

Brazilian Parks:

Visiting means protecting!

Strategies to implement visitation in federal protected areas:

Implementation priorities 2018-2020

General Coordination of Public Use and Businesses – ICMBio

Aparados da Serra National Park
Photo by: Junior Scandolara Claudino

1. Program's Purpose, goals and justification

Chico Mendes Institute for Biodiversity Conservation - ICMBio is a public entity underneath the Ministry of Environment, whose mission is to Protect the natural heritage and to Promote social and environmental development in Brazil. Its vision is to be acknowledged by the Brazilian society as a reference in conserving biodiversity and managing protected areas.

Guided by these principles, we believe that outdoor recreation and ecotourism are two important strategies and tools available to ICMBio to advance in consolidating its goals of protecting and conserving the natural and social heritage of Brazil. Recreation and tourism activities, if done in a structured and responsive way, allow visitors to not only get to know natural areas, appreciate their scenic beauty and their cultural manifestations, but also perceive their environmental importance and their role as a catalyst for local economic development in harmony with the natural and social values protected in there.

A well-structured and implemented protected area can attract a flow of visitors to the region, benefiting the municipalities located around it with stimuli that can promote public engagement of regional economic agents, and that can be translated into direct benefits for neighboring populations. Structuring a protected area for public use activities creates new opportunities for businesses such as hotels, restaurants, souvenir and craft stores and even creates jobs for service providers, in trails and other sporting activities.

ICMBio is in charge of managing 335 Federal protected areas and plays a central role in the full consolidation of these areas. Within the context of access possibilities and public use, it requires a coordinated and propositional action in structuring planning, development and management of visitation, this offering sustainable outdoor recreation options and generating goods and services for visitors by means of visitation partnerships and services. Properly preparing these areas to receive visitors with quality and safety is one of the priorities of the Ministry of Environment - MMA and ICMBio.

ICMBio efforts to implement visitation in federal protected areas has resulted in a clear growth in the number of visitors in the last few years. Considering the reduced staff in relation to the huge extension of these protected areas, the goal to consolidate public use activities has not been an easy task, even demanding the prioritization of areas for implementing these actions. When choosing priority areas, the Touristic Attractiveness Index was used (IAT - Souza *et al.*, 2017), considering: the existence of a management plan, the potential number of visitors, easy access to the area and the existence of preliminary economic viability studies. Aside from these criteria, we considered the previous existence of visitors in the region where the protected area is inserted. In this context, a few smaller units located in the region where there is visitation are

also being included, because studies indicate that even low levels of investment in these units may lead to a high increase in visitation and important advancements in the management.

The PAPPs (Public-Private Environmental Partnerships) are a program developed jointly by the Ministry of Environment and ICMBio and their goal is to set up and foster public and private environmental partnerships or alliances for sustainable use of economic potentialities of the protected areas. The idea is to improve management and conservation of biodiversity and generate social and economic benefits for the residents around the area. The program is managed by IBAM - Brazilian Institute of Municipal Administration - and counts on the financial support from the *Fondo Multilateral de Inversiones* (Fomin), Interamerican Development Bank, *Fundo Socioambiental* (FSA) and *Caixa Econômica Federal*.

Within the PAPP, we have also considered the importance of assessing different protected area categories to check compliance with legislation given this diversity of possibilities. Hence, there were studies for Costa dos Corais Environmental Protection Area, Canela National Forest, São Francisco de Paula National Forest, Unini River Extractive Reserve, considering the existence of visitation-related contract demands and the need to identify legal instruments for setting up partnerships with the private sector when operating in these management categories.

The request for proposals for the following National Parks has been initiated: Chapada dos Veadeiros, Pau Brasil, Itatiaia, Caparaó, Lençóis Maranhenses, Jericoacoara, and Serra da Bodoquena. In the next round, Chapada dos Guimaraes, Aparados da Serra and Serra Geral, Serra da Canastra National Parks and Canela National Forest.

2. Program implementation strategies

From a global perspective, a study done by the World Bank in 1994 has shown that despite promoting the quality of life of the population and having great ecological and economic importance, most natural parks and protected areas existing in the world historically do not generate enough financial proceeds to afford for their maintenance costs. In Brazil this trend is no different. According to the Brazilian Biodiversity Fund – FUNBIO and the Ministry of Environment in 2008 the public spending from the Central Government for maintaining the National System of Federal Natural Protected Areas – SNUC reached R\$ 316.6 million, with R\$ 16 million from other sources. Other financial sources come from international cooperation contracts, environmental compensation, own resources etc.

