

AMERINDIAN LAND TITLING PROJECT (ALT)

Update on Project Implementation Status

This document provides an overview of status of requests which were addressed under the ALT Project to date, for land titles, demarcation and extensions of Amerindian lands.

Review period : 16.06.2014 –
12.12.2014

ALT PMU – 12.12.2014

LAND TITLING

INVESTIGATION

1. Rockstone, Region n° 10: 08-10.08.2014

Many leases and application for leases were discovered within the proposed area. Strong objections to communal land were voiced by most applicants for leases present at the public meeting. The shape file provided by the GLSC officer on the field did not fit the description and is presently being corrected. Most individuals claiming land who were present during investigation do not figure on the last updated list of lease holders or applicants provided by the GLSC. Ethnic tensions within the community affected the public meeting.

A technical meeting between the GLSC and the ALT PMU is scheduled for Monday the 1st September, 2014, to discuss the way forward based on the data collected during investigation.

Update December 12th, 2014: The ALT investigation team including representatives from the MoAA, the GLSC, the GGMC, the GFC, the MNRE, the UNDP and the ALT PMU, revisited the Community of Rockstone from October 23rd – 25th to conduct further investigation.

The team met with the Village Council and the public after which it was proposed by the community that those residents and other applicants who have applied for leases within the proposed title area be exempted from the request for communal land. To compensate for the removal of these leases from the proposed title area, the residents requested that the SFP belonging to the Rockstone Loggers' Association be included as part of the request for communal land.

This lead to a new description which was later plotted by the GLSC and forwarded to the MoAA.

The plan which was plotted by the GLSC exempts all applications for leases, and leaves the proposed title area with approximately 39.03 mi². This reduced the initial application from 49.65 mi² to 39.03 mi².

The new plan will be reviewed with the community before the final version of the investigation report is submitted.

2. Katoonarib, Region n° 9: 17 – 18.08.2012

There was unanimous acceptance from the members of the Community present at the public meeting that titling should be addressed before extension and a general satisfaction that visible efforts are being made to address land titling in Katoonarib by the Government of Guyana.

The Village of Sawariwau seemed willing to facilitate the land titling process for Katoonarib. Toshao Gregory Thomas of Sawariwau explained that his village is willing to offer the land on which Katoonarib is living, in return for which Katoonarib will concede part of the proposed titled area to Sawariwau. He reassured all present that Sawariwau wants to avoid all conflict with Katoonarib.

Update, December 12th, 2014: The Katoonarib case requires legal advice and guidance from the Guyana Lands & Surveys Commission. A formal request was sent to the GLSC requesting such help in addressing Katoonarib's request for title.

The ALT PMU in an attempt to find a solution obtained the legal advice of the Deeds Registrar. It was advised that the nature of the Absolute Grant may not allow for the excision of Katoonarib from Sawariwau unless through an Act of Parliament. Additionally, granting the portion of land to Katoonarib via a Deed of Gift does not guarantee absolute ownership to the Community. The only solution suggested was a lease of 99 or 999 years to Katoonarib.

Further legal advice is being awaited from the GLSC.

3. Parabara, Region n° 9: 20-21.08.2014

There was a unanimous acceptance from the members of the Community present at the public meeting that titling should be addressed and a general satisfaction that visible efforts are being made to address land titling of Parabara by the Government of Guyana.

Despite concerns that mining would damage the land, Community members remained confident that the GGMC would work to prevent this. There was a general consensus that mining officers/CSOs should be trained by GGMC in mining so that the Community may monitor mining activities. It was also suggested that non-operational mines within the proposed area be relocated or become null and void.

The ALT PMU is recommending that the community be titled by November 2014 as there are no negative encumbrances obstructing the land titling process.

Update, December 12th, 2014: The Parabara request for title is being examined for approval or non-approval.

