

DOCUMENT OF THE INTER-AMERICAN BANK
MULTILATERAL INVESTMENT FUND

GUYANA

SAFE LODGES, SAFE GUESTS, SAFE COMMUNITIES

(GY-T1172)

DONORS MEMORANDUM

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PROJECT SUMMARY

GUYANA

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(GY-T1172)

In the remote Northern Rupununi region of Guyana visitors experience the country's rich biodiversity and the culture and traditions of indigenous communities. On average this region welcomed 3,200 visitors annually with the eco-tourism sector providing livelihoods to the small communities that collectively own and manage the region's lodges which generate livelihoods beyond those directly employed via provision of guided tours, supply of food and other key services. With the health risks of COVID-19 and attendant travel restrictions, the impact on eco-tourism and on the livelihoods of host communities has been devastating. The cessation of visitor arrivals has effectively eliminated opportunities to generate income and threatens to reverse years of investment and effort in building the sector and community empowerment. The introduction and adoption of health and safety protocols is critical to the restart of ecotourism in the Northern Rupununi and to ensure safety of guests, hospitality workers and the indigenous host communities, particularly as these eco-tourism destinations are located in remote areas with no quick access to tertiary medical care.

The project objective is to design and pilot a system for implementation, communication and certification of compliance of health and safety protocols that will safeguard ecolodge employees, host communities and eco-tourism visitors to Guyana's Northern Rupununi eco-tourism circuit, and which will facilitate and support the safe resumption of tourism activities and associated livelihood opportunities on which host communities depend. The intervention will include four interlocking components: (i) design of health and safety protocols for lodges and other operators in the eco-tourism supply chain, including ground and domestic air transport providers, hotels in the capital city, tour guides, entertainers, and vendors of artisanal products that interface with visitors; (ii) training in and certification of compliance with the defined health and safety protocols for lodges and key providers of ecotourism services; (iii) design of a mobile application to communicate the protocols and certification of providers and which can track and trace visitors to the region and (iv) technical support for the relaunch of marketing and booking of eco-tourism tours by local and international tour operators.

The solution directly targets three main beneficiary groups: eco-lodge employees, host communities and tour operators that target and book ecotourism travelers to the North Rupununi region of Guyana. The expected results of this intervention include the reopening of 100% of the region's 10 ecolodges to visitors, the return of at least 50% the number of travelers visiting North Rupununi using a pre-COVID 19 baseline of 1,200 visitors in 2019 and generation of ecotourism earnings of at least 50% of pre COVID 19 spend by the 2nd year of project implementation. The project was selected for Financing as under the IDB Lab's Beyond Tourism challenge and will be executed by DAI Global LLC, in partnership with Wilderness Explorers and the Guyana Tourism Authority.

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Draft Resolution

AVAILABLE IN THE TECHNICAL DOCUMENTS SECTION OF MIF PROJECT INFORMATION SYSTEM

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CARPHA	Caribbean Public Health Agency
CCB/CGY	IDB Country Office in Guyana
DAI	Development Alternatives Incorporated (DAI) Global LLC
DICI	Diagnosis of Integrity and Institutional Capacity
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulations
GTA	Guyana Tourism Authority
IDB	Inter American Development Bank
IDB Lab	Multilateral Investment Fund
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
SBG	Sustainable Business Group
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
THMRS	Tourism Health Information, Monitoring and Response Systems and Standards to Enhance Sustainable Tourism
WE	Wilderness Explorers

PROJECT INFORMATION

GUYANA

SAFE LODGES, SAFE GUESTS, SAFE COMMUNITIES

(GY-T1172)

Country and Geographic Location:	Guyana, Northern Rupununi		
Executing Agency:	DAI Global LLC		
Focus Area:	Knowledge Economy		
Coordination with Other Donors/Bank Operations:	RG-T3324 "Regional Tourism Health Information, Monitoring and Response Systems and Standards to Enhance Sustainable Tourism (THMRS) Project" and RG-T3681 "Support to Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) for Coordinated COVID-19 Response in the Caribbean.		
Project Beneficiaries:	Employees of 10 eco-tourism lodges and auxiliary service providers, 16 indigenous host communities in the Northern Rupununi, and eco-tourism tour operators		
Financing:	Technical Cooperation:	US\$ 521,050	50%
	Equity:		
	Loan:		
	Other (explain):		
	TOTAL IDB Lab FUNDING:	US\$ 521,050	
	Counterpart:	US\$ 521,824	50%
	Co-financing (if available; include a separate line for IDB Co-financing if applicable):		00%
	TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET:	US\$ 1,042,874	100%
Execution and Disbursement Period:	24 months of execution and 30 months of disbursement.		
Special Contractual Conditions:	Special conditions precedent to first disbursement will be: (i) MOU executed by DAI, Wilderness Explorers and Guyana Tourism Authority outlining their respective roles in the project and counterpart contribution; (ii) Establishment of the Project Steering Committee		
Environmental and Social Impact Review	This operation was screened and classified as required by the IDB's safeguard policy (OP-703) November 3, 2020. Given the limited impacts and risks, the proposed category for the project is C.		
Unit responsible for disbursements	Country Office Guyana (CCB/CGY)		

