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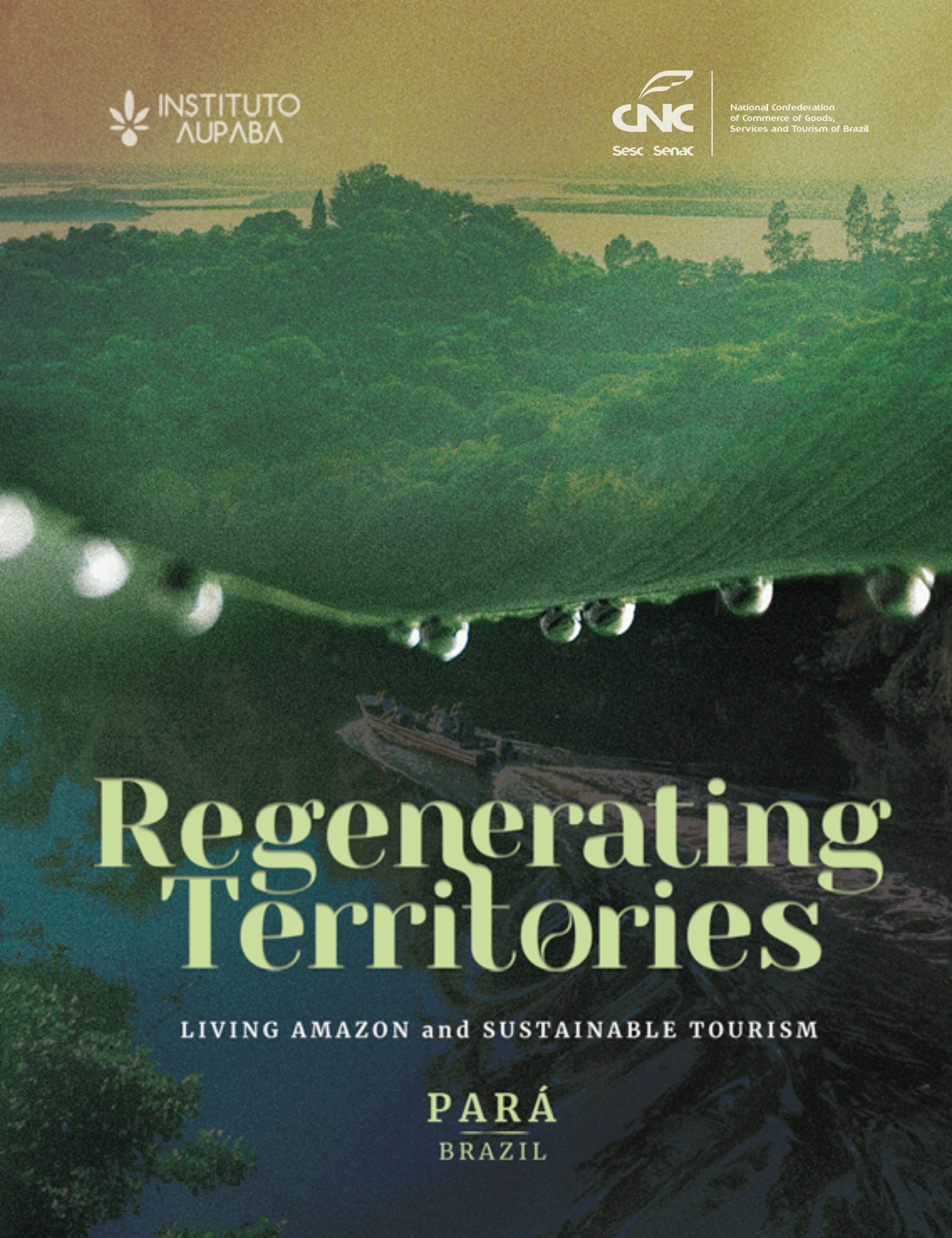

Regenerating Territories

LIVING AMAZON and SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

PARÁ

BRAZIL

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Translator's Note

This translation was carried out with the aim of preserving the integrity of the original text, maintaining its critical and informative tone, as well as its focus on valuing community-driven initiatives. Names of locations, products, practices, fruits, and animals were kept in their original form or followed by explanatory translations, ensuring clarity for the international audience without losing the connection to local realities. Similarly, I translated the names of projects and organizations when necessary, keeping the originals in parentheses to respect the identity and recognition of these entities within the local context. Throughout the translation process, I sought to balance fluency, accuracy, and respect for traditional knowledge and the resilience of communities, which are central to the social and environmental transformations described.

Leandro B. Pinheiro
– Translator

May 2025

Preface

The Amazon at the Heart of a New Tourism Model for Brazil

Brazil is, by nature, one of the world's richest and most coveted tourist destinations. Our environmental, cultural, and human diversity — coupled with the hospitality and creativity of the Brazilian people — creates a truly unique offering for visitors from every corner of the globe. In this context, the Amazon stands out as a symbol of transformative potential: a region that embodies ancestral knowledge, unparalleled biodiversity, cultural wealth, economic opportunities, and a natural vocation for sustainable tourism.

It is in this spirit that the National Confederation of Commerce of Goods, Services, and Tourism (CNC) joins forces with the Aupaba Institute in this important publication, which aims to promote sustainable tourism opportunities in the Legal Amazon on an international scale. This initiative aligns fully with the Responsible Tourism campaign — a joint effort between our organizations — as well as with global sustainable development goals, further reinforced by the upcoming COP30 in the Amazon region.

The CNC believes that tourism, when guided by responsible and sustainable practices, is a powerful tool for social transformation, income generation, environmental preservation, and economic inclusion. It drives an extensive production chain, creating positive impacts that benefit everyone — from small entrepreneurs to large corporations — while fostering regional growth and reducing inequalities.

Together with Federations, Sesc, Senac, and the business entities that comprise the sector, we are committed to building a tourism model that integrates socioeconomic development with cultural appreciation, respecting local vocations and enhancing community well-being. We champion community-based, ethnic, and cultural tourism as essential pillars of a long-term, regenerative approach — ensuring that future generations can also enjoy the riches of our country.

With over 70 years of experience, the CNC's Tourism and Hospitality Business Council (Cetur) has played a leading role in shaping public policies for the sector. We also spearhead the Vai Turismo movement, a nationwide push for investments in infrastructure, connectivity, security, international promotion, and a more competitive business environment. Tourism must be recognized for what it truly is: a key driver of sustainable growth for Brazil.

We commend the Aupaba Institute for this initiative and reaffirm our commitment to fostering a tourism industry that respects, includes, values, and transforms. The Amazon represents both our greatest opportunity and our shared responsibility.

José Roberto Tadros

President of the CNC-Sesc-Senac System

Presentation

Living Amazon: An Invitation to Regeneration

The Amazon is not a geographical abstraction — it is a living body, a territory of wisdom, a pulsating network of relationships between people, forests, rivers, and ancestors. It is within this complex and deeply symbolic fabric that the Aupaba Institute (Instituto Aupaba) takes root with its project, Regenerating Territories: Living Amazon and Sustainable Tourism (Regenerando Territórios: Amazônia Viva e Turismo Sustentável) – Pará. Forged through deep listening, collaboration, and innovation, this initiative reimagines our relationship with the region — and our role within it.

The Amazon is the largest tropical forest on Earth, spanning approximately 5.5 million km² of continuous vegetation within a river basin that extends over 7 million km² across nine South American countries: Brazil, Bolivia, Peru, Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname, and French Guiana. Brazil alone holds 60% of the forest, followed by Peru (16%) and smaller portions in the remaining nations. Within Brazil, this vast territory includes both the Amazon biome (covering 49.29% of the country) and the "Amazônia Legal" (Legal Amazon) — a political-administrative region established in 1966 for regional planning. Encompassing the states of Acre, Amapá, Amazonas, Maranhão, Mato Grosso, Pará, Rondônia, Roraima, and Tocantins, the Legal Amazon was created with the founding of the Superintendency for the Development of the Amazon (SUDAM) and includes not only the Amazon biome but also parts of the Cerrado and Pantanal biomes.

The Brazilian Amazon is also a land of **extraordinary sociocultural diversity**, home to over 170 Indigenous peoples and hundreds of quilombola, riverside, extractive, and agroextractive communities whose ways of life remain deeply intertwined with natural cycles. Here, Brazil safeguards a significant share of its **water resources**, **genetic wealth**, and **cultural heritage**, positioning the region as **a cornerstone of global climate** justice and a model for development rooted in biocultural preservation and standing forests.

Renowned for its unparalleled biodiversity, the Amazon harbors more than half of the world's remaining tropical forests, making it the largest and most diverse forest ecosystem on the planet. Globally, the region is a symbol of ecological urgency and wonder. In 2000, a six-million--hectare area in the basin's heart — including Jaú National Park — was designated a UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site. In 2009, the Amazon was voted the top candidate in the "forests" category of the New7Wonders of Nature campaign

Yet, the Amazon remains a land of discovery — for foreigners and Brazilians alike. Our greatest challenge in the coming years is to foster a tourism model that regenerates, one that repairs, restores, and inspires awe. To achieve this, we must center communities and biocultural heritage as pillars of life, climate justice, and the dignity of Amazonian peoples.

This publication offers a collection of reflections, experiences, data, and proposals that begin in Pará — the beating heart of the Brazilian Amazon and host of the upcoming COP30 — but resonate far beyond borders, charting a path toward a new paradigm for tourism and territory.

Image: Jr Sardo - Pexels.com

Why Pará?

As the host of COP30 in 2025, Pará is home to 25% of the Legal Amazon and an astonishing diversity of Indigenous peoples, quilombola communities, riverside dwellers, and extractivists. Here, some of the greatest challenges and opportunities converge — for development that honors the forest's cycles and the rights of its inhabitants. This publication highlights Pará's strategic role and equips it with tools, visibility, and partnerships to lead a global regenerative tourism agenda.

In the following pages, you will explore:

- Future visions of regenerative tourism across ecology, economy, culture, and governance;
- Inspiring cases, such as the Combu Island itineraries, the Marajó Community-Based Tourism Network, and Belém's cultural tourism routes;
- Data and frameworks linking conservation and prosperity: indicators, targets, policies, and investment opportunities;
- Culture as a regenerative force, celebrating Pará's cuisine, crafts, visual arts, oral traditions, and music as living expressions of cultural biodiversity;
- The Amazon on the global stage, with a focus on COP30 and Brazil's potential to become a world leader in impact-driven tourism.

Image: Freepik.com

A project woven by many hands

This work is the fruit of dialogue with traditional communities, experts, policymakers, social entrepreneurs, and allies united by a shared vision: to redefine Amazonian tourism through care, reciprocity, and restoration.

We offer no ready-made formulas, but open pathways. Like the forest's winding streams, this publication invites many routes — guided by an ethics of encounter and a deep listening to the land.

May it serve as both tool and inspiration for a pact of regeneration.

We walk forward together.

Luciana De Lamare
President of the Aupaba Institute

CHAPTER 1

Unlocking the tourism potential of Pará's amazon through its biocultural vocations

The Amazon region of Pará is one of Earth's richest and most complex territories — a place where nature and culture merge into living landscapes shaped by mighty rivers, dense forests, ancestral wisdom, and ways of life that defy conventional development paradigms.

To reimagine tourism through the lens of the region's inherent vocations is to transform it from a threat into an ally. In Pará, this means not imposing external models, but amplifying what already thrives: community-led itineraries, ancestral cuisine, cultural expressions, identity-rooted crafts, and agroextractive practices that blend traditional knowledge with ecological intelligence. Above all, it means proving that a standing forest holds greater value. Tourism becomes a tool for preservation — regenerating and sustaining these vocations while empowering communities, preserving knowledge systems, and attracting conscientious visitors.

For centuries, the Amazon has been forcibly integrated into the global economy as a peripheral supplier of raw materials. From the rubber boom to today's mega--mining and soybean monocultures, the forest has been treated as an inexhaustible commodity well. The colonial mindset endures, merely modernized: extractive industries still erase forest peoples and devalue local knowledge. Commodities like cocoa, açaí, Brazil nuts, and pirarucu leave the Amazon bearing international labels — stripped of territorial identity and divorced from the ancestral practices that sustain them.

This extractive logic benefits few and jeopardizes many. It concentrates wealth, creates deep inequalities, and weakens local economies that remain on the margins of global value chains. Amazonian products — from cocoa to açaí, Brazil nuts to pirarucu — circulate worldwide, yet add no value to their communities of origin. The forest is exported in bulk —faceless,

nameless, storyless. And tourism, when poorly managed, can reinforce this logic: peddling stereotypical images, ignoring the living culture of these territories, and fueling predatory consumption of landscapes.

However, another path is possible. When we strengthen agroforestry systems, community-based tourism, and regenerative agriculture, we break away from the degenerative model and create space for an economy that respects life's cycles. For example: by supporting a community that produces native honey from stingless bees, by participating in workshops with artisans who harvest and weave natural fibers, by learning about traditional açaí harvesting techniques, visitors become part of an ecosystem that educates, respects, and generates income.

This new standing forest economy connects biodiversity and culture, science and tradition, nature and purpose-driven business. It transforms tourism into a catalyst for territorial belonging and innovation, rather than an agent of cultural erosion. As thinkers like Eduardo Gudynas and Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui assert:

"To regenerate is not merely to restore ecosystems—it is also to repair social relations, recognize marginalized epistemologies, and return agency to the peoples who have kept the forest alive for millennia."

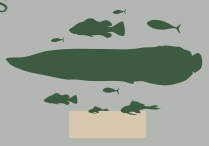
Biodiversity
(natural riches)

The Amazon is home to around:

40.000
species
of plants

1.300
species
of birds

216
species of
amphibians



2.400
species
of fish

371
species
of reptiles

(Source: InfoAmazônia, Embrapa, ICMBio)

Represents **10%** of
the world's biodiversity
(Source: InfoAmazônia, 2022)

Cultural and ethnic diversity

More than **180** indigenous peoples live in the Brazilian Amazon, **55** different ethnic groups in Pará;

More than **160** indigenous languages are spoken

More than **500** quilombola communities mapped in **Pará**;

Approximately **1,2 milhão** people live in traditional communities in **Pará**;

110 million hectares

The indigenous territory totals more than **110 million hectares.**

(Sources: ISPN, IBGE, Coordenação das Organizações Indígenas da Amazônia Brasileira)

The Economy of the Amazon

Historically, the economy of the Legal Amazon (Amazônia Legal) has been marked by activities such as livestock farming and agriculture. Between 1990 and 2003, the cattle herd in the region increased from 26.6 million to 64 million head, a growth of 140%. In the same period, the area used for crops grew by 275%, reaching 7.4 million hectares.

Source: Imazon+1Wikipédia, a enciclopédia livre+1

The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the Legal Amazon in 2002 was R$82 billion, corresponding to 6.1% of the national GDP. The states of Pará, Amazonas and Mato Grosso together accounted for 70% of this value. The GDP per capita of the region was R$7.4 thousand, while the national average was R$12.9 thousand.

Pará is the leading state in the national production of minerals such as iron, bauxite, copper and nickel. In 2021, iron ore production in the state accounted for approximately 35% of national production. However, careful attention is needed to ensure that this abundance does not turn into environmental and social degradation.

Image: Jr Sardo - Pexels.com

Amazon Economy (Brazilian)

National leader in the production of soy, corn, and cocoa.

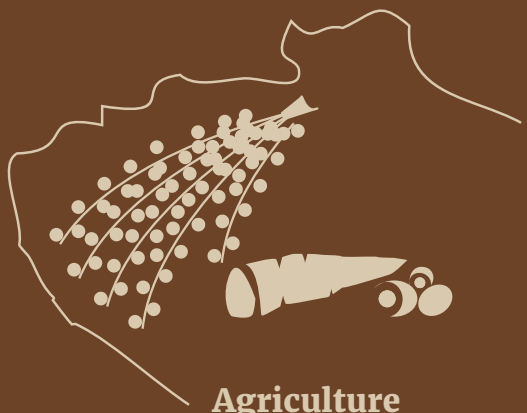
↑ 140%

Home to one of the largest cattle herds in Brazil. Between 1990 and 2003, the cattle population in the region grew from 26.6 million to 64 million heads.

R$ 82 billion (GDP)

In 2002, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the Legal Amazon was R$ 82 billion, accounting for 6.1% of the national GDP.
The region's per capita GDP was R$ 7,400, while the national average stood at R$ 12,900.

Pará Economy



Agriculture

Pará holds a leading position in the production of cassava (3.8 million tons), palm oil (2.8 million tons), and açaí (1.6 million tons), with volumes significantly above the national average.

A record R$ 28.6 billion in agricultural production value was reached in 2023.

Mining

A national leader in the production of minerals such as iron, bauxite, copper, and nickel.

Herd

The state has the largest cattle herd in Brazil's North region, exceeding 1.6 million head. Nationally, Pará ranks as the second-largest producer, holding 10.5% of the country's total herd.

Pará also leads in buffalo farming, with the largest buffalo herd in Brazil, establishing itself as the country's main state for this livestock activity.

↑ 600%

Livestock

Between 1997 and 2023, meat production in Pará experienced remarkable growth—over 600%.
In 2023, Pará exported 106.2 thousand tons of meat.

The Amazon stands out as the national leader in the production of soybeans, corn and cocoa, in addition to being home to one of the largest cattle herds in Brazil. With increasing investments in technology, expansion of cultivated areas and improvements in logistics infrastructure, agriculture in Pará is strengthening as an economic and strategic driver of the North Region. The data are part of the Pará Agricultural Bulletin 2024 (Boletim Agropecuário do Pará 2024), produced by the Amazon Foundation for the Support of Studies and Research (Fundação Amazônia de Amparo a Estudos e Pesquisas - Fapespa). One of the main data refers to livestock farming, a strategic economic activity in Pará, standing out as one of the main sources of wealth and regional development. The state has the largest cattle herd in the North Region, exceeding 1.6 million head. Nationally, Pará is the second largest producer, with 10.5% of the total herd in Brazil. Pará also leads the largest buffalo herd in the country, consolidating its position as the main state in this livestock activity. In 2023, the state was responsible for 40.9% of the national population, totaling 683.6 thousand heads, a significant growth of 6% compared to the previous year.

Livestock - Between 1997 and 2023, meat production in Pará grew significantly, by more than 600%, from 128.5 to 866.6 million tons, representing an absolute increase of approximately 738.1 million tons. In 2023, Pará exported 106.2 thousand tons of meat, with ten municipalities accounting for more than 99% of this total.

Image: Pedro Guerreiro - Ag. Pará

Agriculture - Pará stands out in the national agricultural scenario due to its vast territorial extension and the cultivation of strategic crops, maintaining a leading position in the production of cassava (3.8 million/T), oil palm (2.8 million/T) and açaí (1.6 million/T), whose volumes significantly exceed the national average. In addition, the state also stands out in the production of banana (0.4 million/T), pineapple (0.3 million/T), coconut (0.2 million/T), cocoa (0.1 million/T) and black pepper (0.04 million/T), reinforcing its role in supplying food for direct consumption and for use as industrial inputs.

Growth has continued consecutively over the past four years, culminating in a record R$28.6 billion in agricultural production value in 2023. This advance also reflected an increase in Pará's participation in the national scenario, with its contribution to the value of Brazil's agricultural production rising from 2.4% to 3.5%.

Pimenta do reino

Image: Pedro Guerreiro - Ag. Pará

Exports - With Pará's agricultural sector booming and employing, the state stands out as one of the main agro-export hubs in Brazil. In 2023, Pará exported 5.5 million tons of agricultural products, an increase of 33.5% compared to the previous year. In the historical series, between the years 2000 and 2023, the volume exported by the state registered a significant increase of 587.4%.

Plant products accounted for 91% of all volumes shipped to the international market, reflecting the global preference for these items. Wood came in second place, with 4% of the total traded. Next came live animals and animal products, with 4%, and animal and vegetable fats and oils, with 1%.

The main agricultural products that led international sales were soybeans and corn. In 2023, soybeans accounted for 61.3% of the total volume shipped abroad, with a growth of 32% compared to 2022 and revenue of US$ 1.6 billion. Corn, on the other hand, registered an increase of 44.7% between 2022 and 2023, representing 33.4% of the total traded and reaching US$ 401.6 million in traded value.

Source: Pará Agency, 2025, https://agenciapara.com.br/noticia/65188/para-lidera-producao-de-soja-milho-cacau-e-criacao-de-bufalos

Mineral production is the activity that involves the extraction and treatment of ores, including metallic minerals (such as iron, copper and aluminum), non-metallic minerals (such as sand, kaolin and salt), energy minerals (such as coal and radioactive materials) and gemstones or diamonds. According to data from the National Mining Agency (Agência Nacional de Mineração - ANM), Brazil produced 1.7 billion tons of ores in 2021. In the same year, the state of Pará extracted 369.4 million tons, representing 21.2% of national production. (Table 01)

Overview of Pará mining in the national scenario by class of substance produced (2021)

Mineral Substance Class	Production (Million tons)		PA/BR ratio (%)
	Brazil	Pará	
Total	1739,7	369,4	21,2
Metallic	994,6	356,8	35,9
Non-Metallic	731,7	12,6	1,7
Gems and Diamonds	1,5	0,0	0,0
Energetics	11,6	-	-

Source: ANM, 2023.
Prepared by: CEEAC/FAPESPA, 2023.

Regarding the composition of Brazil's mineral exports by Federative Unit, it was found that, in 2022, only three states contributed with more than 70% of the external trade of Brazilian ore. Pará stood out as the second largest mineral exporter in Brazil, registering a value of US$ 15 billion in 2023. This amount corresponds to 16.6% of the total mineral value traded by the country.

Source: https://www.fapespa.pa.gov.br/sites/default/files/Boletim%20da%20Minera%C3%A7%C3%A3o%202023%20(vers%C3%A3o%2017.04.2023)%20EXPEDIENTE.PUBLICA%C3%87%C3%83O.pdf

Image: Jean Gc - Pexels

Current challenges in the Amazon

In November 2025, Belém will host COP30, a global conference that will define the course of the fight against climate change. The choice of the city is not random: it is a recognition that the future of the planet depends on the Amazon, and Pará is at the epicenter of this challenge. The conference marks the 10th anniversary of the Paris Agreement and occurs at a critical moment: the forest has lost 20% of its original cover, and scientists warn that the point of no return may be near

Source: Science, 2022

The Amazon of Pará is marked by a powerful contradiction: it is at the same time one of the territories richest in biodiversity, cultures and traditional knowledge, as well as one of the most pressured by social inequalities, deforestation and environmental degradation. The construction of sustainable and regenerative paths for the region requires, above all, the honest and direct recognition of the challenges that structure this reality.

At the heart of this wealth lies a little-known treasure: the Amazon reefs. Discovered in 2016, these underwater gardens stretch across 9,500 km² at the mouth of the Amazon River, from Maranhão to French Guiana. Beneath murky waters and sediments, corals, sponges and fish adapted to extreme conditions create a unique ecosystem, sustained by microorganisms that transform minerals into life. It is as if the forest, upon meeting the sea, invented new ways of existing

Source: Moura et al., 2016, https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.1501252

However, this balance is under threat. Oil exploration in the region, with dozens of blocks already put out to tender, puts at risk not only the reefs, but also the coastal communities that depend on these seas.

Image: Jean Gc - Pexels

Without planning that listens to those who live there, leaks and degradation could erase this chapter of the Amazon before it is even fully understood

Source: Francini-Filho et al., 2018, https://doi.org/10.3389/fmars.2018.00142

Meanwhile, on dry land, the forest is facing its own siege. Between 2019 and 2020, deforestation in the Amazon grew by 9.5%, with Pará leading this sad statistic: 37% of all devastation occurred in its territory (INPE, 2021, https://www.obt.inpe.br). Areas where jaguars hunted and hyacinth macaws nested have turned into pasture or charcoal. The result? In the last ten years, the number of threatened species in the region has increased by an alarming 65%, affecting 503 plants and animals — such as the black-faced spider monkey, whose disappearance would unbalance the entire food chain

Source: IUCN, 2020, https://www.iucnredlist.org

Deforestation is perhaps the most visible sign of the ongoing environmental crisis. In 2023, Pará led deforestation in the Amazon, with more than 1,200 km² of forest cut down, according to INPE. Of this total, 45% occurred on non-designated public lands, without any type of legal protection or defined use, preferred targets for land grabbing and speculative exploitation. This situation highlights the vacuum of territorial governance and the fragility of land regulation, which allows advanced destruction even without legal support.

The growth of illegal activities is another critical point. Mining, often carried out in protected areas or indigenous lands, contaminates rivers with mercury, displaces traditional populations and causes territorial conflicts. At the same time, the disorderly growth of livestock farming is one of the drivers of forest conversion. In regions such as São Félix do Xingu, illegal occupation of land by large herds of cattle is common, contributing to increased greenhouse gas emissions and pressure on protected areas.

These processes have direct impacts on the population. Pará is the Brazilian state with the highest greenhouse gas emissions, accounting for 19% of national emissions in 2020 (Sistema de Estimativas de Emissões e Remoções de Gases do Efeito Estufa - SEEG), while 44% of its population lives below the poverty line (Programa das Nações Unidas para o Desenvolvimento - UNDP). The state ranks 24th in the national HDI ranking (0.646), which reveals a combination of natural wealth and human vulnerability.

Pará is a paradox: it is the state that deforests the most, but also the state that innovates the most solutions. With a large part of the Amazon rainforest in its territory, Pará is seeing traditional and indigenous communities rewrite this narrative. In Xingu, for example, villages have been transformed into tourist destinations where visitors learn to fish with wooden hooks and to harvest fruit without damaging the trees. These initiatives have already generated R$2.8 million in direct income for 15 communities between 2018 and 2023 Source: SECOM, 2021, https://www.pa.gov.br

In the institutional field, challenges include the weakness of land use planning policies and the slow pace of land regularization and demarcation processes for indigenous and quilombola lands (territories of Afro-Brazilian communities descended from escaped enslaved people who founded independent settlements called quilombos). The lack of effective regulation encourages environmental exploitation, which occurs with institutional support but without any guarantee of benefit for local populations. The difficulty of implementing appropriate public policies is also present in the field of culture: there are few initiatives that recognize and strengthen traditional knowledge, cultural expressions and native languages as central elements of territorial continuity that serve the vastness of the region.

Another challenge stands out in education: the lack of specific training in areas such as financial management, community governance and the use of technologies. This gap is a recurring complaint among local groups and associations involved in community-based tourism. Young riverside residents report that the training programs offered are sporadic and poorly aligned with local reality, making it difficult for businesses to remain sustainable.

Alongside socioeconomic exclusion and precarious infrastructure, digital exclusion also emerges as a real barrier. Despite some innovative initiatives, such as the use of drones for environmental monitoring and applications developed by indigenous organizations, a large part of communities still lack access to basic connectivity, which limits their inclusion in collaboration and commercialization networks.

Recognizing these issues as structural is the first step towards promoting change. It is only through careful observation of territories, strengthening of community organizations and the construction of legal frameworks that are consistent with regional diversity that we can move towards a transition of models.

For Pará, hosting COP30 is an opportunity to show the world that development and conservation are not opposites. Projects such as Sustainable Territories (Territórios Sustentáveis), which combats deforestation in 11 critical municipalities, have already reduced devastation by 34% in these areas since 2021 (TNC, 2023, https://www.tnc.org.br/). The Forest Cantina Network (Rede de Cantinas da Floresta), an initiative that supports the sale of products such as nuts and açaí, generated R$12 million in income for extractive communities in 2023, proving that the standing forest economy is viable.

In recent years, the Amazon itself has become the focus of international attention due to its strategic importance in regulating the climate and preserving the cycles that sustain life. The holding of events such as "Amazon Week", held in the cities of Berlin, Brussels and Paris, exemplifies this growing interest and the urgency of collaboratively discussing the direction of the preservation of Amazonian ecosystems. During these meetings, leaders, activists, representatives of civil society and traditional communities came together, in their last edition in 2024, to share their experiences and reinforce the need for a joint commitment that transcends borders and hierarchies

Source: Amazon Week, 2024, https://amazonweek.eu

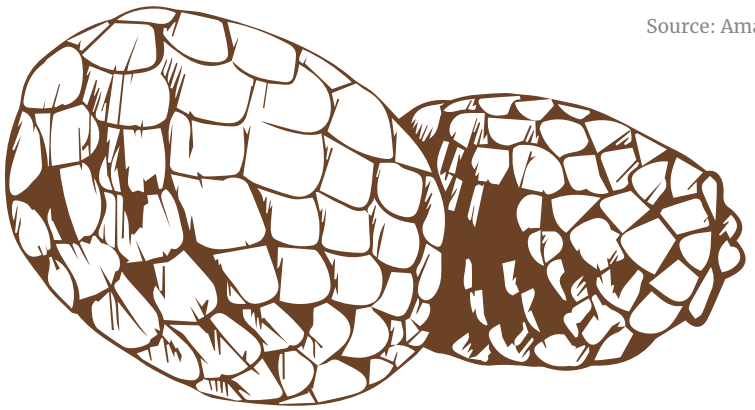


Imagem: Wallace Castro - Pexels

From Degeneration to Regeneration—

Examples of the resilience of the Amazon and its people

Despite the numerous challenges facing the Amazon region of Pará — from the advance of deforestation to the pressure for intensive extractive models — it is essential to recognize that the region is also fertile ground for transformative initiatives that indicate possible and sustainable paths for the future. In this material, compiled by the Federal University of Pará and the State Secretariat for Bioeconomy of Pará (Secretaria Estadual de Bioeconomia do Pará), we will see that there are solutions that can mitigate the process of degeneration. These projects are already taking place on different scales and with different institutional arrangements, but they need to be made visible, strengthened, and replicated.

