

Operational Manual

GUYANA REDD-Plus INVESTMENT FUND (GRIF)

This Operations Manual is not a legal document. It describes the operating principles, guidelines and procedures for the day-to-day operations of the Guyana REDD+ Investment Fund.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ADMINISTRATION AGREEMENT: An administration agreement entered into between the Trustee and a Contributor in respect of such Contributor's Contribution.

ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS: Administrative and other costs incurred by the Trustee and/or the Secretariat, in connection with the performance of their services, communication activities and the independent evaluation in support of the GRIF.

ADMINISTRATIVE FEE: The amount agreed by the Steering Committee with the Partner Entity for administrative and other costs, including but not limited to costs for Project preparation, Project supervision and preparation of reports and unaudited or audited financial reports and evaluations, incurred by the Partner Entity in connection with services performed by the Partner Entity in connection with a Project, excluding any Administrative Fee for Project Proposal Preparation for such Project.

ADMINISTRATIVE FEE FOR PROJECT PROPOSAL PREPARATION: The amount agreed by the Steering Committee with the Partner Entity for administrative and other costs incurred by the Partner Entity in connection with the development of a Project Proposal, including costs incurred by the Implementing Entity.

CONTRIBUTOR: Any party that enters into an Administration Agreement with the Trustee to contribute funds to the GRIF.

CONTRIBUTION: Each Contributor's respective contribution to the GRIF.

CONTRIBUTIONS: The aggregate of all the contributions from the Contributors to the GRIF;

GRANT AGREEMENT: Any agreement to be entered into between a Partner Entity and an Implementing Entity.

GRIF GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK DOCUMENT: The Governance Framework for the GRIF, endorsed by the Steering Committee at its first meeting.

GRIF VERIFICATION FRAMEWORK: The Verification Framework for the GRIF, endorsed by the Steering Committee at its first meeting.

GUYANA REDD+ INVESTMENT FUND ("GRIF"): A multi-Contributor trust fund established for the financing of activities undertaken as part of the Government of Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy.

IMPLEMENTING ENTITY: The Government of Guyana or any instrumentalities thereof or any other entity that is eligible to receive funding in accordance with the Partner Entity's policies, guidelines and procedures and which the Government of Guyana has agreed to be a recipient of resources.

LETTER OF COMMITMENT: A letter from the Trustee to the Partner Entity making the commitment of an allocation to the Partner Entity, which includes in its annex the relevant decisions of the Steering Committee approving the allocation.

LOW CARBON DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY ("LCDS"): The Government of Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy, first released in June 2009 and revised in December 2009 and May 2010.

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER STEERING COMMITTEE ("MSSC"): The Multi-Stakeholder Steering Committee of the LCDS.

PARTNER ENTITY: The Inter-American Development Bank ("IADB"), the International Development Association ("IDA"), and any fund, program or specialized agency of the United Nations that is a member of the United Nations Development Group.

PROJECT: Goods, works or services for an investment, technical assistance or capacity building activity or activities which are to be financed on a grant basis with funds from the GRIF, as approved by the Steering Committee in accordance with the GRIF Governance Framework Document.

PROJECT CONCEPT NOTE ("PCN"): Any project concept note submitted by the Partner Entity to the Steering Committee seeking an allocation from the GRIF for an Administrative Fee for Project Proposal Preparation.

PROJECT PROPOSAL: Any proposal submitted by the Partner Entity to the Steering Committee seeking an allocation from the GRIF for a Project and the corresponding Administrative Fee.

SECRETARIAT: The administrative unit established pursuant to the GRIF Governance Framework Document to support the Steering Committee and the GRIF.

STEERING COMMITTEE: The steering committee established pursuant to the GRIF Governance Framework Document to approve Administrative Fees for Project Proposal Preparation, Projects and Administrative Fees.

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS ("MEMBERS"): The Government of Guyana and the Contributors.

STEERING COMMITTEE OBSERVERS (“OBSERVERS”): The Trustee, each of the Partner Entities, civil society organizations and private sector entities will be invited to participate in the Steering Committee as observers.

TRANSFER AGREEMENT: An agreement entered into between the Trustee and a Partner Entity governing the transfer of funds by the Trustee from the GRIF to the Partner Entity.

