



BRAZIL: AMAZON

Annual report 2024-2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Efforts to save the Amazon have so far failed to address the slave labour¹ that fuels deforestation. To break the vicious cycle that perpetuates modern slavery and accelerates deforestation will require a multisectoral approach that engages businesses, consumers, governments, civil society and local communities. The Freedom Fund works with frontline groups to curb slave labour in the Amazon River Basin, while strengthening protection of the rainforest. This program has been co-created with local groups of people with lived experience of slave labour and it will build on the willingness of government to collaborate on helping local communities protect their environment and people. The strategic focus is two-fold. On one hand, we aim to increase the capacity of local civil society organisations and strengthen collaboration among public officials, NGOs and Amazonian communities. On the other, we seek to curb commercialisation and export of products derived from slave labour in the timber and livestock supply chains that originate in the Amazon.

The hotspot works primarily in the south and southeast of Pará state and in southern Amazonas state; in all, a fragmented territory with an area larger than France and with many logistical challenges. The main municipalities where hotspot partners work are: Altamira, Anapu, Brasil Novo, Senador José Porfírio and Porto de Moz, São Félix do Xingu, and Tucumã e Ourilândia do Norte, in Pará; and those affected by highway BR319 in southern Amazonas, especially Humaitá and Manicoré.

The hotspot strategy focuses on the following:

- Community strengthening and mobilisation, recognising the crucial role communities play in combating slave labour.
- Efforts to enhance the institutional capacity of federal, state and municipal bodies in the region by promoting collaboration between environmental agencies, law enforcement, social services and education.
- Generating multi-stakeholder collaboration to improve coordination between civil society and government agencies.
- Increasing access to legal support and judicial assistance.
- Advocacy regarding supply chain and labour regulations and national to global campaigns aimed at driving change through supply chains.

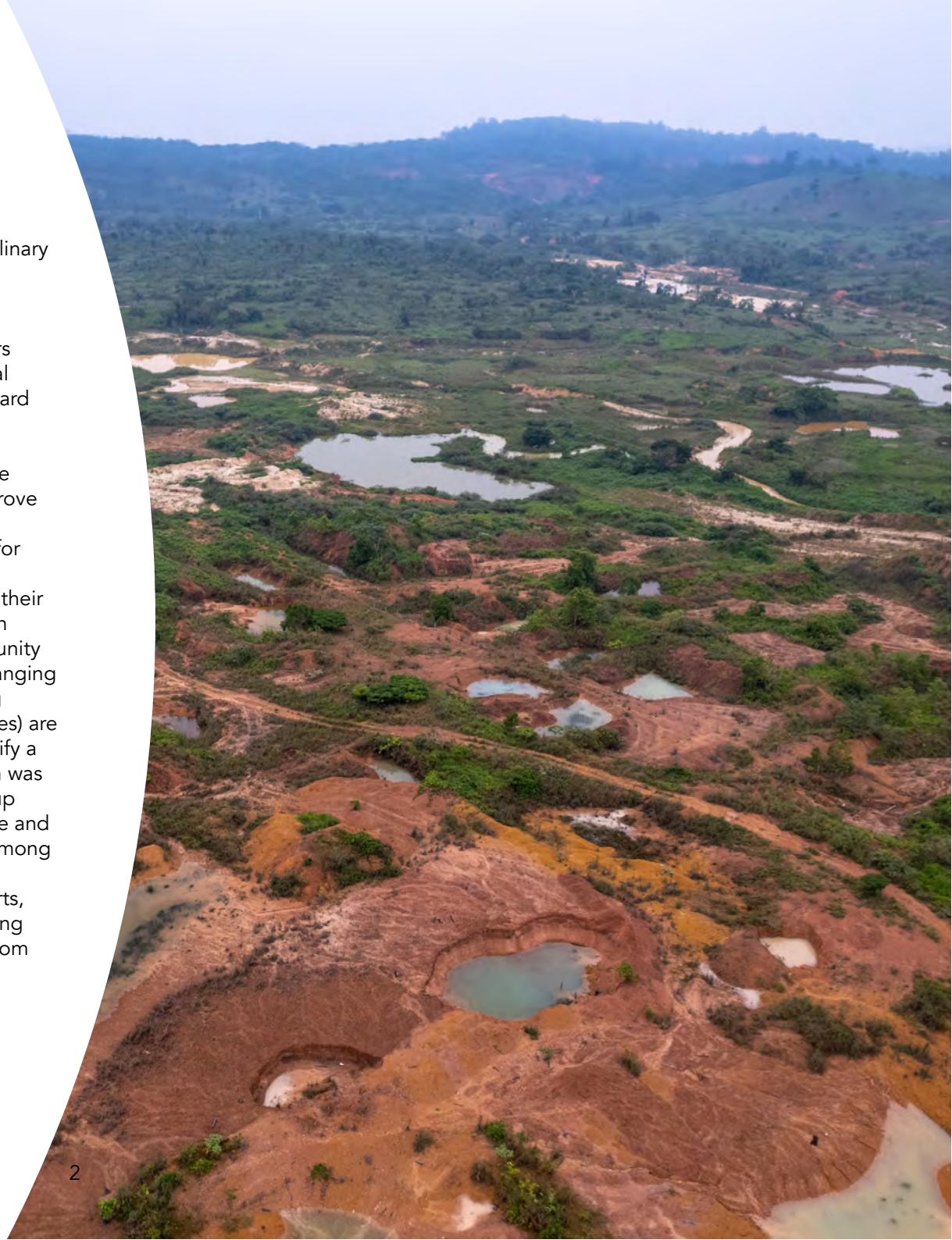
The inception phase of the hotspot took place between 2023 and mid-2024 and was dedicated to exploring and piloting strategies and approaches and collectively developing the hotspot with potential partners and with allies. During that phase, several initial media reports exposed businesses benefiting from slave labour and flaws in monitoring processes, including a report in partnership with Follow the Money exposing Adidas.

