

# Creative Tourism as a promoter of the Sustainable Development Goals - Central Alentejo

## O Turismo Criativo como promotor dos Objetivos De Desenvolvimento Sustentável - Alentejo Central

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**Abstract** | This article aims to analyse creative tourism as a promoter of sustainable development goals (SDGs). To achieve the objective of the study, the questionnaire was applied to entrepreneurs who develop activities associated with creative tourism in Central Alentejo. For the literature review, the Science Direct, Emerald, and Google Scholar databases were used to investigate the correlation between creative tourism and SDG, namely through articles published between 2017-2020.

The questionnaire survey was based on literature review. It was found that the “state of the art” focuses little on the relationship between creative tourism and the SDGs. Despite the focus on job creation, preservation of the environment, and culture, there seems to be a lack of attention to gender equity, social inclusion, and resource management.

This study may have implications at the social level, allowing the understanding of the contribution of creative tourism to the cultural and environmental preservation of places, but also the need for more studies and strategies at the level of gender equality and social inclusion. The value of this article is related to the scarcity of studies in the area, as it allows us to have greater insight into the mindset of these entrepreneurs regarding this subject, as well as the relevance they attribute to each SDG.

**Keywords** | Creative tourism, central Alentejo, Sustainable Development Goals, sustainability

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**Resumo** | O presente artigo pretende analisar o turismo criativo como promotor dos objetivos de desenvolvimento sustentável (ODS). Para atingir o objetivo do estudo foi aplicado um inquérito por questionário a empreendedores que desenvolvem atividades associadas ao turismo criativo no Alentejo Central. Para a revisão da literatura utilizaram-se as bases de dados Science Direct, Emerald e Google Scholar para indagar a correlação entre turismo criativo e ODS, nomeadamente através de artigos publicados entre 2017-2020.

O inquérito por questionário foi elaborado com base na revisão da literatura. Verificou-se que o “estado da arte” se concentra pouco na relação entre o turismo criativo e os ODS. Apesar do foco na empregabilidade, preservação do meio ambiente e cultura, parece faltar atenção à equidade de género, inclusão social e gestão de recursos.

Este estudo pode ter implicações a nível social ao permitir a compreensão da contribuição do turismo criativo para a preservação cultural e ambiental dos lugares, mas também na necessidade de mais estudos e estratégias ao nível da igualdade de género e inclusão social. O valor deste artigo está relacionado com a escassez de estudos na área, contribuindo com as análises realizadas para encontrar a visão dos empresários sobre o tema, bem como a relevância que eles atribuem a cada ODS.

**Palavras-chave** | Turismo criativo, Alentejo central, Objetivos de Desenvolvimento Sustentável, sustentabilidade

## 1. Introduction

Currently, sustainability is not limited to its environmental, social, economic, and cultural pillars, but it also aims to integrate the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Micro and small enterprises comprise most tourism businesses globally. These contribute heavily to the economic subsistence of many communities (Coles, Ritchie & Wang, 2021; Corá & Henriques, 2021). On the other hand, in tourism there is a tendency to live experiences, particularly creative tourism experiences (Gonçalves & Costa, 2022), especially interactions with the local community. This offer is often made up of small creative businesses. For as long as creative tourism has been emerging, it has been meeting more sustainable practices, especially since its offer often involves co-creation processes. Therefore, local creative entrepreneurs tend to create or use existing spaces to develop these activities (Russo & Richard, 2016; Marques & Borba, 2017).

As such, the main objective of this study is to analyse creative tourism as a promoter of SDGs. As this area is still not much studied, the study aims to understand the reality of the Central Alentejo case, through the application of a survey to the promoters of activities within the scope of creative tourism.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goals

Currently, it is important to promote research on sustainable tourism, particularly when framed alongside the SDGs, to positively impact society (Font, Higham, Miller & Pourfakhimi, 2019).

