



# Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission

## 2013 ANNUAL REPORT



Office of the Commissioner  
Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission  
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## Table of Contents

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1.2 Vision of the Commission.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1.3 Overview of the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission, Act No. 15 of 1999 .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1.4 Functions of the Commission.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1.5 An Overview of the Organizational Structure of the Commission .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2.0 ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>4.0 SURVEYS DIVISION.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>5.0 LAND INFORMATION AND MAPPING (LIM) DIVISION.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>7.0 CORPORATE AFFAIRS DIVISION.....</b>	<b>23</b>

## The Board of Directors of the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission

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Mr. R. Roopchand	Project Manager Guyana Rice Development Board
Mr. R. Edinboro	Chief Planner Central Housing and Planning
Mr. J. McKenzie	Permanent Secretary Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment
Mr. J. Singh	Deputy Commissioner Guyana Forestry Commission
Mr. A. Bishop	Advisor to the President Land and Environment
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Mr. G. Gouveia	Private Sector Commission, Representative
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Mr. B. Carter	Worker's Representative Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission
Mr. D. Persaud	Commissioner Guyana Lands & Surveys Commission

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2013, The Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission continued to enhance the quality of service offered to clients as well as to fulfill its mandate as outlined in the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission Act No. 15 of 1999. During the year, the Commission was able to achieve most of its targets and successfully implement its Capital Projects, one Foreign Funded Project and other Special Projects.

The Development of Land Use Planning (DLUP) Project was the foreign funded Project, which was successfully implemented from January 2011 to October 2013. The Project was Funded by the Delegation of European Union, Executed by the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission (GL&SC) and implemented by the National Authorizing Office of the Ministry of Finance.

The deliverables of the DLUP Project are of significant importance to Guyana. These included a National Land Use Plan, which provides developmental options and infrastructural linkages. The Plan guides informed decision-making for optimal Land Use Planning and supports planning for climate change adaptation to shift development inland in order to reduce the risk of flooding on the coast. In addition, there are three Regional Land Use Plans prepared for Regions 1, 2 and 10 to guide regional development.

Another key deliverable of the DLUP Project was a Strategic Plan for GL&SC for the period 2013-2017. This Plan essentially provides a framework for planning by GL&SC for the five-year period, and it is a results-driven approach for the Commission to monitor its performance. Under the Project, a Lease Management System (LMS) was developed to fully computerize the lease application and processing system, and to retain the history of all the leases. Training was also provided for the users, administrators and the managers to facilitate the change to LMS.

The DLUP Project facilitated training in GIS, Remote Sensing, Customer Service and other technical areas during its three-year implementation period.

In 2013, the Land Administration Division of GL&SC continued to deliver and provide efficient and effective services to clients and stakeholders. Under its Work Programme, there was an influx of applications for State and Government Lands, which were consistent with the trend of the past three (3) years.

The Surveys Division provided benchmarks and related data to Government Agencies and clients. In an effort to enhance the quality of surveys conducted, the Division collaborated with the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission to develop the Continuous Operating Referencing Stations (CORS). CORS will extend the national geodetic network and coordinate accuracy of boundaries during surveying.

During the reporting period, eight (8) Amerindian Surveys (Kurukabaru, Kamara, Taruka, Massara Extension, Sawariwau, Yakarinta Extension, Manawarin & Waramuri) were completed, and the Certificate of Titles will be issued in 2014. The Commission attended the Guyana/Brazil Boundary Commission Ninth Conference in Brazil in 2013. Other key functions

and tasks, which are ongoing, include registration of land parcels, mutations and monitoring of reserves to prevent encroachment on public lands.

The Land Information and Mapping Division was engaged in numerous client related activities such as customized map production, scanning, geo-referencing, and printing of maps and plans. The digitizing of Region 9 Administrative Map was completed and the Division commenced digitizing the Region 5 Administrative Map.

In addition, the Division prepared Cadastral Plans including Amerindian Titled Lands, scanned and stored two thousand and eighty two (2,082) Cadastral plans and re-designed the Local Area Network Infrastructure to upgrade the existing network. The Division achieved most of its targets in 2013.

The financial position of the Commission was comparatively stable in 2013, due to the aggressive revenue collection by the Regional Offices. In addition, over two thousand, three hundred (2,300) letters were issued to lessees for non-payment of rent and other fees. The Commission experienced an increase in income over expenditure. However, employment cost exceeded the budgeted figure due to the replacement of staff in the various Divisions and Regional Offices.

The Commission would like to express its gratitude to its partners and collaborators for their support in the achievement of its success in 2013. We look forward to their continued support in 2014.

## 1.0 THE MISSION, VISION AND FUNCTIONS OF THE GUYANA LANDS AND SURVEYS COMMISSION

### 1.1 Mission of the Commission

The Mission of the Guyana Lands & Surveys Commission (GL&SC) is **to effectively and efficiently administer lands for the benefit of our clients and national development.**

### 1.2 Vision of the Commission

Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission will endeavour to become a self-sustaining organization through a team of professional and motivated staff, using appropriate technology to deliver quality services to clients, provides decision support for effective land management, policy and planning and ensure access to land by all, thus contributing to poverty alleviation and national development.

