



ACTION PLAN 2020-2030

PART I

BAIÃO | Green is the
new destination





ACTION PLAN – PART I

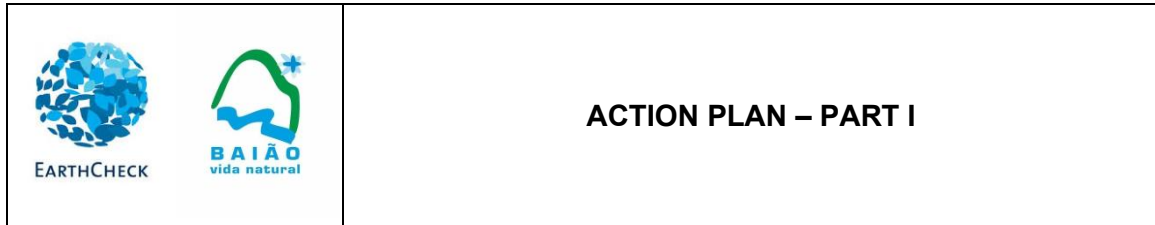
DATASHEET

Designation: Action Plan 2020-2030 - Sustainability of the Tourist Destination Baião

Promoter: Municipality of Baião

EarthCheck Standard Ref: 5.1

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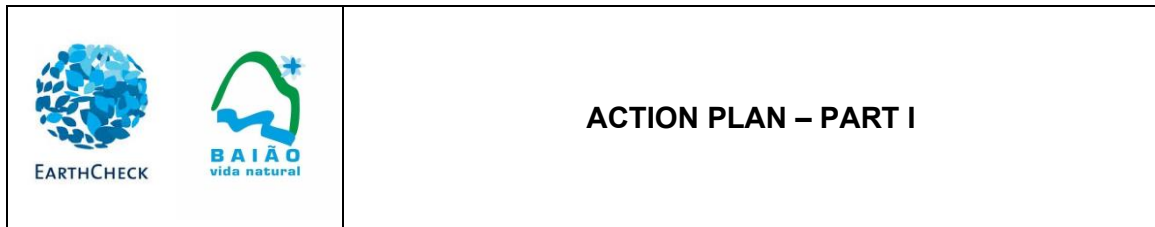
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Part 2 | BAIÃO, Sustainability commitments and actions



Note from the Mayor

We are living in times of change that challenge us to take better care of our local area and our future. Environmental and social issues demand a more people-centered, transparent and responsible approach to management.

In Baião, we believe that sustainability is a commitment to future generations. It is not just an idea — it is the foundation of how we want to develop our municipality.

This Action Plan, structured in accordance with EarthCheck standards and in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, sets out the path we wish to follow: protecting nature, valuing people and offering our visitors an authentic experience. We want to continue to establish Baião as a leading destination for sustainable tourism.

Our priority is to make better use of resources, such as water and energy, reduce our environmental impact, and involve the whole community in this effort.

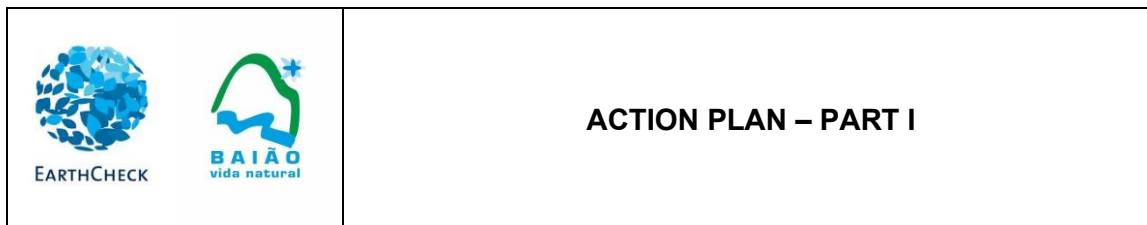
The success of this plan depends on all of us. Caring for our landscapes, our culture and people’s well-being is what truly measures our progress.

Sustainability is built together — with citizens, businesses and institutions. This is a living commitment that requires everyone’s participation.

Together, we will continue to show that it is possible to grow, protect the environment and value what is ours.

Ana Raquel Azevedo, Mayor of Municipality of Baião

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Green Team Note

The certification of Baião as a Sustainable Destination goes far beyond tourism. When covering areas such as the social, cultural, environmental and economic context, this is a comprehensive, transversal and prospective process.

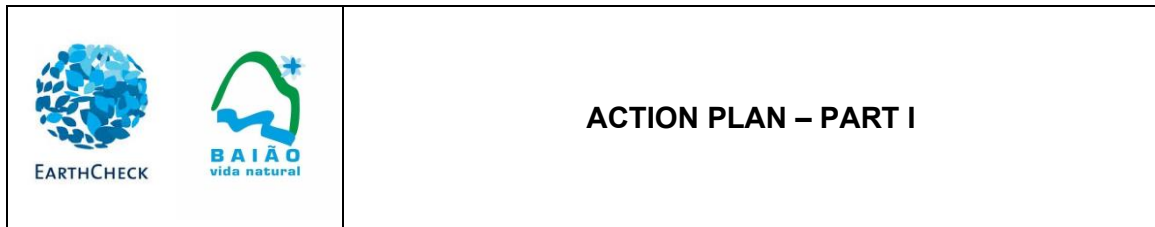
Bearing in mind the strong interdependent relationship between tourism and the territory, since the territory is not only the place where the tourist activity takes place, but it is above all, the tourist resource itself, the challenge of certification of Baião as a Sustainable Destination is seen as a path to the integrated development of the territory.

Three decades after the Brundtland Report, which put sustainable development on the world agenda by defining it as “the answer to the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to respond to their own needs”, the increasing complexity, uncertainty and speed of transformation processes in the contemporary world, plus the increased collective awareness of environmental issues, irreversibly puts sustainable development on the agenda.

Given this context of change, it is important to modify the paradigm and move from words to action. In this sense, the municipalities, due to their proximity to the populations, should be at the forefront of the change towards sustainability. The adoption of a new vision on the territory must, therefore, be a proactive process, assuming in the present the responsibility towards future generations. Tourism, as an argument for development, should provide an opportunity to change practices and economic positions, in which the challenges inherent to sustainability coexist with the impacts caused by the pandemic COVID-19, which imply profound changes in the way in which actors, territory, visitors and tourists live the experiences.

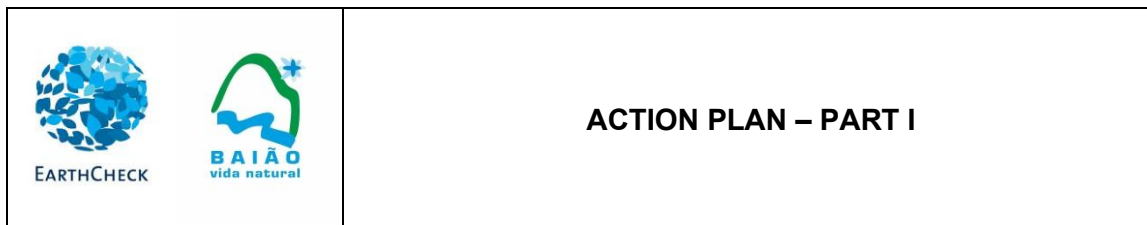
Thus, the different stages of the EarthCheck certification process make it possible to analyze the territory (from a benchmarking diagnosis), define the vision and objectives, formulate a strategy, define and implement an Action plan, with concrete and measurable goals, that make possible to manage environmental and social issues, such as climate change, waste reduction and management of non-renewable resources, developing new strategies and competences for this.

