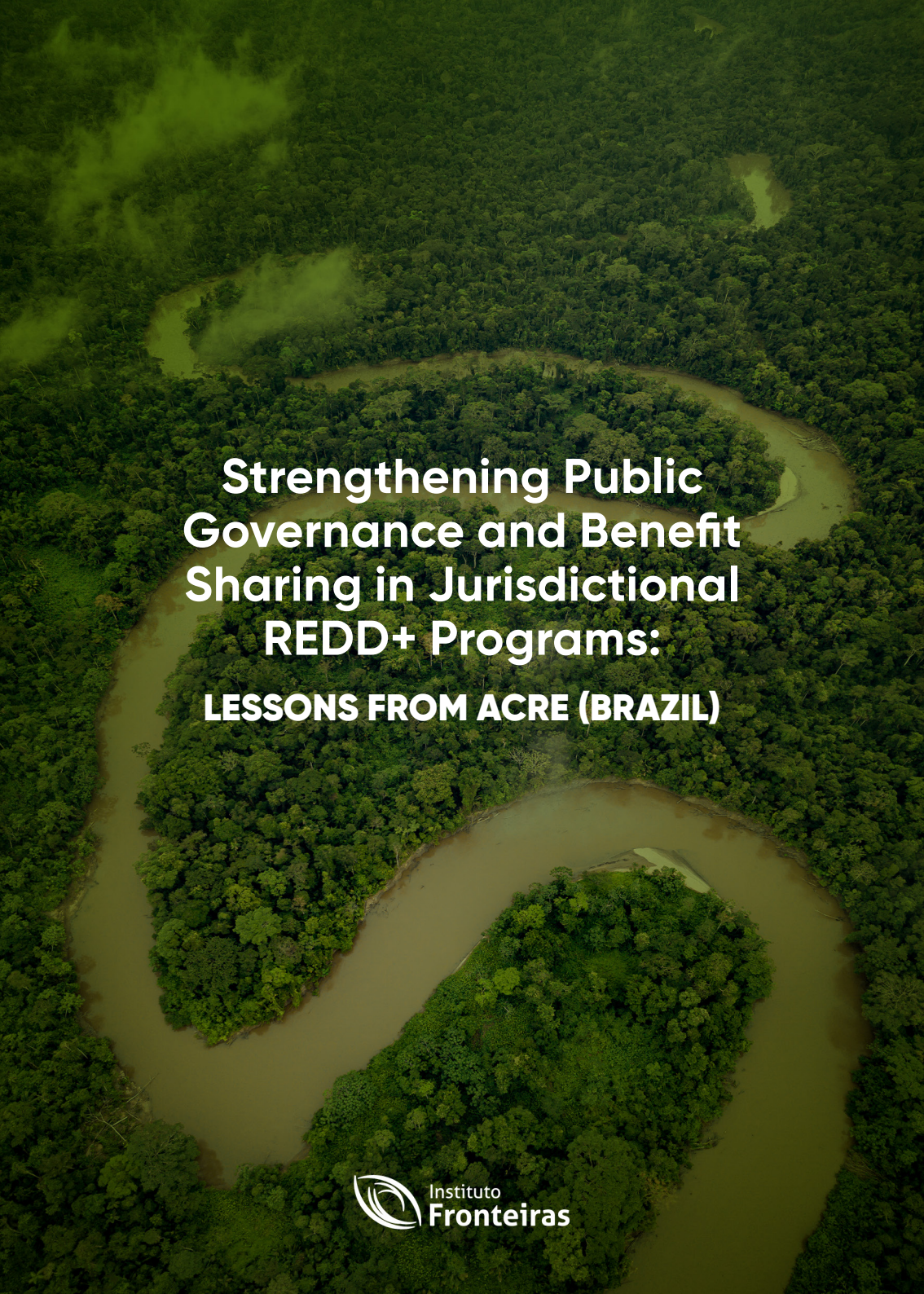

Strengthening Public Governance and Benefit Sharing in Jurisdictional REDD+ Programs:

LESSONS FROM ACRE (BRAZIL)

Instituto Fronteiras

Dados Internacionais de Catalogação na Publicação (CIP)
(Câmara Brasileira do Livro, SP, Brasil)

Dilascio, Karla Sessin
Fortalecendo a governança e a repartição de benefícios em programas jurisdicionais de REDD+ [livro eletrônico] : lições do Acre (Brasil) / Karla Sessin Dilascio, Charles Borges Rossi. -- Cruzeiro do Sul, AC : Instituto Fronteiras, 2025.
PDF

Bibliografia.
ISBN 978-65-993929-5-5

1. Acre (AC) - Aspectos políticos 2. Comunidades tradicionais 3. Finanças públicas 4. Governança pública 5. Quilombolas - Brasil 6. Redução de Emissões por Desmatamento e Degradação florestal (REDD) I. Rossi, Charles Borges. II. Título.

25-277257 CDD-354

Índices para catálogo sistemático:

1. Governança pública administrativa 354

Eliane de Freitas Leite - Bibliotecária - CRB 8/8415

AUTHORS
Karla Sessin-Dilascio
Charles Borges-Rossi
Fiama Natacha Lima de Oliveira

RESEARCH SUPPORT
Samile de Souza Oliveira
Lucas Silva dos Santos
João Victor de Oliveira Souza

Support

WORLD RESOURCES INSTITUTE

Overseas Resources Foundation LTD.

