



**PROTECTED AREAS
COMMISSION
GUYANA**

**Strategic Plan
2016-2020**

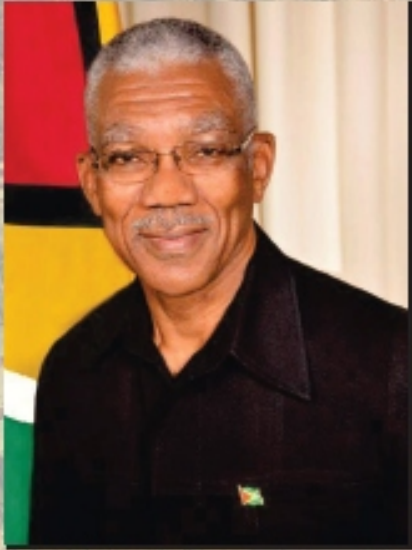


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**Message
of
His Excellency Brigadier David Granger,
President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana**



I am pleased to welcome the publication of the five-year Strategic Plan of the Protected Areas Commission of Guyana, 2015-2020. The plan will serve as an important policy guide and road map for the work of the Commission.

The protected areas form part of our national patrimony. They constitute an economic and environmental resource of the country.

The protected areas comprise of 5.5 per cent of our land mass. Guyana has opted to designate these areas as protected zones as a means of preserving them as pristine and undisturbed environments.

The protected areas are a rich natural resource. They contain some of the world's most diverse ecosystems and are home to some of the world's rarest species of flora and fauna.

The protected areas contribute to Guyana's global environmental stewardship. The preservation of Guyana's National Protected Areas System makes a priceless contribution to the survival of the planet by limiting economic and other human

activities which degrade the environment. They are lungs of the planet, providing vital environmental services to humanity.

The Protected Areas Commission of Guyana enjoys the support of the government in helping to secure Guyana patrimony and natural capital. The Strategic Plan will be a source of useful information to the public about the work that is being undertaken to conserve, safeguard, manage and expand Guyana's National Protected Areas System (NPAS).


David Granger
President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana
2016.03.07

**Minister of Natural Resources
message for
Protected Areas Commission (PAC) Strategic Plan
Hon. Raphael G. C. Trotman**



As the Ministry responsible for biodiversity and ecosystem conservation in Guyana, it is with great pride that we launch the Strategic Plan for the Protected Areas Commission (PAC). The conservation of our country's environment and natural resources is a long term task, with strong inter-generational obligations. It is our generation's responsibility to think and act not only for our immediate short-term interests, but necessarily to be responsible citizens looking out for the interests of each other and for generations to come.

The Protected Areas Commission's Strategic Plan is focused on the development of Guyana's National Protected Areas System. The System contains significant components of Guyana's natural patrimony and supports the government's drive towards "greening" of the economy. The Ministry is committed to supporting the Plan's focus on the development and expansion of our hinterland protected areas and on urban parks. Hinterland protected areas are host to some of the world's most spectacular landscapes and a rich collection of plants and animals, some of which are found nowhere else on earth. Currently, only about 5.5% of Guyana's land area is protected. In considering its international commitment to meet the targets set under the Convention of Biological Diversity, the Ministry will work closely with the Protected Areas

Commission to fulfil the Government's longstanding commitment to the Wai Wai Village of Kanashen and support its request to become Guyana's first Indigenous Protected Area under the Protected Areas Act. Covering over 625,000 hectares of rainforest, the addition of Kanashen to the national system will be an important step to further recognizing the role of indigenous peoples as the original protectors of our natural heritage, and will bring our protected landscapes to 8.5% of Guyana's landmass. However, many of Guyana's unique and biologically diverse landscapes are still unrepresented within the System, and the Ministry will support efforts under the Plan to bring stakeholders together and chart a course for the expansion of protected areas in Guyana.

In addition to our hinterland protected areas, the System includes the urban parks of the Botanical Gardens, Zoological Park, National Park and Joe Vieira Park in Georgetown. These urban green spaces are among the very few places within our Capital City that provide large recreational spaces in which people can interact with local flora and wildlife. We hope to promote the growth of similar green spaces in all of our regions and townships, as understanding and appreciating nature must form an important pillar of our People's self-development and actualization. Through the PAC, the Ministry will focus on the rehabilitation of these areas over the next five years. They will form the cornerstone of an intensive environmental education and outreach drive throughout the life of the plan and beyond.

