



**THE ROLE OF INNOVATION AND SUSTAINABILITY IN RURAL
ENTREPRENEURSHIP - A CASE STUDY BASED ON TOURISM IN DOURO**

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Abstract

Innovation and sustainability represent powerful tools to increase efficiency, to bring diversification to the market and leverage company's competitive advantage.

The purpose of this study is to understand the range of potential for growth and development of Douro through sustainable and innovative practices on touristic enterprises by studying if innovation and sustainability have impact on touristic enterprises on Douro.

It was used quantitative methods for data collection. There was also collection of primary raw data from reports and documentation about the region under study. For the analysis of results was used frequency analysis.

The results suggest that touristic entrepreneurs of Douro region have points of interest towards innovation and sustainability but are not the focus of their business strategy. The consideration about sustainability is centred on environmental and social well-being. Furthermore, touristic entrepreneurs look for innovating on marketing and on the product/service. This study provides evidence of the importance that innovation and sustainability have on touristic enterprises and that how this gap contributes to the low levels of competitiveness of the region. In addition, there is also the perspective of arouse attention of the inquiries for the topics of sustainability and innovation as new opportunities for their businesses.

Keywords: Sustainability, Innovation, Rural development, Entrepreneurial Ecosystem, Rural tourism

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1. Introduction

Portugal is a small country where we can find huge differences in terms of development between urban and rural areas. The rural context is characterized by socio-economic decline, low population density and ageing, low diversification of economic activities that contribute to lack of opportunities, and constrains in access to information, knowledge and technologies due to poor infrastructures (North & Smallbone, 2000; Naldi et al., 2015; Galvão et al., 2020). All these factors constitute barriers to the development of rural areas.

This is clearly reflected on the Synthetic Regional Development Index released by Instituto Nacional de Estatística (INE). This index is a result of the joint performance of competitiveness, cohesion and environmental quality dimensions, based on a matrix of 65 statistical indicators, for the 25 Portuguese NUTS III (level III of the Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistical Purposes, approved by the European Commission). According to INE, in 2020, urban centers, as the Metropolitan Area of Porto and Lisbon, lead the ranking with a Synthetic Regional Development Index above the average (Instituto Nacional de Estatística, 2020). Here, we can perceive disparities between coastal and inland regions with inland regions, mainly composed by rural areas, above in terms of development and competitiveness (Annex A and B). About 81,4% of Portugal's territory is composed by rural regions and represent 33% of Portuguese population (Programa de Desenvolvimento Rural do Continente 2014-2022, 2020). Since in rural areas the levels of regional development are clearly lower, it is important to develop tools and mechanisms to foster progress in the rural context.

Douro (NUT III) is an example of this reality. It is a region predominantly rural with the lowest level of competitiveness, and the second lowest level of regional development of the country (Instituto Nacional de Estatística, 2020). On the other hand, UNESCO classified the region of Alto Douro Vinhateiro and Sítio Arqueológico Vale do Côa, both repositories of natural and historical heritage, as UNESCO World Heritage reinforcing its importance for economic growth of the territory. The evidence show that:

This region has great potential if we talk about economic activities as viticulture and tourism. In fact, Douro has the oldest established and regulated wine region in the world, and it is included in the touristic region of Porto and North being one of the six tourism development poles to be promoted. However, there is a weak capacity to retain tourist assets as well as a reduced specialization and diversification when compared with the NUT II North (Comunidade Intermunicipal do Douro, 2015).

Since Douro was praised with such acknowledgements, and having in mind the weaknesses of the region, efforts were made to enhance this recognition and Douro region. Despite those efforts to leverage remarkable touristic assets, both regional and national, it seems to be a gap between rhetoric and practice since the level of development of the region is logged year by year. In this sense, given the potential of tourism in the region, it is essential for touristic enterprises to include innovative and sustainable practices on their business strategy in order to contribute to the development of the region.

Innovation and sustainability are key factors to leverage competitiveness and growth. According to the literature, innovation is a driver to ensure long-term survival of enterprises since it contributes for economic development (Arcese et al., 2021). At the same time, those enterprises that choose to innovate are a key factor for the physical space where they are located contributing to the competitiveness of the region (Boda, 2015).

Besides that, it is becoming clearer that innovation is related with sustainable practices. Among many other applications of innovation and sustainability, the introduction of innovative and sustainable practices on the field of tourism contributes to the increase of its competitiveness in the market and, consequently, of the environment where it is inserted (Santos et al., 2021). This means that if rural enterprises become more innovative, they are bringing benefits for themselves and for the rural space. Supporting sustainable development is a step ahead for the creation of new businesses and the reinvention of existent ones as long as policies are aligned with it (Lordkipanidze et al., 2005).

In line with this, in 2015, the United Nations Member States adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that defines 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be in the center of the discussion of policies and actions of each state member. Those goals are supported by the balance of the three dimensions of sustainable development: social, environmental, and economic (United Nations, 2015).

In previous studies, it was already pointed innovation and sustainability as strategic tools to achieve greatest levels of development of Douro region in 2020 (Comunidade Intermunicipal do Douro, 2015), what was not verified. Having in mind that rural areas need to reinforce their position on Portuguese economy and being tourism an important source of revenue of the country, and particularly on Douro, the motivation that leads this research proposal is the contribution to identify opportunities in the fields of innovation and sustainability to contribute to the development of the region of Douro. However, there is still a gap on the literature about the relationship between sustainability and innovation with tourism, particularly on rural areas where

these tools have an important role in the performance and dynamics of touristic enterprises and of the region itself. According to previous studies, there is also the need to understand territorial dynamics (identify connections between local players and their importance) as well as the importance of regional markets on developing innovative activities.

In line with this, the aim of this work is to understand the range of potential for growth and development of Douro through sustainable and innovative practices on touristic enterprises through the discovery if those tools are already in practice or not. In this domain, it is important to understand if innovation and sustainability are relevant aspects for touristic entrepreneurs on Douro and in which dimensions of sustainability and innovation are a concern. To understand what sustainable and innovative strategies and plans are currently in practice and how their impact on social, economic, and environmental dimensions of the region is measured is also an objective of this study.

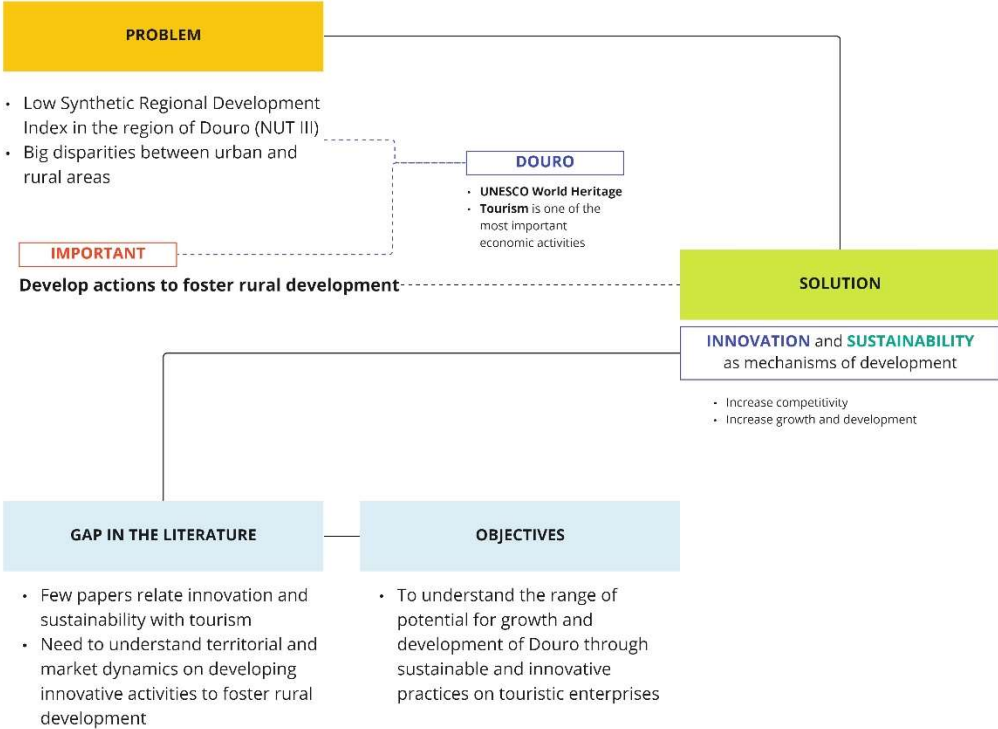


Figure 1 - Research gap and problematic - Source: Own elaboration

To understand this, it makes sense to conduct a quantitative research. The analysis will focus on sustainable and innovative actions that those enterprises already have in practice and their impact on the sustainable development of the region.

The study is structured according to the following: in first place, there will be the presentation of the rural context and its traits, an overview of rural entrepreneurship, as well as an outline of the

importance of entrepreneurship and innovation for rural areas. Then, it will be explained the connections between innovation and sustainability and, finally, its application to the field of rural tourism. In the chapter of methodology, it will be presented the case study followed by the research design with the explanation of research questions, sample design and size, description of the methods used for data collection, including the structure of the survey, and data preparation and analysis. Finally, there will be a chapter with the findings of the study, the conclusion and a section for limitations and proposal for further research (Figure 2).

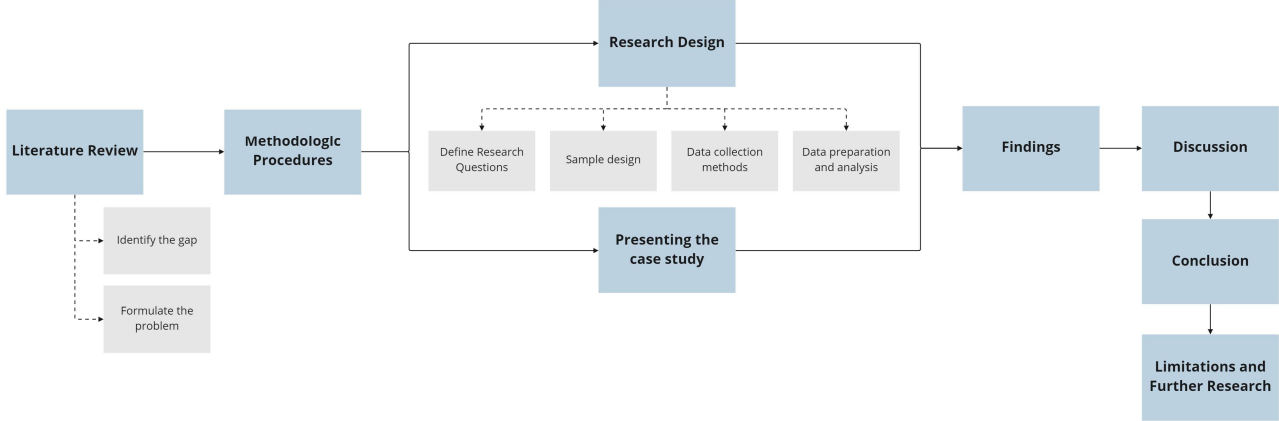


Figure 2 - Thesis structure - Source: Own elaboration

2. The rural context

In the literature it is hard to find an unanimous concept of “rural”. In the European Union (EU), rural areas are defined as “*complex economic, natural and cultural locations*” and it is reductive to characterize them by “*one-dimensional criteria such as population density, agricultural or natural resources*” (European Commission, 1999). In fact, those areas are diverse between each other in terms of cultural, social and political context, including what regards to problems to solve and their future (Dinis, 2006).

Thought, according to Arzeni et al. (2002), it is possible to find four profiles of rural areas in Europe:

- 1) Rural areas near urban centres that benefit from the proximity of resources available in urban areas
- 2) Rural regions located in natural and historical regions, which are typically concerned with touristic development and the use of endogenous resources in a sustainable way
- 3) Areas where agriculture is the dominant economic sector
- 4) Peripheral areas that are remote and where out-migration flows are frequent.

About 83% of the area of country members of OCDE is represented by rural regions what contrast with the 25,1% of population distributed in those regions (OCDE, 2014). The low population density on the rural context contributes, among other factors, for disparities between urban and rural areas.

According to Galvão et al. (2020):

Typically, rural regions are characterized by socio-economic decline with population decrease and aged which may contribute to difficulties in access to information. Moreover, the market on those areas is predominantly composed by agriculturally based companies with a reduced number of specialized companies which lead to lack of opportunities and high employment rates.

In addition, when compared with urban areas, rural areas are characterized by poor socio-economic conditions, accessibility structures and population with lower education levels (Naldi et al., 2015).

In general, rural areas face unique challenges when we talk about economic development and growth. Given their geographic and social context allied to poor conditions in accessing existent and new markets, and resources, it is easy to understand the constrains that those areas face on entrepreneurship, innovation, and economic growth (Markley et al., 2015). Allied to this, there are some factors that contribute for less innovative systems in rural context as the lack of knowledge

regarding new technologies (North & Smallbone, 2000) and processes, and financial support (Dinis, 2006). Moreover, weak cooperation between the private and public agents allied to the inexistence of entities capable to support rural entrepreneurs to bring innovation and differentiation to their businesses reflects on the lack of capabilities of small enterprises to develop the local space which is a concern (Magalhães et al. 2001).

