

# PROMOTING A NEW RESTORATIVE ECONOMY IN EL IMPENETRABLE

Creating tourist destinations with local providers and developing products with cultural and regenerative values



<b>Executive Summary</b>	3
<b>Introduction</b>	4
General Objectives	4
Fundación Rewilding Argentina	5
<b>Starting Point</b>	6
El Impenetrable National Park, an Oasis of Biodiversity	6
Characterization of the Rural Population	7
<b>Surprising Facts</b>	8
<b>Nature Tourism: A Growing Opportunity</b>	9
The Transformative Potential of Nature Tourism	9
<b>Implementing a New Restorative Economy</b>	9
<b>Development of The Tourism Offering</b>	10
1. Preparing Tourism Infraestructure	10
2. Continuing Education for Providing Tourism Services	14
3. Developing Cultural Products with Territorial Branding	16
<b>Building Demand</b>	18
1. Promoting the Tourist Destination	18
2. Marketing Products with Territorial Branding	24
<b>Socioeconomic Impact</b>	26
• Evolution of Entrepreneurs by Nature	27
• Empowering Women	28
• Percentage Distribution of Entrepreneurs by Activity	28
• Evolution of Income Generated	29
<b>Visitor Projection and Direct Economic Impact</b>	32
<b>The Multiplicative Effect of Tourist Activity</b>	35
<b>Community Wellbeing</b>	36
<b>Conclusions</b>	37
<b>Key Tools</b>	38
<b>Takeaways</b>	38
<b>Bibliography</b>	40
<b>Annexes</b>	41

## Executive Summary

- The goal of the following report is to offer a comprehensive analysis on the development of a Restorative Economy in the region adjacent to El Impenetrable National Park (EINP, for its Spanish name). This work is based on detailed monitoring of socioeconomic data collected between 2020 and 2023 by Fundación Rewilding Argentina, with subsequent processing and analysis carried out by the Economic Consultant Inveco.
- Located in the northeast of Chaco Province, EINP stands out as one of the most recent and extensive parks in northern Argentina. It was created on October 22, 2014 and spans 128,000 hectares (316,295 acres).
- The region surrounding the park is inhabited by indigenous communities and criollo families; around 670 criollo families subsist on incomes that are below the poverty line. For 92% of families, the main source of income comes from state social benefits.
- According to Elypsis (2019), tourism generally, and nature tourism in particular, is not being used to its full potential in Argentina and has plenty of room for future growth.
- To promote the development of a Regenerative Economy, Fundación Rewilding Argentina has implemented the “Entrepreneurs by Nature” program, whose main objective is to train local entrepreneurs in the creation of goods and services tied to nature tourism.
- Additionally, guaranteeing access to public infrastructure is essential. Fundación Rewilding Argentina promotes its own investments and encourages collaboration with third parties, supporting local residents so they can become protagonists in the management and development of tourist lodging.
- Between 2021 and 2023, a total of 247 training events took place that were aimed at developing the capabilities of local residents. Standouts among these events include gastronomy, cultural products, tourism services, and enterprise formalization.
- To consolidate a service economy surrounding nature tourism, it is not enough to develop a solid offering; it is equally crucial to work on building demand. To this end, diverse promotion and communication strategies are being carried out to spread information about this destination and increase public interest.
- In 2023, visits to La Fidelidad Campground within EINP increased to 1,775 people, showing that interest in tourism activities and lodging in the region is experiencing sustained growth.
- The “Entrepreneurs by Nature” program’s economic impact in communities is evidenced by the significance of the average revenue generated in EINP compared to state social benefits, the traditional income source of these communities.
- During 2023, nearly 170 community members actively worked as Entrepreneurs by Nature, doubling the participation registered in 2021. Fifty percent of EbN are women.
- Whereas in 2022, the total revenue generated by the EbN was 278 million in constant December 2024 pesos, in 2023, it exceeded 383 million pesos. In terms of unofficial dollar rates, income generated by the community increased from 121,000 dollars in 2022 to 160,200 dollars in 2023.
- On an individual basis, the average income for entrepreneurs has increased considerably between 2022 and 2023, from \$1,520,000 to nearly \$3,000,000. In terms of unofficial dollar rates, the average income nearly doubled, from 662 annual dollars to 954 annual dollars.
- During 2023, on average, the monthly income generated by Entrepreneurs by Nature in El Impenetrable was 5% higher than the monthly value of a non-contributory disability benefit, 104% higher than the Universal Allocation per Child (AUH, for its Spanish name), and 255% higher than the value of the transfer via the “tarjeta alimentaria” food assistance program.

- Outlining three possible scenarios for visitor evolution, a total of between 2,500 and 4,800 visitors is projected for 2034. In association with this demand dynamic, the income generated directly in the future by Entrepreneurs by Nature could be between 446,000 and 860,000 dollars by 2034.
- Replicating the methodology of Alberdi Partners (2022) for Patagonia Azul, the total revenue generated by the multiplicative effect of tourism activity by 2034 would be between 940,000 and 1.8 million dollars.
- Beyond the economic benefits, the model promotes entrepreneurship and creates pride and a sense of belonging in local communities, leading to the empowerment of its inhabitants.

## Introduction

### General Objectives

**The goal of this report is to offer a comprehensive analysis of the development of a Regenerative Economy in the region adjacent to El Impenetrable National Park.** To this end, the study focuses on the creation of a sustainable tourist destination that actively involves local providers and promotes cultural products with regenerative values.

**This document seeks to legitimize and make visible the effort made to record and analyze the economic and social impact of a tourist destination from its beginning stages.** This focus highlights the way a community can start from scratch, developing a sustainable tourist and cultural offering that has managed to attract over 1,700 annual visitors in their first seasons of activity. During this initial stage, we highlight the importance of investing in public infrastructure, expanding accommodation spaces, and consolidating a solid continuing education program for local entrepreneurs, ensuring that they become the main beneficiaries of the economic mobility that is generated. These investments can come from various sources, such as NGOs (for example, Fundación Rewilding Argentina), the government of Chaco, and the National Parks Administration.

This analysis adopts a microeconomic perspective to reflect the local impact and advances achieved in social inclusion, cultural development, and economic regeneration. **This project is based on the detailed monitoring of socioeconomic data collected between 2020 and 2023 by Fundación Rewilding Argentina, with subsequent processing and analysis by the Invecq Economic Consultant.** Key indicators studied include the management of continuing education for new entrepreneurs, the diversification of economic activities, the participation of women, the evolution of incomes, visitor data, and the development of the tourism offering and demand for lodging and cultural products.

This publication, developed in co-authorship, seeks not only to document the processes of monitoring and evolution of indicators, but also to contribute to methodological knowledge in the promotion of Restorative Economies. **The case of El Impenetrable serves as an inspirational model for other regions with similar characteristics, demonstrating how these principles can apply to diverse contexts to encourage sustainable development.**



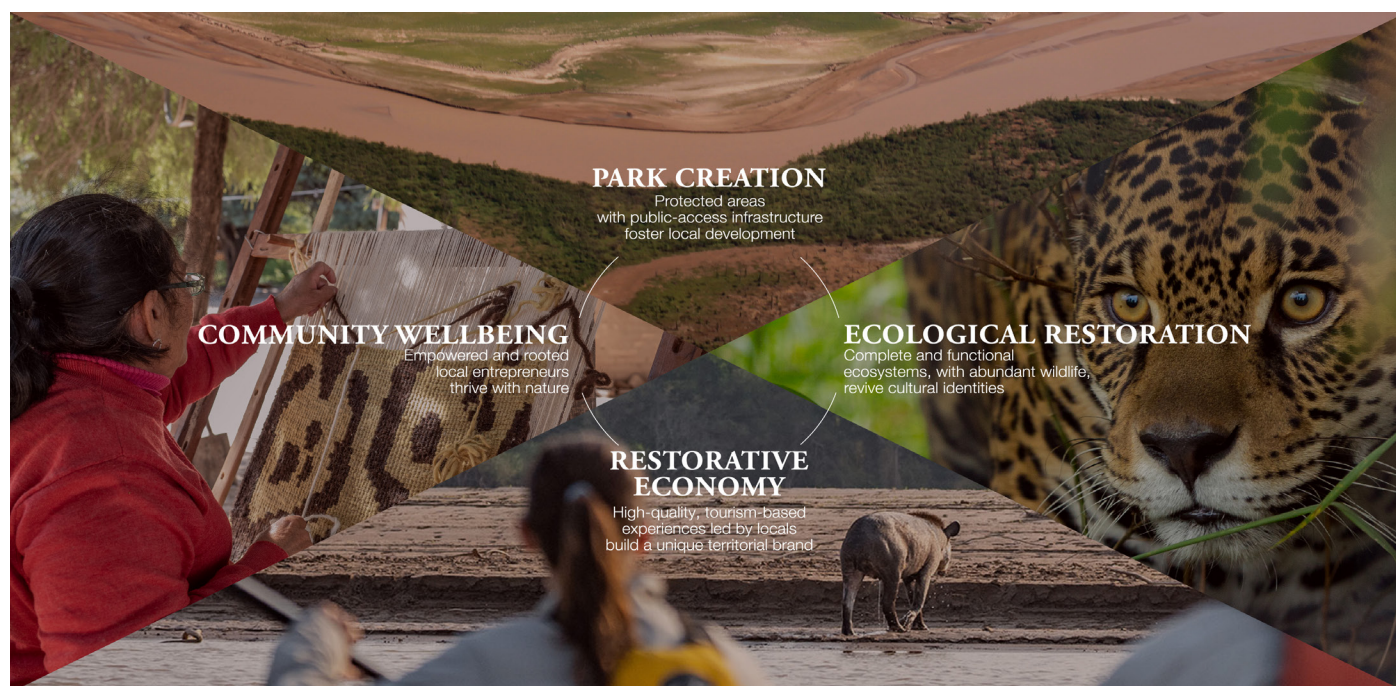
## Fundación Rewilding Argentina

**Fundación Rewilding Argentina is a nonprofit organization that works to face and reverse the species extinction crisis and environmental degradation, with the objective of recovering ecosystem functionality, boosting local restorative economies, and improving the wellbeing of nearby communities.**

To reach these objectives, **the organization collaborates in the creation of national and provincial parks**, where it recovers wildlife to achieve complete and functional ecosystems. Additionally, it **fosters the development of new Restorative Economies, based on the sustainable interaction between local communities and their natural surroundings. This comprehensive approach, which combines conservation and development, is called the Economy of Nature.**

The concept of Producing Nature proposes a new vision for land use, in which the conservation of natural ecosystems with abundant fauna creates a virtuous cycle that boosts new rural economies based on wildlife observation and sustainable tourism. **This model not only protects biodiversity, but also creates economic opportunities for local communities.**

With almost two decades of experience, Fundación Rewilding Argentina began its work in Iberá Park, in the heart of Corrientes Province, and has expanded its projects to diverse regions of the country. Standouts among its initiatives include its work in El Impenetrable National Park, Patagonia Park, and the Patagonia Azul Project.



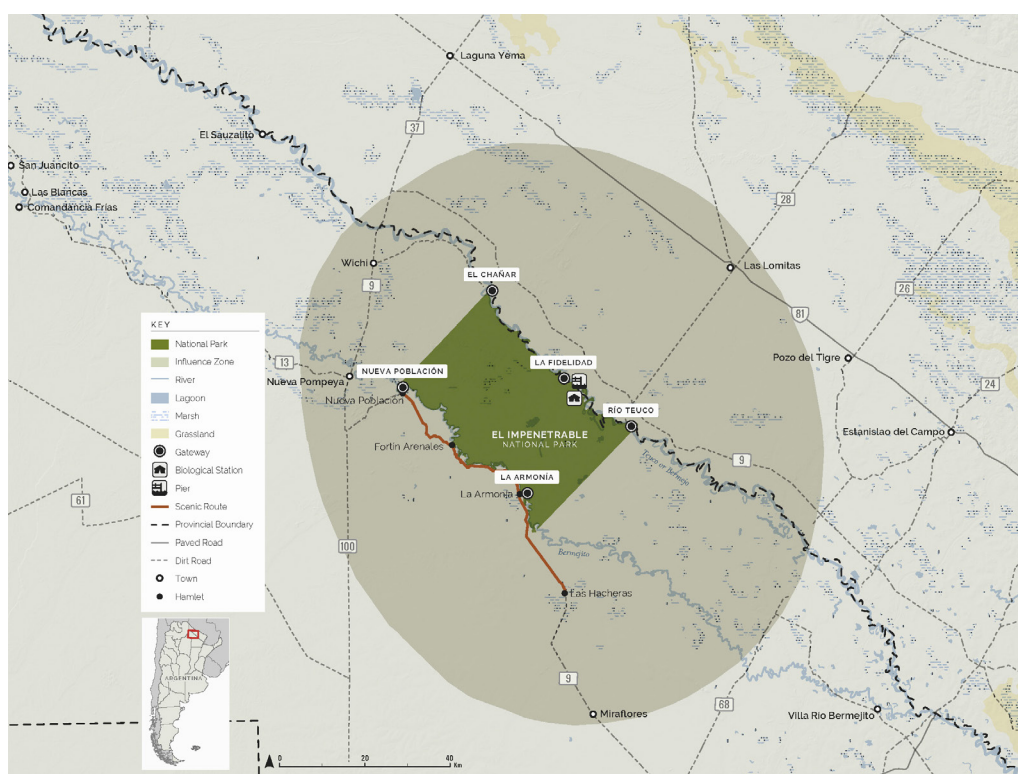
## Starting Point

### El Impenetrable National Park, an Oasis of Biodiversity

**Located in northeastern Chaco Province, El Impenetrable National Park stands as one of the most recent and extensive parks in northern Argentina.** This wild territory protects the greatest remainder of the iconic Chacoan “impenetrable” region, bordered by the Teuco-Bermejo and Bermejito rivers. Located on the eastern edge of this vast region, the park owes its name to the dense, closed, and thorny vegetation, as well as to the historic lack of water that made it difficult to explore. **It is the largest national park in northern Argentina, and it plays a crucial role in the preservation of mammal species such as jaguars, tapirs, peccaries, and giant anteaters, among others.** Its exceptional biodiversity and the good conservation status of its native forest make it a unique wildlife enclave.

