

ESG LAB Activity 4

National Mentoring Report Five Aveiro SMEs

Country: Portugal | Partner organisation: Dialogue Diversity Lda | SMEs covered: 5

Reporting period: 21–29 September 2026

1. Implementation Overview

Carlos Gomes da Costa provided face-to-face diagnostic mentoring to five Aveiro enterprises between 21 and 29 September 2026: Aveiro Emotions (21 September), Horta dos Peixinhos (22 September), Hotel As Américas (23 September), Baga do Sal / Trincadeira (24 September) and Horta da Ria (28–29 September). The ESG scoring questionnaire, training-needs self-assessment and reporting checklist were explained, shared and completed or reviewed with each enterprise. These dates identify five company engagements across six calendar dates; the documents do not provide a separate verified count of sessions or a consolidated attendance register. Each company has a 27-action reporting checklist and plans to begin work in October 2026 and complete it by the end of January 2027.

2. Profile of Participating SMEs

SME	Sector and activity	ESG starting point	Mentor
Horta da Ria	Salicornia cultivation and food products in the Ria de Aveiro	81/100 (E33, S26, G22); 27 unstarted; 28–29 Sep	Carlos Gomes da Costa
Horta dos Peixinhos	Salicornia cultivation and related food products; organic claims to substantiate	72/100 (E27, S24, G21); 27 unstarted; 22 Sep	Carlos Gomes da Costa
Hotel As Américas	Urban hotel accommodation and guest services	71/100 (E15, S30, G26); 27 unstarted; 23 Sep	Carlos Gomes da Costa
Aveiro Emotions	Tourism experiences, including moliceiro trips and partner offers	64/100 (E21, S22, G21); 27 unstarted; 21 Sep	Carlos Gomes da Costa
Baga do Sal / Trincadeira	Guesthouse and restaurant; combined scope to confirm	52/100 (E12, S20, G20); 27 unstarted; 24 Sep	Carlos Gomes da Costa

3. Mentoring Implementation

One mentor worked with all five enterprises. The diagnostic started with the environmental, social and governance scoring questions, followed by the company's training-needs ratings and a review of the reporting checklist. The support was adapted to two salicornia producers, an urban hotel, a tourism-experience provider and a guesthouse/restaurant case. The mentor linked questions to operational records, clarified reporting boundaries and assigned or discussed one company action owner. The supplied checklists are September baselines: all 135 items are marked "not started". No later follow-up or completed reporting output is documented. Horta da Ria's intermediate deadlines require alignment with its agreed 31 January 2027 target; the other four checklists include dated milestones ending on 27 or 29 January.

4. Main ESG Needs Identified

The self-assessed results range from 52 to 81 out of 100 (unweighted mean 68). Environmental scores vary most, from 12/36 for Baga do Sal / Trincadeira to 33/36 for Horta da Ria. Four of the five companies answer negatively on emissions measurement and reporting; all five request strong support with environmental

indicators. Reliable energy, water, fuel, waste and activity data, with clear units, reporting periods and sources, are the common immediate need. The indicators must fit each activity: cultivation and production for the salicornia enterprises; guest-nights for accommodation; meals for catering where included; and trips or passengers for directly operated tourism experiences. Positive self-assessment answers should be checked against evidence before they become report claims.

Across the five questionnaires, supplier social-risk assessment is marked negatively by every company; four report no organisation-wide risk-management and internal-control procedures. Measured community outcomes are absent in four cases. The reporting boundary needs particular care where Aveiro Emotions sells partner experiences and where Baga do Sal and Trincadeira may involve guesthouse and restaurant operations or different legal entities. Horta dos Peixinhos' "SIM" answer to the question on significant environmental incidents or legal action needs clarification before a compliance statement is made. These are diagnostic priorities, not verified findings of incidents, missing records or legal non-compliance.