Nevertheless, there are important vantages of rural areas. The Portuguese inland regions are particularly rich in cultural, natural and historical heritage, important assets that increase value of those areas (Républica Portuguesa - Unidade de Missão para a Valorização do Interior, 2017). The quality of products from agriculture, the existence of natural resources, the environmental quality and the landscapes are important factors that may contribute to the emergence of new opportunities on entrepreneurial activities.

Stathopoulou et al. (2004) also suggests that it has been verified a significant inflow of new residents on these areas, mostly mobilized by local conditions that promise a better quality of living. As a result, the report of OCDE (2006) stablishes a new rural paradigm where new opportunities and new sources of economic growth (as dynamic clusters between small companies) arise in the rural context with the development of diverse economic activities besides agriculture (of which rural tourism is an example), and the emergence of products that reflect local traditions and culture.

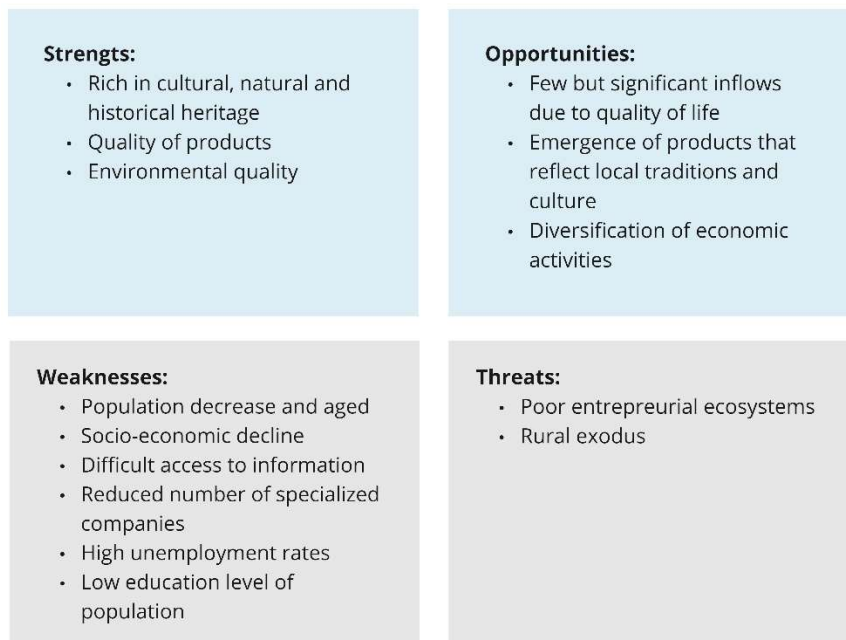


Figure 3 - SWOT analysis of rural areas - Source: Adapted from Dinis (2006)

In this context, it is important to find efficient solutions that tackle the difficulties that rural areas face and that are hindering the regional economic development by leveraging local assets at the

same time that ensuring that endogenous resources are preserved and explored on a sustainable way. In fact, the European Commission (1999) highlighted that the key for the sustainable development of rural areas is the capability of a region to explore internal resources, in other words, through “endogenous development”. Moreover, The Cork Declaration (1996), reinforce that strategies adopted to promote rural development should be a result of local effort and through joint initiatives between private agents and local community (European Commission, 1996).

In Portugal, about 81,4% of the territory is composed by rural areas and represent 33% of Portuguese population (Programa de Desenvolvimento Rural do Continente 2014-2022, 2020) mainly concentrated in inland regions of which the Douro region (NUT III) is an example. This means that underdeveloped areas with low population density are located inland (Dinis, 2006).

These disparities between urban and rural regions contribute to the gap in terms of development and competitive advantage and highlight the importance of reflecting about rural development and actions to promote it, especially in Portugal, where rural areas represent a great part of the territory.

3. Rural Entrepreneurship – an overview

Entrepreneurship underlies the process of creating an enterprise or/and the actions that aim the development of a small enterprise and that is closely connected with innovation (Dinis, 2006). Schumpeter (1934) highlights that the entrepreneur plays a significant role as a promoter of innovations by disrupting the market and being in the center of economic progress.

The valences of entrepreneurship may be reproduced in rural areas that usually struggle with economic progress. Similar to the concept of entrepreneurship, rural entrepreneurship is an activity that underlies *“the creation of a new organization that introduces a new product, serves or creates a new market, or utilizes a new technology in a rural environment”* (Wortman 1990, p. 330). Rural enterprises must be adaptable and innovative to survive in this context (North & Smallbone, 2000). According to Galvão et al., (2020):

Entrepreneurship is seen as a way to create and seize opportunities that bring diversification to the rural context reducing the dependence of mono-industrial based markets, at the same time that bringing new residents and leveraging rural economy. In fact, entrepreneurship is the vehicle that join the rural community with growth and prosperity due to its positive influence on business and job creation.

The work of Hoványi (1995), as cited in Boda (2015), shows the importance for rural companies to ensure basic requirements, as capital, natural, technological and human resources, in order to be capable of creating value. In this way, it is important to find strategies to foster entrepreneurship on rural areas.

The added value that rural entrepreneurship aim to deliver, not only to the entrepreneur but also for the rural space in all its dimensions, is achieved by engaging the entrepreneurial activity with the space and combining local resources (Korsgaard & Tanvig, 2015).

The engagement of the economic agents with entrepreneurial ecosystems contributes for economic development by fostering entrepreneurship, innovation and small businesses growth (Mazzarol, 2014). An entrepreneurial ecosystem is the *“combinations of social, political, economic, and cultural elements within a region that support the development and growth of innovative start-ups and encourage nascent entrepreneurs and other actors to take the risks of starting, funding, and otherwise assisting high-risk ventures”* (Spigel, 2017). In fact, the study of Galvão et al. (2020) show that entrepreneurial ecosystems are a key element that enables opportunities through innovation and value creation. According to Aggarwal (2018), policy frameworks and institutional support are necessary to develop those ecosystems. With cooperation, rural enterprises can potentiate their advantages and overcome seasonality. From a

study made by Meutia et al. (2021), it is clear that most of the times, rural entrepreneurs have difficulties in innovate due to the lack of knowledge. This issue is mostly overcome through collaborations and networking with related stakeholders. On the other hand, the engagement between the entrepreneurial ecosystems with the local community can directly bring solutions to specific local needs and circumstances (Khattab & Al-Magli, 2017). These dynamics inside entrepreneurial ecosystems built to innovate, seize new opportunities and create value while protecting environmental resources, supporting local community, is essential to economic and social development (Zivdar & Sanaeepour, 2022), especially in rural areas. These connections reflect the role of sustainability in those ecosystems. It is here that sustainability can take place into the rural entrepreneurial world.

It is through the exploration of endogenous resources that entrepreneurs can innovate. But it is through the preservation of those resources that is related to sustainable practices. Here, is where innovation, sustainability and rural entrepreneurship cross paths.

4. The crossed paths of Innovation and Sustainability

According to Schumpeter (1934), **innovation** is the centre of economic development that drives progress and competitiveness. The concept “*can be defined as the development of a new form of production. Innovation includes the invention of a new product just as the exploration of new markets or a new organisational structure*” (Schumpeter, 1980 as cited in Boda, 2015 (p.37)). In fact, innovation underlies the idea of improving an activity itself - the process or combination of procedures that are part of the core business – or/and the outcome of the activity (OECD/Eurostat, 2005). Innovation is not necessarily developed originally by a company, but it has implied the implementation of something new for the company (Madureira et al., 2013).

Particularly in the rural context, and aligned with the traditional theory of Schumpeter, **rural innovation** is the introduction of new products, processes, marketing, and organisational methods to create economic and social value for rural areas (Mahroum et al. 2007 as cited in Pato (2020)).

The Oslo Manual brings four types of innovation (OECD/Eurostat, 2005):

- **Product innovation** - the introduction in the market of a new or significantly improved good or service
- **Process innovation** - the implementation of a new or significantly improved production process or supporting activity
- **Organisational innovation** - the implementation of a new or significantly improved organizational method involving changes on daily practices, organization of workplaces, or on external relationships
- **Marketing innovation** - the implementation of a new marketing concept or strategy that differs significantly from your enterprise’s existing marketing method. It involves significant changes on product design and packaging, pricing, placement, and promotion.

Innovating implies searching for new or significantly improved business models that can be a result of mixed innovations (combination of different types of innovation). This is the path that enterprises must choose to leverage competitiveness, to differentiate themselves from competitors and to offer products or services with a significant incremental value.

The OCDE reveal the need to review the detection and measurement of innovation since the current innovation trend is based on a broad concept where diversity is the central point and it is carried out by several players (Madureira et al., 2013). Collaboration between players is a key factor for the creation and development of innovation. Furthermore, it is highlighted other fundamental inputs for the process of innovation taking the spotlight to Research & Development (R&D).

In line with this, several studies mention the concept of “hidden innovation”. Here, the concept is related to low technology based innovations, or non-technological based innovations, usually related to organisational or marketing innovations, or even product innovation when technology does not assume an essential role, but other factors do, as human resources, cooperations and diverse players (Madureira et al., 2013). This type of innovation is usually neglected by public policy and programs to support innovation that are more directed to R&D.

It is clear that “hidden innovation” is associated with the kind of innovation implemented in rural areas, where micro-small companies are typically low technology based. Besides that, between radical, disruptive, and incremental innovations, “hidden innovations” in the rural context are mostly incremental, where the aim is to ensure continuity of change processes, focused on operational efficiency and on product and marketing differentiation. Therefore, those changes are difficult to measure despite the significant impact since innovation is usually measured through investment in I&D (OECD/Eurostat, 2005).

Yet, there is much more to do concerning the development of rural enterprises and, consequently, the rural space. Due to the disadvantages concerning the access to resources of rural areas, this context demands the existence of clever and efficient actions to maximize results with less efforts.

In this sense, the EU created a new growth strategy - Europe 2020 - to overcome the low rates of innovation and productivity of certain regions. This strategy is based on the ideas of **smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth**, considering that:

- **Smart growth** “*implies developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation*” (Naldi et al., 2015)
- **Sustainable growth** is concerned with economic growth based on the efficient use of resources, green solutions, and climate change mitigation
- **Inclusive growth** aims to achieve social cohesion and promote higher employment rates.

The research of Naldi et al. (2015) about smart growth show that other concepts as embeddedness, connectivity and relatedness are important areas that play a significant role for a region to achieve smart growth. According to the EU policy framework, smart growth has implicit the existence of policies that foster innovation, education and research in order to develop the economy of a certain region. However, rural and urban areas have different dynamics in their markets due to their specific context. In line with this, it is expected that the same policies do not have the same impact if applied to urban and rural areas due to regional disparities. For instance, rural areas face more difficulties in terms of connectivity than urban areas. The same applies to efforts needed in the field of research, or even the response to investments in innovation. This means that rural areas

would face more constraints to achieve smart growth with the same policies. Thus, it is crucial that rural areas are able to follow **smart specialization** by identifying the business areas that bring competitive advantage so that those policies and investments are correctly allocated in order to promote innovation in those fields (Naldi et al., 2015).

This strategy has a big and important component which is sustainability. As the concept of innovation, the concept of sustainability is ambiguous what might complicate the understanding of where both paths cross. The general concept of **sustainability** underlies the idea of using available resources properly with concern for the well-being of future generations (Pero et al., 2017). Sustainability aims to achieve wellness in, at least, three dimensions: social, economic and environmental (Biggeri et al., 2022).

In fact, this is the base of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by the United Nations in 2015. In terms of social development, the 2030 Agenda aims to encourage the application of poverty eradication strategies, policies to promote employment, decent work, social inclusion, access to quality education, basic healthcare, drinking water and sanitation, and the social cohesion between people from any social layers (young, ageing, disabled, indigenous people, etc) (United Nations, s.d.).

On the other hand, economic growth supported by sustainable development implies to achieve higher economic productivity levels through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, promote the development of policies that encourage the creation and development of micro, small and medium-sized companies, facilitating the access to financial support, and promote the efficient consumption of resources (United Nations, s.d.).

Finally, what concerns to environmental dimension of sustainability, Stern (2007), as cited in Naldi et al. (2015), believe that *“countries can build a green economy in which investments in resource savings as well as sustainable management of natural capital are drivers of growth, the central idea being that economies that rely more on sustainable development objectives provide opportunities for using financial resources to better meet development needs and reducing the vulnerability of socioeconomic systems to environmental change and resource constraints”* (p. 93).

If initially the concept of sustainability was intrinsic to respond to ecological crisis, over the years sustainability was progressively seen as a way to change in order to improve quality of life in economic and social terms (Maier et al., 2020).

Sustainability is a process of innovation. When we see innovation as a new way of doing something, when implementing sustainable actions into the core business, the entrepreneur is rebuilding processes making things in a different way to achieve social, environmental, or economic well-

being. The same applies on the opposite direction. The study of Blasco López et al. (2018) concludes that innovativeness has a positive effect on sustainability applied to tourism, suggesting that when implementing organisational and technological innovations, there is a significant improvement of economic and social sustainability.

