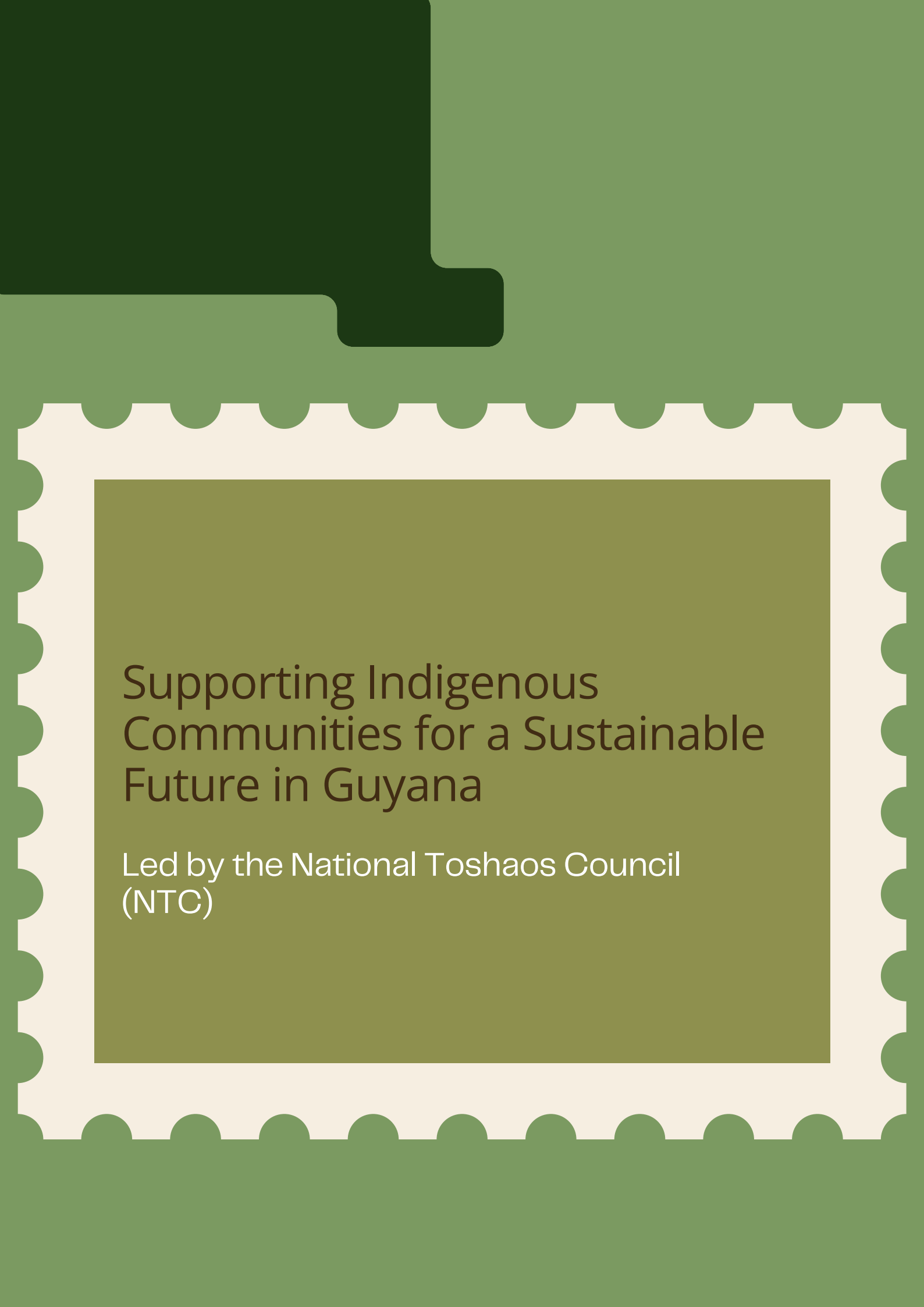




Planning (VSP)



Environmental & Social Impact Plan



Supporting Indigenous Communities for a Sustainable Future in Guyana

Led by the National Toshias Council
(NTC)

