



2023 TOP 100

GOOD PRACTICE STORY

Title: Culture for All, making tourism accessible in Alto Minho

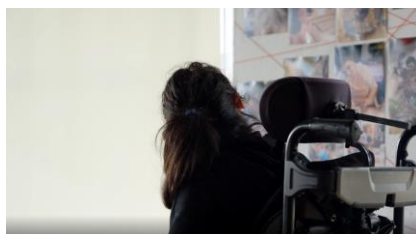
Destination, Country: Alto Minho, Portugal

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In the category: Destination Management Environment & Climate Thriving Communities
 Nature & Scenery Culture & Tradition Business & Marketing

The Story in a picture:

Making tourism accessible for all in Alto Minho.



Summary:

Alto Minho is being increasingly sought after by tourists due to its diversified offer. However, most of its cultural/patrimonial tourism offer does not fulfil the basic conditions of accessibility, not being qualified to receive tourists and visitors with functional diversity. In order to characterise, according to universal criteria of accessibility, this offer, accessibility conditions diagnose of 50 cultural spaces and 10 events/festivals of the ten municipalities were carried out.

The diagnosis evaluated, for each of the spaces, events/festivals, the conditions of physical (parking, access and entry, interior; adapted WC; exhibition rooms; reading rooms; auditoriums, show rooms or outdoor events) and communicational (information in Braille, tactile replicas, audio-guides with audio-description and video-guides with LGP - Portuguese Sign Language or Universal Signs; attendance, communication and signposting) accessibility.

Sixty improvement reports and ten implementation plans were prepared, one per municipality, to help the responsible for managing the spaces/events/festivals and to support political decisions.



Good Practice Story:

Destination description

Brief background of the destination.

Alto Minho is the Portugal's northernmost territory, located at seaside and composed by ten municipalities. It has 36 km of coast, 15 blue flagged beaches and delightful maritime villages. At the interior, idyllic settings like majestic mountains and lush green valleys amaze residents and visitors (more than 90% of the territory is unbuilt). The wide variety of fresh water streams also invites diving or practicing riverside leisure activities. Key attractions include historical and monumental buildings; a rich and varied gastronomy complemented by the local Vinho Verde wine; and traditional festivities, being Romaria de Nossa Senhora da Agonia the most known of Portugal. In order to sense this experience more intensely one may stay on one of the several rural lodging or manor houses that offer a closer contact with Nature and traditional livelihood. Discover the abundance of life found in the natural areas (including protected areas and Natura 2000 network sites) and quiet surroundings by walk or cycle the eco-paths and eco-tracks and visit the Peneda-Gerês National Park (PNPG). PNPG is the only national park of Portugal and three of the five municipalities of the park are located in Alto Minho region. This park is also classified as Transboundary Biosphere Reserve, since 2009, by UNESCO. Alto Minho is an unique environmental excellence territory that is fully certified by the European Charter of Sustainable Tourism (ECST). Although nature is the main resource, the cultural richness is huge. The traditions, the immaterial and built heritage are great and should be enjoyed by all.

Issues faced

Problems/issues solved with the Good Practice Story.

Experience on the ground has shown us on the one hand, physical and communication barriers in the diagnosed cultural/ heritage/ events and festivals spaces and, on the other hand, a lack of knowledge/training or technical preparation in inclusive hospitality of the human resources assigned to these spaces, despite their sensitivity to the topic.

In addition to these constraints, there is another one, the lack of planning regarding the execution of new works or improvement works in order to facilitate access for all, including people with reduced mobility.

Given these constraints identified during the practical diagnosis work, which was accompanied by technicians from the local municipalities, an awareness-raising strategy was implemented, focusing on the one hand on the implementation of improvements, with an emphasis on easy-to-implement, low-investment measures and, on the other, on reinforcing the idea that a more accessible and inclusive heritage represents a higher quality service with an impact on the lives of the people who visit it. This awareness-raising strategy was well received by the people involved in the process.

Methods, steps, and tools applied

Solutions implemented to address the sustainability problems or issues.

The methodology used for the implementation of the diagnoses was based on the following phases:

- 1 - Definition of the accessibility levels to be checked (1. Accessible; 2. Practicable/Possible; 3. Not Accessible).
- 2 - Contact with the municipalities' technical responsible to identify the equipment/festival and events to be diagnosed.
- 3 - Definition of a joint chronogram which involved the technical consultant team hired for the diagnosis, the people responsible for the cultural space/events/festival, the technicians in charge of

management and maintenance, and the CIM Alto Minho senior technician responsible for the coordination of the action.

4 - Beginning of technical visits in January 2022 (concluded in December 2022).

5 - Data and photo collection (also took place throughout 2022).

6 – Data input in the accessible tourism digital platform TUR4all - user questionnaire and technical questionnaire

7 - Accessibility report with suggestions for improvement was produced.

The 60 visited resources were inserted in TUR4all platform (from Accessible Portugal and financed by Turismo de Portugal). Noteworthy to add that each resource received the respective accessibility report with suggestions for improvement.

