communications and trust with a mission to elaborate, organize, promote and operationalize the best Cycling & Walking products in Portugal, gathering in the same organization the best and most trustworthy outdoor services qualified providers, in order to become the first national alliance of affiliated Tour Operator enterprises to better meet the need of the travellers that look for Portugal as a destination. This allows for a better cooperation between tour operators, working in a niche environment, so as to combine the tourist with the complete variety of options for walking and cycling circuits covering all the Portuguese territory, with different operational centres and all levels of service fulfilling different client's skills and wants. Its members are also committed with social responsibility projects in the visited local communities, collaborating with associations, villages, networks and trail advocacy (POA, 2019).



*Figure 8 - POA Logo (POA, 2019)*

### 2.2.2 Exodus and Headwaters

Exodus and Headwater are both British tour operators with several years of experience, with trips including walking and cycling tours, offering destinations all over the world. Exodus was “started” in 1974 and their mission is still the same it was at the beginning “Discovering

countries, cultures, environments, cities, mountain ranges, deserts, coasts and jungles; exploring this amazing planet we all live on.” (Exodustravels.com, 2019). From their humble beginning of the two founders, they continue to evolve and seek new destinations and experiences, fuelled by their passion for adventure and the burning desire to share this fascination with their customers. They are also striving for a more sustainable industry, by making part of their spirit the continued support and protection of the communities they visit. With Portugal A2Z they are a partner tour operator solely for the guided tours of mainly: Porto -Lisbon cycling tour; Douro Walk & Wine; Vicentine Coast, etc.

While Headwater was founded in 1985, focusing mainly in peaceful walking and cycling holidays in Europe, the Mediterranean and Bermuda. They are also embracing the sustainable concepts, prioritizing small family-run hotels, local restaurants with great regional cuisine, etc. With Portugal A2Z Walking & Biking, they are more associated with self-guided tours such as holidays from Porto – Coimbra; Mountains to the Sea (Castro de Laboreiro – Porto) (Headwater.com, 2019).

### **3. Characterization of the activities developed during the internship**

Throughout the internship there were a lot of opportunities to work in the several brands of the company, developing several skills and getting a general insight into the majority of the work that is carried out. Although initially the agency was the starting point, gradually become involved with the Consulting and Bikotel branches. This worked permitted a greater insight of the company itself, as well as a very good insight of what a company at the tour operator level does within the tourism industry. More importantly, was the work developed during the certification process, which allowed me not only to see how these certifications impact tourism companies in general, and particularly tour operators how well they apply the concept of sustainability and what are the possibilities they create from other connecting sectors.

Therefore, in the following section the various activities developed during the internship period, are presented for a better understanding of the work performed.

#### **3.1. Portugal A2Z Walking and Biking**

My main work was always with the tour agency, as referred to in the Introduction to this chapter. Gradually starting to get to know the product, via the translation of the tours and programs, for brochures and the website, both to English and German, it involved to creating a varied array of texts for marketing purposes, such as the [Top 10 things to do in the Historical Villages](#) (Annex I), always with the goal of marketing the tours through the destination(s) or the activity. I also got the opportunity to experience first-hand, direct and personal contact with the consumers, when I represented the company at the Stuttgart's "International exhibition for the Travel, Tourism, Recreational & Other Hospitality Services", also known as CMT.

This event, in January of 2019, was created to showcase products like beautiful travel destinations, cycling holidays, wellness holidays, cruise ships holidays, as well as a tourism entertainment programs and much more. Here I had the opportunity not only to be in a direct

contact for two days with potential customers, hearing their needs and wants, and getting a better understanding of the market, as well as getting to know fellow industry workers and companies.

At the start of the season in April, I become involved with the guided Exodus holidays – as a local guide in Porto for our Douro Walk & Wine tours and our Biking Porto Lisbon tour, which was done to improve the quality of the latter holidays and to give the clients more information about the historical and cultural background of the city; and in the self-guided by preparing the necessary kits and documentation (Annex II) (as well as improving and translating the country notes [Annex III]). After the start of the season, I also collected and analysed the evaluation forms of the holiday tours from Exodus (guided) and Headwaters (self-guided), an important step for a tour operator, which allows us to check customer satisfaction, and see what is going well and what needs to be corrected.

And finally I also started working in the last month of my internship, August, on the commercial department, handling the main booking e-mail ([booking@a2z.pt](mailto:booking@a2z.pt)), organising it, and keep the leads updated, making sure every contact has a response, and trying to get the right holiday for each client's needs. The main work was to reply to e-mails as quickly as possible, mainly in emails with enquiries regarding our trips. When an email was received, depending on the amount of initial information given by the customer, I would try to ascertain if the client is interested; how many people are going on the tour; preferred start they; how do they found us; etc, in order to prepare a program. If the program and itinerary were accepted, hotel availability and if required bike availability were checked by the reservations team and logistics team respectively, so that then an accurate final quote could be given to the client. If accepted, a sales form would be created with all included details in the program and holiday, which was then shared with the relevant departments of sales, reservations, logistics and financial.

### **3.2. A2Z Consulting**

My involvement with the Consulting brand of Ytravel, was small but still allowed me to get a good vision of the variety of the work performed there. Initially during the first few months of the internships, I was creating texts for interpretative panels, leaflets etc of trails based

on fauna, flora, culture and history of the local region. At the beginning of March and continuing till the end of my internship, I started getting involved with the incorporation of the Schist Trails and the Grand Route of Zêzere (GRZ) Trails into the outdoor online Portal, [Outdooractive](#). One of the biggest portals for outdoor athletes, with routes for hiking, cycling, mountain biking, hiking or skiing, it allows the consumer to find the perfect trails, with free online route planner and GPS-trails for a smartphone. I also had the chance of participating on a workshop on walking trails, at the end of March, which dived into the particulars of the implementation of a walking trail, following European and Portuguese Guidelines, such as the marking of said route and the specific details they have to abide by\*.

### **3.3. Bikotel**

The Bikotel is a relatively new brand in the company, still growing and evolving as a concept. My work here was minimal, only helping at the end of 2018 with the membership documents for the newly incorporate hotels for 2019, helping with the texts for the annual catalogue (Issuu, 2019) as well as the occasional creation and translation of texts, for the catalogue or the specific hotel projects\* during my months as an intern.

### **3.6. Biosphere**

The Biosphere certification is conducted in Portugal by “Domínio Vivo – Formação e Consultoria, Lda.”, founded in 2007. The latter is a consultancy firm that operates in the organizational consulting market with offers of technical support specialized in the implementation of ISO management systems, Human Resources, Hygiene and Safety at Work, Hygiene and Food Safety, Environment, Innovation, Social Responsibility, BRC, Global GAP, CE marking and internal audits of the most diverse systems. It is also a DGERT accredited training organization oriented towards organizational training, with a special focus on business training - intra-company training.

\*Unfortunately, since most of the projects I worked at, are still being developed by the company, I am unable showcase them as Annexes.

Contact was first established by Manuel Franco, from A2Z Consulting, who did the initial introduction of the company Ytravel and its brands to the certification team. These initial meetings were made before I started the internship, and it is my understanding that they were just the formalization of the beginning of the certification process.

I became involved in the certification course once the auditing process started. Since the team at Domínio Vivo already had a good understanding of the company, its brands, goals and the possibilities it could apprehend in the future, an Action Plan had already been layout of what needed to be achieved during the auditing process. For Ytravel in particular, different thematic sessions were proposed, in order to better tackle the needs of the company and collaborate them with the certification standards and concepts. In total there were 15 planned interviews, that were to be divided into the following thematic sessions: Human Resources Requirements; Social Responsibility Requirements; Security Requirements and Environmental Requirements, as well as some general progress sessions to check the process. Although there were 4 themes, the majority of the sessions ended up being based around the first two themes mainly; Human Resources and Social Responsibility.

All the work conducted during these sessions, was based on the pre-studied action plan, in order to achieved as must as possible all the goals. The latter was divided into 6 strategic guidelines, which in turn had their strategic goals, that could then be directed towards more specific goals. In order to facilitate the description of the all the work performed, it appears simpler to follow each theme, allowing for a more direct presentation of all the goals, the work that was performed to accomplish them and what were the consequences or possibilities of that. A table summarizing all this information is attached as Annex IV.

## 1. Business Performance

### 1.1 Promoting responsible and digital marketing

- Use non-discriminatory language in all informational and promotional material;

- Entity promotional messages should contain up-to-date, clear and reliable information;
  - Ensure that entity promotional messages are written in the most common languages between customers and users;
- ❖ During the meetings around the thematic of Human Resources/ Social Responsibility Requirements, a small consultation was done regarding what is inclusive language and how to use it - references expressing to both sexes equally should preferably be used, in the production and reproduction of the most varied documents, in the most different professional services (public or private). Evidence was provided of up-to date promotional leaflets, also written in Portuguese; English; French and German, facilitated by the marketing department.

#### 1.2. Fighting seasonality

- Create measures to boost your supply and combat the seasonality of your activity during the low season;
- ❖ Both in the marketing and commercial departments there is always the care to try and get customers all year's round. We advise against sales in the heat spikes (July and August); usually our programs can be run almost all year round (we might discourage Porto-Lisbon in January and February due to the cold, but can then recommend our routes in the Vicentine Coast and Algarve, both perfect in the off season), as we complemented them with hybrid bicycles (BTT + road) and can also do with electric bicycles which allow other customers, with less effort the opportunity to do more demanding routes, enabling various activities throughout the year.

#### 1.3. Developing new products/ services

- Create innovative activities, services and products.

- ❖ Ytravel is a dynamic company always looking for the next challenge, and already had several projects, ideas being developed. Given into evidence were our recent development of the Walking Carmelite Route, a 115km path of faith that goes from the Coimbra to Fátima, linking two historically important cities. In terms of the Portugal A2Z, more recently there has been the creation and development of the “#PortugalA2Z” to communicate directly between Instagram and the site, making all Instagram posts enter directly into the site – it is also a great way for prospective consumers to follow us and also a chance for our clients to better interact with us social (e.g. can take a selfie on a trip and post directly to that hashtag).

