

CANOPY

MAGAZINE

Conserving Forests, Unlocking Value

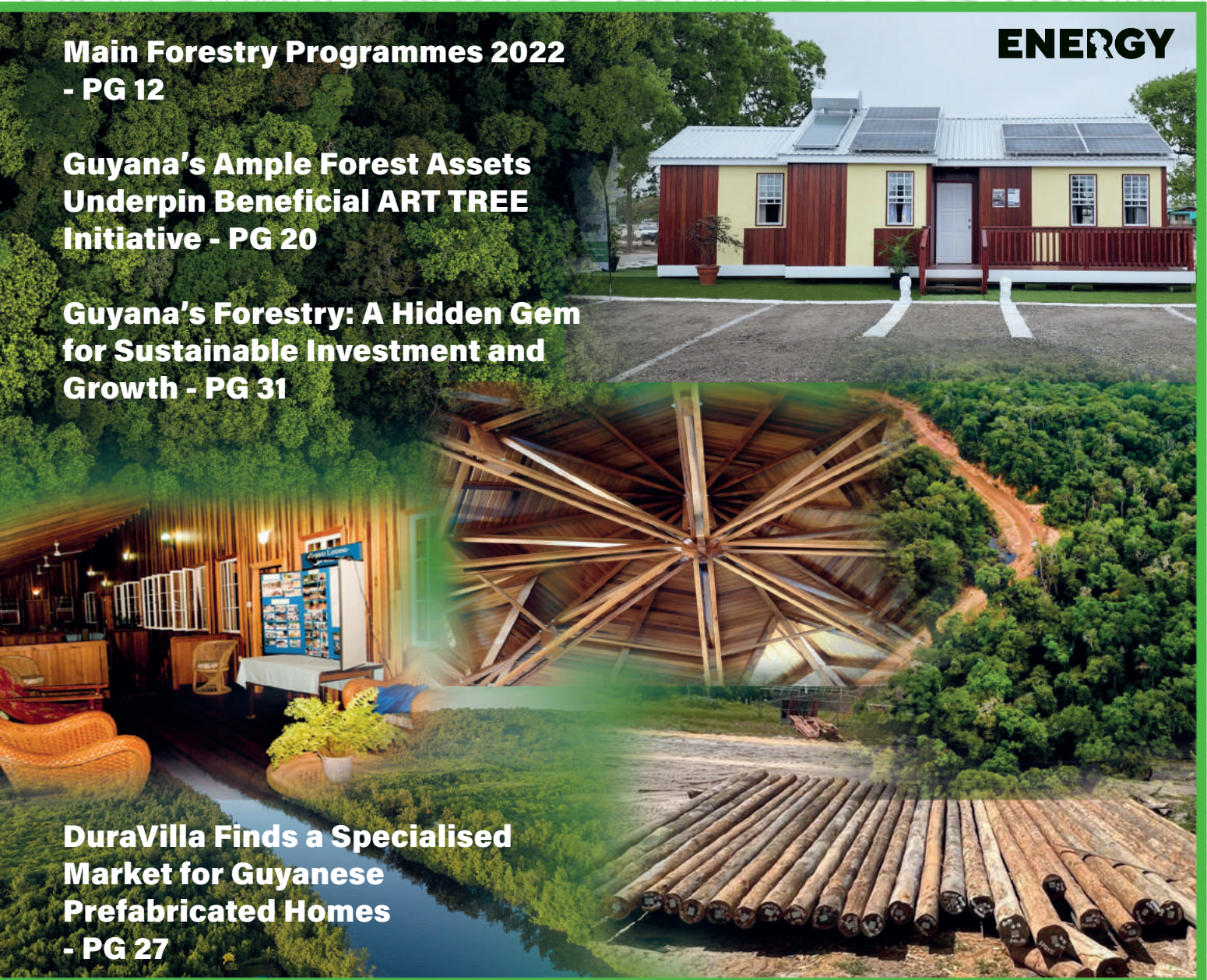
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AUGUST 2023 - ISSUE #1



GUYANA'S FORESTS

99%

of 18 million
hectares
intact

**ONE
OF FOUR**

verified High
Forest Low
Deforestation
countries

**SECOND
HIGHEST**

percentage of
forest cover on
earth

**HIGH
LEVELS**

of biological
diversity and
endemism

Guyana's Pristine Rainforests

An Unparalleled Treasure for Tourism

Nestled on the northeastern coast of South America, Guyana proudly boasts an unparalleled treasure: its pristine rainforests. With over 80% of the country covered in lush greenery, Guyana claims some of the planet's most untouched and biodiverse ecosystems. These rainforests play a significant role in Guyana's tourism sector, attracting nature enthusiasts, adventure seekers, and eco-conscious travellers from around the globe. The role of the rainforest in driving tourism and sustaining the country's natural resources is integral to the Government of Guyana's renewed Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) 2030 and warrants a closer look



Biodiversity Hotspot

Guyana's rainforests, part of the Guiana Shield, are recognised as one of the world's largest biodiversity hotspots. With abundant flora and fauna, including jaguars, giant anteaters, capybaras, and over 800 species of birds, these rainforests provide a unique opportunity for nature lovers to witness diverse ecosystems at their finest. Travellers can embark on guided hikes and treks to explore the rainforest's secrets, immersing themselves in its untouched beauty.

Sustainable Tourism

Guyana has adopted a commendable approach to tourism that prioritises sustainability and preserving its natural resources. The country's commitment to eco-tourism has garnered global recognition, attracting conscientious travellers seeking authentic and responsible experiences. The government, local communities, and tour operators have established various sustainable tourism initiatives, ensuring that travellers have minimal impact on the rainforest's delicate ecosystems. This responsible tourism model enables travellers to appreciate Guyana's rainforests while actively contributing to their conservation.

Indigenous Cultural Immersion

In addition to its exceptional natural beauty, Guyana's rainforests are home to a rich tapestry of Indigenous cultures. Groups such as the Wai-Wais, Macushis, and Patamunas have inhabited these lands for centuries, maintaining a harmonious relationship with nature. Travellers can immerse themselves in Indigenous customs, traditions, and daily lives by engaging in community-based tourism. From learning about traditional crafts and medicinal plants to participating in cultural ceremonies, travellers can better appreciate the interconnectedness between people and the rainforest.

Adventure and Outdoor Activities

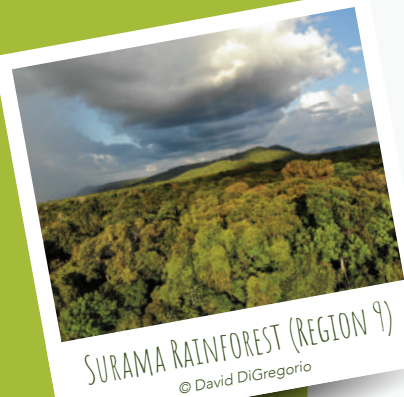
Guyana's rainforests are a haven for thrill-seekers and adventure enthusiasts. The rugged landscapes offer many exciting outdoor activities, such as kayaking through rivers, embarking on multi-day hikes to the majestic Kaieteur, and tackling challenging mountain peaks. These adrenaline-pumping adventures showcase the rainforest's natural wonders and provide unforgettable experiences for intrepid travellers.

Conservation and Research

Guyana's commitment to preserving its rainforests extends beyond tourism. The country has made significant strides in conservation efforts, focusing on protecting its endangered species and mitigating the impacts of climate change. The rainforests serve as living laboratories for scientific research, enabling biologists, botanists, and ecologists to study unique ecosystems and develop strategies for sustainable conservation. Travellers contribute directly to these conservation initiatives by supporting eco-tourism, fostering a cycle of preservation and scientific advancement. The Iwokrama International Centre for Rain Forest Conservation and Development is one of Guyana's main driving forces behind rainforest conservation and research projects.

As more travellers seek authentic and impactful experiences, Guyana's rainforests will continue to play a pivotal role in the country's tourism sector, spotlighting the remarkable biodiversity and cultural richness within these lush jungles.

For more information, visit the Guyana Tourism Authority's website www.guyanatourism.com or follow our platforms on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter @DiscoverGuyana.



SURAMA RAINFOREST (REGION 9)
© David DiGregorio



IWOKRAMA CANOPY WALKWAY
© David DiGregorio



KAIETEUR
© David DiGregorio



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The Guyana Forestry Commission

The Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC) is responsible for advising the subject Minister on issues relating to forest policy, forestry laws and regulations. The Commission is also responsible for the administration and management of all State Forest land. The work of the Commission is guided by a National Forest Plan that has been developed to address the forest policy.

The Commission develops and monitors standards for forest sector operations, develops and implements forest protection and conservation strategies, oversees forest research and provides support and guidance to forest education and training. The GFC is governed by a board of directors appointed by the President. The board is responsible for the performance of the functions conferred on the Commission by the Act.

The Commissioner of Forests is responsible for the overall management of the Guyana Forestry Commission.

Mission

To provide excellence in forestry management services to stakeholders through the application of professional skills to contribute to our nation's development.

Vision

To be a dynamic and professional Forestry Commission highly respected by local and international stakeholders.

The Division comprises the following departments:

- Internal Audit
- Finance Division
- Management Information Systems
- Planning & Development Division
- Forest Monitoring Division
- Forest Resource Management Division
- Human Resources & Administration

For more information visit: <https://forestry.gov.gy/>

Did you Know:

The Government of Guyana embarked on a mission to improve the viability of the forestry sector through the export of secondary products, rather than focusing primarily on raw materials.

The strategy will ensure the sustainability of the sector, limiting deforestation by reducing the number of logs exported. It will also increase profits by enhancing the quality of wooden products sold on international markets.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

We are pleased to introduce Canopy Magazine, a dynamic new annual publication endorsed by the Government of Guyana and prepared by the popular Energy Guyana Magazine in collaboration with Sagacity Inc. From the start, we have been privileged to enjoy full cooperation and support from the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Guyana Forestry Commission. With this in mind, Canopy has excellent potential to become the go-to guide for the most absorbing and meaningful news, views, events, and issues concerning the flourishing forestry sector.

We firmly believe that a profitable and sustainable forestry sector is crucial to the growth of the national economy. The mission is to keep readers up-to-date with the most impactful policies, perspectives, and developments shaping the sector's vital role in the revised Low Carbon Development Strategy 2030. Coverage will focus on the roles forestry and related value-added and spin-off businesses play in national development strategies, and how the actions of industry stakeholders impact environmental preservation and social development.

Canopy will cover the evolution of national policies and plans for the profitable and sustainable development of the nascent forestry industry. We will also share information on initiatives targeting responsible forest management, environmental protection, biodiversity conservation, and community engagement. Our goal is to give readers valuable insights into the strategies and actions taken by various stakeholders in the industry to ensure meaningful progress while balancing economic growth and environmental management.

Even beyond this, Canopy will put a spotlight on the individuals, businesses, agencies and organisations that advance forestry. We will celebrate trailblazing companies, influential investors, and prominent officials—persons or groups who champion sustainability and innovation in forestry. We will explore the connection between people and forests by sharing information on pivotal players, from large-scale operations to community-based projects. And we will publicise the efforts of persons at all levels whose hard work drives the sector forward—loggers, loaders, drivers, rangers, and others—plus indigenous communities whose intimate knowledge of the rainforest is instrumental in responsible forestry.

The Canopy team invites you to join us on an exhilarating journey through the pages of our inaugural edition as we explore the unique challenges and opportunities that define the rapidly-expanding forestry industry. In the pages of our first issue, we share enlightening information about stakeholder activities, including experiences, perspectives, goals, and visions for the future. We believe the information we share will promote the profitable and sustainable development of the forestry sector while balancing national development, environmental protection, and social responsibility.

Canopy Magazine is a production of Energy Guyana Magazine Inc. in collaboration with Sagacity Inc.

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ENERGY





Message by His Excellency Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana



I welcome the launch of Canopy Magazine, a valuable addition to Guyana's literary landscape that brings much-needed attention to the developments within our forestry sector. As our nation witnesses an intense, and at times, obsessive focus on the oil and gas industry, this dedicated magazine will shed light on the vital role of the forestry sector and contribute to a deeper understanding of its potential.

Forests are indispensable ecosystems that provide numerous benefits to our planet and its inhabitants. Guyana, blessed with extensive rainforests which is the primary habitat of the country's rich biodiversity, has always recognised its responsibility to protect and conserve these invaluable resources while harnessing them for sustainable economic opportunities.

In 2009, Guyana adopted a new vision for its forestry sector, as outlined in the original Low Carbon Development Strategy. Although the 'Strategy' has been revised over time, its core principles remain intact, emphasising the use of our forestry resources to promote a low-carbon growth trajectory and positioning our forests as a vital component in addressing global climate change.

To align with this vision, Guyana's forestry sector has been readjusted to capitalise on low-carbon development opportunities and leverage the ecosystem and climate services provided by our forests. With one of the highest rates of forest cover in the world and historically low levels of deforestation, Guyana is well-suited to lead in this endeavour.

Recognising the value of our standing forests, Guyana has begun marketing its forest climate services, including the sale of carbon credits. Last year we signed an agreement for the sale of carbon credits worth approximately

US\$750 million, enabling us to earn revenues while actively contributing to global climate change mitigation. The earnings from these carbon credits will be invested in national low-carbon priorities and the development of indigenous communities.

The marketing and sale of carbon credits will not hinder the sustainable exploitation and development of our forest resources. Our forestry sector, employing over 20,000 individuals, will continue to expand the local value chain for wood products and prioritise reduced-impact logging as part of our commitment to sustainable forestry development.

Against this background, the launch of Canopy Magazine provides a valuable platform to showcase the crucial role our forests play in shaping the emerging new economy and how their benefits extend to forest producers and those whose livelihoods depend on them.

I anticipate that this magazine will also foster a deep understanding of our forest resources and the guiding philosophy behind our forestry sector plans, firmly rooted in our revised Low Carbon Development Strategy.

I am confident that Canopy Magazine will become an informative and engaging publication, attracting readership not only from Guyana but also from across the nation, region, and the international community. On behalf of the people of Guyana, I extend my sincere gratitude to the Canopy team and wish them every success. Together let us continue to enlighten others about the invaluable services and contributions of Guyana's forests!

Message by Hon. Vickram Bharrat - Minister of Natural Resources



I am delighted to extend my warmest greetings as we embark on an exhilarating journey through the pages of Canopy Magazine, a publication that holds great promise in highlighting the transformative progress made in Guyana's forestry sector.

Over the past few years, we have witnessed a remarkable shift in our approach to forestry, embracing sustainable practices, igniting a spark of value-added brilliance, and creating an array of captivating spin-off opportunities for the sector.

At the Ministry of Natural Resources, we firmly believe that a profitable and sustainable forestry sector is not only beneficial for our economy but also for the preservation of our environment and the advancement of social development. With unwavering commitment, we have steered the course of progress, witnessing remarkable strides through various initiatives that have reshaped the very landscape of our forestry sector.

Our dedication is harmoniously aligned with the revised Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) 2030, where the forestry sector plays a pivotal role in shaping our national development initiatives. One such initiative is the National Forest Inventory Programme, which will provide essential information for forest management planning, concession allocation, and forest utilisation.

Our robust sustainable forest management programme has seen Guyana become the first country in the Amazon region to sign a Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) on forest law enforcement, governance and trade (FLEGT) with the European Union. This will allow Guyana to issue verified legal timber products with FLEGT licences, supporting the commitment of government towards improving market access for forest products as we seek to develop a more value-added sector.

