



Autonomous Region
of Madeira

**sustainability
management
policy**

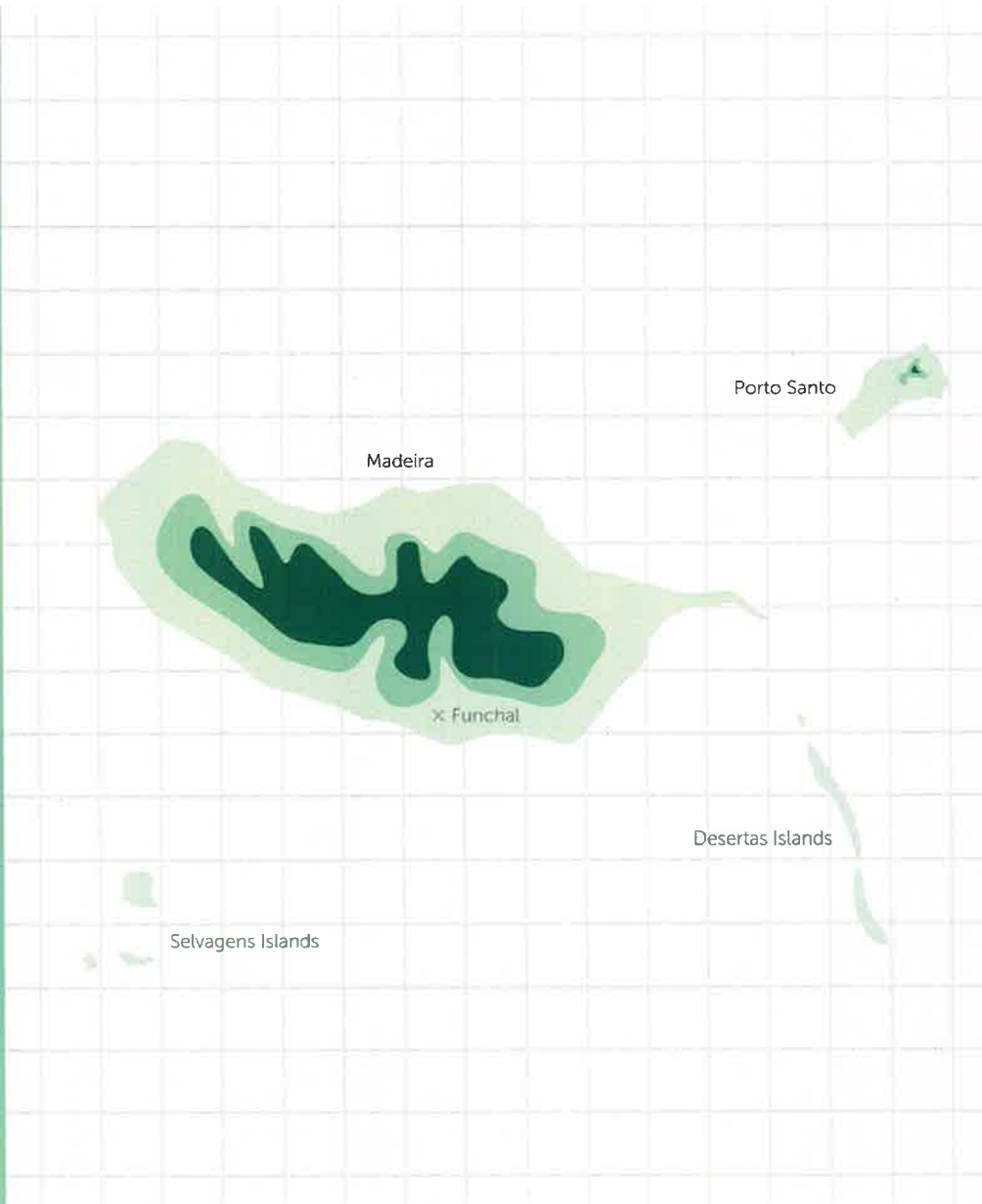


Revision 03

Name: MAD02_03 Sustainability Policy

Approved: 10/04/2026

Approval: António Eduardo de Freitas Jesus



Framework

The Autonomous Region of Madeira, an archipelago with an area of approximately 800 Km², is located in the Atlantic Ocean, 900 Km southwest of Lisbon and approximately 630 Km west of the African coast. It is formed by the islands of Madeira, Porto Santo, Desertas (3 islands) and Selvagens (2 islands and several islets). Of the seven islands, only the largest, Madeira and Porto Santo, are inhabited. According to the provisional results of the last Census, 2021, there were approximately 251,000 people living in the archipelago.