In this sense, some researchers analyse issues related to the commercialization of culture, the improvement of economic well-being, but neglect the fact that the sustainable development of tou-

rism is based on environmental, economic, social, and cultural sustainability (Carr, Ruhanen & Whitford, 2016).

The UN Sustainable Development Summit in September 2015 approved the 17 SDGs that are the cornerstone of the 2030 UN Agenda for Sustainable Development (UN, 2018). Based on sustainable development and the 17 SDGs, 5 dimensions were defined, also known as the 5P's, which are: People, Prosperity, Planet, Peace, Partnerships and Planet. Each of these is related to one or several SDGs: People (SDG 1 Eradicate Poverty; SDG 2 Eradicate Hunger; SDG 3 Quality Health; SDG 4 Quality Education; SDG 5 Gender Equality and SDG 6 Drinking Water and Sanitation), Prosperity (SDG 7 Renewable and Accessible Energies, SDG 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth, SDG 9 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, SDG 10 Reduce Inequalities), Planet (SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities, SDG 12 Sustainable Production and Consumption, SDG 13 Climate Action, SDG 14 Protecting Marine Life, SDG 15 Protecting Terrestrial Life), Peace (SDG 16 Peace, Justice and Effective Institutions), Partnerships (SDG17 Partnerships). Portugal has defined SDGs 4 (Quality Education), 5 (Gender Equality), 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure), 10 (Reducing Inequalities), 13 (Climate Action) and 14 (Protecting Life) as a strategic priority for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (UNESCO, 2017). As such, the interconnection of indicators and sustainable development is a dynamic process and not a goal in and itself (Kristjánsson, Ólafsdóttir & Ragnarsdóttir 2018).

In this context, in recent years the supply and consumption of tourism has changed, as sharing accommodation has emerged as a more environmentally sustainable way of housing tourists, reducing the environmental impact through the shared economy (Cheng et al., 2020). This shared economy has been enhancing contributions to sustainability, highlighting some actors such as AirBnB, Booking or TripAdvisor, where digital platforms are

intermediaries that profit from most transactions (Gössling & Hall, 2019).

In addition to accommodation, catering, craft products, among many others, are opportunities to take advantage of reducing the impacts of tourism and increasing benefits for local communities (Mylan, 2018).

Although literature relating to SDGs and tourism does exist, it is still an infant field of study, and it needs to be nurtured with more research, particularly in regards to the dimension of governance and the lack of studies on the countries of the Global South, since these are the focus of the SDGs. It is noteworthy that the majority of the contributions towards promoting SDGs, in the form of collaboration and involvement comes from local residents, rather than from tourists (Rasoolimanesh et al, 2020). It is also vital to keep improving on collaboration efforts (SDG17) and thus co-design the sustainable development strategy for a future with sustainable resource management (Li-burd, Duedahl & Heape, 2020).

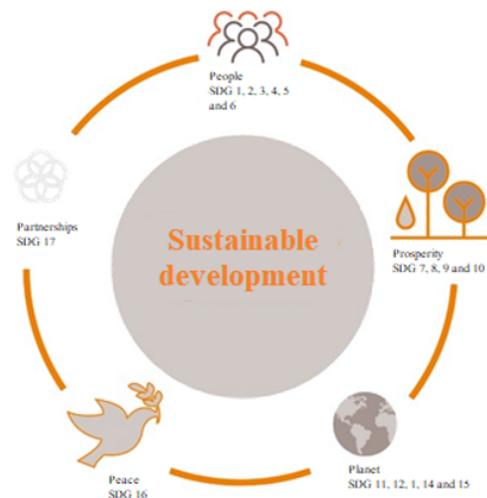


Figure 1 | 5 P's of Sustainable Development Goals  
Source: Adapted from UNESCO, 2017

## 2.2. Creative tourism as a promoter of the Sustainable Development Goals

Creative tourism is presented by Raymond (2007), “as a more sustainable form of tourism that provides an authentic feel for a local culture through informal, hands-on workshops and creative experiences. Workshops take place in small groups at tutor’s homes and places of work; they allow visitors to explore their creativity while getting closer to local people” (p. 145).

