



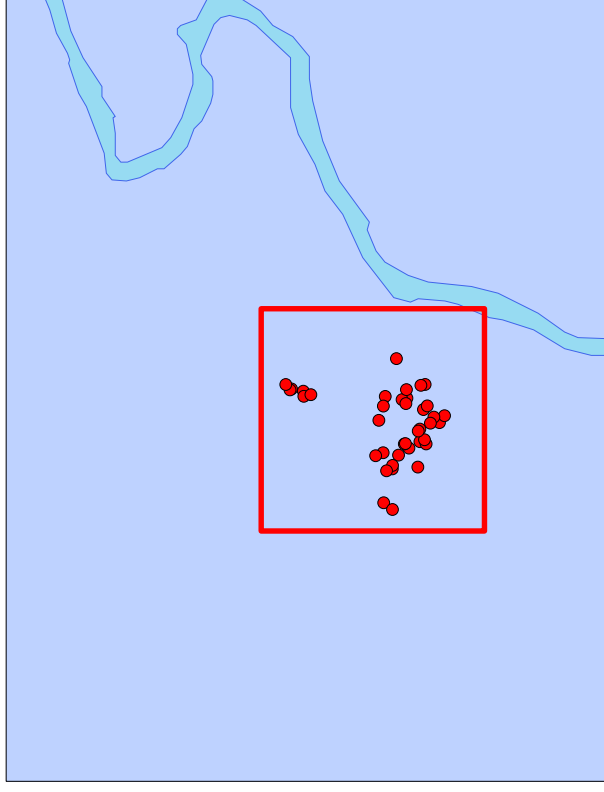
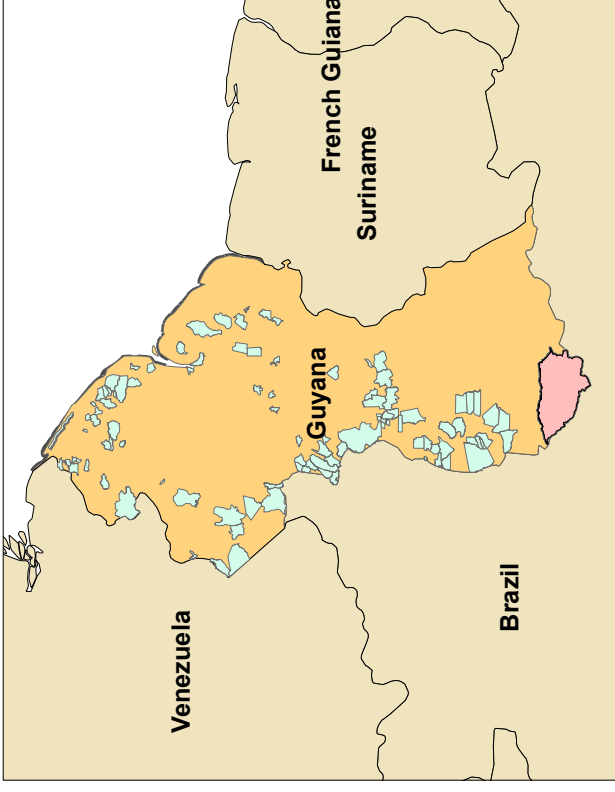
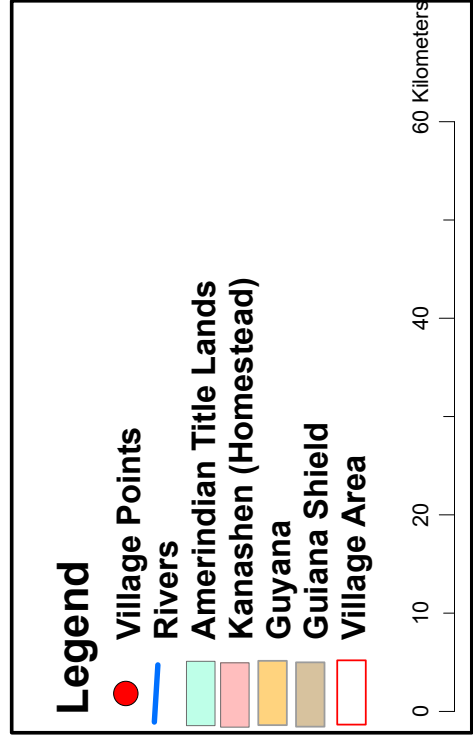
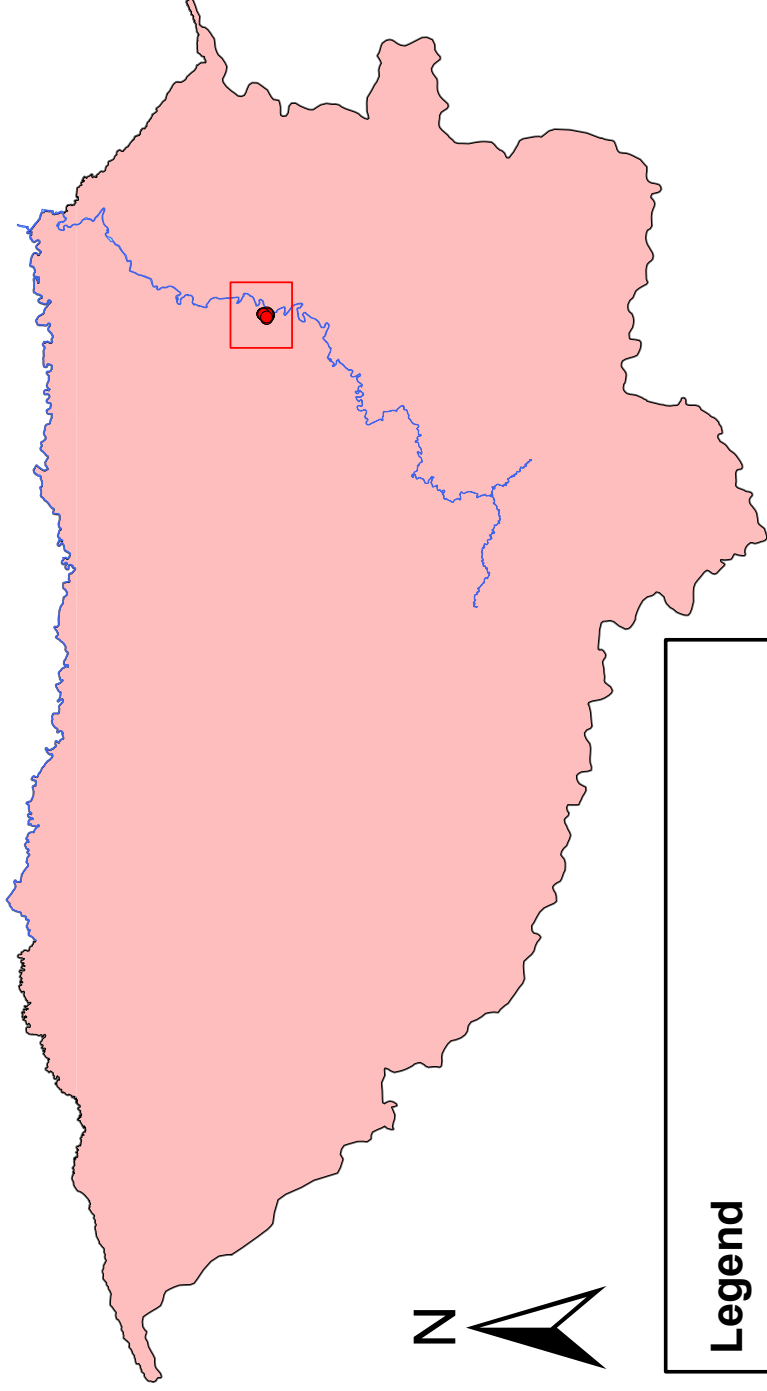
FACTSHEET

