

## Concession in tourism services and partnerships in the Marine National Park of Fernando de Noronha, Brazil \*

### *Concessão de serviços turísticos e parcerias no Parque Nacional Marinho de Fernando de Noronha, Brasil*

D. C. Estima <sup>@,1</sup>, M. A. M. Ventura <sup>2</sup>, A. Rabinovici <sup>3</sup>, F. M. C. P. F. Martins <sup>4</sup>

#### ABSTRACT

Protected areas are created with the aim of promoting environmental protection and preserving biodiversity, thus responding to the growing need to maintain the sustainability of the planet. In Brazil, the increase in the number of protected areas is evident, namely in the case of Parks, where tourism is one of several activities compatible with the management of such areas. However, simply establishing protected areas doesn't necessarily ensure their efficiency, and therefore public-private partnerships arise. In this work, we analyze the importance of partnerships and concessions in public use support services at the Marine National Park of Fernando de Noronha, in order to demonstrate the viability of sustainable management of tourism and funding in National Parks. To understand how such partnerships and concessions actually work and what their importance to the sustainability of tourism is, we conducted interviews and made *in loco* observations during 2012 and 2013. We found that the concession of services that involve supporting the public use of the park enabled great improvements in the infrastructure and in tourist services provided in the protected area, and created jobs for the local community. We were, however, unable to examine the environmental impacts of the concession because specific reports were not made available. We also found that there is a solid network of organizations, government and businesses that work together in planning, implementing, managing and supervising tourism in the Park, bringing positive results to the sustainability of this activity. This network is possible through signed agreements and above all due to the existence and operation of the protected area's Advisory Council. This study is therefore innovative, for it deals with the first concession granted by the Brazilian government in an insular territory and shows initial results about the efficiency of that concession. We hope it will induce new research that culminates in the validation of this management model for tourism in protected areas, through the preservation and valorization of the environment and responsible use.

**Keywords:** tourism; sustainability; partnerships; concession; protected areas; Fernando de Noronha.

@ - Corresponding author: [deborahestima@hotmail.com](mailto:deborahestima@hotmail.com)

1 - Universidade de Aveiro e Universidade dos Açores – CIBIO-Açores, Centro de investigação em Biodiversidade e Recursos Genéticos, InBIO Laboratório Associado, Pólo Açores, Departamento de Biologia, Campus Universitário de Ponta Delgada, Rua de Mãe de Deus, 13A, 9501-801, Ponta Delgada. E-mail: [deborahestima@hotmail.com](mailto:deborahestima@hotmail.com)

2 - Universidade dos Açores – CIBIO-Açores, Centro de investigação em Biodiversidade e Recursos Genéticos, InBIO Laboratório Associado, Pólo Açores, Departamento de Biologia, Campus Universitário de Ponta Delgada, Rua de Mãe de Deus, 13A, 9501-801, Ponta Delgada, Portugal. E-mail: [mateus@uac.pt](mailto:mateus@uac.pt)

3 - Universidade Federal de São Paulo – Campus Diadema, Rua Prof. Artur Riedel, 275, Jd. Eldorado, 09972-270, Diadema, Brasil. E-mail: [andrearabinovici@gmail.com](mailto:andrearabinovici@gmail.com)

4 - Universidade de Aveiro – CESAM, Centre for Environmental and Marine Studies, Departamento de Ambiente e Ordenamento, Campus Universitário de Santiago, 3810-193, Aveiro, Portugal. E-mail: [filomena@ua.pt](mailto:filomena@ua.pt)

**RESUMO**

As áreas protegidas são criadas com a finalidade de promover a conservação da biodiversidade e a proteção do ambiente, face à necessidade crescente de manter a sustentabilidade do planeta. No Brasil é notório o aumento do número destas áreas, nomeadamente os Parques, onde o turismo é uma das atividades compatíveis com a gestão destes espaços. Contudo, a criação destas áreas por si só não garante a sua eficácia, fazendo surgir parcerias público-privadas. Neste trabalho, analisa-se a importância das parcerias e concessões de serviços de apoio ao uso público no Parque Nacional Marinho de Fernando de Noronha, de forma a demonstrar possibilidades de gestão sustentável do turismo e financiamentos em Parques Nacionais. Para isso foram realizadas entrevistas e observações *in loco*, em 2012 - 2013, cujo objetivo foi verificar como ocorre a concessão e as parcerias na prática e sua importância para a sustentabilidade do turismo. Observa-se que a concessão dos serviços de apoio ao uso público no Parque possibilitou grandes melhorias relacionadas com as infraestruturas e serviços turísticos prestados na área protegida, como também com a geração de emprego aos moradores locais. Contudo, não foi possível averiguar os impactos ambientais decorrentes dessa concessão, devido a não disponibilização de relatórios específicos. Verifica-se também que existe uma rede de relações coesa formada por organizações, governo e empresas que trabalham em conjunto no planeamento, implementação, gestão e monitorização do turismo no Parque, culminando em resultados positivos para a sustentabilidade desta atividade. Essa rede é possível através de acordos firmados e sobretudo pela existência e funcionamento do Conselho Consultivo da área protegida. Dessa forma, este estudo possui carácter inovador, sendo a primeira concessão realizada pelo governo brasileiro em território insular, trazendo resultados iniciais sobre a efetividade dessa concessão. Espera-se que seja indutora de novas investigações que culminem para a validação deste modelo de gestão do turismo em áreas protegidas, através da preservação e valorização do ambiente e de usos responsáveis.

**Palavras-chave:** turismo; sustentabilidade; parcerias; concessão; áreas protegidas; Fernando de Noronha.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

The Marine National Park of Fernando de Noronha (PARNAMAR FEN) is located in the Fernando de Noronha (FEN) Archipelago, Brazil, and is classified as a full protection area, with tourism being one of the activities allowed (Portaria Nº 57, de 26 Julho de 2010). The “Fernando de Noronha” island is the only inhabited island in the archipelago, with a population of 2.630. This number doubles if one considers the floating population (transient workers and researchers) (IBGE, 2013). The Park was established in 1988 and covers 70% of the island, amounting to an area of 112,7 Km<sup>2</sup> (Decreto nº 96.693, de 14 de Setembro de 1988)

Indeed, in FEN, tourism is a high priority and strategic sector to achieve the sustainable development of the islands, where natural heritage is understood to be the main asset in the promotion of tourism. Because it is also the island's main business, virtually all inhabitants have some kind of connection with tourism, either directly or indirectly: tour guides, lodging owners and staff, restaurants, scuba diving companies, etc.

The PARNAMAR FEN shows great potential to promote tourism as a factor of sustainability, but public use policies have had, from the onset, a restricting role. In 2010, a concession agreement was reached with a private company, EcoNoronha, regarding support services for public use, in an effort to improve the situation and allow a responsible and sustainable use of the protected area.

Our study aims at analyzing the importance of partnerships and concessions in public use support services in the PARNAMAR FEN, in order to demonstrate possibilities in sustainable management of tourism and funding in National Parks. We resorted to interviews and *in loco* observation, in an effort to understand how such partnerships and concessions actually work and what their importance to the sustainability of tourism is. We try to understand this new reality in the PARNAMAR FEN with the intention of contributing to the future validation of a viable model for the management of tourism in insular protected areas.

The importance of such a study has to do with the innovative character of its subject-matter, for we deal with the first concession granted by the Brazilian government in an insular territory. Therefore, we look to better comprehend and discuss the efficiency of concessions of public use support services, recognizing that such realities are possible when considering the management of tourism in protected areas, which are directly affected by social and political contexts. We seek to discuss the specificities of this model in the particular case of the PARNAMAR FEN. We hope our analysis will encourage more research and above all new concessions and partnerships for the promotion of sustainable tourism, enabling the management of protected areas through the preservation and valorization of the environment.

**2. NATIONAL PARKS AND TOURISM**

Protected areas are considered to be one of the most effective tools in promoting the preservation and conservation of the environment as well as sustainable development. Protected areas have been changing and adapting through the years, due to new developments and needs. Yet they remain key in maintaining the valuable services provided by nature and its ecosystems, thus assisting social interests (Cases, 2012; MMA, 2010; Wyman *et al.*, 2011).

In Brazil, the government passed law no. 9.985, in 2000, that establishes the National System of Nature Conservation Units (SNUC). This law lays down the criteria and directives for the creation, implementation and management of protected areas, which are designated as “conservation units”. These areas divided into two main categories: Sustainable Use Units (direct use) and Full Protection Units (indirect use), with the National Park (PARNA) belonging to the latter. The main goal of a PARNA is the preservation of natural ecosystems, while allowing for scientific research as well as for environmental education activities, recreation and sustainable tourism (MMA, 2006).

National Parks (PARNAs) belong to the public domain, and private property that would fall within its borders is

expropriated upon creation by federal decree. They must have an Advisory Council comprising representatives of government agencies and of organizations from civil society, presided by the entity responsible for its administration which, in the case of all parks in Brazil is ICMBio. Highlights from the Council's responsibilities include: the preparation of internal statutes; overseeing the preparation, implementation and revision of the Management Plan; trying to reconcile the interests of all stakeholders; and pursuing the integration of the protected area with the remaining areas and surroundings (MMA, 2006).