Aligned with our commitment to responsible practices, we have set our sights on Forest Certification, propelling Guyana towards becoming one of the select few tropical timber-producing countries with an internationally accredited National Standard. This achievement will unlock unprecedented opportunities in international markets, putting Guyana's forestry products in the global spotlight.

Our efforts to conserve biodiversity, engage local communities, and promote the welfare of indigenous peoples have borne fruit, establishing Guyana as a leader in the global fight against climate change.

One of our proudest achievements has been the marketing and sale of carbon credits. Through this innovative approach, we have earned approximately US\$750 million in revenues, allowing us to actively contribute to global climate change mitigation while supporting the development of indigenous communities.

Additionally, the recent launch of the Forestry Revolving Fund Facility in March 2023 is a testament to our commitment to fostering growth in the forestry sector. By providing low-cost financing, we empower forestry-related businesses to flourish, enhance operations, and embrace value-adding ventures.

Furthermore, 2023 will see pilot activities for Land Reclamation, with the Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC) undertaking reclamation and rehabilitation projects in line with the LCDS.

Recognising the importance of community involvement, the GFC will target 60 indigenous communities in 2023 for capacity development training in sustainable forestry management.

With these transformative initiatives and many more on the horizon, Guyana's forestry sector stands poised to flourish sustainably, embracing a future that holds untold promise. Together, we tread a path where progress and preservation march hand-in-hand, ensuring a legacy of abundance and environmental stewardship.

Canopy Magazine is a testament to our commitment to promoting meaningful progress while balancing economic growth and environmental management. I extend my heartfelt appreciation to the passionate team and collaborators who have brought Canopy Magazine to life. Together, we have embarked on a remarkable journey, uncovering the boundless possibilities and transformative progress within Guyana's forestry sector.

May the pages of Canopy Magazine continue to inspire and ignite a collective commitment to sustainable development, where economic growth intertwines harmoniously with environmental stewardship.

As you immerse yourself in the captivating stories of our forests within these pages, may you find a renewed appreciation for the intricate tapestry of our rich biodiversity.



I am elated to speak on the publication of the inaugural issue of Canopy Magazine. The Magazine's launch is a momentous occasion for the Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC) as it plays a pivotal role in tandem with the GFC in the sensitisation and promotion of the preservation of our vital forest.

Guyana is one of the most heavily forested countries in South America with over 85% forest cover. The forests serve as the primary source of livelihood for Guyana's indigenous and forest-dependent communities, and are central to our country's macro-economic development. My hope is that through the pages of this publication, readers will be educated and their appreciation grows for the GFC's work on providing excellence in forestry management services to our stakeholders through the application of professional skills, ultimately contributing to our nation's development.

It is imperative that we all work collaboratively with the GFC in promoting its role in forest policy, forestry laws and regulations. Through Canopy Magazine, you will learn about the Commission's responsibilities in the development and monitoring standards for forest sector operations; development and implementation of forest protection and conservation strategies; overseeing forest research and providing support and guidance to forest education and training.

The work of the Commission is guided by robust and modern legislation and supported by policy documents such as the National Forest Policy and National Forest Plan and Codes of Practice. The Commission is governed by a board of directors appointed by the Minister. The board is responsible for the performance of the functions conferred on the Commission by the Act. The various divisions within the GFC are responsible for

implementation of the day-to-day activities of the Commission.

The Commission works closely with other agencies and Ministries in pursuit of its mandate and for strong sustainable management of the country's forest resources.

These agencies and Ministries include but are not limited to the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs, the Geology and Mines Commission, Protected Areas Commission, and the Guyana Lands and Survey Commission.

I congratulate the Canopy team on their diligence and dedication in the composition of this publication and its mission in the promotion of the importance of Guyana's forest and our responsibilities in the conservation of it.

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Message by Ms. Vanessa Benn - Chairperson, Board of Directors Guyana Forestry Commission



The importance of forests cannot be over-emphasised. They are the source of lumber and many of our medicines, personal care products, furniture and food. Forests are diverse but delicately balanced ecosystems of countless fauna and flora that constitute a rich and often threatened biodiversity upon which humankind depends. They play an important role in watershed protection and groundwater supply, so vital to our survival. No less important are the ecosystem services forests provide in sequestering and storing carbon dioxide, mitigating global warming and its attendant impacts that threaten our very existence.

Guyana is blessed with over 18 million hectares of verdant forests which have been maintained in majestic condition for centuries. They serve the same economic, ecological, water and climate functions described above – a fact that is often overlooked. As a source of economic activity, they provide employment for thousands and contribute significantly to our country's macro-economy, not only in the traditional forestry sector, but by supporting the mining sector, and more recently, being the basis of the forest carbon initiative under our flagship Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) 2030.

The prime condition of our vast forests which enable these functions to thrive did not come by chance. The Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC) is the statutory body responsible for managing and regulating the use of our forest resources. The GFC's performance in discharging this responsibility over the years is not a matter of opinion; the figures speak for themselves. Guyana has maintained one of the lowest rates of deforestation in the world - the latest figure is estimated at 0.038 percent (2022).

Critical to climate mitigation is the reduction of emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, and the conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest stocks (REDD+). These are key elements of the LCDS 2030 and in which the GFC has been integrally involved as part of the formulation and revision of the Strategy, and in its implementation. The Commission's REDD Plus Secretariat has developed a world-class Monitoring, Reporting and Verification System (MRVS) that reports annually on our forest cover and land use changes, and is subject to and compliant with international third-party validation.

The GFC's MRVS has enabled Guyana to earn 33.47 million carbon credits for the period 2016 to 2020; the world's first jurisdictional scale forest carbon credits issued under the REDD+ Environmental Excellence Standard (TREES) by the Architecture for REDD+ Transactions (ART) Secretariat. This forms the foundation upon which the 10-year agreement was signed between the Guyana Government and Hess Corporation under the United Nations REDD programme, for the sale of 30% of Guyana's credits for a minimum of 750 million United States Dollars (USD).

This milestone agreement will result in significant revenue being deposited into the state's coffers that will, in part, drive our energy transition to renewable sources, thereby advancing value-added production and business development while lowering our cost of production and carbon emissions

footprint. These finances will also support the expansion of our protected areas; enhance our adaptation and readiness for disasters through improved drainage and irrigation systems; contribute towards advancements in our national environmental awareness programmes; and boost our health care and transportation services.

The outcome of the landmark Guyana-Hess Agreement has also resulted in the disbursement of over USD4 billion to 242 villages and communities in the hinterland. This sum represents payments Guyana has received so far for 2016 and 2017 credits, and constitutes 15% of the revenue earned and destined to finance projects developed by our indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs) under their village sustainability plans. This direct benefit-sharing mechanism is an integral aspect of the LCDS 2030, and forms only part of the support provided to these valued communities to contribute towards their self-determined development, and in recognition of their vital role in conserving our forests and biodiversity.

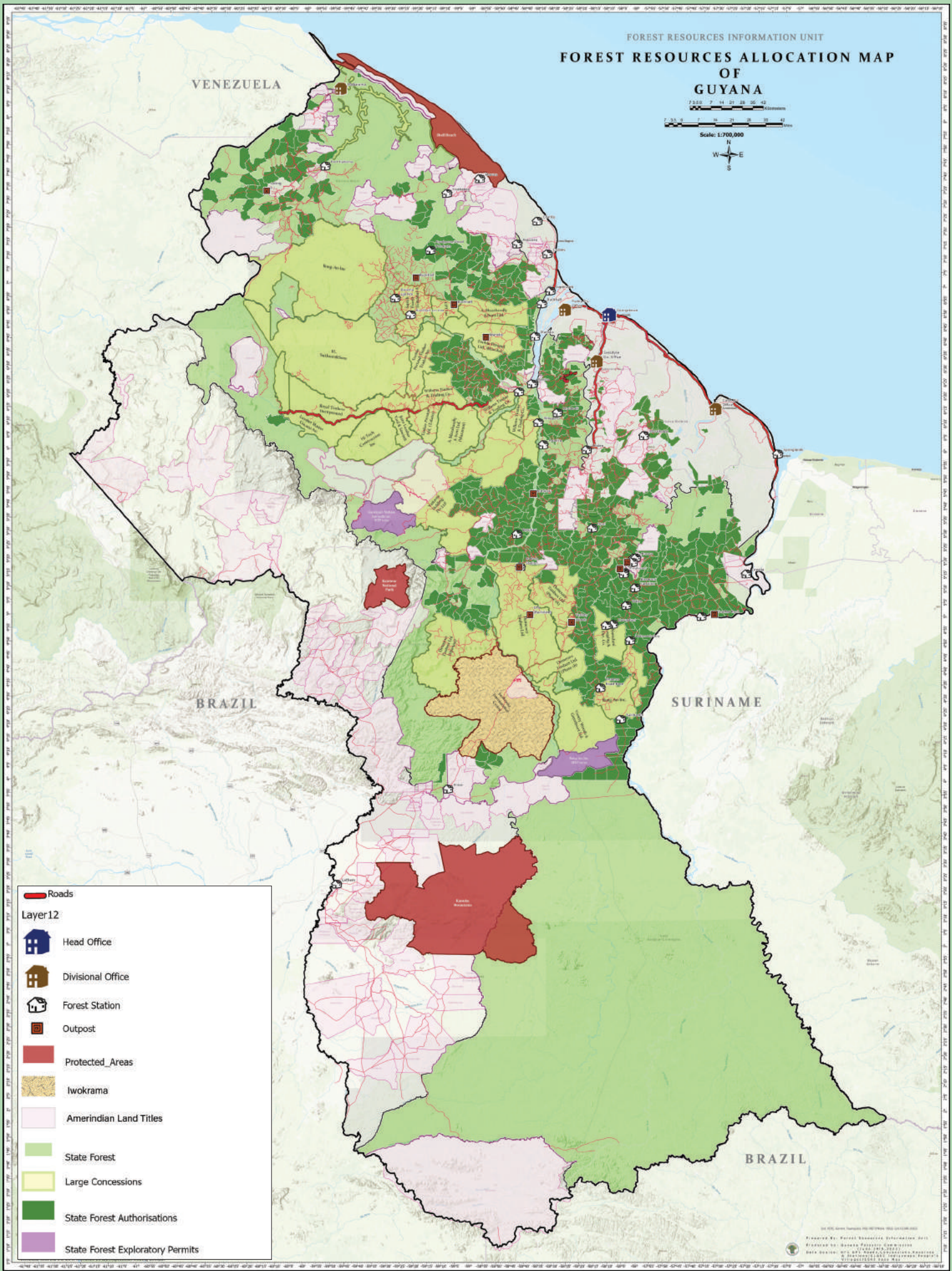
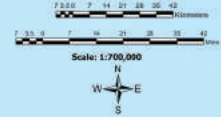
The GFC also plays a leading role in the Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade Voluntary Partnership Agreement (FLEGT VPA) signed by the Parliaments of Guyana and the European Union to ensure the legality of forest produce harvested and traded from Guyana's forests. We are similarly engaged in the process of signing on to the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC), an internationally recognised third-party certification body for timber and forest product trade. These initiatives will augur well for further growth of our forestry sector, including downstream production.













The National Forest Policy is currently being updated to take into account recent developments locally and in the international arena. This process also extends to reviewing other policies, plans and legislation. The GFC is committed to key principles, chief amongst which is ensuring the management of our forests is premised upon conservation and sustainable yield harvesting.

The Board of Directors of the Guyana Forestry Commission is committed to supporting the Government of Guyana's role in the national and international arena to the tenets of transparency, legality and collaboration with local communities, entrepreneurs, forestry organisations and other NGOs, and other development partners. We commend and thank our Government for its unstinting support of the work and sustainability of the GFC and the forestry sector, which benefit from the attention of not only our subject Minister, Hon. Vickram Bharrat MP and his colleagues, but also the timely, direct involvement of His Excellency the President, Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali. The innovative GYD900 million Forestry Revolving Fund is an exemplar of this critical intervention towards the reinvigoration of the sector.

On behalf of our Board, I extend hearty congratulations to the Ministry of Natural Resources for this initiative of Canopy Magazine in promoting the sector. I am pleased to be associated with this inaugural issue and commend it. I also encourage you to share it with your networks.

FOREST RESOURCES INFORMATION UNIT
**FOREST RESOURCES ALLOCATION MAP
 OF
 GUYANA**



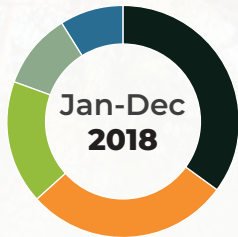
-  Roads
- Layer12**
-  Head Office
-  Divisional Office
-  Forest Station
-  Outpost
-  Protected Areas
-  Iwokrama
-  Amerindian Land Titles
-  State Forest
-  Large Concessions
-  State Forest Authorisations
-  State Forest Exploratory Permits

GUYANA'S TIMBER TRADE PERFORMANCE

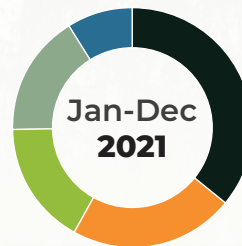
Contribution to GDP

2018	15,430M	1.56%
2019	14,821M	1.42%
2020	13,614M	0.90%
2021	15,149M	0.84%
2022	17,196M	0.91%

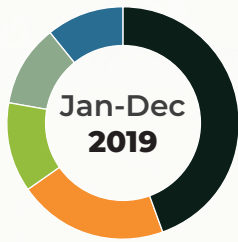
Top 5 selling species for each year from 2018-2022



- Greenheart - \$10,828,644.24
- Wamara - \$8,720,785.31
- Wallaba - \$5,251,825.99
- Purpleheart - \$3,252,436.02
- Washiba - \$2,709,828.98



- Greenheart - \$9,634,595.84
- Wamara - \$5,953,836.04
- Wallaba - \$4,408,127.67
- Purpleheart - \$4,379,741.45
- Washiba - \$2,360,858.05



- Greenheart - \$12,915,077.57
- Wamara - \$6,031,114.65
- Purpleheart - \$3,590,683.87
- Washiba - \$3,369,573.14
- Wallaba - \$3,076,683.79

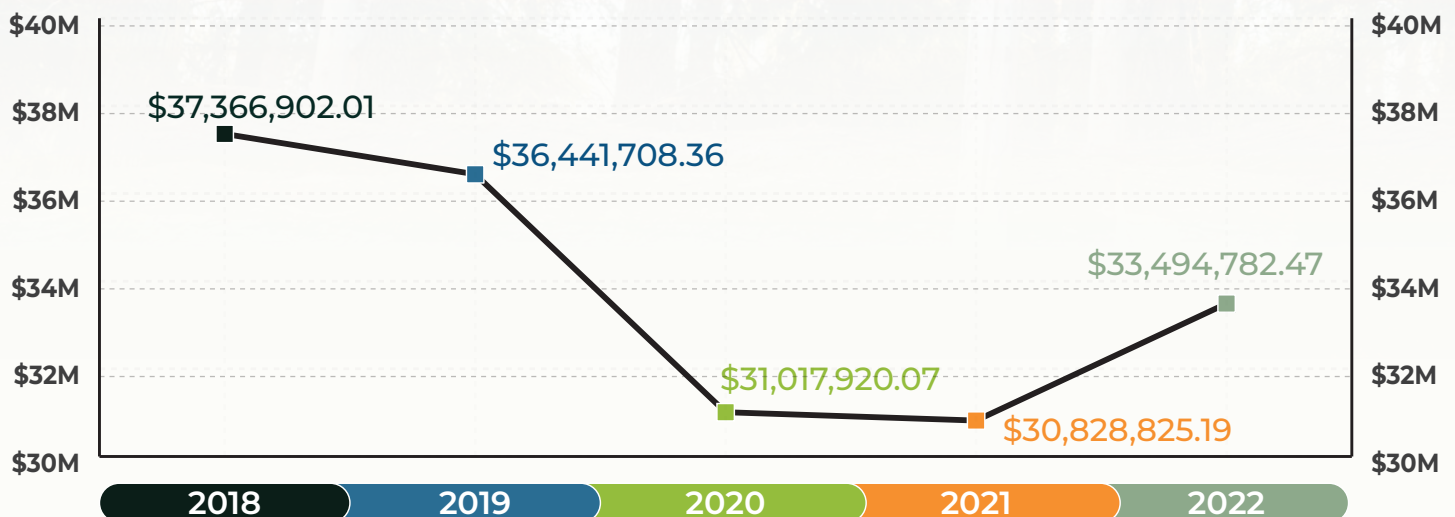


- Greenheart - \$11,495,497.35
- Wallaba - \$6,183,956.11
- Wamara - \$5,083,778.37
- Washiba - \$2,955,637.48
- Purpleheart - \$2,500,241.31

