

# Re-Evaluation of European Charter for Sustainable Tourism TERRAS DO PRIOLO



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**Secretariat for Energy, Environment and Tourism**

31<sup>st</sup> January 2017

## Re-Evaluation Application Report

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Re-Evaluation of European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas, is integral and important to the whole Charter process. It enables us all to see if we have met our commitments, reached our goals and indeed, celebrate success. With a verification visit, the park and communities benefit from external expertise in assessing the strategy and action plan and can help to provide guidance and inspiration to go forward, realising even more the benefits of working together delivering sustainable tourism. Reevaluation too help the Charter areas to be more connected across the EUROPARC network, taking advantage of what can be learned from others.

### Re-Evaluation Process

We are delighted that are continuing with the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas through the re-evaluation process. Only by doing so can you fully appreciate the progress you have made! The Charter encourages you, your partners and communities to continue to work together in a way that is good for nature and good for people! Filling in this re-evaluation report will really help us assess your progress and your application for the re-evaluation in as comprehensive a way as possible.

The Re-evaluation Application Report is the key document where all comprehensive information has to be provided. It will serve as an overview, or summary, of your activities for both the Verifier and Evaluation Committee.

Two other key documents form part of the re-evaluation and should be submitted alongside this report:

- Your assessment of the previous Sustainable Tourism Strategy and Action Plan, commenting on what has been achieved and issues faced.
- A new Sustainable Tourism Strategy and Action Plan for the forthcoming five year period.

The report should be submitted in English, French, German, Spanish or Italian.

Each question in the report must be answered with:

- a short written response, that can be clearly understood on its own.
- a cross-reference to the new Strategy and Action Plan, giving the name and page/paragraph number of the relevant action. Where there is no relevant action, reasons for this should be explained. If helpful and appropriate, a cross-reference to the previous strategy and action plan (and/or to the assessment of it) may also be made.

To make it easier for us all and to be more sustainable, please submit your report in this WORD document **ONLY** electronically, together with the full application dossier, to:

[info@european-charter.org](mailto:info@european-charter.org)

## **SECTION A – GENERAL INFORMATION**

*Please provide brief information in this section. It helps us strengthen the case for protected areas and sustainable tourism. It also helps us to understand the context of your answers in the rest of the form.*

*You are asked to highlight particularly any changes or developments since your last evaluation.*

### **A1** Name of the protected area

“Terras do Priolo” is the name established, within the process of application for the European Charter of Sustainable Tourism, for the eastern part of São Miguel Natural Park included in the municipalities of Nordeste and Povoação. Due to the park’s dimensions, location and social characteristics, only a part of the Natural Park will integrate this application process.

### **A2** Name of the protected area (PA) authority (or equivalent responsible body)

The responsible body for the management of São Miguel Natural Park is the Regional Secretariat for Energy, Environment and Tourism - Secretaria Regional da Energia, Ambiente e Turismo (SREAT)

### **A3** EUROPARC Federation membership number (please contact the EUROPARC office if unknown)

0448-P-2011 Regional Secretariat for Environment and Sea - Secretaria Regional do Ambiente e do Mar (SRAM)

### **A4** Contact details

*Give name of person and position, address, phone, fax, e-mail (who can be contacted by the verifier to discuss the application report)*

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### **A5** Type of designation

*Give the status of the protected area, including IUCN category. Please list, giving their size in hectares, all N2000 sites in the area to be covered by the Charter.*

The São Miguel Natural Park regulated by the Regional Legislative Decree nº19/2008/A, of 8<sup>th</sup> July, and includes all the protected areas in the São Miguel island. For this charter application, we only consider the protected areas at the municipality of Nordeste and Povoação.

The area comprises four IUCN categories: Nature Reserve (I), Habitat/Species Management Area (IV), Protected Landscape/ Seascape (V) and protected area with sustainable use of natural resources (VI) (see table 1).

**Table 1.** Protected Areas in the Lands of Priolo

CODE	PROTECTED AREA	AREA (ha)	IUCN
<b>SMG02</b>	Nature Reserve of Pico da Vara	786	I
<b>SMG08</b>	Habitat or Species Management Area of Tronqueira and Planalto dos Graminhais	5373	IV
<b>SMG10</b>	Habitat or Species Management Area of Ponta do Arnel	22	IV
<b>SMG14</b>	Habitat or Species Management Area of Faial da Terra	205,9	IV
<b>SMG18</b>	Protected Landscape Area of Furnas	3149	V
<b>SMG20</b>	Resources Management Protected Area of East Coast	362,8	VI

Moreover, two areas are integrated in the Natura 2000 Network, namely SPA Pico da Vara/Ribeira do Guilherme and SIC Serra da Tronqueira / Planalto dos Graminhais (see table 2).

**Table 2.** Natura 2000 Network areas in the Lands of Priolo

CODE	NAME	SIZE
<b>PTZPE0033</b>	SPA do Pico da Vara/Ribeira do Guilherme	6067,28
<b>PTMIG0024</b>	SCI da Tronqueira-Graminhais	2010,63

#### **A6** Size of the Charter Area

*Please give*

##### *I. Total size of protected area in hectares*

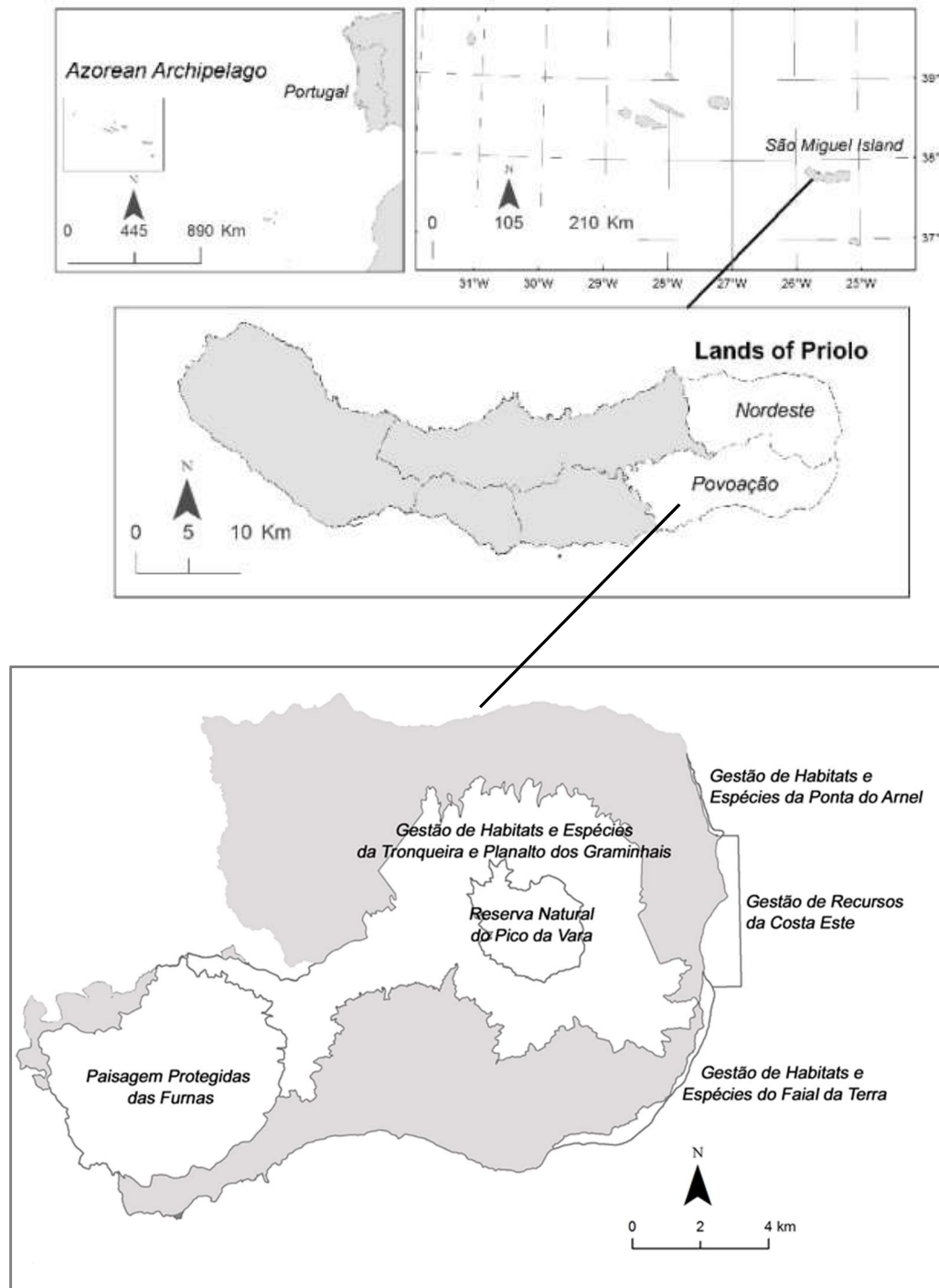
Total size of the protected areas of São Miguel in the Lands of Priolo is 9898,7 hectares divided in 6 different protected areas (see table 1).

##### *II. Total size of the Charter application area (which may be larger than the PA)*

Nordeste is situated in the north Coast of São Miguel Island between Ribeira da Salga and Grota da Fonte and limits with Ribeira Grande municipality at west and with Povoação at south. Nordeste's total area is 101 Km<sup>2</sup>. Povoação, with a total area of 110 Km<sup>2</sup>, is located in the south coast limiting with Vila Franca municipality at west. Altogether, the total size of the Charter application area, considering both municipalities is 211 Km<sup>2</sup>.

**A7** Map of the area

Please provide a detailed map showing the boundary of the PA and of the Charter Area (if different)



**Figure 1.** Map of protected areas in the Lands of Priolo

**A8** Landownership

Please indicate the approximate percentage of public vs private ownership.

Within the two municipalities, the total size of the protected area is 9898,7 hectares (table1), with an approximate 65% public owned and 35% privately owned.

## **A9** Population

*Give the population within the protected area and in the Charter Area*

Within the protected area there are no permanent inhabitants, with the exception of Furnas village (1439 habitants according to 2011 census) and few groups of houses at Fajã de Araújo e Fajã do Calhau. These houses are old agricultural support houses traditionally used for vineyards that are present in these areas for a long time. More recently some of these houses were recovered and are presently used as summer houses. At the coastal protection zone is presently forbidden to build and therefore these houses are only allowed to undertake minor recoveries and cannot enlarge their area. No new buildings are allowed in these areas.

The population of the Charter application area has reached 11.264 inhabitants in 2011, with 4.937 in Nordeste Municipality and 6.327 in Povoação Municipality. Meanwhile, the 2011 census indicates that the population decreased in both municipalities.

## **A10** Legal structure relating to the protected area

*Please indicate briefly the nature of the PA Authority and any relationship to other local or state authorities or official bodies*

The São Miguel Natural Park is regulated by Regional Legislative Decree nº19/2008/A. According to this legal document, the Park is managed by the department of the Regional Government competent in environmental conservation, presently the Regional Secretariat for Energy, Environment and Tourism. The legislation also establishes a Management Council and an Advisory Council. The first one, is presently coordinated by the Director of the Natural Park and the second meets once a year and is composed by the director of the Natural Park; one representative of each one of the municipalities in the island; one representative from each of this departments of the regional government: fisheries; tourism; agriculture and forestry; one representative from the Harbourmaster of Ponta Delgada and Vila do Porto; one representative from the Azores University; one representative from the local or regional environmental protection organizations (with an annual rotation system in case it is more than one); one representative of regional associations of nature sports and activities (with an annual rotation system in case it is more than one) and a representative of agriculture associations (with an annual rotation system in case it is more than one).

The park staff has multiple competences and consists of several professionals with different areas of expertise working together. Working closely with the Natural Park is Azorina – Sociedade Gestão Ambiental e Conservação Natureza, S. A. – public-private enterprise, under SREAT umbrella). Azorina, S.A. provides consultancy and technical collaboration in the management of Azores network of protected areas, including each Natural Park. Close partnerships have been established over the years with the NGO SPEA (Sociedade Portuguesa para o Estudo das Aves), which is presently leading the third LIFE Nature + project within SPA *Pico da Vara/Ribeira Guilherme* aiming at preserving the bird species Priolo – Azores bullfinch – and the priority habitats in this Special Protection Area.

## **A11** Protected Area Authority personnel

*I. Approximately how many people work for the PA Authority in total?*

São Miguel Natural Park counts with 15 Technicians, 10 Nature Guards, 10 Administrative assistants, 6 operatives and 9 visitation and education assistants. Regarding the Lands of Priolo territory 4 Nature Guards are dedicated to this area. From the Conservation Department, all the team of Furnas Water Basin Management Plan (POBHF) (2 technicians

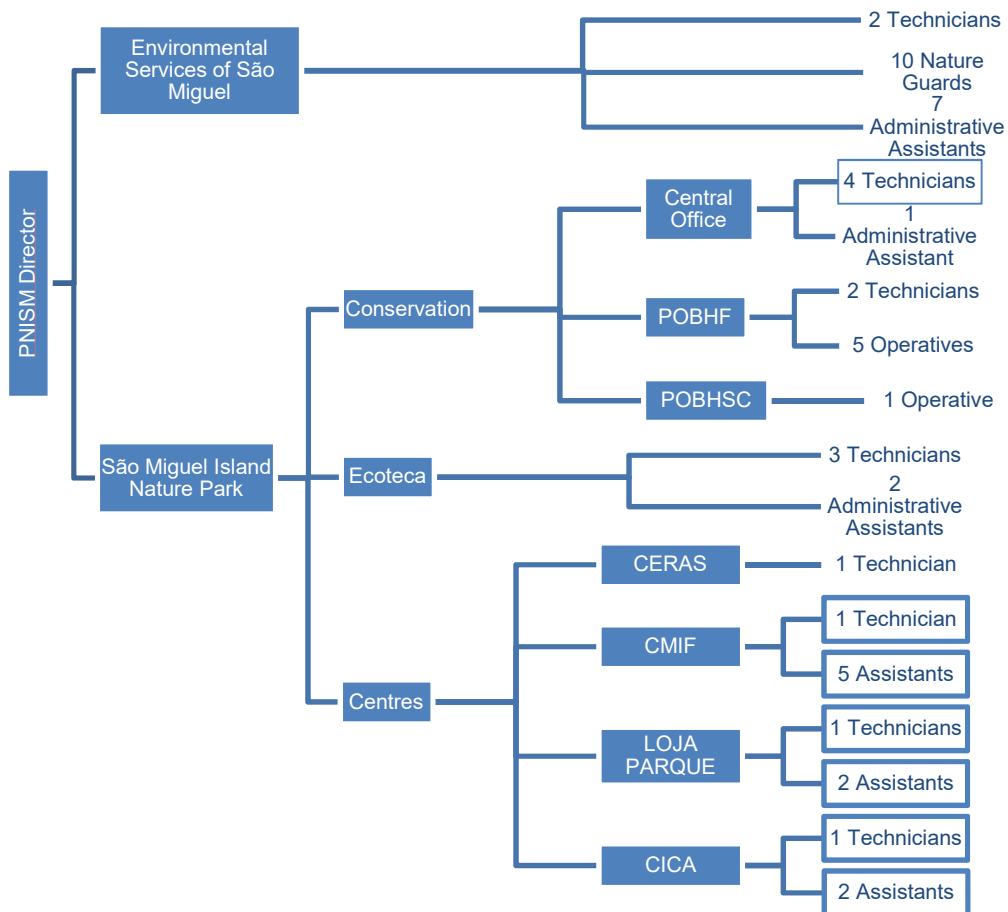
and 5 operatives) and two technicians at 50% from the central are dedicated to the Lands of Priolo. The staff from the Ecoteca (Environmental Education Services) works in all the island of São Miguel and it is difficult to establish the amount of time they dedicate to the Lands of Priolo. Finally, the Research and Monitoring Centre of Furnas (CMIF) staff counts with 1 technician and 5 assistants.

As a summary, we can consider that the Lands of Priolo protected areas count with 4 Full-time equivalent technicians, 4 nature guards, 5 operatives and 5 assistants.

*II. Approximately how many of these people are involved in tourism related work?*

From the staff allocated to the Lands of Priolo territory, we can consider that all the staff of the Research and Monitoring Centre of Furnas (CMIF), 1 technician and 5 assistants works directly with tourism, as well as 1 technician (at 50% of her time) from the Central Office of the Park who is the representative in the Carter Office.

*III. Please provide an organigramme of the staff structure and indicate any personnel with a direct responsibility for tourism.*



**Figure 2.** Organigram of the staff structure of the São Miguel Natural Park. Marked with a thick outline is the staff completely linked to tourism and with a narrow outline, the group that is partially related to tourism.

**A12** Management planning and priorities

*I. Does the protected area have a Management Plan (or equivalent document setting out strategic priorities and actions for management)?*

*II. If yes, what period does it cover and when was it last reviewed?.*

Government Regional order (Portaria) n° 1530/2012 of 10<sup>th</sup> of October approved the Action Plans for each of the protected areas within the PNISM to be applied for the period 2013-2017. The Regional Government order (Portaria) n° 1080/2014 of 5<sup>th</sup> September sets the program for the implementation of actions in the Habitat or Species Management Area of *Tronqueira* and *Planalto dos Graminhais* and was created in order to prioritize actions and define a schedule of application.

The Protected Landscape of Furnas, counts on with a different planning tool, the Furnas Lake Water Basin Management Plan with a period of implementation from 2005 – 2038.

*III. Please indicate very briefly the main management priorities.*

According to Regional Legislative Decree n. ° 15/2012/A that sets the Legal Framework for nature conservation and biodiversity protection, the general objectives of the Protected Area Network of the Azores, are the following:

- a) To assert the identity and value of each protected area terrestrial or marine;
- b) To establish mechanisms, for the conservation, preservation and management of ecosystems, biodiversity and of natural, scenic, scientific and spiritual values and resources of the Azores.
- c) To contribute to the constitution of a fundamental network for nature conservation that coordinates the various legal frameworks for protection of natural resources and values;
- d) To create management units for the protected areas at island level and for the Azores Sea.

In terms of management, this framework establishes the following objectives:

- a) To promote and manage the natural and cultural values;
- b) To value the natural, cultural and built patrimony by organising and regulating any artificial intervention that could degrade them;
- c) To promote knowledge, monitoring, conservation and disclosure of existing environmental values;
- d) To encourage an environmental culture based on information, interpretation and participation of organizations and citizens;
- e) To promote touristic and leisure activities that are compatible with the protected natural values, regarding the balance with socioeconomic development of protected areas.

This framework is completed by the Regional Order (Portaria) n° 1530/2012 from 10<sup>th</sup> of October, that sets specific objectives for each protected area. Those specific objectives are

**Nature Reserve of Pico da Vara (SMG002)**

- 1. To preserve the habitats, ecosystems and species in a favorable state.
- 2. To preserve the referential natural conditions within the scientific and conservation projects in place.
- 3. To define clear limits and control access to the areas.
- 4. To create and promote partnerships for the management of the area.

**The Habitat or Species Management Areas of Tronqueira and Planalto dos Graminhais (SMG08), Ponta do Arnel (SMG10) and Faial da Terra (SMG14)**



1. To ensure the referential natural conditions of habitats, necessary for the protection of species, groups of species, biological communities and environmental physical conditions.
2. To promote research and environmental monitoring as essential activities for a sustainable management.
3. To discipline the uses and activities that can pose a threat to the sustainability of habitats or species.
4. To allow local population to enjoy the benefits derived from the practices of activities inside the protected area.
5. To create and promote partnerships for the management of the area.

#### **Protected Landscape Area of Furnas (SMG18)**

1. To preserve and harmonic interaction between nature and culture through the protection of the landscape, the traditional uses, building practices and social and cultural performances.
2. To support the development of ways of life and economic activities that is in harmony with nature and the traditions of local community.
3. To regulate uses and activities and minimize the threats to the stability of the landscape
4. To encourage touristic and recreational activities adequate to the biophysical conditions of the area.
5. To promote scientific and educational activities that contributes to the well-being of the population and promotes public support to the environmental protection.
6. To create and promote partnerships for the management of the area.

