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Amerindian Land Titling Project Project Number: 00077798 2019 Annual Report



Toshao Receiving Promotional Materials in Yupukari, Region 9. ©2019 ALT PMU

Project Summary

Project Duration: 2013-2021

Project Budget: US\$10,755,990

Annual Budget: US\$1,935,414

Annual Expenditure: US\$379,251.57

Cumulative expenditure: UD\$3,615,377

Name of Project Coordinator: Ms. Mildred Akpan

Name of Supervisor (Permanent Secretary): Ms. Samantha Feedeé

Resident Representative (UNDP): Mr. Jairo Valverde

Responsible/Implementing Agency: Ministry of Indigenous Peoples Affairs

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Acronyms

ALT	Amerindian Land Titling
ALT PMU	Amerindian Land Titling Project Management Unit
CDO	Community Development Officer
GFC	Guyana Forestry Commission
GGMC	Guyana Geology and Mines Commission
GLSC	Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission
GOG	Government of Guyana
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
LCDS	Low Carbon Development Strategy
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOIPA	Ministry of Indigenous Peoples Affairs
MSI	Mediation Services International
NTC	National Toshias Council
RRF	Results and Resources Framework

Executive Summary

The Amerindian Land Titling (ALT) project involves the cooperation of several pertinent stakeholders. Since its commencement in 2013, exogenous factors contributed to the delays in achievement of project deliverables, hence the ALT Project benefitted from extensions, the last of which, extended the project life to 2021. For the reporting year, under output one, demarcation activities were not achieved. However, five villages received Absolute Grants thereby achieving the annual target. The Grievance Redress Mechanism and Communications components also accomplished most of the annual targets. Apart from that, the institutional sustainability component for Amerindian Land Titling continues to be vigorously pursued. Although uncertainties relative to security of job tenure presented by the ALT PMU's repeated extension requests adversely impacted the first half of 2019, the PMU is now fully staffed, and all the components are now supported with necessary skills to accomplish the targeted deliverables.

1. Background

The objective of the Amerindian Land Titling (ALT) Project is to facilitate the land titling process and demarcation of Amerindian lands. It is expected that titling of communities will strengthen land tenure security and will expand the asset base of the Indigenous Peoples of Guyana, enabling improved long-term planning for their future development. The project is also expected to enhance the opportunities for villages to 'opt-in' to the REDD+ and the LCDS. Considering the above, the ALT is operationalized through engagement and consultation and based on request from the villages or communities, the project seeks to enable Amerindians to secure their lands and natural resources towards sustainable social and economic development.

The ALT is the product of collaborative stakeholders' efforts and networking of ideas as well as human resources to ensure the delivery of results. The Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission (GLSC), National Toshias' Council (NTC), Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC), Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC), Ministry of Finance, GRIF Programme Management Office (Ministry of the Presidency) and Indigenous NGO observers constitute the Project Board Members. The Project Board which provides oversight of the project is co-chaired by MoIPA and UNDP. Although MOIPA is responsible for the overall management of the project, UNDP provides fiduciary safeguards.

The US10.7 million-dollar project was initially conceptualized to be completed within a period of three years (21 October 2013- October 20, 2016) however, the project was unable to accomplish its targets and benefitted from two no cost extensions. The first extension was granted for the period 2016-2018 and the second extended the project's life to 2021. The project was unable to realize its targets, due in part, to 16 months of delayed "start-up of the project", a change in government in 2015 which translated into transition delays associated with a change in management at MOIPA and job turnover, delays in the approval of Ministerial submissions for the Titling of Amerindian lands by the Cabinet and unsynchronized

prioritization of ALT interests between government agencies particularly as it relates to timely execution of cadastral surveys¹.

Drawing from the lessons learnt and the current knowledge of the duration of the process for land titling, a fourth project output was included in the revised Results and Resources Framework (RRF), which targets the institutional sustainability of Amerindian Land Titling beyond the ALT project. The first output relates to the issuance of land titles and the completion of necessary demarcation activities for Amerindian villages that submitted requests. The second output seeks to increase access to existing and alternative mechanisms for resolving land titling disputes. While the third output refers to a revised communication strategy, including a handbook describing the process of titling, demarcation and the social and economic impacts of secure land tenure. And finally, the fourth output targets the institutional sustainability of Amerindian Land Titling.

¹ UNDP to Dr. Marlon Bristol (08/12/2018) - Request for Extension of the Amerindian Land Titling Project.

2. Progress Towards Development Results

2.1 Contribution to longer term results

a) **Multi-country Sustainable Development Framework (UNMSDF)/Country Programme Document (CPD) Outcome 2:** Access to equitable social protection and systems and quality services and sustainable economic opportunities improved.

