TECHNICAL DESCRIPTIVE REPORT

Project CERRADO VIVO – Productive and Inclusive Restoration with Traditional Peoples of Northern Minas

New Era Institute (INE)

SUMMARY

1. Presentation

This technical report aims to present the activities carried out during the first three field visits of the CERRADO VIVO Project, implemented by the New Era Institute (INE) with the support of the International Education Institute of Brazil (IEB) and the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF), in partnership with the Socio-Environmental Institute (ISA), Schutzgemeinschaft Deutscher Wald (SDW), the Cerrado Restoration Network (Araticum), and the Cooperative of Family Farmers and Agroextractivists of the Cooperuaçu Valley (Cooperuaçu).

The actions took place in traditional communities in Northern Minas Gerais and were mostly conducted at the Cooperuaçu facilities, located on LMG 603 Highway, no number - neighborhood/district: Areião Community, Januária - MG, 39480-000 / 14°59'14"S 44°27'09"W, a strategic partner in the local execution of the project.

Figure 1: Location Map

The central focus of the activities was to promote **productive ecological restoration** combined with **socio-productive inclusion** of traditional peoples (Xakriabás, Geraizeiros, and Veredeiros) through the implementation of **Inclusive Agrocerrado Systems (SACIS)**.

The activities described here are part of the first phase of the project and cover the axes set out in the logical framework, with emphasis on:

- Community mobilization
- Communication materials
- Participatory socio-environmental diagnostics
- Structuring of forest nurseries
- Forest Nursery and Cerrado Seedling Production Course
- Integrated environmental and productive restoration action planning

The results achieved at this stage already demonstrate significant progress toward the consolidation of sustainable and integrated land-use practices, valuing traditional knowledge and strengthening the autonomy of the communities involved (Vereda Grande I, Vereda Grande II, Araca, Olhos D'água, Areião, Vargem Grande).

3. HISTORY AND PREVIOUS EXPERIENCES

- Since 2017, the cooperative has been dedicated to projects focused on environmental restoration and the preservation of the Cerrado biome, with notable initiatives such as the construction of the shade house, in partnership with WWF. However, in the absence of continued projects, the nursery was not maintained.
- Through the Inclusive Restoration Project, 35 hectares of land were restored through seed collection and direct sowing, using a successful environmental recovery methodology supported by Araticum and financed by Cargill.
- Additionally, 8.5 hectares were restored using the same approach, and another restoration is planned for 2025.
- The cooperative also benefited from and participated in projects supported by the Center for Alternative Agriculture and the Rosas do Sertão collective.

4. EXPEDITIONS

4.1 EXPEDITIONS I

EXPEDITIONS I

Data	February 3–5, 2025
Local	Cooperuaçu – Highway LMG 603, Areião Community, Januária – MG
Team	• Beattriz Mendes Corrêa – Field Technician • Luiz Phelipe Mendes – Communication Technician • Nondas Ferreira da Silva – Project Manager

4.1.1 Project presentation

The project presentation meeting was held on February 6 and included the participation of five cooperative members: Adailton Lopes, Arcanja Fernandes, Roseli Vieira, and Valdomiro Brito. These individuals are Geraizeiros, Xakriabá Indigenous, and Veredeiros, reflecting the diversity of traditional peoples within the cooperative.

Figure 1: Cooperuaçu Members, New Era Institute and CAA

Also present was technician Thiago Selles, representing CAA. The strong female presence in discussions was notable, reinforcing gender identity in community decision-making.

Figure 2: Presentation meeting of the CERRADO VIVO project at Cooperuaçu

- Areas to be restored
- Types of seeds available for collection
- Organizational challenges
- Seed pricing
- Lack of youth participation
- The need for a calendar of fruits and seeds
- The need for training in seed collection and processing

4.1.2 Nursery Diagnosis

During this first technical visit, a diagnostic evaluation of the Cooperuaçu community nursery was carried out. The space was found to be unused due to a lack of projects supporting its ongoing operation.

Figure 03: Structure of the Cooperuaçu nursery

Several issues were identified:

- Damaged or missing protective netting
- A door that needed rebuilding
- Seedbeds and planting beds in disrepair
- Poor internal organization and lack of functional infrastructure

Figure 04: Members visiting the Cooperuaçu nursery

Conversations with community members revealed that **lack of water** was the main factor limiting nursery activity, especially during dry periods.

