

Government of Guyana

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REDD+ SAFEGUARDS

SECOND SUMMARY OF INFORMATION FOR GUYANA



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFOLU	Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use
BUR	Biennial Update Reports
COP	Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC
ER	Emission Reductions
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessments
EITI	Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
FLEGT	Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade
FPIC	Free, prior and informed consent
FRL	Forest Reference Level
FPDMC	Forest Producers Development and Marketing Council
GoG	Government of Guyana
IP	Indigenous Peoples
GFC	Guyana Forestry Commission
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GRIF	Guyana's REDD+ Investment Fund
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
LCDS	Low Carbon Development Strategy
LULUCF	Land-Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry
MRV	Measurement, Reporting and Verification
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRVS	Measurement, Reporting and Verification System
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NFMS	National Forest Monitoring System
OPs	Operational Policies
PAs	Protected Areas
PaMs	Policies and Measures
PLRs	Policies, Laws and Regulations
RBF	Results Based Finance
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries
RIL	Reduced Impact Logging
RL	Reference Level
SIS	Safeguard Information System
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
SOI	Summary of Information
UNDRIP	UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People
UNFCCC	The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
VPA	Voluntary Partnership Agreement
WFR	Warsaw Framework for REDD+

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the decision established in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) regarding policy approaches and positive incentives on issues relating to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks (REDD+), the Government of Guyana hereby submits its Second Summary of Information (Sol).

This Sol follows the submission of Guyana's first Summary of Information in April 2021 and seeks to present Guyana's efforts in implementing the safeguards listed in decision 1/CP.16 appendix I, and how the country continues to address and respect the safeguards in accordance with decisions 12/CP.17, 12/CP.19, 17/CP.21. Guyana's first SOI provided an overview on the efforts undertaken by the Government of Guyana between 2009 and 2020.

Guyana's Second Summary of Information covers progress in implementation for the period January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2022 and is structured as follows:

Part I: National Circumstances for Addressing and Respecting Safeguards in Guyana

This section provides an overview on the efforts undertaken by Guyana's Government between January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2022 in terms of climate change and REDD+ implementation, including on the role of forests and the land sector in the country's Low Carbon Development Strategy 2030, its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) under the Paris Agreement, and Guyana's participation in the Architecture for REDD+ Transactions (ART).

Part II: Country's safeguards approach

This section presents progress to date in Guyana in ensuring REDD+ implementation is consistent with Cancun Safeguards. In the final series of decisions on REDD+, agreed in Paris at COP 21, Parties to the UNFCCC developed some further guidance "on ensuring transparency, consistency, comprehensiveness and effectiveness when informing on how all the safeguards referred to in decision 1/CP.16, appendix I, are being addressed and respected."¹ As part of this guidance, the COP "strongly encourages" developing country Parties, when providing the summary of information on how the Cancun safeguards are being addressed and respected, to include, inter alia, "[a] description of each safeguard in accordance with national circumstances."²

In accordance with the above, this section outlines a description of the Cancun safeguards according to the national context and provides an overview on progress and perspectives in the set-up of a system for providing information on how safeguards have been addressed and respected.

Part III: How safeguards have been addressed in Guyana?

Understanding that 'addressing' safeguards requires anchoring Cancun Safeguards to the existing governance arrangements (e.g. policies, institutions, information systems) in Guyana, , this section outlines all relevant legal and institutional frameworks in place in Guyana to ensure REDD+ activities are designed and implemented in accordance to the Cancun Safeguards With the commencement of engagement with ART, Guyana is required to fulfil reporting on environmental and social safeguards in keeping with The REDD+ Environmental Excellence Standard (TREES) 2.0.

Part IV: How safeguards have been respected in Guyana?

This section constitutes indicators that will inform the set-up of the Safeguard Information System (SIS). The SIS will outline the utilising of existing national systems at sector level, and mainstreaming existing governance arrangements and legal and institutional frameworks detailed in Guyana's First Summary of

¹ UNFCCC Decision 17/CP.21, see also UN-REDD [brief on summaries of information](#)

² Ibid, paragraph 5(b) see also UN-REDD [brief on summaries of information for further analysis](#)

Information (SoI) on REDD+. Guyana's future SOI submissions will provide information on the actual outcomes with regards to conformance with Cancun Safeguards throughout REDD+ implementation, including in the context of accessing to REDD+ results-based payments in application of the methodological framework established in the Warsaw Framework for REDD+.

Part VI: Operational mechanism to receive and address complaints

This section outlines Guyana's efforts for a dedicated system that will serve to receive, and address concerns and complaints associated with the implementation of the REDD+ activities.

Part VII: Stakeholder engagement

This section will present an overview of the participatory processes undertaken in preparation of Guyana's national strategy for REDD+ implementation, the Low Carbon Development Strategy 2030.

PART I: NATIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES FOR ADDRESSING AND RESPECTING SAFEGUARDS IN GUYANA

Having one of the world's largest percentage of rainforest cover –approximately 85% of the national territory- and accounting also for one of the highest national carbon stock per capita globally, Guyana is a net carbon sink and therefore forest conservation and sustainable forest management are priorities in the fight against climate change. Guyana is working to sustain over 99% of that forest while building the foundation for a new low carbon, ecosystem economy, enabling Guyana to store 19.5 billion tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (the measure used for greenhouse gas emissions – the world emits about 50 billion tons a year).

This section provides an overview on the efforts undertaken by the Government of Guyana between the period January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2022, in terms of climate change and REDD implementation.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND REDD+ IN GUYANA

Guyana is characterized for its long history of forest conservation, where indigenous peoples have an outstanding role as forest stewards in recognition to the 7000-year long history of conservation and sustainable management of natural resources in the area. Similarly, Guyana's Kaieteur National Park, established in 1929, was the first protected area established in the Amazon Region.

In 1989, Guyana committed to 'lasting ecological, economic and social benefits' for the Guyanese people and the international community by committing to responsibly manage 1 million acres of forests in the Iwokrama Rainforest. Similarly, the Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC), has the leadership in managing Guyana's 12.5 million hectare (GFC 2020) of State Forest Estate and, with the contribution of civil society organizations and advocates, have maintained one of the lowest deforestation rates globally.

Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) was first formulated in 2008 and aimed to support the country in the pursuit of a '*resilient, low-carbon, socially-inclusive economy*', paving the way for national efforts to reduce emissions in the forest and land use sector.

The Low Carbon Development Strategy set out a vision through which economic development and climate change mitigation will be reconciled through the generation of payments for "forest climate services" in a mechanism of sustainable utilization and development (i.e. REDD+). The result is intended to be the transformation of Guyana's economy whilst combating climate change. Guyana's LCDS was updated in 2011 and 2013, and expanded in 2021, when a draft LCDS 2030 was launched for national consultation. After seven months of national consultation, overseen by a Multi-Stakeholder Steering Committee (MSSC), the LCDS 2030 was finalised in July 2022. As part of the closing stages of the national consultation, the LCDS 2030 was endorsed by the National Toshias' Council (consisting of elected indigenous leaders) and the National Assembly (Parliament of Guyana).

The original LCDS set out a vision for REDD+ in Guyana, which would be implemented through a three-phase plan whereby Guyana would earn money for forest climate services and invest these in a Low Carbon Development Strategy:

- Phase I, a bilateral agreement with a partner which shared Guyana's vision
- Phase II, available market-based mechanisms
- Phase III, a fully-fledged UNFCCC REDD+ mechanism.

The first phase saw Guyana enter the Guyana-Norway agreement in 2009. Guyana's experiences in implementing the bilateral agreement with Norway on climate change in particular those concerning REDD+, the protection of biodiversity, and enhancement of sustainable, low carbon development, allowed for the government to build a model for how progress on

economic incentives for forests could be made. Guyana was able to build the systems and develop the policies and measures required for the national implementation of REDD+, including the Monitoring Reporting and Verification System (MRVS) for REDD+.

The MRVS seeks to provide the basis for measuring verifiable changes in Guyana's forest cover and resultant carbon emissions from Guyana's forests, which will underpin results-based REDD+ compensation in the long-term, based on international guidance and best practice.

LCDS 2030

A draft of a new LCDS 2030 was launched by HE President Irfaan Ali, and was subject to an extensive national consultation process from October 2021 to June 2022. LCDS 2030 seeks to build on the progress made in implementation of LCDS 2009 and to further create a new low-carbon economy in Guyana by establishing incentives which value the world's ecosystem services, and promoting these as an essential component of a new model of global development with sustainability at its core.

The three objectives set out in 2009 continue to provide a guiding framework and have been enhanced based on knowledge gained since then, as well as new opportunities created by international progress. This LCDS 2030 addresses these objectives:

- **Forest Climate Services and other Ecosystem Services:** Guyana can access market-based mechanisms for forest climate services that includes private, as well as international public sector financing that will enable a pathway to build on the successes of the Guyana-Norway partnership as Guyana moves to a market based mechanism, and starts Phase II of Guyana's vision for REDD+.
- **Stimulate future growth through clean energy and sustainable economic activities:** Guyana can undergo one of the world's most ambitious energy transitions and grow the economy up to five-fold, while keeping greenhouse gas emissions from energy generation at around 2019 levels. The development of the Ocean Economy is a further priority - to bridge the land-ocean nexus via low-carbon growth. This will include areas such as fishing, ocean biodiversity and mangroves, and shipping and transport.
- **Protect against climate change:** Global wellbeing continues to be damaged by climate change, including in Guyana where extreme weather events are destroying livelihoods and damaging the economy. Early 2021 saw catastrophic flooding, the social and economic damage is likely comparable to the 2005 flood which affected close to 37% of the population and caused economic damage equivalent to 60% of GDP. The Hinterland also experiences drought conditions, including very serious impacts in 2015.

The LCDS 2030 recognises that for global climate, health and other challenges to be met, nature-based solutions and eco-system services must be valued. It further posits that for Guyana, the long-term future for eco-system services should include market-based mechanisms, with the most realistic entry point for building an eco-system services economy being based on forest carbon through integration of Guyana's forest climate services into global carbon markets.

After the success of the Guyana-Norway agreement during Phase I of the implementation of Guyana's vision for REDD+, Guyana has developed the capabilities to move forward to carbon market integration in the period 2021 to 2030 in the remaining two phases of the original vision:

- **Phase Two:** Guyana will generate credits to be traded on voluntary carbon marketplaces, with independent verification of the quality of those credits and their adherence to the rules of the

marketplaces. Credits will adhere to UNFCCC guidance on REDD+, pending the launch of a full REDD+ mechanism.

- Phase Three: Guyana will enhance the quality of its credits further through establishing a national carbon registry, integrated with international markets and with any future REDD+ mechanism under the UNFCCC. This will be done in accordance with the rules of all relevant international agreements on markets and carbon trading. It will be underpinned by domestic regulation and/or legislation as necessary for market integration and UNFCCC compliance. This phase will be influenced by the developments and pace of global climate negotiations at the level of the UNFCCC.

The LCDS 2030 outlines an agreed revenue-sharing mechanism, which was designed throughout the national consultation on the strategy. Revenues from carbon markets will be invested in: (i) national and multi-community-level investments as set out in the LCDS 2030; (ii) community-produced village sustainability plans or equivalent, where IPLC community/village-led programmes will directly receive 15% of all revenues, supplementary to the significant investment in villages from the national / multi-community programme pathway. This approach to benefit sharing was informed by national stakeholder consultations over a seven month period, was endorsed by the National Toshias (NTC) that their Council³ Conference in July 2022 ([Endorsement of LCDS 2030 by the National Toshias' Council – LCDS](#)); and has been approved by Parliamentary Resolution by the National Assembly of Guyana ([Parliamentary Resolution – LCDS 2030 – LCDS](#)). The LCDS 2030 was tabled in Guyana's National Assembly on July 21, 2022. The motion was debated and successfully passed by the Assembly on August 8, 2022.

Further details are set out in Part VI: Stakeholder Engagement of this SOI.

GUYANA'S NATIONALLY DETERMINED CONTRIBUTION

In 2016, Guyana submitted its first Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) to the UNFCCC. Guyana's NDC refers to a cross-sectoral and *economically holistic emission reduction commitment that* draws on its experience in implementation of the LCDS and early REDD+ efforts, as an overarching premise for policy-based measures to reduce emissions against Guyana's business-as-usual greenhouse gas emissions. Guyana's NDC recognizes the land use and forest sector as a key sector for its unconditional and conditional commitments, together with the energy sector.

At the national level, unconditional and conditional commitments established in the NDC -together with the National Forest Policy, Codes of Practice for Timber Harvesting for Sustainable Forest Management-established the overarching guiding instruments and systems in Guyana to support country efforts on reducing emissions in the forest sector by 2025.

In anticipation of a REDD+ mechanism or equivalent, Guyana has committed to unconditionally continue to pursue sustainable forest management (SFM), in compliance with applicable Forest Codes of Practice governing timber operations, including continuous efforts on forest monitoring to ensure high levels of timber legality. Guyana committed to implementing a trade agreement known as the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) under EU-Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT) aiming to provide independent accreditation of forest legality and management practices in the timber industry. On December 15, 2022, the Government of Guyana and the European Union the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) on Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT), to promote sustainable trade of legal timber to the EU. The signing took place at the 15th Conference of Parties Meeting on the Convention on Biological Diversity, in Montreal, Canada.

For the forest sector, the national MRVS was used to inform the design of the commitments of the NDC, by

³ The NTC is the national body of elected Village Leaders (called Toshias), as set out in the Amerindian Act of Guyana.

providing information on the effects of the direct drivers of forest change. The MRVS has further been given prominence within the NDC as a main contribution, whereby Guyana has committed to the completion and maintenance of building the national MRVS. Guyana's MRVS continues to play a key role in Guyana's climate change mitigation agenda and in fulfilling its reporting requirements on forest change.

PROGRESS ON REDD+ IN GUYANA

MOU WITH THE KINGDOM OF NORWAY

Phase I of Guyana's approach to REDD+ was implemented with support from the Guyana-Norway Agreement. In 2009 Guyana signed an MoU with the Kingdom of Norway on what represented the first world's national-scale agreement for payments-for-performance for issues related to climate change mitigation, in particular those concerning reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries (REDD-plus), the protection of biodiversity, and enhancement of sustainable, low carbon development. Supported by a national Monitoring Reporting and Verification System (MRVS) for REDD+ and the establishment and/or strengthening of forest governance and institutions improving Guyana's capacity to reduce deforestation and forest degradation, the Guyana-Norway cooperation ultimately supported national efforts to establish an innovative and pioneering LCDS and set a precedent for high forest cover/low deforestation countries in the context of REDD+.

The MoU with Norway was signed well in advance of the definition of the REDD+ methodological framework under the UNFCCC to guide REDD+ results-based implementation and access to results-based payments for mitigation actions fully measured, reported and verified. Such agreement thus represented Guyana's commitment, in cooperation with Norway, to support the multilateral process under the UNFCCC to establish what we now know as REDD+. Moreover, such agreement is a symbol of Guyana's political will towards developing a long term development pathway that incorporates issues on climate change, including mitigation on the forest and land use sector, but also with regards to the protection of biodiversity and the rights and livelihoods of indigenous peoples in the country.

In such context, Guyana's agreement with Norway for early REDD+ implementation triggered in the country a diversity of technical and policy processes; several of which would establish the foundations for ensuring that Guyana's efforts to accelerate REDD+ implementation were conducted in consistency with what we now know as the Cancun Safeguards⁴. These have set the stage for Guyana's fulfilment of the requirements of ART TREES.

Amongst the methodological and institutional conditions agreed with Norway to determine the level of financial support to be received -upon Guyana's performance on emissions reductions- Guyana committed to the establishment of institutional arrangements, including a Multi-Stakeholder Steering Committee for oversight of implementation of the LCDS, to:

- Ensure the systematic and transparent stakeholder consultations;
- Enable participation of all affected and interested stakeholders in all stages of the REDD+/LCDS process;
- Protect indigenous peoples' rights;
- Ensure environmental integrity and the protection of biodiversity;
- Strengthening/improvements in forest governance; and
- Transparency and accountability regarding the financial support received.

In addition to the above, Guyana committed to the application of relevant policies and safeguards in the context of activities to be financed by the Guyana REDD+ Investment Fund (GRIF). All of the above have been

⁴ UNFCCC Decision 1/CP.16 Appendix 1 paragraph 2

established as *enabling activity* indicators to assess Guyana's performance, some of them relevant in the context of REDD+ consistency with Cancun safeguards, as follows:

- **Continuous multi-stakeholder consultation process:** *Institutionalized, systematic and transparent process of multi-stakeholder consultation.* Aims to ensure full and effective participation, particularly of indigenous peoples and other forest-dependent communities – including free, prior and informed consent according to Guyana's legislation.
- **Governance:** Guyana is committed to promote the continued development of a 'transparent, rules-based, inclusive forest governance, accountability and enforcement system' in accordance to relevant legislation and independent assessment of forest governance and logging practices.
- **Rights of indigenous peoples and other local forest communities as regards to REDD+:** In accordance with Guyana's Constitution, the *rights of indigenous peoples and other Guyanese to participation, engagement and decision making* are guaranteed regarding matters that affect their well-being. Such rights will be *respected and protected* throughout Guyana's REDD+ and LCDS's efforts.

Over the duration of the Agreement, Guyana committed to undertake efforts to reduce deforestation and forest degradation, including forest conservation, sustainable management of forests and the enhancement of forest carbon stocks in coherence with internationally recognized frameworks for robust and effective REDD+ implementation. The policy framework developed for REDD+ implementation in Guyana has resulted in greater levels of sectoral coordination and more efficient policy formulation and implementation, and Guyana has been able to align efforts to further develop its MRVS, as well as strengthen its institutional capacities for REDD+ implementation. With regards to the methodological framework for REDD+ results-based implementation as agreed under the Warsaw Framework for REDD+, Guyana has developed a National Forest Monitoring System (referred to as the national MRVS), providing data on deforestation and forest degradation at national scale. Likewise, Guyana has established its proposed Reference Level on emissions from deforestation from all causes, and for degradation associated with timber harvesting, for the national level, and for which UNFCCC has completed technical review and assessment.

Guyana earned US\$212.52 million total in payments from Norway under the Agreement. These payments were invested in priority areas that were identified by the LCDS. Among the key projects supported with these payments were titling to Amerindian villages, equipping Amerindian and hinterland communities with renewable energy, digital infrastructure, and sustainable livelihood opportunities, investment in key infrastructure to protect against flooding and support to Guyana's MRVS.

GUYANA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH ARCHITECTURE FOR REDD+ TRANSACTIONS (ART)

On December 18, 2020, a concept note was submitted to the ART Secretariat by the Government of Guyana to become an entity eligible for the issuance of jurisdictional scale TREES credits under the scheme. Guyana's entry into ART is under the High Forest Low Deforestation Module developed to be integrated under TREES v 2.0. Guyana identified two crediting periods, 2016- 2020 and 2021 to 2025 for payments.

Following this submission, Guyana underwent the independent Validation and Verification as required by ART, which audited Guyana's REDD+ results for conformance with both the carbon accounting requirements and the rigorous social and environmental safeguards of TREES. The results of which were presented to and approved by the ART Board of Directors. On December 1, 2022, it was announced that ART issued the world's first TREES credits to Guyana. ART issued 33.47 million TREES credits to Guyana for the five-year period from 2016 to 2020. These serialized credits, are available to buyers on the global carbon market, including for use by airlines for compliance with the International Civil Aviation Organization's global emission reduction program, CORSIA, as well as for use toward voluntary corporate climate commitments.

OVERVIEW THE DESIGN OF A NATIONAL REDD+ IMPLEMENTATION, POLICIES AND MEASURES

The implementation of activities under Guyana's REDD+ Programme, provided Guyana with relevant insights on the economic feasibility of REDD+ results-based implementation and with the tools to continue to sustainably manage, conserve and protect its forest resources, as stated in the country's NDC. Similarly, the refinement of REDD+'s economic feasibility, underscore the need for opportunity costs of REDD+ results-based implementation, required to move beyond traditional natural resource extractives-based economy, currently supporting the livelihoods of thousands of Guyanese.

Guyana's LCDS 2030, developed in 2021, builds on the achievements made from 2009 to present. Its development was informed by the guidance and requirements of the UNFCCC, Guyana's national reporting requirements as well as local progress in REDD+ implementation over the period 2009 to 2020.

The LCDS 2030 seeks to prepare Guyana for accessing market-based mechanisms for forest carbon, for meeting the requirements of these markets as well as in meeting Guyana's other commitments, both internationally and locally. It seeks to address the drivers of forest change by directing actions to creating enabling conditions for REDD+ at a strategic and/or institutional level, with actions that directly impact on carbon emissions or removals. This approach to REDD+ implementation aims to contribute to Guyana's economic growth under the overarching implementation of the country's Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS), requiring a combination of strategic policies and measures to maintain low deforestation rate, and reduce or slow deforestation, where possible, from current economic activities from within the sectors' policies and regulations.

Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy, also addresses the broader adaptation, climate resilience, sustainable development, and financing related aspects of Guyana's National development programme that will help guide the country's climate and socio-economic and environmental development trajectory.

In implementing the LCDS 2030 from a REDD+ perspective, Guyana seeks to advance:

- Sustainable Forestry and Low-Impact Mining Practices: This will enhance employment and income generation opportunities through domestic regulation and linking with global market standards.
- Forest Climate Services: As the first capability for Guyana's ecosystem services, work will be advanced to underpin the Monitoring Reporting and Verification System (MRVS) and Safeguard Information System (SIS) that support REDD+ and ART-TREES, while also creating the right legal and policy frameworks for individual projects, including reforestation and reclamation in mined-out areas.
- Ecosystem Services: Preparing to expand the range of ecosystem services that can become part of global nature-based solutions, beyond carbon. This may entail partnerships from Indigenous Peoples and local communities, local business, government, and international stakeholders.

