



Surroundings of the Rio Doce State Park, Minas Gerais

Field Dialogue - Co-Chairs' Summary Report

February 12, 13 and 14, 2025, in-person

Jacinto Moreira Lana, Jailma Soares, José Ângelo Paganini, Renata Campos, Sônia Carvalho Ribeiro, Thales Claussem Correa, Tiago Marcos de Almeida¹

Introduction

The [Land Use Dialogue \(LUD\)](#) is an initiative that aims to promote the participation of multiple stakeholders by bringing together knowledge and leading processes that foster responsible business practices, improve territorial governance, and promote inclusive development in relevant landscapes.

The initiative has been implemented in several countries, including Brazil, Ghana, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Tanzania. In Brazil, it was first carried out in 2016 in the Alto Vale do Itajaí region, in the state of Santa Catarina, and currently has six ongoing initiatives in the country.

The Dialogue phase of the initiative consists of three main stages:

- Scoping Dialogue;
- Field Dialogues;
- Conclusion Workshop.

The key expected outcomes include:

- Building an environment of trust among local leaders;
- Promoting engagement from a variety of stakeholders, including decision-makers;
- Creating an enabling environment for the development and/or strengthening of platforms led by local actors (forums, alliances, coalitions, etc.);
- Influencing local and regional public policies.

¹ *Advisory group representatives present at the Field Dialogue*

The LUD was designed to support multi-stakeholder, adaptive land management processes in strategic landscapes around the world. The initiative is based on the premise that through dialogue, people and institutions can develop sustainable, locally oriented, long-term solutions to territorial challenges. Rather than focusing on a single debate around a key topic, the LUD proposes an ongoing and collaborative process for environmental decision-making.

This model generates tangible impacts by supporting social processes that contribute to landscape initiatives and formal public policies. The LUD creates space for discussions that often would not occur within formal decision-making structures, serving as a governance platform that facilitates the clarification of key topics with the appropriate stakeholders and guides the development of solutions. Over time, it can also help establish a culture of dialogue and knowledge exchange among those involved.

The LUD process brings together diverse actors to collectively build a shared vision for the landscape and identify strategies for implementation. From this co-creation, participants are able to set goals, recognize common challenges, and establish commitments.

The Land Use Dialogue is grounded in shared principles of dialogue and encourages the maintenance of a continuous exchange among stakeholders, aiming for sustainable and collaborative solutions to territorial challenges.

The Selected Landscape: Surroundings of the Rio Doce State Park

For the implementation of the Land Use Dialogue in Minas Gerais, the chosen landscape was the surroundings of the Rio Doce State Park (PERD). This territory holds significant ecological value, as it shelters the largest continuous remnant of Atlantic Forest in the state and plays a fundamental role in biodiversity conservation and water resource regulation. It was the first Protected Area (PA) established in Minas Gerais and, since 1993, has been recognized as a core zone of the Atlantic Forest Biosphere Reserve. In 2015, its lake system was designated as a Ramsar Site — the third largest lacustrine system in Brazil.

The PERD lies within the Doce River Basin, a region that has historically faced socio-environmental challenges, including forest degradation, inadequate land use practices, land tenure conflicts, and the impacts of economic activities such as mining and agriculture. Environmental recovery and ecological restoration are top priorities in this context, especially after the dam collapse in Fundão in 2015. A more detailed characterization of this key landscape can be found in the [Concept Note](#).

The selection of the PERD surroundings for the LUD is justified by the need to promote structured dialogue among local stakeholders, including communities, the productive sector, government agencies, civil society organizations, and research institutions. The goal is to build integrated solutions that combine environmental conservation with sustainable development, identifying strategies for territorial management and strengthening landscape restoration efforts.

Thus, the Land Use Dialogue around the Rio Doce State Park presents an opportunity to foster the engagement of multiple stakeholders, expand environmental governance, and develop mechanisms that ensure both the ecological and socio-economic resilience of this strategic landscape.

