

# Deqing International Seminar on United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management “Effective Land Administration”



## Land Administration in Guyana

*September 2018*





# Contents

- Background/ Legal Framework
- Role & Functions of the Guyana Lands & Surveys Commission
- Roles of Other Land Related Agencies
- Challenges to Land Administration in Guyana
- Achievements





# Image of Guyana Relative to Neighbours



Venezuela to the West  
Brazil to the South  
Suriname to the East  
Population : 750,000  
Oil Reserves: 7B Barrels



**LAWS OF GUYANA**

**LAWS OF GUYANA**

**Cap. 62:01**

*State Lands*

**Cap. 59:05**

*Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission*

GRANTS, LEASES AND LICENCES

**ESTABLISHMENT AND FUNCTIONS OF THE GUYANA LANDS AND SURVEYS COMMISSION**

3. (1) Subject to this Act or the Forests Act, the

3. There is hereby established a body corporate to be known as the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission (hereafter in this Act referred to as "the Commission").

(a) make absolute or provisional grants of Guyana, subject to such conditions (if any) or as are provided by the regulations for force;

(b) grant leases of any State lands of terms, and subject to such conditions (if any)

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Charge of State lands. c. 67:01 [1 of 1972]

**LAWS OF GUYANA**

*Lands Department*

**Cap. 59:01**

PROVISIONS AS TO STATE LANDS

5. The department shall have the charge of, and act as guardian over all, State lands, rivers, and creeks of Guyana, except as comprised within a State forest declared under the Forests Act.



# Guyana's Context

- Land in Guyana is owned either by the State or under private freehold tenure.
- There are two basic land markets. The first consists of ***freehold properties*** and the second consists of leases of ***publicly owned*** land. There is also a minor market in leases of freehold properties





# Guyana's Context

- In the freehold market, a purchaser buys outright from a seller under the "transport of property" or "transfer of certificate of title" transactions recorded at the Land & Deeds Registries respectively.
- All leases of publicly owned land are recorded at the Lands and Surveys Commission (*Long Leases, 21 yrs & over, recorded at Deeds Registry*).



# Administration of Public Lands

There are two categories of publicly owned lands, namely, **State lands** and **Government lands**.

- *State lands*, formerly called Crown Lands are those transferred at Independence in 1966, to the people of Guyana and became known as State lands under Section 3(b) of the State Lands Act Ch.62:01





# Administration of Public Lands

*Government lands* are those purchased by or granted to the Government of Guyana by the State to be developed with general revenue, for public purposes, such as land for hospitals, and schools, land development schemes, etc.





# Administration of Private Lands

Freehold land administration is carried out by the **Deeds Registry** under the Office of Attorney General of the Supreme Court and by the **Land Registry** under the Office of the Minister of State.

There are two systems of land law and property recordings governing the private market, namely, the "transport index" based on Roman Dutch legal practices, and the "index of land transfer of title," that is, the Torrens system introduced in the early 1950s by the British



# Public Lands

While the Commissioner of Lands and Surveys is the custodian of all State lands, the **Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission** in accordance with the State Lands Act and Regulations, the Guyana Forestry Commission, under Act 2 of 1979, and the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission, under the Act 9 of 1979, administer land use for agriculture (and other purposes), forestry and mining throughout Guyana, respectively



# Public Lands

- Accordingly, each of these three Government institutions issues titles for different purposes over the same land space. The need for some rationalisation of authority in the allocation of public land is, therefore, of some concern in the planning of future institutional arrangements.





# Public Lands

State lands can be given out in one of three forms: a licence, a permit or a lease



# Structure of Land Ownership and Distribution

- The State owns about 85 percent of the national territory.
- In coastal areas where most of the population is concentrated, roughly half of farms are freehold properties
- Land tenure policy has undergone many changes over time. After 1831 the British alienated State lands under a form of title called "absolute grants."



# Land Policy in Guyana

- The alienation of State lands under the systems of grants was suspended in 1938 because of the abandonment and poor development of large areas of land under such titles. The licence of occupancy was the forerunner of the leasehold system
- The 99-year lease was adopted after 1912. The 21-year lease was introduced in 1919 and the 25-year lease was adopted about 1965 with the right of renewal. At present State lands are allocated under 50-year leases.

