



VIST Awards!
Vision for Innovation in Sustainable
Tourism Awards

**SPOTLIGHT ON
UNSUSTAINABLE TOURISM**

REPORTING IRRESPONSIBLE TOURISM



VISTAwards – Examples of Unsustainable Tourism: Submission Form

In the VISTAwards, bad practice as well as good practice is being showcased - a spotlight will highlight nominated tourism-related unsustainable and irresponsible stakeholder actions related to any given destination. Examples might be: a piece of unjust government policy, poor governance, inappropriate property or destination development, corporate greed, harmful environmental business services/practices, oppressive and unfair social behaviour, unsustainable use of technology, etc...

Submit Your Own Example

In order to submit an example of irresponsible or unsustainable tourism activity to the VISTAwards you have to fill in the following information form. The form asks you questions that cover an *Agenda 21*-based analysis of the economic, environmental, socio-cultural and institutional processes of sustainable development in general. The questions focus this broad *Agenda 21 Sustainable Consumption and Production* framework through the lens of the tourism sector-specific *Global Sustainable Tourism Council's* criteria for sustainable tourism, and are formulated according to knowledge needed for preparation of a case for the purposes an EU impact assessment (IA) /, national environmental impact assessments (EIAs), national/regional strategic environmental assessments (SEAs) and territorial planning decision support.

Legal Notice

When you submit an Unsustainable Tourism Development Form you should avoid publishing any material which is abusive, vulgar, defamatory, inaccurate, harassing, hateful, threatening, invading of others privacy, or violates any EU or national law.

DestiNet does not accept any responsibility for the content of your information, and you agree to indemnify and hold the Portal and its agents harmless with respect to any legal or financial claim based upon your submission.

A: IDENTIFICATION DETAILS

1. TITLE OF REPORTED IRRESPONSIBLE OR UNSUSTAINABLE ACTIVITY/BUSINESS:*

Algarve International Autodrome Development Area

2. DATE OF SUBMISSION:*

10.11.10 **UPDATED:** 23.01.2014

3. INFORMATION SUBMITTED BY:*

Gordon Sillence

4. REPRESENTATIVE OF (IF APPLICABLE):*

Janela Aberta 21, Sustainable Development Education Centre

5. CONTACT EMAIL:*

Gordon.sillence@gmail.com

6. NAME OF PROJECT/BUSINESS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ACTIVITY:*

Park Algar

7. ADDRESS:*

Sítio do Escampadinho, Mexilhoeira Grande, 8500- 130 Portimão, Algarve - Portugal

