



The Department of Natural Resources and the Environment

Annual Report 2015



Guyana Forestry
Commission



Guyana Geology &
Mines Commission



Guyana Gold Board



Guyana Lands & Surveys
Commission



Environmental Protection
Agency



Guyana Wildlife
Division



National Parks
Commission



Protected Areas
Commission

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Minister's Message

We must begin to see our natural resources as part of our God-given national patrimony and aim to develop them in keeping with the recently defined sustainable developmental goals. The Government of Guyana plans to ensure that the country can become a 'green' economy by 2020, through the development and promotion of green initiatives and practices in the various sectors of the economy. Guyana therefore, has a simple and strong objective to sustainably harness and develop the natural resources with respect for the environment and the promotion of the dignity of the people.

In 2015 we realized even more that the two - energy and the environment, are inextricably and inexorably linked. As Guyana proceeds to address its energy needs, it is doing so by laying a four-fold foundation as part of its transition towards a 'green economy.' This entails continued preservation and use of forests for sequestration of carbon dioxide, the development of hydrocarbons through attracting more exploration and development of wells; and the development of renewables and improved governance within the extractive industries sector.

Guyana's extractive sector will be a boon to its economic development and though its vast potential has not yet been fully realized, already it contributes to the total wealth of the country as it meets the requirements of national low carbon green development. The performance of the gold mining sector was very impressive and very encouraging. With better regulation and more opportunities for miners, we expect to do even better in 2016. Meanwhile, the safeguarding of our forest will make a tremendous difference on climate change impact within the next decade. Therefore, there is an urgent need for Guyana and all countries to undertake policies and actions that are sustainable and are respectful of the environment.

The Department of Natural Resources and the Environment in continuing the expansion and sustainability of the natural resources and environmental sectors has commenced a series of critical initiatives to improve management and coordination of these precarious sectors in the short and medium term. This is in keeping with the commitment to have a more inclusive and collaborative working relationship with the various associations and other stakeholders, and to continue building on the achievements emanating from the natural resources and environmental sectors.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2015

The Department of Natural Resources and Environment has continued to discharge its mandate in harmonising policy and management in the natural resources and environment-based sectors. In doing so, the Department has focused on implementing key policy-led initiatives and projects under its three programmatic areas: Strategic Planning and Administration; Natural Resources Management; and Environmental Management.

Governance

The Department collaborated with a number of national and international partners for the advancement of its policy initiatives which are described in detail within the 2015 Annual Report. The DNRE has enlisted the assistance of a Canadian University to advance technical discussions and guidance on the nation's Sovereign Wealth Fund through the Canadian High Commission. The Department has recommitted to the EITI process and this has demonstrated a national declaration to good governance that embraces reform of anti-corruption compliance in the extractive sector. The Commonwealth Secretariat continues to revise the Oil & Gas policy which involves an analysis of the legislative, contractual and regulatory frameworks presently in place.

A Commission of Inquiry was established and mandated to investigate mining deaths after a mining pit collapsed, killing 10 miners. The recommendations from this inquiry is forming the basis of a number of steps the Ministry and GGMC is planning to take to improve the sector. Guyana has taken steps to establish an Anti-Gold Smuggling Task Force as it seeks to address the issue of gold smuggling. A National Taskforce was established to advance Guyana's engagement in the UNFCCC process. In an effort to ensure that the Iwokrama Centre continues to discharge its mandate, a Review Committee was established. Key renewal options and recommendations will be identified and negotiated upon by the Barama Review Committee. The GIM Unit continues to provide spatial data services and support to agencies within the sector. The Department continues to be involved in the implementation and coordination of the Amerindian Development Fund and remained engaged with partner ministries for the Amerindian Land Titling Projects.

EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES

To facilitate the early entry into force of the Minamata Convention, a Mercury Initial Assessment (MIA) supported by the UNDP has provided a basis for any further work towards ratification and implementation. Partnership with WWF has provided the GGMC with financial and technical support for the purpose of national capacity building through education and awareness activities, baseline studies and training of stakeholders. A UNDP-GEF Medium-Sized Project (MSP) is currently being implemented with the objective of strengthening monitoring and implementation of biodiversity-friendly practices in Guyana's gold mining sector to reduce biodiversity loss and maintain ecosystem functionality.

The MRVS Report for Year 5 (2014) was released and over the reporting period, the

deforestation rate was 0.065% which was lower than the previous Year 4 period of 0.068%. To facilitate the increased market access, Guyana remains committed to signing a Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) with the EU in the latter part of 2016. The objective of the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility Project is to assist the Government in their efforts to establish an enabling framework and build their capacity for REDD+. In 2015, the Land Reclamation Project demonstrated compliance with the specific indicators under the Joint Concept Note 2015 (JCN) between Norway and Guyana. During the year, GMSTCI responded to the need of the mining sector and trained a total of three hundred and twelve (312) miners, and new entrants with the support of international partners such as UNDP & IDB.

ENVIRONMENT

One of the major areas of focus for the PAC during 2015 was the implementation of the Three Parks Initiative, which aims to revitalise the National Park, Zoological Park, and the Botanical Gardens while the commission continues to finalize the Management Plans for the hinterland protected areas. In the latter quarter of 2015, the NPATF successfully replaced the Conservation Trust Fund as Guyana's long-term financing mechanism for the National Protected Areas System as it is in receipt of the transferred finances. The WWF and EPA have signed a co-financing grant agreement aimed at developing the EPA's Environmental Protection Compliance and Enforcement Regulations in support of the Environmental Protection Act No 11 of 1996. The DNRE has started to implement a series of measures geared towards banning the importation and usage of Styrofoam, as of January 1, 2016. A National Stakeholders Consultation was held in September to discuss the final draft of the Wildlife Conservation and Management Authority Bill which will then be tabled in the National Assembly. The Department has collaborated with the UNDP to comprehensively prepare a State of Environment (SoE) Report. The Protected Area Commission is currently engaged in drafting a Biodiversity Offset Proposal with Guyana Goldfields for the Kaieteur National Park. A Project Proposal has been submitted to the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) for approval to better manage and implement the guidelines of the three Rio Conventions.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment (MNRE) was established on December 17, 2011. This represented a significant and far-reaching institutional change in Guyana's natural resource management sector. Many of the challenges facing natural resources and environmental management today stem from weak linkages between key sector agencies and a somewhat fragmented governance approach. The Ministry's primary focus is therefore harmonizing policy and management in the Natural resources-based sectors, and better mainstreaming of conservation and environmental management. In May 2015, Guyana held its General Elections when a new Government was elected to office. Following the appointment of the new Government, the institutional structure of the MNRE changed and it became a Department of Natural Resources and Environment under the purview of the Ministry of Presidency.

Vision

Improving the quality of life in Guyana through effective environmental management and the sustainable development of Guyana's natural resources.

Mission Statement

To facilitate the effective management and development of Guyana's natural resources, through improved policy making, inter-agency coordination and administration, and based on the principles of environmental, economic and social sustainability, for the ultimate benefit of Guyana and all the global community.

Three (3) Programmatic Areas

Strategic Planning & Administration

To develop and implement policies related to natural resources and the environment, to coordinate the network of implementing agencies under the purview of MNRE; and, to monitor and evaluate the country's programmes in the areas of natural resources and the environment.

Natural Resource Management

To promote and support the expansion and diversification of the economy by facilitating the rational and sustainable development of Guyana's natural resources through the effective management regulations, coordination and oversight of key entities in the sector.

Environmental Management

To contribute to economic growth along a low-carbon development path through the effective management of the environment. To ensure the protection, conservation and

restoration of the natural environment through the integration of appropriate environmental safeguards into development planning.