#### **A13 Annual budget**

- I. Please indicate total annual budget of the protected-area authority (including overheads and project expenditure).*

Annual Budget of São Miguel Natural Park (PNISM) is 650.000,00€ divided between 510.000,00€ in human resources and 140.000,00€ in functioning expenses. To this amount should be added the budget of LIFE+ Lands of Priolo project since, although coordinated by SPEA, this project develops its actions inside the PNISM and guarantees the management of two of the protected areas within this Park. Annual budget of LIFE+ Lands of Priolo project is approximately of 465.000 € for human resources and 145.000,00€ in functioning expenses (total 610.000€).

- II. Please explain briefly how the protected area is funded, and indicate any external resources that are regularly available.*

São Miguel Natural Park is funded from the Autonomous Region of Azores Budget (ORAA) and it also applies to European Funds, such as LIFE Programme and the European Structural Funds, in order to increase the available budget.

- III. Please indicate approximately the annual budget for tourism related activities, and what this covers.*

The annual budget of São Miguel Natural Park for tourism related activities is 126.000,00€ and includes the human resources for the operation of interpretation centres and some functioning budget for the publication of the Park's Guide, promotion of guide's training and other tourism related activities.

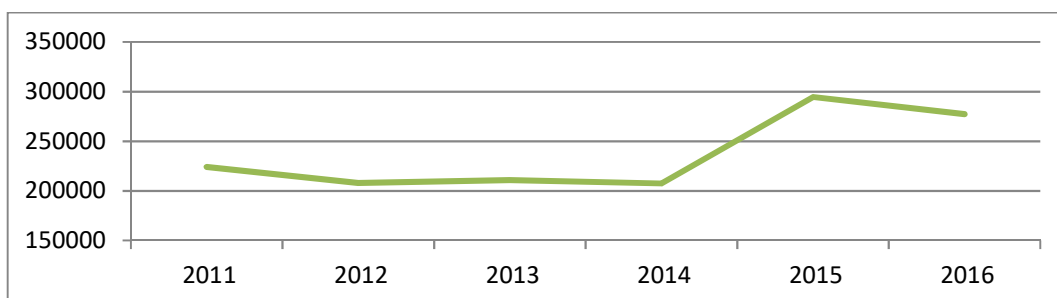
The LIFE + Lands of Priolo (2013-2018) project included four actions related to tourism (trail monitoring, visitor characterization, improvement of visitation in the SPA and Lands of Priolo promotion) with a total budget of near 136.000 € for the 5 years of the project (a mean of 27.200€/ year).

#### A14 Tourism data

*In this regard specific indications could be given to provide figures of development and changes during the last 5 years. Please provide the following estimates for the PA, and also for the Charter Area (if different)*

Annual number of day visitors:

Tourist arrival in São Miguel Island has increased, basically due to the open air space policy and the arrival of Low Cost airlines (see figure 3). In 2015, last year with complete data, there were 294.570 visitors in São Miguel Island.



**Figure 3.** Number of visitors in the island of São Miguel since 2011. Note that 2016 data does not include data from November and December (Source of data: SREA).

According to the characterization of visitors study developed in 2014 in São Miguel's airport (2), 99% of visitors visit Furnas, which is an *ex-libris* for tourism in São Miguel Island. A 61% of tourists also visit the village of Nordeste, 54% visited Povoação village, 35% Ribeira Quente, 31% Achada and 23% Faial-da-Terra. All other parishes have smaller percentages of visitors. Considering this values, we can estimate an approximate number of visitors to each of this locations in the Lands of Priolo. This allows us to estimate the number of visitors to the different parishes in the Lands of Priolo (see table 3).

**Table 3.** Number of visitors in each one of the parishes of the Lands of Priolo estimated from total visitors in São Miguel Island and percentage of visitors in each place determined by study of Characterization of visitors in 2014 (2).

NOTE: The parish of N. S. dos Remédios was included with Povoação, since visitors could not differentiate them.

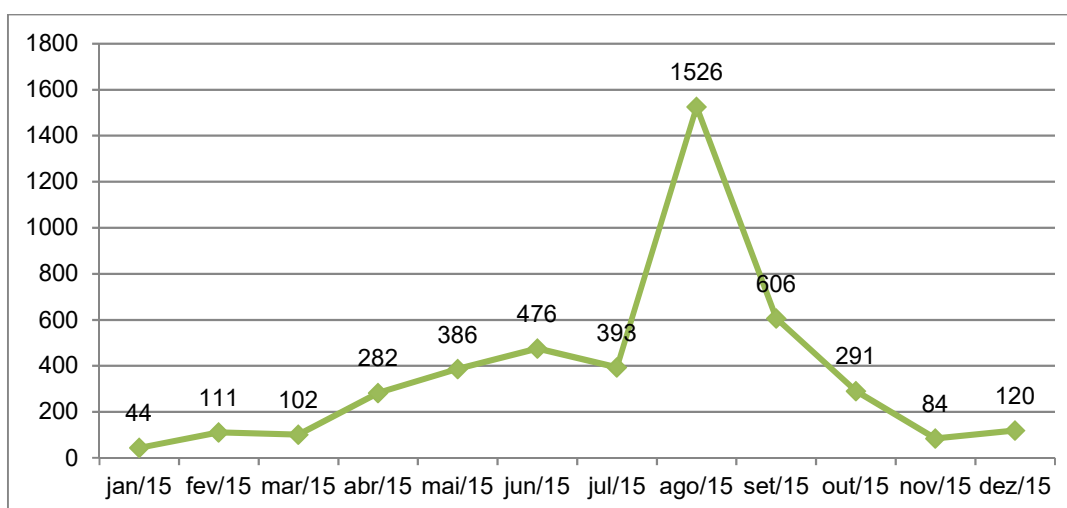
PARISH	PERCENTAGE	Nº VISITORS
Furnas	99%	291.624
Nordeste	61%	179.688
Povoação + N.S Remédios	54%	159.068
Ribeira Quente	35%	103.100
Achada	31%	91.317
Faial-da-Terra	23%	67.751
Lomba da Fazenda	15%	44.186
Santo António Nordestinho	10%	29.457
Algarvia	9%	26.511
Agua Retorta	9%	26.511
Achadinha	8%	23.566
Santana	7%	20.620
Salga	7%	20.620
São Pedro Nordestinho	6%	17.674

Regarding Protected Areas, the Characterization study (2) also showed a big difference between the Protected Landscape Area of Furnas e, which was visited by 98% of the visitors and *Serra da Tronqueira*, visited only by 9% and *Planalto dos Graminhais*, with only 2% of visitors. Considering this values we can estimate and approximate number of visitors in each one of the protected areas (see Table 4).

**Table 4.** Number of visitors in each one of the Protected Areas of the Lands of Priolo estimated from total visitors in São Miguel Island and percentage of visitors in each place determined by study of Characterization of visitors in 2014 (2). NOTE: Coastal and Marine protected areas visitors were not possible to estimate.

PROTECTED AREA	PERCENTAGE	Nº OF VISITORS
<b>Furnas</b>	98%	288.679
<b>Serra da Tronqueira</b>	9%	26.511
<b>Graminhais</b>	2%	5.891

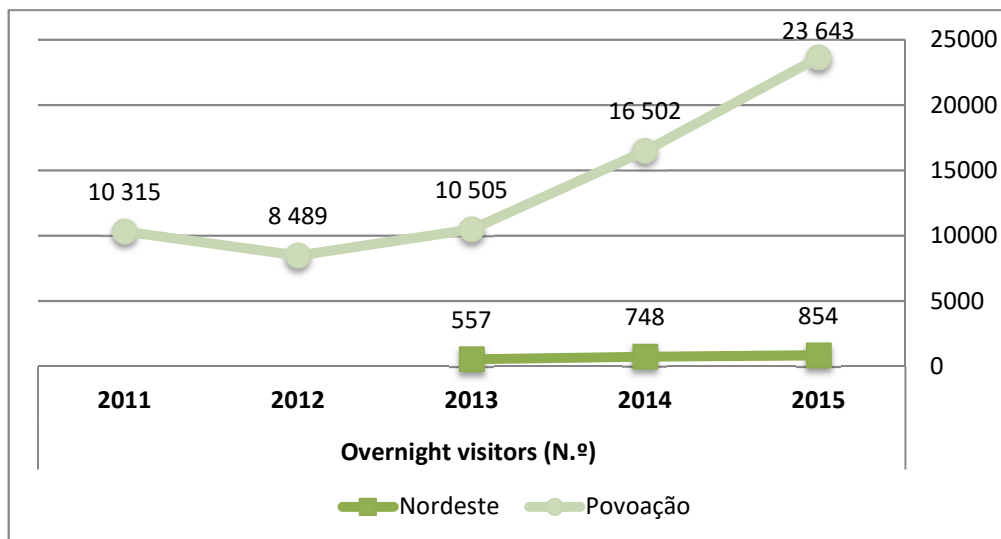
There was also implemented an study of use of the walking trails inside the *Tronqueira/Planalto dos Graminhais* Protected Area (10), that detected in 2015 a total of **6339 users**, with an important increase during the summer (see figure 4).



**Figure 4.** Nº of visitors to the Pico da Vara Mountain in 2015 from Monitoring Study of the Pico da Vara trail network (10).

#### Annual number of overnight visitors:

In 2015 the total number of overnight visitors in the Lands of Priolo was of **24.497**, with a considerable increase in relation to the previous Charter Diagnosis in 2011. Most of this increase has been located in the municipality of Povoação (see figure 5) and it is essentially linked to the increase of available bedspaces in Furnas village (see next question). In the municipality of Nordeste there has also been an increase in number of overnight visitors since 2013 of 53%, that compared to the rest of municipalities in the island is an important percentage. It is important to note that Nordeste municipality had the smallest number of overnight visitors, as well as a bigger average length of stay of 5,4 days.



**Figure 5.** Number of overnight visitors in the Lands of Priolo per council (Source: INE).

*If possible, please also indicate for the Charter Area:*

*I. Average length of stay of overnight visitors*

Average length of stay of overnight visitors in 2015, according to the National Institute of Statistics of Portugal (INE), in the Autonomous Region of the Azores is of 3 days, for the Lands of Priolo it would be 4,3 with a big difference in between the municipalities of Nordeste and Povoação. Povoação municipality stands very close to the average of the region with a 3.2, while Nordeste municipality presents a longer average length of stay with 5,4 days, being the biggest in all the Autonomous Region of Azores.

*II. Number of available beds (if possible by different types of accommodation)*

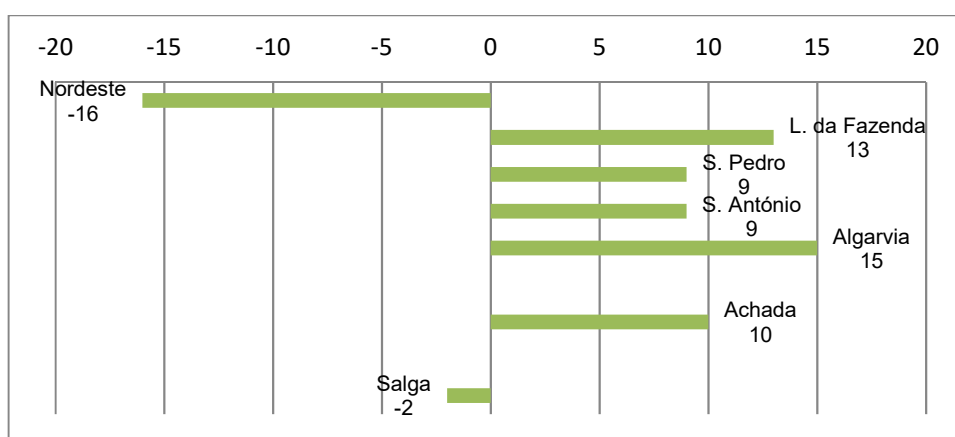
The total number of available beds in the Lands of Priolo is 895 (see table 5) not counting the number of spaces in the two official campsites (Nordeste and Furnas) with a total space for 250 tents.

**Table 5.** Number of available beds by parish and by types of accommodation (AL- Local accommodation; TER – Rural houses and ET – Traditional hotels).

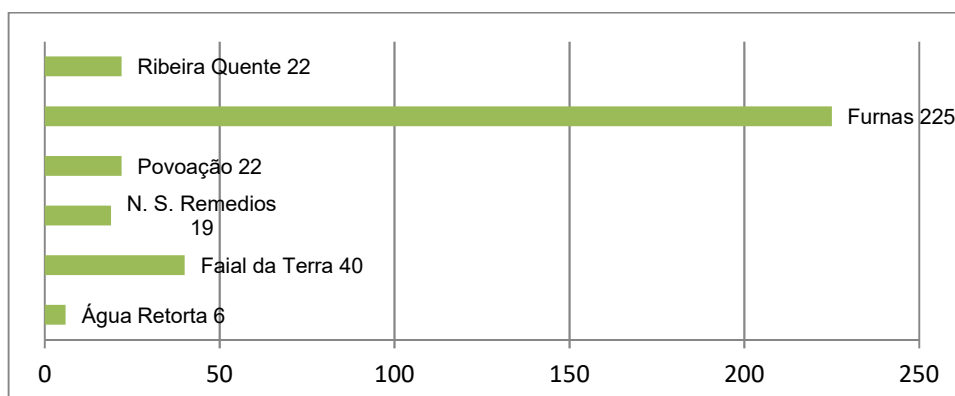
PARISH	AL	TER	ET	TOTAL
Salga	0	0	0	0
Achadinha	0	0	0	0
Achada	10	0	0	10
Santana	0	0	0	0
Algarvia	0	27	0	27
Santo António Nordestinho	3	6	0	9
São Pedro Nordestinho	2	31	0	33
Lomba da Fazenda	20	33	0	53
Nordeste	29	13	0	42
Água Retorta	6	2	0	8
Faial da Terra	6	38	0	44
Nossa Senhora dos Remédios	19	0	0	19
Povoação	10	10	72	92
Furnas	99	45	392	536
Ribeira Quente	10	12	0	22
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>464</b>	<b>895</b>

In terms of accommodation types there has been an increase in the number of available bed in all the types of accommodation, but it has been especially intensive in terms of local or private accommodation with 167 more beds, also rural houses have increased with 117 more beds and finally beds in Traditional Hotels increase in 88 beds.

Comparing this numbers with 2011 we see a big difference in many parishes (see figures 6 and 7), especially in Furnas, where there has been a big increase in availability of beds due to the enlargement of the Terra Nostra Hotel and the opening of a new Boutique-SPA hotel plus the opening of a few smaller rural houses. Nordeste village has also had a big change in terms of types of accommodation. The 4-star hotel, *Estalagem dos Clérigos* with 58 beds, closed in 2013 but since then many small local accommodations and rural houses have opened leaving a final balance of only 16 beds less. Also there's some parishes that have accommodation now but did not have in 2011, like Achada, Santo António Nordestinho and N. S. dos Remédios.



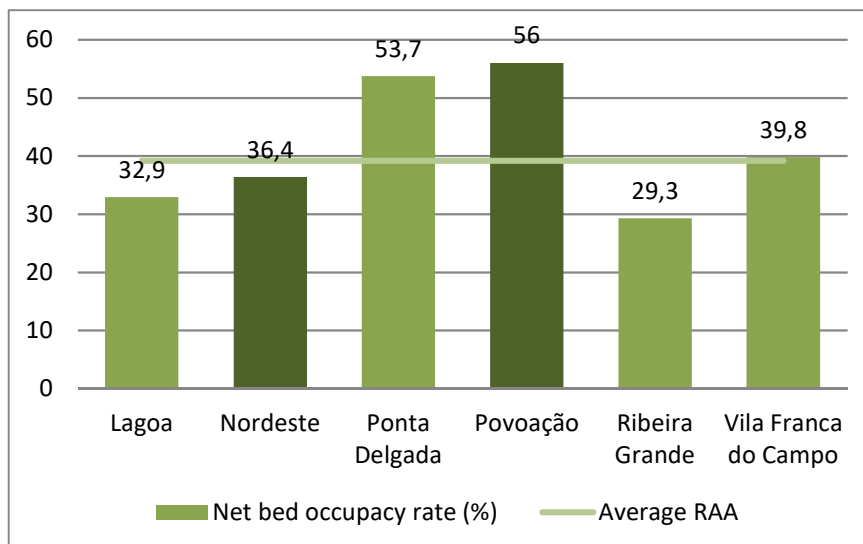
**Figure 6.** Change on beds availability in 2016 compared to 2011 in each parish in Nordeste municipality.



**Figure 7.** Change on beds availability in 2016 compared to 2011 in each parish in Povoação municipality.

### III. Approximate % of beds available all year night in the charter area

Annual rate of bed occupancy in the Lands of Priolo is of 46,2% again with big differences in between the two municipalities. Povoação municipality holds a 56% of bed occupancy rate, while Nordeste has only a 36,4%. Anyway, Nordeste's occupancy rate is not the smallest in the island and it is only slightly below the average of the region.



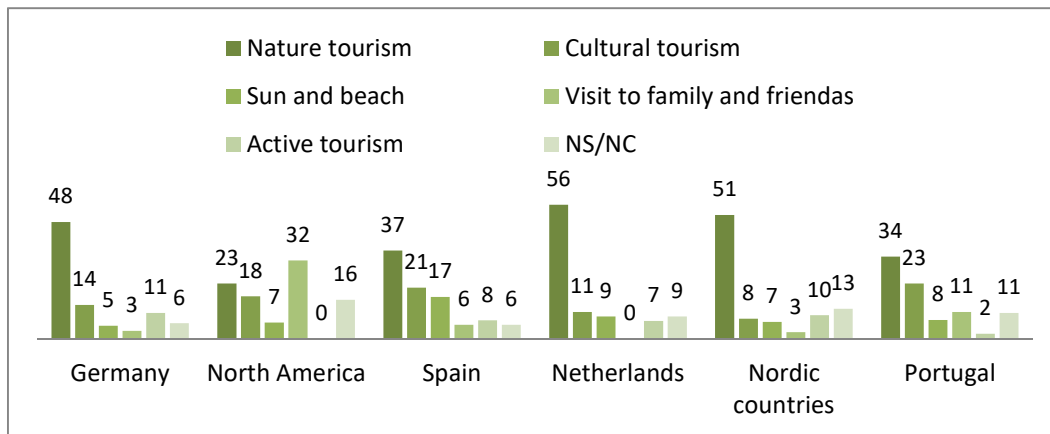
**Figure 8.** Net bed occupancy rate by municipality in the island of São Miguel in 2015.

#### A15 Type and importance of tourism

##### *1. Please briefly describe the type of tourism that occurs in the area and how this has changed over the last 5 years*

In previous application to the Charter we did not have much information about the specific type of tourism in the Lands of Priolo, but we considered that it was similar to the type of tourism in the rest of the Azores. We tried to overcome this lack of information by applying surveys to visitors leaving São Miguel in the airport João Paulo II in Ponta Delgada from July to December of 2014 (2).

These surveys show that the main reason for visiting the Lands of Priolo, as well as the rest of the Azores Region is Nature Tourism. Considering the most important markets for Azores tourism, there are different profiles of tourists (Figure 9); while Germans, Netherlanders and Nordics are mostly interested in Nature Tourism and also on Active Tourism, for North American visitors the “*Turismo da Saudade*” meaning a return to the family origins to visit friends and family, is very important. These nationalities were less interested in Nature Tourism. Some Portuguese visitors could also be included in this group. Portuguese and Spanish visitors have a very similar profile in terms of motivation, being interested in cultural tourism as well as nature tourism, but Spanish visitors are more interested Sun and Beach tourism. United Kingdom and France were not considered for this profiling because the number of total surveys conducted was smaller than 20, but their profile was similar to Nordics, Germans and Netherlanders. Italians profile was more similar to Spanish, although had the same robustness problem.



**Figure 9.** Motivation of visit to the Lands of Priolo by country of origin. Percentage of visitors that chose each type of tourism as their motivation for the visit. (Source: Characterization of visitors in the Lands of Priolo (2))

In terms of group size, in general most visitors come in pairs or reduced groups of up to 4 people, although some Nordic visitors (12%) come in organized bigger groups, of more than 16 people, as well as some North Americans (6%). In terms of length of stay in the São Miguel island the Germans, Netherlanders and North Americans have longer stays with higher percentages of spending more than 7 days in the island.