The First Stage of the Land Use Dialogue in Minas Gerais: Scoping Dialogue

The first stage of the Land Use Dialogue in Minas Gerais was held online in August 2022. During the [Scoping Dialogue](#), key challenges of the landscape were identified and subsequently grouped into four priority topics:

1. **Unplanned urban expansion**, which includes, for example, the lack of land use planning and urban subdivisions occurring in the park's buffer zone;
2. **Lack of frequent monitoring of land use dynamics**, with outdated maps hindering the understanding of deforestation patterns;
3. **The PERD is not well known or valued**, with few environmental education initiatives in place;
4. **Limited social participation in the PERD's management**, including the park's insufficient recognition of the role of local people in the conservation process, and gaps in community representation on the PERD Advisory Council, among other aspects.

Based on these priority topics, existing information and ongoing projects in the focal landscape were mapped, as well as identified information gaps.

From the Scoping Dialogue to the Field Dialogue: Key Developments in the PERD Region

Between April and October 2023, the Management Plan for the PERD underwent a review and update process. This revision was part of the scope of a partnership agreement between Instituto Ekos Brasil and the Minas Gerais State Forestry Institute (IEF), and was conducted based on ICMBio's² methodological guidelines.

Subsequently, in October 2023, during the 90th Ordinary Meeting of the Biodiversity and Protected Areas Chamber (CPB) of the State Environmental Policy Council (COPAM), the revised management plan was unanimously approved. This update strengthened the park's conservation and sustainable management guidelines and improved its integration with neighboring communities.

Also, between the first and second stages of the LUD process, an agreement was reached to create a new protected area in the Jacuba Forest region — a preserved fragment of Atlantic Forest. The creation of this unit will allow the implementation of an ecological corridor connected to the PERD, expanding the protected area and promoting habitat connectivity.

Moreover, recognizing the importance of community participation in environmental management, strategies were developed to enhance communication with the municipalities surrounding the PERD. These efforts included workshops, meetings, and educational programs aimed at raising awareness and engaging communities in park conservation and the sustainable use of natural resources.

These developments reflect a period of significant transformation in the region surrounding the Rio Doce State Park. Accordingly, a new challenge was raised by the initiative's advisory group to be considered and validated by participants during the Field Dialogue:

² Chico Mendes Institute for Biodiversity Conservation

5. Conflicting views regarding the need for and types of use of the “Ponte Queimada” bridge and road, which cross through the interior of the park.

The Second Stage: Field Dialogue

The second stage of the Land Use Dialogue in Minas Gerais was the **Field Dialogue**, which had the following main objectives:

- To promote experiential learning through field visits and discussions focused on the landscape’s challenges and identified opportunities;
- To engage in conversation with local stakeholders in order to better understand their experiences related to the dialogue’s focus areas.

Methodology

Following the operational principles outlined in the [Land Use Dialogue Guide](#), the Field Dialogue took place over three days and included presentations by facilitators, field visits, group work, and plenary discussions. The main results are presented below.

Validation of Priority Topics

One of the key outcomes of the Field Dialogue was the validation of the priority topics for the landscape. This activity took place on the first day through group work, sharing of perspectives, and final agreement in plenary.

As noted earlier, a significant amount of time had passed between the Scoping and Field Dialogue stages, during which important developments occurred in the region, such as the revision of the PERD Management Plan. Given these changes, it was essential to revisit the previously identified topics to assess whether they remained relevant or needed to be updated based on the new context.

This process enabled participants to consolidate and adjust the topics according to the current reality, ensuring that efforts toward a sustainable landscape vision would be aligned with the most recent concerns and needs.

The five original priority topics were maintained, but various updates were incorporated to reflect the current situation:

1. Unplanned Urban Expansion

- The absence of integrated land use planning (Although the Integrated Development Master Plan (PDDI) covers part of the municipalities surrounding the PERD, it has not yet been implemented).
- Ongoing land subdivision for urban purposes within the buffer zone.
- Legal inconsistencies between municipal, state, and federal regulations.
- Most municipalities in the buffer zone have fewer than 20,000 inhabitants and are therefore not legally required to adopt a Master Plan (*Plano Diretor*). However, even without such legal obligation, it is important to establish land use and conservation regulations.

- Need to intensify and expand the presence of the State — including the executive, legislative, and judiciary branches — in territorial planning and environmental oversight.
- Enhance social participation in land use governance.

