Title of the Story: Securing a tourism future for the Town and County of Nazaré

Destination Name: (include any state, province or region)
Nazaré, Leiria, Portugal

Country: Portugal

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Position: Senior Technician

Nomination Category: (Please check the boxes that indicate the focus of your story)
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☐ Localizing the destination supply chain
☐ Decarbonizing the destination supply chain
☐ Culture & Communities
☐ Environment & Climate
☐ Nature & Ecotourism
☒ Tourism Reset & Recovery
☐ Other

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Address each aspect of your good practice story in the different sections being specific including relevant quantitative and qualitative information.

Issues faced

Nazaré is a village of very recent origin, which dates back a little over two centuries of existence. This settlement had its origin in the migration of people from the ilhavo area, having as its primary objective the search for a beach with better conditions for the practice of the xávega art, which was so familiar to them. Much of the success of this settlement was due to the artillery located in Fort S. Miguel Arcanjo, which thus prevented the, until then, frequent pirate attacks, thus creating the conditions for the solidification of the new settlement.

With them, they brought a strong will to win and a vast array of ethnographies that endure through time, many of them to the present day. From the typical way of dressing and speaking to the particular forms of fishing, and the extraordinary creative capacity to survive, these people quickly imposed themselves on their neighbours, to the point where they soon assimilated (even toponymical) the localities of Sítio and Pederneira, gaining the status of a town and the seat of a municipality.

But its external projection occurred later. Since the end of the 19th century, Nazaré began to be presented as a tourist destination par excellence and became frequented by numerous wealthy families, who spent long seasons of 4 months “bathing” in this nice and picturesque beach.

Here they could live in the same space with simple and struggling people, but welcoming and captivating. On the same beach, where the children were initiated in the art of swimming, just next door, you could watch (and even participate) in the bustle of pulling a net, in the magical moment of opening the bag, the fish swarming, or appreciate the courage of the companions in the arduous task of “entering the sea” in small boats overcoming the battering of the sea.

Then, it was to see the immediate sale of the fish at the improvised auction on the beach, the comings and goings of women preparing the animals for the departure of another day of selling fish in remote places to the interior.

It was the possibility of contact with this culture, so different from the bourgeois urban life of the first years of the century that led Nazaré to be presented as a tourist attraction and a true ex-libris of Portugal.

However, with the evolution of time, among other causes, the construction of the Port of Nazaré, which appeared late (first half of the eighties) when it was evident a significant decrease in boats and fishermen, led to the removal of the fishing activity from the centre of the village, thus vacating our sandy beach.
This cultural heritage, an authentic treasure that they knew how to preserve for centuries, could disappear if a strategy was not developed to make Nazaré a differentiating destination.

However, from 2011, with the wave surfed by the North American extreme waterman Garret McNamara disseminated what had remained almost a secret. The 'Canhão' of Nazaré produces big waves, which challenge the most daring, and which has meant that the tourism sector has increased in this territorial area. The international projection came at high tide, with the giant waves taking the name of the town and the country around the world.

Nazaré has positioned itself as a privileged stage for national and world events, which has given it a substantial international media exposure, and caused transformations at the economic level. From an almost exclusively fishing village, Nazaré started to focus on the tourism sector, on business and investments in several areas of activity, namely by multinationals and national companies from several sectors.

It is this Nazarene identity, an area of visitation allied to this great phenomenon, which should continue to be strengthened as an urban development factor.

Therefore, the Municipality of Nazaré decided to develop a strategy where it is important to attract to Nazaré a less seasonal and unstable tourist demand, able to ensure longer stays in the conventional hotel industry, occupation rates adequate to its viability and economic sustainability, and thus able to provide new customers to quality restaurants and, consequently, more and more qualified jobs.

The attraction of that demand goes through the promotion of diverse activities, able to meet the motivations of new visitors and tourists, and to capture new market segments, namely extra-regional and non-seasonal flows, and tourism niches, new or not: the diversity of tourism practices can ensure more regular stays throughout the year, favoring the sustainability of business entities and the generation of new jobs. Thus, the reduction of seasonality in the tourism of Nazaré passes, in effect, through the structuring of an offer in a collar of tourist products able to polarize flows of different motivations, which succeed each other or combine.

