



Permanent Mission of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana to the  
United Nations Office and Other International Organisations in  
Geneva

**Note No: 10/2025**

The Permanent Mission of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana to the United Nations Office and other International Organisations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and has the honour to refer to its Note Verbale Note No.: 223/2024 dated December 4, 2024 regarding the communication from [REDACTED], Officer-in-charge, Special Procedures Branch, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights conveying a communication sent by the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises; the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change; the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights; the Special Rapporteur on the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment and the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights..

The Permanent Mission wishes to forward the attached letter from the Honourable Gail Teixeira M.P., Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance conveying the Government of Guyana's response to the Joint Communication from the Special Procedures Office. The Permanent Mission would be grateful for if the Government of Guyana's Response could be published on the OHCHR's website at the earliest and for an acknowledgement of receipt of this submission.

The Permanent Mission of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana to the United Nations Office and other International Organisations in Geneva avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurances of its highest consideration.

**Geneva**  
**January 7, 2025**





Office of the  
*Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance*

Inclusion • Participation • Transparency • Accountability

January 7, 2025

██████████  
Officer in Charge  
Special Procedures Branch  
Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights  
Palais Des Nations  
1211 Geneva 10  
Switzerland

Dear ██████████ and Special Rapporteurs,

**Re: Government of Guyana response to the Joint Communication from Special Procedures, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights- JAL GUY 1/2024**

The Government of Guyana acknowledges the Joint Communication (A/HRC/54/31) dated November 8, 2024 and received on November 23, 2024 to the Government of Guyana concerning the Architecture for REDD+ Transactions (ART) TREES programme and its implications for the rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) in Guyana.

The Government of Guyana's submission herein is within the original time framework of 60 days stated in the above-mentioned correspondence, and, we therefore ask that it be publicly posted with the Joint Communication JAL GUY 1/2024 as stated in email correspondence from your office.

Therefore, our letter of December 2, 2024 requesting an extension which was kindly granted by your office is therefore no longer necessary.

The Government appreciates your sincere advocacy for IPLC rights. These rights are critical and must be protected against all forms of risk—whether from governments, external forces, or unscrupulous actors. However, we respectfully urge you to reflect on whether the process leading to your letter may have inadvertently been misused in ways that could harm the very IPLCs whose rights you seek to protect.

As outlined below and in the attached appendix, the allegations repeated in your letter have been raised before and have been demonstrated to be verifiably untrue through multiple processes, with evidence available in the public domain – in some cases, for many years.

Moreover, the allegations closely align with claims made by certain private sector entities seeking to procure carbon credits at unfairly low prices. These actors have a vested interest in creating reputational risks to achieve their goals, often at the expense of IPLCs, Guyana's broader citizenry, and public trust.

While we do not suggest any deliberate amplification of such interests, it is a government responsibility to protect IPLCs and other citizens from exploitation by any party. For this reason, we respectfully raise the following concerns:

## **1. Concerns Regarding Potential Abuse of Process**

Your letter acknowledges that the allegations raised in your letter have not been verified, yet the letter's issuance could create reputational risks for Guyana and its IPLCs. We have already seen these precise allegations used by individuals and entities with ulterior motives to create reputational risks for their own political and/or commercial gain. Specifically, a small minority of corporates (and individuals working on their behalf) have sought to suppress prices and exclude IPLCs, so that the corporates can then either bid to buy credits at the suppressed price, or prevent funds from flowing to IPLCs who have chosen to engage with carbon markets. Their allegations have been investigated repeatedly, found to be verifiably untrue, and the evidence is in the public domain.

It is essential to be vigilant against the abuse of the process by such unscrupulous individuals and entities – as the risks they seek to create are tangible, affecting village economies and community well-being. Given these stakes, communications of this nature should be grounded in rigorous due diligence.

The Government would appreciate receiving clarification from the Special Procedures Branch, OHCHR, on the extent of due diligence conducted to establish the bona fides of those making the allegations and why the Joint Communication was issued without fact verification?

## **2. Concerns Regarding Exclusion of IPLCs**

We note that your letter was sent to governments and philanthropic organisations in North America and Europe but not to IPLC representatives in Guyana. This omission perpetuates a historical pattern where IPLCs are excluded – by some international stakeholders - from discussions directly affecting them. Indigenous peoples have the right to be consulted – yet were not brought into this very discussion that you have chosen to engage in with international parties.

We respectfully ask why IPLC representatives in Guyana were not consulted or provided with a copy of your letter. How does this exclusion align with principles of inclusion and respect for their rights?

The Government wishes to remind the Special Procedures Branch, as it has done in previous submissions to the UNCERD, that the National Toshias Council, representing 242 indigenous communities, and elected every two years by these communities, is **the** legitimate authority for the indigenous peoples of Guyana. This is provided for in the 2006 Amerindian Act which gives this body corporate status. Why was this powerful statutory body excluded?

The constitutional rights commission, the Indigenous Peoples Commission, was also excluded.

Furthermore, there are four (4) Indigenous civil society organisations in Guyana (the Amerindian People’s Association, the National Amerindian Development Foundation, the Amerindian Action Movement of Guyana, and the Guyana Organization for Indigenous Peoples) representing indigenous peoples and led by indigenous peoples which were also excluded.

### **3. Concerns About Unfair Expectations on Developing Countries**

The Government was shocked to learn that the Joint Communication document JAL GUY 1/2024 describes carbon markets as a “scam”, despite their promotion by multiple United Nations entities and their integration within the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement (Article 6). Guyana’s credits are also eligible under CORSIA, a UN body initiative.

If concerns exist about carbon markets, the Government respectfully suggests that these be addressed within the UN system rather than unfairly burdening developing countries like Guyana to defend multilateral processes adopted by UN bodies.

The Government is of indefatigable view that the Carbon markets, when implemented with integrity—as in Guyana’s case—can accelerate climate action and generate financial flows that benefit communities and nations, in particular, developing nations.

### **4. Selected Concerns Regarding Accuracy**

The attached appendix provides information on where to find publicly accessible sources that address the verifiable untruths contained within the allegations of the Joint Communication JAL GUY 1/2024. However, selected points are addressed here because they are of fundamental importance.

#### **IPLC Self-Determination**

The Joint Communication JAL GUY 1/2024 accurately states that village decisions on ART-TREES participation must be made through village general meetings. However, it omits that over 1,000 such meetings have occurred, enabling the false narrative on which the entirety of the allegations in the document is built. More seriously, it silences the tens of thousands of indigenous people who participated in these meetings.

The ART-TREES process in Guyana is grounded in self-determination, with IPLC decisions made by IPLCs themselves through inclusive village general meetings as supported in national law:

- Over 1,000 village meetings have been held across 242 Indigenous communities to deliberate and vote on ART-TREES participation. These meetings will continue in the years ahead, ensuring ongoing self-determination.
- Meetings are inclusive, with decisions requiring a majority vote from adult community members.

- Villages also developed their own Village Sustainability Plans (VSPs), often with NGO support, tailored to their priorities and voted on by their communities. These plans ensure IPLCs can determine how benefits from ART-TREES progress their own priorities.

None of this is mentioned in the Joint Communication JAL GUY 1/2024.

### **Opt-In Process**

Your letter asks whether IPLCs have the right to opt out of ART-TREES participation, implying they are compelled to join. This stems from another omission: participation in ART-TREES is entirely voluntary, with IPLCs free to opt in or opt out if they choose, ensuring autonomy.

- No rights are removed, whether communities opt in or not.
- Villages pursuing alternative approaches are free to do so, including participation in other carbon credit programs.
- Only about 30% of Guyana's credits have been sold to date, but **all** IPLCs have the opportunity to share in **all** benefits if they choose to opt in.

None of this is mentioned in the Joint Communication JAL GUY 1/2024.

### **Role of the National Toshias Council (NTC)**

The allegations in your letter inaccurately describe the role of the National Toshias Council (NTC) in this process, unfairly implying that it exceeded its authority.