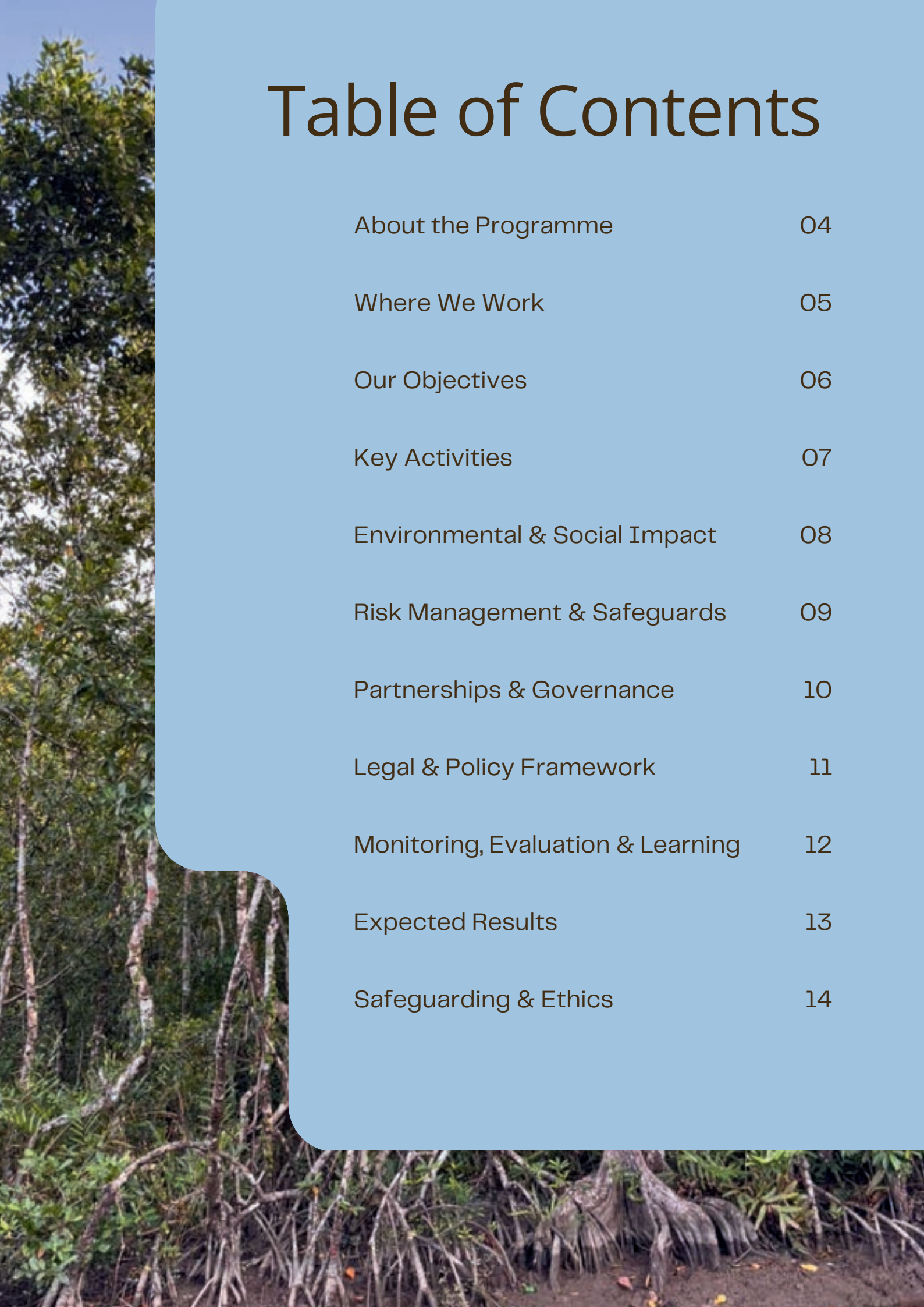
A photograph of a mangrove forest with dense green foliage and prominent prop roots, serving as the background for the document.

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About the Programme

The Village Sustainability Planning (VSP) Programme is a national initiative implemented across Guyana to support Indigenous communities in designing and implementing long-term development plans. The programme is aligned with Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) 2030 and contributes to global climate goals under REDD+.

The programme is led by the National Toshias Council (NTC), the representative body for Indigenous village leaders. It focuses on strengthening governance systems, enhancing environmental stewardship, and improving the social and economic wellbeing of Indigenous Peoples.

