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Mato Grosso Sustainable Municipalities Program: a governance approach in reduction of Amazon deforestation rates

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Brazilian Amazon has the greatest forested areas in the world, providing huge levels of ecosystem services and resources. However, agriculture and disordered territory occupation has driven high deforestation rates and ecosystem loss geared towards supply external demands. From all states (eight) covered by Brazilian Amazon, Northern of Mato Grosso maintain the highest deforestation rates. In the last two decades, this territory has established itself as agricultural border toward occupation of new-forested lands to meet international commodities need. Facing many external interventions, guided by different interests, this is a territory in dispute, characterized by a range of conflicts between different social actors. Trying to curb with the Amazon deforestation, Brazilian federal government launched the Decree 6.321/ 2007 and published a list of the "priority municipalities to hold deforestation". The government has applied financial restrictions to all municipalities in the list. To be taken out of the list the municipality had to present 80% of their farms insert into Environment Rural Registry (CAR) meaning Forest Code (federal law nº 12.652/ 2012) compliance, the annual deforestation mean has to be less than 40 km² and it need to be maintain low than 60% of municipality deforestation rate comparing to 2004 - 06. In addition, Environmental Police has arrested loggers and farmers whom have higher deforestation levels. This command and control policy has reflected in higher mobilization from municipalities around Amazon Biome. When the first list was launched, in 2007, Mato Grosso had the higher number of municipalities included (52.3%) comparing to all others states. Alta Floresta was the first Mato Grosso municipality to be cut off this list. Influenced by those federal actions Alta Floresta's citizens had mobilized themselves to ask help to local government. After this first mobilization the major create the environmental secretary and its policy. This secretary has supported the municipality land tenure, environmental registration and reforestation of riparian forest. Alta Floresta has been recognized even since as successful case in curb with deforestation. In 2013, this case inspired the creation of Mato Grosso Sustainable Municipalities Program (PMS) aiming to improve environmental governance and strengthen sustainable agriculture supply chains in municipality levels. PMS has built local governance by the creation of environmental and agricultural secretaries, local environmental laws, and environmental fund. It has also improved civil society participation in environmental discussion throughout attendance of local population into environmental and agriculture local council and has also improved Forest Code law compliance by providing free fees for smallholder farming to get their registry in CAR as well as their land title registry. Currently PMS covers 53 municipalities (415.626,28 km²) in Amazonia Biomes aims to achieve three main goals: Strengthening municipality basic conditions for environmental governance; Environmental and land tenure regularization Establishment of sustainable supply chains focusing on smallholders farms production.