



SOCIO- ENVIRONMENTAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND SERVICES:

Principles and
Guidelines for
ISA Actions



Instituto
Socioambiental

This publication originated from the Seminar on Socioenvironmental Services, held by ISA and its partners in 2021.

Socio-environmental Services WG

André Villas-Bôas, Antonio Oviedo, Augusto Postigo, Frederico Viegas, Jeferson Straatmann, José Ignacio Gomeza Gómez Corte, Nurit Bensusan, Roberto Almeida and Roberto Rezende

Systematization

Tatiane Ribeiro

Art Director

Adams Carvalho

Graphic Design and Layout

Rayza Mucunã

Illustrations

Adams Carvalho

This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the Instituto Socioambiental and do not necessarily reflect the position of the European Union.

Produced by



With support from



SOCIO- ENVIRONMENTAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND SERVICES:

Principles and
Guidelines for
ISA Actions

FIRST EDITION, AUGUST 2022



INTRODUCTION

Nature is the basis for the existence of human societies. There are no human societies if there is no suitable climate, fertile soils, clean oceans and so forth.

The hegemonic economy, however, was shaped in a war against nature. Since the scientific revolution in the 17th century, part of humanity has sought, at any cost, to become master and mistress of nature, on which it fundamentally depends for survival (ABRAMOVAY, 2012)¹. This economy is based on the degeneration of people and ecosystems, the dumping of waste and the low or non-circularity of the resources used.

A turning point has been reached in which the ruins of that war have been converted into scorched earth by a denialist government of all sorts, which is trying at any cost to pass the buck and push to the limit the idea that protected areas and the people who live in them are obstacles to the country's economic development.



While the Brazilian State continues to encourage illegal activity, the market presumes that the ways of existence and production of indigenous peoples, quilombolas and traditional communities must conform to its premises.

The more progress is made in the practical experiences of the relationship of indigenous peoples, quilombolas and traditional communities with markets (public, private, national, international), the better it is understood that competing with the hegemonic economy, based on subsidised monocultures, predatory and illegal activities and synthetic products, is impossible.

The initial promise of equal participation of indigenous peoples, quilombolas and traditional communities in this economy is hardly ever fulfilled. When it happens, it is something very specific, often in niche markets, insufficient to accommodate the diversity produced and the demands of the community.

In this mixture of devastated land and impossible competition, forms for an economy of the future are presented that are still rooted in the hegemonic economic model and that supposedly guarantee the rights of peoples, sustainable development and climate regulation through technology and innovation.

This economy of the future, however, continues to be a disputed territory, and the term most commonly used today, bioeconomy, remains under discussion. The mere inclusion of the prefix “bio” seems to suspend the definition of who is the de facto agent of this economy of the future (BENSUSAN, 2021)².



The fact is that movements such as these seem to reproduce the same unfair contest as always and fail to recognise that indigenous peoples, quilombolas and traditional communities have for millennia practised economies that, beyond a monetary result, simultaneously care for people and nature, and thus produce diversity, water and health.

These economies, still unrecognised — and successively disregarded — by the Brazilian State and society as a whole, have enormous potential to be developed, and an enormous didactic capacity to transform the future by putting people, life and diversity first. They are therefore **economies of socio-biodiversity**.

Strengthening, recognising and valuing economies of socio-biodiversity, however, requires a significant transformation in the understanding and view of these economies by the State, society, the market and its representatives.

For society and the hegemonic economy, indigenous peoples, quilombolas, traditional communities and their territories are seen merely as suppliers of inputs and labour for the expansion of markets: land, forest products, hydroelectricity, minerals, timber, among others. Concomitantly, they are characterised as backward peoples and communities who must, by any means, adhere to modernity, or as “poor”, in need of opportunities to insert themselves into the market and the hegemonic economy.

Transformation involves understanding that these populations and their territories are **producers of knowledge, contributions and services** that are essential for life on the planet.

The experiences gathered by the Socioenvironmental Institute (ISA) in the promotion of socio-biodiversity products and services in public and private markets, in socio-environmental services and carbon markets went hand in hand with the promotion of the ways of life, practices and Traditional Agricultural Systems of the communities in Xingu, Vale do Ribeira and Rio Negro. The Traditional Agricultural Systems of Rio Negro (AM) and Vale do Ribeira (SP) were registered by the Institute for National Historical and Artistic Heritage (IPHAN) as intangible cultural heritage of Brazil.



According to the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply (MAPA), Traditional Agricultural Systems (TASS) “are dynamic production systems, in which cultural, ecological, historical and socioeconomic elements interact, in time and space, configuring different productive arrangements and techniques that, as a whole, prove resilient and sustainable, generating characteristic landscapes.”