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In this way, it will be up to Green Team to materialize the present Action Plan, promoting territorial synergies, articulating the different sectors and involving the community around a common objective - the valorization and affirmation of the territory and the increase in the quality of life of those who live, work or visit Baião. For this, we count on the commitment and contribution of everyone on this path, so that each one, like José Saramago, can find in Baião the place where we can sit “on the sandy ground, pick between two fingers a tender stem that was born near a mainstay, and, bowing your head, finally listening to your own heart. ”

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Introduction

Tourism is one of the pillars of our development. Baião is benefited by a huge landscape variety that ranges from rivers to mountains. The same mountain ranges that for years made this territory difficult to access, are the ones that allowed the almost untouchable preservation of landscapes and ways of life unique in the region. As a community we have developed structural projects to enhance our heritage, boosting tourism understood as strategic, and taking small steps to make it a quality tourism, in balance with the environment and immaterial traditions.

We assume Tourism as a structuring pillar of the development of Baião, enhancing the natural and human, heritage and historical assets existing in the territory. Due to the natural activity of human beings and the way in which our society is organized, the material and immaterial resources that make up the wealth of the territory are threatened. Thus, it is important that we clearly structure an action that combines Environment and Territory, Development and People.

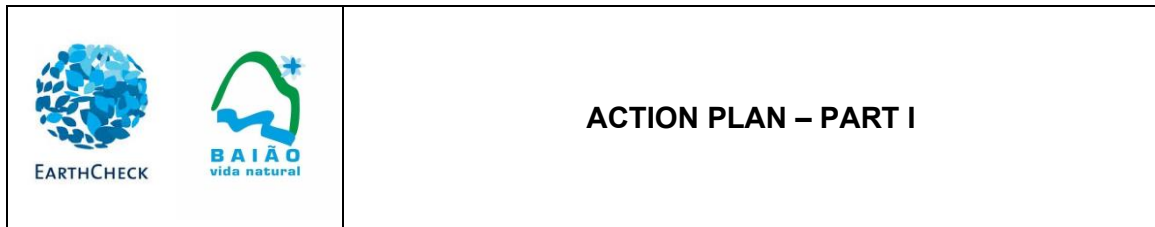
That is why we have been carrying out over the years a work of strong appreciation of our natural heritage. This is one of our greatest assets and an unquestionable path to common development. Thus, we assume the imperative to position ourselves at the forefront of environmentally responsible territories and with a vision of development that gives priority to people and the immaterial context, both environmental and cultural.

We are aware that this is a bold but responsible step, for what we can do for the environment, for people, for economic development and for Baião. The same is to say, for the future of all. Our children's. At the heart is the respect for the environment and the mitigation of human impacts on nature, contributing to mitigate the impacts that climate change has made.

Realizing the need to organize and enhance a municipality in which the forest occupies two thirds of the territory, we intend to implement a policy of acquiring plots of land from private individuals in the ridges and slopes of the three mountains so that we can intervene in cleaning and reforestation (with species native) of those lands.

In this line, we have been developing a strong reforestation policy for uncultivated areas or vegetation cover consisting of scrub, with native species (mostly oak) in order to have a more resilient forest. In

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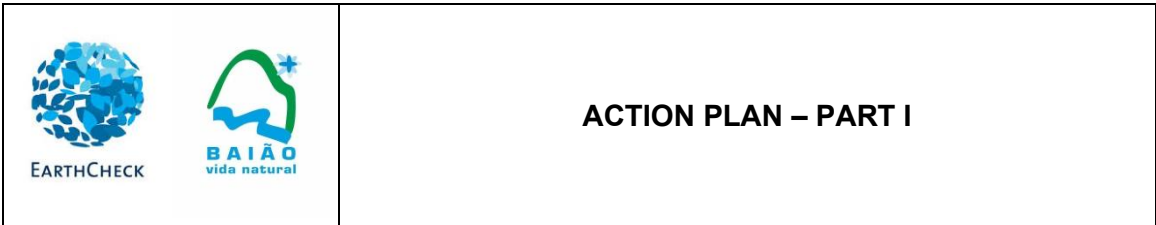


the last decade, we have planted 51,000 trees. This is also an action with a strong pedagogical component, as it involves the three existing school groups in the municipality and students from all teaching cycles, alerting and involving them to the importance of environmental preservation and mitigating climate changes.

The two previous measures are clearly assumed (also) as a long-term investment in view of the sustainability of the territory and the postponed carbon market that rewards those who contribute to the capture of Greenhouse Gases. Here, too, we want to be at the forefront of environmentally responsible territories and prepared for the challenges of an environmentally sustainable future.

These are demanding challenges for a municipality, but we know the importance that “acting now” will have for the future.

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PART 1 | BAIÃO, Green is the new destination

1.1 The Municipality of Baião: a vision of territorial development based on sustainability

Located in the North of Portugal and integrated in the region of Tâmega and Sousa, with an area of approximately 175 km², distributed by 14 parishes, the municipality is administratively framed in the north by Amarante, in the south by Cinfães and Resende, in the west by Marco de Canaveses and to the east by Santa Marta de Penaguião, Peso da Régua and Mesão Frio.

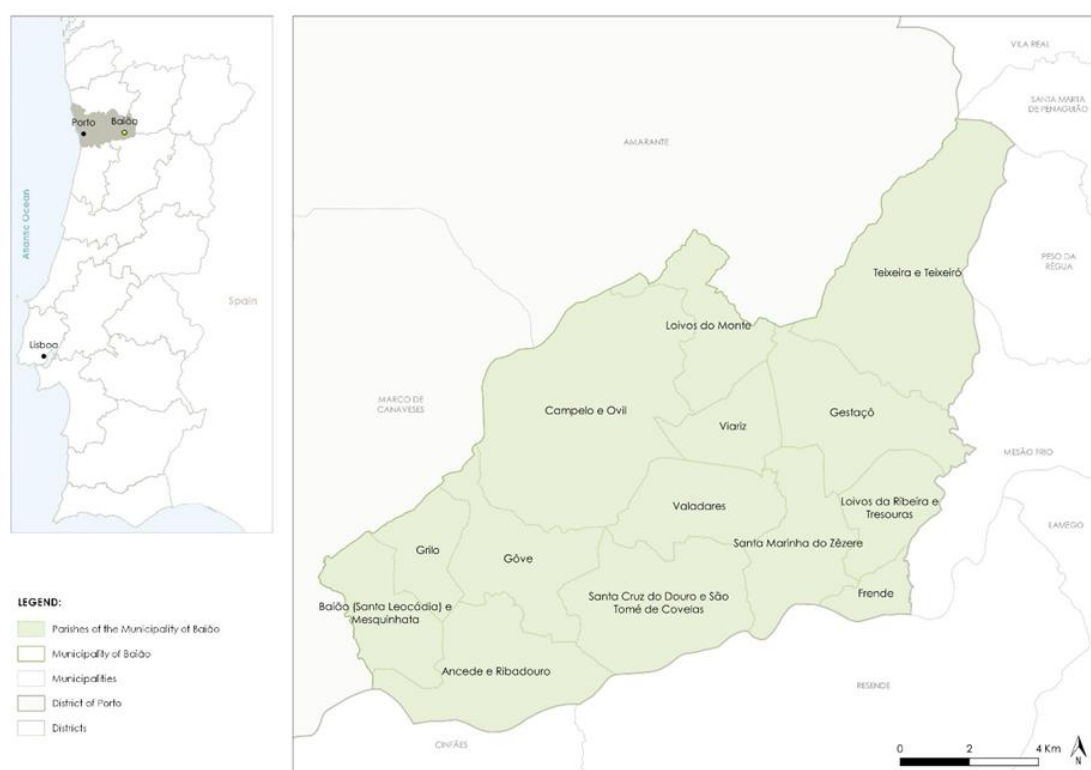


Figure 1 - Location of Baião

This is a transitional territory between Trás-os-Montes and Entre Douro e Minho, which gives it a heterogeneous character from the landscape point of view marked by an orography of strong contrasts, rising from 60 to 1416 meters of altitude in just 25 km. Noteworthy are the Serra do Marão, where the highest altitude and the highest point of the district are found, Serra da Aboboreira, with 965 meters (in the final stage of classification as a Regional Protected Landscape) and the Serra do Castelo with 952 meters. The Douro River runs through the entire southern sector of the municipality,

over 32 km, in a tight valley and, in general, steep slopes. Its tributaries, looking for the base level, dig deep valleys even when they are low flow water lines.