In addition to preserving the environment and valuing biodiversity, these initiatives play an essential role in promoting climate justice, economic inclusion and the protagonism of local communities. They are seeds of the future planted today, with concrete impacts on the lives of residents and visitors. What's more, they open up space for the strengthening of green finance, the bioeconomy, the certification of production chains and the revaluation of territories as living and symbolic assets.

Some highlighted initiatives:

Health and Happiness Project (Santarém):

Transformation of degraded areas into agroforestry systems with planting of cocoa, cupuaçu and native species. Result: 500 hectares recovered and 300 families trained to generate income and food security.

Sesc e Instituto Laurinda da Amazônia:

Immersive social tourism with experiences in riverside and quilom - bola communities, such as on Ingapijó Island, with activities such as visiting plantations, workshops and adventure tourism on Combu Island.

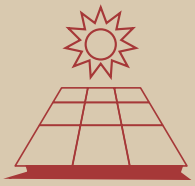
15%

In **Monte Alegre**, the State Park received 15% more visitors in 2023 after the training of local guides, many of them former loggers

IDEFLOR-in the Trombetas State Forest:

Support for the management of Brazil nuts by quilombola communities, reducing fires in managed areas by 40%.

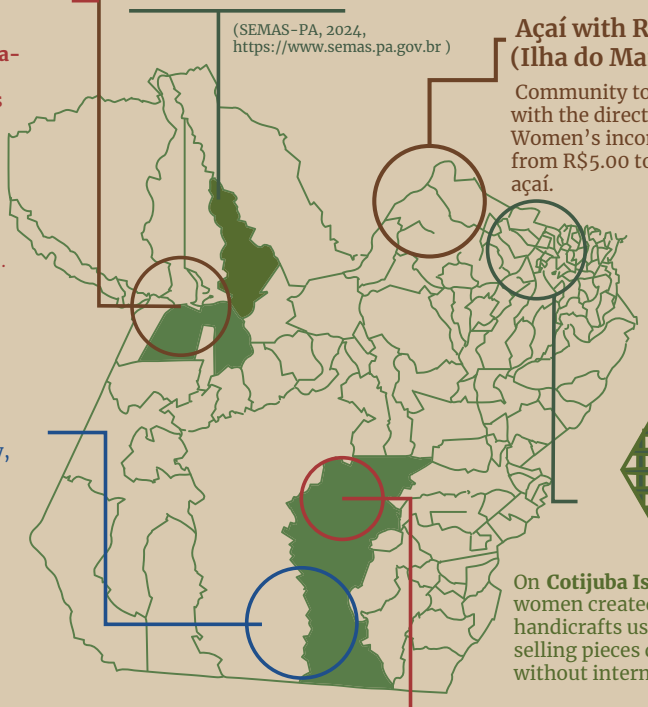
3X



In the **Tapajós-Arapiuns Extractive Reserve**, eco-lodges run on solar energy, avoiding the use of diesel generators. Each stay finances the installation of panels in riverside schools, benefiting 600 students by 2023

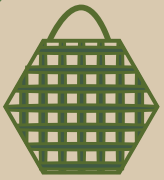
(ICMBio, 2023, https://www.icmbio.gov.br) .

(SEMAS-PA, 2024, https://www.semas.pa.gov.br)



Açaí with Respect Network (Ilha do Marajó):

Community tourism combined with the direct sale of açaí pulp. Women's income tripled, rising from R$5.00 to R$20.00 per liter of açaí.



On **Cotijuba Island**, riverside women created a network of handicrafts using natural fibers, selling pieces directly to visitors, without intermediaries.

Origens Brasil® (Imaflora):

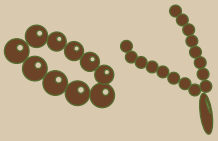
Connection between companies and communities that produce sustainably, such as the Kayapó, who sell honey to the cosmetics industry, conserving 10 million hectares of forest.

PlanBio - State Bioeconomy Plan:

With 122 structured actions and more than R$89 million invested, it promotes sustainable production chains, community-based tourism, and monitoring initiatives via a transparent dashboard.

Wisdom Park (São Félix do Xingu):

Former gold prospectors turned into tourist guides and reforestation agents, working to restore degraded areas.



PSA Program - Payment for Environmental Services

Implemented by the Government of Pará with support from TNC and AMDTF, compensating conservation practices with direct resources to communities.

COP30 Showcases Project:

Support for tourist itineraries in Amazonian communities to attract visitors and investors during the climate conference, with a focus on the bioeconomy and community leadership.

BioBusiness Pará:

Fairs with biojewelry parades, business rounds and exhibition of sustainable products produced by traditional populations, connecting local production and the internatio - nal market.

Climate Justice goes beyond decarbonization

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) warns that global warming is accelerating (IPCC, 2023, https://www.ipcc.ch), but in Pará, this phenomenon has familiar faces. They are people like Mrs. Maria Tereza, a quilombola leader from Moju, who explains: "Before, the rain came at the right time to plant cassava. Now, either there is a lack of water, or it comes all at once, taking the crops away." These changes, driven by deforestation and the burning of fossil fuels, do not affect everyone equally. While rich countries are responsible for 92% of the historical excess emissions (Carbon Brief, 2021, https://www.carbonbrief.org), communities like those in Moju, which contributed little to the problem, bear the worst consequences.

This inequality is at the heart of climate justice: recognizing that those who destroy the least are those who suffer the most. But in Pará, communities are not waiting for saviors. In the Arióca Pruanã Extractive Reserve, riverside dwellers combine GPS and ancestral knowledge to monitor hotspots. "We use a smartphone app, but we also listen to the birdsong — when they become quiet, it's a sign of a fire nearby," says Mr. Raimundo, 68. This fusion of knowledge led to a 40% reduction in fires in the region between 2020 and 2023

Source: ICMBio, 2023, https://www.icmbio.gov.br

The numbers prove the urgency of the situation: according to data recorded by INPE, the average temperature in the state has risen 1.2°C since 1960 (INPE, 2022, https://www.inpe.br). In addition, extreme we-

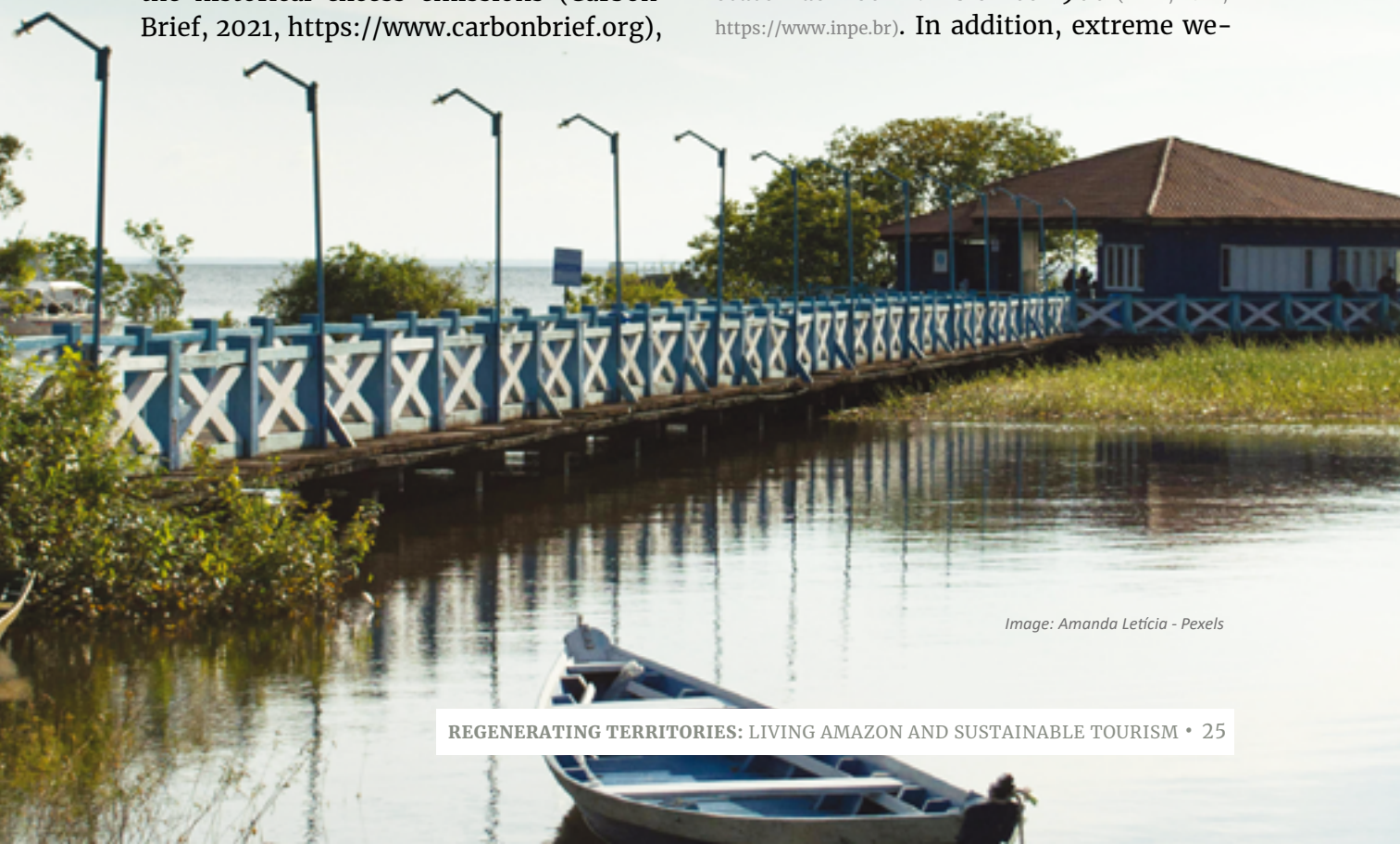


Image: Amanda Letícia - Pexels

Image: Freepik.com

ather events, such as the 2021 floods that displaced 500 families in Santarém (Civil Defense of Pará, 2021, https://www.defesacivil.pa.gov.br),, are increasingly frequent. For the Munduruku of Alto Tapajós, this means seeing sacred fishing areas disappear under floodwaters, while the Tembé of Santa Maria do Pará face dwindling açaí harvests.

Decarbonization has become a nearly consensual goal on global climate agendas. However, this technical and seemingly neutral term hides fundamental disputes over territory, power, and environmental justice. In the Amazon region of Pará, the effects of climate change are already an evident reality, with changes in rainfall patterns, increased fires, and compromised agricultural cycles. In this context, the debate on decarbonization cannot be separated from the struggle for territorial sovereignty, the valorization of local ways of life, and the fight against structural inequality.

Reducing greenhouse gas emissions is urgent, but the question is essential: **who emits, who pays, and who profits from the proposed solution?** The rapid advancement of carbon markets, especially in the Amazon, reveals a logic that maintains the architecture of exploitation: companies from the global North and from highly polluting sectors buy carbon credits to offset their emissions — often without actually changing their production models — while local communities receive a tiny fraction of the benefits and bear the cost of keeping the forest standing.

The idea that conservation can generate revenue is powerful, but it becomes fragile when there is no transparency, redistribution of value and protagonism of the forest peoples. Carbon credit projects signed without prior, free and informed consultation, and with unclear contracts, are multiplying in Amazonian territories. There are reports that indigenous and riverside families sign documents without

full understanding, giving up rights over their own territory in exchange for vague promises. The case of contracts involving millions of hectares, signed with intermediaries who are not even from the region, illustrates the risk that the "green economy" will become just a new phase of the old extractivism, now disguised as climate neutrality.

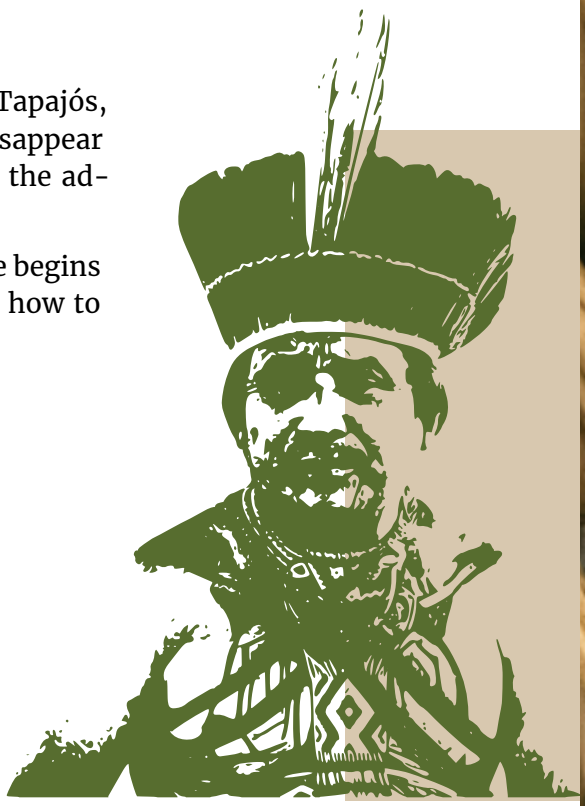
The Amazon rainforest is not just a carbon store. It is life, culture, food, sacred territory and the source of multiple economies. Decarbonization, in this context, **cannot be limited to trading tons of CO_2**. It requires rethinking the development model. It means ensuring land regularization, rigorously combating illegal deforestation, valuing regenerative agriculture, promoting community-based tourism and legally recognizing the ways of existence that have historically maintained the balance of the biome.

Programs that aim at the energy transition and the use of clean technologies in isolated systems in the Amazon — such as the **'Energies of the Amazon'**, from the Ministry of Mines and Energy of Brazil (Ministério de Minas e Energia do Brasil - MME) (2023) — are important, but still insufficient. The real challenge lies in linking these investments to public policies that address environmental racism, the marginalization of local knowledge and the financialization of forests without any effective return to the communities that live there.

The Amazon region of Pará needs structural, non-compensatory solutions. Carbon is just one element of the equation. Decarbonization in this territory will only make sense if it comes together with the redistribution of power over common goods and the recognition that the standing forest is part of a cosmology, a living economy and a project for the future that does not fit into market metrics.

One example is the Munduruku people of Alto Tapajós, who have seen their sacred fishing grounds disappear with the construction of hydroelectric dams and the advance of illegal mining.

Her words echo a basic principle: climate justice begins when we listen to those who have always known how to care for the land.



“We don’t want compensation; we want our way of life to be respected”

Alessandra Korap, a Munduruku leader.

Sustainable tourism is emerging as a tool to reduce pollutants. Pará is rewriting its relationship with nature through initiatives such as the Riverside Carbon Project (Projeto Carbono Ribeirinho), which transforms degraded areas into eco-tourism hubs. In the Triunfo do Xingu Protection Area, 10,000 hectares of abandoned pastures are being reforested with native species. The carbon credits generated are sold to global companies, and part of the proceeds finance tourist itineraries led by local communities.

In practice, this means that a visitor who walks along newly restored trails not only learns about biodiversity, but also funds community surveillance against invasions. In 2023, these actions reduced deforestation by 28% in the region

(Imazon, 2023, https://imazon.org.br)

“Every tree planted is a step towards healing the land”

Ademir Kaba, leader of the Munduruku people involved in the project.

Image: Wallace Castro - Pexels

Integrating tourism and communities is not an easy path. There are unpaved roads, a lack of signage and, at times, resistance from those who fear that culture will be lost. But these examples show that it is possible.

The Role of Ancestral Wisdom —

Advanced Technologies from the Amazon to the World

Climate justice requires more than just speeches — it requires collective action, and it has a face, a name, and a history. In Pará, this means supporting initiatives such as the Marajó Community-Based Tourism Network, which has already trained 120 families in sustainable accommodation management, increasing local income by 40% (ICMBio, 2022, https://www.icmbio.gov.br). It means choosing itineraries that value ancestral knowledge, such as the fishing techniques with timbó (a plant that stuns fish without poisoning the water) taught by the Kayapó in Altamira.

These include the quilombolas of Moju, who fight fires using ancestral techniques, or the Kayapó indigenous people, whose lands have deforestation rates 90% lower than unpro-

tected areas (Imazon, 2023, https://imazon.org.br). Tourism is an ally: by valuing this knowledge, it generates resources for territorial surveillance and strengthens the fight against land grabbing.

In Salvaterra, in the Marajó archipelago, community tourism finances the installation of solar systems in isolated communities, reducing the use of diesel generators. These actions show that climate and culture are inseparable.

Sustainable tourism is one of the tools for this change — an invitation to walk together, learn from those who know each trail, and ensure that future generations inherit not only a living Amazon, but a more just society.

Community-based tourism in Pará isn't just about sightseeing: it's a tool for climate justice. When a visitor pays to take part in an immersive hike with the Kayapó, part of the proceeds fund drones that monitor invasions of indigenous lands. In the Tapajós-Arapiuns Extractive Reserve, "riverside immersion" tours fund the installation of solar power systems, reducing the use of diesel generators.

Far from models that see the Amazon as a stock of resources to be extracted, initiatives are emerging that prove it is possible to generate wealth while keeping the forest standing, and sustainable tourism is a key part of this transformation.

But how does this work in practice? In the Vila Sucupira community, riverside dwellers who previously depended on the illegal sale of timber now welcome tourists to teach them sustainable management techniques. "We show them how to extract andiroba oil without cutting down the tree, and visitors take the product home as a souvenir," explains Mrs. Isabel, a 62-year-old artisan. Part of the income is reinvested in community surveillance against invasions, reducing deforestation by 28% in the region since 2022.

(Imazon, 2023,https://imazon.org.br)

The secret lies in shared governance. Unlike projects imposed from above, in Pará, communities define the rules. In the Carbono Ribeirinho Project, led by Ideflor-Bio, 45 rural settlements decided to allocate 30% of the carbon credit resources to environmental education in local schools.

“My students already know that a chestnut tree is worth more alive than cut down”

Teacher Luíza, from the Nova Esperança community

The Role of Bioeconomy in Local Development and Climate Justice

The bioeconomy of Pará is not just about products — it is about relationships. From the tucupi fermented by the hands of babassu coconut breakers to the andiroba oil that becomes a jewel in the São José Liberto Hub, each chain values the standing forest. The state is already responsible for 38% of the national production of açaí (IBGE, 2023, https://www.ibge.gov.br), but the challenge is to ensure that this wealth reaches those who preserve the açaí groves.

Tourism amplifies this logic: at the Ver-o-Peso Market in Belém, ancestral cuisine reigns supreme, while chefs like Thiago Castanho and Saulo Jennings transform local ingredients into cutting-edge cuisine, extolling the importance of preservation on the plate around the world.

Eating continues to be a political — and economic — act. In the Amazon more than anywhere else on the planet.

Products such as açaí — of which Pará accounts for 95% of the national production (IBGE, 2023, https://www.ibge.gov.br) — already prove that profit and preservation are not opposites, but allies. A study published on March 25, 2025 by WRI Brasil reinforces this potential: 13 bioeconomy chains in the state could increase GDP by R$816 million, generate 6,600 jobs (with R$135 million in salaries) and inject R$44 million in taxes, all with an investment of R$720 million. The numbers reveal a mathematics of hope: every R$1.00 invested returns R$1.13 to GDP, R$0.19 in income for workers and R$0.06 in taxes. And the multiplier effect grows as the chain advances — R$1.14 in the production of raw materials, R$1.27 in industrialization and R$1.40 in commercialization.

(WRI Brasil/CicloVivo, 2025, https://ciclovivo.com.br/planeta/desenvolvimento/bioeconomia-pode-somar-r-816-milhoes-ao-pib-do-para/)

In Afuá, the 'Marajoara Venice', this future is already flourishing. Riverside families sell cupuaçu and taperebá pulp to restaurants in Belém, while guiding tourists in canoes along the creeks, showing that each standing tree is an economic asset. 'Before, the açaí palm was cut down to be used as furniture; today, it is worth more standing', explains Mrs. Raimunda, a community leader whose backyard has become a classroom on sustainability. Her story echoes the study's calculations: investing in the bioeconomy is not an expense, but a seed. A seed that, watered by policies and partnerships, can transform degraded pastures into productive forests — and stories like hers are the rule, not the exception.

These initiatives show that conserving biodiversity requires more than just laws — it requires recognition

"The forest doesn't need to be saved; it needs to stop destroying it."

Ailton Krenak, indigenous leader.

And this is where sustainable tourism becomes an ally: by valuing traditional knowledge, it strengthens those who have always protected the land.

Meanwhile, in the coastal waters of Pará, artisanal fishermen are teaming up with scientists to map Amazonian reefs. In Soure, on the Marajó island, tourists are helping to collect data on corals during guided dives — information that is pushing for protection policies.

Image: Wallace Castro - Pexels

“Before, we only saw oil here; now, we see life”

Mr. Zé, a fisherman for 40 years.

In 2020, Pará made significant progress by implementing the State Policy on Climate Change, a pioneering initiative in Brazil in placing traditional peoples at the center of decision-making. One example is the Carbon in Communities Project (Projeto Carbono nas Comunidades), which directs carbon credit resources to train indigenous environmental agents. In three years, 120 young people from 15 ethnic groups learned how to use drones to monitor deforestation and interpret forest signals that machines cannot capture. “Technology helps, but it is our knowledge of the trails that prevents invasions,” says Juma Xipaya, one of the participants.

Sustainable tourism is emerging as an ally in this journey. On Marajó Island, family-run guesthouses run by riverside residents offer tours where tourists help replant mangroves — ecosystems that store four times more carbon than tropical forests (UNEP, 2020,https://www.unep.org). Each seedling planted funds scholarships for children in the community.

“Before, my children wanted to go to the city; today, they want to be ‘forest doctors’”

Says Dona Clara, the host of a guesthouse in Soure, proudly.

In Altamira, the Yudjá have transformed the threat of the Belo Monte Dam into an opportunity: they have created community-based tourism itineraries that show life before and after the dam. Visitors learn to fish with a bow and arrow, while part of the income is invested in solar energy systems for isolated villages. “We don’t want pity; we want partnership,” emphasizes chief Juruna.

These initiatives reflect a simple principle: climate justice begins with listening. When the government of Pará decided to create the Riveir Climate Fund (Fundo Climático Ribeirinho) in 2022, it did not hire international consultants — it brought together 34 masters of traditional knowledge in Belém. The result? A program that combines the reforestation of streams with the creation of “healing tourism routes”, where shamans teach the medicinal use of plants threatened by climate change.

However, there are still significant obstacles to overcome. In the São Félix do Xingu region, illegal cattle ranchers are advancing on indigenous lands, while the prolonged drought is making subsistence farming difficult. Even so, projects such as Farmland Tourism (Turismo de Roça) are showing the way forward: family farmers receive visitors to teach them how to plant without burning, a method that has already recovered 200 hectares of degraded soil.

Source: EMBRAPA, 2023,https://www.embrapa.br

Image: Wallace Castro - Pexels

“True climate justice does not come from reports, but from the forest floor”.

Sônia Guajajara, Indigenous leader.

In Pará, this floor is being replanted with initiatives that prove that it is possible to generate income without destroying the forest, and that the guardians of the Amazon — indigenous people, quilombolas, riverside communities — are not passive victims, but architects of solutions. The world must learn from them.

Tourism is a catalyst for this change. On Combu Island, 30 minutes from Belém, families who used to make a living from predatory fishing now offer “açaí grove immersion” tours. Visitors learn how to climb palm trees with a peconha (a plant fiber strap) and participate in pulp processing workshops, while 20% of the amount paid goes to a collective fund for climate emergencies. “With the strongest floods, we need to be prepared,” explains Seu João, leader of the local association.

The numbers show the impact of these initiatives: in 2023, Pará registered 152 certified sustainable tourism ventures, generating R$18 million in direct income for traditional communities — a 45% increase compared to 2020 (SEMAS-PA, 2024,https://www.semas.pa.gov.br). Among them, the Amazon with Open Doors (Amazônia de Portas Abertas) accommodation chain stands out, which connects family-run inns in extractive reserves with travelers willing to trade comfort for real connection. “Here, the Wi-Fi is weak, but the conversation with the riverside dwellers is strong,” jokes Ana, a guest at Alter do Chão.

Despite these advances, challenges remain a reality. In regions such as São Félix do Xingu, where deforestation is increasing by 12% per year (INPE, 2023, https://www.obt.inpe.br), tourism projects face a lack of infrastructure and illegal competition. To get around this, innovation was needed: in 2024, the government launched public notices for the concession of degraded areas, where private companies take on environmental recovery in ex-

change for the right to explore sustainable tourism. In practice, this means that a deforested farm can become an eco-lodge, as long as it replants 80% of the native vegetation and hires local labor.

In Monte Alegre, a former illegal mining area has been transformed into the Wisdom Park, where visitors walk along trails lined with centuries-old chestnut trees and learn about indigenous geoglyphs from guides from the Munduruku ethnic group. "Before, we sold gold; today, we sell knowledge," summarizes leader Ademir Kaba.

The lesson Pará offers the world is clear: sustainable finance is not about numbers on spreadsheets, but about cycles that regenerate. When a community lodge in Marajó buys fish directly from artisanal fishermen, it is strengthening an economy that keeps rivers alive. When a carbon credit funds the training of indigenous youth in monitoring drones, it is investing in possible futures.

And what about tourists? They have become part of this trend. Every night spent sleeping in a hut, every meal shared with riverside dwellers, every story heard under the starry sky of the Amazon are the seeds of a new model. A model where development is not the enemy of the forest, but its oldest partner.

CHAPTER 2

Enjoying Without Destroying — Promoting Conservation And Awareness Of Environmental Preservation In Community-Based And Ecological Tourism In The Western Amazon.

Wilza da Silveira Pinto[1]
Sérgio Brazão e Silva[2]
Deusdedith Cruz Filho[3]

In Belém, the capital of Pará and the venue for the Meeting of the Parties to the Climate Change Conference (COP 30), environmental discussions are now taking place in all possible activities. Some discussions are held as part of corporate marketing, while others are held in educational settings. The discussions are varied, but one aspect is of great relevance: how can we use the Amazon's natural resources without destroying it?

The Amazon is the target of people who practice predatory and illegal exploitation in some cases, and in other cases, licensed or tolerated exploitation, but with permissiveness, which also harms the environment. How can we live with exploitation? Some activities cannot be carried out, or can be carried out to a certain extent. I will give some examples: extensive agribusiness cannot promote the felling of the forest, as well as the expansion of areas for cattle raising. Science points to the use of technology in both cases: today it is possible to increase cattle production without increasing the production area, and without promoting cattle confinement. By using pastures studied and recommended by the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (EMBRAPA), it is possible to increase the number of head of cattle in areas already cultivated. Likewise for Agribusiness, there are technologies suitable for increasing production in existing areas.

And what about tourism? Tourism is always seen as a clean technology company, but this is always the case, and now we will address a case that is currently under discussion but has not yet been resolved. The island environment of the city of Belém is a very beautiful and exotic region for visitors who come from outside the northern region of Brazil. When you visit the Islands region, you are immersed in a tour of the Amazon's own world. There are two environments for two different ecosystems on these islands: one environment related to the floodplain islands (dominance of Gleissolos, soils that are influenced by the tide), and the islands with solid ground, two of which have road connections to the urban part of the city. On the floodplain islands, on a boat trip through the "holes", as the relatively narrow spaces inside the islands are called, it is possible to enter an environment of peace, silence, and the sounds of the animals and birds of the islands, observe the houses on stilts, and enjoy restaurants set up on the shores of the islands, mainly in the archipelago south of the city: the Combú Archipelago.

The trip to the large islands, which are formed by the Latosol, an ancient and well-drained soil that dominates the Amazon, an environment with freshwater rivers, and, on the islands, beaches that are enchanting for their size, and for being similar to sea beaches, but on a river. Things from the Amazon in the City of Belém.