4. Four Miles, Region n° 1 – 8/9.09.2014

There was unanimous acceptance from the members of the Community present at the public meeting that titling should be addressed and a general satisfaction that visible efforts are being made to address land titling of Four Miles by the Government of Guyana.

The entire proposed title area is covered with small and medium scale mines. Large scale blocks were granted but no large scale mines. An average of 20 medium scale blocks was granted of which some are in existence since 2002. The latest three were granted in 2010, 2011 and 2013. Over the same area, there are 5 large scale blocks, 3 belonging to Strata Gold (2005/2007/2008), a Queens Way granted in 2010 and a Pharselus granted in 2012. No large scale mining is taking place however.

The proposed boundaries overlap with the Port Kaituma Logging Association.

Investigation with regards to small claims is to be carried out by the GGMC. This information is required to complete the investigation report.

Update, December 12th, 2014: The Four Miles request for title was examined and approved by Cabinet during the course of November, 2014. However, an inquiry to this decision was issued to the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs by the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission. This inquiry will be clarified by the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs as it poses no threat to the issuance of Absolute Grant to Four Miles.

5. Eclipse Falls Top, Region n° 1 – 10/11.09.2014

There was a unanimous acceptance from the members of the Community present at the public meeting that titling should be addressed and a general satisfaction that visible efforts are being made to address land titling of Four Miles by the Government of Guyana.

The community agrees to the titling of the proposed description and will apply for extension to acquire the left bank in the future. Approximately half of the population lives on the left bank of the Barima River.

The entire proposed area applied for by EFT is covered by large scale and medium scale blocks and also falls within the Barama Forest Concession (presently inactive within proposed boundaries

About 20% of the proposed area is covered by medium scale properties amounting to 12, of which only 8 are currently active. Of these 8, 1 was issued in 2009, 1 in 2010 and 1 in 2011. All the others were issued before. The remaining 4 are “subsequently cancelled” according to the GGMC representative present on the investigation team.

The other 80 % of the area is covered by large scale properties. Guyana Gold Shield resources has 4 applications dating from 2006-2007 and Pharsalus has an application for 2012.

Research on small claims is to be conducted by the GGMC. This information is required to complete the investigation report.

Update, December 12th, 2014: Further research is to be conducted in Eclipse Falls Top before a recommendation can be submitted by the technical team for Cabinet approval.

Karisparu, Tuseneng, Batavia and Kariako: Kariako, Batavia, Karisparu and Tuseneng have all submitted applications for title and investigation was conducted in the mid-2013. After research conducted by the ALT PMU, the requests were submitted to Cabinet for examination and the applications were approved during the course of November 2014.

OTHER

The Project faces an impasse with regards to the issuance of Absolute Grants to the seven aforementioned communities investigated during the course of 2013:

- **Kangaruma**
- **Kambaru**
- **Tassarene**

Region	Comm.	Date of App.	Date of inv.	Information Received from the GGMC	Status to Date	Recommendation/ Actions to be Taken
7	Tasserene	22.05.2008	24/25.07.2013	117 blocks granted by the GGMC 81 of the 117 blocks granted after the application date for title 20 new blocks	Request for title pending	GGMC to seek legal counsel and formal opinion on way forward by July 25 th , 2014 GGMC to send letters of notice to claim holders by July 25 th , 2014

				granted in 2014		
7	Kambaru	20.04.2009	26-28.06.2013	Small and Medium Scale mining is very active within proposed boundaries Updated map shows 117 medium scale properties in the proposed area 32 valid mining claims were uncovered by the GGMC	Investigation is still ongoing before a decision can be facilitated by the GGMC	
7	Kangaruma	13.05.2008	5-6.07.2013	Small and medium scale mining active within proposed area Prospecting license granted for 2 large scale operations		GGMC to give further information on number of valid claims within the area and to facilitate decision making process.

DEMARCATIION

Before the ALT project was implemented, the Government of Guyana had already begun addressing demarcation of Amerindian titled lands. However, due to limited funds, not all villages could be demarcated. The remaining villages are now listed for demarcation under the Amerindian Land Titling Project.

