

Versão de Autor:

Citar como: Pato, M.L. & Duque, A.S. (2023). Strategic Issues in Portuguese Tourism Plans: An Analysis of National Strategic Plans since 2000. Sustainability 2023, 15, 5635.

Article

Strategic issues in Portuguese tourism plans: an analysis of national strategic plans since 2000

Maria Lúcia Pato ^{1*}, Ana Sofia Duque ²

¹ CERNAS-IPV Research Centre, Polytechnic Institute of Viseu, Portugal; mljesus@esav.ipv.pt

² CiTUR - Polytechnic of Leiria; ESTGV - Polytechnic Institute of Viseu, Portugal; ascdueque@estgv.ipv.pt

* Correspondence: mljesus@esav.ipv.pt

Abstract: Planning is thinking about the future and allows territories to be better prepared to take advantage of the opportunities and face the challenges that arise. In Portugal, tourism is one of the pillars of the economy, generating wealth and creating several job offers. In recent years, this destination has won several international awards and distinctions due to the quality of services and tourist offer. Part of this success is due to the planning carried out by the responsible entity, Turismo de Portugal. This study consists of the analysis of strategic documents, implemented since the beginning of the 21st century, in Portugal. A qualitative methodology of document analysis was used, combined with the presentation of a case study, related to tourism planning, at a national level. The results show a growing importance of the tourism sector for the Portuguese economy. As well as the growing involvement of stakeholders in the construction of strategic plans, through public consultation. Another aspect worth mentioning is the importance of sustainability in tourism.

Citation: To be added by editorial staff during production.

Keywords: tourism planning; strategic plans; sustainability; national level; Portugal

Accepted: date

Published: date

Publisher's Note: MDPI stays neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.



Copyright: © 2022 by the author. Submitted for possible open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

1. Introduction

Tourism has been gaining increasing importance in the global economy in general and particularly in European countries like Portugal [1]. Indeed, over the last two decades tourism has been an important sociocultural and economic activity of the country and is even considered the country's largest export economic activity [2]. Accordingly, it influences the development process of many regions in the country and creates synergies with other economic and non-economic activities. But if tourism is associated with several benefits, it can also provoke effects on people's lives and their environment [3, 4, 5].

Strategic planning in the tourism sector is considered a tool of the environmental, economic, and social policy of a country since for one hand this led to a more equitable distribution of incomes, preserves the natural and man-made resources and traditions on which human prosperity is based [2]. On the other hand, it can contribute to reduce regional asymmetries and make a country more cohesive in terms of tourism development.

The elaboration of plans allows the organizations and destinations to manage all their resources in a way that could benefit the stakeholders. In the area of tourism, planning

assumes a crucial importance for organizations and destinations given the impacts (positives but also negatives) of tourism activity on the communities where the activity takes place. Tourism planning also helps to sustain a more satisfied tourism market [6, 7]. Indeed, this activity is recognized by various authors as an essential condition for successful tourism development and management [6, 7, 8]. Like Williams refer “in the absence of planning there are evident risks that tourism development will become unregulated, formless or haphazard, inefficient and likely to lead directly to a range of negative economic, social and environmental impacts.” [9] (p. 125).

Although (tourism) planning “is an extremely ambiguous and difficult word to define” [6] (p. 6), the pioneering work of Murphy defines tourism planning as “anticipating and regulating change in a system to promote orderly development so as to increase social, economic and environmental benefits of the development process” [10] (p. 156). Yet, public tourism planning can be understood as a potential tool for guiding tourism actions in way to capable to create benefits and well-being beyond the industry [8] and tourism destinations [11]. During the last four decades, more precisely after the eighties, the concept of sustainability has gained a preponderant and essential weight in tourism development. Tourism planning requires more than in other times an understanding of the meaning of sustainable development and the guiding values for promoting sustainable tourism [12]. Accordingly, it requires that communities be made to be sufficiently aware of the tourism industry and them impacts, as well as the diverse processes to integrate and engage in participatory planning, consensus building and conflict resolution between all stakeholders [12].

The purpose of this study is to analyze the main strategic tourism plans that have been implemented in Portugal, since the beginning of 21st century and guided the national strategy throughout the new millennium.

A qualitative methodology of document analysis was used, combined with the presentation of a case study, related to tourism planning at a national level. This paper is structured in five parts. After this initial section (Introduction), Section 2 contains information about Materials and Methods and here will be presented the methodology used (2.1) and it's presented the study case - Tourism planning in Portugal (2.2). Section 3 is about Results presentation and it's organized in 5 subtopics, each one related to the five phases of strategic planning process. In next section (4) the Discussion of the results will be made and the last part is dedicated to the Conclusions.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Methodology

The present study has the purpose to describe tourism planning in Portugal as a case study. As stated by Scott the focus on a particular geographical case study is the major strategy used to analyze studies on tourism policy [13].

The case study often can imply diverse source of methods [14]. However, document analysis is particularly applicable to case studies [15] since it can produce rich descriptions of a phenomenon or program. According to Liasidou “document analysis helps in understanding and identifying what was said or written versus what was applied to shed light on the historic development of tourism” [16] (p. 77). Additionally, these documents are not only an essential source of information concerning the reaction and perspectives of the government, but also the various stakeholders as the main actors in the tourism industry [17, 18]. In other words, these documents also reflect the role of successful networks and cooperation with different stakeholders as vital part of the development of such policies [19].

The methodology adopted was the documental analysis, based in the exploration of the different strategic planning instruments developed and implemented in Portugal since the beginning of the 21st century, covering up the last two decades.

There are several potential applications for planning, however the nature of the planning process is pretty much uniform [9]. For this research, the authors followed the 5 strategic phases suggested by Alves [20]. See Figure 1.

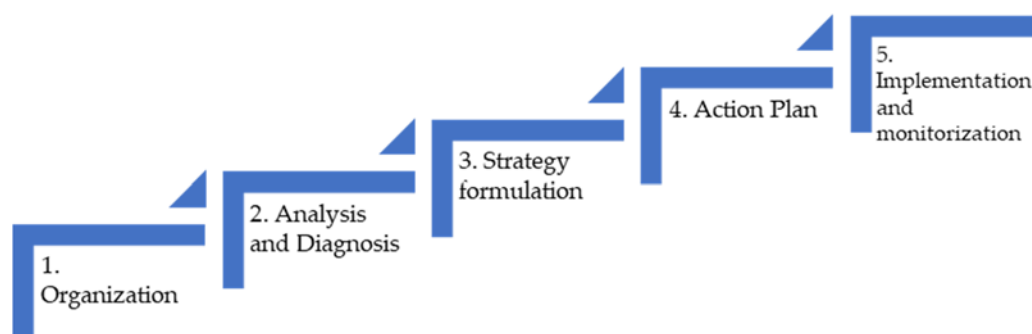


Figure 1. Phases of strategic planning. Source: Adapted from Alves [20].