To set the record straight, the NTC is a democratically elected body representing all Indigenous villages in Guyana. Its leadership comprises toshaos (village leaders) who are elected by their communities and supported by elected Village Councillors, also chosen directly by their communities. As stated earlier in this communication the National Toshias Council is part of the governance structure of indigenous communities and is provided for in the 2006 Amerindian Act.

In the ART-TREES process, the NTC played a pivotal role in representing the collective interests of Indigenous communities. It facilitated discussions, ensured transparency, and acted as a bridge between the government and IPLCs. While the NTC has consistently supported ART-TREES, it has also respected villages' autonomy and right to self-determination.

Notably, in September 2024, every Toshias in the country, as democratically elected leaders, joined a resolution endorsing ART-TREES, thus communicating the decisions of their villages – this is omitted from the Joint Communication JAL GUY 1/2024.

In sum, the NTC's involvement ensured that all 242 IPLCs had a meaningful opportunity to participate in the ART-TREES programme if they chose to do so. Decisions about participation will continue to be made by the villages and communities themselves.

## **Consultation with Stakeholders**

Your letter omitted to mention anything about the national consultation that took place in Guyana, despite making some sweeping statements about the importance of these consultations. This does a major disservice to the tens of thousands of people who gave their time to share their views and ideas.

Guyana's participation in ART-TREES, as with all other elements of the national Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS), involved multiple levels of stakeholder engagement. This consultation continues on an ongoing basis.

**In summary:** Following LCDS 2030's launch in October 2021, national consultations on the LCDS 2030 began in November 2021 and more than seven months of national, regional and community-level stakeholder engagements then took place all across Guyana. Citizens provided their feedback, recommendations, and inputs on the ART TREES approach, as well as feedback on other aspects of low carbon development. The national consultations sought to ensure the maximum outreach possible by providing multiple avenues of engagement: (1) national level engagements; (2) thematic engagements; (3) community-based consultations; (4) written feedback; (5) feedback via website; and (6) an active public engagement programme. This process fed into Guyana's ART TREES application and submissions.

The national consultation was overseen by the Multi-Stakeholder Steering Committee (MSSC), whose membership included a wide range of civil society and other stakeholders, including the National Toshias Council and all the Indigenous civil society organisations in Guyana (the Amerindian People's Association, the National Amerindian Development Foundation, the Amerindian Action Movement of Guyana, and the Guyana Organization for Indigenous Peoples).

The Draft LCDS 2030 was endorsed by the MSSC and the National Toshias Council before being approved by a Parliamentary Resolution of the National Assembly in August 2022.

As stated above, the National Toshias Council renewed their endorsement in September 2024 based on the village meetings that continue to take place in each of their communities.

This consultation remains an ongoing process – with meetings of the Multi-Stakeholder Steering Committee, deliberations by the National Toshias Council, regular village meetings, and other processes led by communities. These continue to contribute to the evolution of the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS 2030), and any stakeholder – including those who are behind the allegations that the Special Procedures Branch have repeated – is welcome to participate in that process.

## **Benefit-Sharing Mechanism**

The design of the Benefit Sharing Mechanism for those who choose to opt in was overseen by the MSSC, but in particular by the National Toshias Council, because this is by its nature a collective decision.

Through an iterative process, including engagement with the Government, an initial proposal was developed into a mechanism whereby 100% of revenues from the sale of credits is invested in local, multi-community and national priorities:

- A minimum of 15% of all revenues goes to individual IPLCs to invest directly in their Village Plans.
- The remainder of revenues go to priorities that span multiple communities – for example on climate adaptation where drainage and irrigation infrastructure is urgently needed to serve multiple communities, or on renewable energy where economies of scale enable the purchase and installation of solar panels for multiple communities at a far cheaper cost than if each community did this individually.

### **Compliance with International Safeguards**

Guyana adheres to international standards, including the UN Cancun Safeguards, and has consistently reported through the Safeguard Information System under the UNFCCC. These reports are publicly accessible and address many questions raised in the Joint Communication JAL GUY 1/2024.

### **Protection of the Right to Free, Prior, and Informed Consent**

LCDS 2030 – and its predecessors since 2009 - are designed and implemented to protect the right to free, prior, and informed consent of IPLCs. This right was protected through, among other things, the voluntary participation of IPLCs through the opt-in mechanisms; the extensive stakeholder engagement processes which began in advance of the adoption of the LCDS; communication in appropriate languages and cultural settings throughout the consultation process; and free deliberation and voting regarding participation in ART-TREES by over 1,000 village meetings across 242 Indigenous communities for LCDS 2030 alone. These meetings and consultations were supplemented by many more which targeted specific elements of the LCDS since 2009 – for example land titling and specific aspects of village development.

### **Transparency in Communication**

Allegations of pre-drafted communications in the Joint Communication JAL GUY 1/2024 are unfounded. Villages created their own plans, with standardised formats used only for formal notifications of decisions to the ART-TREES focal point.

### **Conclusion**

The attached appendix summarises key facts about the 15-year evolution of Guyana’s participation in ART-TREES.

Regarding the ten (10) observations raised in the Joint Communication Jal Guy 1/2024, pages 7-8, the Government responds as follows: -

This submission has responded to Points #1, # 2, # 4, #6, # 7.

With regards to Points # 3 and #5, the Government has not considered “a moratorium on the issuance and sale of carbon credits” nor does the Government accept the observation in the Joint Communication JAL GUY 1/2024 that there are deficiencies in Guyana’s legal framework on Indigenous Peoples rights and land titling system.

Special Procedures Branch is reminded as we have done in submissions to the UNCERD that Guyana is the only country that has developed and enshrined in its Constitution and in statutes, indigenous peoples' rights, governance structures and indigenous communities land titling system, and the right to free, prior, and informed consent. It is the only country where 10% of the population, that is indigenous peoples, communally own more than 15% of Guyana's land mass through absolute grants and titles. Notably, as a result they are the second largest land owner after the state. It is the only country that the elected leaders of the 242 indigenous communities converge annually at the National Toshos Conference to meet and determine their own issues and meet with the President and Cabinet members to address their concerns and make proposals on the development of their communities. Within this annual Conference, every two years the elected representatives elect the executive of the National Toshos Council.

Regarding Point # 8:

As set out in Guyana's LCDS, Guyana sought to embed respect for human rights in all aspects of its engagement with carbon markets by choosing a market standard that (i) aligns with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change definition of REDD+ (being national in scope) and (ii) adheres to the precise social and environmental safeguards agreed within the UN process and specified as the Cancun Safeguards.

ART-TREES was chosen as the highest integrity standard, since it embeds the Cancun Safeguards. The standard includes a rigorous, extensive, independent audit process that carries out due diligence of adherence to the Cancun Safeguards in advance of credit issuance, and subsequent, ongoing monitoring of implementation of the Cancun Safeguards at a national scale. All due diligence and audit reports are publicly available. See the Appendix to this document for further detail.

Regarding Point # 9:

There are many grievance mechanisms available at the national level in Guyana, as well as through the ART TREES mechanism, which ensure that business transactions are conducted in accordance with the law and with international human rights norms. As it relates to REDD+ and carbon markets, this includes adherence to the Cancun Safeguards – and specifically Cancun Safeguard B (Transparent and effective national forest governance structures, taking into account national legislation and sovereignty). At the national level, grievance mechanisms include provisions of constitutional mechanisms including recourse to constitutional bodies and use of statutory mechanisms, to address any violations of human rights, such as recourse to the Constitutional Court all the way up to Guyana's apex court, the Caribbean Court of Justice.

See the Appendix to this document for further details – including evidence of where adherence to the Cancun Safeguards, including Safeguard B, has been assessed independently and the outcomes are publicly available.

At the programmatic level, the ART TREES has a rules-based, grievance mechanism which was used for one issuance by one non-governmental organisation – the Amerindians' People Association (APA). This concerned the first issuance of credits – concerning the credits issued for the period 2016-2020 - and the APA was able to nominate its representatives to advance the resolution of their grievance. However, the grievance was found to be without merit - of note, the grievance had not been the result of consultation

through any village meetings, and did not represent the decision of any villages. The APA subsequently participated in audit processes for 2021 and 2022 issuances, and did not raise any concerns about those issuances. Detailed information about the grievance process and its one utilisation are outlined in the Appendix below.

