



8TH
INTERNATIONAL
WILDLAND FIRE
CONFERENCE

GOVERNANCE
PRINCIPLES:
Towards an
International
Framework



The Importance of data in Disaster Management: A Look at VOST Portugal's Initiatives in Real-Time Information Sharing and Disinformation Prevention

João Pires Ribeiro
VOST-PT & Técnico

Porto, 17th May 2023

VOST

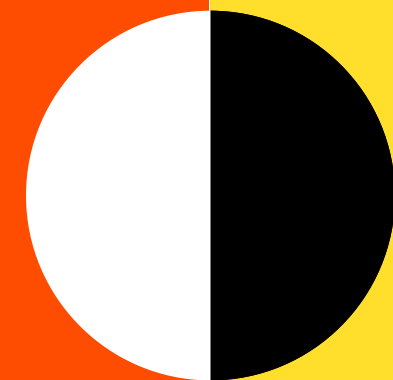
what are they?

VIRTUAL OPERATIONS SUPPORT TEAMS

The VOST concept was born in the United States, in 2011. Its purpose was the creation of digital volunteers groups that would help the communication of official entities during an emergency, while gathering potentially useful information on social networks and sharing it back with those entities.

VOST are multidisciplinary teams with multiple skills that use social media as a privileged communication channel with citizens.

There are currently over 40 VOST in the world



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HISTORICAL SUMMARY - PATH TO WHERE WE ARE



Monchique Wildfires (2018)

Citizens group comes together organically to gather information on the ground and post it on Twitter



VOST Europe (2018)

Formal invitation to join VOST Europe



Hurricane Leslie (2018)

A more organized and enlarged team monitors the situation in the center of the country before, during, and after the passage of hurricane Leslie through mainland Portugal



VOST Portugal - Association (2019)

VOST Portugal legally becomes an association, reflecting the commitment of its founders to this project

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TEAM AND SKILL SET



Multidisciplinary

Developers, OSINT, Civil Protection, Psychologists, Amateur Meteorologists, Researchers, Firefighters, Social Sciences, Data Science, Designers, etc etc etc



Active Citizenship

Criticize, but present solutions that lead to problem solving, independence, continuous learning and quick adaptation to new realities



Digital Native

The entire team understands the power of social media, technology, open data and open source, and how best to use them for good



Motto

Working towards invisibility, always with transparency

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MAIN AREAS OF ACTION



Dissemination

Translation of official messages to shareable content on social media

Monitoring

Monitoring of social networks during an event to identify content that may be useful to the official entities involved

Pedagogy

In times of peace, production and publication of pedagogical content with varied and updated objectives.

Tech4Good

Development of technological solutions, in a timely manner, that allows a more efficient risk management

Fighting misinformation

Identification of online misinformation and its reporting to the platforms, as well as correction / clarification of misinformation

R&D

Contribution with know-how and practical experience with R&D institutions and academics in the areas of DRM

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MAIN AREAS OF ACTION

Dissemination

Translation of official messages into shareable content on social networks



IPMA
@ipma_pt

AVISOS METEOROLÓGICOS 08/12 1103 (Continente)
Foram emitidos avisos meteorológicos de AGITAÇÃO MARÍTIMA. Nível máximo do aviso: LARANJA. +info: zpr.io/68wMk

[Translate Tweet](#)

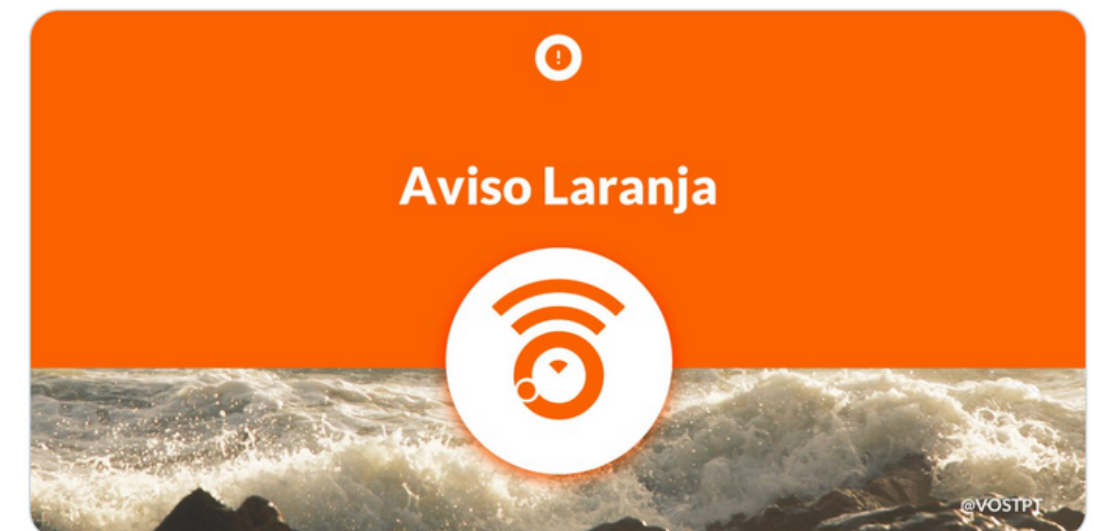
11:45 AM · Dec 8, 2021 · Zapier.com



VOST Portugal
@VOSTPT

[i](#) [!](#) [C](#) [#AvisoLaranja](#) devido a [#AgitaçãoMarítima](#) entre as 09:00h do dia 08DEZ21 e as 06:00h do dia 09DEZ21 para o distrito de [#Setubal](#) [C](#) [!](#) [i](#)

[Translate Tweet](#)



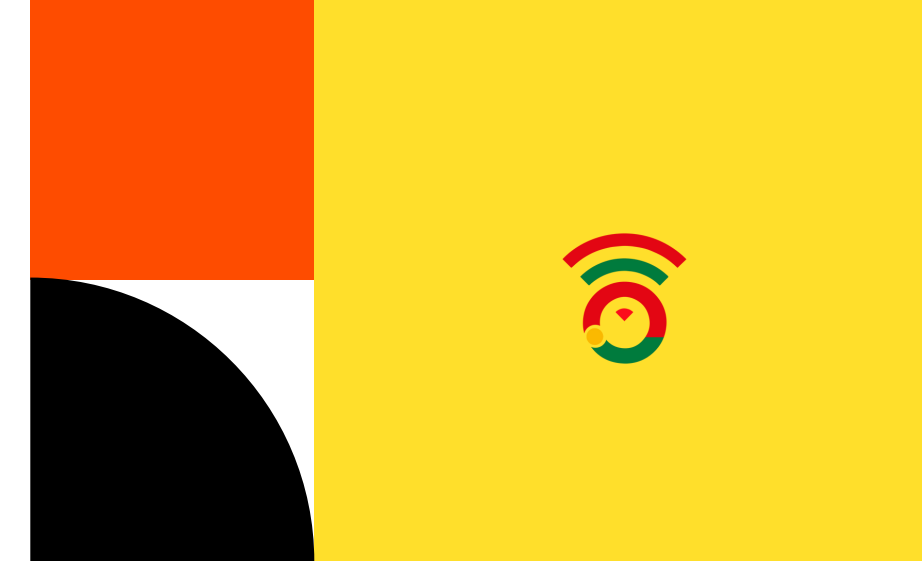
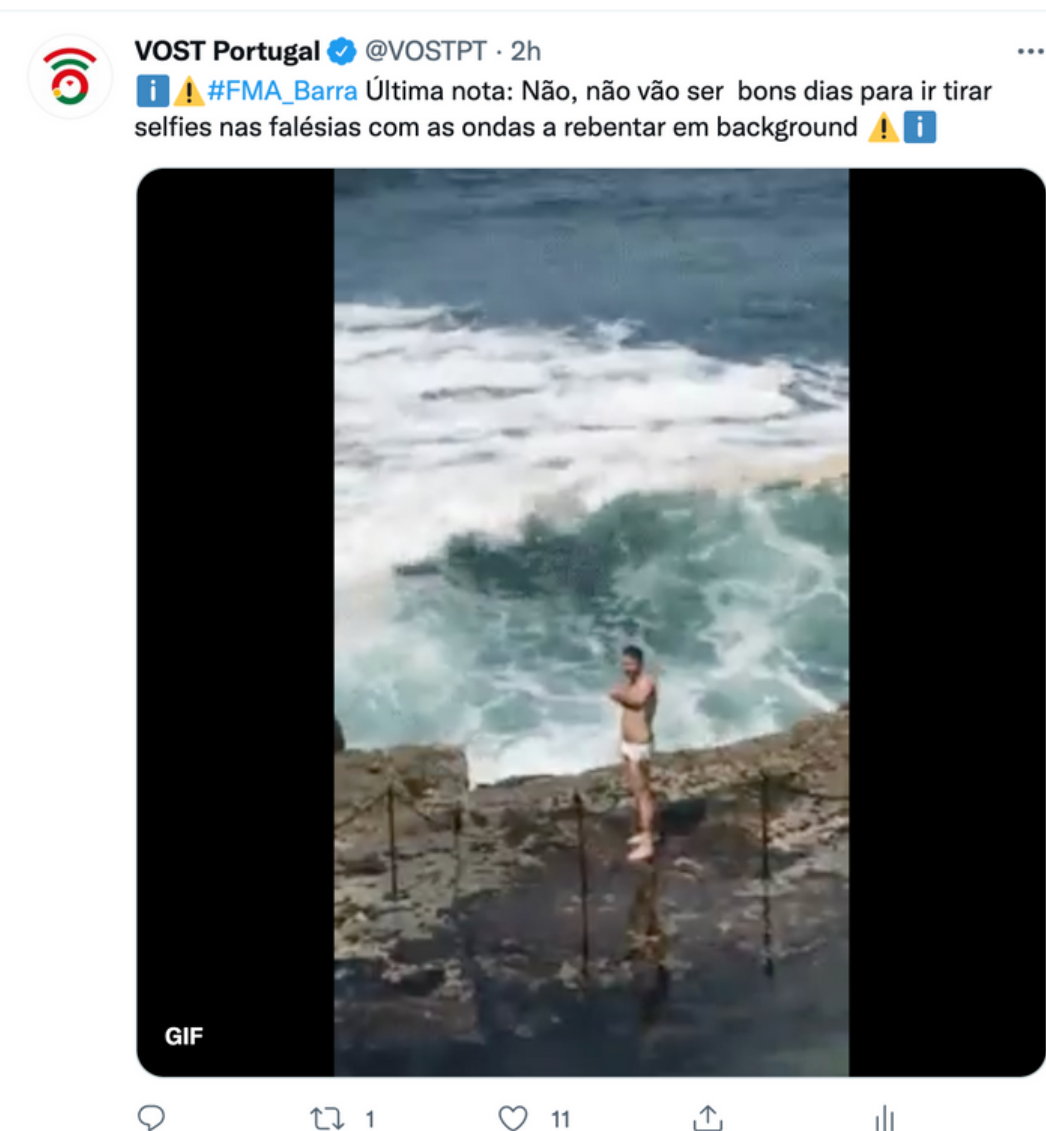
4:30 PM · Dec 6, 2021 · VOSTPTia

