

## Workshop Special Public

The promotion of accessible tourism  
in salt pans



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## Introduction

In the scope of ECOSAL ATLANTIS Project, it was realized, by Universidade de Aveiro, the Workshop Special Public the Promotion of Accessible Tourism in Salt pans.

The development of this Project had, as a premise, the increasing demand of the salt pans both as a touristic and leisure purpose, in the extent that these sites can offer a pleasant environment and high-quality moments of leisure and wellness to its visitors.

However, salt pans and their involving sites have some obstacles in terms of accessibility/mobility to disabled people.

In this sense, accessibility is known as “(...) the possibility of accessing in an easier way to both the social and physical place; by becoming accessible, any context allows and facilitates the inclusion and the participation of handicapped people.” (Silva, RT&D, nº11, 2009, p.113). An essential element of life quality of every citizen, strengthens the need to promote ways to allow everyone to access different spaces and/or equipments designed for leisure and tourism and sustains the development of “(...)tourism proposals that allows the easy and autonomous access by everyone, including those with mobility constraints, to products, goods and services related with tourism, such as accommodation, restaurants, information, transport, use of services in the monuments, equipments and urban spaces, urban, rural or natural landscape” (APTTA), referred as accessible tourism by the Associação Portuguesa de Turismo Acessível (Accessible Tourism Portuguese Association). Thus, building a model to embrace these audiences becomes fundamental; in order to better exploit these places. Such model will constitute a framework at the service of any entity related with tourism, fitting to the single needs of its activities.

This workshop had as main target the project partners and entities and associations related with tourism sector and valorisation of rural environments.

## Goals and key-points

It is the purpose of this project to identify the needs of the disabled visitors during their visits to natural sites, as well as to know how to adapt the visitor model that is being used in the Santiago da Fonte saltpan.

The main questions that led to the execution of this project concern the need of creating conditions in order to make these environments able to be visited by everyone. Therefore, the following questions had been identified:

- What changes should be done to the existing equipments and tracks?
- What changes should be done to products specifically made to promotion and advertisement?
- What changes should the tourist guides make to their actual procedures in supporting disabled visitors?

The main goals are the following:

- To give information about the needs of the group with constraints in their motor and sensorial functions during their visits to natural environments, namely saltpans
- To get the inputs of participants to elaborate the proposed visit model
- To prepare a visit model containing all the peculiarities related with disabled visitors

## Workshop structure

The Workshop had been developed in three distinct phases:

Phase 1 – 29th of April 2011 - Inputs by all the entities and associations working with people with special needs with the purpose of improving the visiting conditions of Santiago da Fonte saltpan

Phase 2 – 1st of June 2011 – visit of a pilot group with mobility and sensorial constraints to Santiago da Fonte saltpan

Phase 3 – 17th of June 2011 – Workshop Special Public the Promotion of Accessible Tourism in Salt pans

### Phase 1

During this first session, an initial assignment was executed together with the invited entities and associations working with these groups (table 1). In this context, different experiences had been shared bringing a contribution to the formulation of the saltpan visit model, enabling that people with mobility and sensorial constraints (blindness or deafness) may use these environments.

Table 1 – 1<sup>st</sup> phase attendants.

Name	Institution
Jorge Leite	ACAPO
Paula Azevedo	ACAPO
Ana Garcia	Accessible Portugal
Filipa Marques	Município da Lousã
Manuel Louzã Henriques	Município da Lousã
Rui Borges Cunha	Município da Batalha
David Fonseca	Representing people with audience difficulties
Josélia Neves	Instituto Politécnico de Leiria

Name	Institution
Rosário Pires	UNAVE
Luís Galiza	UNAVE
Rosa Pinho	Universidade de Aveiro
Tamira Cruz	Universidade de Aveiro

The session began with a short description about the ECOSAL ATLANTIS project to better frame both the development of this action as well as the need to adapt the salt pans to be used by disabled people. After that, each participant made his contribute by telling his own experience, stating his area of intervention and how his specific work may contribute to a better experience in the visit of salt pans by people with special needs.