According to Leonard Gilroy, Harris Kenny and Julian Morris (GILROY *et al.*, 2013), there is a world trend for establishing public-private partnerships in park management efforts. The authors mention this is one alternative to deal with the scenario of public money shortage in which parks must compete with budget line items for healthcare, education, and law enforcement etc. So, concession contracts are one of the ways used in several countries in the world to attract additional investment, promote more efficient use of available resources and make protected areas' ancillary management more flexible. In this strategy, the government is still the policy-maker and the private partner brings speed to implement those policies.

Regarding tourism, concessions represent an opportunity to create, organize, broaden and build visitation-related services, enhancing visitor experience, bringing the society closer to nature, and raising awareness on the importance of conservation. Moreover, tourism plays a relevant role in the generation of jobs and income with a replicating effect to local economies (Semeia, 2017).

Currently there are 335 federal protected areas under the managerial responsibility of ICMBio, which, together represent about 9% of the national territory. Out of this total, 50% have management plans approved and almost all of them have participatory Councils as well. It is important to note the amount of staff at ICMBio in May 2018 was 1,655 career officials distributed among the 335 PAs, 11 Research and Conservation Centers, 11 Regional Coordinations, 4 Administration and Finance Advanced Units and the Headquarters located in Brasília. It is worth mentioning the management challenges faced in protected areas given the rapid growth of a set of PAs, which extension has gone from 37 million to 167 million hectares in the last 20 years, both terrestrial and marine lands. Such an increase means there should be an ever-growing need of resources, which preferably must be channeled to the basic activities such as protection and implementation, in detriment of the end activities for consolidating public use and other economic uses of PAs.

In fact, it is noteworthy public resources cannot cover all the needs for PA maintenance and strengthening. Despite the constant supported received by ICMBio, either through international cooperation agreements, especially donations, there are still major financial bottlenecks to be overcome to ensure economic and operational sustainability of protected areas. On the other hand, we see a few areas offer great opportunities to create economic and social benefits, when well explored, and may produce financial results with positive consequences for the whole PA system.

In 2017, over 10.7 million visitors came to federal protected areas, with Tijuca/RJ NP and Iguaçu/PR NP the two most visited, 3.2 million and 1.8 million visitors respectively. In only 14 PAs – which have an entrance fee – have collected about R\$55 million this year.

A study by Souza (Souza *et al.*, 2017b. *Contribuições do Turismo em unidades de Conservação para a Economia Brasileira - Efeitos dos Gastos do Visitante em 2015: Sumário Executivo*, ICMBio, Brasília) shows ICMBio visitation estimates for 2015. The work was aimed at showing decision-makers, administrators, local communities and the public at large that protected areas are not only important for conservation, but also for generating jobs and income. According to the study, for every *one* Real (R\$1) spent by visitors in federal PAs, *seven* Reals (R\$7) are generated in economic benefits to the regional economy. The study has considered direct effects of visitor spending (sales, proceeds and jobs resulting from the transactions done directly with the local touristic establishments) and the indirect effects, such as the expenses from the establishments to buy the inputs from other supplying industries (e.g., products for a restaurant). The study outcomes suggest 8 million visitors have spent over R\$ 4.1 billion in total sales, R\$ 1 billion in personal income and R\$ 1.5 billion GDP added-value, aside from supporting about 43 thousand jobs in 2015.

3. Contract modality to be implemented and legal arrangement proposal

Visitation-related service contracts in protected areas are aimed at adapting the use standard of these areas to the light of rules and norms from the Central Government. This can make it possible to protect natural ecosystems and at the same time promote the indirect use of the natural and cultural heritage of the country through visitation and public use activities.

Along this process, it is essential do acknowledge generation-related changes of social values pertaining the social use of the environment, remarkably reflected in the different forms of outdoor recreation and ecotourism, which lead to the need for constant infrastructure renovations and improvements for welcoming and supporting visitors.

It is important to mention concessions are not privatization. With the so-called service delegation contracts, the companies gain the right to operate visitation-supporting services for a given period and, in turn, they are committed to invest in the PAs. Management, conservation, protection and research services remain under the administration and territorial control of the

government, since it is not privatization. The goal is to improve the quality of the services provided to visitors since ICMBio is not aimed at managing services such as hotels and restaurants; being then able to focus on conservation efforts.

