



ECO ESTRELA

2021

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INTRODUCTION

It has taken me many years to find Eco Estrela.

In 2003, I embarked on a mission to find paradise on Earth and, after crossing 3 500 km of beaches, dunes, bays and islands, I have found it. A place where life seems to pass at a slower pace and every single moment delivers blissful sunshine and spiritual peacefulness. I was surrounded by incredible nature: 6,5 km of beach, mangrove forest and animals.

In the nearby village, Baía Formosa, I met amazing people with breath-taking traditions, colorful culture and a simple, but inspiring philosophy: finding happiness in simple things. I felt: this is a place that I should protect and these are people whom I would like to support.

With my team, we spent over ten years doing our best to protect the environment and support the local community. The market calls it “impact investment” but, for us, it is much more. We have built solid foundations and now want to do even more.

Together with Six Senses, which shares our values, including social responsibility and sustainability, we are creating practical solutions for the environment and for local inhabitants. Our goal is to create a place where everyone can experience and fall in love with balanced and sustainable living. We want people to take this experience with them so that, once they get home, they will be inspired to get involved with the local community and care for the environment to recreate the paradise that we once lost.

Please take a closer look at what we have already achieved and what we plan to build in the future.

I hope that you will join us on this exciting journey.

Founder, Greg Hajdarowicz

NOTE FROM THE AUTHORS

We wrote this book to tell you the story of the Eco Estrela project launched by Gremi so far – and to share our vision of the future. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the community in Baía Formosa, which is supporting our project and inspires us to continue our work.

We hope that you will enjoy this book as much as we enjoyed working on it.

Piotr Maj
Martin Brink
Marcos Lin
Dorota Hajdarowicz
Kacper Hajdarowicz
Maria Kordecka
Voitek Kordecki
Dominika Koczot

Most of the photographs were taken by Voitek. All of them are from Eco Estrela and Baía Formosa.

PROTECTING WHAT IS MOST PRECIOUS

BACKGROUND



BRAZIL

By Piotr

Brazil's large area comprises different ecosystems, which together sustain some of the world's greatest biodiversity. Due to its intense economic and demographic growth, Brazil's ability to protect its environmental habitats has increasingly come under threat.

The environment of Brazil is characterized by great biodiversity. The Amazon forest is the largest on the planet, conditioned by the humid equatorial climate. It accounts for 35% of forest areas on Earth. Around 60% of Brazil is covered by the Amazon forest, which contains around 55 000 species of plants. The Atlantic Forest, located along Brazil's coast, is one of the world's most biodiverse ecosystems. It once covered nearly 1,5 million km².

Brazil is also home to the Amazon River Basin, the largest rainforest on Earth. Hot and humid both day and night, the Amazon River Basin is home to thousands of plant and animal species, as well as countless others that have yet to be discovered. Despite this diversity, the Amazon rainforest is also a major carbon sink, storing vast quantities of carbon dioxide.



BAÍA FORMOSA

By Maria

Baía Formosa, which means Beautiful Bay, is a picturesque fishermen's village on the southern coast of Rio Grande do Norte. It has around 9 000 inhabitants. The community was established around a fishing centre by the Atlantic Ocean and it still has the feel of a fishing village, with almost a thousand registered fishermen. Its population is young, with over a third of its inhabitants under 19. To stimulate local development through education, it has nine municipal and two state schools, including a high school and two private preschools.

Baía Formosa is still a young municipality; it gained administrative independence in the late 1950s. The main economic activity is fishing (with a focus on albacore – tuna fish, lobster, shrimp and other fish), along with the sugar-alcohol industry, but the place has a vocation for tourism, especially the environmentally-focused kind. The municipality has the largest remnant of the Atlantic Forest of the State, which frames its entire coastline of idyllic beaches, wide mangrove areas, lagoons and rivers. To the north, the Curimataú river marks the border with Canguaretama/RN. To the south, the Guajú river marks the limit with Mataraca/PB.









LOCAL COMMUNITY

By Maria

Baía Formosa, the Beautiful Bay, gets its name from the area's natural beauty, but also from its people, one of its greatest treasures. Visitors are enchanted by the city, which is praised for its cosiness, and its residents' receptivity. This may result from the culture of fishermen and their families, who are accustomed to supporting each other in their daily life. Retired fisherman Antônio de Zé Grande reflects these resistant sea warriors' desire to share stories about the place. Dona Nita Rezadeira, a folk figure who inherited this tradition, like so many other women, is another local celebrity who always has an interesting story to tell.

One of Baía Formosa's top tourist attractions are the perfect waves of Pontal, the beach that saw the first steps of Brazil's greatest surfer, Ítalo Ferreira, who is number 6 in the surfing world ranking. In the music world, we have singer and composer Zé Maria Pescador and Ney Matogrosso, a fisherman and guide (in his free time), who worked in several films and even went to the Cannes Festival (2006) with the movie *Fish Dreams*, in which he played the main character.

There are many local crochet artisans who display their work at the Craft Market in the city centre. The local artisans also include Gabriela, who makes art using local seeds, plants and colorful fabric and Messiah, who works with wine. Baía Formosa has got many other talents, such as poet Neném who romanticizes stories of the place, maestro Tiago Brasileiro who works with young people, developing musical education within the Francisco Magalhães Orchestra, marathon runner Cabeleira, who promotes athletics among children and teenagers and charismatic guide Toreba, who has "only joy" to share. We could name many others, but the best thing is for you to come to Baía Formosa and see for yourself.



PALM TREES

By Maria and Dominika

Children from Baía Formosa often make all sorts of palm leaf arrangements in places where tourists gather. They rip up palm leaves and mostly turn them into flowers, which they give to tourists. They do not take money for it, but there is a general rule that tourists can give them some change. They can usually be found at the beach. In the evening, they can be seen at bars and restaurants in Baía Formosa.

JOIN IN THAT FUN AT THE BEACH

By Maria and Dominika

Young people enjoy spending time at the beach. Even if they do not swim or surf, many play beach volley or beach soccer. It is easy to join in; you can just approach them, wait until they notice you or wait for your turn or a change of players. This is a good way to mingle with local people. There are more opportunities to meet them at the weekend than during the week.



BONFIRES

By Maria and Dominika

Brazil celebrates the June Feast throughout that month, encompassing the day of Saint Anthony in early June, followed by Saint John on the 24th and Saint Peter on the 28th or 29th. As this is the time when corn is harvested, people's traditions were created to celebrate the good harvest and their ability to put food on the table. A variety of corn dishes are prepared.

The most important of these holidays is the feast of Saint John on 24 June, which is traditionally associated with bonfires and fire, probably because it is winter in the Southern Hemisphere. Everyone burns bonfires, roasting corn on them. In Baía Formosa, bonfires are lit in front of every house, right on the street (the whole town is paved). People play instruments and dance in the street. These days, some play music on their phones. Often, the bonfires burn all night. Then people remove the corn and eat it. It is also an opportunity to spend time with one's neighbors. In addition to baked corn, corn is used to make other dishes, such as cakes and puddings.

FREE TIME

By Maria and Dominika

In this small town, there is limited entertainment, so people entertain themselves. The most popular way to spend time, especially after work, after 5.00 PM., is to sit in front of the house on chairs talking to neighbors and friends who are passing by. People prefer to sit outside because it is cooler outside than inside their homes due to the breeze, unique to the city, making the air fresh and crisp. Observing the street, they put food and something to drink, such as some juice or coconut water, on a table outside. They can sit for hours like this.





