

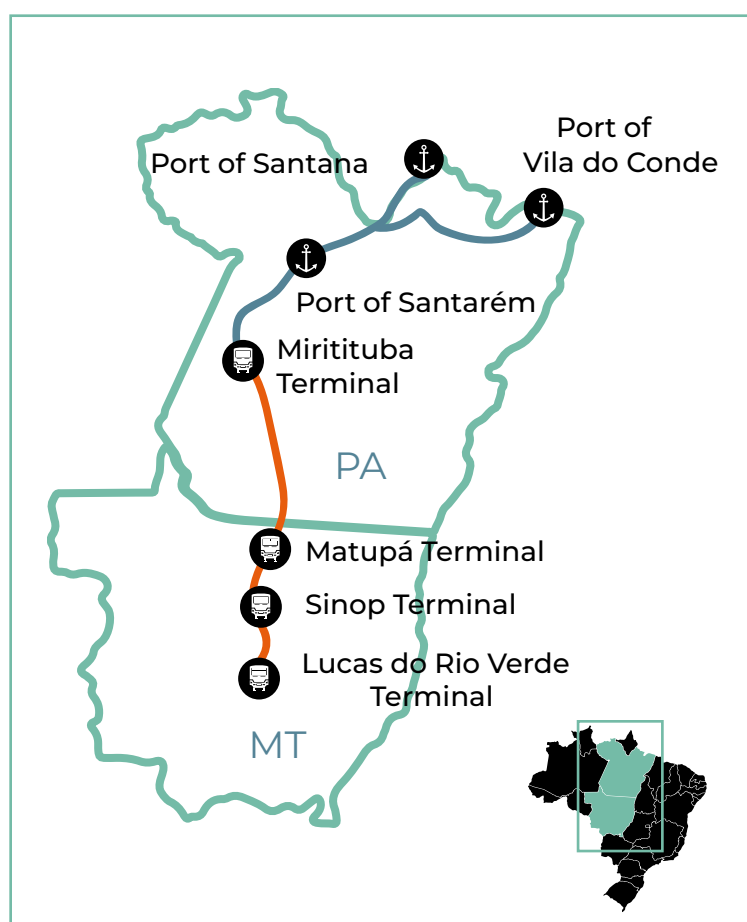
# CULTURAL IMPACTS OF *FERROGRÃO*, THE EF-170 BRAZILIAN RAILWAY

October de 2025

The EF-170 Brazilian railway, known as Ferrogrão, is a railway project aimed at facilitating the transport of grains from Brazil's Central-West region to the North. It crosses areas of great archaeological and cultural significance, **causing harm to territories that have been inhabited for millennia and to ancestral ways of life.**

The railway's route follows the BR-163 highway, starting from the city of Sinop (State of Mato Grosso) and reaching Miritituba (State of Pará). This means that the **area of influence is mainly the eastern portion of the Tapajós River basin.**

A Direct Action of Unconstitutionality (ADI) No. 6553 is under discussion in the Federal Supreme Court (STF), **questioning the legislation that changes the boundaries of the Jamanxim National Park** to include the railway's route. If the case is ruled constitutional, construction of the railway will be authorized.



## Caption

- Ferrogrão
- Waterways
- ⚓ Ports
- 🚂 Terminals Railways

# Cultural Impacts of *Ferrogrão*, the EF-170 Brazilian railway

The trial is currently suspended following a request for review by Minister of the Federal Supreme Court Flávio Dino on October 8, 2025.

The project will lead to an **increase in deforestation of at least 2,040 km<sup>2</sup>**, as projects of this kind create demands for land and, consequently, encourage land grabbing. The illegal deprivation of territory resulting from deforestation poses a **risk to the cultural heritage of Indigenous peoples and traditional peoples and communities**.

Studies show that it is essential to **include the lower Tapajós River in environmental and social impact analyses**, incorporating the affected communities and peoples, due to the restrictions on the river's use, because of its role in grain transportation, for fishing, transportation, cultural activities, and knowledge transmission.

Due to its connection with the ports of Miritituba and Itaituba, the intensification of these projects — and the implementation of the *Ferrogrão* — will amplify their impacts, permanently transforming landscapes, local activities, and community ties. This process threatens to erase parts of the history of numerous communities and disrupt their traditional ways of life.

## FACTS AND MYTHS REGARDING THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE RAILWAY

### MYTHS

**It will be a sustainable alternative to the duplication of Federal Highway BR-163.**

This alternative is expected to cause fewer environmental impacts than duplicating Federal Highway BR-163.

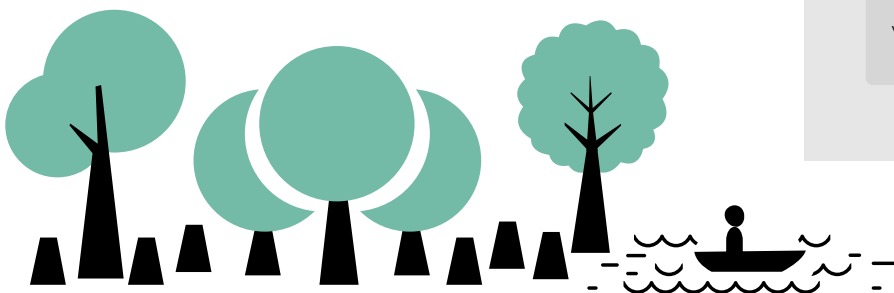
**The railway will prevent deforestation in the region.**

The railway will prevent deforestation by stopping the emergence of 'fishbone' patterns — clearings in the forest that enable the appropriation and illegal occupation of land.

