



Azores Tourism **Sustainability** Management Policy

Rev. 01

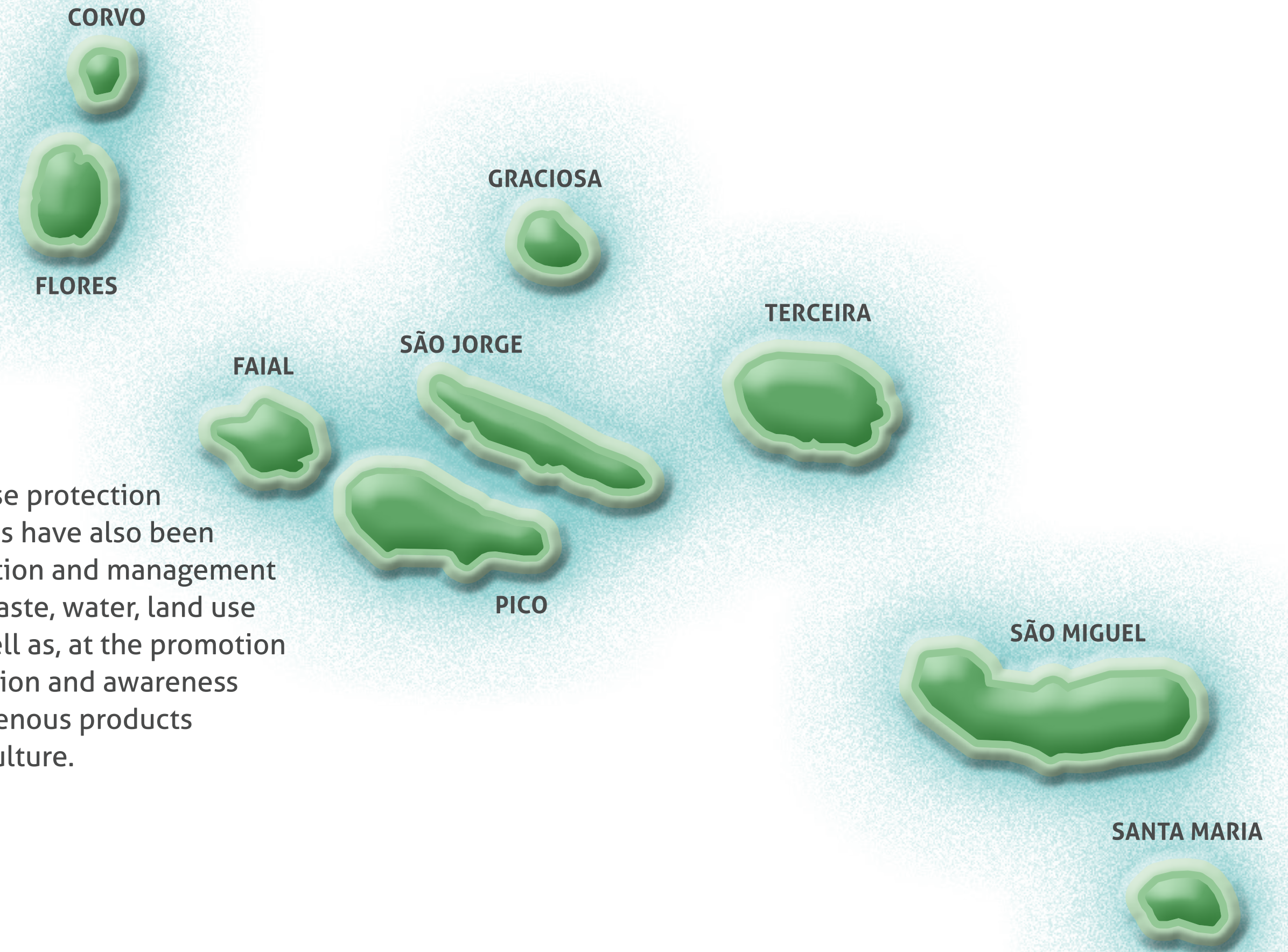


Sustainability in the Azores

The Azores are located in the North Atlantic Ocean, scattered along a range of 600 km long. The nine islands of the Archipelago are from volcanic origin and divided into 3 geographic groups: Eastern Group, with Santa Maria and São Miguel; the Central Group, with the islands of Terceira, Graciosa, São Jorge, Pico and Faial, and the Western Group with the islands of Flores and Corvo.

