GREEN LIFE ASSOCIATION OF AMAZONIA (AVIVE)

Brazil

Equator Initiative Case Studies
Local sustainable development solutions for people, nature, and resilient communities
Local and indigenous communities across the world are advancing innovative sustainable development solutions that work for people and for nature. Few publications or case studies tell the full story of how such initiatives evolve, the breadth of their impacts, or how they change over time. Fewer still have undertaken to tell these stories with community practitioners themselves guiding the narrative.

To mark its 10-year anniversary, the Equator Initiative aims to fill this gap. The following case study is one in a growing series that details the work of Equator Prize winners – vetted and peer-reviewed best practices in community-based environmental conservation and sustainable livelihoods. These cases are intended to inspire the policy dialogue needed to take local success to scale, to improve the global knowledge base on local environment and development solutions, and to serve as models for replication. Case studies are best viewed and understood with reference to *The Power of Local Action: Lessons from 10 Years of the Equator Prize*, a compendium of lessons learned and policy guidance that draws from the case material.

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PROJECT SUMMARY

Since 1999, Green Life Association of Amazonia (Associação Vida Verde da Amazônia – AVIVE) has worked on the island of Silves, deep in the heart of the Amazon rainforest, to build a trade in aromatic soaps, candles, cosmetics, and perfumes containing the oils of medicinal plants such as rosewood and andiroba. By adding value to the raw materials obtained from native forest species and eliminating middlemen in the value chain, this women-led initiative has improved incomes for its members and associates.

The initiative has involved substantial capacity-building in sustainable harvesting techniques, commercial-standard oil extraction, business administration and marketing. One obstacle to business development was navigating state regulatory frameworks and laws governing the trade of medicinal plants. In overcoming all of these challenges, AVIVE has benefitted from a broad partnership model.

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KEY FACTS

EQUATOR PRIZE WINNER: 2002

FOUNDED: 1999

LOCATION: Silves island, Amazonas state, Brazil

BENEFICIARIES: 570 community members

BIODIVERSITY: Sustainable extraction of rare plant species
Since its launch in 1999, Green Life Association of Amazonia (Associação Vida Verde da Amazônia - AVIVE) has developed techniques for the sustainable extraction of vegetable oils obtained from medicinal and aromatic native plant species, particularly the Brazilian rosewood plant, also known as pau rosa. The project promotes the production of natural medicines and cosmetics as an economic opportunity for the women of Silves. These products are now sold in stores in Silves and Manaus, catering both to local consumers and to tourists, as well as international markets to generate income for local women.

The organization leads a far-reaching environmental education program and produces seeds for the replanting and recovery of regional forests where extractive activities threaten biodiversity. To protect the endangered pau rosa and other rare plant species, AVIVE highlights the importance of sustainable extraction and is actively involved in the creation of a “sustainable development reserve” where these species are cultivated and harvested in ways that do not threaten their regeneration.

Ecological context and project catalysts

AVIVE operates on the island of Silves, located at the junction of the Canacari Lake and the Urubu River, next to the Amazon River, at the heart of the Amazonas state of Brazil. More than one third of all known species live in the Amazon, a diverse tropical area that extends over 4.1 million square kilometers. Deforestation in the Amazon Basin continues to destroy habitats and endanger the existence of many plant and animal species indigenous to the area. Approximately 13% of the original rainforest has been destroyed, largely a result of rancher activities, large corporate operations, and slash-and-burn techniques employed by small-scale farmers.

At the beginning of the 20th century, an English company established the first Rosewood Essential Oil Distillation Unit in Silves, on Saracá Island. At that time, rosewood trees (Aniba rosaedora) were plentiful, accessible, and easy to harvest and transport. The company heavily exploited rosewood for nearly ten years before moving on, leaving the local population without employment or income, their land decimated. Between 1940 and 1978, another Brazilian company established a distilling unit, this time along the Sanabani River towards the middle of the forest, 25 km from Saracá Island. Rosewood was becoming rare, however, and production did not last. In the 1980s, others tried unsuccessfully to establish distillation units 40-60 kilometers away from Silves, but the remaining trees were located too deep in the forest for a cost-and time-efficient operation.

Rosewood oil extraction

As Silves was historically a center for rosewood essential oil production, and because the oil was traditionally used in local cosmetics and medicine, it followed that there was community interest in reviving this once lucrative industry. AVIVE was founded in 1999 by 20 women from Silves following their participation in a course on native aromatic and medicinal plants which was presented by a professor at the Federal University of Amazonas and organized by the Silves Association for Environmental and Cultural Preservation (ASPAC). Following the course, the participating women agreed on a vision of producing home-made, natural medicines and cosmetics to create employment opportunities for local women, while also restoring and preserving a traditional knowledge system.

An additional goal was lowering the cost of medicine for the local population and protecting a threatened, indigenous species. The founders saw potential in the national and international demand for Amazonian products, and moved ahead with awareness for the social and environmental concerns that made sustainably produced products valued commodities. The association’s main goal is to promote a viable economic alternative for the women of Silves, using the Amazon’s plant life to extract essential oils for the production of natural cosmetics, thereby ensuring the sustainability of the rainforest and involving the community in sustainable livelihoods and an integrated conservation-development model.
**Certification, licensing and supply-chain management**

Barriers to realization of the association's vision emerged early. The architects of AVIVE learned quickly that Brazilian laws and certification requirements in regards to medicinal products were inflexible, convoluted, expensive, and inhospitable to community-based initiatives with limited resources. The association settled on a more realistic focus of using vegetable oils as aromatic and medicinal ingredients in soaps, candles, perfumes and incense; the traditional knowledge was still applicable, and the legislative environment in this area was more favorable. Primary among the association's new focal species was rosewood oil. Sustainable extraction activities would focus on countering trends of over exploitation of the species in the Silves municipality. With technical and financial support from World Wildlife Fund-Brazil, AVIVE was able to begin its sustainable production of vegetable oils in July 1999.

The association soon encountered another hurdle in the form of obtaining the necessary licenses for marketing their products internationally. The issue first came to the fore in 2001, when AVIVE attempted for the first time to export rosewood oil and soaps under its own label to WWF-UK. While the association obtained permission to export from Brazil's Sistema Integrado de Comércio Exterior, and while the necessary sanitation license was granted by the Ministry of Agriculture, they were denied the second sanitary license from the Ministry of Health which was needed for customs. To qualify, Brazilian producers require a business license, which is issued by the National Health Surveillance Agency and which carries with it a long list of stringent requirements. This continues to be a hurdle to the association's operations to this day. One specific challenge has been construction of a production unit that conforms with and meets National Health Surveillance Agency standards. To get around this, AVIVE has been relegated to the informal market through a despachante, or paid middle-man, who arranges for association products to be “donated” to international buyers in exchange for informal payment. The association remains committed to obtaining the necessary accreditation and is working with an international private sector partner to begin construction on the production unit.

AVIVE has also encountered problems in managing its supply-chain. As demand for their soaps increased, the organization struggled to meet supply needs. To address this challenge, AVIVE enlisted the support of extractors from neighboring communities to help with sustainable harvesting from their forest areas. Since AVIVE is a non-profit organization, the women formed a cooperative organization called COPRONAT in 2003 to function as AVIVE's commercial arm and allow association members to be financially compensated for their work. The establishment of COPRONAT has also allowed association members to apply for bank loans and access formal credit channels, which has in turn facilitated investment in and growth of small businesses.

AVIVE's founders have also encountered numerous political and bureaucratic challenges. Until 2008 when the National Plan for Socio-biodiversity was introduced, there was no legal framework at either the state or national level to support the processing of non-timber forest products. An additional challenge has been access to public institutions and the centres of governmental decision-making. As there is no legal representation of state government in the Silves district, the association needs to make a 380 kilometer trip to Manaus. This has made ongoing accreditation, advocacy and communication efforts extremely challenging and at times strained. (The association received a curt letter from the Director of the National Health Surveillance Agency informing the women of AVIVE that they would never obtain the requisite business license, as an accredited technician would need to be hired and that their prospects for attracting such an expert were dim.) A further legal and bureaucratic hurdle has been the acquisition and registration of formal land titles. According to prevailing laws, AVIVE collection sites needed to be registered at the federal, state and district levels. In total, the process of registering land titles for all 26 production areas – covering 1,300 hectares of land – took seven years. In the interim, while the association was navigating this registration process, they established a partnership with the company Precious Woods Amazon, which owns 336,000 hectares of forest (mostly in the Silves Municipality) and allowed AVIVE access to 66,000 hectares of that land.

**Governance and organizational structure**

In 2010, AVIVE revised its institutional framework to gain Civil Society Organization of Public Interest (OSCIP) status, a designation awarded by the Ministry of Justice for associations and foundations, as outlined in Brazilian Law nº 9790 from 1999. To meet the specifications and requirements of this designation, AVIVE operates a general assembly as the principal decision-making body and elects five women to the executive board, two of whom are then chosen as president and vice-president. Other elected officials include an administrative and financial coordinator, a project coordinator, an operations coordinator, a communications coordinator, a social work coordinator, and three women who make up the financial council. When an official decision is needed, the executive board convenes a special assembly. OSCIP status enables the association to request public financial resources and to access bank loans.

"In 2009, one of the biggest floods in the last 100 years hit us, followed by a strong drought with unusual forest fires which caused great loss of the natural resources we had inventoried. It is clear to us that we need to engage more and start as soon as possible a local campaign with the help of other local institutions, to prevent fires during the yearly drought."

Barbara Schmal, Project Coordinator
AVIVE sustainably extracts vegetable oils from medicinal and aromatic plant species to produce natural cosmetics and other products. Copaiba oil, a balm-like substance, is collected from the trunks of the trees. Essential oils (breu, puxuri, and rosewood) are obtained by steam distillation, while fatty oils (cumaru and andiroba) are obtained by cold expression. AVIVE then uses these oils in the production of a line of cosmetic products that includes soaps with rosewood, cumaru, andiroba, copaiba, and melao-são-caetano essence as well as aromatic and repellent candles, incense, creams, and perfumes. In 2001, the women of AVIVE opened a story in the largest city in Silves called ‘AVIVE Natural Products’. The store caters to both local people and to tourists. AVIVE is also building a processing centre which will bring the association into conformity with National Health Surveillance Agency standards and provide them with the legal certification needed to export their products.

**Sustainable extraction of essential oils**

In all of its projects and activities, AVIVE maintains a strong environmental focus. The association has developed techniques for the sustainable extraction of endemic plant species, many of which are threatened or endangered, including the Aniba plant (pau rosa). The women of AVIVE collect fruit, resin, seeds, leaves and branches. These collection activities are wholly sustainable, as trees do not need to be felled. By successfully collecting, processing and marketing non-timber forest products, the association is demonstrating to local communities that forests are worth more intact than chopped down for logging or farming. In addition to their conservation activities, AVIVE is actively involved in reforestation. The association has installed a nursery that produces seedlings of native plants. Local community members are then enlisted and recruited to carry out tree planting in strategic locations of the forest. Over 3,000 seedlings are grown and planted each year, all of which are native plant species.

The beneficiaries of AVIVE work fall into two categories. The first are the 43 women that currently constitute the AVIVE cooperative. The second are the nearly 100 men and women involved in collecting plant materials, making crafts, and producing the oils and products. Taking family units into consideration, the association benefits a total of 570 people. Women have been a priority target beneficiary, as their opportunities for employment and income-generation in the region are markedly limited. As a complement to its income-generation activities, the association offers women courses in computer science, English as a second language and marketing.

**Secondary processing and land tenure securitization**

One notable AVIVE innovation has been in value-added secondary processing, or identifying uses for endemic plant species beyond their traditional purposes or in their raw material form. This innovation has allowed local women to circumvent intermediaries and middlemen who have filled supply-chain vacuums in the more traditional sectors, and created commodities that fetch a higher premium in target markets. For instance, while demand already existed for Andiroba oil in its pure form as an insect repellent, AVIVE women found a niche for the same oil in candles and soaps. Oil from the Breu tree species was traditionally used as caulking material for boats; AVIVE began using it in insect-repellent candles and incense. And, as one more example, Pau rosa and preciosa which were previously used only for timber are now conserved for the extraction of oils which AVIVE uses in soaps, creams, and lotions. Income generation for the local population has been successfully coupled with sustainability principles and environmental conservation.

A second notable AVIVE innovation has been their ability to secure legal rights to harvesting sites and successfully obtain sanitary certifications. Where the vast majority of community producers lack documentation of their rights to access the land where they work – which ultimately introduces an element of uncertainty and insecurity – AVIVE has obtained land titles for its collectors. The association also
pioneered new ground in establishing ‘good collection practices’ in the absence of national guidelines or standards. To ensure the application of sustainability principles across its supply-chain, AVIVE introduced FairWild Standards (ISSC), which also set a new bar for the collection of non-timber forest products in Brazil. As previously mentioned, the struggle for sanitary certification has been long-fought. Throughout, AVIVE has been the image of determination, knowing that official legal status and certification are absolutely essential to gain access to high-value and high-return international markets. AVIVE’s commitment to good governance and transparency are among the many reasons it maintains strong and lasting relationships with partners and donors.

“AVIVE’s advice to other communities hoping to build sustainable initiatives is to build networks and partnerships with local and national governments, research institutions, and donors. Having a strong partnership with a university will make it possible to undertake difficult and expensive research on biodiversity. A minimum commitment of 10 years of financial support from donors is usually needed to get off the ground. In terms of human capital, sustainability can be achieved by promoting capacity-building and by protecting the community’s traditional knowledge. And lastly, patience is needed because a good project grows slowly.”

Barbara Schmal, Project Coordinator
Biodiversity Impacts

By increasing the per-unit value of harvested raw materials, AVIVE has successfully incentivized the conservation of previously threatened and overexploited plants. Several groups have transitioned from tree-felling to more sustainable and biodiversity-friendly practices such as the harvesting of Copaiba oils or the collection of Puxuri leaves. Among the association’s most noteworthy biodiversity impacts has been its ability to change the attitudes and behavior of local communities in Silves towards their forests; where once the economy revolved around logging and land conversion for agriculture, AVIVE has ushered in a new environmental consciousness that emphasizes sustainability and the long-term value of standing forests.

Environmental education and training

AVIVE has been particularly active in environmental education and outreach. The association conducts awareness-raising campaigns targeted at collectors, producers, farmers, landowners and youth in the municipality. Campaigns focus on imparting the centrality of protecting and conserving local forests for sustainable livelihoods and a stable local economy. Outreach has also taken the form of workshops and trainings. More than 70 individuals from 15 different communities have been trained in the sustainable collection of non-timber forest products. Small groups of collectors are also pulled together for trainings on adherence to environmental regulations, with AVIVE forest technicians visiting collection sites and conducting workshops.

One example of AVIVE training in environmentally-friendly harvesting techniques has been in the collection of copaiba oil. Previously, collectors cut deep gashes into the trunks of copaiba trees, and in some cases would chop down the entire tree to obtain the essential oil. AVIVE now teaches collectors a more sustainable technique of making small holes in the trunk of the tree, which are closed after oil collection is complete. The trees are then left for a four year period of regeneration. In just one community, Sao Pedro, at least 168 trees have been protected by the adoption of this method.

AVIVE also receives technical guidance from specialists on ideal harvesting methods. In 2010, the association established plant protocols for each of the 11 species with which it works, including puxuri (Licaria puchury major), Andiroba (Carapa guianensis and Carapa procera), buriti (Mauritia flexuosa), preciosia (Aniba canelilla), Cumaru (Dipteryx odorata), pau rosa (Aniba roseadora Ducke), copaiba (Copaifera multijuga), and breu (Protium spp.). In the drafting of the plant protocols, AVIVE was careful to combine expert advice with traditional knowledge. Experts hired by IUCN gathered bibliographic information on each species, including: botanic data, site, habitat and distribution, ecology, threats, conservation measures, managing practices (both traditional and scientific), market data (supply and demand), extraction practices, productivity, and more. In a parallel process, AVIVE worked with local community members to undertake inventories of the sites, map the trees, take photos, and develop spreadsheets. The final product has been well-received and, with its straightforward language and instructive illustrations, is regarded as an accessible and resonant set of guidelines for on-the-ground conservation. Collectors working with AVIVE sign statements which commit them to following the plant protocol guidelines. In 2010, three of the protocols — for copaiba, cumaru, and breu — were accepted by the Brazilian Institute of Environment and Renewable Natural Resources for inclusion in the management plan of Precious Woods Amazon (FSC certified area), thereby allowing AVIVE to legally collect fruits, seed, and resin within that area of forest.

Biological monitoring

To measure changes in biodiversity, AVIVE conducts regeneration studies and takes species inventories. To date, AVIVE’s regeneration studies have focused on the Breu species in the Precious Woods Area,
with guidance from a forest engineer from the Federal University of Viçosa MG. Data is still being collected for this study and AVIVE hopes to carry out similar studies for all of the species they use, contingent upon future financial support. Species inventories have involved measuring the circumference of trees, analyzing individual plants, and conducting interviews with local people regarding their collection methods. This information is added to a database, which AVIVE maintains. From 2004 to 2010, the area of community forest inventoried increased from 67.5 to 3,500 hectares. IUCN has partnered with AVIVE on several studies looking at the complementarity of traditional and modern biological monitoring methods.

**SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACTS**

Prior to formation of AVIVE, raw materials such as puxuri seeds, breu resin, copaiba oil, and cumaru seeds were sold to intermediaries for little profit. Local producers were dependent on intermediaries to access markets and had no platform for collective bargaining of fair prices. The value-added secondary processing offered through AVIVE – turning these raw materials into cosmetics, soaps, lotions, candles, etc. – has significantly increased local incomes. In 2005, the average salary of those involved in project activities was R$168.00 (about USD 100). In 2007, it increased to R$275.00 (about USD 165). With the additional income, women have invested in new stoves, freezers, TVs, sewing machines, and home improvements.

**Empowering women through sustainable livelihoods**

The women who founded AVIVE were previously unemployed. Through association activities they now have a source of income as well as opportunities for learning and for travel. Having acquired marketable skills and improved their financial independence, AVIVE's members have also gained a sense of empowerment, which has proven effective in decreasing the occurrence of domestic abuse.

Since AVIVE is a non-profit organization, the production and marketing of its products is done through COPRONAT, a cooperative established in 2003. The cooperative also serves to channel payments to local women for their work. And it is not only cooperative members who benefit from COPRONAT. In several cases, the sons and daughters of women members began volunteering with the association and cooperative, have received capacity building and skills training, and have since become salaried employees and technical staff for the project.

**POLICY IMPACTS**

Over time, AVIVE has developed a positive reputation of trust and credibility with various levels of government. By demonstrating positive results, and showing that it could attract the interest from and partnership with reputable national and international stakeholders – Bank of the Amazon, ProVarzea, ICCO, ICEI, World Wildlife Fund-Brazil, Petrobras, the Government of Germany, etc. – AVIVE has garnered attention and respect from both the state and municipal governments. At the local level, AVIVE members are routinely invited to participate in various aspects of local decision-making processes, such as the local health council and the city council labor group. Four AVIVE representatives are permanent members of these councils.

At the regional level, AVIVE has played a pivotal role in the creation of a Sustainable Development Reserve (Reserva de desenvolvimento sustentável – RDS) in the Silves district. The zone, which will be known as the RDS Saracá-Piranga, will be an area of land where communities may sustainably harvest non-timber forest products, sustainably harvest timber, and fish. RDS is a category designed by the Brazilian government to devolve sustainable management of land in the Amazon rainforest to local communities. AVIVE has been cooperating with the state government of Amazonas on this project since 2009, along with the Italian Institute for International Economic Cooperation and the Silves Association for Environmental and Cultural Preservation. The process is currently waiting for the signature of the governor. Upon the establishment of the RDS, AVIVE will became a part of the supervising council. AVIVE considers this legal designation a viable solution to a prevailing land rights problem, as local access rights will be formally recognized by the state under well-defined legislation.

At the national level, AVIVE has participated in two public meetings to discuss national legislation on the management of non-timber forest products. In the absence of national and state strategies on this issue, AVIVE has been implementing FairWild’s International Standard for Sustainable Wild Collection of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants as a guide for sustainable collection and production. AVIVE has been an outspoken advocate of these guidelines and sensitized members of the respective environment, agriculture and development Ministries in Brasilia and Manaus. While no legislation has been passed specifically relating to non-timber forest products, the government has created commissions and councils for each species or producers group, where experts discuss and outline best management practices. The methodology that AVIVE uses for inventories was presented to the Amazonas State Institute of Agricultural and Sustainable Forest Development, which has committed to adopting and replicating the model with other municipalities in the Amazonas state.
**SUSTAINABILITY**

The key components that make this project sustainable are: the training and capacity-building of the AVIVE women and community collectors; the decision and determination on the part of the women and the collectors from other communities to work legally and transparently; the existence and mapping of natural resources; and the financial support of donors (ICCO, ICEI, IUCN, Petrobras, Precious Woods Amazon, among others). Capacity-building focuses on developing a participatory organizational structure and good managing practices for collection, extraction, and fabrication practices (for natural products and cosmetics). Practical trainings are held on computer skills, accounting, etc.

AVIVE is currently dependent on its partners for funding but the group hopes to become independent by 2012. They are currently working on a business plan to this end. In order to make the project more sustainable, work must be done on two critical fronts: Increasing the production of oils and finished cosmetic products, and enlarging the collecting sites. For the former, they need to construct the production unit in 2011 with the aim of receiving the sanitary license from the Health Ministry. This license is essential for increasing production and sales because it will allow AVIVE to export its products. One impediment to AVIVE’s long-term sustainability has been natural disasters. AVIVE lost the participation of many Andiroba producers in 2010, after a strong flood that was followed by a stronger dry season, where 45 of 49 trees were destroyed by fire. This unfortunate event had a negative impact on local incomes as well as interest in the project. So now, AVIVE is starting over, with people from another community (São João), who had planted several Andiroba trees years prior.

**Production, commercialization and marketing**

A crucial component of AVIVE’s sustainability is its commercial arm, COPRONAT. In Brazil, a non-profit association is allowed to commercialize products, but is not allowed to remunerate members of the association for their work. In 2003, the women of AVIVE along with other community members established COPRONAT, a cooperative to produce and commercialize natural products (cosmetics and handicrafts), which has a separate number at the National Registry of Legal Entities (CNPJ). AVIVE is administrated only by women whereas the COPRONAT is mixed (the men who entered are the sons of the AVIVE ladies).

As AVIVE members, the women do volunteer work, but as cooperative members, they receive remuneration for their work in producing soaps, candles, and other products. There is a contract between AVIVE and COPRONAT allowing the cooperative members to use AVIVE infrastructure and equipment (bought with money from AVIVE projects) for the production of natural products. AVIVE has assisted the cooperative financially in the past. COPRONAT still lacks adequate capital but AVIVE is working toward the financial independence of the organizations. Money given by AVIVE to COPRONAT is loaned and must be paid back. With guidance from a lawyer, AVIVE is preparing a contract which will give more transparency to this relationship.

**REPLICATION**

Due to AVIVE’s success in the sustainable management of non-timber forest products, the group is often used as a case study by the national government and international organizations. AVIVE also promotes the exchange of traditional knowledge among people at the local level. In one example of such exchange, a local woman who is a traditional Andiroba oil extractor was hired by the project to teach interested women of other communities in the Silves district about the methods and technology she uses. This kind of knowledge exchange ensures that the traditional practices will not be forgotten and that more women will be able to produce the oil and increase their revenue.

AVIVE continues to be involved in technical trainings in the areas
of best manufacturing practices (oils, soaps etc.), best collection practices (together with experts from PWA and INPA), accounting, and monitoring and evaluation at the regional and national levels with the Ministry of Environment, the Amazonas state, and a range of NGOs and public institutions. AVIVE also participates in knowledge exchanges with other groups across Brazil to replicate and improve on the program model. In 2009, representatives of AVIVE visited the Project RECA in the village of Nova California, Rondonia State. In the past, AVIVE members have visited the Cooperative of Producers and Improvers of Herbal and Medicinal Plants, Herbal Medicine and Cosmetics (Coopfitos) of Manaquiri, Amazonas state. In addition, representatives of many Amazonian community institutions have visited AVIVE and stayed for a time to see how they work and what results have been achieved. AVIVE’s knowledge exchanges usually take place in the form of visits within Silves but sometimes the women participate in technical events and fairs at the national, regional, and local levels.

**PARTNERS**

AVIVE has benefitted from a wide range of partnerships with government agencies, bilateral governments, banking institutions, and non-governmental organizations. Their various forms of support have been integral to AVIVE’s work and have included direct support in terms of improving the efficiency of collection methods, education on land rights, capacity-building, product certification, developing value chains, gaining sanitary licenses, and funding for construction activities.

**Past partners**

WWF-Brazil, ProVárzea/ IBAMA (KfW, DFID) and BASA (Bank of Amazon) were important partners from 2000-2006, providing financial support (from all those listed) and technical support (from ProVárzea, SEBRAE AM, and WWF-Brazil). WWF-Brazil in particular provided critical technical and financial support which allowed AVIVE to overcome several initial obstacles, such as a small building to house production, packaging for soaps and candles, support to develop the AVIVE trademark, and technical training and also fostered knowledge exchanges with similar production groups.

**Recent and current partners**

The ICCO Foundation / Netherlands has provided financial and technical support since 2007 for field activities (inventory, plant monitoring), capacity-building (administrative and financial management of AVIVE, technical training of collectors and producers, valuation and monitoring of the project, support of technical staff, procurement of extraction equipment, and travel costs).

The ICEI (Istituto Cooperazione Economica Internazionale – Italy) has provided financial and technical support since 2008 for field activities (inventory, plant monitoring), administrative support, and the procurement and maintenance of extraction equipments (computer, boat, car, etc.).

GTZ-Brazil has provided financial and technical support since 2009 for activities related to the production, processing, and marketing of vegetable oils (trainings in the management of value chain, technical consultancy of organizational development, quality control of the products, sanitary license, etc.), knowledge exchanges, and publicizing the work and results of the project at thematic fairs and events.

Petrobras (a Brazilian Petrol Company) has provided financial support since 2009 for technical staff, the procurement of extraction equipment, accounting and judicial advisory, the construction of the production unit (250 m²), publicizing the work and results of the project through exhibiting the products at thematic fairs and events and publishing two books, and travel costs. The initial investment received from Petrobras was R$ 140,000 and AVIVE is hopeful that they will provide the additional financial resources to finish construction in 2011.

Precious Woods Amazon (PWA, a private Swiss timber company which is FSC certified) has provided financial and technical support since 2006 for field activities (inventory, plant monitoring), administrative support, maintenance of equipment, and travel costs.

IUCN SUR provides funds and technical support to improve the ISSC MAP / FAIR WILD certification. The first phase took place in 2008-2009 over 18 months, and AVIVE is currently trying to set up the second phase of this project.

SEBRAE and VERSUS Cooperative (Consultancy) have provided capacity building on developing trademarks, marketing and client relations and was instrumental in drawing up plans for the construction of AVIVE’s production unit in 2007.
FURTHER REFERENCE

- AVIVE website: http://www.avive.org.br
- Video on AVIVE, 2002 (Vimeo) http://vimeo.com/27016504

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