TRANSFER REQUEST: A request submitted by the Partner Entity to the Trustee for the transfer of GRIF funds to the Partner Entity for an Administrative Fee for Project Proposal Preparation or for a Project and the corresponding Administrative Fee.

TRUSTEE: The IDA is the Trustee for the GRIF, responsible for receiving funds from Contributors, managing them within a trust fund on Guyana's behalf, and making transfers of GRIF resources in the amounts approved by the Steering Committee to Partner Entities.

1. DESCRIPTION OF THE GUYANA REDD+ INVESTMENT FUND

1.1 **Objective.** The Guyana REDD-plus Investment Fund (GRIF) is a multi-Contributor trust fund established to: (i) manage payments provided by Contributors to the GRIF for forest climate services provided by Guyana; and (ii) transfer these payments and any investment income earned on these payments, net of any administrative costs of the Secretariat and the Trustee, to Partner Entities for Projects and activities that support the implementation of Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS). The GRIF will provide financing to Partner Entities for goods, works or services for investment, projects, technical assistance or capacity building activities carried out by Implementing Entities.

Projects will be mutually agreed by Partner Entities and Implementing Entities and submitted by Partner Entities for approval of the Steering Committee in accordance with the GRIF Governance Framework Document. Each Partner Entity will ensure that any Project submitted to the Steering Committee complies with all the relevant policies, procedures and safeguards of the respective Partner Entity.

1.2 The GRIF is also designed to support global efforts to devise a UNFCCC REDD-plus mechanism. The GRIF is intended to be a model for REDD-plus payments, and to learn lessons about the nature of REDD-plus finance, to support the development of a UNFCCC REDD-plus mechanism and, as part of this effort, to ensure adherence to internationally accepted fiduciary, social and environmental standards. Guyana and the Contributors to the GRIF have invited the IADB, the members of the United Nations Development Group, and IDA to act as GRIF Partner Entities.

1.3 **Activities.** The GRIF will finance Projects identified in the LCDS, including:

- Investment in low carbon economic infrastructure, including renewable energy and information and communications technology;
- Investment in development and new economic opportunities for Amerindian communities;
- Investment in human capital, through education and training, expanding employment, and providing economic opportunities to small businesses and vulnerable groups;
- Investment in high value, low carbon economic sectors, including large scale agriculture, aquaculture, business process outsourcing and ecotourism;
- Investment in institutional strengthening; and
- Reforming existing forest-dependent sectors, such as forestry and mining, to make them consistent with Guyana's low carbon vision.

1.4 Partner Entities. The following shall apply to all GRIF financing from Partner Entities to Implementing Entities:

- each allocation shall be approved and administered in accordance with the policies and procedures of the applicable Partner Entity;
- the Partner Entity shall only be obligated to make funds available to an Implementing Entity to the extent it has received funding from the Trustee; and
- the relevant Partner Entity shall, for purposes of each allocation, conclude an agreement with the Implementing Entity, indicating that the resources have been provided from the GRIF.

1.5 Contributions. Contributions to the GRIF may be provided by Individual sovereign governments, private sector partners, foundations, international organizations, local governments, and non-governmental organizations may also contribute resources to the Fund, subject to terms and conditions agreed by the Trustee and the Steering Committee.

1.6 The total amount of Contributions that can be made available to the GRIF annually will be determined by the results achieved by Guyana in avoiding greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and forest degradation as well as other indicators verified through an independent assessment as described in the GRIF Verification Framework.

2. GOVERNANCE AND STRUCTURE

2.1 The governance and operational framework applicable to the GRIF is set forth in the GRIF Governance Framework Document and the GRIF Verification Framework.

2.2 The GRIF structure includes Contributors, a Steering Committee, a Secretariat, Trustee, Partner Entities, and various Implementing Entities. See the GRIF Governance Framework Document for complete details on the roles and responsibilities of each of these entities.

