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**Verification
Of Progress Related To
Indicators For The
Guyana-Norway REDD+ Agreement**

**2nd Verification audit covering the period
October 1, 2010 – June 30, 2012**

FINAL REPORT

Date of Report: December 16, 2012

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACRONYMS.....	3
1 SUMMARY OF AUDIT PROCESS, FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS.....	5
2 INTRODUCTION	10
2.1 Background.....	10
2.2 Contractual Arrangement.....	11
2.3 Objective of the Verification	11
2.4 Scope of the Verification.....	11
2.5 Indicators for Verification of Enabling Activities.....	12
2.6 Procedures for Confidentiality, Conflict of Interest and Complaints, Appeals, and Dispute Resolution	12
3 VERIFICATION PROCESS.....	13
3.1 Description of Verification Audit Process	13
3.2 Verification Approach	15
3.3 Audit Team.....	16
3.4 Audit Schedule	17
3.5 Persons Interviewed	18
3.6 Stakeholder Comments	19
4 PARTIAL LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED	22
5 VERIFICATION OF INDICATORS	22
ANNEX 1 Public Notice	

ACRONYMS

ALT	Amerindian Land Titling Project
APA	Amerindian Peoples Association
CI	Conservation International
COI	Conflict of Interest
CIFOR	Center for International Forestry Research
CMRV	Community Monitoring, Reporting and Verification
DTC	District Tshao Council
EFI	European Forestry Institute
EITI	Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
ESIA	Environmental and Social Impact Assessment
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FCPF	Forest Carbon Partnership Facility
FLEGT	Forest Law Enforcement, Government and Trade
FPA	Forest Products Association
FPIC	Free prior and informed consent
GEA	Guyana Energy Agency
GEF	Global Environment Fund
GFC	Guyana Forestry Commission
GGDMA	Guyana Gold & Diamond Miners Association
GGMC	Guyana Geology & Mines Commission
GHRA	Guyana Human Rights Association
GL&SC	Guyana Lands & Surveys Commission
GMTCS	Guyana Marine Turtle Conservation Society
GoG	Government of Guyana
GoN	Government of Norway
GOIP	Guyana Organisation of Indigenous People
GPAS	Guyana Protected Areas System
GRIF	Guyana REDD+ Investment Fund
ICT	Information, Communications and Technology
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
IPC	Indigenous Peoples Commission
IPCC GPGs	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Good Practice Guidelines
IWG-IFR	Informal Working Group on Interim Finance for REDD
KfW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau German Development Bank
JCN	Joint Concept Note
LCDS	Low Carbon Development Strategy
LULUCF	Land Use Land Use Change & Forestry
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoAA	Ministry of Amerindian Affairs
MoNRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MP	Member of Parliament
MRVS	Monitoring Reporting & Verification System
MSSC	Multi Stakeholder Steering Committee
NADF	National Amerindian Development Foundation
NCC	National Climate Committee
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NPAS	National Protected Areas System
NPATF	National Protected Areas Trust Fund
NPC	National Parks Commission
NRDDB	North Rupununi District Development Board
NRWG	National REDD+ Working Group

NTC	National Toshios' Council
OCC	Office of Climate Change
OP	Office of the President
OPRG	Office of the President, Republic of Guyana
PA	Protected Areas
PAC	Protected Areas Commission
PMO	Project Management Office
PoWPA	Programme of Work on Protected Areas
PS	Permanent Secretary
RA	Rainforest Alliance
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation & Forest Degradation + (and includes the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks)
RGDP	REDD+ Governance Development Plan
R-PP	Readiness Preparation Proposal
RS	REDD Secretariat
SESA	Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
SLUC	Strategic Land Use Committee
TAAMOG	The Amerindian Action Movement of Guyana
ToR	Terms of Reference
UG	University of Guyana
UNCBD	United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
VPA	Voluntary Partnership Agreement
WB	World Bank
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

1.0 SUMMARY OF AUDIT PROCESS, FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS

Overall Finding on Guyana Performance to meet REDD+ Enabling Indicators

The dominant impression from this audit, based on inputs from all interested parties, is one of frustration and disappointment that more progress has not occurred on a number of the Joint Concept Note (JCN) enabling indicators. In particular, the Guyana REDD-Plus Investment Fund (GRIF) funding mechanism has, to date, moved so slowly that the delivery of sufficient funds to Guyana has been delayed, causing delayed implementation of important activities and a serious degree of skepticism among target beneficiaries and collaborating entities of all kinds. Though some agencies, e.g. Guyana Forest Commission (GFC), have managed to find creative solutions to resource shortages, overall there is a high degree of frustration with progress on the JCN from multiple perspectives. Based on evidence reviewed it appears that there is a shared responsibility amongst various parties for these delays.

On the positive side, there have been areas of strong performance in terms of independent forest monitoring (IFM), the Forest Law Enforcement, Government and Trade process on forest legality (FLEGT), the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), and inter-sectoral coordination on land use issues, including mining, forestry and land use planning through the new Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment (MoNRE). Some projects are also starting to move forward - the Amerindian Land Titling Project (through partner entity United Nations Development Program, UNDP) and the Institutional Strengthening Project (through partner entity, Inter-American Development Bank, IDB).

In addition to the delay in funding described above, there has also been a noticeable reduction in the efforts by the Government of Guyana (GoG) to communicate and consult with stakeholders. Amerindian communities are particularly concerned about the lack of information available to them in regards to their many questions about the REDD+ activities, and the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) more generally. They are also concerned about the absence of a consistent, ongoing and robust approach or framework for interactions between the Government of Guyana (GoG) and Amerindian communities (whether for the purposes of information exchange, consultation on actions or decision-making). Though improving the quality and quantity of Internet-based information could be a useful tool for improving the situation, and the JCN stipulates that the Internet should be used for reporting on the GRIF, etc., there is an over-reliance on the part of the GoG on the use of the Internet as the principle tool for information sharing and transparency, particularly as a tool for interaction with hinterland Amerindian communities. This audit also identified significant concern regarding information sharing and transparency even on the part of individuals and organizations that strongly support the JCN, LCDS and REDD+ efforts, including members of the Multi-Stakeholder Steering Committee (MSSC).

Several important events have taken place in Guyana since the first Rainforest Alliance verification audit in October 2010. Elections took place in November 2011. The Peoples Progressive Party retained power with the largest number of seats, holding 32 out of 65 seats and a new President took office as the Head of the Government (Guyana's Executive Branch). The combined Opposition parties gained a one-seat majority (33 seats) in the National Assembly (Guyana's Legislative Branch) and formed a Partnership for National Unity. In April, 2012, the combined Opposition partnership used their one-seat majority in the National Assembly to reduce the 2012 budget for green projects under Guyana's LCDS from approximately GY\$18 billion to GY\$1. The functioning of several Government entities, including the Office of the President and the Office of Climate Change (OCC) was affected. Shortly after the election, the President set up a new Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment (MoNRE) to provide Cabinet-level policy integration on issues regarding land use.

Following are summary conclusions for each of the 10 enabling indicators examined by the RA verification team during this audit. The team found that three of the 10 indicators are met; four are partially met; and three are not met.

Specific Audit Conclusions

Verification Indicator 1: Transparent and effective multi-stakeholder consultations continue and evolve.

Audit Conclusion

At the time of the audit in July 2012, the MSSC was not an effective mechanism for regular communication and consultation between “all stakeholders” interested in the LCDS and REDD+ activities as envisioned in the JCN. It had met only once in the last eleven months of the audit period. This is not consistent with the Terms of Reference for the MSSC or with the revised JCN (March 2011). In addition, the recent action of the MSSC led by the representatives of the government ministries and agencies on the MSSC to criticize the action by the combined opposition parties in the National Assembly¹ to reduce the budget from GY\$18 billion to GY\$1 appears to have created a more partisan, political role for the MSSC that compromises its ability to be a non-partisan forum for consultation and deliberation reflecting national interests. This action, which appears to have been led by political and technical government representatives on the MSSC, is not consistent with the JCN reference to a “representative multi-stakeholder steering committee” reflecting the views of all stakeholders in Guyana.

The MSSC is intended to be a forum to bring together representatives of government and civil society and does bring together a wide variety of interests and provides them with a forum to interact with government and, in concept, could serve an important function. However, given the absence of meetings, it is not fulfilling that role. The team notes that when MSSC meetings were regularly being held, the OCC did a good job of providing full summaries of the MSSC meetings in a transparent way. However, in the absence of meetings, there is presently little to no functional transparency, as no meeting summaries have been posted during the audit period since the July 2011 meeting.

The Indicator is not met.

Verification Indicator 2: Participation of all affected and interested stakeholders at all stages of REDD+/LCDS process.

Audit Conclusion

The verification team concludes that the GoG, partner entities UNDP and IDB, and members of the MSSC did conduct a variety of stakeholder awareness activities during this evaluation period. The government has disseminated information primarily by means of mass media (TV, radio, internet) and with the notable inclusion of climate change in the primary school curriculum. Partner entities also implemented required consultation as part of project development efforts. However, during this audit period government officials made few visits to forest-dependent Amerindian villages in the hinterlands, according to the government largely due to lack of funding. The team notes that the consultations and awareness-raising documents and events that were undertaken to meet this indicator, including some done by members of the MSSC, were done without any funds from the GRIF. The OCC, MSSC, NGOs, the partner entities (UNDP and IDB) and certain individuals met with and otherwise reached out at times to stakeholder groups to attempt to undertake a broad consultation process in the absence of support from the GoG/GoN funds. Nonetheless, the scale of

¹ The combined opposition parties opposed the government’s proposed budget for LCDS activities and voted to reduce the budget to GY \$1.

this process was not sufficiently effective and the level of frustration is high, and good information is significantly lacking in most, if not all, of the Amerindian communities visited.

This Indicator is partially met. Participation, consultation and feedback from all affected and interested stakeholders, and specifically from Amerindian communities, as articulated in the JCN, were not effectively enabled during this evaluation period.

Verification Indicator 3: Protection of the rights of indigenous peoples.

Audit Conclusion

The verification team concludes that during this audit period, the GoG has failed to consistently “enable the effective participation and engagement of indigenous peoples” or effectively “enable indigenous communities to...opt in.” Multiple stakeholders indicate that the GoG has failed to document and address land titling concerns of many Amerindian communities within the time frame established by the Amerindian Act. Attention to, and negotiation over, untitled community lands and extensions appears to have stalled. Several cases make it clear that FPIC has been lacking in the REDD+/LCDS process, particularly with respect to territorial rights and the REDD+ opt-in process that will soon be available to forest-dependent Amerindian communities. The opt-in mechanism appears to suffer because of a lack of understanding by the very people who need to make a decision on how to proceed. Finally, many indigenous people feel that their voices are not heard, particularly with respect to land rights, and that their views are not adequately represented in the LCDS process or under the current composition and operations of the MSSC.

The indicator is not met.

Verification Indicator 4: Transparent and accountable oversight and governance of the financial support.

Audit Conclusion

The Guyana REDD+ Investment Fund (GRIF) mechanism is now in place and there has been some progress in improving the flow of GRIF resources. Some projects are finally moving forward. However, the flow of GRIF investment funds into Guyana continues to be slow and this is undermining support for and understanding of the REDD+ initiative. Some community level beneficiaries, including some of the Amerindian communities spoken with during this audit, are supportive of the concept of LCDS and some specific elements of REDD+, but are increasingly skeptical that resources will be forthcoming. External review of GRIF performance by the Meridian Institute occurred in 2011. There was also an external evaluation of the LCDS initiative in Guyana led by LTS International, commissioned by the GoN, which provided recommendations for improved functioning of the GRIF (and other LCDS actions). An active dialogue on potential changes within the GRIF implementing agencies (GoG, UNDP, IDB and GoN) is ongoing but the results of this review have not been incorporated into GRIF management to date and contemplated changes have not been shared publicly. Alternative mechanisms to support pilot or other activities (e.g. alternative funding that was obtained to support Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC) work on Integrated Forest Monitoring or IFM) were positively received by some stakeholders and the suggestion was made that more intensive use of such alternatives be considered, at the same time that partner entities and the GoN continue to implement carefully the safeguards that are required for GRIF project implementation. With regard to GRIF transparency, the GoG approach to information transparency to date has largely relied on use of the Internet with increasing amounts of information being provided there. Continued use of the Internet is indeed part of the expectations under the JCN, and enhancements in the quality, quantity and timeliness of information are expected in the near future and would be welcomed by all interested parties. However, based on interactions with stakeholders, it appears clear that the Internet should not be

the only vehicle for communication, and dependency on the Internet as the principal vehicle for GRIF transparency and accountable oversight is not likely to be successful, particularly for interactions with Amerindian communities in the hinterland.

This indicator is partially met.

Verification Indicator 5: Initial structure for the Independent Forest Monitoring (IFM).

Audit Conclusion:

The verification team concludes that the structure for an IFM mechanism is now in place. It was not in place by mid-2011 as identified in the revised JCN, but the failure to meet this timeline was a result of delays in the funding mechanisms, not the fault of the GFC. The GFC has been diligent and creative in making arrangements to undertake the development of a robust forest monitoring mechanism as quickly as possible, and has completed that task. The first audit was not completed by the end of 2011 as identified in the revised JCN, but is expected to be completed well before the end of 2012.

The team notes that the current scope for the IFM Criteria for Monitoring is limited to Timber Sale Agreements, Wood Cutting Leases, and State Forest Permissions on state forest land and state land and all transport of logs and lumber. The IFM Criteria do include provisions for Amerindian lands but these are not yet applicable because Amerindian communities have not yet “opted-in” to the LCDS.

This indicator is met.

Verification Indicator 6: Continuing stakeholder consultation on the European Union Forest Law Enforcement, Government and Trade (EU-FLEGT) process.

Audit Conclusion

The verification team concludes that stakeholder consultation on Guyana participation in an EU-FLEGT process continued throughout the audit period. This consultation was effective in communicating information and was successful in obtaining input and comments from stakeholder organizations, including Amerindian organizations. The consultation process led to a decision by the GoG to initiate negotiations on a Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA). Although this was not completed by September 2011 as identified in the Joint Concept Note, it was completed by the end of the audit period in June 2012. (Note: A video conference was held in July 2012 and the negotiation process appears to have been initiated.)

The verification team notes that the consultation undertaken to meet this indicator was done without any funds from the GRIF. The GFC was creative in undertaking partnerships with other institutions (EFI and FAO) and stakeholder groups (FPA) to undertake a broad consultation process in the absence of support from the GoG/GoN funds through the GRIF.

This indicator is met.

Verification Indicator 7: Continuing development of a national inter-sectoral system for coordinated land use.

Audit Conclusion

The verification team concludes that progress on this indicator has occurred based on interviews and the documentation reviewed. However, the JCN states that “Key measures to be implemented by the end of 2011 will on that basis be agreed by the partners by mid November 2011 as an addendum to this JCN.” Though no addendum to the JCN has yet been produced, the main

concern is that a “plan for implementation of necessary measures” with contributions from the forest-dependent sectors has not been produced as required in the JCN. Also, given the important contribution/role that the forest-dependent Amerindian sector plays in land use, again per the language in the JCN, it will be critical for the MoNRE to act on this sector’s involvement in the SLUC.

This Indicator is partially met.

Verification Indicator 8: Continuing stakeholder consultation on the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI).

Audit Conclusion

The verification team concludes that the EITI initiative is moving forward though not at a pace conforming to the schedules built into the revised JCN. An MoU between EITI and the GoG has been signed and follow-up is in progress. However, similar to the challenges related to other indicators in the JCN, the GoG has a major challenge in organizing multi-stakeholder interaction as required by the EITI. This makes progress on the EITI challenging since the EITI approach has clear process steps that must be followed, as articulated in the MoU.

This Indicator is partially met.

Verification Indicator 9: Measures by the GoG to work with forest dependent sectors to agree on specific measures to reduce forest degradation.

Audit Conclusion

The verification team concludes that the GoG has not undertaken the type of work during this time period to both agree upon specific measures to reduce forest degradation associated with mining to meet this indicator in the revised JCN, particularly in terms of working with the forest dependent sectors to identify and then implement agreed upon actions. The scientific studies referred to in the revised JCN were delayed, but it is evident from the 2009 benchmark study, the 2011 Year 1 performance report and the data from the draft 2012 Year 2 performance report that mining is the primary driver of forest degradation, accountable for up to 97% of all forest degradation. In order to meet this Indicator, work based on specific measures agreed upon with the forest dependent sectors was necessary. Mere reliance on the existence of laws or policies related to the sector as evidence of actions does not address the expectations new strategies developed in cooperation with forest dependent sectors per the JCN.

This indicator is not met.

Verification Indicator 10: Mapping of priority areas for biodiversity in Guyana forests.

Audit Conclusion

The verification team concludes that mapping of priority areas for biodiversity in Guyana’s forests, based on the criteria established in 2010, continued throughout the audit period. A policy statement on National Protected Areas was made by the Minister of Natural Resources and the Environment in June 2012. This is seven months later than the mid-November 2011 timeline of the revised JCN indicator, but is within the scope of this verification audit and meets the indicator. Guyana is currently at the 8% land cover mark for protected areas – towards the goal of 17% of the country’s surface area by 2020 - to meet this UNCBD obligation. The Strategic Strategy for Natural Resources is a document in progress under the MoNRE.

The verification team notes that there were delays in the process, specifically that an addendum to the JCN was not agreed on by mid-November 2011, as stipulated in this enabling indicator, nor has it been agreed on as of June 30, 2012, the end of this audit period. Importantly, it is also noted that GoG efforts made to meet this indicator were undertaken without any funds from the GRIF. Financing was provided largely by GEF, KfW and CI in the absence of support from the GoG/GoN funds. Funding to local NGOs to carry out biodiversity-related work (e.g., inventories, education) was provided by various international cooperative institutions.

The indicator is met.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

On November 9th, 2009, the Government of Guyana (GoG) and the Government of Norway (GoN) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) regarding co-operation on issues related to the fight against climate change, in particular issues concerning reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries (REDD+), the protection of biodiversity and enhancement of sustainable low carbon development. The MoU committed Norway to providing financial support of up to US\$250 million by 2015 for results achieved by Guyana in limiting emissions from deforestation and forest degradation.

An accompanying 2009 Joint Concept Note (JCN) set out the framework for taking the Guyana-Norway co-operation forward. In March, 2011, both parties felt that considerable progress had been made in the Guyana-Norway co-operation and in other related international efforts. Thus, the 2009 JCN was revised on March 31, 2011 to incorporate the progress and to set out two sets of indicators – indicators of enabling activities and indicators of REDD+ performance – against which the delivery of results would be measured and verified. The indicators identify a series of benchmarks and timelines for continuing progress on Guyana’s part to implement the MoU.

Part of the revised JCN (2011) provides for annual independent third party verification of the progress against the enabling and performance indicators to be conducted by one or more neutral expert organizations to be jointly appointed by Norway and Guyana.

Rainforest Alliance Inc. (RA) was selected by Norway and Guyana in 2009 to assess performance against some of the indicators of enabling activities and REDD+ performance. Other independent bodies (including the GFA Consulting Group and Det Norske Veritas) have also been retained to assess performance against other indicators. RA conducted a first verification audit in October 2010 to assess the performance to meet indicators established in the original 2009 JCN in the period between November 1, 2009 and September 30, 2010.

RA undertook this second verification audit in July 2012 to assess performance against 10 verification indicators derived from the indicators established in the revised version of the JCN (March, 2011). RA was not able to conduct review of the indicator which states: “*Development of an IPCC-compliant national system for measuring, reporting and verification (MRV) of emissions and removals of carbon in Guyana’s forests will continue. Progress in 2011 will be measured against the MRV-roadmap established in 2009.*” The GoN wanted a non-technical process focused assessment of this indicator but the RA team was not able to conduct this and the RA team leader has suggested this should be covered in a subsequent audit. It should also be noted that the review of Indicator 4 related to transparent and accountable oversight and governance of the GRIF did not cover the GRIF’s legal and financial structures – something that is being reviewed by both governments separately.

2.2 Contractual Arrangement

RA undertook this second verification under an extension to the contract initially signed with the Ministry of the Environment (MoE) of the Government of Norway (GoN) on October 13, 2010.

RA was notified by the MoE about the need to undertake a second verification on March 12, 2012. RA submitted a proposal to the Norway Ministry of the Environment on May 28, 2012. Following receipt of comments from Norway on June 8, 2012 which incorporated comments from the Government of Guyana (GoG), RA submitted a revised proposal for the work on June 12, 2012.

