

QualityCoast Award 2016 Jury Report

Região OESTE
Portugal



Leiden, May 2016

Final Version

Coastal & Marine Union (EUCC)
Leiden – Barcelona – Klaipeda



QualityCoast is a programme of the Coastal & Marine Union (EUCC)
and partly funded by the European Commission

Date of Application:

December 2015

International QualityCoast Jury

Jury President: Prof F. Taveira Pinto (Portugal)
Vice President: Dr Anton Micallef (Malta)

Jury & Assessment Team

International:

Julia Vera Prieto (Spain)
Juan Pablo Pérez Gómez (Spain)
José Carlos Ferreira (Portugal)
Margarida Nunes (Portugal)
Xenia Loizidou (Cyprus)
Claudia Coman (Cyprus)
Steef Engelsman (Netherlands)
Menko Wiersema (Netherlands)
Gijs van Zonneveld (Netherlands)
Erwin van Liempd (Netherlands)
Suzanne van der Veecken (Netherlands)
Luz Paramio Martin (Portugal)

Leiden, the Netherlands:

Albert Salman
Hugo de Jong
Joana Mira Veiga

Signature on behalf of the QualityCoast Jury



Albert Salman, Secretary, International QualityCoast Jury

Contact details:

Coastal & Marine Union (EUCC)
c/o QualityCoast Team
P.O. Box 11232
NL-2301 EE Leiden, The Netherlands
www.eucc.net, www.qualitycoast.net
E-mail: secretariat@qualitycoast.info
Tel: +31 (0) 71 5122900

What is QualityCoast?

QualityCoast is a sustainability award for coastal communities, towns and islands. It is the only sustainable tourism destination award developed by local authorities themselves. It is the result of the European Union INTERREG project "Coastal Practice Network" (CoPraNet 2002-2005), led by the EUCC. The QualityCoast criteria have been developed to measure the success of Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) at local level, in connection to the EU Recommendation for ICZM.

People are increasingly interested in sustainability issues, also when selecting their holiday destination. Tourism eco-labels have become common features in travel brochures and websites. Whilst the Blue Flag specifically applies to individual beaches and marinas and Travelife and the Green Key to accommodations, QualityCoast is considering efforts for sustainable tourism in the whole territory of the coastal destination: towns, small regions and islands.

With the QualityCoast programme (www.qualitycoast.info), the Coastal & Marine Union - EUCC aims to establish an international network of coastal communities that share similar values on sustainable and socially responsible tourism, at the same time maintaining high standards in the quality of their tourism offer.

With the QualityCoast Award programme, EUCC aims to encourage tourism destinations for:

- a. their attractiveness for visitors interested in natural and cultural heritage, a clean environment, local identity, or business involvement in sustainable tourism;
- b. their policies re: sustainable tourism and any of the aspects mentioned under point a;
- c. a combination of a and b.

Since the inclusion of all Destinations Criteria of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) in the QualityCoast Award 2013 Application Form, QualityCoast is now open for applications from all continents.

"QualityCoast" has been registered by EUCC as a European Union trademark; the use of the name is restricted under European law.

QualityCoast meets European and global standards

The GSTC Destination Criteria (GSTC-D version 1.0), published 1 November 2013, have already been fully incorporated into the QualityCoast – QualityDestination 2015 Application Form.

In February 2013, the European Commission launched the European Tourism Indicators (ETIS) aiming to measure and enhance the sustainability of destinations across Europe. All ETIS-indicators have also been included into our Award Application Form, mostly for optional use.

QualityCoast certifies tourism sustainability policy

We offer reliable and transparent international Award programmes and a certification option for destinations with serious ambitions for a good sustainable tourism policy. The Awards and certifications are issued for periods of two years.