For us in the Ministry, protected areas are not just important tools for the conservation of biodiversity, but are a key piece of the sustainable development puzzle. The Ministry will continue to facilitate a more integrated approach to environmental management and the utilization of Guyana's natural resources. The launching of the Protected Areas Commission strategic plan represents yet another important step as we work to manage and secure our natural patrimony, and positions the PAC to effectively fulfill its mandate of adding value to the lives of present and future generations.



Here, we launch the Protected Areas Commission's first five-year Strategic Plan (2015-2020). We look forward to establishing ourselves as a dynamic organisation and a leader in the protection and management of Guyana's natural and cultural heritage.

In order to do this efficiently and effectively, and in line with our mission, we have developed a road map of targets (appendix 2) that we believe will help us to achieve high levels of productivity, accountability and success in our quest for conservation excellence.

Our strategic plan is based on a careful evaluation of our customer and stakeholder needs, our capabilities and our human and financial resources, and on areas to be improved. It focuses on preserving our core values, while developing sound operating practices and a flexible approach to our ever-changing environment.

The strategic plan, covering both hinterland protected areas and urban parks under our mandate, has at its core four key themes: administration and management, finance, stakeholder involvement & benefits, and awareness & outreach, each with its own set of strategic objectives. These objectives will guide our annual planning and ensure that all

activities conducted are working towards achieving our vision. Our strategic objectives are directly aligned with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Guyana's National Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan's strategic frameworks. This plan will be adaptive and subject to continuous review and amendment in order to meet emerging challenges.

In preparation for the numerous challenges that lie ahead, our strategic plan helps to set the stage for us to fulfil our mandate, and ultimately realise our vision.

I would like to thank the Frankfurt Zoological Society for supporting the development of this plan, all organisations and persons who contributed, and all our staff whose dedication and talents will ensure its fulfilment.

Damian Fernandes,
PAC Commissioner

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Guyana's National Protected Areas System (NPAS) has been in the making for over 80 years, beginning with the creation of Kaieteur National Park (KNP) in 1929. At that time Guyana boasted the first national park in the Amazon region, and was one of only three countries in South America to have a protected area (PA). Since then, Guyana has taken a measured approach to protected areas development, with the country's second PA, the Iwokrama Rainforest Reserve, being formally established in 1996.

In 2011 the PA Act, which provides for the establishment, management, maintenance, promotion and expansion of a protected areas system in Guyana, was passed. Shortly thereafter two new protected areas, the Kanuku Mountains Protected Area and Shell Beach Protected Area were declared following decades of preparatory work with local communities and other stakeholders.

A major feature of the PA Act was the creation of the Protected Areas Commission (PAC), which was established to oversee the management of the NPAS. The Act also provides for a new, independently managed Protected Areas Trust Fund (PATF).

The Act recognised that a strategic plan for managing the NPAS was required and identified its development as a key and priority action of the PAC (Part II, Section 21).

The main objectives identified in the PA Act for the NPAS are to:

- Assist in combating climate change.
- Assist the state in meeting international obligations.
- Recognise the intrinsic values of biological diversity and its components.
- Conserve biodiversity, ecosystem services and ecosystems representative of all of Guyana's natural land and seascapes.

