

CONVERTE-SE:

Newsletter - July 2022



This is the third edition of the Converte-se Project Newsletter. You will find below a summary of the activities developed on both work fronts of the project: the field front and the articulation front.

PROMOTING SMALLHOLDERS' ORGANIC CONVERSION AND MARKET ACCESS

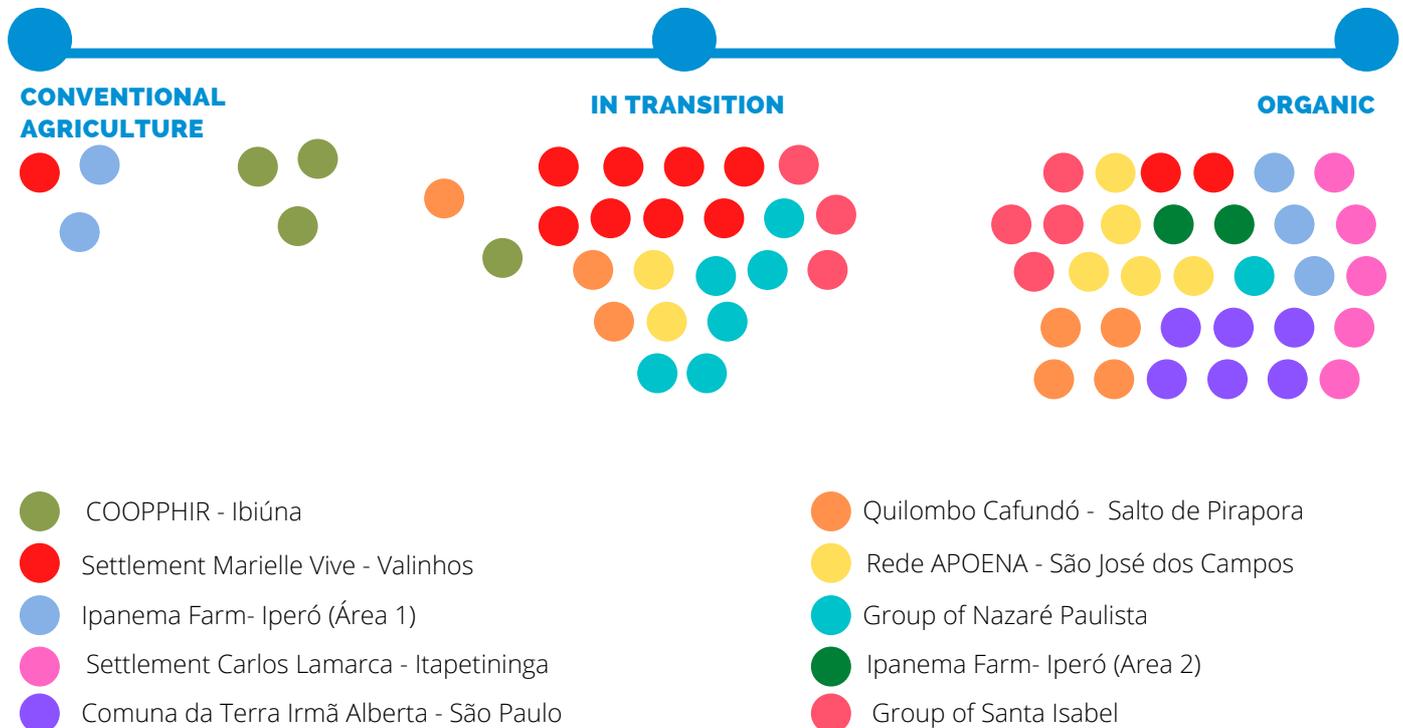
FIELD WORK FRONT

The Converte-se project's **Field Work Front** aims at **promoting, together with smallholders' groups, a cycle of workshops with contents and tools to support their conversion to organic production and access to qualified markets.**

Between **May and June 2022**, the project team continued to conduct technical workshops, guiding farmers in terms of agricultural management and crop cultivation under the organic system. The workshops were also focused on clarifying doubts about audit procedures and documentation for different forms of organic certification.

The ten groups of participating smallholders are very diverse. They have distinct characteristics, which range from whether or not the group is formalized into a cooperative or association, to their expectations regarding the workshops and their main challenges. To illustrate these specificities, the following diagram shows the conversion stages of the participating farmers, according to their own perceptions, drawn up in a participatory and qualitative manner during the project's first round of workshops.