Punctuating the territory is a dispersed settlement structure made up of small rural settlements that reflect an organization of the territory dictated by historical evolution and guided by accessibility.

The interiority that marks this territory is also expressed in its recent demographic dynamics, which poses additional challenges in terms of territorial management. Following the general trend of depopulation that characterizes the interior of the country, the municipality of Baião has also been decreasing its population numbers, which settled at 17.535 inhabitants in 2021 according to the Population Census (INE, 2021). This leads to several problems, ranging from the loss of landscape authenticity that is caused by characteristic economic activities (based on agriculture and pastoralism), and which may also have environmental impacts by altering the balance of biodiversity, by allowing the ruin of urban centers, or even at the level of fire ignitions due to lack of surveillance and maintenance of spaces.

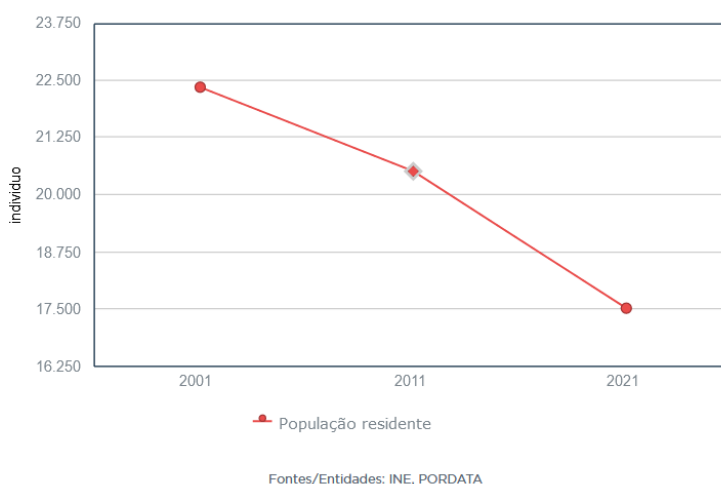


Figure 2 - Evolution of the Resident Population

Source: National Statistics Institute.

The population loss that occurred over the last decades, associated with the decrease in the birth rate, contributed to an increase in the aging rate that in 2018 corresponded to a ratio of 177 elderly people for every 100 young people. Nevertheless, the aging of the population is today a demographic phenomenon across the national territory since it has been occurring in a generalized way and is no longer a phenomenon located only in the interior of the country.

Also the sector of economic activity to which the active population is affected has undergone profound changes over the past four decades. If in 1981 the primary sector employed 44% of the population, that figure dropped to 4.4% in 2011. Conversely, the tertiary sector assumed the predominance of employment for the active population, in line with the tendency for Portuguese society to become tertiary.

Despite these changes, and although the primary sector is no longer the main sector of activity, many families continue to maintain a subsistence agricultural activity by cultivating small plots of land that function as a supplement to the family income. Thus, the agricultural and rural matrix of the territory remains present in the landscape of Baião and is an indelible mark of its identity. The soil classes related to agriculture and forest assume almost total occupation of the territory, corresponding to 94%, according to the 2018 Land Occupation Letter (DGT, 2019).

This is a distinct portrait of its district headquarters. Porto is the second largest city in the country and its Metropolitan Area, 70 km away from Baião, aggregates 17 municipalities and concentrates more than 2.6 million inhabitants.

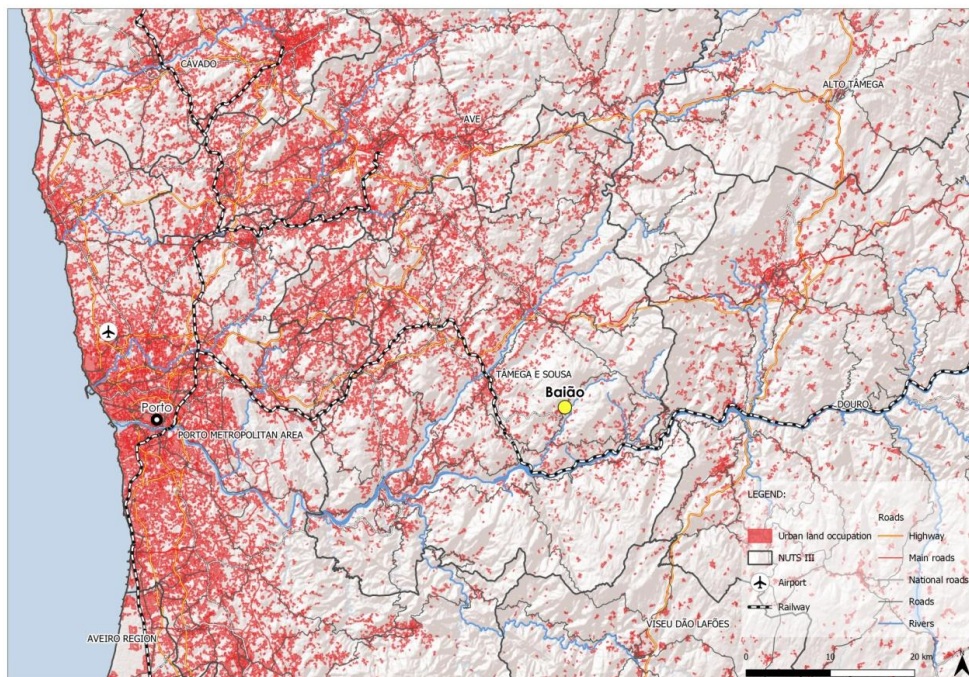
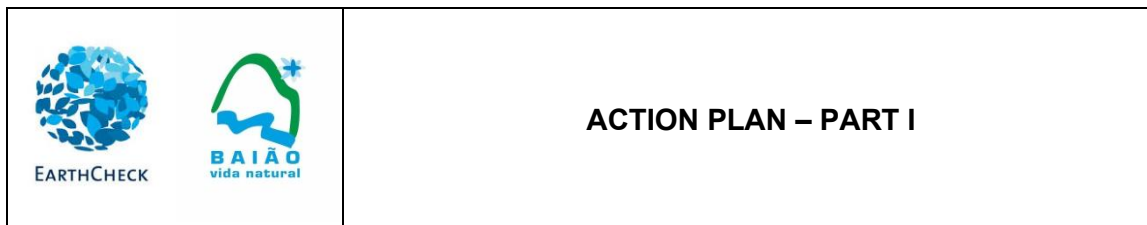


Figure 3 - Territorial framework and land occupation



For long decades, the railroad and the Douro River were the main means of communication and of Baião's relationship with the outside world. The main roadways bypassed the territory, which, due to its geographical position and the characteristics of the relief, has been maintained as an area that is barely permeable to the outside and moderately altered even when compared to the rest of the region.

The relative isolation that has marked Baião over the centuries, and even today, has contributed to preserve heritage and "ways of life", in harmony between physical and human forms, between material and immaterial or between past and future, and constitute the axes that guide the personality of the territory. Between steep slopes and vast forest and agricultural patches, precious testimonies of an ancient human presence can be identified, in which civilizational layers overlap from prehistory to the present, with marks from practically all historical periods and from so many cultural upheavals, testimonies legacy of their own identity.

