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“Exploring opportunities ...
for managing natural resources and a better life for all”

The role of advisory services in the commercialisation of NTFPs from the Cerrado, Brazil

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Abstract

The Cerrado, the second biggest biome in Latin America, is an important savannah biome that is home to diverse and unique vegetation and wildlife. It has been facing large levels of deforestation with 50 % of the native vegetation cover already lost and converted to agricultural lands. There are some initiatives in promoting Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) as they provide a potential solution to curb deforestation while raising the livelihood of the farmers in the area. It also creates economic, social and nutrition opportunities to the community. However, to sustainably maximise the benefits of the NTFPs, there is a potential space for agricultural advisory services to provide support in the production, processing, and commercialisation efforts of the products.

Using the Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System (AKIS) and the agricultural valuechain framework, the study investigates the role of advisory services in the commercialisation of NTFPs in the Rio Pardo region of Brazil. The main objective of the study is to understand the current and potential role of advisory services in providing NTFPs related support in the study area, and their role as bridging institute between the various stakeholders. The study will also investigate the motivations and hinderances farmers face in accessing advise and the capacity of digital tools to be utilised.

The study makes use of mix-methods to provide a better understanding of the role of advisory services in the commercialisation efforts of NTFPs. Qualitative data is collected through interviews with up to 14 farmers and 22 key stakeholders that are composed of advisory service providers, NGOs, cooperatives, and local administrators. While the quantitative analysis is an assessment on the impact of advisory service compared with other important variables on (100) farmers income from NTFPs. Initial results of this ongoing study will be presented, and recommendations provided on how much agricultural advisory services are important in raising income from NTFPs, how they could be improved to strongly foster sustainable NTFP commercialisation and an understanding of the farmers readiness in using digital tools as advisory tools.

Keywords: Agricultural extension, natural resource management, NTFPs, rural development, sustainable economics development