2016



SIGNIFICANT STORIES: EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES THROUGH PARTICIPATORY MRV IN GUYANA

WWF FOREST AND CLIMATE PROGRAMME



SNAPSHOT

What

- » The Wai Wai Kanashen¹ community holds title to 1.5 million acres or nearly 3% of Guyana's land area. WWF led a process that engaged with the Kanashen community and its leadership; government agencies like the Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC); and the community-based organization, the North Rupununi District Development Board (NRDDB) to establish a participatory Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV) system that would serve the needs of the community in REDD+ and natural resource management.
- » The project established a strong linkage between the Wai Wai's monitoring and reporting system and the national MRV system, operated by the GFC. This initiative laid ground-work for the development of the "opt-in" – a pathway for Guyana's titled indigenous communities to participate in and benefit from the Guyana Norway REDD+ Agreement.
- » The Wai Wai Project built on an earlier participatory MRV project, refining and improving it to make it more useful and sustainable - and suitable for all of Guyana's 116 titled indigenous communities.
- » The project's more widely applicable participatory MRV model has already been shared internationally, with organizations promoting participation of communities in MRVS throughout the Guiana Shield and Latin America.

Who

WWF contact

Chuck Hutchinson, REDD+ Lead – WWF-Guyana
chutchinson@wwf.gy

Direct stakeholders

Involved in project design, make decisions, and receive benefits

- » Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC)
- » The Wai Wai indigenous community of Kanashen
- » The North Rupununi District Development Board (NRDDB)
- » World Wildlife Fund (WWF)

Strategic stakeholders

- » Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD)

Indirect stakeholders

Influence practice without being directly involved

- » Global Canopy Program (GCP)
- » Guyana Protected Areas Commission (PAC)
- » Iwokrama International Centre for Rainforest Conservation and Development (IIC)
- » Conservation International (CI)

Where

Guyana's Wai Wai Territory: the Kanashen Community Owned Conservation Area (K-COCA), Region 9

When

2014-2016

¹ Also spelled Konashen; both are considered correct.

COLLABORATIVE PARTNER



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SUMMARY

This Forest and Climate Significant Story describes how WWF-Guyana led a process to engage with the Kanashen leadership and community members; the relevant government agencies, GFC and PAC; and community-based organizational partner, the NRDDDB, to establish a participatory MRV capacity with the Wai Wai community of Kanashen, whose titled territory covers 1.5 million forested acres in far southern Guyana on the Brazil border.

This project successfully built upon an earlier project, initiated by the GCP and funded by Norad, that developed participatory MRV in 16 indigenous communities. Our goal was to create a participatory MRV that is replicable, sustainable, and manageable by communities and provides them the data and the analytical capacity to inform their own communal decision-making.

Six community members, selected by the Kanashen leadership, were outfitted and trained to function as their community's monitors. They learned to measure and gather carbon stock samples, monitor and track natural resource indicators, and monitor a series of community well-being measures —skills that help the community to be better informed as they make decisions regarding the management of their resources and to take action when those resources are threatened.

This project established the goal of developing an indigenous community-to-community training model that we believe can serve as the means to deliver participatory MRV capacity development to all of Guyana's 116 titled indigenous communities. This project successfully contributed to strengthening Guyana's national MRV system through the inclusion of community participation, and helped clarify what it would take to prepare a community for opt-in – the mechanism that will provide titled indigenous communities the opportunity to participate in, and benefit from REDD+ and the Guyana-Norway Agreement (GNA).

"THE IDEA OF HAVING COMMUNITIES MAKE DECISIONS ABOUT WHAT IT IS THEY WANT TO MONITOR AND GOING THROUGH THE PROCESS OF THINKING ABOUT WHAT RESOURCES ARE IMPORTANT TO THEM - WHAT RESOURCES ARE CRITICAL AND WHAT RESOURCES ARE THREATENED OR LESS COMMON THAN THEY USED TO BE. IT HELPS THE COMMUNITY RECOGNIZE THE VALUE OF THE THING AND BUY INTO THE THING AND MAKE IT THEIR OWN."