In the island of São Miguel we can identify general changes at the tourism level. There has been a decrease of visitors from Nordic countries and an increase of German visitors, being this last one the main sources market of tourism to the Azores. Also, with the opening of the air space and arrival of Low cost airlines, tourism from Portugal mainland has had a serious increase.

*II. Please give a brief overview of the amount and type of accommodation, attractions, activities, events and visitor service in the area.*

The "Terras do Priolo" present a wide range of attractions, mostly related to the existence of protected areas and also with the important traditions and culture that still strongly mark the daily life of the population of this territory.

The territory has 895 bedspaces available in hotels (464), rural houses (217) and private accommodation (214). There are also two camping sites in the territory with capacity for 150 tents in total.

Attractions in the territory are mostly related to the protected area, with four interpretation centres that intent to disclose different aspects of the rich natural patrimony present in the area. The Priolo's Environmental Centre that aims to unfold important information on Priolo, an endemic bird of this area, about its natural habitat which is the Azorean Laurel Forest and all the work involved for the preservation of this bird and its habitat. The Furnas Monitoring and Investigation Centre was created with the objective of promoting this important lake and all the work developed to reverse the eutrophication process of this lake. The Microbial Observatory which aims to disclose information on the important bacterial activity present in the thermal water of the Furnas area. The Forestry Disclosure Centre of Nordeste, opened in 2012, presents the history of the forestry services in the territory and the important reforestation work conducted in the decade of the 50's, as well as the evolution of the forestry policy in the Azores. These four centres allow an important understanding of the biodiversity and importance of this territory's ecosystems.

There are also two museums related to the ethnographical characteristics of the territory, the Ethnographical Complex of Nordeste, divided between Achada and Vila de Nordeste, that displays traditional agricultural and domestic instruments traditionally used in the territory and the Wheat museum, located in Povoação, exhibiting the traditional wheat culture that is responsible for Povoação's nickname of "Celeiro da Terra" (Land's Barn).

There is also an important network of walking trails that comprises the most important natural spots as well as some interesting landscapes and sites in the territory, with 9 official trails (table 6). The Nordeste Municipal trails network includes other 3 trails that are not yet considered official but are opened and maintained by this municipality. These trails are considered one of the most important attractions in the area. There are also specific trails in the territory for mountain bikes, with a 10 trails network in Faial-da-Terra and one trail in Furnas (16 seconds trail). There are some other potential trails in the territory but they have no responsible entity and therefore maintenance is not assured, although they are publicized and used.

**Table 6.** Official Trails Network

CODE	NAME	EXTENSION
PRC6SMI	Lagoa das Furnas	9.5 km
PRC7SMI	Pico da Vara	7 km
PRC9SMI	Faial da Terra – Salto do Prego	4.5 km
PR11SMI	Ribeira do Faial da Terra	6 km
PR12SMI	Trilho do Agrião	7.6 km
PR21SMI	Padrão das Alminhas – Salto da Farinha	5 km
PRC22SMI	Grená – Pico do Ferro	6.2 km
PRC31SMI	Trilho Pedestre da Lomba da Fazenda	6 km
PRC38SMI	Lomba d'El Rei	4.5 km

Other attractions in the territory are connected to tradition. The "Terras do Priolo" is a rural territory and it is strongly attached to their traditions, many of can be enjoyed in local celebrations, such as villages' religious festivities and *Espírito Santo* festivities. There is an important built patrimony related to this religious aspect, as shown in (table 7).

**Table 7.** Religious heritage

RELIGIOUS HERITAGE	NORDESTE	POVOAÇÃO	SUBTOTAL
Churches	10	12	22
Small churches (Ermidas)	5	5	10
Nichos (Little altars in the roads)	2	1	3
Alminhas (Little altars in the villages)	0	7	7
Triatos (Small house for Espírito Santo display)	17	16	33
Casas da Mordomia (Support house for Espírito Santo festivities)	0	3	3
Casas do Espírito Santo (similar to above)	0	2	2
TOTAL	34	46	80

There is also a strong rurality in the territory of the "Terras do Priolo". The high isolation in the past together with the presence of an important rural patrimony can be seen in all the villages of the "Terras do Priolo". Fountains, washing piles, watermills, among others (Table 8) are important testimonies of this rural tradition, still present in ethnographical displays and *Espírito Santo* festivities.



**Tabela 8.** Urban heritage in “Terras do Priolo”.

URBAN HERITAGE	NORDESTE	POVOAÇÃO	SUBTOTAL
Fountains	78	52	130
Music Houses (coretos)	11	11	22
Classified buildings	1	1	2
Classified mills	5	0	5
Lighthouses and lightpoints	1	3	4
Washing piles	6	1	7
Town Hall buildings	1	2	3
Sete Arcos Bridge	1	0	1
Nossa Senhora do Pranto Pond	1	0	1
Forno de Cal (Lime oven)	2	0	2
Memorial to poet Virgílio de Oliveira	1	0	1
Padrão das Almas (Monument)	1	0	1
Padrão dos Descobrimentos (Monument)	0	1	1
Portas do Povoamento (Monument)	0	1	1
Mãe de Deus Fortress	0	1	1
Desembarque das Tropas (Monument)	1	0	1
Casa da Grená (Interesting building)	0	1	1
Carvoeiros (Coal ovens)	0	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>185</b>

There are also an important number of infrastructures in the territory that favor tourism, such as sightseeing points, parks and gardens, swimming pools and beaches, camping sites, artisan work centres, information points, that are resumed in table 9.

**Table 9.** Infrastructures in “Terras do Priolo”.

INFRAESTRUTURA	NORDESTE	POVOAÇÃO	SUB-Total
SIGHTSEEING POINTS	19	12	31
PARKS AND GARDENS	20	17	37
RECREATIONAL AREAS	18	23	41
BATHING AREAS	5	4	9
FISHING AND RECREATIONAL PORTS	2	3	5
MUSEUMS/VISITORS CENTERS	5	3	8
INFORMATION POINTS	1	2	3
ARTISAN WORKING CENTER	4	3	7
CAMPING SITE	1	1	2
GOLF COURTS	0	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>145</b>

In terms of active tourism, and apart from the walking trails available in all the territory, there are several activities identified in the territory, that are starting to be developed, such as mountain biking and canyoning. There is only one local enterprise working in active tourism, although a few from Ponta Delgada develop activities in the territory.

Geotourism is starting to grow in importance since the creation of the Azores UNESCO Global Geopark, with the identification of important geosites in the archipelago. One of the

most relevant geosites of the “Terras do Priolo” is the Furnas volcanoes, Where the Azores Microbial Observatory is located. It promotes scientific and cultural knowledge concerning thermal springs and the microbial life around those specific areas. They also promote the Scientific and Cultural Tour through Furnas Thermal Springs, consisting in a tour of science and cultural content, enriched with explanations and tasting of different thermal springs. OMIC also promotes a Thermal Lunch, which consists in a snack, fresh and hot drinks prepared with the local waters.

Birdwatching is also an activity in expansion the archipelago, mainly because of the presence of American birds in the autumn. Despite the “Terras do Priolo” are not the biggest hotspots for these American birds observation (only Furnas lake and Furnas basin area regarded as important birding spot) the presence of Priolo and other endemic subspecies from this area enriches its touristic relevance as a Birdwatching area. Also is an interesting area for the observation of marine birds.

Whalewatching is a very important and well established activity in the Azores archipelago. In the “Terras do Priolo” territory, there aren't any companies working in this area. Although some companies from Vila Franca municipality use the waters in this territory for this activity. Additionally, a company in Ribeira Quente village used to work in this area and many other companies navigate and dock at Ribeira Quente's port as a secondary port for the activity.

Sport and Touristic fishing is also not well developed as a touristic activity in the Charter area. Even though there are some fishing events hosted in the territory and commercial fisheries from Ribeira Quente are studying the possibility of including tourism within their activity.

Bicycle riding (mountain biking, cycling or downhill) is a possible activity to explore in the territory. Specific trails for mountain bikes and downhill were created and several competition events in this disciplines are held every year. Unfortunately, there is no bike for rental offers in the territory although some establishments provide them for their guests.

Motorized vehicles are also used to visit some itineraries, from jeep tours to quad rides, that are available at local companies as well as in companies from Ponta Delgada that develop their activity in the territory. These tours choose secondary roads and agricultural trails as main routes and only in very rare cases interfere with the conservation of the area, despite unfortunate incidents are sometimes identified.

Canyoning is a newly developing activity in the Azores and the Lands of Priolo count with two canyoning routes in Nordeste municipality.

SUP Paddle and Canoeing are also activities regularly taking place in Furnas Lake.

Horse riding is not very well developed in the area. Only a rural house that offers this activity in Furnas Lake and its activity range covers just Furnas area and is not extended to all the territory.

Barbecues and socializing is a very common activity among local population, for this reason there are a lot of spots in the territory that allow this activity and can be used by tourists too.

Geocaching, a modern treasure hunting game with GPS, is well established in the territory, with several geocaches hidden in diverse areas searched by locals and also tourists that visit the area.

Photography and video recording is also an important activity among local people in São Miguel Island and the “Terras do Priolo” offer some of the most amazing landscapes and items for this activity.

Finally, there is a wide range of events in the Charter area along the year, from religious festivities, mostly in the Easter, *Espírito Santo* period (May and June) and in the summer's music festivals, such as Nordeste and Povoação Festivals and Ribeira Quente's "Festas do Chicharro", also during summer. Sport events of cycling, running and even the SATA Rally Azores, take place in the “Terras do Priolo” territory. The municipalities also promote sport events along the year for local population and in cooperation with local associations. Cultural events are also held in both municipalities, from exhibitions to music concerts all over the year, although they are not very frequent. It's worth noticing the Camellias festival that takes place annually, in February, in Furnas village, with an exhibition of flowers and some side activities. The existing interpretation centres in the area, also offer an interesting program of events linked to the understanding and conservation of the protected area, including some volunteer campaigns, guided walks and educative activities.

### *III. Please give an indication of the relative importance of tourism to the local economy.*

Main economy in the Lands of Priolo is based on agriculture, essentially in cattle growing for dairy products. Tourism is a complementary activity and again, there is a clear difference between Povoação and Nordeste councils due to the presence of Furnas in Povoação council. According to the National Statistics Institute of Portugal in 2014 agriculture represented 50% of Gross Added Value in the council of Nordeste and only 23% in Povoação, while tourism related activities, such as accommodation and restoration represented 8% in Nordeste and 30% in Povoação. Although there is no data available, it seems clear that other parishes of Povoação council apart from Furnas, have a more similar economic structure to Nordeste.

## **SECTION B – Sustainable Tourism FORUM**

*Finding out about how you work. The following charter components (Sections B and C) are essential to realise fully the social, environmental and economic benefits that come from the Charter process. So please take a few moments to help us understand what you have set up and developed in your area.*

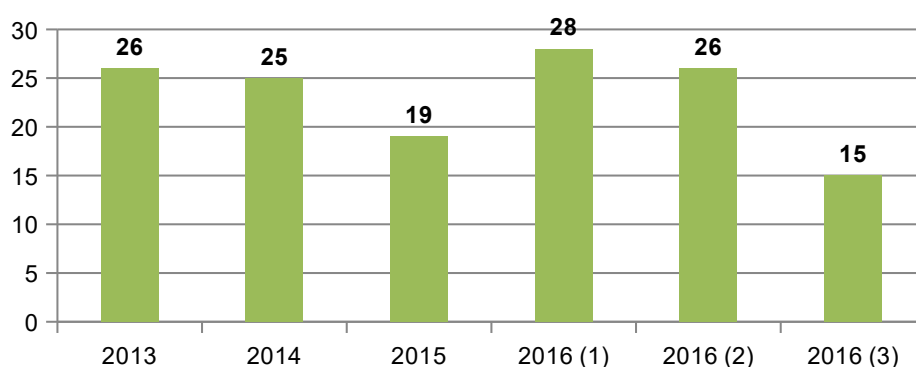
**B1** Has a forum (as a partnership structure) been maintained to enable the protected-area authority to work with others on the development and management of tourism, including implementation and review of the strategy?

Yes, the Forum has been maintained as well as the Local Technical Team (an Executive Committee with representation of all institutions responsible for the management of protected areas and tourism in the Lands of Priolo and the implementation of the Charter Action Plan) and the Charter Office (Coordinating group responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of the Action Plan implementation and for the communication of and within the Charter). These three structures were defined since the first application to the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism and they keep working and interacting between them.

How has this forum developed or changed over the past five years (in terms of its work, membership and the partnerships within it)?

The Forum has increased its official membership including more companies along the years, unfortunately and despite that many of this companies do keep up with the evolution of the Charter Action Plan the presence in the Forum meetings decreased during the years of application of the Action Plan and also along the re-evaluation process (See figure 10), although this decreasing could be more related to availability of time than to the lack of interest. Since 2015 the increase in flight arrivals has increased the amount of work of touristic companies, leaving them with less time to participate in this kind of events. Also, their interest is decreasing since, they are not facing difficult times at least in the short term.

Anyway, all the Forums celebrated counted with more than one representative of the local businesses and also with representatives of almost all the partner entities in the Charter Action Plan.



**Figure 10.** Number of participants in annual Forums during the application of the Charter Action Plan (2012-2016) and re-evaluation process (2016).

**B2** Composition of the Forum

*Please indicate*

*The number of members of the Forum*

*Who these members are (which organisations) – provide a list, or summarise*

The Forum counts with 76 entities, including the 10 partner entities of the Charter Action Plan (table 10) as well as the Nature Conservation and Environmental Awareness Division of the Regional Directorate of Environment (DRA) which, supports many of the DRA actions, although not directly responsible for any action in the action plan. The 15 “*Juntas de Freguesia*” (parishes’s local authorities) are also members of the Forum although most of them have never been present to the Forum meetings due to scheduling difficulties. These parishes’ authorities are contacted regularly and they had promoted meetings in the parishes to overcome this lack of participation. Also the 4 schools in the territory are invited to the Forum and have been represented in some of the meetings of the Forum. The Forum includes 46 touristic companies which are members of the Priolo Brand (table 11). When signing the commitment with the Priolo Brand they also are committed to cooperate with the Forum. The Forum is open to the public and disclosed by social communication and social media, so the entities that are interested or even the people individually can also participate and become members.

**Table 10.** Partner entities that participate in the Forum.

<b>PARTNER ENTITIES</b>
<b>São Miguel Natural Park - Regional Directorate of Environment (DRA)</b>
Nature Conservation and Environmental Awareness Division - Regional Directorate of Environment (DRA)
Regional Directorate of Tourism (DRT)
Regional Directorate of Forestry Resources (DRRF)
Municipality of Nordeste (CMN)
Azores Tourism Association (ATA)
Portuguese Society for the Study of Birds (SPEA)
Azores UNESCO Global Geopark
Azores Microbial Observatory (OMIC)
Local Development Association of Nordeste (ADLN)
AZORINA – Society for Environmental Management and Nature Conservation

**Table 11.** Touristic companies in the Forum.

<b>BRAND PRIOLO COMPANIES</b>	
Casa da Madrinha	Casa da Caldeira
Cresaçor	Futurismo – Empresa de Turismo Náutico, Lda.
Folha de Milho	Casa dos Barcos
Trilhos da Natureza, Lda.	Restaurante Tony's
Casa de Santa Rita	Restaurante Tony's Animação
TurisVerde	Quinta da Mó
Agência de Viagens Melo	Snack-bar Amaral
A Quinta – Furnas	Caldeiras e Vulcões
Tradicampo, Casas de Campo Tradicionais, Lda.	Quinta do Sanguinhal
Azores Ocean Land	Casa de Pasto O Cardoso
Furnas Lake Village - Investimentos turísticos, Lda.	Ac-AvenTTura
Sanguinho - Turismo de Natureza, Lda.	Bruno & João Soares, Lda. (Aldeia do Priolo)
Bluezone – Observação de Cetáceos e Animação Turística.	Sara & João Arruda, Lda. (Aldeia do Priolo)
Casa do Outeiro	Casa do Recato
Quinta Atlantis – Lusa & Luxo, Lda.	Ricardo, Mónica & Paula, Lda.
Picos de Aventura – Animação e Lazer, S.A.	André Philip - Outdoor Events
Archipels	FunActivitiesAzores
Bensitur	T4W (TECFORWORK, Unipessoal Lda.)

Azores Dream Tours	Furnas Valley
O Forno	FUNtastic Azores
Seazores	José de Simas Moniz & Filhos, Lda. (Casas do Vale)
Casa dos Moinhos	ALTEA - Turismo e Serviços, SU Lda.
Casas do Frade	Azores Essentials Lda. (Chalet Tia Mercês)

**B3** How often does the Forum meet and plan to meet?

The Forum meets three times during the re-evaluation year and once a year in the years of application of the Plans. The Forum also could exceptionally do a meeting in case there is a need to make changes in the Action Plan without waiting to the next regular meeting.

**B4** The work of the Forum

*Please summarise briefly the role of the Forum and what decisions it takes*

In 2011, the Forum met three times, the first one to prepare a participative diagnosis, the second to approve and prioritize the strategy and the third to approve the action plan. After the application, the Forum does a meeting annually to receive and update information about the progress of the Action Plan and allow the participants/members to reprioritize actions and discuss other issues relevant to all. In 2016 the Forum did a meeting three times, the first one to receive information about the evaluation of the Action Plan and to conduct a participative evaluation, the second to approve the Strategy and propose actions for the Action Plan and finally to approve the Action Plan (2017-2021). During the application of the new Action Plan, the permanent Forum will do one meeting once a year to keep up with the progress of the Action Plan, make suggestions and prioritize actions for the following years.

The Forum has the final decision as entity in terms of Strategy and Action Plan and any changes in both of these documents should be approved by the Forum. All the other participation strategies developed by the Charter, like Facebook groups and sectorial meetings (meetings in parishes, meetings of the Priolo Brand) are merely advisory.

**B5** How are local tourism enterprises represented on the forum?

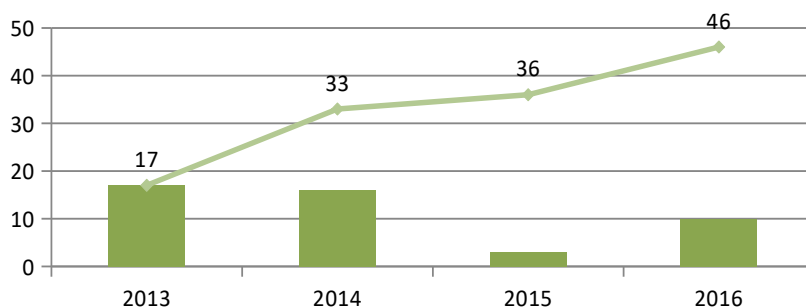
*Please give a brief explanation (e.g. is this through trade bodies or individual businesses)*

When the process was started in the Lands of Priolo, there was not any association of touristic companies that could be considered representative of the Touristic businesses. Anyways, all companies associated to the Priolo Brand are members of the Forum and receive a personal invitation to every meeting (see table 11).

In this new Action Plan we had the chance of including two associations of enterprises, the Azores Tourism Association, that represents many of the big tourism businesses in the archipelago and the Local Development Association of Nordeste that represents smaller local businesses of this municipality.

*1. Please describe how you have progressed and strengthened relationships with local businesses.*

We have strengthened the relationship through the Priolo Brand (explained in the next question). Since 2013, which was the first year of application of the Priolo Brand, the number of companies associated has increased every year (see figure 11)



**Figure 11.** Number of companies joining the Priolo Brand every year (columns) and evolution of total number of companies in the Priolo Brand.

