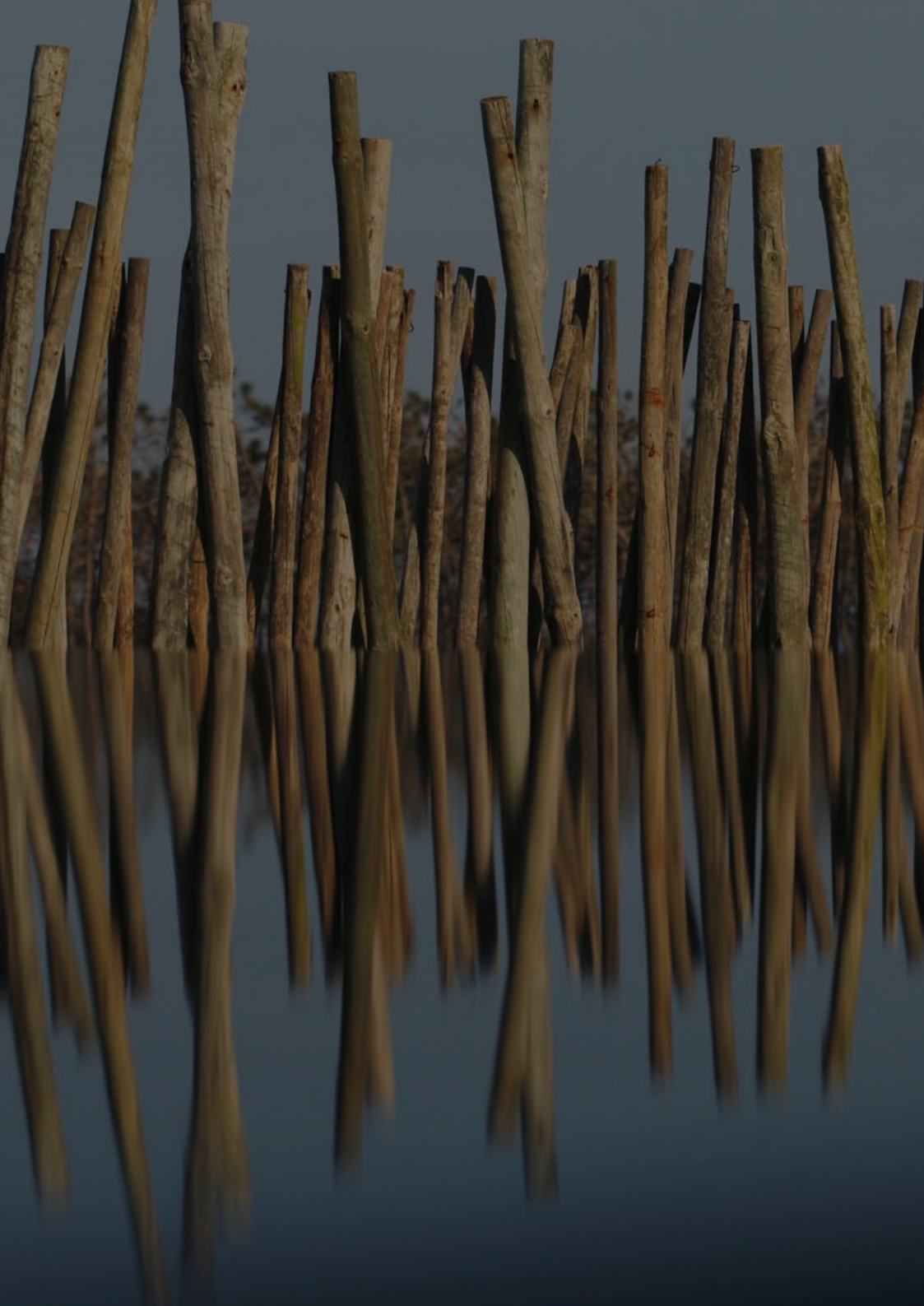




Azeias do seixo
SANTA CRUZ · PORTUGAL

sustainability
notebook







Sustainable Tourism is

“
Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities”

UNEP, 2011

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Introduction

Increasing world economic development and the unsustainable consumption of resources are putting the environment under heavy pressure: climate change, loss of biodiversity, soil degradation and scarcity of water resources are among the immediate challenges.

