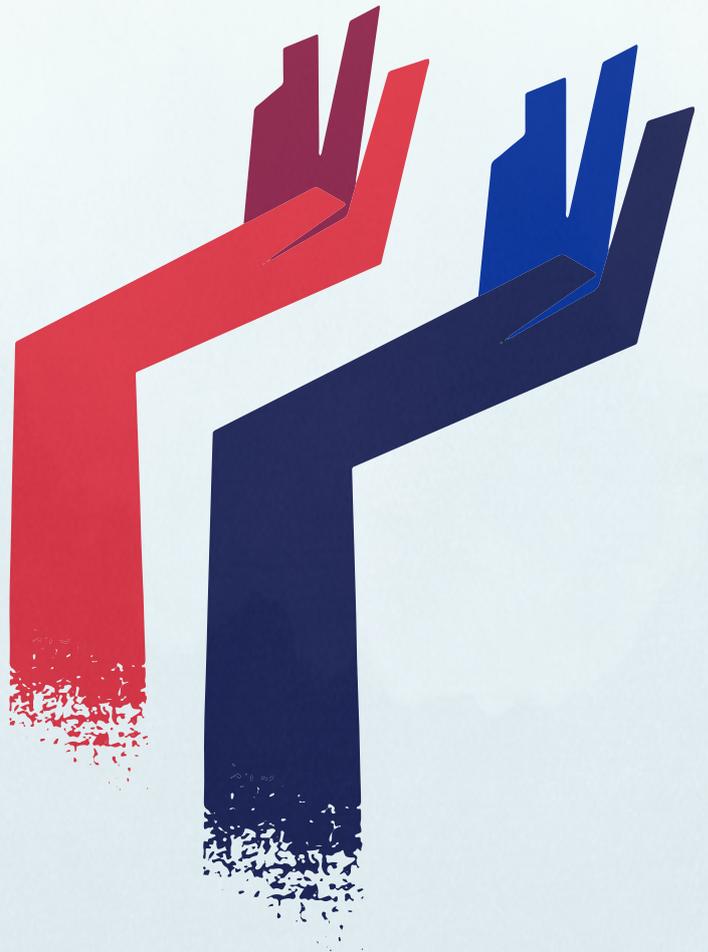
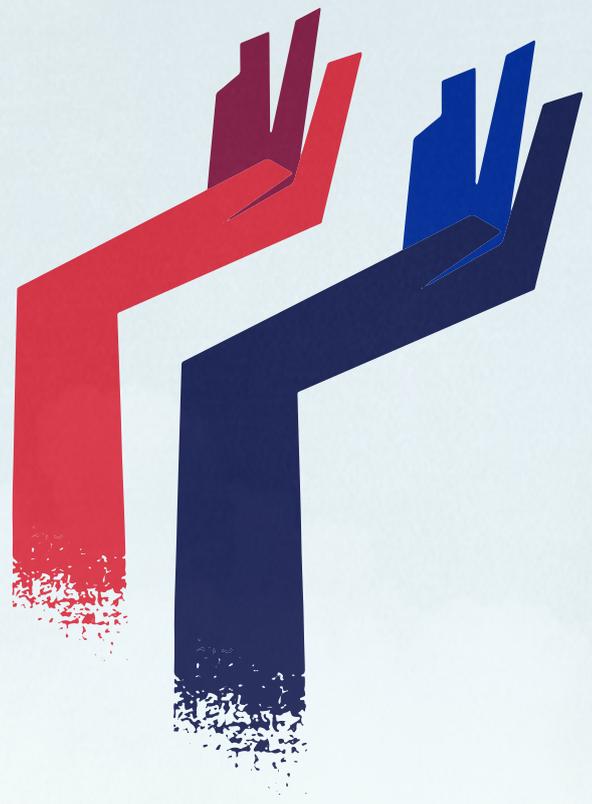




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International Development Cooperation and Civil Society Organizations - France





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Articulation and Dialogue Process (PAD)

International Development Cooperation and Civil Society Organizations - France

Mara Manzoni Luz e Sheila Tanaka
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Introduction

The bilateral diplomatic relationship between Brazil and France was made official in 2006, when presidents Lula and Chirac launched the Strategic Partnership between the two countries. That document recognized Brazil's global role and encompassed several areas: military, space, energy, economic, education, development aid, and cross-border cooperation. In August 2019, during the G7 meeting¹, the French government deployed resources to support the states that were affected by fires in the Amazon. Faced with President Bolsonaro's refusal to accept the aid, relations were strained, and the support mobilized focused on Paraguay and Bolivia².