The community also discussed which native species to prioritize for seedling production to meet both environmental and productive goals in the Agrocerrado systems.

Table 1. Species of Ecological, Cultural, and Economic Value	
Nome Popular	**Nome Científico**
Jacarandá	*Jacaranda mimosifolia*
Umbu	*Spondias tuberosa*
Sucupira	*Pterodon emarginatus*
Aroeira	*Myracrodruon urundeuva*
Manga Rosa	*Mangifera indica (variedade)*
Favela	*Cnidoscolus quercifolius*
Cajuzinho do Cerrado	*Anacardium humile*
Pequi	*Caryocar brasiliense*
Coquinho Azedo	*Mauritia flexuosa*
Jatobá	*Hymenaea courbaril*
Acerola	*Malpighia emarginata*
Café	*Coffea spp.*
Goiaba	*Psidium guajava*
Maracujá	*Passiflora edulis*
Caju	*Anacardium occidentale*
Ipê	*Tabebuia spp.*
Barbatimão	*Stryphnodendron adstringens*
Cabeça-de-Negro	*Vatairea macrocarpa*
Cagaita	*Eugenia dysenterica*
Mangaba	*Hancornia speciosa*
Angico	*Anadenanthera spp.*
Tingui	*Calycophyllum spruceanum*
Murici	*Byrsonima crassifolia*
Tamboril	*Sclerolobium paniculatum*
Jabuticaba	*Plinia cauliflora*

Despite its condition, the nursery remains a strategic space, with strong community ties and clear potential for revitalization as a tool for productive ecological restoration.

Figure 05: Aerial image of the Cooperuaçu nursery

4.2 EXPEDICAO II

Expedição II	
Data	February 5–8, 2025
Local	Cooperuaçu, Areião Community
Team	Same as Expedition I

4.2.1 Interviews, Diagnostics, and Communication Materials

The team visited community yards and areas identified as potential restoration sites. Interviews were conducted with Geraizeiros, Xakriabás, and Veredeiros to better understand their histories and expectations.

These interviews informed the socioeconomic diagnostics and will guide adjustments to the project to ensure it is inclusive and effective.

Interview Highlights:

- **Nicolau Xakriabá**, Indigenous, seed guardian, shared his experience preserving native seeds
- **Arcanja and Manoel Fernandes**, Geraizeiros and extractivists, spoke about rural life

- **Sueli Rodrigues dos Santos**, cooperative member and homemaker, shared her story

Figure 7: Nicolau Xakriabá - Guardian of Seeds

Figure 8: Mr. Nicolau and the INE technical team

Figura 9: Dona Arcanja e seu Manoel

Figura 10: Sueli e a equipe do Project Cerrado Vivo

4.3 EXPEDITION III

4.3.1 Forest Nursery Training and Cerrado Seedling Production

This training was promoted by INE in partnership with SENAR, and taught by instructor **Thalita Câmara**. It lasted 5 days and aimed to prepare local agents to produce Cerrado-native seedlings.

Figure 11: Instructor Thalita Câmara in training

During the training, the existing community nursery at Cooperuaçu was reactivated, making it possible to begin the production of species such as **pequi**, **jatobá**, and **bauru**, which have great ecological and cultural importance in the region. The activities were conducted both **practically and theoretically**, covering topics such as:

- Planning and installation of nurseries
- Types of nurseries and site selection
- Necessary physical structure
- Seedling production and management
- Types of substrates and containers
- Irrigation systems
- Pest and disease control

- Seedling commercialization
- Production schedule for Cerrado seedlings (Table 3)

Period	Action	Status
March – April	Nursery preparation, sowing, and seed collection training.	Done!
April – June	Training on seedling production, maintenance, and transplanting.	Done!
July	Seed processing and specific training.	
August	Seedling development and acclimatization.	
October	Completion of the production cycle.	
November	Planting of seedlings in the designated areas.	

Figure 12: Women, cooperative members, working as a team to revitalize the Cooperuaçu nursery.

Specific processes such as direct seeding, transplanting, hardening, formative pruning, use of plant growth regulators and seedling quality parameters were also covered. The course included discussions on the challenges and possibilities for community organization and commercialization of production, connecting the technical content to the local reality.

Figure 13: Roseli sowing pequi in the seedbed using the techniques she learned during the course.