### 1.3 Overview of the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission, Act No. 15 of 1999

The **Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission** Act No. 15 of 1999 was assented to on June 1, 2001. This legislation comprehensively addresses the areas of management, the sustainable use of all resources. It also established the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission (GL&SC). The

GL&SC Act mandates the Commission to have charge and act as guardian over all Public Lands, Rivers and Creeks of Guyana.

The Lands and Surveys Department was under the Ministry of Agriculture. However, after the passing of the GL&SC Act, the GL&SC did not become operational until June 1, 2001.

#### **1.4 Functions of the Commission**

The overall functions of the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission are in the GL&SC Act, Part II 4 (1). Included among the functions are:

- To have charge of and act as guardian over all public lands, rivers and creeks of Guyana;
- To execute or cause to be executed geodetic, topographic, hydrographic and cadastral surveys in relation to the land and water resources of Guyana;
- To prepare and publish maps and charts of Guyana or parts thereof;
- To check, approve, record and, where required, certify all land surveys carried out in relation to any land in Guyana;
- To collect and account for all purchases, monies and rents, payable in relation to the sale or lease of public lands, and such rates, taxes, fees, fines and charges as the Minister may direct or as may be prescribed by law;
- To administer and enforce all laws relating to public lands and land surveys.

The Commission's regulatory function gives it the responsibility to monitor and enforce the GL&SC Act.

#### **1.5 An Overview of the Organizational Structure of the Commission**

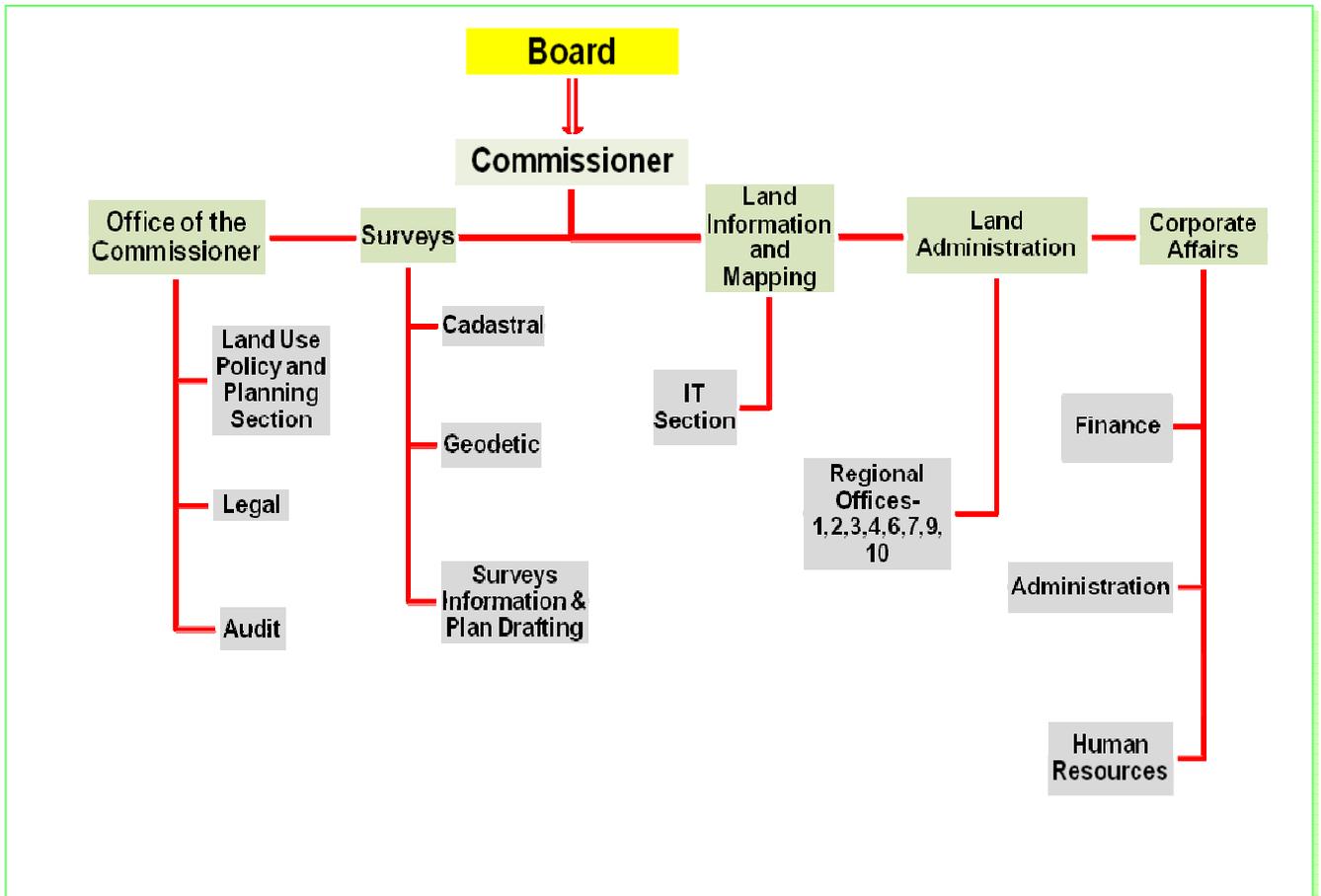
The Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission is a governmental institution responsible, inter alia, for advising the Government on Land Policies, management of State and Government lands, issuance of land titles and leases, provision of support for land use development, collection of land rents and all land management related fees. The Commission became a semi-autonomous Agency in 2001 initially under the Office of the President, established by an Act of Parliament.

