

A Work Project, presented as part of the requirements for the Award of a Masters Degree in Management from the NOVA – School of Business and Economics.

**MANAGEMENT OF COSTA VICENTINA AS TOURISM DESTINATION FOR
FOREIGN SURF PRACTITIONERS AND BEGINNERS**

MARIA LEONOR DA FONTOURA DA CRUZ FERNANDES #1176

A Project carried on the Field Lab of Tourism Management, under the supervision of:

Prof. Sonia Dahab

JANUARY 6, 2014

Index

Abstract.....	2
Purpose of the Project and Methodology	3
Macro Environment and Trends affecting Tourism	3
The sport of Surfing in Portugal	5
Demand.....	6
Supply.....	10
Surf Camps – Description and current situation.....	14
Competition and Competitive Environment	16
SWOT analysis of the destination Costa Vicentina for foreign surfers	16
Vision	18
Goals and Strategy.....	19
Conclusions	24
Acknowledgements and References	26

Abstract

Being a country with such remarkable conditions for tourism activity and a strong contribution of this sector to the national GDP, Portugal, has also been growing fast in the attraction of Surf practitioners and beginners from all over the world, due to its amazing conditions for all surf levels and to its large extent of shore. Costa Vicentina is an example of how surf can be an attraction to visitants. In this project I will analyze this region, study the segment “foreign surf beginners and practitioners”, and we will see how Costa Vicentina can be improved in terms of tourism destination management, regarding this specific target.

Key Words: Surf, Costa Vicentina, Foreign, Tourism.

Purpose of the Project and Methodology

This project was developed within the field lab of Tourism Management with research done in a group. During more than half of the semester I worked with my colleague Madalena Costa Duarte and together we collected data, developed surveys and obtained some important findings. Based on those results each of us developed a strategy for a different target: Madalena for Portuguese surfers and myself for foreign ones. This report covers three key questions: **Where are we now?** (situation assessment), **Where do we want to be?** (vision and goals) and **How can we go from where we are to where we want to be?** (strategic actions). For the situation assessment, we developed a deep study on (1) **trends and changes affecting surf tourism at Costa Vicentina**, (2) **Demand: Current and potential foreign tourists at Costa Vicentina**, (3) **Supply: Network of stakeholders in Costa Vicentina tourism industry** and (4) **Brief overview on Competition**. All this was then put together and assessed in a **SWOT analysis**, which was the basis for the construction of the **Vision, Goals and Strategic Actions**. These ones intend to fulfill any possible gap and take existing opportunities in Costa Vicentina tourism regarding this specific target. The “client” of this project is a DMO – a Destination Management Organization – which shall use this project as a reference. In the case of Costa Vicentina, it could be *Turismo de Portugal* or *Turismo do Algarve*, since there is no DMO exclusively for this region. What I intend to propose is a public-private partnership between the DMO and local stakeholders – idea of *coopetition* – to compete in a sustainable way, that will improve the destination as a whole.

Macro Environment and Trends affecting Tourism

Despite the crisis that Portugal is going through, tourism is growing considerablyⁱ, namely in terms of receipts: the country received 7,696 million international tourist arrivals in 2012

and having received 11,056 million US\$ in international tourist receipts, which was 2,4% of Europe receipts (see appendix 1). In terms of economic impact, in 2012 tourism had a direct contribution to Portuguese GDP of 5,7% and a 7% direct contribution¹ to employment. The numbersⁱⁱ are still more remarkable considering total contribution to GDP and employment in 2012, which are, respectively, 15,9% and 18,5% (see Appendix 2). The countries that most contribute to Portugal in terms of tourist visits and revenues are UK, Germany, France and Spainⁱⁱⁱ.

Having tourism such a high impact in the Portuguese economy, it is important to scan the macro environment and trends affecting tourism in general. Key trends and changes in economics, socio-demographics, ecology and technology have an impact on tourism and its implications can be seen in the table below.

Economics	Socio-Demographics
<p>Europe is emerging from the recession with a GDP growth rate of 0,3% in the last quarter of 2013^{iv}</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential increase of tourism demand and supply in Europe • Higher purchasing power of European tourists <p>Emerging economies are growing much faster than Europe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These economies are becoming important markets and eventually important tourist destination competitors <p>Portuguese economy (GDP) is expected to drop 2% in 2013, followed by a 0,3% increase in 2014, with exports playing a key role on it^v</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing the competitiveness of a unique resource that Portugal holds – the coast – through tourism can be valuable for the recovery of the Portuguese economy 	<p>European population represents roughly 12% of the world population and it is expected to decline^{vi}</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European tourists represent a significant market potentially declining in the medium-long term <p>European population is getting older^{vii}</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More efforts are required to attract the decreasing group age of young adults <p>Changes in social values call for higher social and environmental sustainability^{viii}</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which pressures tourist destination managers to incorporate these two dimensions in their offers <p>The value for unique real experiences is increasing^{ix}</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumers will look for authentic holiday destinations and experiences with more interaction with local communities • The two trends above open together a niche for adventure travel which offers diverse new experiences, while helping destinations to protect local communities and the environment in a responsible and sustainable manner

¹ Total contribution includes “wider impacts” on the economy, such as investment spending, Government ‘collective’ spending, domestic purchases of goods and services by sectors dealing directly with tourists.

