# PIAUÍ

## FROM THE PAST TO A GLOBAL FUTURE

**ECONOMIC METAMORPHOSIS**

Investments in technology, infrastructure and educatio are transforming Piauí.

**SERRA DA CAPIVARA OPERA**

Every year, Serra da Capivara becomes an open-air for the show.

**EDUCATION REVOLUTION**

The state of Piauí was the first territory in the Americas to implement AI teaching in basic education.

COMMERCIAL CONTENT
Publico [estúdio]p

# SEU INVESTIMENTO TEM LOCALIZAÇÃO CERTA

*YOUR INVESTMENT IS IN THE RIGHT PLACE*

No **coração do Nordeste** e fazendo fronteira com cinco estados, o **Piauí** se consolida como um **hub logístico** natural para toda a região. Com **posição geográfica estratégica**, o estado oferece segurança, eficiência e escala para quem busca investir em um território rico em **recursos** e com um **governo inovador e digital** comprometido em criar as melhores condições para **novos negócios.**

*Located in the **heart of Brazil's Northeast** and bordering five states, Piauí has established itself as a natural **logistics hub** for the entire region. Its **strategic location** offers security, efficiency, and scale for investors seeking opportunities in a resource-rich territory supported by an innovative, **digital government committed** to creating the best conditions for **new businesses.***

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InvestePiauí

GOVERNO DO PIAUÍ
AQUI TEM TRABALHO. AQUI TEM FUTURO.

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EDITORIAL

### PIAUÍ, A FORCE OF NATURE

The Serra da Capivara Opera is a perfect metaphor for the aspirations of the Brazilian state of Piauí: once a year the beautiful Serra da Capivara, a blend of pure nature and World Heritage, becomes the backdrop to a modern and daring show that transforms this ancient space. Past and future come together. Not as rupture, but as a natural transformation in which ancestral roots are not forgotten. Because here, the future which is sought is anchored in itself. It is this duality – past and future – that inspired this magazine and serves as the common thread to an issue which showcases the unexplored beauty of a Brazilian Northeast little known to Europeans, as well as how the state strives for development that can bring prosperity to all, harnessing local potential to become a model for modern day Brazil.


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# 12 FACTS ABOUT PIAUÍ

**Learn more about this state located in northeastern Brazil, which boasts unique landscapes such as Serra da Capivara, a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1991, and is currently an emerging and vibrant hub of innovation.**

## HISTORY

**1. Piauí played a decisive role in Brazil's independence**

Brazil's independence was declared on 7 September 1822 by Dom Pedro I – Dom Pedro IV in Portugal – but it did not take place immediately or uniformly throughout the territory of the former colony. In the north and northeast, the process was slower, more tense and, in many cases, marked by armed resistance. Piauí occupies a unique place in this context: on 19 October 1822, the city of Parnaíba made a decisive political gesture by proclaiming Piauí's adherence to independence, at a time when much of the region was still under Portuguese control; institutional consolidation took place on 24 January 1823, when Oeiras, then the capital of Piauí, also joined.

**2. The Battle of Jenipapo: one of the bloodiest clashes**

The Portuguese reaction culminated in the most dramatic episode of the struggle in the state of Piauí: the Battle of Jenipapo, fought on 13 March 1823, in Campo Maior, between cattlemen, backwoodsmen, farmers and soldiers from Piauí against Portuguese troops. The Portuguese won the battle but lost the war thanks to the guerrilla tactics of the Piauí people who, after the fighting, seized the Portuguese weapons, ammunition, money and baggage and forced them to withdraw from Piauí. Although Piauí Day is celebrated on 19 October, the date of 13 March 1823 occupies a central place in the historical memory of the state and, in recognition of the sacrifice of the people of Piauí, is inscribed on the flag by law.

# NATURE AND HERITAGE

**3. Serra da Capivara protects the Caatinga, one of the country's biomes**

Covering 130,000 hectares, Serra da Capivara is located in the south-east of the state of Piauí, about 530 km from the capital, Teresina. The area is part of one of Brazil's 75 national parks and is among the ten that protect the Caatinga, one of the country's six biomes. Dense vegetation coexists with gigantic canyons, islands of forests and savannahs, grey and black marble hills, as well as lagoons and natural springs. The fauna and flora are rich and representative of the region: ocelots, armadillos, rock cavies (*Kerodon rupestris*), seriemas, jaguars (*Panthera onca*) and pumas (*Puma concolor*), oncilla (*Leopardus tigrinus*), snakes and bats coexist with Brazilian pepper trees, xiquexique and mandacaru (*Cereus jamacaru*) cacti and juazeiro trees (*Ziziphus joazeiro*).

**4. It has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1991**

Serra da Capivara is home to one of the most important archaeological sites in the Americas, with vestiges that shed light on man's arrival on the continent. The discoveries at the Boqueirão da Pedra Furada Archaeological Site, for example, support the hypothesis that it may have been populated 60,000 years ago. Around 400 archaeological sites have been found in the area, most of which contain panels of rock paintings and engravings. Created in 1979 and demarcated in 1990 to preserve these traces, the Serra da Capivara National Park is listed in the Archaeological, Ethnographic and Landscape Register of the Brazilian Institute of Historic and Artistic Heritage, IPHAN. On 13 December 1991, it was added to the UNESCO's World Heritage List.

**5. Serra da Capivara is listed in the "Nature with People" programme**

The programme was created by the Brazilian Federal Government in September 2025 as a partnership between the Chico Mendes Institute for Biodiversity Conservation (ICMBio) and the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change, with support from the Ministry of Tourism, with the aim of strengthening sustainable tourism in protected areas. It includes suggestions for ecotourism, wellness tourism, community-based tourism, scientific tourism, rural tourism and wildlife viewing. In 2024, more than 25.5 million people visited these conservation units in Brazil.

**6. The Parnaíba Delta is unique in the Americas**

Another natural wonder of Piauí, the Parnaíba Delta, where the river branches into five main arms before flowing into the ocean, is the only open sea delta in the Americas. Formed by more than 80 river islands, mangroves and dunes, it creates a labyrinth that can be reached by boat trips, allowing access to its rich biodiversity, with birds, alligators, crabs and the majestic flight of the scarlet ibises (*Eudocimus ruber*) at sunset.

**130 THOUSAND**
hectares: the area of Serra da Capivara National Park

**400**
archaeological sites in Serra da Capivara, most with on-site rock paintings

**530**
km from Teresina, the state capital, to the Park

# CUISINE

**7. Flour: the foundation of Piauí Gastronomy**
Piauís'cuisine differs from others in the northeast in that it specialises in the constant use of cassava flour, both white cassava flour and fermented cassava flour (farinha de água), produced in cities such as Altos and Alto Longá. From north to south, the state has a diverse menu, ranging from rustic flavours of the hinterland, based on farm-raised meat such as mutton/goat, traditional free-range chicken (galinha caipira) and capote (guinea fowl, galinha d'Angola), to fish and seafood dishes that satisfy the most demanding palates. "Our cuisine tells the story and speaks of the roots of Piauí, showing that creativity does not depend on an abundance of ingredients. Each dish carries a little of this trajectory, from the hinterland to the coast, with flavours that symbolise resistance, affection and pride," says Chef Igor Rocha, who has represented Piauí at national and international events.

**8. Maria Isabel rice: countryside creativity**
Maria Isabel is a signature dish that combines rice, sun-dried beef (carne de sol) and distinctive seasonings. Born out of simplicity and rural creativity, it has become a staple at parties, Sunday lunches and official events. For Chef Igor Rocha, the recipe captures the essence of the state. "Maria Isabel represents the resilience, creativity and history of the people of Piauí, who knew how to adapt simple ingredients to their way of life and climate, creating a dish full of identity." According to one version, the dish is a tribute to Maria Isabel Thomázia de Seixas, wife of Simplício Dias, who joined the Independence movement. The delicacy is traditionally paired with Cajuína, one of the most refreshing and traditional drinks in Piauí, made from clarified and sterilised cashew juice, free from alcohol, preservatives or added sugar. A symbol of the state's cultural heritage, Cajuína is celebrated for its unique clarity and amber hue, having been immortalised by the Brazilian singer Caetano Veloso in his eponymous song.

## A TYPICAL PIAUí MENU

**CORN COUSCOUS**
Made with corn flour, water, butter and salt, it can be served with butter, eggs, milk or sun-dried beef (carne de sol)

**MARIA ISABEL**
Rice cooked with sun-dried beef and seasonings

**PAÇOCA DE PILÃO**
Sun-dried beef pounded with flour

**BAIÃO DE DOIS**
Rice and beans cooked together, with regional seasoning

**CAIPIRA CHICKEN**
Slow-cooked and well-seasoned free-range chicken

**GOAT**
Stewed or roasted goat meat, very common in the countryside

**CAPOTE**
Also known as guinea fowl (galinha d'Angola), often cooked with seasonings

**CASSAVA STARCH CAKE**
Cake made with cassava starch, a traditional recipe

**FRIED CAKE**
Starch biscuit cooked with eggs and water, then shaped (often into a braid) and fried

**ARTESANAL COUNTRY CHEESE (QUEIJO DO SERTÃO)**
Cured cheese with a firm texture and intense flavour

**CAJUÍNA**
Typical drink made from cashew juice

**ARTESANAL CACHAÇA**
A traditionally produced spirit distilled in pot stills

**9. IN BRAZIL AS IN PORTUGAL: PIAUÍ CITIES WITH PORTUGUESE NAMES**

Portugal and Piauí have a historical and cultural connection that goes back centuries. Among the clearest traces of this bond are the names bestowed upon several of Piauí's 224 cities.

**A. OEIRAS**
Named after the Marquis of Pombal, who was also Count of Oeiras, it was the first capital of the state of Piauí until 1852 and the cradle of Portuguese colonisation in the region, until the seat of government was transferred to Teresina.

**B. CAMPO MAIOR**
As in the Alentejo town, the natives of Campo Maior in Piauí – the scene of the Battle of Jenipapo, which was decisive in consolidating the independence of northern and north-eastern Brazil – are also called campomaiorenses.

**C. AMARANTE**
Named after the Portuguese city and the Portuguese saint São Gonçalo of Amarante, it reflects the transfer of cultural and devotional references from Portugal.

**D. PORTO**
There is also a Porto in Piauí, whose inhabitants are called portuenses, like those of the northern Portuguese city.

**E. BATALHA**
The origin of the name of this city in Piauí, with a population of 27,000, is associated with the military and symbolic tradition of the Portuguese world, being a recurring place name in Portuguese-European history.

**F. CASTELO DO PIAUÍ**
Formerly called Marvão, in direct reference to the Portuguese fortified village in the Upper Alentejo. The change preserved the symbolic meaning of fortification and defence associated with the original place name.

**G. VALENÇA**
Another place name of Portuguese origin referring to the historic fortress city in northern Portugal, often used by the colonial administration to designate towns of strategic importance.

# CULTURE

**10. *Bumba Meu Boi*: a festival that blends Portuguese, African and indigenous cultures**

*Bumba Meu Boi* is a typically northeastern cultural manifestation, which originated in Piauí. It incorporates elements of Portuguese, African and indigenous cultural celebrations and tells, with many variations from region to region, the story of a pregnant woman, Catirina (Catarina in some versions), who asks her husband, Pai Chico (Mateus, in some versions), to eat ox tongue to protect the health of her unborn baby. Pai Chico then kills an ox, which dances and sings and makes the audience laugh, but the husband ends up being caught by the owner of the farm to which the animal belonged. However, the ox is resurrected, thanks to the actions of healers. Since 2023, the cultural manifestations surrounding *Bumba Meu Boi*, which include dances, music, parades and plays, have been recognised as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Piauí by a decree signed by Governor Rafael Fonteles. In the state of Maranhão, *Bumba Meu Boi* has been recognised since 2019.

**11. Pedro II Winter Festival**

The Pedro II Winter Festival has become a fixture on the Piauí calendar, featuring local and national artists. Despite Piauí's semi-arid climate, temperatures in the city of Pedro II are milder for the region during the summer. In 2025, big names in Brazilian music, such as Marina Elali and Eduardo Lages, Baco Exu do Blues, Biquíni Cavadão, Xande de Pilares, Criolo, Nenhum de Nós, Samuel Rosa and the Detonautas, visited the city. In the past, Erasmo Carlos, Jorge Ben Jor, Ana Carolina, Alcione, Vanessa da Mata, Fagner, and Paralamas do Sucesso also shone in Pedro II.

**12. The creativity of Piauí**

Piauí has a continuous line of creativity in art and entertainment that spans generations, languages, and platforms. From Torquato Neto, the 60's and 70's composer and poet who represents Brazilian cultural modernity, as a counterculture intellectual deeply connected to Tropicalia movement and 20th-century avant-garde cinema; to comedian and YouTuber Whindersson Nunes, who personifies the reinvention of that same creative power in the digital age of mass communication, breaking with formats through popular humour. Piauí is a place where culture is born, reinvents itself and dialogues with the world, yesterday through poetry and music, today through humour and social media.

INTERVIEW

# "WE ARE ONE OF BRAZIL'S MOST PROMISING STATES"

**Rafael Fonteles, governor of Piauí, lists the advantages of the state and the policies adopted by his administration to attract foreign investment. "Piauí has a unique combination of untapped potential and a stable environment," he says.**

**What does your state have to offer investors?**
Piauí is currently one of Brazil's most promising states. We have abundant natural resources, significant competitive advantages and offer a dynamic and secure business environment. We are a powerhouse of renewable energy, with vast areas for agricultural production and livestock farming. With access to the coast and proximity to important markets in the north and northeast, and to countries such as Portugal and Spain, Piauí is a rising logistics hub, especially with the expansion of our road and port infrastructure. We have an attractive tax incentive policy and innovative management by a proactive government which has been cutting red tape to facilitate the establishment and development of new ventures. We are also investing heavily in education and professional training, with the aim of qualifying our workers for the demands of new economic sectors.

