

THE AZORES SUSTAINABLE TOURISM OBSERVATORY (OTA)

OTA's Annual Activity Report - INSTO Network

- Balance of work carried out (perspectives, challenges, constraints);
- Prospects for future actions and potential partnerships with mutually beneficial synergies;



OBSERVATÓRIO do TURISMO
dos Açores



THE AZORES SUSTAINABLE TOURISM OBSERVATORY (OTA)

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The Azores Archipelago



The Azores Islands are a Portuguese archipelago in the North Atlantic Ocean, located about 1,500 km (930 miles) from Lisbon and about 3,900 km (2,400 miles) from the east coast of North America. Nowadays the Azores' main industries are tourism, cattle raising for the production of milk and meat, and fishing.

All the nine islands of the Azores Archipelago are of volcanic origin and are located in the North Atlantic, scattered in the North Atlantic along a 600 km stretch of ocean from the island of Santa Maria to Corvo island.

The islands of the archipelago are divided in three geographical groups: the Eastern Group, comprising Santa Maria and São Miguel, the Central Group, including Terceira, Graciosa, São Jorge, Pico and Faial islands, and the Western Group formed by Corvo and Flores islands. The Azores, along with the archipelagos of Madeira, Canary Islands and Cape Verde, constitute the biogeographic region of Macaronesia, a name which means "fortunate islands" for those who live there and visit them.



CLIMATE

The average temperature in Azores is 18°C (64°F). Statistically the driest month is July and the wettest November. Average annual mean relative humidity is 76%. Frost is non-existent in Azores.

The ocean water temperature in Azores range from 17°C (63°F) in the winter to 25°C (77° F) in the summer. The average annual rainfall increases from east to west, with annual precipitation of 958 mm (37.7 in) or 80 mm (3.1 in) per month. The Azores are famous for its anticyclone, an area of high atmospheric pressure located near the archipelago.

GEOGRAPHY

Located in the area of contact between the Euro- Asian, American and African tectonic plates, the Azores Archipelago has a volcanic origin. Throughout the millennia, volcanic eruptions and earthquakes shaped the territory. But each one of the islands has its own identity. The fossils of Santa Maria, the lakes of São Miguel, the caves of Terceira, the cones of Graciosa, the “Fajãs” (landslides) of São Jorge, the Mountain of Pico, the Capelinhos Volcano in Faial island, the waterfalls of Flores, and the “Caldeirão” of Corvo island are all unique territorial features. Traveling throughout the Azores’ nine islands gives a chance to enjoy its beauty and variety, with the same genetic code giving rise to different island profiles completely distinct from one another.



FLORA

The first settlers of the Azores found, amongst dozens of other endemic species, Azores junipers, heaths, Azores heathers and colic wood, which still prevail on the islands. Throughout the centuries man's hands molded the landscape. As the climate is mild, trees such as the Japanese cedar, the araucaria and the pohutukawa became an important part of the typical landscape of the Azores, filled with the blue and pink colored hydrangeas.

The archipelago is the natural habitat of bird species, such as common buzzards, Cory's shearwaters, terns, wood pigeons and blackbirds. In the mountains of "Serra da Tronqueira" on the island of São Miguel, the Azores bullfinch bird (locally known as "priôlo") a protected species given its rarity. The sky of the Azores is home to the only mammal endemic to the islands: the Azores bat. Various other migratory birds choose the Azores to rest during their long intercontinental migrations.

More than two dozen species of dolphins and whales either inhabit or cross the seas of the Azores. There are abundant colonies of mollusks, crustaceans and fish, thus completing the region's extraordinary maritime fauna diversity.

ENVIRONMENT

The long lists of natural parks, protected landscape areas with protected endogenous fauna and flora species, of forest reserves, of geo landscape, and of sites with geological interest, all guarantee the preservation of a priceless natural legacy. As a reward, the Azores are considered to be a sanctuary of biodiversity and geodiversity and one of the best locations for Nature Tourism.

Arriving by Plane

The main Azores international airport hub is the “João Paulo II “ airport located on the island of S. Miguel. The island of Terceira also has an international airport (Lajes airport) which includes a United States air force base. The islands of Faial (Horta airport) and Pico (Pico island airport) also possess national airports.

Accommodation

In fact, hotel establishments concentrate the bulk of accommodation supply and demand. However, it is increasingly important to understand the dynamics associated with other types of tourism accommodation projects bearing a great differentiator power. They are gaining importance within the context of new market trends. In a destination such as the Azores, marked by its authenticity, rurality, proximity and exoticism, the local accommodation n homestays and in the tourism in rural space units brings value added to the tourist's stay.



Culture

If you are looking for Azorean culture then the Azorean museums exhibit various ethnographic collections that reflect a history deeply linked to the land, cattle breeding, handicrafts and fishing. Whale hunting was most intensive on the islands of Pico and Faial, being the object of tales of an era filled with courageous men. Various museum spaces are dedicated to collections of religious art, but most of these art pieces are still kept in the churches.



Language

The official language in Azores is Portuguese. In the majority of the nine islands, the local Portuguese spoken is very similar to standard European Portuguese.



The Azores Sustainable Tourism Observatory (OTA) is an independent technical and scientific institution, paying close attention to the new challenges facing the tourism sector and responsible for analyzing the performance of the Azores as a competitive sustainable tourism destination.

OTA is the first autonomous regional sustainable tourism Observatory in Portugal and it exists since 2006.

OTA proposes the following activities, described within the following strategic action vectors that guide its activity:

Vector A - Monitor

Analysis of the main Tourism Indicators;
Survey on the "Satisfaction of the Tourists Visiting the Azores"
Survey of residents in the Azores on the impacts of tourism;
Survey of entrepreneurs in the Azorean tourism sector.
Statistical Website;
Sentiment Analysis.

Vector B - Study

Project "Green Gardens - Azores Project "Creatour Azores";
Implementation of Tourism Sustainability Indicators;
Project "TOUR SIGNAL";
Project "Azores Digital Innovation Hub".



Vector C - Inform

Updating of the Observatory's Web page and its maintenance;

Presence in social and professional networks;

Production of a monthly newsletter, including dashboards and trends at national and international level.

Vector D – Tourism Policy Advising and International Cooperation

OTA publications advising the regional tourism authorities on the best sustainable tourism policy options;

OTA's membership in the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO);

OTA's membership in the International Association of Universities of Third Age (AIUTA);

OTA's membership in the International Federation of Technical Analysts (IFTA);



Mission and Objectives

OTA's mission is to contribute to transforming the Azores into a top sustainable island tourist destination in the world for both its current and future generations of residents and its visitors.

OTA's objective is to study, and monitor tourism activity, to inform and advise all tourism partners, helping them to implement a sustainable tourism development model in the Azores tourist destination.

The participation of the Azores Observatory of Sustainable Tourism (OTA) in the UNWTO International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories (INSTO network) is essential to guarantee the sustainability of the Azores tourism destination. After a year of activity within the INSTO network, the Azores Sustainable Tourism Observatory has increased its competences and its results, focusing not only on the improvement and updating of the existing monitoring indicators, but also on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the destination.

Ultimately, the current pandemic has reinforced the importance of OTA in providing timely and reliable information on the latest developments in tourism and therefore providing the basis for informed decision-making.





The integration of OTA in the INSTO Network, in January 2020, fostered the analysis and monitoring the tourist activity, in order to contribute to the development of sustainable tourism in the Azores, within a broader scope of action.

DOMAINS AND INDICATORS (Strategic Action Vector)

- Seasonality
- Employment
- Economic benefits for the destination
- Governance
- Tourist Satisfaction
- Energy, water consumption and waste generation
- Inclusive tourism





Balance of actions carried out

Surveys

- Residents' Opinion on the Impacts of Tourism in the Azores (2021);
- Sustainable Practices in Azorean Tourism Companies (2020);
- Assessment of the Impact of COVID-19 on Azorean tourism Companies (2020/2021);
- Assessment and Perception of Azores Residents' Travel Plans (2020);
- Impact of COVID-19 on Residents' Activities and Vacation Intentions (2021).

Indicators


- Monitoring of Tourism Supply and Demand indicators;
- Seasonality Monitoring;
- Monitoring the impact of COVID-19 on the Azores tourism sector;
- Monitoring Azores Residents' Satisfaction with Tourism Development..

POSITIVE BALANCE

The balance of activities developed by OTA in 2020/2021, within the scope of its strategic action vectors, is positive, given the constraints resulting from the Covid 19 pandemic. OTA collaborated with the Azores DMO in the process of certification of the Azores destination as a sustainable tourist destination, by Earthcheck. OTA's chairman of the board has participated in several consultative councils related to the regional tourism sector. Thus, for example, he participated in the advisory council of the first Tourism Planning Plan for the Autonomous Region of the Azores (POTRAA) in 2008 and, now, in its reformulation, which is in its final phase. He participated, in 2020/2021, as coordinator of the "Tourism Group", in the meetings of RIS 3 – Smart Specialization Strategy of the Autonomous Region of the Azores, an ongoing process. And, finally, he also participated in the first working meeting promoted by the Sustainable Tourism Observatory of Alentejo (ASTO), a pioneering action in the context of Portugal's network of INSTO Sustainable Tourism Observatories, sharing experiences and knowledge aimed at designing future win-win partnerships. The Chairman of the Board has also published, as a co-author, several scientific papers and opinion articles, and given interviews in the media, on competitive strategies for a sustainable Azores Tourist Destination, available on OTA's website.

Furthermore, the results of our surveys, the monitoring of tourism demand and supply indicators, and the dissemination of trends and innovations in international tourism are all valuable sources of information, also available on our website.

<https://otacores.com/>



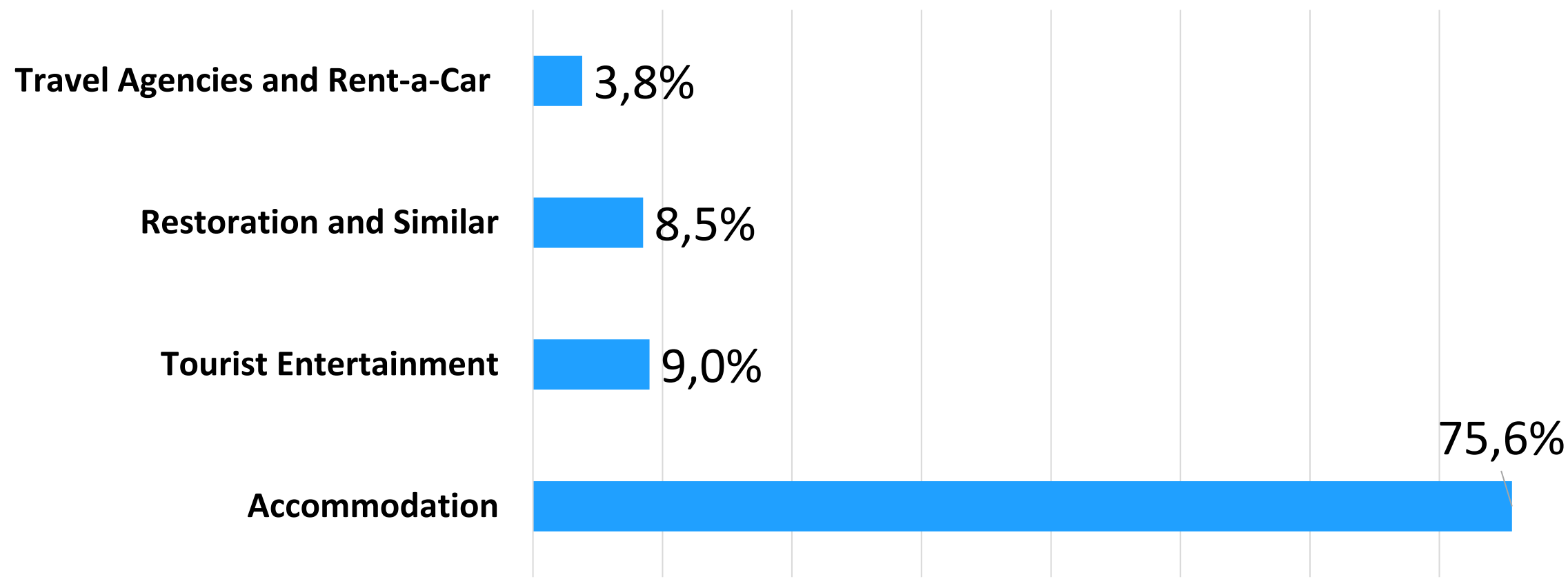
Survey Results

Online Survey “Sustainable Practices in Azorean Tourism Companies”

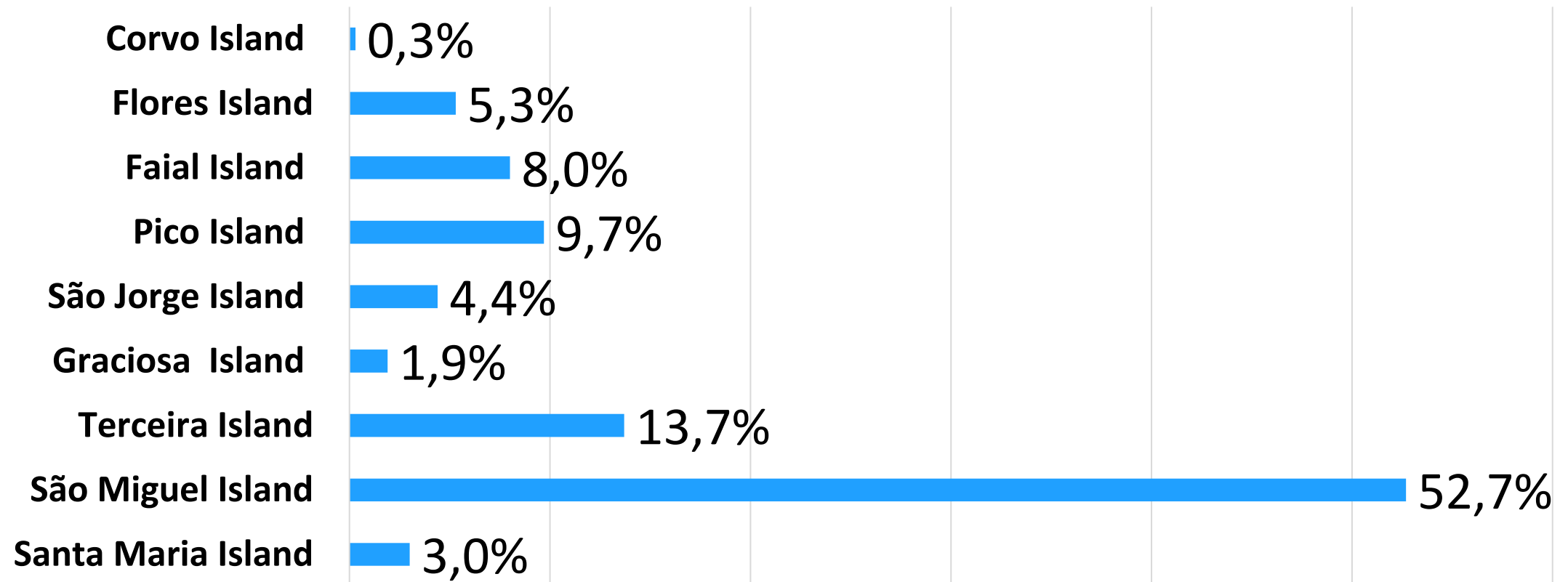
Implementation period: November 2020

Sample Size: 636 tourist companies.

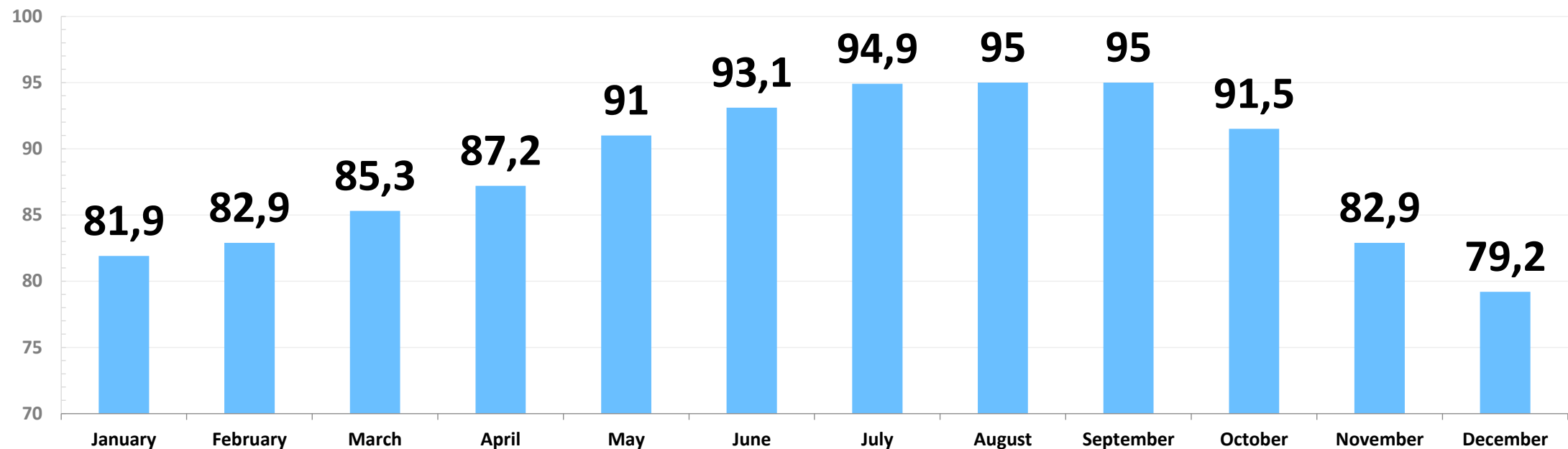
Distribution of Azorean Tourism Companies by type of tourism sector



Distribution of inquired entrepreneurs, taking into account the island where the companies are located



Tourism Companies' annual operating period



Considering the responses of 625 entrepreneurs (valid cases) who indicated at least 1 month of operation, it was found that the months in which there are more companies in operation are from May to October.

Environmental, Social, Cultural and Economic Sustainability Practices by Azorean Tourism Companies

Are you aware of the initiatives of the Sustainable Tourism in the Azores?

78,9%

1

Do you have a customer review system in place?

73,6%

2

Have you defined the mission, vision and values of your company?

80,7%

3

Have you ever made an assessment of the impact of your activity on the environment and local development?

29,3%

4

Do you establish goals and objectives in a periodic way?

65,5%

5

Have you prioritized purchases of regional goods and services?

94,7%

6

Adoption of sustainable practices

Have you adopted purchasing criteria that take into account environmentally friendly products or services?

88,6%

7

8

Regularly organize volunteering actions with a positive impact on the local community?

25,1%

Do you selectively separate waste?

94,5%

9

10

Do you implement measures to measure and reduce waste?

72,9%

Do you sensitize customers to saving water and energy (through flyers, etc.)?

56,0%

11

12

Do you implement measures to measure and reduce waste?

70,6%

Adoption of sustainable practices

Do you implement measures to measure and reduce energy consumption?

70,6%

Do you buy biodegradable detergents, biological fertilizers and "environmentally friendly" products?

70,2%

13

15

14

Do you use alternative/renewable energies (solar, photovoltaic, or other)?

29,9%

Do you ensure the proper final destination of waste water (public sanitation, septic tank)?

88,8%

16

Do you buy biodegradable detergents, biological fertilizers and "environmentally friendly" products?

70,2%

17

Adoption of sustainable practices

Do you minimize the use of hazardous substances or replace them with less dangerous products?
92,3%

19

20

Are employees training to deal with dangerous substances?
65,2%

Do you train and motivate employees to implement sustainable practices?
78,1%

21

22

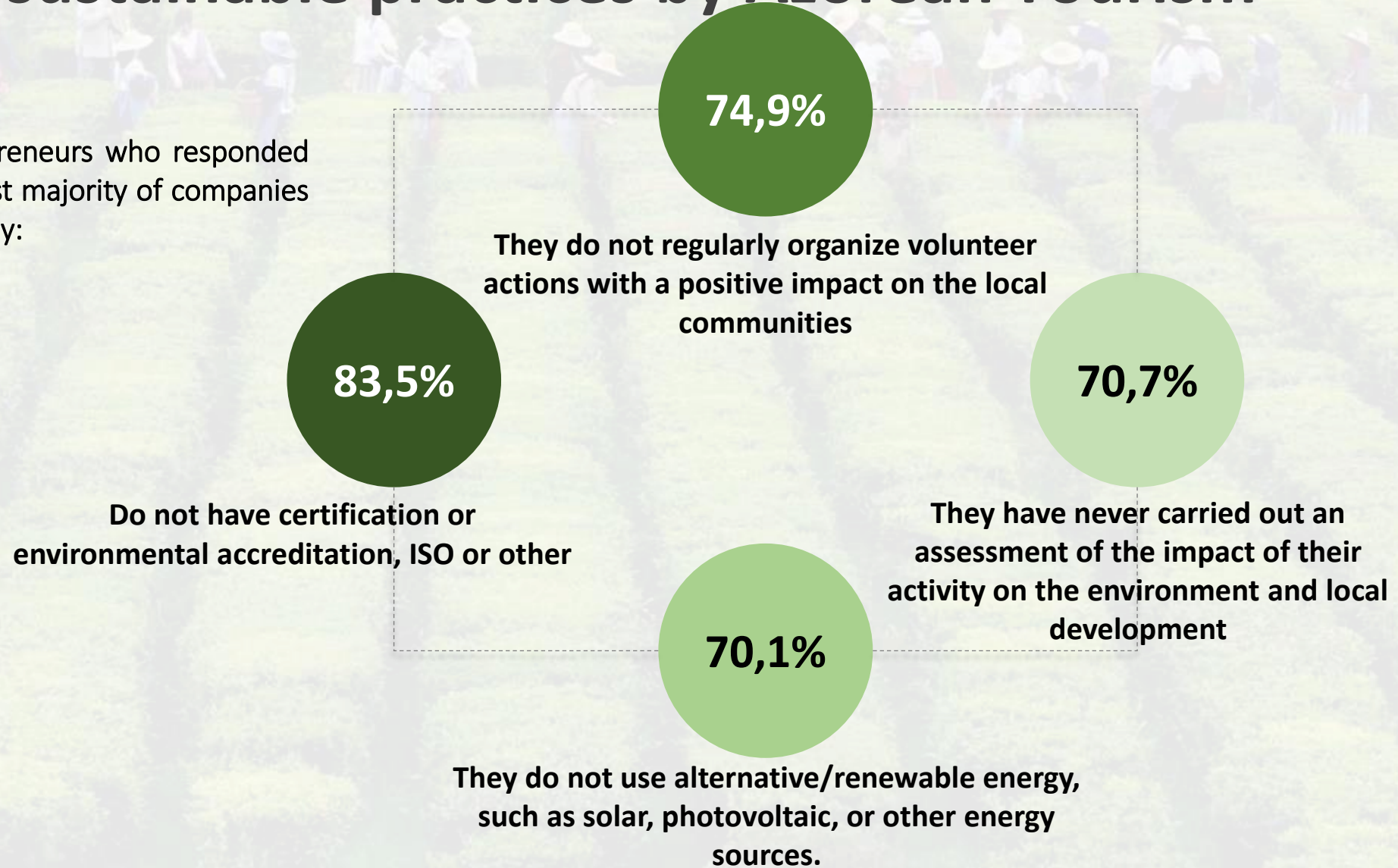
Does the company have any certification or environmental accreditation (ISO or other)?
16,5%