2. Lack of Frequent Monitoring of Land Use Dynamics

- Outdated land use maps: while more recent mapping products now exist, there is limited dissemination of how to access them and who is authorized to use them. New studies have contributed additional material.
- Lack of regular monitoring of land use and land cover hampers understanding of deforestation dynamics.
- Intensificar e incrementar a presença Estado (Governos e legislativo): municipalização das ações (não só legislação).

3. PERD Not Well Known or Valued

- The PERD remains relatively unknown and undervalued by communities in the surrounding area and by the municipalities located in the buffer zone.
- Few environmental education initiatives have been implemented.
- Dialogue with local communities is essential to reduce pressure on the park.
- The presence of the State (governments and legislative bodies) must be strengthened and expanded.
- A new element raised in this second stage was the potential for ecotourism promotion, placing local communities at the center of planning and implementation.

4. Social Participation in the PERD

- The IEF and PERD management must recognize and strengthen the socio-environmental dimension of conservation, acknowledging that local people are key allies in this effort.
- There are representativeness challenges in the PERD Advisory Council. Although two additional seats were recently created for community members, challenges remain regarding the participation of rural residents, particularly property owners with Rural Environmental Registry (CAR) but lacking CNPJ (Brazilian company registration number). The park must better communicate the opportunities available for associations and residents in the surrounding areas to get involved.
- The diversity of the surrounding population — environmental, economic, and social — must be fully acknowledged and considered in participatory processes.
- There is still a need to map and understand who the local stakeholders are, their influence, expectations, and capacity to engage with and shape the territory.
- The presence of the State (governments and legislative bodies) must be strengthened and made more effective in promoting inclusive governance.

5. Better Definition of Permitted Uses and Controls for the Ponte Queimada Road

- There is a need to clarify and define the types of uses allowed for the *Ponte Queimada* road, which crosses through the interior of the park, and to ensure proper control and enforcement.
- The dialogue should go deeper into the themes of preservation and conservation, considering:

- Social aspects: the road was historically used by local communities, who may need access again;
- Political aspects: who benefits and who may be affected;
- Economic aspects: increased freight costs and the types of vehicles permitted to travel on the road.
- Although the Management Plan defines possible uses for the road, political pressure has been exerted to modify these guidelines.
- Once uses are defined, it becomes essential to implement appropriate controls and monitoring.
- The LUD Advisory Group must express a clear position on this matter, contributing to a transparent and balanced resolution.

These challenges continue to represent critical points that must be addressed to ensure integrated and sustainable territorial management, taking into account not only environmental aspects but also the region's social and economic dimensions. Therefore, these challenges served as a guide for the discussions held during the field visits on the second day of the dialogue.

Summary of Field Visits

For the field visits, three locations were selected to allow participants to hear the perspectives of different stakeholders active in the region. For each visit, the related priority topics were identified, so that participants could connect what they learned on-site with the broader objectives of the Land Use Dialogue.

Location 1: Artesãs do Rio Doce, in the district of Baixa Verde

Related priority challenges: 3. The PERD is not well known or valued by surrounding communities; 4. Social participation in the PERD.

The **Artesãs do Rio Doce** is a group of women from the community of Baixa Verde, a district of the municipality of Dionísio, located in the surroundings of the PERD. The group began informally with a few members gathering occasionally at the local Social Assistance Reference Center (CRAS). However, the initiative gained momentum with the implementation of a project by the Waitá Institute, funded by the Renova Foundation, which provided training in new handicraft techniques. These techniques expanded the group's production possibilities, especially with creations inspired by the PERD's fauna and flora, adding value and identity to the products. Even after the project ended, the Artesãs do Rio Doce have maintained an active relationship with the Rio Doce State Park through the support of the State Forestry Institute (IEF) team and research groups such as *Primatas Perdidos* and *Tatu Canastra*, who continue to encourage handicrafts inspired by the park's wildlife. The artisans recognize the park's potential to help boost their sales, particularly at environmental events, where there is greater demand for unique products that reflect the identity of the PERD. However, they still face challenges, such as the absence of a CNPJ (Brazilian company registration number), which limits their access to institutional support, participation in public funding calls, and their ability to make large sales that require the issuance of electronic invoices.

