



## POSITIVE INCENTIVES COLLABORATIVE PROJECT

*Task 18 of the Biodiversity Plan “The Power of Voluntary Action”*

Case Study (Brazil)

# Viva Agua Initiative

Boticario Group Foundation



Organizers



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Boticario Group Foundation



## Summary

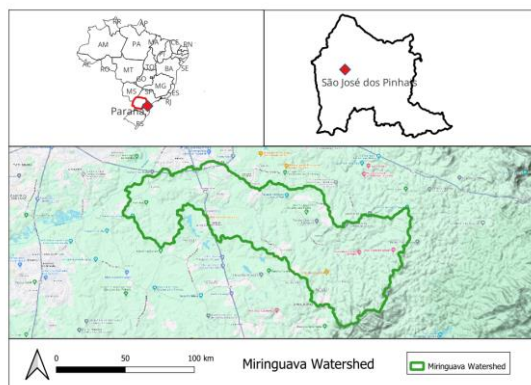
The Viva Agua Initiative (VAI), launched in 2019 by the Boticario Group Foundation (BGF), aims to address water security and climate resilience in critical Brazilian watersheds. Initially focusing on the Miringuava watershed, which supplies water to over 500 thousand people in southern Brazil, VAI expanded to the Guanabara Bay region in 2021, serving 11 million. Each region has a dedicated fund to accelerate actions, which is managed by financial organizations and works within a venture philanthropy and/or revolving fund logic. VAI employs a co-creation approach involving diverse stakeholders to develop integrated solutions to common challenges. It has influenced companies to transition towards sustainable practices, contributing to biodiversity conservation and economic development. Notable achievements include reducing plastic pollution, promoting sustainable agriculture and responsible tourism, and strengthening impact businesses. Looking ahead, VAI aims to consolidate its experiences into a national governance framework by 2030, promoting water security across six strategic watersheds in Brazil.

## Case Study

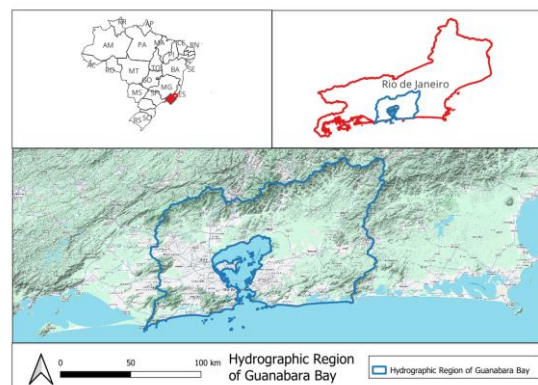
Boticario Group Foundation (BGF) is a corporate foundation maintained by Boticario Group - a Brazilian beauty company. Created in 1990, BGF's mission is to promote nature conservation in Brazil. For over 20 years BGF has worked with water, mainly through Payment for Ecosystem Services, Ecosystem based Adaptation, and strengthening Protected Areas - involving mostly NGOs and local governments. In 2018, understanding the relevance of the private sector, BGF developed a strategy to connect the dependencies of Brazilian businesses and other stakeholders to positive impact on biodiversity. It started by evaluating the closest scenario to the Foundation's headquarters – the watershed that supplies Boticario's factory in southern Brazil. This is the Miringuava Watershed, which supplies water to over 500 thousand people in the Greater Curitiba Area.

In 2019, Viva Agua (VA) Miringuava was launched as a strategy to connect multiple stakeholders to promote water security and climate change adaptation. In 2021, it was brought to Guanabara Bay, which supplies water to 11 million people. Both initiatives are planned to last at least until 2030. Viva Agua consolidated as a private non-state initiative, which connects stakeholders from the

private, public, and financial sectors; as well as local community and civil society, to ensure water security and climate resilience in strategic watersheds in Brazil. Its main pillars of action lay on nature conservation and transition to a sustainable economy.



*VA-Miringuava - State of Parana - Brazil*



*VA-Guanabara - State of Rio de Janeiro - Brazil*

By building on a co-creation logic, the actions' development considers the needs of multiple players and seeks integrated solutions for the posed challenges. This approach is changing the behaviour of the local communities involved, which are switching from an individual to a collective mindset, and recognizing sustainable practices as means to improve their livelihoods. Viva Agua has been influencing companies in transforming their dependencies on natural capital into positive impacts on biodiversity, also contributing to economic development in a sustainable and purposeful way.