Partners

SSN TOWARDS CLIMATE RESILIENCE

HUAIROU COMMISSION Women, Homes & Community

GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

SUMMARY

INDEX OF TABLES AND FIGURES

TABLES

FIGURES

SUMMARY

This report analyzes the limits and potential of public governance of the policy to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD) and benefit sharing in Jurisdictional REDD+ Programs (PJRE) in Brazil, focusing on the case of the state of Acre (PJRE/AC). Starting from the perspective of public governance based on institutional arrangements with the participation of state, civil society and market actors for the management of this policy, and considering results orientation as one of its normative foundations, the PJRE/AC is analyzed from the point of view of its effectiveness, efficacy and legitimacy. The activities of this program, understood as a public policy, imply the duty of the state to ensure its continuous existence, effectiveness and universal supply, without this necessarily meaning that it is provided on an exclusive basis. The analysis presented here uses qualitative and quantitative approaches based on information available in official documents, meeting minutes and interviews with representatives of indigenous peoples and local communities (PICL) to investigate how the institutional arrangements and procedural governance instruments of this policy have impacted on the effectiveness, efficacy and legitimacy of resource management, essential components for satisfactory performance in terms of its public governance.

Although the PJRE/AC is aligned with international REDD+ guidelines and has a governance system that is considered robust from a formal point of view, the empirical data available points to a disconnect between the principles of equity and the concrete results of the program in light of its intended objectives. The benefit-sharing methodology based on the "programmatic stock-flow" logic privileged actors with the supposed capacity to present "deforestation reductions"

the detriment of groups that traditionally conserve the forest, such as indigenous peoples.

On the other hand, the management performance indicators revealed that the declared budget execution results fell far short of what had been planned, and that the indicators presented in the annual reports did not show a clear causal link with the vectors of the program's theory of change and with the determinants of deforestation and forest degradation. On the contrary, the analysis indicates that the years with the highest financial execution coincided with peaks in deforestation in the period ($r = 0.97$), low frequency of participatory meetings ($r = -0.78$) and institutional instability in the program's management body (IMC). This pattern reveals a dissociation between budget execution (efficiency in the use of resources) and social control, raising doubts about the effectiveness and legitimacy of the program. The strong positive correlation between financial execution and deforestation was particularly alarming, suggesting that the resources not only failed to contain the advance of deforestation, but coincided with its intensification, compromising the effectiveness and institutional legitimacy of the PJRE/AC as a public policy.

The study proposes, as an alternative to improve the performance and delivery of REDD+ as an effective public policy, the transition from procedural governance centered on the Public Administration in charge of the State to decentralized and empowered participatory governance. This approach is based on substantive deliberation, decentralization of decision-making and strengthening the institutional capacities of the PICL, and is crucial to ensuring that the efforts made to achieve results translate into greater effectiveness of the principles guiding state action in this area.

INTRODUCTION

Among the various REDD+ institutional arrangements present in Brazil (Figure 1), jurisdictional REDD+ programs have grown in number and diversity in their governance arrangements. In Brazil, this process began with the creation of the Amazon Fund in 2008, as a jurisdictional financing arrangement for direct or indirect forest protection to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (Correa et al., 2019). The proposal to promote structural changes aimed at reducing deforestation and fires coupled with state funding to achieve effective changes in land use change has mobilized sub-national governments in the Amazon into strategic networks, especially the Governors' Climate and Forests Task Force (GCF Task Force)[1], with the aim of attracting REDD+ resources to their states. At both the national and state levels, the application of the payment-by-results methodology to measure REDD+ efforts at the jurisdictional level was consolidated.

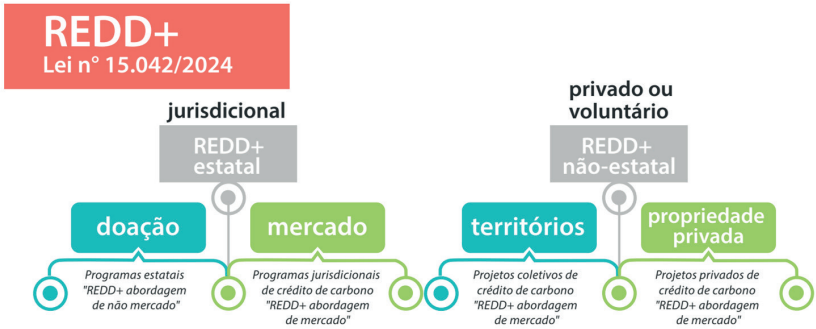

Figure1 . REDD+ architecture in Brazil (Sessin-Dilascio et al., 2025).

[1] https://www.gcftf.org/

The growth in the number of jurisdictional state REDD+ programs (PJRE), through the transfer of non-repayable funds or the sale of carbon credits, has been consolidated as a climate finance agenda in the Amazon for sub-national governments. Initially, these programs presented theories of systemic change and long-term programmatic alignment for land use changes to reduce GHG emissions and conserve the forest. In practice, however, the application of resources on different fronts did not always present a causal link with the primary objectives of the program (Correa et al., 2019; McLaren et al., 2025).

Another controversial point in these programs concerns the rarely equitable sharing of benefits involving the various providers of ecosystem services, especially indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLC). Even though they are responsible for USD 1.16 trillion in ecosystem services, IPLC are still the groups that face the greatest difficulty in accessing the benefits of REDD+ and other payment for ecosystem services ((McLaren et al., 2025)PES) programs.

There are several limiting factors related to equitable access to the benefits of ERDP for IPLC. Equity and benefit sharing have been identified as key elements for the success of PES programs, increasing gains in forest protection (Di Gregorio et al., 2013; McDermott et al., 2013; Pascual et al., 2010). In this report, we will focus the discussion on the programmatic factors present in ERYPs that limit equity and benefit sharing for IPLC.

Based on the case study of the PJRE in the state of Acre (PJRE/AC), we identified that procedural governance, understood as an approach to public governance centered on the notion of Public Administration and focused on formality and compliance with norms , proved to be

limiting in terms of obtaining effective and equitable results, and needed to be complemented or transcended by a more participatory approach oriented towards real impacts (Kulovesi et al., 2024).