Communities and individuals were mobilised on the ground to demand a stronger response against slave labour and Brazil's poor enforcement of its international commitments against slave labour was challenged in international court. Community and frontline services leaders were trained and engaged to work together. Those efforts set the ground for stronger collaboration and refinement of the program's strategy.

¹ The expression work analogous to slavery (or slave labour) is used in Brazil to designate the situation in which the person is subjected to forced labour, exhausting hours, debt servitude and/or degrading conditions. It is considered a crime under Article 149 of the Penal Code.

The implementation phase began in mid-2024. There are currently five partner NGOs: three community-based and two dedicated to local and national advocacy. Partner organisations are: The Amazonia Transdisciplinary Network/Rede Transdisciplinar da Amazonia (RETA), Land Pastoral Commission/Comissão Pastoral da Terra (CPT), Xingu Vivo Movement/Movimento Xingu Vivo para Sempre, NGO Reporter Brasil and Decent Work Institute/Instituto Trabalho Decente (ITD). Since 2023, our partners have impacted the lives of more than 2,300 people, mostly in traditional communities in the Amazon. New partners are expected to come onboard in 2025.

In 2024, partners made significant progress in engaging municipal, state and federal agencies and creating spaces for discussion on how to improve anti-slavery policies. Agreements for collaborative work, including the creation of working groups with CSOs and governmental officials, and for capacity-building sessions were established with government agencies from Pará, Amazonas and Maranhão states. CSOs and rural unions had their capacity to address slave labour increased and incorporated the issue in their agendas. Our frontline partners also successfully mobilised community groups to become active in fighting slave labour and deforestation, changing the situation from a passive one to one where various groups (including workers, women, smallholder farmers and traditional fishing communities) are claiming their agency. As a result, one of our partners was able to identify a major illegal deforestation front – the largest in Amazonas state – which was using slave labour. The partner reported it to authorities and followed up with them until a massive law enforcement operation rescued 50 people and shut it down. This initiative established groundbreaking collaboration among environmental, law enforcement and labour inspection agencies. There were also high-profile successes in 2024 in advocacy and litigation efforts, including reverting two policy setbacks in the state of Pará, one regarding transparency about cattle origin and one stopping a local community from being evicted from their land due to pressure by a global businesses.



OPERATING CONTEXT

Forest fires

In August and September, the Brazilian Amazon was ravaged by natural and human-caused forest fires. Most severely affected were the municipalities São Feliz do Xingu and Altamira, both in Pará state and both areas where our partners work. Due to a combination of drought caused by El Niño/La Niña and human action (aimed at causing deforestation), 2024 saw a 79% increase in wildfires over the previous year.

Brazil and EU deforestation regulation

In September, a letter from the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Agriculture formally requested the European Union to postpone the application of its regulation on deforestation (EUDR), which combines supply chain responsibilities for deforestation and labour conditions and was expected to come into effect in 2025. Former German Chancellor Olaf Scholz expressed support for the Brazilian request. In parallel, WTO's Director-General expressed the same concerns. As a result of these and other pressures, the European Council postponed the EUDR application for one year. The postponement has negative implications for the accountability of those currently benefiting from labour and environmental violations in the Amazon.