I. The Problem

A. Problem Description

- 1.1. In 2018, Guyana's tourism sector was the second highest export sector contributing to GDP after gold.¹ **Over the past years, public and civil society stakeholders have invested in building a sustainable tourism product supported by lodges in the country's interior** as part of Guyana's Green State Development Strategy. These investments have been recognized and Guyana has received 6 international awards for tourism, 5 of which are awarded to sustainable destinations. One such recognition was awarded based on the success stories of two eco-lodges in the Guyana's Northern Rupununi region².
- 1.2. In the remote Northern Rupununi region, visitors experience Guyana's rich biodiversity and the culture and traditions of indigenous host communities. Guyana forms part of the Guiana Shield, one of the world's most biodiverse regions that is home to numerous endemic species. This sector provides livelihoods to small and remote indigenous communities that collectively own and manage the region's eco-tourism lodges and supporting microenterprises which generate livelihoods beyond those directly employed via provision of tours, supply of food, arts and crafts, and other key services. This community tourism model provides authentic, unique experiences while protecting the region's natural and cultural heritage and maximizing local economic benefits to indigenous host communities and small and micro enterprises.
- 1.3. To conserve the quality of the natural capital ecosystems on which tourism is based in its interior regions, Guyana has pursued a strategy to attract a lower number of visitors and encourage a higher level of visitor spend, currently estimated at US\$1,000 per visitor per day. Visitors typically visit several lodges during one visit, thereby creating benefits for several different indigenous communities. The tourism industry has been on track for continued growth, and between January 2018 and December 2019 the country's tourism sector experienced 27.5% growth³.
- 1.4. With the health risks of the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting travel restrictions, the impact on eco-tourism and on the livelihoods of host communities has been devastating. Guyana's borders were closed to international travel from April 2020 and the country instituted strict lockdown measures, including a reduction in domestic flights, which effectively ended both international and local tourism. In the absence of eco-tourism, indigenous communities in the North Rupununi are likely to experience a resumption of the traditional migration of males in particular, who leave their communities for opportunities in mining, youths seeking opportunities for employment elsewhere and a return to low level subsistence

¹ According to Guyana Tourism Authority (GTA), travel and tourism generated GY \$62.6 Billion dollars, making tourism its second largest export sector.

² In 2019, Guyana received international accolades including being awarded "#1 in the Best of Eco-tourism" at the ITB global travel trade fair in Berlin, Germany.

³ <https://caribbeanbusinessreport.com/news/guyana-acts-to-offset-COVID-19-impact-on-tourism/>

agriculture as the primary form of survival. Of the 310 direct employees of lodges and additional 180 persons involved in auxiliary eco-tourism services it is estimated that 60% are female⁴ and have lost their primary income stream due to the closure of ecotourism in the North Rupununi. The threat to these livelihoods and to erosion of the gains realized by these communities over the past years can only be mitigated via mechanisms that support a safe resumption of tourism.

- 1.5. The successful re-opening of the tourism industry, and specifically this niche tourism product, is highly dependent on the introduction and adoption of health and safety protocols that can safeguard the health of guests, hospitality workers, the indigenous host communities and other local service providers in the tourism supply chain.
- 1.6. Several factors must be considered to ensure the successful design and implementation of health and safety protocols that are within the control of key stakeholders in the local tourism sector. Tourists require assurance of their wellbeing from the moment they arrive at the airport in the capital city, during their overnight stay, local travel to the Northern Rupununi region, visits to lodges and host communities, and during the return leg of their travels for departure to their home country.
- 1.7. Additionally, the targeted eco-tourism destinations are located in remote areas, with no quick access to emergency care or advanced medical facilities. Tour operators and eco-lodges will need to instill confidence in tourists and demonstrate that they have the resources, infrastructure and procedures in place to safeguard visitor health and to treat visitors that may require medical assistance, especially if there is a suspected case of COVID-19 or potential exposure to COVID-19. In addition to ensuring adequate health protocols that embrace social distancing and frequent sanitization, eco-lodges will need to guarantee access to medical supplies, personal protective equipment, and to established locations that can act as quarantine facilities.
- 1.8. Tour operators and eco-lodges will also need to evaluate and adapt the tourism product which has been based on highlighting the collective culture and traditions of the indigenous communities. Certain experiences such as sharing communal spaces, drinks, and food, are now considered health risks, and other activities such as group tours for bird watching, will also need to be modified.
- 1.9. Health, and Safety protocols will also have to be defined and implemented by other critical tourism service providers such as taxi operators, domestic air and land transport providers that serve the North Rupununi region, as well as other local providers such as caterers, artisans, and suppliers of produce, fish, and other items to the lodges.
- 1.10. Furthermore, key stakeholders in the tourism industry, need to be able to trace and track all incoming visitors, as well as facilitate an exchange of information on existing travel protocols, health and safety requirements, and certification of compliance with established health and safety protocols by tourism service

⁴ Estimate of percentage of females involved in ecotourism is provided by Wilderness Explorers.

providers. Tourism stakeholders will need to work together to adapt/create a system that tourists will use and trust, that can be updated with real time information from end users, and will work in the remote eco-tourism destinations which face persistent financial and technical challenges in accessing and maintaining high speed internet connectivity.