During a conference call on June 14, 2012 representatives of the GoN and RA discussed further revisions and made additional changes to the proposal. The GoN advised RA on that date to proceed to make travel arrangements and to commence detailed planning to undertake the verification in the period July 3 to 15, 2012.

RA has no other contracts with the Norway MoE. RA has received funds from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) for sustainable landscape work in Ghana, West Africa. The two contractual award processes are independent and Norway's final decision to award work to RA in these two cases was made by two different agencies.

2.3 Objective of the Verification

As described in the RA proposal, the objective of the verification is "to produce a report to verify the content of Guyana's reports stating its performance according to the enabling activities under the Guyana-Norway partnership on REDD+, hereunder an assessment of whether the enabling activities have been conducted as described in the Joint Concept Note (JCN)".

2.4 Scope of the Verification

This second verification audit was originally planned to cover the period between October 1, 2010 (the end of the time period of the first verification) and December 31, 2011. However, a number of important activities occurred since December 2011 and the GoG provided information to the team and the GoN about those activities. Thus the RA team, with agreement from both the GoN and the GoG, has extended the audit period to include the period between January and June 2012. This report therefore assesses performance to address indicators set out in the revised JCN (2011) in an audit period from October 1, 2010 to June 30, 2012. The in-country portion of the audit was conducted between July 3 and July 15, 2012.²

The scope of this verification audit is confined to assessment of activities performed in relation to 10 performance verification indicators derived from the indicators of enabling activities and indicators of REDD+ performance in the revised JCN (2011). The ten indicators are identified in Section 2.5 below.

The scope of the audit does not include assessment of REDD+ performance indicators related to measurement of deforestation or degradation or the determination of the greenhouse gas emissions avoided. These are the subject of separate audit processes being conducted by other consulting firms contracted through the GoN and the GFC.

² GoG has advised the RA team that it has, since the end of the audit period on June 30, 2012, initiated actions to address some of the issues raised in this report. The GoG provided the auditors with a draft self-assessment and action plan document. This is a positive initiative. However, the audit period ended on June 30 and the RA team is unable to verify or address actions taken or documents created after that date.

2.5 Indicators for Verification of Enabling and Performance Activities

The Indicators used in this verification include both enabling indicators and performance indicators developed in the revised JCN (2011). They are consistent with the four enabling indicators and six of the seven REDD+ performance indicators identified in Section 2.1 and Table 1 of the revised JCN (2011). These indicators relate to stakeholder consultation and participation (Indicators 1 and 2); protection of rights of indigenous peoples (Indicator 3); oversight and governance of the financial support (Indicator 4); and improved REDD governance in relation to six key activities (Indicators 5 through 10) identified in Table 1 of the revised JCN (2011).

The indicators were developed in the RA proposal of May 25, 2012 and were subsequently reviewed and revised by RA based on written and verbal comments received from the Norway Ministry of Environment in June 2012. A summary of the indicators was included in the Public Notice for the verification which was posted on June 15, 2012 (See Annex 1). The full text of each indicator is provided below in each relevant section of this report. Following are the titles used for indicator reporting purposes:

Verification Indicator 1: Transparent and effective multi-stakeholder consultations continue and evolve.

Verification Indicator 2: Participation of all affected and interested stakeholders at all stages of the REDD+/LCDS process.

Verification Indicator 3: Protection of the rights of indigenous peoples.

Verification Indicator 4: Transparent and accountable oversight and governance of the financial support.

Verification Indicator 5: Initial structure for the Independent Forest Monitoring (IFM).

Verification Indicator 6: Continuing stakeholder consultation on the European Union Forest Law Enforcement, Government and Trade (EU-FLEGT) process.

Verification Indicator 7: Continuing development of a national inter-sectoral system for coordinated land use.

Verification Indicator 8: Continuing stakeholder consultation on the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI).

Verification Indicator 9: Measures by the GoG to work with forest dependent sectors to agree on specific measures to reduce forest degradation.

Verification Indicator 10: Mapping of priority areas for biodiversity in Guyana forests.

2.6 Procedures for Confidentiality, Conflict of Interest and Complaints, Appeals, and Dispute Resolution

Rainforest Alliance has procedures in place for:

- Maintaining confidentiality of information sources;
- Identifying real and potential conflicts of interest (COI) and assuring an audit free from COI issues; and,
- Addressing complaints, appeals, and disputes.

These policies and procedures build on RA's experience as an independent auditor and certifier since 1987 and follow accreditation requirements which are monitored by the programs to which RA is accredited (e.g. Forest Stewardship Council, American National Standards Institute, etc.).

This verification audit was carried out to allow for an open and transparent process that would also seek to ensure the ability of stakeholders to provide comments to the verification team freely and in confidence if they wished. This was achieved by making public notification of the audit, while at the same time ensuring complete confidentiality of individuals providing comments and inputs when requested. Confidentiality has been applied as the basic principle for stakeholder communication and reporting of comments and inputs. Comments received by the verification team have been treated as confidential unless the person providing the comment specifically requested to be mentioned by name.

In addition, staff and consultants working for Rainforest Alliance are required to declare in writing a disclosure of any potential sources of COI.

RA also has procedures for complaints, appeals, and dispute resolution. If RA or its clients encounter organizations or individuals having concerns or comments about RA and its services, those parties are encouraged to contact RA directly with their concerns. Formal complaints or concerns should be sent in writing, at the same time providing credible evidence related to their concerns. The RA policy for handling such complaints, related appeals, and disputes are found at http://www.rainforest-alliance.org/forestry.cfm?id=dispute_resolution.

3.0 VERIFICATION PROCESS

3.1 Description of the Verification Audit Process

Public Notice

On June 15, 2012, immediately upon receiving confirmation from GoN in regard to this verification audit, RA began to distribute a public notification by e-mail to a variety of stakeholders inside and outside Guyana (Annex 1). The notice provided details about the verification team, the timetable, the ten indicators being verified, and the means to contact RA to provide input. The notice stated that the verification team planned to meet with individuals, organizations and Amerindian communities particularly in the interior of Guyana. At the request of RA, the GoN and GoG also distributed the notice to their stakeholder contact lists. The notice requested that other parties (e.g. international agencies, NGOs, etc.) distribute the notice to anyone else who might be interested.

Notification was published in two Guyana newspapers – the Guyana Chronicle on Tuesday, June 26 and the Stabroek News on Wednesday, June 27.

Also upon receiving confirmation from GoN, the RA verification team immediately began to prepare to undertake fieldwork and consultation with stakeholders in Georgetown and in communities in the Guyana hinterland. These plans were identified in the public notification and suggestions from stakeholders about specific communities to visit or stakeholder groups to meet were requested.

Opening and Exit (Debriefing) Meetings

All three RA verification team members attended an opening meeting with representatives of the Government of Guyana technical committee for the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) in the Office of the President on Thursday, July 5. At the opening meeting the verification team went over the draft audit plan, timing of field visits, meetings and field trips and report writing. This included confirmation of indicators to be covered by each member of the team. All three team members also

provided a very preliminary debriefing and preliminary findings to representatives of the LCDS technical committee on Wednesday, July 11 prior to the departure from Guyana of the audit team leader.

Consultation with stakeholders

Throughout this verification, the RA team made a concerted effort to consult with a wide range of stakeholders. The three team members made five different field trips and visited with members of 16 different Amerindian communities in six different regions – Regions II, III, VII, VIII, IX and X. Team members spoke with approximately 264 community members. These included 13 Toshaos, and numerous former Toshaos and current and former councilors. In addition, the team met with approximately 45 people representing many communities at two meetings of NGO organizations in rural areas. In addition, team members spoke individually with ten people representing six different Amerindian organizations – National Toshaos Council (NTC), The Amerindian Action Movement of Guyana (TAAMOG), Guyana Organization of Indigenous Peoples (GOIP), National Amerindian Development Foundation (NADF), Indigenous Peoples Commission (IPC), and the Amerindian Peoples Association (APA).

The team also interviewed or spoke via Skype or telephone phone or exchanged correspondence with:

- 11 representatives of nine international or local NGOs – WWF, Conservation International, Forest Peoples, Rainforest Foundation Norway and UK, Forest Management Trust, The Meridian Institute, Guyana Human Rights Association and Iwokrama;
- 24 representatives of GoG ministries, commissions or bureaus – Ministry of Amerindian Affairs (MoAA), Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE), Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport, Office of Climate Change (OCC), Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC), Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC), Environment Protection Agency (EPA);
- 6 Members of Parliament representing opposition parties;
- 14 non-government members of the Multi-Stakeholder Steering Committee (MSSC);
- 3 members of the North Rupununi District Development Board (NRDDB);
- 1 representative of the Guyana Forest Products Association; and,
- 6 representatives of three international bodies – UNDP, World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank.

The team received and responded to four written submissions prior to the August 15 deadline established in the public notification. The vast majority of stakeholder inputs were received through in-person meetings and telephone or Skype conversations.

Report preparation

Throughout the team's stay in Guyana, the team met frequently and discussed information, interviews and findings. Each team member then prepared a draft of the findings for the Indicators for which they had lead responsibility. Drafts were reviewed by other team members and a draft report was prepared that represents the cumulative inputs of the whole team.

A full first draft of this report was internally reviewed by an Rainforest Alliance staff person with experience in REDD+ and Guyana and by an independent consultant with considerable work experience in Guyana. Their written comments on the draft were addressed by the team.

A final version of the first draft report was delivered to the GoG and the GON for their review on September 7, 2012. Extensive comments were received and were addressed by the team. A record of the team responses to all comments was maintained.

The team leader met with representatives of the GoN in Oslo and delivered a Powerpoint presentation providing a summary of the verification process and the findings. The same Powerpoint was sent to the GoG and a telephone conference was held with GoG representatives (including the Project Management Office) to discuss this as well.

A final report that incorporated many revisions that responded to the comments from GoG and GoN was delivered to the GoN and GoG on November 11, 2012. Upon receipt of the final report, the GoN and the GoG both expressed concerns to Rainforest Alliance about some of the findings in the report and potentially applicable evidence that had not been delivered to the audit team. The GoG requested time to prepare additional evidence to submit for review by the team. GoN accepted the request from GoG and requested the Rainforest Alliance team to consider any additional information submitted by GoG. Ninety-six documents were subsequently delivered by the GoG to the audit team on December 5, 2012.

The RA team leader reviewed all of those documents. Evidence that was determined to have occurred within the time period of the audit and relevant to the Indicators was reviewed in detail and taken into consideration by the verification team members. Some of the evidence submitted represented actions that have occurred after the audit period. This evidence was considered “not applicable” for the purposes of this report. No additional interviews or other gathering of audit evidence was undertaken. Some additional minor changes and additional pieces of information were added to the report as a result of the additional review. The fundamental Audit Conclusions for all 10 indicators remain unchanged from the November 11, 2012 version.

The final version of the report was delivered to the GoN and the GoG on December 16, 2012.

3.2 Verification Approach

This verification audit placed extremely high importance on having more opportunities to meet with Amerindian communities; something that was not possible during the first verification audit conducted in 2010 due to resource limitations. The importance of Amerindian outreach was reinforced by a group of international NGOs who submitted a letter to RA and the GoN indicating their concerns with the audit process in 2010. The GoN was highly supportive of an enhanced effort for outreach to Amerindian interests, and promptly provided additional financial resources to RA to compensate Amerindian communities for their costs in travelling to and participating in the verification audit, and to support additional domestic travel costs for the audit team.

At the same time, the audit team also ensured that various key stakeholders were spoken with representing the opposition parties in the Guyana National Assembly, some producers associations and representatives of women’s and youth-oriented interests.

The RA audit team was composed of three senior level international specialists, all of whom have extensive field experience as senior auditors and in interacting with indigenous and other community interest groups in various parts of the world. The lead auditor played the same role on the 2010 verification audit implemented by RA – the other two auditors were new to this task. At the specific request of the GoN, one of the auditors was female.

Throughout the team’s work it collected and analyzed evidence by: a) reviewing documentation, b) gathering input from all stakeholders (governmental and non-governmental) through interviews, telephone conversations and written inputs, and c) where possible, field observations on the ground – a process we refer to as “triangulation”. In terms of information gathering, the audit team met or communicated with every single stakeholder that requested to give input (again whether governmental or non-governmental), except for one Amerindian community on the Venezuelan border that due to time and resources we were not able to visit. The sampling approach was not scientific, but rather we reviewed all written evidence submitted by any party, and we reached out to selected communities based on inputs from numerous stakeholders and organizations and that could be reached within logistical constraints. We would note that for future audits it would be important to enhance the quality of sampling, through more effective, efficient and comprehensive evidence submissions by the GoG and GoN. Also in terms of field work, more systematic comparison could occur comparing perspectives and information between, for example, communities involved, not involved or in process of working through

titling claims or implementing development projects supported through the LCDS. The latter is just one example how the quality of sampling and analysis might be improved in the future.

Finally, it is important to recognize that, in the collective experience of the RA verification team there is a wide range of divergent and strongly held views in Guyana about the GoG's efforts related to the LCDS and other activities. This is reflected in a continuing dynamic wherein some stakeholders wish to remain anonymous and wish to make their comments without attribution.

3.3 Audit Team

Auditor(s)	Qualifications, Affiliations
Richard Z. Donovan	Richard is a forestry generalist and has a M.Sc. in natural resources management and administration with a focus on forest hydrology and community forestry from Antioch New England University Graduate School. He has been working in community development, forestry, certification, natural resources management, agriculture, forest sector climate initiatives and environmental and social impact assessment since 1975. He is Senior Vice President and Vice President of Forestry at Rainforest Alliance, where since 1992 he has led the organization's work in forestry certification, support for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and indigenous/communities in the forestry sector, and field project support around the globe in all 3 forest biomes (tropical, temperate and boreal). He is a trained FSC Forest Management lead auditor and has experience in more than 45 countries and many forest management and chain of custody audits.
Keith Moore	Keith is a self-employed registered professional forester (RPF in British Columbia, Canada) and has an M.A. in Geography from the University of British Columbia. He has been working in forestland management, environmental impact assessment, and environmental performance auditing in Canada and other countries since 1976. From 1995 to 2000, Keith was the Chair of British Columbia's Forest Practices Board. Since 2000, he has been a team member or team leader with Rainforest Alliance on over 70 different FSC assessments, annual audits and pre-condition verification audits. He has worked internationally in 11 countries. He is a trained FSC Forest Management lead auditor and Senior Auditor with Rainforest Alliance. He has ISO 9001 Lead Auditor certification.
Margaret Stern	Margaret ("Peggy") is a tropical forest biologist based in Quito, Ecuador where she works to support development of forest carbon and other ecosystem services projects and REDD+ policy, particularly in Andean & Amazonian countries. She received her Ph.D. (1992) in Evolution & Ecology from the University of California, Davis, and has carried out field studies, project assessments and prepared conservation policy documents for the public and private sectors in Mexico, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Peru, Colombia and Ecuador. Her work includes territorial mapping and community land use planning, forest resource management (timber and NTFPs), quantification of forest carbon, and environmental restoration. Since 2000, she has worked periodically as an FSC Forest Management auditor for Rainforest Alliance.

3.4 Audit Schedule

This schedule provides an indication of the people and communities consulted during the course of this audit. Names are not included to protect the anonymity of those who met with the verification team.

Date(s)	Location	Main Activities
Tues, July 3	Georgetown	Auditor Keith Moore (KM) arrives in country. Logistical arrangements. Meeting with representatives of the OCC.
Wed, July 4	Georgetown	KM – Meetings with representatives of GFC. Meeting with representative of international NGO. Meeting with representatives of Amerindian organization. Call with representative of international NGO. Auditor Margaret Stern (MS) arrives in country.
Thurs, July 5	Georgetown	Team Leader Richard Donovan (RD) arrives in country. RD, KM, MS - Team meeting in morning. Audit planning and logistical arrangements. RD – Calls with representatives of 2 international NGOs. RD, KM, MS – Opening meeting with technical committee for LCDS.
Fri, July 6	Georgetown	KM – Meeting with representative of GFC. RD, KM, MS – Meeting with representatives of Amerindian NGO. RD – Call with representative of international NGO. RD, KM, MS – Meeting with members of the MSSC.
Sat & Sun, July 7 & 8	Regions	RD – Travel to Region VII. Meetings with representatives from 6 communities. KM – Travel to Region VIII. Meetings with representatives from 3 Amerindian communities. MS – Travel to Region IX. (Meetings with representatives of 10 communities). Travel to Region X. Meeting with 1 Amerindian community, 1 civil society representative and 1 representative of local NGO.
Mon, July 9	Region (all)	RD –Return travel to Georgetown and meetings in Georgetown. KM – Meeting with representative of GGMC in Region VIII. Return travel to Georgetown. MS – Travel in Region IX. Meeting with Community monitoring group (9 communities). Travel to Amerindian community. Meeting with representatives and community members in Amerindian community.
Tues, July 10	Georgetown	RD and KM – Meeting with civil society representative on MSCC. RD – Meeting with representative of PMO in OCC. KM – Meeting with representative of OCC. Meeting with representative of GFC. MS – Travel to Amerindian community. Meeting with Amerindian community. Return travel to Georgetown.
Wed, July 11	Georgetown	RD – Meetings with representative of Amerindian

		NGO. Meeting with civil society member of MSSC. Meeting with IDB. KM – Meeting with NTC representative. MS – Meeting with representatives of EPA, MoAA. RD, KM and MS – Debriefing meeting with technical committee for LCDS. RD, KM, MS – Meeting with representative of international NGO.
Thurs, July 12	Georgetown	RD – Return travel to US. KM – Phone calls. Meeting with representatives of GGMC. MS – Meeting with representative of Iwokrama. Meeting with representatives of local social NGO.
Fri, July 13	Georgetown Region III and Region X	KM – Meeting with representatives of UNDP. Meeting with four opposition MPs. Meeting with representative of Guyana Forest Producers Assn. MS – Travel to Region X. Meetings with representatives and community members in Amerindian community (Region X). Travel to Region III. Meeting with representatives and community members in Amerindian community (Region III). Return travel to Georgetown.
Sat, July 15	Region II	KM – Travel to Region II. Meetings with representatives of two Amerindian communities (Region II). Return travel to Georgetown. MS – Return travel to Ecuador.
Sun, July 15		KM – Return travel to Canada.
July 16 to September 7	Auditors offices	Preparation of draft report and incorporation of inputs received from 2 internal RA report reviewers. Draft report delivered to GoG and GoN.
October 2		Comments on draft report received from GoG and GoN.
October 23	Oslo, Norway	RD meeting with representatives of GoN and Rainforest Foundation and delivery of powerpoint presentation.
October 2 – November 7	Auditors' offices	Review of comments from GoG and GoN and revisions to report.
November 11		Delivery of Final Report to GoN and GoG.
November 30		GoN and GoG request RA to consider additional evidence to be submitted by GoG.
December 5		GoG submits additional documentary evidence to RA verification team.
December 16		Delivery of revised Final Report to GoN and GoG.

3.5 Persons Interviewed

The following is a summary list of individuals and organizations that the verification team consulted with through meetings, telephone or Skype conversations, e-mails and hard copy submissions. Individuals are not identified in the report but Rainforest Alliance is maintaining a complete, confidential list of stakeholders consulted with their contact information.

Affiliation	Number of Persons Consulted
Government of Guyana	26
Multi-Stakeholder Committee	20
Amerindian Organization representatives	10

Amerindian community members	264
International NGOs – environmental and social	7
Local NGOs – environmental and social	4
International agencies	6
Independent members of Society	4
Members of Parliament	6
Trade associations	1

3.6 Written Input Received from individuals not affiliated with GoN or GoG

Written input was received from four individuals representing four different organizations.

3.7 Stakeholder Comments

The following table provides general comments and assertions that were made to the verification team during interviews or meetings with interested parties and stakeholders during the verification process. The comments are organized by general subject matter and may incorporate the views of many stakeholders.

The comments and assertions in the middle column reflect the RA team understanding of the views of the people who made them. They are NOT, repeat NOT, the views of the verification team and are presented as a representation of the opinions of the parties who made them. The right hand column provides the verification team's response to the comments.