Inquiry about coup d'état attempt

An investigation led by the Brazilian federal police shed light on a coup d'état attempt planned and partially executed by key figures in the Bolsonaro administration. The investigation showed the involvement of high-level generals, federal police officials and the admiral who was head of the Navy at the time. An operation led by active and former special forces officials was put into motion to kidnap and assassinate President Lula, Vice President Geraldo Alckmin and Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes. Their plan was to have Bolsonaro sign a state of siege decree based on a false allegation of electoral fraud. Ultimately, the refusal of the heads of Army and Air Force to participate led to its failure. The investigation pointed out a significant involvement of agribusiness leaders in the plot as key funders and supporters of the coup attempt.

Local elections

In October, municipal elections for mayor and aldermen were held in Brazil. Overall, the results showed a strengthening of the conservative agenda at the local level, connected to agribusiness and mining interests in the Amazon.

PROGRESS TOWARDS SYSTEMS CHANGE

Policy/legislative

Pará's state agency of cattle ranching (ADEPARA) makes traceability information publicly available. The agency had ceased to publish and make available information regarding the traceability of the origin of cattle. Reporter Brasil published a series of news reports on the issue and engaged with federal prosecutors, who filed a motion in federal court to get the agency to resume disclosing this information. A federal judge ruled in favour of the action and now key information for civil society and other stakeholders to trace the origin of cattle to deforestation and slave labour cases is publicly available again.

The Ministry of Human Rights and Citizenship publishes for public consultation the first draft of the Third National Plan to Eradicate Slave Labour (III PNETE). Reporter Brasil and Instituto Trabalho Decente have been part of the working group set up by the National Commission for the Eradication of Slave Labor (CONATRAE) to create the third national plan to eradicate slave labour. Our partners made significant contributions to align the plan to the Freedom Fund's Amazon hotspot strategy. The current draft version of the plan includes at least two directives, five objectives and 25 actions related to the Amazon hotspot strategy, including, for example, promoting better inter-institutional collaboration and supply chain responsibility.

Federal court rules against agreement that would displace 600 families in area at high risk of slave labour. The Xingu Vivo Movement has been an instrumental part of a lawsuit presented by public defenders against an agreement to give tenure to Canadian mining company Belo Sun over an area in Senador José Porfírio, Pará that is targeted for land reform and where socially vulnerable families live. The goal of the mining company is to



establish the Brazil's largest open pit gold mine at the heart of the Amazon forest, which would cause a devastating impact on the environment and on local communities. A federal court ruled in favour of the families and deemed illegal the agreement between the Belo Sun and federal land agency (INCRA), thereby preventing the displacement. This decision will help protect these socially vulnerable families who are, often, a target for slave labour in the region.

Political will/public awareness/attitude change

Mobilising communities against slave labour and in defence of their territories. In Amazonas state, local communities went through a series of capacity-building, joint planning and organising activities. They have been working on how to identify and how to proceed with complaints against slave labour, as well as on how to develop their own local livelihoods and thus reinforce their tenure over their land, protecting it against invasions and exploitation. Mobilised communities were from Pirapitinga and from Humaitá municipalities, and six riverine communities from the Extractivist Reserve “Lago do Capanã Grande” near Manicoré municipality.

Movement building in São Felix do Xingu. CPT has been mobilising and carrying out capacity building on addressing slave labour in São Felix do Xingu. At least 36 local mobilisers participated, including students, public officers and local civil society workers. Mobilisers committed to carry out their own awareness-raising activities and CPT estimates that 540 people will be reached in 2025.



Converting local farmers to agroecology. Together with the federal university of Pará, the Xingu Vivo Movement held capacity-building sessions with local smallholder farmers in the PA Ressaca, an agrarian reform settlement located in the Volta Grande do Xingu region, to introduce them to agroecological practices as a means of reconnecting them to a more sustainable way of production. Acceptance was good and smallholder farmers are now diversifying crops instead of using a monoculture approach. They are investing in açai, cocoa and Brazil nut production, which can provide them with a decent livelihood. A sustainable and economically viable agroecological production can increase resilience of these smallholders against land grabbing pressures and impacts from climate change.

Government performance

Commitment by the federal environmental agency responsible for protected areas to mainstreaming combating slavery. ICMBIO, the federal environmental agency responsible for all federal preserved areas, has engaged with multiple partners and agreed to mainstream identifying and fighting slavery in its work. Partners Reporter Brasil and Rede Transdisciplinar da Amazônia (RETA) have developed a proposal for a training on slavery and its connections to environmental crimes for ICMBIO environmental agents to be carry out in 2025. Together with Instituto Trabalho Decente (ITD), ICMBIO has been discussing how to update its standard operating procedures (SOPs) to include guidance on how to identify labour violations during environmental operations. ITD produced a policy briefing “Proposals for ICMBIO SOPs” and was able to get it reviewed by the regional supervisor office for labour inspections from the Ministry of Labour and the general coordinator for eradication of slave labour from the Ministry of Human Rights and Citizenship. After their input, the document was submitted to ICMBIO.