- 1.11. Tour operators and eco-lodges also need to protect the health and safety of the host communities and prevent the importation of COVID-19 into the region from incoming visitors. Due to the remote location of these communities there has been relatively little spread of the disease, as compared to the capital city of Georgetown and other more populated regions in Guyana. Despite the heavy reliance of the host communities on eco-tourism, many are wary of re-opening and due to their remote location, differing languages and lack of connectivity, many members of the community are not receiving timely information about COVID-19. They are unaware of recommended individual safety protocols that should be adopted and risky behaviors to avoid. Thus, a mechanism also needs to be developed to provide reliable and timely information on recommended health measures to the host communities supporting the sector in North Rupununi.
- 1.12. With the re-opening of international travel and amid the global economic crisis resulting from COVID-19, there is and will continue to be intense competition to attract the limited number tourists who are able and willing to travel. Guyana's eco-tourism industry and specifically tour operators, must be able to communicate the health and safety protocols and systems in place and compliance with international standards to be able to successfully market Guyana as a safe tourist destination and attract visitors.
- 1.13. **Beneficiaries:** Guyana is a commodity-dependent country that has a current population of 780,000 with approximately 89% of the population living along the coast, inclusive of the capital Georgetown.⁵ The remainder of the population lives in the rural interior. Poverty rates in Guyana were measured at 41.2% of the population in 2017, this exceeded the regional poverty rates for Latin America and the Caribbean region at 26.54% and 25.23% respectively.⁶
- 1.14. Within Guyana there are high levels of income disparity between those that live along the coast versus the rural interior, which includes the Rupununi region. In 2017, urban coastal areas were found to have a poverty rate of 35%, while the rural interior recorded a poverty rate of 55%.⁷ Poverty rates are also reflective of regional and ethnic disparities where 65% of the population residing within the rural interior is indigenous.⁸

⁵ Data pulled from 2012 National Census of Guyana

⁶ Data compiled by Guyana Country Economist from 2017 Guyana Labour Force Survey

⁷ Beuermann and Rei (2018). *Main Findings Guyana LFS*. International Labour Organization and Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) presentation.

⁸ Bureau of Statistics - Guyana (2016). *Census 2012: Population Composition – Compendium 2*.

- 1.15. The Northern Rupununi region is located in the southern end of Guyana bordering Brazil and consists of savannah, forest, and wetland ecosystems. This region is the home of several indigenous tribes whose interests are represented by self-governing boards. A population of approximately 9,000 persons live in 18 villages and communities dispersed throughout the Northern Rupununi region of Guyana. Visitors can access the Rupununi region from the capital via domestic flights or via ground transportation which can be costly and time consuming.
- 1.16. Eco tourism and associated services including fishing and agriculture, are the primary means of employment for small and remote indigenous communities in the Northern Rupununi region, with participation by women in eco-tourism jobs and lodge management estimated at 60%. The villages of Surama, Rewa and Yupukari are the main eco-tourism destinations in the region, and tourist accommodations consist of small eco-lodges with an average carrying capacity of 8-10 rooms each. Other villages such as Wowetta and Aranaputa offer more adventurous eco-tourism packages where visitors stay in semi-camp style accommodations. 100% of the ecotourism lodges and associated businesses targeted under the project can be classified as micro and small enterprises based on revenues and the number of employees.
- 1.17. The direct beneficiaries of this project will include the 310 rotating employees of the 10 lodges targeted to participate in this initiative, as well as the 180 persons that are employed by the 12 tour operators who will also receive training and other direct support from project resources. It is estimated that 60%⁹ of these beneficiaries will be female who, as a result of the reopening of lodges, will be able to resume employment and microenterprise activities. By the end of the project host communities are hoping to welcome at least 50% of the 1,200 travelers that visited the region in the 12 months prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

II. The Innovation Proposal

A. Project Description

- 2.1. The project objective is to design and pilot a system for implementation, communication and certification of compliance of health and safety protocols that will safeguard ecolodge employees, host communities and eco-tourism visitors to Guyana's Northern Rupununi eco-tourism circuit, and which will facilitate and support the resumption of ecotourism activities and associated livelihood opportunities on which host communities depend.
- 2.2. The solution directly targets three main beneficiary groups: employees of 10 ecolodges, microentrepreneurs and residents of 16 host indigenous communities and tour operators targeting and booking travelers to North Rupununi in Guyana. The intervention will include four interlocking components that will collectively support a safe resumption of eco-tourism and provide prospective visitors with the assurance that effective health and safety protocols are in place. These components are (i) design of health and safety protocols for lodges and other operators in the eco-tourism supply chain, including ground and domestic air

⁹ The estimate is provided by Wilderness Explorers

transport providers, hotels in the capital city, tour guides, entertainers, and vendors of artisanal products that interface with visitors; (ii) training in and certification of compliance with the defined health and safety protocols, (iii) design of a mobile application to communicate the protocols and certification of providers and which can track and trace visitors to the region; and (iv) technical support for the relaunch of marketing and booking of eco-tourism tours by local and international tour operators.