According to Maier et al. (2020), the literature reveal that when sustainability and innovation are combined, it arises 3 concepts (Figure 3):

- **Eco-innovation:** the introduction of new products and processes with the concern of decreasing environmental impact
- **Sustainable innovation:** the introduction of new products, processes, and technologies with the aim to fulfil human and institutional needs at the same time that natural resources are not compromised and it is preserved regenerative capacity
- **Sustainability-driven innovation:** *“the creation of new market space, products and services or processes driven by social, environmental or sustainability issues”* (p.3).

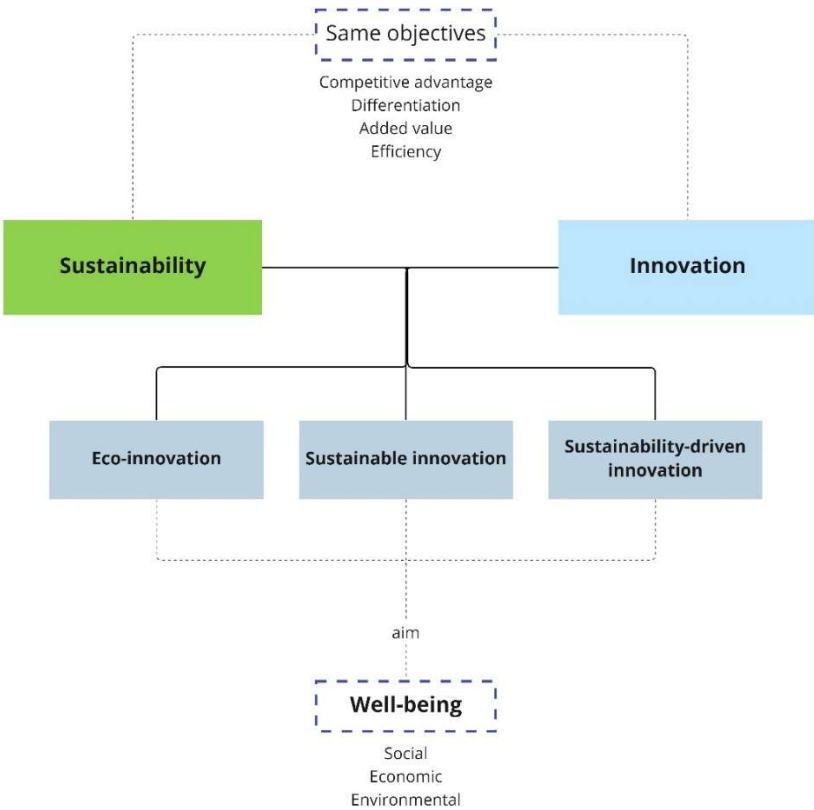


Figure 4 - Link between Sustainability and Innovation – Source: Own elaboration

The awareness towards sustainability and innovation is increasing on companies nowadays since that are being recognized as sources of competitive advantage. As said before, both paths cross

when the implementation of innovative practices aim to ensure social, economic, and environmental well-being. In this sense, there are specific contexts that can benefit from the exploration of those practices, which is the case of rural areas, where the balance of social, economic, and environmental well-being assumes particular importance, and tourism business sector that has inherent the exploration of endogenous resources and where its preservation is imperative.

5. The importance of rural tourism and the applicability of Innovation and Sustainability

Rural tourism gained relevance in the past few years (Pato & Duque, 2021). According to The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO):

Rural tourism is defined as a tourism activity where the visitor's experience is connected with goods typically connected to outdoor recreation, farming, rural lifestyle and sightseeing. Those activities take place in rural regions where prevails a scenario of low population density, an agricultural and forestry-dominated landscape, and a traditional social structure and lifestyle (UNWTO, s.d.).

We can perceive that sustainability is present when we see rural tourism as an economic activity that relates to the community, concerns with the preservation of the history and heritage of a region through its communication to visitants and residents, and with the value added that those activities bring to the local environment and economy. In fact, this is how the idea of **sustainable tourism** arise. It relates to the practice of touristic activities ensuring cultural heritage integrity and minimizing environmental impact at the same time that creating economic and social value (Lordkipanidze et al., 2005). In line with this, Agyeiwaah et al. (2017) identified seven indicators for sustainable tourism: *“(1) job creation, (2) business viability, (3) quality of life, (4) water quality, (5) waste management, (6) energy conservation, and (7) maintenance of community integrity”*.

Tourism is known as one of the most significant economic industries with more potential to grow fast and to create employment, which has been verified in innovative and sustainable tourism (Santos et al., 2021). In fact, the studies of López et al. (2018) conclude that innovation, particularly technological and organisational innovations, and market orientation have a direct and positive impact on sustainable tourism. According to Lordkipanidze et al. (2005), tourists are increasingly searching for experiences on rural areas privileging contact with nature. At the same time, the author highlights the need to diversify touristic products and services which opens the door for new opportunities on sustainable tourism.

Particularly on rural context, it is clear the level of importance that touristic activities have on local economy and the range of potential that innovative and sustainable tourism has.

In this context, it is important to define sustainable strategies so that entrepreneurs can tackle local needs, identify niche markets, and avoid effort in vain and waste money on useless investments. Sustainable tourism plans are based on sustainable strategies. Krippendorf (1988), cited in Lane (1994), believe that sustainable tourism plans should be built under the following remarks:

- Consideration about the need in terms of social, economic, ecological and cultural dimensions;
- Understanding about the role of local participation in decision-making moments and outline of the strategy;
- Consideration about the constraints on the development of touristic activities;
- Suit the offer of products and services to the demand of each area, considering the overall limits to growth in terms of conservation of resources and heritage;
- See those plans as a way to identify new opportunities and guarantee customer satisfaction and customer retention;
- Awareness about including local businesses and individuals to be part of business dynamics and training in order to prevent for outsiders to dominate local tourism industry;
- Understanding that plans must be focused on a set of priority elements, such as quantifiable targets, at the same time that seeking for long-term development. This implies that those plans must be evaluated regularly and updated according to new circumstances.

On the other hand, those strategies must seek for being a trigger for the joint effort of public and private investment by reinforcing the dialogue between government, tourism businesses and the local community, as well as to encourage new entrants in tourism business (Lane, 1994). Here, the perspective of sustainability is related to the cooperation between businesses and public entities in order to do an efficient use of resources, particularly when access to resources is difficult and scarce. In the case of rural tourism, it makes sense to set vertical alliances since it allows enterprises to save money along an integrated value chain with complementary partners. Besides that, Islam et al. (2020) identified other key determinants of sustainable practices and policy adoption with a significant impact on the adoption of sustainable practices: (1) employee culture, (2) technological infrastructure, (3) tourism intermediary's sustainability practices, and (4) top management. On the other hand, the authors reveal that government sustainable tourism policy and the locals' attitude toward sustainability are less significant.

The awareness about the environment is growing and it is an important dimension of sustainable practices. The research of Sharma et al. (2020) resulted on a conceptual framework of eco-innovative practices in the following domains: *“(1) eco-efficient strategy, (2) green consumerism, (3) CSR (corporate social responsibility) and outreach, (4) carbon management, (5) eco-labels (green certifications and standards), (6) management and employee engagement, and (7) analysis and evaluation”*. In fact, the use of technology is a good example of how innovation positively influences sustainable tourism growth

with greener solutions, such as the adoption of online payment methods and pre-book visits system (Loureiro, 2019).

These remarks are important to measure at which extent tourism businesses follow effective sustainable actions and plans in order to increase their performance and, consequently, enhance the development of the rural context where they belong.

6. The case study and methodologic procedures

6.1. Characterization of Douro

The Douro region (NUT III) is located in the interior north of Portugal and it is composed by 19 municipalities (Figure 4). Typically, Douro is a region predominantly rural. (Comunidade Intermunicipal do Douro, 2015). In 2020, the resident population was about 189777 inhabitants on an area of 4032 km², which is translated in a populational density of 47,1 inh./km², far below of the country benchmark of 112,2 inh./km² (ref). In fact, the population density is decreasing since 2014 on the region. In line with this, the average annual growth of population in Douro decreased 0,8% between 2011 and 2020 (Gabinete de Estratégia e Estudos do Ministério da Economia, 2022). Along with this, rural exodus was a key factor that contributed to depopulation in the interior of the country and Douro was not an exception (Associação de Professores de Geografia, 2021). Other factor that has been jeopardized the development of Douro is ageing. In 2020, about 25,6 % of Douro's population was more than 65 years old. (Gabinete de Estratégia e Estudos do Ministério da Economia, 2022).

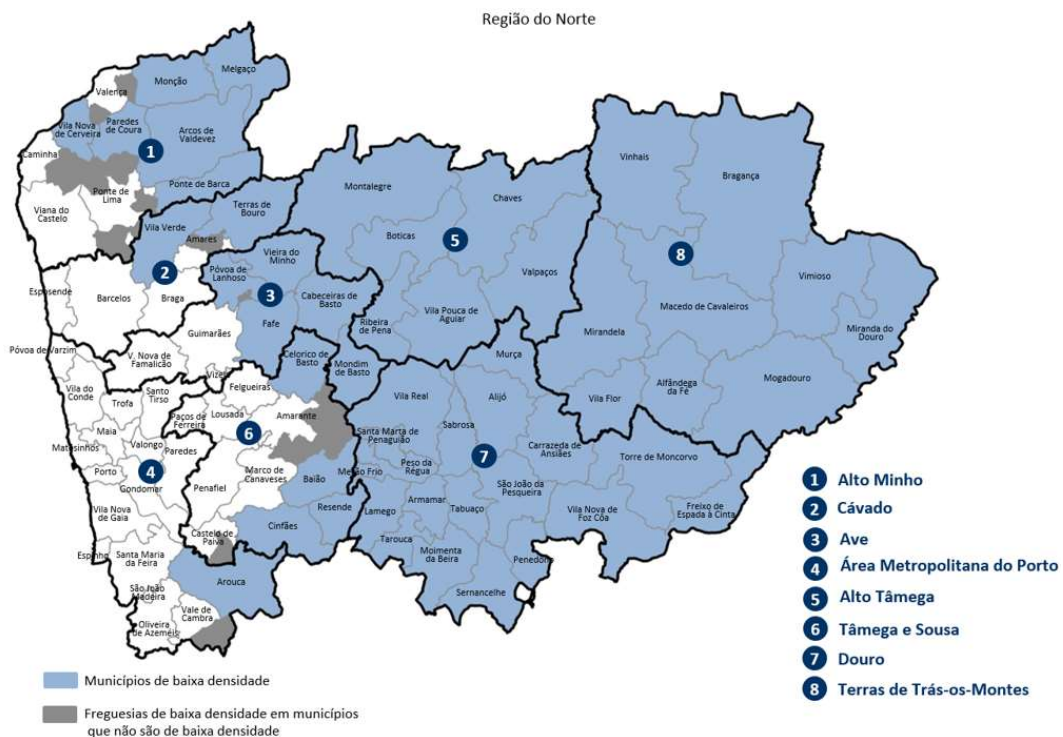


Figure 5 - Localization and constitution of (7) Douro region (NUT III) - Source: (Comissão de Coordenação e Desenvolvimento Regional do Norte, s.d.)

Douro is a region that has been showing symptoms of underdevelopment. In 2020, Douro was the Portuguese region with the lowest Synthetic Regional Development Index, an indicator that is a result of the joint performance between competitiveness, environmental quality and cohesion (Instituto Nacional de Estatística, 2022). This indicator exposes the concerns in terms of competitiveness of Douro, a region where sustainable economic development is particularly necessary, despite the slight improvement of the Competitiveness Index on the region between 2018 and 2020. The same happened with the Environmental Quality Index. On the other hand, it was not identified any improvement of the Cohesion Index in the same period.

Allied to this, Douro is not being oriented towards innovation which reinforces the development issue.

In 2011, the region showed weak innovative investments in I&D as well as a weak capacity to structure a regional microsystem of innovation that responds to the needs of each business in Douro. The fact that there is a weak capacity to retain qualified people and to offer advanced education is also an issue that contributes to the low focus on innovation (Comunidade Intermunicipal do Douro, 2015).

On the other hand, there are remarks that deserve especial attention. Douro was pointed as one of the Portuguese units of touristic development to be promoted (Comunidade Intermunicipal do Douro, 2015). There are many resources that may contribute to the development of tourism in Douro: (1) Porto Wine and wines produced in the region, (2) landscapes of Douro River and the vineyards, (3) Douro River as a waterway of added value, (3) natural and archaeological heritage, (4) gastronomy, (5) local culture, (6) solar farms and wine-growing villages, (7) cross-selling with Porto.

Regarding the economic activities that support the region, it is important to highlight the role of the wine, the vineyards, and the landscapes. These are the key elements of viticulture, the most important economic activity of the region, and tourism, the emergent activity that highly contributes for the economy of the region and with great potential of growth (Comunidade Intermunicipal do Douro, 2015). With a large territory for agriculture, the region also depends on the production of fruits and vegetable as apple, grape, cherry, potato, olive, almond, and chestnuts, most of them certified and designated by protected origin.

