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Geoconservation in Brazil: a slow but consistent trail towards the success

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The difficulties to implement a geoconservation strategy in Brazil are obvious: a huge territory with 8,5 million sq.km, existence of vast areas with difficult accessibility implying a limited geological knowledge of these areas and a small geoscientific community — considering the country's size — traditionally focused on mining issues. In spite these difficulties, during recent years some important changes were introduced. Concerning the inventory of geological heritage, the Brazilian Commission of Geological and Palaeobiological Sites (SIGEP) is assembling and publishing since 2002 a geosites list already with 110 sites. The geological survey (CPRM) is finishing an online database (Geossit) to compile the geological characterisation and assessment of geosites. In addition, there are some isolated initiatives in some of the 27 Brazilian states. For instance, in São Paulo a special legislation was approved to allow the creation of "Geological Monuments". In Rio de Janeiro the "Geological Paths" programme has installed over 100 interpretative panels in some of the most touristic geosites of this state. The biennial national geological congress has a special session on geoheritage since 2006, registering an increasing number of papers. The number of regional and local scientific events is also remarkable. In universities, the offer of optional courses on geoconservation and geotourism in geology, geography, and tourism graduations is increasing each year. In the University of São Paulo, a post-graduation on geoconservation will begin next school year. Finally, there are multiple opportunities and ongoing projects to develop geoparks and to increase the presence of Brazil in the Global Geoparks Network, besides the Araripe Geopark.