

Surui: Carbon Finance and the Protection of Indigenous Peoples' Forests in the Amazon

The Surui Indians of the Brazilian Amazon made contact with the outside world for the first time only 40 years ago. This contact inaugurated a period of settlement, road construction and disease which decimated their population and their ancestral lands. Now the Surui are working with Forest Trends, the Katoomba Group, Amazon Conservation Team and other partners to wed sophisticated mapping technology and global carbon finance to protect their culture and forests. By supporting processes of local consultation and planning, mapping, technical carbon assessments and links to markets, the Katoomba Incubator and partners propose to catalyze carbon finance for the protection of over 240,000 hectares of native forest and the support of a sustainable future for the Surui.



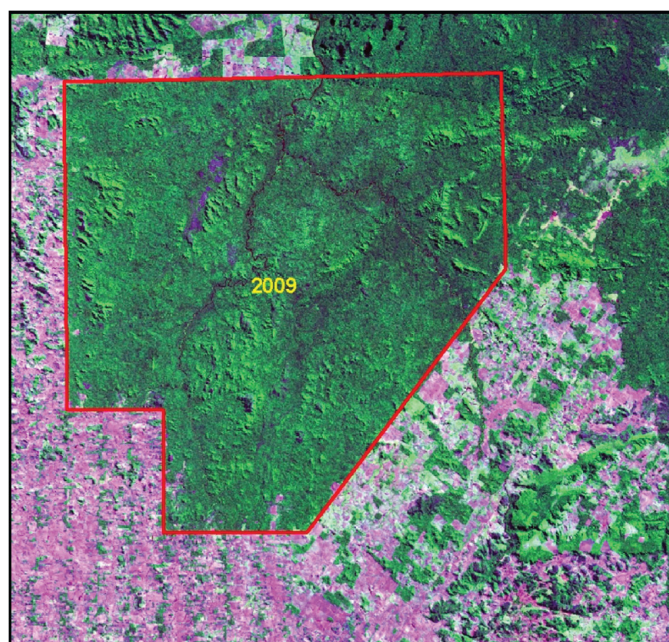
Photo by Rebecca Vonada, 2009

At A Glance

Location	Rondônia and Mato Grosso, Brazil
Project Type	Carbon: REDD and Reforestation
Size	240,000 has of forest conservation and avoided deforestation
Proponent	Organização Metareilá do Povo Indígena Suruí Paiter
CO2 (Est)	>2M tCO ₂ by 2020 (300,000 tCO ₂ by 2012)
Standards (Est)	CCB, VCS
Project Status	Development of PDD

Project Description

The Surui Indians, an ethnic group of 1,200 members, live within a territory of over 248,000 hectares in the Amazon Rainforest states of Rondônia and Mato Grosso in western Brazil. In the 1980s, the federal government instituted incentives for the exploitation of what was then a practically unexplored region, subsidizing roads and economic development. The result was an onslaught of timber and agricultural operations in the region which led to drastic deforestation. The Surui territory was demarcated in 1983, and today the deforested frontier reaches the very border. Although protected by Brazilian law in principle, these forests are under continued threat. In fact, initial assessments have already demonstrated that since the official demarcation of the territory, deforestation has continued and scaled-up. Lands surrounding the boundary have been almost entirely degraded already, and lack of alternative income continues to put pressure the remaining forests.



The Surui Carbon Project

In late 2007 Almir Surui, the internationally-recognized leader of the Surui people, approached Forest Trends and the Katoomba Group to seek support in developing a project to restore and conserve portions of their ancestral lands. From this conversation grew a commitment to collaborate and explore the potential for emerging carbon markets to strengthen the protection of the large area of native forest under Surui stewardship, and reinforce their efforts as a people to conserve their culture and develop alternative livelihoods.

The Katoomba Incubator Is Providing Support to:

- Develop an assessment and Project Design Documents (PDD) for REDD project to VCS and CCB Standards;
- Support the legal analyses regarding carbon rights and contracting issues needed to take this project to market;
- Facilitate contacts and support negotiations with potential investors;
- Provide information on carbon markets and project design as inputs into a process of community planning, decision-making and prior informed consent.

This exploration of carbon finance by the Surui and the work to date with Incubator support has generated a great deal of interest within Brazil as other peoples and organizations grapple with carbon issues. The Brazilian government's National Indian Foundation (FUNAI), along with the Federation of Indigenous Organizations of the Brazilian Amazon (COIAB), as well as other indigenous rights organizations, have indicated a keen interest in learning from and potentially replicating this pioneering project experience. The legal analyses, conducted by Baker Mackenzie, have provided invaluable and high-profile input into discussions in Brazil around indigenous peoples and carbon rights.

Status of Project Development

- Technical design work, including vegetation mapping, baseline modeling, carbon stock analysis.
- Landmark legal analyses on rights to carbon from REDD and reforestation.
- Extensive process of community-level discussion and participatory planning, underway.
- Baseline social and biodiversity assessments, to comply with CCB standards, underway.

"The...project is fundamental for the Surui people. It is a way that we are finding to protect and conserve our traditional territory and also contributing to keep the equilibrium of the planet." – Almir Surui

Timeline

- Preliminary baseline model and emissions reductions calculations - Completed
- Socio-economic baseline studies and community consultation process - Ongoing
- Engagement of investment partners to finalize PDD and develop near-term conservation actions - Ongoing
- PDD to validation - October 2010



Photo: Beto Borges, 2009

Other Partners

This project is based on a powerful collaboration of local and global organizations contributing their expertise.

Amazon Conservation Team- Brazil: Participatory planning, mapping and land-use change modeling. ACT has been at the cutting edge of collaborative mapping and management with indigenous peoples in the Amazon, combining traditional knowledge and advanced technology. www.equipe.org

Kanindé: A grassroots organization with years of experience at the frontlines of indigenous and forest peoples issues in Rondonia, Kanindé is supporting local consultation and forest conservation planning. www.kaninde.org.br

IDESAM: Support for baseline calculations and carbon stock estimates. This Brazilian organization was the key technical partner in developing the Juma project, the first REDD forestry project to achieve "Gold" certification status under the Climate, Community and Biodiversity (CCB Standards). www.idesam.org.br

The Brazilian Fund for Biodiversity (FUNBIO): Fund design and management. FUNBIO has more than 15 years of experience in environmental fund management - ensuring financial sustainability for long-term conservation activities. www.funbio.org.br

Work on this reforestation project has benefited from close cooperation between the Surui organization and **Google Outreach**, using Google's mapping and communications capacities to help the Surui defend their territory and reach out globally.



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