Inspired by previous works from Ruhanen [21], Liasidou [16] and Nichols et al. [22] it was built an instrument designed to analyze tourism plans contents. The instrument has 15 items divided into 5 sections (corresponding to the phases of strategic planning) and was designed to analyze tourism plans contents (Table 1).

Table 1. Instrument used on plan analysis

Sections	Items
1. Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan coordinating entity Methodology and techniques used Stakeholders involved
2. Analysis and Diagnosis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SWOT analysis Benchmarking analysis Diagnosis of the current tourist situation
3. Strategy Formulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vision Values Scenario construction Definition of strategic objectives (how many and what are they?) Hierarchy of objectives and lines of action
4. Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existence of the action plan Projects definition (calendarization, indicators, ...)
5. Implementation and Monitorization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observations on the implementation of the plan Observations on plan monitoring

Source: Own elaboration

Using the same technique used by Collins-Kreiner and Ramb each national plan was analyzed in accordance with the items presented in Table 1. The analysis was based on evaluation by the two authors, that used a yes/no categorical ranking, with the additional writing of information that seemed pertinent to the analysis of results [23].

2.2. Tourism planning in Portugal: study case contextualization

To talk about the history of tourism planning in Portugal, it is not necessary to go back a long way. The first strategic plan specifically dedicated to the tourism sector was created only at the end of the 1980s - the National Tourism Plan - and was implemented

between 1986 and 1989. This document aimed to affirm tourism as a strategic sector for the revival of the Portuguese economy and sought to eliminate existing imbalances. The main topics addressed in this pioneering plan were tourism planning, thermalism, animation, administrative structure, training of human resources, investments and tourism promotion [24].

During the 1990s, there was no strategic plan dedicated exclusively to the tourism sector. There were economic development plans and regional development plans, which referred to tourism, but without highlighting its importance in the national context.

In the 21st century, in 2007, the National Strategic Plan for Tourism (also known by PENT) was created and since then the Portuguese Government, with the support of Turismo de Portugal, started to design and implement national plans for tourism. This document had a horizon of 7 years (2007-2015) and established a set of objectives, policies and initiatives with the objective to pursue a sustained growth for national tourism [25]. During this period, the document underwent two revisions, the first in 2011 and the second in 2013. The plan was structured in five strategic axes: 1) Territory, Destinations and Products: new products and tourist attraction centers; 2) Brands and Markets: development of brands and new markets; 3) Qualification of Human Resources: qualification of human resources, services and destinations; 4) Distribution and Marketing: tourist promotion; 5) Innovation and Knowledge: integration of innovations and knowledge management [25].

In 2015, two complementary documents are developed and published: Tourism 2020: Action Plan for Tourism Development in Portugal [26] and Tourism 2020: 5 Principles for an Ambition [27]. Both documents target the year 2020 and “tried to identify priorities for the use of community funds for the 2014-2020 programming period” [2] (p. 362). About the document entitled Tourism 2020: Action Plan for Tourism Development in Portugal it is structured around 5 strategic objectives, which are: 1) Attract: qualification and enhancement of the territory and its distinctive tourist resources; 2) Compete: strengthening the competitiveness and internationalization of tourism companies; 3) Enabling: capacity building, training and research and development in Tourism; 4) Communicate: promotion and commercialization of tourism in the country and regions; 5) Cooperate: strengthening international cooperation [26]. In the other plan, Tourism 2020: 5 Principles for an Ambition, as the name implies, were defined 5 principles to achieve an ambition: “We have defined five principles that are harmoniously aligned to fulfill the ambition of transforming Portugal into the most agile and dynamic destination in Europe: Person, Freedom, Openness, Knowledge and Collaboration.” [27] (p. 49).

The document that is currently in force is the Tourism Strategy 2027 and was published in 2017. This plan “it is based on a long-term vision, combined with short term action, allowing for more strategic action in the present and being part of the future European support framework 2021-2027.” [28] (p. 12). There are five strategic axes that guide this document, which are: 1) valuing the territory; 2) boost the economy; 3) enhance knowledge; 4) generate networks and connectivity; 5) promote Portugal. In this document, the national commitment to sustainability issues was already clear, but it became more evident during the period of the Covid-19 pandemic [28].

During 2021, in the middle of the pandemic crisis, Turismo de Portugal launched a new strategic document, which does not aim to replace, but to complement the existing document [29]. The + Sustainable Tourism Plan 2020-2023 is currently in force, which is developed around 4 axes of action: 1) structuring an increasingly sustainable offer; 2) qualify the sector's agents; 3) promote Portugal as a sustainable destination; and 4) monitor sustainability metrics [29].

Considering the main objective defined for this study, which is the analysis of the strategic documents implemented in Portugal during the 21st century, these 5 documents

will be analyzed: National Strategic Plan for Tourism; Tourism 2020: Action Plan for Tourism Development in Portugal; Tourism 2020: 5 Principles for an Ambition; Tourism Strategy 2027; + Sustainable Tourism Plan 2020-2023. The results are shown below.

3. Results

3.1. Organization

This first phase of the planning process is structural [20]. Here is given the indication of the entity responsible for the elaboration and implementation of the plan, which in this case study is always the same, Turismo de Portugal. In this first planning phase, the stakeholders involved in defining the strategy and the methodologies used to build the plan are also mentioned. Of the various methodologies used in the strategic planning of tourism, there is one that deserves to be highlighted, the consultation of public and private agents operating in the territories in question. See Table 2.

Auscultation processes are present in almost all analyzed plans. And this action can include different techniques, such as conducting individual interviews, participating in informal meetings, conducting online surveys, focus groups, among others.

Table 2. Methodologies used in tourism strategic plans

Tourism Plans	Methodologies used
National Strategic Plan for Tourism (2007)	Not mentioned in the document.
Tourism 2020 - Action Plan for Tourism Development in Portugal 2014-2020	1.Document analysis (study of trends; community and national documents; plans, programs and regional strategies). 2. Interaction and dialogue with agents (conferences, technical workshops, meetings/work sessions). 3. Public consultation (public and private institutions from different sectors of activity).
Tourism 2020 - 5 Principles for an Ambition	1.Documentary analysis: survey and analysis of several key documents, namely international studies and reports (UNWTO and IMF); Community guidelines and regulations (European Commission); National strategic references; and regional documents. 2. Participation and collective consultation: involving the dimensions of territorial valorization, human resources qualification, companies' competitiveness, tourism promotion and international cooperation. The consultation process included several national, regional and local actors and from different sectors of activity with influence on the tourist development of the country and regions.
Tourism Strategy 2027	Public consultation: 1. Technological platforms and website: online participation through questionnaires. 2. Focus Groups with more than 80 participants. 3. Strategic Tourism Laboratories/Public Sessions held in all regions of the country, involving more than 1400 participants.
+ Sustainable Tourism Plan 2020-2023	Public consultation to collect suggestions and contributions, among tourism players and other public entities,

associations and citizens. It was collected 106 participations: Public Administration (14); Academia/Schools (2); Associations (31); Companies (31) and Citizens (28).