The programme does not involve infrastructure development or extractive activities. Instead, it prioritizes community-led planning, capacity building, and sustainable land management practices.



Where We Work

The programme operates across all ten administrative regions of Guyana, engaging over 240 Indigenous villages and communities. These communities span a wide range of ecosystems, including

- ☀ Dense tropical rainforests
- ☀ Savannahs and grasslands
- ☀ River systems and wetlands
- ☀ Mountainous and hinterland regions
- ☀ Coastal and peri-urban areas

The project covers both legally titled lands and customary-use territories. Many communities manage natural resources beyond formal boundaries, reflecting traditional stewardship practices.

This national scope ensures that the programme addresses diverse environmental, cultural, and socio-economic contexts.



Our Objectives

The VSP Programme is designed to:



STRENGTHEN GOVERNANCE

-  Build the institutional capacity of the NTC and Village Councils
-  Support transparent and accountable decision-making processes
-  Enhance coordination between communities and national agencies



SUPPORT COMMUNITY-LED PLANNING

-  Develop Village Sustainability Plans (VSPs)
-  Integrate environmental, social, and economic priorities
-  Align community plans with national development strategies



PROMOTE ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

-  Improve natural resource management
-  Strengthen biodiversity conservation efforts
-  Support climate resilience and adaptation strategies



ENHANCE SOCIAL INCLUSION

-  Ensure participation of women, youth, and vulnerable groups
-  Promote gender equality in decision-making
-  Strengthen social cohesion and cultural preservation

Key Activities

The programme implements a range of activities to achieve its objectives:

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Conduct consultations in all regions
- Facilitate Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)
- Engage traditional leaders, women, youth, and elders

CAPACITY BUILDING

- Deliver training on governance, safeguards, and environmental management
- Build skills in monitoring and evaluation
- Strengthen community leadership structures

PARTICIPATORY PLANNING

- Support development of Village Sustainability Plans
- Conduct participatory mapping and resource assessments
- Facilitate local planning workshops

MONITORING SYSTEMS

- Establish community-based monitoring committees
- Develop tools for tracking progress and outcomes
- Support reporting aligned with national and international standards

Environmental & Social Impact

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The programme is designed to have minimal environmental impact. It does not involve physical development, land clearing, or resource extraction. Instead, it promotes:

- 🌀 Sustainable land-use planning
- 🌀 Protection of biodiversity-rich ecosystems
- 🌀 Community-led environmental monitoring