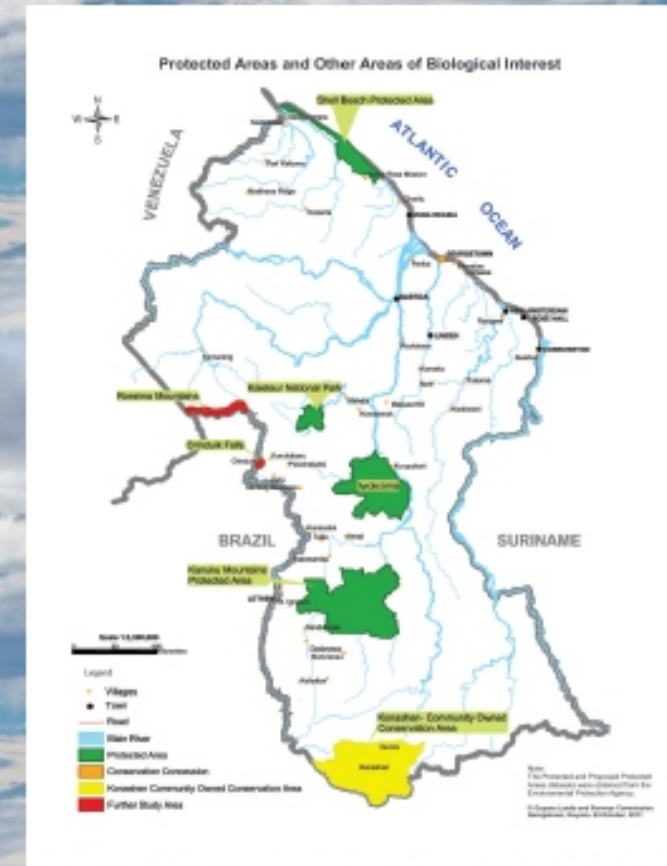
WHO WE ARE

Today, the NPAS includes Kaieteur National Park, Kanuku Mountains and Shell Beach Protected Areas and the Iwokrama Programme Site. It also includes the National Park, Joe Vieira Park, the Zoological Park and Botanical Gardens. Currently PAs comprise 5.5% of land within Guyana.

The Iwokrama International Centre for Rainforest Conservation and Development has been given the authority to manage the Iwokrama Programme Site under the Iwokrama Act, 1996. It is therefore not included in this strategic plan.

The four urban parks were previously declared parks under the National Parks Commission Act, and are managed by the National Parks Commission (NPC). With the passage of the PA Act, the NPC and its responsibilities will be subsumed under the PAC. As such, the strategic plan is designed to also cover these urban sites, and recognises their important role in connecting a predominantly urban/sub-urban population with national protected areas in Guyana's interior.

The NPAS and its constituent PAs are managed according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) categories, with all allowing for some sustainable use by neighbouring indigenous communities, as per the "Managed Resource Protected Area" category VI. This integrated approach to conservation and sustainable use is a core feature of the plan and cuts across most of the strategic themes and objectives.



THE NATIONAL PROTECTED AREAS SYSTEM

In accordance with the PA Act the National Protected Areas System comprises -:

- Kaieteur National Park
- National protected areas
- Protected areas previously declared and urban parks, including the Botanical Gardens and the Zoological Park
- Programme Site of the Iwokrama International Centre for Rain Forest Conservation and Development
- Amerindian protected areas which have been approved under Section 39, of the PA Act
- Privately Managed protected areas which have been approved under Section 26, of the PA Act

Protected Areas Trust Fund

In order to provide for the NPAS's financial sustainability and independence in the long term, the Act establishes a Protected Areas Trust Fund (PATF). The primary purpose of the Trust Fund is to support the management of the NPAS, which includes supporting sustainable resource use in PA adjacent communities. The Trust Fund is governed by a Board of Trustees.

A commitment of approximately US\$18 million has been made to this Trust Fund by the Cooperative Republic of Guyana (US\$10M), the Government of Germany (€4M) and Conservation International (US\$3.5M). These funds will be invested and the returns made available to fund activities associated with the effective management of the NPAS.



WHY OUR WORK IS IMPORTANT

Global Context

Biodiversity

Guyana is part of the Guiana Shield, a distinct eco-region of the larger Amazon Basin. The Guiana Shield alone has over 3,000 vertebrate species made up of 1,168 fresh water fish, 269 amphibians (54% endemics), 295 reptiles (29% endemics), 1,004 birds (7.7% endemics), and 282 mammals (11% endemics). This biological richness is all the more significant considering that the Amazon houses approximately 10% of the world's known biodiversity and is the world's largest remaining tract of tropical rainforest.