According to Gohn (2000) and Burkowski & Varajão (2010), these Councils should have an inter-institutional nature and serve as mediators in the state/society relation, effectively decentralizing public management. Grau (2004) considers that decentralization and democratization need to be associated for the protected area to work.

The SNUC establishes that protected areas have five years after their onset to come up with a Management Plan, which must address all management activities, such as environmental protection and conservation measures, scientific research, promotion and integration of the protected area in the social and economic life of the local community, and public use management (MMA, 2006). Especially in protected areas of the Park category, the Management Plan must ensure the preservation and maintenance of the Park's biodiversity; the protection and valorization of natural resources used for subsistence by traditional populations in the surroundings of the parks, whilst promoting their social and economic integration; environmental education and sustainable tourism (Santos, 2011).

The Brazilian Institute for the Environment and Natural Resources – IBAMA (2007), explains that a Management Plan is a dynamic project that uses ecological planning techniques to establish zones and guidelines that make managing the protected area possible, according to its goals. Until the Management Plan is prepared, all activities in the protected area *“must be of a kind that safeguards the integrity of the resources the unit is supposed to protect, ensuring that traditional populations that might inhabit the area have all the conditions and means necessary to satisfy their material, social and cultural needs”* (MMA, 2006).

According to the Ministry of the Environment – MMA (2014), in August 2013 Brazil had 1.783 protected areas, of which 69 are national parks (one of them being the PARNAMAR FEN) distributed over seven biomes. Santos (2011) asserts that few of the National Parks have a Management Plan and/or are open to visitation. The same thing is true regarding the existence of Advisory Councils in these areas. Some of the parks are not open to public visitation because they lack investment in facilities and staff, or because they do not include tourism in their Management and Public Use Plans.

Scientific research, environmental education and tourism are amongst the few activities that are allowed inside National Parks in Brazil. Research is essential in protected areas for it feeds back into the whole process of managing such spaces, providing important indicators for an efficient management and for the preparation of management plans. Environmental education focuses on educational activities,

raising the awareness of the local community and visitors to environmental matters, being thus a tool to minimize conflicts that might arise upon the implementation and management of a protected area. Finally tourism, an activity with great potential in a protected area, uses pristine nature as a major attraction (Gorini et al., 2006; MMA, 2006).

In spite of there being several sectors of tourism, in this paper we do not aim at discussing or differentiating existing definitions, but rather at emphasizing the importance of sustainability in this activity. Therefore, the sectors used by the authors quoted throughout this paper will focus on a kind of tourism that seeks contact with nature in a sustainable way, mainly in protected areas.

Leisure in direct contact with nature, specifically in protected areas, is increasingly valued globally, because it is an activity with great potential to assist in the conservation of these spaces, together with environmental education. Ecotourism is considered an activity that promotes environmental conservation and the involvement of the community that lives in and/or around protected areas (Santos, 2010b; Araújo et al., 2011; Zeller, 2012; Wyman et al., 2011).

However, to plan and develop ecotourism, people are needed who are qualified and aware of the necessity to preserve the environment, as well as who are committed to advance the cause of sustainability, given that these are interdependent. Planning must consider strategies that benefit local communities, promote social equity and ensure participative mechanisms. It is important to consider the thoughts of locals and tourists in order to achieve responsible planning for the activity. One has to consider the quality, quantity and diversity of services, as well as the creation of jobs that involve the local community (Araújo et al., 2011; Barreto, 2003) and eventual environmental impacts (Wyman et al., 2011).

Tourism is frequently the main driving force behind the economy of small islands, and this calls for the sustainable use of resources and for coherent conservation policies that ensure an adequate exploration of such vulnerable territories (Carvalho et al., 2009; Moniz, 2006). In small insular territories, tourism is considered one of the few opportunities for economic diversification, but this requires adequate and continuous planning and management, because the excessive pressure exerted over fragile ecosystems would endanger its viability (Lima, 2008).

Islands have great environmental value and their management is delicate and complex, involving several environmental protection statutes, such as protected marine areas. Because of use pressures, such as tourism, insular coastal management becomes even more complex, requiring the resolution of problems and conflicts. Many islands considered to be natural sanctuaries have become commercial products in the tourism market. Tourism boosts the economy of these insular territories, but also exerts great pressure on ecosystems, sometimes even exceeding the limits of sustainability. In an effort to safeguard their natural values, some islands have been adopting restrictive measures such as limiting the number of visitors (Dias et al., 2010; Mohr et al., 2009).

Protected areas, namely the PARNAs, can use tourism in an orderly and sustainable way, garnering benefits for the management of such areas. For that to be the case,



tourism has to be managed, overseen, controlled and have adequate infrastructures that have minimal impact in the environment. Yet, one of the greatest constraints of public use of Parks is the scarcity of financial resources managers have at their disposal to promote such measures (Pasquali, 2006; Wyman *et al.*, 2011). This is a very pertinent matter if Brazil is to achieve efficiency and efficacy in its Parks. It is possible for the system to generate revenue from tourism and educational activities when these areas are strategically inserted in local and/or regional development plans. In this context, it is important that Park managers know and analyze the principal instruments of public policies that concern protected areas, so that they are capable of combining management with the measures and strategies implemented in any one locality (Cases, 2012; Wyman *et al.*, 2011).

Another challenge is the realization of participative management through an inclusive process that entails human and financial resources, besides the involvement and training of the different stakeholders. This involvement is essential to avoid and/or minimize conflict between stakeholders and the manager of the protected area should play the part of mediator (Cases, 2012).

Santos *et al.* (2011) stress that regarding PARNAs, there is not enough information concerning their implementation, maintenance and management, namely information having to do with social, economic and environmental issues. To carry out these measures, some Parks in Brazil have been making concessions and/or outsourcing to private enterprises, as in the case of the Iguaçú and Tijuca National Parks.

### 3. CONCESSIONS AND THE MANAGEMENT OF TOURISM IN NATIONAL PARKS

New paradigms, such as sustainable development and leisure in the midst of nature, value the services provided by natural unspoiled environments and bring visitors from all over the world to protected areas. That attraction works not only with tourists that value the preservation of the environment, but also with investors that are interested in using those natural resources in a sustainable way (Terborgh *et al.*, 2002; Santos, 2010a). Small islands exert a special attraction, mainly due to conditions associated with insular geography and environmental vulnerabilities that create singular economic practices (Moniz, 2006).

In protected areas, public visitation, including tourism, must be subject to norms and restrictions established in the Management Plan, as well as in the Public Use Programs of the area, ensuring that visitation takes place in a sustainable way, compatible with the preservation of the environment (Santos, 2010ba, 2011). This program must therefore be an integral part of the full planning of the protected area, allowing for an increased efficiency of its management (Takahashi, 2004).

Santos (2011) notes that the Management Plan is one of the main tools to achieve the sustainability of tourism in protected areas and that the planning and development of tourism by companies and public agencies in that area has to take into account the plan's restrictions. Moniz (2006) emphasizes that for small insular destinations to develop

according to the principles of sustainability, they must use new instruments and information that evaluate the impacts of local policies and the fulfilment of sustainability goals in tourism activities, and allow for preventive and corrective measures. On that note, Kinker (2002) stresses that because several external factors interfere directly with tourism, its sustainability can only be assessed in a certain moment.

According to Fennell (2008), the balance of the tourism industry depends on the existence of positive relations between local communities and protected areas. Politics are the driving force responsible for the balance of the social, environmental and economic sectors, enabling the adequate and effective planning of tourism. The most important thing in different management models is that they must promote and value cooperation amongst different stakeholders, providing real benefits for the local community and for the environment.

In an effort to regulate visitation to protected areas, the MMA of Brazil has published, in 2006, the document "Guidelines for Visitation in Conservation Units" with directions and principles for this activity: it must take place in a democratic way; the planning and management have to respect the preservation character of the area; needs to promote the social and economic development of adjacent populations; adequate infrastructure must be in place and the provision of quality services must be ensured. In 2008, the same Ministry, in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism (MTur), has created the "Program of Tourism in Parks" that aims to promote responsible tourism that takes into account the conservation of biodiversity, sociocultural diversity and traditional knowledge. This program was based on studies carried out by the "Action Plan for the Organization and Promotion of Tourism in National Parks", which laid down priorities for 25 National Parks, including the PARNAMAR FEN (MMA, 2006, 2008).

In spite of showing great potential for ecotourism, many Brazilian National Parks are unprepared for public use. Some even have management plans, but these are inadequate or impractical. This happens mostly because they do not focus on the management of public use and although visitor profile studies exist, there is no expertise to use the results for the improvement of plans that would maintain the conservation character of the areas. Visitation principles must first be established and only then public use planning can take place with effective results for environmental protection in these areas (Galante *et al.*, 2002; Dourojeanni & Pádua, 2001; Zeller, 2012).