5. ESG LAB Tools and Resources Used

Tool or resource	Evidence in supplied files	Purpose or next use
ESG scoring questionnaire	5	Self-assessed E, S and G baselines and diagnostic gaps
Training-needs questionnaire	5	Eleven ratings per SME; learning preferences where selected
ESG reporting checklist	5	27 planned actions per SME; 135 unstarted at baseline
Reporting Plan, Toolkit, Template and webinar materials	Use not evidenced	Consider in targeted follow-up; do not count as used
Community of Practice or expert support	0 new referrals; prior participation for Horta dos Peixinhos	CoP and webinar on 30 July; targeted follow-up as needed

All five companies used the ESG scoring questionnaire, training-needs self-assessment and 27-item reporting checklist during the diagnostic. The tools provided comparable baselines and company-specific tasks. The training-needs forms contain eleven ratings per company; the selected formats are online for Hotel As Américas and hybrid for Horta dos Peixinhos and Aveiro Emotions. Horta da Ria and Baga do Sal / Trincadeira did not mark a format. Use of the separate ESG Reporting Plan, Toolkit, reporting template or webinar material during the September mentoring is not documented. Horta dos Peixinhos' earlier webinar and CoP participation on 30 July is recorded separately.

6. Main Results of the Mentoring Process

Result indicator	Documented position
SMEs mentored	5
Mentoring sessions completed	Five company engagements across six dates; distinct session count not supplied
SMEs using the three diagnostic/planning tools	5
ESG Report or Draft outputs produced	0 evidenced during September mentoring
SMEs connected with CoP or experts	0 new referrals during mentoring; earlier CoP participation documented for Horta dos Peixinhos

Five ESG scores and training-needs profiles were completed, and five checklists identify 135 actions for follow-up. At the September baseline, none of those actions is recorded as in progress or complete. No ESG report or draft is documented as produced during the mentoring period. The tangible result is a diagnostic and an October–January work programme, with named checklist owners for Horta da Ria (Júlio Coelho),

Hotel As Américas (Paula Brandão) and Aveiro Emotions (Virgílio Porto). Horta dos Peixinhos (João Loura). Sandra Borges is the sole owner for Baga do Sal / Trincadeira as confirmed by the company.

7. Training Needs Identified

Priority training need	Frequency and rating	Diagnostic link
Environmental indicators and monitoring	5 of 5: high	All rated this topic 5/5; define few activity-specific metrics.
Transparent ESG reporting	5 of 5: high	All rated 4/5 or 5/5; set boundaries, source references and checks.
Community impact and staff development	5 of 5: high	Both themes rated 4/5 or 5/5 by all five; distinguish activities from outcomes.
Governance and reporting oversight	5 of 5: high	All rated 4/5 or 5/5; clarify owners, risk controls and approval.

Environmental indicators and monitoring are rated 5/5 by all five companies. Transparent ESG reporting also scores 4/5 or 5/5 in every case. Community-impact reporting, staff-development records and governance oversight recur at 4/5 or 5/5 across the group, although the relative order differs by company. Aveiro Emotions rates all eleven topics 5/5, which indicates broad demand without a ranking; the mentor should sequence its support using the scoring gaps and reporting tasks. Horta da Ria prioritises indicators and transparent reporting (both 5/5); Horta dos Peixinhos additionally rates environmental compliance and communication, social impact and staff training 5/5; the hotel rates indicators and transparent reporting 5/5; and Baga do Sal / Trincadeira rates indicators, social impact, staff training and governance oversight 5/5. Supplier due diligence and risk controls merit targeted support even where no separate training question covered them.

8. Challenges Encountered

The main practical challenge is converting broad yes/no answers into traceable records and a small number of meaningful indicators. The five sectors need different reporting boundaries, denominators and ways to explain seasonal variation. All five companies rely on one person to coordinate every action; the hotel and Aveiro Emotions state that no other qualified employee is available to take responsibility. This creates a risk of overloading the owner while evidence still needs to be requested from operations, finance, staff or partners. The Baga do Sal / Trincadeira boundary and Horta dos Peixinhos' incident response require early resolution. The mentor used phased checklists and company-specific examples to address the planning challenge. Actual data availability and time constraints should be tested at the first follow-up, rather than reported as established obstacles.