Creative tourism contributes to the development of poor communities, namely through entrepreneurial initiatives, but indirectly as it depends on external entities (Dias et al., 2020). In the same line of thought, Richards (2020), indicates that the growing articulation between tourism and creativity leads to the emergence of alternative models of tourism development and economic expansion. However, imbalances and obstacles can still arise in implementing creative tourism strategies. In this sense, taking as an example the creative city of gastronomy in Alba, it is possible to understand the importance of establishing links between products, people, and places and, through them, promoting balanced territorial relations (Forleo & Benedetto, 2020). Based in the creative city George Town (Malaysia), after ten years of its integration into the UNESCO Network, it appears that the biggest challenges are still the maintenance its integrity and authenticity due to the gentrification that was taking place, which made it impossible for a city as it aspired (Khoo, 2020). In South Africa, creative projects have proved vital to economic development, generating employment, encouraging urban regeneration, contributing to social inclusion, and empowering communities (Abisuga-Oyekunle & Fillis, 2017).

According to Kangkhao (2020), in the province of Sukhothai, specifically the Sawankhalok-Si Satchanalai Historical Park (UNESCO World Heritage), in Thailand, the goals of sustainability and co-creation of the United Nations are well pre-

sent, and are used as guidelines to improve the quality of life and economy, in a sustainable way, whilst seeking to rescue the historical link by way of its culture, development and co-creation, this relationship presents many improvements in terms of management is positively reflected in the local community. However, it should be noted that, according to Scheyvens and Hughes (2019), to eradicate poverty (SDG 1), governments and tourism companies need to change the way they work. In the same sense, Ambelu, Lovelock and Tucker (2018) consider that food insecurity (SDG 2) could be alleviated with the creation of livelihoods based on tourism, but this would only be possible through sectoral interaction and with policies aimed at ensuring that this relationship is beneficial. Therefore, food security is crucial to combating poverty.

In health and wellness services, creative tourism generates well-being both through intangible elements, such as the atmosphere of experiences and through recreation (Boekstein & Spencer, 2013; Smith, Ferrari & Puczko, 2016; Alina-Cerasela, 2015; Huang & Xu, 2018). Through the study carried out by the authors, we can discern that creative tourism tends to improve health conditions and well-being (SDG 3) in those who partake in it. On the other hand, considering that many tourists suffer from some type of health problem that can appear during the trip or worsen (common conditions such as illness, pain, diarrhea, and respiratory infection). The management of destinations faces the challenge of improving the health conditions of its population as well as educating locals and tourists on health issues. As well as the creation of support infrastructures to ensure the sustainability and development of tourism where health issues are of paramount importance (Musa, Hall & Higham, 2004).

According to Bertella and Rinaldi (2021), in their study, creative tourism projects contribute to the emergence of local communities of learning and innovation in a sustainable way. In other words, in

addition to learning by tourists, as seen above, creative tourism can also encourage learning by local communities, thus meeting SDG 4.

Regarding SDG 5 (Gender Equality), the involvement of women in cultural heritage practices, more specifically through embroidery, in the Autonomous Region of Ningxia Hui, demonstrated that there is an empowerment of women, not only economically, but also socially, psychologically, educationally, and politically through these practices (Su, Wall, Ma, Notarianni, & Wang, 2020). Although as Ferguson (2018) points out, despite gender equality issues being mentioned in guiding documents, such as in the Millennium Declaration on objective 3 - promoting equality between the sexes, or in SDG 6 (UN), it is still necessary to create more support to empowerment and to issues of inequalities. Alarcón and Cole (2019) consider it vital that the World Tourism Organization and other tourism organizations recognize the importance of gender equality in tourism and act, taking measures to mitigate this problem.