Guyana's LCDS was informed by the guidance and requirements of the UNFCCC, specifically those made by Guyana in its NDC submission, Guyana's national reporting requirements on REDD+ and forest governance, as well as in broader ecosystem services management. These are detailed below:

SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY AND LOW-IMPACT MINING	FOREST CLIMATE SERVICES	ECOSYSTEM SERVICES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Finalise and Implement Voluntary Partnership Agreement under EU-FLEGT – Implement Programme for Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) – Expand local value chain for wood products – Advancing transparency through Guyana Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (GYEITI) – Exploring options for land reclamation and reforestation of mined areas. – Sustainable Forest Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Sustain Monitoring, Reporting and Verification System (MRVS) for REDD+ and ART-TREES – Implement Safeguard Information System for REDD+ and ART-TREES – Create Policy and Legal Framework for project- level climate services, including framework for private sector-led reclamation and reforestation programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Expansion and protection of Guyana's mangrove forests – Maintain Intact Forest Landscapes – Biodiversity Conservation and Protection Watershed Management – Examine green-grey solutions (engineered infrastructure/mangroves) – Strengthen and expand Guyana's Protected Area System – International Centre for Biodiversity Research

SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY AND LOW-IMPACT MINING

Finalise and Implement Voluntary Partnership Agreement under EU- FLEGT

REDD+ encapsulates all aspects of sustainable forest management, including forest monitoring and enforcement. Legality and the activities that accompany attaining same are critical to achieving good governance in the forest sector, in that, principles of sustainable forest management as well as activities under a REDD + agenda cannot be accomplished without this. Forest Monitoring is a critical support component of any REDD+ programme, especially to ensure forest degradation and deforestation is contained and or minimized. Guyana has been implementing a number of forest monitoring schemes, including its Legality Assurance System. In 2009, the GoG commenced engagement with the European Union (EU) to better understand the requirements of the European Union Forest Law Enforcement Governance & Trade (EU FLEGT) Programme, towards achieving a Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) with the aim of raising the profile of Guyana's timber industry and making it more sustainable.

Following a series of national stakeholder consultations across the forestry sector, Guyana entered into formal negotiations with the EU for a VPA in December 2012, which aimed to ensure forest exports come from a legal source and improve forest governance and regulations, while promoting broad stakeholder participation in decision-making processes, ultimately contributing to the achievement of sustainable development objectives in Guyana. This led to a series of negotiations between the Government of Guyana and the European Union over the period 2012 and 2015; as well as the establishment of a National Technical Working Group and the FLEGT Secretariat within the Guyana Forestry Commission, the national focal agency for the implementation of activities related the EUFLEGT.

Among the milestones achieved during this period were a broad range of activities including: consultations and capacity building efforts with local stakeholders aimed at improving the understanding on FLEGT; stakeholder engagement to discuss and receive feedback on legality definition and Guyana's Timber Legality Assurance

System; and studies on impacts scoping regarding the gaps between current regulations and requirements under the VPA. This then led to the initialling of the Guyana - EU Voluntary Partnership Agreement on the 23rd November, 2018 in Brussels Belgium. The Initialling signalled the commencement of the Pre-Implementation period of the VPA process.

On December 15, 2022, the Government of Guyana and the European Union signed the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) on FLEGT, to promote sustainable trade of legal timber to the EU. The signing took place at the 15th Biodiversity COP in Montreal, Canada. The agreement will give EU-based timber buyers assurance that timber products from Guyana are legal as well as further strengthen forest governance in Guyana, further curb illegal logging and promote trade in verified legal timber products.

Implement Programme for Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC)

The development of a national forest certification scheme for Guyana is a natural extension of the current FLEGT and REDD+ initiatives, with the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) system in particular providing strong linkages with existing government policies and processes. The PEFC system is structured to endorse standards that have been based on long-standing intergovernmental processes. PEFC's requirements for standards development are much more accommodating of each country's individual legislative and regulatory framework than other forest certification programmes.

In July 2019, the GFC Board of Directors approved for the application to PEFC to be submitted. In November, 2019, Guyana became a member of the PEFC as approved by the PEFC Council. Guyana will seek to build the capacities of national stakeholders to manage and audit PEFC-certified areas. Guyana will also develop the framework to implement the national process for PEFC.

Improving added-value activities locally to assist in creating a higher potential for carbon storage in long-use wood products

Expanding the value chain beyond primary production is integral to minimising the pressure on its forest by finding the most suitable and economic use for the forest resources. Forest carbon is stored in a more stable state for longer periods of time without being emitted into the atmosphere the further advanced the wood products value chain is. Market research and promotion are integral to finding the most suitable and economic use for the forest resources. Guyana's NDC points out that the use of value-added "could also potentially reduce the pressure on forest resources as derivation of a higher value may result in reduced harvest levels."

Implementation will focus on the development of technical skills and techniques, supporting technology transfer and enabling more marketing and promotion of local products. Focus will be placed on developing the skills and products techniques for value-added activities while supporting technology transfer within the sector and developing added value marketing capability to expand the value chain.

Advancing transparency through Guyana Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (GYEITI)

The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) is a global Standard to promote open and accountable management of natural resources and seeks to strengthen government and company systems, inform public debates, and enhance trust.

Guyana first engaged the EITI on 4 May 2010, when the Prime Minister of Guyana expressed Guyana's interest to implement EITI. In August 2017, Guyana submitted its application to the EITI International Secretariat in August 2017, and received official acceptance as an EITI implementing country on 25 October 2017.

Guyana published its first EITI Report in 2019, covering the fiscal year 2017 and its second report in April 2021, covering fiscal year 2018. These reports reported on figures related to mineral productions as well as exploration activities in the hydrocarbon sector.

Integrated Planning and Management of the Mining and Forest Sectors

The Guyana Forestry Commission's Codes of Practice are designed to take into account the various legislations that are directly related to forest management. They provide guidelines for best practices in order to ensure that continuing economic returns can be obtained over the long term, while simultaneously fostering overall sustainable utilisation and management of Guyana's forest resources. They are designed to balance commercial and environmental considerations with social values through implementation of the GFC's integrated management system that will improve efficiency and address environmental, quality, and occupational safety and health areas.

The implementation of mineral mapping in the mining districts in order to identify economically exploitable deposits as a means of improving productivity within the mining sector while slowing deforestation will be supported as part of Guyana's REDD+ Implementation Plan. Such prior planning efforts serve to limit areas deforested and efforts to reduce road-building. This will significantly reduce deforestation by avoiding clearing of forest cover from lands which contain only marginal mineral deposits. A significant portion of Guyana's deforestation results from forest clearing for mining that does not generate a profit. The information will allow the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission to update its geological maps and be better able to use this information to more efficiently identify and plan for extraction of gold or other mineral deposits.

Exploring options for land reclamation and reforestation of mined areas

Mine-site reclamation and closure are legal requirements for all mining operations and is critical to ecosystem restoration or re-establishment. To date, approximately 200,000 hectares of forest areas are available for rehabilitation/reforestation. Whilst some areas may see new vegetation, the majority of these areas will require rehabilitation activities. It is important to Guyana's REDD+ programme as a means of increasing forest biomass and carbon stocks.

Sustainable Forest Management

Given the multiple use nature of Guyana's forests, forest harvesting activities is but one aspect of economic activities undertaken. To this end, sustainable forest management and the accompanying codes of practices are absolutely necessary to ensure the efficient management of the resources. All aspects of sustainable forest management, including forest monitoring and enforcement. Legality and the activities that accompany attaining same are critical to achieving good governance in the forest sector, in that, principles of sustainable forest management as well as activities under a REDD + agenda cannot be accomplished without this.

Forest Monitoring is an equally critical component of Guyana's REDD+ programme, especially to ensure forest degradation and deforestation are minimized. Guyana's Legality Assurance System (GTLAS) is designed to verify the legality of timber from the forest or the point of import through the entire supply chain to the point of final sale or export. The GTLAS covers all sources of timber in Guyana and guarantees the legality along the entire supply chain. Activities will be undertaken in conducting forest monitoring activities within concessions, provision of supporting activities to the implementation of the VPA. Further, support will be provided to the licensing and monitoring of forest operations as well as in monitoring of exports.

The objective will be to encourage the adoption of best practice standards that will act as the driving force to facilitate maximum benefits for Guyana in the utilization of its natural resources. This will allow for there to be implementation of best practices and reduction in carbon emissions as a result of lowered rates of deforestation and forest degradation.

FOREST CLIMATE SERVICES

Sustain Monitoring, Reporting and Verification System (MRVS) for REDD+ and ART-TREES

Through the MRVS, Guyana is able to account for and report on forest change nationally, in terms of forest

area lost and forest carbon emissions. These reports have been the basis of performance measurement under the Guyana Norway Agreement. The MRVS will allow for Guyana to account for performance under any new forest agreement in the future, while allowing for the country to achieve the objectives of the Low Carbon Development Strategy. The system is well-positioned to integrate complex market-based fundamentals, including uncertainty assessment, provisions for risk reversals, project nesting, and linkages to forest carbon registries. Forest financing markets requirements of tracking additionality, leakage, preventing double counting and double issuance of carbon credits, and eventually facilitating project nesting, have been addressed and will be further strengthened through the structure of Guyana's MRVS.

MRVS Phase Three Priorities (2021 to 2025) - MRVS Phase Three will support the improvement of the necessary human and physical capabilities, to be sustained by local institutions, to create the platform for monitoring, reporting and compliance verification under a market-based mechanism. This phase will also build on the REDD+ readiness phase of the MRVS development and result in annual routine reporting on forest carbon emissions and removals in compliance with UNFCCC and IPCC requirements. Simultaneously, this phase will create the complementary systems for reporting on REDD+ governance compliance requirements such as supporting REDD+ forest sector safeguards, Guyana's Nationally Determined Contributions, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals 13 and 15.

Implement Safeguard Information System for REDD+

Growth in the extractive sectors is only sustainable if safeguards are adhered to. The national Safeguards Information System (SIS) for REDD+ will seek to serve several functions for Guyana, including reporting on results-based financing, providing local information on the country's performance against the Cancun Safeguards for REDD+, as well as ensuring maintained stakeholder support for REDD+. More specifically, it will provide information on the actual outcomes of Guyana's conformance with the Cancun Safeguards throughout REDD+ implementation, including in the context of accessing REDD+ results-based payments in application of the methodological framework established in the Warsaw Framework for REDD+.

The safeguards being supported are in keeping with Guyana's First Summary of Information⁵ as follows:

- a) That actions complement or are consistent with the objectives of national forest programmes and relevant international conventions and agreements;
- b) Transparent and effective national forest governance structures, taking into account national legislation and sovereignty;
- c) Respect for the knowledge and rights of indigenous peoples and members of local communities, by taking into account relevant international obligations, national circumstances and laws, and noting that the United Nations General Assembly has adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;
- d) The full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, in particular indigenous peoples and local communities;
- e) That actions are consistent with the conservation of natural forests and biological diversity, ensuring that the actions are not used for the conversion of natural forests, but are instead used to incentivize the protection and conservation of natural forests and their ecosystem services, and to enhance other social and environmental benefits;
- f) Actions to address the risks of reversals;
- g) Actions to reduce displacement of emissions.

⁵ Government of Guyana, REDD+ Safeguards First Summary of Information for Guyana, April 2021, https://redd.unfccc.int/files/redd_safeguards_-_summary_of_information_report_-_guyana_2021_gog_final.pdf

ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

Expansion and restoration of Guyana's mangrove forests and ecosystems

Mangroves provide a number of important services to Guyana that range from the protection of the country's coastal plain to provision of biodiversity habitats to provision of livelihoods to communities. Coastal ecosystems, specifically mangroves, provide an important function in sequestering significant amounts of carbon, designated 'blue carbon'. This is of particular importance to Guyana's REDD+ programme.

Guyana has made significant strides in the protection of mangroves through its Guyana Mangrove Restoration Project. This project allowed for the establishment of national administrative capacity to manage mangroves in Guyana and focused efforts on mangrove restoration, community-based mangrove management as well as public awareness. Guyana will intensify efforts at mangrove restoration and management in coming years. Guyana seeks to further explore Blue Carbon potential in Guyana, focusing on Guyana's mangroves in the initial stages. The expansion and restoration of mangrove forests in Guyana is the intended outcome.

Examination of Green-Grey Solutions Utilising Mangroves in Guyana's Coastal Protection

Mangroves, highly adapted to the challenging and dynamic juncture between land and sea, form a resilient green infrastructure that serves as the foundation of an entire, highly productive ecosystem. Their role in consolidating soil is crucial in the process that created our coastal plain.

Mangroves grow quickly (2m/yr) when the conditions are right. While their unique roots capture and consolidate soil, they become critical nurseries for commercially and ecologically important marine life, and their tangles of branches provide vital habitats for thousands of other species. Bulwarks of coastal resiliency, mangroves provide crucial protection from storm-surges, flooding and erosion. Remarkable for their ability to sequester carbon and mitigate climate change, mangroves store as much as four times the carbon of an equal area of inland rainforest and most of it is in the soil, held fast by their roots.

Increased mangrove cover will increase benefits for Guyana, and Guyana seeks to advance through a process of assessment of current structures and framework, the design and implementation of a comprehensive framework of Green- Grey Solutions as a component within the mechanism addressing sea and river defence.

Strengthen and expand Guyana's National Protected Area System

Conservation of forest carbon stocks is a key component of REDD+, with protected areas and other area-based conservation measures as key strategies to achieve this. The establishment of protected areas are an important part of Guyana's REDD+ and conservation agenda.

The Protected Areas Commission (PAC) was established in 2012 following the passage of the Protected Areas Act in 2011. The PAC has oversight of management of Guyana's National Protected Areas System (NPAS), with responsibility for further expansion of the NPAS. Guyana's National Protected Areas System (NPAS) which currently comprises approximately 8.4%⁶ of Guyana's land area, comprises a mix of urban and hinterland protected areas. These protected areas include the Iwokrama forest, Shell Beach Protected Area, Kanuku Mountains Protected Area, Kaieteur National Park and the Kanashen Community Owned Conservation Area; the urban parks include the National Park, Botanical Gardens, Zoological Park and Joe Viera Park.

The role of the PAC includes monitoring and regulation of resource use within protected areas (PAs); preparation and implementation of management plans; support to Amerindian Villages associated with PAs; and public awareness and involvement.

⁶ <https://protectedareatrust.org.gy/protected-areas/>

Options will be examined for expansion of the NPAS and implementation effected. This will include not only advancing to the Aichi Target on Protected Areas but also, the more recent, 'Leaders Pledge for Nature' that has informed the Global Biodiversity Framework.

Maintenance of Intact Forest Landscapes and Watersheds

An Intact Forest Landscape (IFL) is a seamless mosaic of forest⁷ with an area of at least 500 km² (50,000 ha) and a minimal width of 10 km. There must be minimally human activity within the area, with the land area being large enough to maintain all native biodiversity.

Guyana has been reporting on Intact Forest Landscapes since 2010 as a REDD+ Interim Indicator. This was also part of the reporting requirements under the Guyana Norway Agreement on climate and forests and integral to Guyana's reporting on forest change and biodiversity protection. Reporting on this indicator stems from the concept that degradation of intact forest through human activities will produce a net loss of carbon and is often the precursor to further processes causing long-term decreases in carbon stocks. Furthermore, preserving intact forests will contribute to the protection of biodiversity.

IFL continues to be an area that is underscored for its broader alignment to non-carbon aspects of ecosystem services and for this reason, as part of the REDD+ Implementation framework, will continue to be assessed and will have dedicated reporting.

Watershed services fall into the regulatory category of ecosystem services. Water can serve both a source and a sink function. For example, in comparison to agricultural regions, forested ecosystems regulate storm surges, reduce sediment loading in rivers/streams, and promote sustained water flow. This is an example of how both forested and agricultural ecosystems regulate water, serving as source functions, yet forested ecosystems provide greater climate mitigation potential. Water flow, water quality, transportation provided by waterways, and habitat provided for fishes and marine life are the most common watershed ecosystem services. The LCDS sets out a framework that seeks to protect key watersheds and protect the ecosystems which they serve.

Building Local Capacity for Implementation of Payment for Ecosystem Services Mechanism

The LCDS will support a programme involving Government, civil society, private sector, and Indigenous Peoples and local communities in advancing research and development in ecosystem services and functions. This will include at scale R&D work as well as localised community level development. Academic institutions at national level (such as the University of Guyana, Cyril Potter College of Education, and the National Centre for Education Research and Development) and local level (such as the Bina Hill Institute) and will be engaged.

The programme will be developed and expanded to fully reflect the new and emerging thrust of the LCDS priorities and to holistically expand R&D throughout the academic and vocational pursuits of formal and informal education. Working with local and international partners, including the University of Guyana, the LCDS will support the establishment of an International Centre for Biodiversity Research (and potentially expanded ecosystem services).

⁷ <http://www.intactforests.org/>

PART II: COUNTRY'S SAFEGUARDS APPROACH

This section presents progress to date in Guyana in ensuring REDD+ implementation is consistent with Cancun Safeguards. This section provides a description of the Cancun safeguards according to the national context and provides an overview on progress and perspectives in the set-up of a system for providing information on how safeguards have been addressed and respected.

GUYANA'S DESCRIPTION OF CANCUN SAFEGUARDS

Parties to the UNFCCC agreed to a set of seven safeguards (broad principles) that are expected to be applied in accordance with national context and circumstances when undertaking REDD+ activities. See Box 1.

Box 1: The Cancun safeguards⁸

When undertaking the activities referred to in paragraph 70 of this decision, the following safeguards should be promoted and supported:

- (a) That actions complement or are consistent with the objectives of national forest programmes and relevant international conventions and agreements;
- (b) Transparent and effective national forest governance structures, taking into account national legislation and sovereignty;
- (c) Respect for the knowledge and rights of indigenous peoples and members of local communities, by taking into account relevant international obligations, national circumstances and laws, and noting that the United Nations General Assembly has adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;
- (d) The full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, in particular indigenous peoples and local communities, in the actions referred to in paragraphs 70 and 72 of this decision;
- (e) That actions are consistent with the conservation of natural forests and biological diversity, ensuring that the actions referred to in paragraph 70 of this decision are not used for the conversion of natural forests, but are instead used to incentivize the protection and conservation of natural forests and their ecosystem services, and to enhance other social and environmental benefits;⁹
- (f) Actions to address the risks of reversals;
- (g) Actions to reduce displacement of emissions.

A description of each safeguard in accordance with national circumstances was achieved by identifying the various rights and obligations that are embodied in the Cancun safeguards, and examining how these are reflected in the specific country context in the country's legal framework.

Drawing on an analysis of the country's legal framework, this section presents a description of each Cancun safeguard in accordance with national circumstances, which includes a narrative description and breakdown of the core elements of such description/clarification.

The purpose of this exercise was to specify how the objectives encompassed in the Cancun safeguards translate into concrete principles and objectives that are followed and promoted in the context of the implementation of REDD+ activities in Guyana, and which are anchored in the country's Policies, Laws and Regulations (PLRs).

⁸ UNFCCC Decision 1/CP.16 Appendix 1 paragraph 2

⁹ Taking into account the need for sustainable livelihoods of indigenous peoples and local communities and their interdependence on forests in most countries, reflected in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as well as International Mother Earth Day.

GUYANA'S CLARIFICATION OF SAFEGUARD A (THAT ACTIONS COMPLEMENT OR ARE CONSISTENT WITH THE OBJECTIVES OF NATIONAL FOREST PROGRAMMES AND RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS AND AGREEMENTS)

Narrative description by Guyana:

The REDD+ activities must be implemented in compliance with the objectives of national forest programmes, and consistent to the provisions of the relevant treaties and international conventions Guyana is Party to.

Core elements of the clarification:

- a. The REDD+ activities are consistent with the objectives of national forest programmes
- b. The REDD+ activities are consistent with relevant and applicable international conventions and agreements

GUYANA'S CLARIFICATION OF SAFEGUARD B (TRANSPARENT AND EFFECTIVE NATIONAL FOREST GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT NATIONAL LEGISLATION AND SOVEREIGNTY)

Narrative description by Guyana:

The rights of access to information, accountability, justice, gender equality, land tenure and fair distribution of benefits will be respected and promoted in the scope of the application of the REDD+ activities.

Core elements of the clarification:

- a. Right to access information is promoted in the context of the implementation of the REDD+ activities
- b. Accountability is guaranteed in the context of the implementation of the REDD+ activities
- c. Right to access justice is recognized and protected in the context of the implementation of the REDD+ activities
- d. Rights over forest land are recognized and protected in the context of the implementation of the REDD+ activities (including 'Gender equality is promoted in the context of the implementation of the REDD+ activities')
- e. Fair distribution of benefits is promoted in the context of the implementation of the REDD+ activities (including 'Gender equality is promoted in the context of the implementation of the REDD+ activities')

GUYANA'S CLARIFICATION OF SAFEGUARD C (RESPECT FOR THE KNOWLEDGE AND RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND MEMBERS OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES, BY TAKING INTO ACCOUNT RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS, NATIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND LAWS, AND NOTING THAT THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY HAS ADOPTED THE UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES)

Narrative description by Guyana:

The REDD+ activities will be implemented in accordance and with respect to the rights of recognition of, and respect for the rights of Amerindian peoples and local communities; including the rights to non-discrimination, traditional knowledge and culture, self-determination, benefit sharing and land tenure rights.

Core elements of the clarification:

- a. The rights of indigenous peoples and local communities are promoted and protected in the context of the application of the REDD+ activities.
- b. Traditional knowledge is recognized and protected in the context of the application of the REDD+ activities.

GUYANA'S CLARIFICATION OF SAFEGUARD D (THE FULL AND EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION OF RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS, IN PARTICULAR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES)

Narrative description by Guyana:

The right to participate, in particular for relevant Indigenous peoples and local communities, is recognized and are to be promoted under the implementation of the REDD+ activities.

Core elements of the clarification:

- a. The right to participate in the design and implementation of the REDD+ activities is recognized and promoted.
- b. Relevant Indigenous peoples and local communities have the right to participate in the application of the REDD+ activities.
- c. Right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) is recognized and protected in accordance with the relevant legal obligations in the application of the REDD+ activities.

GUYANA'S CLARIFICATION OF SAFEGUARD E (THAT ACTIONS ARE CONSISTENT WITH THE CONSERVATION OF NATURAL FORESTS AND BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY, ENSURING THAT THE ACTIONS REFERRED TO IN PARAGRAPH 70 OF DECISION 1 / CP.16 ARE NOT USED FOR THE CONVERSION OF NATURAL FORESTS, BUT ARE INSTEAD USED TO INCENTIVIZE THE PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF NATURAL FORESTS AND THEIR ECOSYSTEM SERVICES, AND TO ENHANCE OTHER SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS)

Narrative description by Guyana:

The REDD+ activities will promote the conservation of natural forests and biodiversity, the enhancement of social and environmental benefits, and will not result in the conversion of natural forests.

Core elements of the clarification:

- a. The conservation of natural forests and biological diversity is recognized and protected in the context of the implementation of the REDD+ activities.
- b. The REDD+ activities will not incentivise the conversion of natural forests.
- c. Enhancement of ecological, biological, climatic, and socio-cultural, benefits is recognized and protected in the context of the implementation of the REDD+ activities.