**Which economic sectors would you highlight?**
Renewable energy, agribusiness, tourism, minerals, technology and innovation. We are located in one of the world's most privileged regions for harvesting solar energy and have strong, constant winds practically all year. This provides Piauí with the conditions to be one of the major global players in the green economy. We get 99.75% of our electricity from renewable sources and are currently one of the largest producers of wind and solar energy in the country. In agribusiness, we have vast areas of fertile land and a favourable climate, with steady growth in grain production, especially soybeans and corn, and beef and dairy cattle farming. We are strongly encouraging the implementation of large agro-industrial projects, especially in meat and dairy products, which have enormous potential to attract private investment. In tourism, we have natural riches and beauty ranging from the coastline – one of the most beautiful and well-preserved in the country – to the Serra da Capivara National Park, which boasts the oldest traces of human presence in the Americas. We have enormous potential in the mining sector, currently exporting iron to China, the United States and other countries, and the Brazilian Geological Service recently identified traces of rare earth elements in the state, including graphite, copper, manganese and zinc, which are strategic minerals in the production and sale of electric cars. We are also fostering an ecosystem of start-ups and research centres focused on expanding and improving public services, which creates a favourable environment for attracting investment in technology applied to production and services.

> "WE ARE LOCATED IN ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST PRIVILEGED REGIONS FOR HARVESTING SOLAR ENERGY

**What sets Piauí apart from other states?**
The unique combination of untapped potential with an environment of stability and a proactive government. Piauí still has vast swathes of underutilised or little-exploited natural resources, such as renewable energy, mining and agriculture. In addition, our government has a strategic development plan focused on sustainability and attracting high value-added investments. Investments in technology and innovation, digital management, and full-time public education with technical training associated with the potential of each region, for example, demonstrate our government's ability to create the conditions for integrated development. The expansion of the Port of Luís Correia and the creation of a green industry hub are concrete examples that place us at the forefront of regional and national development.

**Is Portuguese investment a strategic part of this?**
Yes, as is European investment in general. The cultural and linguistic proximity, historical connections and the ties that bind us create an environment of trust and mutual understanding that facilitates negotiations and investor adaptation. We have organised trade missions to European countries, including Portugal, to talk to governments, companies and public and private institutions. These contacts open up excellent business prospects and have also allowed us to better understand where the world is heading and to what extent we can meet the future needs of these countries. Europe, for example, with its strong sustainability agenda, has an ideal partner in Piauí. Our projects in renewable energy and green industry are perfectly aligned with European guidelines and investment funds.

**The Federal Government is led by Lula da Silva, who is from your party. To what extent can this coincidence help business in Piauí?**
This is an extremely positive and strategic factor for Piauí. We are from the same party and share the same ideal of public management focused on economic and social growth, in order to benefit society as a whole and, in particular, those most in need. This harmony allows for more fluid and effective coordination for the release of resources, the prioritisation of projects of interest to the state, and the coordination of policies that benefit the population and favour business. When the state and the federal government are in harmony, the environment becomes safer and more predictable for investors.

**You were the chairman of the Northeast Consortium, which represents the interests of the nine northeastern states. Did this give you an overview?**
That was both an honour for me and a unique opportunity for Piauí. The leadership of the Consortium enables us to articulate interests, promote coordinated development policies and seek investments that benefit the entire region. For this reason, our management focused on unifying agendas in areas such as renewable energy, infrastructure, water security, tourism and innovation, strengthening the northeast as a bloc.

**How important is energy transition for Piauí?**
It is one of the pillars of our model for attracting foreign investment. The Brazilian Government's commitment to decarbonisation and the green economy finds fertile ground in Piauí. We have unrivalled potential for solar and wind energy production and are rapidly advancing to become a centre of production for the green industry. Global demand for clean solutions is growing. And foreign investors, especially from Europe and Asia, are eager for projects that combine profitability and sustainability.

**Both the current Trump administration and the previous Brazilian Government were against multilateralism. Has this climate damaged international partnerships?**
We can't deny that periods such as those experienced during past administrations can generate uncertainty and, in some ways, hinder international partnerships. However, President Lula's return to power and the resumption of dialogue and cooperation open doors for states such as ours to move forward with greater confidence in their partnership agendas and to attract investment. Since the beginning of our administration in 2023, we have carried out 16 international trade missions, making direct contact with governments, institutions, companies, and investment funds.

**The traditional image of Brazil is of a climate of fiscal uncertainty and infrastructure deficits. Does this pose a challenge to foreign investment in the northeast?**
We are working to mitigate these factors in Piauí. We have sought to maintain responsible fiscal management, with efficiency and predictability. We are committed to creating a stable and secure regulatory environment that minimises risks for investors. As for the infrastructure deficit, we are investing like never before in logistics and connectivity. Current priorities are the modernisation and expansion of the Port of Luís Correia, the construction and restoration of motorways and railways, the resumption of waterways, and investments in energy and telecommunications. We have concrete projects that demonstrate our ability to overcome challenges and offer attractive infrastructure for foreign investment.

> "PIAUÍ STILL HAS VAST SWATHES OF UNDER-UTILISED OR LITTLE-EXPLOITED NATURAL RESOURCES

# THE WONDERS OF PIAUÍ: DISCOVER A DIFFERENT BRAZIL

**From the Parnaíba Delta to the Serra da Capivara, Piauí has plenty to offer. With a vibrant culture and rich natural beauty, this northeastern state has been attracting more and more tourists.**

Pristine beaches, nature reserves, culture and authenticity. This is Piauí, a Brazilian state which is growing in notoriety and now increasingly features in more and more lists of must-see places to visit.

With an area larger than the entire United Kingdom and just over three million inhabitants, Piauí maintains its authenticity while investing in a transformation that, although designed for the future, seeks to be anchored in sustainability.

A territory with enormous tourist potential, Piauí brings together unique natural beauty, archaeological sites of global importance, rich culture and a population that preserves centuries-old traditions.

Discover just a few of them in this short itinerary and learn about a different Brazil!

## DREAMY BEACHES AND A ONE-OF-A-KIND DELTA IN THE AMERICAS

Despite having only 66 km of coastline, the smallest in Brazil, the coast of Piauí offers a range of attractions that go beyond the sun and sea, combining nature, cuisine and ecotourism, with a large number of ecosystems, notably the Parnaíba Delta.

With more than 80 islands, it is the only open sea delta in the Americas. A veritable ecological sanctuary, the Parnaíba Delta is a refuge for hundreds of species of flora and fauna, such as capuchin monkeys, alligators, and capybaras, but two species, the manatee and the scarlet ibis (*Eudocimus ruber*) stand out.

The flight of the scarlet ibises is the most sought-after natural spectacle in the Delta. Every day, at dusk, hundreds of birds of this red species colour the sky, providing a unique experience of contemplation. The manatee, also known as the sea cow, is an icon of the Parnaíba Delta, with an observation post and organised boat trips for observing the species. It is not uncommon to see other emblematic Piauí species such as botos (freshwater dolphins) or sea turtles, which lay their eggs on the coast. The Parnaíba Delta has much to offer, with quality infrastructure and services ready to welcome visitors.

# THE PARNAÍBA DELTA IS A REFUGE FOR HUNDREDS OF SPECIES OF FLORA AND FAUNA

SCARLET IBISES AT PARNAÍBA DELTA

## THE ROUTE OF EMOTIONS

Piauí has been strengthening its position in nature and experience tourism, focusing on the consolidation of integrated routes, such as the well-known Route of Emotions, a joint initiative of Sebrae (Brazilian Micro and Small Business Support Service) and the Brazilian Ministry of Tourism.

The Route of Emotions is a tourist itinerary created in 2015 that involves 14 municipalities in the states of Piauí, Ceará and Maranhão, a territory that brings together attractions such as the Parnaíba Delta Environmental Protection Area (Piauí), Jericoacoara National Park (Ceará) and Lençóis Maranhenses National Park (Maranhão).

The route was designed to be explored in different ways and according to the pace and adventurous spirit of each visitor: by jeep, buggy, bicycle, motorbike, bus or even on foot. The aim is to guarantee unique experiences, with activities linked to ecotourism, adventure tourism, beaches and outdoor sports.

**Find out more about the Route of Emotions**

INTERVIEW

**RODOLPHO OLIVEIRA SANTOS,**

CEO OF AEROPHB, WHICH MANAGES THE PARNAÍBA AIRPORT

**WHAT IS AEROPHB'S VISION FOR POSITIONING THE AIRPORT AS THE MAIN GATEWAY FOR TOURISM IN PIAUÍ IN THE COMING YEARS?**

We want to position Parnaíba Airport as the natural hub for access to the Route of Emotions and, consequently, as the main gateway to Piauí. Parnaíba is the entrance point to the Parnaíba Delta, a unique natural heritage site in the Americas. At the same time, the airport is a short distance from the state's main beaches, as well as being the most efficient point for distributing flows to other destinations on the Route of Emotions. We have a three-pronged strategy to achieve this goal: expanding and improving air connectivity and flight regularity; raising standards of comfort, services and efficiency in the terminal; and transforming the airport into a "starting point for travel" rather than just a point of passage, strengthening Parnaíba as a base for stays and a distribution platform for the entire region.

**WHAT ROLE DOES THE AIRPORT PLAY IN STRENGTHENING TOURIST ROUTES?**

Parnaíba will be the gateway to the coast of Piauí and the Route of Emotions and, from there, will connect to the interior — either through regional connections, commercial aviation or charter flights (short flights, integrated products, themed circuits). The airport thus plays a role in facilitating combined itineraries: beach, culture, nature, inland experiences, with reduced travel time and greater predictability — all of which transforms tourist routes into marketable, scalable and sustainable products.

**WHAT ARE THE MOST STRATEGIC AIR ROUTES TO OPEN OR CONSOLIDATE FROM PARNAÍBA?**

I would highlight three routes: Fortaleza, São Paulo and Europe. Fortaleza is the most strategic route to consolidate now, because it is the closest international hub to Piauí, functioning as an immediate bridge for the main inflows (Europe and domestic connections). São Paulo is the largest centre for domestic connections and represents volume (tourism and business) and reach (connections to all of Brazil).

Europe is our disruptive medium-term vision. Parnaíba is the Brazilian airport closest to Europe, merely a five-and-a-half-hour flight from Lisbon. This proximity opens up the possibility of operating to the continent, including from secondary airports in Europe, which often have more competitive rates and direct access to the right audience (experience tourism, nature, sports, premium itineraries). Europe represents the structural leap that can reposition the region on the global tourism map.

**HOW CAN WE ENSURE THAT TOURISM GROWTH VIA PARNAÍBA IS SUSTAINABLE AND BENEFITS THE LOCAL ECONOMY?**

Unlike many destinations in Brazil, which experienced disorderly growth, the coast of Piauí has an above-average infrastructure and organisation. This makes it easier for new projects to be implemented under greater regulatory scrutiny, with higher environmental requirements and compliance standards. Added to this is a characteristic that defines the territory: its natural vocation for ecotourism, which by definition values preservation, authenticity and low degradation, conditioning the very type of growth that makes sense for the region. Tourism is one of the economic areas with the greatest capacity to distribute gains throughout the real economy, particularly in the hotel, restaurant, transport, handicraft, trade and culture sectors. It is also a major creator of jobs, including for young people and workers at the beginning of their careers, which makes development more inclusive and in line with the regional reality.

PARNAÍBA DELTA

POTI RIVER CANYON

Like many places by the sea, the Parnaíba Delta has dunes, but these are no ordinary dunes. In the far north of Piauí, between the cities of Parnaíba and Luís Correia, lie the Lençóis Piauienses. Imagine a desert of gigantic dunes, where, between each one, instead of sand, there are crystal-clear lagoons that turn into natural pools during the rainy season. These formations are extremely beautiful and photogenic, an irresistible magnet for anyone visiting Piauí.

The coast of Piauí owes much of its fame to its idyllic beaches with warm, crystal-clear waters and fine white sand, typical of the north-eastern region.

Perfect for holidays year-round, the beaches of Piauí are ideal for both those seeking relaxation and those who enjoy water sports such as surfing, windsurfing, kitesurfing or stand-up paddle boarding. The best-known beaches in the state are Pedra do Sal, Atalaia, Coqueiro, Barra Grande, Barrinha and Macapá.

The gateway to the Piauí coast is the city of Parnaíba, popularly known as the "Capital of the Delta", as it is from there that boat trips depart to visit the park. Visiting the city of Parnaíba is like taking a trip back in time. The town has great historical value, with numerous monuments, such as Porto das Barcas (preserved colonial houses), the Sea Museum (where you can learn about the relationship between the local inhabitants, the rivers and the sea) and the Quarenta Market (a popular shopping area where you can find regional products and taste traditional dishes).

## PARNAÍBA IS THE CLOSEST BRAZILIAN AIRPORT TO EUROPE

↑

### THE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF PARNAÍBA AIRPORT

The most direct way to reach the coast of Piauí is via the Prefeito Dr João Silva Filho Airport. The terminal's infrastructure handles aircraft of different sizes, receiving regular flights, seasonal operations and charters. In recent years, the airport has undergone a complete overhaul and continues to expand, becoming more efficient, comfortable and adapted to expected growth.