Ecology	Technology
<p>Changing climate and weather patterns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate changes have a major impact on beach and nature tourism <p>Mankind consumes more than 50% more natural resources than the Earth Ecosystems can replenish^x</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This threatens the sustainability of tourism, namely tourism whose main attraction is made of natural resources. <p>Sea level will continue to rise in more than 95% of the ocean area^{xi}</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which is a major threat for the subsistence of coast destinations in the long-term. <p>Increased focus on sustainability as seen in the Socio-Demographics</p>	<p>Social media platforms have been growing dramatically and play now a central role before, after and during trips, with about 40% of travelers being influenced by social network comments on planning their travels, and 50% basing their travel plans on other people's reviews and experience^{xii}</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In promotion, Travel bloggers (“valuable independent voices” writing about destinations) are becoming more important Access to internet in various points at the destination may be a plus Coordination of SM may be needed

Table 1 - Scanning the Macro environment

The sport of Surfing in Portugal

Surfing has become a fashion trend and is evolving into a billion-dollar market, which is expected to reach \$13.24 billion by the year 2017^{xiii}. The number of surfers worldwide increased from 26 million to 35 million between 2001 and 2011 and continues to expand^{xiv}. According to *Ministério da Economia e do Emprego*, surf tourism² is a niche market within the segment of nautical tourism³. This segment is expected to grow 3% to 4% annually in the next years^{xv}, with nautical sports themselves representing 43% of the overall nautical tourism and being expected to increase as well^{xvi}. In the last ten years^{xvii}, surf has grown exponentially due to several aspects: the spread of surf brands across the country; the boom of surf schools, allowing surf to reach an increasing number of people; the return of Portugal to the World Tour (WCT) in 2009, which increased Portugal's visibility as a surf destination; and the entry of a Portuguese surfer – Tiago Pires – in the World Tour for the

² Surf tourism involves people travelling to either domestic locations for a period of time not exceeding 6 months, or international locations for a period of time not exceeding 12 months, and where the active participation in the sport of surfing is the primary motivation for destination selection. *Definition from Fluker (2003:7)*

³ Nautical tourism involves 2 dimensions: Nautical of Entertainment (nautical sports or nautical charter as a form of leisure or entertainment) and Sport Nautical (trips realized with the purpose of participating in nautical sportive competitions.) *Source: Turismo de Portugal (THR 2006, 10 produtos estratégicos para o desenvolvimento do turismo em Portugal.)*

first time in 2008. Every year, Portugal attracts thousands of foreign surf lovers and increases its visibility all over the world, being host of events like national and international championships (see appendix 3). Nazaré is known by the size of its waves (“biggest wave of the world” surfed by McNamara in January 2013) and Ericeira has been classified as “the second surf world reserve” by Save the Waves Coalitions (SWC) in 2011 (see appendix 4).

Moreover, the development of nautical tourism with special emphasis given to surf is one of the ten strategic actions of PENT (*Plano Estratégico Nacional do Turismo, Turismo de Portugal*) 2013-2015, namely in Algarve. Algarve as a surf destination is considered to be in the developing stage of the Tourism Area Life Cycle (see appendix 5).^{xviii}

Demand

In terms of current demand, the profile of a Costa Vicentina tourist^{xix} is mainly 20-39 years old. More than 50% are Portuguese (see appendix 6), and the most common international nationalities British, Spanish, German and Netherlands.^{xx}

In appendix 7, besides seeing the referred nationalities of passengers that arrive to Faro airport, it is possible to see the difference of arrivals number on summer (more than 800.000 arrivals per month in July and August) and on winter (less than 200.000 arrivals per month from November to February). This, together with the reports of touristic movement at Costa Vicentina^{xxi} which show the same kind of contrast in numbers from summer to winter, are indicators of seasonality in the region’s international tourism. Further on we will return to this topic.

A quantitative research was conducted with the purpose of characterizing the demand and its behaviour at the destination Costa Vicentina. This included 150 (from which only 90 answers were complete) questionnaires conducted online and in person in Peniche (during

the World Championship Tour), in Cascais/Carcavelos (during the World Qualifying Series), and at Costa Vicentina. A filter guaranteed that all respondents were foreign and had already practiced surf at least once.

Besides this survey, it was conducted a semi-qualitative research⁴ whose answers were post-coded and grouped into categories thereafter. The purpose of this second type of research was to understand the perceptions⁵ that the target has of the Costa Vicentina region and to understand which factors are important for them when considering a surf destination and a “perfect surfing” (the complete questionnaire can be seen in appendix 8). The sample profile (see appendix 9) is summarized in the following table:

Nationality		Surf Level	
German	24%	Beginner	40%
British	11%	Average	39%
French	10%	Advanced	20%
Australian	9%	Pro	1%
Spanish	7%	Practiced surf at Portugal	
Others (from Europe)	27%	Yes	88%
Others (rest of the world)	12%	No	12%
Age		Heard about Costa Vicentina	
18-25	42%	Yes	56%
25-35	50%	No	44%
35-45	8%	Practiced surf at Costa Vicentina/Sagres?	
Sex		Yes	28%
Female	28%	No	72%
Male	72%		
Level of Education			
High School	18%		
Bachelor	33%		
Master	42%		
Other	7%		

Table 2 – Sample Profile

All the data was analysed with the statistic tool pack SPSS and three types of hypothesis tests were conducted: proportion, mean and correlation. With a confidence level of 95%, statistical evidence was found to support the conclusions below (see the complete results in the appendix 10).

⁴ Open questions made in person to 90 foreign surfers

⁵ *Perceptions reflected by the associations held in consumer memory.* (Keller: 1993)

Current and Potential Demand: Despite more than 45% of foreign surfers had already heard about Costa Vicentina/Sagres (p-value 0,0222), only 20% has already been there practicing surf (p-value 0,0384). From the surfers that have already practiced surf at Costa Vicentina, more than 50% classify their experience at Costa Vicentina as “Good” (p-value 0,0294), more than 20% classify it as “Excellent” (p-value 0,0023) and more than 24% repeated the destination a few times (p-value 0,0384). Finally, on average, foreign surfers are 78% likely to recommend Costa Vicentina/Sagres to other people (p-value 0,000). This induces that the destination performs well and has potential to expand to much more foreign surfers.