The programme also offers an assessment of the visible sustainability (performance, or sustainability status) in a broad range of categories and criteria, since tourists are not only interested in policies, strategies, ambitions and plans, but especially on how they experience a destination. The years of experience in this field allow the programme to inform the tourism sector and the public in a transparent way on policies and performance of ca. 1000 destinations, through the national and international ranking lists of the Global Sustainable Tourism Review (<http://www.qualitycoast.info/alldestinations.htm>). Ranking lists are topped by the QualityCoast Policy Award winners, which have been certified on both policy and status. Next are the destinations that received the QualityCoast BasiQ Award – they are mainly selected on the basis of their status and performance in environmental management, natural and cultural heritage, and local business involvement in sustainability.

The importance of QualityCoast for tourism sustainability

Participation of destination management organisations in the Award programme improves their awareness performance and achievements in an international context. The comparison with other awarded destinations provides the community with a good picture of its strengths and weaknesses. The international assessment and recommendations by our international Jury provide the local authority with a guidance to be considered in an agenda for improvement.

Communities join a network of like-minded communities and share their experiences and best practices in order to improve sustainability and social responsibility in tourism. Their performance in these fields is connected to international tourism marketing through certification under the supervision of an independent international Jury issuing the Awards.

Promotional benefits of participation in QualityCoast

EUCC carries out a marketing campaign together with the Awarded destinations to promote them as the most attractive destinations for visitors interested in nature and landscape, environment, and cultural identity and to highlight their performance in tourism quality and sustainability. The marketing campaign includes promotion at holiday fairs, media publicity, wide dissemination of brochures, promotion via our various web sites and social media. Awarded destinations are also recommended by a number of tour operators of TUI-The Netherlands, in their travel brochures.

The community's own international tourism marketing can profit from the status of QualityCoast destination. Experience in several countries learns that this will continue to generate media publicity nationally and internationally. Sustainability based marketing efforts will increase the "green profile" of the destination both externally and internally and this will help mainstreaming sustainability on local policy and decision making.

What is the QualityCoast Award?

The QualityCoast Award is an independent international certification programme for sustainable tourism of coastal and island destinations that:

- ❖ Has a good overall policy performance in sustainable tourism, mainly according to the Global Sustainable Tourism Council Destination Criteria, according to our Standard (<http://qualitycoast.info/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/qualitycoast-standard-2013.pdf>);
- ❖ Offers a sufficient touristic quality to visitors (mainly measured through the BasiQ indicator set);
- ❖ Provides transparent information to residents and visitors (partly through our communication campaigns);
- ❖ Planning for improvement (according to the Recommendations of the International Award Jury).

The Award Standard is publicly available in www.qualitycoast.info.

The Award programme is considering policy and performance criteria representing five different categories:

- ❖ Nature
- ❖ Environment
- ❖ Local Identity & Cultural Heritage
- ❖ Host Community & Safety
- ❖ Tourism & Business

Each criterion is measured through a combination of quantitative and qualitative indicators, on which the applicant must provide information regarding its entire territory.

What are the QualityCoast criteria?

See the titles of the 2015 Policy Award criteria on the page 8.

Definitions of the criteria and a complete list of indicators can be found in the QualityCoast Application Form 2015-'16.

The criteria and indicators will remain subject to annual revision, based upon European and global standards.

How is the QualityCoast Award attributed?

The QualityCoast Award is attributed on the basis of information to be provided by the applicant(s) through an Application Form. For many of the policy related indicators the applicant is invited to make a self-assessment by giving the destination a rate from 1 to 5 ("1" meaning absence of any relevant policy for the indicator, and "5" meaning full availability of policy concerned); and in the case of a rate of 4 or 5 to clarify the rate or give examples. For the GSTC-D indicators even in the case of self-assessment 1, 2 or 3, a clarification of the main obstacles for improvements is requested (not mandatory). It is useful to provide such clarification for the assessment team, but it is also useful for the annual improvement of the criteria.

The Application Form lists 88 Core indicators, and 127 optional ("Your Choice") indicators.

Core indicators: in principle all Core indicators need to be taken into consideration. However, destinations can ignore up to 25% of the GSTC-D indicators per criterion, if these are less relevant to them, indicating why they are less relevant. However, destinations are advised only to ignore GSTC-D indicators in case of low performance.

Your Choice indicators: applicants can choose on which of the Your Choice indicators they will provide information, with a minimum of one per criterion. This means that applicants will provide information on an additional 20 indicators only.