GUYANA'S CLARIFICATION OF SAFEGUARD F AND G (ACTIONS TO ADDRESS THE RISKS OF REVERSALS; ACTIONS TO REDUCE DISPLACEMENT OF EMISSIONS)

Narrative description by Guyana:

Risks of reversals and displacement of emissions of the REDD+ activities are addressed through the MRVS and national forest monitoring system.

OVERVIEW ON A SAFEGUARDS INFORMATION SYSTEM FOR GUYANA

The UNFCCC does not offer any guidance on what specific functions the SIS should perform, e.g. information compilation, analysis, validation, dissemination, etc., beyond the need to 'provide transparent and consistent information' on how all the Cancun safeguards are being addressed and respected 'that is accessible by all relevant stakeholders and updated on a regular basis'. The functions of the SIS are closely linked to the institutional arrangements for REDD+, which is why the following core functions for the SIS are considered in Guyana, and explained in more detail below:

- Collection: process of collecting raw data through appropriate means (e.g. information systems and sources).
- Aggregation: process of aggregating, into a central repository/database, the information provided by the relevant sources and systems for the purpose of analysis.
- Analysis: process of undertaking assessment (qualitative and quantitative) of the information in order to determine to what extent the safeguards are being addressed and respected.
- Dissemination of information: process of disseminating, both internally (national level) and externally (international reporting) through appropriate means (e.g. website, reports, meetings with relevant stakeholders, etc.)

In December 2022, Guyana commenced the process that would lead to the development of the Safeguard Information System. This SIS will be built utilising existing sector level mechanisms and governance arrangements for developing a centralised Safeguard Information System for compilation, monitoring and reporting on how safeguards are being addressed, implemented and respected in Guyana. The SIS will be developed with flexibility to allow for incorporation of future improvements.

FUNCTION 1: COLLECTION OF INFORMATION

This function refers to the process of collecting information on the ground and is linked to the monitoring and reporting responsibilities under the implementation of REDD+ activities.

The collection of information is to be carried out by the REDD+ Implementing agencies as a component of their monitoring and reporting responsibilities under the implementation of REDD+ activities. Part IV of this SOI outlines the indicators to be used to collect information. Information will be collected and reported routinely, that will allow for its analysis and preparation of national reports every 12 months.

FUNCTION 2: AGGREGATION OF INFORMATION

This function refers to the process of aggregating the requested information at national level through an SIS database, with the purpose of being able to report on the application of the safeguards at national level. The Guyana Forestry Commission will be responsible for the aggregation of the information.

FUNCTION 3: ANALYSIS OF INFORMATION

The analysis function aims to offer a qualitative and quantitative assessment of the information in order to determine to what extent the Cancun safeguards are being addressed and respected.

The Guyana Forestry Commission, will prepare a draft report and submit it for public comments. The draft report will be posted on the LCDS and GFC's websites, and the public will have 30 working days to submit any written comments to the Guyana Forestry Commission.

The Guyana Forestry Commission, will address feedback received within 30 days of finalizing the public comment period. Based on comments received, the office will issue a responsiveness summary that summarizes all comments and responses to each and will submit the final report for validation and endorsement.

These annual reports should capture the experience with implementation of the Cancun safeguards and will be the basis for future SOIs. The specific objectives of these reports are to provide:

- an assessment of extent of compliance with Cancun safeguards, learn lessons, and determine potential improvements;
- to assess the occurrence of, and potential for, cumulative impacts due to project-funded and other development activities
- A record of progress, experiences, challenges encountered, lessons learnt and emerging issues from year-to-year implementation of Cancun safeguards that can be used to improve performance;

The report shall include the following key information:

- Reporting period;
- REDD+ activities undertaken during the reporting period;
- Progress to date in implementing the Cancun safeguards (un-packed by indicators);
- Lessons learned;
- Emerging issues;
- Recommendations for improvement;
- Conclusion.

FUNCTION 4: DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION

This function refers to the process of disseminating the information produced by the SIS. Although UNFCCC guidance is not detailed in relation to this function, it requested that the SIS should: "Provide transparent and consistent information that is accessible by all relevant stakeholders."¹⁰ This means that there is an expectation that SIS information be disseminated both internally (national level) and externally (international reporting) through appropriate means (e.g. website, reports, meetings with relevant stakeholders, etc.).

At the domestic level, once the Report is approved, it will be published as a final version. Information and updates will be done frequently, and a national report will be published every year. The report will also be sent to the respective UNFCCC focal point in the country, to trigger the reporting to the UNFCCC for the preparation of summary of information.

¹⁰ UNFCCC Decision 12/CP.17 paragraph 2(b)

PART III: HOW SAFEGUARDS HAVE BEEN ADDRESSED?

Given that the legal framework of the country generally protects and regulates the substantive and procedural rights enshrined in the Cancun Safeguards, Guyana's relevant legal framework largely determines 'how' the country ensures REDD+ activities are carried out in consistency with these safeguards, including those currently under implementation in the context of ART TREES. This section provides a succinct overview of the legal and institutional framework¹¹ outlining the relevant policies, laws and regulations (PLRs) that are used to ensure consistency with the Cancun safeguards throughout REDD+ implementation.

Information is presented in relation to Guyana's description of Cancun Safeguards below.

OVERVIEW ON THE APPLICABLE LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK IN PLACE TO ENSURE REDD+ IMPLEMENTATION IS CONSISTENT WITH CANCUN SAFEGUARDS

CANCUN SAFEGUARD A

The REDD+ activities must be implemented in compliance with the objectives of national forest programmes, and consistent with the provisions of the relevant treaties and international conventions Guyana is Party to.

Core elements of the clarification:

- a. The REDD+ activities are consistent with the objectives of national forest programmes;
- b. The REDD+ activities are consistent with relevant and applicable international conventions and agreements.

Relevant PLRs to be used to ensure the implementation of this Safeguard

REDD+ actions in Guyana have been implemented in a manner that not only ensures consistency with its commitments under the UNFCCC, but also complementarity with other international and national initiatives. This includes the implementation of national policies including the National Forest Policy, strategies such as the LCDS, and governance initiatives that include EU FLEGT and developing a standard for National Forest Management and Chain of Custody.

Guyana's legal framework provides a comprehensive suite of laws governing conservation and the protection of biodiversity consistent with national forest programmes that are applicable to the REDD+ Implementation Plan¹². The National Forest Policy Statement 2018 (NFPS) and National Forest Plan 2018 (NFP) have been developed within the framework of the Guyana Constitution. These present a set of policies and plans that address the economic, conservation, governance and capacity facets of forest management, while seeking to value the forest for more than the price of the timber.

Guyana is currently party to thirty-three (33)¹³ relevant international agreements which have been recognized and are applicable to the REDD+ Strategy. International law and conventions are enforceable when national

¹¹ Draft Social and Environmental Management Framework for REDD+ in Guyana (15th October 2019)

¹² The Constitution of Guyana 1980 - Principles and Bases of the Political, Economic and Social System recognises by virtue of section 36- the wellbeing of the nation requires inter alia the preservation of the rich diversity of plants and eco-systems. This is a general aspiration of the nation expressed by the drafters of the Constitution and represent the broad objectives which can be viewed as the foundation for all the subordinate legislation, regulations and policies.

Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; CRC - Convention on the Rights of the Child; CRC-OP-AC - Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict; CRC-OP-SC - Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children child prostitution and child pornography; CRPD - Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Diversity Critical Expressions; UN Convention against Corruption, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; Geneva Convention; Inter-American Convention Against Corruption; International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships; International Convention relating to Intervention of the High Seas in cases of Oil Pollution Casualties; International Treaty on Plant Genetic resources for Food and Agriculture; Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage; Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants; UN Convention against Torture; Convention on Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage; Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer.

law gives effect through enactment. The Constitution of Guyana¹⁴ asserts that where a convention has been ratified, such rights shall be respected and upheld by the executive, legislature, judiciary and all organs and agencies of the Government and enforceable in the manner prescribed¹⁵.

CANCUN SAFEGUARD B

The rights of access to information, accountability, justice, gender equality, land tenure and fair distribution of benefits will be respected and promoted in the scope of the application of the REDD+ activities.

Core elements of the clarification:

- a. Right to access information is promoted in the context of the implementation of the REDD+ activities;
- b. Accountability is guaranteed in the context of the implementation of the REDD+ activities;
- c. Right to access justice is recognized and protected in the context of the implementation of the REDD+ activities;
- d. Rights over forest land are recognized and protected in the context of the implementation of the REDD+ activities (including 'Gender equality is promoted in the context of the implementation of the REDD+ activities');
- e. Fair distribution of benefits is promoted in the context of the implementation of the REDD+ activities (including 'Gender equality is promoted in the context of the implementation of the REDD+ activities').

Relevant PLRs to be used to ensure the implementation of this Safeguard

With regards to access to information

The Access to Information Act gives every Guyanese citizen or person domiciled in Guyana the qualified right of access to information¹⁶. The Amerindian Act 2006 (AA) - refers to proper records and financial accounts to be furnished to the subject Minister. The Protected Areas Act 2011 (PAA) requires the publication of annual accounts of the Protected Areas Commission which is presented to Parliament. It also requires the maintenance of a register identifying protected areas and archaeological sites. The NFP and NFPS address dissemination and distribution of information via capacity building and governance including but not limited to green energy, REDD+ requirements, all aspects of forestry and forest-related activities. The Guyana Forestry Commission Act requires maintenance and dissemination of information.

With regards to Accountability

The Office of the Auditor General is entitled to investigate the financial performance of the government organizations, including details on revenue and expenditure relating to ministries, departments and regions. In the forest sector the Forestry Commission Act¹⁷, the PAA and the AA contain provisions mandating independent audits with the State Lands Act¹⁸ providing for rent, fees and other moneys to be paid to the Accountant General. The Criminal Law Offences Act and the Summary Jurisdiction of Offences Act regulate the bribery and corruption by public servant.

With regards to Access to Justice

The Guyana Constitution recognizes the right of access to justice and the right to bring proceedings for the infringement of fundamental rights by arms of the state¹⁹. Alternative Dispute Resolution is available through

¹⁴ Constitution of Guyana, section 39 (2) In the interpretation of fundamental rights provisions in this Constitution a court shall pay due regard to international law, international conventions and charters bearing on human rights.

¹⁵ Constitution of Guyana, section 154A (1) of Fourth Schedule.

¹⁶ Constitution of Guyana, section 39 (2) In the interpretation of fundamental rights provisions in this Constitution a court shall pay due regard to international law, international conventions and charters bearing on human rights. Section 154A (1) of Fourth Schedule. Access to Information Act 2011 - section 12 Information is defined in the Access to information Act 2011 as any format of information relating to any private body which can be accessed by a public authority under any other law.

¹⁷ Guyana Forestry Commission Act 2007.

¹⁸ State Lands Act Chapter 62:01

¹⁹ Articles 139 and 144 of the Guyana Constitution.

the Mediation Centre of Guyana supported by the Supreme Court. Forestry sector specific related offences exist with penalties in place²⁰. The Environmental Protection Act (EPA) section 70 creates offences around bribery²¹. The SLA section 32 outlaws bribery by an officer and prescribes the applicable offences.²² Several state agencies are equipped to investigate corrupt allegations. The State Assets Recovery Act created the State Assets Recovery Unit, the Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism Act 2009²³ created the Financial Intelligence Unit. Others include- The Procurement Commission, the Guyana Revenue Authority, the Office of the Auditor General and the Office of the Ombudsman. The Integrity Commission Act²⁴ (ICA) section 27 establishes a Code of Conduct for any person engaged in public life.

With regards to rights over Forest Land

The AA, SLA, PAA, GFCA, Mining Act²⁵, Forest Act (FA) and other sectoral policies recognise statutory and customary ownership and use rights. This suite of forest legislation provides clear legal rules recognizing land and forest land tenure rights. The FA establishes the basis on which public forested areas can be declared State Forests and the basis on which those forests may be acquired²⁶. The PAA (section 30) places an obligation on the subject Minister to investigate existing rights and to settle or terminate rights as permitted by law. The Act allows for the creation of Amerindian Protected Areas on application by a village council. Amerindian communities can either acquire lands through the AA (2006)²⁷, which has procedural framework in place, or through the SLA, which confers upon the President the power to issue land titles to Amerindian communities. Guyana's Constitution²⁸ forbids expropriation as default of any type of right, while requiring compensation for expropriated property and guarantees the person compensated access to the High Court to appeal any such decision.²⁹ Some forest sector PLRs offer specific rules on regulating state forest authorisations³⁰.

With regards to benefit sharing

Fair distribution of benefits are addressed in the Low Carbon Development Strategy, and the NFPS and NFP. This includes broad statements as to the regulation of such rights such as specific objective 1 of the NFPS which speaks of promoting sustainable livelihoods, both nationally and in forest dependent communities. The objective stresses the need for equitable benefit sharing not just among current stakeholders, but also between present and future generations. There are several policies and strategies which address the issue of participation and benefit sharing in the context of forest conservation and resource extraction, such as The NFPS and The Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS). Guyana's Constitution includes provisions protecting the individual from against discrimination including on the grounds of gender, stating that (a) no law shall make any provision that is discriminatory either of itself or in its effect; and (b) no person shall be treated

²⁰ Forestry Commission Act section 27

²¹ Section 70 EPA creates a provision titled Ethical Considerations which refers to the commission of an offence(s) where officers demand or accept any fee, perquisite, bribe, gratuity, recompense or reward, whether pecuniary or otherwise, from any person on account of anything done or to be done (or omitted or to be omitted) by such representative, officer or employee in any way relating to his office or employment, or if any representative, officer or employee attempts to make any collusive agreement to neglect his duty or to conceal or connive at any act or omission.

²² The provisions of Anti Money Laundering legislation whilst addressing the complex nature of money laundering does not specifically address the forest sector.

²³ Act No.13 of 2009

²⁴ Integrity Commission Act 19:12 Laws of Guyana

²⁵ Mining Act 1989

²⁶ excluding village lands as defined in the Amerindian Act, the Iwokrama Act and the Kaieteur National Park.

²⁷ The Protected Areas Act -Sections 59-64.

²⁸ "No property of any description shall be compulsory taken possession of, and no interest in or right over property of any description shall be compulsory acquired, except by or under the authority of a written law" (Constitution Art. 142(a) 1980 (2001)).

²⁹ The Constitution states: "Nothing contained or done under the authority of any law shall be held to be inconsistent with or in contravention of [the above guarantees of compensation and appeal] to the extent that the law in question makes provision for the taking of possession or acquisition of: (i) property of the Amerindians of Guyana for the purpose of its care, protection and management; or any right, title or interest held by any person in or over any lands situated in an Amerindian District, Area or Village established under the Amerindian Act for the purpose of effecting the termination or transfer thereof for the benefit of an Amerindian community" (Art. 142(b)(i)).

³⁰ Forest Act Section 18-Suspension, amendment, and revocation of State forest authorisation- Where the Commissioner believes an offence has been committed he has the power to suspend, amend or revoke a forest authorisation. The holder is given an opportunity to be heard prior to application of powers under section 18.

in a discriminatory manner by any person acting by virtue of any written law or in the performance of the functions of any public office or any public authority.³¹ Further protections are provided specifically to women and children³².

Guyana's legal framework guards against all forms of discrimination, including discrimination on the grounds of gender.³³ The Guyana Constitution established the Women and Gender Equality Commission to promote national recognition and acceptance that women's rights are human rights, respect for gender equality and the protection, development and attainment of gender equality³⁴.

CANCUN SAFEGUARD C

The REDD+ activities will be implemented in accordance and with respect to the rights of recognition of, and respect for the rights of Amerindian peoples and local communities; including the rights to non-discrimination, traditional knowledge and culture, self-determination, benefit sharing and land tenure rights.

Core elements of the clarification:

- a. The rights of indigenous peoples and local communities are promoted and protected in the context of the application of the REDD+ activities.
- b. Traditional knowledge is recognized and protected in the context of the application of the REDD+ activities.

Relevant PLRs to be used to ensure the implementation of this Safeguard

Several pieces of legislation address the protection of indigenous rights, key among those is the Constitution of Guyana³⁵. Guyana's PLRs define Indigenous Peoples. The Amerindian Act (AA) is the key piece of legislation which offers a definition of "Amerindian"³⁶. The FA and the PAA refer to Amerindian Community and ascribes to the meaning given to Amerindian in the AA. The Iwokrama International Centre for Rain Forest Conservation and Development Act 1996(IA) regulates consultations with the Amerindian community³⁷.

The Guyana Constitution³⁸ defines the right to the protection, preservation and promulgation of their languages, cultural heritage and way of life. This is further elaborated through similar protections of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) implemented into laws recognising and protecting the spiritual relationship which Amerindians have with the land³⁹.

³¹ Article 149 of the Guyana Constitution

³² Articles 149(D) 1) The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or equal protection and benefit of the law. 2) The State shall, for the purpose of promoting equality, take legislative and other measures designed to protect disadvantaged persons and persons with disabilities. 3) Equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms guaranteed by or under this Constitution or any other law. Article 149(E) "1) All persons, whether born in or out of wedlock, and whether born prior to the enactment of this article or not, are born equal, have equal status and are entitled to equal rights. 2). Nothing contained in paragraph (1) shall be taken to affect vested rights. Article 149(F) "1) Every woman is entitled to equal rights and status with men in all spheres of political, economic and social life. All forms of discrimination against women on the basis of gender or sex are illegal. 2) Every woman is entitled to equal access with men to academic, vocational and professional training, equal opportunities in employment, remuneration and promotion and in social, political and cultural activity.

³³ The Guyana Constitution, Equal Rights Act 1990, Prevention of Discrimination Act 1997. Gender discrimination is also addressed in numerous sectoral and other policies and regulations.

³⁴ 212 Q (1)

³⁵ Art (149G): Indigenous people shall have the right to the protection, preservation and promulgation of their languages, cultural heritage and way of life.

³⁶ 'Amerindian' means any citizen of Guyana who — (a) belongs to any of the native or aboriginal peoples of Guyana; or (b) is a descendant of any person mentioned in paragraph (a). The Protected Areas Act - The (a) "Amerindian Community" has the meaning assigned to it by the Amerindian Act. According to article 1, paragraph 1 (a), of ILO Convention 169, its scope embraces tribal as well as indigenous peoples. The latter are defined as those peoples who are descended from populations which inhabited the country, or the geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonization or the establishment of present state boundaries and who, irrespective of their legal status, retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions.

³⁷ The Forests Act 11(1) community group means person living within and having strong ties with the community..." The Iwokrama Act 6(2).

³⁸ Art 149G

³⁹ The Amerindian Act 2006 contains the mechanisms for implementing Article 8(j) of the CBD.

The PAA establishes that the management authority for a national protected area may enter into an agreement with each Amerindian community and Amerindian village which has traditional rights in the national protected area and the agreement may provide for a host of benefits⁴⁰

The Amerindian Lands Commission Act asserts collective forest ownerships and rights⁴¹. The Constitution of Guyana, the FA, the AA and the PAA all address the procedure where rights are susceptible to being extinguished or diminished⁴². The AA empowers the Minister to determine the grant of title, based on investigation which accords recognition and protection of the communal property rights of Indigenous Peoples which arise from and are grounded in traditional ownership systems⁴³. The AA recognises benefit sharing as a key component of the empowerment of indigenous people.⁴⁴

Guyana allocates absolute grants and titles to Indigenous villages and has clear provisions for extensions to land areas following a standard process. Clear provisions for such are detailed in the Amerindian Act, as well as the Forest Act, that specifically speak to customary rights and traditional access and recognizes unhindered access to these areas for subsistence use for all Amerindian people.

The Ministry of Amerindian Affairs, the Protected Areas Commission, and the Guyana Forestry Commission, through the relevant legislations that govern each body, have used their mandates to protect traditional rights. The Ministry of Amerindian Affairs has implemented the Amerindian Act and its attendant protection of traditional rights. The GFC has implemented the EU FLEGT programme with specific provisions made for traditional rights. Similarly, the Protected Areas Commission has implemented its management of the PAC through the recognizing of Community Owned Conservation Areas and traditional rights.

CANCUN SAFEGUARD D

The right to participate, in particular for relevant Indigenous peoples and local communities, is recognized and is to be promoted under the implementation of the REDD+ activities.

Core elements of the clarification:

- a. The right to participate in the design and implementation of the REDD+ activities is recognized and promoted.
- b. Relevant Indigenous peoples and local communities have the right to participate in the application of the REDD+ activities.
- c. Right to FPIC is recognized and protected in accordance with the relevant legal obligations in the application of the REDD+ activities.

⁴⁰ — (a) the use of scientific methodologies to assess the levels at which use is sustainable;

(b) systems for monitoring and recording the exercise of traditional rights;

(c) systems for reporting any threats to traditional rights including any use or extraction of resources which is not authorised under a traditional right or otherwise permitted in the management plan;

(d) recognition of the spiritual relationship which the Amerindian community or Amerindian village has with the national protected area or any part of it;

(e) identification of sacred places and measures to ensure their protection;

(f) the management of any archaeological sites identified under section 79;

⁴¹ The Amerindian Lands Commission Act asserts³⁹ ownership and other customary rights. The role of the Commission is to investigate and recommend which tribes and communities shall be given rights of tenure and inter alia the nature of the rights of tenure, beneficial or legal and how vested or conferred. The Amerindian Act defines which applications are made to and decided by the Minister under a very simplified process. The land claim mechanism encompasses inter alia unorthodox sources such as oral histories, local sketches and drawings.

⁴² For example: The Protected Areas Act sec (30) the Minister shall carry out an investigation to determine what rights and claims exist over the area and may take steps to settle such claims and terminate such rights as permitted by law.

⁴³ While rights are protected, those rights are limited: the Amerindian Act limits those to only “subsistence rights or privileges,” and requires that those rights be “exercised sustainably” in accordance with indigenous peoples’ “spiritual relationship” with their lands, which limits enforceability.

⁴⁴ The requirement for consent for small and medium scale mining, employment of locals in mining operations and benefit sharing with communities. Moreover, central government is now bound to pay a percentage of royalties from mining on Amerindian lands into a fund for the benefit of all Indigenous villages and communities.⁴²

Relevant PLRs to be used to ensure the implementation of this Safeguard

The AA, the PAA, the FA⁴⁵ outline varying levels and processes of public participation. The IA sec 6(2) recognizes and provides for a process of consultancy and involvement of the Amerindian community. The Guyana Constitution established the Indigenous Peoples Commission which has a constitutionally mandated role in enhancing participation and representation of Indigenous people in the decision-making process. The Amerindian Act, the Forest Act, the Forest Policy Statement and Forest Plan, and the Iwokrama Act contain provisions for ensuring participation of stakeholders in the forestry sector. ⁴⁴⁴⁵

CANCUN SAFEGUARD E

The REDD+ activities will promote the conservation of natural forests and biodiversity, the enhancement of social and environmental benefits, and will not result in the conversion of natural forests.