The Azorean territory has a multiplicity of natural, historical and cultural resources that makes them unique. For this reason, for more than two decades, that initiatives leading to the protection and preservation of these resources have been privileged. This vision took to the continuous development of sustainability policies in the Region, which led to the classification of about 25% of its land area as Protected Areas for the conservation of nature and its biodiversity, managed by the Natural Parks, created in each of the islands of the archipelago, as well as a vast area of marine reserves, with about 112,600 km².

Besides the attribution of these protection statuses, sustainability policies have also been developed in terms of production and management of energy, noise, air quality, waste, water, land use and landscape planning, as well as, at the promotion level of environmental education and awareness actions, valorization of endogenous products of the heritage and Azorean culture.



“People first”: key- design for the sustainable development of the Azores

For this purpose, the 13th Program of the Regional Government of the Azores fosters an acting that distinguishes for the complete integration and participation of everyone in the society and for the equality of opportunities in Health, Social Solidarity, Education, Culture, Qualification and Employment. The region, as an all, assumes this commitment, through a policy that privilege the sustainable development, in a territorial cohesion logic, respecting the distinctive characteristics of each community and territory.

The harmonious alliance between people and nature that makes the Azores a unique territory, sustainable.

We believe that this commitment between people and nature – respecting, enhancing and preserving – is the path to follow by this Region, in order to increase, every day, the life quality of those who life, work and visit the Azores.

GOOD PRACTICES of Sustainability in the Azores		
	ECOSYSTEM AND BIODIVERSITY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graciosa, Flores, Corvo and Fajãs of São Jorge are Biosphere Reserve of UNESCO • Geopark Azores is Unique World Heritage of UNESCO • Azores implements LIFE and BLUE Programs • 33 thousands hectares are part of the Rede Natura 2000 	
		ENERGY Almost 40% of the electric energy produced in the Azores have origin in renewable sources, in 2010 the value was 28%
		GREENHOUSE GASES Gracióllica – a project to reduce energy of fossil origin
	SOLID WASTE 55% of the urban waste of the Azores are valued and seven islands have recycling taxes over 80%	
		SOCIETY AND CULTURE The city of Angra do Heroísmo and the Vineyard Landscape of Pico Island are UNESCO World Heritage
	DRINKING WATER 99% of the Azorean Water is safe for human consume	

Sustainability in Azores Tourism



The path is followed every day, always with the same goal in mind. It is based on this approach that the Azores works continuously to promote sustainable development in all areas of action, in order to ensure a better quality of life for those who live here and a differentiating experience for those who visit us.

We are aware that this is an integrated and continuous process, which requires a dynamic action that privilege the adaptation of innovating techniques and methods, aligned with the Goals of Sustainable Development of the Agenda of 2030. In that sense, we surveyed several agents from the public and private sector and, together, we defined as priority, work 10 of the 17 ODS's.

Being the 1st archipelago in the world, certified as a sustainable tourist destination is, of course, an honor, but also a commitment that we assume at a global level.

And for that reason, we want more; we want to continue to lead by example, by vision, by challenge, defining – always – ambitious goals and involving all Azoreans.

<p>4 QUALITY EDUCATION</p>	<p>7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY</p>	<p>8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH</p>	<p>10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES</p>	<p>11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES</p>
<p>12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION</p>	<p>13 CLIMATE ACTION</p>	<p>14 LIFE BELOW WATER</p>	<p>15 LIFE ON LAND</p>	<p>17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS</p>

Tourism has a recognized importance on the GDP of the Region, contributing for the employment and economic development.