Santos *et al.* (2011) argue that the promotion of tourism in the PARNAs has to involve the local population and give due attention to regional specificities, enabling visitors to enjoy the natural and cultural resources of the protected area and thus support the development of local communities and respect for the environment. Ecotourism will only come to be if there is a network of actors that will have it conceived and implemented. Designated *tourism trade*, this network brings together public authorities, private enterprise, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), local populations and consumers/tourists. On this note, the guidelines of the SNUC (MMA, 2006) emphasize the importance of the support and cooperation that NGOs, private organizations

and individuals can bring to the promotion of research, ecotourism, management, maintenance, education and awareness-raising in protected areas.

According to Santos (2010a), in a study conducted in 2009, from 57 surveyed PARNAs, 25 (43,86%) have no management plan and from these, 22 (68, 75%) are incomplete. The same study found that 25 Parks (43,86%) have active councils, 23 (40,36%) have no council at all and 9 (15,78%) have councils that are not active. Regarding public use support infrastructures, the study found that 11 Parks have some kind of infrastructure, but not all are open to visitation. These are: Serra da Capivara; Brasília; Foz do Iguaçu; Ubajara; Serra do Cipó; Serra dos Órgãos; Tijuca; Aparados da Serra; Serra Geral; Itatiaia; and Fernando de Noronha.

The planning and execution of policies and strategies regarding ecotourism in protected areas will involve several actors of different areas and therefore overlapping of responsibilities and interests may occur, be it at the level of government, state, municipalities, populations or entities concerned with environmental preservation (Coelho *et al.*, 2000). This cooperation has to exist between the private, public and NGOs sectors to ensure that the norms of management plans for the protected areas are always respected (Araújo *et al.*, 2011). It's in this context of trying to reconcile the interests of several stakeholders that public-private partnerships materialize (Burkowski & Varajão, 2010; Wyman *et al.*, 2011).

Rocktaeschel (2006) states that the outsourcing/concession of visitation support services in protected areas is aimed at requalifying the use patterns of such areas, thus enabling the fulfillment of their environmental protection goals and fomenting the responsible use of heritage through visitation. He stresses that the implementation and improvement of visitation support infrastructures is a great alternative when these areas have insufficient financial resources. We are told concessions can be: of all explored activities or services in one single concession; by activity or service type; individual, by activity or service; and pulverized or individual. Wyman *et al.* (2011) exemplify concessions like the inclusion of fees that concessionary companies pay to render services inside the protected areas (souvenir stores, restaurants, trails, hotels), providing the know-how required to innovate and respond to the visitors' demands.

Zeller (2012) and Santos (2010a) argue that concessions to private companies are a viable possibility in the management of the public use of Parks, but stress that in that case protected areas must be attractive enough for companies to be interested in concession calls. That's why partnerships are so important to the sustainability of tourism in the PARNAs. As Santos *et al.* (2011) state, it is a continuous effort to obtain sustainable results in the long run.

To the MMA (MMA, 2010), the concession of services in National Parks tries to adequate use patterns in these areas to the federal rules and norms for the preservation of the environment, whilst reinforcing the importance of heritage as a touristic attraction that brings benefits such as: the improvement of heritage preservation conditions; better exploitation of the visitation potential; reduction in public expenses; increase in government funds; creation of

distinguished conditions for environmental education and research. This way, the concession allows private investments in visitor service, promotes environmental conservation and, through the ICMBio, enables more actions to protect and manage the protected area.

Because of that, MMA of Brazil (2006) sees the adoption of concessions, permits and authorizations for the provision of quality services and infrastructures to visitors as a possible alternative. However they remark the need for continuous and rigorous evaluation of these services and infrastructures, as well as for a program to supervise the environmental impacts of activities, amongst other guidelines.

In Brazil, there are no specific laws regarding concessions in protected areas. General legislation that regulates concessions in all Federal Public Services is used instead, namely (Santos, 2010a): Law n° 6.019/74; Federal Constitution of 1988; Law n° 8.666/93; Law n° 8.987/95; Law n° 9.074/95; Law n° 9.941/97; Law n° 9.985/2000; Decree n° 4.340/02; Decree n° 5.758/06; Normative Ruling n° 02/2009; Normative Ruling n° 01/2010; Ordinance n° 117 of 12 of March of 2010, published in the DOU of 15 of March of 2010.

To finance procedures in the PARNAS, concessions have to take into account information arising from economic viability studies, comprising different scenarios for the operation of services and considering visitor flux and the protected area's capacity. For concessions to have positive results, the planning of activities must follow some principles, namely: care for all users; constancy in service provision; provision of adequate services; fair prices; and treat the public well. In this scenery, providers of support services at the PARNAs are seen as important actors in the promotion of sustainable tourism that is in accordance with nature conservation (MMA, 2008; Rooktaeschel, 2006).

An example of concession of public use in protected areas in Brazil is the Iguaçu Falls National Park, which in 2010 welcomed 1.2 million tourists. With a total area of 185.262,2 ha, it was the first protected area in the country to be nominated Natural World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1986. The "Cataratas do Iguaçu S.A." company was established in 1998 and won the public tender called by IBAMA to manage the public use of the Park through a concession. More than ten years after the start of operations in the Park, this company is considered by the Brazilian government to be a model of management of public use to be followed by other protected areas. This model of involvement and participation of private endeavor through concession was a pioneering initiative of the Government and was only possible because the Park presented the right conditions, such as a consistent management plan, with several revisions; economic viability due to the number of visitors; land issues worked out; and good infrastructure outside the protected area (Gorini *et al.*, 2006; Rooktaeschel, 2006). This company has also won the concession for public use support services in the Tijuca National park, in 2012, in the city of Rio de Janeiro (Portaria N° 442, de 5 de dezembro de 2012).

Several other examples exist around the world of protected areas that are granted as concessions to improve the efficiency of their management and revenue generating tools: Kakadu National Park (Australia); Yosemite National



Park and Grand Teton National Park (United States); Galapagos National Park e Yasuni National Park (Ecuador); Tambopata National Reserve (Peru); Arrayanes National Park e Nahuel Huapi National Park (Argentina); South African National Parks e Kruger National Park (Africa do Sul). According to their specificities, each of these protected areas and contracting terms present a different set of benefits and conflicts. Normally, when problems appear they have to do with the lack of regulation and supervision of the concession by environmental agencies (Gorini *et al.*, 2006; Wyman *et al.*, 2011).

An example of efficient management of tourism in protected areas is the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park/Green Island National Park. It was thanks to the Management Plan, supported by rigorous laws and environmental guidelines, together with supervision, monitoring and cooperative management between the Park's staff and tour operators, that the protected area has been overcoming conflicts and attaining the balance of marine and coastal ecosystems. This is an example of cooperative management that seeks to deal with impacts and ensure sustainable tourism in the Park (Zeppel, 2011).

Indeed, concessions in tourism management are not only an opportunity, but also a challenge. The process of establishing a concession in support services for tourism in protected areas stands on four pillars: 1) a consistent political and judicial context suitable to the local realities to ensure a basis for the contracting of the concession; 2) studies that demonstrate the financial viability of the concession; 3) a prospectus with a clear and objective description of the best practices for the concession, with the opportunities, limitations and management procedures; and 4) be clear about the environmental, social and economic responsibilities regarding the protected area and its surroundings. And since these are protected areas, concession contracts must consider the need for environmentally friendly practices which minimize impacts through the use of indicators such as:

monitoring plans; development of adequate infrastructure; use of alternative energy; waste management; and risk analysis (Wyman *et al.*, 2011).

#### 4. THE ISLAND OF FERNANDO DE NORONHA – MARINE NATIONAL PARK AND TOURISM

The island of FEN is the only inhabited island in the archipelago and has a total area of 17,017 km<sup>2</sup>. It is located in the Atlantic Ocean, in the Brazilian Continental Platform, 350 km away from the city of Natal, Rio Grande do Norte, and 545 km away from the city of Recife, Pernambuco. Volcanic in origin, it is approximately 10 km long with a maximum width of 3,5 km. The perimeter is about 60 km. The highest point in the island is the “Morro do Pico”, 321 m high (Figure 1) (IBAMA, 1990; Mitraud, 2001).

According to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE, 2013), the population of the island in 2010 was 2.630, with this number doubling if we add the floating population (transient workers and researchers). With a tropical climate, the island is home to the only oceanic mangrove in the Southern Atlantic, located at the PARNAMAR FEN. The coast is indented with cliffs and residual Atlantic Forest, and the island is regarded as refuge and nursery to many marine species.