Regarding Point #10:

As set out in this submission and its Appendix, participation in carbon markets is a decision that is made by villages themselves, through a positive act of self determination to opt in.

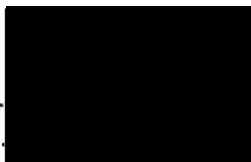
As stated above, the fact that you have repeatedly spoken of the possibility of opt out represents a fundamental misunderstanding. A default choice of not opting in – coupled with a guaranteed option to opt in – ensures that IPLCs remain in charge of all decisions concerning their participation in carbon markets, inclusive of participation in mechanisms other than ART-TREES. As stated above, village decisions are made through the villages’ own participatory approaches, governed by law, the 2006 Amerindian Act, culminating in village-level decision making being done at village meetings with collective decision-making led by elected Toshias and Village Councillors.

Once again, we acknowledge and thank you for your advocacy for the rights of IPLCs. The Government hopes that that you will join with us in urging others to engage responsibly in fact-based debate to ensure that climate action is fair, inclusive and ambitious.

In the meantime, we shall be sharing the Joint Communication JAL GUY 1/2024 and our submission in response with representatives of IPLCs in Guyana so that their right to be included is upheld.

The Government asks the Special Procedures Branch to inform us of the specific individuals that you contacted in all the entities in North America and Europe to whom you have written - as we believe it is essential that they too have an opportunity to hear directly from Guyana.

Sincerely,



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Hon.  
Minister of Parliamentary Affairs & Governance

**For the attention of the following: -**

- Working Group on the issue of Human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises:
- Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change:
- Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights;
- Special Rapporteur on human rights to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment:
- Special rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights

## APPENDIX

### Summary Timeline of Stakeholder Process on Guyana’s LCDS 2030 (including benefits sharing mechanism and stakeholder consultations)

#### *December 2024*

Consultation on Guyana’s Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS 2030) and engagement with ART-TREES is an ongoing process, and IPLCs determine their own approaches to how these consultations progress, led by leaders (toshao) chosen by them. The following provides a high-level summary of the process to date.

The following timeline summarises the progress on the Low Carbon Development Strategy and implementation in Guyana:

Date	Action/Process Step
2009	<p>Launch of the first Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) released for public comments and feedback. This included the introduction of national-scale carbon accounting and the proposal that a national-scale mechanism would be progressively developed.</p> <p>The consultation leading to the finalisation of the LCDS was one of the most comprehensive consultations ever in Guyana at that point, and saw thousands of Guyanese participating across Guyana and at every Amerindian village level.</p> <p>The consultation was overseen by a Multi-Stakeholder Steering Committee (MSSC).</p> <p>An independent report on the consultation process, carried out by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) can be found at:</p> <p><a href="https://www.iied.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/migrate/G02590.pdf">https://www.iied.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/migrate/G02590.pdf</a></p>
2009-2015	<p>The initial LCDS, including its proposal for a national-scale carbon accounting mechanism, led to the conclusion of the Guyana-Norway Bilateral Partnership, where Norway paid Guyana US\$227 million (inclusive of investment income) based on performance against a set of carbon, social and environmental metrics.</p> <p>The Guyana-Norway Agreement can be found at:</p> <p><a href="https://redd.unfccc.int/uploads/2_264_joint-concept-note.pdf">https://redd.unfccc.int/uploads/2_264_joint-concept-note.pdf</a></p> <p>It should be emphasized that at the time this influx of revenue was the largest into Guyana’s economy.</p>

	<p>Examples of programmes funded through the national-scale carbon mechanism include Land Titling, Amerindian Development Fund, Solar Electrification Project, and others, implemented in Amerindian Villages. In all cases, IPLCs were involved in governance and oversight bodies.</p> <p>Details of these investments can be found at: <a href="https://www.guyanareddfund.org">https://www.guyanareddfund.org</a></p>
<p>October 2021</p>	<p>Launch of draft LCDS 2030</p> <p>In October 2021, the President of Guyana, His Excellency President Irfaan Ali launched an updated LCDS 2030, which included a proposal for continuing with national-scale carbon accounting in accordance with the vision set out in the first LCDS.</p> <p>The Draft LCDS set out proposals for how the Guyana-Norway Agreement could be followed by market-based approaches in accordance with the vision first set out in the 2009 LCDS 2009, and how the Government believed that the introduction of ART-TREES created an opportunity for Guyana to continue with its original vision.</p> <p>It was made clear at the time that, while preparatory work would proceed, all final decisions on participation in ART-TREES would be done in accordance with the outcomes of the national consultation and, in particular, as a result of the decisions made by IPLCs in accordance with Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC).</p> <p>An open call for comments and feedback was to be augmented by a proactive set of consultations.</p> <p><a href="https://lcds.gov.gy/timeline/e-consultation-on-website/">https://lcds.gov.gy/timeline/e-consultation-on-website/</a>  <a href="https://lcds.gov.gy/lclds-a-vision-for-low-carbon-strategy/">https://lcds.gov.gy/lclds-a-vision-for-low-carbon-strategy/</a></p>
<p>2021 October to June 2022</p>	<p>Public Consultation on LCDS 2030.</p> <p>The National Consultation consisted of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) national level engagements; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. 77 stakeholder groups were engaged</li> </ul> </li> <li>(ii) thematic engagements; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. 5 sessions addressing themes, including sessions focused on women and regional leaders</li> </ul> </li> <li>(iii) Community-based consultations in each region, with attendance by representatives from over 200 Indigenous Villages and forest-based communities, including their elected leaders.</li> <li>(iv) receipt of written feedback;</li> <li>(v) feedback via a website;</li> <li>(vi) an active public engagement programme;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Radio and television programmes, public service announcements (PSAs), interviews</li> <li>b. Literature: brochures, flyers, posters, newspaper articles, press releases</li> <li>c. Public events (including Government officials &amp; MSSC members)</li> <li>d. Virtual meetings (Zoom and other platforms)</li> <li>e. Social media platforms (YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and other online sites)</li> <li>f. A full report on all LCDS Communication and Consultation activities is also prepared and</li> <li>g. published on the LCDS Website.</li> </ul> <p>Materials were shared in advance; presentations were made and explanations provided on technical materials as inputs were sought. Feedback was received, these were considered in the revision of the final LCDS, and each comment made was recorded.</p> <p>Feedback from Public Consultations led to revisions in the LCDS. All feedback received, including how feedback was addressed in the revision of the LCDS, was summarized in a Summary of Consultations Report available at:  <a href="https://lcds.gov.gy/summary-of-feedback/">https://lcds.gov.gy/summary-of-feedback/</a></p> <p>This is described in the revised LCDS Chapter 8:  <a href="https://lcds.gov.gy/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/LCDS-July-2022-Chapter-8-compressed.pdf">https://lcds.gov.gy/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/LCDS-July-2022-Chapter-8-compressed.pdf</a></p> <p>After August 2022, the revised LCDS was used as the basis for further discussions at national and community / village level, including around the opportunity for IPLCs to opt in to the national ART-TREES programme.</p> <p><a href="http://www.lcds.gov.gy">www.lcds.gov.gy</a></p>
2022 February - Ongoing	Oversight of LCDS 2030 by a <b>Multi Stakeholder Steering Committee (MSSC)</b> which includes representatives of the National Tshaos Council (NTC) consisting of all elected IPLC leaders, the constitutional Indigenous Peoples' Commission (IPC) and all the indigenous civil society stakeholders in Guyana, including the Amerindian Peoples' Association (APA), the National Amerindian Development Foundation, the Amerindian Action Movement of Guyana, and the Guyana Organisation of Indigenous Peoples).  <a href="https://lcds.gov.gy/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/LCDS-July-2022-Chapter-8-compressed.pdf">https://lcds.gov.gy/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/LCDS-July-2022-Chapter-8-compressed.pdf</a>
2022 (July) – first week	Revision of LCDS 2030 to capture consultations on the Benefit Sharing Mechanism.

