

Press-Release

Uatumã Reserve will be FSC-certified in 2022

Being recognized with the FSC seal is the result of a work being carried out by Idesam with the extractivists from the Uatumã Reserve since 2018 and so far this is the only experience in the state of Amazonas to include the timber and non-timber categories.

Manaus, March 2022 - January became an important milestone for the actions undertaken by Idesam in the Uatumã Sustainable Development Reserve (RDS). After a long work that involved capacity building activities, technical assistance and institutional support, the Reserve's main association, the AACRDSU (Association of Agroextractivist Communities of the Uatumã RDS) received, from the Institute for Forest and Agriculture Management and Certification (Imaflora), the FSC's (Forest Stewardship Council) Forest Management and Chain of Custody certifications.

The certification, which is valid until January 2027, includes a production area of 44 thousand hectares. It encompasses timber and non-timber forest products developed and sold by the Association, which had its structuring supported by Idesam's Cidades Florestais Project (Forest Cities in English), financed by the Amazon Fund/BNDES.

The products are part of the Inatú Amazônia collective brand, launched in August 2020, which today has a line with six oils (fixed and essential), from products of the Amazon biodiversity, as well as objects made of wood.

The main expectation, according to the technical director of Idesam André Vianna, is that, from now on, the products will be able to access new markets with a more interesting return from the commercial point of view. Still, the certificate does not have only this single goal.

"Since the beginning of the certification process, the collaborators from AACRDSU and Idesam focused on the use of the criteria and indicators of the FSC certification standard as a tool to improve the management of productive activities", explains Vianna.

"For us, this is a very big achievement, it is the confirmation that our work was not - and will not be - in vain. The certification shows us that it is worth waiting longer and doing 'everything the right way' to have this result"

- Diana Prado Costa, president of AACRDSU

For Vianna, the use of the FSC system allows the certificate holder to monitor its activities not only considering the quality of the operations, but also includes criteria such as: evaluation and mitigation of environmental and social impacts; safety and health aspects of the worker; among others.

According to FSC data, today, in the Amazon there are 7 certified Community Forestry Management plans, being the Uatumã plan the only one that contemplates both categories, timber and non-timber (such as resins, oils and fruits). In the Amazon, until then, only the community Vila Céu do Mapiá, located in the Purus National Forest, had obtained the timber seal for communities.

"In recent years we have seen, besides a greater participation of small and medium-sized producers in the FSC system, a diversification of certifications that goes beyond timber. The story of the Uatumã association clearly exemplifies this trend and represents a paradigm shift - the forest in all its potential and the appreciation of the people who live and survive on it", celebrates Daniela Vilela, Executive Director of FSC Brazil.

In the eyes of Bruno Castro (Imaflora's certification coordinator), certifying the Association means contributing to the development of community forest management in the state, increasing the conditions for forest management to keep being a vector for territorial development, improving people's quality of life and valuing the standing forest.

"It means expanding the access to products from sociobiodiversity with the FSC certification label, what means, products with responsible origin and managed with good environmental, social and economic practices"

- Bruno Castro, Imaflora's certification coordinator

To obtain the certification, Idesam held different courses to train the managers, both in technical, safety, and management aspects. Idesam's technicians also monitor the field actions and develop the necessary improvements with the managers.

In addition, the Amazon Fund financing allowed the project to hire consultants to build the management system now used by the AACRDSU Collaborators Group, and also allowed for the entire forest auditing process.

The effort was worth it. Castro lists a number of benefits that can be obtained by the Association. The first of these is the use of certification itself as an important business management tool: "The association can develop and improve the organization of its relevant documentation, the definition of important activities for the success of the management, the elaboration of management plans according to the local reality, the elaboration of internal procedures and protocols, among other points."

In addition to a series of improvements in social organization, management practices, and workers' health and safety conditions, the auditor also highlights traceability as one of the

results with the greatest impact in the process. The procedures created, the monitoring, and the reliable records prevent the certified product from being mixed with products of unknown origin. "This result is important to guarantee the source of the product offered to the consumer", he adds.

Bruno finishes the list of benefits with the financial gains that can be generated for the families that participate in the activity. He stresses that, with the FSC mark, the association can seek insertion in new markets, which value products of responsible origin.

"For us, this means the arrival of better days, with our production gaining and generating increasingly greater value", adds Diana.

For more information and interviews:

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