Chuck Hutchinson, REDD+ Lead, WWF Guyana

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INTRODUCTION TO KEY CONCEPTS

A Measurement, Reporting and Verification System (MRVS) is one of the requirements for REDD+ country participants under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). A MRVS compiles data about forest cover, deforestation, and forest degradation, in order to calculate and track carbon stocks and emissions.

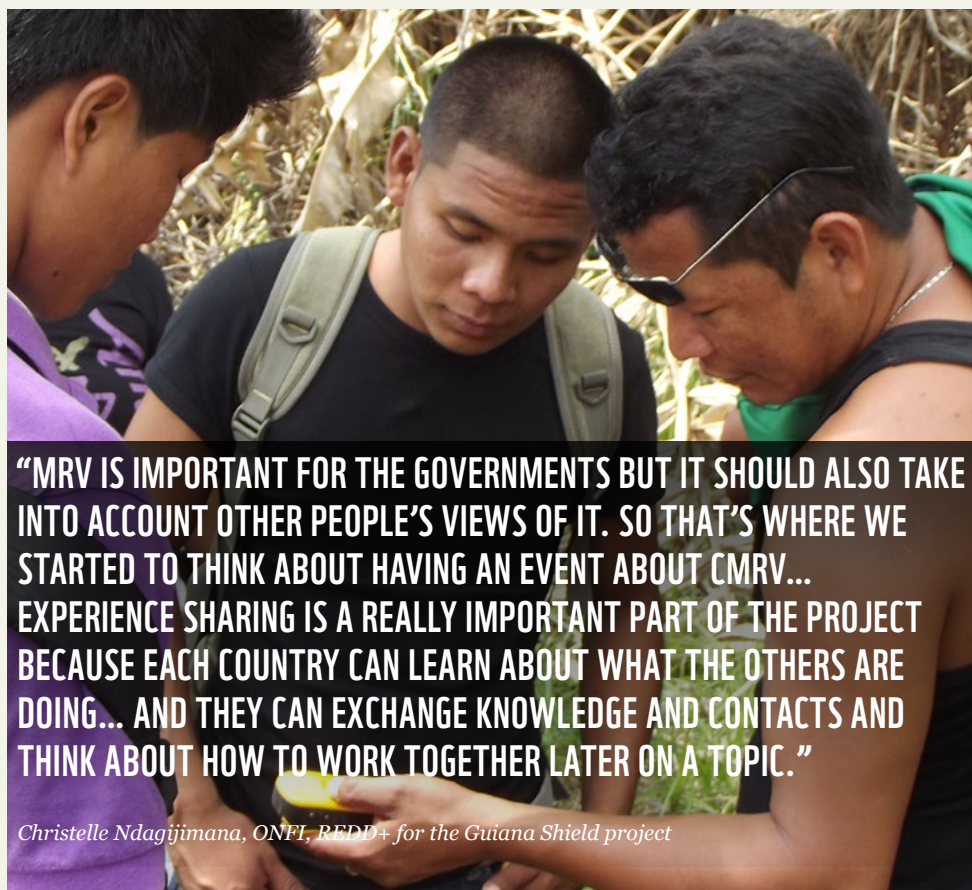
Participatory MRV engages relevant stakeholders in the REDD+ process, providing them with the skills and capacities to monitor and report on their forest and carbon resources. When engaging communities directly, participatory MRV becomes community MRV (CMRV), a more focused subset of participants. Participatory MRV links communities with the relevant government agencies (in our case the GFC) and ensures their monitoring and reporting efforts are fully aligned and interactive. When

integrated, participatory MRV provides the opportunity for communities to ensure their knowledge of their own lands is accurately represented in the national MRVS. Just as importantly, participatory MRV empowers communities with the means to establish and monitor social and environmental safeguards at the community level - mapping and monitoring the resources they value.

The Guyana-Norway Agreement (GNA) pays Guyana to maintain deforestation in the country's 18.5 million hectares of forest under an annual level of 0.057%. Guyana's 116 titled indigenous communities hold title to 3 million hectares (or 16% of the total forest). Opt-in is intended to be developed as the mechanism to deliver REDD+ benefits to those communities who choose to participate and to maintain their own forests and participatory MRV is a necessary component of preparing communities to op-in.

"IT WOULD HELP THE COMMUNITY, THE GOVERNMENT AS A WHOLE, TO SEE THAT THIS IS MRV AND THIS IS WHAT IT IS DOING, AND MAYBE WE CAN INFLUENCE OTHER COMMUNITIES IN OTHER COUNTRIES TO HAVE THE SAME PROJECT BEING DONE THERE."

Shurland Davis, MRV consultant, WWF Guyana



"MRV IS IMPORTANT FOR THE GOVERNMENTS BUT IT SHOULD ALSO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT OTHER PEOPLE'S VIEWS OF IT. SO THAT'S WHERE WE STARTED TO THINK ABOUT HAVING AN EVENT ABOUT CMRV... EXPERIENCE SHARING IS A REALLY IMPORTANT PART OF THE PROJECT BECAUSE EACH COUNTRY CAN LEARN ABOUT WHAT THE OTHERS ARE DOING... AND THEY CAN EXCHANGE KNOWLEDGE AND CONTACTS AND THINK ABOUT HOW TO WORK TOGETHER LATER ON A TOPIC."