	<p><a href="https://lcds.gov.gy/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Guyanas-Low-Carbon-Development-Strategy-2030.pdf">https://lcds.gov.gy/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Guyanas-Low-Carbon-Development-Strategy-2030.pdf</a></p> <p>While all chapters of the LCDS were updated, the chapter dealing with benefit sharing mechanism was one of the chapters that had significant material changes resulting from the consultation feedback. The following changes were among the main areas that were revised based on input from IPLCs, elected leaders, civil society representatives and others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Participation to include both titled and untitled areas, and customary lands</li> <li>- Participation to include all aspects of forest ecosystems – forest land, wetlands, savannah lands, etc.</li> <li>- Focus on social as well as economic aspects of development in addition to forest size in determination of benefits sharing.</li> <li>- Connect benefits sharing to existing village planning process which is led by the approach of self-determination of programmes to be implemented for sustainable development of villages</li> </ul>
2022 July 15	<p>The Annual National Toshaos Conference, attended by over 500 delegates including their elected leaders, Toshaos and Village Councillors representing 242 indigenous communities, issued a resolution endorsing the revised LCDS, including the evolution of the national approach to carbon markets. The resolution welcomed and supported the proposed revenue sharing pathways and allocations, including the ability for communities to opt-in at any time.</p> <p>The NTC – in accordance with its role as the elected leaders of IPLCs – welcomed the approach to ART-TREES and the benefit sharing mechanism that had been developed during the initial consultation period. It also stressed that participation by individual communities would be determined on a continual basis through village-based consultations, who were free to opt in if the village chose to do so.</p> <p>See Resolution available at:  <a href="https://lcds.gov.gy/endorsement-of-lcds-2030-by-the-national-toshaos-council/">https://lcds.gov.gy/endorsement-of-lcds-2030-by-the-national-toshaos-council/</a></p>
2022 July 18	<p>Multi-Stakeholder Steering Committee (MSSC) approved the LCDS 2030 and recommended its tabling in the National Assembly.</p>
2022 August 8	<p>Members of Parliament in the National Assembly approved LCDS 2030 and the proposed revenue sharing amounts and pathways</p> <p><a href="https://lcds.gov.gy/parliamentary-resolution-lcds-2030/">https://lcds.gov.gy/parliamentary-resolution-lcds-2030/</a></p>
2022 August to	<p>The NTC collaborated on modalities of operationalizing the benefits sharing Mechanism.</p> <p>Highlights included:</p>

<p>January 2023</p>	<p><b>August 8-12, 2022: NTC Capacity-Building Workshop and 1st Statutory Meeting:</b> on 11th August, 2022 the NTC met with the LCDS Team to discuss feedback and to relay further inputs from villages, on the modalities of the benefits sharing mechanism.</p> <p><b>September to December 2022:</b> final LCDS, NTC resolution on the LCDS 2030 were discussed within villages and further village-level engagements took place.</p> <p><b>January 2023:</b> Meeting held with NTC and LCDS Team to receive feedback from the three-month engagement with villages and to further inform the benefits sharing mechanism. The modalities of the mechanism were drafted and sent to LCDS Team.</p> <p>It was agreed that village meetings would determine – in accordance with their own processes - whether to engage with the benefit-sharing mechanism or not. They would also determine their own village plans.</p> <p>Templates for letters of submission, and requirements for administration were identified and developed. Templates for village plans were also prepared, including some by supportive national and international non-governmental organisations. However, all villages were free to determine their own plan format.</p>
<p>2022 November</p>	<p>Issuance of ART-TREES Credits for 2016-2020.</p>
<p>2022 December</p>	<p>Sale of c. 30% of credits, with arrangements made that will facilitate opt in to revenue sharing mechanism for all IPLCs that choose to do so through village-led processes.</p>
<p>2023 February 15-16</p>	<p>Village leaders from all indigenous villages in Guyana met to finalise benefits sharing mechanism.</p> <p>Based on national revenues for 2022/2023, a total of GYD 4.725 billion dollars was available for transfer to 242 villages and communities, for investment in village priorities as outlined in Village Plans prepared and submitted by the villages themselves.</p> <p>This reflected the benefit sharing mechanism’s formulation that based on the outcome of the consultations described above, revenues from the sale of carbon credits will be invested through a combination of (i) national and multi-community projects and programmes; (ii) a dedicated 15% of all revenues for investment in village plans, put together through village- led processes.</p> <p>Each Amerindian Village Council also established Dedicated Bank Accounts to prepare for Village-Led Implementation.</p> <p>Capacity building sessions were held.</p>

<p>2023 March to Sept 30</p>	<p>Further NTC engagements with Villages conducted in all regions, financed by Government of Guyana. Peer to Peer engagements, not Government led (though Government financed).</p> <p>Village meetings were held to determine (i) whether to continue with opt in to ART-TREES; (ii) Village Plans. Decisions required the vote of a majority of the adults, resident in the village and present, in keeping with the 2006 Amerindian Act.</p> <p>Based on the outcome of village meetings, Village Plans were submitted to the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs.</p> <p>As of 30<sup>th</sup> Sept, 2023, <b>all 242 villages had submitted</b> Village Plans, letter of agreement to participate in the national carbon credits programme up to the issuance of 2022 credits, and further in some instances, village meeting minutes and attendance sheets (referred to as the complete package of information) submitted.</p>
<p>2024 February</p>	<p>Support project by Government launched with the NTC to a value of US\$3M to support communities in village planning.</p> <p>Issuance by ART TREES of Carbon credits to Guyana for year 2021.</p>
<p>March 2023 to present Aug 2024</p>	<p>Over 800 projects implemented in areas of income generating activities, social upliftment and food security.</p> <p>See public link to community testimonials and village stories that demonstrate the full, free and active participation of community stakeholder in the process: <a href="https://lcds.gov.gy/community_stories/">https://lcds.gov.gy/community_stories/</a></p>
<p>September, 2024 to present</p>	<p>Resolution passed unanimously at the Annual 2024 Annual National Toshaos Conference where each member of the new NTC executive signed on supporting the LCDS, benefits sharing mechanism and stakeholder process.</p> <p><a href="https://www.facebook.com/100083289557482/posts/509515311834783/?rddid=qinZwJivaOkx6hy7#">https://www.facebook.com/100083289557482/posts/509515311834783/?rddid=qinZwJivaOkx6hy7#</a></p> <p>Second allocation of carbon credits revenues for year 2024-2025 of which 200 villages out of 242 have already submitted village plans and expressions of willingness to continue with participation in the programme (opting in).</p>

## Hyperlinks and Detailed Itemisation of Consultation

Detailed itemisation of communications and document references demonstrating Guyana’s significant and meaningful consultations on the LCDS, and the creation and intent to sell ART TREES credits, with Indigenous Peoples, Village Councils, their elected (Toshaos) leaders, and the National Toshaos Council and a wide variety of Indigenous non-governmental organisations.

The entire approach builds on a three-phased strategy set out in 2009, with the most recent iteration seeing consultations started in 2020 and an update to the strategy being finalised over an intensive seven-month period between October 2021 and July 2022.

As of December 2024, the process of including individual IPLCs has gone through three further rounds of consultation, involving more than a thousand meetings. This on-going process will continue.

Guyana’s successful compliance with the Cancun Safeguards, including the requirement to meaningfully consult with Indigenous Peoples, was confirmed repeatedly and independently audited by Aster Global’s 12-member professional audit team and Norway’s independent process auditor.