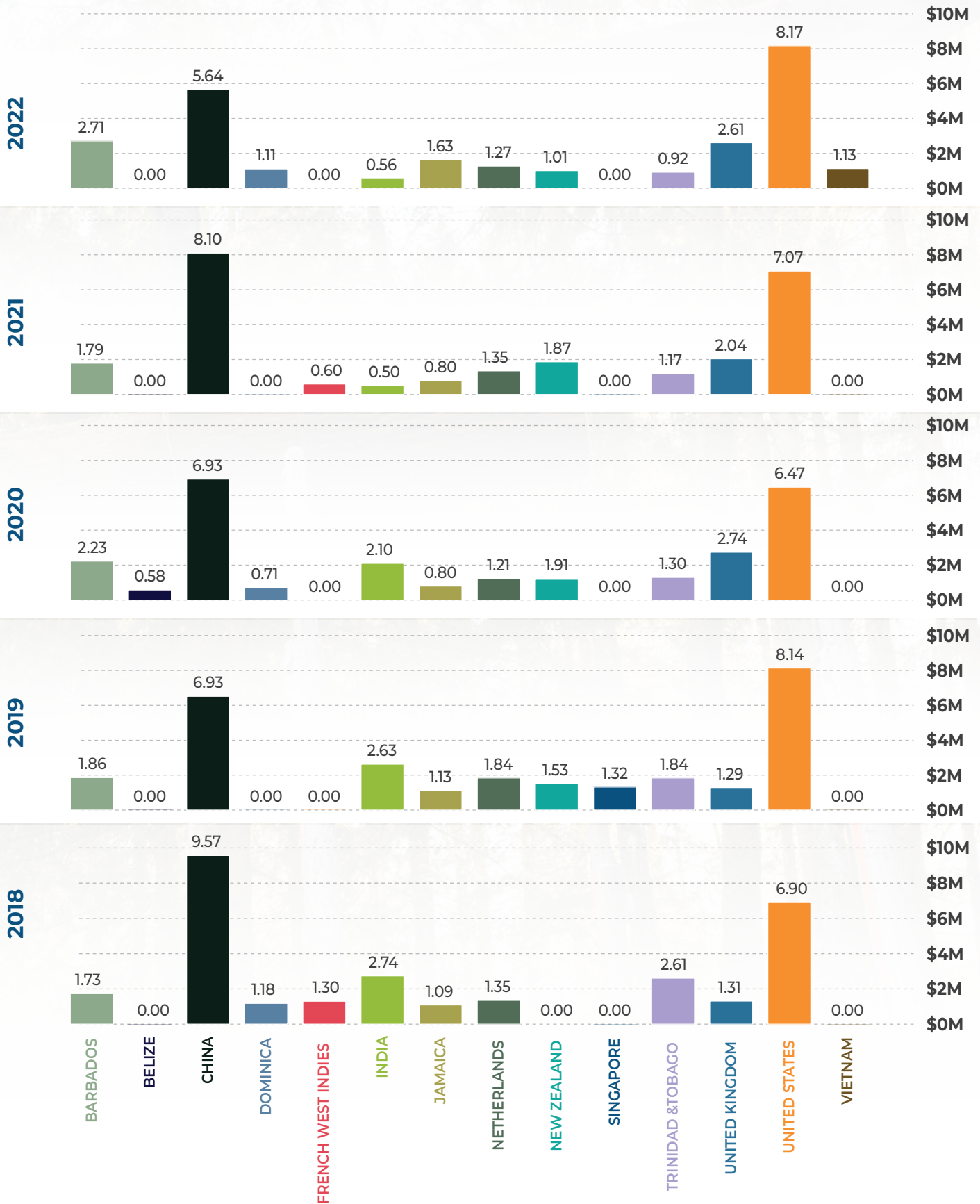


- Greenheart - \$10,310,792.51
- Wamara - \$5,763,882.61
- Purpleheart - \$4,491,599.55
- Wallaba - \$3,358,341.00

Total Exports of All Species 2018-2022 (USD)



Top Markets for All Wood Exports 2018 - 2022 (USD)



Main Forestry Programmes 2022

National Forest Inventory Programme

The Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC) launched a National Forest Inventory Programme in 2021-2022 and expects significant positive results from this massive undertaking later this year.

Comprehensive inventories are essential for forest management planning, concession allocation, and forest utilisation. The GFC legislation and the National Forest Policy require the GFC to execute strategic forest resource inventories to effectively plan for the sustainable management and optimal utilisation of Guyana's forests.

This multi-year project will see the updating of forest resource information; this is crucial for national and concession-level planning, scientific research, and references to support the modern outlook of the National Forest Policy, and the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS).

Given the volume of data to be processed, the dense terrain encountered, and flooding in several areas, the GFC is yet to complete a few key activities. In the final phase in 2023, the Commission proposes to complete mapping; a compilation of data sheets; training; and information dissemination to communities.

The last National Forest Inventory dates back 50 years ago.

Forest Certification

In 2020, the GFC formalised its application for the development of a National Standard to be submitted for Accreditation by a Certification Body, the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification.

Through 2021 and 2022, the development of the Standard was done and overseen by a National Working/Steering Committee comprising broad stakeholder representation. The standard is now in its final development and review stage. In 2023, Guyana, through the GFC, will table this standard to the Certification Body to commence the accreditation.

If accredited, Guyana will be one of the few tropical timber-producing countries in the world to have a National Standard that has attained International Accreditation; hence, companies can apply for Forest Certification under the standard. This is a thematic programme under LCDS 2030 and will open international market opportunities. Importantly, it will allow Guyana's Greenheart wood species to re-enter the United Kingdom market.

LCDS

The LCDS was approved by the National Assembly in August 2022, paving the way for several sustainable development initiatives over the next 10 years along a low-carbon path. The work of the GFC in maintaining the Monitoring Reporting and Verification System (MRVS) is even more critical as Guyana has now adopted the ART TREES model for the computation and trading of carbon credits through a Market-Based Mechanism.

The GFC's role of maintaining the tenets of sustainable forestry management and minimising the rate of deforestation is crucial to the Market-Based Carbon Credit Sale. The MRVS will therefore continue with its annual assessment and reporting on deforestation over each completed year. The MRVS also has other components that support the LCDS and the ART TREES programme, such as social safeguards, meeting and reporting on other UN International Commitments, Forest Area Assessments, maintaining carbon plots data, information and communication to various stakeholder groups on REDD+ and LCDS.

Land Reclamation

This year, the GFC plans to undertake pilot activities for land reclamation and rehabilitation in keeping with the Low Carbon Development Strategy 2030 (LCDS). The Commission proposes the allocation of an estimated 50 acres for pilot reclamation.

EU, FLEGT

The conclusion of the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) negotiations in November 2018 signalled the commencement of the Implementation Phase of the VPA. The VPA started formally in 2012, and after six years of negotiation, the parties signed a final agreement. The main aim of the VPA is to develop a system that facilitates exports of legally-harvested timber and timber products to the European Union (EU) while ensuring their sale in local markets. The GFC accomplishes this through a Timber Legality Assurance System (TLAS), which comprises a series of key components, including a definition of legal timber.

Once the VPA is up and running, forestry operators will be able to obtain Forest Law Enforcement, Governance, and Trade (FLEGT) licences for specified timber products entering the EU Market. The VPA enters the implementation phase with a series of critical components in place, including a Joint Implementation Framework (JIF) and a multi-stakeholder National Implementation Working Group (NIWG) to oversee the implementation. The VPA will now move to legal ratification that will make the VPA law; this will commence in 2023. The Cabinet will review the VPA document, and ultimately Guyana's parliament will have to endorse it. Following ratification, Guyana and the EU will set up a joint Monitoring and Review Committee (JMRC) to establish and implement the rules and procedures.

Tax Benefits and Incentives

In the last three National Budget cycles, the government granted the forestry sector several tax benefits and government incentives.

Some of the across-the-board benefits which continue into 2023 include the zero tax on fuel; reduction in excise taxes for 4x4 vehicles; reduction in duties and taxes on heavy-duty equipment and machinery such as log loaders, skidders, haulers; and the reduction in taxes for all-terrain vehicles (ATVs).

Community Logging Groups

In 2023, the GFC will target 60 indigenous communities for capacity development training in areas of sustainable forestry management. This development came from a recent National Toshaos Council (NTC) that identified the need for such programmes in indigenous villages involved in commercial logging and other forestry-related activities.

The forest cover in Amerindian villages is approximately two million hectares, hence its importance both from a community level for long-term sustainability that communities involved in logging adapted and follow guidelines implemented by the GFC.



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Main Forestry Programmes 2022

Consolidated Stock Yard

A Consolidated Stock Yard is a purpose-built holding facility for forest produce, mainly logs and lumber, which buyers can easily access to purchase supplies. The facility will enable producers to store or stockpile produce so there are adequate supplies in the rainy season. The concept is similar to Home Depot, where sellers and buyers can have a space to interact and buy and sell forest produce. The GFC envisages developing this facility along the Soesdyke-Linden Highway and is seeking the required land space. The Commission's need to source financing for its setup makes this a medium-term objective.

Forestry Revolving Fund Facility

Launched in March 2023 was a GYD900 million Forestry Revolving Fund Facility (FRF). This revolving fund is a collaboration between the Government of Guyana and Demerara Bank Limited aimed at strengthening the forestry sector by providing low-cost financing of as much as GYD30 million to start forestry-related businesses, aid production, enhance operations, start-up value-adding ventures, and expand sawmills, kilns, and logging operations.

Guyanese individuals and organisations involved in forestry-related activities, including small-scale producers and loggers, community logging operations, registered businesses and associations, cooperatives, and registered companies, are eligible to participate if they hold a valid concession agreement, sawmill license, or other timber dealer licenses, and have a good standing with the GFC.

Training Centre

The GFC is the only practical-oriented forest-management training institution in Guyana and one of three in South America, with the others being in Brazil and Peru.

The Forestry Training Centre Institute (FTCI) endured numerous challenges from 2019-2020, mainly the COVID-19 pandemic that disrupted face-to-face and practical exercises. After the postponement and cancellation of numerous planned training courses, the FTCI is now recovering. As such, the plan of activities for 2023 seeks to build capacity by implementing 20 training courses, targeting 300 participants. These courses focus on operational management and the utilisation of forest produce.

Infrastructure Plans

Hinterland infrastructure is crucial to forest operators using interior roads to transport their produce and other resources. Consequently, in Budget 2023, the government allocated over GYD4 billion for hinterland infrastructure. In addition, the government is developing the Linden to Mabura Road, along with 35 bridges along the Linden to Lethem corridor—all aimed at improving the transportation network within the sector, which will impact other operational factors like costs.

Revised Log-Export Policy

The GFC crafted its first log-export policy in 2006. Since then, there have been several revisions, the last in September 2020. This policy spans five years for implementation, with a mid-term review. The main aim is to reduce log export and encourage value-added goods and services. The rates proposed in 2020 are substantial for prime species, whereby exporters of Greenheart logs are required to pay a 20 percent export commission on the FoB (free on board) value, while lumber has an export levy of two percent. The idea is to encourage value-added forest products and services.

Guyana's Forestry Sector Ready for Takeoff

—Key investment opportunities in logging, value-added products and carbon credits

After encouraging export earnings from forestry of USD34.5 million in 2022, the Ministry of Natural Resources projects the sector to make a crucial breakthrough this year due to strategic investments and decisions made by the Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC).

Mr. Edward Goberdhan is Head of the GFC, which issues concessions and licenses related to forestry—such as sawmilling and timber-dealer licences—among other regulatory duties. The sector comprises:

- Primary Producers—operators extracting forestry products (logs, lumber, poles, piles, etc.);
- Secondary Producers—operators in the sawmilling and value-added segments;
- Primary and Secondary Producers—operators engaged in both forestry and value-added activities.

All forestry producers play vital roles; they are interdependent and contribute significantly to overall earnings for the country and the livelihoods of thousands. Primary operators are subdivided into two categories:

- Small-and-Medium Operators—holding concessions of 20,000 acres or below; and
- Large Operators— holding concessions of 20,000 acres and above.

There are approximately 550 small-and-medium operators and 22 large operators. They account for the commercial use of about five million hectares of State Forest, leaving more than double that amount untouched.

Within the small-to-medium category, there are Community Forestry Associations—like the Ituni or Kwakwani Forestry Association—which operate community concessions.



A historic agreement was signed by Hess Corporation with the Government of Guyana for the purchase of high-quality carbon credits for a minimum of US\$750m over a period of 15 years. (Photo Credit: Office of the President)

Goberdhan said the GFC promotes the community model to facilitate wider involvement of hinterland residents in forestry.

The sector recently expanded its earning capacity by accessing billions of dollars in carbon credits; Guyana and Hess Corporation signed the first deal in December 2022.

Outlook

The GFC Head disclosed that forestry is recovering from a challenging period over the last decade. Apart from recent setbacks from the COVID-19 pandemic, the industry suffered a severe blow from 2016-2018 when one of the largest operators—Barama Company Ltd.—exited the market, followed by several international investors.

“This created a vacuum and resulted in a sharp decline in production, revenue, and export,” Goberdhan noted.

The situation worsened from 2020-2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and related challenges, exacerbated by heavy rainfall and flooding but the Commission projects a turnaround in the short-to-medium term, starting this year,

Goberdhan said: “In 2023, the sector is projecting production of 450,000 cubic metres.” Moreover, he disclosed that the Commission expects two State Forest Exploratory Permits—(SFEP) covering approximately 500,000 acres—to be converted to production concessions. Additionally, the GFC plans to issue 30 small concessions, covering 100,000 acres, enabling an additional 40,000 cubic metres of production in 2023.

These projected improvements extend to the value-added sector, where prefabricated houses are manufactured and exported. The GFC also anticipates a substantial increase in production from sawmills and a surge in the production of kiln-dried lumber.

Opportunities

In 2021, the forestry sector saw export earnings of more than US\$31 million, which included the export of logs, lumber, and round wood, derived from 377,838 cubic metres of production.

The GFC projects that this figure will increase exponentially this year, at least doubling the export earnings from forestry. The forestry sector contributes roughly four percent of Guyana’s GDP, with the value from primary production estimated at USD71 million. There is no distinction between the earnings of foreign and local operators, but output from local operations makes up approximately 80 percent of the value of annual production.

