

Cisterns Program (Programa Cisternas) — National Program to Support Rainwater Harvesting and other Social Technologies for Accessing Water

Thematic area	Food and nutrition security; rural productive inclusion.
Summary	As one of the main components of the Water for All Program , the Cisterns Program is aimed at building concrete plate cisterns for storing water for household consumption and at using water storage techniques to benefit productive activities, as well as building cisterns in rural schools in the Semi-Arid Region.
General objective	Universalize access to water and water use for vulnerable populations living in rural communities that lack this essential public service, that suffer water shortages due to faulty systems or from unpredictable, irregular water availability.
Specific objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Fund the construction of cement plate cisterns for storing water for human consumption; » Foster the expansion of improved ways to access water for food production, thus leading to the productive inclusion of low-income rural families; » Promote access to regular food and water and ensure that both are of a quality and quantity that ensure food and nutritional security; » Strengthen family farming by increasing access to water for agricultural purposes, thereby enabling greater diversity of production; » Improve people's health and reduce the time and effort spent fetching and carrying water.
Year launched	2003.
Key stakeholders	Ministry of Development and Fight against Hunger (MDS) - National Secretariat for Food and Nutrition Security (SESAN).
Other stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » State governments and consortiums of municipalities; » Public banks; » Private not-for-profit entities and organized civil society; » Households benefiting from water management guidance and training and responsible for installation and maintenance of the cisterns.

Management and implementation

The Program includes three initiatives for promoting access to water:

Primeira Água (Water for Consumption) — installation of cisterns for harvesting and storing rainwater for human consumption by low income families living in rural areas with no access to drinking water sources, with priority given to the Semi-Arid Region. This involves simple, low-cost technology, with water captured from the roofs of dwellings via gutters and stored in a 16,000 liter storage tank capable of ensuring enough water for a family of five during the dry season lasting around eight months. In the Amazon Region the household water tanks are smaller (up to 5000 liters) given the more regular rainfall pattern.

Segunda Água (Water for Production) — deployment of social technologies for harvesting and storing rainwater for agricultural purposes on family farms in the Brazilian Semi-Arid Region. Various different techniques are used, including: cisterna calçadão (a much larger version of the cistern for storing drinking water), flood cisterns, underground dams and trench pits, with a capacity of up to 52,000 liters.

Cisterns in the Schools — installation of cisterns for harvesting and storing rainwater for human consumption or for growing food in vegetable gardens in public schools in Brazil's Semi-Arid Region.

The three initiatives involve community mobilization, training, social control and participatory construction and implementation processes typical of the concept of social technology. The Primeira Água initiative involves primarily training people in water management and treatment, and training masons in cisterns construction. The Segunda Água initiative covers technical exchanges and courses in managing simplified irrigation systems. Finally, the *Cisterns in Schools* initiative is aimed at training teachers, students and school cooks in water management, food safety and coping with drought.

In order to implement these actions the MDS signs accords with State governments and public consortiums of municipalities, as well as resource transfer contracts and partnership agreements with not-for-profit private entities.

Target audience

Low income rural families, with priority given to those living in the Brazilian Semi-Arid Region.

Selection criteria for target audience

- » Registration in the Federal Government's Unified Registry for Social Programs.
- » To access the Segunda Água Program the family must have previously received a drinking water cistern.

Coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">» Brazilian Semi-Arid Region (priority): this is a region of high temperatures and generally irregular rainfall, with long periods of drought and sporadic rains focused on a few short months of the year. The Semi-Arid Region covers an area of around 980,000 km² in nine states in the Northeast and Southeast of the country, together comprising 1,134 municipalities and a population of 22 million, of which (according to the 2010 Demographic Census) 8 million live in the rural area.» Rural area of other regions of the country, including indigenous communities and traditional communities and peoples, especially in the North Region of Brazil.
Funding sources	Federal Budget funds linked to the Ministry of Development and Fight against Hunger (MDS).
Supplementary information	Further information can be obtained at: http://mds.gov.br/assuntos/seguranca-alimentar (only in Portuguese).