Moreover, there are some activities that have great potential of growth on the region that must be developed as touring, including fluvial cruises, and nature tourism (Comunidade Intermunicipal do Douro, 2015). Among these, it is important to highlight wine tourism as the most important touristic product of Douro, a vein of rural tourism.

In line with this, there is the recognition of Alto Douro Vinhateiro located on Região Demarcada do Douro, as the oldest regulated wine-growing region of the world, as World Heritage by UNESCO, in 2001 (Ministério dos Negócios Estrangeiros, s.d.). The same recognition was given to Sítio Arqueológico Vale do Côa. This may be another element to use to attract touristic demand for this region that is mainly national which contrasts with the touristic demand of the country that it is mostly foreign.

Each of these resources have a connection to tourism, what highlight even more the importance of this economic activity on the region. There are some indicators in hotel establishments that have been increasing between 2017 and 2019 in Douro, as lodging capacity, overnight stays, and income (Gabinete de Estratégia e Estudos do Ministério da Economia, 2022). Nevertheless, it is important to address some issues:

Even though the region is becoming more attractive, there is still constraints to capture value since Douro is the second region of the country with more seasonality, and with a weak capacity to lodge tourists. Allied to this, it also verifies a low diversification on ways to provide accommodation (Comunidade Intermunicipal do Douro, 2015).

Due to this context where prevails the existence of important touristic assets, it is clear the contribution that tourism may have on the development of Douro and the improvements that need to be made.

6.2. Methodologic Procedures

In this chapter, it is presented the research design and methodologic procedures for the quantitative study.

The selection of the sample, data collection procedures and analysis of results are presented in this chapter.

The aim of the study is to understand the range of potential for growth and development of Douro through sustainable and innovative practices on touristic enterprises by knowing if those tools are already being used.

6.2.1. Research Design

For this study, it was conducted **exploratory research** using **quantitative methods**. The focus was on collecting data to get a deeper understanding of the problem and suggest possible solutions or new ideas.

Due to the specificity of Douro explained before, the region was used as **case study**.

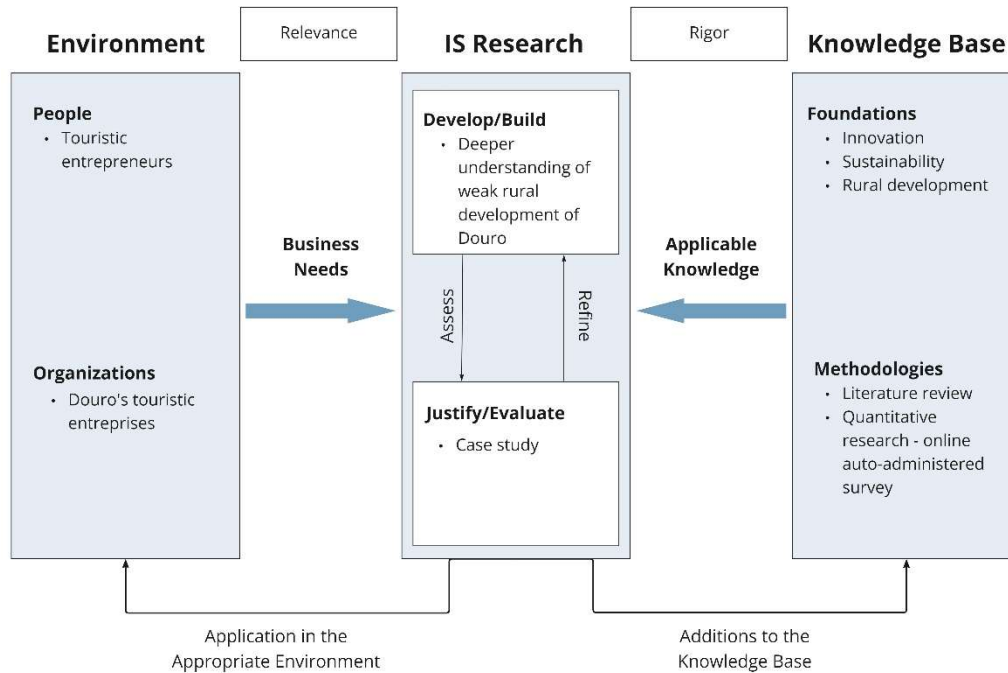


Figure 6 - Research Design - Source: Adapted from Design Science in Information Systems by A.R.Hevner, S.T. March, P.Jinsoo, and R. Sudha, 2004

6.2.1.1. Research Questions

To understand the range of potential for growth and development of Douro through sustainable and innovative practices on touristic enterprises, it is important to find evidences if there are already innovative and sustainable actions ongoing. There are also other questions that can be indicators that touristic enterprises see, or not, innovation and sustainability as opportunities to grow their business:

RQ1 – Are innovation and sustainability relevant topics for touristic entrepreneurs on Douro?

RQ2 - In which dimensions sustainability and innovation are a concern for those enterprises?

RQ3 - Which sustainable and innovative strategies and plans are currently in practice?

RQ4 – How touristic enterprises measure the impact of their sustainable and innovative actions?

6.2.1.2. Sample design and size

For the quantitative research, the target population is Douro's touristic enterprises registered on the Registo Nacional de Empreendimentos Turísticos (RNET).

It was extracted from the database 219 records. From this population, it was not possible to deliver the survey to 10 enterprises, since the e-mail registered on RNET do not exist, 16 records belong to a group of touristic enterprises and 9 representatives of the contacted inquiries communicated that would not respond to the survey. From the last 9 companies, 2 of them are not operational yet, 2 are closed permanently, and 4 would not respond due to lack of availability. With this, the sampling unit was reduced to 193 Douro's touristic enterprises.

The response rate was fixed on about 22%.

Table 1 - Overview of Population and Sample Unit - Source: Own elaboration

Number of inquiries	Legend
43	Nº of answers
10	Survey not delivered
150	Survey not responded
16	Records belong to a group of touristic enterprises
219	Sampling Frame (Total touristic enterprises)
193	Sampling unit

6.2.2. Data Collection

The survey was self-administered online (Annex 1) directed to the enterprise's owner, manager-partner, or executive manager, and the communication was made by e-mail. It was available since 4th July 2022 until 25^h August 2022. During this period, it was reinforced with the enterprises the importance of their participation on the study with a 2nd and 3rd e-mail, on 17th July and 22th August, and through phone calls during August.

To ensure that the questionnaire was structured properly and to minimize possible doubts on inquiries, it was made a pre-test with 3 individuals belonging to management teams of touristic enterprises.

The survey was composed mostly by multiple-choice questions, one open-ended question and one using Likert scale. In this last, it was five possibilities of answer being 1 – “Not at all significant” and 5 – “Very significant”. It was launched in Portuguese and structured in 5 sections:

1. General characteristics – to gather information about the touristic enterprise and set a profile of sustainable and innovative enterprises (type of touristic enterprise, dimension, market segmentation, ...).
2. Entrepreneurial ecosystem – to understand if touristic enterprises are inserted in any entrepreneurial ecosystem and if it is a key factor that influence sustainable and innovative touristic enterprises
3. Innovation – to understand if innovation is a priority for touristic enterprises, and what kind of innovations are implemented
4. Sustainability - to understand if sustainability is a priority for touristic enterprises, and what kind of sustainable actions are in practice
5. Measuring the impact – to understand if touristic enterprises are concerned about measuring the impact of their actions in terms of sustainability and if they certificated due to sustainable actions

Table 2 - Structure of the survey - Source: Own elaboration

General characteristics	Entrepreneurial ecosystem	Innovation	Sustainability	Measuring the impact
1.Type of enterprise (name, legal figure, dimension)	1.External relationships	1.Type of innovations implemented	1.Knowledge regarding 17 SDG	1.Sustainable certifications obtained
2.Target market (segmentation, preferential market)		2.Reasons to innovate	2.Implementation of sustainable actions	2.Reports to measure impact
		3.Application to innovation support programs	3.Sustainable plans implemented	
			4.Sustainable dimensions prioritized	
			5.Reasons to be sustainable	

The questions regarding general characteristics were based on the GRI Standards for sustainable reports. Some questions, most of them related to the topic of sustainability, were adapted from the annual survey “The State of Sustainable Business 2019” launched by BSR and GlobeScan. The definition of the structure and the content of the survey were based on the literature available about the topics of innovation and sustainability.

There was also collection of primary raw data from reports and documentation about the region under study.

6.2.3. Data Preparation and Analysis

The survey was closed with a total of 45 answers. After validating the answers, it was detected that 1 was not legible for analysis since the touristic enterprise do not belong to the region of study. Besides that, it was identified 2 answers for the same touristic enterprise having considered only one. As a result, it was analysed 43 answers.

Since it was included an open-ended question, it was necessary to add codes for the analysis of this question.

For the treatment of data, it was structured a database in Excel both with the data collected on RNET and on the survey.

For the analysis of results, it was used frequency analysis.

Missing data

In the open-ended question about the reasons to be innovative, being an optional question to answer, the response rate was 63%.

To the optional question regarding the reasons for touristic enterprises to innovate, 17 respondents chose not to answer. Besides that, when questioned about the sustainable certifications with which the enterprise was awarded, 3/9 respondents did not answer. Finally, to the question about the knowledge of GRI Standards, 1/3 respondents did not answer.

7. Findings

In order to respond to the research questions, the analysis of results was structured according to the following:

Table 3 - Indicators for data analysis - Source: The author

Research Question	Indicators
RQ1 – Are innovation and sustainability relevant topics for touristic entrepreneurs on Douro?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovative and sustainable objectives • Reasons to innovate and be sustainable • Innovative programs/initiatives
RQ2 - In which dimensions sustainability and innovation are a concern for those enterprises?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of innovation implemented • Dimensions of sustainability prioritized
RQ3 - Which sustainable and innovative strategies and plans are currently in practice?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of sustainable actions • Partnerships and relationships with stakeholders
RQ4 – How touristic enterprises measure the impact of their sustainable and innovative actions?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certification • Reports

7.1. The importance of innovation and sustainability for touristic enterprises

To understand if innovation and sustainability are relevant for touristic enterprises, the indicators that reflect this is the existence, or not, of objectives related to these topics as well as if the entrepreneur find reasons to be innovative and sustainable.

The results suggest that the 63% of the inquiries find reasons to innovate. From these, the majority of entrepreneurs admit innovating to adapt to market dynamics and increase demand. Even being less prominent, the search for service improvement is also a reason highlighted by the entrepreneurs (Figure 7).

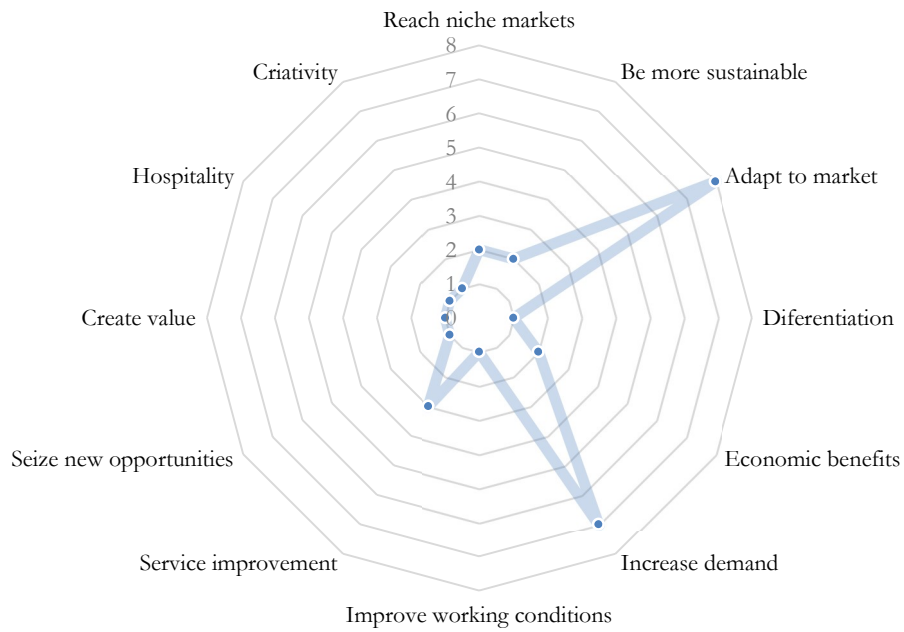


Figure 7 - Reasons to innovate - Source: Own elaboration based on survey results

However, what regards to participation in programs/initiatives that support enterprises to innovate, 79% of touristic enterprises never applied to any program (Figure 8).