Christelle Ndagijimana, ONFI, REDD+ for the Guiana Shield project

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CONTEXT

Guyana is a relatively small country, but with the second lowest population density and second highest percentage of rainforest on Earth, it possesses an increasingly rare and globally important resource—a pristine and highly diverse rainforest the size of Washington State in the US. Guyana, an Amerindian word for “Land of Many Waters,” has vast freshwater resources in a world challenged by water shortages. Its carbon-dense forests contain 6.6 billion tons of stored carbon—three times the carbon density of many Amazonian forests—which are alive with rich and unique biodiversity. Indigenous communities hold title to 3 million hectares, 16% of Guyana’s forests.

Guyana sits in the center of a critical region. Together with Suriname, French Guiana, southeastern Venezuela, southeastern Colombia, and northeastern Brazil, they form the Guiana Shield—a 30-million-hectare transboundary wilderness area that constitutes the largest remaining block of tropical forest in the world. This region produces up to 15 percent of the world’s freshwater and is of crucial importance for climate change mitigation. The core of the Guiana Shield is predicted to be especially resilient to climate change, providing refuge for biodiversity, and ensuring the availability of critical ecosystem services such as the world’s most voluminous water cycles.

Until recently, Guyana’s spectacular landscapes and rich natural resources remained largely intact due to Guyana’s low population density and limited accessibility. Despite its rich natural resources, Guyana’s per capita gross domestic product (GDP) is one of the lowest in South America. Over the past decade, higher gold prices and growing international demand for raw natural resources—especially from China and other parts of Asia—are providing the hope of economic development, but threatening the integrity of Guyana’s ecosystems and the traditional livelihoods of over 200 indigenous communities who live within them.

Gold and diamond mining pollutes streams and rivers with mercury and silt and contaminates the fish that are the main source of protein for Guyana’s indigenous people. Timber concessions have expanded into the rainforests that have provided the sustenance for indigenous people for thousands of years. International investment is also bringing the threat of large-scale soybean plantations, which are already rapidly expanding across neighboring Brazil.

In 2011, Guyana became the last country in the Western Hemisphere to establish and manage a collection of protected areas. Guyana’s Protected Areas System (NPAS), in its formative years, to date, includes only 4 protected areas and 5.4 percent of the country’s land area.

Guyana and its partner Norway have been world leaders in developing the world’s first national-scale REDD+ payment for performance scheme, The Guyana-Norway Agreement (GNA), signed in November 2009, was the world’s first national-scale REDD+ payment-for-performance agreement. Norway committed to provide Guyana up to \$250 million for avoiding deforestation over a 5-year period. Despite some hiccups, it is widely recognized by the international community as a crucial global model for countries with historically low rates of deforestation. The viability of this financing model relies on Guyana’s highly regarded national forest MRVS.

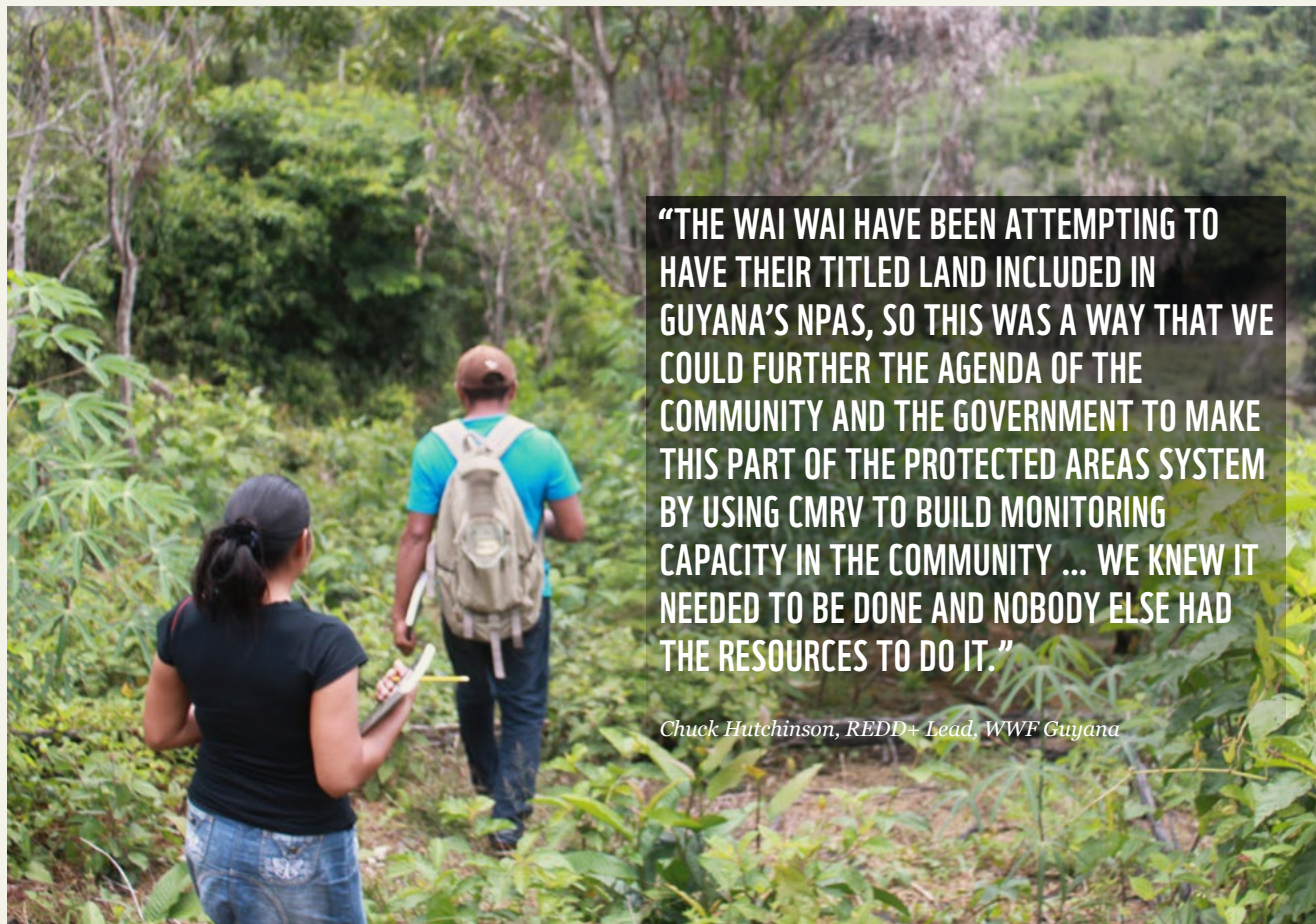
In January, 2014, with funding from Norad, WWF initiated a project to further the development of participatory MRV as a step towards preparing Guyana's indigenous communities to actively take part in and economically benefit from REDD+ through the opt-in process. Opt-in has been discussed as a mechanism for titled communities to participate in the GNA since 2009. By promoting an efficient and cost-effective means to prepare communities with participatory MRV, we hope to facilitate the roll-out of opt-in to all of the 116 titled communities in Guyana who choose to participate.

