

A Roadmap for Sustainable Creative Tourism^{*}

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Introduction

Richards and Raymond have defined Creative Tourism as “tourism that offers visitors the opportunity to develop their creative potential through active participation in courses and learning experiences characteristic of the vacation destination where they are held” (Richards and Raymond 2000). The characteristics of Creative Tourism make it more than just a tourist experience, as it involves a more active role for both tourists and hosts through the transfer and development of creative knowledge, and skills, in the course of shared and co-created activities that are inherent to the unique characteristics of the destination. According to Richards, one of the main differences between Creative Tourism and Cultural Tourism is that creative tourists seek to expand not only their knowledge of the places they visit, but also their own creative skills (Richards 2015).

The emergence of the concept of Creative Tourism was contemporaneous with the identification of the “experience economy”, and many analysts have linked Creative Tourism to Experiential Tourism (*Ibidem* 2015). According to Richards, one of the major differences between Creative Tourism and Cultural Tourism is that creative tourists seek to expand not just their knowledge of the places they visit but also their own creative skills (*Ibidem* 2015).

Since the concept “Creative Tourism” was created, it has changed over the years. We can say that it has changed according to the needs of tourists and communities. We can identify an evolution of Creative Tourism through several different phases (Duxbury & Richards 2019). Firstly, under Creative Tourism 1.0 there is the development of small-scale creative experiences and learning activities, provided mainly by creative entrepreneurs as a supplement to other creative productions. Typically, these would be provided through small-scale workshops and courses, giving tourists hands-on experience of local creativity (Richards & Wilson 2006). The subsequent emergence of Creative Tourism 2.0 introduced a more consumption-related perspective, with creative activities used to attract tourists to a destination, and the emergence of destination-based networks. Creative Tourism 3.0 consists of the increasing integration of tourism and the creative economy, leading to the development of a wider range of creative experiences. Creative Tourism 4.0 has seen a shift towards “relational tourism” (Richards 2014) based on the co-creation of experiences facilitated through networks.

One of our main objectives is to clarify the relationship between sustainability and Creative Tourism, as well as how Creative Tourism develops and promotes the sustainability of a destination. Furthermore, we want to emphasize

that creativity is integrated into tourism in a variety of ways: creative people, products, processes, and places. It is important to develop a shared tourism experience involving tourism professionals, local people, and tourists.

Cultural Tourism Development and Policies

The concept of “creative tourism” is considered an extension of “Cultural Tourism” (Richards 2005; Richards & Wilson 2006, 2007), and a key element of the creative ecosystem (Harrington 1999). This type of tourism emerged in response to a widespread dissatisfaction with experiences provided by cultural tourism and a lack of creative and exciting tourist options with the potential to enrich visitors and connect them to local communities (Smith 2005).

Traditional Cultural Tourism is based on passively “observing” and “contemplating”. Creative tourists seek out experiences which go beyond simply observing cultural displays; they crave the opportunity to “experiment” (Pine and Gilmore 1999) and participate (for example, wine tasting, workshops and courses in painting, dance, cooking, etc.) to awaken their five senses while enjoying the experience. Based on this, we can say that Creative Tourism is the evolution of cultural tourism.

It is worth noticing that during the twenty-second session of the UNWTO General Assembly in Chengdu, China (11 to 16 September 2017), the following definition for “Cultural Tourism” was adopted:

Cultural tourism is a type of tourism activity in which the visitor’s essential motivation is to learn, discover, experience and consume the tangible and intangible cultural attractions/products in a tourism destination. These attractions/products relate to a set of distinctive material, intellectual, spiritual and emotional features of a society that encompasses arts and architecture, historical and cultural heritage, culinary heritage, literature, music, creative industries and the living cultures with their lifestyles, value systems, beliefs and traditions. (UNWTO 2017)

UNWTO considers that Cultural Tourism is set to remain one of the key tourism market segments in the future. The expanded range of cultural phenomena consumed by tourists will also increase the range of stakeholders involved in this market, with local communities becoming one of the keys to the sustainable development of cultural experiences. In order to make effective policies, however, more information is needed on the profile, motivations and needs of cultural tourists. This in turn requires better research, linked

more closely to policy objectives (UNWTO 2018). In order to make effective Cultural Tourism policies, UNWTO point out the need to: create a vision for Cultural Tourism to link and energize stakeholders; generate better information; develop more specific Cultural Tourism policies; create more targeted Cultural Tourism marketing activity; ensure cultural protection; make effective use of new technologies; and foster stakeholder collaboration (UNWTO 2018, 13). In our view, these require all the necessary adjustment to local realities, particularly, with regards to the Azores, there is a need to adequately address the archipelagic condition of the region in all the governance approaches that shall properly articulate cultural and tourism policies in its nine islands.