REPRESENTATION OF THE ORGANIC CONVERSION STAGE OF THE PARTICIPATING SMALLHOLDERS GROUPS



SECOND ROUND OF TECHNICAL WORKSHOPS

The **2nd round of technical workshops** was divided into two parts. The first part covered documentation and records that are required on audits to verify organic compliance. Each farmer received a kit containing templates for registering agricultural inputs, a table to list all the crops and their location on the property, a table to register all crop activities and a booklet edited by the Brazilian Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply (MAPA), containing an organic management plan. The main purpose of the workshop was to exercise the registration process in order to cumulate evidence of the organic production system. In addition, the project team was able to learn more about the needs and difficulties of farmers in the context of the territories where they are located.

The activity proposed in the second part of the workshop was to show to the farmers how an organic certification audit process works: which are the questions they make and what kind of evidence they search for. Each workshop was held on the farm of one of the participants of the group, and the project team conducted a visit throughout the farm. During the visit, the participants discussed each aspect that were observed: Issues related to soil management (inputs used / coverage / rotation), pest and disease control, water resources and protection of springs, conservation of native forests and storage of inputs and equipment were discussed.



THIRD ROUND OF TECHNICAL WORKSHOPS

In the **3rd and last round of technical workshops**, the initial moment focused on answering doubts that farmers had on the organic management booklets given to them in the previous workshops. In addition, the project team presented an overview of the different types of organic certification, as well as the procedures required to obtain them. This contributed to the understanding that there are different formats, depending on the profile and goals of each group.

Finally, the project team and the farmers collaboratively drew up action plans as a way of organizing the knowledge obtained and the reflections made thus far and of organizing the next steps in their processes of converting into organic farming and obtaining certification. Based on the challenges mapped out in the previous workshops, four key topics common to all the groups were defined, for which each group built its own action plan: production practices and management; water and water resources; certification; and external and internal agricultural inputs. As a result of this activity, at the end of the workshop, each group was given a table with activities to be carried out, people responsible for leading them and actors in their networks who could contribute as partners to the success of the plan. In addition, each group built an adapted Venn Diagram, that brings together the potential partners mapped out and indicates how close the group is to each actor in their ecosystem. This tool contributes to the definition of the articulation strategy with the mapped actors.

In order to promote the exchange of knowledge and better cohesion between the participating farmers of the project, the project team recorded videos with testimonials and recipes from farmers about their own practices aligned with agroecology and organic farming, such as insect bait, biofertilizer, pruning for fruit trees, living fences, among others. These materials were consolidated and sent to the groups, and a compiled video is available on youtube - to watch it in Portuguese, click on the caption below the photo. This is an important result that was obtained in a participatory manner and which sheds light on the knowledge of family farmers.



[Click here to watch the video "Converte-se - Sharing knowledge and practices".](#)

ARTICULATION WORK FRONT

The **Articulation Work Front** of the **Converte-se** project had thematic meetings with actors from the organic agri-food value chain running from May 2021 to February 2022. The main product of this work front is to **build recommendations on how to turn the value chain more favorable to the organic conversion of family farming**. The executive report of the recommendations, to be published in August 2022, is under construction and is the result of research and discussion with a group of over 50 specialists from various Brazilian organizations working on the topic.

In this context, in line with our goal of exerting an **influential role in favor of smallholder farmers** and positioning the project's main messages on the public policy agenda, FGVces joined, as an invited organization, **the Steering Committee of the São Paulo State Plan for Agroecology and Organic Production (PLEAPO-SP)**, created from the regulation of the São Paulo State Policy for Agroecology and Organic Production (PEAPO-SP). The committee, formed by representatives of the public sector, civil society organizations and the productive sector, has the mission of drafting a plan with programs, actions and targets to strengthen the agroecology and organic production agenda. If approved by the Sectorial Chamber of Ecological Agriculture of the São Paulo State Agriculture and Supply Secretariat (CSAE), it will be implemented by public management in partnership with several players linked to the topic.

This is an important result indicator of the **Converte-se** project and the work of this network of partners, contributing to the advancement of public policies and the Brazilian agenda of organic agriculture.





NEXT STEPS

In the coming months, the project team will continue on the Field work front, with the inauguration of a new stage of workshops, aimed at strengthening management aspects and market access. A cycle of 3 workshops will be conducted with all participating farmer groups.

We will keep the project network updated on the next steps. Once again, we appreciate the interest and trust in this process!

Best,
Converte-se project team

Execution:



Support:

