



National Capacity Self Assessment Guyana

Project Update

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Phase 3 (Cross-cutting Capacity Issues) and Phase 5 (National Strategy and Action Plan) Reports

This Issue (No. 5) of the NCSA Guyana Project Newsletter presents a summary of the Cross-cutting Capacity Issues Assessment and the National Strategy and Action Plan. Phase 4 is not addressed since the NCSA Report summarized Phases 1-3, which have been captured in Newsletters Issues 2-4.

The Cross-cutting Assessment

The Assessment was done in relation to: (i) the Legal and Regulatory Framework; (ii) the Institutional and Policy Framework; and (iii) Other Priority Cross-cutting Issues for the country.

The primary objective of the Cross-cutting Assessment was to assess capacity issues, needs and opportunities that cut across the Conventions, i.e., the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC); and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), in the three areas. This included identification of common capacity needs and possible synergies that could be achieved in the country by addressing requirements across two or more themes.

The report was also expected to include a review of the national priorities as expressed in national environmental and natural resources Strategies, Plans, etc., and national priorities with regards to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation (MSI), the Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA), etc., with a view of identifying priority areas for capacity development.

The Assessment was conducted by a team of three national Consultants.

Cross-cutting Capacity Issues Report - Excerpt

The following is a summary of the priority environmental and cross-cutting issues facing Guyana as it seeks to fulfil its commitments to the Conventions. The examination of these priorities revealed that the environmental priorities were included among the cross-cutting priorities. This synergy among the priorities creates an ideal opportunity for the stakeholders to enhance the scope of their execution of environmental priorities by including cross-cutting issues.

Environmental priorities:

- * *In situ* and *ex situ* conservation of biodiversity;
- * Translation of knowledge and awareness of biodiversity issues into responsible actions at the individual and collective levels;
- * Development of methods, incentive measures, criteria and indicators for the sustainable use of biodiversity and natural resources (including energy);
- * Integrated freshwater management;
- * Preparation and update of GHG inventory;
- * Development of Adaptation sector plans for the coastal zone;
- * Development of Mitigation plans for energy and other sectors' activities;
- * Planning of response to impacts of climate change effects;
- * Assessment of the current land uses and practices and factors contributing to land degradation; and
- * Development of forecasting and early warning systems for droughts and floods.

Linkages?

Linkages refer to:

- * Connection among themes and issues addressed under Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). For example, forest management and agricultural practices have implications for climate change, biodiversity and land degradation.
- * Formal and informal mechanisms to coordinate interrelated programmes and activities being conducted under several MEAs, e.g., Convention reporting, research and information bases.

Synergies?

Synergies are the amplified positive impacts that result from coordinating or linking the implementation of two or more MEAs, i.e., multiple benefits from more than one Convention resulting from a single programme or action.

Cross-cutting Issues?

Cross-cutting issues are issues that are common to more than one Convention, i.e., they "cut across" Conventions. These may include capacity strengths, constraints, needs and opportunities. If cross-cutting needs were addressed through capacity development, there would be benefits for more than one Conventions.

Cross-cutting priorities:

- * Human resources;
- * Inter-agency collaboration and coordination;
- * Information gathering, management, storage and exchange;
- * National and international funding;
- * Land use and planning;
- * Integrated ecosystems, plant conservation and protected areas management;
- * Community-based natural resource management;
- * Monitoring;

- * Training and education;
- * Research;
- * Public awareness and participation;
- * Development and enforcement of policy and laws;
- * Poverty reduction;
- * Liability and redress;
- * Economic, trade and incentive systems and instruments;
- * Sub-regional and regional international cooperation;
- * Traditional knowledge; and
- * Technology development and transfer.

Assessment of the Legal and Regulatory Framework

The assessment of the legal and regulatory framework showed that there is no single law in Guyana which has been promulgated to advance the cross-cutting issues of the Conventions, though many of the laws have an impact on the cross-cutting issues which have been identified both specifically and generally.

The overall impact of a cross-cutting analysis demonstrates the need for a wider legislative base and a streamlining of these laws. The coordinating role of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will be critical in realizing the nature of cross-cutting objectives. Section 4(1)(l) of the ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT, identifies the agency as playing a "(l) coordinating role in the preparation and implementation of cross-sectoral programmes of environmental contents".

The overall opportunity for linkages within the current legal and regulatory framework lies in the Regulation-making power of the EPA and the rule-making power vested in Amerindian Village Councils. This opportunity can be realized by integrating cross-cutting issues within the regulations which can be addressed by the EPA.

There are also many laws in Guyana which cover the Conventions; however, there are not many Laws which facilitate a legal and regulatory regime across all of the Conventions. It follows that the legal and regulatory framework possesses some gaps in the overall Convention coverage. These were examined with respect to specific cross-cutting issues which impact directly on the legal and regulatory framework.

