

Action Plan for Implementing the Programme of Work on Protected Areas of the Convention on Biological Diversity



GUYANA

Submitted to the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

May 25, 2012

Protected area information:

PoWPA Focal Point:

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Lead implementing agency:

The Environmental Protection Agency is currently the Lead Implementing Agency for the Programme of Work on Protected Areas in Guyana. However, in 2011, the Government of Guyana enacted the Protected Areas Act, 2011, which calls for a new entity, the Protected Areas Commission, to oversee the establishment and management of Guyana's National Protected Areas System. Once the Commission has been established, this entity will take the lead in implementation.

Multi-stakeholder committee:

A Multi-Stakeholder Committee specifically for Protected Areas has not been set up at the National Level. There are, however, a number of mechanisms in place which allow for inclusive decision-making regarding protected areas at the national level. In February 2012, the Board of Directors, including ex-officio members, of the Protected Areas Commission, has been appointed. The members comprise key personnel, including indigenous representatives, with extensive experience and knowledge of protected areas, as well as persons from key national agencies, involved in the management and sustainable use of natural resources such as forestry, lands and mining.

Description of protected area system

Coverage

As at May 25, 2012, the terrestrial coverage of protected areas in Guyana is approximately eight percent (8%). The actual sizes of the two new protected areas that were declared in the last quarter of 2011 are currently being determined. At present, there are no marine protected areas in Guyana but the area along the coast of Guyana is subjected to practices and plans designed for the integrated management of fisheries and the shore zone, and the conservation of sea turtles.

Description and background

The Protected Areas Act, 2011 provides the legal framework for the establishment and management of the National Protected Areas System in Guyana. In accordance with the Act, the national protected areas system consists of: 1) the Kaieteur National Park; 2) the Programme Site of the Iwokrama International Center for Rainforest Conservation and Development; 3) national protected areas; d) Amerindian Protected areas; 5) Protected areas previously declared, and urban parks including the Botanical Gardens and the Zoological Park; and, 6) Privately managed protected areas.

The former two protected areas were established in 1929 and 1996, under their individual Acts, respectively. These areas have now become part of the Protected Areas System, along with the Kanuku Mountains and Shell Beach Protected Areas which were declared as national protected areas under the Protected Areas Act, 2011 in October, 2011. The Konashen Community Owned Conservation Area was declared as an Amerindian Protected Area in 2007 under the Amerindian Act, 2006. Following the passage of the Protected Areas Act, 2011, Konashen Village has reiterated its interest to become a part of the Protected Areas System. However, in order for this process to be completed, the Village has to comply with the provisions made in the Protected Areas Act, 2011.

Governance types

Protected Areas	Governance Type	Status of Management Planning
Kanuku Mountains	Government	In draft
Konashen	Community	Under review
Shell Beach	Government	To be prepared
Kaieteur National Park	Government	In draft
Iwokrama	Shared - Multi-stakeholder International Board of Trustees	Completed

Key threats

Mining contributes significantly to the economy of Guyana. However, mining activities are known to negatively impact the environment, and are a key threat to protected areas. To combat these impacts, the government has published a clear mining policy, and has developed strict mining laws and regulations. The EPA, together with a multi-stakeholder committee, has also drafted updated Mining Regulations (Mining, Amendment No.1 Regulations, 2001) that are more comprehensive regarding the use of poisonous substances, and the management of the environment and protected areas. No mining activities are allowed in legally established protected areas in Guyana.

Another threat to protected areas is the acquisition of land for other use, e.g. industrial, agricultural, and residential. The implications of this are that the size and the boundaries of protected areas may be affected, and all the user groups must be brought into the entire process for the planning, establishment and management of a system of protected areas. It must be noted, however, that to date, these groups, especially Amerindian communities, have been generally supportive of the process, and are given the option under the Amerindian Act, 2006, and the Protected Areas Act, 2011, to declare all or part of their titled lands for protection. Additionally, at the national level, a land use policy is under development. This is expected to improve land management and reduce land conflicts within the natural resources and other sectors.

The limited institutional capacity of the principal Government Agencies, responsible for establishing this system, will serve as a threat to the process. While technical personnel exist in the country, the financial resources to retain them are limited.

A collaborative approach is being taken to the management of Protected Areas in Guyana. As such, communities are represented in the management and decision-making bodies for the Protected Areas in Guyana. In case of the Iwokrama Forest, the community is a shareholder and part owner of the sustainable timber business initiative. This co-management approach will be further expanded in the management of the Kanuku Mountains and Shell Beach Protected Areas. This inclusion of communities in decision-making provides a mechanism for the equitable sharing of both costs and benefits arising from the establishment and management of protected areas. The EPA has also developed a Policy for Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit Sharing. This Policy is being used to guide the use of natural resources in an effort to ensure the conservation of resources and equitable sharing of benefits.