Between 2011 and 2013, the Global Canopy Programme (GCP) engaged with the NRDDDB, a community-based organization representing 16 indigenous communities in the North

Rupununi, and the Iwokrama International Centre for Rainforest Conservation and Development (IIC) to develop the communities' participatory MRV capacity. The Norad-funded project trained 32 monitors (two from each community) in the use of smartphones and open-source software to establish baselines and monitor carbon as well as indicators selected by the communities themselves.

In 2014, WWF set out to learn from a critique of the GCP participatory MRV project and develop an improved participatory MRV, with an increased practical value to communities. Our project operated with a limited budget and abbreviated time frame. For this reason, and because of Kanashen's importance to the conservation of forests in Guyana, it was decided to develop the beta version of

participatory MRV solely with the Wai Wai Kanashen community. Kanashen is extraordinary for its size of over 1.5 million forested acres – nearly 3 percent of Guyana's land area. The Wai Wai have long expressed their desire to incorporate their land, also known as the Kanashen Community Owed Conservation Area (K-COCA), into Guyana's NPAS. One legal requirement was holding up K-COCA's inclusion – the lack of a natural resource monitoring plan and capacity. Equipping the Kanashen community with participatory MRV capacity would prepare them for REDD+, opt-in, and inclusion at Guyana's NPAS, as well as better inform the community's land management decision-making. It also provided an important opportunity to collect forest carbon data and samples in remote locations in the Wai Wai territory for the national MRVS.



“THE WAI WAI HAVE BEEN ATTEMPTING TO HAVE THEIR TITLED LAND INCLUDED IN GUYANA’S NPAS, SO THIS WAS A WAY THAT WE COULD FURTHER THE AGENDA OF THE COMMUNITY AND THE GOVERNMENT TO MAKE THIS PART OF THE PROTECTED AREAS SYSTEM BY USING CMRV TO BUILD MONITORING CAPACITY IN THE COMMUNITY ... WE KNEW IT NEEDED TO BE DONE AND NOBODY ELSE HAD THE RESOURCES TO DO IT.”

Chuck Hutchinson, REDD+ Lead, WWF Guyana

APPROACH

The GCP's first participatory MRV project in Guyana (2011-2013) introduced a number of innovative concepts and approaches, including: the use of smartphones and open-source software to gather data and letting communities determine which indicators besides carbon they would choose to monitor.

- **Data analysis:** GPC's project uploaded raw data into the cloud directly from the phones, with technicians in the UK analyzing the data and sending back the results in pie charts and graphs. Our project's data was downloaded and complied on the community's own computer. The monitors were trained to perform their own analysis and report the findings back to the community. Because data analysis doesn't rely on internet access and outside technical expertise it's possible to replicate and scale-up this approach to many more of Guyana's titled communities.
- **Integration:** The six monitors spent their first training week in GFC offices and field stations, getting an introduction to REDD+ and MRV. The second week was spent in the North Rupununi with NRDDDB staff and community monitors who had recently completed their own participatory MRV training. As requested by the community leadership, all subsequent training took place in Kanashen. NRDDDB and WWF staff provided the bulk of the instruction but a GFC staff member provided all the carbon assessment and forest cover technique training, ensuring the data could be confidently integrated with the national MRVS.
- **Capacity sharing:** We relied on existing capacities and expertise among indigenous communities and NGOs, some built under the

GCP project, to lay the groundwork for an indigenous community to community teaching model that empowers communities to participate in the GNA and facilitates replication.

- **Sustainability:** Seek synergies with other processes and initiatives. – we were able to use participatory MRV training for REDD+ to facilitate other processes like the inclusion of the K-COCA in Guyana's NPAS in an effort to ensure sustained financial and technical support and lasting impact.

"THE METHODS IN DATA COLLECTION DID NOT GO SO SMOOTH AND FAST AS WE WISHED DUE TO THE LANGUAGE BARRIER, BUT IN THE END THEY GRASPED IT... COMMUNITIES HAVE THE ABILITY TO TAKE ON COMPLEX MODERN TASKS IN MONITORING TECHNIQUES. DON'T UNDERESTIMATE THEM."

Vitus Antone, MRV consultant, WWF Guyana



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PROJECT DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE

November 2009: The GNA was signed, committing Guyana to maintaining the country's extremely low deforestation rates (<0.056% annually) in exchange for up to US\$250 million in funding to support Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy over 5 years. Guyana's MRVS was initiated in 2010.

2011-2013: The GCP, the IIC, and the 16 indigenous communities of the NRDDDB established a participatory MRV model, building local capacity by training 32 Community Resource Environment Workers (CREWs) to gather data in their communities.

January 2014-October 2015: Six Wai Wai community members undergo 10 weeks of training to serve as community monitors.