In similar situations, the literature recognizes that participation, empowerment and deliberation processes geared towards practice can generate gains in equity and the distribution of responsibilities, improving local public policies. In this sense, authors such as Fung and Wright (2003) have emphasized that empowered participatory governance (PEG) focused on the analysis of empirical experiences aimed at solving concrete problems and supported by local participation for the creation of deliberative decision-making processes can substantially increase the effectiveness, efficacy and legitimacy of these policies.

Based on these concepts, we analyzed the procedural governance instruments of the PJRE/AC (Figure 2), comparing them with the results presented in the PJRE/AC reports to identify limiting and facilitating factors for achieving the impacts envisaged in this program's theory of change (ToM). Our analysis suggests that when it comes to subnational PJREs, an excessive focus on the procedural governance of the Public Administration can be a limiting factor in achieving substantial results in terms of equity and the sharing of ICLP benefits, weakening the efficacy, effectiveness and legitimacy of the program as envisaged in its ToM. The transition from this paradigm of procedural governance (Kulovesi et al., 2024) to one of empowered participatory governance (Fung & Wright, 2003) could enable an institutional environment that is better suited to the program's intended objectives.

METHOD

The analysis proposed here is based on an in-depth case study (Schwandt & Gates, 2018) of the governance system of the PJRE in the state of Acre (PJRE/AC). The PJRE/AC was the first subnational REDD+ program in the Brazilian Amazon and is considered a benchmark for subnational states, especially for its governance model (Da Conceição & Börner, 2020).

Created in 2010 with the approval of the state law that established the Acre Environmental Services Incentive System (SISA - State Law No. 2.308) and the Carbon Environmental Services Incentive Program, the PJRE/AC uses the payment-by-results methodology to measure the amount of carbon equivalent to be traded via the voluntary market or through donations. In 2012, the state government signed an agreement with to receive 25 million euros from the German government to develop its PJRE. In 2018, a second phase of this contract was signed, now with the collaboration of Germany and the United Kingdom, with a duration of up to 2022, extended to 2024 in the amount of 30 million euros.

The SISA Law establishes a system of governance and social participation centered on the program's State Validation and Monitoring Commission (CEVA), connected to the program's ombudsman and the respective Indigenous and Women's Thematic Chambers. CEVA's role is to validate and monitor the actions of the Acre State Institute for Climate Change and Regulation of Environmental Services (IMC), which is operationally responsible for the PJRE/AC, with the support

program's Scientific Committee. In its role, the IMC mobilizes the state secretariats to implement the programs planned by the PJRE/AC (Figure2).

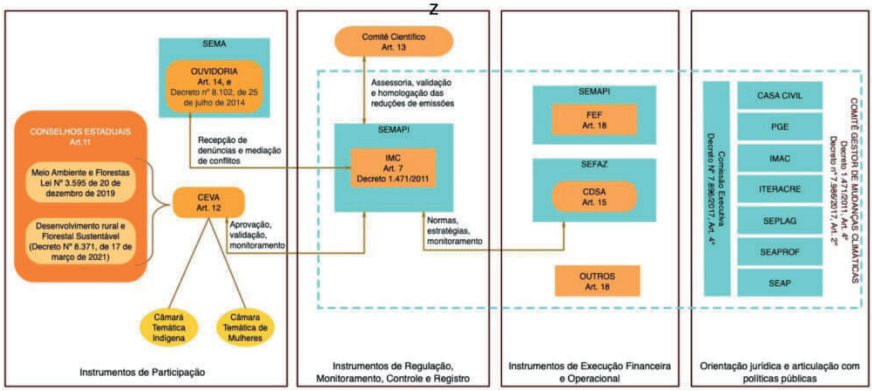

Figure2 . Procedural governance structure of the PJRE/AC focused on the actions of the Public Administration at the state level.[2]

In this work, the governance of the PJRE/AC is evaluated based on GPE (empowered participatory governance) indicators according to the methodology proposed by Dilascio, Rossi and Sinisgalli, (2022) collected from 117 minutes of the PJRE/AC's social participation instrument between 2011 and 2024. A categorical content analysis (Bardin, 2011) was also carried out to evaluate the instruments provided for in the program's governance structure: the 1) "instrument of regulation, monitoring, control and registration"; the 2) "instruments of financial and operational execution" and 3) the "legal guidance and articulation with public policies" based on information from the annual activity reports available for phase I and phase II of the PJRE/AC, a total of 7 (seven) annual and 6 (six) financial reports, as well as from all the technical documents (a total of 17) available on

[2] Source: https://cdsabusiness.com.br/sisa/

the PJRE/AC transparency portals, for the period from 2010 to 2024[3] .

In addition to these 147 documents, ten (10) open-ended interviews were also conducted with managers involved in the program between January and April 2025 to delve deeper into specific themes in the documents, strengthening the hypotheses related to the functioning of the procedural governance of the PJRE/AC in the period. Finally, 5 (five) workshops were organized with representatives of IPLC on the subject of equity in the sharing of benefits in the associated governance systems.

RESULTS

The policy's focus on benefit sharing methodologies that prioritize the allocation of financial resources to groups close to the carbon flow vectors in land use conversion processes over those close to the carbon stock vectors maintained in intact forests was pointed out by the PICL in the interviews and workshops as a limiting factor for the fair and equitable alignment of the PJRE/AC's benefits. In the design of the program, the PJRE/AC phase II benefit sharing divided the available

[3] Document source: https://programarem.ac.gov.br/ ; https://programarem.ac.gov.br/
[4] "Based on historical data, what would be emitted in the future if there were no intervention, the FREL, is estimated. Current emissions are compared with the FREL to determine the reductions achieved, the results are verified by independent entities and the surplus between the FREL and actual emissions corresponds to the amount of carbon avoided and eligible for payment." (Sessin-Dilascio et al, 2025, 39p.).

resources less between groups focused on maintaining carbon stocks (e.g. indigenous peoples) and more towards those closer to the vectors of carbon flow through deforestation and forest degradation processes (e.g. family farmers and cattle ranchers).

