

Brazil opens the first home-grown Chip Fab south of the Rio Grande

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Having recently covered [Brazil's first home-grown RFID product](#) [1], the Chip de BOI livestock-identification chip from CEITEC, we were pleased to be invited to the official opening of the facility that made it. The Chip de BOI (literally, "the Ox chip") is an excellent startup product for the nascent south-of-the border firm. The facility, located in Porto Alegre, is the first of its kind south of the Rio Grande.

CEITEC is taking an internal growth-based strategy towards its product development; each device created will address a primary internal need, with additional ability to export any excess capacity. The BOI chip is targeted first at Brazil's huge cattle market, with demand already in existence and additional opportunity to export to other livestock-management (or other harsh-environment asset tracking) markets. While we cannot tell you what the next product to be produced by CEITEC will be, we can safely say that it follows the philosophy expressed by its first product.

Another interesting aspect of CEITEC's operations is that it produces the entire product, from wafer to packed device. This is to provide finished product to a market lacking a diversity of industry. The BOI chip, like the animal it is named after, must be self-sufficient immediately after birth.

Starting with equipment donated by Motorola, the Brazilian-owned company built a new 6-inch 0.6- μm facility using a "ballroom" style construction in Porto Alegre. The facility is a first step in an educational and developmental program to bootstrap Brazil's tech industry, beginning with finished products like the BOI chip but expanding into cooperative efforts with other newly-created Brazilian tech firms.

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The President of Brazil, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, opened the facility to a large crowd of regional and international press. He took the opportunity to discuss his plans for broadband access for all of Brazil, pointing out that Brazil needs a technically-literate population in order to continue to expand and develop.

The facility has a capacity of up to 55,000 wafers per year. The facility is currently producing the BOI chip in smaller numbers, but will ramp up quantities as the facility develops and improves its processes.

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