A logistics complex and an aeronautical maintenance hub are also under development, expanding the airport's role beyond passenger boarding and disembarking, creating an operational support hub and increasing its attractiveness to airlines.

# INTERIOR OF PIAUÍ: NATURE IN ITS PUREST STATE

The interior of Piauí holds some of its most surprising treasures — a destination where nature, history and culture come together in a grand and unforgettable way. Visiting this region means stepping outside the obvious and exploring an ancestral, beautiful and still little-known Brazil. A destination that excites, inspires and leaves a lasting impression.

In the interior of Piauí you will find the Serra da Capivara National Park, classified as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO, this is a true open-air museum. Its rock formations sculpted by time and thousands of cave paintings tell stories that date back tens of thousands of years, offering a fascinating journey to the origins of human presence in the Americas.

The main attraction of Serra da Capivara is the more than a thousand cave paintings of great aesthetic and historical value, painted or engraved on sandstone walls and rocky outcrops. It is the largest concentration of archaeological sites currently known in the Americas and one of the largest in the world. The park's landscape is also noteworthy for its unique geomorphology, with sandstone formations, deep canyons and gorges.

The park is located in a biome called Caatinga, characterised by a semi-arid climate and unique species of fauna and flora. Armadillos, anteaters, ocelots, brocket deer, capuchin monkeys and jaguars are some of the animals found in Serra da Capivara.

Getting to Serra da Capivara has become easier since 2023, when Serra da Capivara Airport, located in São Raimundo Nonato, began to receive more regular domestic flights.

# VISITING THIS REGION MEANS STEPPING OUTSIDE THE OBVIOUS AND EXPLORING AN ANCESTRAL, BEAUTIFUL AND STILL LITTLE-KNOWN BRAZIL.

VIANA CANYONS

Crédito: Thiago Amaral

SERRA DAS CONFUSÕES NATIONAL PARK

The infrastructure has boosted conventional tourism in the region, as well as consolidating scientific and educational tourism, attracting researchers and students interested in the local archaeological discoveries.

The Serra das Confusões National Park, near Serra da Capivara, dazzles with its wild and preserved nature. It is the largest national park in Piauí, as well as in the Brazilian Northeast, and the largest reserve of the Caatinga biome in Brazil. It contains several archaeological sites, canyons (notably the Viana Canyons, a valley formed by millions of years of river erosion), walking trails and viewpoints.

Further north, the heart of Piauí is served by the Teresina Airport, which connects Teresina, the state capital and largest urban agglomeration, to other capitals such as Fortaleza, Recife and São Paulo. The highlights in this region are the Sete Cidades National Park and the Poti River Canyon. The Sete Cidades National Park is known for its curious rock formations, which resemble human and animal figures, sparking the imagination of visitors.

The site is home to cave paintings and archaeological sites, reinforcing the importance of Piauí as a fundamental territory for understanding human history.

Finally, not far from Sete Cidades Park, is the Poti River Canyon, with its 60-metre-high rock walls. Some rocks feature engravings, different from those found in Sete Cidades Park or Serra da Capivara, as they were carved in bas-relief into the rocks on the slopes.

INTERVIEW

## MÁRIO MIGUEL

MANAGER OF THE LUZEIROS HOTEL CHAIN

**WITH PIAUÍ SHOWING GROWTH IN TOURISM, CAN THE LUZEIROS CHAIN SERVE AS AN ANCHOR FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT?**

In recent years, there has been an increase in the visibility of Piauí as a destination, but there is still room to expand and improve infrastructure and services, especially in the hotel industry. This creates a clear opportunity for investments that contribute to professionalising the sector and enhancing the visitor's experience. The Luzeiros chain is already an anchor for tourism development in north-eastern Brazil, with its flagship establishments in São Luís do Maranhão, Fortaleza and Recife.

A well-structured, high-quality hotel chain acts as a catalyst for tourism development. Our units encourage tourists to stay longer in different destinations, and create new direct and indirect jobs, while helping to develop services such as transport, catering and commerce.

**IF YOU COULD CHOOSE TWO PRIORITIES TO BOOST TOURISM IN PIAUÍ, WHAT WOULD THEY BE?**

The first would be to invest heavily in infrastructure and the quality of tourist services, with a focus on hotels, as the visitor's experience needs to be consistent throughout their stay. The second would be to promote Piauí as a destination, highlighting the state's unique characteristics, which would include integrated campaigns, participation in international tourism fairs and strengthening Piauí as an authentic, sustainable and safe destination.

**WHICH ROUTES AND CONNECTIONS ARE MOST CRUCIAL FOR TOURISM GROWTH?**

Air connections are essential, especially direct routes between Teresina and major centres such as São Paulo, Brasília, or Fortaleza. This strengthens both leisure and corporate tourism. In terms of road transport, it is essential to better integrate the state's tourist hubs, creating well-signposted and safe tourist routes with good support services. This integration would favour more complete itineraries and increase the internal flow of visitors.

# AN OPERA BORN FROM STONE: ART AND LIVING MEMORY IN SERRA DA CAPIVARA

**In the heart of the backlands of Piauí, the Serra da Capivara Opera transforms one of the most important archaeological parks in the world into a living stage, where art, nature and ancestry enter into dialogue under the open sky.**

In one of Brazil's most emblematic natural and archaeological settings, in the heart of Piauí, the Serra da Capivara Opera emerges as a cultural beacon that illuminates the historical richness and identity of a region that safeguards the secrets of the first inhabitants of the Americas. An annual festival that is a celebration of life, art and ancestry — a vibrant dialogue between humankind and nature, the past and the present.

Created in 1979 and classified as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1991, the Serra da Capivara National Park is a treasure of inestimable value. And it is within this true open-air sanctuary that the Opera is held each year.

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"Serra da Capivara is a breathtaking place, for its scenic beauty, its history, the warmth of its people, its culture and its ancestry," says Sádia Castro, General Director of the Serra da Capivara Opera, explaining that the festival promotes "a vigorous dialogue between art, technique, nature and culture", establishing itself as a sensory and symbolic experience of great intensity.

This dialogue takes shape in the magnificence of each performance, where music, dance, theatre and visual arts merge with the landscape, creating an immersive and unforgettable experience.

### A childhood dream

"I think the dream of creating the Opera was born with me," Sádia admits. "Ever since childhood, during school visits to Serra da Capivara, I imagined performances taking place there, similar to the Greek amphitheaters I saw in history books." This desire would become reality in 2016, when, in partnership with architect and set designer Felipe Guerra, she brought the first edition of the Serra da Capivara Opera to life.

The impact was immediate and exceeded all expectations, consolidating the festival as one of the most relevant cultural events in Brazil. "Many people thought it was madness to hold an event of this scale, mobilising a large technical structure, artists from different fields, theatre, dance, acrobatics and an innovative artistic language, such as video mapping that made the stone curtain appear to be on fire or brought dancers 'flying' across the landscape. It really was madness," she recalls.

The choice of themes explored in each edition, explains Sádia Castro, results from a deep immersion in the history and symbolism of the region. "We inaugurated the festival with the *Ato Ancestral* performance, bringing to the stage the history of the first Americans, the birth of the Americas, the journey into the backlands, drought, rain and rock paintings." Over the years, this connection to the roots of the people of Piauí has remained the guiding thread of the project.

More recently, in 2022, *Ato Niède* moved audiences by bringing to the stage the life and legacy of archaeologist Niède Guidon, a pivotal figure in the history of Brazilian and global archaeology. Her tireless dedication to Serra da Capivara was decisive for the park's preservation, and her presence in the audience, despite her age and frailty, made the performance uniquely emotional. It would be her last visit to the Serra.

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**A cultural event that goes far beyond artistic creation**

The impact of the Serra da Capivara Opera extends far beyond the cultural dimension. "The 15 days of the festival account for around 30% of the annual visits to the Serra da Capivara National Park," she reveals. This increase in visitors has boosted the local economy.

"There has been a significant increase in the number of rooms. Previously there was only one boutique guesthouse and a few small units. After we began the opera, boutique guesthouses multiplied, five-star hotels emerged and new accommodation options appeared in practically all the municipalities surrounding the park," she adds.

Even so, the greatest legacy of the festival lies in its social and community impact. The opera actively involves around 200 people from the local community, from production and logistics to the design and making of costumes and sets, as well as the orchestra, dancers and technical team. "I am the general director and I am from the community. Many musicians, singers and dancers are local. This project is made by and for the people here," she stresses.

One of the festival nights is dedicated to pupils from public schools in the region. "In the past, we had over 400 pupils watch The Phantom of the Opera. This is perhaps one of the most important aspects of the project, because it plants the seed of art in the hearts of these children and young people, who may be the artists of tomorrow," says the general director of the Serra da Capivara Opera.

> THE SERRA DA CAPIVARA OPERA IS A TRUE LIVING THEATRE OF BRAZIL. "IT HAS NO WALLS, IT HAS AN IMMENSE MOUNTAIN RANGE OF STONE; IT HAS NO ROOF, IT HAS THE SKY; AND INSTEAD OF CROSSING A STREET, ONE WALKS ALONG A DIRT ROAD LIT UP BY THE STARS"

**SÁDIA CASTRO,**
GENERAL DIRECTOR OF THE SERRA DA CAPIVARA OPERA

**What to expect in 2026**

For the next edition, which will take place in July 2026, the organisation is preparing another memorable performance, *Cleopatra: Queen of the Caatinga*, a poetic journey from the Nile River to the backlands of Piauí, a reunion of Brazil with its African soul, through the eyes of a strong and inspiring female figure.

"We want to bring African references into dialogue with the backlands of Piauí. It is the crossing from the Nile to the backlands, a reunion of Brazil with its African heritage," explains Sádia. "There will be many drums, rhythms and colours, all of this in the Ancestral Amphitheatre," anticipates the director, summarising the experience for those who will attend the "only living theatre in Brazil": "It has no walls, it has an immense mountain range of stone; it has no roof, it has the sky; and instead of crossing a street, one walks along a dirt road lit up by the stars."

↓
LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS EVENT HERE

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# PARNAÍBA DELTA ULTRA: MORE THAN 100 KM OF HUMAN ENDURANCE AND UNTAMED BEAUTY

**More than just a trail running event, the Delta do Parnaíba Ultra Challenge is a physical, mental and sensory odyssey in one of the most unique ecosystems on the planet.**

The wind blows hard, each step sends sand flying in the air and the horizon seems infinite. In the Parnaíba Delta, on the coast of Piauí, running is an exercise in physical, mental and emotional endurance. It is in this setting of wild beauty that the Parnaíba Delta Ultra Challenge takes place, a trail running event covering more than 100 km that challenges athletes from all over the world to test their limits.

Now in its eighth edition, the 2026 event has established itself as much more than just a sporting competition. Set among dunes, beaches, mangroves and open fields, the Delta do Parnaíba Ultra Challenge combines sport, culture, art and social impact, providing an immersive experience of self-discovery and deep connection to the territory.

Comprising more than 80 islands, winding rivers, imposing dunes, lush mangroves and the vastness of the Atlantic Ocean, this unique territory is an invitation to adventure. Its unique geological formation creates a dynamic labyrinth of channels, islands and constantly changing sandbanks.

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### A testament to human resilience

The Delta do Parnaíba Ultra Challenge course is extremely difficult. Long stretches of sand, desert dunes under a merciless sun that requires hydration and energy management, and strong winds (over 60 km/h) that kick up sand are natural and relentless obstacles. These conditions, combined with humidity, turn the race into a battle against the elements, where willpower, strategy, and preparation are crucial.

This is a test of self-sufficiency that requires rigorous preparation and constant adaptation. The reason? Remote terrain that makes external support and rescues difficult, emphasising the importance of self-management, prior experience, and mutual assistance.

Despite official signage, therefore, navigation requires attention and discernment, as the landscape can be deceptive and fatigue can compromise concentration. The demands of the race mean that athletes must be prepared for solitude, the pace on uneven terrain and quick decisions under pressure.

> THIS RACE IS UNIQUE IN BRAZIL - AND PERHAPS IN THE WORLD - BECAUSE OF THE WAY IT BLENDS TERRITORY, IDENTITY AND CULTURAL EXPRESSION"
>
> **LUCIANO UCHÔA**, EVENT ORGANISER

This requirement leads the organisation to adopt strict safety protocols. “We require specific medical certificates and have set up a complex logistical operation, with a specialised medical team, trained first-aiders and helicopter air support,” explains event-organiser Luciano Uchôa. The number of participants is limited in order to ensure “greater safety and a closer and more attentive experience”.

### An unforgettable sensory experience

But what truly sets the Parnaíba Delta Ultra Challenge apart is the way it integrates sport, culture and nature in an organic and disruptive way. “This race is unique in Brazil - and perhaps in the world - because of the way it blends territory, identity and cultural expression,” says Luciano Uchôa.

Along the route, artists and musicians are positioned in remote locations, creating unexpected moments of encounter between physical effort and artistic expression. Sounds, images and performances emerge in the middle of the landscape, offering moments of contemplation, introspection and relief, transforming the race into a true sensory odyssey. Luciano Uchôa points out that, for this reason, “the athlete not only travels a challenging route, but also passes through scenarios that dialogue with culture, local identity and the territory.”

Although there is competition, for most participants the real challenge lies in personal achievement. “It is a transformative physical and mental experience that deeply marks those who experience it and leaves memories for a lifetime,” he sums up.