As the space for civil society in Brazil has been reduced, it is important to reassess these cooperation relationships, and the role Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) can play to build stronger relations of solidarity for democracy, justice, and human rights.

To this end, the Process of Articulation and Dialogue (PAD) and the Brazilian Association of NGOs (*Associação Brasileira de ONGS - ABONG*) conducted a study in 2020 called "International Development Cooperation (IDC) after 2015: agendas for the Brazilian Civil Society Organizations (*A Cooperação Internacional para o Desenvolvimento (CID) pós 2015: agendas para as Organizações da Sociedade Civil brasileiras*) (by Maria Elisa Huber Pessina and Elsa Sousa Kraychete). This document aims to update that study, as well as further analyze elements regarding the French cooperation in Brazil, and offer evidence to support advocacy actions by Brazilian CSOs on cooperation policies. In this way, it will contribute with subsidies for future training workshops on international cooperation, aiming to expand the participation of Brazilian organizations in the debate.

This document was based on the study conducted by PAD and ABONG, so it avoids repeating information already mentioned in the previous study and looks to look deeper into other aspects. We analyzed official documents from the French government, the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), and cooperation agencies with relevant work in Brazil, in a non-exhaustive identification of actors. Four semi-structured interviews were conducted with representatives of Brazilian and French CSOs.

¹ G7 (the Group of Seven) is the group of the world's most industrialized countries, consisting of: Germany, Canada, the United States, France, Italy, Japan, and the United Kingdom, with representatives in the European Union.

² <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/brazil/>

1. Programs and main focal areas

Official Cooperation

Among the countries that make up the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC), France is the third-largest donor in absolute numbers. When compared to other countries, France stands out for dedicating a large percentage of its bilateral donations to environmental issues and Climate Convention commitments, devoting 76.9% of its budget to these issues, while the average for DAC member countries is 35.3%. The country also devotes most of its support to the governments of partner countries. In 2019, 83.8% of the budget was allocated to the public sector, and only 5% to Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)³. Lower middle-income countries, ranked by the [World Bank](#) annually, are the greatest beneficiaries of French bilateral aid.

The structure of official French international cooperation involves multiple actors and is organized by the Inter-ministerial Committee for International Cooperation and Development (CICID). There are three main actors under the coordination of CICID: the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Economy and Finance, and the French Development Agency, in addition to 10 other public entities.

The French Development Agency (AFD) is responsible for development and international solidarity initiatives. Its mission is to “contribute to the economic, social, and environmental progress of low- and middle-income countries.” The AFD Group is composed of the AFD, its subsidiary for private sector financing (Proparco), and, recently incorporated, the agency for technical cooperation Expertise France, which assists in developing public policies.

In Brazil, AFD maintains an office in Brasilia⁴ and acts via public and private sector loans (the latter through Proparco), mobilization of funds for specialized technical support, through consultancy support, and through conversations about public policies. It is committed to “promoting a model of sustainable and solidary development, and climate is a hallmark of its intervention in the region. Their areas of work in Brazil are: Provide support to urban territories; Promote energy transition; Weave partnerships for SDGs and climate. In all areas, it works primarily in partnership with city and state governments, ministries, and public agencies.

An example of the AFD's multisectoral activity is the project with the Development Bank of Minas Gerais, which aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the urban transport, energy, and waste management sectors in several municipalities. Using direct funding and technical cooperation, the project involved public authorities in the state and mobilized private resources, as well as French institutions involved in technical support to implement the measures⁵.

