

Exceptional

A refreshingly 'green' and exceptional voice from Brazil this month, as director Gilberto Câmara of the National Institute for Space Research (INPE) [talks to GIM International](#) about his country's efforts to monitor and save the rainforest. He has been leading the institute since 2005, working on several operations to monitor deforestation in the Amazon rainforest using remote sensing and satellite imagery to record day-to-day changes in the landscape. This has decreased deforestation, yielding input for officials whose job it is to enforce law in the forest. It's a great example from the South American country which suffered corruption and poverty for so long, and still does in many ways, demonstrating its capacity to find a solution for safeguarding the lungs of the world.

One of the economic powerhouses of the globe, Brazil has GDP growth of more than 5% per year and the surveying business is one of, if not the largest evolving uptake markets for big companies elsewhere wanting to sell their hardware and software. Although there are some strong sectors within the Brazilian economy, including agriculture and oil & gas, the geospatial industry is not particularly recognised as belonging among them. One striking feature of the Brazilian economy is that it is inward-orientated: import tends to predominate over export.

In the line-up of contributing indigenous industries, space research is a strong contender, though in a way an exception. Brazil has played a big role in global space research and has, as the only nation of the southern hemisphere, worked on construction of the international space station. Having its own satellite constellation and launch centre has contributed to the success of INPE, and vice versa, thereby being successful in managing the reduction in deforestation. Linking remote sensing/satellite imagery data to professionals working in law enforcement to fight violators on the ground, and to policymakers to help them make better decisions is a great way to save the environment, and the method is great export product.

Brazil is now sharing its experience with the UN Food & Agriculture Organisation (FAO). An initial joint project is trying to transport the technique of monitoring, processing and analysing satellite imagery in order to put it in use in the Congo Basin in Africa, still pristine rainforest but prone to the same dangers Amazonia faced in the 1980s and 1990s, when approximately 500,000km² was illegally felled. That sharing experience with other parts of the developing world makes sense goes without saying, according to Gilberto Câmara. Brazil, as one of the BRIC countries, has become a global player. Taking responsibility is acting accordingly. That's also exceptional!