Figure 1. Region of the islands of Belém. The islands are also the urban environment belonging to the city, and are highlighted in light blue. Other islands belong to the municipalities of Barcarena and Ananindeua, components of the Metropolitan Region of Belém

Source: Embrapa/Brazil seen from Space (2007).

Image: Jr Sardo - Pexels

And this introduction is a provocation to inform that the intense tourism on the islands, which is pleasant to enjoy, is not as clean as the slogan "tourism, the clean industry".

The floodplain islands have been occupied without planning for the construction of restaurants and inns. This occurs without any planning or supervision by legal agencies. This generates restaurants with good food, hiring chefs and support staff, piers for parking boats, and other attractions, but without planning for the waste generated, both in food production activities and the garbage generated by cleaning and bathrooms. Nor has a maximum number of restaurants per island been established, or on which of the islands they can be located. Some restaurants hold parties and make excessive noise in forest areas. The environmental impact is great, and it is not clean.

The island with the largest number of restaurants is a Conservation Unit, the Combú APA. This leads to the urgent need to carry out its management plan, carried out in a participatory manner, and thus observe all the aspects necessary for the elaboration of the Plan, which will guide the installation (or not) of new restaurants in the location.

It is worth noting that the riverside dwellers live in harmony on the islands, developing their activities, which are basically: fishing, the production of açaí berries, which come from the native açaí groves that exist on the islands, and the production of fruit on some islands. The islands are densely populated by large vegetation, with forests predominating on most of the islands (Silva, SB e, 2010). In a recent study carried out by cartography students (not yet published), it was observed that the forests have increased in area, associated with the reduction of

the capoeira area. This shows that the greatest attraction of tourism, nature, is preserved. Its proximity to the city allows tourists to take a trip and return to the urban center quickly, but it offers an escape from the oppressive and noisy environment of the urban environment. This is very good news. It shows that tourism can and should exist, with the established rules, so that it does not become an environmental and social problem.

This example also applies to the islands with solid ground, with their beaches spread across three beautiful islands. In some cases, the most noble public spaces are occupied, which should be for common and free use, but which pollute and exclude part of the population from using them. These are aspects to be discussed for a growing city, which, with the visibility provided by COP30, could further increase its tourism.

This new relationship between different actors and networks on the issue of practices established in communities in relation to the environment has reached its peak in recent decades, especially with the explosion of discussions in the field of ecology, and consequently of the concept of Sustainable Development. It is necessary to (re)know the interactions established between these peoples, social groups and nature, based on the experience with them, in order to subsequently understand the complexity that exists in the relationship between people and natural environments; and thus, create, based on the integration of scientific and empirical knowledge, conservation strategies for the different existing ecosystems, such as soils, rivers, forests, seas, etc. (Barros, 2008).

The flow of tourists generates a local economic movement that is directly related to the exploitation of natural resources and generates an environmental impact that has not yet been measured and has been causing concern among users. The size of the flow is unknown, the economic activities have not been diagnosed, and the size of the impact has not been measured.

It is known that economic activities are focused on tourism, such as bars, restaurants, and inns, without any planning in the occupation and exploitation of natural

resources, such as crab collection, fishing (fish and shrimp), and the use of groundwater, soil, and in the case of poorly planned cisterns. These are items that contribute to the dismantling of the natural landscape.

In the region of the Belém islands, the movement of water in rivers and streams caused by the passage of water transport, such as cargo ships, ferries, boats, speedboats, yachts and jet skis, causes the banks to collapse, causing a reduction in the areas where houses and restaurants are installed, even causing these facilities to collapse over time.

The islands of Mosqueiro, Cotijuba, das Onças and Combu, close to the city of Belém, are located in an intermediate area of the Amazon estuary, that is, a transition area between fresh water (south of the Guajará Bay and to the right of the Guamá River) and salt water (north of Belém at the height of the city of Colares).

Sea, river and lake beaches are assets of collective value and represent one of the bases for investment in tourism. Their conservation should be the focus of attention from the public, private and third sectors. Seeking to build relationships with gender and age-generation equity; participatory management; encouraging the formation and training of groups; creating and strengthening spaces of solidarity for exchange between fami-

lies in the community and the floating population (tourists) can generate an environment conducive to environmental education, generating the conservation and maintenance of these spaces for their social reproduction and for leisure, generating an economic flow and well-being for all users.

It is also worth highlighting the importance of environmental awareness and awareness initiatives for tourists who use the beaches for leisure and play an essential role in maintaining such environments.

Ecological tourism is a component that reorients the way in which regional agrarian social space is occupied, so that the ecological characteristics of these ecosystems are considered, as well as the economic, social and cultural specificities of the historical subjects who live in the area. It is necessary to implement projects for the use of natural heritage that are in accordance with the environmental wealth of the region and that at the same time satisfy the economic needs of local communities (FIEPR, 1012).

Ecotourism can be identified as one of the potential economic forces to achieve local development. This vision presents systemic interaction with several other activities, which can make it a new element in the productive means in the diversity of micro or macroeconomic actions of public policies and of the various social actors.

The dimension of socio-environmental sustainability is a prerequisite for structuring tourism activities. The search for alternative activities to supplement the income of families in traditional communities and, at the same time, preserve their cultural expressions and natural resources, has been a constant challenge for local development projects and policies (Casa da Agricultura, 2012).

The riverside living areas are part of the dialectical field of diverse spatialities and temporalities of this heterogeneous Amazon, in which the river and the forest offer attributes of interest to economic practices and environmental policies (Rodrigues and Cardoso, 2018).

The island sector of Belém is made up of 42 islands (333 km2), grouped into the following regions: Northwest (e.g. Onças, Cotijuba, Jutuba, Paquetá), North (e.g. Caratateua/Outeiro, Mosqueiro) and South (e.g. Combú, Murutucu) (CODEM, 2012, p.7). Some islands are located close to the urban center, with easy access by boat, and have great potential for ecological tourism. Most of these locations are located in Environmental Preservation Areas (APAs).

The Institute for Forestry and Biodiversity Development (Instituto de Desenvolvimento Florestal e da Biodiversidade - Ideflor-Bio) manages Environmental Conservation Areas distributed throughout the State of Pará. The Management of the Administrative Region of Belém (Gerência da Região Administrativa de Belém - GRB), is responsible for managing and monitoring four of the 28 Nature Conservation Units, which are under the management of the Directorate for Management and Monitoring of Conservation Units (Gestão da Diretoria de Gestão e Monitoramento das Unidades de Conservação - DGMUC): Combu Island Environ-

mental Protection Area (Área de Proteção Ambiental da Ilha do Combu - APA Ilha do Combu), Belém Metropolitan Region Environmental Protection Area (Área de Proteção Ambiental da Região Metropolitana de Belém - APA Belém), Metropolis of the Amazon Wildlife Refuge (Refúgio de Vida Silvestre Metrópole da Amazônia) and Utinga State Park (PEUt).

The set of attractions of these Environmental Protection Areas, in addition to contact with nature, the interaction of the flora represented by forests and mangroves and with the fauna in terms of bird watching, includes the local culture in its various aspects (cuisine, music, dances, stories and legends).

Seeking a way to build the future, built from the vision of the organization or community and taking advantage of the skills established from traditions, based on the preservation of cultural identity as a way to rescue sociocultural aspects and transform them into sustainable economic possibilities, makes concern for the environment as important as concern for the cultural continuity of these communities, where natural resources are their greatest source of income and survival (Silveira et al, 1999; Jacobi, 2000; Laville, 2003).

Creativity, the result of internal community dialogue, enables the implementation of projects that are more suited to local social, economic, environmental and cultural conditions (Goulet, 1998).

Thus, when combined, technical-scientific studies, with long-term actions and local empirical knowledge, make knowledge about the place effective and productive. Social transformation im-

Image: Jean Gc - Pexels

plies the participation of different social actors involved in the process, acting as protagonists in a purpose of social (re) construction and replicating a new conception of the world and relationships with nature.

To achieve this, it is necessary to mobilize and raise awareness among local stakeholders to become involved in a possible process of social mobilization in an exclusionary society. Participatory methodologies have been supporting the presented concept, based on the theoretical basis of action research, which seeks to understand and intervene in a reality, but in a joint manner between all actors, fixed and floating users (seasonal tourists and casual tourists) (Thiollent, 1988; Vasconcellos, 1998).

In a rapidly changing world, environmental issues are increasingly at the doorstep of citizens in the space of everyday life that is the territory of action. It is therefore essential to respond to the challenges with information, qualifications and specific skills. As a central element, a continuous and permanent process of coordination and monitoring between the actors involved in projects with this scope of community-based tourism, ecological tourism and rural tourism should be established. It should be capable of mobilizing energies and undertaking actions to be increased with a focus on sustainability and environmental, cultural, economic and social responsibility, adding to these other dimensions politics and technology, as dimensions of sustainability.

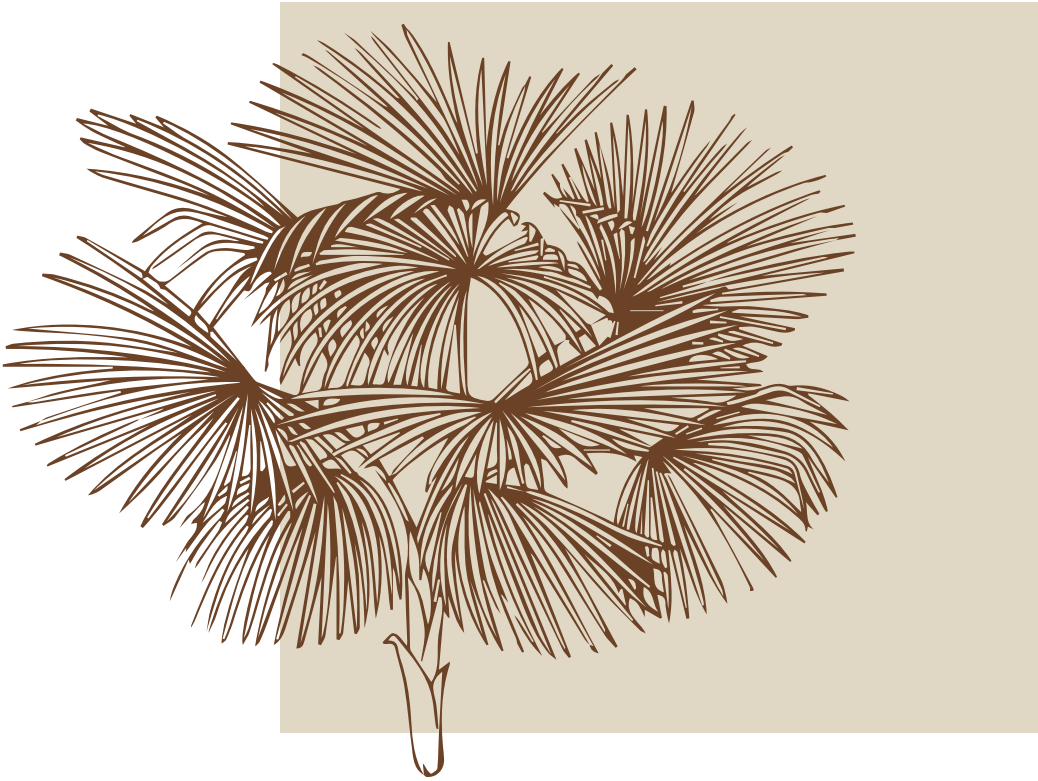
The proposal to "enjoy without destroying" should be able to promote new attitudes regarding environmental management. The intention is to establish a community of learning and action in the local reality. We understand that, in a group, people always cooperate, whether reflecting, criticizing, suggesting, planning or getting their hands dirty to execute. Learning is ongoing and takes place through experiences lived in daily life. These experiences generate demands for relevant information that, in turn, contribute to "illuminating" and reformulating the coexistence with natural resources.

A community of practice is the best way for each person to prepare themselves to better fulfill their role in environmental monitoring and conservation. In other words, to strengthen themselves to participate meaningfully in society and on the planet. To enjoy a collective good without destroying it. It starts from a socio-environmental dimension, in which the environment and quality of life go hand in hand. After all, pollution, depredation and misuse of natural resources, as well as social inequalities, negatively affect quality of life and have profound impacts on the environment and society.

Regenerative Practices

Regenerative practices are like seeds planted in the present to harvest a future in which nature and communities not only survive, but flourish. Unlike sustainability, which seeks to minimize harm, regeneration goes further: it restores ecosystems, strengthens cultures, and reconnects people to the land in a way that everyone wins.

In Pará, where the Amazon pulses in every river and tree, these practices are guided by a simple principle: learning from those who have always known how to care for the forest.



- In Santarém, the Health and Happiness Project (Projeto Saúde e Alegria) transformed degraded areas into agroforestry systems. Family farmers plant cocoa, cupuaçu, and native species side by side, imitating the diversity of the forest. "The tired land began to bear fruit again, and the birds brought new seeds," says Mr. Raimundo, a 67-year-old farmer. The project has already restored 500 hectares and trained 300 families, ensuring food security and extra income from the sale of pulp.

Source: Health and Happiness Project, 2023, https://www.saudeealegria.org.br

- IDEFLOR-Bio (Pará Institute for Forestry and Biodiversity Development) plays a crucial role. In the Trombetas State Forest, an area of 3.2 million hectares, the institute supports the management of Brazil nuts by quilombola communities. In addition to generating income, the practice keeps the forest standing: managed areas have 40% fewer fires

Source: IDEFLOR-Bio, 2023, https://ideflorbio.pa.gov.br

"The Brazil nut is our ally: it feeds us and protects the forest"

Says Dona Joana, leader of Quilombo Boa Vista.

- The Origens Brasil® initiative, linked to Imaflora, connects companies with communities that produce sustainably. In the Kayapó Indigenous Territory, honey collected by indigenous people is sold to cosmetic brands, ensuring a fair price and the conservation of 10 million hectares of forest.

"Our honey heals the land and the spirit."

Chief Raoni Metuktire

- In the tourism sector, the Garimpão Ecological Lodge (Pousada Ecológica Garimpão), in Alter do Chão, is a reference. Built with local materials and solar energy, the inn offers guided tours by riverside residents, such as night tours to observe pink dolphins. Part of the income finances the cleaning of streams, removing two tons of garbage per month.

Source: SEMAS-PA, 2023,https://www.semas.pa.gov.br

- One highlight of Marajó is the sustainable raising of buffaloes, a tradition that is being reinvented. In the Soure region, the Marajó Buffalo Breeders Association (Associação de Criadores de Búfalos do Marajó - ACCM) promotes techniques that respect the natural cycles of flooded fields. Instead of deforesting to expand pastures, breeders adopt rotational management, allowing the vegetation to recover.

“Buffalo are part of our culture, but we need to live with nature, not against it”

Mr. Carlos, a breeder for 30 years.

The initiative has already recovered 1,200 hectares of native fields and reduced methane emissions by 20% through balanced diets for the animals.

(EMBRAPA, 2023,https://www.embrapa.br/)

- Marajó Island has the largest buffalo herd in Brazil. According to a report in G1, local producer Tonga Gouvêa promotes educational tourism to provide visitors with an immersive experience with the animals that are symbols of Marajó culture. The internationally famous buffalo milk cheeses extend the history of Marajó Island, seeking to bring healthy production closer to the environment.
- The Mura Collective (Coletivo Mura) in Belém uses art as a regenerative tool. Young people from urban outskirts create graffiti with natural paints made from genipap and annatto, revitalizing walls and discussing climate justice.

“Our walls speak of resistance, not destruction”

Marcos Sampaio, artist.

Regenerative practices are not ready-made formulas, but rather paths built by many hands. As indigenous leader Sônia Guajajara reminds us: "Regenerating means listening to the voice of the forest and its inhabitants." In Pará, each initiative — be it an agroforestry project, an açaí cooperative or a tourist route — is a step towards showing that it is possible to live well without violating the cycles of nature.

Regenerative Initiatives in Tourism —

Examples in the Amazon

In Pará, regenerative tourism is not just about visiting the Amazon, it's about learning from it. Traditional communities, indigenous peoples and local partners are redefining the travel experience, showing that it is possible to generate income, preserve ancient cultures and protect the forest in a single movement. Here, each itinerary is an exchange, each tour a lesson in resilience, and each story told under the shade of a kapok tree is a step towards socio-environmental justice.

Image: Viajento Blog

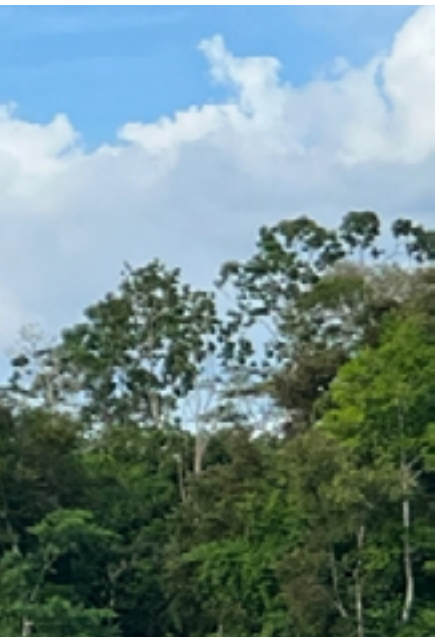
- In the Kayapó Indigenous Territory, in southern Pará, the Nhakrà Katí Project (Paths of the Forest Project or Projeto Caminhos da Floresta) offers a unique immersion experience. Visitors are welcomed by leaders such as Bepkororoti Kayapó, who teaches ancestral sustainable hunting techniques and shows how his people monitor 11 million hectares of forest against invasions. "We don't want tourists; we want allies," he explains. Part of the income is reinvested in radio communication systems for territorial surveillance, reducing deforestation by 35% in the area since 2021

Source: ISA, 2023, https://www.socioambiental.org

- On Cotijuba Island, near Belém, the Association of Women Extractivists (Associação de Mulheres Extrativistas) has transformed seed collection into a tourist experience. Visitors help to collect andiroba and murumuru, while learning about the importance of these species for traditional medicine.

"Every seed you pick up from the ground becomes medicine and a job here"

Mrs. Socorro, leader of the association.



- In Bragança, a historic city in northeastern Pará, Itacoã Quilombo (Quilombo do Itacoã) has opened its doors to tell stories through Carimbó. Masters like Mr. Zé Pio teach tourists to dance to the sound of drums made from mango tree trunks, while sharing stories about black resistance in the region. "Carimbó is our weapon against oblivion," he says. The project has already trained 30 young people as cultural guides, ensuring that the tradition survives to new generations.

“Carimbó is our weapon against oblivion”

Mr Zé Pio, Carimbó Master.

- In the Monte Alegre region, the Forest Opera Festival (Festival de Ópera da Floresta) brings together art and nature. Held at archaeological sites with 12,000-year-old cave paintings, the event brings together local and international artists for performances that engage with the landscape. “Here, art is not just a spectacle — it is a call to care for the land,” reflects conductor Clara Santos, the festival’s creator.

- On the coast of Pará, the Groupers of Brazil Project (Projeto Meros do Brasil) combines science and tourism to protect the grouper (Epinephelus itajara), a fish that is threatened with extinction. Artisanal fishermen from Curuçá guide visitors on expeditions to spot the species, while explaining the importance of the mangroves. “Before, groupers were fished illegally; today, they are worth more alive, bringing tourists,” says Mr. Manuel, a fisherman for 40 years. Since 2020, the project has helped increase the grouper population by 20% in the region.

Source: Meros do Brasil Project, 2023, https://www.projetomerosdobrasil.org

- In Portel, in the Marajó Archipelago, the Anapú River Sustainable Tourism Network (Rede de Turismo Sustentável do Rio Anapú) has transformed abandoned mining areas into birdwatching trails. Local guides, many of them former miners, teach about species such as the scarlet ibis and raise funds to replant streams. “I traded gold for birdsong,” says Raimundo, now a certified guide.

- Organizations like the Peabiru Institute (Instituto Peabiru) act as bridges between communities and visitors. In the Salgado Paraense region, the Tourism of Knowledge Project (Projeto Turismo dos Saberes) connects travelers to pottery masters of Pará, who teach modeling techniques using sustainably harvested clay. "Every pot we make carries the memory of those who came before us," says artisan Maria do Carmo, whose studio has already received more than 500 tourists in 2023.
- Companies are also joining this network. Amazônia Expeditions, based in Belém, offers itineraries in which 30% of the trip price goes to community funds for climate emergencies. João Vitor, owner and founder of one of these companies, says: "We don't sell packages; we sell commitments." In Pará, each initiative proves that it is possible to honor the past, celebrate the present and sow futures in which the forest remains standing, not by obligation, but by choice. And each traveler who leaves light footprints and hearts full of stories is an essential part of this journey.

Importance of Local Involvement and Capacity Building —

Certification, Sustainable Tourism and the Paths of Pará

In the heart of the Amazon region of Pará, sustainable tourism is not just an economic activity — it is a pact between generations. For it to work, it requires more than good will: it requires local communities to be the protagonists, from planning to sharing the benefits. And this starts with real involvement and ongoing training. When riverside communities, indigenous peoples and quilombolas lead the processes, the results are more authentic, fair and lasting.

- In the Tapajós River region, the Nheengatu Tourism Project (Projeto Nheengatu Turismo) has trained 15 Munduruku villages to receive visitors in a structured manner. Leaders such as Juarez Saw Munduruku explain: "Before, agencies would bring tourists without consulting us. Today, we define the itineraries and what we want to share.".

Source: ISA, 2023, https://www.socioambiental.org

- In Afuá, known as the 'Marajoara Venice', the Babaçu Coconut Breakers' Cooperative (Cooperativa das Quebradeiras de Coco Babaçu) has transformed traditional extraction into a tourist attraction. "Babassu is our life, and now it is also our way of showing the world how we care for the forest," says Mrs. Josefa, a member of the cooperative for 20 years. Women like her teach visitors how to break open coconuts without damaging the palm trees, while telling ancestral stories.

- The Peabiru Institute operates on Combu Island, near Belém, training women in community-based tourism. The hosts offer cooking workshops with jambu and tucupi, while telling stories about the Enchanted creatures of the forest (Encantados). "Tourists leave here knowing that açaí is harvested with respect," says Ana Cláudia, one of the project leaders.

- Natura, a cosmetics company known for its socio-environmental principles, works with communities in Pará to sustainably extract oils such as murumuru. "Before, murumuru would fall to the ground and rot; today, it has become a source of pride," says Maria, who has been an extractor for 20 years. In the Arióca Pruanã Extractive Reserve, 120 families like Maria's provide ingredients for the brand, while receiving training in land management.

Interview with Pablo do Vale:

Architecture and Design as Pillars of Sustainable Tourism

"Tourism in Pará should be seen as an extension of our culture and the people who carry it. It cannot be just a consumer experience — it has to be an immersion in our identity, in our gastronomy, in our carimbó, in our crafts, in our relationship with the forest," says Pablo do Vale, co-founder of Guá Arquitetura, a firm that combines innovation and Amazonian ancestry. For him, the key is local protagonism:

> ***"It is we, northerners, who understand the nuances of the Amazon. We must lead the decisions for sustainable, fair and authentic tourism".***

Regarding the challenges, Pablo is direct: "The lack of infrastructure and complex logistics are barriers." But he turns obstacles into opportunities: "Our culture, traditional knowledge and biodiversity have unique potential. Working with communities is essential." In Guá, this philosophy is embodied in projects such as the Carpenters of the Amazon (Carpinteiros da Amazônia), where master carpenters from the riverside are not "executors, but co-creators, bringing ancestral knowledge to contemporary design."

Guá's regenerative practices go beyond certified wood. "We pay everyone fairly, from carpenters to designers, and we develop collaborative projects that meet the real needs of communities," he explains. The result is seen in "job creation, local empowerment and preservation of traditional knowledge."

The challenge, he acknowledges, is "to scale without losing authenticity." The model needs to maintain horizontal dialogue, respecting those who make the Amazon pulse."

For Pablo, tourism is a "powerful tool" when it integrates communities.

> ***"Putting northerners at the forefront of initiatives ensures that we value local culture, work and knowledge. Community-based tourism creates a virtuous circle: communities gain opportunities, and visitors have genuine experiences".***

Projects like Pallas — furniture that blends indigenous techniques and modern design — exemplify this vision: "It's about making local skills visible and transforming them into a living economy."

A Legacy Between the Forest and the World: Guá Arquitetura, founded by Pablo do Vale and Luís Guedes, is a reference in vernacular housing and regenerative design. Recognized as one of the 50 best architecture firms by Casa Vogue (2024), its work has already been featured at Milan Design Week, UN Climate Week in New York and Tiradentes Creative Week (Semana Criativa de Tiradentes). With awards such as Elle Decor's EDIDA and Design for a Better World (2024), Guá proves that the Amazon doesn't just inspire aesthetics — it inspires revolution. "Each project is a bridge between the forest and the future," reflects Pablo. "And at the center of this bridge are the hands that have always known how to build the Amazon."

Image: Instituto Aupaba

Certification is more than a seal, it is a commitment

In Pará, certification seals are like signatures of respect. Selo Origens, a seal granted by Imaflora, identifies products and services that value socio-biodiversity. In the Terra Preta community, near Santarém, the seal guaranteed 30 families access to international markets for their andiroba and copaiba oils, with prices 50% above the local average. The seal is not a piece of paper; it is the confidence that their work honors the forest.

Another example is the Bem Viver Certificate (Certificado Bem Viver), created by the Marajó Sustainable Tourism Network (Rede de Turismo Sustentável do Marajó). To receive it, guesthouses must prove that 70% of their staff is local, that they use renewable energy and that they support cultural projects. Encanto do Marajó Guesthouse (Pousada Encanto do Marajó), in Soure, was one of the first to adopt it. The certificate has started to attract tourists looking for something beyond the beaches — a deeper connection.

Despite the progress, the path to sustainable tourism is full of obstacles. In Altamira, the lack of signage on dirt roads limits access to indigenous communities. "We need investment in infrastructure, but without asphalt, which will only lead to more destruction," says Kayapó chief Bepkroroti. Another challenge is bureaucracy: in the Bailique Archipelago, craft producers face months of waiting to obtain environmental permits.

Image: Instituto Aupaba

Training is also critical. In the Monte Alegre region, young riverside residents created the Guardians of the Paintings collective (coletivo Guardiões das Pinturas) to protect archaeological sites, but they lack training in financial management. "We know how to tell stories that are 12,000 years old, but we need to learn how to manage tourism money," admits Lucas, 19.

Challenges, however, open doors for innovation. In the Arapiuns Extractive Reserve (Reserva Extrativista Arapiuns), the Digital-Based Tourism Project (Projeto Turismo de Base Digital) uses apps to connect visitors to communities without intermediaries. "Before, agencies kept 60% of the profits. Now, we have full control," says Maria, a riverside leader.

The government of Pará is also moving forward with the Standing Amazon: Tourism That Moves Program (Programa Amazônia em Pé, Turismo que Move), offering microcredit to community enterprises. In 2023, R$2 million was invested in 50 projects, from inns to birdwatching tours (SETUR-PA, 2023, https://www.setur.pa.gov.br).

What can we learn from those who live in the forest? Empowerment is not about teaching the community to copy models — it is about valuing what they already know and supporting them where they need it. In Pará, each step taken towards sustainable tourism reinforces a truth: the Amazon does not need external saviors. It needs its guardians to have a voice, tools and recognition.

And every traveler who chooses a certified lodge, participates in a workshop led by indigenous people or buys a craft with a seal of origin is contributing to a cycle that nourishes the forest and its cultures. The road is long, but, as the riverside dwellers of the Tapajós say, "the canoe only moves if everyone paddles together."

Challenges and Hopes —

Pará as a Laboratory of Solutions

Balancing preservation and progress is a path full of challenges. In the region of **São Félix do Xingu**, the largest cattle producer in Brazil, land conflicts persist. Between 2019 and 2023, 45% of deforestation occurred on non-designated public lands, which are areas highly vulnerable to land grabbing (IMAZON, 2023, https://imazon.org.br/). But there is progress: the **Regulariza Pará** program (Programa "Regulariza Pará") has already titled 12,000 rural properties, making land ownership conditional on a commitment to sustainable practices.

Technology is also becoming an ally. In **Altamira**, i indigenous people from the **Juruna** ethnic group use drones to monitor invasions on their lands. "Before, it took us days to cover the area; now, in two hours, we can see everything," explains leader Giliard Juruna. **The Indigenous Climate Alert** App (aplicativo Alerta Clima Indígena), developed by the Coordination of Indigenous Organizations of the Brazilian Amazon (Coordenação das Organizações Indígenas da Amazônia Brasileira - COIAB), sends information about fires and rains in real time to remote communities.