- 2.3. **Innovation.** The model is innovative in the context of Guyana in particular, as indigenous communities involved in tourism will engage in the design, implementation and communication of health and safety protocols supported by a digital monitoring system that can serve as a best practice model for resumption of eco-tourism businesses in Rupununi and potentially other areas in Guyana the wider region. The model features adaptation of health and safety standards, protocols, and reporting systems from the country's sophisticated and world class energy sector to the social, economic, and cultural realities of 16 remote indigenous communities that support eco-tourism in the North Rupununi region.
- 2.4. **Component I: Development of Digital Monitoring and Surveillance System (Total US\$135,000: IDB Lab US\$130,000, Counterpart US\$5,000):** Under this component a mobile application will be developed locally, building on other models in use (such as the travel app recently launched by the Caribbean Public Health Agency with IDB support), but which will be designed to suit the specific educational, cultural/linguistic, geographic and connectivity realities of the remote and poor communities that support the North Rupununi ecotourism sector, and which will provide visitors with real time information on safeguards, standards and certified providers at each stage of inbound and outbound travel to the region.
- 2.5. Required principles of digital design (Principles of Digital Design of the Digital Impact Alliance) will be applied to ensure the relevance, cost effectiveness, integrity, usability of the solution developed, and the ethical use of information supported by the system. Specifically, the application will be designed to be compliant with European general data protection regulation standards (GDPR) which are expected to be a model for regional data protection legislation currently being prepared. Data privacy requirements will include mechanisms to safeguard personal data including data minimization and will provide users with clear terms and conditions of use. DAI as the executing agency will play a key role in the quality assurance, oversight and testing of the mobile application, leveraging previous experience in mobile application development for Guyana that is compliant with GDPR standards.¹⁰ To ensure engagement and use of the application by targeted beneficiaries, a user centered design involving stakeholder participation will be employed, and technical specifications will include ability of the application to run between points of internet connectivity in Guyana, using available satellite imagery for location data and incorporation of key languages. Use of the application will be endorsed by the Guyana Tourism Authority and the country's COVID-19 response team. Eco-tourism travelers to

¹⁰ The technical execution of this function will be implemented by existing staff of DAI in order to fully leverage the organisation's experience and expertise in a similar mobile application development for Guyana. The corresponding cost will be covered by IDB Lab.

the Northern Rupununi will be required to download and register with the mobile application prior to arrival in Guyana. To incentivize use of this tool the mobile application will be used by tour operators to forward travelers' itinerary and all other relevant details needed for their trip.

- 2.6. The key results of this component will be: i) mobile application for communication of health and safety protocols designed and launched; ii) functionalities that support certifications of compliance of lodges and key tourism service provider, information on current travel protocols for visitors and tracking of visitor movement that are compliant with European GDPR standards.
- 2.7. **Component II: Design of Health and Safety Protocols (Total US\$263,996: IDB Lab US\$149,376, Counterpart US\$114,620):** This component will focus on the identification of key actors and organizations with which visitors interface on inbound and outbound travel to and from the Rupununi, and the specific risks that health and safety protocols must mitigate. Based on this analysis and using health and safety protocols developed for Guyana's energy sector, as well as standards and systems developed for tourism operators in the Caribbean and other regions by regional and international health and tourism agencies, specific protocols suited to the socio-economic, linguistic and cultural realities of eco-tourism providers supporting visitors to the Rupununi will be developed,¹¹ together with a practical and transparent system for monitoring compliance and certification of lodges and other related service providers that serve or support visitors and the sector. The health and safety protocols will be designed to facilitate monitoring by the GTA with support from teams of local health and safety officers as outlined in the following component.
- 2.8. The key results for this component include: (i) Health and safety protocols for key providers of accommodation, transportation, food/beverages, tours and experiences for visitors in the Rupununi, duly defined with relevant stakeholders; (ii) health and safety protocols and systems endorsed and signed-off by the Guyana Tourism Authority and key regional health / tourism agencies such as CARPHA, and the Caribbean Travel Organization; and, (iii) a certification system to assess and report on adherence to protocols and identify changes needed developed and rolled-out in Guyana.
- 2.9. **Component III: Training and Stakeholder Engagement for Implementation and Certification of Health and Safety Protocols (Total US\$336,380: IDB Lab US\$162,400, Counterpart US\$173,980):** In order to ensure that key stakeholders (lodge employees, other tourism service providers and host communities) buy in to the adoption of standards, and are equipped with knowledge and skills to apply the defined health and safety protocols required to support safe resumption and operation of eco-tourism in the Rupununi and importantly, safeguard health and wellness of host communities, appropriate sensitization and training will be provided. To respond directly to the realities of languages used, educational and literacy levels and cultural practices and norms of targeted indigenous

¹¹ The technical execution of this function will be implemented by existing staff of DAI in order to fully leverage the organisation's experience and expertise in health and safety protocols for Guyana's energy sector. The corresponding cost will be covered by IDB Lab.

communities and the ecolodges and other eco-tourism providers that form part of these communities, a train the trainer strategy will be used to identify and train key community members to deliver sensitization, technical training and awareness of (i) health and safety protocols and how they are applied in practice (ii) practices to safeguard wellness of households in the community, (iii) surveillance and reporting of compliance with defined health and safety protocols by lodges and other tourism service providers and (iv) use of the mobile application.