With this in mind, there are multiple investment opportunities, particularly in primary and secondary sub-segments. Opportunities exist for investments in large-scale downstream processing and the production of affordable prefabricated houses. There is a niche market in the Caribbean for prefabricated homes produced in Guyana, and the nation plans to sell about 100 of these homes to buyers in Barbados under a collaboration between President Dr. Irfaan Ali and Prime Minister Mia Mottley of Barbados. “This is expected to create a demand for local lumber and hence increase supply,” Goberdhan noted.

Further, there are opportunities in the value-added sector for investors to use non-traditional Guyanese forest species for flooring, decking, and furniture. Goberdhan said the GFC is promoting the expanded use of non-timber forest products—such as Kuffa and Nibbi—in furniture-making and boosting the growing tourism and hospitality industries. There are openings for investors to use non-traditional species to produce decorative, household, or even gardening products, and they can also explore using fast-growing forest species in the pulp and paper industries. Significantly, more than half of the carbon sink in Guyana’s vast forest cover remains available. In 2022, through an International Carbon Credit Accreditation Scheme named ART TREES Standard, Guyana certified 33.7 million tonnes of carbon credits and sold these to Hess Corporation. This involved just 30 percent of the available carbon sink; the country’s more than 18 million hectares of forests

store approximately 20 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent. The GFC Head also pointed to investment opportunities in the rental of vehicles and equipment in the forestry sector; furthermore, approximately 200,000 hectares of land are available for reforestation ventures. Goberdhan noted that there is also scope for investing in an integrated consolidation/storage and distribution center, and another exciting area for investors is converting wood waste into energy.



The GFC has a grading rule which is used by forest officers to inspect and grade forest logs and lumber.

Wood Species

While there are over 1,000 species of tropical hardwoods in Guyana’s forests, only 100 species are of commercial value for construction, furniture-making, plywood manufacturing, flooring, house-building, marine construction, utility poles, decking and other areas. The nation exports less than 10 percent of forest produce or logs; the main species exported is Wamara, followed by other mixed hardwoods.

“The GFC has a grading rule which is used by forest officers to inspect and grade forest produce, both logs and lumber. The grading rules have various grades applied to logs and lumber depending on the quality and state of the forest. There is a very robust system for inspecting and grading of produce,” the GFC Head explained.

Goberdhan asserted that now is an opportune time to invest in the forestry sector because, by taking advantage of progress in other sectors of the economy, the forestry sector is ready for a takeoff.

“The Government, Ministry of Natural Resources and the GFC have been pushing and promoting value-added [goods and services] for the sector. This is already being developed and implemented and value-added activities are on the increase. Many companies have invested in value-added facilities to produce dressed and kiln-dried lumber, plywood, flooring, decking, furniture, ‘prefab’ houses, shingles etc. The forestry sector is very important to Guyana and to national development. It contributes to national development, foreign exchange earnings and employs over 20,000 Guyanese,” he emphasised.



Guyana’s Forestry Sector Ready for Takeoff: Capacity Building for Indigenous Communities

While acknowledging a need for more financing windows for the forestry sector, Head of the Guyana Forestry Commission, Mr. Edward Goberdhan said excellent opportunities exist for community logging groups and developing the capacities of indigenous villages to undertake sustainable logging. He added that the GFC had responded positively to a request by the National Tshaos Council Conference for expanded capacity development for community forestry and small and medium-scale operators, to facilitate greater involvement of indigenous villages and communities in commercial forestry activities.

As such, the GFC plans to provide capacity-building for 60 indigenous communities in 2023. According to Goberdhan, this is a momentous development because forests in Amerindian villages account for approximately two million hectares.



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Guyana's National Forest Inventory: A Game Changer for Sustainable Utilisation and Forest Resource Management

Contributed by Guyana Forestry Commission, NFI Technical Team, Forest Resources Management Division

Guyana's history of environmentally sound, reduced impact logging has allowed for the development of a robust, world-renowned sustainable forest management (SFM) framework. This framework allows for a well-managed forestry sector steeped in sustainable practices including environmental accountability, social considerations and regulated commercial production by individual smallholders, indigenous peoples, and local communities (IPLCs) dependent on forests, and companies involved in wood production and export.

A National Forest Inventory (NFI) for Guyana was initially conceptualised alongside the Monitoring, Reporting & Verification System (MRVS) as part of Guyana's REDD+ Programme. However, given the high resource costs and labour demand of national-level field inventory, the project was only greenlit in 2018 after discussions about the value of such an investment established it as pertinent to transformation of the forestry sector. Phase I saw a country specific NFI design and methodology developed and piloted in Region Ten. Phase II: Field Data Collection in all regions with State Forests has been ongoing since 2019, targeting allocated forests i.e., above 4° Latitude, by administrative region.

The overall purpose of Guyana's NFI is to boost the economic planning capability of the forest sector by making data available for the valuation of forest resources and for sustainable management of Guyana's forest. Three specific objectives were derived: 1) To arrive at an economic value for timber, non-timber forest resources and biodiversity; 2) to enable strategic planning for SFM; and 3) to enable effective utilisation of forest resources.

It is envisioned that following the availability of extensive empirical data on Guyana's state forest resources, management of Guyana's forestry sector will be revolutionised, particularly as it relates to forest allocation, zonation, and resource planning. Data is being collected based on a 10x10 km grid sampling framework contiguous with the MRVS grid system and clipped to state forests, where 5-plot clusters are being sampled at intersections. This data can be extrapolated to specific forest concessions and areas of interest to inform planning for forest operations, conservation mechanisms, zonation by forest activity, and for ecological research and surveys.



GFC's technical capabilities for managing the sector will vastly improve spatial accuracy of forest resource information by updating and enhancing national and regional vegetation maps. NFI data will contribute to an advanced forest resource allocation process by not only identifying vacant areas, but also projecting area-specific commercial potential based on species composition and stand distribution. Rich, reliable datasets collected across diverse forest ecosystems, topographies and geographic regions will allow for strategic resource assessments and management level inventories (MLI) for forest sector operators. This will particularly benefit small-scale operators and IPLC associations for whom such investments have not been economically feasible when compared to the scale of operations and lease periods for their concessions. Forest sector operators will be able to make sounder investments and reduce costs by integrating baseline data from NFI in strategic harvest planning. And finally, GFC will be able to quantify and value forest resources based on economic and conservation potential, including updating stumpage value calculations, and supporting forest carbon assessments and ART-TREES evaluations under the LCDS 2030.

Field teams are presently working rigorously and diligently in Region One, which is the final region for data collection, to complete Phase II of NFI. Phase III: Data Consolidation, Analysis and Reporting has also commenced using OpenForis-based suite of software for data entry, storage, extraction, and statistical summaries. Guyana's NFI is being funded by National Budget allocations through the Ministry of Natural Resources; and is implemented by the GFC, as the state forest authority on forests.

Forestry Revolving Fund: Strengthening the Forestry Sector

With the aim to strengthen the forestry sector to increase production and value-added activities through access to low-cost financing, the Government of Guyana (GOG) in collaboration with Demerara Bank Limited (DBL) has launched a significant initiative: the Forestry Revolving Fund (FRF).

An FRF facility of GYD900,000,000 million was established to provide loans to individuals; community logging organisations; small forest sector operators; small concession holders/producers; mid-size and large concession holders/producers and saw millers; and mid-size and large kiln operators.

The establishment of the Fund is expected to address some of the challenges faced in the forestry sector in easily accessing low-cost financing, especially for small-scale operators.

The FRF is intended for a wide cross-section of forestry stakeholders to start a forestry-related business, aid production, enhance operations, start up a value-adding venture; and expand sawmills, kilns, and logging operations.

Acceptable Collateral

Primary collateral includes cash, mortgages and debentures. Supplementary collateral, as may be required, includes bills of sale, assignments of salaries/contracts, proceeds/shares, assignment of fire/life/stock

insurance, guarantees and promissory notes. Notably, the loan value should not exceed at least 60% of the collateral value.

Target groups

Individuals, small producers and loggers, community logging operations, registered businesses/associations and cooperatives, and registered companies can apply. To qualify, the applications must meet the following criteria:

- Must be engaged in a forestry sector-related activity
- Possess a valid Concession Agreement, sawmill license or other timber dealer licenses
- Must be a Guyanese company or 75% owned by Guyanese
- Must have a pre-screening loan summary provided by the Forestry Revolving Loan Fund Committee (FRFLC)
- Must be in good standing with the Guyana Forestry Commission.

The FRF was launched in March 2023 on the International Day of Forests. It is an initiative of the President of Guyana, Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, who recognised not only the importance of sustainable forest-based industry, but also some of the constraints faced by those operating in the forestry sector.



Visit <https://fpdmc.gov.gy/index.php/the-guyana-forestry-revolving-fund/> for more information.

Guyana's Ample Forest Assets Underpin Beneficial ART TREE Initiative

—Nation prepares to secure and optimise gains from carbon credits

Guyana's forests are a global asset to the world. One of the nine jurisdictions in the Amazon region, its forests are the size of England and Scotland combined. The South American nation has the second-highest forest cover in the world, close to 99%—18 million hectares—still intact. Guyana also has some of the lowest deforestation rates in the world and globally significant biological diversity and endemism.

Guyana's pristine forests hold an exceptional value that the world needs to battle the big 'CC'— Climate Change. The climate challenge has intensified over the years; the world is getting hotter, ice caps are melting, and oceans are rising. The call from all and sundry is: 'What can we do to mitigate it?' Many avenues exist, but the best asset is what nature gave to us—trees.

They remove carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the air, store carbon, reducing harmful greenhouse gases that threaten our existence. Simply put, they slow climate change. Lush forests in Guyana cover 18 million hectares and store over 19.5 gigatonnes of CO₂. Yearly, the forests remove 154 million tonnes of CO₂ from the earth's atmosphere, but the world did not always recognise their value. Now, the global economy is alert and listening to what Guyana has to say. After all, developing countries like Guyana, though they produce little carbon emissions, face the brunt of climate effects.

"There is no solution to climate change without action on forests. The people of Guyana identified this long ago. As a country where most of our territory is rainforest, we did not want to just despair about climate change – we wanted to do something about it. So we proposed two ideas.

One, we said we were willing to create a global model for jurisdiction-scale action to create the right incentives to save



Flashback to 2009: Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo, who was Guyana's President at the time, and Norway's Minister of the Environment and International Development, Erik Solheim, signed an agreement where Norway would provide Guyana with result-based payments for forest climate services (Photo taken from digital copy of LCDS 2030)

forests. And two, we would use the payments we receive to invest in creating a low-carbon economy. If we are successful, we can offer the world a working example of what it takes to forge a successful, low deforestation, climate-resilient economy."

These were the words of then-Guyana President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo in 2009. It took years of planning and incremental progress, but Guyana made history in 2022 when it made the world's first sale of jurisdiction-scale carbon credits for its forest climate services.

ART TREE Initiative

Hess Corporation—one of the three major oil companies producing in Guyana's offshore Stabroek Block—made that historic sale. But it was all made possible through the ART TREE initiative. As explained by Senior Director for Climate and REDD+ at Guyana's Ministry of Natural Resources, Ms. Pradeepa Bholanath, Architecture for REDD+ Transactions (ART) is a global accreditation programme for the quantification, monitoring, reporting and verification of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emission reductions and removals from forestry activities at a jurisdictional and national scale. Some 33.47 million credits—REDD+ Environmental



Senior Director for Climate and REDD+ at Guyana's Ministry of Natural Resources, Ms. Pradeepa Bholanath

Excellence Standard (TREES) credits from Guyana—were made available to buyers for the period 2016 to 2020.

“I congratulate Guyana on being the first country to issue forest carbon credits certified by ART, paving the way for many others to come. This marks a breakthrough for the emergence of a high-quality global carbon market to protect tropical forests,” Mr. Espen Barth-Eide, Norway’s Minister of Climate and Environment said.

The carbon credits are tradable permits or certificates that record the removal of a certain amount of carbon dioxide from the environment. And since carbon dioxide is the principal greenhouse gas that harms the environment, it is tracked and traded like any other commodity, hence the name ‘carbon market’. And this is Guyana’s vision - to sell these credits to countries or companies that would pay to keep Guyana’s forests intact. Guyana’s completion of the ART process paves the way for other governments looking to receive carbon market finance for success in protecting and restoring forests. Currently, 14 countries and large sub-national jurisdictions are working toward their own issuances of TREES credits.

“Guyana is the first to complete the ART process for generating high-integrity, ParisAgreement-aligned carbon credits

that will allow the country to access market-based finance to continue to implement forest stewardship strategies. ART, other governments, and important stakeholder groups, especially Indigenous Peoples and local communities, around the world can now build on Guyana’s experience to accelerate progress towards meeting global forest and climate goals in ways that ensure environmental and social integrity,” noted Ms. Frances Seymour, the Chair of the ART Board on the eve of Guyana’s deal with Hess.

ART TREES credits are among the highest-integrity credits in the market, Bholanath explained. “The credits represent the value of carbon stored at a country level rather than at a project level, avoiding issues of leakage and promoting outcomes that protect the ecosystem in addition to carbon storage or removal functions. ART-labelled credits reward countries and sub-national jurisdictions for acting to retain large, highly intact forests, including through monitoring, law enforcement, conservation, and regulation, among other measures,” she outlined.

The ART TREE credits are also permanent. The insurance mechanisms required by the standard ensure that the overall atmospheric benefit of these credits will be maintained, even if reversals occur in some locations. And the credits help to alleviate concerns that REDD+ can create perverse incentives by disproportionately rewarding jurisdictions that have experienced the highest deforestation.

The Journey

Guyana’s vision for its forests led to the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS), the world’s first from a developing country, Bholanath explained. Finalised in 2009, it set out a three-phase plan which birthed the significant Norway deal as the country too shared Guyana’s vision. It was the first international commitment of financial support to the LCDS and the first of its kind between a

developed and developing country. Former President Jagdeo and the former Minister of the Environment and International Development of Norway, Mr. Erik Solheim, signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in which Norway committed to providing Guyana up to USD250 million by 2015 for avoided deforestation, as per agreed performance indicators.

This agreement led to a series of innovation as Guyana’s economy expanded to include the oil and gas sector. The country amassed large oil and gas reserves in its Stabroek Block and pursued new goals. And although the oil industry has associated greenhouse gas emissions which is part of global climate change, the country’s environmental commitments did not falter and Guyana remains to date, a net carbon sink. And in came the expanded LCDS 2030. Building on the initial blueprint, it presented a vision for Guyana’s development along a low-carbon pathway. It outlined an approach and associated actions to transform Guyana’s national development and the livelihoods of its citizens. LCDS 2030 protects Guyana’s forests, biodiversity, and watersheds and advances clean energy and climate adaptation actions nationally.



LCDS 2030 protects Guyana’s rich biodiversity. (Photo credit: Pete Oxford)

I congratulate Guyana on being the first country to issue forest carbon credits certified by ART, paving the way for many others to come. This marks a breakthrough for the emergence of a high-quality global carbon market to protect tropical forests.” -- Norway’s Minister of Climate and Environment, Espen Barth-Eide

The LCDS also defines the sustainable use of Guyana’s natural resources to combat the effects of climate change. It also outlines how developed nations can compensate Guyana for the vital contribution the country’s ecosystem services make toward global climate action. The new and improved blueprint supports the development of

Guyana’s oil and gas sector, and it seeks to do so by aligning the advancement of this lucrative sector with global climate goals. The new strategy’s objective also focuses on fostering the transition to clean energy; sustainable mining and forestry practices; building climate-resilient agriculture systems; protecting against climate change; transforming education, infrastructure, and public health systems; stimulating Amerindian development; conserving biodiversity and a host of other advantages.

