



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Visipec

Visualizing cattle supply chains in Brazil to
enhance traceability and strengthen deforestation monitoring

1. What is Visipec?

Visipec is a new add-on traceability tool that works alongside the existing monitoring systems used by Brazilian meatpackers to provide the cattle sector with enhanced supply chain visibility and more effective deforestation monitoring. It integrates information from public databases and serves to complement the existing systems, by providing regularly updated data in a seamless tool, to help reduce exposure to deforestation risks that are currently present in the early stages of the supply chain.

2. Why is Visipec needed?

Visipec was developed to help fill a critical gap in the traceability and supply chain management systems used in the Brazilian cattle sector. Currently, most major meatpackers have systems in place to monitor their direct suppliers (fattening and full cycle ranches). These systems help meatpackers and their clients deliver on the environmental commitments that they have made, such as deforestation-free sourcing of beef and leather products. However, the current systems do not extend to indirect suppliers (cow-calf and rearing ranches), where cattle spend the majority of their lives. Therefore, a significant portion of cattle production takes place outside the coverage of current supply chain management systems. Since most deforestation currently occurs on indirect supplying ranches, this lack of oversight creates risks for meatpackers and their customers. Visipec helps fill this gap by providing meatpackers with greater visibility into their supply chains to identify the indirect suppliers that are linked to their direct suppliers to help enhance existing deforestation monitoring systems and improve sourcing decisions.

3. Who developed Visipec?

Visipec is a joint effort of the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) and AVP, based on a methodology developed by scientists and researchers in the Gibbs Land Use and Environment Lab (GLUE) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (UW). The development of Visipec was informed by the multi-stakeholder Indirect Supplier Working Group (GTFI) and was further refined in close coordination with industry stakeholders with support from Amigos da Terra-Amazonia Brasileira (AdT).

4. Does Visipec replace the existing deforestation monitoring and supply chain management systems currently used by meatpackers?

No, Visipec is not intended to replace the existing deforestation monitoring and supply chain management systems that the meatpackers have developed and implemented for their direct suppliers. Visipec serves to complement these existing systems by providing meatpackers with enhanced visibility into their supply chains to identify links between their direct suppliers and the complex network of indirect suppliers in order to enhance deforestation monitoring, strengthen supply chain management, and improve decision-making processes. The addition of Visipec significantly improves the existing systems used by the meatpackers, and enables them to efficiently and cost-effectively integrate indirect suppliers into their monitoring protocols.

5. Who can use Visipec?

Only approved users are granted access to Visipec. The tool is not openly available to everyone. Requests for access are reviewed and approved by NWF. Visipec was designed specifically for use by meatpackers (and service providers), and therefore, at this time, only representatives from these types of companies will be granted access. Aggregated information and summary reports, which will be sufficient for the purposes of determining which meatpackers are effectively addressing indirect suppliers (similar to what is currently available for monitoring direct suppliers), may be shared with other companies in the value chain or with other stakeholders. The Visipec website provides information about the tool and technical information on how meatpackers and service providers can request access to the tool. It is impossible to access any data via this website.

6. What is the best way to request access to Visipec?

To request access to Visipec, please email the following individuals: Simon Hall (halls@nwf.org) and Lisa Rausch (lisa@visipec.com).

7. How much does it cost to use Visipec?

There are no fees associated with the use of Visipec. It is available to Brazilian meatpackers (and service providers) for free. In addition, NWF offers free technical and user support assistance for pilot testing as well as integration of the tool in to the deforestation monitoring and supply chain management systems used by the meatpackers.

8. Can Visipec only be used by the three largest meatpackers in Brazil (JBS, Marfrig and Minerva)?

No, Visipec can be used by all meatpackers in Brazil, but it is intended specifically for meatpackers that source cattle from potential deforestation-risk areas, including the Amazon and Cerrado biomes. This includes large, medium and small meatpackers. Visipec is currently available for use by meatpackers sourcing from the Amazon biome (MT, PA, and RO), and additional data for the Cerrado is being added.

9. Does Visipec collect sensitive commercial data from meatpackers?

No, Visipec does not collect data from meatpackers. The only information provided to the Visipec tool are the numbers of the Cadastro Ambiental Rural (CAR) of the meatpacker's direct suppliers. For security purposes, Visipec does not save these CAR numbers. The CAR numbers of direct suppliers are used to identify links with indirect suppliers. Besides this very basic information, which is needed to query the database, the flow of information moves in one direction, from the Visipec tool to the meatpacker.

10. If a meatpacker uses Visipec, will the tool then give NGOs new information on potential non-compliance issues linked to indirect suppliers?

No, using Visipec will not give NGOs any new information on potential non-compliance issues associated to sourcing cattle from direct or indirect suppliers. Visipec already contains the relevant information linking direct and indirect suppliers in its database. There is no additional data added to the Visipec database when a meatpacker uses the tool. The CAR numbers of the direct suppliers inputted by the meatpacker to query Visipec are never saved in the system. If there are potential concerns or sensitivities associated with the data and/or use of the tool, NWF is happy to discuss options to conduct a trial or pilot under a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) with meatpackers and/or service providers.