All information provided through the Application Form (including the self-assessment rates) is evaluated and assessed by the QC Secretariat. The Secretariat involves (or hires the services of) a local expert, as a 3rd party auditor. The assessment reports produced by Secretariat and local expert are then reviewed by a number of members of the International Award Jury. For each application, a Jury is designated composed of at least three members including: an independent local expert (who is aware of the applicant community); a national expert; and an international EUCC-expert. In order to ensure its independence, the Jury will work anonymously until the moment it is concluding its assessment.

The Secretariat and the Jury assign scores to all indicators, ranging from 1 to 5; "1" meaning absence of any quality (or no information provided for an indicator); and "5" indicating excellence for an indicator.

The score per criterion is based on the scores and weight factors of its indicators.

The average scores of all 20 criteria will then be calculated. This will be the final score. Applicants scoring '1' in two or more of the 20 criteria will not be eligible for the QualityCoast or QualityDestination Award, regardless the scores in the other criteria.

First time applicants with an average score no less than 5.7 (score threshold) will be granted an Award. Destinations applying for the 2nd time need score 5.8, for the 3rd time 5.9 and for the 4th time 6.0 (minimum).

The Jury will issue a report with a complete list of criteria scores and with suggestions for further improvement.

Some of the indicators measure the quality of policies; others measure the performance (policy implementation) or the visible sustainability status. This is why the QC team is able to produce indexes for sustainability policy and for sustainability status.

For successful applicants the Jury report as well as the above-mentioned indexes will be published.

No public reference will be made about unsuccessful applications.

QualityCoast Award levels

If the Award score threshold is met, the Jury will also check whether the average scores of the individual categories (Nature, Environment, Identity, Tourism & Business and Host Community & Safety) reach a minimum of 8.0 ("excellence").

The following Award levels are considered:

- Bronze, in case of excellence in one of the five categories;
- Silver, in case of excellence in two of the five categories;
- Gold, in case of excellence in three [but then no other category should be below 5.0] or four categories;
- Platinum, in case of excellence in all five categories.

Successful applicants become QualityCoast Destinations

Applicants who meet the score threshold are invited to the next tourism fair (ITB Berlin, Vakantiebeurs Utrecht, WTM London, etc.) or a National or Local Award Ceremony, where they will receive the Award Certificate, and an Award Flag. They can then participate in the joint marketing programme. Awarded Destinations can order extra flags and banners, which can be displayed throughout the destination's territory during 24 months.

18 Months after their application the Awarded destination will be encouraged to submit a renewed Application. The assessment of the new application will take into consideration the coherence between the improvements indicated in the previous one and the integration of the suggestions and the recommendations made by the Jury.

Renewal of the QualityCoast Award: important note

The QualityCoast Policy Award assessment will take into consideration that earlier scores related to sustainability performance reflect the state of knowledge and experience of previous periods. If no progress is demonstrated in certain indicators, this could result in lower scores. E.g. ambitions and implementation levels in renewable energy use are increasing with time; therefore a clear progress on this item should be shown within a period of four years. Another example is the assessment of satisfaction of the destination, which should be carried out in periods no longer than two or three years.

It is also important for applicants to realise that the QualityCoast Team is annually improving the indicator set in order to better cover up-to-date considerations about sustainability and relevant criteria, and to increase harmonisation with the global GSTC-D criteria and European ETIS indicators. This is why the score for particular criteria can change compared to two years ago even when the situation hasn't changed.

GENERAL ASSESSMENT & COMMENTS

Overall Remark

The QualityCoast Jury confirms that there is sufficient evidence to approve the QualityCoast Award 2015, and congratulates Região Oeste with this outstanding result.

This QualityCoast Award is a recognition for the high level of tourism quality and sustainability, in particular in terms of nature and landscape, local identity and cultural heritage.

QualityCoast Award: validity and promotion

The validity of this QualityCoast Award is two years (24 months), from the date indicated in the Award Certificate. You are entitled to display the QualityCoast flags, banners and flyers during this period, throughout your territory. The value of the QualityCoast Award for you as a sustainable tourism destination will highly increase if you are able to help make the QualityCoast Award better known among your inhabitants and visitors, through the flags, banners and flyers, and in your own publications, and website and social media.