- 2.10. Use of a “train the trainer strategy” will embed local knowledge/expertise at the level of communities and will support continuity of training efforts over time as required. DAI and project partners will play a key role in developing the training plan, quality assurance in performance of consultants hired to conduct initial training of local trainers, monitoring and evaluating the efficacy of this approach and the identification of any changes/modifications needed. Multimedia training materials including posters, illustrated guides and practical exercises, all in relevant local languages, will be developed and rolled out to support this effort.
- 2.11. As surveillance and reporting on compliance with the health and safety protocols will be managed at the local level, at least 2 safety officers will be identified and contracted to conduct this function in each of the 16 communities hosting ecolodges and tourists in North Rupununi. Reports from these local safety officers and audit visits by a dedicated team from the GTA will serve as the basis for GTA certification of lodges and service providers as compliant with the defined protocols.
- 2.12. The key results targeted for this component include: (i) a training plan including the production of multimedia and multilanguage training materials developed; (ii) 310 personnel of 10 lodges working or directly supporting eco-tourism in North Rupununi trained in health and safety protocols; (iii) 16 communities sensitized and trained in COVID-19 prevention and maintaining wellness at the household level; (iv) 10 (100%) of ecolodges have fully adopted health and safety protocols and are certified as compliant with the protocols; and, (v) 28 health and safety officers in targeted lodges trained to monitor surveillance of ecolodges and direct ecotourism service providers.
- 2.13. **Component IV: Marketing of the Rupununi Visitor Experience (Total US\$192,224: IDB Lab US\$35,000, Counterpart US\$157,224):** The resumption of the North Rupununi’ s eco-tourism sector requires not only definition, adoption and communication of health and safety protocols, but also the ability to attract, assure and book visitors. In this regard, and recognizing that the market is likely to be highly competitive as not all typical eco-tourism travelers may return (due to economic constraints, health concerns and confidence), and all regional destinations will now be seeking to attract a smaller group of prospective visitors, support will be provided to local tour operators, in collaboration with the GTA to develop and launch a safe destination marketing campaign. This will include campaign messaging, virtual participation in industry forums, training of tour operators and other outreach efforts to facilitate the return of visitors.
- 2.14. Key results targeted include: (i) launch of a safe destination marketing campaign targeting visitors (past and potential) as well as local and international tour

operators; (ii) 150 local and international tour operators sensitized and trained on the Rupununi visitor experience; and, (iii) a high level of satisfaction reported in visitor surveys to gauge awareness of and confidence in safety protocols and certifications supporting the campaign for North Rupununi.

- 2.15. Gender considerations: In all aspects of program delivery, the Executing Agency will work with beneficiary groups and stakeholders to ensure equitable access on the basis of gender, taking into consideration the need to structure such approaches in the context of community culture and norms. To support these efforts, the Executing Agency will maintain gender disaggregated information on project beneficiaries to monitor gender participation and introduce changes that may be required to achieve gender balance.

B. Project Results, Measurement, Monitoring and Evaluation

- 2.16. At the impact level, the project seeks to support safe resumption and build resilience of the Northern Rupununi eco-tourism operations which generate income and business opportunities for 16 host communities of an estimated population of approximately 9,000 indigenous persons¹². At the outcome level the project intervention is designed to support the re-opening of 100% of the 10 eco-lodges operating within the Northern Rupununi region within the second year of the project and generation of eco-tourism earnings by Rupununi tourism operators reaching approximately 50% of pre-COVID 19 levels by year two of the project. Key outputs include a mobile application for communication of health and safety protocols, compliance of tourism accommodation and other key service providers and tracking of visitor movement, the development and implementation of health and safety protocols, certification of lodge and key tourism operators' compliance with required protocols, and a strategic marketing campaign that will support the return of international eco-tourism visitors to Guyana's Northern Rupununi region.
- 2.17. This project was selected under the IDB Lab's Beyond Tourism challenge which sought to finance solutions that could assist the recalibration of the tourism industry post COVID-19, via the infusion of digital transformation and innovation. The project contributes to IDB Lab's COVID-19 response portfolio of projects which seeks to re-activate the economies of Latin America and Caribbean member countries. This operation will also directly contribute to the IDB Lab's specific targets for programming in Small and Island countries in the LAC region.
- 2.18. The project contributes to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals as follows (i) Goal #3 "Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages", specifically target 3.d "Strengthen the capacity of all countries, in particular developing countries, for early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks" and (ii) Goal #8 "Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all", specifically target 8.1 "Sustain per capita economic growth in

¹² <https://rupununi.org/people/>

accordance with national circumstances and in particular, at least 7% gross domestic product growth per annum in the least developed countries”.

