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**GUYANA**

**SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

**(GY-L1060)**

**STRATEGY FOR MAINSTREAMING GENDER AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES’ ISSUES, AND ACTIVITIES, IN ALL ASPECTS OF THE LOAN PROGRAM**

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# Brief introduction

The Inter-American Development Bank is preparing a project for a new loan for the agricultural sector in Guyana. This loan programme is entitled the “Sustainable Agriculture Development Program” (GY-L1060) and will focus its activities in Region 9 and Region 10. Its objective is to increase the productivity of the agricultural sector while maintaining a sustainable and climate resilient use of natural resources in Guyana. This loan will be implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and has three main components.

Component 1: Generating information for evidence – based policy making and natural resource management

Component 2: Strengthening of the agricultural innovation and extension system

Component 3: Support for compliance with sanitary and phytosanitary standard

The analysis and data presented as follows as it addresses gender and indigenous peoples is based in an extensive review of secondary sources starting with those comprised for this Project as well as a significant compilation of academic articles, reports and organizations’ websites as they refer specifically to the conflation of sustainable agriculture, indigenous people and a gender perspective, particularly in Guyana. A scoping mission took place between July 25 – August 2, 2016 during which structured and semi-structured interviews were conducted in Georgetown, Lethem and Ebini with indigenous communities, indigenous leaders, community organizations as well as other key agents and stakeholders involved in the topic and in the Project (Please refer to Annex A for the specific itinerary).

UNDP expressed direct interest in joining forces with the IDB on this subject and Project as well as other related areas.

# Mainstreaming gender and an indigenous perspective to sustainable agriculture

Mainstreaming gender and an indigenous perspective to sustainable agriculture implies understanding connections between the lives of the indigenous people -men and women- and cultural sustainable development; it is essential that the cultural, social and economic factors of the stakeholders be fully represented at every stage of the project. A gender and an ethnic perspective, in this case specifically indigenous peoples, should not be understood as isolated but in direct relationship to one another. The selected approach adopted for the current analysis is that which looks at the interrelations between gender and ethnicity, knowing that together they could either enable or hinder access, whether is to health, land, knowledge, education or other. This approach is known as intersectionality.

Project components such as access to new technologies, training and land use, among others, should take into consideration stakeholders’ specific views to guarantee equal access to opportunities and maximize project results (IADB, 2014; Conservation International, 2013; Renshaw 2007).

Ancestral knowledge about the land and its cycles needs to be incorporated in order to both increase confidence and foster sustainability and knowledge-sharing. The indigenous communities’ systems of knowledge at Regions 9 and 10 could be integrated in the sustainable agriculture intervention project.

In order to engage indigenous knowledge in furthering socio-economic development, policy-makers will need to reconsider the prevailing notion of a fundamental dichotomy between indigenous and scientific knowledge and begin to challenge both types of knowledge: organic farming is building on scientific knowledge, and agricultural biotechnology is seeking to draw on traditional knowledge (Ammann 2007).

Differences in how men and women interact with the environment should be seen as an opportunity for conservation; therefore conservation projects can respond to those differences by integrating gender issues to improve project results and guarantee that both men and women benefit from the project, as well as contribute to project sustainability (Conservation International, 2013).

Considering how these core assumptions can be integrated into this strategy, it is important to highlight some reflections made by the International System of Human Rights under its different committees, as well as review the efforts made by Guyana to comply with its international obligations to Women and Indigenous rights. The purpose of considering this method of analysis is to ensure that the Bank can better implement the loan with the Government of Guyana. Equally important is the assessment made through structured and semi-structured interviews and formal as well as informal talks with the community and civil society. These three stages will form the basis of the construction of this strategy.

Guyana has a growing Amerindian[[1]](#footnote-1) Indigenous population that possesses communal lands, organized in Amerindian Villages or Amerindian Communities that are governed by Village Councils, those villages have been provided with primary health facilities and elementary schools. “The standard of living was lower than that of most citizens, and they had limited access to education and health care. Little reliable data existed regarding the situation of women and girls in indigenous communities, although indigenous women tended to face three-fold discrimination and vulnerability on the basis of gender, ethnicity, and reduced economic status.” (Department of State, n.d; Amerindian Act, 2006; CEDAW; 2010)

There are nine groups of Amerindian Peoples in Guyana – Wai Wais, Macushis, Patomonas, Arawaks, Caribs, Wapishana, Arecunas, Akawaios and Warraus[[2]](#footnote-2) – each of which has distinct cultural identity and heritage, language and traditional economic activities. Amerindian communities are at varying stages of integration with the national economy. The communities are typically characterized by the co-existence of well-preserved traditional lifestyles, and cultural freedoms with various kinds of income-generating activities. Gradual integration into the production and consumption structures of the national economy is an ongoing process. (Ministry of Indigenous People’s Affairs, 2016)

The 2012 Census shows that Guyana’s population consists of 6 main ethnic groups and a “mixed heritage group” One of these groups is the Amerindian, composed of indigenous population that represent 10.5% of the population in Guyana.

The Amerindian population represents the largest ethnic group in region 9 (20,808 habitants) and the fourth largest group in region 10 with 3,205 habitants (Census Compendium 2, 2012: P7). It’s worth noting that most of the Amerindian Population of the country lives in region 9. (Census Compendium 2, 2012: P67)

“…the indigenous nature of the Amerindians is reflected in the table; for they are found in significant numbers in the Hinterland Regions. For instance, Amerindians make up 85.8 percent of the resident population in Region 9, Region 8 (72.3 percent), Region 1 (64.6 percent), and Region 7 (37.2 percent) in that order.” (Census Compendium 2, 2012: P6-7)

The following chart shows households composition and size of the family in both regions, to analyze the main beneficiaries of the intervention.

Table 1. General Information on Regions 9 y 10

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Households** | **HH lead by women** | | **Size of the family** | **Native language** |
| Total | Percentage |
| Region 9 | 345 | 27 | 8% | 5,42 | Macushi (47%), Wapishana (39%), Portuguese (5.5%) |
| Region 10 | 223 | 98 | 44% | 4,18 | Guyanese Creole (11%) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Total | 568 | 125 | 22% | 4,59 | Guyanese Creole (58%), Macushi (54%), Wapishana (45%) |
| Average | 284 | 63 | 26% | 4,80 | Guyanese Creole (19%), Macushi (16%), Wapishana (13%) |
| Source: Interamerican Development Bank | | | | | |

Based on Table 1, 44% of households in Region 10 are led by women in contrast to 8% in Region 9. This could be based in a series of factors ranging from migration (both internal as well as overseas) as the Net Migration for 2015 is 4.8. In addition, communities in Region 9 speak three different languages Macushi (47%), Wapishana (39%), Portuguese (5.5%) whereas communities in Region 10 speak Guyanese-Creole (11%). These differences are additional indicators of the stark differences between Region 9 and 10 which need to be accounted when implementing the Project.

Communities in Regions 9 and 10 face additional constrains in order to improve quality and quantity of production to guarantee food security and allow them to benefit from market-based systems. Among these are limitations of family labor to reap economies of scale, lack of technical and investment resources, transportation and lack of a market which is further pronounced in Region 10, institutional bottlenecks and traditional, subsistence agriculture.

The policy recommendations in this report are in response to these challenges and are in tandem with the visions for development expressed in the Community Development Plans (CDPs) developed by the people in Region 9 (no community plan available for Region 10).

