



UN Secretary-General, António Guterres “It is imperative that we rebuild the tourism sector in a safe, equitable and climate friendly manner”
Policy Brief, COVID-19 Transforming Tourism, United Nations, August 2020

IAP BRAGA
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URBACT III - Tourism-Friendly Cities (TFC) Action Planning Network

Integrated Action Plan (IAP) - BRAGA

The **Integrated Action Plan (IAP)** is a document defining actions to be implemented, based on the strategy and vision that was identified in order to achieve the goals of sustainable tourism in the city. This plan describes the current situation of the city, through the objectives that were set in place to be reached in the future. Monitoring results and activities, evaluating actions implemented during the project and whether set objectives are reached after the project, as well as any necessary corrective measures that need to be carried out.

By Municipality of Braga



TFC is an URBACT network of 9 European cities, led by the Genoa Municipality

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Project lifecycle: September 2019 - August 2022

Funded through: European Commission's URBACT programme

CITY OF BRAGA

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ULG Coordinators: Chisoka Simões / João Gomes / Luís Miguel Marado

Local community & tourists together for urban sustainability

TOURISM-FRIENDLY CITIES is an URBACT Action Planning Network aimed at exploring **how tourism can be made sustainable in medium-sized cities**, reducing the negative impact on neighbourhoods and areas interested by different types of tourism and its related aspects through integrated and inclusive strategies **keeping a balance between the needs of the local community**, in terms of quality of life and of services available, and the **promotion of sustainable urban development at environmental, social and economic level**.



1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a sector that mobilizes people globally; it is an industry of the people and for the people, and most cities are highly dependent on tourist demand. Currently, there is a need to respond to sustainable challenges, specifically in a post-CoViD world, for this essential asset in our lives.

The SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus pandemic has caused an unprecedented crisis in the tourism economy worldwide, given the travel restrictions introduced by governments all over the world. In 2020, international tourist arrivals declined by 73%, lowering the number of tourists traveling to the levels of 30 years ago. Nonetheless, our internal national tourism demand has been increasing during the pandemic, pushing cities to take action due to restrictions on international travels and domestic movement by closing leisure activities, and causing a pressure to the sector.

Portugal has suffered a loss of 70% of its tourism levels, but is still one of the most competitive countries regarding safety and sustainability, economic, social and environmental development, considering tourist destinations around the world.

Nowadays, Municipalities are key actors in the implementation of local strategic measures due to their knowledge about the territory, taking in consideration their human resources and the emergent interest for local genuine experiences, vicissitudes in the use of public urban spaces, and rising use of new technologies.

Our priorities within the IAP will be based on a strategy to provide an agreed framework, focusing the benefits of what sustainable tourism can offer as a result for the industry, and as an opportunity to address the less visible political and ethical dimensions of the sector. Partners can work together for the successful development and management of tourism in Braga. This should consider that it is a great balancing act between multiple impacts of diverse activities, and by addressing the needs of visitors to build natural environment for host communities in a continuous process.

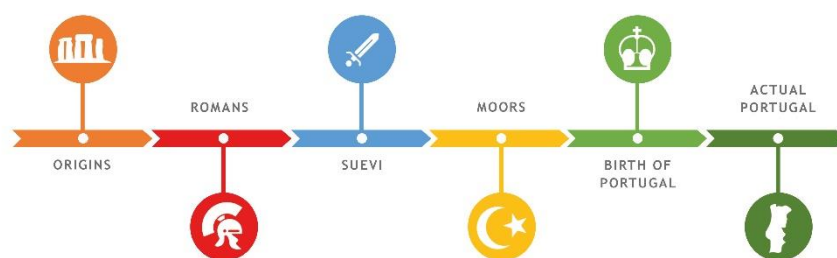


1.1 - City Context, Braga | Portugal

- European Best Destination 2021 (Europeans Customer Choice);
- Capital of Culture of Eixo Atlântico of Noroeste Peninsular (Northwest Iberian Atlantic Axis) 2021;
- Sanctuary of Bom Jesus do Monte – UNESCO World Heritage since 2019;
- 2º Best European Destination 2019 (Europeans Customer Choice);
- European Capital of Sports 2018;
- Creative City of Media Arts – UNESCO since 2017;
- Iberian-American Capital of Youth 2016;
- Minho European Region of Gastronomy 2016;
- European Capital of Youth 2012;
- Capital of the Region of Minho, with more than 1 million inhabitants;

Recognized as one of the oldest Christian cities in the world, Braga was founded by the Romans in the year 16 BC and, to this day, it is called *Bracara Augusta* in honour of Emperor *Caesar Augustus*.

Therefore, it presents a timeline of more than 2000 years of history, with the passage and indelible mark of different races:



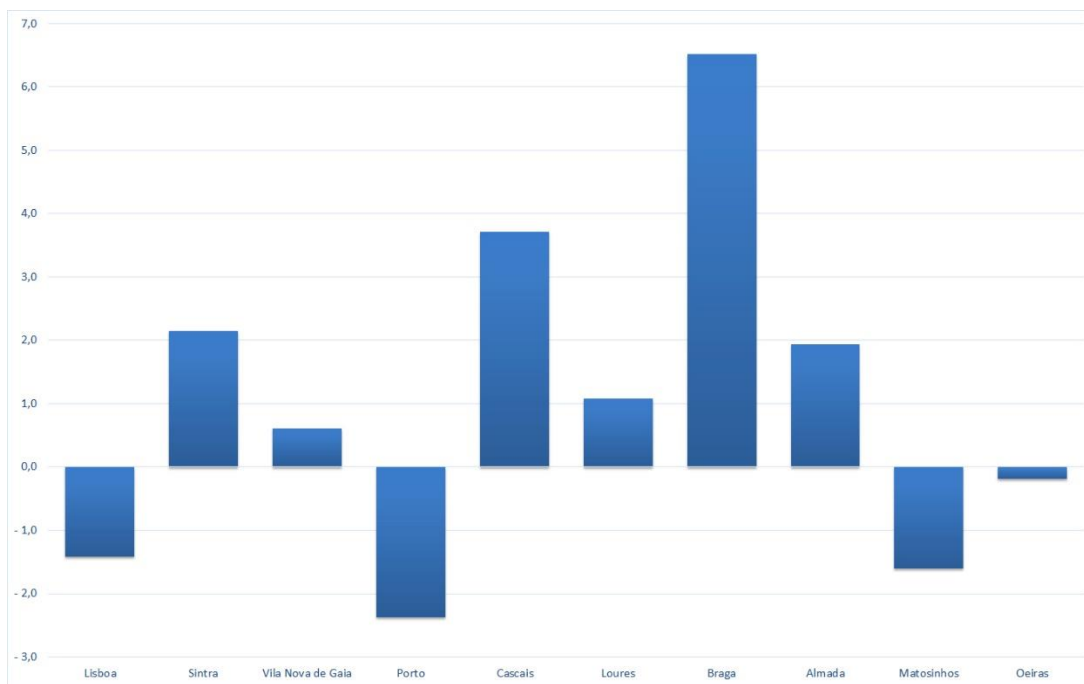
Historical time line of Braga

It is a city where you can have glimpses of the past while discovering and feeling history, moving towards the future. Braga is a technological hub, where many successful international start-ups have emerged, the headquarters of a renowned university (University



of Minho) and the International Iberian Nanotechnology Laboratory (INL) - one of the main international research centres worldwide.