Securing commitments to mainstream slavery awareness in education, law enforcement and social security services from the places of origin of vulnerable workers. Reporter Brasil negotiated agreements with authorities from the state of Maranhão, a major source area of internal migrants for slave labour in the Amazon, to provide capacity building on slave labour prevention for public service officials from the education, social development (social security) and law enforcement state secretariats. A similar partnership

agreement with IEMA, the state body responsible for the management of 50 technical and professional training schools, was also negotiated. Thus far, a capacity-building session has already been carried out with 30 officials from the social security area.

Creation of a multi-stakeholder working group on decent work in Amazonas state. Partners ITD and Rede Transdisciplinar da Amazônia (RETA) organised a seminar for public institutions, universities, state and federal prosecutors, federal agencies and civil society in Amazonas to discuss how to promote decent work and environmental protection together. Out of this, a working group on decent work was created. In addition to ITD and RETA, the group includes representatives from IPAAM (Amazonas state environmental protection agency), IBAMA (federal environmental protection agency), the Ministry of Labour, ICMBIO, Comissão Pastoral da Terra from Amazonas (CPT/AM) and Um Grito pela Vida Network (“a call for life” network), as well as labour federal prosecutors and representatives from the Regional Labour Court (TRT), Amazonas federal university and Amazonas state university.

Development of online learning on slave labour for Amazonas state public servants. Amazonas justice secretariat (SEJUSC) has a centre for digital learning in partnership with the local state university (UEA) and the education secretariat (SEDUC). They centre has established a partnership with ITD, under which ITD will provide content and record video classes about slave labour, how to identify it and how to make complaints. The aim is to reach greater numbers of people in remote regions where face-to-face activities are often difficult to manage.

Influencing the state level plan to eradicate slave labour in Pará. CPT is a member of and has been actively participating at COETRAE (the state level commission for the eradication of slave labour). CPT has advocated for and provided inputs for the review of the state plan, and as a result there is now a process to create a new plan. CPT is adamant that the new plan should address the need for greater agility from state institutions in responding to real-time cases of slave labour.

Convening public agents and civil society towards a common approach for slave labour victims. RETA convened and facilitated the creation of local common framework between the social services network and local civil society in the Manicoré municipality in Amazonas state. This collaborative

effort resulted in a proposal of a joint process to provide assistance for victims that was submitted to the federal labour prosecutor’s office, who will make its contributions and in turn present the plan to the local municipal authority (mayor’s office).

Business performance

The program has been making efforts to convene international and national civil society organisations in a collaboration to create a campaign targeting consumer-facing companies regarding their supply chain responsibilities and their commitments involving slave labour, deforestation, transparency and due diligence. The goal is to generate a response from these companies in the form of new or better policies and practices towards their Amazon supply chain.

These efforts have already borne fruit in the establishment of a collaboration between our Brazilian partner Reporter Brasil and Climate Rights International. Plans include the publication of a report in 2025 on slave labour and deforestation cases to illustrate how current supply chain due diligence efforts are failing and to propose recommendations for the companies involved and for public policies in Brazil.

Community organisation

Community organising and awareness raising led to 50 workers being rescued. One of our partners has been working with traditional local communities in a specific riverine area in the Amazon to create awareness on slave labour and deforestation, the risk of false promises regarding work and the need to stay vigilant regarding strangers entering communities’ territories. This work led to the identification of an illegal deforestation camp and the follow up with authorities to secure an appropriate response. A joint operation was carried out by federal police, IBAMA (the federal environmental protection agency) and labour inspectors that led to the rescue of 50 workers, subjected to slave labour conditions, who were clearing forest areas at the speed of ten soccer fields a day. This operation successfully stopped the largest deforestation detected in the area in 2024. [The name of the partner and specific location have been redacted for security reasons]

Activating the local rural union (STTR) in Senador José Porfírio, Pará

state. The Xingu Vivo Movement engaged with the local rural workers union and, together, they carried out three community organising meetings around the “PA Ressaca” rural settlement community. The local union hadn’t engaged with this community in a long time and, as a result, engagement is now regular and more meetings and activities are being organized.

Community organising in São Felix do Xingu. Comissão Pastoral da Terra (CPT) has been activating and mobilising key local stakeholders at São Felix do Xingu, one of the largest municipalities in Brazil and a hotbed for deforestation. Meetings were held with the local rural workers union (STTR Alto Xingu), members of the local university (UNIFESSPA) and social assistance bodies (CREAS) to create a common agenda on the role that each organisation should play in supporting victims and to plan mobile capacity-building sessions to reach out to and involve communities. These organisations showed a good level of commitment that is beginning to show that a network is being established.