In this division, 12% of the total resources were earmarked for the stock, while 58% were earmarked for the flow, with the remaining 30% being earmarked for maintaining the government structures responsible for operationalizing the PJRE/AC management processes and governance system (SEPLAN, 2021). The program's technical reports substantiate these percentages based on the proposed impact on reducing deforestation and degradation predicted by the PJRE/AC's theory of change (Figure3).

Also from the point of view of the program's design, this impact is measured by a payment-by-results methodology that quantifies the avoided emissions of carbon- equivalent in the jurisdiction's historical deforestation series, identifying the dynamics of deforestation and degradation based on the identification of stock and flow areas (Sessin-Dilascio, Borges-Rossi and Sinisgalli, 2025).

The PJRE/AC relied on this programmatic stock-flow methodology to define the percentages of benefit sharing, seeking to guarantee the reduction of deforestation and forest degradation and the maintenance of the stock in a long-term vision aligned with the state's public policies (Moutinho & Guerra, 2017). In this sense, the programmatic stock-flow informed the distribution of benefits from phases I and II of the PJRE/AC in the period between 2012 and 2024 (SEPLAN, 2021).

Figure3 . Theory of change (ToM) of the PJRE/A-phase II (SEPLAN, 2021).

As for the results of implementing the program's initiatives, the data shows that this strategy has not produced satisfactory results in terms of the policy's objectives. In fact, when considering the information in the program's annual activity and audit reports, the mere forecasting of benefit sharing based on the stock-flow methodology associating the proportions of the categories (sustainable livestock, indigenous peoples, family farming, SISA mechanism) with their proximity to the causes of deforestation and forest degradation did not prove to be a sufficient condition to guarantee the results of the Theory of Change (ToM) of the PJRE/AC - phase II program in the period from 2019 to 2022.

Firstly, because these reports focused on publishing anecdotal indicators such as the number of people/properties assisted, the number of improvements, training courses provided and food baskets donated or grants for agroforestry agents, without, however, presenting the

relationship between these indicators and the actual desired results in terms of reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation for each category in relation to the forest stock-flow dynamic. Secondly, because it was not possible to identify the method used to measure the results presented a posteriori, there was little correlation between these results and the impact predicted by the ToM. Thus, in a nutshell, the consolidation of the results published in the annual reports in Table 1 proved to be anecdotal and disconnected from effective impact measures, contrary to what the program's Theory of Change establishes (Figure 3).

Table1 . Consolidation of the results declared in the PJRE/AC/phase II annual reports.

	Beneficiaries			Government (30%)	TOTAL
	Livestock (25%)	Family farming (33%)	Indigenous Peoples (12%)		
No. of municipalities served	15	10	11	11	47
No. of properties served	178	624	-	-	802
No. of people assisted	2458	8598	12516	2120	25692
No. of infrastructure built	18	5	92	-	115
No. of trainings	-	93	16	409	518
No. of basic food baskets donated	-	2199	5609	-	7808
No. of grants	-	-	399	-	399
No. of seedlings donated				3530	3530
No. of inspection operations				1754	1754
No. of fire outbreaks identified				9098	9098
Volume of seized wood (m3)				84,38	84,38

Source: Prepared by Instituto Fronteiras.

In line with these arguments, the analysis of deforestation dynamics in the state of Acre for the period from 1990 to 2025 reinforced the misalignment between the ToM and the project results, with a significant increase in deforestation in the state starting in 2018 (PJRE/AC--phase II), with a peak in 2021, approaching the historical series of the pre-2000s (Figure 4)

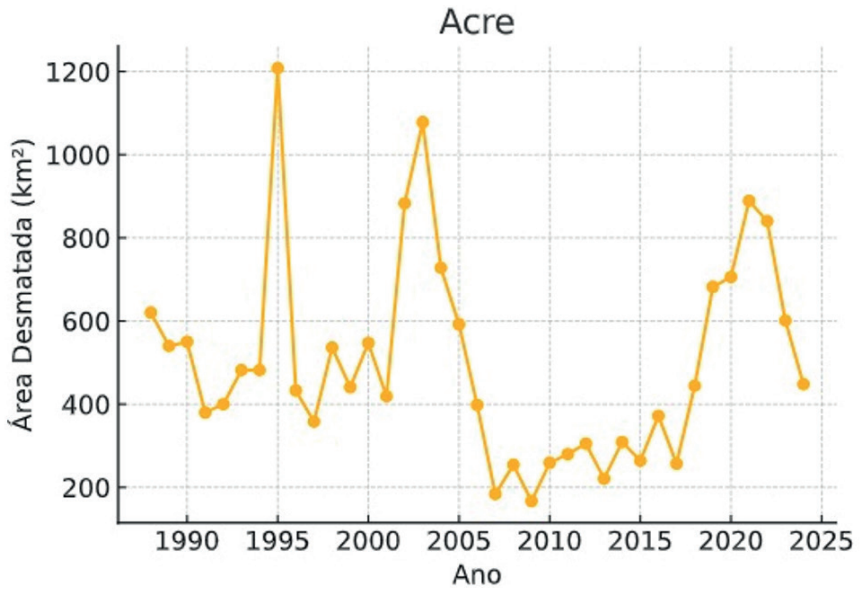

Figure4 . History of deforestation in the state of Acre.
(Source: prepared by Instituto Fronteiras based on MapBiomas).

Thus, although the distribution of benefits established according to the above-mentioned criteria was formally aligned with the PJRE/AC--phase II ToM and its "regulation, monitoring, control and registration instrument" (Figure2), the implementation data presented points to a misalignment between the expected results in terms of reducing deforestation and forest degradation, the main objective of the policy, with a context of poorly qualified management dominated by the occasional implementation of short-range assistance activities, such as the distribution of agricultural inputs to rural producers, the occasional construction of improvements and the donation of basic food baskets.