In addition to the enormous natural potential that the territory holds, Baião also has a number of assets in terms of its historical, popular and gastronomic heritage that are recognized in the region.

Recent changes, the improvement of accessibility, including the electrification of the Douro Line, significantly reduced the distance-time factor in relation to Porto, which increased the demand for Baião for leisure times, reinforcing the complementary relationship between the urban and rural.

In these times of dilution of borders and of space-time concepts, Baião is less and less a region confined to administrative limits and more and more an arena of dialogue, where partnerships are established, networks are organized and its sustainable development is promoted by anchoring itself in the identity of this territory, investing in its recognition and in the valorization of the endogenous heritage at the service of an idea of development that benefits everyone.

1.2. Sustainability of Tourism in Baião / Sustainability of Tourist Destination Baião

The symbiosis between the physical and the human resulted in a geographical unit that currently has a high tourist potential due to the authenticity of the character of its landscapes, recognized by its slopes, biodiversity, rural mosaic and urban mountain nuclei that, considered a natural obstacle limiting the flows and movement of people, conditioned them to the isolation that the territory and

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populations have known throughout the ages. This isolation allowed the development of its own identity, with recognizable traditions and economic organizations and untapped landscapes of great heterogeneity.

Tourism has been occupying a prominent place over the last decade in boosting the local economy. In the Douro region, Baião is in the group of municipalities with the highest number of beds in all types of accommodation.

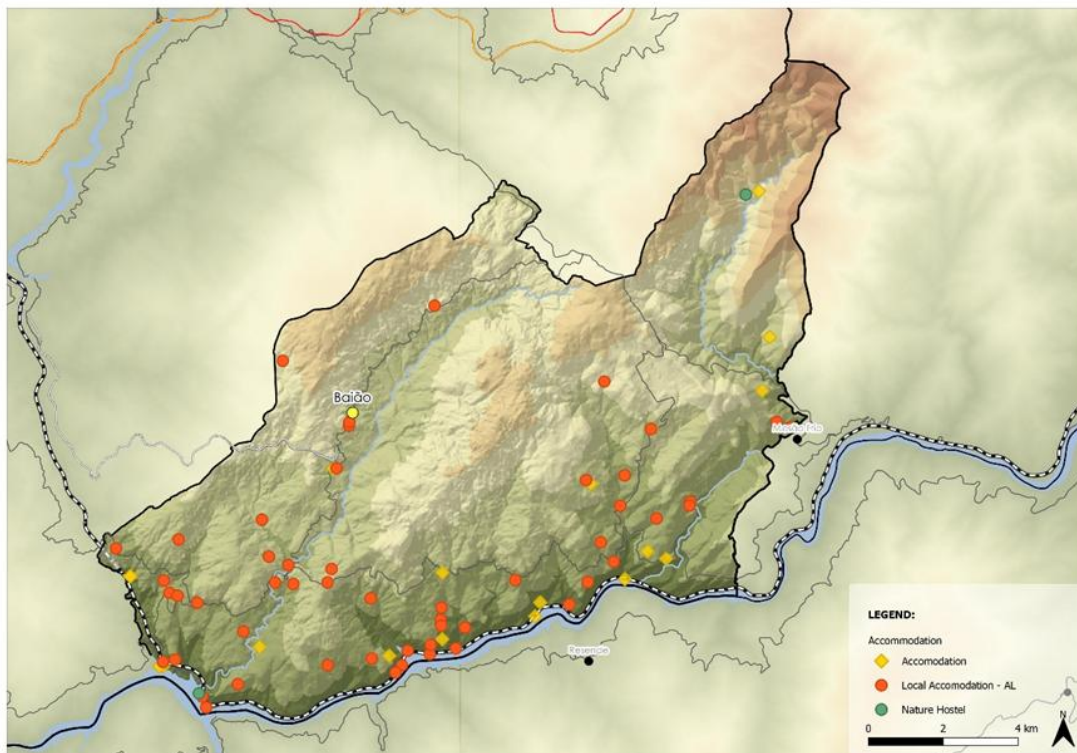


Figure 4 - Accommodation in the municipality of Baião.

In 2024, there were 42.008 guests and 70.234 overnight stays (Source: INE, 2024) which correspond to 8.877.800 €, values in line with those recorded in recent years, with still a large margin of progression. Baião is a territory where the tourist potential is yet to be fully exploited, which can be an opportunity for the development of local populations, for the enhancement of human and natural, material and immaterial heritage and for the diversification of the tourist offer.

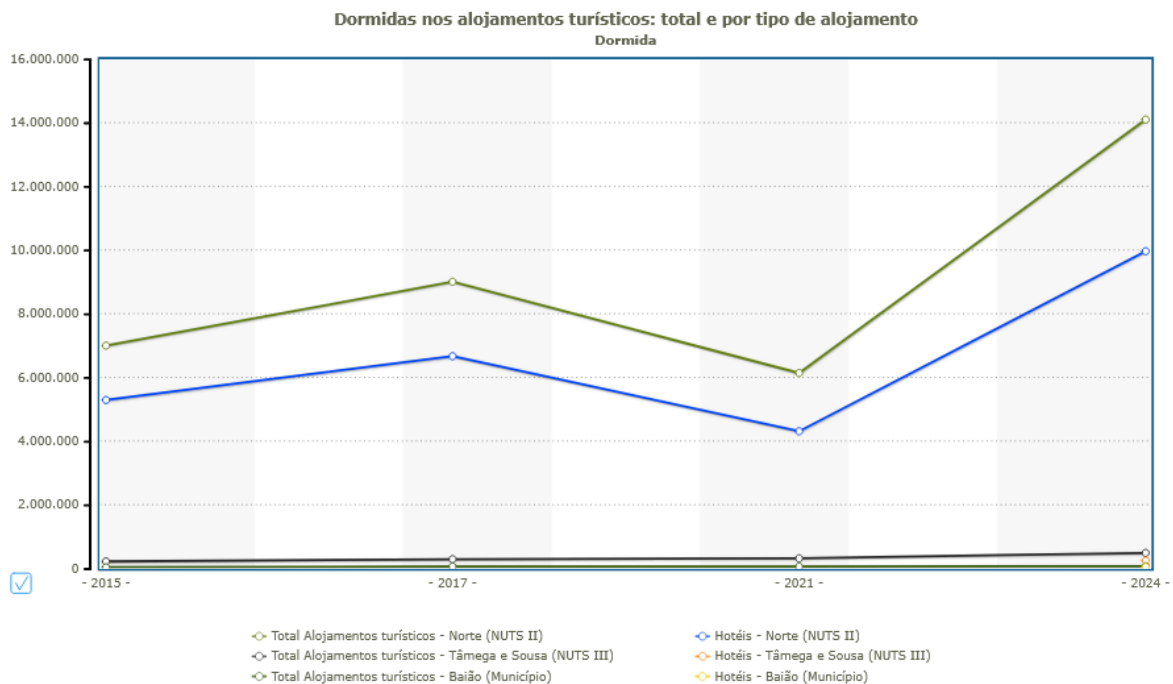


Figure 5 - Number of overnight stays in tourist accommodation establishments between 2015 and 2024

Baião's attractiveness is due to its position in two distinct areas of the destination's tourist offer: nature and adventure tourism and food and wine tourism. This positioning takes advantage of the conditions that its orographic contrasts and its hydrographic network created, punctuated by sometimes exuberant vegetation, of native species, as well as by a refined pleasure in cooking and popular roots.