Who Benefits

The government plans to use the money that accrues from carbon credit sales to boost the livelihoods of every Guyanese. Times are changing, and Guyana intends to change with it, ensuring that its people can live in a sustainable and green country. The primary beneficiaries, however, are the indigenous peoples, as Amerindian-titled lands and extensions represent 12.7% of forested areas in Guyana. During the LCDS 2030 consultation period, the major focus centred on the indigenous communities in

and around Guyana’s forested area. Representation was made in each village spread across the country’s 10 administrative regions. For even better inclusivity, the objectives of the LCDS were translated into the nine main indigenous languages. Bholanath explained that stakeholder engagements included discussions on carbon credits and revenue sharing. As a result, beneficiaries expanded to include titled and untitled communities, as well as communities in savannahs, wetlands, forested landscapes, and other ecosystems.

In line with the revenue sharing mechanism designed during the seven-month national consultation on LCDS 2030, the dedicated 15% of revenues will be available for community/village programmes for indigenous peoples and local communities as set out in Village Sustainability Plans or equivalent. And the plans will be created by the villages themselves.

The revenues will be supplemental to investments received under national and multiple-community programmes. Because they will be led by villages,



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the Village Plans will vary, but will all prioritise areas such as community infrastructure and communications; livelihood opportunities; nature and environment; education, and health.

As outlined in the LCDS 2030, the funds will be channelled into transforming renewable and low-carbon energy on and near Guyana’s coast to create a modernised and decarbonised electricity grid. This will also be aided by the country’s touted Gas-to-Energy project.

“Electricity demand can grow more than fivefold, but greenhouse gas emissions will stay essentially flat while electricity prices are halved. Essequibo Coast and Linden will be connected to the main national grid for the first time,” Bholanath outlined.

Investments will also be funnelled into isolated grids across Guyana. “Each isolated grid will receive most of its power from renewable energy by 2030: in Lethem, Mahaica, Bartica, Kwakwani, Matthews Ridge, Port Kaituma, Mabaruma,” she added.

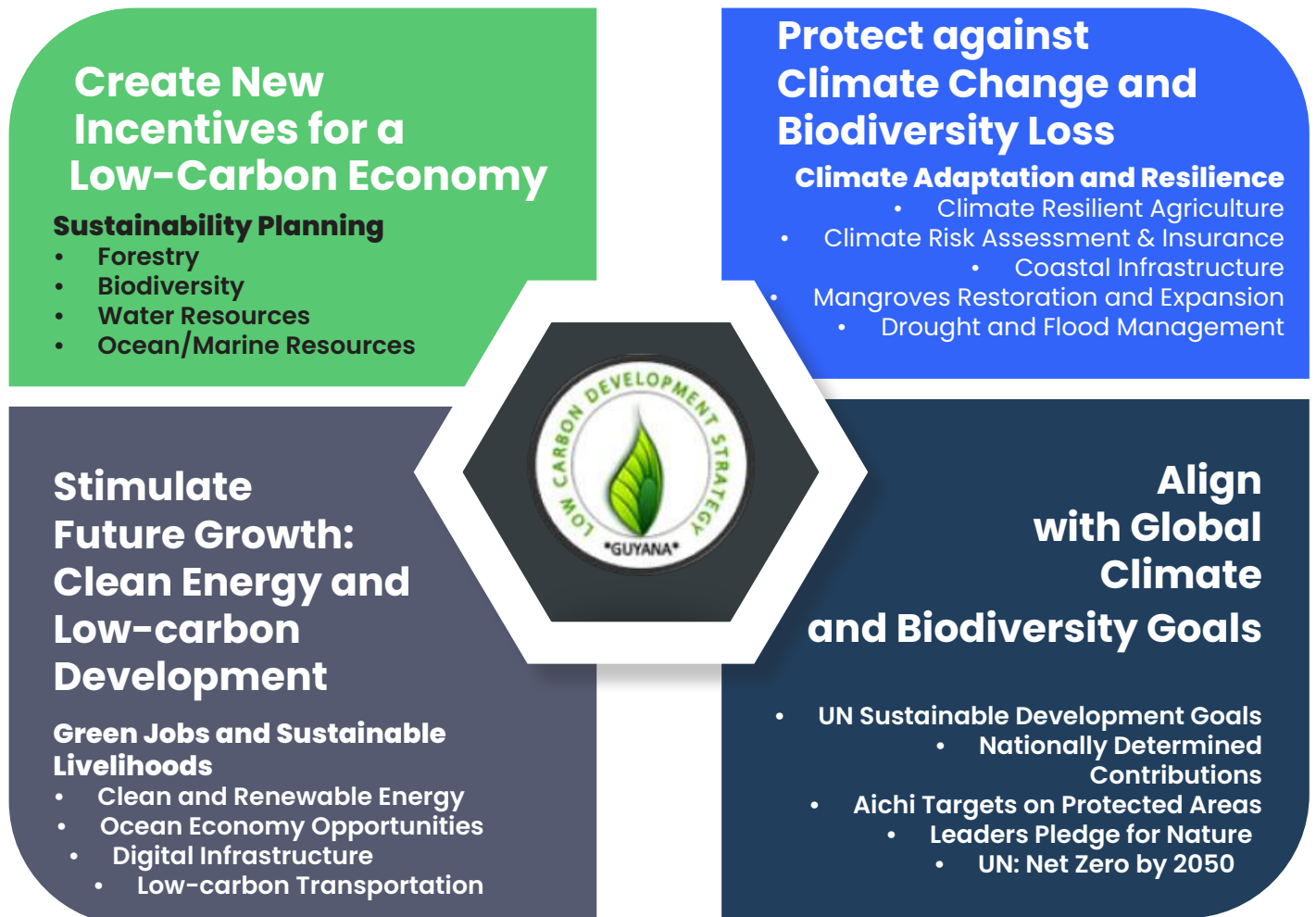
There will be significant investments in Health and Education through the expansion of telemedicine, smart hospitals and an expanded focus on hinterland healthcare, as well

as improving climate and environmental literacy within the education system. Guyana has also eyed the creation of a new International Centre for Biodiversity Research, with associated opportunities for increased research and development work by national and international institutions.

What’s Next

Guyana aims to market the remainder of its issued and expected ART TREE credits and, in selling those, will assess buyers who are prepared to recognise the value of the country’s forest climate services. Bholanath noted that in Guyana, as of January 2023, there are approximately five million issued or anticipated credits available for sale for all years from 2016 straight up to 2030. Balancing environmental and economic objectives is achieved under Guyana’s LCDS 2030 and the programme creates a model for other forest countries that have maintained their forest, to benefits from payments for services that their forests provide, whilst developing the livelihoods of its people.

GUYANA’S LOW-CARBON DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2030



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—Striking the right balance between profitability and environmental responsibility

For over 50 years, family-owned Variety Woods & Greenheart Ltd. (VWL) has operated an integrated logging and sawmilling operation along the Upper Berbice River in Guyana and is internationally acclaimed for its top-quality timber products and consistency in delivery schedules.

According to Managing Director Mr. Rommel Niamatali, based on this unblemished reputation for customer satisfaction, the business has expanded progressively, and it now has the distinction of exporting its products to all six continents across the globe.

Rommel's father, VWL's Founder and Chairman Mr. Sheik (Monty) Niamatali, grew up exploring the lush forests of Guyana during his youth, and developed an intense passion for conserving these forests while exploring its commercial potential. He built VWL from the ground up through sustainable forest management and environmentally-conscious promotion of wood products.

This approach allowed VWL to make a substantial and lasting economic contribution to the forestry sector while maintaining a delicate balance between strategic logging and ensuring the long-term survival of forests. In recognition of this outstanding contribution, the nation awarded Monty the prestigious Medal of Service (MS).

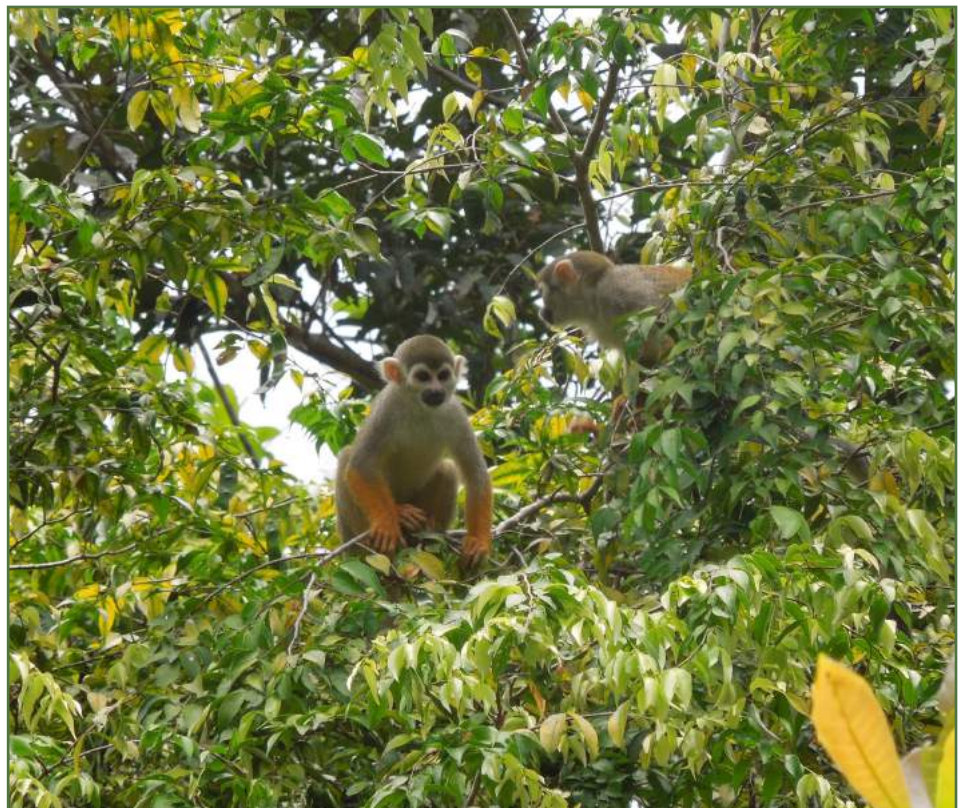
VWL produces sawn timber in different profiles and greenheart pilings for numerous applications from its forest concessions—52,000 acres and 328,000 acres, respectively—in the Upper Demerara, Berbice and Essequibo areas.



*Managing Director,
Mr. Rommel Niamatali*

The Managing Director asserted that planned interventions in the forest resources and sustainability is a top priority in every aspect of the business to preserve the genetic richness of the land. Having been exposed by his father to the natural beauty of Guyana from an early age, Rommel Niamatali said he is intrinsically aware of the need to preserve flora and fauna. He plans to establish an eco-friendly resort within VWL's concession where visitors can experience the wonder of the exceptional landscape and observe endangered species in their natural habitat.

“I would like to teach my young daughters and their generation how to appreciate the natural beauty of our land, just as my father taught me,” he said.



VWL strives to protect biodiversity. (Photo credit: Variety Woods & Greenheart Ltd.)

Sustainable Logging

The Amazon rainforests, which accounts for the generation of about 20% of the Earth's oxygen, covers approximately 85% of Guyana's landmass. Sustainable management of this resource is crucial as the Government forges ahead with its Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS).

Among other goals, the LCDS aims to conserve local forest resources in the face of climate change and biodiversity loss, and align local conservation initiatives with global climate and biodiversity objectives. Under the LCDS umbrella, the Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC) holds management rights for all State forests and issues authorisations to large and small concessionaires for commercial timber harvesting. The Commission ensures the sustainable management of the vast forest resources, and VWL collaborates fully with the GFC as it fulfils its responsibilities.

In keeping with the national drive to preserve the environment and manage forest resources sustainably under the LCDS, the company applies Reduced Impact Logging (RIL) principles and practices in its logging activities with the objective of ensuring that logged over forests maintain their natural functions, including safeguarding the natural habitats of fauna.

The RIL technique covers multiple sustainable-forestry measures. These include: conducting pre-harvest forest inventories, georeferencing and mapping individual merchantable trees, planning roads, log depots, and skid-trails to minimise soil disturbance, and conducting tree marking exercises for felling stock. Tree marking practices ensure that felled trees lie in a position that facilitates rapid log extraction while avoiding unnecessary damage to the residual forests.

Explaining how his company applies these techniques systematically and responsibly, Rommel said: "We divide our concession into compartments that cover planning periods for three to five years and is given a specific name, for example Charabaru Compartment; then the concession is also divided into square, 1000m x 1000m blocks, with each block given an alpha-numerical code, for example A16. We conduct 100% enumeration from which we are able to prepare stock maps, geo-referencing the location of each merchantable tree as well as core site features such as creeks, protected sites and buffer zones; and planned access roads and skid trails to extract the timber. He added, "Apart from its scientifically surveyed and demarcated Biodiversity Reserves, VWL has always demonstrated its committed stewardship towards protecting the environment and its natural species and varieties by voluntarily setting aside additional sections of its forest concessions for the protection of the endangered harpy eagle (*Harpia harpyja*) and giant river otter (*Pteronura brasiliensis*)."

Furthermore, VWL had partnered with Panthera —Leaders of Cat Conservation — to conduct faunal surveys within its forest concession boundaries and provide estimates of

AGM Inc./ Zijin Mining Group Company is the developer of Guyana's first and largest underground mine



OVER 1300 GUYANESE have been employed by the company, playing key roles in the operation in keeping with our local content goals





Variety Woods applies Reduced Impact Logging (RIL) techniques in logging activities

jaguar densities, prey abundance, and overall diversity of medium-to-large mammals within the lowland forests of Guyana. For its effective implementation of this initiative and outstanding application of sound Environmental Practices in all facets of its operations, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) awarded VWL the highly-esteemed Green Award.

According to Rommel, VWL offers employment opportunities to approximately 60 persons from surrounding areas and far-flung hinterland communities. Employees are exposed to hands-on training to guarantee their performance of all daily tasks with forest sustainability in mind. The company also provides field staff with additional training opportunities via the Forestry Training Centre.

VWL is committed to supporting the Government of Guyana in achieving its goal of protecting the nation's rich biodiversity. Referring to the LCDS, Rommel declared: "Guyana's forests should be put to whatever uses that support national, local investor and community needs, provided that these uses are sustainable. If forests provide for the needs of people, then there are built-in incentives to manage them on a sustainable basis and ensure their probability of long-term survival is increased and assured."

VWL also invests in infrastructure development, including roads, crossings, and bridges, and building and fostering relationships with local communities and international clients.

Markets

VWL harvests various varieties of timber--including Greenheart (*Chlorocardium sp.*), Purpleheart (*Peltogyne sp.*), Kabakalli (*Goupia glabra*), Shibadan (*Aspidosperma sp.*), Wamara (*Swartzia sp.*), Mora (*Mora sp.*), and others--to global markets. However, most exports are value-added products for flooring, siding, custom panelling, trims, mouldings, ceilings, spindles etc.

With the rapid expansion of the local housing and construction sector, VWL aims to expand its product line to meet local market needs. "We do everything from log conversion to finishing for housing. We have started to do some supplies to the local housing sector in Guyana with the housing boom, we're working with supplying the local persons involved in the construction of the houses," the Operations Director said.

In 2012, the local company was the first to receive international recognition for Guyana timber products with its Verified Legal Origin (VLO) Statement of Certification from the global Rainforest Alliance and is currently pursuing higher certification.

The company is also poised to get Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification, which will attest that its products come from responsibly managed forests with environmental, social, and economic benefits.