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MAIN AREAS OF ACTION

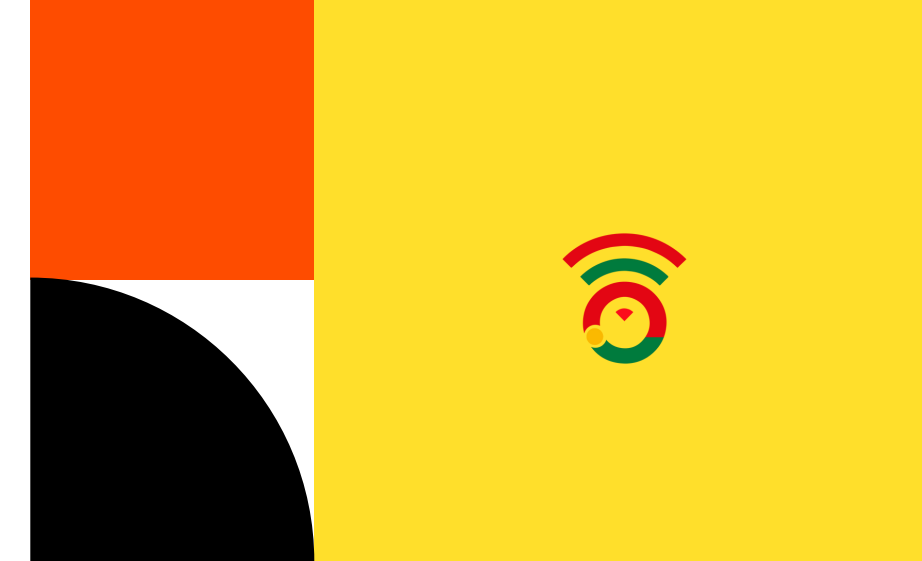
Disseminação

Translation of official messages into shareable content on social networks



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MAIN AREAS OF ACTION



Monitoring

Monitoring of social networks, during an event, to identify content that may be useful to the official entities involved

Code of Practice on Disinformation Signatory. Co-coordinator of Crisis Response Subgroup

<https://disinfocode.eu/>

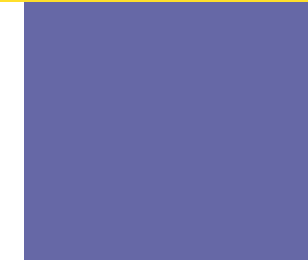
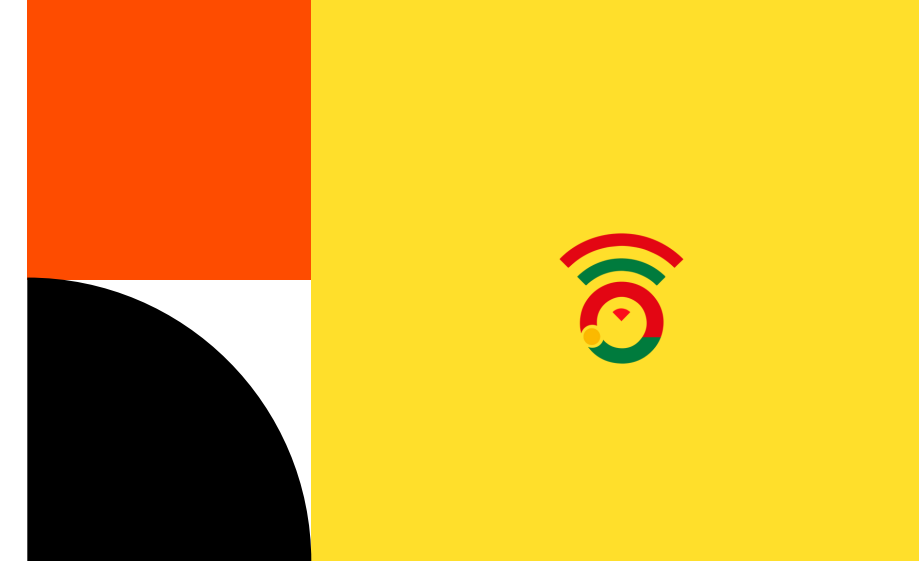
The image shows a social media monitoring interface. On the left, there are four search results for the term 'trovões' (thunder). The top result is from @ingrid_saranah, followed by @camila, CMMV, and Kristal. In the center, there are search results for 'relâmpagos' (lightning) and 'chuva' (rain). The 'chuva' result includes a weather forecast for Figueira da Foz. On the right, there is a search result for 'inundação' (flooding) from Victor Ribas Pereira. Below these is a dashboard for 'emergência' (emergency) with various filters like Facebook, Pages, Last 24 Hours, Post Type, Pages, Language, Branded Content, and Verified Status. It also includes filters for Lists, Local Relevance, Page Category, Portugal only, and Meme Search. Two informational messages are displayed: 'Results include posts from Facebook Pages with Page admins primarily located in Portugal.' and 'Posts with the most interactions do not equal posts with the most content views or reach. Check out the Widely Viewed Content Report at Facebook's Transparency Center.' At the bottom, a line graph shows 'INTERACTIONS' (29,534) and 'POSTS' (493) over an 'EXTENDED 7-DAY TIME PERIOD' from Dec 02, 2021 to Dec 09, 2021.

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MAIN AREAS OF ACTION

Pedagogy

In times of peace, production and publication of pedagogical content with varied and updated objectives.



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MAIN AREAS OF ACTION

Pedagogy

LINKS is a animated series, with 10 episodes, produced by VOST Portugal, in cooperation with Facebook / META and the Portuguese Press Association (API)



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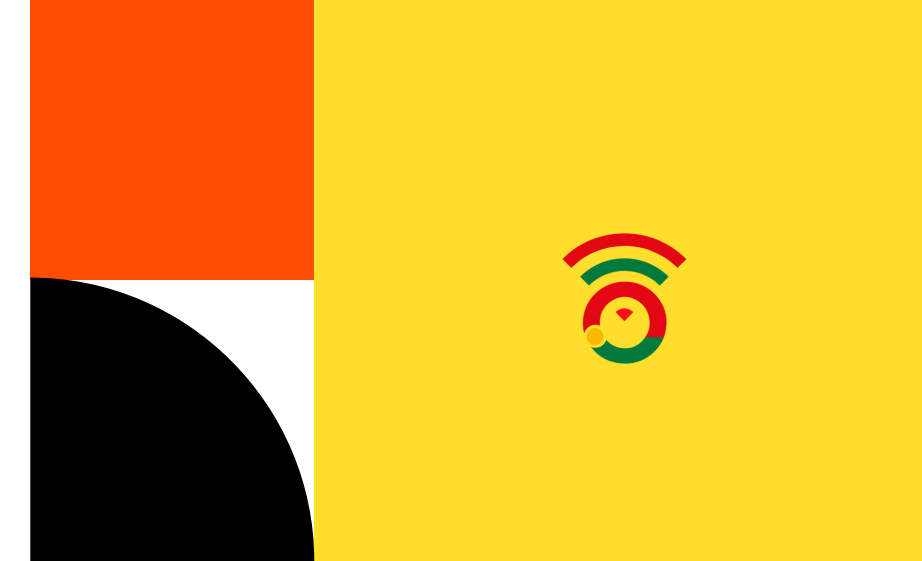
MAIN AREAS OF ACTION