Summary achievements based on MSDF/CPD Outcome

CPD outcome target	Summary achievement	Status <i>Delayed, On track, Completed</i>
Number of actionable mechanisms and policies aimed at decent-work creation and protection, the promotion of entrepreneurship, and the formalization and growth of enterprises. Target: 9	1	On track
Overall		On Track

In keeping with the CPD outcome indicator, the ALT is contributing one actionable mechanism aimed at decent work creation and protection, the promotion of entrepreneurship, and the formalization and growth of enterprises. The ownership of land empowers the indigenous peoples as it provides a degree of security which allows the First Peoples the liberty to engage in and ultimately promote investments towards economic advancement.

CPD Output 2.1: National and subnational institutions, private-sector and civil society capacities strengthened to deliver effective entrepreneur programmes to women, youth and Amerindian and development related policies.

CPD output target	Summary achievement	Status <i>Delayed, On track, Completed</i>
Number of Amerindian communities with institutional measures in place at the subnational levels to generate and	20	Delayed

strengthen employment and livelihoods Target: 39	
Overall	Delayed

Under the ALT, to date, a cumulative total of 20 villages are in receipt of land security, in the form of demarcation. The assurance of land tenure creates opportunities for community leaders to engage in constructive land use planning to ensure not only economic development but also the protection of both flora and fauna and by extension the livelihoods of community members.

2.2 Progress Towards Project Outputs

Project Output 1: <Investigations and demarcation process completed and land titles (Absolute Grants) issued for approved Amerindian villages that submitted requests. >

Summary achievement against 2019 Annual Work Plan (AWP) target

Indicator	Annual Target (2019)	Output	Summary achievement	Status: "Fully, Partially, Not Achieved ² "
<Number of village maps produced and certified by sworn land surveyors (demarcation for new applications and extensions)>	5 Demarcation Activities		nil	Not Achieved
Number of investigations completed with all issues of conflict and concerns addressed >	5 Absolute Grants Issued		5 (100%) completed	Fully Achieved
	6 Investigations		(0) completed	Not Achieved
Overall status				Partially Achieved

² Partially achieved means the achievement of 66%-99% of the output target

Description of Results (as per the AWP/pro-doc indicator targets above)

Investigations:

Six investigations were planned (Chinoweing Ext, Shea, Shulinab Ext. St. Ignatius Ext, Micobie Ext, Tuseneng Ext). However, four visits were completed and visits to two villages (Micobie and Tuseneng) were cancelled due to communication challenges and the absence of credit services which adversely impacted logistical arrangement. The PMU is in the process of concluding the four investigations by producing the reports.

Demarcations:

Pre-Demarcation visits were made to Tasserene, Karasabai and Kangaruma. None of the villages planned for demarcation was completed however actions to realize same are as follows:

A request for estimates to demarcate five villages (Karasabai, Arau, Tassarene, Kangaruma, Kambaru) was sought from the GLSC and the corresponding estimates were submitted to the executing agency.

The exorbitant rental costs included in the estimates resulted in a delay in the signing of the associated Letters of Agreements (LOA), which would have operationalized the beginning of demarcation activities.

Nevertheless, the month of December 2019 saw the signing of the LOAs and the submission of payment requests to UNDP for three villages (Karasabai, Kangaruma, Tasserene). UNDP requested further breakdown of the estimates relative to the villages in question however, the GLSC refused to resubmit further details. MOIPA have since sought support from the Project Management Unit, Office of the Presidency and awaits advise on the way forward.

The revised RRF recommends 19 additional demarcations to be completed by December 2021 adjusting the project overall target from 68 to 39.

Absolute Grants:

Five Absolute Grants were approved and presented to Tassarene, Kangaruma-Asuria, Yupukari Ext, St. Monica Ext, and Mainstay-Wayaka extension during the 2019 National Toshaos Council annual conference.

Village Extension Approvals:

Yupukari Extension and St. Monica Extension were approved, the first in the life of the project.