## 2. Instruments for a Sustainable Tourism Policy

### 2.1 Responsible Tourism Policy:

- Create a Responsible Tourism Policy, approved, accessible and translated into the most common languages of the entity's users and customers. This document is permanently communicated to all employees, employees, suppliers and customers of the entity, as well as to any interested party;
  - Inform the practices and initiatives developed in terms of sustainability and the sustainable commitment acquired by the entity in relation to the destination where it is located. This information is published in visible and easily accessible places;
- 
- ❖ During the thematic sessions of Human Resources/ Social Responsibility Requirements, me and the agent responsible, constructed a Responsible Tourism Policy (PRT) developed based on Ytravel's values, vision and mission, always keeping in mind the principles of Sustainable Tourism. The aims points of the Policy are that Portugal A2Z is committed to improve our sustainable management in all sphere: social, economic and environmental; is committed to motivating and educating our employee; understands the importance of having respect for the Destination and the local community and finally it pledges

to combat any form of exploitation. This policy is available in both Portuguese and English (Annex V).

### 2.3. Staff satisfaction, training and motivation:

- Ensure that the staff remains motivated;

### 2.4. Conciliation measures:

- Ensure that the staff remains motivated;

- ❖ Also, during the thematic sessions of Human Resources, a questionnaire (Annex VI) was drafted by myself and the Biosphere Human Resource responsible, in order to better analyse the satisfaction of the employees, as well as a survey to formalize the training needs of the whole team. This was done anonymously, so that every employee felt safe in sharing their own opinion – as only then it becomes a perfect tool to listen and involve the employee's opinion's. It also allows us to better understand the attitudes, opinions, motivations and, consequently, the factors that contribute to employee satisfaction. The aspects analysed in the questionnaires were: Relationship of management with the Team; Relationship Interpersonal; Organizational communication; Professional development; Benefits / Support; Logistic support; Company Image and Decision Process. After all questionnaires were collected (every employee except the board participated – as it was felt at that time it might give a bias to the results), the results were summarized in a report, made for the Biosphere certification and the board of Ytravel – so that the latter could have an overview of employee satisfaction.

For the future, some follow up measures were also suggested such as:

- Semi-annual meeting (eg) between the team - take this moment to share the improvement proposals (reporting on their follow-up) and verification of the level of compliance with objectives (performance appraisal);

- Annual workshop for definition of motivational and conciliation measures (life professional, family and personal) / proposals for improvement;
- As a result of the above action, the elaboration, each year, of an action plan with concrete measures for motivation / conciliation and formative needs.

### 3. Conservation and improvement of Cultural Heritage:

#### 3.1 Participation in the preservation of cultural resources:

- Prioritize the participation of local artists for the development of cultural activities in their spaces and facilities;
- ❖ All our programs try to incorporate cultural resources as much as possible, such as Port Wine Tasting in Porto, or workshops of cheese making in the Schist Villages for example. The marketing department also tries to integrate in our documentation as much information of each destination/ route. Recently we are also developing a new trip support system for our clients: with the provision of a smartphone that will act as both GPS and information source, we would be able to give more accurate and detail information to our clients regarding interesting points/facts about the destinations. This is also dependent on the development of our routes in the application ["Ride with GPS"](#) – an online and mobile application that allows routes to be uploaded and followed on the smartphone app, making it easier, safer and substantially more fun and educational for the cyclists. Not only does it give accurate details about the route, such as elevation data, but will also allow us to add specific information for each route, city, stop, etc. This in turn will allow us to provide our clients with a lot more educational information about their holiday destination.

#### 3.2. Encourage visitor education:

- Include elements of local cuisine in the catering and / or marketing of food products and / or provide information on Destination traditional / local food restaurants.

- ❖ During our holidays, particularly in the guided tours where we have more control, we always use local restaurants as partners, which we also recommend for our self-guided one's. When relevant it is always included in the initial briefing/documentation information about local gastronomy. We also disseminate in our social networks, the specific gastronomic treasures, sometimes with photos from our local partners of several of our holidays including the Schist Villages, Historical Villages, Rota Vicentina and Alto Alentejo.

#### 4. Economic and Social Development of a Destination:

##### 4.1 Promote economic and social development of the local community:

- Develop projects for social purposes and provide that information to clients;
- Develop measures to support the local economy;
- Incorporate elements of traditional local and / or contemporary culture into the design or decoration of its facilities, respecting the intellectual property rights of local communities;
- Provide spaces and / or facilities for the celebration of events or activities directed to the local population;
- Integrate the Biosphere community: Organize or participate in working groups through which sustainability projects are developed collaboratively or there is exchange of experiences and good practices in this field.

- ❖ This goal was also discussed during the Human Resources/ Social Responsibility thematic sessions. Firstly, although Portugal A2Z had in the past contributed to social projects, it currently has no continuous affiliation. It was left to become an Improvement Action for next year's audit. As we always partner with local companies, hotels, transfers and restaurants for our trips, the list of these partners was gathered, as well as the creation of a code of conduct for local partnerships (Annex VII). As a company we are also always available and willing to participate in lectures / classes / seminars and other initiatives created to share knowledge, and as such look forward to actively participate in the Biosphere community meetings.

#### 4.2. Responsible attitude towards staff and suppliers:

- Periodically gather recommendations and suggestions from entity employees and use this information to improve the delivery of their services;
- Develop conciliation measures;
- Ensure that the entity has sustainable purchasing and subcontracting policies, including criteria and requirements related to social, cultural and environmental factors (local, green suppliers, kilometre 0, fair trade, certified and recognized products and services, etc.);
- Request agents and suppliers that collaborate and/or provide services to the entity to adopt a commitment to sustainability, consistent with the commitment acquired by the entity itself.

- ❖ Continuing on the same thematic meetings, and in concordance with some of the actions already in place in the second set of strategic goals, some conciliation measure ideas were collected by me through the answers of the questionnaire, ranging from having the birthday day off, to organizing team bonding experiences and to offering a more flexible schedule. A Recruitment code and Professional Ethics (Annex VIII) was also drafted by the Biosphere Human Resources agent, and then adapted to the Ytravel brand by me. It is a document that integrates a set principles and concepts of an ethical and deontological nature, which should guide the unity recruitment policy and, fundamentally, in its attitude towards equality of Employment Opportunities. As its main principals it includes: Equal Access to Employment, Work and Training; the Prohibition of Discrimination/ Harassment; as well as a set of Good Practices for Equal Employment. Although not translated into English, this Code of Ethics was presented to all Ytravel employees, with plans to also pass it to suppliers and partners in the next year.

## 5. Environmental Conservation:

### 5.1 Protection of the Biodiversity:

- Possess informational resources to increase awareness and respect for aquatic and / or marine and terrestrial ecosystems for users and customers;
- ❖ We try to integrate, as much as possible and when relevant in our documentation, during the briefings and guided tours biodiversity information, important locations and species as well as information regarding its protection. As aforementioned in the Conservation and improvement of Cultural Heritage section, we are also developing a new trip support system for our clients, based on the “Ride with GPS” system. And with this system during the route we can add information regarding the surrounding landscape and region of the route.

### 5.2 Control and Management of Energy:

- Control Consumption;
- ❖ Due to the lack of time, it was not possible to enquiry after the energy consumptions averages of the offices, but it was idealized that when such could be procured, then an assessment on how to become more efficient could be made. Carbon footprint could also be measured and the value offset when combined with the social and environmental programs.

### 5.3 Control and Management of Water:

- Develop measures for responsible water use by customers;
- Control Consumption in the offices;
- ❖ Each customer is told to bring a reusable bottle or is provided with one, and in guided tours on each stop, each can be refilled by 3l bottles.

#### 5.4 Waste Management and Control:

- Apply measures to minimize the use of disposable products and general consumables;
- Implement selective collection and maximum recycling of waste produced by the entity, including food waste, as well as its correct treatment before collection;
- Use packaging and / or disposables: The entity applies eco-design criteria (or eco-design) in the production and / or procurement of packaging and / or disposables.

- ❖ Before the certification, there were already waste management policies in place. For example, onsite in the offices, since 2010 there are Eco points, for waste differentiation, and in the case of paper we reuse as scratch sheets before placing it in the paper container. For our clients and transfers, reusable burlap bags are used; shopping bags have been replaced by A2Z backpacks, and the mechanical and support material for each holiday is placed inside numbered A2Z bags. In the guided tours for the picnics a reusable cloth as well as plates, crockery and cutlery are used.

#### 5.5 Management and control of atmospheric emissions:

- Encourage the use of public or low-emission transport at their destination by providing their customers with up-to-date and true information about the itineraries and alternative modes of transport available to travel to and from the destination prior to their arrival;
- Measure carbon footprint and participate and inform customers, employees and suppliers.

- ❖ On Portugal A2z holidays all the batteries are rechargeable, and all routes are designed to have entry or exits points, which do not require private transport (e.g. coincide with bus, metro or train stations). More particular, in this thematic session the main idea was to start to think about measuring the carbon footprint. Initially it was conceptualized during the section, that with energy and water information from the offices, suppliers and accommodations, as well as fuel emissions for transfers and our own vehicles, we could not only set an estimate of the carbon footprint of the company but also per tour. As aforementioned for the company footprint, this value could then be offset by choosing a worthy project, if possible related to our tours, such as the contributing to the Faia Brava reserve, or voluntary to do the demarcation of the Rota Vicentina (this one could even serve as a team building day) as a way of connecting both environmental responsibility and environmental concerns.

In terms of tours, besides the above information, but more specialized to the route in question, this calculation would also need to include the way the clients arrive (flight, train, etc). Depending on the carbon footprint, opportunities for compensation should be identified along the way, for both offsetting the value, but also to educate the tourist on it' impact. For the client in particular, it could be offered to just be a small financial contribution to a particular program (if possible, connected to the tour; eg. reforestation of the burned forest along the Porto to Lisbon route).

However, unfortunately due to time limitations, as the certification took place already during high season (April – May), it's an extremely busy time for the company and our partners, and it was impossible to collect all that information in time.