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<b>LCDS 2009</b>	May 2010	Guyana		<a href="https://lcds.gov.gy/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Low-Carbon-Development-Strategy-May-2010.pdf">https://lcds.gov.gy/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Low-Carbon-Development-Strategy-May-2010.pdf</a>
<b>Joint Concept Note on REDD+ cooperation between Guyana and Norway</b>	2009	Guyana and Norway		<a href="https://lcds.gov.gy/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Joint-Concept-Note.pdf">https://lcds.gov.gy/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Joint-Concept-Note.pdf</a>
<b>Memorandum of Understanding on REDD+ cooperation between Guyana and Norway</b>	9 November 2009	Guyana and Norway		<a href="https://lcds.gov.gy/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/MOU.pdf">https://lcds.gov.gy/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/MOU.pdf</a>
<b>Guyana LCDS 2030 – Chapter 8, Indigenous Meeting Chart and supporting information and Photos</b>		Guyana		<a href="https://lcds.gov.gy/lcds-chapter-8/">https://lcds.gov.gy/lcds-chapter-8/</a>
<b>LCDS 2030 – Appendix Two: ART-TREES</b>		Guyana		<a href="https://lcds.gov.gy/lcds-appendix-two/">https://lcds.gov.gy/lcds-appendix-two/</a>
<b>LCDS 2030 – Appendix Three: The Guyana-</b>		Guyana		<a href="https://lcds.gov.gy/lcds-appendix-three/">https://lcds.gov.gy/lcds-appendix-three/</a>

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<b>Norway Partnership</b>				
<b>LCDS 2030 Consultation</b>		Guyana		See summary the MSSC meetings: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Summary of Meeting of MSSC held on 14th Feb 2022 Final</a></li> <li><a href="#">Summary of Meeting of MSSC held on 28 March 2022 Final</a></li> <li><a href="#">Summary of Meeting of MSSC held on 6 June 2022</a></li> <li><a href="#">Summary of Meeting of MSSC held on 18 July 2022</a></li> <li><a href="#">Summary of Meeting held on 21st October, 2022</a></li> </ol>
<b>1.2 NTC-letter-to-ICVCM (1).pdf</b>  <a href="#">NTC-letter-to-ICVCM.pdf</a>	13 May 2024	NTC	p.1	NTC noted there were many months of consultations at national and village level and that ART-TREES is seen by Indigenous Peoples as a high integrity standard.
			p.2	NTC has supported and continues to support Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy ("LCDS") since the initial Strategy was launched in 2009.
			pp. 2-3	NTC was involved throughout the seven-month consultation which took place on the latest version of the LCDS - LCDS 2030 - which took place between October 2021 and July 2022. NTC was and is a member of the Multi-Stakeholder Steering Committee ("MSSC") which oversaw the LCDS and the carbon credits process. Membership of the MSSC include the Indigenous Peoples Commission, National Toshias Council and each of the four (4) Indigenous peoples' advocacy groups, namely, the Amerindian People's Association (APA), the National Amerindian Development Foundation ("NADF"), The Amerindian Action Movement of Guyana ("TAAMOG") and the Guyana Organization for Indigenous Peoples ("GOIP").
			p.3	The final LCDS 2030 was presented in June 2022 at an annual NTC conference with all elected Toshias present and a resolution

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				was passed with no objection endorsing the LCDS 2030 inclusive of all its elements.
			p. 3	Every village in Guyana (242) held meetings to determine whether or not individual villages wanted to opt in, and for what period. All villages in the country chose to participate, through a majority vote of adult villagers resident and present at village meetings conducted in accordance with the village's own processes and the 2006 <i>Amerindian Act</i> .
			p. 4	NTC worked with Government and other stakeholders to determine the proposed benefit-sharing mechanism across communities (the resulting mechanism is mainly based on population to ensure fair treatment of all Indigenous peoples and communities).
			p. 4	NTC's participation was crucial in developing and proposing the benefit sharing mechanism so all villages, satellites and CDCs could benefit equitably.
			pp. 4-5	A key requirement for villages to participate in the benefit sharing mechanism was through the submission of Village Sustainable Plans ("VSPs") that were developed and approved at the community level in a village general meeting. All 242 villages/communities have submitted VSPs.
			p. 6	NTC notes that Indigenous Peoples of Guyana support the ART TREES V2 Standard.
<b>1.3 NTC Letter to IACHR 2024.pdf</b>	27 March 2024	NTC	p. 2	There was a seven-month national consultation that included the NTC and Toshaos in Guyana.
<a href="https://lcds.gov.gy/national-toshaos-council-letter-to-iachr/">https://lcds.gov.gy/national-toshaos-council-letter-to-iachr/</a>			p. 2	The MSSC includes the Indigenous Peoples Commission, NTC, APA, NADF, The TAAMOG and GOIP.
			p. 2	The MSSC and NTC worked to reach all of Guyana's communities, including in settings appropriate for more remote locations and in multiple languages.
			p. 3	There were national meetings and meetings with every single indigenous village in Guyana to discuss ART-TREES credits and

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				to determine whether to engage with the national-level programme. Hundreds of meetings took place in villages and communities to determine whether to engage with the national programme or not, including holding a majority vote at village meetings.
			p. 3	242 VSPs were going through a process of self-determination and leadership.
			p. 3	Villages across Guyana were able to make their own decisions and every village could choose not to engage.
<a href="#">2016-2020 TREES-Validation-Report-Final.pdf</a>	14 October 2022	Aster Global	pp. 10-11	VVB selected 6 Amerindian villages and one Amerindian community for site visits, including Aishalton, Parabara, Shulinab, Moco Moco, Yupukari, Massara, and Fairview to solicit input on their experiences regarding interactions on REDD+ program activities, including how various safeguards were demonstrated. Villages and communities were selected as representing various stages of land titling or land extension titling processes, including titling completed prior to the crediting period, titling activities undertaken during the crediting period, and titling activities still identified as pending at the end of the crediting period.
			p. 11	VVB met with NGOs representing stakeholders for the national REDD strategy activities, including GOIP, TAAMOG, and APA.
			p. 16	VVB reviewed the Resolution of the NTC Conference: Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) 2030, dated July 15, 2022; 2) LCDS sections specifically referencing the ART program, and involvement of Indigenous villages and forest-based communities, as part of its review of Amerindian Titled Lands for the crediting period.
			p. 17	VVB noted the NTC referenced previous endorsement of the LCDS 2009, including forest carbon credit framework and the resulting revenue financing programmes

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				<p>benefiting Amerindian peoples, and the Endorsement specifically welcomes the proposal to move to a second phase for accessing forest carbon financing to continue the approach outlined in LCDS 2009. The VVB determined that the endorsement of the NTC for the LCDS 2030 contains specific provisions consistent with the description provided by the Participant in Section 6 of the TRD that identifies the endorsement as evidence for support for LCDS 2030 by the NTC on behalf of Indigenous Communities and Titled plans available for participation by Amerindian and other communities and identify the benefit Amerindian Villages.</p> <p>VVB also noted the cited LCDS 2030 and NTC Endorsement identify specific plans available for participation by Amerindian and other communities and identify the benefit allocation arrangement consisting of the percentage of revenue from the sale of ART-TREES credits that would be allocated to the resource right holders under these plans in addition to funds from the national share of revenue.</p>
			p. 18	<p>VVB met with [REDACTED] from TAAMOG and [REDACTED] from APA during the VVB site visit in April 2022. Information provided by the TAAMOG and APA representatives, as well as GOIP, another Amerindian NGO, was considered by the VVB as part of the validation and verification of the Participant's conformance with TREES safeguard requirements for REDD+ activities during the crediting period.</p>
			p. 19	<p>VVB reviewed and evaluated the three attachments included with the email from APA dated 12 May 2022.</p>
			p. 19	<p>VVB reviewed and evaluated the attachment included with the email from TAAMOG dated 30 May 2022. The attachment consisted of a letter to the editor of the</p>