Culturally Based Creative Tourism

The concept of Creative Tourism was first introduced into the vocabulary by Richards & Raymond in 2000, and the following definition is the most widely used by researchers in the field, namely: Creative Tourism is “Tourism which offers visitors the opportunity to develop their creative potential through active participation in courses and learning experiences which are characteristic of the holiday destination where they are undertaken”. Basically, these authors support the idea that there are tourists who want to have contact with the community they are visiting and learn more about its culture through participatory experiences with the residents, showing their creative skills (Richards & Raymond 2000).

Ross et al. (2017) warned about the importance of focusing Creative Tourism on creative experiences, based on production, and according to a perspective of “learning by doing and feeling”, or “do it yourself”, i.e., the focus should be on the experience and the tourist. For these authors and in line with Richards & Raymond (2000), the impulse to participate in authentic experiences that stimulate imagination and creative potential allows tourists to experience a sense of satisfaction and self-expression that is not possible in conventional Cultural Tourism experiences.

Creative Tourism is becoming more important not just because tourists are looking for a different Cultural Tourism offer, but also because the cultural sector and destination managers are looking for new ways to interact with tourists. It is becoming increasingly important not just to sell the culture of a place, but also to use tourism to support the identity of the destination and to stimulate the consumption of local culture and creativity (Richards & Wilson 2007).

There are several reasons why Creative Tourism can enhance Cultural Tourism (Richards 2000):

- Creativity allows destinations to innovate new products relatively quickly, giving them a competitive advantage over other places.
- Creativity is a process, and creative resources are therefore more sustainable. While physical cultural resources, such as museums and monuments, can wear out over time and degrade, creative resources are arguably infinitely renewable.
- Creativity is mobile. Where cultural consumption depends on a concentration of cultural resources, creativity can become extremely mobile — shows and artworks can now be produced virtually anywhere, without the need for dedicated infrastructure.

According to Greg Richards (2009), Creative Tourism is becoming more important because:

- Cultural Tourism is becoming a mass tourism product;
- cultural tourists are becoming more experienced and demanding more engaging experiences;
- destinations are looking for alternatives to traditional tourism products.
- According to Greg Richards (2009) creativity is important in tourism because:
 - it creates “atmosphere”;
 - it feeds on people’s need for self-development;
 - it creates a direct link between the culture of the tourist and the host population;
 - it avoids problems of heritage burnout and serial reproduction.

These advantages should ensure that creative modes of tourism become more popular in tourist destinations in the future. However, it is also important to ensure that the new Creative Tourism products meet the needs of consumers.

The changes that Greg Richards has noted in the production and consumption of tourist experiences seem to indicate that there is a double shift occurring in the basis of Cultural Tourism. On the consumption side, tourists are engaging more actively with the culture and creativity of places, and

increasingly turning their backs on products which reduce them to mere observers of culture. On the production side, communities are beginning to utilize the full range of cultural and creative resources available to them, which includes not just the “high culture” highlights such as national museums and monuments, but also incorporates popular and everyday culture as elements of the tourist product, since these are often the factors which allow a destination to differentiate itself (Richards 2009). This means there is an increased attention to previously unacknowledged aspects of local communities’ cultural heritage, with an emphasis on intangible cultural heritage (e.g. gastronomy and culinary practices; handicrafts; social practices, rituals and festive events; community-based knowledge and practices concerning nature; and/or rural heritage), and its contemporary and innovative (re)interpretations.

Examples of Creative Tourism development

Cultural Creative Tourism can be developed in different styles (**fig. 1**). In fact, there are different types of experiences and products that can be offered to creative tourists, and these experiences range from more active forms of participation; such as learning a specific skill (Richards 2009), to more passive types of creative activities, involving different types of creativity. For example, it can be developed within a variety of forms, creative activities, and programs, such as cooking workshops; art colonies; traditional crafts lessons; singing, dancing and music classes; traditional fishing classes; toy-making workshops; photography workshops and many other formats. The creative offering in destinations can be focused on a variety of age groups, ranging from the youngest to the oldest tourists. The diversity of the creative offering is also affected by the creativity of managers of destinations, enterprises or craft trades, the space in which creativity is produced and the end service — the creative product.

Creative tourism networks	The creativetourismnetwork provides a wide range of creative experiences. The focus is very much on learning experiences, with a range of hands-on workshops being run by local tutors.
Spaces	Creative destinations make innovative use of their spaces to facilitate creative tourism. Particular spaces have also been developed to offer creative learning experiences to visitors in different parts of the world (for example: hotels, restaurants, etc.).
Events	Events attract attention, and they focus that attention on the creation of new possibilities. Many cities have therefore seized on the catalytic nature of major events as a means of transforming the city. There needs to be creative vision and overall management of the event 'portfolio' to achieve maximum effectiveness.
Cultural itineraries	Cultural itineraries can also be a means of linking together creative firms and events, stimulating visitors to see a number of different activities in a specific region.
Creative backdrops	Many cities have a reputation of being 'creative' in one way or another. In many cases this creativity is experienced by the visitor not so much in the direct consumption of creative activities, but rather through the general atmosphere or buzz of the place, which is generated by the creative sector.

1 Examples of Creative Tourism development. Source: Richards 2009.

The notion of learning is very strong in the Creative Tourism offer and tourists can learn about different subjects such as: arts, design, cooking, gastronomy and oenology, languages, nature, etc. (Richards 2003). Richards (2013) explains that the learning process is based on local creativity, on the one hand for those who travel, and on the other hand for the local people who have the possibility to appreciate their own creativity through the eyes of tourists.

It seems that creative tourism can offer many advantages to destinations wishing to develop such new forms of tourism activity. It has several important advantages over more conventional forms of tourism, including Cultural Tourism:

- creativity can provide a source of tourism activity, as well as an attractive backdrop for general tourism activity;
- creative development of tourism can help sustain the atmosphere of the destination;
- Creative Tourism can become a means of business development for crafts producers and other small creative enterprises;
- enables local people to use their own creativity (and puts them in control of the process);
- it is a renewable resource.

Sustainable Creative Tourism

Creative Tourism can be an asset to local sustainable development because it helps to establish beneficial links between the different goals and resources of the actors involved, avoiding conflict, and enabling outcomes of true commitment to sustainability in tourism. Therefore, Creative Tourism considerably reduces the tourist flow in each place (unlike mass tourism), which also allows minimizing the negative impacts on the territory and thus meets the goals of sustainability. Thus, Creative Tourism can play a decisive role in sustainable development by promoting a change in tourist behavior, namely respect for the environment, i.e., promoting the preservation of natural resources, reducing waste and pollution, and protecting and conserving biodiversity (Ferreira et al. 2018).

Sustainable Creative Tourism creates opportunities for the reinvention or creation of new tourist destinations, with potential impact on the value chain that benefits the local economy and communities, contributing to the preservation and promotion of natural and cultural heritage, social cohesion, economic development, and sustainability of the territory (Richards & Wilson 2007).