Subject	Stakeholder Comment	RA response
Sluggish disbursement of GRIF resources	Multiple stakeholders in virtually all stakeholder groups (international organizations, Amerindian interests, national & local government, MSSC members, etc.) are extremely concerned regarding the delayed disbursement of resources, the absence of investment directly with expected beneficiaries (on the ground in Amerindian and other communities, etc.). Some stakeholders indicated concerns that the agencies involved (e.g. GoG, WB and UNDP) are poorly equipped to play the roles they are being asked to play. Some suggested that the safeguards process of the trustee (WB) and implementing agencies (IDB and UNDP) are overly burdensome. There is also a perception that the GoG is receiving LCDS resources whilst beneficiaries in the field are not.	RA has examined the sluggishness of disbursements and limitations in terms of project implementation to date. As per the analysis in this report, some GoG agencies have managed to move forward and make investments to advance the REDD+ initiative even with resource shortcomings. Each agency and project has its own history and dynamic, though a general observation is that the importance of making timely progress on investments with beneficiaries does not appear to have been given sufficient emphasis. At the time of this audit there was a sense that some progress is being made, however few actors believe that the process is efficient and the delays are having a residual negative affect amongst stakeholders, partner entities and even the GoG.
Ineffective stakeholder interaction mechanisms	The GoG's approach to consultation, information distribution and transparency is not robust or consistent. There is an over-reliance on the Internet for reporting and communication. The MSSC, though a valuable sounding board to the GoG and other parties for perspectives on LCDS and REDD+ activities, is not functioning effectively at present.	These issues are addressed specifically and in detail in the RA evaluation of Indicators 1 and 2. The team finds that the MSSC is not functioning effectively at this time and Indicator 1 is not met. Indicator 2 is only partially met as participation, consultation and feedback from all affected and interested stakeholders, and specifically from Amerindian communities, was not

		<p>effectively enabled during this evaluation period.</p> <p>It is not the RA team's role to provide recommendations on how to specifically address the shortcomings. However some stakeholders suggested that a strategic review of the stakeholder interaction approach will be necessary if the JCN is to be successful.</p>
<p>Inconsistent and insufficient stakeholder interaction by the GoG during the audit period</p>	<p>GoG interactions with Amerindian communities have dropped off significantly since the initial consultation period in 2009 and 2010.</p>	<p>During this audit period (Oct 2010-June 2012) the RA team concurs that there was inconsistent GoG interaction directly with Amerindian communities about LCDS. This was in contrast with the intensity of visits that GoG representatives made to Amerindian villages in 2009 and early 2010. Today, most Amerindians who were interviewed or who participated in group meetings with RA auditors do not feel that they have received the information necessary to make decisions about their participation in LCDS and REDD+. They feel that the GoG has not kept them updated and often feel strongly that their voices are not being heard, especially with respect to land titling and traditional land extensions. These are land ownership issues that are extremely important to them and that are tied to potential REDD+ activities that forest-dwelling communities may decide to participate in.</p> <p>The minimal GoG contact with distant Amerindian communities during this audit period is clearly at least partially due to the lack of GRIF funds, as travel to the Guyana hinterlands is expensive. MSSC members and others have expressed concern to both the GoG and GoN about the lack of funding progress, and it appears both the GoG and GoN have a shared responsibility in terms of delays.</p> <p>However, as noted above, the team finds that Indicator 2 is only partially met. The verification team's reading of the JCN is that this initiative must demonstrate increased understanding and participation as part of continuing stakeholder engagement, requiring robust and timely two-way consultation between beneficiaries (e.g. forest communities), particularly as it relates to the likelihood of their communities' participation ("opting in") in REDD+</p>

		activities.
Dire need to address negative forest impacts of the mining sector	Many stakeholders expressed concern about the negative impacts of the rapidly expanding mining sector.	<p>As reported in Indicator 9, the analyses of deforestation and degradation conducted during the JCN implementation clearly demonstrate that the mining sector is having the highest negative impact on forest resources.</p> <p>Multiple parties inside and outside of government indicate that, though there are pressing issues related to Amerindian tenure, rights and resources and challenging forestry issues as well, the resolution of issues related to mining may be the single greatest challenge to confront in this initiative. Some Amerindian communities indicate that mining on Amerindian territory remains something outside of their control.</p> <p>Mining was at the forefront of discussions with many stakeholders during this audit (for both Amerindian and non-Amerindian interests). Though there are laws and requirements for the mining sector that provide a basis for action, per the analysis in this audit, there was an absence of additional actions implemented by the GoG in collaboration with forest dependent sectors. Thus, mining issues are addressed in a number of the indicators in this report.</p>
Mapping priority areas for biodiversity is a multi-sectoral effort	<p>Biodiversity mapping, inventory and monitoring are ongoing by the MoNRE, the UG and numerous conservation and social NGOs (e.g. Iwokrama, CI, GMTCS, NRDDDB) and include the participation of local Amerindian community members.</p> <p>One GoG representative remarked on the importance of non-governmental biodiversity mapping initiatives and the need to recognize their help in providing critical data to prioritize national conservation areas.</p>	<p>In the North Rupununi the C-MRV is being carried out wholly by local people who collect local data using state-of-the-art mapping and interview techniques, to be integrated within the national MRV efforts and the EPA database.</p> <p>Information regarding multi-sector participation in mapping priority areas for biodiversity in Guyana's forests and international financial support and recognition of those efforts is provided in this report in Indicator 10. The team finds that this indicator is met.</p>
Conflict of Interest (COI)	One stakeholder stated an opinion that RA should not implement this verification due to COI concerns, i.e. because RA implements other types of forest management audits in Guyana it is not independent.	RA has provided the stakeholder with information on COI procedures, how COI is monitored both internally and externally, and specific COI measures required for RA auditors. RA continues to welcome specific COI evidence or examples to act on. None of the team members on this verification have been involved in forest management audits in Guyana for several years.

4.0 LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

For each Indicator, the RA team has provided, in Section 5, a list of the key documents which the team has either received or researched (on the Internet, in Guyana, etc.) during the verification process. In addition to these documents the team has received confidential emails that are not listed or referred to below. The team also reviewed a considerable number of other documents related to the LCDS and the requirements of the 10 Indicators. Consistent with normal Rainforest Alliance procedures, requests for anonymity or confidentiality are honored.

5.0 VERIFICATION OF INDICATORS

The following findings and conclusions are based on our review of the information in the documents we received, the interviews we conducted and on our observations in the field for each of the 10 Indicators. We use the following terms to report conclusions:

- **Indicator is met** – This indicates that all the requirements or elements of the indicator are met. As directed by the GoN, this term is also used in cases where there was a delay in meeting the timelines established in the indicator, but where all material requirements were met by the end of the audit period (June 30, 2012). In these cases where material requirements were fully met, but timelines for document review or completion were delayed beyond indicated dates or were not completed at the end of the audit period, the indicator is reported as met, but the delay in meeting the timeline is reported.
- **Indicator is partially met** – This indicates that most material requirements or elements of the indicator are met, but at least one important requirement or performance element of the indicator is not met. Those material requirements or elements that are not met are indicated in the text, and the reason for the conclusion of “partially met” is explained. A conclusion of “partially met” was not affected by findings that there were delays in the review or completion of documents beyond indicated dates or where timelines for document review or completion were not met by the end of the audit period. The delay in meeting the timeline is reported.
- **Indicator is not met** – This indicates that most of the requirements or elements, including important elements, of the indicator are not met. There may be individual minor requirements that are met, but overall, most of the indicator is not met.

Verification Indicator 1:

Transparent and effective multi-stakeholder consultations continue and evolve.

Section 1 of the revised Joint Concept Note (March, 2011) identifies continuing transparent and effective consultations at the Multi-Stakeholder Steering Committee (MSSC) as one of the four enabling indicators against which delivery of results will be verified³.

In this context, the revised JCN specifically references the MSSC as follows:

“... namely that Guyana’s LCDS Multi-Stakeholder Steering Committee and other arrangements to ensure systematic and transparent multi-stakeholder consultations will continue and evolve, and enable the participation of all affected and interested stakeholders at all stages of the REDD-

³ The analysis under this indicator focuses heavily on the MSSC, while “other arrangements to ensure systematic and transparent multi-stakeholder consultation” is the focus of the next indicator and thus more fully addressed there.

plus/LCDS process...;

Later Section 2.1 of the revised JCN further describes the “continuous multi-stakeholder consultation process” as follows:

“The LCDS, including the REDD-plus strategy and prioritized LCDS funding needs, is subject to an institutionalized, systematic and transparent process of multi-stakeholder consultation, enabling the participation of all potentially affected and interested stakeholders at all stages of the REDD-plus/LCDS process. This process will continue to evolve over time. Particular attention will be given to the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and other forest-dependent communities. The consultation process will continue to be monitored by an expert team appointed jointly by Guyana and Norway. This team will provide advice to all stakeholders and report on the quality, implementation and adequacy of processes and institutional arrangements to suit the relevant stage of the consultation process, e.g. through regular meetings of a representative multi-stakeholder steering committee.”

In assessing Indicator 1, the RA team addresses the consultation with stakeholders conducted directly through the Multi-Stakeholder Steering Committee (MSSC). Indicator 2 addresses other consultation with stakeholders described in the revised JCN, including consultation with “indigenous peoples” (Amerindian communities).

Audit Findings

In the first audit period between June 1, 2009 and September 30, 2010, the MSSC initially met almost weekly, and then approximately every second week. A total of 33 meetings occurred in that 16 month first auditing period - 21 of these meetings occurred in the 7 month period in 2009 alone. The functioning of the MSSC in the first audit period is addressed in the first Rainforest Alliance Verification Report (page 24). The report concluded “The MSSC has continued to meet regularly. Numerous members of the MSSC observed that it serves a valuable function, minutes of meetings are publicly distributed, all topics are open to discussion, and that its existence and function should be seen as positive performance for meeting Indicator 2.1”.

In this audit period from October 1, 2010 to June 30, 2012, there have been some significant changes in the MSSC.

Prior to this audit, Guyana provided the team with the June 2012 performance report (OCC, June 2012) that summarizes of the activities to meet the JCN. The work of the MSSC is described on pages 8 and 9. On July 6, 2012 the RA team met with 15 members of the MSSC in a formal meeting and various government and non-government members described the work of the MSSC since the first RA verification audit. Immediately following completion of the field work, the OCC provided an additional written summary (OCC, July 2012) of the activities of the MSSC and its members by e-mail to the team on July 16, 2012. The following points are made by the OCC in the two documents, and were supported by some MSSC members during the July 6 meeting:

- The multi-stakeholder process has remained intact and has continued to meet on a regular basis through the reporting period (up to the end of the audit period in June 2012).
- The reduced frequency of meetings reflects the new “implementation” phase of the LCDS and frequent meetings are not required as they were in the earlier “conceptual development” and “consultation” phases.
- The continued sloth in performance of the GRIF mechanism has contributed to a growing feeling by stakeholders that investments from the GRIF would take an excessive amount of energy and time and that the GoG and GoN were not serious about enabling the GRIF payments to flow in an efficient manner.
- The OCC and the GFC have been carrying out consultation activities in accordance with the “Conceptual Process Framework” for multi-stakeholder consultations as developed with the MSSC.

- The MSSC has been involved in providing technical input to many specific LCDS and climate change initiatives and had input into the drafting of the Operations Manual for the GRIF, the LCDS Stakeholder Awareness and Engagement Plan, the Hinterland Electrification Program, the Amerindian Land Titling Program, and the Project Concept Notes for the Institutional Strengthening Project and the Micro and Small Enterprise Development Project.
- Members of the MSSC participated in public forums and debates related to the LCDS including letters and articles in newspapers, and through participation in seminars, workshops and other committees such as the GRIF Steering Committee.

In addition to the formal meeting on July 6, the RA team members had private meetings and interviews with a total of 15 members of the MSSC, including meetings with 11 of the 17 non-government members, during the course of the audit. Many of the non-government members expressed serious concerns about the current effectiveness and role of the MSSC, particularly since July 2011. These concerns are addressed in the following sections, based on the team's review of the performance report and written submissions from the OCC, interviews with MSSC members and others, and our own observations.

Meeting Frequency

In this second audit period from October 1, 2010 to June 30, 2012 the frequency of meetings of the MSSC has decreased substantially. In the 21-month period covered by this second annual audit there have been a total of only 11 MSSC meetings compared to the 33 in the first (shorter) audit period. 10 of these 11 meetings occurred in the first 10 months of the period prior to the end of July, 2011. In the 11-month period since the end of July 2011, only 1 meeting of the MSSC has been held.

The revised Terms of Reference (OCC, 2011) state that MSSC meetings will be held weekly and will continue to be chaired by the President of Guyana. However, in August 2011, following Meeting #43, the President and senior government members of the MSSC entered into preparations for the November 2011 election and were no longer available to chair and attend meetings. Following the election in November 2011⁴, the new President assumed the Chair of the MSSC but no meetings occurred until Meeting #44 in May, 2012. No meetings have been held since Meeting #44 (other than a meeting held in July 2012 for the purposes of discussion with the RA team in regard to this verification audit). The RA team was told by the Office of the President that no meetings were planned in the near future and that it would be up to the President to decide if and when to call a meeting.

This is a very significant change in meeting frequency as compared to the first audit period. At the time of this audit, the MSSC is not meeting regularly. Change from the first audit period was anticipated in the revised JCN which states "the process (for consultation) will evolve over time to reflect the phases of the project". MSSC members understood there would be a reduced frequency of meetings. However, the current situation of very infrequent meetings is not consistent with the meeting frequency established in the revised ToR, or with the revised JCN that requires "continuing... effective consultation", and "regular meetings". Furthermore, the current process for waiting for the president to call meetings is not consistent with the revised JCN which refers to "an institutionalized, systemic...process."

The GoG told the team during the audit that the problem with meeting frequency had been recognized and addressed. The need for regular meetings was discussed at Meeting #44 of the MSSC on May 3, 2012. However, at the time of the audit in mid-July, no meetings had occurred since May or were planned.

The Role of the MSSC (as described in the ToR)

⁴ The election resulted in a minority government. The previous governing party was re-elected with the largest number of seats in the National Assembly, but with one seat less than the two Opposition parties combined.

In early 2011, the OCC believed that the LCDS and REDD+ activities were moving from a conceptual development phase to an implementation phase. Thus, the role of the MSSC was changing and meetings were needed less frequently. Accordingly, at MSSC Meeting #38 on January 26, 2011, the OCC proposed that the MSSC should consider making amendments to the original Terms of Reference (ToR) for the MSSC. The MSSC agreed that the OCC should draft a revised ToR and circulate it for comments to the members. A draft was presented to Meeting #39 on March 29, 2011 and an April deadline was set for comments from the MSSC. The draft revised ToR was presented and tabled at Meetings 40 and 41 but very few comments were received from members. At Meeting #42 on June 9, 2011, the MSSC agreed to provide one more opportunity for comments, and that “thereafter the OCC will review comments and will revise the ToR accordingly.” There was no discussion of the proposed revisions at Meeting #43 on July 5, 2011, but in the absence of any comments it appears that the revised ToR (OCC, undated 2012) was adopted by the OCC.

The revised ToR (2011)⁵ state, “The LCDS has now moved into an implementation phase. The MSSC is now required to adjust its focus accordingly.” With this preamble, the new role of the MSSC is established as follows:

“The MSSC is expected to:

- Provide review and guidance on plans and proposals related to the LCDS implementation activities.
- Oversee progress in the implementation of the Guyana - Norway MoU Agreement.
- Provide guidance and oversight on the planning and execution of ongoing national stakeholder engagements.
- Assist in education, awareness and information dissemination to constituencies.”

In the absence of regular meetings in the 11 month period since these revised ToR were completed by the OCC – there has been only one meeting – the verification team does not see how the MSSC can effectively meet any of the first three expectations established in the revised ToR regarding “review of plans and proposals”, “overseeing progress” and “providing guidance and oversight”. Some members of the MSSC sit on specific project committees, but this is not a substitute for an effective and functioning MSSC.

Membership of the MSSC

Some of the MSSC members interviewed also expressed concerns about the make-up of the MSSC.

The present membership list for the MSSC provided by the OCC includes 40 individuals. The listed individuals include the current President and former President of Guyana; four cabinet ministers, five staff in the Office of the President, seven technical staff from Government ministries, commissions or bureaus; eight representatives of Amerindian interests; five representatives of the private sector and trade unions, two representatives of international environmental NGOs, two individual members, two representatives of civil society, two representatives from the North Rupununi District Development Board, and a representative of the University of Guyana. Two MSSC members are Opposition Members of Parliament (MPs) but are listed as MSSC members representing other organizations or interests, not the Opposition parties. During the period of this verification audit, a member was added to represent academia – the University of Guyana.

One of the listed representatives of Amerindian interests is a representative of the Amerindian People’s Association (APA). However, the APA told the team that they never accepted a membership on the MSSC and do not want to be considered a member. They have never attended a meeting of the

⁵ The revised ToR are undated but were first presented to the MSSC in March 2011 and last discussed by the MSSC in June 2011.

MSSC, and are listed in the minutes of every meeting as “absent by choice”. By e-mail to the RA team on July 25, 2012, the Office of the President confirmed that “the APA refuses to be a part of the MSSC, although they are always welcome to join and participate in the LCDS process.” The audit team acknowledges the APA position that they should not be considered as a member of the MSSC and for the purposes of evaluating the performance of the MSSC, the auditors considered the MSSC membership to include 39 members that are listed on the LCDS website and not the APA.

Based on this membership of 39, almost half (18) represent government ministries or agencies. The 18 government members - the President and former President, 5 persons employed in the Office of the President, 4 cabinet ministers, and 7 senior civil service technical staff - are a mix of political government representatives and technical staff in the public service. The other half (21) represent a wide range of non-government interests including Amerindian interests, private sector associations and unions, international NGOs and independent views. Four of these non-government members are actually appointed to be alternates for other members for their organizations who sit on the committee⁶. If these alternates are not counted in the membership, the MSSC has 35 full members, more than half of whom (18) represent the government.

In a sample of five meetings between October 2010 and July 2011, attendance ranged from 18 to 26 members including alternates, or about 50% to 70% of the members. At four of the five meetings, the government representatives outnumbered non-government representatives, even when attending alternates are counted.

The audit team understands that the MSSC is intended to be a forum to bring together representatives of government and civil society. The MSSC does bring together a wide variety of interests and provides them with a forum to interact with government and serves an important function. However, membership becomes problematic when recommendations are being developed or MSSC positions articulated. During our interviews with MSSC members, several questioned the strong participation of government members in a multi-stakeholder committee, and suggested a separate sub-group of the MSSC be created to allow non-government members to discuss issues and then bring recommendations to the larger committee for government participation.

Others questioned the domination of the MSSC by government representatives accountable to the governing political party at a time when the parliament has a minority government and other political parties are represented in the National Assembly, but have no presence at the MSSC⁷. These issues of balance and representation on the committee came to a head in the most recent meeting of the MSSC.

Meeting #44 occurred on May 5, 2012 and was chaired by the President of Guyana. Twenty-eight of the 39 MSSC members attended – 16 government members (including the former and current presidents) and 12 non-government members (including two alternates) attended. The former President and the representatives of the Office of the President provided updates on various LCDS projects – GRIF, the Amerindian Development Fund, Cunha Canal, Hinterland Electrification and Amaila Falls – to the MSSC which had not met in ten months. The dominant agenda item was in regard to a debate and a vote in the National Assembly in which the opposition parties combined to vote to reduce the 2012 budget for green projects under Guyana’s LCDS from approximately GY\$ 18 billion dollars to GY\$ one dollar. Some members of the MSSC expressed their strong opposition to this action of the opposition parties.

As recorded in the minutes of Meeting #44 (which were not publicly available at the time of the audit)⁸, it was agreed that a draft statement on the budget cut would be prepared and circulated for all MSSC

⁶ The alternates are the second members for The Amerindian Action Movement of Guyana (TAAMOG), the National Amerindian Development Foundation (NADF), the Guyana Organisation of Indigenous People (GOIP) and the North Rupununi Development Board.

⁷ Two opposition MPs are members of the MSSC but represent other interests, not their party affiliation.