Guyana is centrally positioned within the Guiana Shield, containing much of its representative ecosystems and biodiversity, while still featuring many endangered Amazonian species. Approximately 80% of all mammal and bird species, 61% of reptile species and 50% of amphibian species occurring in the Guiana Shield are found in Guyana. Of these, 260 species are on CITES lists and approximately 6% of its mammals and fish, 3-4% of its amphibians and reptiles, and 1% of its bird species are globally threatened. Our work therefore is important to help protect this valuable biodiversity through the effective management of Guyana's NPAS.

Animals and plants are also important to the livelihood and development of indigenous communities adjacent to protected areas. In Guyana these communities have traditionally used PAs and their resources sustainably, and have deep cultural and spiritual connections to these areas. The PAC is committed to supporting sustainable resource use by communities.



See Appendix 1 for SWOT Analysis

National Development

Guyana's ecosystems and biodiversity are generally very well preserved compared to other countries. However, its natural resources are under increasing pressure from extractive industries, the wild meat trade and overfishing of inland rivers. While these activities are economically important, the country's resources must be used sustainably in order to achieve long term prosperity.

The NPAS therefore plays a critical role in ensuring Guyana's natural heritage and its social-ecological service values remain for future generations. Protected Areas in essence are Guyana's Green Banks, conserving natural resources and populations of globally important species; helping climate change mitigation and adaptation; and providing benefits and alternative livelihoods for present and future generations.

Guyana is a signatory to the:

- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) (1977).
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992).
- United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD) (1994).
- United Nations Convention to combat Desertification (1994).
- Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit Sharing (2014).

Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

Climate change negatively affects biodiversity, livelihoods and natural processes at a global level. Its impacts are particularly evident in developing countries such as Guyana, where populations are often heavily dependent on natural resources.

More than a fifth of all carbon emissions come from global deforestation. With 80% of its land covered in primary forest, Guyana boasts one of the lowest deforestation rates in South America, thus making it a global carbon sink, and a key player in any international effort to mitigate climate change. In particular, Guyana's protected forests and their biodiversity play a significant role in climate change adaptation as natural buffers and regulators of floods, droughts and even rising sea levels. They also provide important ecosystem services and options for sustainable livelihoods that become ever more important as the climate becomes more unpredictable.

WHY OUR WORK IS IMPORTANT

Ecosystem and Biodiversity Representation

The current protected areas system represents two of Guyana's four defined (NBSAP, 2012) ecosystems – forest, wetland & coastal; the inclusion of representative areas of Guyana's marine and savannah ecosystems remain a priority for the system.

Although Guyana's ecosystems have not been studied as intensively as in other South American countries, new species to science and/or newly recorded for Guyana are regularly found when studies are conducted. For example, several new amphibian and reptile species were recorded in the mid 2000's in the KNP and, more recently (2012) a new tarantula species.

At a minimum, the NPAS is estimated to contain 70% of Guyana's mammals, 60% of its birds and 43% of its plant species. All six species of cats and all eight species of primates that occur in Guyana can be found in the NPAS. The Kanuku Mountains Protected Area (KMPA) alone is thought to have the highest diversity of bats of any PA in the world, while the Shell Beach Protected Area (SBPA) is proposed as a globally important birding area (IBA) supporting more than 200 coastal and migratory bird species.

It is thought that healthy populations of at least 30% of the globally threatened mammals found in Guyana and approximately 90% of threatened reptiles occur in our national protected areas.



Stakeholder Communities

Many of the areas adjacent to protected areas are titled Amerindian lands comprising six out of nine of Guyana's indigenous groups (45 communities). There is a long history and culture of resource use by communities in the country's protected areas, including hunting, fishing, farming and gathering. Many of these areas are therefore extremely important features in the livelihoods and long-term developmental aspirations of local communities. The management of the NPAS is therefore defined by a "Parks for People" approach with community participation and enhanced local benefits being fundamental to the work of the PAC.





Tourism and Recreation

Guyana's tourism and travel industry contributes approximately US\$220 million (8.9%) to its GDP (direct and indirect expenditure), however this sector's contribution to GDP has the potential to grow significantly. The development of Guyana's protected areas system will directly contribute to the growth of the country's tourism sector, through the protection of important landmarks, landscapes and biodiversity, tourism marketing, and the development of tourism-compatible infrastructure. A strengthened partnership with key stakeholders is therefore a priority to help grow and develop Guyana's eco-tourism services and products. At the centre of this tourism/protected area partnership is Kaieteur National Park, which is Guyana's primary tourist site and received more than 7,000 visitors in 2014, a 250% increase when compared to 2000.