### The impact on communities

In addition to its competitive and cultural aspects, the Parnaíba Delta Challenge serves as a platform for social development and the promotion of sustainable tourism. “In the months leading up to the race, we promote training initiatives, lectures and health activities in traditional communities in the Delta, with the aim of stimulating sustainable development in the region and generating a positive impact, especially among the most vulnerable populations,” explains Luciano Uchôa. Notable examples include beach clean-up efforts, lectures on community-based tourism, environmental education and anti-racism policies in public schools, with a focus on young people, encouraging local leadership and reflection on identity, territory and sustainability. Training in music and crafts values traditional knowledge and boosts the local creative economy.

The production of trophies by Cooperart artisans reinforces the event’s connection to traditional knowledge and generates income and opportunities, demonstrating genuine commitment to the region.

“We believe that initiatives of this nature need to leave a concrete legacy, strengthening dynamics of social inclusion, cultural appreciation and environmental responsibility,” says Luciano Uchôa.

### A rising adventure destination

The combination of physical demands, unique landscapes, community integration, and social and environmental commitment has put the Parnaíba Delta on the international trail running map.

In early 2026, the Parnaíba Delta Ultra Challenge was named the “Most Popular Race in Brazil” by Trail Running magazine.

Luciano Uchôa believes this recognition reflects the organisation’s commitment to offering an iconic experience, positioning Piauí on the map of the world’s great trail running challenges. “The unique way in which we integrate musicians and artists into stunning natural landscapes defines the spirit of the event.

The athlete not only runs a challenging course, but also passes through landscapes that dialogue with the culture, local identity and territory. It is this combination of surreal landscapes, physical demands, presence and community integration that has put the Parnaíba Delta on the international trail running scene. Athletes not only run a challenging course, but also pass through settings that dialogue with the culture, local identity and territory. It is this combination of surreal landscapes, physical demands, artistic presence and socio-environmental commitment that makes the Delta do Parnaíba Challenge a true contemporary odyssey,” he says.

The event showcases the state as an authentic and powerful territory, capable of hosting international events, attracting athletes and tourists interested in ecotourism, adventure, and authentic cultural experiences. The visibility generated contributes to the region’s tourism development, creating new economic opportunities and strengthening the local economy, promoting environmental conservation and respect for traditional cultures.

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↑
ARTISTS AND MUSICIANS ARE POSITIONED IN REMOTE LOCATIONS ALONG THE ROUTE, CREATING UNEXPECTED MOMENTS OF ENCOUNTER BETWEEN PHYSICAL EFFORT AND ARTISTIC EXPRESSION.

THE NEXT EDITION OF THE PARNAÍBA DELTA ULTRA WILL TAKE PLACE BETWEEN 20 AND 21 NOVEMBER 2026.

← Learn more about this event here

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# PIAUÍ: A TOURIST DESTINATION OUT TO CONQUER THE WORLD

**The state has been stepping up its tourism promotion efforts in Europe, featuring prominently in roadshows and specialised trade fairs. This presence is part of an internationalisation strategy to showcase the potential of Piauí.**

Créditos: DR

Créditos: DR

The year 2025 saw growth in the institutional visibility of tourism in Piauí, with several appearances at events, the organisation of fam tours and press trips, as well as activities on the ground aimed at promoting the wonders of the state to the European market, from the Serra da Capivara to the Parnaíba Delta, passing through the coastal beaches and various attractions in the interior. Piauí has been strengthening this type of initiative, attracting new audiences and ensuring greater competitiveness in the global tourism market. Participation in such initiatives acts as a bridge to new investments and partnerships, as well as strengthening tourism as an engine of economic and sustainable development in Piauí.

The 2025 agenda included participation in several international fairs, including BTL - Better Tourism Lisbon Travel Market. Portugal is one of the most important markets for Brazilian tourism due to cultural similarities, the common language and the existence of a wide range of flights between the two destinations. Piauí, represented by the State Secretariat of Tourism, in a joint strategy with Sebrae Piauí and Investe Piauí, participated for the first time with a dedicated stand. The goal was to increase international visibility and tourist appeal, foster connections between companies and professionals in the sector, and help entrepreneurs to offer quality services and make Piauí a more competitive destination. The state's natural and cultural riches were promoted to travellers and professionals in the sector who are looking for authentic experiences, strengthening the ecotourism and adventure tourism aspects of Piauí.

Lisbon also hosted the Piauí Showcase, which included a seminar for tourism agents at the Epic Sana hotel, an exclusive fam tour for Portuguese operators and a promotional campaign called "Bora Ali, no Piauí?" (Shall we go to Piauí?), an initiative by the government of Piauí and Sebrae Piauí with the aim of strengthening the region's presence in the international market. The campaign involved advertising in digital media and high-traffic physical spaces, such as Lisbon Airport and the Cais do Sodré multimodal terminal. The presence of the Piauí Tourism Secretariat in Portugal also served to strengthen commercial ties and introduce new realities to entrepreneurs from Piauí.

The success of the initiatives in Portugal is in the numbers: more than 79,000 people visited Piauí's stand at BTL; 22 technical visits were made by Portuguese operators and 14 visits by the international press. The digital campaigns were viewed by more than 141,000 people. It is also worth noting that Piauí was voted Destination of the Year by VBRATA (Visit Brazil Travel Association).

Another internationally renowned fair attended by the Piauí State Tourism Secretariat was the 45th edition of the International Tourism Fair (FITUR) in Madrid, Spain, where Brazil was the guest of honour. The invitation was proof of

## THE REGION HAS PROVEN ITSELF A MODERN DESTINATION, READY TO OFFER TRAVELLERS UNIQUE EXPERIENCES

the recognition of the Brazilian tourism sector, which is experiencing a boom and has been making its mark on the global market. FITUR is one of the largest tourism fairs in the world, attracting thousands of visitors from more than 150 countries, demonstrating its importance as a platform for networking and promoting different tourist destinations. The event allowed Piauí to create advertising campaigns aimed at the Spanish and European markets, consolidating its position as an attractive destination.

Piauí was also present at the Visit Nordeste 2025 Roadshow, an event that took place in London, United Kingdom, and Milan, Italy, catering to various types of tour operators. This was an unprecedented event, introducing the northeast of Brazil to the European market as a unique brand, promoting the image of the region as a diverse but united place. The region showed itself to be a modern destination, ready to offer travellers unique experiences, from the tranquillity of its idyllic beaches to the historical charms of its cities and the beauty of its natural parks. The Visit Nordeste 2025 Roadshow, promoted by the Nordeste Consortium and Embratur, was a moment of strategic articulation for the region to compete for the interest of European tourists.

United by the strength of their incomparable diverse offerings, the nine northeastern states positioned the region on the international tourism scene. Revealing Piauí as a fascinating state for tourists who want to enjoy unique experiences, two of Piauí's main tourist attractions were highlighted: the Serra da Capivara and the coastline, conveying the idea of a connection between history and nature, represented by the park and the sublime landscapes of the Parnaíba Delta and Barra Grande Beach. The success of the Visit Nordeste 2025 Roadshow demonstrates that the union of the northeastern states under a single identity is a solid way to boost tourism, generating more economic development and opportunities for the people of Piauí.

**Piauí promoted in Berlin and Paris**

Piauí was also present at ITB Berlin and at the Visit Brazil Gallery in Paris. The ITB Berlin (Berlin International Tourism Fair) in Germany is one of the largest tourism fairs in the world, gathering countries from all continents and attracting tour operators, investors and entrepreneurs. Germany is the eighth largest source of tourists worldwide and the third largest European country in terms of visitors to Brazil, behind only France and Portugal. German tourists' main interests in Brazil are beach and nature destinations, which is why Piauí's strategy at ITB Berlin was to present the state as a land of sustainable destinations, with a focus on ecotourism and experience-based tourism. Piauí was also showcased in Europe's most important market, France, through the Galeria Visit Brasil project in Paris. With the theme "An illustrated journey to UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Brazil", the event offered the French a sensory immersion in the 32 Brazilian sites classified as World Heritage Sites. Piauí was represented by its natural jewel, the Serra da Capivara National Park.

The strategy of participating in international events will continue over the coming years. In 2026, Piauí Tourism will once again participate in trade fairs in Lisbon (with a showcase and trade activities) and Madrid (with the Investe Piauí delegation). Other participations will include FIT - International Tourism Fair (Buenos Aires), expanding its presence in Latin America, and the National Tourism Fair in São Paulo, in addition to several regional fairs. The second edition of the Piauí Tourism Fair – a strategic event to attract operators – will also be held, strengthening commercial partnerships and promoting the destination in an integrated manner, with significant participation from the national and international trade. This robust agenda is in line with the strategic vision of transforming Piauí into one of Brazil's main tourist destinations, with a growing presence in the European market and internationally recognised for the uniqueness of its attractions.

**+ 8 MILLION**
foreign tourists visited Brazil in 2025, the highest number ever

**19,7%**
growth in the number of Portuguese tourists to Brazil between 2023 and 2024

**14**
air routes between Portugal and Brazil, operated by Airlines such as TAP, Azul and Latam

**79 THOUSAND**
people visited Piauí's stand in the 2025 edition of BTL - Better Tourism Lisbon Travel Market

INTERVIEW

# "TOURISM IS A STRATEGIC AXIS FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN PIAUÍ"

**With a clear focus on nature, culture and integrated itineraries, Piauí wants to accelerate tourism growth. Daniel Oliveira, Secretary of State for Tourism in Piauí, presents the priorities for strengthening the sector.**

Créditos: DR

**Piauí has the shortest coastline in Brazil, but it is home to many important attractions. What makes the coast of Piauí unique in Brazil and in the world?**

Piauí has only 66 km of coastline, but it is one of the most distinctive on the planet! Its tourism potential is immense, with integrated attractions that combine nature, culture and sustainability. Our coastline is home to the only open sea delta in the Americas — the Parnaíba Delta. This natural refuge enchants tourists from all over the world with its unique landscape and singular biodiversity, which is, in itself, an asset of international value.

Through integrated itineraries, such as the Route of Emotions, which connects the coast of Piauí with that of Ceará and Maranhão, tourists can enjoy sustainable and authentic ecotourism, offering experiences that cannot be replicated in any other destination.

**The natural parks of Piauí are an attraction for scientific and adventure tourism. What sets them apart?**

The natural parks of Piauí stand out for their unique combination of cultural, scientific and environmental value. Serra da Capivara National Park is recognised by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site; Serra das Confusões National Park has enormous potential, with archaeological sites still undergoing scientific research; and Sete Cidades National Park is another area of great cultural and scenic importance. These parks have an archaeological heritage, with thousands of cave paintings that help tell the story of the first peoples of the Americas. This cultural value is a unique feature compared to other natural destinations in the world. All of them already have infrastructure to welcome visitors and a tourism potential that is being consolidated through profound cultural experiences for visitors.

**With a 13% increase in the number of international tourists in 2024 compared to 2023, Brazil is experiencing a boom in tourism. What is Piauí's strategy for consolidating and expanding its tourism industry?**

The main pillars of the Piauí Tourism Secretariat's strategy are positioning the state as a unique destination with a strong identity; investing in quality infrastructure in areas such as hotels, restaurants, transport and logistics; developing integrated regional itineraries; participatory management; and international promotion and investment attraction.

Tourism is one of the strategic axes of economic and social development in Piauí. In partnership with Embratur, the Federal Government, Sebrae and private operators, we are consolidating a public policy that strengthens the sector, creates jobs, generates income and enhances the natural and cultural heritage of Piauí.

**The logistics of accessing Piauí, particularly with regard to airports, has been identified as one of the main challenges for tourism in the region. What infrastructure currently exists in the state?**

Piauí has made great strides in terms of air connectivity. Today, the state has three major airports: Teresina Airport, Parnaíba Airport, and Serra da Capivara Airport. In addition to these gateways, there are fifteen other regional airports strategically distributed throughout the state, capable of handling commercial aviation, executive aviation, and charter flights.

Although the Brazilian aviation sector is still limited in terms of the number of airlines, Piauí has overcome logistical barriers and continues to expand its air services, strengthening tourist access to the state's main destinations.

> "WE ARE CONSOLIDATING A PUBLIC [TOURISM] POLICY THAT (...) CREATES JOBS, GENERATES INCOME AND ENHANCES THE NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE OF PIAUÍ
>
> **DANIEL OLIVEIRA,**
> SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TOURISM OF PIAUÍ

# REINVENTING ITSELF: PIAUÍ, A STATE PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

**Long associated with a traditional economy, Piauí is now establishing itself as a solid example of economic transformation: it is a competitive mineral hub, one of the most dynamic agricultural regions in Brazil, and has ambitions to become an integrated centre for the new energy economy.**

The state of Piauí is redefining its identity on the Brazilian and international stage, emerging as a dynamic hub of modernity, sustainability and competitiveness. This profound transformation is based on three mutually reinforcing pillars: a technologically advanced and environmentally responsible agricultural sector, consolidated leadership in renewable energy production, and a determined commitment to exploiting its vast mining potential, in line with the new demands of the global economy. Piauí is not just growing; it is building a model of development for the future that is already an example in modern-day Brazil.