COLORS, ANIMALS AND SMALL THINGS

By Dominika

When I arrived in Baía Formosa, the first thing I noticed was the colors. The houses were painted all the shades of the rainbow.

The town is simple and modest but it looks very happy. I thought: painting your house is like a statement. It is saying "it doesn't matter whether my house is small or big, modest or expensive. I will make it a happy place anyway. It is up to me to decide what I do about my circumstances." Local people also paint their boats brightly. Colors are the main motif in local art.

People in this small town do not need much to be happy. If you talk to them and look more closely at their way of thinking and living, you will see that the philosophy of those brave, strong and happy people is "happiness is in the small things". Local artists use this phrase in all their paintings and artworks; you will see it everywhere.

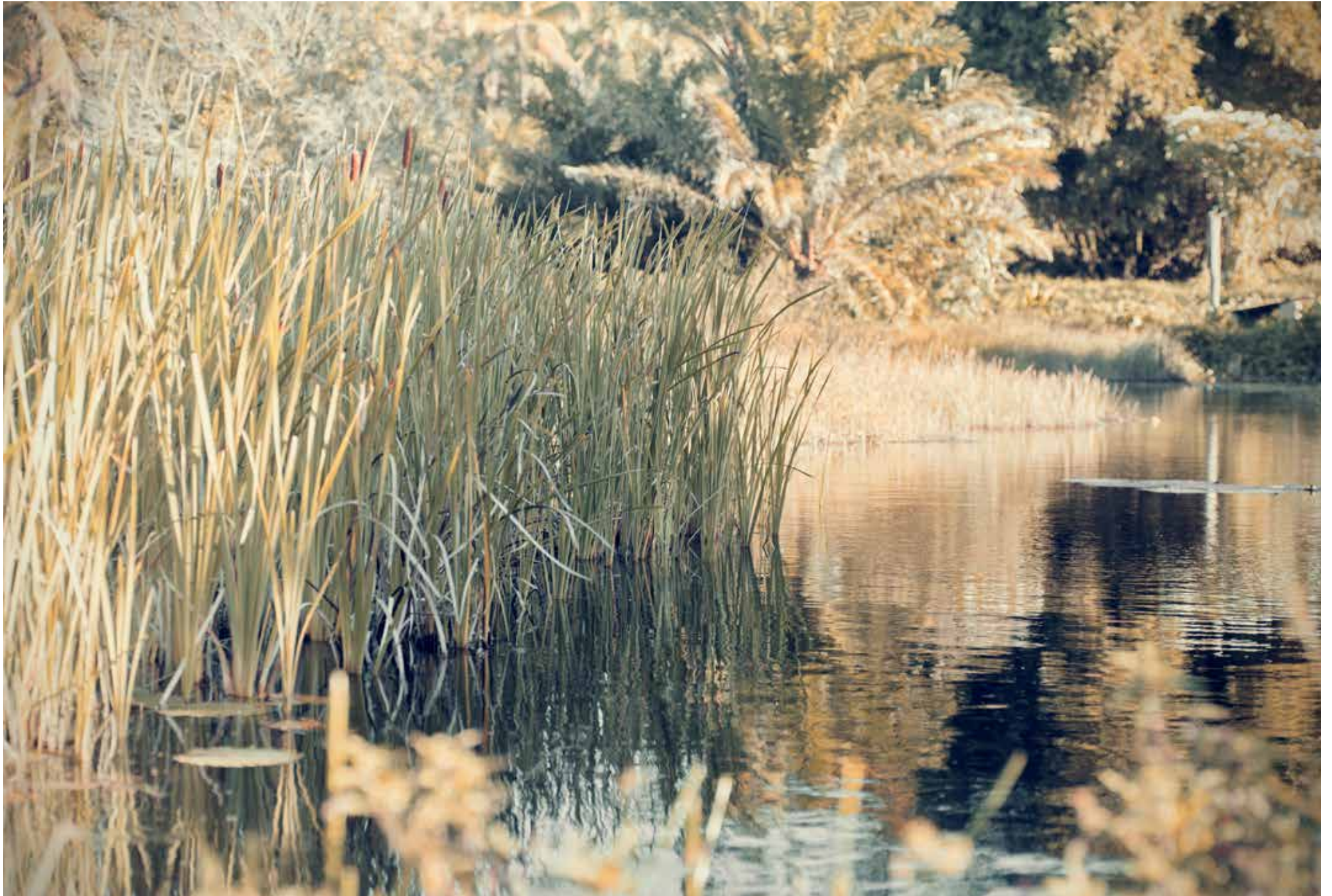
Another interesting thing I noticed was that people and animals in Baía Formosa coexist, sharing spaces such as streets and gardens. In the street, you meet cats and dogs, but also donkeys and goats. Driving a car can be a little tricky in Baía Formosa, but what a beautiful experience, so close to the animals.



I felt that city-dwellers like us have so much to learn from these happy people. If we managed to paint all our grey thoughts in bright colors, look at our problems from a happy perspective and learn to find happiness in simple things, our lives would be so much better. A cat or dog somewhere close would not hurt either. There is so much that we can learn from animals.

Thank you Baía Formosa for these wise lessons.





MANGROVES AND LAKES

By Voitek

Mangrove forests are a key coastal ecosystem that is extremely important for the environment: they serve as a nursery for the oceanic ecosystem. It has been scientifically proven that damage to the mangroves causes further deterioration of coral reefs due to a decline in the fish population. Mangrove forests are often called the richest and most complex ecosystem on Earth. They can be also called land-forming: their dense tangle of roots stops material carried by rivers and causes it to settle, stabilizing their banks. This is why mangrove forests need to be protected. In most countries that benefit from these ecosystems, including Brazil, they are protected by law. Nevertheless, scientists agree that about 1% of the world's surface covered by mangroves disappears irreversibly every year. The Eco Estrela property includes around 1 470 ha of mangrove forests, forming a scenic system of rivers, canals and bays. Over the past 70 years, 520 ha of these forests have been modified by humans. We have planned several activities that will have a positive impact on this area, too. The law protects the mangrove, but it does not require us to make up for losses caused by our predecessors. We would like to do more. We have prepared a large project recreating the mangrove ecosystem on 520 ha of affected area, which we will outline in later chapters.









ANIMALS

By Voitek

The Eco Estrela project is located in a region with a high concentration of fauna. Visitors can observe many interesting local animals in the Mata Estrela, one of the largest private nature reserves in Brazil, where 2 039 ha of virgin Atlantic forest has been preserved. Mata Estrela (the Star Forest) is the sacred home of hundreds of species of local flora and fauna. With such an extensive area, this private nature reserve offers potential for collaboration to support conservation and promote sustainable management.



Nature lovers will certainly enjoy seeing small, sociable monkeys from the tamarins family (*Callithrix jacchus*, or mico estrela in Portuguese), which are very popular in the region, as well as larger species like flashy howler monkeys called Guariba or Bugio. For unforgettable photos, keep an eye out for commonly-occurring, beautifully-colored iguanas or black and white tegu (*Tupinambis teguixin*). Friendly rodents like aguti (*Dasyprocta aguti*, port – cotia) and paca (*Cuniculus paca*) will be frequent guests in resort areas, because they adapt well to living close to people, in search of fruit and plants.