- 2.19. In accordance with IDB Lab requirements, DAI Global LLC (DAI) will report on project results as outlined in the project results matrix every six months via the IDB Lab’s Project Status Reporting (PSR) system and will also complete a final Project Status Report on conclusion of the project.
- 2.20. DAI will also develop and implement a project monitoring system that will facilitate the collection, analysis and reporting of key project indicators. This system will be managed on a day to day basis by the technical coordinator of the project and monitored by DAI and the key project partners, Wilderness Explorers, and the Guyana Tourism Authority. The data collected will serve to inform project reporting and decision making, particularly where changes in approach may be required to achieve targeted project results. In addition to project indicators on targeted results, key metrics on use of the application, virtual reach of the marketing campaign and survey data on training, as well as data on visitor arrivals, length of stay, rating of overall experience and confidence in safety protocols will be collated to support the periodic assessment of project impact, risk management, likelihood of targeted results being achieved and decision making to improve results and benefits attained. DAI, in collaboration with the GTA will also track and collect data on visitor confidence in the health and safety protocols developed via the creation and implementation of a visitor survey tool.

III. Alignment with IDB Group, Scalability, and Risks

A. Alignment with IDB Group

- 3.1. The project is aligned with IDB’s Tourism Sectoral Framework (document consistent with the Second Update to the Institutional Strategy, 2020-2023), with respect to three lines of action to guide operational and knowledge activities in the tourism sector as follows: “(i) developing and innovating tourism products, taking into account the main determinants of travel among demand segments and the structure of their tourism expenditure once at the destinations; (ii) placing local, poor, and/or vulnerable populations at the heart of tourism development strategies; and (iii) reinforcing the competitive position of local firms and human resources throughout the tourism value chain”¹³.
- 3.2. The project is also framed within the IDB Group’s Country Strategy for the Cooperative Republic of Guyana 2017-2021 (GY-P1100) which includes the work done under Guyana’s Green State Development Strategy, a roadmap for a green economy. The Green Strategy’s core areas of focus include eco-tourism and nature-based tourism, subsectors that offer great potential for economic growth, community development and re-valorization of biodiversity and natural and human patrimony, while promoting the participation of local communities in activities relating to economic gains and their social and cultural heritage, and which

¹³ Tourism Sector Framework Document, July 2017

promote the conservation of the natural environment and multi-faceted culture of the country¹⁴.

- 3.3. This project will leverage synergies with the two regional TCs funded by the IDB which are being implemented by the regional health authority, the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA). These projects are (i) RG-T3324 “Regional Tourism Health Information, Monitoring and Response Systems and Standards to Enhance Sustainable Tourism (THMRS) Project” and (ii) RG-T3681 “Support to Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) for Coordinated COVID-19 Response in the Caribbean.” In both projects, Guyana is included as one of the beneficiary countries. In this regard, the Safe Lodges Safe Guests Safe Communities project team will build on the work done thus far, including the design and implementation of the THMRS regional accreditation programme, a Caribbean traveler health mobile app and health assurance stamp financed under RG-T3324, as well as the further capacity building of these health surveillance provided tools under RG-T3681.

B. Scalability

- 3.4. The scaling of the project can be accomplished by the extension and adoption of the health and safety protocols, certification system and supporting mobile application in (i) other eco-tourism lodges and communities in Guyana (such as the South Rupununi and Essequibo areas), and (ii) other groups of tourism providers (operators involved in ground, air and river transfers, tour guides, restaurants, other hotels and accommodation. The active involvement, counterpart funding and endorsement of the Guyana Tourism Authority in the project (at both design and implementation stages), will support broader application and by extension of project results in Guyana over time.
- 3.5. Given the severe impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the broad tourism sector within the LAC region, there is an urgent need to access and implement practical and relevant safety standards, protocols, and systems to facilitate a return of visitors. The challenges of smaller scale low density tourism destinations in this regard do bear some similarities to the challenge of resuming tourism in the Northern Rupununi, which favour scaling of the intervention in other countries. As a result, additional scaling can be achieved via knowledge transfer and exchanges with other countries such as Suriname and Belize that are facing similar challenges in reopening of eco-tourism in remote and indigenous communities.
- 3.6. To support scaling and knowledge transfer the detailed project budget includes financing for development of licensing arrangements for the mobile application and collation of a knowledge toolkit.

