Indigenous communities in Brazil’s westernmost state of Acre have always valued their forests and their surrounding natural environment. They depend on the forest resources and the forest depends on them to extract its produce in a sustainable way. Responsible forest management is of the highest priority here and in all regions of the Amazon where illegal harvest of the forests’ resources for a long time has been a substantial threat to the natural environment and the livelihoods of local communities.

In 2005, communities in the Acre municipalities of Xapuri, Capixaba and Acrelândia formed COOPERFLORESTA (Cooperativa de Produtores Florestais Comunitários) aiming to better organize the sustainable management of the area’s woodlands and to cooperate in the establishment of market access to sell their timber products.

The cooperative gained FSC® certification in 2005, and since then, new value has been added to the communities’ forests continuously, ensuring that they are managed to the benefit of the environment, the communities’ social conditions as well as the local economy.

COOPERFLORESTA's main objectives of getting FSC certification are to promote cooperative forest management and to use the certification as a means to secure fair trade with local communities and hence sustainable local development.

Furthermore, COOPERFLORESTA started using the FSC Small and Community Label Option (SCLO) in 2013 and are using the opportunity to explore possible markets for the products bearing the label. In cooperation with FSC Brazil, the cooperative is working to ensure that the Rio 2016 Olympic Games will be the first major national consumer to demand a product bearing the SCLO, turning Rio 2016 into a major driver of the initiative and raise awareness on the social and environmental benefits.

Overall, FSC is a way for the communities of COOPERFLORESTA to ensure the conservation of their forest and thereby their livelihoods with forestry being one of the most important economic activities in the state of Acre.
Not only has the organization of communities in COOPERFLORESTA and the forest certification improved the practices of forest management in the area, it has also opened doors to new regional and national partnerships and has benefited the cooperative further through the achievement of broad recognition for its work in the forest and its community projects.

Support for the forest and traditional populations

For COOPERFLORESTA, decisions are made jointly to support each other with issues regarding economy, production, sales, etc. Particularly, decisions about suppliers, customers and members are made in cooperation.

COOPERFLORESTA currently consists of 201 member families belonging to ten local communities that are organized in six associations of which four are FSC certified. Each of the associations is responsible for sustainable forest management in their areas and COOPERFLORESTA functions as the commercial channel for the entire production of the communities. The Brazilian State supports the survival of these traditional forest populations and it has officially recognized the members of the six associations the right to residence given their sustainable forest activities.

FACTS

Certificate Holder
Cooperativa de Produtores Florestais Comunitários (COOPERFLORESTA)

Certificate details
SW-COC-001712

Size of certified area
21,605.05 hectares

Products
Roundwood
Sawn wood in boards
Sawn wood in blocks

Tree species
Abiu (Pouteria caimito.)
Amapa (Brosimum utile (H.B.K.) Pittier)
Amarelao (Aspidosperma parvifolium)
Angelim-branco (Hymenolobium heterocarpum Ducke)
Angelim-pedra (Hymenolobium excelsum Ducke)
Angelim-saia (Parkia pendula)
Angico-vermelho (Piptadenia suaveolens Miq.)
Bajao (Bandarra) (Parkia paraensis)
Caixeta (Simarouba amara Aubl.)
Catuaba (Qualea spp.)
Cedro-rosa (Cedrela odorata L.)
Cerejeira (Amburana acerana (Ducke) A.C.Sm.)
Cumaru-ferro (Dipterex odorata)
Fava Orelhinha (Orelhinha) (Enterolobium schomburgkii (Benth.) Bentham)
Garapeira (Apuleia molans Spruce et. Bentham)
Guariuba (Clarisia racemosa R. et. Pay)
Ipe-amarelo (Tabebuia serratifolia)
Ipe-roxo (Tabebuia sp.)
Itauba (Mezilaurus itauba)
Jito (Guarea trichilioides L.)
Jutai (Hymenaea oblongifolia)
Macaranduba (Manilkara huberi (Ducke) Chevalier)
Mata-mata (Eschweileria coriacea (DC) S.A.Mori)
Mirindiba (Terminalia amazonica)
Murrurezinho (Manite) (Brosimum spp.)
Orelhinha-de-macaco (Orelhinha) (Enterolobium schomburgkii (Benth.) Bentham)
Pereiro (Peroba) (Aspidosperma macrocarpon Mart.)
Roxinho (Peltophyne paniculata Bentham.)
Samauma-branca (Ceiba pentandra)
Samauma-vermelha (Preta) (Eriotheca longipedicellata (Ducke) A.Robyns.)
Taufari (Couratari guianensis)
COOPERFLORESTA’s main product (18,000.00 cubic meters of round wood per year) comes in a wide range of tropical species and is sold to the Brazilian processing companies Laminados Triunfo and Complexo Industrial Florestal de Xapuri. The cooperative also sells sawn wood in boards and blocks in smaller quantities (500 cubic meters per year respectively). The timber is transported from the producing members and processed in local sawmills, which COOPERFLORESTA subcontracts before it is traded with carpentries locally and nationally. Besides, COOPERFLORESTA manages all the operations, from forest management and operation plans to harvesting and marketing of the products.

Plans for the future

COOPERFLORESTA has set some ambitious goals for the coming years. They aim to expand their certified area and admit new member families into the organization with the support from the Inter-American Development Bank. Furthermore, the cooperative will focus on starting a pilot export project with its 100 percent FSC certified timber and in time, COOPERFLORESTA would like to run a plant of its own because this would make the processing cheaper.

To reach these goals, marketing and product promotion are extremely important to drive conscious demand for the responsible products of COOPERFLORESTA. The cooperative is expecting to tap into a specific timber market niche that values socially and environmentally sustainable and certified quality products in the hope that this will open up new doors to local and external markets.

The efforts of COOPERFLORESTA demonstrate that it is possible to generate income while supporting and protecting local communities and their forests by working in cooperation towards this common good through sustainability initiatives.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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