

## **The Design of Tourism Policies Adjusted to High Potential Destinations: A Methodology for the Creation of a Green Paper Inspired by the Cávado and the Ave (Portugal)**

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*Public policies regarding the development of sustainable tourism continue to evolve within the European Union. With the changes in tourist trends post-COVID-19, some destinations have initiated certain processes of tourism expansion. These processes must be accompanied by tourism policies tailored to their specific territories. This necessitates a more territorial vision that is aligned with the needs of the local population and in harmony with the four dimensions of sustainability (economic, social, environmental, and institutional). The present research is inspired by the increase in tourist arrivals, observed in the promising destination of the Northern Region of Portugal since 2015, to present a theoretical proposal that has the participation of the local population of tourist destinations, through a literature review, on-site observations and interviews with local agents. The objective is to propose and develop a methodology based on the technique of a Green Paper, a tool for collective intelligence and a preliminary step for the analysis and creation of tourism policies. It is expected to increase confidence in the institutions that manage tourism activity, sustainable reactivation of the economy, resident satisfaction, empowerment and stronger links between local actors and the administration of the destinations.*

**Keywords:** *green paper, tourism policies, governance, local participation, sustainable tourism, fourth dimension of sustainability, high potential destinations*

### **Introduction**

From the 1950s onwards, tourism began to be considered one of the most thriving economic activities in Europe, offering great economic advantages that boosted business, international exchanges and opportunities within and outside the tourism sector (Jafari 1994).

The substantial evolution of the sector from the 1960s led to the development of tourism policies at the local, regional, and national levels. These policies aimed to establish a framework for regulating the sector, which was still in the process of development at the European and global levels, while also prioritizing the maintenance of Sustainable Tourism.

Since the 1980s, significant changes and transformations have been observed in public management processes, driven by the evolving cultural, economic, social, and environmental context of humanity (Fayos-Solá et al. 2012). These changes encompass both structural and conjunctural dimensions.

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From a structural perspective, these transformations align with the guidelines of the EU. Starting from the 1990s, tourism gained greater prominence on the political scale with the publication of the document 'The Role of the Union in Tourism: Green Paper of the Commission' (Commission of the European Communities 1995). This document not only encourages reflection on the European Union's role in the activity but also calls upon interested parties to collaborate (EUR-Lex 2012).

From a more pragmatic conjunctural perspective, the evolution of tourism and its sometimes uncontrolled impacts on social, economic, and environmental contexts have compelled administrations to develop mechanisms for monitoring, regulating, and managing the sector. However, these mechanisms have not always fulfilled their mission, often neglecting the needs of the local population, who are the true stakeholders in the tourist structure of the destination.

These two dimensions, structural and conjunctural, have given rise to structures and instruments that now play a crucial role in supporting the development of tourism management policies (Fayos-Solá et al. 2012).

In line with EU guidelines (Commission of the European Communities 1995), several studies (Lamont et al. 2021, Rozite et al. 2020, Navarro-Jurado et al. 2019, Boukas and Ziakas 2016, Brendehaug et al. 2016, Rodríguez et al. 2014) suggest adopting bottom-up management and organizational strategies to develop tourism policies tailored to the local idiosyncrasies. This approach involves the local population in creating governance systems that align tourist expectations with the needs of the resident community.

Notably, the use of governance-based approaches to design tourism policies is an underdeveloped area in scientific research, as observed through databases like the Web of Science (WoS).

From a broader perspective, tourism activity has been shaping up as an enhancer of the territorial resources of destinations, whether cultural or natural (Cãnoves et al. 2017). In this sense, tourism activity has been favouring the economic and social development of territories distant from first-class tourist destinations (Hinojosa 2020, Vera-Rebollo and Ivars-Baidal 2020, Muñoz Mazón et al. 2012). This push, 'to the authentic', has been accentuated by the COVID-19 health crisis, which opened up new perspectives for tourists and visitors who follow the trend of searching for spaces far from touristified environments, with personalized and unique experiences, in line with the idea of a more sustainable tourism (Pimentel de Oliveira 2020). This reinforces the need to design tourism policies that are more in line with the current reality and the perspectives of territories that present a promising tourism future (Fana et al. 2020, Pimentel de Oliveira 2022).

The scientific literature, as discussed in the following sections, emphasizes the importance of systematization in creating effective tourism policies. This includes providing content and implementing control and monitoring mechanisms, along with designing bottom-up strategies.

Given the above, this research aims to develop a theoretical proposal supported by the technique of a Green Paper, serving as a tool for collective intelligence and a preliminary step for the analysis and creation of tourism

policies, as recommended by the Commission of the European Communities (1995).