8. LOCATION:*

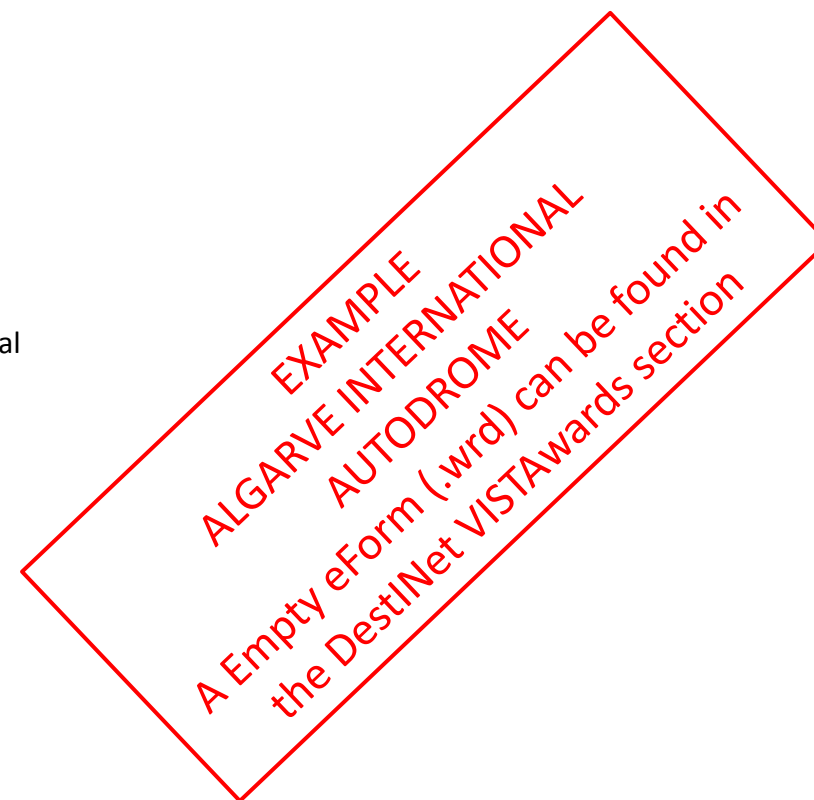
37° 13' 19" N 008° 37' 46" W

9. WEB ADDRESS (IF APPLICABLE):*

<http://www.autodromoalgarve.com.pt/>

10. CONTACT PERSON (IF KNOWN):*

administrador da Parkalgar Eng. Paulo Pinheiro (paulopinheiro@parkalgar.com)



B SUMMARY:*

11A. NATURE OF UNSUSTAINABLE ACTIVITY (-IES)* (Please state nature and extent of the problem (s))

The Autrodromo Internacionale do Algarve race track, development park and tourism resort have been built in the buffer zone of a Natura 2000 area, in prime Iberian lynx and Bonelli's eagle habitat, mainly to fulfil the wishes of a small consortium of local business people, rather than through any sustainability land management process. The business has been operating without having implemented key aspects of noise reduction design features, which means the events exceed legal noise limits and can be heard in a 10km radius, depending on wind direction, disturbing an estimated 5000 plus residents in the vicinity. There is a process of green-washing the project going on, with alternative energy investments being used to provide a sustainability cloak to otherwise economically, environmentally and socially irresponsible, elitist construction, leisure and tourism businesses.

11B. HOW DOES THE ACTION/PROJECT/ACTIVITY DEMONSTRATE IRRESPONSIBLE AND UNSUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT, ACTIONS OR EFFECTS?*

The initial environmental impact assessment process has been very weak, a characteristic similar to insufficient EIAs found in other tourism projects in Portugal by the EU in 2009.

There has been blatant omission of the infrastructure development required by the preceding environmental impact assessment, namely in the forms of noise reduction design of the track itself, and construction of two 7-10 meter high 500-800 metre long sound wall barriers.

200 million Euros has been invested, 40 million of which has come through national to regional funding channels, promising thousands of jobs and businesses which have not materialised.

From concept to implementation there has a pattern of financial and organisational mismanagement leading to poor building quality and non-completion of key design elements.

The project runs on a temporary license that is issued by one of the partners in the consortium that has promoted the operation, bringing into question the veracity/legality of the entire construction process. Currently the regional and local authority's are passing the responsibility to each other to deflect investigation by a legal team formed by the local NGO ADAP.

The project is now reportedly operating at a 3 million Euro per annum loss and is receiving state support through the local council, thus competing with local schools, hospitals and care services for scarce government money

A 37 hectare business development park and tourism complex centred on a 4.8 km race track makes a large footprint in lynx habitat. Its 4 km plus linking road to the motorway completes the habitat defragmentation infrastructure, which has been put up without any regard to wild life transit.

The noise levels from the track reach and exceed upper levels of legal noise emissions, and can be heard in a 10 km radius, stressing both the local residents and wildlife species in the surrounding area.

The potential for genuine ecotourism in this part of the Algarve hinterland in the 10km noise radius of the track has been severely damaged. The racetrack business is dependent on irresponsible use of scarce resources, ie oil/petrol, and has a massive carbon footprint. In the post-Copenhagen climate change, these types of business do not contribute to the mosaic of sustainable development.

The development is a frontier for the expansion of the sub-urban sprawl of Portimao, in which valuable arable and ecologically useful land is being urbanized or industrialized. In particular it is paving the way for the development of a regional airport.

The race track is supported by gambling and alcohol interests, and creates a tourism profile related to irresponsible and unsustainable aspects of these types of tourism activities.

The track encourages the culture of speeding, drinking, and gambling in a country which has high road mortality and alcoholism problems.

It continues to displace local people from their traditional land by adding to the Algarve's inflated foreign-owned luxury housing market.

There has been no discussion of planning gain to counter-balance the negative impacts the track is having on residents and wild life.

Stakeholders ran a questionable publicity campaign to get the track built, using sustainability rhetoric to mask the negative implications of the investment.

UPDATE 2014: The project received a 90 million bailout with tax payer money that on paper made the state the owner, but the management has stayed the same, owners will still share the profits and the environmental requirements remain unmet.