⁸ The Minutes of Meeting #44 are in draft form because there has been no subsequent meeting to approve the Minutes. Thus

members to review. A draft statement was then prepared and provided to each MSSC member for their review and approval. Following a review period, a statement (MSSC, 2012) entitled “Statement by Members of the Low Carbon Development Strategy Multi-Stakeholder Steering Committee (MSSC, 2012)” was released to the news media and posted on the LCDS website homepage.⁹ The statement begins as follows, “The MSSC has observed with dismay the reduction by the combined Opposition of the 2012 budget for green projects under Guyana’s Low Carbon Development Strategy from approximately 18 billion dollars (GY\$) to one dollar (GY\$1).”

This statement was signed by 23 of the 39 MSSC members, a majority. However, fourteen of the 23 who signed were government representatives, including nine who are political representatives – the President, former President, four cabinet ministers and three staff in the Office of the President – and five technical staff of government ministries, commissions and agencies. The other nine signatories were non-government members (but two of these signatories were alternates). In effect, only seven of the 17 non-government full members of the MSSC signed the statement. None of the four members who are individual members of the MSSC or representatives of civil society and neither of the representatives of international NGOs signed. Four of the non-government representatives wrote letters to the Office of the President expressing their reasons for not signing the statement. In interviews with the RA verification team, several MSSC members expressed concern that this action led and supported by the government political and technical representatives on the MSSC has polarized and politicized the committee. In their view, it undermined the role of the MSSC as a non-partisan body reflecting national interests and rendered the MSSC as a group closely aligned with a single party, the governing party, in the National Assembly, rather than a multi-stakeholder committee that reflects the interests and broad range of opinion in the nation as a whole. Those members recommended that the MSSC should be re-constituted to provide for discourse reflecting a broader base of political opinion and wider representation of “all stakeholders” (note this is the language in the JCN), and not dominated by representatives of the government (the JCN is silent on this aspect).

Outside consultation

The OCC told the team that, as part of the changed focus of the MSSC, individual members were undertaking consultation activities for groups that they are affiliated with. These are referred to as “Awareness Sessions”. During the RA team’s stay in Guyana, the OCC provided a list of 40 different “awareness sessions” undertaken between September 2010 and the end of May 2012 by seven different MSSC members representing 3 Amerindian organizations (with financial support from the OCC), the Forest Products Association and the Women’s Affairs Bureau. In December, 2012 the OCC provided a revised version of this list (prepared in September 2012, after the audit period) that indicates approximately 90 “sessions” undertaken by the same seven MSSC members in the audit period from October 1, 2010 to June 30, 2012. About two thirds of the sessions were undertaken by one MSSC member. The audit team did not hear feedback about these sessions in the Amerindian villages that were visited, even in the communities listed as visited by the MSSC members, and was not able to verify the effectiveness of these sessions. The number of sessions and the number of different communities visited is commendable. However, most Amerindian communities want to receive information directly from government representatives and want to have an opportunity to meet face-to-face with government representatives to ask questions and to discuss their interests and priorities. Awareness sessions may serve an important informational purpose but Amerindian communities did not see such consultation meetings as being led by the government – something they appeared to clearly want. Thus, the awareness sessions are not a substitute for the consultation and discussion that the revised JCN anticipates would take place between the various stakeholder groups and the government.

they are not posted on the LCDS website and will remain in draft form until approved by the MSSC at a meeting. The draft minutes were provided to the team on the basis of strict confidentiality.

⁹ www.lcds.gov.gy.

Transparency and reporting

The revised JCN requires a “transparent process.” To that end, the minutes of the 43 MSSC meetings held up to July 2011 are posted on the LCDS website and are readily available. They include complete information about the updates on the various LCDS activities as presented to the meetings as well as a complete summary of the discussions taking place at the MSSC meetings. They are an excellent source of information. Through this mechanism the MSSC was transparent through the first part of the audit period, and the minutes did provide “reporting” to a much wider public audience beyond the MSSC members. Unfortunately, the last set of minutes available on the website at the time of the audit in July 2012 was from the meeting on July 5, 2011, one year prior to this audit¹⁰. Thus, there is no means for the public to obtain current information about the LCDS and an important element of “reporting transparency” has been lost.

Audit Conclusion

At the time of the audit in July 2012, the MSSC is no longer an effective mechanism for regular communication and consultation between the various stakeholders interested in the LCDS and REDD+ activities. It has met only once in the last eleven months of the audit period. This is not consistent with the ToR for the MSSC or with the revised JCN (March, 2011). In addition, the recent action of the MSSC led by the representatives of the government ministries and agencies on the MSSC to criticize the action by the combined opposition parties in the National Assembly to reduce the budget from GY\$ 18 billion to GY\$1 appears to have created a more partisan, political role for the MSSC that compromises its ability to be a non-partisan forum for consultation and deliberation reflecting national interests. This action, led by political and technical government representatives is not consistent with the JCN reference to a “representative multi-stakeholder steering committee” reflecting the views of all stakeholders in Guyana.

The MSSC is intended to be a forum to bring together representatives of government and civil society and does bring together a wide variety of interests and provides them with a forum to interact with government and serves an important function. However, in the absence of meetings, it no longer fills that role. The team notes that while MSSC meetings were being held, the OCC did a good job of providing full summaries of the MSSC meetings in a transparent way. However, in the absence of meetings, there is presently little to no functional transparency, as no meeting summaries have been posted since the July 2011 meeting.

The Indicator is not met.

List of Documents

MSSC, May 2012. Statement by Members of the Low Carbon Development Strategy Multi-Stakeholder Steering Committee (MSSC)

Office of Climate Change, June 2012. Guyana-Norway Partnership. REDD+ Enabling Activities Report Annual Performance 2011.

Office of Climate Change, July 13, 2012. MSSC Activities – Year 3.

Office of Climate Change, 2012 (undated). Terms of Reference – Multi-Stakeholder Steering Committee (MSSC).

¹⁰ The minutes of Meeting #44 are not yet posted on the website, so Meeting #43 on July 5, 2011 is the last available set of minutes.

Verification Indicator 2:

Participation of all affected and interested stakeholders at all stages of REDD+/LCDS Process.

The revised Joint Concept Note (March 2011) refers to a continuous multi-stakeholder consultation process by the Government of Guyana (GoG) that will continue to evolve over time.

The revised JCN states as follows:

“The LCDS, including the REDD+ strategy and prioritized LCDS funding needs, is subject to an institutionalized, systematic and transparent process multi-stakeholder consultation, enabling the participation of all potentially affected and interested stakeholders at all stages of the REDD+/LCDS process.”

“Particular attention will be given to the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and other forest-dependent communities. The consultation process will continue to be monitored by an expert team appointed jointly by Guyana and Norway. This team will provide advice to all stakeholders and report on the quality, implementation and adequacy of processes and institutional arrangements to suit the relevant stage of the consultation process, e.g. through regular meetings of a representative multi-stakeholder steering committee.”

In Indicator 2, the RA team has addressed the local context of consultation as engagement with local stakeholders through a participatory form of consultation.

Audit Findings

The first Rainforest Alliance Verification Report (pp. 23-29) describes Guyana’s progress to meet this indicator in the period prior to October 1, 2010. The report describes the national stakeholder consultation process that is based on four Articles of the country’s Constitution (13-Democracy and Decision-making. 149G-Indigenous Peoples’ Rights. 149J-the Environment and 154A-Protection of Human Rights) as well as the principle of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC). Findings were largely favorable in terms of the GoG undertaking an effective multi-stakeholder consultation process through the preparation of a consultation methodology, development of the opt-in mechanism for Amerindian communities, adherence to pertinent Articles in the Guyana Constitution, existence of procedures for including stakeholder feedback and documentation thereof, records of numerous meetings during 2009 & 2010 with Amerindian groups and villages, and verification of special attention paid to indigenous groups as per the GoG’s Conceptual Framework (2009¹¹).

During the period from October 1, 2010 to June 30, 2012, the GoG reports that it made progress to meet this indicator by the implementation of more “remote” activities relating to the LCDS process rather than the direct consultations with Amerindian villages that occurred during the second semester of 2009 and early 2010. Despite significant funding constraints, the GoG attempted to implement its annual Stakeholder Awareness Plan. A summary of the GoG’s activities to meet this indicator is provided in the June 2012 REDD+ Enabling Activities Report, Annual Performance 2011 (pp. 8-11) and a supplementary document provided by e-mail to the RA verification team (OCC, July 13) that states that “stakeholder participation and awareness activities remain one of GoG’s foremost priorities . . .” Both of these documents emphasize that severe funding constraints prevented Guyana from including “a cross-country continuous multi-stakeholder consultation process as part of its 2011 Plan,” as no GRIF funds came into the country.

¹¹ It appears this document was produced in 2009, at the beginning of the LCDS process, but it is undated, a recurrent problem with public information produced by many branches of the GoG.

http://www.lcds.gov.gy/images/stories/Documents/conceptual_framework.pdf

Public information on the Guyana LCDS and REDD+ activities is available on the internet at the following web sites, among others:

- LCDS <http://www.lcds.gov.gy/>
- GRIF <http://www.guyanareddfund.org/>
- Amaila Hydropower www.amailahydropower.com
- The REDD Desk (REDD countries database).
http://www.theredddesk.org/countries/guyana/readiness_overview

Despite no record of such on the LCDS website¹², the GoG says in the aforementioned June 2012 report that “in this reporting period, the LCDS continued to be subject to an institutionalized, systematic and transparent process of multi-stakeholder consultation and awareness, enabling the participation of all potentially affected and interested stakeholders at all stages of the REDD+/LCDS process.” The report goes on to state that the OCC, GFC and MSSC functioned as focal points for consultative activities; those activities implemented were based on the Conceptual Process Framework (2009) for multi-stakeholder consultations on LCDS and may be summarized as follows:

- Continued efforts at information sharing and awareness raising;
- Initiatives by MSSC members including the representatives of Conservation International (CI), Iwokrama and indigenous NGOs for awareness raising and information dissemination, such as informational materials and slideshows on the LCDS and its projects; and,
- Implementation of the MRV road map (under responsibility of the GFC) with a “broadly representative steering committee overseeing the MRVS establishment.”

The important supportive role of individual MSSC members to provide consultation outside of Georgetown was explained during the RA team’s stay in Guyana. At that time, GoG provided a list of 40 awareness sessions conducted by seven different MSSC members during the audit period. GoG explained at that time that it counted on a few individual MSSC members to implement outreach efforts in Amerindian villages during this audit period. In December 2012, GoG provided an updated list prepared in September 2012 showing that three MSSC members, each one a representative of an Amerindian organization, made 86 visits to communities (some communities were visited multiple times). As well, a few regional outreach sessions were carried out by other MSSC members. This seems like a good approach to consultations in the hinterlands given the financial limitations of the GoG. Unfortunately, the effectiveness of those village consultations was not specifically confirmed during the visits to communities by members of the RA team. What the verification team can state, based on direct field assessments in a limited number of Amerindian communities, is that in July 2012 there was still a broad lack of understanding, misunderstanding and a perceived paucity of opportunities for feedback and participation on LCDS/REDD+ activities in almost all of the communities that each of the three RA team members visited.

The OCC (June & July 2012) reported specific stakeholder awareness activities that took place during this review period including:

- Infomercials and a mini-documentary via mass media;
- 10 Public Service Announcements on television with repeated broadcasts;
- 11 LCDS messages on radio with repeated broadcasts;
- Secondary Schools’ LCDS quiz and consultant’s report (Deodat 2011);

¹² Accessioned July 2012; the ‘consultation’ web page provides detailed information about stakeholder consultation held in Amerindian villages during the second half of 2009, but nothing about consultation during the period 2010-2012.

- Responses to requests for information;
- Workshops related to the LCDS (Economics of Climate Change in the Caribbean, June 2011; IDB Safeguard Workshop Oct 2011);
- Information dissemination to stakeholders and external public through multiple events, exhibitions, presentations, workshops, televised panel discussions and press releases reporting on key project investments;
- Efforts by the Ministry of Education to incorporate the concept of climate change into the primary school curriculum¹³, preparation of an activity booklet and teacher's guide and an audit on the status of climate change in primary school curricula that was carried out in August 2011 (Bynoe & Simmons 2011); and,
- Development of a TV series on "Biodiversity and Climate Change" by the National Center for Education Resource Development in collaboration with CI-Guyana – this series will be presented soon.

In addition, the supplementary document provided by e-mail to the RA verification team (OCC, July 13) lists nearly 40 awareness sessions done by MSSC members, primarily by representatives of The Amerindian Action Movement of Guyana (TAAMOG), the National Amerindian Development Foundation (NADF), and the Guyana Organisation of Indigenous Peoples (GOIP). These are discussed in Indicator 1 above.

Specific to the Amaila Hydropower project, public consultations with neighboring communities of Kopinang and Chenapou were held in Jan 2011. These were part of the preparation of the project's Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) report (Amaila Falls Hydro Inc. 2011) to assess the role of the reservoir area and the communities' food security, cultural activities, social networks and income. Consultations included interviews and a participatory mapping session in Kopinang and discussion on a previously produced map in Chenapou. The results and analysis of this investigation are included as part of the ESIA report.

Online public consultations on the GRIF, or related projects, are available to members of the public who have access to the internet and can understand the technical nature of analytical documents such as the ESIA report for the Amaila hydropower project that was published for public review and comment¹⁴ The OCC (June 2012) claims that:

"The second stage consultations for the Project are aimed at providing information for the public to make informed comments on the Project's EISA and its conclusion. It is also aimed at informing affected or potentially affected communities about the ESIA analysis, the proposals for mitigation measures and proposals for monitoring."

The RA verification team finds it unlikely, however, that those communities that are directly affected or potentially affected by the Amaila hydropower project or any other LCDS projects are able to, or accustomed to, access the internet to review project plans and projections that are likely to have an impact on their communities and livelihoods.

Community Development Plans (CDPs) for Amerindian communities throughout Guyana, with financing from the Amerindian Development Fund Project of the LCDS, aim to increase economic development in villages through sustainable livelihood projects, many incorporating traditional activities and linked to the natural environment (MoAA 2010). Proposed projects include farming and processing

¹³ Funds from UNICEF for 49 pilot schools in 2012 (Jetoo, May 2012).

¹⁴ The Amaila Hydropower Project. Second stage consultation report. <http://www.amailahydropower.com/docs/SSCRAug11/SSCRFinal.pdf>

(peanut, cassava, cocoa, coffee, ginger), poultry rearing, aquaculture, tourism, furniture and craft production, with budgets ranging from US\$10,000 to US\$64,000 over three years, depending on the size of the community. The RA verification team received from the MoAA a list of 165 CDPs from all 10 regions, with a total budget of more than US\$4 million. There were no dates associated with the list of CDPs so it was not possible to determine how many of those had been prepared during this audit period. In December 2012, the verification team was provided with a document listing the consultations that had been carried out regarding preparation of CDPs; the list is long with some 157 Amerindian community consultations cited, of which 28 (18%) were made during this audit period; the majority (82%) had been made prior to this audit period (in 2010 or before Oct 2011) (OCC Sept 2012). Some of the Amerindian communities visited by the verification team mentioned their CDPs but none of those communities had received funding for them nor begun to implement their projects by other means.

Assessing the participatory consultation process from the Amerindian perspective

During this verification audit, the RA team undertook a significant effort to visit Amerindian communities with forests on their titled land. Though we acknowledge that the LCDS has a much wider stakeholder base, effectively including the whole country due to its potential impact on the national economy, we focused field efforts in this audit on the forest-dependent Amerindian communities directly affected by the LCDS and that might be potentially involved in REDD+ activities through the opt-in mechanism. This reflects our understanding of the meaning of Indicator 2 and the JCN (March 2011).

During the period of July 6-13, 2012, the RA verification team travelled to six different regions of Guyana and met with representatives of 16 Amerindian villages and two regional boards (interviewing people from a total of 23 villages) to assess, among other things, the quality of information received, the opportunities to ask questions and provide feedback, the level of understanding and the level of interest and concern about the LCDS and REDD+ activities. At the majority of the community meetings we attended, we found that people are still confused about basic principles of the LCDS, what it entails and what potential benefits might be gained by their villages from LCDS. How trees or forests have anything to do with carbon or climate is not widely understood. The link between protecting forests (reducing deforestation) and moderating a changing climate is not understood. The voluntary opt-in mechanism for communities with forests (for REDD+ activities) is not understood, nor are the potential benefits or the distribution of benefits to communities, who do opt in based on their forest area, understood. Some villages are very concerned that the LCDS and REDD+ activities will force them to abandon traditional ways, especially traditional slash and burn agricultural practices.

The level of interest and the desire for information, in the Amerindian communities the team visited is high. Most communities acknowledged visits by GoG officials and others in 2009 & 2010 to present and explain the LCDS but that since then, most communities report that they have not received any more information from the government about LCDS. Comments were made that those early visits were short and that community members were not given time to respond or ask questions, and that they were told by the official visitors that more information is available on the internet (not helpful in most village settings).¹⁵

Some, but not all, villages visited had received their solar panels during 2011-2012 and had heard the promise of “one laptop per family” as part of the LCDS Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) project. Some of the villages visited have received laptops, but had no internet connections or training. In other villages visited, the batteries accompanying the solar panels were reported to have

¹⁵ A document entitled “Frequently Asked Questions” (FAQ) about the LCDS (second draft for consultation) was provided to the audit team in December 2012. The FAQ document was produced in July 2012 and contains highly useful information explained in a straight-forward manner that could help fill the information gap for Amerindian communities and the Guyanese population in general. However, this document is dated July 2012, is therefore outside the audit period and considered not applicable to this audit.

failed. Villages in the North Rupununi are aware of the fiber optic cable strung along the main road from Georgetown to Letham, but it remains non-functional with no connections or installations. Due to the long period without communication or actions, it appears that the LCDS has lost credibility with some indigenous people. Some Amerindian community stakeholders are either frustrated or non-believing, and some continue to feel threatened by LCDS. It was reported by villagers that a recent newspaper article by a popular columnist (Freddy Kissoon) said that money from the LCDS is a myth, just government propaganda. At the time of this verification audit in mid-2012, with no visible action or information on the ground in most villages, that possibility seems plausible to many residents of Amerindian communities.

Audit Conclusion

The verification team concludes that the GoG and members of the MSSC did conduct a variety of stakeholder awareness activities during this evaluation period. The government has disseminated information primarily by means of mass media (TV, radio, internet) and with the notable inclusion of climate change in the primary school curriculum. Projects to be supported by the GRIF also included consultations necessary for project development and safeguard purposes. However, during this audit period government officials made few visits to forest-dependent Amerindian villages in the hinterlands, according to GoG largely due to lack of funding. The team notes that the consultations and awareness-raising documents and events that were undertaken to meet this indicator were done without any funds from the GRIF. The OCC, MSSC, NGOs and certain individuals met with and otherwise reached out to stakeholder groups to undertake a consultation process in the absence of support from the GoG/GoN funds. Nonetheless, the scale of this process was not “full and effective” (per the language of the JCN). Consequently the level of frustration is high and good information appears to be significantly lacking in most, if not all, of the Amerindian communities visited.

This Indicator is partially met. Participation, consultation and feedback from all affected and interested stakeholders (per the language of the JCN), and specifically from Amerindian communities, were not consistently or effectively enabled during this evaluation period.

List of Documents:

Amaila Falls Hydro Inc. August 2011. The Amaila Hydropower Project. Second stage consultation Report

Bynoe, P & D. Simmons, August 10, 2011. Curriculum Audit of infusion of Climate Change Education into the Science and Social Studies school's curricula (Grades 1 to 6).

Deodat, R, November 2011. The CC-LCDS TV Quiz for secondary schools. Consultant's Report.

Government of Guyana. undated (2009?). Conceptual Framework on Process for the Multi-Stakeholder Consultations on Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS). Prepared by the GoG in consultation with the Multi-Stakeholder Steering Committee and with input from the International Institute for Environmental Development (IIED).

Jetoo, P. May 9, 2012. Action Plan (Draft) Infusion of Climate Change into the Primary Science Curriculum, Funding Source: UNICEF

Ministry of Amerindian Affairs, November 2010. Community Development Plans. Overview and Implementation Framework.

Office of Climate Change, June 2012. Guyana – Norway Partnership, REDD+ Enabling Activities Report, Annual Performance, 2011.

Office of Climate Change, July 13, 2012. Activities summary conducted by the OCC and the MSSC during the reporting period.

Office of Climate Change, September 26, 2012. Consultations and Awareness sessions for the LCDS.

Office of the President, Republic of Guyana. July 2012. The Low Carbon Development Strategy.

Frequently Asked Questions. Second draft for consultation.