The general observations which were reflected in the legal and regulatory framework were the need to review and, if necessary, amend, or repeal out-dated laws. It was also acknowledged that there is a need to enact new laws to address issues which have emerged as a result of the signing of the Conventions.

The important legal and regulatory cross-cutting issues are:

- * Development and enforcement of policy and laws;
- * Monitoring;
- * Liability and redress;
- * Integrated ecosystems, plant conservation and protected areas management; and
- * Land-use and planning.

**Assessment of the Policy Framework**

There is no single policy document in Guyana which substantiates the requirements of the three Conventions in Guyana. The policy landscape is made up of two main and broad policy

documents, the National Development Strategy (NDS) and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), and a number of action plans, which when reviewed and compiled, provide some foundation for the realization of the Conventions' goals (see Table A below). The main anchor on which many of the environmental policy rests in Guyana is the sustainable use of the environment.

As the implementation of the Conventions in Guyana is given priority, outdated policy instruments will have to

be revised and revisited to ensure that they reflect policy issues related to the Conventions. The decision will have to be made on the most effective and efficient manner of integrating, whether through a new instrument which updates and revises all other documents, or whether through revisions of the main policy instruments. At the same time, as new policy instruments are developed, these can integrate the cross-cutting Convention concerns. These instruments include the Land Use Policy and the National Water Use Policy.

The two national policy instruments should also be considered, i.e., the National Development Strategy and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. In their scope of coverage, these instruments provide a matrix of policy issues on which environmental considerations can be based. Convention objectives are, however, not easily identified as a single focused instrument.

Table A. Interface between existing national policies and the Conventions

| National Policies | UNCBD | UNCCD | UNFCCC |
|---|-------|-------|--------|
| The National Strategy for the Conservation and Sustainable use of Guyana's Biological Diversity | Y | | |
| National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) | Y | Y | |
| National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) | Y | Y | Y |
| National Forestry Action Plan | Y | | |
| National Forest Plan | Y | Y | |
| Fisheries Management and Development Plan | Y | | |
| National Mangrove Action Plan and the draft code for utilization of Mangroves | Y | Y | |
| Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan | Y | Y | |
| Guyana Integrated Natural Resources Management System | Y | | |
| National Development Strategy | Y | | |
| Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper | Y | Y | |
| Climate Change Plan | | Y | Y |
| National Ecotourism Development Plan | | Y | |
| Guyana Sustainable Development and Health Project | | | Y |

Assessment of the Institutional Framework

A constitutional mandate and duty is cast on the State to create the institutions, structures and frameworks necessary for the implementation of the Conventions. As the legal and regulatory framework suggests, there are several institutions which will be relevant to the implementation of the objectives of the Conventions. The list of stakeholders prepared as part of this process supports this conclusion.

The institutional framework through which Guyana's commitments to the Conventions will be enacted was illustrated with some of the responses to the questionnaires in the assessment. Institutions (or organizations) indicated what their overall mandate was, what national policy instruments guided them, how the aims, objectives and provisions of the Conventions informed their strategies and priorities and what their specific responsibilities were (as each organization perceived them) towards fulfilling Guyana's obligations to the Conventions.

The mandates of institutions are, perhaps not surprisingly, rather sector-focused so that, for example, Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC) is charged with promoting interest in mining and developing mining potential; Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission (GLSC) manages public lands and formulates land-use policy and plans; Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC) is responsible for the administration and management of all State Forest land, and so on. Of the State Agencies, only the EPA has a clearly stated responsibility across sectors with the environmental thread linking the activities of all the other stakeholder organizations.

Some institutions are steered by specific policy instruments (such as the National Energy Policy or the National Forest Policy) though most are guided by a range of broader policies that include the NDS, PRSP, NBAP and NEAP. In general, however, the specific aims, objectives and provisions of the Conventions do not directly influence the strategies and policies of stakeholder organizations, though Conservation International-Guyana does support the Government in achieving specific goals particularly related to protected area establishment and management.



As a consequence, apart from the identified national focal points (EPA for UNCBD, GLSC for UNCCD and Hydromet Service for UNFCCC), institutions do not identify specific responsibilities that they have towards directly fulfilling Guyana's obligations to the Conventions. While, on the positive side, several stakeholder organizations are involved in environmental activities that may incidentally contribute to Convention goals, the lack of clear mandates and responsibilities hampers a coordinated and synergistic strategic response to the Conventions. Further, the critical role of the EPA, under the current framework, in undertaking specific activities, as well as in coordination and guidance, is emphasized.

The critical need, therefore, emerges to streamline key institutions to ensure the optimal use of limited resources.

Cross-cutting capacity constraints and opportunities for synergies

Description of Key Capacity Constraints

Detailed data on capacity constraints at the Convention level have been provided in the thematic reports. Here, the focus has been on identifying cross-cutting capacity constraints that are applicable to all three Conventions and which are commonly experienced by key stakeholder organizations. Capacity constraints were investigated through the interactions with stakeholders through questionnaire responses, interviews and the focus group workshop held on December 7, 2006.

Clearly, the two most serious constraints faced were lack of skilled manpower and inadequate financial resources (which when combined can exacerbate an inadequate capacity to execute coordinated actions).

The issue of skilled manpower was raised repeatedly and is a rather complex issue. In many cases, the constraint is not so much in recruiting skilled manpower, as there is a relatively good pool of trained young persons in the country, but a problem of retention of key staff. This is linked to a range of causal factors that includes high rates of emigration, relatively low salaries, the perception that some organizations are slow to adopt new ideas and procedures and the feeling that opportunities for career development and advancement in the public sector, especially, are comparatively few. The net result is a generally rapid turnover of employees leading to a stratum of rather young and inexperienced professional staff with a short institutional memory.

Barriers at the systemic level were felt by some to hinder their Convention-related activities which were related in a general sense to regulatory and policy frameworks but were also linked to the coordination at a national level of Convention activities and the sub-optimal recognition and capitalization of potential synergies.

Few specific capacity-building exercises directed to addressing Convention activities had been undertaken, though some training in environmental and planning fields had been conducted by most stakeholders.

Competencies required by stakeholders in order to discharge their current responsibilities ranged from the general (such as land-use planning, environmental management, resource evaluation, IT skills, project management and community participation) to the specific (such as water quality monitoring, soil management, ecosystem health measurement and reclamation of disturbed sites). In most cases, it was felt that not all competencies required were fully established in respective organizations. Furthermore, even existing competencies were not effectively directed towards Convention activities, though it was felt that with adequate re-

sources and guidance, this could be relatively easily achieved.

Opportunities for synergy

There are a number of opportunities for promoting synergy among the activities addressing Convention obligations. These operate at the community, national, sub-regional and international levels.

At the national level, several factors affect synergy and present challenges which must be overcome. These include institutional requirements and structures, capacity requirements, national planning requirements and information and reporting requirements. The elements of each of these areas are examined in an effort to highlight the opportunities and tools which may best assist Guyana.

At the international level, these include:

- ♣ encouraging collaboration among national focal points as a key to fostering synergy at the national level through formal networks;
- ♣ collaboration at the level of the Convention bodies and Secretariats to promote policy coherence, enhance the provision of technical expertise and to enhance cooperation in achieving complementary objectives;
- ♣ capacity-building at the national level, as one of the essential elements for implementation;
- ♣ technology transfer at both the Secretariat and national level through sharing of experiences, information, and identification of technologies of joint interest and relevance; and
- ♣ research and monitoring, including sharing of data.

Institutional requirements and structures

The important lessons which emerge under this heading were the following:

- ♣ Institutional structures must be goal-oriented and goal-specific; and
- ♣ National Priorities must be supported by the institutional arrangements.

Specific activities, such as the following, promote synergy among institutions:

- ♣ awareness raising;
- ♣ education;
- ♣ public participation;
- ♣ research;
- ♣ training;
- ♣ data gathering and inventories; and
- ♣ the enabling environment, including appropriate framework legislation, delegation of authority, and leadership at the highest levels.

Institutional options for implementation at the national level include:

- ♣ Cross-cutting national committee with a policy-

making function. It will comprise all relevant government departments and other relevant stakeholders. The Natural Resources and Environment Committee (NREAC) meets this requirement;

- ✦ Separate institutions with a coordinating mechanism. The present legislative structure of the EPA may meet this requirement; and
- ✦ A single institution responsible for all instruments. In Guyana, it will be necessary to adjust legislative instruments which currently place respective Convention responsibilities with different agencies.

Due to the importance of information flows, it will also be necessary to ensure adequate human capacity and institutional structures at the Regional and Community levels. This may involve Regional Administrations and Amerindian Village Councils. The Councils are an important institution having regard to the scope of functions conferred by the Amerindian Act.

Support at the community level must be premised on adequate resources both human and financial as well as legislative authority.

Institutional linkages currently emerging in Guyana cover many areas of collaboration and/or cooperation and mostly these were described by the organizations themselves as highly or moderately effective. Nevertheless, there were some specific areas of poor interaction which were often the result of unclear or overlapping mandates and regulations. The need for a review of this with a view to harmonization is thus emphasized. In addition, most linkages were not formalized (with the

The National Strategy and Action Plan

The primary outputs of the NCSA process in Guyana were the NCSA Report and the Strategy and Action Plan. The NCSA Report summarized the process and outputs of assessments undertaken in earlier phases and should be regarded as the diagnostic framework and companion report to the Strategy and Action Plan.