This strategy of diversification of the tourist demand passes, namely, by the valorisation of all its tourist, natural, heritage, cultural and social resources, and all the leisure and cultural equipments, separately or in articulation with the neighbouring municipalities (complementary offers with synergic effects). It is important to underline that all tourism activity is closely dependent on the quality of the support services, namely the health services available, and the quality of the environment, and that, for the most part, tourism associated with the coastline and the Sea depends entirely not only on the environmental quality of this most vulnerable area, but also on land planning and the urban and landscape quality of the territory.
Methods, steps and tools applied

- A set of maritime activities and tourist motivations that are directly or indirectly related to the Sea were promoted, including:
  - Coastal zone:
    - The harbour and marina, which should be developed and affirmed in a public-private partnership, associated with recreational boating;
    - The rehabilitation of traditional hot baths, the first form of thalassotherapy as health and wellness tourism;
    - Adventure walks and activities in protected areas;
    - A visit to maritime fortifications and lighthouses;
    - Bird and marine mammal watching;
    - Recreational fishing, using artisanal fishing as a tourist and leisure activity;
    - Diversification of sports activities related to the sea, water sports and even adventure and extreme sports (hang gliding, paragliding, surfing and bodyboarding, diving), making the most of the considerable supply of existing equipment and natural resources (e.g. Salgados Reserve), namely through:
      - Promotion of training actions with due technical accompaniment for sports monitors;
      - Promotion of sports holiday programmes, taking advantage of the excellent accessibility and proximity to relevant regional and national urban centres;
      - Organisation of sports programmes specifically geared towards the sea;
      - Periodic organisation of events in collaboration with the national sporting federations.
    - In-depth, estimating the support capacity of the medium beforehand:
      - Underwater diving (apnea and scuba diving);
      - Spearfishing;
      - Underwater tourism, linked namely to the Nazaré Canyon;
  - Promote new flows of cultural tourism, taking advantage of the county's geographical insertion in regional and national tourist routes and its neighbourhood with counties with emblematic built heritage (e.g. Alcobaça, Batalha), namely through:
    - Valuing the various local heritages, from the built to the intangible, focusing on the intangible elements that make up the local identity culture: religious tourism (Legend of Our Lady of Nazaré; Ciria; linking popular religiosity and the sea); recovering traditions and festivals adjusted to new realities, values and practices;
    - Organisation of cultural programmes, duly scheduled, of theatre, music or dance, exhibitions, or events of an ethnographic and anthropological nature, based on the reactivation of local traditions, taking advantage of the municipality's excellent cultural facilities;
    - Promotion of existing museums and enhancement of other cultural references (e.g. classified heritage, buildings of collective memory), namely through the preparation and dissemination of appropriate information and the adaptation of their opening hours to the needs of tourists;
To promote gastronomic tourism, especially in connection with fishing, the town's traditional activity and identity, and in particular with the artisanal fishing of species of great quality and commercial value.

To promote nature and rural tourism/ecotourism - sea, pine woods, countryside, villages, landscapes, with history -, encouraging the link between the fishing village and the rural areas of the municipality.

Improve information and interpretation systems, promoting the training of local guides.

Promote the creation of specific tourism products outside the high season (e.g. oriented towards senior tourism), within the framework of tourist accommodation/restaurant/entertainment partnerships.

Promote the qualification of public support services, specifically in the area of health, in order to attract national and foreign senior tourism segments.

Key success factors

Land of strong traditions, with a past and present closely linked to the sea and fishing, Nazaré is today a destination known worldwide for its "phenomenon" waves.

In 2011, Nazaré officially entered the list of the world's most popular destinations for surf lovers. The person responsible for this instant worldwide fame was Hawaiian surfer Garrett McNamara, who broke the record for the longest wave surfed on a sandy bottom in the world (23.8 metres), adding his name, and that of Nazaré, to the Guinness Book of Records.

Those who visit Nazaré in search of its giant waves are surprised by customs that seem to have resisted the passing of time, a mild climate, irrepbroachable gastronomy of maritime flavours and, of course, enormous natural beauty.

Since then, various surfers have put their physical and mental abilities to the test by riding the giant waves that break off the coast of Nazaré every winter. In 2017, Brazilian surfer Rodrigo Koxa broke Garrett McNamara's previous Guinness record by riding the largest wave ever with 24.38 metres; in 2018, it was Nuno "Stru" Figueiredo's turn to enter the record book with the largest wave ever kitesurfed, with 19 metres; and, more recently, in February 2020, Brazilian surfer Maya Gabeira managed to surpass her previous Guinness record for the largest wave ridden by a woman (22.4 metres).

Thus, Praia do Norte, located in Nazaré, became internationally renowned for its giant waves.