The Commission is administered by the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment and managed by a Board consisting of a Chairman and twelve (12) members. Three (3) main Divisions, Land Administration, Land Information and Mapping, and Surveys execute operational activities of the Commission with the support of the Finance, Office Administration and Human Resource Sections of the Corporate Affairs Division for administrative, finance and revenue management. The Land Administration Division has ten (10) Regional Sub-Offices which execute de-centralised operational land administration functions of the Commission.

The Office of the Commissioner has three (3) Sections; Land Use Policy and Planning for the provision of advice on land use policy, and regional and national planning, Audit Section for monitoring financial transactions and procedures, and Legal for dispute resolution, legal representation of GL&SC's Clients in Court, and preparation of transfers and agreements.

The Organisational Structure of Guyana Lands and Survey Commission is presented below.

**The Organisation Structure of the Commission**



## **2.0 ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER**

### **Land Use Policy and Planning Section**

The Section was responsible for the following:

- 1) preparing and disseminating National and Regional Land Use Plans (Regional Land Use Plans of Regions 1, 2 and 10 in support of the Development of the Land Use Planning Project
- 2) providing advice and relevant research findings and associated policy recommendations
- 3) providing reports on compliance with International Agreements/ Commitments mandated to the Commission

The Section was staffed with (two (2) Planners and one (1) Technician), and one (1) Intern (an Urban and Regional Planner), on agreement with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) for six (6) months support in land use planning to the Commission.

During 2013, the Land Use Policy and Planning Section was responsible for facilitating the preparation and dissemination of the National and three (3) Regional Land Use Plans with support from the Development of Land Use Planning Project (DLUPP). The DLUP Project was funded by the Delegation of European Union, the Ministry of Finance was responsible for the implementation and the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission was the Executing Agency. Specifically, the Project aimed at providing technical assistance and building the capacity of Government of Guyana to undertake integrated Regional Spatial Planning procedures and to better manage its Mapping, Cadastral and Land Administration Database System.

The Staff of the Section supported the Development of Land Use Planning Project. The Project's period of execution ended on October 23, 2013.

The main achievements were as follows:-

- 1) The National Land Use Plan was drafted after the Project Team held regional consultations in each Region. The Plan assessed the development potential of Guyana using a combination of information gathered from the consultations in the Regions, and data and information and spatial data received from Agencies. The National Land Use Plan was approved by Cabinet in September, 2013 after a period of public awareness and review using the website, newspapers and television stations. The process of review and awareness was managed by the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment. The NLUP was placed on the GL&SC's website to increase awareness of the Plan.

The National Land Use Plan (NLUP) is not prescriptive and supports planning for climate change adaptation to shift development inland in order to reduce the risk of coastal flooding and inundation due to sea level rise.

The NLUP aims to reduce land use conflicts and pressure on the coastal plain by providing land use options inland. In the NLUP, Development Options and Infrastructure linkages were prepared for six (6) areas to guide primary and secondary land uses in Guyana.

- 2) The Project also prepared Regional Land Use Plans for Regions 1, 2 and 10 with spatial datasets. The Plans evaluate the potential of the Regions for optimal land uses and development. Intensive regional consultations were held in the Regions for data collection while the analyses of potential and land use options were completed. Some of the data was provided by other Agencies such as the Guyana Forestry Commission, Guyana Geology and Mines Commission. The land use/ land cover data in the Regional Plans was obtained from satellite imagery.
- 3) Geographic Information System (GIS) datasets were prepared such as land use / land cover from 5-meter satellite resolution imagery while the layers such as roads, rivers and vegetation were updated by the GIS Specialist of DLUPP. The imagery was procured for use during training in GIS and to update the features of the 1:50,000 topographic mapsheets by the Land Information and Mapping Division.
- 4) One of the key outputs of the DLUPP was the 2013-2017 GL&SC Strategic Plan. The Plan required a revised Organisation Structure of the Section in order to implement a results-driven approach.

### **Capacity in Land Use Planning**

Capacity was enhanced by working with the Consultants of the DLUPP, specifically in land use planning and geographic information system, public awareness materials, land use planning system and regulation. Work experience was gained by working with the consultants during fieldwork activities such as data collection using GIS, map preparation and consultations with land users, administrators and managers. In addition, the Section provided guidance on policy, prepared reports on compliance with various obligations under International Agreements/ Commitments. The Staff of the Section were instrumental in coordinating consultations to inform the preparation of the Plans, conducting administrative and technical work necessary for Project implementation, and reviewing Project's outputs.