The Managing Director asserted: "The Company remains committed to enhancing Guyana's reputation as a producer of superior forestry products while embracing biodiversity and sustainably utilising Guyana's natural resources."



Greenheart piling produced by Variety Woods



DuraVilla Homes produces pre-fabricated modern houses using local woods

DuraVilla Finds a Specialised Market for Guyanese Prefabricated Homes

—The environmentally-friendly company secures a distinct position in local and Caribbean markets

DuraVilla Homes Guyana Inc. (DuraVilla)—an acclaimed Guyanese-owned and operated business specialising in prefabricated homes—has successfully carved out a niche in local and Caribbean markets by offering an affordable and eco-friendly housing option.

As part of the Durable Wood Products Inc. Group, DuraVilla delivers top-quality products using Guyana’s woods and other building components. Ms. Shalima Fakira, Director and Regional Sales Manager of DuraVilla, explains, “Our group of companies include DuraVilla Homes Guyana Inc., Woods Direct Inc. and Wood Direct International LLC. Each company specialises in specific

core areas, providing a collective service of sawmilling, manufacturing and distributing of quality tropical hardwoods and hardwood-products.”

Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Rafeek Khan, a prominent Guyanese businessman in the forestry industry, is the sole proprietor of DuraVilla and affiliate companies. As part of the forestry sector for over two decades, the Group’s operations are renowned for adding value, efficiency, and environmental sustainability to forestry.

DuraVilla specialises in the construction sector. In its business operations, DuraVilla ensures the responsible use of resources in an

eco-friendly way while offering top-notch housing solutions. Over the years, the companies have secured a solid international reputation for their commitment to natural-resource conservation, protecting delicate ecosystems, and promoting overall well-being.

DuraVilla’s Rise

Since its incorporation in 2008, DuraVilla has made rapid gains and is now a highly-acclaimed provider of creatively designed prefabricated homes with innovative energy-saving features. In particular, DuraVilla’s homes minimise the need for air conditioners, giving owners significant cost savings and reducing their carbon footprint.



Production activities at DuraVilla (Photo courtesy of DuraVilla Homes Guyana Inc.)

The production process commences deep in Guyana’s rainforests with the sustainable harvesting of wood, the primary raw material. Ms. Fakira assures that all processed woods meet international standards and adhere to the Code of Practice related to harvesting forest products.

DuraVilla Homes and its affiliate company Durable Wood Products Inc., is a fully integrated company from primary to secondary manufacturing. Logs are harvested by Durable Wood Products and processed into sawn lumber which is then converted to wood components for the manufacturing of DuraVilla’s engineered building system. This is then shipped in containers to the final destination.

International customers decide what components to ship since certain items may be cheaper to source in the destination country. “Customers could choose whether or not they want to purchase auxiliary products locally. These can include tiles, zinc, nails, and even windows.”

Minimising Waste

Some of the main markets DuraVilla serves are Trinidad, Barbados, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The Regional Sales Manager affirmed that the operation focuses on sustainability, which includes minimising wastage. “There’s no wastage on the sites; there’s no uncleanliness. On the site, the contractor simply sorts the materials and install. The assembly process is very simple. Our housing package includes a comprehensive list of the components that are being shipped along with instructional guidelines.”

“Our panels are numbered. The components are labelled to match back the sheets or the document that we would send showing their assembly process,” she explained. Fakira said the company attaches labels to every part of a prefabricated home for easy installation, and assembly does not require only professional skills. She said a small, experienced team could assemble the homes at a reasonable pace.

Expansion

Because of the rising demand for the company’s goods and services, DuraVilla plans to hire. “We intend to work with particular teams from within the islands who can install our homes,” said Fakira, adding, “It is not always feasible to send a team from Guyana to the islands to do this work.” She noted, however, that the teams from Guyana would usually build capacity overseas so that persons in other countries are trained to assemble the homes. Currently, the company is undertaking a skills-development programme at its Yarrowkabra facility, which encompasses training in constructing and installing a DuraVilla home. The Group already has over 100 employees.

The importance of DuraVilla making prefabricated homes in Guyana, acquiring new local and overseas markets, expanding, creating more jobs and generating spin-off benefits cannot be overstated. The company can invest in research and development to improve its products and services, further increasing its competitiveness in the market, and the availability of well-built prefabricated homes can provide affordable housing options for people in

need. Overall, DuraVilla is making a unique and positive contribution to Guyana’s economy and that of the wider Caribbean community.

Eco-friendly Operations

Concerning eco-friendly operations, Fakira says the company ensures that its operations are sustainable, from forest harvesting to finished products. “From the forest, we only harvest timber that has been certified. For the homes, we do utilise sustainable logging practises. Our system is of such that we minimise wastage and any lumber that is not used in the manufacture of the homes is used for other products at the factory,” she explains. Additionally, precise factory operations keep the amount of waste from cutting and designing panels and other components at an absolute minimum.

Since the wood-based prefabricated homes are a very cool product as opposed to concrete, customers generally do not need to use air-conditioning units.

Floor It Takes Guyana's Wood Products to New Heights

—Trailblazing company focuses on top-quality and innovative products

In a hyper-competitive global market for wood products, Guyanese-owned Floor It is thriving. Through its unwavering focus on delivering top-quality, innovative products, the company has cemented a place as a key value driver in Guyana's forestry sector.

Renowned evaluator of market trends across the forest products supply chain, Wood Resources International (WRI) predicts that the global wood manufacturing market will grow from USD452.91 billion in 2022 to USD465.31 billion in 2023 at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 2.7%. According to WRI, market growth will be driven by competition in the areas of product quality and product innovation—the hallmarks of Floor It's product line.

The company is a game changer when it comes to turning Guyana's woods into globally-competitive products. Floor It skillfully crafts local wood into value-added products that meet exacting international quality-control specifications and adds a touch of elegance to any property—commercial or residential—and boosts its value. Floor-It is a trailblazer in the industry, delivering high-quality finishes in classic and modern styles, plus expert installation, and excellent customer service.

Floor It, established in 2014 by Cummings Wood Products (CWP), is focused on producing kiln-dried lumber, flooring, and mouldings for the local market. According to Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Mr. Andre Cummings, the company was founded to produce and market top-quality wood products that are easily, and perfectly installed to satisfy the most scrupulous customers. Cognizant that products installed to customers' complete satisfaction would attract future customers, he recalled that in 2014 the first local customer to purchase flooring solutions had numerous installation challenges, which affected the final look.

"I felt empty to see that what we supplied is not being used as it should to meet clients' expectations. This led to the idea of offering installation and the establishment of Floor It," he said. Immediately, steps began to register employees with the National Wood Flooring Association (NWFA) to commence training on Sand and Finish, subfloor preparation, installation methods, tools, moisture testing, application of stains and sealers, and other key requirements for a seamless installation process.

In addition to its acclaimed flooring solutions, Floor It also offers doors, kitchen cabinets and intricate mouldings to enhance interior and exterior finishes—all subject to the company's strict quality-control standards. "We maintain high standards. When people pay for the product, they must enjoy it for years to come," Cummings added, noting that when installation is complete, no nail holes and creases or other unsightly flaws must be visible on any wooden product sold by his company.

According to the CEO, the importance of ensuring quality-control in producing wood products cannot be overstated and involves implementing a series of measures and procedures to monitor and manage every step of the production process—from raw material selection to testing and inspection.



Chief Executive Officer Mr. Andre Cummings



A product of Floor It

The company works with various wood species from Guyana's forests, such as Locust, Greenheart, Purpleheart, Crabwood, Kabakali and Darina, which it has trademarked 'Demerara Oak.' Floor It is currently looking at ways to utilise lesser-used wood species in its production. Additionally, to reduce wastage of forest resources, Floor It has invested in an end-matching machine that allows the utilisation of shorter pieces of wood and facilitates easier and better installation.

The company employs 62 workers, and provides training in technical skills, quality control and health and safety—and in the important area of personal development. Staff development is paramount, Cummings said, adding, "The real resource is the people and you have to build capacity." In addition to production, the staff is also engaged in research to boost product innovation. "We're currently doing research on some lesser-used wood species to begin using them...We have to ensure that it is a stable specie, which is also available and sustainable," the CEO stated.

Floor It sources raw materials, including logs, from various indigenous communities in Guyana's hinterland.

The company also gets supplies from sawmills across the country that comply with the legal requirements of the Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). As part of its Corporate Social Responsibility, the company supports the economies of indigenous villages by donating tractors, chainsaws and other machinery.

Having met the quality requirements of the Guyana National Bureau of Standards (GNBS), Floor-It is fully authorised to

use the Made in Guyana standards mark on its hardwood flooring, wooden mouldings and wooden decking products.

CALLING ALL PRODUCERS OF GUYANA'S FOREST PRODUCTS!



The Forestry Products Development and Marketing Council of Guyana has created a dynamic and sustainable online marketplace that connects buyers and sellers, promotes responsible wood consumption, and contributes to the economic development and conservation of Guyana's precious forests.

Join to:

- 1. Amplify your reach:** Connect with a diverse audience of eco-conscious buyers eager to discover unique wood products.
- 2. Boost Your Business:** Expand your market reach and unlock new growth opportunities for your craftsmanship.
- 3. Sustainable Showcase:** Proudly promote your products crafted from sustainably sourced tropical timber, preserving Guyana's natural heritage.

***Embrace a global platform
to share your products with
the world!***

Scan the barcode or visit
fpdmc.gov.gy to register



Guyana's Forestry: A Hidden Gem for Sustainable Investment and Growth

—GO-Invest opens the door for responsible, profitable investments in forestry

Nestled in the heart of the Guiana Shield and the Amazon rainforest, Guyana boasts vast forested ecosystems that cover over 85% of its land. With its rich biodiversity and abundant forest resources, the forestry sector presents lucrative investment opportunities—and the demand is there too. Since Guyana is experiencing an unprecedented economic expansion, its construction sector requires timber products. In 2022, the forestry sector expanded by an estimated 13.4%, driven by timber products.

Investment in the forestry sector has shown promising trends in recent years. With an average contribution of approximately 3% to Guyana's GDP as a raw material, the sector has displayed remarkable resilience and encouraging growth potential. While 2020 was difficult due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 2021 was a creditable year for stimulating activity in the sector. GO-Invest approved four applications for proposed investments, totalling an estimated GYD756.9 million in sawmilling and lumber production. In 2022, the agency approved applications worth another GYD702.9 million involving the manufacture of plywood and value-added lumber. Estimates indicate that those investments added at least 300 jobs—a boon in hinterland areas where jobs are scarce.

The government, through the Guyana Office for Investment (GO-Invest), actively campaigns to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) to the sector while promoting sustainable practices and value-added products. The boom—and the resultant demand for timber products—is far from over. GO-Invest plays a pivotal role in facilitating investments, and the forestry sector is open for investment with lucrative prospects in multiple areas. Some of the most promising investment hubs are as follows:

Timber Processing Facilities

Investments in primary and secondary timber processing can unlock value-added opportunities. Establishing state-of-the-art facilities for lumber production, kiln-dried lumber, flooring, plywood, and other value-added products can meet both domestic and international demand.

Furniture Manufacturing

Utilising timber and non-timber forest products for furniture production offers substantial potential. Investors can capitalise on the availability of diverse species and create high-quality, sustainable furniture.

Forest Transportation Services

Investments in trucking, passenger transport, and vehicle rentals cater to the sector's logistical requirements. Providing reliable transportation services within the forested areas ensures the smooth flow of raw materials and finished products.

Forest-Related Consultancy Services

There are opportunities for investments in forest inventory, mapping, general forestry operations, and special projects such as Guyana's Measurement, Reporting, and Verification System (MRVS). Consultancy services play a crucial role in sustainable forest management and can support the sector's growth.

Reforestation Programmes and Forest Plantations

Investments in restoring degraded areas and establishing forest plantations contribute to sustainability and can create additional revenue streams. Rejuvenating mined-out areas and implementing reforestation programmes can make an impressive show of an investor's commitment to environmental stewardship, and is a great way to get in the good graces of the government. There are approximately 200,000 hectares of land that need to be reforested.



2021
Applications for proposed
investments, totaling
an estimated **GYD756.9**
million approved

2022
Applications for
proposed investments
worth **GYD702.9 million**
approved

Forest-Based Eco-Tourism

Combining forest exploration with other ecosystem products can present an appealing investment prospect. Developing eco-tourism infrastructure and services that allow visitors to experience Guyana's pristine forests can attract nature enthusiasts and promote sustainable tourism practices. Guyana is already a global leader in eco-tourism, having been named the world's best eco-tourism destination in 2019 at the ITB global travel fair in Berlin.

Forest Road Infrastructure

Building and maintaining forest roads can enhance accessibility and even help the sector grow. Investments in infrastructure development can promote efficient transportation of raw materials and finished products. GO-Invest proposes that some investors can even build and maintain these projects, and charge user fees.

Spin-Off Businesses

Just as a multitude of investors are flowing into Guyana to capitalise on the oil boom, investments in hotels, shops, gas stations, and other related services in forest areas can leverage the forestry sector's development. Such ventures can cater to the needs of workers, tourists, and local communities.

Forest Products Marketing

Establishing a consolidating hub for buying and selling forest products provides investment opportunities. Acting as a central marketplace, this hub can streamline distribution, enhance market access, and increase efficiency within the sector.

GO-Invest's Role

GO-Invest's crucial role in facilitating investments in the forestry sector involves guiding entrepreneurs from inception to the realisation of their business ventures. The agency provides comprehensive assistance in obtaining necessary permits and licenses, identifying suitable investment opportunities, connecting investors with local stakeholders, and offering guidance throughout the investment process. GO-Invest also supports entrepreneurs through tax concessions, such as the removal of value-added tax (VAT) on machinery and equipment, all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), and exports.

Minister of Natural Resources, Mr. Vickram Bharrat often emphasises the government's commitment to working with stakeholders, providing tax incentives, and enhancing the monitoring and enforcement capabilities of the Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC) to combat corruption and illegal logging. This approach reflects Guyana's concerted efforts to achieve sustainable forest management.

Legitimate, well-meaning investors in Guyana's forestry sector can benefit from incentives and competitive advantages. The government offers customs duty exemptions on forestry and sawmilling equipment, woodworking equipment, and items covered under investment agreements. These incentives reduce initial investment costs and enhance the sector's competitiveness. Additionally, Guyana boasts an affordable and trainable labour force, availability of diverse prime and lesser-used species of raw materials, high-density and durable timber suitable for various applications, a strong environmental track record with low deforestation rates, and proximity to Latin American and Caribbean markets.

While declaring the government's commitment to promoting value-added sectors, Minister Bharrat noted, "A barrier to value-added production over the years has been the cost of electricity." However, the Minister assured, "The government is committed to reducing this by 50% within the next five years." This would be primarily through the development of a gas-to-energy project and other green energy initiatives set to come on stream in the short-to-medium term.

Work has already begun on the installation of infrastructure for the transport of natural gas from the Liza oilfield offshore Guyana, to an integrated onshore gas processing facility, so the government can supply power to the country at a significantly reduced cost when it replaces heavy fuel oil as the source. It expects this to provide a significant boost to the potential of value-added sub-sectors, including forestry.

Guyana's adherence to international sustainability standards, exemplified by the EU Forest Law Enforcement, Governance, and Trade (FLEGT) Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) and the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) certification, enhances the marketability of Guyanese forest products.

