

Brazilian Eco-Tourism Gets US\$ 32-Million Push from Government

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The Environment minister of Brazil, Carlos Minc, announced that, until September, the Brazilian government is going to launch an effort totaling 50 million reais (US\$ 31.9 million) to encourage eco-tourism at six federal preservation units, with forecasted investment in infrastructure and tenders for supplying services to visitors.

The National Parks of Serra dos Órgãos (state of Rio de Janeiro), Jaú (Amazon), Chapada dos Veadeiros (Goiás), Aparados da Serra (Rio Grande do Sul), Serra da Capivara (Piauí) and the National Marine Park of Fernando de Noronha (Pernambuco) will receive the funding, according to Minc. Federal investment should fund construction of visitor centers, guided trails, belvederes and the hiring of guides.

Restaurants and adventure tourism services should be granted to private companies by means of public tenders, according to Minc. "The aim is to increase the level of protection and enjoyment, and make a profit at preservation units," said Minc, after installing in office the new president of the Chico Mendes Institute for Preservation of Biodiversity, Rômulo Mello.

According to the minister, federal preservation units receive approximately 3.5 million visitors each year, but 90% of visitation takes place at the National Parks of Iguaçu (state of Paraná) and Tijuca (Rio de Janeiro).

Minc also announced that the government should authorize construction of "park-roads," lines that may pass through the preservation units, as long as rules such as low speed limits and use of non-pollutant materials are observed.

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