External Organizational Structure

The Department of Natural Resources and the Environment had, at the end of 2015, a total Staff complement of 58 while the external agencies and commissions had approximately 1,250. The Department of Natural Resources and the Environment is responsible for the coordination among eight natural resources and environmental agencies:

- Guyana Forestry Commission
- Guyana Geology and Mines Commission
- Guyana Gold Board
- Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Guyana Wildlife Division
- National Parks Commission
- Protected Areas Commission

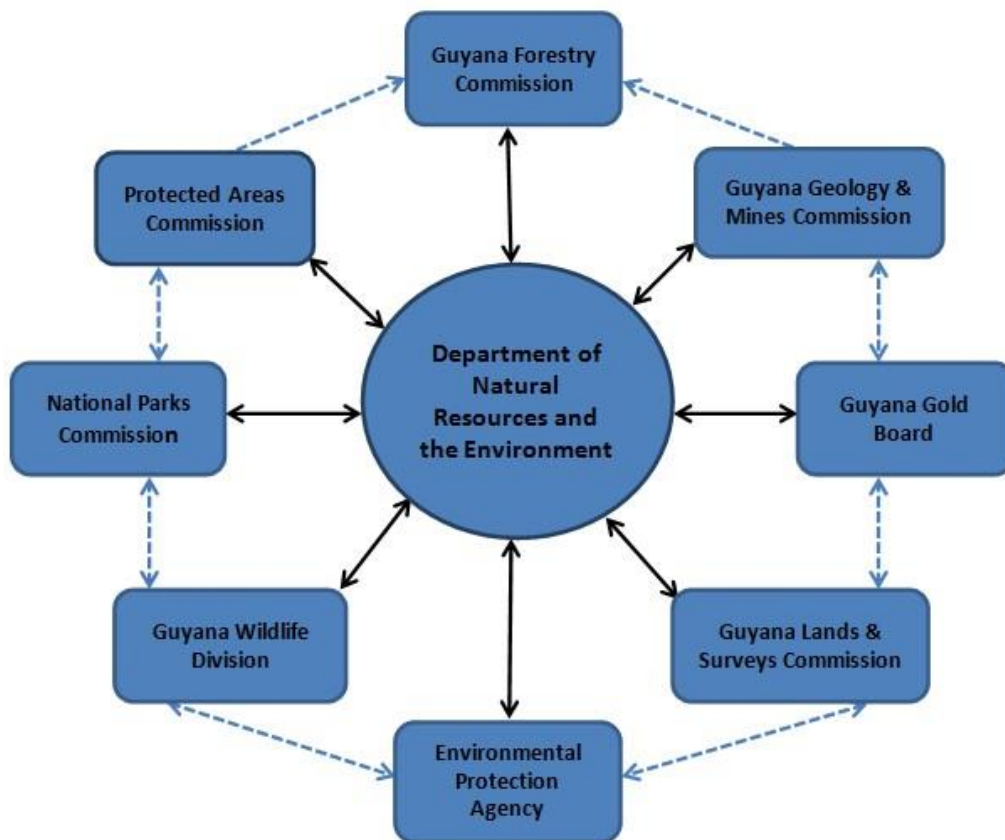


Figure 1: Coordination among Agencies and the Department

AGENCIES' MANDATES

Guyana Forestry Commission: To provide excellence in forest resource planning, management and utilization through good governance; the enforcement of relevant guidelines and the promotion of social and economic benefits.

Guyana Geology and Mines Commission: By ourselves, and in partnership with others, finding, inventorying and producing minerals, mineral commodities and petroleum in accordance with acceptable international standards, for the earning of revenue and other benefits for the citizens of Guyana.

Guyana Gold Board: To provide for the establishment, constitution, and functions of the Guyana Gold Board and for matters connected therewith.

Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission: To effectively and efficiently administer lands for the benefit of our clients and National Development.

Environmental Protected Agency: To provide for the management, conservation, protection and improvement of the environment, the prevention or control of pollution, the assessment of the impact of economic development on the environment, the sustainable use of the natural resources and for matters incidental thereto or connected therewith.

Guyana Wildlife Division: To ensure the regulation of the international trade in wildlife, to assess the level of trade and to devise measures to effectively manage the trade in a sustainable manner.

National Parks Commission: To manage the natural and cultural resources of the national parks on behalf the people of Guyana through conservation, education and awareness, while affording the opportunity for open air recreation for future generations.

Protected Areas Commission: To establish, manage, maintain, promote and expand the National Protected Areas System (NPAS).

2.0 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

The Legislative Agenda below summarizes the legislations that the Department of Natural Resources and the Environment through its agencies and commissions have drafted which are subjected to parliamentary approval before gazetting and enactment.

Agency	Legislation	Focus of Legislation	Status
Wildlife Division	Wildlife Conservation and Management Authority Bill	To establish the law for import/export and management of wildlife.	To be re-submitted to Parliament.
	Zoo Regulations	To regulate the establishment of zoo facilities	2 nd Draft regulations available.
Guyana Lands and Survey Commission	Land Surveyors Act	To reform the law governing the practice of Land/Aerial Surveying	To be re-submitted to Parliament.
	Land Surveyors Regulations	To regulate the practice of Land Surveying	Awaiting Parliamentary passage of the Land Surveyors Act before being gazetted.
	National Land Use Policy	To inform decision making for land-based sector agencies.	Under review by the Ministry of Presidency
Guyana Forestry Commission	Forestry Regulations	The regulation and the management of Guyana's forest.	Re-submit to AG Chambers for vetting.
Guyana Geology and Mines Commission	Mining Regulations	To further establish protocols to regulate mining activities.	With GGMC Board of Directors for review.

Environmental Protection Agency	Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit Sharing Regulations	Regulation of access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing in Guyana.	Awaiting funding to finalize the regulations. Stakeholder Consultations completed.
	Biosafety/ Biotechnology Management Bill & Regulations	Management of Biosafety/Biotechnology activities in Guyana	CBD comments received. Final revision on-going.
	Environmental Protection(Hazardous Wastes Management) Regulations 2000	Outlining of standards for hazardous wastes in Guyana; and the regulation of these standards.	Draft amendments completed.
	Environmental Protection (Transit and Export of Hazardous Waste) Regulations 2015	Regulation of import and export of hazardous waste.	Internal Review completed. Revision on-going.
	Regulations for Compliance and Enforcement Regulations	Strengthening environmental compliance and enforcement in Guyana	Final Draft submitted to the Minister.
Department of Natural Resources and the Environment	GIS Policy	To develop a National Geographic Information System Network	Re-submit to Cabinet for Approval.
	Environmental Protection (Expanded Polystyrene Ban) Regulations	To impose ban on the importation and usage of Styrofoam Products.	Submitted to Parliament/ Gazette Office.

Table 1: Department of NRE Legislative Agenda 2015

3.1 2015 WORK PROGRAMME

The Department of Natural Resources and the Environment has been tasked with ensuring that the activities of its Sector Agencies are coordinated thus ensuring harmonization between the management in the natural resources-based sectors and better mainstream conservation and environmental management. The DNRE primarily focuses on policy and project level work rather than day-day activities and functions of the regulatory agencies.

In 2015, the Department of Natural Resources and the Environment was responsible for coordinating activities, plans and programmes for the regulatory agencies thus ensuring a constant flow of information and coherence of the actions which provided key strategic inputs for the MNRE Strategic Plan and M&E Framework. Below is a list of the projects and policy led initiatives by the Department of Natural Resources and the Environment and its reported progress in 2015 under the three Programmatic Areas:

Strategic Planning & Administration

- ✓ Sovereign Wealth Fund
- ✓ Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative
- ✓ Oil and Gas Policy & Workshop
- ✓ Mining Accidents Action Plan
- ✓ Gold Smuggling Task-Force
- ✓ Re-opening of Bartica Office
- ✓ UNFCCC – COP 21
- ✓ Iwokrama Review
- ✓ Barama Negotiations
- ✓ Durban Park
- ✓ Geographic Information Management Unit
- ✓ Indigenous Affairs

Natural Resource Management

- ✓ Minamata Convention
- ✓ Environmental Management in the Mining Sector
- ✓ Mainstreaming Biodiversity in the Mining Sector
- ✓ Monitoring Reporting and Verification System
- ✓ European Union on Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade
- ✓ Forest Carbon Partnership Facility
- ✓ Alignment of the National Action Plan Project
- ✓ Land Reclamation
- ✓ Mining School and Training Centre

Environmental Management

- ✓ Three Parks Initiative
- ✓ National Protected Area System
- ✓ Guyana Protected Area Trust Fund
- ✓ Environmental Protection Compliance and Enforcement Regulations
- ✓ Styrofoam Ban/ Regulations
- ✓ Wildlife Conservation and Management Authority Bill
- ✓ State of Environment Report
- ✓ Biodiversity Offset – Kaieteur National Park
- ✓ Mainstreaming Rio-Conventions

STRATEGIC PLANNING & ADMINISTRATION

Sovereign Wealth Fund

In December, 2015 the Department of Natural Resources and the Environment enlisted the assistance of a Canadian University to advance technical discussions and guidance on the nation's Sovereign Wealth Fund (SWF). SWF is a state-owned investment fund; investing in real and financial assets such as stocks, bonds, real estate, precious metals, or in alternative investments such as private equity funds. They are mostly funded by revenues from commodity exports or from foreign-exchange reserves held by the Central Bank. The Cooperative Republic of Guyana has indicated that they will consider three sub-funds within the Sovereign Wealth Fund. One fund will secure the wealth of the nation for future generations for hundreds of years; the second will be for budgetary support when there are lean months or lean years, and the third a developmental trust as a backup for emergency work on developmental projects or initiatives.