Because of the geographic isolation peculiar to oceanic islands, FEN has been on the route of the great voyages to the South Atlantic, having been settled by the Dutch and the French. In 1737, under the jurisdiction of the State of Pernambuco, Brazil, construction started on a village, a military outpost and a correctional colony. When, in 1938, there was the need for a political prison, the island came under the jurisdiction of the Union, Federal Government of Brazil. During the Second World War, in 1942, the military occupied the archipelago and the Federal Territory of Fernando de Noronha was established. The military were in charge for 45 years, until the transition from military to civil government. The first civil governor of the archipelago was

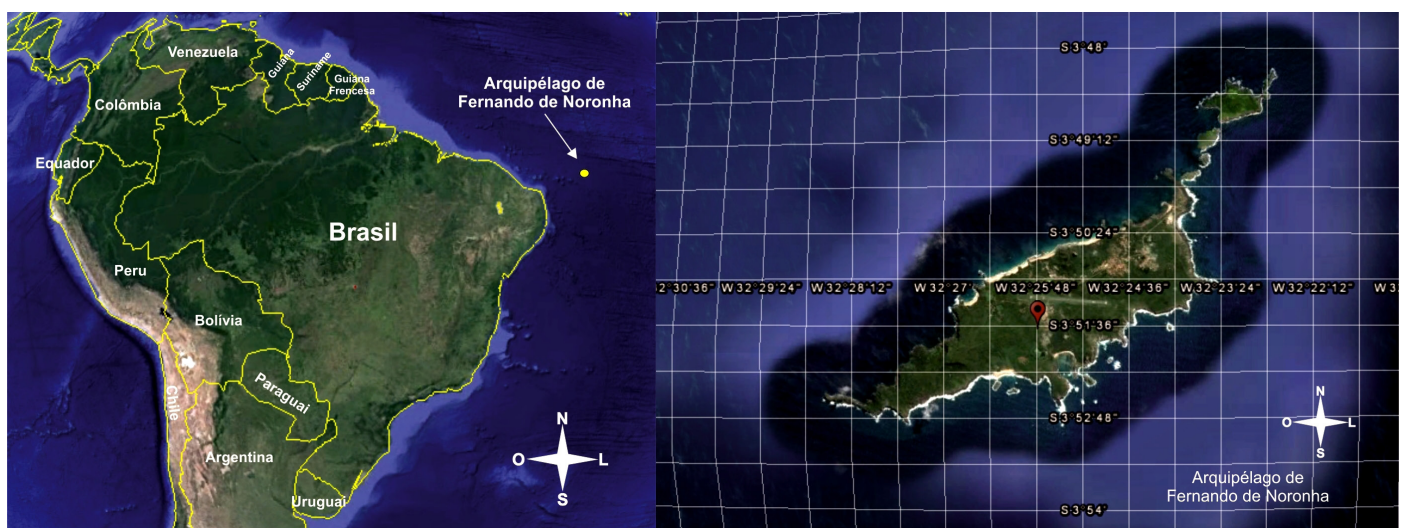


Figure 1. Fernando de Noronha location on a map.

appointed in 1987. The two protected areas, Environmental Protection Area (APA) and PARNAMAR FEN, were created in this period and mark the beginning of a greater openness to tourism in the island (Souza & Vieira Filho, 2011).

As a consequence of the way humans occupied the island through the years, several impacts were caused due to the disorderly and predatory use of the natural resources of the island. Indiscriminate logging and the introduction of plant and animal species are examples of such impacts, with some later becoming aggressive invaders. Because the archipelago stands as feeding and breeding grounds for marine fauna, it has to be protected against the predatory actions of residents and the ever increasing number of tourists (Mitraud, 2001; Mohr *et al.*, 2009). The growing urbanization and tourist flow in the island, combined with morphological features, might accelerate problems that have to do with coastal erosion, which through the years have already become apparent in soil degradation and land movements (Castro, 2010).

Before the two protected areas were established, the Brazilian Institute for Forestry Development (IBDF) was in charge of protecting the archipelago, describing it as a “high priority area for conservation” in a document concerning

the “World Conservation Strategy”, prepared in 1980 by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). In 1986, the gradual increase in unplanned uses of the island, as well as the investments in inadequate infrastructure, gave rise to the “Comitê Pro-Parque Nacional Marinho de Fernando de Noronha”, which advanced several actions to demonstrate the need to preserve the island through the establishment of the National Marine Park (IBAMA, 1990; Mitraud, 2001).

The PARNAMAR of FEN was, then, created in 1988 with the purpose of protecting the terrestrial and marine ecosystems of the archipelago. Comprising a total area of 112,7 km<sup>2</sup>, it covers 70% of the archipelago (Figure 2) and harbors the only mangrove forest in the south Atlantic, as well as many marine species that use it as feeding and breeding grounds. The Park is ranked in the “full protection” category, meaning it is intended to “*protect representative samples of terrestrial and marine ecosystems of the archipelago that ensure the preservation of its fauna, flora and other natural resources, providing opportunities for controlled visitation, education and scientific research and contributing to the protection of sites and structures of historical and cultural interest that might exist in the area*” (Decreto nº 96.693, de 14 de Setembro de 1988; MMA, 2008).

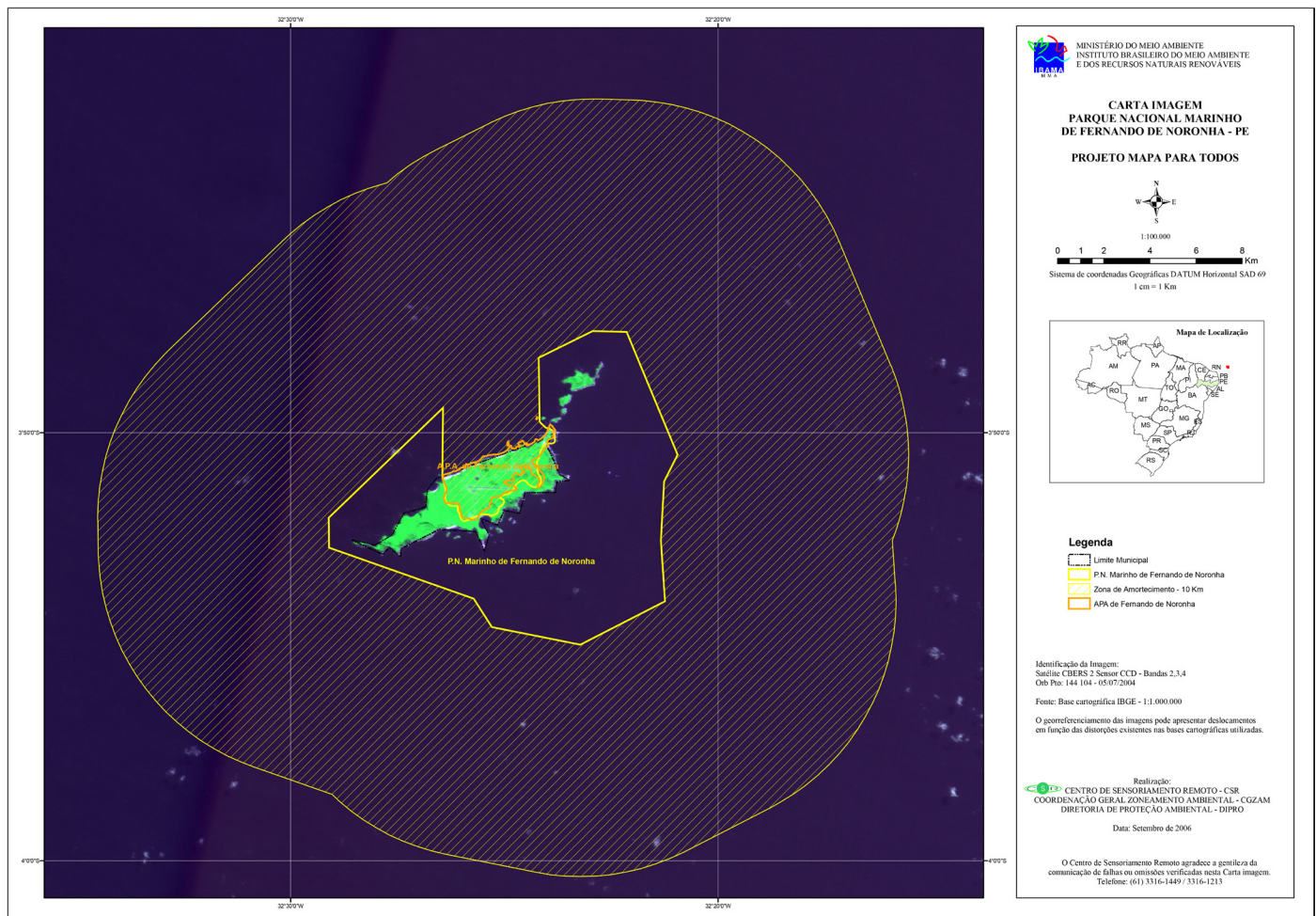


Figure 2. Map of the PARNAMAR of Fernando de Noronha (Fonte: MMA, 2001).