**The park was created on October 22, 2014 thanks to collaboration between the government of Chaco, the National Parks Administration, and diverse conservation organizations on the land of the iconic La Fidelidad ranch.** Its 128,000 protected hectares (316,295 acres) span a variety of landscapes: carob, floss silk, and quebracho tree forests; wetlands; and lagoons. It also hosts endangered species such as giant armadillos, giant anteaters, tapirs, maned wolves, and jaguars. Additionally, it serves as a refuge for hundreds of species of birds, among them the Chaco eagle, jabiru, blue-fronted parrot, and Magellanic woodpecker. These characteristics make El Impenetrable National Park a place of vital importance for preserving the natural wealth of the Chacoan Monte (shrubland).

**From its creation, the park has sought not only to conserve the natural, historical, and cultural heritage of the Chaco, but also to create new economic opportunities for neighboring rural communities.** This focus integrates environmental conservation with sustainable development, laying the foundations for a model of harmonious coexistence between nature and people.



Map 1- El Impenetrable National Park and area of influence



## Characterization of the Rural Population

### Challenges and Opportunities

**The region that surrounds El Impenetrable National Park is inhabited by indigenous communities and criollo families who maintain a profound connection to the land, the fruit of generations of rootedness. However, these communities face great socioeconomic challenges that limit their development and quality of life.**



**In this area, around 670 criollo families subsist on incomes that are below the poverty line.** Their economy is mainly informal and subsistence-level, based on activities such as raising cattle and goats for their own consumption and on forestry. A frequent practice among residents is woodcutting, especially from carob trees. According to available data, 50.2% of families have participated in this activity at some point, while 20.3% continue carrying it out currently. This resource exploitation, often done under contract with outside loggers, brings little income and contributes to the degradation of the ecosystem. By cutting down large carob trees, residents lose not only the forest as a resource, but also the capacity of the forest to feed cattle during droughts.

**For many families, the main source of monetary income comes from social benefits such as retirement, pensions, government programs, or allocations, which reach 92% of homes.** Living conditions in this region are poor: most families live in hard-to-reach rural areas, in an area considered “non-productive” due to limited economic opportunities and low availability of basic services.

- Health and water: Eighty-seven percent of the population lacks health insurance, prepaid insurance, or government health coverage. Access to safe water depends 58.6% on rainwater, which creates serious supply problems during drought periods.
- Energy: Electricity is primarily supplied by low-consumption solar panels.
- Education: There are high levels of illiteracy in the region, which limits work opportunities and contributes to the phenomenon of migration toward urban centers in search of better living conditions. This displacement causes profound changes to local culture.
- Land ownership: Only 10.5% of owners have formal deeds for their lands due to the lack of economic resources to fund official measurements by surveyors and fulfill the requirements established by the government's colonization plan.<sup>1</sup>

**Even though El Impenetrable National Park (EINP) stands out because of its extraordinary biodiversity, the local population does not perceive it as a source of economic opportunities. Currently, their relationship with the land is based on an extractive economy,** which limits their potential to become involved in sustainable initiatives that boost economic development that is more balanced with and respectful toward nature. This context highlights the need to create alternative paths that allow these communities to actively participate in regenerative economic models, taking advantage of the tourism and cultural potential offered by the region.

### Surprising Facts

A 2019 study by the consultant firm Elypsis titled “The Tourism Potential Associated with Nature in Argentina” highlights that **the value chain of tourism is one of the most relevant at both a global and national level.**<sup>2</sup> In 2017, tourism spending in Argentina reached 15 billion dollars, a number that surpasses by 50% the value of beef production or the automotive industry, and is comparable to annual revenues generated by oil, gas, or soy. Additionally, in 2019, tourism created 1.26 million jobs (6% of all jobs) and made up 1.6% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), according to the Argentine Tourism Satellite Count.

However, tourism in Argentina has historically focused on witnessing exuberant landscapes and in certain specific regions. Fifty percent of tourism activity focuses on only four national parks: Iguazú, Nahuel Huapi, Tierra del Fuego, and Glaciares. Within this framework, **nature tourism represents 30% of the total demand, but has an enormous potential for expansion.**

**In any case, the future looks bright. According to Elypsis (2019), tourism in general, and nature tourism in particular, is not reaching its full potential in Argentina.** This is evident when comparing the growth of local and international tourism in Argentina in relation to the other countries in the Southern Cone and Latin America. Both regions have had an increase in visitors and tourist spending across the last 30 years that more than doubles what has occurred in our country. This means that activity in the sector has enormous potential.

---

<sup>1</sup> Informe descriptivo y Análisis de resultados del relevamiento censal socioeconómico para las comunidades rurales criollas lindantes al Parque Nacional El Impenetrable. Alvarez Ferranti, 2023.134 pags. Instituto de Turismo de Chaco, Escuela de Gobierno de Chaco, Facultad de Ciencias Económicas (UNNE), Instituto Provincial de Ciencias y Estadísticas de Chaco y Fundación Rewilding Argentina.

<sup>2</sup> Elypsis (2019): “El potencial turístico vinculado a la naturaleza”



At the same time, through opinion surveys that collected qualitative data, the aforementioned report verified a very high approval and valuation rating by Argentine citizens for the role of national parks in the economic development of provinces and regions, environmental stewardship, and the capacity for job creation. **Consensus on the contribution of parks is unanimous, with no differences seen according to the age, gender, or economic condition of respondents.**

### Nature Tourism: A Growing Opportunity

Nature Tourism (NT), centered around activities such as wildlife watching, is one of the sectors that has seen the greatest growth and demand on a global scale. This kind of tourism offers experiences of profound connection with nature and fosters high-quality services, which makes it a key opportunity for rural communities, who possess valuable knowledge of the territory and its cultural traditions.

**Unlike mass tourism, which tends to focus only on landscapes and has little interaction with local communities, wildlife watching tourism integrates the knowledge and traditions of inhabitants as a central element.** This not only enriches the visitor experience, but also has a positive impact on local communities by fostering economic development and preventing earnings from being diverted toward outside agents. In contrast, mass tourism tends to bring in foreign personnel and in many cases creates environmental and social liabilities.

### The Transformative Potential of Nature Tourism

According to Elypsis (2019), Nature Tourism has a high potential to generate new job openings. This sector has a great capacity to kickstart local economies: for each direct job, 1.5 additional indirect jobs are created. Additionally, NT stimulates economic diversification by incentivizing the offering of goods and services, fostering investments, and increasing the added demand.

For rural communities near El Impenetrable National Park (EINP), NT presents a sustainable, alternative economic opportunity in the face of the lack of income and basic services. This model not only diversifies the local economy, but also contributes to revaluing rural traditions through interactions with visitors interested in traditional products and knowledge. In addition, nature tourism presents a sustainable option in comparison to extractive activities such as large-scale livestock farming and woodcutting, promoting cultural and environmental preservation and comprehensive development in communities.

### Implementing a New Restorative Economy

To guarantee the sustainability of the ecosystems we seek to protect, it is essential to foster new economies that integrate conservation and development. **A Restorative Economy is based on the creation of tourist destinations managed by local providers and on the development of products with cultural and regenerative values.** This focus not only allows for the long-term conservation of ecosystems, but also generates direct economic benefits for local communities.

The success of this economy requires working in the development of the tourism supply as well as the demand, ensuring that the revenue generated directly benefits the inhabitants of the region.

## The “Entrepreneurs by Nature” Program

To promote this model, Fundación Rewilding Argentina has been implementing the “Entrepreneurs by Nature” program, whose main objective is to train local entrepreneurs to create goods and services associated with nature tourism. The program offers comprehensive assistance across the entire production chain, encompassing the following key stages:

1. Continuing education in skills and techniques: Manages training for new techniques and occupations, the use of specific tools, and the design of innovative products or tourism experiences.
2. Marketing support: Works to construct marketing networks to guarantee that local entrepreneurs can position their goods and services within the market.
3. Community support: Carries out periodic community gatherings in which educators specialized in different productive areas provide orientation and training. These sessions take place in Occupation Centers specifically designed for this purpose, as well as in cultural centers, schools, or other public spaces offered by local communities.

The program seeks to establish a virtuous cycle in which nature is the engine for new economic opportunities. This not only promotes environmental conservation, but also strengthens cultural rootedness and fosters the economic self-sufficiency of communities. Also, the model helps diversify the local production network and position nature tourism as a sustainable alternative to traditional activities with higher environmental impact, such as large-scale livestock farming or forestry.

This regenerative focus demonstrates that it is possible to build a future in which nature conservation and economic development walk hand in hand, benefitting ecosystems as well as the people who inhabit them.

## Development of the Tourism Offering

### 1. Preparing Tourism Infrastructure

Nature tourism offers a unique opportunity to generate significant revenue in local communities, mainly through services such as lodging, food, excursions, wildlife watching, and transportation. To take advantage of this potential, it is essential to invest in adequate infrastructure that can support a solid, sustainable, and high-quality tourism offering.

### Public Infrastructure

For El Impenetrable National Park (EINP) to become an engine of economic development, it is essential to guarantee public access and help local inhabitants offer services within the protected area. To achieve this, access “Gateways” into the protected areas are being created. This requires strategic investments in infrastructure such as:

- Trails and walkways for safe and accessible walks.
- Signage that provides guidance to visitors.
- Information and visitor centers that serve as locations for reference and education.
- Communal squares that serve as training spaces and locations where residents can offer goods and services to tourists.



In these first four years, thanks to the efforts of Fundación Rewilding Argentina, the National Parks Administration, and the provincial Tourism Institute, investments have been made to develop infrastructure both within and outside of the park. The most important achievements of the first four years include:

- Building 25 kilometers of trails inside the park.
- Building 800 m of walkways.
- Establishing 40 parking lots for visitors.
- Creating two communal squares in the villages of La Armonia and Nueva Poblacion.
- Building the Nature Tourism Technical School, which includes a hotel, café, and shop in La Armonia village, an entryway to EINP.
- Installing 6 strategic lookouts for wildlife and landscape watching.

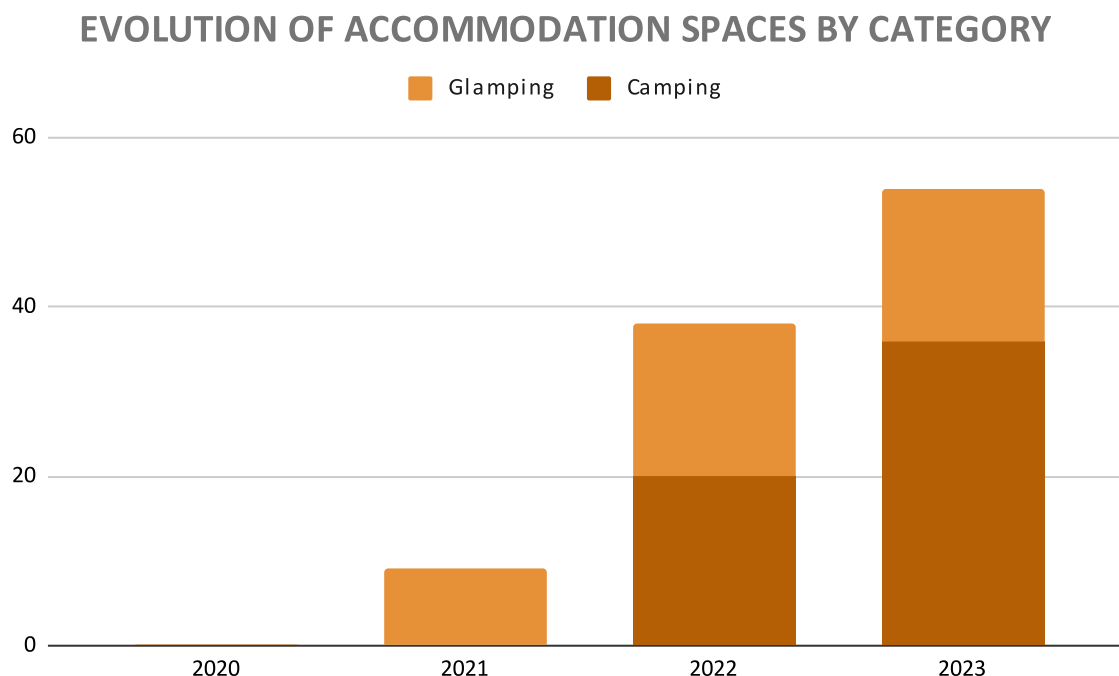
### Lodging: A Key Focus for Tourism Development

Lodging capacity is a fundamental pillar for consolidating tourism in the region. It is essential to diversify lodging modalities, including campgrounds, glamping sites, shelters, and rural lodging both within and outside of the park. This not only improves tourist experiences but also creates jobs and promotes local entrepreneurship. A careful focus on planning the number, category, and distribution of accommodation options helps avoid mass tourism and ensure that the economic benefits remain in local communities.

