

City Curitiba	
Country	Brazil
Population	1,765 million
Title of policy or practice	Projeto Polo da Ponkan (Ponkan Hub Project)
Subtitle (optional)	Ponkan Hub Project
URL video	
Category	Social and Economic Equity
SDGs	SDGs: 1, 2, 3, 8.
Brief description	<p>Created to qualify the production of ponkan mandarins in Curitiba's metropolitan region, the Project "Polo da Ponkan" addressed a difficulty family farmers had to aggregate value to the fruits they produce. Especially addressed to the Ribeira Valley producers, the project proposed the creation of a locality mark to strengthen the producer-consumer connection, making the product more identifiable and popular.</p> <p>While improving the product's branding, free-trade markets in downtown Curitiba were created so producers can avoid intermediate traders. The families' direct contact with final merchants and the institutional market reduced the production chain and increased their profit margins.</p> <p>The involvement of public and private actors in the project, such as Curitiba City Hall and the Pró-Metrópole (Curitiba's Metropolitan Region Integrated Production Development Program), culminated in the launch of the locality mark in May 2018. Besides the natural fruits, the label is also applied to the fruit juice produced in the City of Serro Azul, thanks to a partnership between a Cooperative (Cooperativa Integrada de Agricultura Familiar de Cerro Azul) and a local industry.</p>
Date of start and state (ongoing/completed)	09/2017 Ongoing
Actors and stakeholders involvement	The project involves family farmers from the towns of Doutor Ulysses and Cerro Azul, located in the Ribeira Valley, part of the North Metropolitan Region of Curitiba; Curitiba's Food Supply Department; the 28 cities of the Metropolitan Region of Curitiba; and 14 other governmental and non-governmental organizations part of the Pró-Metrópole Regional Governance Project. See the attached document for a detailed list.
Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayor of Curitiba takes over Pró-Metrópole's Presidency in 2017; • Creation of the Pró-Metrópole agri-food workgroup; • Meeting with public and private stakeholders to discuss challenges, needs and strategies for action; • Identification of initiatives and areas of production aiming at opening up the market; • Coordination with experts to train farmers and cooperatives on managerial and productive aspects; • Carrying out the strategies.
Innovation	<p>The Polo da Ponkan Project takes a holistic approach in finding new opportunities in the consolidated produce chain by engaging actors with expertise and resources - such as a City Government or NGOs - that wouldn't otherwise directly reach the producers individually.</p> <p>Especially for the Ribeira Valley's ponkans, the creation of a locality mark and free-trade markets in downtown Curitiba increased the producers' profits. The methodology also encompassed the idea</p>

	<p>to raise awareness among people about the benefits of buying local products as a way to tackle climate change, and to reduce the product chain.</p> <p>The integration of policies and stakeholders increased the product's quality and opened a range of possibilities for the use of inferior quality fruits, such as juices and derivatives, reducing wastage.</p>
Impact	<p>Considering that the two main towns participating in the project have a substantially lower GDP per capita compared to the capital – Curitiba: R\$ 44.239 versus R\$ 14.650 in Cerro Azul and R\$ 11.518 in Doutor Ulysses (IBGE, 2016) – alternatives to income generation are much needed to ensure equity in the Ribeira Valley.</p> <p>The Polo da Ponkan Project allowed the increase in the profits of family farmers and the reduction of waste from the harvests.</p> <p>Direct sales in downtown Curitiba resulted in a 75% average increase in the price per kilogram when compared to 2017 sales. Producers sold 12 tons of ponkans during the 2018 harvest season, resulting in R\$ 24.500 in gross income.</p> <p>A juice factory installed in Cerro Azul, producing 6,000 liters/day, was integrated into the project, giving a long-term continuation for the project. Using only below-standard fruits, that would neither be harvested nor discarded, it was possible to sign a contract with the City of Curitiba to supply its public schools during one year with 23,000 liters of ponkan juice and 34,200 liters of watermelon juice, in an agreement that reached R\$ 601,047.70.</p>
Inclusion	<p>Thanks to the expertise of Curitiba and the Pró-Metrópole Program, it was possible to encompass in a greater or lesser extent thematic, territorial, and social inclusion in the Polo da Ponkan Project.</p> <p>Considering the signed contracts with the city, creation of cooperatives, professionalization, and the opportunity to conduct direct sales in downtown Curitiba, the Ribeira Valley Ponkan had its aggregated value increased and made possible for producers to expand their market.</p> <p>Another important aspect is to keep fostering the relationships among local markets in the Metropolitan Region of Curitiba. The area as a whole has a vocation for agriculture, and this project produced better income distribution and created new opportunities in the area.</p> <p>Supported by the technical consultancy, wastage decreased with training, improvements in the distribution strategy, and the partnership with a juice factory. This reduction in the production chain and the local consumption of the ponkans also presents a real impact on logistics and, consequently, in the emissions of pollutants.</p> <p>Considering the vocation Curitiba's Metropolitan Region has towards agriculture, it is always important to reinforce the links between the local markets - better-distributing income and opportunities in the area.</p> <p>The tendency, as shown in the number of cooperatives operating in the region which increased from 20 in 2017 to 79 this year, attests that professionalization and unionization should keep increasing.</p>
Adversity coefficient	<p>We chose the locations to implement the project according to the importance of the agricultural sector in those towns' economies and the general low-income profile of the families living in the Ribeira Valley.</p> <p>The past structure of the agri-food chain could explain some of these adversities. Producers faced an unfeasible financial model, with too many links in the production chain, and were not articulated in a way that would allow for the implementation of different strategies towards better agricultural practices, disregarding physiological and agronomic aspects.</p>

To further understand these adversities and devise mechanisms to overcome them, farmers with properties in the Ribeira Valley answered a questionnaire.

The greatest difficulty pointed out (55.7%) was related to the fruits' commercialization. Among these, 44.8% responded that intermediaries were their main form to sell the produce, an option that drastically reduces profits.

Another obstacle was the lack of a proper facility to carry out the post-harvest process, pointed out by 77% of the surveyed. The fruit classification step was performed empirically in 55% of the cases, without any protocol or technical guidance.

Ultimately, 92% of farmers label the ponkans, and 53% did not have technical consultants for their properties.

Considering the region's history and the surveyed data, it was possible for the working group to propose strategies. Amongst them, the creation of partnerships promoting professionalization and training; educating families about the opportunity to be organized in cooperatives; offering courses in management and business for these cooperatives and farmers' associations.

With the help of the project team, it was also possible to identify the market's demand for a quality standard; the approximation of the farmers with market agents that allowed new partnerships and businesses; opening of points of sale in public fairs and commercial events; supporting the development of inter-institutional arrangements; proposal of trade strategies to promote the ponkan; and creation of a collective brand to facilitate market access.