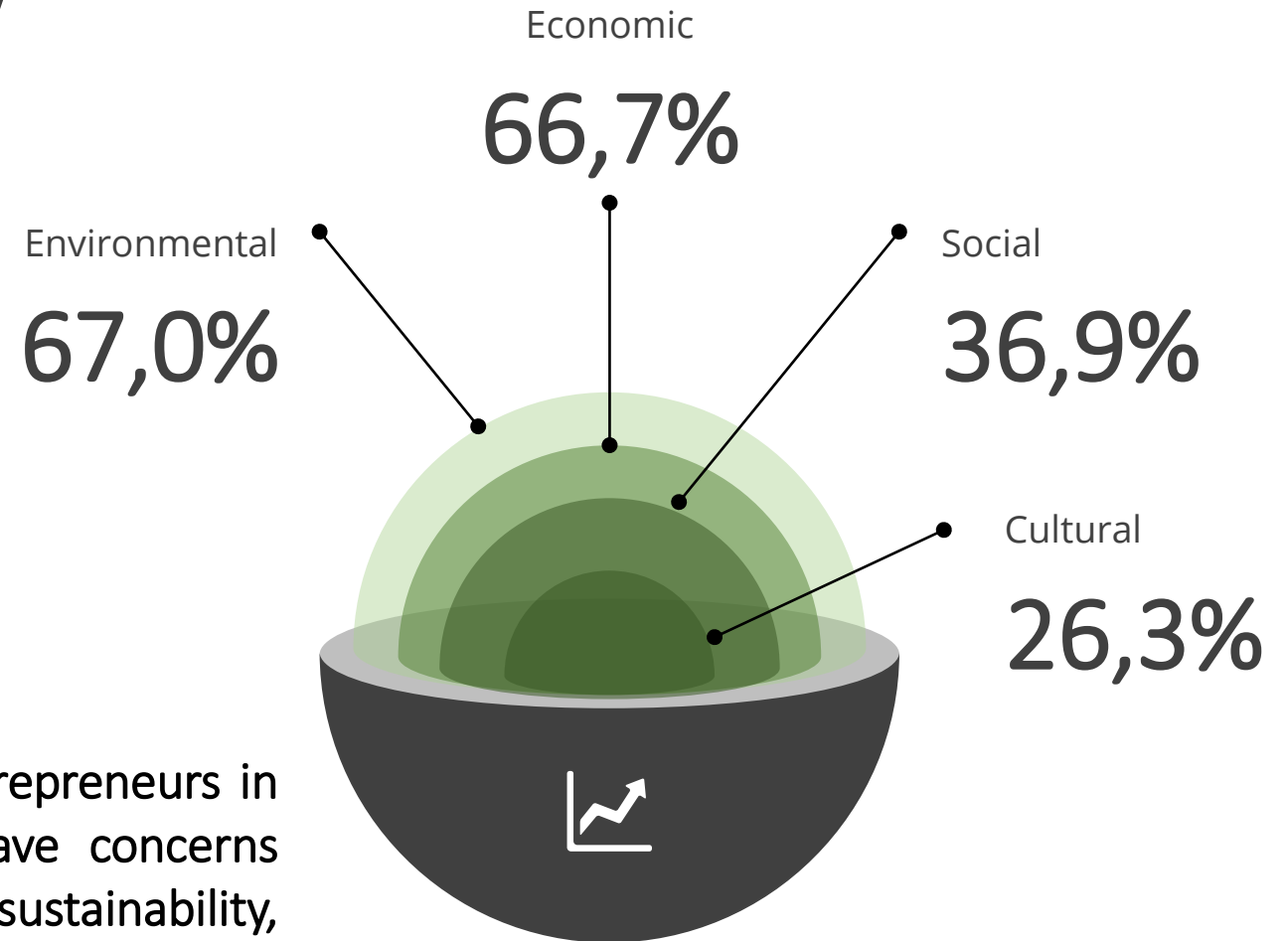
Adoption of sustainable practices

Adoption of sustainable practices by Azorean Tourism Companies

In the perception of entrepreneurs who responded to the questionnaire, the vast majority of companies that participated in the survey:



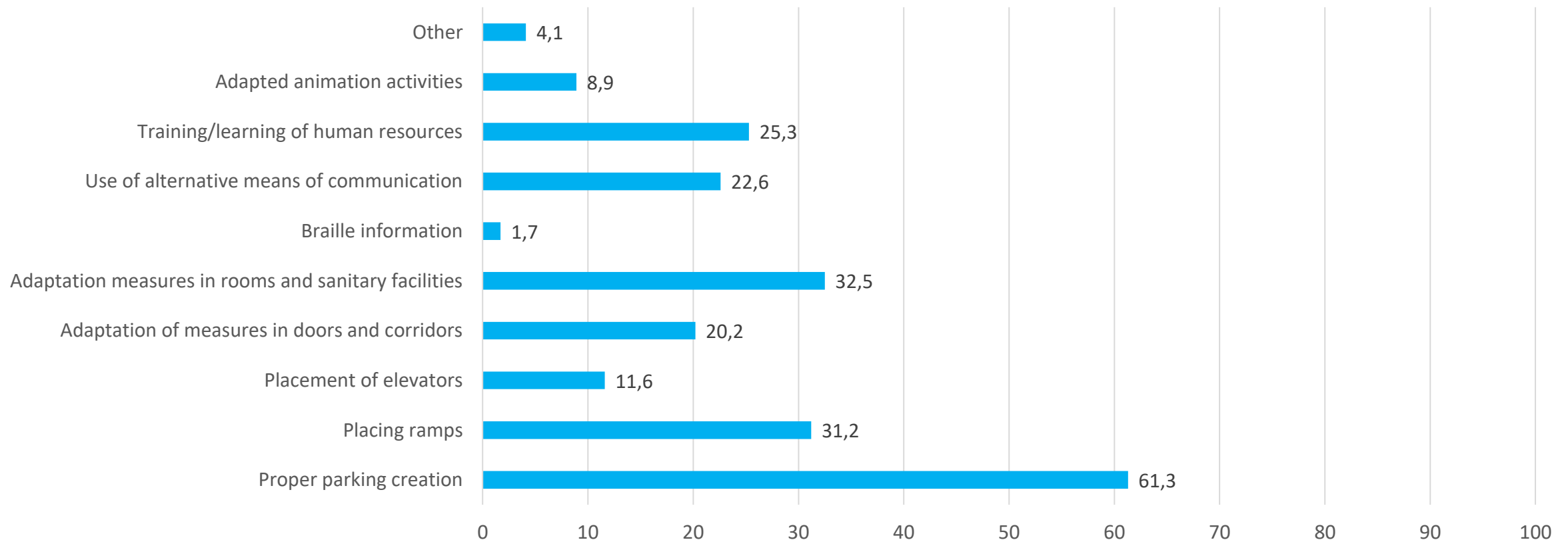
Axes of sustainability



The results suggest that most surveyed entrepreneurs in the Autonomous Region of the Azores have concerns related to the axis of environmental sustainability, although there is still room to widen this awareness.

Accessible Tourism in the Azores

Aspects that made the tourism companies infrastructure accessible



Regarding the “Other” category, respondents specified some interesting aspects, such as air conditioning, installation of fire doors, heated swimming pool, recycling, all accommodation on a single floor.

Online Survey “Assessing the Impact of COVID-19 on Azorean Tourism Companies”

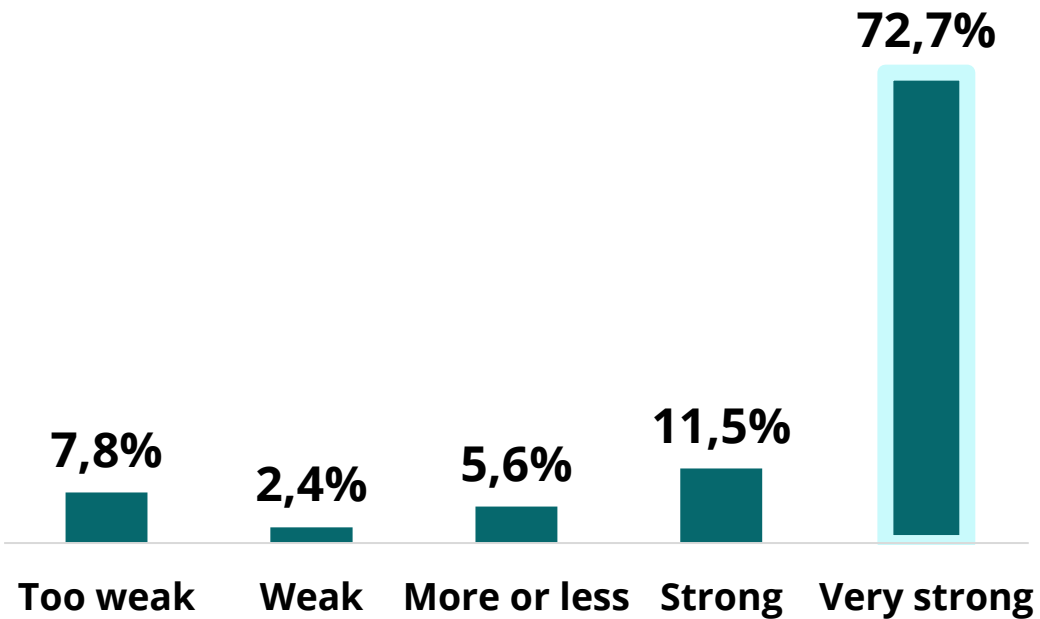
Implementation period: December 2020 to February 2021

Sample size: 506 tourist companies.

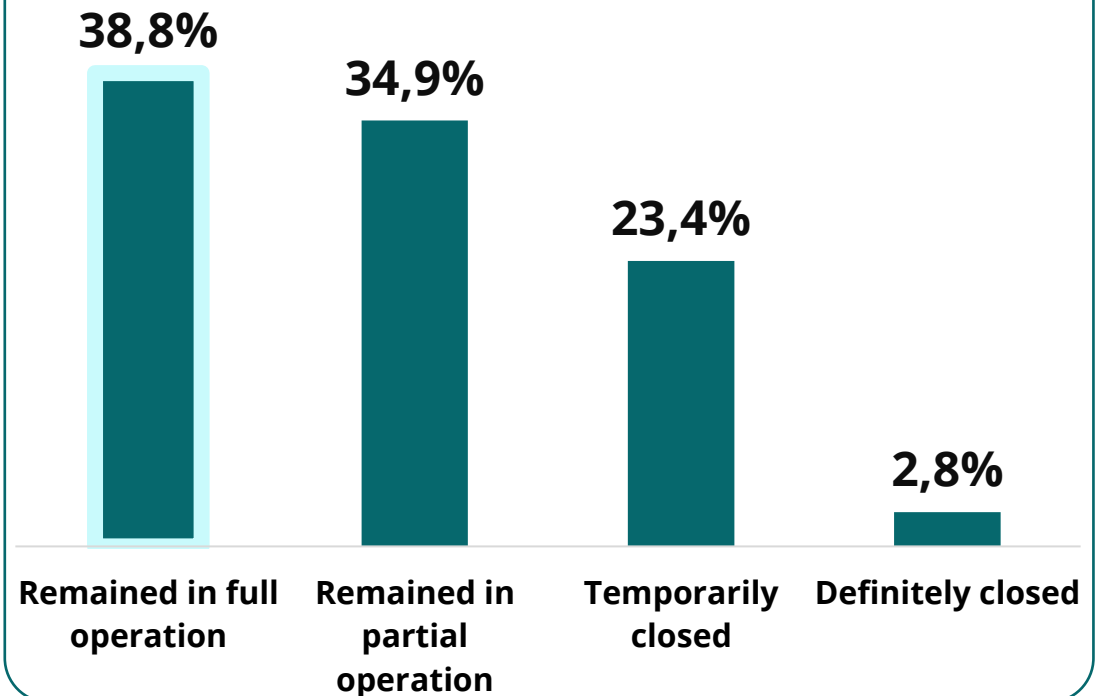


Impact of COVID-19 on Regional Tourism

Level of negative impacts of the pandemic on tourism businesses

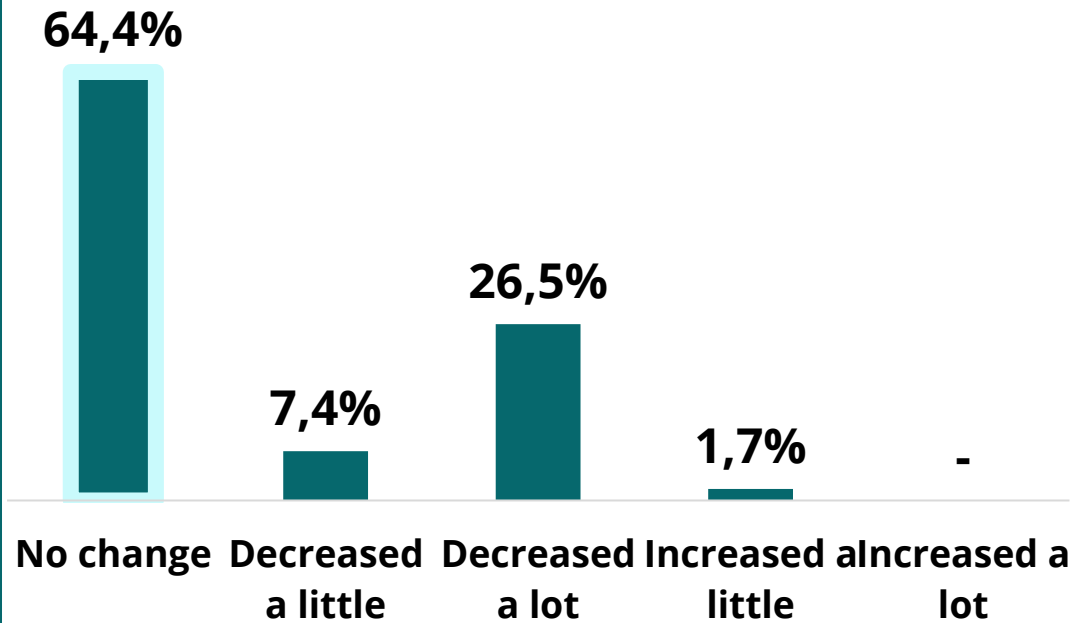


Situation of tourism companies in the high season 2020

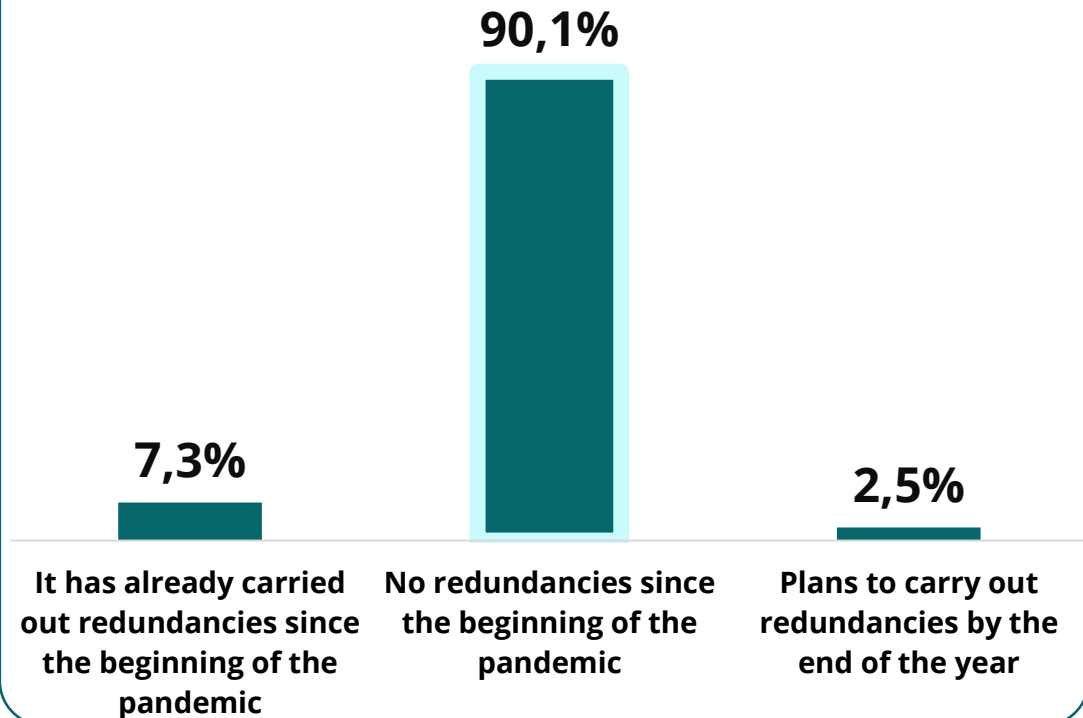


Impact of COVID-19 on regional tourism

Evolution of staff working in the high season of 2020 in tourist companies

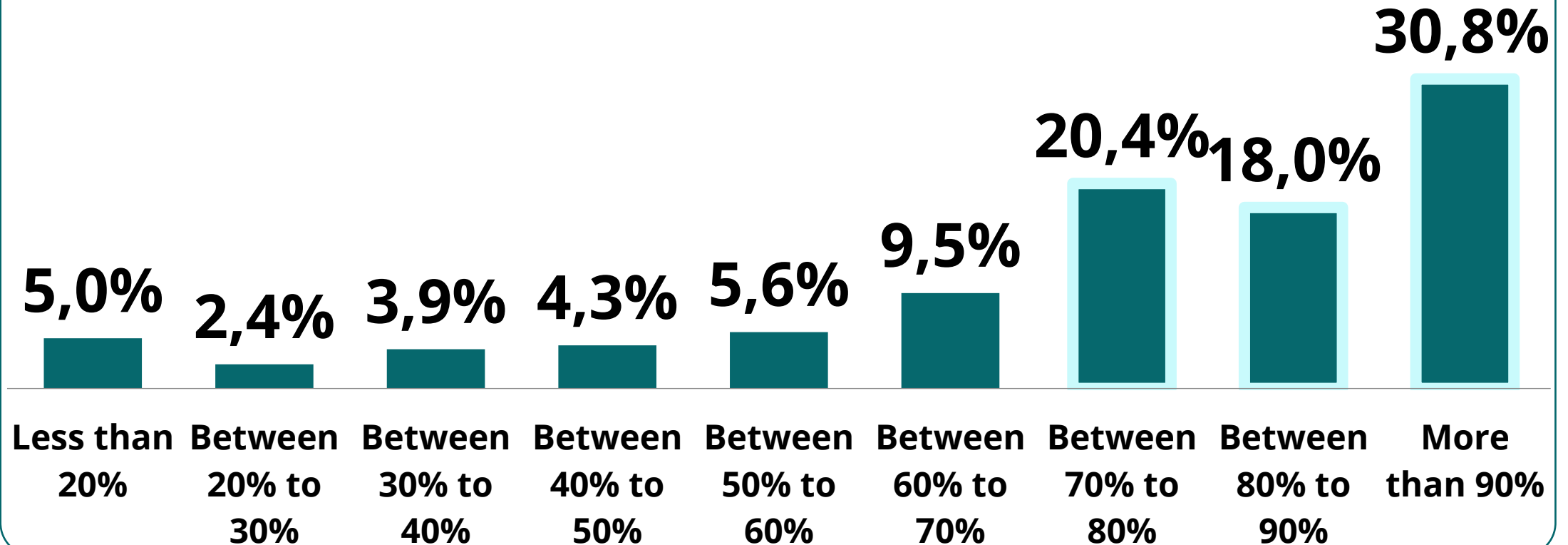


Redundancies (Fired Staff)



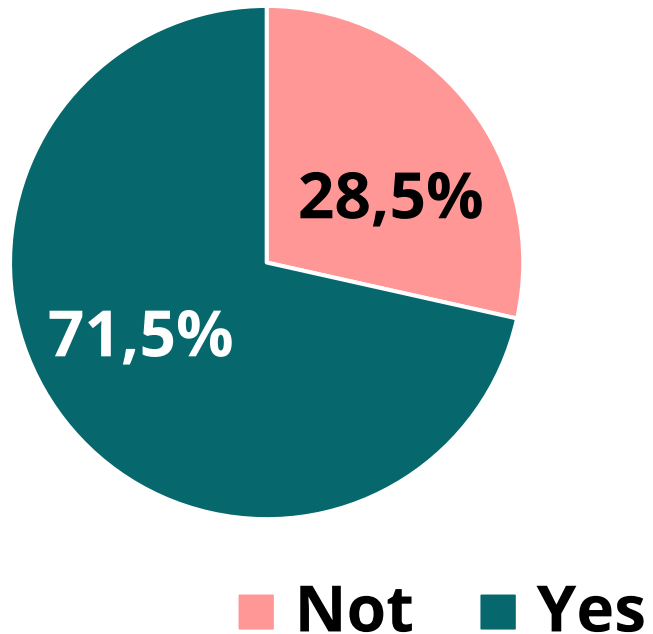
Impact of COVID-19 on regional tourism

Estimated reduction in turnover in the high season of 2020

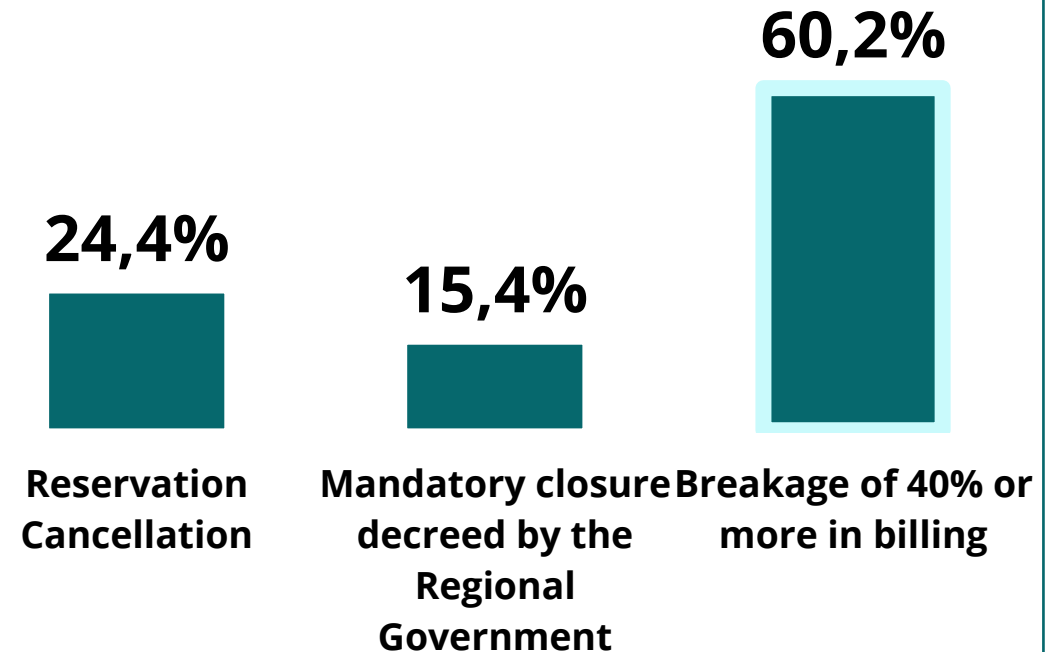


Impact of COVID-19 on regional tourism

Have tourist companies resorted to lay-off in the high season of 2020?