According to the United Nations (2013), environmental problems have intensified since the 1992 Earth Summit. Many international organisations stress the urgent need to adopt sustainable consumption patterns in order to avert significant deterioration in the next 40 to 80 years, which will leave future generations with poor opportunities to live.

At the same time, the public is increasingly better informed about what is happening and much more aware of the fact that we share a common planet, with common problems that require common solutions involving us all. These solutions also inevitably include individual actions taken by each and every one of us at a local level.

The tourism and leisure sector is globally one of the largest industries, which makes a significant and growing contribution to national economies in terms of job creation and revenue and tax generation. On the other hand, the sector is a notoriously intensive resource consumer that contributes to several environmental impacts. These include: energy consumption and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions; water consumption; waste production / management; effective management of the natural and cultural surroundings / site. The sector has the potential to lead the change to a more sustainable way of life, by creating trends and adopting new behaviours. In fact, traditional mass tourism is considered to have reached a stable state of growth, and there also appears to be increasing demand for the growing sustainable tourism sector.

This is where the Areias do Seixo project comes in... a player that acts in a sustainable way and continuously promotes a change to this way of life within the universe in which it operates!

Background

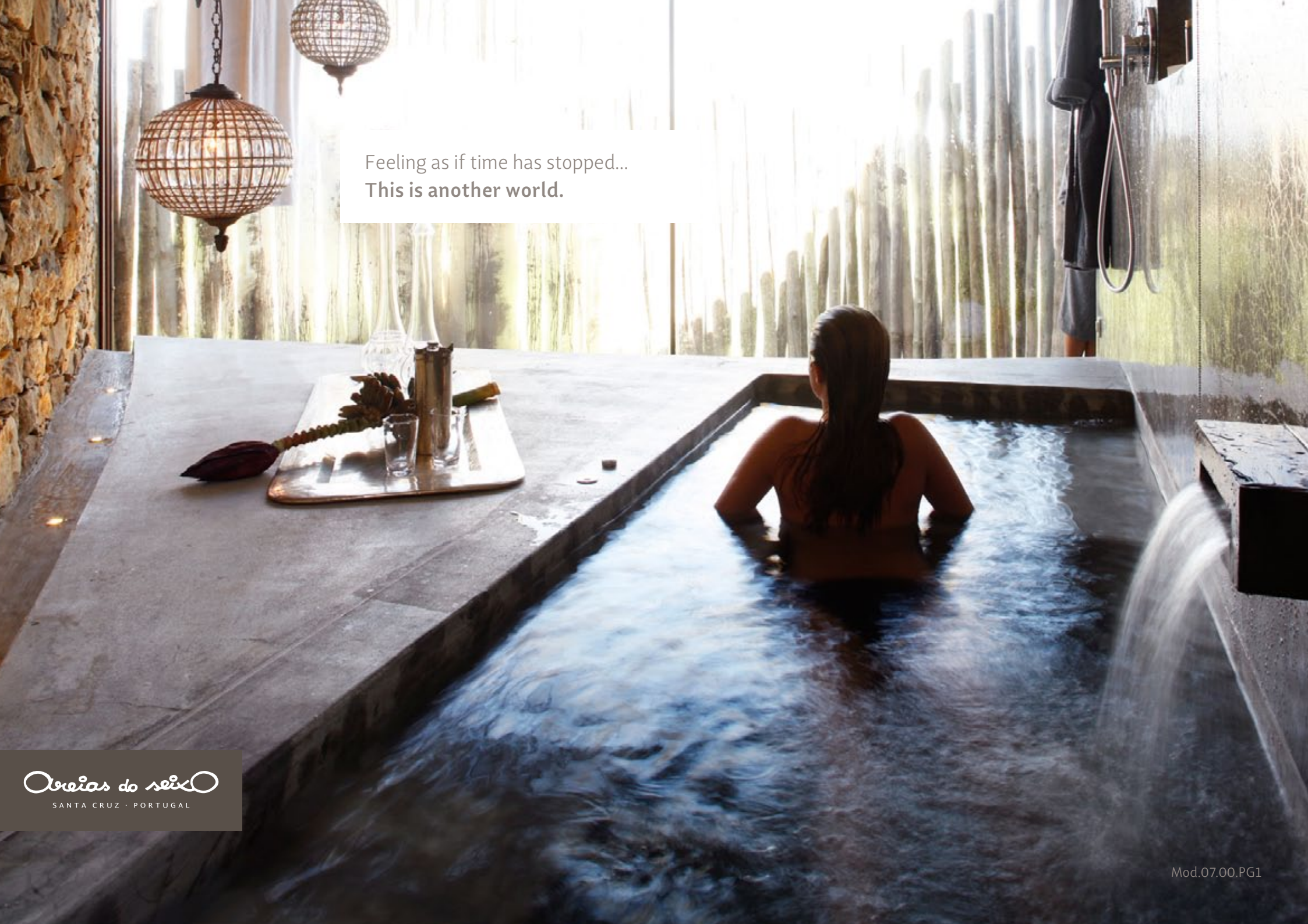
Mindful of the fact that the hotel industry has associated environmental impacts, the Areias do Seixo concept is based on a sustainability policy that covers the unit's design/construction phase and envisages extending this policy across the Hotel's entire value chain. In 2012, a decision was taken to produce the Areias do Seixo's first sustainability report, relative to 2010 and 2011, which was the first step in the hotel's action plan for responsible communication. The aim of this publication is to share the Areias do Seixo concept and present the most important actions and measures that have been implemented in the field of sustainability, namely in terms of the environment.

Forget tight schedules, rushing around and being bombarded by advertising and publicity... This is another world.



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A woman is seen from behind, sitting in a rectangular hot tub. The hot tub is set in a spa area with a stone wall on the left and a large waterfall wall in the background. Two large, spherical, woven lanterns hang from the ceiling. A tray with drinks and a candle is on the edge of the hot tub. The scene is lit with warm, golden light, suggesting a sunset or sunrise.

Feeling as if time has stopped...
This is another world.

Oreios do rei
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Areias do Seixo

“

The Areias do Seixo hotel began with a dream... the longing to create a unique place where we could welcome people from every corner of the world in a magical environment that would be both comfortable and completely at one with Nature.

The idea was to create a low density hotel, with a low level of global land use, which would blend in with the natural surroundings. One of the great pillars of the project was to promote emotional and sustained tourism.

The hotel was developed with great environmental awareness, in an attempt to achieve harmonious integration. From the construction of the building to its use, the key concern was, and always will be, to cause the lowest environmental impact while the hotel will play an awareness-raising role among those who visit it.

From dream to construction, many obstacles were overcome. The result? The hotel is a space that uses sustainable

tourism principles, based on energy efficiency, renewable energies and use of natural resources. It's a place where all the ingredients were chosen with originality, comfort and quality in mind... a place where you just want to be and live each moment... surrounded by sea, sand dunes and pines.

The pursuit of excellence in the service provided and sustainable and pragmatic thinking are the guiding pillars on our path.

Be sustainable, be happy!”

Marta and Gonçalo
Owners of Areias do Seixo





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Presentation

Areias do Seixo opened for business in May 2010, promoting emotional and sustained tourism. The unit belongs to the segment of low density thematic hotels, and currently has fourteen rooms, five villas and a townhouse, a restaurant, grocer's, viewing room, spa, organic vegetable plot and a greenhouse for aromatic herbs, and also hosts events.

The initial investment was 5 million euros raised from equity and loans obtained. It also had the support of Turismo de Portugal through a Protocol signed between this entity, Areias do Seixo and the banks, as well as support from QREN (Incentives System for Innovation), within the scope of sustainable tourism, for the sum of 170,000 euros.

In the context of sustainability, Areias do Seixo won the "Green Project Awards 2012" in the category "Agriculture, Sea and Tourism" and obtained the "Green Key" certificate.

Sustainability at Areias do Seixo

The general actions and measures adopted by Areias do Seixo are presented here, outlining the unit's profile in terms of sustainability. Specific measures and actions are presented according to environmental aspect.

INSPIRING SUSTAINABLE BEHAVIOURS
Inspiring sustainable behaviours is one of the goals at Areias do Seixo. Employees and guests get involved in this by sharing the actions adopted by the Hotel, in order to raise awareness of how everyone's contribution makes a difference.

The guests' involvement in the Areias do Seixo concept of sustainability is based on so-called Emotional Tourism, which promotes the sharing of experiences and memorable moments at one with nature. In this context, guests can take part in activities aimed at providing practical information on the unit's sustainable concept:

“From the Land to the Table”: spend a morning in the company of the hotel's farmers and pick the vegetables and aromatic herbs that will be used to make your lunch, with the Chef's help.