### **United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)**

The Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission is the National Focal Point Agency for the UNCCD in Guyana. The Focal Point supports the preparation and submission of national reports, interventions to reduce and prevent land degradation, and promote sustainable land management. Presently, the Commission prepared Project Documents to align Guyana's National Action Plan (NAP) to the new UNCCD 10-year Strategy. Guyana's NAP was prepared in 2006 while the new UNCCD Strategy was prepared for the period 2008-2018. Guyana would align the NAP to the new strategy in order to reverse and prevent land degradation using new indicators to define activities under the new UNCCD Strategic Objectives.

### **3.0 Audit Office**

The Internal Audit Office was established under the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission Act, 1999 when the then Lands and Surveys Department came into existence on 1 June, 2001.

The Internal Audit Office reports directly the Commissioner/CEO and Board of Directors. The Internal Audit Office functions as a support unit of the Division of the Office of the Commissioner with the main function being to conduct general Internal Audit on all Financial Transactions, Processes and Procedures in the Corporate Affairs (Finance and Human Resources), Land Administration, Surveys and the Land Information and Mapping Divisions of the Commission. It plays an important and adequate assurance role in the Commission's governance and particularly in the area of risk management that good internal controls are in place and operate effectively and also review the Commission's written policies and procedures, especially the policy pertaining to management's responsibility to control the organization.

Internal Audit was conducted on Leases issued to ensure that they are in compliance with the Standard Operating Procedures of the Land Administration Division, also audit was conducted on payments for 2013, to assess the effectiveness of this process to ensure adequate controls exist to provide reasonable assurance that payment cannot be made incorrectly.

The Internal Audit Office reviewed the adequacy of current systems employed by the Commission in the various Divisions. The Internal Audits were conducted in the Sub - Regional Offices in Region # 1,2,3,4,6,7,9 & 10 which were successfully completed for the First, Second, Third and Fourth Quarters of 2013. The Final Internal Audit Reports were completed and duly submitted to the Commission/CEO for presentation to the Chairman and Board of Directors.

## **4.0 SURVEYS DIVISION**

### **4.1 FUNCTIONS OF THE DIVISION**

The Surveys Division is responsible for National Geodetic Network (both horizontal and vertical networks) as well as determining the characteristics of the ocean, rivers, creeks and conservancies beds. The Division is also responsible for the monitoring of Government and State Lands and Reserves. The Division manages land parcels for both public and private lands as it relates to surveys, subdivision and change of boundaries.

Another key responsibility of the Division is the maintenance of the Land Registration Register of Parcel Numbers, surveying of State and Government Lands for future development and ensuring that all surveys in the country are executed in keeping with the legal requirements that are necessary for the demarcation of lands.

The Surveys Division is also mandated with the maintenance, replacement and storage of survey records, plans and stock sheets necessary in GL&SC's Vault for future development and land transactions. Grants, Leases, diagrams prepared by the Land Administration Division are also stored and retrieved by this Division for use by GL&SC's staff for the execution of some of their duties.

Apart from the aforementioned, the Surveys Division offers a series of products and services. These services are the mutation of Land Registration Areas, Registering of Cadastral Plans with GL&SC, Survey Inspections, Permission to Survey State Land for lease purpose, surveys for Government Agencies, as well as surveys at the request of the Courts. Products include the sale of Bench Marks Information, the sale of Photocopies of Plans and Map Sheets. The sale of products and services of the Surveys Division contributes to the financial sustainability of GL&SC.

The Division also provides information to the General Public on location of lots or land parcel throughout Guyana and some of its clients are Real Estate Developers, Real Estate Agents, General Public, Government Agencies and Private Sector.

The Division executes surveying projects for the Government for National Development in order that the land parcels can be demarcated. The Division also surveys State Lands as a support mechanism in the different Regions for agricultural development.

### **4.2 AIM OF THE DIVISION**

To survey State and Government Lands as well as issue Permission to Survey State and Government Lands by private surveyors and to efficiently and effectively manage surveys in keeping with the laws and regulations governing the branches and types of surveys.

### **4.3 OFFICE OF THE MANAGER**

The Office of the Manager is responsible for the management and implementation of the Annual Work Programme and Survey Standards, granting of Permissions to Survey State Lands, signing of Survey Plans and preparation of Survey Plans for the Land Registration System and plans for Governmental Agencies. This Office coordinates the activities of the Sections within the Division.

### **4.4 THE OBJECTIVES OF THE DIVISION**

- To establish and maintain a National Geodetic Network as a framework for integrating and mapping.
- To establish a Cadastre to inform and guide land policy and planning, support land information and supply clients with relevant and timely data.
- To administer and enforce all Laws relating to Cadastral Surveys and Land Surveying in general.
- To survey public lands and maintain an index plan of leases.
- To regulate and set standards for the execution of Geodetic, Topographic, Hydrographic, Cadastral and Aerial surveys.
- To establish and maintain Plan Index for the Land Registry.
- To develop and maintain an adequate level of surveying capacity in Guyana.