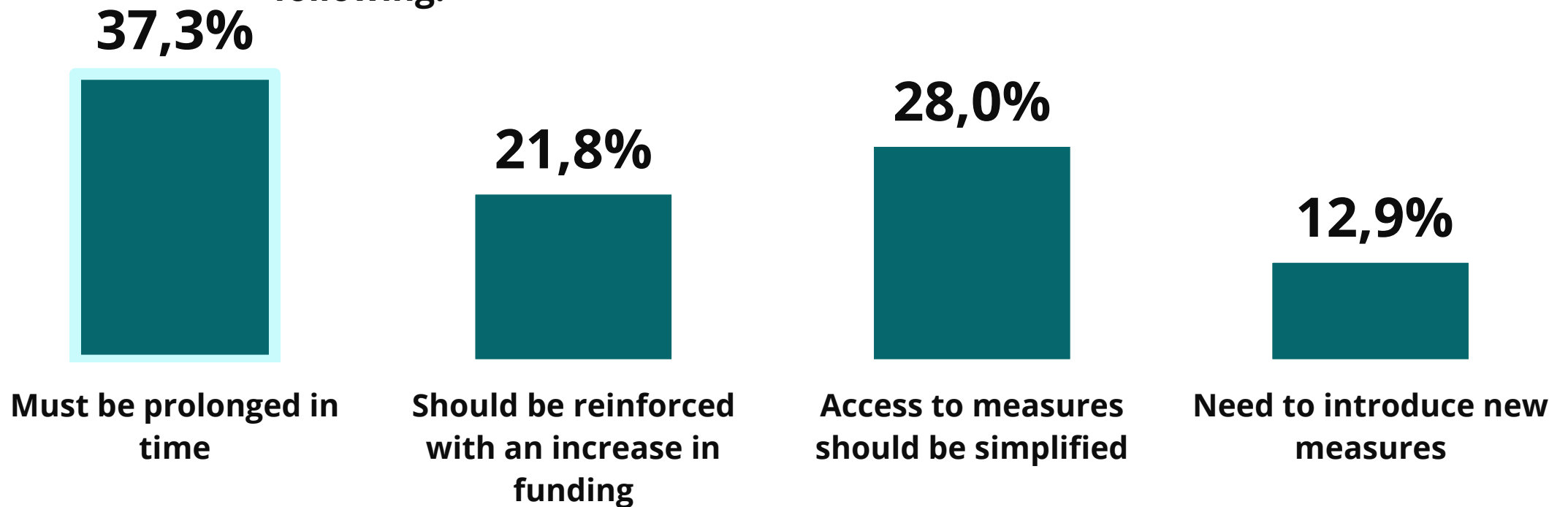


Main reason for resorting to lay-off



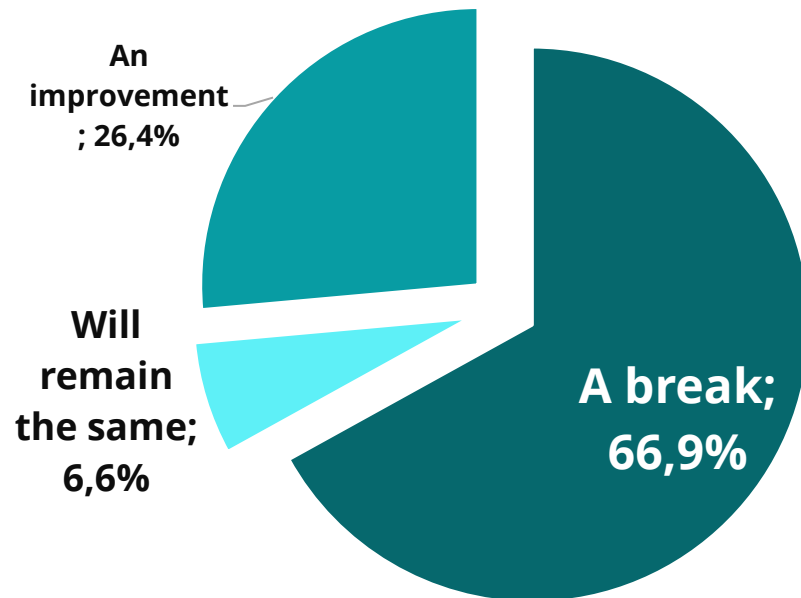
Impact of COVID-19 on regional tourism

Regarding the main tourism supporting measures launched by the Azores Regional Government, tourism companies consider the following:

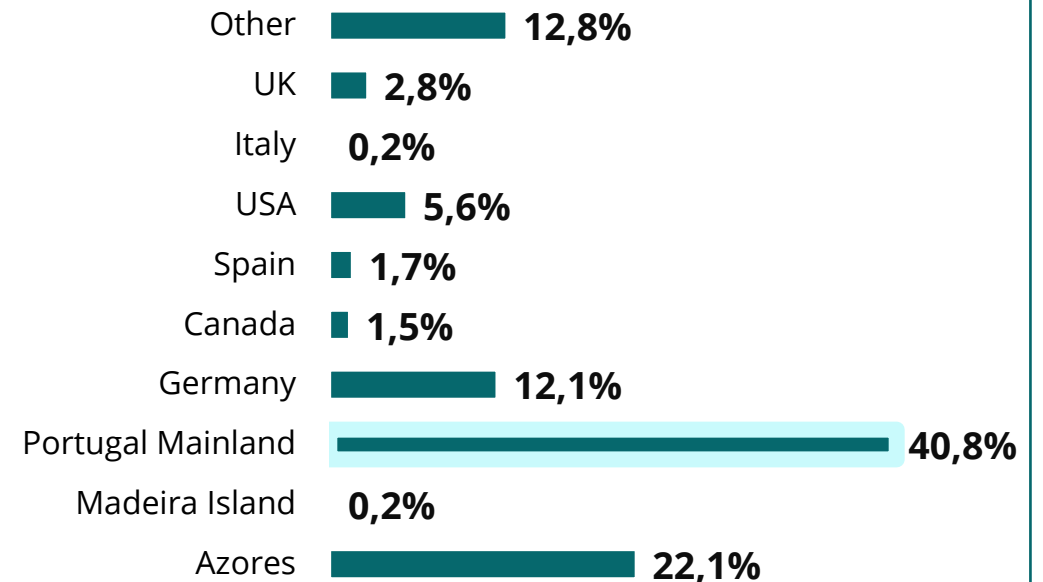


Impact of COVID-19 on regional tourism

What are the companies expectations for their business in 2020/2021 compared to 2019, with regard to invoicing

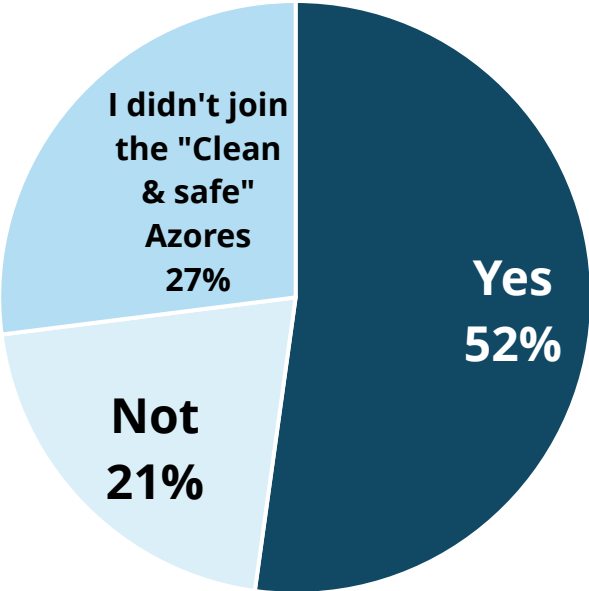


The main outbound tourism markets that has been looking for the services of companies in this pandemic period (year 2020)

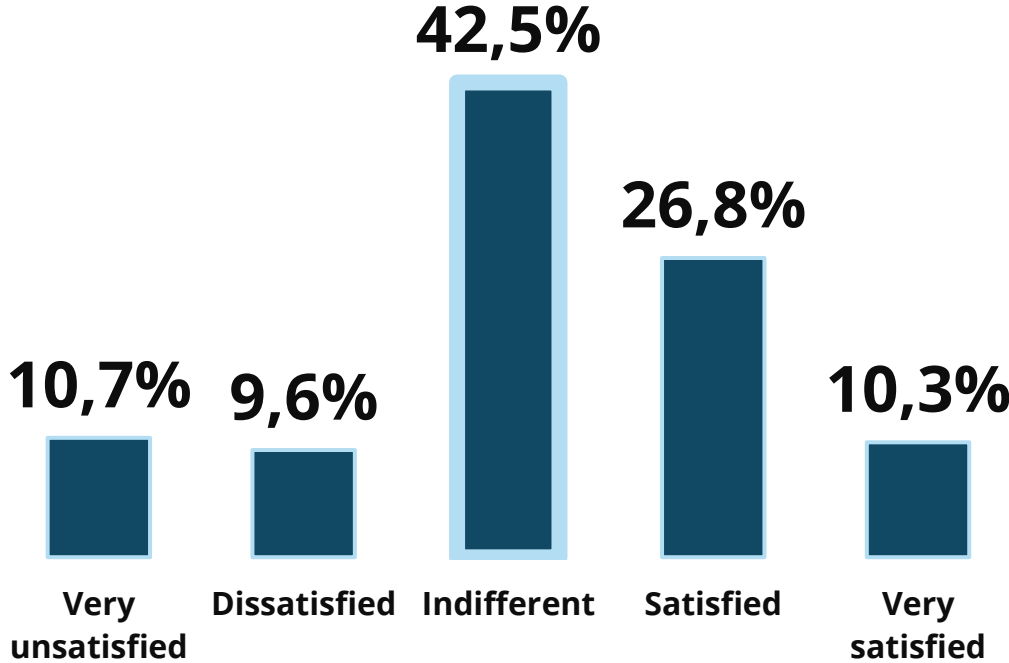


Impact of strategies aimed at encouraging tourism growth in the Azores

The "Clean&Safe" Azores seal is an asset for companies

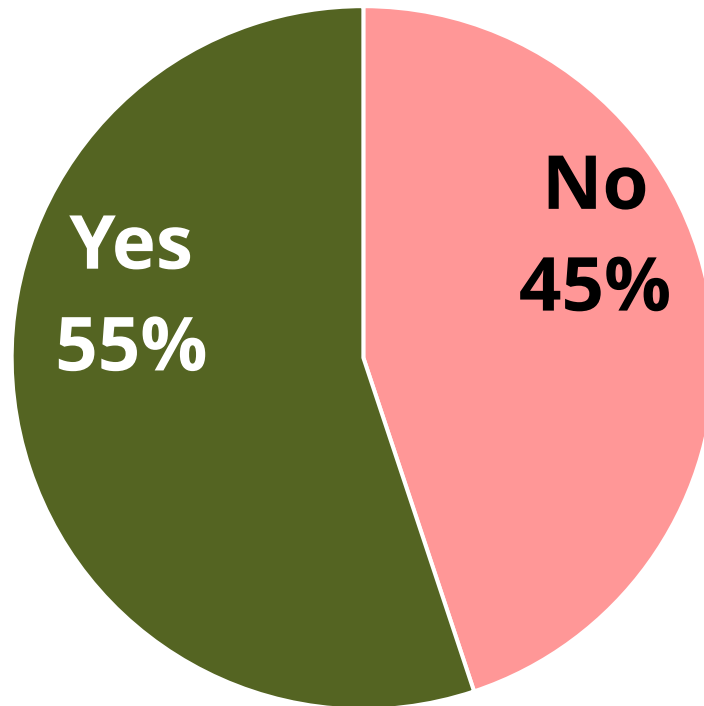


Degree of satisfaction of companies with the incentive for residents to take holidays in the high season of 2020 in the Azores, the "VIVER OS AZORES"

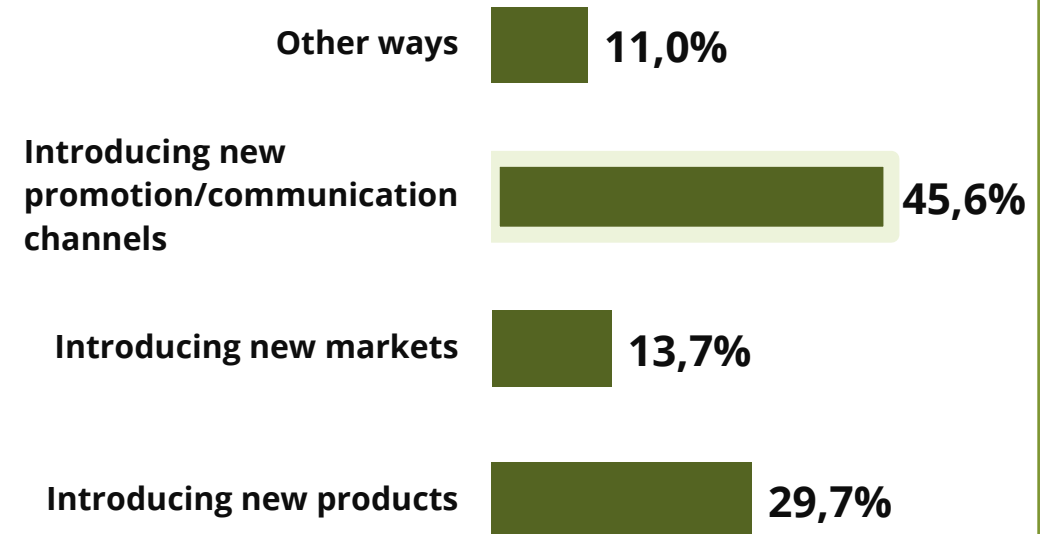


Assessment of the Proactive Capacity of Tourism Companies

Are companies rethinking their tourism offer?

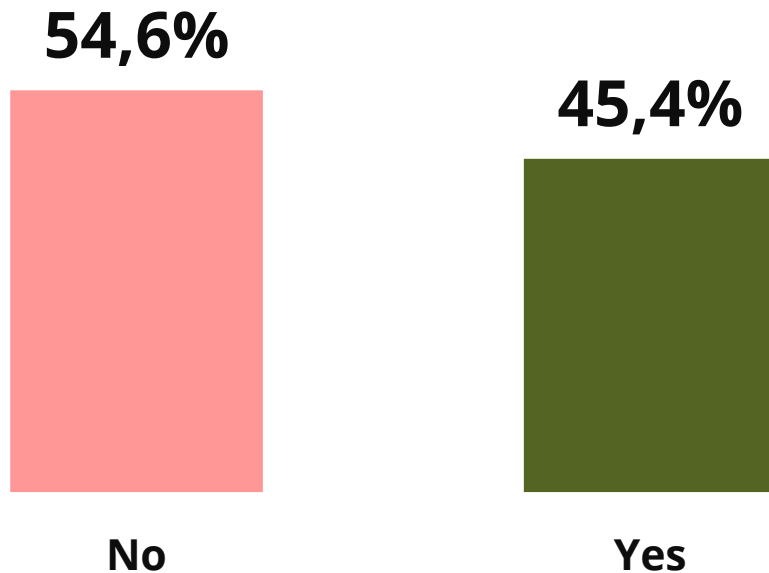


How are companies taking advantage of the partial or total activity breakdown to innovate their offer?

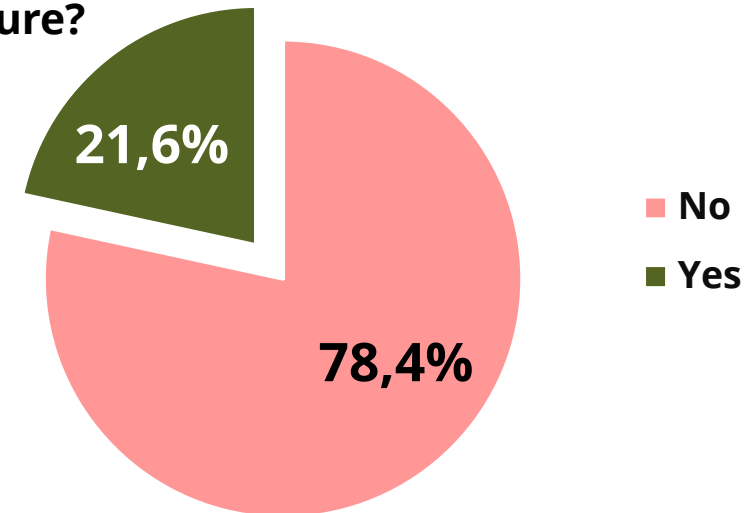


Assessment of the Proactive Capacity of Tourism Companies

Do companies depend on support measures to survive the pandemic period?

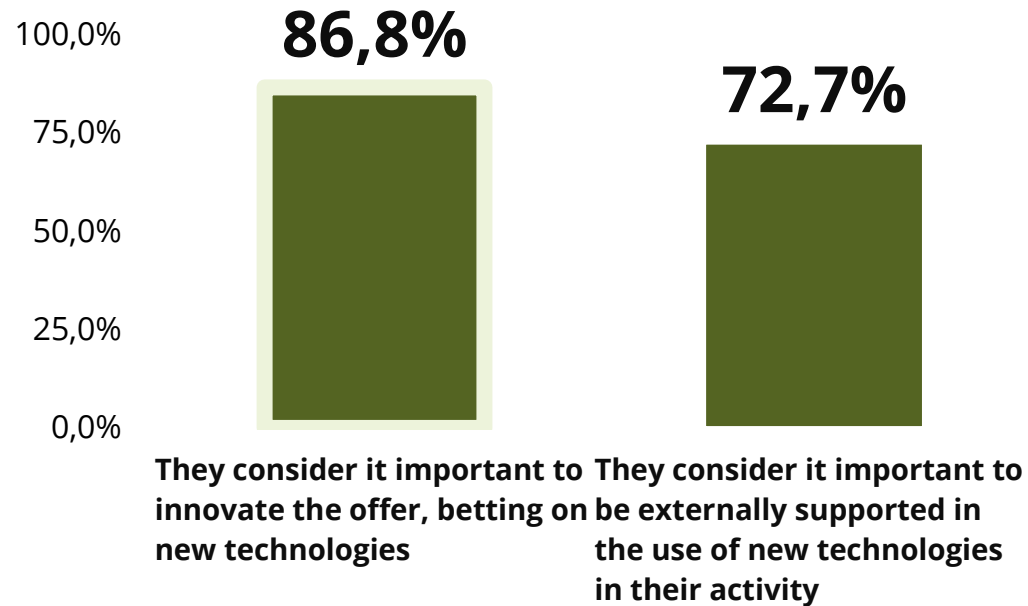


Are companies taking advantage of some lay-off situations to promote the qualification of their professionals, in order to offer a higher quality service in the future?

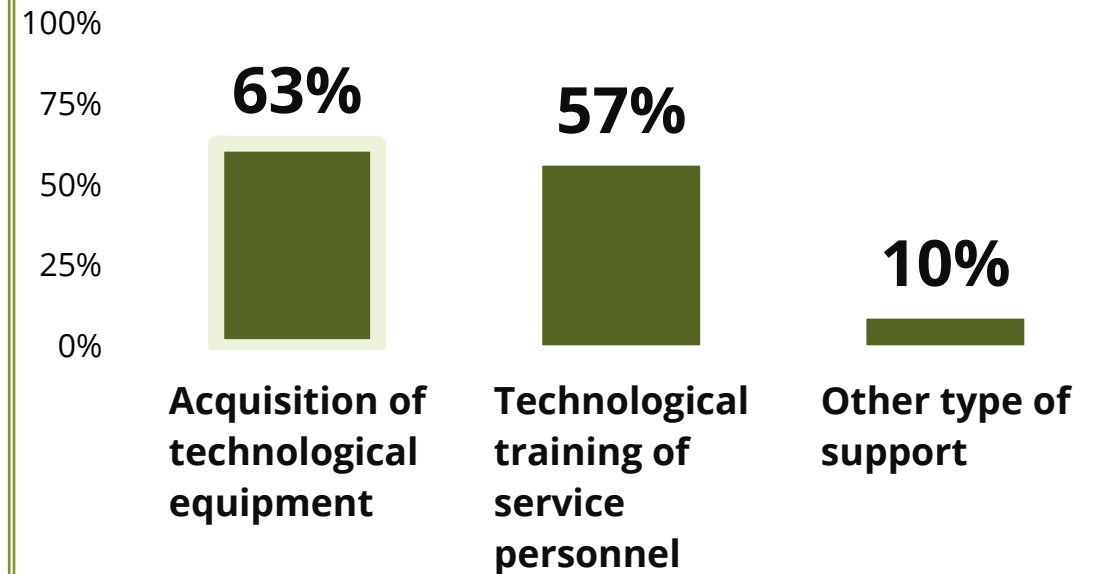


Assessment of the Proactive Capacity of Tourism Companies

Tourism Companies and Technology



Types of support in the use of new technologies



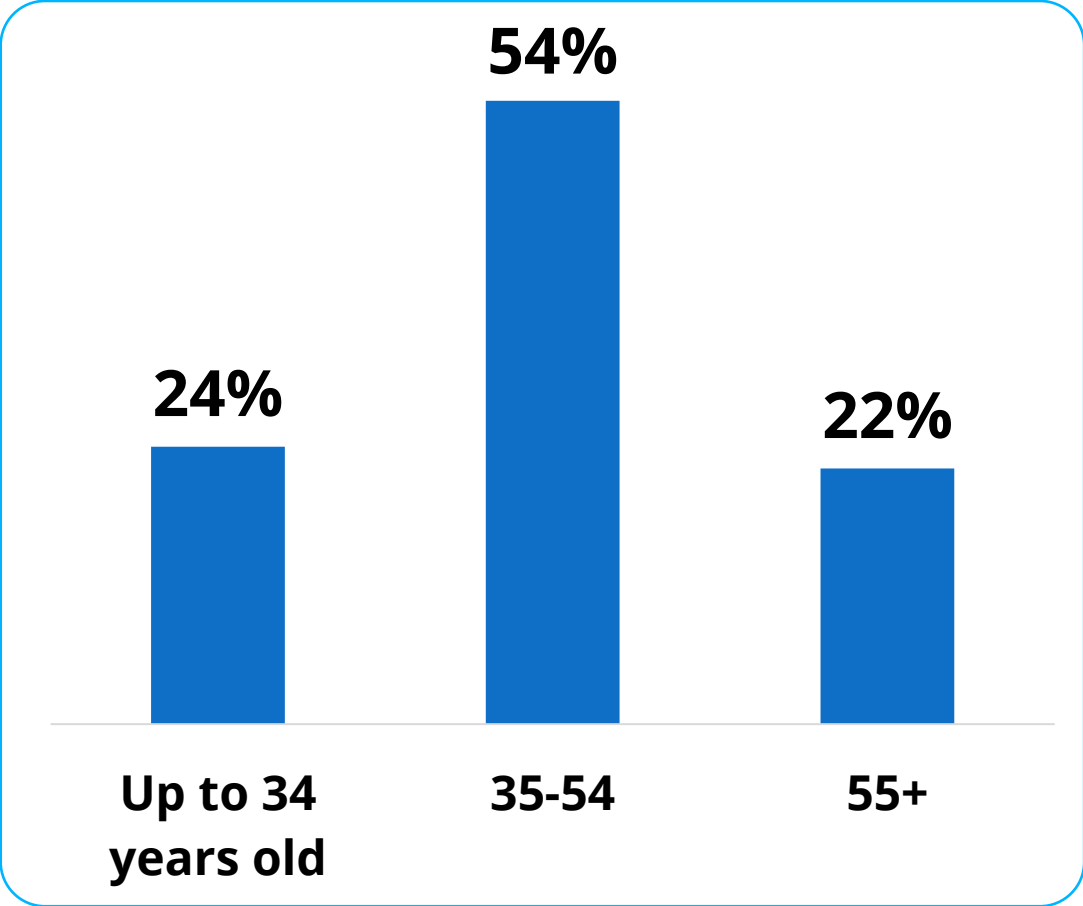
Online Survey "Assessment and Perception of Azores Residents' Travel Plans "

Implementation period: June 2020

Sample size: 705 residentes in the Azores.

Age and Gender

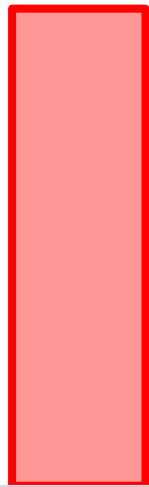
PROFILE OF THE SURVEYED RESIDENTS



Impact of COVID-19 on Azorean Resident's Holiday Plans

Did the COVID-19 crisis affect the course of any trip you were taking?

51,1%



No

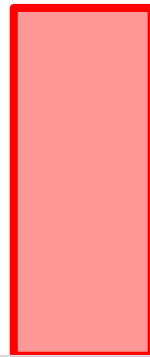
48,9%



Yes

Because of COVID-19, did you cancel or have to reschedule any trip you had already scheduled?

39,1%



No

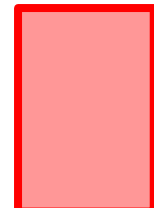
60,9%



Yes

Because of COVID-19, did you change your vacation plans for 2020?

25,9%



No

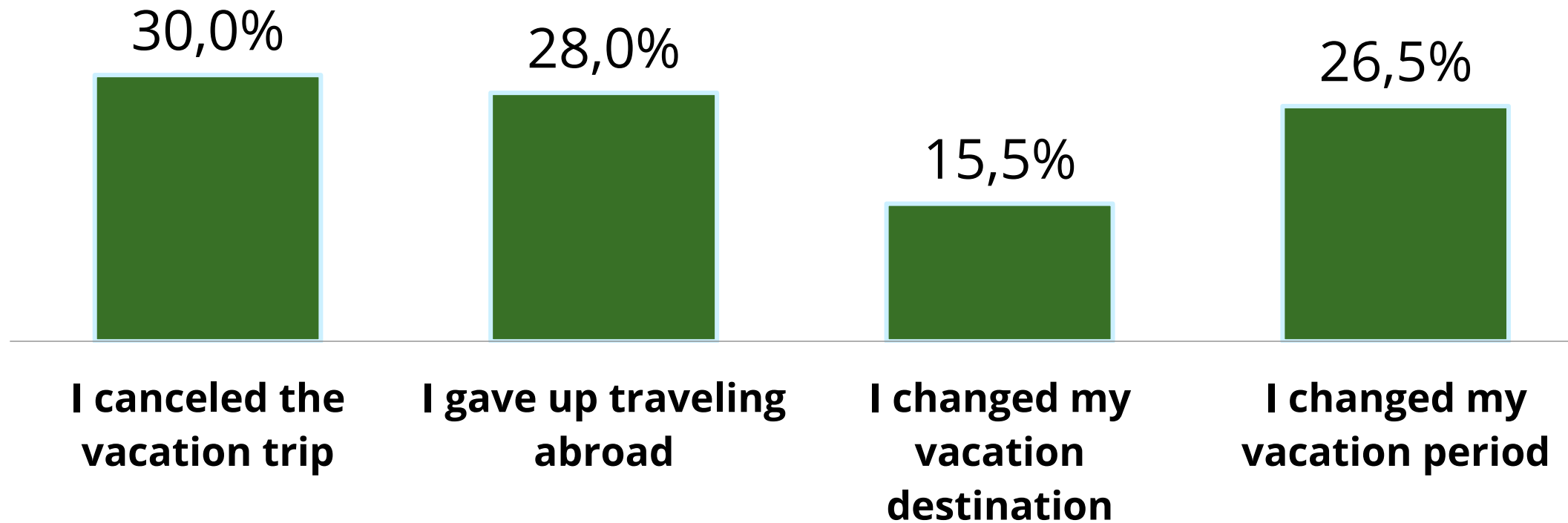
74,1%



Yes

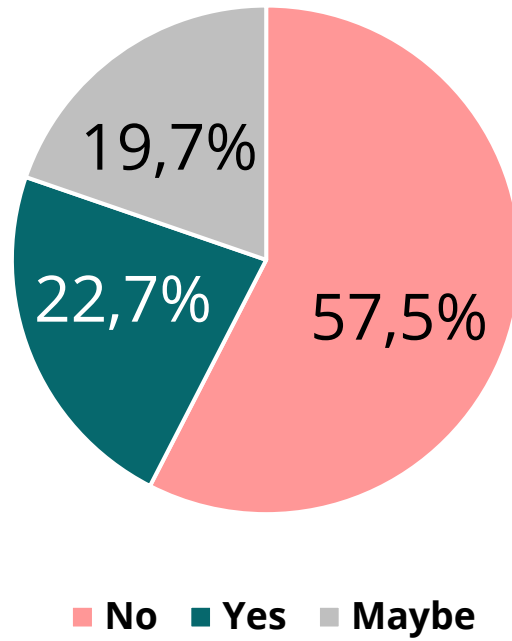
Impact of COVID-19 on Azorean Resident's Holiday Plans

What has changed in your 2020 vacation plans?

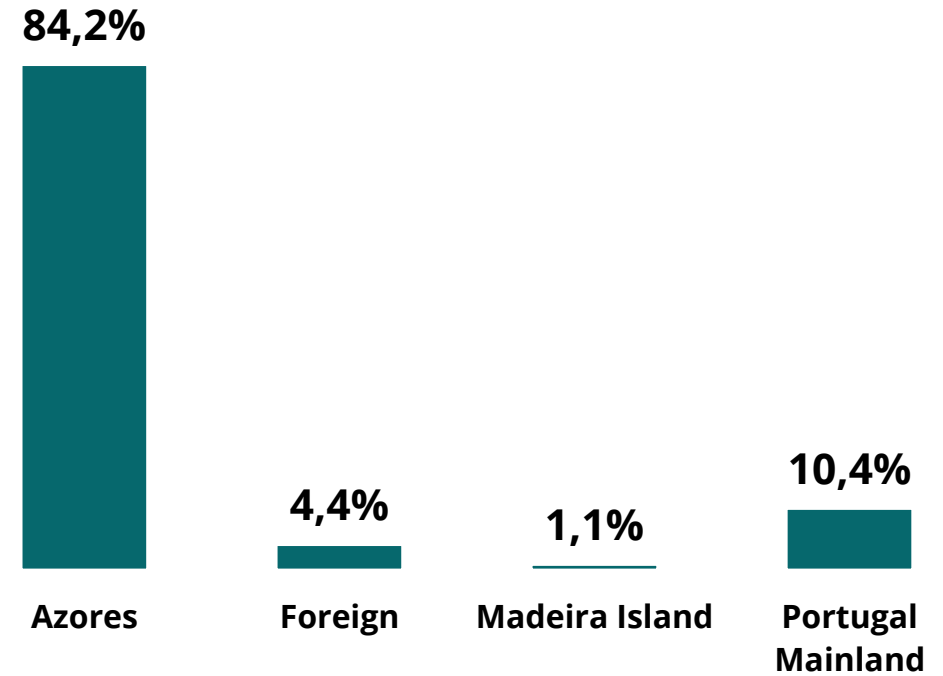


Impact of COVID-19 on Azorean Resident's Holiday Plans

Are you traveling to enjoy your vacation?

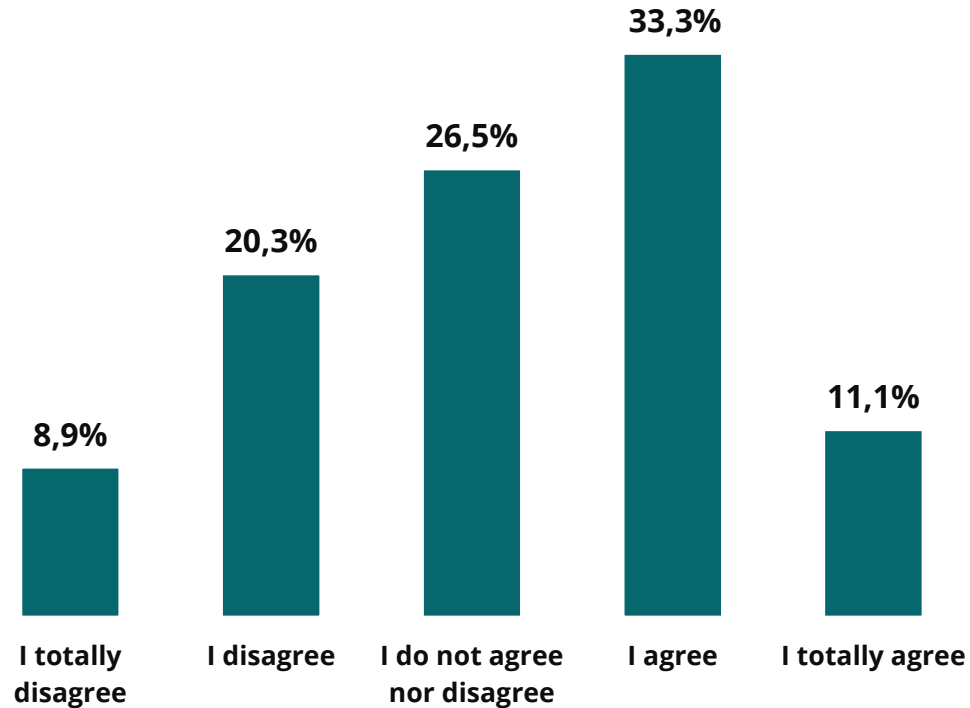


Where will the holidays be spent?

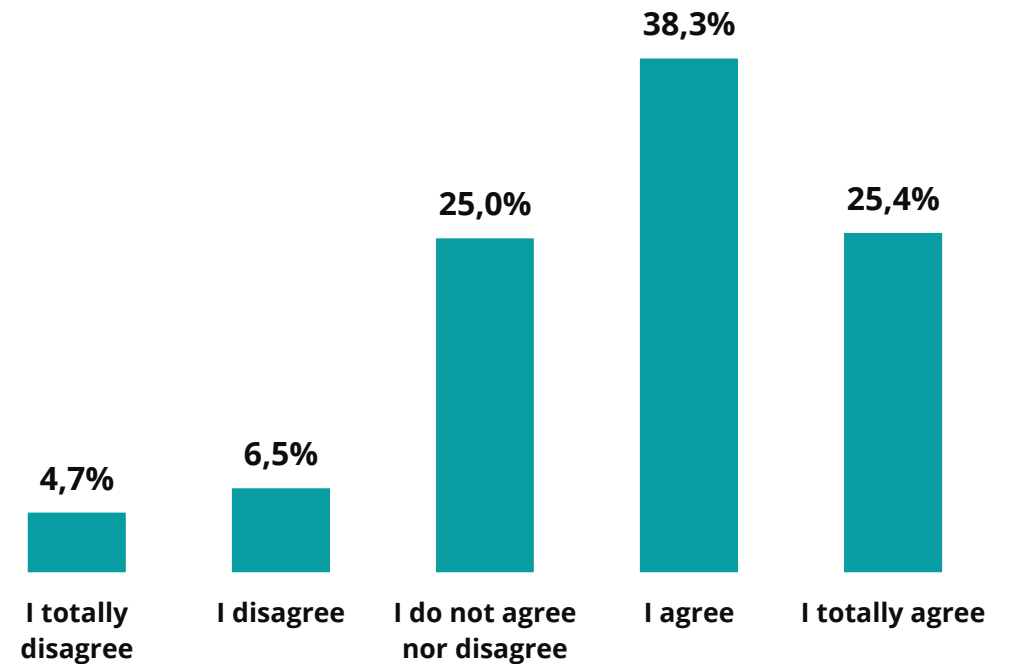


Impact of COVID-19 on Azorean Resident's Holiday Plans

Will I travel relaxed if the use of masks and visors is widespread at the destination?

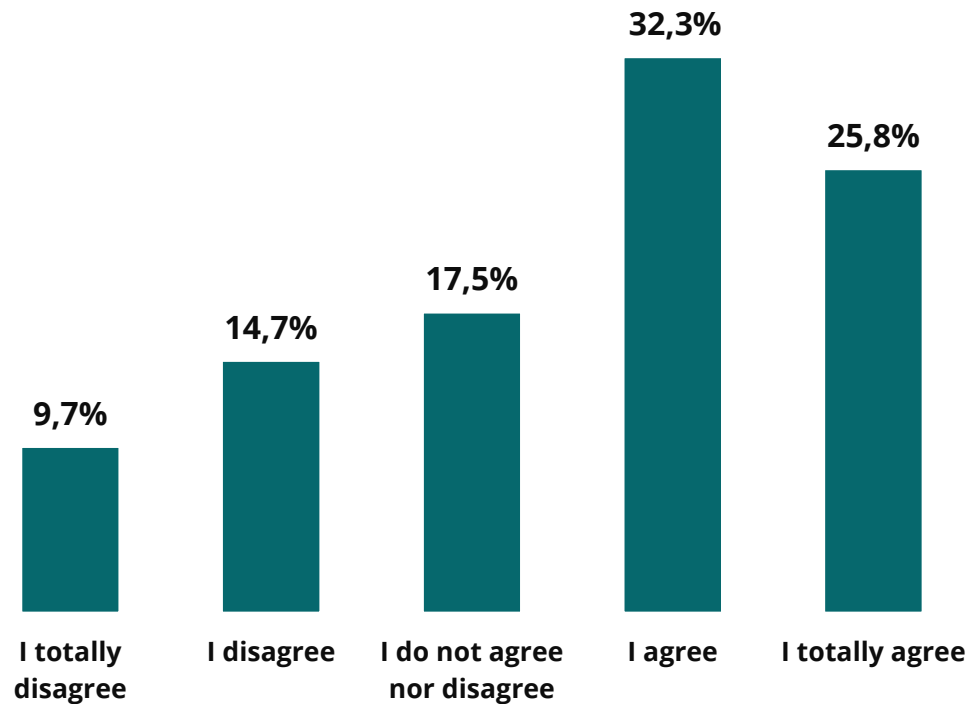


I will trust and choose a tourist accommodation that has a "Clean&Safe" sanitary and hygiene seal

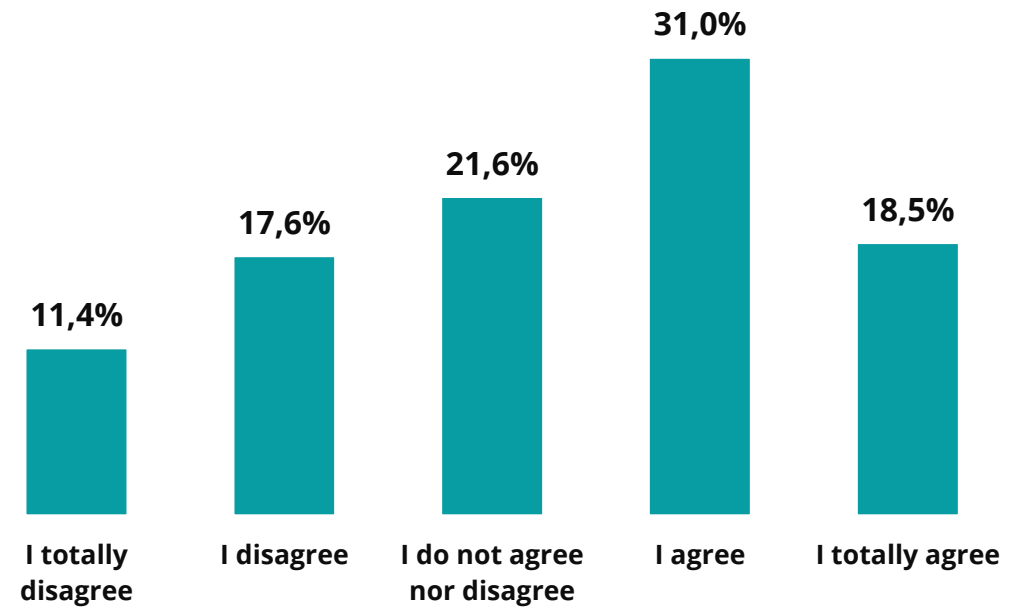


Impact of COVID-19 on Azorean Resident's Holiday Plans

COVID-19 came to show that we should avoid highly frequented tourist destinations

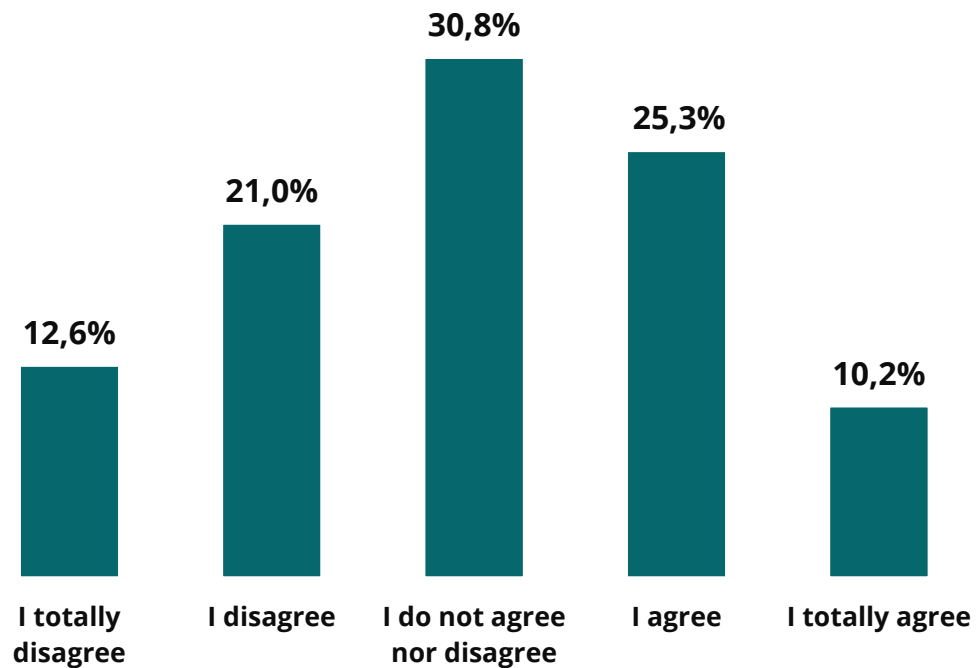


COVID-19 came to show that we should avoid taking holidays during peak holiday periods with a high demand

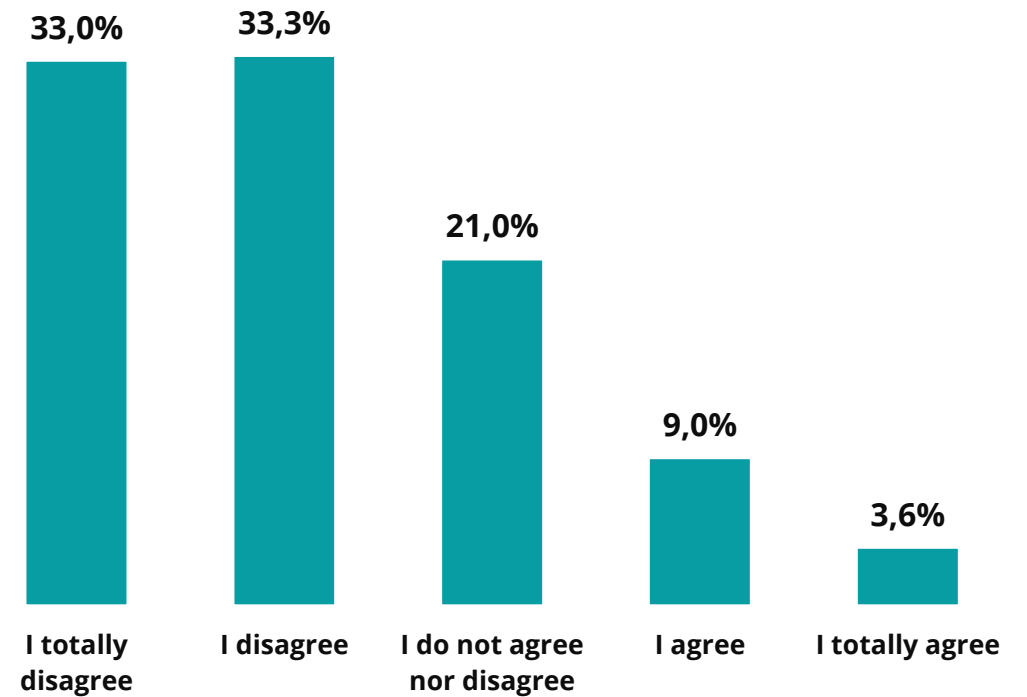


Impact of COVID-19 on Azorean Resident's Holiday Plans

COVID-19 came to show that the best thing is to take holidays in the countryside

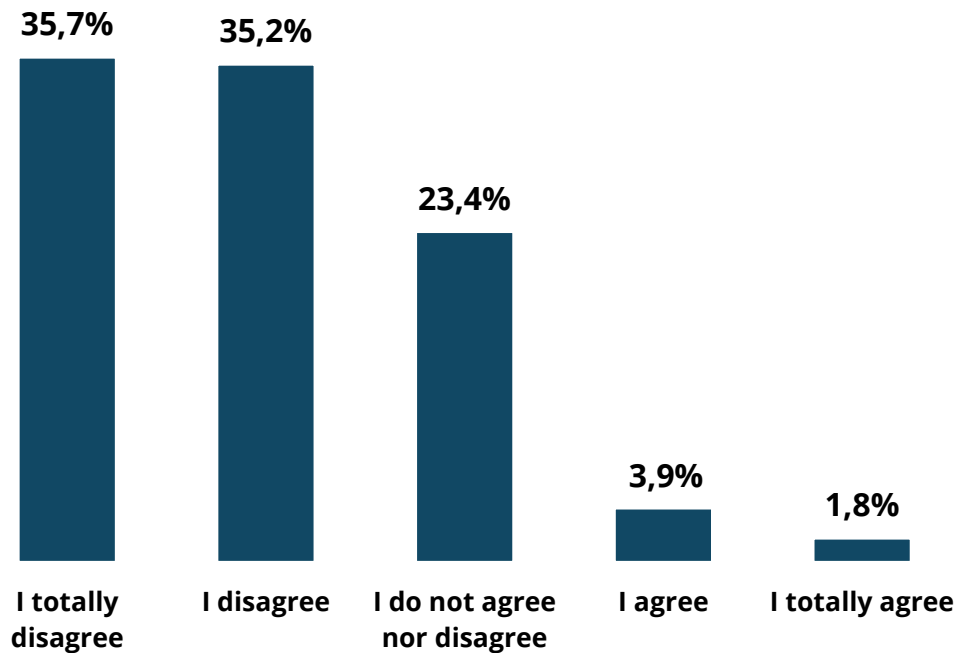


In the future I will avoid air travel

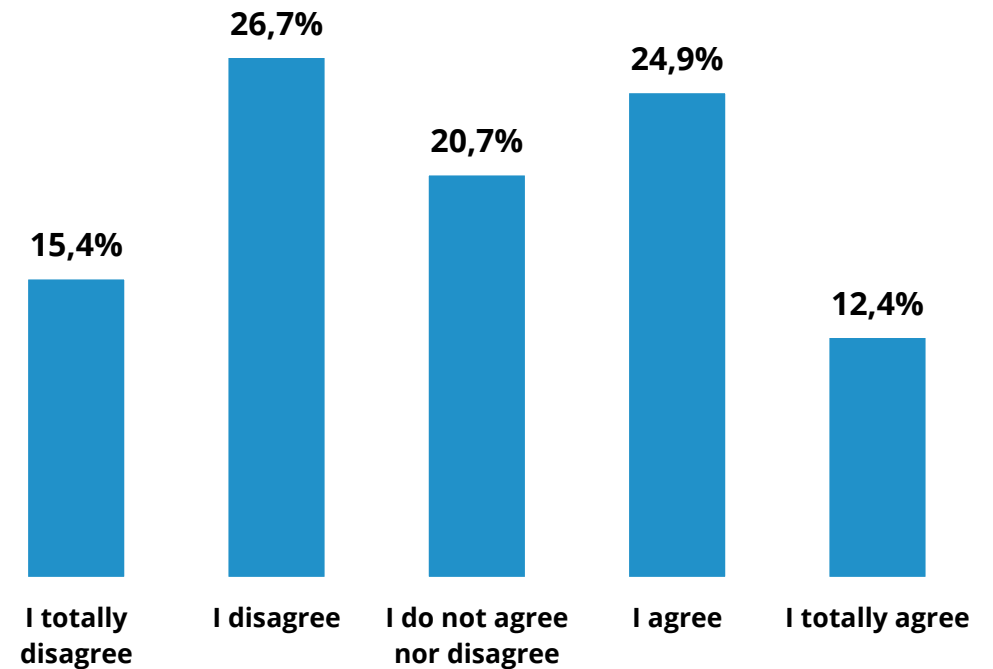


Impact of COVID-19 on Azorean Resident's Holiday Plans

Will you spend more on holidays in 2020 than on holidays in 2019?

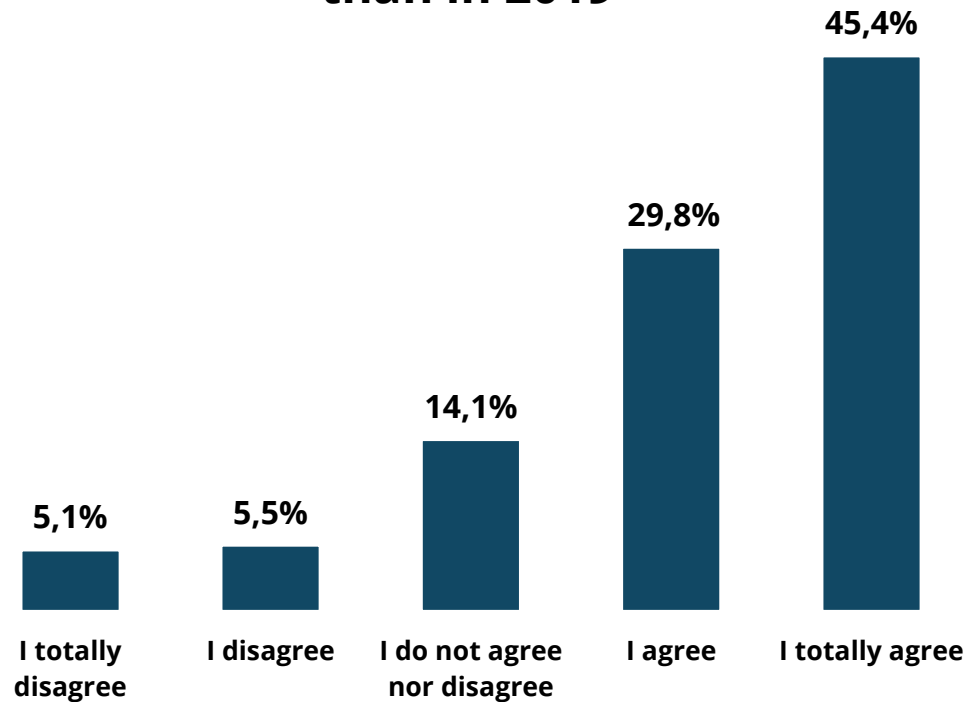


The 2020 holidays will be shorter than in 2019?

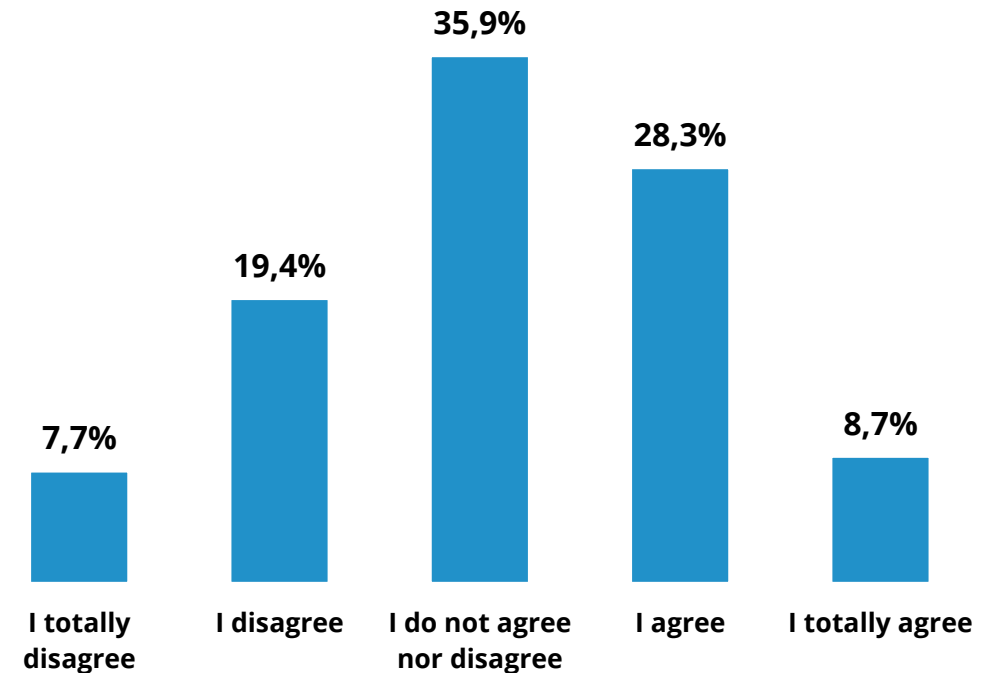


Impact of COVID-19 on Azorean Resident's Holiday Plans

I will travel abroad less in 2020 than in 2019

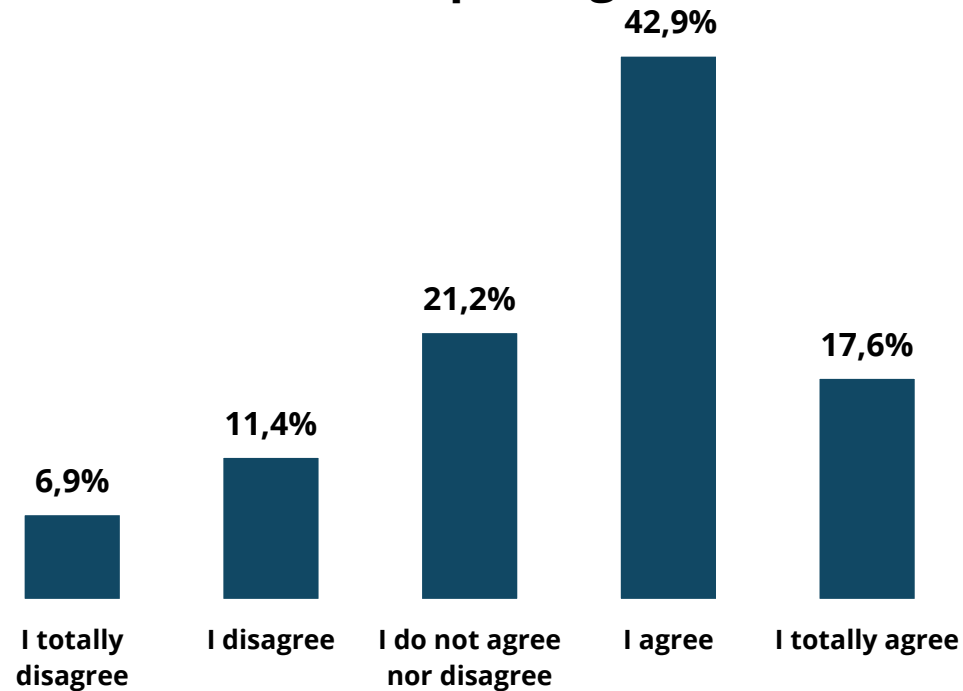


I usually choose the cheapest holiday destinations

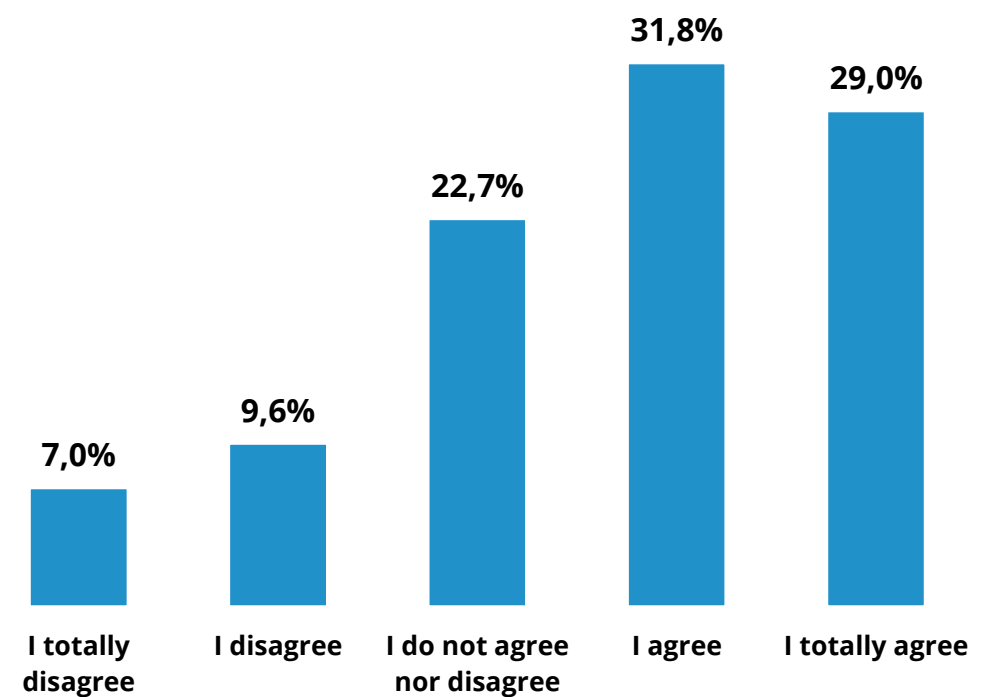


Impact of COVID-19 on Azorean Resident's Holiday Plans

In order to save money, I usually use cheaper flights

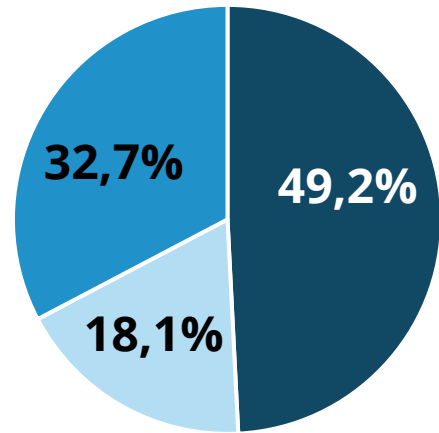


I will avoid long-distance air travel



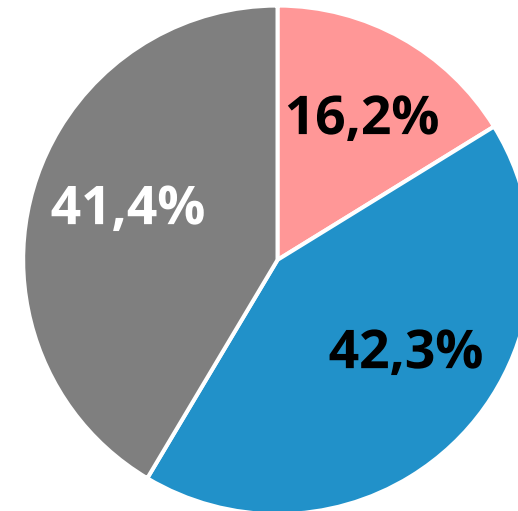
Impact of COVID-19 on Azorean Resident's Holiday Plans

Is the "Clean & Safe" seal important to you?



- When choosing accommodation and restaurants
- When choosing tourist activities
- When choosing the destination to visit

Are you willing to pay more for a safe vacation?



- No
- Yes
- Maybe

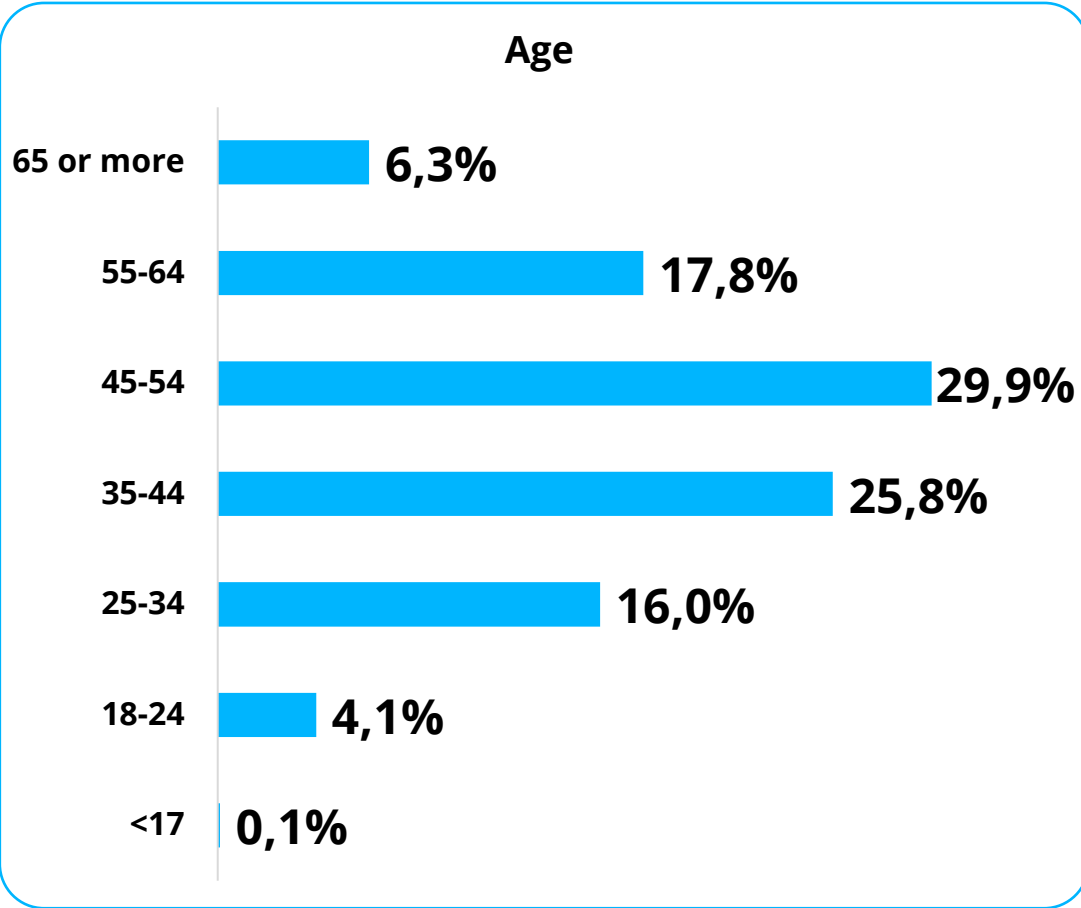
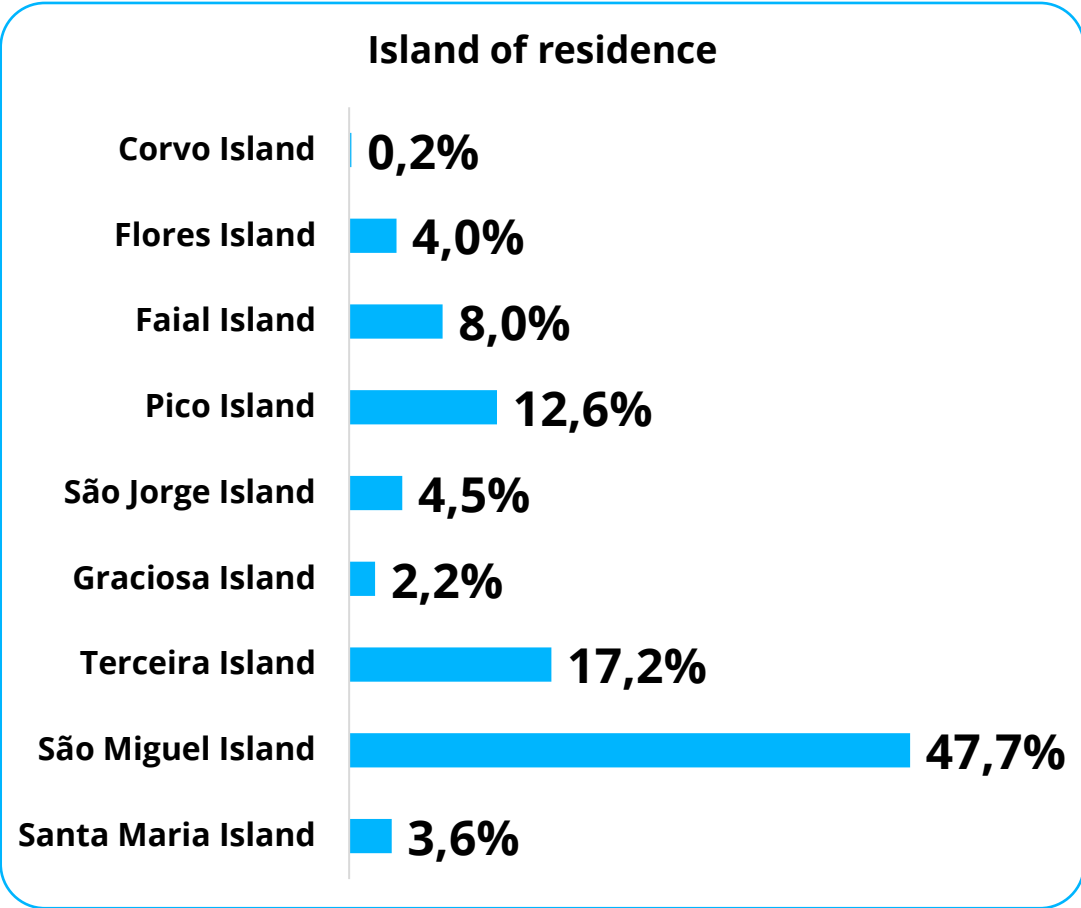
Online Survey "Residents' Opinion on the Impacts of Tourism in the Azores "

Implementation Period: March to July 2021

Sample size: 994 (residents)

Surveyed Residents' Profile

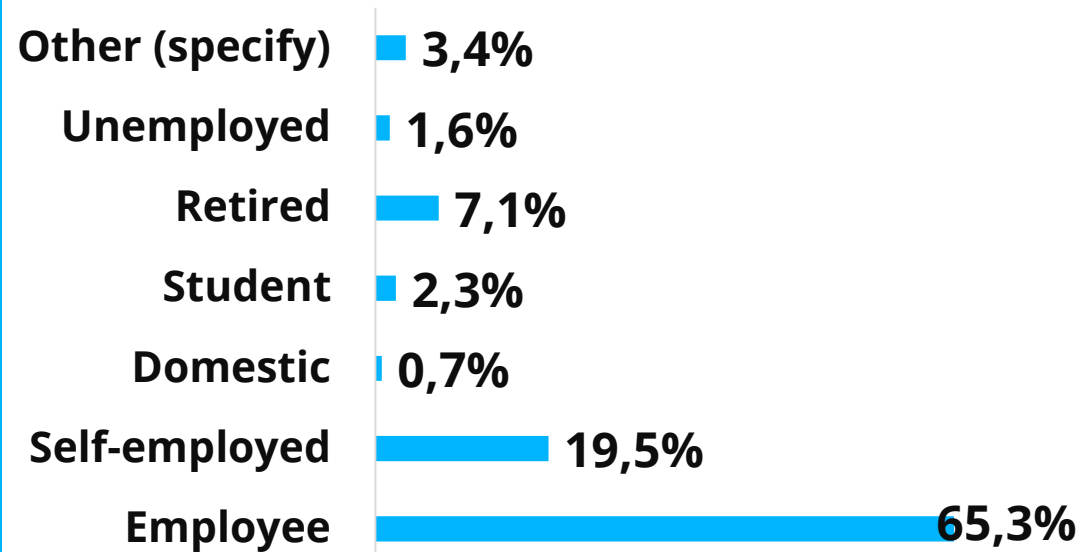
CHARACTERIZATION OF RESPONDENTS



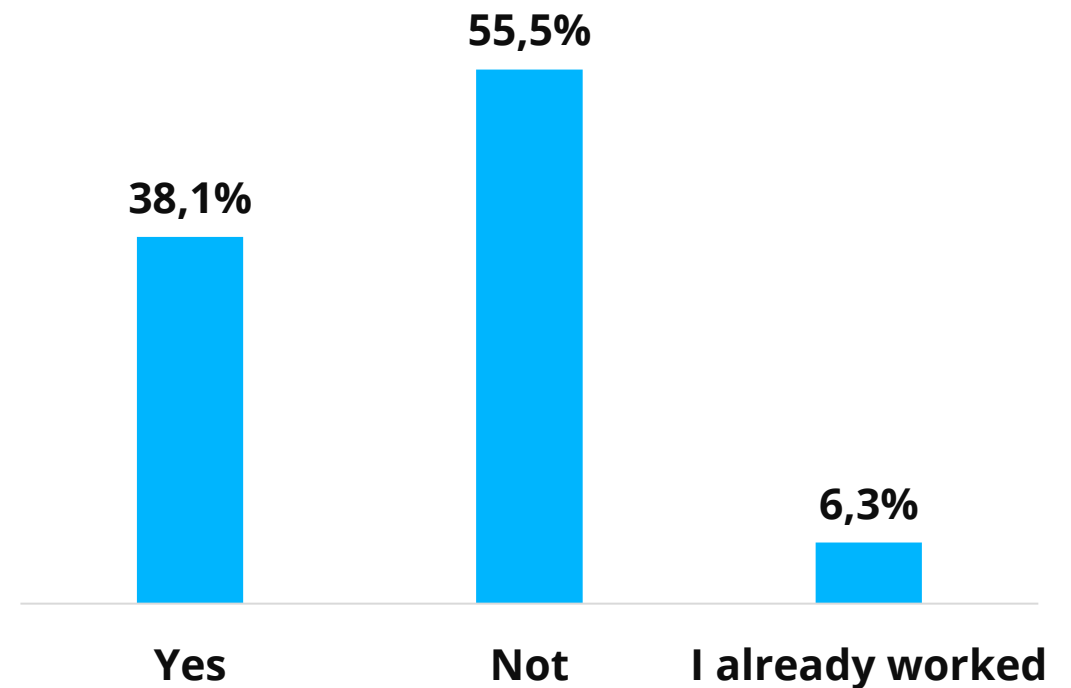
Surveyed Residents' Profile

CHARACTERIZATION OF RESPONDENTS

Professional situation

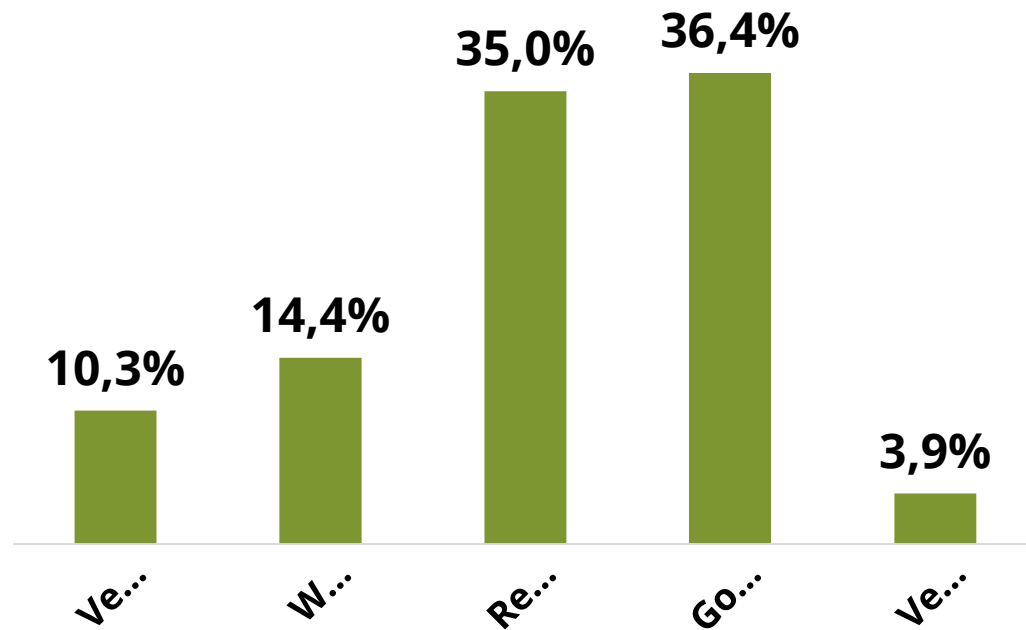


Do you work in the tourism sector?

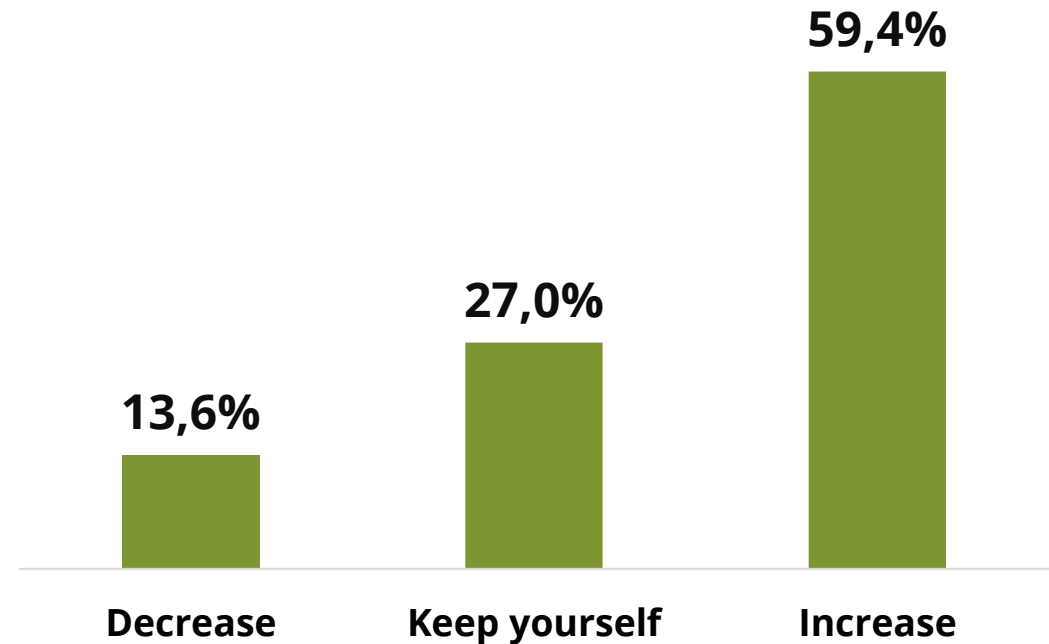


Opinion and Satisfaction of the Surveyed Azorean Residents in Relation to Tourism

What is the current level of tourism development in the region?



In the coming years, tourism in the region will...



The development of tourism contributes to...

Increase residents' incomes
76,8%

1

Create jobs for residents
93,1%

3

Develop local/typical economic activities
88,2%

5

2

Attract more investment to the Azores
86,8%

4

Improving public infrastructure (e.g. road communication routes, sports/cultural facilities)
62,9%

6

That the money spent by tourists/visitors stays in the Azores
84,3%

Positive Economic Impacts of Tourism

The development of tourism contributes to...

Increase the overall level of land and house prices (to buy or rent)

79,4%

1

Increase prices of goods/products/services (e.g. food, clothing, transport)

59,9%

3

Increase the price of access to cultural and natural attractions

61,7%

5

2

Excessively increase the supply of local accommodation (e.g. hostels, apartments, houses, homestays)

70,1%

4

Increase the price of access to cultural and natural attractions

55,4%

Negative Economic Impacts of Tourism

* % - AGREE

The development of tourism contributes to...

Increase the quality of life of the population

57,7%

1

Increasing public safety

35,5%

3

2

Improving urban infrastructure (e.g. streets, sidewalks, car parks)

63,9%



**Positive Social
Impacts of Tourism**

The development of tourism contributes to...

Increase crime and acts of vandalism
17,6%

1

Decrease socialization/conviviality
among residents in public spaces (e.g.
gardens, squares)
14,6%

3

Increase stress, disturb the calm and
tranquility of the community (e.g. the
presence of tourists/visitors in
churches or restaurants)
30,1%

5

2

Increase alcohol and drug use
18,8%

4

Disrupt the daily life of the resident
population (e.g. robberies, noise,
inappropriate behavior of
tourists/visitors, garbage, traffic
complications)
25,8%

6

Make it difficult for residents to access
equipment and leisure facilities
38,3%

Negative Social Impacts of Tourism

* % - AGREE

The development of tourism contributes to...

1 Increase the offer of cultural events (e.g. parties, concerts and other artistic events)

17,6%

3 Valuing intangible heritage (e.g. traditions, festivities, gastronomy)

14,6%

2 The conservation and restoration of built heritage (e.g. monuments, houses)

18,8%

4 Improving cultural infrastructure (e.g. exhibition and fair spaces)

25,8%

Positive Cultural Impacts of Tourism

* % - AGREE

The development of tourism contributes to...

1 Diminish the authenticity of typical products on my island

17,7%

1

2

The loss of cultural identity on my island

12,6%



Negative Cultural Impacts of Tourism

The development of tourism contributes to...

Conserve natural heritage / natural resources

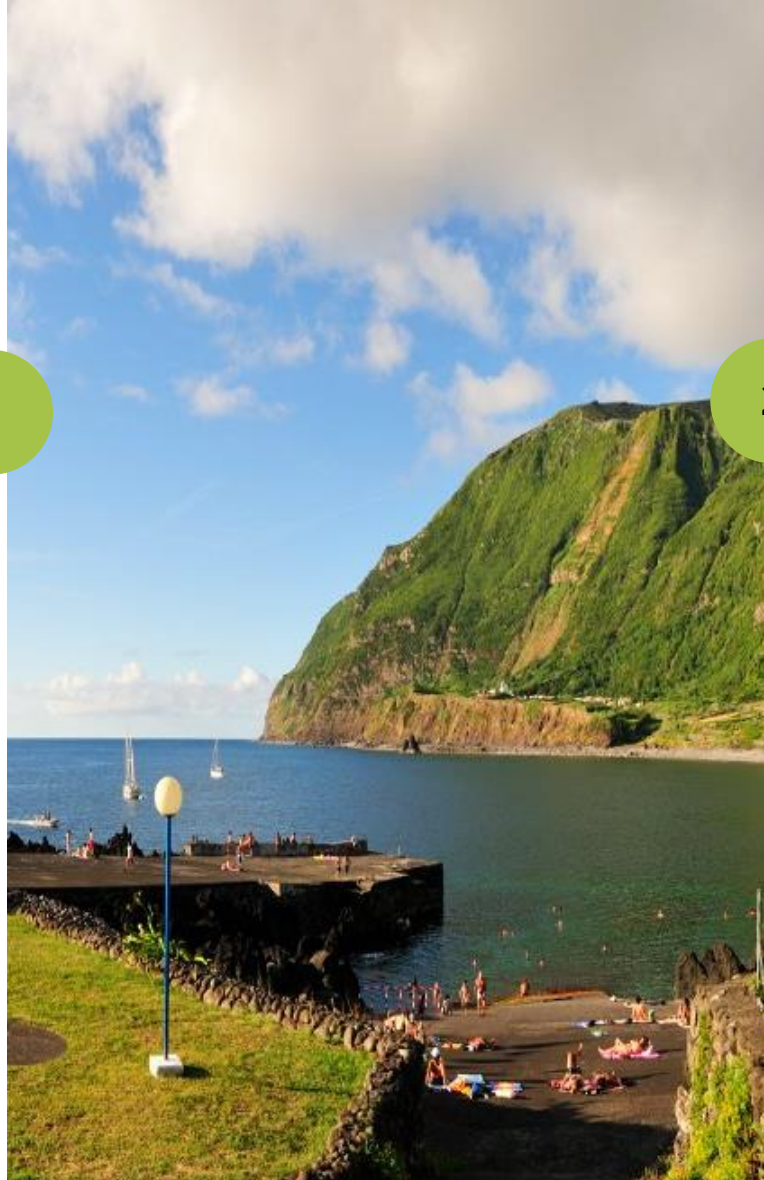
62,9%

1

2

Increasing environmental awareness of the population

62,4%



**Positive
Environmental
Impacts of Tourism**

The development of tourism contributes to...

Degrade the natural environment

38,3%

1

Increase pollution levels (e.g. air, waste/waste, noise, water, public space)

50,1%

3

2

Occupy the natural areas that residents use (e.g. beaches, protected areas)

42,9%



Negative Environmental Impacts of Tourism

* % - AGREE

Degree of Participation in the Tourism Development Process

Participation					
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Ever
I try to be informed about the investments in tourism of my island	2,4%	9,4%	32,1%	36,3%	19,9%
I get involved in decision making on my island's tourism development processes	23,7%	29,2%	31,6%	11,8%	3,7%
I participate / would like to actively participate in tourism planning on my island	13,1%	15,7%	36,7%	22,4%	12,1%
I get the right information to understand the tourist development on my island	12,2%	31,3%	34,1%	16,4%	5,9%
I get involved in monitoring the development of tourism on the island of my island	20,4%	28,8%	28,9%	16,8%	5,0%

Residents Suggestions' for Improving tourism in the Azores



Invest more in transport and the quality of the services provided, value new projects and concepts that integrate pillars of sustainability, associated with nature, culture, heritage and above all to the individual value of each island;



Insist on sustainable tourism measures (not only in the environmental field, but also in the cultural and social field);



Not to allow the operation of low-cost airlines and the construction of large tourist equipment, including large hotels, which would result in the destitution / wear of what constitutes the greatest attraction of the islands: its natural beauty, its typicality and authenticity;



Urgently improve air and sea accessibility



Do not let it become a mass tourism destination



Online Survey “Impact of COVID-19 on Residents’ Activities and Vacation Intentions”

Implementation Period: March to July 2021

Sample Size: 994 residents in the Azores



Activities that Residents Feel Comfortable Participating In

IMPACT OF COVID-19

85,3%

Participate in outdoor activities with friends /family

64,3%

Go to the local market

56,8%

Shopping on commercial surfaces (hypermarkets/supermarkets)

51,8%

Restaurants frequency

43,3%

Enjoy local accommodation (spend the night, the weekend)

37,1%

Camping

35,9%

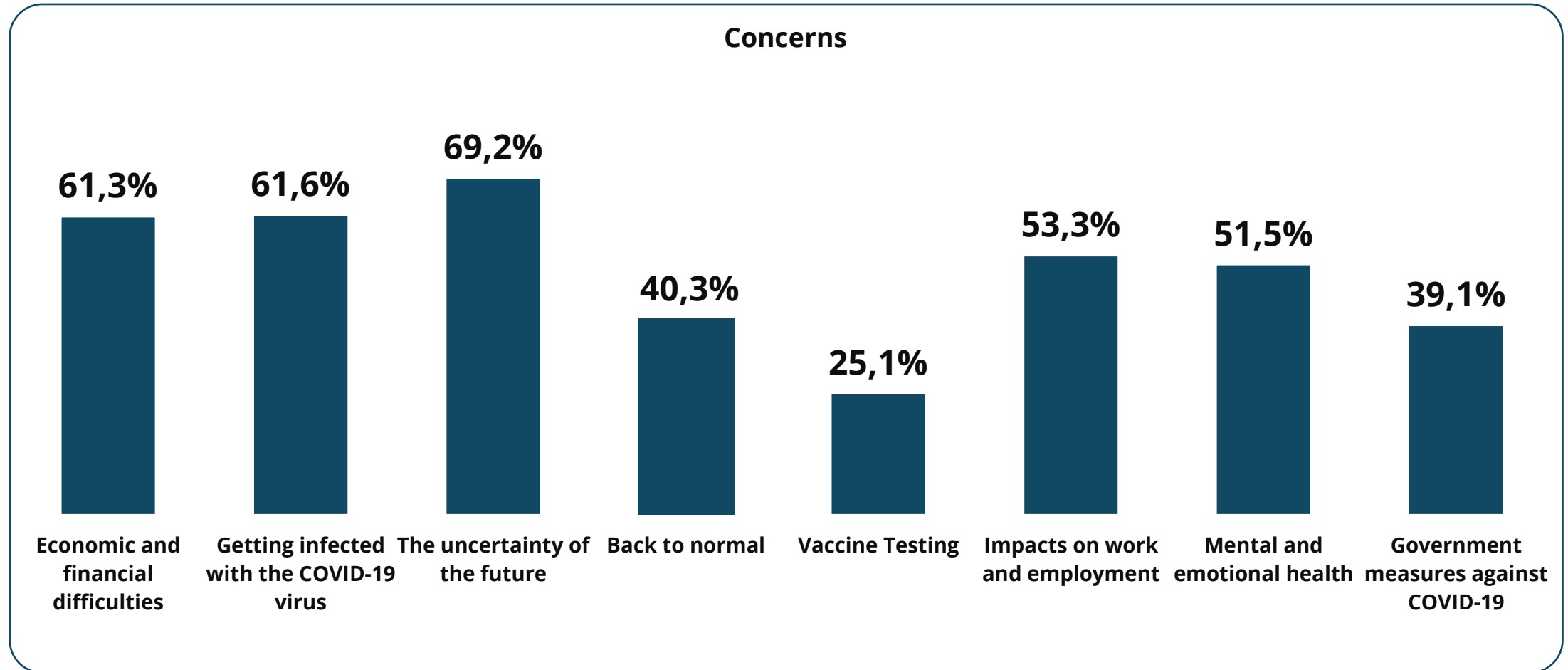
Participate in outdoor events (festivals, sporting events, etc.)

11,6%

Frequency of nightlife venues (bars, nightclubs, etc.)

Major Residents' Concerns Resulting from the Pandemic

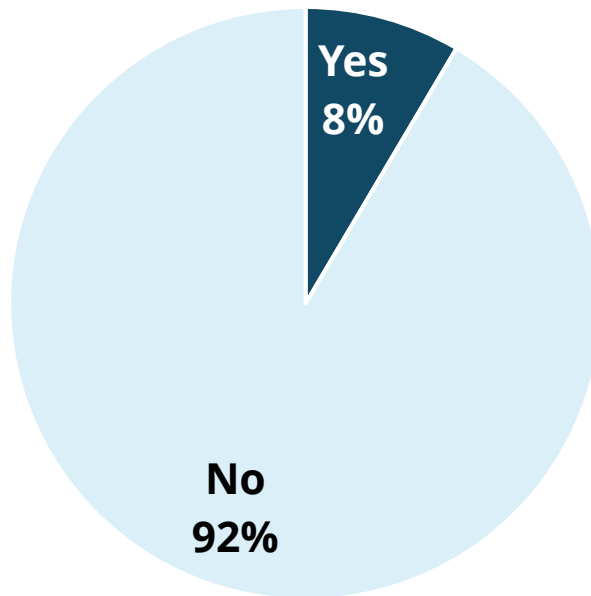
IMPACT OF COVID-19



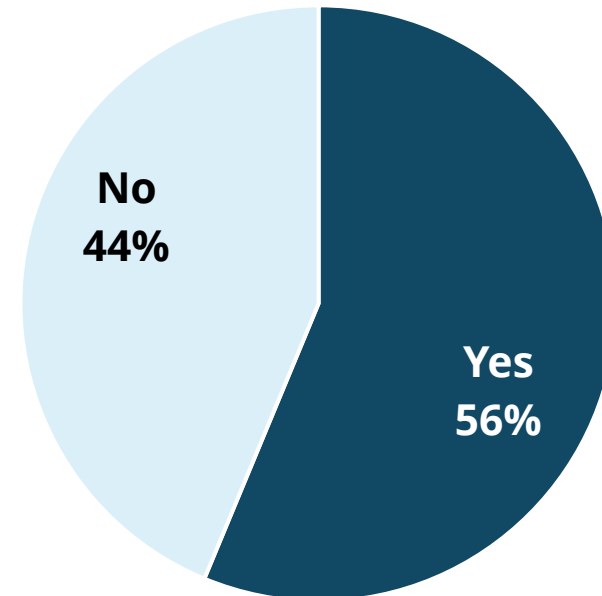
How the COVID-19 Pandemic will Affect Residents' Upcoming Holidays?

INTENÇÕES DE FÉRIAS

I will travel abroad



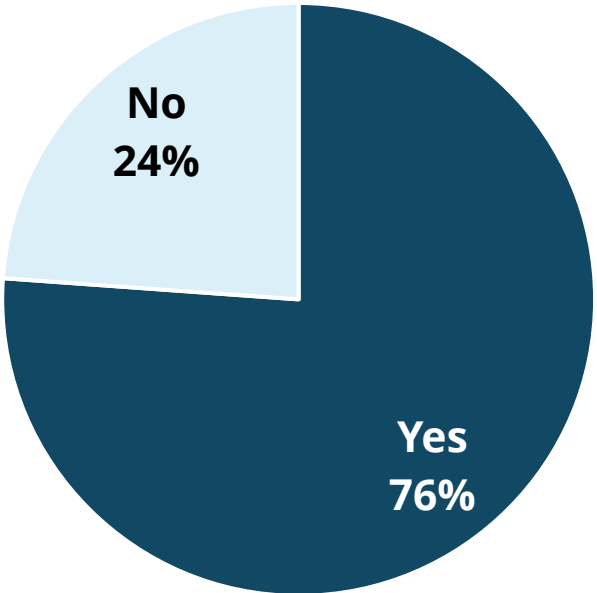
I will travel to Portugal Mainland or another island in the Azores



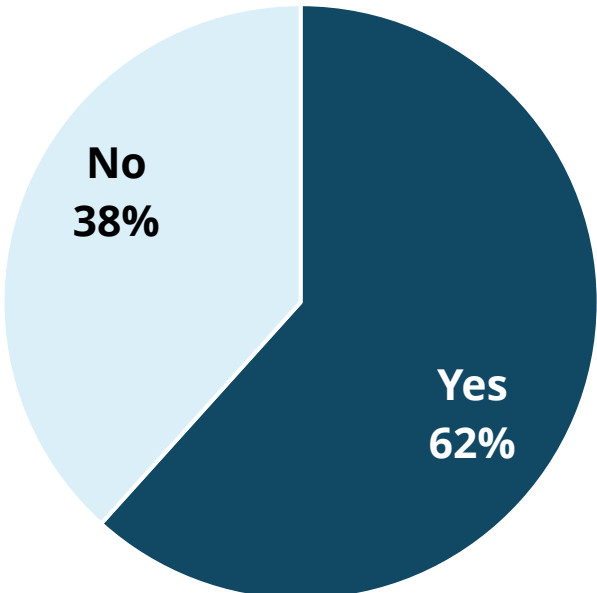
How the COVID-19 Pandemic will Affect Residents' Upcoming Holidays?