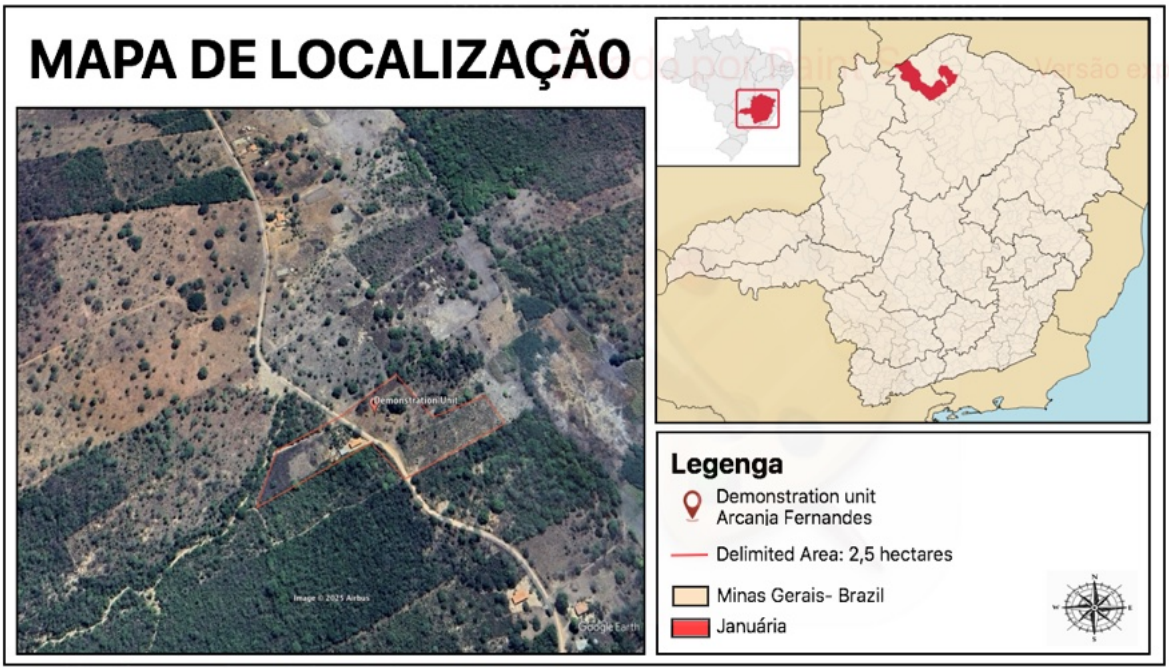
A particularly significant aspect was the strong participation of women, who accounted for **80% of the participants**, reinforcing the central role they play in the conservation and sustainable management of the Cerrado. The training was consolidated as an important step toward the implementation of **Inclusive Agrocerrado Systems (SACIS)**, by strengthening local leadership and ensuring the production of seedlings adapted to the region's socio-environmental conditions.

Figure 14: Closing of the Cerrado Seedling Production course at the Cooperuaçu nursery.