### An agricultural revolution in Piauí

Agriculture in Piauí is going through a golden age, but that is not just down to chance. "It is the result of a consistent process of structural evolution that has been consolidated over the last two decades," explains Ícaro Torres de Carvalho, vice-president of Business Implementation at Investe Piauí, pointing to the adoption of technology, investment in workforce training, institutional support, and public policies aimed at attracting investment as the key reasons for this transformation. The figures are clear: over the past eight years, the value of agricultural production in the state has grown by an extraordinary 384%, jumping from 2.6 billion to around 13 billion reais (around two billion euros), Ícaro Carvalho explains. The adoption of precision agriculture, advanced mechanisation, the digitisation of the countryside and the use of modern irrigation systems have translated into a leap in productivity and the optimisation of resources.

"Due to its natural characteristics, Piauí enjoys very favourable conditions for agricultural production: large areas of fertile soil, predominantly flat topography, high levels of solar radiation throughout the year and abundant groundwater and surface water in several regions," says Ícaro Torres de Carvalho, noting that "in addition to its natural advantages, the state government of Piauí has promoted a strong programme to attract industries that can take advantage of the state's significant production and generate economic growth." This is evident in the commitment to improving legal certainty, a policy of tax incentives and greater access to credit which has led to improvements in infrastructure. Investment in electrical and logistical infrastructure (such as improving strategic road networks or greater integration with ports) are also factors that contribute to reducing "transport costs and making Piauí's production more competitive in Brazil and abroad."

PIAUÍ IS NOT JUST GROWING; IT IS BUILDING A MODEL OF DEVELOPMENT FOR THE FUTURE THAT IS ALREADY AN EXAMPLE IN MODERN-DAY BRAZIL

Pointing out that "the new generation of agribusiness in Piauí is symbolised, above all, by the robust growth of soybean, corn and cotton crops

> "DUE TO ITS NATURAL CHARACTERISTICS, PIAUÍ ENJOYS VERY FAVOURABLE CONDITIONS FOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION"

**ÍCARO CARVALHO,** VICE-PRESIDENT OF BUSINESS IMPLEMENTATION AT INVESTE PIAUÍ

© DR

in the Cerrado region of the state [municipalities of Uruçuí, Baixa Grande do Ribeiro and Bom Jesus, Ribeiro Gonçalves and Santa Filomena]", the official shares figures that prove this: the 2024/2025 soybean, corn and cotton harvest in this region reached around 6.25 million tonnes, a direct reflection of the increase in cultivated area from 1.85 to 1.94 million hectares and an 8.6% gain in productivity compared to the previous cycle.

The strength of Piauí's agribusiness also lies in its growing diversification. Alongside grains, irrigated fruit plantations (bananas, papayas, lemons), beef and dairy cattle farming, and sheep and goat farming are becoming increasingly prominent, forming a rich and resilient productive mosaic. He also points out that the state is one of the country's largest exporters of honey, a high-quality and internationally valued product, with a chain that benefits thousands of small and medium-sized producers, organised into associations and cooperatives.

For investors, Ícaro Carvalho lists the competitive advantages of Piauí when compared to other states: "One of our main competitive advantages is the availability of large-scale arable land at competitive prices," says Ícaro Carvalho, pointing out that there is "room for planned and sustainable expansion, while maintaining high levels of environmental preservation."

In short, he says, "the combination of these advantages – arable land, favourable climate, availability of water and government structural actions – puts Piauí in a unique position in Brazilian agribusiness."

### Clean energy: potential for the region

According to data from the government of Piauí, the region has established itself as a superpower in renewable energy, ranking first in Brazil in renewable electricity, with 99.75% of its power coming from clean sources.

The state is also the third largest producer of centralised solar energy (2025) and wind energy in the country (2023), a remarkable feat that places it at the forefront of the national energy transition. Geography is a powerful ally. Located in the so-called "Brazilian solar belt", Piauí benefits from exceptional solar iradiation of 5.9 kWh/m² and around 12 hours of sunlight per day, conditions that exceed the average for countries such as Germany and Brazil as a whole. These characteristics make projects such as the São Gonçalo Solar Park, the largest under construction in South America, economically viable and highly productive. When its expansion is complete, the park will have an installed capacity of 864 MW, occupying an area of approximately 12 million square metres, equivalent to 1,500 football pitches.

The potential in the wind sector is just as significant. Constant winds and favourable topography have enabled the installation of large-scale projects, such as the Lagoa dos Ventos Wind Farm, the largest in Latin America. With 230 turbines and a capacity of 1,063 MW, this complex generates 3.3 TWh annually and prevents the emission of 1.6 million tonnes of $CO_2$ per year. Complementing this project, the recently inaugurated Ventos de São Zacarias Wind Complex adds 456 MW of capacity, with the potential to supply energy to more than one million homes.

This vast potential for clean, low-cost energy opens the door to the next frontier of decarbonisation: green hydrogen. Piauí is structuring a green hydrogen production hub in the Parnaíba Export Processing Zone (EPZ), strategically located about 20 km from Porto Piauí. This initiative aims not only to supply the global green hydrogen market, which is expected to grow exponentially over the next decade, but also to add value to other local production chains, such as mining, creating a low-carbon industrial ecosystem. The possibility of incorporating the Parnaíba River waterway into export logistics further boosts the viability of this ambitious project.

As Ícaro Carvalho points out, investing in renewable energy not only reduces costs but also "strengthens the environmental footprint of properties, an attribute that is increasingly valued by domestic and international markets that demand traceability and lower carbon intensity."

Raimundo Dias, CEO of Companhia Porto Piauí, points out that, over the coming decade, "Piauí is projected to occupy a prominent position at the top of the global chain of generation, processing and export of green and low-carbon energy". As the state "will cease to be just a territory for primary renewable electricity generation and will consolidate itself as an integrated hub of the new energy economy, operating from distributed generation initiatives to large solar parks, thermosolar plants, low-emission hydrogen production and its industrial derivatives."

In this regard, Raimundo highlights two specific entities that form a "neo-industrialisation ecosystem": Investe Piauí and Porto Piauí. The former "organises the business environment and regulation" and the latter "enables the physical distribution of production".

### A new era for mining

The state of Piauí is quickly emerging as a new competitive mining hub, with a clear and multifaceted strategy, where investment in minerals crucial to the energy transition stands out. "The result of a convergence between geological wealth

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and the creation of a proactive and secure business environment," as pointed out by the manager of Porto Piauí. This metamorphosis is also a consequence of a new international context – to which Piauí offers answers: "The global energy transition has increased demand for metals such as nickel, iron and rare earths. Piauí has what the market is looking for: minerals essential for clean technologies in a region that still has vast potential for discovery," says the CEO.

The Piauí Nickel Project, in the municipality of Capitão Gervásio Oliveira, is one of the most significant. With an investment of over 1.3 billion dollars (around 1.1 billion euros), the project aims to produce 28,000 tonnes of nickel and 1,000 tonnes of cobalt per year. These metals are indispensable for the manufacture of new-generation batteries. "Nickel and cobalt are now called 'metals of the future' because they are essential components in the manufacture of high-performance batteries. Without them, the global transition to electric vehicles and the storage of wind and solar energy would be technically impossible," Raimundo Dias explains, adding that, for this very reason, the extraction of these minerals is structural. "For Piauí, the importance goes beyond commercial value; it is a matter of geopolitical relevance."

> "PIAUÍ OFFERS WHAT THE MARKET IS LOOKING FOR: MINERALS ESSENTIAL FOR CLEAN TECHNOLOGIES IN A REGION THAT STILL HAS VAST POTENTIAL"

**RAIMUNDO DIAS,**
CEO OF COMPANHIA PORTO PIAUÍ

Finally, the discoveries of phosphate, uranium, and rare earths place Piauí on a new geological level, guaranteeing the state "a leading role in the economy and national sovereignty," says the CEO of Companhia Porto Piauí. "By exploiting these critical minerals, the state not only stands to increase its royalty revenue (CFEM), but can also attract research and development centres," he continues, pointing to future potential. "Recent discoveries in the Parnaíba Basin have elevated Piauí to a new global geological level. Research by the Geological Survey of Brazil has identified 39 new mineral occurrences rich in rare earth elements, confirming that the state has one of the most promising deposits in the world."

Central to the state's strategy is the role of Porto Piauí: "In commodity mining, profit is determined by transportation costs. Porto Piauí offers a distribution point a very short distance from the mines. It is only about 180 km from the Lion Mining company in Piripiri to the port," explains Raimundo Dias. The figures for this company, which exports iron to giants such as China and the US, are impressive. "In three years of operation, the mining company is the sixth largest in Brazil in terms of volume [of iron] produced; growth has been explosive: between 2023 and 2024, production jumped by more than 400%."

And the consolidation of Piauí's role in the mining sector is set to continue as the state's plan strengthens: "Integrated logistics is the decisive factor that transforms Piauí's mineral potential into concrete economic viability," explains Raimundo Dias, adding that at the moment the exports depend on land transport, which reduces the competitiveness of projects. Thus, the "proximity of mining areas to Porto Piauí represents a strategic logistical advantage: by shortening distances and integrating mines, railways and ports, the cost per tonne transported falls structurally."

In addition to proximity, integrated logistics "expands the role of Porto Piauí as a multimodal and energy hub: The connection between mineral projects, future green hydrogen production in the Parnaíba EPZ and the possibility of incorporating the Parnaíba River waterway create a unique ecosystem in the country," says Raimundo, explaining that, among other things, this combination allows additional cost reductions and a lower carbon footprint per tonne transported, and also "positions Piauí on the Brazilian cabotage route and in the global logistics scenario, taking advantage of its geographical proximity to Europe." The competitive advantage is, therefore, remarkable: "Even in commodity downturns, the state remains attractive to investors, offering efficient, integrated, low-carbon logistics in line with international market requirements."

**PORTO PIAUÍ: SHORTER DISTANCES BETWEEN EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN PORTS**

Located in Luís Correia, Porto Piauí allows for logistical integration on three fronts: the Parnaíba River waterway (which offers a more sustainable, efficient and economical alternative by connecting the coast and the interior), the Luís Correia fishing terminal and the Private Use Terminal (TUP).

Porto Piauí also benefits from its proximity to the Panama Canal and, thanks to its privileged position, allows for shorter sea distances to important international ports such as Lisbon, Miami, Rotterdam and Hamburg.

# AUGE CARNAÚBA EXPANDS ITS PRESENCE IN PORTUGAL WITH HIGH-VALUE BRAZILIAN RAW MATERIALS

CRÉDITOS: RÉGIS FALCÃO

**Company CEO Luciano Bandeira says that the introduction of "the best vegetable wax ever discovered" to the country was "natural and strategic". The next step is to consolidate the products in Europe and worldwide.**

What is considered the best vegetable wax in the world has arrived – and established itself – in Portugal, through Auge Carnaúba, a company from the Brazilian state of Piauí. The next step for carnauba powder, which has countless practical uses, is to expand across the European Union, through the open door in Portugal, and then the rest of the world.

"Auge Carnaúba's entry into Portugal was a natural, positive, strategic and very well-received move: the Portuguese market shows great appreciation for sustainable, natural and high-performance products, all of which are part of the brand's DNA," says Luciano Bandeira, CEO of the Piauí-based company.

"The quality of Brazilian carnauba wax, combined with transparency in the origin of raw materials and care in production processes, has helped build strong partnerships and opened doors for consistent performance in the country, always with the fundamental support of the Made In Piauí [programme]," the entrepreneur adds, in reference to the initiative of the investment promotion agency of the northeastern Brazilian state.

Made In Piauí is a programme run by the state government of Piauí and developed by Investe Piauí, which promotes local culture, as well as its cuisine, products and handicrafts. With a digital marketplace as one of its main tools, the programme connects local artisans and producers to consumers throughout Brazil and beyond, strengthening the community-based economy, valuing cultural traditions and generating positive social and economic impact.

"We had the direct support of Investe Piauí in structuring the operation, from selecting the most suitable accounting firm for our profile to monitoring the establishment of the company in Portugal, ensuring legal, fiscal and operational compliance. This was decisive support in accelerating our adaptation, reducing risks and allowing Auge Carnaúba to position itself in a solid and professional manner from the outset."

After Portugal, Europe is the next step. "Portugal plays a strategic role as a link between Brazil and Europe," says Bandeira. "This process is being conducted in a planned manner, with the aim of consolidating the brand as a benchmark in

> OUR FLAGSHIP PRODUCT, AUGE STUCCO, IS NOW A GLOBAL BENCHMARK IN WAXES FOR MARBLE EFFECTS, RECOGNISED FOR ITS TECHNICAL PERFORMANCE, FINISH AND NATURAL AESTHETIC APPEAL
>
> **LUCIANO BANDEIRA,**
> CEO OF AUGE CARNAÚBA

natural protection and finishing solutions across the continent. Our flagship product, Auge Stucco, is now a global benchmark in waxes for marble effects, recognised for its technical performance, finish and natural aesthetics."

In fact, Bandeira adds, "entering Europe through Portugal was essential, not only because of the ease of language and cultural affinity, but also because of European Union agreements, which simplify and standardise logistical, fiscal and commercial processes between member states, all of which significantly facilitate the shipment and circulation of products within the bloc, reducing barriers, deadlines and operating costs".

In addition to wax, which has a variety of applications, Luciano Bandeira explains that Auge Carnaúba has other products and raw materials that may be of interest in Portugal and other European countries because, as "they are all integrated into a sustainable production model. An important highlight is macauba," says the entrepreneur, "a genuinely Brazilian product, which provides high quality and chemically rich oil, with an excellent technical performance, it is widely used in the carnauba industrial process, contributing to the performance, stability and naturalness of the formulas." The entrepreneur adds that "Auge is also advancing in the development of formulas with close to 94 percent natural raw materials, in line with the technical, environmental and regulatory requirements of the European market."