The implementation of these conservation-adapted services is aimed at reaching the best conditions for preserving the natural heritage and at the same drawing the most benefits out of recreation and visitation. Aside from visitor leisure and awareness, they can create direct and indirect jobs, reduce public spending and increase tax collections in the three levels of government. In this virtuous arrangement, service concessions for public use is based on seeking solutions that will lead to more investments from the private sector, to forms and strategies that can turn the visitation experience into an awareness-raising and public engagement experience for conserving protected ecosystems.

To grant a greater level of legal entitlement to the concession contracts in National Parks Law no. 13,668 was enacted on May 28th, 2018, which sets forth: the destination and application of resources of environmental compensation; hiring personnel for a fixed length of time; land tenure regulations, and service, area and infrastructure concessions in PAs. Specifically, regarding concessions, this law allows service, area or facility concessions in federal PAs for performing visitation-related activities towards environmental education, environmental preservation and conservation, ecotourism, environmental interpretation and outdoor recreation, with the prior execution or not of infrastructure constructions, under the bidding process by Law no 8,987, as of February 13th, 1995.

4. Demonstrating economic, legal and technical viability of the partnerships proposed

According to estimates by the Concessions and Business Unit - CONCES/ICMBio, from data obtained in Economic Viability studies, the plan for implementing concession contracts has the potential to ensure an investment of R\$ 81.1 million in structuring these PAs, R\$ 445.5 million in operating costs (payments related to managing a company) and generating R\$ 191.4 million in taxes. In the current situation after budgetary earmarking because of Constitutional Amendment PEC 55/2016, for balancing public spending by means of a rigid mechanism of expenditure control (budget cap), it becomes paramount attracting more investments for the structuring and functioning of protected areas.

References

GILROY et al., 2013. Parks 2.0: Operating State Parks Through Public-Private Partnerships. Conservation & the Environment: Conservative Values, New Solutions , January 2013.

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Souza, T. V. S. B.; Thapa, B.; Rodrigues, C. G. O.; Imori, D. (2017). Contribuições do Turismo em Unidades de Conservação para a Economia Brasileira - Efeitos dos Gastos dos Visitantes em 2015. ICMBio. Brasília

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Initial estimates for projects yet to be under concession contracts							
Area	Estimated investment	Operating costs	Total Revenue	Total concession	Taxes	ROI	Concession plan
Lençóis Maranhenses National Park	R\$ 4.2 mi	R\$ 39.6mi	R\$ 65 mi	R\$ 3.9 mi	R\$ 14.9 mi	17.50%	20 years
Serra da Bodoquena National Park	R\$ 3.4 mi	R\$ 24.6 mi	R\$ 36.8 mi	R\$ 2.6 mi	R\$ 11 mi	12.00%	15 years
Itatiaia National Park	R\$ 18.2 mi	R\$ 114.2 mi	R\$ 208.6 mi	R\$ 11.4 mi	R\$ 36.2 mi	9.98%	20 years
Jericoacoara National Park	R\$ 37.2 mi	R\$ 159.7 mi	R\$ 439.9 mi	R\$ 65.9 mi	R\$ 109.8 mi	15.09%	20 years
Caparaó National Park	R\$ 7.7 mi	R\$ 58.6 mi	R\$ 95.4 mi	R\$ 3.5 mi	R\$ 7.7 mi	12.58%	25 years
Chapada dos Veadeiros National Park	R\$ 1.9 mi	R\$ 29.5 mi	R\$ 45.6 mi	R\$ 4.9 mi	R\$ 6.6 mi	16.64%	20 years
Pau Brasil National Park	R\$ 7.2 mi	R\$ 40.4 mi	R\$ 77.9 mi	R\$ 6 mi	R\$ 21.4 mi	11.37%	20 years
Chapada dos Guimarães National Park	R\$ 9.9 mi	R\$ 88.6 mi	R\$ 148.4 mi	R\$ 10.8 mi	R\$ 9.8 mi	13.90%	20 years
Aparados da Serra and Serra Geral National Parks	R\$ 32.7 mi	R\$ 231.3 mi	R\$ 354.7 mi	R\$ 19.9 mi	R\$ 15.9 mi	9.65%	20 years
Serra da Canastra National Park	R\$ 24.4 mi	R\$ 37 mi	R\$ 89.6 mi	R\$ 8.1 mi	R\$ 5.6 mi	10.90%	20 years
Canela National Forest	R\$ 6.9 mi	R\$ 70.1 mi	R\$ 117.3 mi	R\$ 3.5 mi	R\$ 8.2 mi	12.00%	20 years
TOTAL	R\$ 153.7 mi	R\$ 883.5 mi	R\$ 1.600 mi	R\$ 140 mi	R\$ 258.1 mi		

5. Final RFPs

Chapada dos Veadeiros National Park

Municipalities:

Located in São Jorge, District of Alto Paraíso de Goiás. Distance from Brasilia is 258 km.