A BIRD WATCHER'S PARADISE

By Voitek

The extensive Eco Estrela area, with its system of rivers and mangrove, is home to a huge range of birds, including endemic ones. Watching birds from the heron family forming large groups above the water, especially at the end of the day, is an unforgettable experience. Strong, majestic Caracara falcons (*Caracara plancus*) and several smaller species patrol the sky above the property. At night, the area is dominated by earth owls. The real jewel in the crown remains the Jandaia, an endemic species of bright and colorful parrots, which only occurs in this area. A large flock of them is still present in the Project area. The fast and colorful hummingbirds common to the region will pose a real challenge for photographers.

Nature lovers will have the chance to watch a group of dolphins that permanently live in the Baía Formosa. Several species of sea turtle come to the beach every year to create their nests. The Project's plans include full protection of these animals.

Lovers of stronger emotions can try to photograph several species of vibrantly-hued snakes from the boa family. They are not aggressive and do not have venom. Their beautiful coloration (rainbow boa *Epicrates Crassus* or Cook's Tree boa *Corallus hortulanus*) and impressive size (*Boa constrictor*) are a great opportunity for nature photographers.





OUR WORK

USING ARTS TO EMPOWER PEOPLE

FINC – INTEGRATION WITH LOCAL SOCIETY

By Piotr

The Baía Formosa International Film Festival has been held every year since 2010. It was initiated by Greg Hajdarowicz, Founder of Eco Estrela, Brazil's honorary consul in Poland. An influential figure in the world of film, he has made several movies, including *City Island*, starring Andy Garcia.

FINC offers Brazil its own space for creativity, originality and invention. The festival creates opportunities for exchanging ideas and experiences. One of its main objectives is to inform people in the audio-visual sector about Rio Grande do Norte through:

- cultural international exchange
- training audiences interested in this art
- creating a destination and highlighting the potential of this cultural activity
- promoting the interests and development of local productions
- enriching audio-visual production and content in RN
- attracting tourism





The festival strengthens cultural exchange between Poland and Brazil. Its main award is an all-inclusive trip to attend the Off Camera International Film Festival in Krakow, Poland, one of the largest independent film festivals in Europe. The winning film is screened and its creator has the opportunity to attend workshops, meet producers and watch numerous movies. Every year, FINC includes a "one-minute film" contest. The ten best films are included in the official Off Camera programme in Krakow. Several production seminars and workshops are being organized within the community, encouraging local productions.



In recent years, the festival has developed partnerships with schools and universities, including Instituto Federal do Rio Grande do Norte (IFRN), Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte (UFRN), and Universidade Potiguar (UNP). FINC's cooperation with IFRN is getting stronger every year. As part of the "one-minute film" contest, the rector's office established an additional award to enable IFRN's most promising student and his coordinator to attend the Off Camera Festival in Poland or another film festival in Brazil, depending on the IFRN budget. Several audio-visual workshops are held in other cities in the state.

Since it was established, FINC has positioned itself as one of RN's top film festivals, generating interest in the audio-visual segment and attracting tourists to the region. One of the festival's aims is to develop a sense of identity among local people and in the audio-visual community. In 2017, FINC held its first volunteering workshop, encouraging students to improve their teamwork and reflect on the importance of engagement. The workshop was repeated in 2018, attracting many participants. A new initiative as part of the FINC programme was the "FINC Race" in 2016, which brought together more than 120 people. Since then, the number of participants has grown significantly. Sports are a fun and healthy pastime for the community.



USING THE ARTS TO EMPOWER SOCIALLY-DISADVANTAGED GROUPS

By Voitek

Creating the largest tourist project in Brazil is bound to have a strong social impact. We are doing everything to ensure that it is 100% positive. If we are changing people's lives, we have a duty to change them for the better! One of our team's basic tasks is to reduce social differences in the Baía Formosa region. Art is one of the tools being used. Team Eco Estrela created three major photographic projects covering three socially-disadvantaged groups.



Viktor Kunkin





The “Raise your head Princess” photography project

Fifteen women from Baía Formosa with completely different profiles were selected to participate. They were asked to choose their dream film role. A professional group of artists prepared the appropriate costumes and interiors. Each of the women attended a photo shoot that transformed her into her dream figure.

The project’s aim was to prove that, regardless of life’s difficulties, it is worth dreaming, because dreams come true. The photo exhibition at the Outdoor Gallery was opened by Governor of the State Ms. Fatima Bezerra (the only woman governor in Brazil) and visited by thousands of people. The women have become local celebrities. In the conservative culture of north-eastern Brazil, it has broken many taboos about women’s position in society.

A project centering on portraits of Baía Formosa's inhabitants.

About 800 photographs of local people were taken and used to create a mosaic depicting the panorama of Baía Formosa. The project was presented at the International Film Festival of Baía Formosa (FINC BF). With the slogan "We are all Baía Formosa", its aim was to strengthen social identification. Many people from lower social groups were intentionally included. Normally, they do not feel of equal value to the community, but the project gave them a sense of belonging.

Preparation: 2 months,
Project team: 4 people
Date: November 27, 2015
Viewers: 3 000 (estimate)







The "Fishermen" project.

This social group forms the core of Baía Formosa, but fishermen often struggle to make ends meet. This project's aim was to help them regain their self-esteem. It included underlining their heroic fight against the ocean and remembering its victims, while honouring them as the city's "founding fathers". The project, presented at an outdoor gallery created in the port, triggered extraordinary reactions and had a strong social impact. It undoubtedly gave back many fishermen and their families (around 15% of the population) their sense of pride.

Preparation: 1 month

Project team: 6 people

Date: November 26, 2017

Viewers: 2 000 (estimate)



SCULPTURES

By Voitek

Baía Formosa's charm needs to be preserved. This small, cosy town deserves a special place on the tourist map of Brazil. That is why we are focusing on a select group of tourists: those who are ecologically aware. Reviving cultural life and art is part of the plan. In partnership with the town's mayor, we are running a project entitled "Baía Formosa, City of Art". So far, we have donated three artistic installations to the town, which are displayed in public locations. Modern steel letters spelling out the town's name were unveiled by the Governor of State on Fishermen Square. The town gained a renovated square and lit inscription that quickly became a local landmark. Renovation of the port, the heart of the town, is currently underway. This is where Baía Formosa was founded. A sculpture, funded by the Eco Estrela project and created by Voitek Kordecki, a member of our team, depicts two life-size whales, a female and her calf – an allegory of motherhood. The authorities are working on a full renovation of the port, along with a renovated church. A beautifully-lit artistic installation will restore the historical centre's splendor. Another permanent project is an outdoor art gallery on the old stone wall of the street leading to the port, which has hosted many photo exhibitions and is already one of the city's attractions.

Another piece of art, a sculpture entitled "Hemingway – Corrida" by well-known Polish artist Andrzej Lichota, was also contributed by the Eco Estrela project. All these investments are turning Baía Formosa into a vibrant town with numerous artistic groups and a reputation for culture in Rio Grande do Norte.





TROPICAL BURN

By Voitek

If you want to create truly great things, it is worth joining forces with those with similar values.

In line with our project's philosophy in 2019, we decided to invite the Brazilian Burning Man community to the project area to organise the first-ever Tropical Burn event. The Ten Principles of Burning Man are extremely close to our philosophy. A strong emphasis on communal effort, civic responsibility, participation and, above, protecting the environment are the project's priorities. It was an honour to create this story together. The first edition of Tropical Burn, was attended by several hundred people from at least 14 countries, along with numerous art installations. For four days, Baía Formosa became a centre of radical self-expression. Through workshops and meetings organized by the BM community, the inhabitants of Baía Formosa had the opportunity to find out that protecting the environment, artistic freedom and social participation are timeless ideals, shared by people around the world.





