
Discussion paper

***Stronger by association:
lessons from Guyana's
forest-based associations***

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Small and medium forestry enterprises for poverty reduction and sustainability

Most international attention in forestry has been given to improving the conditions for large-scale or micro-scale forestry, and much less to the 'messy middle' – which produces a high proportion of forest products and involves huge numbers of people. Ways need to be found by which small and medium-scale forestry enterprises (SMFEs) can better contribute to reducing poverty and improving the prospects for sustainability.

IIED, with partners in Uganda, South Africa, India, Brazil, Guyana and China have been investigating these issues. Country diagnostics show that the SMFE sector is of major significance for livelihoods in these countries – the net effect of myriad small players represents a substantial part of local economies. Yet, these are largely invisible economies, and policy and programme developments almost completely ignore the SMFE sector. Raising the sector's visibility such that its impacts can be better assessed, and then going on to explore how the positive links to sustainability, livelihoods and poverty-reduction can be enhanced, is a major challenge to which this initiative seeks to rise.

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Executive summary

Guyana boasts extraordinary ecological and cultural diversity. Forests cover 75% of its total land area. Its low population density comprises 800,000 people from nine Amerindian and more than five immigrant groups. Many of these groups depend on forest products (timber and non-timber) and services (especially tourism). Growing forest degradation and shortages of commercial species have shattered any illusion of limitless forest resources. The inequity in resource access has also become a cause of major concern.

The forests of the Guyana shield are fragile. Low stocking of commercial species and slow growth rates mean that competition for these scarce resources is high. Powerful commercial interests often marginalise small and medium forest enterprises (SMFEs). Yet it is often these SMFEs that have the greatest potential to enhance local well-being. SMFEs currently occupy 31% of Guyana's productive forest estate, but make up 50% of government revenues and employ 75% of the sector's workforce.

One response to the marginalisation of SMFEs has been the formation of associations. In this paper, we treat associations broadly as any group that comes together around a common purpose. Associations play three important roles: reducing transaction costs (e.g. joint purchasing or marketing), sharing adaptive costs (developing new markets together) and shaping the policy environment (lobbying for change).

This study provides detailed information on 14 associations from seven of Guyana's 10 administrative regions. They include a diversity of types and scales of association, a wide range of forest products and services, mixed and gender specific membership models, and recent to long-standing constitutions. The study tested four hypotheses:

- Cohesion – association functionality is dependent on particularly strong mutual aspirations.
- Resilience – association functionality is dependent on the credibility and legitimacy of different types of decision-making processes and association governance.
- Equity – association functionality is dependent on the extent and adequacy of representation of different interest groups including gender representation.
- Support – association functionality is dependent on the degree to which policies and institutions are supportive.

The findings of this study are summarised below:

Cohesion – associations formed around strong, shared aspirations and mutual trust. In some cases associations formed primarily to reduce costs: negotiating joint access to land or obtaining better prices for products. In other cases, they formed to develop strategic options, such as new timber or non-timber forest products or new tourism ventures, and others still formed to shape the policy

environment, lobbying for resource access or to put their own cultural and social interests on the map. In several cases, they pursued two or more agendas. Associations tended to flourish when the shared agenda was still strong and struggled when lack of trust destroyed that shared agenda. In almost all cases, economic aims were complemented by strong social or environmental aims – commonly captured in written lists of objectives.

Resilience – decision making was often democratic in members' meetings. Active decision making depended in part on the degree to which the association's functions influenced members' livelihoods. Where the negotiation of timber product prices or the allocation of craft orders was critical to local incomes, participation was strong. For minor decisions, democratically elected leaders tended to take charge. Lack of transparency in leadership activity has been a major constraint to the development of association trust and functionality. The success and longevity of associations depends both on the quality of early leadership – and on the gradual transition to procedures that safeguard association interests (for example meticulous financial and stock records).

Equity – costs tend to be simple and hotly debated. They are either distributed equally (fixed membership fees and time for participation in meetings) or based on product sales (a percentage of sales value). Recorded benefits are much more diverse and often difficult to quantify. Respondents listed the following as benefits: basic needs (secure income, access to credit); livelihood security (stable access to markets, sick benefits); social development (improved status, education, national and international networking, community spirit); creative work (training in handicraft, reduced impact logging, tour guiding, catering etc.); aesthetic appreciation (exposure to national and international exhibitions, understanding of environmental management); and cultural identity (revival of local cultures through language, craft and displays). Two important areas emerged as requiring particular equity or justice. The first was the allocation of work in times of limited demand. The second was managing free riders, or those who over-exploit natural resources. The profitability and continued unity of associations hinged on finding acceptable solutions to both.

Support – all of the associations surveyed received external support during start-up. Some received considerable further administrative or technical support. But many continued for periods of over ten years without any significant external support. In many cases, these associations become the backbone of community activity and representation – functioning far beyond their initial mandate to provide social services to the community as a whole. Where external support was needed, it tended to come from trusted intermediaries – occasionally government departments, but more often national or international NGOs. Finding ways of reaching such associations with appropriate support is the abiding challenge for sustainable development in forested areas.

Some of the associations covered in this report are clearly upwardly mobile – with expanding membership and exciting prospects (for example the Surama Eco-tourism Enterprise). Others are based around depleted resources with stagnant markets (for example, the Orealla Loggers' Group). Both types of

association are critical to the livelihoods of rural communities in Guyana, which often have only limited options available to them. Finding ways of securing subsistence, or helping associations to expand where new opportunities allow should be critical preoccupations for external support services.

Opportunities to support SMFE associations in Guyana exist, but need to be carefully targeted on a case by case basis. In some instances, there is a need for the development of administrative and financial management skills, or even basic literacy. In other cases, sustainable natural resource management, innovative product design or technical processing options require attention. In most cases the detailed requirements are only known by association members or a few trusted intermediaries. Developing programmes that engage actively with associations and their intermediaries is an important general priority.

Acronyms and abbreviations

AHA	Amerindian Handicraft Association
AMCAR	Amazon Caribbean Limited
BCCP	Building Community Capacity Project
BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CPEC	Caribbean Program for Economic Competitiveness
DFID	Department for International Development
DGIS	Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs
FPA	Forest Products Association of Guyana
FTC	Forestry Training Centre
GFC	Guyana Forestry Commission
GMSA	Guyana Manufacturing and Services Association Limited
GMTCS	Guyana Marine Turtles Conservation Society
GNIFC	Guyana National Initiative for Forest Certification
IICA	Inter-American Institute for Cooperation for Agriculture
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
ISLA	Ituni Small Loggers' Association
ITTO	International Tropical Timber Organisation
KHA	Kabakaburi Handicraft Association
LEAP	Linden Economic Advancement Programme
MRU	Makushi Research Unit
NRDDB	North Rupununi District Development Board
NTFP	Non-timber forest product
SFP	State Forest Permit
SIMAP	Guyanese Social Impact Amelioration Programme
SMFE	Small and medium forest enterprise
TSA	Timber sales agreement
UBFPA	Upper Berbice Forest Producers' Association
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VW&GL	Variety Woods and Greenheart Ltd
WCL	Wood cutting lease

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction to small and medium scale forestry operations in Guyana

Guyana is extraordinary in the abundance and ecological diversity of its forest resources. Forests cover 75% of its total land area (215,000km²) but vary widely in terms of species composition (Thomas, 2001). Its population of less than 800,000 is also extraordinary in the extent of its cultural diversity – coastal populations of Indian, African, Chinese, English and Portuguese decent mingle with older Amerindian communities. The latter comprise a total population in excess of 60,000 and are Guyana's most rapidly growing group. The nine Amerindian groups (Arawaks, Caribs, Warrau, Makushi, Wapisiana, Wai-Wai, Akawaio, Arecuna and Patamona) are particularly prominent in the interior (Ministry of Amerindian Affairs, 2005). Many of these groups have unique traditions of coexistence with their natural environment – which usually involve hunter gathering and slash and burn agriculture – with some logging either for construction or increasingly for cash.

Guyana's low population density means that there should be abundant forest resources for rural development. Yet, forest-based livelihoods and the environment on which they depend are threatened across this social and ecological diversity. An International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO) diagnostic mission concluded in 2003:

The use currently being made of Guyana's extensive, diverse and complex forest resource is not satisfying many, if any, of the stakeholders. (ITTO, 2003)

Growing financial aspirations have put pressure on natural resources. Intermediaries who control timber market chains demand high volumes at low prices – servicing the burgeoning international demand for timber. Large industries vie against one another in a competitive scramble for markets with small chainsaw loggers and mobile sawmills. The boom in chainsaw logging is increasing competition and undermining controlled access to the forest resource (Mendes, 2004). As competition grows and pressure on the forest increases, the sustainability of forest livelihoods is jeopardised. The integrity of ecosystems on which they depend is threatened.

There is also considerable inequity in the allocation of forested land between different commercial users, which creates further pressure in particular forest areas. For example, the Barama Company alone controls approximately 30% of the productive forest estate – and has deals with other concession holders comprising a significant additional territory (see Macqueen, 2001). Powerful commercial interests often marginalise small and medium forest enterprises (SMFEs), which may have to cut social and environmental corners in order to survive. Yet it is often these SMFEs that have the greatest potential to raise financial incomes in rural areas (from the current Guyanese average GDP per

capita of only US\$ 2.2 per day) – especially since profits are not repatriated abroad. A number of significant social issues have been documented in the workforces of larger concession holders and in the surrounding communities (Applewhite *et al.*, 2000).

Another major issue is the sparse stocking and slow growth rate of Guyana's main timber species. Calculations of economic returns at sustainable harvesting levels show marginal returns at best (Landell-Mills, 1997). The heavy capital investments required to extract timber in the interior undermine profits even for larger operators such as Barama (Haden, 1999). In the silviculture systems employed by most of Guyana's logging companies, the predominant 25 year felling cycle is simply too short to allow the recovery of the forest – but calls for a sixty year felling cycle have not been taken up (Bird, 2000). That is not to say that the biodiversity of forests harvested over 25 year cycles is necessarily degraded – evidence suggests that biodiversity levels remain high (Steege *et al.*, 2001). Rather, it means that commercial sustainability is at risk. These realities present a formidable challenge for SMFEs.

Recent estimates suggest that there are approximately 750 formal SMFEs working in the wood-based sector including forest extraction companies (less than 243 km²), sawmills (less than 16,000 m³/yr) charcoal licencees, firewood producers, furniture manufacturers, timber dealers and sawpit dealers. SMFEs cover only 31% of the productive forest estate; yet employ 75% of the sector's workforce and account for 50% of government revenue (Thomas *et al.*, 2003). Guyanese individuals and families own almost 90% of SMFEs. However, some are subcontracted by larger international firms to produce logs for export orders.

Within Guyana there are several designated categories of forest use:

- *Non-allocated state land (44%)*: often because it is too far from the coast for timber or non-timber forest product (NTFP) extraction to be economically viable.
- *Non-state land (17%)*: this belongs to Amerindian groups or private individuals. Amerindian groups have autonomy in the way that they can harvest forest products.
- *Timber Sales Agreement (TSA) 24%*: issued for areas greater than 242.8 km² (60,000 acres) for periods of 10-30 years with an option for renewal. There are strict requirements for inventory, management planning and reporting.
- *Wood Cutting Lease (WCL) 2%*: issued for areas between 809.4 to 242.8 km² (20,000 to 60,000 acres) for period ranging from 5-15 years with an optional for renewal. These are gradually being phased out.
- *State Forest Permit (SFP) 9%*: issued for areas under 809.4 km² (20,000 acres) for two years. The grantee does not have exclusive rights to the area. There are simplified registration and planning requirements.
- *Exploratory permits (2%)*: issued for areas greater than 809.4 km² (20,000 acres) to accommodate new investment, on an exploratory basis for a maximum of three years. On satisfactory completion of the pre-conditions, the grantee may be awarded either a TSA or WCL.

- *Reserves (2%):* current limited to national reserves around particular areas such as Kaitour Falls.

SMFEs are normally restricted to SFP land use, unless they are based in Amerindian communities, which have full autonomy. Significant financial barriers exist for many forest-based SMFEs in Guyana. Profit margins on timber are small due to the low commercial value of the Guyana Shield Forests (Landell-Mills, 1997). Timber and non-timber crafts, oils and edible products face formidable transport difficulties the further production is from the coast. Credit is difficult to come by – especially where there is short tenure for small concessions or unproven sustainability of production from small areas. Low credit ratings reduce opportunities to invest in technology that could improve enterprise efficiency. The seasonality of harvesting operations generates cash flow problems that are particularly acute for smaller scale operations. In addition, limited staff often do not have either the time or resources to attend administrative or technical training courses where they exist. Low or variable quality and timeliness can lock SMFEs into low cost markets or niche fair trade markets.

Associations are one way in which SMFEs can overcome many of the shortcomings of a small scale. It is no surprise, therefore, to find many examples of spontaneously created associations for forest-based SMFEs. The aim of this study is to look at some examples of associations from across Guyana – recording what is working well, what challenges exist, and what practical support could be offered to make associations more profitable and socially and environmentally sustainable.

1.2 Introduction to associations and collective action

The term 'association' within Guyana denotes an official institutional organisation made up of members bound together by the Friendly Societies Act, Chapter 36: 04; the Companies Act 1991; or the Cooperative Societies Act, Chapter 88: 01. There are other statutory mechanisms that allow for the formation of associations in Guyana. However, most of the associations studied here are registered under the Friendly Societies Act. The process of registration is relatively simple and the application (made to the registrar of Friendly Societies) must meet the following requirements:

- No less than seven members (including the secretary) shall make the written application in the format laid out in the Act; and
- Two copies of the rules of the society and two lists of names of officers, all signed by the people signing the application, must be sent to the registrar along with the said application.

More complex is making sure that the aims of an association really correspond to its members' needs, and that there is sufficient leadership, institutional structure and process to make this a reality.

To register an association the following details must be supplied (Simmons, 2002):

- Name and place of office of the society.
- Objects and purposes for use of funds
- Terms of admission for members.
- Fines and forfeiture imposed on members (if any).
- The right of withdrawal of members (and the time and manner of withdrawal).
- The mode of holding meetings.
- Voting rights and the manner of making, altering or rescinding any rules.
- The appointment and removal of the management committee, treasurer and other officers.
- The investment of funds, account keeping and (at least) annual audit; annual returns to the registrar for the receipt of funds.
- Effects, expenditure and number of members.
- The inspection of books by all members.
- The manner of resolving disputes between members and the association.
- Provisions for satisfying claims on the association prior to division thereof.
- The custody and use of the seal.

The registrar of Friendly Societies reviews applications and the rules of each association and determines whether proposed associations can exist under the Act. The registrar can summon a meeting with the applicants to discuss the proposed rules/constitution. If successful, the Office of the Registrar of Friendly Societies issues a certificate of registration upon submission of documents and payment of registration fees.

In various instances external agencies have encouraged forest-based SMFEs to consider grouping together into an association. Sometimes the formation of an association can make life much easier for the authorities – it reduces the transaction costs of dealing with SMFEs. With a collective scale, associations can operate and take advantage of some of the land use regulations normally applicable only to larger enterprises. For example, the Ituni Small Loggers' Association has managed to access a TSA and the Upper Berbice Forest Producers' Association has accessed several SFPs. Both of these associations are responsible for meeting the legal requirements of the Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC) and other government agencies.

Another example is the formation of the North Rupununi District Development Board (NRDDB), which has allowed for collective discussion and decision making with the frontline stakeholders of the Iwokrama International Centre for Rain Forest Conservation and Development. In this way, 16 communities are collectively represented under this type of institutional structure. Iwokrama has also facilitated the formation of the Makushi Research Unit (MRU) to study the biodiversity and culture of the Makushi people to gain an understanding of the ecosystems and local culture. This has resulted in published research on

cassava, birds, fish, language, local stories, and a main publication on sustaining the Makushi way of life.

1.3 Conceptual framework of associations

Our conceptual framework for associations involves a wide range of groups whose formal constitution may take a number of forms – trusts; cooperatives; companies limited by guarantee, shares etc. There are a number of possible advantages to forming an association (see Figure 1). Some of these advantages relate to cost reductions – the vertical axis in Figure 1. For example, the Kabakaburi Handicraft Association, the Amerindian Handicraft Association and the Kamuni Women's Handicraft and Sewing Development Association described below, all invested in a handicraft centre to jointly store and display crafts – something that an individual would not have been able to finance on their own. Additionally, the Ituni Small Loggers' Association (ISLA) has invested in building a new office and will use part of the building as a guesthouse. They envisage earning an income from the guesthouse and employing female management staff.

Forest-based associations often suffer from extreme isolation – which can result in dependency on intermediary groups. For example, in Mabaruma it became extremely difficult to market farm produce due to the low prices offered by 'hucksters' who transport produce from remote locations to city markets. These hucksters often paid only a small proportion of the farm price, claiming that produce perishes on the trip from Mabaruma to Georgetown. Although some of the farmers travelled to Georgetown to market their produce, they were often not guaranteed access to the market since hucksters controlled transactions by offering a lower price for the goods. Therefore, most farmers in the Waini community relied on the hucksters to market their produce. When faced by high transaction costs like these, one of the only options may be to start an association to try and bypass such middlemen.

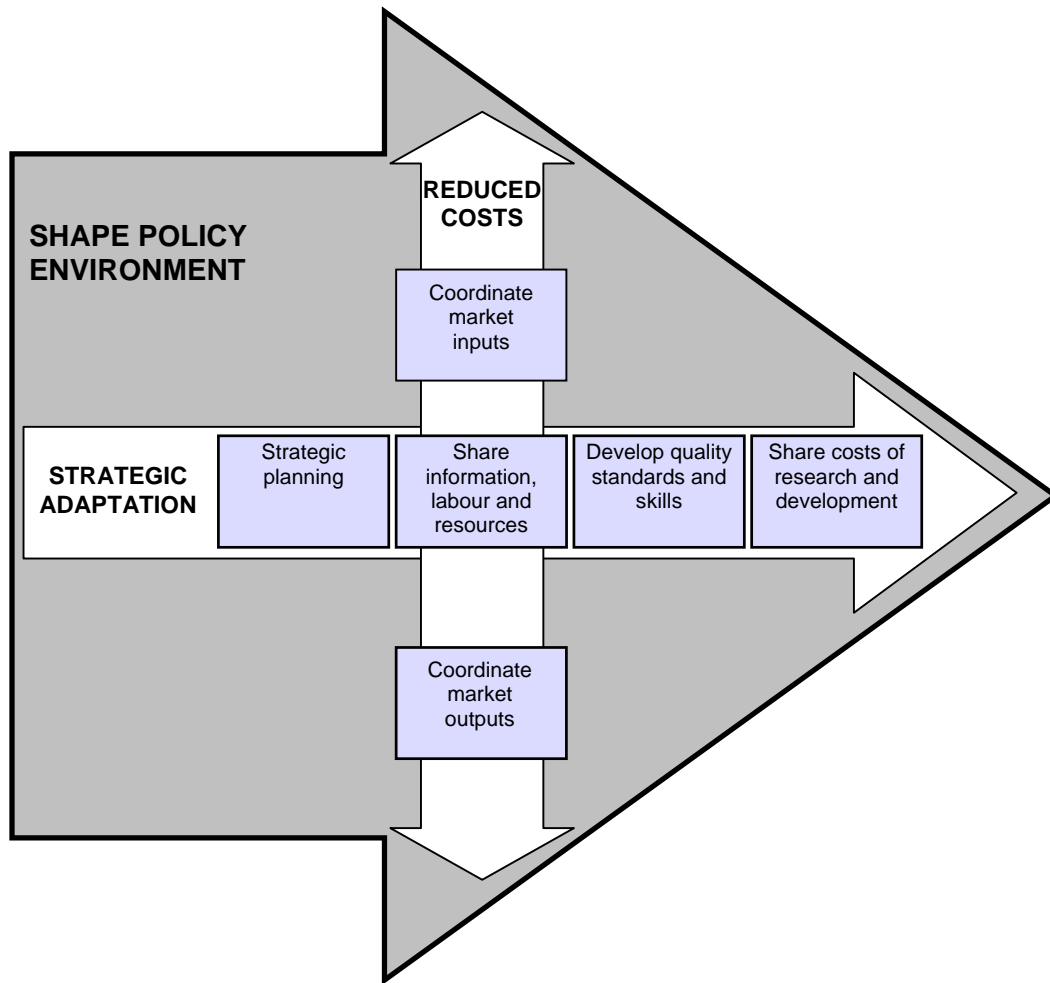
Another set of advantages relate to strategic cooperation between SMFEs to develop new market opportunities – reflected in the horizontal axis of Figure 1. For example, members of the Orealla Fruit Cheese Women's Association jointly researched markets and packaging for new products.

Going beyond static and adaptive advantages – some associations form to change the policy environment within which SMFEs operate. For example, the Forest Products Association of Guyana and the Guyana Manufacturing and Services Association Limited formed effective lobby groups to represent different types of forest enterprise within Guyana.

In this report we include analysis of both internal factors and external support mechanisms that contribute to or impede association success. The aim was to test four main hypotheses:

- Cohesion – association functionality is dependent on particularly strong mutual aspirations.
- Resilience – association functionality is dependent on the credibility and legitimacy of different types of decision-making processes and association governance.
- Equity – association functionality is dependent on the extent and adequacy of representation of different interest groups including gender representation.
- Support – association functionality is dependent on the degree to which policies and institutions are supportive.

Figure 1. The possible advantages of forming an association



Source: Macqueen *et al.*, 2005

2. Methodology

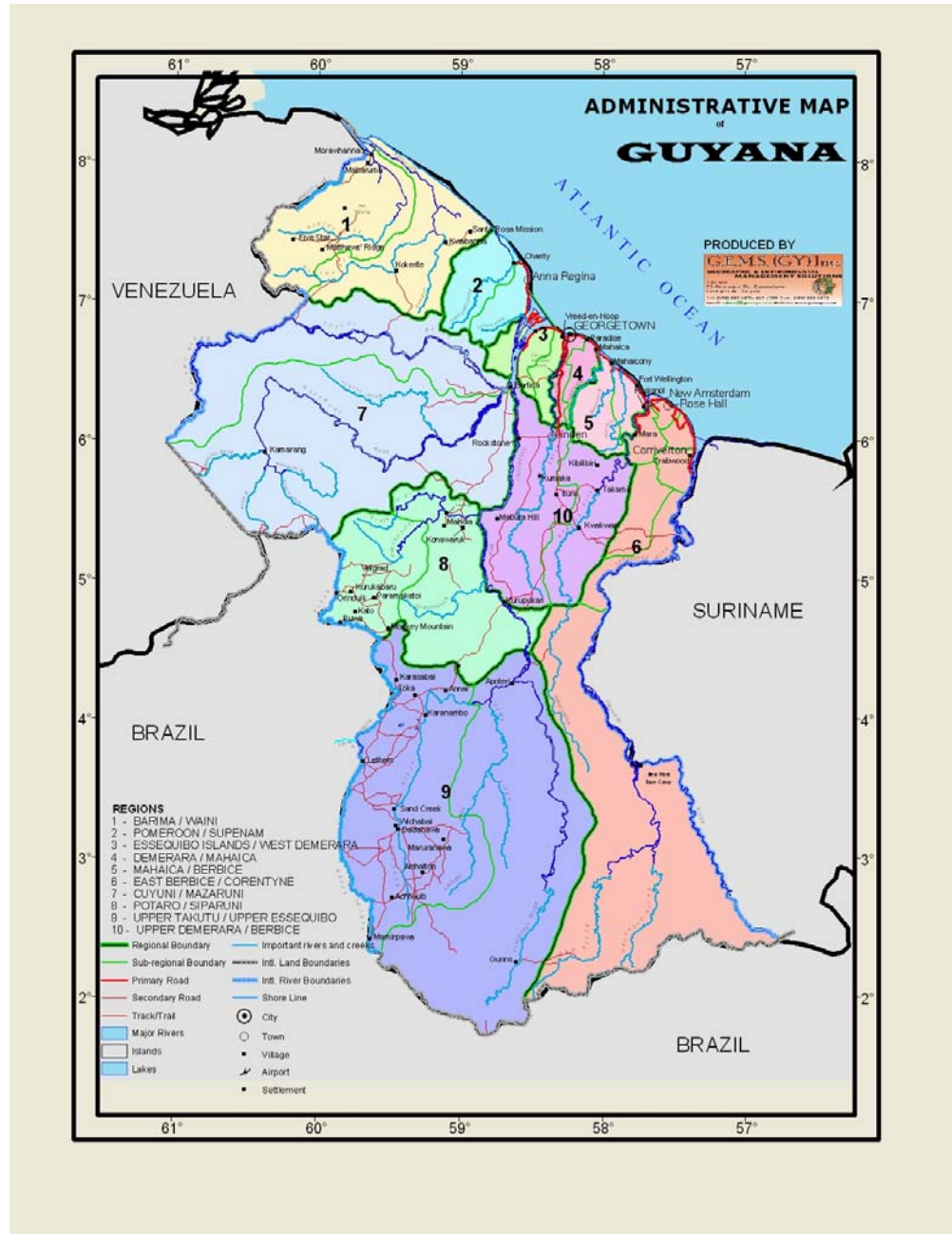
2.1 Sample of associations studied

This study analyses 14 associations from seven of Guyana's 10 administrative regions. Table 1 indicates the names and regional locations of each association. Figure 2 shows the locations of Guyana's 10 administrative regions.

Table 1. Associations covered in this report

Name of association	Location	Type of association
Kabakaburi Handicraft Association	Kabakaburi Mission, Pomeroon River, Region 2	Handicraft – NTFPs
Kamuni Women's Handicraft and Sewing Development Association	Santa Aratack Amerindian Settlement, WBD, Region 3	Handicraft – NTFPs and some timber products
Amerindian Handicraft Association	St. Cuthbert's Mission, Region 4	Handicraft – NTFPs and some timber products
Orealla Fruit Cheese Women's Association	Orealla Village, Region 6	Agro-processing
Orealla Loggers' Group		Community logging
Orealla Women's Group		Provide income for women through sewing and handicraft
Surama Eco-tourism Enterprise	Surama Village, Region 9	Community-based tourism
North Rupununi District Development Board	Bina Hill Institute, Annai, Region 9	Community development, natural resources management, sustainable business development, advocacy, training
Makushi Research Unit	Bina Hill Institute, Annai, Region 9	Traditional knowledge-based products; development and research
Informal Group of Waini Crabwood Seed Collectors	Waini, Region 1	Extraction of seeds and processing of oil – NTFP
Upper Berbice Forest Producers' Association	Kwakwani, Region 10	Community logging
Ituni Small Loggers' Association	Ituni, Region 10	Community logging
Forest Products Association of Guyana	Georgetown, Region 4	Representing the forestry sector
Guyana Manufacturing and Services Association Ltd	Georgetown, Region 4	Representing the manufacturing and services sectors

Figure 2. The 10 administrative regions of Guyana and some of the SMFE study locations



Source: courtesy of Geographic and Management Solutions (GY) Inc.