Based on Renshaw’s (2007:12) report on Indigenous Peoples in Guyana, the New Amerindian Act (Act No. 6 of 2006) recognizes the Village Council, comprising a Toshao or Captain and from 6 to 22 Councillors – depending on the size of the village, as the local authority in Indigenous communities, rather than the Community Development Councils or Neighbourhood Democratic Councils found in other parts of the country. Under the Act, the Toshao is an ex officio Justice of the Peace and is given the powers and immunities of a rural constable – for which he or she receives a small stipend from the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs. The Act builds on the existing system of governance: the role of the Captain or Toshao is enshrined in the 1951 Amerindian Act and follows earlier colonial practice.

From a gender perspective that goes beyond sex diseggregation to accounting for decision-making power, the political participation of indigenous women is limited among the Toshaos which is the local name given to indigenous leaders. There are only five women Toshao out of 219 Toshaos at a national level.    As these positions are highly politicized and tied to one of the political parties, these challenges limit Indigenous women’s access to a candidacy as they need the community’s endorsement.  Therefore, leadership training is crucial to foster the optimal participation of women as well as the conditions for this leadership to flourish given women a more visible position as leaders.

This is another measurable indicator of the gender disparity historically present regarding access to power positions.  According to CI-Guyana report (2016), one of the major problems that indigenous women face in this regard is lack of self-esteem which in turn makes them ill-prepared to run for office as they won’t develop the skills, networks and know-how required to have community support.

Guyana has made significant efforts to overcome gender violence and gender inequalities in the last decade. Some steps taken toward improving quality of life for women and children in rural areas include constitutional and legal reforms providing advances for equality, a renewed institutional framework for the three branches of the State and increased spending for the social sector in areas such as education, health, water, sanitation and housing.

Decentralized gender units throughout the country have helped organize the civil society organizations providing a forum for consultation and advocacy. Each of the regional administrations has Poverty Reduction Strategies. Access to a reliable supply of potable water, legal protection for women’s property rights, equal access to employment, education, social security and health care are protected by affirmative action to ensure priority access for women to those services. In addition, due to the significant number (29%) of female-headed households, in 2009 the State introduced a Single Parent Assistance Programme to lend support to these heads of households with financial assistance for day care and skills training and/or retraining. (CEDAW, 2010; Women and Gender Equality Commission 2013).

Despite the efforts made by the State of Guyana, the CEDAW Committee remains concerned about discrimination in employment, sexual discrimination on the job, sexual harassment in the work place, poor representation of women in political power and poor access to justice. Thus, some of the recommendations focus on increasing women’s awareness and understanding of their rights, as well as improving access to justice. Another important area of concern is domestic and sexual violence as well as violent crimes that target women (CEDAW, 2010)

“As of 2012 only 48 percent of women were in the workforce, compared to 85 percent of men. Job vacancy notices routinely specified that the employer sought only male or only female applicants.” (Department of State, n.d)

Evidence of these discrepancies is apparent when contrasting the policies and plans for the agricultural sector and the concerns expressed by the population during interviews. Therefore, it is necessary to integrate a gender view into the state actors’ vision by pointing out the effects that gender violence problems have on productivity and hence on economic results, as well as to demonstrate how the work capacity and productivity of both victims and perpetrators of violence is reduced. In addition – and placing special emphasis on indigenous communities – it is necessary that women be represented in political spaces such as Community Councils. This specific measure would play a special role in the proposed Consultation and Participation activities, since those mechanisms are regulated by the law.

Through this framework, the strategy will focus on connecting how gender and indigenous issues affect the expected results of a project and how addressing gender and ethnicity issues could improve the project itself.

# Methodology

This framework follows the structure provided under the Terms of Reference in order to facilitate the identification of each issue. It starts with the Protocol for consultation and participation and continues analyzing every question asked by the Terms of Reference. The structure of the document is organized as follows:

Strategy to mainstreaming gender and indigenous peoples’ issues, and activities, in all aspects of the loan program.

1. Protocol to develop effective consultation and participation of indigenous peoples and women, during the design and execution of the program.
2. Description of gaps on: information, local capacities for agriculture, training, research & innovation, relevant for beneficiaries. This section must identify culturally appropriate methodologies to close these gaps.
3. Identification of incentives for adopting new technologies of agricultural production; and, increasing the beneficiaries’ participation in the extension systems.
4. Identification of communication and dissemination products required for adequate socialization and implementation of the program in the beneficiary communities with an intercultural and gender approach.
5. The expected results on gender and indigenous peoples in agriculture.
6. The results indicators on gender and indigenous peoples that will be monitored and assessed during the development of the program.
7. Key elements and recommendations
8. Recommendations related to credit components

# Strategy to mainstreaming gender and indigenous peoples’ issues, and activities, in all aspects of the loan program.

## Protocol Objectives

To promote a tool to implement the processes of effective research and the participation of women and the indigenous population during the design and implementation of the program.

Scope

The protocol is implemented in two phases in order to adequately complete its function. The first is related to research, during which we seek the participation of State institutions given that constitutionally, the processes of inquiry are governed by the state and their validity is subject to the observance of the norms. Research processes have both legislative and executive institutional levels and are decentralized in the territory. In the second phase, the participation process during the project focuses directly on the beneficiary, the project team and the local authorities as it seeks to create a mechanism that allows them to address problems and solutions as a dynamic tool that facilitates the implementation of the project.

In order to secure the project implementation’s effectiveness, culturally-appropriate mechanisms such as the following, need to be in place in both phases of the protocol in order to enter and interact with the communities:

The socialization of the project needs to start with the Community Councils and the Toshaos. Considering that the Toshaos are selected through a political election process, it’s important not to concentrate all the information and socialization solely on Toshaos but also have the Community Councils simultaneously taking part in active participation. Yusa Xavier, one among the few women Toshao at St. Ignatius, mentioned the importance of hiring indigenous local people in order to gain trust as well as entrance to the communities. This is also relevant as it resolves the issue of language and cultural interpretation. Other additional important recommendations provided are related with the seriousness of the proposal. The Wikki/Caicuni community in Ebini mentioned how they have had organizations visited them in the past, collect data with promises to return, and never come back. This creates distrust and should be avoided.

Cultural aspects to consider in both phases of the protocol:

*Research*

Two important aspects to keep in mind in the research process are the focus on the beneficiary and that the mechanisms follow the State’s procedures, guidelines and eligibility criteria, when applicable.

*Participation*

The main aspects to consider in terms of participation are that the places, time and facilities chosen, need to promote the attendance of as many beneficiaries as possible. The language used needs to be aware of the cultural aspects of ethnicity and gender as they relate to structural discrimination. For example, avoiding technical jargon and following a methodology that is consistent with expected gender and ethnicity norms, will facilitate interaction.

The material should be presented in the language understood and spoken by the community, whether it is translated into that language or whether a translator is accessible to explain the materials (even better if both are available).

Description of the Procedure

Research

* Integrate the State’s Institutions such as the decentralized gender units’ forums for consultation and advocacy. This could also be helpful for the Government of Guyana as it establishes a link with other policies related to economic development.
* Maintain close coordination with the regional administration, the Toshaos Village Councils and the Gender Equality Commission to secure participation in the design and implementation of public policy as developed closely with the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs and the Gender Affairs Bureau.
* Map the actors involved in the research process, their roles and the obstacles to full participation they might face based on access to knowledge which goes hand-by-hand with technology.