Another point discussed was the participation of the community in events promoted by the PERD and the opportunities for tourism in the surrounding areas. Residents highlighted the need to diversify attractions within the park beyond *Lagoa Dom Helvécio*, noting that other lagoons in the region are regularly used by local residents — such as the one near the Baixa Verde community.

Last year, the celebration of the PERD's 80th anniversary brought a series of public events, including activities for children, which significantly increased participation by the surrounding population.

Finally, the importance of continuing and expanding the park's environmental education efforts — especially in schools — was reinforced. Currently, 4th-grade students participate in guided visits, walking short trails and experiencing the PERD's biodiversity firsthand. These activities are essential to help children grow up with a sense of recognition of the park's environmental role and the importance of conservation.



Location 2: Areas of Irregular Land Subdivision at the Border of the Park near Cava Grande

Related priority challenges: 1. Unplanned urban expansion (impacts of LMG-760 paving near the Cava Grande area on the buffer zone — wildlife collisions, fires, land subdivision); 2. Lack of frequent monitoring of land use dynamics.

During this visit, participants discussed the importance of urban planning in municipal expansion, especially in areas adjacent to the Rio Doce State Park. The area visited was recently removed from the park's buffer zone during the latest update of the Management Plan. However, this change does not eliminate the potential environmental impacts resulting from its proximity to the protected area. In contrast, several other areas experiencing expansion remain within the current buffer zone. It was noted that, depending on land use practices and the level of awareness among residents, the existence of subdivisions near the park does not necessarily constitute a problem — as long as sustainable practices are adopted. Nevertheless, real estate speculation has intensified in the surroundings of the PERD, with the proliferation of irregular subdivisions and land invasions that are later sold informally. It was emphasized that subdivision of land into plots smaller than the Minimum Subdivision Fraction (FMP) is not

permitted. The FMP varies by municipality and is defined by the National Institute for Colonization and Agrarian Reform (INCRA); in the Cava Grande region, the FMP is five hectares. However, illegal practices have been reported, especially since the paving of highway LMG-760, which has made access to the region much easier.

Regarding the lack of frequent land use monitoring, the group discussed that some organizations already have updated land use maps that could support territorial planning. However, greater dissemination of how to access this information is needed. In addition, near-real-time deforestation monitoring, with appropriate resolution for the region, remains a technical challenge.

In this context, participants stressed the need to strengthen coordination among municipalities in the surrounding area in order to improve sustainable land use planning, mitigate negative impacts on the PERD, and promote orderly regional development.



Location 3: Ponte Queimada

Related priority challenge: 5. Better define permitted uses (and controls) for Ponte Queimada and the road inside the PERD.

The visit to *Ponte Queimada* began with a historical overview of the structure, which has undergone several reinterpretations over time. Originally, the wooden bridge was part of the *Estrada do Degredo*, a route used to transport convicts for forced labor in gold extraction. Later, the company Acesita rebuilt the bridge to allow the passage of trucks transporting charcoal. In 1979, a major flood of the Rio Doce destroyed the structure, and more recently, the bridge was again destroyed by fire. During the visit, participants discussed the challenges involved in managing the bridge and road within the Rio Doce State Park (PERD), particularly the urgent need to regulate permitted uses and strengthen enforcement. One of the main concerns raised was the absence of state presence, reflected in the lack of infrastructure for surveillance and the absence of policing within the park. In addition, opaque real estate

interests were mentioned as a source of pressure for opening the road and authorizing the use of the bridge, without ensuring environmental preservation or proper control of the area.

In light of this situation, there was broad consensus among participants that before any decisions are made regarding the use of the bridge and road, effective surveillance and enforcement measures must be implemented. It was suggested that a regulatory document be developed, setting out clear and legally grounded rules for the use of the road, in order to prevent irregular occupation and environmental degradation.

Another point discussed was the responsibility of municipalities in implementing public policies and complying with agreements. Without effective municipal action, measures adopted by the park risk losing their effectiveness.