Braga was the municipality in the North that registered the biggest increase (6,5%) in population in the last 10 years. The majority of the population concentrates in the urban area of Braga, itself, where densities are more than 10000 per square kilometre.



10 Municipalities with the most Resident Population 2011-2021 in Portugal

Source: National Statistics Institute

Braga population includes native Portuguese, other segments of the population include Brazilian, African (principally from the former Portuguese colonies), Chinese and eastern European peoples, namely Ukrainians.

The urban structure includes approximately 70,268 residences (2001), even as the typical classic representation of family only includes 51,173 members in the municipality. The "extra" homes are primarily temporary residences, normally for students, migrant workers and professionals working in the city. There is also a great number of homes owned by Portuguese residents living overseas (who use the homes periodically while in Portugal)



even as constant development has attracted new growth in the population. Further, the difference in resident to transitory population means that, on average, the population of Braga hovers between 174,000 and 230,000 individuals annually.

Geographically, Braga is located in the North of the country, in the Cávado valley, and is the capital of the Minho region. The municipality of Braga occupies an area of 183.4 km². To the North, Braga borders the municipalities of Vila Verde and Amares, to the Northeast and East with Póvoa de Lanhoso, to the South and Southeast with Guimarães and Vila Nova de Famalicão, and to the West with the municipality of Barcelos.



Braga location within the North of Portugal

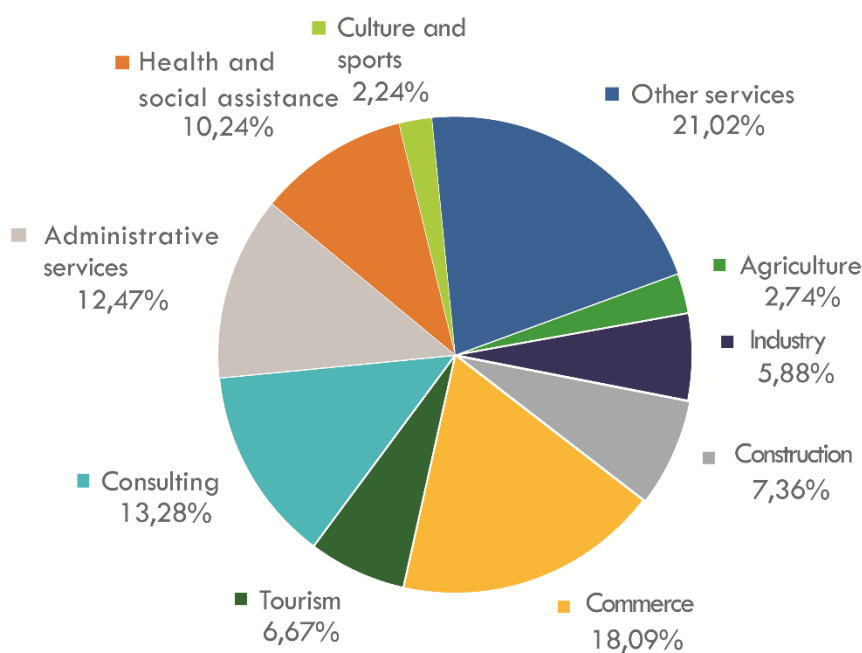
The municipality's terrain is characterized by some irregularity with lowlands that spread throughout its territory, which at times contrasts with small mountainous formations, aligned with the main rivers. To the North it is limited by the Cávado River, to the South by a group of hills that form the Mountains of Picos (566m) and to the East by the Mountain of Carvalhos (479m). The territory progresses from Northeast to Southeast, following the valleys of its two rivers, which, along with smaller river courses, created two platforms.

Administratively, the municipality of Braga is the capital of the district, comprehending 37 civil parishes ("freguesias") in total. The city is located in an important road axis and as a result it has reached a great economic, social and cultural development.



Braga was ranked as Portugal's third city, after Lisbon and Porto between 2017 to 2020 in terms of its number of exports. In 2021 is fourth city representing 2,7% of the Portuguese exports – 1.951.849.557€.

In the last years the number of companies in the territory has been increasing, with 22,982 companies based here (125 companies/km²) in 2019, with a Gross Value Added (GVA) of over 1,900 million euros. The economic activity focuses on the industrial sector, whose Gross Value Added Value (GVA) represents 29% of the wealth generated in the territory. The commerce and construction sectors also have a relevant weight in the economy, representing respectively 19% and 15% of the GVA companies located in Braga.

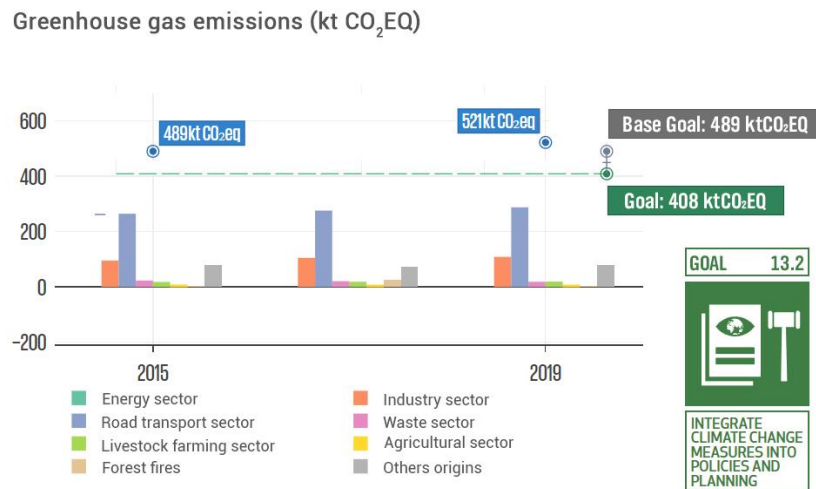


Distribution of the companies located in the Municipality of Braga by sector of activity, in 2019 [%]
 (Source: adapted from INE, 2019)

For the Municipality, greenhouse gas emissions that result from tourism and all its chain of value are taken seriously. Such commitment is essential and vital for tourism destinations, and for individual travellers that are aware of this problem. Sustainable travel is not only about reducing your carbon footprint, but to ensure that travellers don't have a negative



impact on local communities, and also by encouraging other cities to take action and consider new methods and experiences.



Source: <https://odslocal.pt/braga>

At an international level, Braga was listed as one of the 88 best cities in the world in the fight against climate change and as been awarded “class A” by the Carbon Disclosure Project. For the first time, Braga was distinguished in the top 3 ranking with the Green Flag ECOXXI award in 2021, awarded annually by the Associação Bandeira Azul Europa to Portuguese municipalities. Also at the national level, Braga is at the forefront of achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, with an execution of around 70%.

Braga is a technological hub, where many successful international start-ups have emerged, the headquarters of a renowned university (University of Minho) and the International Iberian Nanotechnology Laboratory (INL) - one of the main international research centres worldwide.

It assumes itself as a pole of attraction, with great potential to increase and develop, such as the tourism sector and through the creation of new emerging investment areas that stand out, like new technologies and the ability to set up start-ups. Historically, this municipality has been recognized for its strength in commerce, which contains the ability to expand through new ideas that contribute to the creation and sustainability of the “Braga Brand”.



