

Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy (Part 2)

In the previous article, we discussed Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) - one of the biggest steps taken in Guyana to address climate change and national development. This week we will continue to explore the LCDS and the major projects that are being implemented.

LCDS Priority Projects

In 2009, the LCDS identified a number of priority projects to support Guyana's transition into a low carbon economy. Since that time to now, many of these projects have been developed and implementation commenced. These are identified below:

Amerindian Development

The LCDS is supporting Amerindian development through several strategic initiatives:

Hinterland Renewable Energy: To support the energy needs of households without access to the national electricity grid, solar photovoltaic systems were distributed to Amerindian and other hinterland households. As of March 2013, approximately 11,000 solar panels were installed in almost 200 communities. Investments are also being made into small-scale hydropower resources in the hinterland.

Socio-Economic Development: An Amerindian Development Fund (ADF) has been set-up to support the socio-economic and livelihood development of Amerindian communities through the implementation of their Community Development Plans (CDPs), which identify the communities' own priorities to meet social and economic development objectives.

Amerindian Land Titling (ALT): In excess of 14% of Guyana's territory is owned by Amerindians. This project aims to facilitate and fast track the ALT process.



Expanding the Digital Economy and Avoiding a Digital Divide

Fibre Optic Cable: Investments are being made into enhancing broadband connectivity between the coast and the hinterland, as well as connections to Brazil's telecommunications network.

One Laptop per Family (OLPF) Project: The Project is providing Internet-connected mobile computers to families throughout Guyana who otherwise might be excluded from the opportunities presented by modern ITC sector. As of March 2013, 26,832 laptops were distributed supported by on-going training.

Telecommunications Liberalisation: In an effort to modernise the sector, several pieces of legislation have been tabled in the National Assembly including a Telecommunications Bill.

Support for Micro and Small Enterprise (MSE) and Vulnerable Groups Low Carbon Livelihoods

This project aims to address two of the major bottlenecks that constrain the development of MSEs and the ability of vulnerable groups to build alternative livelihoods in Guyana, which are i) limited access to finance and ii) limited technical and business skills.

Access to finance will be addressed through a credit guarantee facility which will be used to guarantee part of the collateral of a loan, thereby enabling a MSE to obtain a loan at an affordable rate. In addition, an interest support facility will help with interest payments and a low carbon grant scheme will be established to assist vulnerable persons with viable business propositions. The lack of skills will be addressed through a training voucher scheme which will enable MSEs to obtain the skills they require at existing training institutions. Sector specific training will also be provided.

Centre for Bio-Diversity Research and Curriculum Development

Centre for Bio-diversity Research: The international Centre for biodiversity research and low carbon development will be dedicated to researching Guyana's biodiversity and assessing its economic value and how this can be maximized.

Curriculum Development: Steps are being taken to integrate low carbon development concepts into the primary school curriculum.

Climate Resilience and Adaptation

Several initiatives have been targeted to improve Guyana's resilience to climate change and its capacity to adapt. One of the first priorities addressed was the rehabilitation of canals to improve the management of water in the East Demerara Water Conservancy (EDWC).

The Next Stage in the Low Carbon Transition (2013 – 2015)

During this period to the end of 2015, the priority projects are expected to continue utilizing resources already allocated. In parallel, and subject to revenues from climate services and other sources continuing as planned, the Government of Guyana intends to address a further 5 priorities in the period to 2015:

Climate Resilience, Adaptation and Water Management

This will include initiatives to improve Guyana's ability to cope with climate change and will likely include some or all of the following measures:

Upgrading infrastructure and assets to protect against flooding through urgent, near-term measures: This will include maintaining and upgrading Guyana's drainage and irrigation (D&I) system, empoldering as well as dredging and de-silting major rivers, expansion of the use of mangroves as natural sea defenses, and significant upgrades to the EDWC.

Hinterland Adaptation: This will include the development, reproduction and distribution of plant varieties and crop management techniques that are suitable for Hinterland communities, thereby ensuring the sustainability and further development of their livelihoods. In addition, all-

weather roads and bridges and new D&I systems will be constructed, with a focus on particularly vulnerable areas.

Adaptation Readiness Programme: This could include significantly revamping Guyana's early warning system and improving the timely and accurate collection and dissemination of data and information on weather-related events and their impacts on the ground.

Supporting High Potential Low Carbon Sectors

This will involve the development of priority low carbon sectors. It is expected that the priorities to 2015 will be business process outsourcing, aquaculture, eco-tourism, and fruits and vegetables. In parallel, work to strengthen the sustainable forestry and mining sectors will continue.

Hinterland and Amerindian Development: Much of the work that has started including land titling initiatives will continue up to 2015. The ADF will continue to be capitalized to provide financing for all CDPs. Alongside the existing programmes; further measures will also receive investment to support the following: Hinterland Adaptation measures; improving Information and Communication Technology (ICT) access and facilitating Hinterland Distance Learning through ICT.

Next week we will continue to further explore Guyana's LCDS.

Prepared by the Office of Climate Change

For additional information, please contact:

Office of Climate Change, Office of the President, Shiv Chanderpaul Drive, Georgetown

Tel. + 592 223 5205, Email: info@lcds.gov.gy , Website: www.lcds.gov.gy

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