Seasonality: More than 43% of foreign surfers go to Costa Vicentina/Sagres on summer (p-value 0,0427) and more than 20% go on spring (p-value 0,0294). Besides these numbers, there is evidence of seasonality since the region is quite empty during summer months. At this point, it is important to note a “contradiction”: one of the virtues of surf tourism is its low-seasonality or even anti-seasonality nature for some consumer segments, and this goes against the existing seasonality. The reason for the current situation is the fact that almost everything is closed during the low season at Costa Vicentina (restaurants, accommodations, and other supporting stakeholders). But, since the low season is a good surf season, and more, it is during the equinoxes that average, advanced, and professional surfers can enjoy the better wave conditions (more and bigger waves), the seasonality reduction will be an important aspect of the tourism strategy to be developed.

Length of stay and Expenditure: The average length of stay at Costa Vicentina by foreign surfers is 19 days (p-value 0,00), with more than 30% usually staying about one week (p-value 0,0192), more than 25% staying one month or more (p-value 0,0158) and 17% staying one weekend (p-value 0,0384). On average, foreign surfers spend 50€ per day in

each stay (p-value 0,000). This value is divided by the daily spending in food, transports, accommodation, material and also a little amount of money to have fun at bars, discos, etc.

Travel Companion, Transports and Accommodation: More than 75% of foreign surfers go to Costa Vicentina/Sagres with friends (p-value 0,0244). More than 38% rent a car to go to Costa Vicentina/Sagres (p-value 0,0256) and more than 30% go in their own car/caravan (p-value 0,0192). More than 24% of foreign surfers stay in a surf camp (p-value 0,0384), more than 20% stay in campsite (p-value 0,0294) and more than 20% rent an apartment (p-value 0,0294).

Awareness: As it was already referred, only 45% of foreign surfers have already heard of Costa Vicentina, having only 20% actually been there. Even more significant is the fact that the majority of the respondents that recognized Costa Vicentina did it through Sagres. They know Sagres but they don't know the name Costa Vicentina. Considering this, one of the main conclusions regarding the target is the lack of awareness. Since, as we also saw, this destination has a high potential for this target, something has to be done to increase awareness, in order to attract more foreign surfers to Costa Vicentina. We can also take advantage of the awareness about Sagres (connecting the name Costa Vicentina with Sagres). From the foreign surfers that have already been in Costa Vicentina, more than 63% developed awareness of the destination through family and friends (p-value 0,0384).

Perceptions about Costa Vicentina⁶: More than 25% of foreign surfers associate Costa Vicentina to Sagres (p-value of 0,0228) and more than 12%, associate it to waves (p-value of 0,0301). More than 12% of foreign surfers heard of Costa Vicentina/Sagres but have never been there (p-value of 0,0301). Other interesting associations regarding Costa

⁶ See complete results of semi-qualitative research in appendix 11

Vicentina/Sagres that are shared by more than 8% of foreign surfers are cliffs, beauty, pure and natural and beer⁷ (p-value of 0,0465).

Factors considered when planning a surf destination: More than 56% of foreign surfers, consider waves when choosing a surf destination (p-value of 0,0336), more than 26% consider weather (p-value of 0,0336) and more than 26% consider prices and budget (p-value of 0,0262). Other factors considered are crowd - shared by more than 8% of foreign surfers (p-value of 0,0314) - and accessibility - shared by more than 6% of foreign surfers (p-value of 0,0207). Other factors referred a few times are quality of surf conditions, nature and landscapes, accommodations, surrounding infrastructures, wind, season, water temperature, culture, food and restaurants, fit for beginners, etc.

Supply

The Region – Costa Vicentina

The region under study includes 2 municipalities and 6 “freguesias” in the district of Algarve: from Odeceixe to Sagres. It includes about 60 km of shore and 33 beaches.

District	Municipalities	Freguesias
Faro	Aljezur	Odeceixe Rogil Aljezur Bordeira
	Vila do Bispo	Vila do Bispo Sagres

Table 3 - Territory of Costa Vicentina

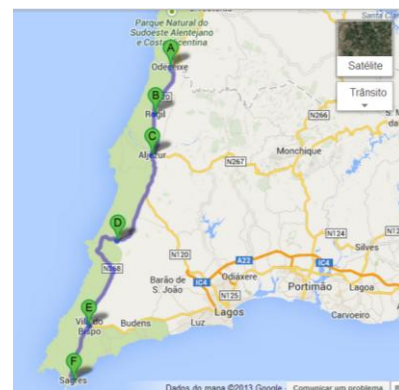


Image 1 - Map of Costa Vicentina

Network of services in Costa Vicentina tourism

The tourism industry constitutes a network of inter-related sectors in which different services are provided together to the consumer. In the figure below, we can see the network of sectors^{xxiii} involved in Costa Vicentina tourism industry, which summarizes information

⁷ Perceptions about the destination Sagres

collected at Costa Vicentina and provided by Municipalities of Aljezur and Vila do Bispo and also from the *Vicentina – Associação para o Desenvolvimento do Sudoeste* association and the *Rota Vicentina* coordination.