This entire process, Luciano Bandeira concludes, "is integrated into family farming chains, strengthening local producers, ensuring traceability, generating profit and having a positive social and economic impact." An approach that "reinforces Auge's position as a company committed to sustainability, innovation and social responsibility, all qualities that are increasingly valued in European and international markets," he adds.

**"Best vegetable wax ever discovered"**

But what sets carnauba wax apart from the competition and makes it so special and sought after internationally? "Carnauba wax stands out because it is naturally porous, allowing for excellent absorption, anchoring and finishing, resulting in superior performance compared to other vegetable waxes," explains Bandeira, adding that it is "widely recognised as the best vegetable wax ever discovered, both for its resistance and for the aesthetic quality it delivers and, in the case of Auge Carnauba, this difference is even more evident."

Pointing out technical aspects, he notes that "the wax provides an intense and long-lasting wet-look shine, which is highly valued in international markets. Furthermore, it is a pure wax, free of paraffin, petroleum-based solvents or any fossil-based inputs. Its entire formula uses only raw materials from the cosmetics line, ensuring high standards of quality, safety, naturalness and alignment with the technical and environmental requirements of the world's most demanding markets."

Auge Carnaúba's next steps are to "consolidate the brand as a global benchmark in all waxing segments in which it operates, raising the standard of quality, performance and its own identity."

Ambition is key: "In addition to wax, the strategy includes the integration of complete polishing combos, bringing together all the items that make up the process, such as microfibre towels, polishers, accessories and power tools, all developed and marketed under its own brand," Bandeira explains, adding that these "power tools are the result of a structured project fully supported by Investe Piauí, including industrial and productive development carried out in China, ensuring scale, technology and global competitiveness," says the CEO of Auge, who leaves a further guarantee. "Portugal will once again be the strategic starting point for the introduction of these products in the European market, strengthening the brand's presence on the continent and expanding its international operations in an integrated, professional and sustainable manner."

> CARNAÚBA WAX STANDS OUT FOR BEING NATURALLY POROUS, A CHARACTERISTIC THAT ALLOWS FOR EXCELLENT ABSORPTION, ANCHORING AND FINISHING
>
> **LUCIANO BANDEIRA,**
> CEO OF AUGE CARNAÚBA

**WHERE DO YOU APPLY THE WAX?**

Extracted from the powder contained on the surface of the plant's leaves, Auge Carnaúba wax is used to polish furniture, floors and wood. It also serves to shine car paintwork and, as it offers protection against ultraviolet rays, helps to prevent fading.

The wax can also be used to protect leather. Its powder is used to make fine oils, medicinal products, cosmetics, plastics, carbon paper, paints, varnishes, lubricants, waterproofing agents and even chips, allowing for industrial scale use.

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT MADE IN PIAUÍ →

Crédito: Gabriel Paulino

# INVESTE PIAUÍ, AN AGENCY PROMOTING THE STATE GLOBALLY

**Victor Hugo Almeida, CEO of the Piauí Strategic Investment Attraction Agency, leads one of the state government's main strategic tools: attracting foreign investment and supporting internationalisation are part of its job, which now extends to three continents.**

The mission is clear. Beyond identifying business opportunities, the focus of Investe Piauí, the agency that leads the promotion of this Brazilian state around the world, is to create the necessary conditions for companies to set up in Piauí, grow and be able to forge links with local production chains. Instrumental in the economic and social metamorphosis of a state that for many years was seen as a territory with vast but untapped potential, Investe Piauí's action is also visible in the way it is able to catapult local businesses into foreign markets. One of the best examples is Auge Carnaúba, which sells wax from a palm tree native to north-eastern Brazil (Carnaúba, *Copernicia prunifera*) that is used for polishing furniture, floors and wood. "This is a success story, the company previously did not export, and we supported its expansion into Portugal and China. It now exports to more than 30 countries." explains Victor Hugo Almeida, CEO of Investe Piauí, as he elaborates on one of the aspects of this agency's work, the internationalisation of local businesses. "Our work in supporting these companies is systematic and detailed to help them comply with all importing, health, technical and legal requirements in these countries," he adds.

In order to provide closer and more effective assistance in overcoming obstacles, Investe Piauí maintains international offices in Lisbon (Portugal), Boston (USA) and Xiamen, in the Chinese province of Fujian – "where there are many initiatives linked to the BRICS," he explains. These markets are considered strategic and capable of expanding the state's ability to engage with investors, companies, universities and research centres. "Internationalisation is not just about travelling, it's about creating lasting bonds. Our offices act as bridges: it is there that Piauí sits at the table, builds trust and opens doors," he points out.

The CEO explains how Investe Piauí stands out in Brazil. "It is the largest and most powerful of its 18 counterparts in Brazil," he says in reference to similar initiatives in other Brazilian states, such as São Paulo, Minas Gerais, and Paraná. This sends a "signal to the market that investment in the state is strategic for Piauí and that Investe Piauí is a major player in this promotion," says Victor Hugo, noting that in three years (out of four) at the helm of Investe Piauí, more than 100 companies have been attracted to the state, with a total investment of around R$40 billion (€8 billion). But more than growth alone, Investe Piauí's focus is on how this translates into improved living conditions for the state's population, which for many years bore an image of poverty. "The development can already be seen in people's lives: in the jobs created, in the companies that are expanding and in the state's presence in strategic agendas".

credits: DR

**8**
**BILLION EUROS OF INVESTMENT,**
from more than 100 companies attracted to Piauí via Investe Piauí

**+200**
**MEETINGS**
in international missions

**15**
**MISSIONS**
led by governor Rafael Fonteles

**100**
**GUESTHOUSES**
just in Praia da Barra Grande, a rising jewel on the Piauí coast

### Setting the stage for full integration

Investe Piauí operates according to an integrated development vision that combines attracting investment with adapting strategic infrastructure in Piauí and providing direct support to projects. In practice, Investe Piauí acts as an agent that creates concrete conditions for investment to materialise. For example, the agency coordinates the implementation of decentralised business parks, designed to strengthen economic clusters in different regions of the state, while also helping to reduce territorial inequalities in access to infrastructure. This is already a reality in strategic municipalities such as Piripiri, Picos and Floriano, where investors benefit from tax incentives, licensing support and better logistical integration, among others. The agency also works to attract foreign investment, offering a range of services to facilitate the entry of companies into the state. This is only possible because Investe Piauí has three subsidiaries that expand its operational and strategic capacity in key areas of the economy: Companhia Porto Piauí (responsible for managing and operating the port, which is essential for reducing logistics costs and strengthening the state's competitiveness), the Free-trade Zone in Piauí State (ZPE Piauí), located in Parnaíba, which functions as an industrial park offering tax, administrative and foreign exchange incentives to export-oriented companies; and, finally, the Piauí Institute of Technology (PIT), a subsidiary focused on workforce training, preparing professionals to meet the needs of an increasingly tech-based economy. "These subsidiaries are concrete instruments for executing our strategy: they translate public policy decisions into assets, infrastructure and people that have a real effect on the economy of Piauí," the CEO says.

### Piauí: Identity as a distinctive factor

Agriculture is one of the main focuses of Investe Piauí and the state government. But that's not all: from renewable energy to tourism, this northeastern state has a lot to offer. "The main economic sectors in which Piauí is investing are, in addition to agriculture – where we have already had 400 bilateral meetings and 15 missions led by the governor – renewable energy, where we are third in the production [in Brazil] of clean and sustainable energy. This is why we have been attracting a lot of investment from the so-called green economy," Victor Hugo explains.

"In addition," he continues, "we are investing in mining, technology and innovation companies, such as start-ups, and the logistics sector, because Piauí enjoys a strategic location, bordering many states in the northeast of Brazil, a region with 56 million inhabitants, second only to the southeast, having already surpassed the south."

Though virtually unknown to most European travellers, Piauí sees tourism as one of its greatest assets, with the Parnaíba Delta being a particular highlight. The beaches of other northeastern states, such as Bahia, Ceará, Pernambuco and Rio Grande do Norte, are better known to European tourists, especially Portuguese ones. Piauí, however, can compete. "Barra Grande beach is a gem, a paradise for kitesurfers, with many guesthouses, and we are working to ensure sustainable growth," he points out, without forgetting cuisine, an essential asset of the state, and guardian of its identity.

"There are many Brazils in Brazil, and Piauí has its own characteristics because it grew from the interior to the coast, from the inside out, which is unique," he explains, noting that, at the business level, there are two local products that stand out: honey (Piauí "is the largest producer and exporter of organic honey in Brazil," he recalls) and cajuína, a 100% natural cashew juice with no additives, preservatives or added sugar ("a delicious cold drink that is usually an instant hit," says Victor Hugo).

A believer in the maxim that tourism, culture and development must be linked, the CEO of Investe Piauí points out that "when the world discovers Piauí, it sees not only its natural beauty, but also its opportunities. Tourism opens doors, generates local income and strengthens the state's image as a vibrant, diverse and connected territory."

> "WHEN THE WORLD DISCOVERS PIAUÍ, IT SEES NOT ONLY ITS NATURAL BEAUTY, BUT ALSO ITS OPPORTUNITIES
>
> **VICTOR HUGO ALMEIDA,**
> CEO OF INVESTE PIAUÍ

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INTERVIEW

# "WE ARE ACHIEVING POSITIVE RESULTS ACROSS ALL FIELDS OF OPERATION"

**Daniel Martins, Commercial Director for the European markets at Investe Piauí, is one of the leading figures in the mission to raise Piauí's profile in Europe, where the agency maintains an office in Lisbon, Portugal. This objective is fulfilled through the dual approach of attracting investment to the state and internationalising local businesses.**

**What drove the decision to open an Investe Piauí office in Lisbon, and to what extent is this delegation important for the defined strategy?**

As a state, we are seeking to reposition ourselves on the national stage. Throughout history, we have been somewhat sidelined for political and even geographical reasons. When Governor Rafael Fonteles took office in January 2023, he brought a vision of integrating us into the national and international spheres. Lisbon, for linguistic reasons — which are fundamental — and also as a gateway to Europe, fit perfectly into this perspective of positioning and internationalisation.

**Did that this dual objective make Lisbon a natural destination?**

It was, but at the same time, it was also a very bold step. We operate through the Lisbon office, where we are currently based, in addition to Boston (USA) and Xiamen (China). The idea of positioning ourselves in three distinct locations is to pursue different priorities, in Europe, the focus is access to green hydrogen, but also gaining ground in tourism. In the United States, the focus is on education, due to the proximity to MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology). China is our main export destination, primarily from agribusiness products. This three-part strategy, if we may call it that, is what justified the investment in these international offices. Thinking of Lisbon, the return has been significantly higher than the investment.

**Which sectors are priorities for attracting investment to Piauí and what potential have you identified in Portuguese companies?**

Two of the sectors we have focused on are tourism and renewable energy. For example, we maintain a very active presence in the hotel industry, with ongoing negotiations with some Portuguese groups, which I cannot disclose just yet. What I can confirm is that we are collaborating with the Luzeiros Hotel chain, which is Brazilian, but whose owner, Mr José Hugo Machado, lived in Portugal for many years and invested in property in Lisbon. The chain already owned property in Teresina, but it was through the Lisbon [office] that we began supporting them to start construction. This is precisely one of the agency's roles: to serve as a support for both local and foreign investment in our state. We have also been in talks with Spanish groups.

Our goal is to boost Parnaíba airport, located on the coast, 340 km from the capital, which already receives flights from Fortaleza. Furthermore,

**FROM PIAUÍ TO EUROPE**

Attracting foreign investment to the State is one side of Investe Piauí's mission. The other focuses in the opposite direction: internationalising Piauí-based companies. Here, too, there are results that make the commercial director of the Lisbon office proud. Two very concrete examples stand out, including Cachaça Lira, which has been promoted at events, such as Web Summit, and is already on sale in some venues. Even more robust is the internationalisation of Auge Carnaúba, a polishing wax company, that has already expanded to 38 countries.

we intend to create a regional airline to facilitate flights to Teresina and Parnaíba from other [state] capitals, such as Fortaleza, Recife, and Salvador. To this end, we have been in talks with TAP and EuroAtlantic. This is one of our ambitions, though we know it is complicated, because it requires not only capacity at Parnaíba but also landing slots in Lisbon. In the renewable energy sector, we also have good contacts with companies, as we do in the fishing industry—particularly in canning—and we are successfully maintaining those links.

**Does this mean there is a high level of proactivity on your part in approaching companies?**

Our mission is exactly that: to serve as a bridge, to "sell" the state of Piauí, in the best sense of the word. Because when people talk about Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, it's easier to recognise them. But when talking about Piauí, an explanation is required; communication is needed to strengthen awareness. This justifies our presence here, and the Lisbon office. For this, we have the support of the Portugal–Piauí Chamber of Commerce, of which I am president, and the European Chamber of Support for Foreign Investors, which has helped us open doors in the Portuguese market, with companies and the government in general, so they can truly get to know Piauí.

In addition, we have participated in trade fairs in Portugal, such as Web Summit and BTL – Better Tourism Lisbon Travel Market, as well as Brazil Origin Week, which promotes Brazilian products in Portugal and other European countries. Internationally, we've attended the World Hydrogen Summit in Rotterdam, InnoTrans in Berlin, and Hyvolution in Paris. Ultimately, we act as a representation of the Piauí government, much like an embassy, working across multiple sectors.