GENERAL JURY RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to maintain and improve this high level, the Jury would like to make the following general recommendations to all QualityCoast Destinations:

QualityCoast Committee

The Jury recommends to establish a local QualityCoast Committee on order to provide a think-tank and discussion platform for sustainable tourism on the implementation of the QualityCoast Jury Recommendations. A local QualityCoast Committee could also help promote synergies between stakeholders and contribute to the prolongation of the QualityCoast Award within two years. Within a next QualityCoast application the Jury would like to see involvement of the Committee and also to see the work of the Committee reported.

Tasks of this Committee could be:

- To help establish a multi-year tourism strategy that is publicly available, is suited to its scale, that considers environmental, economic, social, cultural heritage, quality, health, and safety issues, and was developed with public participation;
- To help develop a system to monitor, publicly report, and respond to environmental, economic, social, and cultural heritage issues;
- To help monitor residents' aspirations, concerns, and satisfaction with tourism, to be regularly recorded and publicly reported.

We suggest that this Committee would represent:

- The local government (highest possible level),
- The local business sector;
- Independent expertise or NGO on nature conservation and management;
- Independent expertise or NGO on cultural heritage and landscape interests;
- Independent expertise or NGO on environmental issues.

SCORES for REGIÃO OESTE

	Overall (max. 10)	Sustainability Policy (max. 10)	Visible Sustainability (max. 10)
NATURE	8.0	8.5	7.3
1. NATURE & CONSERVATION	6.0	5.8	6.1
2. ACCESS, INFORMATION & EDUCATION	9.1	8.8	10.0
3. GREEN POLICIES	8.8	8.8	-
4. OPEN LANDSCAPES	9.2	9.0	9.2
NATURE GENERAL	8.4	8.4	-
ENVIRONMENT	8.7	8.8	8.6
5. ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT	8.6	8.4	9.0
6. WATERFRONTS & SAFE BATHING	9.0	-	9.0
7. WATER MANAGEMENT	8.6	8.8	7.7
8. SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY	8.2	9.0	7.2
9. WASTE & RECYCLING	7.8	8.9	3.6
10. ENERGY & CLIMATE MITIGATION	9.3	9.0	10.0
11. CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION	9.0	8.7	9.3
ENVIRONMENT GENERAL	9.0	9.0	-
IDENTITY & CULTURE	8.7	8.0	9.4
12. CULTURAL HERITAGE	8.5	8.0	9.4
13. TERRITORY & TRADITION	8.2	7.3	9.2
14. LOCAL IDENTITY	9.5	-	9.5
IDENTITY & CULTURE GENERAL	8.7	8.7	-
TOURISM & BUSINESS	8.8	8.9	8.0
15. DESTINATION MANAGEMENT	9.1	9.1	10.0
16. BUSINESS INVOLVEMENT	8.2	8.7	5.6
17. HOSPITALITY & SATISFACTION	8.9	8.6	9.4
TOURISM & BUSINESS GENERAL	9.0	9.0	-
HOST COMMUNITY & SAFETY	8.9	8.8	9.2
18. FREEDOM & JUSTICE	9.4	9.4	-
19. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION	9.1	8.8	9.3
20. HEALTH & SAFETY	8.9	8.8	9.0
HOST COMMUNITY & SAFETY GENERAL	7.3	7.3	-
FINAL POINTS & SCORE 2016	8.6	8.6	8.5
Number of categories score 8 or more	5		
QualityCoast Award type	PLATINUM		

Highlighted scores for TORRES VEDRAS (stronger aspects in red)