Management of the Park is carried out by the Chico Mendes Institute for the Conservation of Biodiversity (ICMbio), bound to the MMA, which has the mission of protecting the Brazilian natural heritage as well as promoting socio-environmental development (Decreto nº 96.693, de 14 de Setembro de 1988; Carvalho, 1999; MMA, 2001, 2005). The Managing Council of the Park has a consultative and joint nature and includes representatives from the following institutions: the PARNAMAR of FEN; the APA of FEN; the Executive Management of IBAMA in Pernambuco; The Administration from the State District of FEN; the District Council of FEN; the Department of Science, Technology and Environment of the State of Pernambuco; the Federal University of Pernambuco; the Aeronautics Detachment of Fernando de Noronha of the Second Regional Aerial Command; the Popular Assembly of FEN; the “Golfinho Rotador” Center; the “Pró-Tamar” Foundation; the local Tour Guides Association; the local Scuba Diving Companies Association; and the local Tourist Boats Association.

Observing the legal requirements for the management of the protected area, in 1990 the Management Plan of the Park was prepared, with tourism activity addressed in the Public Use Program (IBAMA, 1990). Between 1997 and 1999, the IBAMA and WWF-Brasil signed an agreement to carry out the project entitled “Recreative Uses Development in the Marine National Park of Fernando de Noronha” which sought to plan and implement the recreative use of the Park, reconciling recreative visitation with the protection of terrestrial and marine ecosystems, improving visitation support infrastructures to offer a safe and comfortable environment to visitors, thus consolidating the protected area. The results and conclusions of this project highlight the importance of Park managers as those in charge of ensuring the implementation and sustainability of the elements proposed in the recreative use system, maximizing recreative benefits and thus guaranteeing the protection of the environment. As happens with most Brazilian Parks, after having management plan and infrastructure the PARNAMAR of FEN saw neither new investments nor adequate management mechanisms to fulfill the purpose of its establishment (MMA, 2008).

The establishment of both protected areas brought greater visibility to the island as a tourist destination with great natural attractions and scenic beauty. Shortly thereafter the first lodgings appeared. The system of family lodgings was introduced, transforming the homes of locals into lodging facilities, and tourism ventures such as restaurants, diving schools and rent-a-car began to appear.

Because of its natural and historical potential, in 2001 FEN was recognized as being of outstanding importance for the preservation of the world’s natural and historical heritage by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization – UNESCO (MMA, 2005; ADM&TEC, 2000). To keep this distinction, continuous supervision of tourism is essential. This entails understanding, planning and monitoring the impacts of such activities so that sustainable development is achieved.

In 2009 a study was carried out to evaluate the feelings of the local community towards the social and cultural changes brought along by tourism activities that started in the Park

after the end of military government in the archipelago. It was found that most people (72,5%) considered the progress of tourism in the island to be great, with 83,3% saying it brings more benefits than problems. However, some 16,7% refer problems that are due to increased tourism, such as: water shortages, increased living costs, increased numbers of inhabitants, lodgings and vehicles, less security, amongst others. There is the perception that, through the years, improvements were made in the infrastructure and in working conditions, but the increased number of inhabitants became a major problem that sometimes results in tensions between locals and temporary residents (floating population) regarding the use of the natural resources of the island and the restrictions imposed by environmental legislation (Souza & Vieira Filho, 2011).

Currently, in 2013, tourism is the main economic activity and the island is considered one of the best sustainable tourism destinations in Brazil. As in other Brazilian islands (Ilhabela, Ilha do Mel, Ilha Grande), tourism in FEN has the status of protected area, regarded as a paradisiacal destination with visible ecological appeal (Prado, 2003). The main activities tourists partake in are: trails, scuba diving whale watching, and participation in the activities carried out by the environmental NGOs. But, in spite of this potential and status, some factors hamper the development of tourism in the island: distance to mainland; limited infrastructures; environmental preservation tax (staying in the island and access to the Park); high price of tourism trade (flight, accommodation); restrictions to land use and occupation, amongst others (Souza & Vieira Filho, 2011). Besides these limitations, the availability of water, energy and adequate waste management are real issues that make one wonder about the real levels of sustainability (environmental, social and economic) in the island (Cleto, 2013).

Other research conducted in 2013 shows that these problems remain and that the use and occupation of the island are in increasingly unsustainable. It also reveals that the publicized image of the island highlights natural beauty while ignoring the reality of most inhabitants in which “paradise” is close to collapse. The research goes on to stress that during the preparation of the “Study on Peak Capacity and Sustainability Indicators in the Environmental Protection Area of Fernando de Noronha” the MMA had already alerted for the need of improvements in occupation patterns, ecosystem exploration and emissions in the area. We are told that since the PARNAMAR of FEN was established the economy has been evermore centered on tourism, with locals giving up their quality of live to offer better conditions to tourists. The depletion of the natural attributes of the island would therefore entail the loss of the main source of income for locals, *i.e.* tourism. This dependency on tourism is the main challenge in attaining sustainability (Cleto, 2013).

Although sustainability remains to be achieved in FEN, the kind of tourism and the services that it offers already seek direct contact with nature and the valorization of natural and cultural heritage. Services are mostly provided by locals, with small lodging facilities and trained tourist guides. In order to keep the impact of tourism low, the island authorities control the flow of tourists through the



payment of an environmental fee (R\$ 48,20 / € 15 per day), quantifying and identifying each visitor to the island (airport and seaport). Visitor entrances are limited to 246 per day, according to the Administration's norms.

Because the Park has full protection status, living in the area of the PARNAMAR of FEN is forbidden by federal law. The singular natural attributes of the Park make for diverse visitation possibilities, such as walking trails, boat trips, scuba diving, bathing areas, geologic landscapes, historical sites, and others. Apart from leisure activities, environmental education and scientific research also take place and must be authorized and supervised by the ICMBio (MMA, 2001, 2005). In 2013 there were in the area of the Park 5 beaches, 14 walking trails and 3 Information and Control Posts.

Operating hours are also in place: the park can be visited daily from 08:00 to 18:30, with the exception of "Baía dos Golfinhos" and "Praia do Leão" which can be accessed outside operating hours under the supervision of "Tamar" and "Golfinho Rotador" staff, so that visitors can experience the conservation activities of these organizations. Besides established visiting hours, there are other rules that have to be observed when visiting the Park. For example, when visiting the natural pool of "Praia da Atalaia", tourists must be accompanied by a local guide certified by the ICMBio and can only stay in the water for 30 minutes, with no sunscreen, to avoid disturbing the marine environment.

In the beginning there was little visitor infrastructure or supervision, as was the case with most Brazilian protected areas. Signaling could only be seen in tourist maps and some signboards and there were no access gates or collection of admission fees. The increased number of visitors together with the physical features of the Park brought about more impacts and conflicts. To assess and change this situation, in 1995 the "Ecotourism Program for the Archipelago" was launched. But only in 1997 has the IBAMA signed an agreement (nº 006/97) with the *World Wide Fund for Nature* (WWF) to bring order to public visitation in the Park, in the process creating subprograms for recreation and leisure, education and environmental education, as predicted in the Management Plan (Mitraud, 2001).

In July 2010, the MMA decreed the insertion of the following studies in the area's Management Plan until there latter is reviewed: "Recreative Use of the Park"; "Study on Peak Capacity and Operationalization of Activities in Nautical Tourism"; "Executive Project for the Adjustment/ Recovery of Trails"; "Readjustment Project for the Visitor Center and Expography Project for the Visitor Center" (Portaria Nº 57, de 26 Julho de 2010). In 2011, the MMA has further established norms and procedures for the registration and authorization of the exercise commercial activities regarding visitor tours in the Park's area (Portaria Nº 12, de 23 de Fevereiro de 2011). These measures, combined with Brazilian laws on the preservation of the environment, have been assisting in the planning, development and supervision of public use in the PARNAMAR of FEN.

Because there was the need to implement infrastructure, management and supervision of public use and the ICMBio lacked human and financial resources, in 2010 a bidding process was started for a concession contract to provide support services for the public visitation and collection of admission fees in the Park (Decreto nº 96.693, de 14 de Setembro de 1988; IBAMA, 1990; MMA, 2008).

## 5. METHOD

In order to attain our objectives, we sought to identify all stakeholders that were active in the Park's area and learn about their *modus operandi* (Table 1), especially if they were involved in the planning, implementation, management and supervision of tourism and provided services and/or tourist attractions in the area, with environmental protection in mind. Because in this study we try to analyze concessions and partnerships in the management of tourism in the Park, data were collected through individual interviews with representatives of six institutions/companies, forming a population of six respondents: the PARNAMAR of FEN (ICMBio – Federal Government); EcoNoronha (concessionary); environmental NGOs; and the island's Administration (State Government of Pernambuco).

**Table 1.** Stakeholders network in the PARNAMAR of Fernando de Noronha.

STAKEHOLDER		ROLE
ICMBio/ PARNAMAR of FEN		Manage the protected area, in particular, supervise the concessionary company.
FEN Administration	Environment	Preserve the island's environment
	Ecotourism	Plan, implement and monitor sustainable tourism in the island.
EcoNoronha		Fulfill the actions laid down in the concession contract for the public use of the Park.
"Tamar" NGO		Preserve sea turtles.
"Golfinho Rotador" NGO		Preserve spinning dolphins.
Private Companies ( <i>Tourism trade</i> )		Use the Park's area for tourism services (scuba diving, boat trips, pedestrian trails).
Local community		Enjoy the Park.
Tourists		Get to know and enjoy the Park.