Pará's strength lies in its people. On **Marajó** Island, quilombola women from the **Nós do Mangue** Association have restored 50 hectares of mangroves, creating nurseries for crabs. "The mangrove is our supermarket; without it, we cannot survive," says Mrs. Maria, the project leader. Their work earned the community the **2023 Equatorial Prize** (Prêmio Equatorial 2023), awarded by the UN to conservation initiatives led by traditional peoples.

In **Belém**, the **Ver-o-Peso Market** — a Brazilian cultural heritage site — has become the stage for a unique movement: chefs like Thiago Castanho have transformed local ingredients, such as tucupi and jambu, into haute cuisine. "Each dish tells the story of the people who cultivated these flavors," he says. The **Remanso do Bosque** restaurant, a reference in this approach, received the **Flavors of the Amazon seal** (Selo Sabores da Amazônia), certifying the ethical use of forest products.

COP30 will be a test for the world. While rich countries are pushing for ambitious emissions reduction targets, developing nations like Brazil are demanding funding to protect biomes. Pará brings concrete proposals to the table:

1. Living Amazon Fund (Fundo Amazônia Viva): Proposed by the state government, it aims to direct 30% of international resources to community projects, such as the creation of indigenous tourist routes in the Tapajós

2. Seals of Origin: Expand certifications such as '**Origens Brasil**', which already guarantee fair prices to 2,000 extractive families, connecting them to global markets.

3. Climate Justice in Schools (Justiça Climática nas Escolas): State program that includes traditional knowledge in the school curriculum, training young people as environmental agents.

As indigenous leader **Sônia Guajajara** recalls: "COP30 needs to listen to those on the front lines. We don't want to be the object of discussion; we want to be part of the solution.".

Pará is not a museum to be preserved under glass. It is a living laboratory, where each community, each project, each recovered hectare proves that another future is possible. COP30 comes as an invitation: for the world not only to admire the Amazon, but to learn from it. After all, as the riverside dwellers of the **Arapiuns River** say: "The forest will only remain standing if we take care of it — and if the world helps.".

Image: Luciano Gemaque - Pixabay

CHAPTER 3

Tourism experiences in the Amazon from a professional point of view — The Amazon and I

Esther Rapoport[4]

Writing about the Amazon is as big a challenge as getting to know the Amazon.

I start by saying that we should call it 'Amazon', because it is a hyper-diverse universe, pardon the pun, with so many different areas and particular ecosystems, and that is exactly where its importance for the planet and humanity lies.

I decided that to start my text, instead of writing lines and more lines about the wonders of the Amazon, I could tell you what the Amazon is not.

The first item on the list is the easiest to explain and is probably already known worldwide. The Amazon is not the lungs of the planet. It's simple: if it produces oxygen in the daytime process of photosynthesis, it breathes that same oxygen in the nighttime process of respiration. The plankton in the oceans are the ones who produce more oxygen than they need, generating a surplus that goes into the atmosphere in quantities proportional to their extensive "land".

Next item: it is a virgin forest. No! Largely, yes, but studies are beginning to show that several plant species, which are found in different areas of the Amazon, were domesticated and replanted by the original peoples thousands of years ago. In this immense Amazonian Garden, the chestnut tree, the rubber tree, the açaí and the cocoa are examples, in a list with more than 85 names of plants cultivated by the indigenous peoples, both for food and for the production of medicinal herbs or even to provide leaves and various materials necessary for life in the forest.

Image: Gustavo Denuncio - Pexels

In fact, not only did they plant and replant trees, they also created cities with impeccable urban plans, opening avenues up to ten meters wide and straight roads 25 km long, according to the interpretation of studies carried out in the Ecuadorian Amazon, using a new technology called "LiDAR", which allows us to see what is on the ground, below the dense vegetation cover.

In addition to these new technologies, more advanced studies reveal other new developments when we talk about the occupation of the Amazon.

Unlike other areas where highly studied civilizations such as the Aztecs, Mayans, Incas or ancient Egypt developed, the Amazon has no stones and no buildings or traces of them, making it difficult to identify the occupation of land by ancient peoples. However, researchers have identified another element that can help us understand that this forested area was not a large human void and that it had been occupied sustainably for millennia. It is a special type of soil, called Amazonian Dark Earth (Terra Preta de Índio – TPI), which is a mixture of original soil with other substrates to fertilize and allow planting and settlement of human groups in the areas. This soil has been identified in several regions of the Amazon. Here is another ancient record of Amazonian nature modified by intentional human action, without environmental damage.

But I also thought about writing about the Amazon that I know, a privilege of someone who worked for a nature tourism operator and had, as part of the job, to visit several Brazilian biomes.

I was in the Tapajós Forest region, in the State of Pará, which is home to a river, the Tapajós, with crystal clear waters that, when they meet the Amazon River, run side by side without mixing for kilometers.

But what impressed me most on this visit was finding white sand beaches in Alter do Chão, beautiful and frightening because they reveal the soil that exists beneath the forest cover. Once the trees are removed, the layer of humus is washed away by the waters and what is left is a desert.

Then I was in the southern region of the Amazon, the one that covers the north of the State of Mato Grosso, surrounded by soybeans on so many sides.

Staying in one of the best-equipped lodges in the Amazon, I had a guide who was a North American biologist working as a volunteer for three months. This is how it worked: many guides were foreign researchers or biologists who volunteered to work at the hotel, without pay, just to have the chance to observe the Amazon and its fauna. On our first walk through the forest (this region is crisscrossed by trails since the forest here is not flooded) I saw a little bird. My guide did not shout, because he was a birdwatcher and knew how to behave, but he revealed a state of ecstasy and silent amazement, waving and smiling wildly. He had been waiting for three months to find bird xyz, an extremely rare bird, and finally he found it, right there, right in front of us, the little bird... Beginner's luck, he told me later.

And I had other opportunities to travel to the State of Amazonas, staying in several lodges accessible from Manaus, but the one that left the biggest impression on me was my stay in Médio Solimões, north of the city of Tefé.

The lodge that welcomed me is part of a community-based tourism project and is located within the Amazon Biosphere Reserve (Reserva da Biosfera da Amazônia). Its structure is simple and perfect. It consists of five bungalows built on wooden logs that float on the waters of the Japurá River. The structure follows the river's high and low tides, with a variation of up to 12 meters between peaks. It also has a central space, with an area for dining and for guests to meet, and a swimming pool, let's call it that, but it is a large woven metal box submerged in the river, the only space where diving in the waters of the Japurá is permitted. Why is this? So that guests can enjoy those waters without being bothered by the piranhas or snakes that live there.

The day after I arrived, I found, to my surprise, a Brazilian family staying at the inn. When it was time to leave for the canoe tour to explore the flooded forest, the Brazilians told the guide that they would not go on the tour with us, they preferred to stay there, by the pool... that box submerged in the river...

I'm still thinking about it today, about those three people sitting, for an entire morning, around the box submerged in the river, in the middle of the jungle, in the Central Corridor of the Amazon... Was it laziness and lack of interest in the forest or just the blasé mood of those who live in this country and have the Amazon as their backyard?

CHAPTER 4

The people of the Amazon

Pará is a place where the threads of time intertwine, weaving stories that unite past and present in a continuous dance. Here, life pulses in the voices of indigenous peoples, in the hands of coconut breakers, in the drums of carimbó and in the cauldrons where tucupi ferments. It is not just about preserving traditions, but about recognizing that each gesture, each flavor, each celebration carries within itself the strength of generations who learned to live with the forest without silencing its secrets.

The cuisine of Pará, for example, is not just a set of dishes, but a way of dialoguing with the land. Tacacá, served hot at the stalls of the Ver-o-Peso market, preserves the memory of the Tupinambá, who used wild cassava as the basis of their diet. Maniçoba, prepared over days on wood-burning stoves, reminds us that patience is an essential ingredient in transforming cassava leaves into a delicacy that unites communities around the table. Even açaí, now famous around the world, maintains its roots in the riverside tradition: harvested by men and women who deftly climb palm trees, it is more than just food — it is an act of resistance.

“the açaí palm only bears good fruit if we treat it like a relative”

Mrs. Raimunda, extractivist from Combu Island.

Source: Projeto Saúde e Alegria, 2023, https://www.saudeealegria.org.br

Pará's cultural heritage is not restricted to museums — it is found in the Warao graphics painted on canoes, in the Carimbó de Curuçambá that tells stories of resistance, and in the quilombola territories where the Tambor de Crioula acts as an anchor for local identities. In Belém, the Onze Janelas Cultural Complex (Complexo Onze Janelas) is not just a museum: it is a space where indigenous artists exhibit works that engage with the city.

This cultural richness is also manifested in celebrations, such as the Círio de Nazaré — the largest Catholic procession in Brazil — which are true encounters of diversity, mixing times, colors and sounds. Every year, more than 2 million people gather on the streets of Belém (Agência Belém, 2023, https://www.belem.pa.gov.br) to participate in this unique fusion, where indigenous people, caboclos and tourists carry the rope together, symbolizing that faith, here, is collective. The procession, of Portuguese origin, took on Amazonian contours with indigenous people carrying the image of Our Lady alongside caboclos and tourists, while the smell of duck in the tucupi mixes with the songs. As Master Zé Pio, guardian of the carimbó in Bragança, explains: 'The Círio rope is like the rhythm of the drum — it only works if everyone pulls together'.

The balance between tradition and innovation is also evident in the arts. At the fairs in Belém, artisans like Mrs. Maria do Carmo shape Marajoara ceramics using techniques that date back centuries, but now include contemporary themes, such as the fight against deforestation. "Each vase I make tells a story, some come from my grandparents, others speak of what we are experiencing today," she shares, whose pieces are even sold in Europe (Instituto Peabiru, 2022, https://www.peabiru.org.br). JIn the outskirts of the city, young artists use graffiti to paint murals

that combine forest legends with messages about racial equality and climate justice. It is a living culture, reinventing itself without losing its roots.

At the heart of this wealth dwell are the Encantados, spirits inhabiting rivers, trees, and deepest corners of the forest. For riverside communities, such as those living on the banks of the Tapajós River, these spirits are not legends, but everyday presences. "The Encantado is like a neighbor that we respect," explains Mr. Manuel, a 72-year-old fisherman. "If you take care of the stream, it will take you to the best fish. If you pollute it, it will disappear and take away the abundance." This relationship of reciprocity, studied by anthropologist Raymundo Heraldo Maués (SciELO, 2018, https://www.scielo.br), shows that the sacred in the Amazon is not separate from practical life — it is in the water that is drunk, in the land that is planted, in the stories that are told around the fire.

In indigenous schools in the Munduruku Land, young people learn to use GPS to map territories threatened by mining, while mastering the language of their ancestors. On Marajó Island, quilombola women combine ancestral weaving techniques with online sales, reaching markets their grandparents could never have imagined. And in Belém, chefs like Saulo Jennings transform local ingredients—like the mouth-numbing jambu — into internationally award-winning dishes, proving that Amazonian cuisine can bridge the gap between the local and the global.

In the Tapajós-Arapiuns Extractive Reserve (Reserva Extrativista Tapajós-Arapiuns), for example, communities have created surveillance tourism (turismo de vigilância), where visitors help monitor protected areas while learning about medicinal plants. "Before, foreigners would just come and take photos. Now, they tread lightly and help preserve the area," says Joana, a riverside leader.

And so, Pará continues: a land of enchantment, yes, but also of real people, who prove every day that another Amazon is possible. An Amazon where culture is not a museum, but a seed; where development is not synonymous with destruction; and where each person, each community, has the right to write their own path — with roots firmly in the ground and eyes open to tomorrow.

Amazonian Peoples: other ways of understanding the world

In the heart of the Amazon, Pará is a land of people who carry ancient stories in their steps, hands and songs. Communities such as the Kayapó, Munduruku and Tupinambá not only inhabit the forest, but also converse with it — whether in dances that celebrate the harvest, in rituals that thank the rain or in canoes that glide along the rivers as if they were extensions of their own bodies. Their lives are intertwined with the cycles of nature: they fish according to the fish's reproductive times, they plant in fields that renew themselves like the forest itself and they harvest fruit without rushing the rhythm of the trees. This is not about "preservation" as a distant concept, but rather a way of existing that recognizes the forest as part of the family.

An example of this wisdom in motion is the work of Justino Rezende, an indigenous scientist who, together with thirteen other researchers—six of them from indigenous peoples — showed in a study published in Science Magazine (Science, 2023, https://www.science.org), how traditional knowledge from the Alto Rio Negro is fundamental to caring for the Amazon. The research does not talk about indigenous people, but with them, revealing that their way of understanding the world is divided into three great horizons: the sky, the earth, and the waters. Each of these spaces is lived, observed, and cared for in ways that challenge the separation between 'humans' and 'nature.'

Image: Pexels

On the celestial horizon, where birds streak across the sky and the treetops sway in the wind, communities learn to read the birds' signals to know when to plant or harvest. A hawk circling overhead can indicate changes in the weather; the song of a uirapuru announces the arrival of good times for hunting. Fruits that grow high up, such as cupuaçu and murici, are harvested without cutting down the trees, using ancestral climbing techniques with braided vines. "The forest above is like a roof that protects us," shares Davi Kopenawa, a Yanomami leader, in dialogue with the research. "If the roof falls, we all lose our shelter."

On the terrestrial horizon, where feet tread the ground and hands cultivate the land, agriculture is not done to dominate, but to converse. The Tupinambá, for example, plant cassava among native trees, creating a web of life where each plant supports the other. The leaves that fall become fertilizer, insects are allies in pest control, and medicinal herbs grow alongside food. There is no monoculture here — there is diversity, as the master farmer Mariazinha, from the Munduruku people, teaches: "The land gets tired if we only take it. We have to give it time to breathe, like us." This practice, known as fallow (pousio), allows the soil to regenerate naturally, maintaining fertility for generations (ISA, 2022, https://www.socioambiental.org).

Finally, there is the aquatic horizon — where winding rivers cut through the forest and fish are more than just food: they are messengers. In riverside communities, fishing is not just about casting a net; it is about listening to the river. The Tupinambá, for example, avoid fishing during spawning season, ensuring that the fish can reproduce. They use homemade traps that catch only what they need, while the elders teach children how to read

Image: Viajento Blog

the water marks: a stronger current can indicate distant rains, and the mud on the banks reveals the health of the ecosystem. "The river speaks, but we need to stop and listen," says Joaquim, a fisherman from the Tapajós region.

What these three horizons show us is that indigenous knowledge is not a "set of techniques", but a way of seeing the world where everything is connected. When Justino Rezende talks about 'indigenizing science' (indigenar as ciências), he proposes a bridge: that academic knowledge can learn from this integrated vision, instead of imposing ready-made models. After all, as the study shows, areas managed by traditional peoples in the Amazon have deforestation rates up to 80% lower than in neighboring regions (Imazon, 2023, https://imazon.org.br). However, this bridge can only be sustained if there is respect. Respect for the communities' time, their ways of transmitting knowledge (often oral, not written) and their decisions about whether or not to share their knowledge. As leader Sônia Guajajara reminds us: "We do not want to be studied like guinea pigs. We want partners who walk alongside us.".

For those who live outside the forest, the lesson is clear: caring for the Amazon does not require complex technology, but humility to learn from those who have always known how to do it. Whether supporting community tourism initiatives, valuing products made by indigenous people or simply sharing their stories, each gesture is a step towards ensuring that this knowledge not only survives, but flourishes. After all, as the carimbó masters sing: "The forest is our home, and we care for our home with love — not with fear of losing it.".

Indigenous Peoples: indigenous diversity

Euaracy[1] when she wakes up,
her rays come to greet us

Showing that the day begins,
it's time to work.

The village of the Kambeba People[2], is not built anywhere ,

The river is a determining factor
in being able to live.

Printing this space,
our face, our look,,

The tuxaua[3] says,
he Kambeba are a farming people

You can't stop planting,
you chose São Tomé as your protector,

So that he would have a good harvest,
he clung to this saint..

In the village of Tururucari-Uka[4],
the houses represent unity

Arranged in a circle,
they facilitate communication.

Made of wood and straw,
maintaining the ancient tradition.

At night Yacy[5] approaches,
calling the people to teach

What the elders left,
manifested in the way they sing.

In the dances they represent,
the intangible culture, our ancient heritage.

The sound of the maraká announces,
the dance is about to begin,

With the breath of my cariçu[6] ,
I begin to make sound.

From the song that comes to bring,
the curupira[7] to dance.

The elders tell with wisdom,

That Kambeba has an example to follow,

From a leader who fought for the people,

So as not to see them succumb,
by May-tini's weapons[8] .

Tururucari did not allow itself to become extinct.

Today, Tururucari represents unity,
strength, struggle and courage,

It is not known what he looked like,
but we can get an idea of his image.

Portrayed in the drawing by the indigenous Uruma [9],

Marking this new lineage.

(Marcia Kambeba, 2023).

[1] Sun goddess in the Tupi language.

2Indigenous people, whose territory is in parts of the middle and upper Solimões river region in the state of Amazonas, with some Kambeba who live in the municipality of Tefé, in addition to the Peruvian Amazon, known as Omágua.

[3] Tupi word for the chief of chiefs, who represents the people in negotiating with other indigenous peoples.

[4] Tururucari - Kambeba leader who fought to defend the Omágua-Kambeba people, Uká - family home or collective dwelling. A metaphor for a power that is at the same time spiritual, cultural and political.

[5] Goddess of the Moon in the Tupi language.

[6] Wind instrument made of bamboo, used in rituals and community celebrations.

[7] Guardian of the Forest who takes the form of a boy with flaming red hair and feet turned backwards.

[8] Non-indigenous people.

[9] Name of the current tuxaua of the Tururucari-Uka village.

In Márcia Kambeba's poem, released in 2023, the words flow like the waters of the Amazon River, carrying with them the essence of the Kambeba people's daily lives. Through verses that mix ancestry and resistance, the author invites us to enter a universe where agriculture is not just a means of subsistence, but an act of love for the land and dialogue with the cycles of nature. In the lines written by Márcia, we realize that planting, harvesting and celebrating are gestures intertwined with the identity of her people, a practice that sustains not only the body, but also community ties and collective memory.

The life of the Kambeba people, as portrayed in the poem, revolves around a community organization that values listening and sharing. Decisions are made in circles where young and old share experiences, ensuring that each voice is heard. This form of governance, inherited from generations, reflects a deep understanding that caring for people is as vital as caring for the land. In the fields, for example, planting is done collectively: while some prepare the soil, others sing stories of their ancestors, remembering that each seed carries the spirit of those who cultivated it before. "Cassava does not grow with water alone; it needs gratitude," teaches an excerpt from the poem, revealing how agricultural work is permeated with meanings that transcend the practical.

This relationship with the land goes beyond survival. For the Kambeba, as for many indigenous peoples of the Amazon, the forest is a relative — a living being that deserves respect and reciprocity. The rituals performed before planting, the dances that give thanks for the harvest, and the songs that celebrate the rain are all ways of maintaining this sacred dialogue. In Márcia's words, "the song of the uirapuru is not just music; it is the forest speaking through its wings." These practices, passed down orally for centuries, are like roots that keep the community strong in the face of storms, whether climatic or social.

The elderly occupy a central place in this web of knowledge. They are the guardians of the stories that teach how

to read the signs of nature: the flight of macaws indicates the right time to sow; the murmur of rivers warns of impending floods. This knowledge, however, is not static. As the poem shows, young people learn to use modern tools — such as GPS to map threatened territories — without abandoning the lessons of their ancestors. "Our grandparents gave us the bow and arrow; we give our children technology and memory," writes Márcia, highlighting a fusion that strengthens, rather than dilutes, the Kambeba identity.

The resistance of these people, however, is not without challenges. The advancement of projects that threaten their lands — such as illegal deforestation, which affected 1,200 km² in Pará in 2023 (INPE, 2023, https://www.obt.inpe.br) — requires them to be constantly vigilant. But it is precisely in the union between tradition and adaptation that they find strength. Cooperatives led by women, for example, have taken products such as babassu coconut oil and handicrafts to international fairs, showing that economy and culture can go hand in hand. "We don't just sell nuts; we sell stories of resistance," there is an excerpt from the poem that echoes real initiatives (ISA, 2022, https://www.socioambiental.org).

Márcia Kambeba's poem, therefore, is not just a portrait of her people — it is an invitation to rethink our place in the world. By narrating the Kambeba's daily life, she reminds us that there are other ways of inhabiting the Earth, based on balance and respect. Each line is a lesson: that agriculture can be done without poisons, that decisions can be made collectively, and that technology, instead of separating generations, can bring them closer together. After all, as the elders say, "the earth does not belong to us; we belong to it." There is a simple but powerful lesson in this speech: caring for the forest is not just an indigenous duty, but a commitment of all who live there, directly or indirectly.

Interview with Marcia Kambeba

Marcia Kambeba

Tourism in Pará has great potential, but also challenges, such as infrastructure and sustainability. There is a growing concern about the appreciation of native peoples and the preservation of biodiversity. However, tourism in the state of Pará has a geography marked by rivers, forests and islands, and in this exuberant wealth of natural landscape are indigenous peoples, riverside communities and quilombolas, peoples who are considered the children of the waters, environmentalists. I say this to reinforce an activity that integrates nature, culture and history, highlighting the diversity of the Amazon and the wealth of indigenous peoples, quilombolas and riverside communities. Ecotourism, when well structured, contributes to the conservation of the forest and generates income for traditional communities. However, it is worth highlighting some aspects that are not only touristic but also identity-related that make up the tourist aspect of Pará.

Pará is home to conservation units such as the Tapajós National Forest and the Monte Alegre State Park, as well as paradisiacal landscapes such as Alter do Chão, known as the Amazon Caribbean.

The indigenous, Afro-descendant and caboclo identity is expressed in festivities, gastronomy and crafts. Standouts include the Círio de Nazaré festival, the typical cuisine (such as pato no tucupi and açaí) and the cultural manifestations of traditional communities.

Community-based tourism is an alternative that allows visitors to visit indigenous villages and riverside communities in a respectful and immersive way. The state of Pará has great potential to strengthen this model, ensuring that communities are protagonists and direct beneficiaries of tourism activities. Tourism in indigenous villages can include experiences with traditional peoples, participation in rituals, craft workshops and exploration of trails in preserved territories.

On April 1st, I opened the doors of my home and welcomed 25 high school students for an immersion in indigenous culture, showing them the artifacts and culture of my people that I have at home. It was a unique experience for them, who were unaware, for example, that many typical foods from Pará come from indigenous culture and knowledge.

Considering my work in research on the culture, memory, identity, sustainability, struggle and resistance of peoples and specifically of my Omágua/Kambeba people, the main challenges and potential in my area involve identity issues, public policies, environmental conservation and strengthening of indigenous villages.

Among the challenges faced, territorial and cultural recognition stands out: the demarcation of indigenous lands and the guarantee of territorial rights still encounter significant political and legal barriers. In addition, the struggle for recognition of cultural identity, respect for local knowledge, sacredness and traditional medicine has remained an essential cause of indigenous peoples over the centuries, extending to the present day. We cannot see indigenous peoples only as cultural attractions for tourists. Our presence and knowledge are not limited to this, but expand when considering culture, identity and ethnicity

as an intrinsic part of the formation of Brazil and the population living in the Amazon. Cities like Belém, for example, before being elevated to the category of town and later city, were villages of many peoples. Belém, according to the account of Father Antônio Thevet, in a translation made in 2009, was part of a cultural complex known as Mairí Tupinambá. This complex covered the state of Macapá, part of Maranhão and Amazonas. This does not mean that the region was inhabited only by the Tupinambá, but rather that this complex involved several peoples speaking the Tupi linguistic branch. Another point would be sustainability and environmental protection. The advance of deforestation and environmental degradation directly impact indigenous and riverine territories, while the unbridled exploitation of natural resources threatens traditional ways of life and ancestral knowledge. These challenges are compounded by the need to strengthen indigenous culture. The lack of bilingual education policies and the valorization of indigenous knowledge in academia hinder cultural transmission, in addition to there being challenges in ensuring that research on indigenous peoples is conducted with indigenous protagonism, without the imposition of external narratives.

Sustainable economic development is also a key issue. Predatory tourism can compromise culture and territory if not managed responsibly. Therefore, it is essential to encourage sustainable economic alternatives that guarantee the autonomy of people in their territories and villages.

Education and knowledge production represent another important front of struggle. The growing indigenous presence in universities strengthens the production of knowledge made by and for indigenous peoples. Educational projects that integrate ancestral and scientific knowledge have the potential to transform the structure of indigenous education. It is crucial to encourage

indigenous peoples to write about themselves, in addition to promoting the production of materials that strengthen the ancestral language and document their history, memory and identity. This is what I have done through the literature I produce and the research I develop on my people, both in my master's and doctoral studies.

Finally, encouraging artistic and cultural production is also essential. There are no festivals dedicated exclusively to indigenous culture and knowledge, since the music produced in villages or cities often does not fit the mold required by these events. Even so, it is encouraging to see indigenous people gaining space in this scenario. The appreciation of graphics, sacred songs and the relationship with nature are essential ways of preserving and disseminating traditional knowledge, and all of this can also make sustainable ecotourism in villages viable.

In the state of Pará, some of these regenerative and sustainable practices have already been implemented, while others face challenges to be widely applied. Pará is one of the states most impacted by deforestation and illegal exploitation of natural resources, but it is also home to conservation and sustainable use initiatives led by indigenous and riverside communities and social movements. What I know is that practices such as Agroforestry and Agroecological Systems are present in indigenous communities and agroextractive settlements, especially in Marajó and western Pará. Projects such as those involving cabruca cocoa and agroforestry consortiums with açaí are gaining momentum. Expansion faces limitations due to the advance of agribusiness, which exerts pressure on small farmers and traditional peoples, often forcing them to adopt monocultures. On the other hand, initiatives such as Sustainable Forest Management offer alternatives. In some areas, community management of products such as Brazil nuts and açaí generates income without destroying the forest. However, there are still significant challenges, such as conflicts with illegal

loggers and the lack of efficient monitoring, which allow predatory practices.

I believe that when we think about social inclusion, it is essential to consider the participation of women and young people in the production of community-based tourism. Initiatives that involve art, culture, cuisine and the territory are fundamental to generating positive results and strengthening communities.

When working with sustainable tourism, especially in traditional communities, we need to take some precautions. Despite the benefits it can bring, poorly managed tourism can generate negative impacts, such as:

- Commercial exploitation of culture, without communities having a fair share.
- Overcrowding and environmental degradation in sensitive areas.
- Lack of public policies to regulate and support community initiatives.

Therefore, I believe that everything should be done in a participatory manner, listening to the local residents and respecting their needs and perspectives.

Image: Pedro Guerreiro - Ag. Pará

Quilombola Communities: the Africanity of Pará

In Pará, quilombola communities have written stories of resistance that have echoed for centuries. With more than 520 identified communities — of which only 98 have officially recognized land titles, according to the Pará Land Institute (Instituto de Terras do Pará - ITERPA (ITERPA, 2023, https://www.iterpa.pa.gov.br) —, these groups keep alive a heritage that spans oceans and generations. Concentrated mainly in the northeast of the state, these communities are beacons of culture, memory, and care for the land, even in the face of challenges such as the delay in recognizing their territories.

On the islands of Marajó and Soure, quilombola communities keep alive traditions such as Marajoara pottery, inherited from ancestors who molded clay with symbols of fertility and protection. At the Nós do Mangue Association (Associação Nós do Mangue), women lead tourist tours where visitors learn to paint pots with graphics inspired by water and birds. "Each stroke is a message from those who came before us," says Mãe Rita, a 68-year-old artisan.

The Terreiro de Tambor de Mina in Belém is another landmark. Here, Afro-Brazilian rites mix with indigenous chants, celebrating the fusion of wisdom. "Our candomblé has the smell of jambu and the sound of maracá", jokes Pai João, spiritual leader.

To understand the strength of these collectives, we need to look beyond maps. For quilombolas, territory is not limited to geographical boundaries or official documents. It is where the memories of ancestors mix with the smell of wet earth after the rain, where the drums of the curimbó mark the rhythm of the festivities and where children learn, from an early age, that each tree has a story.

“Here, the ground we walk on holds the dreams of those who came before us. It is not just land; it is roots”

Dona Maria, quilombola leader from Abacatal, in Ananindeua.

This deep connection explains why the fight for land title goes beyond legal guarantees. It is about ensuring that orally transmitted knowledge — such as the cultivation of medicinal plants, the artisanal manufacture of tools, and sustainable techniques — remains alive. A study by Carvalho and collaborators ([SciELO, 2021, https://www.scielo.br), reveals that more than 80% of quilombola communities in Pará maintain traditional agricultural practices, such as the intercropping of cassava, beans, and fruits, avoiding soil degradation. This harmony with nature is no coincidence: it is a legacy of ancestors who, even amid the oppression of the slave system, knew how to create ways to coexist with the forest.