Source: Own elaboration

3.2. Analysis and Diagnosis

The second phase of strategic planning is, according to Alves a phase of great technical rigor and scientific depth [20]. It is here that an analysis of the macro and micro environment of the territory and/or company will be developed, externally evaluating the opportunities and threats and internally its strengths and weaknesses. Often this task comes in the form of a SWOT analysis..

On the other hand, at this stage, some key themes that are important for the object of analysis must be identified and data on these themes must be presented. In the present study, since the object of analysis is national tourism plans, the data presented is about the evolution of demand, analysis of competition and trends that may affect the sector.

In National Strategic Plan for Tourism, the analysis and diagnosis can be found in the first chapter, which is dedicated to the state of Tourism in Portugal. Here an economic contextualization of the sector is made, since this is one of the most important for the national economy. A summary of the evolution of the sector follows, where demand data are presented (main outbound markets, evolution of the number of tourists and overnight stays). Finally, a list is presented with the main opportunities and challenges that at the time (in 2007) were significant for the sector, such as: “acceleration of growth in the number of international tourists worldwide; aging of the European population; increase in do it yourself (DIY) and decrease in organized trips; low cost development; transformation of business models (importance of the internet)” [25] (p. 35-43).

In the second plan analyzed (Tourism 2020 - Action Plan for Tourism Development in Portugal 2014-2020) we find chapter 3 dedicated to “Prospective diagnosis: major international trends, trends in Portugal, tourism in the regions”. The major international trends identified are divided into 5 groups: demographic and sociocultural, economic, environmental, technological and transports. The work is presented in a very interesting way as trends are identified for each of the groups and then a list of possible consequences for the tourism sector appears. The chapter continues with the presentation of various statistical data on the evolution of tourism in Portugal, revealing data that allow us to compare Portugal with some of the main competing destinations (ex: Spain and France) and that show the evolution and growth of tourism in the territory [26].

The Tourism 2020 Plan - 5 Principles for an Ambition was designed at the same time as the previous one. Both were published in 2015 and are limited to the year 2020, so the information available in the Analysis and Diagnosis chapter is very similar and in some cases points is even the same, for example with regard to the analysis of world trends. In this chapter it is possible to find statistical data regarding the tourist supply and demand of the territory, emphasizing the growth of the sector. Finally, it is possible to find a very complete SWOT analysis [27] (p. 38-39).

In Tourism Strategy 2027 the analysis and diagnosis is presented in an original way, divided into two chapters. First comes the chapter “Where are we? – The performance of tourism in Portugal”, where information about the evolution of tourism in the decade 2005-2015 is presented. Also in this chapter, the presentation of “Tourism today - 2016” is made with reference to current data (for the time of construction of the plan) and ends with the presentation of a SWOT analysis, where are referred “positive and negative elements of the tourism value chain in Portugal, over the last decade” [28] (p. 41-42). The next chapter “Changes, Outlooks and Challenges” is the culmination of the analysis of the tourism sector and suggests some elements that will be important for the definition of the strategy (Figure 2), which is the next phase of the plan.

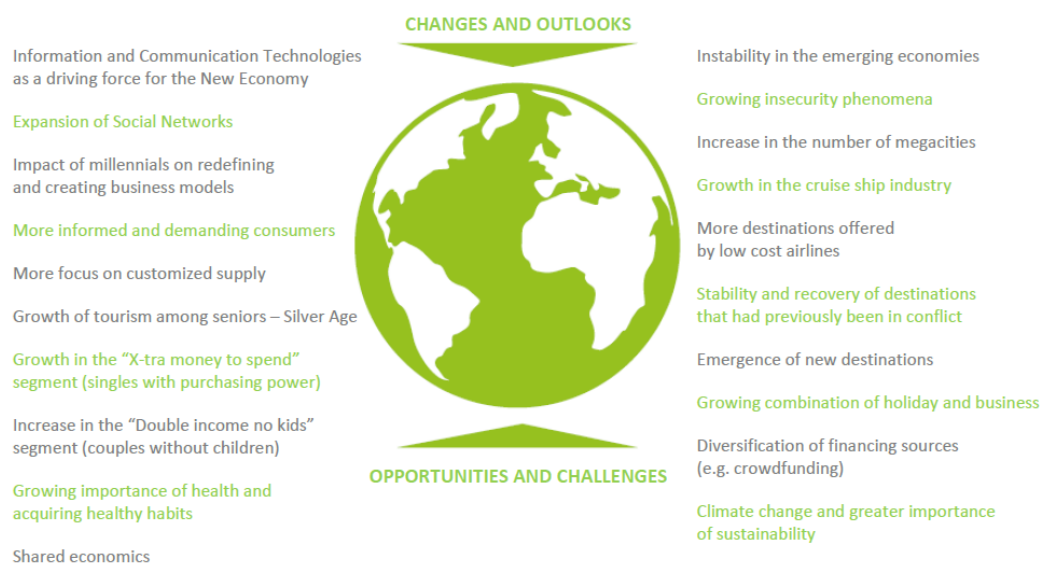


Figure 2. Some international trends that impact tourism. Source: [28] (p. 44)

Regarding the most recent plan, + Sustainable Tourism Plan 2020-2023, as it is a complement to the current strategy and is a medium-term plan (3 years), the analysis and diagnosis phase was not much developed. It only has an initial chapter, entitled “Framework”, where the motivation for creating the document is explained. The creation of this plan is based on two components: 1) the growing importance of sustainability for the tourism sector and the need to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030; 2) the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic that had major impacts on the tourism sector [29].

3.3. Strategy Formulation

The third phase of strategic planning is related to strategy formulation, that is, the “definition of the territory model that the community wants for the coming years, and the way to achieve it.” [20] (p. 35).

