



Government of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana

***Ministry of the Presidency
Department of Environment***

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Mr. Jairo Valverde
Resident Representative
Att: Astrid Lynch
Programme Specialist
United Nations Development Programme
107-108 Duke Street,
Kingston,
GEORGETOWN

Dear Mr. Valverde,

**REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF THE UNDP: 00096369: STRENGTHENING
TECHNICAL CAPACITIES TO MAINSTREAM AND MONITOR RIO
CONVENTION IMPLEMENTATION THROUGH POLICY COORDINATION**

The Department of Environment (DoE) under the aegis of the Ministry of the Presidency is implementing the Project strengthening technical capacities to mainstream and monitor Rio convention implementation through policy coordination during the period 2016-2020.

The goals of the project are for Guyana to improve capacity to make better decisions as it relates to management of the natural resources and sustain its global environment obligations. The objective of the project is to strengthen technical capacities for mainstreaming and monitoring achievement of Rio Convention objectives.

The main strategies for achieving these goals are:

- Strengthening of the technical and institutional arrangements of sectoral agencies for data and information management and dissemination, through a national platform, the Environmental Information Management and Monitoring System (EIMMS);
- Building awareness and capacity for mainstreaming the Rio Conventions into sectoral plans, programmes and policies; and
- Updating of the National Capacity for Self -Assessment, which is geared to assess Guyana's, capacity and progress towards meeting these obligations.

The Project Management Unit (PMU) is working assiduously to complete the project in the expected timeline. Notwithstanding that fact, a decision was made by the DOE/PMU to request an extension of the project which was endorsed by the Project Board based on the following:

- **Late implementation of the project:** The project commenced implementation one year later than scheduled as a result of it being handed over from the Ministry of Natural Resources to the Government of Guyana's new and important Policy Division, DOE. The DOE's main role is to coordinate the implementation of the Green State Development Strategy and manage the environmental sector, including the national repository for laws, policies, guidelines and programmes;
- **Delayed recruitment of staff:** The recruitment of staff, consultants and the setting up of the PMU commenced in late 2016 and first half of 2017;
- **Procurement of EIMMS equipment:** There was an interruption in the procurement of the EIMMS equipment as a result of it being sourced and purchased overseas. This was compounded by the lengthy government procurement system;
- **Lack of technical skills:** There was a hiatus in the configuration of the EIMMS hardware as a result of lack of technical skills in Guyana;

- **Delay by some Agencies to sign MoA:** Given the novelty of the EIMMS, there was a pause in the development of the national platform due to the delay of some agencies to sign a Memorandum of Agreement (MOAs) to share data. The Project therefore had to conduct numerous consultations to reduce the data sharing silo that exists among agencies. The consultations also improved interagency collaboration within and among agencies, including the public, private and civil society sectors. There are several critical activities relating to networking and building capacity to support, maintain and manage the EIMMS. These will ensure a rigorous testing and management of the platform to eliminate errors and provide a sound system to the DOE and by extension the Government of Guyana;
- **Sufficient funds to cover extended workplan:** Given that the project had only three years of implementation (2017-2020), there are sufficient funds remaining to cover an eighteen month annual workplan and budget (AWPB) from July 2020 to December 2021 (see activities timeline attached for the 18 month extension);
- **Politics:** There are uncertainties surrounding the results of the General and Regional Elections that were conducted in March, 2020. No winner has been announced. A national recount is pending. This can result in further disruptions in the implementation of the project;
- **COVID-19 Pandemic:** The COVID-19 global pandemic has placed a pause on the activities of the project. The project already lost six months of implementation as a result of this pandemic from January to June 2020. To date, Guyana has implemented a number of interventions in an effort to curb COVID-19, including locking down, only allowing for essential services operation and implementing social distancing.

The DOE proposes that the Project Management Costs (PMC) be covered by the project's resources. It is acknowledged that the budget allocation for the Project Management Component would not have sufficient resources to satisfy the PMC for the extension period. Given that there are no other supportive funding sources to this end, the PMU staff have committed to executing technical tasks from Components 1 and 2 and to utilize associated budget lines to offset said PMC.

This extension will allow for the project to complete its full four years of implementation and fully achieve its overall goals and objectives.

To this end, we are seeking your approval and the consideration of your kind office to extend the Project from July 2020 to December 2021. We anticipate your usual favourable response to our request.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'NS' or similar initials, enclosed within a circular scribble.

Ndibi Schwiers
Director