The following five Amerindian Villages figuring on the ALT Year 1 list were demarcated under the Government of Guyana, before the ALT project was established:

- Kamana
- Manawarin
- Waramuri
- Sawariwau
- Massara Extension (Tract A & C)

The ALT PMU has chosen to maintain the project's objective of demarcating twenty six villages in Year 1, by selecting the following four titled villages up for demarcation on the Year 2 list to replace those which were already demarcated:

- Arau
- Chinoweng
- Chenapou
- Kaikan

And by selecting one village which is requesting extension of titled lands on the Year 2 list:

- Karasabai

The above mentioned five Year 2 villages are listed in the same order on the project document.

VILLAGE	GRANT N°	PLAN N°	BLOCK N°	ZONE
Waramuri	7768	58455	121133	121
Sawariwau	7745	58049	912223	912
Kurukubaru	7749	58760	811122	811
Massara Extension (Tract C)	7871	59312	911213	911
Massara Village (Tract A)	7871	59356	912117	912
Manawarin	7763	59239	121136	121
			121134	121
			212122	212
			212121	212
Kamana	7754	59240	811222	811
Waipa	7770	59280	81128	811
Kaibarupai	7774	59279	811127	811

First registration of title under Section 46 of the Land Registry Act in the name of Amerindian Village Councils of the above villages was adopted by the Hon. Minister Pauline Sukhai in August, 2014:

ALT – Technical Meeting with Villages Eligible for Demarcation: 07.08.2014

The aforementioned 8 Amerindian villages are immediately eligible for demarcation and as such a technical meeting was convened at the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs on August 7th, 2014 to inform their leaders of the Amerindian Land Titling and Demarcation process, of the ALT Project, of the funds available for demarcation and of their eligibility to demarcate:

- Baramita
- Paramakatoi
- Konashen
- Arau
- Chinoweng
- Chenapou
- Kaikan

The following objections to demarcation emanated mainly from the Chenapou and Paramakatoi representatives:

- Demarcation means “fencing in the village”
- Extensions should be addressed before demarcation so that the entire area requested could be demarcated at once
- All villages should merge to obtain ownership of the entire region (8)
- Demarcation will cause gaps of State land to remain between villages, thus attracting “Coast landers” who will have negative impact on land.
- Paramakatoi feels trapped by other bordering communities that would restrain its eventual request for extension.

The ALT PMU expected that the technical briefing would assist the villages in their decision making with regards to demarcation. The villages were informed of their eligibility for demarcation and the willingness of the Project to commence demarcation immediately once a request was made by the Village Council. The representatives from each Village agreed to provide a feed-back whether positive or negative to the Ministry within a month. Rupunau village representatives were unable to attend the briefing due to bad weather conditions.

The ALT PMU received the following feedback:

- Chinoweng: No village discussions held yet on the matter due to district sports tournament
- Kaikan: No village discussions held yet on the matter due to district sports tournament
- **Arau: Pursuant to a village meeting held in the beginning of September by the Village Council, Arau has indicated that it does not wish to demarcate its boundaries**
- Chenapou: The ALT team will be visiting the village from to discuss demarcation and clarify other issues with villagers. A date has yet to be set.
- **Konashen: Toshao Chekema indicated on the 15.09.2014 that the village wishes to proceed with demarcation.**
- Baramita: No feedback as yet. Failed attempts to contact Toshao B. Thomas from ALT PMU.

