
[Neocolonialism in the Amazon: REDD Projects in Portel, Brazil](#)

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Amid the flurry of news about investments in carbon markets, a new WRM study has taken a closer look at a REDD initiative underway in the municipality of Portel, in the state of Pará in the Brazilian Amazon. It involves four projects connected in various ways, which span a vast area of over 7,000 square kilometers of forest. The projects are spearheaded by investors from industrialized countries.

The case illustrates what is known as "carbon colonialism". With a sophisticated discourse, the initiative's proponents present themselves as saviors of the forest and promoters of social actions for the benefit of the riverine communities. However, the project's documents lack transparency about the ownership of the lands used; there are signs of irregularity pointing to an improper use of lands belonging to the State; and, in addition, the estimates of the actual reduction in CO2 emissions that the projects claim they will achieve are questionable from several angles.

Another problematic aspect is that there seems to have been no legal authorization by the hundreds of riverine families included and supposedly represented in the project. Some of them, who WRM spoke to, were astonished to learn that the lands in which they live are listed in the project. And they could not have imagined that the estimated sale of a commodity that they do not know about already exceeds US\$100 million, pocketed by the initiative's proponents.

While REDD projects promote actions to reduce the already insignificant emissions by Portel's riverine families, far away from the region carbon credits from these projects are bought by some of the world's biggest polluters from different industrial sectors, such as Repsol (oil); Air France, Delta Airlines and Boeing (aviation); Amazon (e-commerce); Samsung, Toshiba and Kingston (technology); Aldi (supermarket); and Kering (luxury goods); among others. These purchases allow companies responsible for massive greenhouse gas emissions to continue to profit from burning fossil fuels, while simultaneously broadcasting their alleged environmental and social responsibility.