Participation

Establish a place and schedule for regular meetings between the project management, the staff and the beneficiaries that is in line with the project implementation in order to:

* Address general concerns on the key aspects derived from the preliminary investigation (discrimination against women and the indigenous population; work environment; expectations and the results of the training sessions)
* Collect input on how to transform the concerns raised into viable solutions for the project, that can be utilized to make adjustments to the project planning if necessary.
* Map the actors involved in the participation process (in progress).

## Description of gaps on: information, local capacities for agriculture, training, research & innovation, relevant for beneficiaries. This section must identify culturally appropriate methodologies to close these gaps.

Ms. Dhanmattie Sahai (Small Projects Coordinator), Ms. Hymawattie Hagan (Gender Affairs Bureau) and Ms. Hazel Halley-Burnett (Consultant/Gender & Development) at the Ministry of Social Protection, provided relevant information on some of the programs as pertaining to women, gender and indigenous communities. Many of these programs have actively involved women in agroprocessing (jam, wine, preserved fruit) in Region 1, cassava production in different regions throughout Guyana, including Region 9. Based on their experience, women are more involved in agriculture-based agroindustry than in any other activity such as fishing or logging which falls within the realm of men’s traditionally assigned roles.

Based on a cited research report carried out by Dr. Thomas in 2006, at least 30% of households in Guyana are led by single women. According to Prof. Paulette Henry – Head of the Department of Sociology, Interim Director, Institute for Gender Studies at University of Guyana – access to resources is one of the major challenges faced by women in the rural areas (mostly indigenous) when it comes to having active economic and social involvement in the agricultural areas.

In this sense, Dhanmattie Sahai, Hymawattie Hagan and Hazel Halley-Burnett at the Ministry of Social Protection, emphasized the program known as WOW (Women of Worth) as designed to offer micro-loans for financial empowerment to single parent households (mostly women). The WOW Programme, sponsored by the GBTI (Guyana Bank for Trade and Industry), has being implemented through the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security since 2010. One of the highlights of this program is that it doesn’t require collateral as all other loan applications do. The requirements for standard loans almost automatically leaves women out, particularly indigenous women and/or those in impoverished as well as rural areas. Part of those requirements are that banks require a male-headed household in order to access any loan. Nevertheless, the interviews conducted with women farmers at Lethem (Annex B), revealed that they had no knowledge of the WOW Programme fund and hence went without loans. All of the women who participated, mentioned the impossibility of accessing loans based on being single mothers. A similar situation was revealed by Conservation International’s research. The researchers found that the majority of the women in Region 9 had never heard about the RIF or any other financing option before (those who have heard about it were not clear on how the fund works to develop indigenous communities).

The need to decentralize efforts towards both indigenous communities and women empowerment in the economic field is evident and is consistent with the recommendations provided by Prof. Henry and Dean Scott at the University of Guyana who have extensive experience in the field.

In agriculture, a large percentage of women are involved in the processing of crops. Hence, there’s a great need to access new technologies in addition to training in canning, bottling, packaging and marketing. As was made evident in the case of a previous pineapple canning project conducted in Regions 3, 4 and 6 (Rouffiange 1993), if the women are unable to sustain a supply of raw materials, the project will not be sustainable.

Access to resources is not only about access to money but also access to improved working conditions that provide protection to men and women involved in agriculture if, for example, they face a flood or a plague. Neither indigenous women nor men are protected, which makes indigenous communities more vulnerable to climate change’s negative impact on agriculture and the environment which in turns create a social impact.

Since there are no structured social support systems for combating catastrophic experiences in the agriculture industry, those engaged in the farming industry are highly affected by floods, extended dry spells or diseases, with the corresponding social and economic impacts (Henry 2015:74). According to Henry’s (2015:74) research findings, farmers in Guyana suffer from delayed payment that, coupled with any of the catastrophes mentioned, have a high economic impact at various levels (bank, family, community) as no insurance of any type is provided. Based on preliminary research carried out by Prof. Henry in Region 6, for many women involved in small-scale agriculture, this is a second job, which adds to the burden of their already busy days as they fulfill their reproductive-based roles.

Access to resources goes hand-in-hand with access to land, which is another constraint that was repeatedly mentioned throughout the interviews with indigenous women and women in agriculture, as well as academics working in the field and government officials at the Gender Affairs Bureau. These statements are consistent with (FAO, CEDAW, 2010; IFAD, n.d; IADB) gender and agricultural research. Some of the explanations for women having difficulty accessing land are based on socio-cultural factors, starting with traditional land inheritance practices where land ownership is mainly male. For example, in East Indian communities, males inherit land. This provides easier access for male landowners to property, which is then registered under a male’s name. There has been an attempt by the government to have both men and women registered on property documents as a couple so that women will not be left in such heightened vulnerability if something happens to their partner. Having little access to land makes women vulnerable to additional risks. If the government decides to use the land for any other activity, they will probably be required to move and can lose their crops, and their efforts are wasted.

Since passage of the Amerindian Act of 2006, the government increased the number of communal land titles for indigenous communities, more than doubling the area of communal land titles from 6.5 percent of the national territory to 14 percent (please refer to attached map). To earn money, some villages contracted with loggers, saw millers, and miners to exploit timber and other natural resources on their land. The Amerindian Act also emphasizes indigenous people’s right to self-determination, which is in line with IDB’s Strategy for Indigenous Development and cultural sustainability.

According to Mr. Trevor L. Benn, Chief Executive Office at the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission, most of the 170 communities have been titled largely thanks to the Amerindian Act, and currently there are only 30 still in the process.  Some of the challenges they have faced have to do with demarcation.  The Ministry of Indigenous Affairs with the support of UNDP are in charge of the consultation for the land demarcation. Based on their experience, they now require written signatures from the community accepting the boundaries.  Not long ago the acceptance of the boundaries was done verbally.  In those cases, when the team in charge of doing the official titling arrived, many would say that they hadn’t agreed with such demarcation.  Mr. Benn believes that this entire process should be carried out by his Office.  In addition, he mentioned that there is no legislation that protects religious or sacred land.

Mr. Trevor mentioned that both men and women have equal access to land although they have noticed that more men apply than women. This could be explained by the gender imbalance discussed earlier, which is reflected in terms of access to information and the land itself, ability to understand the information and act on that information based on the requirements (official documents, collateral, etc.).

The two maps shared by the GLSC : Basic Overlay of Titled Amerindian Lands and Protected Areas (2015-03-09) and Guyana Mining Permits (2016-07-115) show that the proposed expansion in Region 9 includes much more land area than the proposed expansion in Region 10. The proposed expansion in Region 10 may be limited due to mining claims that are more concentrated in the north. A key element to consider is that the proposed expansion in Region 9 (and other regions) includes watershed areas that require protection/management to ensure water resources for the communities as well as the preservation of its biological diversity.

Prof. Henry mentioned the ancestral Sou-sou money management tradition with its origins in Africa. Also known as “sandbox”, it functions outside the institutional monetary establishment. For centuries, this tradition has created a solidarity-based system in which participants contribute small amounts of money either weekly or monthly which will then be given back in a year or so, acting both as a no-interest loan as well as a savings system. This is still being used among the most vulnerable community members (indigenous, afro-descendants and Indian-descendants, who have used it at different periods in history). These loans act as a “community bank” particularly for single women, when banks are not accessible or an option[[3]](#footnote-3). The system is based on trust, equality and integrity providing some form of alternative financial stability and access to resources.