The associations, their leadership and affiliates were selected and targeted for survey based upon a set of informal criteria agreed in advance at a meeting with the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) in February 2005. The main criteria used to inform the sampling of associations were as follows:

- The sample should cover a range of scales – from national, industrial focused associations through to small, local associations restricted to single communities.
- The sample should cover as wide a range of forest products and services as possible (for example, both timber and non-timber forest products – in both the manufacturing and processing sectors).
- The sample should pay particular attention to gender issues and include associations with a particular relevance to women as well as men.
- The sample should cover as full a range of geographical and ecological contexts within Guyana as possible subject to available resources.
- The sample should include both long-standing associations and more recent associations – provided there is some ongoing activity.

A number of options were discussed. A formal choice was made and associations were grouped into regional areas. In each case initial contact was established with the leaders – and a date and time agreed for a discussion process. In many instances, because of the geographical spread of associations, this involved field visits. Permission was always sought before interviews commenced. No leadership refused us permission to survey members.

For each association we were careful to undertake a process of discussion that had been agreed in advance with the association leaders. This normally involved separate interviews with association leaders and a longer process with association members – often involving working groups to consider a set of questions. Our aim was to ensure adequate representation from within the association.

Table 2. List of associations and estimated number of members and number of interviews held

Data collection method	Association	No. of interviews	Total no. of members	% of members interviewed
Workshop and questionnaires	Kabakaburi Handicraft Association (KHA)	20 (incl. ex-members)	12	100%
Workshop and questionnaires	Kamuni Women's Handicraft and Sewing Development Association	21	48	44%
Workshop and questionnaires	Amerindian Handicraft Association (AHA)	26	35	74%
Workshop	Orealla Loggers' Group	37	100	37%
Workshop	Ituni Small Loggers' Association (ISLA)	11	56	20%
Workshop and questionnaires	Upper Berbice Forest Producers' Association (UBFPA)	21	122	17%
Community meeting and questionnaire	Informal Group of Waini Crabwood Seed Collectors	18 (community meeting)	32	56%
Discussion	Orealla Fruit Cheese Women's Association	4	12	33%
Discussion	Makushi Research Unit (MRU)	5	13	39%
Discussion	Surama Eco-tourism Enterprise	11	11	100%
Discussion	Orealla Women's Group	10	25	40%
Questionnaires	North Rupununi District Development Board (NRDDB)	7	36	19%
Questionnaires	Forest Products Association of Guyana (FPA)	5	62	16%
Questionnaires	Guyana Manufacturing and Services Association Limited (GMSA)	10	105	10%

2.2 Nature of the discussion and data collection process

Descriptions prepared in this document are taken from the findings of a survey of association leaders and a subsequent discussion process with association members.

Leaders, ordinary members and in some instances, ex-members and potential members of associations attended the survey meetings. A list of the associations surveyed and the methods of data collection are provided in Table 2. In most instances, the leader of the community or the association opened and chaired the one-day discussion. This was followed by a short presentation on the purpose of the project and review of the day's agenda by the GNIFC (Guyana National Initiative for Forest Certification) research coordinator.

The research coordinator generally facilitated short brainstorming sessions to allow participants to identify the objectives, activities, benefits and achievements of their association. The brainstorming sessions were normally conducted in groups of twos or threes depending on the number of participants.

Working group sessions were subsequently convened in four areas loosely following a questionnaire format: tracing the history of the association; the role of supporting organisations; association membership; and association management. The facilitator, along with a knowledgeable member of the association, assigned each participant to a particular working group after studying the detailed information provided on the registration forms. This process was flexible and allowed any participant to switch groups. This process was extremely sensitive and challenging since both the ordinary members and association leaders were meeting together to discuss issues regarding their association. This process was managed carefully to allow for transparency, honesty, and openness and to ensure a balance between the opinions of the different group members.

Final activities generally involved a 'hopes and fears' session and closing remarks from the floor. In a few instances, the facilitator conducted the hopes and fears session immediately after the opening session. This session involved giving each participant a coloured card to list one hope and one fear for the association. The participants were asked not to write their names on the card for purposes of anonymity, and participants were not shown each other's cards (to avoid identification of feedback through handwriting etc.). This anonymous session was another way of compiling information that participants may not have felt comfortable sharing or expressing during the discussion process. The facilitator read aloud the contents of each card to all participants (but only if there was a large enough number of participants at the meeting to prevent members from guessing who made which remarks).

3. Survey results and analysis

3.1 Cohesion – reasons behind the formation of association

Globalisation has brought with it an increasing pace of change – often resulting simultaneously in new opportunities and increasingly fierce market competition. Previous studies have observed that successful associations are not those that have been protected from competition, but those that are accustomed to commercialisation, have a genuine competitive advantage and that fully own their group's activities (Baviskar and Attwood, 1995; Shah, 1995). Associations that focus initially on one core activity have been seen to be more successful than those that spread their activities over multiple complex objectives (Harper and Roy, 2000).

In the Guyanese forestry sector, it was possible to discern three different types of association within the sample. The first type involved individuals or family groups without paid employment who established an association as a joint enterprise (associations as a form of enterprise). The second type involved already established SMFEs that joined together to confer some particular advantage on their existing enterprises (associations as an umbrella for multiple enterprises). The third type was not necessarily formed to pursue entrepreneurial activities, but to secure rights in general – of which entrepreneurial activity was one component (associations as cultural champions).

Examples of the first type (association as a form of enterprise) are the Orealla Fruit Cheese Women's Association, the Informal Group of Waini Crabwood Seed Collectors and the Surama Eco-tourism Enterprise. These associations were formed to provide or improve the livelihoods of members – often involving new employment opportunities. Such associations also tended to include aims of contributing to the socio-economic well-being of the overall community. For example, the Orealla Fruit Cheese Women's Association was formed to provide employment for the women in the community while supporting the development of Orealla farming activities. The Informal Group of Waini Crabwood Seed Collectors formed to develop crabwood oil production as a means of employing community members – but spin off benefits have come from increased awareness of the Waini community through frequent visits by organisations, and boat transport for the evacuation of sick people from remote locations. The Surama Eco-tourism Enterprise was likewise formed to provide an income for particular members of the community whilst also serving to revive the Makushi culture through language, food, craft, songs, poems and local plays/skits.

Examples of the second type of association (associations as an umbrella for multiple enterprises) include the logging associations (ISLA and UBFPA), that were formed to access forested land for existing enterprises. In the instance of the Orealla Loggers' Group (Amerindian community), the loggers required assistance from the village council to negotiate prices for products and to represent the loggers and thus prevent exploitation. The various handicraft

associations were established to pursue activities such as training, to negotiate better prices and jointly market produce for the members and to access food hampers (e.g. KHA).

Examples of the third type (association as cultural champions) include NRDDB and MRU. NRDDB was established to bring together North Rupununi community representatives to ensure rights, roles and responsibilities in the decision-making process governing the Iwokrama programme. NRDDB is the legitimate community representative that oversees and monitors the activities of Iwokrama, other organisations and government agencies and ensures that community interests are enshrined in all programmes. MRU was established to study the traditional Makushi way of life including language, food, craft, biodiversity, ethno-medicine, hunting, fishing and farming.

Some of the main reasons for forming the different types of association are summarised as follows:

Type 1: Associations as a form of enterprise

- Provide new employment opportunities for members
- Increase income for those members

Type 2: Associations as umbrella for multiple enterprises

- Fight for access to lands or forest resources
- Negotiate better prices for products in the marketplace
- Access training, for example on handicraft making and directional felling
- Represent members' interests in policy discussions

Type 3: Associations as cultural champions

- Work for the revival of indigenous culture
- Secure community interests, decision-making powers and ensure community development
- Conduct research into biodiversity, ethnobotany, Makushi culture

Each of the three types of association also formed to assist community development or to ensure environmental management. The general objectives of most of the associations included the following:

- Contributing to community development in various forms: for example, handicraft associations mobilise and organise self-help projects in cleaning, weeding, vector spraying and generally keeping surroundings clean; assist with small donations for sick people; assist with loans; mandatory self-help activities (at least one day per week). The Orealla Loggers' Group assists with building roads; cleaning the surroundings; maintaining a community wharf; and upkeep of reservation boundaries. Logging associations also assist with loans and donations to sick people.

- Targeting social beneficiaries: handicraft associations ensure that out-of-school young people, women and pensioners benefit from skills-based training to earn a livelihood. Women are empowered to earn an income and opportunities are provided for them to meet and discuss issues affecting families etc.
- Meeting environmental standards: as part of its programme, the Kamuni Women's Handicraft and Sewing Development Association tries to promote non-harvesting of its palms near creeks and rivers, and traditional management of its palm forests. Logging associations (mainly UPFPA and ISLA) have received training on directional felling and reduced impact logging from the Forestry Training Centre (FTC). They also try to meet GFC's Code of Practice. All of the logging associations have received training on the National Forest Certification Standard for Guyana. Most association members recognise the importance of natural resource management and the impacts of poorly managed forests.
- Retaining cultural identity: the Surama Eco-tourism Enterprise incorporated a revival of the Makushi culture into its programme of work whilst focusing on raising incomes and livelihoods. MRU documented traditional knowledge on the Makushi people and the environment and raised awareness around the importance of their culture. The Informal Group of Waini Crabwood Seed Collectors realised the importance of traditional oil-making techniques to capture markets. Handicraft associations use traditional knowledge to make handicrafts, for example, stripping and boiling tibusiri to ensure good quality craft products. These associations have raised some awareness of traditional management practices of NTFPs.

3.2 Resilience – credibility and legitimacy of decision making

Previous studies of the factors that determine the success of joint enterprises have highlighted the need for autonomy from political interference, the centrality of strong leadership, good participatory processes and frequent well-attended meetings (Harper and Roy, 2000). The importance of an 'internal locus of control' (not controlled from outside) driven by the performance demands of its members, and honest relationships between leadership and members have also been highlighted (Shah, 1995).

Within Guyanese SMFE associations we also noted the importance of strong leadership. But there are additional factors worthy of note – for example, the need for participatory processes as a tool to ensure transparency and trust – and the importance of the gradual evolution of rules and procedures to ensure smooth association functioning even in the absence of strong leadership. It was also observed that where associations govern activities that are crucial to people's livelihoods, decision making by members was much more actively pursued.

Many of the associations (for example the various handicraft associations) reported that decisions are made democratically. However, in reality, and except for very contentious issues, decisions are usually made by association leaders in response to points raised by members. For example the Kamuni Women's Handicraft and Sewing Development Association holds annual elections for members to appoint an executive body. Leaders are chosen on the basis of their interests in the association and must be paid-up members. The executive body meets once a month to deal with day-to-day issues. The members meet every quarter to discuss issues of greater substance and concern. Impromptu meetings are also held as the need arises.

In some instances there is a formal split between leadership and membership decision making, depending on the type of decision in question. For example, the management committee of the Orealla Fruit Cheese Women's Association makes decisions about work regulation and business procedures (quorum of two thirds). But the general membership (quorum of two thirds) takes decisions on all other matters at general meetings.

In other associations decisions are shaped by the leadership, but taken by the members. For example, in the Ituni and Upper Berbice logging associations, decisions and rules are made by the leadership and put forward for approval by members. Loggers are more active in association decision making since these associations make a significant contribution to livelihoods in their respective communities.

Associations that act as cultural champions (for example NRDDDB and MRU in Region 9) are well organised and take decisions democratically. The NRDDDB structure is a democratic model and allows for a fair and open decision-making process. MRU makes decisions through consensus. The Surama Eco-tourism Enterprise works for the benefit of the community and the village council decides on employment and general guidelines for tourism in the community.

In only a few instances, the democratic nature of the association was somewhat less apparent. For example, in the case of the Informal Group of Waini Crabwood Seed Collectors, the decision on pricing of seeds and other matters is decided by the oil producer.

In all of the associations (with the exception of the Surama Eco-tourism Enterprise and the Informal Group of Waini Crabwood Seed Collectors) leaders are elected by members. Each association has specific requirements/criteria for electing leaders.

The majority of associations have written rules with the exception of the Informal Group in Region 1. The researchers were unable to confirm whether the Orealla Women's Group and the Orealla Fruit Cheese Women's Association have written rules. The frequency of association meetings is summarised in Table 3.

Table 3. Frequency of association meetings

Association	Leaders' meetings	Members' meetings
KHA	Once a month	Once a week
AHA	Once a month	Once a month
Kamuni Women's Handicraft and Sewing Development Association	Once a month	Quarterly
ISLA	Once a month	Quarterly
UBFPA	Once a month	Once a month
Orealla Loggers' Group	Once a week	
NRDDB	Once a month (minimum)	Quarterly
Surama Eco-tourism Enterprise	For specific projects and planning events	
MRU	Leader attends NRDDB meeting once every two months	Meets on specific projects
Informal Group of Waini Crabwood Seed Collectors	Informal meetings with individuals	
Orealla Women's Group	Unknown	Unknown
Orealla Fruit Cheese Women's Association	Bi-monthly	Twice a year
Forest Products Association of Guyana	Once a month	Annually and at special meetings
Guyana Manufacturing and Services Association Limited	Once a month	Annually and at special/ sub-sector group meetings

The penalty for failing to attend meetings varies, depending on the type of association. Examples of penalties include:

- Refusal of permission to log forests (Orealla Loggers' Group) if a logger misses meetings or fails to carry out mandatory work.
- Payment of GY\$300 to rejoin KHA if a member misses three consecutive meetings.
- Under the new by-laws, NRDDB members are penalised if they miss two consecutive meetings by progressive measures: 1) written warning, 2) censure by the board, 3) suspension of benefits and 4) suspension of membership.
- Loss of membership status if members fail to supply craft to the association for a period exceeding three months (Kamuni Women's Handicraft and Sewing Development Association).

The success and longevity of most associations was perceived by members to be directly linked to a combination of strong leadership and management skills. These are essential to inspire trust and resolve conflicts. In many cases this strong leadership has also led to the development of clear rules and procedures that reduced conflicts and improved functionality. For example, the Kamuni Women's Handicraft and Sewing Development Association established in 1993, has strong leadership and managerial capacity and ensures that meticulous

financial and stock records of each transaction are available. This engenders trust, confidence and support from association members. The executive body rigorously assesses the quality of craftwork to maintain the high standards associated with craft from Santa Mission. Members are expected to produce high quality craftwork and upgrade their skills through training provided by more experienced members, they are also required to produce craftwork every quarter for sale through the association. Since 1993, the village's main and sustained source of income has been the sale of craft through the association. This has led to greater social and economic security, including the provision of loans and assistance to sick people. Members also recognise the need for proper management of its palm forests and emphasise traditional rules for harvesting of resources.

Over the years, the community-based Surama Eco-tourism Enterprise, established in 1998, has developed stronger leadership and management skills and effectively dealt with the hopes, challenges and fears of the community to cope with a new type of business enterprise. The enterprise has learned from previous mistakes and works with the Surama village council to ensure benefits for the community. The enterprise committee keeps accurate financial and tourism records for transparency and accountability purposes. The committee has developed rules and guidelines for both tourists and the community. The community has learned from its mistakes of encouraging tourism without control or management systems in place. Previously, for example, most households wanted to provide tours to their area but this led to photographers wanting to film Amerindians in traditional clothing which caused alarm and serious concerns within the community. This experience made the community appreciate the efforts of the committee – and the risks of unplanned and uncontrolled tourism. Initiatives by the committee include introducing strict rules for filming and a filming fee. Most of the community is now supportive of the enterprise since many people are confident in the leadership and management of the business. Villagers are able to clearly see the benefits of tourism, such as the per capita tourist tax which goes towards the village council and emergency assistance, and the recent purchase of a minibus (for use by the community and pick-up of tourists from the local airstrip in exchange for a fee). Additionally, the committee reports on all financial matters and is able to show how funds are utilised

For future security, it seems important that leadership skills translate into well-established managerial processes. One of the ways in which an association is bound together is through carefully planned meetings. Too regular meetings risk exhausting the good will of members. Too infrequent – and members pay insufficient attention to association issues. It is useful if these meetings can be linked to existing community functions. For example, the Orealla Loggers' Group meets with the village council once a week and provides community services such as village cleaning, maintenance of logging roads and the community wharf, contributions to an emergency fund for sickness and upkeep of reservation boundaries.

In some other instances associations have subjected themselves to external review, which can prove a useful tool in learning how to improve institutional

structure. For example, NRDDB's structure is currently being reviewed and members have supported a recommendation to employ an executive director. For the first year of this role, the position will be funded by the Canadian International Development Agency's (CIDA) Building Community Capacity Project (BCCP). The executive director will report to NRDDB's board and executive committee on progress and implementation of the workplan, problems encountered in implementation and decisions and actions taken. The method of delivering meetings has also been reviewed and NRDDB will be making some changes.

3.3 Equity – distribution of costs and benefits

Shah (1995) noted the importance of associations being responsive to members' needs. The ability to respond to needs depends in part on the fair allocation of costs. The main costs associated with association membership are listed below:

- Initial joining fees, e.g. KHA charges GY\$100 to join.
- Periodic membership fees, e.g. KHA demands GY\$20 per month.
- Percentage tax on sale of products, e.g. KHA demands 5% on products valued at more than GY\$500.
- Time to attend meetings – with penalties for missed meetings, e.g. KHA demands a further GY\$300 to rejoin the association if a member misses meetings.
- 'Voluntary' social contributions, e.g. the Orealla Loggers' Group meets every Monday to do voluntary social work.

Benefits to association members are much more varied and can be grouped under a series of headings relating to human well-being:

Basic needs

- Secure incomes for families
- Access to micro-credit/loans

Livelihood security

- Stable access to markets
- Sick benefits/assistance

Social development

- Education, schools, scholarships
- Established local, national and international partnerships – with numerous government agencies, institutions, and civil society organisations
- Fostering of community togetherness especially among women – self-help

Creative work

- Employment

- Skills-based training – handicraft, sewing, cake decoration, reduced impact logging, tour guiding, research skills, forest inventory, catering, hospitality etc.
- Leadership development – management, financial management, leadership skills
- Participation at local, national and international meetings and workshops

Aesthetic appreciation

- Exposure to national and international exhibitions
- Understanding of environmental management
- Replanting of its palm forest (St. Cuthbert's Mission)

Cultural identity

- Revival of local cultures through language, craft and displays
- Improved social status for local researchers and recognition of women's knowledge

In terms of equity there are two critical challenges. The first has to do with the allocation of productive opportunities when market demand is low – or when market demand is high but natural resources are scarce. The second has to do with controlling 'free-riders' – non-members who try to take advantage of association benefits.

Allocating scarce productive opportunities is never easy. For the Orealla Loggers' Group, timber resources are allocated by the village council for Amerindian lands. With valuable resources such as timber, it is vital that the association's harvesting activities do not threaten ecological sustainability. Individual members must respect collective interests and not harvest above their quota. The Orealla Loggers' Group is now trying to actively enforce a quota system for resource extraction in community lands to meet the need for resource management planning. ISLA and UBFPFA follow the requirements of GFC. These associations have to submit a forest management plan, an annual plan and other plans as required by GFC. These documents set out the annual allowable cut and other guidelines for resource management. ISLA and UBFPFA leaders decide the quota per member based on the number of tags issued by GFC.

The executive body of the Kamuni Women's Sewing and Development Association decides which member should meet an order based on the skills of the crafter and the type of craft they normally produce. For example, some members specialise in baskets, jewellery, dolls etc. The price paid for each handicraft is dependent on the quality of work and overall finish of the product. However, there are difficulties enforcing this rule and frequent disagreements. Association leaders encourage further training to improve product quality by identifying areas that require improvement and encouraging junior crafters to work with more experienced members.

The Surama Eco-tourism Enterprise tries to implement a system whereby the village council decides who should be employed for each group of tourists.

There is a rotational system that gives qualified and trained people equal chances of earning an income. The enterprise committee ensures that employees have enough time to carry out traditional activities such as farming, craft making, fishing and hunting, based on the collective village decision that total dependence on a cash economy normally disrupts traditional life.

Resolving the problem of free riders is another challenge. There are some non-members who are able to take advantage in a few of the associations, for example, by getting their craft sold through other members. The Kamuni Women's Handicraft and Sewing Development Association does not face this problem since almost 95% of households are association members. This association actively encourages membership and promotes handicraft work at local and national levels. Yet in the Amerindian Handicraft Association there is a growing reluctance to pay the 10% fee on each craft item sold and many former members now sell their craft through other traders. In part, the problem is due to lack of trust in the use of association funds due to poor record keeping. The association has declined in numbers from 200 to 35.

In the case of ISLA, a few members were caught transporting the produce of non-members. In such cases, ISLA's executive body normally penalises both the member and non-member by charging a fine following a detailed investigation of the matter.

Another significant issue is a lack of trust, which can develop when financial dealings are not completely transparent. For example, some members of the Orealla Loggers' Group complain over the lack of price rises for logs over the last eight years despite rises in fuel and food prices. Questions have also been raised over whether the association's leaders are spending money as reported to the members. The Orealla village council was recently audited resulting in the election of several new village councillors and a new leader due to the mismanagement of funds and inaccurate record keeping.

All of the associations surveyed, with the exception of the Informal Group of Waini Crabwood Seed Collectors, have joint asset investments in one or more of the following: offices, buildings, computer equipment, sewing machines, carpentry equipment, agro-processing equipment, generators, guest houses, tourist accommodation, bank accounts, training investments, Radio Pawiomak, intellectual property rights, publications. The members of the Kamuni Women's Sewing and Development Association contribute towards a fund for the upkeep and maintenance of the craft centre. The funds from KHA and AHA are also utilised to maintain the building. Sales of MRU's work have contributed towards other projects for North Rupununi. The assets of each association are managed by its executive body.

Establishing clear rules and transparent records for decision making pays dividends in the long run. The precedent set by prior decisions acts to strengthen just outcomes in future situations. It is notable that the most successful associations studied here have paid careful attention to the accurate keeping of records.

3.4 Support – adequacy of external institutional and policy help

Almost all of the associations surveyed could not have been established, or in some cases functioned, without external support. These associations often lack critical resources and skills, for example:

- Technical know-how
- Tools and other basic assets
- Credit
- Financial and managerial skills
- Building facilities
- Negotiation skills
- Market information
- Legal advice to prepare and submit documents to register the association, and to foster collaboration with key government and other institutions on environmental standards and other areas

For example, in terms of technical know-how, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation for Agriculture (IICA) funded several training courses for KHA members in pottery making, joinery/carpentry, sewing and craft making using nibbi, tibisiri, and mukru. Two local trainers from Santa Mission, Region 3, conducted the sewing training. This combination of external funding and local intermediaries delivering required inputs has been repeated across several associations. In many cases, local entrepreneurs have some basic knowledge of skills such as handicraft, but require finance for technical design training to access more lucrative markets. In some cases there is a need for an initial catalyst for association formation. For example, the Guyanese Social Impact Amelioration Programme (SIMAP) provided food items to KHA members for three years, which served as an incentive to join the association.

External support has been necessary for some associations to obtain access to land and forest resources. For example, logging associations gained land from GFC following external legal advice on how to organise members and set rules and guidelines such that the associations could become entities with which government services could engage.

In exceptional cases, the lack of formal constitution has proved a barrier to external (particularly government) support agencies. For example, external support has not been provided to the Orealla Loggers' Group or the Informal Group of Waini Crabwood Seed Collectors as both are not formally registered.

It is not always obvious support (finance, business management etc) that is required. For example, MRU received training on research techniques to collect and analyse data and other information and its members are now able to earn an income from this skill.

All of the associations surveyed (except the Orealla Loggers' Group) were initiated with external support. External support has ranged from providing motivation to technical and financial inputs. For example the infrastructure for the

Orealla Fruit Cheese Women's Association was funded by a Belgian foundation. This initial investment was necessary to set up an agro-processing business and provide an income for Amerindian women from the Orealla-Siparuta community and to support Orealla farming activities by purchasing fruit from the local farmers and curbing the over harvesting of timber resources in village lands. In addition, 12 people received outside training in agro-processing techniques to make fruit cheese from local fruits. These products are gaining recognition locally and from the overseas Guyanese community as a result of their high quality and unique packaging.

Almost all of the associations studied here have required some type of support before becoming fully independent and functional. The Region 10 logging associations were initiated by GFC to facilitate an organised and legal group to manage communal forest lands. The members of these associations readily agreed to become an organised body since doing so enabled them to acquire land from GFC. These associations became completely independent after receiving initial technical and financial assistance from GFC for legal registration purposes. Although they are currently unable to purchase heavy duty logging machinery, both of these associations are self-sufficient enough to employ one to four full time employees and pay legal and technical consultants to prepare forest management plans and other legal documents. They have also built their own offices and a guesthouse and made significant contributions to community development projects. UBFPA contributes GY\$35,000 per month to the Community Forestry Development Committee.

Most of the handicraft associations surveyed received initial funding from external agencies to construct craft centres and purchase machinery. They also benefited from skills-based training programmes to support self-dependency for their members.

All of the associations have managed to survive following initial, crucial, external support and most have functioned for at least five to 10 years. These associations have been able to continue their activities and help provide an income for the majority of their members.

An important lesson learned from this study is that the nature of support, its timing and duration, have all varied enormously and were very specific to the objectives and activities of each association in question. In many instances support came from trusted intermediary groups (for example NGOs or religious groups) rather than from central government authorities. For example the Red Thread Women's Organisation provided finance and advice to establish the Kamuni Women's Handicraft and Sewing Development Association. This emphasises the need for central government programmes that include these trusted intermediaries – who are often much more effective at reaching remote rural locations than government services.

3.5 Summary

The importance of local associations for communities is reflected in the proportion of households that normally benefit, either directly or indirectly in their particular locality. For example, members of the Kamuni Women's Handicraft and Sewing Development Association represent 90-95% of households in Santa Mission village. Members of the Orealla Loggers' Group comprise 50% of all households in Orealla.

