



MIGRANTES-EMPREENDEDORES E O TURISMO NO ALGARVE  
**T-rELMA**  
TOURISM-RELATED ENTREPRENEURIAL LIFESTYLE MIGRATION IN THE ALGARVE

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# Lifestyle migrant entrepreneurism and the sustainable development of tourism and rural areas in the Algarve



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## Goal:

The Algarve is best known as a sun and sea destination for both tourists and lifestyle migrants, with a corresponding high level of development along the southern coastal belt. Compared to other regions of Portugal, there has been relatively little development of the inland and rural areas of the Algarve in terms of tourism, although recently there has been a move towards incentivizing rural and nature-based tourism as a means of both expanding the region's tourism offer and contributing to a possible social and economic regeneration of these areas.

The ongoing T-rELMA project (Tourism-related Entrepreneurial Lifestyle Migration in the Algarve) seeks to explore the extent to which (and how, and why) lifestyle migrants in the Algarve are taking up entrepreneurial activities that contribute to the production of tourism in rural spaces, and to better understand links between local entrepreneurship and the sustainable development of both tourism and rural areas of the Algarve. The goal of this presentation is to provide an overview of the project and to discuss some of the preliminary findings.

## Method:

The research design comprises (1) identifying tourism-related entrepreneurial activity in rural areas of the Algarve; (2) conducting an online questionnaire survey aimed at profiling the migrant entrepreneurs and their businesses; (3) in-depth interviews with migrant entrepreneurs and other key stakeholders to explore motivations, experiences, impacts, challenges and successes.

## Findings:

Although still in an initial phase, preliminary findings reveal that there are evident clusters of migrant-entrepreneurs in certain rural areas of the Algarve who are involved in a wide range of tourism activities including local accommodation, catering services, health and wellness, nature-based activities, bicycle rentals and guided tours, water sports, etc. On the other hand, very little is being done by local authorities to support, incentivize, or monitor this type of entrepreneurship or to assess its potential impacts.

## Limitations:

The research project is exploratory in nature, but some limitations as to its representativeness have been noted; for example, we have experienced difficulties in identifying migrant entrepreneurs due to a lack of systematized and updated information in the available databases (e.g. the National Tourism Register of businesses).

## Practical implications:

The envisaged outcomes of this research project include firstly, for the migrants themselves, providing a basis for support in terms of developing networking activities as well as deepening their understanding of the challenges faced and the support measures available to overcome these challenges. Secondly, the findings might also support the emerging policy agenda of rural areas in the Algarve.

## Originality:

Building on studies carried out in other parts of Europe, the theoretical underpinning of this research enables us to go beyond the dominant understanding of lifestyle migration as a form of consumption-based migration in areas already developed for tourism, and to explore the potential interactions among peripheral and lagging rural areas and their populations, relatively privileged migrants, rural tourism activities, public sector stakeholders and sustainable development.

## Keywords:

Lifestyle migration; entrepreneurship; rural areas; rural tourism; sustainable development.