Geogenic arsenic and manganese in anoxic riverbank groundwater along the Amazon River

CAROLINE DE MEYER¹, ROLF KIPFER¹, INGO WAHNFRID², PATRICIA ROESER⁴, JUAN RODRIGUEZ³, MICHAEL BERG¹

¹Eawag, Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science and Technology, Dübendorf, Switzerland; caroline.demeyer@eawag.ch; rolf.kipfer@eawag.ch; michael.berg@eawag.ch
²UFAM, Universidade Federal do Amazonas, Manaus, Brazil; iwahnfried@ufam.edu.br
³UNI, Universidad Nacional de Ingeniería, Lima, Peru; jrodriguez@uni.edu.pe
⁴UFVJM, Universidade Federal dos Vales do Jequitinhonha e Mucuri; Diamantina (MG), Brazil; patricia.roeser@protonmail.com

Reducing subsurface conditions in parts of the Amazon Basin result in groundwater being geogenically enriched with arsenic and manganese (de Meyer et al., 2017). Groundwater is an important source of drinking water in places along the Amazon River where surface water is contaminated by microbes or anthropogenic pollutants. Since As and Mn are of concern for human health, it is important to understand where and under which environmental conditions these elements are mobilized from aquifer sediments and accumulated in groundwater. Here we discuss the results of a field study along the main Amazon River. We sampled water from household wells in riverine communities and collected groundwater from seasonally flooded riverbanks by setting piezometers in active clay-silt deposits. We compare the main hydrochemistry, trace element chemistry, variations in redox sensitive trace elements (e.g. As, Mn, Fe, Mo) in groundwater from various river bank types. Analysis of water isotopes and in-situ measurements of dissolved gases (e.g. to date the groundwater), provide insights on the origin and residence times of the contaminated groundwater.