## 6. Client Satisfaction

### 6.1 Quality customer service:

- Create basic customer service protocols and courtesy formulas for employees to follow, from first customer contact to completion of service;
- Measuring customer satisfaction, and customer perception of the entity's degree of sustainability, is collected and monitored through a mechanism;
- Publicly manifest its fight against any form of abuse, exploitation or harassment, particularly vulnerable groups and minorities;
- Measure customer satisfaction, and whether company activity has improved customer knowledge of the Destination and its inhabitants in all or some of its areas: culture, geography, flora and fauna, traditions, gastronomy, music, history, etc;
- Encourage customers and employees to adopt healthy practices (exercise, healthy eating, cycling, etc.);
- Have a mechanism for the correct reception, resolution and evaluation of complaints, incidents and suggestions, to detect future aspects to be improved;

- ❖ In place we already had basic customer service protocols and policies, while the evaluation form of our trips was redone by me, creating a similar style to the previous in Google Forms. This reformulation of the form was necessary to better measure the customer satisfaction (Annex IX), while incorporating new questions such as asking if they thought the holiday had benefited local economy; had educated them regarding the region's cultural and heritage and also had allowed them to explore Portugal's nature. For next year a review will be conducted to see if the applied sustainability activities were well received and if they reflect on the success of the customer return rate.

### 6.2 Customer Security:

- Create protocol for possible emergency situations;
- Promote customer safety and comfort from exposure to risks that may affect the customer;
- Establish food safety measures;

- ❖ Ytravel already had a risk management plan in place, as well as a personal accident insurance for clients during our trips. Before the trip, the customer is asked for his medical conditions, medication, blood type, dietary restrictions, risks that may affect customers are identified on program sheets, and emergency means are available in the material provided to the back-office team. This information is accessed whenever we are planning the trip, to keep those conditions in mind (in our guided tours we offer lunch boxes, which are altered based on that information). In the briefings a section is dedicated to security measures, with the most common situations discussed and a brief demonstration of bicycle M-check security routine. Our guides have a first aid certificate, obtained during this certification, which emphasis on the most common situations that can happen on our trips: eg major risks burn, insulation, dehydration, sprains, falls, etc.

#### 6.3 Responsible Customer Attitude:

- Provide customers with responsible behaviour guidelines to be taken with regard to the environment and the local community, fostering a respectful attitude toward destination;
- ❖ In our country notes, provided to the clients a little time before the trip, they are informed of the good environmental and cultural practices they should follow in Portugal. After I made a summary of the guidelines to being a responsible tourism, the marketing team shared it with our social media followers on facebook.

#### 6.4 Sustainability information and awareness:

- Providing training and / or sustainability awareness resources for employees / customers;
- ❖ This was left to be added into next year's workshops and training courses.

#### 6.5 Universal accessibility:

- Ensure and improve accessibility;
  - Improve existing accessibility conditions in terms of motor accessibility;
- ❖ Even though Portugal A2Z is a active holiday sellers, focusing on walking and biking, if a customer informs us their special needs in advance so that A2Z can plan the activity, when we usually, depending on the need itself, have the ability to prepare a particular tour to meet the specific needs and interests of customers by making itinerary changes, equipment changes or even provide extra support, whenever the tour itself allows it. We have several options, such as renting electric bikes for people with limited mobility, adapting certain models of bikes to fit particular needs. Our consulting brand also has adapted certain trails both for blind users, and for wheelchair-bound users.

Once the majority of the strategic goals were achieved, or postponed for next year already with clear objectives to accomplished, the certification audit was concluded and granted to Ytravel, Lda. The majority of the work of this first audit, was mainly bureaucratic/organizational, with a lot of the activities set in those specific goals/to develop actions already in place in the company before the beginning of the audit. It was a gathering of evidence of already established sustainable practices, as well as the creation of the sustainable tourism staples, such as a responsible tourism policy as well as a sustainable buying policy. I was responsible for attending and helping with the sessions, in the capacity mainly of coordinator between the Biosphere agent and the company. By gathering all important evidence, as well as providing help with the creating of the policies, employee's questionnaire, etc. As this certification was conducted between January and May, it was unfortunately conducted partly during our high season, which lead to the rise of time constrictions for certain activities/ideas, main practical applications of this certification have been postpone to be implement during the low season.

### **3. Critical Analysis**

The last chapters focused on explaining some of the theoretical background of this report, as well as characterizing the entity where the internship was conducted and the work performed there. The general idea regarding this internship was not only to gain valuable insights into the professional side of tourism, as well as relate it to a bigger picture. In this critical analysis, we explore what has the work meant personally and career-wise for me, as well as discussing how the sustainable tourism industry can be improved by certifications, particularly in tour operators. The latter point will be divided into two separate sections: the first will compare the goals set by the certification and work performed with the theoretical framework, while the second section will focus on the possible ramifications of the certification, in the tour operator sector, in the industry and in the sustainable future of the field.

#### **3.1 The Internship**

The original idea behind this internship was to give me an opportunity to experience a tourism sector in a professional capacity. Since my previous background was in Zoology, and I preferred an outdoor, nature type of tourism, this seemed right away like a good fit, but with the addition of the Consulting brand made it perfect. I was very fortunate to have been able to work in all three brands, which gave me an insight into different sectors of the tourism industry. During this internship I was able to understand how destinations create products and try to utilize their surroundings in order to attract tourists, with my work with A2Z Consulting developing interpretative panels and leaflets for villages and trails; with my work in the Bikotel concept I got a sense of how accommodations try to adapt to the current trends and needs of clients. And finally, with my work within the tour agency/operator, I got a first view of how a destination is packaged to consumers, how a good marketing campaign is worth plenty, how consumers' expectations influence their views and experiences and how to mitigate that; etc. It was very enriching to be able to put into practice concepts that we were absorbing during the first year of the master's degree, as well as all the actions and methodologies that we learned during these 10 months.

The entity provided all the necessary support, always collaborating in the development of the marketing actions and activities that I planned, developed and implemented. In addition to the support provided, it was noteworthy how the elements belonging to these entities motivated and encouraged me, giving me all the freedom to come up with creative and innovative suggestions and ideas that could somehow really be implemented. The positive notes are the chances I got to diversify my work, the opportunities to learn new things within the several brands of the company; as well as the opportunity to experience the Stuttgart fair, which was a fantastic experience that allowed me not only to speak directly to consumers and help them on their journey to Portugal, but also to interact with other similar companies and see the bigger picture of the industry.

In terms of negative aspects, I felt that there were a lot of ideas and possibilities that floated around from time to time, which proves the dynamic and ambitious of the entity, however many were left at that due to lack of people or time to start them; also the time of the internship was also a bit tumultuous for the company, with some long-time employees leaving, as well as increased number of sales and tours, which lead to some disorganization and stressful moments.

In the light of the all the above, I consider that the internship performed contributed to our integral development professionally; it was exactly what had been expected and more, with all the activities planned and developed in the internship providing me with a great and diversified learning experience, as well as a chance to practice what I had learnt on my studies.

## **3.2 Certification as a tool for a sustainable tourism**

### **3.2.1 Certification process applied to the tour operator sector**

As previously mentioned in the Theoretical Framework portion of this report, “The recent boom in the tourism industry has brought to light that some of the effects of this growing industry have become more negative and far from being properly managed..”, with sustainable tourism arising as a way to preserve the industry and its destinations from

collapse. However due to the complexities of the industry with the number of different suppliers, agents, services and sectors interconnecting to create the “touristic product”, adjusting that can be theorized and approved by academia as solutions into reality has proven to be difficult. With the consumers and governmental agendas pushing more and more for the industry to become sustainable (not just for show and marketing), certification has been proposed as a way to provide companies with standardized process, activities and goals in order to achieve it. Yet, international standards cannot be too strict and wouldn't allow for the incorporation of local stakeholders and communities to implement their perspective as well. They also faced challenges due to their apparent stiffness to adapt to other sectors of the industry apart from the more straightforward accommodations and transport, and the general lack of willingness to change from some sectors coupled with a lack of supportive funding, poor consumer knowledge, poor marketing support, and their perceived inflexibility by agents of the industry.

This report has selected to see how such a certification develops and thrives for sustainability, in particular in a tour operator company as the latter are one of the main players in the industry, connecting almost all suppliers, services etc to each other and the consumer. The certification in question, Biosphere, follows the United Nations guidelines, in order to strive for the triple bottom effect to be balanced. It already has shown its flexibility by specifying in their website (Biosphere, 2019) that although their certification follows the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), around 5 main themes, it also attaches a more specific purpose depending on the sector/company. It is also seen with the progress of the work performed during the certification that it isn't inflexible, as it can be very well applied to other sectors, even a complex one like a tour operator. The Biosphere certification tackles all the basic concepts in sustainability, while adapting them to the reality of a tour operator. It shows that it is possible to standardize themes for the whole industry such as Climate Change, as strategic academically approved goals, but also to adapt them to the reality at hand into more company specific goals.

For example, that first goal can be applied to tour operator and accommodation alike, but in the latter it is a straightforward management issue, involving measuring the carbon footprint, from energy, waters, fuels etc, and try to reduce the value; while for the first this problem is exponentially bigger – as its carbon footprint would be an amalgamation of his company solo carbon footprint as well as all their suppliers, services they import, and their

consumers. It was hypothesized “..although global standards would increase the legitimacy and impact of certification in the industry, efforts to establish working agreements on a global scale may conflict with the integration of local perspectives regarding equity and participation - national certification schemes are likely to produce more concrete, measurable criteria that are more sensitive to the issues of local people.”. But if one uses standardized concepts from a global brand, using a local stakeholder, such is the case with Biosphere that doesn't apply a strict set of roles, but rather applies the concepts to the company and situation, it gives a really good impact. Certifications are a form of consultancy that is meant to give a standardised structure to managerial processes in order for a company to achieve their goals. And Biosphere applies sustainability concepts, combined with governmental guidelines on sustainable development couple with a flexible process that studies that company, its mission, activities, etc, before implementing it. Although it is not clear from report how other challenges such as the lack of supportive finding and poor consumer knowledge can be fixed, it does show that a sustainable certification with global guidelines can be locally implemented into a tour operator company very successfully.