Although White Papers on Tourism have been implemented at the regional level in Europe since the 1990s, Green Papers, as documents for collective reflection, are less common at the local level, making this study potentially innovative.

The proposal is based on the four dimensions of sustainability: social, economic, environmental, and institutional, which have been utilized by many researchers (Obradović et al. 2021, Lee and Jan 2019, Pulido-Fernández et al. 2011, Stuart et al. 2007). It adapts to the needs of tourist destinations that have an attractive tourist future, designing a green book, and adjusting to the territory.

To ensure a more territorial contribution, this research focuses on the reality of destinations in the northern region of Portugal, drawing inspiration from the territories of Cávado and Ave. The selection of these territories is not arbitrary, as recent data from INE - Portugal (2022) indicate a positive evolution in recent years, particularly in the tourism sector (Vidal 2022). Additionally, there has been significant growth in the flow of visitors, as stated by the President of Tourism Porto e Norte, Luís Pedro Martins (Publituris 2022). This increase in tourism flow in such a particular environment, such as the Northern Regions of Portugal, requires tourism policies adjusted to their needs and local idiosyncrasies.

In the subsequent sections of the research, an overview of European Union documents, such as Green Papers and White Papers, is presented, along with their development into a Tourism Policy Plan. The literature review and theoretical proposal will incorporate citizen participation as a primary focus, integrating it into the process of developing tourism policies tailored to the territories. Citizen involvement will manifest in two ways: through direct participation in the methodology's development and through personalized, semi-structured interviews with various stakeholders of the destination (Kallio et al. 2016, Komppula 2014).

## **Literature Review**

### *Tourism Policy and Local Residents*

Since the nineteenth century, certain voices in the political and economic sphere began to recognize tourism as a potential tool capable of contributing to the economies of countries. This vision was also shared by the political environment in Portugal, which viewed tourism as a suitable instrument to address its critical economic situation (Cunha 2012).

Building on this premise, some scientific studies directed their theoretical frameworks towards supporting the development of methodologies for designing tourism policies that demonstrate effective management and planning of the industry.

In this context, Fonseca (1936) proposed a methodology divided into three steps to assess and incorporate the tourism industry. Firstly, the author advocated considering the existing artistic value, such as its tourist appeal (as capital).

Second, evaluate the returns this value can generate. Finally, organizing the efforts to achieve the expected results, thus establishing the principles of a tourism development strategy. Carlos and Santos (2015), noted that this vision was predominantly focused on economic aspects, viewing tourism as a mere industry.

From the perspective of tourism policies, they should aim to minimize adverse sociocultural and environmental impacts associated with tourism development. Spencer (2010) suggests involving the local population through mechanisms like tourism advisory committees, public hearings, or satisfaction surveys. This methodology is widely supported by studies conducted by Nunkoo and Ramkissoon (2011).

Another more integrative vision, focusing on social, economic, structural, and political aspects, is presented in the three-step methodology: Diagnosis of environments; Knowledge of available instruments, and governance applied to tourism (Fayos-Solá et al. 2012).

Lamont et al. (2021), use 'participant-governed networks' techniques as an instructive framework to examine the role of community-driven grassroots networks in shaping tourism and leisure public policy. This methodology was also approved by Provan and Kenis (2008) and studied by Lin and Simmons (2017).

All these proposals aim to encourage a conscious reconsideration of tourism, as highlighted by Huete et al. (2008), emphasizing the importance of research that analyses the impacts of the activity and its effects on residents' lives.

From this perspective, Harrill (2004) underscores the fusion of society with tourism within their territories, linking employment and land use with environmental and social aspects. Therefore, "the recognition of the needs of residents must be an integral part of all tourism planning processes" (Pimentel de Oliveira 2022, p. 252). This perspective creates a virtuous circle, where local population support leads to a more favourable reception of tourism by the residents themselves, who become integral actors in the tourist experience of the destination.

In this regard, some scientific studies (Nunkoo and Ramkissoon 2011, Gursoy et al. 2009, Huete et al. 2008, Allen et al. 1993) assert that the local population is more likely to support tourism activity if the positive impacts outweigh the negative consequences. The best strategy to achieve this balance is through the implementation of Bottom-Up policies, which allow the local population access to participation and decision-making processes.

By adopting this participatory approach, authorities grant citizens a crucial role in the development process, "enabling them to have a say in interventions that affect them and over which they previously had limited influence or control" (Kothari and Cooke 2001, p. 5). According to Grzeskowiak et al. (2003), this empowerment of residents is pivotal for the overall satisfaction of the community.

In summary, it is only through the redesign of tourism policies, considering the needs and satisfaction of the local society, that the tourism sector can effectively manage the activity. This approach involves implementing a planning strategy that aligns with the characteristics of the territory, respects its resources and its population, and aims to establish truly sustainable tourism.

