

The Role of Advisory Services in the Commercialization of Non-Timber Forest Products in the Brazilian Cerrado

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The Cerrado, home to various and unique flora and fauna, has been facing large levels of deforestation with 50% of the native vegetation cover already lost. Commercializing the local Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs), by implementing an agro-forestry system is viewed as a prospective solution. It protects the local biodiversity while boosting rural income and creates economic growth for the rural population. The success of this system requires financial support, technical expertise, and knowledge. These are gaps that agricultural advisors are established to support. However, the role of advisers and their activities related to NTFPs has not been widely explored. The main objective of this study is to understand the role advisors play throughout the value chain. The study also maps the various actors in the agricultural knowledge and innovation system (AKIS). It provides an insight into the opportunities and hindrances for the producers, related to maintaining native trees. An in-depth interview with 34 respondents from various stakeholder groups actively involved in the value chain was conducted. The results were analyzed through the lens of the extended value chain framework. The mapping exercise was done to identify the actors and find the linkage of actors in the AKIS. The results indicate that advisors are well positioned to support producers through the creation of the network, provision of financial information, and access to market and marketing opportunities. In addition, advisors play a role in short-term commercialization opportunities by allowing producers access to sell into public procurement programs such as PNAE. They also offer long-term opportunities by organizing producers into cooperatives. Cooperatives possess a stronger ability to add value to NTFPs and hold negotiation power in the value chain. However, the advisers face problems such as a lack of NTFP-related training, a small workforce in the advisory bodies, and ever-growing responsibilities. These challenges restrict their ability to support in an impactful way. Innovative solutions such as digital messaging tools are proposed to support and maximize the reach of advisors.

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