The structure of the GRIF is shown in Figure 1, while the flow of funds from the GRIF to Project implementation is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 1: GRIF Agreement structure

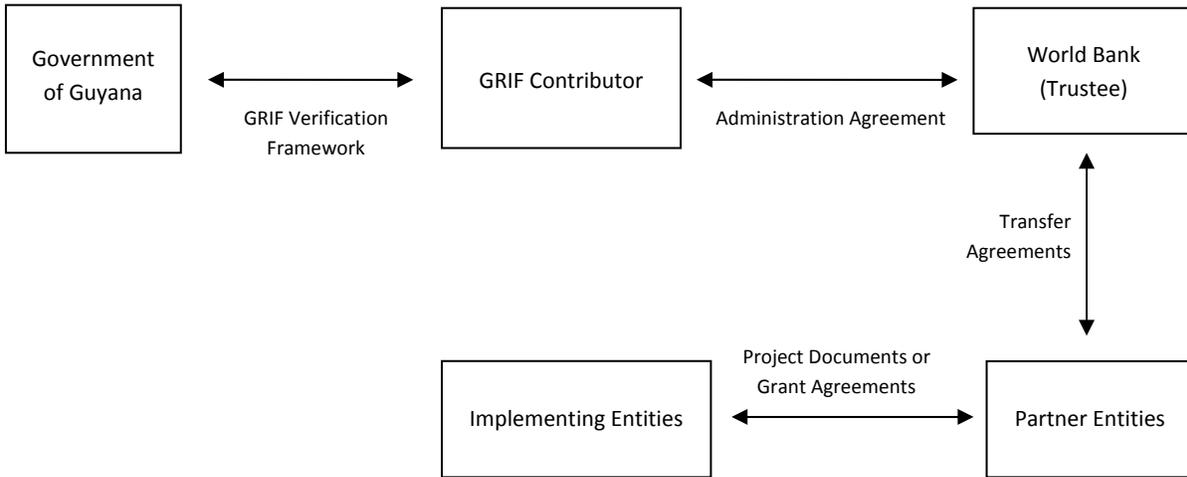
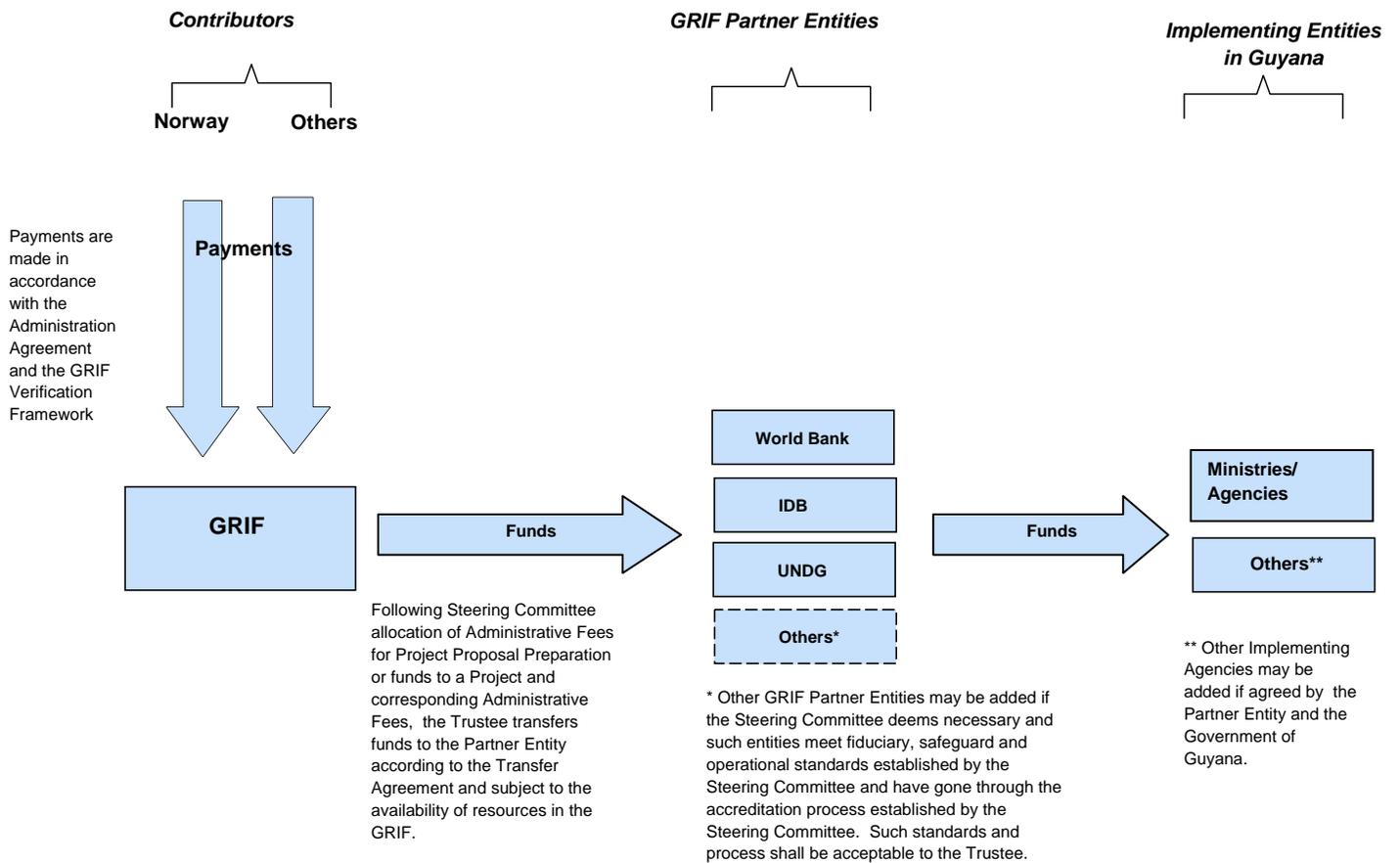