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				Stabroek News in response to a letter to the editor from APA.
			p. 20	VVB determined the public comments provided through the ART Secretariat through May 2022 do not specifically reference the TREES Registration Document under validation or the TREES Monitoring Report under verification. The VVB determined however, that comments related to the Participant's national REDD+ strategy and safeguards applicable to REDD+ activities under TREES would be appropriate for evaluation. The VVB determined that the ART Participant reviewed and provided a response addressing stakeholder comments received within 30 days of the VVB on-site visit. The VVB determined through review of supporting documentation and through stakeholder interviews that the Participant had appropriately considered and addressed similar responses as part of the consultations for the LCDS 2030 process,
			p. 20	VVB noted that because endorsement of the NTC for the LCDS 2030 is a key consideration used in substantiating the Participant's rights to manage and administer ERs to be issued by ART that are derived from titled and untitled Amerindian land, any changes to this endorsement by NTC would require reassessment to determine how the changes could affect the Participant's rights. To further foster a robust FPIC process, continuous support from the NTC was identified as a main recommendation by Government, to be taken forward throughout the implementation of the programme.
			p. 28	VVB held a meeting with Aishalton on 2022/04/26 to discuss safeguards, REDD+ program, consultation process, experience with land titling process.
			p. 29	VVB held a meeting with Parabara on 2022/04/26 to discuss safeguards, REDD+

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				program, consultation process, experience with land titling process.
			p. 29	VVB held a meeting with Shulinab on 2022/04/26 to discuss safeguards, REDD+ program, consultation process, experience with land titling process.
			p. 30	VVB held a meeting with Moco Moco on 2022/04/27 to discuss safeguards, REDD+ program, consultation process, experience with land titling process.
			p. 30	VVB held a meeting with Yupukari on 2022/04/27 to discuss safeguards, REDD+ program, consultation process, experience with land titling process.
			p. 30	VVB held a meeting with Massara on 2022/04/28 to discuss safeguards, REDD+ program, consultation process, experience with land titling process.
			p. 31	VVB held a meeting with Fairview on 2022/04/28 to discuss safeguards, REDD+ program, consultation process, experience with land titling process.
			p. 32	VVB held a meeting with Indigenous NGOs on 2022/04/29 to discuss safeguards, REDD+ program, consultation process, experience with land titling process.
			p. 38	Aster Global noted that it had been provided four sets of comments by the ART Secretariat including (1) email from [REDACTED] (APA) date 12 May 2022, (2) email from [REDACTED] (TAAMOG) dated 20 May 2022, (3) email from [REDACTED] (APA) dated 22 July 2022, and (4) email from [REDACTED] (APA) dated 12 September 2022.
			p. 39	Guyana's approach to ART was included within the draft LCDS 2030. A national consultation on the LCDS 2030 facilitated more than seven months (November 2021 to June 2022) of national, regional and community level stakeholder engagement all across Guyana with feedback, recommendations, and inputs made on the ART TREES approach, as well as feedback on other aspects of low carbon development.

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				This process involved thousands of citizens, many of whom provided feedback, and the process fed into Guyana's ART TREES application and submissions.
			p. 65	Support documents and interviews with government, Indigenous, and NGO stakeholders substantiate the reported procedures and resources were in place regarding accessibility to information on REDD+ actions.
			p. 76	The TRD and TMR present similar summaries regarding the NTC being the main body through which all coordination with Amerindian communities and villages take place. The TRD and TMR present similar summaries regarding stakeholder outreach with other key stakeholders. The TRD and TMR summarize several generalized objectives for the described stakeholder outreach undertaken.
			p. 77	The TRD and TMR updated to reflect specific outcomes which speak to monitoring parameters to demonstrate that no involuntary relocation of peoples or rights occurred relative to REDD+ actions and FPIC. The monitoring parameters added address stakeholders' access to, use of, and control over land and resources and outline REDD+ programmes during the period 2016 to 2020
			p. 78	VVB reviewed the documents referenced and embedded as attachments in the TMR in support of verification of the desired outcome for identifying any instance of involuntary relocation. Site visit interviews with representatives of government agencies, community forest associations, and Amerindian villages substantiated information provided in the supporting documents that during the crediting period stakeholders had access to, use of, and control over land and resources in line with relevant domestic legal framework, and no involuntary relocation was identified as a result of REDD+ actions.

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			p. 81	VVB determined that the TRD and TMR describe procedures public institutions have made use of to facilitate access to dispute resolution mechanisms for stakeholders involved in the implementation of REDD+ actions and that these can ensure that the implementation of REDD+ actions will be in conformance with the indicator. Site visit interviews with representatives of government agencies, community forest associations, and Amerindian villages substantiated that during the crediting period these procedures were in place for REDD+ actions.
			p. 85	TRD and TMR identify the legal framework, policies or procedures for the identification or self-identification of Indigenous peoples, and local communities, or equivalent, and for the respect of their rights. Review of supporting documents substantiates the legal framework in place.
			p. 86	TRD and TMR identify how public institutions have made use of mandates, procedures, and resources to respect the rights of the Indigenous peoples and local communities, or equivalent in the design and implementation of REDD+ actions. Review of supporting documents and interviews with representatives of Guyana Forestry Commission, the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs, the Ministry of Natural Resources, Amerindian villages visited, and community forest associations substantiate that processes are in place as described.
			p. 89	VVB determined that clarification provided in the TRD describes how the context-specific outcomes and monitoring meet the requirement for the rights and interests of Indigenous peoples and local communities, or equivalent, to have been recognized in the design of REDD+ actions and the evidence provided by the Participant demonstrates the initial plan for monitoring the Participant-defined context-specific outcomes has been implemented for identifying Indigenous

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				peoples and local communities, or equivalent, and for how their respective rights have been respected in the design and implementation of REDD+ actions.
			p. 91	VVB determined that the TRD and TMR identify the legal framework that was in place to define, and provide guidance for respecting and protecting Indigenous people's knowledge and/or local communities' knowledge, based on a review of the information provided, including additional support documents.
			p. 92	<p>VVB noted the continuous multi-stakeholder consultation process is identified as a means for implementing these mandates; VVB noted that the continuous multi-stakeholder consultation process for Indigenous peoples and other forest-dependent communities as described is consistent with the Process Indicator for Safeguard C.1.</p> <p>VVB further noted the governance structures described as in place identify means by which public institutions engage Amerindian villages and Community Forest Associations. The VVB noted that although not specifically referencing applicability to REDD+ actions, these structures and engagements are understood to broadly include REDD+ actions based on review of other support documents and interviews with representatives from the Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC), Amerindian villages and community visited by the VVB, and Community Forest Associations.</p>
			p. 93	VVB determined clarification provided in the TRD and TMR identifies how public institutions have made use of mandates, procedures, and resources to respect and protect Indigenous peoples and/or local communities' traditional knowledge in the implementation of REDD+ actions. The VVB determined the descriptions provided are substantiated through supporting documents provided to the VVB.

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			p. 97	VVB acknowledged the response provided and the clarifications and additional information added by the Participant to the TRD and TMR. Based on a review of the information provided, including additional support documents, the VVB determined that the TRD and TMR identify the legal framework that was practiced as applicable and these are anchored in relevant domestic legal in place to respect, protect and fulfill human rights of Indigenous peoples and local communities, or equivalent, in conformity with customary law, institutions, and framework.
			p. 98	VVB noted that review of a supporting document provided to the VVB, "EU_FLEGT-Report_2016.pdf" identified the following statement (page 11): "In addition, logs are extracted from sites that are sacred for Guyana's Indigenous peoples which constitutes a breach of their customs. It was noted however, that in the FLEGT VPA negotiation process, consideration is being given to the use of land for traditional purposes. One participant expressed the view that the Indigenous people are not ready for FLEGT licensing and that they need more time to deliberate on the process."
			p. 103	VVB determined that the TRD and TMR identify the legal framework that was in place to respect, protect and fulfill the right of all relevant stakeholders to participate fully and effectively in the design and implementation of REDD+ actions, including timely access and culturally appropriate information prior to consultations, and these are anchored in relevant domestic legal framework, based on a review of the information provided, including support documents.
			p. 110	VVB has determined that the TRD and TMR identify the relevant domestic legal framework that recognizes, respects, and protects the respective rights to participation