*II. Have any schemes been set up to link businesses more closely with the protected area/Charter implementation? Please describe. (Such schemes are not obligatory for re-award of the Charter, but we are interested to learn if any exist.)*

Yes, the Priolo Brand. All types of companies related tourism (accommodation, restoration, tour operators or touristic animation companies, handcrafts and local food producers) can apply for the Priolo Brand. This Priolo Brand has a Manual (6) that identifies the businesses benefits and obligations when joining the brand. Every company joins the Brand for three years and assumes a basic set of obligatory actions (networking with other companies in the Brand, reporting information to the Charter Office and participate in the Forums) and chooses three voluntary actions related to sustainability (there is a set of proposed actions, but the company can add another if they consider it important) that are negotiated case by case with the companies and approved by the Local Technical Team. On the third year, the companies fill in a short report on the actions accomplished and negotiate three new actions to be fulfilled in the next three years for the renewal of the Brand.

**B6** How is the local community represented on the forum?

*Please give a brief explanation (e.g. Does this include community groups, in addition to local authorities).*

Local associations are linked to music (philharmonic orchestras, traditional singing and dancing groups, etc). Most of them are all run by volunteers and it is very difficult to engage them to participate in the Forums. Trying to overcome this difficulty, we organize periodically meetings in the parishes of the Lands of Priolo (see table 12). The last round of meetings was conducted in 2014 in 10 out of the 15 parishes of the territory. Some other meetings were intended but cancelled due to the absence of participants.

**Table 12.** Meetings in parishes of the Lands of Priolo.

Data	Place	Participants
08/04/2014	Junta de Freguesia de Nordeste	12
16/04/2014	Junta de Freguesia de Santo António Nordestinho	18
17/04/2014	Junta de Freguesia de São Pedro Nordestinho	11
22/04/2014	Junta de Freguesia da Achadinha	13
07/05/2014	Junta de Freguesia de Algarvia	7
14/05/2014	Junta de Freguesia de Salga	10
11/06/2014	Junta de Freguesia da Achada	11
24/09/2014	Junta de Freguesia de Agua Retorta	5
24/10/2014	Junta de Freguesia de Ribeira Quente	14
25/10/2014	Junta de Freguesia de Povoação	5
TOTAL		106

**B7** How are local conservation interests represented on the forum?

*Please give a brief explanation (e.g. Does this include conservation groups/bodies, in addition to the PA authority).*

Yes, the Portuguese Society for the Study of Birds (SPEA), despite being a national association has been working on the “Terras do Priolo” territory since 2003 and has good supported knowledge on conservation needs at a local scale. The SPEA has managed two LIFE projects in the area focussing on the conservation of Priolo, an endemic bird only present in this territory, and the Laurel Forest which is Priolo’s habitat and a very important ecosystem in Azores. This association is participating as part of the Technical Working Team and even collaborating in the development of the Charter documents with the support of this LIFE Project. Also, the Azores UNESCO Global Geopark Association, responsible for the implementation of the Azores UNESCO Global Geopark has participated in the Charter Forums.

**B8** Are the wider (regional) bodies responsible for tourism, regional development and conservation represented on the forum? Which ones and how represented?

*Please answer yes or no and give a brief explanation (e.g. Does this include regional tourist board, regional development agency, regional environment department/body)*

Yes, the two main entities responsible for Tourism Management and Promotion in the Autonomous Region of Azores are included in the Local Technical Team of the Charter: the Regional Directorate for Tourism, which is the competent branch of the regional government in tourism management and the Azores Tourism Association, that is responsible for the promotion of the Azores Destination and the management of touristic products in the archipelago.

**B9** Are other types of interests represented, such as volunteers, represented? Which ones and how?

*Please answer yes or no and give a brief explanation.*

No, since volunteering activities conducted in the territory are punctual, there are no formal groups of volunteers in the Lands of Priolo so there is no specific institution that can represent the volunteers in the Forums. Anyway, the Forums are open to anyone interested and are publicly disclosed in social media and social communication in order to try to increase the kind of interests represented in them. To the moment, only in one of the first Forums held, we had the representation of an individual person from the territory who is also a volunteer in the Protected Areas.

**B10** Is there an Executive Committee or equivalent body or group that is responsible for ensuring the delivery of sustainable tourism strategy and actions, and how does this relate to the Forum? It would be also interesting to highlight the role of this body during the last five years and what role will play during the next five years. And if it has changed.

*Please give a brief description of relevant structures and relationships*

Yes, the Charter Office, formed by two technicians from the Regional Directorate of Environment and one technician from SPEA, is the responsible entity to coordinate the Charter Action Plan and maintain communication between partners. There is also a Local Technical Team responsible for the implementation of the action plan on the behalf of each entity, to gather the suggestions and priority choices of the Forum and to identify ways to implement them. The role of the Forum is to receive the information about the implementation of the action plan and propose changes and priorities to its implementation.

The Local Technical Team has changed its composition in the re-evaluation process of the Charter with two new entities incorporated: The Azores Tourism Association (ATA) and Nordeste’s Rural Development Association (ADLN). Apart from these entities there are



members of the Local Technical Team: The Regional Directorate of Environment (DRA), the Regional Directorate of Tourism (DRT), the Regional Directorate of Forestry Resources (DRRF), the Municipality of Nordeste (CMN), AZORINA – Environmental Management and Nature Conservation Society, the Portuguese Society for the Study of Birds (SPEA), Azores UNESCO Global Geopark and the Azores Microbial Observatory (OMIC)

Both of these groups are also members of the Forum and participate in them. The representatives of the partner entities also respond to the Forum in relation to the actions developed by their institution.

## SECTION C - SUSTAINABLE TOURISM STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

*Creating a good strategy and plan with your partners brings everyone together with a common goal and purpose. So let us know about it.*

### PREVIOUS STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

**C.1** How would you assess your overall progress towards excellence in sustainable tourism, bearing in mind where you started from five years ago?

In order to assess the overall progress of the Charter in the Lands of Priolo, aiming towards excellence in sustainable tourism a set of indicators were defined and measured regarding the old Charter Principles (see table 13). In beginning of 2016, we conducted in the beginning of 2016 a stakeholder survey about their perception on the Charter. The results of this evaluation can be found in the Evaluation Report (1).

For the next 5 years, a set of implementation and impact indicators were defined for each action (4) and the global indicators selected for the present evaluation will be reviewed and adapted to the new Charter Key Topics.

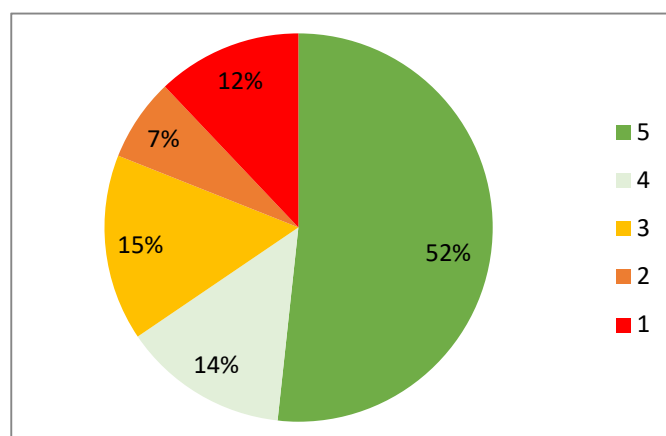
**Table 13.** Indicators defined in order to assess progress of the ECST in the Lands of Priolo on present re-evaluation. Source: Evaluation of Charter Action Plan (2012-2016) (1)

CHARTER PRINCIPLE	THEME	INDICATOR
<b>1. Increase cooperation between institutions</b>	Coordination and cooperation between institutions	N° of meetings of the Local Technical Team (LTT) N° of institutions that participated in each of the LTT meetings N° of meetings in which each of the institutions participated
	Partnership with touristic companies	N° of companies associated to Priolo Brand N° of companies of each typology associated to Priolo Brand N° of companies associated to Priolo Brand by municipality
	General public attendance	N° of meetings of the Permanent Forum N° of participants in the Forum meetings N° of meetings in the parishes N° of participants in the parishes meetings
	<b>2. Prepare and apply a Strategy for Sustainable Tourism</b>	Implementation of the action Plan
<b>3. Protect and value the natural and cultural heritage</b>	Natural Heritage	N° of hectares of protected areas restored N° of native plants planted Evolution of Priolo's population
	Cultural Heritage	N° of elements of cultural heritage put into value N° of elements of cultural heritage restored
<b>4. Offer a quality experience to the visitor</b>		Satisfaction degree of visitors in the Lands of Priolo N° of distinct activities that are offered to visitors in the Lands of Priolo Promotion of new activities linked to traditions

		and natural heritage
<b>5. Provide adequate information to visitors</b>	Touristic information	Nº of informative materials produced Nº of information points linked to Priolo Brand created
	Communication	Nº of visitors in the website of the ECST Terras do Priolo Nº of “likes” in the Facebook of the Lands of Priolo Agenda Nº of news about the Lands of Priolo published
<b>6. Promote touristic products</b>		Nº of new itineraries created Nº of sustainable touristic packages offered to visitors
<b>7. Increase knowledge on the protected area and sustainability issues</b>		Nº of accomodation companies with Miosóti's/Green-key awards Nº of participants in the course of flora e fauna of the SPA Pico da Vara / Ribeira do Guilherme Nº of participants in the Protected Areas Guide's training
<b>8. Ensure that tourism improves the quality of life for local population</b>		Evolution of employment in the Lands of Priolo Consumer price index in the Autonomous Region of Azores
<b>9. Increase benefits of tourism for the local economy</b>		Nº of overnight stays in the Lands of Priolo Nº of available beds
<b>10. Control and influence the visitor's fluxes</b>		Nº of monitoring systems in the trails and entries of the Protected Areas Nº of visitation plans for the Protected Area Nº of places with accessibility improvements

**C.2** Could all of the planned actions be implemented? If not, how much of the action plan was implemented (please estimate as a percentage)?

A 52 % of the Action Plan was fully implemented and another 14% was almost completed. Only 12% of the Plan, corresponding to 7 actions, was not implemented and another 7%, corresponding to 4 actions were only started (see figure 12)



**Figure 12.** Implementation of the actions in the Action Plan (2012-2016). (LEGEND: 5= Fully implemented; 4= Almost complete; 3=In implementation; 2=Starting; 1=Not implemented)

**C.3** What were the main reasons for you not being able to complete the full programme (if applicable)?

The main reasons identified for not being able to complete the plan in order of importance were: the lack of commitment by some of the partner entities, lack of human resources in the Charter Office, low investment and low coordination between entities, according to the stakeholders survey implemented in the beginning of 2016 (1).

#### C.4 What were your most positive achievements?

Main achievements of this first five years with the Charter are:

- Maintenance of the coordination between entities in the Local Technical Team and assistance during the implementation of two new entities: Azores UNESCO Global Geopark and Azores Observatory of Microbiology. Although this coordination needs improvements. It is considered an achievement because this kind of cooperation between institutions was not usual in the Azores and nowadays there are more interinstitutional teams working in other conservation topics, such as the Strategy for Eradication and Control of Invasive Species in the SPA *Pico da Vara/ Ribeira do Guilherme*.
- Priolo Brand with 46 companies associated and implementation of more than 26 sustainability actions by these companies;
- Improvement of knowledge of tourism guides about the protected areas through several trainings;
- Improvement of conservation status of the Azores Bullfinch and increase in the restored area in the SPA Pico da Vara/ Ribeira do Guilherme;
- Creation of a website, an agenda and informative materials and maps about the Lands of Priolo;
- Increasing the recognition of the name Lands of Priolo for the territory.

#### C.5 What are the main challenges you still face?

Main challenges identified in the I Forum and II Forum for the re-evaluation of the Charter (1) were:

- Improvement of communication and cooperation between institutions, with the companies and general public in the territory;
- Improvement of touristic communication of the Lands of Priolo;
- Improvement of coordination and communication with companies associated to the Priolo Brand in order to promote networking and improve their commitment with the charter.

#### C.6 Please describe the monitoring you have undertaken of the results of your action plan over the past five years. Indicate where the results of monitoring can be found (in which documents), for review by the verifier.

Every year an Annual Report of Progress of the ECST in the Lands of Priolo was produced and published in the website (<http://www.azores.gov.pt/Gra/srrn-cets/menus/principal/cets/>). This report was presented and discussed in a meeting of the Permanent Forum and the actions were adjusted according to the priority of the present members. In 2016, the Annual Report comprised the results of the five years plan (4) and was assisted by an Evaluation Report (1) that analysed a set global indicators defined from the Principles of the Charter. This evaluation included the results of a perception survey sent to all stakeholders of the charter (with 32 answers) and a participatory evaluation conducted in the I Forum.

#### C.7 Please explain how you have addressed the specific recommendations made by the verifier and Evaluation Committee at original evaluation five years ago.

- **Lack of formal collaboration of the Povoação municipality**

Unfortunately this problem could not be solved in these five years. Several efforts were conducted by the Regional Directorate of Environment in order to include the municipality of Povoação in the Charter, but none of them was successful.

We acknowledge that this is a flaw in the process, but still, it is possible to continue implementing actions in the Lands of the Priolo as a whole through regional entities and with the collaboration of the local authorities of the parishes and we believe that continuing the process of the Charter and showing its advantages is the best way to get Povoação Municipality involved in the long term.

- **High dependence of SPEA as promotion entity of the Charter**

SPEA is part of the Charter Office together with the São Miguel Natural Park and was capable to ensure its participation and even increase the number of actions undertaken thanks to LIFE+ Lands of Priolo project that ends in June 2018. From this date on, SPEA's capacity will depend on availability of funds of this organization. The park also increased their commitment to the charter in the last years which resulted in the will to renew it for five more years.

The São Miguel Natural Park and SPEA are totally committed with the application of the Charter in the Lands of Priolo and believe that its application is essential to ensure long term conservation of the Azores Bullfinch in a harmonious way with the well-being of the community. For this reason SPEA will make all efforts to continue to collaborate with the Regional Directorate of Environment in the process of the Charter. Also, the evolution of the process and the experience gained by technicians of Regional Directorate of Environment and technicians from other partner entities will also allow the process to continue even if SPEA needs to decrease to some extent their role in the Charter Office.

- **Lack of information about visitor's satisfaction**

In 2014 a visitor's survey (2) was developed. This survey allowed us to identify more accurately the strengths and weaknesses of the Lands of Priolo as a touristic destination. Due to budget limitations it is not possible to develop these surveys every year, but we intend to develop this every two years for the Charter Action Plan (2017-2021).

- **Weak offer of local products and gastronomy**

This is still a problem in some areas of the territory, especially in the municipality of Nordeste. There has been some new products appearing in the territory and some initiatives that intend to promote the use of endogenous products and offer them to visitors and there are a few new restaurants offering better traditional gastronomy.

We face two major difficulties promoting this through the Charter: On one hand, there is no motivation of the owners of the local restaurants to improve their offer of local products and gastronomy. The initiatives of training and gastronomy contests promoted by the municipality of Nordeste had no adherence. On the other hand, the Portuguese law is very restrictive in terms of production and distribution of these local products and many people do not find it economically rentable to try and produce them to sell, especially in relation to local products that are actually produce in the particular houses. In this aspect, there are some punctual initiatives taking place in the Lands of Priolo, from gastronomy fairs like the one in Agua Retorta, that allow the disclosure of local products but does not sale them and the farmer's market and local handcrafting fair promoted by the municipality of Nordeste that as allow a little increase in availability of locally produced foods.

- **Small effort in providing alternatives to car**

This topic is particularly hard to approach in the Lands of Priolo. Public transport offer is clearly lacking, but demand is also very low and for this reason it is not considered

economically efficient to increase the routes. The Nordeste municipality has included an action in the present Charter Action Plan (2017-2021) aiming to promote sustainable mobility in the municipality. This new action has a wider attempt; it includes the promotion of bicycles as transportation, which is really attractive and safe in the regional road, since most transit is now conducted to the highway.

- **General problems of accessibility**

In 2013, an accessibility assessment (9) was conducted in selected places of the Lands of Priolo and results were disclosed with the partner entities responsible for the implementation of the suggestions of this study. To the moment only some of the suggestions were implemented, but it is expected to implement them in the next Charter Action Plan (2017-2021).

When there are a considerable number of places accessible and signalled, a Accessible Route will be created and promoted, including all the accommodations and restaurants with these accessibilities.

**C.8** Were the envisaged financial resources available for the implementation, and where they sufficient?

The originally envisaged financial resources were secured by the approval of the LIFE+ Lands of Priolo project that allowed the maintenance of the participation of SPEA on the Charter Office, as well as ensured the preparation of some informative materials and development of visitation studies.

The envisaged budget defined by the Park authority was in general adequate, but in some particular cases it was identified a need to increase budget, like in the case of the maintenance of the trail network. In all those situations that needed a budget adjustment in previous Charter Action Plan, the present budget was defined considering this actual cost and we expect that it will be sufficient for their application. In terms of financing by other partner entities, the envisaged budget was, in general, sufficient.

**C.9** Have there been changes in staffing levels, both in the protected area generally and in the staff dealing with tourism issues, over the past five years? Has the level of staffing affected implementation of the action plan?

The Charter Office had a staff reduction in the last year, due to personal and professional motives of its members. Considering the importance and work volume of this office, it will be reinforced.

For the Charter Action Plan (2017-2021) it is expected to increase again the number of technicians in the Charter Office with a new technician from the Regional Directorate of Environment designated to this work in 50% of his time. The Charter will continue with one technician of the Regional Directorate of Environment at 50% of her time and one technician from SPEA at 50% of her time. The person responsible to assure the coordination of the Charter Office will be the Director of the São Miguel Natural Park, Dra. Hélia Palha.

## **NEW STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN**

**C10** Has a new/revised strategy and action plan been prepared for sustainable tourism in the Charter area?

*Please answer Yes/No. If No, please give an explanation If yes, please:*

- I. Give title of the main document containing the strategy and action plan
- II. Indicate if this is a single document, multiple documents, part of a wider document etc.
- III. Give date of production and period covered by the plan;

Yes, the Strategy and Action Plan were published in two different documents (3, 4). These two documents were produced in 2016 and cover from 2017 to 2021.

**C11** How does the sustainable tourism strategy relate to the protected area's Management Plan (or equivalent) – see A12 above  
Please briefly indicate the relationship

New Management Plans for all the Natural Parks in Azores will be produced during the application of the Charter Action Plan (2017-2021). The Management Plans for the areas in the Lands of Priolo will take into consideration the work already developed for the Charter Action Plan, especially regarding visitation.

### **Preparation and consultation**

**We want to understand how local stakeholders were involved in preparing the new strategy and action plan and how the work was done**

**C12** How and when did you start the process of preparing the Strategy and Action Plan?  
Please identify who initiated the idea and process and approximately which month it started.

The process for the new strategy and action plan began in January of 2016 with the production of the Action Plan Progress Report of 2015 that included prospects of finishing actions in 2016. The I Forum for the renewal of the Charter took place in May 30<sup>th</sup> and the Strategy was produced by the end of September, the II Forum for the renewal of the Charter took place at 6<sup>th</sup> of October and the Action Plan was presented and approved in the III Forum at 13<sup>th</sup> of December.

**C13** Who was responsible for the preparation of the Strategy and Action Plan?

Please indicate:

- I. What organization/structure has been responsible for overseeing the process (e.g. the PA Authority, the Sustainable Tourism Forum, a specially appointed steering group, or other structure)

The leading organization of the re-evaluation process was the Regional Directorate of Environment through the São Miguel Natural Park authority with the support of SPEA. All documents were overseen and approved by the Sustainable Tourism Forum.

- II. What organization carried out most of the work (e.g. appointed consultants, PA Authority staff, other)

Most of the coordination and preparation work of the documents was developed by the Charter Office team, but all the partner institutions named one or two technicians in order to accompany the process and participate in the Local Technical Team. Those partner technicians were responsible for the preparation of their contributions to all documents and specially the description of the actions of their responsibility in the Action Plan. The Local Technical Team did several meetings with the partners companies for the preparation of the present document before it was presented to the Sustainable Tourism Forum.

**C14** Involvement of the Sustainable Tourism Forum in the process of preparing the Strategy and Action Plan

- I. Was the Sustainable Tourism Forum (see B1-2) in existence before the process started?
- II. If no, was any other equivalent group of stakeholders established to engage in the process – please describe?