There are further issues to consider as we look at these findings using a gender perspective. For example, although legislation might seem gender neutral, it is engrained in a particular socio-cultural context and thus shaped by cultural expectations that require targeted processes to balance out the history in order to make the legislation favorable to both men and women.

The age variable needs to be considered when addressing the indigenous population. Indigenous youth – both women and men – are among the most vulnerable population in the country, with scarce access to education, entry into child labor at an early age in mines as well as in agriculture, and with very limited opportunities for social mobility and entertainment. In the Rupununi Region in Region 9, Thirteen percent (13%) of the HH surveyed were headed by youths (≤ 29 years old). Young HHs have on average, 2.5 times more income than older HHs. Main sources of income are logging, external work, agro- processing and livestock. Roughly 71% of the Rupununi generates an annual income equivalent to US $3, 110 that compared to the minimum wage in Guyana (US $2,100/year/household), it demonstrates significant wealth generation attributed to the use of natural resources (Rupununi Economic Baseline Conditions – IDB, Conservation International).

Young indigenous men are at particular risk in the agricultural sectors as they are more often exposed to pesticides and high-risk tasks. Professor Henry’s 2015 article calls attention to how the high rates of suicide in Guyana seems to be inherently linked to the growth of the agro chemical industry (although not exclusively). The country is ranked fourth in suicides per capita worldwide, and has the highest rate amongst South American and Caribbean nations (Henry 2015). In this context, the Government of Guyana -through the Ministry of Agriculture- could play an important role in strengthening the national chemicals management infrastructure including the establishment and implementation of protocols.

One way in which both young indigenous men and women can be connected to forms of economic production, skills and knowledge sharing could be through the National Agricultural Research & Extension Institute (NAREI) as well as the Agricultural Center to be developed at Manari that can provide targeted training based on specific needs that could match both NAREI’s goals as well as the communities’ needs. According to Leslie Simpson’s consultant Preliminary Report for Component 2 on agricultural innovation and extension system (August 1), the agricultural centre in the Rupununi would also house a campus of the Guyana School of Agriculture (GSA) which could be a key liason for engaging indigenous youth.

A crucial component for facilitating access is increasing knowledge in the science of agriculture, from use of seeds, types of soil, safe handling of pesticides and other technology and agricultural practices. Ebini agricultural centre will service the surrounding savannah areas of Kimbia, Tacama, Ebeorabo, etc. The agricultural centre to be developed at Manari in the Rupununi savannahs will service the research and extension needs of the savannah areas in north and south Rupununi.

Specific Considerations for Region 9

Indigenous participants at the St. Ignatius Village meeting in Lethem, Region 9, suggested the need to have some sort of formal schooling in agriculture such as at a School of Agriculture developed by the government. Indigenous women emphasized the need to access technical knowledge such as the best type of cassava to grow based on soil type, seeds and weather conditions. In terms of gender division of roles in cassava planting, men are the ones who traditionally prepare the soil and women do everything else. Women in Guyana have been at the forefront of agriculture although, as other countries’ experiences illustrate, they are still marginalized and their contribution is mostly invisible. These findings are consistent with FAO’s research on agriculture and gender that illustrates that globally, female farm laborers’ wages are lower than men’s while low-paid tasks in agro-processing are routinely "feminized"[[4]](#footnote-4).

Cassava, as a crop native to the forest, has cultural significance in the communities in addition to its nutritious value. Cassava is used to make as many as ten different products ranging from cassava bread to tapioca.

In terms of socio-cultural aspects that affect productivity are societal gender norms. One of the indigenous men shared at the meeting how men in Lethem and surrounding areas have been traditionally jealous and controlling of women’s activities even when related with religious activities. He mentioned how he has changed his perspective and now values his wife’s contributions and ability to move more freely as well as to contribute to the family’s income. The community’s Pastor, Ramesh, mentioned how men and women will confide in him about different issues the community faces. Among the most important and urgent issues to target are domestic violence and sexual abuse. Men’s high rate of unemployment, paired with employment in high-risk areas such as mining and agriculture, trigger frustration and gender-based violence. In addition, cultural norms implicitly allow men to have more than one intimate relationship simultaneously. Consequently, unwanted pregnancy and single-women households are two (among many) ways this cultural norm impacts men, women and children socially and economically.

Another obstacle that both affects the entire communities communities around Lethem is the difficulty in having a niche market to sell their products, in addition to transportation, which was also reported as a huge obstacle in Region 10 as discussed below. Rebecca Faria’s recommendation as the Vice-Chair of the RLPA was to educate women farmers not to focus entirely on livestock.

According to the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Communities, Mr. Emil McGarrell, 70% of organized groups across the country are women.  A successful example is the peanuts project in Region 9 where women from North Rupununi started producing and selling peanuts as one of the main crops in the savannah.  With the support of the Universities of Georgia and Florida they started the Collaborative Research Support Programe in 2002, slowly growing into a peanut butter factory thanks to the Canada Fund and the US Ambassadors Self-Help Fund.  The Ministry of Education is one of their niche markets, providing peanut butter to public schools around the country.  Despite its success, because of market prices and strong market competition, the head of the Association mentioned in the interview we conducted, that some women would prefer to work in Brasil as they get paid more.  However, in her case, she indicated that despite earning less she has the tranquility of being close to her children and watching them grow as the store they manage is nearby and has expanded its sales to other local products such as crabwood oil.

Indigenous women in both Regions 9 and 10 mentioned the crucial role domestic violence and sexual abuse plays as an obstacle for productivity and wellbeing in their communities.

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Specific Considerations for Region 10

A reunion was conducted in the indigenous community Wikki/Caicuni located in Ebini, Region 10, composed of Toshaos, government officials from NAREI, indigenous men and women and the IDB research team (see Annex B for a complete list and contact information of people that attended the meeting). Based on the information gathered, some of the main obstacles limiting productivity in the agricultural field has been water access on the one hand and flooding on the other, further aggravated by climate change.

Due to high levels of unemployment paired with low incentives and scarce opportunities of acquiring knowledge in the agricultural field or technology, many young men leave the communities and go to Georgetown, Brasil or other countries such as the U.S.A.[[5]](#footnote-5), sometimes permanently. Community members in Ebini mentioned the additional obstacle they face transporting products and the inexistent links between their products and a viable market. They traditionally plant red beans, pineapples, cassava and corn on a small scale.

In terms of gender and access to land, women complained that they have no access to farm lands and are left without any income or possibilities of gaining knowledge that could be both useful and empowering. Women mentioned their skills, willingness and readiness to work on any agricultural endeavor as well as in handicrafts, given the knowledge they have producing the latter, provided they have a market to sell their products and the know-how including technology.

The lack of access to education in these communities is concerning and women rarely finish high school while young men and also women are lured by promises of well-paid jobs ending up under harsh working conditions in the mining field or forced prostitution. Among the factors are both access to schools and trained teachers as well as unwanted early pregnancy. Incest was reported as another problem engrained in the Amerindian communities (further data needs to be collected to avoid making a correlation between a particular ethnicity and sexual abuse as it exists across ethnicities).