In the Azores, Tourism has achieved in the last years, an increasingly important role in the local economic dynamic and in the increase of the attractiveness rate. In 2019, the Azores registered approximately 972 thousand guests and 3 million overnight stays, record numbers yet.

This evolution is due, in major part, to the distinctive character of the destination tourist offer, based in nature. The position of the Azores as Nature Destination, in the active side as well as in the contemplative one, allied to the complementarity with the nautical, cultural, wellness tourism, strengthen its competitiveness in the tourist market.

At a stage where tourists adopt more responsible travel behaviors and are more demanding regarding experience quality standards, it is crucial to maintain a dynamic and innovative path, something that the Azores have been promoting at the level of sustainability commitment. Published studies refer that tourist values – increasingly – sustainability practices applied by the destinations and their companies. For that reason, we believe we are in the right path, allying sustainability to security.



We know that COVID-19 suspended the World and that tourism was one of the economic sectors that had larger breaks in their business volume.

However, the Azores – either in the public sector as in the private one – knew how to face the moment as a break to improve, to qualify more professionals and adjust business models, guiding their services for the post-pandemic Tourism.

Imbued with this spirit of resilience, stands out, among dozens of initiatives promoted by the Azorean Government, the website **Safe Destination Azores**, where you can check all the preventive measures taken against the pandemic and access useful information to help the tourist preparing their trip.

These and other initiatives, allowed the archipelago of the Azores to be recognized internationally by several entities, as one of the safest destinations in the World.

Know the measures



Only through a collaborative framework, we will reach the true sustainable development.

Azores DMO

The Management Structure for the Sustainability of the Azores Tourist Destination (Azores DMO), formed in 2018 by the Resolution of the Government Council n° 58/2018 of May, 15th, 2018, and with renewable term by the Resolution n° 91/2021, of April, 21st, 2021, is the entity responsible by the management of the destination sustainability, in dependence of the Regional Secretariat with competence in matters of Tourism. The Azores DMO constitutes itself as the structure empowered to plan, organize, implement, manage and supervise the certification of the Azores as a Sustainable Tourism Destination, as well as to monitor the implementation of the strategy adopted for the tourism sector in the Azores.

The creation of this structure comes in a context where tourism increasingly established itself as a fundamental sector for the territory and in which the development of the Azores destination should be distinguished by its sustainability.

The actions of the Azores DMO are coordinated with the population, members of the private and public sector, both municipal as well as several departments of the Regional Government, and also Associations and NGOs.

How to contribute

Juntos planeamos, implementamos e monitorizamos

Advisory Committee

Formed by the Associations representing economic sectors and public and private agents, with the goal of accompanying, pass sentences and make recommendations about the Azores Certification Process.

Monitoring Group

Formed by Public Entities, with the goal to provide the implementation of the measures and actions intended to the compliance of the Certification requirements and goals.

Green Teams

Formed by public and private entities representing local interests, in the Form of Green Teams (in each of the nine islands), and meetings for the community, partners and economic agents. Integrant part of these forums are the subscribers' entities of the [Cartilha de Sustentabilidade dos Açores \(Sustainability Booklet of the Azores\)](#).

PILLARS OF THE AZORES SUSTAINABILITY

ECONOMY

Promote a new model of economic development, sustainable, that conciliates and balances the structuring public investment with the private investment, through the establishment and qualification of the business enterprises, produced wealth and the sustainable and qualified working places.

SOCIETY / CULTURE

Identity respect and appreciation and the ability of each island, each municipality, each village, with focus on local power and social cohesion, fighting the social inequalities and promoting the improvement of Health and Standard of Living of the population.

ENVIRONMENT

Promote the integral management of the natural resources in a long-term perspective, ensuring the adjustment to the climate changes scenery, fostering the protection and preservation of the ecosystems and fighting the loss of the biodiversity, in land as in the sea.