The University of Calgary's School of Public Policy, held a two-day workshop on the establishment of a Sovereign Wealth Fund (SWF) for the country. The workshop was facilitated by experts from the University of Calgary, a premier academic institution with a strong extractive resource governance programme. This workshop was part of the process that will prepare Guyana for the responsibilities of managing natural resources revenues. It is part of a triune of initial engagements that introduces policymakers and the beneficiaries, to a better understanding of the nature of the resources, measuring its value, and utilising it responsibly for this and future generations.

Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative

The Cooperative Republic of Guyana has recognized that it can benefit from following an internationally recognized transparency standard that demonstrates

commitment to reform and anti-corruption, and leads to improvements to the tax collection process and enhanced trust and stability in the mining sector. In this regard, the Department of Natural Resources and the Environment, has recommitted to this process and this has demonstrated a national declaration to good governance that embraces reform of current ways of operation, and anti-corruption compliance. The EITI constructs, facilitates and guides a process of collaborative governance and resource management, by working with the State and a multi-stakeholder group.

The Department of Natural Resources and the Environment has engaged the services of Moore Stephens International (MSI) to undertake the task of a scoping study for the potential adoption of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative in Guyana. The consultants' assignment consisted of a detailed study to assess Guyana's extractives industry and to highlight opportunities and challenges of EITI implementation. In December 2015, the DNRE hosted its first technical working group meeting with stakeholders and members of civil society on the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative. The CRG has completed the first two steps in the application process with its reaffirmed commitment, and the selection of a high level and working level focal points being the Minister of Governance, and the Governance Officer at the DNRE. The third step began with the establishment of a Multi-Stakeholder Group which will support the final step of the creation of an agreed work plan in keeping with reporting and validation deadlines of the EITI Secretariat.

Oil & Gas Policy

The policy document represents Guyana's attempt at setting out specific policy objectives and implementation measures for the exploration and potential development of upstream oil and gas resources found in the country. The then Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment and the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission along with technical assistance from the Governance and Natural Resources Advisory Services Division of the Commonwealth Secretariat had completed a draft National Upstream Oil and Gas Policy in the third quarter of 2014. As such, the Policy was launched in early 2015 at a National Stakeholders Forum for stakeholder feedback.

While the work executed on the previous policy was extensive, the new government maintained that this policy should be –upgraded to suit modern-day changes— so that it can be implemented and enforced properly. In this regard, an invitation was extended to Commonwealth to return to Guyana to assist in updating and upgrading the document. This was in light of the recent discovery

of oil by the US oil giant ExxonMobil. It was reported by the Commonwealth Secretariat that the upgrade to the policy would involve an analysis of the legislative, contractual and regulatory frameworks presently in place in order to determine how best they can be improved. The team reviewed the fiscal arrangements for upstream petroleum activities for two purposes: to assess its strengths and weaknesses, and to strike the balance to obtain revenue. In cases where weaknesses were found, recommendations were made as to what should be done to move forward. Similarly, there was an analysis of the existing petroleum legislation and contracts as well.

Commission of Inquiry on Mining Accidents

A Commission of Inquiry was established and mandated to investigate mining deaths by His Excellency David Granger after a mining pit at Mowasi, Region 7 collapsed in May 2015, killing 10 miners. The report emanating from the Inquiry revealed that 25 deaths were recorded in 16 accidents within the past 12 months; 75 per cent of which were due to the collapse of mining pits. According to the inquiry the main contributing factor in the pit failure accidents was the neglect of safe mining practices. In addition there was evidence that shortcuts were being taken in an effort to raise production. It was noted in the report that from 2010 to 2015, a total of 62 miners, particularly young men, have died in the industry. The COI also found that there is a laidback culture to safety and as such, clear rules must be applied and enforced.

The report recommended that the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC) institute the proper framework in order to decrease the number of future accidents. In that regard, a plan of action was presented by the GGMC which included strategies for Occupational Health and Safety. It included plans for collaboration with the Ministry of Social Protection, improvement at the technical levels, continuous and systematic training, enhancement of education and instituting a certification requirement for the General Managers of the mining operations, and public and miners' education. In addition, the GGMC has committed to conducting regular –sweeps in all of the mining districts to ensure compliance with the safety guidelines. The Plan of Action called for the development of a comprehensive set of guidelines to deal with the ‘stripping’ of overburden with or without excavators, clearing of trees and debris from the rim of the pit, prohibiting the undercutting of working face, avoidance of high pit faces/walls, and establishing stable slopes among other issues.

Anti-Gold Smuggling Task Force

The Cooperative Republic of Guyana has taken steps to establish an Anti-Gold Smuggling Task Force as it seeks to address the issue of gold smuggling. In September 2015, the Department of Natural Resources and the Environment sought Cabinet's approval in convening a high level interagency task force to step-up efforts in stamping out the illicit trade as tackling corruption and inefficiency in the sector is of top most priority. Agencies on the Task Force included the Guyana Revenue Authority, Special Organized Crime Unit, Guyana Geology and Mines Commission, the Guyana Police Force and the State Asset Recovery Unit. The work of the Task Force includes a refined plan of action with a call for collaboration from foreign countries. Furthermore, the Department has mandated the Guyana Gold Board to review the process of issuing gold dealers' licenses and to ensure a greater level of compliance is adhered to.

Re-Opening of Bartica Office

In December 2015, the CRG re-commissioned the Guyana Gold Board (GGB) branch office at Bartica on the premise of having integrity and accountability as the foundation of their operations. The closure of the office in 2014, amid allegations of gold tampering, had an adverse effect on the mining community, therefore a decision was taken to revamp and reopen the office. The responsibility of the office was two-fold—to increase gold declarations and stimulate the community's economy in the planned township. The Bartica office, which is located in what is considered to be the gateway to the interior and a hub of mining activities, had been conducting operations for years and has been one of the main sub-offices for the GGB.

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change – Conference of Parties 21

Cabinet had approved the appointment of a Taskforce to advance Guyana's engagement in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) process. In November 2015, the Task Force, hosted a public consultation on the position that Guyana advanced at the annual Conference of Parties (COP 21) climate negotiation held in Paris, France, as well as the Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC). The first consultation was held in September and the comments and recommendations that arose out of that forum were incorporated in the document. The consultations were aimed at garnering additional feedback and support for the complete and final position that was presented in Paris.

The Guyana delegation that attended the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference (COP21), held in December in France, attained its agenda to secure a legally binding Paris Agreement to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions and protect vulnerable states. Guyana's principal objectives going into the negotiations were to secure a legally binding agreement, a long-term goal for deep emissions' cuts consistent with a 1.5 degree warming pathway, led by developed countries.

Guyana played a key role in the negotiating blocs of CARICOM, The Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), and the Coalition of Rainforest Nations. CARICOM countries stood firm in their call for 1.5 degrees as the warming limit to be included in the agreement and its support of the REDD+ framework, which is particularly important to Guyana and Suriname. In addition, Guyana pursued a number of bilateral engagements, meeting with the Norwegian delegation, and the Green Climate Fund (GCF). The Green Climate Fund, which administers the financial mechanism within the UNFCCC supporting projects and programmes in developing countries for climate change mitigation and adaptation, accepted a readiness support proposal from Guyana. Guyana's proposal for institutional strengthening of its Climate Change apparatus to implement its Climate Resilience Strategy and Action Plan (CRASP), which is currently being developed, and to increase its access to GCF funding for future projects, was approved for the US\$300,000 grant to be implemented over the next year. At close of the conference, a dedicated Article for Forests – in particular REDD Plus – which secures the previous COP decisions on REDD Plus as a framework and provides for support, including through results-based payments for forest conservation and sustainable management of forests, and provides a corresponding COP 21 decision which provides for financing for REDD Plus, was established. Guyana played a leading role in securing this Article and Decision.