WORKING WITH COMMUNITY



BUGUEIROS

By Maria

Buggy drives are a key part of the local economy. For tourists visiting Baía Formosa, a buggy drive to Sagi or Lagoa de Araracuara is a must. The Buggy Drivers' Association is the strongest local association in town. It provides employment for 40 buggy drivers from Baía Formosa, all of whom have completed special driving, environmental protection and tourist reception courses. Since 2010, the Eco Estrela team has been cooperating closely with the association at several levels. Basic English courses have been offered to its members, along with special programmes that will launch once the Eco Estrela project is completed. The buggy drivers support and engage in environmental protection activities, stand up for local interests and promote local tourist activity. They are an important partner for our team.



CLEAN UP THE WORLD

By Maria

The Eco Estrela project has brought several editions of the Clean up the World initiative to Baía Formosa. With around a hundred students from local schools and representatives of the Tamar Project (an NGO for turtle protection), the Eco Estrela team cleans 6 km of beach. Over 500 bags of rubbish have been collected. Most of the rubbish comes from big ships, which dump it in the ocean. The tide brings it to the coast of Rio Grande do Norte, where it ends up on local beaches.

The beach by the Eco Estrela project has a freshwater source (Olho d'Água) – an extremely rare phenomenon at the beach – and around 200 nests of the protected Hawksbill sea turtle. The beach is regularly cleaned using a special machine. Additional activities, including the Clean Up the World initiative, are being organized to involve the local community in protecting the environment – for educational reasons and to encourage civic engagement. The Entrepreneurs' Association, municipal government and local Catholic Church organise similar activities. The Eco Estrela team supports most of them.





MARATHONS

By Maria

Life in a small community requires a close bond between its members. It is a matter of social integration, but also necessary for social development and sometimes even survival. Investing in sports and activities has been a fun way to strengthen bonds with the local community in Baía Formosa.





We are supporting marathon runner Gilberto's project of organizing running and physical education for children and teenagers. They train hard every day and take part in local and regional competitions. Street runs are organized in Baía Formosa three times a year (the 8 km Corrida dos Amigos supervised by Gilberto and the 6 km Corrida FINC). The FINC is the Eco Estrela project's initiative and is part of the Film Festival (FINC BF) weekend activities.

This picturesque 6 km run starts with a view of the bay that gives the town its name and follows the Mata Estrela Atlantic Forest reserve to the Eco Estrela project. It has become popular among local and regional runners, as well as visitors in town for the Film Festival.

JANGADAS RACE

By Maria

The Jangadas Race was being organized without a fixed date by the Baía Formosa's fisherman community in cooperation with the local authorities. Since 2009, with the support of local businessmen, officials have sought to make the race a permanent fixture in the town's calendar, recognizing its social value and highlighting the strength of fearless fishermen who place bets on their way home to prove who has the fastest boat.





The event is attended by around a thousand people, including fishermen and their families, visitors from the region and local people, who meet at the port to watch the race. There are awards for first, second and third place. For the past five years, the Eco Estrela project has sponsored the event, providing new sails for 40 jangadas. Every year, the event becomes more popular. With their sailboats and handcrafted wooden rafts, the sea warriors challenge the waves and strong winds to show local inhabitants' strength and bravery.

SUPPORTING GROWTH

THE ENTREPRENEURS' ASSOCIATION

By Piotr

The Baía Formosa Entrepreneurs' Association (AEBF) is a recently-established group of entrepreneurs who see tourism at the town's natural vocation and recognise its potential to create jobs and generate income. Their goal is to promote Baía Formosa as a tourist destination, strengthening the local economy. The Association's members are local entrepreneurs, from artisans to people working in real estate, who want to promote efforts to develop tourism in the region. They also conduct environmental campaigns focusing on sustainable development in partnership with schools and the local government. The Eco Estrela project has been a strong partner promoting the Association and supporting its activities. The Association is open to all entrepreneurs and citizens who want to improve their community, an attitude that supports cohesive and participatory development.





CAMPAIGNS:

- July, 2018 – Partnered with the Pre-Military Commando Environmental Guardians (a local teenagers' association) to encourage young people to participate in clean-ups around town;
- July, 2018 – Meeting with the principal of the Águida Sucupira state school to request students' participation in cleaning initiatives in the city promoting environmental education;
- July, 2018 – Meeting with a City Hall representative to request support for the final disposal of rubbish collected during initiatives;
- July, 2018 – Partnership with the Eco Estrela project for beach clean-ups (the latter organized the removal of the rubbish collected);
- August, 2018 – Meeting with a representative of the Buggy Drivers' Association to ask for support in the organization of transport for beach clean-up participants;
- June 15, 2019 – Held its second beach clean-up in partnership with Tropical Burn, the Eco Estrela project and the Town Hall, with the support of the Pre-Military Environmental Guardians Command, Swell Project, the Águida Sucupira school and the Prof. Paulo Freire school. Part of the rubbish collected was used in works of art created for Tropical Burn.
- June 28, 2019 – With its hotel partners, the Association supported the Ecomaratona 42k, a running competition for single runners, couples and groups of four runners, which gave participants from various north-eastern states a unique experience, with an appeal to preserve the environment. The organizers and participants promoted a beach clean-up, received recycled PET shirts, trophies and medals made from recycled wood.





Following the global trend and need for behavioral changes that minimise the environmental impact of human consumption, the Baía Formosa Entrepreneurs' Association board has been discussing ways to promote a collective commitment among its partners. Some have already chosen not to use certain disposable products such as plastic straws, while others sort cardboard for recycling. Now the goal is for the entire municipality to join this movement.

COOPERATION WITH IFRN

By Piotr

The IFRN's (Federal Institute of Rio Grande do Norte) social function is to provide professional and technological education in referenced quality and political-pedagogical architecture capable of articulating science, culture, work and technology. IFRN's commitment to human development, active citizenship and the production and the socialization of knowledge aims to transform reality in terms of social equality and justice. The pursuit of technical skill permeates all the levels of education offered, from basic worker training to secondary (integrated and subsequent) and higher (undergraduate, technological and postgraduate) vocational training.

Given IFRN's important role in technical vocational education for different sectors of the economy, as well as supporting integration, development and the quality of the project, we are cooperating with IFRN in different areas. This includes the Film Festival described above, which aims to stimulate cultural production and entrepreneurship, and areas directly or indirectly linked to the project, such as Fisheries, Marine-Biology, Marine Mammal Protection, Water Conservation, Eco-Farming, and Green Energy. A wide range and several hundred jobs will be created for the local and regional community in support of scientific and technological development driving social responsibility. These interrelated areas and their knowledge based application will feed into the Bio-Tech Hub where work-space and resources will be available to incubate new ideas and test new technologies. For this cooperation, we are counting on the support of IFRN, which has more than 21 campuses in the state of Rio Grande do Norte. One of them, with capacity for over 1,200 students, is just 10 km away from the project.

With expertise at various levels of education, this partnership will prepare local society for the new job market that will initially be created by Six Senses and later by other hotel brands that join the Eco Estrela project. The first steps have been taken: a memorandum of understanding has been signed and the past six editions of the Film Festival have been attended by students, teachers and the IFRN board of directors. Contacts with universities in Krakow, Poland, have also been made to raise this cooperation to a higher level.