9. Lessons Learned

Face-to-face completion of the three tools gave each enterprise a concrete baseline and linked ESG language to its operations. Scores alone do not indicate report readiness: even Horta da Ria's 81/100 self-assessment sits alongside 27 unstarted tasks. The strongest cross-company learning is to confirm the reporting boundary, establish a simple evidence register, and define a few defensible indicators before drafting a narrative. A single action owner can coordinate the process if other record holders have clear requests and management review is scheduled. The training questionnaire reveals demand for support, while the scoring answers and

checklist show where that support should begin. Follow-up should measure completed actions and verifiable data, not changes in self-assessed scores alone.

10. Recommendations

In the first October follow-up, confirm the legal entities, sites, activities and reporting period for each enterprise. Resolve the Baga do Sal / Trincadeira boundary, distinguish Aveiro Emotions' own and partner services, clarify Horta dos Peixinhos' incident answer, and enter missing owner names in the two checklists. For each company, create a concise evidence register with document source, period, unit, responsible record holder and any estimate. Provide short, activity-specific training on environmental indicators and transparent reporting, with supplier screening and a proportionate risk register. Use online support for the hotel, hybrid support for Horta dos Peixinhos and Aveiro Emotions, and confirm the preferences of the other two. Review status against milestones, reserve January for reconciliation and management approval, and complete all actions by 31 January 2027. A targeted expert or Community of Practice referral should follow only from a defined technical gap and be documented.

11. SME Feedback Summary

The training-needs selections are the available record of requested support; three companies also selected a delivery format. The representatives participated in the diagnostic and agreed to the October–January action plans. No consolidated satisfaction survey, direct quotations or post-session evaluations are supplied, so this report does not attribute praise, increased confidence or learning gains to the five enterprises. At the first progress review, the mentor should record which tools were useful, which evidence requests proved difficult and what further support each action owner requests.

12. Community of Practice and Networking Contribution

Horta dos Peixinhos was already a CoP member and participated in the 30 July 2026 morning CoP session and webinar alongside Porto de Aveiro and Porto de Leixões. This prior engagement provided access to project resources and peer discussion; it is not counted as a connection created by the September mentoring. Existing academic or commercial relationships in other company contexts likewise predate these sessions. Future targeted support could address cultivation and biodiversity indicators for the producers, hospitality utility and waste data, or tourism partner information. Any subsequent referral should record the technical gap, contact, advice and practical outcome. The number of new referrals attributable to the September phase remains zero.

13. Overall Conclusions

The national mentoring phase covered five Aveiro enterprises with one mentor and produced five self-assessed ESG baselines, five training-needs profiles and five company-specific reporting plans. The overall score range is 52–81/100; environmental measurement and evidence, supplier social due diligence and proportionate risk controls recur across the group. At the September baseline, all 135 reporting actions remain unstarted and no ESG draft is evidenced. The companies intend to start in October and finish by the end of January 2027. The next measure of achievement is documented progress: confirmed reporting scope, source records, consistent indicators, updated checklist statuses and management-approved reports. The mentor should pace support around the single action owners and escalate technical questions only when the initial evidence review identifies a specific need.

14. Annexes and Supporting Evidence

The five company reports and their scoring and checklist workbooks form the supporting diagnostic record: Horta da Ria; Horta dos Peixinhos; Hotel As Américas; Aveiro Emotions; and Baga do Sal / Trincadeira.

Source note: Company scores, training ratings, mentoring dates, statuses and action-owner information are consolidated from the company-specific diagnostic documents and referenced workbooks. Results are self-assessments, and the checklists represent September planning baselines.