In terms of adolescent pregnancy, Guyana has the second highest rate in the Caribbean and South America (UNFPA State of the World Population 2013 report). Structural conditions of economic, racial and ethnic disadvantage coupled with normalization of sexual abuse and little to no accountability and education opportunities favor unwanted teen pregnancy which take a toll in the communities’ ability to develop socially and economically.

## Identification of incentives for: adopting new technologies of agricultural production; and, increasing the beneficiaries’ participation in the extension systems.

Any investment in agriculture needs to consider traditional cultural norms and expectations based on being a male or female and how men and women work together, building on potential capacities and strengthening trust within and between couples. That is to say, men can be trained to see the economic advantage that having women as equal partners in a productive endeavor that could bring benefits to everyone, including him and his community. This is the alternative view to the one currently in place, where women actively engaged in agriculture are seen as either a threat in terms of competitiveness, or their work is disregarded as part of their re-productive work. Together with this, limited support in childcare places both women and children in risky situations (facilitates child labor) and hence hinders childhood education. Some form of child support needs to be put into place. Prior research illustrates this as a key component in the success of agricultural endeavors with a strong gender focus. As babies and toddlers have specific needs, women with small children have seen their farming affected, particularly if the farm is far from the house. Distances between homes and farms is another variable that affects women’s involvement in agriculture. Women are mostly involved in what are called “cash crops” consisting of okra, spinach, shallots as these have a quick turnover.

Another important consideration is to build on existing women’s association

s and networks as they have already created a network of support and work diligently to support their needs, those of their families and as such, the communities. One such group is the Women’s Agroprocessors Development Network. Another group is the Makashi Research Unit in Region 9. According to their website, the Makashi Research Unit/Merisin Sepo (MRU), is a legally registered trust. The Makashi Research Unit (MRU) is comprised of skilled indigenous women researchers from 13 villages in the North Rupununi area in Region 9. Conservation International is fostering a Women’s Entrepreneurs network as well. These could turn into collaborative alliances that will foster sustainability and inform the Ministry of Agriculture of further obstacles and the best way to carry out incentives. For example, given the historical socio-cultural gender inequality, incentives will need to consider, at least initially, the implementation of an affirmative-action policy benefiting women. Such a policy should take into consideration courses of particular value to women in a language and a format that will consider the cultural context and the education level. This goes in line with IDB’s safeguards on Gender Equity in Development (OP 270) and Women in Development (OP 761) which promotes the development and participation of women economically and socially, mainly through support in the organization and empowerment of women’s associations involved in agriculture.

Additional considerations should be made to facilitate participation in the courses such as childcare and husband involvement, selection of appropriate training venues, mixed groups of training facilitators that include women, time-frame, and logistics such as availability of food, sitting arrangement, age range, etc.

## Identification of communication and dissemination products required for adequate socialization and implementation of the program in the beneficiary communities with an intercultural and gender approach.

Other issues that need to be addressed simultaneously are related to access to information in terms of how the information is presented and circulated. Capacity building needs to be central to any project that incorporates gender and as such, women’s historical constraints must be considered in the context of gender-based differential power dynamics between men and women.

Any communication strategy should be closely coordinated with the Community Councils as well as with the Toshaos but not exclusively as information tends to circulate within the same circles of interest such as political parties, which could exclude many people.

For a successful communication strategy geared towards the indigenous communities, outreach is a key component as it will enable access to information and determine the actions needed to be taken.  The person in charge of outreach should work with a translator “to help villagers better understand, and feel more comfortable in engaging in the discussions” (CI-Guyana RIF Gender Assessment 2015).

Because of rigid traditional gender norms and expectations, women in indigenous communities in Guyana and other places such as in Ecuador (particularly the Andean Region) tend to be silent when asked to express their opinions in the presence of men.  As the meetings we hold were mixed due to time constraints, at the end of each meeting I would approach some of the women and do a one-to-one informal interview.  In many cases, other women would join the conversation and therefore I was able to clarify and ask further questions on issues brought up by men and some women during the meeting.  This approach proved to be effective.  Ideally, more time should be devoted to having women-only focus groups led by women as well as men-only focus groups led by men.  At a later stage, once the central issues have been identified, a mixed focus group (or a series of focus groups) can be organized addressing specific questions based on previously collected data.

Other strategies include the following[[6]](#footnote-6):

* Create a seasonal activities calendar so the times of year when men and women

have more time to participate is known; plan activities for periods during those

times when men and women are not engaged in other necessary activities.

* Make activities accessible: women are generally less mobile than men because of

household duties, childcare and lack of transportation options, and it may be

difficult for them to leave their homes for longer periods; consider providing

childcare during meetings or trainings.

* Consider that local language may differ between age groups or genders, and create

communication materials in languages that everyone can understand in order to

access the information.

* Tailor messages for men and women through different channels (radio, written,

etc.) depending on how each get their information.

* Ensure that information about community meetings is provided to both men and women.
* Ensure that men are informed about and invited from time to time to meetings in

women’s projects and vice versa.

* Hold separate meetings or activities with women (at least in the beginning) to

allow women to familiarize themselves with the issues

## The expected results on gender and indigenous peoples in agriculture.

There are two parallel narratives regarding land use and land expansion.  The indigenous communities that are requesting extension base their argument on the need to have more farmland, as a vast majority of their land is not suitable for agriculture (for example, swamp land was mentioned in Region 10).  There is also the widespread belief that the savannahs are not suitable for farming.  On the other hand, the government’s stance is that the indigenous communities requesting expansion do not necessarily require more land as they are not productively using the land they already have.  This feeds on an on-going historical and colonial context that will need to be taken into consideration when implementing any agricultural project.

As an integral part of the project on sustainable economic development of the Rupunini Region as being currently implemented by CI-Guyana with the support from the Multilateral Investment Fund of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the Swift Family, CI-Guyana collaborated with the Guyana Bank for Trade and Industry (GBTI) to develop a revolving fund, the Rupununi Innovation Fund (RIF), the first ever green loan fund for low carbon livelihoods entirely driven by the private sector in the Guyana. According to the RIF Gender Analysis report carried out by Conservation International, Guyana (2016) women mainly earn income through the sale of farine, casareep, tapioca, kari etc., baking and cooking, crafts, sewing, fishing, government jobs and shops.

Women in some villages were interested in (re)activating their women’s groups to help the women improve their livelihoods by generating more income but this was difficult due to a lack of coordination, low numbers of interested women and lack of finance (RIF Gender Analysis report carried out by Conservation International, Guyana 2016). Finance was the main barrier for women who indicated their interest in starting a business or expanding a current one. In Sand Creek, the women stated that they are currently relying on their own money and donations. Women were generally interested in the following types of enterprises: poultry, livestock, sewing, crafts (e.g. cotton, tibisiri, balata), groceries, gardening/ farming.

Based on Conservation International’s work in Guyana in general and in Region 9 in particular, some of the main issues that have arisen from past and current projects in small scale agriculture are centered around youth opportunities to pursue livelihood after school and women’s access to funding and knowledge[[7]](#footnote-7). Despite the efforts to enhance accessibility to women through the GBTI which was started in 2015, preliminary research data shows that while both men and women now have access to more funds, men have access to larger funds than women. The most important obstacles women face are based on socio-cultural norms: confidence issues which in turn hinder leadership and access. These are engrained in the education system as a result of lack of access and poor quality of education. For instance, to foster entrepeneurship, women would need to apply for financing but they find the process very intimidating, both in terms of requirements as well as how the information is presented.