The AFD recently launched a project in collaboration with a civil society called “Terrindigena”, to support 18 indigenous communities in Brazil, Colombia, and Ecuador. The project's objectives are to improve living conditions in the communities and protect 17 million hectares of the Amazon forest. In Brazil, their partner will be the Institute for Indigenous Research and Education (Iepé), and the project will involve several civil society organizations and NGOs that work with indigenous communities in the Amazon.

³ <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/29927d90-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/5e331623-en&csp=b14d4f60505d057b456dd1730d8fcea3&itemIGO=oecd&itemContentType=chapter>

⁴ <https://br.ambafrance.org/Agencia-Francesa-de-Desenvolvimento-4604>

⁵ For more detailed information on projects they support in Brazil, visit: [Rechercher | Proparco – Groupe Agence Française de Développement](#)

The project complements the TerrAmaz initiative, launched in 2020, which aims to combat deforestation and transition to a sustainable development model, focusing on Paragominas (PA) and Cotriguaçu (MS), as well as other regions in Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru.

AFD also works in partnership with the French Embassy in Brazil, which maintains the Cooperation and Cultural Action Service (SCAC) for efforts in the areas of arts and culture; French language and education; higher education, science and innovation; governance (modernization of the State, human rights, and justice), and global challenges (sustainable development and health). SCAC has regional offices in Brasilia, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and Belo Horizonte, and works in collaboration with several French organizations present in Brazil, such as the French Agricultural Research Center for International Development (CIRAD) and Campus France, as well as AFD.

Support to Civil Society Organizations

In addition to official agencies, French cooperation supports CSOs in the fulfillment of their objectives. Out of the 5% of Official Development Assistance (ODA) directed to CSOs (\$480 million in 2019), 67.6% is passed on to French-based NGOs, 19.6% to international NGOs, and only 7.9% to NGOs based in recipient countries.

There are few French organizations with significant work with CSOs in Brazil. The work of the Catholic Committee Against Hunger and For Development ([CCFD Terre Solidaire](#)) stands out. France's first international solidarity and development NGO, CCFD-Terre Solidaire has been working for 60 years alongside those who fight daily against all the causes of hunger and confront the injustices of the current development model. To address these woes, it was one of the first to choose to act differently and sustainably, partnering with more than 500 organizations in 67 countries. In Brazil, it maintains partnerships with CSOs and social movements working for the development of sustainable initiatives and the promotion of Human Rights.

[Caritas France](#) (Secours Catholique-Caritas France) is a non-profit association, recognized as being of public utility and globally present through the *Caritas Internationalis* network, one of the largest international solidarity networks in the world, comprising 165 Catholic organizations. It works to fight poverty and exclusion, both in France and worldwide, carrying out its missions in collaboration with local, national, and international actors. In France, they have projects against energy and digital poverty, access to rights, and quality food. In 2020, the organization published an [important study](#) on Hunger and Dignity in France, estimating that between 5 and 7 million people needed food aid and were in a situation of great vulnerability, as the pandemic had exacerbated the intensity of the poverty already experienced.

Globally, it is active in emergencies, in the development of long-term programs, and international mobilization for the right to food. They provide information to the general public and invite them to support international projects. In Brazil, the organization sponsors projects and raises awareness on the issues of agrarian reform, the Amazon (the Pan-Amazonian Ecclesial Network- REPAM6), and human rights. In 2020, its main partners were the Landless Rural Workers Movement ([MST](#)); the Brazilian Semi-Arid Articulation ([ASA](#)), in the water project for the Northeast region; and Family Farming and Agroecology ([AS-PTA](#)), in the development of family farming in the Rio de Janeiro favelas.

The French branch of the global network Veterinarians Without Borders (Vétérinaires Sans Frontières) has backed (MST) in its action to support the peasant movement in Haiti.

⁶ Au Brésil, les peuples autochtones en danger | Secours Catholique (secours-catholique.org)

2. French cooperation in the post-Covid-19 pandemic context and common advocacy topics

Trends

The French Development Agency (AFD) has stepped up to respond to the health and economic emergency and translate into action the commitments made by the French government to support the priority countries for French public development aid, i.e., benefitting mainly countries in Africa and the Middle East⁷. In Latin America and Asia, AFD is responding to the requests of its partners and is swiftly preparing operations to respond to the health crisis and its economic and social consequences, mainly through lines of credit to support small and medium-sized businesses crippled by the stagnation of the economy, and through budget financing to support public policies against the epidemic. It has also initiated conversations with several other members of the International Development Finance Club (IDFC) to design programs and projects in response to the health crisis in their countries or regions of intervention. The Development Bank of Latin America (CAF) is in charge of this region.

In this last period, Brazilian CSOs have felt a constant increase in the search for information about Brazil, and concrete data about the country's current situation, especially regarding human rights violations, and the Amazon (now a central priority in their policies), which since 2020 features the slogan "Against deforestation, no ratification of the EU-Mercosur agreement". Non-governmental agencies, which have increased solidarity and resources towards Brazil, play an important role in supporting the struggles of indigenous peoples. One example is in the state of Acre, where the local government, without any consultation with the communities, has had a carbon project enforced by German and US funds since 2010.

In practice, this project has meant the mortgaging of indigenous territories, bringing them no benefit because, while it claims to protect them, it has outsourced resources to local organizations without transparent criteria, causing divisions and restrictions on the use of the territories. In this case, the CCFD has supported the participation of indigenous leaders in national and international forums (COPs, Social Forums, Pan Amazon Forum) to raise awareness about the travesty of the project and its impacts on communities. Likewise, projects in Brazil have been involved in CCFD fundraising campaigns, campaign activities, and communication.

These actions, along with emergency support beyond regular support, have been positively assessed by Brazilian CSOs receiving support from French non-governmental cooperation. "These support actions help address the difficulties that indigenous and indigenist organizations encounter for effective articulation in the face of the threats of agribusiness ("cattle run") and the pandemic, that is, the dismantling of environmental policies, human rights, and inclusive public policies currently underway in the country."⁸

Regarding the current state of affairs, Brazilian CSOs feel that there has been a growing concern on the part of French cooperation for the defense of the territorial rights and self-sustainability of indigenous peoples. Faced with the pandemic, the communities were forced to reduce their family plots, worsening the already existing situations of food vulnerability and malnutrition. Added to this are the many trips into town due to the health issue, which made the communities even more vulnerable.

Although solidarity has increased, so have the bureaucratic demands, such as extensive reporting and auditing every six months, even for small amounts spent. This situation sometimes leads to a certain imbalance between the demands and the resources, tending to make relationships strictly technical.

⁷ <https://www.afd.fr/pt/actualites/todas-respostas-da-afd-crise-do-covid-19>

⁸ Entrevista CIMI – Amazônia Ocidental.

Advocacy:

The climate issue is a priority topic for French cooperation these days. Due to the serious setbacks in the environmental issue on the part of the current government, the denunciations of payments for environmental services, and the need to support the fight for demarcation and against the invasions of indigenous territories, this subject is extremely important in the current situation and should become even more so in the discussions.

A good example of advocacy action has been happening through the Center for Climate Crime Analysis (CCCA), an international NGO that includes prosecutors and law enforcement professionals, aimed at supporting and expanding climate judicial action around the world at the national and international levels. In Brazil, the CCCA has established a wide and diverse network of partners, ranging from Brazilian and foreign authorities, including **Europol**⁹, local and international NGOs, and Brazilian grassroots and indigenous organizations. CCCA works with partners to inspect the supply chain of some of Brazil's leading slaughterhouses and assesses whether the cattle processed in these slaughterhouses originate from lands that have been illegally deforested, whether the land is under federal embargo, or whether there are other illegalities in their supply chain, such as forced labor or violence against indigenous peoples. In addition, they examine these slaughterhouses' financial structure, as well as their business connections inside Brazil and abroad.