More specifically during phase II of the program, the resources made available (30 million euros) over the period (4 years) did not show a positive contribution to the problem of emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in the jurisdiction, observations that seem in line with what was described in the context of a policy with similar objectives, the Amazon Fund, in the analysis of the results of its 10 years in Correa et al. (2019).

Unfortunately, low transparency in access to annual reports, audits and technical documents in the years prior to 2018 restricted our analysis, removing the PJRE/AC-phase I period from the focus of this work.

When we take into account the analysis of effectiveness in spending the resources of the "financial and operational execution instruments" (Figure2), we analyze the execution rate of the subprograms (Figure5), which compares planned spending with actual spending. The "sustainable livestock farming" sub-program, for example, performed relatively more stable and better in some years.

The "family farming" and "strengthening SISA" sub-programs fluctuated more and often fell below the average, suggesting difficulties in executing expenditure under these headings. The "indigenous peoples" sub-program showed modest and little variation in performance, with execution generally below 50% of what was planned. None of the four sub-programs reached 100% execution, indicating systematic under-utilization of budgeted resources even in periods of worsening deforestation and fires.

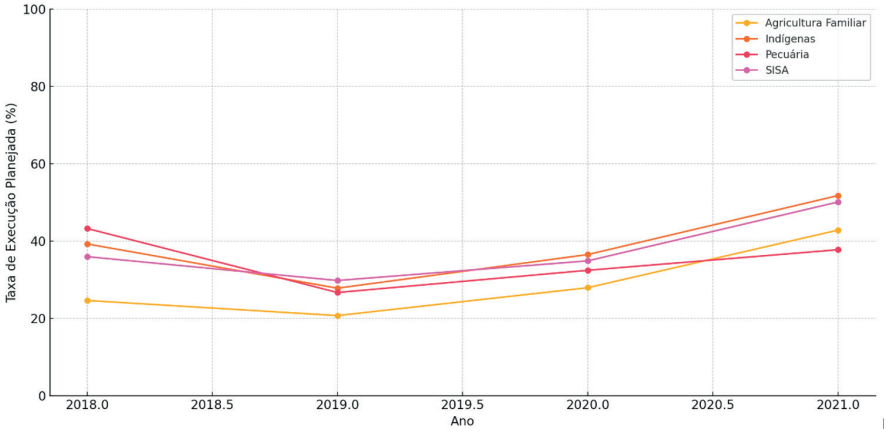

Figure5 . Evolution of the budget execution rate in relation to the annual budget, by subprogram.

Inconsistencies were also identified between the financial data declared in the annual activity reports and the figures reported in the external financial audit reports between 2019 and 2022.

In this regard, Figure 6 shows the compliance rate of the amounts spent by the sub-programs declared in the annual reports by year, represented by the 100% line on the vertical axis, compared to the amounts actually recognized by the external audits carried out, showing audited amounts far below the executed amounts declared in the activity reports.

On average for the period, we found that the amounts spent audited represented only 41.38% of the amounts reported in the annual reports, represented in the graph by the dotted red line.

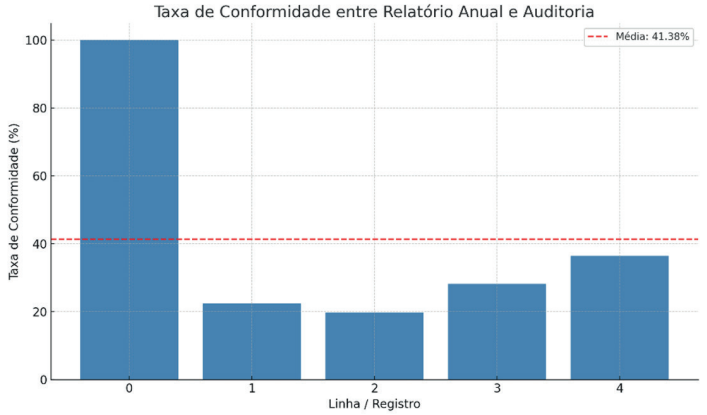

Figure6 . Compliance rate between annual and audit reports.

With the exception of 2018 (the first year of the period analyzed, represented on the horizontal axis of the graph), when the audited expenses coincided with the accountability of the respective annual activity report, all the following years were characterized by a large discrepancy between the audited expenses and the reported expenses.

This evidence points to problems in the management of the policy which can range, at best, from double-counting of expenses incurred within each sub-program, to more serious financial management problems which were not validated by the audits due to a lack of adequate documentation of the contracts and expenses incurred. It is beyond the scope of this work, however, to conclusively point out the precise nature of the irregularities found, let alone the possible responsibilities of those involved.

In any case, the mere observation of these indications supports the thesis of the need for a closer look at the public governance of this

policy that transcends the administrative culture of the state's bureaucratic apparatus in favor of a perspective that recognizes a greater role for the democratic participation of civil society and the impacted communities.

In the original design of the policy, this need would have been met by the "instruments for social participation" component provided for in its original governance structure. However, when we analyze the minutes of CEVA, CTI and CTM, which record the activities carried out under this component, the excessive concentration of decision-making processes in the political center of the state, far from the territories where the forest carbon stock-flow dynamic takes place, is evident. In fact, of the 117 meetings analyzed, only 3 were held away from the government headquarters in the state capital, and with few representatives close to the daily life of the territories, not to mention the ever greater presence of representatives from government agencies to the detriment of the other sectors covered by the policy, as shown in Figure 7 .