Iwokrama Review Committee

Sustaining the work programme of the Centre has always been a key priority for the CRG. Following a meeting with His Excellency and representatives from the Iwokrama International Center (IIC) in June, 2015, the CRG signaled its commitment to working closely with the Centre, with the aim of strengthening its work agenda, to make the IIC more a place of excellence and of education for the benefit of all Guyanese and the international community. Over the years, Iwokrama has been heavily dependent on the Commonwealth, but it was made clear that funding will no longer be made available for operational costs of the Centre, but will provide technical and financial support to support the development of a self-sustainable model.

In an effort to ensure that the Centre continues to discharge its mandate, a grant of US \$100,000 was approved and a Review Committee was established by Cabinet Decisions in July, 2015. The Review Committee was an independent, impartial team of experts appointed by the CRG to provide a rigorous technical assessment into the functioning and financing of the Iwokrama International Centre for Rainforest Conservation and Development with a view to define a renewed mandate of the Centre going forward. The Terms of Reference of the Committee called for both immediate solutions as well as a more long-term, sustainable solutions going forward. Sub-committees were established based on the priority areas that were identified. These included budget and financing, research and training, governance and management.

The Review Committee submitted its final report to the DNRE outlining the findings and recommendations as it relates to the Centre's discharge of its mandate, lessons learnt from programme implementation, identification of constraints encountered and proposed actions and measures to fulfil the work of the Centre. A work plan and timetable was included for the execution of the scope of work to be conducted.

Barama Negotiations

Barama Company Ltd. was granted a Timber Sales Agreement (TSA) in October 1991 and is located in the Essequibo region (North West, Mazaruni Potaro District). An Investment Agreement was signed by the Government and Barama's parent company in 1991 while in 1999, a second investment agreement was inked for the Company's Buckhall operation. The Department of Natural Resources and the Environment toured the Barama Company operations in September, 2015 amidst discussions between the company and the Cooperative Republic of Guyana for a renewal of Barama's operations agreement, which expires in October 2016. The CRG has indicated that there will be a renewal of agreement but like all agreements there is a need for re-negotiations.

In keeping with this commitment, the DNRE submitted a Cabinet Memorandum requesting approval for a Barama Negotiating Committee to be established. The Terms of Reference for the Barama Negotiating Committee included a review and an assessment of the company's operations to date specifically as it relates to the company's commitments within the various clauses of the Agreement. A preliminary assessment has highlighted that whilst there have been significant investments in a number of areas, there have been delays in achieving milestones and the investments installed are operating sub optimally. Key renewal options

and recommendations will be identified and negotiated upon starting in 2016 by the Committee.

Durban Park

In November, 2015 the Department of Natural Resources and the Environment sought Cabinet's approval for the establishment of green spaces and a recreational park, by way of the rehabilitation of Durban Park, as a signature project in preparation for the CRG's 50th Independence Anniversary to be celebrated in 2016. The objective of this project signals the Government's commitment to a green Guyana as well as promotes healthy recreational and creative space particularly with our youth and the elderly in mind. This project also serves to manifest Project Restoration Guyana. In addition, this project will also explore the feasibility of the establishment of a multi-turf sports facility within the environs of the Park. Subsequent to the submission of the Memorandum, Cabinet approved the transformation of the Durban Park Area behind the 1763 Monument, into a Green Zone Recreational Park. The Department commenced the process of procuring an Architect and Engineer estimates for the cost of this stage of the project.

Geographic Information Management Unit

The Geospatial Information Management (GIM) Unit provides spatial data services and support to agencies, divisions, and units that falls within the natural resources and environmental sector. The Unit utilizes technological innovation, capacity building and training sessions, in the development of specific applications and decision support systems to achieve its objectives. Additionally, the lessons learnt are shared with other Government agencies to create and maintain an online portal that facilitates the collection, dissemination and integration of spatial data thus improving decision making nationally.

In the year 2015, the GIM Unit worked on a number of projects in collaboration with agencies and the University of Guyana (UoG). In the implementation of these projects, many tools were created to automate the data processing and result generating capabilities of the unit whilst the results of these projects provided valuable data and information for decision making not only at the level of the ministry but also at different agencies. The projects undertaken during 2015 included, the maintenance of the Amerindian Land Tenure Database, Provision of data and information to the Land Reclamation Project (LRP), The Mining Deforestation Analysis, Updating of the Pick-It-Up-Project database(PIUP), GGMC data analysis and data standardization, the development

and customization of the open data portal and data collection application. Work continued on the Near Real Time Analysis (NRTA) of deforestation as a result of mining, this project however needed to be redesigned as a result of the high cloud cover encountered in the analyzed areas. Also in 2015, the generation of Permanent Sampling Plots (PSP) and Secondary Sampling Plots (SSP) for REDD+ Activities was done along with a two projects in collaboration with the UoG, (1) Spatial Analysis of the importation and distribution of Pine doors in Guyana and its implication on local products (Testing of GeoODK, Epicollect and sMAP for data collection) and (2) Sea Surface Temperature analysis.

Indigenous Affairs

The DNRE's Indigenous specialist continues to make progress in addressing indigenous matters in the natural resources and environmental sectors. The specialist addressed a number of cases in areas of mining, water pollution, land conflicts, Trafficking in Persons (TIP), Low Carbon Development Strategy, Pick it up Guyana, and Climate Change. There were visits to ten (10) communities during 2015, to ensure that these cases were reported accurately and investigated while sensitizing the communities on Mining Laws and the Amerindian Act.

The National Toshaos Council was held in August, 2015 at the Arthur Chung Convention Center where more than 200 Toshaos from Amerindian Villages across Guyana were present. The meeting was held under the theme, –Steadfast Indigenous Leadership towards Territorial Integrity and Sustainable Livelihood. The Conference was well attended by the Department's regulatory agencies to ensure that agency specific issues that were raised could be addressed and documented for further follow-up actions.

The Indigenous Specialist continues to be involved in the implementation and coordination of the Amerindian Development Fund and the Amerindian Land Titling Projects that are financed through the GRIF mechanism. The ADF is established to provide support for the socio-economic and environmental development of Amerindian communities and villages. This is operationalized, through the implementation of Community Development Plans (CDPs). At the end of 2015, the ADF would have financed 64 CDPs, and transformed them into business plans for Phase II of the project. Through engagement and consultation and based on requests from villages or communities, the ALT seeks to strengthen land tenure security and the expansion of the asset base of Amerindians, enabling improved long term planning for their future development. At the end of 2015, the ALT would have financed and supported 11 demarcation and investigation processes while 10 Certificates of Titles have been issued thus far.

NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Minamata Initial Assessment

In January 2013, an UN agreement was reached for the establishment of a globally legally binding Convention on Mercury –The Minamata Convention on Mercury¹¹. The Cooperative Republic of Guyana signed the Convention in October 2013 and ratified in September 2014. To facilitate the early entry into force of the Convention, a Mercury Initial Assessment (MIA) supported by the UNDP will provide a basis for any further work towards ratification and implementation. The project's expected outcomes will be a description of the following: (a) National Mercury profile, including significant sources of emissions and releases, as well as inventories of mercury and mercury compounds; (b) Structures, institutions, legislation already available to implement the Convention; (c) Barriers that would hinder or prevent implementation; and, (d) Technical and financial needs for implementation of the Convention, including resources from the GEF, national sources, bilateral sources, the private sector and others.

As of Dec, 2015 the project achieved a delivery rate of 88 % for its first Annual Work Plan. A project associate was hired in the latter quarter of 2015 that coordinated these activities in the AWP. An Inception Workshop and Board Meeting were held concurrently which identified the priority consultancies within the AWP that should be executed immediately. As such, ToRs were drafted for two international consultancies that were advertised and executed in the 4th quarter. These included work done by a Mercury Policy and Regulator Advisor and a Mercury Inventory Specialist. The latter consultancy included a training exercise for conducting mercury inventories. At its final board meeting in December, it was agreed that the project's work plan for 2016 would focus on awareness and risk assessment activities.