Considering now the work itself, more specifically the goals and actions established during this exact process, one can see the strategic global guidelines can be successfully used to produced them, and them in turn can be successfully applied to a tour operator. The certification process was a successful introduction to the concepts of sustainability, allowing Ytravel to check what it already had accomplished on their own (waste management in the offices; cooperation with local partners; substitution of previously disposable items, for reusable ones, such as batteries). For a first audit, it was in a way a sort of introduction into the sustainable world and into establishing Ytravel as a sustainable company, the goals that should have been considered priority were the actions detailed in the second thematic in the Instruments for a Sustainable Tourism Policy and the fourth thematic the Economic and Social Development of the Destination – as these are the basis of the companies protocols and relationship with other partners. The other thematic can be developed independently over time, but if the guidelines, policies and company values aren't adapted and reformulated to fit within the sustainable guidelines, then the company doesn't have “solid ground” to start their sustainable journey and develop further activities.

In the other hand, although the brand/team/company are very open to the implementation of these goals and all the work involved, there are a couple of goals/actions that can prove to become quite the challenge to implement. A case in point of the latter, would be the control and management of the atmospheric emissions. This last goal would be quite difficult to achieve. This is due mainly to the general difficult of the concept – calculating carbon footprint can be hard, as much will be mere estimates, but you still want to get the closer a value as possible. Which is complicated usually by the intricacy of the system – too many variables to take into account. For a tour operator such as Portugal A2Z Walking & Biking, not only do we have to consider our own carbon emissions in our offices and transport, etc, but also the one's of our clients (client's flight, accommodations through the route), and along the route. So even though this could be a great environmental tool, both in terms of having a value to offset our emissions, and as an education tool, a way to start a dialog with our clients, it will not be easily accomplished, and might require some extreme collaboration between Portugal A2Z employees and the brand's partners.

### **3.2.2 Ramifications into the future of a sustainable tourism industry**

The possibilities of implementing sustainable certification at the tour operator level are far-reaching, as are the sectors connections. Hotels, transports and other services becoming sustainable allows for the Hotels, transports and other services becoming sustainable allows is the first front of the development of the industry. These are the base of the pyramid, the one's that have a more direct impact on the destinations. Tour operators occupy a middle position in the supply chain, which can be figuratively seen in Figure 1, a central position of linking several services together and to the consumer. For that reason, they are main players in the industry, with great power over all other players, particularly the suppliers. However, this power can be a great accept in furthering the sustainable cause in the industry.

They are the first contact the consumer sometimes has with the destination/tourism product, and so they are the first line of their education regarding the latter's culture, history and nature as well as the potential impacts they may make and preventive measure for them –

basically how to be a responsible tourist; which is why in the Biosphere certification they made sure Portugal A2Z provided cultural, historical and environmental information, both in the website, on social media, and in the documentation sent to clients (country and route notes Annex III and Annex II respectively); besides the creation of sustainable orientated marketing tools such as articles/ blog posts – a way of promoting the destination and it's sustainable development. They can greatly influence the volume and direction of tourism flows, meaning they can try to diminish seasonality by trying to apply to different target tourist audiences (eg senior tourism).

As promoters of the destination, they play a crucial role in the survival of the small and medium tourism suppliers (SMTS), so they can support “economically” their development by influencing their distribution channels (e.g. travel agents and reps) to fairly distribute tourists to several regions and local suppliers – it has always been Ytravel’s policy to always work with local partners as much as possible, and have an open communication with other players , which lead to the creation of the POA alliance whose vision is of a cooperating industry, filled with passion for Portugal the destination and with the same goals. Finally, they can promote and trigger their suppliers’ actions towards the implementation and co-development of sustainable tourism practices, e.g. by contracting and including in tour packages, only suppliers complying with sustainable standards; creating ripple effects of more and more players getting involved into sustainable goal, “infesting” the whole industry.

## Recommendations and Conclusion

After concluding the internship, particularly the end of the Biosphere certification, there are a couple of aspects that either couldn't be accomplished due to the time frame or due to other constrictions. From the critical analysis it is clear that this work, is important in the bigger tourism industry picture, but also for the firm itself, giving it a chance to develop further sustainable activities, incorporating itself with the certification and its partners, while streamlining its own goals and vision into a reality. It is important to consider all the possibilities this work still can offer Ytravel, before the next reevaluation audit.

Firstly, in terms of the Human Resources thematic, the report created from the employee's questionnaire has yet to be fully evaluated by the board. The report had valuable intel on the current level of satisfaction and motivation of employees, where they also provided ideas for mitigation and conciliation of the personal and professional life; team bonding experiences; professional training, etc. These should be given some thought and attention now that the high season has passed, in other to raise the moral of the workers and satisfaction levels for next season, while also showing that the questionnaire was done with a purpose and that their voices were heard. More training regarding history, culture, nature of Portugal + sustainability goals

Secondly, the program "Ride with GPS", seems not only like a great substitution to the previous supporting kit (phone, GPS, batteries and chargers), but would also allow the entity to provide digitally ("waste-free") more information to the clients live. The app allows several extra details to be add into the routes, such as points of interest, extra facts, etc. To give an idea of the what this could mean to the A2Z client: in the briefing he would get to understand how the smartphone and the app work, with all their documentation here (not printed). Using the Porto Lisbon biking tour as an example, the client could have access to a touristic tour of Porto, with details of each monument as well as the history of the city. Once he is riding, different points of interest along the route would appear followed by a small description, be it a historical church by the sea, passing a nature reserve and describe a common species from there, or arriving at village and getting right away more information

about its history and culture. A fantastic way of not only eliminating the need for several support devices and the need for a printed document for the briefings, but also provide even further information to the tourist regarding the destination.

Another interesting idea to be developed was the calculation of Ytravel's carbon footprint and that of its tours. The first could be measured within the three offices, and the value used to know how much of an offset the company must "revert back" each year. This value can then be associated with a particular cause, either selected by the employees or one that is connect to the company or its travels in one way. An icon could be placed on the website that measures the carbon footprint of company mainly with a value, as well as the forms done to mitigate it and how much they saved, with the intention of having the lowest possible carbon footprint – a fun icon that could draw attention to the theme from the customer. The second could be another way of imparting information to consumers – by measuring the carbon footprint of each tour per person, the value can then be used to start a dialogue with the client. It could be a form of showing how it would be much higher if it was done on public transport or even car, instead of a bike or walking (zero fuel); it could be, similar to the previous paragraph a way of connecting clients with causes, either connected to the trip somehow, or relevant at the time, etc. – "you had a totally of X of carbon footprint, you could offset it by donating to the reforestation program, or the local homeless shelter". All possible ideas, just not enough time to either perform them and/or gather the necessary data.

And finally I believe it to be important, as a major player in the tourism industry of Portugal, and a central link in the supply chain, that Ytravel should make the most of this opportunity not only to get involved with the Biosphere community to get insights on how other companies are approaching this new trend, trade ideas and knowledge, but also to use this newly acquired knowledge and share it with our partners. We have a great opportunity to impact other players in the industry, and should take advantage of it through our brand Portugal A2Z and Bikotel.

The major work performed during the internship and taken for a deeper analysis for this report, was the involvement with the sustainable certification Biosphere. Previous research had turned little information of what the collaboration would be, since mostly these

certifications are more aimed at the “ground level” companies such as lodgings and transport. There was some evidence of why the collaboration wasn’t occurring (too focused on other sectors; lack of flexibility; cost), and many speculations of the benefits it would bring to the industry in general, but no actual study on the reality. With this internship we tried to get an understanding of what exactly that collaboration does for the tour operator and then what it could do for the industry. And although we can’t extrapolate Ytravel’s experience in terms of the financial aspect, or openness of the team, as that is dependent on each company; in general, we found that the certification adapted very well to the company and sector. It managed to apply its globally accepted standards and concepts – guidelines from the United Nation Sustainable Development Goals, into the activities and goals of Ytravel. It acknowledged some of the previous changes it had made as company to strive for a more sustainable management, while adding extra layers to it - such as the implementation of a responsible tourism policy and a buying sustainability policy. It also brought some new ideas for improvement as well as opportunities to take this knowledge and pass it to our partners and clients. And in terms of the tourism industry, it has huge opportunities for its central position, connected to mostly all type of players as a diffuser of information and pioneer in their education,

In conclusion, this internship allowed us to acquire great insight in the tourism industry of Portugal, particularly from the perspective of Tour Operator, at Ytravel, in the different business areas: Portugal A2Z Walking & Biking, Bikotel and A2Z Tourism Consulting. Since their inception, these brands have been developing actions and projects aimed at the creation and improvement of resources and the promotion of Portugal's destination for an adventure and nature aspect, both cycling and walking. Throughout the internship we applied knowledge acquired throughout the course, as well as increased our own skills. And with Ytravel, it was possible to get to know all the work that goes into building a “destination” – from the groundwork of the creating trails and other such products as part of the consulting team to the combination of all the suppliers and services need to create a tourist product and sell it to the consumer as part of the tour operator team. I was also able to have a direct insight into how a sustainable certification can be applied to a tour operator, what are the goals that can be achieved and their ramification throughout the tourism industry.

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## ANNEXES

## Annex I

### Marketing Text: Top 10 things to do in the Portuguese Historical Villages

Available in full at: <https://www.portugal-a2z.com/en/blog/top-10-things-to-do-in-the-portuguese-historical-villages/>



Come and discover very small points on the world map, which not only belong to the oldest European frontier, but they have also forever changed the destiny of a country.

**Twelve Centenary Villages**, scattered throughout **central Portugal** – welcome to the Historical Villages! Land of mesmerizing landscapes, deserted roads, ancestral rails and stunning castles, you now have the privilege of walking where conquerors walked, walking through some of Portugal's most impressive natural parks, or simply walking to the nearest restaurant and savoring years of wisdom. An unforgettable journey to explore history, traditions and the aromas of a territory so diverse, open to adventure! Do not miss the Top 10 of Portugal's Historical Villages:

#### 1. Gastronomy

Get ready to sample the best delicacies and fantastic regional products! It is the tasting of the best of Portuguese gastronomy, washed down with the best wines. Main examples of regional products include kid, lamb, sausages and olive oils, typical of the central region of Portugal, which will always find in various recipes. A few examples are the Serra da Estrela cheese, which is considered the oldest and most recognized national cheese, the Serra da Lousã honey, the various wine options you can incorporate in the trip from sparkling wines to reds and cherries that you can find near the Cova da Beira.