OUR PROJECTS

BACKGROUND



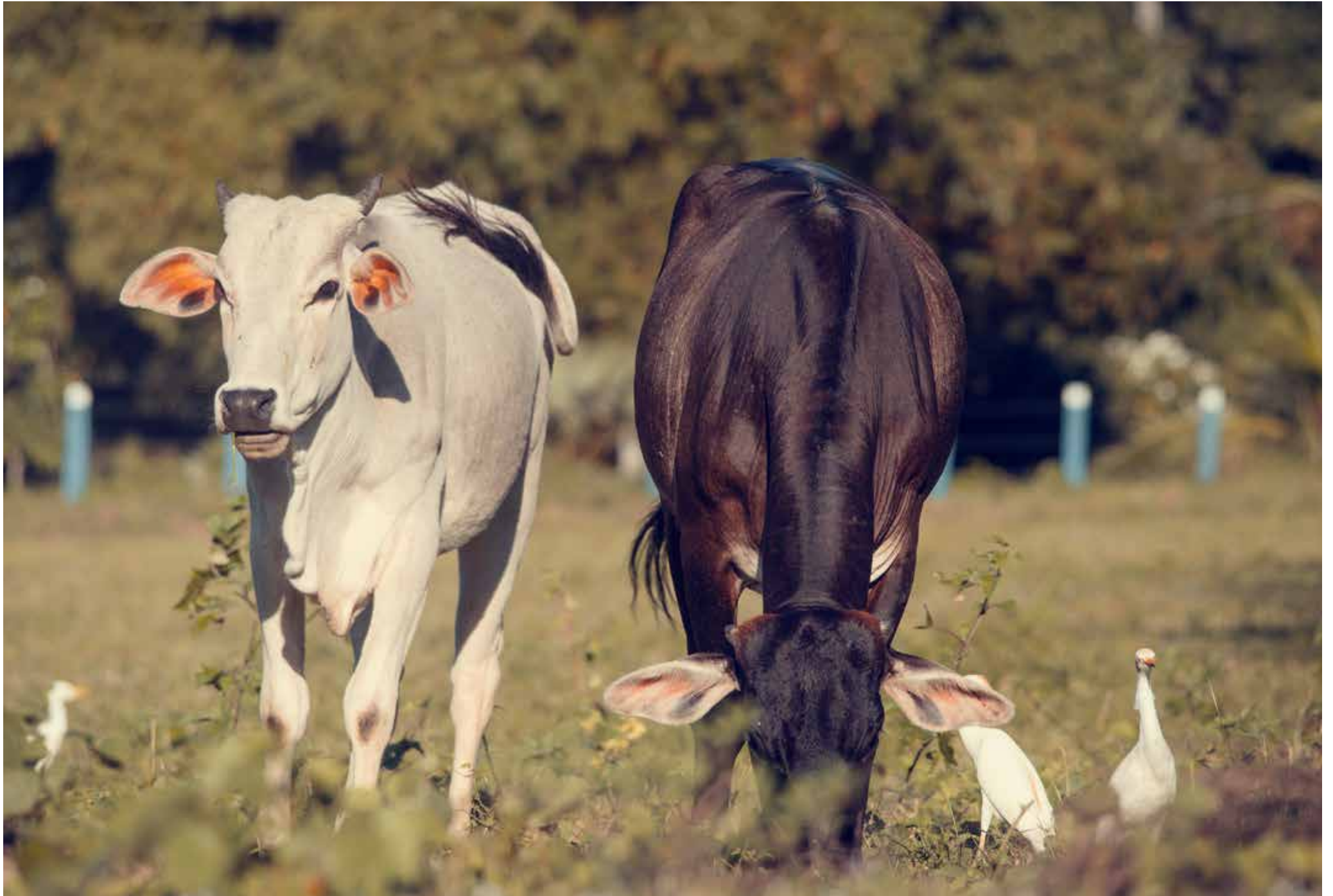
SUSTAINABILITY OVERVIEW

By Piotr

Much like Six Senses, Eco Estrela is committed to sustainability that addresses carbon emissions from travel and hotel operations and encourages guests to conserve energy, reuse water and recycle waste.

Responsible purchasing means using only eco-friendly chemicals, producing local food and beverages, and using reusable packaging.

Located in places of great natural beauty, the resorts and spas often have biodiverse environments ranging from coral reefs to jungle to preserve, protect and rebuild. There is also a commitment to protect endangered species. Eco Estrela only wants to work with suppliers who share this commitment.



SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

Eco Estrela, such as Six Senses wants to focus on three areas of sustainability.

Self-Sustaining

Supporting our needs without a negative impact on the community and environment.

Operating based on the principle of “Waste to Wealth”, collecting and reusing or recycling all waste created on the property.

Creating an extensive composting programme that supports the organic gardens on site.

A chicken farm with organic eggs for guests and hosts is planned. Wastewater will also be recaptured, treated and reused to irrigate the gardens and coconut palms.

Legacy

- We are aware that our decisions and actions do not only affect the present – we are also creating legacy for future generations.
- We believe in strong relationships with the local communities in the area. We work closely with schools in Baía Formosa and involve them in sustainable activities. Like Six Senses, we organise seminars on ocean conservation and sea turtles, zero waste and other relevant topics. Students will be welcome to join in various initiatives such as planting trees, beach clean-ups or film screenings on sustainability. We are leaving a legacy by planting the seed of sustainability by informing and empowering younger generations.

Social Equity

- We recognise that we are part of a global community where we are all responsible for the health and wellbeing of each other and our planet.
- All Six Senses properties have a sustainability fund made up of 0.5% of revenue, soft toy sales and 50% of water sales. The money is used locally, at each property, on social or environmental projects. We believe in investing in way that supports equal access to improved quality of life for all.

Less is More

- Products that have travelled a long distance are often gassed, irradiated and preserved using wax or toxic packaging. At Six Senses, the energy footprint of importing branded drinking water has been eliminated: each resort has its own reverse-osmosis plant to produce top-quality still and sparkling mineralized water, which is provided to guests in reusable glass bottles.



IN HARMONY WITH NATURE

THE INITIATIVE'S TARGETS

- Sustainable management of all types of forests
- Conservation of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems
- Action to reduce of the degradation of natural habitats and to halt the loss of biodiversity
- Ecosystem and biodiversity as parts of national and local planning processes
- Financing sustainable forest management and provision of incentives to adopt conservation and reforestation as proper forms of natural management
- Spreading information and awareness about lifestyle in harmony with nature





SPORT FISHING

By Voitek

Sports fishing based on the “catch and release” system is one of the best forms of eco-tourism. The aim is nature photography; any caught fish is returned to the water. This sport has strict rules on harmless equipment, techniques, fish handling and seasons. Anglers seek large specimens, which require the highest standards of environmental protection. Big animals disappear first.

Fishing is Baía Formosa’s vocation: seven of the world’s ten most-wanted species of sport fish live here. There are few other places like this on Earth. Until now, the town was earning money from commercial fishing (killing the fish for sale). The Eco Estrela project will change this. We have been working on one of the world’s most modern sport fishing projects, based exclusively on local resources. It involves restoring around 250 ha of lakes and 270 ha of mangrove forests. The project will be based on two types of sport fishing:

- Ocean fishing (marlin, tuna fish, dorado, grouper, wahoo), using the exceptionally advantageous location of the ocean current just 6–8 nautical miles from the port (the average for Brazil is 20–25 miles) and the abundance of rich fishing spots. The season is 365 days a year.
- Fishing in the mangrove system (huge tarpon and snook) on protected private lakes and rivers.