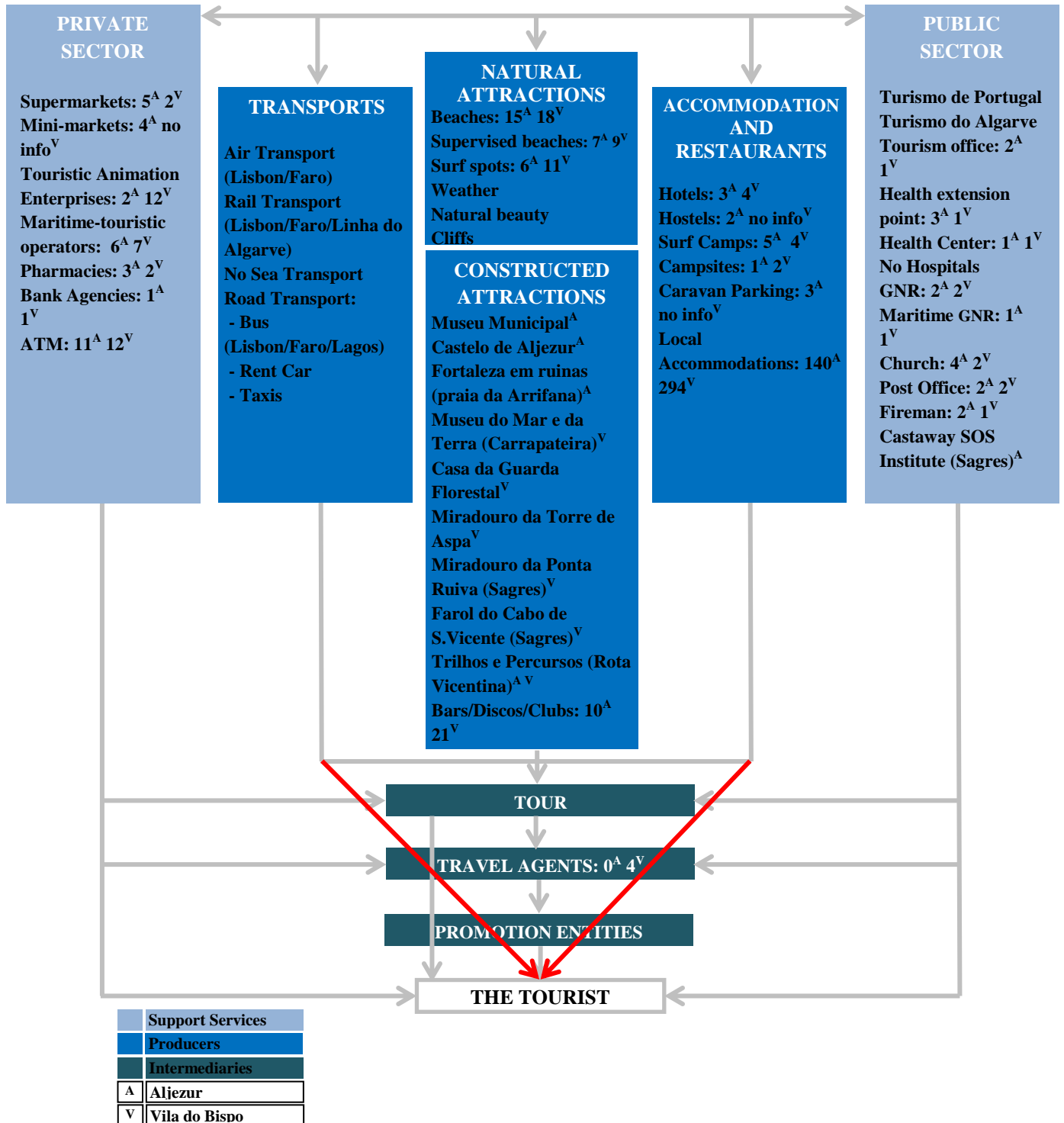


Image 2 - The Tourism Network at Costa Vicentina

As it is possible to see, the “supportive services” comprise the private sector - which includes complementary activities in the tourism animation (such as surf classes, adventure sports, etc.), and other services the tourist may need (supermarkets, ATM, pharmacies, etc.) – and the public sector, which includes services as health and security. This sector also includes DMOs⁸ that manage the touristic destination. Besides public DMOs (*Turismo de Portugal* and *Turismo do Algarve*), there are also some public-private associations of touristic development (and not only): AESCV (*Associação de Escolas de Surf da Costa Vicentina*), *Rota Vicentina*, *Casas Brancas*, *Promosagres* and *Vicentina* association (see appendix 12).

The “final product” provided to the consumer includes carriers, accommodations and restaurants. To arrive to Costa Vicentina, the foreign tourist may rent a car (which is the most used transport, as we could see in the research) or can catch a bus from Lisbon or Faro. There are several ways to access these cities from outside of the country: by air (see appendix 13), by train (see appendix 14) or by bus (see appendix 15). Once in Costa Vicentina, the foreign tourist has a huge number of choices in terms of accommodation. Most part of the target – foreign surf tourists – will choose a Surf Camp, a type of accommodation that will be better explained in the next section.

The most important part of the “final product” is what incentivizes the tourist to come to Costa Vicentina, which can be natural or constructed attractions. The most important ones are natural attractions, which include beaches and surf conditions (an intangible resource). The 33 beaches of this region are characterized by its natural beauty, its purity and its wildness (only half of them are supervised). At Costa Vicentina, 17 beaches are considered surf spots^{xxiii} (see appendix 16) and those beaches are close to each other and are diversified

⁸ DMO: Destination Management Organization

in terms of wind conditions. An advantage of Costa Vicentina is that it has different beaches with conditions for different levels of surf practice and a high choice for surfers. In what concerns to surf conditions, Costa Vicentina is considered to have a perfect sand, waves with right and left directions, very low crowd and spots suitable for all difficulty levels (see complete classification of Costa surf conditions at appendix 17).

Besides the natural ones, there are a few constructed attractions that exist to improve the experience of the tourist. Some of them are related to natural attractions (as viewpoints and trails to explore) and will make the tourist take more advantage of the nature contact; while others are related to culture (museums and ancient buildings) or fun (bars/discos).