Since 2020, when there were no accommodation spaces for tourists, important advancements have taken place. During this period, campgrounds and glamping sites were constructed, increasing the total capacity to 54 spaces. The main additions include:

YEAR	CATEGORY	SPACES	BUSINESS MODEL
2021	El Bermejito Glamping Site	9	Public-private
2022	Los Palmares Glamping Site	9	Private
	La Fidelidad Campground	20	Associative - adm. by the community
2023	La Fidelidad Campground (expansion)	16	Associative - adm. by the community

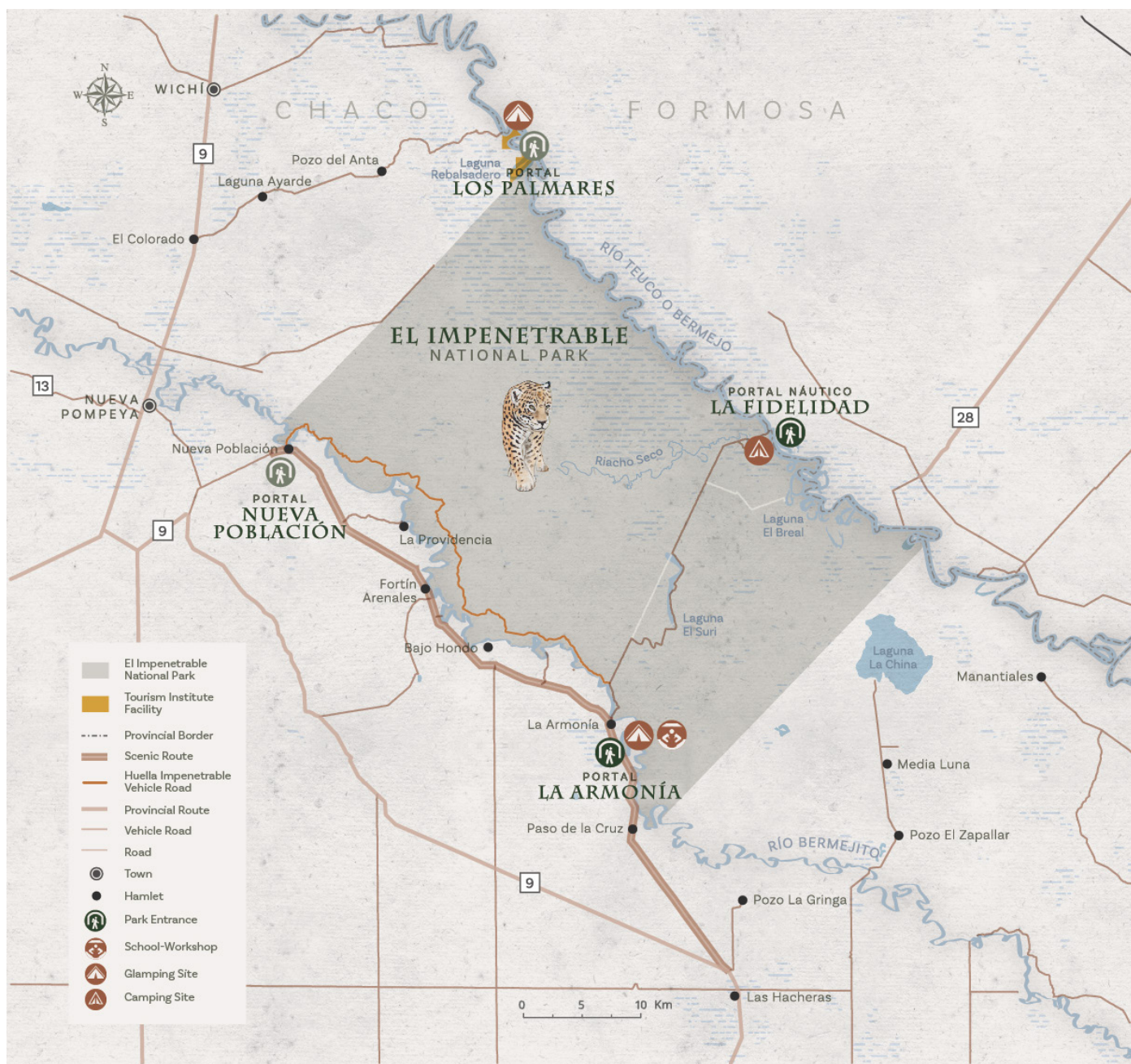
The following graph details the evolution of accommodation spaces by category (Glamping and Camping) for the 2020-2023 period:



Graph 1- Evolution of total spaces by accommodation category

The distribution of accommodation spaces around the park helps avoid mass tourism and guarantee that the economic benefits are equitably distributed among the communities. Additionally, each Gateway offers unique activities that prolong visitor stays and generate higher revenues for the local community.





Map 2 - Location of glamping and camping sites, El Impenetrable tourism map

## A Replicable and Sustainable Model

**Fundación Rewilding Argentina promotes its own investments and fosters collaboration with third parties, supporting local residents so they can become protagonists in the management and development of tourist accommodations.** This model not only strengthens the regional economy, but also marks the beginning of a series of replicable enterprises that integrate nature conservation with economic development.

## Food Enterprises: Empowering Local Identity

**Alongside the development of tourism infrastructure, there were investments made to strengthen local food enterprises,** taking advantage of the homes of residents as key spaces for offering

authentic and unique culinary products and experiences. This focus not only promotes the local economy, but also enhances the cultural identity of the region through cuisine.

Investments adapt to the needs of each entrepreneur, prioritizing the use of noble materials that respect and value community traditions. This model fosters the integration of local culture with the tourist experience, offering visitors a deeper connection with their surroundings.

In 2020, the baseline indicated that there were no formal restaurants in the rural area, with the exception of the modest convenience store “Kiosko de Zulma,” which offered some foods. However, between 2020 and 2022, investments were made to assist in the consolidation of two new rural restaurants:

- Comedor Campo Alegre
- Parador Don Esteban

Additionally, food services were incorporated at strategic points associated with the tourism infrastructure of El Impenetrable National Park:

- La Armonía Village Square
- Nueva Población Square
- La Fidelidad Campground, with the Qaramtá restaurant

These enterprises not only enrich the tourism offering, but also become a direct source of revenue for local families. By tying gastronomy with the tourism experience, visitors have the chance to savor dishes made with local ingredients, often prepared following traditional recipes, as they learn more about the history and culture of the region. This model has the potential to be replicated in other rural communities, strengthening nature tourism and economic sustainability in local populations.

## 2. Continuing Education for Providing Tourism Services

### Training the Protagonist of Nature Tourism

Developing an economy of services based around a nature destination requires strengthening the capabilities of local entrepreneurs, who play a key role in building an authentic and sustainable tourism offering. Local residents possess valuable assets: they are experts on their territory and keepers of stories and traditions that enrich the visitor experience.

### Nature Tourism as an Engine for Development

Nature Tourism (NT) must center around activities that offer a strong experiential component. Opportunities such as long hikes, horseback rides, and kayak tours not only allow tourists to connect more intimately with nature, but also increase the possibilities of observing diverse animal species in their natural habitat. In this context, local guides are essential. Thanks to their deep knowledge of the habits of fauna and the most suitable places for sighting and photography, they provide unique value to the tourist experience.

On the other hand, culinary entrepreneurs contribute by designing menus that revalue the region's traditional dishes, while local artisans create unique pieces using native resources and techniques. These initiatives not only generate revenue, but also reinforce communities' cultural identity and sense of belonging.

### Continuing Education as a Transformative Axis

**Between 2021 and 2023, a total of 247 training events took place, aimed at developing the capabilities of local residents.** These sessions were carried out periodically in community spaces and in the Nature Tourism Technical School, with support from educators with diverse areas of expertise. Trainings focused mainly on four key through-lines:

1. Gastronomy: revaluing traditional dishes and using local ingredients.
2. Cultural products: creating handicrafts and products with a regional identity.
3. Nature Tourism: training guides and providers of tourism services tied to experiential activities such as hiking, horseback riding, and kayaking.
4. Business formalization: cost calculation, financial education, and business management training programs; counseling for obtaining legal authorizations and insurance; training on food safety norms and best practices for food handling; assistance in the transition toward administrative formalization.

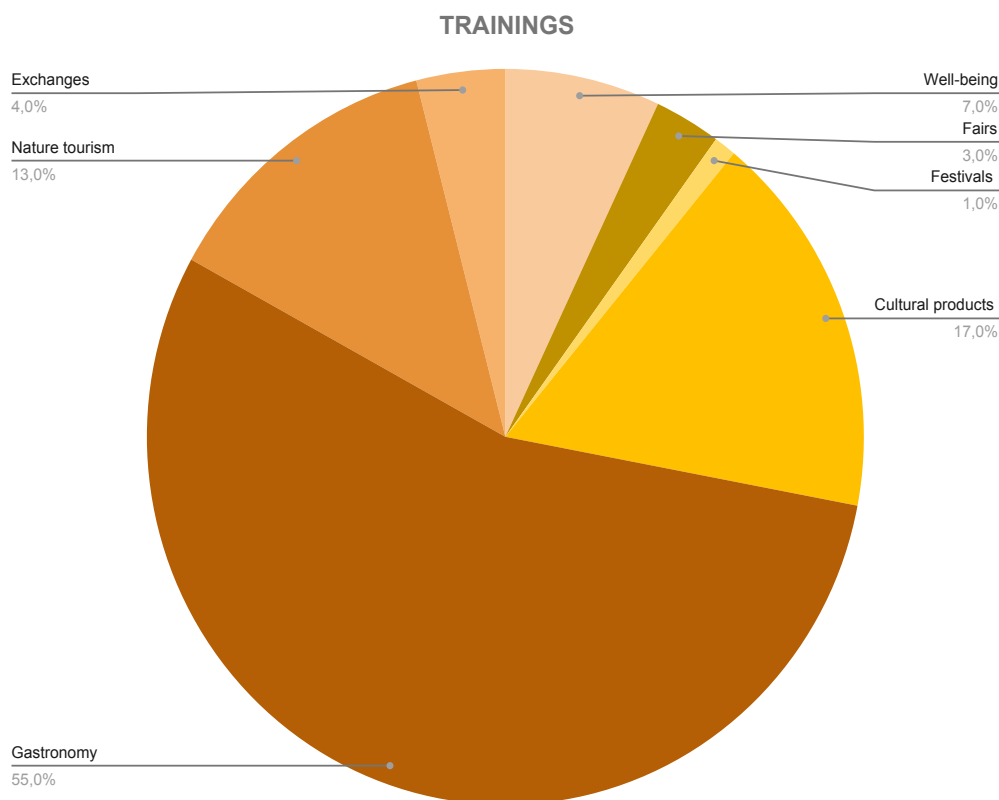
At the same time, work was done to consolidate the Neighbors Association of La Armonia, a civil association that brings together several members of the rural village located in the access gateway to the park, for managing tourism, artisan, and beekeeping projects, among others.

### Local and Sustainable Impact

**This strategy ensures that the economic benefits of tourism remain in the territory, avoiding a dependence on external agents.** Training local residents not only develops new economic opportunities, but also strengthens cultural roots and fosters sustainable development, protecting both the natural environment and cultural heritage of the region.

Focusing on the comprehensive education of local actors allows the building of a tourism model that directly benefits communities, reinforcing their ability to manage and use natural resources in a responsible and long-lasting manner.





Graph 2- Percentage distribution of trainings by activity type

### 3. Developing Cultural Products with Territorial Branding

Within the framework of a restorative economy, production is oriented in favor of nature and communities. Although wildlife and landscapes are key elements of a tourist destination, local communities, with their cultural identity and their unique perspectives, play a key role in enriching the visitor experience. For this reason, the development of cultural products with territorial branding is promoted, such as handicrafts and food products belonging to the region. These products, conceived as regenerative, carry with them stories of social wellbeing and sustainability.

#### Identifying Local Abilities and Resources

Developing cultural products begins by diagnosing the abilities and resources available in local communities, reflecting their cultural wealth. Traditional practices identified include:

- In the criollo community
  - Making horseback riding accessories (whips, muzzles, saddlebags, saddle pads) and clothing made of cow or goat leather and sheep wool.
  - Producing home goods (tables, chairs, and tools) using local wood.
  - Activities such as making garments in sheep wool using the traditional techniques of loom or frame weaving, creating products such as saddle pads, duvets, and saddle bags.

Although many of these practices have diminished with industrialization, the challenge has been to revitalize them to create high-quality products for tourists while conserving cultural traditions.

## Artisanal Production and Marketing

From the first years of the project, there has been work done to bring together local artisans to design unique pieces. Currently, more than 50 product categories have been developed, including:

- Textiles: Bedside rugs, table runners, rugs, table mats, tapestries of native flora and fauna, ponchos, ruanas.
- Wood crafts: Lignum vitae candles, spoons, animal figurines, plates, pudding dishes, mortar and pestles.



## Culinary Traditions

Local cuisine has been revitalized through the “Cooks of Impenetrable” program, formed by 12 women chefs who train regularly to craft regional culinary products and services. Their advances include:

- Traditional products such as native fruit jams (ucle cactus, angled pigface), chañar and mistol syrup, herbal infusions, carob ice cream, and charqui (dried meat).
- Development of the star product: Carob flour from El Impenetrable. The more than 40 families involved in the program managed to collect more than 10 metric tons that, after being processed and packaged, are sold in different locations around the country.



## Cultural and Economic Impact

Developing cultural products not only enriches the tourism experience, but also generates a positive impact on communities:

- Cultural preservation: Reinforces local pride and regional identity.
- Sustainable economic development: Diversifies sources of income through the sale of value-added products.
- Visitor-community connection: Products act as ambassadors for the local culture.

The combination of handicrafts, cuisine, and cultural tourism has been shown to be a powerful tool for promoting a regenerative economy.

## Building Demand

### 1. Promoting the Tourist Destination

**To consolidate an economy of services surrounding nature tourism, it is not enough to develop a solid offering; it is equally crucial to work on building demand, promoting the destination and attracting a constant flow of visitors. To achieve this, various promotional and communication strategies are carried out to spread information about the destination and increase public interest.** These actions seek to position El Impenetrable National Park and its surroundings as an attractive option for nature tourism in Argentina. Standout initiatives include:

- Press trips with influencers, journalists, and tourism agencies: these tours allow recognized figures (environmental and travel influencers) and specialized media (regional, national, and international) to get to know the destination and share their experiences with a wide audience, generating authentic and attractive content.
- Printed promotional materials: developing informational flyers, tourist guidebooks, and books that highlight the advantages of the destination, its biodiversity and cultural wealth.
- Design and optimization of digital platforms: creating and maintaining websites dedicated to the destination, as well as regular publications on social media to attract and maintain the attention of potential visitors.
- Advertisements: broadcasting on media such as radio, and in strategic spaces such as signage in airports, key transit points for tourists.
- Participating in tourism fairs: national and regional.