Persaud, P. Summary of the Amerindians Communities where TAAMOG's REDD+ meetings were held and Attendance by residents between Sunday 5th September, 2010 and Monday 30th May, 2011 as per Geographic Region.

The REDD Desk. 2011. Guyana: REDD countries database of REDD activities on the ground.

Verification Indicator 3:

Protection of the rights of indigenous peoples.

The Joint Concept Note (March 2011) refers to protecting the rights of indigenous peoples and other local forest communities with regards to REDD+. The JCN Section 2.1 states as follows:

“The Constitution of Guyana guarantees the rights of indigenous peoples and other Guyanese to participation, engagement and decision making in all matters affecting their well-being. These rights will be respected and protected throughout Guyana’s REDD+ and LCDS efforts. There shall be a mechanism to enable the effective participation of indigenous peoples and other local forest communities in planning and implementation of REDD+ strategy and activities.”

“Guyana’s policy is to enable indigenous communities to choose whether and how to opt in to the REDD+/LCDS process. This will take place only when communities wish to do so with their titled lands, in accordance with Guyana’s policy of respecting the free, prior and informed consent of these communities.”

Audit Findings

The first Rainforest Alliance Verification Report (pp. 37-39) describes Guyana’s progress to meet this indicator in the period prior to October 1, 2010. The overall conclusion for this indicator describes strong emphasis placed by the GoG on the rights of Amerindian communities in the process, particularly through involvement of agencies such as the MoAA and the National Toshios Council (NTC). It was pointed out in the 2010 report that the GFC had been proactive in its interactions with local forest communities. Due to the early stage of REDD+/LCDS activities at the time of the first audit, the opt-in process was not reported on but the comment was made that in future reports it would be important to see how the GoG deals with issues related to the opt-in process. Finally, the importance to report on indigenous rights-related issues was highlighted, particularly the constraints and challenges faced by financing delays or land tenure resolution for all communities regardless of whether they decide to opt in or not.

A number of international organizations (April 2011, pers. comm.) criticized the RA team for not providing an accurate picture of progress in regard to Amerindian communities in the 2010 verification audit. Those organizations criticized the “superficial assessment of fundamental problems relating to indigenous peoples’ rights and tenure” resulting from the team’s heavy reliance on statements made by the GoG, the MSSC and consultants, and not having made much effort to talk directly to indigenous people in their villages. To respond to this criticism, the 2012 verification team made a concerted effort to visit as many Amerindian communities as possible during its time in-country. The team’s focus was to visit forest-dependent Amerindian communities in different regions of Guyana and to select and visit a diversity of communities with the help of the team’s contacts in Guyana, rather than depending on the GoG. This largely-independent selection of communities was deemed essential by the RA verification team to ensure that the sites of our visits were not “hand-picked” by the GoG and to respect the anonymity, to the greatest degree possible, of the communities that were visited. The verification team had obvious time and economic constraints that did not permit visits to some of the most distant villages but we travelled quickly and extensively. We visited and interviewed key representatives and/or village groups from 16 Amerindian villages and regional boards located in six of the 10 regions

of Guyana

A summary of the GoG's approach to this indicator is summarized in the June 2012 REDD+ Enabling Activities Report, Annual Performance 2011 (pp. 11-12), where the GoG points out that "the rights of indigenous people are entrenched in country's constitution" and highlights (a) "the Amerindian Act of Guyana, one of the very few pieces of legislation that protect the rights of indigenous people in the world" and (b) the National Toshi Council (NTC) that is "a democratically elected body of village leaders, the only statutory body of its kind in the world."

For the period from October 1, 2010 to June 30, 2012, two activities related to this indicator were reported by the GoG. These activities are (a) strengthening the NTC by the establishment of a NTC Secretariat such that initial staffing is nearing completion and (b) preparation of a more detailed "Opt-in" Mechanism Concept Paper. With regards to the Opt-in mechanism concept paper, feedback was provided by two Ministries (Youth and Sport, MoAA), two Amerindian NGOs (TAAMOG, NADF), one international NGO and three interested individuals during the period of March-June, 2010; nothing thereafter. An updated Opt-in document was prepared during 2011 and was presented to the Executive Committee of the NTC by the MoAA in November 2011 for review. The NTC was to distribute the document to their respective community clusters. As of March 2012, the Executive Committee of the NTC reported that the Opt-in mechanism was still under review and asked for information on when it is likely that the GRIF mechanism will be functional as this is extremely relevant as to when communities may opt in if they decide to do so.

The RA verification team worked with the March 2010 Opt-in draft. We were looking to see progress and improvements based on the updated version of November 2011, but we were told by the OCC and the MoAA that the March 2010 draft is the only Opt-in document because changes are still under review by the NTC.

Interviews with people in the numerous Amerindian communities visited during the course of this audit yielded clear indication that the principal concerns regarding indigenous rights and the REDD+/LCDS process fall in the following three general but overlapping categories: (1) land titles and extensions; (2) free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC); and, (3) adequate representation at all levels of REDD+/LCDS decision-making.

Land titles and extensions: According to the MoAA, there are currently 207 Amerindian communities inclusive of satellites, small settlements, community development councils and titled villages in Guyana. Thirteen communities are not titled and over the last three to four years, the MoAA has received 41 eligible applications for land extensions (Table 1). Different reasons were given by the MoAA for slow action on those extensions: limited time and resources to process the applications; applications were being dealt with based on the date of application, lack of justification and logic to the requested extensions, traditional land depends on traditional use, and that proposed extension areas required extensive consultation to verify the villages use and need for the land.

Public information on the MoAA website about the land titling process is outdated, for example, reference is made to "within the last three years (2004-2007) seventeen communities have received titles. . ."¹⁶

Most villages have legal recognition and title to the land they occupy and use. Many villages, however, do not feel that their land title encompasses all of their ancestral land and that they are rightful owners of more land than has been titled to them. In some cases, this is the result of an absence of physical surveys, such that title descriptions do not correspond with the reality on the ground and thus require demarcation. In other cases, titled areas do not include pre-existing alienations within ancestral areas. For example, in one community visited, the team was shown a map which indicated that the titled area was "save and except for" all private lands, existing prior to the "title". In this case the list of pre-

¹⁶ <http://www.amerindian.gov.gy/projects/land.html>

existing properties excluded from the title totaled about 20 square miles out of the 24.3 square miles in the title area.

The Amerindian Act 6 of 2006 guarantees land rights and provides a legal process for demarcation and titling existing villages and resolving claims for land extensions with “the full participation of the community members and their leaders.” (MoAA undated) Specific gaps and deficiencies in this legal framework and methods for demarcation and titling were enumerated in comments made by the APA (Jan 2011) regarding Amerindian land titling and demarcation that were submitted to the GRIF, these include (among many others): (a) a lack of transparency and unfair and arbitrary land titling rules, (b) the government’s reluctance to recognize the full extent of Amerindian territorial claims, and (c) the issue that some Amerindian villages have waited several years following submission of their extension applications for a formal response or status update on their applications.

To address outstanding Amerindian land claims the MoAA has a three-year plan (but unspecified which three years) to make Absolute Grants (or titles) for communities, for demarcation of existing legally-recognized villages, and to address titling and demarcation of extensions to villages (Table 1).

Table 1. Village lands and extensions outlined for Titling and Demarcation – 3 year plan.

Number of Communities /Villages		Absolute Grants for Communities	Demarcation of Villages	Titling & Demarcation of Extensions to Amerindian Villages
	Year 1	13	7	10
	Year 2	--	8	17
	Year 3	--	11	14

Source: MoAA, July 2012

According to the GoG¹⁷, four field verification visits to three villages (Four Miles, Tuseneng and Karispaur) were carried out in 2011. During the audit period, those visits appear to be the only ones made by the MoAA through which stakeholders in their villages were directly consulted about land issues, probably in large part due to lack of funds for travel to the hinterlands. The same document, states that in 2012 “no visits were made to discuss Amerindian Land Titling issues as it was anticipated that the GRIF funds would have been available to accelerate the investigative activities of the land titling process.”

The Amerindian Act (Part VI, No. 59.) details the application process and procedures for land extensions. The MoAA provided information on pending applications for absolute grants, demarcation and extensions (Table 1) but the dates of these applications have not been made available to the verification team, despite numerous requests. Nor did the MoAA provide information on the status of these applications for grants, demarcation or titling (see update in starred paragraph below).

For this reason, it has been impossible to determine if the MoAA has been attending to these applications in timely fashion, as detailed in the Amerindian Act as follows:

- No. 61. Acknowledgement and investigation: acknowledgement in writing within one month of receiving application; investigation to commence within six months;
- No. 62. Decision: within six months of the investigation being completed.

*Note: In December 2012, the verification team received two documents (both undated and without institutional designation) that are directly pertinent to the status of demarcation, titling and extensions of Amerindian land. One of these is a report entitled “Outstanding issues with Amerindian land” and the other is a table of villages that applied for titles, extensions and demarcations, with dates of the applications¹⁸. According to the table, twelve communities applied for titles between Apr 2003 and Aug

¹⁷ American Land Titling consultation dates; this document compiled by the GoG on Dec 3, 2012 and submitted to the verification team as a final piece of evidence.

¹⁸ Due to the subject matter, we assume these were both compiled or authored by the MoAA.

2009 (whereas the “outstanding issues” report says that there are 13 communities eligible for titling – is one of these documents more recent than the other?); there is no information as to whether those titles have been granted. Twenty-nine villages applied for extensions between Jun 2003 and Apr 2010; again, there is no information as to whether those titles have been granted. Furthermore, this information conflicts with earlier information from the MoAA (Table 1) that indicates that the MoAA has received 41 eligible applications for land extensions (this doc lists only 29). It is, therefore, difficult to determine how to use and interpret this new information. Finally, according to this table, thirteen villages were demarcated within this audit period and were issued their Certificate of Title (these titles were issued in two groups, on Oct 25, 2010 and July 25, 2011), but there is no information as to the date that those applications for demarcation were made, and consequently we cannot assess if the MoAA acted in a timely fashion as per the Amerindian Act.

Some communities with pending extensions that were interviewed by the verification team stated that they had not received a response from the MoAA about their land titling and extension petitions over many months or years. If that is the case, the MoAA is not adhering to the time frame established in the Amerindian Act. Community members expressed disappointment as to lack of movement on this issue of extreme importance to them and some stated that this was a breach of indigenous rights.

Conflict between state protected areas and Amerindian lands: The Amerindian Act (Part V, 58.) states that “No protected area may be established over the whole or any part of Village lands without the consent of the Village general meeting.” Furthermore, the *Guidelines at the local level for establishing protected areas*, in Guyana’s REDD+ Governance Development Plan (Draft, Sept 2010) lists as one guideline “Where potential protected areas fall within lands claimed by Amerindians, efforts will be made to resolve those claims.” Nevertheless, it was found by the verification team that some communities directly involved in the demarcation of new national protected areas (2010-11) were displeased that their pending requests for land extensions had not been attended to by the MoAA during that process, as they had been led to believe would happen. Apparently, consent for protected area boundaries had been given but land claims had not been resolved and land-based conflicts definitely continue to exist.

Mining conflicts on Amerindian lands: Some titled communities are struggling with intrusions by miners (foreign, Guyanese non-Amerindian, and Amerindian) in their legally recognized areas as well as other areas that they considered belong to them. In Region VII, all Amerindian villages are involved in mining.

Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC): There are a number of legal mechanisms that require that Guyana’s REDD+ activities respect the right to FPIC, among them Guyana’s Constitution (2003), The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the World Bank’s Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF).

The underlying principles of FPIC, as described in community manual on climate change developed in the North Rupununi are: information about and consultation on any proposed initiative and its likely impacts; meaningful participation of indigenous peoples; and, representative institutions (Stone & Chacón León 2010). And, from the indigenous people of the South Rupununi (2012, p. 80) comes the following list of FPIC Rules:

- Our right to FPIC applies over all of our traditional titled lands including areas over which we are seeking extension of title;
- In line with this, outside people proposing to do projects and government agencies must first give village councils information on how the proposal may affect the rights, resources or interests of our communities;
- If a proposal may affect more than one village, information must also be given to the appropriate District Toshao Council (DTC);

- If a project or decision might affect the whole territory, both DTCs (South-Central and South Rupununi Districts) must be part of the FPIC process;
- Information must be given in a form that is understandable to the communities;
- Village councils will help their affected villages and satellites, including homesteaders and ranchers, to discuss the proposals;
- Discussions amongst ourselves must include elders and other knowledgeable people in the community, as well as women and youth;
- Ample time must be allowed for us to discuss with each other and form groups to check over projects proposed by outsiders.

The proposed “Opt-in” mechanism is the means by which forest-dependent Amerindian communities can participate in the REDD+/LCDS process (OCC 2012). The verification team gathered evidence which suggested, based on many comments made by Amerindian people in the villages visited, that insufficient information had been provided to them for a clear understanding of the opt-in mechanism. Some of the villages had received the opt-in document, but only in the previous months (early 2012), while other villages had not received it or did not know about it. Comments by village members about the opt-in mechanism ranged from open acknowledgement of a lack of understanding, to concern that opting in would take away the village’s rights regarding their forests, land and natural resources; and some people were worried that Guyana was selling their forests to Norway. Confusion about opting-in was high even among Amerindian people with good formal education who had read the document, because the benefits of opting-in were unclear in the document. Some current Toshias were not aware whether previous Toshias had opted in or not, and wondered if there were provisions for “opting-out” if that was the case. The GoG has explained that all communities (Amerindian or other) will benefit from LCDS through projects: hydroelectricity (Amaila hydropower); information, communication and technology (ICT) (e.g. solar panels and a laptop per household); the Cunha canal; and the Amerindian Development Fund under which all Amerindian communities would benefit equally. Under the premise that all Amerindian communities would benefit equally, community members posed the following questions during the verification team’s visits: What would be the advantage of “opting-in” if all communities are going to benefit equally? Why take the risk of losing control over the community’s own forests by “opting-in” if treatment will be equal for all?

A major concern in some communities had to do with whether opting-in would require abandonment of traditional agriculture methods and other land uses, and whether traditional activities (fishing and mining) would no longer be allowed.

Additional economic benefits from REDD+ activities to forest-dependent Amerindian communities (or communities with forested lands) that decide to opt in were not understood, particularly since the forested regions that are currently considered under the LCDS MoU are all state-owned. Responses recorded from visits to Amerindian villages indicated a generalized low level of comprehension about opting-in, and a serious lack of information and consultation, though there were some notable exceptions, such as the Northern Rupununi District Development Board (NRDDB).

Based on Amerindian comments during field visits, as well as comments (both written and verbal) from individuals and NGOs familiar with land rights and processes in Guyana, it appears that FPIC principles and rules (as described above by Amerindian groups) were not fulfilled in terms of effective participation, consultation and provision of adequate information on the potential impacts of LCDS/REDD+ activities in a form that is understandable to communities and that allows their meaningful participation, particularly in relation to untitled customary lands of proposed land extensions.

Amerindian representation for REDD+/LCDS decision making: The roles and functions of the NTC are described in the Amerindian Act, Part IV. The GoG has emphasized the importance of the NTC, especially in its representation of Amerindian concerns in the LCDS process (OCC, June 2012). The

NTC in turn, is represented by its Chair on the Multi-stakeholder Steering Committee (MSSC), who participates in REDD+ and LCDS consultations and international meetings. The verification team recognizes that Toshias are elected by their community constituents and that the Chair of the NTC is also an elected official. Despite this, numerous Amerindian people in the villages visited by the verification team, as well as other representatives interviewed, expressed strongly and unequivocally that the current Chair of the NTC did not adequately represent them and their concerns as they related to this process. Other comments made during interviews indicated that some of the Amerindian NGOs that participate in the MSSC do not always represent the views of their constituents.

The Guyana Human Rights Association (GHRA) wrote in an article for publication that there has been a recent deterioration in the relationship between the MoAA and unspecified Amerindian organizations “due to the systematic attempts to weaken or eliminate the latter from influencing decision-making (LCDS, protected areas, land demarcation, toshaos elections)” (GHRA May 2012).

Please note that the RA verification team’s perspectives presented here are extremely similar to those expressed previously in the LTS International et. al. “Real-time Evaluation of Norway’s International Climate and Forest Initiative” (March 2011), in the section on Amerindian Issues (pp. 46-47). We refer specifically to comments on (1) “slow progress with titling and the resolution of outstanding extension claims,” (2) the need for “greater clarity on the mandate and accountability of the various Amerindian representative groups,” (3) the need to “revisit the proposed speed with which outstanding Amerindian land titles will be settled . . . to settle them as soon as possible” and (4) that “it is not clear that Amerindian communities yet have sufficient knowledge to take fully informed decisions on “Opting-in” and further effort is indicated on this.”

Audit Conclusion

The verification team concludes that during this audit period, the GoG has failed to consistently “enable the effective participation of indigenous peoples” or effectively “enable indigenous communities to...opt in.” Multiple stakeholders indicate that the GoG has failed to document and address land titling concerns of many Amerindian communities within the time frame established by the Amerindian Act. Attention to, and negotiation over, untitled community lands and extensions appears to have stalled during this audit period. It is hoped that the Amerindian Land Titling Project (ALT) funded by the UNDP for the period Sept 2012 to Nov 2014 (but outside this audit period) will catalyze the land titling and extension processes as it “seeks to enable Amerindians to secure their lands and natural resources with a view towards sustainable social and economic development. . . . It is also expected to enhance the opportunities for villages to ‘opt-in’ to the REDD+ and the LCDS, should they wish to do so (UNDP 2012).”

Several cases make it clear that FPIC has been lacking in the REDD+/LCDS process, particularly with respect to territorial rights and the REDD+ opt-in process that will soon be available to forest-dependent Amerindian communities. The opt-in mechanism suffers from an overall lack of understanding by many of the very people who need to make a decision on how to proceed. Finally, many indigenous people feel that their voices are not heard, particularly with respect to land rights, and that their views are not adequately represented in the LCDS process under the current composition and operations of the MSSC.

This Indicator is not met.

List of Documents:

Amerindian Peoples Association. January 2011. Comments by the APA on the Government of Guayana project concept note on “Amerindian Land Titling and Demarcation” submitted to the Guyana REDD Investment Fund (GRIF).

Feedback on “Opt In” Mechanism for Amerindian Communities, Comments from March-June 2010.

Guyana Human Rights Association. May 5, 2012. GHRA Executive reviews critical issues. For Publication.

Indigenous peoples of the South Rupununi. 2012. Thinking together for those coming behind us. An outline plan for the care of Wapichan territory in Guyana. South Central and South Rupununi Districts Toshaos Council, South Rupununi, Region 9, Guyana.

Laws of Guyana. Amerindian Act 2006. Chapter 29:01.

LTS International in collaboration with Indufor Oy, Ecometrica and Christian Michelsen Institute. Real Time Evaluation of Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative, Contributions to National REDD+ Processes 2007-2010, Country Report: Guyana, March 2011.

Ministry of Amerindian Affairs. Undated document. Village lands and extensions outlined for Titling and Demarcation – 3 year plan.

Ministry of Amerindian Affairs. Undated document. Amerindian Land Titling Consultation Dates.

Ministry of Amerindian Affairs. Undated document. Table of villages that applied for titles, extensions and demarcations with dates of applications.

Ministry of Amerindian Affairs. Undated document. Outstanding issues with Amerindian land.

Office of Climate Change. June 2012. Guyana – Norway Partnership, REDD+ Enabling Activities Report, Annual Performance, 2011.

Office of the President. March 2010. Developing a Framework for an “Opt in” Mechanism for Amerindian Communities. Concept Paper (Draft for Discussion). LCDS.

Office of the President. Sept 2010. Guyana's REDD+ Governance Development Plan.

Personal communication to the Norwegian International Climate and Forest Initiative (NICFI) and RA in the form of a detailed letter dated April 14, 2011; signed by Global Witness, Forest Management Trust, Forest Peoples Programme, Rainforest Foundation Norway, Rainforest Foundation UK and Rainforest Foundation US.

Stone, S. & M. Chacón León. 2010. Climate change & forests. A community manual. Conservation International, Iwokrama and Conservation International-Guyana.

UNDP. 5 September 2012. Draft project document on the Amerindian Land Titling Project (limited circulation).

Verification Indicator 4:

Transparent and accountable oversight and governance of the financial support.