#### 2. Explore the ancient village of Idanha-a-Velha

One of the oldest of the set of the Historical Villages of Portugal, with a history that dates back to the 1st century BC. A space where Roman founded cities and later on an episcopal seat under Suevian and Visigothic rule, it is remarkable for the set of ruins it preserves, remains of these different eras. To visit you will find the Torre dos Templários (Templars Tower), also known as Torre de Menagem, unique vestige of the Castelo de Idanha-a-Velha (castle), built above the base of a Roman temple dedicated to the goddess Venus, the Roman bridge on the Pónsul river, that once connected Mérida to Braga, and the Lagar de Varas (oil press) where it is still possible to see closely how the olive oil was produced. A unique place among the history of Portugal, with several vestiges of the great civilizations that preceded us, with opportunities to venture yourself in the slopes, in mountain biking style, or simply get lost in the beauty of this picturesque village.

#### 3. Know the History and Monuments

Made of granite or schist, the Historical Villages preserve a rich history of conquest and battles, evidenced by the various monuments and legends that surround them. They are often distinguished in the distance by the haughty towers of their medieval castles, and they are also lined up along the border with Spain. Between Moors and Christians, Castilians and Portuguese, for many centuries, in a total of a 900-year-old history, there are many stories to discover. Among the castles, you will also find Renaissance churches, or Romantic ones as the Igreja Matriz Linhares da Beira (main church), which holds boards attributed to Grão Vasco, an important 16th-century painter. Among the many battles, there are also stories of courage, such as that of Princess Isabel, the bastard daughter of King D. Fernando exchanged in marriage to ensure peace with Spain, or fantastic stories such as the legend of the table with precious stones of Almeida Village, table that supposedly existed in the time of the Arabs and gave name to the village. These villages, from the center of Portugal, have many secrets and treasures.

#### 4. Discover the "Village crib", Piódão

A place hidden from the world, with a dazzling architecture created in harmony with nature and surrounded by that same magnificent and pure landscape. Sometimes called "village crib", by the way their houses are scattered along the hillside, nestled by the Açor mountain range. It was the springs and pastures of this mountain that attracted the Lusitanian shepherds years ago, a tradition that continues to this day, besides providing a beauty that is ready to be admired. The houses are built in traditional schist but they have roofs covered with slabs and doors and wooden windows painted in blue, which create a unique effect at night with artificial light.

## Annex II

### Example of a day in a Holiday Documentation



Leave Porto crossing the D Luis Bridge to the south side of the river. Here at Cais de Gaia is located most of the Port wine cellars. If you didn't have the time to visit one, this is probably the last chance you have this week.

Ride along the Douro until its mouth and then head south along the coast, mostly on bike paths, with beautiful sandy beaches on our right. This is the busiest stretch of coast you will be cycling all week, so there are dozens of restaurants and bars to stop at for snacks and for lunch, and many beaches to choose from as well. So, take your time and enjoy a traditional Portuguese meal or just have a drink looking at the Atlantic Ocean!

At Miramar you will pass by the 17th century Senhor da Pedra (Chapel of the Stone Lord) that stands over a giant boulder on the shore break. The Chapel with a hexagonal design displays two large blue and white, hand painted tile side panels sit either side of the magnificent wooden, front entrance door, both making mention of the pagan temple that once existed there and the importance of archaeological finds also on this spot.

Today the largest town you will pass is Espinho, originally a small fishing village boasting little more than a minor canning industry, the beach resort of Espinho now draws crowds to its golden beach and varied attractions, although the odd colorful narrow fishing boats can still be seen on the sand, especially at the fisherman's neighborhood in the south of Espinho.

The final part of your cycling day will be on the forest bike path leading you to the beach of Furadouro, with a reputation both for its fishing and surfing, defining very different eras and approaches to life on the beach, the extensive Furadouro Beach comes with the strong waves of the Atlantic.  
Your final destination is Ovar, known for the typical Portuguese tiles "azulejos".

In Ovar, by the end of the 19th-century semi-industrial pattern tiles were applied in the facades of most of public buildings, ornamented with balusters, pine cones and small ceramics statues. Tiles became increasingly more democratic and could be seen now on private-owned houses. These pattern tiles mostly with flowery motifs were produced in the factories of Vila Nova de Gaia and Aveiro.



#### Highlights:

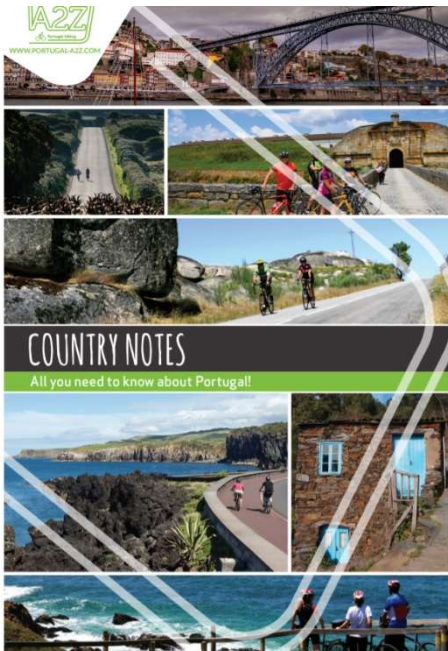
- 17<sup>th</sup> century Capela do Senhor da Pedra (Chapel of the Stone Lord)
- Furadouro beach
- Ovar tile buildings
- Cycling paths along the ocean and forest

#### Accommodation 1:

Aqua Hotel  
(+351) 256 575 105

## Annex III

### Portugal A2Z's Country Notes on a Biking Holiday



PACKING LIST FOR CYCLING IN PORTUGAL		
Black - Optional    Orange - Mandatory    The ** indicates what's provided		
<b>TOILETRIES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Shampoo*</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Shower gel*</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Deodorant*</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Hair brush</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Tooth brush</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Toothpaste*</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Lotion*</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Razor/ shaving kit*</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Nail clippers</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Towel/ Towel (lightweight to enhance pack drying, like the PackTowl)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Laundry detergent*</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Anti-inflammatory (Advil)</li> </ul> <small>*Pack small travel size packages (under 100ml)</small>	<b>REGULAR CLOTHES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Underwear / boxers (3 to 5 pair)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Socks (2 to 3 pair)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Slacks, blue jeans or leggings (1 pair)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Comfortable pants (zip-off legs or rain pants are substitute)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> T-shirts (2 pair)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Swimsuit</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Footwear</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Running/ casual shoes (1 pair)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Touring shoes – good for walking as well as riding (1 pair)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sandals, flip-flops, or lightweight shoes (1 pair)</li> </ul>	<b>BIKE EQUIPMENT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Cycling glasses</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Bike lights or head lamp</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Helmet**</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Air pump</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Tube**</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Tire levers</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Spare tire**</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Repair kit</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Chain multi tools</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Chain pin**</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Chain oil</li> </ul> <small>** If you bring your own bike, we advise you to bring your own tools and spare parts.</small>
<b>TECHNICAL CLOTHES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sweatshirts / shirts 1st layer</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Jacket 2nd Layer Polar 100</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Jacket 2nd Layer Polar 200</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Windbreaker</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Cycling windbreaker vest</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Jacket 3rd Layer (Goretex or similar waterproof)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pants 3rd Layer (Goretex or similar)</li> </ul>	<b>BIKE SPECIFIC CLOTHES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Cycling pants (1 to 2 pair)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Cycling shorts (1 to 3 pair)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Cycling socks (2 to 3 pair)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Windbreaker vest</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Cycling jersey(s)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Cycling gloves</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Leg warmers or rain pants (1 pair)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Light, long-sleeved shirt for layering and sun protection (1 pair)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Rain gear, jacket and pants</li> </ul>	<b>PROTECTION</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sunglasses</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Goretex / Windstopper gloves</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Bandana or Buff</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Wool or fleece hat</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Balaclava</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Insect repellent</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 30+ Sunscreen</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Lip Balm (i.e. Chapstick / Blistex)</li> </ul>
<b>DOCUMENTS / TRAVEL</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Airline tickets</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Passport</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Photo ID.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Credit/debit cards</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Euros (cash – €50)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Vaccination card</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Emergency phone numbers</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Travel Insurance</li> </ul>	<b>MISC.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Camera</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Camera charger &amp; batteries</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Memory cards</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Waterproof ziplock or plastic bags</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Waist pack</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Cell phone &amp; charger</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Energy Bars</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Day "Garnet Back" pack 5-15L (for snacks, water, camera, jacket)</li> </ul>	<b>RUN / LEISURE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Deck of cards</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Novel</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Notebook</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pen / pencil</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Music player &amp; headphones</li> </ul>



#### RECOMMENDATIONS

##### STAY SAFE

Portugal is a safe country, but this does not mean that you should throw caution to the wind. Like in any other tourist areas, you might want to have in mind that pickpockets do tend to target tourists more frequently – but some common sense should be enough to keep you safe.

##### RESPECT

When visiting churches or other religious monuments, try to wear appropriate clothes, meaning "no bikinis".

##### COMMUNICATIONS AND EMERGENCY

Dial 112 for the emergencies. There are two different authorities with which you might come into contact: inside cities the blue-uniformed PSP (Policia de Seguranca Pablica), responsible among other things for incidents involving tourists; outside cities, the GNR (Guarda Nacional Republicana) police the rural areas and patrol the roads and motorways.

##### GRATUITIES

Tipping in Portugal is not as important as in other parts of the world. So, remember, only tip to show your appreciation for exceptional service. The amount will depend on the quality of the service. Taxi drivers and waiting staff can be tipped by rounding the bill up to the nearest euro. In restaurants, you may also round the bill, like in the cafes, but if you feel the service deserves it maybe also add 10% of the bill.

##### SERVICES

##### BANKS & CURRENCY

The banks are open to the public between 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Monday to Friday. Banks and post offices are the most reliable places to change traveller checks and generally offer the best rates. Our currency is the Euro. Try bringing smaller bills such as 10 and 20 as it is often difficult to get change for larger bills.