The choice of population for our research took into account time and financial constraints. We therefore suggest that a wider study is conducted that involves tourist operators, residents and tourists in Fernando de Noronha, in an effort to embrace all stakeholders that might be affected in a positive and/or negative way by the concession. This would provide a complete analysis of this model of public use management in protected areas.

Two data groups were used: primary data, based on six semi-structured interviews and *in loco* observations (participant); and secondary data, involving information about the concession process and the management of tourism in the Park. Empirical research was carried out by means of semi-structured interviews with the legal representatives of institutions (PARNAMAR/ICMBio; Administration/Management of Ecotourism and Management of the Environment), organizations (the “Tamar” and the “Golfinho Rotador” ENGOs) and the concessionary (EcoNoronha). The respondents were informed of the purpose and relevance of our study and permitted that their statements be recorded, with each interview running for about one hour. Interviews were digitally recorded and later transcribed in full for analysis. Respondent’s phrases were indexed according to topic for analysis and interpretation. The following topics were addressed: the mission of the institution; general description of their role in the island; the progress and sustainability of tourism; the balance between tourism activities and environmental preservation; the management of the Park; the concession of public use services in the Park; and partnerships concerning tourism in the Park.

We also examined the minutes of some meetings of the Park’s Advisory Council and made *in loco* observations during the months of January, February and December of 2012. Furthermore we followed activities in November of 2013. This amounted to a total of 17 days of field work. We employed a qualitative approach, useful in the understanding of social issues because there is direct contact between the researcher and his object of study. This research is classified as a case study and elaborates on the respondent’s perceptions of the tourism management model of the PARNAMAR FEN, resorting to content analysis and descriptive exploratory study (OMT, 2005; Gil, 2008; Vergara, 2010).

## 6. RESULTS

### 6.1. Concession of tourism services in the PARNAMAR of FEN

The PARNAMAR of FEN was part of a group of Brazilian National Parks surveyed by the MMA (2008) for investments through concessions of tourism services, and in 2010 a concession contract was signed with EcoNoronha. In order to improve visit quality and diversify recreational attractions, the MMA recommends that Parks plan and implement recreational activities and reconcile tourism with the protection of marine and terrestrial ecosystems, while improving the infrastructure of the protected area.

According to the norms established in the call notice nº 01/2010, process nº 02070.001685/2010-49, of the ICMBio (MMA, 2010), only one company answered the

concession call, EcoNoronha, a company of the Cataratas do Iguaçu S.A. group. It satisfied all legal requirements and won the concession. The call notice includes: basic project; model letter of accreditation; model declaration— minor; model declaration of compliance with the provisions of Art. 10 of Law nº 4.358/2002; model declaration of inspection; model declaration of independent proposal; and contract draft (Table 2). The concession period is 15 years, and may be extended for another 5 years.

From the beginning of the concession to the time of our research, 2013, the company has already carried out improvement works in public visitation support services, such as: renovation and creation of information and control posts (PICs) for visitor support; establishment of convenience stores with diners an equipment rental; conservation actions (reduction of environmental impacts and restoration of vegetation); implementation and maintenance of recycle bins; use of sustainable technologies; adequate treatment for solid and liquid waste; harvest and use of rainwater; implementation of appropriate infrastructure for disabled people; hiring and training of local staff; creation of a webpage with information concerning the Park and its norms.

Respecting the deadlines and the values specified in the concession contract, in September 2012 the collection of individual admission fees started (Brazilians pay R\$ 75,00 / € 23,00 and foreigners R\$ 150,00 / € 46,00). Tourists are then entitled to access all public visitation areas, including walking trails and beaches for 10 consecutive days. The following people are exempted from paying fees: Brazilian citizens over 60 years old; children under 11 years old; legal inhabitants of the island; public servants working in the island; and researchers cleared by the ICMBio. Guided tours, scuba diving, boat trips and other such services are provided in the Park by personnel cleared by ICMBio (tour guides and registered companies).

According to the authorities of the State District of FEN, in 2012 the island was visited by 62.960 tourists. We were unable to learn the number of visitors to the Park for the same year, but according to data provided by ICMBio, in the following year (2013) the Park received 61.580 visitors. Of these, 54.885 paid the entrance fee and 6.695 were covered by exemption norms. The concession contract establishes that the company must transfer to ICMBio 14,6% of the value of each admission. Based on the study of economic viability for the concession, in 15 years ICMBio will receive an estimated seven million, eight hundred and eighty four thousand Brazilian “reais” (R\$ 7.884.000,00 / € 2.454.927,00).

To better understand how the concession of support services for public visitation in the Park works, we sought the opinion of the general manager of EcoNoronha in the island, discussing the process of implementing and managing the Park as well as the importance of partnerships and sustainability for tourism in the protected area (Table 3).

To validate the performance of EcoNoronha in the Park, we surveyed the perceptions of the legal representatives of the PARNAMAR, of the “Tamar” and “Golfinho Rotador” NGOs, of the Management of Ecotourism and of the Management of the Environment from the

**Table 2.** Concession liabilities besides the contents of the Basic Project.

<b>LIABILITIES OF CONCESSIONARY (EcoNoronha)</b>
Cannot carry the brand of the concessionary in products to be sold in the Park. Can only be displayed in facilities inside the protected area, upon permission of ICMBio;
Collect and dispose of waste by-products of daily operations, in suitable conditions;
Be responsible for the training of contracted staff, according to operation rules and general knowledge of the Park;
Implement an efficient radio communications system in the Park for supervision and control of visitation services;
All logos, illustrations, pictures and any other visual programming material concerning the Park must first be submitted and approved by ICMBio;
Allow and facilitate free access of ICMBio staff and authorized personnel to the protected area, as well as to the counting and control systems for monitoring purposes;
Promote the modernization, replacement, improvement and expansion of technology, equipment and facilities during the concession period;
Carry out, every 3 months, a satisfaction survey with visitors to the Park, proposing research methods and ensuring that at least 35% of monthly visitors are interviewed.
Produce monthly and yearly reports for ICMBio about visitor flux (number of visitors, number of exemptions, granted amenities and collected amount);
Make available for the general public information emanating from ICMBio;
Start collecting entrance fees within 90 days from signing the contract.
Provide information and explanations when required by ICMBio and report all occurrences concerning the fulfillment of the contract;
Pay for the concession in time, until the fifth day of each month;
Replace any worker who is deemed inconvenient to the order or norms of the concession;
Be liable for the damage and disappearance of material goods and malfunctions caused to the grantor or third parties by the staff, because of negligence or willful misconduct in the execution of the contract, according to Law nº 8.666/93;
Immediately rectify any damage to goods under the concessionary's responsibility, when prompted by ICMBio.
Provide services in accordance with the contract, <i>i.e.</i> , with staff that is trained, has good educational and moral level and is correctly habilitated.
Ensure that workers abide rigorously by the legislation of environmental protection.
Whenever requested, prepare and submit to ICMBio reports on construction work to be carried out;
Abide by the Safety and Occupational Medicine Standards, Laws nº 8.666/93 and 8.987/95, the Brazilian Civil Code, the Technical Norms of the ABNT, environmental legislation and other pertinent laws and regulations.
At the end of the contract, return to ICMBio the rented property in perfect use conditions, with the equipment in good condition and in accordance with the goods inventory.
<b>LIABILITIES OF THE GRANTOR (ICMBio)</b>
Must interrupt or change the operation of visitor activities when the safety of visitors to the Park is compromised;
Approve in advance all replacement, construction or improvement projects. Likewise, approve beforehand the Environmental Control Plan of civil construction works;
Supervise and police the fulfillment of the concession and of all activities stipulated in the contract, having the power to halt, refuse, and impose the replacement or destruction of any service that is not in agreement with the contract;
Appoint a delegate or commission to supervise the execution of services and activities specified in the contract;
Demand the immediate suspension or replacement of a company worker who is problematic for supervision and policing reasons;
Whenever deemed necessary, inspect and challenge services or activities carried out according to contract.