Water (SDG 6) is fundamental for tourism activities, based on Morocco, Del Mar Alonso-Almeida (2012) indicates that it is necessary to empower populations to make significant decisions regarding the management of water resources, especially through empowering women and in this way contribute to increasing the wealth of the place. Vila, Afsordegan, Agell, Sánchez and Costa (2018) indicate that several projects are implementing water management strategies, aimed at reducing environmental impacts, thus increasing their sustainability, however it is important that they consider the weight that each of the factors have and what decisions are taken based on that knowledge. This goes in tandem with the study by Alarcón and Cole (2019), where the authors indicate that tourism can support water supply, but poor management and water scarcity due to tourism can affect local communities. Ali, Khan and Khan (2018), in their study of 19 countries in Asia, further concluded that policies should focus on improving sanitation

and tourism to increase total reserves.

The use of clean renewable energy (SDG 7) can benefit tourist activities, having an impact on the reduction of fixed and variable costs, but also on CO2 emissions (Calderón-Vargas, Asmat-Campos & Carretero-Gómez, 2019), it also improves the image of the destination, increasing the number of tourists and creating new jobs (Shevchenko & Petrushenko, 2021).

Tourism contributes moderately to SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth) through job creation and to SDG 10 (reducing inequalities), as it generates jobs. However, with low incomes due to having low pay and sometimes precarious positions due to the lack of specific education and the mitigation of gender pay gaps (Alarcón & Cole, 2019; Kronenberg & Fuchs, 2021). To achieve SDG 8, it is important that dignity and respect are part of working conditions (Winchenbach, Hanna & Miller, 2019). On the other hand, there seems to be a contradiction between this SDG and the logic of growth, due to competitiveness and profits, but priority should be given to reducing inequalities and reducing exploitative work (Bianchi & Man, 2021).

Innovation (SDG 9) in destinations results from competitiveness in tourism and technological dynamism on the part of tourist companies (Ruiz-Ortega et al., 2021). Broshi-Chen and Mansfeld (2021), in their study, alert to the importance of understanding what innovation is, since it is perceived (by the managers of tourist companies in Israel) as something new, which can compromise the implementation of a strategy based on innovation and creativity as a response to crises in tourism. As indicated by the OECD (2014, p.15) "tourism is also important for creative industries because it has the potential to value cultural and creative assets, expand the audience of creative products, support innovation, improve the image of countries and regions, open markets and support professional networks".

Regarding the SDG 11 sustainable cities

and communities, according to Dias, González-Rodríguez and Patuleia (2021), creative tourism can contribute to making communities more sustainable by offering interactive experiences. In the study carried out by the authors, not only does this happen due to the allocation of capital, resources, and skills development, thus, leading to entrepreneurial initiatives and the consequent increase in business activity, but also due to the maintenance of their traditions and culture.

Associating food heritage with the SDGs, makes it possible to understand that tourism can be an ally of UNESCO regarding responsible consumption and production (SDG12), for example, through the purchase of Algarve food products, at the Loulé fair, by residents and tourists, allows producers to continue to invest in traditional Mediterranean food production, but also in the flavors of local traditions (Flores and Silva et al., 2018). In the same vein, Hatipoglu and Inelmen (2020) consider that through the implementation of the Slow Food philosophy in markets (the relationship between what you eat and the health of people and the planet, that is, eating pleasantly, with quality in a conscious way) is to contribute to sustainable consumption and production, but also to the preservation of cultural heritage. Dubois, Peeter, Ceron and Gössling (2011) refer the importance of reducing CO2 emissions related to tourism due to climate changes it causes (SDG 13). Some drought episodes occurred in some places, which led to a drop in tourist demand, a reduction in tourist spending and in the hotel occupancy rate, leading to a loss of income and unemployment. As such, tourism must adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change (Dube et al., 2020).