One important intermediary which was not referred yet is the group of people/entities that conduct the promotion and disclosure of Costa Vicentina. They go from accommodations and restaurants to public tourism organizations, and are considered an intermediary because it is through them that most part of the tourists becomes aware of Costa Vicentina and is attracted to visit it. Currently, what the region has in terms of promotion are websites (in several languages) and some facebook pages: promoting Sagres, *Rota Vicentina*, Algarve (in general) and the “Discoveries Route⁹”. Public-private organizations as *Rota Vicentina* develop direct promotion in Portugal and in some foreign countries, participating in markets, events, conferences and organizing press trips. The countries covered are the UK, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Germany, Spain, Ireland, Brazil, Austria, the USA, Italy, Norway, Denmark and Finland. The municipalities of Costa Vicentina have also some actions of promotion, such as the participation of several beaches in the competition “7 Maravilhas – Praias de Portugal¹⁰”, having Odeceixe beach been elected as one of the 7

⁹ <http://www.descubriter.com/pt/>

¹⁰ <http://www.7maravilhas.sapo.pt/#/praias-de-portugal/>

wonders. Besides this, the municipalities use to promote their beaches by participating in tourism exhibitions such as the BTL¹¹.

Surf Camps – Description and current situation

As we could see in demand research results, a considerable number of foreign surfers stay in a surf camp when coming to Costa Vicentina. A surf camp is not just an accommodation, but an offer of the whole surf experience: a complete surf trip with almost everything included. Usually surf camp guests stay there for one or two weeks: they have theoretical and practical surf classes for their level every day, they receive personal feedback at the end of each day and they live in a surf house (or in a tent at the surf camp) with other people doing the surf camp and with whom they share all this experience. During our field research at Costa Vicentina, we visited several surf houses/camps where we conducted a questionnaire (see appendix 18) in order to collect the following information: usually these houses have surf decoration and a “surf culture environment” (see some pictures in appendix 19), they have shared and double rooms, usually with total capacity to 20-30 people, Wi-Fi, a shared kitchen, and other services. The price¹² of a surf camp week can go from €355 in the low season to €500 in the high season. This price includes accommodation with breakfast, transport to the beach, surf classes and material. Some surf camps also provide transport from Faro or Lagos to the accommodation (which helps the surfers that come from other countries). The most typical nationalities that participate in the surf camps are German, Austrian, Spanish, British, Italian and Swiss surf tourists. Usually guests are surf beginners or advanced, 18 to 30 years old, and they usually repeat the destination (hence increasing surf level from one year to the other). Again, we identify the existence of seasonality: most part of the surf camps close during winter months (from mid-November

¹¹ International tourism fair in Lisbon

¹² See an example of Price Table in appendix 20

to March/April). This is not due to the lack of good surf conditions (it is quite the opposite as we saw) but, in part, because legal licenses are semiannual, and they prefer not to pay during the low season.

As it is possible to see in the network above (image 2), there are in Aljezur and Vila do Bispo 5 and 4 surf camps^{xxiv} that are registered in the AESCV¹³, respectively. However, in our field research at Costa Vicentina we realized that the real number of surf camps is much larger. Actually, there are dozens of surf camps in each municipality of the region. Having asked *Turismo de Portugal* and the municipalities about the total number of surf camps in the region, we were told that it isn't possible to know that number, since there is no legal framework for that type of establishment. Surf camps are legally considered “local accommodations”¹⁴ (see appendix 21) and not “touristic enterprises”¹⁵ (see appendix 22). Nevertheless, besides the surf camps that are registered as “local accommodations”, we could understand that there are several units whose situation is not clear. In many surf camps that we visited, while interviewing owners and staff there, we received many complaints regarding this, having all insisted about the existence of many unregistered/illegal surf camps across Costa Vicentina. We then asked *Turismo do Algarve* if they were aware of the problem and if they could clarify and explain us the situation and they told us that a new legal scheme is being prepared for this type of accommodation (see appendix 23).

Besides the unclear legal regime for surf camps we could also realize on our field research and interviews that there are many illegal foreign surf camps: foreign people come to Costa Vicentina, rent a house there, bring the surf material and teach surf classes, developing “non-official” surf camps. In these cases, since all the clients are foreigners (they book

¹³ AESCV: Associação de Escolas de Surf da Costa Vicentina (Costa Vicentina Surf Schools Association)

¹⁴ Which include apartments to rent, hostels, etc.

¹⁵ Which include hotels, resorts, some hostels, etc.

online), the booking money does not even “enter” in Portugal, going from foreign accounts to other foreign accounts. Of course there is some positive economic impact for the region, but the surf camps end-up not paying taxes, social security or assuming civil liability. This is, of course, not good for the Portuguese economy, who could benefit from this activity.

Competition and Competitive Environment

As it was already referred, Costa Vicentina has 17 beaches that are considered surf spots and which offer good surf conditions for all surf levels. Despite that, this region doesn't have necessarily the best surf conditions in the country. Other portuguese surf destinations such as Cascais/Carcavelos, Peniche, Ericeira, Nazaré and Figueira da Foz represent excelent surf destinations. Also the neighbouring countries like Spain and France offer a large number of surf spots such as Galicia, Asturias, Cantabria, Pais Vasco and Andalucia in Spain; Normandy, Brittany, Vendee, Charente, Gironde in France and the Mediterranean spots in both countries. All these surf destinations¹⁶ represent a threat to Costa Vicentina, since they are located at similar distances from European countries where the target comes from, and provide accommodation and services at similar prices. The point of difference of Costa Vicentina is that the destination as a whole is a unique experience of contact with nature, free wild moments and purity. The region provides a number and diversity of beaches, not crowded and which have all the attributes that are very valued by the target¹⁷.

SWOT analysis of the destination Costa Vicentina for foreign surfers

After having analyzed Costa Vicentina's demand and supply, we can now match both sides and look to the destination as a whole, identifying its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. In the following table and paragraphs is constructed the SWOT analysis of the touristic destination Costa Vicentina.

¹⁶ Portuguese and foreign – see all surf regions in appendix 24

¹⁷ Based on the semi-qualitative research results

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Natural Resources and beauty -Considerable number of beaches (33) and surf spots (17) -Low man intervention -Waves suitable for different surf levels -Large number of surf camps and low cost accommodations -Sunny weather all year -Very appreciated gastronomy -Safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Lack of accessibilities by public transports -Distance from center and north of Portugal -Surf camps closed during winter months -Low offering of complementary activities -Lack of accommodations and restaurants available during winter months -High number of non-supervised beaches -Relatively small operator tourism base
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Attractive surf conditions all year – good to reduce seasonality -Increasing visibility of Portugal in surf world -Costa Vicentina visitants usually like the experience very much, want to come back and are likely to recommend -Increasing success and impact of <i>Rota Vicentina</i> project -Potential for other nautical sports activities -PENT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Lack of awareness by foreign surfers -Beaches getting too much crowded in summer months -Unclear legal situation of surf camps -Illegal foreign surf camps -Other Portuguese surf spots with better surf conditions -Increasing visibility of other Portuguese destinations -Increasing transportation costs (oil price)

Table 4 - SWOT Analysis

Strengths. Costa Vicentina is a destination characterized by its natural resources and beauty. With very low man intervention, this region has a considerable number of beaches (33), from which 17 are surf spots. These surf spots are diverse from each other and include waves suitable for different levels of surf practice. There is a large offer in what concerns to surf camps and low cost accommodations, usually located closely to a large possibility of beaches. The region is safe, has sunny weather during all year and its gastronomy is very appreciated by foreign tourists.

Weaknesses. The destination is relatively inaccessible, being far from the center and North of Portugal and with very few public transports available. During winter months, surf camps – the type of accommodation most used by foreign surfers – are closed and there is lack of accommodations and restaurants available. The region has a high number of non-supervised beaches and a low offer in terms of activities (besides surf and pedestrian paths).

There is a relatively small operator tourism base, since there is no DMO exclusive for Costa Vicentina.

Opportunities. As we could see over this report, there are plenty opportunities in Costa Vicentina. One is the reduction of seasonality, since the region has excellent surf conditions during the whole year. Another one is to take advantage of Portugal's increasing visibility in surf world and also of the emphasis put on surfing in the strategic actions planned by *Turismo de Portugal* (in PENT). We saw in the survey results that Costa Vicentina visitants usually classify positively the experience, they want to come back and are likely to recommend it to others. This represents an opportunity to the increase touristic demand and the foreign surfers' awareness of the destination (by word-of-mouth). Finally, there is potential to explore other activities, including other nautical sports.

Threats. As we could identify, one of the main issues regarding the target of foreign surfers is the lack of awareness about this destination. At the same time, increasing the number of tourists means turning the beaches too crowded in summer months, being the "no-crowd" characteristic a much appreciated one. The problems regarding surf camps also have to be addressed, by regulating the legal frameworks of this type of accommodation and supervising the existence of illegal foreign surf camps. The increasing visibility of other Portuguese destinations will have to be faced with a good promotion of Costa Vicentina, highlighting its points of difference. Finally, the increase in transportation costs (e.g.: oil price) represents a threat to an isolated region like this.

Vision

The SWOT analysis presented above is now used to develop a Vision – a "shared dream of the future destination"^{xxv} and reference point for all strategic actions:

*“In the next few years, Costa Vicentina will become a **top surf tourism destination**, characterized by an excellent offer to foreign surf lovers. The region will deliver the best experience in what concerns to **surf beginning and intermediate levels practice**, while providing its **unique natural attractions**.*

*Quality surf classes, accommodations and a diversity of activities **available during all year** will surpass the visitors’ expectations about Costa Vicentina, creating in them the desire to return and increasing the destination’s **visibility** in foreign surf communities. This will be possible through an **effective leadership** together with the **commitment and coordination** of all tourism stakeholders. Costa Vicentina will become a leader surf destination for surf beginners and advanced practitioners, contributing to the **sustainable improvement** of Algarve and Portugal regional tourism industry.”*

Goals and Strategy

To put this Vision into reality, some goals are now developed, followed by the Strategic Actions to achieve them. At the end of the section there is a table where it is possible to see which strategic actions are designed to each goal. A second table indicates which ones are short-term or long-term strategies. Almost all strategic actions are supposed to be conducted by public-private partnerships, with an exception for law related strategies, which will be implemented by public entities only.

Goals

- 1. To increase the volume** of foreign surf tourists at Costa Vicentina. This can be done by attracting new visitors and by increasing loyalty.
- 2. To reduce seasonality.** Surf tourism is characterized by its low-seasonality or even anti-seasonality. Costa Vicentina is not an exception, characterized by having very propitious

surf conditions during all year. The region's tourism can take advantage of that and attract foreign surfers to Costa Vicentina during autumn, winter and spring.

3. To increase awareness and visibility of Costa Vicentina for foreign surfers.

4. To regulate the unclear situation of Surf camps in Portugal.

5. To improve the overall tourist experience. The creation of new attractions will turn the foreign surfer's experience at Costa Vicentina in a more diversified one, making it even more outstanding.

6. Long-term sustainability of the destination. First, by making sure that the strategies which are proposed in this report actually contribute to the sustainable development of the destination without damaging the environment and second, by controlling that the strategies are followed, in order to have a long-term impact.

Strategic Actions

A. Considering that the target is “foreign surf beginners and practitioners”, there is a niche in the Portuguese market yet to be explored regarding this destination, that are the **Erasmus students**. Every year, Portugal attracts an increasing number of foreign students who come here to do exchange programs, internships or international masters programs. Only in 2011/12, Portugal received more than 6500^{xxvi} people within the Erasmus program. A phenomenon happening is that a considerable number of Erasmus students love surf and choose Portugal because of the quality of its surf spots. Moreover the majority of Erasmus students is curious about this sport, wants to try and learn it, and so they register themselves in surf schools with special packs for Erasmus students (see appendix 25) and join surf groups and communities. One example is the Nova Surf Club (see appendix 26), which coordinator¹⁸ we interviewed and who told us that the majority of members are foreigners

¹⁸ Francisca Pereira dos Santos

and many of them are beginners, learning now the first steps of the surfing. Costa Vicentina could attract this niche of foreign surf lovers by creating special Erasmus surf camps (see a Peniche example in appendix 27), negotiating surf trips with surf schools around Portugal, organizing Erasmus surf camps and trips with University students associations and clubs, etc. For the University of Algarve there could exist a more regular program of lessons or surf camps. For the universities in Lisbon, Oporto, etc., the offer would be weekend or holiday weeks surf camps, with transport included.