These integrated actions are essential to making the tourist destination visible and positioning it not only as a unique experience of connection with nature, but also as a space that fosters sustainable development and the local economy.

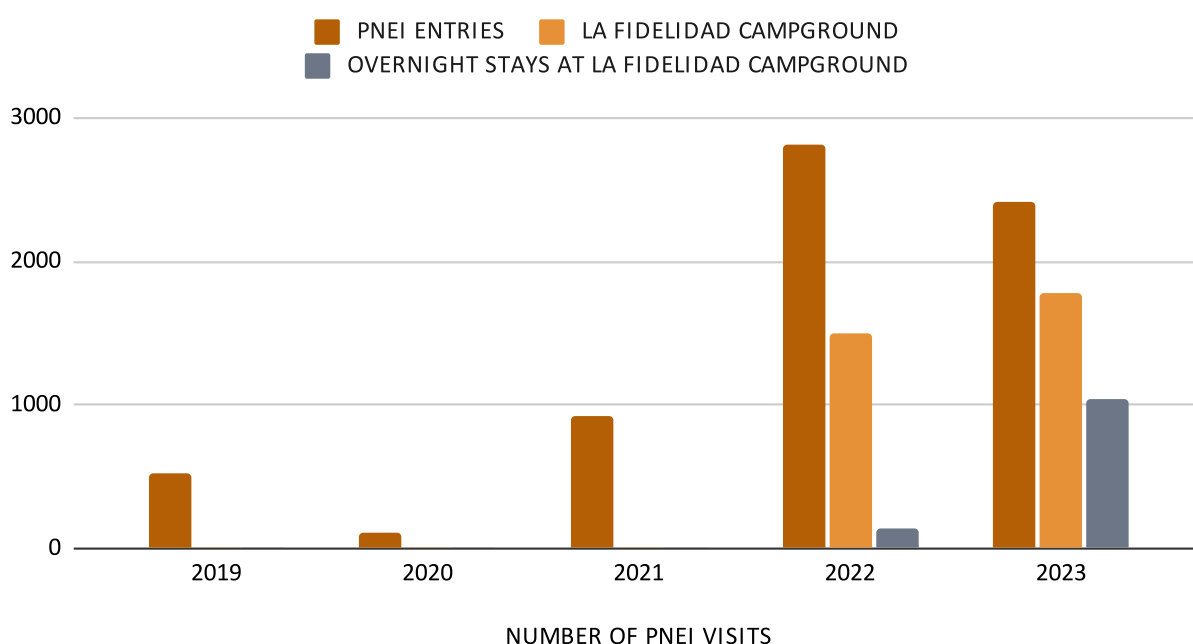


## Visits to El Impenetrable National Park

Analyzing the evolution of visitor numbers in El Impenetrable National Park requires considering two key factors:

1. Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic: Entries into the park during 2020 and 2021 were significantly affected by health restrictions, which altered the normal flow of visitors.
2. Distortion due to internal activities: During the 2020-2023 period, visitor data includes the movement of members of Fundación Rewilding Argentina and local residents who entered the park as part of environmental education programs, which also influences records. To correct the interpretation of these data, it is useful to observe the visits to La Fidelidad Campground, which offer a more direct picture of tourist activity.

### PNEI VISITORS - Annual Evolution



Graph 3 - Annual evolution of number of EINP visitors, La Fidelidad Campground visitors, and overnight stays

### Evolution of Visitors (2022-2023)

- In 2022, El Impenetrable National Park received 2,813 visitors, while La Fidelidad Campground counted 1,500 visitors.
- **In 2023**, although park visits decreased slightly to 2,420 people as a result of heavy rainfall during May and June, preventing access to the park, **visits to the campground increased to 1,775 people, demonstrating sustained growth of interest in tourist activities and lodging in the region.**

### Growth of Overnight Stays

One of the most salient indicators has been the increase in overnight stays. Since the campground's inauguration in 2022, this figure has experienced significant growth:

- In 2022, only 139 overnight stays were registered.
- In 2023, the number surpassed 1,000 overnight stays, showing notable growth of over 600% in only one year.

This increase reflects the consolidation of accommodation offerings in the park and its capacity to attract visitors interested in more prolonged and profound experiences in contact with nature.

Data show sustained growth in tourist activity, especially in terms of overnight stays, as infrastructure was developed and the destination was consolidated as an option for nature tourism in Argentina. This growth is an encouraging indicator for local communities and a model of restorative economy that seeks to tie conservation of the park with the economic and cultural development of the region.

### La Fidelidad Campground

#### Revenue Received by the Neighbors Association of La Armonia

**In the April-October season of 2023, the revenue received by the Neighbors Association of La Armonia, through the administration of "La Fidelidad" Campground, surpassed 28 million in constant December 2024 pesos.** This revenue came from the various activities the association carries out in the campground. The three main activities, which account for 93% of revenue generated, are tent rentals, the convenience store, and the restaurant's culinary services.

The remaining 7% of revenue came from providing services that are less relevant until now such as tour guiding, shower and hot water services, firewood sales, and sleeping bag rentals.

Considering the unofficial dollar exchange rate, throughout the entire season the revenue generated **was equivalent to 11,852 dollars.**

## Duration of the Season

The activity of La Fidelidad Campground is concentrated in the season of April to October (7 months), with a spike in revenue during July and August, corresponding with the peak season. During January, February, March, November, and December, the campground is closed, which limits revenue generation in those periods.

## Average Monthly Incomes

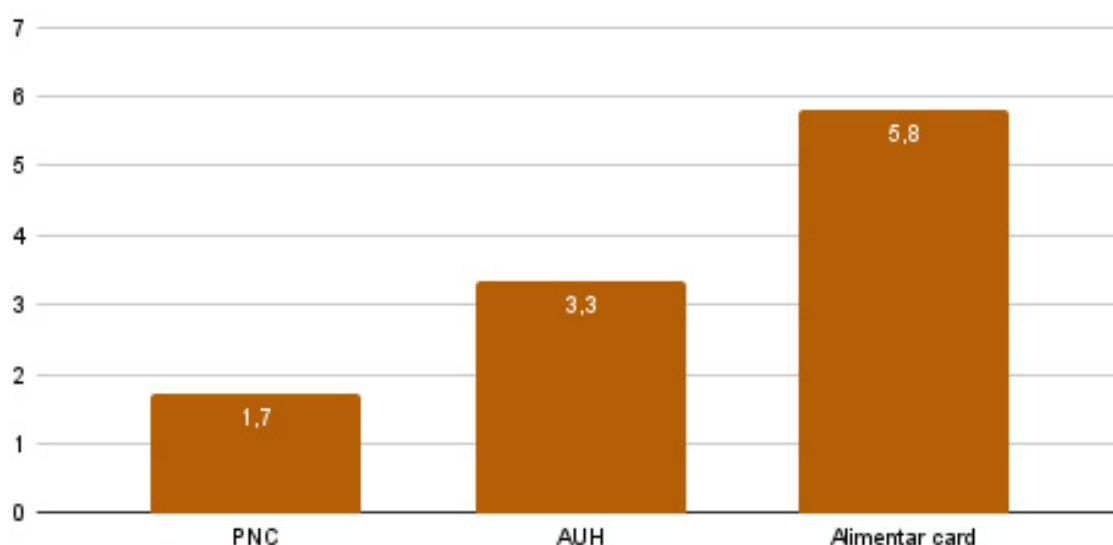
Upon distributing the total revenue generated in the campground among the entrepreneurs who participated in campground activities during the season (the permanent participation of eight entrepreneurs is considered), each one received a real income of 3.73 million pesos or the equivalent of 1,519 unofficial dollars. In terms of an equivalent monthly income, it would signify an average income of \$533,375 a month during active months and of \$311,135 considering the total income distributed across all twelve months, although there is no activity in the off-season months. This fact can be compared to the median income in the region, highlighting the positive economic impact of nature tourism on local communities.

Just as will be done later on with the EbN as a whole, the income generated can be contrasted with the social benefits that usually constitute the basic income of the community members who are reached by government assistance.

Comparing the income obtained during the 2023 season to the value of social benefits offered by the public sector, we identify that **the average monthly income generated by the Entrepreneurs by Nature at La Fidelidad Campground were 70% higher than the monthly value of a non-contributive disability benefit (PNC), 230% higher than the Universal Allocation per Child (AUH), and 5.8 times the value of the “tarjeta alimentaria” food assistance program transfer.**

## ExN Revenue managed by Camping La Fidelidad

-Comparison with social benefits-



Source: Invecoq based on FRA and ANSES data

Graph 4 - Annual evolution of income generated by EbN in charge of La Fidelidad Campground

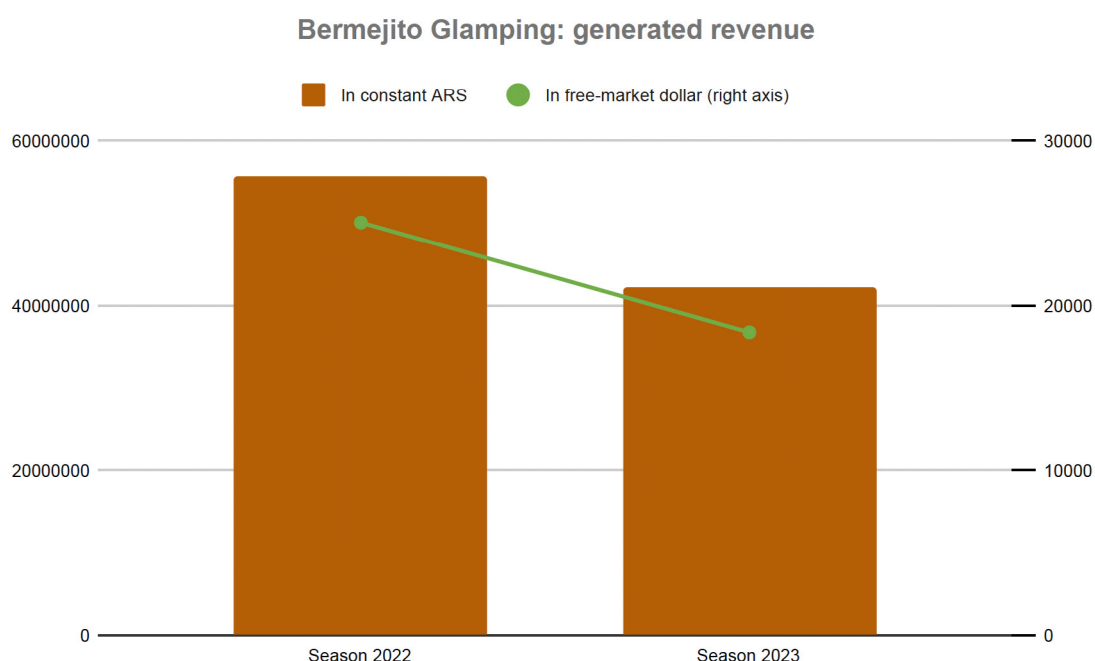


The economic growth of the campground shows the effectiveness of the community management model and the potential of nature tourism as a tool to generate significant income in rural areas. This fosters local economic development, contributing to a restorative economy that directly benefits residents.

### [Bermejito Glamping Site](#)

In 2021, with “Bermejito Glamping,” the possibility first opened up to stay in the access gateway to EINP. Located near the Nature Tourism Technical School, it was constructed together with the Tourism Institute for the rotation of 4 local interns and their training in tourism. The glamping site was built with the purpose of promoting the tourist destination, increasing the number of beds and diversifying options on offer, while simultaneously educating the local community on providing tourism services.

With only 9 lodging spaces (3 South African-style tents), the glamping site received 455 visitors during 2022. The amount charged during the tourist season months (April-October) was 55.6 million pesos. In 2023, visits to Bermejito were practically the same with a total of 273 beds sold and the real income in constant pesos was equivalent to 42 million pesos. The difference in the total real revenue received between the two years is explained by the increase in promotional visits with reduced rates and the decision not to adjust rates to the rate of inflation to promote visiting the park in an emerging nature destination. It is important to keep in mind that the period being analyzed was characterized by the highest rate of inflation in over 30 years of the Argentine economy.



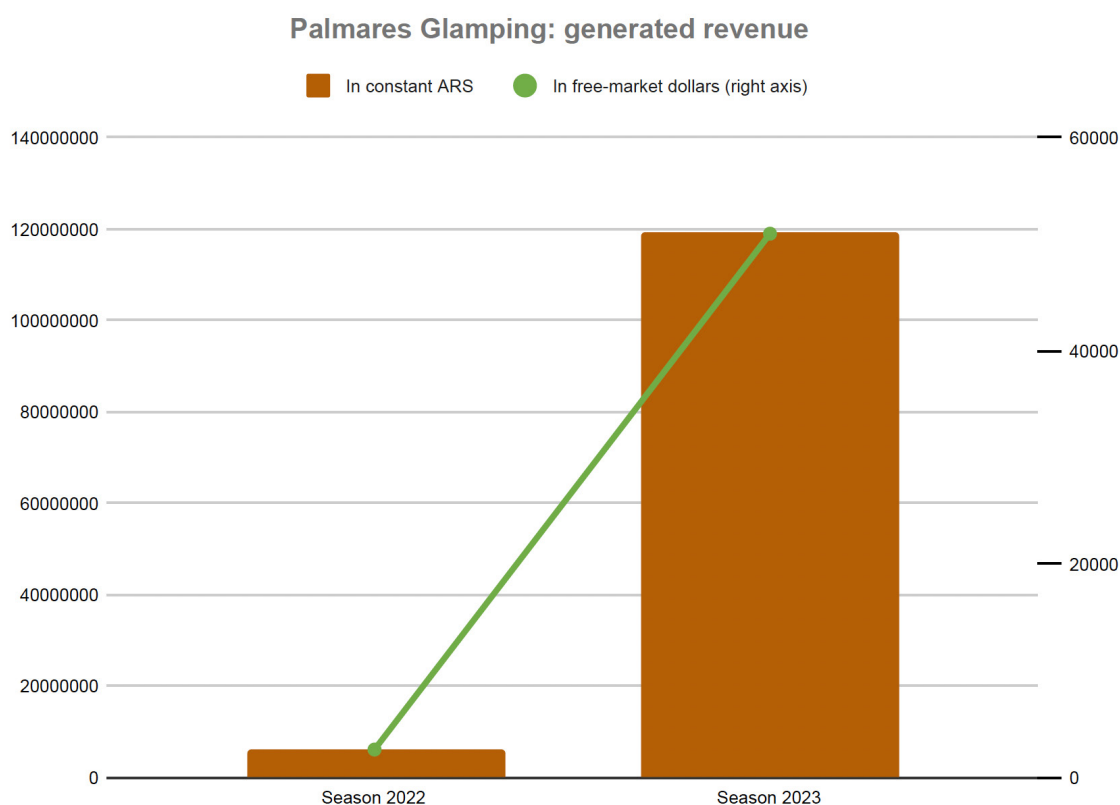
Graph 5 - Annual evolution of income generated in Bermejito Glamping

## Los Palmares Glamping

After its inauguration in July of 2022, a new access gateway to the park was opened, diversifying the activities that can be done surrounding the park and extending the average visitor stay. This private glamping site creates five jobs for people in the community.