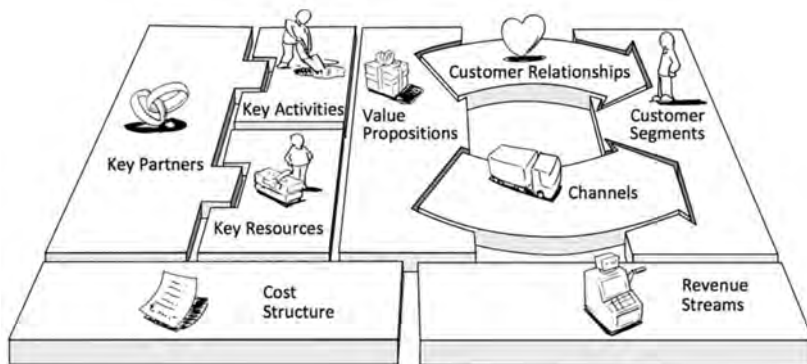
UNESCO (2006) explains that local people can improve their own economies through Creative Tourism by: developing the creativity of local people to create unique products; developing local infrastructure; and strengthening policies to support Creative Tourism development. This means that Creative Tourism has a role in local development because it allows for profit; increases jobs; diversifies the culture of the population; integrates economic, cultural, social, and technological dimensions; develops creative industries; promotes innovation and “policies that stimulate innovative and multidisciplinary responses to the demands imposed by a competitive global economy” (UNESCO 2006).

We conclude that Creative Tourism can be used by tourist destinations, namely the Azores Islands destination, as a tool to find a way to create stronger and more meaningful links between the social, economic, and environmental goals of sustainable development (UN 2015).

The Evolution of Creative Tourism Business Models

We already know what Creative Tourism is and how it can be developed. But, for the Creative Tourism process to be successful it needs to follow a business model. In the past, the focus of business model analysis used to be on “how businesses generate money”, but more recently the focus has shifted to a broader concept of value creation, describing the assumptions about not only key resources and activities of the business, but also the value propositions, customer relationships and customer segments (Richards 2021).

The first model, the CANVAS Business Model (CBM), was developed by Osterwalder & Pigneur (2010), and “describes the rationale of how an organization creates, delivers, and captures value”. The CBM consists of nine elements that describe the whole process of value creation (**fig. 2**), but the key component is the value proposition: the benefits that people can expect from your products and services.



Adapted from 'Business Model Generation', Alexander Osterwalder, Wiley 2012.
www.businessmodelgeneration.com
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2 The Business Model Canvas (CBM). Source: <http://www.innovationclub.it/profondimenti/business-model-canvas/>

The development of Creative Tourism has also produced a succession of new business models.

In early Creative Tourism 1.0 experiences, the emphasis was often on individual creative producers developing workshops for tourists. The basic type of value being delivered to the tourist is intrinsic (learning, skills development), and for the creative producer the basic value generated is economic, through course fees.

- Creative Tourism 1.0 experiences usually generate intrinsic value for the participants, who acquire creative skills and come to appreciate the skills of producers more focused in creativity. For the producers, as well as the intrinsic benefit of gaining respect for their creativity, there is an increase in instrumental value through sales of experiences and products related to these (Richards 2021).
- Creative Tourism 2.0 — the growing scale of Creative Tourism enabled local networks to emerge that would collaborate to provide more complex creative offers, such as concerts, festivals, or workshop programs. In addition to the instrumental value being generated by tourist spending, there were also benefits in terms of increased local collaboration, building the potential for institutional value creation (*Ibidem*).
- Creative Tourism 3.0 provides new opportunities through the integration of tourism and the creative economy. By opening up different creative sectors to tourism, such as the film industry, architecture or design, the potential to tap new tourism markets is increased (Richards 2021).
- Creative Tourism 4.0 also provides new opportunities through global networking. The placement of creative experiences on global platforms such as Airbnb or TripAdvisor exposes them to a global audience, significantly increasing the potential for new business. The expanded networking and peer-to-peer interaction supported by Creative Tourism 4.0 enables a wider range of stakeholders to become involved in Creative Tourism, opening up the ecosystem to actors outside the tourism or creative sectors (*Ibidem*).

The development of Creative Tourism 4.0 business models has also been given a boost by the Covid-19 pandemic, including for example:

- Online Experiences: “Online Cooking Classes”, “Travel to India to do Yoga at home”; “Online Spanish Class from Guatemala”, “Virtual Wine Tastings”, etc.
- Digital Work and Digital Nomads: digital nomads are online workers that are “location independent”. They can, and do, work from anywhere. They lead “asset-light” lives and are invested in experiences rather than things.
- Digital Experiences: can also be offered after the physical experience as a means of staying in touch with visitors helping to ensure continued interest in creative activities and increasing the potential for repeat visits. For example, Virtual Reality is used for virtual tours, test drive excursions and attractions, etc.).