In general, for the formulation of tourism policies, the European Union (European Commission 2020) recommends adopting a comprehensive and

standardized three-step methodology: Green Paper, White Paper, and Tourism Policies. Therefore, this research constitutes the initial phase of these three steps, presenting a proposal for a Green Paper with an innovative application specifically, from a local perspective, tailored to the idiosyncrasies of promising spaces, such as the Cávado and Ave, in the North Region of Portugal.

### *EU Books*

#### Green Paper

According to the glossary of the European Union (European Commission 2020), 'Green Books' are documents published by the European Commission that aim to stimulate reflection at the European level on specific issues or topics. These books seek to engage institutional entities as well as local actors in a participatory process of consultation and debate on proposals related to a specific topic.

In this context, a 'Green Book on Tourism' is associated with the concept of collective intelligence (Pimentel de Oliveira 2022) within a tourist destination, be it a locality, region, or country. It facilitates the process of analysing, contrasting, and integrating the knowledge of the destination under study from the various perspectives of the stakeholders within the territory. It is the outcome of reflection, consultation, and debate among the destination's stakeholders, aimed at analysing its structure and operation while also fostering participatory processes related to tourism activity, although it does not provide specific recommendations (Fayos-Solá et al. 2012). Its purpose is to define how the tourism system, its operators, and interest groups function, as well as each of the subsystems. This is achieved through methodological techniques such as meetings involving experts in the economic, social, and environmental fields, interviews with them, workshops, SWOT analysis, and/or PEST analysis.

In essence, it provides a consistent conceptual framework and a platform for identifying the actors within the tourism system, and their roles and responsibilities, while also serving as the starting point for a participatory process. In summary, it reflects the image of the destination and its approach to the tourism sector.

The Green Paper represents the initial phase in the development of tourism policies, serving as the precursor to legislative processes leading to a subsequent document called the 'White Paper.' The White Paper, in turn, lays the foundation for the formulation of specific tourism policies, which, in this case, are tailored to the needs of the analysed territory.

#### White Paper

The 'White Paper' serves as an analytical and institutional guidance tool, particularly in the context of tourism. It operates as a forward-looking instrument, offering solutions to existing challenges within the tourism sector within a specific locality, region, or country.

Its premise begins with the participatory evaluation process, which began previously with the 'Green Book', under the auspices of different local actors.

In essence, a 'White Paper on Tourism' should have the capacity to define strategies, objectives, and actions tailored to each of the stakeholders in the

process. Thus, it represents the second stage in the development of the 'Tourism Policy Plan' (Fayos-Solá et al. 2012).

### Tourism Policy Plan

The need for a well-structured tourism policy has become increasingly evident in recent decades, and this need has been further emphasized following the COVID-19 health crisis. Both public and institutional agencies, as well as the private sector, have recognized the importance of establishing robust institutional frameworks to ensure the sustainability of tourism activities at the sectoral level (Edgell et al. 2013, Fayos-Sola and Alvarez 2014).

The Tourism Policy Plan should be built upon the results obtained in previous documents of analysis and political guidance that facilitate decision-making, such as the 'Green Paper' and the 'White Paper,' as explained earlier.

A Tourism Policy Plan encompasses a series of programs, subprograms, and agreed-upon actions, which are developed collaboratively by public administrations, the private sector, and civil society. Its purpose is to design strategies and achieve objectives related to various aspects of the tourism sector in a destination, including analysis, communication, promotion, distribution, service provision, excellence, and result evaluation (Fayos-Solá et al. 2012).

A Tourism Policy Plan should have the capacity to outline the different components of the governance process. In essence, it serves as the framework examined from the perspective of utilizing tourism as a development tool, considering both human and social capital and participatory governance systems within the destination.

### *Tourism in the Northern Region of Portugal*

According to the Portuguese Tourism Statistics Report (INE-Portugal 2020), tourism has experienced significant growth in the country in recent years, with approximately 24.6 million tourist arrivals in 2019. This represents a 7.9% increase from the previous year, positioning Portugal as the 5th country with the highest surplus (13,100 million euros) in the European tourism balance.

In this context, Portuguese tradition and culture, together with the post-COVID-19 trend that is linked to the search for destinations away from mass tourism, with experiences closer to local autochthony (Pimentel de Oliveira et al. 2022, Remoaldo 2020, Vargas Sánchez 2020, Sintes González 2020, Padrón Fumero and Hernández Martín 2020, Vera-Rebollo and Ivars-Baidal 2020, Couret 2020, among others), are configured as important attractions for tourism in general.

