

LOW-CARBON REGENERATIVE COMMODITY PRODUCTION IN THE CERRADO BIOME: FOSTERING ADOPTION OF INTEGRATED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION SYSTEMS IN THE STATE OF TOCANTINS, BRAZIL

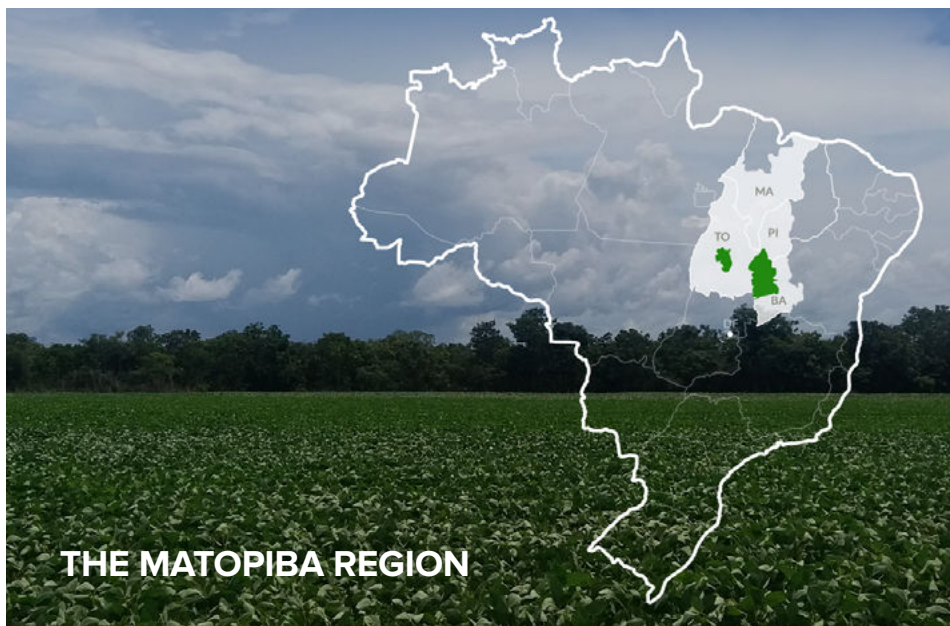
Since 1987, Conservation International (CI) has worked around the globe to protect nature. We use science, policy and partnerships to safeguard forests, rivers, lakes, coasts, oceans and wetlands that provide food and water, sustain economies and help promote a stable climate. We do so to improve human well-being.

In the past few years, Cerrado's northern part, known as Matopiba (an acronym for the states of Maranhão, Tocantins, Piauí and Bahia), has become one of the most important places for commodity production in the country. About 12% of the 124.8 million tons of soy produced in Brazil in the 2019/2020 harvest came from more than 300.000 agricultural properties in the region, with about 4.5 million hectares planted. At the same time, the Matopiba region is Cerrado's most preserved area and shelters several priority areas for the conservation of biodiversity.

THE CONTEXT

Brazil is becoming a leader in agricultural commodity production, which has been made possible by intensive land conversion in the Cerrado biome, the world's most biodiverse Savannah and an important carbon sink (311.62 tons of CO₂eq per hectare). The land conversion rate in the state of Tocantins, part of Brazil's last agricultural frontier has become the highest in the country over the last decade. Preserved ecosystems still account for 14.5 million hectares in Tocantins but are mostly located within rural farms. However, 50% of Tocantins consolidated production areas are already degraded and lower yields are increasingly reported because of unsustainable farming practices.

Moreover, farmers lack capacity and access to financial resources to implement existing policy frameworks such as the federal 2010 Low Carbon Agriculture Plan (ABC plan). The ICLF (Integrated Crop-Livestock-Forest) approach is key to increasing productivity combined with natural resources conservation through a process of agricultural intensification on degraded areas in Brazil. It is also directly connected to national public policies efforts on GHG mitigation.



THE APPROACH

The project aims to create farmer technical and financial incentives for improved soy production in existing farms and degraded lands in 6 priority municipalities in the state of Tocantins, Cerrado biome. The municipalities are (1) Porto Nacional; (2) Pium; (3) Monte do Carmo; (4) Lagoa da Confusão; (5) Aparecida do Rio Negro and (6) Santa Rosa do Tocantins.

The project is aligned with the Forest Positive Coalition's vision and the Soy Roadmap aiming to develop innovative ways to combine government, corporate, donor and investor funding to help places transition to nature-based development. Our work will build upon a favorable scenario of previous engagement with strategic public sector stakeholders in the region, such as State Secretariats of Agriculture and Environment and thus will support the Coalition's efforts to promote transparency and accountability through our ICLF rural properties monitoring of natural capital protocol indicators. This approach values establishment of solid partnerships, such as the one with Embrapa in the state of Tocantins, which can demonstrate viable production models for commodities that link public demand, sustainable production, protection of essential resources and local communities' benefits.

There is also a great opportunity in the territory, involving the State Secretariat of Agriculture of Tocantins, to engage and influence the decision-making process for sustainable landscape governance.

The initiative proposes to promote a low-carbon agricultural production model through:

COMPONENT 1 – Production: Capacity-building for low-carbon, regenerative production model, through rural extension services to support the adoption of the ICLF production model in the state of Tocantins. Co-implemented with Embrapa (Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation) and supported by ICLF Network.

Output 1.1: 20 rural producers (20k hectares) (soy farmers & cattle ranchers) and rural extension workers are trained and implement ICLF production model.

Output 1.2: 20 rural producers (20k hectares) (soy farmers & cattle ranchers) are exposed to ICLF benefits.

COMPONENT 2 – Credit: Support raising awareness among farmers of existing credit mechanisms and building capacity to access those credit lines, by promoting trainings to staff within local financial institutions and disseminating information on climate finance opportunities within the productive sector.

Output 2.1: Financial mechanisms identified and disseminated to 10 financial institutions.

Output 2.2: 1 business case developed for an improved sustainable financing model.

OUR GOALS



Avoid deforestation through supporting farmers in the adoption of low-carbon agriculture (LCA) practices, according to the existing national and state policy frameworks (ABC + Program, Forest Code);



Encourage agricultural production consolidation in areas of degraded pasture, improving land use management through natural capital conservation and monitoring tools.



Raise awareness of farmers and producers of existing credit mechanisms and building capacity to access credit lines, by promoting trainings to staff within local financial institutions and disseminating information on climate finance opportunities within the productive sector.

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ADVANCING SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION AT SCALE IN MATOPIBA WILL REQUIRE MANY PARTNERS AND COLLABORATORS. PLEASE JOIN US.