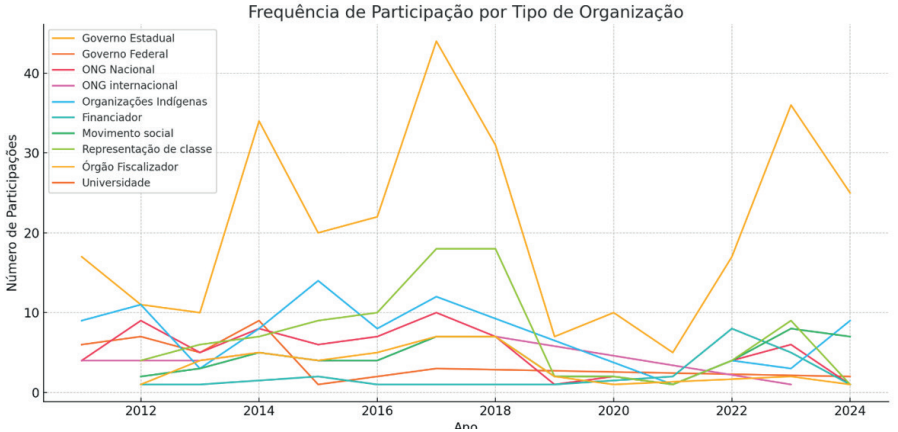

Figure7 . Frequency of participation in PJRE/AC governance meetings.

In this way, the instability caused by electoral cycles that change the composition of the political groups that govern the state of Acre has had a detrimental effect on the priorities and strategies within the PJRE/AC, affecting both social participation and efficiency and compliance in the spending of resources for this program. In this sense, the graph at Figure8 consolidates the data on the frequency of social participation meetings (CEVA, CTI, CTM) in the blue bars, with the instability of the IMC portrayed by the continuous change of presidency (red line), and the relationship between the spending declared in the annual reports (green line) and the spending audited (yellow line).

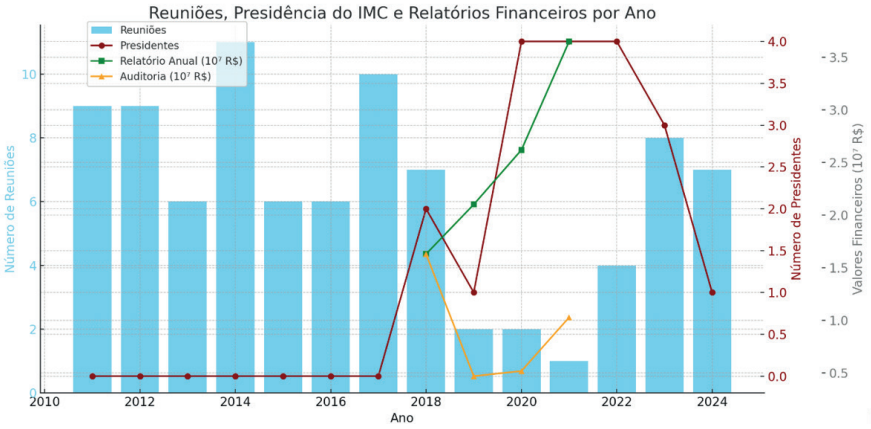

Figure8 . Cross-referencing of meeting attendance data, IMC institutional instability, and financial data from annual and audit reports.

The frequency of meetings of the SISA Governance Chamber between 2018 and 2023 shows variations that directly reflect the instability in the composition of the governing body of the Institute for Climate Change (IMC). It can be seen that the years with the greatest turnover in the IMC presidency, such as 2021 and 2022, coincide with a

significant reduction in the number of meetings held, for example. This trend suggests that successive changes in the body's leadership compromise the full functioning of the spaces for collective deliberation and social participation.

Even the context of the COVID-19 pandemic does not adequately explain these losses. This is because, even in the expectation of a generalized drop in the activity of participatory forums from the beginning of 2020, when the pandemic breaks out, we see a negligible drop in the number of meetings in the governance of the PJRE/AC this year, with the year 2021 seeing the sharpest drop in the frequency of meetings, already in a context of the existence of technological alternatives made possible by the widespread adoption of digital platforms and the spread of hybrid meetings and partial return of the activities of government bodies.

This year also saw the highest number of replacements of the IMC presidency in the entire period, which coincides with the sharp drop in the frequency of meetings compared to 2020. Paradoxically, the financial execution data in 2021 and 2022 show a significant increase in both the amounts reported in the annual reports and the audited amounts, pointing to indications of misuse in the management of these resources in the period.

This indication is reinforced when analyzing the frequency of social participation in the PJRE/AC governance system in relation to the state's deforestation rates in the period, with a clear inverse correlation between the frequency of social participation and the state's deforestation rate in these years (Figure 9).

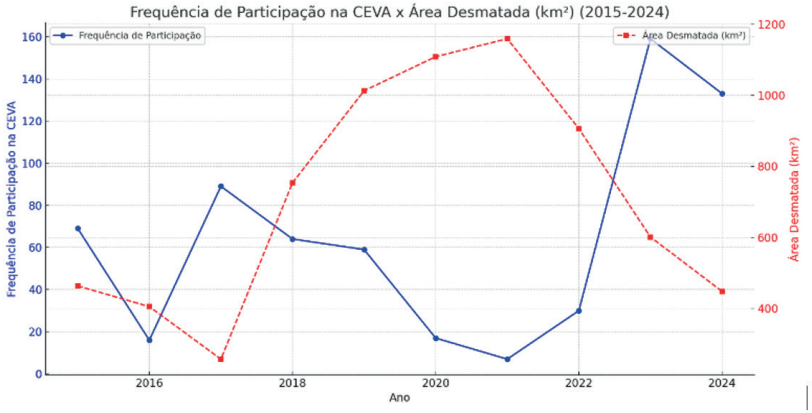

Figure9 . Correlation between frequency of meetings of the PRJE/AC social participation governance system and deforestation rate in the state of Acre.

In this sense, the correlation (Pearson) observed between the frequency of meetings of the PRJE/AC governance system, financial execution and deforestation rates are presented below in Table 2 .

Table2 . The Pearson correlation matrix reveals significant statistical relationships between social participation (meetings), financial execution and deforestation in Acre.