Reference exchange rate: 1 € = 1,13 \$USD or 1 € = 0,86 EGBP.

##### VISA & PASSPORTS

None required for EU nationals. Nationals of Canada, New Zealand, Australia and the USA can stay for 90 days visa-free. Everyone else needs a visa. Being a member of the Schengen Agreement, business travellers from the Schengen group of nations can obtain a 90 day Schengen Visa when entering Portugal.



#### PORTUGAL, THE COUNTRY

A small nation, in the southwest of Europe, between Spain and the Atlantic Ocean, Portugal is officially comprised of Continental Portugal and two archipelagos named Madeira and Azores, both located far into the Atlantic. Continental Portugal has one of the oldest borders of the world, but it is nevertheless a smallish country measuring just 560 km (350 mi) north to south and 220 km (135 mi) from east to west. It is divided into five regions: the north of Portugal, a region with a strong but always open-hearted northern identity. In the center one finds an incredible variety of natural landscapes from the coast bathed by the Atlantic sea to pine forests and hidden historical and picturesque villages. Lisbon is a unique combination of the past and the future, with the smell of flowers and sea in the air. Alentejo on the other hand is where tales of fishermen battling the sea join stories of the conquests that formed Portugal. And finally the Algarve is a picturesque spot ideal for both scenic walks on land and sea, as well as relaxing and enjoying the sports and nightlife.

Northwest of Continental Portugal in the Atlantic Ocean there is the Madeira archipelago a land full of colour and a popular year-round resort visited by millions, the leading Portuguese port in cruise line dockings. In the midst of the blue immensity of the Atlantic, west of the Continent we find the archipelago of Azores. Nine volcanic islands (São Miguel, Flores, São Jorge, Faial, Pico, Santa Maria, Terceira, Graciosa e Corvo) connected by their natural beauty and rich biodiversity, in a symphony of colors where the green landscape is contrasted by the vast blue sea and dotted by the most beautiful and colorful flowers.

#### A LITTLE INTO THE HISTORY AND CULTURE

With palaeolithic art in the C6a Valley dating back to 22000 years, Portugal was being occupied by many civilizations, throughout the years, from the Celts (around 700bc), to the Phoenicians, the Greeks, Romans and after that the Visigoths. The 8th Century marks the beginning of the Moor occupation, that crossed the Strait of Gibraltar. However Portugal's true history starts in 1143, as it emerged as a country, in the northern region of the current land, after a 15 year rebellion by Dom Afonso Henriques, our first king. This was followed by years of wars, conquering cities farther south from the Moors, as well as several independence wars with the neighbouring realm of Castile. Echos of these years can still be felt and in many cities, their castles and walls. However the 15th and 16th centuries, the "Golden Decades", also known as the "Age of Discoveries", brought peace and prosperity.

Our sailors made worldwide discoveries from the maritime path to India, trading with China and the colonization of Brazil. Pestebril has endured three french invasions during the Napoleonic Wars; put a stop to a dictatorship in 1974 using just peaceful resistance, songs and the carnation flower - Carnation revolution and become a founding member of NATO, OECD, and EFTA, entering the European Community (now the European Union) in 1986. After some troubled years, with recessions and necessary economic intervention, Portugal has begun to again flourish in the 2010s. Emerging as a popular destination, we are the hosts of the most important event in the world - Web Summit, starting in 2016, also the year we were the European Champions and more recently we were the winners of the Eurovision contest for the first time in 2017.

## Annex IV

### Biosphere's Goals/Action in Summary

<i>Strategic Guidelines</i>	<i>Strategic Goals</i>	<i>Actions to Develop</i>	<i>Summary of the Activities/Evidence</i>
1. Business Performance	1.1 Promoting responsible and digital marketing	Non-discriminatory language;	Session with Human Resources agent regarding appropriate language + Shared with all employees
1. Business Performance	1.1 Promoting responsible and digital marketing	Clear reliable promotional messages;	All leaflets and online information are updated regularly
1. Business Performance	1.1 Promoting responsible and digital marketing	Promotional messages are in the most common languages;	All details and messages are at least in ENG and PT – majority of promotional messages are also in FR, GE and ES
1. Business Performance	1.2 Fighting seasonality	Combat the seasonality;	Warn against peak heat sales (July and August) + programs throughout the year
1. Business Performance	1.3 Developing new products/ services	Create innovative activities, services and products;	Carmelite Route, on the walking slope (Coimbra-Fátima) - 115km + developing app with route highlights + #PortugalA2Z
2. Instruments for a Sustainable Tourism Policy	2.1 Responsible Tourism Policy	Responsible Tourism Policy, approved, accessible and translated;	Work session between me and the Human Resources agent to develop it
2. Instruments for a Sustainable Tourism Policy	2.1 Responsible Tourism Policy	Inform the partner practices and initiatives;	Translate the Policy to English (Annex V)
2. Instruments for a Sustainable Tourism Policy	2.3 Staff satisfaction, training and motivation	Ensure that the staff remains motivated;	Questionnaire (Annex VI) + Conciliation measures
2. Instruments for a Sustainable Tourism Policy	2.4 Conciliation measures	Ensure that the staff remains motivated;	
3. Conservation and improvement of Cultural Heritage	3.1 Participation in the preservation of cultural resources	Participation of local artists for the development of cultural activities;	Workshops in Goat's Cheese and Miniature Schist Villages
3. Conservation and improvement of Cultural Heritage	3.2 Encourage visitor education	Elements of local cuisine in the catering and / or marketing;	Only use local restaurants
4. Economic and Social Development of a Destination	4.1 Promote economic and social development of the local community	Develop projects for social purposes and provide that information to clients;	To be developed
4. Economic and Social Development of a Destination	4.1 Promote economic and social development of the local community	Develop measures to support the local economy;	Always local SMTEs for almost every service in a package holiday
4. Economic and Social Development of a Destination	4.1 Promote economic and social development of the local community	Incorporate elements of traditional local and / or contemporary culture;	Workshops in Goat's Cheese and Miniature Schist Villages
4. Economic and Social Development of a Destination	4.1 Promote economic and social development of the local community	Integrate the Biosphere community;	To be developed
4. Economic and Social Development of a Destination	4.2 Responsible attitude towards staff and suppliers	Gather recommendations and suggestions from entity employees;	Questionnaire (Annex VI) + Conciliation measures
4. Economic and Social Development of a Destination	4.2 Responsible attitude towards staff and suppliers	Develop conciliation measures;	

4. Economic and Social Development of a Destination	4.2 Responsible attitude towards staff and suppliers	Sustainable purchasing and subcontracting policies;	Creation of the Policy
4. Economic and Social Development of a Destination	4.2 Responsible attitude towards staff and suppliers	Approach agents and suppliers about adopting a commitment to sustainability;	To be developed
5. Environmental Conservation	5.1 Protection of the Biodiversity	Informational resources to increase awareness and respect for ecosystems;	To be further developed
5. Environmental Conservation	5.2 Control and Management of Energy	Control Consumption;	Already in place
5. Environmental Conservation	5.3 Control and Management of Water	Develop measures for responsible water use by customers;	Already in place – reusable bottles are provided and encouraged
5. Environmental Conservation	5.3 Control and Management of Water	Control Consumption in the offices;	Refillable water is provided
5. Environmental Conservation	5.4 Waste Management and Control	Measures to minimize the use of disposable products and general consumables;	Reutilization of extra papers; GPS instructions are reutilized;
5. Environmental Conservation	5.4 Waste Management and Control	Selective collection and maximum recycling of waste;	Use to the eco points;
5. Environmental Conservation	5.4 Waste Management and Control	Use reusable packaging;	Reutilization of bags and kits;
5. Environmental Conservation	5.5 Management and control of atmospheric emissions	Encourage the use of public or low-emission transport;	Eg. Metro system
5. Environmental Conservation	5.5 Management and control of atmospheric emissions	Carbon footprint;	To be developed
6. Client Satisfaction	6.1 Quality customer service	Basic customer service protocols;	Already in place
6. Client Satisfaction	6.1 Quality customer service	Measuring customer satisfaction;	Evaluation Form (Annex IX)
6. Client Satisfaction	6.1 Quality customer service	Fight against harassment, abuse, etc.;	Responsible Tourism (Annex X)
6. Client Satisfaction	6.1 Quality customer service	Measure customer satisfaction, and whether company activity has improved customer knowledge of the Destination;	Evaluation Form (Annex IX)
6. Client Satisfaction	6.1 Quality customer service	Encourage customers and employees to adopt healthy practices (exercise, healthy eating, cycling, etc.);	It is an active company
6. Client Satisfaction	6.1 Quality customer service	Correct reception, resolution and evaluation of complaints;	Developed after the certification by me
6. Client Satisfaction	6.2 Customer Security	Create protocol for possible emergency situations;	Already in Place
6. Client Satisfaction	6.2 Customer Security	Promote customer safety;	Already in Place
6. Client Satisfaction	6.2 Customer Security	Establish food safety measures;	Collect medical information from clients
6. Client Satisfaction	6.3 Responsible Customer Attitude	Promote responsible behaviour guidelines;	Responsible Tourist (Annex X)
6. Client Satisfaction	6.4 Sustainability information and awareness	Providing training and / or sustainability awareness resources for employees / customers;	To be developed
6. Client Satisfaction	6.5 Universal accessibility	Ensure and improve accessibility;	Already in Place
6. Client Satisfaction	6.5 Universal accessibility	Improve existing accessibility conditions in terms of motor accessibility;	Already in Place

## Annex V

### Responsible Tourism Policy

#### *Responsible Tourism Policy*



Aware of the importance of maintaining and development sustainable tourism, and assuming the principles, that were specifically adopted in the World Charter on Sustainable Tourism, A2Z Portugal is committed to carrying out a sustainable management of its activities, by adopting commitments aimed at preventing, eliminating or reducing the impact of our facilities and activities, both internal and external, as well as to optimize the sustainability of our offers / activities by improving their behaviour towards the environment. With this purpose in mind, A2Z Portugal has adopted the following responsible tourism policy, with which it undertakes to comply with the requirements established in the Biosphere Tour Operation indicative, which include, among other things, the legal requirements that regulate the effects generated by the tourist activity.