These associations provide environmental, socio-economic and cultural benefits for the wider community. While it is understood that most associations form to meet economic needs, it is also true to say that the spin-off benefits are of equal importance to the lives of the wider community. Due to the associations' awareness of the specific needs and realities that communities encounter, these social, cultural and environmental benefits enhance lives in a way that many donor projects cannot. In some associations, the existence of an institutional structure allows for further development work, for example, working on alcohol and domestic abuse as an extension of social welfare projects. Association members from MRU have been able to earn money for research work on health projects.

Most associations here have been able to carve out a niche based on the particular skills and resources of the local people. This has enabled many associations to continue for up to 10 years after initial external support has concluded. In most of the communities surveyed, there are hardly any other significant livelihood activities taking place. The importance of these associations and their capacity to make a significant contribution to community life should not be underestimated.

It is fair to say, that in most communities, associations are the backbone of community representation and assistance in the provision of social services. The possibilities for development are endless if associations are given the necessary support, as their interests are both self-serving and communally driven. Association members live within communities and work and support family dependents. Therefore, it is recommended that support around capacity building, training, management of natural resources, provision of loans, market access and development of timber and non-timber products is given directly to the associations. Associations do not seek dependency on external agencies (including donors) – but where it is required, it should be based on a locally driven process and agenda.

4. Detailed descriptions of 14 forest-based associations in Guyana

4.1 Kabakaburi Handicraft Association (KHA)

4.1.1 Tracing the history of KHA

KHA is a small association that was formed in May 1994 with approximately 20 members. The association was founded by Mr Maurice Bennett, who was an active indigenous representative at community and regional administrative levels, and Ms Aloyda Correia, a community representative. In 1994 Mr Bennett obtained funding from IICA to run several training courses. Members received training in pottery, joinery/carpentry, sewing, and craftwork using nibbi, tibisiri, and mukru forest materials. The sewing training was conducted by two local trainers from Santa Mission, Region 3. The association was legally established upon completion of the training. The association also received funding from the Future's Fund to build the Kabakaburi handicraft centre and the village council office. KHA was established to increase members' income and obtain better prices and market access for products. The association is legally registered under the Friendly Societies Act.

From 1995 to 1998, SIMAP provided food items to association members. Food donations served as an incentive to join the association and membership from Kabakaburi and the surrounding villages of St. Monica and Arapaico grew from 20 to 55. However, when SIMAP stopped distributing food to the association several years ago there was a decline in membership. KHA's activities have changed over time since most members are no longer involved in carpentry or in making nibbi and mukru handicraft.

The association's objectives are to:

- Provide livelihoods for both the young and old (recent school graduates, housewives, pensioners etc)
- Produce good quality products
- Provide employment for both males and females
- Obtain better prices and access to markets for products
- Satisfy demands (quality) for products
- Share ideas and skills in handicraft production
- Organise community self-help projects

The association is currently involved in making craft items and marketing members' products. It is also involved in community activities such as cleaning the surroundings of the health centre and schools, and ensuring vector spraying of communities. Association members hope to establish a small kitchen for catering purposes (which would be useful for community purposes especially at meetings with NGOs and government institutions) and for preserving fruits such as cashew and karambola. There are currently no existing markets for the fruits due to high transportation costs. Association members will require training in

both fruit preservation and catering.

4.1.2 Membership of KHA

Most of KHA's 12 members are pensioners. Membership is open to both females and males. Membership conditions include:

1. Payment of an entry fee of GY\$100 to join the association.
2. Payment of a monthly membership fee of GY\$20.
3. Payment of GY\$300 to re-join the association if a member misses meetings or stops providing craft to the association for more than three months.
4. Payment of 5% on each craft item valued over GY\$500, which is sold by the centre.
5. Residency in Kabakaburi community or nearby villages.
6. Attendance at weekly meetings (every Wednesday from 1000am to 2:00pm).
7. Be supportive to the association.

Funds from the association are used for training; transporting products to markets; maintaining the building and compound; vector spraying; and providing small stipends for emergencies (sick people) in the community. The association markets products to the charity market, visitors, the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs and within communities. Forest products (made from wood and liana vines) sold by the association include paddles, miniature boats, mats, jewel boxes, dolls and shoulder bags. The main benefits of working together are the training opportunities offered through the sharing of skills between members; ongoing discussions among members; and the marketing and sale of craft items.

The association faces many challenges such as the misuse of association funds and the sale of craft items from non-members to members. This poses a problem to the association since non-members are able to gain some benefits without paying membership fees and participating in association activities. Many members have left the association after receiving training and advancing their experience in craft making. Some of these members have formed new groups or associations (most of which have gradually dissolved). However, this practice has confused many potential members. Other challenges to the association include slow product sales; lack of creativity in craft design; conflicts among members; high transportation costs; family commitments (including pregnancy, child rearing and those of single mothers); lack of cooperation and trust; dishonesty; poor financial records; declining membership and illnesses.

A working group was formed to devise a short-term plan to attract members to the association. This included targeting people interested in learning different types of stitching. Members decided that they would raise funds by undertaking manual labour in the community such as weeding and farm work. Funds could then be used to transport materials and products for sale at the nearest marketing centre. The women in the association planned to do home visits and possibly source food and clothing hampers (donations from aid agencies) to attract new members.

4.1.3 Management of KHA

The association is legally registered in compliance with formal rules and regulations. The association has a chair, secretary, treasurer and four committee members. The executive body meets every second Sunday of the month and is elected by membership vote every two years. Decisions are taken by consensus and more than half of the members must be present. However, most rules are set and agreed upon by the executive body. Membership benefits include access to markets, training and participation at workshops, and meetings in Georgetown and other places.

The infrastructure and assets of KHA include:

- A handicraft centre to facilitate meetings, storage and display of craft items, and a workstation for sewing and carpentry.
- Three sewing machines – two of which are in good working condition and the other which is in need of repair.
- Carpentry/joinery tools for furniture making etc.

Association members have received crochet training but KHA does not currently have enough funds to purchase sewing materials. The executive body feels that if they can purchase these materials, this will be an incentive to attract new and former members. The leader of the association is planning to conduct financial management training for other members to reduce conflicts, access better markets and attract new members. The leader is also seeking to meet with the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs to discuss marketing opportunities.

4.1.4 External support to KHA

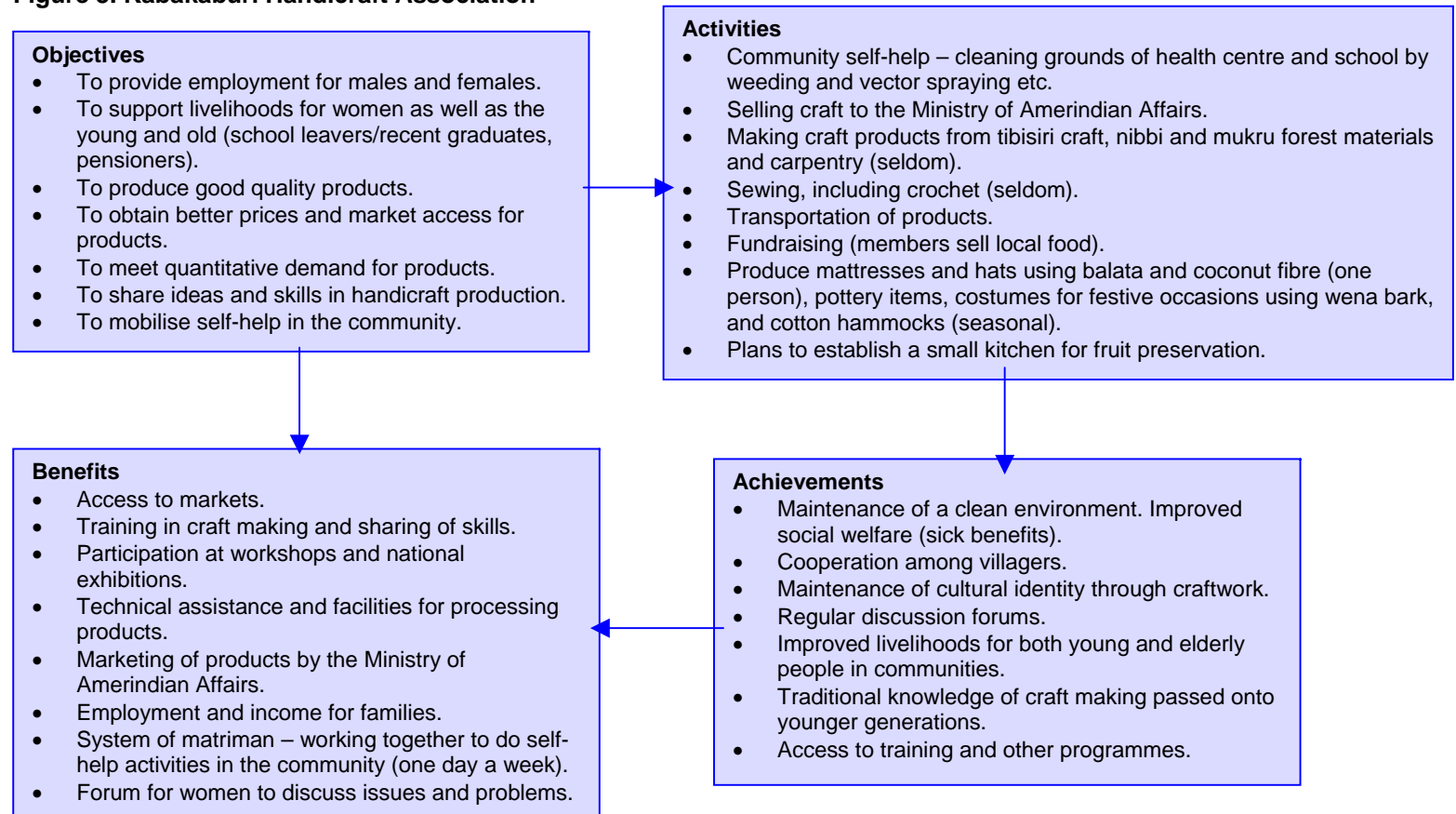
Members reported that it would not have been possible to form the organisation without outside support. Supporting bodies were IICA, SIMAP and the Future's Fund. Other organisations that have been involved in some association activities are the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs, the Guyana Volunteer Corps (providing training to make fibre mattresses, hats and baskets), Kabakaburi village council, the Region 2 Democratic Council, Food for the Poor and SIMAP.

The association leader has only ever received a few days leadership training, which was provided through the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs. The current chair believes that more training should have been provided at an early stage. Members requested training on financial record keeping and attendance at important meetings and workshops outside of the community. Leaders identified the lack of market access and information as a main challenge. They recommended training to guide the management of the association and on innovative designs for products. Improving participation and increasing membership will require identification of better markets and prices for products, and more cooperation among members.

Initially, the association entrusted the head of the church to be responsible for its finances, enabling the association to have a secure banking system within the community. The nearest established bank is approximately 50 miles from the community via boat and road.

Working group members developed a mini workplan for the role of supporting organisations in the future of the association. They identified that they require assistance in management training and record keeping and will need financial assistance from bodies including the central government, NGOs, CIDA, Food for the Poor, and the Basic Needs Trust Fund. Members also indicated that traditional, and technical knowledge from older people should be passed down since preparation of tibusiri for example is a complicated process. They would also like to visit other communities and organisations successfully produce high quality items. They also recognise that the standard of their products will only improve if they work together and are open to constructive criticisms. Figure 3 summarises the objectives, functions and benefits of the association.

Figure 3. Kabakaburi Handicraft Association



4.2 Kamuni Women's Handicraft and Sewing Development Association

4.2.1 Tracing the history of the Kamuni Women's Handicraft and Sewing Development Association

The Kamuni Women's Handicraft and Sewing Development Association was created to meet the needs of individuals and groups selling craft items to tourists at the community water landing in Santa Mission. At that time, numerous tourists visited the local tourist resort several miles upriver from the village. A nurse who was working in the village, Nurse De Cambior, offered to store craft items at the resort health centre so that tourists could purchase products more easily. Nurse De Cambior subsequently approached Mr Clement Lyle to source funds from the Future's Fund to build a handicraft centre. In 1993, the association was established under the umbrella body of the Amerindian Handicraft Association through the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs. The association was first initiated in the early 1990s with 15 members and was registered in December 2000 as a specially Authorised Society under the Friendly Societies Act. The original goals of the association were to generate income for women (now extended to include men also); upgrade skills; and attract tourists. Members were encouraged to join by the provision of craft training for income generation.

The association is currently involved in craft production utilising timber and non-timber forest resources. Most of the products are sold to tourists in the main craft shops. Craft from Santa Mission is generally of a high quality and other communities try to compete to produce similar quality products. Santa Mission also produces the highest volume of craft compared to other communities. The association plans to improve participation, starting new projects such as pastry making, cake decoration and floristry. Members recognise the need to further strengthen the organisation and its managerial capacity.

4.2.2 Membership of the Kamuni Women's Handicraft and Sewing Development Association

Membership conditions include:

1. Payment of an annual membership fee of GY\$100.
2. Payment of a monthly membership fee of GY\$30.
3. Be active members – ensure that craft items are properly stored in the craft centre, and contribute towards the building fund of \$1000 per year.
4. Production of good quality craft items and skills upgrading as necessary.
5. Membership is withdrawn if craft is not supplied to the association for more than three months.

By fulfilling these conditions, members can sell their craftwork, and gain access to loans and assistance with medical benefits (for themselves and families). Over the years, the association has assisted the village council with financial contributions for community development. They also donate money to purchase

snacks on the village clean-up day and run an awareness programme on litter and keeping the surroundings/environment clean.

The association has to maintain the newly built craft centre and surroundings. Some members are reluctant to contribute towards the building fund. Members are expected to pay the building fund fees within the first six months of the year and can pay in several instalments. The fund helps maintain the building's thatch roof and general structure. The association currently has around 48 members, which constitutes 90-95% of all households in Santa Mission village. Membership is generally stable but some members leave due to inability to pay membership fees or supply craft within the required three-month period. Others have left upon moving out of the community. The key ingredient to the association's success is good management skills. Also, the executive body keeps meticulous financial records of previous accounts and the value of current stocks in the association.

4.2.3 Management of the Kamuni Women's Handicraft and Sewing Development Association

The executive body of the association consists of a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, assistant secretary, and four committee members. The executive body is responsible for providing good leadership; maintaining the general welfare of the members; smooth administration of the association; keeping minutes of meetings; proper financial record keeping; cleaning the building, and stock taking. Membership is from seven satellite areas within the Santa Aratack Mission (Arrow Point, Quakoo Creek, Tiger Farm, Kamuni Shop, Lower Kamuni Creek and Mabiri Creek). The executive body is chosen by members by majority vote and positions are for one year. Leaders are chosen based on their genuine interest in the association and must be up-to-date financial members. The executive body meets once a month and members meet quarterly. Impromptu meetings are also held as the need arises. The members of the executive body receive a small monthly stipend.

The group sets out its goals and objectives through the elected body and in consultation with members. However, there are instances when the committee has to discuss and make urgent decisions to ensure order within the association. Most members are satisfied with the executive body's progress especially since they are confident in the administration of finances and stock. Members also recognise that there is a need for improvement, good vision, and development of markets for their products.

4.2.4 External support to the Kamuni Women's Handicraft and Sewing Development Association

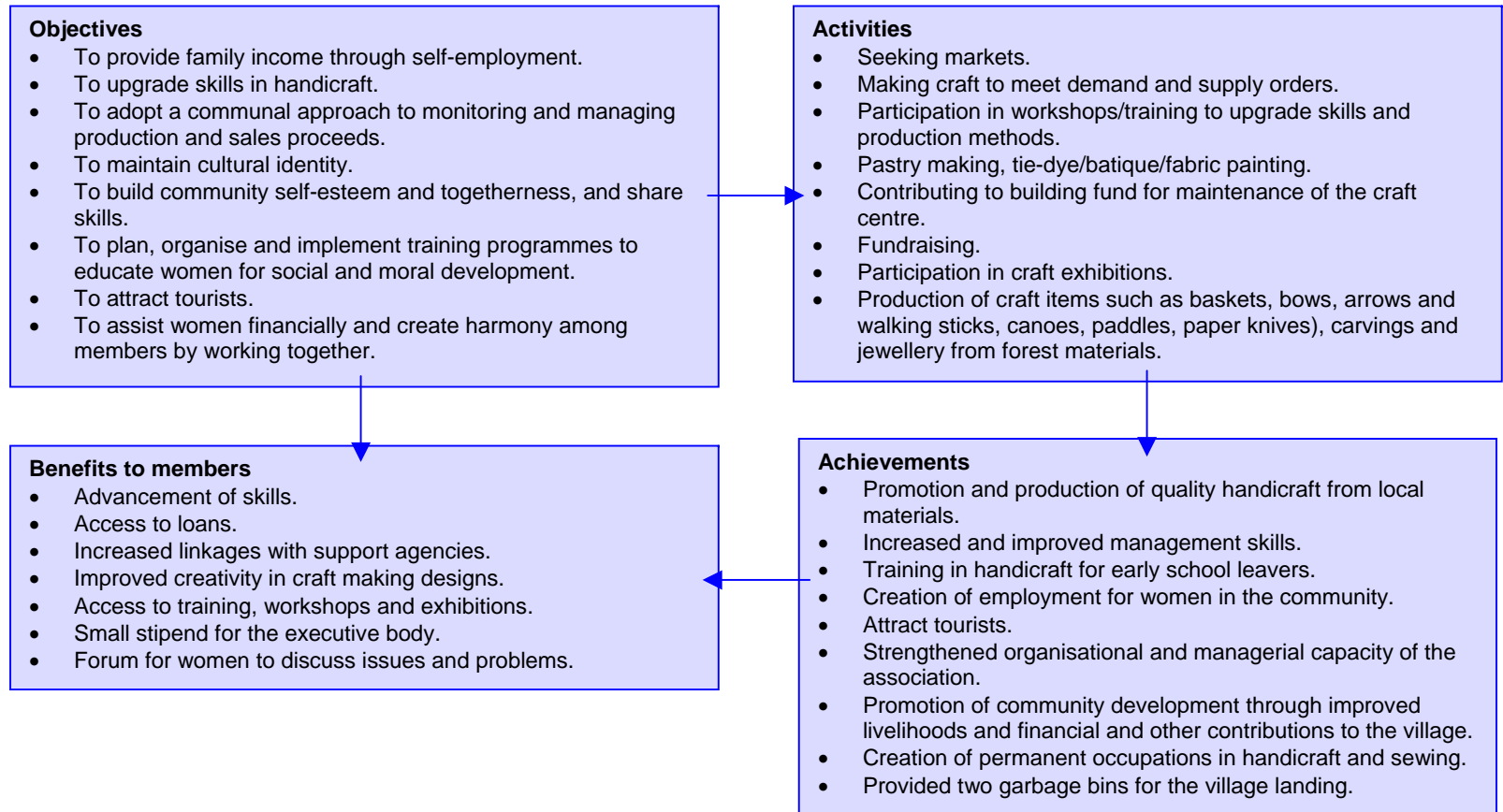
The Red Thread Women's Organisation provided initial financial assistance and advice to the association. Recently, the Poor Rural Community Support Service

Project funded the provision of two storage tanks to supply water to the craft centre and supported a poultry project. The association also has links with other organisations to access markets for their products.

Obstacles facing the association are lack of access to markets, over harvesting of its trees near creeks, competition (since there are more craft shops in Georgetown resulting in fewer tourists visiting the village), and the time and labour required for craft making. Some members reported that only certain craft makers are chosen to supply the particularly large orders. This is a source of constant resentment among members who feel that they should all be allowed to supply craft. Leaders responded that to ensure constant markets, orders are supplied based on product quality. The executive body provides feedback on product quality and urges members to improve quality by working alongside more experienced craft makers. Most craft makers specialised in certain craft products.

CIDA has funded a new craft centre fitted with water tanks, five sewing machines and new furniture.

Figure 4. Kamuni Women's Handicraft and Sewing Development Association



4.3 Amerindian Handicraft Association (AHA)

4.3.1 Tracing the history of AHA

During the 1980s, the main buyers of craft from St. Cuthbert's community, Mr Gordon Forte and Ms Jocelyn Dow advised the community to form a craft association. The then captain of St. Cuthbert's Mission obtained funding from CIDA to build a craft centre that subsequently deteriorated over the years. This led Ms Bibi Andrews, the chair of the Women's Progressive Organisation (a political organisation in St. Cuthbert's Mission), to actively seek out funding to build a new craft centre. A new craft centre funded by the Women's Progressive Organisation was officially opened by Mr Haripersaud Nokta, Minister of Local Government and Regional Development and Mr John Simon, Captain of St. Cuthbert's Mission on 24 September 1993. The cost of building the new craft centre was GY\$5 million.

The goals of the association are to promote Amerindian craft, foster intra-community cooperation; improve livelihoods; sell and showcase craft in the craft centre and through exhibitions and advertisements; market products on the internet; liaise directly with craft buyers; produce quality craft products; ensure financial accountability within the association; and set standard prices for craft items.

4.3.2 Membership of AHA

To join the association, members (who must be residents of St. Cuthbert's Mission) pay an initial fee of GY\$100 and a monthly fee of GY\$50. Membership benefits include assistance at times of needs (such as illness), sale of craft to the association, loans, and provision of character references to obtain loans from banking institutions. Members have gained a sense of stronger cultural values, and capabilities by working together in a cooperative manner, and most importantly a monthly income.

However, there is a growing reluctance to pay the 10% fee on each craft item sold by the association, which has resulted in some members leaving the association. Some members have started selling items to people who are actively engaged in marketing products to buyers in Georgetown. This has resulted in a decline in association craft sales.

Presently, there are only 35 active members (down from a previous membership of 200). Crafters have complained that the association does not pay the true value of craft items given the labour and time involved. Members also report that over the past few years there has been a lack of transparency and a failure to keep the association's financial records up to date. This has caused distrust and lack of confidence in the association leadership. Members recommended establishing a marketing body, consisting of around five people who would receive a small stipend to market and sell craft items. Members would also like

to see the craft centre only accepting good quality craft and producing monthly financial statements.

Reasons for giving up membership are cited as lack of progress and income by the craft centre, poor account keeping and unwise utilisation of the 10% sales fee (Duncan, 2005). However, some people eventually return to the association since they are unable to find markets for their produce. They are often cheated by agents who underestimate product prices and make verbal agreements to pay for their products upon sale in Georgetown. In practice, this seldom occurs and crafters rarely receive payment for their products in this way.

4.3.3 Management of AHA

The main positions and duties of responsibility are: chair – manages the affairs of the association; secretary – keeps minutes of meetings and records craft items sold in the handicraft centre and at exhibitions; and treasurer – collects membership fees and manages association finances.

Leaders are elected by members for one year. Ordinary members raise issues for discussion at meetings. Personal characteristics necessary for association leaders include confidence, honesty, hardworking nature, interest in handicraft, friendliness, open mindedness, creativity and passion for the work. There appear to be no dominant groups or influences within the association. Association leaders meet once a month and members meet every other month. Members are all treated fairly and decisions are made by the majority. Some of the association's previous members have migrated to other areas and in some instances, to other countries. In 2004, association income from craft sales was approximately GY\$24,000, of which, 50% was spent on transportation to supply orders in Georgetown. The association is financially weak and requires urgent fundraising activities such as barbeques, video shows, cake sales and fun-days.

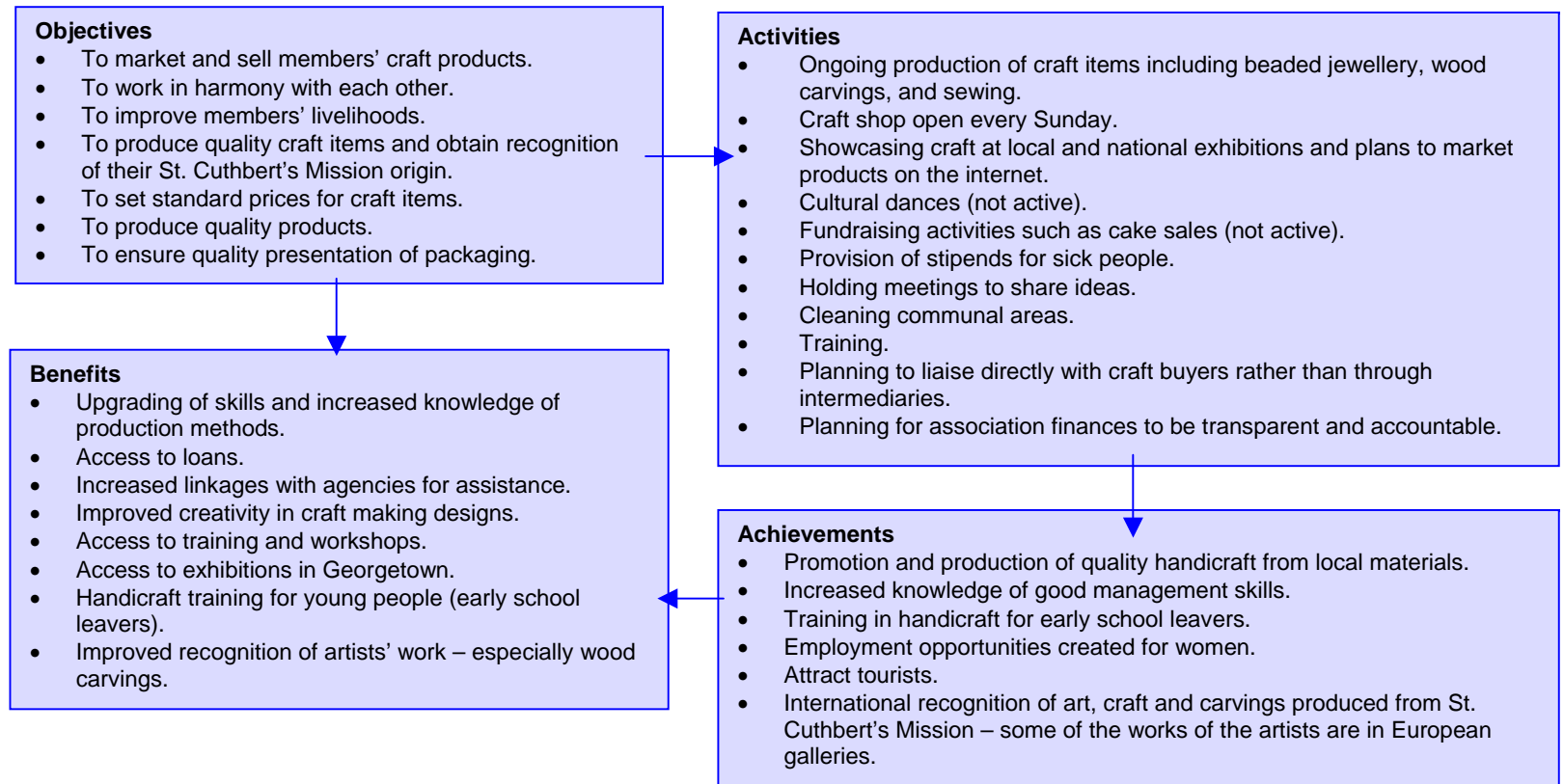
Members recommend seeking greater internal cooperation so that they can supply large orders for craft and access foreign markets. Members would also like to attend more external meetings, identify new markets for craft products and establish a quality control body to assess quality of craft products and replanting of its palms. Members would also like to improve the craft centre with new furnishing and extra shelves.