One of the fundamental elements for the formulation of the strategy is the definition of the vision of the territory. According to Bibri and Krogstie “future vision construction is about identifying the desired future state, which consists of vibrant descriptions of audacious goals and targets, as well as reflective statements addressing the aspired future.” [30] (p. 6). It is critical that the vision provides a clear direction of what image the destination wants to project and that it facilitates the establishment of strategic priorities. We can observe in Figure 3 the evolution of the vision defined for the Portuguese territory, in the last two decades.

As can be seen, the vision of the territory has undergone slight changes over the years, but there are two aspects that mark and accompany the various documents: the first one is related to the growth of the tourism sector, and the importance of this activity for national economy; and the second aspect is the growing concern with sustainability and its implementation in the territory.

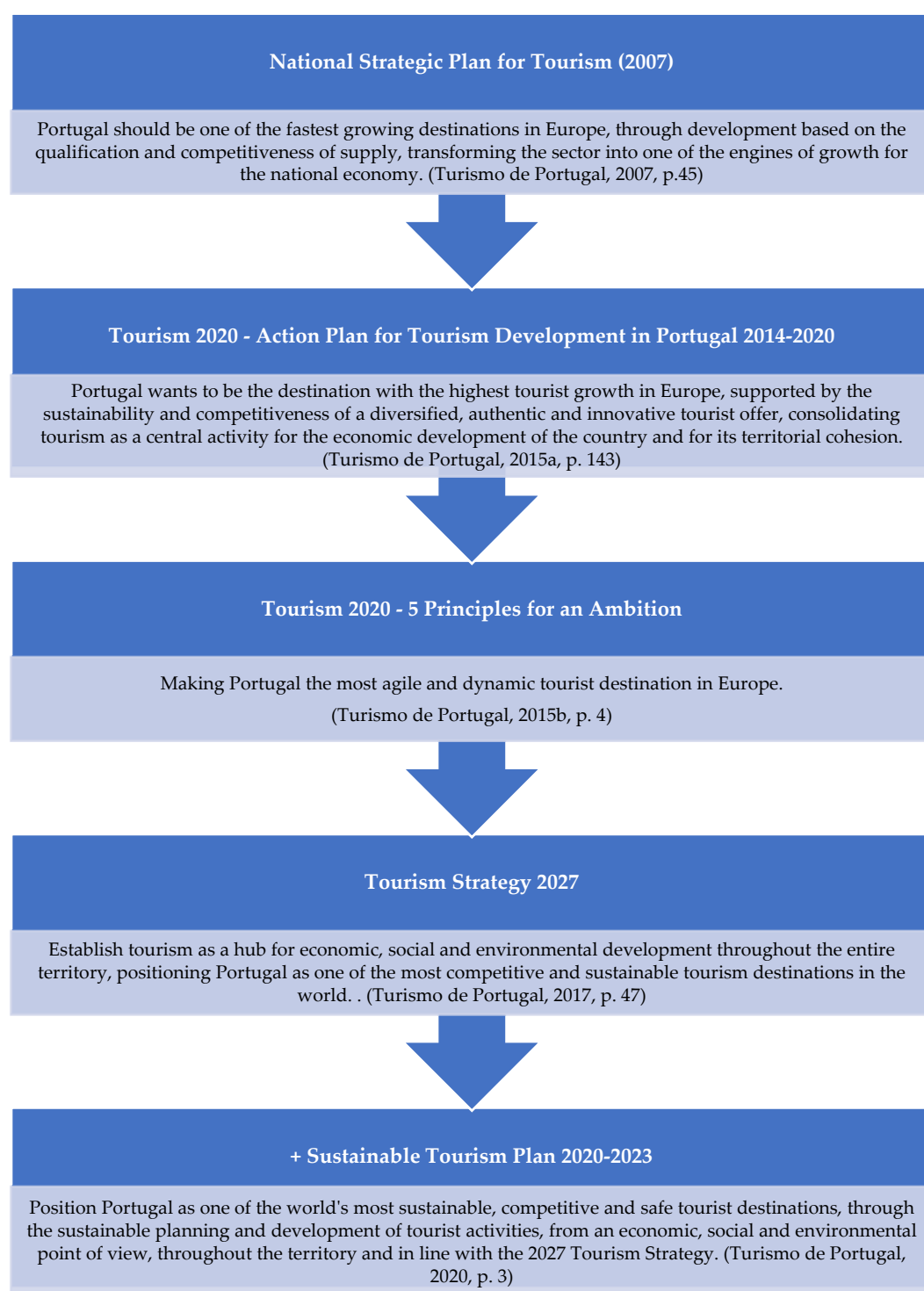


Figure 3. Portuguese strategic vision evolution, for the last 20 years. Source: Own elaboration

Still in this third phase, it is common to see one of the most important elements in strategic planning, the definition of objectives and lines of action. Table 3 shows the internal organization of each of the analyzed plans, with the respective definition of objectives, values and the respective unfold into lines of action.

Table 3. Strategy formulation evolution in Portuguese tourism plans (in 21st century)

Tourism Plans	Values / Strategic assets	Objectives / Pillars / Axes / Strategic goals	Lines of action / Lines of strategic development
National Strategic Plan for Tourism (2007)	<p>Differentiating elements: climate and light; history, culture and tradition; hospitality; concentrated diversity.</p> <p>Qualifying elements: modern authenticity, safety and excellence in the quality/price ratio.</p>	<p>1. Annual growth in the number of international tourists above 5% and in revenues above 9%.</p> <p>2. Lisbon, Algarve and Porto e Norte with the highest absolute contribution to growth.</p> <p>3. Annual growth of national tourism in the order of 2.5%, promoting the sustainable development of regions and centers and combating seasonality.</p> <p>4. Increase in the sector's contribution to the economy, constituting itself as one of the main drivers of growth in the Portuguese economy.</p>	<p>International markets: Bet on attracting tourists (4 lines of action).</p> <p>Product strategy: Consolidate and develop 10 strategic tourism products (10 lines of action).</p> <p>Guidelines for regions (8 lines of action).</p> <p>Air accessibility (7 lines of action).</p> <p>Events (4 lines of action).</p> <p>Offer enrichment (4 lines of action).</p> <p>Urban, Environmental and Landscape Quality (1 line of action).</p> <p>Quality of service and human resources (3 lines of action).</p> <p>Promotion and distribution (5 lines of action).</p> <p>Effectiveness and modernization of the performance of public and private agents (4 lines of action).</p>
Tourism 2020 - Action Plan for Tourism Development in Portugal 2014-2020	<p>Authenticity</p> <p>Hospitality: people</p> <p>History and Culture: cultural heritage</p> <p>Tourist services: companies</p> <p>Sea and Nature: natural heritage</p> <p>Knowledge: Education and R&D institutions</p>	<p>1. Attract: Qualification and enhancement of the territory and its distinctive tourist resources.</p> <p>2. Compete: Strengthening the competitiveness and internationalization of tourism companies.</p> <p>3. Enable: Training and R&D in Tourism</p> <p>4. Communicate: Promotion and commercialization of the tourist offer in the country and regions</p> <p>5. Cooperate: Strengthening international cooperation</p>	<p>Attract (6 investment priorities)</p> <p>Compete (6 investment priorities)</p> <p>Empower (6 investment priorities)</p> <p>Communicate (6 investment priorities)</p> <p>Cooperate (3 investment priorities)</p>
Tourism 2020 - 5 Principles for an Ambition	<p>5 principles: Person, Freedom, Openness, Knowledge and Collaboration.</p>	<p>1. A sustainable and quality destination</p> <p>2. A destination for competitive companies</p> <p>3. An entrepreneurial destination</p> <p>4. A destination connected to the world</p> <p>5. An effectively managed destination</p> <p>6. A destination that marks</p>	<p>A sustainable and quality destination (6 action assumptions + 9 lines of action, which in turn unfold into multiple actions).</p> <p>A destination for competitive companies (6 action assumptions + 5 lines of action, which in turn unfold into multiple actions).</p>