The JCN (March 2011) states as follows:

“In 2011, Guyana and Norway will work with the Trustee and Partner Entities of the GRIF to identify how the GRIF mechanism can function in a way that is fit for the purpose of channeling results-based international support to the implementation of Guyana's low carbon development strategy in an effective, efficient and equitable manner. Moreover, like all other elements of the Guyana-Norway partnership, the financial intermediary function should be independently evaluated to ensure that it meets the needs of stakeholders within Guyana, and that useful lessons are generated to inform the global debates on REDD+.

Therefore:

- Guyana and Norway will invite the other partners involved in the Guyana REDD+ Investment Fund (GRIF) – the World Bank, The Inter American Development Bank, and the UNDP; within the framework provided by the structure of the GRIF (including the GRIF Governance Framework document, the Administrative Agreement and the Transfer Agreements) – to participate in an independently facilitated

process, which will be initiated by Guyana and Norway to: (i) help to accelerate the disbursement of funds from the GRIF, in a manner which is in accordance with the AA and the TAs of the GRIF, and in a manner satisfactory to all concerned; (ii) identify potential short-term improvements in the processes and practices of the GRIF and all its partners in the GRIF context. This facilitated process will start by mid-May 2011.

- Guyana and Norway will – as part of the annual review process of the partnership – appoint an expert organization to assess the overall performance of the GRIF and make recommendations for its improvement.
- Transparency around funding is also critical for REDD+ to function well. To facilitate such transparency, the Government of Guyana will – by the end of April 2011 – establish a dedicated website, containing an overview of all committed international funding for activities relevant to REDD+ and LCDS efforts in Guyana. This will ensure easy access to transparent information on contributors to Guyana’s REDD+ and LCDS efforts. The website will track pledges of funding, commitments of funding, and actual disbursements.”

Audit Findings

The first Rainforest Alliance Verification Report (pages 30 and 31) described Guyana’s progress on financial support, and in particular the management of the GRIF, in the period prior to October 1, 2010. The summary findings, at that time, indicated that a GRIF agreement had only just been signed, formally establishing the GRIF as of October 8, 2010. No reporting on REDD+ investments overall (including those outside the GRIF) had been provided in the Progress Reports available at the time, though the GoG and other supporters had made investments.

In this audit period from October 1, 2010 to June 30, 2012, the RA verification team has focused on the following three elements identified in the revised March 31, 2011 JCN: a) accelerating/improving the flow of resources, b) achievements in terms of external review of the GRIF performance, and c) transparency related to GRIF funding activities.

Status of the GRIF – The latest REDD+ Enabling Activities Report on Annual Performance 2011 (distributed June 2012 and referred to as the 2011 Annual Performance Report) from the OCC provides more detail than described herein. The following is a brief summary. First, the GRIF exists and US\$69.8 million has been put into the fund by the GoN. A GRIF Steering Committee has been formed to oversee it. The committee has formally met twice (November 2010 and May 2011). A website has been established (www.guyanareddfund.org) to communicate about the GRIF. A GRIF Operational Manual has been produced and is available on the website, in addition to other documents. For example, the following documents are provided indicating project-related progress:

- Approval of Institutional Strengthening project concept note;
- Approval of Micro and Small Enterprise and Building Alternative Livelihoods Project Concept Note;
- Approval of Institutional Strengthening Project Document;
- Amerindian Development Fund PCN - Record of Decision; and,
- Cunha Canal PCN - Record of Decision.

In 2011 the Meridian Institute conducted an external review of the GRIF’s management and LTS International conducted an external “real time” evaluation at the request of the GoN which also reflects on Guyana and the GRIF. The GoN also indicates that further external GRIF progress assessments are being conducted in the near future, in collaboration with the GoG, trustee and partner entities. It is expected that these will provide much more detailed examination of the intricacies of GRIF from a financial and/or management perspective than the process or transparency verification conducted within the scope of this RA verification audit.

Flow of GRIF Resources - Virtually all parties, including government, partner entities, potential beneficiaries and other stakeholders indicate frustration with the slow flow (referred to as “sloth” in the 2011 Annual Performance Report) of resources from the GRIF. This included a specific memo from various members of the MSSC to the GoN indicating concern with the progress of funding and the GRIF. Though the GoN has made a major disbursement to the fund, the delivery and application of those resources to field activities is slow. There is little recent news on the GRIF website about recent investments (the only item in the “News” section dates to September 2011). As per the 2011 Annual Performance Report from the GoG, the slowness of financial investments has impaired progress, as have other external factors such as the 2011 presidential elections, changes in government, and negative dynamics caused by a vote in the Guyanese National Assembly in April 2012 that did not approve the President’s proposed budget for investments in LCDS and REDD+ and reduced the budget from approximately GY\$ 18 billion to GY\$ 1.

External Reviews of GRIF Performance – In 2011 the Project Management Office (PMO) engaged the Meridian Institute to provide independent review of GRIF management. Meridian staff interviewed numerous parties engaged in day-to-day management of the GRIF with the intent of developing recommendations for improved GRIF management. This included interaction with GoG, GoN, the trustee (World Bank), the partner entities (IDB and UNDP), and PMO staff. Meridian provided a set of recommendations for improved GRIF management to these parties in late 2011. To date the recommendations of Meridian are still being considered by the involved parties.

Separately the GoN commissioned LTS International to conduct a “Real Time Evaluation of Norway’s International Climate and Forest Initiative”, dated March 2011, which includes sections on Guyana. In this report a series of suggestions for improvement are made, a number of which track closely to the situation confronted by the audit team at the time of this audit.

Both of the above processes, plus other inputs, are currently being considered by the GoN and GoG as they consider improvements to the GRIF management, including expeditiously moving forward with various projects.

GRIF Transparency – The GRIF website continues to be the vehicle of choice for communication of progress, project status, etc. The website includes, for each page, a “last updated” function which is useful. However, the information is not always up to date. For example at the time of the audit the GRIF Fact Sheet did not discuss the revised March 2011 JCN. Also, the documents provided present a relatively static picture of what is going on. There does not appear to be a regular periodic (e.g. monthly, bimonthly, quarterly, etc.) updates on the status of the GRIF overall.

Separately, the revised JCN also states that information will be made available through national systems of public disclosure, including to the National Assembly. According to OCC staff, information was available to Assembly members if requested. There was a budget submission to the General Assembly requesting authorization of expenditures in support of, or as a complement to, GRIF investments, but this submission was rejected by the Assembly.

There is a continuing dialogue internally on how GRIF progress can be more effectively communicated in Guyana. Based on the inputs of multiple parties, including but not limited to stakeholders or beneficiaries, it is hard to see how this indicator can be effectively achieved without expanding the reach of GRIF transparency efforts and communications beyond use of the Internet. The Internet is not a consistently effective tool for communication with either Amerindian or non-Amerindian communities in the interior, or for many interested parties even in locations closer to Georgetown. This does not mean that improved GRIF reporting on the Internet wouldn’t be welcomed or isn’t necessary – some parties indicate they can and would use the site for seeking timely information. Improving the Internet tool in terms of the quantity, quality and timeliness of information would likely contribute to enhanced performance on this indicator. However, heavy reliance on the Internet for communication of GRIF progress, investments, though clearly one output expected under the JCN, will not “ensure easy access to transparent information on contributors to Guyana’s REDD+ and LCDS efforts” (per JCN) for the multiple groups of interested parties inside and outside Guyana, particularly Amerindian interests.

Is GRIF a Performance-based Transaction or an International Aid Project? Based on the revised JCN, Guyana is to be paid for its performance through an incentive structure which rewards keeping deforestation below an agreed reference level, as well as avoiding increased forest degradation. The JCN states “The Governments of Guyana and Norway strongly endorse the establishment of such an incentive structure under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). To help facilitate such an agreement, the Governments have decided to pilot such an incentive structure on a national scale and in a pragmatic, gradually evolving, workable and hopefully replicable manner. Once an international regime is in place, the Guyana-Norway partnership will be adjusted accordingly.” Section 3.1 of the JCN sets out the incentive structure, while Section 3.2 outlines how performance is to be assessed. Per the JCN, the GoN is to “apply an interim carbon price of US\$5 per tonne of avoided emissions, providing Guyana does not exceed an agreed level of deforestation within the context of the Guyana-Norway partnership – see Section 3.1.3. If the deforestation rate is above the levels stipulated in section 3.1.3, payments will be reduced and ultimately cease.” The payments due to Guyana for a given year are to be paid *post facto* but will only be applied if Guyana’s observed deforestation rate is below the agreed reference levels and acceptable deforestation rates as stipulated in the revised March 2011 JCN.

The above language, taken from the JCN, clearly articulates that payment to the GRIF is performance-based (i.e. results based). However, in discussions that occurred with the MSSC and in discussions between RA audit team members and numerous stakeholders, confusion is evident – Is the initiative embodied within the JCN a “performance-based” program, or is it an international grants-based donor-grantee effort? Indeed, is this distinction important or relevant or are the two approaches mutually incompatible? GRIF communications do not provide transparent communication as to the “performance-based” versus “international aid” nature of GRIF investments. The revised JCN provides very useful information on the performance or results framework, but as mentioned above, it is not consistently communicated through the Internet or to stakeholders, though the 2011 Performance Report - produced and distributed (via the Internet) in June 2012 - does refer to it. Numerous parties are confused about this, and as such do not clearly understand the nature of specific commitments or expected actions by beneficiaries or other parties to meet GRIF investment requirements.

Audit Conclusion

The Guyana REDD+ Investment Fund (GRIF) mechanism is now in place and there has been some progress in improving the flow of GRIF resources. Some projects are finally moving forward. However, the flow of GRIF investment funds into Guyana continues to be extremely slow and this is undermining support for and understanding of the REDD+ initiative. Alternative mechanisms to support pilot or other activities (e.g. alternative funding that was obtained to support GFC work on IFM) were regarded positively by multiple stakeholders and the suggestion was made that more intensive use of such alternatives be consider, at the same time that partner entities and the GoN continue to implement carefully the safeguards that are required for GRIF project implementation. Some community-level beneficiaries, including some of the Amerindian communities interacted with during this audit, are supportive of the concept of LCDS and some specific elements of REDD+, but are increasingly skeptical that resources will be forthcoming. In terms of external review of GRIF performance, external review occurred in 2011. Active dialogue on potential changes within the GRIF implementing agencies (GoG, UNDP, IDB and GoN) is ongoing but the results of this review have not been incorporated into GRIF management to date and contemplated changes have not been shared publicly. With regard to GRIF transparency, the GoG approach to information transparency to date has largely relied on use of the Internet with increasing amounts of information being provided there. Enhancements in the quality, quantity and timeliness of information are expected in the near future and will be welcomed by interested parties. However, the Internet should not be the only vehicle for communication and the use of the Internet as the principal vehicle for GRIF transparency is not likely to be successful.

This Indicator is partially met.

List of Documents

Guyana REDD+ Investment Fund (GRIF) Steering Committee, May 12, 2011. Interim Funding for a National System for Monitoring, Reporting and Verification for 2011.

Joint Concept Note (GoG and GoN), Version 2, March 2011.

Independent Forest Monitoring Multi Stakeholder Reporting Panel, September 26, 2011. Minutes of Meeting #1.

LTS International in collaboration with Indufor Oy, Ecometrica and Christian Michelsen Institute, Real Time Evaluation of Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative, Contributions to National REDD+ Processes 2007-2010, Country Report: Guyana, March 2011.

Multi-Stakeholder Steering Committee (MSSC), Minutes of Meeting 44, Thursday, 3rd May 2012.

Office of Climate Change, June 2012. Guyana-Norway Partnership. REDD+ Enabling Activities Report Annual Performance 2011.

Verification Indicator 5:

Initial Structure for the Independent Forest Monitoring (IFM).

The Joint Concept Note (March 2011) states as follows:

“An initial structure for an Independent Forest Monitoring mechanism shall be in place by mid-2011. Its first report shall be due by the end of 2011.”

Audit Findings

The first Rainforest Alliance Verification Report (pages 30 and 31) describes Guyana's progress on an Independent Forest Monitoring (IFM) mechanism in the period prior to October 1, 2010. At the time of the first verification, the Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC) had developed a terms of reference (TOR) for an initial scoping mission to review a draft of an IFM mechanism and had issued a call for proposal through local, regional and international media outlets (Guyana Forestry Commission, 2010). That call for proposal followed a consultation process that included local stakeholders, a number of international organizations and close review of the Global Witness July 2005 handbook “ A Guide to Independent Forest Monitoring”. At the time of the first audit, the initial scoping was expected to be conducted in the last quarter of 2010.

In this audit period from October 1, 2010 to June 30, 2012, the GFC received and reviewed the proposals for the scoping mission. In late 2010, GFC notified the GFA Consulting Group that they were the successful bidder on the work. GFC intended that GFA carry out the scoping work described in the proposal in June, 2011 so that there could be a six month gap between the scoping and a full audit that was planned to take place in late 2011 to meet the timeline established in the revised JCN. This separation was intended to allow Guyana an opportunity to make changes and improvements in response to the scoping report. There was, however, a delay in securing the funding for this project even though the project had been approved by the GRIF Steering Committee (as part of the Institutional Strengthening Project approved in mid-2011). Thus, the GFC did not have funding to complete a contract with GFA as planned and the scoping work for the independent monitoring mechanism was delayed.

The GFC told the RA team that they felt it was important to try and meet the end of 2011 timeline established in the JCN, so the GFC approached the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) directly and requested a commitment from the IDB that funds would be reimbursed to the GFC once they were delivered to IDB from the trustee. The IDB indicated that a re-imbusement commitment was possible but first required an audit of the GFC procurement process. The IDB undertook the audit and found the

GFC in conformance with procurement requirements and in August 2011, IDB issued the GFC a letter of commitment to reimburse the GFC up to a specified maximum amount. This assurance of reimbursement allowed the GFC to use internal funds to sign a contract arrangement with GFA to undertake the planned IFM scoping work. At the time of this audit in July 2012, GFC has still not received any funds to support this work, but the letter of commitment from the IDB has allowed the GFC to retain the GFA Consulting Group to complete work on the IFM mechanism to meet the JCN performance indicators.

Because of the time that had elapsed during the search for funds, the GFC also negotiated with the GFA Group to expand the “scoping” to a more thorough “preliminary audit” and to include substantially more work to review and test the monitoring indicators so that a full audit could be completed as soon as possible. GFA undertook the expanded “scoping” project between September 26 and October 13, 2011. The scoping work included field visits to forest sites, log yards, sawmills and lumber yards. Consultation during the scoping included members of the MSSC, Amerindian representatives (APA, GOIP, TAAMOG, and NADF), International NGOs (CI, WWF), private companies, and the Independent Forest Monitoring Multi Stakeholder Reporting Panel established by the GFC. The scoping work included a thorough review of the proposed set of Principles and Criteria for Independent Forest Monitoring. On December 16 2011, GFA provided a lengthy report on the results of the scoping mission titled “Guyana Independent Forest Monitoring Scoping Report” (GFA Consulting Group, 2011).

The GFA scoping report found a significant degree of conformance with the Criteria for Monitoring – only three out of 42 applicable indicators were not met, and a further eight indicators were recorded as “not clear if met”. The report identified areas of strength and weaknesses in conformity with the Criteria. The report also identified areas where the GFC could focus work in the period before the full audit to address weaknesses. These were laid out in a Work Breakdown Structure which identified timelines for the GFC to implement corrective actions.

In addition, the GFA report reviewed each Criteria and Indicator and recommended re-wording a number of indicators to improve the monitoring mechanism. The proposed changes to the wording were then reviewed by the IFM Multi-Stakeholder Reporting Panel.

Since the scoping in late 2011, the IFM Multi-Stakeholder Reporting Panel and the GFC have been active in following up on the report and making preparations for the first full audit. Five meetings of the Panel were held up between September 2011 and May 8, 2012 when the revised Criteria and Indicators were approved by the Panel. The first audit was planned to occur in July 2012, in the week following this verification audit, and was planned to be conducted by the same GFA Consulting Group team. The contractual arrangement with the GFA Consulting Group requires that the audit report be made available for comment by the GFC and finalized by the end of September 2012.

Audit Conclusion

The verification team concludes that the structure for an IFM mechanism is now in place. It was not in place by mid-2011 as identified in the revised JCN, but the failure to meet this timeline was a result of delays in the funding mechanisms, not the fault of the GFC. The GFC has been diligent and creative in making arrangements to undertake the development of a robust forest monitoring mechanism as quickly as possible, and has completed that task. The first audit was not completed by the end of 2011 as identified in the revised JCN, but is expected to be completed well before the end of 2012.

The team notes that the current scope for the IFM Criteria for Monitoring is limited to Timber Sale Agreements, Wood Cutting Leases, and State Forest Permissions on state forest land and state land and all transport of logs and lumber. The IFM Criteria do include provisions for Amerindian lands but these are not yet applicable because Amerindian communities have not yet “opted-in” to the LCDS.

This Indicator is met.

List of Documents

GFA Consulting Group, December 16, 2011. Guyana Independent Forest Monitoring Scoping Report.

Global Witness, July 2005. A Guide to Independent Forest Monitoring.

Guyana Forestry Commission, August 10, 2010. Independent Forest Monitoring in Guyana: Terms of Reference and Background Information.

Guyana REDD+ Investment Fund (GRIF) Steering Committee, May 12, 2011. Interim Funding for a National System for Monitoring, Reporting and Verification for 2011.

Independent Forest Monitoring Multi Stakeholder Reporting Panel, September 26, 2011. Minutes of Meeting #1.

Office of Climate Change, June 2012. Guyana-Norway Partnership. REDD+ Enabling Activities Report Annual Performance 2011.

Verification Indicator 6:

Continuing stakeholder consultation on the European Union Forest Law Enforcement, Government and Trade (EU-FLEGT) process.

The revised JCN (March 2011) refers to measures to advance REDD+ governance and anticipates progress in a number of areas in the 2010 to 2011 period. The anticipated progress included progress on consultation with stakeholders in the forestry sector in Guyana and the initiation of negotiations on a Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) through the European Union Forest Law Enforcement, Government and Trade (EU-FLEGT) process.

The revised JCN states as follows:

“Stakeholder consultation on the European Union Forest Law Enforcement, Government and Trade (EU-FLEGT) process will continue. The Government of Guyana and the European Commission will, by September 2011, initiate negotiations on a Forest Law Enforcement, Government and Trade Voluntary Partnership Agreement, in a manner that is consistent with the outcomes of this consultation where applicable.”

Audit Findings

The first Rainforest Alliance Verification Report (pages 30 and 31) describes Guyana’s progress to consider initiating an EU-FLEGT process in the period prior to October 1, 2010. The report describes the consultation process that began in early 2010 following internal discussion within the government of Guyana regarding the national objectives and interests in participating in a FLEGT process. This discussion included the European Union (EU) office in Brussels and the European Forestry Institute (EFI) of the EU. The first RA report also describes a two-day workshop held in September 2010 coordinated by the GFC. This workshop brought together a wide variety of stakeholders in Guyana including members of civil society, community forestry groups, private sector forest producers, public sector institutions, National Toshias Council (NTC), Amerindian NGOs and other stakeholders to receive information and to provide input into development of a national approach to the EU-FLEGT process. Ninety-eight people representing a total of 37 different organizations participated in the two-day workshop and produced a series of notes summarizing civil society, public sector, private sector and community perspectives. The GFC prepared a summary of the results of the workshop and a consolidated matrix of the comments received following the workshop. Those comments address the various implications for Guyana associated with joining the EU-FLEGT scheme.

In this audit period from October 1, 2010 to June 30, 2012, Guyana has made significant progress to meet this indicator, under the continuing leadership of the GFC and with collaboration and support from the Guyana Forest Products Association (FPA), the EFI, and the Food and Agriculture Organization of

the United Nations (FAO), as well as stakeholder groups in Guyana. A summary of the activities is provided in the June 2012 performance report (OCC, 2012) (pages 15, 16 and 67).

In January 2011, the Guyana FPA, with the support of the GFC, organized a two-day workshop to present information to their members and a variety of other invited stakeholders on FLEGT and to seek comments. The FPA held a second similar workshop in August 2011. Approximately 80 persons attended these workshops representing a broad cross-section of FPA members and stakeholders in Guyana. An FPA representative told the team that the workshops were very successful and that FPA members are working closely with the GFC on this initiative.