The budget for this action was around 35,000 Euros. The implementation of this action was done for a hired expert and a senior technician of CIM Alto Minho. All the initiatives involved the municipalities' technicians of cultural and social areas, the responsible for the facilities and/or event/festival, as well as stakeholders that participate on the events.

Key success factors

Critical elements that led to successfully solving the issues.

The success factors identified were: a greater openness of local public and private sector actors from the social and cultural areas towards universal accessibility and design for all; the awareness of technicians and professionals who manage cultural spaces, thus helping them to implement physical and communicational accessibility; the presentation of examples and/or models of collaborative interaction between entities (municipalities, municipal technicians, and other local actors who manage, such as the Voluntary Firemen of Vila Praia de Âncora who are the ones who run the Vila Praia de Âncora cinema facilities, or participate in events) with the aim of enhancing inclusive and accessible artistic creation programmes; the presentation of practical examples to welcome/host the public in an inclusive way taking into account their specific needs (of access, communication and attendance).

The success of this intervention is also based on the international dissemination, in the TUR4all platform, of the accessibility characteristics of museums, theatres, cinemas, libraries, interpretation centres, events such as music festivals, gastronomic fairs, exhibitions and artistic installations, diagnosed in the territory of Alto Minho that will help to improve the tourist experience of people with functional diversity, providing them with real information about the accessibility conditions, translated into five languages.

Lessons learned

Challenges faced while implementing the Good Practice and their solutions.

The diagnosis of the physical and communicational accessibility conditions of several cultural equipment/facilities and festivals/events of the ten municipalities of Alto Minho, took place during one year, without remarkable difficulties since the technicians of the municipalities, responsible for them, collaborated diligently so that the whole process took place in an exemplary way.

After the diagnosis, and dissemination in the Tour4All platform, it is fundamental that the political decision makers and the managers, when thinking of interventions in these cultural spaces and events/festivals, consider the recommendations presented on the reports of improvement of the accessibility conditions of the cultural equipment/facilities of Alto Minho (already delivered to the responsible for the management of each of the spaces and events).

On the other hand, the implementation plans made by each one of the ten municipalities with the technical and physical structuring, and with suggestions and measures to be implemented, and the

dissemination and promotion of these cultural resources constitute, along with the technical reports, important auxiliary tools for the implementation of the improvements pointed out.

Achievements and Results

Direct and indirect results of the Good Practice.

Culture is an element of mediation for inclusion, but it does not always have/occur in spaces which are physically and communicationally prepared to welcome all audiences, including those with functional diversity. These non-conformities were collected in accessibility diagnoses allowing the elaboration of technical documents that help the implementation of improvements in the spaces/equipment, events and festivals analysed in order to make them more accessible. Thus: 60 accessibility improvement reports were prepared, as well as 10 implementation plans to improve the tourist experience in each of the 10 municipalities involved. All this work was accompanied by about 60 municipal technicians. The improvements (physical, some requiring adaptation works, and communicational) are dependent on municipal agendas and budgets, in some cases demanding large amounts of money. Their implementation will be facilitated by the fact that these technical tools have been created, as well as by the sensitivity and openness of the municipal technicians involved in the process.

One component that was created was the communication and dissemination of the 60 diagnosed resources, now available in the Tour4all platform that helps to improve the tourist experience in the territory of Alto Minho.

The TUR4all platform was developed in a joint action between Accessible Portugal, the Vodafone Portugal Foundation and Turismo de Portugal with the support of ENAT - European Network for Accessible Tourism, in collaboration with PREDIF in Spain, supported by the Vodafone Foundation Spain.

Tips for other destinations

Your suggestions or recommendations for other destinations facing the same issues or implementing similar solutions

You must: diagnose the tourist attractions from the point of view of physical and communicational accessibility; prepare technical reports with systematization of the accessibility information of those attractions; propose improvements at the physical and communicational level; and sensitise those responsible for implementing the necessary improvements.

With this we are responding to a group of tourists with specific needs (people with disabilities or temporary limitations, seniors with difficulties, the chronically ill, families with children, etc.) who have a growing importance in what regards tourist potential and revenue.

Recognitions and Additional references

Recognitions and awards the Good Practice received and supporting evidence.

As already stated all the sixty resources that were diagnosed to improve the tourism experience are available online.

On CIM Alto Minho website:

<https://www.cim-altominho.pt/pt/acessibilidade/turismo-acessivel/>

And on Tour4all platform:

Arcos de Valdevez:

Paço de Giela - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/paco-de-giela>

Oficinas de Criatividade Himalaya - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/oficinas-de-criatividade-himalaya>

Casa das Artes - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/casa-das-artes-de-arcos-de-valdevez>
Biblioteca Municipal - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/biblioteca-municipal-dos-arcos-de-valdevez>
Centro Interpretativo Barroco - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/centro-interpretativo-do-barroco>
Piscinas municipais - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/piscinas-municipais-de-arcos-de-valdevez>
Festival Sons de Vez - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/festival-sons-de-vez>

Caminha:

Cineteatro Bombeiros V. VPÂncora - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/cineteatro-de-vila-praia-ancora>
Valadares Teatro Municipal Caminha - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/valadares-teatro-municipal-de-caminha>
Centro Interpretação Serra D'Arga - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/centro-interpretativo-serra-darga>
Museu Municipal Caminha - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/museu-municipal-de-caminha>
Ludoteca / Biblioteca VPÂncora - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/ludoteca-biblioteca-vila-praia-ancora>
Festival Vilar de Mouros - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/festival-vilar-de-mouros>

Melgaço:

Casa da Cultura - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/casa-da-cultura-de-melgaco>
Museu de Cinema Melgaço - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/museu-de-cinema-jean-loup-passek>
Espaço Memória e Fronteira - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/espaco-memoria-e-fronteira>
Núcleo Museológico Castro Laboreiro - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/nucleo-museologico-de-castro-laboreiro>
Solar do Alvarinho - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/solar-do-alvarinho>
Mercado Medieval Melgaço - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/mercado-medieval-de-melgaco>

Monção:

Cine Teatro João Verde - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/cineteatro-joao-verde>
Biblioteca Municipal Monção - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/biblioteca-municipal-de-moncao>
Museu Monção e Memórias - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/museu-moncao-e-memorias>
Museu do Alvarinho - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/museu-do-alvarinho>
Alto Minho 4D - Rota dos Castros - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/alto-minho-4d-rotas-dos-castros>
Feira do Alvarinho - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/feira-do-alvarinho-moncao>

Paredes de Coura:

Centro Cultural - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/centro-cultural-de-paredes-de-coura>
Museu Regional - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/museu-regional-de-paredes-de-coura>
Biblioteca Municipal - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/biblioteca-municipal-aquilino-ribeiro>
Arquivo Municipal - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/arquivo-municipal-de-paredes-de-coura>
Casa Conhecimento / Loja Rural - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/casa-do-conhecimento-loja-rural-e-lit-loja-interativa-de-turismo>
Festival Mundo ao Contrário - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/festival-mundo-ao-contrario>

Ponte da Barca:

Santo António do Buraquinho - Auditório Municipal - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/biblioteca-municipal-de-ponte-da-barca>

Santo António do Buraquinho - Arquivo Municipal - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/arquivo-municipal-sto-antonio-buraquinho>

Biblioteca Municipal - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/auditorio-municipal-sto-antonio-buraquinho>

Casa da Cultura - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/casa-da-cultura-ponte-da-barca>

Centro Interpretativo Patrim F. Magalhães - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/centro-interpretativo-patrimonio-cip-fernao-de-magalhaes>

Festival Folk Celta - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/festival-folk-celta-ponte-da-barca>

Ponte de Lima:

Teatro Diogo Bernardes - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/teatro-diogo-bernardes>

Auditório Rio Lima - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/auditorio-rio-lima>

Museu do Brinquedo PT / Portas do Tempo - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/museu-do-brinquedo-portugues>

Museu dos Terceiros - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/museu-dos-terceiros>

Centro Interpretação História Militar Ponte Lima - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/centro-de-interpretacao-historia-militar>

Festival Internacional de Jardins - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/festival-internacional-de-jardins-de-ponte-de-lima>

Valença:

Auditório CILV (ESCE-IPVC) - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/auditorio-cilv-centro-de-inovacao-e-logistica-valenca-1>

Biblioteca Municipal Valença - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/biblioteca-municipal-de-valenca>

Academia Música Fortaleza Valença - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/academia-de-musica-da-fortaleza-de-valenca>

Núcleo Museológico Valença - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/nucleo-museologico-de-valenca>

Posto Turismo Valença - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/posto-de-turismo-valenca>

Fortaleza de Chocolate (Festival/Evento) - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/festival-fortaleza-de-chocolate>

Viana do Castelo:

Centro Interpretativo do Caminho Português da Costa - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/centro-interpretativo-do-caminho-portugues-da-costa>

Centro de Monitorização e Interpretação Ambiental CMIA -

<https://www.tur4all.com/resources/centro-de-monitorizacao-e-informacao-ambiental>

Observatório Litoral Norte - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/observatorio-do-litoral-norte>

Funicular de Santa Luzia - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/funicular-de-santa-luzia>

Biblioteca Municipal - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/biblioteca-municipal-de-viana-do-castelo>

Festival de Jazz - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/festival-de-jazz-de-viana-do-castelo>

Vila Nova de Cerveira:

Centro Multiusos Cerveira - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/pavilhao-multiusos-de-serveira>

Arquivo Municipal - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/arquivo-municipal-de-vila-nova-de-serveira>

Biblioteca Municipal - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/biblioteca-municipal-de-vila-nova-de-serveira>

Cineteatro de Cerveira - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/cineteatro-de-serveira>

Fórum Cultural de Cerveira - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/forum-cultural-de-serveira>

Bienal Internacional de Arte de Cerveira (festival) - <https://www.tur4all.com/resources/bienal-internacional-de-arte-de-serveira>



There is also a short version of the video of the implementation of accessibility actions and involvement of local actors and people with functional diversity:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J9DsJlZWYF4>

