



## 2022 TOP 100 GOOD PRACTICE STORY

**Title of the Story:** Seringal Nova Esperança, area of relevant ecological interest

**Destination Name:** Epitaciolândia / AC

**Country:** Brazil

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**Position:** Secretary of Environment and Tourism

**Submission category:** *(Please check one of the boxes that indicates the focus of your story)*

*Please find detailed information for the categories below in the Top 100 training module 'Good Practice Story'.*

- Governance, Reset & Recovery
- Nature & Scenery
- Environment & Climate**
- Culture & Tradition
- Thriving Communities
- Business & Marketing

*Find detailed instructions for submitting good practices in the Top 100 training module "Good Practice Story".*

*Should you have any questions on your submission please refer to our FAQ page or contact [top100@greendestinations.org](mailto:top100@greendestinations.org)*





## DESCRIBE YOUR GOOD PRACTICE STORY

Address each aspect of your good practice story in the different sections being specific including relevant quantitative and qualitative information.

### Issues faced

What was the problem/issue solved with the good practice

*Epitaciolândia is a city in the state of Acre, northern Brazil. The municipality has an area of 1,654.77 km<sup>2</sup>, so the population density is 9.13 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup> and an estimated population of 18,979 inhabitants (2021), the current head of administration is Mayor Sergio Lopes De Souza. It is limited to the north by the municipality of Xapuri, to the south and east by Bolivia and to the west by the municipality of Brasiléia, 229 km from Rio Branco, the state capital. The economic activity revolves around commerce and livestock, in the economy, the average remuneration of the Epitaciolandense worker is 1.6 minimum wages per person. The staff occupancy rate is 9.4% (1,628 people). The infant mortality rate is 10.31 deaths per thousand live births. Basic sanitation reaches 21.4% of sanitary sewage. The schooling rate, considering the 6 to 14 age group, is 93.7%.*

*The most significant economic activities in the state are the exploitation of rubber and wood. The rubber cycles in Brazil attracted to the State of Acre, since the last century, a population formed mainly by Northeasterners. The fall in the price of the product on the international market caused many rubber plantations to be deactivated and rubber production dropped sharply in Acre. With the decline of rubber in the region, it opened space for extensive cattle ranching that had an important impact on the process of deforestation in the Amazon Forest. With the beginning of synthetic rubber production, around 1945, the extraction of rubber fell even further, but it is still an important activity today, not only because it supports many families, but also because it is a strategic activity for conservation. and protection of forests.*

*One of the most widespread strategies for the preservation and conservation of biodiversity in the world throughout the 20th century and which has been responsible for protecting areas of great importance for socio-biodiversity is the creation of conservation units. The Seringal Nova Esperança Area of Relevant Ecological Interest, located in the municipalities of Epitaciolândia and Xapuri, in the state of Acre, is a sustainable use conservation unit created with the aim of protecting Brazil nut and rubber trees.*

*The area of relevant interest Seringal Nova Esperança is a federal conservation unit for sustainable use created by the Federal Decree s/n° of August 20, 1999. It has 2,576.47 hectares and aims to protect specimens of the regional biota. such as chestnut and rubber trees. One of the justifications for the creation of the conservation unit was the conflict of interests between the traditional population that occupied the area and the owner of Fazenda Nova Esperança. While the residents carried out their agro-extractive activities with the forest standing, the landowner was interested in cutting down part of the forest to expand his pasture areas in the area occupied by the traditional population.*

### Methods, steps and tools applied

*With the decrease in the amount paid for latex from the rubber tree, extractive activity was abruptly reduced, the Acre State Department of Entrepreneurship and Tourism together with the City Hall and the Federal University of Brasília – UnB, thanks to a course given by UnB, a technique was developed in which 'latex sheets' are produced,*





*the so-called Semi Artefato Sheet (FSA), which, in addition to dispensing with the burning carried out in traditional processing plants, the rubber created at Lateq uses simple and low-cost technologies, generates little polluting waste and offers rubber tappers and their families the opportunity to work and earn income in the forest.*

*The conservation analyst at WWF-Brasil in Acre explains that after harvesting, the milk from the rubber tree is mixed with a chemical product, called pyroligneous acid, which will make the milk clot. The organization works with the rubber production chain, providing support from production in the forest, with material for the manufacture of blankets, to training rubber tappers and establishing fairer market prices. The rubber mat is passed several times in a calender (a type of manual cylinder), to get thin, and then it is placed to dry.*

*The rubber tapper then began to diversify his activities, and today the forests of Acre are permeated by extractive communities. Direct management of the forest by the population that inhabits it, becoming the agent responsible for itself and for what the preservation of the forest can mean is recommended.*

#### Key success factors

*What helped you tackle the issues?*

- *Everyone's commitment to the preservation and handling of the rubber plantation;*
- *Training carried out so that the raw material could be developed uniformly;*
- *Commitment of the entire community to work in a sustainable way in tourism and extractivism;*
- *Community ecological tourist space; and*
- *Local, national and international recognition that have earned him several awards.*

#### Lessons learned





While implementing the Good Practice what challenges were faced, and how were they overcome?

One of the challenges presented is the area where the extractive reserve is located, as it has a very precarious road infrastructure that, depending on the season, access is practically impossible. Another critical point is the lack of knowledge on the part of the owner of the extractive reserve of sustainable tourism practices, green tourism, which is an activity carried out responsibly, which complies with the elementary principles of sustainable development. Allied to the challenges presented, the lack of knowledge of the basic concepts of product improvement, ways of commercializing and improving the products, are points of extreme relevance for the activity.

