



Amerindian Land Titling Project



AMERINDIAN LAND TITLING PROJECT
Project Number: 00077798

2022 Annual Report

Project Summary	Project Duration:	2013-2022 (115 months in execution)
	Project Budget:	US\$13,226,370
	Annual Budget:	US\$830,220
	Annual Expenditure:	US\$725,462.50
	Cumulative expenditure:	US\$5,261,138.50
	Name of Project Coordinator:	Ms. Monica Shiri Sharma
	Name of Supervisor (Implementing Agency):	Mr. Ryan Toolsiram Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Amerindian Affairs
	Name of Deputy Resident Representative UNDP):	Ms. Stephanie Ziebell
Responsible/Implementing Agency:	Ministry of Amerindian Affairs	

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Acronyms

ALT	Amerindian Land Titling
AWP	Annual Work Plan
COT	Certificate of Title
CPD	Country Programme Document
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
GFC	Guyana Forestry Commission
GLSC	Guyana Lands and Surveys' Commission
GGMC	Guyana Geology and Mines Commission
GOG	Government of Guyana
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
LCDS	Low Carbon Development Strategy
LOA	Letter of Agreement
MOAA	Ministry of Amerindian Affairs
MOIPA	Ministry of Indigenous Peoples Affairs
NPTAB	National Procurement & Tender Administration Board
NTC	National Toshias Council
PMU	Project Management Unit
SEIA	Social and Economic Impact Assessment
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

Executive Summary

In 2009, Guyana launched the its Low-carbon Development Strategy (LCDS), setting out a vision for inclusive, sustainable development, while simultaneously maintaining the country's forests, to help meet some of the most urgent challenges the world faces. This first-of-its-kind strategy enabled Guyana to earn US\$212.52 million in payments for the period 2009 to 2015 through the historic partnership agreement with Norway.¹

The Government of Guyana's commitment to protecting Indigenous land rights was bolstered with the availability of these funds and the Amerindian Land Titling (ALT) Project was crafted as a result. Monies earned and duly allocated to Indigenous people's development enabled Amerindian villages to receive legal title for communal lands without having to shoulder the burden of high costs attached to surveying, demarcation and mapping.

Through engagement and consultation and based on requests from villages or communities, the project seeks to enable Amerindians to secure their lands and natural resources with a view towards sustainable, social and economic development. It is expected that titling of communities will strengthen land tenure security and the expansion of the asset base of Amerindians, enabling improved long-term planning for their future development. It is also expected to enhance the opportunities for villages to 'opt-in' to the REDD+ and the LCDS, should they wish to do so.

Since its signing in late 2013, the Project has suffered some periods of very low implementation that came primarily with the changing of priority development strategies linked to different ruling political parties. The COVID-19 pandemic also had its impact on the execution rate of the project. On 16 August 2022, the project received approval by the GRIF Steering Committee for a fourth extension, taking the project end date to 31 December 2024 at an additional cost of US\$2,470,380 for project implementation.

The Annual Work Plan for 2022 was approved on 8 September 2022 by the Project Board with a budget of USD 664,202 and just about four (4) months to reach the year's targets. An additional USD 166,018 was requested and approved before the year ended. The Project Management Unit (PMU) was able to achieve upwards of 85% expenditure by 31 December 2022 and the following achievements:

- 5 Certificates of Titles handed over to Village Councils
- 5 demarcations completed
- 2 Absolute Grants issued
- 3 draft cabinet papers prepared, for the consideration of Absolute Grants
- 10 investigative visits conducted

This report captures the details of these achievements and highlights some of the challenges faced during project implementation during the year.

¹ LCDS 2030

Background

The primary objective of the Amerindian Land Titling (ALT) Project is to facilitate and fast track the Amerindian Land Titling process in Guyana by dedicating technical and financial resources to:

- a) Have land titles issued and demarcation process completed for all Amerindian villages that submit requests, including those that request extensions;
- b) Strengthen existing mechanisms to deal with unresolved land issues;
- c) Improve the communication and outreach efforts of the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs.

The ALT Project seeks to enable Amerindians to secure their lands and natural resources with a view towards sustainable social and economic development. It is expected that titling and demarcation will strengthen land tenure security and the expansion of the asset base of Amerindians, thus enabling improved long-term planning for their future development.