This was a key piece to combat seasonality, however, it became imperative to implement an integrated strategy with added value for the economy, culture, society and the environment.

Thus some municipal projects were implemented:

- Certification of Nazaré Beach by ISO 14001:2015, environmental quality certification the first beach in Portugal to be certified in the year 2018;
- Requalification of the Dry Fish Museum;
- Requalification of the São Gião Church;
• Integration in the Western Nautical Stations;
• Opening of the Forte São Miguel Arcanjo facilities, with thematic exhibitions;
• Creation of Cycling paths.

Lessons learned

In a sustainable development strategy, governance and social innovation dynamics are crucial factors and a powerful stimulus for local development potential. Governance, i.e. the way (set of rules, processes and practices) in which society collectively solves its problems and meets its needs, is an essential core for reconciling economic prosperity, social cohesion and environmental quality. Good governance appeals simultaneously to public and private institutions, businesses, civil society and individual citizens. The valorisation of the cultural heritage that the sea represents for Nazaré, including the underwater cultural heritage, the establishment of a creative and creative relationship and the dissemination of an ethic of environmental protection around the sea are some of the governance and social innovation initiatives that can affirm Nazaré in the future.

The density and richness of the present and the meaning of the future of a community are inherited from the richness of a tradition, assumed as a common space of belonging. Only those who have a past have a present and a future!

Results, achievements and recognitions

Throughout these years with the implementation of the action plan, the Municipality of Nazaré has received several quality awards, such as:

• The municipality of Nazaré belongs to the Estações Náuticas do Oeste (Nautical Stations of the West). The Nautical Station thus constitutes a platform for interaction to promote cooperation in a given Territory between municipalities, nautical service companies and tourism businesses, between the public and the private sector.
• It participates annually in the Blue Flag campaign by the Blue Flag Association of Europe. Nazaré Beach has been awarded for 27 years, since 1987. Being that, of the 27 years, 12 were consecutive. In the present year, the application for the Blue Flag 2021 was made, where it obtained the Blue Flag 2021 certification for two beaches of Nazaré, Praia da Vila and Praia do Salgado.
The Municipality of Nazaré was awarded for two consecutive years as an "Eco-Green Municipality ECO XXI". This programme comprises 21 indicators that allow the behaviour of each municipality to be measured in terms of sustainability.

Nazaré Beach was the first public beach under municipal management to obtain ISO 14001:2015 certification. In ISO 14001:2015 the scope of certification must be defined. After listening to the various stakeholders and gathering all the contributions that came to us, the scope of certification was defined as the following "Coordination of Maintenance with Stakeholders, of the Management of Nazaré Beach (sandy shore limit/along the coast), according to the coordinates defined in the Spatial Plan of the Coastal Zone of Nazaré Beach, by the Environment Office of the Municipality of Nazaré".

The municipality of Nazaré belongs to the Oeste Intermunicipal Community (OesteCIM) where the Oeste region was awarded by Green Destination as Sustainable Destination Top 100 and Quality Coast Gold for 2020-2021.

The Municipality of Nazaré currently holds the Gold Quality Beach Award by Quercus in Salgado Beach.

Following the European Year of People with Disabilities, the "Accessible Beach, Beach for All" project was initiated in 2004, with the aim of harmonising the various local initiatives already undertaken to make Portuguese beaches accessible to people with restricted mobility, extending them to the largest possible number of bathing areas (both coastal and inland). In this sense, Nazaré beach is certified as an "Accessible Beach, Beach for all".

From the data provided by PorDATA (Contemporary Portugal Database) and INE (National Statistics Institute), the Municipality of Nazaré, there was a decrease in the number of unemployed people between 2011 and 2019, there was an increase in the average monthly earnings between 2015 and 2018, there was an increase in the no. of companies installed in the municipality, an increase in the number of staff in service between 2014 and 2019, there was an evolution of 23.06% of companies installed in the sectors of "accommodation, restaurants and similar between 2014 and 2019 and the turnover increased in the same period.

The number of visitors to museums has increased dramatically, as an example we have the Forte S. Miguel Arcanjo which was ceded by the State to the municipality, which in 2014, opened to the public, contained 41,876 visitors in that same year and in 2019 contained more than 300,000 visitors.

Additional references

- https://www.cm-nazare.pt/
- https://findoutnazare.pt/
- https://www.youtube.com/c/MunicipioNazare
- https://vimeo.com/municipiodanazare
- https://www.facebook.com/cmnazare