Statistics	Data
Population ¹	193,349 inhabitants (January 2021)
Demography ¹	<p>Gender (2019): Males: 86,128 Females: 96,551</p> <p>Aging index 120 Potentiality Index 70,1</p> <p><15 years old: 25,937 > 65 years old and more: 31,224</p> <p>Effective annual growth (%) 0,4 Natural annual growth (%) 0,2</p>
Unemployment and employment statistics ²	<p>Unemployment rate (2014): 13.2% • Unemployment rate males: 11.7% • Unemployment rate females: 14.6%</p> <p>Activity rate (2014): 62.4% • Activity rate males: 66.8% • Activity rate females: 58.5%</p>
Industrial / employment composition	<p>Braga is an extremely dynamic city with an intense economic activity in the areas of trade and services, education and research, construction, IT and new technologies, tourism and various branches of industry and crafts. The most important companies, tourist enterprises and hotels chains in Braga are the following:</p>
Most important companies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BOSCH Car Multimedia Portugal, SA (electronic industry); - The International Iberian Nanotechnology Laboratory; - Primavera-Business Software Solutions SA; - Navarra Aluminium's; - DST;
Tourism enterprises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Braga Tours; - Get Bus; - Itineris; - Picoto Park; - Minho Free Walking Tours; - Your Tours;
Major hotel chains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hotel Meliã****; - Hotel Vila Galé****; - Hotel Mercure****; - Hotel Ibis***;
Summary of relevant Operational Programmes (ERDF and ESF – European Social Fund) covering the city	<p>Accessible Tourism, funded by European funds.</p> <p>Project providing Wi-Fi for residents and tourists in city centre, funded by EU.</p> <p>Regarding sustainability, Braga is investing heavily to decarbonize our mobility.</p>

¹ Source: National Statistics Institute / ² Source: Eurostat [Database - Cities \(Urban Audit\) - Eurostat \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&code=sdg_11_3_1)



1.2 - Institutional framework in the tourism sector

Structuring responsibilities within the public sector in the domain of the tourism sector in Portugal:

- **National Tourist Authority | Turismo de Portugal (TP):** is integrated in the Minister of Economy and Maritime Affairs - Secretariat of State for Tourism, Trade and Services.
 - Responsible for the promotion, enhancement and sustainability of tourism activities, it brings together in a single entity all institutional competences related to the stimulation of tourism, from supply to demand.
- **Regional Tourism Entity of Porto and North of Portugal (ERT - TPNP):** is integrated in the Ministry of Economy and Digital Transition.
 - Responsible for regional tourism development, in line with national guidelines for the tourism area.
- **Porto Convention & Visitors Bureau (ATP, AR):** as a Regional Agency, aims to develop and promote externally Porto e Norte de Portugal as a tourist destination, namely, in the promotion of strategic products (MI - Meeting Industry, City Breaks, Touring and Nature, Wines and Gastronomy), in the various international markets. The ATP, AR, has several public and private members, is a non-profit organization founded in 1995 by a group of institutions that wanted to develop the Tourism Industry in Porto and Northern Portugal.



- **Municipalities:** are responsible for urban and local development, regarding tourism regulations, strategies and policies.
 - The Department of Economy and Tourism of the Municipality of Braga, is responsible for planning and managing local, as well as national and international promotion of tourism.
- **Intermunicipal Community of Cávado | CIM:** Aims to combine, promote and articulate common interests to the associated municipalities, in the area of community outreach services and municipal investments at the level of:
 - The NUTS III of the Cávado Valley, which encompasses the counties of Amares, Braga, Barcelos, Esposende, Terras de Bouro and Vila Verde;
 - Promotion of the planning and management of the economic, social and environmental development strategy of the territory concerned;



1.3 - Urban and tourism development

The city of Braga in the past years has been exponentially growing tourist demand for religious/cultural sites and natural environments as well as short city-breaks, gastronomy/wine and recently as a city for congresses, meetings and business tourism. This is certainly seen as a factor that promotes economic and cultural development.

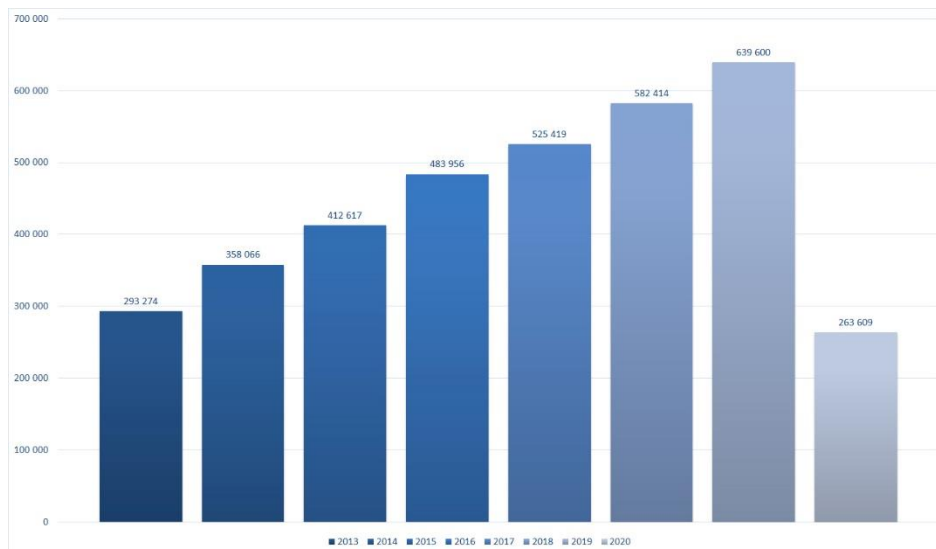
Based on current data of the National Statistics Institute we observe that over the years per night stays increased the city's activity in the tourism sector, which brought new investment from the public and private sectors.

Historical centre has seen old buildings being rehabilitated, attracting people to live again in the heart of Braga. New hotels were born in the city, increasing its previous installed capacity. The motivations for tourist demand are now in high expectancy for years to come.

According to a case study, it was found that the average daily spending of tourists in the city of Braga is 173.86 € which has been increasing from year to year. In addition, the average daily spending of tourists in Braga is able to compete with the average daily spending of cities like Porto as well as the national value of the average daily spending.

Compared to results of a previous study, conducted in 2017 in the middle of the Holy Week in Braga, the average daily spending was 165.21 €. This increase can be explained by all the positive factors from the tourism industry as well as the focus of the entities in improving their products, services and infrastructures, which has contributed with more fluency of visitors who are spending even more on their stays.

Regarding the city of Braga, tourism has had several impacts that helped to revitalize the city's economy by generating jobs, attracting investors and stimulating local commerce.



