

CENTER FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (CDS) OF THE UNIVERSIDADE DE BRASÍLIA (UnB)

I - About the CDS

The **CENTER FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT** - CDS, created in 1995 by the University of Brasília (UnB), is a permanent academic unit dedicated to the study of contemporary relations between society and nature. Stressing the interplay between knowledge and reality, it aims to build technical and professional capacity and to promote the ethics of sustainability, by establishing exchanges among a wide variety of disciplines and areas of knowledge. The CDS carries out research about the environment and sustainable development, using interdisciplinarity as a basic guideline and as a theoretical, methodological and epistemological reference.

The CDS arose from discussions among UnB faculty members, during the early 1990s, about the need for changes in the traditional design and roles of teaching, research and extension. Several of these faculty members also participated intensively in discussions and collaborations concerning socioenvironmental issues. Participating in these exchanges were, among other institutions, the Ministry of the Environment (MMA), the Brazilian Institute of the Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (IBAMA), the Ministry of Science and Technology (MCT), the National Council of Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq) and the Office for the Training of Higher Education Professionals (CAPES).

This led to the project of creating an interdisciplinary doctoral program in Environmental Management and Policy. The project was started up in 1996, with the creation of the current Graduate Program in Sustainable Development, the PPG-CDS, under CDS management. The graduate program, like the CDS, is linked directly to the office of the UnB President. As a supradepartmental unit, the CDS initially depended on faculty members and collaborators affiliated to different university departments, besides faculty members of other Brazilian universities and scientists from specialized government and non-governmental organizations. Its first major budget allocation came from the important Scientific and Technological Development Support Program (PADCT), managed by the CNPq, Brazil's major science funding institution.

The PPG-CDS is the pioneer graduate program in its area. By 2009, its original doctoral course in Environmental Management and Policy has been expanded to include four masters' courses, two of them also in Environmental Management and Policy, one in Education and Environmental Management, and one in Science and Technology Policy and Management. In 2004, in its eighth year of operation, CAPES ranked the PPG-CDS among the best Brazilian interdisciplinary graduate programs, the federal agency responsible for accreditation and evaluation of higher education programs in Brazil. This ranking has been maintained until 2009.

The first class of PPG-CDS doctoral students was admitted in January of 1996. Classes started in March of that year. The 14th class was recently admitted, in 2009. In 1998, the two first masters' courses admitted their first classes. The two other masters' courses were created in 1999 and in 2006. The PPG-CDS now admits about 45 doctoral and masters' students per year.

In 1998, the PPG-CDS, in another pioneering initiative, offered its first masters' course outside its home city. This was done in association with the State University of Mato Grosso do Sul, in the city of Dourados. A class of 20 local university professors and state and local technicians earned their degrees in 2000. After a second class, also in Dourados, this experience of training masters' students outside Brasília was repeated five other times, in the states of Bahia (four classes) and Amapá (one class), each time in association with a local public university.

About 140 masters' degrees were thus awarded to students residing in those three states, which lack graduate courses in the area of the environment and have severe shortages of qualified

personnel for academic, scientific and management positions. As a consequence of this experience, in October of 2008 the PPG-CDS admitted a class of 12 doctoral students, based in Manaus, capital of the state of Amazonas. This resulted from a partnership with the State University of Amazonas. All 12 students are university professors with master's degrees. Universities from half a dozen other Brazilian states have proposed similar types of partnerships with the PPG-CDS.

The PPG-CDS maintains an active body of around 150 regular doctoral and masters' students per semester. The application process is highly competitive for Brazilian standards – on the average, for each four applicants, only one is accepted. The program has received students from just about every Brazilian state.

As of April of 2009, the PPG-CDS had granted degrees to 102 doctoral and 350 masters' students (including those of the classes held in other states). This means that, since 2000, practically one doctoral or masters degree has been awarded per week. All titles, abstracts, names of authors and advisers are available at the link "Biblioteca" of our Web page. About 70% of the full texts of dissertations and theses are available in PDF format for download at the same location. The titles, the names of advisors, the dates of conclusion and the names of the alumni are available in the link "Diplomados".

By early 2009, the PPG-CDS faculty had about 50 members with different standings, including 12 full-time and 10 part-time UnB professors. Other categories include associate researchers, visiting professors, post-doctoral fellows and lecturers). All have doctoral degrees. Most are qualified to advise doctoral students and all can advise masters' students. The "Docentes" link of our Web page provides the names, titles, CV information and e-mails of all PPG-CDS faculty.

The CDS is frequently summoned to participate in the evaluation of Brazilian policy initiatives, plans and projects, or to conduct research that helps in the design of public policies and community initiatives. For example, in 2005-2006 the CDS had a leading role in a network of research institutions engaged in a long-term prospective project, concerning the options and directions of Brazilian development for the following 20 years.

More information about the CDS the PPG-CDS can be obtained through the link "Downloads / Avaliação do CDS", available in our Web page. It provides access to the full text of an external independent evaluation of the CDS, conducted by a panel of four academicians (one Brazilian, one German, one Chilean and one Canadian), concluded in mid-2006. Also, detailed information about the official yearly evaluations of the PPG-CDS, made by CAPES, is available at <www.capes.gov.br>

II – Full CDS Address and Contact Information

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III - Host institution:

Universidade de Brasília (UnB), Brasília, located in Brazil's Federal District – <http://www.unb.br>

The Universidade de Brasília is one of Brazil's leading research universities and the only public university located in the nation's capital. It has about 1.300 professors, 4.000 graduate students and

21.000 undergraduate students. It has about 40 doctoral courses, 55 masters courses and 61 undergraduate courses.

