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BASE STUDIES FOR THE PROMOTION OF A HIGH-QUALITY GEOTOURISM IN THE TOURIST STATE PARK OF ALTO RIBEIRA (BRAZIL)

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The Alto Ribeira Tourist State Park (PETAR) is located in the Ribeira River valley, in the Brazilian State of São Paulo, and it is one of the main tourist destinations in southeastern Brazil. Its scenic beauty combines the Atlantic Forest (included in the UNESCO's World Heritage List) and caves with a large variety of speleothem systems. The main lithological types in the study area are Cenozoic sedimentary deposits, Jurassic-Cretaceous basic dykes, Neoproterozoic to Cambrian granitic and metamorphic rocks. The carbonate rocks and their varied compositions are responsible for the regional karst systems, the Açungui Speleological Province. Given the high geodiversity of the region, this project currently under development, aims to: (i) refine the inventory of geological heritage in PETAR, carried out in 2014 by the Geological Survey of Brazil (CPRM); (ii) quantify both the value and risk of degradation of these sites; (iii) identify and characterize the target audience and the tourist offer of the region; (iv) calculate the carrying capacity of geological sites; and (v) produce contents for the geological interpretation, integrating the cultural heritage and other aspects of the natural heritage in order to promote a high-quality geotourism in the region. At the end of this work, it is expected that the carrying capacity assessment of geosites will contribute as a management tool for the tourism planning in PETAR and its surroundings. Moreover, it is also expected that the introduction of a proper geological interpretation of these sites will contribute to the safeguarding of PETAR's geoheritage, to the sustainable economic development of the region and to the dissemination of culture and geoscientific knowledge.