**Table 3.** Perceptions of the manager of EcoNoronha about the concession process and tourism in the Park.

SUBJECT		MANAGER'S PERCEPTIONS ON THE MATTER
Motives to bid for concession		We already had the know-how from the Iguaçú National Park (Brazil) concession, specifically in services, infrastructure and public use management in National Parks.
Objectives of concession		The concession contract is about providing support services for public visitation of the PARNAMAR of FEN, where there is a business plan to be executed. This business plan is in accordance with the Park's Management Plan.
Concession obligations – Operation of the company in the Park		Provision of support services to visitors: build adequate infrastructure (walking trails, visitor centers, diners, toilets, etc.), provide quality services, track and help tourists and local guides in the trails, etc. The contract also covers the collection of admission fees to the Park.
Constraints to operations in the Park		One of the biggest challenges of operating in the Park has to do with its insular nature and the obstacles imposed by insularity, like having to do all transport by sea in precarious conditions. This was more evident during the infrastructure building process, but goes on even now in the visitor management phase. The qualifications of staff members are also an issue, but this is being addressed with training.
How the company interacts with:	PARNAMAR of FEN– ICMBio	This is a relationship between the concessionary company and the entity responsible for that concession. We are bound to comply with the obligations established in the concession contract. This is a great partnership because of the common interests, <i>i.e.</i> , to provide quality support services to visitors and maintain the appeal of the Park to tourists while preserving the environment. EcoNoronha are not a full member of the Park's Management Council but take part in meetings as observers, asking questions and contributing to the best possible management of public use.
	NGOs	Our main partnerships are with the “Tamar” and “Golfinho Rotador” NGOs, because they work directly in the Park's area. EcoNoronha support some of these NGOs' initiatives because these are some of the main tourist attractions in the protected areas.
	The island's Administration	The relationship is good and we cooperate in several matters, especially in the promotion of FEN as a tourist destination in Brazil and abroad. For this effort we also partner with the Company of Tourism of Pernambuco (EMPETUR), which are responsible for managing tourism in the State of Pernambuco and work to increase tourist flow and improve visitation quality in the island.
	Local community	One of our priorities when starting operations in the island was to establish a good relationship with the local community. This is reflected in how many of the company's staff are locals (98%). We also prefer local suppliers and so promote the island's economy. We value cultural heritage and support some events and projects undertaken by the community.
	Local tourism businesses	Tourism businesses and EcoNoronha are the link between tourists and the Park. EcoNoronha pay continuous attention to the demands of tourists that visit the Park and use the services and facilities of the company, thus ensuring quality standards that comply with the concession's requirements.
How the management of public use works		Currently there are no conflicts, either with tourists or locals. The local community understands how important tourism is for the island given that many residents work with tourists. This facilitates synergies and friendly relations. Because the Park is already consolidated (25 years), initial conflicts that appear when a full protection area is established have already been surpassed.
Public-private partnerships in the management of tourism in the Park		There are public-private partnerships in the management of tourism: all companies that provide tourist services in the protected area have signed agreements with the ICMBio. All services in the Park are provided by third-parties, while the environment agency (ICMBio) is responsible for setting rules and supervision.
Contribution of EcoNoronha to the Park		EcoNoronha are responsible for a major breakthrough in the PARNAMAR of FEN due to the improved infrastructure for visitors, bringing the reception of tourists in the island to an all new level. The Park now is equipped with all necessary infrastructures to allow for a proper visitation, always in compliance with environmental norms and sustainability parameters laid down in the Management Plan.
Future developments		There are several possibilities of development in the Park's area, like new services to be added to public visitation. However, many environmental restrictions complicate this process in a full protection area.
Balance between tourism activities and the preservation of the environment in the Park		The main point of the concession is the balance between tourism activities and the preservation of the environment in the PARNAMAR of FEN. And so, the concession rests on three interconnected pillars: environmental concern; quality public visitation; and accessibility that is compatible with a protected area.

island's Administration, since they all cooperate to ensure the environment is preserved in the protected area. Our intention was to identify the benefits, advantages and conflicts that arise from the concession of tourism services to EcoNoronha, thus allowing for a deeper analysis of the concession.

According to the Manager of the PARNAMAR of FEN, EcoNoronha have previous experience from the concession of support services to public use in the Iguazu National Park that facilitates operations in line with the norms of the concession and brings about more advantages than disadvantages. Being a private company means operations are easier and more agile, contributing to an increased cooperation with the protected area. This partnership allows the government to act in an organized, lawful and agile way. He says that in spite of the admission fee being mandatory, visitors are very satisfied with the quality of services and infrastructure and this way the protected area collects funds directly (14,7% ICMBIO, 15,3% EcoNoronha and 70% investments in PARNAMAR). But there are disadvantages too, he warns: some people don't understand the purpose of the concession, and believe the Park was privatized. Because of this, it is important for the PARNAMAR to provide more information about the concession, making it easier for people to understand the role of the Park in the concession process.

The legal representative of the "Golfinho Rotador" NGO, considers that earlier the PARNAMAR had no conditions to manage the public use of the protected area in an adequate way and that the concession improved that management, providing the Park with the infrastructure needed for quality visitation in compliance with environmental norms. However, she recalls that at the onset of operations, all service providers that were already active in the area had to be organized, and this originated conflicts in the local community. The conflicts were due to the fear that EcoNoronha would curb the activity of tourist operators in the protected area. The question has however been settled, since the need for registration was only a control measure by the Park's manager. The company hired many locals (98% of staff), but this can become a serious question because some locals went from being self-employed to being employees, thus changing the dynamics of the local economy. As for a partnership between EcoNoronha and the NGO, she tells us there are no signed agreements, but that the company contributes to the research activities and environmental education carried out by the organization.

To the legal representative of the "Tamar" NGO, despite the commercial interests of EcoNoronha, the company improved the Park greatly through the provision of excellent quality services. Indeed he states that the company is responsible for a small revolution in the island, whether regarding infrastructure, whether regarding the provision of quality services and also the regulation of the labor market. He explains that the improvements in the infrastructure and services of the Park will naturally force tourism operators to improve as well. This has already happened with lodgings and, because of EcoNoronha, is now happening with tourist services. Nonetheless, locals still need to be trained. Regarding their relationship with the grantor, we are informed that there

is a healthy cooperation, mainly because the environmental NGO monitors several beaches in the Park but also because of activities that they carry out together. There is, however, one catch, he says, that has to do with the souvenir business. "Tamar" is a self-supporting organization that relies on the sales their shops make throughout the country, besides other kinds of assistance and funding. EcoNoronha also have very profitable souvenir shops in the island and are consequently competition for the NGO. Despite this, he stresses the importance of EcoNoronha for the Park and for the island as a whole, and specifically for the partnership with "Tamar".

The manager of Ecotourism in the Administration of FEN, admits that EcoNoronha came to add value, in the sense that their purpose is to offer quality infrastructures and tourist services that are in compliance with the Park's norms. The manager of Environment in the Administration of FEN, agrees that the concession brought benefits to the island. She recalls that before the concession the relationship of the Administration with the Park was difficult, especially concerning tourism management, because the protected area had no funds to invest in the infrastructures, services and supervision needed for adequate visitation. When EcoNoronha started operations in the island there was some conflict, but in time they succeeded in establishing a good relationship with everyone. Finally, he declares that tourism is now more expensive in the island, but at least visitors can expect great value for their money.

Considering the need to improve the process of concessions for visitation support services in protected areas in Brazil, the MMA (Portaria N° 442, de 5 de dezembro de 2012) introduced in December 2012 a Workgroup for the Evaluation of Concessions, with the aim of evaluating existing concessions, namely the PARNAMAR of FEN. Although this evaluation by the Workgroup already took place, it is yet to be made available (March 2014) to the Park's chief. As of now the results cannot be examined.

However, before the Workgroup was established, in August 2012 there were controversial situations concerning the concession, as was the case of the construction of an Information and Control Post at the Southeast Beach. According to the concession notice, all construction works must first be approved by ICMBio. As it happened, some locals didn't like the project and claimed its visual impact was severe and changed the beach landscape. This situation was solved by removing the physical structure of the Post, with EcoNoronha having to start the project over to get a new approval of ICMBio, this time with the assent of residents. This case illustrates the kind of solvable conflicting situations that may occur in concessions in protected areas.

Another controversial situation concerning the concession was the apprehension the local population felt towards the admission fees in the Park. It was claimed this measure would interfere with tourist flow in the island and affect local income, since tourism is the main source of income for locals. Notwithstanding the importance of the objections, tourist flow actually increased after the concession (2010 = 61.114 tourists / 2012 = 62.960 tourists), thus demonstrating the importance and viability of the concession in the protected area, concerning the availability of public use services and infrastructure.

Besides the Workgroup created by the MMA, the PARNAMAR of FEN established a monitoring committee for the concession contract which monitors all items in the Basic Project periodically and makes them available in annual reports. In this case, ICMBio are responsible for monitoring the environmental, social and economic impacts (positive and negative) stemming from the concession in the Park. EcoNoronha only have to comply with all the norms laid down in the concession contract, with environmental preservation being determinant. We stress we had no access to these reports during our research period. We learned a questionnaire has already been prepared for visitors to the Park, as envisaged in the concession contract, to assess visitor satisfaction with the services and infrastructure offered by EcoNoronha in the Park. However, it is yet to be distributed.

We come then to the conclusion that, despite being recent, the concession is significantly improving the PARNAMAR area of FEN. Even with all the hindrances associated with the insular context, the provision of services is stable and efficient, offering quality infrastructures and services that observe environmental norms. Although the introduction of yet another environmental fee remains a controversial issue in FEN, the amount that is charged is more affordable than the one practiced by the island's Administration (R\$ 392,83 / € 119,00 for 10 consecutive days). As it is, EcoNoronha establish partnerships and consolidate a participatory concession model in National Parks.