4.3.4 External support to AHA

Outside assistance was required to form the association. Ms Jocelyn Dow and Mr Gordon Forte, the main buyers of craft and Ms Bibi Andrews, community representative, provided creative ideas for the formation and functioning of the association. Ms Dow actively sought markets and screened the quality of craft produced by the community. In the 1980s, people were encouraged to join the association by the free donation of items by various organisations to members. CIDA also donated a tractor to the association. Presently, there are several

bodies involved in supporting the association including the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs and GFC. Improvements to the functioning of the association include improving the quality of craft; holding local exhibitions to showcase craft from St. Cuthbert's Mission, and building linkages with other organisations such as the Regional Democratic Council to assist in sourcing markets for products.

Figure 5. Amerindian Handicraft Association



4.4 Orealla Fruit Cheese Women's Association

4.4.1 Tracing the history of the Orealla Fruit Cheese Women's Association

In 1995, the Orealla Fruit Cheese Women's Association was set up with the assistance of Mr Mark Goffin and Ms Oaude Niffle, a Belgian couple. Between 1995 and 2002, funds were secured to construct a building and conduct training on fruit processing. In 2001, 12 local people (two men and 10 women) were trained to manage the business. The Guyana Volunteer Consultancy led training sessions in record keeping, small business management, advertising and hospitality skills. Training materials were provided to the association for future reference. The association currently has 12 members (11 women and one man). Seven of the members are paid employees and four are voluntary members who are presently learning the fruit processing techniques.

This association is legally registered under the Friendly Societies Act and is located at Orealla, Corentyne River, Berbice, Region 6. The association's assets include a building, a generator and gas cooker, canisters to store finished products, six weighing scales and cooking utensils. Packaging (baskets and boxes) is made from local materials.

4.4.2 Membership of the Orealla Fruit Cheese Women's Association

The association is failing to attract new members due to its low income. The association pays its employees GY\$100 per hour to work four hours a day from Mondays to Fridays. Members can access small loans and also receive national insurance scheme benefits. However, this is still insufficient incentive for new members. The four members interviewed recommended finding better markets to obtain a better wage package. This would improve and attract participation within the association.

At least two-thirds of the association's members must be from Orealla and Siparuta villages. To join the association, new members must submit a written application, obtain a food handlers certificate, be an active figure in the community, and be capable of learning the rules of the association. Applications are reviewed at a general meeting. There is an initial joining fee of GY\$500. The annual membership fee is determined at the general meeting and is paid by February at the start of each year. Failure to pay fees can lead to the withdrawal of membership. Members of the general meeting or management committee can expel members with a two-thirds majority vote. A special meeting is held to elect new members.

A verbal or written notice of resignation should be addressed to the secretary if a member wishes to leave the association. The village council, a support agency, Tarakuli Guyana Inc. and the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs are able to attend

the general assembly as observers. This attendance is in an ex-officio capacity and representatives from these bodies are not allowed to vote.

4.4.3 Management of the Orealla Fruit Cheese Women's Association

The association has a management committee consisting of five members: a chair, a secretary, a treasurer and two other members, one of whom acts as an advisor. This committee is responsible for the work and any related business regarding the association. Two thirds of the general membership can remove the management committee if it fails to perform the duties of the association. Management committee meetings are held at least every two months. The association has a bank account and all members have the right to inspect any of the association's books by request to the secretary or treasurer.

Leaders are elected based on public speaking aptitude, friendly attitude towards visitors and the ability to communicate and negotiate with different agencies and organisations. The association meets quarterly and the election of the management committee is supervised either by the regional administration or a recognised body that is not connected to the association. However, there is some need for improvement to the association's management – including implementing more activities to attract visitors.

The association was set up to provide an income for Amerindian women from the Orealla-Siparuta community and to support Orealla farming activities through the purchase of fruit. The association currently manages agro-processing, purchases fruit from local farmers and sells the finished fruit cheeses to various shops in Georgetown. The women are trained in a beneficial skill to earn an income to support their families. The association hopes to seek better markets for their products and to create more job opportunities – especially for women – in the community. Additionally, they hope that farmers can benefit further from the sale of their produce and will benefit from a long-term (rather than seasonal) income. Future plans include expansion of the current project to embark on canning of fruit juices, which will lead to increased demand for various types of fruits. Members would also like to obtain a better price for the products.

4.4.4 External support to the Orealla Fruit Cheese Women's Association

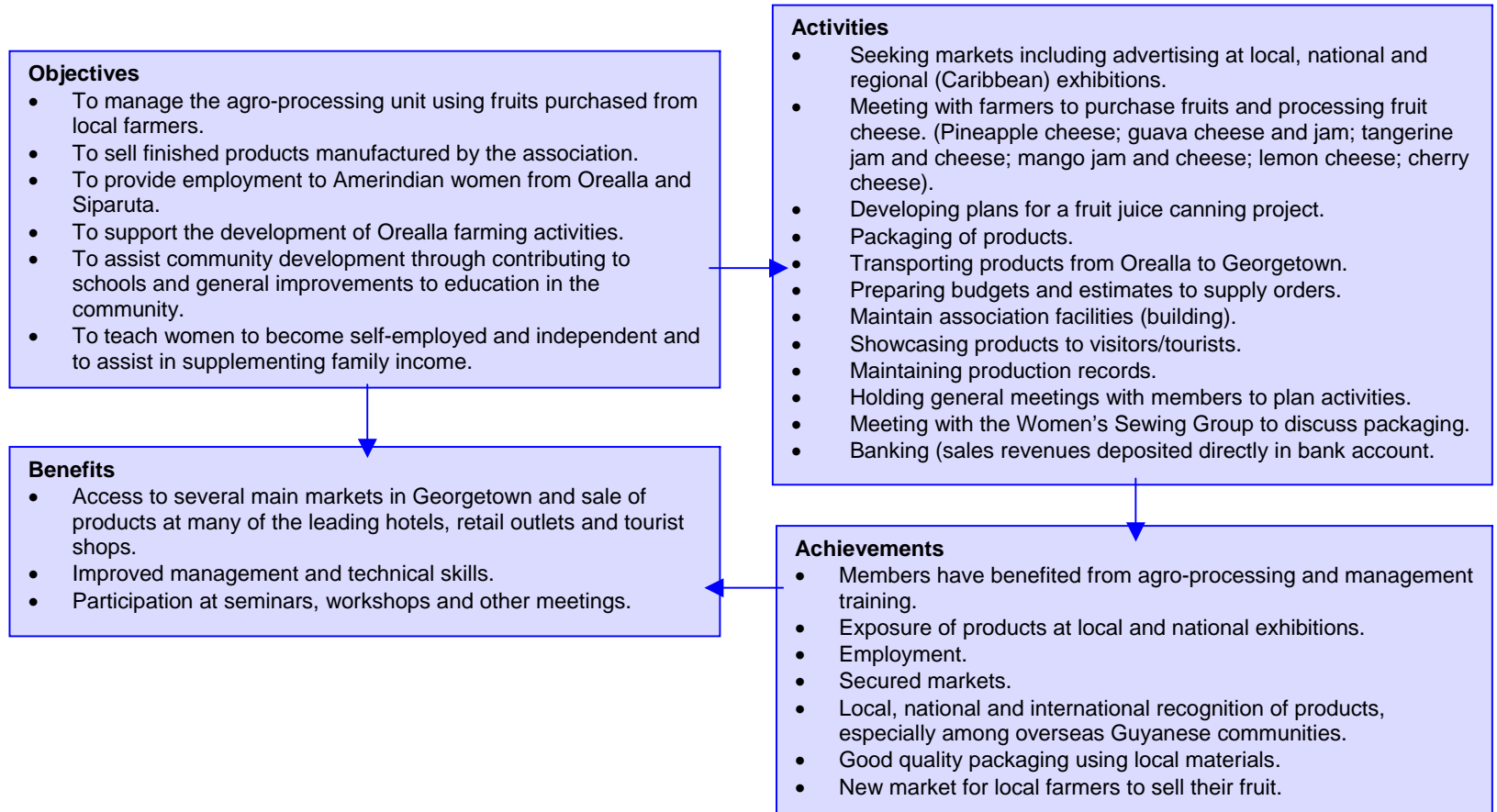
CIDA has provided a generator and Amazon Caribbean Limited (AMCAR) has supplied raw materials and internet access, the latter of which the association has used to advertise and receive orders. CIDA and AMCAR are still involved in some of the association's activities, but mainly AMCAR who assists the association by purchasing raw materials, labels, equipment and other items as required. AMCAR also checks emails on behalf of the association and provides information on orders to the association over the phone. AMCAR also provides free booth space to the association at national exhibitions and other events.

The association has business relations with leading distributors including Demerara Distillers Limited, as well as major hotels, supermarkets and gift shops.

Volunteer training was provided by Mr Don Weirs and Ms Anita Weirs, from the Canadian Executive Service Organisation in April 2002 to assist with building repairs, construction of a walkway, a generator room and teaching the women to be self-sustaining.

The association's greatest fears are machine failure (blender and generator); lack of markets forcing a closure of the facility; and the risk of bodily harm such as burns from cooking. The lack of financial capital to restart the business if funds were completely spent is another fear identified by the group.

Figure 6. Orealla Fruit Cheese Women's Association



4.5 Orealla Loggers' Group

4.5.1 Tracing the History of the Orealla Loggers' Group

The Orealla Loggers' Group consists of roughly 100 loggers accounting for approximately 50% of the total number of households in Orealla village and to a lesser extent some from Siparuta village also. Logging started in Orealla in the 1960s when sawmillers came to the village to purchase logs. An association was formed to represent loggers at forums since some were unable to adequately represent themselves. People were encouraged to join the association through meetings to discuss the benefits of logging and working together. One of the association's first goals was to acquire a sawmill to enable milling of logs and sale of finished products, whilst maximising the resource and earning a higher price. The association has been unable to achieve this goal – which is one of its many goals and plans that have changed over time.

Many associations have been formed by loggers over the years but none of them have lasted – this has often been due to difficulties over setting prices.

The objectives of the Orealla Loggers' Group are to:

- Work with the village council for the benefit and development of the community.
- Earn an income through negotiating access to better markets and best possible prices.
- Ensure sound management of resources and honest measurement of logs/lumber.
- Set rules and regulation for quota extraction and sustainable harvesting of resources.
- Facilitate discussions and settle logging disputes.

Through the association, loggers participate in community development projects such as maintenance of the village wharf and logging roads, upkeep of reservation boundaries, contributions to the emergency village fund, provision of loans to sick people and participation in village work once per week.

4.5.2 Management of the Orealla Loggers' Group

The Orealla Loggers' Group is organised through the Orealla village council. Responsibility is assigned to a village councillor for direct liaison with the group. Community residents are automatically members of the group. Each member is required to do compulsory community work every Monday which could include tagging logs and stumps (tags are supplied by GFC); ensuring fair scaling of logs; and maintenance of roads. If a member fails to take part in the community work, the village council can refuse that person permission to log the forests. Benefits of membership include employment and assistance with loans in time of emergency.

The association is hoping to get better prices for logs and thus continue to support and improve livelihoods. The association is also looking to establish a better farming association as an alternative livelihood to logging, and promote better management of resources for long-term benefits. Loggers are now looking to earn a better living by making finished products from logs, e.g. furniture. Loggers are generally willing to engage in other business activities if the necessary training is available. At the moment, the village council is meeting with an NGO to do feasibility studies on alternative income generating projects such as providing vegetables to a nearby bauxite company.

The main external positions of authority of relevance to the group, are the captain of the village council and the councillor with whom they liaise directly. Association leaders are elected by community members based on the candidates' interest in managing community welfare. Loggers meet with the village council every Monday and are free to raise any issue at these meetings. There is already sufficient representation of loggers in the association so an increase in membership is not recommended since this would further diminish resources.

Outside support was not required to form the association. However, institutions such as GFC, the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs and GNIFC have met with members. Meetings are held with GFC and buyers to discuss sustainable forest management and other issues. There is a recognised need for meetings with investors (such as those from the furniture industry) to seek sponsorship and the possible sale of furniture from Orealla. Regular linkages and meetings are convened with GFC, the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs and GNIFC. The kinds of support required include more education through workshops; assistance to diversify to large-scale agriculture; marketing of non-timber forest products e.g. casareep and crabwood oil; and negotiation of better prices for logs.

The main obstacles to the smooth functioning of the association include members not adhering to rules and regulations; stagnant prices for the past eight years despite several fuel and food price increases over the same period; and lack of cooperation. Some loggers are of the opinion that the village council is not spending revenue as is reported to the community. Members also believe that trees should be left to grow to produce better logs and allow for forest regeneration. Members have also suggested that the association needs re-organising into an autonomous group.

Orealla has learned valuable lessons over the years which can be applied to other communities to prevent degradation of forest resources. Orealla loggers started to harvest trees from pristine forests during the 1960s in the belief that the resources would last forever. They later realised that they had logged all of the Class A species and began to harvest Class B and C species. They also cited the example that 10 years ago, Orealla was able to supply 300 cubic feet of peeler logs Baromalli (*Catostemma commune*) to Barama, a plywood company but can now only supply 50 cubic feet of logs. Near exhaustion of the Baromalli

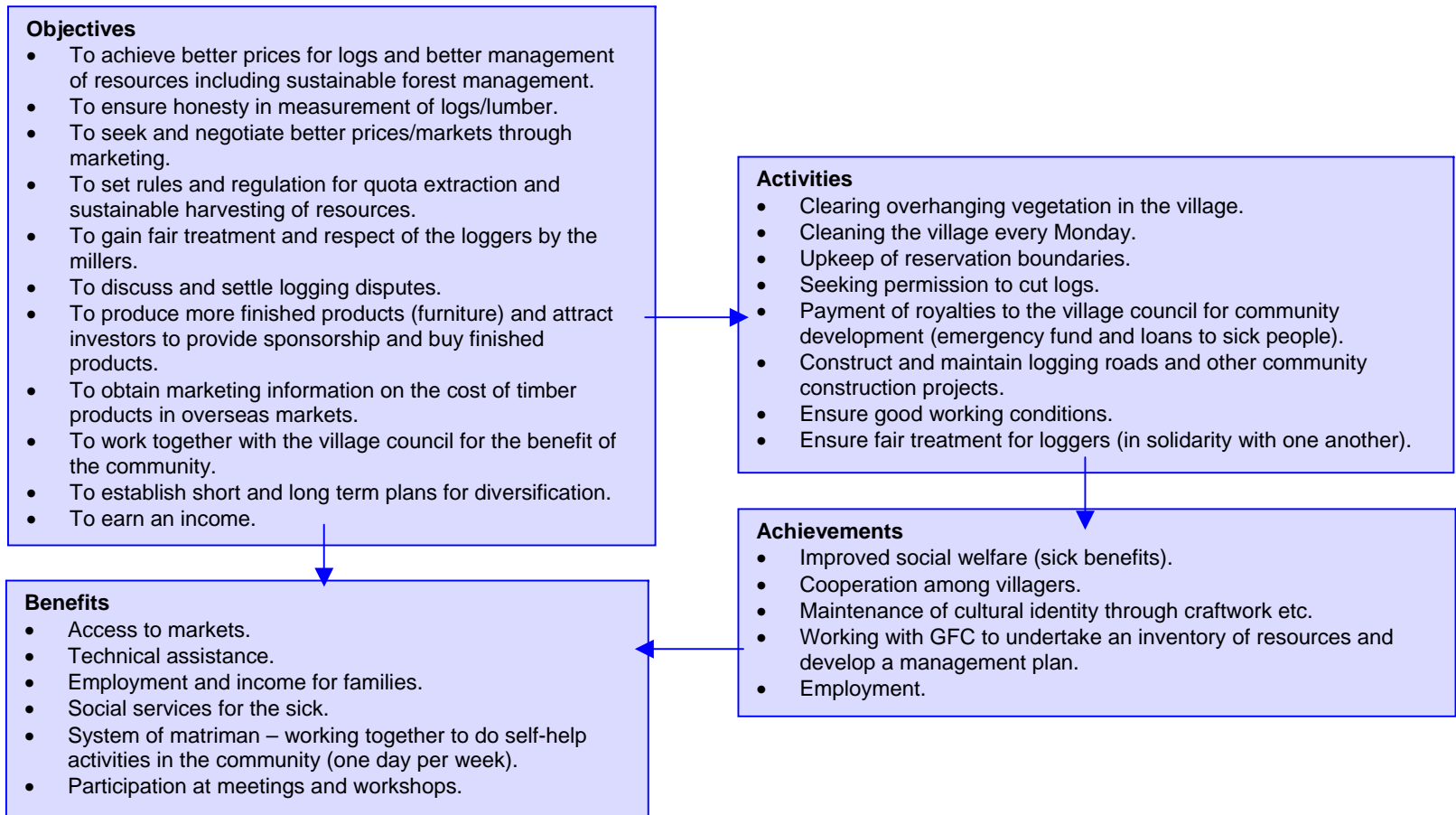
species occurred in a matter of 10 years. There are serious fears regarding the future of logging in Orealla which focus around the following points:

- Insufficient logs at present.
- Depletion of all logs if tree cutting continues – and uncertainty over the future of the community.
- Something could happen to stop logging – including GFC preventing further felling once the allocated reserves have been exhausted.

Loggers are of the view that buyers such as Barama have provided little or no benefits to the community or the country. They are wary of foreign companies as they were previously conned by a foreign company who failed to pay the community for logs supplied. GFC has also built an office in the community which has generated mixed reactions from the villagers ranging from general agreement to strong disagreement.

Most of the group's members strongly recommended better keeping of financial records. This was a sore issue among the members. Recently, the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs was asked to intervene and independent financial auditors were hired to audit the accounts. As a result, the leader and some of the village councillors were asked to resign from their respective offices.

Figure 7. Orealla Loggers' Group



4.6 Orealla Women's Group

4.6.1 Tracing the history of the Orealla Women's Group

In January 2000, the Orealla Women's Group was formed by six Orealla residents. Many people joined the association to learn the handicraft trade but presently, only 10 of the estimated 25 members are considered to be actively involved in the association.

4.6.2 Membership of the Orealla Women's Group

Despite the group's name and its original formation to support women, today membership seems to be open to both men and women. Of the 25 existing members, three are men. There is an initial registration fee of GY\$1000 and a monthly membership fee of GY\$100. Fees are used to purchase sewing materials, scissors and other essential items. Members generally use their own materials to make craft. Some members purchase tibusiri from the loggers at GY\$1000 per bundle or GY\$100 per head of tibusiri. The group has no written rules. Upon payment of fees, new members are allowed to attend meetings. 12 members make handicraft on a daily basis.

Members benefit from training programmes in areas such as sewing, cake decoration and handicrafts. Numerous craft products including baskets, fans, dolls and mats are made from mukru, kufa and tibusiri materials. Additionally, three of the female members teach school children how to make handicraft. Some members noted that access to NTFP resources is not a problem since they can either purchase them from the loggers or collect materials while they are harvesting produce from their farmlands. They reported that the long lifespan of handicraft products allows them sufficient time to get their products to market.

Other members spoke of their one-day round trip on foot to collect NTFP materials and said the labour and time invested in producing handicrafts was not well utilised since they lack access to markets. The time intensive nature of handicraft production means it is not possible to pursue other income generating activities at the same time.

Customers are generally visitors and tourists to Orealla, including those brought to the area from a nearby Suriname border town by a Surinamese tourist agent. Some of the group's male members also make outboard boats, which are sold in the community and sometimes to outsiders.

Six months ago, the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs sponsored Mr Brian Williams, a trained craftsman from Kabakaburi village to conduct handicraft training with group members. However, the problem of insufficient access to markets remains. One member reported that he tried to sell craft items from the pavement at local markets in Suriname but was unsuccessful due to Suriname's strict laws. He does not have sufficient capital to invest in a market stall.

Members indicated that membership is not increasing due to lack of markets, insufficient cooperation among members, competition with other communities (due to high transport costs and the high costs of handicraft). Some members were not happy with the level of training provided since their skills were more advanced than the trainers. Other members, however, require beginners' training. Some of the older and more experienced members are unwilling to assist with training the younger members because they feel that their efforts are not appreciated and the newer members will eventually leave the association.

4.6.3 Management of the Orealla Women's Group

The leaders of the association are a chair, secretary, treasurer and three committee members. Leaders are chosen by membership vote and are elected on a yearly basis.

The association's assets include an incomplete building and four sewing machines, two of which are in working condition. One of the more active members (who is also the teacher in the community) assists in planning activities such as training for members. Members reported that the association's success can be attributed to its involvement in important activities including providing advice to young women, assisting with sickness, cleaning communal grounds and promoting social interaction.

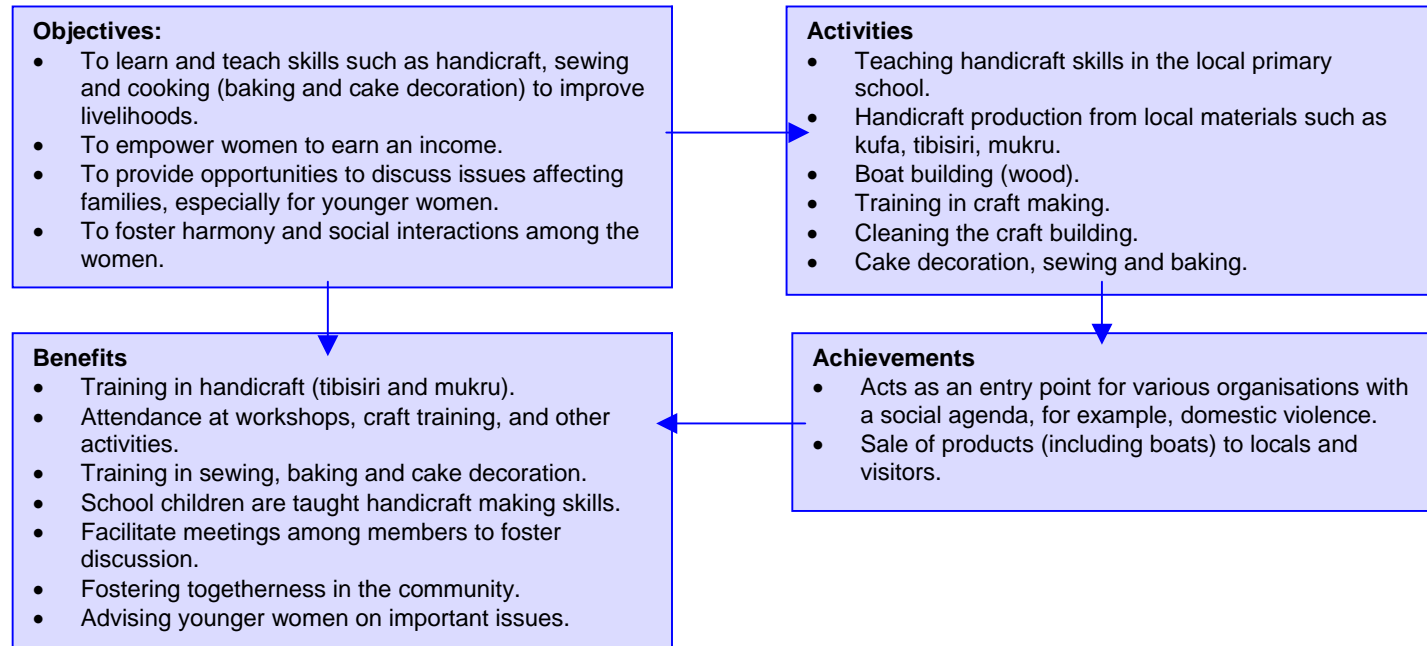
The group would like to expand its membership to more men and women by offering advanced training in sewing, embroidery, craft, and cake decoration. The group would also like to start making mattresses from local materials (tibiriri and coconut fibres) and making handicraft and jewellery from balata and bamboo etc. There is also a need for more activities for young people, especially young women. The most important need is to secure markets and produce high quality products to gain recognition for Orealla as a source of high standard handicraft.

Members consider the group to have many weaknesses and some of them were unsure whether it is legally registered. No proper record keeping is maintained. During discussions for this study, some members did not participate whereas other more dominant people were quite frank and consistently emphasised the differences between skilled and unskilled members. Some of the more vocal members did, however, recommend rotating the position of chair to allow equal opportunities for all members to chair meetings. This would allow more interaction and build leadership skills across all members. Computer training for young people was identified as an unmet need, as well as government support to complete the construction of the group's building. Some of the challenges facing the group are poor access to technical information, lack of commitment on the part of members and lack of external support.

4.6.4 External support to the Orealla Women's Group

Some of the organisations that have provided external support to the group include the Road Side (Rose Hall) Baptist Church and other religious organisations, the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs and volunteers from the Canadian Executive Service Organisation.

Figure 8. Orealla Women's Group



4.7 Surama Eco-tourism Enterprise

4.7.1 Tracing the history of the Surama Eco-Tourism Enterprise

The Surama Eco-Tourism Enterprise is a community-based tourism project that was established in 1998. The idea of community tourism was put forward in 1988, by an overseas youth group on an 'Operation Raleigh' visit to Surama. They recognised the potential for Surama village to become a community-based tourism destination. Mr Colin Edwards, a tour operator, along with Iwokrama began holding discussions with Surama in 1992, to promote eco-tourism in the region. The idea of developing this tourism business appealed to the community, as a way of reviving elements of the Makushi culture. In light of the challenges the community was facing (for example, changing patterns of disease, influx of different food types, increased visits by road users), project members were supportive of reviving historical ways of life to retain their cultural identity in language, food and craft making. Following the launch of the project by community members, a youth group from Watburg College, Iowa, USA were the first official tourists to Surama, spending two weeks in the community in 1993/1994. In 1995, Surama invited Youth Challenge International to assist with the construction of buildings. In 1998, Mr Tony Thorne, Wilderness Explorers assisted the village with the development of tour packages. A training workshop on hospitality, marketing, tour guiding and first aid was held to facilitate the venture in Surama.

