

Guidelines for a

State Tourism Policy

oriented towards the sustainable urban
development of Alagoas

• EXECUTIVE SUMMARY •



This Executive Summary provides a synthesis of the **Guidelines for a State Tourism Policy oriented towards the sustainable urban development of Alagoas** – a component of the *Visão Alagoas 2030* project, a technical cooperation initiative between the Government of Alagoas and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).

The Guidelines aim to support the strengthening of the tourism sector, focusing on enhancing existing initiatives, fostering intersectoral coordination, and promoting integrated urban development.

The recommendations presented herein were developed based on a comprehensive diagnosis of the tourism sector and are grounded in strategies designed to promote environmental, social, and economic sustainability across the state's seven tourism regions.

The document is structured into the following main sections: Methodology; Guiding Principles for Sustainable Tourism; Diagnosis of the Tourism Sector in Alagoas; Guidelines for Sustainable Tourism in Alagoas; and Proposal for Pilot Programmes for Sustainable Tourism.

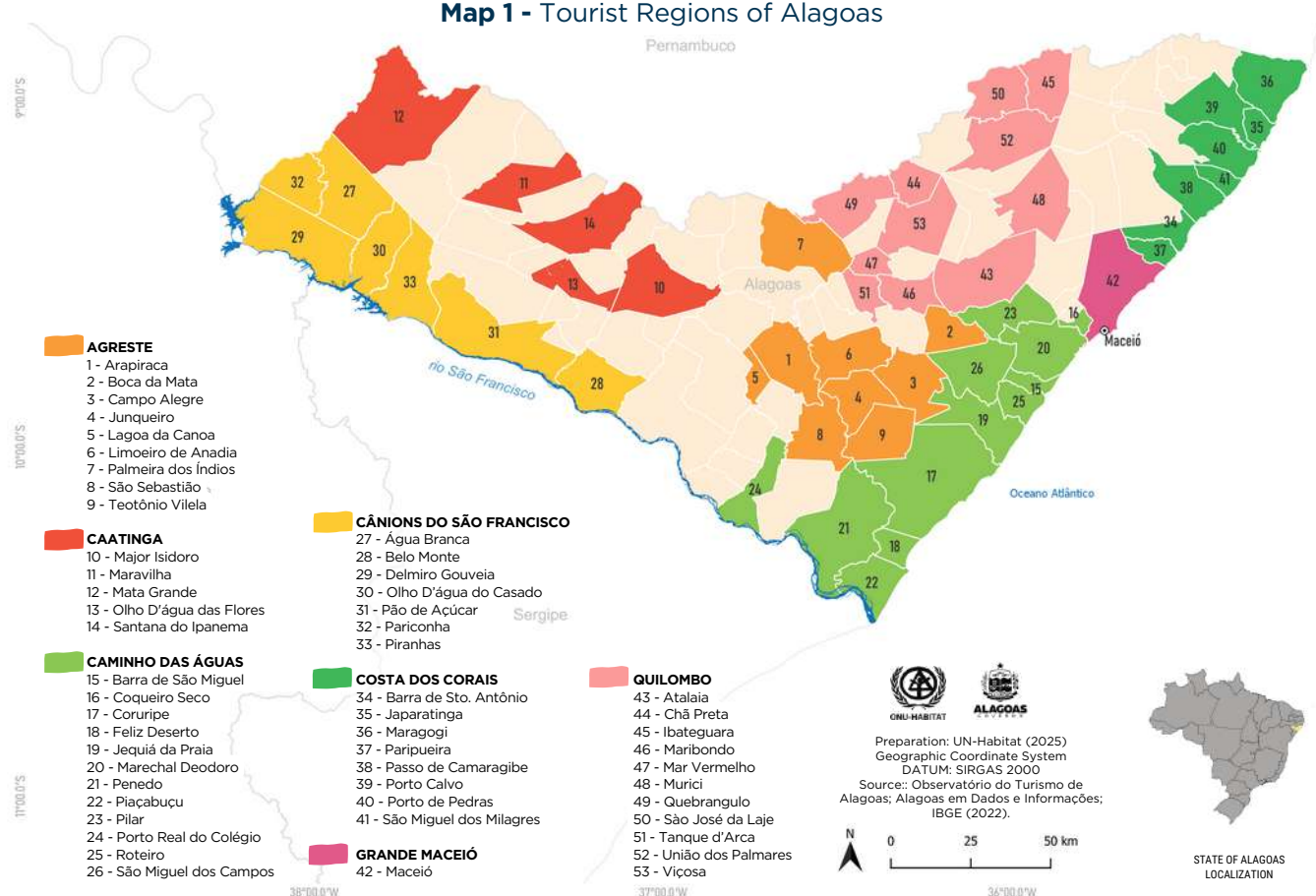
The methodology adopted for the development of this work comprised the following stages:

- Conducting seminars, participatory workshops, and technical meetings;
- Analysis of both primary and secondary data sources; and
- Application of tools such as Life Cycle Analysis to identify the development stages of each tourist region, the construction of a GUT Matrix to prioritise opportunities and challenges, and the mapping of best practices to inform the proposed pilot programmes.

The Guidelines presented are grounded in key principles for tourism oriented towards sustainable urban development, as advocated by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda. These principles include:

- Economic viability;
- Local prosperity;
- Quality employment;
- Social equity;
- Visitor satisfaction;
- Local control;
- Community well-being;
- Cultural richness;
- Physical integrity;
- Biological diversity;
- Resource efficiency;
- Environmental quality.

Map 1 - Tourist Regions of Alagoas



The diagnosis aimed to address sustainable tourism in a systemic manner, based on the analysis of the Life Cycle of the tourist regions, guiding the identification of key challenges and opportunities.

The opportunities include strengthening sustainable practices, diversifying tourism products, and fostering greater integration between local communities, urban areas, and rural regions. Meanwhile, the challenges highlight the need for strategic planning and effective governance to prevent negative impacts and ensure benefits for local populations.

LIFE CYCLE AND ANALYSIS OF THE TOURIST REGIONS OF ALAGOAS

Phase 1. Exploration: limited visitation, with tourists having an adventurous and independent profile; tourism infrastructure concentrated in small accommodations; and direct contact with local communities, without commercial mediation.

- **Caatinga:** ecotourism and cultural tourism in natural areas and regions with sertanejo (Brazilian backcountry) culture.

Phase 2. Involvement: increased interest from the local community in participating in the tourism economy; the initial emergence of services such as small restaurants and guesthouses; and a moderate increase in the number of visitors, usually through recommendations.

- **Agreste:** rural tourism in a balance between urban and rural areas; and
- **Quilombo:** initial cultural tourism in neighbouring rural municipalities.

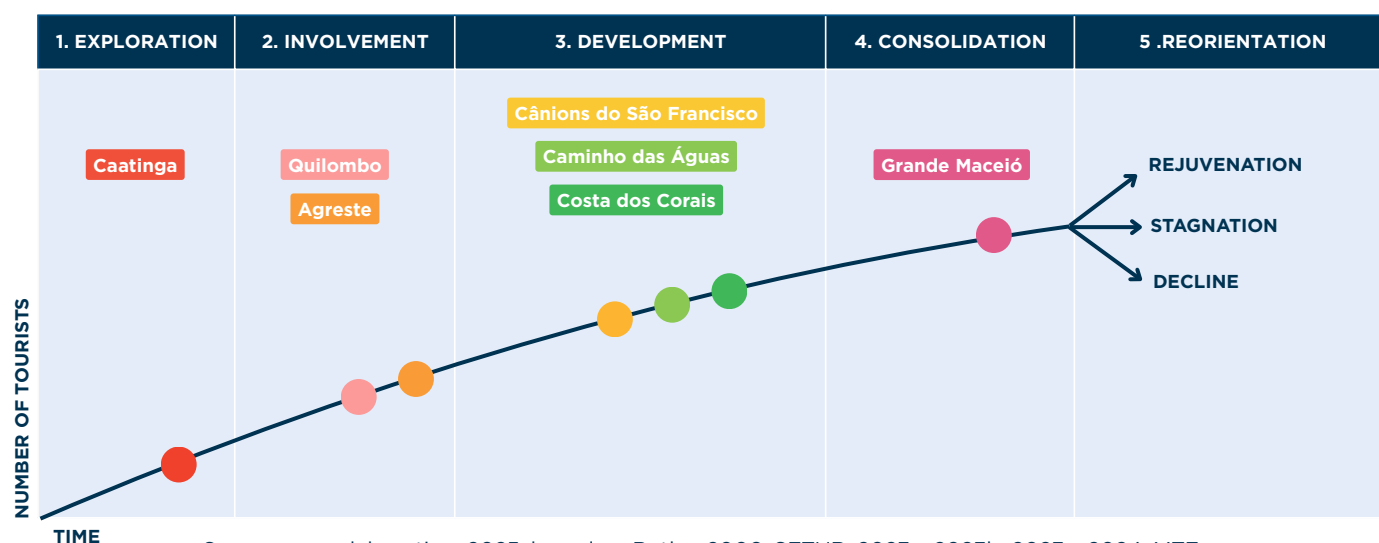
Phase 3. Development: rapid and significant growth in tourism infrastructure; increased commercial promotion of the destination; inflow of external investments and expansion of the tourism service network; greater professionalisation of the tourism offering and development of structured itineraries; and attraction of national tourists and, eventually, international visitors.