Cross-variables	Correlation (r)	Interpretation
Meetings × Financial Execution	**-0.78**	Strong negative correlation: when spending increases, there tend to be fewer meetings - suggesting a dissociation between execution and participation
Meetings × Deforestation	**-0.68**	Moderate negative correlation: less social participation is associated with more deforestation
Financial Execution × Deforestation	**0.G7**	Very strong positive correlation: the more spent, the greater deforestation - possibly a reflection of execution without effective governance

This statistical analysis reveals a strong negative correlation between the frequency of meetings and the amounts spent from the PJRE/AC budget (r = -0.78).

This result suggests that the periods of greatest financial disbursement are also the periods in which participatory meetings are least held, which raises important questions about the nature and conduct of this expenditure. Instead of strengthening deliberative spaces and coordination between agencies and civil society, budget execution seems to have taken place in parallel with the governance bodies provided for in the program. The negative correlation between meetings and deforestation ($r = -0.68$) reinforces this. Years with less social participation coincide with the worst deforestation indicators, such as 2021, which recorded only one meeting and a deforested area of 889 km², the largest in the entire period analyzed. The lack of inter-institutional coordination and social control in these years seems to have weakened the system's ability to promote preventive or corrective actions in the face of pressure on the forest.

Even more alarming is the almost perfect positive correlation between financial execution and deforestation ($r = 0.97$). In theory, greater public spending should reflect investments in enforcement, more effective command and control policies, incentives for sustainable production and institutional strengthening. However, the data suggests that the resources spent not only failed to contain the advance of deforestation, but coincided with its intensification. This may indicate a deviation between the stated purpose of the program's budget and its actual application, or the presence of structural bottlenecks that prevent the conversion of resources into environmental results. In our opinion, these results show a weakness in the institutional arrangement of the PJRE/AC in which the increase in spending of the system is not being accompanied by a strengthening of the intended results and associated

social participation, but rather by an increase in deforestation and the absence of mechanisms to ensure integration between public finances and participatory governance in the context of this policy. When resources are used without the backing of transparent and deliberative processes, there is a risk of feeding an opaque and formalistic form of governance which, above all, is ineffective when faced with the challenges of environmental conservation. Instead of acting as a conservation mechanism, the financial resources seem to be being executed in a way that is dissociated from the instances of social control and deliberation, which compromises the environmental effectiveness and institutional legitimacy of the PJRE/AC.

DISCUSSION

The results presented reveal a mismatch between the PJRE/AC's planned objectives and its practical implementation. Although the program adopts a robust institutional architecture aligned with formal procedural governance, as outlined by Kulovesi et al. (2024), its effectiveness in achieving the equity and conservation results envisaged in its Theory of Change (ToM) is limited by failures in its execution, evaluation and lack of institutional learning. This gap highlights the risks of governance that is excessively guided by norms and procedures, but disconnected from the social, territorial and political dynamics that shape real access to benefits by Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLC).

The empirical analysis of the PJRE/AC benefit sharing demonstrates how the programmatic stock-flow methodology, although technically coherent, has resulted in the marginalization of groups with a low capacity to generate an immediate "flow" of deforestation reduction, such as indigenous peoples. The procedural focus on quantifiable performance criteria, such as the number of deforested hectares avoided, obscured other forms of environmental contribution, such as the continuous protection of large areas of forest, historically guaranteed by indigenous and extractivist communities. The consequence has been an asymmetrical distribution of resources, disproportionate to the importance of these groups in maintaining ecosystem services.

In addition, the data shows that budget execution has, at various times, been dissociated from the instances of governance and social control, which compromises the legitimacy of the decision-making process and its ability to produce sustainable change. The strong correlation between increased spending and growth in deforestation ($r = 0.97$), coupled with the reduction in the frequency of participatory meetings in years of institutional instability, reinforces the argument that the lack of substantive social participation compromises the environmental effectiveness of the program. As pointed out by Fung & Wright (2003), empowered participatory governance - that which is anchored in public deliberation, power-sharing and concrete problem-solving - can generate more consistent and lasting impacts on the formulation and implementation of public policies.

In this sense, the case of Acre reveals the urgency of moving from governance centered on formal compliance with rules and procedures to an institutional arrangement that effectively values social participation,

expanding co-management spaces and deliberating on priorities with the groups that live in the forest. Procedural governance, although necessary as a minimum regulatory structure, must be subordinated to substantive political processes that guarantee the protagonism of the PICL, the responsiveness of public institutions and the adaptability of the programs to territorial dynamics.

The analysis of the minutes and instruments of participation, in turn, reinforces that the centralization of decisions in the political center of the state, the low territorial capillarity of the meetings and the disproportionate participation of government representatives are relevant obstacles to effective governance. The fragile institutionality of the thematic chambers and the instability of the management of the Climate Change Institute (IMC) in recent years also reveal the limits of the political-institutional sustainability of the current arrangement. Instead of guaranteeing continuity and predictability, procedural governance has proved vulnerable to changes arising from electoral cycles and the short-term priorities of those in power at the time, reflecting a logic of "reactive technocratic governance" rather than "inclusive strategic planning".

Finally, the statistical analysis of the correlation between participation, execution and deforestation shows that transparent and participatory governance is not just a normative or ethical requirement, but a technical factor that determines the environmental effectiveness of the program. Empowered participatory governance, in this context, is not opposed to effectiveness, but presents itself as its condition of possibility.