Environmental Management in the Mining Sector

In 2013, a grant agreement was signed between world Wildlife Fund, Inc. (WWF) and the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC). Through this grant, the WWF has provided the GGMC with financial and technical support for the purpose of national capacity building through education and awareness activities, baseline studies and training of stakeholders within the gold mining sector. One of the targeted areas is the development of a National Action Plan for phasing out mercury use in Guyana and in addition, updating the Codes of Practices – Mercury Use. The National Action Plan and Codes of Practices have been drafted and shared at the sectorial level for review and comments. It is anticipated than

in 2016, regional consultations will be conducted before finalization of the documents. The United Nations Environmental Programme has shared a recommended framework for NAPs which is in conformity to Guyana's draft. Additionally, a study on 'Sources and Distribution of mercury in Guyana' was undertaken and completed which identified a baseline quantity of the mercury distribution flows that currently exist in Guyana.

Mainstreaming Biodiversity in the Mining Sector

Gold mining is a key sector in Guyana's economy and plays an important role in the country's socio-economic development. However, at the same time it is the main driver of deforestation and forest degradation and associated biodiversity loss. The Department of Natural Resources and the Environment in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), is interested in addressing various pressing issues related to the impact of mining activities on biodiversity. To this end, a UNDP-GEF Medium-Sized Project (MSP) is currently being implemented with the objective of strengthening monitoring and implementation of biodiversity-friendly practices in Guyana's gold mining sector to reduce biodiversity loss and maintain ecosystem functionality for the benefit of all Guyanese. This will be achieved through enhanced monitoring and enforcement of the environmental regulations and codes of practices, as a result of a strengthened EPA, increased inter-institutional collaboration, and greater satellite tracking of mining activities. In addition, individual and institutional capacity building will contribute to a greater understanding of the regulatory framework in place and of best practices in the gold mining sector to reduce negative impacts on biodiversity.

Following the approval of the project document, the steering committee convened a meeting to draft and approve the Annual Work Plan (AWP) for 2015 based on the Project Results Framework. In 2015, the AWP included a number of items which were procured and/or delivered to the Environmental Protection Agency, Geographic Information Management Unit and the Guyana Mining School and Training Center. These included the Network Attached Storage Unit, ARCGIS Software License, 3 CPUs, Projector and Bench equipment. In addition, there was the implementation of an international consultancy to provide training in satellite image interpretation and application of ODK software. While the drafting of ToRs and procurement process for two other consultancies commenced, namely the prioritization of hotspots for monitoring and enforcement and building capacity of the EPA to develop a monitoring checklist and written training material.

Monitoring Reporting and Verification System

The MRVs reports on forest change, both deforestation and degradation, by change driver through the interpretation of a national coverage of high resolution 5 m imagery. The same dataset has also been used to improve the historical (1990) delineation of forest and non-forest areas. The total forested area used in this assessment is 18.48 million hectares (ha)The Guyana REDD+ Monitoring Reporting & Verification System (MRVS) Interim Measures Report for Year 5 (01 January, 2014 to 31 December, 2014) was released for public review.

The continued wall to wall RapidEye coverage at 5m resolution has allowed the boundaries and the drivers of change to be mapped with greater certainty. Forest change of Forest to Non-forest excluding degradation was estimated at 11 964 ha. Over the Year 5 reporting period, this equates to a total deforestation rate of 0.065%. This rate of change is lower than the previous Year 4 period which was reported as 0.068%. In Year 5, as in previous years an independent map accuracy assessment has been undertaken by a team from the University of Durham. The Year 5 accuracy assessment has independently determined a deforestation rate of 0.062% with a standard error of 0.008% at the 95% confidence interval.

The main deforestation driver for the current forest year reported (Year 5) is mining (sites and roads) which accounts for 83% of the deforestation in this period. The majority (83%) of the deforestation is observed in the State Forest Area. The temporal analysis of forest change post- 1990 indicates that most of the change is clustered around existing road infrastructure and navigable rivers. In Year 5 the change has continued primarily near the footprint of historical change.

Period	Years	Analysis Resolution	Forest Area ('000 ha)	Change ('000 ha)	Change Rate (%)
Initial forest area 1990		30 m	18 473.39		
Benchmark (Sept 2009)	19.75	30 m	18 398.48	74.92	0.41
Year 1 (Sept 2010)	1	30 m	18 388.19	10.28	0.056
Year 2 (Oct 2010 to Dec 2011)	1.25	30 m & 5 m	18 378.30	9.88	0.054
Year 3 (Jan 2012 to Dec 2012)	1	5 m	18 487.88	14.65	0.079
Year 4 (Jan 2013 to Dec 2013)	1	5 m	18 475.14	12.73	0.068
Year 5 (Jan 2014 to Dec 2014)	1	5 m	18 470.59	11.96	0.065

Table 2: Area Deforested 1990-2014

European Union: Forest Law and Enforcement Governance and Trade

As part of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana 's Forest Policy implementation, Guyana formally entered into the negotiation process with the European Union for a VPA, in December 2012. The VPA is a key element of the EU's Forest Law and Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Action Plan, and a VPA with the European Union would facilitate increased market access for Guyana's timber into the lucrative EU market. The FLEGT VPA process also provides an opportunity for Guyana to further strengthen and mainstream its consultation and engagement process to enhance forest governance, improve legal compliance and build in-country capacity for community engagement in forest policy development and implementation.

To facilitate this increased market access, Guyana is committed to signing a Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) with the EU in the latter part of 2016. As part of the VPA process, the EU and Guyana successfully concluded the third negotiation session in April, 2015. Guyana was represented at this session by the National Technical Working Group (NTWG) - a multi-stakeholder group comprising representatives of the private sector, indigenous bodies and Government Agencies selected through a participatory process. Both parties acknowledged the progress that has been made since the last negotiation session and during this session, including the revision of the joint roadmap.

It was agreed that the next negotiation session would have been held in Brussels in November 2015. However due to November Paris attacks, the negotiation session was re-scheduled for March 2016. The Guyana Forestry Commission continues to revise the Roadmap while emphasis has been placed on stakeholder engagement where several regional workshops were completed in Region 1,2,4,6,7 and 8 on the draft legality definition and annexes of the VPA.

Forest Carbon Partnership Facility

The Forest Carbon Partnership Facility project is a Technical Cooperation (TC) valued at \$3.8 Million US between the Cooperative Republic of Guyana and the Inter-Development Bank. The objective of this operation is to assist the Government of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana (CRG) in their efforts to establish an enabling framework and build their capacity for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) by providing financial and technical assistance. Specifically, this Technical Cooperation (TC) will support: (i) improvements in the organization of the country for REDD+ readiness, including

stakeholder consultations; and (ii) the preparation of the Guyana REDD+ Strategy to facilitate Guyana's access to additional funding under performance-based incentives.

In March 2015, the Government engaged the IDB to initiate the project, and it was recommended that a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) be prepared for the support to be offered to the National Toshi Council, an Annual Work Plan for 2015 to be drafted and disseminated for implementation and the establishment of a Project Steering Committee to guide the project's execution. After Guyana's Elections in May, 2015, the new government engaged the IDB in a review process of the work completed under the Technical Cooperation to date with the aim of refining the project's implementation. In the latter quarter of 2015, the Department of Natural Resources and Environment has engaged the Ministry of Finance and the IDB in discussions on the way forward for the project.

National Action Plan – United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

The Aligned National Action Plan provides the fundamental principles for guidance and fulfillment of the country's obligation to align its National Action Plan (NAP) to Combat Land Degradation to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), ten-year Strategy(2008-2018). The Aligned NAP provides consideration for the need for urgent efforts to integrate and strengthen existing National Policies, Strategies, Action Plans and the planning framework for conservation, promotion of sustainable land management and combating the exacerbated effects of degradation. Thus, the Aligned National Action Plan builds on the previous NAP of 2006. It seeks to mainstream and presents the country's past and current strives made towards aligning the National Action Plan and thereafter implementation and reporting to the UNCCD.