	Overall (max. 10)	Sustainability Policy (max. 10)	Visible Sustainability (max. 10)
NATURE	8.2	8.7	7.6
1. NATURE & CONSERVATION	6.5	5.8	6.6
2. ACCESS, INFORMATION & EDUCATION	9.5	9.4	10.0
3. GREEN POLICIES	8.8	8.8	-
4. OPEN LANDSCAPES	9.2	9.0	9.3
NATURE GENERAL	8.4	8.8	-
ENVIRONMENT	8.9	8.9	8.9
5. ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT	8.9	8.8	9.0
6. WATERFRONTS & SAFE BATHING	9.6	-	9.6
7. WATER MANAGEMENT	8.7	8.8	8.3
8. SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY	8.4	9.0	7.6
9. WASTE & RECYCLING	7.8	8.9	3.6
10. ENERGY & CLIMATE MITIGATION	9.3	9.0	10.0
11. CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION	9.0	8.7	9.3
ENVIRONMENT GENERAL	9.0	9.0	-
IDENTITY & CULTURE	8.9	8.4	9.4
12. CULTURAL HERITAGE	8.9	8.7	9.4
13. TERRITORY & TRADITION	8.2	7.3	9.2
14. LOCAL IDENTITY	9.5	-	9.5
IDENTITY & CULTURE GENERAL	8.7	8.7	-
TOURISM & BUSINESS	8.9	8.9	9.0
15. DESTINATION MANAGEMENT	9.1	9.1	10.0
16. BUSINESS INVOLVEMENT	8.6	8.7	8.0
17. HOSPITALITY & SATISFACTION	8.9	8.6	9.4
TOURISM & BUSINESS GENERAL	9.0	9.0	-
HOST COMMUNITY & SAFETY	8.9	8.8	9.3
18. FREEDOM & JUSTICE	9.4	9.4	-
19. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION	9.1	8.8	9.3
20. HEALTH & SAFETY	9.0	8.8	9.3
HOST COMMUNITY & SAFETY GENERAL	7.3	7.3	-
FINAL POINTS & SCORE 2016	8.8	8.7	8.7
Number of categories score 8 or more	5		
QualityCoast Award type	PLATINUM		

DETAILED COMMENTS & OPINIONS

NATURE

Considerations of weak and strong points

- **Strong points**

- This predominantly rural and very well preserved territory still maintains a set of significant natural values, and there are many different kind of protected nature areas: Parque Natural de Aire e Candeeiros - (Natural Park); Serra do Montejunto - (Natura 2000) site with code PTCON0048; Paisagem Protegida da Serra de Montejunto (Protected Landscape):1.493 ha; Paul da Tornada (Local nature reserve; Peniche/Santa Cruz -Rede Natura 2000 with code PTCON0056 and a total area of 8438 ha (2805 land surface + 5633 marine); São Bartolomeu Hill; Bird Site Ilhas Berlenga-Natura 2000 with code PTZPE0009 and total area of 9560,42 ha (99,68 land surface + 9460,74 marine; 99,68 ha in Peniche Municipality); Berlengas Natural Reserve; Berlengas Biosphere Reserve; Sintra-Cascais-Natura 2000 site with code PT CON 0008. Although it is not a high % of the territory, the sites that are protected are very important at nacional level. It is considered, not only the quality of the sites that are referred above but also the natural area (Reserva Ecológica Nacional-REN) that are protected by national law, at local level.

- Recently, the Municipality of Torres Vedras is to delimit a marine protected area, which aims to implement at the end of 2016.

- Existence of the "Life Berlengas" project, which proposes a set of management measures of the Berlengas Nature Reserve, to control introduced invasive species.

- The municipalities of Torres Vedras and Lourinhã are implementing an educational project and awareness and action campaigns to increase literacy on biodiversity and nature conservation issues among its inhabitants and visitors.

- The municipalities of Torres Vedras and Lourinhã are developing an Educational Exhibition Tour and a group of mobilizing agents - The Ambassadors for Biodiversity. Goals: a) Sensitize the young school population for the conservation of nature and biodiversity, focusing on the Natura 2000 network. B) Protecting the environment and promoting efficient use of natural resources, especially in areas of high coastal biodiversity, which include Natura 2000 sites.

