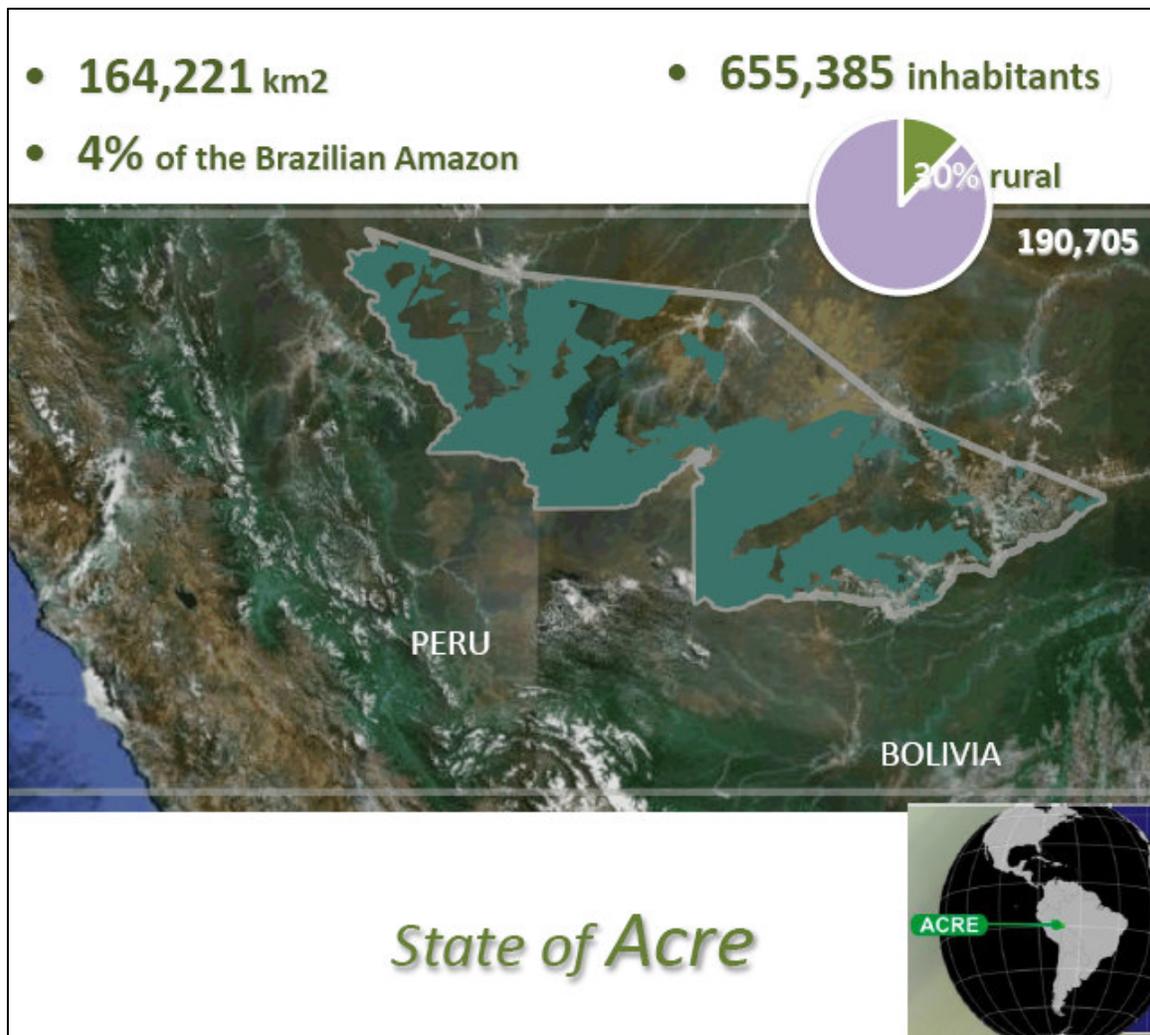


Acre: sustainable development and reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in the Brazilian Amazon

Acre state, although one of the poorest and most isolated states in Brazil, has experienced substantial economic growth over the last decade while also controlling deforestation. Stable leadership and commitment to good governance enabled the state to grow and improve social indicators while beginning to create the institutional basis for a sustainable forest-based economy. Real GDP grew about 18% from 2002–2006 while deforestation rates fell 44% over the same periodⁱ. About 88% of Acre’s 164,221 km² remain forested, and 44% of the state is in protected areas such as indigenous lands, parks and extractive reserves. Since ex-Governor Jorge Viana initiated the “Government of the Forest” in 1998, about 3.7% of the state has been deforested. Over the same period, 11.8% of neighboring Rondonia was cleared, while the Amazon region lost about 4.75% of its forests.



Acre approved its Economic and Ecological Zoning plan in 2006, regulating economic activities in the 12% of the state already deforested and establishing parameters for sustainable forestry management and harvest of non-timber forest products in forested regions. The state has also launched an ambitious Program for Valuing Environmental Assets, including best practices and certification for agriculture, cattle ranching, logging and family farming in already cleared or altered areas, and forest management in intact forests. In 2008, the state adopted a deforestation reduction target, calculated as Acre's contribution to Brazil's national target of an 80% reduction below average rates from 1996 – 2006 by 2020.

Good governance has been key to Acre's progress towards sustainable development. The Workers' Party (PT) in Acre, in office since 1998, has a particularly strong commitment to forest protection and sustainability. The PT in Acre was founded by rubber tapper and union leader Chico Mendes (assassinated by cattle ranchers in 1988), current Senator Marina Silva (federal Minister of Environment 2003 – 2008) and others who saw development alternatives for the state as a very high priority. They viewed officially supported frontier expansion through extensive cattle ranching and agricultural colonization projects as both environmentally destructive and ineffective development strategies. Their governance strategy is based on improving infrastructure and services for the urban population (69% of the state's population), combating organized crime and government corruption, and *florestania* (a combination of the Portuguese words for "forest" and "citizenship", *floresta* and *cidadania*), or the principle that poor and isolated forest communities have the right – and corresponding responsibility – to fully participate in the state's social, economic and political life.

Acre's current capabilities in monitoring and measuring emissions from deforestation, rigorous law enforcement and innovative incentive programs for sustainable development put the state well ahead of the curve in REDD readiness. With the right policy signals and incentives Acre can put its statewide REDD program into action now.

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¹ In relation to the annual average over the decade 1996 – 2005.