For each operating region, a dedicated fund has been established to receive investments from both the private and public sectors, thus speeding up the actions' implementation. Managed by financial organizations, these funds operate within a framework of venture philanthropy and/or revolving fund logic. The Viva Agua Miringuava fund, established in 2019, has mobilized over USD\$ 1 million to date, with USD\$ 601,000 already invested within the territory. Similarly, the Viva Agua Guanabara fund, launched in 2022, has seen investments totalling over USD\$ 402,000, with USD\$ 153,000 already invested within the territory.

### *Intended Impacts*

Looking forward to 2030, VA-Miringuava targets the reduction of average water turbidity by 20%, alongside the consolidation of 3 sustainable markets focusing on sustainable agriculture, responsible tourism, and ecological restoration through carbon offsetting. The initiative also seeks to conserve 1,500 hectares of natural areas and restore 650 hectares strategically important for water availability, while promoting sustainable agriculture across 500 hectares. Additionally, VA plans to support the strengthening of 30 impact businesses within the region.

Similarly, in the Guanabara Bay area, VA aims to deliver significant positive impacts by 2030. These include providing essential ecosystem services such as water quality maintenance, erosion control, water regulation, flood and landslide prevention, coastal resilience, and cultural preservation. Furthermore, the initiative endeavours to strengthen socio-environmental governance in the bay

area, fostering connections between various sectoral agendas. Leveraging private, public, and philanthropic financial resources, VA seeks to create a sense of pride and engagement among the population of Guanabara Bay, encouraging active participation in the protection of the territory and belief in its potential.

### VA-Miringuava

In the Miringuava Watershed, Viva Agua's efforts since 2022 have focused on ecological restoration, with 75 hectares of Atlantic Forest currently undergoing restoration. Part of this process is leveraged by an offsetting mechanism, developed to offset corporate emissions. Additionally, partners of VA-Miringuava are strengthening the conservation of 133 hectares of strategic natural areas for water availability through a payment scheme for environmental services. Between 2020 and 2021, 100 local farmers have taken part in a capacity building process with regards to innovation and technology for sustainable agriculture. In 2022, Viva Agua has started to activate 2 sustainable markets - agriculture and tourism. In the same year, Guaviva, an initiative to leverage marketing of sustainable agricultural products, was created. It consists of a hybrid mechanism based upon markets and delivery of products' bags, both in schools, companies and offices. So far, this business has involved 9 local entrepreneurs; delivered 29 markets and 381 bags; and earned an income of over USD\$ 6,000.



*Ecological restoration at VA-Miringuava.  
Photographer: Gabriel Marchi*



*Miringuava River.  
Photographer: Boticario Group Foundation*

Moreover, in 2022, a set of strategic guidelines was developed to strengthen responsible tourism in the region until 2027. The next step built capacity in responsible tourism, including social, economic and environmental aspects, among 6 local entrepreneurs, resulting in the region's first responsible tourism route (*Destino Miringuava*), launched in 2023.

To keep strengthening responsible tourism and sustainable agriculture, VA mobilized around USD\$ 200,000 in 2023. This project benefitted 12 local entrepreneurs with seed capital, which was invested in sustainable projects within their enterprises. The businesses were also strengthened through mentoring sessions on marketing and financial topics. Additionally, 4 workshops were carried out and opened to a broader audience, to inspire a sustainable future for the Miringuava region.

So far, VA-Miringuava has benefited 154 land owners including 43 women. Twelve local businesses were strengthened, 24 partnerships were established and over USD\$ 1.4 million was raised.

In terms of engaging the local corporate sector, between 2020 and 2022, Viva Agua worked with a partner to strengthen their interest through several studies connecting climate change and adaptation with their realities. The initiative promoted studies to understand: how local companies relate to water resources, climate change and sustainability; and the [concept of Nature-based Solutions and its role in promoting climate resilience, water security and economic benefits in the Miringuava Region](#). Two workshops with local companies were carried out on "Climate Risk and Adaptation with emphasis on water security", and 3 companies were assisted on identifying climate risks and developing guidelines for management and adaptation measures. This has led to the publication of 3 case studies. A financial plan until 2030 was also developed to support and guide every member and project in terms of fundraising to achieve the planned targets.