Perhaps the clearest indicator of the government's eco-friendly national development plan is the implementation of a Low Carbon Development Strategy 2030 (LCDS), which seeks to bind the development of each of the country's lucrative sectors, with sustainable policies. This builds on a robust legislative framework, including the Forest Act 2009, the GFC Act 2007, Forest Regulations 2018, the National Forest Policy 2018, and the National Forest Plan 2018. There are clearly defined policies for state forest allocation, state forest harvesting, processing of products, and domestic sale/export of forest products.

Guyana's commitment to sustainability is also demonstrated by its immensely low forest cover, which is rivalled by less than a handful of countries in the world. Its average annual deforestation rate for the last 30 years has been approximately 0.05%. President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali has often said that by leaving its forests intact Guyana is foraging for—potentially—billions of US dollars in revenue as the nation can provide invaluable services to the world, including carbon sequestration and biodiversity preservation. The government maintains that Guyana's deforestation is so low that there is significant room to monetise a percentage of the country's endowments while maintaining its globally-envied conservation credentials.



The Parika Sawmills timber processing facility

Made In Guyana Certification Mark Guarantees Authenticity and Excellence

– Local Forestry Industry on the Forefront of International Markets

The Made In Guyana Certification Mark Programme is a voluntary programme under which the Guyana Bureau of Standards (GNBS) certifies local products and services according to international quality standards and specific qualification requirements of the programme.

In particular, competing for the Made In Guyana status has pushed local producers of forestry products and value-added goods and services to raise their quality and service standards and find new ways of differentiating their products in highly-competitive markets.

By approving the Made in Guyana mark for a product or service, the GNBS certifies that the manufacturer or service provider has produced the product or service in Guyana using Guyanese resources, human resources, etc., and the product or service is contributing to the growth of the Guyanese economy and is generating employment for Guyanese.

The programme provides a framework for developing top-notch quality-control systems under the Local Content Act, ensuring that producers and service providers comply with the highest national, regional, and international standards. The introduction of this programme has revolutionised the production and delivery of Guyanese goods and services, giving them a distinct competitive edge.

What Is It?

The Made In Guyana mark provides global quality recognition for locally manufactured products. It focuses on creating healthy local competition among suppliers for certification as producers of authentic Guyanese products while creating and promoting brand recognition of locally-manufactured products. It allows local companies to gain

market advantages through increased brand recognition and standardisation of their products.

This voluntary programme is available to all local manufacturers who want to access the benefits of the Made in Guyana mark. The programme is in keeping with the GNBS Act No. 11 of 1984, which authorises the Bureau to set appropriate quality requirements for suppliers seeking to use the phrase ‘Made in Guyana’ for labelling and marketing purposes.

What Are Its Benefits?

According to Mr. Syeid Ibrahim, Head-Marketing of GNBS, attaining the Made In Guyana Standards Mark means that a company has proved to the Bureau that it has a quality system to produce top-quality finished products in line with the highest standards. Ultimately, this translates to increased consumer confidence in Guyanese goods and services.

“Having the Made In Guyana Standards Mark on your product(s) indicates to buyers that your product(s) can be trusted and has been assessed through quality assurance mechanisms to ensure that they meet their intended purpose and can deliver value,” Ibrahim explained. He pointed out that for companies involved in value-added forest products to gain the Made in Guyana certificate, the final assembly or production must be done in Guyana.

Forestry and value-added companies in the sector that have benefitted from Made In Guyana certification since it came on stream are Barama Company Limited, which produces Guyana Tropical Hardwood Plywood; Durable Wood Products, the supplier of Taper Sawn Wallaba Shingles; and Floor It Guyana Inc., which trades in Hardwood Flooring, Wooden Mouldings, and Wooden Decking.



What Are The Requirements?

To qualify for the Made In Guyana Standard Mark, manufacturers of authentic Guyanese products must first apply to the Certification Services Department of GNBS. The application form is available on the organisation's website, and GNBS can also provide a printed copy upon request.

Once the application is submitted, the Bureau evaluates it for completeness, after which the staff will contact the applicant. A preliminary assessment will be scheduled and conducted at the applicant's location to determine if the criteria for achieving certification have been met.

Eligible local producers must be registered to do business in Guyana for at least 12 months, and the business registration must be unexpired. For local content, the last substantial transformation, creation, design, or production of the final product must be in Guyana. Additionally, the criterion for local labour specifies that at least 70% of the staff must reside permanently in Guyana.

Value-added products made entirely from local raw materials automatically qualify but for those produced using some foreign raw materials, at least 80% of the process of transforming raw materials into finished products must be in Guyana. Companies seeking the standard must have established turnaround times, key performance indicators and quantifiable targets.

They must also have a system for complaints and feedback, product-sample testing via approved testing methods, using equipment verified and calibrated for in-house testing or provisions for testing at an accredited laboratory.

Following the conclusion of the preliminary assessment, GNBS will issue a report with the findings, which will indicate the degree to which the applicant has met the criteria. This assessment will highlight opportunities for improvement as necessary.

Once the applicant is satisfied with the findings or has addressed the opportunities for improvement, GNBS will send an invoice giving the final cost of certification to be paid by the applicant. The charges depend on the size of the organisation and the number of employees.

When the Bureau receives payment, it will conduct a final certification audit, after which the findings will indicate whether or not the applicant should be certified. Certification is valid for one year, and GNBS will conduct two surveillance audits and one renewal audit during the certification period to ensure conformity to the established criteria.

How Are Approved Products Identified?

Products that satisfy the requirements for the standard will have unique and distinct Made In Guyana mark on their labels and packaging, certified by GNBS. Notably, the design uses the colours of the Guyana Flag.



BCL General Manager Mr. Mohindra Chand (fourth from left) poses with Guyana Manufacturers and Services Association President Mr. Rafeek Khan (third from right) and other stakeholders after the signing of the Terms of Agreement to use the Made in Guyana standards mark.

Made in Guyana Certification Mark: Company Feedback

Human Resources Manager, Floor It Guyana Inc., Ms. Niande McKenzie, pointed out that the Made in Guyana certification has given her company “even greater credibility on the local market by showcasing to the public, inclusive of its customers, that Floor It Guyana Inc. is focused on producing the highest quality of locally manufactured products, utilising local materials to produce its items.”

She explained that attaining certification included a preliminary site visit to ascertain eligibility, correction of non-conformity, and final approval by the GNBS Certification Board. McKenzie added that the company had to provide seven proofs: that it is a local business, that it fulfils local content criteria for locally-sourced products, local value-added goods and services, local labour force, rapid turnaround time, and has a system for feedback and complaints and testing procedures.

“Having this certification indicates to our customers that Floor It takes pride in serving the people of Guyana authentically...It emphasises the pride we take in our country Guyana and serving Guyana’s population with quality products,” she declared. Barama Company Ltd. (BCL) on October 12, 2022 became the first company in the timber industry to achieve the rights to use the Made in Guyana Standards Mark on its Tropical Hardwood Plywood in regular, grooved and water-resistant types, the GNBS said in a press release.

Barama’s Assistant General Manager, Ms. Patricia Griffith-Mingo said: “The certification adds value to our products

and the company collectively; it has caused us to improve/ implement systems and controls to ensure quality products and services, and improved customer relations.”

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Let's do this together.



The Saint George's Cathedral was built using local woods. It was consecrated in 1894.

Timber Structures Amongst the Concrete Jungle: Impact of Guyana's Building Codes on Timber Construction

**By Dr. Anna Perreira,
Head of Department of Architecture, University of Guyana**

Guyana, the only English-speaking country in South America and part of the Guiana Shield¹, is the newest player in the international oil and gas sector. However, more incredible than the recent discovery of large oil and gas reserves, the country boasts more than 80% virgin forest cover comprising some of the world's strongest hardwoods suitable for construction in the tropics and elsewhere. However, despite the abundance of timber, much of it is difficult to access, monitor and manage by natural resource officials due to the varied and difficult terrain of the country.

Notwithstanding these impediments, there are multiple historic timber buildings in the capital city

Georgetown and elsewhere in the country which demonstrate the durability, strength, and beauty of timber, its resilience to climatic conditions and its enduring appeal despite the changing architectural landscape and tastes. On the other hand, the economic dynamics of building materials supply and demand in the country have driven the proliferation of concrete, steel and other more unnatural and unsustainable materials for the construction of various buildings and public infrastructure. While the country's Low Carbon Development Strategy's (LCDS 2030) stated objective is to be net zero by 2050, similar to other countries with net zero aims, a limited effort is made to encourage the use of more sustainable resources like timber.



*Dr. Anna Perreira,
Head of Department of Architecture,
University of Guyana*

Generally, timber is more expensive than the favoured concrete blocks for building. However, its lower carbon footprint can help reduce the construction industry's carbon dioxide emissions. Carbon dioxide, the principal greenhouse gas contributing to global warming, is sequestered in timber products even after manufacture and installation, making it an environmentally friendlier option for construction. Moreover, with appropriate building design, timber buildings can be much cooler than conventional concrete structures. This reduces reliance on mechanical means for cooling, energy demand, and the overall heat island effect created by dense concrete jungles of buildings. Building in timber can be challenging for an architect or structural engineer because of the diversity of wood species available. Further, the lack of information about structural properties and aesthetic characteristics makes it difficult to perform calculations and competent designs compared to the more controllable concrete and steel options. However, with the assistance of scientific material properties data sheets, building regulations, and codes and guidelines, practitioners can intelligently select or experiment with a variety of timber and timber by-products.

The Guyana National Bureau of Standards (GNBS)², established in March of 1985 under the GNBS Act No. 11 of 1984, is the principal agency responsible for standards development and a host of other services³. The availability, and more importantly, the enforcement, of building codes and regulations for timber (or any other kind of construction material application) is critical to assuring the structural stability of buildings, and the safety of their users, and occupants.

Unfortunately, the national building codes were inherited from colonisers

and are due for a much-needed update. Current building codes, section 7 in particular, addresses the use of Guyanese hardwood in construction. According to the GNBS, the code “provides guidance on the use of Guyanese timber species for construction purposes. It includes recommendations on quality, engineering properties and the various design considerations and principles for simple members, build-up components, composite structures and sub-structures incorporating other materials. Requirements and recommendations for sound construction and typical details for residential construction are also included. Further, recommendations for the design of heavy engineered structures, nailed, screwed, and bolted joints are also presented” (Sanichara, 2023).

Modern building codes reflecting updated safety and design standards, new materials, and sustainability goals must be readily available to guide practitioners in the building process. However, not many building practitioners or clients are aware of their particulars because they are not easily available to the public nor are they updated to reflect current trends in architecture, sustainability, or construction technologies.

An expression of interest was made in 2018 with the aim of conducting “a situational analysis, reviewing legislation, identifying gaps, overlap and any conflict of interest of the National Quality Infrastructure (NQI), financial sustainability of the NQI, and possibility of a 5-year implementation plan” (Sanichara, 2023). As of 2023, however, much has not been accomplished. This can potentially jeopardise Guyana's objective of achieving even 50% net zero by 2050 or its 2030 LCDS objectives for a greener built environment.

The discrepancy lies in the fact that neither building codes nor national strategies fully acknowledge the benefits or strongly encourage timber usage in construction as a strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Guyana, like many developing countries, faces a dilemma as it tries to balance its physical development and its obligation to agreements such as the REDD⁴. The challenge now rests with built environment practitioners, academics, government officials, and the general citizenry to educate, inform, explore, innovate, and challenge the building norm to choose more sustainable renewable resources for construction.

Drafting regulations for the application of timber and/or timber products for government and other buildings can be an initial strategy to help reduce our carbon footprint. Countries like French Guiana skillfully utilise lots of timber for such buildings as they recognise the cooling effect and environmental impact. Evidently so did our colonisers as they skillfully built our City Hall, churches (e.g., Saint George's Cathedral) and various residential structures using wood as the primary material.

Building codes and regulations can specifically influence the construction industry by suggesting, for example, the percentage of timber integration into new buildings or retrofits of the existing building stock. Guyanese architects and engineers are more than capable of designing timber structures as evidenced by the recently concluded Third International Lekol Architectural Competition⁵ held in French Guiana where the University of Guyana's architecture department was elected the first-place winners for designing a student dormitory where 75% of the building was constructed out of wood.

¹The Guiana Shield includes countries such as Guyana, Suriname, French Guiana and parts of Brazil and Venezuela which collectively comprise part of the Amazon Rainforest Ecosystem.

²The GNBS is a semi-autonomous agency which operates under the Ministry of Business and is governed by the National Standards Council. It is headed by an Executive Director.

³Other services include certification (products & abs), Testing, Verification, product monitoring, business reports, calibration, training, and audit services

⁴Former President Bharrat Jagdeo and the former Minister of the Environment and International Development of Norway, Hon. Erik Solheim, signed a historic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in 2009, where Norway committed to providing Guyana up to US\$250M by 2015 for avoided deforestation once certain performance indicators are met (Source <https://lcds.gov.gy/guyana-norway-partnership/>)

⁵The competition w the participation of Amapa (Brazil), French Guiana, Suriname and Haiti (who unfortunately withdrew due the political crisis)

The group also won the prize for the best construction, a further validation that the next generation of Guyanese professionals is more than equipped to design in wood. Even the university campus in French Guiana displays an array of buildings aggressively utilising timber construction and passive cooling design. Best practices in timber construction

abound around the world and in our neighbouring territories. This should encourage Guyana to take up the challenge of being a green Petro-state by demonstrating true sustainability efforts – and this must start with our building codes and other built environment regulations.



Winning design by the University of Guyana’s architecture department. The winning team comprised Ms. Semira Greene, Ms. Toquana Daphness and Ms. Nia Bishop.



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Black Kakaralli: The Affordable and Sustainable Hardwood Alternative to Greenheart

—Promoted as a viable hardwood solution for cost-conscious local builders

Guyana's timber trade is thriving thanks to its abundant natural forest resources. However, the Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC) is concerned that the over-reliance on traditional commercial species—like Greenheart, the world's toughest hardwood—could lead to their depletion. Therefore, the GFC and the Ministry of Natural Resources are turning loggers' attention to Lesser-Utilised Species (LUS), which are just as valuable as their more renowned counterparts and offer a sustainable alternative for local and export markets.

To support this initiative, Tropenbos International Foundation and the Timber Research and Development Association are researching the best ways of encouraging greater acceptance and utilisation of LUS by wood product producers and consumers, both locally and internationally. An essential aspect of this drive is to promote Black Kakaralli hardwood as a viable alternative to Greenheart, particularly for use in marine environments where high resistance to water, weather and insects is essential.

The Black Kakaralli hardwood tree is abundant in Guyana, particularly in Region Six, East Berbice-Corentyne, and it has exceptional physical and mechanical properties similar to Greenheart. Extensive credible scientific research and testing have confirmed that it is highly durable and exceptionally resistant to fungi, termites

and insects, especially marine borers. These qualities make Black Kakaralli a feasible alternative to Greenheart for heavy carpentry, pole and post-production, ship-building, industrial flooring and marine construction.

The Black Kakaralli hardwood—*Eschweilera sagotiana* (most common); *E. subglanduosa* (family: *Lecythidaceae*)—is found in northern South America in Guyana, Suriname, French Guiana, Venezuela and northern Brazil. It grows in wet tropical forest biomes, and is a characteristic species of mixed forests in Guyana. It is also found in mixed forests on laterite (a soil and a rock type rich in iron and aluminium) and in Mora forests but generally has a wide distribution.

The Black Kakaralli is an evergreen tree and often grows up to 40 metres tall and 60 centimetres in diameter. The crown is oval-shaped with dense branches ranging from erect to spreading. The base may be straight or buttressed, and the bark is grey, dark brown or red-brown. Dead bark is 1-3 millimetres (mm) thick and dark brown with a lighter brown layer inside. Living bark is about 3-5mm thick; it is light brown or pink, fibrous, tough, and smells of linseed oil.