Project Output 2: <Increased access to existing and alternative mechanisms for resolving land disputes. >

Indicator	Annual Target (2019)	Output	Summary achievement	Status: "Fully, Partially, Not Achieved ³ "
<# community persons trained in mediation skills for land related disputes	< 50 representatives >		<44 (88%) >	Partially Achieved
# of Land Administration personnel trained >	< 15 representatives >		<0 >	Not Achieved
Overall status				Partially Achieved

Description of Results (as per the AWP/pro-doc indicator targets above)

- In keeping with the core function of the Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) relative to increased awareness, accessibility, predictability, transparency, legitimacy and credibility, 328 persons were part of a cluster awareness exercise in Region 9.
- Mediation Services International (MSI) provided training to 44 representatives from Regions 1&2 inclusive of villagers and Community Development Officers (CDO) in Grievance Redress Mechanism process.
- GRM collaborated with the Amerindian Peoples Association to provide mediation services to Akawini and Wakapou in land disputes.
- In the latter part of the reporting year, and in keeping with the AWP 2019, efforts were made to commence Mediation Training for 15 Land Administration Officers by direct contracting of the MSI. However, the quote submitted by the consultant did not appear to provide value for money. UNDP requested that a competitive bidding process be launched. The preparation of a bid document to action competitive bidding has been actioned.

³ Partially achieved means the achievement of 66%-99% of the output target

Project Output 3: <Revised Communication Strategy, including a handbook describing the process of demarcation and titling and the social and economic impacts of secure land tenure >

Indicator	Annual Target (2019)	Output	Summary achievement	Status: "Fully, Partially, Not Achieved ⁴ "
<Revised and Updated Communication Strategy	1		Exists in Draft	Not Achieved
Number of communities reached through communication strategy	< 8 villages>		<8>	Fully Achieved
Overall status				Partially Achieved

Description of Results (as per the AWP/pro-doc indicator targets above)

- Relevant information as it relates to this component was operationalized through intensive communication campaigns. Workshops were conducted in 8 Amerindian communities (Karasabai, Moco Moco, Nappi, Yupukari, Aishalton, Mararanau, Awarewanau and Shea), which attracted the attendance of the Village Council, Toshaos and other community members.
- A total of 437 persons were reached through the communication workshops. Pertinent information on the process of applying for land title and land extension, the concept of demarcation, difference between Absolute Grant and Certificate of Title, FPIC and GRM comprised the core areas of information disseminated.
- In addition, Radio Paiwomak located in the North Rupununi (Region 9) was contracted to broadcast, twice monthly information on "Grievance Redress Mechanism of the ALT Project.
- Further, shirts and caps were procured to enhance the visibility of ALT Project Staff in the field.

⁴ Partially achieved means the achievement of 66%-99% of the output target

Project Output 4: <Institutional Sustainability of Land Titling

This component was included in the revised Results and Resource Framework (RRF) to support the sustainability of the ALT in MOIPA after the completion of the project. Although activities towards the realization of this output were not included in the AWP 2019, preparatory actions to secure a consultant to create policies and define the organizational structure of the unit for the sustainability of Amerindian Land Titling within the MOIPA were undertaken.

3. Issues

Repeated no-cost extension requests in the reporting year resulted in both positive and adverse impacts. The process of seeking and obtaining a response to the most recent extension request resulted in the delays of critical project activities and raised job tenure insecurities. On the positive front, the extension allowed a critical assessment of the project implementation challenges and facilitated the identification of solutions such as the revision of the ALT guidelines which was subsequently tested in the successful demarcation of Four Miles Village, Region 1.

Following a request by the PMU, estimates to operationalize the demarcation of five communities (Tassarene, Kangaruma, Karasabai, Arau, Kambaru) were submitted by GLSC, however discussions relative to the cost for rental of equipment delayed the signing of the Letters of Agreements which adversely impacted the commencement of the demarcation exercises. Subsequently, in the later part of the year, LOAs were signed for three villages (Tasareene, Kangaruma, Karasabai), however demarcation exercises are yet to commence since the UNDP requested the breakdown of cost estimates relative to the villages in question and GLSC refused to submit additional details. MOIPA have since sought support from the Project Management Unit, Office of the Presidency and awaits advise on the way forward.

Mineral extraction permits continue to cause encumbrances creating further delays in the ALT implementation.

Further, as a result of the uncertainties relative to security of job tenure presented by the ALT PMU's repeated extension requests, 2019 was occupied with the recruitment of staff to

remobilize the ALT PMU. For example, the Project Manager responsible for output one was employed on June 26, 2019; Grievance Redress Mechanism Director responsible for output two was employed on August 13, 2019; Office Assistant/ Cleaner in September 2019; Project Coordinator on November 1, 2019 and a Surveyor on October 18, 2019. As a result of the recruitment exercise operationalized by MOIPA, the PMU is now fully staffed, and all four outputs are now supported with the necessary skills to accomplish the targeted deliverables.

4 Human Interest Story

Planning our future while sharing our resources Moco Moco and St. Ignatius

The Macushi people of Moco Moco Village are vibrant farmers, many of whom farm along the foot and valley of the mountains outside of Moco Moco's titled village lands. Rice, peanuts and eddoes are some of the main crops farmed by Moco Moco villagers.