Core elements of the clarification:

- a. The conservation of natural forests and biological diversity is recognized and protected in the context of the implementation of the REDD+ activities.
- b. The REDD+ activities will not incentivise the conversion of natural forests.
- c. Enhancement of ecological, biological, climatic, and socio-cultural, benefits is recognized and protected in the context of the implementation of the REDD+ activities.

Relevant PLRs to be used to ensure the implementation of this Safeguard

Guyana's legal framework defines the terms "biological diversity" and "ecosystems services"^{46/47}. The Guyana Forestry Commission has utilised the definition of Forest⁴⁸ as per the Forest Act and operationalised it for mapping purpose so the stipulation of a minimum mapping unit which is 1 hectare is utilized⁴⁹. The PAA establishes the basis for creating protected areas. The AA has limitations in respect of large-scale mining⁵⁰.

Guyana's legal framework regulates protection of wildlife- The Animals Disease Prevention Act 2003, Animal Control of Experiments Act Chp 71:03, the Wildlife Conservation and Management Act contain provisions for the protection of endangered species. Penalties⁵¹ exist for non-compliance in respect of protection, marketing and trade of endangered species. Guyana's PLRs promote conservation research for science-based biodiversity conservation: IA, PAA, WCMA are among the key legislative instruments addressing science-

⁴⁵ The Forests Act section 11 speaks of the free and fair opportunity for participation where grants of Community Forest Management Agreements are awarded.

⁴⁶ The Protected Areas Act and the Iwokrama Act. Protected Areas Act 6(f) "biological diversity" means the variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial ecosystems, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems.

⁴⁷ Defined in the act as benefits provided by ecosystems which include provisioning services such as food, water, timber, fibre, and genetic resources; regulating services such as the regulation of climate, floods, disease, and water quality as well as waste treatment; cultural services such as recreation, aesthetic enjoyment and spiritual fulfilment; and supporting services such as soil formation, pollination and nutrient cycling;

⁴⁸ Forests Act- Forest means an ecosystem dominated by woody plants consisting of closed forest formations where trees of various stories and undergrowth cover a high proportion of the ground; or open forest with continuous vegetation cover in which tree crown cover exceeds 10 percent and includes mangrove forests and any wetlands or open lands within a forest which forms an integral part of the ecosystem, forest produce in the ecosystem; and biological soil and water resources of the ecosystem.

⁴⁹ Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission (GL&SC) is the main agency responsible for land surveying and administration in Guyana. The Commission, a statutory body, is responsible for the development and management of land information system. It maintains registers of GIS data and maps in Guyana. It is responsible for the purchase and lease of all public lands in Guyana. The Commission engages in projects with the Guyana Forestry Commission to address mapping and verification. A National Land Use Plan was crafted by the GLSC. Its key policy focus is summarized as follows- The National Land Use Plan highlights present land use, potential and constraints and recommendations. Short, medium and long-term priorities for development and land use, especially how to deal with competing land uses in each of the development periods are planned by various Agencies. Planning ultimately analyses the sustainability of activities such as forestry and agriculture against non-sustainable but high-value activities such as mining. The GL&SC has overall responsibility for land use planning. It carries out land surveys, produces maps and stores and distributes geographical information through Guyana Integrated Natural Resources Information System (GINRIS).

⁵⁰ The subject Minister may override the village's consent to large scale mining. The Forests Act contains restrictions on activities in State Forests.

⁵¹ The WCM Act 2018- Unlawful trade and the carrying out of certain activities without authorisation are offences under clause 68. Clause 69 creates an offence to possess, control, offer or expose for sale or display to the public any specimen to which the Act relates without authorisation from the Commission.

based conservation in addition to policies such as the NFPS and NFP⁵².

Guyana's Definition of Forests in the Forest Act is consistent to the Definition of Forests applied in the national REDD+ programme. The definition of forests in the Forest Act 2009 is as follows:

- (a) "forest" – means an ecosystem dominated by woody plants, consisting of –
- (i) closed forest formations , where trees of various stories and undergrowth cover a high proportion of the ground; or
 - (ii) open forest with a continuous vegetation cover in which tree crown cover exceeds 10 percent, and
- (b) includes –
- (i) mangrove forests and any wetlands or open lands
 - (ii) forest produce in the ecosystem; and
 - (iii) biological, soil, and water resources of the ecosystem;

This definition serves the purpose as the broad legal definition of forests.

To operationalize this definition for purposes of REDD+, UNFCCC reporting, including on Reference Level and MRV System reporting, there was the need to specify certain basic parameters which were not detailed in the broad, legal definition in the Forest Act and in a way that complements but not conflict with the Act, these areas being:

- the minimum mapping unit
- tree height characteristics that were within the ability of a REDD+ system to realistically monitor
- the canopy cover that was practical, realistic yet conservative to be monitored from spatial methods.

Given the above, an operational definition that further details this broad definition was developed as part of the MRV process and complements the broad, legal definition, now with parameters that enabling monitoring and as guided by the Marrakech Accords.

For operational and monitoring purposes, Land classified as Forest follows the definition as outlined in the Marrakech Accords (UNFCCC, 2001). Guyana classifies land as forest if it meets the following criteria:

- Size: Over a minimum area of 1 ha
- Canopy Cover: Tree cover of minimum 30%
- Height of Stand: At a minimum height of 5 m at maturity.

Land area that satisfies the area, height and crown cover criteria for forest but are not classified as forest include lands that are predominantly under agriculture, infrastructural development and settlements. Guyana has no commercial forest plantation and has not had any plantation project implemented over the reporting period.

CANCUN SAFEGUARD F AND G

'Risks of reversals and displacement of emissions of the REDD+ activities are addressed through the MRVS and national forest monitoring system'.

Relevant PLRs to be used to ensure the implementation of this Safeguard

It will be largely supported by a national forest MRVS.

Additionally, the Guyana Forestry Commission Act⁵³ and the State Lands Act (SLA)⁵⁴ with their corresponding

⁵² Develop structure and content for biodiversity databases and legal and stakeholder-based processes used to increase forest protection based on protected areas and biodiversity conservation guidelines

⁵³ Guyana Forestry Commission Act No 20 of 2007.

⁵⁴ State Lands Act 1903.

NFPS⁵⁵ and NFP⁵⁶ apply. The Code of Practice for Timber Harvesting⁵⁷, the Guidelines for Conducting Management-level Inventory and 100%-level Inventory, and the Guidelines for the Preparation of Forest Management Plans and Annual Operational Plans. Additionally the Code of Practice for Timber Harvesting is based on the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) Model Code of Forest Practice and prescribes inter alia internationally accepted standards for exclusion areas and buffer zones, pre-harvest inventory, road construction and felling. Guyana's legal framework provides measures to tackle reversals and displacement, this is done through the PAA⁵⁸ and the FA⁵⁹, as well as through several policy instruments: NFPS⁶⁰ and NFP⁶¹, LCDS⁶². These efforts include enforcement.⁶³ The FA⁶⁴ addresses the issue of detection and reduction of forest fires.

⁵⁵ Guyana National Forest Policy Statement 2018.

⁵⁶ Guyana National Forest Plan 2018.

⁵⁷ Code of Practice for Forest Operations 2018

⁵⁸ Protected Areas Act -section 123 Except with the permission of the management authority any person who lights any plant or vegetation, fire or clears, burns or otherwise damages any tree, bush, plant or other vegetation commits an offence.

⁵⁹ Forests Act - section 5-Except in accordance with subsection (2), no person shall (a) enter a State forest, provided that a person may travel through a state forest in the course of his journey and may reasonably occupy or use the forest for the purpose of his journey; cut, damage, or take any forest produce, or carry out any other kind of forest operation in a State forest; carry out any kind of exploratory operation in a State forest;(d) occupy or use any land in a State forest;(e) clear, cultivate, or turn soil in a State forest; or (f) graze or pasture livestock in a State forest. Section 1212. The Commission, after consultation with relevant stakeholders may on agreement application grant any person an afforestation agreement by entering into an agreement with the person concerned authorising that person to (a) plant specified trees and specified plants in a specified area of State forest; and (b) manage the planted area in accordance with a forest management plan approved by the Commission.

⁶⁰ National Forest Policy Statement - Policy Strategy 2.2.5 Afforestation and Reforestation -The policy promotes the rehabilitation and restoration of degraded landscapes through forest plantation development, enrichment planting, and community forestry. The strategy is to develop systems, and incentive packages, to support reforestation and forest plantation development. Public, private sector and community investment shall be sought, with emphasis on degraded forests, agricultural and mining lands and mangroves. This will require developing and implementing a National Forest Plantation Strategy, based on best practices and updated forest plantation

⁶¹ National Forest Plan- SO 2-Improved rating for Guyana on the global Environmental Performance Index; Real-time quantification of forest cover loss and forest degradation; Reduced numbers of forest fires, disease and pest outbreaks; Sustainable use reserves increases.

⁶² Low Carbon Development Strategy- the Government of Guyana supports a phased approach to REDD+: (i) starting with a fund-based mechanism for REDD+ from 2010, and (ii) gradually merging REDD+ into the carbon market(s). Starting in 2013, a portion of each country's rainforest should be assigned forestry emissions quotas or carbon credits (known as REDD Credits)³¹ as offsets to trade within the carbon markets. Over years, the portion of rainforest for which REDD Credits are assigned should be progressively increased in line with a trajectory which prevents "flooding" the markets.

⁶³ Areas such as the Community Owned Conservation Area (COCA), Konashen, established under the Amerindian Act⁶³, the Kaieteur National Park and Iwokrama Forest have Rangers. The Protected Areas Act further strengthened that approach by committing financial support for Rangers in all protected areas, with The Guyana Forestry Commission tracking illegal logging. The Guyana Geology and Mines Commission⁶³ is the regulatory body for most of the extractive sector. In 2016 the Ministry of Natural Resources committed to establishing a law enforcement arm made up of wardens with powers of arrest.

⁶⁴ Sections 17-18

PART IV: HOW SAFEGUARDS HAVE BEEN RESPECTED?

This section presents the adopted indicators to be utilized for collection and analysis of information to demonstrate the REDD+ activities have been implemented in consistency with the Cancun safeguards. Guyana's reporting for its SOIs will provide information on the actual outcomes, structured in relation to these indicators, in the context of accessing REDD+ results-based payments in application of the methodological framework established in the Warsaw Framework for REDD+.

The following indicators have been developed in accordance with Guyana's clarification of the Cancun safeguards, which includes its core elements.

CANCUN SAFEGUARD A

The REDD+ activities must be implemented in compliance with the objectives of national forest programmes, and consistent to the provisions of the relevant treaties and international conventions Guyana is Party to.

Core elements of the clarification:

- a. *The REDD+ activities are consistent with the objectives of national forest programmes;*
- b. *The REDD+ activities are consistent with relevant and applicable international conventions and agreements.*

Indicators

Guyana's Progress in Implementation

A.1. *Description of how the implementation of the REDD+ activities are consistent with the objectives of national forest programmes.*

Guyana has achieved over a decade in implementation of REDD+. Over this time, the policy framework developed for REDD+ implementation has resulted in greater levels of sectoral coordination and more efficient policy formulation and implementation. Through this, Guyana has been able to align efforts to further develop REDD+ actions and has strengthened its institutional capacities for REDD+ implementation. This will now further be supported through the LCDS 2030, whereby key public institutions continue to be engaged and involved in achieving the objective of the Strategy.

Guyana's institutional and legal framework supports REDD+ implementation, and includes the enactment of forest regulations under the national Parliament which aim to ensure the continued maintenance of the low rates of deforestation and forest degradation, including the provision of necessary platforms for the implementation of updated forest legislation.

Guyana's legal framework provides a comprehensive suite of laws governing conservation and the protection of biodiversity consistent with national forest programmes that are applicable to the REDD+ Implementation Plan⁶⁵. Among them are the National Forest Policy Statement 2018 (NFPS) and National Forest Plan 2018 (NFP), which were developed within the framework of Guyana's Constitution. These present a set of policies and plans that address the economic, conservation, governance and capacity facets of forest management, while seeking to value the forest for more than the price of the timber.

Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) 2030 builds on the progress made in implementation of LCDS 2009 and seeks to further create a

⁶⁵ The Constitution of Guyana 1980 – Principles and Bases of the Political, Economic and Social System recognises by virtue of section 36- the wellbeing of the nation requires inter alia the preservation of the rich diversity of plants and eco-systems. This is a general aspiration of the nation expressed by the drafters of the Constitution and represent the broad objectives which can be viewed as the foundation for all the subordinate legislation, regulations and policies.

A.2. Description of how the implementation of the REDD+ activities are consistent with the objectives of the various international agreements to which Guyana is a Party.

new low-carbon economy in Guyana by establishing incentives which value the world's ecosystem services, and promoting these as an essential component of a new model of global development with sustainability at its core. These national-scale actions are underpinned by the sale of forest carbon credits through ART-TREES.

REDD+ actions in Guyana have been implemented in a manner that not only ensures consistency with its commitments under the UNFCCC, but also complementarity with other international and national initiatives. This includes the implementation of national policies including the National Forest Policy, strategies such as the LCDS, and governance initiatives that include EU FLEGT and developing a standard for National Forest Management and Chain of Custody.

Guyana is currently party to thirty-three (33)⁶⁶ relevant international agreements which have been recognized and are applicable to the REDD+ Strategy. International law and conventions are enforceable when national law gives effect through enactment.

The Constitution of Guyana⁶⁷ asserts that where a convention has been ratified, such rights shall be respected and upheld by the executive, legislature, judiciary and all organs and agencies of the Government and enforceable in the manner prescribed⁶⁸.

Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; CRC - Convention on the Rights of the Child; CRC-OP-AC - Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict; CRC-OP-SC - Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children child prostitution and child pornography; CRPD - Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Diversity Critical Expressions; UN Convention against Corruption, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; Geneva Convention; Inter-American Convention Against Corruption; International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships; International Convention relating to Intervention of the High Seas in cases of Oil Pollution Casualties; International Treaty on Plant Genetic resources for Food and Agriculture; Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage; Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants; UN Convention against Torture; Convention on Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage; Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer.

⁶⁷ Constitution of Guyana, section 39 (2) In the interpretation of fundamental rights provisions in this Constitution a court shall pay due regard to international law, international conventions and charters bearing on human rights.

⁶⁸ Constitution of Guyana, section 154A (1) of Fourth Schedule.

CANCUN SAFEGUARD B

The rights of access to information, accountability, justice, gender equality, land tenure and fair distribution of benefits will be respected and promoted in the scope of the application of the REDD+ activities.

Core elements of the clarification:

- a. Right to access information is promoted in the context of the implementation of the REDD+ activities;
- b. Accountability is guaranteed in the context of the implementation of the REDD+ activities;
- c. Right to access justice is recognized and protected in the context of the implementation of the REDD+ activities;
- d. Rights over forest land are recognized and protected in the context of the implementation of the REDD+ activities (including 'Gender equality is promoted in the context of the implementation of the REDD+ activities');
- e. Fair distribution of benefits is promoted in the context of the implementation of the REDD+ activities (including 'Gender equality is promoted in the context of the implementation of the REDD+ activities').

Indicators

Guyana's Progress in Implementation

B. 1. Description of the application of information sharing/dissemination laws, regulations and procedures tailored to stakeholders.

The Access to Information Act gives every Guyanese citizen or person domiciled in Guyana the qualified right of access to information⁶⁹. The Amerindian Act 2006 (AA) - refers to proper records and financial accounts to be furnished to the subject Minister. The Protected Areas Act 2011 (PAA) requires the publication of annual accounts of the Protected Areas Commission which is presented to Parliament. It also requires the maintenance of a register identifying protected areas and archaeological sites. The NFP and NFPS address dissemination and distribution of information via capacity building and governance including but not limited to green energy, REDD+ requirements, all aspects of forestry and forest-related activities. The Guyana Forestry Commission Act requires maintenance and dissemination of information.

The Act defines "right of access to information" which means the right to information accessible under this Act which is held by or under the control of any public authority and includes the right to - (a) inspect any work, documents or records; (b) take notes, extracts or certified copies of documents or records; (c) take certified samples of material; (d) obtain information in any digital or electronic mode or through printouts where such information is stored in a computer or in any other similar device;

Further, 3. (1) which outlines the objective of this Act: is to extend the right of members of the public to access information in the possession of public authorities by — (a) creating a general right of access to information in documentary form in the possession of public authorities limited only by exceptions and exemptions necessary for the protection of essential public interests and the private and business affairs of persons in respect of whom information is collected and held by public authorities; and (b) making available to the public, information about the operations of public authorities and, in particular, ensuring that the authorisations, policies, rules and practices affecting members of the public in their dealings with public authorities are readily available to persons affected by those authorisations, policies, rules and practices.

In the context of REDD+, information is included as part of the constitutional provision on all types of information, across programs and sectors.

⁶⁹ Constitution of Guyana, section 39 (2) In the interpretation of fundamental rights provisions in this Constitution a court shall pay due regard to international law, international conventions and charters bearing on human rights. Section 154A (1) of Fourth Schedule. Access to Information Act 2011 - section 12 Information is defined in the Access to information Act 2011 as any format of information relating to any private body which can be accessed by a public authority under any other law.

B.2. Description of REDD+ related financial performance, including details on income, expenditures and benefits within the forest sector, when available down to the sub-jurisdictional level.

Guyana received approximately US\$220 million in revenue under Phase I of the strategy for forest climate services (the Guyana-Norway Agreement). Although revenue was received for performance in the period 2009 to 2015, the investment of that revenue continues to date. Payments from Norway were intermediated through the Guyana REDD+ Trust Fund (GRIF), hosted at the World Bank.

During the reporting period, transparency in REDD+ actions and distribution of REDD+ revenues have been provided by complete reporting on all project under REDD+ and finances received. The procedures and processes are set out in the operation of the Guyana REDD+ Investment Fund. [Operational Manual \(lcmds.gov.gy\)](http://lcmds.gov.gy) The Trustee (the World Bank) is required to produce an annual report which is accessible publicly.

B.3. Description of how REDD+ finance (readiness, implementation and results) has been spent, percentage of allocation by gender, sector and location.

On the Government's website on LCDS, each project is presented with information on the contractual agreement, final report and performance. Additionally, on the financial and accountability side, information on all revenues received and how this is accounted for is publicly available on www.guyanareddfund.org

B.4. Description of REDD+ related grievances received, process followed to adjudicate and outcomes, including records of any REDD+ related efforts to ensure access to justice in the context of the implementation of REDD+ activities.

All stakeholder have access to an existing system of recourse to resolve disputes, competing claims, and effective recourse and remedies provided when there is a violation of rights. This was measured by:

- Sector level addressing of disputes
- Project level addressing of dispute resolution specific to individual processes like Land Titling
- Initial work towards collating safeguards report at central level

Guyana's current mechanisms serve to receive and address concerns and complaints at the sector level.

B.5. Description of how land tenure and land use rights have been recognized and protected during the implementation of REDD+ activities, in particular land rights of women,

The Amerindian Lands Commission Act asserts collective forest ownerships and rights⁷⁰. The Constitution of Guyana, the FA, the AA and the PAA all address the procedure where rights are susceptible to being extinguished or diminished⁷¹. The AA empowers the Minister to determine the grant of title, based on an investigation that accords recognition and protection of the communal property rights of Indigenous Peoples, which arise from and are grounded in traditional ownership systems⁷².

The Amerindian Act, outlines rights for Indigenous Peoples regarding areas of traditional privileges (Section 2), governance roles over village lands (Section 13), make

⁷⁰ The Amerindian Lands Commission Act asserts⁷⁰ ownership and other customary rights. The role of the Commission is to investigate and recommend which tribes and communities shall be given rights of tenure and inter alia the nature of the rights of tenure, beneficial or legal and how vested or conferred.

The Amerindian Act defines which applications are made to and decided by the Minister under a very simplified process. The land claim mechanism encompasses inter alia unorthodox sources such as oral histories, local sketches and drawings.

⁷¹ For example: The Protected Areas Act sec (30) the Minister shall carry out an investigation to determine what rights and claims exist over the area and may take steps to settle such claims and terminate such rights as permitted by law.

⁷² While rights are protected, those rights are limited: the Amerindian Act limits those to only "subsistence rights or privileges," and requires that those rights be "exercised sustainably" in accordance with indigenous peoples' "spiritual relationship" with their lands, which limits enforceability.

indigenous peoples and vulnerable groups.

rules for the conduct of the Village (Section 14) and its activities, and impose remedies if rules rights are breached (Section 16). Additionally, several areas of provision of rights are also included with respect to developing village plans, managing the affairs of the villages, conducting mining, refusal to allow small and medium scale mining, use of forest products for village purposes, and a number of other operational rights based areas including seeking title and extensions to village lands.

The AA recognises benefit sharing as a key component of the empowerment of indigenous people.⁷³ For each of these legislative provisions, within the sections outlined above, the procedures and processes are also clearly defined. One example is regarding land titling, the procedures is clearly set out in the Act. Taken together, this Act effectively lays down the structural, procedural and process based requirements to ensure that Guyana has legal requirements that respect, protect, and fulfil rights of indigenous peoples and/or local communities. The Act also appropriately defines the role of the MoAA, the Toshias, Village Leaders, and villagers in implementing the mandate of the Act to protect the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The AA, SLA, PAA, GFCA, Mining Act⁷⁴, Forest Act (FA) and other sectoral policies recognise statutory and customary ownership and use rights. This suite of forest legislation provides clear legal rules recognizing land and forest land tenure rights. The FA establishes the basis on which public forested areas can be declared State Forests and the basis on which those forests may be acquired⁷⁵. The PAA (section 30) places an obligation on the subject Minister to investigate existing rights and to settle or terminate rights as permitted by law. The Act allows for the creation of Amerindian Protected Areas on application by a village council.