Working towards local participation during COP30. CPT has been a key mobiliser in the development of “Cop do Povo” (Popular COP), which is an articulation of several local, Amazonian civil society organisations, communities, social movements and indigenous peoples to make sure they are prepared and that their voices have space during COP30, which take place in Belém do Pará, November 2025. Held in parallel to the official COP event and the People’s Summit (a gathering of civil society organizations from around the world), “Cop do Povo” will be a gathering of local organisations and will feature sessions on issues including slave labour and deforestation, as well as a people’s tribunal to denounce those who profit from the Amazon destruction and exploitation of the forest peoples.



HOTSPOT OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

Headline results

The following results are from 2024 only and do not include results from the inception phase in 2023:

573 community group members supported

Hotspot partners supported 12 slave labour and environmental protection monitoring groups in local traditional communities, training 573 group members during the year. These groups are active in monitoring their territories for indications of deforestation, slave labour, child sexual exploitation and related threats.

50 people liberated from slavery

The work in movement building and community organising carried out by one of our hotspot partners led to the identification of a large illegal deforestation operation where workers were being subjected to slave labour conditions. Traditional communities from a particular river area worked with our partner to identify the situation and provide intelligence to law enforcement, environmental protection and labour inspection agencies. [The name of the partner and specific location have been redacted for security reasons.]

229 individuals accessing legal or social services

Mobilising community members and engaging with public officials have generated more demand for public policies better implementation, as well as more proactive actions by local authorities. Beneficiaries are active citizens seeking their rights and related public services.

Rural families improving their livelihoods and income

Traditional community members and smallholder farmers received support on how to better organise their production to generate higher income while



living sustainably off the land. Agroecological practices were promoted with community members in two hotspot areas and smallholder farmers are now producing cocoa, açai and Brazil nut as a strategy to improve their livelihoods.

11 media stories generated

Throughout the year, various media news stories and reports were published based on the findings of Reporter Brasil's research connecting slave labour and deforestation to corporate supply chains. By publicising cases of large companies profiting from slave labour, the media coverage generated interest and activities aimed at building strategies for making these companies accountable and for persuading governments to enact more effective regulatory frameworks.

53 improvements in public policies

Hotspot partners have been engaging with public officials at the federal, state and municipal levels. Improvements achieved included both better enforcement and implementation of existing policies, as well as key steps on the development of new policies.

PROGRESS TOWARDS HOTSPOT OBJECTIVES

Hotspot Objective 1: To increase capacity and collaboration among public agents, CSOs and Amazonian communities to address slave labour associated with deforestation

Outcome 1.1: Key stakeholders are working together more effectively in preventing slave labour and assisting those who are exploited

As a result of the advocacy and convening efforts carried out by the Freedom Fund's partners, stakeholders are integrating slave labour into their strategies and are working to increase collaboration. These stakeholders include public authorities at the municipal, state and federal levels. Mobilisation focused on law enforcement, environmental protection and labour inspection who play a decisive role in enforcement, as well as on public services officials from areas such as education, health and social security who can play an important role in raising awareness and in providing assistance to victims.

These efforts have been two-fold. On one front, partners are working to increase awareness and have capacity building sessions on how to identify slave labour cases, how to make complaints and how to activate public services and support for victims. This effort includes public bodies integrating the goal of eradicating slave labour into their strategies and plans, be it in the case of education or of law enforcement. On the other front, our partners have been working to promote better inter-institutional collaboration among public officials. This is a critical aim, given that eliminating slave labour in the context of its connection to deforestation requires collaboration from a wide variety of public agencies and other stakeholders.

In 2024, Instituto Trabalho Decente, working with RETA, was able to mobilise local authorities and civil society in Amazonas state. This was particularly

challenging, as the true extent of slave labour in the state, and the numbers of those exploited, is unknown due to the lack of effective labour inspection. Our partners held a seminar on the challenges of bridging efforts against slave labour with those against deforestation. This seminar was the inception point for a 15-member inter-institutional committee that includes representatives from environmental bodies, labour inspection, universities, prosecutors, the judiciary and civil society. In 2025, the committee intends to hold capacity-building sessions and meetings to discuss how participants can improve collaboration. Partnerships with Amazonas state secretariat of justice (SEJUC-AM) and the Amazonas state university (UEA) have also been discussed, through which ITD will provide content on slave labour for an online learning program for civil servants.