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				of Indigenous peoples, local communities, or equivalent, through their respective decision-making structures and processes, based on a review of the information provided, including support documents.
			p. 113	VVB determined that clarification provided in the TRD and TMR describes and demonstrates how design, implementation, and periodic assessments of REDD+ actions were, where relevant, undertaken with the participation of Indigenous peoples and/or local communities, or equivalent. The VVB determined support documents and interviews with representatives of government agencies, community forest associations, and Amerindian villages, substantiate the outreach efforts described for the participation of Indigenous peoples and/or local communities, or equivalent, particularly through their designated or elected representatives, in the design, implementation, and periodic assessments of REDD+ actions.
			pp. 143-144	VVB reviewed the description provided for the plan to obtain rights to TREES credits for Amerindian Titled Lands for the crediting period, specifically through the participation identified as an opportunity for Amerindian Titled Lands under the Policy Statement (page 8). Evidence reviewed included: 1) the Resolution of the NTC Conference: Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) 2030, dated July 15, 2022; 2) LCDS sections specifically referencing the ART program, and involvement of Indigenous villages and forest- based communities. VVB noted the NTC referenced previous endorsement of the LCDS 2009, including forest carbon credit framework and the resulting revenues financing programs benefiting Amerindian peoples, and the Endorsement specifically welcomes the proposal to move to a second phase for accessing forest carbon financing to

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				<p>continue the approach outlined in LCDS 2009. The VVB determined that the endorsement of the NTC for the LCDS 2030 contains specific provisions consistent with the description provided by the Participant in Section 6 of the TRD that identifies the endorsement as evidence for support for LCDS 2030 by the NTC on behalf of Indigenous Communities and Titled Amerindian Villages.</p> <p>VVB noted the cited LCDS 2030 and NTC Endorsement identify specific plans available for participation by Amerindian and other communities and identify the benefit allocation arrangement consisting of the percentage of revenue from the sale of ART-TREES credits that would be allocated to the resource right holders under these plans in addition to funds from the national share of revenue.</p> <p>Review of the TRD, TMR, and associated MRVS determined that state lands and Amerindian Titled Lands, but no private property was included in the forest cover inventory or accounting area for ART TREES, and therefore no credit rights or plan to obtain such rights for private property is required for this crediting period.</p>
<a href="#">2016-2020 TREES-Verification-Report-Final (2).pdf</a>	16 October 2022	Aster Global		The Verification Report is materially similar to the Validation Report regarding the overview of consultation and engagement with Indigenous Peoples, villages, communities, and NGOs.
<a href="#">2021-2025 TREES-Validation-Report-Final 20231228.pdf</a>	7 December 2023	Aster Global	pp. 10-11	Aster Global indicated that a wide range of public and private stakeholders were requested to meet with the VVB during the site visit. Specific focus was placed on Indigenous peoples and other forest-dependent communities to gauge level of involvement in consultations in the program development process and to assess whether REDD+ programme or activity related concerns they may have expressed have been considered.

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				<p>VVB visited six Amerindian villages and communities and met with representatives of ten villages and communities during meetings held in these locations. These included Moraikobai, Chinese Landing, Kwebanna, Santa Rosa (including representatives from Santa Rosa &amp; Islands, Kamwatta, Huradiah, Mora, and Parakese), Bethany, and Capoey. Although not part of the site visits specifically conducted for the 2021-2025 crediting period, the VVB had previously conducted visits in 2022 as part of the audit for the 2016-2020 crediting period and met with representatives of six titled Amerindian villages and one untitled Amerindian community-Aishalton, Parabara, Shulinab, Moco Moco, Yupukari, Massara, and Fairview.</p> <p>VVB also met with NGOs representing Indigenous stakeholders for national REDD strategy activities, including APA, GOIP, and NADF.</p>
			p. 17	<p>VVB reviewed the description provided in TREES Registration Document for the plan to obtain rights to TREES credits for Amerindian Titled Lands for the crediting period, specifically through the participation identified as an opportunity for Amerindian Titled Lands under the Policy Statement (page 8). Evidence reviewed included: 1) the Resolution of the NTC Conference: Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) 2030, dated July 15, 2022; 2) LCDS sections specifically referencing the ART program, and involvement of Indigenous villages and forest-based communities; 3) results of meetings held with representatives of Amerindian villages, communities, and Indigenous NGOs; and 4) the submittal letters and supporting documentation accompanying village sustainability plans or outline plans submitted in 2023. The VVB reviewed each of the 241-village plan/outline plan submittals received through 22 September</p>

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				<p>2023, along with other supporting documentation included with the plan submittal letters. The VVB noted the submittal letters were signed by leaders of the respective Amerindian titled villages, untitled communities, and Community Development Councils. The VVB met with a few of the villages that had already submitted plans, and substantiated the information provided in the accompanying submittal letters regarding general meetings held to discuss participation in the National Forest Carbon Credits Programme and Benefits Sharing Mechanism. The VVB noted the Participant indicated it expects to receive the submittal for the one remaining Amerindian community following formation of a governance structure for this satellite village. The VVB further noted that none of the submittal letters stated that the Amerindian Village, Community, or Community Development Council had withdrawn consent from the NTC endorsement contained in the July 2022 NTC Resolution.</p>
			p. 18	<p>VVB determined the Participant provided a complete description of its rights to TREES credits, including the legal basis for establishing these credits, and provided documentation for agreements received to date confirming participation by Amerindian Villages, Communities, and Community Development Councils. The VVB determined the information presented in TREES Registration Document and evidence provided for VVB review, along with additional information obtained during stakeholder meetings, allowed the VVB to reach reasonable assurance that the Participant has provided a complete description of its rights to TREES credits.</p>
			pp. 19-20	<p>Aster Global indicated that seven sets of comments received prior to or subsequent to the 30-day comment period were considered during the validation process for TREES</p>

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				<p>Registration Document for the second crediting period:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. September 2022 comments (Sept 9, 2022, Follow up Letter to International Donors &amp; Partners .9.9.2022.pdf) from the Amerindian Peoples Association (APA), originally provided to the VVB by the ART Secretariat on 13 September 2022, consisted of an email from ██████████ (APA) dated 12 September 2022 along with attachments.</li> <li>2. VVB determined through review and comparison that the comments provided in October 2022 were duplicates of the comments provided on 2023-03-08. The VVB determined actions taken to evaluate the September 2022 APA comments covered these comments as well.</li> <li>3. March 8, 2023, comments (Letter from APA_ Comment on latest approved ART documents for Guyana and complaint.pdf) included items identified as complaints as well as items identified as comments. The VVB noted complaints were addressed separately by the ART Secretariat in line with procedures outlined in TREES Standard. The items identified as comments were considered for this crediting period.</li> <li>4. April 24, 2023, comments (Formal Communication by NTC to ART Secretariat RE Complaints Procedure.pdf) consisted of comments contained in a letter from the NTC. The items identified as comments were considered for this crediting period. The VVB determined the Participant's response provided additional information substantiating key points made by</li> </ol>

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				<p>the commenter regarding legitimacy of the NTC as a legally representative body for Amerindian villages and communities. The VVB also determined however, that the APA is also a body that represents Amerindian concerns and is identified as an NGO stakeholder.</p> <p>5. June 23, 2023, comments (Meeting with Audit Team [REDACTED].pdf) were contained within an email from [REDACTED] representing another Indigenous NGO, TAAMOG. The VVB notes a meeting had been scheduled with Mr. [REDACTED] as part of the site visit, but he was not able to meet in person due to illness and instead provided comments in his email. The items identified as comments were considered for this crediting period.</p>
			p. 22	VVB noted that additional evidence was provided to the VVB during the audit process for the current crediting period to demonstrate continued support by the National Tshaos Council and support for participation in the national REDD+ Strategy and benefit sharing plan by individual titled Amerindian Villages, untitled Amerindian Communities, and Community Development Councils.
			p. 29	Meeting with Moraikobai Village on 2023/06/20
			p. 30	Meeting with NTC Chairman on 2023/06/20
			p. 30	Meeting with Chinese Landing Village on 2023/06/21
			p. 30	Follow-up Meeting with Tushao on 2023/06/21
			p. 30	Meeting with Kwebanna Village on 2023/06/22
			p. 30	Meeting with Former NTC Vice-Chairman on 2023/06/22
			p. 31	Meeting with Santa Rosa Villages on 2023/06/22

