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Installation of biodigesters in the Amazon completed

Sewage treatment system for rural areas improves public health and the environment in Rondonia state capital, Porto Velho



Partner representatives visit biodigester tank
Photo: USAID / Mark Mitchell

“As a result of the installation of these tanks, waste will no longer go into the drinking water or the nearby river.”

- Lisa Kubiske, Deputy Chief of Mission for the United States Embassy in Brazil

The United States Mission in Brazil, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and in partnership with the Cargill Foundation and the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (Embrapa), celebrates the completion of the implementation of a social technology for sewage treatment in the rural area of Porto Velho, in Rondonia state. Seventeen families from a rural community, which had biodigester toilets installed in their residences, attended a breakfast with all project partners.

The technology used is cheap and, besides treating the domestic sewage, it prevents the contamination of soil and groundwater and generates compost that can be used for organic production.

During the breakfast, Lisa Kubiske, Deputy Chief of Mission for the United States Embassy in Brazil, spoke to the participant families:

“This project is an example of positive environmental action that improves the environment and benefits the lives of people. As a result of the installation of these tanks, waste no longer stands outside your homes and it no longer moves into the drinking water or the nearby river. Plus, you now have free organic fertilizer for your gardens. It is one small step that makes a big difference”.

After the breakfast, representatives from the U.S. Embassy to Brazil, USAID/Brazil, Cargill and Embrapa visited the residences of the families to see the result of the project. The technology, known as a septic biodigester tank, was developed by Embrapa and works by transporting sewage from home toilets into a cement tank that transforms the material into an organic fertilizer via anaerobic biodigestion.

The first tank was built in March and installed at the residence of Luciano

Alves do Prado's. Five months after its installation, Mr. Prado is already using the compost for his açai plantation. “The implantation of these tanks was an improvement, mainly because it prevents the pollution of water. This is new for Porto Velho,” said Mr. Prado. ❖

Enter Jovem Plus Receives Media Attention

Chevron receives 20 professors of Enter Jovem Plus once a month for training sessions with volunteer employees. They discuss work related issues such as security, environment and human resources. The initiative was highlighted by one of the most important newspapers of Rio de Janeiro, O Dia. Enter Jovem Plus is a USAID-supported program held by Instituto Empreender and it aims to train at least 500 youths from Rio de Janeiro in 2010. ❖

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Sustainable socio-environmental project benefits farmers

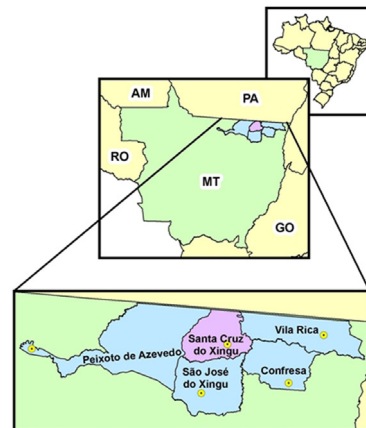
Responsible production in Mato Grosso is promoted through regulatory programs and recovery of deforested areas

Last month the city of Santa Cruz do Xingu, located in northeastern Mato Grosso, launched an innovative program that will expedite the process of environmental regulations and restore degraded forested areas. The program is called “Santa Cruz do Xingu Verde Legal”, and is the result of joint partnerships between multiple branches of the Instituto Socioambiental (ISA) and USAID/Brazil.

Environmental sustainability of rural properties has been complicated in the past because state databases of owned properties within the territory of Santa Cruz do Xingu contain conflicting information. The project aims to provide more accurate data by making a survey on the actual occupation of the territory, as well as unifying already existing databases of land titles.

Using information gathered from the survey, landowners will be able to complete the Rural Environmental Registration of their properties, which is essential for environmental regularization of private areas. Currently, Brazilian law only allows

farmers to have access to credit loans in order to finance production if his property complies with environmental legislation.



Location of Santa Cruz do Xingu

The “Santa Cruz do Xingu Verde Legal” program, as well as conducting the survey of rural properties, will invest in actions to restore environmental liabilities – such as when a farmer clears an area that according to Brazilian law should not be cleared. The program

will also invest in providing incentives for owners to keep forested areas of their properties. Partial funding of these actions will come from already existing mechanisms of trading carbon credits.

Carlos Alberto de Oliveira Guimarães, landowner and president of the Association of Farmers of the Araguaia River in Xingu, stated, “we need to continue producing and selling our products. This [project] is an opportunity we can not let go.”

Participation in the program includes the Mato Grosso state government, the Santa Cruz do Xingu municipal government, the Union of Agricultural Producers, and the Association of Farmers of the Araguaia and Xingu private companies. Rodrigo Junqueira, Deputy Coordinator of the Xingu Program ISA stated that, “all sectors are here, meeting and discussing this joint project for the municipality. This facilitates the process of getting resources and support from companies. For buyers who need to acquire products in a responsible way, responsibility will be shared throughout the chain.” ❖



Landowners discuss actual occupation of the territory.

Photo: ISA / Fernanda Bellei

“We need to continue producing and selling our products. This [project] is an opportunity we can not let go.”

- Carlos Alberto de Oliveira Guimarães, local landowner

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Upcoming Events

September 15 - CEO's of the Mais Unidos group will hold a meeting to publicly announce the new framework for their English Project. U.S. Ambassador to Brazil Thomas Shannon is expected to participate in the event as well as USAID/Brazil Mission Director Denny Robertson. ❖

Training courses for indigenous groups

Course held at the USAID-supported Garah Itxa Consortium in Porto Velho teach indigenous groups how to implement development projects.

Between August 2 and 14, the USAID-supported Garah Itxa Consortium held a course designed to teach indigenous groups about the significance, planning, and implementation of development projects – including how best to raise funds for these projects. The course was held in the Kanindé Center for Culture and Learning in Porto Velho, Rondônia and was implemented by Instituto Internacional de Educação do Brasil (IEB).

The course was attended by twenty-two participants, representing 12 different associations found in the Brazilian Amazon. Half of the participants were women – marking the first indigenous training course in which female participation is equal to male participation. Their participation represents a significant increase in representativeness and performance of women in their respective organizations.

The first segment of the training course addressed the importance of indigenous associations for dialogue and negotiation between the indigenous and non-indigenous world. This segment focused on public policy, indigenous leadership, feasibility of sustainable economic activities to help achieve autonomy, as well as fundraising through projects.

The course also trained participants how best to understand the needs of different villages and peoples so that development projects can have a greater impact on their communities. Also discussed was the methodology of planning development projects, including ways to adapt projects created by other groups according to their own traditional indigenous cultures.

The course highlighted the importance of partnerships as

a way of achieving mutually beneficial goals, avoiding the risk of dependence on external resources, as well as the need of strategic planning.

The course ended with a closing ceremony which included handing out certificates of completion – provided by IEB and the Federal University of Rondônia – as well as a presentation of traditional songs and dances from the participating indigenous groups.

The Garah Itxa Consortium is a partnership between Associação de Defesa Etnoambiental Kanindé, Conservation Strategy Fund (CSF Brasil), Amazon Conservation Team (ACT Brasil), Associação Metareilá do Povo Indígena Suruí (Gamebey) e Coordenação das Organizações Indígenas da Amazônia Brasileira (COIAB). ❖