August 2014: World Wildlife Fund Guianas (WWF-Guianas), the WWF Forest and Climate Programme, the Global Canopy Programme, and the Global Forest Observation Initiative's SilvaCarbon Program hosted a MRV lesson sharing workshop "Community-Based Monitoring, Reporting and Verification Know-How: Sharing knowledge from practice." Participants came from 15 different countries and represented governments, communities, and technical experts. More than 30 participants from Asia, Europe, America, and Africa agreed on key lessons from their experiences.

August 2015: Guyana hosts a second MRV lesson-sharing workshop, co-sponsored by the GCP, the 'REDD+ for the Guiana Shield' Program of the international arm of the French Forest Service (ONFi), and the forest services of the participating governments. This workshop corresponded to the 6th Working Group Meeting (WGM6) of the 'REDD+ for the Guiana Shield'

Program. Participants from Guyana, Suriname, French Guiana and Brazil's State of Amapa gathered to understand the concept of community-based MRV systems and discuss different ways of implementing participatory MRV in the Guiana Shield. The purpose of WGM6 was also to look at opportunities for further collaboration on this topic at a regional scale, from the perspective of a future regional project.

EXPECTED RESULTS

- The Wai Wai Kanashen community is capacitated through participatory MRV to participate in and benefit from REDD+ (and the GNA) and become a full participant in Guyana's NPAS.
- The NRDDb's capacity to share their knowledge through an indigenous community-to-community teaching model is enhanced.
- An improved participatory MRV model adapts and simplifies previous approaches to MRV for Guyana's indigenous communities; making it more accessible, replicable, and sustainable for the long term.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Six members (4 men, 2 women) of the Kanashen community have been trained as participatory MRV monitors. The participatory MRV design was shaped by the communities' values and tailored to their needs and integrated into the national MRV system.
- The Kanashen community's participatory MRV has qualified as a monitoring plan and capacity and met the outstanding requirement for inclusion in NPAS under the Protected Areas Act.
- Two international workshops were hosted that shared the lessons from Guyana's rich experience with participatory MRV.

"THIS TRAINING WAS VERY SIGNIFICANT AS IT WAS DONE IN ONE OF THE MOST REMOTE COMMUNITIES OF GUYANA... MEANING THAT A SYSTEM HAD TO BE SET UP TO ACCOMMODATE ALL THE DATA ENTRY AS WELL AS THE PROCESSING AND AUDITING RIGHT THERE ON THE GROUND, OTHERWISE THE TIME IT WOULD TAKE TO GO OUT TO GEORGETOWN OR ELSEWHERE TO VIEW THE DATA WOULD BE TOO LONG AND BECOME IRRELEVANT BY THE TIME IT COMES BACK TO THE COMMUNITY. WITH THIS IN MIND THE TRAINEES HAD INTENSE TRAINING TO ACCOMMODATE THIS ASPECT AND THEY RESPONDED WELL."

Vitus Antone, MRV consultant, WWF Guyana



CHALLENGES

- The K-COCA is located on the Brazil border in far south Guyana, nearly two hours by small chartered plane from Georgetown. It is a logistically challenging and expensive place to work. Maintaining Kanashen's participatory MRV capacity will require on-going technical and financial support. Only once a new GNA agreement is in place and opt-in is available to communities will those resources be secured.
- More than seven years since it was first identified as the mechanism for titled indigenous communities' participation in the GNA, little progress has been made in the development of the opt-in. If communities don't have the resources to support their monitors' work and keep their equipment in working order, then the progress that has been made could be lost.

OPPORTUNITIES

- The preexisting conditions – Guyana's early and innovative experience developing a MRVS to inform the GNA, the impetus to bring indigenous communities into forest monitoring under opt-in, and the first GCP/NRDDDB participatory MRV project – all provided the opportunity to test an improved participatory MRV model on the ground and generate lessons and recommendations for more widespread application.
- By equipping the Wai Wai with the tools and skills for monitoring and reporting, the participatory MRV allows them to meet the requirements for incorporating their community-owned conservation area into Guyana's NPAS and permits them to request funding from Guyana's Protected Area Trust (GPAT) to finance it.

"COMMUNITIES' KNOWLEDGE OF CONTEXT AND LOCAL DYNAMICS IS KEY TO UNDERSTAND WHY WHAT IS HAPPENING IS HAPPENING -- IN OTHER WORDS, TO CHARACTERIZE THE DRIVERS OF DEFORESTATION. IF WE DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT IS HAPPENING, WHY AND WHERE, THE COUNTRY WILL NOT BE ABLE TO DEVELOP A RESPONSIBLE MITIGATION STRATEGY, ONE THAT REALLY RESPONDS TO THE PROBLEMS THAT AFFECT FORESTS."

Naikoa Aguilar Amuchastegui, Director of Forest Carbon Science, WWF Forest and Climate

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LESSONS LEARNED

- **Build on existing and available competencies.** We staffed our project entirely with local, mostly indigenous, people with all the relevant skills, including principals of the previous participatory MRV project
- **Participatory MRV is about more than REDD+.** Participatory MRV has been developed as an element of REDD+ – providing a system to ground-truth and contextualize remotely sensed data, and a mechanism to establish social and environmental safeguard
- **Tailor the participatory MRV data collection and analysis methods to the social and technical context.** Physical isolation and remoteness, limited resources, and language are all barriers to many communities seeking to participate in the REDD+ economy. The design of participatory MRV must take into account these limitations and ensure that they are

baselines. To communities, participatory MRV's greatest value is likely to be the improved capacity to manage their own resources.