			<p>An entrepreneurial destination (6 action assumptions + 4 lines of action, which in turn unfold into multiple actions).</p> <p>A destination connected to the world (6 action assumptions + 6 lines of action, which in turn unfold into multiple actions).</p> <p>An effectively managed destination (6 action assumptions + 5 lines of action, which in turn unfold into multiple actions).</p> <p>A destination that marks (6 action assumptions + 7 lines of action, which in turn unfold into multiple actions).</p>
Tourism Strategy 2027	<p>Single cross-sectional asset: people</p> <p>Differentiating assets: climate and light; history and culture; sea; nature; water</p> <p>Qualifying assets: food and wine; artistic-cultural, sports and business events</p> <p>Emerging assets: well-being; living in Portugal</p>	<p>1. Add value to the territory.</p> <p>2. Drive the economy.</p> <p>3. Leverage knowledge.</p> <p>4. Generate networks and connectivity.</p> <p>5. Raise Portugal's profile.</p> <p><u>People</u> at the heart of the tourism strategy (residents, tourists and professionals).</p>	<p>Add value to the territory (6 lines of action).</p> <p>Drive the economy (5 lines of action).</p> <p>Leverage knowledge (5 lines of action).</p> <p>Generate networks and connectivity (5 lines of action).</p> <p>Raise Portugal's profile (4 lines of action).</p>
+ Sustainable Tourism Plan 2020-2023	<p>Contribute towards achieving the goals of 2027 Tourism Strategy.</p> <p>Strengthen the role of Tourism in the 17 United Nations SDGs.</p> <p>Promote the energy transition and the circular economy for tourism companies.</p> <p>Involve stakeholders in a joint commitment to transform supply and sustainability of the destinations.</p> <p>Stimulate a change of attitude throughout the sector's value chain.</p>	<p>Structure an increasingly sustainable supply (unfold into 8 objectives).</p> <p>Qualify tourism professionals (unfold into 5 objectives)</p> <p>Promote Portugal as a sustainable destination (unfold into 5 objectives).</p> <p>Monitor sustainability metrics in Tourism (unfold into 2 objectives).</p>	<p>The Plan includes 119 actions distributed by the 4 axes of action:</p> <p>Axis I - Structure: 11 areas and 80 actions.</p> <p>Axis II - Qualify: 1 area and 17 actions.</p> <p>Axis III - Promote: 3 areas and 13 actions.</p> <p>Axis IV - Monitor: 2 areas and 9 actions.</p>

Source: Own elaboration

3.4. Action Plan

If the previous phase serves the purpose of defining the vision for the territory, the strategic objectives and the lines of action that will guide the future development, the action plan serves to materialize these decisions through the definition of action programs and projects [20]. In the analysis carried out on the national tourism plans, it was found that the action plan often appears intertwined in other parts of the planning, being common to appear associated with the part of implementation and monitoring.

In the case of PENT - National Strategic Plan for Tourism, as soon as the chapter referring to the formulation of the strategy ends, the implementation program is presented, which is one of the examples in which phases 4 and 5 of the planning process appear together. Here it is mentioned that the strategic plan will be implemented considering 11 projects. An explanation of the scope of intervention of the projects follows, a graphic indicating the impact and complexity is presented and a scheme with the expected timetable for each of the interventions is presented. These are some of the elements that should be included in an action plan. Alves [20] mentions that sometimes the strategic plans include project sheets, which facilitate the understanding of the projects, the actions that will be developed, measurement indicators and ways of financing the actions. In this plan, these sheets can be found in the annexes, between pages 117 and 133 [25].

As for the Tourism 2020 - Action Plan for Tourism Development in Portugal 2014-2020, as soon as phase 3 (strategy formulation) ends, the chapter "Management and Monitoring Model" appears immediately, with no reference to the action plan. There is, however, an explanation, which is left to the readers: "the projects included in this strategic reference constitute a recognition, in general, of their framework and contribution to the strategic objectives of the Tourism Action Plan 2020. (...) It is also important to highlight that this document is a "living" open plan and, therefore, will integrate other projects in the future." [26] (p. 166).

Something similar happens in the document Tourism 2020 - 5 Principles for an Ambition, where there is no reference to the actions that normally form part of the action plan. Only in the final part of the plan appears, a paragraph that refers to the monitoring process.

In the Tourism Strategy 2027, the action plan is once again included in the chapter entitled "Implementation". The following explanation is left in the document: "The present chapter lists the types of priority projects for developing tourism in the country as a whole and in the regions in particular, thereby fulfilling its role as the short/medium term strategic guideline for Tourism Strategy 2027." [28] (p. 59). This description fits the definition of action plan given by Alves [20]. On the document following pages, tables are presented with the description of the priority projects, however there is no timetable for the actions, nor the indicators that will allow the assessment of the correct implementation of the projects.

In the most recent plan, + Sustainable Tourism Plan 2020-2023, it appears that the action plan is merged into chapter 3, where the 119 actions to be developed are presented. The procedure applies to all 119 actions, first the presentation of the action appears (see the example in Figure 4) and then the concrete actions to be implemented, the indicators that will allow the evaluation of their implementation and the calendarization (see the example in Figure 5).