- The Amerindian Act in its opening paragraph states that it is: An Act to provide for the **recognition and protection of the collective rights of Amerindian Villages and Communities**, the granting of land to Amerindian Villages and Communities and the promotion of good governance within Amerindian Villages and Communities.
- The Amerindian Act Section 61 outlines the following with regard to **defining the boundaries of an Amerindian Area (mapping, surveying and inventory)**:
- The Minister (Minister of Amerindian Affairs) upon the village fulfilling the eligibility criteria for land titling as outlined in Section 61, conduct an investigation into the size of area occupied, a description of the customs and traditions of the village, examine the nature of the relationship between the Amerindians and the land, examine information on historical or current sketches or drawings of the areas, **and initiate surveys to be prepared by the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission** (the State agency with the mandate to conduct mapping, inventory and resource tenure physical description for this area).

The **Guyana Lands and Survey Act** outlines the functions of the GLSC as follows:

- to have charge of and act as guardian over all public lands, rivers and creeks of Guyana;

⁷³ 'The requirement for consent for small and medium scale mining, employment of locals in mining operations and benefit sharing with communities. Moreover, central government is now bound to pay a percentage of royalties from mining on Amerindian lands into a fund for the benefit of all Indigenous villages and communities.'⁷³

⁷⁴ Mining Act 1989

⁷⁵ Excluding village lands as defined in the Amerindian Act, the Iwokrama Act and the Kaieteur National Park.

- to execute or cause to be executed geodetic, topographic, hydrographic and cadastral surveys in relation to the land and water resources of Guyana;
- to prepare and publish maps and charts of Guyana or parts thereof;
- to establish and maintain the national survey control system, set standards for the collection of photogrammetric data and specify the technical requirements for land surveys;
- to check, approve, record and, where required, certify all land surveys carried out in relation to any land in Guyana;

Upon completion of this process, the **Amerindian Act Section 63** states:

Approval.
Cap. 62:01

63. (1) If an application is approved title shall be granted under the State Lands Act.

(2) In the case of a Village, title shall be granted to the Village Council to be held for the benefit of the Village.

(3) In the case of an Amerindian Community, the Minister shall by order establish a Village Council to hold title on behalf of the applicant Community and upon the grant of title the Amerindian Community becomes a Village.

(4) If a Community Council has been recognised under section 85, the Minister shall by order establish the Community Council as a Village Council.

The Ministry of Amerindian Affairs is responsible for implementing the resolution mechanism that forms part of the land titling process. The land titling process is a multi-faceted process that brings about various perspective, requests, and areas needing resolution before the title can move forward to conclusion. The MoAA is responsible for administering this process to resolve grievances that may come up. A summary report is provided with all grievances that have arisen and the accompanying resolution as logged by the GRM under the land titling process. This came into effect in 2017.

Further protections are provided specifically to women and children⁷⁶.

Guyana’s legal framework guards against all forms of discrimination, including discrimination on the grounds of gender.⁷⁷ The Guyana Constitution established the Women and Gender Equality Commission to promote national recognition and acceptance that women’s rights are human rights, respect for gender equality and the protection, development and attainment of gender equality⁷⁸.

B. 6. Description of measures taken to ensure equitable sharing of benefits with forest-dependent

Fair distribution of benefits is addressed in the Low Carbon Development Strategy 2009 and 2013, the NFPS, and NFP. This includes broad statements as to the regulation of such rights such as specific objective 1 of the NFPS, which speaks of promoting sustainable livelihoods, both nationally and in forest dependent communities. The objective stresses the need for equitable benefit sharing not just among current stakeholders, but also between present and future generations.

⁷⁶ Articles 149(D) 1) The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or equal protection and benefit of the law. 2) The State shall, for the purpose of promoting equality, take legislative and other measures designed to protect disadvantaged persons and persons with disabilities. 3) Equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms guaranteed by or under this Constitution or any other law. Article 149(E) “1) All persons, whether born in or out of wedlock, and whether born prior to the enactment of this article or not, are born equal, have equal status and are entitled to equal rights. 2). Nothing contained in paragraph (1) shall be taken to affect vested rights. Article 149(F) “1) Every woman is entitled to equal rights and status with men in all spheres of political, economic and social life. All forms of discrimination against women on the basis of gender or sex are illegal. 2) Every woman is entitled to equal access with men to academic, vocational and professional training, equal opportunities in employment, remuneration and promotion and in social, political and cultural activity.

⁷⁷ The Guyana Constitution, Equal Rights Act 1990, Prevention of Discrimination Act 1997. Gender discrimination is also addressed in numerous sectoral and other policies and regulations.

⁷⁸ 212 Q (1)

communities and Indigenous villages, including ensuring gender equity and dealing with social discrepancies.

There are several policies and strategies which address the issue of participation and benefit sharing in the context of forest conservation and resource extraction, including the NFPS and the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS),.

Guyana's Constitution includes provisions protecting the individual from against discrimination including on the grounds of gender, stating that (a) no law shall make any provision that is discriminatory either of itself or in its effect; and (b) no person shall be treated in a discriminatory manner by any person acting by virtue of any written law or in the performance of the functions of any public office or any public authority.⁷⁹

The AA recognises benefit sharing as a key component of the empowerment of indigenous people.⁸⁰

Further protections are provided specifically to women and children⁸¹. Guyana's legal framework guards against all forms of discrimination, including discrimination on the grounds of gender.⁸² The Guyana Constitution established the Women and Gender Equality Commission to promote national recognition and acceptance that women's rights are human rights, respect for gender equality and the protection, development and attainment of gender equality⁸³.

B. 7. Description of how benefit sharing arrangements functioned in practice, their distribution across villages and description of impacts resulting from such benefit sharing arrangements.

The LCDS 2030 outlines a revenue-sharing ratio across two pathways: (i) national/multi-community investments; (ii) village sustainability plans, where IPLC community/village-led programmes will receive 15% of all revenues (this will be supplementary to the significant investment in villages from the national programme pathway). This has been approved by Parliamentary Resolution ([Parliamentary Resolution – LCDS 2030 – LCDS](#)).

⁷⁹ Article 149 of the Guyana Constitution

⁸⁰ 'The requirement for consent for small and medium scale mining, employment of locals in mining operations and benefit sharing with communities. Moreover, central government is now bound to pay a percentage of royalties from mining on Amerindian lands into a fund for the benefit of all Indigenous villages and communities.'⁸⁰

⁸¹ Articles 149(D) 1) The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or equal protection and benefit of the law. 2) The State shall, for the purpose of promoting equality, take legislative and other measures designed to protect disadvantaged persons and persons with disabilities. 3) Equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms guaranteed by or under this Constitution or any other law. Article 149(E) "1) All persons, whether born in or out of wedlock, and whether born prior to the enactment of this article or not, are born equal, have equal status and are entitled to equal rights. 2). Nothing contained in paragraph (1) shall be taken to affect vested rights. Article 149(F) "1) Every woman is entitled to equal rights and status with men in all spheres of political, economic and social life. All forms of discrimination against women on the basis of gender or sex are illegal. 2) Every woman is entitled to equal access with men to academic, vocational and professional training, equal opportunities in employment, remuneration and promotion and in social, political and cultural activity.

⁸² The Guyana Constitution, Equal Rights Act 1990, Prevention of Discrimination Act 1997. Gender discrimination is also addressed in numerous sectoral and other policies and regulations.

⁸³ 212 Q (1)

CANCUN SAFEGUARD C

The REDD+ activities will be implemented in accordance and with respect to the rights of recognition of, and respect for the rights of Amerindian peoples and local communities; including the rights to non-discrimination, traditional knowledge and culture, self-determination, benefit sharing and land tenure rights.

Core elements of the clarification:

- a. The rights of indigenous peoples and local communities are promoted and protected in the context of the application of the REDD+ activities.
- b. Traditional knowledge is recognized and protected in the context of the application of the REDD+ activities.

Indicators

Guyana's Progress in Implementation

C.1. Description of how Indigenous peoples and local communities were included in the design and implementation of the REDD+ activities.

Guyana considers consultation, participation and outreach on REDD+ to be critically important for the success of REDD+. The demography of Guyana (90 percent of the population lives on the low coastal plain and hilly sand and clay natural regions), poor communication infrastructure in the hinterland and the use of local languages there dictate the need to be patient and to use all available means to engage and to ensure the right messages are communicated, received and followed through into practice.

The recommended participatory mechanisms to apply to engagements with Indigenous Peoples and forest-dependent communities in order to ensure the effective participation in REDD+ readiness and implementation in Guyana are two-fold:

- Engaging representative groups in stakeholder engagement exercises to identify attitudes, strengths and weaknesses to REDD+ and mitigation strategies;
- Targeting representative groups with capacity strengthening interventions. In order to ensure full, effective and ongoing participation of IPs, the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs serves as the primary recipient of introductory information, and it then notifies communities in writing. Often, interpreters from the target community are employed to translate from English to the local language, and community meetings are chaired by the Captain (or Toshao) of the community. To ensure follow up and continuity, a community liaison person is identified by the Village Council and may receive a paid stipend from the interested third party. For non-IP communities, the Ministry of Local Government is the focal point government entity working through its regional and local governance organs to organise meetings and to disseminate information. Forest-specific information is communicated directly through the GFC representatives in the field.

Processes such as the LCDS, MRVS and EU FLEGT continue to employ the above approach.

Projects on REDD+ addressing Land Tenure and Amerindian Development are implemented and receive required resource support: The Amerindian Land Titling Programme (which is being implemented in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and adheres to all UNDP procedures and safeguards), the advancement of the MRV System for the forest sector, and

C.2. Number of Indigenous peoples and local communities trained in the implementation and the reporting of the REDD+ activities.

C.3. Description on how vulnerable groups, indigenous peoples and local communities, particularly women, were not excluded from the benefits of REDD+ or are not left worse off.

the implementation of the EU FLEGT Programme are implemented in a manner that planning, coordination, implementation, and evaluation of REDD+ actions were, undertaken with the participation of indigenous peoples and/or local communities, including through FPIC:

- Public engagements sessions on Programme Implementation on EU FLEGT that includes both indigenous and non-indigenous communities.
- Capacity Building Session implemented for REDD+ Programmes
- Implementation of the Amerindian Land Titling Programme to secure tenure for Amerindian Villages and Communities.

Over the reporting period, over 200 Indigenous Villages and forest based communities have been engaged, with each session was attended by on average 100 persons.

Guyana recognizes the different impacts that climate change and climate events have on women and men. The experience of floods and droughts in Guyana during the past two decades in particular has made it quite clear that the immediate effect and the subsequent consequences of floods have been particularly difficult for women. In indigenous communities where the farms are part of the women's work, the task of restoration of the farms and the need for alternative food supplies during and after floods or droughts puts a new and onerous burden on women and the household in general. In urban and rural communities women have experienced loss in long-term damage to homes and loss of livestock and kitchen gardens to mention a few. In all areas, the risk to health and the long-term impact of these realities have added unequally to the status of women.

Given the diverse nature of Guyana geographically and the different ethnicities that make up communities and the different cultural norms, it is necessary to create sensitive and appropriate solutions including training to address the common problem of climatic change events that are more frequent and more intense. Additionally, the role of women and girls in climate action is a high priority in the LCDS and REDD+. This will include the role of women and girls in influencing change to achieve climate adaptation, creating awareness of the LCDS objectives and its linkage to REDD+, innovating solutions to climate risks, and in being agents of change at the community and national levels.

The LCDS 2030 recognizes that common and differentiated measures are required to address this reality. The LCDS 2030 will establish benchmarks and appropriate responses that take into account the realities of the disproportionately negative impact of climate change on women. Women have already been consulted in the design of the Strategy to date and provision is made for women-driven deeper analysis and the specific measures needed for mitigation and adaptation.

Women-centred approaches based on the realities and experiences that recognise the commonalities that women face are a cornerstone of the strategies. Equally important is that specific LCDS actions are conceptualized and deployed to be women driven and responsive to demography, age, and cultural norms. Women's representatives will be a significant part of the multi-stakeholder committee of the LCDS in order to ensure that their voices are heard at all levels and that they are

C. 4. Description of Indigenous peoples, local communities, particularly vulnerable groups, women, youth and the elderly residing in areas affected by REDD+ activities.

C. 5. Description of any sacred sites or other sites of cultural significance to communities in areas that may be affected by REDD+ activities.

C. 6. If applicable, description of how (if at all) traditional knowledge has been used/has contributed to REDD+ activities implementation and how Indigenous peoples' intellectual property has been protected.

C. 7. Number of Indigenous peoples and local communities, particularly women, youth and the elderly, directly involved in traditional use of resources from areas supported by REDD+ activities.

direct beneficiaries of resources to help build their resilience. Further, the involvement of women will aim at establishing leadership over key LCDS projects and, resultant plans are honed at addressing their often times unequal access to resources. In so doing, the resources of the LCDS can be directed to improve the opportunities available to women by providing skills training and affordable financial resources to widen their choices.

Guyana has over 200 Amerindian and other hinterland villages/communities away from the country's main urban areas, with a population of about 98,000 people or 13% of Guyana's population – these are all considered local communities for the purpose of Guyana's ART-TREES jurisdiction-scale approach.

The Amerindian Act outlines the procedures that are mandated to be in place to protect indigenous People's knowledge. Section 2 of the Amerindians Act defines Traditional Rights. Section 13 of the Act outlines the Functions of the Village Council and lists the following:

- encourage the preservation and growth of Amerindian culture;
- ensure that places and artefacts located within Village lands and which hold sacred or cultural values to the Village are protected and cared for;
- protect and preserve the Village's intellectual property and traditional knowledge;

The procedures that enforces these rights rest with the Village Council and the governance structure at village level as detailed further in Part III of the Act.

REDD+ processes harnessed traditional knowledge and inputs of indigenous peoples: all REDD+ actions that are implemented take into consideration within the design, the aspects of protecting and harnessing traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities in a manner that is valuable to the indigenous peoples and local communities.

- Consultations on EU FLEGT process features traditional knowledge.
- The Land Titling Programme, under the LCDS, have included broad direct involvement of indigenous peoples that have identified and utilized traditional knowledge.

The outline below makes reference to specific areas which provide evidence for this safeguard:

- EU FLEGT: Definition of Legality and GTLAS. In the case of the Definition of Legality, pages 13, 18, 23, 31 and 48 benefit from traditional knowledge requirements in defining legality. As well, the Guyana Timber Legality Assurance System (GTAS) outlines on page 70 the requirement for establishing criteria for protection of traditional knowledge as part of the FLEGT process.

Guyana's approach to REDD+ is national scale. Guyana has 218 Amerindian and other hinterland villages/communities away from the country's main urban areas, with a population of about 98,000 people or 13% of Guyana's population – these are all considered local communities for the purpose of Guyana's jurisdiction-scale approach.

CANCUN SAFEGUARD D

The right to participate, in particular for relevant Indigenous peoples and local communities, is recognized and are to be promoted under the implementation of the REDD+ activities.

Core elements of the clarification:

- a. The right to participate in the design and implementation of the REDD+ activities is recognized and promoted.
- b. Relevant Indigenous peoples and local communities have the right to participate in the application of the REDD+ activities.
- c. Right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent is recognized and protected in accordance with the relevant legal obligations in the application of the REDD+ activities.

Indicators	Guyana's Progress in Implementation
<p><i>D.1. Description of the general categories of stakeholders (women, youth, the elderly, etc.) and how they were involved in the implementation of the REDD+ activities (documentation and mapping of stakeholders, information shared, feedback gathered, in what format was it gathered).</i></p>	<p>The following categories of stakeholders are involved in REDD+ implementation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Amerindian villages and communities: identified as having collective attachment to geographically distinct habitats or ancestral territories and to the natural resources in these habitats and territories; and depend on forests or other biomes such as savannahs and wetlands for their customary spiritual and cultural well-being, as well as economic and social livelihoods. Amerindian communities are integral to the design & implementation of REDD+ activities, including pilot projects; engage in consultations and REDD+ dialogue and policy design; and inform government decisions; ii. Multi Stakeholder Steering Committee of the LCDS: The MSSC oversees LCDS development and implementation. Membership includes the Offices of the President and the Vice President, the Office of the Prime Minister, Ministry of Public Works, Ministry of Amerindian Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Natural Resources (including Guyana Forestry Commission and Guyana Geology and Mines Commission), Ministry of Agriculture, the National Toshias' Council, Amerindian Peoples' Association (APA), Guyanese Organisation of Indigenous Peoples (GOIP), The Amerindian Action Movement of Guyana (TAAMOG), National Amerindian Development Foundation (NADF), Private Sector Commission, Indigenous Peoples Commission, Forest Products Association, Guyana Gold and Diamond Miners Association, in addition to representatives of Labour Unions, Women's organizations and youth groups. iii. National Toshias Council: a major stakeholder within this grouping and has been engaged by the GoG in the design of REDD+ and forest governance activities, including the LCDS, Guyana's MRVS, and engagement in ART TREES. Apart from fulfilling this role, the NTC's advocates on behalf of Amerindian communities and villages, hence their representation of the indigenous peoples' best interest at the level of the MSSC. iv. Women, youth and the elderly: Represents vulnerable groups in many communities, and are often marginalised due to gender related issues. Albeit the latter, women and the elderly fulfil essential roles in the operations of many communities and are often centrally involved in communities' economic activities. Youths and young professionals constitute the future population of the country and will be the portion of society benefiting from the outcomes of current governmental decisions. The active participation of these groups in REDD+ is essential to the empowerment of these groups, and in the long term, Guyana's success in REDD+.

- v. **Other forest dependent communities:** Recognised as those not qualifying as an Amerindian community but are nonetheless as dependent on the forest ecosystem services such as community groups and associations involved in logging, mining and non-timber forest products. They foster the design of project proposals & implementation of pilot projects;
- vi. **Government Agencies:** Comprising a cluster of government lead agencies closely involved in climate change mitigation and adaptation, natural resources management etc. which provide political leadership and strategy setting on climate change issues and agenda for Guyana, oversee the implementation of the LCDS and execution of activities under the GRIF and other initiatives related to REDD+ among other roles.
- vii. **Private Sector Bodies:** Essentially comprising small business entities and large corporate organisations such as loggers and Miners Associations, Forest Producers Association, Guyana Gold and Diamond Miners Association, Private Sector Commission (PSC), etc., that facilitate investment and employment in Guyana's extractive industries sector and aid in the financing and implementation of REDD+ activities within sectors (e.g. forestry, mining, agriculture, tourism etc);
- viii. **Civil Society Organizations and community organizations & NGOs, including indigenous NGOs:** Support and advise on REDD+ projects design and implementation, as well as foster awareness raising and information dissemination. This stakeholder group also supports the implementation and management of community-based conservation, sustainable management and development projects, and assist in conducting national REDD+ consultations. Those included in this group are Trade Unions Congress (TUC), Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Guyana (FITUG) and several indigenous NGOs among other groups.
- ix. **Academia:** Support the training and education of personnel at the secondary and tertiary level. Moreover, academic institutions and researchers are responsible for conducting research into specific REDD+ related activities as well as disseminating information to the future generation;
- x. **International Organisations and NGOs:** Provide expert advice and (technical) support to the Government of Guyana and aid in project implementation within Guyana. Moreover, collaborations with international organizations and NGOs allows for sharing of best practices, identifying gaps in communication and engagement, and enable knowledge transfer and capacity building. In addition, other possibilities include the contribution of news feeds, articles, reports, lessons learnt etc to the revised website; and

D.2. Description of approaches to participation as well as the outcomes of the participation processes in the implementation of the REDD+ activities (for example how the ideas or comments from relevant

Guyana considers consultation, participation and outreach on REDD+ to be critically important for the success of REDD+. The demography of Guyana (90 percent of the population lives on the low coastal plain and hilly sand and clay natural regions), poor communication infrastructure in the hinterland and the use of local languages there dictate the need to be patient and to use all available means to engage and to ensure the right messages are communicated, received and followed through into practice.

The recommended participatory mechanisms to apply to engagements with Indigenous Peoples and forest-dependent communities in order to ensure the effective participation in REDD+ readiness and implementation in Guyana are two-fold:

stakeholders led to implementation changed/was influenced by considering the views of the relevant stakeholders).

- Engaging representative groups in stakeholder engagement exercises to identify attitudes, strengths and weaknesses to REDD+ and mitigation strategies;
- Targeting representative groups with capacity strengthening interventions. In order to ensure full, effective and ongoing participation of IPs, the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs serves as the primary recipient of introductory information, and it then notifies communities in writing. Often, interpreters from the target community are employed to translate from English to the local language, and community meetings are chaired by the Captain (or Toshao) of the community. To ensure follow up and continuity, a community liaison person is identified by the Village Council and may receive a paid stipend from the interested third party. For non-IP communities, the Ministry of Local Government is the focal point government entity working through its regional and local governance organs to organise meetings and to disseminate information. Forest-specific information is communicated directly through the GFC representatives in the field. Processes such as the LCDS, MRVS and EU FLEGT continue to employ the above approach

Indigenous peoples and local communities have been involved in informing a wide range of development policies and planning instruments that are relevant to REDD+. These have been drafted to address land-use, land tenure and titling, natural resource rights, livelihoods, and governance issues in priority regions related to specific REDD+ programmes; to outline further steps; and to identify required resources, with a broad range of potential REDD+ activities emerging from the plans, recommendations and activities. Although there is a great diversity across these plans some key themes emerge:

- Improving coordination across natural resource management agencies;
- Improving efficiency within extractive industries;
- Improving planning and zoning, inclusive of improved information on the resources;
- Increasing value-added within the forestry sector;
- Developing mechanisms to distribute and allocate the benefits associated with REDD+ or forest management more generally.

D.3. Description of participation activities (e.g. type of meeting, purpose of meeting and level (regional cluster/sub regional, district council, culturally appropriate information produced, non-technical information produced, capacity building activities, specific meetings organised for vulnerable groups).

Over the reporting period, the following approaches were implemented, co-ordinated within the seven-month national consultation on LCDS 2030:

- **Consultations During Covid-19 Period** At the start of the national consultation, Guyana was still under health restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result, citizens from across sectors, disciplines, gender and other groupings were engaged on the Zoom and Facebook Live platforms during which the draft Strategy was explained, while participants' questions received responses and their recommendations were recorded. Concurrently, informational videos and messages were circulated in the print and electronic media, and on social media sites.
- **Face-to-Face Consultations** As national health restrictions were lifted, face-to-face consultations began in focus group meetings and in community consultations across the ten administrative regions. Independent activities by members of the MSSC and civil society were undertaken, while the National Consultation consisted of (i) national level engagements; (ii) thematic engagements; (iii) community-based consultations; (iv) receipt of written

feedback; (v) feedback via a website; and (vi) an active public engagement programme.

- **Regional and Community Level Consultations** were held in every region, as shown in the table below. Each session was attended by on average 100 persons. Over 200 Indigenous Villages and forest-based communities were engaged.