Liu (2020) considers that the creative cultural products of maritime tourism can contribute to the sustainability of this type of tourism. As well as the regeneration and redevelopment of seafronts and port cities (Kostopoulou, 2013). The development of the marine economy and creative activities has progressed, both in terms of marine strategy,

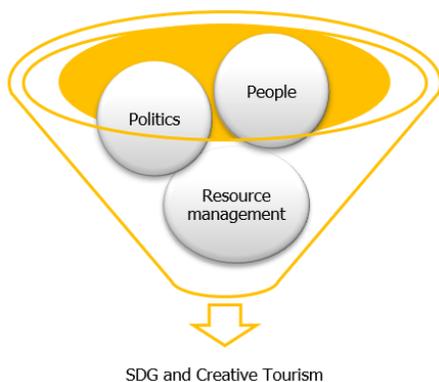
and product innovation and in terms of promotion. Having to be aligned with the characteristics of the local marine culture, meeting the SDG 14 - Protecting Marine Life (Qiu, 2020). Nature tourism experiences, more specifically maritime, tend to inspire tourists to adopt behaviors of protection and preservation of these resources. The effectiveness of these experiences does not vary depending on how they are offered, they can be real or virtual, on the other hand, the effectiveness does not increase with the addition of more interpretive content (Hofman et al., 2021). According to Timakova and Maksimeniuk (2021), the basis of sustainable tourism aims at a good use of natural resources in ecosystems, technological innovation in the management of territorial resources, especially in protected areas, but also in the preservation of natural habitat through fauna and flora, ecological thinking, and a responsible consumption attitude (SDG 15 Protect terrestrial life). According to Silva et al. (2020), in the Recife Creative Tourism Plan there are few actions aimed at protecting the environment and natural and cultural resources.

Referring to Flores e Silva and Farias (2019, p.11), it is possible to predict that through creative tourism, if investment policies are maintained, the territories will be “capable of absorbing even groups of migrants and/or refugees looking for work, to be a home and a welcoming space that can in the future bring them peace and a quality life far from their lands in wars or with problems of political and religious persecution”. In the same sense, Higgins-Desbiolles, Blanchard and Urbain (2021), regarding the SDG 16 Peace, Justice, and Effective Institutions, consider that this can be an essential incentive for tourism thinking, as it draws attention to peace as a value. Therefore, the authors refer the need to think about the contributions of tourism to these issues.

Regarding Portugal, the current understanding is that tourism can contribute to the 17 SDGs, but above all to goals 8, 12 and 14, that is, inclu-

sive economic growth, consumption and production, and use of resources in a sustainable manner, regarding the ocean and the sea (Turismo de Portugal, 2021). Currently, according to Tourism for SDGs (2021), the only Portuguese project underway is Impactrip. It offers activities that range from cooking classes without wasting food, to traditions that have been preserved, with the aim of contributing to the host communities through well-being, working conditions improvements and heritage preservation.

In summation, according to several authors cited above, it appears that tourism and, more specifically, creative tourism can contribute to the 17 SDGs, through the training and empowerment of communities and agents in the territory, strategies, and policies to be adopted, innovation and technology and efficient management of resources. In this way, it allows for the sustainability of local communities, as well as the improvement of their image. In other words, the relationship between creative tourism and the SDGs must be based on people, policy definition and resource management.



**Figure 2** | The three pillars of the Creative Tourism and SDG relationship

Source: Self-elaboration

It was also noted that it is necessary to better study the relationship of each of the SDGs and creative tourism to understand what their real contributions are.

### 3. Methodology

To achieve the proposed objectives, we initially used the Science Direct, Emerald and Google Scholar databases, to search for the links between creative tourism and SDGs, through the use of different combinations of keywords and specific phrases, "Tourism and SDGs", "Creative Tourism and SDGs", "Creative Tourism and Sustainability", "Creative Experiences and SDGs" and also, Creative Tourism and the name of each SDG. Articles published between 2017-2021 were considered.