**What factors do you highlight to attract foreign investment, particularly from Portuguese companies?**

We know that no region or country can stand out without a strong educational environment. That is why we have prioritised this "educational shock," making Piauí the top state in the northeast in terms of secondary education. Furthermore, considering the 2023 Basic Education Development Index (Ideb), Piauí holds the fourth position nationwide, competing with the wealthiest states. Coupled with this educational revolution is the fact that we are the first Brazilian state—I would even say in the Americas—to include Artificial Intelligence as a mandatory curriculum subject. In a way, we are showing that we are preparing young people for a different environment.

Furthermore, we are trying to challenge the assumption that to invest in Brazil one must go to the southeast, to São Paulo or Rio. We show the opportunities Piauí offers, particularly in the renewable energy sector, where we produce eight times more than the state consumes. All this is happening under a government committed to reducing bureaucracy as much as possible, to encourage companies to move there, knowing, for example, that they will find skilled professionals and will not need to export human capital. We try to match the benefits and exemptions offered by other states, increasing our competitiveness at a national level. The investment we make in offices like the one in Lisbon is precisely to present Piauí and help change perceptions. Although it is just the beginning, we have already seen some returns.

**What obstacles might Portuguese companies encounter that could hinder investment intentions?**

Much the same as elsewhere: bureaucracy. What makes Investe Piauí different is how it breaks this paradigm by showing the way—assisting with licences, permits, and authorisations, and offering support to companies wishing to invest in Piauí. This is what we do through our three overseas offices: in an agile, rigorous, and competent manner, without cutting corners, but accelerating the process, because we value that speed; we need that competitiveness to make the leap. That is what we are committed to.

**POSITIVE BALANCE**

"We can say we are achieving positive results in all areas of operation. In meetings, participation in trade fairs and other events, and educational exchanges."

It is with this unequivocal statement that the commercial director of Investe Piauí for European markets summarises the contribution of the Lisbon office—opened in April 2023—to the state's global positioning and internationalisation strategy. "We consider the state's investment in the office, both in terms of space and the team, to be negligible compared to the return and the recognition Piauí has received in Portugal and Europe," Daniel Martins emphasises.

Weighing investment against return, the positive outcome extends to the other offices in Boston and Xiamen. Despite this virtuous relationship, he warns that when dealing with a disruptive mission, one must resist the temptation of looking for immediate results: "We have done so much in such a short time that it is often difficult even to measure, but we believe the fruits are already becoming visible," he says, stressing that the full accomplishment of giving the state visibility requires more time.

↓
**FIND OUT MORE**
**INVESTE PIAUÍ**

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# ENTREPRENEURSHIP
## THE KEY TO COMPETITIVENESS

**Innovation is a concept deeply embedded in the vocabulary of Investe Piauí and Startup Piauí, but far from being just a buzzword, it takes form through an active strategy of promoting entrepreneurship.**

Créditos: DR

Making Piauí a more competitive territory is the goal of Investe Piauí — a strategy whose structural pillars are the creation of an innovative ecosystem and the development of an entrepreneurial culture. This clearly stated ambition has been reflected from the outset in Investe Piauí's motto: "O futuro do estado é tech", which translates as - The future of the state is tech.

Daniel Munhoz, vice-president for investments and trade promotion at Investe Piauí, explains that at the root of this movement lies "a very clear diagnosis" carried out at the start of the current government: Piauí showed a low level of digitalisation in public services and innovation strategies, which limited both the state's efficiency and its attractiveness for new investment.

A change was therefore imperative, the first step of which involved identifying international benchmarks of excellence in digital government and innovation. An official mission was sent to Estonia and would go on to inspire a set of structural policies, such as digital identity, fast-track business registration, database integration, and the strengthening of a favourable environment for start-ups and innovation. "It is not just about technology as a narrative, but technology as a transversal tool for economic development, public efficiency, and productive inclusion," Daniel Munhoz stresses. This idea is corroborated by Luciana Tsukada, coordinator of the Startup Piauí programme at Investe Piauí, who explains that the state "recognised that the digital economy represents a strategic opportunity to diversify its production matrix, generate skilled employment, and increase its competitiveness."

> "WE ARE POSITIONING PIAUÍ AS AN EMERGING INNOVATION HUB IN BRAZIL AND INTERNATIONALLY

**LUCIANA TSUKADA,** COORDINATOR OF THE STARTUP PIAUÍ PROGRAMME, INVESTE PIAUÍ

Startup Piauí plays an instrumental role in materialising this strategic ambition. Its coordinator is convinced it constitutes a "vehicle for the economic and technological transformation of the state." After all, she argues, "it is through start-ups that innovation materialises into concrete solutions capable of responding to real challenges in the productive sector, the public sector, and society." These entrepreneurial projects allow Piauí to develop technologies locally, add value to its economy, and create new markets, both within the state and at national and international levels.

Daniel Munhoz provides an equally positive assessment, which he backs up with figures: by 2025, approximately 580 projects had been accelerated through this programme which, he highlights, "connects entrepreneurs, the market, universities, investors, and the public authorities, creating an environment conducive to innovation applied to real economic and social problems." It is within this environment that Startup Piauí's four lines of action converge: the Acceleration Programme itself, which provides support in product and business development; the Innovation Lab, which maps challenges and provides specialised curation to identify solutions for specific challenges; the Business Verticals, which take the form of communities bridging the gap between start-ups, investors, and companies; and the Academy Lab, which coordinates with academia to enable the development of innovative ideas.

**More than numbers: real impact**

The common denominator is the construction of an innovative ecosystem, which, in Daniel Munhoz's view, involves three main pillars. Firstly, human capital, through training, qualification, and talent attraction tools. Secondly, the design of an institutional environment that responds to these new challenges through, for example, the adoption of modern regulatory frameworks, the simplification of processes, and the definition of innovation-oriented public policies.

And finally, market connectivity, bringing start-ups closer to companies and investors, taking into account the needs of the productive sector and the state. This strategy has yielded results that go beyond the number of incubated start-ups: in 2024, the state rose three positions in the Brazil Innovation and Development Index.

If "the future of Piauí is tech," it comes as no surprise that technology is the common thread of the entrepreneurship programme, whose priority areas—in the words of Daniel Munhoz—"align directly with the state's comparative advantages and global trends." These are GovTech, for public sector modernisation; AgroTech, considering the strength of agribusiness in the state; HealthTech and EdTech, as vectors for inclusion and qualification; as well as energy and sustainability, in line with Piauí's leading role in renewable energies.

The impact is measurable, but to the concrete results, Luciana Tsukada adds the cultural shift through the consolidation of an entrepreneurial mindset. "Through programmes aimed at secondary school students, university students, and early-stage entrepreneurs, we have managed to transform how Piauí society views innovation and entrepreneurship. This foundational work is essential to ensure the ecosystem has continuity and the capacity to renew itself."

In the economic and social spheres, the success of the programme is backed up by plenty of data: start-ups in the portfolio have generated 1,783 direct jobs, "contributing significantly to skilled employment in the state"; they have served 18,914 customers, reflecting the scale of the impact of the technological solutions developed; and they show an accumulated turnover of 115.9 million reais (approximately €18.6 million), "which provides evidence of the revenue-generating capacity and sustainability of the supported businesses." In the social field, Daniel Munhoz draws attention to the Investe Nelas project, designed to empower female entrepreneurs by supporting their businesses on the road to success, while promoting gender equality and diversity in the innovation ecosystem. A total of 37 female-led companies across eight cities in the state benefited from this immersion. On balance, "these figures show that Startup Piauí's intervention goes far beyond training, we are generating jobs, income, and real economic value, while positioning Piauí as an emerging hub for innovation in Brazil and beyond," Luciana Tsukada concludes.

> "IT IS NOT JUST ABOUT TECHNOLOGY AS A NARRATIVE, BUT AS A TOOL FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PUBLIC EFFICIENCY, AND PRODUCTIVE INCLUSION

**DANIEL MUNHOZ,**
VICE-PRESIDENT
FOR INVESTMENTS
AND TRADE PROMOTION,
INVESTE PIAUÍ

**Taking the ecosystem beyond the state**

Internationalisation is one of the pillars of the state's ambition regarding innovation and entrepreneurship. The vice-president for Investments and Trade Promotion at Investe Piauí goes as far as to say it is fundamental for positioning the state as a competitive territory: "International exposure expands the capacity to attract investors, strategic partners, anchor companies, and talent, while allowing Piauí start-ups to access new markets, technologies, and cutting-edge methodologies," he describes, stressing that "this visibility helps to overcome regional stigmas, reinforcing the narrative that Piauí is an emerging innovation hub, with structured public policies, qualified human capital, and concrete results." Examples follow one another, with a special emphasis on initiatives supporting education (see page 34).

In turn, Luciana Tsukada highlights the soft-landing pilot programme for start-ups selected for the Web Summit Lisbon 2025 mission, noting that "Portugal plays a central role as a gateway to Europe. As a result, we are already seeing portfolio start-ups establishing partnerships, commercial contacts, and international pilot projects, reinforcing the presence of the Piauí ecosystem on the global stage."

**LISBON ON THE ROUTE TO INTERNATIONALISATION**

The strategy for internationalisation and global positioning of Piauí's innovation ecosystem ran through Lisbon, with the Web Summit establishing itself as a privileged showcase. The first participation was in 2024, with an emphasis on exhibiting the Piauí Saúde Digital (Digital Health) programme, but in 2025, it took on new dimensions with 34 start-ups attending what is considered one of the world's largest tech events.

Eighteen were selected by Startup Piauí, "following technical and transparent criteria. Selected companies received full support for the event. The state presented one of the largest delegations that year—and the largest from Brazil—comprising both start-ups and business people, consolidating its objectives of international visibility and networking," explains Daniel Munhoz. The process—as Luciana Tsukada explains—aimed to select start-ups that already possess a functional product, market validation, and the capacity for international operations, thereby ensuring that representation was strategic and results-oriented.

# SoberanIA: WHEN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE GETS BRAZIL

Crédito: Gabriel Paulino

**In a significant step in the field of public innovation, the state of Piauí has developed the first Portuguese language artificial intelligence model, thereby contributing to affirming Brazil's sovereignty in this strategic sector.**

Piauí is at the forefront of technological development in the construction of an artificial intelligence tool geared towards digital sovereignty. The name leaves no doubt as to the purpose of this project – SoberanIA. Led by PIT - Piauí Institute of Technology, it was conceived by the Secretariat for Artificial Intelligence, Digital Economy, Science, Technology, and Innovation, with the endorsement of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation of Brazil.

Implemented in three stages, starting in February 2025, it is expected to be completed in December 2026, at which time it will become a library with a billion tokens, including data from other Portuguese-speaking countries.

Despite its origins, the project transcends Piauí and aims to become a national strategy. Governor Rafael Fonteles highlighted this strategic dimension at the public presentation of SoberanIA in Brasília in December 2025, arguing that this is not a state project, but rather a project for Brazil. This premise has already led to it being defined as one of the foundations of the Brazilian Artificial Intelligence Plan, based on the principles of inclusion, transparency and ethics, public utility, technological sovereignty and openness.

## 1 PUBLIC AND NATIONAL DATA

Data sovereignty is the foundation for the development of this first artificial intelligence model developed by a Brazilian state. Therefore, one of its distinguishing features is the fact that it is being trained with data from Brazil, fed by public, ethical, representative, and auditable databases. All processing is based on a 100% Brazilian computational infrastructure located in the country, including the PIT supercomputer, installed at the Piauí Information Technology Company (ETIPI). Delivering computing power around 250 times greater than a conventional computer, it is a critical resource for training and fine-tuning a robust language model such as SoberanIA. Together, these factors help ensure security, autonomy and digital sovereignty.

## 2 THE FIRST TOOL THAT SPEAKS AND UNDERSTANDS BRAZILIAN PORTUGUESE

SoberanIA was created to break the hegemony of the English language in artificial intelligence models, which excludes the great diversity of languages in the world. This exclusion greatly affects the Portuguese language: only 0.09% of the data used to train these models is in Portuguese, with the inevitable consequence of creating barriers to the use of technology by Brazilians. SoberanIA challenges this assumption: not only does it understand the language, but it also has the ability to interact with the different linguistic, cultural and social manifestations of the country.

FOLLOW THIS PROJECT HERE →

Crédito: Renato Braga

3

**OVER 130 BILLION WORDS**

The quality and scale of data are instrumental in the design of any language model: this understanding guided the creation of the Jabuticaba dataset, a national database with solid foundations to ensure robustness, ethics, and alignment with Brazilian culture and laws. With over 130 billion words, it has enabled SoberanIA to be fed with diverse content, from literature to poetry and music, from journalism to legal texts. And with the advantage of using cleaned data, without unnecessary repetitions and ready to use. In addition, the content is filtered to exclude irrelevant documents and reduce toxicity, with quality control to avoid redundancies and inconsistencies, thus reducing so-called data noise.

4

**PUBLIC SERVICE**

At the heart of SoberanIA lies public interest, and it is designed to support the definition of more efficient, transparent and inclusive public policies. This is true public service. It has very concrete applications in the state of Piauí, such as BO Fácil, a pioneering platform in Brazil that allows citizens to generate police reports, make anonymous complaints and call 190 (the emergency number) via WhatsApp. Interaction via text or audio message allows this tool to collect data such as date, location, participants and other facts associated with the incident. Another example is Piauí Oportunidades, which bridges the gap between job seekers and companies that are hiring, with artificial intelligence helping candidates identify their skills and professional affinities, resulting in suggested opportunities.