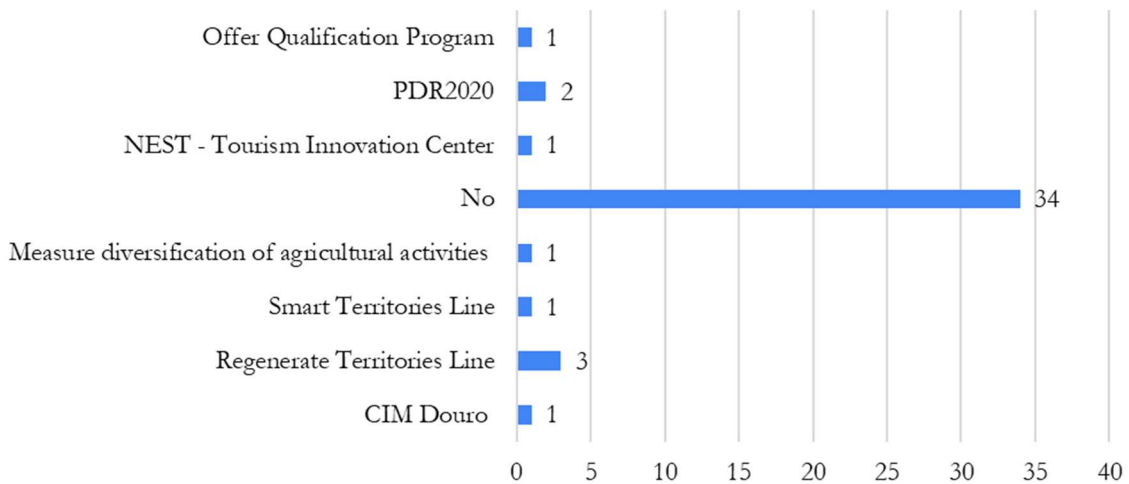


Figure 8 - Application to innovative programs/initiatives - Source: Own elaboration based on survey results

What concerns to the topic of sustainability, about 57,8% of inquiries did not show knowledge regarding the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (Figure 9). However, from the 42,2% of inquiries

that are familiar with it, 77,2% admit that already include, or intent to include, those goals on the company's strategy (Figure 10).

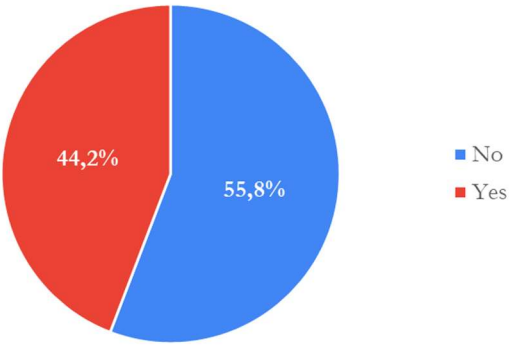


Figure 9 - Knowledge regarding the 17 Sustainable Development Goals – Source: Own elaboration based on survey results

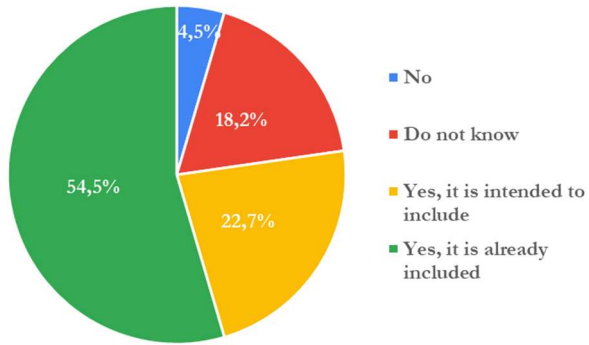


Figure 10 - Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals on business strategy - Source: Own elaboration based on survey results

On the other hand, the main reasons that (might) lead touristic enterprises on Douro to be more sustainable are to reach operational efficiency, minimize costs and attract new opportunities of growth (Figure 11).

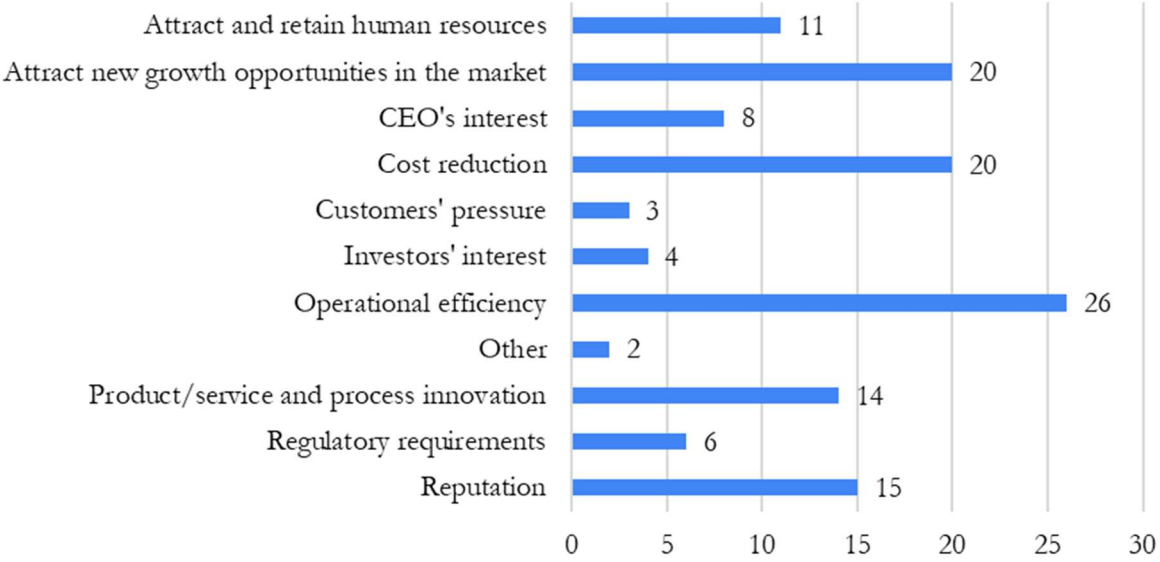


Figure 11 - Reasons to settle a sustainable business strategy - Source: Own elaboration based on survey results

The goal with more expression in the results in terms of sustainability is to root deeper this topic in the company's strategy. Moreover, build closer relationships with stakeholders and influence the creation of sustainable policies are the other goals that gain more expression in the results (Figure 12). Here, the highlight goes to objective of collaborating with other enterprises. Only about 12%

of the touristic enterprises aim to be more collaborative with complementary enterprises, public entities and local community.



Figure 12 - Touristic enterprises' sustainable objectives - Source: Own elaboration based on survey results

7.2. Dimensions of sustainability and innovation applied to touristic enterprises

Here, the goal is to understand which types of innovation touristic enterprises implemented in their businesses. At the same time, it is relevant to understand which sustainable dimensions (social, economic, or environmental) are more prioritized by those companies.

Regarding innovation, about 28% of Douro’s touristic companies admit never had implemented any kind of innovation. On the other hand, it is evident that product/service innovation is the type of innovation most implemented, followed by marketing innovation (Figure 13).

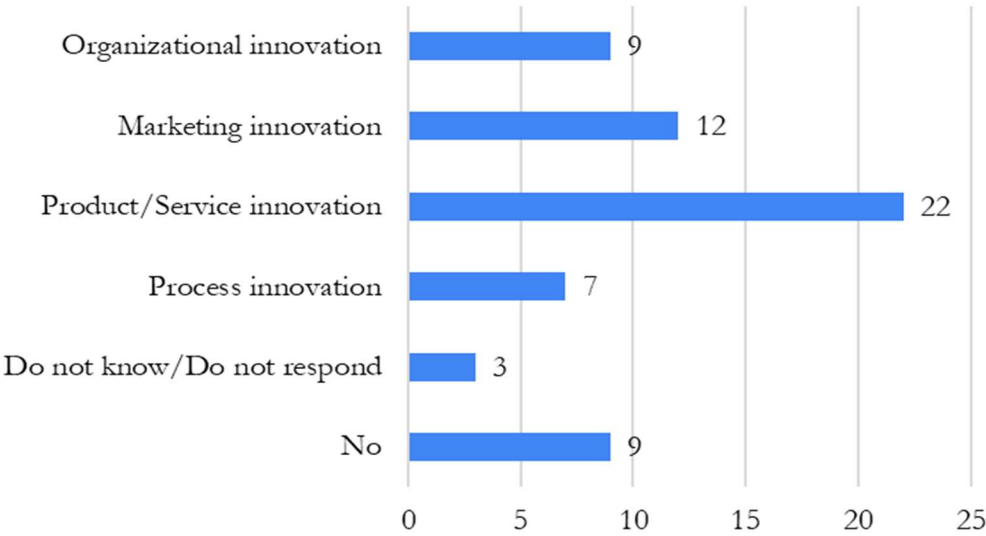


Figure 13 – Types of innovation implemented by touristic enterprises – Source: Own elaboration based on survey results

Regarding sustainability, the most prioritized objectives are related to social and environmental dimensions. According to the results, from the enterprises that admit incorporating at least one of the 17 SDG, the objectives prioritized are “7 – Affordable and clean energy”, “10 – Reduced inequalities”, “5 – Gender equality”, “8 – Decent work and economic growth”, and “15 – Life on land” (Figure 15). Aligned with this, what concerns to inclusive growth, promoting decent work conditions is the hot topic among inquiries, followed by the investment on professional growth of employees (Figure 14).

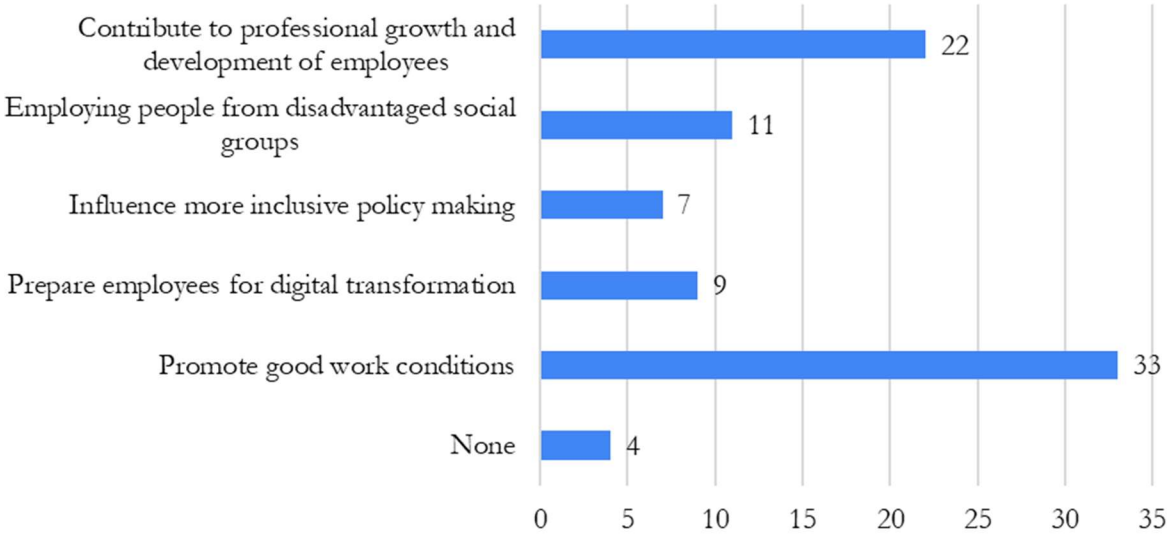


Figure 14 – Goals towards inclusive growth - Source: Own elaboration based on survey results

However, considering the main themes of the study, it is relevant to highlight the goal “17 – Partnerships for the goals” which is one the less prioritized goals (Figure 15). This requires special attention since this is related to capacity development that aim at “*strengthening and maintaining the capabilities of states and societies to design and implement strategies that minimize the negative impacts of current social, economic and environmental crises and emerging challenges*” (United Nations, s.d.). Also, it relates to finance, multi-stakeholder partnerships and voluntary commitments, technology, and strategies to integrate the SDG.