The Azores DMO commits still to review the principles that support the guidelines for the sustainability of destination, on an annual base, and share it with the agents that intervene directly or indirectly, in its management.

Goal

Being the most sustainable archipelago in the world!

We intend to achieve the sustainability of destination Azores bearing in mind its intention of being “recognized internationally as unspoiled volcanic islands, of exuberant vegetation, exclusive, of mystical beauty”. We want to insure that the destination development borne on the Goals of Sustainable Development, in context of the Agenda 2030, and applied to all the initiatives and actions of the tourism in Azores, as well as the DMO and its partners.

Although being an international certified tourist destination, we know that this process of continuous improvement, where it is necessary measure and analyze the impacts, in a way to shape/adjust the processes and to innovate the way we act.

Only through a visionary, ambitious and cooperative work – integrating all the destination players – it is possible to maintain the path and achieve our ambitious but tangible goal: being the most sustainable archipelago of the world!

A Destination
that allies its authenticity
with sustainability



A transparent commitment towards the sustainable development of the Azores

- ✓ Follow the national and international sustainability guidelines such as the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism
- ✓ Define goals related with Tourism that contributes for the sustainable development and, therefore, to reach the continuous improvement, of the Earth Check markers
- ✓ Incorporate contributions related with sustainability in the strategic and operating management of the Tourism in the Azores
- ✓ Check, involve and sensitize the local communities, the partners and the economic agents of the value chain of tourism in the decision making related with the sustainable development management of destination Azores, including the markers of sustainability, in order to allow that these contribute to reach the goals defined by the destination

- ✓ Promote the policy of Sustainability Management of Tourism in Azores together with all the agents that work in the tourism sector, reviewing annually
- ✓ Promote and encouraging the sustainability of the destination, setting goals to fulfill for each of the key certification areas
- ✓ Stimulate and promote the awareness and qualification of the partners and economic agents in relation to the territory sustainability
- ✓ Engage in initiatives and innovating local projects that strive the environmental, cultural, social and/or economic sustainability, and "green experiences" for locals and tourists
- ✓ Ensure the qualification, the employment of the locals in the tourist activity

- ✓ Identify the risks associated to the tourist activity, minimizing their negative effects, through its prevention but also, enhancing the positive effects
- ✓ Monitoring the tourism evolution in connection with the environmental, cultural, social and economic sustainability, providing precise information in promotional materials
- ✓ Promote the surveillance of the execution of the Regional Program for the climate changes, more specifically, the adjustment measures to the climate changes in the tourism sector
- ✓ Boost the use of local products by the companies in the tourism sector and, imported goods that respect the standards of "Fair Trading" whenever possible
- ✓ Encourage the use of sustainable individual or business innovative practices, through the assignment of incentives or other benefits
- ✓ Promote and monitoring the implementation of the Strategic and Marketing Plan for the Azores Tourism (PEMTA), especially at the seasonality level and the certification of the business companies in the tourism value chain

We measure in order to manage the path of sustainability

We follow a path that promotes the monitoring of all initiatives. Only then, we can advance, innovate and elevate our sustainability standards, seeking always to do more and better



 ENERGETIC EFFICIENCY	 GREENHOUSE GASES	 AIR QUALITY, NOISE CONTROL AND LIGHT POLLUTION	 WASTE WATER
 FRESH WATER RESOURCES	 ECOSYSTEM AND BIODIVERSITY PROTECTION	 LAND USE PLANNING	 TRANSPORTS
 SOLID WASTE	 NOXIOUS SUBSTANCES	 SOCIETY AND CULTURE	 ECONOMY

Áreas de certificação chave (KPAs)



july 28, 2021

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Bolieiro', is positioned above a horizontal line.

José Manuel Bolieiro

President of the Regional Government of the Azores

Azores Tourism Sustainability Management Policy		Created by: Açores DMO	Approval: José Manuel Bolieiro
Rev. 01	Code: EC01_01Politica	Created: 28/07/2021	Ref. EarthCheck: Standard 1 e 2.1