Per night, stay in Braga (2013 – 2020)

Source: National Statistics Institute

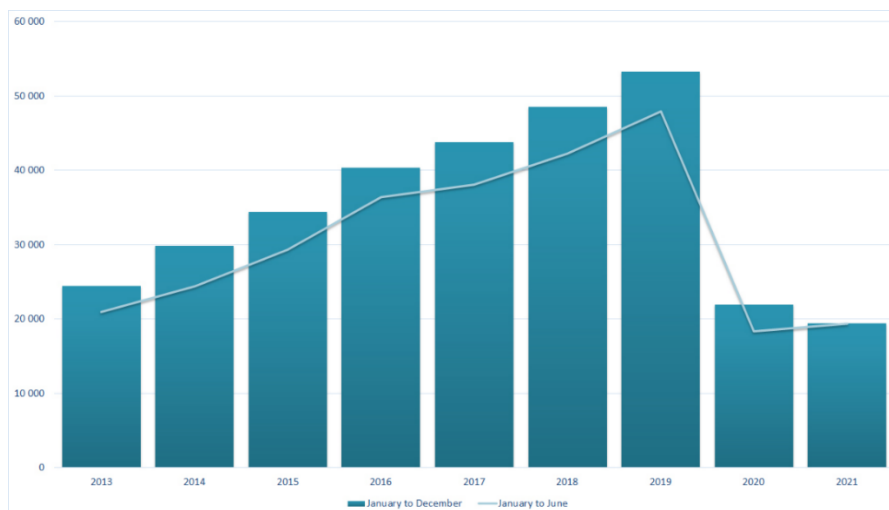
<i>Tourists</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2018</i>	<i>2019</i>	<i>2020</i>	<i>2021</i>
Total	525.419	582.414	639.600	263.609	368.707
Domestic	262.890	300.426	331.169	184.711	-
Foreign	262.529	281.988	308.134	82.062	-

Per night, stay in Braga (2017 – 2021)

Source: National Statistics Institute

There was an increase of 18.69% in tourism arrivals from 2009 to 2019 at the tourist office. Regarding overnight stays in Braga, in 2018 it was of 1.8 nights per tourist (582 414 sleeps), according to the last data of the Statistics of Portugal.

With the understanding of the growth of tourism and the impacts generated by it, negative outcomes can be reversible if detected in advanced. Through that understanding, the city shows signs that over the years it was able to maintain and even grow its tourism levels in a sustainable way, by avoiding over-tourism and keeping the city genuine and alive.



Variation rate - per night, stay in Braga (2013 – 2020) / (Jan. to Jun 2013 – 2021)

Source: National Statistics Institute

As a result, we can observe that in the year 2020 the impact due to the COVID-19 pandemic in the economy affected local tourism in 58.8%, compared to 2019, our best year ever.

In relation to 2021, we can realise that there was a slight recovery in the summer season compared to the previous year, demonstrating that we'll soon #restartourism again.

<i>Typology</i>	<i>Number of facilities</i>	<i>Number of beds</i>
Hotels*****	1	366
Hotels****	9	868
Hotels***	8	730
Hotels**	10	968
Hotels*	0	0
Other types of hotels (rural, country...)	6	79
Total of categorized hotels	34	3011
Short term rentals	495	2974
Total accommodation	563	5985

Source: Tourism of Portugal (2022)



The main positive and negative aspects of the current city situation regarding tourism sustainability are identified in the SWOT analysis set out below:

SWOT ANALYSIS – Braga Tourism Development			
STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Best European Destination 2021	Parking management policy on street and off-street parking facilities are granted to private companies	“Visit Braga” brand visibility and awareness towards internationalization through diverse enterprises and football	Governmental policy towards tourism recovery post-pandemic
Biggest pedestrian areas of Portugal in its city centre	Degradation of natural environment	Training in the area of tourism through the existing tourism universities and schools	Adaptability of measures implemented to stop CoViD
Bom Jesus do Monte World UNESCO	Lack of frequency from urban public transport to several touristic places	Search for new types of tourism	Growing competitiveness between destinations
Good hospitality	Low seasonality in certain periods of the year	New Municipality investments in rehabilitation of old infrastructures	Rise of pollution
Central location within of Porto and North Region	Lack of cooperation between local stakeholders in all tourism chain of value	Improvement of quality life	Rise of prices of local goods and services
Good gastronomy	Lack of tourism integrated services (interpretative signs, bus, train)	Rise of new business and services	Rise of prices in renting housing



2. DESCRIPTION OF PROCESS

Developing the IAP was a team effort, conducted above all through the collaboration between the members of the Braga ULG in a series of local meetings. To help garner perspective on the objectives and strategies defined by the Braga ULG, we also heard and shared experiences with our partner cities, by being present in transnational meetings and city visits, in order to get in touch with other realities in terms of tourism. This made us aware of the valuable inputs set out by each partner city, enhancing international cooperation.

There were five ULG meetings in total, and we had other five meetings by zoom due to the pandemic. Each of these meetings was programmed to help convey the information garnered in the previous transnational meeting, or to prepare Braga's participation in the next transnational meeting. Besides this, the meetings always had the focus of addressing the development of the IAP, independently of the transnational meetings or city visits, so that local stakeholders could have continuous opportunities to voice and express their ideas.

The priorities of the IAP are the challenges identified above for Braga. These include keeping the genuine and traditional feel to this small city, while increasing the stays and the revenue provided by guest, and raising local awareness to the role of tourism in valuing heritage and the city's services.

To reach these results, we also did two SSAs that helped test and refine strategies for long-term implementation through the IAP. These SSAs gave us different insights and perspectives of local citizens about the importance of tourism in our community. They also helped deepen bonds and awareness in the three-way relationships between residents, tourists and the region's tourism sector.

This study gave us the opportunity to understand and report on how IAP's, can provide a structure for cities to work better in certain dimensions, setting out ambitions and aspirations for future generations towards city attractiveness and sustainable social-economic impact.

2.1 - Learning from transnational meetings and partners

Stimulating understanding and awareness for the role of sustainable tourism, by supporting local tourism through sustainable development, is crucial to our TFC network.

Consequently, the most important role is to display and exchange knowledge about good practices from partners that integrate the URBACT – Tourism Friendly Cities network and discuss guidelines and approaches that help municipalities support local sustainable tourism practices.

An approach was set that gave us different insights. These revealed the strategic importance of reconciling tourism with long-term sustainability, which can be a key economic activity for many municipalities. It is therefore critical to find methodologies that allow us to continue benefitting from the tourism economy in a sustainable way.



On-line transnational meeting



Transnational meeting city of Braga – January 2020

What we retain from the transnational meetings was undoubtedly all the contact with the outside reality, as well as the networking between partners. We learnt how other technicians and organisations work with each other, how the different problems manifest themselves regarding over-tourism and other problems related to sustainability, and what approaches each city has to the identified problems.

2.2 - URBACT LOCAL GROUP: Role and composition

The strategy is largely based on the balance of opinion emerging from a process of local consultation, which is vital and crucial to set up a local supportive group, which gathers the most important tourist related local key stakeholders in order to co-produce the Integrated Action Plan (IAP).

The ULG structure proposed by Braga is connected to a strong political support, which clearly emerges among the lines. It has a clear connection between transnational and local activities with a strong focus on economic and social dimensions of sustainability of tourism, taking into consideration the different scopes of the sustainable impact of tourism in the city and involving a wide range of stakeholders that guarantee an effective sharing of the priorities and visions that will emerge along the meetings of the ULG Braga network activities.



Key stages in this process include:

- Transnational meetings and online transnational meetings;
- Meetings with relevant stakeholders and local citizens;
- Discussion of key issues;
- Production of a draft strategy and action plan;
- Implementation of Small Scale Actions.



<i>ULG meeting schedule:</i>	<i>ULG on-line meeting schedule:</i>
2 March 2020	17 February 2021
7 September 2020	24 February 2021
8 September 2021	4 March 2021
26 November 2021	10 March 2021
26 April 2022	17 March 2021

Given the fact that we were caught unexpectedly with the pandemic (SARS-CoV-2) during this process, made us aware that we needed to change our approach and perceptions towards tourism dynamics by having the need to adapt to the circumstances.

Therefore, we rapidly adjusted to tourists' needs as well as regarding our ULG Group. We were able to provide a series of online ULG meetings to keep the schedule. The meetings occurred in February and March of 2021 when we were not able to do physical meetings, due to the procedures set by the World Health Organization taken into consideration to ensure the minimisation of disease transmission.

Our meetings were set out independently by areas of intervention related to the tourism sector, in order to segment all contributions by areas of interest such as:

- Commerce and services;
- Schools of tourism;
- Tour operators;
- Public and private entities.



// ASSOCIATIONS	NAME
ACESAS Cultural Intervention Group	Betânia Ribeiro
// LOCAL ENTITIES	NAME
InvestBRAGA Economic Agency of the Municipality of Braga	José Coutinho
InvestBRAGA Youth Centre	Pedro Soares
Chamber of Commerce of Braga	Ruí Marques
Intermunicipal Community of Cávado	Joana Peixoto
Confraria do Bom Jesus	Varico Pereira
Porto and North of Portugal Tourism Region	Marco Sousa
Human Power Hub	Carlos Santos
Professional School of Tourism - PROFITECLA	Hugo Sá Sérgio Pinto
Faculty of Philosophy and Social Sciences of Braga - TOURISM	Carla Cardoso
Cooperativa Minho Porta Aberta	João Gomes / Chisoka Simões / Miguel Marado
Memories of the <i>Misericórdia</i> of Braga Interpretation Centre	Manuela Machado
Raio Palace Museum	
Secondary School Sá de Miranda - Reception Course	Prof. Manuel Vieira
Secondary School Alberto Sampaio	Prof. Marlene Faria
7 Wings	Maria João Bastos
Get Bus	Ruí Dias
Braga Tours	Jorge Vilela
Your Tours	Yorick Viche
Itineris	José Barbosa
Hotel Vila Gale****	Natália Oliveira
Hotel Dona Sofia ***	Maria Conceição Rocha
Domus Guest House	Conceição Rebelo
Time To Restaurant	Teresa Bastos
Venice Pastry	Paulo Vilaça
// LOCAL RESIDENTS	NAME
	José Rocha



3. ACTION PLAN

A new level of cooperation is needed to shape sustainable tourism destinations, in order to embrace nature, be open to change, build on local tradition, collaborative ways to be open minded, and learn from each other.

Over the previous years, the city centre saw a great deal of urban renewal and investment, related to growth in tourism and economic activity in that area. The city has room to grow in tourism, given the potential of the city centre to accommodate further infrastructure and tourism-related equipment in the space provided by some previously abandoned Baroque buildings undergoing or awaiting renovation. The current investments have had a strong focus on neighbourhood investments and support of cultural and creative industries.

In this perspective, an ongoing collaboration process is crucial and might be the key, between the municipality, local stakeholders, citizens and private sector investors standing side by side to find the solutions that will carry out strategic ways that will ensure the success of the project.

Although different approaches were presented within the ULG, the need to develop strategies within the municipality for the recovery and rebuild of the sector on a short/medium term is transversely identified. Also, the unique opportunity to rethink the tourism industry in a sustainable way on a medium/long term was pinpointed due to the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our standpoint is to create a solid strategy that could overcome our main policy challenges:

- Short stays: increase the length of stays per night in the city;
- Increase the income per available room;
- Avoid over-tourism;
- Integrate local tourist services;
- Maintain genuineness and tradition in the city;

- Limited city resident's participation and awareness of the growing importance of tourism for the local economy.

We are a unique tourist destination that suffers from an old fashion external perception, since we are known as the city of archbishop's and very attached to our religious heritage. In order to be internationally known for our attractiveness we need to change the existing perceptions by doing a different approach and to be able to increase tourism ratings even more in our territory.

We are focused to create a strategy that can overcome our main problems, since that it is the first strategic process on tourism using URBACT method and actively involving ULG members, and to accomplish we want to be able to show Braga as a smart tourism destination, which is recognized for its concerns addressing new sustainable ways and methods in the economic, social and environmental impacts.

Create and develop new methodologies for engaging young and entrepreneur population, gain international awareness, as Portugal is highly quoted as a tourism destination of reference, won three times in a row since 2017 to 2019 - World's Leading Destination. The North region has experienced an increase of tourism by 5% in 2018, being the region that had the best economic growth in Portugal, and Braga can benefit with this recognition despite being a religious tourism city.

To accomplish this, we aim to do it in a sustainable way, by setting out a strategic objectives and actions along this process that are presented below and through enhancing the experience of the tourist in the destination, which could shift some existing perceptions throughout new reliable touristic infrastructures, events and cultural richness, crafts and historical heritage, environment and nature protection.

Also, local citizens should be more knowledgeable and closer to the tourism phenomenon by recognizing the potential of Braga as a city of heritage and culture, engaging local stockholders in the process for co-creation of the new tourism strategy, and testing of small



scale actions that can consolidate collaborative practices between city residents, tourists and tourism industry in general.

Improve capacity of avoiding overtourism, by facilitating the cooperation of city residents, tourists and tourism industry in actions of dispersion, limiting growth and reinvestment in local assets.

3.1 Objectives, actions and schedule

Action	Intended result	Resources/ Assets	Lead Agency	Key partners	Timescale
Improvement and development of Tourist Passport	Provide new benefits for visitors as well as for tourist attractions	Municipality budget funding	Municipality of Braga and Chamber of Commerce	Local entrepreneur, museums, and business	In progress
Introduction of tourist tax collection system	Allow to monitor tourism flows, reduce the ecological footprint and improve data collection system	Municipality budget funding	Municipality of Braga	Local accommodation and hotels	In progress
Municipal Market	Regularization (location) of prices, distribution of local products, economic dynamization of the surrounding spaces, boosting tourism and culture, complementary services	Municipality budget funding	Municipality of Braga	Local commerce stakeholders	In progress
Create new parking mobility for tourist buses	Release tourist pressure in the streets of the historical centre	Municipality budget funding	Municipality of Braga	Municipal Police and TUB – Urban Transports of Braga	In progress
Adopt “Visit Braga” to promote brand awareness	High brand recognition, and integration of local stakeholders in the engagement process	Municipality budget funding	Municipality of Braga	Porto and North Region and CIM Cávado	In progress



Coordinate efforts for reviewing all tourist interpretative signs	Guide and better inform tourists around the city	EU, and Municipality budget funding	Municipality of Braga	University of Minho – History and archeological department	2022 - 2023
Organize cultural events and increase the tourist offer throughout new sustainable models	Fight seasonality in certain months of the year (November; December; January; February)	EU, and Municipality budget funding	Municipality of Braga – Division of Culture and Invest Braga	Local businesses, private and public cultural institutions	4 years
Initiate cooperation with local authorities, scientific institutions, local businesses operating in tourism in order to implement a DMO	Research and monitoring the tourism impact in order to prevent negative effects of the use of social, economic and natural resources Better control and information on the sustainable state of the territory	Municipality budget funding,	Municipality of Braga	CIM Cávado, Catholic University of Braga - Tourism Department. Chamber of Commerce, Tour Operators	In progress
Provide free access to museums and historical sites ruled by the Municipality	Increase tourist per night stays in Braga, sensitize, educate and create local awareness for local heritage	Municipality funding	Municipality of Braga	Roman Baths, Roman Idol Fountain, Domus da Escola Velha da Sé, Medieval Tower of Menagem, House of Crivos, Image Museum	In progress
Eco-route of “Rio Este”	Local community become aware of environmental issues, defending the quality of water, fauna and flora	EU - REACT	Municipality of Braga	Portuguese Ambient Agency (APA)	2021/2022
Eco-route of “Rio Cávado”	Local community become aware of environmental issues, defending the	Municipality funding	Municipality of Braga	Portuguese Ambient Agency (APA)	2022/2023