Scientists from leading Brazilian universities and renowned research centres abroad were consulted about the project. The result is a detailed engineering project for the lakes. The project will have a strong social impact, re-orienting of a group of fishermen to become fishing guides. The Eco Estrela team is already working with the Federal Technical University (IFRN) to develop the training programme. Detailed statistics leave no doubt about the strong positive impact of sport fishing – not just on the natural environment, but also on the local economy.



WATER

By Piotr

Many countries have already banned plastic bags and plastic straws are being slowly eradicated day by day, but single-use plastic bottles have not yet been banned.

Eco Estrela plans to go further when it comes to sustainability and education. In addition to eliminating most single-use plastics from their hotels and spas globally, it wants to follow the example of Six Senses' Vietnam location, where an "Earth Lab" was launched in 2018. This experimental initiative includes a coral reef restoration programme, teaches guests how to compost and make their own chemical-free detergent, and takes them to plantation fields and water treatment plants to raise awareness and inspire more sustainable habits. From the outset, Eco Estrela wants to extend these practices to the whole project.

RETHINKING BOTTLED WATER

Avoiding the entire process of purchasing, shipping and storing water simplifies administrative matters. There are also financial savings. The cost of water drops from 20% of water sales to 2%. In other words, 18% of revenue from water can be saved. These savings can be sent to water charities, benefiting thousands of local people. This small change does not affect profitability and can raise a considerable amount for charity.





NATURAL COSMETICS

By Martin

As part of Eco Estrela's environmental awareness programme, only natural cosmetics will be promoted and sold on the property. As sophisticated, conscious consumers turn to natural and organic products to avoid synthetic chemicals in sunscreens, cosmetics and toiletries (with their associated health risks), the environmental dimension of production and waste management is of interest in the long term. Brazil boasts the greatest biodiversity in the world and an array of exotic plants are used to produce these natural cosmetics. Large companies like L'Oréal and Unilever are moving into the natural cosmetics market, so there are many options to choose from. Brazil's own Natura Brazil is a global leader in natural cosmetics and uses indigenous ingredients from this biodiverse country, harvested sustainably in partnership with local communities. Using only natural cosmetics will improve health, reduce pollution and have a positive impact on the local communities that produce them.



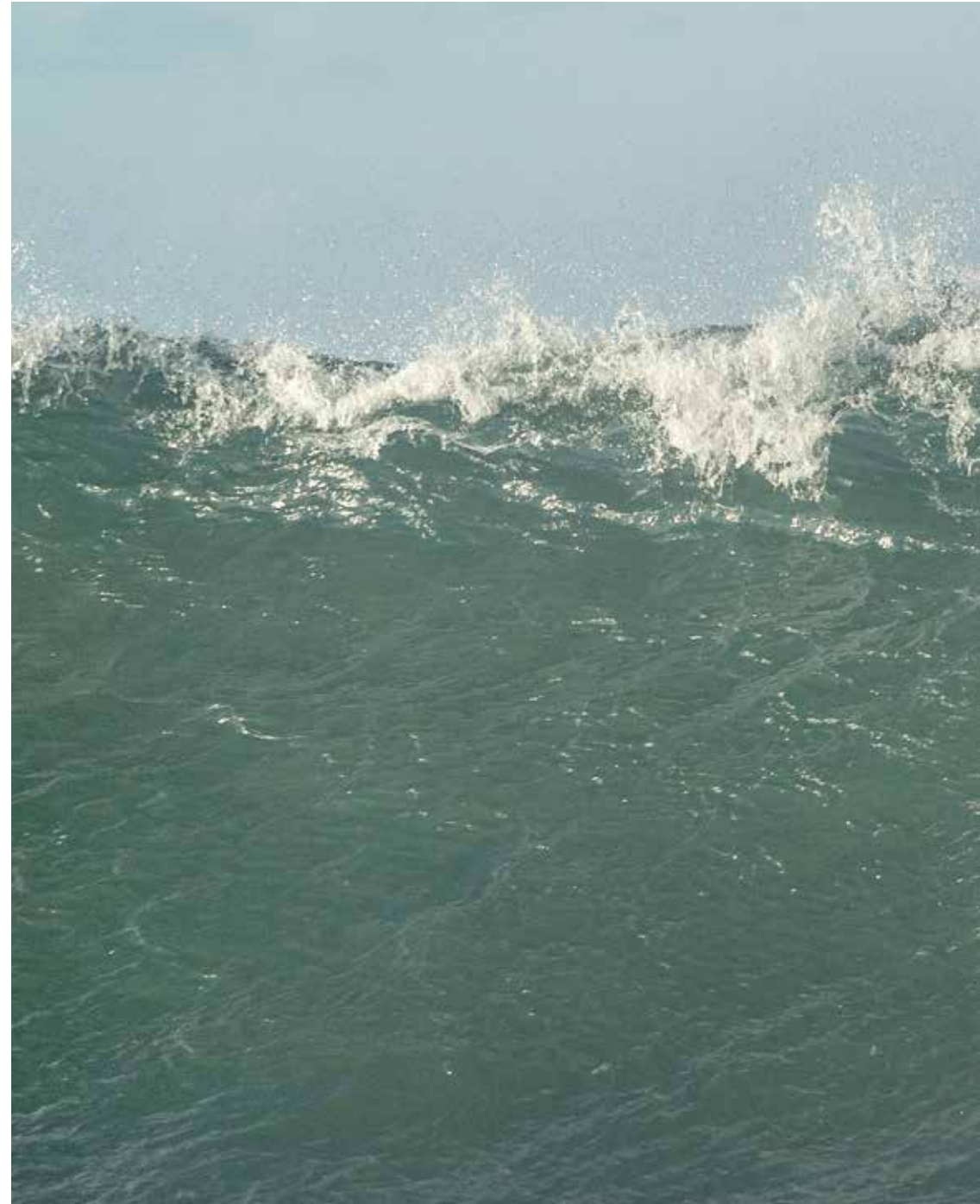
SPORTS

By Maria

Sports play a crucial role in improving quality of life, just as exercising can transform people into better versions of themselves, physically and mentally. In Baía Formosa, people can run along the beautiful beach or go kitesurfing on windy days. Baía Formosa has great conditions for surfing for both beginners and experts.



Famous surfer Italo Ferreira learned how to surf at the Praia de Pontal and still visits it often. Local people are very friendly and gladly hold volleyball games or amateur surfing competitions. After a long day of breath-taking activities, guests can go paddling on the ocean and watch the sunset. Being a better person means being at peace with your own body, so make the most of what we have to offer in Baía Formosa.





CLEAN ENERGY



SOLAR ENERGY PLANT

By Martin

Eco Estrela's goal is to provide affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for the entire project using solar energy. This will solidify the project's green and sustainability Credentials. We are aiming for the smallest possible carbon footprint and to avoid using fossil fuels to produce energy. The Baía Formosa region is optimal for solar energy generation as it has a low degree of cloudiness and an average of 3 000 hours of sunshine a year, together with constant winds throughout the year and a relatively high annual average temperature of 26,6°C. Eco Estrela has reserved a significant section of land to produce enough energy for the area. We are researching ways to complement our main Solar Plant with other sustainable energy sources and make Eco Estrela a regional green energy technology hub.