Baião's affirmation assets can be structured in three axes: natural heritage (the mountains; the rivers; the Reixela oak); tangible heritage (megalithic sites; the Ancede monastery; the Eça de Queiroz Foundation; the Gestaçõ canes and the Frende baskets); and the intangible heritage (the roasted roast with oven rice; the smoker; the Teixeira biscuit; the Pala citrus fruits and the wine). These assets can then be organized into three strategic axes: nature and adventure; culture and enogastronomy.



Figure 6 - Baião affirmation axes

Nature and Adventure

- Walking routes
- MTB routes
- Natura 2000 Network
- Regional Protected Landscape of Serra da Aboboreira
- Mountains - Aboboreira, Castelo e Marão
- Rivers - Douro, Ovil and Teixeira
- Carvalhal de Reixela
- Villages - Mafômedes; Almofrela; Matos; Outoreça

With a privileged location, the municipality of Baião opens its doors between the landscape of Entre Douro and Minho and Trás-os-Montes, in a transition between shale and granite, connecting the peak of Marão to one of the most beautiful reservoirs of the Douro River, with about thirty kilometers.

On the interleaved slopes, marked by powerfully dug valleys, where some water lines like those of Ovil, Zêzere, and Teixeira wind up, draws the municipality whose landscape inspired the novelist, Eça de Queiroz, to write a real "hymn" to the environmental heritage: The City and the Mountains.

The foothills of Marão, the plateaus of Aboboreira and Castelo take our memory back to the times and peoples that gave life to this landscape more than 6,000 years ago. And even before nationality, other people here settled down, the Land of Baião was already mentioned in a document of 1066 and, on September 1, 1513, D. Manuel granted him the charter of Foral.

Currently, the landscape of Portuguese mountain areas is a reflection of millennia of human occupation. Oak trees, the primitive forest vegetation of the Aboboreira, Castelo and Marão mountains, are currently quite rare, but still evident in the Carvalhal de Reixela, one of the most important environmental assets in the region and one of the last indigenous forest areas in the Iberian Peninsula.

In these mountains, the historical destruction of forest ecosystems promoted their replacement by different types of scrub, dominant in the landscape. Thus, the proposed routes allow to observe landscapes of extreme beauty and diversity, in which Man and Nature coexist harmoniously and the uses of the territory are compatible with the most unique elements of flora and fauna, and a valuable cultural heritage. Archaeological remains, pillories, cruises, religious buildings, rustic houses and hidden villages mark the territory.

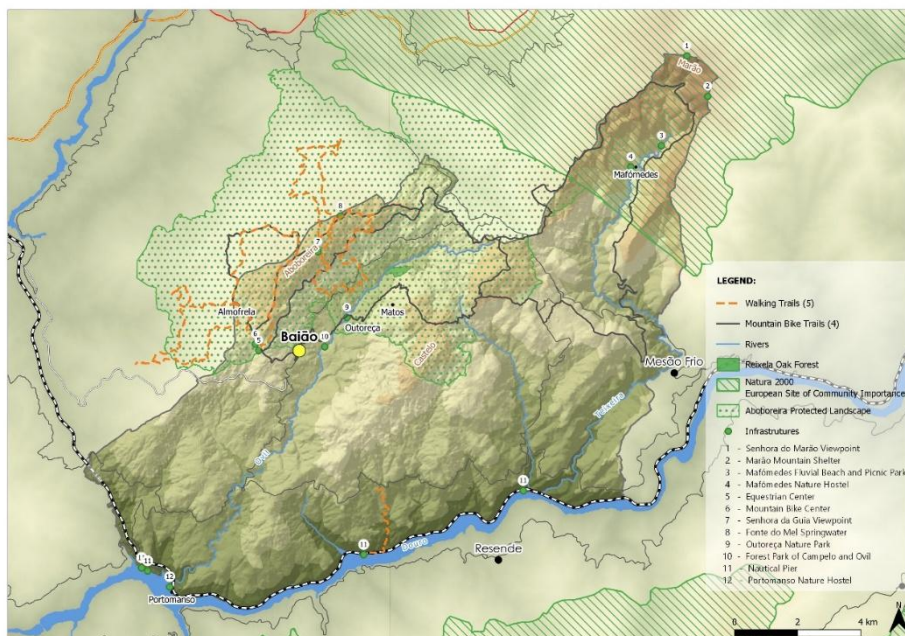
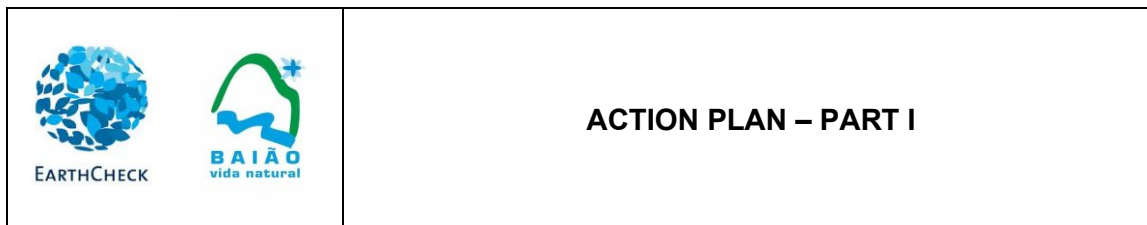


Figure 7 –Baião affirmation axis - Nature and Adventure



Culture

- Classified Heritage
- Romanesque Route
- Literature
- Eça de Queiroz Foundation
- Ancede Monastery
- Gestaçô canes
- Frende baskets

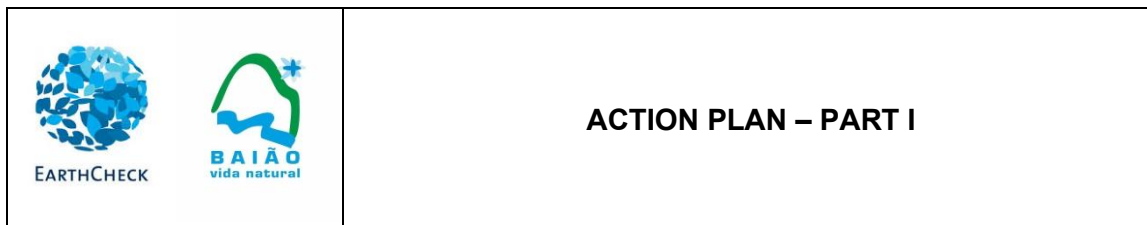
The landscape of Baião is today the result of the distinct way in which man occupied and transformed the territory over thousands of years, resulting in a landscape of great cultural value, with a strong heritage legacy. The oldest occupation of this territory is concentrated in the central plateaus of the mountains of Aboboreira and Castelo and dates back to recent prehistory that extends over a long chronological period of four thousand years (V to the 1st millennium BC) and includes different known traces thanks to the research project of the Serra da Aboboreira Archaeological Field. The tombs with “mamoas” stand out for their quantity, diversity and visibility, still marking the scenic landscape of Aboboreira today.

It is precisely in the Serra da Aboboreira that we can find the dolmen of Chã de Parada I, classified as a national monument in 1910 and one of the ex-libris of the municipality. Large dolmen, formed by nine pillars, with an access corridor that is distinguished from the funerary chamber in plan and elevation, and that originally consisted of three pillars on each side and where engravings are still visible inside.

Subsequently, during the Romanization period, man already inhabited, preferably, the slopes and valleys of the main water courses, with emphasis on those of Ovil and Douro. This occupation strategy was maintained in the medieval period, highlighting the hill of the Castle of Matos, a strong mark in the landscape and the identity of Baião, as it was the place chosen by the lord for the construction of a castle, which in the middle of the XI century, commanded the destinies of the Land of Bayam.

