

WORLD HERITAGE NOMINATION – IUCN COMMENTS TO ICOMOS

SÍTIO ROBERTO BURLE MARX (BRAZIL)

IUCN has considered this cultural landscape nomination based on a desk review of the nomination dossier and the comments of four (4) external reviewers.

The total area of the nominated property is 40.53 ha with a proposed buffer zone of 575 ha. The property is nominated under criteria (ii) and (iv). Sítio Roberto Burle Marx (SRBM), “is a unique cultural landscape created intentionally by man, which combines an artificial ecosystem and a cultural system in harmonious dialogue with its surroundings”. According to the nomination dossier, the phyto-ecological laboratory character of the botanical collection of the SRBM combined with the accumulated knowledge and information supports the conservation of Brazilian native species.

IUCN notes that the natural values of the landscape have been altered in approximately one-third of the nominated property. However, natural values in SRBM remain strong in areas above 100 m asl, which boast native Atlantic Forest biome and associated species, many being endemic or threatened. IUCN emphasizes that the Atlantic Forest and its species are of international importance. The fauna and flora present in the nominated property are similar to those found in the State Park of Pedra Branca (PEPB), which corresponds to an IUCN category II protected area and which is part of the UNESCO Atlantic Forest Biosphere Reserve.

In addition to parts of the nominated property that have remained in their natural state (native forests and mangroves), IUCN notes the ex-situ component (garden and botanical collection) of tropical plants whose distribution and placement forms an integral part of the nomination. Overall, SRBM houses over 3,500 plant species, out of which 71 species are endangered nationally or internationally (e.g., *Alcantarea geniculata* – EN and endemic). Therefore, SRBM functions as an important genetic bank for threatened tropical and subtropical flora.

IUCN notes that the Biological Reserve of Guaratiba (RBG) and the PEPB support the protection of SRBM. While the RBG is adjacent to the nominated property, PEPB partially overlaps with the nominated property, with the remaining part overlapping with the buffer zone of the PEPB and the Biological Reserve of Guaratiba (RBG). The SRBM is also located nearby the Municipal Natural Park of Grumari.

The PEPB’s Management Plan states that activities in the buffer zone (and thus partly overlapping with SRBM) are only permitted provided they do not damage the nominated property. Furthermore, IUCN notes that the PEPB’s Management Plan provides for the establishment of an agreement between the Environment State Institute INEA and the municipal government to support monitoring within the PEPB buffer zone and to specify preservation criteria for the PEPB and its buffer zone. Indicators on the conservation status of native flora above 100 m asl within the nominated property have been included (table 24 of the nomination dossier). Furthermore, urban zoning laws limit urban expansion in the vicinity of the nominated property. An additional level of protection at the national level is constituted by the Urban and Sustainable Development Master Plan of the Municipality of Rio de Janeiro, which declares the nominated area as a site of outstanding environmental and landscape interest for the city.

Finally, IUCN notes that economic benefits from the SRBM are derived from the ornamental use of tropical species, benefits which are also shared with local farmers. In this vein, a new governance structure is proposed with higher participation of the local community in the accessibility and management of SRBM. IUCN welcomes this and recommends ICOMOS to consider with the State Party the prioritisation and timeline for the establishment of this new structure.