- **Costa dos Corais:** beaches and natural pools with environmental protection, but significant impact;
- **Caminho das Águas:** adventure tourism and ecotourism; historic and heritage cities; and
- **Cânions do São Francisco:** cultural and adventure tourism, with a need for infrastructure.

Phase 4. Consolidation: widely recognised destinations with high tourist flow; robust tourism infrastructure, but with pressure on natural and cultural resources; and a local economy strongly dependent on tourism.

- **Grande Maceió:** high visitation in urban areas, with a focus on gastronomy and handicrafts.

Graphic 1 – Life Cycle of the Tourist Regions of Alagoas



Source: own elaboration, 2025, based on Butler, 2006; SETUR, 2023a, 2023b, 2023c, 2024; MTE Rais, 2023; MTur Cadastur, 2011 a 2020; and IBGE, 2020.

Opportunities and challenges of the state

OPPORTUNITIES	CHALLENGES
Tourism infrastructure and mobility	
O.1. Expansion of the hotel network and private investment, with improvements in regional mobility, airport infrastructure, and public-private partnerships in the sanitation sector.	D.1. Insufficient basic infrastructure, such as sanitation (80.5% without sewage collection) and access to water (23.4%), as well as pressure on public services during peak season. D.2. Limited investment in infrastructure adapted to climate change. D.3. Limitations in universal accessibility at tourist attractions and facilities.
Regional diversity	
O.2. Alagoas has 7 tourist regions with potential for different tourism profiles (sun and beach, ecotourism, cultural, and adventure), combining rural and urban areas.	D.4. Concentration of tourism in consolidated regions such as Maceió and Costa dos Corais, with limited infrastructure in more rural and less developed areas. D.5. Low integration between urban and rural areas.
Natural and cultural heritage	
O.3. Unique attractions, such as the São Francisco River, canyons, natural pools, and historical and cultural heritage in Penedo and Marechal Deodoro, mostly operate with established protection and conservation instruments.	D.6. Environmental degradation due to irregular occupation in sensitive areas, such as Costa dos Corais, and challenges in protecting and enhancing cultural heritage. D.7. Lack of environmental monitoring, challenges in controlling tourist flow in sensitive areas, and sustainable approaches still being secondary in several municipalities. D.8. Absence of an explicit focus on adaptation to extreme events limits preparedness for the impacts of climate change.
Governance and planning	
O.4. Advances in the implementation of the Alagoas Tourism Observatory, State Tourism Council of Alagoas, policies such as the Integrated Sustainable Tourism Development Plan and Integrated Urban Development Plan for the Maceió Metropolitan Region, which address sustainability in tourism. O.5. The potential of the E-Conecta Programme and the State Policy for Investments and Socio-Environmental Impact Business in the state of Alagoas to promote and enhance sustainability in state tourism. O.6. A formal governance structure established in bodies such as State Secretariat for Tourism, Municipal Councils, and Regional Governance Bodies. O.7. Informal networks facilitate quick decision-making.	D.9. Fragmentation of public policies, lack of intersectoral integration, and uneven governance between municipalities and tourist regions. D.10. Limited capacity building in smaller municipalities and less developed regions. D.11. Scarcity of financial resources for the implementation of projects in Regional Governance Bodies and Municipal Tourism Councils.
Social inclusion	
O.8. The potential of tourism to generate employment and income within local communities, particularly in rural and traditional regions. O.9. Incentives for local cooperatives and creative tourism, such as the <i>Alagoas Feita à Mão</i> programme, foster inclusive socio-economic development and enhance the value of local communities.	D.12. Low representativeness and engagement of communities in less consolidated regions, as well as challenges in transparency and continuous dialogue with local communities.