### VA-Guanabara

In Guanabara Bay, one of VA's main challenges has been addressing plastic pollution, as the Bay is one of the world's largest dischargers of plastic into the sea. In response to this, VA supported, within the "Orla Sem Lixo" project, the installation of a 300-meter-long pilot barrier capable of intercepting 1 t of floating plastic waste per day. The project involves 96 artisanal fishermen in waste collection logistics, generating a new income source for them.



*Viva                      Agua*  
*Photographer: Suzanna Tierie*

*Guanabara.*



*Viva                      Agua*  
*Photographer: André Dias*

*Guanabara.*

Another important priority is supporting sustainable businesses in the territory. Consequently, in 2021, a sustainable business assessment was carried out and 69 businesses were mapped. As a result, 3 acceleration cycles of impact businesses took place in subsequent years, strengthening 26 enterprises.

In 2022, along with this strategy, VA-Guanabara also launched the Consilium of Waters, an open innovation environment, currently with 8 participants, which aims to generate positive socio-



environmental impact in the region through the exchange of ideas and co-creation of solutions for common challenges between impact businesses.

Another priority of VA-Guanabara is addressing ecological restoration, conservation of ecosystems and nature-based solutions. To address these challenges, 3 innovative ecological restoration solutions were developed and financially supported between 2023 and 2025, totalling USD\$154,000. This financial support aims to improve and scale up the solutions, while promoting local economy through ecotourism practices, agroforestry systems, and socio-biodiversity value chains.

In 2022, to increase Guanabara's Bay visibility, the initiative started the implementation of a 100-km-long trail, alongside the launch of the web series "[The Bay that Resists](#)" and a study highlighting the importance of 117 protected areas for water and biodiversity in Guanabara Bay.

Collaborating with several stakeholders, VA-Guanabara has invested over USD\$ 1 million in the territory, leveraging private, public, and philanthropic resources. In addition to these important local results, VA-Guanabara also participated in the development of the study on [Philanthropy Operating Archetypes](#) in partnership with Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, contributing to the field of strategic philanthropy.

### *Special Recognition*

Viva Agua's impact extends far beyond the boundaries of the Miringuava Watershed and the Guanabara Bay hydrographic region, gathering attention and recognition at various nature conservation events globally. Notable appearances include serving as a case study at Climate COP26 in Glasgow, Scotland, featured in the side event "Multi-level action for biodiversity and climate: Planetary challenge & lessons from Latin America", and at Climate COP27 in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, as part of the panel "Bringing nature-based climate action to cities in challenging times". Moreover, Viva Agua showcased its achievements at the Biodiversity COP15 in Montreal, Canada, illustrating how Brazilian companies contribute to biodiversity conservation and promote a Nature Positive economy. The initiative has also been presented at important events such as the UrbanShift Latin America Forum in 2024, the Latin American Water Funds Alliance Workshop in Colombia in 2023, and the NYC Climate Week in 2023. VA's presence has been acknowledged in various publications highlighting its pioneering role in promoting sustainable practices and environmental stewardship. Some examples are: "[Cities of the Future: Nature-based Solutions helping to tackle the climate emergency](#)" by Urban Bioconnection Alliance and Boticario Group Foundation in 2023; "[Bioeconomy, Nature and Businesses](#)" by the Federation of Industries of Rio de Janeiro State (Firjan) in 2023; "[The role of structuring organizations in strengthening local impact investment and business ecosystems](#)", by the Corporate Citizenship Institute (ICE) in 2022; and "[Nature-based Solutions for Business](#)" by the Brazilian Business Council for Sustainable Development (CEBDS) in 2021.