"Farming is important for my people", said Toshao George of Moco Moco Village; "and it is in our interest to secure our farm lands for our people and our future generations, that is why we as a village decided to apply for an extension of our village lands".

Toshao George went on to say, *"in 2006, the Toshao and Village Council at the time had decided to secure the farmlands so they applied to the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples Affairs for an extension of their village lands".*

In 2012, the Amerindian Land Titling (ALT) Project was designed with the main aim to fast track the applications for Amerindian land titles and extensions. After receiving Moco Moco's application, it was found that a part of the extension overlapped with a State Land Lease and another part of their application overlapped with Nappi's extension application.

Under the ALT Project, a technical committee was established. This committee comprised of representatives from various government agencies, Non-governmental agencies and Indigenous groups that have a stake in the project.

In 2017, the technical committee visited Moco Moco Village and held a meeting with the village to discuss the encumbrances of their application. After the meeting, the villagers understood how these issues with their application prevented their application from moving forward. Moco Moco wanting to move forward with their application, agreed on a compromise to exclude the lands in conflict from their application. This meeting ended with the villagers ecstatic about their application being free from encumbrances. However, St. Ignatius Village, which is another one of Moco Moco's neighbours made inquiries to the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples Affairs about the extent of Moco Moco's application,

expressing concern that their application overlapped with St. Ignatius' application for extension.

St. Ignatius Village is a rapidly growing village with 4,000 residents, the village council applied for an extension of their village lands in 2013. However, the village was only added to the ALT Project in 2019 and the description for their application was reviewed and plotted on a map; and indeed, there was an overlap with Moco Moco's application.

Both villages requested the technical support from the ALT Team and Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission to identify the division points as well as the new extension boundaries and to re-do the descriptions and maps for the application of both villages. The technical committee then investigated St. Ignatius in December 2019. During the investigation visit, the maps were presented and the overlap with Moco Moco Village was confirmed. Subsequently, Moco Moco Village was invited to St. Ignatius to attend a meeting the next day. The ALT Surveyor and a Surveyor from the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission worked together, using GPS technology, to complete field verifications in the area of contention for the meeting.

Toshao George and some of his Village Councilors attended the general meeting, again the maps were presented. The village leaders of both villages met and reported to the gathering that they had come to a satisfactory compromise to share the overlap equally and give each other the privilege of uses later.

The work of the ALT Project Team together with the understanding of both villages allowed for a successful investigation which will allow the Moco Moco Village to move forward towards their extension application and advance the St. Ignatius process further.



Figure 1: Picture showing the Toshaos and Village Council members of Moco Moco and St. Ignatius Villages. ©ALT PMU 2019.

5 Cross Cutting Issues

5.1 Partnerships

The implementation of the ALT was supported by several stakeholders particularly GLSC, UNDP, GGMC, NTC, MOF, and MOIPA. The ALT fostered collaborative relationships which resulted in successful field missions. Further, in addition to technical support, UNDP as the partner entity facilitated the payment of all the expenses incurred by the PMU in the execution of its mandate.

5.2 Social and Environmental Considerations

The activities relative to the ALT process in terms of demarcation for instance, is not invasive as it requires manual labour with minimal destruction to flora and fauna. Apart from that, the titling of communities ensures ownership which translates to a sense of belonging and the development of protective measures among the beneficiaries. Moreover, beneficiaries can explore their land use ambitions with informed information as it relates to their boundaries.

5.3 Innovative approaches

In consideration of repeated payment challenges to service providers encountered during missions and an updated HACT report, a decision was taken by UNDP to have the ALT PMU operate on a small cash advance intended specifically for field missions. Hence, in order to improve the services provided to communities, following approval from the Ministry of Finance, actions have been taken to secure a separate bank account for the ALT PMU to facilitate payments to service providers during field missions as recommended by UNDP. This process of establishing the account at the Bank of Guyana is on-going.

5.4 Sustainability

An assessment of the project determined that Amerindian Land issues will not be exhausted within the project timeframe. Therefore, the PMU operationalized actions to ensure the sustainability of the ALT post the current project life cycle by creating a permanent ALT office

in MOIPA. In an effort to hire a Consultant to realize this component, a draft Terms of Reference was developed by the MOIPA legal team and is currently under review.

5.5 Visibility



Figure 2: Toshao Michael Thomas in Aishalton Village South Rupununi collects the ALT Guidelines, Posters and flash drive with the translated information on the ALT process in the Wapishana language during an awareness campaign. © ALT PMU 2019.

