

Technical Briefing Session - Meeting No. 2 Multi-Stakeholder Steering Committee (MSSC)

Date: Wednesday, 29th May 2013

Venue: Office of the President

Time: 10:07hrs

Attendance:

Name	Institution
ShyamNokta	Office of the President
KapilMohabir	Office of the President
Shereeda Yusuf	Office of the President
Preeya Rampersaud	Office of the President
Alfred King	Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports
NashetaDewnath	Guyana Forestry Commission
Ashton Simon	The National Amerindian Development Foundation (NADF)
Rommel Simon	The National Amerindian Development Foundation (NADF)
George Norton	Guyanese Organisation of Indigenous People (GOIP)
David Singh	Conservation International (CI)
Charles Hutchinson	World Wildlife Fund (WWF)
Joseph Singh	Individual Capacity
Annette Arjoon-Martins	Individual Capacity
David James	Individual Capacity

Absent/Excused

His Excellency President Ramotar		
Former President Dr. BharratJagdeo	Individual Capacity	Excused
Dr. Roger Luncheon	Office of the President	Excused
Minister Ashni Singh	Ministry of Finance	Excused
Minister Pauline Sukhai	Ministry of Amerindian Affairs	Excused
Minister Leslie Ramsammy	Ministry of Agriculture	Excused
Minister Robert Persaud	Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment	Excused
Andrew Bishop	Office of the President	Excused
James Singh	Guyana Forestry Commission	Excused
PradeepaBholanath	Guyana Forestry Commission	Excused
Colin Klautky	Guyanese Organisation of Indigenous People	Excused
Ronald Webster	Private Sector Commission	Excused
Michael Williams	North Rupununi District Development Board	Excused
Derrick John	National Toshios Council	Excused
Dane Gobin	Iwokrama International Centre	Excused
Paulette Bynoe	University of Guyana	Excused
HilbertusCort	Forest Producers Association	Excused
Raquel Thomas-Caesar	Individual Capacity	Excused
Hymawattie Lagan	Women's Affairs Bureau	Excused
Edward Shields	Guyana Gold and Diamond Miners Association	Absent
Yvonne Pearson	National Toshios Council	Absent
Peter Persaud	The Amerindian Action Movement of Guyana	Absent
Pamela Mendonca	The Amerindian Action Movement of Guyana	Absent
IndarjitRamdass	Environmental Protection Agency	Absent
Rickford Vieira	Guyana Geology and Mines Commission	Absent
Carvil Duncan	Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Guyana	Absent
George Jervis	Ministry of Agriculture	Absent
Gillian Burton	Guyana Trades Union Congress	Absent
Jean La Rose	Amerindian People's Association	Absent by Choice

Invitee

Veetal Rajkumar	Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment
Nikolaus Oudkerk	Office of the President

1. Call to Order

MrShyamNokta called the meeting to order.

2. Opening Remarks

- 2.1 Mr Nokta informed members that the second Technical Briefing Session is to provide additional details on specific issues raised by Members in the statutory MSSC meetings and a follow up to the initial Session held in February 2013. This meeting is intended to update members on the LCDS, its projects and the deliverables under the JCN. It will also update members, on the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment's Strategic Plan.
- 2.2 Members were informed that work is progressing on meeting the requirements under the Revised JCN whereby Guyana's performance will be measured in order to receive the fourth payment from Norway for the reporting period July 2012 to 15 June 2013. The reports to be completed indicating Guyana's performance for the reporting period will not follow the process used previously. It will follow a similar process to the GFC's MRVS reporting process. Consequently, GoG has engaged a private consultancy group, PricewaterhouseCooper (PwC) to assist with the assessment of the JCN indicators.
- 2.3 Mr..Nokta informed Members of the MSSC at the meeting that this second Technical Briefing Session for the MSSC will feature presentations from the Office of Climate Change (OCC), the Project Management Office (PMO) and the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment (MoNRE).

3. Presentations from OCC,PMO and MoNRE

- 3.1 OCC presented a brief update on the progressto date on the implementation of the 23 JCN deliverables as reported at monthly meetings with a team of representative from the Government of Norway.
- 3.2 The PMO's presentation provided updates and status reports on the six priority projects under the LCDS. Mention was made to the new project areas identified in the LCDS Update and these concepts are being explored.
- 3.3 The MoNRE's presentation on its Strategic Plan 2013 – 2018 was requested at the statutory MSSC Meeting No. 53. The presentation highlighted key aspects of the Strategic Plan, which was a landmark decision to bring agencies under one umbrella Ministry to facilitate better collaboration and coordination of the agencies.
- 3.4 Mr.Nokta opened the floor for questions and comments.

4. Question and Answer Segment

The Presentations

- 4.1 Enquiry was made as to whether the presentations will be available on the LCDS website. It was replied that the presentations can be shared with the MSSC. But, the MoNRE's Strategic Plan is available on the MoNRE's website and is still open for comments.

Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF)

- 4.2 It was pointed out that several processes related to REDD+ are occurring in parallel – in particular, the engagements for FCPF which commenced before the LCDS. The question was raised on the level of integration of these and how the FCPF funds, when materialise, will be used. It was stated that the FCPF started before the agreement with Norway and since then no funds have been disbursed to Guyana. Guyana is the first country to have had its RPP approved but even though large sums of money are available they have not been disbursed from FCPF. However, the process has been useful in defining Guyana's strategic framework to be incorporated within the LCDS. Efforts are being made to ensure that there is no duplication of the FCPF and the LCDS activities.
- 4.3 Members were updated that significant progress has been made on the MRVS and reference level without funding from FCPF. It was pointed out that the GFC is becoming less dependent on funding

from the FCPF as there has been implementation of other aspects with assistance from other initiatives such as the Guiana Shield Facility to support the preparation of the REDD+ Strategy.

4.4 Enquiry was made on whether the FCPF funds will be available after the agreement with Norway expires in 2015 so that there is continuity of the projects.

It was replied that the FCPF started in 2007 and no funds have been received to date. GoG would like to be optimistic that Norway will commit to a second agreement. Also, other bilateral arrangements are being explored. In spite of the bleak financial outlook of the EU, some countries have expressed positive interest in the LCDS such as Germany. Bringing new partners on board strengthens the LCDS model. Hence, in the interim of the 2020 globally binding agreement from the Durban negotiations, other bilateral agreements and initiatives will be explored.

MoNRE's Strategic Plan

4.5 Enquiry was made on whether other Ministries will provide MoNRE with their strategic visions and actions up to 2017 so that MoNRE will be able to make informed decisions without duplication or overlapping activities.

It was replied that the MoNRE will have a centralised database that will draw on spatial coverage from the agencies that fall under the Ministry such as Guyana Lands and Survey Commission.

4.6 Suggestion was made for a technical forum to be held for persons with knowledge in the various agencies to present to other agencies representatives so that all is aware of what is going on, for instance, where are we with IIRSA¹ and recently the Del Conte trail which is not seen on any map. This is in reference to the announcement of the reopening of the Del Conte trail for agricultural purposes.

It was replied that with respect to specific projects, there is a comprehensive approval process that takes many factors into consideration. These projects would require feasibility and other technical studies whereby other agencies would have to be engaged. These would have also been captured under National Land Use planning process. However, there is clearly a need for more information sharing among agencies.

4.7 Report was given that MoNRE's Strategic Plan is heavily dependent on information sharing among agencies. Strategic priorities and specific activities with other agencies outside MoNRE will need to be identified. It is expected that there will be a Planning Unit within the Ministry that will identify these priorities.

Mining Studies

4.8 Enquiry was made on whether there are baseline studies on mining and mercury especially in hinterland regions.

It was replied that there are some baseline studies for specific mining areas..

4.9 Mention was made that the WWF signed a project for USD12 million with the MNRE to among other things focus on building capacity in environmental management in the mining sector and training key stakeholders to transition to mercury-free mining in Guyana.

4.10 The meeting was informed that information is available from the Ministry of Health on the various mercury studies that were conducted in collaboration with PAHO. Information could be obtained from the Chief Medical Officer.

4.11 In addition, a number of doctoral studies were conducted on specific mercury issues in Guyana. These could be made available to the OCC to be circulated to members.

LCDS Projects

Conservancy Adaptation Project (Cunha Canal)

¹ Initiative for the Integration of the Regional Infrastructure of South America (IIRSA)

- 4.12 Enquiry was made on whether there was an assessment done for determining the Cunha Canal as the best conservancy adaptation project for East Demerara.
Response was made that the initial decision to choose Cunha Canal was determined before the data was available through the World Bank Study which presented other canals as better alternatives.

New LCDS Projects

- 4.13 Clarification was sought on the new projects areas identified within the LCDS Update.
Reply was given that some of these projects' areas are climate resilience and eco-tourism. Infrastructure and early warning systems are part of the climate resilience package that is being identified for the second wave of LCDS projects. Work will be done with the line agencies such the Civil Defence Commission and Ministry of Trade, Industry and Commerce. The projects are only in its conceptual stage. The OCC is in contact with the Guyana Tourism Authority regarding eco-tourism ventures.

Amaila Falls Hydroelectric Project

- 4.14 Mention was made that there will be new legislation regarding some aspects of the Amaila Falls Hydroelectric Project. Suggestion was made for work to commence as soon as possible for the new legislation to be in place so that the project is not stalled.

Amerindian Land Titling (ALT)

- 4.15 The issue of the mining interpretation was raised. Members were informed that stemmed from misinformation. The process is the same as specified within the Amerindian Act (2006) and not a new process.