Although the date of its foundation is unknown, it is known that in 1120 the Monastery of Santo André

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de Ancede already belonged to the Diocese of Porto, being linked to the Canons of St. Augustine. In 1141, D. Afonso Henriques sells the Carta de Couto to the abbot of the Monastery for 150 Morabitanos. In 1560, it was annexed to the Convent of S. Domingos de Lisboa, by decision of Pope Pius IV. In the eighteenth century, several buildings were constructed that still make this architectural complex stand out today: the granaries and the cellar, the octagonal chapel of Nosso Sr. do Bom Despacho and probably the Fountain. At the beginning of the century. XIX, the Monastery was sold at public auction, being held by the baron of Ancede, passing to the possession of the municipality in 1985.

Currently, an integral musealisation project of the Santo André de Ancede Monastery complex is under development, with a central project by the architect Siza Vieira. The project is based on the concept of consolidated ruin at the ground floor level, with requalification options that refer to the period building materials on the first floor, where two exhibition rooms and a multifunctional room will function, as well as four work rooms. The project also foresees the valorization of the Bom Despacho Chapel - one of the most important monuments of the Baroque - as well as the creation of several exhibition spaces and visitation circuits, which will make this one of the reference projects in the North of Portugal.

The monastery of Santo André de Ancede is part of the Route of the Romanesque, alongside the Bridge of Esmoriz and the Church of S. Tiago de Valadares. The Route of the Romanesque is a tourist-cultural project, which currently brings together 58 monuments, spread over 12 municipalities in the Sousa, Douro and Tâmega valleys and which also integrates Baião. Rota seeks to position the region as a reference destination in the area of cultural tourism.

Writers such as Camilo Castelo Branco, Alves Redol, Agustina Bessa-Luís, Soeiro Pereira Gomes and Eça de Queiroz - who immortalized Baião's landscape in the novel A Cidade e as Serras, and also the children's literature writer António Mota, they often refer to this landscape in their works and found inspiration here.

The Eça de Queiroz Foundation, the dolmens of Serra da Aboboreira, the monastery of Santo André de Ancede, the vast religious heritage, handicrafts, small museum centers and interpretive centers invite you to visit Baião.

Taking advantage of the natural context in which Baião is inserted, inspired and skillful artisans transform raw materials such as wood, broom and stone into beautiful handicrafts, as the Gestaçô canes and Frende baskets.

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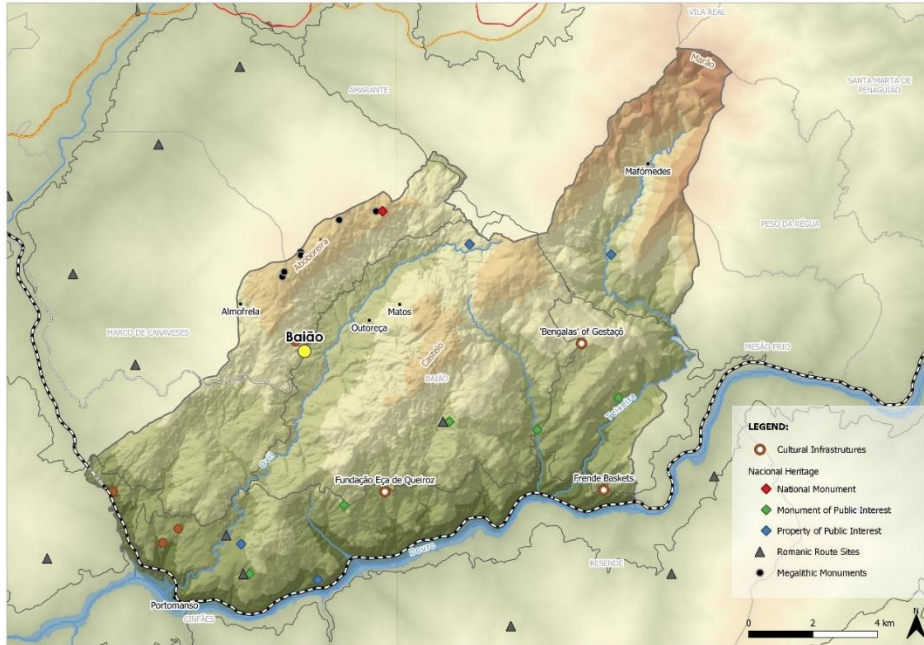


Figure 8 –Baião affirmation axis - Cultura

Enogastronomy

- Vineyards
- Orchards
- Location of farms
- Roasted garlic with oven rice
- Smokehouse
- Avesso (relationship with the Demarcated Region of Vinhos Verdes)

Here the Douro Line meets the river. After the Juncal tunnel, from the Pala station, the Douro can be seen below. The train winds along its course, sometimes rising on high viaducts, other times nestling in its meanders, almost touching the water. When crossing the line towards the source, surrounded by citrus fruits and vineyards, the Douro line reveals a valley that keeps transforming itself into an amphitheater where are built terraces that overcome steep slopes and allow the protection of a poor but generous soil.



Baião is part of this transition territory between Verde and Douro. Its edafo-climatic characteristics give conditions so different, that within the Demarcated Region of Vinhos Verdes (the largest Portuguese geographical area and one of the largest in Europe) one of the sub-regions is precisely Baião.

The sub-region of Baião “is located in the interior of the [Demarcated Region of Vinhos Verdes] at an intermediate altitude, conditions that create a less temperate climate, with colder and less rainy winters, and hotter and drier summer months. These characteristics allow the correct ripening of the late ripening varieties, for example Azal and Avesso (white) and Amarel (reds), with higher heat requirements at the end of the cycle. This sub-region has established itself in the production of highly renowned white wines from the Avesso grape variety, adding an intense and fruity aroma to a lively acidity”(https://www.vinhoverde.pt).

Gastronomy joins wine and is so special that even some say that Eça de Queiroz fell in love with both the landscape of this land and the flavors of its traditional cuisine when he wrote A Cidade e as Serras, referring to the magnificent rice of broad beans with chicken fried.

From roast anho with oven rice, traditional smokehouse to Teixeira's biscuit, gastronomy is celebrated in several events, including the “Festival do Anho Assado e do Arroz de Forno”, the “Feira do Fumeiro, do Cozido à Portuguesa e dos Vinhos de Baião ”and the meeting“ Virar a Mesa do Avesso ”.

The geographic location of the municipality gives it the privilege of opening the doors between the landscape of Entre Douro e Minho and the Trás-os-Montes, of moving from granite to schist, allowing you to taste the flavors of a unique, unmistakable gastronomy, which leaves the flavor on the palate of those who taste it.

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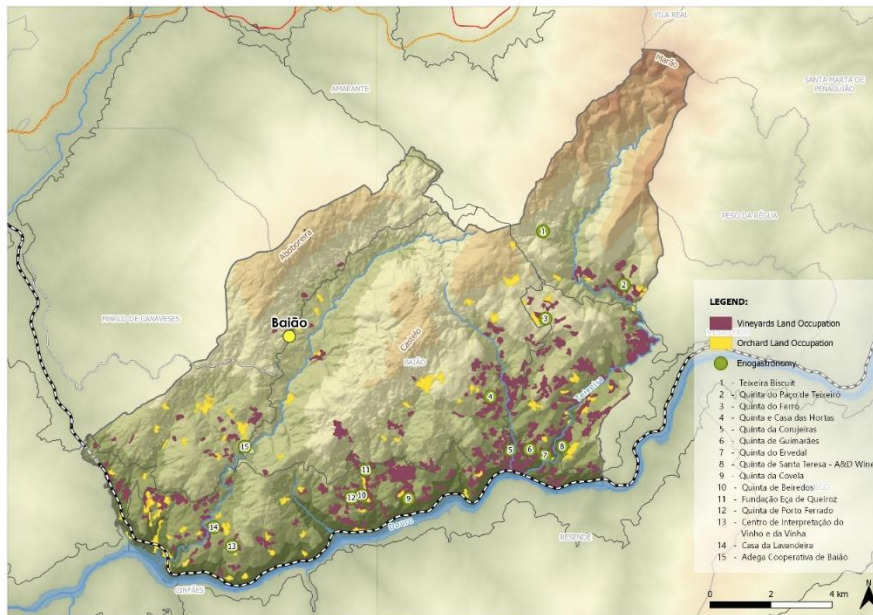