*\*(Guyana is now in the process of drafting an overarching National Land Policy)*





# GLSC Act 1999 Chap. 59:05

The Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission was created in 1999 via an Act of Parliament to replace the former Lands and Surveys Department.



(a) to have charge of and act as guardian over all public lands, rivers and creeks of Guyana;

SC

**Surveying**

**Land  
Administration**

**Land  
Information &  
Mapping - GIS**

**Land Policy  
& Planning**





# Roles of Other Land Related Agencies

- Land Administration
  - Guyana Geology & Mines
  - Guyana Forestry Commission
  - **Protected Areas Commission**
  - **Central Housing & Planning Authority**
  - **MMA/ADA (Mahaica-Berbice)**





# Roles of Other Land Related Agencies

- Authorization, Execution and/or Registration of Surveys
  - Ministry of Public Infrastructure,
  - Maritime Administration Department (MARAD),
  - Mahaica-Mahaicony-Abary Agricultural Development Authority (MMA-ADA)
- Land Valuations
  - Land Valuation Department of the Ministry of Finance





# Roles of Other Land Related Agencies

- Land Mapping
  - Guyana Forestry Commission,
  - Central housing & Planning Authority,
  - Maritime Administration Department,
  - Guyana Geology & Mines,
  - Environmental Protection Agency,
  - Private Firms





# Roles of Other Land Related Agencies

- Land Use Planning

- Central Housing & Planning Authority,
- Local Government,



- Oversight of Outer Territorial Limits/ Waters

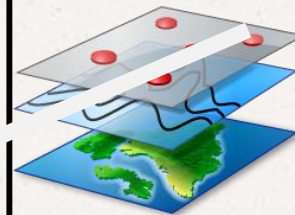
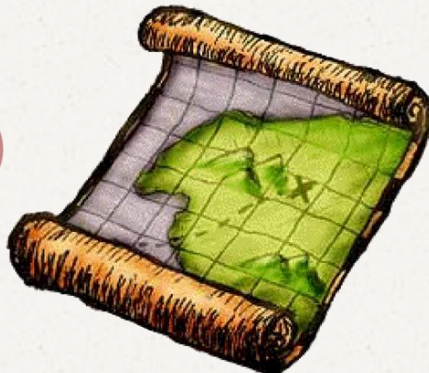
- Ministry of Public Infrastructure,
- Maritime Administration Department (MARAD),





# Challenges to Land Administration

- Poor inter-agency coordination – “Turfism”
  - Lack of data sharing
  - Duplication of efforts
  - Poor Planning Framework/Mechanism
- Outdated maps and base data
- Lack of Integration between Surveys and GIS Divisions
- Lack of trained personnel – Capacity Deficit



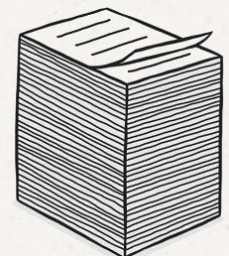
# Challenges to Land Administration

- Lack of understanding of Legal/Policy Framework
- Non-cohesive Legal/Policy Framework
- Lack of Financial Resources
- Poor ICT Infrastructure, Policies & guidelines  
(Inter-connectivity)



# Challenges to Land Administration

- Separation of Valuation/Land Registry
- Poor Geodetic Infrastructure
- Paper-based system
- Lack of respect for Repository Function
- Lack of Comprehensive Strategic Plans





# Recent Achievements

- Development of **C**ontinuously **O**perating **R**eference **S**tation (CORS) Network
- Development of new Land Surveying Standards
- **N**ational **S**patial **D**ata **I**nfrastructure & National Geospatial Policy
- Improved capacity for Land Policy and Planning
- Development of National Land Policy







# Recent Achievements

- Commencement of Strategic Planning
  - Strategies/ Business Model
- **Sustainable Land Development and Management (SLDM) Project:**  
*Est. of National Consultative Platform*
- Acquisition of modern equipment and upgraded facilities
- Training and Equipment to establish a hydrographic Department
- Establishment of new Diploma and Degree courses with The University of Guyana in Partnership with other International Universities. (LA, Surveying, Valuation, GIS)



Thank You

# National Geospatial Framework and Policy



\*All agencies are not depicted in graphic