Finally, participants raised the possibility of redefining *Ponte Queimada* as a cultural and historical tourism site, recognizing its role in the history of the *Estrada do Degredo*. The creation of an interpretive trail or route was proposed as a way to strengthen both environmental and cultural education while enhancing the visitor experience within the park.



Building a Shared Vision for the Landscape

Following group work aimed at building a shared vision for a sustainable and thriving landscape in ten years, participants reached consensus on the following vision:

“A thriving landscape that integrates biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services across public and private lands, with diverse land uses compatible with socio-economic development, in harmony with local culture and with the active involvement of surrounding communities, government, civil society, and academia — generating benefits for all living beings.”

Solutions, Strategies, and Priorities

To bring this landscape vision to life, participants worked in groups and later shared their reflections in plenary to propose solutions and strategies aimed at achieving the desired future. The proposed solutions and strategies, many of which were closely interconnected, were organized by thematic areas as follows:

1. Governance and Territorial Planning

- Define the territorial scope for the landscape vision (expanding on the buffer zone established during the Scoping Dialogue stage — a 10 km buffer around the PERD);
- Establish a governance structure;
- Review land use legislation in the municipalities surrounding the PERD;
- Promote integration across levels of government to enable trained enforcement agents to oversee land use;
- Cooperation among municipalities;
- Create the *Águas da Jacuba* State Park.

2. Conservation, Ecosystem Services, and Cultural Valorization

- Develop an action plan that:
 - Promote initiatives to achieve key objectives (e.g., biodiversity conservation, ecological restoration, wildlife collision mitigation, promotion of sustainable value chains, alignment with local culture, improved stakeholder engagement, etc.);
- Support initiatives and implement activities that integrate socio-economic development with biodiversity and ecosystem service conservation;
- Define guidelines for revitalizing *Ponte Queimada*, taking into account its historical, cultural, and environmental significance;
- Provide greater detail on permitted uses for the *Salão Dourado* road, as current guidelines in the management plan are brief.

3. Sustainable Tourism and Infrastructure

- Structure and promote a network of tourism experiences in the region surrounding the PERD;
- Expand and optimize access to the park's natural features in zones where tourism is allowed (e.g., *Lagoa do Bispo*, new birdwatching points, etc.);
- Improve infrastructure in local communities — incorporating regional identity — to host tourists (lodges, restaurants, etc.);
- Improve infrastructure within the PERD to receive visitors (e.g., camping areas);
- Establish a PERD Tourism Committee in partnership with local agencies;
- Include the PERD in existing tourism circuits;
- Develop new activities to enhance the *Portal do Macuco* in the municipality of Timóteo.

4. Education, Communication, and Network Articulation

- Promote environmental education initiatives;
- Continue ongoing education activities and develop an integrated plan to unify efforts;
- Create a strategic communication platform with broad reach and tourism focus (e.g., a mobile app to connect local businesses and regional initiatives);
- Map existing initiatives in tourism, entrepreneurship, and corporate projects (to understand local actors and projects);
- Foster network articulation among stakeholders.

5. Financing and Resource Mobilization

- Fomento a editais;
- Support the institutionalization of local organizations to enable access to resources;
- Mobilize funding for the implementation of planned actions.

6. Public Policy and Quality of Life

- Integrate health-related public policies.

It was also discussed that the solutions and strategies presented — structured based on the identified challenges — serve as essential inputs for the development of an **Action Plan**. This plan should address each challenge specifically, ensuring targeted and effective approaches, while also integrating cross-cutting actions to foster synergy across different thematic areas. In this way, governance, biodiversity conservation, socio-economic development, sustainable tourism, environmental education, resource mobilization, and infrastructure converge into a cohesive strategy that is fully aligned with the collectively constructed landscape vision.