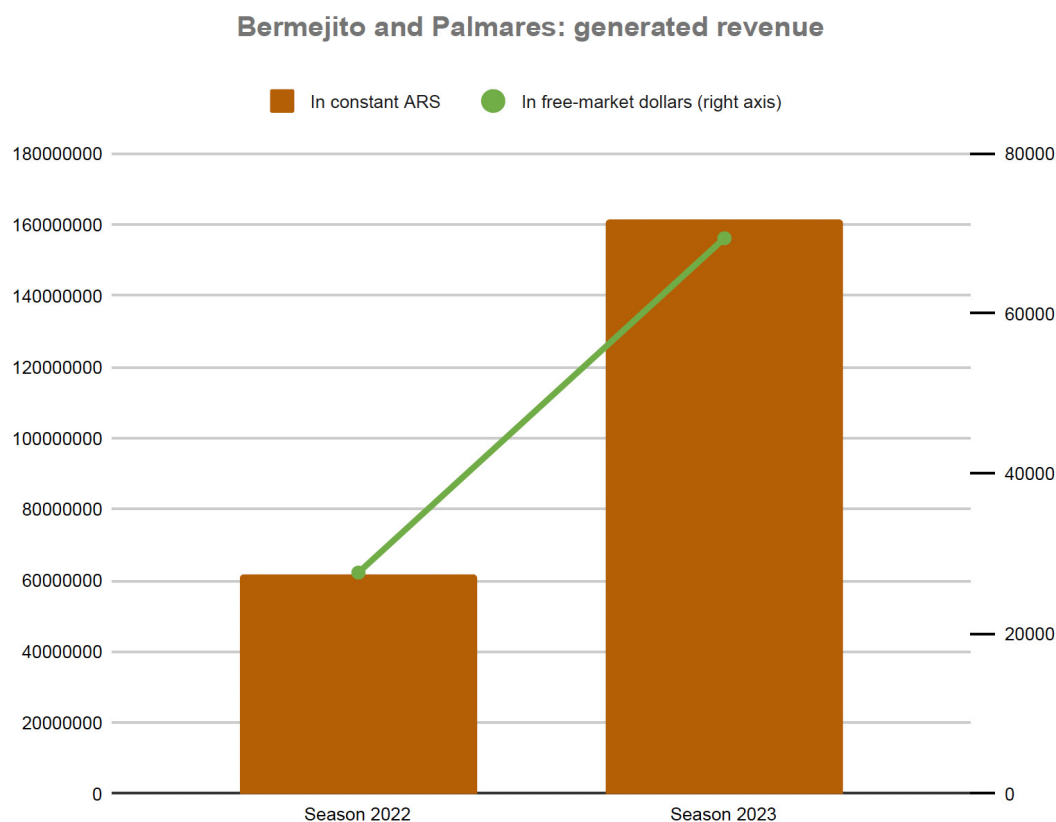
Its strategic location on the river has a strategic importance regarding the possibility of promoting water tours along the Bermejo River, making it possible, through tourism, to monitor the park borders and thus reduce threats.

In 2023, it received 262 tourists, achieving an occupation rate of 41% and generating 119 million pesos in revenue throughout the season.



Graph 6- Annual evolution of income generated at Palmares Glamping

The income generated by the “Bermejito” and “Palmares” glamping sites during the 2023 season was over 160 million pesos (constant Dec-24) and equivalent to nearly 70,000 unofficial dollars.



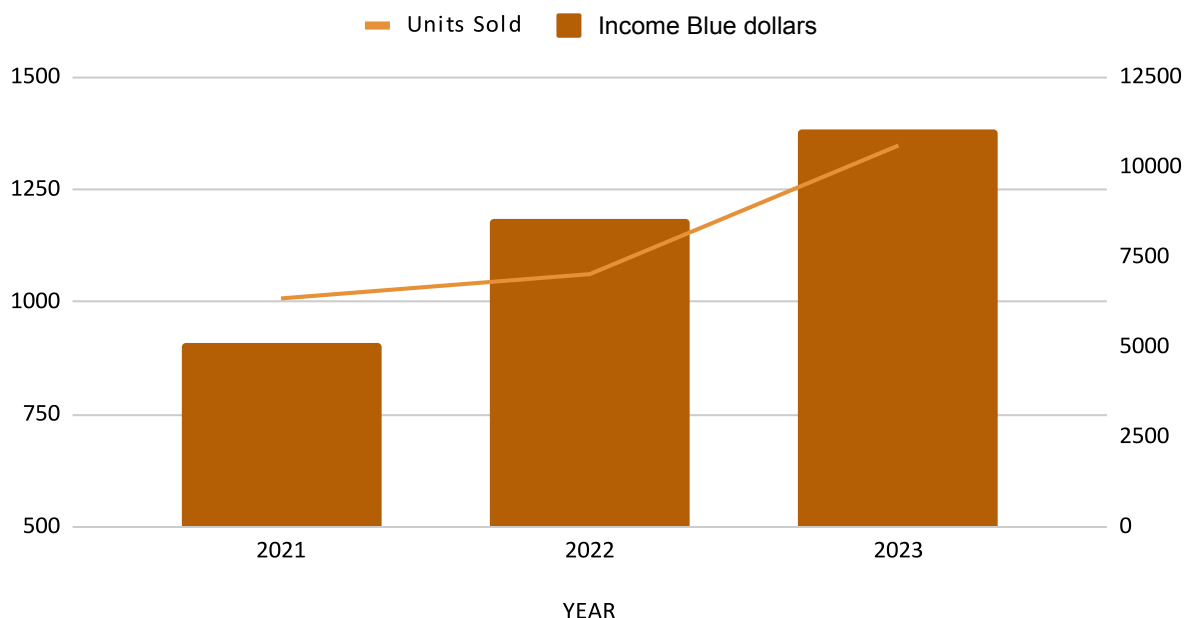
Graph 7- Annual evolution of income generated at Bermejito and Palmares Glamping

## 2. Marketing Products with Territorial Branding

The products developed by the Entrepreneurs by Nature are sold according to visitor demand. These products can be acquired at Bermejito Glamping and Palmares Glamping and by visiting the neighbors who open their doors to tourists through cultural experiences: dyeing, spinning, and culinary classes are a few examples. Presenting products in the Shop is a key element for increasing the possibility of sales. Although we only have one shop in Bermejito Glamping, **between 2021 and 2023, over 3,400 handicrafts were able to be sold, generating 24,700 dollars in income.**



## INCOME EVOLUTION - Cultural Products



Graph 8- Evolution of income from sales of cultural products between 2021 and 2023

### Exporting Products to Increase Reach

However, not all sales are on site. Exporting products (selling products outside the region) represents a key strategy for increasing the reach of this new economy, reducing the exclusive dependence on visitors to El Impenetrable National Park (EINP). This diversification is especially important in emerging tourist destinations, where tourist activity tends to be highly seasonal.

To reach other markets, various strategies are implemented, among them:

- **Online store:** this channel allows local communities to overcome geographic barriers, connecting their products with consumers beyond their immediate region. Digitizing sales also makes it easier to promote cultural identity through stories, photos, and descriptions that enrich the buying experience. In 2021, we inaugurated our shop, Tienda Monte.
- **Selling in 4 own point of sale (POS) locations:** stores located in different parks where FRA work.
- **Agreements with POS locations:** these collaborations with established stores guarantee broader and more effective distribution of cultural and culinary products. Additionally, they position the territorial brand in markets where local communities might not have a direct presence. To achieve this, deals were established with recognized brands such as Facón and Quiero Norte. Some brands even place direct orders with artisans, as is the case with Fuegoia.
- **Participation in fairs and events:** this kind of activity fosters direct connections between producers and consumers, in addition to generating visibility for the entrepreneurs. These events also allow the gathering of direct market feedback, key to improving products.

**This strategy maintains the production demand throughout the whole year (reducing seasonality), guaranteeing constant income for local communities, even outside the tourist season.** Additionally, it positions cultural and culinary products as ambassadors for the regional identity, fostering economic and social development in these territories. Combining exportation with tourism creates a sustainable model that maximizes the positive impact on local communities and strengthens their capacity for economic resilience. Because it is centered on sustainability and on diversifying economic activities, this model could be replicated in other emerging nature destinations in Argentina and the world.

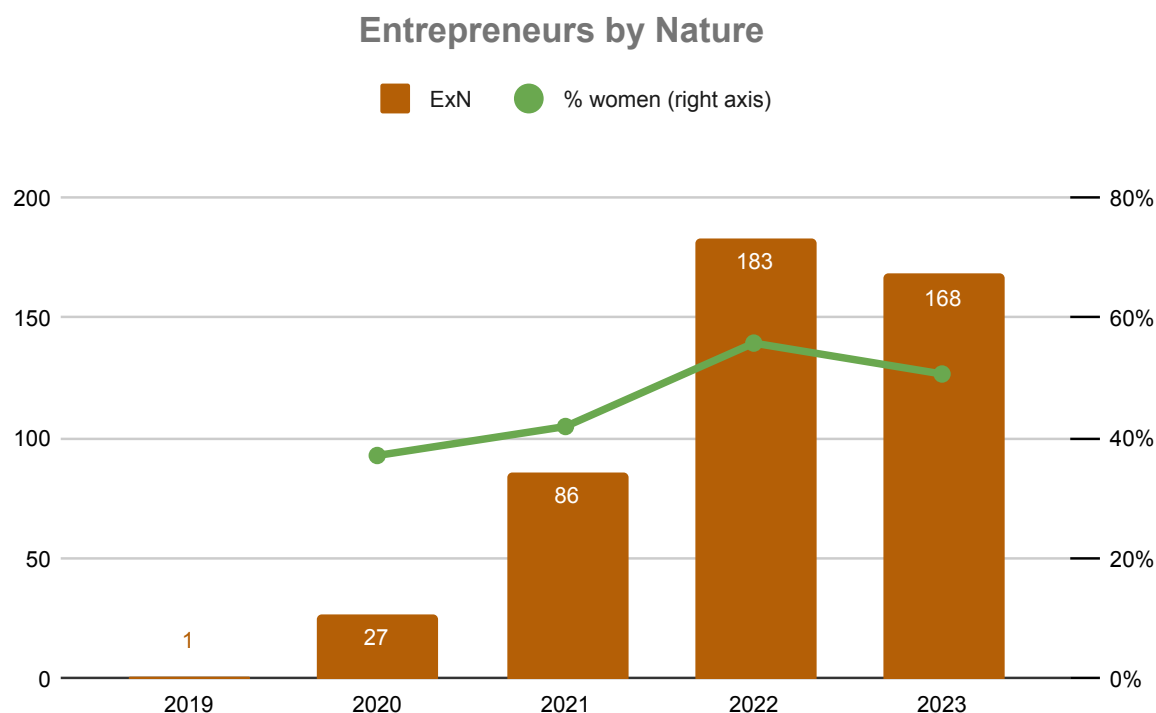
## Socioeconomic Impact

A detailed analysis of economic and social impact indicators for the Entrepreneurs by Nature program between 2020 and 2023 makes evident how creating specific categories has allowed the identification and measurement of the project's reach in the communities neighboring El Impenetrable National Park (EINP). These categories are essential for evaluating the diversification of economic activities and their contribution to regional development. Here we analyze the key points of each category:

Entrepreneur Category	Detailed Activity
<b>Tourism Provider</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic impact: Increasing direct income for families who offer authentic and personalized experiences to tourists.</li> <li>Social impact: Fostering knowledge and valuing of the natural environment, strengthening the sense of belonging and environmental conservation.</li> </ul>	Resident of the rural area who carries out some activity tied to providing tourist services such as guiding for wildlife watching, hiking, kayak touring, horseback riding services, rural accommodations, and interning at the Technical School, among others.
<b>Cultural Products</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic impact: Generating income by transforming local resources into products with high cultural and commercial value.</li> <li>Social impact: Rescuing traditional techniques and promoting cultural identity, tying products to the land and its history.</li> </ul>	Resident of the rural area who creates wood handicrafts, wool fabrics, provides wool, makes mud and leather handicrafts.
<b>Gastronomy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic impact: Increasing consumption of native foods and creating value chains around regional cuisine.</li> <li>Social impact: Spreading awareness of local culinary culture, promoting community pride, and transmitting knowledge.</li> </ul>	Resident of the rural area who is part of the "Cooks of Impenetrable" group and provides culinary services and shrubland fruit gathering.
<b>Employees</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic impact: Stable and formal employment for residents, strengthening professional development in the areas of conservation and tourism.</li> <li>Social impact: Professionalization of the community and greater involvement in managing the park.</li> </ul>	Resident of the rural area who is part of the FRA team or works for the NPA.
<b>Day Laborers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic impact: Complementary income that supports family finances.</li> <li>Social impact: Inclusion in activities that integrate vulnerable sectors in project development.</li> </ul>	Resident of the rural area who receives income for building corrals, raising donkeys/pigs, managing tusca trees, constructing public infrastructure.