The objective of the Strategy and Action Plan was to promote and achieve synergies (amplified linkages) in overall environmental management that would enhance meeting national environmental priorities, and address the obligations of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), through synergistic capacity development. This was done through addressing capacity development priorities, identified from earlier assessments in the NCSA process, and highlighting specific opportunities relevant to global environmental commitments and national priority issues, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

The National Strategy and Action Plan was prepared by the Project Coordinator, and refined with inputs from

exception of an NGO that was party to several MoUs which can limit the impact of synergies on the ground.

Capacity building

This is an important objective of the NCSA project and should include relevant partners and stakeholders. This will ensure effectiveness in the participation in policies, plans and processes by which they are affected.

One of the first steps which must be undertaken is an assessment of the Guyana's existing capacities to execute the requirements of the Conventions. This assessment could be guided by relevant indicators which will determine, *inter alia*, the level of knowledge of the Conventions as well as responsibilities among different parties.

Experience suggests and Guyana has not varied from previous experiences that insufficient capacity exists to conduct activities related to:

- ✦ inventories, monitoring, and systematic observation;
- ✦ planning, policy development, and reform of legal frameworks;
- ✦ impact assessment and research, including participatory assessment;
- ✦ information and data management, including reporting; and
- ✦ education, training and public awareness.

The capacities which are needed for the implementation of the Conventions tend to be in the areas of Human Resources, Infrastructure development and Coordination and Cooperation.

the Focal Points for the Conventions, UNDP and a wide cross-section of Stakeholders at the National Workshop held on March 22, 2007.

Strategic Vision, Mission and Outcomes

Guyana's Strategic Vision for Capacity Development for Environmental Management should be in synchrony with Guyana's Policy position on Sustainable Development, that which is expressed in the EP Act, and in the National Development Strategy.

The **Vision** of the Capacity Development Action Plan is: *By the year 2027, Guyana will have an efficient harmonized system of environmental management which will enhance the country's ability in meeting the obligations of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements. This will incorporate economic, environment and social values, and protect and maintain environmental integrity during planning and implementation. It will also allow for participation at all levels of society and the distribution of benefits equitably across socio-economic strata and gender.*

The **Mission** of the Action Plan is:

To develop Guyana's capacity to address national priorities in meeting the obligations of Multilateral Environmental Agreements in the thematic areas of Biodiversity, Climate Change and Desertification/Land Degradation, through synergistic capacity development actions.

The Expected Outcomes of this Action Plan are:

Outcome 1:

Enhanced Multilateral Environmental Agreements Management and Financing.

Outcome 2:

Improved National Environmental Management Framework.

Outcome 3:

Research and Development promoted in National Priority Areas

Outcome 4:

Improved Human Capacity, Public Awareness and Stakeholder Involvement for National and Global Priorities

Implementation Structure

The following were possible implementation structures suggested for the Action Plan:

Option A:

Establishment of a National Coordinating Secretariat for implementation of the Action Plan and Conventions responsible to an Environmental Capacity Working Group with the responsibility for oversight of the Action Plan, with overall reporting responsibilities to the Natural Resources and Environment Advisory Committee (NREAC). The Capacity Working Group should have representation from the key stakeholders Agencies,

NGOs, Private Sector, the Scientific Community and Civil Society.

Option B:

The Environmental Protection Agency to be responsible for coordinating the Action Plan, establishing a Steering Committee for oversight and monitoring of the progress of activities.

Option C:

Establishment of a National Coordinating Secretariat for implementation of the Action Plan and Conventions activities within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Option D:

A combination of any of the above options.

Next Steps

The following were also **next steps** recommended in implementing the Action Plan:

1. Secure high-level political support by way of Cabinet approval of the Strategy and Action Plan.
2. Decide on an implementation structure.
3. Develop Terms of References for chosen implementation structure, including requirements for staffing, reporting, monitoring and evaluation.
4. Establish a financing strategy for funding the implementation structure.
5. Put in place the institutional arrangements for the implementation of the Action Plan and recruit staff.
6. Develop an Annual Work Programme and seek funding for recommended actions.
7. Place priority on implementing short-term actions which require little or no funding.
8. Monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Action Plan.

For further information on the Reports please contact

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Useful Websites:

NCSA Guyana: <http://www.epaguyana.org/nrsa>



Participants at the National Workshop held on March 22, 2007 to refine the National Strategy and Action Plan.