The survey was designed considering the issues raised in the studies presented in the literature review. As it is a field that had not yet been studied, there are no articles that carry out an analysis on the totality of the SDGs and creative tourism. Subsequently, 104 questionnaires were applied, between June and September 2020, to entrepreneurs with activities suitable for creative tourism in Alentejo Central. The sample for the present study was based on, in the database of the regional tourism entity (Visit o Alentejo), in the database of Turismo de Portugal (RNT).

It included sample characterization questions (open and multiple choice) and questions about the SDGs, as such, dichotomous scales were used. The surveys were carried out through the google forms platform, having been sent by email and with subsequent contact either by email or in person.

### 4. Results and Discussion

To characterize the sample under study, participants were questioned about how long their company has been in business, with 40.8% of respondents answering, "less than 5 years". On the other hand, 38.8% responded "more than 10 years". From these numbers we can infer that while the creation of new businesses is noticeably underway, there is also a trend of companies being

able to survive in the industry for long periods of time, as there is no significant difference in the amount of young and old companies as shown in Figure 3.

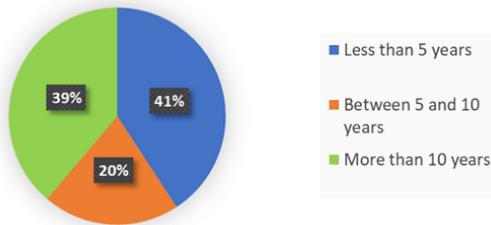


Figure 3 | Company longevity  
Source: Self-elaboration

The size of each company’s workforce was also a subject of study, and by looking at the graph we can see that most (53.6%) of the sample companies are made up of two people or less, and thus only managed by the owner, or the owner and a co-owner/employee. There seems to be a trend of smaller businesses, as 87.9% claim to have their workforce made up of less than 11 people.

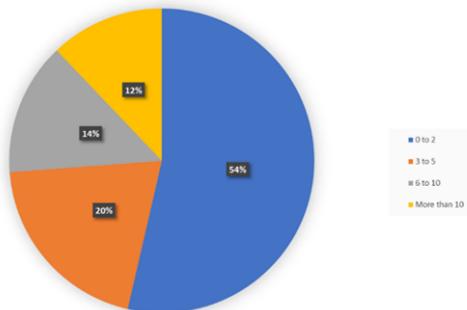


Figure 4 | Number of workers  
Source: Self-elaboration

To know what area of work each business specializes in, the questionnaire featured a multiple-choice question with various categories as answers, these were based on the UNESCO Creative Cities list, and an "other" option. Analysing their replies, excluding the "other" option, which garnered 37% of the answers, we found that the Handicrafts and Popular Arts category is the one with the most respondents (31%), followed by Gastronomy (21%), and in the tail end of the percentages we find Design (4%), Arts and Media (3%), Music (3%) and

Literature (1%). The respondents who consider their creative activity as "another" (37%) category is due to the fact that respondents do not have a real perception of the categories. This fact was verified once the description of their activities was requested.

The answers to the previous questions are in line with what is defended by Mylan (2018), that is, there are several tourist activities that allow increasing profits for local communities.

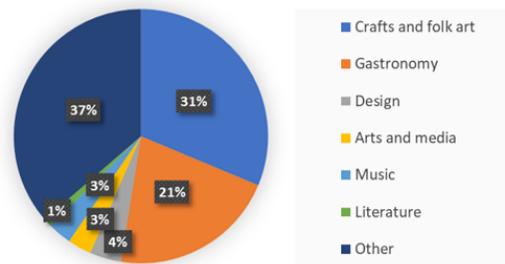


Figure 5 | Area of activity  
Source: Self-elaboration

The respondents were asked whether the commitment to Creative Tourism (CT) allowed them to meet the different SDGs. As such, respondents considered that the SDG1 – Eradicate Poverty can be contributed towards, as CT tends to generate employment (75% of respondents). However, Scheyvens and Hughes (2019) indicate that greater changes are needed providing a quality of life in order to eradicate poverty. About SDG2 – Eradicate Hunger, 94.1% of respondents also consider that there is a contribution through CT, and generally claim it tends to occur through the incentive to greater local production and/or use of local products. They also consider that the co-creation of experiences in ecotourism activities can contribute to it (87.9% of respondents). The same is Ambelu, Lovelock and Tucker (2018) who defend what the livelihoods advocate creation as well as the creation of food livelihoods.

