

Brazil

Overview



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What's happening

28%

Population below international poverty line

€238

per month

National minimum wage

€456

per month

Rural living wage

10%

Agricultural workforce

7%

Agriculture share of GDP

5

very high

Risk to workers' rights

Context

The population of Brazil is around 214 million people.^[1] The country is highly urbanised with 87% of its population living in cities^[2] and only 13% in rural areas.^[3] Agriculture accounts for 7% of Brazil's GDP^[4] and it is estimated that 10% of the population is employed in this sector.^[5]

Since the 1970s, the number of large-scale, commercial farms has continued to increase, and smallholders are estimated to account for 20% of all farmers in Brazil. Nearly 45% of Brazil's agricultural land is held by the largest 1% of Brazil's farms; a reflection of the structural problem of land distribution in Brazil.^[6]

The top grown agricultural commodities in Brazil are sugar cane, soybeans, maize, fresh milk and cassava.^[7] Brazil's top export commodities in terms of quantity commodities are soybeans, maize, raw sugar, soybeans cake and regined sugar.^[8]



Wages

Minimum wage

In Brazil there is a government mandated minimum wage. As of January 2023, the general minimum wage for Brazil is 1,320 Brazilian Reais (238 EUR) per month.^[9] Employers who fail to comply with the national minimum wage are subject to punishment by the government, however, thus far such penalties have not been proven to be successful in ensuring employer compliance.^[10]

Living wage

The **Global Living Wage Coalition** has developed 2 Living Wage Benchmarks based on the Anker methodology, one for Minas Gerais, rural Brazil and one for São Paulo State, non-metropolitan Brazil.

The Global Living Wage Coalition has estimated the living wage for Minas Gerais South/Southwestern Region of rural Brazil to be 2,522 Brazilian Reals per month (456 EUR). This number is based on a family of 4 with 1.71 workers.^[11] The **living wage benchmark** provides context in the rural coffee growing regions of Southern Brazil. The Minas Gerais Southern and Southwestern mesoregion is the world leader in coffee production and is responsible for 24% of Brazil's coffee production, most of which is exported.^[12] Accordingly, the living wage report uses prevailing wages in the coffee sector for comparison with the estimated living wage.^[12]

The Global Living Wage Coalition has developed a **living wage benchmark** for the non-metropolitan areas of São Paulo State in Brazil. The estimated living wage, to afford a basic but decent standard of living for a family of 4 with 1.68 workers, is 3,091 Brazilian reais (558 EUR) per month^[13]. The living wage benchmark focusses on the citrus belt region, but is applicable to all workers living in the non-metropolitan urban areas of the State of São Paulo. The State of São Paulo is one of the main economic hubs of the country, concentrating 33% of the national GDP. It is responsible for 75% of orange production in Brazil and approximately 60% of the world exports of orange juice.

Living income

The **Global Living Wage Coalition** has also developed Living Income Benchmarks for Brazil based on the Anker methodology, focusing on cocoa in coffee growing regions. Published as working papers, the studies looked into six cocoa growing areas in Brazil: South Bahia; East Rondonia; Southwest Pará;

Southeast Pará; North Coast Espírito Santo and Belém metropolitan area; and also for three coffee growing regions in Brazil: Northwest Espírito Santo; Zona da Mata mineira, and Triângulo Mineiro/Alto Paranaíba. The estimated [living income](#) value for a family of 4 persons per month in cocoa growing regions ranged from 2.669 Brazilian reais (482 EUR) in South Bahia, to 3,496 Brazilian reais (631 EUR) in Belém and the metropolitan area.^[14] In the coffee regions, the estimated living income were between 3,283 Brazilian reais (593 EUR) per month in Northwest Espírito Santo, and 3,920 Brazilian reais (708 EUR) in the region of Triângulo Mineiro/ Alto Paranaíba^[15].

What's happening

RESOURCE

[Updated Living Wage Benchmark, Non-Metropolitan Brazil](#)

Updated living wage estimate for the State of São Paulo, Brazil focussing on orange production in the citrus belt. Global Living Wage Coalition, 2022.

RESOURCE

[Updated Living Wage Benchmark, rural Brazil](#)

Updated living wage estimate for Minas Gerais South/Southwestern Region of Brazil focussing on coffee production. Global Living Wage Coalition, 2022.

RESOURCE

[Living Income Benchmark, Brazilian coffee](#)

Living income estimate for cocoa growing regions in Brazil, 2021. Global Living Wage Coalition, 2021.

RESOURCE

[Living Income Benchmark, Brazilian cocoa](#)

Living income estimate for cocoa growing regions in Brazil, 2021. Global Living Wage Coalition, 2021.

RESOURCE

[Living Wage Benchmark, rural Brazil](#)

Living wage estimate for Minas Gerais South/Southwestern Region of Brazil focussing on coffee production. Global Living Wage Coalition, 2019.

RESOURCE

[Living Wage Benchmark, Non-Metropolitan Brazil](#)

Living wage estimate for the State of São Paulo, Brazil focussing on orange production in the citrus belt. Global Living Wage Coalition, 2020.

INITIATIVE

[Improving Living Conditions of Coffee Farmers](#)

Global Coffee Platform collective action initiative aims at improving working conditions, including wages, in the Brazilian coffee sector.

Footnotes

1. World Bank (2021). <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=BR>
2. World Bank (2021). <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.TOTL.IN.ZS?locations=BR>
3. World Bank (2021). <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.RUR.TOTL.ZS?locations=BR>
4. World Bank. (2021). <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NV.AGR.TOTL.ZS?locations=BR>
5. World Bank. (2021). <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.AGR.EMPL.ZS?locations=BR>
6. FAO. (2015). The economic lives of smallholder farmers. <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5251e.pdf>
7. FAOSTAT. (2020). http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#rankings/commodities_by_country
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9. WageIndicator Foundation. (2022). <https://wageindicator.org/salary/minimum-wage/brazil/23075-general-minimum-wage>
10. U.S. Department of State. (2019). <https://www.state.gov/reports/2018-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/brazil/>
11. Global Living Wage Coalition. (2022). https://www.globallivingwage.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Updatereport_Brazil_Southern-Minas-Gerais_July2021-Final.pdf
12. Global Living Wage Coalition. (2018). https://www.globallivingwage.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Living_Wage_Benchmark_Report_Brazil.pdf
13. Global Living Wage Coalition (2022). Updated Living Wage Report-Non-Metropolitan Brazil: State of São Paulo. https://www.globallivingwage.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Updatereport_Brazil_State-of-Sao-Paulo_February2021-Final.pdf
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15. Global Living Wage Coalition (2021) https://www.globallivingwage.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Living-Income-Estimates-for-Coffee-Brazil_72228.pdf