In June 2011, upon a request from the GFC to the EU, EFI organized a five-day fact-finding mission in Guyana to collect data, interview a variety of stakeholders and visit field operations to assess on-going and planned programs related to forest legality. Following this mission, EFI prepared a 16 page assessment report (EFI, 2011) evaluating Guyana's current systems and providing recommendations for possible engagement of Guyana in VPA negotiations with the EU.

In July 2011, GFC sent this assessment and earlier workshop information to the MSSC and to 37 organizations for comments. Sixteen different organizations representing a cross section of interests provided comments by the deadline in November 2011. These included the Amerindian Peoples Association (APA), the Amerindian Action Movement of Guyana (TAAMOG) and Conservation International (CI) as well as private sector companies and government agencies.

The GFC also made a presentation to a total of 166 people representing many Amerindian villages at the July 2011 annual meeting of the NTC and provided copies of the assessment prepared following the EFI work in June 2011 to each Toshao and sought comments.

These consultation activities are fully described in a report (GFC, 2012) that consolidated and presented all the stakeholder input and the information collected during the period between September 2010 and December 2011 and presented the results. The GFC then submitted this report for direct official government policy.

On March 8, 2012 the GoG communicated a decision to the EU to formally commence the process of negotiating a VPA following the EU-FLEGT road map process. A government media release from the MoNRE on March 12, 2012 announced that decision and reviewed the process of consultation led by the GFC with assistance from EFI and the FPA that led to the decision.

Following the announcement, in the period between March 26, 2012 and June 11, 2012, the GFC collaborated with the FAO to undertake a series of 12 workshops in different locations throughout Guyana to provide updated information about the EU-FLEGT process and to foster greater stakeholder participation in the next steps of implementing a VPA in Guyana. Over 400 people, representing loggers, community forests, Amerindian communities and organizations, social and environmental NGOs, government and the private sector, attended these workshops. The GFC and FAO produced a report (2012) that provides a short summary of nine key findings from the workshops.

In March 2012, following the government decision and media release, the GoG wrote to the EU office in Guyana, and then to the EU Ambassador in Brussels to initiate discussion on the next steps in negotiating a VPA. The first video conference to discuss the roadmap and a timetable for the VPA negotiation was held on July 12, 2012, while the RA verification team was in Guyana.

Audit Conclusion

The verification team concludes that stakeholder consultation on Guyana's participation in an EU-FLEGT process continued throughout the audit period. This consultation was effective in communicating information and was successful in obtaining input and comments from stakeholder organizations, including Amerindian organizations. The consultation process led to a decision by the GoG to initiate negotiations on a Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA). Although this was not completed by September 2011 as identified in the Joint Concept Note, it was completed by the end of the audit period in June 2012. (Note: A video conference was held in July 2012 and the negotiation

process appears to have been initiated.)

The verification team notes that the consultation undertaken to meet this indicator was done without any funds from the GRIF. The GFC was creative in undertaking partnerships with other institutions (EFI and FAO) and stakeholder groups (FPA) to undertake a broad consultation process in the absence of support from the GoG/GoN funds.

This Indicator is met.

List of Documents re EU- FLEGT

European Forest Institute, July 1, 2011. Assessment of Guyana Forest Legality and Monitoring Mechanisms. Working Paper.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) and the Guyana Forestry Commission. July 4, 2012. Conducting Stakeholder Consultations Concerning FLEGT and the Log Export Policy. Summary Report.

Guyana Forestry Commission, January 6, 2012. Update on Guyana's Engagement with EU-FLEGT.

Office of Climate Change, June 2012. Guyana-Norway Partnership. REDD+ Enabling Activities Report Annual Performance 2011.

Verification Indicator 7:

Continuing development of a national inter-sectoral system for coordinated land use.

The JCN (March 2011) states as follows:

“The development of a national, inter-sectoral system for coordinated land use will continue. The system shall serve to maximize benefits to society and development, while minimizing negative impacts on the environment, from land-use decisions. By mid November 2011, Guyana's Special Land Use Committee, comprising stakeholders from the Government and forest dependent sectors, will have identified - and established a plan for implementation of - the necessary measures, including enforcement measures, to be implemented in the relevant forest dependent sectors, including forestry and mining. These will ensure that these sectors can operate at the standards necessary to sustainably protect Guyana's forest. Recognizing that sustainable, well coordinated land use is a continuous challenge, further mechanisms will be established and/or strengthened to ensure such coordination, where necessary. Key measures to be implemented by the end of 2011 will on that basis be agreed by the partners by mid November 2011 as an addendum to this JCN.”

Audit Findings

The first Rainforest Alliance Verification Report did not specifically address the topic of an inter-sectoral system for coordinated land use. The revised JCN (March 2011) refers more specifically to expectations in this regard, and analysis thereof is reflected below.

In late 2011 the GoG established the new Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE). The agencies which the Ministry has direct responsibility for include the Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the National Parks Commission (NPC), the Wildlife Management Authority (WMA), the Guyana Lands & Surveys Commission (GL&SC), the Guyana Geology and Mines Commissions (GGMC) and the Protected Areas Commission (PAC). Currently the MoNRE is in the process of developing a five year strategic plan for this new ministry, which is to provide enhanced national leadership across key natural and extractive resources activities in Guyana, including on issues related to climate change (a specific element written into the draft Terms of Reference for the strategic plan). Through the IDB, a consultant is expected to be identified

and to support development of this strategic plan in cooperation with government agencies.

In addition to the above, a Special Land Use Committee (SLUC) has been formed including members from MoNRE, Guyana Gold & Diamond Miners Association (GGDMA), GGMC, GFC, EPA, GGMC, Forest Products Association (FPA) and GL&SC. At the time of this verification the MoNRE was considering how to engage Amerindian interests in this effort. The SLUC has met three times (the last meeting was April 26, 2012) and, although the SLUC has not developed a “plan” for actions *per se*, it has identified projects for implementation. For example, at the April meeting, five projects were identified for implementation over a three-month period starting in May 2012 (Table 2). These were discussed in detail at the April meeting and members had the opportunity to share additional comments.. At the time of this audit the results of the planned activities were not available. In theory, at the end of the three months, a review and further selection of more recommendations for implementation would be conducted.

Table 2. Brief Description of the first five projects identified for implementation as part of the national inter-sectoral system for coordinated land use.

Project	Output	Activities
Strengthening Land-Use Planning and Coordination among natural resource agencies	Integration of GFC, GGMC, GL&SC and EPA Geographic Information Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meet with GIS technicians from the respective agencies. - Design a mechanism for data sharing. - Prepare a written document outlining standard operating procedures for data sharing. - Confirm a date for routine submission of data. - Decide which agency has the technical and staff requirements needed to manage the data.
Sustainable Land Management in the mining and forestry sector	Effective coordination of resource utilization in areas of multiple-use, particularly forestry and mining.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meet with Commissioners of GGMC and GFC, and subsequently with representatives from GGDMA and FPA. - Identify current laws, regulations and procedures for resource utilization in each sector. - Determine where potential overlaps or conflicts exist. - Draft framework for resolving conflicts due to multiple land use in forestry and mining.
Enhanced Land Reclamation	Increased, and more effective, reclamation of mined out lands.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct a study to determine the estimated cost to reclaim an acre of mined out areas in different mining districts. - Compare the finding of the study with the current price of the environmental bond. - Decide whether increasing of the environmental bond is necessary.
Improved Infrastructure in Mining Districts	Upgraded and effectively managed mining roads and related infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish a Hinterland Infrastructure Committee. - Finalize TOR for the committee. - Prepare and implement a work plan for roads to be managed or rehabilitated for 2012.
Amendments to Mining Act and Regulations	Updated and effective Mining legislation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review the Mining Act and its regulations. - Determine gaps and areas for amendment. - Draft amendments/additions to the Mining Act and regulations (e.g., regulations on administration and management of the mining industry).

Per Project 3, a Hinterland Infrastructure Committee has also been formed, composed of representatives from MoNRE, GGMC Board, GGMC, GGDMA, MPWC, GGMC and GFC.

Audit Conclusion

The verification team concludes that good progress on this indicator has occurred based on interviews and documents reviewed. However, the JCN states that “Key measures to be implemented by the end of 2011 will on that basis be agreed by the partners by mid November 2011 as an addendum to this JCN”. Though no addendum to the JCN has yet been produced, this is not the auditors’ major concern. Rather, the key shortcoming is that “a plan for implementation and key measures...” in two

key forest dependent sectors (including forestry and mining) has not been accomplished. Also, given the important contribution/role that the forest-dependent Amerindian sector plays in land use, it will be critical for the MoNRE to conclude and act on this sector's involvement in the SLUC.

This Indicator is partially met,

List of Documents

Draft Minutes of Meeting 44 of the Multi-Stakeholder Steering Committee (MSSC), Thursday, May 3, 2012.

Joint Concept Note (GoG and GoN), Version 2, March 2011.

Office of Climate Change, June 2012. Guyana-Norway Partnership. REDD+ Enabling Activities Report Annual Performance 2011

Strategic Plan TOR rev2, no date. [a draft]

Verification Indicator 8:

Continuing stakeholder consultation on the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI)

The JCN (March 2011) states as follows:

“Stakeholder consultation on the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) will continue until June 2011. Based on the outcomes of this consultation, a plan for the implementation of the EITI principles will be in place by mid November 2011. These next steps will address the introduction of EITI, if the conclusions from the 2011 stakeholder consultation support this goal, or an alternative approach to the same effect if that is decided. Based on the outcome of those consultations, an addendum to this JCN will be agreed on this issue by mid November 2011.”

Audit Findings

As referred to in the REDD+ Enabling Activities Report on Annual Performance 2011 (referred to as the 2011 Annual Progress Report) and the first Rainforest Alliance Verification Report (page 30), EITI conducted an initial visit to Guyana in April 2010. Though efforts were made to have EITI visit again in 2011, a second visit was not possible until April 2012 when EITI's Secretariat Head engaged in discussions with various GoG agencies through the coordination of the new Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE). As a result of these meetings and further interactions, an MoU between the GoG (represented by MoNRE) and EITI was signed on May 15, 2012. The MoNRE is now leading the follow-up on this effort, building on the contents and suggestions from EITI and building on EITI's ongoing similar initiatives with two other countries in the region – Trinidad and Suriname.

The GoG is now in the process of working with EITI on following up as per the MoU. Follow-up includes a regional seminar, including representatives from Trinidad and Suriname, and perhaps other countries. A senior GoG representative has been appointed to lead the implementation of EITI. MoNRE is organizing a multi-stakeholder group to oversee its implementation and to develop a “fully costed work plan with measurable objectives, a timetable for implementation and evaluation of capacity constraints”. The multi-stakeholder group is expected to solicit inputs from other stakeholders as it implements this process. When these requirements must be met the GoG will submit a formal “application” to the EITI requesting its support to implement the initiative. No timeline for submitting this application has been established by the GoG. Once an application is received, the EITI has indicated it will respond within three months and as part of that response will provide information on what the EITI can bring to the table in terms of resources to help the GoG implement the initiative, potentially soliciting resources from other organizations including the IDB or World Bank.

Though there has been progress (in particular the signing of the MoU and initial steps to develop a plan for implementation), the GoG has not met the deadlines set in the JCN regarding stakeholder consultation in 2011 and the plan for the implementation of the EITI principles by mid November 2011 has not been completed. Though the production of an amendment to the JCN related to EITI by mid-November 2011 has not occurred, this is the joint responsibility of the GoN and GoG and a secondary concern as compared to other expected deliverables.

Audit Conclusion

The verification team concludes that the EITI initiative is moving forward though not at a pace conforming to the schedules built into the revised JCN. An MoU between the GoN and EITI has been signed and steps to develop the plan for implementation of EITI principles is moving forward. Similar to the challenges related to other indicators, the GoG has a major challenge in organizing multi-stakeholder interaction as required by the EITI. This makes progress on the EITI particularly difficult since the EITI approach is very process oriented with clear steps that must be followed articulated in the MoU.

This Indicator is partially met.

List of Documents

Joint Concept Note (GoG and GoN), Version 2, March 2011.

MoU between the GoG and the EITI, May 12, 2012 (attachment to the OCC report above; other correspondence with the EITI was also provided).

Office of Climate Change, June 2012. Guyana-Norway Partnership. REDD+ Enabling Activities Report Annual Performance 2011.

Verification Indicator 9:

Measures by the GoG to work with forest dependent sectors to agree on specific measures to reduce forest degradation.

The revised Joint Concept Note (March 2011) refers to work to be undertaken by the Government of Guyana with forest dependent sectors to agree on specific measures to reduce forest degradation caused by mining and infrastructure. These measures were to be addressed in an addendum to the Joint Concept Note to be put in place by mid-November 2011.

The revised JCN states as follows:

“Based on the outcomes of a scientific study to determine the extent of degradation caused by mining and infrastructure, the Government of Guyana will work with the forest dependent sectors to agree specific measures to reduce forest degradation by these activities. Based on this, an addendum to this JCN, including end of 2011 as well as 2012 deliverables, will be put in place by mid-November 2011.”

Audit Findings

This indicator was not included in the scope of the first RA verification audit as it was not included in the original JCN (2009). The first RA Report did assess the Enabling Indicator #5 in the original JCN (2009) related to the development of a “road map” for development of a national Monitoring, Recording and Verification (MRV) system. The first RA verification report notes (page 37) that mining was identified as the leading contributor of forest change (51% of the change), particularly between 2000 and 2005, and also notes a stakeholder comment (page 16) that “Little attention seems to be given to mining and deforestation in the progress report and the LCDS. Neither are there direct incentives or demonstration models for best practice reflected in the RGDP.” In response to the stakeholder comment, RA noted that mining issues are largely absent from the progress report and Guyana’s

REDD+ Governance Development Plan (RGDP), although they are addressed in the MRV Road Map document.

In this audit period between October 1, 2010 and June 30, 2012, Poyry Management Consulting Limited completed the Year 1 deforestation and degradation report (Poyry, 2011) covering the period between October 1, 2009 and September 30, 2010. This is referred to as the first or Year 1 performance report.

Also in this audit period, the GFC and Indufor Asia Pacific Ltd. completed the analysis for Year 2 for the period between October 1, 2010 and December 31, 2011. It is referred to here as the second or Year 2 performance report and builds on the benchmark deforestation and degradation map and report (2009?), as well as the first performance report (2011). The second performance report includes a separate study by Applied Geosolutions LLC and Winrock International (commissioned by the GFC) on the assessment of forest degradation surrounding new infrastructure. An independent accuracy assessment of the GFC/Indufor report was conducted by the University of Durham, United Kingdom, in May 2012 and is also included in the second report¹⁹. This second performance report (GFC and Indufor, 2012) was in the final stage of a public review at the time of this RA verification audit and was considered a near-final draft. An independent third party audit of the report, commissioned by the Government of Norway, was scheduled to be conducted by Det Norske Veritas in mid-July, 2012.

The GFC/Indufor report identifies five drivers of forest degradation²⁰ – forestry, agriculture, mining, infrastructure and fire. In the 15 month Year 2 period between October 2010 and December 2011 reported in the GFC/Indufor second performance report, the area of forest degradation was determined to be 5287 ha²¹. This area was significantly less than Year 1 estimate of 92,413 ha but this reduction was attributed to “implementation of a revised and more precise methodology for degradation assessment”. It was concluded that the Year 1 assessment did not “reliably measure degradation due to the resolution of the imagery and the scale of degradation events in Guyana”.

The Year 1 and Year 2 performance studies appear to be the scientific studies that are referred to in the revised JCN (2011) and that are relevant in assessing performance to meet this Indicator. The Year 1 report and the accuracy assessment of it were completed in 2011 and the Draft Year 2 report and the Accuracy Assessment were completed prior to June 30, the end of this audit period. The Year 2 report awaits revisions to address any public or stakeholder comments received and the results of the DNV audit but is also essentially completed within the audit period. The results of these scientific studies are clear and consistent with past reports. They show that mining is by far the most significant single cause of forest degradation.²² To meet this Indicator, the results of these studies should have prompted the GoG to undertake work to agree on specific measures to reduce this forest degradation associated with mining. This is the specific language of Indicator 9.

The RA team accepted the figure of 5287 ha as reflecting the best current information as to the extent of forest degradation²³ during the audit period. Of the five identified drivers, mining activities alone account for 97% of the area of forest degradation reported in the October 2010 to December 2011 period²⁴. Forestry and forestry infrastructure are responsible for 2.7% of the degradation and all other

¹⁹ The University of Durham report is Appendix 10 in the Guyana Forest Commission and Indufor Pacific Interim Measures Report, draft version of June 2012.

²⁰ Page 59 and 60 of GFC and Indufor report (June 15, 2012).

²¹ Table 8-2, page 73, GFC and Indufor report (June 15, 2012).

²² Mining is also by far the most significant cause of deforestation, causing 94% of the deforestation identified in the GFC and Indufor report (June 15, 2012). However the JCN (2011) refers only to degradation, not deforestation.

²³ The extent and rate of deforestation is also reported in the GFC/Indufor report (June 2012) but is not reported in detail here because Indicator 9 is specific to “forest degradation”. Deforestation in the 2010-2011 period was reported to be 9205 ha, about the same as in Year 1 (2009-2010) but lower than in previous periods and in the 1990-2000 benchmark years.

²⁴ Page 73, GFC and Indufor report (June 15, 2012).

activities have had negligible impacts. All three recent studies (benchmark, Year 1 and Year 2 performance reports) have identified mining as by far the most significant cause of forest degradation.²⁵ The GFC/Indufor report identifies infrastructure as a negligible contributor to degradation – only 5 ha in the 2010/2011 period.

During the verification, three representatives of the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC) involved with mining told the verification team that mining activity has been expanding rapidly because of the continuing high price of gold. New equipment and many new people are moving into several regions of the country to mine gold. In some cases, the mining boom involves the re-opening of old mining sites and waste piles, but in many other cases it involves new operations in previously un-mined forest areas. The GGMC representatives told the verification team that the GGMC has been unable to keep up with this rapid expansion, that it is presently actively seeking to hire and train 50 new inspectors, and that there has been a recent expansion of staff in field positions. The GGMC representatives told the team that the GGMC works primarily with their own staff to monitor mining activity and does not normally work with other forest dependent sectors to address the forest degradation impacts associated with mining.

GGMC requires miners to obtain permits and conducts field inspections to check that activities are being conducted within the permit area and in accordance with the Mining (Amendment) Regulation 2005. This regulation requires that miners submit an environmental management plan and a reclamation and closure plan. In addition, miners are required to post either an environment bond or a reclamation bond, depending on the size of the operation. The GGMC is presently undertaking two reclamation projects in the Mahdia area as pilot studies and is planning a manual to direct the reclamation of mine sites in the near future. Note: in July 2012, at the time the RA verification team was in Guyana, GGMC imposed a temporary one month ban on the issuance of new gold mining permits. However, this did not occur within the audit period and the outcome of the temporary ban was uncertain.

Since 2005 the GGMC has been developing Codes of Practice related to environmental management for large and medium scale mining operations. In addition, negative environmental impacts, including forest degradation impacts, associated with major infrastructure development such as new roads and large mining operations are addressed within the Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIA) process that is required by law. Mitigation and control measures are required to be put in place to address the degradation associated with these large scale developments. However, these types of measures are not within the purview of this verification indicator which addresses the more extensive degradation impacts of the small and medium-sized mining operations.

Within this audit period, the GoG does not appear to have responded to the GFC/Indufor report that documents the forest degradation impacts of the mining sector. This work was envisioned by the JCN (2011) that required the GoG to work with the forest dependent sectors to agree specific measures to reduce forest degradation. During interviews in Guyana, the RA verification team was unable to obtain any evidence of specific agreed upon measures to address the forest degradation identified in the scientific studies. In response to requests from the team, the GoG advised the RA team by e-mail on July 16, 2012 that “Currently there is no documented work on developing specific measures to reduce forest degradation by mining activities.”

The RA team is aware of work conducted by the Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC) to address forest degradation associated with forestry and forest infrastructure development during this audit period. This includes work related to Codes of Practice for Harvesting Operations and for Non-timber Forest Products, training in community forests and monitoring and enforcement. This work is notable and may serve to mitigate forest degradation associated with forestry activities. Forestry, however, was only accountable for 2.7% of the degradation reported and this forestry-related work does not directly

²⁵ It is not possible to compare the % of degradation associated with mining in the previous reports because, as described above, a different and more precise methodology was employed in the 2010 – 2012 GFC and Indufor report (June 2012).

assist in meeting the Indicator requirement to address the overwhelming influence of mining as the primary cause of forest degradation identified in the scientific studies. Also, the existence of detailed laws or regulations designed to reduce the environmental impact of mining are acknowledged by the audit team. However, the expectations of the JCN are that additional efforts would be undertaken by the GoG with inputs on strategy from forest-dependent actors, and to date this has not yet occurred.