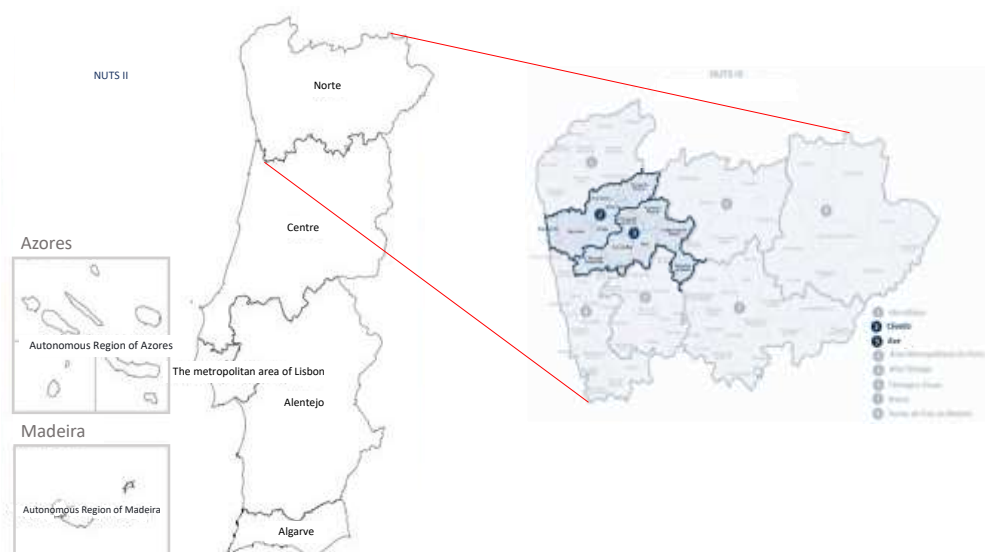
According to Lopes et al. (2018), the region known as the 'Região Norte de Portugal' has become an area where tourism has gained increasing importance in recent years, attracting a growing number of tourists and contributing significantly to economic production. Confirming this trend, the latest annual bulletin from INE-Portugal (2023) reports that all regions of Portugal are expected to see an increase in tourist arrivals in 2022. The Northern Region is positioned as the third region with the highest growth rate, at over 86.6%, compared to the previous year,

ranking just behind Lisbon (121%) and Madeira (90.9%). Consequently, it is emphasized that "the region is expected to play a prominent role in competitiveness through strategic planning that leverages its potential". However, Lopes et al. (2018, p. 2) also express concerns about the heterogeneous nature of tourism development in the region.

In light of these observations, the development of a Tourism Policy Plan tailored to the destination's specific needs would serve as an invaluable management tool.

Regarding the territory, the Cávado and Ave (the territories forming the basis for the methodological development of this research), located in the North of Portugal, consist of 13 municipalities or "Concelhos" (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1.** *Cávado and Ave - NUTS III North of Portugal*



*Source:* Own elaboration based on data from PORDATA (2009) and Comissão de Coordenação e Desenvolvimento Regional do Norte (2022).

Both spaces are characterized as emerging destinations, presenting a tourism composed of a local culture based on gastronomic, artisanal and social traditions, as well as a unique preserved nature.

### The Territories of the Cávado and the Ave

Currently, the wide offer of tourist destinations, as well as the variety of markets, is according to Mendola and Volo (2016), one of the major concerns of emerging destinations. An observation that is seen by Lopes et al. (2018), as a limiting characteristic of the development of measures in similar and neighbouring regional destinations. Therefore, the methodologies implemented in these destinations must be clearly defined, as there is significant competition at both regional and local levels.

Both destinations, Cávado and Ave, present products capable of promoting tourism growth in the short term, such as City Break, Touring and Nature Tourism, as well as other more structured products such as health and wellness tourism,

interesting gastronomic tourism and innovative meetings and conference tourism, among other notable products.

These are territories that knew how to make use of the various classifications of "World Heritage Sites" by UNESCO to restore urban, historical and natural areas with great tourism potential. Broadly speaking, they are defined by three basic singularities: openness to the outside world, a solid tradition and experience in international trade. In addition, they have entrepreneurial and industrial characteristics as well as the consideration of significantly safe regions (Northern Regional Coordination and Development Commission 2023).

In this sense, the destinations that make up the Cávado and the Ave can be configured as vectors of territorial, social, economic and environmental development, if the design of their public policies goes through participatory processes, where the need of local actors is observed and the expectation of the visitor is fulfilled.

Sustainable tourism cannot be only related to endogenous characteristics, such as availability of access to resources, employment opportunities and access to public services (Dal Bello et al. 2022), but must also have a network articulated based on public policies and good governance. For this reason, it must contemplate a triple awareness: the economic weight of tourism in the region, governance (understood as the participation of the population in decision-making) and the correct balance between tourism, visitors and heritage, whether natural or cultural.