### FACT

**There will be an unavoidable impact on the populations and biomes within the area of influence.**

Claiming that the railway has less impact than the expansion of the highway downplays the effects of the project on the populations and biomes within its area of influence. Despite promises of development, similar projects demonstrate that the reality often involves environmental destruction, human rights violations, and uncontrolled urban growth.



# Cultural Impacts of *Ferrogrão*, the EF-170 Brazilian railway

## MYTH

**The railway will bring economic growth to the soybean-producing municipalities.**

According to the 2023 technical report of the Thematic Sectoral Chamber (CST) on the Ferrogrão project, it is expected that the railway will generate approximately 30,000 direct jobs and 373,000 indirect jobs. The report also estimates environmental compensation of around R\$765 million, a 40% reduction in freight transport costs, and an increase in municipal tax revenues.

## FACTS

**The rate of return on the investments will be low.**

In a 2021 letter, Inter B Consultoria argues that expected investment returns are low and do not meet private investors' cost of capital, thereby necessitating public compensation to bridge this gap.

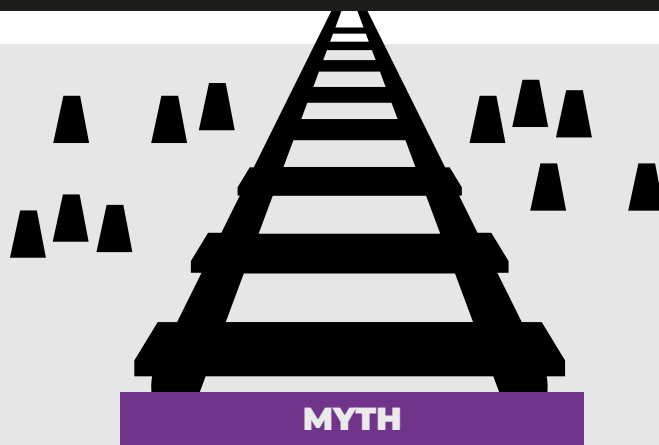
**The project's cost estimates are not realistic and appear to be underestimated, particularly in light of the biome's specific features and environmental fragilities.**

The financial estimates submitted to the Federal Court of Accounts (TCU) underestimate the costs linked to the environmental specificities and fragilities at stake. Thus, from an engineering standpoint, the project's feasibility is questionable in light of the sensitivity of the biome affected.

**The project does not adequately address the social and economic challenges it faces.**

**Put differently, it repeats the logic and framework of past initiatives that proved unsuccessful.**

Ferrogrão will not resolve the economic and social challenges it is intended to address, rendering the initiative another case with a high probability of failure.



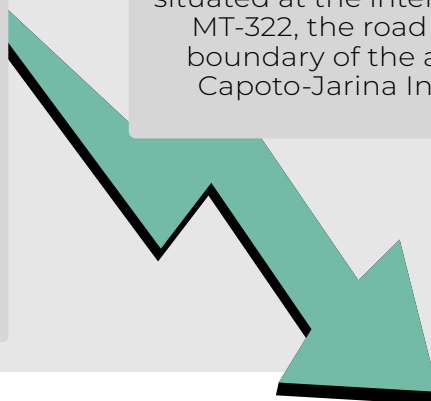
**The railway will operate without intermediate stops, directly linking Sinop (State of Mato Grosso) to Miritituba (State of Pará)**

The railway will be built without intermediate stops to prevent the urbanization impacts that any potential stops might have on more ecologically sensitive areas.

## FACT

**The intended stop is in Matupá, northern part of State of Mato Grosso, adjacent to the State of Pará.**

A stop is planned in Matupá, located in northern part of State of Mato Grosso, on the border with the State of Pará. The city lies along the BR-163 corridor and corresponds to the former Kren-a-Karore village, which was invaded and occupied by prospectors in the 1990s. Matupá is also situated at the intersection of BR-163 and MT-322, the road that delineates the boundary of the already demarcated Capoto-Jarina Indigenous Territory.



# Cultural Impacts of *Ferrogrão*, the EF-170 Brazilian railway

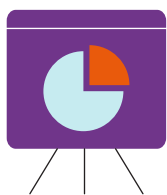
In Brazil, cultural impacts should be taken into account during environmental licensing, as the country is a signatory to the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 169, which stipulates that Indigenous peoples and traditional communities must be consulted regarding such projects. However, this consultation did not occur in the case of the *Ferrogrão* project.

Considering the foregoing, it is essential to highlight the process of cultural destruction that the implementation of

the EF-170 will entail, including direct impacts on approximately 400 archaeological sites belonging to Indigenous peoples and traditional communities. Furthermore, the project constitutes a serious violation of the rights of these peoples, potentially resulting in cultural erasure, population extermination, and territorial dispossession.



As recommendations, we suggest:



**conduct new impact studies** that comprehensively consider Indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation, all archaeological sites within the region, the Indigenous and traditional communities affected by the project, the potential impacts on biocultural heritage, and the consequences of the intensified operation of the Tapajós Waterway;



**carry out free, prior, and informed consultations**, as outlined in ILO Convention 169, including all affected peoples, following community-specific consultation protocols (where they exist), in a manner that fully respects their culture and traditions.