Considering the above, the ALT is operationalized through engagement and consultation with villages or communities based on their requests and is always guided by the principles of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC).

The ALT Project is implemented by the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs (MOAA) and has a dedicated Project Management Unit (PMU) that executes approved activities within the Project, in yearly cycles. As the Partner Entity, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Guyana, ensures the Project adheres to UNDP's social, environmental and fiduciary safeguards and standards.

Progress towards development results

1.1 Contribution to longer term results

- a) **Multi-country Sustainable Development Framework (UNMSDF)/Country Programme Document (CPD) Outcome 1:** More productive and competitive business ecosystems designed to improve people's standards of living and well-being.

Summary achievements based on MSDF/CPD Outcome

CPD outcome indicator	Summary achievement	Status <i>Delayed, On track, Completed</i>
Number of communities with institutional measures in place at the sub-national levels to generate and strengthen employment and livelihoods	28	Delayed
Overall		Delayed

In keeping with the CPD outcome indicator, the ALT is contributing towards 68 communities with institutional measures in place at the sub-national levels to generate and strengthen employment and livelihoods. 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. The overall project implementation schedule has been extended to 31 December 2024 and additional funds totaling USD 2,470,380 was approved in August 2022. This costed extension speaks to the commitment of both Governments of Guyana and Norway.

Progress towards project outputs

Project Output 1:

Land titles issued and demarcation process completed for all Amerindian Villages that submit requests

Indicator	Annual Output Target (2022)	Summary achievement	Status: "Fully, Partially, Not Achieved"
<i>Number of village maps produced and certified by sworn land surveyors (demarcation for new applications and extensions)</i>	<i>1 community receives Absolute Grants</i>	0	Partially achieved
	<i>8 villages receive Absolute Grants for extensions</i>	2	
	<i>5 villages/ communities demarcated</i>	5	
<i>Number of investigations completed with all issues of conflict and concerns addressed</i>	10 Investigations	10	Fully Achieved
	Overall status		Partially achieved

Absolute grants and extensions

The ten (10) communities directly targeted for the issuance of Absolute Grants in 2022 were Capoey Ext; Mashabo Ext; Hotoquai Ext; Hobedaia Ext; Red Hill Ext; Little Kanaballi Ext; Bethany Ext; Nappi Ext; Moco Moco Ext and Arrau.

With the exception of Little Kanaballi, Bethany and Nappi, all of the other seven (7) communities were visited and follow-up meetings were held with the respective village councils and residents; reports written and submitted. Submissions were made to the office of the Hon. Minister of Amerindian Affairs for her consideration and further processing. Capoey and Mashabo were granted their extensions via Absolute Grants (AG) while draft Cabinet Papers were prepared and submitted for Moco Moco, Hotoquai and Hobedaia extensions respectively.

Red Hill's Extension description had been altered by the villagers via a village general meeting (VGM) resulting in the forfeiting of the originally requested tract (Tract A) by the villagers and replotting of a smaller portion of a subsequent tract B. The plotting of the shapefile was done by the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission (GLSC) and the ALT had conducted the verification consultation with the village. Red Hill's extension is ready to be advanced for consideration by the Hon. Minister of Amerindian Affairs.



Investigations

The list below details the communities visited, dates and land tenure nature primarily discussed.

No.	Community	Dates	Land Titling Nature
1	Mashabo	29 September, 2022	Introduction of Surveyors
2	Capoey	29 September, 2022	Introduction of Surveyors
3	Hotoquai	04 October, 2022	Absolute Grant (Ext)
4	Hobedia	05 October, 2022	Absolute Grant (Ext)
5	Red Hill	06 October, 2022; 22 December, 2022	Absolute Grant (Ext)

6	Moco Moco	22 October, 2022	Absolute Grant
7	Arrau	09 November, 2022	Grant Plan Handing over and Demarcation Consultation
8	Kambaru	01 November, 2022	Demarcation Consultation
9	Chenapau	03 November, 2022	Demarcation Consultation
10	Kaikan	08 November, 2022	Demarcation Consultation

- **Visits to Chenapau, Kaikan, Kambaru and Arrau**

Though not originally planned for 2022, the ALT PMU responded to the communities of Kaikan, Kambaru, and Chenapau, and conducted visits to specifically answer questions and address concerns about demarcation.

