

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** *I just finished my fieldwork in Brazil where I was able to collect data through interviews with key stakeholders from municipal and state government, NGOs, and consultants involved in the Sustainable Municipalities Program. To analyze this information I plan to use a framework based on environmental governance, multi-scale governance, and political agendas. Considering the limitation of time that I have to process all of this data, **this document is only a draft of the final paper.** I am working in the analysis of the data, I will submit the final version of this paper as soon it's possible. I would like to include the last findings of this research, which I consider very important to compliment the research. I would greatly appreciate your understanding of my situation.*

## **Governance, Incentives and Environmental Agendas: The case of Sustainable Municipalities Program (Programa Mato-grossense de Municípios Sustentáveis)**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*“Governance is emerging as a critical part of addressing development challenges such as poverty and the sustainable management of natural resources” (Barnes and Child 2014). I conducted my field practicum in Mato Grosso, Brazil, coordinating with the Instituto Centro de Vida (ICV), to conduct a governance analysis of the Sustainable Municipalities Program (SMP). There are many definitions of governance, but in this case, I used the definition of the Governance Analytical Framework: governance refers to “the processes of interactions between the actors involved in a collective issue that leads to decisions and the formulation of social norms” (Hufty 2009). For the analysis, I collected information through a review a secondary data of SMP and the environmental governance status of Mato Grosso. Additionally, I conducted interviews with key stakeholders from municipalities and state government, NGOs and consultants involved in the process. I also had the opportunity to participate in many events related to the SMP, events such as political meetings and ICV internal discussion meetings. To analyze this information I plan to use a framework based on environmental governance, multi-scale governance and political agendas. This research will be used to gain a deeper understanding of governance arrangements in this program and to strengthen local level and multi-scale governance processes in order to support more successful adoption of the Sustainable Municipalities Program.*

### **Geographical Context**

The state of Mato Grosso is located in the Brazilian Midwest. This state has a population of 3,035,122 (IBGE 2010) and is the geodetic center of Latin America. According to the Mato Grosso Institute of Agricultural Economics (IMEA), agribusiness represents 50.5% of the state Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Unfortunately, two of the Brazil's key products, cattle and soy, are still driving deforestation as well as economic growth. According to Brighter Green's report, researchers estimate that cattle ranching caused 65-70 percent of land clearing in the Amazon between 2000 and 2005. Data from INPE shows that in 2013 deforestation rates increased by

50% when compared with 2012 rates. In this context actions to preserve forests and biodiversity are an important issue that should be addressed by public, private and social organizations.

### **Sustainable Municipalities Program**

Mato Grosso local municipalities in a collective effort have been promoting a socio-environmental agenda at local level. In 2013 in a collective effort, civil society organizations, local stakeholders, and local municipalities launched the Sustainable Municipalities Program. One of the main objectives of this Program is to develop a common socio-environmental agenda for the state and ensure its implementation as a public policy. After one year of negotiation, the state government of Mato Grosso created the "Programa Mato-grossense de Municípios Sustentáveis (PMS)." This program has three principal components: municipal environmental management, control of deforestation settlements and sustainable value chains and family farming.

Instituto Centro de Vida (ICV) is a Civil Society Organization that plays a key role into Sustainable Municipalities program. This non-governmental organization is leading the articulation process between municipalities and government of state. Their work focuses on sustainability solutions aimed at reconciling agriculture and forestry production with conservation and restoration of natural ecosystems and their services. The range of actions taken by ICV covers the fields of environmental governance and public policies at the state level and local initiatives at the municipal level.

### **General Objective**

Determine the potential of the Sustainable Municipalities Program as an instrument to improve environmental governance into the Mato Grosso region.

### **Governance**

“Governance entails a move away from traditional hierarchical forms of organization and the adoption of network forms. It also entails a revision of the relationship between state and civil society in a more participatory direction. Governance is finally said to be responsible for shifting the emphasis away from statute law to more flexible forms of regulation and implementation” (Bellamy & Palumbo 2010). There are many definitions of governance, but in this case I will use the definition of the Governance Analytical Framework: governance refers to “the processes of interactions between the actors involved in a collective issue that lead to decisions and the formulation of social norms” (Hufty 2009). One of the principal strategies to assure good governance processes is the inclusion of non-state actors. According to Hufty (2009), actors intervene at different levels, depending on the strategies employed which are often complex. This is one of the principal reasons for the importance of having a better understanding of governance arrangements in order to promote strategies that are effective and that learn from experience.

Analyze and understand governance processes is crucial and relevant to the development arena. According to Barnes and Child (2014), it is important to promote an integrative understanding of cross-scale and adaptive governance in Africa and Latin America in the development arena. Adaptive governance is important to better serve local priorities, involving interactions with local, district, national and global governance structures. A “Natural Resources Governance approach explicitly recognizes that the distribution and exercise of power are fundamental to addressing poverty, inequitable resource distribution, human rights issues, clogged and over-centralized land administration systems and other contemporary development problems” (Barnes 2014).