Barriers for effective implementation

While there have been several developments in the areas of environmental governance such as the passage of the Protected Areas Legislation, enhancement of national technical and human capacity through training provided by the German Development Bank (KfW) and WWF, and numerous environmental education and public awareness initiatives, several challenges and gaps remain. These include adequate funding for the establishment and management of protected areas, steady progress of establishment of the Protected Areas System process development, revision and finalization of key

policies and legislation, such as the Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit Sharing Regulations, and retention of skilled professionals.

National Targets and Vision for Protected Areas

The overall objectives of the Protected Areas System include, *inter alia*, the conservation of Guyana’s biological diversity, safeguarding and maintenance of eco-system services, and assisting in the adaptation and mitigation of climate change. The Government of Guyana is committed to meeting the 17% target by 2020 for the protection of terrestrial areas in accordance with the Aichi Target 11 developed by Countries at the last meeting of the COP on the Convention of Biological Diversity. The Protected Areas Act, 2011, provides the legal framework for the establishment of a Protected Areas Trust Fund to contribute to the financial sustainability of the System. Provisions are also made for the development of management plans, and the inclusion of community and privately owned protected areas to ensure that the system is managed effectively and includes the ecosystems important for the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable use of natural resources.

Progress in and plans for achieving the goals of the Programme of Work on Protected Areas

Progress: 0 = no work, 1 = just started, 2 = partially complete, 3 = nearly complete, 4 = complete

Goals of the Programme of Work on Protected Areas	Progress 0-4
• Progress in establishing and strengthening national and regional systems of protected areas (1.1)	2
• Progress in integrating protected areas into broader land- and seascapes and sectors so as to maintain ecological structure and function (1.2)	2
• Progress in establishing and strengthening regional networks, transboundary protected areas (TBPAs) and collaboration between neighbouring protected areas across national boundaries (1.3)	1
• Progress in substantially improving site-based protected area planning and management (1.4)	2
• Progress in preventing and mitigating the negative impacts of key threats to protected areas (1.5)	2
• Progress in promoting equity and benefit-sharing (2.1)	1
• Progress in assessing and implementing diverse protected area governance types (2.1)	2

• Progress in enhancing and securing involvement of indigenous and local communities and relevant stakeholders (2.2)	3
• Progress in providing an enabling policy, institutional and socio-economic environment for protected areas (3.1)	2
• Progress in assessing the contribution of protected areas to local and national economies (3.1)	1
• Progress in building capacity for the planning, establishment and management of protected areas (3.2)	2
• Progress in developing, applying and transferring appropriate technologies for protected areas (3.3)	1
• Progress in ensuring financial sustainability of protected areas and national and regional systems of protected areas (3.4)	1
• Progress in strengthening communication, education and public awareness (3.5)	2
• Progress in developing and adopting minimum standards and best practices for national and regional protected area systems (4.1)	1
• Progress in evaluating and improving the effectiveness of protected areas management (4.2)	2
• Progress in assessing and monitoring protected area status and trends (4.3)	1
• Progress in ensuring that scientific knowledge contributes to the establishment and effectiveness of protected areas and protected area systems (4.4)	1
• Progress in marine protected areas	1
• Progress in incorporating climate change aspects into protected areas	1

Priority activities for fully implementing the Programme of Work on Protected Areas:

Activities	Timeline
1. Establish and strengthen institutional framework for establishment and management of protected areas	2015
2. Improve Capacity Building for the planning, establishment and management of protected areas	2015
3. Ensure that protected areas and national and regional systems of protected areas are financially sustainable	2020
4. Evaluate and improve the effectiveness of protected areas management	2015

Action Plans for completing priority activities for fully implementing the Programme of Work on Protected Areas:

Activity 1: Establish and strengthen institutional framework for establishment and management of protected areas

Key steps	Timeline	Responsible agencies	Indicative budget
Appoint the Board of the Directors for the Protected Areas Commission (PAC)	2012	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE), EPA and Minister of MNRE	-
Prepare documents for the recruitment of a Commissioner of the PAC in accordance with the Protected Areas Act, 2012	2012	MNRE, EPA and Board of Directors of the PAC	-
Advertise for, and appoint the Commissioner to oversee the day-to-day business, administration and operations of the PAC	2012	MNRE and Board of Directors of the PAC	US\$2,000
Prepare documents for the recruitment of other staff positions, such as the Deputy Commissioner, Protected Areas Officers, Administrators and Rangers of the Commission.	2012	MNRE, EPA and Board of Directors of the PAC	Euro 0.5 M
Advertise for, and recruit persons to fill the required staff positions at the PAC	2012-2013	MNRE and Commissioner	US\$4,000