Figure 2: GRIF Flow of Funds



3. MECHANISMS FOR FINANCING PROJECTS

A. STEERING COMMITTEE APPROVAL PROCESS

3.1 A Partner Entity, upon mutual agreement with the Implementing Entity, may submit a fully developed, appraised Project Proposal to the Steering Committee for approval or the Partner Entity and Implementing Entity may jointly determine to submit a Project Concept Note (PCN). Through a PCN a Partner Entity may inform the Steering Committee of an intended Project, and request Administrative Fee for Project Proposal Preparation.

3.2 In the case of a PCN, a PCN may be approved by the Steering Committee and Administrative Fee for Project Proposal Preparation may be allocated by the Steering Committee to a Partner Entity for Project preparation. The Secretariat will inform the Trustee of such allocation and the Trustee will commit and transfer such allocation to the Partner Entity subject to the availability of resources in the GRIF and in accordance with the terms of the Transfer Agreement.

3.3 The Partner Entity will use the Administrative Fee for Project Proposal Preparation to develop a full Project Proposal for approval by the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee may approve the Project Proposal and allocate GRIF funds to the Project and corresponding Administrative Fee. The Secretariat will inform the Trustee of such allocation and the Trustee will commit and transfer such allocation to the Partner Entity subject to the availability of resources in the GRIF and in accordance with the terms of the Transfer Agreement.

B. OPERATIONS CYCLE OF GRIF-FINANCED PROJECTS

(i) Summary Table of Operations Cycle for GRIF-Financed Projects

Submission of a PCN and request for allocation and approval of Administrative Fee for Project Proposal Preparation (Steps 1 through 5) prior to submission of a full Project Proposal and request for allocation and approval of funds for the Project and corresponding Administrative Fee, are optional, at the discretion of the Implementing Entity and relevant Partner Entity.

Steps/Actions Required	Who is Responsible?	Performance Standards/Time Frame (business days)
Project Concepts		
1. Submission of PCN to the Secretariat	Partner Entity, upon agreement of the Implementing Entity	To be submitted at minimum 15 working days prior to a scheduled Steering Committee meeting.

		Approval may also be done by electronic communication, on a no-objection basis.
2. PCN review and approval or request for revisions	Steering Committee	Review and approval of PCN and allocation of Administrative Fee for Project Proposal Preparation: either at a scheduled Steering Committee meeting, or after 15 working days of receipt by the Steering Committee if approval is being done by electronic communication
3. Trustee issues Letter of Commitment to Partner Entity for Administrative Fee for Project Proposal Preparation, subject to availability of funds	Trustee	Within 5 working days of notice of approval by the Steering Committee
4. Partner Entity requests transfer of Administrative Fee for Project Proposal Preparation from the Trustee	Partner Entity	Partner Entity may submit a cash Transfer Request following issuance by the Trustee of the Letter of Commitment
5. Trustee transfers funds to the Partner entity according to the procedures in the Transfer Agreement	Trustee	Within 5 working days of receipt of complete Transfer Request.
Full Project Proposal		
6. Development of Full Project Proposal	Partner Entity and Implementing Entity	Partner Entity and Implementing Entity jointly prepare Project Proposal in accordance with Partner Entity's standards
7. Submission of full Project Proposal to the Secretariat	Partner Entity, upon agreement of the Implementing Entity	To be submitted at minimum 25 working days prior to a Steering Committee meeting.
8. Approval of Project Proposal and allocation of resources to Project and corresponding Administrative Fee or request for revision of Project	Steering Committee	Review and approval: either at a scheduled Steering Committee meeting, or after 25 working days of receipt if approval is being done by