Update September 2014

- Several attempts to follow-up on the question by the ALT PMU were made. Only 2 villages to date are known to have consulted with villagers on the matter: Konashen and Arau.
- Visits to the different villages will be made by a technical team to provide information on land titling/demarcation (advantages) and respond to doubts/questions
- A decision to move ahead with extensions was made by the ALT PMU while awaiting requests for demarcation
- **It was brought to the attention of the ALT PMU that a meeting was hosted by Paramakatoi on August 18th, 2014 to advise titled villages and communities awaiting title in Region 8, to desist from demarcating titled boundaries. These villages/communities were encouraged to request extensions before demarcating, so that all villages may merge into one administrative block composed of the entire Region n° 8.**

However, as the Project advanced, the ALT PMU had to adjust the Annual Work Plan to the challenges, reflecting realistic projections of future demarcation activities in Year 1, by the end of December 2014.

Consequently, the number of Villages immediately eligible and willing to commence demarcation in Year 1 reduced to 4:

- Rupunau
- Konashen
- Riversview
- Baramita

Update, December 12th, 2014: The demarcation process for these Villages has begun. Payments for demarcation activities are scheduled to commence in December, 2014. Demarcation activities for these villages are scheduled to terminate by the end of March, 2015.

EXTENSION

Update December 12th, 2014:

Nine Villages on the year 2 list for extension of village lands were investigated:

VILLAGE	REGION
Bethany	2
Mashabo	2
Capoey	2
Mainstay Whyaka	2
Wakapoa	2
Akawini	2
St. Monica	2

- Descriptions of proposed extensions submitted by villages were examined and forwarded to the GFC and GLSC for verification and plotting
- A technical meeting was convened between the GLSC and the ALT PMU to discuss the above mentioned requests on Friday, September 19th, 2014.

Investigation was conducted in the coastal villages from November 3rd – 12th and from November 17th – 26th, 2014.

1. **Bethany:** Bethany has requested for an extension situated on 3 tracts of land. On Tracts B and C there are active SFPs belonging to private concessionaires. Tract A is entirely occupied by families who are actively living and cultivating the lands. These families do not possess leases for their lands despite living there for more than 30 years. Research is ongoing to determine the status of lands on Tract 1, as it is suspected that a portion of this land is privately owned.
2. **Mashabo:** A farm was discovered within the proposed extension and research is ongoing to determine whether it is a leased land or not, and to whom it may belong.
3. **Capoey:** No encumbrances were discovered within the proposed extension.
4. **Mainstay Whyaka:** Two hundred 10 acres plots of State land were surveyed within the proposed extension. 2 farms of 100 acres and 12 acres respectively were also discovered within the proposed extension. The Mainstay Whyaka Village Council is to submit a description of a new proposed area excising the two hundred 10 ac plots from the initial proposed area.
5. **Wakapoa:** The Village is not in possession of a cadastral plan or a CoT. This is due to the objection from the Akawini Village Council of the demarcation of the shared boundary line between Wakapoa and Akawini. Extension may not be addressed before the Village

acquires a cadastral plan and a CoT. There are no additional encumbrances within the proposed extension.

6. **Akawini:** The Village is not in possession of a cadastral plan or a CoT. This is due to the objection from the Akawini Village Council of the demarcation of the shared boundary line between Wakapoa and Akawini. Extension may not be addressed before the Village acquires a cadastral plan and a CoT. Additionally, the Village has requested to cancel the initial proposed extension since the area is a swamp land unsuitable for occupation. Instead, the Village now requests its SFP as its proposed extension. However, approximately half of the SFP is covered in mining blocks issued by the GGLC in 2007. The Ministry of Amerindian Affairs is awaiting a formal request for the new proposed extension from the Akawini Village Council.

7. **Saint Monica:** The proposed extension is partly occupied by 2 privately owned SFPs. Additionally the occupants of Bat Creek who are represented by the Saint Monica's Village Council are not included within the proposed extension. The Saint Monica's Village Council is thus requesting that the Bat Creek area along with the remaining available initially requested for become their new requested extension. The ALT PMu has verified that the occupants of Bat Creek are living on State land and depend on the Saint Monica Village Council for representation. The Ministry of Amerindian Affairs is awaiting the new description from the Saint Monica Village Council.