*III. Please indicate to what extent, and how, the Forum (or equivalent group) has been engaged in the process of preparing the Strategy and Action Plan. Indicate the number of Forum (or group) meetings that have discussed the strategy/action plan preparation.*

Yes, the Sustainable Tourism Forum existed since 2011 and has been increased with the inclusion of new companies and institutions that were created in these years.

The I Forum for the renewal of the Charter occurred on May 30<sup>th</sup> and the Strategy was produced by the end of September, the II Forum for the renewal of the Charter occurred on 6<sup>th</sup> of October and the Action Plan was presented and approved in the III Forum on the 13<sup>th</sup> of December.

**C15 Wider consultation on preparing the Strategy and Action Plan**

*What procedures were followed to consult with local stakeholders during the preparation of the Strategy and Action Plan. Please provide specific details of the following:*

- I. Stakeholder conferences/meetings/workshops held. Please give dates and approximate attendance (numbers and type of attendee).*
- II. Surveys undertaken (e.g. any questionnaire surveys of tourism business, visitors, residents etc.)*
- III. Interviews with key organisations/stakeholders (approximate extent of this process)*

Besides the Forum meetings, a stakeholder survey was conducted in the beginning of the process and a Facebook participation group was created. Before the beginning of the process, in 2014, a visitor's survey was conducted.

Also with the purpose of including new institutions in the Local Technical Team and to improve commitment of some institutions some meetings were developed.

**Assessment undertaken**

***You need to know your natural, cultural and human resources in order to manage them more sustainably in the future. Can you tell us how you have identified and assessed these in your area***

**C16** Was there an assessment of the natural and cultural resources (sensitivities, needs, impacts and opportunities for tourism)?

*Answer yes/no and indicate briefly when and how this was done (including sources of evidence used)*

Yes, this assessment was conducted during the first application to the Charter (2011) and is included in the diagnosis document (7). There haven't been major changes in terms of resources in the territory therefore we consider that the first diagnosis is still valid.

**C17** Was there an assessment of the local community and economy (sensitivities, needs, impacts and opportunities for tourism)?

*Answer yes/no and indicate briefly when and how this was done (including sources of evidence used)*

Partially, in the beginning of 2016, The Charter Office conducted a stakeholders survey related to their perception about the implementation of the Charter that was included in the Evaluation of the Charter document (1).

**C18** Was there an assessment of strengths/weaknesses of tourism and recreation infrastructure and services?

*Answer yes/no and indicate briefly when and how this was done (including sources of evidence used)*

Yes, this assessment was conducted during the first application to the Charter and is included in the diagnosis document (7). There haven't been major changes in terms of



resources in the territory apart from the opening of a new interpretation centre, the Forestall Disclosure Centre of Nordeste. For this reason, we did not consider necessary to repeat this assessment in terms of cultural and patrimonial resources.

About the protected areas, and since it has been verified an increase of visitors in the walking trails inside the APGHE of *Tronqueira and Planalto dos Graminhais*, there was conducted an study of use and impact on the three trails that allow access to Pico da Vara mountain (10).

Also, in this protected area, and accessibility assessment (9) and public use proposal (5) were developed. The latter, that included an analysis of access and interpretation infrastructures for this protected area, as well as potential impacts of tourism in the protected area is still a working draft, but includes all the information assessment. This study highlighted some needs of this area to improve visitation quality as well as to minimize visitation impact on the protected area.

**C19 Was there an assessment of existing visitor patterns and needs?**

*Answer yes/no and indicate briefly when and how this was done (including sources of evidence used)*

Yes, in 2014 from July to December, SPEA conducted a study of characterization of visitors in the Lands of Priolo (2) that included a characterization of profiles of visitors from different nationalities and identification of their patterns, needs and global satisfaction with the territory.

Also, in this protected area, it was conducted an study about accessibility and public use (5) that identified users profiles and needs of infrastructures, accessibility and signalling, as well as potential impacts of each type of user. This study will inform the development of the visitation plan proposed in action 3.2.

**C20 Was there an assessment of potential future visitor markets?**

*Answer yes/no and indicate briefly when and how this was done (including sources of evidence used)*

Yes, but it was not specifically conducted by the Charter and for the Charter territory. The Azores Regional Government developed a Strategic Plan of Marketing for the Tourism of Azores (8). This plan identifies future visitor markets for the Azores and for each island and although there is no specific study conducted for the Lands of Priolo it is possible to identify from all the markets and products identified for the island of São Miguel which ones are more relevant for the Lands of Priolo. In order to select this, it was also useful the information gathered by the Visitor's Characterization survey (2).

It has always been defined the Lands of Priolo as a product inside the Azores Tourism Destination, therefore this characterization of the Azores Destination is very useful to position the Lands of Priolo product inside. This study was useful for the definition of actions in the Charter Action Plan (2017-2021) and will be the basis for the creation of the Communication Plan of the Lands of Priolo (Action11.1)

**Content**

***We appreciate that you will be submitting the Strategy and Action Plan to us but it would be really helpful if you could give a very short outline of the key points here***

**C21 Key aims/objectives/priorities of the Strategy and Action Plan**

*Please provide a very brief summary (under 1 page) of the main points of the Strategy and Action Plan*

*(NB, the Charter requires that the strategic objectives should cover:*

*conservation/enhancement of environment and heritage; economic and social development; quality of life of local residents; visitor management and quality of the offer.)*

Main priorities of the Charter Action Plan were defined by the II Forum of re-evaluation of the Charter; held the 6 of October of 2016 in Nordeste. Those priorities were, in the order they were selected by the Forum:

1. To improve communication and disclosure of the territory and the Charter to the potential and actual visitors.
2. To promote tourism of experiences in the Lands of Priolo
3. To promote training of human resources in tourism
4. To develop visitation plans for the protected areas in order to improve visitation and minimize impacts
5. To ensure maintenance of conservation actions taking place in the Protected Areas
6. To promote accessibility and inclusive tourism in the Lands of Priolo
7. To promote family tourism in the Lands of Priolo
8. To improve public transportation offer in the territory
9. To promote, disclose and maintain the existence of a coherent network of trails
10. To improve road touristic signalling that complements available touristic information
11. To monitor perception and impact of tourism for the local population
12. To promote alternative visitation itineraries, that include least visited parishes in the Lands of Priolo, with companies in the Priolo Brand.
13. To promote the use of native and endemic species as ornamentals in public and private gardens
14. To improve gastronomy offer in the restaurants (traditional gastronomy and adapted to visitors, for ex. vegetarian and vegan food) and create Gastronomic Routes
15. To maintain the Priolo Brand as a partnership tool to involve the companies with the Charter, to promote their sustainability and networking and to ensure the periodic communication with the Priolo Brand companies.
16. To ensure the coordination between partner entities in the Local Technical Team and with the Forum and to establish a system for regular monitoring of the implementation of actions by the partner entities.
17. To increase inspection in the most sensitive areas
18. To improve touristic information offered in the Tourism Information Centres
19. To promote and ordain the development of nature sports in the Lands of Priolo
20. To prepare and make available to companies a text, image and video database about the territory
21. To promote identification and restoration of cultural patrimony in the Lands of Priolo
22. To implement the Invasive Species Combat Strategy
23. To publish a monthly agenda of the Lands of Priolo
24. To communicate the Charter to local community and increase participation
25. To promote local diversified handcrafting products and to present them to the visitors in an appellative way.
26. To promote enlargement of opening hours of touristic resources
27. To identify needs of visitors in the Lands of Priolo

## **Implementation**

***Having a great sustainable tourism strategy is one thing, delivering on those plans is quite another. Who and how will you turn ideas into reality!***

**C22** What organization is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan?

The organization responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan is the Regional Directorate of Environment and the São Miguel Natural Park authority and will do it through the Charter Office.

**C23** Does the action plan indicate which stakeholders or partners are responsible for the delivery of each action?

*Please answer yes/no and give a brief explanation of how you have addressed this.*

Yes, each action has a responsible entity and other entities that should be involved identified. Some actions have more than one institution responsible, since they have strong needs of coordination or involve directly more than one institution. The responsible entities for each action can be seen in the Action Plan document (4).

**C24** Does the action plan include an indication of phasing/staging of action over time?

*Please answer yes/no and give a brief explanation of how you have addressed this.*

Yes, the Action Plan includes an approximate calendar of implementation of the actions that was defined by each partner institution. The calendar can be found in the Action Plan document (4).

**C25** Does the action plan indicate the approximate cost of each action?

*Please answer yes/no and give a brief explanation of how you have addressed this.*

Yes, it was calculated the cost of each action approximately considering human resources involved and the need of other funds for equipment, consumables or consultancy. In the case of the actions conducted by the Charter Office, the need of human resources was accounted in the first action (1.1. Charter Office), therefore in order to avoid double counting it was not considered in the actions carried out by this team.

#### **C26** Estimated total cost of implementation

The estimated total cost of implementation of the Charter Action Plan (2017-2021) (see table 14) is 7.656.950 €, approximately 1.500.000€ each year (see table 14). For more detailed information, is possible to consult the complete budget in the Charter Action Plan (2017-2021) document (4).

All the core staff costs are included in Group 1 of the Action Plan, this will be the staff responsible for the Charter Office and Technical Local Team. The rest of staff cost considered is staff of the partner entities that is assign to actions in the Action Plan. There are no overheads considered in this budget because those overheads are assumed by the partner entities, regardless of the existence of this Action Plan.

**Table 14.** Budget of Charter Action Plan (2017-2021) by group of actions.

(1. Participation, coordination and monitoring; 2. Conservation; 3. Visitation and accessibility; 4. Nature Sports; 5. Cultural and experiences tourism; 6. Local Economy; 7. Volunteering; 8. Interpretation; 9. Training; 10. Sustainability; 11. Promotion)

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	TOTAL
<b>1</b>	28 200,00 €	21 450,00 €	28 200,00 €	21 450,00 €	28 200,00 €	127 500,00 €
<b>2</b>	761 300,00 €	851 300,00 €	938 300,00 €	1 028 300,00 €	1 028 300,00 €	4 607 500,00 €
<b>3</b>	51 070,00 €	45 070,00 €	14 070,00 €	9 070,00 €	9 070,00 €	128 350,00 €

<b>4</b>	87 170,00 €	55 670,00 €	33 370,00 €	30 870,00 €	30 970,00 €	238 050,00 €
<b>5</b>	120 450,00 €	110 750,00 €	36 250,00 €	22 850,00 €	22 850,00 €	313 150,00 €
<b>6</b>	1 775,00 €	1 775,00 €	1 775,00 €	1 775,00 €	1 775,00 €	8 875,00 €
<b>7</b>	13 000,00 €	13 000,00 €	13 000,00 €	13 000,00 €	13 000,00 €	65 000,00 €
<b>8</b>	258 000,00 €	326 000,00 €	261 000,00 €	258 500,00 €	258 500,00 €	1 362 000,00 €
<b>9</b>	6 600,00 €	15 600,00 €	15 600,00 €	4 600,00 €	4 600,00 €	47 000,00 €
<b>10</b>	82 800,00 €	117 800,00 €	87 800,00 €	87 300,00 €	87 300,00 €	463 000,00 €
<b>11</b>	113 905,00 €	53 405,00 €	45 905,00 €	38 905,00 €	44 405,00 €	296 525,00 €
	<b>1 524 270,00 €</b>	<b>1 611 820,00 €</b>	<b>1 475 270,00 €</b>	<b>1 516 620,00 €</b>	<b>1 528 970,00 €</b>	<b>7 656 950,00 €</b>

*I. Please indicate the approximate total estimated cost of implementing the action plan, for each year of the plan, excluding core staff costs and overheads.*

7 526 950,00 €

*II. Please indicate the approximate total estimated cost of implementing the action plan, for each year of the plan, including core staff costs and overheads.*

7 656 950,00 €

#### **C27 Internal (PA Authority) budget to support the action plan**

The budget of the Regional Directorate of Environment (DRA) assign to the development of the Charter Action Plan is of 1.581.975€ (see table 15).

The Regional Directorate of Environment (DRA) will also assume partially the budget allocated to Charter Office (GABCETS) of 194.550,00 €, the budget of the Official Trail Network maintenance (action 4.2) in partnership with Regional Directorate of Tourism of 124.700,00 € and the Communication Plan (Action 11.1) with a budget of 110.000,00 €. It is hard to determine at the moment what will be the contribution of each entity to the total budget. This will also depend on whether it is possible to get European funds approved for the development of these actions. Anyway, if we consider an equal budget for each of the entities involved, total budget of the Regional Directorate of Environment (DRA) would be of 1.769.100,00 €. From the Charter Office budget, 91.000,00 € are core staff of the DRA for the Charter Office and no overheads were considered in the budget since they are included in regular budget of the partner institutions.

*I. Please indicate the approximate total budget that the PA Authority will make available for implementing the action plan, for each year of the plan, excluding core staff costs and overheads.*

1.678.100,00 €

*II. Please indicate the approximate total budget that the PA Authority will make available for implementing the action plan, for each year of the plan, including core staff costs and overheads.*

1.769.100,00 €.

#### **C28 External funding to support the action plan**

Total budget from other partner entities in the Charter Action Plan (see table 15) is of 6.035.350,00 € (considering equal distribution of expenses in actions developed in partnership), from which 36 500,00 € are core staff and no overheads are considered.

**Table 15.** Budget of Charter Action Plan (2017-2021) by partner entity responsible

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	TOTAL
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<b>ADLN</b>	2 075,00 €	1 875,00 €	2 075,00 €	1 875,00 €	2 075,00 €	<b>9 975,00 €</b>
<b>ATA</b>	2 200,00 €	2 200,00 €	1 700,00 €	700,00 €	200,00 €	<b>7 000,00 €</b>
<b>AZORINA</b>	125 000,00 €	128 000,00 €	127 000,00 €	126 000,00 €	126 000,00 €	<b>632 000,00 €</b>
<b>CMN</b>	211 100,00 €	277 900,00 €	58 400,00 €	36 500,00 €	36 500,00 €	<b>620 400,00 €</b>
<b>DRA</b>	317 995,00 €	328 495,00 €	319 995,00 €	308 995,00 €	308 995,00 €	<b>1 584 475,00 €</b>
<b>DRA e DRT</b>	40 000,00 €	21 000,00 €	21 200,00 €	21 200,00 €	21 300,00 €	<b>124 700,00 €</b>
<b>DRRF</b>	236 270,00 €	322 270,00 €	412 270,00 €	502 270,00 €	502 270,00 €	<b>1 975 350,00 €</b>
<b>DRT</b>	19 500,00 €	19 500,00 €	19 500,00 €	19 500,00 €	19 500,00 €	<b>97 500,00 €</b>
<b>DRT, ATA, DRA e SPEA</b>	60 000,00 €	20 000,00 €	10 000,00 €	10 000,00 €	10 000,00 €	<b>110 000,00 €</b>
<b>GABCETS (DRA e SPEA)</b>	47 130,00 €	30 580,00 €	43 130,00 €	30 580,00 €	43 130,00 €	<b>194 550,00 €</b>
<b>GEOPARQUE</b>	18 000,00 €	16 000,00 €	16 000,00 €	15 000,00 €	15 000,00 €	<b>80 000,00 €</b>
<b>OMIC</b>	70 000,00 €	70 000,00 €	70 000,00 €	70 000,00 €	70 000,00 €	<b>350 000,00 €</b>
<b>SPEA</b>	375 000,00 €	374 000,00 €	374 000,00 €	374 000,00 €	374 000,00 €	<b>1 871 000,00 €</b>
						<b>7 656 950,00 €</b>

- I. *Please indicate how much external funding has already been secured to support the action plan (if relevant, for each year of the plan) and from which sources.*

Most of the governmental partner entities (DRA, DRRF, DRT) actions will be secured by their own budget and staff. AZORINA, the Microbial Observatory (OMIC) and the Association of Tourism of Azores (ATA) count on a secure budget by the Azores Regional Government, and this situation is not expected to change in the next 5 years.

The Azores UNESCO Global Geopark has already secured a project in order to measure the loading capacity in the Geosites and has its own budget to secure monitoring and conservation.

Some of the actions that will be developed by Charter Office and SPEA until June 2018 are secured by LIFE+ Lands of Priolo project.

- II. *Please indicate how you propose to raise additional funding to implement the actions and from which sources.*

The Directorate of Environment intends to apply for a LIFE Integrated project that could ensure some of the actions included in this Action Plan, not only by this entity but also by some other partners like SPEA.

In the case of Nordeste Municipality (CMN) some actions will depend on European Funds and will apply to the Regional Operational Programme for Azores (2014-2020) to secure the funds in order to implement the infrastructure building actions.

#### **C29** Human resources for implementing the action plan

- I. *Please indicate the level and nature of human resources that the PA Authority is making available to implement the action plan, including core staff, additional project staff, volunteers etc.*

The Regional Directorate of Environment will allocate two technicians at 50% of their time to the Charter Office. Another 18 technicians from the Regional Directorate of Environment will be involved in the application of the Charter Action Plan in different percentages of their time.

- II. *Please indicate the level and nature of human resources that have already been made available from external sources to implement the action plan, and from which sources.*

SPEA will assign one technician at 50% of her time to the Charter Office. All other partner entities will designate one or two technicians to accompany the implementation of their actions and participate in the Charter Local Technical Team and Forum meetings. This will take approximately a 10% of their time.

*III. Please indicate the level and nature of human resources that are being sought from external sources to implement the action plan, and from which sources.*

There won't be any human resources sought from external sources in order to implement this plan, with the exception of eventual hiring of external assistance for the accomplishment of some actions.

### **C30 Challenges in raising funding/resources**

*Do you anticipate any problems in securing sufficient funding and human resources to implement the action plan, and how do you propose to address this?*

Some of the funds necessary for the implementation of the Action Plan will depend of European Union Funds. Essentially the possibility of the Regional Directorate for Environment application to a LIFE integrated project could help secure funds for the implementation of many of the actions included in the Action Plan. Should this project not be approved, some actions may suffer a cutback in funding.

### **Commitment of partners**

*Many organisations and people will be involved in creating your sustainable destination. Please let us know who is involved and what kind of commitments have been made to deliver the goals of the sustainable tourism strategy*

**C31** Have any formal agreements been made with any partners concerning sustainable tourism in the protected area (including for the Implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan)? (e.g. legal agreement, memorandum of understanding, letter of commitment)

*Please answer yes/no and give brief details. This may include agreements with public bodies, local organisations, trade bodies or individual businesses (including under Part 2 of the Charter)*

Yes, all partner entities have signed a term of commitment with the process and the final Action Plan. Also the Priolo Brand associated companies sign a term of commitment to participate in the Charter process and develop voluntary actions in order to improve sustainability of their businesses.

**C32** If no formal agreements, is there any other good indication of commitment from partners to the implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan?

*Please answer yes or no and give a brief explanation.*

There are formal agreements.

### **Monitoring results**

*You need to check on how you are doing with your sustainable strategy and action plan, so you can be sure of success and catch up on actions that might not be progressing well. Can you let us know how you will monitor your work.*

**C33** Has a process been put in place for monitoring and reporting on progress with the implementation of the Action Plan?

*Please answer yes or no and give a brief description*

Yes and this process will be improved in relation to the monitoring of the previous action plan. The progress reports will still be annual, but it is intended to do a mid-year check of

progress with a meeting of the Local Technical Team in order to improve coordination.

**C34** Have indicators been identified for the success of the Strategy and Action plan, including how these will be monitored?

*Please answer yes or no and give a brief description (NB there is no need to set out all the indicators here).*

Yes, each action in the Action Plan has defined execution indicators and most of them includes impact indicators relating the objective they prosecute. The set of indicators can be found in the Action Plan document (4).

## **SECTION D – ADDRESSING THE KEY TOPICS**

*Getting to know how well you address the principles and key topics of the Charter. The principles and key topics of the charter are its fundamental foundation. They have been thoughtfully considered to align the work of protected areas, business and communities to create a sustainable tourism destination and realise social, economic and environmental benefits. In that way we can care for our protected areas and the people who live, work and enjoy them.*

Under the following headings, please indicate what actions have been undertaken or are proposed relating to each of the Key Topics of the Charter. We are looking for evidence that action is being taken to address each of these topics, either to make progress or to maintain existing high standards.