Proposal		electronic communication
9. Trustee issues Letter of Commitment for the Project and corresponding Administrative Fee, subject to availability of funds	Trustee	Within 5 working days of notice of approval by the Steering Committee
10. Partner Entity requests transfer of allocated funds for Project and corresponding Administrative Fee from the Trustee	Partner Entity	Partner Entity may submit a cash Transfer Request following issuance by the Trustee of the Letter of Commitment
11. Trustee transfers funds to Partner Entity in accordance with the provisions of the Transfer Agreement	Trustee	Within 5 working days of receipt of complete Transfer Request
12. Implementation	Implementing Entity	As set forth in Project documentation and in accordance with Partner Entity policies and procedures
13. Supervision, Monitoring and Reporting	Partner Entity	In accordance with Partner Entity policies and procedures and the corresponding legal agreements
14. Project Completion	Partner Entity and Implementing Entity	As set forth in the Project Documentation

(ii) Explanation of Each Step in the Operations Cycle of GRIF-Financed Activities

3.4 Partner Entities and Implementing Entities will have the option to prepare a PCN for any given Project. The following steps will precede the development of the full Project Proposal:

(Steps 1 to 5 optional, at the discretion of the Partner Entity and Implementing Entity)

STEP 1: Project Concept Note (“PCN”) Submission

3.5 An Implementing Entity works with a Partner Entity to develop a PCN in the Partner Entity’s agreed format. The PCN must be consistent with the LCDS and the overall results framework of the GRIF (once such framework is approved by the Steering Committee), and disclose any

proposed waiver of the Partner Entities policies and procedures. The relevant Partner Entity then submits the PCN to the Secretariat for further transmittal to the Steering Committee, requesting the allocation of Administrative Fees for Project Proposal Preparation.

3.6 The Secretariat will post the PCN on the GRIF website. A minimum period of 10 working days will be allowed for Observer comments, followed by at minimum five working days for Partner Entity and Implementing Entity review of the comments, before a Steering Committee meeting will be held.

STEP 2: PCN Review

3.7 The Steering Committee will review the PCN to determine whether it is consistent with the GRIF Governance Framework Document requirements for Partner Entity investments, and will either allocate Administrative Fees for Project Proposal Preparation to the Partner Entity, or send the PCN back to the Partner Entity for revision. The Steering Committee will make a decision either at a scheduled Steering Committee meeting, or after a minimum of 15 working days from receipt of the PCN, if reviews are being done by electronic communication.

The decision of the Steering Committee will be communicated to the Partner Entity and the Trustee by the Secretariat in writing. The Secretariat will post the Steering Committee decision on the GRIF website, and make it public through other acceptable public disclosure channels.

STEPS 3 to 5: Trustee issuance of Letter of Commitment for Administrative Fees for Project Proposal Preparation and Transfer of Funds

3.8 The Trustee will issue a Letter of Commitment for the allocated Partner Entity Administrative Fees for Project Proposal Preparation, subject to availability of funds. Once the Letter of Commitment has been issued, the Partner Entity may request funds from the Trustee, and the Trustee will transfer those funds to the Partner Entity according to the procedures in Transfer Agreement.

STEP 6: Development of Full Project Proposal

3.9 The preparation process of a Project will be undertaken by the Implementing Entity and Partner Entity in accordance with the applicable policies and procedures of the Partner Entity.

3.10 The Project Proposal must be consistent with the LCDS and the overall results framework of the GRIF (once such framework is approved by the Steering Committee), include a robust results framework for the Project, as agreed between Guyana and the Partner Entity, and disclose any proposed waiver of the Partner Entities policies and procedures.

STEPS 7-8: Approval of Project Proposal and allocation of resources to Project and Administrative Fee

3.11 The Partner Entity, upon agreement of the Implementing Entity, submits the full Project Proposal to the Secretariat for further transmittal to the Steering Committee requesting the allocation of GRIF funds to a Project and the corresponding Administrative Fee.

3.12 The Secretariat will post the full Project Proposal on the GRIF website. A minimum period of 20 working days will be allowed for Observer comments, followed by at minimum five working days for Partner Entity and Implementing Entity review of the comments, before a Steering Committee meeting will be held.

3.13 The Partner Entity and Implementing Entity may jointly decide to make modifications to the Project Proposal based on comments received. All comments will be shared by the Secretariat with the Steering Committee Members, Partner Entity and Implementing Entity.

3.14 The Steering Committee will review the Project Proposal to determine whether it is consistent with the GRIF Governance Framework Document requirements for Partner Entity investments and will either allocate GRIF funds to a Project and the corresponding Administrative Fee or send the Project Proposal back to the Partner Entity for revision.

3.15 The Steering Committee will make a decision either at a scheduled Steering Committee meeting or after a minimum of 25 working days from the receipt of the Project Proposal referred to in 3.12, if the decision is being made by electronic communication.

The decision of the Steering Committee will be communicated to the Partner Entity and the Trustee by the Secretariat in writing within five working days. The Secretariat will post the Steering Committee decision on the GRIF website, and make it public through other acceptable public disclosure channels.

STEP 9: Trustee issuance of Letter of Commitment for Project and Corresponding Administrative Fee

3.16 The Trustee will issue a Letter of Commitment for the approved Project and corresponding Administrative Fee, subject to availability of funds.

STEP 10-11: Transfer of funds

3.17 All GRIF-funded Projects are subject to the terms and conditions of the Transfer Agreement between the Trustee and the designated Partner Entity.

3.18 Once the Letter of Commitment has been issued, the Partner Entity may request funds from the Trustee, and the Trustee will transfer those funds to the Partner Entity according to the procedures in Transfer Agreement.

STEP 12. Project Implementation

3.19 Upon approval of a Project Proposal, and if required by the Partner Entity, signing of a Grant Agreement, the Implementing Entity may begin implementation and request disbursements from the Partner Entity as applicable and as provided for in the Project Proposal or Grant Agreement. Project implementation will comply with the policies and procedures of the Partner Entity.

3.20 Procurements by the Partner Entities and Implementing Agencies or any of their attached organizations shall be performed in accordance with internationally accepted procurement principles, good procurement practices and the procurement regulations as applicable to a given Partner Entity. Partner Entities and Implementing Agencies shall observe the highest ethical standards during the procurement and execution of projects and programs.

STEP 13. Supervision and Monitoring

3.21 The Partner Entity will supervise the GRIF financed Projects in accordance with its policies and procedures.

3.22 Implementing Entities and Partner Entities will conduct monitoring according to performance indicators as set out in the Project Proposal and in accordance with the Partner Entities policies and procedures, and submit regular reports to the Steering Committee through the Secretariat on findings as required in the Standard Provisions for the GRIF and Transfer Agreements.

3.23 As specified in the Transfer Agreements, Contributor(s) reserve the right to carry out independent reviews or evaluations of the Projects as and when deemed necessary, the scope and conduct of which shall be agreed between the Contributor(s) and the Partner Entity. The costs for such activities will be covered by the Contributor(s).

STEP 14: Completion

3.24 Partner Entities are required to submit to the Secretariat a post-implementation final report on the Project activities financed by the GRIF within six months after the completion of the Project. The Secretariat will then forward the report to the Steering Committee. Reporting by the Implementing Entity will be according to the policies and procedures of the Partner Entity

C. AMENDING EXISTING PROJECTS

3.25 If an amendment to an existing Project is determined necessary by the Partner Entity and Implementing Entity, changes should comply with the operational policies and procedures of the Partner Entity. Should the changes include modifications to the Project's development objectives and/or extension of the completion date, these changes should be presented to the Steering Committee through the Secretariat for no objection.+

D. DISPUTE SETTLEMENT

3.26 In case of a dispute as to the interpretation, application, or implementation of the Project between a Partner Entity and the Implementing Entity, this should be solved in accordance with the established procedures of the Partner Entity.