	quality of water, fauna and flora				
River Beach network of Merlim S. Paio, Palmeira, Adaúfe, Navarra and Cavadinho	The project aims to provide for the creation of a space for picnics and accommodation; access construction of bar and river support equipment; in articulation with the channel of the Eco route of River Cávado	Municipality funding	Municipality of Braga	Portuguese Ambient Agency (APA)	2022/2023
Monumental Eco park of 7 fountains	This project seeks to ensure: heritage and conservation by enhancing the national monument through the management of rainwater, drainage, routing and retention	Municipality funding EU Funding	Municipality of Braga	AGERE	2023
Create a good practice guide for sustainable tourism and services in the city	Access to new alliances, promotion of good practices among stakeholders in the territory	Municipality funding	Municipality of Braga and Chamber of Commerce	Chamber of Commerce, Catholic University of Braga – Tourism, CIM Cávado	2023
Three-dimensional reproduction of the most important monuments for disabled, blind or partially sighted people	These tactile models also include Braille information to help more people read about individual monuments or even entire city centers, since architectural details are imperceptible to the blind/partially sighted people. Mock-ups, replicas and reconstructions are tactile 3D materials particularly useful for blind people and	Municipality funding	Municipality of Braga	Municipality of Braga - Division of Heritage and Archeology	2023



	people with intellectual disabilities				
Apply to the Project - Historical Cities 3.0	Discuss problems, experiences, solutions used in historical cities, exclusively in the aspect of tourism development, taking into account demographic, spatial, historical, cultural, economic and social conditions and for the purpose of searching for common tools for sustainable development in terms of the evolution of tourism	No budget needed	Historical Cities 3.0	Municipality of Krakow	2022
Apply to Biosphere Tourism Certificate	Better positioning of the Destination; Involve local community and businesses in the sustainable commitment of the destination	Municipality budget funding, local business funding	Municipality of Braga	Local businesses, local communities	2022



3.2 SMALL SCALE ACTIONS (SSA) “Enjoy the City like a Tourist”

Stakeholders involved in the co-creation and implementation phases:

Our main stakeholder for this SSA was the Portuguese Catholic University (UCP), through the Faculty of Philosophy and Social Science – Course of Tourism, under the leadership of Professor Carla Cardoso (PhD).

We acknowledge the assistance of a strong team of tourism students that were involved in the SSA, and our main objective for this action was extended to other stakeholders involved in our ULG, such as all chain of tourist guides operating in the city, as well as to the Professional School Profictecla of Braga with tourism courses, under the leadership of Teachers Hugo Sá and Sérgio Pinto.

The remaining stakeholders (private sector, other training institutions, museums, and the general public) were involved as participants in the SSA activities.

Therefore, the aim of this SSA was to determine how our local community is willing to participate in sustainable tourism, with a view to advise tourism managers, planners and other local partners on how the local community should be involved and actively participate in the tourism development.

What we want to test:

- Perceptions (and the evolution of the perceptions) of local residents and businesses on tourism;
- Building new ways of co-creating local sustainable tourism experiences with local community;

Why:

- To improve local knowledge and the perception of value on the tourism-relevant heritage of Braga and its region;
- To raise awareness to the opportunity and relevance of sustainability in tourism practices;

This first SSA was organized in the 27th of September 2021 – World Tourism Day and aims to raise awareness through an educational program that includes the local community. The action will help them to become more involved in tourism development as entrepreneurs, employees and as local touristic promoters. Local citizens have the right to live in a sustainable and high-quality safe environment, by knowing the richness of the city they live in, in terms of cultural infrastructures, services and tourism.



Our second SSA was in the 24th of May 2022, and had a particularity that was not consider in the first one: we set out to include disabled people in order to test and somehow monitor how travellers with physical disabilities might be restricted at some point, and how they feel and sense the city as if they were tourists given the fact that according to UNWTO – World Tourism Organization, 15% of the world's population lives with some form of disability.

For that reason we wanted to involve persons using wheelchairs and consequently, for example, handrails, ramps, lifts and lowered counters as well as if the city has major barriers for travellers that involve physical obstacles, limiting access to tourism sites and attractions, to museums, historical monuments or shopping areas restricted to persons with disabilities.

Goals off the Small Scale Action:

1. The local community will be given the opportunity to feel as part of the city, in its broader meaning, as a builder of identity and cultural pride, through awareness of the material and immaterial heritage, and the commitment to preserve and divulge it;
2. The Community should actively participate in tourism development by seeking partnership opportunities with the established tourism public and private sector;
3. Residents must be included in key projects by planning and decision-making activities through the organization of public meetings of local residents;
4. Use of the local press and digital channels of the Municipality as a communication tool;
5. Inform on how tourism costs and benefits are to be shared among different stakeholders and local communities;
6. Encourage local community to invest in tourism industry. As a result, this would create employment opportunities to local communities, reduce unemployment, improve living standards, and make them supportive for sustainable tourism development.



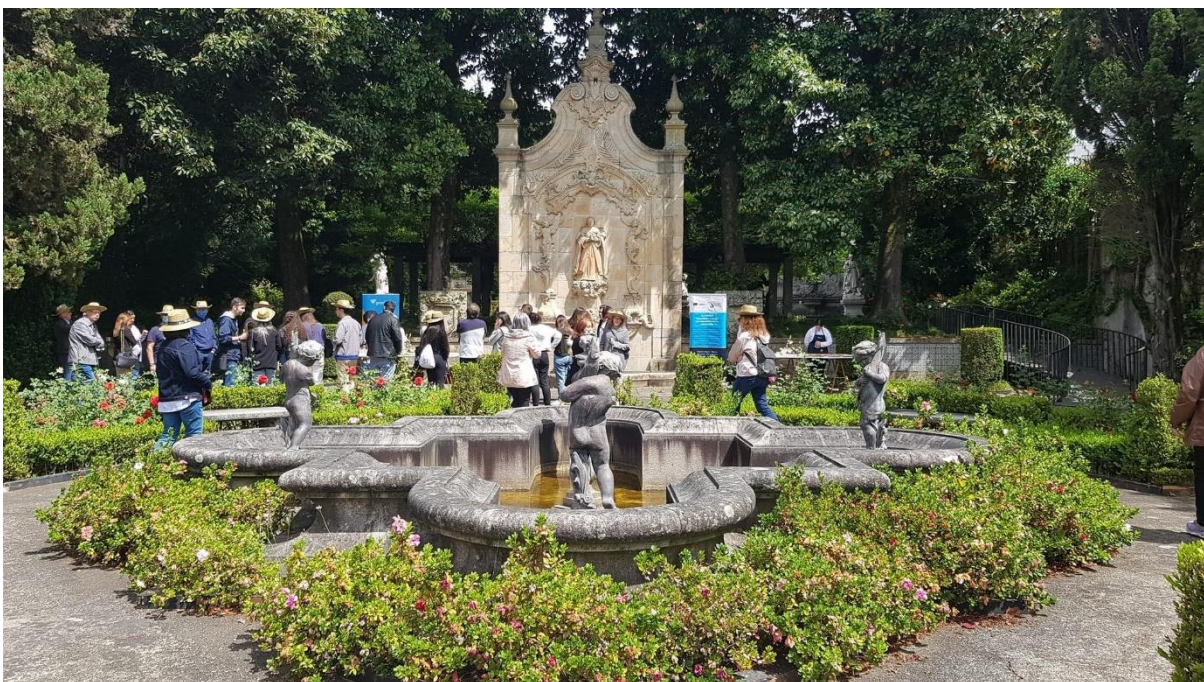
Foreseen impact on the city:

Local participation has been regarded as a positive force for change and we hope to encourage local communities to invest in the tourism industry. As a result, this would create employment opportunities to local communities, reduce unemployment, improve living standards, and make them supportive for tourism development in our city.