The Palmares Cultural Foundation (Fundação Cultural Palmares) defines quilombolas as groups that preserve cultural, religious, and subsistence traditions linked to their African ancestors (Fundação Palmares, 2023, https://www.palmares.gov.br). In Pará, this comes alive through festivals

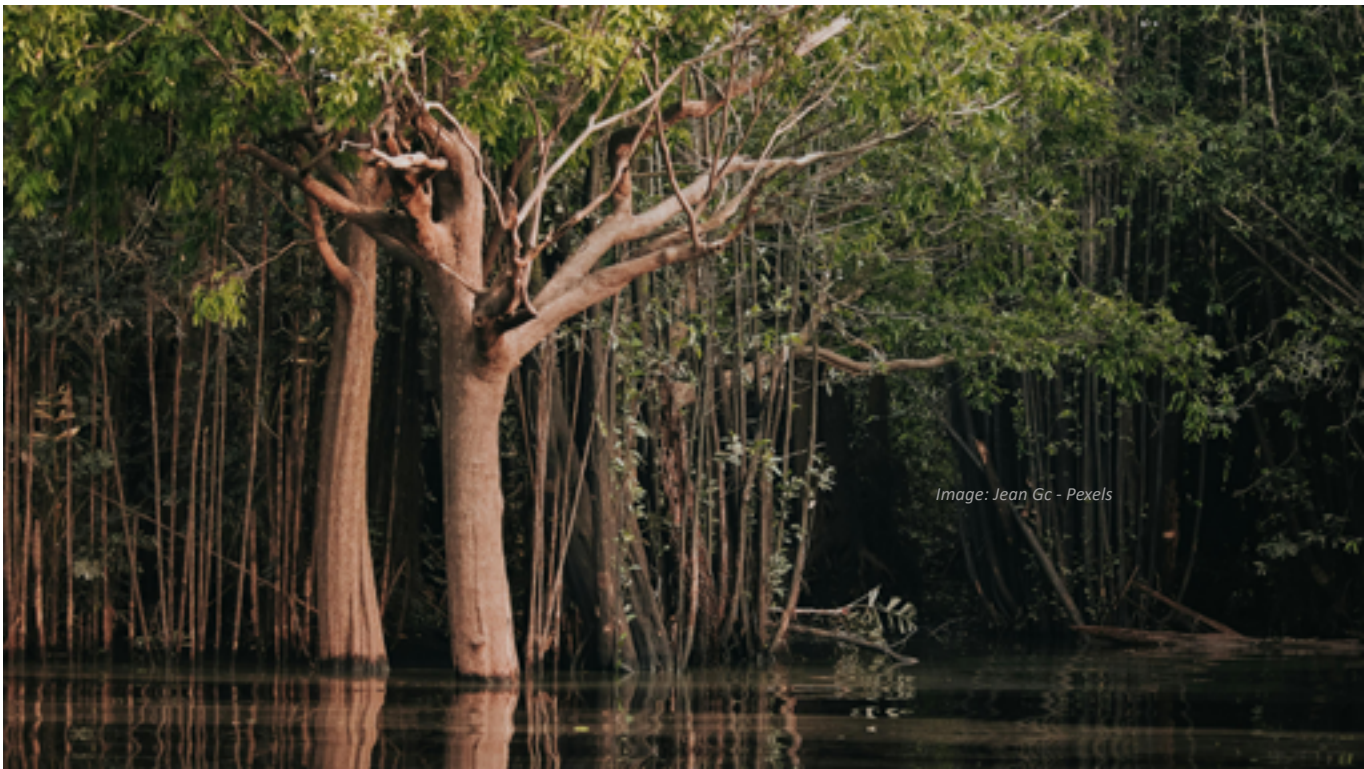


Image: Jean Gc - Pexels

like *Carimbó Chama*, in Salvaterra, where ancestral dances are revitalized with youth energy, or in the Masked Carimbó (Carimbó de Máscaras) circles, in Curuçá, where vine-and-feather masks narrate stories of resistance. These are practices that defy time, showing that culture is not something static, but a river that continues to flow. In Pará, this comes alive through festivals like Carimbó Chama, in Salvaterra, where ancestral dances are revitalized with youth energy, or in the Masked Carimbó (*Carimbó de Máscaras*) circles, in Curuçá, where vine-and-feather masks narrate stories of resistance. These are practices that defy time, showing that culture is not something static, but a river that continues to flow.

But the relationship with the land also faces real challenges. In regions such as the Marajó archipelago, quilombola communities live with the pressure of large agricultural enterprises and real estate speculation. Even so, they continue to innovate: in São Benedito, women lead the production of andiroda oil, used in the manufacture of cosmetics, while in Cachoeira do Arari, young people created a community tourism network that shows visitors how to fish with a large-mesh net — avoiding catching small fish. "We don't want to be seen as 'people of the past,'" reflects João, a 24-year-old tour guide. "Our culture is alive, and it has a lot to teach us about the future"

In this context, environmental preservation is not a choice, but an intrinsic necessity. Data from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) show that areas occupied by quilombola communities in Pará have deforestation rates 60% lower than in neighboring regions (IBGE, 2022, https://www.ibge.gov.br). This is because their practices — such as the rotational extraction of Brazil nuts and the management of native açaí palm groves — ensure that the forest remains standing, generating income without depleting resources. "Nature is not our enemy; it is our partner," explains Raimunda, an extractivist from Acará. "If the forest disappears, our identity disappears with it."

andiroba's seed

Image: Pedro Guerreiro - Ag. Pará

Recognizing these communities, therefore, is not limited to issuing land titles. It is necessary to support initiatives such as the Association of Remaining Quilombo Communities of Pará (Associação das Comunidades Remanescentes de Quilombos do Pará - MALUNGU), which trains young people in sustainable business management, or the Roots of the Quilombo Cooperative (Cooperativa Raízes do Quilombo), which sells pulp from native fruits at local fairs. Each step in this direction strengthens not only the quilombos, but society, which gains examples of how to balance production and preservation.

The history of Pará is inextricably linked to quilombola resistance. From the 18th-century huts hidden in the forests to shelter fugitives from slavery to today's communities that integrate technology and tradition, these people show that another world is possible—a world where progress does not mean destruction, and where the past is not a burden, but a foundation. As the elders of Jambuaçu, in Baixo Amazonas, say: "As long as there are drums beating and children learning to plant, our quilombo will remain standing." And in this perseverance, there is an invitation for all of us: to learn, to support and, above all, to listen.

Riverside Communities: or the whole of Pará

On the banks of the Amazon rivers and streams, riverside communities write stories of harmony with nature, transforming challenges into opportunities for coexistence. Their lives are intertwined with the cycles of the waters, forests and seasons, creating a way of life that balances tradition and adaptation. For these families, the river is not just a path — it is a source of food, transportation and identity, a relationship that is reflected in each hand-built canoe, each carefully cast hammock, and each crop planted in accordance with the rhythm of the land.

Fishing, for example, goes beyond economic activity: it is a dialogue with the environment. In communities near Belém, such as those on Combu Island, fishermen know the fish's reproduction periods and avoid catching species during spawning season. This practice, passed down through generations, ensures that resources such as tucunaré and tambaqui remain abundant. "We only fish what the river allows," explains Mr. Raimundo, a fisherman in the region for 40 years (Projeto Saúde e Alegria, 2022, https://www.saudeealegria.org.br) This ancestral wisdom means that areas managed by riverside dwellers maintain fish stocks up to 50% higher than in unmonitored regions, according to data from the Brazilian Institute of the Environment (IBAMA, 2021, https://www.ibama.gov.br).

In the fields, cultivation follows a similar logic. Cassava, beans, and fruits such as açaí are planted using the slash-and-burn system (coivara), an indigenous technique that uses controlled burning and fallow periods (periods in which the land is left uncultivated to recover its fertility and vitality) to regenerate the soil.

"The land needs to rest, just like us. If you push it too hard, it gets sick"

Dona Maria, farmer from Abaetetuba.

This approach, combined with crop diversification, reduces the need for pesticides and maintains natural fertility — a model that even inspires university researchers

Source: EMBRAPA, 2020, https://www.embrapa.br

Image: Alexandre Costa - Ag. Pará

Trade strengthens ties between the countryside and the city. At Belém's markets, such as Mercado Ver-o-Peso, riverside products—fresh fish, artisanal cassava flour, and wild fruit pulps—arrive daily on colorful boats. These exchanges are not just transactions: they are moments of sharing stories. "When I sell my açaí, I take a piece of our island to the city," says Ana Claudia, a producer from Ilha das Onças, whose family has been harvesting the fruit for three generations. This connection ensures that 30% of the food consumed in the metropolitan region of Belém comes from traditional communities.

(IBGE, 2023, https://www.ibge.gov.br)

Even the homes reflect this harmony with the environment. The stilt houses (palafitas), raised on wooden pillars, are examples of adaptive architecture. Built with local materials, such as sustainably managed wood and palm leaves, they protect against river flooding and allow natural ventilation in the humid climate. "The house breathes with the forest," says João, a carpenter from Ponta de Pedras who learned the technique from his grandfather. This practical knowledge, combined with innovations such as solar panels recently installed in some communities, shows how tradition and modernity can go hand in hand.

Despite the challenges — such as the lack of access to health and education services in remote areas — riverside communities continue to find creative solutions. In Salvaterra, in Marajó, women created a handicraft network using tucumã fibers, selling bags and mats that support entire families. In Santarém, young people developed an app to map sustainable fishing areas, combining technology with traditional knowledge. "We use our cell phones, but the river is still our best map," jokes Carlos, one of the project's creators (Instituto Mamirauá, 2023, https://www.mamiraua.org.br).

These stories reveal a vital lesson: living in harmony with nature does not mean stagnation, but conscious evolution. Riverside communities remind us that it is possible to prosper without depleting resources, valuing the collective and respecting the limits of the environment. Whether through responsible fishing, cyclical agriculture or fair trade, they show that development and conservation are not opposites, but partners.

Supporting these communities goes beyond public policies — it involves valuing their products, respecting their territories, and learning from their practices. When we choose to buy a fish caught with a large-mesh net or a craft made with natural fibers, we are strengthening a chain of care that benefits everyone. After all, as the riverside dwellers of the Tapajós say: "The river that feeds us is the same one that carries our stories to the world. Taking care of it is taking care of our future."

The Forest's Enchanted Ones (Os Encantados da Floresta):

Deep in the Amazon, where rivers carve paths and trees whisper ancient stories, there are beings that defy the boundaries between the visible and the invisible. Known as enchanted ones (Encantados), these beings are part of the daily lives of many traditional communities, weaving a web of meanings that unite the spiritual with the earthly. For those who grew up listening to the stories of their elders, such as Mr. Manuel, a fisherman from the Tapajós River, the enchanted ones are not distant legends: "They are in the breeze that sways the leaves, in the song of the birds at dawn, and even in the smell of the earth after the rain. They are neighbors we respect, not ghosts we fear."

In his studies, anthropologist Raymundo Heraldo Maués describes these beings as entities that inhabit an intermediate plane—not entirely spirits in the common religious sense, but also not entirely material. For the caboclo communities, this concept is embodied in shamanism, a practice in which healers, or pajés, act as intermediaries between the worlds. During the rituals, herbs such as jurema and cravo cipó are used not only to treat physical illnesses, but to restore balance between the person and the enchanted beings who protect or challenge their path. "Shamanism is like a conversation," explains Mrs. Raimunda, a master of traditional knowledge in Santarém. "We ask permission, give thanks, and learn to listen to what the forest has to say."

These beings manifest themselves in ways as diverse as the Amazon itself. In the riverside communities of Marajó, they speak of Mãe-d'Água, a female entity that lives in the depths of the rivers, caring for the fish and punishing those who fish greedily. In the mainland regions, the Curupira — a being with backward-facing feet — is invoked to explain forest disappearances or justify why fruit must never be harvested prematurely. "When someone vanishes in the forest, we understand: the Curupira has come to teach respect", says João, a farmer from Bragança.

The relationship with the Enchanted ones is not limited to fear or reverence; it is an exchange. In the fields, before planting, families perform small rituals to "warn" the invisible owners of the land that food will be grown there, not destruction. On Combu Island, near Belém, açaí harvesters leave offerings of tobacco and cachaça to the Forest-Dwelling Caboclos (Caboclos da Mata), guardian spirits of the palm trees. "If we don't thank them, the açaí tree will stop producing sweet fruit," says Maria, who has been an extractor for 30 years. This practice, recorded in a study by Embrapa The relationship with the Enchanted ones is not limited to fear or reverence; it is an exchange. In the

Image: Pedro Guerreiro - Ag. Pará

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But how can we explain this coexistence in an increasingly technological world? For young people like Karina, 19, who studies agroecology in Belém, the answer lies in adaptation. "My grandparents taught me to respect the Enchanted ones. Today, I use apps to map planting areas, but I always ask the forest for permission." This fusion is visible in initiatives such as the Xingu Agroforestry Network (Rede de Agroflorestas do Xingu), where traditional knowledge and modern techniques come together to restore degraded areas — a project that has already planted more than 18 million native trees.

Source: Rede Xingu, 2023, https://www.socioambiental.org

Belief in the Enchanted ones also shapes the relationship with natural resources. In the Tapajós-Arapiuns Extractive Reserve, fishermen avoid using fine-mesh nets not only because of environmental laws, but because they understand that the River Enchanted Ones (Encantados do Rio) guarantee abundance only for those who fish in moderation. "I've seen fish disappear for years when someone overdoes it," says Raimundo, a community leader. This ethic, reinforced over generations, explains why regions managed by riverside communities maintain fish stocks 40% larger than areas exploited industrially.

Source: ICMBio, 2022, https://www.icmbio.gov.br

Far from being relics of the past, the Enchanted Ones are still alive in Amazonian culture. At festivals like Çairé, in Alter do Chão, giant dolls representing cultural entities like the Boto and the Vitória-Régia dance in the streets, reminding everyone that the forest is inhabited by multiple forms of life. In indigenous schools, children learn about both biology and the protectors of the trees, in an education that

Imagem: Instituto Aupaba

integrates science and spirituality. "We teach that the forest has an owner, and that owner is not human," says teacher Edna Kambeba.

The resilience of these beliefs in the face of modern pressures—such as deforestation, which increased by 15% in Pará in 2023 (INPE, 2023,https://www.obt.inpe.br) — reveals their strength. In projects such as Sacred Territories (Territórios Sagrados), indigenous and quilombola leaders have mapped more than 200 places considered to be the homes of enchanted beings, lobbying for their legal protection. "When we demarcate a sacred area, we are not just preserving trees," says Ailton Krenak. "We are guaranteeing a home for beings that teach balance."

Understanding the Enchanted Ones, therefore, is more than exploring folklore: it is immersing oneself in a worldview where everything is interconnected. In the words of a young street artist from Belém, who paints murals honoring forest entities: "They remind us that we do not own anything — we are part of a network that includes even what we cannot see." And in this network, each gesture of respect for the forest, each story told by the fire, is a thread that keeps alive the wisdom of those who know how to listen to the Amazon.

Blessing Women and Herb Healers
(Benzedeiras e Erveiras)

In the heart of the Amazon region of Pará, blessing women and herb healers weave a web of knowledge that unites forest, faith and healing. They are women who carry in their hands the gift of transforming leaves, roots and prayers into relief for the body and soul. Their crafts, learned from grandmothers and teachers, do not follow scientific manuals, but rather a careful listening to the cycles of nature and the needs of the community. In a world that often disregards tradition, they are guardians of a medicine that arises from the dialogue between the visible and the invisible.

The blessing women and herbalists of Pará come from diverse backgrounds: indigenous, quilombola, riverside and caboclo. In

Image: Marcelo Seabra - Ag. Pará

Santarém, Maria Susete Kumaruara, an indigenous midwife from the Solimões village, learned to help women give birth by observing the movements of nature and following intuitions that she calls guides of the heart (guias do coração). In Belém, Beth Cheirosinha, a 70-year-old herbalist, inherited from her grandmother and mother the knowledge of more than 200 plants, such as carrapatinho and aceleradinha, used to treat physical and emotional ailments. Her stalls at the Ver-o-Peso Market are meeting points where tourists and locals seek everything from teas for insomnia to spiritual protection.

The work of these women goes beyond preparing medicines. It is a ritual that integrates gestures, words and intentions. Herbal baths, for example, mix rosemary, rue and lavender not only to cleanse the body, but also to discharge (descarregar) heavy energies. Foot baths, made with ginger and lemongrass, are used to calm the mind and strengthen the connection with the earth. "The plant does not heal with just the leaf; it heals with the faith we place in it", explains Mrs. Raimunda, an herbalist from Combu Island.

The Garrafadas — herbal blends steeped in cachaça or alcohol — are another specialty. Used to treat muscle pain, inflammation or even evil eye (quebranto), they bear poetic names, such as love binding (amarração de amor) or path opener (abre caminho), revealing how healing intertwines with life's poetry. In riverside communities, families often keep Garrafadas stocked for emergencies – a tradition that substitutes distant pharmacies.

The 'magic' of these practices lies not in the supernatural, but in an intimate relationship with nature. Healers like Aunt Eliza from Belém blend Catholic prayers, sacred leaves, and gestures inherited from Indigenous and African ancestors. Her altar is a mosaic of syncretism: images of saints, bird feathers and andiroba seeds coexist harmoniously. For her, blessing a child with pitanga leaves or an elderly person with the smoke of breu-branco, a vegetal resin, is not only an act of healing, but also of cultural resistance.

In the outskirts of Belém, young people like Aline, 27, are reinventing this knowledge. Learning from her elders, she uses social media to teach how to prepare teas

and share stories about plants, proving that tradition can interact with technology.

The work of these women goes beyond individual health. In regions where access to doctors is limited, they are often the only alternative.

> ***A study by Embrapa reveals that 65% of riverside communities in Pará depend on herbs and blessings for basic care.***

In addition, their work preserves ecosystems: by collecting plants sustainably, such as jambu or piri-piri, they prevent overexploitation and keep the forest standing.

Culturally, they are bridges between past and present. The documentary 'Between Roots and Ancestral Rituals' (Entre Raízes e Rituais Ancestrais), released in 2025, shows how teachers like Neide Viana and Luciene Borari teach children to identify medicinal plants on trails in the forest, ensuring that knowledge is not lost. Initiatives like the Ver-o-Peso Herb Healers' Cooperative (Cooperativa das Erveiras do Ver-o-Peso) sell products with certification of origin, valuing the local economy.

"Being a witch means mastering the cycles of the earth, not fearing your own strength"

Roseli Souza, researcher at the State University of Pará.

Despite their importance, many face prejudice. The term 'witch' (bruxa), historically used to marginalize them, still echoes in larger cities. However, women like Roseli Souza, a researcher at the State University of Pará, fight to redefine this image: "Being a witch means mastering the cycles of the earth, not fearing your own strength."

Mapping projects, such as the one carried out by the Camisa Verde e Branco Samba School (Escola de Samba Camisa Verde e Branco) in São Paulo — which identified 160 herb healers — inspire similar actions in Pará, where local groups seek to catalog and support these guardians.

Learning from the healers and herbalists is recognizing that science is not only found in laboratories. It is in the hands of those who know how to read the murmur of rivers, in the smell of a patiently prepared lemon balm tea, in the courage of women who keep ancient wisdom alive. As Beth Cheirosinha says: "The forest is our pharmacy, but also our teacher. Whoever listens to it will never get sick."

Supporting these practices is, above all, honoring the diversity of the Amazon — and ensuring that its roots continue to flourish.

Myths and Legends: The Guardians of the Forest

In the Amazon, stories are not told — they are lived. Those who walk along the creeks or cross the rivers at dusk know that the forest has owners, beings who protect its secrets with ancestral wisdom.

Curupira, for example, is not just a boy with flaming hair and inverted feet. He is the guardian of the trees, the one who challenges greedy hunters to get lost in mazes of foliage. "Curupira does not punish out of malice," explains Mr. Tibério, a 72-year-old riverside dweller on the banks of the Tapajós River. "He teaches that the forest is not a place for greed, but for respect."

The Mother of Water (Mãe-d'Água), the lady of the depths, is remembered on nights with a full moon. It is said that her song attracts unwary fishermen, but those who listen to her with humility receive blessings of abundance. "She showed me where the tambaquis were during the last drought," says Maria, a fisherwoman from Abaetetuba, while weaving a net. "You have to listen, not fear."

And we cannot talk about legends without mentioning the Great Snake (Cobra Grande), a cosmic serpent that inhabits lakes and streams. Legend has it that on stormy nights, its body shines beneath the water, reminding us that nature has powers beyond human comprehension. The poet from Pará, Paulo André, captured this essence in verse:

"The Snake is not a monster, it owns the river,
His eye is a lighthouse, his back is a path.
Whoever respects his home is never alone,
For the forest protects your destiny."

"A Cobra não é monstro, é dona do rio,
Seu olho é farol, seu dorso é caminho.
Quem respeita seu lar, nunca fica sozinho,
Pois a floresta protege seu destino."

Regional Music: The Drum that Unites

Pará's music is a river of rhythms that flows from saints' festivals to carimbó circles. Dona Onete, "the voice of lambada", is an icon of this sound. In her song "Pitiú", she sings about the distinctive smell of dried fish, a central element of riverside cuisine:

"Pitiú, pitiú, smell that comes from the river,
At grandma's house, there's fish in the stew.
Pitiú, pitiú, life is a swing,
"Whoever doesn't like the smell doesn't know summer."

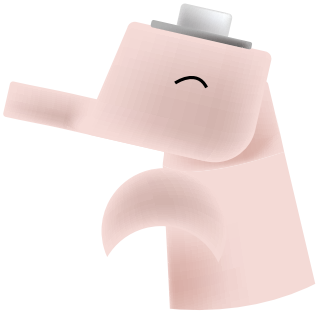
"Pitiú, pitiú, cheiro que vem do rio,
Na casa da vovó, tem peixe no pirão.
Pitiú, pitiú, a vida é um balanço,
Quem não gosta do cheiro, não conhece o verão."

As for Joelma, the queen of brega pop, she took Pará global with 'Flying to Pará' (Voando pro Pará), an anthem that celebrates nostalgia and local identity:

"I'm flying, flying to Pará,
Where the açaí is thick and there is no shortage of love.
In the waters of Guamá, my heart will remain,
Belém, my place, has no equal anywhere else!"

"Eu tô voando, voando pro Pará,
Onde o açaí é grosso e o amor não vai faltar.
Nas águas do Guamá, meu coração vai ficar,
Belém, meu lugar, não tem igual no lugar!"

And we cannot forget the masters of carimbó, such as Pinduca, whose fast-paced rhythm makes even the palm trees dance. His drums, made from mango trunks, echo the cultural resistance of a people who transformed pain into joy.



Pink Dolphin

(BOTO-COR-DE-ROSA)

One of the most well-known myths. It is said that the boto transforms into a handsome man at riverside parties, seduces women and returns to the river before dawn. It is often blamed for unexpected pregnancies.

Iara (ou Uiara)

Female spirit of the waters, described as a mermaid with long black hair. She bewitches men with her song, taking them to the bottom of rivers. She represents the strength and mystery of aquatic nature.

Curupira

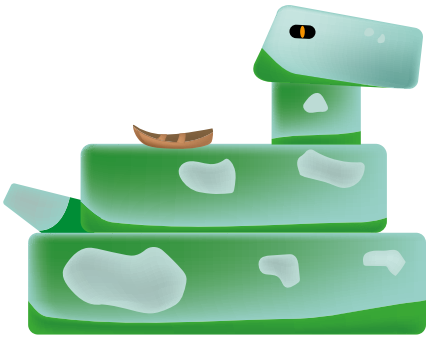
Guardian of the forest, he has red hair and feet facing backwards. He uses his tricks to confuse hunters and protect animals and trees from invaders. He is a symbol of the fight against environmental destruction.

Matinta Pereira

Figure associated with witchcraft. Appears as an old woman who whistles at night and only calms down when given smoke or tobacco. She is linked to the imagery of enchantments and curses.

Mapinguari

A mythical creature described as a hairy giant with one eye and a mouth on its stomach. It is said to inhabit remote areas of the forest and emit a terrible smell. It is seen as a defender of the jungle against intruders.



Great Snake

(cobra grande or boiaçu)

A huge mythical serpent that lives in the Amazon rivers and lakes. In some versions, it represents the fury of the waters and can swallow entire boats. In others, it is a protective and sacred entity.

Anhangá

Protective spirit of fauna, especially of animals that are hunted unfairly. Appears in the form of a white deer with fiery eyes. Usually punishes cruel or greedy hunters.

River Enchanted Ones

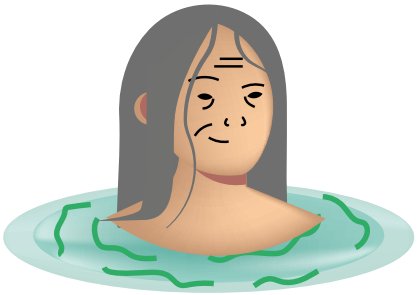
(encantados do rio)

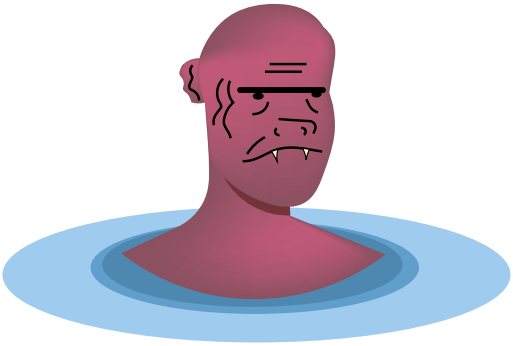
Spiritual entities that live in the depths of rivers and lakes. They are enchanted beings, often associated with underwater kingdoms and a magical world parallel to that of humans.

Mother of Water

(mãe d'água)

Similar to Iara, but with a more maternal and protective presence. She is an entity that protects the waters and the beings that live there and can reward or punish people according to their conduct.





Water Caboclo

(caboclo d'água)

Spirit that haunts fishermen and travelers, causing whirlpools and capsizing canoes. It is an entity that demands respect for the waters and the balance of rivers.

Expressions from Pará: The Affective Dictionary of the Amazon

In Pará, words are seasoned with humor and inventiveness. ‘Raio que o parta!’ — an exclamation of astonishment — can be heard in crowded markets when someone meets a distant friend. ‘Pai d'égua!’ expresses admiration, as when seeing a giant fish being pulled from the river. ‘Toró’ describes the rain that falls with force, washing streets and filling creeks.

And there are expressions that are true riddles for outsiders. 'Mas quando...' (*'But when...'*) launches suspenseful tales, as tacacá vendor Mrs. Zeneide shares: 'But when I saw the size of that jaraqui fish, I thought: this is the work of the River Mother!' (*'Mas quando eu vi o tamanho do jaraqui, pensei: isso é coisa de Mãe-d’Água!'*). Every word invites you to decode the emotional lexicon of those who live between rivers and forests.

Multifunctional interjection used to express surprise, admiration or indignation.

Strong fishy smell, generally considered unpleasant.

In addition to being a typical dish, the word is also used as a cultural symbol.

Regional way of saying “even”.

Slang for calling someone smooth-talked and quick-witted.

Object used to serve tacacá or açaí, it is also part of the local identity.

Affectionate way of calling someone, especially from the countryside or the interior.

A mixture of flour and water, a quick meal from the riverside.

To mock of or make fun of someone.

Affectionate way to call a friend.

Expression that indicates a very far away or deserted place.

Something very good, cool, excellent.

Agitation of the waters of large rivers such as the Amazon, also used to indicate turbulence.

Slang used to refer to the authentic paraense – someone who proudly embodies local culture.

CHAPTER 5

Cultural and natural heritage of Pará

In Pará, every corner tells a story — whether in the hustle and bustle of centuries-old markets, on the walls of museums that hold memories, or in the waters that bathe islands and forests. This state, which encompasses the largest portion of the Brazilian Amazon, is an invitation to discover how culture and nature intertwine in unique rhythms, flavors, and landscapes. Shall we travel these paths together?

Markets: Where Life Pulsates

Ver-o-Peso Market

Imagine a place where the day begins before sunrise, with boats arriving loaded with fresh fish, exotic fruits and healing herbs. This is Ver-o-Peso, in Belém, a market that is much more than a place to shop: it is a living history lesson. Its name comes from colonial times, when it functioned as a tax inspection post ("to check the weight" of goods). Today, among wooden stalls and 19th century iron structures, you can find everything: from tacacá served in gourds to jambu, the herb that "numbs the mouth" and is the base for dishes like duck in tucupi.