The registration of the Traditional Agricultural System is not just a title; it is subject to the Safeguard Plan, which consists of a fostering programme that aims towards a set of political actions developed in partnership with universities, NGOs, governmental and private bodies and other spheres, in order to guarantee the reproduction, transmission and continuity of the registered immaterial asset (Presidential Decree No. 3.551/2000).

Studies in Archaeology and Landscape Ecology show that landscape management, based on the lifestyles and culture of indigenous peoples and traditional communities, was and is responsible for the formation of environments in different Brazilian biomes, especially the Amazon Biome. This landscape management that underpins the Traditional Agricultural Systems of indigenous peoples and traditional communities has transformed forest into forest for millennia, ensuring the reproduction of ecosystems.



The understanding that the ways of life of indigenous peoples and traditional communities are responsible for the reproduction of ecosystems provides a specific perspective on their contributions to society and nature. It is clear that there is a need to progress with mechanisms that go beyond the logic of the carbon market and the monetary valuation of ecosystem services, and complement the understanding of Payment for Environmental Services (PES), established by Law 14.119 of 13 January 2021.

This law established an important distinction between ecosystem services and environmental services.

Ecosystem services: relevant benefits to society generated by ecosystems, in terms of maintaining, restoring or improving environmental conditions.

Environmental services: individual or collective activities that favour the maintenance, recovery or improvement of ecosystem services.

Based on the interpretation of the law and the understanding of the relevance of the **environmental contributions and services generated by the lifestyles of indigenous peoples, quilombolas and traditional communities**, a complementary and specific definition of **Socio-environmental Contributions and Services** is proposed.

Socio-environmental Contributions and Services are understood as specific types of environmental services provided through the activities/practices associated with the ways of life, knowledge, culture and landscape management of indigenous peoples and traditional communities in their territories, which favour the reproduction, recovery or improvement of ecosystem services, and which update and produce cultural diversity.



It is worth highlighting some of the activities and practices associated with livelihoods and their positive impact to elucidate the cause and effect relationships between the contributions generated by the ways of life.

Traditional harvesting and extractive practices are modes of production that generally maintain landscapes and have an extremely low environmental impact, especially when compared to other modes such as monoculture.

Human practices of very low environmental impact not only allow for a greater diversification of forest plots, but also the maintenance of the landscape itself, guaranteeing the continuity of the ecosystem services it provides for society, such as biodiversity, maintenance of the CO² stock, water, pollination, etc.



Furthermore, traditional management practices may provide other complementary contributions, such as monitoring and territorial protection, biodiversity mapping and monitoring, water monitoring, among others. This is what happens, for example, in gathering and extraction activities. These productive activities of indigenous peoples and traditional communities involve lengthy journeys and temporary stays in the forest, contributing to territorial monitoring and protection, the mapping and deepening of knowledge about biodiversity, as well as improved observation of ongoing environmental changes. In this case, territorial management is closely linked to the economy, the maintenance of ecosystem services and the social and cultural reproduction of the group.

Traditional plantations, closely associated with slash-and-burn (*coivara*), are ways of working the land that generate a controlled environmental impact and have contributed to the structuring of different Brazilian landscapes. The process of felling and burning, done under proper control, generates small disturbances in the landscape, enabling the present biodiversity to resurface in a way that adapts to the current climatic conditions and increases its resilience. And as with harvesting and extraction, the traditional practice of planting promotes different ecosystem services associated with these landscapes.

In these plantations there is an enormous diversity of species and varieties of plants. They are veritable collections of diversity, making up an immense inventory of species that can provide present and future solutions to questions of food security and sovereignty. The communities already contribute to the *in situ* promotion of agro-biodiversity (*in situ* germplasm banks), guaranteeing food security for local populations and for society as a whole as policies and practices are structured to recognise and value these “traditional germplasm banks”.

In addition to the contributions already made by the traditional practices associated with the plantations, other complementary services could be associated, such as the mapping and cataloguing of species;

research and development of foods and products led by the communities and their practices; specialised fire management; etc.

These practices that promote abundance and have produced a diversity of landscapes are sustained and propagated by the cosmologies they are rooted in. The ways in which indigenous and traditional peoples conceive their relationships with entities and elements in their territories differ from the relationship based on the modern economicist perspective, which sees nature as a source of resources. Traditional peoples and communities, to a large extent, see entities in nature as agents endowed with intentionalities and with whom relationships must be established in order to achieve good management of the territory and social life itself. These perspectives see animals, plants and other elements of the environment as agents of relationships that guide and regulate forms of use and access to these elements. In these cases, cultural diversity forms the basis of socio-environmental contributions not only through the management techniques employed, but also through the production of alternative perspectives on the establishment of relations in the territories.