The above-named communities, along with Arrau, which was visited in the same cluster, were all granted communal ownership for tracts of State Lands vide Absolute Grants (AG) based on descriptions of the 1969 Amerindian Lands Commission (ALC) recommendations. However, it became subsequently evident that all of the villages had express dissatisfaction with the description of lands given to them, since they claimed that the boundaries do not cover their actual traditionally known lands. The villages purported that as a result of this, some of their residents, farmlands and other areas of importance, have been excised. Additionally, the villages expressed concerns over the GGMC's issuances of prospecting and mining permits within what is perceived to be customary territories and, in some case, even village lands. The case of Arrau had another dimension to it in that the Grant Plan, which accompanied the Absolute Grant (AG), was incongruous with the worded description thereby reflecting a significantly lesser area of land for Arrau. There were also indications that some persons were insufficiently informed about the concept of demarcation and the process as it relates to Amerindian Land Titling as per law. Assumably, it is mainly for these reasons that the named villages had refused demarcation of their legally held lands.

The ALT PMU, cognizant that the villages were listed for attention under the ALT project and had refused demarcation prior mainly due to the aforementioned reasons, revisited the villages and engaged the leadership and residents on possible legal resolutions to their concerns and to ensure that residents were amply informed about the concept and process of Land Tenure Security in Guyana, thereby allowing for the advancement of their respective titling process.

The named villages were revisited and the objectives were achieved in that the residents were adequately informed about the concept of demarcation and titling process. The villages concerns were discussed and examined within both rational and legal confinement and all villages had expressed satisfaction with the quality of engagements. Arrau's Grant Plan was corrected and presented to the village. The village had issued a letter of endorsement for the said Grant Plan. All villages were left to stage internal deliberations before writing the Minister on their official decisions on demarcation. The ALT PMU awaits these official correspondences in order to plan the next steps.

Demarcations

A total of two (2) Letters of Agreement (LOAs) were signed with the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission (GLSC) to conduct cadastral surveys in the following communities and 65% of the approved budgets have been released

- Capoey Extension:
 - Approved budget: G\$14,342,719; Status: demarcation completed; awaiting submission of deliverables by GLSC in order to effect final payment.
- Mashabo Extension:
 - Approved budget: G\$9,264,591; Status: demarcation completed; awaiting submission of deliverables by GLSC in order to effect final payment.

Demarcation exercises for Tassarene, Kangaruma and Yupukari were completed in 2022, having signed LOA's with GLSC in 2021.

- Tassarene:
 - Approved budget: G\$46,735,926; Status: demarcation completed; COT issued.
- Kanagruma:
 - Approved budget: G\$37,126,931; Status: demarcation completed; COT issued.
- Yupukari Ext:
 - Approved budget: G\$22,963,498; Status: demarcation completed; COT issued.

The tables below show the square miles measurement surveyed under the project and total area of the village after demarcation.

Demarcations - 2022					
No.	Name of Villages	Region	Original	Ext. (Sq. Mls)	Total Area (Sq. Mls)
1	Kangaruma	7	335.29		335.29
2	Tasserene	7	609.30		609.30
3	Yupukari	9	53.51	145.51	199.02
4	Mashabo	2	17.11	13.00	30.11
5	Capoey	2	23.04	14.50	37.54
			1,038.25	173.01	1,211.26

Figure 1: Areas demarcated in 2022

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

Indicator	Annual Target (2020)	Output	Summary achievement	Status: "Fully, Partially, Not Achieved"
<i>#of community persons trained in mediation skills in land related disputes</i>	<i>25 representatives</i>		<i>14</i>	<i>Fully achieved²</i>
Overall status				Fully Achieved

The Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) of the Amerindian Land Titling Project is intended to resolve grievances associated with the titling of indigenous peoples' lands. In April 2017 the Guidelines for Amerindian Land Titling in Guyana were adopted to govern practices related to the titling of Amerindian lands. As stated in the Guidelines, the mandate of the Grievance Redress Mechanism will be to:

- Receive and address any concerns, complaints, notices of emerging conflicts or grievances alleging actual or potential harm to affected persons arising from the titling of Indigenous peoples' lands, resources and territories.
- Assist in the resolution of grievances between and among stakeholders to the Amerindian land titling process- including but not necessarily limited to the direct beneficiaries, the indigenous peoples themselves; as well as the various Government ministries, agencies and commissions, Amerindian CSOs and NGOs and other natural resource users.
- Conduct itself at all times in a flexible, collaborative and transparent manner aimed at problem solving and consensus building.