HOLIDAY INTENTIONS

I will spend the holidays on my island of residence



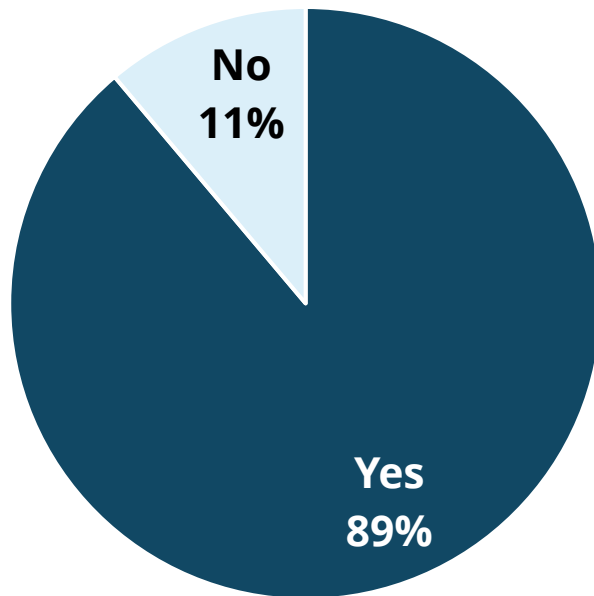
I will opt for establishments with the "Clean&Safe" seal



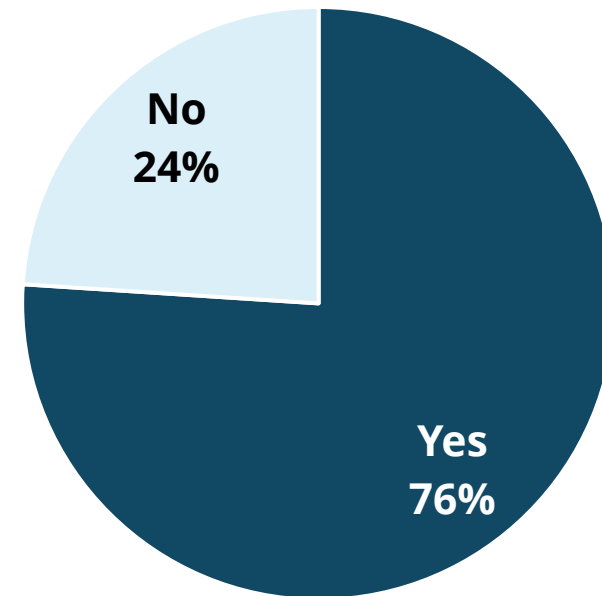
How the COVID-19 Pandemic will Affect Residents' Upcoming Holidays?

HOLIDAY INTENTIONS

I will spend more time in nature



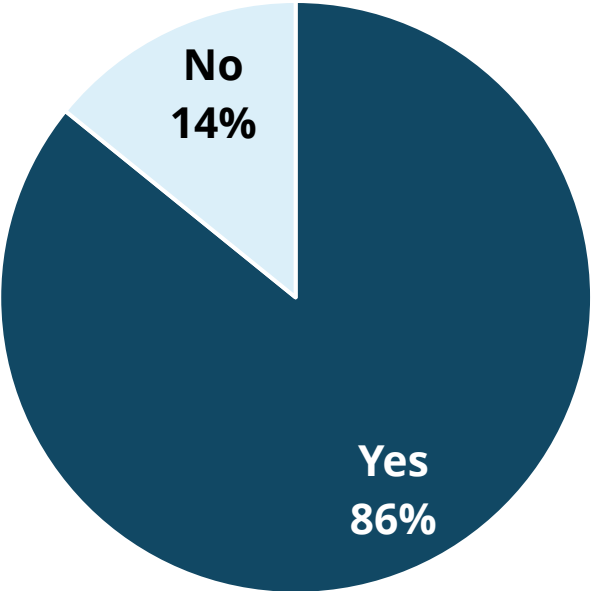
I will participate in outdoor activities and entertainment



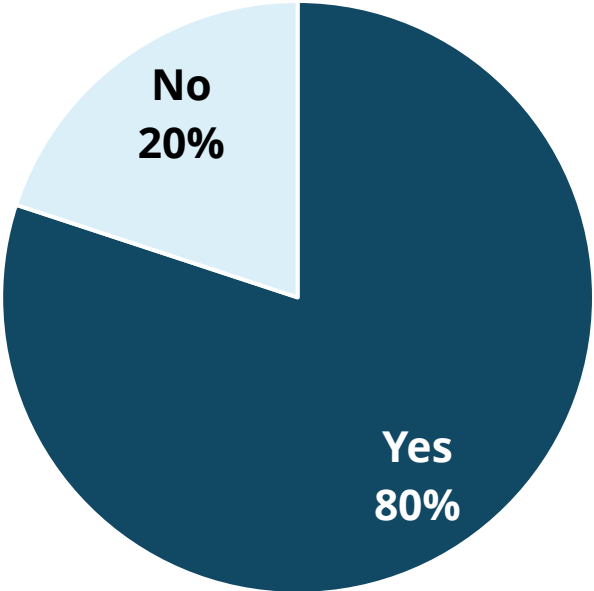
How the COVID-19 Pandemic will Affect Residents' Upcoming Holidays?

HOLIDAY INTENTIONS

I will look for attractions and activities that respect social distancing



I will spend less on the 2021 vacation than in previous years

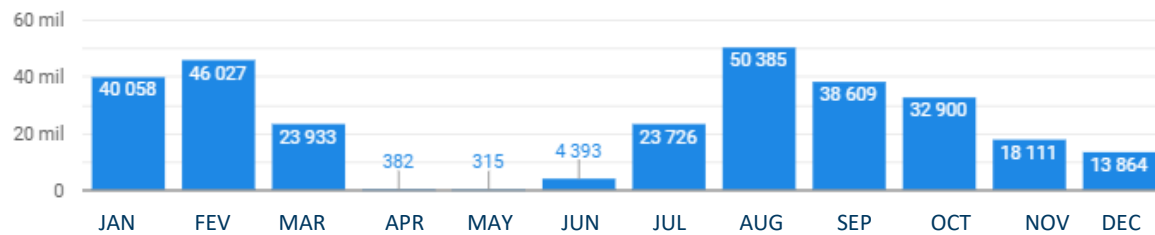




Indicators

Seasonality

Graph 1. Evolution of the number of guests in the Azores destination, throughout the year 2020



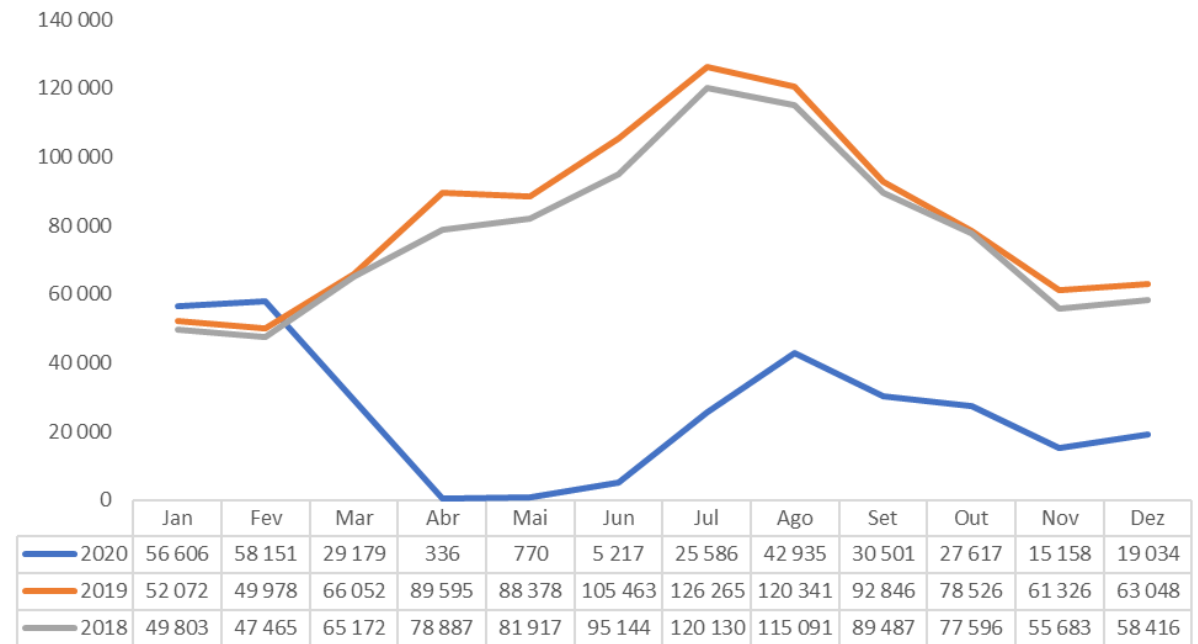
Fonte: OTA, Estatística

Seasonality rate in 2020 - 37.4%

Seasonality rate in 2019 - 35.4%

Seasonality rate in 2015 - 38.3% *Arrivals

Graph 2. Comparison of the number of arrivals in the Azores destination (2018 to 2020)



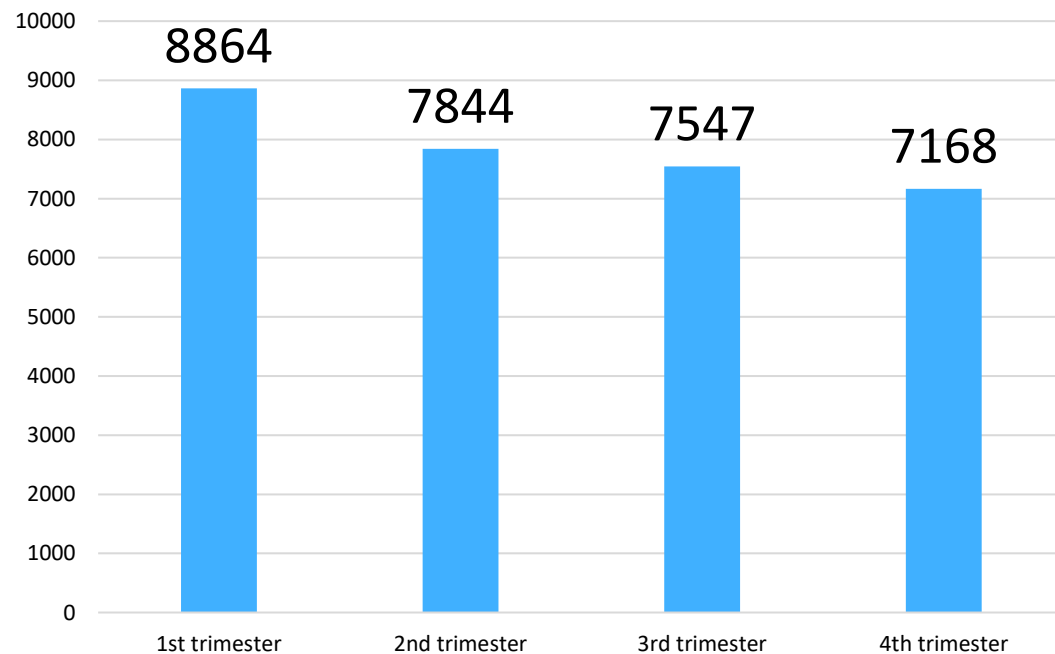
Fonte: SREA, Passageiros Desembarcados



OBSERVATÓRIO do TURISMO dos Açores

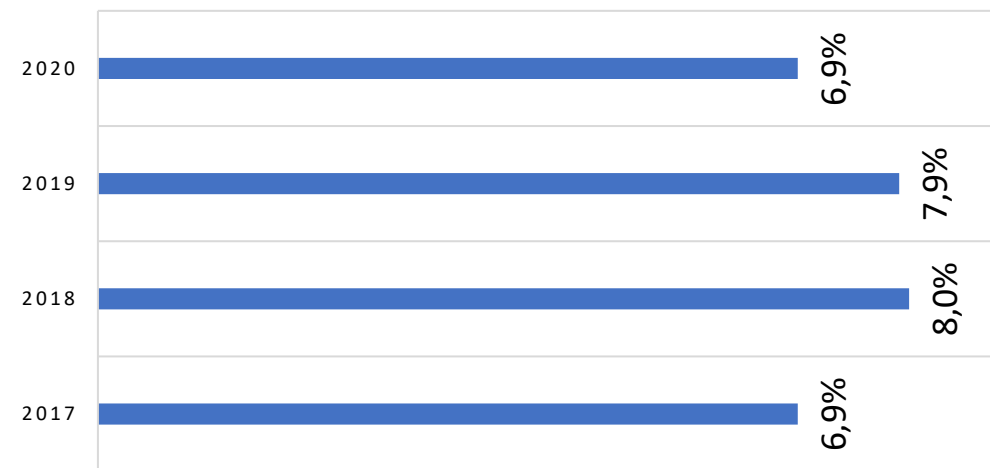
Employment in Tourism

**Graph 3. Total employees in Tourism *
Accommodation and Catering (2020)**



Fonte: SREA, Mercado de Trabalho

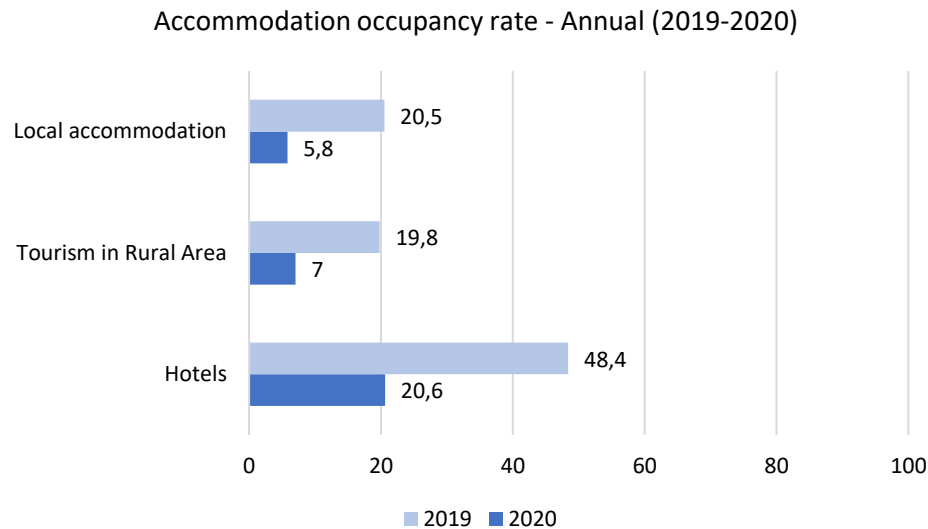
**Table one. Representativeness of the population
employed in Accommodation, catering and the like, in
relation to the total number of employees in the
Azores (2017 to 2020)**



OBSERVATÓRIO do TURISMO
dos Açores

Economic Impacts of Tourism on the Azores Destination

Graph 4. Occupancy rate in the tourist accommodation of the Azores destination (2019 and 2020)



Fonte: SREA, Turismo

The Azores Tourism Satellite Account - Main results (2016-2019)

It is estimated that, in 2019, the GVA generated by tourism has grown 15.4% in nominal terms, reaching 10.8% of the GVA of the regional economy. It is estimated that in 2018, tourism consumption (Tourism Consumption in the Economic Territory) had a contribution to GDP of 18.1%.

GVA generated by Tourism

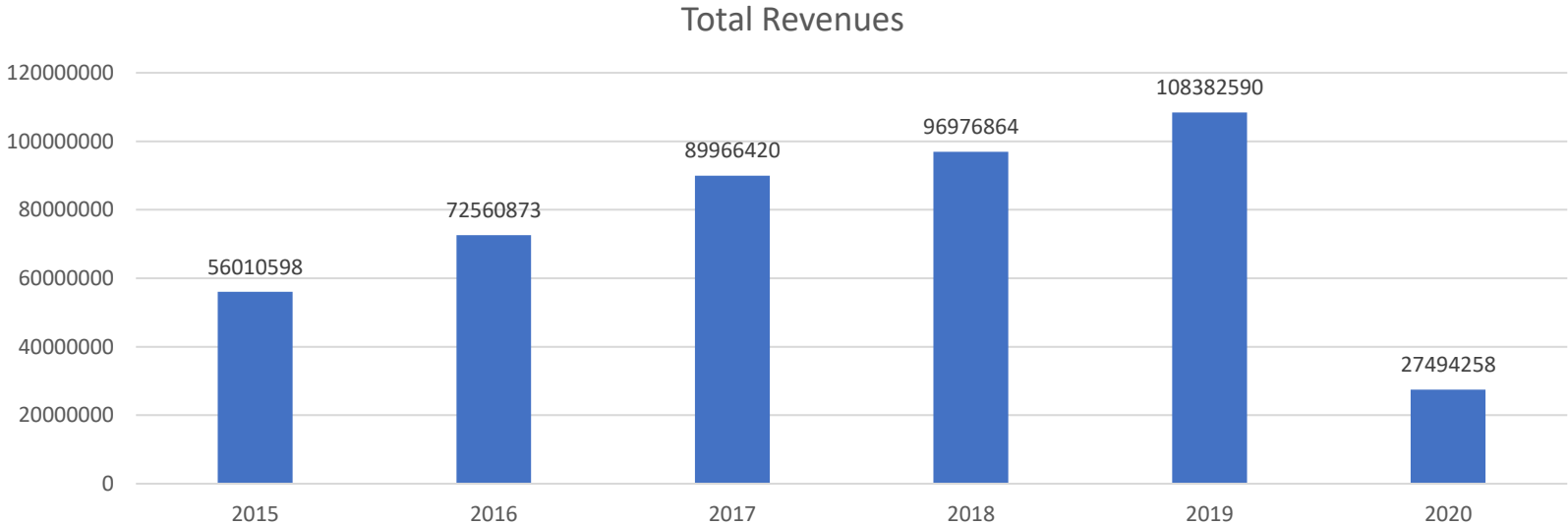
The Gross Value Added generated by Tourism (VABGT) is estimated at 360.6 million euros in 2018, reaching 9.7% of the regional economy's GVA. The activities that most contributed to the VABGT were hotels and similar establishments (40.2%), followed by restaurants and similar (19.7%) and air transport (12.0%)

Fonte: SREA, Conta Satélite



Economic Impacts of Tourism on the Azores Destination

Graph 5. Total income (all tourist accommodation)



Source: SREA, Tourism

Tourists' Satisfaction

Project "**Surveys on the Satisfaction of Tourists who Visit the Azores**", implemented continuously, since the year 2010, aims at characterizing the tourist who visits the Azores, namely at the level of his profile, satisfaction and expenditures. To this end, OTA inquires tourists residing in Mainland Portugal and Madeira, as well as in Germany, Spain and the United States (the main tourism outbound tourism markets to the Azores) , in the following three regional airports: Ponta Delgada, Lajes and Horta. The database of this survey includes about 1500 all year round annual questionnaires. Therefore it is a useful tool to guide the actions of the various public and private partners in the tourism sector of the Azores and also to develop scientific studies on regional tourism, as has been done.

The tourists who visited the Azores in the Summer IATA 2019 and Winter IATA 2020 are, in global terms:

- **Very satisfied with the offer of the destination;**
- **Have lower levels of satisfaction with transports, particularly the public transports;**
- **Very pleased with the Azorean Cultural offer;**
- **Show a high degree of satisfaction with regard to accommodation, the cleanliness of the destination and the beauty of the landscape;**
- **Choose 4/5 star hotels and are accompanied by family members;**
- **Value the opportunity to contemplate nature;**
- **Value the quality of seawater;**
- **Value the hospitality of the local community, and safety as being the main attributes of the destination;**
- **Value tourist entertainment activities such as whale watching, jeep tours and health and wellness tourism;**
- **Consider the Centre of Portugal to be the main competing destination for the Azores;**
- **Most likely would recommend the Azores destination to friends and family.**

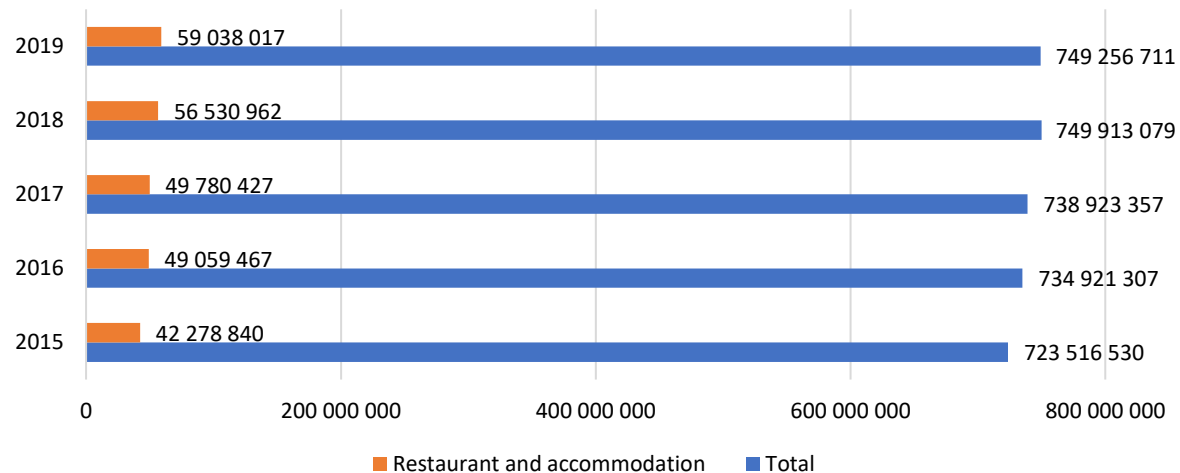
<https://otacores.com/inqueritos/>



Energy Management in the Tourism Sector

Graph 6. Electricity consumed (kWh) 2019-2015

Electricity consumption (kWh)



Fonte: PORDATA, Energia Elétrica consumida na RAA

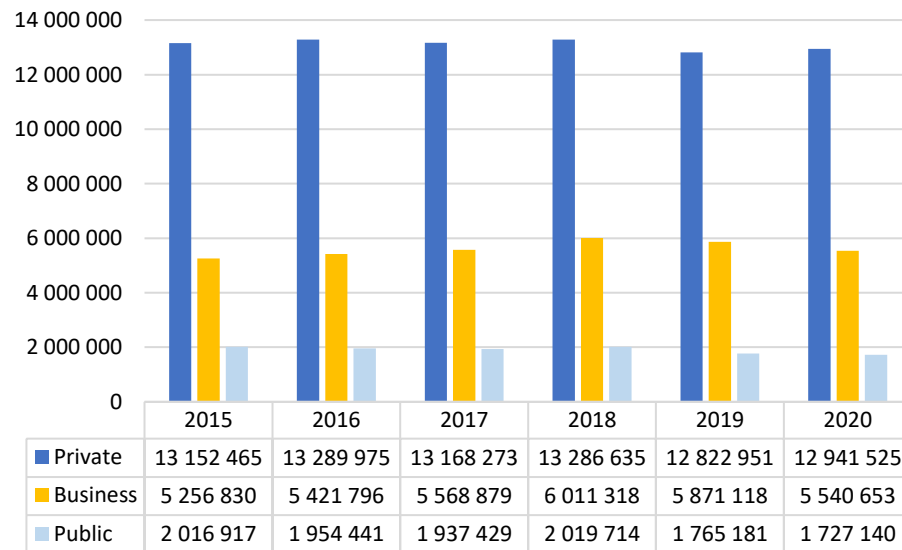
Table two. Percentage of energy consumed in the tourism sector in relation to total energy consumption in the Region

YEAR	SECTOR
2015	5,8%
2016	6,7%
2017	6,7%
2018	7,5%
2019	7,9%



Water Management in the Azores Destination

Graph 7. Total water consumed by sector (2015-2020)



Fonte: SREA, Consumo de Água

The Regulatory Authority of Water and Waste Services of the Azores (ERSARA) released the detailed results of 2019, obtained in the control of the quality of water for human consumption, which indicate that tap water in the Azores maintains the highest quality standards, recording, with 99.02%, the highest value obtained at the level of the indicator "Safe Water" in the last 10 years.