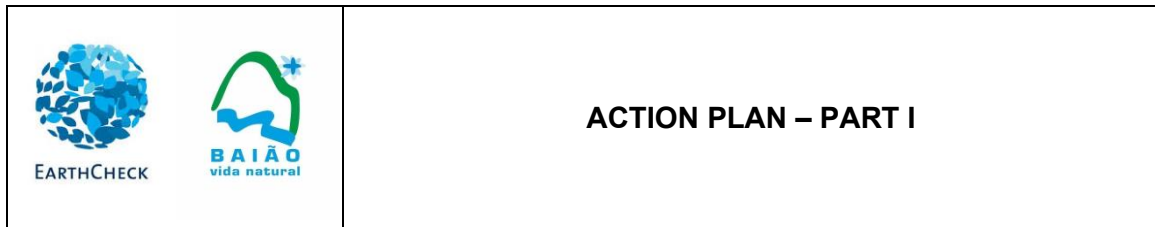
Figure 9 –Baião affirmation axis - Enogastronomy

The COVID-19 pandemic had a profound impact on tourism and compelled us to analyze the path to follow, with the certainty that sustainability is crucial to a successful strategy.

The health crisis has highlighted new concerns on the part of tourists and reinforced issues related to health security, sustainability, creativity and innovation.

The choice of destinations has also changed, which could constitute a window of opportunity for a territory with the characteristics of Baião. The search for low-density territories, with a strong natural component and that provide outdoor experiences related to wine and gastronomy began to be valued at the expense of more mass-market destinations. Destinations that allow regeneration and are associated with well-being are also more valued, with preference being given to smaller events and rural accommodation or local accommodation.

Tourists are demanding mainly due to the diversity of offers on the market. When you choose a particular tourist destination, you are not just choosing a beautiful place, but a place that provides you with experiences that will last in your memory.



Sustainability

The unique characteristics of Baião in the region, very much based on the millenary environmental and human heritage, full of authenticity, make it a fragile ecosystem in the face of tourist pressure. In this way, the certification process of the tourist destination intends to deepen practices, guarantee the preservation and the integral and integrated valorization of the natural and human heritage, enhancing the delicate balance between four pillars: the environmental, the cultural, the social and the economic, aligning with the 2030 Agenda Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as can be seen in part II of this Action Plan.

A possible step to understand the potential and constraints that the territory may contain, allowing the discussion and planning of the work leading to the elaboration of a strategy consisted of the elaboration of a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats / Potentialities, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) where we tried to reflect the potential of Baião.



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SWOT

	Positive factors	Negative factors
Internal Factors	<p>Strengths <i>What do you do well?</i> <i>What unique resources can you draw on?</i> <i>What do others see as your strengths?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural heritage of great value and diversity (forest spot covering 63% of the municipality, water courses, granite and shale mountains, diverse and endogenous fauna and flora) with unique characteristics such as Carvalho da Reixela; • Strong distinctive elements (Douro, Marão, Aboboreira, Castelo); • Historical and cultural heritage of interest and with tourist potential (megalithic monuments, religious heritage / Ancede Monastery, manor houses, typical villages); • "Brand" and logo associated with the municipality "Baião, Vida Natural"; • Efforts to qualify the various agents related to tourism (initial qualification). • Gastronomy and wines 	<p>Weaknesses <i>What could you improve?</i> <i>Where do you have fewer resources than others?</i> <i>What are others likely to see as weaknesses?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road accessibility to the municipality • Difficulty / sluggish car traffic between the various potential tourist sites in the municipality; • Depopulation of the municipality and aging of its population, affecting territorial distribution and economic dynamism in tourism activities; • Imbalance between flows of tourists and visitors; • Delays in organizing the tourist offer and programming to turn visitors into tourists; • Insufficient communication of the offer and / or resources in institutional channels and the media; • Insufficient development of nature tourism and housing tourism subtypes; • Insufficiency of structured tourist products that fit the interests of tourists / visitors.
External Factors	<p>Oportunities <i>What opportunities are open to you?</i> <i>What trends could you take advantage of?</i> <i>How can you turn your strengths into opportunities?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism as a strategic sector for sustainable development in Portugal; • Increasing tourist interest in tourist products / subtypes of reasons for tourist attraction characteristic of the municipality; • Proximity to the hub of Porto airport with a large influx of tourists whose profile (young people, looking for nature tourism, new destinations in short periods - short breaks) contributes to expand new segments and consolidate the existing offer; • Growing interest among young people in travel and tourism, evident in the growing supply and demand for specialized training; • Municipality's incentive policy to boost the tourism sector; • Tourism as a sector of diversification and strengthening of the local productive base. • Search for less dense locations • Demand for smaller accommodation 	<p>Threats <i>What threats could harm you?</i> <i>What is your competition doing?</i> <i>What threats do your weaknesses expose you to?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risks of uncharacterisation of areas / ecosystems characteristic of the municipality such as the forest, namely the riverside and the oak (construction, fires and eucalyptus); • Population changes: aging and depopulation; • Difficulty in systematizing a specific institutional model for tourism development; • Lack of human resources with adequate training in the areas to be developed, namely in the programming activity. • Duration of the pandemic

1.3 Vision

Baião is not an isolated territory. It is an administrative unit, integrated in a wider context of municipalities with similar geographical and sociodemographic characteristics, with a high tourist potential. There are, however, unique identity elements that give us a differentiated and differentiating position in relation to our neighbors. These are the elements that we want to enhance and cross in a strategy to promote a sustainable tourist destination and that constitute the design of our Vision.

Since 2006, Baião has had a tourism promotion and structuring line based on a signature that, today, is associated with the municipality “Baião, Vida Natural”. The accompanying logo shows the nature elements that make up the territory: the mountains and the river. The slogan, translates what we think to be the key elements in the articulation of tourism: a territory marked by a high quality natural heritage, preserved by the isolation to which it was voted over several decades, and which marked the pace of Baião's cultural development .

Today, natural and cultural heritage built and immaterial, are confused in the imagination that the tourist associates to the territory.

The Baião Municipality, being the key player in the process, acts as a catalyst for actions aimed at structuring a quality territory at the level of its tourist destination. Only with the various local tourist agents such as hotels, restaurants and tourism companies, or supramunicipal entities such as the Tâmega e Sousa Intermunicipal Community, the Baixo Tâmega Municipalities Association, the Romanesque Route or Porto Tourism and the North of Portugal, a network of partnerships can be built that fulfill the objectives that we propose, making Baião a reference destination in the national and European panorama.

