

## Securing access to land and livelihoods in Guyana

Intervention:	Land Administration Support Project (Phase II)
Country:	Guyana
Date:	March 2000 to March 2005 (Builds on earlier initiatives dating back to 1987)
Challenge:	To enhance the land tenure and livelihood security of poor people
Objectives:	(1) Tenure regularized on a substantial number of land parcels (2) An established and sustainable land administration agency (3) Better livelihoods for poor people
Approach of the Intervention:	The project helped set up the semi-autonomous Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission (GLSC), aiming to regularise land tenure, first in coastal areas and subsequently in the hinterland. The project supported strengthening of the senior management team, introduction of new management systems, and establishment of a lease registry. Steps were taken to enhance the capacity for GLSC to be self-financing, based on the collection of rents from leased government land. The project also sponsored a series of policy studies intended to help persuade government to make tenure regularization more accessible to the poor.
Benefits and Impacts:	The project helped revamp the institutional framework for land administration. Although the completion report does not list farming-related benefits, it can be argued that, <i>incidentally</i> , the project helping to strengthen the enabling environment for commercial agriculture. With respect to <b>Objective 1</b> , regularization targets have been exceeded: since 2001 about 10,000 leasehold claims have been registered and 3,000 freehold titles issued. The overall output of titles for 2003 and 2004 was five times higher than in 2002, the first full year in which the agency operated. This is a substantial increase compared to the record of the government's Lands and Surveys Department before GLSC was established. <b>Objective 2</b> was also met, to the extent that, by 2004, GLSC no longer received a government subsidy but produced a surplus of G\$21 million. Data for the first quarter of 2005 indicate that cost control measures and continuing revenue increases would generate a larger surplus that year. <b>Objective 3</b> was partially achieved. The land rights of several Amerindian communities have been secured, the number of titles issued to women has increased, and the regularisation programme has successfully targeted poor hinterland communities. But more needs to be done to increase outreach to the poor, including offering full freehold title to persons occupying private family lands (outside the publicly-owned coastal estates); and ensuring that public information campaigns target all vulnerable groups, including women.
Lessons learned:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Successful land administration interventions require a holistic approach, comprising organizational change, capacity building and policy development; this may require a long-term engagement both by the donor partner and by the local contractor. (The World Bank's series of land titling projects in Thailand provides a parallel).</li> <li>□ Programme design needs to be flexible and iterative. Phase I of this intervention field-tested and successfully modified a number of early design assumptions: for example, it turned out that, contrary to expectations, the existing lease registers were not sufficiently accurate to provide a platform for reform of the leasehold sector—the Registry needed to be completely overhauled and a substantial field campaign was needed to bring everyone on to the registers.</li> <li>□ A budget support approach would not have worked, according to the completion report: “neither the policy-making nor the institutional structure would have been strong enough to implement the required changes without direct project engagement”.</li> </ul>
Wider application:	The GLSC model has been successfully applied to establishment of the Guyana Forestry Commission, a parallel DFID-supported initiative. In both cases the creation of a semi-autonomous institution helped free the reform process from civil service constraints, ensuring faster improvement in staff and management development, and in service delivery. The “Commission model” can be replicated in other countries undergoing public sector reform.
Implementing agency & partners	HTSPE (formerly Huntings); SRKN Engineering (local contractor); Government of Guyana; Inter-American Development Bank; and DFID
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