Visitation within urban parks is also significant and growing. The National Park, for instance, is visited by approximately 1,000 persons daily, while the Zoological Park has between 6-8,000 visitors per month. This makes the urban parks extremely valuable platforms not just for marketing tourism to a domestic market, but also for improving awareness, education and support among Guyanese for the conservation of Guyana's biodiversity.

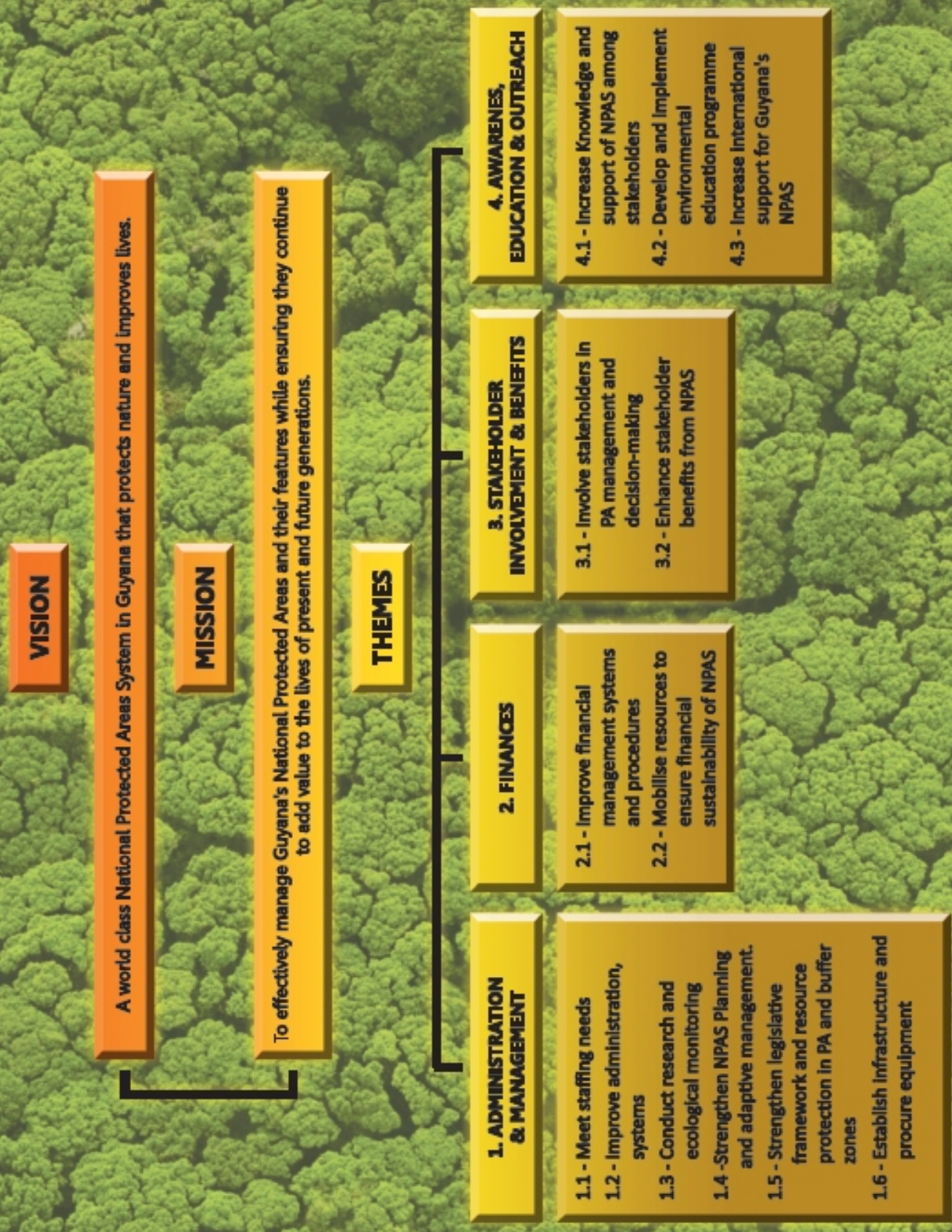


Protected Areas Management

Planning for the effective administration of individual protected areas has commenced. This includes site level management plans for hinterland protected areas, an infrastructural plan for the rehabilitation of our urban parks (Three Parks Initiative) and a master plan for modernisation of the Zoo. By merging new and long established protected areas under one system for the first time, strategic emphasis will be placed, over the next five years, on personnel and site-level capacity, developing appropriate management systems, and building critical infrastructure.

To date the NPAS has been largely financed by the Cooperative Republic of Guyana and, since 2006, the German Development Bank (KfW). KfW has committed to funding most of the infrastructure required in hinterland PAs up to 2019, thereby significantly reducing the funding gap for the growth of the NPAS. Funds for additional activities and costs will be pursued through a fundraising approach targeting a suite of donors, including a number of existing partner NGOs.

Climate change is a cross cutting issue that affects all programme activities and decisions related to the effective management of the NPAS. Thus, climate change mitigation, adaptation, and understanding of the impacts of climate change on the natural resources, are overarching principles guiding all programme activities outlined in this strategic plan.



Key Activities

Administration and Management

Meet Staffing Needs

- Hire staff
- Train staff in appropriate skills
- Carry out staff performance assessments
- Improve staff working conditions, motivate staff and build morale

Improve Administration Systems

- Review and update HR policies
- Revise MoUs with unions
- Develop operational plans and procedures
- Improve planning and reporting systems

Conduct Research and Ecological Monitoring

- Develop NPAS research strategy