We commit ourselves to motivate and educate our employees with training and awareness workshops, based on the principles of Responsible Tourism, to promote good environmental practices and the participation in external activities, and to impart, both internally and externally, about the developments and the environmental and social actions, the company does.

We also understand that it is important to have respect for the Destinations we make known and where we work, as well as to attempt to harmonize our clients' interests with local communities, while showing respect for their traditions and material and immaterial cultural heritage, as it is absolutely essential to ensure a sustainable experience for all.

We also pledge to combat sexual exploitation, or any other form of exploitation and commercial harassment, in particular of children, adolescents, women and minorities. We also include the commitment to, where possible, adopt accessibility measures for people with disabilities (sensory, physical, intellectual and psychic).

One of our main objectives is to improve sustainable management, assuming the commitments for continuous improvement in all spheres of sustainability: social, economic and environmental, as well as customer satisfaction. To this effect, future projects and activities will be subject to criteria of sustainability and efficiency measures for the use of resources.

This Responsible Tourism Policy will be updated whenever circumstances require it, adopting and publishing in both cases, new sustainability objectives.

# Annex VI

## Employee's Questionnaire (only in PT)

### FICHA DE AVALIAÇÃO DO CLIMA ORGANIZACIONAL

Objetivo: Conhecer as expectativas, motivações, necessidades e níveis de satisfação dos/as colaboradores/as da YTravel LDA.  
Metodologia de Aplicação: Documento anónimo e confidencial. Deverá seleccionar a opção de 1 (mínimo - negativo) a 5 (máximo - positivo) que melhor corresponde à sua apreciação.

\*Required



#### Relação da Direção com a equipa

Visa identificar o comportamento do líder em relação à sua equipa, ou seja, se este/a apoia, incentiva, disponibiliza recursos, se existe uma relação harmoniosa entre a equipa e o/a líder.

1.\*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Mínimo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Máximo

#### Relacionamento interpessoal

Visa identificar a maneira como ocorrem as interações entre as pessoas dentro da YTravel LDA, ou seja, verificar o grau de relacionamento que prevalece entre os/as colaboradores/as, entre estes/as e as chefes, verificando se existe um ambiente de confiança, apoio, harmonia, respeito e consideração entre os membros da empresa.

2.\*

Mark only one oval per row.

	Mínimo (1)	2	3	4	Máximo (5)
Relacionamento interpessoal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ambiente de confiança, apoio, harmonia, respeito e consideração mútuos	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

#### Comunicação organizacional

6.\*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Mínimo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Máximo

#### Imagem da YTravel, Lda

Visa conhecer as percepções dos/as colaboradores/as sobre a Ytravel LDA no que diz respeito aos valores institucionais, à ética, ao tratamento dado aos clientes, à qualidade e à produtividade no ambiente e nos procedimentos de trabalho. Visa também identificar o sentimento de identidade do/a colaborador/a em relação à empresa.

7.\*

Mark only one oval per row.

	Mínimo (1)	2	3	4	Máximo (5)
Correspondência das práticas da empresa aos seus valores institucionais	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Respeito e tratamento dado aos/às Clientes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Qualidade e produtividade do serviço oferecido pela Ytravel	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sentimento de identidade em relação à Ytravel (ex: identificação com a empresa, rejeição nas práticas da empresa)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

#### Processo de decisão

Visa identificar o grau de autonomia que é dado aos/as colaboradores/as para a realização das suas atividades, bem como o quanto as pessoas se sentem envolvidas nas decisões estratégicas da empresa.

8.\*

Mark only one oval per row.

	Mínimo (1)	2	3	4	Máximo (5)
Autonomia no desempenho da função	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Envolvimento nas decisões estratégicas da Ytravel, Lda	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

#### Nível de motivação e satisfação como colaborador/a da Ytravel, Lda

9.\*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Mínimo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Máximo

09/05/2019

### FICHA DE AVALIAÇÃO DO CLIMA ORGANIZACIONAL

Visa identificar a percepção dos/as colaboradores/as em relação ao processo de comunicação existente na empresa. Este parâmetro deverá abordar questões relacionadas com a forma como as pessoas percebem como são divulgadas as políticas e as orientações da YTravel, a transparência e rapidez dos procedimentos de trabalho, a eficiência dos meios utilizados, bem como a comunicação existente entre os gestores e sua equipa, entre os componentes da própria equipa e entre as diversas áreas funcionais da empresa.

3.\*

Mark only one oval per row.

	Mínimo (1)	2	3	4	Máximo (5)
Forma como são divulgadas as políticas e as orientações da empresa	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transparência e rapidez na comunicação dos procedimentos de trabalho	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Comunicação existente entre os/as colegas da equipa	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Comunicação existente entre a equipa e a Direção	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

#### Desenvolvimento profissional

Visa identificar a percepção dos/as colaboradores/as no que diz respeito à maneira como a YTravel LDA prevê a oportunidade de crescimento e desenvolvimento profissional, e o quanto a empresa atende às aspirações e expectativas de progressão profissional.

4.\*

Mark only one oval per row.

	Mínimo (1)	2	3	4	Máximo (5)
Contributo da empresa para o desenvolvimento e valorização profissional	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Correspondência da empresa às expectativas de progressão profissional	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

#### Apoios/benefícios

Visa identificar a percepção dos/as colaboradores/as em relação ao equilíbrio entre as recompensas materiais e imateriais oferecidas pela empresa em relação aos esforços despendidos para a realização das suas atividades.

5.\*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Mínimo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Máximo

#### Apoio logístico

Visa verificar o grau de apoio que a empresa providencia aos seus/as colaboradores/as em relação às condições e aos instrumentos de trabalho necessários para um bom desempenho, o quanto a empresa facilita a execução dos seus principais trabalhos.

09/05/2019

### FICHA DE AVALIAÇÃO DO CLIMA ORGANIZACIONAL

#### Indique três medidas motivacionais que gostasse de propor para a empresa:

10.\*

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## Annex VII

### Local partners Guidelines and Code of Conduct (only in PT)



#### > Enquadramento

O **Código de Conduta – Parcerias Locais** é um documento que integra um conjunto de princípios que regem as relações externas de parceria, da YTravel, Lda, contendo orientações e regras de natureza ética e deontológica.

Este Código de Conduta pretende constituir uma referência para o público, no que respeita aos padrões de conduta desta empresa, quer no relacionamento entre colaboradores/as, quer no relacionamento com terceiros, contribuindo para que esta empresa seja reconhecida como um exemplo de excelência, integridade, rigor, responsabilidade e sustentabilidade.

O presente Código de Conduta foi assim oriado com o objetivo fundamental de:

- Partilhar os princípios que orientam as relações de parceria e as regras que devem orientar o comportamento de todos/as os/as colaboradores/as;
- Promover e incentivar, nos parceiros, a adoção dos princípios de atuação e regras de sustentabilidade definidos neste Código;
- Consolidar a imagem institucional da YTravel, Lda, nas comunidades locais onde atua, enquanto empresa que aplica Boas Práticas de Turismo Sustentável.

A responsabilidade social da YTravel, Lda determina igualmente a aplicação do princípio da sustentabilidade, nas suas dimensões económica, social e ambiental, como valor orientador de todas as atividades e relações de parceria.

Em última instância, o presente Código constitui um elemento enquadrador da atuação relacional dos/as colaboradores/as da YTravel, Lda, visando refletir a cultura da empresa e constituir uma referência valorativa para a orientação das parcerias a desenvolver com a comunidade local.

A aplicação deste Código de Conduta e a sua observância não impede, nem dispensa a aplicação de outras regras de conduta ou deontológicas, de fonte legal ou de qualquer outra natureza, aplicáveis a determinadas funções, atividades, ou grupos profissionais.



#### > Relacionamento com a comunidade local e Meio Ambiente

A YTravel, Lda desenvolve uma política de Responsabilidade Social ativa e de contribuição para a melhoria das comunidades envolventes, com forte preocupação ambiental, de bem-estar económico-social. Deve assim continuar a assumir uma atitude socialmente responsável na empresa e perante a opinião pública, bem como adotar uma política de sustentabilidade ambiental consciente.

A YTravel, Lda deverá promover sempre junto da comunidade local e seus parceiros formais a sua política de sustentabilidade, e desafiar ao desenvolvimento de novas medidas de sustentabilidade, que a eles se possam aplicar.

#### > Atividades Externas

Os/as colaboradores/as devem empenhar-se na defesa dos interesses da YTravel, Lda, sendo propriedade da sua empresa os resultados do trabalho nela desenvolvido, inclusive os de natureza intelectual.

Os/as colaboradores/as, respeitando o quadro legal e os normativos internos definidos pelo YTravel, Lda não pode exercer atividades que sejam incompatíveis e/ou suscetíveis de gerar conflitos de interesse.

Atividades de trabalho voluntário são apoiadas pela YTravel, Lda.

#### > Comunicação Externa

A comunicação ao público e à imprensa de assuntos que envolvem a YTravel, Lda e as suas parcerias deverá ser efetuada pela Direção ou pelo representante delegado para o efeito, no sentido de assegurar um canal de informação único e fidedigno.

No relacionamento com os parceiros, a YTravel, Lda assegurará informação completa, coerente, verdadeira, transparente e em tempo útil, com total respeito pelo dever de informar.



#### > Relacionamento com Parceiros

A YTravel, Lda baseia as suas relações, com os parceiros locais, em princípios fundamentais de honestidade e respeito mútuo. Deverá assegurar sempre a igualdade de tratamento e a não discriminação.

É intenção da YTravel, Lda desenvolver sinergias com parceiros que respeitem as regras de boa conduta nas suas relações incluindo as relações com os seus/suas colaboradores/as e comunidade local, através da subscrição e cumprimento do Código de Conduta, elaborado pela YTravel, Lda.

As decisões devem ser tomadas no melhor interesse da YTravel, Lda e do seus parceiros, e não com base em considerações ou relações pessoais. Podem ocorrer conflitos de interesse quando as relações com atuais ou potenciais parceiros comprometerem um julgamento independente e são.