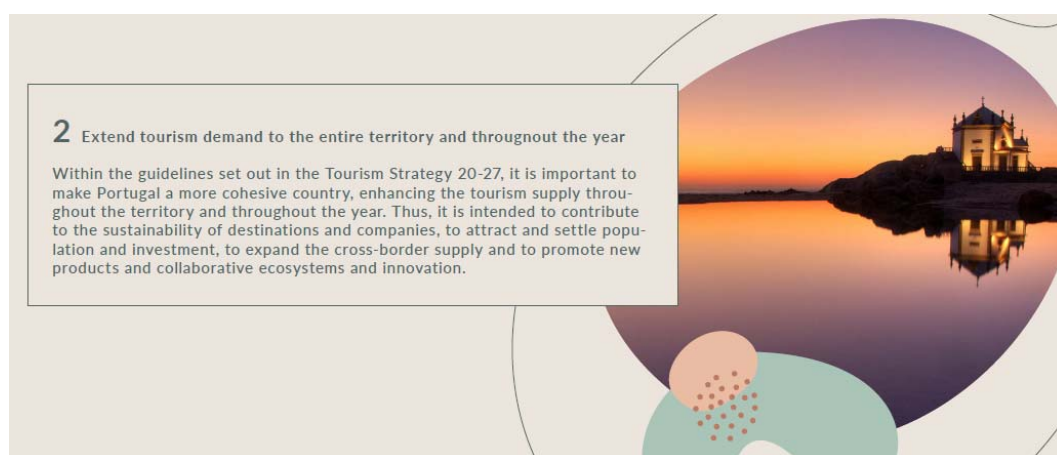


Figure 4. Example of an action presented in + Sustainable Tourism Plan 2020-2023. Source: [29] (p. 54)

NO.	KEY ACTIONS	INDICATORS	CALENDAR
1	Development of communication actions for the promotion of low density territories, namely the inland territory of the country	Implementation of actions	2020-2023
2	Capacity building of the tourist operation on the low density territories of the mainland and in Azores and Madeira, namely regarding the Collaborative Networks set up in the territory	Implementation of training actions	2021-2023
3	Communication and marketing plans for tourism products that extend tourism activity to the whole year and promote longer stays	Implementation of the plans	2021-2023
4	Communication actions to attract new tourist segments that contribute to expanding demand throughout the territory and throughout the year.	Implementation of communication actions	2022-2023

Figure 5. Action plan presented in + Sustainable Tourism Plan 2020-2023. Source: [29] (p. 55)

3.5. Implementation and Monitorization

The last phase of strategic planning is described by Alves as being a transition between the elaboration of the plan and its execution [20]. For strategic documents to be more than a mere exercise in reflection and effectively contribute to the transformation of territories, it is necessary to understand their practical application and address implementation and evaluation actions [31]. To carry out this monitoring, it is necessary to identify which indicators will enable the evaluation of the process and which agents are involved in the process, that is, the entities responsible for monitoring the implementation of the plan.

In National Strategic Plan for Tourism (2007) it is mentioned that:

implementation should be based on a structure composed of a monitoring steering – which should monitor the project implementation process, approve proposed measures for the recovery of delays and ensure the involvement of various entities – and a Program Management – composed of a team dedicated exclusively to the management of the Program, with the mission of controlling the execution in terms of objectives, time and budget. [25] (p. 114).

The importance of involving partners in the sector throughout this process is also mentioned.

In Tourism 2020 - Action Plan for Tourism Development in Portugal 2014-2020 the implementation and monitoring of the plan will be carried out by the managing entity (Turismo de Portugal). Also, by a Superior Council, a high-level body of a strategic nature composed of a limited number of entities in central areas for tourism in the country and regions. And by a Monitoring Commission, a body made up of several entities from different sectors of activity in different regions, which aims to promote the dynamism of projects to achieve the objectives of the Tourism Plan.

Consulting the document Tourism 2020 - 5 Principles for an Ambition, it is possible to verify that there is not much information about this phase. It is only said that:

Turismo de Portugal is the competent entity for the preparation of an annual action plan that includes the annual and multi-annual measures to be developed within the scope of compliance with this document and identifies its timetable and those responsible for it. The plan must be submitted, by 30 November of each year, to the tourism authority, for approval. At least one biannual meeting should be held, with the active participation of relevant partners to reflect on tourism themes. [27] (p. 111).

The last chapter of Tourism Strategy 2027 is dedicated to “Monitoring and Management Model”. Here reference is made to the entities involved in this monitoring process, which are [28] (p. 67):

1) *Turismo de Portugal as the National Tourism Authority is responsible for coordinating and invigorating Tourism Strategy 2027 and promoting its implementation; ensure coherence between tourism investments and community financing instruments; and mobilize stakeholders and monitor the strategy.*

2) *Strategic Tourism Laboratories (STL): are ongoing consultation platforms for the territories and markets for implementing projects and measures for Tourism Strategy 2027. The STL shall take place in different regions of the country, to take into account the specifics of each territory. STL shall also be held in external markets (where tour operators, travel agents, and opinion leaders in the market will be heard), considering international dynamics and their implications.*

3) *National Tourism Forum: a space for discussion and debate regarding tourism in the country as a whole and in its regions in particular; sharing of good practices (projects and initiatives) related to the strategic priorities; report on the degree of implementation of Tourism Strategy 2027; and formulation of recommendations for short/medium term action.*

The last document analyzed was + Sustainable Tourism Plan 2020-2023 and the last chapter (5. Management and Monitoring) is dedicated to this planning phase. Here are presented the organizations that will be part of this mission, to contribute to the monitoring and implementation of the plan, namely Turismo de Portugal (as coordinating entity) and multiple entities and groups as dynamic agents: Confederation of Turismo de Portugal; Business associations and companies; Regional Tourism Authorities; Regional Directorates for Tourism of Azores and Madeira; Regional Tourism Promotion Agencies; NEST - Tourism Innovation Centre; Local, regional and central government bodies; National and international entities of different natures, orking in the field of sustainability; Academic bodies [29].

4. Discussion

Fifteen years after the launching of the first strategic plan, analyzed in this study, some considerations can be pointed out. It is quite visible the difference in the way that strategy was formulated between the first plan (published in 2007) and the following plans (published in 2015). In PENT one of the biggest concerns was the definition of 10 tourist products (i) Sun and Sea, ii) Cultural and Landscape Touring, iii) City Break, iv) Business Tourism, v) Tourism of Nature, vi) Nautical Tourism, vii) Health and Well-being, viii) Golf, ix) Resorts and Residential Tourism and x) Gastronomy and Wines) and their importance for each one of the 7 Portuguese regions - Northern, Center, Lisbon,

Alentejo, Algarve, Madeira, Azores. In the two tourism plans published in 2015, it's possible to observe a different concern in strategy definition. The emphasis relays on the specific resources that each one of the 7 regions have. In fact, it is difficult to isolate a given tourist product, even because the different types of tourism intersect and present particularities in common.