According to (Tony 2006) forest sector in the Brazilian amazon has serious structural problems: institutional problems a disconnection between normative frameworks and state operational capacity; chaotic forest tenure administration; infrastructure deficiencies and technical assistance

issues. As consequence of the centralization processes establish in the Brazilian constitution of 1988, municipal governments were provided with more resources and were in charge of some services that in the past were the state of federal state who provided (Tony 2006)

### **Public Agendas**

“The process by which demands of various groups in the population are translated into items vying for the serious attention of public officials can appropriately be called agenda building. There are two types of agendas: the public agenda consists of issues which have achieved high level of public interest and visibility; the formal agenda is the list of items which decision makers have formally accepted for serious considerations (Cobb, Ross and Howard Ross 1976).”

There are different models of agenda building: the outside model that arise in nongovernmental groups and then become the public agenda to finally reach the formal agenda. The next model is the mobilization model, issues are initiated inside the government and almost automatic reach the status of formal agenda. The third is the inside initiative model, issues arise within the governmental sphere and whose supporters do not try to expand them to the mass public (Cobb, Ross and Howard Ross 1976). This is a conceptual interpretation, however in a practical way one agenda can have different levels and combinations of agenda-buildings models.

In the case of the Sustainable Municipalities Program could be considered as a combination between the outside initiative model, the mobilization model, and the inside access model. The SMP has some characteristics of the outside initiative model such as the initiative was promoted by a group outside to the government structure, in this case, a non-governmental organization (Instituto Centro de Vida - ICV). This organization is trying to expand the interest between the different municipalities of Mato Grosso, Brasil in order to gain a place on the public agenda to put enough pressure to the Mato Grosso State Government in order to reach a formal agenda status.

In the case of the mobilization model, "it describes the process of agenda-building in situations where political leaders initiate a policy but require the support of the mass public for its implementation." (Cobb, Ross and Howard Ross, 1976). The state government of Mato Grosso has created a program called "Produce, Conserve, and Include - PCE" that was presented at the COP21 in Paris. This plan aims to eradicate illegal deforestation, rehabilitate large tracts of degraded forests, improve agricultural productivity and livelihoods of family farms, as well as double agricultural output. However, this plan lacking practical instruments to achieve their principal goals, additionally needs a strong intervention of the municipalities to implement the plan. In this context, the Sustainable Municipalities Program could play a role as a practical instrument to implement the PCE initiative, becoming both the MSP and PCE formal agendas. Additionally, this program (SMP) has characteristics of the inside access model because "in this model, policy originates within a governmental agency, or within a group which has easy and frequent access to political decision makers," which is the case of the Instituto Centro de Vida that plays a role of an articulator agent between municipalities and the state government.

### **Collection of Data**

For the purpose of this research a descriptive, single case-study methodology is ideal because it allows integration of multiple sources of data (Yin 1994). For the analysis, I collected information through a review a secondary data of Sustainable Municipalities Program and the environmental governance status of Mato Grosso. Additionally, I conducted semi-structure interviews with key stakeholders from Mato Grosso municipalities, state government, NGOs and consultants involved in the process. I also had the valuable opportunity to participate in many events such as political meetings and Instituto Centro de Vida internal discussion meetings. The data were collected in Portuguese by the principal investigator who is fluent in Portuguese and trainer interviewer from

May to July on 2016. To compile relevant documents I received help from the ICV team in Alta Floresta and also in Cuiaba.

The review occurred prior to and during the time of the interviews. Interview data were collected using a semi-structured guide with open-ended questions. The questions in the interview reflected the informants' experience and perception of the Sustainable Municipalities Program, their role and attitude toward the topic; their opinion about the potential of the SMP as an instrument to improve environmental governance in the Mato Grosso region in Brazil, additionally, the factors that may have promoted or impeded the collaboration process between actors and sectors toward the SMP. The guide was fine-tuned after a consultative phase with ICV team in Alta Floresta, Brazil. Also, this guide was occasionally revised to illustrate new issues that had come up in earlier interviews. All participants were interviewed on a voluntary basis, recruitment by a previous analysis of the principal and more relevant stakeholders.

### **Discussion**

For the majority of the municipalities, the principal motivation to sign up the Sustainable Municipalities Program was the opportunity to receive economic resources to implement local projects to fight against deforestation. At the time of the creation of the SMP twenty-four municipalities from Mato Grosso were part of the "black list" (municipalities with the highest rates of deforestation). Because this condition those municipalities had economic restrictions. These two aspects had driven the implementation of some of the activities proposed in the MSP. However, because the lack of support from the state government of Mato Grosso, many of the municipalities have been lost the interest to be part of this initiative.

For the majority of the participants in the study, one of the key aspects of the Sustainable Municipalities Program is that this is a bottom-up initiative leading by the municipalities from Mato Grosso and civil society organization and Non-Governmental Organization: Instituto Centro de Vida (ICV) and the participation of the State Government. These aspects convert the MSP in a flexible instrument that allows negotiations between state government, municipalities, and social civil organizations. As I described in the beginning, the SMP it is an agenda that has a mix of characteristics that make possible the inclusion of many sectors of the society. Instituto Centro de Vida has a key role in this process becoming a catalyzer for the successful of the initiative.

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