

São Manoel Dam

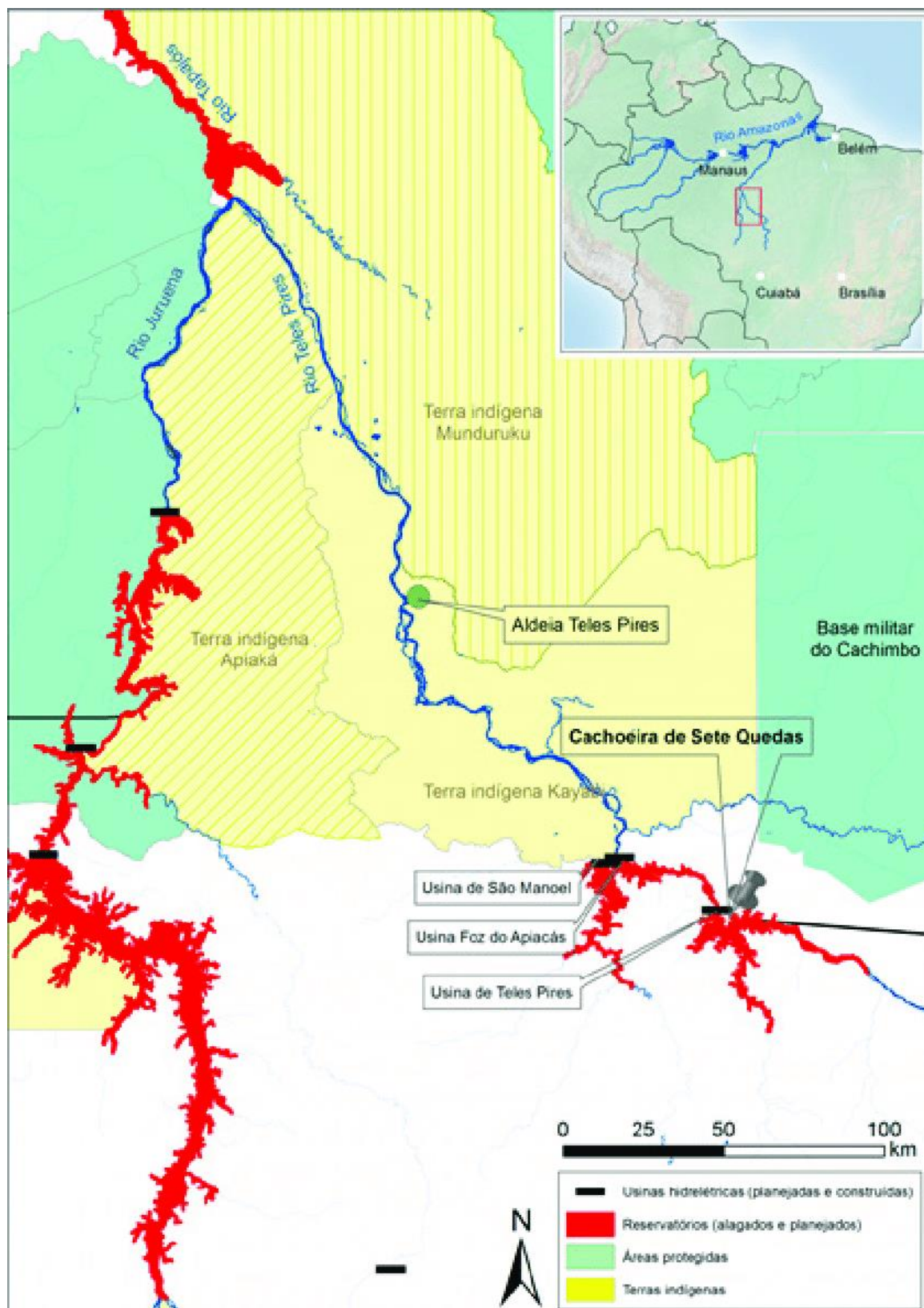
Overview

The São Manoel Hydroelectric Plant (HPP) is a run-of-the-river project, proposed in the Hydroelectric Inventory Studies of the Teles Pires River Basin. These studies were submitted to ANEEL in 2005 and approved in July 2006.