Internal migration of socially vulnerable rural workers from northeastern states to the Amazon has been one of the key dynamics of how slave labour enables deforestation. Reporter Brasil conducted research based on data gathered from workers rescued from slave labour conditions in Pará. It identified that one particular state, Maranhão, stood out as their place of origin. The research found that these migrant workers go to Pará under false promises of employment and once they arrive, they often find themselves in debt bondage and working in an isolated location on illegal deforestation operations. Recognising the gap in prevention and awareness raising of this risk, and also on victims' assistance once they were able to return home, Reporter Brasil began establishing a partnership with Maranhão authorities – particularly the state's secretariats of education, social development and justice – aimed at strengthening slave labour prevention and survivor assistance locally. Memorandums of understanding have been signed and negotiations are underway to establish an agenda of capacity-building sessions focused on how to identify slave labour cases and how to build an effective inter-institutional framework for victim assistance.

ITD has been engaging with the rural military police, federal police and federal highway police, who are strategic actors due to their extensive geographical reach in the hotspot locations. The openness from law enforcement officials to capacity building on slave labour has been promising and demand for training sessions has been high.

Program partners, through various initiatives, have been actively engaging with public bodies at the state and federal levels, such as ministries of labour, environment (including IBAMA and ICMBio) and human rights and citizenship to promote greater collaboration between labour inspection and environmental enforcement agencies. These efforts have provided the opportunity to mainstream the slave labour issue into the agenda of environmental bodies, including revising the curriculum to train environmental agents and revising the ICMBIO's standard operating procedures to include specific provisions for slave labour.

RETA conducted capacity-building sessions with public officials at the municipal level in southern Amazonas state. They focused on municipal secretariats of health and social assistance and their role in both public awareness raising on slave labour risks and on providing support for rescued survivors.

Outcome 1.2: Expanded access to restoration and justice for slave labour victims

During the year, we began to explore the feasibility of setting up a legal clinic at a local university in Amazonas state to provide support for survivors, given that Pará state already has more than one such clinic. While we had significant engagement with both the state and federal universities in Amazonas, the challenges we encountered were greater than expected in terms of creating the proper institutional arrangement, identifying professors available to commit to such an endeavour, how to reach out to victims and difficulties in travelling to small towns in the countryside. Ongoing conversations are being held with professors from the law department of the Amazonas state university to continue exploring the feasibility of this initiative.

Outcome 1.3: Communities are vigilant, informed and supported to play an active role in protecting their rights and territories

The Amazon hotspot comprises three community-based partners that have been conducting local activities in their respective territories, as well as collaborating with our advocacy-based partners.

In the Volta Grande do Xingu region in Pará state, an area where the main municipality is Altamira, community awareness raising about slave labour

and its connection to land grabbing led to pressure on state agencies to investigate complaints of human rights violations. Two advocacy actions fostered by partner Xingu Vivo Movement have been essential in advancing land rights and reducing the socio-economic vulnerability of workers. In February 2024, INCRA (the federal land agency) visited a landless workers' camp in collaboration with Xingu Vivo, registering 98 families for agrarian reform and investigating reports of violent attempts to expel them. Following this visit, workers began occupying vacant plots in the region and started planting crops. And in May 2024, the 3rd Mission of the National Commission for Combating Violence in the Rural Areas, which is coordinated by the Ministry of Agrarian Development, investigated reports of violence and slave labour in the Volta Grande region. Their mission was accompanied by Xingu Vivo Movement representatives and Reporter Brasil provided media coverage. The commission issued its report and recommended actions to be taken by various federal agencies.

CPT and Xingu Vivo Movement have been working on the promotion and fostering of agroecological practices with rural workers, including the adoption of Agroecological Forests Systems (SAFs) and a diversification of production. While CPT works in the São Felix do Xingu municipality area, Xingu Vivo Movement works in Altamira, both in Pará state. The promotion of sustainable agriculture through agroecology practices has shown potential to ensure food security and provide an increase in the income of rural workers' families, which can help diminish their social vulnerability. They also provide communities with agricultural techniques that help preserve the environment and value native species instead of cash crops and monoculture. While providing technical assistance and capacity building in agroecology is already part of the work of CPT's team, the Xingu Vivo Movement got assistance from the Federal University of South and Southeast Pará (UNIFESSPA).

RETA has been conducting community organising meetings and awareness raising on slave labour with traditional communities from the federal preserve RESEX Lago do Capanã Grande (a RESEX is a type of preserved area where traditional communities live inside of it). The communities of Rio Manicoré, Pirapitinga and Moanense have been involved in awareness-raising activities so its members know the risks of false labour promises that often are related to slave labour and illegal deforestation.