Table 1- Entrepreneur categories by activity

- Evolution of Entrepreneurs by Nature



Source: Inveco based on FRA

Graph 9- Evolution of Entrepreneurs by Nature 2019-2023

The growth of the Entrepreneurs by Nature program (EbN) reflects how the development of El Impenetrable National Park (EINP) as a tourism destination has positively impacted the economy of neighboring communities. **This increase, which has more than doubled the number of entrepreneurs between 2021 and 2022, makes evident the success of economic inclusion and diversification strategies.** Here we detail the key points regarding this growth:

General context:

- The increase in tourism has generated a higher demand for local goods and services, attracting more residents to participate in activities related to EINP.
- The expansion of the park infrastructure and its promotion have been key factors in this growth.
- The growth of FRA's communities team accompanied the consolidation of new entrepreneurs in different work groups.

The success of the Entrepreneurs by Nature program shows how the combination of conservation, tourism, and community development can generate significant impacts in the long run. The expansion toward new core locations demonstrated that it is possible to replicate this model in other rural areas with similar characteristics, as long as there is an access gateway to the protected area.



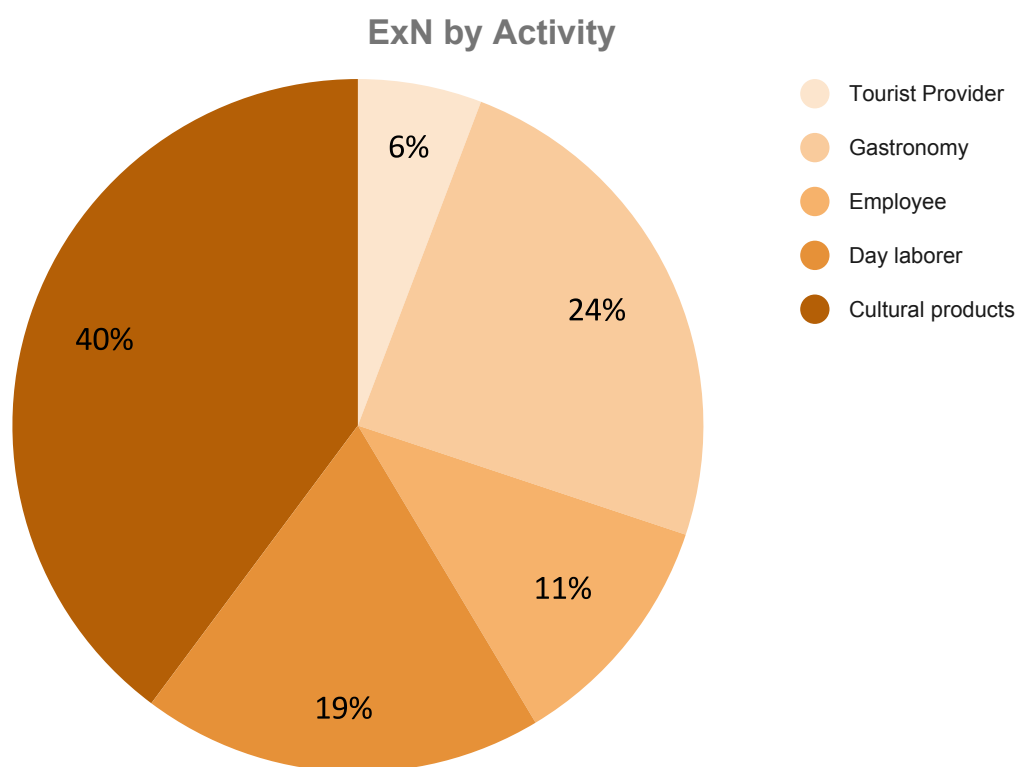
- **Empowering Women**

Female participation in NT projects is worth highlighting. Female empowerment has significantly transformed traditional roles in rural communities.

Previously limited to the home, **women now make up 50% of entrepreneurs in the Entrepreneurs by Nature (EbN) program, excelling in activities such as cultural products and gastronomy.**

This change boosts their economic independence, elevates their role in the community, and fosters gender equity. Additionally, together with the youth, they lead the transition from a livestock farming economy to one of services, preserving cultural identity and improving family income.

- **Percentage Distribution of Entrepreneurs by Activity**



Graph 10- Percentage distribution of entrepreneurs by activity

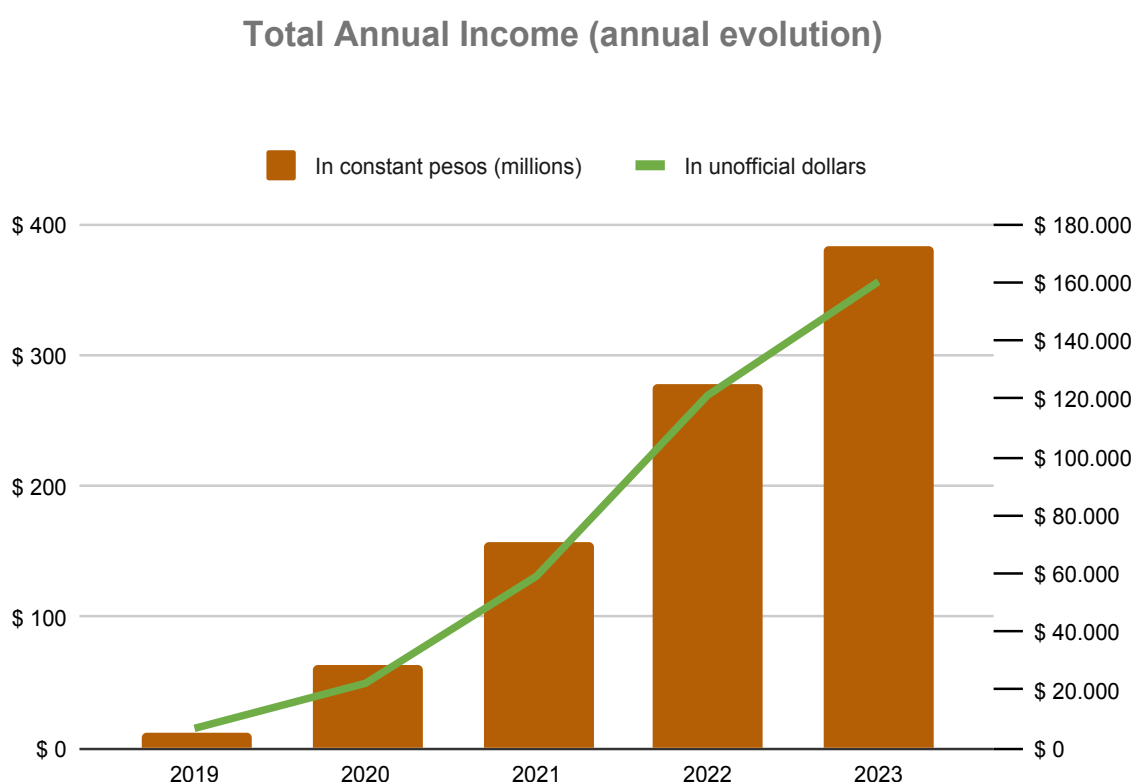
In these first four years of investment in infrastructure development for tourism and while visitor numbers to the park are still very low, those who create cultural products play a very important role in generating income in the community. The possibility of exporting products with territorial branding to other regions of the country sustains artisan production throughout the year, removing the dependence on visitor demand. The significant number of day laborers employed for developments related to the park is also evident.

- Evolution of Income Generated

Due to the high inflation rate in which the Argentine economy has been immersed for many years now, in order to draw conclusions related to the monetary income of Entrepreneurs by Nature, it is necessary to transform nominal income from the last few years into real income discounting inflation in pesos or converting income in pesos to dollars. The evolution of income generated by Entrepreneurs by Nature (EbN) reflects significant growth in real terms.

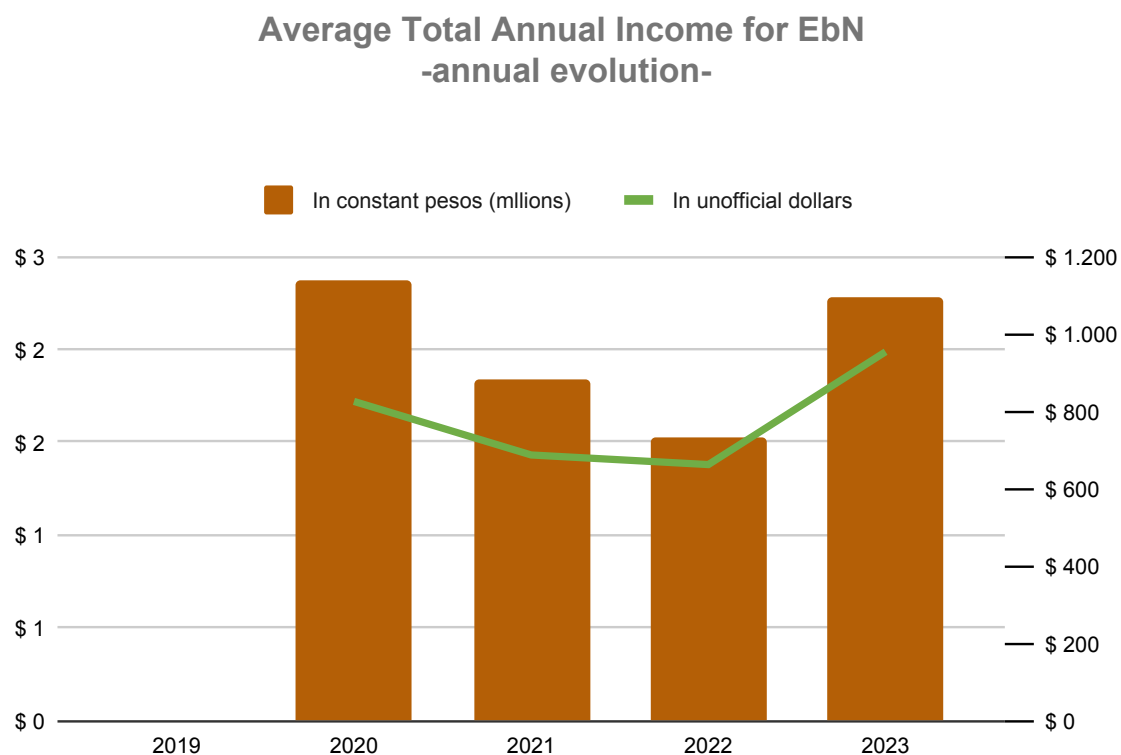
In the following graphs, income is expressed in constant December 2024 values and in unofficial dollars (using the exchange rate in the parallel exchange market as a reference).

**Whereas in 2022, the total income generated by EbN was 278 million constant pesos, in 2023 it surpassed 383 million pesos. In foreign currency terms, the income generated by the community increased from 121,000 dollars in 2022 to 160,200 unofficial dollars in 2023.**



Graph 11- Evolution of total annual income

In individual terms, taking an average of entrepreneur incomes, between 2022 and 2023 the average income increased considerably from \$1,520,000 to nearly \$2,280,000. In terms of unofficial dollars, the average income doubled, from 662 annual dollars to 954 annual dollars.



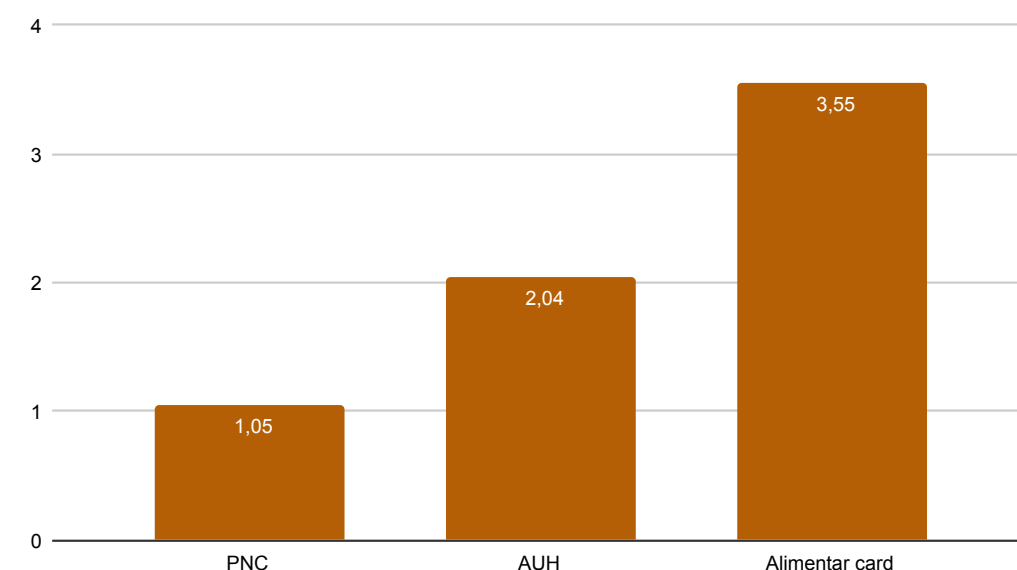
Source: Indecq based on data from FRA, INDEC, and BCRA

Graph 12- Evolution of average total annual income



When comparing the income received during 2023 to the values of the social benefits offered by the public sector, we identify that **on average, the monthly income generated by EbN in El Impenetrable was 5% higher than the monthly value of non-contributive disability benefits (PNC), 104% higher than the Universal Allocation per Child (AUH), and 255% higher than the value of the transfer for the “tarjeta alimentaria” food assistance program.**

### EbN Incomes -comparison with social benefits-



Source: Invecq based on FRA and ANSES data

Graph 13- Average total annual income in comparison with social benefits

Traditionally, non-contributive disability benefits have been identified as a social policy mechanism that is particularly relevant in the populations of the northern provinces of Argentina.<sup>3</sup> **Chaco Province specifically leads the ranking of non-contributive disability pensions per capita, with 8.6% of its population receiving a benefit of this kind, according to data from June 2024.**

Some municipalities such as Taco Pozo, Villa Río Bermejito, San Bernardo, Presidencia Roque Sáenz Peña, Pampa del Infierno, Corzuela, Charata, Las Breñas, Pinedo, Villa Ángela, Tres Isletas, and Castelli are being audited by the national government in search of irregularities in the distribution of social benefits. Beyond any flaws in the process, residents’ dependence on these sources of income makes generating genuine income in communities even more relevant in this new context.