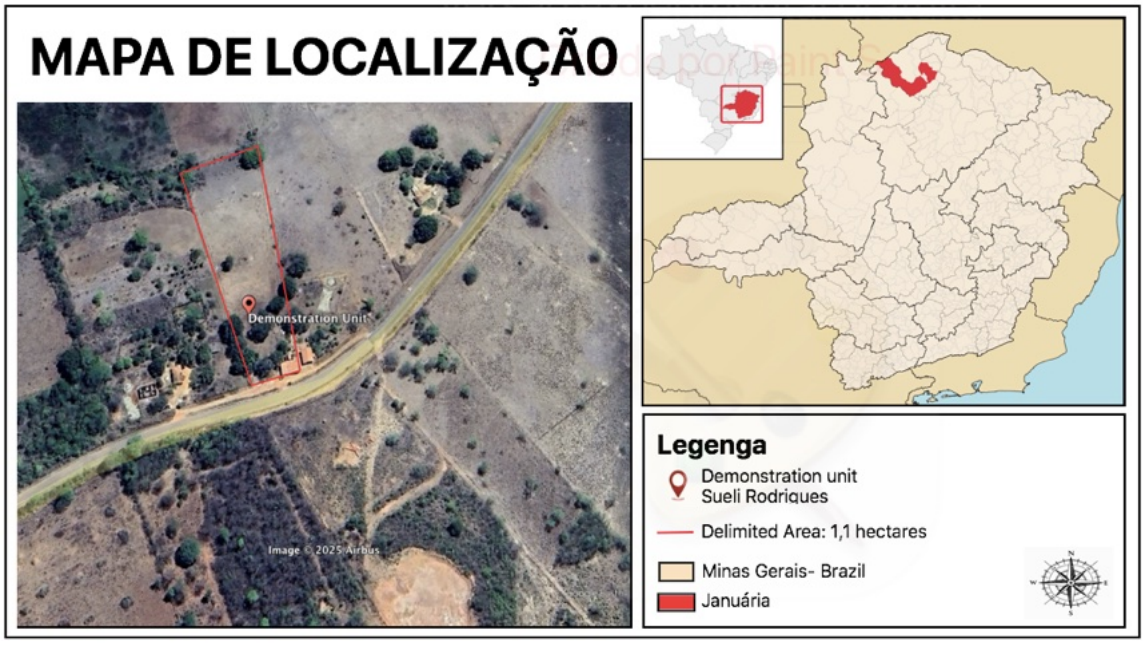
4.3.2 Implementation areas

A total of **2 hectares will be restored**, divided into **2 or 3 plots** to benefit the largest possible number of participants.

- **Maps of the areas where the SACIS (Inclusive Agrocerrado Systems) will be implemented** are presented below.
- Area 01



- Area 02



- Area 03

4.3.3 **Presentation of the Project at the General Assembly of Cooperuaçu**

On **March 15**, the **General Assembly of Cooperuaçu** was held, providing an opportunity to present the **CERRADO VIVO Project** once again—this time to a broader audience. During the occasion, the activities carried out thus far were highlighted, along with the upcoming steps outlined in the project's schedule.

The strong presence of cooperative members and community participants enabled wider dissemination of information about the project, reaching a larger number of beneficiaries and strengthening collective engagement in future actions. The presentation also focused on reaffirming the initiative's objectives, the expected benefits for the territory, and the strategic role of **Cooperuaçu** as a key partner in project implementation.

Figure 14: Luiz Felipe, INE technician, presenting the project to cooperative members.

5. ACHIEVED INDICATORS

Tabela 5. Indicadores Alcançados	
Category	**Indicator**
Social	Participation of more than 30 residents in community meetings.
	Identification of local leaders.
	Engagement with traditional peoples of the region (Indigenous, Quilombola, and Geraizei communities).
	Clear presentation of project phases, sparking interest in training and community leadersh
	Completion of socio-environmental diagnosis with more than 10 families.
	Inclusion of data on traditional peoples, with a focus on women and youth.

	Active participation of 10 residents in the forest nursery course, with 80% female representation.
Environmental	**Environmental** Training of nursery technicians with theoretical and practical knowledge.
	Identification of potential areas for SACIS implementation.
	Survey of native species used, such as pequi, cagaita, mangaba, and jatobá.
	Revitalization and reactivation of the Cooperuaçu community nursery.
	Initial production of 150 native seedlings, including species like pequi, jatobá, and bauru.
	Participatory planning for the production of 2,000 seedlings adapted to local conditions.
	Identification of priority areas with potential for Agrocerrado system implementation.
	Documentation of community suggestions on what should be included in the SACIS.
	Generation of audiovisual content with testimonies about the Cerrado, restoration, and collective memory.

6. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The first phase of the **CERRADO VIVO Project** represents a key milestone in advancing inclusive and productive restoration in Northern Minas Gerais. With active participation from traditional communities, the reactivation of the Cooperuaçu nursery, and practical training focused on native seedling production, the project demonstrated the strength of

community-led approaches—especially the leadership of women, who made up 80% of participants.

The support from **Stiftung Unternehmen Wald** was fundamental to enabling these first steps. Thanks to SDW's contribution, we were able to initiate critical activities such as field expeditions, diagnostics, nursery revitalization, and training. This partnership was not only a catalyst—it was a vote of confidence in the potential of grassroots restoration.

However, this is only the beginning. The outcomes thus far show that, with sustained support, we can **scale up** our impact significantly. We now have the structure, community engagement, and local leadership in place to restore **more hectares**, produce **thousands more seedlings**, and further strengthen the livelihoods of traditional peoples through nature-based solutions.

We believe the Cerrado can be restored—and communities can thrive—if this momentum continues. Together, we can achieve even more.

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