Feedback received throughout the national consultation is summarized in a 315-page report that is publicly available on the LCDS website, showing each comment received and how it has been used to inform the finalization of the LCDS 2030: <https://lcds.gov.gy/summary-of-feedback/>

- In hinterland communities, Toshias, regional officials and other leaders were contacted, invitations dispatched, and arrangements made to ensure residents' participation.
- Thousands of draft LCDS 2030 books were distributed at the consultations and through various government agencies and NGOs such as the Amerindian Peoples Association (APA) and the South Rupununi District Development Council.
- In addition, a Question and Answer booklet covering the objectives and frequently asked questions on the Strategy was prepared and circulated.
- The Objectives of the LCDS were translated into the nine indigenous languages, with hundreds of copies of these translations printed and distributed, along with hard-copies of the LCDS PowerPoint presentation used throughout the consultative process.
- Following the NTC endorsement, the MSSC's July meeting approved the revised LCDS 2030 and resolved that the Strategy be sent to Parliament for approval.

D.4. If applicable, description and evidence of how FPIC processes were followed prior to REDD+ activities in areas of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and whether they affected the implementation of REDD+ (REDD+ actions cancelled where FPIC withheld).

D.5. If applicable, number of FPIC processes followed (FPIC granted, FPIC withheld -resulting in intervention not going ahead).

After the final community consultations on the LCDS 2030, the National Toshias Council (NTC) held its annual conference in Georgetown during July 2022. The NTC is the national body that represents all Indigenous Villages in Guyana, as set out in the legislation that governs Indigenous Peoples matters in Guyana: the Amerindian Act 2006. Part IV, Sections 38-43 of the Act outline the Role and Functions of the National Toshias' Council.

At the annual NTC Conference in July 2022, all elected Toshias present engaged with the LCDS team who joined discussions on the Strategy and plans for the next phase. These discussions included reviewing the output of the consultations and the process for, and progress on, issuing and marketing carbon credits. A resolution was passed endorsing the LCDS 2030 inclusive of all its elements while both the Government and the Chair of the NTC emphasized the need for Toshias to stay involved as implementation of the LCDS moves ahead, village plans are prepared or updated, and new opportunities arise.

Following the NTC endorsement, the MSSC's July meeting approved the revised LCDS 2030 and resolved that the Strategy be sent to Parliament for approval.

The LCDS 2030 was tabled in the National Assembly on July 21, 2022. The motion was debated and successfully passed by the assembly on August 8, 2022

CANCUN SAFEGUARD E

Guyana's LCDS will promote the conservation of natural forests and biodiversity, the enhancement of social and environmental benefits, and will not result in the conversion of natural forests.

Core elements of the clarification:

- The conservation of natural forests and biological diversity is recognized and protected in the context of the implementation of the REDD+ strategy.
- The REDD+ strategy will not incentivise the conversion of natural forests.
- Enhancement of ecological, biological, climatic, and socio-cultural, benefits is recognized and protected in the context of the implementation of the REDD+ Implementation Plan.

Indicators

Guyana's Progress in Implementation

E.1. Description of how REDD+ activities include measures to ensure that do not result in the conversion of natural forests.

Guyana's Forest Act (Part 1, Section 2) and Forest Policy outline legislative and policy mandates around forest utilisation and these rest firmly on sustainable forest management principles, and no conversion of natural forests for commercial timber harvesting or REDD+ activities. This is regulated based on requirements of Guyana's Codes of Practice for forest operations, which is also outlined in the Forest Act (Section 35).

Section 2 of the Code of Practice for Timber Harvesting outlines requirement for Sustainable Management of Production Forests including reduced impact logging procedures. Though there is no statement of what should not prevail (such as clear felling), there are clear stipulations of what should prevail – in the outline of Section 2, all requirements of SFM. There is maximum allowable cut and forest management and planning requirements are all aimed at selective logging that allows for natural regeneration of harvested forests.

The MRV System is informed by management data on forest use and land use. These aspects of the MRVS will allow for the distinguishing of natural forest and plantation forests. The MRV programme involved ground truthing of forest change in cases of new drivers, to determine and verify plantations for example, being mapped and forming part of the reporting. Further, the standard operating procedure for the mapping dictates separate categories for afforestation and reforestation should these occur.

Plantations

The National Forest Policy Statement address the inclusion of plantation forests within Guyana's forest strategy and by extension REDD+ application. The Strategy, in Policy Statement 2.2.5, states that: This will require developing a National Forest Plantation Strategy, based on best practices and updated forest plantation information. As such, plantations are not included as part of Guyana's REDD+ application and are also not included as part of Guyana's programme under ART; it is also not included as part of forests reported under Guyana's MRVS.

Other Natural Ecosystems

The current MRV system as outlined in Guyana's submission to the UNFCCC, as well as under its national reporting on REDD+, includes forest based ecosystems. The Roadmap for the MRVS outlines plans to integrate other aspects of natural ecosystems within the MRVS within the next 5 years. Additionally, Guyana's Low Carbon

Development Strategy 2030 has expanded the focus of REDD+ actions in Guyana to focus on the ecosystem as a whole. This will be developed within the 2022 to 2030 period term of the LCDS.

E.2. Spatial information on the country's natural forest cover before and after REDD+ implementation.

Guyana's Monitoring Reporting and Verification System, which is composed of Forest Area Assessment System (FAAS) and the Forest Carbon Monitoring System (FCMS), has been developed for data and information collection, such as information on historical forest cover changes and emission factors, to inform the assessment of national forest RELs. In this way, the MRVS forms the link between historical assessments and current/future assessments, enabling consistency in the data and information to support the implementation of REDD+ activities. The MRVS details the methods required to quantify the changes in forest cover and changes in forest carbon stocks in Guyana, develop driver-specific emission factors, and monitor emissions from land cover/land use change over time based on a range of management activities.

E.3. Spatial information on extent of plantations nationally and rate of change in extent of plantations.

The MRV System is informed by management data on forest use and land use. These aspects of the MRVS will allow for the distinguishing of natural forest and plantation forests. The MRV programme involved ground truthing of forest change in cases of new drivers, to determine and verify plantations for example, being mapped and forming part of the reporting. Further, the standard operating procedure for the mapping dictates separate categories for afforestation and reforestation should these occur.

E.4. Description of whether and how the projected ecological, biological, climatic and socio-cultural priorities of REDD+ activities were realised following implementation.

The projected ecological, biological, climatic and socio-cultural priorities of REDD+ activities were realised based on Guyana being party to ratified international conventions, agreements, and/or domestic legal framework or policies which have identify priorities for the protection and conservation of natural forest areas and natural ecosystems, biodiversity, and ecosystem services, to which REDD+ actions could contribute.

Guided by the findings of Guyana's MRVS and the commitments made in Guyana's NDC, the REDD+ Implementation Plan, as detailed in Guyana's LCDS 2030, will implement approaches to advance:

- Sustainable Forestry and Low-Impact Mining Practices: This will enhance employment and income generation opportunities through domestic regulation and linking with global market standards.
- Forest Climate Services: As the first capability for Guyana's ecosystem services, work will be advanced to underpin the Monitoring Reporting and Verification System (MRVS) and Safeguard Information System (SIS) that support REDD+ and ART-TREES, while also creating the right legal and policy frameworks for individual projects, including reforestation and reclamation in mined-out areas.
- Ecosystem Services: Preparing to expand the range of ecosystem services that can become part of global nature-based solutions, beyond carbon. This may entail partnerships from Indigenous Peoples and local communities, local business, government, and international stakeholders.

Guyana's REDD+ Actions proposed in Guyana's NDC are aimed at protecting natural forest areas, biodiversity and ecosystem services. These are:

- Sustainable management of forests
- Reduced Impact Logging
- EU FLEGT

E.5. Description of how the implementation of REDD+ activities has impacted biodiversity in accordance with Guyana's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan and other relevant national strategies.

- MRVS

These actions also address the main drivers of deforestation and forest degradation in Guyana.

As well as carbon storage and sequestration, Guyana's forests provide multiple other benefits, including biodiversity and water protection. Guyana's LCDS2023 seeks to expand from an ecosystem services focus on forest climate services, prioritising:

- Expansion and restoration of Guyana's mangrove forests and ecosystems.
- Examination of Green-Grey Solutions (Engineered Infrastructure-Mangroves) utilising mangroves in Guyana's coastal protection.
- Maintenance of intact forest landscapes
- Watershed Protection

Combined with the implementation of REDD+ activities, the resultant environmental impacts will be as follows:

- maintenance of forest cover by reducing or limiting drivers of deforestation
- advancing protected areas and reducing or eliminating potential threats to protected areas
- protect watersheds
- promote sustainable forest management and forest legality
- - promote local livelihoods development in forest based communities.

E.6. Description of how the implementation of REDD+ activities has resulted in climate benefits in accordance with Guyana's Nationally Determined Contribution and/or National Adaptation Plan.

Development and implementation of codes of practice to inform effective forest resources management in forest harvesting activities to maintain low rates of deforestation and forest degradation

- Given the multiple use nature of Guyana's forests, forest harvesting activities is but one aspect of economic activities undertaken. To this end, sustainable forest management and the accompanying codes of practices are absolutely necessary to ensure the efficient management of the resources. Codes of practice are designed to take into account the various Acts and Legislations that are directly related to forest management. They provide guidelines for best practices in order to ensure that continuing economic returns can be obtained over the long term, while simultaneously fostering overall sustainable utilisation and management of Guyana's forest resources. They are designed to balance commercial and environmental considerations with social values through implementation of the GFC's integrated management system that will improve efficiency and address environmental, quality, and occupational safety and health concerns.

The objective is to encourage the adoption of minimum standards that will act as the driving force to encourage improvement in the current practices of the industry and facilitate maximum benefits for Guyana in the utilization of its natural resources.

Implementation of forest monitoring activities to ensure conformance with sustainable forest management (SFM) guidelines and EUFLEGT requirements-

REDD+ encapsulates all aspects of sustainable forest management, including forest monitoring and enforcement. Legality and the activities that accompany attaining same are critical to achieving good governance in the forest sector, in that, principles of sustainable forest management as well as activities under a REDD + agenda cannot be accomplished without this. Forest Monitoring is a critical support component of any REDD+ programme, especially to ensure forest degradation and deforestation is contained and or minimized. Guyana has been implementing a number of forest monitoring schemes, including its Legality Assurance System. Additionally, in 2009, the GoG engaged the European Union (EU) to better understand the requirements of the

European Union Forest Law Enforcement Governance & Trade (EU FLEGT) Programme. EU FLEGT is also part of Guyana's REDD+ Programme.

Guyana – EU FLEGT Process

Guyana's early commitment to REDD+ implementation under the Guyana-Norway partnership (Phase I), led to Guyana's national process to join the European Union's Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) initiative towards achieving a Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA). This national REDD+ governance indicator aims to raise the profile of Guyana's timber industry and make it more sustainable.

Key milestones have been achieved including: consultations and capacity building efforts with local stakeholders aimed at improving the understanding on FLEGT; stakeholder engagement to discuss and receive feedback on the definition of legality definition and Guyana's Timber Legality Assurance System; studies on impacts scoping regarding the gaps between current regulations and requirements under the VPA; and calls for funding proposals for stakeholders. On December 15, 2022, the Government of Guyana and the European Union signed the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) on FLEGT, to promote sustainable trade of legal timber to the EU. The signing took place at the 15th Biodiversity COP in Montreal, Canada. The agreement will give EU-based timber buyers assurance that timber products from Guyana are legal as well as further strengthen forest governance in Guyana, further curb illegal logging and promote trade in verified legal timber products.

Reduced Impact Logging (RIL)

As a key pillar for sustainable forest management, Reduced Impact Logging (RIL). RIL will result in improved harvesting practices through the implementation of planned activities which includes directional felling of trees which reduces damage to the residual stand. These activities will support Guyana REDD+ initiatives through the maintenance of a low deforestation rate during logging activities, in order to support Guyana's implementation of REDD+, as well as to continue to build capacities and improve practices within the sector.

In 2021, Guyana continued to execute capacity building for communities and concessionaries –both large and small scale- on the principles of RIL, including directional felling or planning of road infrastructure. Training materials have been also developed aiming to promote improved planning, control, and use of extracted timber.

Development of a National Forest Management and Chain of Custody Standard

Starting in 2021, the Guyana Forestry Commission commenced preliminary activities on the development of a National Forest Management and Chain of Custody Standard. The National Forest Management and Legality Standard for Guyana will cover forest management on all land tenures where forest management for commercial purposes is permitted by law and is intended to be available to both individual forest management organisations and potential group schemes involving multiple forest management entities. Certification will cover both timber and non-timber forest products and will facilitate chain of custody certification for entities purchasing, processing and/or trading in forest products.

Monitoring, Reporting and Verification System (MRVS)

Building on Guyana's reporting commitments under the Guyana Norway Bilateral Agreement to measure and report on the country's performance against the REDD+ Performance Indicators⁸⁴, the country is committed to continuing to develop and maintain the MRVS as a platform through which the country can report on forest change and associated emissions.

The MRVS was designed to underpin results-based REDD+ compensation and is integral to Guyana's engagement with the ART. It is a key component of the Low Carbon Development Strategy 2030, whereby the Strategy seeks to build on the platform provided by the MRVS to embark on a more inclusive and comprehensive path to a low-carbon economy.

Advance the promotion of value added initiatives within the sector to assist in creating higher potential for carbon storage in long term wood products- Market research and promotion are integral to the supporting REDD+, as the country seeks to minimise the pressure on its forest by finding the most suitable and economic use for the forest resources. Guyana's NDC points out that the use of value added "could also potentially reduce the pressure on forest resources as derivation of a higher value may result in reduced harvest levels."

Continued Support to Guyana's National Protected Area System- Guyana's biodiversity provides important ecosystem service functions upon which key economic and livelihood activities are dependent. These include agriculture, forestry and fisheries, payment for forest climate services, and community based economies, particularly in hinterland communities among others. With the passing of the Protected Areas Act, 2011, the Protected Areas Commission (PAC) was established at the end of 2012. The PAC is tasked with the responsibility for establishing, managing, promoting and expanding the National Protected Areas System (NPAS) in Guyana. Guyana's NPAS currently comprises the Kaieteur National Park, Kanuku Mountains Protected Area, Shell Beach Protected Area and Kanashen Amerindian Protected Area, as well as urban parks.

⁸⁴ Joint Concept Note, 2012

CANCUN SAFEGUARD F & G

Risks of reversals and displacement of emissions of the REDD+ interventions are addressed through the MRV and national forest monitoring system.

Indicators	Guyana’s Progress in Implementation
<p><i>F&G.1. Description of MRVS designed, maintained and implemented with the appropriate frequency to detect and provide information on reversals and displacement events</i></p>	<p>Guyana’s MRVS Roadmap, developed in 2009, aimed to build a comprehensive national system to monitor, report and verify forest carbon emissions resulting from deforestation as well as forest degradation.</p> <p>This reduces risks of displacement as national scale information on a routine basis inform national planning on land allocation, forest utilization and forest monitoring activities.</p> <p>All forest-related emissions by sources and removals are monitored, reported on annually and verified in accordance with UNFCCC guidance. A system of tiers has been developed by the IPCC to represent different levels of methodological complexity. Tier 1 is the basic method, Tier 2 is intermediate and Tier 3 is the most demanding in terms of complexity and data requirements. Guyana is operating at Tier 2 to 3 levels for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wall-to-wall coverage of satellite imagery is used to obtain the Activity Data (AD) related to conversion of forest lands to other uses. For the period 1990 to 2010 Guyana used primarily Landsat imagery with a variety of other sensors. Post-2010 to 2015 AD is based on practically wall-to-wall monitoring using high resolution RapidEye imagery. Sentinel imagery was used following 2015. - All AD are disaggregated by the strata used for the field sampling design for EF estimation (e.g. threat for land use change, accessibility), and by the drivers (e.g. mining, infrastructure, converted to cropland, converted to settlements). - All AD are combined and co-registered with other key spatial databases such as roads, rivers, settlements, vegetation class, location of logging concessions, location of mining concessions, topography, etc. - A comprehensive, peer-reviewed, field sampling system was designed to attain the required precision target. <p>This approach has safeguarded against the risk of leakage.</p>
<p><i>F&G.2. Description of measures undertaken, and financial resources allocated, to support enforcement and ranging efforts.</i></p>	<p>As a result of early efforts and financial cooperation in Guyana to accelerate REDD+ implementation under the UNFCCC, including deploying domestic resources and supported by Norway’s financial cooperation, Guyana has been able to make significant progress in the key areas of the REDD+ Implementation Plan, from policy transformations to monitoring and programmatic implementation as described below:</p> <p>Guyana – EU FLEGT Process- Drawing on Guyana’s early commitment to REDD+ implementation in the context of the MoU with Norway, Guyana has undertaken a process to join the European Union’s Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) initiative towards achieving a Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA). This is a key enabling indicator under Guyana’s cooperation with Norway and aims to raise the profile of Guyana’s timber industry and make it more sustainable. Following a series of stakeholder consultations across the forestry sector, Guyana entered into</p>

formal negotiations with the EU for a VPA in December 2012, which aimed to ensure forest exports come from a legal source and improve forest governance and regulations, while promoting broad stakeholder participation in decision-making processes, ultimately contributing to the achievement of sustainable development objectives in Guyana. While seeking to ensure Guyana's timber products are legally sourced, the EU-FLEGT and the VPA will contribute to further strengthening Guyana's existing policy, legal, and institutional frameworks for forest legality and sustainable forest management.

On December 15, 2022, the Government of Guyana and the European Union signed a trade agreement, known as a Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) on FLEGT, to promote sustainable trade of legal timber to the EU. The signing took place at the 15th Biodiversity COP in Montreal, Canada. The agreement will give EU-based timber buyers assurance that timber products from Guyana are legal as well as further strengthen forest governance in Guyana, further curb illegal logging and promote trade in verified legal timber products.

The Agreement is aligned with the country's Low Carbon Development Strategy, the National Forest Policy Statement, National Forest Plan, and commitments to combat illegal logging and prevent the trade in illegal timber products. Some of the changes which are a result of these commitments include the country having updated and gazetted the Codes of Practice and the Forest Regulations in May 2018.

Illegal logging is a significant driver of forest degradation globally. Guyana has committed to advancing efforts under SDG 13 through its implementation of the EU FLEGT programme. Guyana has aligned its FLEGT work programme with SDG 13.2.1: establishment or operationalization of an integrated policy/strategy/plan, which increases their ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change and foster climate resilience and low greenhouse gas emissions development in a manner that does not threaten food production.

Reduced Impact Logging (RIL)- As a key pillar for sustainable forest management, Reduced Impact Logging entails a set of technologies and practices designed to minimize environmental impacts from timber harvesting operations, which are embedded systematically in the planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating of timber harvesting.

In this regard, over the reporting period, Guyana has undertaken trainings of communities and concessionaries –both large and small scale- on the principles of RIL, including directional felling or planning of road infrastructure. Training materials have been also developed aiming to promote improved planning, control, and use of extracted timber.

Based on assessments conducted by the GFC, all large concessions practice RIL techniques and there is a growing number of small and medium scale operators who have now adopted RIL practices. The revised Code of Practice gazetted within the Forest Regulations in May 2018 outlines the aspects of RIL that apply to small scale operators in the forest sector. Additional training materials in RIL have been developed to meet the requirements of the sector; there has been expanded support for development of curricula for formal training at certificate, diploma and degree

levels; Manuals of Procedure have been developed on components of RIL; and over 35 training courses have been conducted with stakeholders.

RIL reduces both collateral and incidental damage to forest areas under harvest. Limiting impact on forest areas in harvest zones reduces carbon emissions from timber harvesting. Policies and programmes on RIL have positive impacts on SDG Indicator 13.2.1.

Policy and institutional measures in support of EU FLEGT and RIL- Guyana has strengthened its institutional and legal framework in support of REDD+ implementation, including the enactment of forest regulations under the Parliament which aim to ensure deforestation and forest degradation rates remain low, including through the provision of necessary platforms for the implementation of updated forest legislation.

As part of this process, the National Forest Policy Statement and National Forest Plan were revised in 2018. The Policy & Plan reflect a movement away from valuing of forests for simply their wood and trees, and instead treats forests as national resources to be managed collectively. They present a set of policies and plans that address the economic, conservation, governance, and capacity facets of forest management, while seeking to value the forest for more than the price of the timber.

The Codes of Practice for the Forestry Sector have also been revised, as supporting guidance regulations to accelerate REDD+ implementation by ensuring low deforestation and forest degradation rates. This includes, for instance, Codes of Practice for Timber Harvesting and Non-Timber Forest Products.

This NDC commitment and progress outlined above impacts SDG 13. The 2018 National Forest Policy Statement & National Forest Plan will support the implementation of REDD+ in Guyana, seeking to implement sustainable forest management and thereby reduce GHG emissions.

Stakeholder Engagement and Outreach- A broad range of stakeholder engagement efforts have been conducted by Guyana in the context of all the activities described above, particularly regarding the MRVS, the design and operationalization of the EU-FLEGT and VPAs, Sustainable Forest Management, and other technical aspects of REDD+ implementation.

As described elsewhere (including Part IV of this SOI), stakeholder engagement efforts and capacity building sessions have included a wide range of stakeholders, from community logging associations to Amerindian villages, miners, saw millers, non-governmental organizations, private sector, youth, and women. Outreach actions overall were geared towards enabling and further strengthening institutional arrangements and ensuring inclusiveness in the decision-making processes regarding REDD+ implementation, particularly at the community level.

This action is aligned to SDG 15 and Indicator 15.2.1. Maintenance of forest cover to ensure conservation and sustainable use forest resources, ecosystems, and their services is only possible through the inclusion and building of broad community capacities of forest-based stakeholders.

Monitoring, Reporting and Verification System (MRVS)- Building on Guyana's reporting commitments under the Guyana Norway Bilateral Agreement to measure and report on the country's performance against the REDD+ Performance Indicators⁸⁵, the country is committed to continue to develop and maintain the MRVS as a platform through which the country can report on forest change and associated emissions.

Over the past years, the MRVS has evaluated and integrated many data streams used to map national-scale forest change has supported data analysis, and has developed datasets to determine the accuracy of the change area mapped. Guyana's approach has evolved over time to accommodate new technologies, but at its core the MRVS recognises the importance of local management, existing datasets, and linking these elements to appropriate Earth Observation (EO) data such as Landsat, RapidEye, Sentinel, Planet Scope, and very high spatial resolution aerial imagery. Phase 2 of the MRVS included the development of a national scale Forest Carbon Monitoring System that is now fully operational, enabling Guyana's move to full emissions reporting and away from REDD+ Performance Measures for all relevant drivers of deforestation and forest degradation. With the data collected by MRVS, Guyana was able to submit its Reference Level for REDD+ and complete its technical assessment under the UNFCCC.