¹⁴ Framework for the Guyana Green State Development Strategy and Financing Mechanisms. UNEP. March 2017

C. Project and Institutional Risks

- 3.7. The technical risks and corresponding mitigation strategies identified for the project are as follows:
- 3.8. **Language and cultural barriers to effectiveness of training and adoption of protocols:** The indigenous communities that host eco-tourism speak a range of languages and live by specific and traditional cultural norms that may prove a barrier to the effectiveness of training efforts. To mitigate this risk, the project will identify, train and support trainers that are part of the 16 targeted communities, and will produce a range of training aides and exercises that connect with different learning styles and are translated into languages most commonly used by targeted communities.
- 3.9. **Connectivity challenges in remote communities may impact efficacy of a technology solution:** The targeted ecolodges and host communities have some level of satellite connectivity but no broadband. In some cases, given the devastating financial toll of the cessation of tourism, lodges have stopped paying their internet provider and currently have no connectivity. To address these risks the project will seek to engage a local provider to develop the mobile application that is suited to the reality of Northern Rupununi and does not rely on access to broadband to function. These technical requirements will be embedded in the digital design approach and in the specifications issued to the selected developer. Additionally, some financial support for resumption of connectivity for the 10 ecolodges in North Rupununi has been included in the project budget, as maintenance and access to communication channels will be critical for effective project implementation and for safe resumption of tourism activities.
- 3.10. **Visitors may not feel safe travelling to remote locations far from medical facilities:** The risk that tourism will be slow to resume is significant and to an extent exacerbated by the typical older demographic of nature lovers, photographers, sports fishing enthusiasts and bird watchers that traditionally visit North Rupununi. The certification and transparent communication on health and safety protocols and safe destination marketing included in the project design can help to partially mitigate this risk.
- 3.11. The Assessment of Integrity and Institutional Capacity (DICI) conducted for this project rated institutional risk as low.

IV. Instrument and Budget Proposal

- 4.1. The project has a total cost of US \$1,042,874 of which US \$521,050 (50%) will be provided by the IDB Lab, and US \$521,824 (50%) by the counterpart. Counterpart financing will include in-kind resources from the technical staff of executing agency and project partners, as well as administrative and management support from DAI. Partner agencies, namely the Guyana Tourism Authority and Wilderness Explorers will provide counterpart cash resources to provide direct support to tour operators and eco-lodges as well as support for the new marketing campaign for the Northern Rupununi region.

- 4.2. The instrument to be used is a non-reimbursable technical cooperation given that this project is targeted to support vulnerable and indigenous populations whose main source of income has been detrimentally impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 4.3. Retroactive Recognition of Counterpart Funds. The sum of US \$40,000 already expended by the GTA within 9 months prior to project approval, for the purchase of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and sanitization materials provided to the Northern Rupunini ecolodges and host communities will be retroactively recognized as counterpart financing.
- 4.4. The project budget summary is presented in the following table:

	IDB Lab	Counterpart Cash and In- Kind	Total
Project Components			
Component I: Development of Digital Monitoring and Surveillance System	130,000	5,000	135,000
Component II: Design of Health and Safety Protocols	149,376	114,620	263,996
Component III: Training and Stakeholder Engagement for Implementation and Certification of Health and Safety Protocols	162,400	173,980	336,380
Component IV: Marketing of the Rupununi Visitor Experience	35,000	157,224	192,224
Project Administration	38,500	60,000	98,500
Contingencies	5,774	11,000	16,774
Grand Total	521,050	521,824	1,042,874
% of Financing	50	50	100

V. Executing Agency (EA) and Implementation Structure

A. Executing Agency(s) Description

- 5.1. DAI Global LLC (DAI) will be the Executing Agency for this project and will sign the agreement with the IDB.¹⁵
- 5.2. DAI Global LLC was founded in 1970 in the USA., DAI is a for-profit, mission-driven, global development company with a decades-long track record of supporting donor, government, and private sector clients to implement and measure sector-specific investments that catalyze broad-based economic growth. The Sustainable Business Group (SBG) within DAI is a unique player in the market for private sector development services. SBG's experts support private companies, governments and local organizations unlock commercial potential.

¹⁵ <https://www.dai.com/>

- 5.3. In Guyana, DAI has established and staffed a local office responsible for implementation of a support programme for ExxonMobil that is focused on increasing local content and business opportunities in Guyana's emerging energy sector. In this context, DAI has designed, launched, and currently leads implementation of the Centre for Local Business Development, ExxonMobil's flagship investment in supplier development, combining enterprise development with promotion of local content. This programme provides local enterprises with business training, mentorship, embedded technical advisory, industry information, and analysis to help connect them with the country's the oil and gas supply chain and other related sectors such as construction. Critical to DAI's work with this industry has been the design and roll out of health safety and environmental protocols for goods and service providers to ExxonMobil.
- 5.4. Key technical partners in the implementation of this project include the Guyana Tourism Authority and Wilderness Explorers.
- 5.5. The Guyana Tourism Authority (GTA) is a semi-autonomous governmental organisation created by an Act in parliament on June 11, 2002. The GTA, which is governed by a Board of Directors, is responsible for developing and promoting sustainable tourism in Guyana through collaboration with sister agencies and the private sector in order to maximize local socio-economic and conservation outcomes and improve travelers' experience. The GTA is focused on Guyana becoming recognized locally and internationally as a premier destination for protecting its natural and cultural heritage, providing authentic experiences, and maximizing local socio-economic benefits. Its mandate includes co-creating national tourism strategies, action plans and policies; building local capacity; facilitating product development; regulating safety, quality, and sustainability standards; as well as branding and marketing the country's tourism offerings.
- 5.6. The GTA's role in the Safe Lodges Safe Guests Safe Communities project is to support the development of, and lead health and safety training, as well as to manage the assessment and compliance certification of tourism services and lodges against the recommended protocols which will be required for safe reopening of the North Rupununi tourism sector.
- 5.7. Wilderness Explorers (WE)¹⁶ is a full-service destination management company providing seamless travel services across Guyana; established in 1994, WE promotes ecologically sensitive tourism by working closely with the indigenous host communities in an honest, thoughtful and concerned manner that is respectful of their customs and cultures. WE involves local host communities in its operations so as to afford them the greatest financial benefit possible, while offering professional tourism services that meet international standards.