The main objective of the project is to host scientific and cultural tourism for the benefit and survival of the community. The project showcases the cultural identity of Surama through songs, poems, local plays/skits etc. The committee ensures that there is a two-way learning process between the tourists and community members since tourists are also required to share information on their way of life and culture. This form of tourism is described by the project leaders 'as a friendly way of exploiting the natural resources and sharing scientific information while at the same time, contributing to the social and economic development of the community'.

4.7.2 Membership of the Surama Eco-tourism Enterprise

A management committee was established to manage the project comprising a chair, secretary, assistant secretary, treasurer, village councillor and an advisor. The treasurer reports to the village council. The management committee meets prior to the village meeting and the arrival of tourists and liaises with business partners. The village council selects the project manager. Services provided to tourists include catering, accommodation, tour guiding and any other specific packages that may be required by special visitors. The tourism project currently employs 11-21 people depending on the number of tourists. Employment is on a part-time basis to allow for continuation of traditional activities (farming, hunting, fishing, handicraft etc.) and is arranged to correspond with the arrival of tourists. Youth groups, students, scientists and other kinds of tourists have all visited the

village since the project began, with an annual influx of an average of 174 tourists, accounting for over 1400 tourists from approximately 14 countries.

This tourism enterprise provides both direct and indirect benefits for community members. Direct monetary benefits are provided to the 'druggers' (baggage handlers), boat operators, tour guides, cooks and drivers. Other direct beneficiaries include the committee members who are paid for administrative services. There also many service providers/beneficiaries within the community including farmers, fishermen and hunters who supply vegetables, ground provision, fruits, fish and on special requests wild meat is also available. The committee generally charges a certain percentage mark-up on all goods and services provided by the community to tourists, for example for the hiring of boats and engines. Each visitor is charged a tourist tax of GY\$800 which is put towards the community fund. Annual donations are also made by the tourism committee to the school. Craft workers also directly benefit from tourism since they are able to sell handicraft to tourists in the handicraft centre. Indirectly, the project also facilitates meetings with church groups, politicians and other stakeholders to raise and communicate issues related to their community. However, the single most significant achievement of the project to date has been for young people benefiting from the Makushi language drive in the community. Nursery and primary school children are taught Makushi for two hours per week by the Makushi researcher and another local villager.

The tourism project is managed through the village council and a community representative normally reports to NRDDDB on progress. Committee members are able to earn an income and attend relevant workshops and training which aids the development of the project and ultimately the community at large. There is a fair and transparent system for identifying potential employees since the community is involved in the selection process. The committee has built up significant managerial and hospitality skills to provide quality services and business. The community project enables community members, mainly young people, to be educated and emphasises educational values. The project has helped two young people to attend the University of Guyana and has provided approximately six people with medical assistance.

4.7.3 Management of the Surama Eco-tourism Enterprise

The management committee consists of an executive director, chair, administrator, treasurer and secretary. A Surama village councillor also sits on the committee to ensure two-way reporting and transparency between the committee and the council. This enterprise is not yet officially registered.

Interviewees emphasised that the development of community-based tourism requires exemplary leadership as a critical building block to deal with the challenges posed. Some of these challenges and lessons are listed below:

- Developing the tourism enterprise took almost five years to properly manage and secure a profitable business.

- Approximately 90% of the community is supportive of the project – the other 10% still does not see its benefits.
- Indirect benefits to the community are generally overlooked by community members but complete buy-in and understanding is necessary for the success of the project. This should be achieved through transparency, sharing of information and open meetings.
- Community-based tourism needs to start small and be allowed to grow gradually – strict control and management is therefore necessary.
- Overcoming and dealing with the fears and suspicions of community members regarding the types of tourists, guest houses, effects of tourism on the community etc. is crucial.
- Good leadership is fundamental to any enterprise and the community must invest in building the capacity of local leaders.

The committee faces many obstacles including educating the community on community-based tourism, attracting tourists to visit their community without a brochure, and lack of finances – the latter of which is considered as the main frustration.

The main ingredients that have contributed to the success of the project have been identified as strong leadership skills, proper record keeping, accountability, dedication and honesty. Members suggest the following advice for other communities interested in offering community-based tourism:

- Recognise that business relationships must be purely professional and business like and cannot indulge friends and families.
- Ensure consistent high hospitality standards by employees.
- Foster commitment by the committee to maintain and keep proper financial records/accountability.
- Share the project benefits and activities within the community.

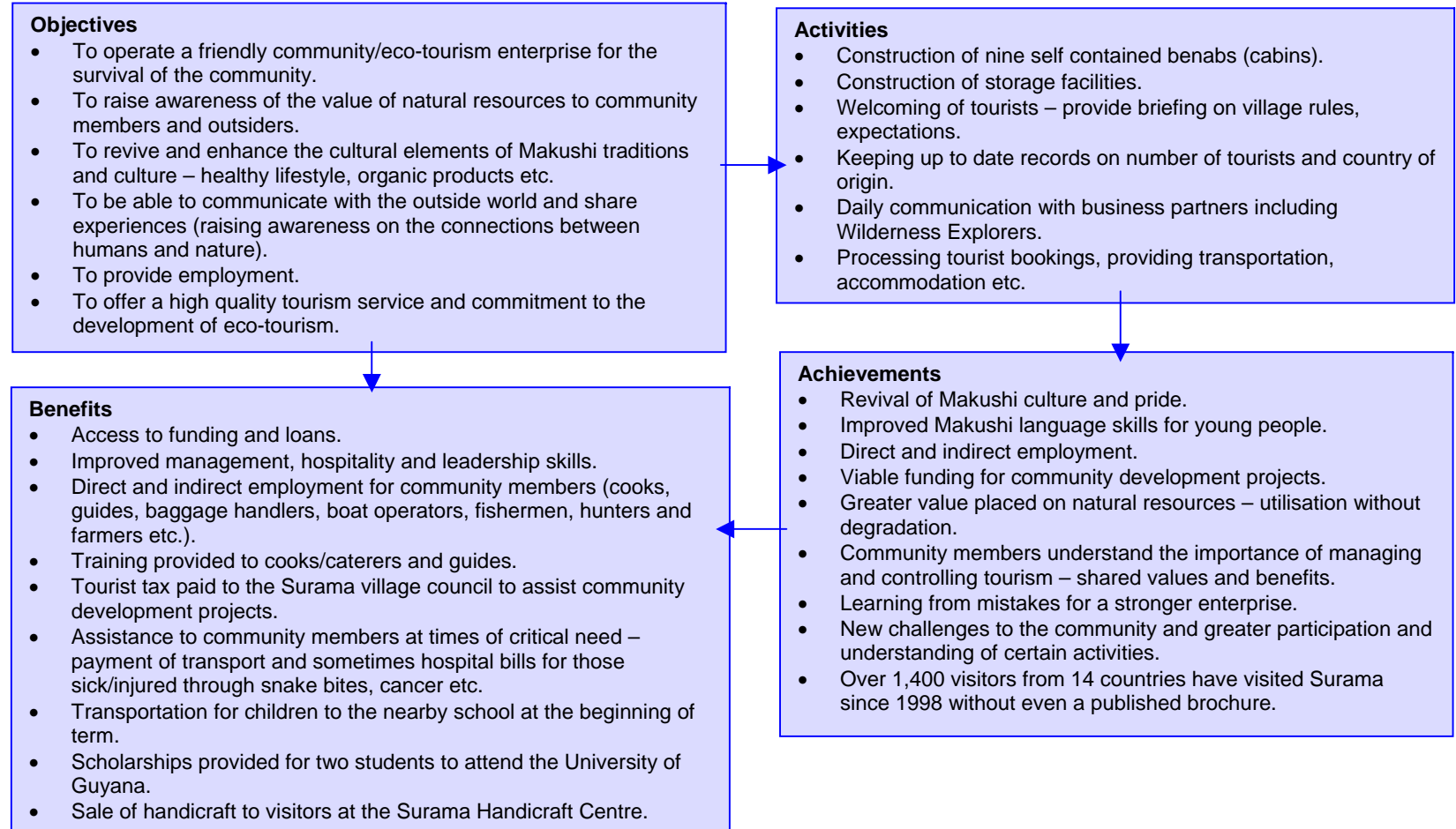
4.7.4 External support to the Surama Eco-Tourism Enterprise

In 2003, the committee accessed funding from NRDDDB, a decision-making body comprising leaders of the 14 communities of the North Rupununi District. Surama borrowed GY\$1 million from the NRDDDB community revolving fund to build and furnish a new guesthouse. The committee is required to repay the loan within a one-year period. The loan has also covered the construction of four (out of a total nine) eco-lodges. Each eco-lodge reflects the individual style of the nine tribes of Guyana's Amerindian people. The lodges have been designed by the community with involvement of skilled residents in the construction activities. Trekforce Expeditions, a UK based charity, provided 25 unskilled volunteers from the UK to assist with labour – transporting materials (leaves, boards etc.) to the site. Youth Challenge Guyana has also assisted by providing labour to build the new guesthouse.

The enterprise has a working partnership with business groups such as Wilderness Adventures, Rock View, Iwokrama and a German group. The committee is planning to establish a trail from the Buro Buro River to Rockview, Annai.

Tourism activities in Surama triggered a meeting with Conservation International Guyana and key government officials on tourism development in Region 9. One of the outcomes of this meeting has been the formation of the Rupununi Tourism Association comprising a representative from each of the five districts in Region 9 and a representative of each of the tour operators and the chamber of commerce. This association is currently developing a constitution for their future work.

Figure 9. Surama Eco-tourism Enterprise



4.8 North Rupununi District Development Board (NRDDB)

4.8.1 Tracing the history of NRDDB

NRDDB is a registered trust and an established non-government, non-profit, community-based organisation currently representing 16 communities. It is an autonomous body, initially comprising representatives from 12 indigenous communities in the North Rupununi. In 1996, it was legally established to link the 12 communities with the Iwokrama International Centre for Rain Forest Conservation and Development, government agencies, and other institutions, on issues relating to community development in the North Rupununi. At that time, Iwokrama held many discussions with the communities through an independent facilitator and NGO, Red Thread. NRDDB was established with some technical and advisory support from Iwokrama.

During the initial stages of formation, people were interested and willing to become leaders of NRDDB since it provided opportunities for:

- Sharing of knowledge and experiences.
- Representation through 'one voice' rather than in individual community capacities.
- Local determination and implementation of community development projects.
- Targeting of people and forest.
- Creation of employment.
- Identifying priority areas of development.
- Identifying the rights, roles, benefits and responsibilities for the people of the North Rupununi.

NRDDB has a constitution outlining rules and guidelines for its functioning. Some of NRDDB's original objectives were to facilitate a forum for discussions between Iwokrama and leaders of the North Rupununi communities; encourage participation of communities in development plans; develop a constitution outlining goals and objectives of the organisations; and set guidelines for negotiations with NGOs, government agencies and other bodies. The organisation requested technical assistance, leadership capacity building and training from Iwokrama. Subsequently, Ms Vanda Radzik and Ms Janette Forte, staff members of Iwokrama's Social Sciences Unit began an active capacity building programme with NRDDB to finalise the constitution and guidelines for the organisation; build leadership skills; and train community development workers and Makushi researchers. In November 2001, Mr Rodney Davis, chair of NRDDB signed a trust deed.

NRDDB has since developed a strategic plan for 2005–2007 with assistance from CIDA's BCCP fund to strengthen and restructure the organisation in line with members' recommendations. The new mission statement outlined in the strategic plan states that:

The NRDDB is a well managed, transparent, development organisation representing and negotiating on behalf of its communities with stakeholders to secure the preservation of indigenous culture, the flow of economic benefits to the communities and the sustainable utilisation of community natural resources.

The strategic plan describes the roles, responsibilities and guidelines for NRDDB's executive members. The plan allowed for a review of the executive body's work as well as the aims and objectives of NRDDB. Meetings and consultations were held with eight of the 16 North Rupununi communities to obtain feedback on the proposed strategic plan, and to hear community views on strengthening NRDDB and other issues relating to their respective communities. Based on these discussions, NRDDB has been established as a development organisation to accommodate both business and community development. Also, NRDDB has recently adopted a new set of by-laws based on consultation with the 16 communities to finalise numerous aspects including those relating to the organisation's purpose, membership, board structure, executive director and committee, employment, conflicts of interest, decision-making, finances. NRDDB is also assessing the sustainability of several business-oriented projects such as MRU, initiatives around ornamental and arapiama fish, and engagement with the Makushi Yemekum Cooperation.

4.8.2 Membership of NRDDB

NRDDB provides a mechanism for community leaders to meet, discuss, and make decisions relating to NRDDB operations in their respective communities. NRDDB is recognised as one of Guyana's leading community-based organisations. Since its formation, membership has increased from 12 to 16 communities, namely Annai Central, Apoteri, Aranaputa, Kwatamang, Massara, Rewa, Rupertee, Toka, Wowetta, Yakarinta, Fairview, Surama and subsequently, Crash Water, Kwaimatta, Katoka and Yupukari.

NRDDB meetings are open to government, NGOs and other bodies. Relevant organisations are usually invited to attend the bi-monthly meetings depending on specific issues to be addressed. Membership representation on the board has recently been changed to include 16 community leaders, one other elected community member from each village, a youth group leader, the toshao (village leader) for Annai District, an elder and one woman leader. Most meetings are held at the Bina Hill Institute, Annai, North Rupununi, Region 9.

NRDDB membership requirements as detailed in the organisation's new by-laws are:

- The organisation's membership must consist of elected community members from each of the 16 communities.
- Members are the owners and beneficiaries of the organisation.
- Residents of member villages have the right to information about NRDDB

decisions and actions.

- Residents of member villages can seek to have their opinions heard by the board either in writing, or in person or through their authorised representative.
- Each member is promised equitable benefits from NRDDDB membership.
- The decision to add a village is based on the appointment of elected community leaders in that village for at least one year; confirmation of three public buildings; submission of a village work plan for the upcoming year to help NRDDDB in its support of village goals; and a year's record of council minutes and feedback from community meetings.
- Member villages must pay an annual membership fee calculated by multiplying the number of adults living in the village by GY\$40, to be paid at the first meeting of the new calendar year.
- There is an associate member category for groups who are not a village or community but have some type of claim to land in the Rupununi.
- Members and associate members who fail to meet the membership requirements will be subject to the following penalties: 1) Written warning. 2) Censure by the board. 3) Suspension of benefits. 4) Suspension of membership.
- Censure will be communicated by letter from the entire board outlining the grievance and will be entered into the public domain in any manner the board deems appropriate.
- Suspension of benefits will consist of the restriction of access to NRDDDB programmes, services and funds until the grievance is resolved.
- NRDDDB can appoint members to any advisory committee etc.
- NGOs and other agencies can contribute to NRDDDB in the payment form of meals and transportation when members are invited to attend their board meetings.
- Statutory meetings will be held every three months.

4.8.3 Management of NRDDDB

This type of decision-making structure is new and innovative for communities in the North Rupununi. This model allows for the sharing of ideas and experiences, collective decision-making, and the highlighting of problems and issues to find relevant solutions for local communities. NRDDDB is recognised locally, nationally and internationally as a legitimate body that serves the purpose of consultation and collaboration for social and economic development in the North Rupununi.

NRDDDB has overall responsibilities for facilitating, planning and coordinating all community-based development projects and programmes whether cultural, educational or research oriented. From 1996-2005, NRDDDB has made significant progress in achieving its goals and objectives, mainly through job creation in the region. NRDDDB recommends the following approaches to increase participation by communities:

- Undertake educational outreach activities to all communities and address

- specific issues for each community.
- Undertake projects that are culturally friendly and address resource management issues.
- Educate young people in both Makushi and English languages.
- Create funds for education.
- Source funds for community development projects.

The new executive committee will be chosen by members' vote and will consist of a chair, vice chair, treasurer, secretary, and community relations executive effective from May 2006. These members will serve a three-year term with a maximum of two consecutive terms in office. According to NRDDB's 2006 by-laws, "the executive committee is authorised to make decisions and take action on all matters of the NRDDB board, in the board's absence, except where otherwise restricted in the by-laws or by the board".

Members have supported the recommendation to employ an executive director. For the first year, this position will be funded by CIDA's BCCP fund. As proposed in the strategic plan, the executive committee will oversee the work of the executive director and provide overall direction for the implementation of the plan. The executive director will be responsible for submitting a quarterly report to the committee on the implementation and coordination of the plan, problems encountered and how they were or will be solved.

Some of NRDDB's main programmatic areas are as follows:

1. *Tourism revolving fund* (CIDA funded): Financial support to North Rupununi communities interested in developing unique tourism projects. Each community can borrow up to GY\$1 million to be repaid within a one-year period plus 10% interest. Each community is given an additional one-year grace period to repay the loan. To date, only five of the sixteen communities – Surama, Wowetta, Aranaputa, Annai and Rupertee have accessed funding from this source. Surama has completed re-payment of its entire loan plus the 10% interest. Rupertee and Wowetta have started their re-payment scheme. An interviewee noted that the other communities are not yet confident enough to source these funds and need to first develop business and management plans. The NRDDB chair felt that this process is not assessed rigidly enough by the executive committee. A tourism coordinator is responsible for facilitating the development of tourism in the various communities.
2. *Women's revolving loan scheme*: Women can borrow a loan of GY\$40,000-60,000 to be repaid with 5% interest.
3. *North Rupununi Credit and Development Trust*: People interested in starting a small business can access a small loan of GY\$30,000-200,000 to be paid back with 15% interest. However, credit has to be repaid between six and nine months. Following repayment the loanee is eligible for a second loan.
4. *Makushi Yemekum Cooperation*: This is a cooperative comprising of loggers from mainly Surama and Annai. GFC has recently granted two SFPs – a concession of 40,000 hectares. The cooperative provides employment to its members. NRDDB has paid 50% of the concession fees to GFC.

5. *Community-based natural resource management projects*: NRDDDB has undertaken several natural resource projects including trade of ornamental fish, a wetlands project, logging, arapaima fish, management of conservation contracts and NTFP projects.
6. *Bina Hill Institute*: This institute is a partner of NRDDDB that has secured funding from several donors. Services are currently offered in training and internships. The institute also provides internet telephony for a fee.

The North Rupununi District Agricultural Producers Association represents local farmers and producers for the development of crops and livestock. They are developing peanut production systems and have recently embarked on making peanut butter to supply schools. This association is registered separately and not legally under NRDDDB, but does claim shelter under the NRDDDB umbrella.

NRDDDB has learned many lessons through trial and error. Members' recommendations for continued improvement include: more participation and cooperation by community leaders; leaders to undertake more responsibilities; sharing of experiences and lessons with communities in the South Rupununi and other regions; and more efforts for progress in regional education and health sectors. Some interviewees felt that some village leaders need to take a more responsible approach towards community development.

Members hopes include a continuation of lobbying, conservation activities and capacity building; sourcing of funds; creation of a resource centre for women's development; new employment for community environmental workers; improved MRU extension work; improved environmental management; strengthening of junior wildlife clubs. Changes or development should be accelerated whilst at the same time retaining cultural identity to prevent further exploitation. NRDDDB has to ensure financial sustainability in order to meet community needs and cover staff costs. The income from interest charged on loans is used to pay for NRDDDB administration and management costs and finding solutions to cultural challenges.

The key ingredients for NRDDDB's success have included strong leadership and a cooperative approach; flexibility; commitment and support to volunteers, community members and toshao (village leaders); good working relationships with the government; community consultation; and sound financial management and innovation.

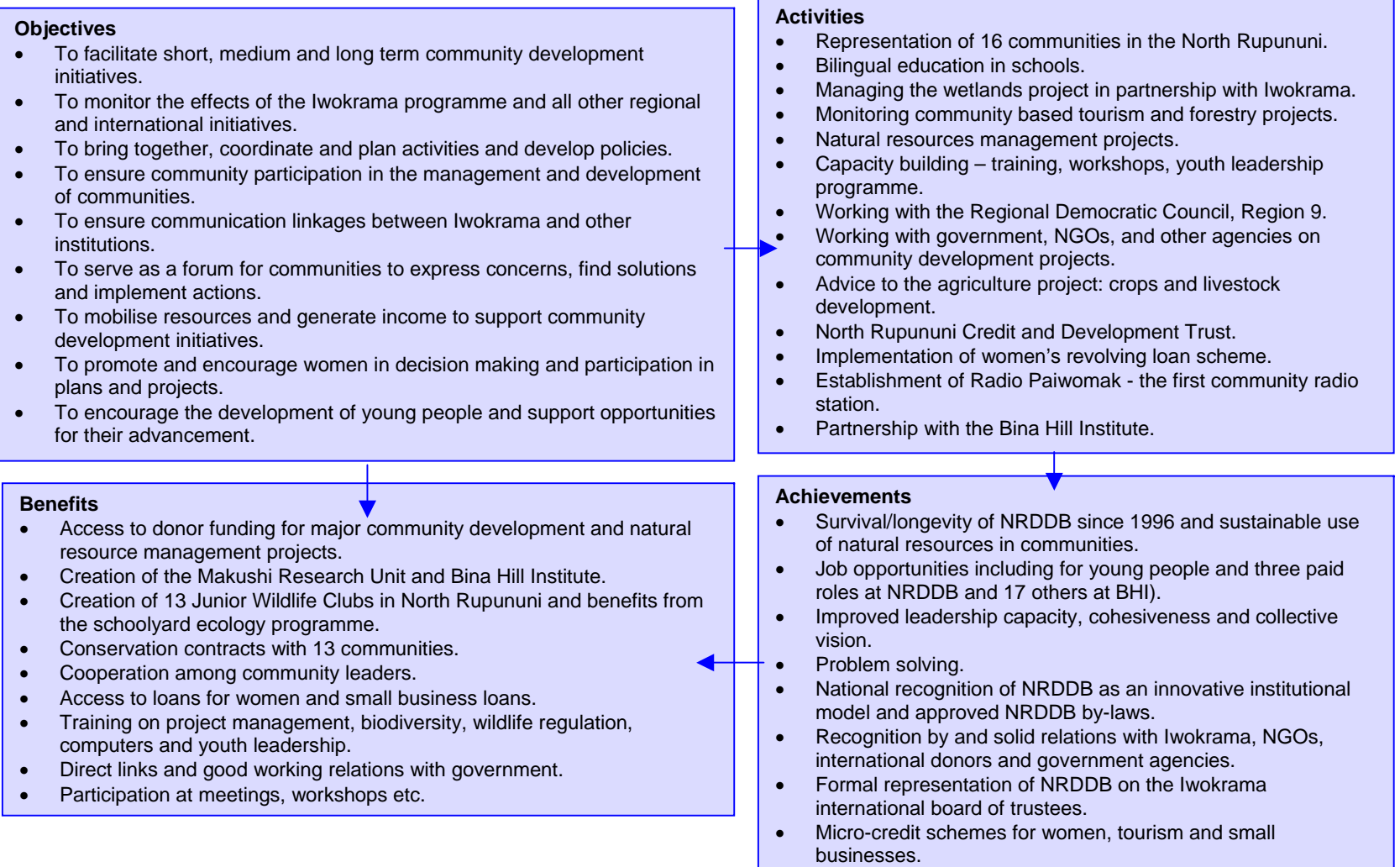
NRDDDB has also recognised the importance of including the government in natural resource management and community development initiatives. There has also been a push to strengthen NRDDDB to ensure that it is prepared for future programmes and challenges. Leadership capacity has been built through trial and error and overcoming common challenges. Challenges include disseminating information to the wider community – this is particularly true for leaders of untitled community areas who are ineligible for government salaries. Members would also like to see a compensatory mechanism implemented to provide for loss of leader's income during their involvement in volunteer activities, meetings and community projects.

4.8.4 External support to NRDDDB

NRDDDB members who were interviewed recognised that support from Iwokrama was fundamental to the development and functioning of the organisation. They also recognised the contributions of volunteers and interns and the consistent participation of communities and their leaders in NRDDDB's success and longevity. There were many individuals, organisations, government institutions and donors who also supported NRDDDB including the following:

- UNDP initially provided funding to NRDDDB under its poverty reduction programme.
- Iwokrama has provided generous support in numerous areas ranging from initial financial support to cover administrative costs through to implementation of natural resource management projects and forest management training.
- The Government of Guyana provided financial assistance to NRDDDB/Bina Hill Institute for administrative support.
- A memorandum of cooperation has been signed by NRDDDB, Iwokrama and Conservation International for the Wetlands Protected Areas System, community development, conservation, planning and funding.
- Support has come from various government ministries (fisheries, forestry, Amerindian Affairs), local institutions, and Regions 8 and 9 Democratic Councils.
- Support to set up Radio Paiwomak came from the Guyana Broadcasting Corporation; UNESCO; National Communications Network; and Iwokrama.
- UNDP and the Government of Guyana have supported the development of guidelines for community based natural resource management in the North Rupununi.
- Rotary Demerara and Rotary Canada provided funding for four tractors.
- IUCN supported an aquarium fish project.
- Additional support came from the British Lottery Fund; Youth Challenge Guyana; Youth Challenge International; Pronatura; Voluntary Service Overseas; Ghost River Re-discovery Programme; Darwin Initiative; Philadelphia Zoo; Audubon Society; Jacksonville Zoo; German Solar Project; USAID; overseas volunteers; Karanambo Trust; Red Thread; UK National Charities Commission the Commonwealth Human and Ecology Council.

Figure 10. North Rupununi District Development Board



4.9 Makushi Research Unit (MRU)

4.9.1 Tracing the history of MRU

MRU was formally established 15 May 1999 with nine women researchers under a project sponsored by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and administered by Iwokrama. MRU grew from nine to 11 and finally 13 researchers from villages in the North Rupununi, Region 9. Ms Janette Forte, a leading Guyanese anthropologist provided intensive training for the first researchers at the Iwokrama field station. Most of the researchers have either completed or partially undertaken primary education but have become skilled in their work through training, including learning how to use solar powered laptop computers.

MRU's main objective is to study, whilst at the same time revive, the traditional lifestyle of the Makushi people focusing on their language, food, craft and biodiversity (ethno-medicine, hunting, fishing and farming). This is the only programme in Guyana designed specifically for Amerindian women that combines culture, gender, traditional knowledge and skills to provide broad-based benefits for the entire Makushi people including raising funds from sales of MRU products. MRU has produced an important publication - *Makusipe Komanto Iseru* - on sustaining the Makushi culture and many other booklets and educational material on birds, cassava, fish, wildlife, domestic violence and alcohol. The Makushi researchers have recorded knowledge of their homeland and ecosystems to benefit the present and future generations.

