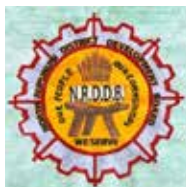
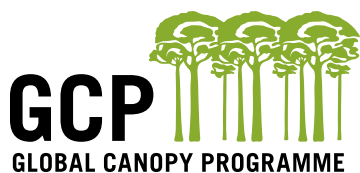


COMMUNITY MONITORING, REPORTING AND VERIFICATION FOR REDD+

Lessons and experiences from a pilot
project in Guyana.

Executive Summary



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides a comprehensive overview of the Community Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (CMRV) project in the North Rupununi, Guyana, funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD).

It presents the approach and steps taken in setting up and managing the first phase of this pilot project (2011-2013), as well as some of the key lessons learned, recommendations, and challenges.

The aim of the first phase of the project was to pioneer an approach through which communities could monitor their forests, and also possibly receive payments or other benefits through a REDD+ opt-in mechanism being developed by the Government of Guyana. At the time of publication of this report, the project was in its second phase, under the wider Forest COMPASS: Community-powered Assessment of Ecosystem Services and Safeguards project. In this phase, in addition to continuing the work in Guyana, we are working with local partners in Acre, Brazil, to replicate the project in the Chico Mendes Reserve. We are also seeking to build a network of practitioners of community based monitoring to share knowledge and best-practice and to further advocate for community-based monitoring as a viable approach for maximising REDD+² effectiveness, efficacy and equity. This phase of the project operates at the local, national and international levels.

This initiative has involved collaboration between a team of 32 dedicated community monitors from 16 indigenous Makushi villages, five local project management staff, and partner representatives from the Global Canopy Programme (GCP), the North Rupununi District Development Board (NRDDB) and the Iwokrama International Centre for Rainforest Conservation and Development (IIC), with wider cooperation with the Government of Guyana through the Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC).

Data has been gathered on wellbeing, natural resource use, land-use change and carbon stocks, in order to generate information that can inform local resource management, and inform the development of national forest monitoring and safeguard information systems as part of Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS). Beyond this, it is hoped that the results of this project move discussions on REDD+ and indigenous participation forward at the national and international levels.

The experiences gained and lessons learned during phase 1, documented in this report, will be fundamental to further testing, improving and advocating for community participation in REDD+, as well as other national and international initiatives on forests, such as FLEGT VPAs³ and NBSAPs⁴. The authors ultimately hope that this report can serve as a valuable case study of community-based monitoring.

Key lessons and recommendations

Community based monitoring has an important role to play in improving local resource management and informing the implementation of REDD+ regimes with local participation, as well as the potential to provide employment and income for local communities. Yet there are important considerations that stem from adopting such a model:

1. Monitoring activities must take into account multi-stakeholder interests and balance out external and local priorities and data needs in order to achieve relevance and integration of data at different scales;
2. Local institutions must be embedded in the governance and decision-making of the monitoring project to guarantee community participation and ownership, and to improve engagement with external entities;

¹The project was originally called Community empowerment for forest measuring, reporting and verification (CMRV) in the proposal to Norad. 'Measuring' later became 'monitoring' due to the latter being used more widely in Guyana.

²Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation plus the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and the enhancement of forest carbon stocks.

³Voluntary Partnership Agreements under the EU's Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Action Plan – see www.euflegt.efi.int/home.

⁴National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). See www.cbd.int/nbsap.

3. Local participation is fundamental in data management in order to guarantee transparency when establishing a data sharing protocol; such a protocol takes time and should be reviewed regularly following the principles of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) and respecting data ownership;
4. Monitoring systems should feed directly into existing management plans and development strategies in order to establish appropriate interventions; therefore the design of effective methodologies must consider how the outputs will be processed, reported and applied so that the resulting information is relevant and useful;
5. Regular outreach and communication activities are essential to establish support and understanding among the wider community, who may not be participating in and benefiting directly from the project;
6. When community members are adequately trained and informed, they can produce data of national relevance;
7. Communities are best placed to gather socio-environmental baseline data for national safeguard information systems;
8. Monitoring systems relying on technology must consider the trade-offs involved and prioritise technical training;
9. Community participation in monitoring must be considered as a service, in order to guarantee permanence and continuity of the work, and therefore the sustainability of monitoring systems is strongly linked to long-term funding streams;
10. Some standardisation of methodologies and protocols on data collection and reporting is needed in order to achieve scale, keeping in mind, at the same time, the different aims of different projects.

In addition, an unexpected finding was that mobile phones encouraged intergenerational exchange, with the younger generation teaching the older generation to use the phones, while the older generation shared the necessary knowledge on farming and biodiversity needed for the surveys.

Main outputs of the project

Through the efforts described in this report, the CMRV project in Guyana delivered the following key outputs:

1. Sixteen community resource maps and reports were produced.
2. The main drivers of deforestation in the monitoring region were identified.
3. Government satellite data was ground-truthed.
4. A report on above-ground biomass in the monitoring region was produced.
5. A set of indicators for assessing natural resources and community wellbeing were agreed upon among and monitored by key project stakeholders.
6. Capacity was built among local project team members to collect, process and analyse forest monitoring data.
7. A briefing note for the Government on Free, Prior and Informed Consent, in the context of CMRV, was produced.
8. A CMRV data sharing protocol was initiated.

The detailed maps, reports, and data gathered were provided in reports to stakeholders. Information that the communities have agreed to share with wider audiences will be presented in subsequent reports, as will the further developments and results of phase 2 of the project.

Full report accessible at: www.globalcanopy.org

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Citation

Please cite this publication as: Global Canopy Programme, 2014. Community monitoring, reporting and verification for REDD+: Lessons and experiences from a pilot project in Guyana, Global Canopy Programme: Oxford

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This project was developed with initial support from the Waterloo Foundation and the Rufford Foundation, and implemented with financial support from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD).



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