### **D1 Protecting valuable landscapes, biodiversity and cultural heritage**

#### **1.1 Influencing land use planning and the control of potentially damaging developments**

*Key activities and results over the past five years.*

*Were activities planned in this field which could not be completed? (Please give brief reasons.)*

*Planned activities in new action plan.*

Nowadays no potentially damaging developments are identified, and they are not expected in the near future. However there's a set of regional legislation and rules that protects the landscape, biodiversity and the cultural heritage:

- Regional Legislative Decree n.º 15/2012/A, of 2nd of April – Legal Framework for the Conservation of Nature and Protection of Biodiversity in the Autonomous Region of Azores
- Regional Legislative Decree n.º 15/2007/A, de 25 de June – Review of the Regional Network of Protected Areas of the Autonomous Region of Azores
- Regional Legislative Decree n.º 19/2008/A, of 8th of July that creates the São Miguel Natural Park
- Regional Implementing Decree n.º 29/2007/A, of 5<sup>th</sup> of December, that sets the Coastal Plan for the South coast of São Miguel
- Municipal Development Plans of Nordeste and Povoação (Aviso n.º4/2013, of 11th of January and Aviso n.º 7323/2010, of 12th of April)

Any changes in this Planning legislation should only be possible with the positive assessment of the Regional Directorate of Environment. In the last five years no damaging development was proposed for the Lands of Priolo.

However, the protected areas in the Lands of Priolo do suffer from conservation threats mainly due to the presence of invasive alien species and degradation of natural habitats. In order to reverse this situation, several actions have been developed in the last five years, with the restoration of 81 hectares of peatland in the *Graminhais* Plateau (and better management in area total of 100ha) and also almost 60 hectares of heavily invaded Laurel Forest by the LIFE+ Sustainable Laurel Forest (2009-2013) and LIFE+ Lands of Priolo (2013-2018) projects. Also a total of 250ha of native habitats restored since 2002 was managed and monitored. The improvement of habitat has recently allowed the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to reduce the Azores bullfinch's conservation status to "Vulnerable" due to the stability of its population trend for the last five years.

Also, the Furnas River Basin Management Plan, that aims to reduce the impact of intensive agricultural and forestall practices in the Protected Landscape of Furnas as well as impact



from invasive alien species proliferating within the area. In terms of landscape restoration, this plan implemented actions of combat to invasive flora and restitution of native flora, recovery of erosion gullies with green engineering, creation of retention basins for solids capture and swampy areas and the requalification of the Furnas Lake margins. Total forested area to the date is 86 hectares and the requalified area in the margins of Furnas Lake is of 32 hectares.

The Management Plan for the Forestall Perimeter and Woods of São Miguel, approved in 2015, is contributing to a better management of forestall resources in the Lands of Priolo. This Plan allowed the Forestall Perimeter to be certified by FSC® – Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC-C119744) and to implement a responsible management of the forestall production areas including recovery of natural habitats in the water lines protection zones.

For the next five years, this restoration and invasive species control actions will continue with a coordinated effort of all entities competent in the matter. Actions related to this Key Topic can be seen in table 16.

**Table 16.** Actions related to Key Topic 1.1. Influencing land use planning and the control of potentially damaging developments.

Action	Responsible entity
2.1 Management Plan for the Species or Habitats Management Protected Area of <i>Tronqueira</i> and Planalto dos Graminhais and Nature Reserve of Pico da Vara	DRA
2.2 Furnas River Basin Management (POBHLF)	DRA
2.3 Implementation of reforestation and re-naturalization actions in the Forestall Perimeter Management Plan	DRRF
2.4 Conservation and monitoring of Priolo and its habitat	SPEA
2.5 Implementation of the Strategy of Combat of Invasive Alien Species in the SPA <i>Pico da Vara / Ribeira do Guilherme</i>	DRA
2.8 Implementation of PRECEFIAS in the Lands of Priolo	DRA
2.9 Implementation of “ <i>Mais Endémicas</i> ” project in the Lands of Priolo	DRA
10.5 Disclosure/ Promotion of Endemic Plants	CMN

Most of the actions developed in the last five year plan will be continued and reinforced in this new action plan, such as management and restoration in the Species or Habitats Management Protected Area of *Tronqueira* and *Planalto dos Graminhais* and continuous monitoring of the Azores Bullfinch; the implementation of the Furnas River Basin Management Plan with an expected improvement of the ecological conditions of Furnas Lake and the further implementation of the Forestall Perimeter Management Plan.

New actions will be developed in the territory such as the implementation of the Strategy of Combat of Invasive Alien Species in the SPA *Pico da Vara / Ribeira do Guilherme* that intends to coordinate efforts and improve results in invasive species control, the implementation of PRECEFIAS (Regional Plan for Eradication and Control of Invasive Alien Flora in Sensitive Areas) and “*Mais Endémicas*” project, that aims to increase the areas with endemic species in the region.

In terms of the biggest threat to the protected areas in the territory, which is invasive alien species, there was defined an action in Charter Action Plan (2012-2016) on developing endemic species gardens in the territory, trying to reduce the introduction of invasive alien plants for ornamental purposes. This action was not completed due to technical problems regarding the area selected for the implementation but it will be included in the present Action

Plan as two different actions that aim to promote the use of endemic and native species in gardening and are specially focused for tourism developments (2.9 Development of “Mais Endêmicas” project in the Lands of Priolo and 10.5 Disclosure/ Promotion of Endemic Plants). These actions could reduce the use of exotic species for gardening thus reducing the risk of introduction of new invasive species.

### 1.2 Influencing the location, type and design of tourism developments

*Key activities and results over the past five years.*

*Were activities planned in this field which could not be completed? (Please give brief reasons.)*

*Planned activities in new action plan.*

About the touristic developments, there has not been any potentially damaging development to the moment and it is not expected in the near future.

To promote recovery of existing building and restoration of traditional houses, the previous Charter Action Plan included an action to promote local accommodation. This action was not completed as expected but still it had a positive impact in the new touristic developments in the territory. There has been some touristic development in the territory, especially in the last year, but most of the new developments have been small developments related to rural and local accommodation and therefore perfectly compatible with sustainable tourism. There has also been two bigger developments, the enlargement of the Terra Nostra Garden Hotel and the new Furnas Boutique Hotel Thermal & Spa, both of them located in previously existent buildings and therefore with no impact on the landscape.

There are no specific actions in the Action Plan concerning to this key topic because it is not considered relevant at the moment. Nevertheless, main actors in promoting and licensing tourism developments in the territory are present in the Charter Technical Team, with the exception of Povoação municipality, and should there be any intention to promote a touristic development that would not be considered sustainable it could be addresses from this Charter Technical Team.

### 1.3 Managing visitor flows, activities and behaviour in sensitive areas and sites

*Key activities and results over the past five years.*

*Were activities planned in this field which could not be completed? (Please give brief reasons.)*

*Planned activities in new action plan.*

In the past five years the monitoring of trails has been increasing in the Habitat/Species Management Area of *Pico da Vara / Planalto dos Graminhais*. All the trails to the *Pico da Vara* were monitored and all visitors were registered and counted. Also the *Grená-Pico do Ferro* walking trail is monitored with a different methodology.

There is an electronic system of registry for permissions to climb the *Pico da Vara*, but in the number of registries received in this system is lower than the real number of people counted in the trails.

Another action from the Charter Action Plan (2012-2016) was to develop a Nature Sports Charter for the Lands of Priolo. The Nature Sports Charter of the Lands of Priolo was developed during 2016. However it was decided not to advance with the publication since it will be developed a single Nature Sports Charter for all the protected areas of São Miguel Natural Park. This Nature Sports Charter is expected to be finished by the end of 2017

In the Charter Action Plan (2017-2021) there are a few actions that aim to improve the management of visitation and activities in the protected areas, as well as in some tourist sites that may have crowding problems (see table 17).

**Table 17.** Actions related to Key Topic 1.3. Managing visitor flows, activities and behaviour in sensitive areas and sites.

Action	Responsible entity
2.6 Inspection and monitoring of the Lands of Priolo	DRA
2.7 Conservation of Geossites of the Lands of Priolo	GEOPARQUE
3.1 Visitation Plan for the Protected Landscape of Furnas	DRA
3.2 Visitation Plan for the Habitats or Species Management Protected Area of <i>Tronqueira</i> and <i>Planalto dos Graminhais</i>	DRA
3.3 Authorisation form for Pico da Vara	DRA
3.4 Determination of carrying capacity in the Geossites in the Lands of Priolo	GEOPARQUE
3.9 Promotion of alternative routes	ADLN
10.4 Sustainable Mobility Plan of Nordeste	CMN

It is expected in the following five year period, to develop and implement two Visitation Plans for the most visited protected areas in the territory: Protected Landscape of Furnas and Protected Area for Management of Habitat or Species of *Tronqueira* and *Planalto dos Graminhais*. These plans will try to determine the types of visitors in the protected areas, main fluxes and improve signalling and interpretation resources in order to improve quality of visitation and reduce potential negative impacts in the territory. The electronic registry requirement for climbing to *Pico da Vara* will be maintained and reinforced and a wider program of visitation monitoring and conservation will be implemented in the Main Geosites, identified by the Azores UNESCO Global Geopark, of the territory and on sensitive areas in order to reduce negative effects of visitation

With regard to the crowded touristic sites, which is a new reality that as intensified in the last couple of years, the Charter Action Plan (2017-2021) includes an action that aims to promote new itineraries in the territory in order to diversify the visitor's routes and prevent crowding of most emblematic places. The Sustainable Mobility Plan to be conducted by Nordeste municipality will also consider those crowding situations in case they are verified in the municipality.

## D2 Supporting conservation through tourism

### 2.1 Encouraging visitors and tourism businesses to support conservation, through donations, volunteering and other activity

*Key activities and results over the past five years.*

*Were activities planned in this field which could not be completed? (Please give brief reasons.)*

*Planned activities in new action plan.*

The Previous Charter Action Plan (2012-2016) included a Volunteering program coordinated by several institutions working in the Lands of Priolo territory. This program was implemented with more than 400 volunteers involved in actions taking place in the territory in those five years. It also intended to involve tourism businesses in the collaboration on the conservation of the protected area through the Priolo Brand, which was implemented with 46 companies associated to this brand. Some of this companies assumed actions related to promoting volunteer work or supporting volunteering activities by providing discounts, collaborating in

the maintenance of trails or even donating some of their benefits directly for the conservation of the protected areas.

The present Charter Action Plan (2017-2021) maintains those actions (see table 18) and aims to increase their impact in conservation. Two different volunteering programs will be promoted in the Lands of Priolo one developed by the Regional Directorate for Environment and the other by SPEA. Also, the companies with the Priolo Brand, renewing their commitments have the opportunity to increase their tourism revenues. The intention to implement the Charter phase II, together with other Charter Parks in Portugal, will be a good opportunity to increase those incomes, learning from good practices applied in other areas.

**Table 18.** Actions related to Key Topic 2.1 Encouraging visitors and tourism businesses to support conservation, through donations, volunteering and other activity.

Action	Responsible entity
7.1 Volunteering in the actions of the Furnas River Basin Management Plan	DRA
7.2 SPEA volunteering programme	SPEA
10.1 Priolo Brand	GABCETS

## 2.2 Using revenues obtained from tourism-related activity to support conservation

*Key activities and results over the past five years.*

*Were activities planned in this field which could not be completed? (Please give brief reasons.)*

*Planned activities in new action plan.*

When the first Charter Action Plan (2012-2016) was prepared the tourism economic situation tourism was low. Many companies were struggling to maintain their activity because the tourist visitation in the island was very low, particularly during the low season. For this reason, the focus of the plan was on increasing tourism revenues to the companies and to create a stronger partnership with them.

The main action aimed at this purpose was the creation of the Priolo Brand. Presently, in this scheme, we count with two companies that share their benefits with conservation organizations, both SPEA and Regional Directorate of Environment. Also some interpretative structures collect donations that are directly spent in conservation in the area: the Priolo's Interpretation Centre and the Monitoring and Investigation Centre of Furnas.

In the future Action Plan (2017-2021) we intend to maintain the Priolo Brand action (10.1) and increase its impact on conservation as well as in sustainability encouraging stronger commitment of companies associated to the brand as an implementation of Charter Phase II. Also, the interpretation centres will continue to promote donation gathering for the conservation actions taking place in the area.

## 2.3 Establishing, supporting and promoting tourism-related investments, projects and activities that help to conserve the natural and cultural heritage

*Key activities and results over the past five years.*

*Were activities planned in this field which could not be completed? (Please give brief reasons.)*

*Planned activities in new action plan.*

From the 400 volunteers involved in the Volunteering action included in previous Charter Action Plan, at least 80 were tourist (or came to the Azores for the volunteer opportunity). One of the actions that attracted the largest number of tourists was the Priolo Atlas, which

occurs every 4 years and involves 50 volunteers, most of whom are from abroad, that come to count all the Priolo's in the world.

The volunteering programs will continue in the present Charter Action Plan (see table 19) aiming to increase participation, coordination among entities and disclosure of volunteering offers to visitors and local population.

**Table 19.** Actions related to Key Topic 2.3 Establishing, supporting and promoting tourism-related investments, projects and activities that help to conserve the natural and cultural heritage.

Action	Responsible entity
7.1 Volunteering in the actions of the Furnas River Basin Management Plan	DRA
7.2 SPEA volunteering programme	SPEA

### D3 Reducing carbon footprint, pollution and wasteful resource use

#### 3.1 Working with tourism businesses to improve environmental management, including use of energy and water, waste management, and noise and light pollution

*Key activities and results over the past five years.*

*Were activities planned in this field which could not be completed? (Please give brief reasons.)*

*Planned activities in new action plan.*

In Charter Action Plan (2012-2016) the Priolo Brand action aimed to promote sustainable development of touristic companies by encouraging them to assume three voluntary actions to develop in three years. This action was successful, with 11 environmental sustainability actions developed by the companies. During this 5 year period of application of the Charter Action Plan, new initiatives were promoted by the Regional Directorate of Environment, such as the “ECO Freguesia, Freguesia Limpa” program, that although is not directed to tourism companies, is very important in the removal of the waste disposal in nature and the “Miosotis Azores” award for accommodation enterprises that intends to promote environmental management of those enterprises. All this actions were developed simultaneously to the Charter Plan (2012-2016) and Priolo Brand manual included them as suggested actions. For this reason, in the present Charter Action Plan (2017-2021) they are included as sustainability actions to be promoted in the territory (table 20).

It was also planned to develop some training opportunities in sustainability for those companies. This action was not completely successful due to limited time availability of company owners, most of which have family businesses. For this reason, in the present Charter Action Plan, these actions has been transformed in an online training programme, that we expect to have a more positive reception by the company owners.

**Table 20.** Actions related to Key Topic 3.1 Working with tourism businesses to improve environmental management, including use of energy and water, waste management, and noise and light pollution.

Action	Responsible entity
9.3 On-line training programme for the companies in the Priolo Brand	GABCETS
10.1 Priolo Brand	GABCETS
10.2 "ECO Freguesia, freguesia limpa" contest	DRA
10.3 Miosotis Azores and Green Key Awards	DRA

#### 3.2 Promoting the use of public transport and other alternatives to cars

*Key activities and results over the past five years.*

*Were activities planned in this field which could not be completed? (Please give brief reasons.)*

#### *Planned activities in new action plan.*

The public transport offer in the Lands of Priolo is very deficient but the demand is also very low and for this reason it is not considered economically efficient to increase the routes. In previous Charter Action Plan (2012-2016) there was an action aiming to promote public transport in the Lands of Priolo, especially in Nordeste municipality, that was not possible to achieve due to the lack of economic revenue of this kind of transport. Anyway, and despite this known difficulties, the Nordeste municipality included an action in the present Charter Action Plan (2016-2021) aiming to promote sustainable mobility in the municipality (10.4). This Plan intends to collaborate with the Povoação municipality and the Regional Directorate for Terrestrial Transport to promote new public transport routes that allow visitors to have a transportation alternative to cars. Also, the Nordeste municipality intends to promote bicycle transport in the municipality by installing a “By-Cycling” infrastructure that will allow residents and visitors to rent bikes to visit the area.

#### **D4 Providing safe access, quality facilities and special experiences of the protected area, available for all visitors**

##### **4.1 Providing a wide range of access opportunities, with attention to safety and risk management**

*Key activities and results over the past five years.*

*Were activities planned in this field which could not be completed? (Please give brief reasons.)*

*Planned activities in new action plan.*

In the previous Charter Action Plan (2012-2016) actions relating access to São Miguel Natural Park were related to specific types of use of the protected areas. One general action was related to the creation and legal publishing of a Nature Sports Charter for the territory (2.7). This action is near to be completed now, and the charter is expected to be published in 2017.

There were three actions related to the creation of a solid network of walking trails within the protected areas and the rest of the Lands of Priolo (actions 2.1, 2.2 & 2.4). These actions were partially completed: the Azores Official trails network (2.1 & 2.2) was completely reviewed in the last 5 years, and trails were eliminated, altered and improved in order to promote a more coherent and efficient network with a guaranteed maintenance in all its extent. Presently, the network is more consistent, with **9** official trails in the Lands of Priolo, and new trails are being added at regular pace in order to assure that the total extent of the network is correctly maintained every year. Nordeste municipality also promoted **3** municipal trails, which are not considered official yet, but could be included in the official network in the future or remain as part of a Municipal Network of trails in case they don't fit the criteria to be considered official by the region (This criteria are related to the security of the hikers, length and the type of pavement. The Municipal Trail Network of Nordeste was created with the objective of including this trails).

Promotion of Birdwatching (2.8) and Geocaching (2.9) activities were also actions in the previous Charter Action Plan. Both actions were completed within the implementation period.

For future Charter Action Plan (2017-2021) there are seven action related to this topic (table 21). Three of them are global actions related to the implementation of the Nature Sports Charter as well as the definition of Public Use Plans for the two more visited areas in the territory: Furnas Protected Landscape and the Habitat or Species Management Area of Tronqueira and Planalto dos Graminhais (3.1 & 3.2). The latter is already in draft and expected to begin its implementation in early 2018. These action intend to improve visitation

in a general way, prevent visitor fluxes, characterize types of visitors and promote new visitation infrastructures. In terms of walking trails, which is the territory main attraction, the Azores Official Trail Network will continue to be improved in the Lands of Priolo (4.2) and the Municipal Trail Network of Nordeste (4.3) will also improve by including new trails and promoting a better signalization of the existent ones. The new Charter Action plan also includes actions related to promote mountain biking and geocaching. Promotion of other types of nature sports in the area, such as canyoning could be included in the future, since it is an increasing activity in the area, by creation disclosure materials about this practice in the territory.

**Table 21.** Actions related to Key Topic 4.1 Providing a wide range of access opportunities, with attention to safety and risk management.

Action	Responsible entity
3.1 Visitation Plan for the Protected Landscape of Furnas	DRA
3.2 Visitation Plan for the Habitats or Species Management Protected Area of <i>Tronqueira</i> and <i>Planalto dos Graminhais</i>	DRA
4.1 Implementation of the Nature Sports Charter in the Lands of Priolo	DRA
4.2 Maintenance of Official trails in the Lands of Priolo	DRA e DRT
4.3 Municipal Trails Network of Nordeste	CMN
4.4 Maintenance of the “16 seconds” mountain bike trail	DRA
4.5 Maintenance of the Geocaching spots in the Leisure Forestall Reserves	DRRF

#### 4.2 Improving the quality of visitor facilities and services

*Key activities and results over the past five years.*

*Were activities planned in this field which could not be completed? (Please give brief reasons.)*

*Planned activities in new action plan.*

About the visitor’s facilities and services the previous Charter Action Plan (2012-2016) included activities related to the functioning of all the interpretation centres existent in the area. Those centres receive an important number of visitors in the area (see table 22) It included the creation of a new interpretation centre, the Forestry Disclosure Centre of Nordeste, inaugurated in 2012. All this actions were implemented as expected and they provide a good network for the understanding of the natural values of the protected areas in the Lands of Priolo. All those actions will continue in the future Charter Action Plan (2017-2021) (see table 23).