Imagem: Alex Ribeiro - Ag. Pará

Mrs. Maria, a vendor for 30 years, explains as she sifts cassava flour: "Here, açaí is not just food. It's memory. My grandfather harvested it from the palm tree without cutting down a single tree." This respectful relationship with the forest is even reflected in the stands selling medicinal herbs, where healers like Mr. Zé offer pariri for inflammation and muirapuama for energy, knowledge inherited from indigenous peoples.

Source: Museu Emílio Goeldi, 2021, https://www.museu-goeldi.br

Meat Market (Mercado das Carnes)

Nearby, the Meat Market draws attention with its historic building in pastel colors. Founded in 1901, it was originally a slaughterhouse, but today it houses bars serving dishes such as filhote assado (a typical fish from the region) and shops selling handicrafts made from tucumã fiber. Tip: try the bacuri juice, a sour fruit that locals call the "the Amazon gold".

São Bras Market (Mercado São Brás)

In São Brás neighborhood, this market is the go-to spot for fresh ingredients at fair prices. At the stalls, riverside vendors sell dried shrimp and Brazil nuts harvested by extractive communities. "The nuts you buy here feed families all the way in the Xingu," says Sônia, one of the vendors.

Dock Station (Estação das Docas)

On the banks of Guajará Bay, this revitalized complex – housed in former port warehouses – blends gastronomy, culture, and breathtaking sunset views. The restaurant 'Lá em Casa' serves regional-ingredient dishes, while the Cultural Space (Espaço Cultural) hosts exhibitions like those by Professor Sérgio Brazão (Agricultural Engineer and UFRA researcher), highlighting the Amazon's rubber history.

São José Liberto Space - Jewelry Center
(Espaço São José Liberto - Polo Joalheiro)

An old 18th-century convent is now home to jewelry that tells stories. The bio-jewels made with açaí seeds, sustainably managed wood and natural fibers are the work of local artisans. "Each piece bears the name of the seed and the community that produced it," explains designer Ana Paula, whose creations have already appeared on international catwalks.

Cultural Visits: Museums and Memories

Belém Magnetic Observatory (Observatório Magnético de Belém - OMB)

Since its founding, OMB has been the guardian of Earth's invisible secrets. It monitors magnetic pulses that shape everything from Amazonian navigation to interactions with solar winds. Its magnetometers, like eyes on the sky, reveal connections between the magnetosphere and local climate. A partner of global institutions, OMB feeds research that echoes at COP30 and beyond.

Source: INPE, 2023, https://www.inpe.br

Emilio Goeldi Museum of Pará (Museu Paraense Emílio Goeldi)

Founded in 1866, this museum is a sanctuary for Amazonian biodiversity. Its zoobotanical park is home to species such as the manatee and the giant otter, while exhibits show-

case 1,000-year-old Marajoara ceramics. Researchers at the museum work side by side with indigenous people, such as the Munduruku, to catalog medicinal plants

Source: MPEG, 2023, https://www.museu-goeldi.br

Pará Museum of Sacred Art - Santo Alexandre Church (Museu de Arte Sacra do Pará - Igreja Santo Alexandre)

In Frei Caetano Brandão Square, this 18th-century baroque church houses sacred images carved in wood and the largest collection of colonial goldsmithing in the North. A highlight is the Christ of the Navigators (Cristo dos Navegantes), sculpted by indigenous people under Jesuit supervision.

Eleven Windows Complex (Complexo das Onze Janelas)

This colonial mansion, which was once a military hospital, now houses contemporary art galleries. In the rooms, works by artists such as Emanuel Franco interact with the historic architecture, while the 'Casa do Saulo' Restaurant, by chef Saulo Jennings, in the inner courtyard, celebrates Pará cuisine with dishes such as maniçoba real and tucupi negro, rescuing ancestral techniques and ingredients from the forest. The place is a gastronomic reference, mixing innovation and tradition in every bite (SEMAS-PA, 2023, https://www.semas.pa.gov.br). The café, in turn, also serves tapioca with tucumã, in an experience that combines art, history and Amazonian flavors.

Image: Bruno Cecim - Ag. Pará

Interview with Saulo Jennings

Gastronomy as a Bridge Between the Amazon and the World

"Tourism in Pará is, above all, an encounter with the essence of the Amazon. It is not content with the superficial — it delves deep into the traditions, ways of life and stories told by the people," says Saulo Jennings, chef at **'Casa do Saulo'**, a restaurant chain that has become a symbol of Pará cuisine. For him, the state is "vast, diverse and has immense potential to welcome the world with open arms, with identity and truth".

ennings does not hesitate when it comes to the challenges: "Balancing the growth of tourism with respect for nature and traditional cultures is urgent. Sometimes, economic interests try to override the forest and the people who live in it." He criticizes the precarious infrastructure: "The air network makes it difficult for those who want to embrace the Amazon cause." But he sees light on the horizon: "We have unique ingredients, ancestral knowledge and landscapes that move us. Valuing the production chain, supporting riverside producers, weavers, boatmen — this is how we move forward with sustainability.".

In practice, the chef turns words into action. At **'Casa do Saulo'**, "we work with sustainable fish management, family farming products and respect for seasonality. This is regeneration: buying directly from those who plant and fish responsibly." Projects like **Living Tapajós** (Tapajós Vivo) — which forms communities in conscious production — are examples. "It generates income,

strengthens identity and prevents deforestation," he explains. But he acknowledges obstacles: "It is difficult to compete with the large-scale market and predatory tourism. But we remain firm, showing that it is possible to grow while taking care."

For Jennings,

"tourism is a powerful tool for transformation.".

"It empowers young riverside dwellers to value their culture, gives autonomy to female artisans, and brings income to invisible communities." In his dishes, each ingredient carries a story: "The flour comes from Bragança, the beans from Santarém. Everything is made by people who produce with love." He concludes: "When tourists understand this chain, they become allies of the forest. Conscious tourism is an instrument of preservation, inclusion, and a future for the Amazon."

Appointed 'UN Gastronomic Ambassador for Tourism' (2024), he has brought Amazonian cuisine to events such as COP28 in Dubai and Embratur presentations in New York and Berlin. His work, recognized as Chef of the Year by **Prazeres da Mesa Magazine** (2024), redefines gastronomy as a tool for cultural diplomacy. "Cooking is telling the story of the Amazon in every bite," he reflects. At 'Casa do Saulo', part of the Eleven Windows Complex in Belém, this narrative comes to life: between works of art and tapioca with tucumã, the restaurant proves that flavor and sustainability can, indeed, go hand in hand.

Image: Instituto Aupaba


Imagem: Rogerio Uchôa / Ag. Pará

Círio Museum of Nazaré
(Museu do Círio de Nazaré)

The Círio – Brazil's largest religious festival – now has a museum showcasing its Portuguese roots and Amazonian adaptations. Vintage photographs display river pilgrimages by canoe, while an interactive room simulates the thrill of pulling the berlinda's rope. "Here, faith smells like maniçoba," jokes guide João, referencing the traditional dish made with manioc leaves that's central to the celebration.

Basilica Sanctuary of Our Lady of Nazareth (Basílica Santuário de Nossa Senhora de Nazaré)

The final destination of the Círio procession, this neoclassical basilica houses the miraculous wooden statue of Our Lady of Nazaré, carved in the 17th century. On its stairways, devotees give thanks for answered prayers, many wearing shirts proclaiming: "Nazaré is the mother of the Paraense people.".

Museum of Urban Art of Belém
(Museu de Arte Urbana de Belém - MAUB)

In a renovated industrial warehouse, local graffiti artists like Cris Guerra transform walls into canvases depicting everything from legends of the Great Snake to protests against deforestation. Free workshops teach youth to wield spray cans as tools of expression..

Ver-o-Rio Complex
(Complexo Ver-o-Rio)

This park on the banks of the Guamá River offers trails, viewpoints and a memorial that tells the story of Belém through interactive panels. On Sundays, families gather to enjoy iced açaí while children play on sculptures that imitate regional boats.

Traditional Festivals: When the City Dances

Sairé Festival (*Festival do Sairé* -Alter do Chão)

In September, the '**Amazonian Caribbean**' transforms during Sairé – a festival blending devotion to **Our Lady of Health** with Indigenous legends. The highlight is the competition between pink (**Cor-de-Rosa**) and gray (**Tucuxi**) river dolphins, represented by dance groups moving to banjos and maracas. "It's as if the river itself finds its voice," explains dance master Ribamar Silva.

Marajó Bumbá Bull Festival

On Marajó Island, the ox isn't just a legendary character — it's cultural identity. During the festival, performers reenact the tale of 'Pai Francisco and Mãe Catirina', who steal the ox's tongue to satisfy a pregnancy craving. The celebration ends with everyone dancing *carimbó* around bonfires.

Pavulagem Festival

In June, Belém comes alive with fantastic *boi-bumbá* parades, like **Caprichoso** and **Garantido**, inspired by Parintins festival. The processions, led by masters like Zeca Malato, draw crowds with songs celebrating love, the forest, and resistance.

Mariner's Dance (Marujada -Bragança)

In December, **Bragança** revives Portuguese traditions with the São Benedito Festival (Festa de São Benedito), where dancers dressed as sailors perform intricate choreographies to the rhythm of snare drums and guitars. This UNESCO-recognized cultural heritage event even attracts researchers from the organization.

Source: IPHAN, 2022, https://www.gov.br/iphan

Círio de Nazareth

Over 2 million people flood Belém's streets every October to follow Our Lady's berlinda carriage. Traditions range from the *Romaria Fluvial* (a boat procession) to the Círio Feast Lunch *(Almoço do Círio)*, where families serve *pato no tucupi* and *maniçoba* – a dish requiring seven days of Indigenous-inspired preparation.

Marapanim Carimbó Festival (Festival de Carimbó de Marapanim)

Each October, this town 130km from Belém becomes the stage for Pará's biggest carimbó gathering. Groups like **'Tecno Raiz'** blend traditional drums with electric guitars, while food stalls serve vatapá made with dried shrimp and tacacá with *jambu* leaves.

Imagem: Uchoa Silva - Ag. Pará

Natural Riches:
The Amazon in Your Hands

Marajó Archipelago (Arquipélago do Marajó)

Marajó - the world's largest river-island - reigns as the buffalo kingdom, where herds roam freely across flooded fields. Local artisans craft buffalo horns into combs and bones into jewelry, while restaurants like 'Casarão do Jamaci' serve specialties like 'filho' (a banana-leaf--wrapped stew).

Combu Island (Ilha do Combu)

Just 15 minutes by boat from Belém, this floodplain island is renowned for its cupuaçu chocolates crafted by riverside women. On guided tours, visitors harvest açaí straight from the palm and learn to prepare black tucupi (fermented manioc sauce). Despite growing tourist pressure — with over 40 restaurants — initiatives like 'Combu with Open Doors' (Combu de Portas Abertas) promote responsible visitation.

Source: SEMAS-PA, 2023, https://www.semas.pa.gov.br

Utinga State Park (Parque Estadual do Utinga)

In Belém's metropolitan area, this park safeguards the springs supplying the city's water. Trails like Tucumã wind to overlooks where herons and caimans thrive, while Bolonha Lake invites visitors to explore by kayak.

Anavilhanas National Park (Parque Nacional de Anavilhanas)

On the Rio Negro, this 400-island archipelago forms a labyrinth of creeks and lakes where pink dolphins and giant otters thrive. Floating lodges provide unforgettable experiences – from peacock bass fishing to nocturnal caiman spotting.

Beaches of Alter do Chão (Praias de Alter do Chão)

Known as the 'Amazonian Caribbean', this village in Santarém has white sand beaches and crystal-clear waters that appear during the dry season (August to November). The local Sairé festival mixes indigenous legends with Catholic festivities, culminating in a fireworks display over the Tapajós River.

Mangal das Garças

In Belém's heart, Mangal das Garças offers an intimate revelation of the Amazon rainforest. Created in 2005 on revitalized Guamá River banks, this park isn't just a garden — it's a masterclass in coexisting with nature without taming it. Across 40,000 m^2, rescued birds and ancient plant species whisper timeless stories.

Dolphin watching:

In the heart of the Amazon, the red dolphin (boto vermelho - Inia geoffrensis), also known as the pink dolphin, glides through the fresh waters of the Tapajós River. With its unique pink hue and body reminiscent of a marine dolphin, this mammal delights visitors on boat trips near Santarém. Riverside lodges offer immersive experiences where you can see the dolphins in their natural habitat, jumping at dusk. Considered guardians of the forest by local communities, each encounter with these animals is a living lesson in the delicacy and strength of Amazonian life.

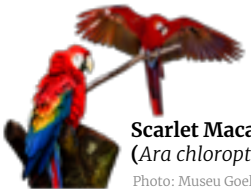
Birdwatching:

The Amazon is home to more than 1,000 of Brazil's 1,919 bird species (Comitê Brasileiro de Registros Ornitológicos, 2023), and Pará is one of the best stages for this winged symphony. Specialized birdwatching tours guide visitors along trails where hyacinth macaws, wrens and scarlet ibises paint the sky. Routes such as those in the Tapajós National Forest combine birdwatching with visits to ancient caves and isolated waterfalls. In Alter do Chão, in addition to observing toucans and japins, it is possible to sail along crystal-clear creeks, where the birdsong mixes with the murmur of the waters.

Image: Bruno Cruz - Ag. Pará

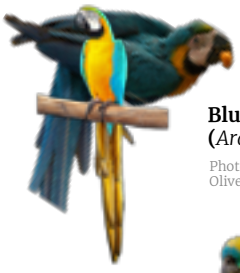
Amazon Birds

Iconic and emblematic birds



Scarlet Macaw (*Ara chloropterus*)
Photo: Museu Goeldi

Black-billed Toucan (*Ramphastos vitellinus*)
Photos: Ana Cota / snowmanradio



Blue-and-yellow Macaw (*Ara ararauna*)
Photos: Christofer Silva Oliveira/benjamint444

Cock-of-the-rock (*Amazona aestiva*) –vibrant orange plumage, a bird symbol of conservation
Photo: Almir Cândido deAlmeida / Junior Girotto

Toco Toucan (*Ramphastos toco*)
Photo: Chris Parfitt

Blue-fronted Amazon (*Amazona aestiva*)
Photos: Jair Moreira / 8-2rc

Uirapuru (*Cyphorhinus arada*) - famous for its mesmerizing song
Photo: Norbert Potensky

Birds of prey

Harpy Eagle (*Harpia harpyja*)- largest eagle in the Americas, symbol of the Amazon
Photo: birdphotos.com / MDF

Water and river birds

Black-billed Ani (*Crotophaga ani*) – a very common social bird in fields and floodplains
Photo: Jose Reynaldo da Fonseca

Great Egret (*Ardea alba*)
Photos: thimothy a gonsalves chuck homler

Black-crowned Night Heron (*Ardea cocoi*)
Photos: halley pacheco de oliveira

Common duck (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*)
Photo: Alan d wilson

Japiim (*Cacicus cela*) – known for its hanging nests and varied song
Photo: doug janson

Bullnose (*Tigrisoma lineatum*)
Photo: Claudio Dias Timm

Frugivorous and granivorous birds

Tanager (*Tangara cayana*)
Photo: Wagner Machado Carlos Lemes

Red pipira (*Ramphocelus carbo*)
Photo: Mike & Chris

Jacamim (*Psophia viridis*) – important for seed dispersal

Curassow (*Crax alector*)

Other relevant species

Bullfinch (*Sporophila angolensis*)
Photos: Dario Sanches/ Hector Bottai

Aracuã (*Ortalis motmot*)
Photo: Claudio Dias Timm

Brown-cheeked White--rumped Antbird (*Pachyramphus castaneus*)
Photo: Dario Sanches

Common Canary (*Sicalis flaveola*)
Photo: Charles J Sharp

Jaó (*Crypturellus spp.*)– shy birds of the forest floor

Fire-shining hummingbird (*Topaza pella*) –one of the largest hummingbirds in the world

Interview with Sergio Brazão

Tourism in Pará: A Sleeping Giant Waiting for Sustainability

"Pará is a state of continental dimensions, larger than France and Germany combined, but with a population that barely fills its space," says the Professor. In an interview, he paints a portrait of local tourism as "a rough diamond, sparkling with potential, but still unpolished.".

For Brazão, Pará's true wealth lies in its untouched nature and regional cuisine – both woefully underutilized. "In Juruti, Baixo Amazonas, I discovered dishes even I, a paraense, didn't know. It's as if every corner of this state holds culinary secrets," he shares, highlighting diversity far beyond tacacá and pato no tucupi. Santarém and Alter do Chão – the latter crowned by British media as home to the "world's most beautiful beach" – exemplify places beginning to develop tourism infrastructure, yet remain "islands of potential in an ocean of possibilities".

The challenges, according to the professor, are as vast as the territory itself. "Tourism here is still done by hand: improvised hotels, restaurants without effluent treatment, festivals without planning." He criticizes the lack of environmental monitoring in conservation units, where businesses operate "as if the forest were an infinite landscape." The solution, he proposes, is "A Traveling Tourism School, training guides and innkeepers in the territory itself, teaching everything from waste management to riverside hospitality techniques".

Regarding regenerative practices, Brazão is direct: "They are as rare as jaguars." While cattle ranches advance and mining companies leave scars, sustainable initiatives are restricted to "pilot projects or luxury concessions." He cites UFRA as a beacon: "We created 115 rural training courses, teaching communities how to produce without destroying. We have already reached 80% of the municipalities, but we need to reconnect these policies to a state plan".

Tourism, for the engineer, is "a double-edged scissor". If poorly managed, it can accelerate degradation; if well managed, "it becomes a tool for emancipation". He gives an example: "When a quilombola community learns to sell crafts made from sustainable fibers or to offer birdwatching tours, it is protecting its territory with its own hands".

COP 30 appears to be a source of hope:

> ***"It is a chance to show the world that Pará is not just about mining and cattle. It has cuisine that surprises even the natives, beaches that rival the Caribbean and traditional knowledge that can regenerate the economy".***

But he warns: "Without investment in basic sanitation, solar energy for guesthouses and certification policies, we will be just another postcard that has been exploited to the point of exhaustion."

Brazão concludes with a plea: "Sustainability can't be a passing trend. It must become law, school curriculum, a requirement for every environmental license. Otherwise, the Amazon that enchants us today will become the desert we'll mourn tomorrow." His words echo both a warning and an invitation: Pará may be the size of a country, but its future hinges on the choices we make now.

CHAPTER 6

Cuisine, gastronomy and native food and their importance for the bioeconomy of Pará

The cuisine of Pará is a daily celebration of the Amazon in the form of flavor. In every bowl of açaí, in every cauldron of tacacá, there are centuries of stories intertwined with the forest, the rivers and the knowledge of indigenous peoples, quilombolas and riverside dwellers. More than just a set of dishes, this cuisine is a political act: it proves that it is possible to generate wealth while keeping the forest standing, honoring those who protect it.

Ingredients that are roots

Typical Fruits of the Amazon

Cupuacu

Açai

Native cocoa (Cacau nativo)

Biribá

Piquiá

Wild passion fruit (Maracujá do Mato)

Pupunha

Abiu

Bacaba

Tucumã

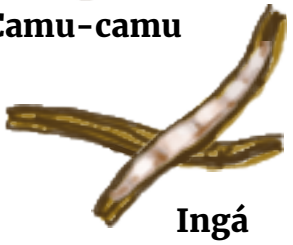
Araçá-boi

Camu-camu

Bacuri

Araticum

Buranhém



Ingá

Taperebá (cajá)

Jambo

Patauá

Soursop (Graviola)

Jenipapo

Sapotilha

Uxi

Brazil nut
(seed, but present in culinary use)

The Amazon is not an open-air supermarket, but a web of life where each fruit, leaf or fish carries an ecological and cultural role. To know these ingredients is to understand the very essence of Pará:

Açaí

What it is: Purple fruit from a palm tree, harvested by peconheiros (traditional climbers) without cutting down trees.

In the bioeconomy: Pará produces 95% of the açaí consumed in Brazil (IBGE, 2023, https://www.ibge.gov.br). Cooperatives such as 'Açaí do Maicá', in Santarém, pay up to 3 times more to producers who preserve floodplain areas.

Fun fact: Originally, açaí was consumed salty with fish, not sweet with granola.

Tucupi

What it is: Yellow broth extracted from wild cassava, fermented for days in clay pots.

In the bioeconomy: Used in dishes such as Pato no Tucupi, its traditional process avoids waste — even the cassava poison (eliminated during boiling) becomes an ingredient.

Jambu

What is it: Herb that causes a slight numbness in the mouth, used in tacacás and salads.

In the bioeconomy: Farmers from Combu Island sell bunches of jambu to chefs in Belém, generating income without deforestation.

Images: Marcelo Seabra/Açai. Pedro Guerreiro/Tucupi - Ag. Pará

Cupuaçu

What it is: Sour fruit used in juices, sweets and 'cupulate' (cupuaçu chocolate).

In the bioeconomy: The 'Filha do Combu' brand transforms cupuaçu into chocolates that value riverside producers.

Brazil nut

What is it: Chestnut seed, a tree that can live 500 years.

In the bioeconomy: Projects such as 'Origens Brasil®' guarantee a fair price to indigenous collectors, preventing illegal sales to loggers.

Pirarucu

What is it: The largest freshwater fish in the world, with firm flesh and no bones.

In the bioeconomy: Sustainable management by communities in the Middle Amazon increased the fish population by 425% in 10 years

Source: ARA, 2022](https://amazoniarica.org.br

Cupuaçu / Ver o peso

Brazil nut / Belém

Pirarucu seco/ ver o peso

Images: Marcelo Lelis e Pedro Guerreiro - Ag. Pará

Dishes that tell stories

Each recipe from Pará is a lesson in resilience and creativity. Here are some that go beyond the tourist menu:

Photo: Pedro Guerreiro / Ag. Pará

Maniçoba

- **What it is:** Cassava leaves ground and cooked for 7 days (to eliminate toxins), served with pork and bacon.

Interesting fac: Called "indigenous feijoada", it was prepared in Tupinambá rituals to celebrate harvests.

Photo: Kamilly Ols

Dried Shrimp Vatapá

- **What is it:** Creamy paste made from wheat flour, coconut milk and shrimp, inherited from Afro-Brazilian cuisine.

Interesting fact: In Marajó, shrimp is dried in the sun on bamboo mats, a technique preserved for generations.

Photo: Bruno Cecim / Ag. Pará

Tacacá

- **What is it:** Hot tucupi broth with tapioca starch, jambu and dried shrimp.

Interesting fact: Sold by 'tacacazeiras' (tacacá producers) since the 19th century, it was an indigenous remedy for flu.

Chibé

- **What is it:** Cassava flour hydrated in water, served with baked fish.

Interesting fact: A staple food of the Sateré-Mawé, it sustains fishermen on days-long journeys along the rivers.

Chibé

Photo: Diego Oliveira

Photo: Lumass

Caruru

- **What is it:** Okra cooked with shrimp, chestnuts and palm oil.

Interesting fact: Sacred dish in Candomblé, offered to the orixás Ibeji and Erê.

Image: Instituto Aupaba

Amazonian Chocolates

In recent years, Pará has emerged as one of the main producers of **fine cocoa** in Brazil, with emphasis on regions such as Transamazônica, Baixo Tocantins and the west of the state. Small producers, community agribusinesses and cooperatives have been adopting agroforestry and artisanal fermentation practices to produce chocolate that respects the soil, trees and local traditions.

These chocolates from the Amazonian terroir have been the basis for bonbons filled with ingredients such as **cupuaçu, bacuri, Brazil nuts, muruci, taperebá, açaí** and even **jambu** — a native plant that causes a slight numbness in the mouth, transforming the flavor into a true sensorial experience.

Typical Amazonian Fish

Tambaqui

Photo: Rufus46

Pirarucu (largest freshwater scaled fish in the world)

Photo: shizhao

Piraíba

Photo: wikipedia

Tucunaré

Photo: Ianare

Jaraqui

Photo:jutta234

Aracu

Photo: wikipedia

Pacu

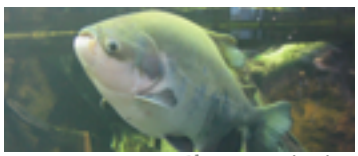


Photo: omnitarian

Matrinxã

Photo: david marimoto

Traíra

Photo: claudio d timm

Acari (or bodó)

Photo derek ramsey

Candiru

Photo alexandre bouças

Pirapitinga

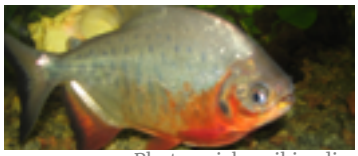


Photo: wisky wikipedia

Amazonian sardine

Photo: barthem, r goulding, m 2007

Aruanã

Photo: qwertzy2

Piranha

Photo: alexdi

Other relevant species of the region:

Surubim	**Bodião**
Curimatã	**Dourada**
Mapará	**Caratinga**
Filhote (young version of the piraíba)	**Bicuda**
	Dogfish (Peixe--cachorro)

Restaurants that are references

Pará's gastronomy takes on new contours in spaces that mix tradition and innovation:

A Casa da Luna (Belém)

Flagship: Moqueca de Filhote with Tucupi.

Differential: Ingredients purchased directly from riverside residents of the Marajó Archipelago.

Casa do Saulo (Belém)

Flagship: Maniçoba Real (premium version with smoked ribs).

Differential: Chef Saulo Jennings revives 19th century recipes found in travelers' diaries.

Filha do Combu (Ilha do Combu)

Flagship: Cupuaçu Brigadeiro with Chestnut.

Differential: 100% Amazonian chocolate, made by women who preserve native açaí palm groves.

Instituto Iacitatá (Belém)

Flagship: Jambu Rice with Costa Shrimp.

Differential: It works as a research center, mapping non-conventional food plants (PANCs).

Casa Moqueio (Santarém)

Flagship: Pirarucu Tapajós Style (grilled in banana leaves).

Differential: Partnership with artisanal fishermen who use circular hooks (avoid catching young fish).

Bioeconomy on the plate

In Pará, the relationship between what we eat and the health of the forest is as intimate as the rain cycle. The bioeconomy is not an abstract concept — it is the reality of farmers who harvest açaí without cutting down palm trees, fishermen who respect fish breeding seasons, and chefs who transform native ingredients into world-renowned dishes. However, this connection needs solid foundations to flourish, and that is where public policies, addressing challenges, and everyday choices come into play.

One of the first steps is to strengthen certification of origin. Today, only 12% of Amazonian products — such as tucupi, fermented cassava broth, or Brazil nuts — have seals that prove their sustainable extraction (IMAZON, 2023, https://imazon.org.br). An inspiring example comes from the Xingu Nut Producers' Cooperative (Cooperativa dos Produtores de Castanha-do-Xingu), which – through the '**Origens Brasil®**' certification – increased payments to harvesters by 40%, proving the standing forest's value outweighs its timber. Imagine buying nuts that directly support families safeguarding ancient trees: that's the power of an ethical seal.

Another crucial aspect is supporting agroforestry systems, which combine crops such as açaí, cocoa, and black pepper. In Tomé-Açu, in northeastern Pará, farmers led by Mrs. Maria show that this diversity generates four times more income than pastures (EMBRAPA, 2022](https://www.embrapa.br). "Before, we would cut down the forest to plant. Now, the forest is our partner", she explains, as she harvests cocoa in the shade of chestnut trees. These systems not only nourish the soil, but also create habitats for animals, such as native bees and seed-dispersing birds.

Nutritional education also plays a vital role. In 30 municipalities in Pará, dishes such as pirarucu de manejo and sugar-free açaí are now included in school meals (SEMAS-PA, 2023, https://www.semas.pa.gov.br). In **Altamira**, children like João, 10, already prefer tacacá to processed snacks. "It's tasty and good for you," he says, proving that it is possible to cultivate new habits without losing the connection with tradition.