The economy of the Autonomous Region of Madeira is strongly based on the service sector, with tourism standing out as the engine of the region's economy. The main agricultural products are banana, wine, sugar cane, potatoes, and flowers. Regarding fishing, the capture of tuna and the black scabbard fish is distinguished by its artisanal fishing methods, while the industry is mainly based on the production of pasta, beer, and cement. The region has also a strong tradition in handicraft, with special emphasis on "Bordado da Madeira" (embroidery), tapestry and wicker articles.

The nomadic market niche visibly impacted the region's economy. Madeira has empowered the destination to attract and enhance this market micro-segment, which led to an increase in the number of technological companies operating from Madeira, some of which with internationally recognized innovative projects.

The rugged relief and its slopes are the geological result of the archipelago, which has contributed to the formation of different types of landscape, vegetation, microclimates, and cultures. Besides its natural wealth, the archipelago also has a vast and rich, artistic (painting, sculpture, gilded woodcarvings and tiles) and intangible cultural heritage, expressed in different popular manifestations such as handicrafts, gastronomy, wine-making and the Region's activities and festivities.

The Autonomous Region of Madeira presents itself as a territory of natural diversity, but also cultural, awarded and valued by many. In 1995, the Desertas Islands, received the status of **Nature Reserve**; in 1999, the **Laurissilva Forest** was recognized by **UNESCO** as a **World Natural Heritage Site**, the **Municipality of Santana** (2011) and the Island of **Porto Santo** (2020) received the distinction of **UNESCO Biosphere Reserve**.





The projects and developed initiatives, in the last years, reveal a strong focus on the sustainable principles development, which comproves an increased concern in protecting and preserving the territory, while working on its promotion and innovation, namely: the **Tourism Sector Strategy of the Autonomous Region of Madeira for the period 2022-2027, Madeira Circular Platform, Waste Strategy of the Autonomous Region of Madeira, Sustainable Porto Santo - Smart Fossil Free Island, Certification of Good Practices in the Management of Biological Risks and several projects included in Life Programmes.**

The affirmation of sustainability in the archipelago is seen as a long-term goal that involves various entities, since there are numerous challenges that are not achievable immediately and which require continuous dedication, **including the preservation of natural and cultural resources and decarbonisation.** The enhancement and protection of resources will translate into the creation of authentic products, experiences and activities that, together, will result in an increasingly **unique and attractive offer.**

This policy is a commitment of the Autonomous Region of Madeira to the four pillars of sustainability – Environment, Society, Economy and Culture)

There are also other important challenges to be highlighted, such as **raising the awareness of the local community about the importance of sustainability and the need to continue to invest in policies that promote and encourage the production and consumption of local products.**