“Join us In the Vegetable Plot”: the hotel will provide you with a piece of land to cultivate and bring to life with your very own hands.

The Hotel also offers more technical activities which demonstrate the measures implemented for sustainable management of the Hotel's activity, namely:

“Think-Eco”: Let yourself be taken on a guided tour of the hotel's automation system and learn about efficient resource management.

“Composting Circuit”: find out about the methods for reusing the organic waste produced during your stay.

The guests also have access to real-time information on the Hotel's electricity, water and gas consumption through the "Eco-Clock", which is available on the Hotel's website and on an app developed for smartphones and accessible to customers.

The Hotel also promotes its employees' involvement in this area, by holding training and communication / procedure sharing sessions. The aim is not only for



“
Tell me and I forget.
Teach me and I remember.
Involve me and I learn.”

Benjamin Franklin

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them to adopt sustainable actions at the Hotel, but also to commit to a sustainable lifestyle at a personal level.

At a macro level, the Hotel shares information with all interested parties, through dedicated contents accessible on the website, such as the previously mentioned "Eco-Clock" or the monthly tips on sustainability that offer interesting facts and sustainable behaviours, and also share what Areias do Seixo does in this area.

LOCAL AND SEASONAL PRODUCE

The Areias do Seixo restaurant uses predominantly local food which is in season. It is partially supplied by its own farming production, which follows organic farming principles and is free of pesticides / herbicides.

Organic compost, obtained at the composting unit on the Hotel perimeter, is used as a natural fertiliser to apply to the soils on the vegetable plot.

“
Individuals can choose to buy environmentally friendly products, or not. That changes consumption patterns and in the end production patterns. All individuals have that power.”

Kofi Annan



“

The measure of progress of civilization is the progress of the people.”

George Bancroft

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Areias do Seixo actions and performance

In this section, we present the specific environmental actions and measures taken by the Hotel in both the design/construction phase and in the unit operation phase. These allow guests to enjoy a luxury service, while guaranteeing sustainable resource management. The actions adopted at both the economic and social level are explained.

ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE

The concept of sustainability is an integral part of the Hotel project. The building's design /construction and the entire Areias do Seixo engineering and architectural project were developed according to good environmental management practices aimed at integrating the hotel into the natural surroundings, minimising / avoiding environmental impacts and reducing the ecological footprint associated with the Hotel's activity.

Construction Phase

Several measures were adopted during the design / construction phase that influence the operating phase and

therefore the unit's performance. Some of the key measures implemented include:

- Building design takes into account plot morphology;
- Reuse of rubble and ruins of a former aviary on the plot, by crushing the stones to make the paved base of the hotel.
- Building materials were carefully chosen, always giving preference to the resources available in nearby zones - in this case pebbles, glass and wood.
- Use of cork in the cavity walls for thermal insulation;
- Implementation of infrastructures for: hotel air conditioning based on geothermal system; system for collection, reuse and transportation of rainwater, surplus from irrigation, well and springs for use in irrigation; integrated automation system and multimedia application for monitoring and efficient resource consumption management (water, electricity, gas).



Operating Phase

The measures/actions implemented are presented according to environmental aspect and aim to reduce the hotel's ecological footprint, focusing on responsible consumption / use and whenever possible on measures of reduction at source. The automation system is a management measure that runs across the Hotel's entire activity and is therefore described separately.

AUTOMATION SYSTEM

The automation system allows automated consumption management and monitoring. Since this system can be adjusted to weather conditions, occupation rate and other scenarios that influence the way the hotel is used, methodical programming can be used for water, electricity and gas consumption. For example, the system allows the time, duration or cancellation of irrigation to be managed on the basis of weather information and/or types of events.

ENERGY MANAGEMENT

The most significant measures of the Hotel's energy management aimed at reducing the energy footprint, involve the building's air conditioning and hot

water production, interior and exterior lighting and energy production for the building's own consumption.

Air conditioning inside the building is provided all year by the geothermal system, through underfloor heating, and there are no forced air conditioning units in the building.