Regarding SDG3 – Quality Health, 82% of respondents indicate that this can occur using activities in the CT that allow mental refreshment. In this way, Creative tourism generates well-being

(Boekstein & Spencer, 2013; Smith et al., 2016; Alina-Cersasela, 2015; Huang & Xu, 2018). At the level of Quality Education (SDG4), respondents indicate that CT can lead to an increase in technical and professional skills with a path to creating employment and entrepreneurship (86% of respondents). The same view is shared by Bertella and Rinaldi (2021) who indicate in their study that CT tends to encourage learning by communities and tourists.

However, regarding the SDG5 - Gender Equality, 67% of respondents believe that CT enables women to achieve more income, however, 21% of respondents chose the answer "don't know/no answer" and 12% of respondents indicated that "no". The results also tend to agree that gender equality, despite the existence of studies on cultural practices, lacks that empowerment strategies will occur (Su et al., 2020; Ferguson, 2018; Alarcón & Cole, 2019).

However, about SDG6 - Drinking Water and Sanitation, 75% of the inquired believe that by investing in CT, recycling and reuse of resources can be promoted. In line with what Alarcón and Cole (2019) and Ali et al. (2018) in their studies. When asked about contributions towards the SDG7 - Renewable and Accessible Energies, that is, through the promotion of the use of renewable energy by tourists and the local community, 72.7% of respondents answered affirmatively. Therefore, tourist activities and destinations can also benefit from renewable energies as environmental and economic activities at the image level (Calder-Vargas et al., 2019; Shevchenko & Petrushenko, 2021). Regarding SDG8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth, the bet on CT allows the increase in diversity of the destination's offer, increasing the value chain, according to 92% of respondents. However, such Winchenbach (2019) is vital as it indicates how conditions and respect are fundamental to working conditions.

As for the SDG9 - Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure, that is, CT allows strengthening sci-

entific research and improving the technological capacities of sectors of creative industries according to 71.7% of the sample under study. But it also allows, through the modernization of production processes, for typical activities (77.6% of respondents). In this way, innovation makes it possible to make the destination more competitive and enhance cultural and creative products (Ruiz-Ortega et al., 2021; OECD, 2014).

Regarding the SDG10 - Reducing Inequalities, 78.6% of respondents believe that the bet on CT aims to empower and promote the social, economic, and political inclusion of all, thus meeting the objective. In this sense, Bianchi and Man (2021) consider that a reduction in inequality and exploitative work should be a priority. 97% of the study sample considers that this bet allows the preservation of cultural and/or natural heritage, thus meeting SDG11 - Sustainable City and Communities, as advocated by Dias et al. (2021).

When asked whether the bet on CT allows the development of sustainable tourism (creates jobs, promotes culture and local products), 95% of respondents believe it does (SDG 12 - Sustainable Production and Consumption). The consumption of local products allows for more filmed consumption and productions (Silva et al., 2018; Hatipoglu Inelmen; 2020) Regarding SDG 13 - Climate Action, 65.7% of respondents believe that the commitment to CT allows the reduction the impact of climate change, 18.2% of respondents indicate "don't know/don't answer" and 16.2 % say they don't believe. In this way, the CT should allow mitigating an environmental footprint (Dube et al., 2020), adopting strategies (Dubois et al., 2011).