This programme allows Guyana to advance efforts in SDG 15 for Indicators:

15.1.1 Forest area as a proportion of total land area

15.1.2 Proportion of important sites for terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity that are covered by protected areas, by ecosystem type

15.2.1 Progress towards sustainable forest management

15.3.1 Proportion of land that is degraded over total land area

15.4.2 Mountain Green Cover Index

The MRVS fosters the maintenance of forest cover to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of forest resources, ecosystems, and their services through more informed planning and decision making. Guyana's reporting on Intact Forest Landscapes⁸⁶ under the MRVS allows for closer linkages with SDG reporting on Mountain Green Cover Index. These areas are reported annually, consistently following international standards and best practices.

Development of a National Forest Management and Chain of Custody Standard-

Starting in 2021, the Guyana Forestry Commission commenced preliminary activities on the development of a National Forest Management and Chain of Custody Standard. The National Forest Management and Legality Standard for Guyana will cover forest management on all land tenures where forest management for commercial purposes is permitted by law and is intended to be available to both individual forest management organisations and potential group schemes involving multiple forest management entities. Certification will cover both timber and non-timber forest products and will facilitate chain of custody certification for entities purchasing, processing and/or trading in forest products.

⁸⁵ Joint Concept Note, 2012

⁸⁶ IFL is defined as a territory within today's global extent of forest cover which contains forest and non-forest ecosystems minimally influenced by human economic activity, with an area of at least 500 km² (50 000 ha) and a minimal width of 10 km (measured as the diameter of a circle that is entirely inscribed within the boundaries of the territory).

Advance the promotion of value added initiatives within the sector to assist in creating higher potential for carbon storage in long term wood products- Market research and promotion are integral to the supporting REDD+, as the country seeks to minimise the pressure on its forest by finding the most suitable and economic use for the forest resources. Guyana's NDC points out that the use of value added "could also potentially reduce the pressure on forest resources as derivation of a higher value may result in reduced harvest levels."

Continued Support to Guyana's National Protected Area System- Guyana's biodiversity provides important ecosystem service functions upon which key economic and livelihood activities are dependent. These include agriculture, forestry and fisheries, payment for forest climate services, and community based economies, particularly in hinterland communities among others. With the passing of the Protected Areas Act, 2011, the Protected Areas Commission (PAC) was established at the end of 2012. The PAC is tasked with the responsibility for establishing, managing, promoting and expanding the National Protected Areas System (NPAS) in Guyana. Guyana's NPAS currently comprises the Kaieteur National Park, Kanuku Mountains Protected Area, Shell Beach Protected Area and Kanashen Amerindian Protected Area, as well as urban parks.

During 2021, transparency in REDD+ actions and distribution of REDD+ revenues have been provided by complete reporting on all project under REDD+ and finances received. The procedures and processes are set out in the operation of the Guyana REDD+ Investment Fund. [Operational Manual \(lcnds.gov.gy\)](http://www.lcnds.gov.gy) The Trustee (the World Bank) is required to produce an annual report which is accessible publicly. On the Government's website on LCDS, each project is presented with information on the contractual agreement, final report and performance. One example of a project on ICT that is financed with REDD+ benefits is shown below and available at www.lcnds.gov.gy

F&G.3. Description of carbon accounting risk mitigation mechanisms such as buffer pools.

All aspects of carbon accounting will be conducted in keeping with the requirements of ART TREES. In this regard, Guyana has claimed all three mitigation factors resulting in a twenty percent reduction in the buffer withholding.

Legislation or executive decrees actively implemented and demonstrably supporting REDD+, issued by a relevant government agency, or with leadership from the Presidential or Prime Ministerial Office. - Guyana has in place an institutional and legal framework that supports REDD+ implementation. This includes the enactment of forest regulations under the Parliament which aim to ensure deforestation and forest degradation rates remain low, including through the provision of necessary platforms for the implementation of updated forest legislation.

Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) was first formulated in 2008 and aimed to support the country in the pursuit of a '*resilient, low-carbon, socially-inclusive economy*', paving the way for national efforts to reduce emissions in the forest and land use sector. This initiative is led by the Office of the President of Guyana and continues to be the cornerstone for REDD+ strategic development in Guyana.

Guyana's legal framework provides a comprehensive suite of laws governing conservation and the protection of biodiversity consistent with national forest

programmes that are applicable to the REDD+ Implementation Plan⁸⁷. The National Forest Policy Statement 2018 (NFPS) and National Forest Plan 2018 (NFP) have been developed within the framework of the Guyana Constitution.

Guyana is characterized by its long history of forest conservation, where indigenous peoples have an outstanding role as forest stewards in recognition to the 7000-year long history of conservation and sustainable management of natural resources in the area. Similarly, Guyana's Kaieteur National Park, established in 1929, was the first protected area established in the Amazon Region. In 1989, Guyana committed to 'lasting ecological, economic and social benefits' for the Guyanese people and the international community by committing to responsibly manage 1 million acres of forests in the Iwokrama Rainforest. Similarly, the Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC), and its predecessor are leaders in managing Guyana's 12.5 million hectare (GFC 2020) State Forest Estate and, with the contribution of civil society organizations and advocates, have managed to maintain one of the lowest deforestation rates.

In addition to the above, Guyana committed to the application of relevant policies and safeguards in the context of activities to be financed by the Guyana's REDD+ Investment Fund (GRIF). All of the above have been established as *enabling activity* indicators to assess Guyana's performance, some of them relevant in the context of REDD+ consistency with Cancun safeguards, as follows:

- **Continuous multi-stakeholder consultation process:** *Institutionalized, systematic and transparent process of multi-stakeholder consultation.* Aims to ensure full and effective participation, particularly of indigenous peoples and other forest-dependent communities. Indigenous peoples can 'choose whether and how to opt in to' the REDD+ or the LCDS processes; if so, free prior and informed consent according to Guyana's legislation applies.
- **Governance:** Guyana is committed to promote the continued development of a 'transparent, rules-based, inclusive forest governance, accountability and enforcement system' in accordance to relevant legislation and independent assessment of forest governance and logging practices.

Rights of indigenous peoples and other local forest communities as regards to REDD+: In accordance to Guyana's Constitution, the rights of indigenous peoples and other Guyanese to participation, engagement, and decision making are guaranteed regarding matters that affect their well-being. Such rights will be respected and protected throughout Guyana's REDD+ and LCDS's efforts.

REDD+ Actions in Guyana have been consistent with its commitment under the UNFCCC, other international commitments, and importantly national policies including the National Forest Policy and the LCDS. These have been underscored in Guyana's NDC.

The implementation of activities encompassed in the Guyana's Cooperation Agreement with the Government of the Kingdom of Norway have provided Guyana with relevant insights on the economic feasibility of REDD+ results-based

⁸⁷ The Constitution of Guyana 1980 – Principles and Bases of the Political, Economic and Social System recognises by virtue of section 36- the wellbeing of the nation requires inter alia the preservation of the rich diversity of plants and eco-systems. This is a general aspiration of the nation expressed by the drafters of the Constitution and represent the broad objectives which can be viewed as the foundation for all the subordinate legislation, regulations and policies.

implementation and have provided Guyana with the tools to continue to sustainably manage, conserve and protect, its forest resources, as stated in the country's NDC, LCDS, and National Forest Policy. Similarly, the refinement of REDD+'s economic feasibility underscores the need for opportunity costs of REDD+ results-based implementation required to move beyond traditional a natural resource exploitation-based economy, currently supporting the livelihoods of thousands of Guyanese.

Guyana was among the countries that submitted its NDC. In its NDC, it is noted that *"...Guyana is offering to defer the pursuit of our historic natural resource exploitation-based economy, and offer our huge carbon stocks to the world if, in return, our sustainable human development needs and the cost of deferring business as usual are met by financial support from the international community in a predictable, just and equitable manner."*

National commitments were made that targeted the forest and energy sectors, which has produced the majority of emissions, both current and historic. Importantly, sustainable forest management and conservation are highlighted as key to Guyana's fight against climate change and are in keeping with the national implementation of REDD+ in Guyana. These activities all form the basis for Guyana's contribution to efforts to mitigate climate change up to 2025 and inform plans for future targets.

Guyana has undertaken a process to join the European Union's Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) initiative towards achieving a Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) with the aim of raising the profile of Guyana's timber industry and making it more sustainable. Following a series of stakeholder consultations across the forestry sector, Guyana entered into formal negotiations with the EU for a VPA in December 2012 which aimed to ensure forest exports come from a legal source and improve forest governance and regulations, while promoting broad stakeholder participation in decision-making processes, ultimately contributing to the achievement of sustainable development objectives in Guyana. On December 15, 2022, the Government of Guyana and the European Union signed the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) on FLEGT, to promote sustainable trade of legal timber to the EU. The signing took place at the 15th Biodiversity COP in Montreal, Canada. The agreement will give EU-based timber buyers assurance that timber products from Guyana are legal as well as further strengthen forest governance in Guyana, further curb illegal logging and promote trade in verified legal timber products.

Codes of Practice for the Forestry Sector have also been revised, supporting guidance regulations to accelerate REDD+ implementation by ensuring low deforestation and forest degradation rates. This includes, for instance, Codes of Practice for Timber Harvesting and Non-Timber Forest Products.

Demonstrated inter-annual variability of less than 15% in annual forest emissions over the prior 10 years used in TREES Reporting- Guyana is a country with very low rates of deforestation (not exceeding 0.079% between 2005 and 2014) and as such a 15% variation in rate from a mean value is not a reflection of a high risk of reversal. Over a 5-year period the variation about the mean is 16%. This number rises where a 10-year period is considered because Guyana, as an HFLD country, has increasing rates of deforestation.

Given the very low areas of annual deforestation and low annual fluctuation in deforestation area (16% of the 5 year average deforestation rate is less than 2000 ha),

Demonstrated national reversal mitigation actions, plan or strategy developed in alignment with Cancun Safeguard F- The policy framework developed for REDD+ implementation in Guyana has resulted in greater levels of sectoral coordination and more efficient policy formulation and implementation, and Guyana has been able to align effort to further develop REDD+ actions and strengthened its institutional capacities for REDD+ implementation. In recognition that the bulk of Guyana's forest emissions emanate from extractive forestry activities, Guyana's efforts will therefore focus on ensuring that such activities align with sustainable and efficient operations in line with the country's objectives stated in the NDC.

Guyana's national commitments were made that targeted the forest and energy sectors, which have produced the majority of emissions, both current and historic. Importantly, sustainable forest management and conservation are highlighted as key to Guyana's fight against climate change and are in keeping with the national implementation of REDD+ in Guyana. These activities all form the basis for Guyana's contribution to efforts to mitigate climate change up to 2025.

Unconditional contributions for forestry activities have been identified as follows:

- Ensure compliance with the various Codes of Practice to realise sustainable forest management (SFM);
- Forest monitoring will maintain a high level of timber legality. These efforts will maintain a low rate of illegal logging (at less than 2% of production).
- Forest monitoring to maintain a high level of timber legality, including the finalisation and implementation of the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) under the EU Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (EU FLEGT);
- Improve added- value activities locally to assist in creating higher potential for carbon storage in long term wood products and to support linkages to the FLEGT process.
- Strengthen support for indigenous communities as they continue the stewardship of their lands and inter alia the benefits that accrue from any REDD+ activities from these lands

Conditional contributions include:

- Conservation of an additional 2 million hectares through Guyana's National Protected Area System and other effective area-based conservation measures as per Guyana's commitment under the UNCBD, including the protection of conservancies and reservoirs and their watersheds and the watersheds upstream of new hydro-power sites. Existing mangrove forests will be counted in this target and the mangrove restoration programme along the vulnerable coast will be expanded.
- Avoided deforestation through the development of an Emissions Reduction Programme that will target:
- Use of Reduced Impact Logging (RIL) with the potential to reduce annual emissions by 13.5%
- Completion and maintenance of building the national MRVS, provided that adequate financial resources are available to do so.

Guyana's MRVS has verified that small scale gold mining resulted in 89% of the national deforestation recorded over the past three years. To address this, the ERP will include actions by the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC) to implement policies, education programmes, and incentives for integrated planning and management of the mining sector. This will support the transformation of the mining sector and include actions to:

- Implement mineral mapping in the mining districts to identify economically exploitable deposits. This will significantly reduce deforestation by avoiding clearing of forest cover from lands which contain only marginal mineral deposits.
- Implement awareness and incentive programmes to improve the efficiency of technologies and practices in the mining industry.
- Implement policies to institute reclamation and reforestation of mined areas.

Guyana has continued to pursue efforts to have in place all requirements and methodological guidance to support REDD+ implementation as agreed under the Warsaw Framework for REDD+ (WFR), including ensuring the implementation of REDD+ in accordance to Cancun Safeguards and meeting all safeguards-related requirements, as described below and in the subsequent sections.

The NDC acknowledges Guyana's robust MRVS as one that can ensure the integrity of emission reduction efforts as the country engages with carbon-neutral markets as a means of maximizing the value of national exports and providing internationally attractive, verifiable low carbon products. The MRVS will continue to be strengthened and improved as new international guidance and technologies become available. Further the role of the MRVS will be expanded to inform forest management policy and practice.

The MRVS was developed as performance measurement mechanism for REDD+ with focus initially placed on the development of two primary components: (i) a framework for forest area change assessment and monitoring; and (ii) forest carbon stock measurement and monitoring. The national-scale MRVS is identified as a national priority of Guyana's REDD+ program. Guyana's MRVS Roadmap, developed in 2009, aimed to build a comprehensive national system to monitor, report and verify forest carbon emissions resulting from deforestation as well as forest degradation. Since 2010, there have been nine national-level assessments done on an annual basis. MRVS uses a combination of GIS and field-based data to report on activity and emissions data. Satellite imagery technology used include Landsat, Planet Scope and Sentinel 2. The range of deforestation rates is between 0.048% and 0.079% which is at a maintained low level. The repeated, systematic assessments under the Guyana MRVS, integrates the risk of reversals in its approach.

Additionally, the Guyana Forestry Commission Act⁸⁸ and the State Lands Act (SLA)⁸⁹ with their corresponding NFPS⁹⁰ and NFP⁹¹, the Code of Practice for Timber Harvesting⁹², the Guidelines for Conducting Management-level Inventory and 100%-level Inventory, and the Guidelines for the Preparation of Forest Management Plans

⁸⁸ Guyana Forestry Commission Act No 20 of 2007.

⁸⁹ State Lands Act 1903.

⁹⁰ Guyana National Forest Policy Statement 2018.

⁹¹ Guyana National Forest Plan 2018.

⁹² Code of Practice for Forest Operations 2018

and Annual Operational Plans additionally the Code of Practice for Timber Harvesting prescribes inter alia internationally accepted standards for exclusion areas and buffer zones, pre-harvest inventory, road construction and felling.

Guyana's legal framework provides measures to tackle reversals and displacement, this is done through the PAA93 and the FA94, as well as through several policy instruments: NFPS⁹⁵ and NFP⁹⁶, LCDS⁹⁷. These efforts include enforcement.⁹⁸ The FA⁹⁹ addresses the issue of detection and reduction of forest fires. Together, these mechanisms, policies, and legislative mandates have installed strong capabilities to effectively implement national reversal mitigation actions that are aligned with Cancun Safeguard F&G.

F&G.4. Number of tCO2 reduced since REDD+ intervention/implementation.

Guyana is a country with very low rates of deforestation (not exceeding 0.079% between 2005 and 2014). Guyana is a HFLD country, seeking to maintain its high forest cover through implementation of REDD+, and more specifically, sustainable forest management, conservation and enhancement of forest carbon stocks.

⁹³ Protected Areas Act –section 123 Except with the permission of the management authority any person who lights any plant or vegetation, fire or clears, burns or otherwise damages any tree, bush, plant or other vegetation commits an offence.

⁹⁴ Forests Act – section 5-Except in accordance with subsection (2), no person shall (a) enter a State forest, provided that a person may travel through a state forest in the course of his journey and may reasonably occupy or use the forest for the purpose of his journey; cut, damage, or take any forest produce, or carry out any other kind of forest operation in a State forest; carry out any kind of exploratory operation in a State forest;(d) occupy or use any land in a State forest;(e) clear, cultivate, or turn soil in a State forest; or (f) graze or pasture livestock in a State forest. Section 1212. The Commission, after consultation with relevant stakeholders may on agreement. application grant any person an afforestation agreement by entering into an agreement with the person concerned authorising that person to (a) plant specified trees and specified plants in a specified area of State forest; and (b) manage the planted area in accordance with a forest management plan approved by the Commission.

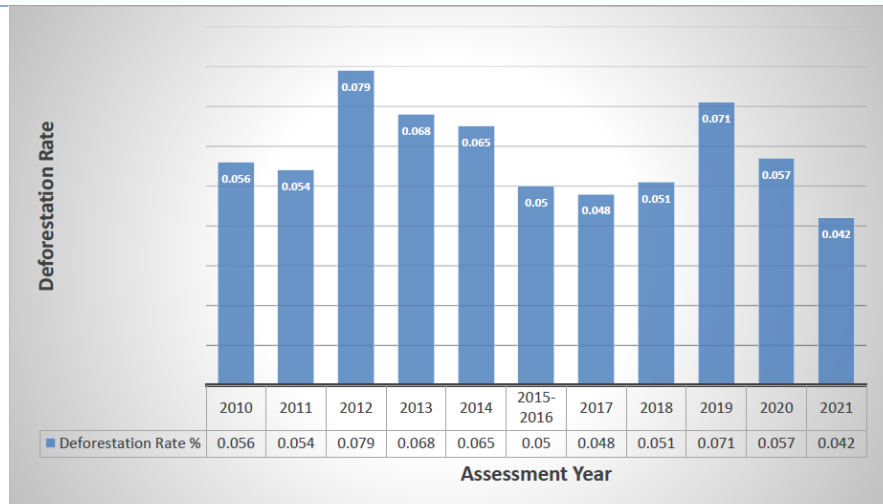
⁹⁵ National Forest Policy Statement - Policy Strategy 2.2.5 Afforestation and Reforestation -The policy promotes the rehabilitation and restoration of degraded landscapes through forest plantation development, enrichment planting, and community forestry. The strategy is to develop systems, and incentive packages, to support reforestation and forest plantation development. Public, private sector and community investment shall be sought, with emphasis on degraded forests, agricultural and mining lands and mangroves. This will require developing and implementing a National Forest Plantation Strategy, based on best practices and updated forest plantation

⁹⁶ National Forest Plan- SO 2-Improved rating for Guyana on the global Environmental Performance Index; Real-time quantification of forest cover loss and forest degradation; Reduced numbers of forest fires, disease and pest outbreaks; Sustainable use reserves increases.

⁹⁷ Low Carbon Development Strategy- the Government of Guyana supports a phased approach to REDD+: (i) starting with a fund-based mechanism for REDD+ from 2010, and (ii) gradually merging REDD+ into the carbon market(s). Starting in 2013, a portion of each country's rainforest should be assigned forestry emissions quotas or carbon credits (known as REDD Credits) 31 as offsets to trade within the carbon markets. Over years, the portion of rainforest for which REDD Credits are assigned should be progressively increased in line with a trajectory which prevents "flooding" the markets.

⁹⁸ Areas such as the Community Owned Conservation Area (COCA), Kanashen, established under the Amerindian Act⁹⁸, the Kaieteur National Park and Iwokrama Forest have Rangers. The Protected Areas Act further strengthened that approach by committing financial support for Rangers in all protected areas, with The Guyana Forestry Commission tracking illegal logging. The Guyana Geology and Mines Commission⁹⁸ is the regulatory body for most of the extractive sector. In 2016 the Ministry of Natural Resources committed to establishing a law enforcement arm made up of wardens with powers of arrest.

⁹⁹ Sections 17-18



Annual Rate of Deforestation by Period from 1990 to 2021

Guyana's proposed forest carbon mechanism has four modules for incentive creation:

- Reduce deforestation- to incentivise reducing deforestation; albeit that in Guyana's case, deforestation is already the lowest, or close to the lowest in the world
- Restore forests- to incentivise restoring forests where deforestation has already taken place; in Guyana's case there are 200,00 ha where this could happen as a priority
- Remove carbon- to recognise the value that standing forests continue to provide by removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere; Guyana's forests remove about 154 million tonnes of CO₂e annually
- Conserve carbon- to recognise the value that standing forests provide to the world by storing carbon sequestered over hundreds of years, in Guyana's case 19.5Gt of stored carbon.

F&G.5. Variation of deforestation rates in neighbouring areas before and after the REDD+ intervention.

Guyana continues to collaborate in regional initiatives such as ACTO to target forest protection across the Guiana Shield.

PART V: OPERATIONAL MECHANISM TO RECEIVE AND ADDRESS COMPLAINTS

It is the aim of the Government of Guyana to strengthen internal GRM systems of REDD+ related agencies while promoting an interagency GRM platform that can capture and report on data relating to investigations, dialogue, and resolutions. The platform will provide vital support services related to communication, capacity building, stakeholder engagement and monitoring and evaluation.

EXISTING MECHANISMS

The Table below details the existing mechanisms currently in place to receive and address complaints and issues. These mechanisms allow for complaints to be addressed at various levels. These operational mechanisms currently address issues highlighted by stakeholders regarding REDD+ implementation and more specifically the implementation of REDD+ Safeguards.

It is the longer term vision for all the avenues through which grievances on REDD+ take, addressed at the legislative/mandated agency level, that these are consolidated, for reporting purposes, within a centralised mechanism. It is intended that these will continue to be addressed at the mandated/legislated sector/agency level. Complaints could be made through any of the channels outlined in the Table above and would be collated through this centralised mechanism for reporting purposes.