MRU's work stems from its first hand community experiences, in-depth knowledge and understanding of ecosystems. Researchers report that prior to their involvement in MRU, they could not contribute at village meetings. At the beginning of the project, they were unsure how their role would unfold but through their continued involvement they are now grateful for the opportunity to be part of MRU. MRU sets high standards for its work and some researchers feel that because of this they may not have fully achieved all objectives.

4.9.2 Membership of MRU

The 13 Rupununi communities each represented by a Makushi researcher are Annai, Rupertee, Surama, Aranaputa, Crash Water, Rewa, Toka, Kwatman, Massara, Yakarinta, Apoteri, Wowetta and Fairview. Each of the 13 communities has self-selected their representative researcher. Membership of MRU has increased over the years and there are many people who are interested in becoming a researcher. The required criteria for becoming a Makushi researcher are:

- Knowledge of the Makushi language.
- Residency in the North Rupununi.
- Basic knowledge of English (reading and writing).
- Understanding of the community.
- Clear understanding by family members of the work involved.

- Knowledge of the environment – wildlife, birds, fish etc.
- Leadership capabilities.

Some of the incentives for becoming a Makushi researcher were reported as improved ability to speak, read and write in Makushi, the opportunity to conduct research on the use of medicinal plants and learn the names of flora and fauna, and cultural interaction through travelling and meeting with other villagers and institutions.

Since its establishment, MRU has demonstrated its ability to capture traditional Makushi culture in the form of stories and written publications for the benefit of future generations. Makushi researchers are represented at NRDDDB, which has benefited from the sale and profit of MRU publications. Under NRDDDB's new by-laws Makushi researchers no longer have voting rights, which some researchers are not happy with. Researchers report on their monthly work programmes and contributions to the community at NRDDDB's bi-monthly meetings. The women researchers consider this a tremendous achievement and report that doing so requires courage and self-confidence since NRDDDB is dominated by men. The women state that their self-esteem and confidence have improved significantly. They are pleased that they are able to share their ideas fluently in their own language rather than feeling inferior on account of being unable to explain themselves in fluent English. Their work has also enabled them to act as teachers. Makushi publications are used as a tool in the bilingual education programme and viewed as the most significant contribution to demonstrating and reviving the Makushi culture through school children and other young people. Young people view the Makushi researchers as role models and the community at large also respects them.

The researchers also pointed out that MRU's programme is extremely significant as they have been able to document traditional knowledge, initiate hand-sewn embroideries and at the same time earn an income from the sale of cultural and knowledge-based products. Researchers have gained essential computer and research skills and are able to discuss and solve issues relating to the development of their respective communities. Some researchers are now acting in leadership positions as a pivotal and locally acceptable entry point to assist with other development programmes, for example on alcohol and domestic violence issues.

Some of the researchers hopes for the future are:

- To have a library of their own to showcase their publications.
- To conduct Makushi language training with young people and continue teaching the language in North Rupununi schools.
- To see Makushi adopted as the North Rupununi's first language with teaching in schools in other parts of Guyana also.
- To share experiences and lessons learned with other women's group by travelling to other parts of the country and other countries
- To be long-term MRU employees.
- To obtain national health insurance for the benefit of their families.

Some of the women's fears were that their research materials would be used with no real benefits returning to MRU and that future researchers may not be as dedicated, committed and hard working as in the past.

4.9.3 Management of MRU

The current positions of authority within MRU are a coordinator, assistant coordinator, communicator and communications and management assistant (who also assists with radio programmes) and a coordinator for outreach activities. There is also an MRU advisor who is an elder from Massara village. These executive members are elected by the researchers. Currently, there are no membership fees. MRU meets on a bi-monthly basis and reports to NRDDDB. In the past, the MRU met almost on a monthly basis and communicated via high frequency radios. Members work together and meet to discuss and make decisions on all issues. They consider that MRU is well managed as a result of the cooperation, respect and understanding among the researchers.

The researchers are part-time employees who earn a fee from the sale of their bilingual publications. The total revenue from sales to date is approximately GY\$1,600,000. Funds from MRU's work have been allocated, partly to the researchers in the form of a gratuity payment but have also been channelled to Radio Paiwomak, a local community radio station and the purchase of a boat for NRDDDB's fisheries research and business development projects.

The researchers would like the youth clubs (Wildlife Conservation Cubs) in their villages to become more involved in the teaching of the Makushi language. Members would like to see a delegation of authority by NRDDDB to MRU to manage its own projects. Obstacles facing MRU include lack of transportation and the need for further computer training and access.

4.9.4 External support to MRU

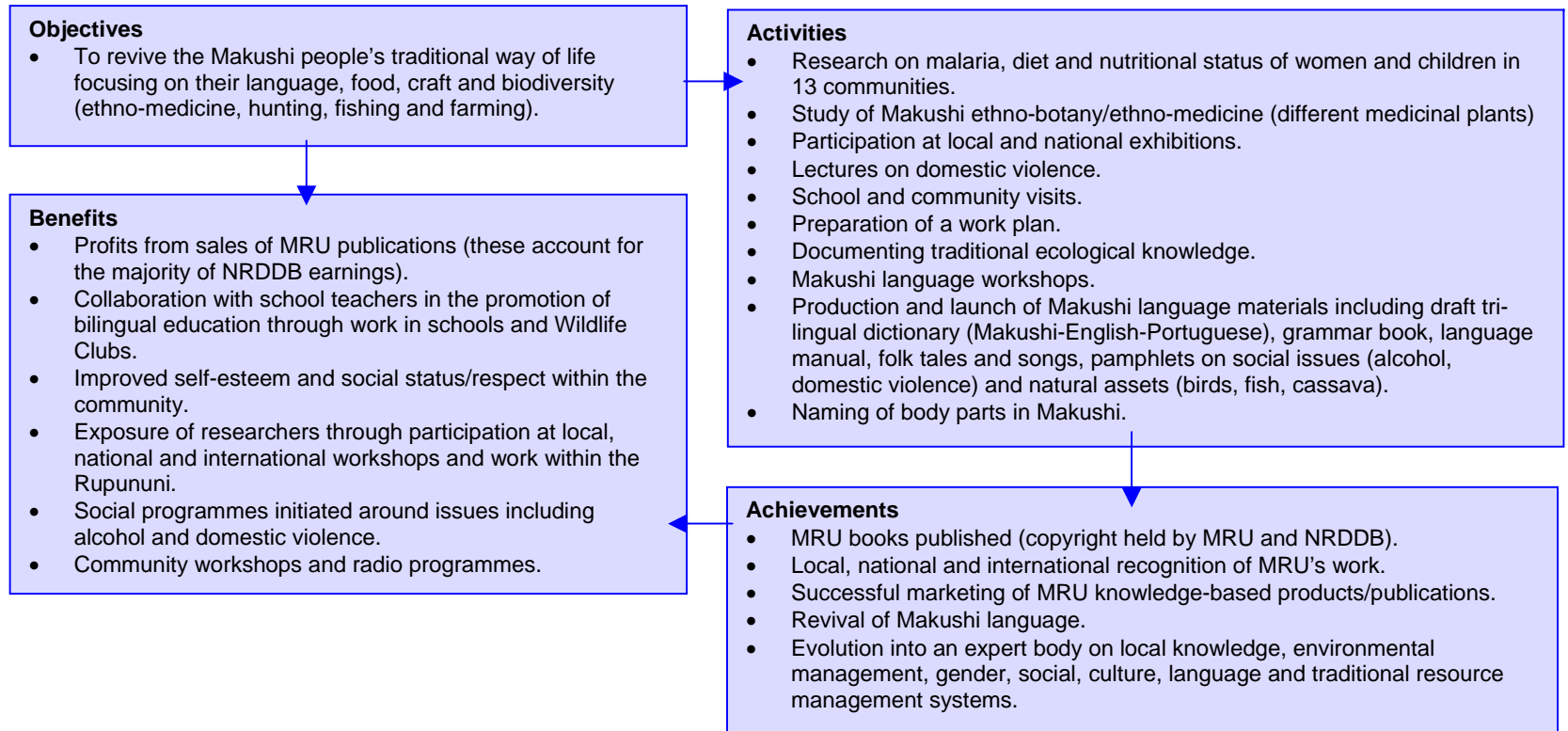
MRU could not have started or continue to function without the help of external institutions and the support of Makushi people.

MRU is an integral part of NRDDDB, which has greatly assisted the unit. MRU has also worked in collaboration with Iwokrama and CIDA on the development of bilingual education. The UK-based Eden Project paid a royalty fee to MRU for the use of selected text and illustrations from the booklet "Cassava – Our Gift to the World" for its cassava exhibit in the UK. MRU is also recognised by the Eden Project for its outstanding work. The Guyana Book Foundation has distributed MRU publications to libraries and schools throughout Guyana and has also supported the MRU pilot project in schools. The University of Calgary contracted MRU to undertake research on the diet and nutritional status of mothers and children between the ages of one day to five years. In this study, researchers collected information on the types and quantities of food consumed by both

traditional and wage-earning Makushi households. The results of this project also sought to monitor the impact of Iwokrama and other external programmes on the diet and nutrition of the Makushi people. Shell Antilles and Guianas Ltd displayed the 12 images of MRU embroideries in their 2002 corporate calendar and paid a royalty fee for the use of these images.

Other forms of support have come from bodies including: Amerindian Research Unit, University of Guyana, Iwokrama, GEF, and UNDP. There have been many trainers including, Ms Miriam Abbott, a Makushi language expert from Brazil who worked with the researchers to produce several materials including 'Let's read and write Makushi'. She is currently working with the researchers to produce a dictionary.

Figure 11. Makushi Research Unit



4.10 Informal Group of Waini Crabwood Seed Collectors

4.10.1 Tracing the history of the Informal Group of Waini Crabwood Seed Collectors

In around 2000, Ms Maria Gonsalves started to produce crabwood oil on a commercial scale. Her customers were miners and loggers in the Port Kaituma area, a few families in the Pomeroon area, and some residents of the nearest regional administrative centre – Kumaka, Mabaruma. Ms Gonsalves was born in the Waini community but left to pursue primary school education in Santa Rosa, Region 1, after which she worked for a few years in Region 1 and later Region 4. In 1979, she returned to the Waini community and has been there ever since.

In 2003, Ms Annette Arjoon, project manager of the Guyana Marine Turtles Conservation Society (GMTCS) who had a long association with the Gonsalves family in the Waini Community, decided to look for local and international market opportunities for crabwood oil. She was impressed with the quality of oil produced by Ms Gonsalves, particularly given the time and labour intensive nature of the production process. The pure oil produced in the Waini area is now marketed by GMTCS and sold as insect repellent and massage oil. Ms Gonsalves reports that other local uses of the oil include as a treatment for asthma, bronchitis, pneumonia, itching and diarrhoea.

Ms Gonsalves' main reason for choosing to produce crabwood oil was the abundance of resources in the Waini area and its wide local usage to treat ailments by miners and other community members. Production has served to supplement income from farming activities by the Gonsalves family. It has become extremely difficult to market farm produce at Kumaka, Mabaruma due to the low prices offered for produce and often only partial payment by the hucksters (middle men) who often claim that the outstanding payment was not made due to produce perishing during transportation to Georgetown. Ms Gonsalves reported that this is a difficult journey (via steam boat) to make oneself – there are often no seats for passengers and women are generally uncomfortable and sleep deprived. Although some farmers travel to Georgetown to market their produce, they are often not guaranteed market access since the hucksters assert such control over prices. Most farmers in Waini no longer make the trip to Georgetown themselves but rely on hucksters. Interviewees reported that the hucksters have good relations with the Region 1 Democratic Council and that many of their alleged activities receive little attention by the authorities. These factors influenced Ms Gonsalves to consider other income generating activities such as the production of crabwood oil.

Due to the limited income generating activities in the Waini area (manicole/palm heart harvesting, fishing, subsistence farming, and providing farm labour for large scale farmers), the collection of crabwood seeds was a viable option for generating extra income for the community. Ms Gonsalves has a dry-goods shop at the riverbank and sells oil to fishermen, villagers, manicole harvesters, AMCAR staff and others.

4.10.2 Membership of the Informal Group of Waini Crabwood Seed Collectors

An informal type of membership is open to anyone from the Waini community who is willing to collect crabwood seeds. The current membership consists of one crabwood oil producer and 32 seed collectors, of which 14 are men and 18 are women. The total population of Waini is 300 people (approximately 50 households). The ethnicity of the community is predominantly Warrau with some people of Carib, Arawak, mixed race and East Indian descent. One of the Warrau families currently living in Waini migrated from Venezuela a few years ago. This family has benefited significantly from the sale of crabwood seeds and was able to furnish their house using this income.

The group's objectives (which were set by Ms Gonsalves) are:

1. To provide supplemental income for young school leavers – both boys and girls involved in seed collection.
2. To train the younger girls and any interested males to make crabwood oil and become self-sufficient through their work.
3. To provide employment for school leavers (extracting/digging out the pulp from seeds and collecting and chopping fire wood).
4. To teach skills for producing crabwood oil on a large scale.

Ms Gonsalves recognised that supplemental income for the Waini Riverine people was much needed and that this was an opportunity to start a lucrative initiative with GMTCS.

Up to 2004, Ms Gonsalves paid GY\$1000 per bag of seeds collected. The average weight of a typical rice bag of crabwood seeds varies from 70-100lbs, which provides approximately 42lbs of kneaded mixture to produce one gallon of crabwood oil. The problem with this system was that the seed collectors would often collect old seeds, worm infested seeds and seedpods among the good crabwood seeds to fill up a rice bag more quickly. However in 2005, a new system was implemented to prevent these problems – collectors are now paid GY\$10 per pound of crabwood seeds. Approximately 220 bags of seeds were collected by the seed collectors in 2005.

4.10.3 Management of the Informal Group of Waini Crabwood Seed Collectors

The benefits of seed collection include an increased standard of living and creation of employment opportunities (including for young people). Indirectly, the crabwood project has raised awareness of the value of crabwood trees as a source of income and the need to protect resources for the benefit of future generations.

The following constraints to crabwood oil production have been reported:

- In some areas, crabwood trees are not producing the same volume of seeds as in the past.
- Some trees are fruiting pre-mature seeds.
- Producers report that the quality of oil from some areas may be affected by salt water intrusion in the river, especially during the dry season since the seeds fall in the salty water in the swampy areas.
- Salt water intrusion in the river also means that producers have to travel long distances to collect water to boil the seeds.

Community members identified the following threats facing resources and crabwood trees in Waini:

- Potential logging (by outsiders).
- Crabwood trees/resources taken away (by government etc. for other purposes).
- Over harvesting.
- Birds, insects (e.g. wood ants, beetles) and diseases causing damage to trees and destroying blossoms.
- Forest fires in the dry season (rarely deliberate).
- Climate/weather change (smaller harvest of seeds during the dry season; heavy winds leading to trees falling).
- Unknown effects of salt water on the trees.
- Use of crabwood timber/wood for housing, furniture etc.
- Sabotage – from people who may not be involved in the project
- Land clearance for farming (crabwood trees are sometimes cut to clear areas for farming). This is not a significant threat since farming is carried out on a relatively small scale.

Ms Gonsalves has held several discussions with women in the community on the idea of sourcing funds to build a community factory. The factory will allow women to come together to make oil collectively and store the seeds in a central location. This will also allow the group to formalise itself as an association and develop plans to market its products. Plans for the group include learning technologies to make value added products from crabwood oil e.g. soap, skin cream, shampoo, mosquito coils and candles. The group would like to visit Brazil to learn these technologies and thus further increase income for families in Waini. The group's main priority at present is to acquire a stamp press to produce the oil and to access a recipe or training to produce crabwood oil soaps. The stamp press will allow maximum production of oil from the seeds. There are concerns, however, that the oil may not be considered natural if certain technologies are used instead of manual labour. It would also be necessary to source additional markets as GMTCS would be unable to purchase a larger volume of oil if supply increases. Other plans include packaging to market the oil as an insect repellent and massage oil. Ms Gonsalves notes that the entire community could benefit from such a venture and that this would thereby reduce some of the conflicts within the community caused by the perception that Ms Gonsalves is the sole beneficiary of the project.

Other plans for the future include:

- Accessing advice on forming and running an association.
- Selling crabwood oil to pharmacies and accessing training on marketing and production methods.
- Working with researchers to study the effects of salt water intrusion on crabwood seeds and oil quality.

Other significant, indirect benefits of the crabwood oil enterprise have been the purchase, by Ms Gonsalves, and re-sale in her shop of other local produce such as bananas, cassava and peppers. As the only shop in the area, basic food items are also sold to community members here. In the dry season, Ms Gonsalves uses her boat to travel many miles to collect drinking water for her family and community members. Ms Gonsalves is also able to transport sick people by boat to Kumaka (generally free of charge or occasionally on reimbursement of fuel costs). She also provides accommodation for visiting medical teams.

There are many factors affecting the capacity of the community to produce and market products. These include the location of Waini approximately 115 km from the nearest administrative centre (Kumaka, Mabaruma) by river; the distance of the school from some households (resulting in 44 children not being schooled); prevalence of alcohol in the community; a lack of community cooperation and a long standing family feud which has caused a rift between residents. In addition to re-building the school in a more convenient location, it is hoped that literacy rates can be improved by appointing trained teachers and providing education beyond primary school and second form level.

At a community meeting in April 2005, group members identified their hopes and fears regarding crabwood oil production. At one of the meetings, community members suggested that GMTCS should purchase oil from other women in the community who are interested in producing oil – including from those who do so in a more traditional manner without the use of a matapee to squeeze the oil from the pulp.

4.10.4 External support to the Informal Group of Waini Crabwood Seed Collectors

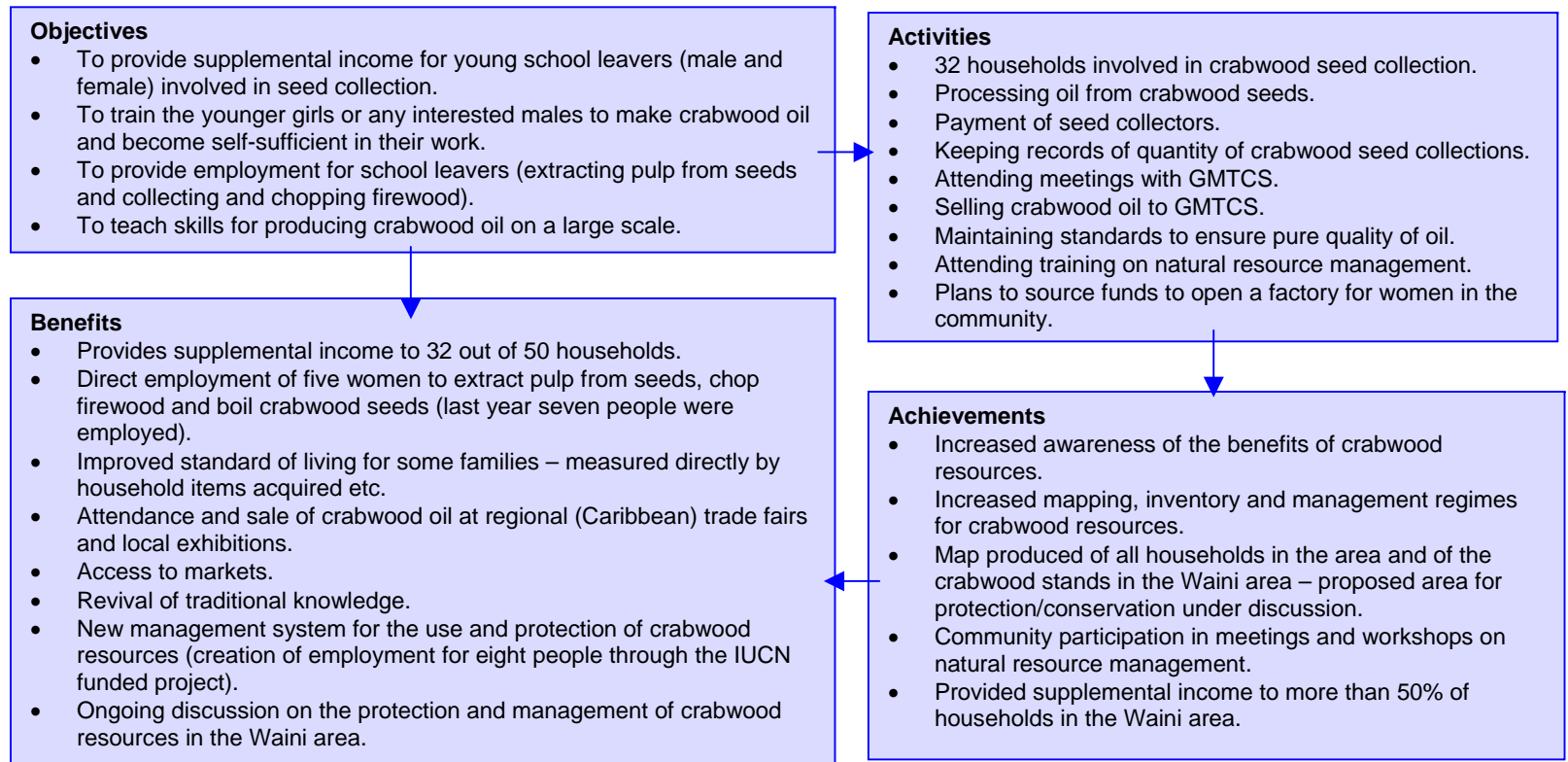
GMTCS has been the main source of external support for the crabwood project. GMTCS purchases oil from Ms Gonsalves, which it then packages, labels and markets for sale in Georgetown and few overseas markets. Infiltrating these markets has taken time and has relied on the consistent supply of a pure quality oil. GMTCS currently only purchases oil from one oil producer to ensure that a high quality is maintained. However, GMTCS does also purchase and sell crabwood soap produced by the Almond Beach Community, Region 1. GMTCS is seeking to increase demand by accessing other markets, and raise awareness of uses for the oil.

GMTCS recognised the need for sustainable management of the crabwood resources in the Waini area and subsequently was able to source funding from the Netherlands Committee for the World Conservation Union (IUCN) to develop a management plan for the sustainable use of crabwood resources. Funds were utilised to provide training for nine people in the Waini community in the areas of inventory, usage of equipment (compass, GPS etc.), line cutting, courses in forestry and natural resource management by FTC and Iwokrama. Although, the project provides many benefits for the community, neither Ms Gonsalves nor the other community members were included in the development of the project or had a copy of the project document. However, GMTCS have reported that discussions were held on the proposal and copies of the proposal were sent to Ms Gonsalves. GMTCS has provided crucial marketing and financial support to the Waini community (meetings are held on a quarterly basis), and continues its support of the group. The community believes that GMTCS has played a key role in the success of the project.

Table 4. Hopes and fears expressed by members of the Informal Group of Waini Crabwood Seed Collectors

Hopes	Fears
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That certification will come quickly • Creation of an industry that will sustain family development • Better prices for seeds to be able to buy clothes etc. • To obtain gloves and other protective equipment to limit danger when collecting seeds (from snakes, mosquitoes, scorpions, spiders etc) • That the crabwood project will provide economic benefits and rising incomes for all community members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project will not succeed. • More hard work during seed collection (it takes collection from approximately 20 trees to gather one shopping bag full of seeds). • Over harvesting. • Most people will not get feedback about the project. • Seed prices will not rise. • Collective working will not happen. • Only the people who make the oil will be better off. • Trees will bear less fruit over time.

Figure 12. Informal Group of Waini Crabwood Seed Collectors



4.11 Upper Berbice Forest Producers' Association (UBFPA)

4.11.1 Tracing the history of UBFPA

UBFPA was formally established to provide employment for members of the Kwakwani Community in 2000. There were limited employment opportunities available within the community, due to the diminishing bauxite mining industry in Region 10. Some community members were involved in illegal logging which the government was actively clamping down on in Region 10. In 2000, loggers recognised the opportunity to access lands legally through GFC and decided to join the Region 10 Forest Producers' Association (a logging group based in Linden) in order to do so. Association membership provided them with the opportunity to become self-employed. Under the leadership of Mr Phillip Bynoe, the Region 10 Forest Producers' Association pursued an advocacy agenda for the acquisition of land by small loggers. This led to several protests and demonstrations against GFC. The association and other groups claimed that the issuing of TSAs by GFC was leading to small-scale loggers being unable to compete economically. UBFPA was set up in October 2000 and eventually broke away from the Region 10 Forest Producers' Association in 2002. GFC embarked on a community forestry programme, granting lands to UBFPA and helping them register as an association.

From an initial base of 10-15 people, membership of UBFPA has risen on account of employment opportunities and other benefits available to members. In 2003, the association contracted a legal consultant to develop a constitution with members, setting out rules and guidelines for the association. The association is now registered under the Small Business Act.

The association's original objective was to create employment whilst contributing to community development. Members set out their objectives through meetings and discussions. These objectives still represent the main purposes of the association but members feel that the objectives do not fully match their needs (approximately an 80% match at present).

The association's objectives are to: provide employment and livelihoods for members; to practice sustainable forest management; to negotiate ownership and access to land; to obtain better prices for products; and to build unity and strength among members. The association hopes to eliminate unemployment in the community and also seeks to work legally and to develop the capacity of its members. UBFPA is working to become more transparent to ensure proper financial record keeping and listing of membership. Members of the public are allowed to view the association's records. The association pays royalties to GFC and made a recent payment of GY\$2 million.

4.11.2 Membership of UBFPA

Kwakwani has a population of approximately 4000 consisting of around 1400 households. UBFPA has 122 registered members from Kwakwani and Aroaima, the vast majority of whom are males. UBFPA is open to any person who is a current resident of Kwakwani or Aroaima or former residents who have lived in either community for more than three years and are involved in the timber business.

Members have to apply for membership by completing an application form (GY\$100); pay an application fee of GY\$5000; and obey the rules of the association, including:

- No under-sized logs to be cut (<35 cm diameter at breast height).
- Members are not allowed to miss three consecutive meetings.
- Royalties must be paid on every shipment/harvest of logs to GFC.
- Members have to provide board measure of lumber.
- Each member has to tag stumps and forest produce.
- Members are required to submit relevant documentation for lumber, i.e. a trip sheet and removal permit.

Members have to pay an acreage fee, which can be made in two instalments. A royalty fee varying from GY\$1-3 per board foot is paid depending on the timber species harvested. Membership has risen and fallen over the years, and UBFPA reports that there are currently 30 active members out of the total 122. Declining membership is directly attributed to the poor quality of land available for harvesting. Association members believe they are all treated equally. The community is small and there is a sense of familiarity and close relations among members, which poses a challenge of strictly enforcing the rules. One way forward for the association is to diversify from logging.

Members identified several problems facing the association; mainly that GFC has issued land to the association which is already harvested by other companies. They reported that foreigners are increasingly able to benefit from the forest more than local communities. Additionally, several outsiders have been able to join the association and the group reinforced that the association's membership rules should be more prohibitive. However, in the plenary session, several executive members objected to this complaint noting that these external members have lived in the communities for more than three years.

The greatest frustrations are poor attendance at meetings and disobeying of rules by some members. There is an urgent need for financial aid for community development. Since March 2005, the association has been contributing GY\$35,000 per month towards community development projects through the Community Forestry Development Committee. This committee comprises representatives from UBFPA, the Neighbourhood Democratic Council, GFC, the Regional Development Committee and three community members. GFC is responsible for committee finances. The committee decides on the type of community projects to be implemented, e.g. road building.

The committee would like the association to become involved in value added processing, for example, providing dressed lumber and making furniture. Other projects include re-planting of manicole palm, fish farming, and development of agriculture and other NTFPs. The committee identified other potential future projects including duck rearing, building a proper wharf at the Kwakwani waterfront and a community sports shed. Members fear that in the near future they will become unable to work and support their families due to the poor quality of lands. Members hope that GFC will be able to allocate more land and that their association will get first preference to lands which are closer to their community. Members recommend that each logger should receive more tags per month and that the government of Guyana should offer duty free concessions on logging equipment. Other requests include allocation of good quality forests to the association, establishing better relationships with GFC and large logging companies – especially to enable access to the company road at a convenient time.

Table 5. Hopes (recommendations) and fears expressed by UBFPFA members

Hopes	Fears
<p>SFM and allocation of additional land</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If more lands are given to the association then the chances of managing the concession in a real and sustainable way will be greatly enhanced. • GFC will grant access to workable, un-logged lands as early as possible, with first preference to UPFPA on nearby land. • Better relations with GFC, the government, Variety Woods and Greenheart Ltd (VW&GL) and other organisations. • Use of the VW&GL road at a convenient time, to access the market and meet orders in a timely manner. • Construction of a new road by the bauxite company. • Release of waste oil by VW&GL. • A review by GFC of the protected species list to allow for harvesting in the future. • Issuing of more tags per month and contribution by foreign loggers to road maintenance. <p>Expectations for UBFPFA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued strengthening and expansion of the association, with increased membership and better benefits for members – including job creation for the unemployed. • Better concessions and easy access to loans to buy equipment (tractors, skidders). 	<p>Depletion of forest resources and impact on livelihoods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GFC will stop small woodcutters from cutting lumber with chainsaws after 2006. • Insufficient land and non-allocation of new land will mean association members are unable to work and support their families after 2006. • Unsustainable livelihoods and inability of association to meet members' daily needs. • GFC will take back land located beyond the river. • Insufficient lumber due to foreign loggers using up surplus and other species of logs. • Insecure futures for young people – members may go hungry and take things into their own hands with uncertain outcomes. <p>High operational costs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bankruptcy of members due to exorbitant gas prices and the cost of lumber extraction. • Inability of association to pay acreage fees due to exhausted land. • The association will not be given full privileges to carry out its mission and

<p>loans to buy equipment (tractors, skidders, portable chainsaws).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquisition of a sawmill so that members can produce boards/sawn lumber and build houses and offices for community development. • Better prices for products. <p>Institutional support, alternative livelihoods and other recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More support to the association from GNIFC to enhance community development. • Full cooperation from all supporting agencies to facilitate development of Region 10. • Technical assistance to help members diversify into farming for example. • Implementation of government policy to grant ownership of land to Guyanese citizens and involvement of foreigners as co-workers. • Government provision of duty free concessions on logging equipment. 	<p>accomplish its purposes community sustainability.</p> <p>External limitations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability of GFC to instruct drug dealing forestry land owners on how to work their lands but with continued pressure on small associations. • Continued restriction of road usage during certain hours and threats to stop people using the road all together if there are any problems. • Inability of GNIFC to continue assisting the community.
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4.11.3 Management of UBFPA

Leaders are elected to serve for a one-year term. However, under the proposed constitution, members have recommended that this term is increased to two years. The criteria for leadership are honesty, leadership ability and commitment to the association. The election process is conducted in accordance with the constitution by majority vote.

The executive body comprises a chair, vice chair, second vice-chair, secretary, treasurer, assistant secretary, assistant treasurer, five committee members and three trustees. Currently, there are no female representatives on the executive body.

All members can raise any issue through approaching the chair at any ordinary or general meeting. Interviewees reported that there is no single dominant group within the association. It was recommended that the executive body should undertake management training programmes to build capacity and strengthen leadership and management skills.

UBFPA members reported that they encourage good environmental practices, but often, it is difficult to harvest the forest sustainably due to the poor quality of their allocated land. They do, however, try to meet and adopt the following environmental standards which they have set themselves:

- Follow GFC quotas, and rules as closely as possible and pay royalty fees to GFC.
- Monitoring of harvesting/logging teams by executive members if they are working in particular areas.
- 10 tags are allocated per member. If wood measurements are supplied and the initial 10 tags are correctly accounted for, a further 10 tags can be provided.
- Provide records of tag allocation to GFC to ensure transparency and accountability.
- Replant greenheart seedlings.
- Practice directional felling.
- Try to site forest roads/trails in forested areas with large trees to minimise damage to younger trees.
- Try not to harvest trees alongside creeks.
- Expel members if they do not comply with UBFPFA rules.

The main problems affecting the association are lack of equipment, poor quality lands, lack of transportation to monitor the concession and transport lumber to the point of sale, low prices for lumber and lack of overseas markets. Members also highlighted that fuel prices are constantly increasing and that UBFPFA does not enjoy duty-free concessions like the foreign logging companies.

4.11.4 External support to UBFPFA

UBFPFA reports that it could not have continued without the support of outsiders. UBFPFA was initially supported by the office of the prime minister, GFC and the office of the president (which conducted a socio-economic study of Kwakwani). GFC and the prime minister's office are still involved in the development of the association. GFC provided initial encouragement to members to form an association and to sever ties with the Region 10 Forest Producers' Association. Today, GFC monitors the management of the association; issues permits and tags and is responsible for the Community Forestry Development Committee's finances. GFC also provides training for members through seminars and workshops; allocates land and facilitates meetings with other forestry stakeholders. Mr P.I Gomes, a consultant to GFC was involved in institutional strengthening. The prime minister's office has an ongoing relationship with the association and maintains regular contact by monitoring its administration. It also provides resource personnel in response to specific requests by the association. In some instances, there were problems acquiring tags from GFC and the prime minister's office responded to UBFPFA's request to mediate and solve these issues.

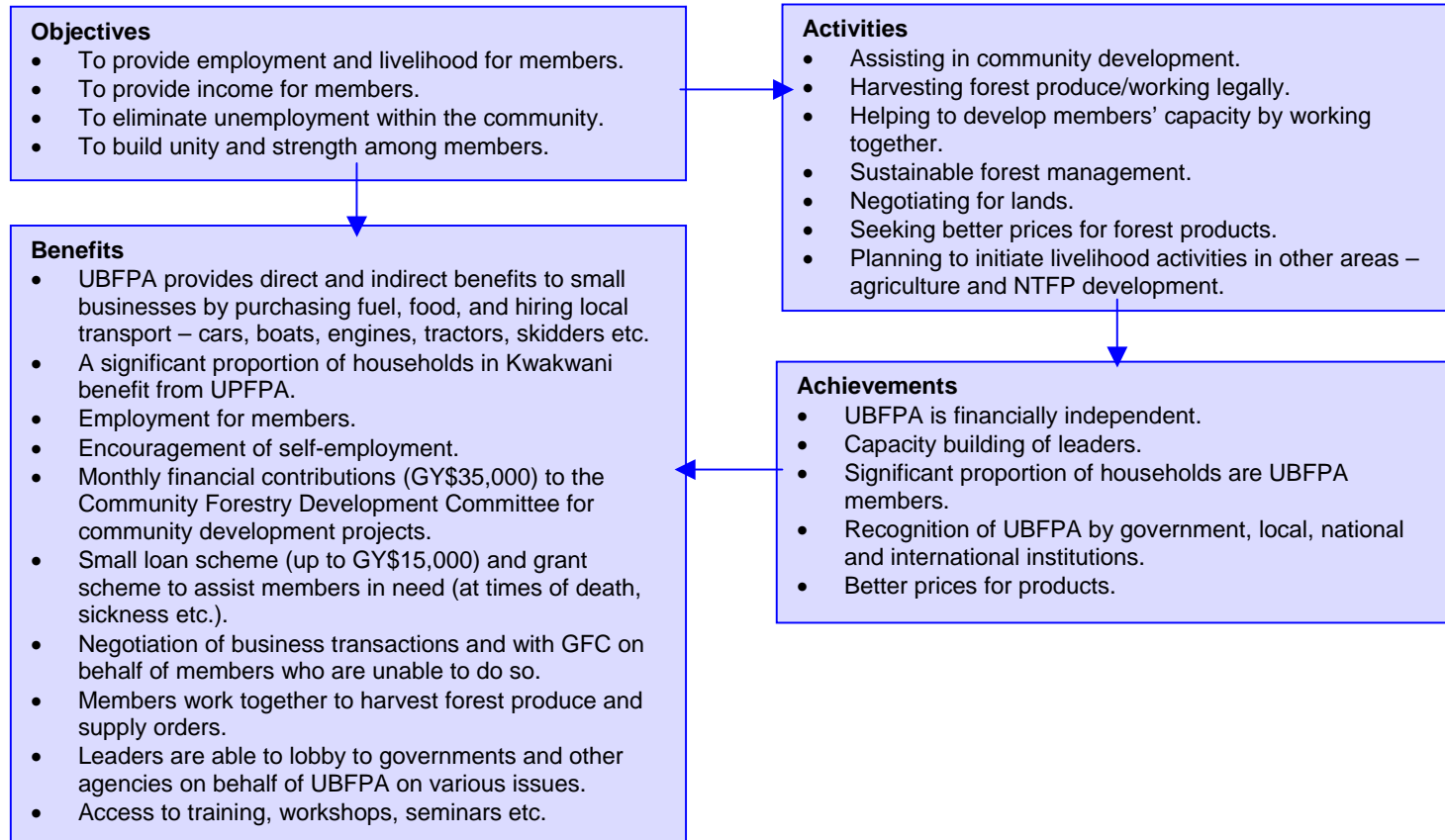
UBFPFA meets with other institutions, including holding regular meetings with ISLA and the Region 10 Forest Producers' Association to address issues affecting members. Discussions are also held with GNIFC around forest certification issues. The Linden Economic Advancement Programme (LEAP), which is financed by the EU, is currently facilitating meetings with all forest

producer associations in Region 10 to discuss plans to form an umbrella organisation.

UBFPA members are urgently recommending linkages with financial, training and agricultural institutions and marketing agencies. The types of support required include technical assistance for replanting, financial, marketing, management training, NTFP development, production of value added products including furniture and training on the use and repair of production equipment.

Currently, none of the associations involved in UBFPA provide any incentives to keep the association functioning. UBFPA is strongly advocating for a representative of a small forest producers' association to be appointed to GFC's board of directors. UBFPA is urgently seeking assistance to train people on NTFPs and to convene an NTFP forum.

Figure 13. Upper Berbice Forest Producers' Association



4.12 Ituni Small Loggers' Association (ISLA)

4.12.1 Tracing the history of ISLA

In 2001, ISLA was established by 12 people from the Ituni community. At that time, GFC, through many meetings, requested that individual permits were given up by SFP holders. GFC advised SFP holders to form themselves into an association to manage their resources collectively. Many SFP holders were extremely reluctant to relinquish their individual rights but eventually decided to become part of the association because membership became the only legal way to extract timber. GFC opted to deal with the loggers as a collective body due to difficulties (around decision making and follow-up actions and penalising where necessary) of working with numerous individuals. GFC is now able to work with ISLA to implement rules and guidelines and the association is responsible for non-compliance with laws. GFC has also encouraged community forestry. Working together as an association has provided employment opportunities within the community and ISLA's collective voice has improved the loggers' ability to solve any individual or collective problems with external bodies. ISLA membership is growing since logging is the only reliable source of employment that also supports community development. There are no middlemen operating as part of the association and people are able to become self-employed.

The association's original objectives were to provide employment, assist community development and educate members on good environmental practices. These objectives were set by a group of people who came together to develop ISLA's constitution. The rules and guidelines under the constitution remain the same, except that over the years, members have been educated on environmental standards for logging. This association is legally registered under the Friendly Societies Act. Members benefit from the activities that ISLA undertakes such as building logging roads and bridges, and payment of royalties to GFC. ISLA has limited financial resources to build roads and bridges and relies on its members to provide labour. Members would like the association to find markets for NTFPs, dress wood, and get involved in down-stream processing such as furniture making.

4.12.2 Membership of ISLA

Currently, the association comprises 56 members, of which, 45 are men and 11 are women. Membership is also open to any institution; however, institutional members do not have harvesting rights to the forests and are categorised as associate members. Applicants cannot be otherwise employed and must possess assets – a chainsaw, be an Ituni resident and/or have a holding or children within the community to apply for membership. Prospective members must submit an application stating name, address and a list of their assets for review and approval by the management committee. Members are expected to be reliable, honest and loyal to the community. ISLA's management committee is selected by members and comprises two executive members and three general members.

Responsibilities of ISLA members include the following:

- Fulfil the requirements of ISLA, GFC, the Environmental Protection Agency; and other forestry-related organisations.
- Follow environmental guidelines such as harvesting trees of a certain diameter, ensure buffer zones are demarcated, little damage to seedlings etc.
- Pay monthly fees of GY\$1,000 to ISLA.
- Pay acreage fees to GFC.
- Maintain roads and bridges. Members can also send someone else on their behalf to participate in maintenance activities. A penalty of GY\$10,000 is charged by ISLA for non-participation.

Membership benefits include employment, training, improved management skills, upgrading harvesting techniques (directional felling/reduced impact logging), donations to churches and support in event of sickness etc. All members benefit equally from ISLA.

Participation could be better improved in ISLA by:

- Developing a better communication system to interact with members (including to notify them of meetings).
- A more responsible approach by members to attending meetings – since attendance by two thirds of members is necessary to conduct a meeting.
- More regular meetings (at least every three months).

4.12.3 Management of ISLA

Leaders are elected every year and are chosen on the basis of their experience, confidence and general knowledge of the logging business and ISLA. Also, they must be able to represent the loggers at various forums. The management committee consists of a chair, vice chair, secretary, treasurer, assistant secretary, public relations officer, assistant public relations officer and two trustees. Decisions are made in accordance with the rules and guidelines of the constitution and are consistent with the decisions by the general membership. Decisions taken at general meetings are considered final.

Members have several mechanisms through which they can raise an issue or a complaint: by written letter to the secretary of ISLA or at a special meeting convened by any six members or at the annual general meeting. There seems to be no dominant sub-group within the association, however, many people are not completely happy with the association. The management committee makes decisions on behalf of members which can be accepted or rejected at general meetings. The committee can take executive decisions (without consulting members) on issues that are in clear accordance with the constitution. The

management committee meets once a month and holds quarterly meetings with the general membership.

Members' recommendations to improve ISLA include more opportunities for dialogue, management training, greater exposure of members and training in conflict management. The community places high expectations on ISLA, and particularly in relation to the creation of employment opportunities.

Constraining factors faced by ISLA include members not participating in road maintenance activities; disagreement with decisions made by the management committee; and in some instances, members have been caught transporting produce and lumber of non-members leading to a penalty fine and an investigation by the committee. Some members have objected to this system of paying the fine before the investigation is conducted. Both parties (members and non-members) are fined and membership is withdrawn. Some members have complained that the association does not look after the interests of all members.

Currently, the association is experiencing many frustrations as they believe GFC is issuing insufficient tags which barely meet the needs of the current membership. There are many more applicants hoping to join the association, but ISLA is unable to facilitate this on account of the already low number of tags issued. Recently, members had to divide 300 tags among 40 members which caused significant tension. GFC told ISLA that because members have been involved in activities that do not meet their requirements they are unwilling to issue a higher number of tags. ISLA reports that its members have not exceeded the annual allowable cut outlined in their management plan and cannot understand why tags are being limited.

There is a general sense of frustration felt by the association's members. Recently, one member and his family left the community because income from logging can no longer service his loans. There are fears by some members that foreigners will take over and work on land that has not been cut yet. Members feel insecure as most of them completely reliant on logging for their families' livelihoods. Due to current financial difficulties members can barely afford gasoline for their chainsaws. One member also complained that the tags (which are placed on logs) are easily misplaced when there is rough handling in certain terrain, for example floating logs in creeks etc, and skidding. Also, logs are stored in open community spaces which are accessible by children and other people who often remove the tags.

Some of the obstacles facing ISLA are its lack of finances; poor performance of executive members; poor access to technical information; internal problems including lack of commitment by members; and lack of external support from the government and other agencies. ISLA also bears a high administrative cost to meet with GFC on various issues as this requires travelling to Georgetown on a regular basis. The association also has to pay a forestry consultant to prepare its forest management plan and annual plan on its behalf. This is a particularly high expense for the association and these plans are rarely accepted in their initial

form by GFC. The association requires technical support to effectively participate in preparing these plans.

Members would like the government provide loans to the association to boost road and bridge building activities. Fundraising activities such as sports activities and barbeques are held by members to support ISLA's development.

Table 6. Hopes and fears expressed by ISLA members

Hopes	Fears
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ISLA members will work together in greater harmony and will have better relations with the association. • ISLA will continue to recognise its members' needs. • Motivation will be maintained with better cash flows and ability to market and sell more species of wood. • GFC will provide more land for the association and develop unknown species so that loggers can produce more and have better access to markets. • ISLA will be able to assist the community more, for example in schooling. • ISLA becomes more action oriented, growing and moving forward in appropriate areas (including development of NTFPs) and is successful in the activities it undertakes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ISLA will fail because the management committee is good at talking but not at taking action. • Dishonesty of management committee members. • The forest will be soon be depleted, and many people will be left without jobs. • Trees of an allowable size for cutting will soon run out due to the size of allocated land and the number of loggers. • GFC's failure to address the problem of insufficient land will lead to many problems. • GFC could withdraw the TSA. • Outsiders may not help if Ituni residents do not show more interest in their own welfare. • Failure to unite ISLA and work efficiently with GFC.

4.12.4 External support to ISLA

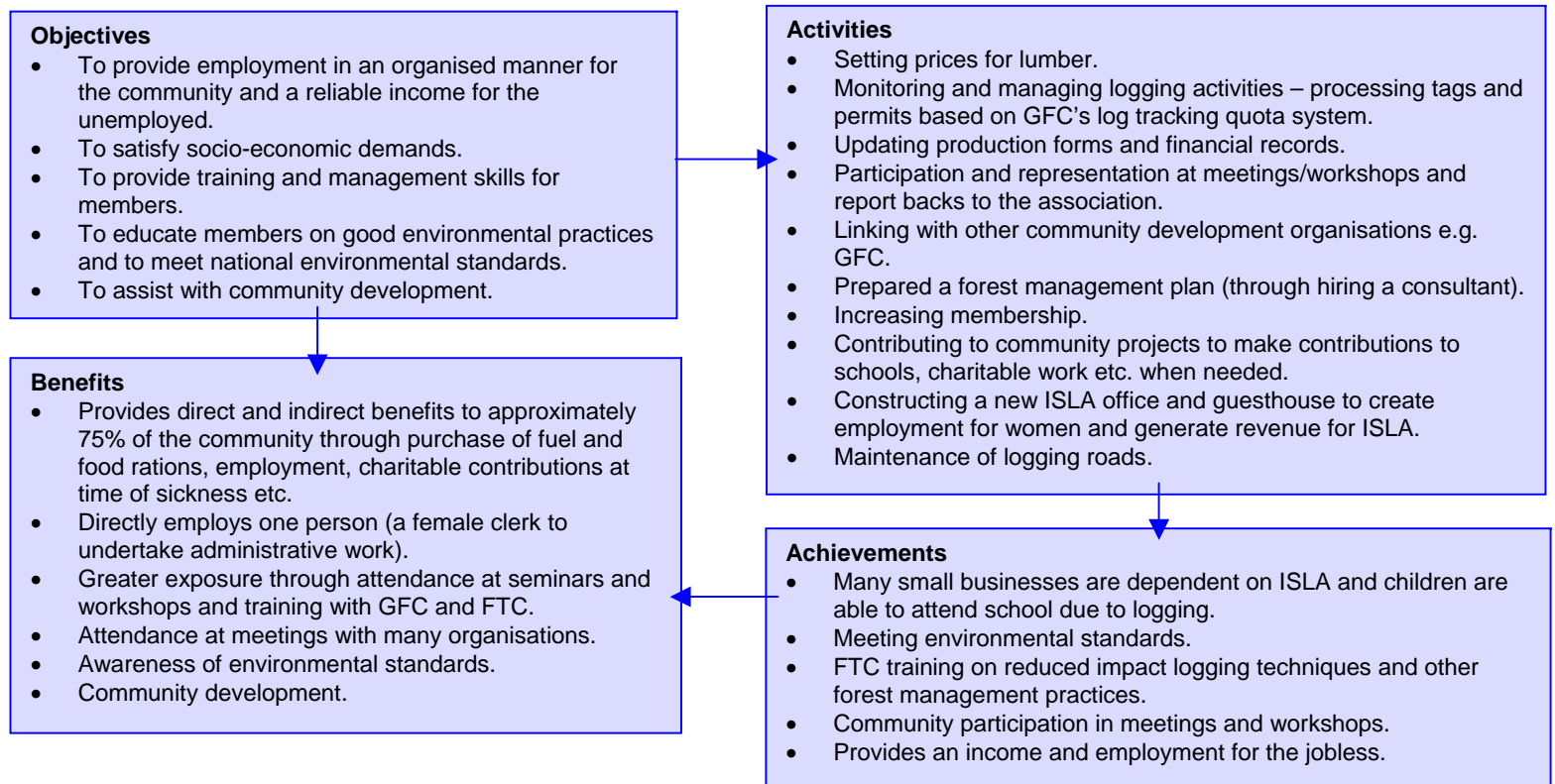
ISLA received external support to form the association. In 2004, ISLA was formally granted 360 km² of forest by GFC under a TSA. GFC provided training and motivation and attended meetings to assist in the formation of the association. GFC helped conduct an inventory of the forest resources under the TSA. ISLA accepted the land allocated by GFC with the hope of acquiring additional land in the future. GFC is still involved in ISLA's activities and provides guidelines for harvesting forest resources. GFC also covered legal fees to develop the constitution and assisted in the registration process. ISLA reports that it would not have been possible to keep the association going without the support of GFC.

ISLA meets with other organisations such as the Region 10 Forest Producers' Association, UBFPA (for information purposes), the office of the prime minister, LEAP (for funding purposes) and GNIFC (to discuss certification). ISLA is a

member of GNIFC and hopes to become a member of the Linden Chamber of Commerce. GNIFC also offered to become an associate/institutional member of ISLA to share relevant information on forestry and certification with ISLA.

External support required by ISLA includes technical and financial training, and information on marketing and developing lesser-known timber species. The main constraints facing the association are the need for more wooded forest, better access to roads and improved and regular attendance of members at meetings.

Figure 14. Ituni Small Loggers' Association



4.13 Forests Products Association of Guyana (FPA)

4.13.1 Tracing the history of FPA

FPA is a non-governmental trade organisation which was legally established in 1944. The organisation was formerly known as the Forest Products Association of British Guiana and was registered under Chapter 57 of the Trade Union Ordinance. At that time, the organisation was formed as a new and innovative way to represent the forestry sector.

FPA's overall goal is to ensure an economically viable industry while members practice SFM. In 2004, FPA secured funding from WWF-Guyana to develop a strategic plan with the aim of strengthening the association. The strategic goals outlined in FPA's 2004-2007 strategic plan are to: improve the structure, governance and operation of the association; ensure short and long term financing; increase membership (mainly by targeting small-scale producers and regional associations); increase the level and range of services provided; improve linkages and working relations with key agencies, associations and enterprises; and improve communication.

FPA is currently involved in several projects promoting internships within the sector for undergraduate students; disseminating information via newsletters, websites, email and meetings with regional bodies. FPA is working with the USAID Guyana Trade and Investment Support initiative as part of the forest products working group. FPA has also completed several projects under the Caribbean Regional Human Resource Development Program for Economic Competitiveness (CPEC) to develop critical training, an FPA website and a handbook on timber species in Guyana.

4.13.2 Membership of FPA

Membership is open any person, firm or company resident in Guyana involved in obtaining, producing, converting, selling or storing any forest product. Large and small-scale sawmillers, loggers, furniture and other craft manufacturers are all encouraged to become members. FPA currently represents 62 companies accounting for 70% of production in the formal forestry sector. FPA membership includes both foreign and locally owned forest entities, most of whom are represented by male delegates. Applicants are required to submit the names of their company and directors, details on the type of business and concession size, and the signatures of two existing FPA members. It is generally felt that the submission of these signatures should be phased out to ease procedural requirements. Membership applications are reviewed at the executive committee's monthly meetings.

FPA shares information with some of the more remote regions through its regional representatives. Regional representatives are asked to update members and non-members on FPA activities and to recruit new members in their respective regions. Members are required to: pay quarterly fees (allocated

in four categories); comply with the rules of the association; attend general or special association meetings and meet other administrative requirements. The executive committee can elect any person or company as an honorary member.

FPA achievements often filter down to the entire sector rather than accruing only to members. For example, FPA lobbied to waive the duty and consumption tax on specific items. FPA is currently reviewing the VAT Bill to ensure that the sector can continue to benefit from the duty and tax waiver. Again, the results of this work will impact on the forestry sector as a whole. As a result, some people do not perceive a need to join the association since they can experience some of its benefits without doing so.

The other benefits of membership were listed as:

- More national level representation especially for small-scale members.
- Issues affecting the forest industry are presented in a structured manner at all levels.
- Linkages established between small and large-scale members to share experiences.
- Dissemination of information to the sector – finance, technical advice etc.
- Review of relevant legislation for the common interest of the industry.
- Advocacy at a national and international level on specific issues affecting the industry.
- Facilitation of training and capacity building on forest management, administration, technical and mechanical skills etc.