Tech4Good

Development of technological solutions, in a timely manner, that allow a more efficient risk management



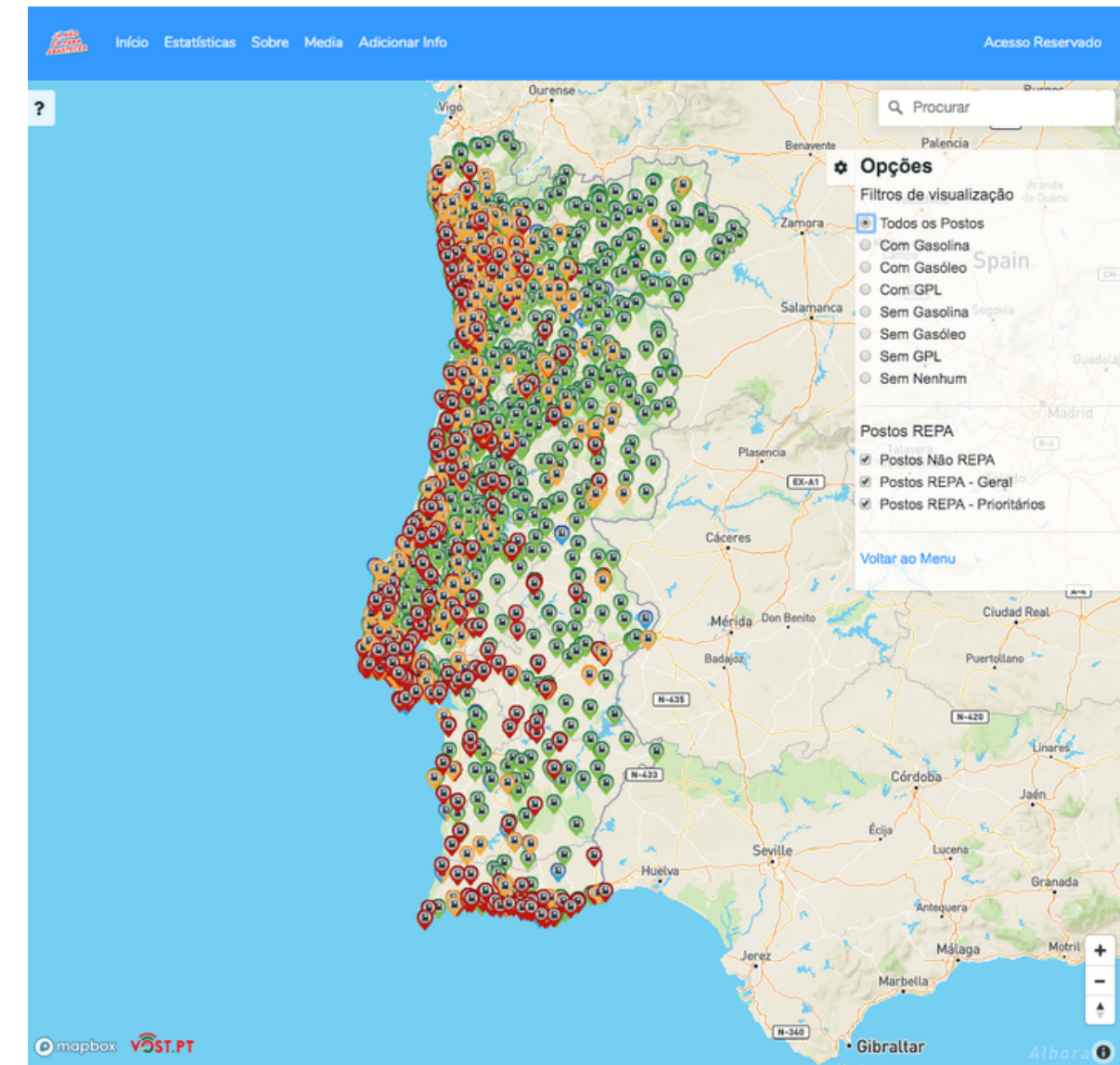
VOST PORTUGAL



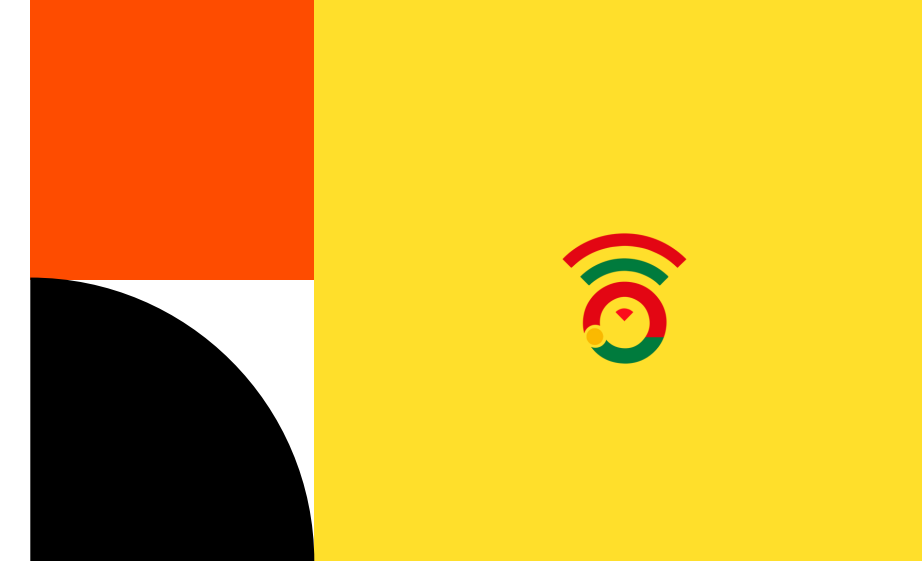
Tech4Good

"Já Não Dá para Abastecer" was deployed in less than 5h to crowdsource information regarding the capacity of fuel stations, during the fuel distribution strike in Portugal. The data was shared with the public and authorities that used it as a tool to support the decision-making process, during a strike that stopped, literally the country.