One of our partner's work with communities led to the rescue of dozens of workers from slave labour conditions. The area is protected and 18 communities that live there have been issued TUCs (a land grant for communal usage), which means only the communities can explore local resources. Community members identified movement of individuals and equipment along the river and, together with RETA, sought support of an allied INGO to identify the location where an illegal deforestation operation was being carried out. Working with federal police, labour and environmental authorities, an operation was prepared and executed in April 2024. The operation was successful and 50 workers were rescued from an isolated illegal deforestation camp, including five women, one of which was pregnant, one teenager and a child. Our partner supported survivors in obtaining health and social assistance services and Reporter Brasil provided media coverage to the operation. [The name of the partner and specific location have been redacted for security reasons.]



Hotspot Objective 2: Curbing commercialisation of products derived from slave labour in supply chains of timber and livestock in the Amazon

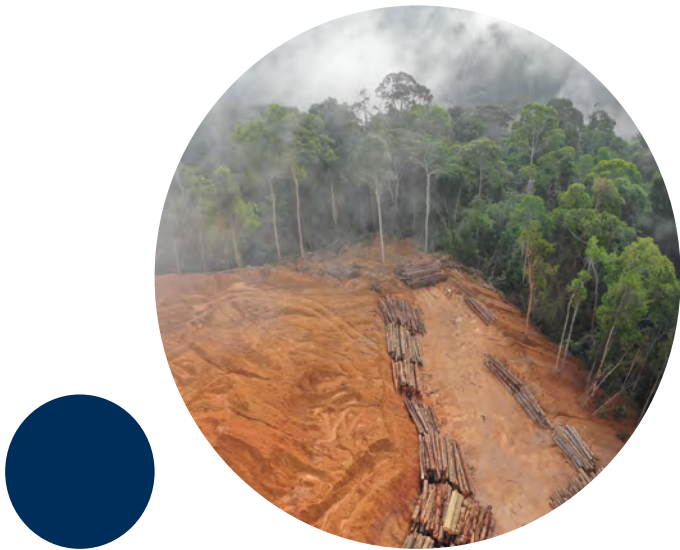
The Amazon hotspot has been working for more regulation and legislation to make sure supply chains originating in the Amazon are operated responsibly, and for exposing cases of rights violations connected to cattle and timber in order to generate action from key supply chain companies.

Our partner Reporter Brasil has been carrying out supply chain investigations and publishing media stories exposing large and often multinational companies involved in slave labour and deforestation cases. In one report, Uber and Audi were linked to deforestation and slave labour cases via their sourcing of carbon credits that were being offered by farms on which violations had occurred. Another investigation led to media reports exposing how all of the large companies in the local animal hide supply chain, including German carmakers, are complicit in deforestation and slave labour.

Outcome 2.1: Increased transparency and accountability in the supply chains of timber and livestock in the Amazon through strategic campaigns

Reporter Brasil's investigation into supply chains originating in the Amazon has shown how the use of slave labour is linked to a wide range of by-products such as leather, animal fat for biofuel production, bovine inputs for the pharmaceutical industry, charcoal for steel industries and even the carbon credit market. This investigation has underpinned 11 stories that were published in the media.

Reporter Brasil has begun a collaboration with Climate Rights International to produce joint research on slave labour cases related to the leather supply chain and cattle ranching in the Amazon. The goal is to produce a report exposing the connection of big companies with these local violations, showing the gaps in human rights due diligence and the need for more regulation related to companies' transparency and responsibility to ensure human rights are respected in the communities where their products are sourced.



Reporter Brasil produced three impactful news reports on the need of transparency and traceability regarding the movement of cattle in the Amazon. The Pará state agency for cattle and agriculture (ADEPARA) was denying access to information from transit documents that register when cattle are moved from one farm to the other, which is critical to identifying links to deforestation and slave labour. The news reports from Reporter Brasil played a strategic role in building public pressure around a legal case presented by federal prosecutors that challenged the lack of disclosure by ADEPARA. Additionally, Reporter Brasil reports were also used by NGO Data Privacy BR to expose the issue and advocate for greater disclosure and transparency. By the end of 2024, a federal judge had ordered ADEPARA to resume disclosing the cattle movement information.

Outcome 2.2: Strengthening laws, policies and enforcement mechanism in relation to slave labour to increase corporate accountability in the timber livestock supply chains in the Amazon

Reporter Brasil and Instituto Trabalho Decente have both been members of the working group created by the National Commission for the Eradication of Slave Labor (CONATRAE), which is responsible for the development of the third national plan for eradication of slave labour (III PNETE). The national plan sets out actions and guidance for public officials at the federal, state and municipal levels, civil society and the private sector. The last national plan was

developed in 2008 and has stayed in place for 17 years. Influencing the new plan presented a key opportunity for the anti-slavery sector to help shape public policies for the next decade or longer. As a result of advocacy work by Freedom Fund partners, the first version of the plan that was presented to the public already showed a great deal of synergy with the hotspot's approach, with at least 27 of the plan's items (including directives, objectives and actions) in alignment with our programmatic strategy. Some of the highlights are proposals addressing the need to increase labour inspection in the Amazon region, the need for greater collaboration between environmental and labour agencies, the importance of explicitly recognising the nexus between slave labour and deforestation, and the responsibility of companies regarding slave labour in their supply chains.