The presentation of Santiago da Fonte salt pan took place right after, referring the various activities developed as well as the materials used and distributed to the public visiting it, namely the brochures and two videos regarding salt issue. Moreover, it was shown the visit model that has been used in many visits made by the University team. In this sense, it was highlighted the fact that most of these visits was made at a scientific and academic scope, being the model adapted to these target groups.

After the presentation, an assessment sheet about Santiago da Fonte salt pan was given to all of the participants, clearly identifying all the materials used during the visits and the physical environment, so that all the participants could, while visiting the place, make their evaluation, having in mind the needs of people with special needs.

The visited to Santiago da Fonte salt pan occurred after lunch with the purpose of making a clear assessment about the materials and the physical environment. Each participant filled his assessment in the sheet previously given, contributing to the improvement of the site and the visit model that is being used.

The feedback was object of analysis in order to identify the type and characteristics to develop, its feasibility and priorities to be set. From this analysis, the following sets of suggestions were taken (table 2 and 3).

Table 2 – Set of suggestions related with the site

Site	Suggestions
<b>Outside</b>	
<b>Accessibility/Mobility to the saltpan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create an accessible and comfortable track</li> <li>• Make a ramp of the track until the warehouse's entrance</li> <li>• Eliminate all the salience</li> <li>• Create a guiding track (with a differentiated pavement)</li> <li>• Make an adapted parking lot</li> <li>• Free accessible track with a minimum width of 1,50m required</li> <li>• Implement urban furniture/places to rest</li> <li>• Potentiate sites to outside sightseeing</li> <li>• Put clear, very intuitive and well placed signs and add information in Braille</li> <li>• Tactile and visual guides</li> </ul>
<b>Footbridge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not tested due to not being concluded. Still, the following was suggested:</li> <li>• Build a walkway from the warehouse to the existing footbridge</li> <li>• Handrail built at different heights (0,70m and 0,90m), with no salience and not slippery. Well maintained. Access in form of a ramp until salt crystallizer.</li> </ul>
<b>Warehouse</b>	
<b>Accessibility/Mobility inside the Warehouse</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enlarge the balcony (1,50m)</li> <li>• Ramp with less inclination and spacing between the planks</li> <li>• Having two possible entrances to the balcony</li> <li>• Make a guiding track on the floor, with clear guiding marks located at points of interest</li> <li>• Tactile and visual guides</li> <li>• Place a plan of the site (multiple format) at the entrance (with multiple format information)</li> <li>• Widen windows and place them at a lower position</li> </ul>

Table 3 – Set of suggestions for the material

Material	Suggestions
Salt implements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve its exposure</li> <li>• Place some at an accessible way so they can be touched</li> <li>• Use them in a real context (make a specific space for multi-sensorial experience)</li> </ul>
Speaker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 Device with the sound for each bird and a short description of each of them</li> <li>• Name of the bird in Braille and enlarged</li> <li>• Retouch the birds – smooth shapes with a contrasting colour/reveal or trace the spot of the eyes and wings of the bird</li> <li>• Video in Portuguese sign language indicating the sound of each bird</li> <li>• Place a speaker to feel the vibration of the sound</li> </ul>
Informative Panels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fully detailed information in audio</li> <li>• Enlarged information (bigger size) and in Braille</li> <li>• Synthetic information about the shape and contents (simplify language)</li> <li>• Greater contrast/ High contrast</li> <li>• Tactile models</li> <li>• Create texturized or interactive map</li> <li>• Create videos in Portuguese sign language with sound simultaneously</li> </ul>
Brochures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In Braille</li> <li>• At the bottom of the brochure, “Fauna and Flora” is not easily readable</li> <li>• Bigger formats aligned to the left</li> <li>• Summarize information</li> <li>• Simplify language</li> </ul>
Movie “The Salt in the World”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Portuguese sign language</li> <li>• Subtitles (multiple language) and audio description</li> <li>• Rerecord the voice with two different voices (narration + audio description)</li> <li>• Segment in parts of approximately 3 minutes</li> </ul>
Animation “Water Circulation in the Saltpan”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Portuguese sign language</li> <li>• Audio description (multiple language)</li> <li>• Create subtitles</li> <li>• Higher contrast for visually impaired</li> <li>• Less didactic approach for the touristic tours</li> <li>• Slow down or pause essential parts</li> </ul>