**JÁ NÃO
DÁ PARA
ABASTECER**



VOST PORTUGAL

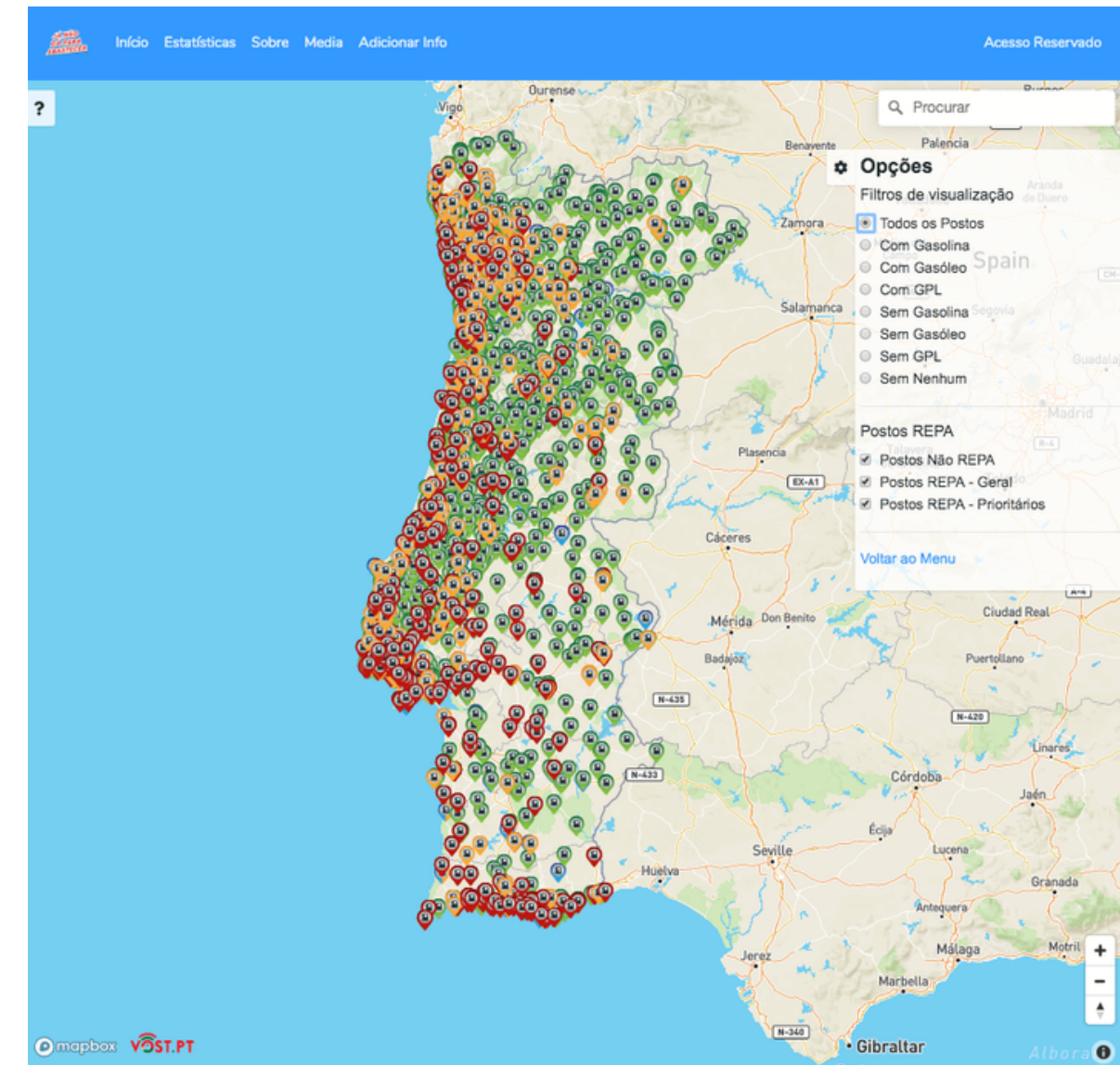


TESTIMONY

"the reliable information from all the gas stations that had fuel, when there was a strike by the truck drivers, was given by VOSTPT. We were able to have an updated dashboard because VOSTPT was giving us the information".

DUARTE COSTA
ANEPC PRESIDENT

**JÁ NÃO
DÁ PARA
ABASTECER**





But does it work?



Does it have an impact? Is it worth it?

JNDPA DATA

Abril e Agosto 2019

PageViews

2.30M

Peak Users on the site at the same time

169646



But does it work?



Does it have an impact? Is it worth it?

FOGOS.PT DATA

2021

Notifications

33M

Sessions

31225447



Fogos.pt

LOCAL

Beja, Serpa, Vila Verde De Ficalho - E.N. 260 (SÃO JORGE (FICALHO)) [Mais detalhes](#)

INÍCIO

17-05-2023 07:38

NATUREZA

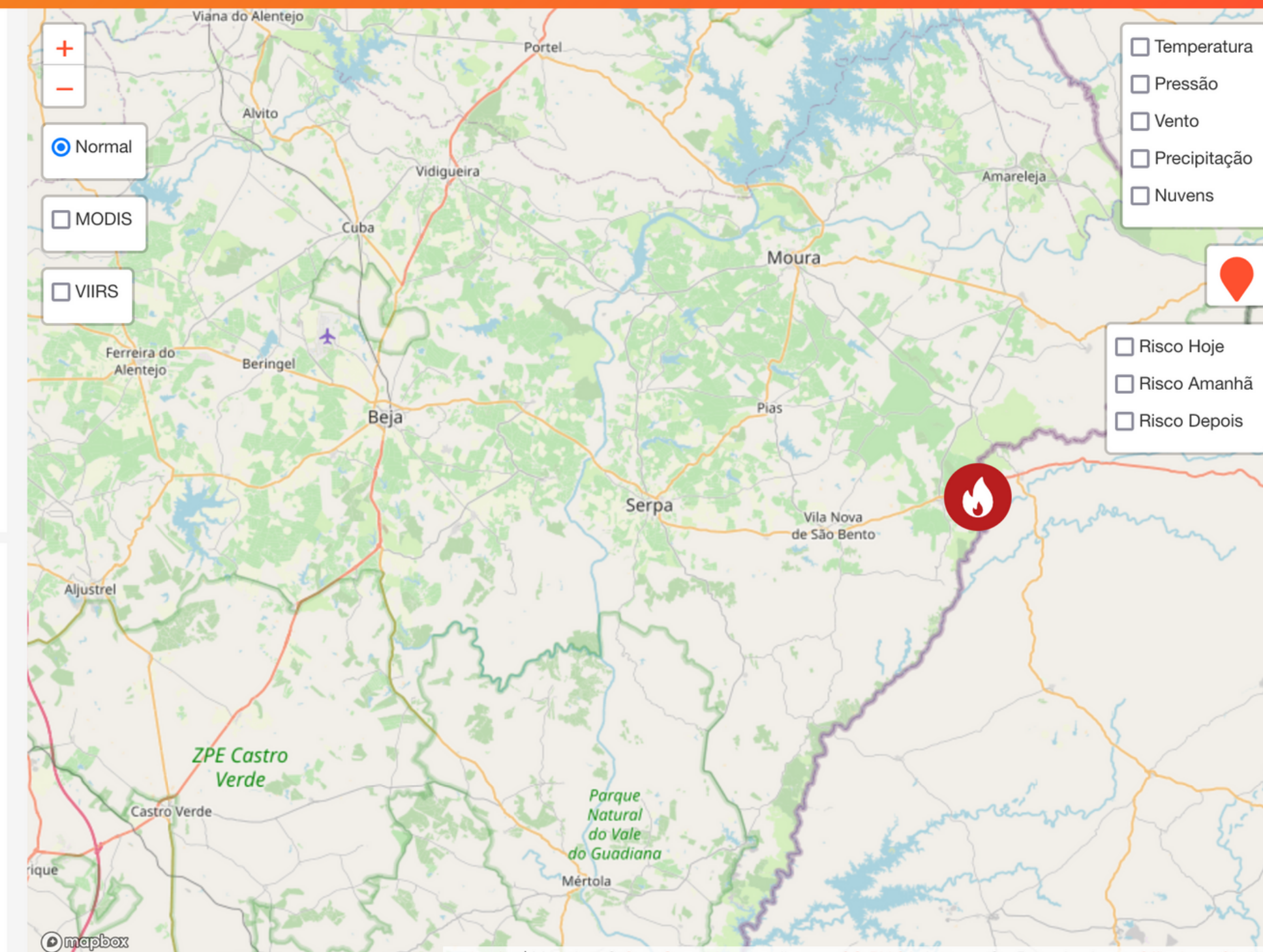
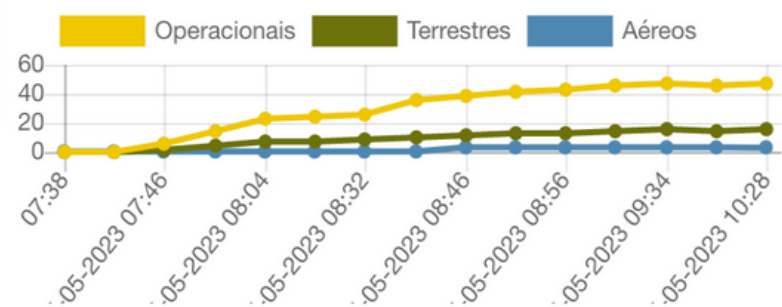
Agrícola