Bid:

Service concession: access control of Chapada dos Veadeiros NP, including at least the following services:

- Visitor welcoming;
- Ticket entrance;
- Restaurants;
- Convenience store;
- Camping area in Sete Quedas;
- Internal shuttle service.

Main attractions:

Waterfalls, rivers, trails, viewing decks and trekking.

Visitation data:

Year	Visits
2012	23,014

2013	27,407
2014	39,347
2015	56,629
2016	63,933
2017	62,477

Pau Brasil National Park

Municipalities:

Located in Porto Seguro, 43 km away from the city (by ferry boat). Arraial D´Ajuda is 36 km away.

Bid:

Visitation-support service concessions, ecotourism, environmental interpretation and outdoor recreation, including the following mandatory services:

- Ticket entrance;
- Internal shuttle service;
- Parking lot at the headquarters and in Jaqueira;
- Coffeeshop at the headquarters and in Jaqueira;
- Convenience store at the headquarters;
- Biker´s spot; visitor center;
- Campsite;
- Zipline and skywalks.

Visitation data:

The area has recently been open for public visitation, so it does not have a history of visitation records.

Main attractions:

Viewing deck, rivers and trails

6. Contract summary:

Jericoacoara National Park

Municipalities:

Located in Jijoca de Jericoacoara municipality, 300 km from the city of Fortaleza and bordering with Cruz and Camocim cities.

Bid:

- Access control and Visitor welcoming;
- Traffic control inside the park;
- Ticket entrance;
- Restaurants;

- Convenience stores;
- Welcome center and use of other venues at the Visitor Center;
- Management of visitation-support venues and lodging (glamping and camping).

Visitation data:

Year	Visits
2013	100,000
2014	400,400
2015	780,000
2016	780,000
2017	800,000

Main attractions:

Beaches, lakes (Azul and Paraíso), dunes, Pedra Furada, adventure sports (kitesurfing and windsurfing).

Lençóis Maranhenses National Park

Municipalities:

Located inside three municipalities of Maranhao state, which have structure for welcoming and guiding visitors: Barreirinhas, Santo Amaro and Primeira Cruz.

Bid:

Concession of services in Lençóis Maranhenses NP (PNLM) for at least, the following services:

- Access control and Visitor welcoming;
- Implementation and administration of parking lot and roads;
- Ticket entrance;
- Store (souvenir shop);
- Restaurants;
- Support recording cars and four-wheelers that belong to outfitted guides;
- Parking lot;
- Equipment rental (stand up paddle, kayaking, fat bike);
- Visitor Center Management;
- Implementation of construction works and visitation structures.

Visitation data:

Year	Visits
2012	16,800
2013	42,000
2014	47,000
2015	40,000

2016	40,000
2017	89,540

Main attractions:

Beaches, dunes and lakes, boat rides.

Itatiaia National Park

Municipalities:

This is the oldest national park of Brazil, located at Serra da Mantiqueira, reaching out to the states of Minas Gerais, São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. It includes the municipalities of Itatiaia and Resende in Rio de Janeiro and Itamonte and Bocaina de Minas in Minas Gerais.

Visitation data and amounts collected:

Year	Visits
2012	96,039
2013	99,495
2014	117,974
2015	133,801
2016	127,494
2017	139,616

Bid:

LOT 1: LOWER PART, UPPER PART and VISCONDE DE MAUÁ

- Ticket entrance;
- Parking lot management;
- Restaurants;
- Stores;
- Adventure sports;
- Lodging (Mountain shelters, glamping and camping);

LOT 2:

- Lodging in the facilities available in the lower part.

Main attractions:

Lagos, waterfalls, Maromba Complex, Stepping Stone, trails and viewing decks.

Serra da Bodoquena National Park

Municipalities:

Located 47.8 km from Bonito, with entrance at Bodoquena city.

Visitation data:

Recently open to the public, so no visitation data yet.