### *Project Team*

The current core team behind the Viva Agua Initiative (VAI) comprises individuals with diverse expertise and backgrounds, all dedicated to driving positive change in environmental conservation and sustainable development. The founding members of VAI include Andre Ferretti, a Forest

Engineer serving as the Senior Manager at the Boticario Group Foundation (BGF); Guilherme Karam, a Biologist who holds the position of Manager at BGF; Anke Salzmänn, also a Forest Engineer, serves as the Program Manager at BGF; Thiago Valente, a Biologist who holds the role of Program Manager at BGF; Luiz Weber, specialized in Social Communications and Journalism, works with Institutional Relations at BGF; Mariana Benzoni, with a background in International Relations, serves as a Project Analyst at BGF; and Rubiane Spina, specialized in Public Relations, serves as a Project Analyst at BGF. Currently, the initiative is under coordination of André Dias, a tourism expert, who holds the position of Project Analyst at BGF, and André Ferretti. Furthermore, VAI also benefits from the contributions of external members, totaling approximately 70 individuals. These external members contribute to the initiative with their knowledge and experience from various sectors, enriching the VA's collaborative efforts towards achieving its goals in environmental sustainability and community engagement.

### Outlook Future

Viva Agua has demonstrated its effectiveness as a social technology, promoting water security and climate change adaptation in critical Brazilian watersheds. Its inclusive governance framework and financial mechanism, founded on principles of co-creation, have facilitated an environment where stakeholders from various sectors come together to address common challenges.

To extend the reach and maximize positive impacts nationally, Viva Agua plans to consolidate the experiences, results, and success factors of both initiatives into a comprehensive national governance framework. By 2030, this framework aims to establish and reinforce a collaborative network of local governance structures dedicated to promote water security in 6 strategic watersheds across Brazil.

### Some highlights of Viva Agua in the media:

- World Water Day: Find out what actions help to tackle river and ocean pollution (in Portuguese).  
<https://www.superacessoinfo.com.br/supervisualizador/visualizador.aspx?idanalisesubcanal=24683710&idemail=4088>
- Study shows that riparian forests help to keep the water volume of river in dry seasons (in Portuguese).  
<https://www.superacessoinfo.com.br/supervisualizador/visualizador.aspx?idanalisesubcanal=24683710&idemail=4088>  
<https://www.gazetadopovo.com.br/curitiba/como-agricultores-vao-plantar-agua-para-ajudar-captacao-da-barragem-do-miringuava>
- Trail “Caminho Reconcavo da Guanabara” combines environmental restoration, ecotourism and sustainable development (in Portuguese).  
<https://oglobo.globo.com/um-so-planeta/noticia/2022/12/trilha-de-longa-distancia-vai-unir-reservas-ecologicas-da-baixada-ao-municipio-de-cachoeiras-de-macacu.ghtml>
- A long-distance trail will link ecological reserves in the Guanabara Bay (in Portuguese).  
<https://umsoplaneta.globo.com/sociedade/noticia/2022/12/06/trilha-caminho-do-reconcavo-da-guanabara-une-regeneracao-ambiental-ecoturismo-e-desenvolvimento-sustentavel.ghtml>

- Ecological restoration in the Miringuava Watershed (in Portuguese).  
<https://ciclovivo.com.br/planeta/meio-ambiente/plantio-de-mudas-nativas-ajuda-a-restaurar-bacia-do-rio-miringuava/>
- Ecological restoration helps small-scale farmers in the Miringuava Watershed (in Portuguese).  
<https://bandnewsfmc Curitiba.com/restauracao-ecologica-na-bacia-do-rio-miringuava-ajuda-agricultores/>
- Six inspiring examples of land use and conservation (in Portuguese).  
<https://ciclovivo.com.br/planeta/meio-ambiente/6-exemplos-inspiradores-para-o-uso-e-conservacao-do-solo/>
- Boticario Group Foundation emphasizes the importance of sustainable practices (in Portuguese).  
<https://exame.com/esg/fundacao-grupo-boticario-ressalta-a-importancia-do-aumento-de-ambicoes-sustentaveis-diz-executivo/>
- Conserved soil is essential to guarantee water, food and climate resilience (in Portuguese).  
<https://www.segs.com.br/demais/373529-solo-conservado-e-essencial-para-garantir-agua-alimentos-e-resiliencia-climatica>
- Barrier to contain garbage is installed in the Guanabara Bay (in Portuguese).  
<https://ciclovivo.com.br/inovacao/inspiracao/projeto-instala-barreira-para-conter-lixo-na-baia-de-guanabara-rj/>

#### **VA-Miringuava Expert Source**

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