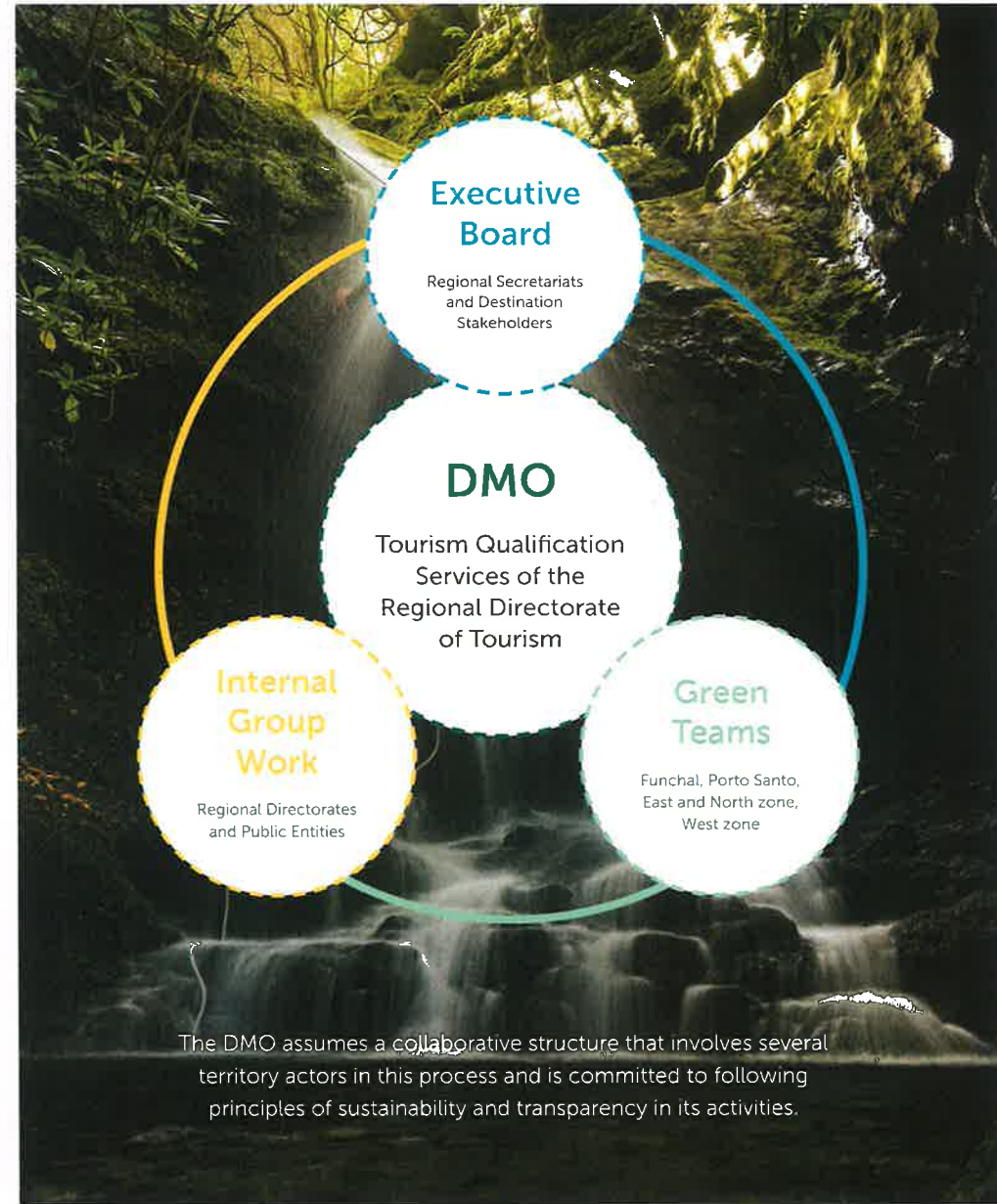
It is in this context of betting on the development of a "So sustainable" destination that this policy arises, a commitment of the Autonomous Region of Madeira to the four pillars of sustainability (Environment, Society, Economy and Culture), within the scope of its certification through the *EarthCheck* normative standard.



Strategic Guidelines

The DMO (*Destination Management Organization*), created by the Resolution of the Regional Government Council n.º 51/2022, of 31st January 2022, promoted by the then Regional Secretariat for Tourism and Culture, now Regional Secretariat for Tourism, Environment and Culture, is the structure responsible for planning, managing and supervising the certification process of the Autonomous Region of Madeira, based on the criteria of the GSTC (Global Sustainable Tourism Council) and on a set of strategic guidelines of regional, national and international scope, which it undertakes to follow.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations 2030 Agenda are also important pillars guiding the archipelago as a sustainable destination, as well as the 10 articles of the World Tourism Organization's Global Code of Ethics for Tourism.



The Strategy for Tourism in the Autonomous Region of Madeira, for the period 2022-2027, is presented as the guiding document for the tourism sector in the Madeira archipelago, updating the strategic vision to: **"A destination for all year round, sustainable, of unparalleled natural beauty, easily accessible, of experiential fusion between**

Sea, Mountains and Culture, recognised as the "must visit", with a mild climate, authentic and cosmopolitan, with a vast offer of differentiated experiences". This new vision is in line with the previous vision, increasing the experiential fusion between Sea, Mountain and Culture.

ENVIRONMENT

It is recognized that the preservation, enhancement and responsible use of natural resources are essential actions for the development of tourism in the region and for the production of green energy. In this sense, the focus of action is on renewable energy, with a view to decarbonisation and better management of water, waste and forests. These aspects, which will contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

SOCIETY

Social subjects are seen as a means to leverage sustainability in the Destination, through the promotion of education, health and well-being, equality, security and access to employment and services.

There will be an increased effort in training and education on resilience and mitigation of risks and disasters, closely related to climate change.

ECONOMY

The tourism sector is a regenerator of the local economy and a driver of creativity and innovation. In this sense, it is a priority to attract investment, to focus on the growth of small and medium enterprises while promoting employment opportunities, training and safe, fair and equitable working environments. It is also of great importance to maintain the focus on preserving the authenticity of the Destination.