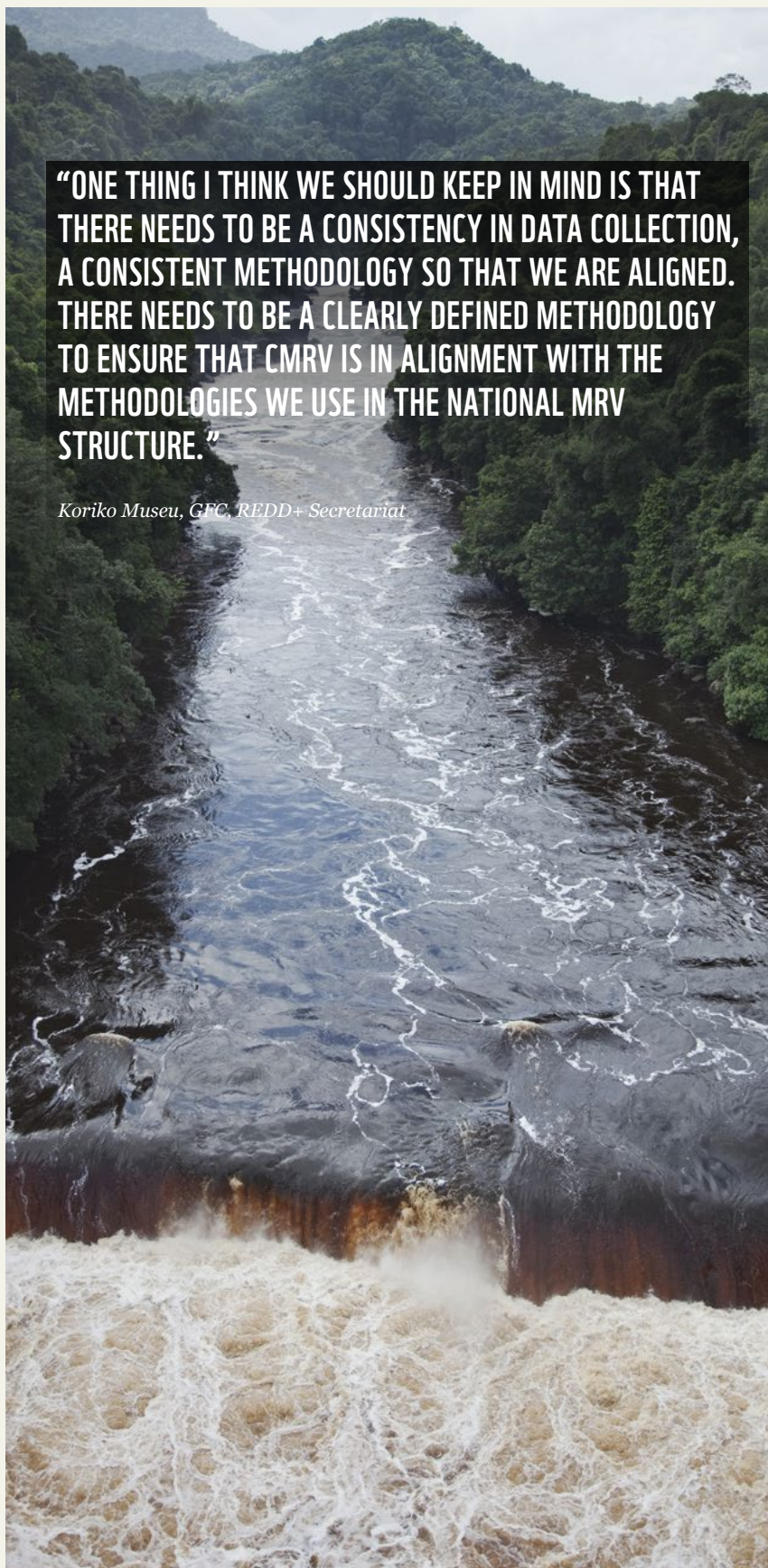
adequately addressed. For example, the Kanashen monitoring and reporting system doesn't rely on the community's unreliable and expensive internet connectivity; data is stored and analyzed on the community's computer and forms used for gathering interview data was translated into the Wai Wai language. Communities decide what type of information will be collected, how this information will be handled, who will have access to it, and for what purposes.

- **Participatory MRV is much more than technology.** Smart phones and Open Data Kit (ODK) forms are useful tools, but the skills the monitors acquire – from interview technique and survey design to data analysis and results presentation – provide the key to unlock them.
- **Creating synergies with other initiatives and institutions increases the probability of sustaining our project's contribution.** Relations with GCP, PAC, GFC, NRDDDB, ONFi and others strengthened our project and theirs. Although the monitors were fully capacitated and in possession of the appropriate technology at the end of this project, maintaining the participatory MRV capacity requires ongoing inputs – financial and, occasionally, technical resources. Opt-in, once operational, will provide long-term financing, but until it is in place, we anticipate that Guyana's Protected Areas Trust will support the participatory MRV. (Now that their monitoring and reporting system is in place, the K-COCA can be formally accepted in the NPAS.)

“ONE THING I THINK WE SHOULD KEEP IN MIND IS THAT THERE NEEDS TO BE A CONSISTENCY IN DATA COLLECTION, A CONSISTENT METHODOLOGY SO THAT WE ARE ALIGNED. THERE NEEDS TO BE A CLEARLY DEFINED METHODOLOGY TO ENSURE THAT CMRV IS IN ALIGNMENT WITH THE METHODOLOGIES WE USE IN THE NATIONAL MRV STRUCTURE.”

Koriko Museu, GFC, REDD+ Secretariat

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HIGHLIGHTS AND INNOVATIONS

- MRVS training was expanded to include data analysis and presentation tools and skills.
- Data remains in the direct control of the community, on computers in their possession.
- The indigenous community-to-community participatory MRV teaching model has great potential for replication. The project produced a series of products, including a curriculum and study plans, a poster, a video, and a monitor's handbook that will be useful as participatory MRV training is rolled out in communities in Guyana and the region.