**Table 22.** Number of visitors in the Interpretation Centres in the Lands of Priolo.

	Furnas Monitoring and Research Center	Priolo Interpretation Center	Forestry Disclosure Center of Nordeste	Microbial Observatory
<b>2012</b>	5.912	3.134	100	17904
<b>2013</b>	17.599	3.111	165	10.986
<b>2014</b>	17.908	2.293	1.066	12.777
<b>2015</b>	9.397	2.593	2.761	17.983
<b>2016</b>	9.440	1.796	1.212	20.411
<b>Totais</b>	<b>60.256</b>	<b>12.927</b>	<b>5.304</b>	<b>80.061</b>

About the touristic information centres, the previous Action Plan included in 2014 a new action that aimed to develop a new Tourism Information Centre in Nordeste, this centre is already implemented and it is also included in Charter Action Plan (2017-2021)

**Table 23.** Actions related to Key Topic 4.2 Improving the quality of visitor facilities and services.

Action	Responsible entity
3.1 Visitation Plan for the Protected Landscape of Furnas	DRA
3.2 Visitation Plan for the Habitats or Species Management Protected Area of <i>Tronqueira</i> and <i>Planalto dos Graminhais</i>	DRA
3.3 Authorisation form for Pico da Vara	DRA
3.5 Touristic signalling of Nordeste municipality	CMN
3.6 Improvement of signalling in the Leisure Forestall Reserves	DRRF
8.1 Priolo's Interpretation Centre (CAP)	SPEA
8.2 Monitoring and Research centre of Furnas (CMIF)	AZORINA
8.3 Old Orchard in the Furnas Lake fumaroles	DRA
8.4 Azores Microbial Observatory (OMIC)	OMIC
8.5 Forestall Disclosure Centre of Nordeste	DRRF
8.6 Nurseries of Plants of Azores in Sto. António	SPEA
8.7 Graminhais Interpretation Centre	CMN
11.11 Production of touristic information of the municipality of Nordeste	CMN

#### 4.3 Providing visitors with specific tourism offers which involve discovery, interpretation and appreciation of the area's special natural and cultural heritage

*Key activities and results over the past five years.*

*Were activities planned in this field which could not be completed? (Please give brief reasons.)*

*Planned activities in new action plan.*

In Charter Action Plan (2012-2016) there were some actions aimed to promote tourism offers that involved the discovery and interpretation of the territory. However these actions were more focused on structuring the offer, this is to create the infrastructures that would allow the development of this specific touristic products. We consider that it only makes sense to promote a specific itinerary once all conditions of quality are met. For this reason, the development of thematic routes in the Lands of Priolo, only started by the end of the period of application of the Charter Action Plan, with the publication of "Conservation Route" that suggest the visit to all nature conservation and restoration actions taking place in the area. There are more thematic routes in preparation and we expect them to be released in the beginning of Charter Action Plan (2017 – 2021). This thematic route preparation also had a delay because it was originally of the responsibility of a company that later in the process decided that it was not interested in continuing and the action had to be developed by the Charter Office. One product that was clearly promoted was the volunteering tourism, with more than **50** volunteers involved in monitoring and restoration actions in the Lands of Priolo every year.

For the Charter Action Plan (2017 – 2021) we elaborate again actions to structure the offer and actions to promote different types of tourism (see table 24). Those actions are interrelated and promotion will not be initiated until structuring of the product is adequate. The proposal of products in the Charter Action Plan (2017 – 2021) includes:

- **Specialist Nature Products:** This product is quite used and well-structured at this moment, but the development of visitation plans will ensure that an increase in visitation in certain areas does not pose any threats to the conservation of the protected areas, as well as ensure that visitors can have adequate information along this visit. Habitat Restoration Actions, Birdwatching, Botany and Geotourism are interesting sub-product inside this type, that are already identified but need to



improve signalling (3.1, 3.2, 8.9). For the first one, a proposed itinerary has been produced in 2016.

- **Hiking:** This product is already highly used by the visitors in the territory, but it's important to previously define a coherent promotion of the network mixing Regional Official Trails (4.2) and Municipal Trails (4.3).
- **Family tourism:** There are children friendly facilities and visits in the Lands of Priolo and the territory has unique characteristic for travelling with young children due to security and safety. The aim of the Charter Action Plan in this type of tourism is to identify those children friendly spots, improve some other places like ethnographic museums for example in order to promote a more children appealing offer and create an itinerary for families with young children (5.2).
- **Agriculture and tradition tourism:** The traditions and customs are very alive in the Lands of Priolo. The experience of local culture can be very authentic, from traditional music and dancing to traditional religious celebrations like "*Espirito Santo*" *Holy Ghost festivities*. The purpose with this type of tourism promotion will be to maintain authenticity as much as possible; therefore, the objective will be to open and disclose actually happening traditional events to the visitors and promote events like folklore festivals, philharmonic orchestras' concerts, etc. (5.1, 11.6). Other traditions that are alive in the territory, but not explored as touristic resources are all traditions related to rural life, from agriculture tasks such as the production of cheese, bread or other traditional products. Since this offer is not regarded as an opportunity by the local population, the Charter Action Plan proposes some promotional events of this kind of offer with the objective of testing its interest and trying to promote the offer (5.1, 5.5). Also, the Quinta da Lazeira project (5.4) intends to replicate some of these traditional activities as a touristic resource.
- **Patrimony and Culture tourism:** The Lands of Priolo have an interesting patrimony linked to the fact of being the first populated area in the island of São Miguel and to the rurality, but some of this patrimony needs to be recovered, identified and explained to visitors (5.3).. This type of itineraries will be very interesting in terms of alternative itineraries that include less visited areas of the Lands of Priolo as intended in action 5.9.
- **Gastronomic Tourism:** Geogastronomy is a typical product of Furnas and an *ex-libris* in any visit to the Azores, but there are some other gastronomic traditions in the Lands of Priolo, linked to traditional uses of products like corn, yam, sweet potatoes, bread, cheese, rooster capon, etc. that are still present on the tables of the locals families and could be recovered and innovated by restaurants. There are also some social economy institutions that produce liquors, jams, biscuits and bread that has the potential to be visited. The Charter Action Plan (2017-2021) aims to promote this recovery and reinvention of traditional food in order to increase the number of restaurants and shops offering interesting gastronomic experiences (6.3) and then, promote a Gastronomic route beyond the traditional "Cozido da caldeira" Portuguese stew.
- **Inclusive Tourism:** In the first Charter Action Plan (2017 – 2021) an accessibility study was conducted and some adapted accommodation business and restaurants were identified. There is still a need to apply some of the suggestions in the study to some places in the territory, as well as to apply adequate signalling in order to ensure

the existence of an adequate proposal of inclusive tourism, not only for visitors, but also for the local population (3.7)

- **Nature Sports:** Some sports are practiced in the Lands of Priolo and the Nature Sports Charter (4.1) will allow defining the locals and conditions for these sports to be practiced sustainably. After the approval of this document, it will be possible to promote nature sports in the area. There are some other actions taking place in the territory that promote some of this sports and activities, like the geocaching points in the Forestall Reserves (4.5) and the creation and maintenance of Mountain biking trails (4.4).

**Table 24.** Actions related to Key Topic 4.3 Providing visitors with specific tourism offers which involve discovery, interpretation and appreciation of the area's special natural and cultural heritage.

Action	Responsible entity
3.1 Visitation Plan for the Protected Landscape of Furnas	DRA
3.2 Visitation Plan for the Habitats or Species Management Protected Area of <i>Tronqueira</i> and <i>Planalto dos Graminhais</i>	DRA
3.3 Authorisation form for Pico da Vara	DRA
3.7 Promotion of accessibility in the council of Nordeste	CMN
3.9 Promotion of alternative routes	ADLN
4.1 Implementation of Nature Sports Charter in the Lands of Priolo	DRA
4.2 Official Trails Networks maintenance in the Lands of Priolo	DRA e DRT
4.3 Municipal Trails Network of Nordeste	CMN
4.4 Maintenance of the "16 seconds" mountain bike trail	DRA
4.5 Maintenance of the Geocaching spots in the Leisure Forestall Reserves	DRRF
5.1 Offering tradition	CMN
5.2 Promotion of a Family Tour in Nordeste	CMN
5.3 Promotion na recovery of patrimony in Nordeste	CMN
5.4 Quinta da Lazeira	CMN
5.5 Promotion of Agro-tourism	ADLN
6.3 Training and awareness about gastronomy in the municipality of Nordeste	ADLN
8.9 Interpretative signalling of the Azores UNESCO Global Geopark	GEOPARQUE
11.6 Monthly Agenda of the Lands of Priolo	GABCETS

#### 4.4 Providing facilities and information for visitors with special needs

*Key activities and results over the past five years.*

*Were activities planned in this field which could not be completed? (Please give brief reasons.)*

*Planned activities in new action plan.*

In the first Charter Action Plan (2012 – 2016) an accessibility study was conducted and existing adapted accommodation business and restaurants were identified and possible improvements were identified all over the area. Some actions took place in order to improve accessibility, the new exhibition in the Priolo's interpretation centre, counts with a sensorial room and SPEA intends to include more inclusive materials like a 3D model of Priolo or of the protected area. Still, it is necessary to apply more of the suggestions in the study to other places in the territory and in the present Charter Action Plan (2017-2021) Azorina and Municipality of Nordeste have included actions to do so (3.7 & 3.8). Also the visitation plans for the protected areas will take into consideration the accessibility of those areas (3.1 & 3.2) (table 25).

**Table 25.** Actions related to Key Topic 4.4 Providing facilities and information for visitors with special needs.

Action	Responsible entity
3.1 Visitation Plan for the Protected Landscape of Furnas	DRA
3.2 Visitation Plan for the Habitats or Species Management Protected Area of <i>Tronqueira</i> and <i>Planalto dos Graminhais</i>	DRA
3.7 Promotion of accessibility in the municipality of Nordeste	CMN
3.8 Promotion of accessibility in the Natural Park in the Lands of Priolo	AZORINA

## D5 Effectively communicating the area to visitors

### 5.1 Ensuring that marketing materials and activities promote the area effectively and responsibly

*Key activities and results over the past five years.*

*Were activities planned in this field which could not be completed? (Please give brief reasons.)*

*Planned activities in new action plan.*

In the first Charter Action Plan (2012-2016) two actions were implemented in order to coordinate the edition of marketing materials and activities and ensure responsible and effective disclosure: the creation of a manual for marketing materials, which was not completed, and the creation of a database of images and video that could be used to by partners in the Charter Plan and in the Priolo Brand, this second action was partially implemented but we are still testing the best informatics tool for sharing this database due to its size and limitations on the website of the Lands of Priolo.

For next Charter Action Plan (2017-2021) (see table 26) we intend to coordinate this, by developing a communication plan for the Lands of Priolo with the involvement of all stakeholders and also by increase the video and image database with a text database with accurate information regarding the different touristic resources written by the competent entity in the matter, in order to avoid misinformation. Another important change in the present Charter Action Plan is the inclusion of the Azores Tourism Association to the partner entities; this entity is responsible for the external communication of the Azores Destination and therefore will be an excellent associate to increase the effectiveness of our communication.

**Table 26.** Actions related to Key Topic 5.1. Ensuring that marketing materials and activities promote the area effectively and responsibly.

Action	Responsible entity
11.1 Communication Plan for the Lands of Priolo	DRT, ATA, DRA e SPEA
11.8 Disclosure of the Lands of Priolo in VisitAzores website	ATA
11.9 Organisation of Fam trips and Press trips in the Lands of Priolo	ATA
11.10 Uniformisation of touristic information produced about the Lands Priolo	GABCETS

### 5.2 Providing good quality and effective visitor information and interpretation

*Key activities and results over the past five years.*

*Were activities planned in this field which could not be completed? (Please give brief reasons.)*

*Planned activities in new action plan.*

All interpretation centres and spaces (8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5) in the territory provide accurate information about different natural values of the protected areas in the Lands of Priolo. All this centres had actions in the previous Charter Action Plan (2012-2016) and two new

interpretation spaces are included in this new Charter Action Plan (2017-2021) (see table 27); the Nurseries of Plants of the Azores (8.6), already functioning, and the *Graminhais* Interpretation Centre (8.7), in project.

About the interpretation and communication materials available to visitors, in previous Charter Action Plan (2012-2016), we developed a website about the territory, created a touristic guide, initiated the publication of a monthly agenda of activities in the territory and started creating thematic routes (explained in question 4.3).

All this information materials were translated to English, French, Spanish and German, with the exception of the guide and website that was only translated in English

The Future Charter Action Plan (2017-2021) will maintain all these actions and intends to have a better coordination, through the definition of a Communication Plan (11.1). This Communication Plan will also increase the effectiveness of communication. The municipality of Nordeste will also develop information materials coordinated with this action plan (11.11).

**Table 27.** Actions related to Key Topic 5.2 Providing good quality and effective visitor information and interpretation.

Action	Responsible entity
8.1 Priolo's Interpretation Centre (CAP)	SPEA
8.2 Monitoring and Research Centre of Furnas (CMIF)	AZORINA
8.3 Old Orchard of the Fumaroles in Furnas Lake	DRA
8.4 Azores Microbial Observatory (OMIC)	OMIC
8.5 Florestall Disclosure Centre of Nordeste	DRRF
8.6 Nursery of Native Species of Azores in Sto. António	SPEA
8.7 Graminhais Interpretation Centre	CMN
11.1 Communication Plan for the Lands of Priolo	DRT, ATA, DRA e SPEA
11.2 Maintenance of Lands of Priolo website	DRA
11.3 Touristic Guide of the Lands of Priolo	GABCETS
11.4 Creation of Touristic Routes in the Lands of Priolo	GABCETS
11.5 Translation of touristic materials	DRT
11.6 Monthly agenda of the Lands of Priolo	GABCETS
11.11 Production of touristic information about Nordeste municipality	CMN

### 5.3 Ensuring that tourism businesses and other local stakeholders are well informed about the area and provide relevant and accurate information to visitors

*Key activities and results over the past five years.*

*Were activities planned in this field which could not be completed? (Please give brief reasons.)*

*Planned activities in new action plan.*

In the previous Charter Action Plan (2012-2016), several trainings courses were planned in order to increase business and local *stakeholders* knowledge about the protected areas in the territory. In the total were developed 3 courses of Flora and Fauna of the SPA *Pico da Vara/ Ribeira do Guilherme* were implemented with 30 participants, one course of Guides for the São Miguel Natural Park with 15 participants and a short training for the staff of Nordeste Tourism Centre with 5 participants.

Also it was offered information materials to the companies associated to the Priolo Brand. These materials are destined to install information points where the customers can access to the information. Presently, we have 45 information points.

In future Charter Action Plan (2017-2021) (see table 28) we will continue offering the information points and the promotion of training courses for guides and other business owners and the implementation of online courses in order to increase the number of participants. Also we will include the businesses and other stakeholders in the definition of the communication plan in order to determine their needs for information.

**Table 28.** Actions related to Key Topic 5.3. Ensuring that tourism businesses and other local stakeholders are well informed about the area and provide relevant and accurate information to visitors.

Action	Responsible entity
9.1 Course for Guides in the Natural Parks of Azores	DRA
9.2 Training of tourism technicians of Nordeste municipality	CMN
9.3 Online training platform for companies in the Priolo Brand	GABCETS
11.1 Communication Plan for the Lands of Priolo	DRT, ATA, DRA e SPEA
11.7 Information points of Priolo Brand	DRA

#### 5.4 Providing specific information and interpretation for young people, schools and student groups.

*Key activities and results over the past five years.*

*Were activities planned in this field which could not be completed? (Please give brief reasons.)*

*Planned activities in new action plan.*

Although there was no specific action in the previous Charter Action Plan (2012-2016) about working with schools, the environmental education services of the São Miguel Natural Park and the Priolo's Interpretation Centre educational programme were in action and involved more than 4000 students every year. Also the Microbial Observatory, the Azores UNESCO Global Geopark and the Forestry Disclosure Centre of Nordeste develop activities with schools.

For Charter Action Plan (2017-2021) these actions were separated to the interpretation components of the Centres (see table 29)

**Table 29.** Actions related to Key Topic 5.3. Ensuring that tourism businesses and other local stakeholders are well informed about the area and provide relevant and accurate information to visitors.

Action	Responsible entity
10.6 Eco-Escolas programme in the Lands of Priolo	DRA
10.7 Parque Escola programme in the Lands of Priolo	AZORINA
10.8 School programme from the Priolo's Interpretation Centre	SPEA

## D6 Ensuring social cohesion

### 6.1 Anticipating, monitoring and minimising any existing and potential conflicts with local residents

*Key activities and results over the past five years.*

*Were activities planned in this field which could not be completed? (Please give brief reasons.)*

*Planned activities in new action plan.*

Previous Charter Action Plan included participatory meetings in the parishes of the Lands of Priolo in order to identify suggestions from local population but also potential conflicts. In 2014, 10 meetings were developed in the parishes of the Lands of Priolo and involved 109 people in total. It was very difficult to complete the meetings in all the 15 parishes, and

although they were scheduled, some of them were not developed due to lack of participants or involvement by the parish authority. So far no conflicts have been identified, but the increase of the number of tourist due to recent new airlines policy may cause some conflicts, especially in the most visited areas, like Furnas.

For the future Charter Action Plan (2017-2021) we intend to increase this type of participation, as well as develop other channels for participation, essentially online, in order to be able to include as many opinions and suggestions as possible into the Charter Plan (Action 1.4) and of course provide opportunities for any eventual conflict to be expressed. Also, we intend to develop surveys for local population and businesses (Action 1.8) in order to measure their perception on tourism. Also the Monitoring Plan for the Charter Action Plan (Action 1.5) will define indicators for each of the Key Topics in the Charter that can be measured every year.

**Table 30.** Actions related to Key Topic 6.1. Anticipating, monitoring and minimising any existing and potential conflicts with local residents.

Action	Responsible entity
1.4 Promotion of alternative participation channels	GABCETS (DRA e SPEA)
1.5 Monitoring of the Action Plan	GABCETS (DRA e SPEA)
1.8 Surveys to local population and businessmen	ADLN

## 6.2 Maintaining good communication and engagement between local residents, businesses, visitors and the protected area authority

*Key activities and results over the past five years.*

*Were activities planned in this field which could not be completed? (Please give brief reasons.)*

*Planned activities in new action plan.*

In the previous Charter Action Plan (2012-2016) communication and commitment was the responsibility of the Charter Office and actions that aimed to maintain meetings in every parish of the territory was included. As explained in previous question, this action was difficult to accomplish and only **10 of the 15 meetings scheduled (one for each parish of the lands of Priolo) were developed. Those meetings involved 109 people** in total. Also, a private group including all partners was created to increase participation and communication, this group has presently **35 members**. The Charter Office also maintained regular contact with stakeholders by e-mail with an average of 2 e-mails per month.

About the communication with visitors, and besides the work developed by Interpretation and Tourism Information Centres that receive an **average of 40.000 visitors per year**, the Charter Action Plan included the presence in Tourism Fairs, like the British Birdwatching Fair and Sagres Festival, as well as the presence in emigrant meetings in the U.S.A and Canada, as tools to reach potential visitors.

For the next five-year period, the Charter Office will still be responsible for ensuring the communication with local population, businesses and visitors. Main action in terms of commitment will be the maintenance of the Permanent Forum (1.3), this should be the main communication channel and although we will promote participation in other ways, this would be the only decision making organ in terms of Charter Action Plan. Alternative participation way will include online systems like the private Facebook group and meetings in parishes. Also, some thematic meetings and awareness sessions (6.1, 6.2, 6.3) are foreseen in the Charter Action Plan with specifics groups and all this meetings and session could be engagement opportunities.

**Table 31.** Actions related to Key Topic 6.2. Maintaining good communication and engagement between local residents, businesses, visitors and the protected area authority.