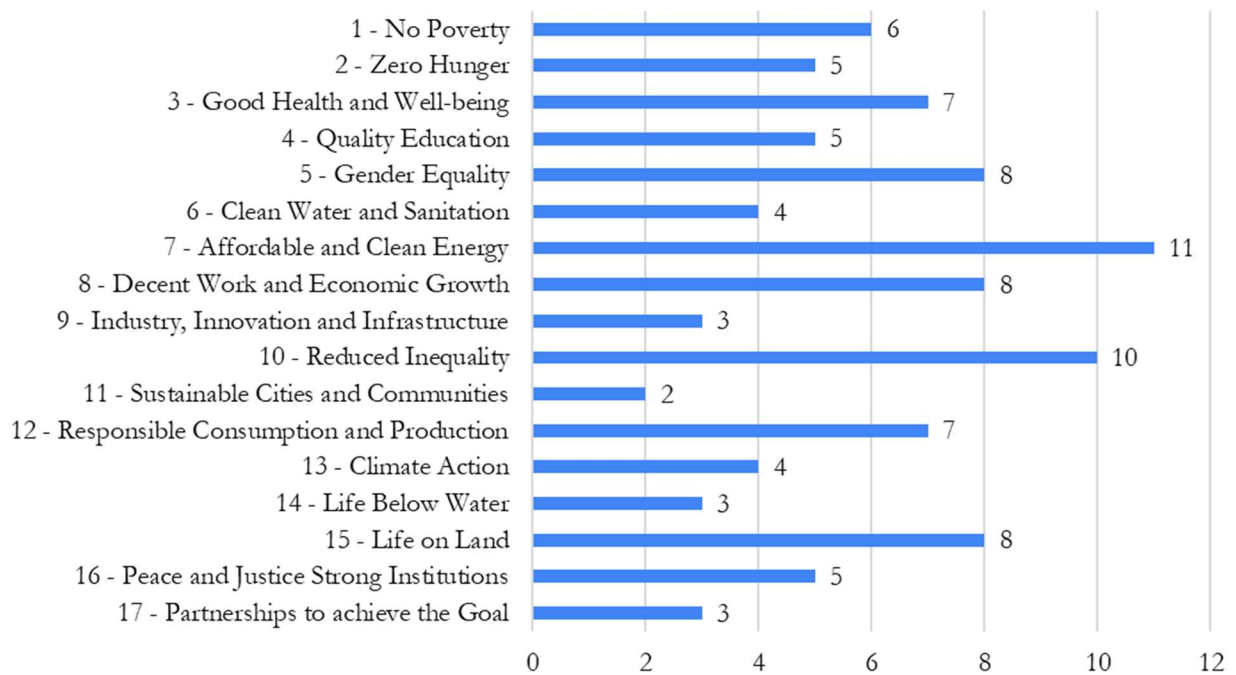


Figure 15 - The 17 Sustainable Development Goals prioritized - Source: Own elaboration based on survey results

In line with this, considering the entire sample, touristic enterprises indicate when setting their strategy, the sustainable priorities are “Water”, “Preservation of cultural heritage”, and “Climate change” (Figure 16). Again, environmental dimension is the most relevant for the inquiries.

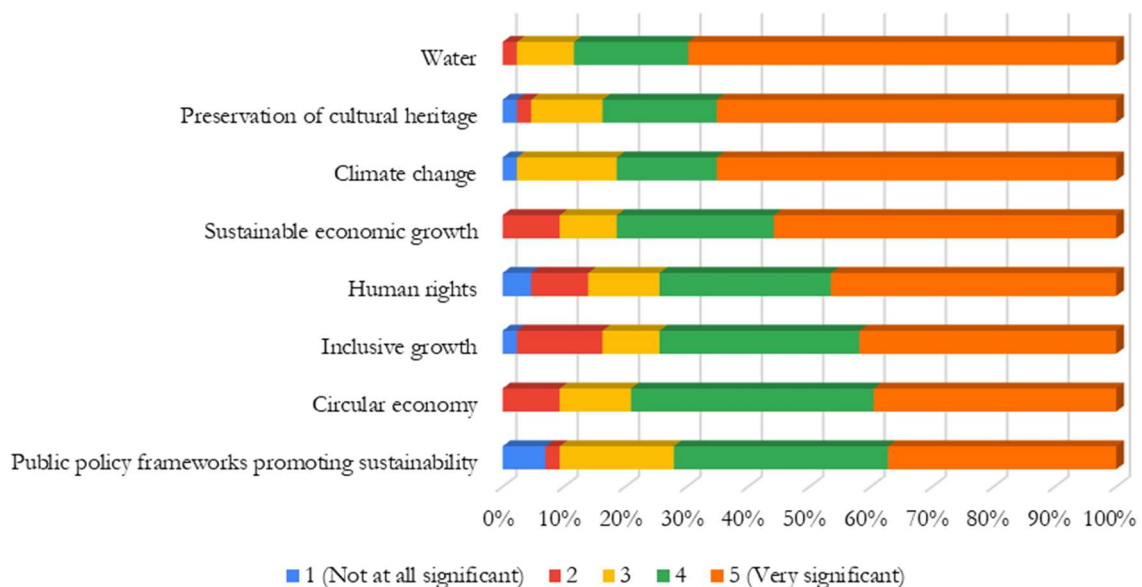


Figure 16 - Corporate Sustainability Priorities (Likert Scale) - Source: Own elaboration based on survey results

7.3. Sustainable and innovative strategies and plans in practice

When asked about the implementation of sustainable actions and plans, about 14% of touristic enterprises assume they do not integrate any sustainable action on their business (Figure 17), and 61% said they did not have outlined a sustainable plan (Figure 18). On the other hand, the results suggest that sustainability is integrated mostly on the company's policy and in the product/service (Figure 17).

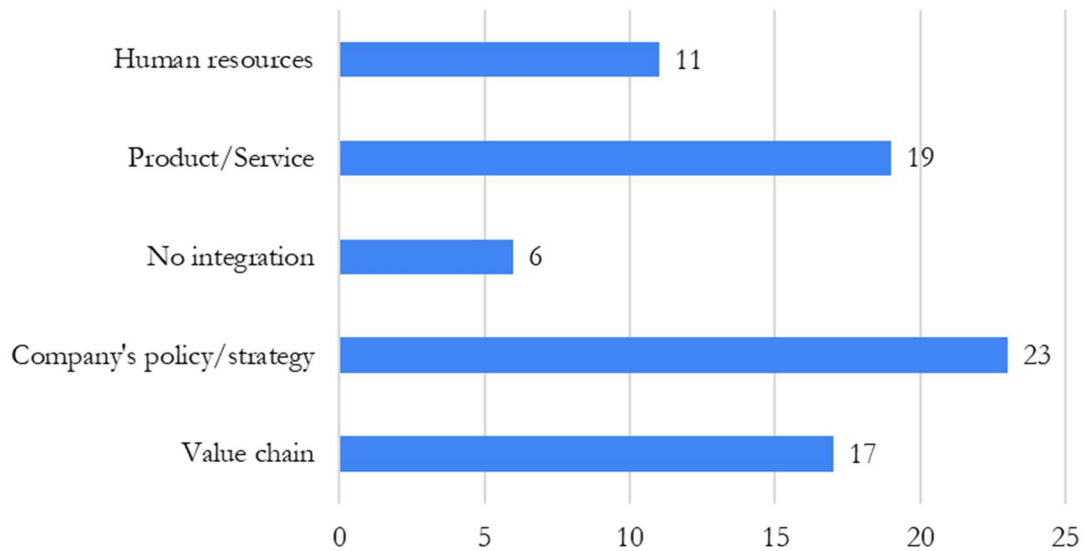


Figure 17 – Integration of sustainable practices - Source: Own elaboration based on survey results

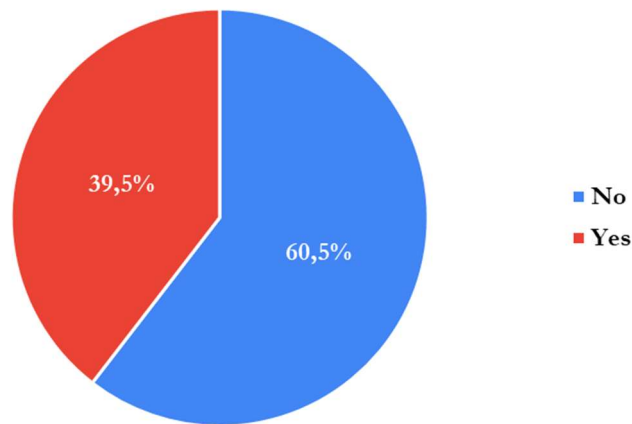


Figure 18 - Implementation of a sustainable strategic plan- Source: Own elaboration based on survey results

On the other hand, 28 touristic enterprises admit having incorporated eco-efficient strategies, 20 follow green consumerism, and 15 follow corporate social responsibility (Figure 19).

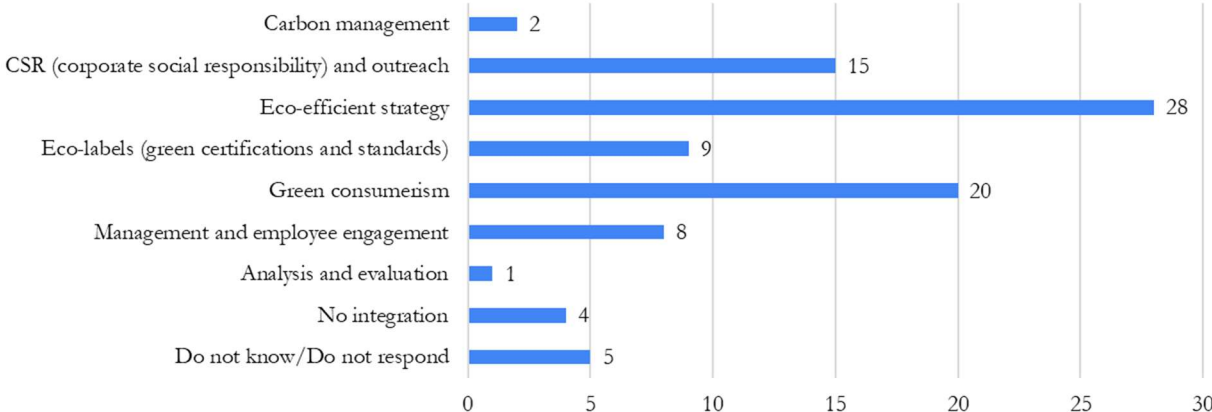


Figure 19 - Eco-innovative practices - Source: Own elaboration based on survey results

In terms of innovative strategies, setting partnerships is a relevant step for enterprises to innovate. According to the results, about 58% of Douro’s touristic enterprises said that did not have connections with local associations (Figure 20). From the other 42%, the relationships with local associations are mostly to participate in projects and for strategic purposes (Figure 21).

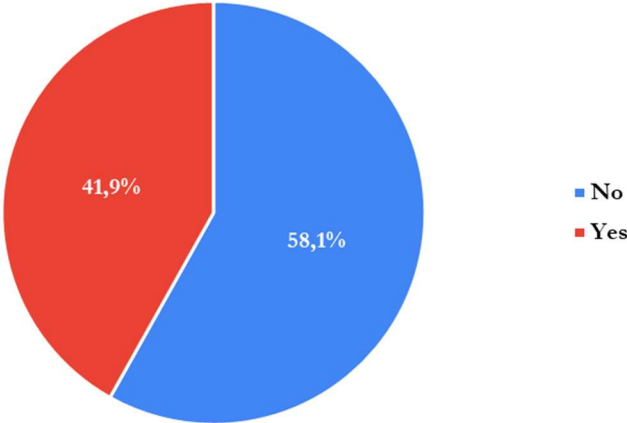


Figure 20 - Connections to local associations – Source: Own elaboration based on survey results

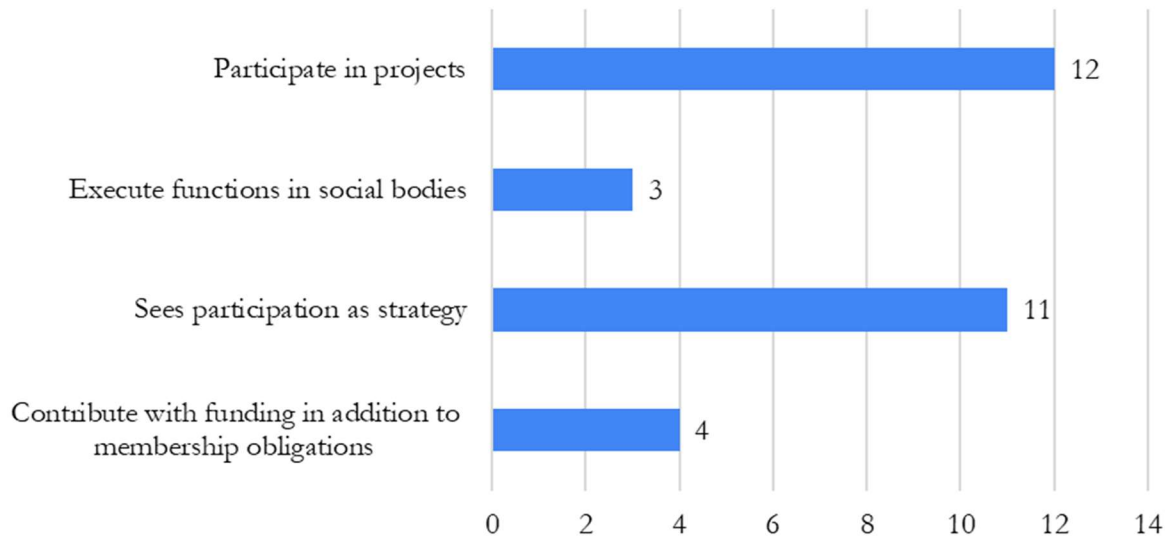


Figure 21 - Relationships with local associations – Source: Own elaboration based on survey results

Also, the relationships with other stakeholders assume special relevance. In fact, more than 50% of inquiries reveal that relationships with business partners are based on participating, both through dialogue and work, with them in order to co-create new ideas and solutions to reach common goals (Figure 22).