Faced with this reality, José Rodrigues de Araújo, or "Doctor of Rubber", as he is better known, has lived in the Chico Mendes Extractive Reserve for 39 years. Born and raised in Xapuri, living in Eptaciolândia for over 10 years, after taking a course promoted in the region, Dr. Borracha saw the forest as an opportunity to change his life through extractivism, transforming rubber in a handmade way into shoes and other latex-based products.

For this to be possible, it was necessary to carry out an awareness-raising work with the owner, as the area is a private preservation reserve. The point of awareness was that if preserved, the removal of resources from the environment will always be possible.

Every day, he wakes up before the sun and goes into the woods, in the Chico Mendes Extractive Reserve, where he lives, to "cut rubber". He returns home and after about two hours he returns to collect milk from the rubber tree which is mixed with a chemical called pyroligneous acid that coagulates the milky liquid, forming a film that rests on the bottom of the tray. This film, called "rubber blanket" is passed several times in the calender, a kind of manual cylinder, until it becomes very thin, and only then it dries. With the blankets dry, they begin the assembly of the shoes, which resembles the work of a tailor.

He has the help of his family, three employees in the studio and two rubber tappers who supply the rubber for making the products. It mainly sells to SP, RJ, RS, DF and PE. It has more than 30 models, with varied colors, which, according to him, are to attract the attention of customers. The business is expanding into necklaces and bracelets.

The way that was chosen to overcome the challenges mentioned above was initially to carry out training to continue the activities related to the rubber tree culture, carried out by the Secretariat of Forestry Extension and Family Production (Seaprof), and the Rural Extractive Technical Assistance Company of the Acre (Emater) in partnership with the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (Embrapa) offered a training course to agricultural technicians in the state with the aim of updating technicians to provide adequate technological support and guarantee greater productivity, another important point was the development of the oven construction process for the production of pyroligneous acid used for latex coagulation, in addition to access to fairs in order to promote the work and the manufactured product.

As a way of contributing to business improvement, the Acre Innovation and Development Forum, together with DEL Turismo, provided a technical visit by the German tourism expert Hans Peter Sater, where it was possible to demonstrate to local residents the best ways to work the sustainable tourism.





### Results, achievements and recognitions

*What were the qualitative and quantitative results of the good practice?*

*The main result initially achieved was the preservation of the reserve in addition to the dissemination of the work and products offered by Dr. Rubber, in addition to disseminating good practices among the local community.*

*With good practices, it did not take long for entrepreneurs to develop an interest in investing in the business that was beginning to be recognized beyond the borders of Acre, starting to have its presence in the main Brazilian capitals such as: São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Porto Alegre, Belo Horizonte and other Brazilian cities. Another opportunity presented to the artisan was the possibility of exhibiting his handicrafts in other countries, such as a trip to Milan, Italy.*

*Initially production was quite artisanal, 70 pairs per month, with the advent of the courses held, in addition to the improvement in infrastructure, production reached 2,000 pairs, today after the resumption of the pandemic production is at 1,000 pairs.*

*Another very important point was the city hall's commitment to the recovery and conservation of syringe roads, access roads for the maintenance and flow of latex production in the municipality.*

### Additional references





Provide links to further information. Pictures and videos should be available for download either from YouTube, Vimeo or other Cloud-based (Google/ One Drive) download URL (not WeTransfer).

<https://www.artesol.org.br/doutorborracha>

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=878300532344872>

<https://www.facebook.com/DrAcre/videos/2400353386776202/>

<https://unbciencia.unb.br/exatas/36-quimica/509-designer-cria-joias-com-borracha-ecologica-da-amazonia>

<http://circuitomt.com.br/editorias/geral/46610-seringueiro-e-artesao-dr-borracha-faz-botas-e-sapatilhas-de-latex.html>

<https://www.terrabrasil.org.br/ecotecadigital/index.php/estantes/pesquisa/3263-area-de-relevante-interesse-ecologico-seringal-nova-esperanca-acre-intencoes-e-resultados>

[https://queimadas.dgi.inpe.br/~rqueimadas/material3os/2015\\_Abreu\\_InteresseEcologicoSe ringalNovaEsperanca\\_ENCE\\_DE3os.pdf](https://queimadas.dgi.inpe.br/~rqueimadas/material3os/2015_Abreu_InteresseEcologicoSe ringalNovaEsperanca_ENCE_DE3os.pdf)

<https://agencia.ac.gov.br/estado-realiza-parceria-para-aumentar-producao-artesanal-do-acre/>

<https://brasis.vc/rapadura/doutor-da-borracha-seringueiro-artesao-e-guardiao-da-floresta/>

<https://www.artesol.org.br/doutorborracha>

<https://g1.globo.com/ac/acre/noticia/2014/07/seringueiro-e-artesao-dr-borracha-faz-botas-e-sapatilhas-de-latex.html>

<https://revistapegn.globo.com/Empreendedorismo/noticia/2017/09/empreendedor-do-acre-faz-sucesso-vendendo-sapatos-de-borracha.html>

<https://ac24horas.com/2022/03/27/seringueiro-do-acre-conquista-mercado-internacional-com-produtos-de-borracha/>