## **Methodology**

This research has used the review of scientific articles from the Web of Science database, a database that allows access to publications in all fields of knowledge with a high-quality index, also with significant scientific rigour and a high level of demand (Garrigos-Simon et al. 2018, Merigó and Yang 2017). Scientific articles from other search engines were also used, although by snowballing from the articles initially searched in WOS.

Based on the analysis of the reviewed articles, a methodology is proposed as a foundation for the development of tourism policies, aligning with the creation of the 'Green Book' of the EU. This methodology places a strong emphasis on tourism sustainability and processes of citizen participation tailored to the specific needs of territories such as the Cávado and Ave in the Northern Region of Portugal.

Furthermore, personalized semi-structured interviews were conducted with various local actors, following the methodologies observed in studies by Kallio et al. (2016) and Komppula (2014).

### *Theoretical Proposal: A Green Paper for Sustainable Tourism*

For the development of a tourism policy plan, the participation of all stakeholders involved in the destination is crucial (Fayos-Solá et al. 2012). By



using sustainability as a foundational principle, this technique is based on the four dimensions of sustainable development supported by various authors across different fields of study (Sustainable Development 2023, Pimentel de Oliveira 2021, Carro Suárez et al. 2019, Rosano Ortega et al. 2019, Beatriz et al. 2018, Spangenberg 2002, Commission on Sustainable Development 2001, Valentin and Spangenberg 2000). This proposal operates under the premise that fully satisfying the economic, social, and environmental dimensions necessitates an institutional framework that promotes the coordination and development of regulatory frameworks, as well as alliances among various stakeholders to enable their advancement.

Recognizing that tourism should not disrupt the communities hosting it in their territories, tourism activity inevitably shapes perceptions and utilization of cultural, social, and economic spaces (Vidal 2021). This transformation can only occur through the integration of all involved actors. Therefore, the first step of this theoretical proposal, following the approach of a 'Green Book,' centres on the identification of tourist interest groups through a comprehensive analysis.

#### Phase 1: Identification of Actors

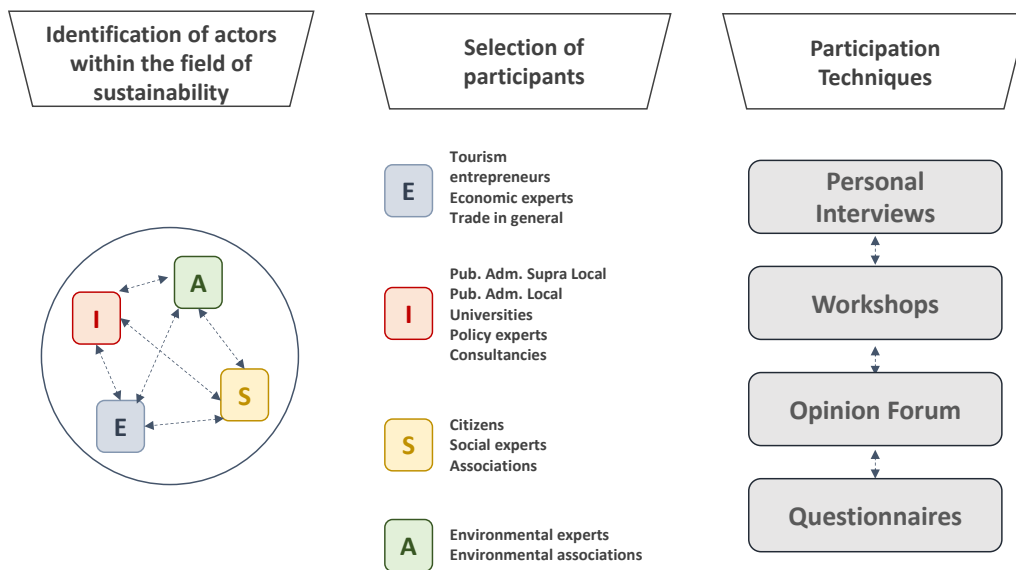
Stakeholders should ideally represent a broad spectrum of interests, encompassing the needs of various actors from the public, private, and civil society sectors. To identify these interests, personal interviews, workshops, opinion forums, and questionnaires can be employed. These techniques should delve into aspects related to the perception of tourism development and the levels of commitment to the activity's progress.

Moreover, it is essential to map out a network of relationships among these actors to determine potential connections and alliances that can prove beneficial in addressing the future challenges of the activity within the destination.

Figure 2 illustrates the framework for the identification phase of actors, aligning with the four dimensions of sustainability (social, economic, environmental, and institutional).