11. Does Visipec force meatpackers to block transactions because of potential non-compliance issues associated with indirect suppliers?

No, Visipec is just a tool that provides information. It does not make decisions. And it does not automatically block transactions. Right now, Visipec is in the pilot phase, which is intended to allow meatpackers to test the tool, gather feedback on experiences using the tool, and make improvements that help ensure effective uptake and use of the tool in the future. The Indirect Supplier Working Group (GTFI) has agreed on a set of *Good Practices for Monitoring Indirect Cattle Suppliers in Brazil*, which are being incorporated into Visipec to allow meatpackers to filter results using the GTFI Good Practices (Boas Práticas). If there are potential concerns or sensitivities associated with the identification of potential non-compliance issues, NWF is happy to discuss options for an NDA with meatpackers and/or service providers that would like to test the tool.

12. Can Visipec be used for daily monitoring to inform purchasing decisions?

Yes, Visipec can be used in conjunction with the existing deforestation monitoring and supply chain management systems currently used by meatpackers to inform their purchase decisions. Visipec is designed to integrate and enhance these existing systems by expanding deforestation monitoring to indirect suppliers. Given the nature of the supply chain for cattle, there is a time lag that exists between when an indirect supplier sells to a direct supplier and when a meatpacker conducts a sourcing check and decides to buy cattle. But this time lag is relatively short and follows a consistent and logical pattern through the cattle production phases. Visipec addresses this time lag by linking the transaction window for direct and indirect suppliers with the data collection window for the official Brazilian deforestation data and maps (Prodes). For the purposes of monitoring, this means that there is a limited window of time for when a direct and indirect supplier are linked in the tool. In other words, the direct and indirect supplier are not linked indefinitely, and the transactional relationship between these actors resets on an annual basis.

13. Is Visipec a *real-time* monitoring tool?

No, Visipec is not a real-time monitoring tool, but this does not mean it can't be used for daily monitoring. Visipec is designed to integrate into the existing monitoring systems used by meatpackers for checking direct suppliers, and these systems do not use real-time data. The primary data input into these deforestation monitoring systems is the official deforestation data published by the Brazilian government (Prodes) which is collected and published on an annual basis. This means that all the meatpacker's purchase decisions regarding deforestation are based on clearing events that occurred in the previous year. Visipec also incorporates official Prodes deforestation, so it works in the same way. Therefore, there is no need for real-time monitoring in these contexts.

14. Does Visipec currently cover every single indirect supplier in Brazil?

No, Visipec currently covers the most important cattle ranching states in the Brazilian Amazon biome (Mato Grosso, Pará, and Rondônia). Coverage for other key regions in Brazil, such as the Cerrado biome, is still under development, but Visipec is currently available for the Cerrado-portion of the state of Mato Grosso. Also, Visipec is currently set-up for tracking cattle back to the first tier of indirect suppliers. The inclusion of tier one indirect suppliers (with direct suppliers) covers the majority of the cattle supply, and through a step-wise approach, additional tiers can be added later.

15. What time period does Visipec cover?

Visipec currently includes data for 2013-2019. The database is updated every three months, so new information is regularly added to the tool.

16. Was all of the data used in Visipec obtained legally?

Yes, all of the data used in Visipec was obtained legally. Visipec only uses public information from publically available websites. The types of data used and the processes associated with data acquisition, storage and delivery have been thoroughly reviewed by lawyers in the US and Brazil, and all aspects of the tool are compliant with current laws.

17. Is Visipec compliant with the new personal data protection laws in Brazil?

Yes, Visipec is fully compliant with the new General Data Protection Law (LGPD) in Brazil (Law No. 13.709, August 14, 2018). Some of the information systems and databases that are integrated into Visipec contain CPF and CNPJ numbers. Since CNPJ numbers are for commercial/business purposes, they are not considered personal, and are therefore not covered under the new law. CPF numbers are protected under the new law, and Visipec takes great care with this information to ensure full legal compliance. Visipec does not share CPF numbers with users, and users cannot use CPF numbers to query the Visipec database. NWF has no access to CPF numbers in Visipec. In addition, Visipec has multiple layers of encryption on the database to ensure security. The handling of personal data was reviewed by lawyers in the US and Brazil, and Visipec is already compliant with LGPD, which does not come into effect until August 2020.

18. Is a team of software engineers needed to use Visipec?

No, Visipec is not that complicated. It was designed to seamlessly integrate into existing deforestation and supply chain management systems. It serves as an add-on traceability tool to enhance these existing systems. NWF offers step-by-step instructions, available on the Visipec website, for Windows and Mac OS users, on how to request access and how to get set-up to use the tool. There are also several different options for users to connect to the Visipec database, providing flexibility for users to choose what works best for them. Most meatpackers work closely with technical service providers to support their supply chain monitoring systems. Visipec was developed in consultation with several of these leading service providers, which helped inform the technical specifications, accessibility criteria, and data delivery processes - helping make the tool easier to use. In addition, NWF offers free technical and user support assistance for pilot testing as well as integration of the tool into the deforestation monitoring and supply chain management systems used by the meatpackers.



Additional resources

Visipec Website: <http://www.visipec.com>

Key Contacts

For more information, please contact:

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