Level	Legislation	Institution	Characteristics	Type
Local Community Mechanisms	Amerindian Act 2006, Ch.29:01	Amerindian Village & Community Councils	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make Rules 2. Investigate and enforce breaches of Rules 3. Allocate lands and resolve land disputes 4. Negotiate commercial agreements for mining and forestry on Amerindian lands 	Statutory
Sector Specific Mechanisms	GLSC Act, Ch.59:01 State Lands Act, Ch.62:01 State Lands Resumption Act, Ch 62:02 Public Lands (Public Roads) Act, Ch.62:03	Guyana Lands & Surveys Commission	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Investigation and resolution of complaints 2. Enforcement of terms and conditions of leases, license and permissions 	Administrative

	GGMC Act, Ch.65:09 Mining Act, Ch.65:01 & Mining Regulations; Petroleum (Exploration and	Guyana Geology and Mines Commission	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Investigation and resolution of complaints 2. Enforcement of terms and conditions of permits 3. Law enforcement 	Statutory
	GFC Act, No.20 of 2007 Forests Act, No.6 of 2009	Guyana Forestry Commission	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Investigation and resolution of complaints 2. Enforcement of terms and conditions of permits 3. Law enforcement 	Administrative
	Amerindian Act 2006, Ch.29:01	Ministry of Amerindian Affairs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Minister may investigate and remove Tshaos & Village Councillors 2. Minister must determine applications for grants of State lands 3. AVC may appeal from Minister's decision to High Court 	Statutory
			1. Amerindian Land Titling Project GRM	Administrative

	Environmental Protection Act, Ch.20:05	Environmental Protection Agency Environmental Assessment Board Environmental Appeals Tribunal	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Appeals to EAB concerning EPA decisions not to ask for EIA 2. Appeals to EAT against EPA decisions to refuse, or grant conditionally, environmental permits 3. Appeals to EAT against EPA decisions to refuse, grant conditionally, vary or revoke, construction and operation permits and process licenses 4. Law enforcement 	Statutory
	Protected Areas Act, No.14 of 2011	Protected Areas Commission	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Extinction of existing claims/rights in PAs 2. Appeals by AVCs re-creation of PAs on Amerindian lands 3. Consultation and agreement with AVCs re traditional rights and archaeological sites in public PAs 4. Public meetings re variation and de- reservation 	Statutory
	Wildlife Conservation and Management Act, No. 14 of 2016	Wildlife Conservation and Management Commission	Representations by licensees against cancellation of licenses & permits	Statutory
National Law Courts	Summary Jurisdiction Act, Ch.3:05	Magistrate's Courts	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Small Claims 2. Summary Offences 	Judicial

	High Court Act, Ch.3:02	High Courts	1. Criminal Prosecutions 2. Civil Litigation 3. Judicial Review	Judicial
	Court of Appeal Act, Ch.3:01	Court of Appeal	Appeals from lower courts	Judicial
	Caribbean Court of Justice Act 2004, No.16 of 2004	Caribbean Court of Justice	Appeals from Court of Appeal	Judicial
Special	Land Registry Act,	Land Court	Land Adjudication	Judicial
Level	Legislation	Institution	Characteristics	Type
Purpose Forums	Arbitration Act, Ch.7:03	Arbitrators	Out of Court Settlement of Civil Proceedings	Statutory ADR Process
	Constitution, Ch.1:01 Ombudsman Act, Ch.19:04	Ombudsman	1. Investigation of complaints against government bodies 2. Recommendation of remedial actions	Feedback

PART VI: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

This section presents an overview of the participatory processes undertaken in Guyana in preparation of the LCDS, Guyana's participation in ART and this SOI. The workshops were held over the period October 2021 to July 2022 and were overseen by the Multi-Stakeholder Steering Committee of the LCDS.

Multi-Stakeholder Steering Committee (MSSC) The MSSC oversees LCDS development and implementation. Membership includes the Offices of the President and the Vice President, the Office of the Prime Minister, Ministry of Public Works, Ministry of Amerindian Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Natural Resources (including Guyana Forestry Commission and Guyana Geology and Mines Commission), Ministry of Agriculture, the National Toshias' Council, Amerindian Peoples' Association (APA), Guyanese Organisation of Indigenous Peoples (GOIP), The Amerindian Action Movement of Guyana (TAAMOG), National Amerindian Development Foundation (NADF), Private Sector Commission, Indigenous Peoples Commission, Forest Products Association, Guyana Gold and Diamond Miners Association, in addition to representatives of Labour Unions, Women's organizations and youth groups.

Consultations During Covid-19 Period At the start of the national consultation at end of 2021 and start of 2022, Guyana was still under health restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result, citizens from across sectors, disciplines, gender and other groupings were engaged on the Zoom and Facebook Live platforms during which the draft Strategy was explained, while participants' questions received responses and their recommendations were recorded. Concurrently, informational videos and messages were circulated in the print and electronic media, and on social media sites.

Face-to-Face Consultations As national health restrictions were lifted on March 2022, face-to-face consultations began in focus group meetings and in community consultations across the ten administrative regions. Independent activities by members of the MSSC and civil society were undertaken, while the National Consultation consisted of (i) national level engagements; (ii) thematic engagements; (iii) community-based consultations; (iv) receipt of written feedback; (v) feedback via a website; and (vi) an active public engagement programme.

Regional and Community Level Consultations were held in every region, as shown in the table below. Each session was attended by on average 100 persons. Over 200 Indigenous Villages and forest-based communities were engaged.

Feedback received throughout the national consultation is summarized in a 315-page report that is publicly available on the LCDS website, showing each comment received and how it has been used to inform the finalization of the LCDS 2030: <https://lcds.gov.gy/summary-of-feedback/>

LEADING ROLE OF THE NATIONAL TOSHAOS COUNCIL (NTC)

After the final community consultations, the National Toshias' Council (NTC) held its annual conference in Georgetown during July 2022.

The NTC is the national body that represents all Indigenous Villages in Guyana, as set out in the legislation that governs Indigenous Peoples matters in Guyana: the Amerindian Act 2006. Part IV, Sections 38-43 of the Act outline the Role and Functions of the National Toshias' Council.

Toshias and Village Councils (the wider body elected to manage the affairs of the village which is headed by the village Toshao) are elected at the village level in keeping with Part III of the Amerindian Act. Toshias then represent their villages at meetings of the NTC.

Among the functions of the NTC as detailed in Part IV of the Amerindian Act, is to: “**coordinate and integrate the activities of the villages on a national basis**” as stated in **Section 41 (h)**, and “to prepare strategies and plans for the protection, conservation and sustainable management of village lands and natural resources” as stated in Section 41 (e). By virtue of the provisions of Part IV of the Act including Section 41 (h), collectively these legislatively enshrine the powers of the NTC, to lead on, guide and endorse the LCDS and approach to carbon financing in Guyana.

At the annual NTC Conference in July 2022, all elected Toshias present engaged with the LCDS team who joined discussions on the Strategy and plans for the next phase. These discussions included reviewing the output of the consultations and the process for, and progress on, issuing and marketing carbon credits. A resolution was passed endorsing the LCDS 2030 inclusive of all its elements while both the Government and the Chair of the NTC emphasized the need for Toshias to stay involved as implementation of the LCDS moves ahead, village plans are prepared or updated, and new opportunities arise.

Following the NTC endorsement, the MSSC's July meeting approved the revised LCDS 2030 and resolved that the Strategy be sent to Parliament for approval.

The LCDS 2030 was tabled in the National Assembly on July 21, 2022. The motion was debated and successfully passed by the Assembly on August 8, 2022

Resolution of the National Toshias' Council on the LCDS 2030

Available at: <https://lcds.gov.gy/endorsement-of-lclds-2030-by-the-national-toshaos-council/>

Resolution of the National Toshias' Council Conference

Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) 2030

July 15, 2022

The National Toshias' Council, at its Conference of July 11-15, 2022, adopts the following resolution:

Whereas the National Toshias' Council (NTC) recognizes Guyana's leading role in forests and climate action nationally and globally, and recognizes that through the joint effort by Government and Indigenous Peoples, along with other stakeholders, Guyana has maintained over 99% of forest cover over many years; and further notes that this is testimony to Guyana's strong stewardship on forests and Guyana's continued contribution to the global fight on climate change.

Reaffirming that the Low Carbon Development Strategy 2009 has been a visionary Strategy that showed how inclusive, sustainable development can take place, while simultaneously maintaining the country's forests, to help meet some of the most urgent challenges the world faces.

Recalling that the LCDS 2009 laid the early framework for low carbon development in Guyana, including forest carbon credits; and was subject to extensive national, regional, and community-based consultations, and one of the widest national consultations exercises completed in Guyana in recent history.

Emphasizing that the LCDS 2009 was discussed at the Community and National Toshias' Council levels and received full endorsement.

The National Toshias' Council notes that:

- Projects based financing and additional resources from national-level programmes, benefitted Amerindian Villages across Guyana.
- Phase I of the approach to Forest Climate Services saw Guyana earn a total of US\$220M from the Guyana-Norway Agreement for the period 2010-2015.
- These revenues were channeled towards financing a wide range of programmes, including those that are aimed at improving the quality of life of Indigenous Peoples, including:

D. J

- two separate phases of the **Amerindian Development Fund (ADF)** Project which used funds earned under the Guyana-Norway agreement to implement the Community Development Plans (CDPs) of Amerindian communities and villages. The development of the CDPs was led by the communities and villages and approved at their Council meetings. The first phase funded 26 communities and villages and the second phase funded 154 communities and villages. The project aimed to strengthen the entrepreneurial and institutional capabilities of the village economies of Amerindian communities; improve linkages with the private sector to further develop value chains; and strengthen institutional frameworks to support local economies. CDPs implemented were categorised under the following sectors: agriculture, village infrastructure, tourism, manufacturing, village business enterprise, and transportation. Between both phases of the project, the CDPs of 180 communities and villages were funded and implemented at an approximate value of US\$4,412,540 or G\$911,189,465.

- The **Amerindian Land Titling (ALT)** Project, which is still ongoing, seeks to accelerate the legal demarcation and titling of Amerindian lands for a total budget of US\$13.3M or G\$2.8B. Amerindians total approximately 14 percent of Guyana's population and currently own in excess of 15.65 percent of Guyana's territory, up from about six percent in the early 1990s. The ownership of land empowers and allows Guyana's first peoples the liberty to engage in and promote investments towards their own social and economic advancement. Under the ALT project:
 - 15 villages were issued with absolute grants, bringing the total number of Amerindian villages titled with Absolute Grants to 111.
 - 26 villages were demarcated and 24 were issued with certificates of title in what is the final step in the titling process. This brought the total number of villages demarcated and issued with Certificates of Titling to 101.

The principle of Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) continues to be an important and respected principle that is applied under the Project. Amerindians are provided with enough information well in advance of planned or proposed activities to allow communities and villages to agree or consent to the execution of those activities. Under the project, over 210 persons were trained in FPIC to ensure that not only do Amerindians understand their rights but importantly, for other

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stakeholders to recognise and understand those rights and practically apply the principle of FPIC during project implementation. A Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) was established as an alternative for helping to resolve land titling disputes. Twenty-three persons were trained as GRM liaisons, 254 community members were trained in mediation and 378 persons were part of cluster awareness exercises on the core function of the GRM.

- The **ICT Access and e-Services** for Hinterland, Poor, and Remote Communities Project. This project restarted in 2021, is still ongoing and ICT hubs are being established in 200 communities and villages. Each hub will be equipped with printers and televisions, as well as 20 laptops and software. Once complete, this project will provide the necessary infrastructure, equipment, hardware, and software necessary to enable access to high-quality ICT, training and e-services in all parts of Guyana, with particular attention given to vulnerable groups and remote communities who might otherwise be excluded.

Highlighting that Guyana's pursuance of a new Low Carbon Development Strategy, LCDS 2030, expands to a broader ecosystem approach, to include biodiversity and water management, and one which creates a model for avoiding deforestation and maintaining forests; investing in urban, rural and Amerindian development; protecting the coast and hinterland from climate change; creating jobs in a suite of low carbon sectors; and aligning the education and health sectors with low carbon development.

Recognizing the commitment to Free Prior and Informed Consent in Guyana's LCDS 2030.

Recognizing that a central tenet of the LCDS 2030, like the LCDS 2009, involves communities benefiting from revenues earned from the sale of forest carbon services; and where the LCDS 2030 sets out new opportunities for new revenues.

Noting that the LCDS 2030 seeks to advance the work started under the LCDS 2009 and charts the path for a sustainable future towards 2030.

The National Toshias' Council:

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Welcomes Guyana's pursuance of an expanded Low Carbon Development Strategy, LCDS 2030, and the proposal to move to a second phase for accessing forest carbon financing, to continue the approach outlined in the LCDS 2009.

Recognises that extensive national scale and community-based consultations, conducted over the past seven months, have informed the main aspects of LCDS 2030.

Welcomes the commitment expressed in the LCDS 2030 to continued consultation and engagement with Indigenous Communities and Villages as the LCDS moves to implementation.

Agrees with Guyana's national approach of engaging with forest carbon financing that is aimed at bringing benefits to Guyanese and particularly Indigenous Villages and Communities.

Notes and welcomes the information in the LCDS 2030 that from 2022, there is a strong possibility that Guyana's sale of forest climate services can be structured around high-quality voluntary carbon markets that could include private, as well as international public sector, financing.

Welcomes and supports the proposal which resulted from the national consultation that:

- The LCDS, and engagement with carbon markets, nonetheless will create new *opportunities* to opt into revenue-sharing mechanisms where Amerindian and other local communities can choose to access revenues through a combination of:
 - o national programmes as outlined in the draft LCDS 2030 (e.g., renewable energy, land titling, protection against climate change), and
 - o community/village-led programmes for indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs) as set out in Village Sustainability Plans or equivalent, put together by communities themselves.
- All Amerindian communities will have the opportunity to engage with both pathways for carbon market revenues, in accordance with the principles of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC).
- A dedicated 15% of all revenues from forest carbon markets will be allocated for Amerindian communities. These funds will be available to the villages to support development initiatives. This will be supplementary to the considerable funds communities are expected to receive from national-level programmes.
- This dedicated revenue stream will be shared equally with villages and communities, including those that are covered with forest as well as those in non-forest ecosystems
- Communities are free to opt into this dedicated revenue mechanism for local communities.
- No deadline will be set for opting in.



Handwritten signature in blue ink, possibly initials 'L.P.' to the right.

Support by the National Toshao's Council Executive Committee
Resolution on Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy (2030)

July 15, 2022


NATIONAL TOSHAOS COUNCIL
SIGN: _____
DATE: _____
Derrick John- NTC Chairman

Sonia Latchman
Sonia Latchman- NTC Vice Chairwoman

Shane Cornelius
Shane Cornelius- Secretary

Executive Members

- Michael Brown*
- Compton Thompson*
- Kenny Moses*
- Demond James*
- Orlayne Williams*
- L. Angel*
- Shamim Khan*
- M. Thomas*
- C. Evans*
- Lewis DeVair*
- Jimmy Byal*



TWELFTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA
FIRST SESSION (2020-2022)
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

RESOLUTION NO. 45

WHEREAS His Excellency President Irfaan Ali launched a draft version of the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) 2030 on 28th October 2021, building from the original LCDS of 2009 and its update in 2013;

AND WHEREAS the Draft LCDS 2030 subsequently underwent more than seven months of national consultation, during which community-level consultations took place alongside engagement with national stakeholders to shape the main elements of LCDS 2030;

AND WHEREAS the LCDS 2030 has been updated to include inputs received through the more than seven months of consultation;

AND WHEREAS the National Toshaos Council, at their Conference in July 2022, have endorsed the LCDS 2030 and the mechanism for benefits sharing at the village and community level;

AND WHEREAS the Multi Stakeholder Steering Committee, the oversight body for the LCDS, at its Meeting on 18 July 2022, has approved the LCDS 2030 and recommended it for tabling at the National Assembly;

AND WHEREAS the LCDS 2030 was laid in the National Assembly on 21st July 2022;

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2.

AND WHEREAS the LCDS 2030 sets out a strategy for recognising Guyana's world-class ecosystem services, including those provided by its forests, biodiversity, fresh water and oceans;

AND WHEREAS the strategy prioritises the evolution of Guyana's sale of forest climate services in line with a three-phase plan which was first set out in 2009;

AND WHEREAS the first phase of the plan saw Guyana enter into a partnership with the Kingdom of Norway, under which Guyana received a total of over US\$220 million from the Kingdom of Norway as payments for forest climate services provided in the period from 2009 to 2015;

AND WHEREAS revenues received from the Kingdom of Norway were, and are being, invested in clean energy, low carbon jobs, Amerindian land titling, the Amerindian Development Fund project, small and medium enterprise development, rehabilitation of the Cunha Canal and other climate resilience work, building a world-class forest carbon Monitoring Reporting and Verification System (MRVS), and other priorities set out in the original LCDS in 2009;

AND WHEREAS the LCDS 2030 sets out how Guyana can move to the second phase of the plan for forest climate services, where payments from the Kingdom of Norway can be replaced or augmented by payments from forest carbon markets;

AND WHEREAS the LCDS 2030 articulates how these new revenues can be invested in a new suite of social and economic investments across Guyana;

RESOLVED,

That this National Assembly welcomes the tabling of, and endorses, Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) 2030;

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FURTHER RESOLVED,

That the National Assembly supports the approach to investing revenues from forest carbon markets through two pathways:

- *National programmes* as outlined in the LCDS 2030, including investments in renewable energy, land titling, protection against climate change and other areas;
- *Community/Village-led programmes* for indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs) as set out in Village Sustainability Plans (VSPs) or equivalent, put together by communities themselves;

FURTHER RESOLVED,

That the National Assembly supports the proposal to dedicate 15 percent of all revenues from forest carbon markets to Amerindian communities, which will be supplementary to the funds received by these communities from the national programmes;

FURTHER RESOLVED,

That the National Assembly, including through its Committees, will oversee the investment of all national revenues received from forest climate markets and managed via the Consolidated Fund through the budgetary process.

Passed by the National Assembly on Monday, 8th August, 2022.


S.E. ISAACS, A.A.,

Clerk of the National Assembly

**CLERK OF THE
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

Summary of Villages, Communities and Organizations represented at Regional LCDS 2030 Consultations (November 2021 to June 2022)		
Regions	Location	Villages/Organizations Represented
1	Mabaruma	St Dominic, Aruka Mouth, Arukamai, Sacred Heart, Aruau, Hobedia, Hotoquai, Lower Kaituma, Barima /Kariabo, Black Water Savannah, Lower Black Water, Lower Kariabo, Red Hill, Baracina, Unity Square, St Anselm's, Morawhanna, Imbotero, Smith Creek, Shell Beach, Kachikaimo, Three Brothers, Yarakita, White Water, Wauna, Tobago, Wanaina, Hosororo, Koberimo, Khan's Ville/Hill, Hobo Hill, Thomas Hill, Barabina, Mabaruma
	Port Kaituma	Matthew's Ridge, Arakaka, One Mile, Baramita, Eclipse Falls, 4 miles, Oronoque, Citrus Grove, Canal Bank, Sebai, Fitzburg, Port Kaituma
	Santa Rosa	Kariako, Kokerite, Waikrebi, SantaCruz (Little and Big Canaballi), Warapoka, Assakata, Kwebana, Fathers Beach, Manawarin, Waramuri, Haimaracabra, 7 mile (Santa Rosa and satellites) Kairie, Kamwatta, Parakese, Mora, Wallaba, Karaburi, Haimaruni, Rincon, Cabora, Huradiah, Koko, Paloma, Kumaka
2	Anna Regina	Bethany, Mashabo, Capoey, Mainstay/Whyaka, Tapakuma, St. Deny's, Akawini, Wakapau, Charity, Kabakaburi, St Monica, Karawab., Lima Sands, Anna Regina (and Mayor & Town Council, Onderneeming
3	Lenora	Zeelugt, Parika, Naamryck, Groenveldt, Stewardtville, Lenora
4	Lusignan	Golden Grove, Non Pariel, Brixton, Foulis, Enmore, Unity/Vereeniging, Cane Grove, Mon Repos, Haslington, LBI, Buxton, Kuru Kuru
5	Bush Lot	#22 Bel Voir, Woodlands, Bel Air, Hamlet, Fellowship, Proffit, Rising Sun, Bush Lot, Armadale, Mahaicony, Farm, Cotton Tree, Moraikobai, Blairmont, Geldenland, Mara, Kilcoy/Hampshire, No. 52 -74 NDC, Plegt Anker, Enfield, Kintyre/Borlam NDC, Crabwood Creek, Wyburg/Caracas NDC, Corriverton M&TC, Maida/Talgorie NDC, Brothers Village, Rose Hall, Eversham
6	New Amsterdam	Loggers' associations from Canje River, Mara, and Lonsdale/Brothers/Sisters; New Amsterdam
	Orealla	Orealla Village
7	Kamarang	Phillipai, Wayala Yeng, Amokokopai, Jawalla, Quebanang, Kako, Warawatta, Waramadong, Paruima, Omenaik, Kambaru, Imbaimadai, Chinoweng, Wax Creek, Kamarang
	Bartica	Isseneru, Tasserene, Kangaruma/Asura, Miles Potaro Road, Karrau, Kartabo, Issano, Sacaralla Bay, Falmouth, Agatash, Daag Point, Mile Potaro Road.
8	Kato	Kato, Chiung Mouth, Kanapang, Penak, Itabac, Kurukabaru, Kamana, Waipa, Sand Hills, Catchcow, Kaibarupai, Karisparu, Paramakatoi, Mountain Foot, Bamboo Creek, Tuseneng, Taruka
	Mahdia	Chenapou, Campbelltown, Mahdia, Princeville, Micobie, El Paso, Sucre Junction, Mowasi, Muruwa
9	Annai	Fairview (Region 8, but administratively Region 9), Surama, Wowetta, Kwatamang, Rupertee, Annai Central, Apoteri, Rewa, Crash Water, Yakarinta, Massara, Kwaimatta, Anaruputa, Toka, Yupukari, Quatata, Fly Hill, Kaicumbay, Katoka, Semonie (& Students of Bina Hill Institute), Iwokrama, Conservation International, South Rupununi District Council, Sustainable Wildlife Management Project
	Maruranau	Sand Creek, Potarinau, Kraudanarau, Maruranau, Aishalton, Quiko, Shea, Baitoon, Achiwib, Sawarenau, Rupanau, Shulinab, Parikarainau, Meriwau, Parabara, Katoonarib, Lethem
10	Kwakwani	SandHills /Hittia, DeVeldt, Kimbia, Wiruni, Wikki/Calcuni, Parapee, Ituni, Hururu, Kaitapin, Bamboo Landing, Jonestown, Kimbia, Community Forestry Groups from Berbice River area
	Linden	Rockstone, Bamia, Wisroc, 47 Miles Mabura Road, Prosville, Andyville, Malali, Siberian, Coomacka Mines, 58 Miles Mabura Road, Kara Kara, Kairuni, Muritaro, Great Falls, Christianburg, Nottinghamshire, Watooka, Speightland, Ituni, Richmond Hill