5.6 Reports and Publications



Figure 3: The above captures a moment in one of the successful Amerindian land titling workshops concluded in the Deep South Rupununi villages documented by Alva Solomon on November 10, 2019. <https://guyanachronicle.com/2019/11/10/successful-amerindian-land-titling-workshops-conclude-at-deep-south-rupununi-villages>

6 Monitoring and Evaluation

M&E activity (monitoring visit, evaluation, review exercise)	Key outcomes/ observation	Recommendation	Action taken
Field visit during communication outreach in Moco Moco, Yupukari and Nappi in Region 9 by UNDP Results Management Analyst	Communication materials were adequately prepared beforehand however adjustments were required on the ground due to delays in start of meetings as well as need for translation in some cases.	Revise length of presentation in keeping with time available and need for translations where necessary. Focus on the principal points of the communication strategy. Keep incorporating activities as far as possible to reveal understanding of the information.	Adjustments were made to the presentations and would be applied to the other villages during communication outreaches.

7 Risk management

Risks	Mitigation Measures
<p>Environmental: Risk of flooding hinders the pace of field activities and ultimately prevents cadastral surveys</p> <p>Non submission of demarcation requests and or withdrawal from demarcation process.</p>	<p>Weather patterns were considered during planning of all missions.</p> <p>The Communications and the Grievance Redress Mechanism components of the project were active in ensuring enhanced awareness and sensitization during missions through audio-visual, banners, brochures, local radio channels to mitigate the occurrence of withdrawals due, in part, to communication gaps and engender interest in titling of Amerindian lands.</p>

Risks	Mitigation Measures
<p>Operational Capacity relative to coordination among institutions</p> <p>Financial Risks</p>	<p>The degree of involvement relative to agencies in the ALT process was clarified during deliberations on the request for extension, GLSC for instance, has been continuously engaged relative to demarcations.</p> <p>UNDP, based on its responsibility for fiduciary oversight, facilitated all payments which ensured prudent spending.</p> <p>In keeping with the most recent HACT Report, ALT PMU is in the process of establishing a separate bank account to facilitate payment for services during missions. This development was in response to repeated reports of financial difficulties encountered relative to payments for services consumed in the hinterland during field missions.</p>

8 Lessons Learned

- i. Sharing of pertinent experiences and networking with liaison Officers/ Agencies revealed that Titling 68 communities was an ambitious venture.
- ii. Amerindian land titling is an arduous exercise since it involves repeated consultations to ascertain and prove rights that is time consuming but beneficial.
- iii. Drawing from experiences gained from project implementation, Amerindian land issues, especially those with court cases, are continuous in nature therefore all land matters cannot be addressed during this project's life cycle.
- iv. Institutional sustainability hinges on the retention of essential project staff.
- v. Communication relative to the ALT process cannot be overemphasized as this reduces withdrawals from demarcation and land application requests.

9 Conclusions

The revised Results and Resources Framework captured realistic deliverables following an assessment of the project in light of an extension request hence implementation towards the achievement of the revised deliverables is an expectation. Apart from that, the synergy between agencies created through the agency- wide adoption of the revised ALT guideline will increase the pace of project implementation particularly with GLSC. Since the ALT PMU is now fully staffed it is expected that project implementation will move forward speedily. The titling of communities also ensures ownership which translates to a sense of belonging and the development of a sense of protective intensions among the beneficiaries. Previous experience relative to the adverse effects on the administration of the ALT during elections cannot be overlooked particularly since March 2020 is elections in Guyana.

10 Recommendations

- i. The revised ALT guidelines should be used in order to prevent disagreements between agencies and further delays in project implementation.
- ii. Actions to ensure continued collaboration with sister agencies is critical as this would reduce delays in demarcations and issuance of Absolute Grants.
- iii. Timely establishment of an Amerindian Land Titling Unit in the MoIPA would allow for capacity building and knowledge transfer for optimum results post project.

11 Financial Summary

Outputs	Expenses						
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total
Output 1 :88401 Land titles issued and demarcation process completed for all Amerindian villages that submit requests.	163,826	732,249	333,437	146,710	395,935	172,360	1,944,517
Output 2 :88402 Increased access to existing and alternative mechanisms for resolving land titling disputes.	20,277	157,826	83,281	26,870	39,086	25,868	353,209
Output 3 :88403 Revised Communication Strategy, including a handbook describing the process of titling, demarcation and on the social and economic impacts of secure land tenure	0	4,325	105,429	147,634	43,108	27,778	328,273
88404 Project Management	152,058	95,774	130,072	276,018	182,211	153,245	989,378
Output 4:116510 Institutional Sustainability for Amerindian Land Titling	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	336,161	990,174	652,219	597,232	660,339	379,252	3,615,376