BIOFUEL

By Marcos

Eco Estrela aims to provide clean energy using organic waste generated by people living in the area. Biofuel is an especially interesting source of energy as the output is proportional to the number of people in the community. In other words, more people will increase the demand for energy, which will be met using the organic waste that they produce. The simple formula we aim to achieve is:
Sewage + Organic Waste = Energy + Compost



This is accomplished in partnership with Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, a leading Italian research centre with patented biofuel technology that delivers:

- An integrated system for producing biogas and compost using the consolidated technologies of aerobic composting and anaerobic digestion
- Biogas utilization for heat and power generation to make energy in a self-sufficient system
- Biomass utilization without external processed water
- Confined processes to limit pollutant emissions into the atmosphere
- A complete liquid waste treatment that allows utilization in the same plant and/or disposal into the ground without the need for landfill disposal
- The treatment and recirculation of sedimentation mud





THE INITIATIVE'S TARGETS

- Increasing the share of energy from renewable sources
- Increasing energy efficiency
- Increasing investment in energy efficiency and the amount of foreign direct investment in sustainable development services
- Implementation of a framework for programmes on sustainable consumption and production
- Efficient use of natural resources



USE OF NATURAL MATERIALS

When we talk about the sustainability of materials in architecture, the subject ranges from the construction and structural technique to the choice of insulation and finishing. We have a responsibility to research and define each decision in every sector of the project, always considering sustainability.

The first point is construction technique and structural elements, since they are repeated throughout the buildings. By comparing construction techniques using steel, concrete and wood, and researching each material's sustainable characteristics and financial viability, wood was found to be the most sustainable material.

The next striking point in the project are the roofs of buildings. The site of around 94 ha will have almost 250 buildings covering an area of 57 thousand square metres. Although this represents just 6% of the site, the roofs will matter from a sustainable point of view. All rooftops are seen from the highest points of the terrain and therefore have a physical and visual presence.

The green roof technology used in the project meets both sustainability-related and aesthetic criteria: it reduces the need for air conditioning since it thermally isolates the building and creates a green mantle when viewed from above, mimicking the native vegetation.

In addition to the architecture's role in ensuring energy efficiency through good ventilation and heat dissipation in buildings, and by creating shaded areas protected from the sun and installing good internal lighting, the choice of finishing materials also affects the energy quality. Using local and recyclable materials, quick renovation and concern about volatile organic compounds in the finishing of floors, walls and linings, is essential. The materials of the local vernacular architecture were used as a reference: trellised wood panels, straw linings, wood branches, regional colored walls, local stones for the floor and external walls, as well as water-based paints for walls and other internal elements.



SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

By Martin

With our commitment to protect and promote the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems and to halt the loss of biodiversity, Eco Estrela's Six Senses project has been designed for absolute minimal environmental impact and has committed to restore and reverse land degradation. Buildings will be elevated so as not to damage the dunes. Their location will ensure that they do not affect local flora and fauna.





WORKERS' VILLAGE & WORKERS' VILLAS

By Martin

By creating a residential area for project collaborators and staff we are aiming to achieve 2 main goals. To create an environmentally and socially responsible living area to accommodate the arrival staff and other stakeholders coming in to support and work at the project, and to reduce the direct housing demands within the local municipality, which has limited capacity for growth. Participants of the Eco Estrela projects will be able to combine work and their personal life in harmony in the safe and environmentally responsible Staff Village located within Fazenda Estrela.

Live and work in paradise

The Workers' Village introduces an ecologically sound way of living. The idea is to create an inclusive and self-resilient space. The village will become a hub and temporary home for resort staff and anyone interested in collaborating on projects relating to sustainability. Drawing inspiration from the neighboring ecosystems, anyone staying here will have the exclusive opportunity to live and work in a dynamic environment surrounded by people who share the same vision and goals. This urban development will set the stage for a greener future by introducing a new way of living. With access to nature reserves that can cater to all human needs, the workers' village will be designed to be not only ecological, but also economically viable.



THE INITIATIVE'S TARGETS

- Providing access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems and improving road safety
- Supporting inclusive and sustainable urbanization
- Promoting sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources
- Spreading information and awareness about sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature including a commercial hub, education, medical and social support

Community

By providing housing and the social infrastructure to cover the staff's basic needs – including a commercial hub, education, and medical and social support – these families' lives will be greatly improved. Providing transport facilities will reduce the need to commute to work; staff will be able to spend more time within the local community. Eco Estrela also intends to work with local governments to support health and wellbeing for all by providing medical facilities for everyone involved in the project and the municipality of Baía Formosa.



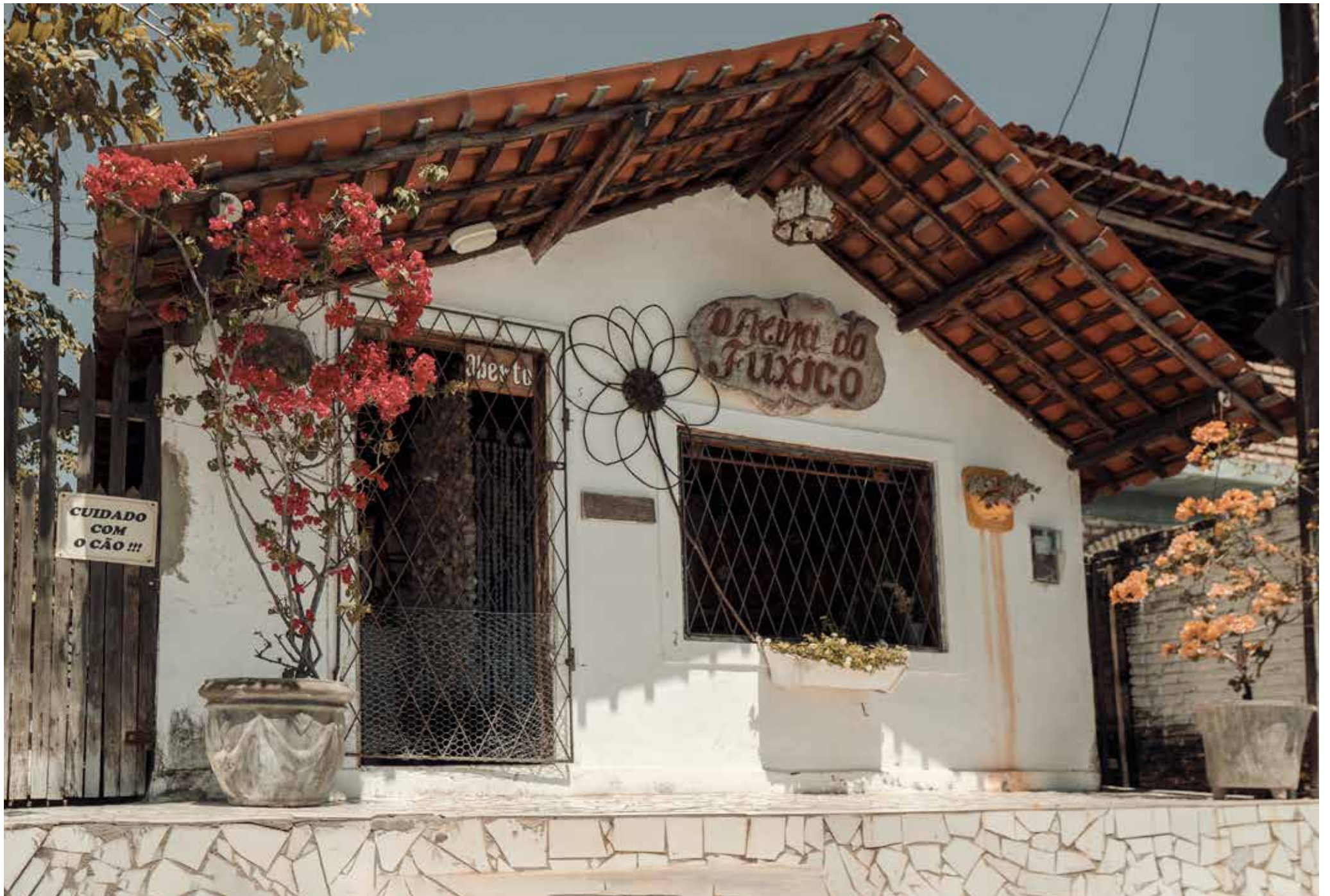
FUTURE WORK – IMPROVING SAFETY AND ARCHITECTURE

By Martin

Future work in the town includes two important areas of urban life: providing absolute security and architectural control of city development. Our team is active in these areas and has well-developed strategies. To improve security, we are in constant contact with the state government: the Ministry of Security Affairs and the law enforcement authorities. The design for an open monitoring network prepared by a professional security company has been handed over to the municipal authorities. They are working to implement the project.