C FURTHER DETAILED DESCRIPTION:

12A WHO ARE THE OTHER STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED?*

Camara Municipal de Portimao, Camara Municipal de Lagos, Comissao de Coordenacao do Region do Algarve (CCDR), Ministerio de Economia, Instituto de Conservacao de Natureza e Biodiversidade, Turismo de Portugal, Radisson Hotels, Casinos do Algarve, Sagres Beer Company. GALP Energia, Associacao para a Defesa do Ambiente de Portimao, Monchique Natura 2000 Zone, local residents, motor sports tourists. Local businesses plus other local councils.

12B WHAT PART ARE THEY PLAYING? Please provide details of the issue in the table below. Please describe positive and negative Impacts according to different stakeholders relationship to the issue. If negative, please describe potential mitigating actions.

Impact analysis	Qualitative assessment/+	Quantitative assessment/+	Alternatives/ Options	Comments
<p>How does the action/project/activity effect socio-economic processes in the local community, alongside other potential economic impacts?</p>	<p>Turismo de Portugal and Park Algar have made a partnership under Turismo de Portugal's Partnerships for the future (http://www.turismocapital.pt/atividade/empresas). This highlights the short term economic thinking at a national level that conflicts with medium and long term environmental conservation and social improvement policies, and in particular contradicts with Turismo de Portugal's own alleged 'carbon-neutral operations' statement.</p>	<p>Construction of F1 approved 4.6km racing circuit with stands, and business park, and hotel, plus of 160 luxury tourist apartments of different types (with one, two, three and three "two-story" bedrooms) managed by the Radisson Hotels & Resorts to complement the hotel, integrated within the tourist complex. These actions were predicted to create 2,400 jobs during an investment of 200 million Euros. A regional airport is now planned to accompany the track. It continues to displace</p>		<p>Camara Municipal de Portimao and the CCDR have been involved in poor governance of the application of due construction process and the allocation of public subsidies.</p> <p>Radisson are offering double your money investment http://www.radissonblu.com/resort-spa-portimao Yet during construction phase an entire apartment block has tilted owing poor foundation preparation in the rush to get the investment return.</p>

		local people from their traditional land by adding to the Algarve's inflated foreign-owned luxury housing market.		
How does the action/project/activity effect cultural heritage and have other potential socio-cultural impacts?	<p>This project undermines the portrayal of the idyllic Algarve hinterland and its rich local patrimony, and its reputation as a refuge from the busyness of urban living.</p> <p>The track encourages the culture of speeding, drinking, and gambling in a country which has high road mortality and alcoholism problems.</p> <p>It also creates a class of youth who aspire to the high life style luxury role models, who abandon their own culture, yet who do not have the means to truly participate in the illusion that is created by luxury sports tourism.</p>			
How does the action/project/activity effect the environment and have other potential environmental impacts.	The <i>Association for the Defence of Portimao Environment</i> has been formed to address the noise impacts and future developments. It is their	The potential for genuine ecotourism in this part of the Algarve hinterland in the 10km noise radius of the track has been severely damaged.		The project is highly damaging to the habitat of the Iberian Lynx. Not only is there a high visual footprint of the track, but also the motor way link

	independent noise study which shows violation of noise levels.	There has been blatant omission of the infrastructure development required by the preceding environmental impact assessment, namely in the forms of noise reduction design of the track itself, and construction of two 7-10 meter high 500-800 metre long sound wall barriers.		fragments one the lynx's ecosystem corridors. The racetrack business is dependent on irresponsible use of scarce resources, ie oil/petrol, and has a massive carbon footprint. In the post-Copenhagen climate change, these types of business do not contribute to the mosaic of sustainable development.
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13. CAN YOU REFER TO ANY MONITORING/CERTIFICATION SYSTEM THAT THIS EXAMPLE IS COVERED BY OR IS RELATED TO? (See www.destinet.eu to see if your example is listed in relationship to any certificates or awards)

The Autodrome project should have been picked up by the regional sustainability monitoring system (SIDS – Sistema de Indicators de Desinvolvimento Sustentavel), but this system is only tentatively related to decision support systems and policy implementation. In itself the issue highlights the problem of one agency in this case the CCDRA both making and then monitoring policy implementation.

Quality Coast, who have awarded the nearby Lagos council with a sustainable destination award, have been informed of the potential negative impact the racetrack will have on Lagos's potential for ecotourism in its hinterland.

