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Quality reference values and background concentrations of potentially toxic elements in

soils from the Eastern Amazon, Brazil

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**Abstract** 

Concentration quality reference value (QRV) concentrations are calculated based on the

background of potentially toxic elements (PTEs) in their natural state, absent from human

influences. QRVs are essential for ensuring that environmental legislation is consistent with the

local conditions and they are also important for monitoring potential changes in the chemical

compositions soils that can affect soil quality. The objective of this study was to obtain

background concentrations to set QRVs for the PTEs in the soils of the state of Pará. The

background concentrations and QRVs of the PTEs were obtained from 132 surface soils (0–0.2

m) and 132 subsurface (0.8-1.0 m) soils in the state of Pará, Eastern Amazon, Brazil. Under

natural conditions, the values found for the QRVs and the background values of the PTEs were

low, indicating low risk of environmental contamination and hazard to human health. The

exception was Hg, whose content was higher than the prevention level defined by Brazilian

law. The concentrations of Al, Cu, Cd, Cr, Fe, Hg, and Mn were positively correlated with the

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