The CREATOUR and CREATOUR Azores Research Projects

The CREATOUR project — “Developing Creative Tourism Destinations in Small Towns and Rural Areas” —, was the first multidisciplinary action-research project on Creative Tourism, in Portugal, taking place from November 2016 to June 2020.

The CREATOUR project combined both theoretical and practical approaches, prioritizing collaborative processes and constant dialogue between research and practice. Thus, it sought to contribute, through catalyzing a network of 40 Creative Tourism initiatives, to the development of sustainable Creative Tourism practices in small towns and rural areas in four regions of Portugal: North, Center, Alentejo, and the Algarve.

The CREATOUR AZORES project is an applied research project coordinated by the Azores Sustainable Tourism Observatory (OTA) and the University of the Azores, in partnership with the Centre for Social Studies (CES) of the University of Coimbra. It is funded by FEDER through the operational program Azores 2020 and by regional funds through the Regional Directorate of Science and Technology.

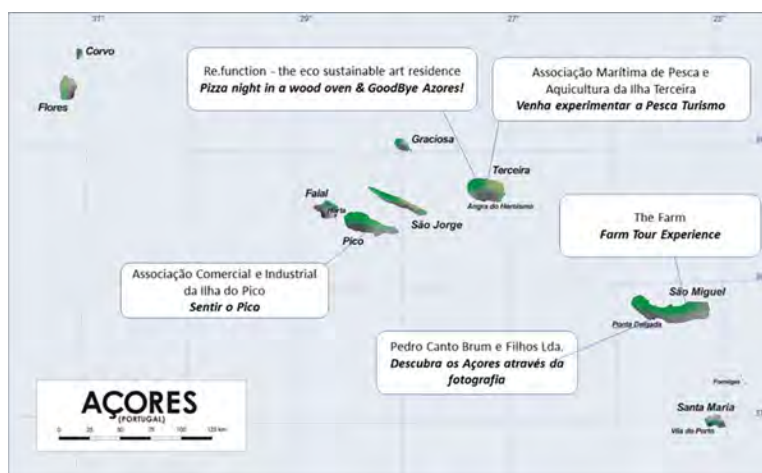
The CREATOUR AZORES pilot projects were selected in 2019 through a regional open call, issued between May and the end of July, launched across the entire archipelago. Projects could be proposed by any public or private entity, third sector or single professional organizations established in the Azores developing activities in the cultural and creative sectors as well as in the tourism sector. Pilot projects were also committed to stimulate local competitiveness and sustainable territorial development through

creative tourism offerings, based either on tangible or intangible regional cultural resources.

Given the positioning of the Azores, as a nature destination, the following themes were suggested in the call: art and nature; crafts and traditions; creative cuisine; families and children; other (e. g. integrating new technologies such as virtual reality, augmented reality, etc.).

Currently, there are five selected pilot projects within CREATOUR AZORES (see **figs. 3** and **4**, below), outlined as follows:

- “Discover the Azores through Photography” (São Miguel Island) — this project offers Photography Workshops (on landscape, gastronomy, botany);
- “Farm Tour Experience” (São Miguel Island) — offering agriculture activities and sustainable food and well-being workshops;
- “Experience Pico” Festival (Pico Island) — an yearly event focused on local gastronomy, crafts and traditions;
- “Come Experience Fishing Tourism” (Terceira Island) — aimed at developing artisanal fishing and gastronomy tours;
- “Good-Bye Azores!” (Terceira Island) — an artist’s residency with creative workshops on contemporary crafts.