The building's air conditioning is complemented by the aforementioned building solutions and additional measures:

- Roof irrigation for cooling the stones and to support for the building's air conditioning;
- In the winter, the building is heated by absorbing sunlight through the glass in the building's architecture;
- In the summer, solutions are applied to create shade at the spots most exposed to the sun to maintain the building's temperature.

Hot water is produced using the solar thermal system and geothermal system.

The solar thermal system includes 28 high yield solar panels and a 1500-litre accumulator, allowing hot water to be produced throughout the day. In 2011, with just 12 solar panels in operation, the solar thermal system produced 38,495 kwh of energy, corresponding to 18.1 tonnes of CO2e avoided.

The Hotel produces energy for its own consumption through 36 photovoltaic panels, installed in September 2010. In 2011, 16,700 kwh of energy were produced, which is equal to 7.8 tonnes of Co2e avoided.

The Areias do Seixo lighting project was designed to integrate aesthetic considerations with low consumption/LED lighting, but with certain limitations according to solutions available on the market.

Additional energy efficiency measures include:

- Heating the pool using thermal surplus from the solar thermal and geothermal system;

- Monitoring of the air conditioning and hot water equipment by the hotel's automation system;

- Efficient management of equipment, machines and (small) household appliances, taking into account the periods of necessary use. Measures are also taken to avoid so-called "vampire" consumption, whenever possible disconnecting the equipment from the sockets.

WATER MANAGEMENT

Areias do Seixo has implemented a series of measures aimed at using water efficiently and reducing its water footprint. These include:

- Flow restrictors;
- Toilet flushes with economy valve;
- Collection, transportation and storage system for water from the waterhole, well, rainwater and surplus water from the irrigation system. This system allows self-sufficiency in consumption at the level of irrigation; water consumption monitoring through the automation system.



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WASTE MANAGEMENT

Areias do Seixo implements two key principles in waste management: reducing production and reuse. When this is not possible, there is selective separation of all the waste produced at the unit, which is collected to be taken to authorised management operators. To guarantee these objectives, the most important measures implemented are:

- "Zero paper" policy. Hotel information is provided mainly in digital format, on an app developed for smartphones (e.g. restaurant menus, wine list, information recorded on the "Eco-clock"). The "zero paper" policy extends to the unit's offices;
- Reduction measures in waste production for the Hotel's employees (e.g. using the back of sheets of used paper and/or sheets printed front and back in economy mode; reduction of the number of paper towels used to dry hands);
- Acquisition of returnable glass packaging;
- wholesale shopping in large quantities;



- Reuse of materials left over from creating decorative items and furniture, applied in several of the hotel's spaces (e.g. exterior lighting uses lamps made from leftover plumbing pipes);

- Composting of organic waste, done at the unit with no chemical additives.

BIODIVERSITY

Areias do Seixo is located in a Natural Ecological Reserve and National Farming Reserve, which shelters habitats of protected flora and fauna species included in the Natura Network 2000. Prior to the hotel's construction, this area showed signs of degradation, especially the dune ecosystem. Since the Hotel's construction and the consequent delimitation of a perimeter around it, the dunes and vegetation have been in clear recovery. The Hotel promotes actions to preserve these areas, by raising awareness among employees and guests.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE

The main economic and social measures adopted by the Hotel include:

- The Hotel favours proximity as one of the selection criteria for employees and suppliers, aiming to contribute to the region's economy and reduce the ecological footprint associated with the transport of goods and services. In 2010, the proportion of local suppliers was 52% compared to 48% others, rising in 2011 to 56% local suppliers compared to 44 % others.

- At the local community level, the hotel has taken the following actions: sending leftover food from events to the homeless support programme; volunteering for cleaning the waterways around Areias do Seixo. Some collected objects are reused, for example for designing decorative items for the Hotel.

- The hotel also organises actions with other communities, including sending towels, bedroom slippers and other items to the Guinea support programme.



Goals and Commitments

Aspiring towards continuous improvement, instigating sustainable thinking and proving that it is possible to grow economically in harmony with the planet, a series of measures were planned which stood out for their creativity, "outside the box" thinking and dedication to well-being with Nature.

From the simplest of goals - reducing water consumption and progressively replacing light bulbs with more efficient LED lighting, to the most visionary, Areias do Seixo will continue to invest in and develop sustainable activity.

Be part of this sustainability culture. Through the smallest of gestures, we can make a difference. Think globally and act locally!

To find out more, consult our Sustainability Report.