3- <https://www.infobae.com/politica/2024/07/29/pensiones-por-invalidez-chaco-santiago-del-estero-y-formosa-lideran-la-tasa-de-beneficiarios/>

## Visitor Projection and Direct Economic Impact

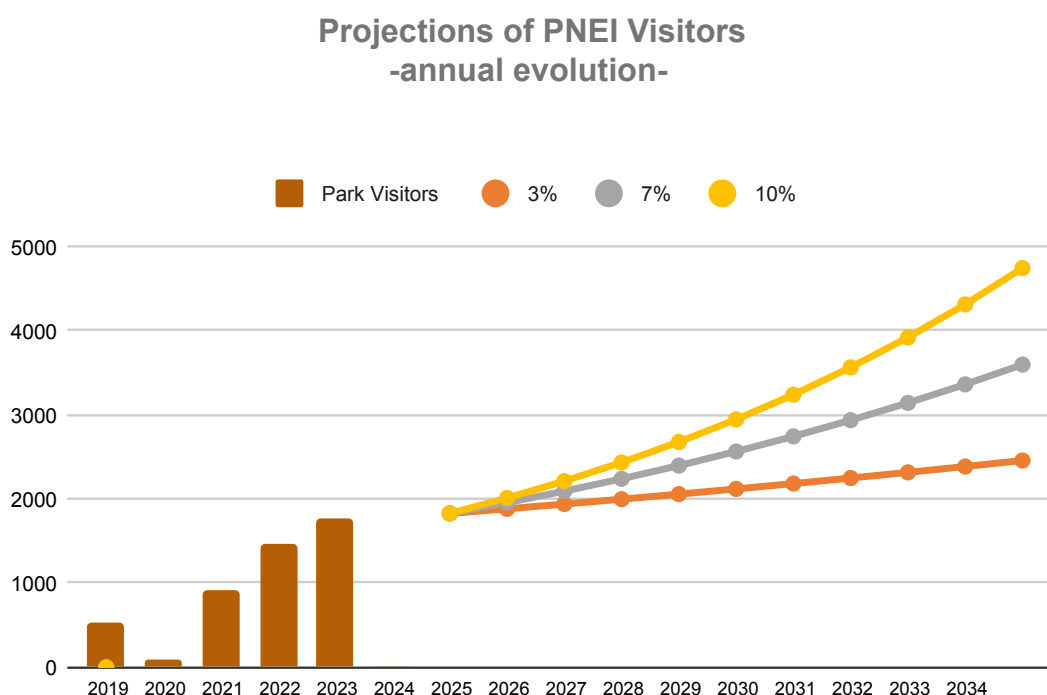
Below, we present different projection scenarios for visitors to El Impenetrable National Park over the next ten years, using as a reference the visitor numbers for La Fidelidad Campground (1,700 visitors) and relatedly, scenarios of annual income generation on the part of the EbN community in constant pesos and dollars.

For the projection of growth in visitor numbers, we outlined three scenarios that were positive, although relatively conservative given the tourist destination's current stage of development: **the first one with an assumption of annual and cumulative growth of 3%, the second with a rate of 7%, and the third with an annual growth of 10%.**

In the 3% annual growth scenario, total visitors would reach 2,457 by 2034, which would signify an accumulated growth of nearly 40% throughout the decade.

In the intermediate scenario, visitors would surpass 3,590 by 2034, implying 103% growth and doubling the total number of 2023 visits.

Finally, in the fastest growth scenario, visitors would reach nearly 4,800 in 2034, an increase of 167% in relation to 2023.

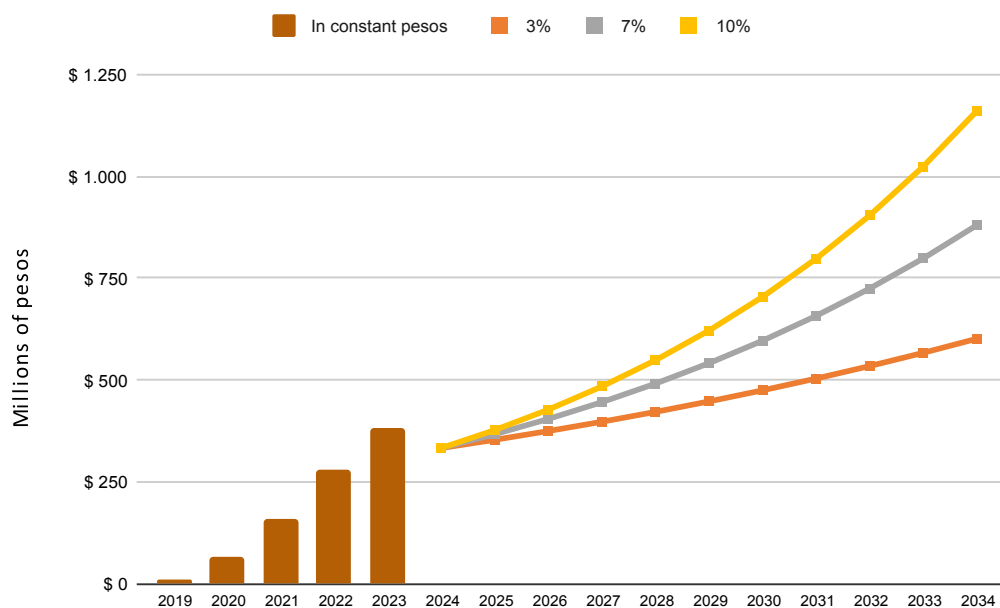


Source: Invecq based on data from FRA and projections

Graph 14- Visitor projections, according to scenarios

Based on the different scenarios for the evolution of park visitors and the visits-spending relationship, we project the following scenarios for the evolution of EbN incomes in both constant December 2024 pesos and dollars. For the years used as a basis for the calculations (2022-2023), average spending for visitors based on goods/services provided by the EbN community was 182,000 pesos or the equivalent of 156 unofficial dollars.

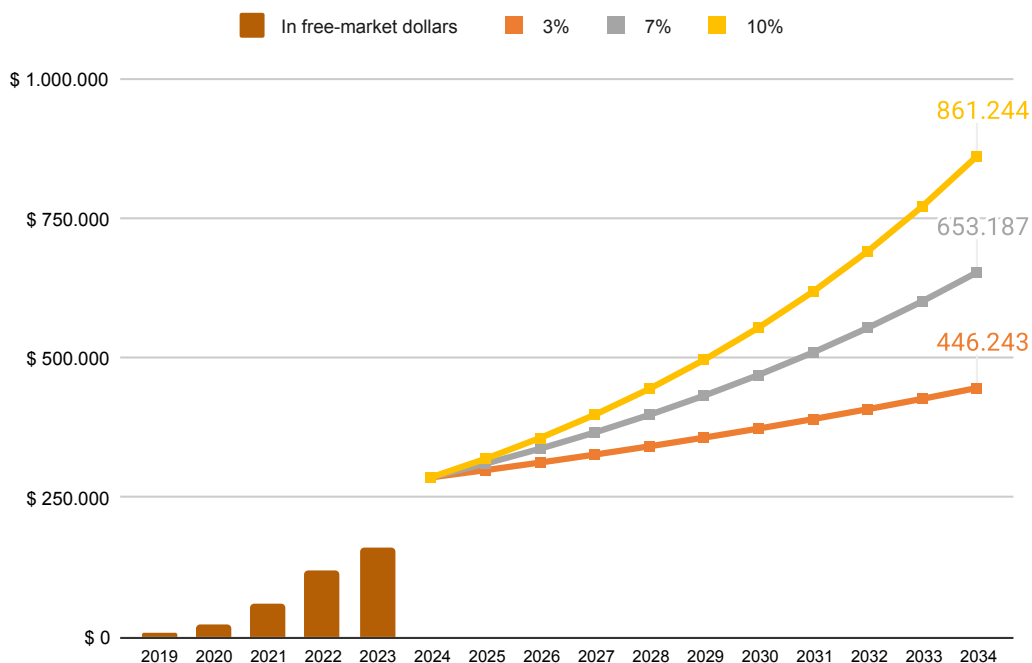
### EbN: Total Annual Income -annual evolution-



Source: Inveco based on FRA, INDEC, and BCRA data and projections

Graph 15- Projection of income, according to scenarios

### EbN: Total Annual Income -annual evolution-



Source: Inveco based on data from FRA, INDEC, and BCRA and projections

Graph 16- Projection of income in dollars, according to scenarios

**In the most conservative scenario of 3% growth in park visits, the income generated by EbN would increase from current levels to 600 million pesos in 2034, signifying a real growth of 57%. In dollars, income would increase by a considerably larger magnitude, 180%, surpassing 446,000 dollars.** This greater growth in income measured in foreign currency in relation to the local currency is explained by the macroeconomic conditions of Argentina.

During the initial period of the El Impenetrable project (2019-2023), the macroeconomic situation was characterized by an exaggeratedly high unofficial dollar for the structural conditions of Argentina. With the implementation of new economic policies, the value of the local currency in unofficial dollars has increased considerably, causing the same income in pesos to increase in terms of hard currency due to the mere decrease in unofficial exchange rates. Therefore, this phenomenon of greater increase in income generated when measured in dollars characterizes the three projected scenarios.

**In the scenario of 7% annual growth, incomes measured in constant local currency would reach 880 million pesos by 2034, equivalent to 653,000 dollars annually.**

**Finally, in the most rapid-growth scenario, incomes in pesos would reach 1.16 billion pesos and 860,000 dollars, which would signify an increase of 220% in pesos and 440% in dollars throughout the decade.**

It is important to clarify that these projections for EbN income growth are incomplete. **All three scenarios are based on a baseline that only includes revenue generated by the communities that have been able to be surveyed and systematized by Fundación Rewilding Argentina (the Entrepreneurs by Nature).** But outside of these statistics, there is other revenue that comes from park visitor activity that is untracked because it is generated in a decentralized manner by community members. This factor will be increasingly important as activity grows.

Second, even the projections arising from registered data are based exclusively on a “demand” focus, given that the baseline is the evolution of park visitors across the years. However, as demand evolves, supply will do so as well. **The growing quantity and quality of the supply will create new spending options for visitors, and therefore the average spending value per visit is expected to increase over time independently from the number of visits.**

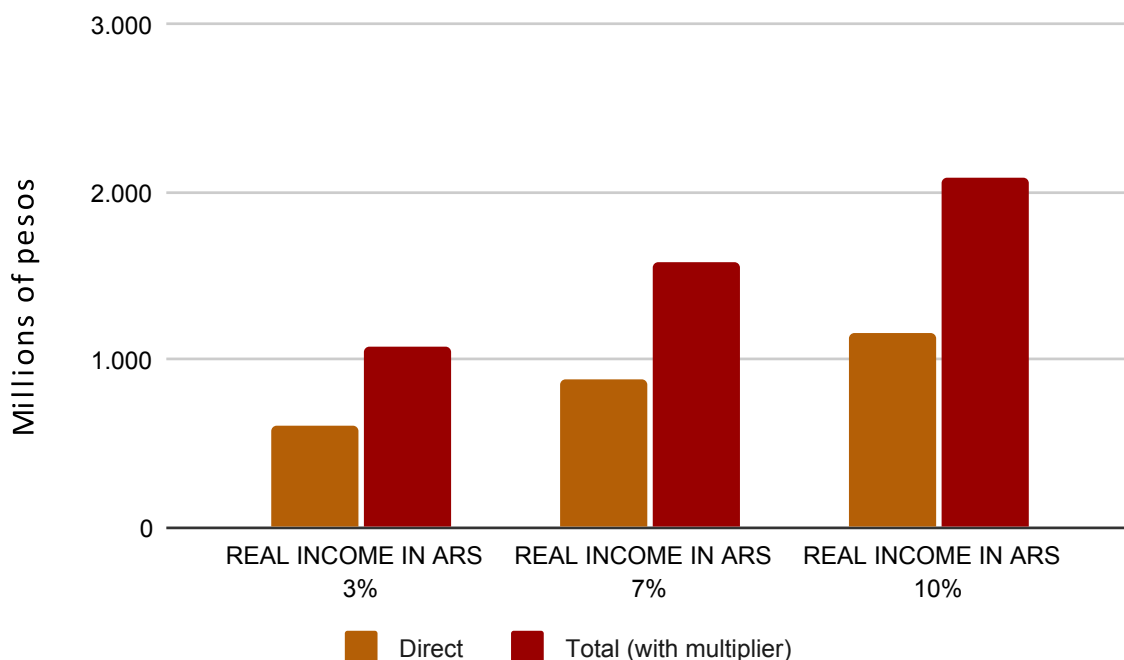


## The Multiplicative Effect of Tourist Activity

Finally, the indirect or secondhand effects of visitor spending must be taken into account. Tourist spending permeates and circulates through the economy, and therefore creates direct and indirect effects. Tourist activity has a multiplicative effect on other economic activities in the goods production and services sectors alike. The multiplicative effect can be defined as the revenue generated in the economy as a result of an additional unit of tourist spending. Using the “Economic and Social Potential of Patagonia Azul” report developed in 2022 by Alberdi Partners as a reference, it is possible to approximately measure these effects by applying the spending multiplier. In other words, the multiplicative effect on the rest of the communities in the area through the spending of EbN revenue and spending on accommodations, including Palmares Glamping.

