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PADF/USAID project donates Promotional Material to GYEITI

The Guyana Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (GYEITI) on Wednesday August 18, 2021 received a number of promotional materials aimed at strengthening public outreach and engagement activities around Guyana's 2nd EITI Report in the coming months.

The brief handing over ceremony was held in the boardroom of the Ministry of Natural Resources' 55 Main Street, Georgetown annex.

Making the donation was the Pan-American Development Foundation (PADF), which is executing a project on behalf of the United States Agency For International Development (USAID) called the Guyana Extractive Sector Transparency (GYEST) Project.

An element of this project aims to bolster the capacity of Guyana's EITI Secretariat and Multi-Stakeholder Group (MSG) to enable them to better execute their mandate and play their role in ensuring that there is transparency within the extractive sectors of Guyana.

Handing over the items on behalf of the PADF/USAID was PADF Chief of Party Dr Rena Guenduez and receiving on behalf of the GYEITI Secretariat was Guyana's National Coordinator Dr Rudy Jadoopat.

In receiving the items Dr Jadoopat thanked the PADF and the USAID for their contribution which he regarded as timely and valuable. He said the items would aid the GYEITI in its public engagement activities and in spreading the word with regards to not only transparency and good governance in Guyana's extractive sector but also the findings of the Guyana EITI Reports for Fiscal Years 2017 and 2018.

The donation included 100 flash drives on which Guyana's EITI reports will be downloaded and distributed to a number of stakeholders.

The GYEST project has provided support to the EITI in a number of other areas, such as support for Guyana’s EITI Validation process, the development of a new website which will be launched soon and providing training for Secretariat staff.

List of items handed over:

No.	Description of Items	Quantity	Date Delivered
1	Ceramic Mugs	200	August 18, 2021
2	Large Bio-Degradable Bags	200	August 18, 2021
3	Pens	500	August 18, 2021
4	Pocket Folders	1,000	August 18, 2021
5	Flash Drives	100	August 18, 2021
6	Banners 8x3	2	August 18, 2021
7	Table Runner	1	August 18, 2021



Dr Rena Guenduez (left) looks on as Dr Rudy Jadoopat signs accepting the items.



Dr Guenduez and Dr Jadoopat displaying the donated items

Context of Guyana's Artisanal, Small, and Medium Scale mining

Guyana is part of wider Amazonia with its tropical rain forests, rivers and related eco-systems. The Guyana Shield covers nearly 1 million Km² of surface area on the northern end of South America. The shield was formed during the Proterozoic age, and, before the formation of the Atlantic Ocean, it was contiguous with West Africa's Leo Mann Shield. Both the Guyana and Leo Mann shields host corridors of low-grade metamorphic rocks that contain significant gold deposits. Gold plays a central role in Guyana's economy, representing about 64% of its foreign exchange and 15% of its total economic output. The artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) sector in Guyana is robust, accounting for 88% of its gold production, and it is fully legalised. It is also the primary source of employment and revenue for more than 15,000 people in Guyana's hinterland, including members of local native communities .



Small scale miners panning for gold (GGMC photo)

Guyana's Artisanal, Small and Medium-scale Gold Mining (ASGM) sector has been in existence for more than one hundred years. Unlike most other countries, the ASGM sector has legal status in Guyana. Under the Mining Act (1989) mining activities have been fully legalised, with the scale of mining (small, medium, or large) dependent on the size of the dredging equipment and technology used.

Gold in Guyana is produced primarily by hydraulic dredging and sluices, and mercury is used in the final stage of the gold extraction process. Mercury is used primarily by the ASGM sector while the large-scale miners use cyanide. Mining is the largest consumer of mercury and accounts for 94 % of Hg emissions in 2017.

On 10 October 2013, the Government of Guyana signed the Minamata Convention then ratified it in September 2014. The Minamata Convention is an international treaty designed to protect human health and the environment from anthropogenic emissions and releases of mercury and mercury compounds. Guyana was one of the first countries to sign on the legally binding agreement with the support of the mining sector and mainly members of the Guyana Gold and Diamond Miners Association (GGDMA).