Thus, the data reinforces the need to rethink the governance arrangements of the PJREs in the Amazon - not just as formal bureaucratic structures within the Public Administration, but as hybrid political processes that are alive, adaptive and rooted in the territories. Promoting equity in the sharing of benefits therefore implies reconfiguring the basis of decision-making, expanding accountability mechanisms, decentralizing control and valuing the forms of knowledge and social organization of the ICLPs. Strengthening empowered participatory governance can thus reorient jurisdictional REDD+ programs towards their original purpose: conserving the forest with social justice.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. For subnational governments implementing jurisdictional REDD+ programs (PJRE):

1.1 Reconfigure the mechanisms of social participation to ensure that deliberation takes place in a decentralized, periodic and representative manner of the territories and their modes of social organization. This includes internalizing meetings and valuing existing regional councils with broad social participation;

1.2 Transitioning from procedural governance centered on the Public

Administration to empowered participatory governance with the leading role of the territories, incorporating methodologies that associate joint planning, shared management and participatory evaluation into the PJREs' decision-making cycles;

1.3 Review the criteria for sharing benefits, overcoming the excessive focus on factors linked to the flow of avoided deforestation as the main metric. It is recommended that greater value be given to the contributions made by communities committed to protecting carbon stocks with their traditional forms of territorial protection promoted by PICL, ensuring greater equity and fairness in the distribution of resources derived from REDD+;

1.4 Prioritize the management of the resource by a third party fund that is not part of the state's bureaucratic structure, which reduces the vulnerability of the processes to electoral cycles and guarantees greater accountability and transparency in the use of these resources and the results they produce;

1.5 Strengthen the institutionality and stability of governance structures, shielding their operations from political fluctuations and guaranteeing budgetary predictability and technical continuity, including through the professionalization of program management;

1.6 Expand active transparency, with the regular publication of financial reports, independent audits and open digital systems for public monitoring of implementation and impact data.

2. For donors and international organizations that fund YERPs:

2.1 Make financial transfers conditional on the existence of effective

mechanisms for social participation, with qualitative indicators of local empowerment and representation of the PICL in decision--making processes;

2.2 Prioritize transfers to third-party funds rather than direct injection of resources into the government's bureaucratic structure, facilitating external auditing processes and reducing the dependence of the application of resources in the territories on interests linked to electoral cycles;

2.3 Prioritize direct transfers to third-party funds, promoting the launch of public calls for proposals aimed at direct access to PICL associations for their institutional strengthening, giving priority to processes rooted in the territories;

2.4 Encourage the decentralization of decision making on the use of resources derived from jurisdictional REDD+ by inserting existing local participation bodies (e.g. Municipal Environment Council, Conservation Unit Councils), improving the diversity of participation, avoiding the political capture of these bodies, in order to guarantee greater social control over the whole process.

REFERENCE

Bardin, L. (2011). Content analysis. In Edições 70 (Vol. 70, Issue 3).

Correa, J., Van der Hoff, R., & Rajão, R. (2019). Amazon fund 10 years later: Lessons from the world's largest REDD+ program. Forests, 10(3). https://doi.org/10.3390/F10030272

Da Conceição, H. R., & Börner, J. (2020). Understanding Adoption and Design of Incentive-Based Forest Conservation Policies: A Case Study of the SISA Program in Acre, Brazil. In Ecological Economic and Socio Ecological Strategies for Forest Conservation (pp. 241-258). Springer.

Di Gregorio, M., Brockhaus, M., Cronin, T., Muharrom, E., Santoso, L., Mardiah, S., & Budenbender, M. (2013). Equity and REDD plus in the Media: a Comparative Analysis of Policy Discourses. ECOLOGY AND SOCIETY, 18(2). https://doi.org/10.5751/ES-05694-180239

Dilascio, K., Rossi, C., & Sinisgalli, P. (2022). Technique for the Analysis of Social Participation in Councils: Operationalizing Concepts. Revista de Administração Contemporânea, 27(1), e210258. https://doi.org/10.1590/1982-7849rac2022210258.en

Fung, A., & Wright, E. O. (2003). Deepening democracy: Institutional innovations in empowered participatory governance (Vol. 4). Verso.

Kulovesi, K., Oberthür, S., Van Asselt, H., & Savaresi, A. (2024). The European Climate Law: Strengthening EU Procedural Climate

Governance? Journal of Environmental Law, 36, 23-42. https://doi.org/10.1093/jel/eqad034

McDermott, M., Mahanty, S., & Schreckenberg, K. (2013). Examining equity: A multidimensional framework for assessing equity in payments for ecosystem services. Environmental Science and Policy, 33, 416-427. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envsci.2012.10.006

McLaren, C. N., Salcedo-La Viña, C., Ding, H., & Cervera, M. (2025). Enhancing Climate Finance Access for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities: Insights From Payments for Ecosystem Services. https://doi.org/10.46830/wrirpt.23.00115

Moutinho, P., & Guerra, R. (2017). REDD Program for Early Movers-REM: Stock and Flow Approach to Benefit Sharing in REDD Programs: Concept and Practice in REDD Implementation in the State of Acre.

Pascual, U., Muradian, R., Rodrígues, L., & Duraiappah, A. (2010). Exploring the links between equity and efficiency in payments for environmental services: A conceptual approach. Ecological Economics, 69(6), 1237-1244.
https: / / www.sciencedirect.com / science / article / pii / S092 180 090 9004534 ? casa _ token = BPIN tcwS U Y4AAAAA:Z NlDeIKcwiQ1wa ChVl KaICCOZu A1UV-hQ3hzpMrUFaHFbl SeBzCsX 1kjdz9pHFO6hEuiIm40LE

Putnam, R. (1995). Bowling alone: America's declining social capital. Culture and Politics, 1(6), 223-78234. . https: // www.taylorfrancis.com / chapters / edit / 10.4324 / 9781315748504-30/ bowling-alone-america--declining - social-capital-robert-putnam

Schwandt, T. A., & Gates, E. F. (2018). Case study methodology. The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research, 341-358.

SEPLAN. (2021). REM Acre Program Phase II - Program Operational Manual (MOP).

Sessin-Dilascio, K., Borges-Rossi, C., Oliveira, F., & Sinisgalli, P. (2025). REDD+ and the new carbon market in Brazil: an initial guide for interested communities (K. Sessin-Dilascio, Ed.; 1st ed., Vol. 1). Instituto Fronteiras. https://doi.org/10.5281


Instituto
Fronteiras