Action	Responsible entity
1.1 Charter Office for the Lands of Priolo	GABCETS (DRA e SPEA)
1.3 Permanent Forum for Sustainable Tourism	GABCETS (DRA e SPEA)
1.4 Promotion of alternative participation channels	GABCETS (DRA e SPEA)
6.1 Promotion and diversification of handcrafting products in Nordeste	ADLN
6.2 Awareness raising campaign with local businessmen about tourism opportunities	ADLN
6.3 Awareness and training about gastronomy in the municipality of Nordeste.	ADLN

### 6.3 Encouraging and developing appropriate partnership activity with and between stakeholders

*Key activities and results over the past five years.*

*Were activities planned in this field which could not be completed? (Please give brief reasons.)*

*Planned activities in new action plan.*

Local Technical Team and Priolo Brand are the main action in this Key topic. In first Charter Action Plan (2012-2016) the Local Technical Team included almost all the entities with actions in the Plan and was initially divided in working works, the objective of these working groups was to coordinate actions and it was proposed that it would meet once per trimester. This Local Technical Team encountered some difficulties in setting the meetings and being able to count with all the representatives. For this reason, the organization of this Local Technical Team suffered some changes along the application of the Charter Action Plan. Firstly, working groups were eliminated since representatives in all groups were almost the same. Later, new tools have been identified in order to try to ensure the bigger number of entities present in the meetings and to try to avoid meeting by ensuring communication by digital tools of co-working. In future Charter Action Plan (2017-2021) the Local Technical Team will continue to meet regularly and will have to coordinate a bigger number of actions.

Priolo Brand was created as a symbol of partnership between individual businesses and the Park authority, but it also intended to increase networking between the companies in the brand in order to produce an integrated offer for the territory. This last objective was not accomplished in this first five years of the Charter, although some little steps were taken like one Priolo Brand companies meeting and two events to which companies were invited. Networking is not usual in tourism in the Azores and, since the number of visitors was reduced, companies regard each other more as competitors than potential partners towards a common goal, changing this view will take longer than expected. This networking will be an important objective to be accomplished in the next five years of the Charter in which some actions, like the communication plan will be participated. We expect that by increasing participation and engaging companies in themes, like external communication, which is very important for them, we may improve their interest in networking. We also intend to promote more opportunities for companies in the Priolo Brand to meet.

## D7 Strengthening prosperity in the local community

### 7.1 Promoting the provision and identity of local produce and services and their purchase and use by visitors and tourism businesses

*Key activities and results over the past five years.*

*Were activities planned in this field which could not be completed? (Please give brief reasons.)*

*Planned activities in new action plan.*

Local products in the Lands of Priolo are not very diversified or easy to find, and it is not easy to see initiatives emerge in order to recreate old traditional products or create new products in the territory, both in terms of handcrafting products and food products. The previous Charter Action Plan did not have any specific action regarding the promotion of local products and services, but since this was a weakness identified by the verifier. The Charter Office tried to identify in parishes meetings potential products and the reasons for this lack of emergence of initiatives; we found two essential reasons: lack of imagination or interest in developing new products or adapting traditional crafts to actual trends and law restrictions that make it difficult to sell home-made products and even agricultural products to visitors.

In order to tackle the first identified reason, and thanks to the involvement of the Nordeste Local Development Association, in the future Charter Action Plan (2017-2021) we will develop several information sessions with local artisans and businesses in order to promote new products and new sales presentations that could drive visitors to buy more local products (actions 6.1& 6.2).

An action that had some impact in overcoming the second identified problem and promoting new local products and sale of local products to the public was the Farmer's Market and Handcrafting Fair regularly promoted by Nordeste Municipality initiated in 2014. This markets will continue in the Charter Action Plan (2017-2021) included in action 5.1

**Table 32.** Actions related to Key Topic 7.1. Promoting the provision and identity of local produce and services and their purchase and use by visitors and tourism businesses.

Action	Responsible entity
6.1 Promoção e diversificação do artesanato do Nordeste	ADLN
6.2 Sensibilização dos comerciantes locais para o aproveitamento do turismo	ADLN
10.1 Marca Priolo	DRA

## 7.2 Supporting the economic viability and performance of local tourism businesses and the provision of local employment in tourism

*Key activities and results over the past five years.*

*Were activities planned in this field which could not be completed? (Please give brief reasons.)*

*Planned activities in new action plan.*

Benefits for companies in the Priolo Brand include information about founding opportunities for their businesses, as well as training and positive discrimination by some Charter Partner Entities.

Priolo Brand (10.1) will continue in Charter Action Plan (2017-2021), but this plan also includes actions that should have a positive effect in local businesses performance, like the Communication Plan (11.1) and more effective disclosure actions for the Lands of Priolo Ecotourism product. Also training actions like the Guides course of the São Miguel Natural Park (6.1) and Restaurants training (6.3) will improve local employment in tourism and a better performance of local businesses.

**Table 33.** Actions related to Key Topic 7.2. Supporting the economic viability and performance of local tourism businesses and the provision of local employment in tourism.

Action	Responsible entity
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6.3 Training and awareness about gastronomy in the municipality of Nordeste	ADLN
10.1 – Priolo Brand	DRA

## **D8 Providing training and capacity building**

### **8.1 Providing relevant training for staff of the protected area authority in sustainable tourism development and management**

*Key activities and results over the past five years.*

*Were activities planned in this field which could not be completed? (Please give brief reasons.)*

*Planned activities in new action plan.*

The participation of protected area staff members in the Forums and meetings of the Charter has allowed increasing their awareness on the importance of tourism and tourism management in protected areas, as well as in sustainability. Nevertheless, there was no specific action designed to train park staff in sustainable tourism in Charter Action Plan (2012-2016).

Charter Action Plan (2017-2021) intends to develop a São Miguel Natural Park staff training session per year in order to improve their understanding about the Charter and sustainable tourism in protected areas (action 9.4)

### **8.2 Providing and encouraging relevant training and capacity building for tourism businesses and other stakeholders in sustainable tourism**

*Key activities and results over the past five years.*

*Were activities planned in this field which could not be completed? (Please give brief reasons.)*

*Planned activities in new action plan.*

The previous Charter Action Plan (2012-2016) included an action to promote training on sustainability for businesses in the Priolo Brand, but this action was not accomplished because most of the companies are small family businesses and their owners have very reduced time to be present in this trainings. For the reason, for next Charter Action Plan we intend to promote online trainings that can be followed in a more flexible matter by business owners and staff (action 9.3)

## **D9 Monitoring tourism performance and impacts**

### **9.1 Monitoring of visitors – volumes, patterns, spending and satisfaction**

*Key activities and results over the past five years.*

*Were activities planned in this field which could not be completed? (Please give brief reasons.)*

*Planned activities in new action plan.*

The previous Charter Action Plan (2012-2016) included the development of surveys to visitors; they were implemented in 2014 in the airport of Ponta Delgada. Also a monitoring of users in the main trails to *Pico da Vara* was implemented in 2014 and 2015. This information allowed the creation of a first proposal of Public Use plan for SPA *Pico da Vara/Ribeira do Guilherme* (5).

In Charter Action Plan (2017-2021) there is a visitor's survey action (1.7) that will be implemented biannually and will include both airport surveys and surveys in the Lands of Priolo. Also, the Visitation Plans and Nature Sports Charter (3.1, 3.2, and 4.1) that will be developed and implemented will include monitoring plans for the use of Protected Areas by visitors.

**Table 34.** Actions related to Key Topic 9.1 Monitoring of visitors – volumes, patterns, spending and satisfaction.

Action	Responsible entity
1.7 Visitor surveys	GABCETS (DRA e SPEA)
3.1 Visitation Plan for the Protected Landscape of Furnas (APPF)	DRA
3.2 Visitation Plan for the Species or Habitats Management Protected Area of Tronqueira and Planalto dos Graminhais	DRA
4.1 Implementation of Nature Sports Charter in the Lands of Priolo	DRA

## 9.2 Monitoring of tourism businesses – performance and needs

*Key activities and results over the past five years.*

*Were activities planned in this field which could not be completed? (Please give brief reasons.)*

*Planned activities in new action plan.*

Monitoring of needs and business performance was only partially tackled in previous Charter Action Plan by promoting meeting with Priolo Brand businesses and in Forum meetings. For future Charter Action Plan (2017-2021) Priolo Brand action will include an annual survey to companies in the Priolo Brand in order to accompany their performance and needs more effectively.

## 9.3 Monitoring of tourism impacts – on the environment, economy and community

*Key activities and results over the past five years.*

*Were activities planned in this field which could not be completed? (Please give brief reasons.)*

*Planned activities in new action plan.*

Monitoring of tourism impacts in the Lands of Priolo to the moment has relied in available statistic data and some monitoring developed in the territory, like visitor's surveys and monitoring of trails to Pico da Vara. For future Charter Action Plan we intend to include a new survey to local population and businesses in order to have more accurate information of impact of tourism in local economy, also with the Visitation Plans and Nature Sports Charter (3.1, 3.2 and 4.1) monitoring schemes, will permit a more accurate information about tourism impact in protected areas, and with surveys about the Priolo Brand we will also try to evaluate their environmental and economic performance. The new Monitoring Plan for the Charter (1.5) will try to identify available measurable indicators for each one of the new Charter Key Topics, based on those surveys and also on statistic information.

## 9.4 Monitoring progress in implementing the action plan.

*Key activities and results over the past five years.*

*Were activities planned in this field which could not be completed? (Please give brief reasons.)*

*Planned activities in new action plan.*

In the previous Charter Action Plan (2012-2016) monitoring of Action Plan implementation was accomplished and every year a report was produced in implementation progress. In the Charter Action Plan (2017-2021), the new Monitoring Plan for the Charter (1.5) will include a new system of monitoring with mid-year evaluation of progress in order to try to ensure a better implementation. Also, in this Charter Action Plan a set of execution and impact indicators has been defined for each action and these indicators will be measured regularly and included in the annual reports. These indicators will be the basis for the definition of the Monitoring Plan of the Action Plan.

## D10 Communicating actions and engaging with the Charter

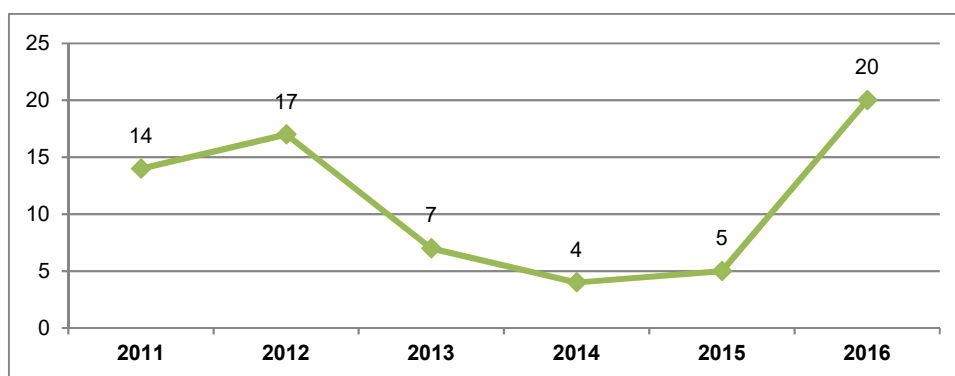
### 10.1 Communicating sustainable tourism actions and results to local stakeholders and more widely at a local, regional and national level

*Key activities and results over the past five years.*

*Were activities planned in this field which could not be completed? (Please give brief reasons.)*

*Planned activities in new action plan.*

The Charter Office was responsible for the press releases about the actions developed. In total **49 news** were published about the Charter in the Lands of Priolo (see figure 13). We also used Facebook as a communication tool; a page was created to disclose the Agenda of the Lands of Priolo, with **382 followers**.



**Figure 13.** News published about the Charter for Sustainable Tourism in the Lands of Priolo,

In Charter Action Plan (2017-2021) the Charter Office will continue to be responsible for the Charter communication and we expect that the definition of a Communication Plan (11.1) will organize and make this communication more effective both for tourism promotion and for internal communication.

**Table 35.** Actions related to Key Topic 10.1 Communicating sustainable tourism actions and results to local stakeholders and more widely at a local, regional and national level.

Action	Responsible entity
1.1 Charter Office of the Lands of PrioloGabinete da CETS Terras do Priolo	GABCETS
11.1 Communication Plan for the Lands of Priolo	DRT, ATA, DRA e SPEA

### 10.2 Promoting and making visible the award of the Charter

*Key activities and results over the past five years.*

*Were activities planned in this field which could not be completed? (Please give brief reasons.)*

*Planned activities in new action plan.*

In previous Charter Action Plan there was no specific action regarding the promotion an visibility of the award, but this award has been promoted by the Charter Office in press releases and in the territory. The interpretation centres in the territory have the award in their walls and the municipality of Nordeste uses it in its website as a promotion tool. There is still much to be done in the future Charter Action Plan. The Communication Plan will intend to increase the visibility of the award and also the new partnership with the Azores Tourism Association will allow making the award more visible in official Azores touristic information.

**10.3 Engaging with EUROPARC and the Charter Network, including participating in related events and activities**

*Key activities and results over the past five years.*

*Were activities planned in this field which could not be completed? (Please give brief reasons.)*

*Planned activities in new action plan.*

Although there was no action in previous Charter Action Plan in order to participate in the Charter Network, we participated in Charter meeting in *Vila Nova de Cerveira* and we have produced information for the Charter Network webpage. In future Charter Action Plan we intend to increase this collaboration and have included an action in the Action Plan in order to assure some funds to be able to participate in meetings (action 1.6)

**10.4 Taking steps for re-application and renewal of the Charter.**

*Key activities and results over the past five years.*

*Were activities planned in this field which could not be completed? (Please give brief reasons.)*

*Planned activities in new action plan.*

There were no specific action in the past Charter Action Plan (2012-2016) to ensure re-application to the Charter, but it has been verified that annual monitoring and a continuous review of the Charter Action Plan in annual Forums, like it was defined in the Charter Action Plan are sufficient to ensure that re-application process is easier. Anyway, in the re-application process we identified some difficulties essentially regarding the measure of indicators. For this reason, in the Charter Action Plan (2017-2021) we have included execution and impact indicators per action, as well as identified the sources for information and we intend to organize a Monitoring Plan based on those indicators that will improve the monitoring of implementation and results and therefore make it easier to re-apply to the award.

## **SECTION E – EXPERIENCE AND FINAL COMMENTS**

*EUROPARC and our European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in protected areas are founded on the principle of cooperation. By sharing knowledge and experience we all benefit from the collective learning, improve standards and increase benefits for all. We really do want to hear of some good ideas of actions and practise that you are proud of, to share across our international network. You will benefit too from this great library of experience in return.*

### **E1 Examples of excellence and best practice**

*Please give up to five examples of best practice from your protected area for any of the above components and topics, which best demonstrate how you are working towards excellence in sustainable tourism development.*

## **GOVERNANCE MODEL FOR TOURISM IN THE LANDS OF PRIOLO**

The governance model established for the coordination and monitoring of the Charter Action Plan has allowed a continuous coordination between stakeholders, has ensured the application of many of the actions in the action plan. This governance model defines two stages of evaluation of the documents of the Charter: the Local Technical Team that includes representatives of the Charter partner institutions and is the responsible entity for the coordination among Charter partners and the Forum that is open to all interested people with special attention to local businesses and local institutions. The functioning of this model is secured by the Charter Office that is responsible for the organization of meetings, gathering of information and preparation of final documents.

The creation of this intermediate step between the Charter Office and the Forum, has proven to be a good system to ensure coordination and participation between the partner entities and, although it still needs to improve its functioning, the development of joint actions. This intermediate step allows a first analysis of documents before they are presented to the Forum and ensures that all entities are comfortable with their commitments to the Charter Action Plan before they are approved.

## **PRIOLO BRAND SCHEME**

The Priolo Brand, presently with 46 companies, allows a process of continued improvement of businesses sustainability, but it is also a promotion tool for the companies involved. The Priolo Brand manual identifies the main obligations of Priolo Brand companies, which are very general obligations about informing the Charter office about their business, networking with other Charter businesses. Apart from these general obligations, each company defines three voluntary actions towards sustainability (social and environmental actions) that are negotiated with the Charter Office taking in consideration the size of the company and the main impacts of their activity.

## **CONSERVATION OF PRIOLO (AZORES BULLFINCH)**

Although it is not directly related to tourism, the conservation of the Azores Bullfinch is an example not only of a successful biodiversity conservation project that has allowed in thirteen years increasing the population of this bird from 400-500 birds to more than 1000, with an stable population since 2008. These population trends have allowed reviewing its conservation status, according to IUCN criteria, from “Critically endangered” to “Endangered” in 2010 and to “Vulnerable” in 2016.

This biodiversity conservation success story is an important attractive for the Lands of Priolo, and provides an interesting touristic product with the visitation of the areas restored in the successive projects and understanding the ecology and functioning of the Laurel Forest and Peatland ecosystems in the Azores.

### **ECO-FREGUESIAS CONTEST**

The “Eco-freguesias” contest is an environmental education project that aims at involving the local parishes (Freguesias) in improving their environmental conditions. This programme awards the efforts of the parishes to ensure an adequate management of residues by removing garbage dumps in public spaces and promoting environmental awareness actions. In a first visit of the technician of the Directorate of Environment to these parishes, all the existing dumps are identified and marked, and the parishes are responsible for cleaning those deposits and giving them the adequate residues management. The parishes are awarded according to punctuation in three areas: Maintenance of clean spots – when in a second visit to the parish, all the identified spots are maintained clean; Cleaning Effort – When the parishes demonstrates a cleaning effort even if it is not capable to stop the continued dumping in those identified areas and Awareness Raising Effort – when the parishes promote awareness raising activities for the local population in the matter of residues prevention. All parishes that participate in the contest are awarded a financial aid between 2.000€ to 4.000€ that depends on the level of cleaning of the parish. All parishes with at least 20 points and at least 50% of the punctuation of each topic are awarded as “Eco-freguesias” receiving a flag and certificate. Also, the parishes with the highest punctuation in each island receive an excellence award that consist in a certificate and a monetary price of 1.000€ (or 500€ if there is more than one parish with the same punctuation). In recent years, this contest has included two new areas: “A minha Ribeira” and “Costa Limpa” that promotes monitoring of at least 250m water lines and 1000m of coastal areas by the parish.

All the parishes in the Lands of Priolo participate in this contest that is promoted in all the Autonomous Region of Azores. This contest has increased awareness of parishes on a serious a recurrent problem in the archipelago related to illegal garbage dumps in public spaces.

### **REVITALIZATION AND PROMOTION OF CULTURAL TRADITIONS**

The Lands of Priolo count with very alive traditions like the Holy Ghost festivities, folklore, traditional singing and philharmonics. Promoting and encouraging this authentic cultural demonstration and recovering some traditions that are no longer in use, has been an important action of Nordeste municipality and other partners of the Charter in order to recover promote actual traditions and recover lost traditions that those linked to the rurality of the area.

Including popular traditions like the Holy Ghost festivities in the cultural agenda and disclosing them to visitors and promoting events linked to rural traditions like bread making and those related to corn culture and historical reconstitutions as well as encouraging local musical institutions like philharmonic orchestras, folklore groups and traditional singing groups to perform in public have the double function of enriching the cultural life of the territory and involving local population in those activities and events.

## E2 Experience of working with the Charter – final comments

### I. *What have been the main benefits of going through the Charter process?*

Working with the Charter process has allowed entities to coordinate and work together in a way that was not usual in the Autonomous Region of Azores. The lessons learnt from this coordination efforts have allowed to apply this participative and coordination methodologies in other themes, such as invasive species combat.

### II. *Have you had any particular problems with the process?*

It is always difficult to engage all entities and sometimes conflicts that are not specifically related to the Charter get on the way. This has been the most difficult situation on which we are working, but we have not been able to solve yet.

Another problem has to do with ensuring participation by tourism companies. This year we had fewer participants in the Forums than we had in the first application process, five years ago. The reason for this smaller participation is related to an increase in tourism arrival due to Low-Cost companies travelling to the archipelago. This increase in visitors has a double effect, tourism entrepreneurs have an increase of work and subsequently less available time and a reduced the concern about the future of their businesses, that leads to them being less interested in this kind of processes.

## E3 Any further comments or suggestions for the future

It would be interesting to find ways to ensure more cooperation and exchange of practices between Charter Areas, in particular between Charter Areas in Portugal. It would be very interesting to include partner entities and touristic companies in this kind of interchanges so that they can learn about other Charter processes, their achievements and good practices developed.

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Signed:

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