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			p. 31	Meeting with Bethany Village on 2023/06/23
			p. 31	Meeting with NTC Vice-Chairwoman on 2023/06/23
			p. 31	Meeting with Capoey Village on 2023/06/23
			p. 32	Meeting with NADF and GOIP on 2023/06/24
			p. 32	Meeting with APA on 2023/06/24
			p. 50	Aster Findings - Round 2 (21 October 2023). The VVB determined through review of supporting documentation and interviews with representative government, Indigenous, and NGO stakeholders that discussions over the benefit-sharing mechanism were conducted in 2021 and continued through 2022 and 2023 consistent with the description provided in the TMR. VVB noted the village outline plan concept was developed to enable villages and communities to participate in the benefit-sharing mechanism in 2023, and further noted the submittal letters accompanying these outline plans committed these villages and communities to developing full village sustainability plans.
			pp. 56-58	VVB noted stakeholder comments were received identifying concerns over the Participant's ownership rights to the TREES credits on Indigenous lands based on the NTC endorsement. The VVB determined these comments merited additional consideration and were used to help inform evidence gathering and requests as part of the audit. The VVB reviewed the Participant's formal responses to these concerns, reviewed supplemental supporting documents, and conducted interviews with government, Indigenous, and NGO stakeholders.  VVB noted that support documents provided by the Participant included Village Sustainability Plans (VSP) or Outlines, along with submittal letters and minutes from village/community general meetings dealing specifically with participation in the

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				<p>National Forest Carbon Credits Programme and Benefits Sharing Mechanism, from 237 of 242 Amerindian villages, communities, and community development councils (CDCs) (as of 18 August 2023).  VVB noted the following regarding these VSPs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VVB noted that 229 of the 237 submittals received included statements that in accordance with the 2006 Amerindian Act, a Village General Meeting and by majority had expressed their jurisdictional approach utilizing ART-TREES, consistent with the NTC endorsement of the villages/communities had held, in accordance with Sections 13, 32, and 34 of the agreement to utilize the VSP for the purpose of participating in the National Forest Carbon Credits Programme and Benefits Sharing Mechanism. The VVB determined this statement substantiated the confirmation by these villages/communities/CDCs of their concurrence with the Government of Guyana's policy for a national REDD+ jurisdictional approach utilizing ART-TREES, consistent with the NTC endorsement of July 2022.</li> <li>• VVB noted that 6 of the other 8 submittals did not provide as clear a statement as indicated above, but did reference without limitations their agreement to participate in national programmes such as the LCDS and use of the proceeds of carbon credit revenues, or alternatively acknowledged intended use of carbon credit revenues. The VVB determined these statements substantiated the confirmation by these villages/communities/CDCs of</li> </ul>

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				<p>their concurrence with the Government of Guyana's policy for a national REDD+ jurisdictional approach utilizing ART-TREES, consistent with the NTC endorsement of July 2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VVB noted the submittal from Katoka Village only references use of a "fund allocated for development" with no reference to participating in the National Carbon Credits Programme. The VVB determined that the statement by Katoka Village, while not specifically substantiating the NTC endorsement, did not withdraw consent from the NTC endorsement.</li> <li>• VVB noted the submittal from Kako Village limits consent to participating in the National Carbon Credits Programme for only the 2016-2020 crediting period at this time. The VVB determined the statement by Kako Village clearly indicated the village's requirement that consent must be obtained from the village for continued participation in the National Carbon Credits Programme for this second crediting period and 2021 monitoring period. The VVB determined this time-limited consent constituted a change from the last TREES document submission. Based on the response from the Village of Kako, VVB determined the TRD and TMR do not identify how ownership rights to TREES credits would be affected by an Amerindian village or community that chooses to withdraw its consent from the NTC endorsement, or identify a plan to obtain such rights. VVB determined this is a nonconformance to be corrected.</li> </ul>

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				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>VVB further noted that as of 18 August 2023, there were 5 of the 242 villages/communities that had not responded. VVB noted the Participant confirmed via email (4 August 2023) that none of these villages/communities had communicated a desire to the GoG to withdraw consent of the individual village/community from the NTC endorsement of July 2022. The VVB notes Item 4e is subject to additional review if these 5 villages/communities submit statements prior to the completion of the validation/verification activities.</li> </ul>
			p. 59	<p>At the time when the findings were written, the Government had sent a reply addressing the issues raised in the letter from the Toshao of Kako. At the time, no response to that letter had been received from the Toshao. However, as set out in the LCDS, there is no deadline for participating in the benefit sharing mechanism, so we suggest that the lack of evidence for opting in from Kako should not be seen as a non-conformance, rather it is important to safeguard every village/community's right to take the time they need to take before they decide whether or not to participate in the mechanism, and not have deadlines imposed by either the Government or the audit process.</p> <p>A reply was received from the Kako Village Council, setting out how they were satisfied that their concerns had been addressed by the Government, and stating their choice to opt in for credits issued for 2021 (and 2022).</p>
			p. 60	<p>VVB reviewed the 13 September 2023 letter from the Kako Village Council and noted the letter updated the Village's agreement to participate in the national carbon credits programme for 2023-2024, which was identified as including credits to be issued for the crediting period covering the years</p>

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				<p>2021 and 2022 as well as the previously agreed crediting period covering 2016 to 2020.</p> <p>VVB determined clarification that individual villages are free to opt in to the carbon credit programme and to agree to implement the LCDS 2030 at community level, addresses this item and that based on review of the submittal letter for village plans/outline plans provided to date (241 out of 242 through 22 September 2023), including updated letter from the Kako Village Council, there are no Amerindian villages or communities that have withdrawn consent from the NTC endorsement for participation in the national carbon credit program under ART- TREES for the 2021 - 2025 crediting period under validation, or the 2021 monitoring period under verification.</p> <p>VVB noted that as of 22 September 2023 the Participant reported receiving, and provided for VVB review, 4 of the 5 village plans/outline plans reported as outstanding in the Round 1 finding. The VVB noted that each of 4 provided a similar attestation as noted by Round 1.</p> <p>VVB further noted the remaining village is a satellite village of a titled Village that has already submitted its own village plan under cover of a submittal letter with the attestation concerning agreement by the village to participate. The VVB determined that based on this information, this item is closed, but can be reopened for additional consideration if the remaining village submits a statement withdrawing consent for participating in the national carbon credits programme prior to the completion of the validation/verification activities.</p>
<a href="#">2021 TREES-Verification-Report-Final 20231228.pdf</a>	7 December 2023	Aster Global		<p>The Verification Report is materially similar to the Validation Report regarding the overview of consultation and engagement with Indigenous Peoples, villages, communities, and NGOs.</p>

## List of Acronyms

APA	Amerindian Peoples' Association
ART	Architecture for REDD+ Transaction
ART TREES	Architecture for REDD+ Transaction - The REDD+ Environmental Excellence Standard
CORSIA	Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation
CDC	Community Development Councils
ERs	Emissions Reductions
FPIC	Free Prior and Informed Consent
GFC	Guyana Forestry Commission
GOIP	Guyanese Organization for Indigenous Peoples
IPLC	Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities
IPC	Indigenous Peoples' Commission
ICVCM	Integrity Council for the Voluntary Carbon Market
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
LCDS	Low Carbon Development Strategy (of Guyana) (LCDS 2030)
MRVS	Monitoring Reporting and Verification System
MSSC	Multi Stakeholder Steering Committee
NADF	National Amerindian Development Foundation
NTC	National Toshias Council
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
PSA	Public Service Announcement
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation Plus (sustainable management of forests and the conservation and enhancement of forest carbon stocks)
TAAMOG	The Amerindian Action Movement of Guyana
TREES	The REDD+ Environmental Excellence Standard
TMR	TREES Monitoring Report
TRD	TREES Registration Document
UNFCCC	United National Framework Convention on Climate Change
UN	United Nations
VSP	Village Sustainability Plans
VVB	Verification and Validation Body (for ART TREES)