In a wider sense, showing the city through the eyes of visitors will underline how impressive the city is, in perspective. Showing the local history, the local material and immaterial heritage, and the local services as internationally recognized identity markers - that make Braga a proud and unique city, alongside its region - will bolster the perception of the city by locals and their engagement with welcoming and understanding the touristic phenomenon.

Raising local awareness of the touristic interest of Braga can make the city more welcoming and promote continued positive contact among citizens, tourists and tourism-related services.

This will be accomplished through the historical relevance of the local heritage, through the positive impact and quality of the tourist services in the city, alongside valued traditions and genuine cultural landmarks, such as the regional/traditional gastronomy and bakery.



Participants were asked to answer a short survey to establish their self-described base knowledge of Braga's touristic appeal (from its historical and cultural uniqueness), their view on the role of tourism and on the need of making tourism more sustainable, and their expectations for the activity/activities.



Questionnaires:

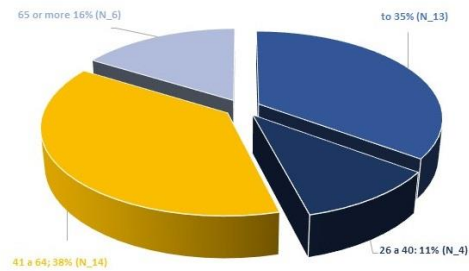
Surveys were provided among the participants/local residents and stakeholders to evaluate the basal state and the evolution of:

- 1) The knowledge of Braga's heritage, historical and cultural appeal for residents and visitors;
- 2) The perception of the role and impact of tourism in Braga's public life and economy;
- 3) The need for sustainability in local tourism;
- 4) Their expectations and conclusions on the offered activities;

Respondent Profile: age

Age wise:

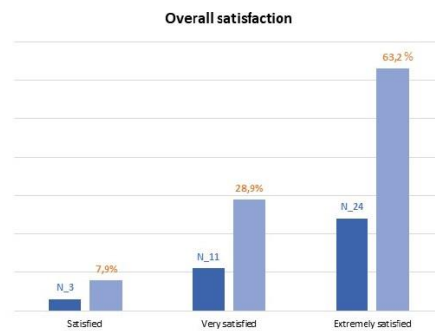
- 49% respondents are between 26 and 64 years old
- 35% between 18 and 25 years old
- the remaining 16% are over 64 years old.



Evaluation of the Experience: degree of satisfaction

- On a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 means extremely satisfied, the overall level of satisfaction with the experience is 4.55.
- 92.1% are very or extremely satisfied with the experience.

LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH THE EXPERIENCE (scale of 1 to 5)	
	4,55



Evaluation of experience, by category

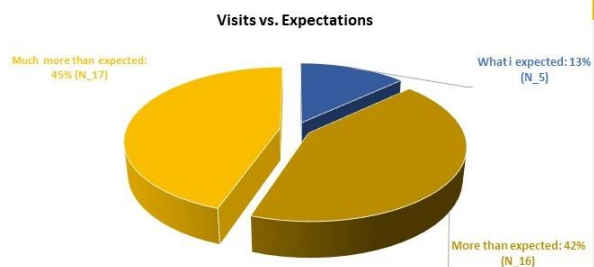
- In the evaluation of the experience by categories, the highest score was given to "gastronomy" (4.31), followed by "cultural knowledge acquired" (4.28) and "monuments" (4.03).

	Degree of Satisfaction (average)
Length of the visit	3,86
Attractiveness of the monuments/sites visited	4,03
Gastronomy	4,31
Cultural knowledge acquired during the visit	4,28



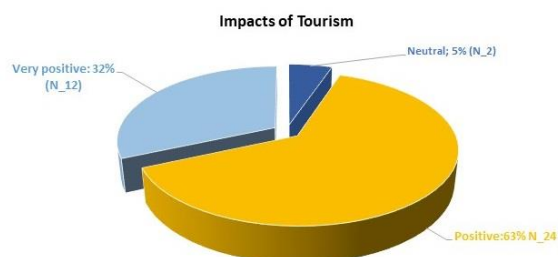
Experience compared to expectations

- Comparing the lived experience with the expectations prior to the visit, 87% of the respondents saw their expectations exceeded.

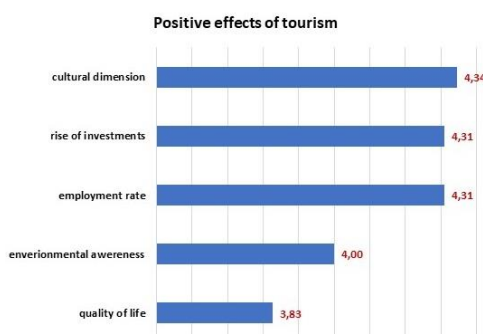


General perception of impacts of Tourism in Braga

- 95% of the respondents consider that Tourism has positive or very positive impacts on the City.



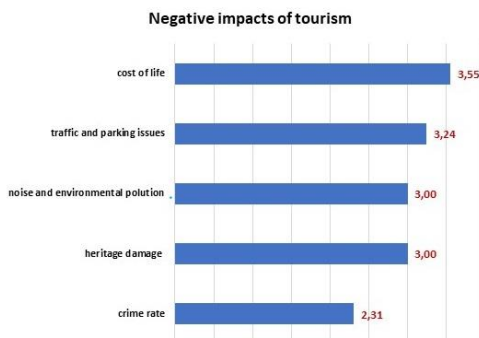
Perception of positive impacts



- The cultural dynamism of the city and the increase in investment were the most positive impacts considered.
- The degree of agreement on the positive impacts of Tourism was, in most cases, higher than 4, on a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 means totally agree.

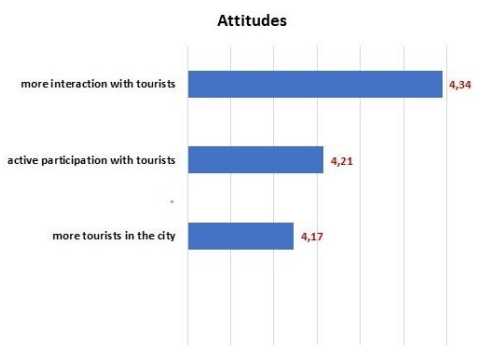


Perceived negative impacts



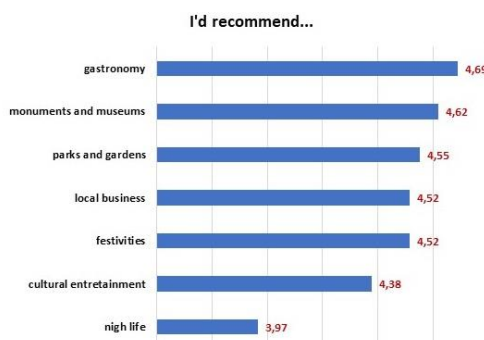
- **Increased cost of living and increased traffic and parking problems** were the only perceived negative impacts.
- The majority of respondents have no opinion or do not recognize any other type of negative impact.