14. GOOD GOVERNANCE QUESTIONS

14A CAN YOU ESTABLISH ECONOMIC, ENVIRONMENTAL OR SOCIAL DRIVERS AND UNDERLYING CAUSES OF THIS SITUATION? (IF YOU ARE FAMILIAR WITH THE DRIVING FORCE, PRESSURE, STATE, IMPACT, RESPONSE (DPSIR) MODEL, PLEASE APPLY)

This type of development can be seen as art of the globalisation of the sector, where local investors use international concepts and attract large amounts of capital to execute large-scale projects.

14B CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE GOVERNANCE CHAIN AND FINANCING PROCESSES BEHIND THE ACTIVITY? (STATE OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS ESTABLISHED AT A NUMBER OF ADMINISTRATIVE LEVELS AND DEPARTMENTS)

The supervision of financing and building of the track have involved several different departments of the local council of Portimao, the regional and national state departments. Both local and regional state administrations are complicit in facilitating the poor conception, design, implementation and operation of this project. At the national level, the project has received special support despite the projects contradictions to the nationally undertaken biodiversity conservation commitments. ICNB has played a very weak role in stating the case for conservation in both the environmental impact analysis phases and the protection of REN land for networking Natura 200 habitat sites in the Algarve. Turismo de Portugal have tried to market the track to boost the country's international reputation as a leader in luxury power sports, yet also professes to be working toward carbon-neutral operations itself. The EU Tourism Unit Environment, who did contact the national government on its poor EIA processes related to tourism, yet has not acted to stop this development.

14C CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE POLICY CONTEXT OR PROVIDE AN OVERVIEW OF EXISTING GOVERNANCE MEASURES ON THIS ISSUE? (STATE POLICY OBJECTIVES THAT CORRESPOND TO THE PROBLEM/ROOT CAUSES OR SOLUTIONS)

The UN CBD and this specific species conservation stated in the IUCN red list provide an overview of why such a development should not be allowed to have taken place in this region. Natura 2000, the regional sustainability plans and the tourism sustainability policies of the EC should govern such land use developments.

Portugal has its own National Biodiversity Action Plan which does not accord enough resources to this area, preferring to give its economic development strategy preference. Regional and local governance is controlled by local vested interests working for their own ends rather than for species conservation and habitat management.

14D ARE YOU AWARE OF DIFFERENT SITUATIONS ACCORDING TO EUROPEAN OR UN MEMBER STATES?

Wales in the UK have turned similar wilderness areas into high revenue eco-tourism destinations. Spain has far better integrated lynx protection plan. California, which shares similar eco-system characteristics, offers example of highly innovative regional sustainability solutions.

14E HOW CAN THIS PROJECT/ACTIVITY/ DESTINATION BE IMPROVED?

The race track can be redesigned to be operated at lower noise levels.

The long term phasing out of petrol-based motor sports and phasing in of innovative alternative green developments should be planned.

Regional airport development should be abandoned.

14F WHAT OTHER DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS/ALTERNATIVE WERE POSSIBLE?(COMPARE THE OPTIONS, WEIGHING-UP POSITIVE/ NEGATIVE IMPACTS AND EFFECTIVENESS OF PREFERRED OPTION IN ACHIEVING OBJECTIVES)

The area should have been made part of the Natura 2000 networked areas, marketed under a mark such as *Terras do Lince*, following true ecosystem restoration and adaptation work according the *Monchique Biopark Network* and low density tourism plans suited to the area.

15_ UPDATES AND PROGRESS:

Update Date: 23rd January 2014

Author: Gordon Sillence

Economic Issues

Despite having full knowledge of the economic liability and negative environmental impacts of the race track, the owners received a Government bailout of 90 million euros via the government program “*Recupera*”, which was part of Portugal’s overall 70 billion national EU bailout. However, This money has disappeared down a paperwork legal black hole - now the **government institution** “Portugal Ventures” has bailed out the track (effectively BCP) with taxpayers money but has no guarantee as all the real estate still belongs to Parkalgar. Meanwhile Portugal Ventures is merely leasing out the track from Parkalgar. So, debts and running expenses are effectively paid for by the taxpayer whilst profits remain in “private” hands.