After identifying the actors involved in the destination, the methodology progresses to Phase 2, focusing on the territory and the examination of attractions within the existing tourist offerings in the destination. This phase is tailored to the specific needs of this research, with a particular focus on the territories of Cávado and Ave as the septentrion.

**Figure 2.** Phase 1 Identification of Actors



Source: Own elaboration based on data from Fayos-Solá et al. (2012).

### Phase 2: Determination of Supply

Tourism is closely intertwined with the geographical area it encompasses, making it dependent on environmental resources. These resources are directly linked to the sustainability of a tourist destination, necessitating social engagement to effect meaningful changes that contribute to improved tourism sustainability (Pimentel de Oliveira and Pitarch-Garrido 2022). In this context, it is not only important to consider what attractions a destination possesses but also how effectively it utilizes its available resources.

In the determination of this second phase of the methodological proposal, a cataloguing of the tourist offer of the destination is carried out. This catalogue includes its tourist resources or attractions (monuments, heritage, landscapes, etc.) and its infrastructure (accommodations, transportation routes, restaurants, services, etc.).

This cataloguing process is guided by the four dimensions of sustainability mentioned earlier. Figure 3 illustrates the potential factors that may influence each of these dimensions, though it is not an exhaustive list:

**Figure 3.** Factors for the Analysis of the Territory

Source: Authors.

### Determination of Demand

The aim of demand analysis is to address two fundamental questions: How many people desire what my destination offers? And among them, how many have the means to acquire it?

In essence, tourist demand for a destination represents the goods and services that are accessible and ready for purchase within a specified time frame and under specific conditions (Wu et al. 2017).

Based on the insights gained from these questions, it becomes possible to formulate tourism planning strategies that revolve around the existing products within the destination, tailored to meet the needs of the local population.

Common methodologies for assessing tourist demand include tracking the number of tourist arrivals and overnight stays (Guizzardi and Stacchini 2015, Baggio and Sainaghi 2016) and employing visitor questionnaires (Getz & Brown, 2006). However, there are additional techniques that can provide more precise insights into visitor behaviour, such as analysing tourist expenditures, employing the Frequency-Variable (Var) model, utilizing spatial econometric models, conducting panel data analysis, or even integrating Artificial Intelligence techniques like the Artificial Neural Network model (ANN) or the Approximate Set model (ASM), all of which have been outlined by Wu et al. (2017).

Once the destination's resources have been catalogued, and the type of demand for them has been determined, the next step involves conducting a SWOT analysis, which evaluates Weaknesses and Threats (external factors) and Strengths and Opportunities (internal factors), as well as, as a PEST analysis (examining Political, Economic, Social, and Technological aspects) related to the territory. With these components in hand, including the selected destination actors, supply/demand factors, SWOT and/or PEST analyses, the subsequent phase involves identifying potential connections and alliances between the actors and the

resources to be enhanced. This process highlights potential future challenges for tourism activity within the destination.

This dynamic approach enables the closure of a virtuous circle that aligns the destination's available resources with the active participation of local actors, resulting in a consensus rooted in the reality presented, as facilitated by the technique (refer to Figure 4).

**Figure 4.** *Circle of Consensus between Tourism and Destination Actors*



Source: Authors.

#### Interviews with Local Actors

As a complement to the research, reinforcing the importance of the participatory methodology, the present study conducted 16 personal interviews, combined with the use of the Zoom platform, when the face-to-face mode was not possible, with an approximate duration of 30 minutes to 1 hour each.

The interviews were carried out over a period that extended over 5 months, during the years 2022 and 2023, respecting the availability of the institutional agenda of some of the interviewees. The interviews have a semi-structured approach, and are aimed at different *stakeholders* of the destination (Kallio et al. 2016, Komppula 2014).

The selection of the interviewees, on the one hand, was made by observing the methodological criteria presented in this research. For this reason, they were framed in 4 dimensions of sustainability (social, economic, environmental and institutional). This contextualization allowed the interviewees to answer questions directly related to their expertise, providing greater depth to the theoretical proposal.

On the other hand, the interviews have been directed to local actors and agents of change in both regions in question, as indicated above and observed in Figure 5.