### **4.5 CADASTRAL SECTION**

The Cadastral Section is responsible for checking and verifying that plans submitted to the Division satisfy the relevant Acts. The Section surveys Public and State Lands as part of Government Policy to make land available for agriculture and national development. This Section ensures that Amerindian and State Lands boundaries are properly surveyed and described. The Cadastral Section also develops index plans in keeping with the Land Registry Act Cap. 5:02 by preparing Block Plans, Certifying Mutation requests and Issuing Parcel Numbers. Management of the Land Registration Register and the preparation of reports on petitions for the Land Court are done by the Cadastral Section. The section also prepares estimates for surveying projects and carryout research on land related issues.

#### **4.6 THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE CADASTRAL SECTION**

- Amerindian Land Titling Programme – Eight (8) Amerindian Surveys were completed.
- Mutation document – 41 mutations were done.
- Preparation of Report for the Land Court Judge – 12 reports were prepared.
- Permission to Survey – 303 permissions were granted to surveyors.
- Execution of routine cadastral surveys in Regions 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 – 68 surveys were executed

#### **4.7 THE PLAN DRAFTING AND SURVEY INFORMATION SECTION**

The Plan Drafting and Surveying Information Section (PDSIS) is responsible for data entry of all survey plans into the computerized system, replotting and compiling of cadastral plans, preparing cadastral plans, charts, sketches under the relevant acts and recording the same.

The Section provides photocopies of plans at the request of internal and external customers. The PDSIS also scans plans for digital storage, retrieves, and restores Vault records.

#### **4.8 THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE PLAN DRAFTING AND SURVEY INFORMATION SECTIONS**

- Research of resourceful data for the general public
- Drafting of Plans on request - 227 plans were drafted
- Repairing / maintenance of 58 plans.
- Correction to plans – 60 plans were corrected
- Numbering and recording plans – 3,136 plans were recorded.
- Retrieving and restoring records – 27,262 Vault records were retrieved and restored.
- Entering plans into the Vault Database – 2,815 were entered into the Vault database.
- Detachment of leases – 895 leases were detached

#### **4.9 GEODETIC SECTION**

The Geodetic Section is responsible for maintaining a National Geodetic Framework for integrating survey and mapping. The Section assisted the Cadastral Section in completing surveys at Port Kaituma Railway.

#### **4.10 ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE GEODETIC SECTION**

- Assisted the Cadastral Section and Land Administration Division in execution of routine surveys and Capital Works.
- Prepared the annual thirty-day International Boundary Inspection Campaign
- Estimated on a section of Guyana/Brazil common border.
- Input of survey data into the database.

#### **4.11 THE MONITORING UNIT**

The Monitoring Unit of the Surveys Division is tasked with executing some of the statutory functions of the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission. The Unit is responsible for the witnessing of Surveys involving State Lands, Government Lands and Reserves. Surveys are witnessed in keeping with the relevant legislations in order to ensure that there is no encroachment on State or Government Lands or any lands identified as a Reserve. The Monitoring Unit is also responsible for the investigation of Petitions, copies of which are served on the Commissioner of Lands and Surveys when persons approach the Land Court seeking a Declaration of Title whether through Prescriptive Rights, Adverse Possession or First Registration. In some instances, the Unit is also tasked with executing Occupation Surveys, which may be required for verification purposes and would conduct research at the Deeds Registry or the Land Registry in order to locate transports or land titles in order to make a determination of ownership.

#### **4.12 AMERINDIAN SURVEYS**

Eight Amerindian Villages were surveyed, namely:-

- Waramuti
- Massara Extension
- Yarakinta Extension
- Kurukabaru
- Turuku
- Kamana
- Sawariwau
- Manawarin

#### **4.13 CAPITAL WORKS**

The Division executed cadastral surveys at Port Kaituma, Region 1 in support of Land Administration Work Programmeme, and the required plans are being drafted.

#### **4.14 SUMMARY**

The year 2013 commenced with improved human resources in the Cadastral and Geodetic Sections. One Land Surveyor was employed for the Cadastral Section, who passed the 2012, SLS Examination.

At the 2013 Sworn Land Surveyors Examination, one of the technicians in the cadastral section was successful. This means that more routine survey jobs would be executed. The desired level of production, as it relates routine surveys, requires the other technicians to upgrade to the level of land surveyor. The salary of the Government surveyor is not attractive enough to encourage the private surveyors to leave the Private Sector and work in the Government Sector, thus this problem would have to be resolved by the technicians improving their performance at the sworn Land Surveyors Examination.

Routine Cadastral survey has reduced in 2013; more clients elected private surveyors to execute cadastral surveys of State Lands.

The mutation of lands in land Registration Areas reduced in 2013. This is not controlled by GLSC, but rather a function of public and Central Housing and Planning Authority requests. It, however, indicate that there were less subdivisions of lands in Land Registration Areas in 2013.

Permissions to Survey State and Government Lands have increased, as the Land Administration Division of GLSC has been able to obtain more approvals in 2013 than in 2012 and to disseminate approval letters to potential lessees. This also indicates that the potential lessee has responded significantly in 2013 as compared to 2012.

Recording of survey plans have significantly increased from 2012 by 1%, that is from 3,136 to 3,167 over a one-year period. This could be tied to the amount of land transactions and security of tenure over the reporting period. This also indicates that the real estate sector is growing and this is closely linked to growth of the economy.

## **5.0 LAND INFORMATION AND MAPPING (LIM) DIVISION**

### **5.1 Divisional Overview**

The LIM Division comprises three (3) Sections - GIS, Cartography and IT Sections.

Within the GL&SC, the LIM Division is responsible for the preparation of maps and charts of Guyana, the development and maintenance of a parcel-based land information system and maintenance and development of the IT infrastructure of the Commission. Through the LIM, the GL&SC is the primary provider of baseline information for numerous Government and private institutions.

### **5.2 SUMMARY**

- Training was conducted through the DLUPP in the extraction of features from satellite imagery for the updating of the 1:50,000 topographic maps.
- In conjunction with the Surveys Division, the GIS Section scanned and stored on the GL&SC server a total of two thousand, two hundred and fifty-six (2,256) cadastral plans. This is part of the long-term plan for preservation of these important land records.
- The GIS Section is also currently digitizing existing topographic maps to have them in a digital format for easy reproduction and for use in GIS application.
- The GIS Section also worked with the Surveys Division in preparation of a number of plans for Amerindian Land titles.
- The LIM Division was also involved in the DLUPP's Project Implementation Team, which overlooked various aspects of the DLUPP implementation.
- The Manager, LIM and Senior GIS Analyst, LIM were integrally involved in the public consultations on the Draft National Policy on Geographic Information and the setting up of the MNRE's GeoNode centralised GIS database.
- The Manager, LIM was also integrally involved in the LCDS MRVS, the GIS Day Committee, and the MNRE's GIS Committee.

### **5.3 Client Related Activities**

In addition to the above tasks, the Division was engaged in numerous client related activities such as customized map production, scanning, geo-referencing, printing, etc. for the reporting period. These activities were not captured in the work Programmeme as indicated above, and included work for the Surveys Division, Land Admin Division, Ministry of Amerindian Affairs, National Agricultural Research Institute, Guyana Geology & Mines Commission, Guyana Power & Light, Office of the President, CGX Resources Inc.,

Civil Defence Commission, Ministry of Health, Guyana Defence Force, and various other Government agencies and private entities.

In support of the Surveys Division, the LIM Division drafted plans for a number of proposed Titled Amerindian Lands.

#### **5.4 GL&SC's IT Development Plan**

In 2007, the GL&SC embarked on a three year IT Development Plan that seeks to develop systems by the use of IT. This is the major development activity for the GL&SC and aims to increase efficiency, transparency and capability within the GL&SC operations.

Due to availability of funds from the Government of Guyana for activities related to DLUPP, some money was available for work on the IT Development Plan. To this end, a redesign of the LAN was done with the physical work expected to be completed in early 2014.

The IT Section was also integrally involved in the development, launching, testing and troubleshooting of the Lease Management System (LMS), developed through the efforts of the EU funded Development of Land Use Planning Project (DLUPP). The Section remains involved in the continuing development of the system.

#### **5.5 Constraints / Issues**

Notably delayed were activities requiring some field verification and the printing of maps for map stocking. Printing of maps should be made a priority as the maps are used to generate revenue. The Development of Land Use Planning Project (DLUPP) and the MoA's ASDU Agricultural Diversification Project (ADP) made significant inputs into the IT Development Plan although significant investment on the part of the GL&SC is still needed for infrastructural upgrade.

## **6.0 LAND ADMINISTRATION DIVISION**

### **6.1 Introduction**

The DLUP Project ended during 2013 and among the main deliverables was the development of a new Lease Management System (LMS). This system was launched in October of 2013 in the Land Administration Division amid great expectations of improving the functionality of the Division, reduced processing time, more accurate information and more flexibility. Like any new system, it is still going through the initiation phase and some tweaking is still to be completed.

This change resulted in the slowing down of application processing towards the end of the year as staff had to be trained and glitches fixed. Despite this, the Division performed very creditably in terms of achieving and surpassing some key targets and has yet again made significant contributions to the achievement of the overall Commission's goals.

A new Strategic Plan has been developed under the DLUP project and although not implemented yet, the Division sought to move in the general direction of the plan.

The Division continued to provide an efficient service to the public while seeking to achieve financial sustainability for the Commission. Outreaches to communities to discuss issues and solve problems as well as to improve revenue collection resulted in improved support to the clients and the public. This latter strategy was particularly important in order to compensate for reduced revenue generation. The innovative approach of Regional staff enabled the Commission to maintain financial stability throughout the year.

The Region 4 Section has benefitted from the recruitment of trained surveying personnel from three (3) Surveyors and three Technicians. The new staff quickly adapted to the work environment, which resulted in the development of an effective and productivity team.

The statistics, which follow, are indicative of achievements from the efforts and dedicated support of the Staff.

### **6.2 Aim of the Land Administration Division**

To effectively and efficiently manage and administer public lands.

### **6.3 Objectives**

1. To increase production and issuance of titles in a timely manner
2. To develop, compile and maintain an accurate register of tenure on public lands
3. To ensure that the use of public lands conforms to the terms and conditions set out in titles and laws governing public lands.
4. To develop and implement operational procedures for the effective and efficient functioning of the Land Administration Division and its regional offices
5. To identify new lands for development, taking into consideration government's policies on sustainable development and the Low Carbon Development Strategy.
6. To maintain an accurate Land Information System which includes the use of modern technology.
7. To promote the use of alternative means of settling disputes and reduce the number of land issues in the Division.
8. Develop new approaches to deal with illegal occupancy of public lands.

## **6.4 Functions of the Division**

The main responsibility of the Division is to receive and process land applications from the public for various purposes, with more emphasis on agriculture. To achieve this, various procedures and guidelines have been adopted with the ultimate goal being to deliver an effective and efficient service to the public.

The Division is also responsible for the monitoring and enforcement of both the lease conditions as well as the laws related to public lands and ensures maximum use of the resource. A significant component of the activities within the Division entails keeping a record of all matters related to public lands and to maintain an accurate and up to date register of public land leases. The entire portfolio of functions is reflected in the summary below.

## **6.5 Summary of Major Functions**

- The Land Administration Division is responsible for the implementation and achievement of some of the objectives of both National and Commission wide land policies.
- The Division identifies new lands for potential applicants and processes land applications for land through strict procedures and guidelines while delivering an effective and efficient service.
- The Division is responsible for the monitoring and enforcement of both the lease conditions as well as the laws related to public lands and ensures maximum use of the resource.
- The Division also keeps a record of all matters related to public lands and maintains an accurate and up to date register of public lands including the preparation of up to date stock plans showing land holdings.
- The Division also collects revenue for the use of public lands and identifies defaulters for further action.
- The Division also identifies issues, intervenes and attempts to settle land disputes out of court while in some cases it provides evidence to the courts to facilitate decisions.
- Provides information on land tenure status to various levels of the Administrative authorities as well as the public.
- Implement Land Tenure Regularization projects in unregulated areas to provide Security of Tenure.
- Facilitate the issuance of freehold titles in areas identified by government for conversion from leasehold to freehold in keeping with Security of Tenure policies.

## **6.7 Analysis of Statistics**

An analysis of the Statistics presented would indicate that the Division made significant progress in its core activities that of receiving and processing applications for land and completing that process to the point of lease preparation or issuing approval letters.

The Division exceeded its targets in the following activities:

- Inspections (Applications)
- Inspections (Monitoring)
- Application Submissions
- Applications Sent for Approvals
- Leases Issued

Region 10 has recorded its fourth highest amount of applications over a ten (10) year period and the highest in eight (8) years as shown in Fig 7.

Generally, application trends over the past three (3) years have been almost consistent except where new lands were opened for leases. The trend of applications received is illustrated in Fig 2.

The demand in Region 4 far exceeded the amount of applications filed due to the limited number of plots available now on the Soesdyke/Linden Highway.

The Region 2 Office has already exhausted the 200 plots made available in 2011-2012 and another 100 would become available in 2014 hence a decline was observed during 2013 (Fig 1). This decline in Region 4 can be seen in Fig 7 where it has recorded the second lowest total in 10 years and has been considerably declining over the years from a 2005 peak of over 800 applications to just fewer than 350 in 2013 which is a mere 43% of that.

Region 9 is another area that has seen a significant demand for land, and large-scale agriculture projects were approved in Santa Fe and Pirara. These innovative large-scale projects were catalysts for emerging enterprises in Rice and other integrated cropping/livestock/aquaculture in the Region.

Port Kaituma, Region 1 has become the most challenging in terms of meeting an increased demand for land (Fig 1 shows increase). The Division has expended significant resources for land administration. New plots were surveyed to regularize squatters but the demand for land is greater than the available public lands. The lands are in limited supply due to the extensive swampy landscape and the demand to be located "on the waterfront". Large land claims by the Four Mile village has also impeded efforts to open additional lands.

The addition of another 150 surveyed plots at Long Creek was not sufficient to reduce the backlog of requests that was in excess of 3000. The Division has embarked on intensive monitoring in Region 4 with a view to rescind leases for lands that were not beneficially occupied. Region 4 Office has scheduled to undertake approximately two thousand (2,000) monitoring inspections in 2014 for new applicants.

Freehold conversion activities could not reach their targets due to delays in the recording and preparation of Titles.

The Division has been aggressive in terms of collecting revenues. Regions 2, 3 and 6 collected the highest recorded revenue during the year. Over 2300 letters were sent out; many were delivered by hand after working hours in the backland areas such as Parika. This resulted in revenues surpassing estimated targets in some Regions.

There is a Dispute Resolution Committee within the Commission, which aggressively resolved a number of disputes, including those that were engaging the attention of the Courts for a protracted period.

