

# Minho

Candidate for the title of European Region of Gastronomy 2016  
Application and Ambitions of the Candidacy Project







### *“Minho has already begun...”*

It was exactly thirty years ago that the former Tourism Board of the Alto Minho (Upper Minho) hosted its 1st annual national gastronomy congress from which resulted the creation of the Confraternity of the Gastronomes of Minho. A few years later the annual congress started being co-organized with the Tourism Board of the Baixo Minho (Lower Minho). Early on, Minho was seen as Portugal’s greatest gastronomic treasure.

In 2001, was organized the 1st International Gastronomy Congress, which resulted in the publication of a pioneer book “Gastronomy and Tourism” (2002) by G. Richards and A. Hjalager (Eds). This publication has been an indispensable source for putting this proposal together. This event led to the creation of the ATLAS Gastronomy and Tourism Special Interest Group which continues its scientific work until the present day.

In addition to these large annual events, the Tourist Board of the Alto Minho published regularly illustrated gastronomy texts and from 1989 actively promoted ‘Local Gastronomy Sundays’ in selected restaurants of the region during the low tourism season (February - May). This initiative was truly ‘local’ in that each municipality promoted its own ‘local’ gastronomy with a close link to the landscape.

In 2001, Portuguese national legislation was approved integrating gastronomy as national

intangible heritage that warrants safeguarding and promotion (Resolution of the Council of Ministers 96/2000, of the 26th of July).

According to this legislation, “a sense of actions are being taken to inventory, further value, promote and safeguard Portuguese recipes, with the objective of guaranteeing its unique character, as well as promoting its use, in such a way as to also pass on to future generations”. The Tourism Board of the Alto Minho and the Confraternity of the Gastronomes of Minho played an essential role in the preparation of this legislation.

A further initiative was the proposal to award a ‘Certificate of the Atlantic diet’ to promote the Atlantic diet of the Celtic culture in contrast to the Mediterranean diet of southern Portugal. Such certification was seen to not only contribute to the tourism supply of the area but also, it was hoped, conserve certain components of the regions gastronomy. Such protection was thought to be necessary as certain EU food industry directives would effectively forbid the production and sale of a number of classic traditional dishes.

In 2009, ‘Local Gastronomy Sundays’ turned into the 1st edition of the ‘Gastronomic Weekends’ in Minho and in 2010 included a wider geographical area of the territory of ‘Porto and the North of Portugal’. The new Regional Tourism Entity of Porto and the North of Portugal extended the participation of municipalities to 59,



increasing in 2011 to 72 municipalities, small decrease to 71 in 2012 and a new increase in 2013 to 74 municipalities, far exceeding the 24 municipalities that comprise the Minho region.

The European Region of Gastronomy 2016 project represents an extraordinary opportunity for a long-term commitment to the development of this peripheral region of Europe and the improvement of the quality of life of its people, who has along the years dedicated effort and energy to preserve the traditional tangible and intangible heritage of this region of northern Portugal—known as MINHO.



Map of Minho in the national context





To the evaluation committee

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## Think Globally, Act Locally

In 2014, National Geographic magazine ran an eight-month series, labeled the New Food Revolution, exploring how food is produced and whether that is done in a sustainable, efficient and safe manner, the future of food and how by 2050 we'll need to feed two billion more people without overwhelming the planet—where will we find enough food for 9 billion? (Foley, 2014: 26-27).

When we think about threats to the environment, we tend to picture cars and smokestacks, not dinner. But the truth is, our need for food poses one of the biggest dangers to the planet (Foley, 2014: 35). Around the world, trees are often cut down to make room for farming, and so the single biggest threat to forests remains the need to feed growing populations, particularly an expanding global middle class with the means to eat better.

Another important aspect of food production in the modern 'risk society' (Beck, 1992) is the extent to which our food is safe to eat. The larger forces of globalization and the technological change has led to the development of modern factory farming methods and food processing, creating a situation in which the risks associated with mass-produced food have actually increased, and the demand for safer foods, such as biological or unprocessed foods have grown as a result.

The report Portugal—Healthy Eating in Numbers 2014 reveals results far from the desired level of healthy eating in Portuguese society. More than half of the adult population suffers from excess weight, 1 million are obese and 3,5 million are pre-obese (in a total population of just under 10 million). What went wrong? How can we put people eating more healthy food?

Still, a further concern is the food losses that can occur throughout the entire food chain, from farm to table. In its roadmap for a resource efficient Europe, the European Commission has set the target to halve the generation of food waste by 2020.

Unfortunately the debate over how to address the global food challenge has become polarized, pitting conventional agriculture and global commerce against local food systems and organic farms. The good news is that we already know what we have to do: we just need to figure out how to do it. Solutions require a big shift in thinking, not getting more divided but rather finding common ground. It doesn't have to be industrial farms versus small, organic ones. There's another way. We need to make connections between our food and the farmers who grow it and between our food and the land, watersheds, and climate that sustain us (Foley, 2014).

This trend poses a concern for Europe, as exemplified in the article "Europe's fast food fight" by the Financial Times on 2/3 November of 1996, calling on solutions to an increasing "tasteless food society" as if people have "switched off their taste buds". Throughout Europe, the debate is currently raging--fast food is fighting it out with slow food and technologies with the fruits of the earth (terroir). The tasteless food society is a threat. It's all about the popularity of ready cooked meals, convenience and take away foods. A generation is growing up without the haziest notion of how to "boil an egg" or cook the simplest food. If we consider the cliché "tell me what you eat and I will tell you who you are", one cannot help but be apprehensive about the direction being taken.

The comfortable association of certain foods with certain regions is being challenged by the growing mobility of food, culinary styles and the increasing de-differentiation of dishes and cuisines. Far from producing a homogenised gastronomic landscape, the tension between globalisation and localisation is producing ever more variations (Iyer, 2000) also raising the debate between the conservation and innovation in gastronomy.



### *Bigger is Better or Small is Beautiful?*

“What you eat is what you are” attitude is leading people to do things more slowly, triggering the blossoming of a local food movement. Demand for fresh produce and a desire to invest in local economies are driving this growth. Consumers show increased interest in “food transparency” (Foley, 2014). Consumers are also generally well off, obsessed with healthiness in their lifestyle, more aware of what goes on their plate and are willing to pay more for the food they eat. This in turn is likely to increase the demand for gastronomic tourism in regions which can show that their food products are ‘safe’ and/or rely on traditional production methods.

As Hughes (1995) points out there is a ‘notion of a natural relationship between a region’s land, its climatic conditions and the character of food it produces. It is this geographical diversity which provides for the regional distinctiveness in culinary traditions and the evolution of a characteristic heritage’. This link between location and gastronomy has been

used in a number of ways in tourism, including promotional efforts based on distinctive or ‘typical’ regional or national foods and the restaurants that rely on local ingredients.

It becomes necessary to link the pleasure of good food with a commitment to the region and the environment. It is also important to identify and encourage agricultural development through niche and typical products, which are to be protected and promoted as provided by the European agriculture policy. This will set the basis for a solid and durable success both in tourism and agriculture, engendering beneficial effects in terms of revenue and employment, mainly in less developed areas (Corigliano, 2002).

However, although tourism to Minho has increased, farmers are poorer and are decreasing in number. The profession is not sufficiently attractive to the current generation, frustrated by how little they earn and the stagnation of rural living standards. Few in the countryside see their future there. But it also has to do with the difficulties in selling the products and the lack of experience of farmers with the new technological methods of production; too many intermediaries; low added value of the products; distance from place of production to place of distribution; and, decreasing food prices due to increased mass production. But more generally because the farms in Minho are too small to generate large profits.

Another strategy to facilitate the micro forms of agricultural production in Minho is to organize the event European Region of Gastronomy in 2016 to showcase regional gastronomy and demonstrate how it could contribute to further the process of sustainability in regional development.



## Project Minho- European Region of Gastronomy 2016

### Aim and Objectives

#### *“Where Tradition Lives On”*

The aim is for Minho to establish the foundation of its gastronomy by focusing on a retro-innovation perspective — making the most of past recipes and activities with authenticity or tradition and apply creativity to locally-sourced food—from our land, from our sea, from our hands to the table—and apply innovation to better understand and meet the needs of today’s ever-demanding consumer. The question is, how much innovation?

To meet this aim, this project will be of extraordinary regional consequence for achieving the following objectives:

- Linking food producers and suppliers with cultural and tourism entrepreneurs in order to stimulate innovation while supporting the production of traditional foods.
- Build regional identity by giving visibility to a unique cultural heritage including culinary traditions.
- Project regional gastronomy at European level.
- Focus on education to better understand food and nutrition, as well as the many facets of agriculture and food patterns through the ages as a way of encouraging healthy retro-innovation of the food culture to support smart growth.
- Provide education and training to raise the level of food production and food preparation so as to contribute to the sustainability of food producing resources.

### Theme and Title

#### *“Regional Gastronomy - between tradition and innovation”*

In his classic work *Distinction*, Bourdieu (1984) examines the role of taste in forming and maintaining and legitimating class differences. Not surprisingly one of the main arenas in which these distinctions are developed and underlined is in eating. Bourdieu shows us that the physical necessity of eating is also a cultural practice:

“.....cultural practices also appear in eating habits. The antithesis between quantity and quality, substance and form, corresponds to the opposition - linked to different distances from necessity- between the taste of necessity, which favours the most ‘filling’ and most economical foods, and the taste of liberty - or luxury - which shifts the emphasis to the manner (of presenting, serving, eating etc.) and to stylized forms to deny function, (p. 6).”

In the gastronomic culture of Minho, home cooking remains a factor of pride for the individual and for the community, perhaps the reason for the abundance of food related events in the region. Traditional food is the “taste” of the landscape; it’s a way of life. Family/subsistence agriculture safeguards the attractiveness of the landscape, possibly the biggest comparative advantage of Minho as a tourist destination. Local people maintain a close relationship with nature and traditional cultural heritage. For local people, the landscape is a mirror of their lifestyle and traditional food as the link between place and people.

The traditional recipes that we many times invoke are of food which was once characteristic of poverty (survival) served at poorhouses (in Portugal called *casas de pasto*).

For example, vegetables were not food for the rich, but for the peasants; the rich ate expensive meat (meat as a status symbol). The same with fish-for the poor and only the freshest fish with the minimum amount of ingredients. The idea of food moving from simply feeding the poor to being a source of richness in itself is something that we have seen in other areas – for example with polenta and pasta in Italy. Pasta actually started as street food for the poor; minimal and only the simplest ingredients were added. One of the big strengths of Minho is that it has maintained its traditions so that these ‘poor’ foods are now seen by others as something special – something that they have lost; something to cherish.

But traditional cuisine isn’t made from recipes; it is born out of necessity, availability, and intuition, and it is codified not in books but in individual recollection or in common wisdom. Traditional cuisine is folklore, inspired by the world in which its creators live, imbued with lessons about that world, and passed down by a people among themselves, with infinite variation and frequent adaptation (Andrews, 1996). It is important to recognize that sustainable development of gastronomy is not just about preserving the past, but also about creating the future. Cultural changes inevitably lead to changes in foodways.

Minho is often characterized as a culture in transition from traditional to modern. Cultures in transition are often characterized by resistance to change. That can happen with food habits. Food habits of a [region] are quite evidently the product of the [region’s] present environment and past history. Those food patterns and customs have become

meaningful [to a region], are carefully held and not quickly changed. Resistance to a series of suggested dietary changes may be traced to fear of losing the food in its culturally oriented significance (Lowensberg et al, 1979).

There are many blocks to the change of food habits, some of which may represent inertia or even resistance to change. People have been categorized as: (1) those who seek to lead groups to change; (2) those who accept change easily; and (3) those who resist change (Lowensberg et al, 1979: 105). So overcoming resistance to change (which can be seen as a strength in terms of preserving food traditions) is an important issue if the region is to move forward and create new potential for future growth.

Questions remain as to how do you go about promoting change for future growth? Whose mind would you like to change? And, what would you like to change? Furthermore, in the same context, in defining heritage, do “cultural traditions need the same protections as historic sites?” (Grauman, 2009).





*“Regional Gastronomy - between tradition and innovation”*









For Hegarty & O'Mahony (2001), gastronomy has moved away from the purely utilitarian to the artistic and can lay claim to fulfilling the various criteria necessary to be considered as essentially fine art. A work of art is expected to be beautiful.....For gastronomy, this translates into menu balance and harmony in such areas as colour, temperature, taste and texture which in some cases can be dictated by the aesthetic demands of the raw materials which are used to create a gastronomic work. In this act of creativity the chef as an artist, uses raw materials in a special way so that the meaning of the meal as a whole, that is the integral meaning, is greater than the sum of the experiential meanings.

Indeed, over the last decade the development of food as fashion has seen its popularity flourish by the rise of the culinary media. In Portugal, we are witnessing the *masterchefisation* of society as increasingly media chefs search for new ideas and styles of cooking, many times based on 'forgotten' traditional foods and recipes. Experimenting with recipes....reinterpreting traditional recipes...discovering typical dishes from a whole new perspective...making their dishes stand out from similar meals.....are the objectives of the media chefs in the increasingly popular culinary shows.

So, what is it that consumers seek in regional gastronomy? Is it traditional food, the 'authentic', 'real' cuisine of a region, or is it increasingly the new, innovative aspects of food and gastronomy that draw the crowds? Which approach is best placed to secure the future of regional gastronomy – conservation or innovation? This debate is not limited to Minho, but needs to be reflected upon at European level. A starting point of all our considerations is the local PEOPLE

and their needs, for whom material factors may be secondary. The changing circumstances of today's society requires change on the part of local people, but the change must be in process of "stretching" tradition and never a process of "jumping" to innovation. Such an approach requires the involvement of the entire population, whether individually or in some collective form, of public or private nature, to create conditions for the sustainability of the culinary richness of the Minho region.

The globalization of food is certainly a growing phenomenon everywhere; however, altering dishes to appeal to tourists can be risky. Changing the taste of typical recipes to conform to the uniform tastes of the international clientele can lead to a loss of originality. This last point should instead be a matter of concern for local tourist destinations. In an attempt to make the offerings more attractive, bringing them into line with what is available elsewhere, certain important aspects of the foods can be contaminated, like a particular flavor, appearance, cultural value the place of origin of the ingredients. Nonetheless, local restaurants have to work with tourists and develop their business (Columbini, n.d.).
















## Organising Body and Main Partners

The coordinator, **Minho-IN**, will take responsibility for carrying out the project Minho-2016. Minho-IN is a consortium of the 24 municipalities that integrate the three inter-municipal communities of the Minho region. All 24 municipalities have approved their participation in this project and are currently preparing the cultural programme for the event. In its endeavor, Minho-IN will promote the widening of networks at all levels, and pooling of resources between, public and private sectors as well as civil society organisations.

The municipalities supporting this candidacy are:

Inter-Municipal Community	Municipalities
Alto Minho	Arcos de Valdevez, Caminha, Melgaço, Monção, Paredes de Coura, Ponte da Barca, Ponte de Lima, Valença, Viana do Castelo and Vila Nova de Cerveira.
Ave	Cabeceiras de Basto, Fafe, Guimarães, Mondim de Basto, Póvoa de Lanhoso, Vieira do Minho, Vila Nova de Famalicão, Vizela
Cávado	Amares, Barcelos, Braga, Esposende, Terras de Bouro, Vila Verde.

**Education/research organisations:** The Polytechnic Institute of Viana do Castelo (IPVC) is an associated partner of the Project Minho 2016 European Region of Gastronomy. IPVC is a relatively new higher education institution that has developed rapidly over the last thirty years to become a major provider of higher education in rural northern Portugal, which has resulted in its developing a clear focus upon strategies for regional development. IPVC has made tremendous effort in establishing partnerships with other European institutions and is acknowledged nationally as a leading institution of education, research and development.

To help bridge the gap between the knowledge generators and those with the capacity to put such knowledge into practice, the Polytechnic Institute of Viana do Castelo will lead a community of knowledge where knowledge generators, policy-makers and practitioners participate in the creation, dissemination and application of knowledge related to food and tourism (WTO). With the approval of this candidacy, the remaining institutions of higher education in Minho will be asked to contribute to the project. They are: Polytechnic Institute of Cávado e Ave; University of Minho; University Fernando Pessoa; Instituto de Estudos Superiores de Fafe; and Escola Superior Gallaecia and the Catholic University (Braga). These institutions offer education in fields related to this project, particularly in arts, culture, gastronomy, agriculture and tourism management.

Also, the vocational schools with education and training in culinary-related courses will join this network of knowledge, for example the Tourism and Hospitality School

of Viana do Castelo, part of the national tourism organisation-Turismo de Portugal.

**The five Local Development Associations (LDA's) of Minho:** *Associação de Desenvolvimento Rural Integrado do Vale do Minho (ADRIMINHO)*, *Associação do Desenvolvimento Rural Integrado do Lima (ADRIL)*, *Associação de Desenvolvimento das Terras Altas do Homem, Cávado e Ave (ATAHCA)*, *Associação para o Desenvolvimento Integrado do Vale do Ave (SOL DO AVE)* and *the Associação de Desenvolvimento Rural de Basto (PROBASTO)*.

The LDA's have played a very active role in the projection of the region's gastronomy with two recent projects—"Prove [Taste] Minho-IN" and "Prove [Taste]". The former established the groundwork with research on foodways of the people of Minho throughout history and the current sources of food production, with the objective of contributing to the endogenous products of the region and increasing the added value to the final consumer. The latter project, focused on the flow of local products, establishing relations between producers and consumers and putting in place short circuits of commercialization with the use of information technology. Thus, part of groundwork research for ERG Minho 2016 is already in place, including the showcasing of Minho gastronomy at European level, for example with showcooking and tastings at the annual Open Days of the EC in Brussels.

The LDA's have along the years coordinated the LEADER-led initiatives in this disadvantaged area and will facilitate the implementation of the Programme for Rural Development 2015-2020 (PDR 2020), being targeted to overcome

obstacles identified to the lack of adequate productivity levels in the area of agriculture. This programme will require that farmers without experience undergo a 24 months training period and to develop a business plan to demonstrate how and to whom the products will be sold and how to expand into new markets, in order to be eligible for EU funds. The DLA's will facilitate these processes and contribute to the increased attractiveness and dedication to agriculture and food production as a profession.

**Civil Society Organisations.** Led by the Confraternity of the Gastronomes of Minho, a society whose purpose is to safeguard the authenticity of the regional gastronomy of Minho and promote it at national and international level as well as to establish a solid scientific basis for, and broaden the background information related to, local gastronomy as a part of the cultural patrimony. Other confraternities of Minho, particularly the *Confraria do Arroz de Sarrabulho à moda de Ponte de Lima*, *Confraria do Vinho Verde*, *Real Confraria do Vinho Alvarinho*, *Confraria da Lampreia do Rio Minho*, *Confraria do Pudim Abade de Priscos*, and the *Confraria Gastronómica do Pão-de-Ló Tradicional* are expected to contribute to this project.

Confraternities are comprised of volunteers who are motivated by pride in their heritage and willingness to contribute to its success and contribution to the well-being of the people of Minho. Their role will depend much on the visibility of their activities, for example through presence at gastronomy and wine related activities (festivals, gastronomy weekends, etc.), appearance in television talk shows and culinary shows, acting as food critics for regional media and participation in the certification of restaurants, election of top restaurant and chef/cook.





**In the commercial sector.** Restaurants will have a leading role as well as local food producers and processors and the accommodation sector, from the traditional hotels to the increasingly popular design/boutique hotels to the rural tourism based accommodation in manor houses, etc. SME's in food production, processing and preparation and hospitality sectors have been networking with the DLA's in the two gastronomy related projects. This network will be enlarged for ERG Minho 2016 in order to improve the position of Minho and project Minho as a leading gastronomy destination in the regional, national and international markets. This can only be achieved through the establishment of healthy competition in the region with the certification of restaurants, election of the top restaurant and top chef/cook (criteria could be established in conjunction with the other ERG region for 2016) and increase in communication by food critics in the regional, national and international media, an activity being planned through the education and training of food professionals.

**Arts and Cultural Actors.** Along with the Confraternities, members of the creative industries will also engage in this project through the manifestation of artistic and cultural activities associated to regional culture, be it in the form of Biennials of Contemporary Art, national and international folklore festivals, handicraft production through workshops or other forms that, at the same time that are expressing the region's culture, are also retaining consumers in the region which could contribute further to the sustainability of the region's development process.





## *Why Minho?*

### *Region of Gastronomy and Wine*

According to Edwards (1998), Minho's food culture is influenced by the region's landform, soil and climate, annual rainfall, together with the wealth, ideas and products of Portugal's colonial times and Portugal's geographic position as a bridge between the Celtic gastronomy and the Euro-African Mediterranean culture of Semite origin, has resulted in a food culture of which regional society is fiercely proud. While perhaps an over simplification, one might suggest that the foods of Minho place great emphasis upon high quality locally produced primary products while further south foods are more complex mixtures and make greater use of condiments.

One event of considerable significance historically for the food culture of Minho was the introduction of maize 'Indian Corn' from Brazil. This innovation solved the difficulties associated with the low yields of cereals which had resulted in a major nutritional shortfall and which had stimulated out-migration from the region. Today the region's many, mainly small farms, produce maize, potatoes, root vegetables, various forms of cabbage, olives and their oil and the unique 'Vinho Verde' or 'Green wine'. Livestock is both stall fed, milking cows and pigs, while on the higher ground, goats and the endemic beef cattle Barroso graze and bees forage.





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As with many other rural subsistence societies, a number of cheeses and a highly diverse range of pork products are produced and a number of these have come to characterize the regions food culture. Two of these are particularly well known, *Rojões* - a range of cuts of pork meats and offal served with roast potatoes and *Sarrabulho* - a dish of rice cooked in pig's blood and often served as an accompaniment to *Rojões* (*Rojões com Sarrabulho*).

Smoking, one of the oldest forms of preserving meat and meat products, is still widely practiced and valued and there is a wealth of smoked pork products ranging from *presunto* (smoked pork shoulders) to the many smoked *chouriças* (smoked sausage style products). To diced meat is added the spices (salt, white pepper, red pepper), fresh garlic (option) and the locally produced red vinho verde wine. The meat is left marinating for three to four days.

Fish protein was for centuries a vital dietary ingredient and while the staple poor man's fish was 'Bacalhau' (dried cod fish) originally caught of the fishing grounds of Newfoundland, other fish both from coastal waters (Pescada-whiting) the rivers (Trout and Savel- Sea trout) as well as regional specialties such as the much prized Lamprey are characteristic of the gastronomy of the region (Edwards, 1998).

The importance of codfish is today reflected in the Festas (festivals) that characterise the region, many of which include, through their religious dimension, prayers for the safe return of the cod fish fleet. While the cultural value of Bacalhau is reflected in the Festa, the cultural value of other foods have been recognised recently with their being awarded PDO status. Nineteen products originating in this northern region have been awarded this accolade representing one quarter of those approved for all of Portugal.







They include six breeds of livestock (three beef, two goat, one sheep), two cheeses, four smoked meats, one olive oil, three honeys and two 'dry stone' fruits - almonds and chestnuts.

Traditional desserts are not as conspicuous as are the typical entrees and main course dishes and are more likely to be encountered in private homes while conversely the shelves of the *Pastelarias* are covered with a wide range of cakes and pastries with particular egg-based confections being claimed as 'typical' in many towns and villages.

In mountain communities it is still practice to smoke the *chouriças* in the kitchen, hanging over an (open) fireplace. Several restaurants offer this activity as an attraction. Customers enjoy peeking into the smoke house when the *chouriças* and *presuntos* are hanging, just before they go in for their meal.







The first documentation relating to vinho verde dates to the year 1216. It was a wine which only the nobility had the pleasure of drinking. Vinho Verde became internationally known during the reign of D. Joao I. (late 14th century). There are historical records of English merchants purchasing the vinho verde directly from the region. A depository was established in Viana at the mouth of the River Lima and between 1599 and 1640 trade flourished. After Portugal's war with Spain the trade ended. In the middle of the XVII Century the English returned for the wine trade but developed the industry in Porto, replacing the demand for the vinho verde with a demand for what came to be known as port wine.



Along with other wine producing countries of Europe, Portugal has embraced the wine route concept developing it in several regions including Minho. The vinho verde route was an initiative of the association of vinho verde viticulturists and the alvarinho route by the municipalities of Monção and Melgaço. Both routes take visitors to Quintas (Estates/large farms-for Minho standards) throughout the

region, where you may sample the wine. Other routes have also been established, which promote both the local gastronomy and the wines, i.e. Pilgrimages to Santiago. These initiatives clearly demonstrate the link between gastronomy, wine and the landscape which in the Minho is characterized throughout the river valleys by the vine trellises which border the majority of the small field plots. Clearly a sustainable demand for this young wine will help to ensure the upkeep of these key landscape features which in themselves are a constituent of the appeal of the Minho to visitors.

### *More about the Region*

The unique traditional landscape, marked by small fields, vineyards and corn fields, villages with granite structures (*aldeias*) and manor houses (*solares*) bring another dimension to the description of the region, together with the typical Minho hospitality, rich culinary tradition and vibrant customs, celebrations and popular festivals.

Situated in the north of Portugal, the Minho region borders on Galicia (Spain) in the north, and the Atlantic Ocean, in the west.

With a population of over 1.1 million inhabitants, the region is often associated with the green of its natural scenery, where water is in abundance. Minho is also typically characterised by a mountainous terrain of great beauty and biodiversity which gradually becomes smoother as one reaches the river valleys and the countless beaches along the coastline. At present, the geographic area of the Minho region amounts to 4,700 Km<sup>2</sup>.

Its proximity to Spain (notably the province of Galicia) places Minho at an advantageous location for accessibility as it is positioned between two international airports—Porto (Portugal) and Vigo (Spain). Minho's location not only facilitates accessibility, but international cooperation with Galicia is a self-evident principle.

Minho is characterized by family farming of subsistence nature; outdated, unspecialized and uncompetitive.

Minho has a well-established identity amongst the Portuguese people. However, Minho does not benefit from this identity on the international map. As such, there are those who do not consider Minho as a consolidated tourist destination. For others, Minho is an emerging and unexplored tourist destination providing a diversified range of tourist accommodation and other tourism services that are attractive to consumers. Recent research by the Tourism Entity of Porto and the North of Portugal shows the gastronomy and wine product as being very important for visitors, but the rating of restaurants relatively weak, for example.

### *Region Where Culture Meets Nature*

Minho is particularly rich in heritage, with fragile natural and cultural resources. Examples include the water-based natural resources conducive to 'blue tourism', particularly in the Minho and Lima rivers, the landscape and architecture associated with rural tourism, where the Lima valley boasts the most concentrated number of manor houses in all of Portugal, the world heritage site in Guimarães,

protected areas with special attention to Portugal's only National Park - the Peneda-Gerês, but also folklore, handicrafts and gastronomy and abundant religious tangible and intangible heritage with hundreds of festivals taking place each year between July and September.

The Holy Week during Easter in various municipalities, but most renown in Braga, the many pilgrimage related Festas, such as Our Lady of Agony (Nossa Senhora d'Agonia) in Viana do Castelo are but two of the many examples of cultural manifestation in the region. Minho is often referred to as the capital of folklore of Portugal.

Guimarães was European Capital of Culture 2012, Braga the European Capital of Youth 2012, Viana do Castelo- RECEVIN City of Wine 2011, Barcelos in 2014 and Monção and Melgaço submitted an unsuccessful joint candidacy for City of Wine 2015. RECEVIN is the European Network of Wine Cities composed of towns or groups of towns belonging to the European Union with a strong economic dependence of viticulture and located in areas protected by the quality guarantee of their wines.







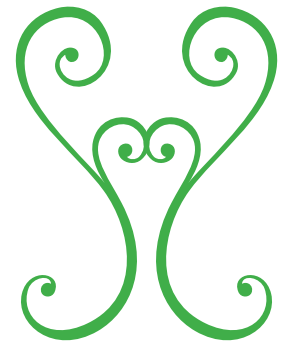
All these natural and cultural assets and the significant events make Minho a key cultural magnet with potential for attracting visitors to the region. However, closer cooperation is required to achieve the necessary planning to promote the gastronomy and wines of Minho.

The 24 municipalities through the three inter-municipal communities have shown they are prepared to work in synergy with key stakeholders in the region and finish building an organizational structure and subsequent development strategy to make Minho a region of excellence in culture, tourism and innovation.

Minho-IN is coordinating the synergy; Minho-2016 European Region of Gastronomy will be the glue bringing it all together.









### *Region of Art and Creativity*

Minho realized early that it needed to use creativity, innovation and culture as an engine of local development. From 1997-1999, the Eurotex project assessed and evaluated the current situation of the textile handicraft production in the region, which has resisted change and failed to innovate and adapt to changing market conditions, and identified general criteria for action as well as innovative methods for the production process and the development of other distribution systems.

The project explored the situation of crafts production, evaluating the situation, difficulties and what motivates people who are involved in crafts production and others who could possibly get involved. Product differentiation, where new features may be introduced, like new functional characteristics to make the product more attractive to its target markets, has been consistently ignored. Production is based on traditional techniques and modernised automated production is practically non-existent. Eurotex concluded that as much as local people may resist change, change is necessary for the survival of many traditions, gastronomy and crafts included.

Consequently, the Regional Tourism Board of Alto Minho promoted two projects. In the first, Roteiro de Artesanato do Alto Minho (Crafts Tour of the Alto Minho), 1998-2000, a network was created for selling crafts online and also selling crafts at most tourism offices throughout the region. The second, Valorização do Artesanato do Alto Minho (Adding Value to the Crafts of the Alto Minho), 2001-2003, increased the link between crafts and

gastronomy. In fact, it suggested gastronomy as a craft. “It is often said that cooking is an art. In Minho, where crafts are treated/promoted as art, traditional recipes are being protected and gastronomy is being classified as national heritage” (Francisco Sampaio).

In 2001, national legislation was approved for crafts (Government Decree nº 41/2001) and crafts production. It was expected that this statute of the crafts producer would lead to initiatives to promote, while preserving and protecting this “industry”. Portugal is so rich in crafts producers that it could actually be considered a national industry. However, as in gastronomy, crafts at national level never did achieve high importance; success is evident at regional level.

Minho has one of the highest number of crafts producers in varied areas of production. Crafts fairs are common throughout Minho and increasingly alongside gastronomy. Where you find a food fair you will find a crafts fair (and vice versa). The promotion of regional intangible heritage is the main objective of such events.

The focus on crafts as art has led to the founding of three Biennial arts events in Minho—in Vila Nova de Cerveira (since 1980), Vila Verde (since 1989) and Viana do Castelo (since 2010). Consequently, education on arts and art and cultural management has flourished in the region. The Biennial of arts of Vila Nova de Cerveira is considered one of the most prestigious national art exhibitions for contemporary art, second only to the Lisbon Biennial. The major difference being that the latter takes place in Portugal’s biggest city and the former in a predominantly rural region.





Viana do Castelo has also taken the initiative of creating the Viana Criativa (Creative Viana), being branded as “connecting life, apply creativity”.

### *An Emerging and Unexplored Tourist Destination*

Destinations are increasingly facing a challenge to develop new place/product combinations which are strongly competitive, unique and attractive for special interest or niche markets that want specific products and experiences. 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 (Richards, 2009). Destinations that deliver memorable visitor experiences consistently create superior value and competitive advantage (Voss, 2004).

Tourism experiences are generated by the people met, places visited, activities participated in and memories created from travel, particularly through watching, tasting, smelling, touching, listening to and being part of a culture or lifestyle that is distinctly different from everyday life. For the experience seeker it extends beyond a single activity and is a combination of experiences that reach an individual’s deeper needs and desires (Tourism Australia, 2007). Traditional destinations no longer have much interest. The idea is not to simply stay at another hotel or eating at another nice restaurant, it is about ambience and experiencing something different and possibly unexpected. The growing importance of intangible culture

also means that the type of cultural content is changing. In the past, cultural tourism was dominated by high culture, the museums, art galleries, and monuments that constitute the must-see sites for many destinations. Increasingly, these mass cultural sites are places to be avoided for the discerning tourists, who prefers to seek out small scale, out-of-the-way places that other cultural tourists have not yet found ... what the tourist is seeking in these local places is more contact with real people and engagement with the local culture and creative practices (Richards, 2009).

Considering the trends in demand by culturally motivated tourists, an approach of novelty attitude towards tourism is necessary. Explore vibrant aspects of the destination (it’s about new discoveries!). Embrace a new role—social spaces; creative uses of spaces to engage visitors (it’s about the experience!). Heritage has more and more to do with a social bond (building stronger relationships). Human beings are relating to heritage in a more playful/fun way; to do with culture of entertainment. It is required a different way of thinking in order to improve the tourist attractiveness of the destination.

The natural, historic and cultural resources are the basis for enhancing certain tourism products by developing new tour itineraries, regional circuits and thematic packages of attractions and activities. Seasonal events that feature local history, artists, writers, and craftspeople are essential, as are workshops for residents and visitors alike.

Events require much planning in order to create a sense of being transported in time and place and mood, of seeing and hearing things as if for



the first time, of being stimulated in the most pleasurable way – sensations and memories that experiences create and enhance the appeal of the area and provides more reasons to visit.

But Minho has not been treated as a destination. Until recently, the region was divided into several promotional bodies/regional tourism boards. There has been a generalized lack of vision of tourism in the Minho region and there is no professionalization of the tourism management, neither in the public sector nor in the private sector. Traditionally, this activity was left to the regional tourism boards. Moreover, no tourism organization represents the majority of the private sector in the Minho.

But ...Minho has already begun.... After the initiatives taken in the 1980's and 1990's, particularly by the two regional tourism boards of Alto (Upper) Minho and Baixo (Lower) Minho and the lead role taken by the municipal authorities in promoting traditional peasant/country cooking, the Polytechnic Institute of Viana do Castelo continued its internationalization strategy in the tourism field and hosted several important events. From international expert meetings of Gastronomy and Tourism (2001; 2007; 2014), Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage (2003; 2009), international conference "Destinations Revisited: Perspectives on developing and managing tourist areas" (2007) to an International Congress on "Valorization of Local Products (2012).

In 2008, the Associação do Desenvolvimento Rural Integrado do Lima (ADRIL), a local development association, undertook a pioneer study on tourism in Minho (which led to the creation of Minho-IN). Its title: Reinventing

tourism in Minho. This study identified assets that could be brought into play for the makeover of Minho as a tourism destination. One of the key assets identified was regional gastronomy.

In 2012, a professor of the Polytechnic Institute of Viana do Castelo presented at the University of Bologna a lecture on "The recipe for an idea: developing a gastrotourism destination", using the case study of Minho.

Finally, the 2014 meeting of the ATLAS Tourism and Gastronomy Group entitled "Expert Meeting on Regional Gastronomy: Between tradition and innovation" was the basis for launching interest in this project.

This sequence of events served the purpose of planting the seeds of *Minhones* (defined as pride in being from Minho and doing things traditionally of Minho) of regional gastronomy. There are no Michelin star restaurants in Minho (and only 14 in all of Portugal) and the aim is not to promote nouvelle cuisine in Minho. What is suggested is the rejuvenation of agriculture and rural life through a well-defined and organized role of collaboration between food producers, restaurants and tourism providers as a means of linking landscape, heritage, cuisine and tourism.

Whereas tourism provides the bridging for the cooperation of the 24 municipalities, gastronomy provides the bonding through a grass-roots, bottom-up approach to regional development. Local authorities are coordinating what are grass-roots initiatives that counts with the participation of citizen-based entities such as the Confraternities.





Masterchef, Chefs Academy, and other culinary media shows are picking up on this trend and romanticizing it in the form of *eatertainment*. It has been a great success, particularly with the youth market.

However, as an emerging destination, Minho will have to come up with an effective regional branding for cultural tourism in order to be able to compete in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

### *Cultural Programme*

An overview of the main activities to be implemented during the project reiterates the notion that Minho has already begun. The “Gastronomic Weekends” in which each municipality has a traditional signature dish, 2016 will follow the deep-rooted structure of cultural activities that have marked this

event for more than twenty years—traditional cultural entertainment, but with a touch of innovation from year to year. This event takes place between January and May and November.

*-Gastronomic Weekends involving all 24 municipalities, taking place between the months of January and May and in November-*

*-“Gastronomy and Wine Events, including grape harvest and wine-making opportunities; region-wide annual launch day of the vinho verde red; pairing food with wine workshops; etc”-*





January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
		- Arcos de Valdevez - Barcelos									
	- Cabeceira de Basto	- Braga - Mondim de Basto									
	- Caminha	- Póvoa do Lanhoso	- Guimarães	- Fafe							
-Vizela	- Esposende	- Terras de Bouro	- Ponte da Barca	- Paredes de Coura						-Vila Verde	
	- Melgaço	- Viana do Castelo		-V.N de Cerveira							
	- Monção	- Vieira do Minho									
	- Ponte de Lima	- V.N. Famalicão									
	- Valença										





*-Hundreds of Festas and Romarias (Festivals and Pilgrimages) of traditional Minho culture organized between June and September, where food is always a principle attraction-.*

Lots of involvement of folklore groups and performance of traditional music, including international folklore festivals. The popularity of this event is noticeable in the attitudes of the younger generation. While a few years ago it was unfashionable for youngsters to join folklore groups, play the most traditional musical instrument of Minho—the *concertina* (type of accordion)—or sing *desgarradas* (also designated as *cantares ao desafio* and *cantigas ao desafio*), a popular song in which the singers improvise, challenging and responding to each other, usually at the sound of concertina, nowadays it is quite fashionable.

After the *fado* and the Alentejo songs, now it is the *cantares ao desafio* of Minho being proposed for application for the classification of world intangible heritage by UNESCO. But also the traditional folklore costume of Viana do Castelo (*trajes à Vianense*, also known as as *trajes Minhotos*) has been suggested for possible application to UNESCO, as has the traditional pilgrimages/festivals that take place in just about every parish in Minho, with particular emphasis on the larger events at municipal level. These cultural manifestations are common practice during “Gastronomic weekends”, as at the *arraiais* (traditional Minho party, a must during the festivals) of the hundreds of Festas and Romarias (Festivals and Pilgrimages) of traditional Minho culture organized between June and September. In Minho, one cannot separate food traditions from the other cultural manifestations of the people.

The cultural entertainment is a form of communication between the people and socialization and festivities always involve food provisions.

Other activities are related to the agricultural calendar and are usually organized by civil society organisations and citizen involvement in initiatives of conservation of cultural traditions. For example, the thrashing of the wheat (*malhada*), grape harvest (*vindima*), corn defoliation (*desfolhada*) and again the cultural entertainment associated to playing of the concertina and the gastronomic traditions associated to the particular activity. In the mountain villages it is common to serve stewed goat after completing the thrashing of the wheat, a practice carried out within kinship circles. These activities take place mostly between July and November.

*-Agricultural grassroots initiatives based on the subsistence village economies with traditional food served as the meal for all who worked-.*





*-“Taste of the Sea”, including the annual St. John’s festival, traditionally a celebration of the poor with three staple poor foods—grilled sardines, corn bread (boroa) and cabbage soup (caldo verde)-TODAY celebrated by everyone“-*



*-“Gastronomy and Wine Events, including grape harvest and wine-making opportunities; region-wide annual launch day of the vinho verde red; pairing food with wine workshops; etc”-*



Gastronomy and wine festivals take place in just about every one of the 24 Municipalities. The wine festivals are very popular from the spring until the end of the summer, mostly the white wine. The vinho verde red has not received as much attention. With this project, the red vinho verde will be given extra attention, particularly in the fall as this wine has traditionally been paired alongside the heavy dishes characteristic of the Minho winter diet.

*-“Taste of the countryside”, including reenactment of traditional local markets; and, medieval festivals with typical food of the era” -*

*-“Handicrafts and Gastronomy”-taking place at various municipalities throughout the year, pairing two works of art of Minho-*







## *Cross-collaboration with other ERG Partners*

*“It’s less important to capture all of the knowledge we have and it’s more important to be connected to the people who have the knowledge”*

*-Geoff Parcell (WHO, 2005:727)*

Minho aims to establish the foundation of its gastronomy by basing innovation around its cultural traditions. Within the proposed theme of tradition and innovation, there is clearly a need for innovation within traditional food systems – “in the provision of high quality, safe, healthy and sustainable produced products” and “foster cooperation between gastronomy and other creative sectors” (as in the Aarhus/Central Denmark Region) “for the realization of economic and social added value” (as in the North East Brabant).

Taking the perspective that “Eating is an agricultural act” (by Wendell Berry), the School of Agriculture of the Polytechnic Institute of Viana do Castelo will establish a Regional Centre of Gastronomy of Minho, where all activities related to regional food production, processing and preparation will be coordinated and disseminated including education and training for food producers and restaurant professionals.

*-“Establish a Regional Centre of Gastronomy of Minho, where all activities related to regional food production, processing and preparation will be coordinated, and disseminated including education and training for food producers and restaurant professionals”-*

Cataluña has been quite successful in broadening the involvement of stakeholders, particularly the Universities, to share knowledge and to disseminate all the activities being undertaken to promote local products, cuisine and territory, as a key for a sustainable development. Minho hopes to learn from Cataluña’s experience to develop a gastronomy forum in the region.

Not focusing on the ‘top chefs and Michelin stars’ route but recognizing the need for rethinking food culture, Minho will pursue a series of initiatives to consolidate the importance of gastronomy and the need for some innovation in the region. For example, completing the charter of Minho’s food legacy, much the way as carried out in Cataluña, the certification of restaurants and food producers (network of ‘top restaurants of Minho’ and Minho guide of recommended restaurants). Because food experiences entail quality products, exceptional service and consistency, these initiatives will stimulate healthy competition in the region to achieve the goals for this event and also promote an innovative climate.

*-“ Complete the charter of Minho’s food legacy”-*

*-“Establish healthy competition through the certification of restaurants and food producers contests for top restaurant and top chef/cook”-*

The proprietors of the certified restaurants would then elect the top restaurant of Minho and a contest for the top chef/cook of Minho (not necessarily of restaurants) in which the general public could be involved in the voting process and possibly promote citizen awareness, raising interest and reinforce pride in the region's traditions and the pursuit of retro-innovation as a way to "revitalize the way we look upon local ingredients and food" (as in the regions of Aarhus/Central Denmark and Malta).

Finally, create a series of gastronomy tourist routes (possibly associated to the vinho verde wine route) and other programmes to promote the region's gastronomy (as in Riga – Gauja Region, for example, Delightfully Delicious Riga and the Restaurant Weeks), and potentially aid collaboration with other regions, such as Galicia, or the Basque Country and Asturias.

*–“ Create a series of tourism routes to showcase Minho´s gastronomy”-*

Thus it is proposed instituting a sense of *Minhones* in the pursuit of culinary innovation which would allow visitors to discover Minho's gastronomy. In this sense, Minho can cooperate with, exchange feedback of experiences with and learn from practices at other partner regions. A further example are the markets in Minho

that have become unattractive to cultural and gastronomic tourists. Outdoor markets are falling out of fashion and new modern structures have been built often replacing traditional market buildings that were demolished in the name of modernization. It is necessary to turn these structures and spaces more attractive and to transform them into new forms of consumption. The markets of Cataluña and Marseille Provence could be an inspiration for markets in Minho.

*–“Educate stakeholders on the need to make markets more attractive and consumer-friendly— for both locals and visitors”-*

But other partner regions can also learn considerably from the experiences of Minho where tradition is still predominant. From the "food going back in time" in Malta, to food related programmes in Riga – Gauja and Marseille Provence, to the big on innovation, large scale North East Brabant, Minho could be an important source of information for partner regions on how to stay close to 'authentic' food production, conservation of traditional foods and cooking (the region's culinary heritage) and the level of innovation acceptable by local producers and consumers.

To achieve such cooperation and exchange of ideas, organisations in partner regions are coming together through support for food education. Higher education institutions in Malta, Cataluña, Lombardy and Minho are currently working on a proposal for a Joint Master course in Food Culture, Tourism and Communications under the EU Erasmus+ Programme.





*-“Have school children engage in the region’s food movement”-*



Bilateral agreements between Universities/ Polytechnics in Minho and other partner regions already exist for the mobility of students and academic staff and will seek to expand this network.

Another source of joint cooperation could be the creation of an ERG ‘Quality Label’ / Certification recognizing quality products and food related services to be applied by all ERG regions (good practices, product quality). The use of an ERG logo on local products as a ‘quality seal’. Minho already has intentions for the certification of restaurants and food producers.

Host an International Conference on Gastronomy and Culture, which Minho already has experience in organizing, is another possibility for developing links not only with European countries, but also regions in Asia, Africa, Latin America, etc. Partner regions would come together and exchange good practices of food production, gastronomy tourism and other food related activities. The conference could include parallel sessions on thematic food patterns in order for regions with similar interests to develop links. For example, Minho would have an interest in promoting a *Bacalhau* World Summit (Codfish World Summit) to include regions of production with regions of consumption.

*-“Host an International Conference on Gastronomy and Culture where a Bacalhau World Summit could be organized in parallel”-*

## Education

Education to develop greater awareness about local and regional food, the relationship with people who produce it and issues of nutrition, health and sustainability needs to start with the young. The food we choose to eat, how we decide to eat it, how the food is presented and served to us says a great deal about the culture of the food. Young people need an early start in obtaining knowledge about healthy eating in order to enable them to decide on their future dietary preferences.

Ideally, we would like to see nutrition a systematic part of the primary school curriculum in which children could learn about seasonal foods and eating habits of their region by having direct contact with the producers and experimentation with “good food” at the school’s cafeteria and the socialization component, achieving the aims of education in accordance with the changing social and economic role of society. “Eating together creates union in the group/community and “family that eats together, stays together” (Huffpost Living, 2015).

Have school children engage in the region food movement by obtaining traditional recipes from their parents and grandparents. In this compilation of recipes, both children and adults will learn from one another.

Chefs/cooks and local food producers going to the primary schools, for example with cheeses, smoked meats, vegetables, etc. to show where do these products come from (and get away from the “misunderstanding” that milk comes from a carton at the supermarket!). How they are made and what is their nutritional value. Conduct blind tasting for children to distinguish between a supermarket product and a fresh locally grown and/or made product.

*-“Chefs/cooks and local food producers going to the primary and secondary schools to show why cooking should be based on the finest and freshest local seasonal ingredients”-*

A continuation of this approach in the secondary education would contribute to the relationship between young people and the needs of Europe in the local food movement by focusing on why cooking should be based on the finest and freshest local seasonal ingredients that are produced sustainably and locally.

In Portugal, the national government is considering the transfer of some competencies related to education to the municipal authorities. When this occurs, Minho-IN and its 24 municipalities will be in an excellent position to influence a curricula change and possibly instill a set of guidelines for primary and secondary schools on “Good school meals”.



*-“The Tourism Programme will establish a Research Unit on Tourism, Entrepreneurship and Development to conduct research on this field including the monitoring and evaluation of ERG Minho 2016”-*

At the university level emphasis needs to be placed on sustainable food culture, quality and responsibility and understanding the food chain, placing emphasis on networking skills. In May 2014, the Polytechnic Institute of Viana do Castelo signed an agreement of cooperation with IGCAT for the European Region of Europe initiative.

*-“Creation of a Joint Master course in Food Culture, Tourism and Communications”-*

*-“The Polytechnic will also organize a winter/summer university with a gastronomy related theme in association with partner regions”-*





### *“Minho 2017, 2018, 2019...”*

The year 2015 will be used as a run-up to 2016—we will run events as a “tasting” to put systems in place for hosting the Minho-2016. But what about after 2016, what will follow? How will the sustainability benefits of the event still be felt and what services will continue being provided without requiring continued funding?

The organisers are entrenching sustainability principles and objectives in all areas of the event planning. A long-term view is being taken and regional actors are committed to leave a legacy of enhanced citizen mobilization; built alliances, partnerships and networks; promoting change within a framework of respect for tradition but

forward looking with creativity and innovation approaches, including the transformation of regional food entities into knowledge networks promoting the adaptation of the region’s gastronomy to the realities of the 21st century.

Producing positive lasting outcomes is important to achieve a long-term development of culture and increase the quality of life of citizens. This will require a long-term cultural strategy. Education and training from primary school to higher education will be a step towards creating lasting change and building the capacity of citizens to improve community organization for all citizens in order to achieve the desired changes and promote democratic values.

*-“The Regional Centre of Gastronomy of Minho will continue as a gastronomy forum and centre of research and dissemination long after ERG Minho 2016 comes to an end”-*

We aim to improve awareness of traditional cultural heritage, particularly with emphasis on the younger generation.

Also, capitalizing on the comparative advantages of the region, organising more artistic - cultural - gastronomy programmes while engaging more of the citizens is another sustainability objective being pursued.

Furthermore, key stakeholders are already involved in this bidding and planning stage in order to imbed their commitment and help sustainability strategies emerge, and cultivate them to even after the event comes to an end.

A realistic assessment of the event will convince stakeholders of the need for the implementation of a culture of ongoing monitoring and evaluation of development progress and market research in the region, something that has not

received much attention, much less support from regional authorities.

The certification of the restaurants and food producers' process will begin in 2016 and involve most likely only 4 to 6 units. The evaluation and certification process will achieve greater impact in 2017 and 2018. The same holds for the contests of top chef/cook and top restaurant. Methodology will be tested in 2016, but the bulk of the work will take place in years following the event.

The Regional Centre of Gastronomy of Minho to be created during 2016, will coordinate all activities and research related to food producing, processing and preparation and train and assist operators of small SME's (micro and/or family businesses) in an effort to continue projecting Minho as a gastronomy destination, long after ERG Minho 2016 comes to an end.











Linking the communications and marketing plan to the overall development strategy can not only help reach the sustainability objectives, but also help the market positioning and branding of Minho as a tourist destination and increase international awareness of Minho's gastronomy. The Portuguese diaspora can play a very important role here.

A traditional emigrant region, Minho has not managed to bind the diaspora at its full potential in helping to open markets for Minho as a tourism destination or for the goods produced in and associated with the Minho culture.

“Nostalgia” goods tend to be labor-intensive and, often, artisanal, so that earnings are more likely to be enjoyed at the local and household level. The question here is “do we want people to bring the traditional food to their homes or, only at the place of the roots? Our position is that there is no need to choose one over the other; use gastronomy for destination promotion where Minho's diaspora reside. In addition, the diaspora market for nostalgia goods can offer a measure of protection to small or artisan producers who may be threatened by the standardization of large-scale production for the global market (Newland and Taylor, 2010).





The mobilization of Minho diaspora for increased participation in Minho-2016 is a further objective which the organisers of the event feel will have long-term effects. Contacts will be established for cooperation with *Casas do Minho* (Minho cultural houses) abroad, for example in Lisbon, Newark (USA), Paris (France) and Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) to forge closer links with the region in the form of a Minho world network (diaspora element).

*-“ Contacts will be established for cooperation with Casas do Minho (Minho cultural houses) abroad”-*

### ***Citizen Inclusion***

The success of this project relies heavily upon the goodwill of local residents. As such, it is imperative to involve as many people as possible in order for them to take responsibility for the project’s outputs. Increased stakeholder participation will be encouraged during the planning and implementation phases in order to ensure the successful operation and sustainability of the project. Possibly the biggest challenge will be convincing part of the population of this peripheral rural region often described as a traditional society with an emotional orientation towards the past and a general lack of willingness

for forward-looking innovation and cultural progress. Still, the ERG appears as an attractive project that is likely to catch the interest of the general public as it will identify with the place attachment and to the *Minhones* of the project.

Mobilization of an increasing number of local people will require some effort. Some will be mobilized through civil society organisations /associations such as the Confraternities representative of local gastronomy and wines. Others through the assembly of an Honorary Committee (prestigious individuals in gastronomy, arts, culture and tourism); the contest of the top cook in Minho will be based on popular vote and anyone can be nominated—from a restaurant chef to the grandmother in an isolated village; students from primary to higher education will be involved in educational activities related to the project; to involve volunteers through schemes of the youth institute, particularly during school breaks; people in the countryside participating at the very grassroots level by maintaining the agriculture-based activities that in itself are popular attractions for visitors; performing artists, musicians, folkore groups, etc. as cultural entertainment during the Gastronomic Weekends; through volunteers associations that deal with the planning and implementation of the hundreds of cultural/religious festivals that take place during the summer months and the thousands of volunteers that make these festivals happen, from the entertainment to the logistical support; the showcooking provided by local restaurants; etc.

## *Support of SMEs*

Food markets and characteristic food shops, diverse forms of accommodation with culinary offer, traditional food production systems, specialist producers and processors, restaurants as more than just a place to eat (eatertainment), etc. are some of the types of food-related SME's that could benefit from this event and the expected long-lasting economic benefits.

In the last few years, as a result of support for primary production a range of initiatives have targeted food processing as a conscious attempt to increase the 'added value' of the products such as the production of high quality smoked meats, (*Minho Fumeiro* at Ponte de Lima), and cheeses (*Quinta dos Moinhos Novos* at Póvoa de Lanhoso). These SME's are tapping into the increasing market for traditional products. These products are marketed as being 'artesanal' in that they follow some form of traditional production methods (retro-innovation).

Minho must rediscover local farmers markets and the role of SME's. Minho lays claim to both the oldest (Ponte de Lima) and biggest (Barcelos) regular local markets in Portugal, both being heavily promoted as tourist attractions. In addition travelling stall-holders service markets in most towns and villages and the sale of fresh food products characterise many of these 'local' markets. A significant quantity of fresh and processed food products are sold by individual small 'farmers' and producers who today face the challenge of a rapidly expanding supermarket culture featuring not only aggressive Portuguese chains but also international operators.



Strong linkages between gastronomy, local food production, fisheries, agricultural activities and tourism can create considerable added value and socio-economic development through SMEs by boosting employment and regional growth.

But SME's need to diversify further their business approach to today's ever-demanding consumer. As the overall satisfaction of consumers will highly depend on the quality of the food and services provided by local gastronomy agents, this group will be involved in the project in order to guarantee the desired level of quality. The Regional Centre of Gastronomy of Minho will train operators of small SME's (micro and/or family businesses) to acquire the skills necessary to manage the link between gastronomy and consumers, how to increase the added value of products and to improve their profit margins by working with a new and probably more profitable market.

SME's will be further involved, particularly restaurants and traditional food production systems, through the certification of the quality of their products, participate in the selection of the top restaurant and top cook of Minho, possibility of integrating the list of top restaurants of Minho, etc.



## *European Content and Actions*

All events being planned have a European dimension taking into consideration a diverse range of heritage and linked to the voyages of discovery. From pre-Roman times, maritime trade within Europe and beyond flourished and subsequently it was from the Atlantic seaboard ports that all important voyages of exploration and discovery set sail, of which the Portuguese have a rich history.

Historians and historical archaeologists of the Atlantic World have been primarily concerned with identifying shipping routes, measuring the evolution and volume of trades, and determining their impact on European economies. However, very little work has been done on the consumption of the products traded. Because consumption comes at the end of the distribution chain, it is generally taken for granted and considered as *allant de soi*, whereas it is in fact the initial stage of economic activity. Consumer desires determine the demand for goods traded, and their value, market, and sometimes even method of manufacture (Turgeon, n.d.)

Not only in Portugal. There's Latin America, Italy, and even France, where salt cod played a mighty important role in the history of the world. Seafarers and sinners alike ate this white-fleshed fish by the tons, especially during the Age of Exploration. Governed as they were by the Roman Catholic Church's meatless Fridays and oppressive Lenten restrictions, housewives throughout medieval Europe and in many of the later colonies invented tasty traditions out of what looks like cardboard soaked in the sea (Bertelson, n.d.). Codfish was the first New World product consumed massively in

France by both Catholics and Protestants. Codfish consumption, which was not part of a pre-existing culinary tradition, was the means whereby the French symbolically appropriated the “New-Found-Lands”, made the territory ripe for a permanent colony in Canada in the early seventeenth century, and contributed to the development of a national market and identity (Turgeon, n.d.). Even today, the Nordic countries of Europe and Canada trade codfish to the consuming countries in southern Europe.

During the 20th century, Viana do Castelo was known for its mighty cod fishing fleet that departed from its harbor for the North Atlantic. Author Elaine Sciolino says, “Bacalhau, as the fish is called here, is to Christmas Eve in Portugal what turkey is to Thanksgiving in America. Treasured since the 16th century, when Portuguese fishermen first brought it back from Newfoundland, it bore the nickname *fiel amigo* — faithful friend. Its correct preparation is a source of pride, a sign of respect for family values” (Sciolino, n.d.).

Portugal is the biggest consumer of dried cod in the world (70%), but its fishing fleet captures only 2% of the national need. Codfish is imported mostly from Norway, Canada, Iceland and Russia. But other connections remain, for example the Bacalhau Academy in South Africa.

The trading resulted in an Atlantic Gastronomy characterized as a particular gastronomic style typically found in the Atlantic Ocean coastal regions of different European Countries: northern part of Portugal, Galicia and the north coast of Spain, Brittany in the north-west of France, Ireland, England, and Scotland. In all these regions, gastronomy is linked not only to

some specific type of food and cooking style, but also, and more importantly, to certain ways to socialize and spare time with family and friends.

The Atlantic Diet was first characterized in 2006 by a group of experts and institutions aimed at promoting the Atlantic Gastronomy. The following points were identified: (1) high consumption of fish and seafood, (2) high consumption of fruits and vegetables, (3) Olive oil for cooking and dressing, (4) daily consumption of dairy products, (4) moderate consumption of meat, specially red meat and pork, (5) moderate intake of wine with meals and high intake of water, (6) simple cooking procedures (boiled, grilled, fried with olive oil) in order to preserve the quality of the goods, and (7) traditional Atlantic meal habits based on the slow food concept (Sociedade Portuguesa de Inovação, 2001).

Discovering Atlantic Gastronomy and Discovering Atlantic Health Routes were two bids submitted to the EU Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme (EIP), between partners in Minho and Galicia.

Increasingly, the Portuguese are looking out to sea and the potential that it represents to the national economy, but also culture. For this reason, in 2014 Viana do Castelo established the Centre of the Sea— Centre for Environmental Interpretation and Documentation of the Sea. The location is a former hospital ship that provided assistance to the local fishermen during the months long expedition to the North Atlantic.

The ERG Minho 2016 project will demonstrate the extraordinary diversity of Europe’s shared





cultural heritage based on a rich trading tradition and explore the potential of this under-appreciated transnational European heritage to ensure that cultural heritage makes an even stronger contribution to a sustainable Europe. Initiatives could include a network of fisheries villages, food from the sea in an Atlantic Diet, local touristic nautical activities as well as professional training and events, following the Atlantic Maritime Strategy.

An Atlantic Stakeholder Platform Conference to discuss possible collaboration between Member States will take place on the 20th of January (2015) in Porto.

### *Marketing and Communication Plan*

Gaining the title of the European Region of Gastronomy 2016 offers a unique opportunity to put Minho on the international, gastronomy map. For that to happen, emphasis needs to be placed on marketing the cultural potential of Minho through close cooperation between all 24 municipalities, starting with simple actions of promoting certain events in the media, for example the “Gastronomy Weekends”, in the form of a common strategy in conjunction with promotional initiatives of the regional tourism board (ERTPNP).

Municipalities have started to work on the cultural programme for Minho 2016 and will continue to create an annual calendar of events of interest to the Minho region as well as a map for culinary itineraries.

Edwards et al (2000) argued that gastronomy is an important element of the brand image

of Minho, which ‘contains an agriculturally based society set in a particular landscape, with particular ways of social behaviour and with a distinctive gastronomy’.

But it is common to hear abroad that “I’ve never seen Portuguese cuisine being promoted, much less Minho cuisine”! Still, linking gastronomy to Minho, how gastronomy is an inseparable part of daily lifestyles, can become a powerful tourism marketing tool.

Authenticity has always been viewed as an important aspect of tourism consumption, and seeking out ‘authentic’ local and regional foods can become a motive for visiting a particular destination. Many countries and regions around the world have begun to realise this, and are using gastronomy to market themselves (Richards, 2002). Simultaneously, this action can also contribute to boosting the pride of local people toward their cultural roots, particularly the culinary aspects. Thus, the stakeholders and target groups for which the communication plan should be directed include residents of the Minho, the tourism sector, professionals from the arts and cultural sectors, business community, opinion leaders, politicians/decision-makers, etc.

The entire communication strategy will be planned in detail by marketing professionals taking into consideration the national and international media mix according to the target groups intended and is expected to follow the following format.

The main target group represents culturally motivated visitors. These can be same day visitors or tourists on short breaks (usually 3-4 night



stay). For these tourists, destinations need to have a wider regional context, with attractions based on a distinctive character or way of life of which the landscape, gastronomy and the host community are indispensable for this authentic experience seeking visitors. Culturally motivated tourists are no longer satisfied with observing cultural and natural heritage and events, they want to actually coproduce the cultural experience with more creative activities and they look for the unexpected. As regions struggle to differentiate their products in an increasingly competitive tourism market, food has become one of the major attractions being promoted by many destinations. As well as providing visitors with an aesthetic experience, gastronomy has the added advantage of displaying and supporting the local culture.

Create a functional online (internet and social media, for example Facebook and Twitter) system parallel to the municipalities to ensure readily available and updated information for visitors, or potential visitors, to Minho. Include what to see + what to do + where to eat + where to sleep per municipality + regional routes + recommended restaurants, etc.—perspective of “72 hours in Minho”). Link to interactive tourism offices. This system will include a vast amount of images of Minho available for downloading and links to both, regional entities, for example the interactive tourism offices of the regional tourism board, as well as all partner regions of ERG.

Municipalities will use their existing thematic networking, for example, Viana do Castelo integrates the healthy cities network, Valença the European Walled Towns network, Guimarães the UNESCO network, etc. in order to appeal

to specific market segments associated to the respective themes.

Marketing through big events organized in Minho, for example the city capital of wine, cultural festivals with religious connotations during the summer months, etc. This can take place in the form of entertainment, music programmes or live broadcasts which are quite popular in Portugal and run on all three national major television stations every weekend throughout the year, talk shows that run daily also on all three major television stations and include interviews and/or references to the cultural events taking place, as well as standard news reporting and public interest programming. These strategies can be adapted to other initiatives and not necessarily just during big events.

Even though technology is increasingly used by potential consumers to obtain information of the destinations they are thinking of visiting, or for obtaining information upon arrival at the destination, promotional material in the forms of brochures (in paper and online forms) are still quite popular and will be part of the strategy for Minho 2016. A promotional video is also being considered with different time durations, directed at specific agents promoting the region. The video will compile images from three videos already made under the PROVE Minho-IN project. Both the brochures and the video will reflect the attractions and products of Minho and will be available in different languages, coinciding with the origin of visitors.

Fam and Press Trips of journalists and opinion-makers as well as articles in thematic publications and other channels targeted at



specific segments of the market. This can also include the culinary media shows that are quite popular nationally, for example Chefs Academy and Masterchef.

Participation in national and international trade fairs, for example *Barcelona Degusta* and Barcelona Food Fair, in 2016.

-“ *Participation in national and international trade fairs*”-

Finally, participation in conferences and publications, particularly by academia of the region and communication initiatives at Casas do Minho (Minho cultural houses) and possibly restaurants abroad.



## *Monitoring and Evaluation*

Even though 2016 will be the first year of hosting a European Region of Gastronomy event, it is expected that costs will be relatively high. As the costs will inevitably be drawn from public budgets, particularly of the 24 municipalities associated to the project Minho 2016, it will most likely lead to increasing attention for effective monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the event.

Through a study of indicators to be determined, independent research will carry out a transparent evaluation with a methodology designed to be highly effective in determining

the factors of success/failure and identifying good and bad examples of the event. Possible indicators include: monitoring economic indicators; monitoring attendance; monitoring socio-cultural and environmental indicators; and, monitoring the media and public relations.

An initial workshop will take place with all organizations involved in the monitoring and evaluation to decide upon the managing, methodological, and coordinating functions.

Also, research will be conducted to determine the profile of visitors to the region, possibly using a food related filter question, to identify their socio-demographic, visit motivations and consumption patterns. Specific indicators using quantitative and qualitative data will be pre-determined to define the influence on changes in the region's image, strengthening regional identity and quality of life of residents.

Data will be collected in 2016; Data will be analysed in 2017; and, the writing-up of the report will take place in 2018.

It is expected that the monitoring and evaluation will be conducted by the academia of the region and the coordinating functions and report outputs will be conducted by the Polytechnic Institute of Viana do Castelo.

In addition, a member of the academic staff of the Polytechnic Institute of Viana do Castelo is expected to begin a Ph.D. with a theme related to the monitoring and evaluation of Minho 2016, at a university at one of the partner regions of the European Region of Gastronomy project.

It is difficult to determine the cost of the event, the total expenditure or the total amount of resources earmarked for organizing the ERG Minho 2016, particularly for the cultural programme. All 24 municipalities have already voted on or made financial commitments to the event. The commitments are the same as has taken place for the last few years and having to do with the “Gastronomic Weekends” hosted by all the municipalities during the months of January through May and November (low periods of the year in terms of number of visitors).

**Gastronomic Weekends**

Estimated cost (€)	
24 Municipalities	50.000

Other activities related to the agricultural calendar are usually organized by civil society organisations and citizen involvement in initiatives of conservation of cultural traditions. Costs associated to these events are in the form of symbolic contributions by local authorities. However, there are many of such events organized throughout the year.

**Activities based on agricultural practices**

Estimated cost (€)	
24 Municipalities	50.000

During the summer, over 500 religious festivals take place in Minho. Again, most of the costs are supported by civil society organisations and citizen involvement in initiatives of conservation of cultural traditions and the bigger festivals, the so-called Municipal Festival, are financed in a major part by local authorities.

**Festivals, Pilgrimages and Food Traditions**

Estimated cost (€)	
24 Municipalities	1.000.000

**Other Thematic and Food Related Events**

Estimated cost (€)	
24 Municipalities	1.000.000

Other significant items to include in an eventual operating budget includes wages/salaries, local initiatives directly related to gastronomy, for example, the certification of restaurants and food producers, contests for top restaurant and chef/cook, education and training, creating the Regional Centre of Gastronomy of Minho, promotion and marketing, monitoring, regular meetings of stakeholders in the region and abroad as well as costs associated with undertaking the bid for ERG Minho 2016.



### Other Activities (2016 and 2017)

	Estimated cost (€)
Certification of Restaurants and food producers	150.000
Contests for top restaurant and chef/cook	100.000
Education and training (restaurant operators and food producers)	150.000
Joint Master degree in Food, Tourism and Communication	20.000
Regional Centre of Gastronomy of Minho	300.000
3rd International Gastronomy Conference and 1st Bacalhau World Summit	90.000
Participation in national and international trade fairs	80.000
Comprehensive Charter of Minho's food/gastronomy legacy	250.000
Pursuing the Atlantic Diet	100.000
Collaboration with Minho cultural houses (Lisbon, Newark, Paris and Rio de Janeiro)	50.000
Winter/Summer University on Gastronomy	20.000
Marketing and Communication Plan	150.000
Monitoring and Evaluation	70.000
Meetings of Regional Partners	20.000
Meetings of European Partners	20.000
Sub-total	1.570.000

The estimate of the available funding sources and their volume has been made on the basis of discussions with representatives of the 24 municipalities in the 3 inter-municipal communities that comprise the Consortium Minho-IN, the Regional Operational Programme for the period 2015-2020 and the Ministry of Culture.

It is expected that the Regional Development and Coordination Commission of the North Region (CCDRN) will provide funds through a strategy for the development of the Minho Region for the period 2015-2020 and act as a strategic partner and co-financing institution of the project, drawing on EU Funds and other potential grants, for example the INTERREG V-A Programme, as well as initiatives planned under the Atlantic Action Plan. Projects are normally for a period of two years. So, most activities and costs proposed on the table (previous page) will start in 2016 and continue to 2017 and possibly 2018.


Additional operating income in the form of contributions from the business sector and non-profit organizations has also been considered.











## Application Process

Minho-IN entrusted the bidding stage to Carlos Fernandes, Associate Professor and Course Leader of BA in Tourism at the Polytechnic Institute of Viana do Castelo and Grand Master of the Confraternity of Gastronomes of Minho, for putting together the application to compete for the title of European Region of Gastronomy 2016. A series of meetings were held with regional stakeholders, Minho-IN provided relevant documents, project reports and images of Minho for possible inclusion in the application, graduate students of the Master course in Innovative Tourism Development of the Polytechnic Institute of Viana do Castelo assisted in the preparation of this application and the candidacy of Ostrava-Candidate for the title of European Capital of Culture 2015 was used as a reference and which inspired the slogan “Minho has already begun”.

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### Graphic Design

Graphic Design conducted by Ana Filomena Curralo of the Polytechnic Institute of Viana do Castelo.

### Photographs

Photos supplied by Carlos Fernandes, Polytechnic Institute of Viana do Castelo, Minho-IN, Regional Tourism Board of Porto and the North of Portugal, Confraternity of Gastronomes of Minho, the Municipality of Viana do Castelo and google.com.

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