



Survey of rural development policies in Brazil¹

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Executive Summary

One of the main advances that have occurred in the field of rural development policy in Latin America over the past decade and a half is the emergence of the **rural territorial development approach** (Veiga et al., 2001; Abramovay, 2003; Schejtman & Berdegué, 2003; Favareto, 2007). However, analyses of the soundness of the policies implemented under this approach do not always yield satisfactory results. One of the greatest challenges is the need to move from **rhetoical innovation** to real **institutional change**. An important first step in this direction involves recognizing the myriad practices that have been put into place. This not only makes it possible to identify ongoing efforts but also, and above all else, contributes to a clear understanding of where we are in the transition from a sectoral vision to a truly territorial approach. That is the objective of this document. It presents a systematization of policies that share this characteristic in Brazil and forms part of a broader initiative coordinated by Rimisp – Latin American Center for Rural Development- which involves the implementation of similar surveys in other Latin American nations.

This report is organized into four parts. The first, which follows a brief introduction, provides a summary of the results achieved. The second addresses the recent history of territorial development policies in Brazil. The third presents a description of the policies included in this survey and the manner in which they are grouped together and classified. The fourth part offers a succinct presentation of specific types of policies that are in place in

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Brazil. The appendices contain a brief description of the different experiences included in the survey.

The survey covers dozens of territorial development policies and programs in place in Brazil. The main programs presented at the federal level are: the Territories of Citizenship Program, the Program to Support Rural Territories, Agenda 21, and the Meso-Regions Program. Programs of note at the state level include: Territories of Identity, the Dom Helder Câmara Project, and the Micro-watershed Programs in the states of Santa Catarina and São Paulo.

This survey and the typology that accompanies the systematization of the nearly six-dozen policies and programs lead us to four main conclusions.

First, we have yet to find a program that satisfactorily implements the set of elements laid out in the rural territorial development approach. Here we take up two aspects as substantive indicators of this orientation: its inter-sectoral nature and coverage that goes beyond communities or municipalities. From this perspective, one notes that during this decade the territorial rhetoric was incorporated in Brazil but there was no corresponding process of institutional change.

Second, in spite of this innovation by addition, without compatible institutional change a significant number of experiences exist that bring with them embryos of the territorial approach. These experiences represent an important base upon which stimuli that promote the potential complementariness that exists among them could have an impact. The greatest challenge consists of overcoming the two biases that restrict the reach of these policies: the bias of the fight against poverty and the sectoral bias that restricts actions to agriculture and social agents linked to that sphere.

Third, this is a particularly favorable time for taking a new qualitative leap towards the territorial approach. Though it has not overcome the two limiting biases mentioned above, the Territories of Citizenship Program presents an unprecedented condition in recent Brazilian history: for the first time, the need for a major policy for rural Brazil has been recognized and these policies have been placed under the purview of an agency that has a real capacity for inter-sectoral and inter-ministerial coordination, Casa Civil.

Fourth, the most significant question that emerges is which social forces will be capable of completing the transition from the sectoral approach to the territorial one given that the latter is necessarily multi-sectoral and multi-dimensional. The territorial approach emerged in Brazil as a result of a few studies and evaluations of the family agriculture policies introduced during the previous decade in that country and elsewhere. It is possible that the lessons

learned through the attempts to implement this approach in Brazil and in the world will serve as new impetus for change. There is therefore a need for deeper analyses based on the elements identified in the survey and for the results of said analyses to be incorporated into discussions with public representatives.