The Government of Guyana signed Minamata Convention on Mercury on 10 October 2013 and ratified it on 24 September 2014. The Government since then has been putting together a National Working Group to guide the development of a National Action Plan in December 2015 . This Group comprises regulatory agencies and Government Ministries such as the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC), Guyana Gold Board (GGB), the Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC), the Pesticides and Toxic Chemicals Control Board, the Environmental Protection Agency, Ministry of Health, Guyana Human Rights Association, Ministry of Indigenous Peoples Affairs (MOIPA) as well as funding partners WWF-Guianas, Conservation International Guyana, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Collective action on extractive sector corruption can turn the tide **Article reposted from EITI.org**

This week, governments, business and civil society will unite to take action on corruption in the extractive sector, demonstrating support and commitment for beneficial ownership transparency.

Anonymous ownership of companies has been used to facilitate corruption across many sectors, including the extractive industries. Those in developing countries are hardest hit; Africa loses around GBP 88.6 billion in illicit capital flight every year, according to the United Nations. At a time when the continent faces costs of more than USD 200 billion to deal with the COVID-19 crisis, citizens and governments can ill afford to see such wealth sent abroad.

Opening Extractives – a USD 7 million programme supported by the BHP Foundation and implemented by the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) and Open Ownership – aims to address this problem by providing sustained support over five years to over a dozen countries seeking to bring data on company ownership into the public domain.

The programme will build on progress made by governments, companies, civil society and other stakeholders to establish the legal reforms and technical systems required to make ownership data public and promote its use. Evidence and insights from the programme will be shared globally to scale impact.

“If we succeed, the prize is large,” said Helen Clark, former Prime Minister of New Zealand and EITI Chair. “Billions of dollars should be going into infrastructure and investment to make life better for many millions of people, rather than into the pockets of corrupt officials or businessmen. Managed responsibly, the extractive sector can be a source of wealth. Making the ownership of companies transparent and promoting the use of beneficial ownership data can help make this a reality.”

Over 100 stakeholders will join a virtual “Implementers’ Forum” on 8 September, to mark the inception of Opening Extractives. To date, nine resource-rich countries across three continents have agreed to take part in the programme. These countries – Ghana, Indonesia, Mexico, Mongolia, Nigeria, the Philippines and Zambia – will be represented at the forum.

In parallel, leading extractive sector companies are taking action. BHP, Rio Tinto, Anglo American, Newmont, Glencore and Repsol have signed a commitment to support ownership transparency, disclose information on the beneficial owners of companies and subsidiaries, and assess data on company ownership as they undertake due diligence on partners and suppliers. They will gather on 7 September alongside representatives from accounting firms, to assess how the industry can lead the way in disclosing beneficial ownership in open data format.

Given the necessity of minerals for the energy transition, transparency will be essential to ensure that revenues from the sale of minerals to power the transition are not also fuelling corrupt practices.

“Concealment of company ownership is a root cause of corruption which can deny the rights of citizens to benefit from their country’s natural resource wealth,” said James Ensor, BHP Foundation Executive Officer and President. “By raising the bar for responsible investment, Opening Extractives will improve the quality of life of millions of people in resource-rich countries. But to be successful it requires governments, industry and civil society to work together – which is why this initiative is so essential in driving momentum on this important agenda.”

A further welcome development is that this issue is gaining more prominence internationally. In June 2021, G7 leaders, including the United Kingdom, confirmed their commitment to transparency and international action against corruption.

“I look forward to seeing stakeholders in the extractive sector work together to create a new global norm of beneficial ownership transparency,” said John Penrose, M.P., the UK Prime Minister’s anti-corruption champion. “Through its G7 Presidency, the UK has supported action to target illicit financial flows and anonymous company structures, recognising the urgency of this topic and the need for action.”

Building on G7 and corporate commitments, this collective effort in the extractive sector can shed light on the infrastructure that enables anonymous companies to operate, and ultimately threatens the development prospects of resource-rich countries.

Please visit our website and Facebook page for information and updates on the work of the GYEITI. View or download our 1st and 2nd EITI Reports and their annexes in easily accessible formats. Also, feel free to give us feedback by email or Facebook message.