Commissioner of Forests at the GFC, Mr. Edward Goberdhan explained that Guyana is not yet exporting Black Kakaralli. However, the GFC and the Ministry of Natural Resources are encouraging its use in the local construction industry as an alternative

to Greenheart piles. He pointed out that, despite its availability and attributes, Black Kakaralli is not widely used by local contractors; therefore, promotion is crucial.

“It is important to note that Black Kakaralli is being promoted as an alternative to Greenheart piles, not lumber or other applications...It has strong physical and mechanical properties and is a good alternative for use in construction...as piles; that is, for foundation. It has the length and straightness similar to Greenheart and is durable as well. Also, the cost will be much cheaper than Greenheart,” the Commissioner explained.

The GFC asserts that Black Kakaralli is more cost-effective than Greenheart for building piles. In the lumber market, 50-foot lengths of Black Kakaralli used for making pilings cost about 10% less than similar lengths of Greenheart. Also, Black Kakaralli’s density of 1.07 grams-per-cubic-centimetre (G/cm³) compares favourably with Greenheart’s density of (G/cm³), which is a significant benefit when used for pilings in the construction sector.

According to the GFC, the general physical and mechanical properties of Black Kakaralli that would interest stakeholders in the local forestry sector are as follows:

- **Air-dried density (12%) – 1070 kilogrammes per cubic metre (kg/m³)**
- **Bending strength (at 12%) - 182 Newtons per square millimetre (N/mm²)**
- **Modulus of elasticity (at 12%) – 21635 N/mm²**
- **Crushing strength (at 12%) - 77 N/mm²**

In promoting Black Kakaralli and other LUS in the local construction sector, the GFC and Ministry of Natural Resources urge stakeholders to carefully match the attributes of each species with its intended use. They hope focused promotion will expand the range of wood species used in construction projects, which can result in considerable cost savings for both producers and end users of wood products.

Guyana is promoting Black Kakaralli and other LUS as cost-effective alternatives to popular commercial wood species because there are ample supplies and they offer more affordable options in the local construction sector. Expanding their use would help to reduce pressure on valuable hardwood species like Greenheart, which have long growth cycles and are becoming scarcer due to high demand. By expanding the use of Black Kakaralli, the GFC hopes to provide cheaper construction materials while also making space for Greenheart stocks to replenish.





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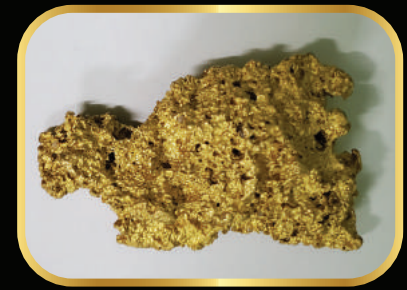
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THE GOLD MEDALLION

Here are some interesting facts about medallion created for Guyana's 50th Republic anniversary.

Did you know...

The unique medallion was crafted to depict the theme "Continuous development – committing to a Green Guyana through sustainable mining". The artwork portrays the growth of the mining industry through a green state. The symbols used are a stack of gold, a batel, a pickaxe, the map of Guyana, leaves, and a patch of land.



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Ministry of **FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

“A FULL, PERFECT AND FINAL SETTLEMENT”

If borders had brands, that title would be the marquee of Guyana's border with Venezuela: Full – Perfect – Final! They are words of perfection, of completion, of eternity. And they are words that have stamped their character on the line that forms Guyana's western boundary from Punta Playa to the Summit of Mount Roraima.

The boundaries of the ancient 'Wild Coast' of the Guianas were the Orinoco and the Amazon Rivers. The first real occupiers of the land between the Orinoco and the Essequibo were the Dutch; and their presence there goes back to the 17th Century when Holland had placed their stamp on the Essequibo Region. As early as 1679, a Dutch postholder had been stationed on the Pomeroon; and occupation continued thereafter. Today, throughout the Essequibo Region, Dutch names ring out in memory of Dutch Governors, administrators of many kinds, settlers and traders from the Netherlands.

It was from the Dutch that Britain acquired those lands between the Essequibo and the Orinoco Rivers. The Treaty of Munster 1648 had confirmed Dutch ownership of the Region, and, as the Century ended in the wake of European wars the future ownership of the Guianas was settled. The end result of the Treaty of Amiens of 1802, the Convention of London of 1814 and the Peace of Paris the next year, was that Suriname was Dutch, while the colonies of Essequibo-Demerara and Berbice were confirmed as British - colonies that were united in 1831 as British Guiana. Spain and Venezuela



were nowhere on the 'wild' Guiana coast.

But that scene would draw admirers. As British Guiana began the century-long process of unification and development, Venezuela in particular, cast aspiring eyes beyond the Orinoco. In the 1840s, it took issue with a worthy British effort to identify and ultimately demarcate the Colony's boundaries. They had commissioned a distinguished German geographer and naturalist, Robert Schomburgk, to begin the process of survey. Venezuela's reaction was one of hostility, not welcome - hostility that has reached - with rising intensity - nearly 200 years: despite what in totality follows.

Why? It was the second half of the 19th Century, and Venezuela was spreading its national wings - west with Colombia and east with Essequibo. Its credo was expansion. It failed with Colombia; but

got the US to be its patron with 'BG' - because of the 'Monroe Doctrine' - and US politics. Under threat of 'war', no less, the United States forced Britain to have the border settled by a 'treaty-based Commission' - as Venezuela wanted.

It would be a Commission - an Arbitral Tribunal - on which Venezuela's choice of Member would be the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. His fellow arbitrators were from the pinnacle of the British and American judiciaries - the very apex of the 'Common Law' world - and they chose as their Chairman a Russian international lawyer, F.de Martens - of worldwide acclaim.

And it was all 'treaty based' - as Venezuela wanted - The Treaty of Washington 1897 - signed on behalf of the President of Venezuela by Senor Jose Andrade and ratified by the Venezuelan Congress on the basis of its commendation by President Joaquin Crespo as "an effort of intelligence and goodwill worthy of praise and thanks from us". And as the formalities were scrupulous, so the substance was fundamental. Article XIII of the Treaty of Washington could not be more explicit and exact:

Article XIII

The High Contracting Parties engage to consider the result of the proceedings of the Tribunal of Arbitration as a full, perfect, and final settlement of all the questions referred to the Arbitrators.

And so, in due course was the Award of the Tribunal delivered by the Chairman on 3rd October, 1899. It was a unanimous Award. It was hailed by Venezuela:

“Greatly, indeed, did justice shine forth,” proclaimed Venezuela’s Ambassador to Britain a few days later; and as late as 1949 the law firm handling Venezuela’s case would write in the American Journal of International Law:

“The Award secured to Venezuela the mouth of the Orinoco and control of the Orinoco basin, these being the most important questions at issue.”

Two months after the Award, the new American President (McKinley) summed up the situation in his Union Message to Congress (5.12.99) thus:

“The Award...while not meeting the extreme contention of either part,... appears to be equally satisfactory to both parties.”

And for a while, Venezuela did all the right things. They participated fully in the demarcation (1900-05) of the boundary as awarded by the Tribunal. They joined in marking the trijunction border point – between Venezuela, Brazil and British Guiana – on the summit of Roraima (1931). They insisted on precise adherence to the boundary line as awarded by the Arbitral Tribunal in 1899 despite inconvenience (1931). But, throughout, there were other voices yearning to be heard and other ambitions reaching beyond lawful perimeters.

The post-war years presented a new world scene, and the onset of the ‘cold war’ within them. Together, they amplified the voices of expansionism within Venezuela, and, infamously, shattered Venezuela’s anti-colonial inheritance. President Betancourt even floated the outrageous idea of a cordon sanitaire in the Essequibo region under Venezuelan sovereignty. In the UN’s Hall of self-determination itself, Venezuela drew up barricades to the full freedom of British Guiana, stoking

fears of ‘another Cuba’. Eventually, as a Judge of the International Court of Justice has recently declared, “At the time of Guyana’s independence in 1966, the right to self-determination had already become a rule of customary international law.” Venezuela’s effort to deny that right to Guyana was firmly and unconditionally thwarted. As independence dawned, British Guiana (with Britain still in the wings) joined in an effort to settle for all time the concerns that had bedevilled Venezuela about its eastern border. What emerged was the Geneva Agreement of 1966 allowing for the resolution of Venezuela’s new found dispute with the validity of the Arbitral

Tribunal’s Award of 1899 – fixing their border with the then British Guiana. If necessary, the Geneva Agreement provided, this finality would be determined by the International Court of Justice at the instance of the Secretary General of the United Nations. And so, in due course, as ordained by the Geneva Agreement the Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr Antonio Guterres, on 30 January, 2018 determined that ‘significant progress not having been made toward arriving at a full agreement for the solution of the controversy (I have) chosen the International Court of Justice as the means that is now to be used for its solution’.



On 29 March 2018, Guyana filed its Application to the International Court of Justice in The Hague- the ICJ.

It had taken Venezuela 63 years to challenge the Award of the Arbitral Tribunal under the Treaty of Washington, 1897. It spun out 52 more years of filibusters under the Geneva Agreement of 1966. 100 years and more have now passed since the most distinguished jurists of 3 States pronounced Venezuela's eastern boundary to be as in the Award of 1899 – a pronouncement Venezuela's then acclaimed: Greatly did justice shine forth !

Yet, years of repudiation were to follow; years studded with acts of enmity and postures of aggression. Unfortunately, when a final resolution came in sight, Venezuela rejected the decision of the Secretary-General and challenged the jurisdiction of the ICJ. The Court determined that it would first decide on the question of Jurisdiction, and following oral hearings on 30 June 2020, issued its decision on 18 December 2020 that it had jurisdiction to hear the case on the merits of Guyana's application concerning the validity of the Arbitral Award of 1899 and the related question of the definitive settlement of the land boundary between the two countries. Venezuela has condemned that decision as 'biased and irregular'. However, it remains binding on both Parties under international law.

On 8 March 2022, Guyana filed its Memorial on the merits of its case against Venezuela. On 7 June 2022, Venezuela filed preliminary objections to the admissibility of Guyana's Application to the Court to determine the validity of the 1899 Arbitral Award.

In accordance with the rules of the Court, the proceedings on the merits were suspended until the determination by the Court of the matter of Venezuela's preliminary objections. Guyana submitted its response to the preliminary objections on 15 July 2022.

The Court heard oral pleadings over the period 17 to 22 November 2022 on Venezuela's objections to the judicial proceedings.

On 6 April 2023, the Court gave its judgement on Venezuela's objections, which is final, without appeal and binding on the Parties, as follows:

1. Unanimously, Finds that the preliminary objection raised by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is admissible.
2. By fourteen votes to one, Rejects the preliminary objection raised by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.
3. By fourteen votes to one, Finds that it can adjudicate upon the merits of the claims of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, in so far as they fall within the scope of paragraph 138, subparagraph 1, of the Judgement of 18 December 2020.

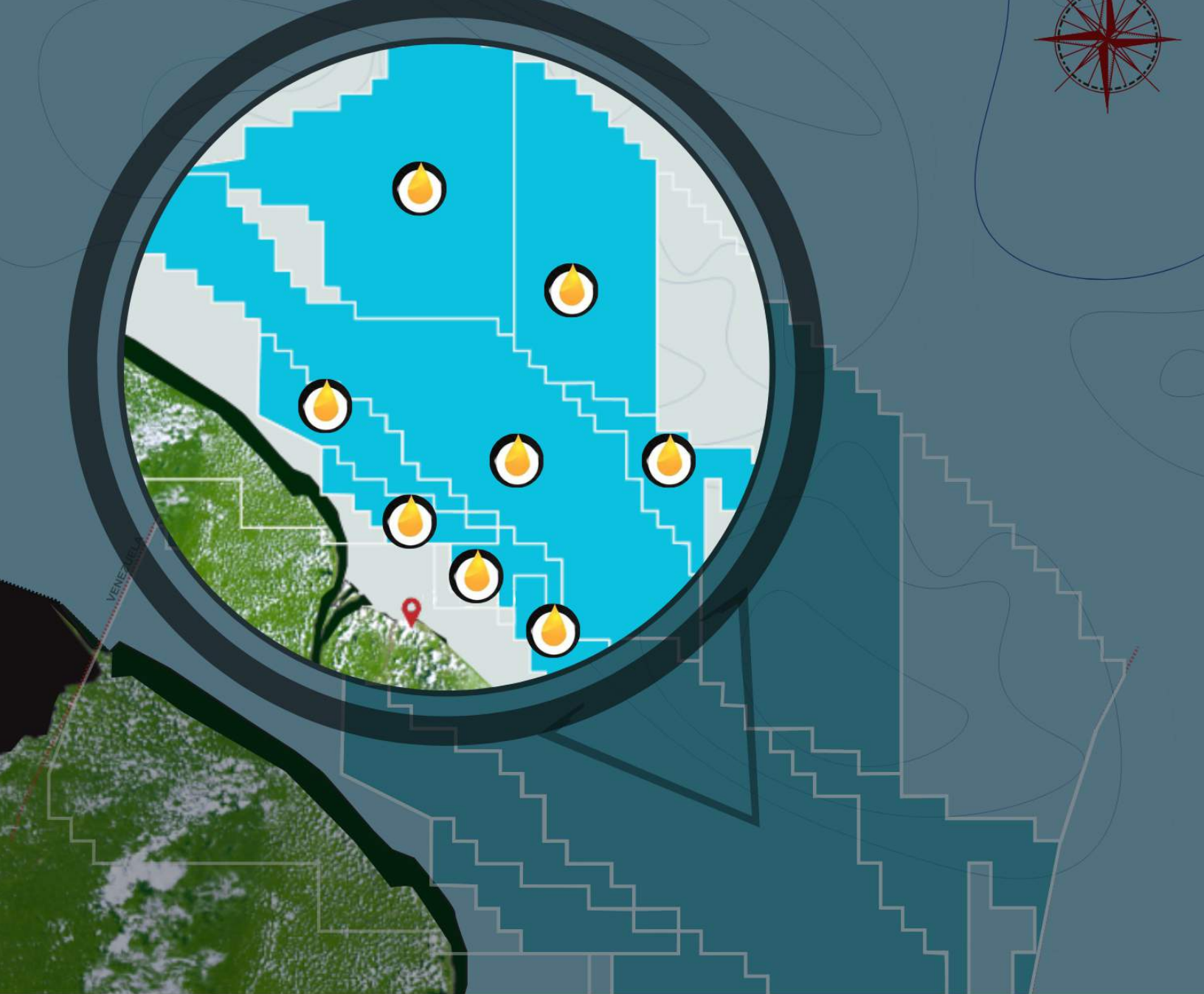
In votes (2) and (3) above, the single vote against was that of the Judge ad hoc appointed by Venezuela.

In welcoming the Court's decision, the President of Guyana, H.E. Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali underlined 'that this means the Court will now proceed to decide the dispute between the two States on the merits, and ultimately issue a final and binding determination on the validity of the 1899 Arbitral Award that fixed the land boundary between Venezuela and the then British Guiana.'

President Ali emphasised that this was the second time the International Court of Justice had rejected jurisdictional objections raised by Venezuela. He added that Guyana remained confident that its longstanding international boundary would be confirmed by the Court.

President Ali further underscored that "all Member States of the United Nations, including Guyana and Venezuela, are obligated under the United Nations Charter to comply with the Court's binding Judgements."





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ENERGY



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