Conservation International reported a lack of information and access to funding opportunities, both key drivers in fostering women’s active involvement in projects and their sustainability. Other parallel constraints are women’s seclusion based on both a lack of access to childcare as well as gender norms that dictate that women stay at home. Based on focus groups conducted with the communities in Rupunini, jealousy restrains women’s freedom. That is to say, a change in the unbalanced power dynamic between men and women will have to be considered. These changes can be fostered through training for leadership that in turn has proven to foster confidence. Having indigenous women entrepreneurs tell their storieshas proven to be a helpful and reliable tool for incorporating other women and strengthening mentorship. Building on women’s networks across Rupunini and other regions will be essential to securing sustainability and a long-term leadership process. Women’s networks have the information and the ability to delineate many of the main obstacles that hinder women from their own communities to become active participants in development projects. Capacity building has proven to be an essential tool to address many of these issues.

Other issues that need to be addressed simultaneously are related with access to information which has to do with how the information is presented as well as how it is circulated, a problem that was voiced by the communities interviewed in Regions 9 and 10. The material should be presented in the language understood and spoken by the community, whether it is translated into that language or whether a translator is accessible to explain the materials (or both). Capacity building needs to be central to any project that incorporates gender and as such, women’s historical constraints as built over gender-based differential power dynamics between men and women.

Conservation International-Guyana research reports (2016) and RIF Gender Analysis also illustrate how the younger generation of indigenous women and men have few incentives and scarce access to training and skills-development in agriculture. The CI training site in Lethem is involving young men and women in research, thereby fostering mentorship, knowledge-development and entrepreneurship which will in turn reduce the high immigration rates to Georgetown and abroad among the community’s youth.

Another problem highlighted by CI’s experience is that because women’s work and contributions are undervalued, communities and the government find it difficult to understand how indigenous women (and non-indigenous women) fit into the economy and how to integrate women into economic strategies. A salient point is that women are not a homogenous group anywhere in the world. The characteristics of indigenous women in Regions 9 and 10 make them prone to a set of constraints that might be shared with non-indigenous women to a certain extent, but that are specific as well as context-based in relation to their geo-political space and history.

## The results indicators on gender and indigenous peoples that will be monitored and assessed during the development of the program.

Within the available literature, we have found some of the most cited issues as related with agricultural interventions in Guyana. These conditions are further aggravated when intersected with gender and ethnicity as variables.

* + Perceptions and ideas on women’s participation in the agricultural field (undervalued)
  + Unequal access to land
  + Job discrimination
  + Women’s reduced access to credit
  + Disruption of the family’s possibilities for educational development when children stop attending schools in order to accompany the parents and when able, to work with them in the farms

The impact of these issues can be easily identified in a quantitative (national statistics) as well as qualitative data. Although the consequences cannot be readily attributed to a project, we could identify the causal relations brought by policies that address some of these issues.

In terms of collecting data on the problems faced, the following are the most relevant parameters:

* economically productive population
* school dropout rates as analyzed through ethnic and gender lenses
* living conditions survey
* work-force participation

The available data dates back to the 2012 Population Survey as the data from the most recent Census is not yet available. Although the Guyana Statistics Bureau is constantly collecting information on social and economic indicators, this information is not disaggregated in land units or by gender and ethnicity. An analysis that addressed some of these issues is based on this outdated Population Survey.

This framework has been usted to develop the following indicators as inserted within the project planning matrix’s macro indicators. The suggested indicators consider the following criteria: easily measured in the program, related to the international instruments that Guyana forms part of and, they have evaluation mechanisms.

The following indicators incorporate at least one economic factor, one social factor and one cultural factor among those defined within the terms of the project, where it's expected that the project generates incidence:

* + Number of indigenous people that apply the technology-based knowledge and technical assistance transferred by the Agricultural Centers, as disaggregated by gender.
  + Number of indigenous people employed by the farms disaggregated by gender
  + Types of positions offered to indigenous women in sustainable farms compared to those offered to men
  + Income as divided by gender

In addition and through participation mechanisms it’s also important to incorporate the following qualitative indicators that could allow the project to connect the project outcomes with the indigenous communities’ expectations as divided by gender:

* Satisfaction with the training mechanisms based on the functionality of the knowledge gained within the context of daily life
* Affirmative action
* Identification of labor policy measures within workplaces that guarantee indigenous women are not overburden with the double (sometimes triple) work burden.
* Number of farms that have implemented childcare facilities

The Project could also consider measuring the number of sustainable farms run by indigenous women as well as the number of indigenous women beneficiaries of loans as compared to indigenous men beneficiaries and to non-indigenous men and women.

It’s important to highlight that a negative outcome cannot be directly attributed to gender and ethnic discrimination but that these are a part of the structural conditions that might inhibit a higher productivity of the agricultural sector while maintaining a sustainable and climate resilient use of natural resources in Guyana.

**Expected Impact**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Indicators** | **Units** | **Baseline** | | **Target EOP\*** | | **Means of verification** | **Observations** |
| **Value** | **Year** | **Value** | **Year** |
| Gross value of the farm’s production (increase expected) | USD/farm  USD/Ha |  | 2016 |  | 2021 | Baseline study  Surveys for agricultural census | Survey after agricultural census will provide data for ex-post evaluation |
| Gross value of farm’s agricultural production (increase expected) | USD/farm  USD/Ha |  | 2016 |  | 2021 | Baseline study  Surveys for agricultural census | Survey after agricultural census will provide data for ex-post evaluation |
| Gross value of farm’s livestock production (increase expected) | USD/farm  USD/Ha |  | 2016 |  | 2021 | Baseline study  Surveys for agricultural census | Survey after agricultural census will provide data for ex-post evaluation |
| Adoption of sustainable practices | Number of practices adopted by farmers |  | 2016 |  | 2021 | Baseline study  Surveys for agricultural census | Survey after agricultural census will provide data for ex-post evaluation |
| Income as divided by gender |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

\* EOP, End of Project

**Expected outcomes**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Indicator** | **Unit** | **Baseline** | | **Intermediate** | | **EOP Target** | | **Means of verification** | **Observations** |
| **Value** | **Year** | **Value** | **Year** | **Value** | **Year** |
| Water and management plans approved for Region 9 | Plans |  | 2016 |  | 2019 |  | 2021 |  |  |
| Analysis of results from the Agricultural Census published | Studies |  | 2016 |  | 2019 |  | 2021 |  |  |
| Farmers implement technologies promoted by NAREI and GLDA  Number of indigenous people employed by the farms as disaggregated by gender.  Types of positions offered to indigenous women in sustainable farms compared to those offered to men | Number of farmers |  | 2016 |  | 2019 |  | 2021 |  |  |
| Value of products processed by pilot facilities increase | USD / Kg  USD / Lt |  | 2016 |  | 2019 |  | 2021 |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Outputs**