The hotel building remain incomplete, and the track has been hosting music concerts to gain revenues in summer months. There has been an exodus of local businesses from premises as the recession affects the region. About the size of a regional airport, the unused track sits idly and empty, lighting up the night sky needlessly in the middle of the forests and fields below the Monchique Natura 2000 zone.

Environmental Issues

The environmental impact breaches have not been solved. The CCDRA (who the EU recognises as the body responsible for environmental issues in the Algarve) have performed their own noise tests and found the noise levels to be “negligible”, contrary to independent measurements presented by the NGO contesting the project.

Meanwhile the track is now advertising in the British motoring press that it is the only one in Europe with no noise restrictions and can therefore provide night time testing. Each night time circuit usage can be heard in the still of the night for more than 10 km into the habitat of 2 highly endangered Red-Listed protected species, Bonnellis eagle and the Iberian lynx.

Institutional Management Issues

The local environmental protest group is still functional, but the EU is supporting the CCDRA and the CCDRA is following national policy to use the bailout funds to effectively bail out BCP and Parkalgar with taxpayers money. Portugal Ventures shareholders are the Portuguese State via IAPMEI and others and, of course, the banks. Effectively this is another bank bailout free from the supervision of the Trioka and FMI. The case should lead to a more thorough revision of the regional sustainable development strategy.

Solutions

As it is now the Portuguese State involved the only way to make any progress is to ensure the EU investigates the case fully, but, to date this has not resulted in any action being taken to track the 90 millions through this public/private venture, which may involve taking the Portuguese State to court alongside other environmental infringements.

The rise of the electric motor is one green opportunity that could be exploited here, but not with the current management and ownership arrangements.

Further popular protest to close down the course will help the solution, but this will take a lot more noise from the track than is currently happening as it lies empty and unused. If repetitive night time testing continues it should provide opportunities for measuring further sound violations.

14. SUBMIT IMAGES RELATED TO REPORTED ISSUE HERE:

The screenshot displays the website for 'autódromo internacional algarve'. At the top left is the logo, and at the top right is a digital clock showing 01:16:54 on 15. Below the header is a navigation menu with links: INÍCIO, LOCALIZAÇÃO, EVENTOS E ACTIVIDADES, NOTÍCIAS, AIA 360º, SÓCIOS, GALERIA, TRACKSHOP, and PT | EN. The main content area shows a breadcrumb trail 'INÍCIO > LOCALIZAÇÃO' and a sidebar with 'Apresentação' and 'Localização' tabs. The central feature is a satellite map of the Algarve region in Portugal, with a white rectangle highlighting the 'ALGARVE MOTOR PARK' area near Portimão. The map includes labels for Lisboa, Sevilha, Faro, and Portimão. To the left of the map, the coordinates are 37° 13' 19" N and 008° 37' 46" W. Below the coordinates, a 'Distâncias (km)' section lists: Faro 70, Lisboa 250, and Sevilha 230. At the bottom of the map area is a navigation bar with buttons for GLOBO, EUROPA, P. IBÉRICA, ALGARVE, and PORTIMÃO. The footer contains links for 'Ficha Técnica', 'Termos de Utilização', 'Contactos', and 'Mapa do Site'.



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HOTEL RESORT & APARTMENTS

Apresentação

Hotel & SPA

Apartamentos



“VISTA DO FALCÃO” Residences

Autódromo Internacional do Algarve inicia a comercialização dos seus Apartamentos Turísticos

Um investimento com garantia de rendimento garantido por ano nos primeiros 3 anos.

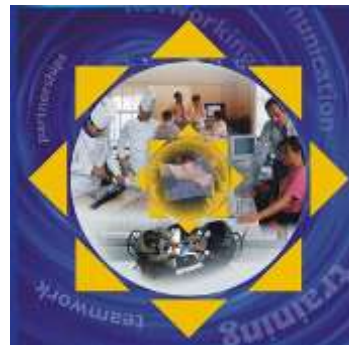
A Parkalgar, empresa detentora do Algarve Motor Park, apresenta o lançamento no mercado do seu



END OF SUBMISSION FORM:

YOUR SUBMISSION WILL BE UPLOADED AT: WWW.DESTINET.EU (SEE The VISTAwards SECTION)

MAIL TO: Gordon.destinet@ecotrans.de



(This form was created for the VISTAs by Gordon Silence in his capacity as Executive Director of UN Type II Partnership – the DestiNet Sustainable & Responsible Tourism Portal – Training, Education and Development Services 2014)