Regarding the SDG15 - Protecting Life on Earth, that is, if CT aims to conserve the biodiversity of local communities, 79.8% of respondents indicate yes. Although the answers tend to demonstrate that there is a relationship between the TC and the protection of terrestrial life, which indicates the need for a good action of these resources (Timakova and Maksimenuik (2021), on the other

hand it will be interesting that they are made and Who can become who in the future as indicated by Silva et al (2020). Relative to SDG16 - Peace and Effective Institutions, 70% of respondents believe that it allows different communities to be involved, consolidating peace, although 18.4% “do not know/do not answer” and 11.4% disagree. Therefore, the answers show that peace, justice, and specific institutions are defined as a need to defend the authors Higgins-Desbiolle, (2021). But also, the perspective presented by Silva and Farias (2019) where the TC assumes the role of promoter of peace.

About SDG17 - Development of partnerships, 92% of respondents believe that the commitment to TC allows to encourage and promote part-

nerships (Graphic 4). When analysing the answers where the choice fell on “do not know/do not answer”, it appears that this does not occur due to difficulties in understanding the question or a poor formulation of the same. An example of this is that, in the answer to SDG 11, the respondents chose to answer, “do not know/do not answer”.

It should also be noted that collaboration in sustainability is understood as important, as defended by Liburd et al. (2020). Due to the percentage of responses that consider partnerships important (SDG17), they tend to consider that communities operating in the destinations of NUTIII - Alentejo Central, recognize the importance of these partnerships, as indicated by Movono and Hughes (2020).

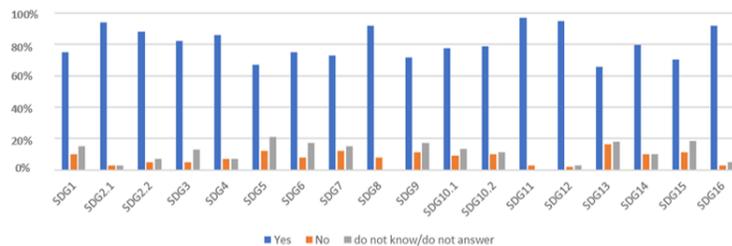


Figure 6 | The perception of the relationship between creative tourism and the SDGs  
Source: Self-elaboration

As can be seen in Figure 6, respondents tend to consider that the investment in creative tourism meets the different SDGs. However, it appears that SDGs 2, 4, 8, 11, 12 and 16 are those in which the results were superior. In contrast, SDGs 5, and 13 were those that had a lower percentage of favourable responses.

## 5. Concluding remarks

The relationship between creative tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals still needs further studies. However, the practices and information in tourism today must include the inclusion of sustainable practices. The choice of adopting

SDGs improves the use of resources and generates positive effects for the local community and tourists, according to the literature review carried out. In this sense, this article investigated how creative tourism providers in Central Alentejo understand creative tourism as a promoter of the SDGs. As such, it was found that they tend to consider that the relationship between creative tourism and sustainable development is positive. However, the need to define measures that promote gender equity, social inclusion and resource management is highlighted.

The results obtained in the study aim at a more global view of the relationship between the SDG and creative tourism, the study not focusing on deepening one of them, the aim was thus to verify

the different perceptions about each of them to compare them.

Much still needs to be done for the implementation of creative tourism to reach the SDGs. It is necessary to carry out more in-depth studies on this relationship. The present work, as it is a case study, does not allow the results to be explored for other realities. As such, even for Central Alentejo it is necessary to deepen this relationship to be able to develop a management model for the implementation of creative tourism as a basis for the sustainable development of the territories under study.

When crossing the ODS variables with the variables area of activity, number of years of activity and number of employees, the results obtained tend to demonstrate that these factors do not influence the respondents' answers, with no significant differences.

It is also important to mention that the present study was limited by the impossibility of applying questions about SDG 14, since in Central Alentejo there is no sea, although there are other forms of life in the water.

## 6. Research implications

The results presented can contribute to the research area, as they allow us to understand that there are differences in the perception of Creative Tourism and the SDGs, thus opening lines of investigation. To the community of Alentejo Central for showing that this can be a type of tourism to be developed.

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