

# Brazil



**Organization:** Centro Ecológico

**Location:** Southern Brazil (Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul states)

**Solution:** Stimulate açai berry production through agroforestry systems to generate income for communities and protect the Atlantic Forest

**Factsheet Period:** First round of UNDP AFCIA funding (18 months)



Açaí fruits planted by the Centro Ecológico to support Indigenous and traditional communities - @Centro Ecológico

Smallholders and traditional communities in the Atlantic Forest are key to preserving the endangered palm juçara, which has been threatened by its unsustainable harvesting which traditionally involves cutting the tree to consume its centre (palm heart). To protect this species, vital to the Atlantic Forest conservation, Centro Ecológico supports regenerative agriculture by assisting farmers to sustainably cultivate açai through agroforestry practices. Almost 95 % of all the açai consumed in the world comes from Brazil. This approach combines açai production with forest management, benefiting Indigenous and traditional communities by enhancing food security and nutrition, focusing on households cultivating and harvesting the berries without cutting the tree.



## Key achievements

- 40 tonnes of açai berries processed
- 2,500 seedlings of native species planted
- 4,000 tons of carbon sequestered
- 364 households participating in açai production
- 654 school students engaged in environmental education programmes
- Açai introduced into school meals for 8,500 children, 56% of the local population



## Adaptation benefits

- Resilient agroforestry systems that retain water and enhance biodiversity
- Traditional knowledge sharing on climate-resilient production methods



## Innovation

- Develops research for açai fruit production in the Atlantic Forest
- Includes açai and bananas grown by local communities in school meals
- Creates an alternative source of income for local communities through the production and sale of açai juçara





### Social impact

- Improves food security and nutrition for Indigenous and traditional households
- Empowers women within the açai production chain by giving them leadership roles throughout the process, from cultivation to sales
- Supports vulnerable Indigenous and “quilombola” groups by providing berries for schools



### Replication potential

- The initiative effectively promotes resilient production systems by adapting agroforestry techniques to local contexts impacted by drought. It serves as a strong model, benefiting family farmers, Indigenous Peoples, and traditional populations.



### Funding snapshot

- UNDP-AFCIA grant: US\$235,000 ( first grant: \$125,000, scaling grant: \$110,000 -under implementation- data still unavailable)

### Investability

Revenue per year	Income generated through project activities: on average, \$2,000 per family per year
Sustaining criteria	<p>Knowledge sharing among community promotes the long-term viability of the initiative</p> <p>Development of a sustainable market chain for açai berries</p>
Financial innovation	<p>Initiative’s success has garnered government interest in establishing a minimum price for açai juçara berries</p> <p>Increased family income from açai sales encourages younger community members to participate, fostering long-term sustainability and income generation</p>