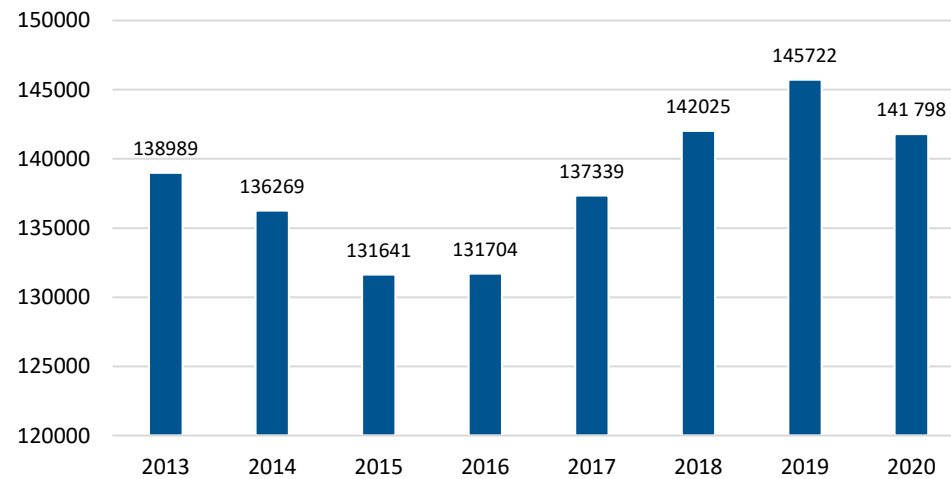
Fonte:

<http://correiosdosacores.pt/NewsDetail/ArtMID/383/ArticleID/24231/ERSAR-A-confirma-excel234ncia-da-qualidade-de-225gua-para-consumo-nos-A231ores>

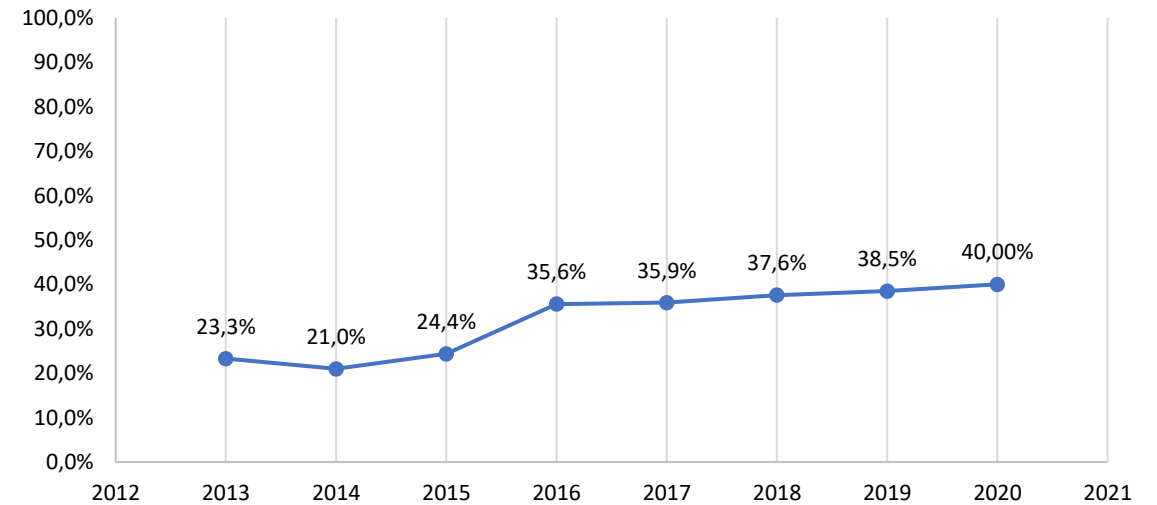


Waste Management in the Azores Destination

Graph 8. Evolution of the total waste produced in the Azores destination (2013-2020)



Graph 9. Percentage of waste recycled or reused in the Azores destination (2013-2019)



Fonte: Direção Regional do Ambiente e Alterações Climáticas, Relatório “Resíduos Urbanos”

Energy, Water and Waste Management in the Azores Tourism Sector and Sustainability

The Azores Tourism Observatory (OTA) is looking for a way to monitor monthly indicators for the management of energy, water and waste of the tourism sector.

Unfortunately, the data produced by government entities do not clearly distinguish the tourism sector from the other sectors.

However, in 2020, the OTA implemented the survey " Sustainable Practices in Azorean Tourism Companies " in order to assess existing sustainability practices.

Of a total of 636 companies:

- 94.5% of the companies make selective separation of waste;
- 72.9% of companies implement measures to reduce the volume of waste produced;
- 56.0% of companies raise customers' awareness of water savings;
- 70.6% of companies implement measures to reduce energy consumption;
- 29.9% of companies use alternative/renewable energy;
- 88.6% of companies adopt purchasing criteria that take into account "environmentally friendly" products;
- 88,8% ...

<https://otacores.com/inquerito/praticas-sustentaveis-no-sector-turistico-regional/>



OBSERVATÓRIO do TURISMO
dos Açores

Inclusive Tourism - Tourism Sector

The Azores Tourism Observatory in the survey on " Sustainable Practices in Azorean Tourism Companies " included questions on inclusive tourism. This market segment is constantly evolving. Here comes the question: Are Azores tourism companies prepared to receive tourists with special needs?

636 companies

Aspects that have made tourism business infrastructure accessible:



- Creation of adequate parking - 61.3%
- Placement of ramps - 31.2%
- Placement of elevators- 11.6%
- Adaptation of measures in doors and corridors- 20.2%
- Adaptation in rooms and sanitary facilities- 32,5%
- Braille information- 1.7%
- Use of alternative means of communication- 22.6%
- Training/learning of human resources - 25.3%
- Adapted animation activities- 8.9%
- Other- 4.1%

<https://otacores.com/inquerito/praticas-sustentaveis-no-sector-turistico-regional/>



OBSERVATÓRIO do TURISMO
dos Açores

Governance

AZORES DMO, the Azores Sustainability Management Structure, is the entity responsible for the Sustainability Management of the Azores Tourist Destination. Under the responsibility of the Government of the Azores and the Regional Secretariat of Transport, Tourism and Energy, the main function of the DMO is to coordinate sustainability efforts and initiatives acting as a stimulus for the development of sustainable tourism with partners in the public and private sectors. It is committed to ensuring that the development of the destination is supported by the Sustainable Development Goals in the context of the 2030 Agenda and is applicable to all initiatives and actions of tourism in the Azores, as well as the DMO and its employees. The initiatives of the Azores DMO will be coordinated with the population, with members of the private sector and the public sector, both municipal and various departments of the Regional Government, as well as associations, including the Azores Sustainable Tourism Observatory and NGOs.

DESTINATION MANAGEMENT POLICY

The Azorean territory has a multiplicity of natural, historical and cultural resources that make it unique. For more than two decades, initiatives have been privileged to lead to its protection and preservation, which has led to the continuous development of sustainability policies:

- Nature conservation and biodiversity protection;
- Energy production and management;
- Management and supervision of noise, air quality, waste and water;
- Actions for environmental promotion and education;
- Valorization of indigenous products, heritage and Azorean culture.

<https://sustainable.azores.gov.pt/>

AZORES ON THE PATH OF SUSTAINABILITY The
first archipelago in the world certified as a
sustainable tourist destination



OBSERVATÓRIO do TURISMO
dos Açores

Governance

BOOKLET

The Azores Sustainability Chart is an initiative of the Government of the Azores to strengthen the sustainable development of the entire territory. It aims to support the adoption of the principles of the 2030 Agenda in an inclusive and comprehensive way in the various sectors of society. The Chart is perfectly aligned with the 17 Sustainable Global Development Goals, having a fundamental role for its implementation in the Azores.

This is an important contribution to a fairer, more dignified, more inclusive and sustainable world.


COMMITMENTS Each appointment will be associated with three SDDs to enhance and three more to mitigate. In addition to this information, each entity will have to define a metric that allows the monitoring of the commitment and the estimated deadline for its implementation.

SUBSCRIBING ENTITIES:

https://cartilhadmo.azores.gov.pt/lista_entidades.php

**148 Regional Entities
Subscribed to Booklet**



The background features a dark blue field filled with numerous light blue, stylized virus particles of varying sizes. A large, semi-transparent blue circle is centered on the page, containing the main title text. The overall aesthetic is clean and scientific.

**IMPACTS OF
COVID 19
PANDEMIC
ON THE
AZORES
TOURISM
DESTINATION**

2020

COVID-19



OBSERVATÓRIO do TURISMO
dos Açores

Impacts of the Covid 19 Pandemic on Tourism Performance Indicators

Comparison with the year 2019

Passengers Disembarked



Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Set	Oct	Nov	Dec
2019	90 677	85 296	109 510	147 252	149 572	180 896	219 439	220 376	167 172	132 081	103 161	98 389
2020	94 988	94 662	49 709	1 232	2 441	20 293	63 572	101 347	73 708	62 377	36 531	37 730
GR 2019- 2020	5%	11%	-55%	-99%	-98%	-89%	-71%	-54%	-56%	-53%	-65%	-62%

Source: SREA, OTA , Tourism Statistics Azores

Regional Tourism Offer Indicators



Global - Number of tourism Establishments in Activity

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Set	Oct	Nov	Dec
2019	2 376	2 328	2 402	2 425	2 478	2 514	2 653	2 700	2 719	2 728	2 747	2 771
2020	2 773	2 814	2 832	2 627	2 626	2 683	2 868	2 893	2 880	2 881	2 878	2 874
GR 2019-2020	17%	21%	18%	8%	6%	7%	8%	7%	6%	6%	5%	4%

Source: SREA, OTA , Tourism Statistics Azores

Regional Tourism Demand Indicators

Homestays - Guests



Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Set	Oct	Nov	Dec
2019	8 197	8 366	11 332	21 208	24 003	33 780	44 734	50 432	32 811	19 755	10 910	7 924
2020	9 849	10 043	5 009	382	315	1 511	8 847	18 017	12 015	8 480	4 129	3 386
GR 2019-2020	20%	20%	-56%	-98%	-99%	-96%	-80%	-64%	-63%	-57%	-62%	-57%

Source: SREA, OTA , Tourism Statistics Azores

Regional Tourism Demand Indicators

Hotels - Guests



Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Set	Oct	Nov	Dec
2019	27 090	30 617	40 163	54 112	63 044	70 651	79 099	86 381	69 172	56 207	36 637	30 461
2020	29 283	34 748	18 376			2 876	13 133	28 816	25 039	23 642	13 350	10 060
GR 2019-2020	8%	13%	-54%			-96%	-83%	-67%	-64%	-58%	-64%	-67%

Source: SREA, OTA , Tourism Statistics Azores

Regional Tourism Demand Indicators



Rural Tourism Accommodation - Guests

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Set	Oct	Nov	Dec
2019	283	379	559	1 282	1 651	2 557	3 606	4 537	2 292	1 208	288	254
2020	284	325	174				771	1 720	1 113	507	309	216
GR 2019-2020	0,4%	-14%	-69%				-79%	-62%	-51%	-58%	7%	-15%

Source: SREA, OTA , Tourism Statistics Azores

Regional Tourism Demand Indicators

Overnights - Tourist accommodation

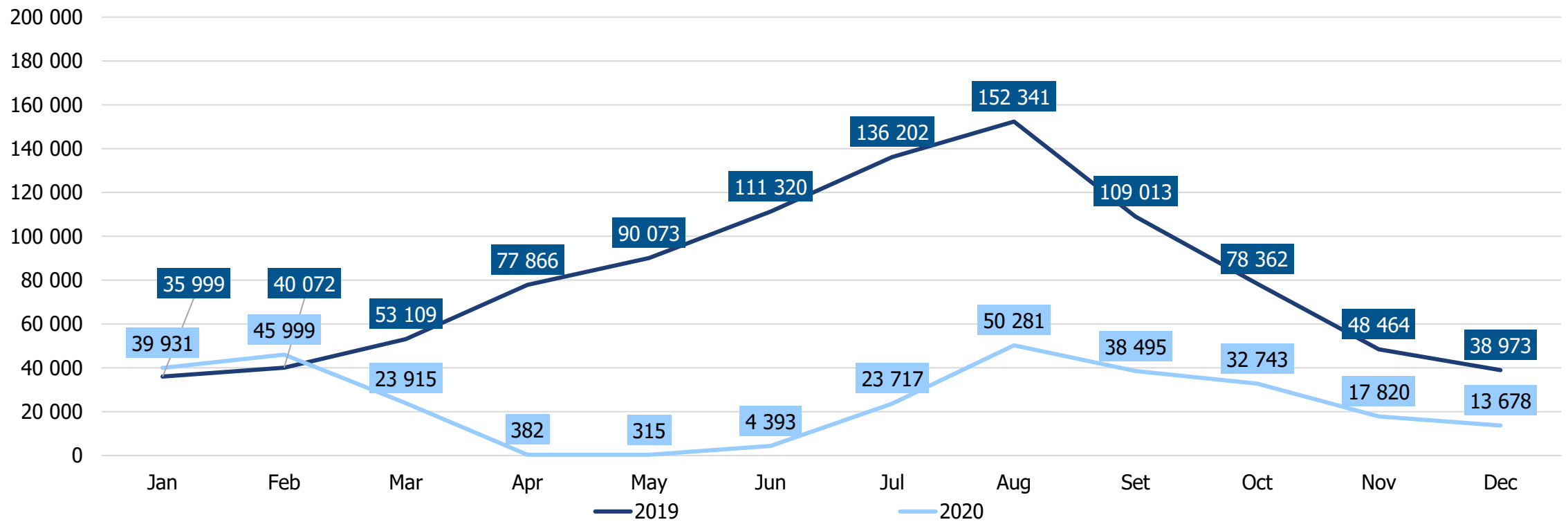


Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Set	Oct	Nov	Dec
2019	98 685	111 018	165 622	247 832	277 345	342 521	447 221	493 430	348 825	239 489	132 002	105 855
2020	109 367	129 986	72 630	2 278	2 179	11 753	74 045	161 320	113 814	93 434	50 700	37 445
GR 2019-2020	10,7%	16,9%	-56,2%	-99,1%	-99,2%	-96,7%	-83,6%	-67,8%	-67%	-61%	-62%	-65%

Source: SREA, OTA , Tourism Statistics Azores

Regional Tourism Demand Indicators

Evolution of the number of guests - Tourist Accommodation 2019-2020*

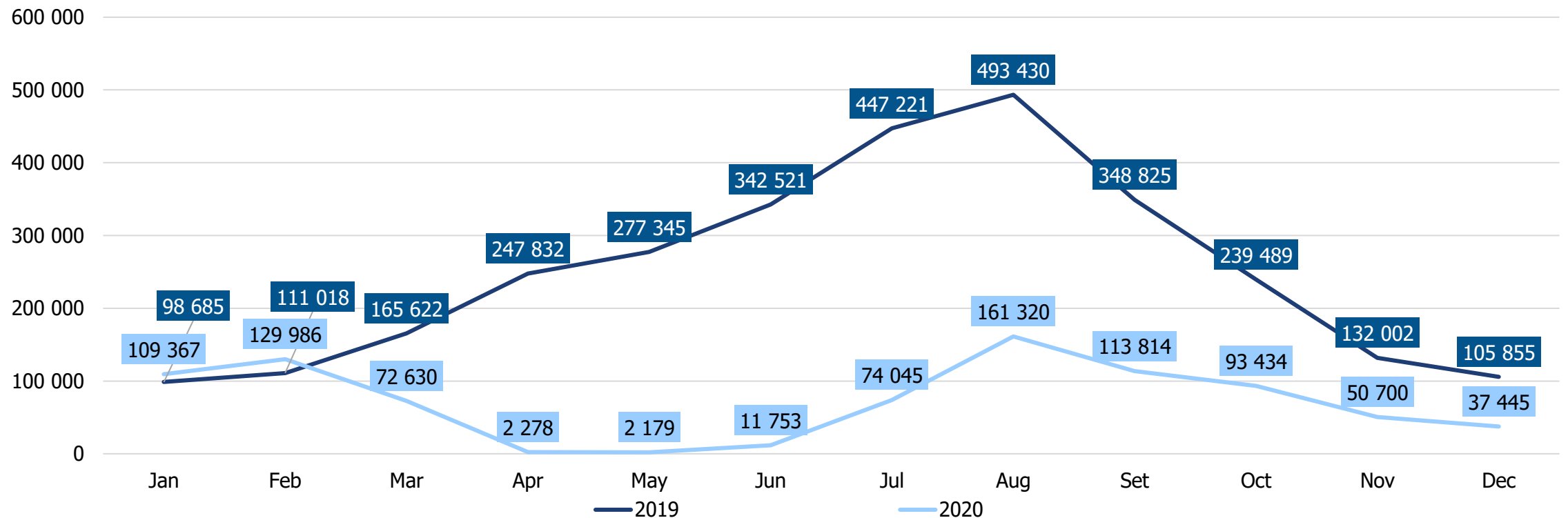


Source: SREA, OTA , Tourism Statistics Azores

*Inns/camp sites/Holiday Colonies/Homestays

Regional Tourism Demand Indicators

Evolution of the number of overnight stays - Tourist Accommodation 2019-2020*



Source: SREA, OTA , Tourism Statistics Azores

Regional Tourism Demand Indicators

Total Revenues - Hotels



Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Set	Oct	Nov	Dec
2019	2 961 208	3 458 389	5 214 792	8 062 291	10 309 683	12 741 778	15 669 440	16 593 864	12 823 305	8 356 654	4 354 494	3 966 575
2020	3 256 588	3 972 985	2 403 618			536 988	2 162 650	4 803 495	3 720 989	2 833 835	1 572 507	1 220 221
GR 2019-2020	10%	14,9%	-53,9%			-95,8%	-86,2%	-71,1%	-71%	-66%	-64%	-69%

Source: SREA, OTA , Tourism Statistics Azores

Regional Tourism Demand Indicators



Room revenues - Hotels

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Set	Oct	Nov	Dec
2019	2 029 668	2 316 151	3 573 838	5 901 771	7 700 402	9 922 955	12 484 393	13 016 911	9 859 557	6 185 729	2 999 571	2 453 071
2020	2 212 671	2 682 054	1 734 757			384 512	1 694 880	3 633 799	2 780 621	2 106 719	1 089 835	809 762
GR 2019-2020	9%	15,8%	-51,5%			-96,1%	-86,4%	-72,1%	-71,8%	-66%	-64%	-67%

Source: SREA, OTA , Tourism Statistics Azores



**Challenges
Constraints
Future
actions**

Main challenges:

- Lack of available and systematically collected data on the performance of the tourism sector, especially concerning energy consumption, water consumption and waste production;
- Difficulties in reactivating this process of personal tourists' surveys, which was completely suspended, since April 2020, due to the COVID 19 pandemic, namely:
 - a) Unavailability of the usual interviewers who gave up the project, due to the risk of contact with many people of various backgrounds;
 - b) Extreme difficulty in hiring new interviewers in this new pandemic context;
 - c) Very low willingness of tourists to be interviewed in person, due to increased fears resulting from the new Covid 19 variants;
 - d) Low numbers of incoming tourists and at the mercy of health measures taken by each country and which are constantly changing;
 - e) More time spent on compliance with sanitary security bureaucracies and protocols.



Constraints:

- The Azores Tourism Observatory (OTA) has produced extensive and credible independent technical and scientific work, which has sometimes not been properly recognized by government entities, which are the public destination managers (DMOS).
- High costs of assembling services and implementing complex projects, such as in the field of "Monitoring the Mobility of Tourists in the Territory".

Prospects for future actions

Some of the future actions to be developed by the OTA include the following:

- ✓ A clear bet on digital tourism projects. The Azores Tourism Observatory is part of the group of partner entities of the Azores Digital Innovation Hub project, whose application, presented by the Science and Technology Park of S. Miguel island, "Nonagon", was recently approved, making OTA eligible to obtain funds from the "Digital Europe" program with the aim of promoting various projects related to the application of new technologies in the Azores tourist destination.
- ✓ Implementation of the project "Sentiment analysis" - monitoring of tourist reviews on various platforms, TripAdvisor, Booking, etc.

Prospects of future actions

- Develop actions either promote synergies between the creative industries and creative tourism, providing visibility to the Azores as a Destination of Creative Tourism, and improving the tourist experience in the destination through creative innovation processes;
- Promote, facilitating the adoption of new technologies by companies and tourist entities in the Azores;
- Create new partnerships with government entities to obtain data on indicators of water, energy, waste, employment, by tourism companies, etc. (Regional Directorate of Environment and Climate Change, Regional Directorate of Energy, Regional Directorate of Professional Qualification and Employment);
- Promote collaborative partnerships with other Sustainable Tourism Observatories both in national territory and in other countries.
- Develop studies in partnership with universities on innovation in sustainable tourism (new products, new tourism marketing strategies, etc.).





OBSERVATÓRIO do TURISMO
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