All knowledge associated with land management and, consequently, the contributions made by traditional peoples and communities, depends on ways of teaching and learning that are unique to their cultures and ways



of life. The shared experience of young people together with their elders in different management activities, festivities, rituals and daily life provide an opportunity to promote the practices, customs and languages that have transformed forest into forest for millennia and thus promote all the services associated with this management.

In addition to the contributions generated by traditional practices of teaching and learning, other services could be performed to enhance the impact: research to systematise and disseminate traditional knowledge, structuring of teaching materials based on traditional knowledge, integration between school and community life, school meals based on traditional foods, etc.



The different forms of organisation of indigenous and traditional communities are based on relations of conflict, exchange and reciprocity of these communities among themselves and with the landscape, from their geographical distribution, to the forms of relationship between groups, to the definitions on the use and management of natural resources. These practices have contributed and contribute to the formation of existing landscapes and secure the different associated ecosystem services.

In a complementary manner to the contributions already made by the forms of community organisation, other services may enhance these impacts: management agreements in broader territories (fishing, che-lonians, etc.); networks and arrangements for joint marketing of products and services; associativism and cooperativism of different groups; holding territorial

management meetings (local, associativist, territorial, regional, national); mechanisms and spaces for conflict resolution; tools, spaces and activities for participatory monitoring of territories and landscapes; defence and promotion of rights before society (public authorities, the market, companies, etc.);

Thus, working with the notion of Socio-environmental Contributions and Services is complementary to the proposal of Law 14.119/2021, because it goes beyond the idea that human actions help protect and enhance nature. It recognizes and highlights that beyond specific, one-off activities, cultures, ways of life and ways of managing the landscape have been and are responsible for the generation, reproduction, recovery or improvement of ecosystems and their services in vast collective territories.

The recognition of these contributions and services by adequate public policies is fundamental for strengthening socio-biodiversity economies and containing the advance of the hegemonic economic model over traditional territories, creating mechanisms to promote local ways of life.

To facilitate the understanding and practical developments associated with Socio-environmental Contributions and Services, it became necessary to establish premises and guidelines that steer ISA's vision on the subject and point to paths of action.

The premises and guidelines are described below.

2

PREMISES AND GUIDELINES

In order to institutionally address socio-environmental contributions and possible reward mechanisms, we assume the following premises:

FIRST SET OF PREMISES:

Socio-environmental contributions and services are linked to the territories and to the particular ways of life of each people, and are non-transferable and irreplaceable.

- Traditional knowledge is, above all, a way of doing and relating that is based on different assumptions and can produce results that are very different from those of modern science. In this context, it is impossible to discuss biodiversity and environmental services without speaking of the actions of these peoples through their ways of life, their forms of management and use of their territories.
- Modes of interaction with nature and landscape (e.g. traditional farming systems and settlements) promote diversity and counteract those production processes set in motion by modernity which focus on standardisation and specialisation (homogenization, monoculture, exhaustive use of resources). These modes of interaction have their own historical roots. The diversity present in these traditional territories is the result of other ways of thinking about nature and engaging in relations between humans and non-humans (e.g. water, soil, biodiversity, crop varieties, animals, forest spirits, etc.);



GUIDELINES

- To foster community initiatives for territorial management, aggregating the socio-biodiversity economy and its socio-environmental contributions in local arrangements and observing, as a moderating force, the welfare of the communities;
- Technical assistance actions by ISA, the State or partners with regard to the socio-biodiversity economy must seek paths of action that promote ways of living, traditional knowledge and its interaction with the landscape, understanding these aspects as central to the socio-biodiversity economy and its socio-environmental contributions.



SECOND SET OF PREMISES

The recognition of socio-environmental contributions and services strengthens the territorial rights of traditional peoples and promotes alternatives to predatory activities.



