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Payment for Ecosystem Services in Brazil: situation and challenges

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Despite Brazil's forceful environmental legislation which has been evolving since the 1930s, the country has not been able to fully achieve sustainable development. The command and control strategies preconized in its laws have been proven to be insufficient. In view of this context and following global trends, some ways to implement economic instruments in environmental management have been discussed since the 1990s. The objective of this study is to present the Brazilian experience in implementing economic instruments as a tool for environmental management and as a promoter of sustainable development. In Brazil, many strategies are being used to implement programs and carry out actions of Payment for Environmental Services (PES), such as: Ecological Sales Tax; Private Nature Reserves; Forestry and Green Grant Programs; REDD projects; Proambiente Program; Water Producer Program; and others. Despite such actions, the lack of some legal basis and adapted governance schemes still represents a limitation; however, several law projects are being discussed in the Brazilian Congress. An example is the one that establishes the Environmental Services National Policy and the PES Federal Program. The need for technical knowledge to support PES policies has emerged as a new challenge, motivating many research projects in the country. As a conclusion, it is important to point out that PES initiatives have multiplied quickly in Brazil and are being used as a complementary tool to promote environmental preservation, the responsible use of natural resources and gradual processes of sustainable agricultural transition. However, there are still some challenges to be met.

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