Activity 2: Improve Capacity Building for the planning, establishment and management of protected areas

Key steps	Timeline	Responsible agencies	Indicative budget
Source funding the implementation of capacity building activities at the national and local levels	2012	MNRE, EPA and Protected Areas Commission	-
Source Trainers	2013	MNRE, EPA and Protected Areas Commission	-
Develop capacity building programmes for implementation	2013-2014	EPA, Protected Areas Commission and Training Institutions	-
Execute programmes at the national and local levels	2014-2015	EPA, Protected Areas Commission and Training Institutions	Euro 0.5 M

Activity 3: *Ensure that protected areas and national and regional systems of protected areas are financially sustainable*

Key steps	Timeline	Responsible agencies	Indicative budget
Appoint the Board of the Directors for the Protected Areas Trust Fund (PATF)	2012	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment	-
Prepare documents for the recruitment of a Fund Administrator	2012	Board of Directors of the PATF/Ministry/EPA	-
Advertise for, and appoint the Fund Administrator to provide investment advice and investment management practices	2013	Board of Directors of the PATF	US\$2,000
Set up the PATF	2013	Board of Directors of the PATF and the Fund Administrator	Euro 4M US \$5 M
Apply for funding from the PATF	2015-2020	Management Authorities of the Protected Area	-

Activity 4: *Evaluate and improve the effectiveness of protected areas management*

Key steps	Timeline	Responsible agencies	Indicative budget
Evaluate and update existing management plans as necessary	2013-2015	EPA, Protected Areas Commission and Communities	US \$50,000
Develop new plans for existing protected areas	2012-2013	EPA and Protected Areas Commission	US \$25,000
Provide infrastructure and other support for the management of protected areas	2012-2013	EPA and Protected Areas Commission	Euro 1M

Key assessment results

Ecological gap assessment

In November 2009, a workshop was conducted with various key stakeholders to arrive at priority sites for conservation and inclusion in the protected areas system of the country. Areas were selected after consideration was given to Guyana's contribution to the biodiversity value to the Amazon region. In keeping with the need for connectivity, representative ecosystems were also considered for protection.

Management effectiveness assessment

Tools for management effectiveness have been employed to some degree in the development and review of management plans. Iwokrama Protected Area is in the process of developing a lessons-learned document which will provide an evaluation of Park Management. Each protected area Management Plan will comprise a section on monitoring and evaluation and outline a mechanism to complete these activities. The intervals at which monitoring and evaluation are to be conducted are also indicated in the plans that have already been completed.

Sustainable finance assessment

Various financial mechanisms are currently used to support protected areas in Guyana, such as Government subventions, user revenues, project support funding, and endowments. The draft Protected Areas Legislation provides the legal framework necessary for the establishment of a Protected Area Trust Fund. To date, the Government of Germany, through KfW, has signed a Financing Agreement for the sum of Euro 4M to be put into the Trust Fund. Conservation International has also pledged an additional US\$5M for this purpose. Additionally, it is expected that a percentage of the revenues to be generated from the services offered by the protected area, will be used for the management of the area.

Capacity needs assessment

The Government of Guyana has secured funding from the Government of Germany through the KfW (German Development Bank) to facilitate the training of community members as Forest Rangers, Tour Guides and Natural Resource Managers. Further capacity building needs have been and will be identified during the management planning processes for each PA, and will form part of the respective management plans for each area.

Policy environment assessment

The need for a national law on protected areas was met through the passage of the Protected Areas Act, 2011. This Act provides the basis for protected areas establishment and management in Guyana.

Protected area integration and mainstreaming assessment

A proposal for the mainstreaming of biodiversity concerns into forests and mining practices and strengthening biodiversity management in Guyana is currently being developed for submission under Guyana's GEF 5 Allocation. A comprehensive national land use plan is also being developed for Guyana, which will significantly contribute to the integration of protected areas into broader land- and sea-scapes, and sectors.

Protected area valuation assessment

While Protected Area Valuation Assessments were not completed for Guyana, the Office of the President, based on an independent assessment by McKinsey & Company, estimated the value of Guyana's rainforest, if harvested and the land put to the highest value subsequent use. A similar approach can be utilised for a protected area valuation assessment taking into account the other values, such as ecosystem services, that protected areas provide.

Climate change resilience and adaptation assessment

While there is no climate change resilience and adaptation assessment that was conducted for protected areas in Guyana, it is recognised that there is a trend towards payment for ecosystem services and carbon storage, rather than simply protected areas for the conservation of species and ecosystems.