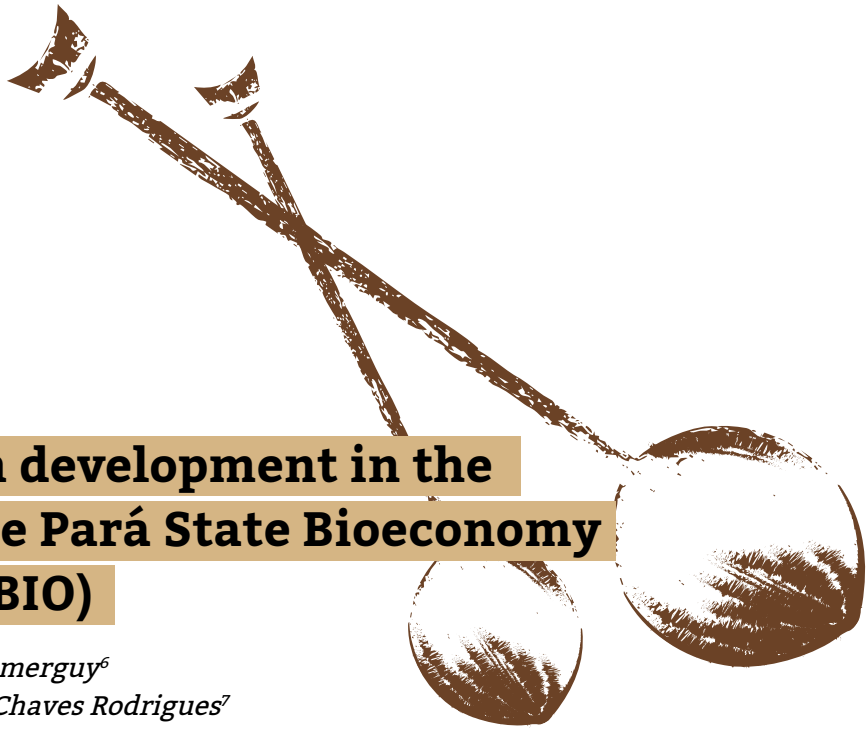
However, the challenges are many. Producers of **camu-camu**, a fruit that has 60 times more vitamin C than oranges, face difficulties in selling their harvest. "Often, half of it rots on the ground because we can't sell it," says Seu José, a riverside dweller in Abaetetuba. Without adequate roads or access to fair markets, communities see their work lost before it reaches the consumer.

Another threat is biopiracy. Between 2000 and 2020, foreign companies patented 78 Amazonian species — such as jambu and cumuru, used in medicinal oils — without sharing the benefits with the communities (CGEE, 2021, https://www.cgee.org.br). It's as if someone registered your grandmother's recipe and charged royalties for it, without ever having set foot in your kitchen.

But there is hope — and it starts on each person's plate. Choosing brands like Cupulate, which transforms cupuaçu almonds into premium chocolate, or Aruna **Chocolate, whic**h connects buyers to extractive families via QR codes on packaging, is a way to vote with your fork. Visiting places like '**Espaço Aruna Combu**', on Combu Island, also makes a difference: 10% of the value of dishes, such as **Filhote Wrapped in Banana Leaf** (Filhote na Folha de Bananeira), is reinvested in riverside schools.

Every choice at the supermarket, every meal in committed restaurants, every demand for social and environmental justice is a step towards a future in which the Amazon is not a commodity, but a home. And in this future, everyone — from the nut collector to the Michelin-starred chef — has a seat at the table.

Image: Pedro Guerreiro - Ag. Pará



CHAPTER 7

Low-carbon development in the Amazon: the Pará State Bioeconomy Plan (PLANBIO)

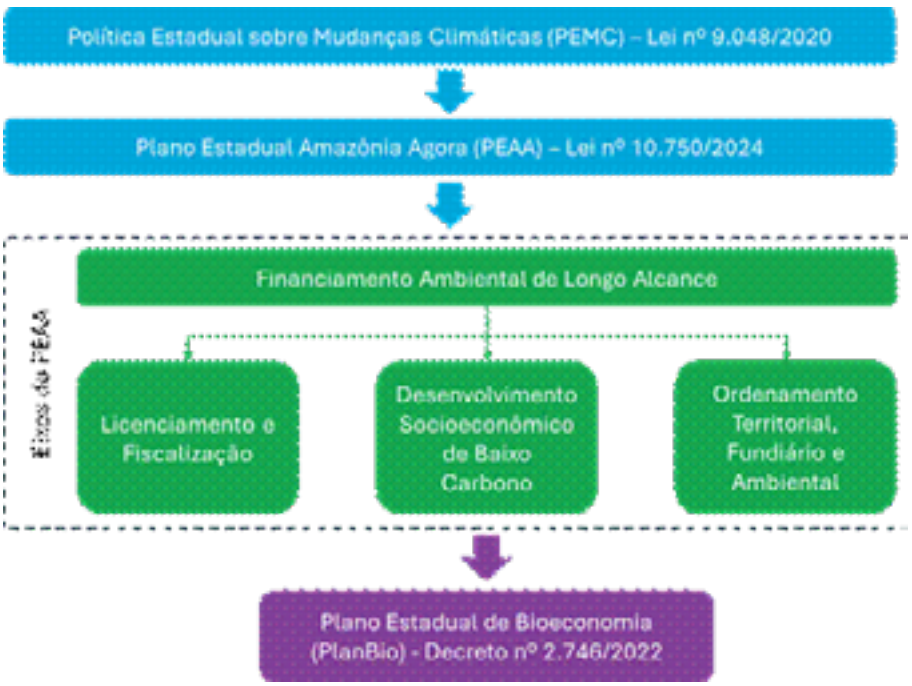
Camille Bendahan Bemerguy[6]
Ágila Flaviana Alves Chaves Rodrigues[7]
Marcel Assis Batista do Nascimento[8]
Beatriz Teixeira Barbosa Lima[9]

In recent years, the state of Pará has emerged as the largest emitter of greenhouse gases (GHG) in the country, accounting for approximately 19% of total national emissions in 2020 (SEEG, 2022). One of the main causes is deforestation, followed by the agricultural sector. With an estimated population of 8.8 million people (IBGE, 2021), and being the most populous state in the Brazilian Amazon, its wealth has not been distributed equitably among individuals and collective groups. The state's Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.646 (UNDP, 2010) places it in 24th place in the national ranking, with 44% of the population living below the poverty line (Pará, 2022), which results in unstructured and poorly planned modes of occupation, causing residents to live with considerable environmental and social problems.

On the other hand, with a vast territorial and forested area, with biological and sociocultural diversity, Pará presents a series of possibilities and paths for sustainable and inclusive socioeconomic development, based on standing forests and the guarantee of the rights of the population, especially indigenous peoples, quilombolas and other traditional original communities.

It has become imperative to implement more effective projects and actions to change the economic and social reality of Pará. In 2019, the Eastern Amazon Fund (**Fundo da Amazônia Oriental - FAO**) was created, an operational and financial mechanism designed to strengthen public policies and initiatives established with a focus on sustainable development and the decarbonization of economic activities. FAO is operated by the Brazilian Biodiversity Fund (**Fundo Brasileiro para a Biodiversidade - FUNBIO**). Since 2020, the state government has been implementing strategic policies for conservation and sustainable development, in particular through the "Pará State Policy on Climate Change (**Política Estadual sobre Mudanças Climáticas do Pará - PEMC**)", the "Amazonia Agora State Plan (**Plano Estadual Amazônia Agora - PEAA**)" and, more recently, through the "State Bioeconomy Plan (**Plano Estadual de Bioeconomia - PlanBio**).

Figure 1 - Institutional framework of the Pará Bioeconomy Plan (PLANBIO)



Source: Authors (2025).

The PEMC was established by State Law No. 9,048 of April 29, 2020, and aims to integrate the global effort to promote measures that achieve the necessary conditions for adaptation and mitigation of the impacts resulting from climate change. The PEAA, established by Decree No. 941/2020 and replaced by Law No. 10,750 of October 31, 2024, is the sectoral plan for land use and forests provided for in the PEMC. Through the PEAA, the state established a set of targets to make Pará a net-zero emissions (NZE) – or carbon neutral – state in the "land use and forestry" sector by 2036. These targets were organized across four pillars, including "low-carbon socioeconomic development" – the foundation for PlanBio as one of the socioeconomic development models driving this transition.

The State Bioeconomy Strategy was established by decree no. 1,943 of October 21, 2021, and focuses on promoting production chains based on forests, sociobiodiversity, and biodiversity. In this sense, in 2022, during the 27th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 27) in Egypt, PlanBio was launched, a pioneering initiative in the country, based on the concept that the bioeconomy enables, in addition to sustainable production and climate resilience, a set of actions related to green infrastructure, sustainable entrepreneurship, and the generation of jobs and income with the potential for low-carbon socioeconomic growth.

The State Bioeconomy Plan was established by Decree No. 2,746/2022, whose governance takes place at two levels: strategic and executive. The first is the Steering Committee of the State System on Climate Change (Comitê Gestor do Sistema Estadual sobre Mudanças Climáticas - COGES-Clima). The second is the Executive Committee of the State Bioeconomy Plan (Comitê Executivo do Plano Estadual de Bioeconomia) [5] , coordinated by SEMAS and, initially, composed

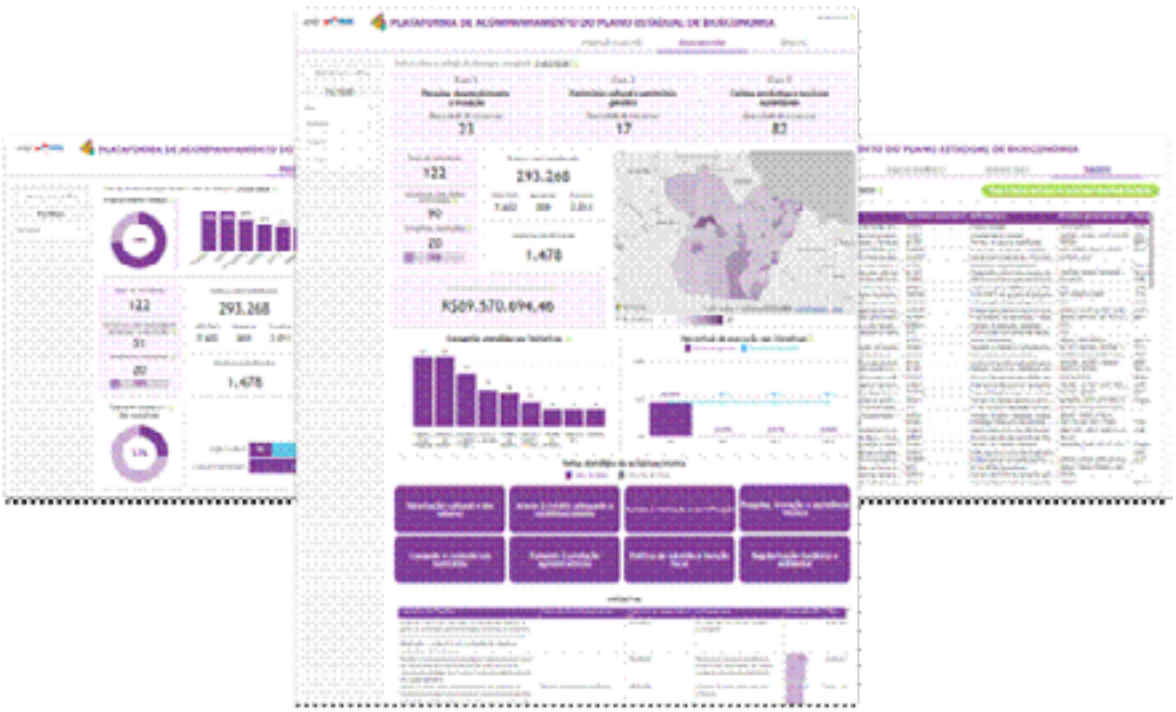
of representatives of 6 state secretariats and institutions [6] . It is a participatory construction in conjunction with representatives of indigenous peoples, quilombolas and extractivists, among members of public management, social movements and organized civil society.

For the first 4-year period, the Executive Committee structured 92 actions in the following areas: Research, Development and Innovation in the bioeconomy, Cultural Heritage and Genetic Heritage, and Production Chains and Sustainable Businesses, aligned with the proposals outlined by the G20 bioeconomy initiative, by converging on the promotion and integration of sustainable development, valorization and protection of traditional knowledge and by cooperating with the sharing of benefits in a more equitable manner.

As results achieved with the implementation of PlanBio, we can highlight the aligned governance of the Steering Committee of the State System on Climate Change COGES-CLIMA with the implementing secretariats whose actions already reach more than 293 thousand people and exceed 89 million reais in investments, such as the creation of credit lines via financial institutions such as Banpará prioritizing audiences from Indigenous Populations, Quilombolas and other Traditional Communities (PIQCTs), as well as family farming producers.

There was a need to develop monitoring and transparency strategies for PlanBio, resulting in the creation of a digital platform (figure 2) in order to clearly monitor PlanBio's results. Throughout the process of creating the platform, a data architecture and governance manual, stakeholder and journey mapping, a manual of data management routines and processes, and a final platform (Dashboard) were prepared. After the product was delivered, an awareness-raising talk was held with internal audiences.

Figure 2: Monitoring and Transparency Platform for PlanBio's actions.



Source: SEMAS (2025)

The Monitoring Platform was designed by SEMAS to be a dynamic and accessible instrument that allows interested sectors to transparently monitor the progress of the actions established in the State Bioeconomy Plan, highlighting the positive impact of these initiatives on sustainable development and environmental conservation in Pará. The creation of this platform represents a significant step in promoting transparency and relevance of actions aimed at the bioeconomy in the State of Pará, contributing to the strengthening of environmental governance and engagement of civil society.

Throughout 2023 and 2024, SEMAS' Bioeconomy Management participated in several events and activities involving the theme, seeking to publicize PLANBIO and its actions to various sectors of society, as well as actively support the implementation of the bioeconomy policy, aiming to promote biobusiness activities and the conservation of Pará's biodiversity. During this same period, PlanBio underwent a process of updating its actions and including new executive members, with the creation of new secretariats [7] , increasing from 92 to 122 initiatives, totaling 18 members. It is worth noting that all members underwent specific training to feed data into the platform, through bilateral meetings [8] with focal points from each entity.

The Biobusiness Pará Meeting (Encontro Biobusiness Pará) is a partnership with the Amazon Environmental Research Institute (Instituto de Pesquisa Ambiental da Amazônia - IPAM) and the Brazilian Micro and Small Business Support Service (Serviço Brasileiro de Apoio às Micro e Pequenas Empresas - SEBRAE), in addition to the support of the British embassy. The aim was to stimulate business opportunities by creating a space for exchanging experiences and contact with the market and potential investors. With editions in Belém and Santarém, it also included a fashion show of biojewels, cultural presentation, business rounds, exhibition of physical products from participating initiatives, among other activities.

Figure 3: Biobusiness Pará 2023: bioproducts exhibition and fashion show

Photo: Pará Agency (2023)

Another impactful delivery is the Inova Sociobio project, launched in early 2022, with a view to promoting the sociobioeconomy production chains of traditional peoples and communities in the integration regions of Pará, specifically in the territories of Marajó, Baixo Amazonas and Tocantins, with the State Government investing more than R$1.2 million, reaching 420 bioproducers. The actions trained young people and women from the communities in entrepreneurship and innovation, with workshops on entrepreneurial culture, innovation, bioeconomy and market access.

Figure 4: Innovation points implemented by Inova Sociobio

Source: SEMAS (2023).

Among other actions, GEBIO/SEMAS stands out for its work in developing the State Strategy and Plan for Biodiversity Conservation (EPAEB), an integrated management tool for state actions aimed at conserving biodiversity and sustainably using biodiversity components, as well as promoting the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from the use of biodiversity, and is an instrument for monitoring the progress of state actions to achieve their own, national and global goals. This instrument aims to implement the Convention on Biological Diversity (Convenção sobre a Diversidade Biológica - CBD) and the National Strategy and Action Plan for Biodiversity (Estratégia e Plano de Ação Nacional para a Biodiversidade - EPANB) in a concrete, focused and meaningful manner on a more local scale.

The State Government has also been progressively committed to promoting sustainable productive activities as alternatives to those that generate deforestation and environmental degradation. In this sense, the Payment for Environmental Services Program (Programa de Pagamento por Serviços Ambientais - PSA) is based on the principle that producing more sustainably and maintaining natural ecosystems is a challenge and, in most cases, represents a high opportunity, transaction and implementation cost for environmental service providers. Thus, compensation for environmental services can represent a complementary source of income and contribute to the continuous management of territories, to the increase in ecosystem services and, ultimately, to the mitigation and adaptation to climate change. The development of the PSA-PA began with the support of Project BR-T1516, executed by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and financed by the Multi-Donor Trust Fund for the Bioeconomy and Forest Management of the Amazon (AMDTF).

It is worth noting that PLANBIO includes actions aimed at tourism development, particularly initiatives focused on Community-Based Tourism (CBT), given the potential for inclusion and leadership of local communities. The State Tourism Secretariat of Pará (Secretaria de Estado de Turismo do Pará - SETUR), a member of the Executive Committee, leads in partnership with other institutions, such as SEMAS (Secretaria de Estado de Meio Ambiente e Sustentabilidade), SEDAP (Secretaria de Desenvolvimento Agropecuário e da Pesca), IDEFLOR-Bio (Instituto de Desenvolvimento Florestal e da Biodiversidade), SEASTER (Secretaria de Estado de Assistência Social, Trabalho, Emprego e Renda), EMATER (Empresa de Assistência Técnica e Extensão Rural do Estado do Pará), SECULT (Secretaria Executiva de Estado de Cultura), and SEDEME (Secretaria de Estado de Desenvolvimento Econômico, Mineração e Energia), the following actions:

- Integration of the Tourism Observatory into the Bioeconomy Observatory;
- Policies for the construction of sport fishing areas for ecological tourism;
- Local Workshops and Regional Meetings to mobilize and raise awareness among the beneficiary community and prepare a Participatory Diagnosis and Action Plan for the Pará State Community-Based Tourism Policy;

- Structuring of the TBC (training, strengthening of local grassroots organizations; experience itineraries; WGs to support local managers);
- Technical assistance in TBC with products from the bioeconomy production chain and/or Geographical Indication (GI);
- Support for marketing through participation in promotional events for tourism and bioproducts;
- Implementation of the Reference Center for Locally Based Tourism and Cultural Traditions.

In 2025, the State of Pará will host the 30th edition of the United Nations (UN) Conference on Climate Change (COP30). With Belém being established as the event's host city, there is an urgent need to structure initiatives that promote the Bioeconomy chains in all their potential. Tourism routing emerges with a focus on building partnerships that can occur at the municipal, regional, state, national and international levels, in order to seek to increase business opportunities in the integration regions.

In this sense, the Bioeconomy Management of SEMAS-PA has been seeking to format a series of actions that aim to attract potential investors and partners for community businesses in the bioeconomy of the state of Pará during COP30. Through the project entitled "COP-30 Showcases", which consists of supporting the formatting of visiting itineraries with community initiatives pre-selected for their representation in the priority chains of the Pará State Bioeconomy Plan (PLANBIO), itineraries will be carried out that aim to attract visitors, among them, tourists in general, especially delegations of heads of state, investors in the bioeconomy chains, press and environmental activists from the dozens of countries that will be present at the event.

Finally, among the structuring projects and actions, there is the Amazon Bioeconomy and Innovation Park (Parque de Bioeconomia e Inovação da Amazônia), planned to promote favorable conditions

Image: Bruno Cecim - Ag. Pará

for the development and leveraging of the bioeconomy in the State of Pará, with the creation and management of an innovation ecosystem, which aims to generate new products, services and businesses from Amazonian environmental assets with high technology associated with traditional knowledge and nature-based solutions.

Located within the scope of the 'Porto Futuro II Project', its objective is to provide safe environments and favorable conditions for the establishment, consolidation and expansion of biobusinesses by providing infrastructure in rooms and laboratories to assist in the development of executive agendas, business acceleration, training, as well as integration with other innovation environments. The space will consist of two warehouses with an opening scheduled for the second half of 2025.

Figure 5: Location of the Amazon Bioeconomy and Innovation Park, within Porto Futuro II

Source: SEMAS (2024).

In conclusion, it is understood that the bioeconomy of Pará thus emerges as a pioneering and viable alternative to guarantee the present and future maintenance of the biological and sociocultural diversity of the Amazon, and consequently, of Brazil. In addition to a theoretical and methodological proposal, it configures a societal, participatory and open project, with a view to sustainable and inclusive socioeconomic development, based on the standing forest and the guarantee of the rights of indigenous peoples, quilombolas and other traditional communities. The bioeconomy management of the government of the state of Pará proposes a series of strategies that will allow future generations to have a strong, diversified and sustainable economy, based on the preservation and maintenance of sociobiodiversity and biodiversity.

CHAPTER 8

Sustainable Social Tourism in Pará

Social Tourism Team
Leisure Management - SESC/PA

Brenda Cardoso Lima
Ewerton Wander Soares Paiva
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Among the pioneers in promoting social tourism, SESC (Social Service of Commerce) plays a fundamental role in this process. With its initiatives aimed at providing inclusive access to leisure and culture, SESC has been one of the main contributors to the democratization of tourism in Pará, providing unique experiences for its accredited institutions, in addition to fostering the inclusion of less privileged communities. Its actions go beyond offering trips, encompassing educational and cultural projects that enable a real experience of the identity of Pará. In this way, SESC contributes not only to strengthening tourism, but also to promoting a tourist experience that values the diversity and protagonism of Pará's communities, making tourism a tool for social transformation.

One of the strategies adopted by Sesc Tourism in 2025 was to adapt its actions to the Commitment and Free Services Program (Programa de Comprometimento e Gratuidade - PCG), established in 2008 by Decree 6,632. This initiative arose from an agreement between the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labor and Employment, the Ministry of Finance,

the National Confederation of Commerce of Goods, Services and Tourism (Confederação Nacional do Comércio de Bens, Serviços e Turismo - CNC), the National Commercial Training Service (Serviço Nacional de Aprendizagem Comercial - Senac) and the Social Service of Commerce (Serviço Social do Comércio - Sesc). The main objective of the program is to expand the population's access to quality services in the areas of education, culture, leisure, assistance and health, ensuring the social inclusion of thousands of Brazilians.

The PCG allocates resources to offer free activities to people with a gross family income of up to two federal minimum wages per capita, prioritizing workers in the trade of goods, services and tourism, their dependents and students in basic education in the public system. This year, for the first time, SESC in Pará is implementing this benefit in the tourism sector, providing a completely free national excursion to Fortaleza, in Ceará.

Social Commitment and Access to Tourism

Sesc has a strong commitment to democratizing access to leisure and tourism, recognizing its importance for the well-being and cultural development of citizens. Social tourism promoted by Sesc is not limited to travel to new destinations; it provides enriching experiences, access to local culture and transformative experiences, allowing low-income people the opportunity to travel, often for the first time.

By offering a tour with free tickets, accommodation and full board, Sesc reinforces its role as an agent of social inclusion. This tourism model goes beyond leisure: it strengthens community ties, broadens cultural horizons and promotes the appreciation of national identity. Initiatives like this contribute to the development of sustainable and accessible tourism

in Brazil, fostering the local economy and stimulating cultural exchange between different regions of the country. With this unprecedented initiative in Pará, Sesc reaffirms its mission of providing quality of life and well-being to retail workers and the low-income population, ensuring that tourism is a right accessible to all.

Infrastructure of Destinations in Pará for Serving People with Deficiency

Accessibility for People with Disabilities (PwD) in tourism in Pará still faces challenges, but there are advances in infrastructure and services. The state, known for its cultural, natural and gastronomic wealth, has gradually invested in accessibility, especially in Belém and the most visited tourist spots.

Some tourist attractions, such as the Docks Station complex and Mangal das Garças, have ramps, adapted bathrooms and tactile signage. In addition, hotels and restaurants in more developed urban areas usually offer adapted facilities. However, accessibility in inland cities and natural attractions, such as Alter do Chão and Marajó Island, can still be limited due to geography and infrastructure.

Another point to be highlighted is transportation and mobility. Belém has adapted buses, but public transportation in the state, in general, still needs improvements to ensure full accessibility. River transportation, essential in Pará, also faces challenges, as many vessels are not adapted for people with disabilities

Challenges and Necessary Improvements

To make Pará a truly accessible tourist destination, it is essential to increase investments in adapting public spaces, training tourism professionals and implementing stricter regulations to ensure that hotels, transport and attractions are inclusive.

Although there are efforts to make tourism accessible in Pará, there is still a long way to go to ensure that PwD can explore the state independently and safely. SESC plays a fundamental role in promoting the inclusion of People with Disabilities (PwD) in tourism in Pará, seeking strategies to minimize access difficulties and increase the participation of this group in its activities.

Inclusion and Accessibility in Tourism

Sesc invests in accessible infrastructure, professional training and adaptations to its spaces and services to ensure that people with disabilities can enjoy tourism safely and independently. In social tourism projects, for example, there are adapted itineraries that take into account architectural accessibility, inclusive communication and adequate transportation.

Strategies to Reduce Barriers

In addition to physical accessibility, Sesc promotes educational and cultural actions aimed at raising awareness about inclusion, in addition to offering support so that tourist establishments are better prepared to receive PcD.

These initiatives contribute to more inclusive tourism in Pará, ensuring that more people can experience the state's natural and cultural riches without limitations imposed by a lack of accessibility.

Sesc and Regenerative Tourism

The state of Pará has immense potential for the development of regenerative tourism, a sustainable approach that goes beyond conservation to promote the recovery of ecosystems and the strengthening of local communities. This innovative form of travel not only preserves culture and biodiversity, but also boosts the local economy by providing authentic and transformative experiences for visitors.

In this context, Sesc in Pará has sought to further deepen its actions in regenerative tourism, recognizing its importance for a more responsible tourism development model that is integrated with communities.

As part of this strategy, the Laurinda da Amazônia Institute (Instituto Laurinda da Amazônia), located in Mangabeira, Pará, is already part of Sesc's Social Tourism planning and is being incorporated more broadly into the institution's programs. This destination offers a unique experience in a riverside and quilombola community, where visitors not only get to know but also live with the local residents. The experience includes visits to the plantations of riverside and quilombola families, as well as a tour of Ingapijó Island, providing direct contact with the knowledge, ways of life and traditions of these communities, in addition to getting to know all the products made and sold by this community and immersing themselves in the challenges they face.

Image: Carolina Evangelista - Pexels

Image: Instituto Aupaba

In addition, Sesc in Pará is also investing in adventure tourism activities and immersive experiences, which allow for an even deeper connection with the Amazonian nature. One example is Combú Island, a true natural refuge located just a few minutes from Belém. In the region, visitors can explore Guajará Bay through kayaking tours and rowing lessons, activities that allow for a unique experience of the Amazon environment, with options to depart at both sunrise and sunset. To make these experiences possible, SESC Pará seeks partnerships with local companies that already promote this type of activity, such as UBÁ – 'Clube Náutico', 'Marear – Experiências na Amazônia', 'Canoa Paid'égua' and local restaurants that align their processes with environmental responsibility.

Finally, the Social Service of Commerce (Serviço Social do Comércio) has been one of the main agents in the democratization of social tourism in Pará, promoting access to leisure and culture in an inclusive way. Its initiatives go beyond travel itself, encompassing educational and cultural projects that strengthen local identity and ensure that less privileged communities can also enjoy these experiences. With these actions, Sesc reaffirms its role in promoting accessible, sustainable and socially responsible tourism, consolidating itself as an agent of transformation that values cultural diversity and contributes to the economic development of the communities involved.

Tourist Infrastructures of Pará

Sustainable social tourism in Pará is based on simple but profound principles: generating income for those who protect the territory, valuing traditional knowledge and ensuring that visitors leave not only with photos, but with stories that change perspectives. Local operators play a fundamental role in this ecosystem.

'Monotur', for example, created itineraries in partnership with riverside residents of Marajó Island, where tourists participate in the açaí harvest and learn sustainable management techniques.

Amazonas Tour offers expeditions through the Tapajós National Forest, guided by Munduruku indigenous people who teach how to read trails and identify medicinal plants. Meanwhile, 'Scafi Turismo' specializes in cultural trips, connecting travelers with carimbó masters in Bragança and quilombola artisans in Salvaterra. These companies are not intermediaries — they are bridges that allow tourism money to go directly to those who need it most.

To understand the dynamics of tourism in Pará, it is first necessary to understand its unique geography. With an area larger than France and a hydrographic network that crosses 90% of the territory, the state's rivers are its main transport routes. "Our streets are the rivers," as the riverside residents say.

In communities such as those in the Marajó Archipelago or the Tapajós-Arapiuns Extractive Reserve, regional boats — such as 'rabetas' (small motorboats) and wooden canoes — are the only means of transportation. In larger cities, such as Belém and Santarém, ride-hailing has gained ground, especially since public road transportation is almost nonexistent. In 2023, Belém registered more than 12,000 active drivers on platforms such as Uber and 99Pop , reflecting the demand for agile urban mobility. (Prefeitura de Belém, 2023, https://www.belem.pa.gov.br)

Airports are strategic gateways. Belém/Val-de-Cans International Airport, the busiest in the North region, receives direct flights from São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and even Miami, in addition to being a hub for destinations such as Suriname and French Guiana. In 2022, there were 4.2 million passengers (Infraero, 2023, https://www.infraero.gov.br). Santarém Airport, known as the "Gateway to the Amazon", connects the Lower Amazon to cities such as Manaus and Brasília, and is vital for the flow of tourists visiting Alter do Chão. Other regional airfields, such as Marabá and Altamira, operate smaller flights, connecting cities in the interior to Belém.