B. Costa Vicentina visitors must have a unique and memorable experience during the trip, and the tourists shall want to **return**. The destination will keep the interest of the tourist on the destination until the next visit, through promotion that appeals to an emotional tie between Costa Vicentina and the visitor.

C. To increase **activity during the so-called “low season”**, activity which in the long-run will develop *per se*. Taking advantage of the fact that foreign students live in Portugal during the academic year, the surf trips and camps specially organized for Erasmus students can be done during autumn, winter and spring months. Surf camps may organize surf weekends and surf camps during Christmas, Carnival and Easter vacancies. Besides that, special pack prices may be done during the low season weeks. For instance, there can be temporary campaigns of discounts for transports through collaboration among different stakeholders of the tourism network.

D. Regarding legal issues, **licenses for surf camps could be annual** in spite of the semi-annual ones now in place, and **fiscal benefits** could be offered to surf camps in activity during winter months.

E. Creation of **surf events** at Costa Vicentina during the “low season”, such as championships or exhibitions focused on surfing and surf material, which would attract

many foreign surfers and surf companies and would promote Costa Vicentina during winter months.

F. To promote the region and surf packs at **universities**, for Erasmus and foreign students.

G. To always promote the Costa Vicentina region **associated with the name “Sagres”**, taking advantage of the awareness that foreign surfers already have of Sagres.

H. To negotiate with **travel agencies and online surf guides**, which are very much used by foreign surf lovers - as “TakeOff Surf Travel” or “Wanna Surf” (see appendix 28) - the promotion and booking offer of trips to Costa Vicentina.

I. To negotiate with **international touristic guides** much used by the youth – such as “Lonely Planet” - the presentation of the region as a top surf destination.

J. To promote the region in **surf online communities** (appendix 29 example). As it was referred in the first part of this project, the boom of social media is an increasing reality and we must consider and take advantage of it in the promotion of Costa Vicentina.

K. To make **promotional movies** to put on social networks and online international surf communities, using Celebrities as surf champions or record beaters (e.g. Garret McNamara) talking about surfing at Costa Vicentina, showing images of its beaches, surf camps and other attractions.

L. To create an **appropriate legal framework** for surf camps as enterprises that offer different services at the same time (accommodation, surf classes and material, etc.) and to make sure that all surf camps are registered in that legal system.

M. To **supervise** and to make sure that there are no illegal surf camps, i.e. surf camps not registered at all (not even as local accommodations). Foreign illegal surf camps are not stealing customers since all surf camps are full during summer, but they are “stealing natural resources”, that is, they are using Costa Vicentina beaches and nature to develop

economic activity without contributing to the Portuguese economy. The Government has to make sure that they are paying taxes on their activities.

N. More activities extra surf may be provided by tourism agents, or even included in trips packs. For instance, as we could see in our research on the Portuguese surf tourists at Costa Vicentina (see appendix 30), there are some **nautical sports**, like sailing and underwater fishing, which are practiced by Portuguese tourists, but not by foreign ones: this may represent an opportunity to be explored regarding this target. **Adventure tourism** can also be explored, namely bungee jumping, rappel and tandem.

O. Regarding the first point, it is important to do an **assessment** of the destination management process and impact, at least once a year. Aspects like the region getting too crowded during summer months, or the nature being mistreated, have to be avoided, and the strategies that aim to the increase of the region's competitiveness have to be regulated in order to respect that.

P. In order to do this assessment and also guarantee the implementation of this strategy, it is necessary one entity that takes the role of a leader: a coordinator of sustainable development of the Costa Vicentina destination as a whole. This is the already referred concept of **DMO** – Destination Management Organization – which, as it was also referred, doesn't exist exclusively for Costa Vicentina, but for all the Algarve region. The DMO will connect all stakeholders in the tourism industry, leading them to the same strategic direction. "It is vital that the various components of the visitors' stay are managed and coordinated to maximize customer value throughout the visit. Effective destination management allows destinations to maximize tourism value for visitors while ensuring local benefits and sustainability."^{xxvii}

Considering all entities already existing at Costa Vicentina, what I propose is the creation of a tourism office exclusive for the region, inside the **Vicentina Association**. This public-

private association “has the social object of local development, education and improvement of cultural, social and material conditions of communities’ lifes, in the covered area.”^{xxviii}

This covered area goes from Odemira to all the Algarve extension, including Costa Vicentina. It develops projects in the area of education, animation and environment, among many others. When contacting the board of this association, we were told that they have some projects planned for Costa Vicentina, including projects related with tourism and surf. Since this association already has relations with the municipalities and partnerships with many local entities, it makes sense to create the DMO inside this public-private association, in spite of creating one from scratch. This tourism office, focused on Costa Vicentina, will make sure that the projects by the “Associação Vicentina” are not punctual, but follow instead a strategy and have long-term impact.

Goals	Strategic Actions
1	A B C E F H I J
2	A B C D E
3	A E F G H I J K
4	L M
5	E N
6	C D O P

Table 4 - Goals and Strategic Actions

	Strategic Actions
Short-term	A C D F H I J K L N
Long-term	B E G M O P

Table 5 - Strategic Actions time horizon

Conclusions

While developing this project, me and my colleague Madalena contacted and interviewed many entities at Costa Vicentina. After doing our strategic actions proposal (each one for her target), we found very interesting to realize that some of those entities are developing projects with similar objectives, confirming the righteousness of our findings.