Os/as colaboradores/as de ambas as organizações devem lutar ativamente contra todas as formas de corrupção, ativa ou passiva, tendo especial atenção a qualquer forma de pagamentos, favores e cumplicidades que possam induzir a criação de vantagens ilícitas, que constituem formas sutis de corrupção, tais como ofertas ou recebimentos de parceiros.

A YTravel, Lda considera impróprias as ofertas que possam ser associadas a suborno, influenciando o destinatário ou fazendo-o sentir-se obrigado a retribuir.

#### > Relacionamento Institucional com Outras Entidades

A YTravel, Lda deve manter, nas relações institucionais com outras entidades ou organizações, nacionais e internacionais, uma postura respeitosa, cooperativa e participativa, apoiando iniciativas que se enquadrem no âmbito das suas atividades e acrescentem valor para a empresa, para os/as seus/suas colaboradores/as e para as suas políticas de sustentabilidade.



Em questões relacionadas com a atividade e imagem pública da YTravel, Lda os/as colaboradores/as, enquanto tal, devem abster-se de conceder entrevistas ou fornecer informações, exceto quando expressamente mandatados/as para o efeito.

Todas as informações prestadas aos meios de comunicação social ou contidas em publicidade devem possuir carácter informativo e verdadeiro, respeitando os parâmetros culturais e éticos da empresa.

#### > Aplicação

O presente Código de Conduta entra em vigor imediatamente após a aprovação pela Direção da YTravel, Lda e a sua divulgação a todos/as os/as colaboradores/as e parceiros.

#### > Divulgação

O presente Código será divulgado pela YTravel, Lda, no seu site, e através de outros meios internos.

No momento da sua formalização, cada colaborador/a e parceiro deverá assinar na primeira folha do presente do documento, atestando ter conhecimento deste Código de Conduta e o compromisso individual/organizacional do seu cumprimento.

## Annex VIII

### Excerpt's of the Recruitment Code and Professional Ethics (only in PT)



#### > Enquadramento

O **Código de Recrutamento e Ética Profissional** é um documento que integra um conjunto de princípios e conceitos, de natureza ética e deontológica, que devem orientar a unidade, na sua política de recrutamento e, fundamentalmente, na sua postura perante a **Igualdade de Oportunidades de Emprego**.

*"O/a trabalhador/a ou candidato/a a emprego do setor privado ou público tem direito a igualdade de oportunidades e de tratamento no que se refere ao acesso ao emprego, à formação e promoção ou carreira profissionais e às condições de trabalho, não podendo ser privilegiado/a, beneficiado/a, prejudicado/a, privado/a de qualquer direito ou isento/a de qualquer dever em razão, nomeadamente, de ascendência, idade, sexo, orientação sexual, estado civil, situação familiar, situação económica, instrução, origem ou condição social, património genético, capacidade de trabalho reduzida, deficiência, doença crónica, nacionalidade, origem étnica ou raça, território de origem, língua, religião, convicções políticas ou ideológicas e filiação sindical, devendo o Estado promover a igualdade de acesso a tais direitos."*

CITE – Comissão para a Igualdade no Trabalho e no Emprego



- Assegurar as condições de igualdade de emprego para os/as residentes locais, grupos de minorias, mulheres e pessoas com capacidades diferentes;

- Estabelecimento de contratos terá sempre como base os **critérios de igualdade e justiça**;

- A YTravel, Lda contribuirá para o combate à utilização indevida de trabalho menor, por forma a evitar o abandono escolar.

De ressaltar também que, no caso das ações de formação profissional dirigidas a profissão exercida predominantemente por colaboradoras/as de um dos sexos, será dada, sempre que se justifique, preferência a colaboradoras/as do sexo com menor representação, bem como, sendo apropriado, a colaborador/a com escolaridade reduzida, sem qualificação ou responsável por família monoparental ou no caso de licença parental ou adoção.

#### > RETRIBUIÇÃO E REMUNERAÇÃO

Os/as colaboradores/as da YTravel, Lda têm direito à igualdade de condições de trabalho, em particular quanto à **retribuição ou remuneração**, devendo os elementos que a determinam não conter qualquer discriminação fundada no sexo.

**A igualdade de retribuição ou de remuneração implica que, para trabalho igual ou de valor igual:**

- Qualquer modalidade de retribuição ou de remuneração variável, nomeadamente a paga à tarefa, seja estabelecida na base da mesma unidade de medida;

- A retribuição ou a remuneração calculada em função do tempo de trabalho seja a mesma;

- As diferenças de retribuição ou de remuneração não constituem discriminação quando assentes em critérios objetivos, comuns a homens e mulheres, nomeadamente, baseados em mérito, produtividade, assiduidade ou antiguidade;

- As licenças, faltas ou dispensas relativas à proteção da parentalidade não podem fundamentar diferenças na retribuição ou na remuneração dos/as trabalhadores/as;

- Os sistemas de descrição de tarefas e de avaliação de funções devem assentar em critérios objetivos comuns a homens e mulheres, de forma a excluir qualquer **discriminação baseada no sexo**.



#### > Igualdade no Acesso ao Emprego, no Trabalho e na Formação Profissional

A YTravel, Lda, em matéria de **Igualdade no Acesso ao Emprego, no Trabalho e na Formação Profissional**, terá sempre em conta que o/a colaborador/a ou candidato/a a emprego tem direito a **igualdade de oportunidades e de tratamento** em matéria de:

- Critérios de seleção e condições de contratação, em qualquer setor de atividade e a todos os níveis hierárquicos;
- Acesso a todos os tipos de orientação, formação e reconversão profissionais de qualquer nível, incluindo a aquisição de experiência prática;
- Retribuição e outras prestações patrimoniais ou remuneração, promoção a todos os níveis hierárquicos e critérios para seleção de trabalhadores/as a despedir;
- Filiação ou participação em estruturas de representação coletiva, ou em qualquer outra organização cujos membros exercem uma determinada profissão, incluindo os benefícios por elas atribuídos;
- Disposições legais relativas ao exercício de uma atividade profissional por estrangeiro ou apátrida;
- Disposições relativas à especial proteção de património genético, gravidez, parentalidade, adoção e outras situações respeitantes à conciliação da atividade profissional com a vida familiar.

A YTravel, Lda terá ainda em consideração, na sua política de recrutamento, as seguintes premissas:

- A exclusão ou restrição de acesso de candidato/a a emprego ou colaborador/a, em razão do sexo, a determinada atividade ou à formação profissional constitui discriminação em função do sexo;

- Os anúncios de oferta de emprego, e outra forma de publicidade ligada à pré-seleção ou ao recrutamento, não pode conter, direta ou indiretamente, qualquer restrição, especificação ou preferência baseada no sexo.



#### > PROIBIÇÃO DE DISCRIMINAÇÃO

- Conceito de discriminação direta:

*"Considera-se que existe discriminação direta sempre que uma pessoa seja sujeita a tratamento menos favorável do que aquele que é, tenha sido, ou venha a ser dado a outra pessoa em situação comparável."* CITE – Comissão para a Igualdade no Trabalho e no Emprego

- Conceito de discriminação indireta:

*"Considera-se que existe discriminação indireta, sempre que uma disposição, critério ou prática aparentemente neutro seja suscetível de colocar uma pessoa, por motivo de um fator de discriminação, numa posição de desvantagem comparativamente com outras, a não ser que essa disposição, critério ou prática seja objetivamente justificada por um fim legítimo e que os meios para o alcançar sejam adequados e necessários."* CITE – Comissão para a Igualdade no Trabalho e no Emprego

Assim, a YTravel, Lda não praticará qualquer tipo de discriminação, direta ou indireta, de acordo com os pontos infra:

- É inválido o ato de retaliação que prejudique o/a colaborador/a em consequência de rejeição ou submissão a ato discriminatório;

- Constitui discriminação a mera ordem ou instrução que tenha por finalidade prejudicar alguém em razão de um fator de discriminação;

- Presume-se abusivo o despedimento ou outra sanção aplicada alegadamente para punir uma infração, quando tenha lugar até um ano após reclamação ou outra forma de exercício de direitos relativos a igualdade e não discriminação;

- A YTravel, Lda não pode, em circunstância alguma, exigir a candidato a emprego ou a trabalhadora a realização ou apresentação de testes ou exames de gravidez. O médico responsável pelos testes e exames médicos só pode comunicar à entidade empregadora se o/a trabalhadora está ou não apta/a para desempenhar a atividade;

# Annex IX

## Excerpts of the Portugal A2Z's Client Evaluation Form (Self-Guided)

### Self-Guided

Description (optional)

Please indicate which trip you had with Portugal A2Z - Walking & Biking:

- Historic Villages
- Porto and Douro Valley
- Sober Villages
- Vicentina Route
- Algarve
- Porto to Lisbon (Atlantic Coast)
- Camino de Santiago
- Other...

How did you find Portugal A2Z - Walking & Biking?

- Google Search
- Friends
- Magazines / Journals
- Catalogues
- Newsletter
- Social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)
- Other...

Rate your A2Z experience globally

	1	2	3	4	5	
Very bad	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Excellent

Section 3 of 9

### A2Z's Performance

Description (optional)

Where you satisfied with the initial briefing and documentation provided? Lets us know how could we improve it

Long-answer text

How do you rate, regarding your trip with A2Z the:

	Very bad	Bad	Reasonable	Good	Very good
Itinerary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A2Z Support thro...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Equipment Condit...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Accommodation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Were there any less than perfect situations during your trip? Where can we improve?

Long-answer text

After section 3 Continue to next section

Section 4 of 9

### Final Touches

Description (optional)

Do you feel that your A2Z trip has allowed you to:

- experience the local communities
- learn about the region's culture and heritage
- experience Portugal's nature while preserving it

What did you like most about your trip?

Long-answer text

If you have any suggestions about your experience with Portugal A2Z - Walking & Biking please leave them here:

Long-answer text

Would you recommend your trip with Portugal A2Z - Walking & Biking to friends or family?

- Yes
- No

Would you like to receive more information about new A2Z offers?

- Yes
- No