The Aligned National Action Plan to Combat Land Degradation (NAP) is based on the results, analysis and recommendations of Studies undertaken in 2014 & 2015 under the Project. Both national and international consultants were contracted to undertake and complete the following studies: National Stocktaking Consultancy, Drought Early Warning Systems Consultancy, Institutional and Policy Expert Consultancy, Integrated Investment Framework and Financing Strategy Consultancy, UNCCD reporting Expert Consultancy and Database Developer Consultancy.

Land Reclamation Project

In 2009 - the Special Land Use Committee (SLUC) was established to provide recommendations to Cabinet on managing land use and land use conflicts as they relate to degradation from extractive activities. Among the cross-cutting recommendations emanating from the SLUC were specific considerations to ensure –Enhanced Land Reclamation, with an anticipated output of –Increased, and more effective, reclamation of mined out lands. Moving the committee’s recommendation to action, while acknowledging Guyana’s obligations as outlined in the Joint Concept Note (JCN) of the Guyana - Norway Partnership under the Enabling indicator of Governance; which referred to the on-going implementation of activities by the Land Reclamation Committee (LRC); the then Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment in February, 2014, was granted cabinet’s approval to proceed with implementation of intervention to combat the impact of the extractive sector.

In 2015, the Land Reclamation Project demonstrated compliance with the specific indicator under the Joint Concept Note 2015 (JCN) of the Guyana - Norway Partnership where minutes of the committee meetings and site specific progress reports were provided. In addition, the project demonstrated compliance with the specific indicator under the Policy Based Loan II (2015) where the project coordinator’s ToR, the Action Plan and M&E Framework were provided. The project has achieved traction by commencing remedial works at two pilot sites. To support earthworks via backfilling and replanting, the requisite site visits and technical evaluations were conducted. At the first pilot site, a total estimated volume of material moved was approximately 136,297.34 cubic meters, which constitutes approximately 73 % of projected volume while at the second site, leveling has been completed across 50 % of the total land area and seedlings were planted and prepared for transport.

Mining School & Training Centre

Over the past year, the Guyana Mining School and Training Centre Inc. with financial support from the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission, has been a nexus between the small and medium scale miners and the policies of the Government, to ensure that mining is conducted in a more efficient, safer manner with greater environmental responsibility. This was demonstrated through the introduction of the Intermediate and Advanced levels Training of Prospectors courses, and signalled GMSTCI’s strategic focus to build capacity for the extractive industries in alternatives to mercury use; occupational health and

safety; increased capacity for prospecting; enhanced mineral recovery and improved environmental management practices by miners.

In 2015 the School has engaged with the private sector particularly the Guyana Gold and Diamond Miners Association (GGDMA) and the Guyana Women Miners Organization (GWMO), along with multilateral development agencies such as UNDP, IDB and representatives from the Norway/Guyana agreement. The Training Center has benefited from two projects that were supported by the IDB and UNDP, two of the more prominent developmental partners within the sector. The IDB project is facilitated through a technical cooperation grant – Supporting Technical Education in the Extractive Industries while the UNDP project is supported through GEF financial resources for the implementation of the –Mainstreaming Biodiversity in the Mining Sector project.

These projects have allowed the GMSTCI to benefit from Training of Trainers workshop; mercury free enhanced gold recovery equipment and training; turbidity test kits, and other equipment that will facilitate the miners being empowered through field training exercises to become more compliant with the mining and environmental regulations and laws. During the year, GMSTCI responded to the need of the mining sector and trained a total of three hundred and twelve (312) miners and new entrants to the mining sector.

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Three Parks Initiative

One of the major areas of focus for the PAC during 2015 was the implementation of the Three Parks Initiative, which aims to revitalise the National Park, Zoological Park, and the Botanical Gardens. Gaining momentum over the year, the Three Parks Initiative completed several upgrades for the urban parks which included:

- ✓ The elevation of and compaction of low areas in the Parks from the donation of mud and builders rubble from private individuals and Ministry of Public Works.
- ✓ The first and second installment of –Art in the Park was completed. The first being a 20 foot tall carved Purple Heart log and the second installation was the 6 foot Black Caiman created from discarded tyres.
- ✓ Zoo Camp hosted 106 children over 5 weeks. In addition to arts and crafts, nature walks and games, the campers were also treated to field trips to the Mangrove Restoration Project and the Yarakabra Forestry Reserve.

- ✓ Completed the creation of the –Guyana Pondll in the National park. The pond was dug following the outline of the map of Guyana.
- ✓ Completion of a raised, paved all weather walkway in the Botanical Gardens. This walkway features a three tiered fountain that was donated by New Thriving Guyana Inc.
- ✓ The PAC hosted several activities within the Parks to encourage family oriented activities within the Parks. These included Earth Day Celebrations, Plant Sales, Tree Planting activities, –It’s MY Zoo Dayll , Earth Day Celebrations, Allied Arts Steel Band Competition, BANKS DIH Fishing Competition, National Go-Kart Derby and the Christmas Family Festival.
- ✓ All of the urban parks were given an aesthetic lift using landscaping and natural materials, such as bamboo, to provide a cohesive outlook and enhance the visitor experience.

National Protected Area System

Currently, there are three hinterland protected areas under the jurisdiction of the PAC, namely: (1) The Kaieteur National Park (KNP), (2) The Kanuku Mountains Protected Area (KMPA), and (3) The Shell Beach Protected Area (SBPA).

During 2015, the draft management plan for SBPA was finalised, and the public review meeting for the KMPA management plan, as required by the Protected Areas Act 2011, was held, following which the plan was also finalised. The PAC commenced implementation of activities under the first year operational plan for the KMPA and the SBPA. In the case of the SBPA, sea turtle monitoring was conducted at Almond Beach from mid-February to July 31, 2015. Two capacity building workshops at Shell Beach, and Ranger Training at Kanuku Mountains were conducted for the Amerindian stakeholder communities in the area. For the KNP, the draft management plan was restructured and streamlined, and shared with Chenapau Village. The public review process is expected to be initiated in early 2016. During 2015, the Commission also continued its consideration of Kanashen Village Council’s application to have its Titled Village lands be declared as an Amerindian Protected Area under the National Protected Areas System.

During December, 2015, an Ecological and Threat Monitoring workshop was held in Georgetown to identify monitoring priorities for all three of the hinterland protected areas (KNP, KMPA, and SBPA).

National Protected Area Trust Fund

The Protected Areas Act, which was passed by the National Assembly in 2011, provides the framework for the establishment and management of a National Protected Areas System (NPAS) in Guyana. The Act also establishes a National Protected Areas Trust Fund (NPATF) to provide long-term financing for the NPAS. In December 2011, a Conservation Trust Fund (CTF), a private Trust modeled after the NPATF was established. The CTF was set up by the Cooperative Republic of Guyana and Conservation International as an interim financing mechanism to secure early financing for NPAS, until such time that the NPATF was set up. The CTF has been endowed with US\$8.5 million from the Government of Germany through KfW-German Development Bank (€4.024M) and Conservation International through the Global Conservation Fund (US\$3.5M). Before the monies could be transferred from the Conservation Trust Fund to the National Protected Area Trust Fund, it was advised that due diligence was required with the establishment of a Bank Account. In the latter quarter of 2015, the NPATF successfully replaced the Conservation Trust Fund as Guyana's long-term financing mechanism for the National Protected Areas System as it is in receipt of the transferred finances.

Environmental Protection Compliance and Enforcement Regulations

The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Guianas and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have signed a \$4M co-financing grant agreement aimed at developing the EPA's Environmental Protection Compliance and Enforcement Regulations in support of the Environmental Protection Act No 11 of 1996. This Regulation will strengthen EPA's capacity for the management of environmental and social impacts of development activities in all economic sectors of Guyana.

The Environmental Protection Act established the EPA and sets out mechanisms for its functioning. Among its various functions, the EPA is mandated to take steps as necessary for the effective management, conservation, protection and sustainable use of its natural resources, and additionally to develop and enforce relevant supporting environmental regulations. The Act provides for prosecutions in a court of summary jurisdiction in respect of offences under the Act, but not the power of arrest, issue warrants or charges. As such, these regulations will now assist the EPA in dealing with the perpetrators directly, by instituting fines when in breach of permits and address other limitations that existed previously. These Regulations have gone through a series of consultations both at the sectorial and regional level with the final draft being available in the latter quarter of 2015.