- **Socio-environmental Contributions and Services should complement public policies and not replace them, and the State is responsible for guaranteeing the rights of indigenous peoples, quilombolas and traditional communities.**
- **Amidst the current dismantling of institutions for the protection and promotion of traditional peoples' rights, the recognition of the Socio-environmental Contributions and Services of these peoples brings to the fore the need to strengthen the role of the State in its constitutional and public policy commitments;**
- **The communities need better healthcare, schooling, infrastructure and communication technologies, as well as meeting other basic needs, which are obligations the Brazilian State has towards them. This includes the fundamental role of the State in maintaining the integrity of these territories, through protective and enforcement actions;**
- **In the context of the advance of predatory activities, the focus on traditional peoples and communities resides more in their right to exist than the processes of valuing nature. These valuation processes may serve as a reference, but clearly cannot be the parameter for guaranteeing those rights;**
- **Remuneration for Socio-environmental Contributions can be a promising path to further advance the recognition of these contributions and generate incentives for traditional practices to be reproduced over time, without neglecting the basic struggle for rights of these peoples and communities. The recognition of the Socio-environmental Contributions and Services made by traditional peoples and their territories makes visible the importance of these peoples and territories for the reproduction of contemporary social life, reinforcing the need to guarantee their rights;**
- **To recognize Socio-environmental Contributions and Services is to recognize that for the lifestyles of traditional peoples and communities, doing is important. Those landscapes are anthropogenic landscapes, and there were people who managed this abundance for a long time. Knowledge comes from interaction with nature.**

GUIDELINES

- To deepen knowledge about the formation of landscapes regionally, and the historical contribution of communities in this management for the struggle and guarantee of rights (territory, use of natural resources, promotion of traditional practices, archaeological studies etc);
- To use PGTAs and life plans as a basis for knowing where and how the resources for remuneration for socio-environmental contributions should be applied, given that in these documents the communities have made explicit what they want for the maintenance of their ways of life;
- To think about the mechanisms of remuneration for socio-environmental contributions in a complementary way to the State's obligations, seeking to promote means of addressing plurality, collaborating for healthcare, schooling and other needs without replacing the role of the State in its constitutional duties;
- To advocate with the State for the implementation of complementary policies and programmes that promote the socio-biodiversity economy and ways of life, in order to enhance socio-environmental contributions;



- To work on new regulatory frameworks and the adaptation of existing laws. Two non-excluding possibilities are on the table: the regulation of the current Bill on Payment for Environmental Services and the proposal of other related laws that strengthen the State's recognition of the importance of indigenous peoples, quilombolas and traditional communities.



THIRD SET OF PREMISES

The recognition of the socio-environmental contributions and services of traditional peoples is an appropriate path to mitigate the effects of the hegemonic economy and build a new economic paradigm.

- **Socio-environmental Contributions and Services are a benchmark for the creation of mechanisms to mitigate the effects of the hegemonic economy and build a new economic paradigm that sees nature and society as intimately connected, with care for people and the environment as a priority;**
- **The recognition of Socio-environmental Contributions and Services must promote alternatives to predatory activities and strengthen the territorial rights of traditional peoples;**
- **Socio-biodiversity economies and the value chains that move them monetarily cannot compete, under the current paradigm, with the chains associated with the hegemonic economy;**
- **There is an impossibility of competition between traditional agricultural systems and the productive systems of modern society because of the lack of recognition of the impacts of both systems;**
- **The recognition of Socio-environmental Contributions and Services is not the promoter of the monetization of relations in the communities. This mechanism should not bear that responsibility and, on the contrary, should be used to offer better living conditions for these communities, and, if**



possible, to keep them away from harassment and the lure of illegal activities that remunerate quickly and sometimes abundantly;

- Furthermore, recognition for Socio-environmental Contributions and Services can be made by **monetary or non-monetary mechanisms**;
- **The recognition of Socio-environmental Contributions and Services is a strategy to improve these collective services.** The forest products chain competes with illegal activities in the territory. Young people become involved in illegal activities that also have the effect of breaking the learning of traditional knowledge and of living in and from the forest;
- Encouraging the generation of income helps to curb illegal activities and provides conditions for the continuation of the way of life. Paying for socio-biodiversity products enables traditional and cultural practices and traditional work as a **socialising element** that is totally different from illegal activities.

GUIDELINES

- To build mechanisms of remuneration for Socio-environmental Contributions and Services always in consultation and together with the peoples and communities;
 - To concretely aggregate the concept of Socio-environmental Contributions and Services in relations with the market, with international cooperation, with funders and with public authorities;
 - To carry out pilot schemes with companies to think of prototypes for remuneration for Socio-environmental Contributions and Services, with due care not to fall into a purely market logic, thus building a form of market recognition of the importance of traditional peoples and communities;
 - To assess the feasibility and mechanisms for the creation of funds that allow the contribution of individuals, organisations, cooperation and companies;
 - To advocate or support the structuring of government incentives and investment funds to promote private sector engagement in the socio-biodiversity economy;
- 
- A stylized illustration showing two hands, one in a blue sleeve and one in a red sleeve, holding several golden corn cobs. The background is a vibrant green and blue, suggesting a natural, outdoor setting.
- To aggregate and qualify Socio-environmental Contributions and Services in debates on public policies in the different spheres of power;
 - To aggregate Socio-environmental Contributions and Services as a fundamental value in communications processes about the socio-biodiversity economy;
 - To structure research and mechanisms that reveal, recognize and reward Socio-environmental Contributions and Services. Within these proposals, to seek to analyse what the contributions/impacts are, whether monetary and/or non-monetary remuneration is appropriate for this contribution, and what would be the paths to individual and/or collective remuneration;
 - To seek new forms of financial analysis and business plans that aggregate Socio-environmental Contributions and Services and mechanisms of remuneration as an inherent part of the economy of socio-biodiversity;