3 Map of the Archipelago of the Azores with the pilot’s location. Source: own elaboration.

Pilot projects	Entity Type	Location	Project name	Activities
Commercial and Industrial Association of Pico Island	Association	Pico	“Feel the Pico”	Food workshops and candy; Wine workshops; educational activities for children; trails, fishing sports; showcookings
Maritime Association of Fisheries and Aquaculture of Terceira Island	Association	Terceira	“Come experience the Tourism Fishing”	Activities directed to the artisanal fishing
Pedro Canto Brum & Filhos Ltd.	Company	São Miguel	“Discover the Azores through Photography”	Photography workshops - landscape, cuisine and botany
Re.function -the eco sustainable art residence	Informal Network Partners	Terceira	“GoodBye Azores!”	Creative Workshops - contemporary crafts
The Farm	Individual entrepreneur	São Miguel	“Farm Tour Experience”	Experimental tourism - Agriculture / Nature
Norte Crescente	Association	São Miguel	“Local Network Artisans’Land”	Activities associated with handicrafts, local culture, local accommodation, agriculture, etc.
CDIJA	Association	São Miguel	“Azores all in Blue”	Inclusive tourist routes for families with children with autism

4 CREATOUR Azores: the pilot projects. Source: own elaboration.

This figure indicates the geographical location of the five pilot projects selected by CREATOUR AZORES, within the context of the nine islands of the Archipelago.

Additionally, the research team also selected complementary pilots designated as “friendly pilot projects”, which were not eligible for financial support (given the budget constraints of the initial project proposal of CREATOUR AZORES), but which could (on a voluntarily basis) be equally engaged in and benefit from the project’s mentoring and training activities. The following friendly pilots were chosen (all located in the island of São Miguel):

“Local Network – Land of Artisans”, promoted by a local non-governmental development association (Norte Crescente – ADL) to foster the development of a locally-based network of artisans and handicraft connecting visitors with the local population.

“Azores All in Blue” has a social orientation and is developed by the Center for Child and Youth Development of the Azores (CDIJA) as an inclusive Creative Tourism offer, aimed at connecting with nature both families of children with autism spectrum disorders and the children themselves, through specially designed Creative Tourism experiences.

Final Considerations

Cultural Tourism has grown considerably in recent decades, but the massification of this segment’s supply has become an undeniable fact. The cultural activities proposed in destinations are “standardized”, offering no surprises and they no longer meet the demands of today’s tourists. These tourists want to enjoy unique experiences, authentic, creative, and custom designed, but at a competitive price, which is a challenge for the industry. It is precisely through this new demand that Creative Tourism has appeared as an emergent branch of Cultural Tourism. In fact, the dilemma of mass reproduction of culture and the need to develop new tourism products have encouraged the use of creativity, creative industries, and Creative Tourism in cities.

Creative Tourism uses tourism resources that are the processes by essence, as for example: dancing, singing, crafts, cooking, painting, festivals. Creative resources are more sustainable than tangible cultural products. Creative Cultural Tourism does not need to have a built heritage. Creativity is not only in the activities developed by the promoters, but also in the actions of the tourists involved in co-production. Tourists also have to be creative when participating in Creative Tourism, meaning that Creative Tourism can be carried out

anywhere without the need to have much fixed infrastructure. In this way, creativity is unlimited, and it is for this reason that Creative Tourism can be considered as a sustainable development process. This type of tourism also helps to protect and enhance a territory, contributing to generate income for the local population, which makes it a great expression of sustainability. In fact, Creative Tourism can benefit a community by creating jobs and distributing the income generated in a fair way, directly to the local population and not concentrated in the hands of a few big tourism companies. This type of tourism also brings the traditional skills of a community to the market.

Creative Cultural Tourism has undergone considerable development over the last twenty years. Starting from a casual observation by Richards and Raymond (2000) of the potential of creative workshops and learning experiences, the concept has evolved in many different directions, involving an increasingly diverse range of stakeholders. While the initial Creative Tourism 1.0 model was based on a fairly simple exchange of knowledge for economic gain by creative producers, Creative Tourism 4.0 presents a much more complex system of placemaking and integrative value creation, supported by technological platforms and networking.

The CREATOUR Azores project is a Creative Tourism 4.0 project aiming at strengthening the knowledge about the specific Creative Tourism market segment and their travel profile as well as the Creative Tourism products which can be offered to satisfy the needs and preferences of creative tourists visiting the Azores. Finally, it intends to identify the most appropriate channels to communicate with these differentiated creative tourists. Given the unique location and characteristics of the Azores, there is a very high potential for the development of attractive and unique creative tourism offers at the international level attracting creative tourists to the Azores destination.

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