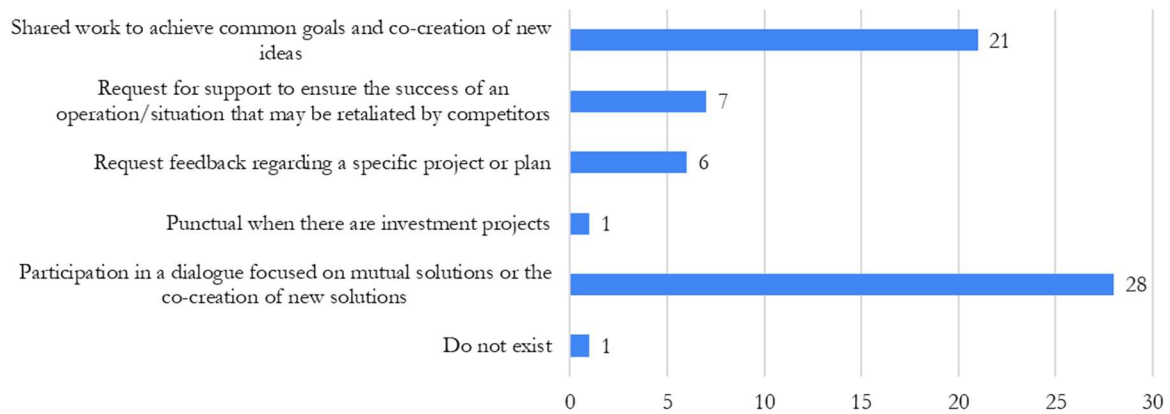


Figure 22 - Relationship with business partners – Source: Own elaboration based on survey results

7.4. Measuring impact of sustainable and innovative actions

To measure impact, there are indicators as the attribution of certifications and the measurement of economic impact related to sustainable actions in public reports.

What regards to sustainable certifications, about 77% of the inquiries do not have, neither are in process of obtaining, any sustainable certification (Figure 23).

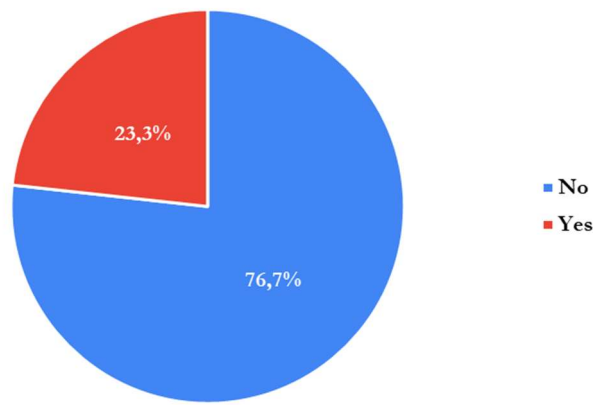


Figure 23 - Obtention of sustainable certifications - Source: Own elaboration based on survey results

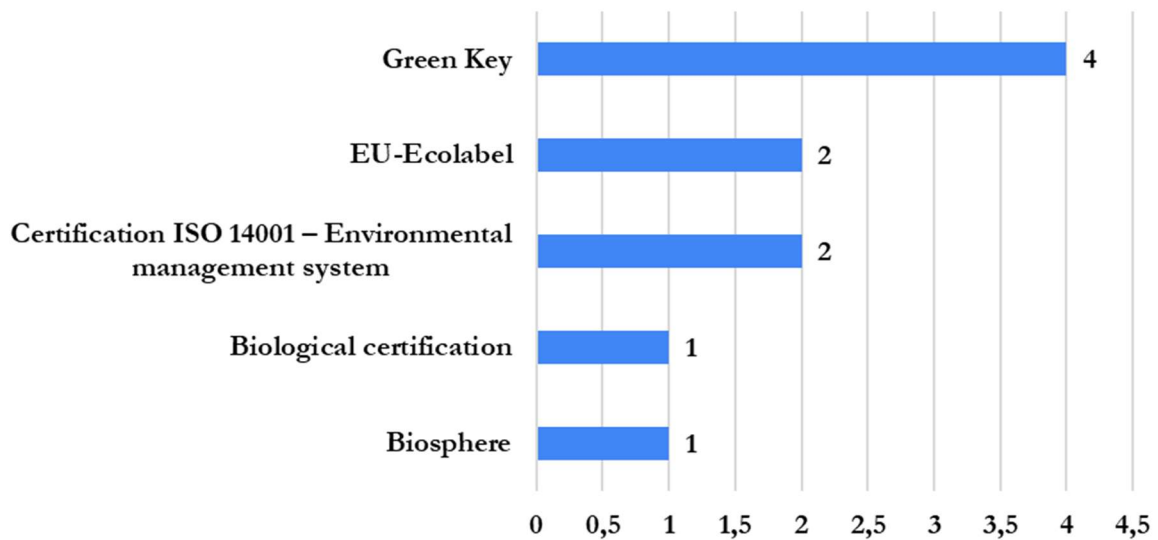


Figure 24 - Types of sustainable certifications – Source: Own elaboration based on survey results

What regards to the existence of sustainable reports or integrated report, 91% of inquiries said they do not publish this type of report (Figure 25).

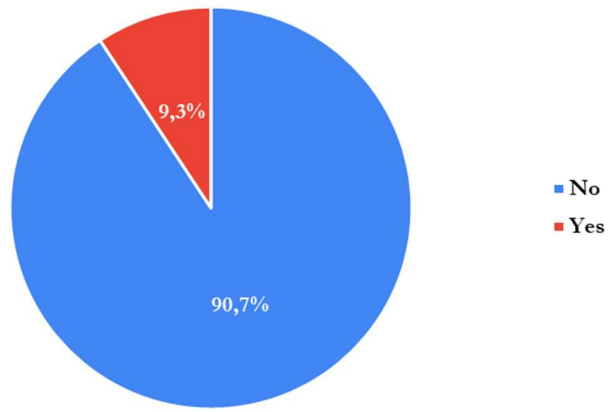


Figure 25 - Sustainable report - Source: Own elaboration based own survey results

8. Discussion

A solid base for an efficient strategy is to define concrete goals. Including innovation and sustainability on those goals reveal the importance given to those topics as tools to contribute to the business development.

Touristic enterprises on Douro search for innovation to achieve adaptation to market dynamics and to increase demand purposes which calls for product and marketing differentiation and operational efficiency. On the other hand, reach operational efficiency, minimize costs, and attract new opportunities of growth are the main reasons that (might) lead touristic enterprises on Douro to become more sustainable. These positions reflect the concerning of economic growth supported by sustainable development where enterprises achieve higher economic productivity through diversification, and through the efficient use of resources.

Also, the results suggests that 79% of touristic companies never applied to programs/initiatives that promote innovation which reinforces the idea that “hidden innovation” is neglected to public policy since these are more directed to I&D.

When asked about the awareness about the 17 SDGs, 57,8% of the inquiries said they did not have knowledge about this topic . On the other hand, most respondents that are familiar with it, intend to implement, or is already included, in the business’s strategy. Furthermore, 48,8% of the inquiries admit that one future goal is to root deeper sustainability on their businesses what shows that sustainability is already a concern for touristic enterprises, but it is not yet the central focus of their business strategy.

According to the results, it seems that innovation and sustainability are topics that touristic enterprises have in consideration, since the majority of inquiries find reasons to innovate and to pursue sustainability but are not extremely relevant.

According to the profiles of rural areas exposed by Arzeni et al., (2002), Douro can be considered a rural area located in a natural and historical region where the main concern is to develop tourism through the sustainable exploration of resources. In fact, the results of the study suggest that the environmental dimension of sustainability is one of the major prioritizes in the region where water, the preservation of cultural heritage and climate change are the main priorities when thinking about the strategy of the touristic enterprises Aligned with the Europe 2020 growth strategy, the enterprises of tourism sector have their attention on inclusive growth making efforts to promote decent work conditions and to invest on professional growth of employees what reveals consideration regarding social wellness.

In line with the concept of “hidden innovation” and assuming the fact that in the rural context innovations are more incremental and more related to product and marketing innovation, the results can confirm that. Allied to this, the results also suggest that there is a pattern between the inquiries since it prevails the implementation of mixed innovations.

What regards to plans and actions implemented by touristic enterprises, 86% of touristic enterprises have integration of sustainability on their businesses, mostly in the company’s policy as well as in their product/service. However, more than half of the respondents said they do not have outlined a sustainable plan.

Following Sharma et al. (2020)’s conceptual framework of eco-innovative practices, 79% of touristic companies admit incorporating eco-innovative actions in their businesses, most of them eco-efficient strategies and following green consumerism and corporate social responsibility.

The literatures reinforce the important role of setting partnerships as a key innovative strategy for companies to overcome the knowledge gap and access to resources. However, it is not a priority for the companies in the study. Only 12% of the touristic enterprises aim to be more collaborative with complementary enterprises, public entities, and local community which complies with the 58% of companies that admit to not having connections with local associations. Along with this, the goal “17 – Partnerships for the goals” of the 17 SDGs is one of the less prioritized goals. Here, it is clear there is a gap between Douro’s touristic companies and their progress due to the lack of relationships in entrepreneurial ecosystems which is, consequently, lagging the development of the region.

The topic of sustainability seems to not have a significant impact on Douro’s touristic enterprises because only 23% of the inquiries have or are in process of obtaining a certification. Besides that, and the overwhelming majority do not publish any sustainable report.

In this way, the results suggest that there is much yet to do what concerns to effective and efficient integration of sustainable actions on Douro’s touristic enterprises.

9. Conclusion

Douro is a region with a deserved highlight due to the combination of beautiful landscapes, with good wine and food, environmental quality, and quality of living. All these factors together result on a destination of excellence, and the recognition as UNESCO World Heritage can prove it.

As a region predominantly rural, it is a place where depopulation and ageing are a reality as well as the existence of poor infrastructures that difficult access to resources and information. These are factors, among others, that contribute to impressive low levels of competitiveness and development of the region when compared with the rest of the country. This increases the urgency of implementing measures to address issues that foster regression of the development of those areas and to maximise the value and potential of endogenous resources.

It is a fact the innovation and sustainability represent powerful tools to increase efficiency, to bring diversification to the market and leverage company's competitive advantage.

The results of the study conclude that innovation and sustainability are topics that touristic enterprises have in consideration when thinking about the business strategy but are not the focus. Most touristic enterprises do not have structured a sustainable plan neither publish a sustainable report to measure impact.

The attention towards sustainability goes mostly for the environmental and social dimensions, focusing on preserving the natural heritage and ensuring good work conditions. On the other hand, it is on the product, or service, and on the marketing where enterprises choose to innovate more.

The aim of the study was to understand the range of potential for growth and development of Douro through sustainable and innovative practices on touristic enterprises. It is possible to conclude there is still a path to be built by Douro's touristic entrepreneurs towards sustainability and innovation which might increase the possibilities of growth and development of those companies and, consequently, of Douro region.

10. Limitations and Future Research

One clear limitation of the study is the time constrain that limited the sample size. Only 22% of the sampling frame answered the survey. Allied to this, the survey was available during high season what took availability for entrepreneurs to participate in the study.

During the study, there was some remarks that lead to other questions that might be addressed in future research as the settlement of the profile of touristic entrepreneurs on Douro and how it impacts the implementation of innovation and sustainability in their businesses. A qualitative analysis of results to develop data triangulation methods, in order to observe some justifications for the observed relationships is other suggestion for further research. To understand which are the barriers and key available resources for the process of innovation on touristic enterprises on the region is also an hypothesis to study in the future. Finally, it would be interesting to understand how innovative and sustainable enterprises specifically impact the environment around.

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Annex

1. Survey

Introdução

No âmbito da conclusão do Mestrado em Inovação e Empreendedorismo Tecnológico da Faculdade de Engenharia da Universidade do Porto, venho solicitar a sua colaboração na resposta a este inquérito.

Um dos principais objetivos deste inquérito é entender a relação que existe entre os empreendimentos turísticos do Douro (NUT III) e as temáticas da inovação e sustentabilidade.

Todas as informações recolhidas serão confidenciais e utilizada para fins meramente académicos.

Obrigada pela sua colaboração.

Secção 1

Características Gerais

Nome do empreendimento turístico:

Figura jurídica da empresa:

- Empresário em nome individual
- Sociedade unipessoal por quotas
- Sociedade por quotas
- Sociedade Anónima
- Outra: _____

Dimensão da empresa:

- 1-9 trabalhadores
- 10-49 trabalhadores
- 50-249 trabalhadores
- >= 250 trabalhadores

Segmento de mercado-alvo:

- Nacional
- Estrangeiro
- Ambos

Mercado preferencial:

- Famílias com crianças
- Casais
- Clientes de negócio
- Grupos de jovens
- Grupos de adultos
- Clientes *single*
- Outro: _____

Secção 2

Ecosistema de empreendedorismo

Um ecossistema de empreendedorismo consiste na construção de redes de network e fortes relações sociais entre agentes de diversas atividades económicas.

Pergunta 1: O empreendimento turístico tem alguma ligação empresarial com associações locais?