- The opportunity to walk and visit nature sites along this wild coastal line is a strong point of this Region and it is noteworthy the range of different types of visitation that are available, particularly environmental interpretation Footpaths (some according to the norms of the camping grounds and Mountaineering Federation of Portugal), activities to promote the historical, cultural and biological heritage of the region (some of them guided by qualified technicians), sensitizing participants to the conservation and preservation of nature, guided tours to the historic towns, as well as thematic tours concerning a number of specific areas, some of them provided by private companies. These companies offer tours and trips of environmental interpretation in Portuguese, English and Spanish languages; some visits include a component of observation of the landscape, natural and human. The Jury also highlights the pedestrian trail "Grande Rota da Rede Natura do Oeste", promoted by Peniche and Torres Vedras, which provides bilingual information (English and Portuguese).

- **Issues for improvement**

Availability of information and interpretation of the natural surroundings can still be improved, as well as visitor behavior when visiting nature sensitive sites in various languages.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE JURY

The applicant is advised:

- to improve interpretative information about key natural sites, e.g. in the format of a flyer (or app) describing the walk; and info panels, preferably in various languages;
- to include recommendations or guidelines for visitor behavior to minimize the impact of visitors on these key sites.
- Any new land occupation related to tourism or not, is subject to national regulation and land use plans. Any new touristic occupation with relevant impact on environment is controlled and must comply with a set of environmental rules before it is licensed by the authorities. Despite this, local authorities can be more and more demanding towards the adoption of better environmental practices as a counterpart. Also higher efforts must be done in order to require from tourism enterprises to have an environmental management plan. These schemes should include measures concerning the use of autochthonous vegetation, sustainable watering, and avoidance of the introduction of invasive species.

ENVIRONMENT

Considerations of weak and strong points

- **Strong points**
 - Torres Vedras has a climate change local strategy.
 - Within the framework of Portugal 2020 the municipalities of Torres Vedras and Lourinhã have created the ECOMARES Coastal Development Association. Also Peniche and Nazaré municipalities have created the Western Coast Action Group.
 - The implementation of the Local Agenda 21 of Torres Vedras.
 - The urban regeneration programme *Torres ao Centro* was awarded with an honorable mention in the 7th edition of The Green Project Awards (2015).
 - Torres Vedras was recognized with the European Green Leaf Award granted by the European Commission, which highlights the great efforts of the municipality to achieve better environmental outcomes, especially with regards to mobility strategy, biodiversity conservation efforts and water management.
 - The Municipality of Torres Vedras has joined in December 2010, the Covenant of Mayors ADAPT, an initiative of the European Commission's Directorate General Climate Action. It is launched in the context of the EU Adaptation Strategy and is Implemented Within the Covenant of Mayors, the flagship European initiative for cities to reduce their greenhouse emissions. The Covenant signatories have to reduce their CO2 emissions by more than 20% by 2020 through energy efficiency and renewable energy actions.
 - Região Oeste is characterized by having a coastline of rocky cliffs, which punctuate some small stretches of sandy areas. Thus, the beaches in this area are beaches backed by rocky cliffs, located in the terminal portion of small coastal streams. Many of these beaches have small dimensions and are not easy accessible but with an extremely wild beauty and high environmental quality. Many of these beaches have been awarded with Blue Flag.
 - Very high % of the bathing water are excellent quality.
 - All the beaches awarded with Blue Flag are equipped with facilities to separate waste.

- **Issues for improvement**
 - The rate of waste recycling and composting still are very low – only 9%
 - There are many pig farm unities in this region that cause problems related with theirs waste treatments. A better control of the illegal discharges is desirable.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE JURY

- This is an application that involves 12 municipalities, and the Jury would like to see stronger involvement from each of the municipalities of Região Oeste, presenting some concrete sustainability measures implemented in the next two years.
- Identify and monitor the key environmental issues connected with the peak tourism season, to minimise negative effects of tourism on the local community on the touristic attractiveness (water shortage, sanitation, waste, marine litter and other types of pollution, energy, etc.), and improve the system to adress them.
- The destination is advised to create an effective system to promote energy conservation, measure energy consumption and reduce reliance on fossil fuels. The destination should encourage tourism-related enterprises to save energy and use renewable energy technologies.