- 4.16 Concern was raised that media reports have stated that there was a formal objection to the ALT project and the UN system had viewed the project with alarm.
It was replied that the ALT project document was submitted to the UN Headquarters and has been received without any issues. The project is now moving forward.

Projects' Statuses

- 4.17 Enquiry was made on the statuses of the ALT and the Amerindian Development Fund (ADF) in relation to the LCDS budget cuts.
Response was given that the budget cuts reduced the financing available for the implementation of the projects, which goes beyond financing the equity for the Amaila Falls Hydroelectric project. The funds approved by Parliament are insufficient for the projects so there is need for supplemental budget or a positive ruling of the Chief Justice.

- 4.18 Report was given that there is still need for clarifying to the Opposition and the public that the budget cut is not GYD 19 billion for Amaila Falls project and the remaining GYD 1 billion for the other projects. The equity for Amaila Falls is approximately GYD 16 billion and the remaining GYD 4 billion was allotted for the other projects.
It was replied that the budget cuts have gone beyond the Amaila Falls and will affect the other LCDS projects.

Opt-In Mechanism for Amerindian Communities

- 4.19 The meeting was informed that there has been much time spent on clarifying issues relating to the Opt-In Mechanism for Amerindian Communities. The LCDS has clearly indicated that the Opt-In process will follow international guidelines such as the Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) as enshrined in the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The concept paper of the Opt-In is good but there is need for a bottom up approach to be used rather than a top down approach when developing the Opt-In Mechanism.

- 4.20 Members were notified that work is still being done for the Opt-In Mechanism. The process is complex since there is no similar project available to reference. However, the process for the

mechanism is expected to follow a similar process adopted by GoG in its agreement with Norway. The performance indicators and payment scheme still need to be determined so options and scenarios are currently being developed. It is expected that by June 2013, there will be a draft available of the Opt-In Mechanism and this will be circulated to the MSSC for review.

- 4.21 Request was made for preference to be given to the Wai Wai community as they have submitted their written consent to opting-in.
- 4.22 The meeting was informed that the Wai Wai community have asked whether the calculation of payments will be made based on the percentage of forests the community owns or assessment of forest carbon stored. They have also asked whether their community can be earmarked as a Protected Area. Therefore, it is critical that communities fully understand what it means to opt-in.
- 4.23 Members were updated that there is an interesting project on MRVS in the North Rupununi (NR) with support from the Global Canopy Programme (GCP). The project has just completed its first year and the sixteen communities from NR have completed their baseline studies, which were well received. WWF is expected to receive some NORAD funding as well as part of a bigger WWF programme that supports forest carbon initiatives worldwide. Some of this funding is expected to be used in Guyana where the WWF will attempt to take the process that has been developed in NR and transfer the lessons and experiences to the Wai Wais. This can be an important step for the Wai Wai community to understand the whole process and to obtain their baseline data.

Newspaper Article

- 4.24 Clarification was sought on the Kaieteur newspaper article on 28th May 2013 that states forestry concession has been granted to Chinese company, Bai Shan Lin, totalling approximately one million hectares of rainforest. The article also states that the company has been granted permission mine a 20-kilometre stretch of river for gold. It was replied that the MoNRE has no knowledge of this transaction.

MRVS

- 4.25 Enquiry was made to the extent the GFC is less reliant on consultants for the operationalisation of the MRVS. Response was given that the MRVS process is guided by its roadmap. Winrock is still the consultant for the MRVS implementation however; GFC staff has been integrally involved in each step of the process since its inception. They can do most of the work without external assistance and it is expected that they continue with the intention to be self-sufficient in the near future.

5. Recommendations

Wealth Fund

- 5.1 It was recommended that we consider establishing a wealth fund using some of the earnings from mining – to instil some degree of confidence that there will not be a hindrance to the continuance of the LCDS after the agreement with Norway expires. Funds from mining sector can be placed in escrow in case there are any problems acquiring funds from external sources.
- 5.2 It was recommended that the MoNRE consider increasing the amount of the environmental bond for miners, which is extremely low at the moment. Many miners are not operating in a responsible way and if the GGMC issues charges, the bonds are not sufficient to cover the damages caused. The GGMC should organise a workshop inviting stakeholders, so that they are part of the process, to demonstrate the high cost of rehabilitation and restoration of mining areas against the insufficient amount of money received from the bonds.
- 5.3 The meeting was informed that Conservation International-Guyana has established a 'Conservation Trust Fund using funds from CI and the German Government. These funds are invested with a 7 percent return on the investment, which is significantly higher than commercial banks' rates. The GoG can invest in a similar fund with monies received from the mining sector..

5.4 It was reported that GoG financed its green growth when the LCDS was launched and garnered support from its agreement with Norway. The idea to mobilise finances through a Wealth Fund is a good one and the main goal is for GoG to not lose momentum in the implementation of the LCDS, so these options will be considered.

6. Close

The meeting closed at 11:35 hrs.

End of Minutes