Another note that can be pointed out is the growing intervention of private entities on the planning process. In fact, in PENT strategic plan the reference of public and private intervention is not done. On the contrary this participation is evident (and even growing) in the next published plans. The documents launched in the after years (2015, 2017 and 2020) were built based on public consultation with different stakeholders, like: regional entities of tourism, regional agencies of tourism promotion, sectoral associations, inter-municipal communities, schools and academia agents and individuals (Turismo de Portugal, 2015a, 2015b, 2017, 2020). This means that Turismo de Portugal, the national entity responsible for the promotion and valorization of the activity in the country, recognized the importance of involvement of all the stakeholders in the promotion and concretization of the aforementioned plans. Indeed, as referred by Saito and Ruhanen is not a government alone, neither a single tourism organization that can develop a successful tourism destination [32]. Instead, it is acknowledged the increasing importance of collaboration and particularly coopetition (which combines collaboration and competition) within a major tourism destination (national scale) but also among smaller destinations (regions, cities and villages [33].

The focus on entrepreneurship and innovation is also growing, which corroborates the relationship between entrepreneurship and economic growth of country/region [34, 35]. Indeed, few references are made in the first strategic plan analyzed, while in the following plans the reference to entrepreneurship and/or innovation have grown, reaching its maximum exponent in the last two strategies - Tourism Strategy 2027 and + Sustainable Tourism Plan 2020-2023. Is important to look and recognize Portugal as a pole of international reference in entrepreneurship and in the production of co-creative goods and services for tourism [28], by developing solutions oriented towards the challenges of sustainability by innovation ecosystem in tourism [29].

Last but not the least, the concept of sustainability in tourism is gaining a considerable attention in the five strategic plans. Sustainability is a topic that is currently being discussed and constantly adapting, since it is related not only to an environmental dimension, but also to an economic and sociocultural perspective that led to the development of nations [36]. Awareness about sustainability principles led governments, but also international development agencies, trade associations, academic institutions and non-governmental organizations to acknowledge that without sustainability, is not possible to reach development that can bring benefits to all the stakeholders and that can solve serious and urgent problems in regions where tourism take place [37]. Moreover, it is also recognized that sustainable tourism is not applicable to just one certain type of tourism, but rather all forms of tourism should strive to be more sustainable [38]. The attention related to sustainable tourism reached the highest point in the last strategic document entitled + Sustainable Tourism Plan 2020-2023. As previously mentioned, the vision of this plan is "to position Portugal as one of the world's most sustainable, competitive and safe tourist destinations, through the sustainable planning and development of tourist activities, from an economic, social and environmental point of view." [29] (p. 3).

5. Conclusions

Considering the analysis of the five strategic tourism plans, developed in Portugal since the beginning of the 21st century, it is possible to verify some important contributions of this work. First it underlines the importance of public participation in the planning

process, in the development and implementation of the plans. In fact, without this involvement a lot of stakeholders, including the civil society, will not be satisfied with the process and the results achieved. In tourism planning, public participation has become increasingly prominent [39]. The main purpose of this participation is to maximize the positive impacts from this activity and protect local communities from tourism's adverse impacts [2, 40].

The second aspect that deserves to be highlighted is the power of entrepreneurship/innovation combined with sustainability on the affirmation of Portugal as a top touristic destination. To guaranteeing sustainable and innovative tourism implies that the stakeholders in the tourism sector, continuously adopt innovative and sustainable practices. This will lead to product differentiation and to higher levels of cooperation, growth, and progress in terms of visitor attractiveness and visitors' loyalty in the future [41].

Thirdly, it is possible to verify through the analysis of the plans that tourism is an important engine of development for all regions of the country and not just for the most famous, like Algarve, Lisbon and Madeira. The focus has been on diversifying the offer, not only in terms of territory, but also in terms of tourism products. Tourism in Portugal is best known for sun and sea product, but the country has much more to offer, especially in rural areas (which correspond to the largest area of the country). This for instance explain the increasing interest in other relevant products such as rural tourism and wine tourism [42]. This new tendency to diversify tourism in Portugal led to a growing promotion of the country as a whole and led to the development of interior and laggard regions as announced for diverse public and private authorities.

However, there are several challenges that tourist destinations face, such as try to stand out from the competition, ensuring the safeguarding of heritage, promoting the destination, combating seasonality, or even adapting to new technologies. More recently, other concerns have emerged, on a global scale, such as the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and the recent war in Ukraine. Therefore, from a political point of view, policy tools should be sensitive and appropriate to the conditions and tendencies that affect tourism activity, not forgetting the importance of the participation of the community in the development of strategic plans. In the same way, concerns related with sustainability and innovation, must integrate the purpose of any strategic plan [43].

This study has some limitations, that authors believe that can be the way to future investigation. First, the analysis was only performed into national tourism plans, developed in Portugal. So, an interesting path for future research will be to extend the study to other strategic plans, from different scales, such as the documents designed by regional entities located in the 7 sub-regions: North, Center, Lisbon, Alentejo, Algarve, Madeira, Azores. Second, the study is only based on documentary analysis. So, one interesting path for future research would be an empirical study, integrating a qualitative technique, with interviews to diverse agents (stakeholders) responsible for the creation and implementation of the strategic plans.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization: Maria Lúcia Pato. Methodology: Ana Sofia Duque; Results (collecting data, analysis and interpretation): Maria Lúcia Pato and Ana Sofia Duque; Discussion: Maria Lúcia Pato and Ana Sofia Duque; Conclusions: Maria Lúcia Pato and Ana Sofia Duque. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Data Availability Statement: All the documents analyzed in this study are available online, in Turismo de Portugal website (www.turismodeportugal.pt)

Acknowledgments: The authors would like to thank CERNAS - Research Centre, Polytechnic Institute of Viseu and CiTUR - Centre for Tourism Research, Development and Innovation from Polytechnic of Leiria, for their support.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