5

**EXPORTER OF CRITICAL TECHNOLOGY**

SoberanIA elevates Brazil to a new geo-economic level. Thus, the country is no longer confined to the role of consumer of digital infrastructure, but is now positioning itself as a producer and exporter of critical technology. This paradigm shift has a direct impact on the creation of skilled jobs, the attraction of investment and, ultimately, the reduction of strategic dependencies. The country is thus carving out a new place for itself on the global innovation scene.

**PIAUÍ DIGITAL HEALTH: THE POTENTIAL TO INSPIRE THE CPLP**

The state's innovative spirit in serving the public interest finds one of its most transformative manifestations in the Piauí Digital Health programme. Using an app, it expands the scope of health services, giving citizens access to remote consultations, diagnoses and prescriptions, without the need to travel to a hospital.

This is a solution with high potential for use in countries facing situations similar to Brazil's in terms of access to healthcare, which inspired a delegation from the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP) to visit Piauí. Besides learning about the results obtained by Piauí in the application of technological solutions in the field of healthcare, the visit constituted – in the words of Ambassador Juliano Féres Nascimento, Permanent Representative of Brazil to the CPLP – "an opportunity to analyse the common challenges of bringing healthcare to populations with few material resources".

"This type of 'South-South' cooperation should focus on involving all participants and thinking long term about ways to reduce dependence on external inputs, which have a negative impact on programme implementation," he explained.

"As a developing country, Brazil faces difficulties similar to those of other CPLP member states. Over the years, we have noticed that Brazilian cooperation projects include practical solutions to many of the issues imposed by the reality of the countryside," he explains, noting that it is not a question of exporting the programme, but rather of inspiring the construction of a solution tailored to each reality.

Incidentally, he recalls that this spirit presides over the Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2024 between the Executive Secretariat of the CPLP, the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation and the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC) with a view to expanding collaboration in public health: "I believe it will bear fruit in 2026, with the continuation of negotiations between the institutions."

Although no commitments in the strict sense were made during this visit, Ambassador Juliano Féres Nascimento believes that the CPLP is a privileged space for creating synergies, mainly due to the common language and similar cultural and economic circumstances. "We have an environment of exchange, of sharing experiences and ideas, and this permeates multiple instances, especially in the interactions between experts from our countries."

> IN THIS TYPE OF COOPERATION (...) THE FOCUS SHOULD BE ON INVOLVING ALL PARTICIPANTS [IN THE CPLP] AND THINKING OF WAYS TO REDUCE DEPENDENCE ON EXTERNAL INPUTS

**JULIANO FÉRES NASCIMENTO,**
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BRAZIL TO THE CPLP

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# PIAUÍ: AN EDUCATIONAL REVOLUTION

**Preparing young people for the professions of the future, broadening their horizons and fostering an ecosystem of innovation are the cornerstones of a programme established in Piauí. Three years later, the state is about to take first place in the Brazilian quality of public education ranking.**

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In mid-November, Ângelo Gabriel Sousa had his suitcase packed and passport in hand, ready to go. His destination was Boston, USA, for a 30-day training experience at internationally renowned institutions such as MIT - Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His initial anxiety with having been chosen from among thousands of students aged 16 to 18 to join the "From Piauí to the World" programme – which offers the opportunity for exchange and immersion in technology and entrepreneurship schools in countries such as the USA, China, South Korea, Singapore, Germany and Portugal – had already given way to curiosity and a great sense of responsibility.

Coming from a small rural community in Jatobá do Piauí, about 140 km from Teresina, the state capital, Ângelo Gabriel Sousa knew that he was in for a truly transformative experience, unprecedented among the inhabitants of the Santa Luz settlement where he lives. "No one here had ever experienced anything like this. I will come back with a much better understanding of the world," he explained before leaving. Giving students from across Piauí, a state in north-eastern Brazil more than two and a half times the size of Portugal, this world experience is one of the cornerstones of a strategy that aims to prepare young people for the professions of the future and foster an ecosystem of innovation in the region. The "purposeful education policy" was implemented when the current governor, Rafael Fonteles (himself a teacher), first took office, and in just three years, the results have been very encouraging. Piauí stands out as having the best education in northeast Brazil and ranks fourth among all 26 states. The newly appointed State Secretary of Education for Piauí, Rodrigo Torres, expects to put Piauí at the top by 2026.

How did things get this far? Rodrigo Torres says Piauí is undergoing "a real revolution", based on the idea that education is central and should be universal and full-time (coverage is already total in secondary education). It should also have a strong link to the economic fabric, particularly through technical education (60.7% of secondary school students attend vocational education) and innovative subjects such as artificial intelligence (which already reaches around 120,000 students), robotics and financial education. Piauí

IMMERSION ABROAD

## THE BEST STUDENTS ENROLLED IN "FROM PIAUÍ TO THE WORLD" PROGRAMME GET THIRTY DAYS IN EUROPE, THE US OR ASIA

was a pioneer in adopting technology education in the public school system, with partnerships with Google, Amazon, and MIT, with which a digital entrepreneurship course was created.
UNESCO recently recognised Piauí as the first territory in the Americas to implement Artificial Intelligence (AI) teaching in basic education – a unique situation in Brazil – that teaches students the risks and potential of AI, while motivating them to stay in school, as they receive complementary education in traditional subjects such as portuguese, mathematics, physics, or chemistry in fields that appeal to them.
"We are undergoing a major revolution not only in the quality of education, but also in infrastructure. It's a big change," says Rodrigo Torres, who coordinates a programme to revitalise school facilities, with a focus on new libraries, sports fields and computer labs (which where available in 20% of public schools and are now installed in 93%). The idea is to transform schools into welcoming spaces where students want to be and where they are guaranteed free transport, three meals a day and financial incentives (which can amount to around R$9,000, approximately €1,431, for those who successfully complete three years of secondary education).

PORTUGAL

IN AUGUST 2025, A GROUP OF 20 STUDENTS AND 4 TEACHERS VISITED LISBON FOR AN EXPERIENCE AT TUMO LISBOA. IN ADDITION TO CLASSES ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS SUCH AS GRAPHIC DESIGN, ROBOTICS AND 3D PRINTING, THEY ALSO ENJOYED SIGHTSEEING IN THE PORTUGUESE CAPITAL

They also improve prospects for a professional future. The state has surveyed potential job vacancies for the coming years, adjusting the range of technical courses on offer to fields such as renewable energy, agribusiness (stronger in the southern territories), tourism (in the north), as well as technology – Piauí has defined itself as a programming hub, aiming to train up to ten thousand professionals in this area per year. After secondary school, there are new university courses on offer with the creation of institutions such as PIT (the Piauí Institute of Technology, inspired by MIT).

**Inspired by good examples**

Piauí has consistently exceeded its targets in the field of education, which has been essential in helping it to catch up after falling behind. Just three or four decades ago, some children in Piauí did not have access to school, which contributed to an illiteracy rate of 13.8% among the population over 15 years of age, second only to the state of Alagoas (14.3%). In an effort to address this legacy, all young people, adults and elderly are now encouraged to enrol in schools, which have adopted after-hours schedules. The literacy programme offers 800 reais (around 128 euros), uniforms, food and transport, with the aim of reaching 100,000 students. At the same time, the state hopes to achieve another goal this year: to have 85% of children literate by the end of the 2nd year of primary school, equalling Ceará's current rate.
This revolution in education has also taken inspiration from successful experiences in other Brazilian states (the model for children's literacy, for example, is Ceará itself) and countries around the world. The governor, along with the team from the State Department of Education (SEDUC) of Piauí, visited academic institutions and companies in various countries in Europe, Asia and the USA, with which they established partnerships for the "From Piauí to the World" programme.
In the first year of implementation, in 2024, 55 students and 11 teachers were given the opportunity to participate in an international exchange. The number has been growing ever since. In 2026, 300 students and 60 teachers will spend time abroad. In addition to an opportunity to learn and improve their English, they also have access to technology-focused courses and learn the ins and outs of multinational technology companies. The idea is that they will be inspired, learn what is being done abroad, and bring that experience back to replicate in new projects in Piauí.
The selection is made through Seduckathon, a programming marathon promoted by the SEDUC. In 2025, there were 9,000 applicants, 130 of

100%
provision of full-time secondary education

78,9%
of full-time secondary school enrolments in 2025, up from 21.5% in 2022

60%
of students enrolled in integrated technical courses designed to meet the needs of the labour market in agriculture and renewable energy, among others

120 THOUSAND
students attending mandatory Artificial Intelligence classes

25 THOUSAND
enrolled in technical courses in systems development, AI, game programming, and digital marketing

100 THOUSAND
adults in the literacy programme is one of the targets for 2026

**IN THE CRADLE OF TECHNOLOGY**
The last group of 2025 graduates left for Singapore in early January 2026 for an experience that included Google, Amazon, and Hyundai. When they return, students will meet with start-ups in Piauí to present projects and apply for jobs.

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# WASHINGTON BANDEIRA: "WE SHOW STUDENTS THAT IT IS POSSIBLE TO DREAM BIGGER."

**Piauí has been investing in education as a driver of change in the state, making it one of the pillars of the current government's strategy. The Governor's Special Adviser, Washington Bandeira, explains the guidelines and the measures currently in place.**

whom won a passport to travel abroad, provided by the programme, which also covers the costs of visas, travel, accommodation and food. Twenty of them were enrolled in technical courses in systems development, IT and programming, and spent the month of August in Lisbon, where they took part in robotics classes, 3D printing, and programming at the TUMO Lisboa creative technology centre. "They offer something I've always wanted to pursue, programming. I think it will add a lot to my CV and my life in the future," said student Carlos Wanderson. In the same report, published in a Portuguese media outlet, the executive director of TUMO Lisboa, João Figueirinhas Costa, explained the relevance of the initiative: "It is a public policy that connects public schools to the reality of the global market. The programme promotes inclusion, develops talent and broadens horizons."

**HOW CAN EDUCATION BE A FORCE FOR CHANGE IN PIAUÍ AND BRAZIL?**

Education is the main force for change in a state, because it changes lives, expands opportunities and builds a better future.

By ensuring quality public schools, with valued teachers, technology, full-time schooling, and comprehensive education that includes sports, culture, reading clubs and vocational training, we show students that it is possible to dream bigger. This type of education, connected to the present, to innovation and to the world of work, is the surest path to a fairer Piauí and Brazil, with more opportunities.

**EDUCATION GETS THE LION'S SHARE OF THE PIAUÍ BUDGET. IS THIS A CLEAR SIGN OF PRIORITISATION?**

Since the beginning of Governor Rafael Fonteles' administration, education was defined as the central axis for development in Piauí. This commitment is evident in the largest construction programme in the history of the school network, with modernised schools designed for full-time attendance, as well as significant advances in air conditioning, which has increased from 26% to

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75%, and connectivity, which now reaches over 90% of units. We have also invested in valuing students and teachers, with scholarships, teaching assistantships, internships and training programmes, always with a focus on learning and better opportunities.

**WHAT IS THE EDUCATION SUPERSHOCK BEING PROMOTED IN PIAUÍ?**

The Superchoque Educacional e Tecnológico, which translates to Educational and Technological Supershock, is based on the universalisation of full-time education integrated with vocational education. This means offering technical courses in strategic areas, especially in technology, as well as innovative subjects such as artificial intelligence, robotics and entrepreneurship.

In practice, students begin to develop projects, create solutions and apply what they learn in real situations, connecting school to the world of work. This change makes learning more meaningful and prepares young people in Piauí to continue their studies, enter higher education, enter the job market and build their life projects.

**WHAT INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES INSPIRED THE DEFINITION OF THIS STRATEGY?**

This strategy was developed based on the best international experiences in education. Governor Rafael Fonteles learned about successful models first-hand and and brought practices adapted to Piauí's reality.

In the US, we established a partnership with MIT, one of the most renowned universities in the world, to apply the entrepreneurship methodology they teach in state schools. As a result, Piauí became the only basic education network in the world to adopt this model, bringing practical, innovative training focused on solving real problems to the classroom.

From Singapore we obtained inspiration from the educational management model based on continuous assessment, use of data, and heavy investment in teacher and manager training.

**ARE THE COURSES ALIGNED WITH THE FIELDS OF HIGHEST DEMAND IN THE LOCAL ECONOMY? IS THERE THE INTENTION TO TRAIN PROFESSIONALS TO WORK IN BRAZIL AND ABROAD?**

Yes. The technical courses offered by the state school network are aligned with the fields of greatest demand in the economy, which is the result of a careful assessment carried out in dialogue with the productive sector. We consulted around 90 companies in the 12 territories of Piauí to identify the main needs of the market, with a focus on science and technology, agriculture, renewable energy, health, the creative economy and tourism, with an emphasis on entrepreneurship.

Based on this survey, we structured the course offerings to meet local needs, while also considering professions that are in high demand in the global market. We have invested in areas such as Systems Development, Gaming, Renewable Energy and Logistics and Artificial Intelligence, to train talented and competitive individuals in entrepreneurship and generating income, strengthening the economy of Piauí and expanding opportunities for them around the world.

# O PIAUÍ

3,3 MILHÕES
DE HABITANTES

A CAPITAL É TERESINA

A SERRA DA CAPIVARA
É PATRIMÓNIO DA UNESCO

# PIAUÍ

3.3 MILLION INHABITANTS

THE CAPITAL IS TERESINA

SERRA DA CAPIVARA IS A UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE