



# **IMPACT OF THE DELIBERATIONS OF THE COUNCIL FOR SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF RONDÔNIA (CEDRS) ON THE ECONOMY AND REGIONAL SUSTAINABILITY**

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RURAL SUSTENTÁVEL DE RONDÔNIA (CEDRS) NA ECONOMIA E  
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### ABSTRACT

Grounded in the theory of participatory democracy, this study aimed to understand how the deliberations of the Council for Sustainable Rural Development of Rondônia (CEDRS) relate to the regional economy and sustainability between 2019 and 2024. Considering the historical context of the state, marked by extractive cycles, deforestation, territorial inequalities, and the vulnerability of family farming, the study analyzes CEDRS as a participatory governance body connected to sustainable regional development. The research is qualitative and designed as a single case study, based on document analysis of regulations, minutes, reports, and official data, complemented by non-systematic observation. The theory of participatory democracy guided data selection and interpretation through analytical dimensions such as representation, deliberation, interinstitutional coordination, and policy implementation. The findings suggest that CEDRS contributes to organizing sectoral demands, strengthening the family farming agenda, coordinating productive chains, and incorporating environmental sustainability into the regional public debate. The sectoral chambers, especially those related to coffee, fish farming, and cocoa, function as mediation mechanisms between territorial demands and governmental or partner actions. However, the results also reveal limitations: the available documents allow the identification of institutional contributions and evidence of sectoral effects, but they do not support direct causality between deliberations and economic performance. Challenges persist regarding infrastructure, technical assistance, land concentration, and the mitigation of environmental impacts caused by agribusiness.

**Keywords:** Participatory democracy. Sustainable rural development. Regional economy. Environmental sustainability.

## RESUMO

A pesquisa, fundamentada na Teoria da Democracia Participativa, objetivou compreender como as deliberações do Conselho de Desenvolvimento Rural Sustentável de Rondônia (CEDRS) se relacionam com a economia e a sustentabilidade regional entre 2019 e 2024. Considerando o contexto histórico do estado, marcado por ciclos extrativistas, desmatamento, desigualdades territoriais e vulnerabilidade da agricultura familiar, buscou-se analisar o CEDRS como instância de governança participativa vinculada ao desenvolvimento regional sustentável. A pesquisa é qualitativa, delimitada como estudo de caso único, com análise documental de normas, atas, relatórios e dados oficiais, complementada por observação assistemática. A Teoria da Democracia Participativa orientou a seleção e a interpretação dos dados a partir de dimensões como representatividade, deliberação, articulação interinstitucional e encaminhamento de políticas públicas. Os achados sugerem que o CEDRS contribuiu para organizar demandas setoriais, fortalecer a agenda da agricultura familiar, articular cadeias produtivas e inserir a sustentabilidade ambiental no debate público regional. As câmaras setoriais, especialmente as de café, piscicultura e cacau, aparecem como mecanismos de mediação entre demandas territoriais e ações governamentais ou de parceiros. Contudo, os resultados também evidenciam limites: os documentos disponíveis permitem identificar contribuições institucionais e indícios de efeitos setoriais, mas não autorizam estabelecer causalidade direta entre deliberações e desempenho econômico. Persistem desafios relacionados à infraestrutura, assistência técnica, concentração fundiária e mitigação dos impactos ambientais do agronegócio.

**Palavras-chave:** Democracia participativa. Desenvolvimento rural sustentável. Economia regional. Sustentabilidade ambiental.

## INTRODUCTION

The State of Rondônia, created by Complementary Law No. 41 of December 22, 1981 (Brasil, 1981), was the stage for cycles of predatory exploitation of natural resources that shaped its economy and left deep marks on the environment, such as the Rubber Cycle in the nineteenth century, the Cassiterite Cycle in the 1930s and 1940s, the Gold Cycle in the 1970s and 1980s, the Timber Cycle in the 1980s and 1990s, and the Hydroelectric Power Plant Cycle in the twenty-first century (Oliveira, 2007). Today, the state has a population of 1,796,460 and is divided into 52 municipalities, according to IBGE estimates (2020).

The legacy of the extractive cycles has left Rondônia facing complex socioeconomic, environmental, and political challenges, including illegal deforestation, land grabbing, social inequality, the decline of family farming, inadequate infrastructure, and poverty. In this context, the Council for Sustainable Rural Development (CEDRS), created by Complementary Law No. 220 of December 28, 1999 (Rondônia, 1999) and restructured by subsequent regulations, serves as a participatory governance body and plays a relevant role in pursuing a more sustainable and inclusive future. This participatory governance, grounded in the Theory of Participatory Democracy as set out by Bonavides



(2001) and Avritzer (2010), seeks to overcome centralized management models by promoting social inclusion and efficiency in public decisions.

In this context, the deliberations of CEDRS can be examined as an institutional dimension of Sustainable Regional Development (SRD), since they organize public agendas, disputes, and priorities for rural sectors that cut across the regional economy, environmental sustainability, and social inclusion. The following question is therefore posed: in what ways do the deliberations of CEDRS contribute to the sustainable regional development of Rondônia, considering their possible effects on the regional economy and environmental dynamics? Based on this research problem, the objective was to understand how the deliberations of CEDRS, in the period from 2019 to 2024, relate to the regional economy and sustainability, from the perspective of the Theory of Participatory Democracy.

The topic's relevance to regional development stems from the fact that CEDRS operates at an intermediate territorial scale, coordinating the State, social organizations, financial institutions, technical assistance, productive chains, and representatives of rural segments. This coordination is relevant because regional development depends not only on aggregate economic growth but also on the institutional capacity to reduce inequalities, diversify productive bases, recognize local demands, and reconcile production, social inclusion, and environmental conservation in territories historically marked by asymmetries.

In addition to this introduction, the article is organized into five sections. The first section discusses Sustainable Regional Development and its frameworks in Brazil, the Legal Amazon, and Rondônia. The second presents public governance and Management Councils as participatory arrangements. The third contextualizes citizen participation and the institutional trajectory of CEDRS. The fourth outlines the methodological procedures and their relationship to the theoretical framework. The fifth analyzes and discusses the results, followed by final considerations that revisit the study's objective, contributions, and limitations.



## SUSTAINABLE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT (SRD): CONTEXT AND LEGAL FRAMEWORKS

The concept of Sustainable Regional Development (SRD) broadens the debate on development by incorporating the economic, social, and environmental dimensions, in response to growing concerns about the depletion of natural resources and socioeconomic inequalities. For Sachs (2009), the term “development” should be reserved for the scenario in which progress occurs simultaneously across the three fields (economic, social, and environmental); otherwise, one would be faced with unbalanced development, a “maldevelopment.”

The concept of sustainable development is grounded in the triple bottom line, which balances environmental sustainability, economic growth, and social well-being (Varavin; Kozlova; Sorokina, 2024). At the regional scale, Sachs (2015) emphasizes the need to consider environmental carrying capacity and the engagement of local populations in policy formulation, guided by ethical principles such as meeting fundamental human needs, strengthening community self-reliance, and ecological prudence (Sachs, 2007). Lisboa Filho and Rebellato (2024) reinforce this view by highlighting the importance of considering the perceptions and subjectivity of the communities involved in territorial management strategies. According to Varavin, Kozlova, and Sorokina (2024), the essence of sustainable development derives from the triple bottom line, which implies a balance among environmental sustainability, aimed at maintaining environmental quality, economic growth, and people’s quality of life through social sustainability.

The concept of sustainable development emerged in the twentieth century, alongside criticism of the economic model based on unlimited growth and the exploitation of natural resources. Documents such as *The Limits to Growth* (1972), *Our Common Future* (1987), Rio-92 (ECO-92), and Agenda 21 established the foundations for SRD and propelled its advancement, later complemented by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations 2030 Agenda. The SDGs consolidate SRD as a central axis of global policies, highlighting targets such as the eradication of poverty, the fight against climate change, and the promotion of sustainable growth. Goal 11, for example, underscores the importance of inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities, reflecting the relevance of regional planning.



## SUSTAINABLE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN BRAZIL

The concept of Sustainable Regional Development (SRD) in Brazil is rooted in analyses of the historical and structural inequalities that mark the country, and the national SRD process has been shaped by profound transformations in both regional dynamics and the public policies that shaped them (Santos, 2017).

For Sachs (1990, p. 104), “Brazil is, without a doubt, the most heterogeneous country in the world. While only a minority takes part in the world’s eighth-largest industrial economy, almost two-thirds of the population are excluded from it.” Brazil lacks public policies that ensure equitable opportunities, fundamental rights of citizenship, and sustainable progress, structured within medium- and long-term strategies, with consistent budgetary and financial allocations, to enable the completion of the actions and projects already initiated (Brasil, 2008).

Regional disparities will not be resolved spontaneously, requiring adequate regional development programs, plans, and policies conceived based on national development objectives (Furtado, 2012). The author, an important theorist of development in Brazil, provides a critical basis for understanding regional underdevelopment because of a dependent economic model, structured to meet external demands. According to Furtado (2012), the absence of adequate planning perpetuates economic dependence on primary activities, intensifying structural imbalances. In this context, economic diversification and social inclusion are necessary as essential pillars of SRD.

The application of this concept in Brazil gained relevance through public policies aimed at addressing regional inequalities. Historically, initiatives such as the creation of the Superintendency for the Development of the Northeast (SUDENE) in the 1960s sought to implement regional industrialization strategies under the leadership of Celso Furtado. This institution marked a milestone in efforts to reduce regional disparities, promoting the economic diversification of the Northeast through targeted policies to strengthen local productive chains. However, as discussed in the previous section, the consolidation of SRD only occurred at the end of the twentieth century, especially with the institutionalization of the concept of sustainable development in international documents that influenced Brazilian policies, such as Agenda 21, signed at Rio-92 on June 14, 1992 (Brasil, 1992). In the twenty-first century, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) broadened the SRD approach by linking it to global targets for poverty eradication, inequality



reduction, and climate change response. In the Brazilian context, this translated into efforts to align public policies, such as the Sustainable Amazon Plan (PAS), with the specific challenges of the region, considering its unique environmental and socioeconomic characteristics, with the aim not only of implementing specific public policies but also, drawing on the learning accumulated through cooperation, dialogue, and the peaceful negotiation of differences, of forming possible consensuses and building solutions jointly (Brasil, 2004).

The Legal Amazon is an example of the challenges and potential of SRD in Brazil. Marked by an economy based on extractivism and by the growing pressure of agribusiness, the region faces problems such as deforestation, land concentration, and social exclusion. Composed of the states of Acre, Amapá, Amazonas, Maranhão, Mato Grosso, Pará, Rondônia, Roraima, and Tocantins, the Brazilian Legal Amazon covers an area of 5.1 million km<sup>2</sup> (60% of the national territory) (Alvares, Rodrigues, Narita, 2021).

In view of the socioeconomic and environmental challenges, the Consortium of Governors of the Legal Amazon put forward a regional development proposal for the Amazon called the Green Recovery Plan for the Legal Amazon (PRV), with public policies of regional scope (Alvares, Rodrigues, Narita, 2021). This plan establishes targets such as combating illegal deforestation by 2030 and promoting an economic transition based on the bioeconomy and clean technologies. According to the authors, its success requires, in addition to coordination among all social actors and the government, the adoption of policies that reduce inequalities and foster sustainable jobs.

Initiatives for the construction of hydroelectric power plants (HPPs), exemplified by the Samuel HPP on the Jamari River in the municipality of Candeias do Jamari; the Santo Antônio and Jirau HPPs on the Madeira River in the municipality of Porto Velho; and the Rondon II HPP on the Comemoração River in the municipality of Pimenta Bueno, State of Rondônia (Brunoro et al., 2023), also highlight the complexities of reconciling economic advancement with ecological preservation, exposing the dilemmas between economic development and environmental protection. In the words of Professor Aziz (1996), any dam causes major impacts that are, for the most part, irreversible and unknown, since a new ecosystem is formed with all the complexities it entails.

Although necessary in view of the country's growing energy demand, the construction of hydroelectric power plants frequently entails negative socio-environmental impacts. Among these impacts



are the forced displacement of traditional communities, the often irreparable loss of biodiversity, and increased deforestation, all of which deepen the challenges to the region's environmental sustainability. This controversial scenario stems from the complexity of transformations in environmentally sensitive areas and reflects the need for public policies that reconcile economic growth and environmental conservation, grounded in strategic planning that considers the multiple dimensions of sustainable development.

In the Legal Amazon, where environmental and socioeconomic challenges coexist in pronounced ways, SRD requires approaches that reconcile economic exploitation with environmental conservation. Oliveira *et al.* (2019), in their research using environmental indicators, concluded that in the Amazon Region, "[...] the most economically developed municipalities point to a mismatch with an environmental preservation agenda" (Oliveira *et al.*, 2019, p. 198). In this scenario, local agency becomes imperative, since, according to the authors, even in the face of the region's wealth of natural resources and biodiversity, the problems of SRD relate to public policies detached from local needs.

Nevertheless, according to authors such as Sachs (2009), the country can reach promising paths toward sustainable development.

[...] tropical countries in general, and Brazil in particular, today have a chance to skip stages and reach a modern biomass civilization, achieving an endogenous "triple victory" by simultaneously meeting the criteria of social relevance, ecological prudence, and economic viability, the three pillars of sustainable development. (Sachs, 2009, p. 35).

The State of Rondônia, part of the Legal Amazon and historically marked by extractive cycles, including those of rubber, cassiterite, gold, and timber, faces problems such as illegal deforestation, land concentration, land grabbing, and social exclusion. According to Sachs (1990), the successive cycles constituted a series of ecological disasters; however, initiatives such as strengthening family farming and economic diversification have proven viable strategies for achieving more just and balanced development.

The role of participatory governance is also highlighted as an important element for the success of SRD. Public Policy Management Councils, such as the State Council for Sustainable Rural Development (CEDRS) in Rondônia, have been identified as tools for promoting social inclusion and the democratization of decisions. These councils represent an attempt to overcome centralized models and to foster the participation of different social actors in the formulation and implementation of regional strategies (Santin, Pandolfo, 2017).



Thus, SRD, as an integrative proposal that connects past and future, economy and ecology, the global and the local, in Rondônia and the Amazon, requires robust public policies, participatory governance, and the strategic use of technologies, with a focus on social inclusion and environmental protection. On these foundations, it is possible to envisage a model of sustainable development that respects regional specificities and values local communities. In this sense, the next section explores the strategic role of participatory governance and the work of Management Councils in Brazil, highlighting their relevance in coordinating the State, civil society, and specific regional demands.

## **PUBLIC GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT COUNCILS**

The fiscal crisis of the 1980s led the public sector to seek new paths toward becoming a more efficient State, proposing a new international economic and political arrangement (Brasil, 2014). Public governance in Brazil has emerged as an important framework that proposes institutional changes through participatory governance in the public sector to enhance participatory management and decentralize power, particularly in response to demands for efficiency, transparency, and social engagement in public administration (Ribeiro, 2022). This concept encompasses mechanisms and processes that facilitate collective decision-making, integrating various sectors of society to address complex challenges effectively.

Matias-Pereira (2022), discussing New Public Governance, clarifies that the transformation of governance in the public sector is intrinsically linked to society's growing demands for more efficient, accountable administration that prioritizes transparency and *accountability* in processes, strengthens accountability mechanisms, and expands opportunities for citizen participation. Moreover, these social demands include the continuous pursuit of better quality in public services, reflecting pressure for inclusive and accessible management models suited to needs and expectations.

According to Perego et al. (2022), the State acts as a strategic coordinator, fostering collaboration among civil society, the market, and governmental entities to promote development that goes beyond mere economic interests. For these authors, public governance transforms State–society relations, emphasizing collective action and democratic principles. However, Avritzer (2010) warns that, in order to succeed, institutions must be specifically designed to promote effective citizen participation, taking into account the characteristics of civil society and local political contexts. According to the author, “[...] it is possible to observe that participatory institutions vary in their capacity to democratize government.



The main variations are related to the context of civil society organization and to the presence of political actors capable of jointly supporting participatory processes” (Avritzer, 2008, p. 47).

In Brazil, participatory governance is found in Public Policy Management Councils, a practical example of how collegiate structures can expand the State’s capacity to respond to social demands. Thus, as governance mechanisms, the councils play an important role in integrating different actors into the decision-making process, reducing power imbalances between public and private agents, and ensuring that public policies reflect the real needs of local communities (Santin, Pandolfo, 2017).

Management Councils are essential instruments of participatory governance, established to facilitate civil society’s involvement in the formulation and oversight of public policies, democratize public decisions, and consolidate inclusive and transparent practices. For Faria (2021), they serve as a bridge between the government and various social actors, promoting dialogue and collaboration.

This coordination among different spheres of government and representatives of civil society strengthens the democratic process and can promote consensus-building. However, this plurality also requires robust institutional structures capable of mediating conflicts of interest and ensuring the effectiveness of decisions. Participatory governance in Management Councils depends on fundamental principles such as representation, plurality, and equity. Recent studies emphasize that this plurality contributes to the legitimacy of decisions by including diverse voices in the deliberative process, but it also presents challenges, such as the risk that more influential groups will predominate in decision-making (Barddal, Torres, 2020).

Froener and Leite (2023) warn of the risk of councils becoming ineffective, existing merely for legal compliance, owing to problems such as inadequate preparation of council members for the performance of their duties, failures in communication between representatives and those represented, co-optation of the council by groups or by the government, and a lack of genuine representation of the people, among others. The effectiveness of councils depends on the quality of dialogue among participants, the clarity of institutional rules, and the capacity to implement decisions.

Therefore, participatory governance through Management Councils represents a significant advance in strengthening democracy and promoting sustainable development. However, its effectiveness depends on ensuring representation, equitable deliberative power, and robust mechanisms for policy implementation.



## CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AND THE COUNCIL FOR SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF RONDÔNIA (CEDRS)

Citizen participation in Public Administration finds in Management Councils one of the best institutionalized mechanisms of democratic governments for exercising citizenship. Jean-Jacques Rousseau is regarded as one of the main precursors of the Theory of Participatory Democracy, disseminating the idea that political and governmental legitimacy rests on the general will, which is expressed through the direct participation of the people (Bobbio, 2000).

The Theory of Participatory Democracy is grounded in the principle of popular sovereignty and, for Bonavides (2001), requires mechanisms for the direct exercise of the general and democratic will that can restore the legitimacy of the system, with Public Policy Management Councils being one such mechanism.

The 1988 Constitution brought a significant advance toward strengthening citizenship and citizen participation in public life; strictly speaking, however, formal freedoms did not translate into real freedoms for the entire population. Santin and Pandolfo (2017) highlight, in the Brazilian model of public management, the resistance of civil society and the political sector to turning this social participation into an effective practice, which, for Barddal and Torres (2020), may be the result of a traditional, centralizing management model that is contrary to participatory management. Despite the formal recognition of equal rights, there is still a long way to go to ensure that everyone can participate in public life and in political decisions on equal terms.

The Council for Sustainable Rural Development of Rondônia (CEDRS) plays a fundamental role in the state's development, deliberating on policies that may mitigate the socioeconomic and environmental problems presented in this study and promote balanced development. The decisions of CEDRS are essential to the development proposal and help explain their impacts on the state's economic and environmental dynamics.

CEDRS, a collegiate body linked to the Department of Agriculture of the State of Rondônia, was created by Complementary Law No. 220 of December 28, 1999, under the name State Council for Rural Development of Rondônia (CEDR/RO). Its founding statute defined its objective as the discussion and deliberation of public policies related to sustainable rural development in the State of Rondônia. Prior to CEDR, the State Council of the National Program for the Strengthening of Family Farming



(PRONAF) existed, established by Complementary Law No. 163 of December 27, 1996, a statute fully repealed by Complementary Law No. 220/1999.

In 2013, Complementary Law No. 721 of July 3, 2013, established the Sectoral Chambers as bodies supporting CEDRS, and under Complementary Law No. 721/2013, these Sectoral Chambers must be linked to the main production chains of Rondônia's agribusiness to promote the economic and social development of the rural population. Complementary Law No. 844 of November 27, 2015, introduced the third amendment to Complementary Law No. 220/1999, changing the name of the Council to the State Council for Sustainable Rural Development (CEDRS); its composition was also altered: CEDRS expanded from 24 to 35 members.

Chart 1 presents the composition under Complementary Law No. 844/2015.

**Chart 1** | Composition of CEDRS – Complementary Law No. 844/2015

CEDRS/RO – Complementary Law No. 844/2015	
1	Secretaria de Estado da Agricultura - SEAGRI
2	Secretaria de Estado do Planejamento Orçamento e Gestão SEPOG
3	Secretaria de Estado de Finanças SEFIN
4	Secretaria de Estado do Desenvolvimento Ambiental - SEDAM
5	Sistema OCB/SESCOOP - RO
6	Empres Estadual de Assistência Técnica e Extensão Rural do Estado de Rondônia - EMATER-RO
7	Federação dos Trabalhadores na Agricultura do Estado de Rondônia - FETAGRO
8	Comissão Executiva do Plano da Lavoura Cacaueira – CEPLAC/SUERO
9	Federação da Agricultura e Pecuária do Estado de Rondônia - FAPERON
10	Articulação Central das Associações Culturais de Ajuda Mútua - ACARAM
11	Centro de Pesquisa Agroflorestal de Rondônia CPAFRO - EMBRAPA
12	Superintendência Estadual do Banco do Brasil S/A - BB
13	Superintendência Regional do Banco da Amazônia S/A - BASA
14	Superintendência da Caixa Econômica Federal em Rondônia - CEF
15	Organização do Seringueiros de Rondônia - OSR
16	Instituto Nacional de Colonização e Reforma Agrária - INCRA
17	Associação dos Pequenos Agricultores de Rondônia APARO
18	Superintendência Regional de Rondônia da Companhia Nacional de Abastecimento - CONAB
19	Comissão Pastoral da Terra – CPT
20	Delegacia Federal do Desenvolvimento Agrário –DFDA/MDA
21	Associação das Escolas Famílias Agrícolas do Estado de Rondônia - AEFARO
22	Serviço Brasileiro de Apoio às Micro e Pequenas Empresas em Rondônia Sebrae/RO
23	Assembléia Legislativa do Estado de Rondônia
24	Associação Rondoniense de Municípios – AROM.



25	Sistema de Cooperativa de Crédito Rural com Interação Solidária CRESOL BASE RONDÔNIA
26	Associação de Crédito de Cidadão de Rondônia - ACRECID -
27	Superintendência Federal de Agricultura Pecuária Abastecimento e Rondônia – SFA-RO/MAPA
28	Agência de Defesa Sanitária Agrosilvopastoril do Estado de Rondônia - IDARON
29	Superintendência do Desenvolvimento do Estado de Rondônia - SUDER
30	Federação de Pescadores e Aquicultores do Estado de Rondônia - FEPEARO
31	Rede Estadual de Territórios da Cidadania
32	Cooperativa Central de Crédito do Norte do Brasil – SICOOB - NORTE
33	Cooperativa de Trabalho Agro-Ambiental de Rondônia - COOTRARON
34	Conselho Secretários Municipais Agricultura do Estado de Rondônia CONSEMAGRI
35	Centro de Estudos da Cultura e do Meio Ambiente da Amazônia - Centro de Estudos Rio Terra

Source: The authors, 2024

The expansion of the composition of CEDRS aimed to include all credit cooperatives serving rural producers, the state Federation of Fishers and Aquaculturists, and others, thereby giving greater robustness to the Council.

The plural composition of the State Council for Sustainable Rural Development (CEDRS) brings together 35 members from various sectors, including civil society organizations, unions, cooperatives, and financial institutions. This configuration of the council, established by Complementary Law No. 844/2015, seeks to balance often conflicting interests, such as those of agribusiness and family farming; however, the necessary parity in its composition has not been observed.

CEDRS has adopted the Sectoral Chambers as complementary bodies to deepen discussions on specific themes, such as family farming and fishing. Despite their relevance, the fragmentation of these structures may compromise the coherence of the policies deliberated if there is no effective integration between their decisions and those of the main council.

## METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

This research is characterized as a single-case study of the Council for Sustainable Rural Development of the State of Rondônia (CEDRS), aimed at deepening understanding of the role of Public Policy Management Councils in strengthening democracy and sustainable regional development. CEDRS, as a public policy council created in 1999 and restructured in 2015, serves as a participatory governance body in Rondônia, bringing together representatives of civil society and public authorities to formulate and implement public policies for sustainable rural development.



The case is unique because it involves a council with: (a) a specific historical context, (b) multiple actors and interests, (c) specific challenges, and (d) the phenomenon of social participation.

A. Rondônia has a history of extractive cycles that have shaped its economy and caused socio-environmental impacts. CEDRS emerges in this context to promote sustainable rural development and social inclusion in an environment marked by inequalities, governance challenges, and pressures on natural resources. In 2015, Complementary Law No. 844/2015 restructured the Council and expanded its composition.

B. CEDRS is composed of representatives of civil society and public authorities, including family farmers, union organizations, cooperatives, fishers, socio-environmental entities, financial institutions, state bodies, and federal bodies. These actors hold different, often conflicting perspectives and interests, so the dynamics of the Council are shaped by interaction, negotiation, and mediation among them.

C. Rondônia, as part of the Legal Amazon, faces challenges such as deforestation, land grabbing, land concentration, and socio-environmental conflicts. CEDRS must operate in this context, seeking solutions to these problems, which are specific to the region.

D. CEDRS is an institutionalized space for social participation in the formulation and implementation of public policies. The research seeks to understand how this participation occurs in practice, given the different perspectives and interests involved; its limits and potential; and how it contributes to strengthening democracy and sustainable regional development.

According to Creswell (2014), the case study approach involves analyzing a real, bounded case to obtain more detailed information. In the specific case of this study, the aim was, from the perspective of the Theory of Participatory Democracy, to contribute to the theoretical-empirical discussion on the role of Management Councils for Public Policies in strengthening democracy, as an instrument of social participation, and on their possible impacts on sustainable regional development.

To answer the question of how Management Councils for Public Policies contribute to strengthening democracy and sustainable regional development, this research is characterized, in its nature, as applied, seeking to solve latent problems in the researchers' social environment (Gil, 2019). The locus of the research is the Council for Sustainable Rural Development of the State of Rondônia, considering the



phenomenon of social participation and its impacts on sustainable regional development. In terms of temporal scope, this research used the period from 2019 to 2024 as its basis; it also drew on a retrospective analysis to understand the context.

The study sought to identify the mechanisms by which these councils influence the formulation and implementation of public policies, as well as the challenges and opportunities associated with their work. Regarding the classification of its objective, the research is descriptive: first, it describes CEDRS and the scenario in which it operates, providing, according to Gil (2019), the researchers' approximation to the research object; second, it describes and interprets data on the economy of the State of Rondônia related to the agendas and deliberations of CEDRS. As to its approach, the research is qualitative, allowing greater depth in observing the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 2014), and analyzing the role of Management Councils for Public Policies in strengthening democracy and their possible impacts on sustainable regional development, based on the analysis of CEDRS and the principles of the Theory of Participatory Democracy.

Data collection was carried out through documentary research on official data provided by the State Department of Agriculture (SEAGRI) and the Council for Sustainable Rural Development (CEDRS), as well as through the analysis of regulations, laws, decrees, resolutions, acts, minutes, and reports relevant to the constitution and functioning of the Council, which make up the corpus of the research. As a complementary method, non-systematic observation was conducted during the data collection process, which made it possible to compare documentary information with observed institutional dynamics. Data analysis proceeded from the selection and organization of the relevant findings, considering criteria of authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and meaning, followed by an interpretive analysis through the confrontation of empirical data, literature, and concepts.

To make explicit the connection between the theoretical framework and the methodological design, the Theory of Participatory Democracy guided the construction of the study's analytical dimensions: (i) representation and plurality of the Council's composition; (ii) deliberation and the public circulation of demands; (iii) interinstitutional coordination among the State, civil society, financial institutions, and technical bodies; and (iv) the forwarding of policies, programs, or actions capable of affecting productive chains and regional sustainability. These dimensions served as criteria



for reading the regulations, minutes, reports, and sectoral data, enabling assessment of CEDRS not only as a formal structure but also as an arena of mediation between social participation and regional development.

The notion of impact adopted in this article is therefore interpretive and processual. The aim is not to establish statistical causality between deliberations and economic indicators, but to identify observable contributions, convergences, and limits among the Council's deliberations, the demands of the sectoral chambers, the available official data, and the literature on participatory governance and sustainable regional development.

## ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

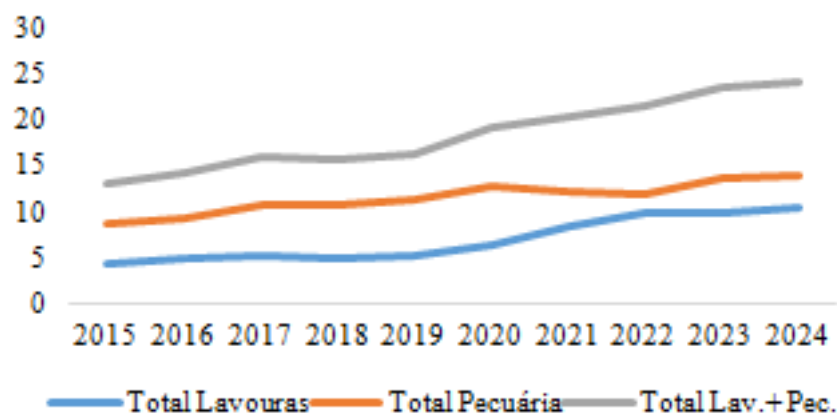
The analysis and discussion of the results were organized around three axes connected to the theoretical framework: the participatory governance of CEDRS, the relationship between deliberations and regional productive chains, and the institutional limits that prevent this governance from translating into sustainable regional development. This organization responds to the need to interpret the data beyond mere description, relating them to the literature on participation, public governance, and SRD.

The economy of the State of Rondônia is strongly based on primary sectors, especially livestock, grains, coffee, milk, fish farming, cassava, and cocoa. Although relevant to GDP and to the state's commercial integration, these activities pose challenges for productive diversification, value addition, the inclusion of family farming, and environmental sustainability. In this scenario, CEDRS can be understood as a governance body that does not replace the execution of public policies but contributes to structuring agendas, qualifying demands, and bringing different actors closer to decisions on rural development.

The analysis of Rondônia's economic data reveals dynamics marked by structural transformations, with the agricultural and livestock sector occupying a central position. In recent years, the main segments of agribusiness have shown continuous growth, as evidenced by the evolution of the gross value of agricultural and livestock production, driven by domestic and foreign markets, especially in livestock, grains, and coffee. However, in light of Sachs (2009; 2015) and Furtado (2012), regional economic growth is not in itself equivalent to sustainable regional development: it is necessary to verify whether this growth is articulated with social inclusion, institutional capacity, ecological prudence, and the reduction of territorial asymmetries.



**Figure 1** | Gross value of agricultural and livestock production in Rondônia from 2015 to October 2024 (in R\$ billion, current values).



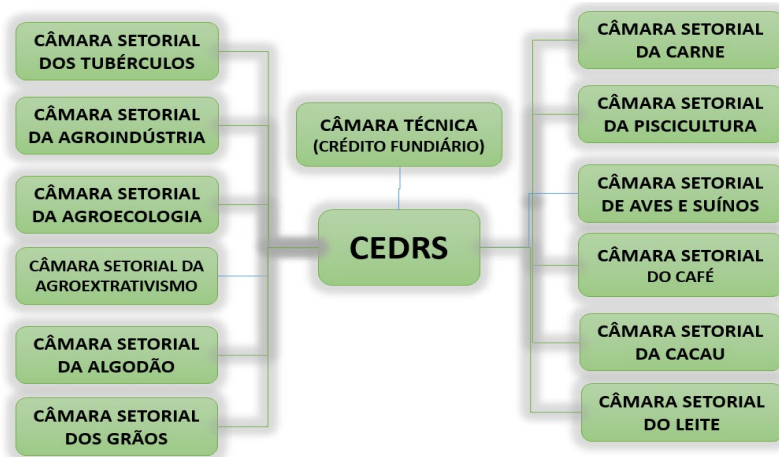
Source: Ministry of Agriculture, 2024. Note: current values, in R\$ billion.

The data in Figure 1 and Chart 2 do not allow direct causality to be established between CEDRS deliberations and the economic performance of the agricultural and livestock sectors. In this research, they function as indicators of context and of the adherence between the deliberated agendas and productive chains relevant to Rondônia. The Council's contribution appears above all in its function as a public arena: the sectoral chambers receive demands, coordinate among producers, public bodies, financial institutions, and technical entities, and forward proposals that, once approved, may be implemented as governmental actions or by partners aligned with the agenda. This function approximates the participatory governance described by Avritzer (2008; 2010), Santin and Pandolfo (2017), and Matias-Pereira (2022), by broadening the institutional circulation of territorial demands.

With regard to support for family farming, the data analyzed reveal a mainly institutional and sectoral contributions. Institutional, because the composition of CEDRS includes actors directly linked to the segment, such as FETAGRO, EMATER-RO, APARO, AEFARO, rural credit organizations, cooperatives, technical assistance entities, and representatives of productive chains with a strong presence of small producers. Sectoral, because the chambers and agendas related to robusta coffee, milk, fish farming, cassava, and cocoa engage with activities relevant to rural income and economic diversification in interior municipalities. This evidence, however, should be read with caution: the available documents demonstrate

representation, coordination, and the formulation of agendas, but they do not directly measure the number of family farmers benefited, variations in family income, or the territorial distribution of the effects.

**Figure 2** | Organization of the sectoral chambers of CEDRS Rondônia.



Source: the authors, 2024.

The differences among the sectoral chambers should be interpreted with caution and within the limits of the available data. Figure 2 shows the diversity of the chambers established, while Chart 2 presents the economic relevance of specific sectors. The comparison between these elements makes it possible to state that the chambers operate in productive chains with distinct economic weights and mobilization capacities; however, the research does not have standardized indicators of participation frequency, degree of interaction, volume of resources mobilized, or the self-financing of each chamber. For this reason, the analysis considers that there is evidence of different capacities for sectoral coordination, but it avoids generalizing that all chambers have the same level of effectiveness or that their results derive exclusively from CEDRS.

Livestock and grains account for about 85% of Rondônia's exports, which confirms the strength of larger-scale productive chains. However, the field of regional development also requires attention to sectors capable of diversifying the economy and distributing opportunities across the territory. The coffee sector offers a more consistent example of sectoral coordination: in 2019, the Coffee Sectoral Chamber approved a strategic plan with guidelines for the segment; Rondônia's robusta coffee obtained a geographical indication from INPI; and actions in research, innovation, events, and commercial promotion

were mobilized. These elements indicate that sectoral governance can help transform a productive agenda into a public development agenda, aligning with Sachs's (2009) perspective, which holds that sustainability combines social relevance, ecological prudence, and economic viability.

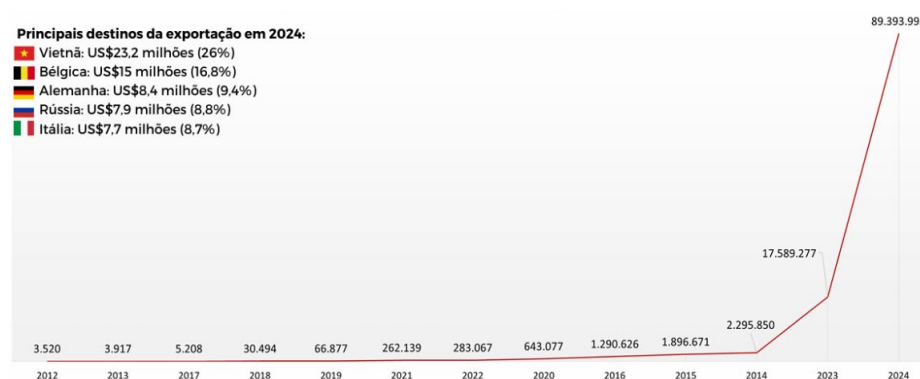
**Chart 2** | Ranking of the main agricultural and livestock sectors based on the gross value of production in Rondônia over the last 5 years.

Sector	Gross Value of Production (in R\$ billion)
1st Beef cattle	57,0
2nd Grains (soybean, maize, and rice)	29,5
3rd Robusta coffee	11,5
4th Milk	5,7
5th Fish farming (tambaqui)	3,3
6th Swine, poultry, and eggs	1,5
7th Cassava	0,9
8th Cotton	0,7
9th Cocoa	0,6

Source: Ministry of Agriculture, 2024.

The Department of Economic Development allocated about R\$ 4.2 million to Embrapa for studies on robusta coffee clones, which are fundamental for improving productivity and quality. In addition, initiatives to add value to coffee were promoted, such as the Rondônia Rural Show, Concafé, and the International Coffee Week. These elements reinforce that, in cases where there is convergence among the sectoral chambers, research, commercial promotion, and recognition of origin, participatory deliberation tends to gain greater capacity to produce territorial effects. Figure 3 illustrates the evolution of Rondônia's robusta coffee exports.

**Figure 3** | Robusta coffee exports from Rondônia since 2012 (in US\$)



Source: ComexStat, 2024.

The increase in soybean exports, the growth of fish and cattle production, and the expansion of coffee production contribute to the growth of the state's Gross Domestic Product, especially in recent periods. However, the SRD literature warns that economic dynamism must be analyzed alongside its social and environmental effects. In this sense, the deliberations of CEDRS, especially through the sectoral chambers, indicate an attempt at a gradual transition toward a more organized agricultural model, with incentives for diversification, family farming, and environmental preservation. This transition, however, still coexists with the structural pressures of agribusiness, land conflicts, and infrastructure weaknesses.

The public policies and agendas arising from the deliberations of CEDRS provide institutional inclusion and support for family farming as an attempt to address regional disparities and poverty. The contribution identified lies less in isolated economic results and more in the capacity to insert these themes into a deliberative arena that brings together the State, civil society, and productive sectors. Nevertheless, substantial barriers persist: insufficient infrastructure, limited technical assistance, unequal access to resources, land concentration, and environmental tensions. Environmental sustainability remains a critical point, especially in the face of the dilemma between agricultural and livestock expansion and conservation, aggravated by recent crises such as the drying of rivers, wildfires, and predatory activities harming the environment.

In summary, the results demonstrate that CEDRS contributes to the sustainable regional development of Rondônia by serving as a participatory governance mechanism that coordinates demands, confers institutional legitimacy on rural agendas, and brings public policies closer to strategic productive chains. Its contribution, however, is conditioned by the capacity to translate deliberations into implementation, monitoring, and the evaluation of results. Thus, the main contribution of this article to the field of regional development lies in demonstrating that management councils can serve as territorial arenas of mediation among social participation, the regional economy, and sustainability, but their effectiveness depends on data, monitoring instruments, and the state's capacity for execution.



## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The objective of this article was achieved by demonstrating how the deliberations of CEDRS between 2019 and 2024 relate to the economy and the regional sustainability of Rondônia. The analysis showed that the Council acts as a participatory governance body, capable of bringing together different social and institutional actors, organizing sectoral demands, and forwarding agendas aimed at sustainable rural development. In this way, CEDRS contributes to strengthening productive chains, valuing family farming, and incorporating environmental sustainability into the regional public debate.

The contribution of CEDRS, however, must be understood in institutional and processual terms, not as direct causality between deliberation and economic performance. The data analyzed indicate convergences among the Council's work, the sectoral chambers, and strategic sectors such as coffee, fish farming, cocoa, milk, and cassava, but they also reveal that the available documents do not directly measure beneficiaries, income, territorial distribution, or environmental impacts. This limitation reinforces the need for monitoring systems that track the implementation of deliberations and allow results to be assessed more precisely.

It is concluded that the construction of sustainable regional development in Rondônia depends on the continuity and improvement of the public policies deliberated within CEDRS, especially regarding the inclusion of small producers, technical assistance, rural infrastructure, land regularization, and environmental preservation. It is recommended that the Council improve its meeting architecture, agenda-setting, deliberation recording, monitoring indicators, and feedback mechanisms to the sectoral chambers and the segments represented. Future studies may deepen the analysis through interviews with councilors, family farmers, and public managers, as well as through implementation indicators, thereby enabling more robust assessment of the territorial effects of the deliberations.



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