LOCALIZAÇÃO

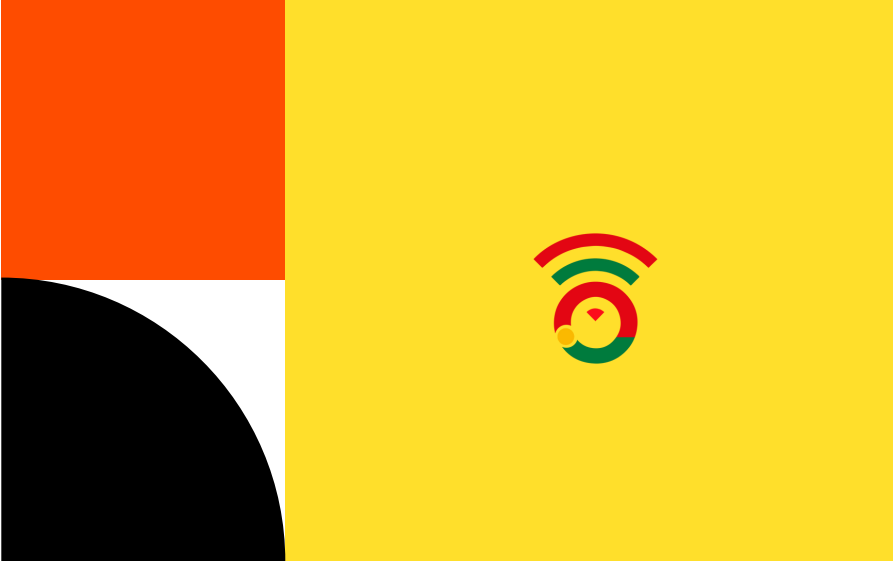
 37.95588,-7.271392

MEIOS

 47  15  2

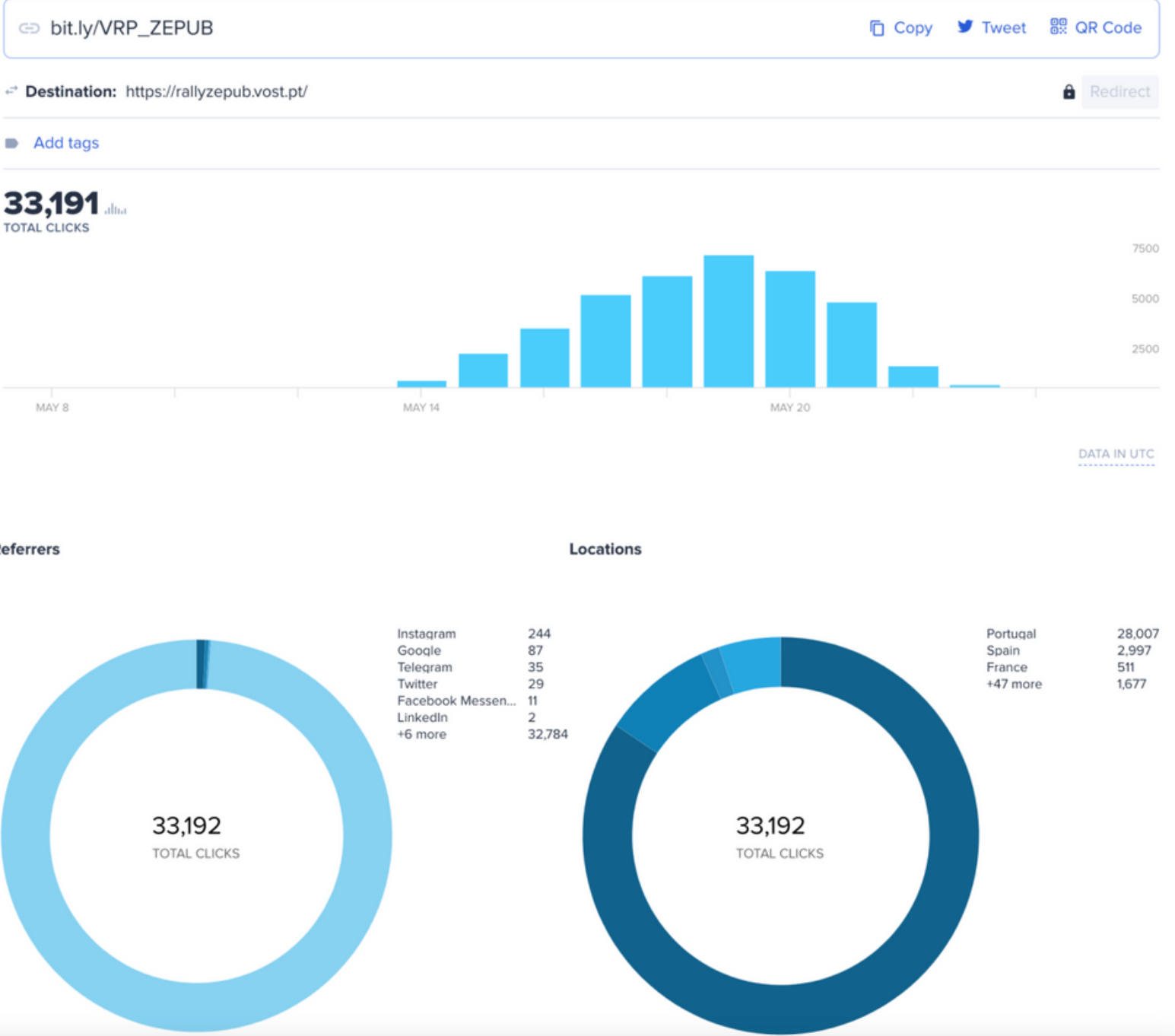
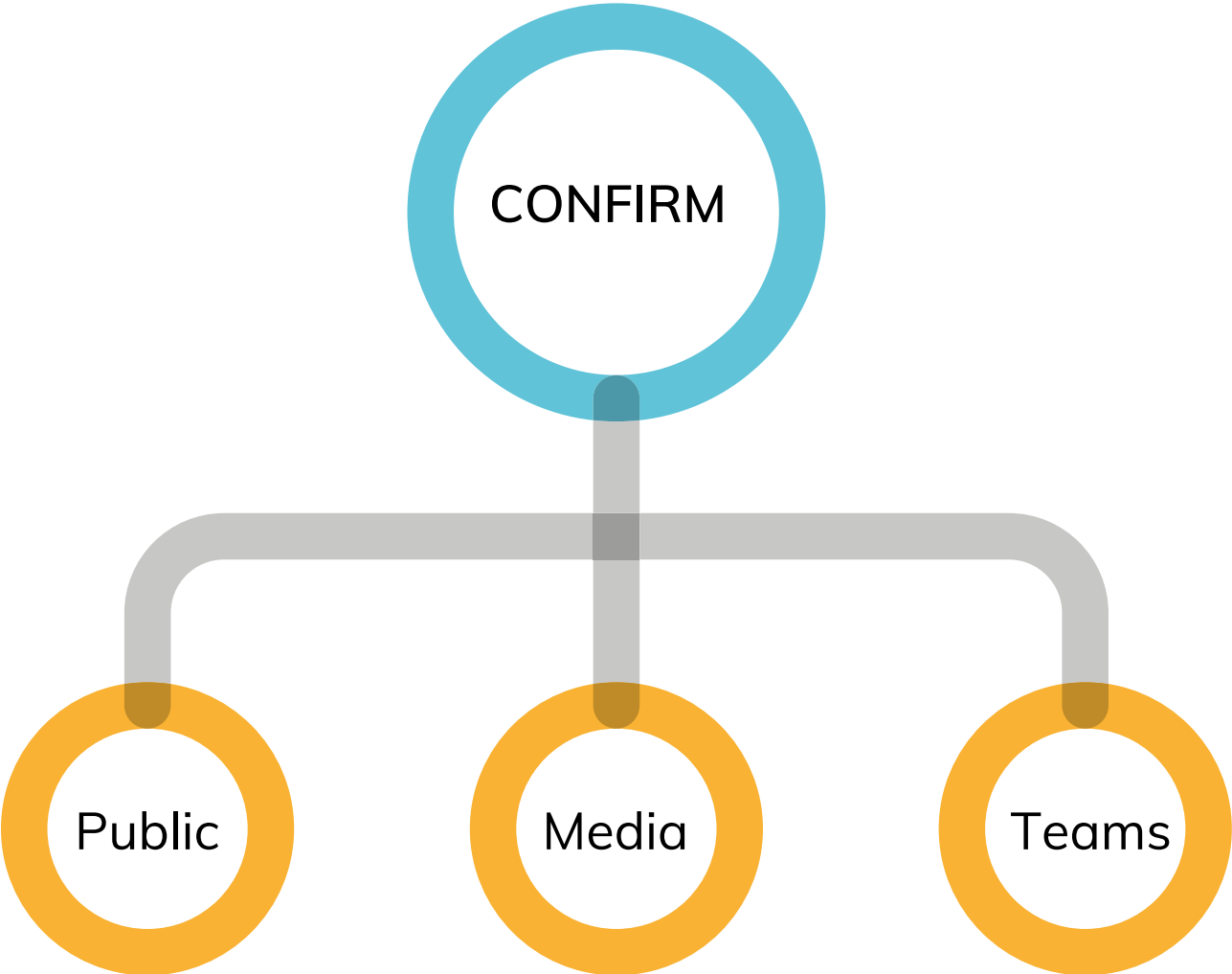


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Portugal Rally

Use of the CONFIRM tool to help manage and provide better information to the public, media attending and participating teams.





But does it work?



Does it have an impact? Is it worth it?

Rally de Portugal 2021 (CONFIRM)

May 2021

Platform unique users

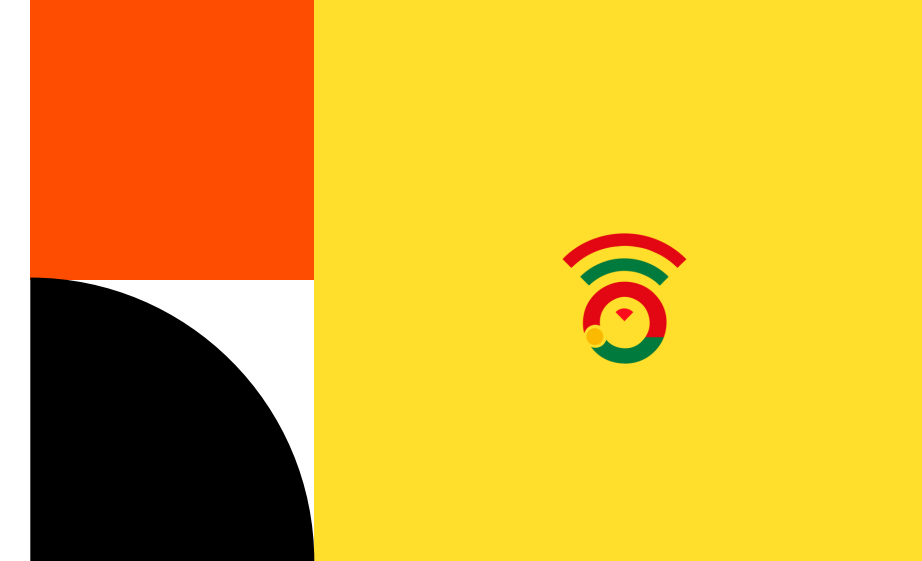
311600

Information requests

9850000



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FÁTIMA 2022

Use of the CONFIRM tool to manage the pilgrims heading to Fátima in May 2022, in order to prepare for the Youth Festival in 2023, which will bring more than 3M people to Portugal. This deployment was done by combining the location features of the Telegram app. 64 groups were tracked, almost 2k individual pilgrims.