The analysis of the suggestions mentioned above conducted to the identification of some constraints towards their application, given the lack of resources, both human and financial, that would allow an improvement in the accessibility and the adaptation of the materials so they can be used by everyone. Besides that, it is necessary to have in account that this place is

located in a Special Protection Area (SPA), under the Natura 2000 scope, which requires special care in the interventions.

## Phase 2

At the second phase, a visit to Santiago da Fonte Saltpan was made with a preliminary group of people from Aveiro University (students and employees), all with mobility or sensorial constraints (figure 1 and figure 2).

With the purpose of initiating the training of the University tourist guides to support the visits to the salt pans, people belonging to the Serviços de Comunicação, Imagem e Relações Públicas (Communications, Image and Public Relations Services), as well as another volunteer students, were present, and could have a first contact with the visit model applied, and also understand the need to adapt this model to the visits made by people with special needs.



Figure 1 – Difficulties felt by a group with mobility disorders



Figure 2 – Identification of the exposed material in Braille and Salt implements being shown

From the suggestions identified in the first phase, it was only possible to implement some of them related with the material, namely making some of the material in Braille, putting the salt implements in a place where they could be touched and an explanation on how they work could have been done. Given the short period of time between the first and the second phase, it was not possible to gather enough human and financial resources to adapt more material. On the other hand, the same need to gather more financial and human resources was an impediment to the improvement of other aspects referred by the participants during the first phase.

It was also possible to confirm some of the constraints identified by the entities and associations that took part during the first phase and, thus, reinforce the need to make modifications, not only in the visit model, but also in the place and the materials used.

### Phase 3

The third phase consisted in a workshop. This workshop had the participation of, not only the specialists invited to take part on the first phase, but also of specialists in the areas of tourism, natural environments, mobility, and also project partners, as seen in table 4.

Table 4 – List of participants in the workshop, on the 17th of July of 2011

Name	Institution
Laura Romero	ANDANATURA
Lola Alcón	ANDANATURA
Marie Duverger	Le Port des Salines (C. Communes de l'Île d'Oléron)
Benoît Poitevin	Ecomusée du Marais Salant
Émilie Morin	Ecomusée du Marais Salant
Ana Oliveira	Câmara Municipal de Aveiro
Margarida Ribeiro	Câmara Municipal de Aveiro
Sónia Pinto	Câmara Municipal da Figueira da Foz
Maria do Rosário Pires	UNAVE
Margarida Almeida	Universidade de Aveiro
Sónia Nunes	Universidade de Aveiro
José Claudino Cardoso	Universidade de Aveiro
Angelina Barbosa	Reserva Natural das Dunas S. Jacinto
Isabel Maria Ruela Sousa	Reserva Natural das Dunas S. Jacinto
Tamira Cruz	Universidade de Aveiro
António Coutinho	Câmara Municipal de Sever do Vouga
Graciela Figueiredo	Câmara Municipal de Sever do Vouga
Norberto Monteiro	Câmara Municipal de Estarreja
Paula Ribas	Câmara Municipal de Estarreja
João Silva	Instituto de Conservação da Natureza e Biodiversidade
Ana Garcia	Accessible Portugal
Manuel L. Henriques	Câmara Municipal da Lousã
Rui Cunha	Câmara Municipal da Batalha
David Fonseca	Representante Públicos com dificuldades auditivas
Paula Azevedo	ACAPO