Styrofoam Ban

The Department of Natural Resources and the Environment has started to implement a series of measures geared towards banning the importation and use of closed-cell extruded polystyrene foam, known by the trade mark brand, Styrofoam, as of January 1, 2016. This decision follows a series of consultations, which were held previously with industry operators, importers and other key stakeholders. In October, 2015 Cabinet granted approval for the immediate development of a legal framework to implement the ban on the importation and use of polystyrene foam products, as well as a public awareness programme to educate the public on the consequences of its usage and the benefits of the alternatives. Pursuant to Cabinet's Decision, the Department of Natural Resources and the Environment through the Environmental Protection Agency has drafted the Environmental Protection (Expanded Polystyrene Ban) Regulations 2015.

The Regulations not only aim to prohibit the importation, sale, and use of Styrofoam in the food service industry, but also to encourage the use of environmentally friendly, biodegradable alternatives. The Department will be collaborating with the Ministries of Business, Legal Affairs, and Finance via the Guyana Revenue Authority, to implement the ban. A third draft of the regulations has been reviewed by the AG Chambers before it was submitted to Parliament for a negative resolution followed by the gazetting process so that it becomes enacted for January 1, 2016. In December 2015, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), began yet another public awareness campaign aimed at promoting the use of Alternative Products for the achievement of a cleaner, greener Guyana. The EPA has partnered with the Guyana National Bureau of Standards (GNBS) to set standards for alternative packaging options to be identified and recommended to guide the business sector in the procurement of replacement products for Styrofoam based containers/packaging.

Wildlife Conservation and Management Authority Bill

In July, 2014, a consultative meeting was held on the previously drafted Wildlife Bill that was submitted to the Parliamentary Select Committee and concerns were expressed about the apparent disjointed approach to wildlife management and conservation in Guyana. This consultative meeting sought to present the new approach to wildlife management and conservation in Guyana and to obtain feedback from the stakeholders on the way forward. It was suggested that under the enactment of the Wildlife Bill, an Authority should be established for

implementation while the gazetted Wildlife Conservation and Management Regulations (2013) should be repealed and now be captured under the same the Bill and Authority.

The Department of Natural Resources and the Environment, under its Wildlife Division (WD), held a National Stakeholders Consultation in September 2015, to discuss the final draft of the Wildlife Conservation and Management Authority Bill, which is expected to be tabled in the National Assembly in the first quarter of 2016. The revised Bill is intended to create a national framework and mechanisms for governing wildlife management and conservation in Guyana. The consultation was another step in the legislative process as it provides a new approach to protect and conserve wildlife in Guyana.

State of Environment

The Department of Natural Resources and the Environment has collaborated with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to comprehensively prepare a State of Environment (SoE) Report and update the Country Environmental Profile (CEP). The Country Environmental Profile captures and provides an overview of a country's environmental situation, current policies, institutional capacities and environmental co-operation experience with clear recommendations for the integration of the environment in the economic and others sectors. While the State of Environment Report presents a critical analysis of current specific condition of the environment; the pressures and the drivers; the management initiatives and systems in place to address environmental concerns, and the impacts of those initiatives.

Both of these are important tools used for providing up to date and accurate information for decision-making and monitoring, as well as report on progress made towards achieving sustainable development goals and indicators. Broad stakeholder engagement will ensure that these documents are: a) widely utilized and b) as complete as possible with regards to the content. Stakeholder engagement will help to encourage communication and coordination with respect to environmental initiatives and projects in Guyana. While regular comprehensive updates will ensure that these documents never outlive their usefulness. The Stakeholder Workshop is scheduled for February, 2016

Biodiversity Offset

The Biodiversity Offset provides a rationale for offsetting significant residual impacts on biodiversity from the Guyana Goldfield's project, through financial

investments in support of the National Protected Area System. The project is impacting mixed lowland forest habitat of the Cuyuni-Mazaruni region of Guyana. The project has received financing from the International Finance Corporation's (IFC) and needs to meet environmental standards as outlined in IFC's Performance Standard 6. The developer is taking steps to avoid, minimize and restore its impacts on biodiversity. IFC has determined that further mitigation actions are needed to offset the project's significant residual impacts to achieve No Net Loss (NNL) to Natural Habitat. Based on expert consultation and input from key government and NGO stakeholders, it was determined that an offset in support of management activities within Kaieteur National Park is the most suitable option at this time. The Department of Natural Resources and the Environment, and the Protected Area Commission is currently engaged in drafting a Biodiversity Offset Strategy with the developer which will provide the framework for implementation in the Kaieteur National Park.

Mainstreaming Rio Conventions

The priority focus of the project is on strengthening interagency coordination to better manage and implement the guidelines of the three Rio Conventions: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD). The project will focus on the management of data and information to formulate and implement sectorial development plans that better reflect global environmental dimensions. This project pursues a long-term approach to institutionalizing capacities to meet the MEAs' obligations that lay the foundation for effective decision-making and policy-making regarding global environmental benefits. The Department of Natural Resources and the Environment with support from the United Nations Development Programme in 2015 has completed the Project Proposal which has been submitted to the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) for approval. The UNDP contracted the same consultant who prepared the approved Project Identification Form in 2014 to facilitate the drafting process of which many sector based stakeholders were consulted with.

2015 Workshops

Name of Workshop	Date & Venue	Objective
Launching of Guyana's Draft Upstream Oil & Gas Policy	January 21, 2015 Herdmanston Lodge	Forum to present the first attempt (1 st Draft) at setting out specific policy objectives and implementation measures for the exploration and potential development of upstream oil and gas resources in Guyana for stakeholder feedback.
The Sustainable Management and Conservation of Guyana's Wildlife	March 3, 2015 Guyana International Conference Centre	The purpose of the forum included: To acquaint/remind stakeholders of the relevant laws and Regulations that deal with the Sustainable Management and Conservation of Wildlife in Guyana; To promote compliance with the key provisions of these Laws and Regulations; and to enlist Stakeholders' support and views for the ongoing Sustainable Management and Conservation of Wildlife in Guyana.
National Stakeholders Consultation- UNFCCC	September 9, 2015 Grand Coastal Hotel	Consultation to present Guyana's position on the iNDC, to be presented to the UNFCCC COP 21.
Training in Satellite Image Interpretation for GGMC and EPA Officers	October 19-23, 2015 GFC Multicomplex Building	Building the capacity of the GGMC and EPA in satellite image interpretation and application of ODK Software, develop written training material, establish mechanism for sharing of satellite images and integration in GIS, and analysis of future improvements to increase usefulness of satellite tracking.
Building Capacity for Managing the Hydrocarbon Sector for Development in Guyana	October 30 – 31, 2015 Arthur Chung Convention Centre.	The Seminar focused on key elements for designing and implementing the legal and regulatory frameworks to effectively govern the petroleum sector; addressed gender-sensitive, conflict risks and environmental and social sustainability; revenue management; and human, social, physical and financial capital development to support economic diversification. The forum allowed for building on the foundations of an effective governance framework for the oil and gas sector, which followed from the draft National Upstream Oil and Gas Policy.
Public Consultation – Consensus on Guyana's COP 21 and iNDC position	November 14, 2015 Arthur Chung Convention Centre	A Public consultation to present Guyana's position and to obtain national input for finalizing Guyana's position, prior to the Guyana delegation attending COP 21 in December 2015.

Strengthening Technical Capacities to mainstream and monitor Rio Convention implementation through policy coordination	November 17, 2015 Arthur Chung Convention Centre	The workshop intended to discuss, clarify and elaborate on relevant project details, with an emphasis on the project design, strategy and implementation arrangements. The results of the workshop will inform the drafting and finalization of the project document with the endorsement of stakeholder representatives.
Sovereign Wealth Fund Seminar	November 25 & 26, 2015 Arthur Chung Convention Centre	The seminar was geared towards meeting the unique governance-related challenges and opportunities faced by decision-makers in Guyana. The intention of the seminar was to bring a practical, global and focused perspective on public policy analysis and practice which provided guidance in moving the resource development for the extractive industry forward.
Convening of Guyana's United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) Steering Committee Meeting	December 9, 2015 Cara Lodge	The Focus of the Meeting was to address issues of transparency and accountability, Guyana's completion of UNCAC's required self-assessment checklist report and the Establishment of a Subcommittee to draft terms of reference for the work of the general committee with regard to Guyana's self - assessment report.
First Meeting of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative – Multi Stakeholder Group	21 st December, 2015 Cara Lodge	The meeting focused on the establishment of a Multi- Stakeholder Group to support the final step of the creation of an agreed work plan in keeping with reporting and validation deadlines of the EITI Board; this would aid Guyana's fulfilment of the mandates of the application process to become an EITI Candidate in 2016.