Bid:

- Ticket entrance;
- Restaurants;
- Parking lot;
- Camping;
- Adventure activities (zipline, caving, stand up paddle, buoy cross, kayaking)

Main attractions:

Trails, canyons, bikes and waterfalls.

Caparaó National Park

Municipalities:

Located between the states of Minas Gerais and Espírito Santo, with an entrance gate on both states, with Dores do Rio Preto (district of São José da Pedra Menina) as the entrance in Espírito Santo and Alto Caparaó in Minas Gerais.

Visitation data:

Year	Visits
2012	33,366
2013	32,245
2014	43,422
2015	54,548
2016	49,617
2017	62,157

Bid:

Concession in an area of 24,163,858 m² for the following visitation services:

- Visitor access control;
- Ticket entrance;
- Parking lot;
- Ballrooms (events);
- Food and drinks (delis);
- product sales stores, convenience stores and specialized product stores;
- Campsites;
- Equipment rental;
- Mountain shelter in Terreirão;

- Temporary cabins in Casa Queimada.

Main attractions:

Forests, highlands, trails, viewing decks, waterfalls and hills.

Canela National Forest

Municipalities:

Located 115 km from Porto Alegre city and 6 km from downtown Canela, at the heart of the most consolidated tourist destination of Rio Grande do Sul state.

Bid:

The concession holder may explore activities that lead to developing ecotourism, recreation, sporting activities and environmental education, including these services:

- Ticket entrance;
- Visitor welcoming;
- Kid park;
- Hiking trails and MTB trails;
- Restaurants;
- Lodging (inn);
- Convenience store;
- Parking lot.

Visitation data:

No consolidated visitation data available.

Main attractions:

Lakes, araucaria tree forests, large trail network and historical buildings.

Chapada dos Guimarães National Park

Municipalities:

Located 26 km from the urban area, city of Cuiabá, capital of Mato Grosso State and 6 km from the touristic city of Chapada dos Guimarães.

Bid:

- Ticket entrance;
- Access Control and Visitor welcoming;
- Restaurant and coffeeshop in Véu de Noiva complex;
- Product sales stores in Véu de Noiva complex;
- Internal shuttle service;

- Parking lot;
- Zipline in Vêu de Noiva complex;
- Bike rentals in Vêu de Noiva complex,
- Equipment rental in Vale do Rio Claro;
- Canyonism in Vêu de Noiva complex;
- Floating in Rio Claro;
- Buoy cross in Rio Claro.

Visitation data:

Year	Visits
2012	96,166
2013	102,753
2014	135,090
2015	174,855
2016	158,365
2017	172,839

Main attractions:

Waterfalls, natural pools, Stone City, trails, trekking, bike tours and adventure activities.

Aparados da Serra and Serra Geral National Parks

Municipalities:

Located in an easy-to-access region, with consolidated tourism. It is 185 km away from Porto Alegre city.

Bid:

Provide visitors with quality services and information in line with parks' goals, including providing the following visitation-supporting services:

- Visitor welcoming;
- Ticket entrance;
- Parking lot;
- Internal shuttle service;
- Lodging (glamping and camping);
- Restaurants;
- Picnic Area;
- Convenience store;
- Travel agency;
- Recreation activities, such as kid parks and trails;
- Product sales stores.

Visitation data:

Year	Visits
2012	72,356
2013	73,590
2014	76,058
2015	106,899
2016	111,778
2017	107,472

Main attractions:

Trails, viewing decks, skywalks, bathing structures in Rio do Boi and Poço.

Serra da Canastra National Park**Municipalities:**

Located in mid-Southwestern Minas Gerais State and comprises the municipalities of São Roque de Minas, Sacramento, Delfinópolis, São João do Gloria, Capitolio and Vargem Bonita. The closest state capitals are Belo Horizonte and São Paulo.

Bid:

- Ticket entrance;
- Visitor welcome and access control;
- Restaurants;
- Lodging (inn, base camp, rustic shelter and camping);
- Tour operator for long-range trails;
- Sporting events (adventure races and MTB);
- Bike rentals;
- Equipment and product sales store;
- Equipment rental store;
- Picnic Area.

Visitation data:

Year	Visits
2012	40,914
2013	46,274
2014	48,290
2015	52,673
2016	68,337
2017	89,087

Main attractions:

Casca D'Anta Waterfall (São Francisco River) 186 meters high, stone corral, stone garage, São Francisco River Spring, trails, landscapes with river banks and natural grasslands.

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