At the municipalities we were told that nautical tourism has yet a high potential to be explored and structured. They want to create a network to support nautical sports, developing infrastructures for sports and activities connected with sea and tourism, while avoiding conflict in the beaches. They also plan to create a strategic plan for nautical tourism at Costa Vicentina especially focused on surf.

The *Vicentina* association is developing some actions more directly related with surf tourism under the project “Um Outro Algarve” (see appendix 31): it is creating a website, which will soon be available, with information about natural heritage, places, products and services in the region, including surf schools and houses in Costa Vicentina, if legalized and within certain standards of quality. Still under the project “Um Outro Algarve”, the association is organizing, together with AESCV¹⁹, a surf event to take place in Aljezur, in 2014. This event, besides providing a surf experience to local and tourist surfers, intends to show a more introspective vision of the sport, inviting some of the main local and national surf stakeholders. As Daniel Martins, from the association, told us, “this event will also have a strong reflexive component, and aims to put into discussion the issue of surf overcrowding in the beaches of Algarve coast and the measures that must be taken to assure the sustainable future of surf tourism inside Costa Vicentina, inviting many of the sector stakeholders to this reflection with a very practical goal.”

These last considerations can just positively confirm the findings, goals and strategic actions proposed in this project, and also the pertinence of the suggestion to create a Costa Vicentina DMO within the Vicentina association. I sincerely hope that, if that happens, this project will be valuable and useful for the new entity to achieve the best sustainable development of the region’s surf tourism.

¹⁹ Associação de Escolas de Surf da Costa Vicentina

Acknowledgements

Dr^a Dora Sousa, tourism desk of the Municipality of Aljezur
Dr^a Rute Silva, councilor of the Municipality of Vila do Bispo
Dr. Daniel Martins, from *Vicentina – Associação para o Desenvolvimento do Sudoeste*
Dr^a Marta Cabral, coordinator of the project *Rota Vicentina*
Dr^a Carla Simões, from *Turismo de Portugal*
Dr^a Luísa Correia, from *Turismo do Algarve*
Prof. Catherine da Silveira, professor at Nova SBE
Prof. Clara Costa Duarte, professor at Nova SBE
Prof. Luís Correia, Senior Partner at AEQUITATE S.A.
Prof. Sonia Dahab, professor at Nova SBE
Nuno Castel-Branco, for the English revision

References

-
- ⁱ “UNWTO Tourism Highlights: 2013 Edition” 2013. UNWTO World Tourism Organization.
- ⁱⁱ “Travel & Tourism Economic Impact 2013” 2013. World and Portugal editions: World Travel and Tourism Council.
- ⁱⁱⁱ “O Turismo em Números” 2013. Turismo de Portugal.
- ^{iv} “Flash estimate for the second quarter of 2013” 2013. *Eurostat News Release Euro Indicators*. Eurostat.
- ^v “Projeções para a Economia Portuguesa em 2012-2014” 2012. In *Boletim Económico*. Banco de Portugal.
- ^{vi} “Demographic trends in Europe: turning challenges into opportunities” 2012. Council of Europe: Parliamentary Assembly.
- ^{vii} *Ibid.*
- ^{viii} Carroll, Laura. 2013. “New Report on Trends and Statistics Finds Interest in Responsible Travel on the Rise”. *Ethical Traveler*: 1.
- ^{ix} “ITB World Travel Trends Report 2012/2013.” 2012. IPK International on behalf of ITB Berlin.
- ^x “Tourism for Tomorrow, the WTTC perspective” 2013. World Trade and Tourism Council.
- ^{xi} “Climate Change 2013: The Physical Science Basis Summary” 2013. IPCC – Inter Governmental Panel on Climate Change.
- ^{xii} *Ibid.*
- ^{xiii} “A Global Strategic Business Report” 2011. Global Industry Analysts, Inc.
- ^{xiv} Llangennith, Wales. 2012. “Beach Rush” *The Economist*, Surf Economics
- ^{xv} “Plano Estratégico Nacional do Turismo (PENT): Horizonte 2013-2015” 2012. Ministério da Economia e do Emprego.
- ^{xvi} “Turismo náutico (segmento surfing)” 2012. Departamento de Dinamização do Turismo de Portugal.
- ^{xvii} Leal & Cipriano, António & Francisco. 2012. *Portugal Surf Guide* Lisbon: Uzina Books
- ^{xviii} “Plano Estratégico Nacional do Turismo (PENT): Horizonte 2013-2015” 2012. Ministério da Economia e do Emprego.
- ^{xix} “Perfil da procura turística” 2006. Study developed and provided by the Municipality of Aljezur.
- ^{xx} *Ibid.* and information provided by Project “Rota Vicentina” coordination.
- ^{xxi} Reports provided by the Municipality of Aljezur: “Movimento Turístico em Aljezur - 2011”, Movimento Turístico Praia de Odeceixe - 2011”, “Movimento Turístico Património - 2011”, “Movimento Turístico Museu da Carrapateira”
- ^{xxii} Adapted framework (figure 8.1) of the following book: Holloway & Humphreys, J Christopher & Claire. 2012. *The Business of Tourism* London: Pearson Education Limited: 183 (model based on the model from the book).
- ^{xxiii} Leal & Cipriano, António & Francisco. 2012. *Portugal Surf Guide* Lisbon: Uzina Books
- ^{xxiv} <http://www.algarvesurfschoolsassociation.com/surf-camps.html>
- ^{xxv} World Tourism Organization. 2007. *A practical guide to tourism destination management*
- ^{xxvi} European Commission Statistics - http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/doc/stat/erasmus1112_en.pdf
- ^{xxvii} World Tourism Organization. 2007. *A practical guide to tourism destination management*
- ^{xxviii} In the website <http://www.vicentina.org>