The CONFIRM tool interface includes a sidebar with navigation options: RESUMO OPERACIONAL, CAPACIDADE DOS POSTOS, MAPA INTERACTIVO, and SOBRE. The main area displays a map of Portugal with a popup for 'Ordem de Malta' showing details like location (IC2, Vale de Janes, Furadouro, Condeixa-a-Nova) and status (NO INFO). A bar chart shows the occupancy rate for 64 locations, with a legend for 'ocupação' (Occupado - red, Livre - green).

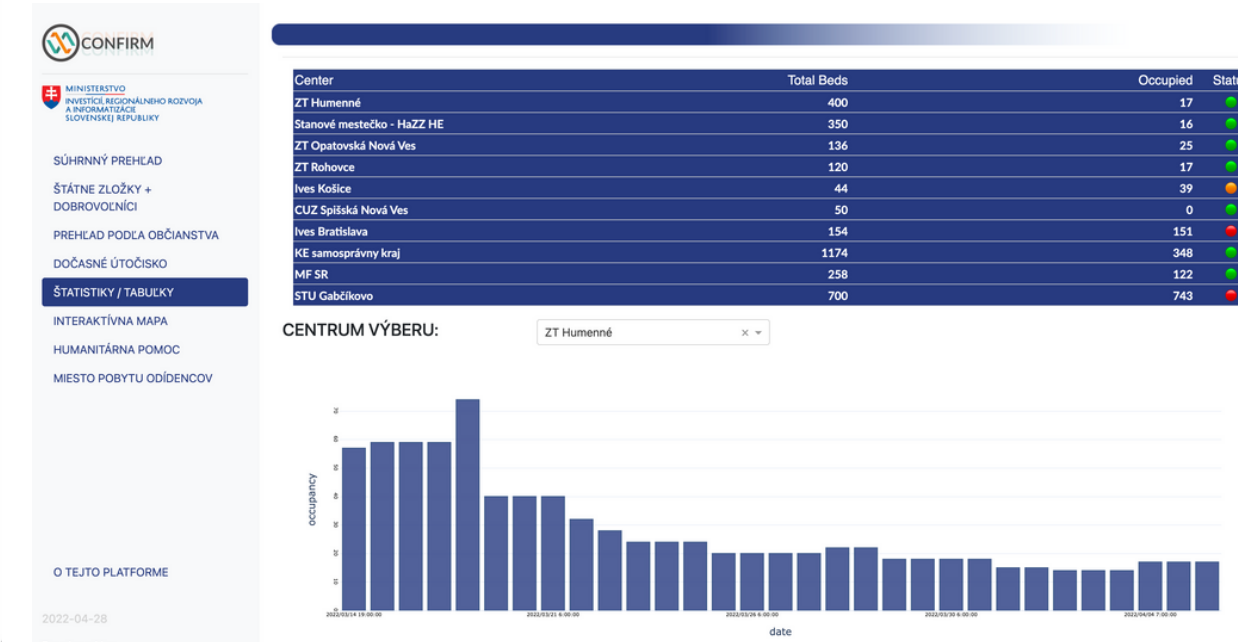
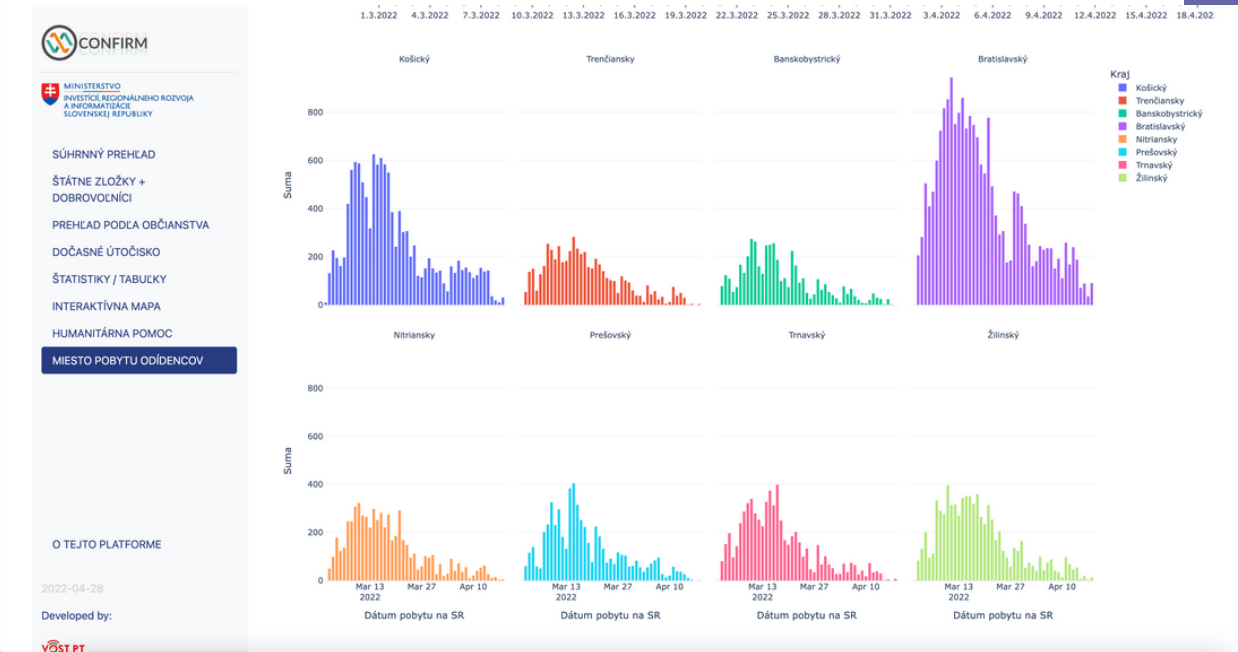
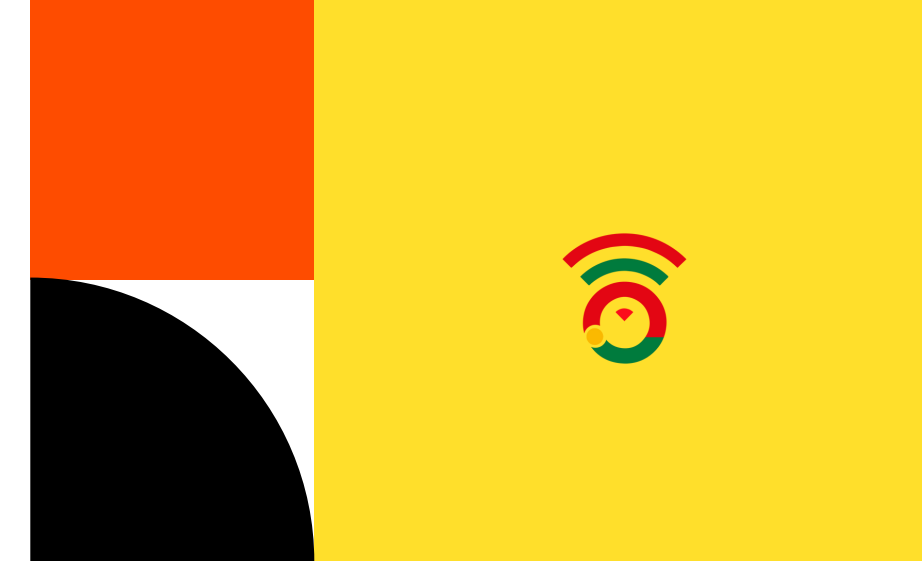
Local	Capacidade	Disponíveis	Ocupação	Status
Associação de voluntários de Ferreiros	97	80	17	●
Casa Diocesana de Almagre	61	46	15	●
Almagreira	45	35	10	●
Cernache	60	60	0	●
Ass. Sócio Cultural Recreio e Desporto dos Pereiros	60	0	60	●
Tendas do exército	64	44	20	●
Torres do Mondego	93	65	28	●
Junto às estruturas da AAC	78	48	30	●
Quartel da Cruz Alta	92	67	25	●

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CURRENT PROJECTS

COOPERATION WITH THE SLOVAKIAN GOVERNMENT

Use of the CONFIRM tool to help the Slovakian government manage the influx of refugees from Ukraine.



