4 Site description for Irati, Brazil

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4.1 Context

The Global CBM Study is working with faxinal communities. These traditional communities were, until recently, found throughout the Araucaria forests of the Paraná state, in the South of Brazil. The faxinal system is associated with slash and burn agriculture and extensive use of common forest lands to raise animals through a communal fencing activity. The farmers also have their own lands within a common forest patch. Land ownership is complicated because of local unwritten laws and the lack of clarity regarding land use. Informal agreements among the communities are established in order to control the access to natural resources. Some of these agreements are recognized by formal municipal laws, which help to ensure compliance. Faxinal management has contributed to the use and conservation of several species. The community extracts yerba-maté (*Ilex sp.*) and harvests timber/firewood. The main income generating activities are cultivation of tobacco and animal husbandry.

4.2 Institutional and project setting

UFSC's activities in Faxinal dos Marcondes are still in their initial stages. In July 2009, the UFSC team made the first contact with local organizations, including the Puxirão Network coordinator, Hamilton José da Silva, and other members. The various organizations involved in CBM at Iratí include: UFSC; the Federal University of the Central West Parana; two NGOs (Institute for Popular Education (IEEP), and the Centre for Environmental Studies, Evaluation and Research (CEMPA)); and the federal government institute responsible for biodiversity conservation, the Chico Mendes Institute for Biodiversity Conservation (ICMBIO).

CAPES, Brazil, is funding the Plant and landscape domestication in southern Brazil in the community biodiversity management context project. In partnership with Articulação Puxirão dos Povos Faxinalenses (Collective Articulation of the Faxinal People), data collection for the project commenced in mid-2009 and should have concluded by the end of 2010. The project objectives were to:

- document the genetic resources in the managed landscapes used by local populations;
- document and systemize practices and knowledge associated to the genetic resources in the managed landscapes;
- systemize the traditional management practiced by local communities of the landscapes;
- evaluate the occurred changes in the management of the landscapes and the associated use of its biological resources;
- evaluate the contribution of the landscapes to forest conservation;
- explore indicators for domestication of the landscapes and for used biological resources;
- analyse how the local organization of faxinal people can contribute to conservation of PGR; and
- contribute to the building of conservation strategies *in situ* related to the establishment of conservation areas of sustainable use (Sustainable Development Reserve).

4.3 Key project activities

Main activities of the project mentioned above include:

- participatory approaches to diagnosis, focussing on the ethnobotany of the use and management of non-timber species in the landscapes; and
- community-driven and participatory approaches to research in the permanent plots in the historical landscapes.

4.4 Social and institutional organization

The community is predominantly of Ukrainian, Polish and "Caboclo" origin. Caboclos are an ethnic group of mixed native and European/African descent. The community is well aware of environmental issues and have placed severe restrictions on the exploitation of exotic plants. This aspect of community resource management is perhaps unique to this site. There are lots of opportunities to refine the collective structures for using such forest resources, for the benefit of the poor families. The exodus of young people from these faxinal communities to nearby cities and selling off of their ancestral property to people who no longer recognize the traditional land rights have resulted in violent land conflicts. This conflict has brought the faxinal communities together and spurred them to form a movement to get back their traditional land records.

Since 2000, some faxinal communities have been organizing themselves, in a process that is supported by NGOs and Universities, to fight for their traditional land rights. In 2005, the communities founded the Puxirão Network of the Faxinal Peoples (Articulação Puxirão dos Povos Faxinalenses). Today there are 227 faxinal communities, 33 of which participate in the Puxirão Network. The Puxirão Network organizes a meeting of faxinal communities every two years.

During discussions with the communities, the Indian model of Joint Forest Planning and Management (JFPM) and the establishment of Village Forest Committees to micro plan and manage the resources was explained by the Indian CBM representatives to the communities, and suggested as a possible option to strengthen community faxinal management. More research and awareness-raising activities could support the establishment of conservation units and the legalization of the faxinais (Sustainable Development Reserve) by the Ministry of Environment.

4.5 Plant genetic resources

Key plant genetic resources of the region are *Araucaria spp* and *Ilex spp*. Major issues include the loss of traditional lifestyles and external pressure from the agribusiness community, which affects local biodiversity and land ownership.

The community has 200 ha of communal land, where economic plants like *Araucaria spp*, *Ilex spp* and other rare flora grow. The reserve is a repository of various kinds of fruits for human as well as animal consumption. Yerba-maté leaves, firewood, and the nuts and timber of *Araucaria angustifolia* are collectively managed.

4.6 CBM practices

Identifying CBM practices at "Faxinal de Marcondes" was not easy. Since CBM is embedded in the traditional structures of common property management, specific CBM components could not be identified based on discussions with community leaders, community members and stakeholders. The only collective action the community is involved in is the conservation of community land for collective use by faxinais.

Value addition to yerba-maté by the community as micro-enterprises is another option to be explored. Value addition to *Araucaria spp* nuts for bread, flour, baby food, health food and ice cream is also an option.