As an example of this approach, CCCA provided evidence and analysis to support **litigation in France** against supermarket giant Casino over deforestation and human rights violations. CCCA established that Casino regularly purchased beef from three slaughterhouses owned by JBS, a multinational meat-packing company. The slaughterhouses sourced cattle from 592 suppliers responsible for at least 50,000 hectares of deforestation between 2008 and 2020, contributing to illegal deforestation in Brazil. Casino is **the largest food retailer in Latin America** and is known to be exposed to the risk of deforestation in its beef supply chain. This is also the first time that a French supermarket chain has been taken to court for deforestation under the French due diligence law. This makes it possible for indigenous organizations in Brazil and Colombia to claim compensation for damage to their lands and livelihoods.

In this experience, CCCA has worked with French NGO Envol Vert, whose mission is forest protection and rural development. The organization has been fighting for the preservation of forests and biodiversity in Latin America (primarily Brazil and Colombia) and France since 2011, establishing links with local communities to develop conservation efforts, participate in sustainable rural development, and pursue economic alternatives to deforestation. Envol Vert also works to raise awareness through global impact campaigns, such as Casino's, which in Brazil had the support of news agency **Reporter Brasil** and the **Life Center Institute**, to **research the whole meat production chain and its effects on deforestation in the Amazon**. For the organization, the increase in deforestation and the increased sensitivity to this issue have allowed for closer working relationships between organizations in France and Brazil. This has allowed for results such as the stalling of trade treaty negotiations without environmental protection caveats, through increased internal and external pressure.

In another field of French solidarity, given the increasing criminalization of social movements in Brazil, in December 2018 eighteen French international solidarity organizations decided to launch a coalition to unite their actions in favor of Brazilian democracy. The Solidarity with Brazil Coalition, in association with Brazilian CSOs, "develops actions of awareness, visibility, and defense of rights, especially with vulnerable groups in France and in Europe." To this end, they launched a campaign entitled "Brazil resists. Fighting is not a crime," setting up a barometer as a tool for monitoring the Brazilian situation regarding the pressure suffered by civil society since the 2016 coup, with important reports for 2019 and 2020.

⁹ [European Union \(EU\) law enforcement agency based in The Hague, the Netherlands. It provides support to the 27 member states of the Union in combating serious international crime and terrorism and collaborates with countries and international organizations.](#)

The main themes being addressed are: indigenous peoples' rights, socio-environmental conflicts (especially on the issue of dams), violence against women, racism and police violence, freedom of expression, housing, access to land, education, and the LGBTQI+ community.

3. Conclusion: Lessons learned and challenges to stronger cooperation with CSOs and the promotion of Sustainable Development Objectives (SDO)

From the amount of data gathered, the main conclusion is the need to resume and/or reinforce the partnerships between French and Brazilian organizations, aiming at a wide range of solidarity and cooperation activities. The most productive partnerships have been those focused on highlighting and analyzing local problems linked to international actors or actions. One example is the work against French distributor groups, combining propositions for local solutions and raising awareness among consumers in France about the impacts of deforestation and the current setbacks in public policies and environmental legislation in Brazil.

In addition, the stronger partnership between Brazilian and French organizations enables an efficient incidence on the French and European governments, generating internal and external pressure so that the international commercial agreements include conditioning factors for the protection of the environment, such as the European Union - Mercosur. In this sense, they can also influence decisions about financial aid for projects with communities, highlighting the need for the French government's funds for climate issues not to be used only for compensation.

The historically fluid political relations between the two countries mean that the agenda of solidarity with Latin America and Brazil can be reinforced in France. Despite the crisis in international relations due to the Brazilian government's positions towards its French counterpart, with frequent breaches of fundamental principles in diplomatic relations, added to the risks the electoral scenario in both countries poses for the future, it is possible to bolster political relations on issues such as climate impacts on communities and food sovereignty, reinforcing a complicity that has historically survived the reduction of common official agendas.

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Isis Campos - Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (MST) - (Landless Workers' Movement)

Ivanilda Torres dos Santos - Advisor for Conselho Indigenista Missionário (CIMI) Regional Amazônia Ocidental (Indigenous Missionary Council (CIMI) Western Amazon Region).

Leonardo Godoy - Administrative Assistant - the Center for Climate Crime Analysis (CCCA)