3.27 In case of any disputes between the Partner Entity and the Steering Committee, the Partner Entity and the Steering Committee shall use their best efforts to amicably resolve such disputes.

E. WHERE TO SEND A PROJECT PROPOSAL

3.28 Partner Entities should send all PCNs and Project Proposals to:

The GRIF Secretariat

Address: Office of the President, Shiv Chanderpaul Drive, Georgetown, Guyana

Tel: +592 225 8329

Email: lbrown@op.gov.gy

4. REPORTING

Reporting requirements are stipulated in the GRIF Standard Provisions, the GRIF Governance Framework Document and the Transfer Agreements from where the following is extracted :

Partner Entity

4.1 Under the Transfer Agreements, the Partner Entity shall, in accordance with the PEs own reporting formats, report to the Steering Committee, through the Secretariat, annually on the progress of implementation of its activities, results achieved compared to planned results as well as to its contribution to the achievement of the planned results of the GRIF as such and the financial status of Projects and activities under its responsibility. Within six months of the completion date of the Project, the PE will provide the Steering Committee with a final report of such Project

4.2 The Secretariat will post progress reports, annual reports and non-audit quality reports on financial disbursements and results of audits on the GRIF web site, as received from Partner Entities.

Trustee

4.3 The Trustee shall furnish to the Contributors current financial information relating to receipts, disbursements and fund balance of the GRIF in United States dollars as stipulated in the GRIF Standard Provisions of the AA.

Under the requirements of the Administration Agreement, the Trustee shall provide to the Contributors, within six months following the end of each Trustee fiscal year, an annual single audit report, comprising: (a) a management assertion together with an attestation from the Trustee's external auditors concerning the adequacy of internal control over cash-based financial reporting for all cash-based trust funds as a whole; and (b) a combined financial statement for all cash-based trust funds together with the Trustee's external auditor's opinion thereon. The cost of the single audit shall be borne by the Trustee.

If a Contributor wishes to request, on an exceptional basis, a financial statement audit by the Trustee's external auditors of the GRIF, this should be made as stipulated in the AA.

4.4 The Trustee shall furnish the Steering Committee with copies of all unaudited and audited financial reports received from the Partner Entities, and any other relevant financial information received from the Partner Entities.

4.5 The Secretariat will post all unaudited and audited reports received from the Trustee on the GRIF web site.

5. REVIEW OF THE OPERATIONS MANUAL

5.1 **Review of the Operations Manual.** An objective review of this manual will be conducted within the first year of operation and as necessary thereafter. The review will be essential for the purpose of streamlining workflow, avoiding duplications of effort, reflection of the adoption of any new policies and procedures approved by the Steering Committee, compliance with developing requirements of the Government of Guyana, the Contributors, the Trustee, and above all reflecting good management principles for effective operational controls.

5.2 **Amendment of the Operations Manual.** This operations manual may be amended as necessary by the Steering Committee.

6. OVERRIDING AUTHORITY OF THE ADMINISTRATION AGREEMENT, GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK DOCUMENT AND TRANSFER AGREEMENTS

6.1 In the event of any conflict between the Administration Agreements, the Governance Framework Document, or the Transfer Agreements and this Operations Manual, the provisions of those Agreements will prevail.

7. MECHANISM FOR COMMENTS/GRIEVANCES ON THE GRIF

7.1 Comments or grievances to the GRIF related to the approval of projects should be directed to the GRIF Steering Committee through the Secretariat. Comments or grievances which are not related to the process of Project approval, should be directed to the relevant Partner Entity or Implementing Entity and should be handled according to their internal policies and procedures.

8. PROCEDURES FOR PROJECT SUSPENSIONS AND CANCELLATIONS

8.1 Procedures for project cancellations are stipulated in the AA and procedures for project suspension are stipulated in the Transfer Agreements.

ANNEXES

Annex A: GRIF Governance Framework Document
Annex B: Procedures for the Steering Committee Meetings
Annex C: GRIF Results Framework

Annex B: Procedures for the Steering Committee Meetings

The Steering Committee will be chaired by the Government of Guyana, and its decision-making Members will be the Government and the Contributors to the GRIF. Any decision of the Committee will be made by consensus.