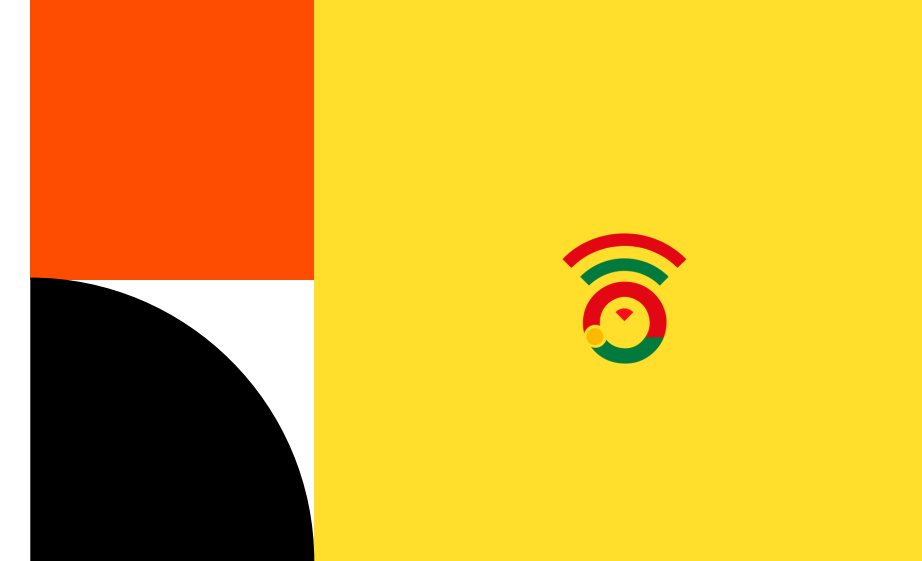
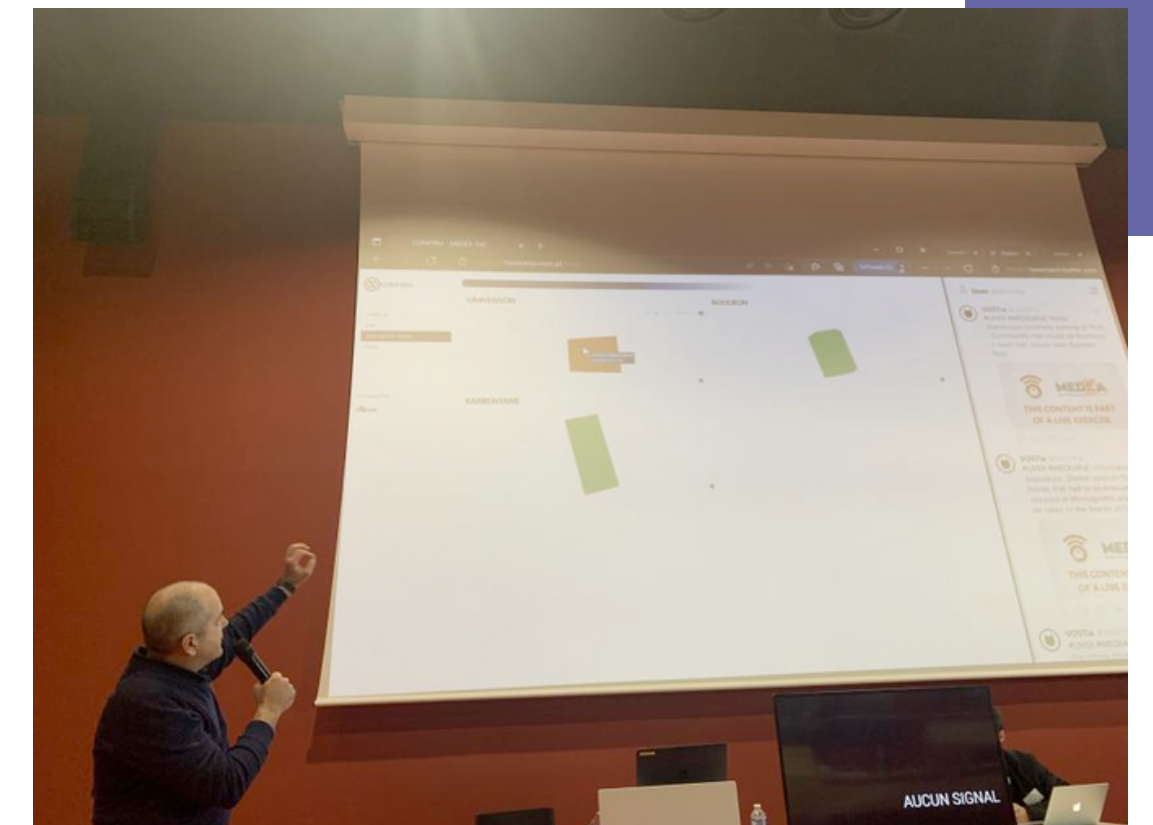
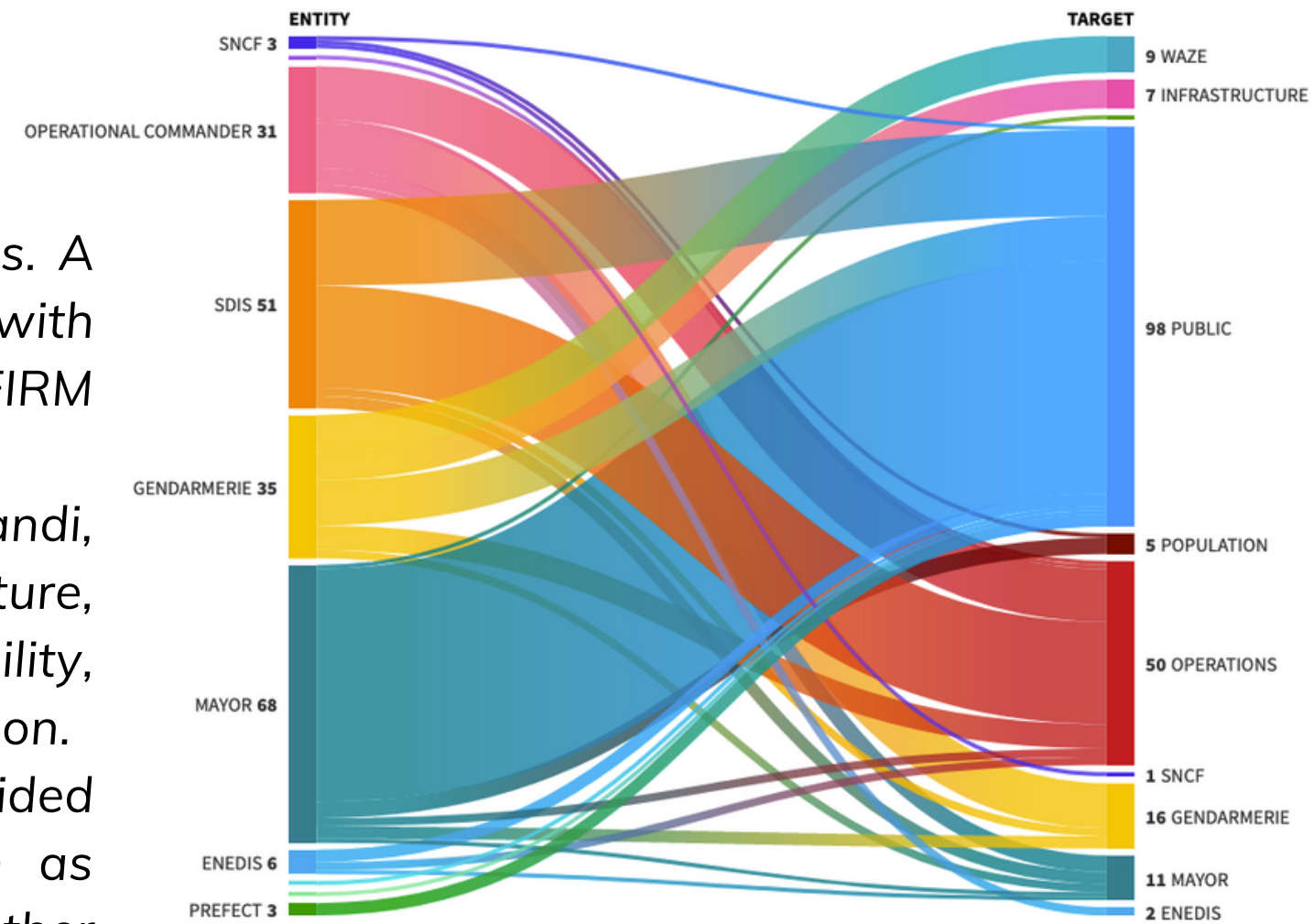
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CURRENT PROJECTS

MEDEA

Use of the CONFIRM tool during wildfires. A live exercise was made in Nimes, France with stakeholders and practitioners. CONFIRM aims at:

- Each entity has its own modus operandi, technology, and command structure, which hinders the interoperability, exchange, and publication of information.
- The management of resources provided by municipalities to the COS, such as shelters for evacuated people and other logistical resources for firefighting and support to affected populations.
- Be a multidirectional tool of communications, between entities and ensuring public communication.