Akawini – Wakapao Dispute

- The villages of Akawini and Wakapau of Region 2 applied for extension to their village lands in 2004. However, the processing of the applications was stymied due to an existing common boundary dispute between the villages. On 10 March 2022, the Tosaos of both Villages approached the ALT PMU with an aim to having this long-standing matter of their common boundary resolved. The root of the issue was the location of the point of commencement of a portion of the common boundary, named as the source of the Pariaka Creek.

² Though the number of participants was less than the original target there was representation from each agency identified to be a part of this training.

- The ALT Surveyor, Field Manager and Project Manager reviewed the maps and observed that they were in line with the Absolute Grant of 1991. However, the issue was that the paals were not physically where they were thought to be.
- The ALT PMU discussions with the GLSC on that matter revealed that it was physically not possible to place the paals at the “source” of the creek. Added to that the interpretation of where exactly is the “source” was another issue.
- The matter was ultimately resolved on 8 December 2022 with both Tshaos coming to a signed agreement stating the acceptance of both Villages to the demarcation.



Training in Mediation for land administration personnel

The Amerindian Land Titling (ALT) Project hosted a workshop with fourteen (14) participants from all target Agencies that touch and concern the ALT Project and who play a part in the ultimate goal of regularizing Land Titling for Amerindian Communities. Such Agencies were:



- Guyana Geology and Mines Commission,
- Guyana Forestry Commission
- Protected Areas Commission
- Guyana Lands and Survey
- National Tshao Council

The workshop was conducted over a period of two days and focused on mediation as a tool to help with solving dispute resolutions as we all work together to realize the goal of helping the Amerindian communities receive land titles for their communities.

The ALT Project saw the success of Mediation training with the community leaders and Tshaos in previous training sessions and sought to elevate and expand the discussions and training with key stakeholders who all work together to demarcate land, name boundaries and regularize all lands in the Amerindian communities.

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 (2020)	Output	Summary achievement	Status: "Fully, Partially, Not Achieved"
<i># of communities reached through communications strategy</i>	<i>10</i>		<i>14</i>	<i>Fully achieved (Target surpassed)</i>
Overall status				Fully Achieved

Number of communities reached through communications strategy

All fourteen (14) communities reached through visits were targeted with communication tools and strategies for engagement. Materials produced in house were shared where appropriate and discussions held at length to ensure all questions and concerns on land titling were addressed. Where necessary, translators were used to communicate effectively with community members.

Project Output 4:

Institutional Sustainability for Amerindian Land Titling

Indicator	Annual Target (2022)	Output	Summary achievement	Status: "Fully, Partially, Not Achieved"
<i>Structure of ALT Unit mapped and TORs developed for all posts</i>	<i>GIS Software procured</i>		<i>Nil</i>	<i>Not achieved</i>
Overall status				Partially Achieved

With the approval of the Annual Work Plan & Budget for 2022 being granted in September, the PMU had just under four (4) months for complete execution of the activities within. Sourcing software depended on having the right computer systems in place and procurement of these systems only occurred in December 2022. This activity was thus deferred to 2023.

Project Management

The ALT PMU operated with the following staff in position for 2022:

- Project Manager
- Project Associate
- Field Manager
- Surveyor
- Driver
- Office Assistant / Cleaner

With the project official end date being 31 December 2021, the main focus of the project management team was to attain approval for a costed extension. On 21 January 2022 UNDP officially submitted a request for continuity of the Amerindian Land Titling Project and a joint submission with the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs was tendered on 21 June 2022 for an additional three (3) years beyond the project end date of 31 December 2021. Approval by the GRIF Steering Committee was granted on 16 August 2022. The project end date was extended from 31 December 2021 to 31 December 2024 and the additional approved cost for project implementation was US\$2,470,380.

This extension allows for the full achievement of the original project objectives, thus enabling the Government of Guyana to realize its commitment to providing legal land tenure for indigenous peoples.

Audit

The audit of the ALT Project began in January and concluded in March 2022.