Attitudes towards Tourism



- **The majority of respondents showed a very positive attitude towards Tourism**, with average values above 4 in each of the questions asked, on a scale of 1 to 5. Ou seja, a maioria dos residentes:
- I would like to interact more with tourists;
- to take a more active part in tourism planning and
- to have more tourists in Braga.


Recommendation of visit/experience to relatives or friends




- On a scale of 1 to 5, Gastronomy comes in first place in terms of recommendations, with an average value of 4.69, followed by Visits to monuments and museums (4.62).

Tips from residents on what a tourist cannot miss in Braga

TOP +
mentioned



1º Bom Jesus, N_10



2º Cathedral of Braga, N_5



3º Saint John's festivities N_4

Holly week (N_3); , Historical Centre (N_2); Francesinhas (N_2); White nights (N_2); Sanctuary of Sameiro (N_2); Mostery of Tibães (N_2); Guided tour experience (N_1); Municipal Stadium (N_1); Municipal Market (N_1); Chapel of Santa Marta (N_1); Central Avenue (N_1); Theatre (N_1).

The results also show that, in general, the visit exceeded the participant's expectations and that they valued the gastronomy, the monuments and the cultural knowledge acquired during the visit, thus highlighting the importance that this type of initiative may have in the promotion and dissemination of the heritage among residents. In fact, these results suggest that concrete actions such as this one can contribute to reinforce in the local community the feeling of identity and pride in heritage, as well as the commitment to preserve and disseminate it. It should be noted that, even though they are residents, most of them noted that they acquired knowledge about the heritage during the visit.



4. FRAME WORK FOR DELIVERY

The tourism in Braga is under the dependence of the Mayor's office and has political relevance in the structure of the municipality. Therefore, the Division for Economy and Tourism is directly responsible for the application of the Braga Integrated Action Plan, under the supervision of the Mayor's Office.

The Division of Economy and Tourism is integrated in a larger department, Culture and Tourism and it will coordinate the implementation of this IAP. Some actions planned are transversal and will be executed by other departments of the city, in an integrated approach.

This plan had the contribution of several stakeholders of the city, mainly from the Urbact Local Group (ULG). The private sector and other public institutions are our main partners and we can only achieve success if they are engaged within the implementation this plan.

Our ULG was involved in the stage of co-creation of the IAP, due to the high value chain of the main stakeholders. Therefore, we intend to keep alive our ULG even when the project lifecycle finishes, due to their precious contributions and active participation by the support given along this journey as a kind of DMO. The knowledge acquired through the URBACT - Tourism Friendly Cities network will support the tourism division in delivering actions and responsibilities as progress will be reported to the ULG members and to the Mayor's office.

General management and organization regarding implementation of actions/projects will be coordinated with project managers for attributing administrative tasks and responsibilities, as for promotion and information dissemination. Short/medium and long term goals are going to be set and monitored/scheduled in several stages, as for indicators for evaluation should be detailed to be operationalized/executed according to the strategy set in place by VisitBraga brand relating policies and budgets.

With the direct involvement of the Mayor and his Office in this plan, the city will embrace and implement this IAP.



5. RESOURCING

The City of Braga will use its own budget to fund the implementation of the Braga Integrated Action Plan for the sustainable development of tourism. Some actions listed in plan are already in course and so they do not need extra financial resources. The municipal budget and European Funds will provide the resources to fund these actions. The tourism tax will also provide extraordinary funds that will be allocated to some of the actions planned in this IAP.

The green and digital transition are main priorities of this IAP and are totally aligned with the policies of our National Government and the European Union. Consequently, we believe there will be plenty of opportunities to have the resources to develop this plan.

Braga will also receive structural funds from the next European Budget “Portugal 2030”, mainly European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+).

The National Recovery and Resilience Plan also will be important. Therefore, the European Funds will be fundamental for the interventions planned for the next years and some actions listed in this IAP will use these resources.



6. RISK ANALYSIS

Given the scope of actions provided in IAP, following the risks across the process of implementation are presented below:

TYPE OF RISK:	RISK DESCRIPTION:	RISK LEVEL:	RISK MANAGEMENT:
Timing	Given certain actions planned for organizing meetings, activities could not be achieved within the stipulated time and plan of action due to Covid measures set in place by the government.	High	Readjusting/rescheduling activities to ensure their realization.
TYPE OF RISK:	RISK DESCRIPTION:	RISK LEVEL:	RISK MANAGEMENT:
Behavioural	Lack of entrepreneurship skills and conflict between stakeholders in the ULG meetings.	Medium	Combine participation with applying key attitudes by building trust, understanding, respect, willingness.
TYPE OF RISK:	RISK DESCRIPTION:	RISK LEVEL:	RISK MANAGEMENT:
Operational	Changes or shifting responsibilities could cause interruption in the plan's implementation process.	Low	Planning in advanced by exploiting existing options and available human resources.
TYPE OF RISK:	RISK DESCRIPTION:	RISK LEVEL:	RISK MANAGEMENT:
Strategic	Understanding of the territory through the interpretation techniques for managing tourism.	Medium	Deliver considerable benefits on knowledge management and product development, as regarding research and following trends.
TYPE OF RISK:	RISK DESCRIPTION:	RISK LEVEL:	RISK MANAGEMENT:
Staff	Lack of staff in the tourism department.	Medium	More people should be hired in order to coordinate efforts and allocate technical staff to new responsibilities to set up new visions and goals.
TYPE OF RISK:	RISK DESCRIPTION:	RISK LEVEL:	RISK MANAGEMENT:
Technical	Lack of expertise regarding new operational models, and new business models.	Medium	Reconstruction of efforts by acknowledging the utility of certain human resources in the department, which can be involved in decision-making and reduce resistance to external pressures.



7. FUTURE ACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Sustainability is a long-term process that requires constant response and adaptation based on behaviour change that contributes significantly to the socio-economic, natural and cultural development of many cities and its surroundings. Therefore, we must be aware of the information and knowledge sharing among destinations to mitigate the social and economic impact of the pandemic and geopolitical conflicts. Consequently, Municipalities need to be in a continuous process of inquiry and deep listening in a regular basis focused in themes such as education, commerce and consumers, which we intend to sensitize by creating:

- Cooperation between different stakeholders in order to respond to consumer needs through a sustainable recovery strategy in a post-pandemic world;
- Support and encourage the tourism sector to develop new experiences and products, by developing new kits and tools that can provide positive impacts for creating interest for Braga as a healthy and safe destination;
- Promote the use for environmentally friendly transportation and visits to tourist attractions, by making future generations aware of its impacts at local level and social responsibility;
- Increase synergies with the industry of stakeholders such as tourism organizations and DMO's, local authorities, university and school tourism courses, attractions, transport and tour operators, sleeping facilities, urban planners, architects and civil society.

We strongly believe that our contribution with this document will give support to other European destinations, in order to rebuild a strong and balanced tourism sector considering the sustainable development by looking forward to make a difference towards a better world for future generations to come.



“Braga is committed to sustainability in all areas. Tourism is one of the most important economic sectors in our city and we believe the work of this network is fundamental for planning our future, as an innovative and sustainable city.”

Ricardo Rio, Mayor of Braga 2022

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