CULTURE

Aware of the importance of developing integrated, participative and continuous action, aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda, the various DMO Working Groups were consulted and, together, defined 5 priority SDGs and 5 other relevant SDGs.

An integrated, participative and continuous action, aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals.

Aware of the importance of developing integrated, participative and continuous action, aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda, the various DMO Working Groups were consulted and, together, defined 5 priority SDGs and 5 other relevant SDGs.



Commitments towards Sustainability

- 01 Integrate strategic and operational management principles that contribute to **highlighting the leading role of the tourism sector in sustainable development**;
- 02 Involve the **local community** - public and private sector, residents, entrepreneurs and investors - in the tourism development and certification process, making them also responsible for identifying the impacts, implementation and success of the ECSE dimensions (Economic, Cultural, Social and Environmental);
- 03 Work towards **the fulfilment of the Autonomous Region of Madeira's Tourism Strategy for the period 2022-2027**, seeking to guarantee the strengthening of the destination's management; the investment in diversity; the differentiation and structuring of the tourist offer; the investment in increasing the destination's notoriety; attracting, qualifying and valuing the sector's human resources; promoting investment and ensuring the Destination's sustainability; and further continue to guarantee that Madeira is a all Destination, maintaining and increasing actions that will overcome seasonality in Porto Santo;
- 04 **Clearly and objectively** communicating Madeira's sustainability management policy to all those involved in the process, using the various resources and communication channels available and reviewing it on an annual basis;
- 05 To provide **reliable and transparent information** to all those involved in the certification process and in all communication/dissemination;
- 06 Adopt an **ethical stance** towards the Destination's employees, suppliers and visitors, promoting a safe and participative environment, where cases of exploitation and human rights violations are regularly monitored and where employees, from businesses in the tourism value chain play an important role in the decision-making process;
- 07 Encourage **local employment and the creation of equitable work opportunities and remuneration for all**, including women, young people, minorities and people with special needs, as well as the promotion of health and well-being, equality and **continuing education and training**.

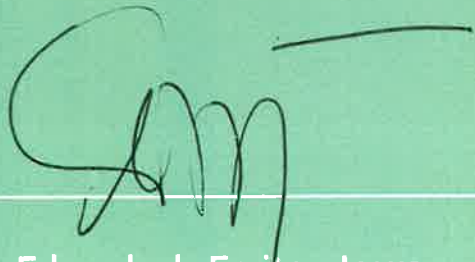
-
- 08 Promote the **training of small and medium-sized enterprises** in terms of sustainability and of local community members, to increase **awareness of their individual impact** on achieving the EarthCheck sustainability targets and benchmarking indicators in the four pillars of sustainability (Economic, Cultural, Social and Environmental);
-
- 09 Encourage a **policy of purchasing local products and services**, especially of sustainable origin, which guarantees fair trade and opportunities to transact them with companies related to the Tourism sector;
-
- 10 Encourage companies in the Region to **develop innovative business concepts** and participate in **sustainability certification programmes**, promoting them in DMO channels;
-
- 11 Promote the **responsible use and management of natural resources**, namely nature conservation protected areas, forests, water resources and energy.





-
- 12 Promote the safeguard of the cultural **identity and heritage of the Destination**, to maintain the authenticity of the Autonomous Region of Madeira, monitor, conserve and rehabilitate areas of natural, cultural and heritage value in the Destination.
-
- 13 To gradually stimulate the **transition to sustainable mobility** in order to reduce the emission of pollutants and noise, empowering the internal transport network, integrating innovative solutions and projects and raising awareness among the community, visitors and the market.
-
- 14 To consider **monitoring as the vehicle for innovation**, progress and raising sustainability standards and commit to implementing monitoring indicators, duly adjusted to their reality, in the 12 key performance areas of the EarthCheck certification standard: **energy efficiency and energy management; greenhouse gas emissions; air quality, noise control and light pollution; water resource management; sanitation and wastewater treatment; ecosystem conservation and protection; planning and land management; transport; solid waste management; hazardous chemicals; cultural and social management; and economic management.**

Funchal, 10 April 2026



António Eduardo de Freitas Jesus

Regional Secretary for Tourism, Environment
and Culture



Revision 03

Name: MAD02_03 Sustainability Policy

Approved: 10/04/2026

Approval: António Eduardo de Freitas Jesus