The main goals of this third phase were to transmit the synthesized information from the previous phases, receive feedback from every participant to improve the visit model that is being used and come up with a preliminary version of set of actions to implement in the case study (Santiago da Fonte saltpan). The program of this workshop was the following:

**10h00-10h15 – Open Session**

Filomena Martins, Project Manager of ECOSAL ATLANTIS at Universidade de Aveiro

**10h15-11h00 – Presentation of the work developed in the 1st phase**

Filomena Martins; Manuel Louzã Henriques, Rui Cunha, Ana Garcia

**11h00-11h30 – Coffee-Break**

**12h00-13h00 – Presentation, at Santiago da Fonte Saltpan, of the results of the test session of the visitor model**

Margarida Ferreira da Silva

**13h00-14h30 - Lunch**

**14h30-16h00 – Group Dynamics – Contributions to improve the visit model**

Workgroups constitution

Analysis and discussion of the model

**16h00-16h30 – Presentation of group findings and contributions**

**16h30-17h00 – Coffee-Break**

**17h00-17h30 – Systematization of group contributions**

**17h30-17h45 – Closing Session**

Prof. Doutor José Claudino Cardoso, Pro-Rector of the Coordination of the Project Team for the physical development of UA.

According to the program, the session began with a short description of Santiago da Fonte saltpan and the inclusion of Accessible Tourism issue within the ECOSAL ATLANTIS project.

Then, the work developed during the first phase of the workshop had been presented, namely the feedback given by the invited specialists and the constraints identified related to its implementation (in a short, medium and long term).

The involvement of the invited specialists was crucial in the sense that it gave important information about best practices in the accessible tourism, put in practice in other areas –Architect Manuel Louzã Henriques, from the Project Team of Lousã Destino Acessível (Lousã, Accessible Destination) project, gave some of the solutions that has been implemented in the Lousã Municipality, with the purpose of turning it into an accessible tourism destination for all; Dr. Rui Cunha, Chief of Education, Culture and Sports Department of the Municipality of Batalha, presented the Ecoparque Sensorial da Pia do Urso (Sensorial Eco Park of Pia do Urso), highlighting the major actions put in practice in order to make this Eco Park accessible to everyone; Dr. Ana Garcia, manager of the Accessible Tourism Agency, identified the main requirements that a tourist spot must have in order to be an accessible destination.

In the end of these presentations, a visit to the Santiago da Fonte salt pan was made, where the participants could experience, in loco, the main difficulties indicated during the second phase of the workshop – visit with a pilot group.

After lunch, a workgroup session was conducted, where the participants could discuss the results shown during the morning session and give suggestions to improve the visit model and the visiting conditions of Santiago da Fonte salt pan. The participants were divided in 4 groups to allow a better communication and share of ideas between them. In the end, each group presented their suggestions, pointing out the main issues considered as being the most crucial to modify, in a way that Santiago da Fonte salt pan could be an accessible place for everyone.

## Conclusion

This workshop made possible the identification of the main issues in Santiago da Fonte saltpan and that, to a certain extent, can be seen in other salt pans, regarding accessible visits to everyone. It is clearly seen that these places, due to their peculiarities, offer not the most adequate conditions to people with special needs, with mobility and sensorial disorders. Moreover, it is necessary to have in account that, most often, these areas are placed in natural environments, under protection rules, e.g. Santiago da Fonte saltpan, integrated in Ria de Aveiro SPA (PTZPE0004), narrowing the possible adaptations that could be done.

Nevertheless, there are still some adaptations, especially to the materials, that can be done quite easily. However, both financial and human resources should be allocated to successfully implement these modifications and, in this way, it is necessary to identify financial frameworks available to these sorts of plans.

Concerning the suggestions given by the participants, a chart presenting the priorities/possibilities indicating the amount of resources to be allocated will be executed.

## Notes