Table 3: 2015 Workshops hosted by the Department of Natural Resources & Environment

Declaration Figures

Guyana Gold Board

	Dec 30,2015 (YTD)	Dec 2014 (YTD)	Percentage Change
Declarations	451,490	387,507	16.51
Purchases GGB:	145,711	183,894	(20.76)
Exports (OZ):			
GGB	144,132	182,345	(20.96)
Dealers	264,624	203,338	30.14
Aurora Gold Mines Inc	36,807	-	
Troy Resources	2,684		
TOTAL EXPORTS	448,247	385,683	15.53
Exports (USD):			
GGB	154,667,571	214,504,187	(27.90)
Dealers	303,857,788	255,312,615	19.01
Guyana Gold Fields	39,759,094	-	
Troy Resources	2,847,311		
TOTAL EXPORTS	501,131,764	469,816,802	(2.40)

Table 4: Guyana Gold Board Export Figures

Guyana Forestry Commission

		Jan - Dec 2015	Jan - Dec 2014	% Change over Jan - Dec 2014
PRODUCTS	Unit	Volume	Volume	
TIMBER PRODUCTS				
<i>Total LofP</i>	m ³	331,194.83	406,433.16	(18.51)
<i>Total Roundwood</i>	m ³	208,723	246,667	(18.57)
<i>Total Primary Lumber</i>	m ³	79,523.5	67,147.68	5.67
<i>Total Splitwood</i>	m ³	39.14	10.42	(62.7)
<i>Total Fuelwood</i>	m ³	30,804.5	32,512.56	(5.64)
<i>Veneer</i>	m ³	16,131.00	23,740	(28.54)
<i>Plywood</i>	m ³	14,617.00	18,798.00	(22.24)
NON-TIMBER FOREST PRODUCTS				
Wattles	pieces	343,608.00	401,618.00	(14.44)
Manicole Palm	pieces	3,253,785.90	2,796,974.00	16.33

Table 5: Guyana Forestry Commission Production Figures

PRODUCT	Jan - Dec 2015		Jan -Dec 2014		% Change Over	
	Volume	Value	Volume	Value	Jan - Dec 2014	
	ml	US\$	ml	US\$	% Vol	% Val
Logs	109,220.87	20,669,302.10	138,502.34	24,448,974.36	(21.14)	(15.46)
Sawnwood	18,722.95	18,013,447.00	22,735.51	20,343,895.23	(17.65)	(11.46)
Roundwood	3,551.18	2,122,188.94	6,871.25	4,102,447.37	(43.95)	(48.27)
Softwood	2,154.41	2,089,192.56	2,042.61	2,138,739.50	5.47	(2.32)
Plywood	3,921.56	1,940,821.55	5,278.87	2,615,302.92	(25.71)	(15.79)
TOTAL TIMBER & PLYWOOD	137,870.97	44,835,052.15	175,430.99	53,649,359.38	(21.41)	(16.43)
TOTAL VALUE ADDED	18,036.03	4,091,176.07	40,200.75	255,125.47	(55.14)	60.38
Fuelwood (m ³)	9,105.97	335,233.97	9,364.48	261,541.78	(1.69)	28.18
Other (pcs)	4,637.00	16,605.38	3,965.32	9,057.37	16.94	83.34
Non - Timber Forest Products (pcs)	2,526.00	31,657.57	773.00	10,315.00	226.78	206.91
OTHER PRODUCTS	15,992.97	383,496.91	14,102.80	280,914.15	13.40	36.52
TOTAL EXPORT VALUE	0.00	45,218,549.14	0.00	54,115,315.00	-100.00	-15.43

Table 5: Guyana Forestry Commission Export Figures

Guyana Geology and Mines Commission

	Year	Year to Date
Gold (ozs.)	2014	387,507.38
	2015	451,058.81
	Proj. 2015	410,000.00
	% Achieved	110.01
Diamonds (cts.)	2014	99,950.34
	2015	118,450.79
	Proj. 2015	60,000.00
	% Achieved	197.42
Bauxite (tonnes)	2014	1,601,747.00
	2015	1,497,620.20
	Proj. 2015	1,779,527.00
	% Achieved	84.16
Stone (tonnes)	2014	840,073.06
	2015	389,380.83
	Proj. 2014	768,000.00
	% Achieved	50.70
Sand (tonnes)	2014	1,098,386.53
	2015	1,085,949.95
	Proj. 2015	4,000,000.00
	% Achieved	27.15

Table 6: GGMC Mineral Production 2015

4.0 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Ministry of Natural Resources & the Environment 2015 Capital and Current Budget Summary January- August 2015

DIVISION	ESTIMATE						
	CAPITAL			CURRENT			Total
	Specific	Local	Total	Subvention	Other	Total	
241 - Ministry Administration (Furniture & Equipment/Land Transport)		\$ -	\$ -	\$ 131,228	\$ -	\$ 131,228	\$ 131,228
242 - Natural Resource Mng		\$ -	\$ -	\$ 78,376	\$ 223,813	\$ 302,189	\$ 302,189
GGMC		\$ -			\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
GGB		\$ -			\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
GFC		\$ -	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -
GLSC		\$ -	\$ -	\$ 78,376	\$ 223,813	\$ 302,189	\$ 302,189
243 - Environmental Mng			\$ -	\$ 267,983	\$ 79,587	\$ 347,570	\$ 347,570
EPA		\$ -	\$ -	\$ 131,081	\$ 32,856	\$ 163,937	\$ 163,937
NPC		\$ -	\$ -	\$ 90,271	\$ 46,731	\$ 137,002	\$ 137,002
PAC		\$ -	\$ -	\$ 46,631	\$ -	\$ 46,631	\$ 46,631
WL		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
						\$ -	\$ -
						\$ -	\$ -
TOTAL		\$ -	\$ -	\$ 477,587	\$ 303,400	\$ 780,987	\$ 780,987

Subvention	\$ 477,587
GOG	\$ 303,400
Recurrent Budget	\$ 780,987
Capital	\$ -
Total Budget	\$ 780,987
Other Revenue	\$ -
Total Revenue / Exp.	\$ 780,987

**Department of Natural Resources & the Environment
2015 Capital and Current Budget Summary September- December 2015**

DIVISION	ESTIMATE						
	CAPITAL			CURRENT			Total
	Specific	Local	Total	Subvention	Other	Total	
241 - Ministry Administration (Furniture & Equipment/Land Transport)		\$ 3,500	\$ 3,500	\$ 30,666	\$ -	\$ 30,666	\$ 34,166
242 - Natural Resource Mng		\$ 18,000	\$ 18,000	\$ 21,834	\$ 97,502	\$ 119,336	\$ 137,336
GGMC		\$ -			\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
GGB		\$ -			\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
GFC		\$ -	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -
GLSC		\$ 18,000	\$ 18,000	\$ 21,834	\$ 97,502	\$ 119,336	\$ 137,336
243 - Environmental Mng		\$ 21,000	\$ 21,000	\$ 70,386	\$ 27,625	\$ 98,011	\$ 119,011
EPA		\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000	\$ 40,950	\$ 11,744	\$ 52,694	\$ 58,694
NPC		\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000	\$ 19,034	\$ 15,881	\$ 34,915	\$ 43,915
PAC		\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000	\$ 10,402	\$ -	\$ 10,402	\$ 16,402
WL		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
						\$ -	\$ -
						\$ -	\$ -
TOTAL	\$ -	\$ 42,500	\$ 42,500	\$ 122,886	\$ 125,127	\$ 248,013	\$ 290,513

Subvention	\$ 122,886
GOG	\$ 125,127
Recurrent Budget	\$ 248,013
Capital	\$ 42,500
Total Budget	\$ 290,513
Other Revenue	\$ -
Total Revenue / Exp.	\$ 290,513

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