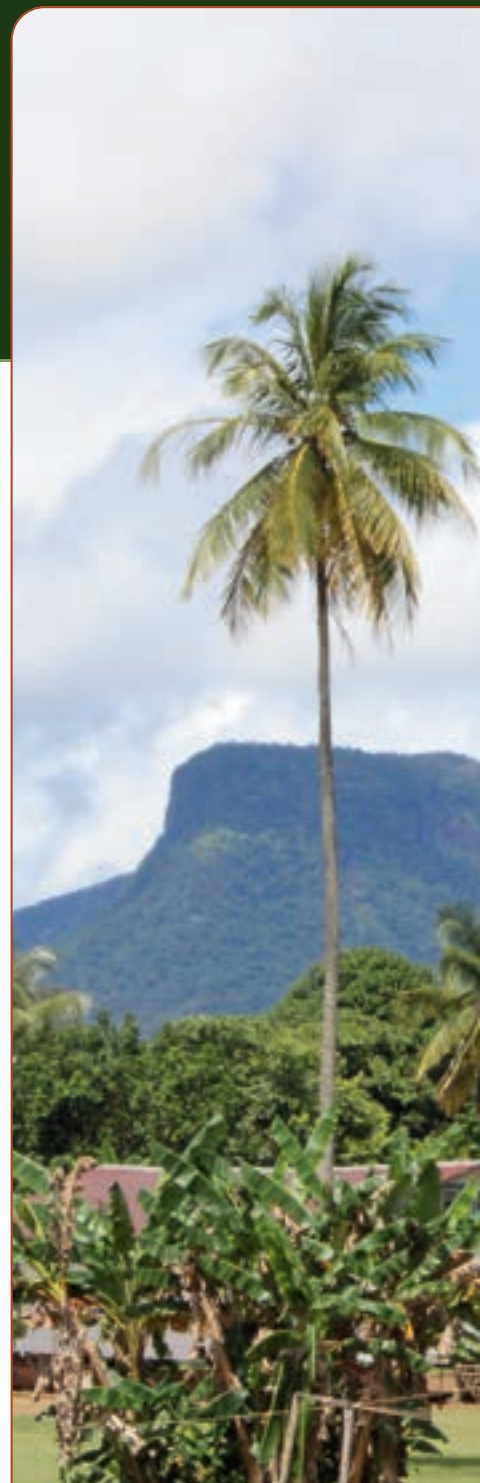
SOCIAL IMPACT

The programme delivers significant social benefits, including:

- 🌀 Strengthened Indigenous governance systems
- 🌀 Increased community participation in decision-making
- 🌀 Empowerment of women and youth
- 🌀 Preservation of cultural heritage and traditional knowledge

However, some moderate risks were identified, such as:

- 🌀 Potential exclusion of vulnerable groups
- 🌀 Cultural misunderstandings across diverse communities
- 🌀 Community health and safety risks during field activities
- 🌀 Risks related to gender-based violence (GBV)



Risk Management & Safeguards

A comprehensive Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) is in place to manage risks and enhance positive impacts.

KEY SAFEGUARD MEASURES

- Inclusive stakeholder engagement processes
- Implementation of FPIC in all communities
- Gender-responsive planning and training
- Protection of cultural heritage through established protocols
- Community grievance mechanisms for resolving concerns
- Safety protocols for fieldwork and travel

RISK MITIGATION APPROACH

Risks are identified, assessed, and addressed through:

- Continuous stakeholder consultations
- Capacity building and awareness training
- Adaptive management and regular monitoring

After mitigation, most risks are expected to be low.



Partnerships & Governance

The programme is implemented through a collaborative approach involving:

LEAD

- 🌀 National Toshias Council (NTC)

COMMUNITY-LEVEL PARTNERS

- 🌀 Village Councils
- 🌀 Community Development Officers
- 🌀 Local monitoring committees

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

- 🌀 Ministry of Amerindian Affairs
- 🌀 Environmental Protection Agency
- 🌀 Guyana Forestry Commission
- 🌀 Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission
- 🌀 Guyana Geology and Mines Commission

SUPPORTING PARTNERS

- 🌀 Civil society organizations
- 🌀 Indigenous-led groups
- 🌀 Technical experts and facilitators

These partnerships ensure that implementation is culturally appropriate and technically sound.



Legal & Policy Framework



The programme aligns with national and international frameworks, including:



National Laws

- Amerindian Act (2006)
- Environmental Protection Act
- Forestry and Mining Acts
- Protected Areas Act



National Strategies

- Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) 2030



International Standards

- UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)
- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

These frameworks
guide project
implementation and
safeguard compliance.

Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning

The programme includes a robust monitoring system to track progress and ensure accountability.

KEY FEATURES

- Community-based monitoring systems
- Annual reporting and performance reviews
- Data collection through surveys and consultations
- Knowledge-sharing platforms and learning exchanges

ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

The ESMP is treated as a living document, allowing for:

1

Continuous improvement

2

Adjustment of mitigation measures

4

Integration of lessons learned

Expected Results

By the end of the programme, the following outcomes are expected:

- ☀ Over 190 Village Sustainability Plans developed
- ☀ Increased participation of women and youth in governance
- ☀ Strengthened institutional capacity of the NTC and Village Councils
- ☀ Improved environmental management and climate resilience
- ☀ Enhanced livelihoods and economic opportunities



Safeguarding & Ethics

The programme follows strict safeguarding and ethical standards.

Key Principles

Zero tolerance for abuse, exploitation, and harassment

Protection of children and vulnerable groups

Respect for human rights and cultural values

Safeguard Measures

Confidential grievance reporting systems

Staff code of conduct

GBV and safeguarding training

Secure data management and privacy protocols

Accountability

Regular audits and reviews

Community feedback mechanisms

Dedicated safeguarding focal points





Building Resilient Communities, Protecting Indigenous Lands, and Supporting Sustainable Development in Guyana.

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