- Promote research in NPAS to international and national institutions
- Support researchers
- Develop and implement an ecological monitoring programme including data management and feedback

Strengthen NPAS Planning and Adaptive Management

- NPAS planning and expansion
- Develop site level tourism and infrastructure plans
- Monitor and Improve effectiveness of NPAS management activities

Strengthen Legislative Framework and Resource Protection in PA and Buffer Zones

- Strengthen policy for improved PA management
- Lobby for and support development of relevant national strategies, plans and policies
- Establish resource protection unit and programme in hinterland PAs
- Support resource protection in community lands adjacent to PAs

Establish Infrastructure and Procure Equipment

- Develop infrastructure as per infrastructure needs assessments
- Identify equipment needs annually and procure relevant items
- Maintain existing infrastructure and equipment

Finances

Improve Financial Management Systems and Procedures

- Review and update financial manual
- Improve financial reporting and procedures
- Establish and implement a double entry accounting system

Mobilise Resources to Ensure Financial Sustainability of NPAS

- Develop and implement a business and sustainable financing plan for NPAS
- Identify bilateral, multilateral and other fundraising sources to secure funds for PA development and management and apply for suitable grants and funding opportunities

Stakeholder Involvement and Benefits

Involve Stakeholders in PA Management and Decision Making

- Build relationships with state agencies
- Build capacity of communities and state agencies for engaging in PA management
- Develop law enforcement engagement agreements and protocols with state agencies
- Develop land use and resource use agreements with communities
- Establish site level committees

Enhance Benefits to Stakeholders from PAs

- Enhance livelihood opportunities in PA adjacent communities
- Examine options for benefit sharing in the NPAS
- Enhance visitor and user experiences in the NPAS



See Appendix 2-3



Awareness, Education and Outreach

Increase Knowledge and Support of NPAS among Stakeholders

- Visit PA adjacent communities and hold awareness meetings
- Hold regular workshops with stakeholders providing awareness on management plans, progress and NPAS values
- Develop and disseminate awareness publications among stakeholders