**Figure 5. Actors Selected and Main Criteria for Interviews**

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>N<sup>o</sup></i>	<i>Actors</i>	<i>Main criterion</i>
Social	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Craftsmen</li> <li>• Associations</li> <li>• Academic Experts</li> <li>• Public Offices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Artisans: Cobres Cunha (J.C.F.), an artisan trade that has the tradition of six generations of the family, proximity to tourist areas of greater pressure;</li> <li>• Association of 'Galo de Barcelos' (A.P.), representative of the collective of artisans;</li> <li>• Academic expert in regional culture and Portuguese traditions (F. J. B. G.);</li> <li>• Councillor for the social area at Guimarães City Council (P.C.S.O.);</li> <li>• Director of the Museum: 'Museu de Olaria de Barcelos' (M.C.C.M).</li> </ul>
Economic	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Merchants</li> <li>• Entrepreneurs</li> <li>• Associations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trade in traditional bulk products (S.F.), relevance of its trade in the tourism environment and level of sustainability;</li> <li>• Flower Trade (M.I.G), contribution to the tradition of the 'Festa das Flores' (annual party of flowers) and level of sustainability of the trade;</li> <li>• Businessman and owner of winemaking activity, Portuguese green wine tradition (A.R.);</li> <li>• Hotel Entrepreneur and President of the Association 'Confraria do Galo de Barcelos' (F.A.M.S.);</li> </ul>
Environmental	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Offices</li> <li>• Technical</li> <li>• Experts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillor for the Environment, Braga City Council (A.B.);</li> <li>• Environmental and Climate Management Technician at the 'Laboratorio da Paisagem' (S.O.);</li> <li>• Councillor for Tourism and Environment, Terras de Bouro City Council (A.M.C.M.);</li> </ul>
Institutional	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Offices</li> <li>• Technical</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive Director of the 'Laboratorio da Paisagem' (C.A.R.);</li> <li>• Councillor for Tourism at Guimarães City Council (P.L.S.);</li> <li>• Tourism Technician at Barcelos City Council (L.M.F);</li> <li>• Councillor for Culture, Tourism and Crafts at Barcelos City Council (M.E.B).</li> </ul>

Source: Authors.

As these are semi-structured interviews, they are more flexible, which makes it possible to introduce questions related to a main topic. The technique makes it easier for the interviewee to express himself spontaneously while providing the researcher with the means to introduce other questions that may arise and were not initially raised. All of this reinforces the idea of Janesick (2016), which states that it is through questions and answers that the construction of meanings regarding a specific topic is reached.

As for the data, they have been collected by topics divided by dimensions, according to the expertise (social, economic, environmental or institutional) of each of the interviewees. The list of main topics by dimension includes the sessions presented in Figure 6.

**Figure 6.** *Main Themes of the Interviews by Dimension*

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Main topics</i>
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The importance of governance processes linked to tourism training, through professionalizing courses;</li> <li>• Citizen participation in trades, activities and customs of the community;</li> <li>• The satisfaction of the tourist and the resident.</li> </ul>
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public policies before, during, and after the COVID-19 health crisis;</li> <li>• The economic impact of tourism benefits on trade;</li> <li>• The perspective of the current Tourism Policy and the Citizen Policy in actions involving governance;</li> <li>• Local experiences and suggestions for the enhancement of actions related to tourism and economic management.</li> </ul>
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negative impacts generated by the activity due to the lack of policies adjusted to each territory;</li> <li>• Intensity of the tourist flow.</li> </ul>
Institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutional disposition to implement Public Policies, through the creation of a Green Book;</li> <li>• Public policies linked to current tourism challenges.</li> </ul>

Source: Authors.

The complementation of this methodology, through interviews, provides interesting information about the territory, allowing a more concrete perspective of the scope of Public Policies related to tourism activity and the degree of openness of institutions, in the face of future challenges in the sector.

## Results and Discussion

### *From the Interviews*

Within the social sphere, interviews have been conducted with academic experts, artisans, associations and public officials. An almost universal consensus has been reached among experts regarding the need to maintain the satisfaction of tourists, without forgetting the needs of the local population, as well as the need to influence training in tourism through professionalizing courses. Another recurring theme in the interviews was the one raised by the artisans, by the councillor for the social area and by the management of the museum, regarding citizen participation in local traditions, linked to their satisfaction. From the perspective of the artisans, there is little involvement of the local population in issues related to citizen participation, however, this perspective changes radically and joins the more institutionalized vision, when talking about the Portuguese tradition.

From the economic sphere, in the interview held with the representative of the Association of Artisans of Barcelos, a municipality certified as a UNESCO Creative City (Barcelos Creative City 2017), it was stated that between 2019 and 2020, there was no real support from the administrations responsible for tourism, being "a very difficult period for the artisan sector economically and psychologically". Such a situation should be contoured with the implementation of an adjusted policy, which also takes into account the needs of the sector, in hypothetical crisis situations, in the future. Still in the economic area, and an

interview with local merchants, it was confirmed that, although in 2019 a greater number of tourists was observed, the sector has not managed to impact certain areas, which reinforces the hypothesis that the benefit of these tourist flows is quite marginal (Ribeiro and Remoaldo 2019) and that tourism policies still do not have the perspective of local actors. Stories were collected from merchants and the local population, who lamented the non-existence of tourist routes focused on traditional commerce and the ineffectiveness of the actions that were directed, for the most part, to the historic centre of the municipalities, ignoring remote and/or marginalized areas that could be potentialized, if the design of them had the opinion of local agents.