Representatives of the Eco Estrela team actively participated in work on the long-standing masterplan for Baía Formosa. The city's appearance and cosy character was preserved by the ban on tall buildings near beaches and beside the ocean. Through the Baía Formosa Entrepreneurs' Association, we support and carry out many educational projects in the field of architecture and infrastructure for the town's residents and the municipal authorities. The aim is to maintain harmony between future resort facilities – developed by the best architects, respecting customs and preserving local elements – and the town's appearance.

As part of Eco Estrela's aspiration to make urban areas inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, we plan to work together with the municipality of Baía Formosa and its neighbors to help improve public safety. By improving standards of urban design and beautifying the community, we intend to help develop a sense of social pride to preserve and protect all that is positive here. By aiding the local and regional authorities, we expect to improve safety within the municipality, as well as in neighboring areas.



WORKING WITH THE RIGHT PARTNERS

BACKGROUND

SUSTAINABILITY AT SIX SENSES

By Piotr

Six Senses specializes in a unique style of luxury hospitality that benefits local communities and environments. For the past two decades, Six Senses has been recognized as the hospitality industry's pioneer in sustainable practices, demonstrating that responsibility can be successfully wedded to uncompromised high-end facilities – long before it was considered fashionable.

SUSTAINABILITY FUND FOR LOCAL PROJECTS

The Resort's Sustainability Fund supports local Environmental and Community Programmes. Funding is generated from: • 0,5% of hotel revenue • soft toy sales • 50% of water sales • Guest donations partnerships with local organizations will be actively sought for advice and implementation. Outcomes must have clear benefits to communities and ecosystems; they may include research, conservation, education and outreach.

EDUCATION

Six Senses understands that education is key to influencing the next generation of conservationists. It supports programmes in partnership with local schools and on specialised topics. Educational projects range from in-kind donations for local schools and long-term funding commitments to detailed educational programmes. Many programmes are designed to build awareness of the importance of wildlife conservation and an understanding of good environmental stewardship.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Six Senses is an active participant in local communities. It has policies to hire locally as much as possible and to support local businesses by using their goods and services. Six Senses actively promotes small local businesses, runs community outreach programmes that stress the value of local wildlife. This basic understanding is fundamental to end the poaching of sea turtles, their eggs and other protected wildlife .





SEA TURTLES

By Piotr

Brazil is blessed with an abundance of natural wildlife, including several species of endangered sea turtle. We aim to establish a turtle research and conservation centre with the hotel.

In Baía Formosa, we will seek to implement, in close collaboration with the local authorities, best practices for development around sea turtles' nesting zones. An often-overlooked aspect is opting for lighting strategies that will not interfere with sea turtles' nesting and hatching pattern.

Six Senses' Guidelines for Sustainable Operations require no negative impact on native wildlife. Each hotel with sea turtles builds a customized turtle protocol to:

- Identify and mark new nests
- Protect nests from predators and poachers
- Manage hatching events to promote the successful, natural release of infant turtles.

Guests are welcomed to observe hatching events in a safe and controlled way, based on scientific guidance.



STEWARDSHIP

All hotel waste is properly managed and marine debris that lands on shores is routinely collected and disposed of. Six Senses works with local communities to clean public beaches and other wildlife habitats in the area.

LEED SILVER

By Piotr

Six Senses Formosa Bay Eco Resort is the newest hotel development in Brazil's north-eastern region. Since the start of the design phase, the project has aimed to achieve the highest environmental performance among resorts in Brazil.

Located on a marvellous site, the resort finds a unique balance between the topography and the natural landscape.

To achieve this recognition, the project will be built with specific strategies that will enable it to apply for LEED v4 certification – Silver level.

The LEED System was developed by the United States Green Building Council (USGBC), which was established in the 1990s promote sustainable practices in the design, construction and operation of buildings to reduce their environmental impact.

For each type of system, applicable to different types of construction, there are defined prerequisites and criteria, for which points are awarded.

The prerequisite guarantees a minimum environmental performance, while the number of points obtained for complying with criteria leads to different levels of certification.





The environmental performance strategies being adopted as part of the project are:

- Storm water management;
- Lighting design that promotes energy efficiency and avoids lighting pollution;
- Water efficiency strategies (internal and external areas);
- Optimizing energy efficiency (internal and external areas);
- Advanced energy metering;
- Renewable energy production on site;
- Building life-cycle impact reduction;
- Waste management (construction and operation phases);
- Enhanced indoor air quality strategies during construction and operation;
- Thermal comfort;
- Natural lighting;
- Acoustic performance

In this way, the Six Senses Formosa Bay Eco Resort is positioning itself as a point of reference in the global resort sector when it comes to sustainability.



PARTNERS



WOLF HENGST

I began my relationship with Six Senses in 2008 and ever since then I have been focusing on increasing the emphasis on sustainability and the environment, which, I believe had led to a spectacular growth of the company all over the world.

I have been involved with Eco Estrela for two years already and I am confident that it will become one of the top destinations in the Americas.

Combining the extensive experience of the developer and Brazil's market's growing openness with the natural environment and the community work that has already been done, this project is a great opportunity for all of us.

Six Senses' acquisition by IHG gives the company excellent distribution and marketing power, which will contribute to the reputation of Six Senses as the World's Top Hotel Brand and result in continued growth of the company.

Eco Estrela is, in my opinion, one of the most beautiful places on earth and is fit to create exceptional experiences and marvellous memories for years to come.



ANDREW THOMSON

During my longstanding career, I have been involved with numerous hospitality projects and I have to say that despite my extensive experience in that area, the Eco Estrela project has truly captured my undivided attention. To be able to be a part of it will certainly be an astounding journey.

One of the greatest passions of my life has been surfing and other watersports – which are key in Eco Estrela sustainable development. What I find most appealing in such activities is how they manage to integrate the pure joy of physical entertainment with nature. Surfing comes from being in full harmony with the waves and wind and creates a thrilling experience, without interfering with the environment.


Eco Estrela's sustainable principles resonate with my own philosophy which I have been implementing in many of my businesses throughout the years. I am sure that this, combined with the exceptional professionalism of the project's developing team, will result in a dedicated cooperation, which will produce one of the most wonderful destinations in the world.

AUTHORS







An aerial photograph of a coastline. On the left, a wide, light-colored sandy beach curves along the shore. The ocean water is a deep blue, with white foam from breaking waves visible further out. A small, white, bird-like object is seen in flight over the water in the upper right quadrant. The entire image is framed by a thin white border.

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February 2021