

Indigenous Economy, Territorial Economic Governance and Socio-biodiversity Value Chains:

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The Two Spheres of the Indigenous Economy

The indigenous economy has two spheres: the reciprocity economy and the market economy. The reciprocity economy is linked to traditional practices, the barter economy and collective production. These practices are independent from monetary or financial relationships. There is some friction or tension when such reciprocity economy gets in touch with the market economy.

Forest Trends' Communities and Territorial Governance Initiative (CTGI) has been developing processes in order to trigger a thinking process on how to underpin the economy of the indigenous people and territories and to make sure that the link with the market be as beneficial and equitable as possible, taking into account the respect for the ethnicity of each people and the experiences accumulated by the communities and organizations. In order to deepen the analysis of the economic spheres, i.e., reciprocity and market, as well as the links already existing between them, such reflections led to the preparation of 4 illustrated booklets and a video¹ (in both Portuguese and Spanish):

The Territorial Economic Governance, Life Plans and Common Good

The Territorial Economic Governance, as devised by Forest Trends' CTGI, depends on the way the community and territorial organizations make their decisions regarding their territory, i.e., on a series of conditions, processes, systems and protocols in order to discuss, analyze and decide on the course of the economy of the indigenous people within their territories.

Each indigenous people see the world in a different perspective. The Forest people have their own vision of the world. The understanding of the economy must be part of the life plans of those living in the territory, based on a wider vision of the world in order to guarantee that their own economy, the subsistence and food security economy, stands when they are placed before the relationships with the market.

The "good living" and reciprocity economy are rooted in deep reflections of the common good, stemming from an idea that is opposed to the scarcity of resources and that competition for the appropriation of these goods must take place, as this approach always leads to inequities.

¹ 1 - http://forest-trends.org/publication_details.php?publicationID=5479;

2 - http://forest-trends.org/publication_details.php?publicationID=5547;

3 - http://forest-trends.org/publication_details.php?publicationID=5549;

4 - http://forest-trends.org/publication_details.php?publicationID=5552;

Vídeo: https://youtu.be/bnNQhFjh_AU

The “common good” notion stems from the rationale that states that resources are abundant and that a collective benefit is possible. Traditional and ancestral knowledge must be the basis of a long-term vision for the collective good, so that all people think and work together in order to protect, restore and use the resources.

Kichwa Good Living

“Our life is our reason to live”. The ‘good living’ is a literal definition, a way of life, a universal concept. But it is not a one-size-fits-all formula. If there are many peoples, then each one has its own vision. Kichwa life has four principles: ancestral knowledge, land foreshadowing abundance of all lives, the use of the woodland resources life in the community. Because of all those who evolve around the land, the forest, and according to the way a community is organized, comes a series of changes in the habitat, the woodland and the waters, which leads to changes in the economy. Our life plans are therefore based on four elements: community, territory, economy and ancestral knowledge.” Alfredo Vitery, of the Kichwa people from Pastaza, (Ecuadorian Amazon).

Territorial Economic Governance Challenges:

- Confrontation with the external economic occupation threats (wood logging, mining and extraction, agribusiness, land grabbing, large infrastructure projects, etc.);
- Food security and the peoples’ own economy in the face of intensification of the relationships with the market;
- Establishment of rules for the use of the collective resources by some families;
- Inclusion of economic themes in life and management plans;
- Appreciation of the traditional culture, vision of the world and ways of life whenever projects, initiatives and relations with the market are being developed;

Territorial Economic Governance of the Paiter Surui People from the Sete de Setembro Indigenous Land

The Paiter Surui people live on the *Sete de Setembro* Indigenous Land since the dawn of time. After they got in touch with the non-indigenous society, in 1969, the social dynamics has been changing and today’s population of approximately 1400 people is spread over 27 villages, socially and economically organized around various associations and cooperatives.

Forest Trends’ CTGI has been providing support to the Paiter Surui people for more than ten years to strengthen the indigenous territorial governance. At the beginning, collective territorial governance spaces and tools were built, like the 50-year Plan, and over the past 5 years a support has been provided to projects and initiatives in the following fields: culture, economy, and politics of the groups, families, villages and indigenous organizations. Complementarities are explored with a mutual integration and support between the economic initiatives, such as Arte Paiter artisanal products, those in the field of management and marketing of Brazilian nuts, the projects aimed at providing food security with agroforestry systems and beekeeping.



The cultural dimension of territorial governance is of the essence. That is why Forest Trends supports a cultural center, a center for medicinal plants and a Paiter Surui Museum. These endeavors foster initial reflections on ethnic and community tourism. In the field of indigenous education, teachers are trained as cultural facilitators with the addition of political training as promoted by the PFGETI – Indigenous Territorial Economic Governance Training Program – organized in partnership with the Federal University of Rondonia.

Socio-Biodiversity Value Chains in the Mosaico Tupi Region in the States of Rondonia and Mato Grosso, in the Brazilian Amazon

Forest Trends' Territorial Communities and Governance initiative supports 14 indigenous people who act as guardians of 1.5 million hectares in the Brazilian Amazon, strengthening economic initiatives and the economic territorial governance of 8 indigenous lands. We support as a priority the arrangements of artisanal products and Brazilian nut value chains, among others with a large potential market, as well as the productive systems that guarantee food security. Besides supporting the arrangements of these value chains in the territories we also develop training activities for the economic territorial governance and the design of economic territorial management and governance tools so as to set favorable conditions for access to market based on solid and long-lasting commercial partnerships.

Territorial Economic Governance for Mitigating and Adapting Climate Changes

The role of the indigenous people as guardians of their territories, which is essential to keep a standing forest, needs to be acknowledged. The indigenous territories are strategic for mitigating climate change considering that the peoples living in them are responsible for managing 25% of the global carbon stocks. It is estimated that in the *Mosaico Tupi* region in Rondônia and Mato Grosso, in the Brazilian Amazon, 750 million tons of CO₂ are being stocked.

Global efforts and resource allocation by the climate funds must take into account in their investment strategies the priorities set by the indigenous people. The efficiency in managing these resources and the positive impact on the conservation of the forests depends, to a large extent, on the conditions, systems and processes whereby such territory governance decisions are made.

The strengthening of economic governance of the indigenous territories in the Amazon, with strategic investments in forest-based initiatives of the socio-biodiversity value chains of non-timber forest products, agroforestry and artisanal products, brings about immeasurable environmental, social and cultural benefits, not only for the indigenous people living in those territories but for society as a whole who benefits from forest conservation. The scale of these benefits should thus be measured on the basis of the importance of the Amazon for climate regulation and the environmental balance of our planet.