From the environmental aspect, it was highlighted by the technicians that the region has been facing new challenges related to climate change, as well as the preservation of the environment, being observed the increase in concern for the redesign of Public Policies that are up to the current challenges, such as the increase in fires, touristification and the indiscriminate use of the territory.

In the institutional dimension, the interviews conducted with the councillors and tourism technicians of different municipalities, as well as the management of the "Laboratório da Paisagem", an institution dedicated to promoting sustainable development, innovation, research and scientific dissemination, the early acceptance of the creation of participatory environments for the generation of the Green Book of the region was observed. It also offered means and contacts so that the process could be carried out with institutional support. Still, in the political sphere, the interview with the Councillor for the Environment of Braga highlighted the numerous actions promoted by the municipality, however, it was not a coordination between them that would lead to the redesign of tourism policies more in line with the destination, or that would respond in unison to the current challenges, such as those related to mobility in the destination, in high season periods.

### *Expected Results*

The level of trust that residents have in the institutions responsible for tourist activities in the destination is a key factor in determining the perceived benefits and costs of the activity (Nunkoo and Ramkissoon 2011).

For this reason, the incorporation of techniques for the participation of the local population in destinations such as the spaces that make up the Cávado and the Ave, with rather reserved characteristics, requires the in-depth analysis that this methodology has exposed.

The ideal combination for expanding spaces is to avoid acculturation and touristification, highlighting their cultural, heritage and natural resources, always considering the local perspective. In this sense, tourism has the capacity to boost locally and on a small scale (Cànoves et al. 2017).

As a final result, it is expected that the methodology can bring about the necessary dynamism in collaboration with the local population, fostering the development of sustainable tourism that can boost the economy and counter depopulation.

The territories of Cávado and Ave boast significant cultural heritage, and their enhancement through public-private initiatives has demonstrated considerable resilience in times of crisis, such as the economic downturn in 2015 and the COVID-19 crisis in 2020.

The implementation of governance practices proposed in this study reinforces the paradigm of tourism as a driver of development, which has already been established.

Another expected result is the satisfaction of the local community that welcomes tourists to their territory, tailored to their needs and capabilities, which is a crucial factor in sustaining destination development.

Territories must have the ability to choose the type of tourism that best suits their resources. From this selection, another anticipated outcome is the development of tourism products that create stronger connections between local actors, reducing the need for collaboration with external agents. In other words, it promotes local empowerment and societal dynamism.

Furthermore, economic and socio-cultural revitalization is expected, as tourism activity has a powerful multiplier effect on the local economy and enhances cultural pride and authenticity. This is exemplified by the opening of establishments selling regional products, reminiscent of the traditions of the region, which can be consumed by tourists. This vision aligns with the perspective of du Cros and McKercher (2020), who argue that tourism activity can be a catalyst for enhancing local heritage by transforming culture into consumable products for tourists.

Without losing sight of the core objective of this proposal, which is the creation of a 'Green Book of Tourism' adapted to the needs of expanding areas, this methodology could pave the way for the development of a 'White Paper,' leading to the creation of Tourism Policies aligned with the Region of Cávado and Ave in the north of Portugal.

## **Conclusion**

This research aimed to shed light on the intricacies of tourism policy development by presenting various approaches and methodologies proposed by different academic authors.

Furthermore, the research proposed here sought to offer a methodology inclined to the trends and idiosyncrasies of promising tourist spaces, taking as a source of inspiration the territories that make up the Cávado and the Ave, in the North of Portugal. A region that has been perceiving a significant increase in the flow of visitors and that needs policies adjusted to the features and particularities of the destination, before unsustainable processes such as touristification or acculturation, begin to be part of the development of the activity and the reality of the local population.

To contribute to knowledge in this field, the study presented an adapted version of the three-step structure (Green Paper, White Paper, and Tourism Policy) proposed by the Commission of the European Communities (1995) for the



creation of Tourism Policies. This adaptation focuses on the development of the 'Green Book,' which is more attuned to the destination and grounded in sustainability principles by incorporating sustainability dimensions as core elements of the methodology.

The work presented here represents a significant advancement in understanding the involvement of the local population, the alignment with destination capabilities and needs, and the integration of sustainability dimensions.

It is important to note that this research direction is not yet complete. Following the three-step structure, there is a potential opportunity to develop a methodological proposal for the 'White Paper,' equally tailored to the destination's needs and linked to sustainability dimensions. This remains a subject for future research.

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