| **Indicator** | **Cost** | **Unit** | **Baseline** | **Year 1** | **Year 2** | **Year 3** | **Year 4** | **Year 5** | **Year 6** | **EOP Target** | **Means of verification** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Component 1: Generating Information for evidence – based policy making and natural resource management** | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Surveys before and after agricultural census |  | Survey | 0 | 1 |  |  |  | 1 |  | 2 | Results published |
| Agricultural census |  | Census | 0 |  |  | 1 |  |  |  | 1 | Results published |
| MoA and GSB staff trained |  | Number of people | 0 | 20 | 50 | 50 | 20 | 20 | 20 | 150 | Training for the survey and census |
| LIDAR study of Region 9 |  | Study | 0 |  | 1 |  |  |  |  | 1 | Could include Region 10 |
| Management plan for hinterland savannahs |  | Plan | 0 |  |  | 1 |  |  |  | 1 | Including the identification of the RAMSAR site |
| **Component 2: Strengthening of the agricultural innovation and extension system** | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Agriculture centers build and refurbished |  | Center | 0 |  | 1 | 1 |  |  |  | 2 | New AC in Region 9; Updated and refurbished AC in Region 10 |
| Research programs implemented |  | Program | 0 |  | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 8 | 4 research programs in Region 9; 4 research programs in Region 10 |
| Extension programs implemented |  | Program | 0 |  |  | 1 | 2 |  |  | 2 | One extension program per Region (5, 9 and 10) |
| Farmers trained in the use and benefits of technologies promoted by AC  Number of indigenous people that apply the technology-based knowledge and technical assistance transferred by the Agricultural Centers, as disaggregated by gender |  | Number of farmers | 0 |  |  | 1,000 | 1,000 | 1,000 | 1,000 | 4,000 | Women/Men; indigenous people; |
| NAREI and GLDA staff trained |  | Number of people | 0 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 |  | 50 | Short courses; MSc |
| Visiting researchers collaborating in Guyana |  | Number of people | 0 |  |  | 2 | 4 | 4 |  | 10 | 5 per AC |
| **Component 3: Support for compliance with sanitary and phytosanitary standards** | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Pilot facility to process meat implemented |  | Facility | 0 |  |  | 1 |  |  |  | 1 | Region 9 |
| Pilot facility to process milk implemented |  | Facility | 0 |  |  | 1 |  |  |  | 1 | Region 5 |
| Number of people trained in SPS and food safety standards  Number of women trained in SPS and food safety standards |  | Number of people | 0 | 20 | 20 | 30 | 30 |  |  | 100 | GLDA and MoA staff; members of producers associations  This information could be disaggregated by gender |
| Agreements to export meat to Brazil implemented |  | Agreement | 0 |  |  | 1 |  |  |  | 1 |  |

## Key elements and recommendations

The following recommendations reflect the Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition (GSF, October 2013) suggestions for ensuring the participation of women and the inclusion of gender in agriculture and other productive areas.  Given Guyana’s context that includes a significant number of women associations and organizations, policy that builds on some of those could be beneficial to secure knowledge through extension services and financial services. At the same time such a policy would target gender-based discrimination as intersected with ethnicity, place of origin and age as variables.  Securing equal women’s and men’s access to productive resources, land ownership including inheritance and agricultural technology and information will aid in decreasing underemployment.  At the same time, the government of Guyana needs to strengthen the laws that protect women from all kinds of violence as violence will hinder both the insertion of women into agriculture and other projects as well as risk the sustainability of any project and the well-being of their communities.

Having said this, making efforts to engage and involve women can bring significant benefits and be quite rewarding. It has been found that women’s groups are one of the most effective entry points for initiating activities and reaching poor households. In Nigeria, the women-in-agriculture (WIA) initiative used government fields because more than one-third of Nigeria’s women belong to cooperative societies and other locally recognized formal and informal associations. This built on the indigenous women’s groups to expand the newly established state WIA programmes (Ogunlela and Mukhtar 2009:23). Success in reaching poor households, can illustrated through the the example of the Guyana Women Miners Organization, born out of the need to confront inequality which was manifesting in different forms of bullying and concerns over payment going unheard.  Other entrepreneur women such as the only woman who owns a fishery in Guyana (Global Seafood Distributors) and women involved in agriculture have also joined the struggle.

Although women miners are engaged in the same mining activities as men requiring the same physical strength, their work is invisible. Women usually receive lower wages or no payment at all.  As prostitution runs high and develops because of mining, girls and women are reduced to “Kaimu” (sex objects). The women at the Women Miners Organization are seeking equality in terms of respect, recognition of their work and as such, equal payment within the context of their heightened vulnerability within a male-dominated activity with high risks of gender violence and sexual abuse.

As part of the Government’s Task Force, this association has worked closely with reported cases of underage children, mostly girls that are victims of trafficking at the various mining locations (please refer to attached map).  They reported that most girls who are victims of trafficking are indigenous while others came from countries like Brasil, Dominican Republic and Venezuela.  Based on their experience, they recommend that the government strengthens policies that protect girls and women, building accountability mechanisms.

To summarize, based on the literature, which is consistent with data collected during the field visit in Guyana (July 25 – August 3), the following recommendations should be considered:

* Single women use farming as a means of livelihood, hence fast-tracking access to land for economic production would be highly advantageous to the project implementation.
* Women (as well as men) need some form of insurance that could keep their farming practices sustainable, for example, provisions in case of contingencies such as floods, drought or plagues. There should be a strong system of accountability and compensation built into the program.
* For training and capacity building, the MoA could establish something similar to a MoU with the Gender Unit at University of Guyana in order to facilitate the gender-awareness interventions required to develop key competencies that will need to be implemented at the government level so it disseminates to indigenous communities.
* Decentralize processes and programs (such as the WOW) so that it reaches indigenous communities, particularly women, given the context provided.
* Promote, strengthen, and support women farmers’ cooperatives and associations as research conducted by FAO, IDB, Conservation International-Guyana, USAID, among many others, has proven that these provide a security network for women that provides benefits such as childcare and empowerment.
* Any program needs to consider Women’s Rights and Gender Rights as per (quote conventions and similar that Guyana has signed). Actively involve men in the process and provide gender-awareness training in order to reduce the current high levels of gender-violence (related with historical gender inequality and triggered by poverty, lack of education, unemployment, gender expectations on males that add a burden as sole or main providers, higher risks at mining and agriculture industry). Seek ways to promote men’s involvement in childcare to allow women to participate in the production and gain access to educational opportunities.
* Work closely with the NAREI to support the development of a food lab as well as internship and training courses where young men and women from the indigenous communities can be actively involved providing an alternative to migration.

## Recommendations related to all components

Component 1

**Strengthening of the agricultural innovation and extension system.** The loan will finance the implementation of a comprehensive strategy for innovation, extension and management of natural resources in the country. Agriculture centers will be established / improved, to contribute to local and regional development, including technology transfer, demonstration and training. This includes support to strategic innovation by funding adaptive agricultural innovation projects, with an emphasis on validation of technologies and their transfer to farmers. Two research centers have been identified by the MoA: Lethem / Manari (Region 9) and Ebini (Region 10). In both sites, infrastructure, equipment and innovation programs will be designed and implemented. Research / demonstration programs, identified through a prioritization exercise, will be implemented in collaboration with national and international research and technology transfer centers. These programs will identify specific beneficiary groups, technology transfer and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and deliver technology products as expected results. Agriculture Centers will also support activities in other regions of the country. The Agriculture Center activities will focus on reducing vulnerability to climate change through multiplication and conservation of genetic material, including drought resistant varieties.