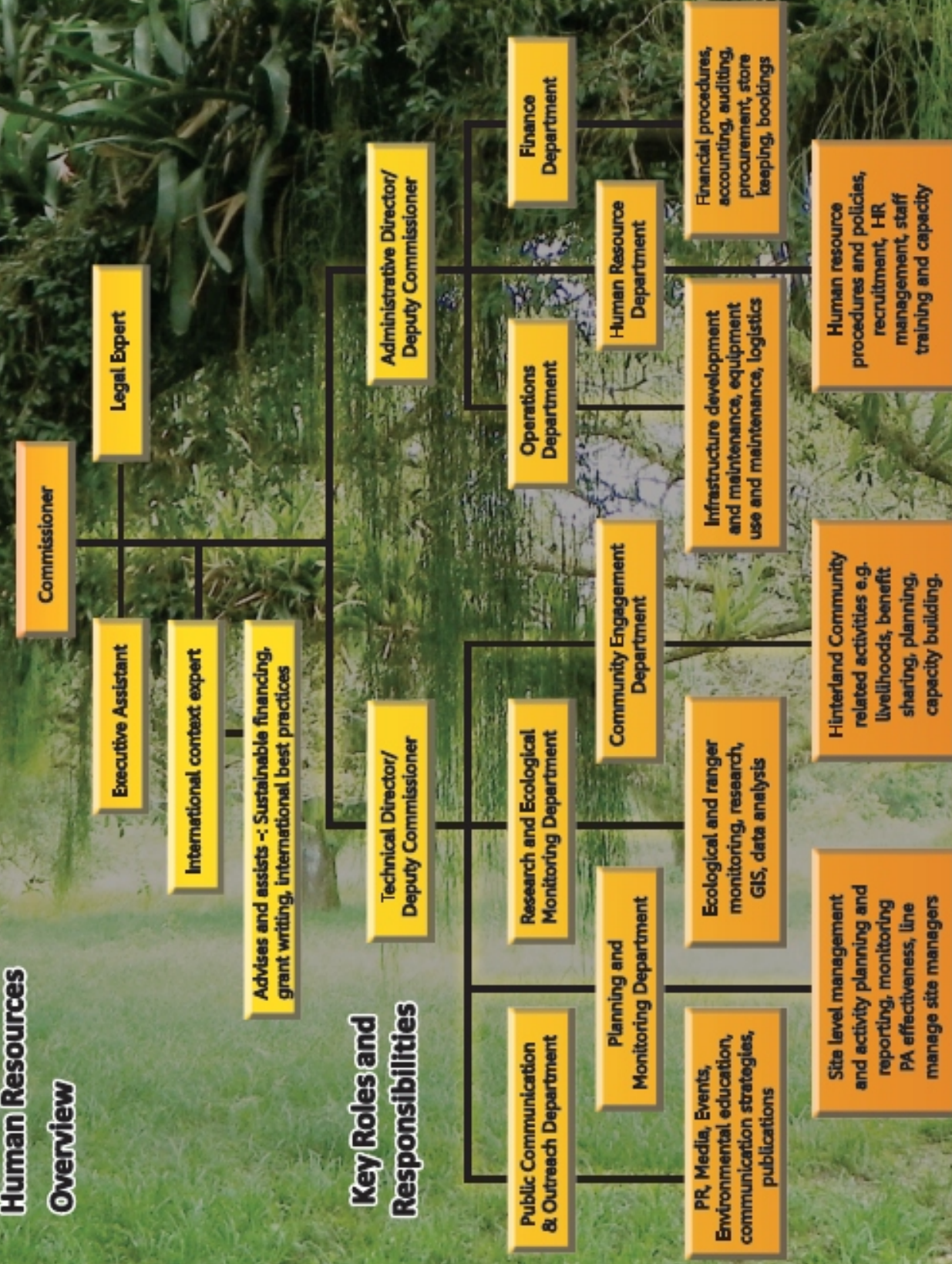
Develop and Implement Environmental Education Programme

- Develop and implement grassroots environmental educational strategy across the NPAS
- Establish school nature groups
- Develop interpretative materials for urban and hinterland parks
- Hold annual zoo camp

Increase National and International Support for Guyana's NPAS

- Develop and implement a PR and marketing strategy for the NPAS
- Diversify products and services across the NPAS
- Promote the NPAS at workshops and international meetings
- Examine options for participating in relevant international agreements and listings

Human Resources Overview



The Structure

The organisational structure represents the PAC's growth in the long-term. Recruitment of personnel within the structure will be gradual and based on need and on resources available to the organisation. The structure is designed to ensure roles and responsibilities, including line management, are clearly defined within departments. This will allow for easier mentoring and monitoring of staff performance and work plans. It is envisioned that all departments will be involved across all sites, however some will have more focus on either hinterland protected areas (e.g. Community Engagement Department), or urban parks (e.g. Public Communications & Outreach Department, and Operations). It will be the Planning and Monitoring department that will ensure all departments' planning and reporting are aligned with the strategic framework, and will streamline key activities so as to ensure that efforts are not duplicated.