1. Lopes, A. P., & Soares, F. (2017). Tourism planning and development: The case of Portugal's Norte region. *Tourism & Management Studies*, 13(4), 20-29.
2. Bailoa, S., & Cravo, P. (2020). Strategic tourism planning in Portugal: challenges for the National Tourism Development. *Zbornik Veleučilišta u Rijeci*, 8(1), 353-374. <https://doi.org/10.31784/zvr.8.1.23>
3. García, F. A., Balbuena Vázquez, A., & Cortés Macías, R. (2015). Resident's attitudes towards the impacts of tourism. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 13, 33-40. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2014.11.002>
4. Gursoy, D., & Nunkoo, R. (2019). *The Routledge Handbook of Tourism Impacts*. Routledge.
5. Mason, P. (2020). *Tourism impacts, planning and management*. Routledge.
6. Hall, C. M. (2000). *Tourism Planning: Policies, Processes and Relationships*. Prentice Hall.
7. Saarinen, J.; Rogerson, C. M. & Hall, C. M. (2019). *Tourism planning and development: contemporary cases and emerging issues*. Routledge.
8. Saarinen, J.; Rogerson, C. M. & Hall, C. M. (2017). Geographies of tourism development and planning. *Tourism Geographies*, 19(3), 307-317. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616688.2017.1307442>
9. Williams, S. (2003) *Tourism Geography*. Routledge Contemporary Human Geography
10. Murphy, P. (1985). *Tourism: A community approach*. Methuen
11. Manning, E. W. & Dougherty, T. D. (2000). Planning Sustainable Tourism Destinations. *Tourism Recreation Research*, 25(2), 3-14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02508281.2000.11014907>
12. Dwyer, L., & Edwards, D. (2010). Sustainable tourism planning. In *Understanding the sustainable development of tourism* (pp. 19-44). Goodfellow Publishers Limited.
13. Scott, N. (2011). *Tourism policy: A strategic review*. Goodfellow.
14. Yin, R. (2014). *Case study research design and methods* (5th ed.). Sage
15. Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 9(2), 27-40. <https://doi.org/10.3316/QRJ0902027>
16. Liasidou, S. (2019). Understanding tourism policy development: a documentary analysis. *Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events*, 11(1), 70-93. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19407963.2018.1465063>
17. Bramwell, B. (2006). Actors, power, and discourses of growth limits. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 33(4), 957-978. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2006.04.001>
18. Carr, L. M. & Liu, D. Y. (2016). Measuring Stakeholder Perspectives on Environmental and Community Stability in a Tourism-Dependent Economy. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 18(6), 620-632. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.2084>
19. Nastase, C.; Chasovschi, C.; Popescu, M. & Scutariu, A. L. (2010). The importance of stakeholders and policy influence enhancing the innovation in nature based tourism services Greece, Austria, Finland and Romania case studies. *European Research Studies Journal*, XIII(2), 137-148.
20. Alves, P. (2007) *Planeamento estratégico e marketing de cidades* (1st ed.). Confederação do Comércio e Serviços de Portugal (CCP)
21. Ruhanen, L. (2004) Strategic planning for local tourism destinations: na analysis of tourism plans, *Tourism and Hospitality Planning and Development*, 1:3, 239-253. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1479053042000314502>
22. Nicholls, S.; Organ, K. & Cummings, B. (2021) Planning for sustainable tourism development in Wales: ananalysis of destination management plans. *Welsh Economic Review*, 23-32 <https://doi.org/10.18573/wer.257>
23. Collins-Kreiner, N. & Ram, Y. (2021) National tourism strategies during the Covid-19 pandemic. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 89, 103076. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2020.103076>
24. Vieira, J. (2007) *Planeamento e Ordenamento Territorial do Turismo: uma perspetiva estratégica*. Editorial Verbo
25. Turismo de Portugal (2007). *Plano Estratégico Nacional do Turismo: Para o Desenvolvimento do Turismo em Portugal*, Turismo de Portugal
26. Turismo de Portugal (2015a). *Turismo 2020: Plano de Ação para o Desenvolvimento do Turismo em Portugal*. Turismo de Portugal
27. Turismo de Portugal (2015b) *Turismo 2020: Cinco princípios para uma ambição*. Turismo de Portugal
28. Turismo de Portugal (2017). *Tourism Strategy 2027: Leading the Tourism of the Future*. Turismo de Portugal
29. Turismo de Portugal (2021) + *Sustainable Tourism Plan 2020-2023*. Turismo de Portugal
30. Bibri, S. & Krogstie, J. (2019) Generating a vision for smart sustainable cities of the future: a scholarly backcasting approach. *European Journal of Futures Research*, 7(5), <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40309-019-0157-0>
31. Guell, J. (2006) *Planificación Estratégica de Ciudades: nuevos instrumentos y procesos*, Editorial Reverté
32. Saito, H. & Ruhanen, L. (2017) Power in tourism stakeholder collaborations: Power types and power holders. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 31, 189-196. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2017.01.001>
33. Mariani, M. M., Buhalis, D., Longhi, C. & Vitouladiti, O. (2014). Managing change in tourism destinations: Key issues and current trends. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 2(4), 269-272. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2013.11.003>

-
34. Aparicio, S., Urbano, D. & Audretsch, D. (2016). Institutional factors, opportunity entrepreneurship and economic growth: Panel data evidence. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 102, 45-61. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2015.04.006>
35. Martínez-Fierro, S., Biedma-Ferrer, J. M., & Ruiz-Navarro, J. (2016). Entrepreneurship and strategies for economic development. *Small Business Economics*, 47(4), 835-851. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11187-016-9738-5>
36. Sousa, B., Lubowiecki-Vikuk, A., Rodrigues, M. A. & Remondes, J. (2021). Challenges for Marketing Research in the Concept of Sustainable Development. *International Journal of Marketing, Communication and New Media*, 9
37. UNEP, & UNWTO. (2005). *Making Tourism More Sustainable - A Guide for Policy Makers*: UNEP
38. Lu, J., & Nepal, S. K. (2009). Sustainable tourism research: An analysis of papers published in the *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 17(1), 5-16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669580802582480>
39. Lin, D., & Simmons, D. (2017). Structured inter-network collaboration: Public participation in tourism planning in Southern China. *Tourism Management*, 63, 315-328. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2017.06.024>
40. Jurowski, C., Uysal, M., & Williams, D. R. (1997). A Theoretical Analysis of Host Community Resident Reactions to Tourism. *Journal of Travel Research*, 36(2), 3-11. <https://doi.org/10.1177/004728759703600202>
41. Santos, V., Sousa, M. J., Costa, C., & Au-Yong-Oliveira, M. (2021). Tourism towards Sustainability and Innovation: A Systematic Literature Review. *Sustainability*, 13(20), 11440. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su132011440>
42. Kastenholz, E., & Lane, B. (2021). Delivering appealing and competitive rural wine tourist experiences. In R. Sharpley (Ed.), *Handbook of the Tourist Experience* (pp. 508-520): Routledge.
43. Soteriou, E. C., & Coccossis, H. (2009). Integrating Sustainability into the Strategic Planning of National Tourism Organizations. *Journal of Travel Research*, 49(2), 191-205. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287509336472>