

Guyana's LCDS – Involving All Guyanese in the Low Carbon Transition

**“The bedrock of the LCDS is built from the commitment of the people of Guyana.”
- H.E President Donald Ramotar, President of the Republic of Guyana**

In previous articles, we examined key elements related to Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS). This week we will continue to explore the LCDS and examine actions taken to involve stakeholders in the development and implementation of the strategy.

The long-term success of the LCDS is highly dependent on several key factors including broad-based, inclusive domestic support within Guyana. The LCDS therefore requires an institutionalised, systematic and transparent process of multi-stakeholder engagement and consultation, enabling the participation of all potentially affected and interested stakeholders at all stages of the process.

From its inception, the preparation of the LCDS involved extensive consultations. It was prepared through three drafting and consultative processes, under the oversight of a Multi-Stakeholder Steering Committee (MSSC) chaired by the President of Guyana.

An initial framing document was launched in December 2008 and the first draft of the LCDS itself was published in May 2009. The first draft of the strategy was subject to review through multi-stakeholder consultations, and extensive awareness, discussions and public outreach sessions utilizing the local media and other portals such as internet.



Participants at an LCDS outreach session in the Hinterland

The consultation process and a review of the draft were overseen by the MSSC and the process was monitored by an international non-governmental organization - International Institute for Environment and Development.

At the request of the Government of Guyana (GoG), the Government of Norway engaged the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) to provide independent advice on the consultation process. According to the IIED: “The Independent Monitoring Team finds that the process of multi-stakeholder consultation surrounding Guyana’s LCDS has broadly followed principles derived from international best practice and has met these criteria. It is the opinion of this team that the consultative process, to the extent that its findings inform a revised LCDS, can be considered credible, transparent and inclusive.”

The MSSC provides guidance on the implementation of the LCDS. The members of this Committee include representatives from the following sectors: government, indigenous non-governmental organisations (NGOs), private sector, labour, forestry, mining, youth and women organisations, academia, NGOs and civil society.



Members of the MSSC at a their monthly meeting

The second (December 2009) and third drafts (May 2010) of the LCDS incorporated further feedback from national stakeholders and inputs from other processes. An LCDS update was prepared in March 2013 to inform on progress to date and builds on earlier versions of the Strategy.

Since its inception, LCDS investments have been subject to on-going consultations among impacted stakeholder groups. Stakeholder engagements will continue as the new wave of investments proceeds, and consultations on individual investments will be done through broad-based and transparent public processes.

Information programmes on the LCDS are important and are on-going. Overall, general communication and awareness raising approaches to provide updates to the public on the LCDS include a number of different methods including: documentaries, public service announcements, and hosting of outreach and awareness events and exhibitions. Information on activities is also made available online.

Annual LCDS stakeholder awareness and engagement activities include community outreach and engagements with coastal and hinterland and interior villages. Outreach exercises were conducted in Regions 1, 5, & 6 and will be extended to the other Administrative Regions. Information and consultation routines have been tailored specifically to the needs of Amerindian communities,

including non-internet based channels of communication like in-person meetings, information folders, and traditional media.

Collaboration will continue with the National Tshaos Council (NTC) and MSSC members to strengthen their capabilities to function as agents of information sharing. The NTC – which consists of representatives of all the democratically elected Tshaos of Amerindian Villages, will continue to be involved in development and implementation of the LCDS. Moreover, the MSSC Facilitators will continue to conduct field awareness and outreach, especially in the hinterland regions. From an overall perspective, continued efforts are being made to engage all Guyanese in the implementation of the LCDS.

Next week will continue to examine key elements of Guyana’s LCDS.

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