B. Implementation Structure and Mechanism

- 5.8. DAI will establish an executing unit and the necessary structure to execute project activities and manage project resources effectively and efficiently. A technical

¹⁶ <https://wilderness-explorers.com/about-us/>

coordinator will be contracted to manage and coordinate project implementation, data collection, reporting and co-ordination of project partners on a day to day basis. DAI will provide fiduciary support, manage procurement and financial reporting, and will also be responsible for providing progress reports on project implementation. Details on the structure of the execution unit and reporting requirements are in Annex V in the project technical files.

- 5.9. Wilderness Explorers and the Guyana Tourism Authority will partner with DAI to provide counterpart financing and to lead specific activities in the project.
- 5.10. The partnership forged for delivery of the project brings unique advantages that auger well for project success. DAI has recent experience in supporting health and safety protocol design and implementation, as well as in the development of a culture of safety for actors in the country's oil and gas sector. This expertise can be leveraged to develop health and safety protocols, tools, and technologies for adoption in the country's eco-tourism sector. Supported by mobile technology, health and safety procedures can be clearly communicated, actively monitored, and reported to build a safe visitor and community experience. Wilderness Explorers has direct working relationships with the targeted eco-tourism communities in the North Rupununi, and brings practical insights and experience in effective practices for engagement, training and change management in these communities, while the Guyana Tourism Authority will play a key role in monitoring and certification of compliance with required health and safety protocols, promotion of the new system, monitoring and support and is also well positioned to facilitate the replication and scaling of the proposed project to other local eco-tourism clusters, as well as to hotels, restaurants and other visitor service providers in the country's capital city.
- 5.11. To formalize engagement and input of Wilderness Explorers and the Guyana Tourism Authority as critical stakeholders, a project Steering Committee composed of lead officers of DAI, Wilderness Explores and the Guyana Tourism Authority will be established to jointly monitor project implementation, results achieved, the assessment and mitigation of risks and the resolution of challenges that may arise. The project technical coordinator will support the Steering Committee which will be chaired by DAI. Given the short duration of the project, a monthly meeting will be conducted for the first six months and the subsequent timing can be agreed by the Steering Committee thereafter. In addition, the core Steering Committee members (DAI, Wilderness Explorers, and the Guyana Tourism Authority), may elect to invite additional permanent or temporary members as required.

VI. Compliance with Milestones and Special Fiduciary Arrangements

- 6.1. **Disbursement by Results, Fiduciary Arrangements.** The Executing Agency will adhere to the standard IDB Lab disbursement by results, Bank procurement

policy¹⁷ and financial management¹⁸ arrangements as specified in Annex V and VI

- 6.2. **Results Based Disbursement.** The project will be monitored by the IDB's Country Office in Guyana. Monitoring will be undertaken in accordance with the performance and risk management policies (fulfilment of milestones), as established by the IDB Lab. Project disbursements will be contingent upon verification of the achievement of milestones (pre-determined outputs critical to achievement of the development objectives). Achievement of milestones does not exempt the Executing Agency from the responsibility of reaching the results matrix indicators and project's objectives.
- 6.3. **Financial Management and Supervision.** DAI will establish and be responsible for maintaining adequate accounts of its finances, internal controls, and project files according to the financial management policy of the IDB Lab. For the procurement of other goods and contracting of consulting services, the Executing Agency will adopt the principles of IDB Policies (GN-2349-9 and GN-2350-9), however, the Executing Agency, which is a private entity, will use their private sector procurement procedures for the execution of the project.

VII. Information Disclosure and Intellectual Property

- 7.1. **Information Disclosure.** This document contains confidential information related to one or more of the ten exceptions to Access to Information Policy and will be initially treated as confidential and made available only to Bank employees. This document will be disclosed and made available to the public upon approval.
- 7.2. **Intellectual Property:** The Executing Agency shall own the intellectual property rights to all works produced or results obtained under the project and will grant the IDB Group an irrevocable, worldwide, perpetual, royalty-free, and non-exclusive license to use, copy, distribute, reproduce, publicly display and perform any and all Executing Agency intellectual property derived from execution of the project, as well as to create derivative works.

¹⁷ Link to the Policy: [Procurement of Works and Goods Policy](#)

¹⁸ Link to the document [Operational Guidelines for Management of Milestones and Financial Supervision for MIF and SEP Technical Cooperation Projects](#)