## 6.2. Partnerships in the management of tourism in the PARNAMAR of FEN

We identified the organizations, institutions and companies that are active in the area of the PARNAMAR of FEN (Table 1). We started with a global survey and then proceeded to analyze whatever activities they carry out that are linked to sustainable tourism. This initial analysis revealed the existence of a network made up of actors from the public and private sectors. Despite their collaborative work, some actors have a broader scope of action concerning the planning, implementation, management and supervision of tourism. These are the PARNAMAR/ICMBio; the "Tamar" and "Golfinho Rotador" NGOs; the island's Administration; and EcoNoronha. These actors form a network and although each one has its specific goals, they try to work together when it comes to the sustainability of tourism and the preservation of ecosystems in the Park. These partnerships are established through signed agreements and answer the need for collective efforts, seeing that all parties have common interests in the protected area.

The mission of the "Tamar" NGO is to research, preserve and handle sea turtles, with funds coming mainly from Petrobras and with the support of ICMBio. This NGO started working in FEN in 1984, *i.e.* before the Park was created. This is one of their most important bases, offering excellent conditions for conservation works on the biology and behavior of sea turtles in their natural environment. Taking advantage of the fact that the island has a considerable influx of tourists throughout the year (approximately 60.000 visitors per year), this NGO promotes awareness-raising and environmental education activities, mainly at the Visitor

Center. In this center tourists find souvenir shops, diners and information desks that offer services to the community and visitors alike. Through this NGO tourists can also take part in the tagging of turtles and watch them lay their eggs during spawning season. These activities garnered international acclaim as a successful marine conservation experience, serving as a model for other countries, especially when it comes to the involvement of the local population.

The "Golfinho Rotador Center" started activities in the island in 1990, with the mission of doing research on spinner dolphins in the archipelago in order to find strategies for the preservation of this species' natural behavior. Funded mainly by Petrobras and with the support of ICMBio, it promotes an environmental education program and tries to provide subsidies for sustainable local development. Specifically, this NGO's aims are: to raise the awareness of locals and train them in environment preservation; subsidize the island's sustainability; improve the quality of ecotourism services; study the natural history of dolphins; research the interaction of dolphins with nautical tourism; propose measures for the conservation of this species; propose and take part in actions that aim to preserve the environment in FEN. To achieve this, they run research programs and environmental education programs. Local students are the target of the environmental education program and take part in lectures, workshops and field trips. Professional courses in ecotourism are also available. The other program is aimed at tourists, who are briefed at "Mirante dos Golfinhos". Additionally, there are open lectures at Tamar's Visitor Center.

Despite there being other ENGOs in the island, these two are the most relevant when it comes to tourist activities and environmental preservation in the Park, using environmental education, guide training, cultural valorization, lectures, participatory tourism programs, etc. These organizations were active in the area and striving to protect the environment since before the Park was established and now their activities proceed in partnership with ICMBio and EcoNoronha. Because some activities, like Dolphin Watching and Turtle Spawning, are carried out outside opening hours, there is an agreement between the Park/ICMBio, EcoNoronha and the NGOs to enable the area being used at those times. This entails changes to the logistics of company staff to ensure facilities are open and activities are supervised.

Apparently, the role of the island's Administration is sometimes mistaken for that of EcoNoronha or of the protected area themselves. The Administration is responsible for planning, implementing laws, fomenting and supervising tourism in the island as a whole with strong investments in marketing campaigns to promote FEN as a destination. It is also responsible for providing the island with infrastructures, promoting services, controlling tourist flow, marketing the destination, amongst other actions that directly affect the sustainability of tourism in the island. Among Administration sectors in FEN we find the Coordination Office for the Environment and Ecotourism, with a manager for the Environment and another one for Ecotourism.

The main element of this network is the ICMBio, which has the principal role in the management of the PARNAMAR of FEN. Despite the island's Administration being the local representatives of Government, the Park is autonomous



regarding management because it is a Federal protected area. As executor of the SNUC's resolutions, the ICMBio proposes, implements, manages, protects, inspects and supervises the Park. It also fosters and carries out research, protection, preservation and biodiversity conservation programs and acts as environmental police for the protection of the Park. They are also responsible for the supervision of outsourced services, run by EcoNoronha, as well as by other tourism companies active in the protected area. The Park has a headman and the management model comprises an Advisory Council, established in 2001, consisting of public and private entities and of civil society organizations, thus legitimating local participatory management.

Looking into the minutes from the Advisory Council's meetings, it is possible to see how this management takes place and how partnerships between stakeholders are established regarding the planning, implementation, management and supervision of tourism. During the Council's meetings, which take place every two months, stakeholders discuss, opine and suggest ideas for the Park, some regarding tourism activity. The results can be verified in terms of research, laws, supervision, infrastructure, services, education, promotion, etc. The Advisory Council can therefore be seen as a formal connection between stakeholders, where all matters regarding management are discussed and solutions suggested to avoid or minimize disputes over interests in the protected area. We should stress that despite the fact that our study looks into some stakeholders with greater depth, all of them are represented in the Council, thus validating a local participatory management.

Our results may come to show that the head of the protected area is competent in its management, as are the partners that make up this network and try to promote sustainability in tourism, validating a viable management model for public use in National Parks that can be implemented. But again we stress the importance of a broader study that covers all stakeholders and of the supervision of all activities linked to the environmental component of the concession's sustainability.

## FINAL REMARKS

Many Brazilian PARNAs face difficulties intrinsic to their status and lack management plans or appropriate funding. Despite being located in one the country's principal tourist destinations, the PARNAMAR of FEN also experienced constraints that hindered its management. Our analysis of the way the concession of services in the Park works and of how partnerships are established for its management allowed for new insights into a viable model for the management of tourism and funding of protected areas in islands.

We found that the management model of public use in the PARNAMAR of FEN is based on the concession of support services for that use, with public-private partnerships and signed agreements. This model comprises several stakeholders that have a preponderant role in the planning, implementation, management and supervision of tourism in the Park. Despite different interests, stakeholders in the network manage to work in synergy and obtain results at the levels of research, laws, supervision, infrastructure,

services, education, promotion, marketing, etc. There is a cohesive network of relationships between stakeholders that, in addition to individual actions, enables joint efforts for the improvement of the sustainability of tourism in the PARNAMAR of FEN.

Our data show that EcoNoronha played a crucial role in turning tourism into a tool for the growth of the local economy, using infrastructures and services to generate revenue in the area of the Park. Besides that, the company also collects admission fees that represent direct and bureaucracy-free funds for the protected area and streamline its management.

As it is, the network is promoting the sustainability of tourism in the Park in the sense that it tries to involve everyone, fostering dialogue and the sharing of knowledge. It also advances the economic growth of tourism and the competitiveness of the island as a whole, whilst ensuring that practices remain responsible and balanced in the long run for the sake of environmental preservation. There is also an effort to improve the qualifications of the resorts and of those involved in tourism activities, combined with the development of environment-friendly products and services that consolidate the destination and satisfy visitors.

All parties try to optimize the use of resources and enhance environmental efficiency, promoting good practices in the Park. The involvement of the local community in the protected area is also patent, with most inhabitants working directly or indirectly with tourists and therefore profiting from the Park, while consolidating its participatory management model. Nonetheless, because it is an ongoing process, constant supervision is required.

Given that during our research we had no access to the results of the MMA's Workgroup and of the technical reports, we were unable to verify the data concerning compliance and supervision of the components of sustainability (environmental, social and economic) in the Park. Therefore, regarding the concession, we cannot yet assert that this is an appropriate model to be replicated in other insular contexts.

Despite the positive results for the sustainability of tourism in the Park, it is not yet possible to know if these three elements are balanced, making it necessary to verify if the indicators used by the MMA and ICMBio are adequate for local characteristics and observe the parameters of environmental preservation. Moreover, there should be a broader and uninterrupted study that includes the local community, tourist operators and visitors.

For the network to proceed with its efforts towards the sustainability of tourism in the Park, this management model must be integrated into the policies and programs of sustainable development of the island and become an inducing factor for such development. The effective management of the PARNAMAR of FEN requires strategies, plans and resources and the valorization of the area by the local community. However, it is important to strengthen the management possibilities for tourism in the protected area by all stakeholders and ensure constant supervision of activities through adequate and measurable indicators.

Finally, we can conclude that for concessions to be implemented in protected areas, namely in National Parks, there needs to be legislation that is both solid and in line with

local characteristics, especially when dealing with insular contexts. The bidding process also needs to be transparent and judicious and include all legal matters concerning the environment. Moreover, it is important for the success of the concession that the Park be consolidated, with management plan and operating Council. It is also essential for the Park to have a manager who is capable of planning and thoroughly supervising the entire concession process, while establishing partnerships with all stakeholders and ensuring participatory management with positive results. Our study demonstrates the importance and viability of a model for the concession of public use support services in a marine protected area, clarifying the employed procedures and the opinions of some actors in the process and providing a basis for future research that will lead to the legitimation of a model to be applied in other insular contexts.

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