Data and monitoring	
O.10. The potential of tourism to generate employment and income within local communities, particularly in rural and traditional regions. O.11. Use of social media and digital platforms by state and municipal bodies to communicate with the public and the tourism sector.	D.13. Lack of regular research on carrying capacity, vulnerabilities and risks, perception of tourism impacts, and sustainability indicators. D.14. Absence of technological integration in some municipalities and challenges in training public management on new tools.
Diversification of offerings	
O.12. Growing appreciation for cultural, ecological, and community-based tourism, with initiatives in regions such as Quilombo and Cânions do São Francisco.	D.15. Dependence on summer tourism, high seasonality, and a strong focus on sun-and-beach tourism.
Innovation and knowledge	
O.13. The promotion of technologies such as QR codes, along with planning for sustainable public transport, connects destinations and communities, optimising the tourism experience. O.14. The <i>Escola do Turismo</i> Programme demonstrates efforts to strengthen coordination and capacity building.	D.16. Technological solutions for tourism management and visitor experience remain incipient, limiting the destination's competitiveness. D.17. A focus on traditional teaching methods overlooks sustainable tourism practices and digital innovation, limiting the modernisation of the sector.

GUIDELINES FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN ALAGOAS

STRATEGIES DIRECTLY RELATED TO TOURISM

1. Strengthen the management and integrated, sustainable operation of tourism | SDG 11, 17

Integrate governance and monitoring efforts with a focus on sustainable practices and climate resilience.

Actions:

- Strengthen the Tourism Observatory and governance bodies;
- Incorporate climate risk management, particularly in coastal destinations vulnerable to rising sea levels and extreme events;
- Implement guidelines for new tourism ventures in vulnerable areas; and
- Promote sustainable certifications and tax incentives for best practices.

2. Strengthen the *Escola do Turismo* Programme | SDG 4, 8, 13

Expand and strengthen the *Escola do Turismo* Programme to incorporate specific qualification themes for the growth of sustainable tourism.

Actions:

- Develop partnerships with universities for professional qualifications;
- Implement exchange programmes between regions to disseminate best practices and successful experiences;
- Offer courses on innovation, governance, data analysis, and sustainable tourism;
- Promote heritage and environmental education initiatives to strengthen cultural identity; and
- Train local communities for climate adaptation, focusing on resilient practices in agriculture and housing.

3. Implement monitoring policies, control of tourist carrying capacity, and acceptable limits of change in publicly owned attractions | SDG 12, 13

Ensure a sustainable balance between tourism and environmental conservation.

Actions:

- Implement continuous tourist flow monitoring systems; and
- Strengthen tourism management based on climatic and environmental parameters.

4. Promote technological innovation and digital inclusion in developing and established tourist regions | SDG 9

Modernise and digitalise tourism management and promotion in both developing and established tourist regions.

Actions:

- Invest in connectivity and digital platforms for tourism management;
- Adopt big data and artificial intelligence for monitoring and managing tourism flows; and
- Use real-time climate monitoring technologies to predict risks, assess vulnerabilities, and support quick decision-making in the tourism sector.

5. Strengthen the diversification of tourism offerings based on cultural and natural resources | SDG 8, 11

Reduce seasonality and diversify tourism offerings by leveraging local resources.