Recommendations:

1. According to the 2012 National Population and Housing Census, the Indigenous communities comprised of Amerindians are the fastest growing population. Given this fact, any intervention carried out by the Guyana Government should consider the cultural needs of this population in order to build culturally-appropriate development as aligned with IDB’s Strategy for Indigenous Development.
2. Considering that the agricultural technological packages will include training and extension services, a methodology that includes an intersectional strategy that incorporates a perspective on gender, indigenous communities and the environment as mutually constitutive could prove highly beneficial. This intersectional strategy is of particular importance given the lack of resources to hire experts in these fields in Guyana and the impossibility of hiring specialists for each component. In addition, this could make the intervention more sustainable for all the communities and actors involved by providing \shared knowledge that is applicable and context-based.
3. As was made apparent through the information gathered, women and the indigenous population could be included into the components of the proposed program through education as well as knowledge and technology transfer initiatives. Both of these groups expressed a desire to receive technical assistance focused on the agricultural sector. Such collaborations, if implemented properly, would increase these groups’ inclusion in the work force, their ability to access safe and regular employment as well as foster governance and maintenance of productive lands.
4. The challenges faced by women and the indigenous population are related to societal obstacles that impede their full inclusion in agricultural production and viable economic activities. Women face the challenges of systemic exclusion from many agricultural production activities due to engrained societal roles and a need for greater technical knowledge to improve the yields of those crops that they currently do produce. The indigenous population faces the challenge of a perception that they lack the knowledge to effective use their land for greater production. Awareness-raising initiatives should be included in the program phases in order to sensitize members of the society to the challenges these groups face and to the benefits of their inclusion in the proposed activities. For example, men should be sensitized to the importance of including women as contributing members to the local economy that, rather than threatening the place of men in society or potentially displacing them in the workforce, provide an additional boost to community’s economic viability. In the case of the indigenous population, it’s important that government officials as well as economic and agricultural policy-makers understand the extent of the challenges of the indigenous populations and support efforts to improve their access to technical support that would improve productivity and thereby reduce the flight of young people from indigenous communities.
5. Both groups expressed the need to attain better knowledge on how to confront the challenges of climate change in terms of their local agricultural production. The research centers offer the possibility of fostering research into how to address climate change, which is an important long-term goal. However, in the short- and medium-term, the target populations need technical assistance in order to increase their productivity and ensure that agricultural production provides a sustainable livelihood for the population. For this reason, it’s suggested that technical assistance on alternative practices and ways to increase productivity be implemented as soon as possible in order to lay the ground for improved productivity and initial research. This will also establish the research centers as points of collaboration with the communities and establish trust among stakeholders.
6. Based on past experiences by the IDB in other Caribbean countries such as the Dominican Republic, it’s important to highlight that a certain types of technology could become an obstacle, particularly for single-women households who might (have to) choose a less complex technology package that could be disregarded as hierarchically less valuable than other technology as used/chosen by men.

Component 2

**Information for policy making and natural resource management**. This component will include the review and design of an Agricultural Information System (AIS), including the preparation and implementation of an Agricultural Census; a LIDAR survey of the North Rupununi (Region 9) and Region 10; strengthening of the Monitoring and Evaluation capabilities of the MoA; identification of buffer zones for sensitive wetlands (with potential to designate a RAMSAR site) in Region 9; and identification of potential water catchment sites for improved agricultural production and climate change adaptation in Region 9.

Recommendations:

1. As mentioned in point b above, women and the indigenous population are excluded from agricultural production due to societal restrictions. Additionally, many remote areas of the country face the challenge of limited access to markets for their products. These factors should be considered and included as indicators in the Agricultural Information System. The AIS should measure agricultural productivity among these populations in order to both monitor the progress of program initiatives as well as highlight the needs of these populations. Additionally, the establishment of buffer zones and water catchment sites may further exacerbate the challenges that the indigenous populations face unless greater production can be achieved on their lands. Restricted access to such areas may also reduce the possibility of alternative sustainable agriculture in wetlands, which could offer solutions to climate change adaptation. All these factors should be carefully analyzed as part of the policy-making process (See the recommendation of Mr. Trevor L. Benn, Chief Executive Office at the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission).
2. Agriculture cuts across lines of gender and ethnicity as extensively illustrated by research carried out by FAO, USAID, Conservation International, IDB, World Bank, among other international organizations and experts. Therefore, in households where the family is led by a man instead of a single mother, the criteria needs to consider working conditions that favor, for example, child care as it will avoid, or at least reduce, women’s double work burden and reduce children’s possibilities of leaving school to accompany the parents and a very early start as workers in different capacities.
3. Specific suggestions for the Agricultural Census

Different ideas regarding women’s roles in agriculture might be causing differences in women’s incomes and discrimination in accessibility to work. In addition, women have unequal access and control of land and resources. These factors create outcomes such as differences in incomes by gender, lower access to credits, school dropouts, and child labour, among others.

The Agricultural Census must provide an overview of gender issues that offers policymakers an opportunity to understand the complex dynamics between women’s productivity and wellbeing. Since Census Questionnaires answer to standard statistics it is sometimes difficult to properly assess the aformentioned relationships between factors and outcomes for women.

There are similar experiences in the region that should be considered in order to promote general information that allows comparisons between countries and intraregional information for planning around integration institutions.

Besides demographic data that must show gender disaggregation, some considerations should be taken account when dealing with the Census Questionnaire, such as:

* Employment
  + Members of the household that are economically active by: gender, age, occupation, type of work
* Land
  + Land tenure, land use, area of holding
* Credit and productivity
  + Access to credit.

Component 3

**Strengthening the Sanitary and Phytosanitary System, including food safety.** This will include the review and update of standards and codes related to products destined for export markets as well as local markets, both current and potential. During the design, specific markets and products will be analyzed to facilitate compliance with local and international regulations, especially related to the pilot facilities to be supported by the Program. Studies to support the implementation of pilot facilities for meat processing (Region 9 and Region 5) and milk processing will be prepared during the design.

Recommendations:

Women and the indigenous population seek opportunities to participate in the agriculture sector and to receive technical assistance that will increase their productivity. As previously mentioned, limitations to full participation in the agriculture economy hinder their ability to contribute at the level that would ensure viable incomes. However, if provided the appropriate technical assistance, opportunities to participate and infrastructure that would allow access to markets, it will all translate in additional benefits for the community. An important consideration regarding the regulations compliance is that if women and the indigenous population are to become participating members in the agricultural activities proposed in Credit Component 3, they will need to receive further technical assistance in order to meet the standards for local and international markets. Such technical assistance should be made available to these groups as a priority among the program’s activities. It’s also important to note that there is no economic data available on household’s income as disaggregated by gender or age.

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1. For the purpose of this report I will refer to the indigenous communities as such as this is the category adopted by the Government, although the term Amerindian is widely used by the indigenous peoples, who self-nominate and identify themselves as such. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. For further information please refer to the Ministry of Indigenous’ Peoples Affairs’ description at http://indigenouspeoples.gov.gy/amerindian-villages/ [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Scotia Bank is currently reviewing their loan requirements in an effort to improve the access to single women by reducing the collateral [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <http://www.fao.org/gender/gender-home/gender-why/why-gender/en/> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Guyanese community is fifth-largest immigrant community in New York [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Integrating Gender into Conservation (Conservation International, November 2013) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Based on information shared by Conservation International Executive Director, David Singh, Dianne Balraj (Environmental Policy Coordinator) and Egbert Ralph (CI Lethem). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)