In terms of hospitality infrastructure, Pará balances charm and challenges. In Belém, hotels such as the Radisson and Selina Belém offer modern comfort, while community guesthouses — such as Tapera do Céu in Alter do Chão — provide immersion in family environments, with hammocks strung on balconies and breakfasts based on local fruits.

Restaurants are another highlight: from '**Lá em Casa**', which serves duck in tucupi in a historic mansion, to 'Espaço **Aruna Combu**', on Combu Island, where dishes are prepared with freshly picked ingredients, the gastronomy is an attraction in itself.

Tourist information points, such as those installed at 'Ver-o-Peso Market'

aquarium/maquete

and ‘Feliz Lusitânia Complex’, help visitors navigate authentic options, avoiding predatory tourism traps.

separate chapter is the **Trans-Amazonian Highway** (BR-230), a pharaonic project begun in the 1970s that cuts across Pará from east to west. With its 4,260 km — of which only 30% are paved —, the road is at the same time a symbol of resistance and a reminder of challenges not overcome. In practice, traveling along stretches like the one between Altamira and Itaituba means facing potholes, improvised bridges and stretches where the bush seems to want to reclaim the asphalt. Even so, the Trans-Amazonian Highway is vital for isolated communities. In 2023, the federal government announced investments of R$800 million to restore 600 km of the highway in Pará (Ministry of Transportation, 2023, https://www.gov.br/transportes), a crucial step towards integrating regions like the **Xingu**, where Kayapó indigenous people develop ecotourism projects.

For those who venture along the Trans-Amazonian Highway, the rewards are unique. In Uruará, family farmers welcome visitors to show them how they grow agroforestry cocoa, while in Medicilândia, women’s cooperatives transform cupuaçu into pulp and sweets that are sold at local fairs. The road also leads to impressive landscapes, such as the Serra do Pardo, where 12,000-year-old trails reveal cave paintings by ancient peoples.

However, tourism in Pará still faces obstacles. The lack of signage on roads such as PA-150 (which connects Belém to Marabá) and the lack of public restrooms in conservation areas are recurring problems. On the other hand, initiatives such as the Amazon Routes Program, launched in 2022, seek to train local guides and improve basic infrastructure in 15 priority municipalities (SETUR-PA, 2023, https://www.setur.pa.gov.br).

River transportation, while charming, also requires attention. Regional boats, such as those that leave the Port of Belém for nearby islands, often lack life jackets and emergency equipment. On the other hand, projects such as ‘Navega Pará’ have modernized waterway terminals, installing Wi-Fi and electronic ticketing systems on vessels.

Cocoa seeds

When it comes to accommodation, travelers can find everything from hammocks in indigenous huts to guesthouses that combine comfort and sustainability. At 'Pousada Garimpão', in Alter do Chão, energy comes from solar panels, and the shower water is heated by a biomass system. 'Hotel Vila Amazônica', in Belém, invests in decor with certified wood and hires cooks from quilombola communities.

For food, in addition to classics like tacacá and maniçoba, it's worth exploring new options. 'Remanso do Bosque Restaurant', in Belém, led by chef Thiago Castanho, reinvents traditional dishes with haute cuisine techniques — like jambu rice with smoked shrimp. 'Casarão do Jamaci', in Marajó, serves filhote in banana leaves in an environment that combines history and nature.

Sustainable social tourism in Pará is not a passing fad — it is a necessity. In a state where 25% of the population lives below the poverty line (IBGE, 2023), every real spent on community tours becomes a seed of change. When a riverside family starts earning R$2,000 per month hosting tourists, as is the case on Combu Island, deforestation loses its meaning. When young indigenous people become certified guides, as in the Community-Based Tourism Project in Xingu, culture gains a new lease of life.

The challenge now is to scale up these initiatives without losing their essence. Expanding internet access in remote communities, as the 'Wi-Fi Brasil' program does in 120 locations in Pará (Ministry of Communications, 2023, (https://www.gov.br/mcom), helps to publicize itineraries. Partnerships with universities, such as UFPA, guarantee research that supports public policies. And what about the traveler? Well, he just needs to arrive with respect, curiosity and a desire to learn. After all, as the elders in Soure say: "The Amazon cannot be explained — it must be experienced.".

Images: Pedro Guerreiro/ Ag. Pará

Interview with Júlio César Meyer Júnior

employee of Ideflor-bio, the management body for state conservation units in Pará, who works as the Head of State Conservation Units in the Metropolitan Region of Belém:

1. In your opinion, how would you define tourism in Pará?

A: Among the various types of tourism that exist in the world, the state of Pará stands out for its nature tourism and experiential tourism practices, which represent a great opportunity for development for the region. Our biggest attraction is the lush forest, a natural heritage of extreme global importance, combined with an incredible cultural heritage. Nature and experiential tourism offer visitors — especially those who have already visited established destinations — the chance to experience more immersive activities, in direct contact with traditional communities. Pará thus emerges as an ideal destination for those seeking authentic experiences, complementing already known travel routes.

2. Quais os principais desafios e potenciais na área em que atua, e como promover iniciativas sustentáveis para o desenvolvimento destes?

A: The biggest challenge is the lack of adequate infrastructure. Often, tourism activities begin to be developed in the territory before other essential agendas are implemented. However, ideally, tourism should be the "icing on the cake", that is, it should come after the structuring of basic services such as health, sanitation, education and logistics. The reality, however, is the opposite: several territories even lack drinking water and sewage, which makes it difficult to offer a quality tourism product.

Our traditional communities and sociobiodiversity stand out as potential. They allow tourists to experience an intimate connection with the people who protect the forest, interpreting the environment for visitors. This immersion is enriched by the cuisine of Pará, recognized nationally and internationally, and by the traditional knowledge associated with biodiversity.

3. What regenerative and sustainable practices have already been implemented (or not) and how do they impact the region?

A: AConservation Units and Indigenous Lands are examples of regenerative practices, especially in nature tourism with traditional populations. In the metropolitan region of Belém, for example, Combu Island offers experiences such as scent baths, açaí and cocoa cultivation, artisanal shrimp fishing and chocolate production, all integrated with the forest. Another highlight is the Wildlife Refuge, which combines leisure, recreation and appreciation of biodiversity and local culture.

The negative aspect is the cultural conflicts caused by mass tourism, which does not reflect the reality desired by the people of Pará. The challenge is to regulate this activity to minimize negative impacts (such as cultural loss of character) and enhance the positive ones (income generation and conservation).

4. How can tourism be a tool for preservation, community empowerment and economic development?

A: Tourism is one of the best tools for conserving natural and cultural heritage. By generating income through standing forests, it encourages communities to protect forest fragments and restore degraded areas. In addition, it values traditional knowledge, strengthens the transmission of this knowledge to future generations and promotes the decarbonization of economic activities.

It's a two-way street: tourists gain transformative experiences in contact with nature, while communities achieve economic sustainability and social inclusion. Regenerative tourism benefits both the environment and people, creating a virtuous cycle of preservation and development.

Arts and Crafts of Pará

Architecture: 'Raio-que-o-parta'

Between the 1940s and 1960s, Pará reinvented modernism with its own hands — and broken tiles. While Brazil dreamed of concrete, the people of Pará glued colorful fragments to facades, creating lightning bolts, animals, and religious symbols. The Belém-Brasília highway, in poor condition, caused tiles to break during transportation; families bought them at the price of rubble and transformed them into art. "It was the modernism of the possible," says Laura Costa's research (2014). Named '**Raio--que-o-parta**', the style became popular language: mosaics on parapets told stories of those who yearned for modernity without abandoning their identity. Today, many of these facades have been erased by paint or renovations, erasing memories. "It's like forgetting your mother tongue," reflects Elis Almeida, from Raio-que-o-parta Network (**Rede Raio-que-o-parta**), a collective that has been mapping and preserving these works since 2020. In partnership with Project Minerva (UFPA), they train women to restore discarded tiles, transforming remains into heritage. "Each shard is a verse of our history," says Mrs. Isabel, an artisan from the Marco neighborhood. On the streets of Belém, Bragança or Marabá, the mosaics resist: witnesses of a modernism that did not come from above, but sprouted from the ground, made of fractures, colors and resistance.

Source: Rede Raio-que-o-parta, ArchDaily, 31/03/2023

Archaeology: Marks of the Past in the Present

The stones of Pará speak. In the Monte Alegre State Park, cave paintings up to 12 thousand years old reveal scenes of hunting, dancing and constellations drawn by ancestral peoples. "These are our grandparents engraving life on the rock", re-

flects indigenous guide Ademir Kaba, from the Munduruku ethnic group. Studies by the National Institute of Historic and Artistic Heritage (**Instituto do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional - IPHAN**) show that these sites were ceremonial centers, where astronomical knowledge was shared between generations.

Source: IPHAN, 2023, https://www.gov.br/iphan

The Xingu geoglyphs, giant figures engraved on the ground, challenge the idea that the Amazon was a "void" before colonization. Researchers at the Federal University of Pará (UFPA) estimate that these structures, discovered in 1977, were part of complex agricultural systems.

Sorce: UFPA, 2022, https://www.ufpa.br

Muriquitã: the sacred amulet of the Amazon rainforest

The **Muriquitã** (or murikixã) is a traditional Amazonian amulet, typically carved from green stone (like jadeite, serpentinite, or nephrite) into anthropomorphic or zoomorphic shapes. Small in size yet profound in meaning, this sacred object **symbolizes protection, spiritual power, and connection to Indigenous ancestry**.

Of ancestral origin and widespread among several indigenous peoples of the Amazon, especially the people of the Tapajós River region, the muriquitã was worn on the body as a necklace, pendant or ceremonial adornment. Its function was spiritual: to protect the body and soul, attract good energy and ward off illness or bad influences. It was commonly passed down through generations as a sacred inheritance.

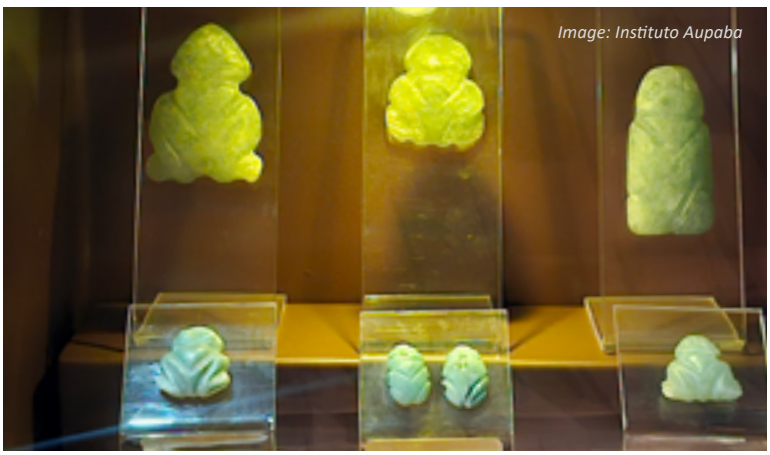
Image: Instituto Aupaba

In Pará, the muriquitã has become an icon of Amazonian identity. It gained prominence in the 20th century when intellectuals and artists from Pará adopted it as a symbol of regional culture. In the city of Santarém, it is treated as an archaeological relic. Many original pieces were found in archaeological sites in the region, and today they are part of collections in museums in Brazil and abroad.

In oral tradition, the stone is also linked to legends — such as the one that only women could find it in riverbeds, during moments of great spiritual connection. Other versions say that it was offered as a gift of initiation or healing within sacred rituals.

Today, the muriquitã continues to be evoked as a symbol of cultural resistance, indigenous spirituality and belonging to the Amazon. It is used in jewelry, in symbolic crafts and as a representation of a link between the past and the present of the forest.

Miriti toys (or miritizeiros)

Colorful sculptures and toys made from the light wood of the miritizeiro tree, traditionally produced in Abaetetuba (PA). Sold especially during the Círio de Nazaré, they represent boats, animals and everyday figures. They are Intangible Cultural Heritage of Pará.

Image: Instituto Aupaba

In the village of Cachoeira do Arari, miriti toys delight children and adults alike. Made from seeds of native trees, such as the açaí palm, these objects are more than just fun — they are lessons in sustainability. "My grandfather taught me that playing can be caring," says artisan Carlos Santos, whose miriti horses have traveled the world.

Abre Letras

Abre-Letras is a traditional form of hand painting used to make commercial signs, banners, signs, posters and advertisements in markets, fairs and facades throughout

the state of Pará. With vivid lines, hand-drawn letters and intense colors, this practice expresses a popular aesthetic full of identity, creativity and empirical knowledge.

Very common in peripheral neighborhoods and in the countryside, **Abre-Letras** combines art and craft. The artists — known as 'letristas' — not only write, but also compose visual images that communicate with the everyday perspective of the population. The typography is original, stylized and often mixes humor, religion and poetry, reflecting the language of the people. It is a functional art that resists digital standardization, reaffirms orality and preserves traditional forms of visual communication.

Recently, this art form has been rediscovered by movements that value popular culture and vernacular design. Cultural projects and exhibitions have incorporated Abre-Letras as an authentic visual language, reaffirming its value not only as a means of communication, but as an intangible and symbolic heritage of the Amazon region of Pará.

he Floating Letters project (**Projeto Letras que Flutuam**), created by the **Rios de Encontro** collective (coletivo Rios de Encontro), brings poetry to riverside communities via library boats. "We inscribe verses on recycled wooden plaques and hang them from trees," explains poet Ana Cláudia. "This way, words journey with the river's flow."

Among the masters, Master Zé do Carmo stands out, a carpenter from Bragança who carves canoes like works of art. "Every vessel has a soul," he says, pointing to the curves that imitate the bodies of snakes.

Essence and Aroma Works: The Forest in Drops

In the São João do Jaburu community, women extractivists produce **andiroba** and **copaíba** essential oils – used for centuries as anti-inflammatories. "We learned from our grandmothers how to harvest without harming the trees," explains Raimunda, leader of the '**Aroma da Floresta**' cooperative. In 2022, the group earned R$120,000 selling to ethical cosmetics brands.

Source: SEMAS-PA, 2023, https://www.semas.pa.gov.br

The smell of **pitiú**, so celebrated by Dona Onete, even gained an artisanal perfume created by chemists from UFRA. "We captured the essence of dried fish in notes of wood and amber," explains researcher Luísa Mendes.

The peculiarities of Pará are not exotic — they are mirrors. They reflect a way of life that understands the forest as a partner, culture as a river, and the future as a web to be woven collectively. Here, every legend, every carimbó chord, every humorous expression is an invitation: not just to visit, but to be transformed.

Marajoara and Tapajônica Ceramics

Ancestral art with graphics and symbolic forms from the original peoples of Marajó and the Santarém region. One of the richest archaeological legacies in Brazil.

Straw and fiber crafts
(tipiti, baskets, fans)

Indigenous and quilombola crafts with braids of arumã, tucumã and other native fibers, with everyday and symbolic use.

Handmade lutheria of carimbó instruments

Manual production of drums (curimbós), ganzás (a type of percussion instrument) and banjos, keeping the musical tradition and carimbó rituals alive.

Indigenous body painting and traditional graphics

Aesthetic and spiritual expression of indigenous peoples such as Kayapó, Munduruku and Warao, with cosmological meanings.

Biojewelry and crafts with seeds and natural fibers

Sustainable jewelry produced by riverside and indigenous communities with materials such as açaí, jarina, tucumã and jute.


Image: Instituto Aupaba

CHAPTER 9

Community-Based Tourism: an important vector for the Bioeconomy in Pará

Ágila Flaviana Alves Chaves Rodrigues
Marcel Assis Batista do Nascimento
Cláudia de Souza[10]
Beth Bauchwitz[11]
Benno Pokorny[12]

The state of Pará, whose characteristic biome is the Amazon, comprises both highly urbanized areas used for agricultural purposes and degraded areas, as well as forest areas rich in biodiversity, being a storehouse of historical and cultural traditions of traditional peoples and communities. On the other hand, in this same environment, the demand for the use of natural resources is growing, which are extracted in a disorderly manner, causing socio-environmental and territorial imbalances of all kinds.

It becomes imperative to face the numerous challenges that arise through solutions that can contribute to the enhancement of ecological, social and cultural wealth. In this sense, tourism can emerge as an innovative proposal that, if carried out in a balanced way, can contribute to a more inclusive and equitable development that respects and values this diversity.

Among the strategies for tourism as a vector of sustainable socioeconomic development in the region, the State Policy for Community-Based Tourism of Pará (Política Estadual de Turismo de Base Comunitária do Pará) stands out, established

by Law No. 9,773, of December 27, 2022, since the state has been a major stage for discussions, especially in the planning of actions that value the transition to a low-carbon economy, in which traditional knowledge is associated with social and innovation technologies.

The bioeconomy thus presents itself as a possibility for the integration and valorization of natural and cultural resources and, when combined with tourism, promotes responsible economic practices, being a tool not only for preserving biodiversity and cultural traditions, but also for boosting the generation of employment and income for local communities, creating a solid foundation for a more sustainable future.

In this sense, the bioeconomy and tourism are an intrinsic part of the Pará State Bioeconomy Plan (**PLANBIO**), launched by Decree No. 2,746, of November 9, 2022. The bioeconomy is a possibility of socioeconomic development based on nature-based solutions (NbS), enabling the transition to a green and diversified economy capable of creating and/or improving local production processes and sociobiodiversity through innovation, which will guarantee the safety of genetic heritage and the protection and appreciation of the knowledge and culture of traditional peoples. Coordinated by the Pará State Secretariat for the Environment and Sustainability (**Secretaria de Estado de Meio Ambiente e Sustentabilidade do Pará - SEMAS**), whose actions are carried out by other state secretariats, PLANBIO is a pioneering policy in Brazil, one of whose guidelines is to enhance and integrate tourism as a production chain of the Bioeconomy. In this scope, responsible and regenerative tourism practices enable investments that sustain environmental, social, and economic benefits. PLANBIO has three main areas of activity: 1) Research, Development and Innovation in the bioeconomy; 2) Cultural Heritage and Genetic Heritage; 3) Production Chains and Sustainable Business. Tourism is specifically part of the last area, with actions and projects that converge with the promotion of the bioeconomy, including the State Policy for Community-Based Tourism (TBC).

Image: Rodrigo Pinheiro - Ag. Pará

Thus, with a view to contributing to the promotion of development based on low carbon emissions, the Government of the State of Pará, through the State Secretariat for Tourism (SETUR) and SEMAS, with support from the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, based on the Bioeconomy and Value Chains project, developed in partnership with the Ministry of Agrarian Development and Family Farming (MDA), with resources from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), started, in 2024, the Pará Tourism and Bioeconomy Working Group (GTTBP) to discuss strategies to strengthen the community-based tourism chain with a focus on the bioeconomy and to jointly develop with partners, an Action Plan for the development of TBC in the state of Pará.

The first meeting of the GTTBP brought together experts in TBC, representatives from the government, the market, educational institutions, third sector entities, as well as representatives of indigenous peoples, quilombolas and traditional communities that implement TBC. Currently, in addition to the aforementioned Secretariats, the Group includes representatives from the Federal University of Pará (UFPA), the Technical Assistance and Rural Extension Company of the State of Pará (Empresa de Assistência Técnica e Extensão Rural do Estado do Pará - EMATER), the Dell Institute, GIZ, MDA, the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change (Ministério do Meio Ambiente e Mudanças do Clima - MMA), among others.

Figure 1 - Meeting to create the Pará Tourism and Bioeconomy Group (Grupo de Turismo e Bioeconomia do Pará - GTTBP)

Source: authors (2024).

For the GTTBP, tourism initiatives focused on bioeconomy must have the responsibility and commitment to generate income that keeps the forest standing (SBN - Nature-based solutions), such as ecotourism, community-based tourism and nature tourism, as long as practiced in their premises, contribute to strengthening sociobiodiversity, ratifying and guaranteeing the autonomy and protagonism of local people's businesses, through inclusion and social equity.

The members understand that in order to leverage tourism as a low-carbon economy, it is necessary for enterprises to have broad knowledge about the Bioeconomy, its production chains and active communities, about the formatting of products with active participation of local communities, considering their regional vocations (cultural, social and environmental), respectful and transparent communication, in addition to price proposals and fair payments for services.

Furthermore, it was understood that leveraging tourism as a low-carbon economy requires that tourism enterprises have broad knowledge about the Bioeconomy, its production chains and the communities involved, ensuring that the formatting of tourism products occurs in a participatory manner, valuing regional vocations and ensuring respectful communication, in addition to fair pricing and remuneration practices for services provided.

In this sense, the GTTPB seeks to ratify the role of tourism as an agent that promotes social well-being and low-carbon development, especially in regions with cultural plurality and rich biodiversity. To this end, it highlights the importance of policies and practices that guarantee the active participation of local communities, respecting their traditional knowledge and promoting socioeconomic inclusion. It is therefore necessary to reinforce the need for tourism models that value environmental conservation as a central axis, encouraging sustainable production chains, the responsible use of natural resources and the adoption of innovative strategies that reduce negative impacts and enhance benefits for local populations.

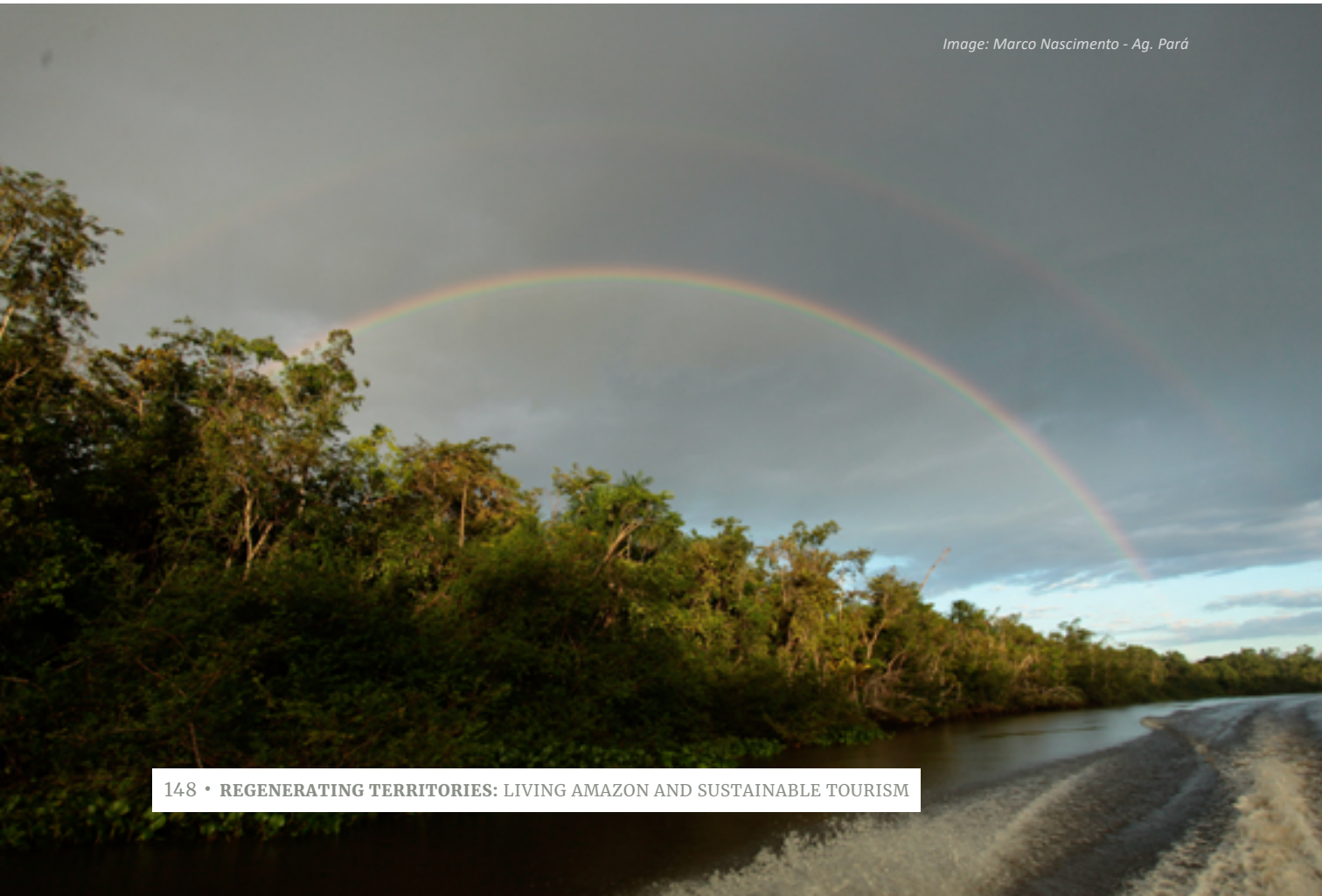

Image: Marco Nascimento - Ag. Pará

NOTES

1. Wilza da Silveira Pinto – Agricultural Engineer, PhD in Agricultural Sciences – Federal Rural University of the Amazon;

2. Sérgio Brazão e Silva - Agricultural Engineer, PhD in Geology and Geochemistry – Federal Rural University of the Amazon;

3. Deusdedith Cruz Filho - Forestry Engineer, Doctor in Agricultural Sciences – Federal Rural University of the Amazon – Belém- Pará.

4. Esther Rapoport - Graduated in History from the University of São Paulo, she dedicated herself to tourism for over 40 years, having worked in several companies in the sector. Since 2016, she has been developing the "History of Destinations" Program, offering lectures and courses for curious travelers interested in expanding their knowledge of the History, Geography, Culture and Current Affairs of their next travel destination. She currently lives in Berlin, from where she gives her presentations and guides Brazilian clients through the history of Germany. She writes chronicles about travel and history for the Revista Fórum website.

5. Márcia Kambeba - PhD in Linguistics, Master in Geography, Writer with 11 published books, Poet, Multi-artist and activist of the indigenous and environmental box.

6. Camille Bendahan Bemerguy - PhD in Economics (UFF), economist, Deputy Secretary of Bioeconomy at the State Secretariat for Environment and Sustainability of Pará (SEMAS/PA).

7. Ágila Flaviana Alves Chaves Rodrigues - PhD in Socio-Environmental Development (NAEA/UFPA), tourism expert, Environmental Management Technician at the Pará State Secretariat for the Environment and Sustainability (SEMAS/PA).

8. Marcel Assis Batista do Nascimento - Master in Natural Resources Management and Local Development in the Amazon (NUMA/UFPA, tourism expert, Environmental Management Technician at the Pará State Secretariat for the Environment and Sustainability (SEMAS/PA).

9. Beatriz Teixeira Barbosa Lima - Specialist in Project Management (Estácio), environmental engineer, Environmental Management Technician at the State Secretariat for Environment and Sustainability of Pará (SEMAS/PA).

[5] The Committee has the following responsibilities: I - To coordinate and operationalize the implementation of (PlanBio), together with the municipal and federal public sector, the private sector, the third sector, research institutions, indigenous people, quilombolas and traditional communities; II - To submit for approval by the Steering Committee of the State System on Climate Change (COGES-Clima): the monitoring and evaluation indicators; the annual implementation report; and the proposals for regionalization of the Plan; III - To ensure the continuous flow of data and information for monitoring, communication and transparency through a Power BI platform, with dashboards including graphs, actions, status, indicators and qualitative descriptions of the execution of the State Bioeconomy Plan, which is fed by the bodies and entities executing the Plan.

[6] When it was formed, the Executive Committee was composed of SEMAS, FAPESPA, SECTET, SEDEME, SEDAP, and IDEFLOR-Bio. However, the Plan was implemented by 14 state government departments and institutions, including SEFA, SEJUDH, ADEPARÁ, BANPARÁ, EMATER, SETUR, SECULT, SECOM, SEASTER, ITERPA, and the members of the Executive Committee.

[7] In 2023, the Extraordinary Secretariat for Indigenous Peoples (SEPI), the Secretariat for Racial Equality and Human Rights (SEIRDH), the State Secretariat for Women (SEMU) and the State Secretariat for Family Agriculture (SEAF) were created, the group now consists of 18 institutions executing projects and actions.

[8] The training was provided by the SEMAS technical team and was individualized, addressing the specificities of each department and institution.

10. Cláudia de Souza - PhD in Sustainable Development (UNB), agricultural engineer, Technical Advisor at the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).

11. Beth Bauchwitz: Tourism expert and consultant in Tourism and Environment at the Dell Institute

12. Benno Pokorny: PhD in Forestry Sciences - University of Freiburg - Germany, representative of the Deutsche Gesellschaft fürInternationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) in Brazil.

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