- Sim
- Não

Se sim, indique qual/quais o(s) tipo(s) de relação/relações que tem com a(s) mesma(s):

- Encara a participação como estratégica
- Exerce funções nos órgãos sociais
- Participa em projetos
- Contribui com financiamento para além das obrigações como associado

Pergunta 2: De que forma é que mantém relações com os seus parceiros de negócio? Selecione até 2 opções

- Participação num diálogo focado em soluções mútuas ou de cocriação de novas soluções
- Trabalho partilhado de forma a atingir objetivos comuns e de cocriação de novas ideias
- Solicitação de feedback relativamente a um projeto ou plano específico
- Solicitação de suporte para garantir o sucesso de uma operação/situação que possa ser alvo de retaliações por parte dos concorrentes
- Outra: _____

Secção 3

Inovação

“Inovação trata-se de um produto ou processo (ou a combinação dos dois), novo ou melhorado que difere significativamente do produto ou processo anterior, e que é colocado à disposição de potenciais utilizadores, ou que é colocado em prática” Fonte: Manual de Oslo (4ª edição)

Pergunta 3: Já implementou algum tipo de inovação no seu empreendimento turístico?

- Inovação de produto/serviço (produto ou serviço novo ou significativamente melhorado)
- Inovação de processo (uma nova, ou significativamente melhorada, forma de produção ou método de distribuição de um produto ou serviço)
- Inovação organizacional (novo método organizacional envolvendo mudanças nas práticas quotidianas, organização do espaço de trabalho ou nas relações externas)
- Inovação em marketing (novo método de marketing envolvendo mudanças significativas ao nível do preço, design do produto/serviço e *packaging*, publicidade e colocação)
- Não
- Não sabe/Não responde

Pergunta 4: Quais os principais motivos que levam a sua empresa a inovar?

Resposta aberta

Pergunta 5: Já alguma vez se candidatou a algum dos seguintes programas/iniciativas de apoio à inovação?

- NEST - Centro de Inovação no Turismo
- Polo de Inovação Digital InnovTourism DIH (através do IAPMEI)
- Linha Regenerar Territórios | Transformar Turismo (Financiamento através do Turismo de Portugal)
- Linha Territórios Inteligentes | Transformar Turismo (Financiamento através do Turismo de Portugal)
- Não
- Outro: _____

Pergunta 6: Acredita na sustentabilidade como uma forma de inovação?

- Sim
- Não

Pergunta 7: Existe integração de algum tipo de práticas eco-inovativas? Selecione até 3 opções (mais relevantes)

- Estratégias eco-eficientes
- Consumismo verde/ecológico
- Responsabilidade social corporativa
- Gestão de carbono
- Eco-certificações
- Gestão de recursos humanos
- Análise e avaliação
- Não há integração
- Não sabe/Não responde

Secção 4

Sustentabilidade

Pergunta 8: Tem conhecimento dos 17 Objetivos de Desenvolvimento Sustentável?

- Sim
- Não

Se sim, tenciona incorporar algum dos objetivos na estratégia da sua empresa?

- Sim, já está incluído
- Sim, é pretendido utilizar
- Não
- Não sabe

Se sim, indique qual/quais o(s) objetivo(s) priorizado(s):

- 1 - Erradicar a pobreza
- 2 - Erradicar a fome
- 3 - Saúde de qualidade
- 4 - Educação de qualidade
- 5 - Igualdade de género
- 6 - Água potável e saneamento
- 7 - Energias renováveis e acessíveis
- 8 - Trabalho digno e crescimento económico
- 9 - Indústria, inovação e infraestruturas
- 10 - Redução das desigualdades
- 11 - Cidades e comunidades sustentáveis
- 12 - Produção e consumo sustentáveis
- 13 - Ação climática
- 14 – Proteger a vida marinha
- 15 – Proteger a vida terrestre
- 16 – Paz, justiça e instituições eficazes
- 17 – Parcerias para a implementação dos objetivos

Pergunta 9: De que forma é que a sustentabilidade está integrada no seu negócio?

- Produto/serviço
- Cadeia de valor (todas as atividades desde a criação do produto/serviço até ao momento em que é distribuído aos consumidores finais)
- Estratégia / Políticas da empresa
- Recursos humanos
- Não há integração

Pergunta 10: A sua empresa tem estruturado um plano estratégico sustentável?

- Sim
- Não

Se sim, qual é o deadline?

- 2030
- 2050
- Não tem
- Outro: _____

Pergunta 11: Quais são os principais motivos que o levam/levariam a delinear uma estratégia sustentável para a sua empresa? Selecione os 3 principais motivos.

- Reputação
- Pressão por parte dos consumidores
- Interesse dos investidores
- Eficiência operacional
- Atração e retenção de recursos humanos
- Força da lei
- Atrair novas oportunidades de crescimento no mercado

- Inovação de produto/serviço e de processos
- Interesse do CEO
- Redução de custos
- Outro: _____

Pergunta 12: Quais são as prioridades em termos de sustentabilidade quando pensa na estratégia para o seu empreendimento? Classifique de 1 – “Nada significativa”; ...; 5 – “Muito significativa”

- Alterações climáticas
- Direitos Humanos
- Crescimento inclusivo
- Crescimento económico sustentável
- Preservação do património cultural
- Economia circular
- Água
- Políticas públicas de promoção da sustentabilidade

Pergunta 13: Para o futuro, qual/quais são os objetivos em termos de sustentabilidade para a sua empresa? Selecione até 2 opções.

- Enraizar mais o tópico da sustentabilidade
- Construir relações mais próximas com os *stakeholders* (clientes, fornecedores, colaboradores, parceiros de negócio, ...)
- Colaborar mais com empresas complementares na indústria/entidades públicas/sociedade civil
- Enfatizar a criação de valor a longo prazo
- Influenciar a criação de políticas relativamente à sustentabilidade
- Não sabe/Não aplicável
- Outro: _____

Pergunta 14: Qual/Quais do(s) seguinte(s) tópico(s) são os mais relevantes em termos de crescimento inclusivo para a sua empresa?

- Empregar pessoas de grupos sociais desfavoráveis
- Promover boas condições de trabalho
- Preparação dos trabalhadores para a transformação digital
- Dar a possibilidade de crescimento profissional e de desenvolvimento de carreira para trabalhadores
- Influenciar a criação e atualização de políticas públicas mais inclusivas
- Nenhum
- Outro: _____

Secção 5

Medição do Impacto

Pergunta 15: A sua empresa possui algum tipo de certificação sustentável ou está em processo de obtenção de certificação sustentável?

- Sim
- Não

Se sim,

Pergunta 16: Selecione os tipos de certificações que tem no seu empreendimento em matéria de sustentabilidade.

- Certificação SA 8000 - RESPONSABILIDADE SOCIAL
- Certificação ISO 14001 – Sistema de Gestão Ambiental
- EU-Ecolabel (Rótulo Ecológico da União Europeia)
- Green Key
- Biosphere
- Outra: _____

Pergunta 17: A sua empresa publica relatório de sustentabilidade ou relato integrado?

- Sim
- Não

Se sim à questão 17:

Pergunta 18: Tem conhecimento das Normas GRI?

- Sim
- Não

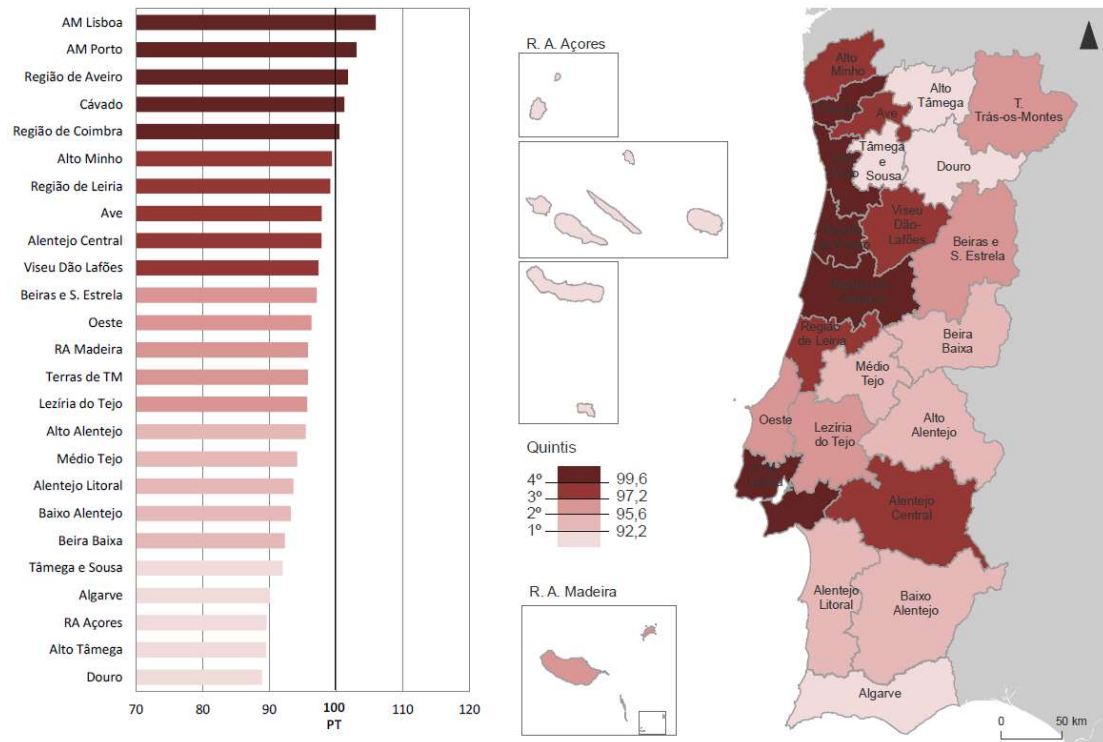
Caso tenha disponibilidade para uma entrevista presencial, pode deixar de seguida o seu contacto:

Nº telemóvel:

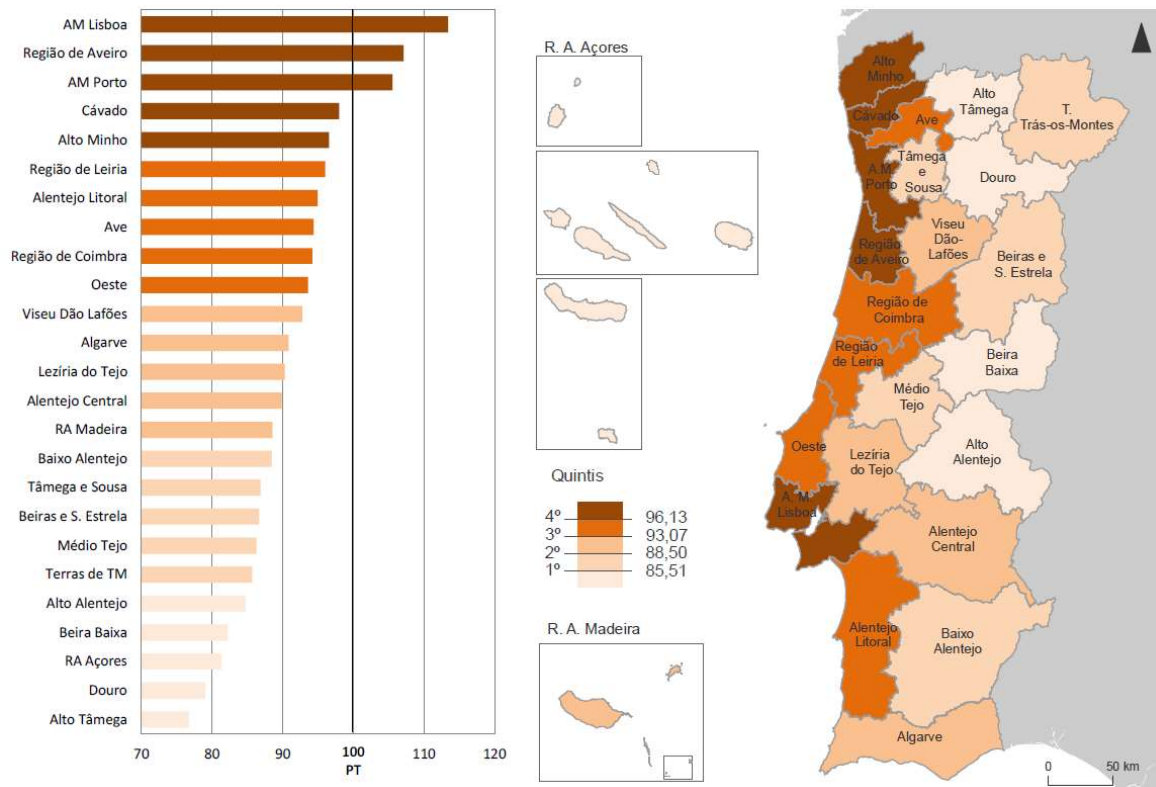
E-mail:

Muito obrigada pela sua colaboração.

2. Regional Development and Competitivity Index



Annex A - Synthetic Regional Development Index (Portugal = 100), NUTS III, 2020 – Source: (Instituto Nacional de Estatística, 2022)



Annex B - Competitivity (Portugal = 100), NUTS III, 2020 – Source: (Instituto Nacional de Estatística, 2022)