Located between the states of Pará and Mato Grosso, the dam lies near the territories of the Munduruku, Kayabi, and Apiaká do Pontal ethnic groups. Other dams on the Teles Pires River include the Teles Pires and Sinop HPPs.

Construction began in 2014 and concluded in 2018, employing approximately 5,726 workers from both local and distant regions. Initially met with scepticism by the local population—situated around 120 km from the nearest town—the project gradually gained acceptance.

The works were carried out by Empresa de Energia São Manoel (EESM), with ownership shared equally among EDP Brasil, CTG Brasil, and Furnas Centrais Elétricas (each holding a 33.3% stake).



Source: [Mapa das barragens São Manoel, Foz do Apiacás e Teles Pires. Fonte: Maurício Torres \(Torres, 2017\)](#)

Regulatory Oversight

The Brazilian Institute for the Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (IBAMA) oversees the environmental licensing process. Other involved agencies include the Ministry of Health, FUNAI (National Indigenous Foundation), IPHAN (National Historical and Artistic Heritage Institute), and ICMBio (Chico Mendes Institute for Biodiversity Conservation).

IBAMA mandates a series of requirements to mitigate, compensate, and monitor the environmental and social impacts of the project. These are detailed in the preliminary, installation, and operational licences.

Each licence includes specific conditions for indigenous communities, reviewed and approved by FUNAI. Due to the cultural uniqueness of each group, a tailored Indigenous Environmental Plan (PBAI) was developed for each. These plans include 17 programmes, divided into mitigation and compensation measures, and are monitored by FUNAI and indigenous leaders.

IBAMA regularly reviews these programmes to ensure compliance with licensing conditions. Documentation demonstrating adherence to these requirements, particularly the Indigenous Environmental Programme, is available [[here](#)].

Community Relations

Arnaldo Kabá Munduruku, Chief of the Munduruku people, voiced concerns about the government's approach to indigenous relations. His statement reflects both sorrow and determination, highlighting the community's desire for constructive dialogue.

Tensions between the government and the Munduruku date back to Operation Eldorado in 2012, which involved the destruction of illegal gold mining dredges on indigenous lands. The operation led to violent clashes and the death of Adenilson Kixi Munduruku, straining relations further.

In July and October 2017, around 150 Munduruku from the Upper and Middle Tapajós regions occupied the São Manoel construction site. Although their demands were unrelated to São Manoel, they called for discussions involving FUNAI, the Federal Public Prosecutor, and representatives from the Teles Pires HPP.

One key issue was the removal of funerary urns from Sete Quedas, a sacred site flooded by the Teles Pires HPP reservoir. These artefacts were relocated to a museum, and a dedicated building was constructed for their preservation. The São Manoel Plant, located 40 km away, was not involved in this incident.

Indigenous Engagement

Approximately 1,400 individuals from the Kayabi, Munduruku, and Apiaká peoples live in 19 villages near the São Manoel HPP. The PBAs define specific environmental and social

measures tailored to each group, monitored by FUNAI and implemented through Management Councils comprising company, FUNAI, and community representatives.

Communication channels include amateur radio systems in all villages and an ombudsman service via:

- Phone: 0800-7626635
- SMS: (66) 9 9632-7827
- Email: faleconosco@saomanoelenergia.com.br

The company prioritises transparency and dialogue, ensuring timely responses to community concerns and regulatory requirements.

Sustainable Development Initiatives

Between December 2023 and March 2024, the Identification and Management Programme for Non-Timber Forest Products generated R\$ 220,000 through the sale of 51.8 tonnes of Brazil nuts, benefiting 126 indigenous collectors. The initiative provided essential tools, PPE, and transport, improving safety and efficiency.

Other notable projects include:

- Delivery of media equipment, furniture, and kitchen utensils to Kururuzinho Village (Kayabi)
- Expansion of EMEF Waru Bachembo School with five classrooms in Teles Pires Village (Munduruku)
- Construction of a flour house in Buretamba Village (Apiaká)
- Completion of a meeting hall, community kitchen, and solar energy system in Mayrowi Village (Apiaká)