Audit Conclusion

The verification team concludes that the Government of Guyana has not undertaken the type of work to agree upon specific measures to reduce forest degradation associated with mining to meet this indicator per the language in the revised JCN. The scientific studies referred to in the revised JCN were delayed, but it is evident from the 2009 benchmark study, the 2011 Year 1 performance report and the data from the draft 2012 Year 2 performance report, that mining is the primary driver of forest degradation, accountable for up to 97% of all forest degradation. Thus, to meet this Indicator, work was necessary to agree on specific measures to reduce degradation caused by mining activities. Beyond the existence of mining regulations, which largely predate this audit period and/or the LCDS initiative, the GoG does not appear to have initiated any additional work with other forest dependent sectors during this audit period to address degradation caused by mining activities.

This Indicator is not met.

List of Documents

Government of Guyana. 2005. Mining (Amendment) Regulations, 2005.

Guyana Forestry Commission and Indufor Asia Pacific Ltd, June 15, 2012. Guyana REDD+ Monitoring, Reporting and Verification System (MRVS), Interim Measures Report 01 October, 2010 to 31 December 2011, Version 1.

Pöyry Management Consulting (NZ) Limited, 2011. Report on Interim REDD+ Indicator under the Guyana - Norway REDD+ Partnership for the period October 1 2009 to September 30 2010.

University of Durham. May 2012. Guyana Forestry Commission Guyana REDD+ Monitoring Reporting and Verification System (MRVS) Accuracy Assessment Report. Report submitted to Guyana Forestry Commission and included within the GFC/InduFor Pacific report of June 15, 2012 as Appendix 10.

W. Salas, S. Hagen, B. Braswell, and M. Palace, February 2012. A Pilot Study to Assess Forest Degradation Surrounding New Infrastructure. Report Submitted to Guyana Forestry Commission By Applied GeoSolutions, LLC and Winrock International and included within GFC/Indufor Pacific report of June 15, 2012.

Verification Indicator 10:

Mapping of priority areas for biodiversity in Guyana's forests.

The revised Joint Concept Note (March 2011) refers to improved REDD+ governance through a number of specific measures and actions that were to be continued through 2011. Identifying priority areas for biodiversity has been underway for some time in Guyana by government agencies and NGOs. Biodiversity data and the science behind them are essential to make good land use planning decisions such as the location of protection, limited-use and sustainable production areas. Guyana's 18.6 million ha of forest encompasses habitat types such as moist tropical forest, seasonal forest, flooded forest and savanna forest that are critical to support a largely endemic complex of flora and fauna that is restricted to Guiana Shield environments as well as the high biodiversity of the Amazon Basin.

The revised JCN states as follows:

“Undertake mapping of priority areas for biodiversity in Guyana’s forests, based on, inter alia, the criteria established in 2010. By mid November 2011, Guyana will release a policy statement on how it plans to meet its Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) obligations. Based on the forest related elements of this statement, an addendum to the JCN will be agreed by mid November 2011.”

Audit Findings

The first RA Verification Report did not verify this indicator as it was not specifically itemized in the original JCN (2009), although the MoU between Norway and Guyana does state the objectives of ensuring environmental integrity and protecting biodiversity as part of the REDD+/LCDS process. Guyana’s REDD+ Governance Development Plan (Office of the President, Sept 2010) contains Section 20 (pages 31-34) that establishes the criteria for identifying priority areas for Biodiversity with Guyana’s Forest that form the basis for evaluating progress on this indicator for this 2012 verification audit.

The framework described for establishing protected areas includes four approaches:

- (a) the Systematic and Scientific approach, i.e., protection of examples of all natural ecosystems in Guyana, areas of particular biological significance, integrated management of key watersheds and preservation of sites of cultural and spiritual importance;
- (b) the Participatory approach, i.e., all stakeholders will be invited and given opportunities to be involved in and contribute towards the effort of establishing and managing the system of protected areas;
- (c) the Precautionary approach, i.e., limitations of information and scientific certainty will not deter decision-making such that they will be based on the principle of ensuring that the highest number of options is retained; and,
- (d) the Holistic approach, i.e., that natural ecosystems serve multiple functions including sources of economic well-being, social functions and provision of environmental services. The REDD+ Governance Development Plan also provides guidelines for establishing protected areas at the local level as well as criteria for selection of protected areas.

In June 2010, a workshop to establish the criteria for identifying priority biodiversity areas in Guyana’s forests was attended by a wide range of stakeholders including representatives from various indigenous communities and organizations (according to the government document; but not cross-checked by the verification team).

In this audit period from October 1, 2010 to June 30, 2012, Guyana made good progress to meet this indicator, under the leadership of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of the recently-established Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE), the Iwokrama International Centre, the North Rupununi District Development Board (NRDDB) and other stakeholder groups in Guyana. A summary of the GoG’s activities on this indicator is provided in the June 2012 performance report (OCC, 2012) (pp. 17-18, and Annex 8, pp. 69-84).

Guyana is a signatory to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD) since 1992, with subsequent ratification in 1994. The EPA is the national Focal Point for the UNCBD. The country’s most recent National Biodiversity Action Plan II (2007-2011) is due to be updated (see reference to June 14, 2012 below). The general objectives of the National Policy on Biodiversity²⁶ are to:

- sustainably use renewable resources;
- develop institutional capacity for the management of biological resources;
- integrate the conservation agenda into the national development agenda;
- equitably share benefits arising from biological diversity; and,

²⁶ <https://www.cbd.int/countries/profile.shtml?country=guy#nbsap>

- take all necessary actions to achieve these goals.

Since 1999, five natural areas have been identified as potential protected areas based on high levels of biodiversity and endemism documented through biological inventories and scientific studies (e.g. Mt. Roraima Rapid Biodiversity Assessment, EPA 2007).

In 2010 (date not specified), the EPA produced Guyana's Fourth National Report to the CBD for the period 2006-2008 that describes contributions toward the implementation of the 2010 targets and Articles of the Convention.

Also in 2010, to meet obligations under the CBD, the protected areas target for Guyana was increased to 17% of national land area by the year 2020. The GoG's commitment to reach this goal was emphasized in Guyana's Action Plan on the Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA). The EPA is responsible for the database for mapping of priority areas.

On July 7, 2011, Guyana's National Assembly passed the Protected Areas Act (PA Act) 2011 that became law on November 1, 2011. Under the PA Act, existing and new state-owned protected areas, Amerindian protected areas, privately managed protected areas and urban parks (including the Botanical Gardens and the Zoological Park) will comprise the National Protected Areas System (NPAS). The PA Act calls for the establishment of the Protected Areas Commission (PAC) to oversee the NPAS; a Board was appointed and has met three times, but the Commission has yet to be filled. Once established, it will take the lead in implementation that is currently being carried out by the EPA.

In October 2011, two of the five priority areas were established as new protected areas: (1) Shell Beach (Northwest District, Region I), encompassing mangrove forests, inland swamp forests and savannahs, that is famous as the nesting ground for four of the world's endangered marine turtles and (2) the wildlife-rich Kanuku Mountains (Region IX).

The delineation processes for Shell Beach and Kanuku Mountains were completed under the German Development Bank, Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW)-funded Guyana Protected Areas System Project using participatory approaches, and a draft management plan for the Kanuku Mountains was completed. Conservation International (CI) was the lead agency working with government officials and local indigenous communities to establish the natural reserve in the Kanukus, while the Guyana Marine Turtle Conservation Society (GMTCS) played a lead role in the advocacy for Shell Beach to become a national protected area. Some of the communities that were visited in the process of this audit were disappointed and unhappy that their land extension requests adjacent to and/or overlapping with protected area boundaries were not attended to, nor were titling conflicts resolved, during the course of the demarcation of the new protected areas.

Prior to the declaration of the Shell Beach and Kanuku Mountains protected areas, Guyana had only three legally-established protected areas: Kaieteur National Park, Iwokrama International Centre for Rainforest Conservation and Development, and the Konashen District, a community-owned conservation area. Today, the five protected areas cover about 8% of the country's land surface, as actual sizes of the two new protected areas are currently being determined (May 25, 2012) (Table 3).

Table 3. The five protected areas in the National Protected Area System of Guyana, their type of governance and status of the management plan.

Protected Area	Governance Type	Status of Management Plan
Kanuku Mountains	Government	In draft
Konashen	Amerindian Community (Wai-wai)	Under review
Shell Beach	Government	To be prepared
Kaieteur National Park	Government	In draft
Iwokrama	Shared, Multi-stakeholder International Board of Trustees	Completed

Source: Office of Climate Change, June 2012.

Other potential protected areas include the white sand savannas around Orinduik Falls and the tepui habitat at Mt. Roraima that is being considered as a tri-national park with Venezuela and Brazil. As

well, there are 11 additional sites under consideration for protection including small areas of the East Demerara Conservancy and the area around the source of the Canje River in East Berbice-Corentyne (Region VI).

The EPA is currently preparing its 2013 budget that will include consideration of how to implement the Priority Biodiversity Criteria (EPA, Jan. 2012). Major funding contributions come from the KfW for the Guyana Protected Areas System (GPAS) Project and CI for the National Protected Area Trust Fund (NPATF). The GPAS Project, Phase I, II & III are large grants with KfW financing.

Phase I (2.56 million Euros) for community projects has recently been completed such that the EPA has 46 Community Livelihood projects underway that are designed to decrease pressure on natural resources. There is one production project per community, for example, improving rice production on savannas to reduce pressure on local forest resources. There is a bee-keeping project with communities near Mt. Roraima.

Phase II runs from 2012-2013, with funding of 1 million Euros + 150,000 Euros that were left from Phase I (Total=1.15 million Euros); funds are earmarked to provide infrastructure and equipment for protected areas, the development of a management plan for Shell Beach and follow-up support for community livelihood projects developed under GPAS Phase I.

For Phase III KfW has made a financial commitment of 4.3 million Euros to be disbursed in 2014 to support the effective management of the NPAS, improve livelihoods and resource management capacities in local communities and improve capabilities of key government agencies (EPA, GFC).

CI has agreed to contribute US\$3.5 million to be used as an endowment to the NPATF to support a sustainable and long-term financing mechanism for the management and maintenance of the National Protected Area System (NPAS).

On May 25, 2012, the EPA completed and submitted Guyana's Action Plan for the implementation of the CBD Programme of Work on Protected areas (PoWPA) to the CBD Executive Secretary. This is a requirement for all Parties of the Convention. It will serve as a framework to access funds from the GEF and other financing sources for the establishment and management of protected areas.

On June 14, 2012, Guyana received notification from the UNEP/Secretariat of the CBD of a Regional Workshop for Caribbean Region on Updating National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, to be held in September 2012 in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago²⁷. Guyana's current National Biodiversity Action Plan II (2007-2011) requires updating.

On June 16, 2012, the Protected Areas Policy Statement was read in Parliament by Hon. Robert M. Persaud, Minister of Natural Resources and the Environment²⁸.

Efforts to map biodiversity priority areas by Amerindian communities and local NGOs

Amerindian communities and non-governmental entities in rural Guyana have been carrying out biodiversity inventories and studies in their regions. For example, communities in the North Rupununi have been creating species lists, evaluating and monitoring local forest and wetland biodiversity for years, financed by small and medium-sized grants and producing biological and cultural educational material (e.g., North Rupununi wetlands booklet). They have promoted youth programs, small grants programs and community-based wildlife management in the North Rupununi, with wildlife education programs in English and Makushi. Local educators at the Bina Hill Institute for Learning produced *Ecosystem Services Education Modules* to teach their constituents about ecosystems, biodiversity, climate change and carbon sequestration (Roopsind et al. 2010).

The South Central and South Rupununi Districts recently published their well-illustrated plan (written in the Wapichan language and English) for the care of their territory, land use zoning and governance,

²⁷ <http://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2012/ntf-2012-093-nbsap-en.pdf>

²⁸ <http://www.nre.gov.gy/The%20Guyana%20National%20Protected%20Areas%20System.%20June%2016%202012.html>

including maps with titled village lands and proposed extension boundaries, village conserved forest areas, and also seasonal calendars (Indigenous peoples of South Rupununi 2012).

At the Iwokrama International Centre for Rainforest Conservation, biodiversity inventory, mapping and monitoring is ongoing within the 371,000 ha reserve. The Iwokrama Monitoring Unit carries out routine and non-routine bio-physical monitoring continually as per instructions in the Iwokrama Bio-physical Monitoring Framework and Manual (2009); this includes road, river and wildlife monitoring, timber harvest, climate information and the status of specific threatened focal species (e.g. giant otters and caiman). In 2012, a principal activity of the Forenet Project at Iwokrama, funded by CIFOR, is a management-level forest inventory of all biodiversity that is being implemented by a field team comprised primarily of Amerindians from the region. This is a comprehensive inventory of flora and fauna with data collected from plots and subplots (trees and NTFPs), sample point observations, wildlife sign and key indicator species (birds and mammals).

Audit Conclusion

The verification team concludes that mapping of priority areas for biodiversity in Guyana's forests, based on the criteria established in 2010, continued throughout the audit period. A policy statement on National Protected Areas was made by the Minister of Natural Resources and the Environment in June 2012. This is seven months later than the mid-November 2011 timeline of the revised JCN indicator, but is within the scope of this verification audit and meets the indicator. Guyana is currently at the 8% land cover mark for protected areas – towards the goal of 17% of the country's surface area by 2020 - to meet this UNCBD obligation. The Strategic Strategy for Natural Resources is a document in progress under the MoNRE.

The verification team notes that there were delays in the process, specifically that an addendum to the JCN was not agreed on by mid-November 2011, as stipulated in this enabling indicator, nor has it been agreed on as of June 30, 2012, the end of this audit period. Importantly, it is also noted that GoG efforts made to meet this indicator were undertaken without any funds from the GRIF. Financing was provided largely by GEF, KfW and CI in the absence of support from the GoG/GoN funds. Funding to local NGOs to carry out biodiversity-related work (e.g., inventories, education) was provided by various international cooperative institutions.

The Indicator is met.

List of Documents:

Environmental Protection Agency. November 2007. Mount Roraima Situation Analysis and Rapid Biodiversity Assessment.

Environmental Protection Agency. 2010. Guyana: Fourth National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity. <http://www.cbd.int/doc/world/gy/gy-nr-04-en.pdf>

Environmental Protection Agency, Natural Resources Management Division. January 2012. Criteria for identifying priority biodiversity areas within Guyana's Forests. Guidance for the development of localized and national level criteria.

Indigenous peoples of the South Rupununi. 2012. Thinking together for those coming behind us. An outline plan for the care of Wapichan territory in Guyana. South Central and South Rupununi Districts Toshaos Council, South Rupununi, Region 9, Guyana.

Iwokrama Bio-physical Monitoring Framework v.1.3, Sept 2009. Iwokrama International Centre.

Iwokrama Bio-physical Monitoring Manual v.1, May 2009. Iwokrama International Centre.

Laws of Guyana. Protected Areas Act 2011. No. 14 of 2011.

North Rupununi Wetlands booklet. no author, no date.

Office of Climate Change, June 2012. Guyana – Norway Partnership, REDD+ Enabling Activities

Report, Annual Performance, 2011.

Office of the President, Sept 2010. Guyana's REDD+ Governance Development Plan.

Roopsind, I., B. Xavier & V. Henry. 2010. Ecosystem services education modules. GSI Project, UNDP, Guyana. 42 pp.

ANNEX 1 – Public Notice

Public Briefing Paper for the Verification of Enabling Activities of the Guyana-Norway REDD+ Partnership

June 15, 2012

Introduction - As an important step towards meeting the objectives of Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy "*Transforming Guyana's Economy while Combating Climate Change*" (LCDS), the Governments of Guyana (GOG) and Norway (GON) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) agreeing on terms under which financial support from Norway would be made available to Guyana to support the LCDS. The framework for the collaboration covered by the MoU has been defined in the Joint Concept Note (JCN) outlining the enabling activities. The original 2009 JCN was revised in March of 2011. In July 2012 the progress to meet indicators (as identified in the March 2011 revised JCN) will be the subject of independent verification by the Rainforest Alliance. Verification field work will occur during the period July 5 – 13, 2012 by a three person audit team. Stakeholders may provide comments prior to, during or after this field work. The deadline for submissions is August 15, 2012. Rainforest Alliance will maintain confidential all comments received and the sources thereof, unless otherwise requested by the relevant stakeholder.

Scope of the Verification – Per the specific requests of both the GON and GOG, this verification will focus on progress in Guyana in meeting the "Enabling Indicators" imbedded within the JCN. At a minimum, the verification process will focus on processes and performance related to the following Enabling Indicators:

1. Guyana's LCDS Multi-Stakeholder Steering Committee and arrangements to ensure systematic and transparent multi-stakeholder consultations will continue and evolve.
2. Enable the participation of all affected and interested stakeholders at all stages of the REDD-plus/LCDS process.
3. Protect the rights of indigenous peoples.
4. Transparent, accountable oversight and governance of the financial support received for:
 - o Implementation of Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS), and,
 - o Efforts in building capacity to improve overall REDD+ and LCDS efforts.
5. Initial structure for Independent Forest Monitoring (IFM) mechanism;
6. Stakeholder consultation on the European Union Forest Law Enforcement, Government and Trade (EU-FLEGT) process will continue.
7. Continuing development of a national, inter-sectoral system for coordinated land use.
8. Stakeholder consultation on the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) and related results and conclusions.
9. Measures by the GOG to work with the forest dependent sectors to agree on specific measures to reduce forest degradation by these activities.
10. Undertake mapping of priority areas for biodiversity in Guyana's forests.

Verification Team Composition – The team will be led by Richard Z. Donovan, Rainforest Alliance Senior Vice President and Vice President of Forestry Division. Two other senior consultants and auditors will be involved: Keith Moore and Margaret ("Peggy") Stern.

Verification Steps and Schedule – Following is a short description of the verification process and a tentative agenda:

- Verification organization –Our organization process started June 14, 2012. The Rainforest Alliance team will assemble in Georgetown on Thursday, July 5th, 2012.

- Meetings in Georgetown – The team will have meetings with government and stakeholders starting July 5 and ending Friday July 13.
- Field assessments – The team will also visit forest sites in Guyana’s interior, as well as visits to Amerindian populations. Suggestions from stakeholders on sites to visit are welcomed.
- Stakeholder consultation – Prior to and during fieldwork, the team will be contacting local stakeholders. We welcome private interviews and discussions, meetings, etc.
- Final assessment briefing – Upon completion of field work, the team will present draft findings to the GON and GOG. However we will continue to welcome stakeholder inputs.
- Draft report production – The assessment team will produce a confidential draft report that will be circulated for comment to the GON and GOG.
- Final report production – Upon receipt of comments on the draft report from both the GON and GOG, and considering other general stakeholder comments, Rainforest Alliance will produce a final report.

Your Input Sought – As a part of this verification process, we invite stakeholders to offer comments and feedback in relation to the Enabling Activities of the Guyana-Norway REDD+ Partnership. We welcome input, either public or confidential, in whatever form is easiest and most secure for you. Your input will be valuable at any stage of the assessment process, but we would prefer to receive your comments either prior to the verification, during the verification, or prior to August 15, 2012 so that we can take them into consideration in preparation of the verification report. Your options for providing comments to us are as follows.

1. Meet with a Rainforest Alliance verification team member during or shortly after the fieldwork (period of July 5 – 13, 2012)
2. Call and give comments to Richard Donovan, the Rainforest Alliance staff person responsible for leading this verification. If Richard Donovan is not in the office, please give your comments to Adolfo Lemus, staff person in our regional office in Guatemala.
3. Submit written comments by mail, FAX or e-mail to Richard Donovan. Unless you request otherwise, these comments will be kept confidential and are solely for the purposes of this verification in Guyana.

The source of any information provided will be kept confidential, available to only Rainforest Alliance staff. Stakeholders who may wish to dispute any aspect of the forest certification process or decision can access Rainforest Alliance’s Complaints, Appeals and Dispute resolution procedures at www.rainforest-alliance.org.

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