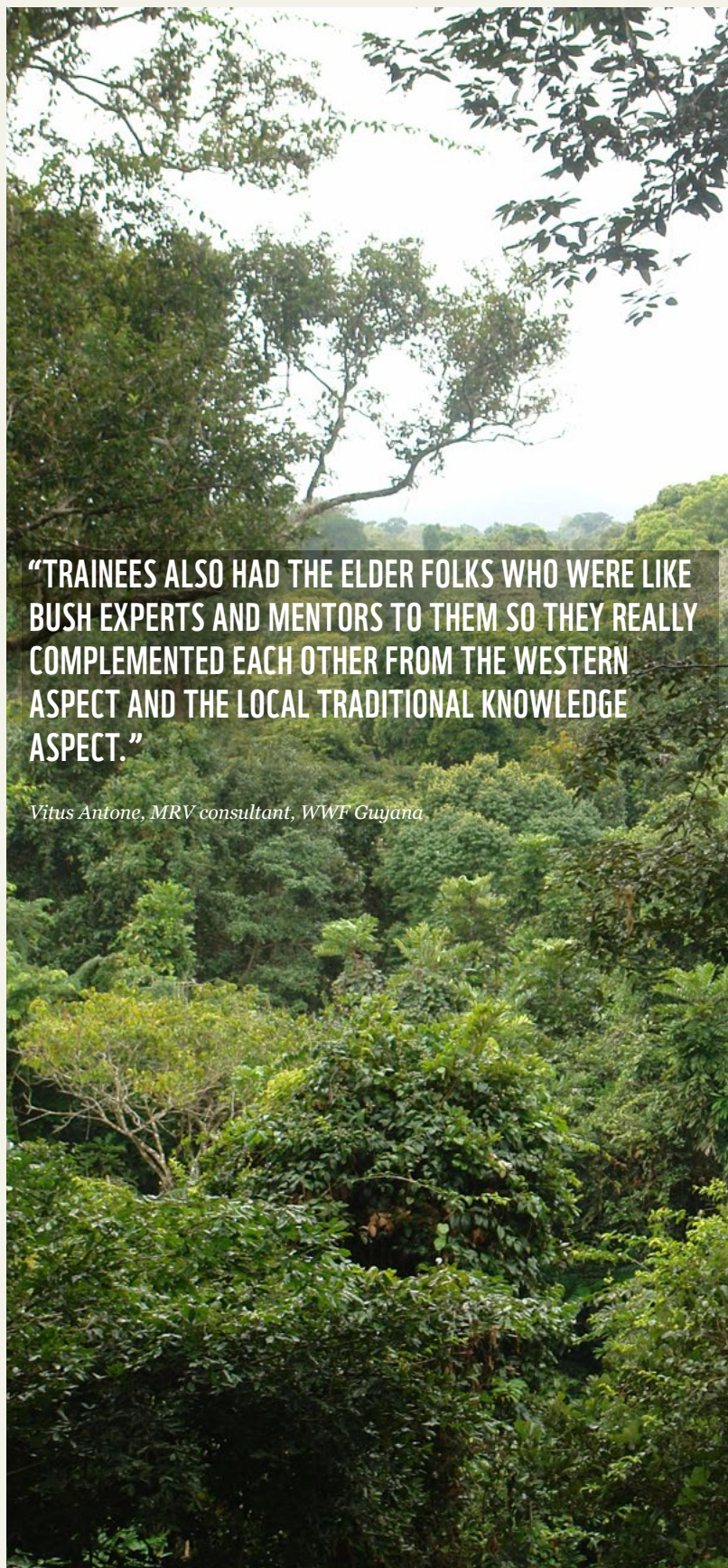
NEXT STEPS

- WWF will continue to facilitate and support the development of an opt-in mechanism in Guyana.
- Building on our existing partnerships with the NRDDDB and GFC, and with the continued support of Norad, WWF will work to bring the participatory MRV development process, and a broader opt-in readiness capacity, to 30 indigenous communities, with the goal of providing a cost-effective model for the roll out of participatory MRV and opt-in readiness training to all of Guyana's 116 titled indigenous communities.
- WWF will continue to work with NGO and government partners to share Guyana's participatory MRV experiences and lessons with the indigenous and tribal communities of Suriname.

"TRAINEES ALSO HAD THE ELDER FOLKS WHO WERE LIKE BUSH EXPERTS AND MENTORS TO THEM SO THEY REALLY COMPLEMENTED EACH OTHER FROM THE WESTERN ASPECT AND THE LOCAL TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE ASPECT."

Vitus Antone, MRV consultant, WWF Guyana

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CONCLUSION

When communities have the capacity to monitor their resources and any impacts on their lands and people, it empowers them. Participatory MRV capacity not only informs their own decision-making, it gives them information they can use to communicate their concerns and ultimately to guide regional, national, and international policies that affect the fate of whole forests. In Guyana, indigenous communities like the Wai Wai are learning to harness participatory MRV as a tool to better understand and manage their land, their choices, and their community's wellbeing and future.



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"I'M HOPING THAT AS WE GO ON INTO THE OTHER COMMUNITIES, WE CAN DEVELOP A TOOL THAT IS FLEXIBLE ENOUGH AND ABLE TO ADAPT TO ALL THE COMMUNITIES WITHIN GUYANA, AND BY EXTENSION, AROUND GUYANA. HOPEFULLY WE CAN HAVE MAYBE MULTIPLE WORKING CMRV PROJECTS IN THESE COMMUNITIES, AND HAVING THE INFORMATION COLLECTED BE USED TO INFLUENCE THE MANAGEMENT PLAN AND BETTER ENABLE THE COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO DEVELOP THEMSELVES AND WORK TOGETHER. THAT'S WHAT I'M HOPING THAT THIS WOULD BRING."

Roxroy Bollers, MRV consultant, WWF Guyana



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OUR VISION

WWF's Forest and Climate Programme works to ensure that the conservation of tropical forests as carbon stores is secured by green economic development that benefits people, the climate and biodiversity in transformational ways.

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Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.
www.panda.org/forestclimate

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