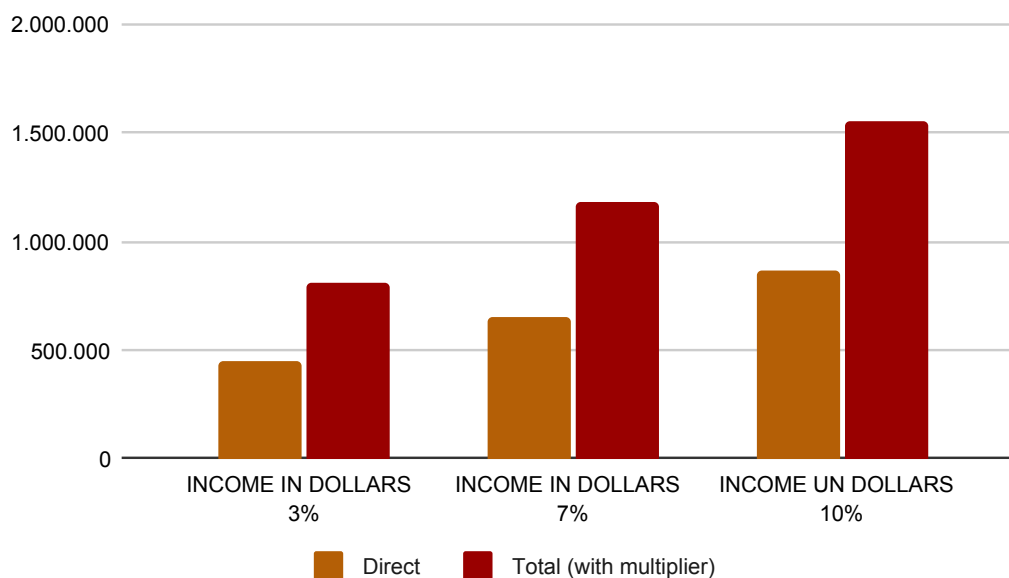
Taking into account the particularities of nature tourism, Alberdi Partners (2022) uses a spending multiplier of 1.8. **Replicating the calculations for El Impenetrable, the wider economic impact of visitor growth over the next 10 years would be between 1.2 billion and 2.4 billion pesos (3% scenario and 10% scenario) or the equivalent of 940,000 and 1.8 million dollars (3% scenario and 10% scenario, respectively).**

### **EbN: Projected Income for 2034 -in constant pesos-**



Graph 17- Projection of revenue with multiplicative effect, according to minimum and maximum scenarios

### Projected Income for 2034 -in dollars-



Graph 18- Projection of revenue with multiplicative effect, according to minimum and maximum scenarios

## Community Wellbeing

This new promotion model for restorative economy diversifies the current economic matrix and strengthens rural production through meaningful jobs. Beyond the economic benefits, the model promotes entrepreneurship and creates pride and rootedness in local communities, leading to the empowerment of its inhabitants.

Bellow, we list the impacts on community wellbeing:

- Conserving threatened species: by developing enterprises that respect flora and fauna, the products and services of the Entrepreneurs protect iconic and threatened species.
- Revaluing local culture: the goods and services of entrepreneurs contribute to the development, pride, and rootedness of the communities neighboring protected areas based on the revaluation and strengthening of artisanal knowledge and techniques and their insertion into the local and tourist market. NT has also brought new value to other aspects of local culture such as dress, dance, music, and language. Promoting NT results in a series of benefits, not only economic but also social, which encourage the recovery of traditions and certain values that might have been forgotten but that have strong implications for culture, identity, and the recovery of pride in one's own.
- Diversifying and strengthening rural production: microenterprises diversify the current economic matrix by creating new opportunities for income generation based on meaningful jobs (reducing income inequality) in remote communities that are often marginalized (job creation and inclusion).

- Positive migration toward rural settlements: though the areas surrounding natural parks tend to hold great potential, they also face significant threats; among them, the lack of local employment opportunities. By developing microenterprises, marginal sites with populations that have high poverty rates now have new opportunities to generate income in their community, thus encouraging positive migration toward these settlements.
- Empowering young people and women: microenterprises encompass a varied spectrum of products and services, allowing not only men but also women and young people to work. Transitioning from an economy based primarily on livestock farming to one of services gives space to women and young people. In this way, the local economy becomes an engine for ecosystem restoration.

## Conclusions

**El Impenetrable is beginning to position itself as a productive territory that also boosts the economic growth of Chaco through Nature Tourism.** This kind of production aims to increase the health of ecosystems and the presence of wildlife, transforming them into a sustainable tourist attraction. **These four years of work have generated the conditions for revenue from lodging and for the Entrepreneurs by Nature community to surpass 500 million pesos, equivalent to 210,000 dollars.** Projections for the next ten years suggest strong income growth for the Entrepreneurs by Nature, both in the local currency and in dollars. **This income not only substitutes the social benefits traditionally used by the government for the members of these communities, but it surpasses them, allowing residents to increase their income and bringing economic improvement to the region.**

Beginning with the creation of El Impenetrable National Park, the economy based on large-scale livestock farming in the pastures neighboring La Fidelidad ranch has begun to transform into an economy of services supported by growing tourist demand.

The first entrepreneurs tied to El Impenetrable National Park have been able to use the opportunities offered by Fundación Rewilding Argentina, the Chaco government, the National Parks Administration, and the growth of the tourist demand. Support from Fundación Rewilding Argentina focused mainly on putting into motion the program that involves encouraging local entrepreneurship based on complete and functional ecosystems by creating a market for the sale of artisanal products with a brand of origin to broaden offerings for visitors. Additionally, it supports artisans, cooks, and tourism providers along their journey as private entrepreneurs sustained by the existence of a complete ecosystem where observing native fauna is easy. One of the most essential tasks has been constant investment in building capabilities, with a special emphasis on women and young people, in the areas of lodging, food, activities, and making handicrafts and regional culinary products.

Many of the rural families located in the buffer zone of El Impenetrable National Park (over 600 in a thirty-kilometer radius) and their neighbors from the cities of Nueva Pompeya, Miraflores, and the urban areas of Wichí-El Pintado and Las Hacheras could join this new economy. To this end, new access gateways are being consolidated in Los Palmares, La Fidelidad, and Nueva Población, as well as on La Huella del Impenetrable trail with its three river crossings in the villages of Bajo Hondo, Fortín Arenales, and Providencia, along the Bermejito River. In the future, access gateways should also be developed along the Formosa shore, and even in the area of La China Lagoon, near Manantiales.

## Key Tools

1. **A shared vision of the territory:** To develop a new, restorative economic model for different environments, we must first seek to form a strategic alliance with government tourism agencies and with the mayor of localities neighboring the park, with whom we share credit for goals reached. This alliance allows us to work on a shared, long-term vision of the territory, designed to benefit people and wildlife in these ecosystems.
2. **Secure a protected area:** We encourage the creation of large protected areas to be able to secure a territory protected in the long term that can be used to benefit local communities and can sustain a healthy ecosystem that guarantees populations in good condition of the key species that make up the ecosystem, and in turn, make the tourist destination attractive. Ecosystems in better conservation conditions provide better experiences for visitors, increasing interest in maintaining those ecosystems well-preserved. Parks as engines for local development and job creation.
3. **Develop public infrastructure:** Trails, signage, information centers, interpretation/visitor centers, and campgrounds. For parks to become engines for economic development, public access must be ensured. When doing this, we pay special attention to the quality of the materials, the local visual appearance, and the scale of visitor numbers, to avoid negative impacts on the ecosystems we are recovering.

A public park that promotes and facilitates visitor access and that, additionally, allows lower-income tourists to also participate in wildlife watching activities. If visitor arrivals are not promoted, local residents cannot sustain their own businesses.

4. **Restore the ecosystem through Rewilding projects:** Based on the wealth of a complete ecosystem, observing tame, abundant wildlife becomes the main ecotourism attraction, together with services provided by local enterprises. It is necessary to implement restoration projects, including the reintroduction and strengthening of populations of native species, with the aim of recovering the functionality of natural ecosystems.
5. **Work on the construction of the territorial brand:** It is important to position the brand as a wildlife-watching destination at the national and international level, one that has its own identity and offers high-quality services provided by locals. Additionally, products crafted in the region are offered under this brand, helping diminish threats surrounding the park and its wildlife.

## Takeaways

1. **History, culture, and local abilities as a basis for development**
  - The site's cultural and material particularities determine both cultural products and community organization styles (associations, cooperatives, or independent enterprises). Materials such as plant fibers, dried wood, clay, shrubland fruits, wool, and recycled plastics can adapt to local capabilities and traditions, fostering sustainability and creativity.
  - Existing capabilities guide initial opportunities, highlighting the importance of training for empowerment and innovation.



2. Synergy with the political context:
  - Creating participatory committees and other governmental strategies promotes collaboration between communities, foundations, and authorities, consolidating inclusive and representative projects.
3. Time as a key factor:
  - Transforming the local economy into a sustainable tourism model requires a 20-year time frame, the necessary time to consolidate products, markets, and an attractive tourist destination.
4. Evolution of organizational styles:
  - Civil associations and cooperatives tend to be initial organizational styles, but in the long term, they tend to evolve toward commercial structures that are more stable and sustainable.
5. The development of rural communities surrounding a tourist destination like EINP involves a comprehensive focus that combines respect for local history, collaborative work, innovation, and patience. This model can serve as a guide for replication in other regions with similar challenges.

## **Bibliography**

- Informe descriptivo y Análisis de resultados del relevamiento censal socioeconómico para las comunidades rurales criollas lindantes al Parque Nacional El Impenetrable [Descriptive report and analysis of the results of the socioeconomic census survey for rural criollo communities adjacent to El Impenetrable National Park]. Alvarez Ferranti, 2023. 134 pages. Instituto de Turismo de Chaco, Escuela de Gobierno de Chaco, Facultad de Ciencias Económicas (UNNE), Instituto Provincial de Ciencias y Estadísticas de Chaco y Fundación Rewilding Argentina [Chaco Tourism Institute, Government School of Chaco, College of Economic Sciences (UNNE), Chaco Provincial Institute of Science and Statistics, and Fundación Rewilding Argentina].
- Elypsis (2019): “El potencial turístico vinculado a la naturaleza” [The Tourism Potential Associated with Nature].
- Alberdi Partners (2022): “Potencial económico y social de Patagonia Azul” [Economic and Social Potential of Patagonia Azul]

## Annexes

### 1. Number of trainings carried out between 2021 and 2023 discriminated by activity type:

Trainings	2021	2022	2023	Total
<b>Wellbeing</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>17</b>
Green Building		1	1	2
Connectivity			1	1
Trades	1		1	2
Other				0
Food Handling	10	2		12
<b>Fairs</b>		<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>
Fairs		4	3	7
<b>Festivals</b>		<b>2</b>		<b>2</b>
Festivals		2		2
<b>Gastronomy</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>135</b>
Food Safety Norms	1	3	1	5
Gastronomy	24	50	52	126
Other				0
Shrubland Products			3	3
Shrubland Fruit Collection	1			1
<b>Exchanges</b>		<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>
Exchanges		5	6	11
<b>Cultural Products</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>42</b>
Ceramics	5	4	2	11
Entrepreneurship		3		3
Weavers Gathering	2	4	8	14
Woodworking				0
Wood and Leather	2	2		4
Weaving	2	5	3	10
<b>Nature Tourism</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>33</b>
Horseback Riding				0
Cycling	2			2
Entrepreneurship	1		8	9
Kayak and Hiking Tours	2	6	4	12
Other			1	1
Tourism Providing	2	3	1	6
First Aid	1	2		3
<b>Overall Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>247</b>

2. Number of entrepreneurs discriminated by settlement and the principal activity in which they participate:

SETTLEMENT	ACTIVITIES	%
<b>La Armonía</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>45%</b>
DAY LABORER	31	22%
EMPLOYEE	21	15%
GASTRONOMY	36	26%
TOURISM PROVIDER	7	5%
CULTURAL PRODUCTS	44	32%
<b>Los Palmares</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>27%</b>
DAY LABORER	12	14%
EMPLOYEE	8	10%
GASTRONOMY	19	23%
TOURISM PROVIDER	4	5%
CULTURAL PRODUCTS	40	48%
<b>Nueva Población</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>28%</b>
DAY LABORER	16	18%
EMPLOYEE	7	8%
GASTRONOMY	20	23%
TOURISM PROVIDER	6	7%
CULTURAL PRODUCTS	39	44%
<b>Total Entrepreneurs</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Number of entrepreneurs by settlement and principal activity*

The distribution of activities in the settlements of Palmares and Nueva Población highlights the central role of cultural products and gastronomy as initial economic engines where there is still not public access (a gateway) to EINP. Cultural products have a leading role in these first stages of consolidating a destination, representing 48% of all entrepreneurs in Palmares and 44% in Población. These activities allow communities to sustain themselves even before the arrival of tourism.

3. Exchange rate of the official dollar and unofficial dollar (“Blue”) for the analyzed period of economic impact:

Monthly Average		
Dollar	Wholesale	Blue
Jan-22	104.0	212.0
Feb-22	106.3	213.7
Mar-22	109.5	201.7
Apr-22	113.3	199.7
May-22	117.8	204.3
Jun-22	122.7	218.5
Jul-22	128.4	290.8
Aug-22	135.3	292.7
Sep-22	143.6	281.5
Oct-22	152.6	288.2
Nov-22	162.1	301.8
Dec-22	172.9	327.9
Jan-23	182.2	367.9
Feb-23	191.9	378.3
Mar-23	203.1	382.1
Apr-23	216.6	424.2
May-23	231.2	480.4
Jun-23	248.8	490.3
Jul-23	266.8	519.0
Aug-23	322.1	673.6
Sep-23	350.0	740.1
Oct-23	350.0	962.6
Nov-23	353.8	956.5
Dic-23	642.0	990.3



Informe descriptivo: Promoviendo una nueva economía restaurativa en El Impenetrable. Hollmann Fátima, 2024. 39 pags. Invecq Consultora Económica y Fundación Rewilding Argentina.