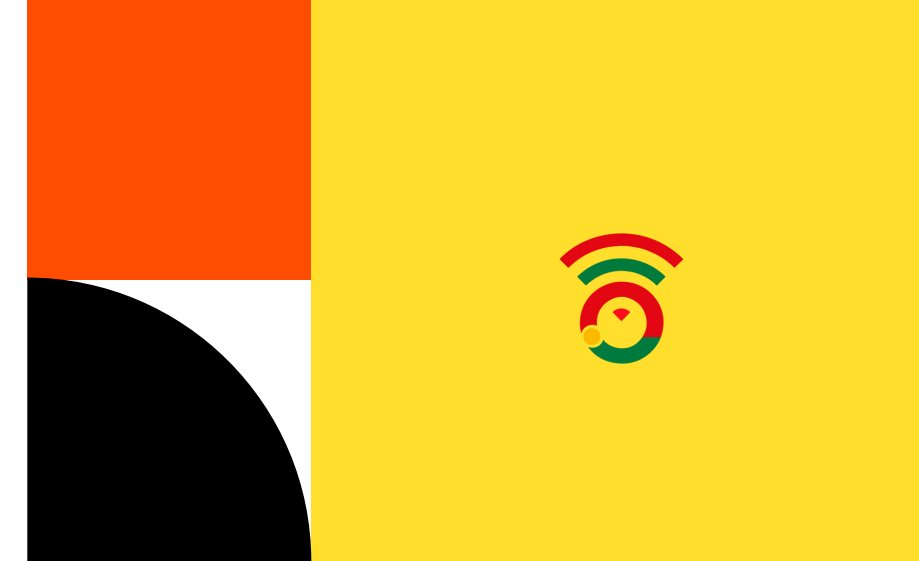


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CURRENT PROJECTS

Fire Season 2022

- Under the cooperation protocol established with ANEPC, VOST Portugal provided personalized access to the FOGOS.PT API to release technological resources from ANEPC systems.
- From July 5th to July 18th 2022), VOST Portugal issued 551 tweets that reached 3.01M views, generating over 587,000 visits to the profile. The highlighted tweet is a message on how to share photos on social media in the context of forest fires.
- Monitored social media networks and transmitted the most relevant information/images to ANEPC via a direct channel that had already been established.
- In the area of cooperation between VOST organizations, VOST Portugal has maintained constant contact with various VOST groups in Spain, particularly with VOST Galicia, due to cross-border fires.
- On July 14th, VOST Portugal managed to make the topic "BEBAM ÁGUA" (Drink Water) trend on the first place in Portugal, alerting to the need for hydration during these days of extreme heat.



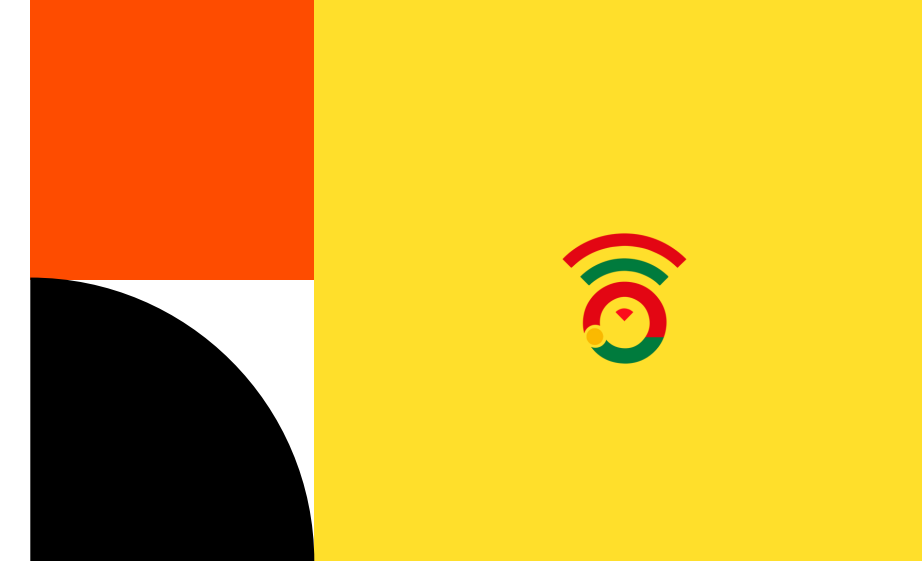
VOST PORTUGAL

MAIN AREAS OF ACTION

Fighting misinformation

Identification of online misinformation and its reporting to the platforms, as well as correction / clarification of misinformation

bit.ly/MEDIALAB_VOSTPT



← Tweet

VOST Portugal @VOSTPT · Feb 25

#COVID19PT Relativamente a um PDF que já anda por todo o lado, e após contactarmos as entidades oficiais, foi-nos dito que o mesmo é falso. #StopRumores

Áreas	Data	Medidas	Condições
Regras Gerais	15-mar	Confinamento obrigatório para pessoas doentes e em vigilância ativa Dever cívico de recolhimento domiciliário Proibição de eventos ou ajuntamentos com mais de 10 pessoas. Lotação máxima de 5 pessoas/100m ² em espaços fechados. Funerais: com a Cerimónia religiosa; celebrações comunitárias de acordo com regras e regras entre DGS e entidades religiosas	Uso obrigatório de máscara em espaços públicos
Transportes	03-mar	Lotação máxima de 5 pessoas/100m ² em espaços fechados. Funerais: com a Cerimónia religiosa; celebrações comunitárias de acordo com regras e regras entre DGS e entidades religiosas	Uso obrigatório de máscara em espaços públicos
Trabalho	05-mar	Teletrabalho parcial, com horários desfasados ou espaços em espelho	Uso obrigatório de máscara em espaços públicos
Serviços Públicos	03-mar	Trabalho volta às condições normais pré-confinamento	Uso obrigatório de máscara em espaços públicos
	05-mar	Serviços deslocalizados de atendimento ao público (reparações de furos, conservatórias, etc.)	Uso obrigatório de máscara / Atendimento por mensagem prévia
	03-mar	Abertura de lojas de comércio	Uso obrigatório de máscara em espaços públicos
	15-mar	Comércio local: lojas com porta aberta para a rua até 200m ² Cabeleiros, manicuras e similares Livrarias e comércio automóvel, independentemente de área	Lojas: Uso obrigatório de máscara / funcionamento a partir das 10h para as lojas que residem

21 1.5K 1.5K

República Portuguesa @govpt · Feb 25

Circula um documento falso com um suposto plano de #desconfinamento do @govpt. Pela #desinformação e falsas expectativas que pode gerar, com o inerente risco para a saúde pública, esta falsificação será objeto de comunicação ao Ministério Público. portugal.gov.pt/pt/gc22/comuni...

Áreas	Data	Medidas	Condições
Regras Gerais	15-mar	Confinamento obrigatório para pessoas doentes e em vigilância ativa Dever cívico de recolhimento domiciliário Proibição de eventos ou ajuntamentos com mais de 10 pessoas. Lotação máxima de 5 pessoas/100m ² em espaços fechados. Funerais: com a Cerimónia religiosa; celebrações comunitárias de acordo com regras e regras entre DGS e entidades religiosas	Uso obrigatório de máscara em espaços públicos
Transportes	03-mar	Lotação de 2/3 nos Transportes	Deve de ser obrigatório o uso de máscara em espaços ao ar livre
Trabalho	05-mar	Teletrabalho parcial, com horários desfasados ou espaços em espelho	Uso obrigatório de máscara em espaços públicos

46 375 565

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MAIN AREAS OF ACTION

R&D

Contribution with know-how and practical experience with R&D institutions and academics in the areas of DRM

Joint Research Center (Comissão Europeia)

Participation, since 2019, in a machine learning project in the area of critical information detection in social networks. The project extends to 2024.

George Mason University (EUA)

Research project, led by Hemant Purohit, on the use of social media by all stakeholders involved in disaster response.





But does it work?



Does it have an impact? Is it worth it?

TWITTER DATA

2021

Average monthly views:

3.12M

Most Viewed Tweet:

528,217 views



PIPP*



EUROPEAN PROJECTS

- Firelogue.eu
- EU-HYBNET
- PyroLife
- DAREnet

INITIATIVES

- Cell Broadcast
- Code of Practice on Disinformation of the European Commission
- Social Media Disaster Risk Management Task-Force led by COPERNICUS-EMS
- Permanent Task Force to monitor the Code of Practice on Disinformation led by the European Commission

PARTNERSHIPS

- Joint Research Center
- George Mason University
- EFAS
- COPERNICUS.EU
- Web Foundation
- Twitter
- Facebook / META
- Google

AWARDS / PRAISES

- Portuguese Government
- EENA Award 2022

PROTOCOLS

- ANEPC - Portuguese National Civil Protection Authority

COOPERATION

- GNR
- Polícia Judiciária
- CNCS
- AMA
- Digital Response Office to COVID-19
- Slovakian Government



*Projects, Initiatives, Protocols, Partnerships

CONTACT & RESOURCES

VOST PORTUGAL

- www.vost.pt
- @vostpt (twitter, Instagram)
- /vostpt (facebook, telegram)

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