The benefits of membership were generally thought to be shared equally among members and there is a growing recognition of the importance of the association. The executive committee felt that participation could be improved by increased public awareness and communication since some people are still unaware of the association's activities. There is a need for: technical assistance; further research on wood properties of lesser-known species; building membership; and advocacy and marketing skills for the executive committee.

4.13.3 Management of FPA

The executive committee comprises 12 people and one ex-officio member. There are also two trustees. Committee positions are president, senior vice president, junior vice president and nine other directors. The executive director serves in an ex-officio capacity as the secretary of the executive committee. The leadership is chosen by membership vote at the annual general meeting. Committee positions are held for two years. The president cannot serve for more than two consecutive terms. The current president is Mr David Persaud (of Toolsie Persaud Ltd). The executive committee meets once a month to make most decisions. Special meetings can be called to discuss a particular issue and formalise a decision with the wider membership. Six directors must be present to make decisions at the executive committee. Likewise, 50% of all members must

be present to make decisions at general meetings. General members can raise any issue for discussion by bringing the matter to the attention of the executive director or any other director either verbally or preferably in writing.

Members made the following recommendations to improve the association's effectiveness:

- Better visioning for the entire forestry sector.
- Strategic planning and management training.
- More awareness of the roles and functions of the board.
- Gender balanced representation of members.
- Employment of trained field officers to help identify and solve regional problems.
- Employment of technical and trained staff to support proposal writing, marketing and lobbying.
- Increase membership and address the perception that FPA only represents big companies.
- Hold more meaningful and healthy discussions.
- More outreach work to remote regions.
- Restructure the association to strengthen the collective lobbying voice of members.
- Develop conflict resolution mechanisms for the sector.
- Close working with regulatory agencies – mainly GFC and EPA.
- Performance appraisals and possibly awarding affiliate or membership status to small operators.
- A more service oriented approach – e.g. preparation of forest management plans for companies.
- Training of existing staff members in strategic areas including communications, marketing and lobbying.

4.13.4 External support to FPA

FPA is currently linked to: the University of Guyana, Guyana School of Agriculture, University of the West Indies, Iwokrama, EPA, USAID, UNDP, CIDA (CPEC training), Suriname Centre of Commerce, as well as other donors, government agencies and private sector organisations. FPA also works with the Guyana Manufacturing and Services Association Limited on specific issues, with members of the NGO forum in Guyana and is also a project partner of FTC.

FPA is currently represented on the GFC Board of Directors, University of Guyana Forestry Advisory Board, Forest Marketing Council Advisory Board, FTC, Board of Governor's for the Government Technical Institute and the Private Sector Council of the Private Sector Commission.

Members would like to see policies changed to assist FPA through initiatives such as financial assistance for overseas promotional activities and forming a broad-based committee of key government agencies, trade and customs and

private sector groups to resolve issues relating to imports/exports, boundary disputes and other matters. An interviewee recalled that several years ago, GFC provided incentives to honour or recognise the top exporter and the most improved exporter. It was recommended that this incentive measure should be revived.

FPA would like to build links and closer relations with:

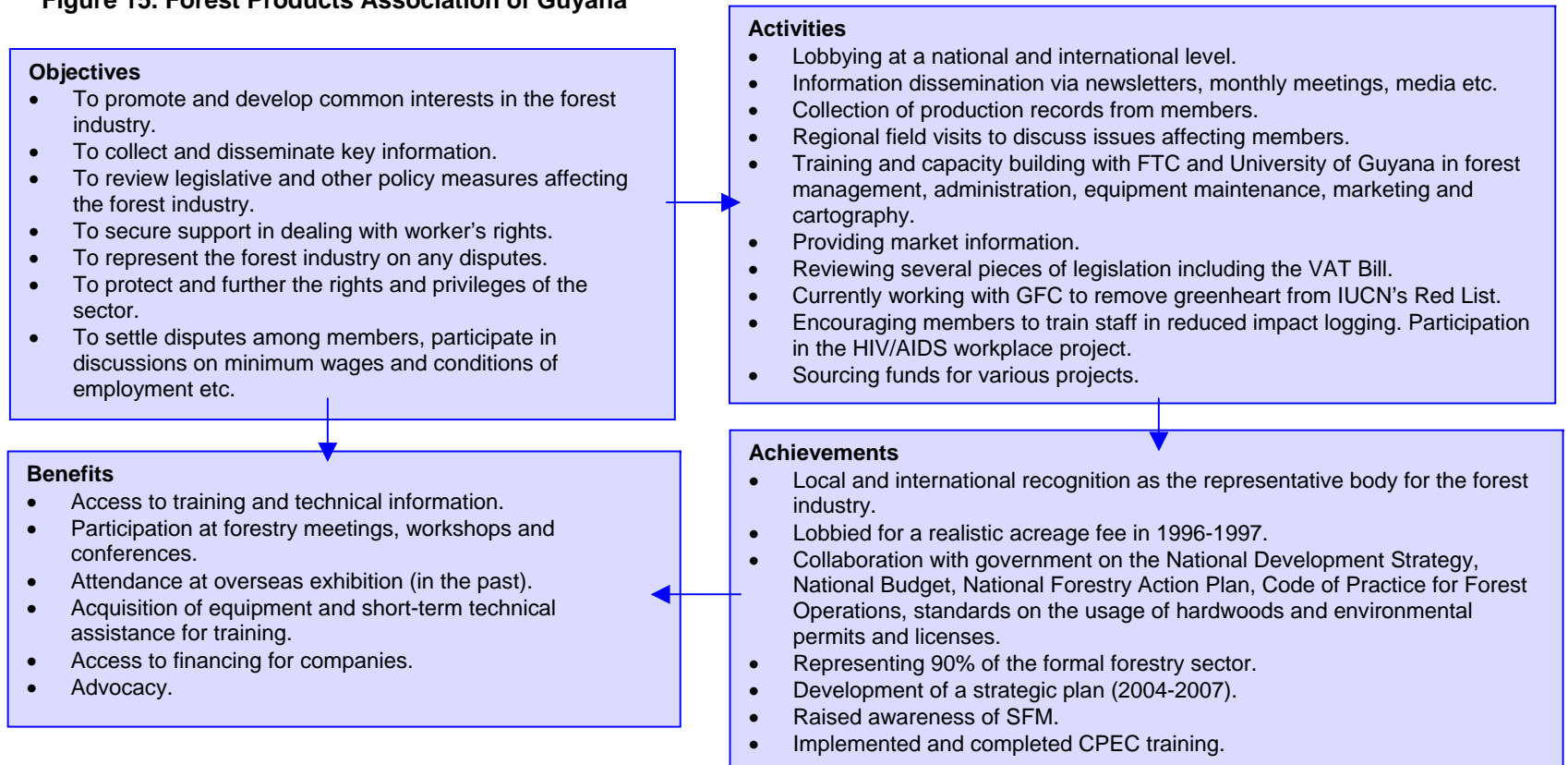
- International research organisations.
- Finance institutions (Guyana Revenue Authority; Ministry of Finance).
- All chainsaw operators.
- SFP, WCL and TSA holders.
- Regulatory agencies including GFC and EPA.
- Funding agencies.

FPA's strengths include its wide recognition as the representative association for the forestry sector; significant lobbying impact; support of both local and foreign owned companies; longevity and ability to remain a useful organisation; and regular dissemination of information.

Challenges to FPA lie in collecting production records/projections from members for forecasting purposes; effecting policy change; and maintaining attendance of members at meetings. Another challenge is to disseminate more concise information for effective decision-making since field personnel and managers cannot assimilate heavy documents in a short period. Members are frustrated that there are still many people in the forestry industry who are unaware of FPA's work. One member noted that unity among members is lacking since there is a concentration of family oriented businesses in the industry. Some members reported that there are hardly any meetings and insufficient information is disseminated to the general membership. There is also a perception that the executive committee is dominated by long serving members who generally represent big companies. The current executive committee, however, does include six small producers who were duly elected at the annual general meeting.

It was suggested that the association should not waive its membership fees (as was done in the past) since this does not reflect a vibrant organisation and membership fees are already inadequate to fund the association's administration costs.

Figure 15. Forest Products Association of Guyana



4.14 Guyana Manufacturing and Services Association Limited (GMSA)

4.14.1 Tracing the history of GMSA

GMSA originally registered in 1963 as the Guiana Light Industries Employers' Association under the Companies Ordinance, Chapter 328. The organisation was re-registered in 1967 as the Guyana Manufacturers' Association. The association underwent several re-organisations and changes and following a special resolution on 11 November 2003 became known as the Guyana Manufacturing and Services Association Limited. The association is a limited liability company under the Companies Act, 89:01. GMSA is the recognised consultative body for the manufacturing sector and services industry and comprises individuals and private sector organisations. GMSA represents its members at national, regional and international levels.

GMSA's vision is for an economically strong Guyana in which the manufacturing and services sector play a major role. Its mission is:

To provide leadership and institutional capacity for the initiation and advocacy of policies geared to improvements in productivity, sector competitiveness and effectiveness in the manufacturing and related services and to enhance membership satisfaction through application of professional services, while encouraging due regard for business ethics, human rights and the environment.

4.14.2 Membership of GMSA

GMSA currently has 105 members, of which, 20 are represented in its forestry and wood products sub-sector committee. Membership is open to any individual and company/institution engaged in any part of the productive sector or service provision. Companies are required to complete an application form and provide information such as number of employees, legal status, nature of business, estimated annual output, and provide a copy of its registration documents to the secretariat. The board approves membership based on a majority vote, information provided by the applicant and sometimes field visit reports by the secretariat.

Membership is allocated in five categories: Category A is for companies with more than 250 employees (annual membership fee of GY\$150,000). Category B is for companies with 100-250 employees (annual membership fee of GY\$75,000); Category C is for companies with 50-100 employees (annual membership fee of GY\$50,000). Category D is for companies with 25-50 employees (annual membership fee of GY\$20,000). The Empretec category is for individuals or companies of 1-25 with employees (annual membership fee of GY\$10,000). The membership fee structure is based on a market survey and was implemented in 2006. Membership is withdrawn if fees are not paid within

four months from the due date (with an initial payment term of one month followed by further notification by the secretariat to pay within three months).

Perceived benefits of membership include linkages with finance institutions and overseas buyers; involvement in the identification of sectoral programmes, common challenges and opportunities; building competitive advantages for companies; dissemination of information; access to training and representation.

The forestry and wood products sub-sector group is currently involved in the following activities:

- Conducting a feasibility study (through the USAID Guyana Trade and Investment Support Project) on establishing a common kiln-drying facility in Guyana.
- Advocating for a log export ban on prime timber species since there is insufficient supply of sawn timber to meet local demand which is leading to increased prices for certain species.
- Advocating for a tax on log exports. Currently meeting with the president's office, the Forest Products Marketing Council and other relevant agencies.
- Promoting value added products and enabling policies to maximise the value of resources and thereby create more jobs.
- Holding a workshop on chainsaw logging (funded by FAO and UNDP, May 2006).
- Attending a woodworking trade fair in Atlanta, USA in August 2006 (funded by USAID).
- Recent involvement in a workshop with 12 other countries on best practices in the woodworking industry.
- One member is actively involved in a DFID Forest Research Programme study on chainsaw logging.
- Involvement in several projects funded by CPEC, for example, training on furniture making.
- Reviewing the VAT Act, No. 10 of 2005.

Interviewees from the forestry and wood products sub-sector committee identified the following areas for attention/action:

- A structured programme to encourage SFP holders, chainsaw operators, small furniture manufacturers to join the association.
- A structured advocacy programme on the issue of subletting/subcontracting forest concessions. It is unclear whether companies who have duty free concessions are allowed similar privileges if they rent other forest concessions.
- Ongoing attention to the issues identified by GFC's board (GMSA is represented on this board).
- Consolidation of SMFEs in terms of price controls.
- Provision of infrastructure and logistical links for SMFEs.
- Establishment of a training facility for value adding – kiln drying, moulding, marketing, saw-doctoring, milling, dressing lumber etc.
- A seamless transition upon implementation of the VAT legislation scheduled for January 2007.

- Discussions with the Guyana Revenue Authority and Ministry of Finance to fast track certain benefits for the sector including timely processing of duty free concessions and clearance of imported products.
- More efficient linkages between suppliers and buyers.
- Creation of a forest consolidation stock yard/clearing house as a means to hold and supply stocks.
- Stronger role of GMSA in marketing, through organising independent trade shows, upgrading standards within the sector for milling, dressing, finished products, designs etc. and having a holistic view of the industry from stump to shelf.

Members made the following recommendations to improve the association:

- Provide detailed information on product types/specialities offered by companies in the official membership list. Build a stronger database on manufacturing and services.
- Members should assist with mobilising the necessary resources to hold a GMSA trade show to promote local manufacturing.
- Appoint a larger secretariat to build institutional capacity and help the association become more service oriented; implement a strategic plan; conduct field visits; increase membership and improve the association's image.
- Become a lead advocate for sustainable manufacturing and development, with an active focus on environmental management.
- Establish de-centralised regional offices that support connectivity.
- Hold more frequent meetings for general members.
- Improve communication to disseminate information via website, press releases etc.
- Establish a strong partnership with the Private Sector Commission and create a joint development strategy (since there are many institutions serving narrow self-interests). Strategise from all angles – including bottom-up for a well-developed plan.
- Implement measures to make GMSA better organised, coordinated and united to ensure that sub-sectors are not wholly autonomous. Improve communication between the board and sector groups.
- Develop a new paradigm for the 'third sector' – consisting of the state, civil society and the private sector.
- Enable general members to become association leaders through leadership training and capacity building initiatives.
- Help empower social groups marginalised by age, class, gender, race etc. to create modern institutions that are merit oriented.

4.14.3 Management of GMSA

GMSA's board comprises 21 members: a president, three vice presidents, a sub-sector coordinator and 17 committee members. Executive members are elected at the annual general meeting and can serve for two consecutive terms.

Decisions are made by the board (by at least seven members). General members can raise issues for discussion by the board through the chair of their respective sub-sector group or through the secretariat. The board is required to meet once a month and more frequently if deemed necessary by the chair. The wider membership meets at least once a year depending on issues to be discussed. At least 20% of fully paid members must be present for annual general meetings to proceed.

GMSA's governance structure is organised into four standing committees on policy and legislation, national sector coordination and international trade and cooperation. The national sector coordinating committee comprises eight sub-sector committees on agro-processing; textiles and sewn goods; printing and packaging; construction and engineering; chemical and pharmaceuticals; minerals and related industries; forestry and wood products; and services. Each sub-sector is responsible for electing a chair for their respective sector.

Standing committees meet at least four times a year. Additionally, there is a GMSA committee of management which has responsibilities for finance/administration, technical governance, public relations/fundraising, membership development, member services, education and training, technical assistance programmes and coordination of the bi-annual manufacturers' exhibition.

GMSA's secretariat consists of several staff members who report on a monthly basis to the board. The secretariat is responsible for overall project management, communication, fundraising, membership, marketing and sub-sector work programmes.

GMSA's main activities over the past two years have included:

- Advocacy on taxation and customs procedures.
- Sectoral reviews.
- Hosting an annual presentation award dinner.
- Sensitisation on the Caricom Single Market Economy.
- Institutional strengthening of GMSA.
- Technical, vocational and education training projects.
- Entering a tri-partite arrangement with the Guyanese government and UNDP to support a programme for small-scale operators.
- Implementation of an environmental management system.
- Strengthening of value added exports and development of sectoral business plans (USAID Guyana Economic Opportunities Project).
- Submission of budget proposals to the government for the national budget.
- Submission of recommendations on the draft Small Business Act.
- Discussions with customs department and the agro-processing sector.
- Project with Development Finance Ltd Guyana to assist SMEs.
- Market survey.
- Programmatic work with the association's eight sub-sector committees.

One of the constraints identified was the lack of independent funding from donor organisations. In some instances, the government is required to endorse applications which can often result in the association's reduced independence and control over an initiative. There should also be more serious approaches towards public/private partnerships.

There appears to be a lack of coordination and a need for greater cohesion and organisation among the sub-sector groups. Some of these groups act completely autonomously e.g. drafting and circulating letters of an advocacy nature.

Interviewees from the forestry and wood products sub-sector group felt that GMSA is taking care of large business interests but making no real linkages with smaller operators, despite their important role in creating the majority of jobs in the sector. Affordable finance arrangements should be made available and practical action taken on re-building the sector rather than funding endless consultancies.

4.14.4 External support to GMSA

The members of the forestry and wood products sub-sector group are represented on the Forestry Marketing Advisory Committee. GMSA has established links with manufacturing associations in Suriname, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica. GMSA also works with the Guyana Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce; Caribbean Association of Industry; Suriname Chamber of Commerce; Proinvest-EU; and the Caribbean Development Bank. Donor support has come from agencies including CIDA, USAID; and Development Finance Ltd Guyana. A CPEC funded project has made a significant contribution to the institutional strengthening of GMSA through technical and vocational education and training.

Stronger linkages are considered necessary with a range of Guyanese organisations including the Guyana National Bureau of Standards, GFC, Georgetown Chamber of Commerce, Private Sector Commission, Guyana Small Business Association, banking institutions, fair trade networks and other NGOs engaged in similar work.

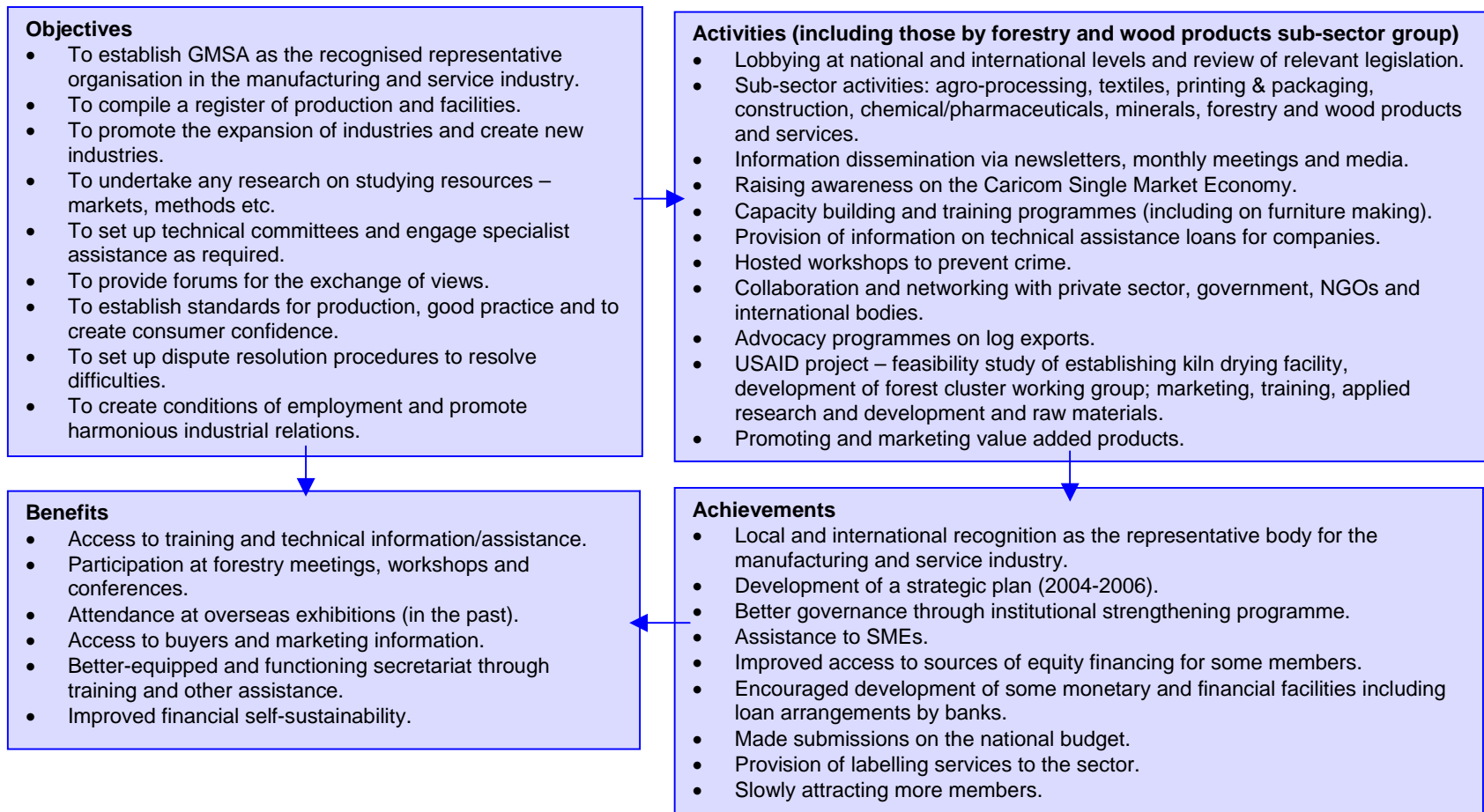
Since 2003, GMSA has provided administrative support to the Empretec Guyana Programme. This is an initiative of the government of Guyana, UNDP and the private sector to facilitate access to entrepreneurial training; quality management and control; export support services; and networking for SMEs.

GMSA's main strengths are its capacity to support institutional building and recognition by the government of its role as an important private sector body to be consulted on development matters.

There are a number of internal frustrations cited by association members some of these include:

- Insufficient engagement in policy making and government reluctance to buy in to GMSA ideas.
- Small (and often uncommitted) membership base.
- Need for additional (senior) secretariat staff.
- Small human resource pool to draw from for board members meaning that some members play board roles in other associations also.
- Members' difficulties to pay association fees.

Figure 16. Guyana Manufacturing and Services Association Limited



5. Conclusions

Cohesion – does association functionality depend on particularly strong mutual aspirations?

Examples from Guyana suggest that strong mutual aspirations are an important issue.

- Fundamentally, all associations were formed to improve the economic well-being of their members while securing social and environmental interests. Additionally, cultural maintenance and revival was a critical reason for forming a few of the associations.
- Critical spin-offs enshrined in the formation of most associations included contributing to community development and targeting specific beneficiaries (e.g. young people, women and pensioners) through training, funding, sickness benefits, infrastructure maintenance, scholarships, teaching local knowledge, social welfare, sanitation, self-help projects etc.

Resilience – does association functionality depend on the credibility and legitimacy of decision making?

Examples from Guyana suggest that strong leadership, transparent decision making and evolving rules and procedures were critical for success.

- Fair decision-making processes are essential and are practiced by most associations contributing to their longevity.
- In most associations, leaders are chosen by the general membership based on a set of criteria. Leadership abilities were identified as the main factor for the failure or success of an association.
- Leadership is important for administering and implementing rules around quality control and finance. The right leadership can help build trust among members, motivate ongoing production and solve conflicts. Leadership can also play an important role in the sustainable management of natural resources, raising awareness of environmental standards, and ensuring that association benefits are experienced by the community at large.
- Regular meetings were held at both leadership and membership levels and were important forums for developing managerial and financial skills and sharing up-to-date information on the association. Some associations penalise members for failing to attend meetings and participate in compulsory activities. Attending meetings is a mandatory requirement for most associations.
- Many associations have successfully evolved from their initial foundations and leadership to become a more established and stable organisation over time.
- Written rules were essential for most associations to enforce quality control, prevent illegal transport of forest produce, encourage meeting attendance, elect leaders, promote accountability and ensure monetary benefits to the association and wider community.

Equity – does association functionality depend on the adequate representation of interests (including gender)?

In Guyana, associations need a certain degree of transparency, equity and justice both internally and in their dealings with outsiders to maintain the interest of members.

- Strict enforcement of association rules is required to prevent non-members from benefiting financially since this drains the association both financially and socially.
- Associations also depend on an equitable and fair system of allocating resources among members whilst maintaining quality and conserving critical forest resources. This factor, if not managed and controlled can lead to the failure of associations and degradation of forest lands.
- All of the case study associations have joint investments that require strict control and management by members to ensure sustained financial returns.
- Associations recognise and target vulnerable beneficiaries including out-of-school young people, women and pensioners. In some associations, there has been local, national and international recognition and validation of the traditional knowledge of women. Crucial training and access to micro-credit have resulted in the empowerment and improved earning abilities of women.

Support – does association functionality depend on the degree to which policies and institutions are supportive?

Support is often required – but in very diverse forms and often from local trusted intermediaries rather than central government services.

- Initial external support was crucial for the formation of the case study associations since most of them lacked finance, technical and legal expertise, market access, training, management and negotiation skills, access to lands and partnerships with key institutions to meet environmental standards.
- In some cases, initial functioning can be greatly improved by specific administrative or technical inputs once the association is established.
- Most of the surveyed associations have continued to function without external support and many are able to contribute socially, environmentally and economically to the members and the community. They are able to offer employment to a few people and provide income for a significant proportion of households within their specific communities.
- Government institutions, for example, the Guyana Forestry Commission, provided lands to the Region 10 forestry associations. However, these associations received depleted lands and there are serious fears and concerns by both the government and the association about resource sustainability. Therefore, policies for community forestry need to include strong resource management and an environmental capacity building focus.

- Associations depend on supportive policies and institutions to become stronger and access resources for the wider benefit of their respective community.
- Most of the specific types of SMFEs – e.g. handicraft, logging, community-based tourism, NTFPs, community development, agro-processing – need to be adequately represented by an umbrella organisation if in existence. Some of the more general umbrella organisations do not adequately represent small-scale interests.

We conclude with a set of steps that support agencies should take to support healthy associations:

Future support should focus on nurturing local trusted intermediaries (NGOs or government extension staff) who can identify specific gaps. For example, associations might require short-term training programmes for:

- Financial and management skills.
- Natural resource management.
- Marketing.
- Development of NTFPs including preservation, processing and packaging technologies.
- Access to loans for technology to process value added forest products (timber and non-timber).
- Innovative craft designs to supply overseas markets.

Associations could also be supported with a number of longer-term inputs:

- Literacy programmes, schools and trained teachers, teaching of local cultural skills in schools.
- Basic sanitation and health care – clean water, recreation grounds etc.
- Institutional capacity building and leadership skills training.
- Development of quality control procedures and standards to access markets.
- Strategic inputs towards diversification from logging, e.g. farming technologies.
- Forest restoration programmes for both timber and NTFP species.
- Assistance for participation in policy dialogues with key government institutions, NGOs and donor agencies.
- Conflict management training.

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