IDENTITY & CULTURE

Considerations of weak and strong points

- **Strong points**
 - Região Oeste corresponds to a territory characterized by the existence of small scattered urban settlements as well as rural areas with an extremely important extensive agricultural activity. It is therefore a territory in which the urban occupation has little expression, with large open landscapes, although strongly compartmentalized with green hedges to allow extensive ancestral agricultural practices, which corresponds to a traditional landscape, predominantly rural and very well preserved.
 - Rich cultural heritage: important historical and archeological sites, museums, annual festivals and public events that have their roots in local culture and history.
 - The Brandy DOC of Lourinhã only has parallel at European level in the French spirits of the regions of the "Cognac" na "Aemagnac"
- **Issues for improvement**
 - Improve interpretation and codes of behavior for visits to culturally sensitive sites, in order to minimize visitor impact and maximize enjoyment.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE JURY

- Continue to improve the trails in order to constitute a real network, linking this beautiful coast and also the rural landscape and urban settlements with cultural interest, as a mean to promote a sustainable tourism and developing local economy. Do not forget that these trails should be planned with local communities and stakeholders, and need scientific support. This will lead to adequate infrastructures that will stay for decades, protecting environment and able to responds to local needs and to local knowledge.

TOURISM & BUSINESS

Considerations of weak and strong points

- **Strong points**
 - This coastal region is the scene of many sports events linked to surfing. International competitions are organized in the West beaches that are known for their exceptional qualities for this modality. In 2011 Garrett McNamara surfed on a wave 30 meters high in Nazaré and this image has crossed the world. To link sustainability to the organization of the events, as one of its brands, is an effective way to increase awareness and to sensitize young people for the environment and sea protection. Such is the case of some actions that are taken *in Sumol Summer Fest* (Mafra-Ericeira), *Ocean Spirit Festival* (Torres Vedras) and *World Cup of Surf* (Peniche)
 - Good initiatives about social inclusion at the public level – Torres Vedras Monitoring Program for Heritage, Program ISA (Elderly Healthy and Active).
- **Issues for improvement**
 - An overall sustainable tourism strategy / action plan is lacking.
 - Local Business sector involvement in sustainability issues is very limited.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE JURY

- To create an up-to-date, publicly available inventory of its key tourism assets and attractions including natural, historical, archaeological, religious, spiritual, and cultural sites.
- To prepare a multi-year strategy for sustainable tourism that is publicly available, is suited to its scale and considers environmental, economic, social, cultural heritage, quality, health and safety issues, developed with public participation.
- To create an effective organization, department, group, or committee responsible for a coordinated approach to sustainable tourism. This group has defined responsibilities for the management of environmental, economic, social, and cultural heritage issues.
- Considering green energy and energy conservation, it is recommended to prepare a common action involving the municipalities, business sector and residents, which has advantages in cost efficiency, effectiveness and publicity.
- The municipality is advised to monitor how many (%) tourism enterprises are involved in the above actions, apart from those having a broadly recognized eco-label (Travelife, Green Key).

HOST COMMUNITY & SAFETY

Considerations of weak and strong points

- **Strong points:**
 - It is a safe and quiet community and territory, comprising small villages and rural landscapes, that welcomes visitors very well.
- **Issues for improvement**
 - Although the problems related to freedom and justice are pretty much under control in Portugal and there are telephone lines to support victims, the local authorities should keep always these things under surveillance and preview mechanisms to facilitate claims and providing support and a quick response in case problems emerge.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE JURY

- To regularly monitor to what extent visitors are satisfied with their overall experience in the destination as a whole, and to what extent they are aware of sustainability efforts in the destination. This could perhaps be done together with or through tourist accommodations.
- To monitor residents' aspirations, concerns and satisfaction with tourism, to be regularly recorded and publicly reported.

General remarks of the Jury regarding application:

Despit Região Oeste being a strong applicant, all the municipalities are invited to contribute equally to it. As a general remark the jury considers that there must be a better and clear commitment by all the municipalities involved in order to maintain the QualityCoast Award Level.