- To study and assess available mechanisms of Payment for Environmental Services (Carbon, water, etc.) from the perspective of Socio-environmental Contributions and Services, and to develop criteria to influence the regulation of these markets, seeking not to put the way of life at the mercy of the market, but on the contrary, to guide the recognition of its practices.
- To work on the creation of indicators for Socio-environmental Contributions and Services, with their own criteria and verification models, lower costs and more credibility to launch as an alternative to metrics based on elements of nature, such as carbon;

FOURTH SET OF PREMISES

Socio-environmental contributions and services are the contributions of traditional peoples and their territories to the commons and promote the reproduction of their ways of life



- **Socio-environmental Contributions and Services are performed by individuals who share ways of life and knowledge collectively.** Remuneration mechanisms value the contributions of indigenous peoples, quilombolas and traditional communities to the commons and promote the reproduction of their ways of life, promoting the continuity and strengthening of these contributions.
- **The greater the amount of relationships with nature and landscapes, the greater the resilience of indigenous peoples, quilombolas, and traditional communities,** both to resist market oscillations and new predatory activities, and to cope with climate change.
- It is therefore not only a matter of defending that traditional peoples and communities make socio-environmental contributions, but of **ensuring the necessary conditions for the reproduction of ways of life and their resulting Socio-environmental Contributions and Services.** That is, ensuring that their ways of being in the world, their ways of existing and doing persist, guaranteeing the defence of territories, respect for their ways of existing and doing, and allowing their physical, social, and cultural reproduction.



- **Remuneration for Socio-environmental Contributions and Services can occur through different mechanisms, both monetary and non-monetary,** and it is important to ensure that these mechanisms strengthen ways of life and their relationship with territories and landscapes;
- **Traditional knowledge is closely linked to landscape management and nature's contributions to society. The existence and use of genetic heritage and technological development resulting from this process should be associated directly or indirectly with historically practised traditional knowledge and management;**



GUIDELINES:

- The mechanisms of remuneration for Socio-environmental Contributions and Services must be able to recognise both collective contributions and individual and/or family contributions, and it is important to **build agreements that share the benefits between individuals and between collectives**;
- To structure less passive and more proactive ways — and with a **greater role for communities** — of connecting traditional knowledge and landscape management to innovation and technological development and benefit sharing mechanisms, considering that genetic heritage is directly or indirectly related to traditional knowledge.

NOTES

[1] *Muito além da economia verde*. São Paulo: Ed Abril, 2012.

[2] *Bioeconomia ou necroeconomia?* Available at: <https://site-antigo.socioambiental.org/pt-br/blog/blog-do-isa/bioeconomia-ou-necroeconomia>

ABOUT ISA

Instituto Socioambiental (ISA) is a non-profit association qualified as a Civil Society Organization of Public Interest (OSCIP), founded on April 22, 1994, by people with extensive knowledge and experience in the struggle for social and environmental rights. Its objective is to defend collective and diffuse social rights and goods related to the environment, cultural heritage, human rights and the rights of peoples.

ISA produces studies and research, implements projects and programs that promote socio-environmental sustainability, valuing the cultural and biological diversity of the country.

Board of Directors

Deborah Lima (president), Marina Kahn (vice-president), André Villas-Bôas, Beto Ricardo, Leão Serva and Marta Maria do Amaral Azevedo

Fiscal Council

Alicia Rolla, Isabelle Vidal Gianinni and Paulo Afonso Garcia

Executive Secretary

Rodrigo Gravina Prates Junqueira

Advisor

Tânia Matsunaga

CGE – Strategic Management Board

Deborah Lima, Marina Kahn, André Villas-Bôas, Beto Ricardo, Leão Serva, Marta Maria do Amaral Azevedo, Adriana Ramos, Antonio Oviedo, Biviany Rojas, Bruno Weis, Fábio Endo, Marcos Wesley Raquel Pasinato, Rodrigo Gravina Prates Junqueira



Instituto
Socioambiental