We are strongly committed to the paradigm shift, leading by example, serving as a catalyst for the various local and regional agents to accompany us in the implementation of good practices that allow the reduction of environmental impacts and the guarantee of an environmentally sustainable territory. In this sense, we are committed to a set of generic principles, which guide the municipality in implementing the Action Plan:

- Baião, Vida Natural is synonymous / guide to a desire to put at the center a policy of preserving the natural and the cultural, with a regional vocation as a catalyst for sustainable development;



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- Baião, Vida Natural, provides (ha) a set of experiences, events and tourist products according to principles of sustainability in sharing local habits, customs, gastronomy and local hospitality, challenging all regional actors to join Baião and its community on this journey;
- Baião, Vida Natural, is committed to developing a line of work based on four pillars: Economic, Cultural, Social and Environmental (ECSE), allowing Baião to be recognized as a regional destination in terms of sustainability

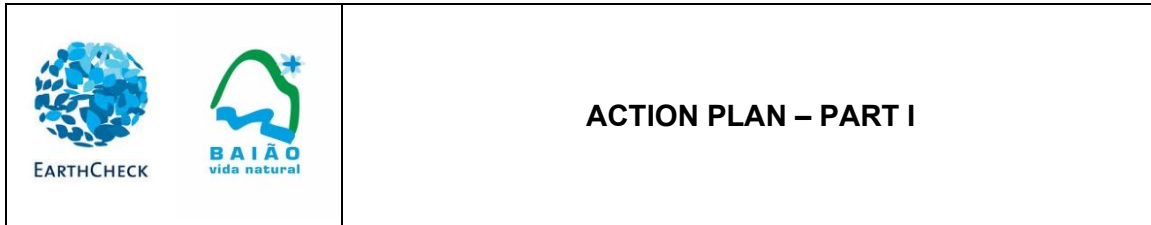
A territory integrates a set of physical and human resources that shape ways of life and support the creation of a strategic matrix for the development of the territory. It is up to decision-makers and technicians in the area to identify the distinctive and endogenous elements of the territory that contribute to the creation of a brand and / or a differentiating personality differentiating from other territories. This brand, translated into touristically operable products, should have the capacity to attract visitors that allow them to structure an appealing offer capable of turning “territories” into “tourist destinations”. In the case of Baião, the bet is clearly to create a sustainable tourist destination, in which the economic factor is balanced with the pillars of nature, culture and people, preserving the matrix of authenticity that characterizes us and of which we are proud.

Such a destination anchored in the territory / region, when in conjunction with other destinations, can create synergies and gains in scale that translate into a dissemination of quality, democratic and sustainable tourism.

In the tourism context, there are a series of guiding documents and supramunicipal platforms that, in a cooperative and complementary manner, seek to structure the regional and sub-regional tourist offer in which the municipality of Baião seeks to integrate itself. Among these, we refer to the “Tourism Strategy 2027” that outlines the national lines of the sector's development in the country, but also regional documents such as the “Marketing Study of the Promotion of the Low Tâmega”, “Tourism Development Plan of Vale do Vale do Douro”, or the “ Tâmega e Sousa Territorial Marketing Plan ”, which defines the strategy for promoting the tourist (and business) potential of the region, in which Baião is integrated, and is composed of eleven municipalities.

The appeal that the territory has to a public in search of experiences that are based on authenticity

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values, has allowed the growth of the number of tourists and visitors, and also the appearance of several hotels and local accommodation units in their most different typologies.

As an almost immaculate territory from an environmental point of view, the natural heritage in a territory that is limited to the south by the Douro River and to the North by the highest point of Serra do Marão, with several natural landmarks of great regional importance, as are Serra da Aboboreira and its archaeological heritage from the Neolithic period, Serra do Castelo or Reixela oak, Baião presents a wide range of options for nature and adventure tourism.

The scenic potential of the territory makes the various tourist options more pleasant, attracting thousands of visitors annually, projecting Baião as a tourist option in the increasingly competitive tourist market in the North of Portugal.

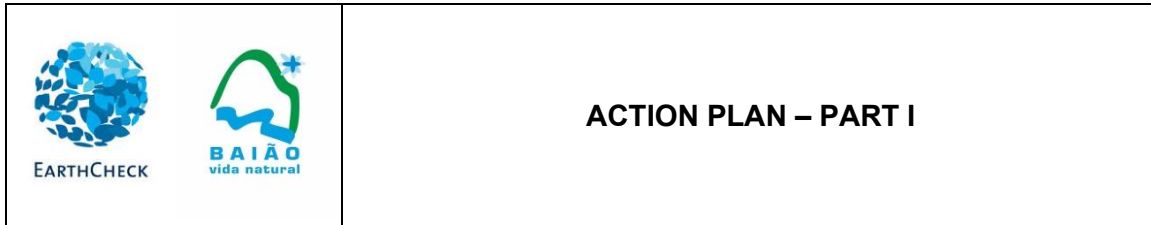
The quality of the territory and its endogenous products has led to several praiseworthy references in various media, highlighting natural and cultural assets, but also excellent gastronomy and wine production.

In recent years, the stake of Destiny's stakeholders has been to create a set of anchor products that attract visitors, based on gastronomic fairs and Nature sports activities, as well as on the level of appreciation of cultural heritage. Among those, we can highlight for the importance in the calendar and the potential in terms of attracting visitors:

- The Feira do Fumeiro, Cozido à Portuguesa and Baião Wines
- Roasted Anho and Oven Rice Festival
- Festival Grey Revolution
- Agro Douro Verde
- Creation of the Regional Protected Landscape of Serra da Aboboreira
- Enhancement of the Monastery of Sto. André de Ancede
- Enhancement of the monuments of the Route of the Romanesque

These assets, which follow a logic of consolidated programming and dynamism and in constant innovation, have been responsible for the growing number of visitors and tourists arriving in the territory and for the focus given by the media.

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1.4. Destination Management Organization (DMO)

The DMO is an internal structure of the Municipality of Baião, with responsibility for the coordination of the Baião Certification Project as a Sustainable Tourist Destination, which will be an interlocutor with EarthCheck and all relevant institutions and partners to pursue it.

It is, therefore, a structure directly dependent on the Mayor, responsible for managing the process of implementing the sustainability of the destination and monitoring the measures contained in this Action Plan, ensuring the consolidation of the quality levels identified in the benchmarking process, in a constant search for improvement of its indicators.

Likewise, it is within its sphere of action to define the sustainability strategy of the Baião Tourist Destination, in conjunction with the responsible municipal services.

Thus, the Destination Management Organization's functions are to:

- a) Implement, streamline and monitor the certification process for the Sustainable Tourist Destination, following the criteria defined by EarthCheck, having as guiding principles those issued by the United Nations World Tourism Organization and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) defined by the UN;
- b) Prepare the annual action plan to be presented and developed with the various stakeholders of the municipality and the North region;
- c) To guarantee the continuity of the certification processes for the sustainable tourist destination and the respective certification renewals;
- d) Identify and integrate good sustainable innovative practices in the municipality and with stakeholders.

1.5. DMO Lines of Action

The Destination Management Organization's role is to serve as a catalyst for the various stakeholders to be committed to the implementation and development of an environmentally sustainable and touristically responsible territory. Thus, its line of action is based on a strong commitment to adapt and integrate different strategic documents:

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- Align with the Sustainable Development Goals, as defined by the United Nations;
- Follow the normative code of action defined by EarthCheck with regard to environmentally sustainable territories, with a view to permanent improvement;
- Implement sustainability guidelines for different national (such as Turismo de Portugal) and international (such as the World Tourism Organization, GSTC, among others);
- Integrate considerations emanating from the World Health Organization and the General Health Directorate (DGS) with regard to health care and its impacts on the practice of tourism,;
- Involve the local community, the various municipal and inter-municipal partners, as well as the stakeholders that add or may add economic value to the tourism cluster;
- Promote an environmental responsibility policy that, as a whole, pays off in a case of success in terms of the environmental sustainability of the tourist destination Baião;
- Make Baião an environmentally sustainable tourist destination with the objective of providing turistic friendly experiences to the tourists hat come to the territory;
- Identify and integrate good practices at national and international level that constitute an effective added value in the environmental sustainability vision and policy of the municipality;
- Continuously monitor the behavior of the municipality in each of the twelve key certification areas (see part II);
- Make Baião a reference territory in terms of environmentally sustainable tourist destinations.

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