IV - Areas of Research

Research carried out by the CDS seeks: 1) to provide technological tools for improved environmental planning and management; 2) to integrate professionals from different academic backgrounds; 3) to generate information that contributes to the assessment, quantification, monitoring and prevention of damage to the environment; 4) to respond to social demands regarding environmental and scientific-technological management and policy.

The interdisciplinary study of sustainable development requires new approaches and methodological tools. Research on the **construction of alternative methodologies for sustainable development** reflects the desire of the CDS to create mechanisms for wide and diversified discussion about the possibilities and problems of sustainable development. The CDS seeks to build instruments that, at the same time, contribute to the better understanding of the problems of sustainable development and help shape strategies for its operationalization through public policy

An updated list with brief descriptions of each current research project is available at the CDS Web page, through the link "Projetos de Pesquisa".

Each research project pertains to an institutionally defined "research line", sometimes to two such lines. These seven lines are listed and briefly described below.

1 – Public Policy, Governance and Socioenvironmental Conflicts

Comprises the study of the set of activities in which the state is engaged in its quest to execute functions that express the public interest, with the analysis the several processes involved in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of sustainable development policies

2 – Energy, Waste and Climate Change

This line hosts projects that seek to generate knowledge about the interaction between energy, society, the production of waste and the environment and about its consequences for sustainable development, in search of alternatives for designing, using and evaluating energy systems.

3 – Environmental Education

Includes projects that discuss the epistemological foundations of education in the process of environmental management. This includes the discussion of appropriate philosophical and conceptual frameworks so that the educational dimension can be inserted in environmental management processes.

4 – Science, Technology and Innovation

These projects investigate matters that relate scientific and technological development to sustainable development, together with topics that have high priority in Brazil's system of science, technology and innovation.

5 – Territorial Management, Land Use and Protected Areas

This line is concerned with the generation of knowledge about spatial changes of social, economic, ecosystemic, cultural, political and normative natures that occur in territories affected by developmental processes, looking into their determinations and implications.

6 – Living Conditions and the Environment

Examines how different human-induced transformations of the biodiversity or the sociodiversity of human dwellings cause impacts on the means and conditions for health, sanitation and quality of life of human populations. Emphasis is placed on the Brazilian biomes Cerrado and Amazonia.

7 – Environmental Economy and Businesses

These projects are concerned with the relations between the operation of productive systems and environmental systems, in theoretical-conceptual, methodological and empirical terms, as well as with principles and instruments linked to economic-environmental policies and management.

V – Research, Networks, Partners and Exchange

Exchange between the CDS/PPG-CDS and similar institutions and graduate programs in Brazil has grown and taken a definitive institutional format, through the National Association of Graduate Study and Research on Environment and Society (ANPPAS), established in 2000. The CDS is among the founders of ANPPAS and occupied its Executive Secretariat between 2004 and 2008. It was the main organizer of its III and IV National Meetings (Brasília, May of 2006 and June of 2008). At each event, more than 500 papers and posters were presented. ANPPAS also runs *Ambiente e Sociedade*, Brazil's major scientific journal in the area of environmental studies (see www.anppas.org.br).

The CDS/PPG-CDS also has an expanding range of international contacts, agreements and exchanges, fully listed in the links “Projetos de Pesquisa” and “Cooperação” in our Web page. This includes institutions and research groups based in every South American country, France, Italy, Portugal, European Union and Canada.

VI – Other Teaching and Training Programs

Besides its regular doctoral and masters' courses, the PPG-CDS offers:

- **A co-tutorship graduate program:** This is part of an effort to strengthen academic-scientific relations with other institutions and countries. Co-tutored students are enrolled at once in two graduate programs in different institutions from different countries and earn joint degrees (two doctoral or two masters'), one from each institution. Several non-Brazilian graduate students from South-American countries, from France and from Spain are enrolled at the PPG-CDS under this system. Also, several Brazilian students from PPG-CDS are studying in France and Spain. About 15 students have gone or are currently going through their courses and research work under this system.
- **Specialization level training courses** (short-term graduate courses). There is a constant demand from various institutions for this type of course. The PPG-CDS has awarded about 370 specialist degrees since 2001, earned in nine such courses, designed for different groups of students. These courses are usually organized in cooperation with other institutions – the Federal District Attorney's Office, the Ministry of Agrarian Development, the Ministry of Education etc. Courses have focused on the concept of sustainable development as applied to fields such as of environmental law, environmental education, environmental management, conflict resolution and agricultural extension.

VII - Publications

- All academic and research activities of the CDS/PPG-CDS are regularly disseminated in different media, in Brazil and abroad, either by institutional publications or by individual productions that appear in annals, scientific journals, books and the press.
- In early 2009, the PPG-CDS launched its new scientific journal, entitled *Sustainability Science and Technology – SST*. A description of the journal, instructions to authors and calls for papers for the two first issues can be found in the link “Revista Científica do CDS”, in CDS's Web page.