Actions:

- Develop differentiated tourist products, such as ecotourism, rural tourism, regenerative tourism, and community-based tourism; and
- Support local communities in sustainable tourism as a means of income generation and balanced regional development.

6. Strengthen the implementation of the multi-level governance model | SDG 16

Enhance integrated governance between municipal, regional, and state levels, promoting strategic alignment, transparency, and community participation in tourism management.

Actions:

- Create channels of dialogue between the population, the public sector, and the private sector to ensure efficient and transparent governance;
- Train public management, Regional Governance Bodies, and Municipal Tourism Councils to strengthen planned and effective actions;
- Create regional and state tourism forums;
- Establish interinstitutional committees to align regional demands with state and national tourism policies; and
- Adopt metrics and indicators to monitor the impacts and results of actions.

7. Promote sustainability for tourists and the market | SDG 4, 12

Raise awareness among tourists and the market about sustainable practices and low-impact behaviours.

Actions:

- Promote environmental education programmes to encourage conservation and responsible practices in tourism;
- Undertake educational activities in conservation areas, involving local communities in environmental protection;
- Incorporate the concept of climate literacy into educational campaigns, highlighting the impacts of climate change and the role of sustainable tourism;
- Map best sustainability practices and integrate them into the Tourism Observatory of Alagoas; and
- Encourage sustainable experiences and best practices among tourists, tour operators, and industry partners.

CROSS-CUTTING STRATEGIES FOR TOURISM

1. Improve Sanitation Infrastructure and Solid Waste Management | SDGs 6, 11, 12, 13

Expand sanitation coverage and promote sustainable solutions for solid waste management.

Actions:

- Expand the coverage of basic sanitation and solid waste collection and disposal;
- Invest in green infrastructure, such as sustainable urban drainage and nature-based solutions for climate adaptation; and
- Establish partnerships with federal programmes to facilitate investments in sanitation, waste management, and sustainable infrastructure.

2. Improve Sustainable Mobility Infrastructure and Tourist Accessibility | SDGs 9, 11

Promote an efficient, sustainable, and accessible mobility system, integrating tourist destinations and local communities.

Actions:

- Invest in sustainable mobility, with cycle lanes, efficient public transport, and quality access routes to tourist attractions;
- Ensure universal accessibility, promoting inclusive tourism for people with disabilities;
- Prioritise electric and hybrid transport on tourist routes; and
- Strengthen the resilience of infrastructure against extreme weather events, ensuring accessibility in adverse situations.

3. Establish Cultural and Heritage Preservation Policies | SDG 11

Promote cultural preservation integrated with tourism and climate policies.

Actions:

- Strengthen actions for the valorisation of local culture through festivals, cultural itineraries, and experiential tourism;
- Include the protection of cultural heritage vulnerable to climate disasters within preservation policies; and
- Implement climate protection measures for vulnerable cultural and historical assets as part of a long-term strategy.

PROPOSED PILOT PROGRAMS FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

The pilot programmes aim to inspire, strengthen government actions, and foster partnerships, promoting governance, innovation, and sustainability based on national and international best practices.

- **State and Regional Tourism Forum:** Strengthening integrated governance and promoting best practices among municipalities.
- **Strong Councils, Strong Destinations:** Capacity building and digitalisation of participatory tourism management.
- **Digital Governance Platform:** Centralisation of strategic data for monitoring and managing the sector.
- **Monitored Tourism Sustainability:** Implementation of metrics to control carrying capacity and environmental impacts.
- **Green Infrastructure and Regeneration in Tourism:** Implementation of sustainable solutions and restoration of degraded areas.
- **Smart Destination:** Use of interactive technologies and connectivity to optimise the tourism experience.
- **Immersive Experiences:** Nature, Culture, Well-being, and Technology: Development of innovative tourism products that focus on culture, nature, well-being, and technology.

It is expected that this product will serve as a reference for strategic planning and decision-making in the tourism sector of Alagoas, aligning with best practices in sustainability and innovation, while contributing to the strengthening of the economy, environmental preservation, and the valorisation of local communities. .



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