Field Dialogue Agenda

February 12

1:40 PM – Training Center, Rio Doce State Park (PERD)

- Overview of the Land Use Dialogue: challenges and opportunities identified in the previous stage (Scoping Dialogue) and the rationale behind the selection of the landscape
- Presentation by PERD management with updates: revision of the park management plan, communication strategy with surrounding communities, among others
- Validation of the identified priority challenges (baseline situation)
- Creation of the vision for a sustainable and thriving landscape over the next 10 years

5:45 PM – Closing

7:00 PM – Dinner at the PERD restaurant

February 13

8:00 AM – Departure for field visits (*meeting point: PERD Training Center*)

- Visit to *Artesãs do Rio Doce* in Baixa Verde, with the participation of other community members

11:00 AM – Lunch in Cava Grande

12:00 PM – Departure for additional field visits

- MG-760 highway in Cava Grande and *Ponte Queimada*

7:00 PM – Dinner at the PERD restaurant

February 14

8:30 AM – Training Center, Rio Doce State Park (PERD)

- Construction of a shared landscape vision
- Discussion of key challenges
- Identification of solutions and strategies to achieve the landscape vision
- Priorities and recommendations
- Next steps

1:00 PM: Closing session

1:00 PM: Lunch

2:30 PM: Departure to Belo Horizonte and other cities

Support:



The facilitation was conducted by Fernanda Rodrigues and Carolina Oliva Brasil (Forest Dialogue).

List of Participants

It is important to note that participation in all stages of the Land Use Dialogue may occur in an individual capacity and does not necessarily reflect the official position of the institution with which the participant is professionally affiliated.

Name	Institution
Alice Arantes Carneiro	Amigos do Parque Estadual do Rio Doce Association
Daniel S. Vila Nova	APERAM
Dilcéia Martins da Silva Lana	Marliéria City Hall
Diva da Luz Venancio	Artesãs do Rio Doce / Baixa Verde
Eliana Benedita Vasconcelos Souza	Artesãs do Rio Doce / Baixa Verde
Eliane Aparecida Freitas	Artesãs do Rio Doce / Baixa Verde
Elizabete Lino	AMDA
Fabricio Araujo de Castro e Silva	Marliéria City Hall
Fernanda Rodrigues	Brazilian Forests Dialogue
Flamínio Guerra	CBH-Doce
Flávia Maria de Castro Pereira	Dionísio City Hall
Francisco Valverde Filho	Timóteo City Hall
Ítallo de Andrade Campos	ARMVA
Jacinto Moreira Lana	Cenibra
Jailma Soares	IEF / PERD
Jane Aparecida da Silva	Artesãs do Rio Doce / Baixa Verde
José Ângelo Paganini	Relictos
Juliana Jacome Gomes	APERAM Foundation
Laiza Maria Silva Dutra	Cáritas Diocesana / Comissão Pastoral da Terra - MG
Letícia Bandeira Rocha	Univale
Lucas Barreto	Tatu-Canastra Project
Maria Aparecida Calazans	Chico Mendes II Association / Pingo D'Água

Maria Carolina Oliva Brasil	Brazilian Forests Dialogue
Maria Isabel Rodrigues e Carvalho	WAITÁ
Mariana Carvalho Machado Chaves	Timóteo City Hall
Marília Martins Aparecida da Silva	Univale / Emater
Maurício Ferreira	Daterras
Nair Augusta Lana Freitas	Artesãs do Rio Doce / Baixa Verde
Perpétua de Vasconcelos Carvalho	Artesãs do Rio Doce / Baixa Verde
Renata Bernardes F. Campos	Univale
Ricardo Coimbra e Silva	SPM Empreendimentos
Rosiene Aparecida Francisca	Artesãs do Rio Doce / Baixa Verde
Sandra A. Firmino	Artesãs do Rio Doce / Baixa Verde
Sandra Maria Vasconcelos	Artesãs do Rio Doce / Baixa Verde
Sonia Carvalho Ribeiro	UFMG
Suzy Avelino Trindade	Marliéria City Hall
Tatiana Cristina Guimarães Kaminski	Cáritas Diocesana Technical Consultancy
Thales Claussem Correa	Cenibra
Tiago Marcos de Almeida	ArcelorMittal BioFlorestas
Vanessa Lopes	Primatas Perdidos Project
Vanilda de Souza Cabral Pinto	Artesãs do Rio Doce / Baixa Verde
Vinicius de Assis Moreira	IEF / PERD

Registros fotográficos: acervo do Diálogo Florestal.