This structure strives to provide opportunities for staff to build their capacity and move up within the structure, thus promoting institutional capacity building and staff retention. We aim to have 75% of the structure fulfilled by 2020.

Implementation

In order to achieve a full complement of staff as per the organisational structure, a number of methods have been identified.

Reassigning current PAC staff - Assign current staff as the organisation expands.

Recruiting new PAC staff - Funding dependent.

Volunteers - Volunteers and/or institutions with skill sets that match gaps within the structure will be pursued.

Skills Sharing - Source support from sister agencies until gap is filled. For example, seeking geo-information system (GIS) support from Guyana Land and Surveys Commission.

Interns/Attachments - Provide stipends for specific tasks to students thus building local capacity and interest in Guyana's NPAS.

See Appendix 4 for detailed
Technical and Administrative
Department Structures

HOW MUCH IT WILL COST

PAs	Capital Costs (GY\$'000)	Year 1 operation Cost (GY\$'000)	Year 2 operation Cost (GY\$'000)	Year 3 operation Cost (GY\$'000)	Year 4 operation Cost (GY\$'000)	Year 5 operation Cost (GY\$'000)	Total Cost (GY\$'000)	Total Cost (US\$)
PAC Georgetown Headquarters	20,000	56,256	56,256	56,256	56,256	56,256	301,280	1,506,400
KMPA, KNP, SBPA	808,750	186,895	196,240	206,052	216,355	227,172	1,841,466	9,207,334
Zoological Park	2,127,185	80,145	84,152	88,359	92,777	97,416	2,570,036	12,850,184
Botanical Gardens; National and Joe Vieira Parks	70,000	38,000	39,900	41,895	43,989	46,189	279,974	1,399,870
TOTAL	3,005,935	305,040	320,292	336,307	353,122	370,778	4,691,477	23,457,388

This table shows estimated critical costs (absolute minimum costs to function) only for the NPAS. They do not take into consideration specific site level costs which would vary from region to region, nor the additional activity costs to implement their 5 year management plans. Carrying out detailed costs for the implementation of each management plan is a key activity identified in the Strategic Plan.

Protecting Nature and Improving Lives

Transparency: We promote an open organisation that is accountable to its stakeholders

Commitment: We guarantee to undertake activities demonstrating passion, pride and dedication at all times

Inclusiveness: We value and respect diversity and contributions from all stakeholders, and will treat each person in a professional manner that reflects our values

Innovation: We seek to develop novel ideas using international best practices to respond to changing environments and stakeholder needs

Integrity: We act morally, ethically, and with honesty at all times

Results: We work proactively to produce prompt and effective results





Protected Areas Commission
STRATEGIC PLAN
2016 - 2020
Protecting Nature
and Improving Lives



ACRYNOMS

AOP	Annual Operational Plan	MNR	Ministry of Natural Resources
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora	NPC	National Parks Commission
CTPM	Conservation Target Pressure Monitoring	PA	Protected Area
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	PAC	Protected Area Commission
GIS	Geographic Information System	NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
HR	Human Resources	NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature	PATF	Protected Area Trust Fund
KfW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (German Development Bank)	NPAS	National Protected Areas System
KMPA	Kanuku Mountains Protected Area	PA Act	Protected Areas Act, 2011
KNP	Kaieteur National Park	SBPA	Shell Beach Protected Area
		UNCBD	United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity



APPENDICES:

- Appendix 1: SWOT Analysis
- Appendix 2: Strategic Framework
- Appendix 3: Stakeholder Analysis
- Appendix 4a: Technical Department Structure
- Appendix 4b: Administrative Department Structure

Appendices available for download from
Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
website <http://nre.gov.gy>

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