Issues

- With the AWP 2022 approved even later than the previous year, the PMU had just under four (4) months of execution. The ALT PMU still managed to do 13 visits to communities within the period ending 31 December 2021. However, an earlier approval of a yearly work plan and budget is critical to full achievement.
- The length of time taken for responses from key partners like the GLSC continues to be an issue and it directly impacts the rate of execution. However, with the Technical Committee functioning fully now, collaboration is improving.
- Competing agendas were discovered during field missions specifically to a few communities in Region 7 (namely, Kaikan, Kambaru and Chenapau). These villages were known to have

refused demarcation in the past. However, coming out of the National Toshios Meeting, leaders of these villages approached ALT PMU and extended invitations to re-visit the communities with the specific aim of addressing concerns and answering questions relating to land titling and demarcation. This request was fulfilled even though the communities were not featured in the 2022 AWP specifically. After having what seemed to be very successful meetings where villagers expressed positive movement towards demarcation, the ALT PMU received contrary indication from these villages. It was noted that immediately after the interaction with the ALT field team, a non-governmental body held discussions on land titling with these very communities. Based on communication with village leaders and elders, it is evident that while the leadership and members of these communities see the benefit of land titling and are ready to move forward with demarcation, there is significant influence from non-governmental actors that results in a more-than-two-third vote against demarcation and land titling. The ALT PMU will make a further attempt to clarify and concerns these villages may have and point of the benefits of land titling but at the same time will recognize the democratic decision making process of the Village Councils.

1. Monitoring and Evaluation

While there was no specific M&E activity for the year 2022, a delegation from Norway visited GRIF-Funded projects in Guyana, inclusive of the ALT Project. Hon. Pauline Sukhai, M.P. Minister of Amerindian Affairs led the delegation that included the Norwegian Ambassador and other officials from the Kingdom of Norway, UNDP Officers, Office of the President Representative, IDB Rep and other sectorial officials. This visit was primarily made to enlighten the Norwegian delegation on the works being done with regards to implementation and the issues being faced on the ground. The village of Yupukari was specifically visited in regards to land titling.



Figure 2: Hon. Pauline Sukhai and Norwegian delegation in Yupukari Village, Region 9, Guyana

2. Risk management

Risks	Mitigation Measures
Health (COVID-19)	Coronavirus still poses a risk to timely execution. Staff continue to take necessary precautions, especially during field visits.
Inter-Agency Collaboration	Professional working relations maintained with all partner agencies, though difficult at times due to competing interests.
Financial execution	Timely financial execution is linked to approval of the annual work plan. Efforts to have a budget approved in the beginning of the year would allow for higher implementation rates.
Operational	Training in financial management and procurement needed to ensure proper accounting of project finds since there now exists a dedicated bank account and the PMU is processing funds for filed travel.

3. Lessons Learned

- The Project Board Meeting should be planned for early in the year to allow for timely implementation.
- With the guidance on Amerindian Land Titling processes agreed to by all parties, timely feedback from relevant key partner agencies need to be a commitment from the highest levels to allow for smooth work flow especially given the tight timeframe for achievement within the ALT Project.

4. Financial Summary

Outputs / Activity Result		Annual Budget (US\$) (Jan – Dec 2022)	2022 Expenses	2022 Commitments	Total 2022 Expenditures B+C	Balance A-D
		A	B	C	D	E
Output 1	Land titles issued and demarcation process completed for all Amerindian villages that submit requests.	442,500.00	408,599.06	Nil	408,599.06	33,900.94
Output 1 Sub-total		442,500.00	408,599.06	Nil	408,599.06	33,900.94
Output 2	Increased access to existing and alternative mechanisms for resolving land titling disputes.	12,000.00	13,308.14	Nil	13,308.14	-1,308.14
Output 2 Sub-total		12,000.00	13,308.14	Nil	13,308.14	1,308.14
Output 3	Revised Communication Strategy, including a handbook describing the process of titling, demarcation and on the social and economic impacts of secure land tenure	5,000.00	NIL	Nil	NIL	5,000.00
Output 3 Sub-total		5,000.00	NIL	Nil	NIL	5,000.00
Output 4	Institutional Sustainability for Amerindian Land Titling	53,000.00	42,139.59	Nil	42,139.59	10,860.41
Output 4 Sub-total		53,000.00	42,139.59	Nil	42,139.59	10,860.41
Project Management		219,616.00	190,323.00	Nil	190,323.00	29,293.00
Grand total		732,116.00	654,369.79	Nil	654,369.79	77,746.21