Reporter Brasil has also engaged in advocacy efforts around a proposal for a National Policy on Human Rights and Businesses that is being developed by the Ministry of Human Rights and Citizenship. Reporter Brasil contributed inputs through two different networks of allies during the initial phase of the policy development. A first draft of this proposed policy has been presented to the public and it brought important elements, such as of recognition of companies' liability for any human rights violations in their supply chains, their responsibility in providing reparations (including for slave labour cases), and provisions on greater transparency by the private sector.



SUPPORTING A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

Since the beginning of the Amazon hotspot implementation phase in mid 2024, two community of practice meetings have been held, each bringing together all partners and external invitees for collective learning. This was in addition to two previous meetings that were held during the initial months of the year as part of the inception phase of the program. For all of these meetings, discussion and learning points have included:

- Security issues and challenges for frontline and grassroots organisations and human rights defenders.
- Mandatory human rights due diligence currently being discussed by the federal government and proposed in bills introduced in Congress.
- COP 30 and the plans for popular participation via “Cop do Povo” (Popular COP) and “Cúpula dos Povos” (People’s Summit).
- The connection between land grabbing and deforestation and slave labour in the Amazon.
- Learnings from how to engage and work with community members and governmental authorities’ operations to rescue workers from slavery-like conditions.

Throughout the inception and implementation phases of the Amazon hotspot, partner organisations have worked to create an organic relationship developing both joint influencing actions as well as joint capacity-building sessions. Highlights are:

- Workshops on slave labour conducted by Xingu Vivo Movement in Altamira, including participation from CPT and focusing on receiving complaints, assisting workers and directing them to appropriate services.
- Partnership between Xingu Vivo Movement and Repórter Brasil covering the 3rd Mission of the National Commission for Combating Violence in the Rural areas.
- Partnership between RETA and Repórter Brasil covering the operation to rescue workers on the Manicoré River.



CASE STUDY



[The name of the local partner and specific location have been redacted due to security reasons.]

Thanks to the efforts of a Freedom Fund partner, there are 15 local riverside communities in the Amazon hotspot that have organised under a special government provision granting them land tenure and recognition as territories of common usage (TUCs), which is a type of land grant that creates a reserve for them.

Nonetheless, the local state government body for environmental licensing has also issued licenses for loggers to operate in the area, a move deemed illegal. This contradiction has enabled illegal loggers and land grabbers to operate in the area. Our partner, working on awareness raising and community organising with the union of local associations representing the communities, was able to work with community members to identify strangers moving up and down the river. Through collaboration with other civil society organisations, they were able to identify the exact location and generate coordinates and a map pointing the way to an illegal deforestation camp where workers were not allowed to leave. Our partner then engaged with a representative of the labour inspection service from the Ministry of Labour, providing the necessary intelligence and advocating for an operation to rescue workers. Using this information, the federal police, federal labour inspectors and agents from the federal environmental agency IBAMA organised a joint operation in April. Another hotspot partner, Reporter Brasil, provided media coverage.

The operation shut down the largest deforestation detected in the Amazonas state during 2024 and 50 workers were rescued from slave labour conditions – the year's second largest rescue of workers in the region. Two of the workers had previously sustained injuries in work-related accidents, and the group included a teenager, a child and five women, including one who was pregnant. Our local partner provided assistance to the rescued workers during the operation, including support for those who needed medical attention and engagement with social services.

The area destroyed by deforestation was 3,700 hectares and was estimated to be expanding in a rate of ten soccer fields per day, according to Reporter Brasil. The camp was using bulldozers, chainsaws and had a fuel depot. Elon Musk's Starlink satellite internet service was found to be used by the illegal loggers. Only the "manager" of the camp was arrested, while others responsible have been identified. Exploiters will have to pay more than USD 6 million in fines to the state and USD 200,000 in salaries and severance to workers.



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Photo from the Labour Inspection Service at the Ministry of Labour. Agents watch deforestation machinery being destroyed. ©Repórter Brasil	Page 15

VISION

Our vision is a world
free of slavery.

MISSION

We invest in frontline organisations
and movements to drive a measurable
reduction of modern slavery in high-
prevalence countries and industries.

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