The Steering Committee will meet at such frequency as it may decide, but at least once a year. The Steering Committee may, without meeting, review and approve allocation of GRIF funds for Projects and Administrative Fees or Administrative Fees for Project Proposal Preparation, as needed, through means and procedures agreed to in the Operations Manual.

Participation in Steering Committee Meetings:

The Trustee and each of the GRIF Partner Entities will be invited to participate in the Steering Committee as Observers, and will select participants as they deem appropriate. Each Contributor shall nominate two additional Observers, from civil society and/or the private sector. Guyana shall nominate four such Observers, through the Multi-Stakeholder Steering Committee (MSSC) of the LCDS¹. The process for selection of Observers representing civil-society organizations and private sector entities will be at the discretion of the respective Steering Committee Member. No Steering Committee Member can veto Observers nominated by another Steering Committee Member.

Prior to a Steering Committee meeting, the following will occur:

- If a Project is to be reviewed at the meeting, the PCN or full Project Proposal will be posted on the GRIF website and circulated to Steering Committee Members and Observers and to the MSSC, at a minimum of 15 working days in the case of the former and 25 working days in the case of the latter, prior to the meeting.
- The chair of the Steering Committee, through the Secretariat, invites the Steering Committee Members and Observers to a Steering Committee meeting. The Secretariat will give a minimum of five working days notice of a Steering Committee meeting.
- The Secretariat will circulate the meeting agenda, PCNs or full Project Proposals, and all other documents to be considered by the Steering Committee, to Members and Observers at least five working days before the meeting.

¹ If a Project involves or is designed to benefit Amerindian persons the MSSC will ensure that at minimum one nominated Observer will be representative of Amerindian persons

- The MSSC convenes at a minimum of five working days prior to the Steering Committee meeting to discuss their comments and elect the Observers that will represent the MSSC at the Steering Committee meeting.
- Written comments and questions from individual Steering Committee Members or Observers regarding the agenda items and Project Proposals may be submitted to the Secretariat for distribution to the Steering Committee.

Steering Committee review of each issue, PCN or Project Proposal, will be according to the following procedure:

- i. The relevant Partner Entity will present a summary of the PCN or Project Proposal.
- ii. The floor will then open to questions from the Steering Committee Members regarding the Project.
- iii. The Chair will subsequently invite the Observers to the Steering Committee to ask questions or make interventions.
- iv. The Steering Committee will, based on the presentation and the following session of questions and answers, discuss, and decide whether the PCN or Project Proposal will be approved and receive funding as appropriate from GRIF or be returned to the Partner Entity for further work to ensure consistency with the GRIF objectives, terms and conditions.

In the case of a decision to be made by electronic communication:

- After the mandatory period for Observer comments (10 working days in the case of a PCN and 20 working days in the case of a full Project Proposal), the Secretariat shares all comments with the Steering Committee Members and Observers, and the Steering Committee can elect, by consensus, to make a decision by electronic communication.
- The Secretariat notifies the Steering Committee Observers that a decision will be made by electronic communication at least five working days before the decision is made.
- The Steering Committee makes a decision either to approve a PCN or Project Proposal and allocate an Administrative Fee for Project Proposal Preparation or funds for a Project and corresponding Administrative Fee, or to send the PCN or Project Proposal back to the Partner Entity for revision. The Steering Committee communicates its decision to the Secretariat in writing.

After the Steering Committee meeting or decision by electronic communication:

- The Secretariat will circulate a record of decisions no later than five working days after the conclusion of the Steering Committee meeting or decision made by electronic communication to the Steering Committee Members, the Trustee, and Partner Entities.

- The Steering Committee Members will then have five working days to submit any comments on the record of decisions to the Secretariat. If no comments are received from an individual Steering Committee Member, then that Member will be deemed to have no such comments..
- The Secretariat will distribute the record of decisions to the Steering Committee Members and Observers, and post the record of decisions on the GRIF website and make them public through other acceptable public disclosure channels.
- The Secretariat maintains a record of all Steering Committee decisions, ensures that information on GRIF activities is available on a public website and provides information to the public on GRIF activities as directed by the Steering Committee.