

Avoiding deforestation in Apuí, Brazil

Mid-Year Update 2023

Project status

Year 3
out of 5 (phase 1)

175 hectares
restoration target

120 families
directly benefiting



Our project with IDESAM aims to support families to establish forest-friendly agroforestry systems combining native tree species with organic coffee, recovering degraded land and avoiding further deforestation in Apuí.

So far, 70 ha of coffee agroforestry has been set up, 35 ha in the 2021–2022 planting season and another 35 ha in 2022–2023, with the coffee planting finishing in January 2023 and the native species planting completed by March 2023. Post-planting – removing invasive grasses, and weeding – took place from March onwards, and since June, 45 farmers and their families have been trained in organic agroforestry techniques. In the third planting season (2023-2024), another 35 ha will be planted.

Read on to find out more about what's been happening in the Apuí project.



This photo (below) shows an 8 year-old agroforestry system developed under IDESAM's programme: not a WeForest area, but a good indication of how ours will look in time. The coffee trees are planted in lines, and within these lines are bananas and other native species. You can clearly see the big leaves characteristic of the bananas, and if you look carefully you can also spot some palm trees such as açai (*Euterpe oleracea*). The idea is that the native species will provide shade to the coffee, but with no more than 50% of canopy cover, otherwise productivity decreases. The native species can also be used for non-timber products, and some of them are used to increase biomass and for nitrogen fixation. While the trees are growing, the farmers can also cultivate crops between the lines, such as cassava or corn, for consumption or to sell.



For the 35 ha of agroforestry established in the 2022-2023 planting season, 22 120 native species seedlings and 46 200 coffee seedlings were provided to the 14 new families engaged during 2022, who are devoting an average of 2.5ha of coffee agroforestry per farm. This year the seedlings were bought from nurseries in the region, but next season four families in Apuí will produce some of the native species seedlings, and our partner IDESAM is starting its own plant nursery, which should be ready for production in 2024. IDESAM is also looking into the purchase of a tractor to avoid the high prices of services in the Apuí region. Five people are supporting the farmers in their field work – 2 women and 3 men.

Here's Elpidio and Dagmar's 1 hectare agroforestry system (below). The picture on the top was taken in March 2022, and the one on the bottom was just 9 months later at the end of 2022. The coffee and native trees planted alongside corn during the project's first planting season are doing very nicely!



Moises Anghinoni, 55, is another of the early farmers to be engaged in IDESAM's organic coffee agroforestry systems, way back in 2016. He started farming at a young age in Rio Grande do Sul, and traveled around the country until he settled in Apuí at the beginning of the 2000s. Six years after establishing his organic coffee agroforestry, his view of farming has changed. "Without poison, we see that the land has life," he says. "Even without pesticides, it is possible to deal with the insects that destroy coffee. We gain by preserving the forest, and also the health of my family. We eat what we plant."

João Nilton Ferreira Julião was one of the first farmers to join IDESAM's agroforestry coffee programme, before WeForest came on board. "We used to cultivate coffee in the traditional way, with the land as bare as possible. I had never cultivated coffee in the shade," he says. "A big difference is that we have been able to reduce the workforce, because it is easier to handle. And we clean, sprout and harvest in the shade which is also much more comfortable." He also appreciates the increased yield (from 9 bags per ha per year before to 16 bags per ha per year now, on average) and the good price he gets for his organic coffee through IDESAM's commercial spin-off [Amazonia Agroflorestal](#). He is glad, too, that there is no need for contact with pesticides, which could damage his and his family's health.



What is agroforestry?

Agroforestry combines agriculture and forestry; environmentally and socially-appropriate trees and shrubs are grown around or among crops or pastureland. It plays a critical role in successful forest restoration by:

- reducing the pressure on forest resources and incentivising sustainable forest management by alleviating poverty;
- compensating the loss of access to forest resources;
- ensuring reliable incomes to fund sustainable forest management.

IDESAM's work in Apuí started in 2012, with each producer receiving support

to recover 1 hectare of coffee plantation in an agroforestry system, with native trees for shade including jatoba and mahogany, as well as species whose fruits and seeds could be collected and sold, such as cocoa, açaí, Brazil nut, crabwood and copaiba. Regenerating coffee systems has doubled productivity in the region and enabled farmers to earn income from coffee and look to the future of essential oil production from native trees. Creating value in standing productive forests can prevent their degradation and destruction.

Please visit our [What We Do](#) webpage for more information.



You'll receive an annual update in March. Meanwhile, stay up-to-date with our interactive [Apuí map](#), and check out the [photos](#) on Flickr. You can find an overview of all communications assets and guidance on how to communicate about your partnership with WeForest [here](#).