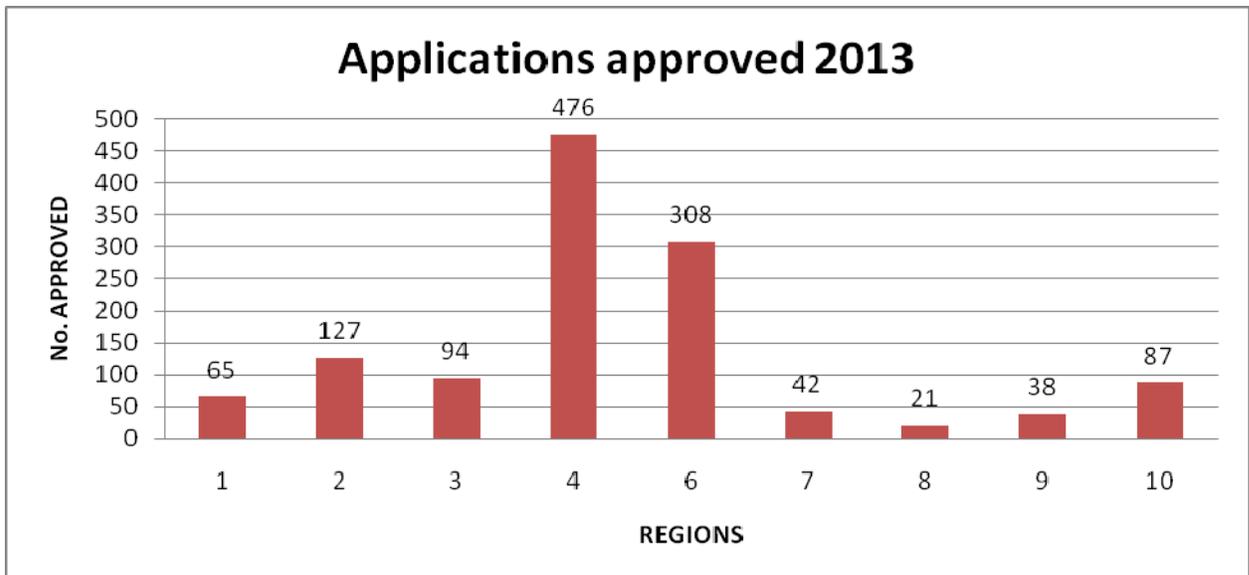


FIG three Applications approved in 2013, by Regions



FIG 4 Leases Issued in 2012 compared with 2013 for the various Regions

## 6.8 Client Support

The Division collaborated with the Environmental Protection Agency and conducted a series of outreach meetings. Meetings were held in multiple locations in Regions 2, 3, 4, 6, 9 and 10 to meet with clients to resolve disputes and provide guidance, which resulted in effective resolution of pending matters impeding lease processing, surveying and other related issues. Fig 8 highlights some of the sessions.



Fig 8 Meeting at Lanaballi, Essequibo River



Fig 9 Region 9, St Ignatius



Region 10-Linden meeting



Region 6- Black Bush

## 6.9 Capital Works

The Commission continued its Capital Programme to open up new lands, complete geo-referencing of land parcels and to regularize occupancy of Public Lands.

In 2013, cadastral surveys were conducted to open ninety-one (91) new plots of ten (10) acres each in Region 2 at Onderneeming.

New Plans were digitized and geo-referenced to enhance the lease portfolio for Regions 3, 10 and 7 leased lands. Some lease holdings were surveyed without a Global Positioning System (GPS), and therefore, field visits were conducted to collect GPS points for the survey and plan. This is part of the work programme of the Commission to re-compile leased lands in a GIS, which would be compatible with other data from other agencies.

The Commission undertook GPS surveys in seven (7) Corentyne villages to open new lands for lease applications. The residents of Whim, Alness, Ulverston, Salton, Manchester, Lancaster and Hogstye filed Land Tenure Regularisation (LTR) claims but due to the non-completion of the necessary surveys, the Commission was unable to complete the exercise. Approximately 200-250 persons would benefit if the surveys were completed specifically at Whim.

The area along the old railway in central Port Kaituma was also surveyed for regularization. This, along with new lots along the "Catwalk" numbered approximately 160 lots of residential/commercial sizes that would be made available in 2014. In addition, the Commission has planned to survey road reserves and create alternative access routes in some congested areas. The challenge continued with squatters who disregarded reserves and undermined the Commission's efforts.

### **9.10 Constraints**

The Division has been working for a number of years without the full quota of fully qualified staff in the surveying field specifically in Regions 1, 2, 9 and 10. The recent addition of another graduate surveyor into the Division would considerably contribute to a higher standard of work.

A National Land Policy is fundamental to guide the allocation of lands and the land administration authority, which would enable the Commission to make decisions in cases of land availability.

The process to conduct proper assessment of requests for land without a functional Land Selection Policy can be very challenging, especially in Region 4. Applications were processed on a first come, first served approach. If clients did not respond to GL&SC's Acknowledgement letter, they were deemed not interested, and thus, their applications were not processed.

The demand for small plots in Region 4 exceeded the number of available plots, and efforts have been made to complete surveys and design schemes with access roads. The Commission was unable to execute such capital works due to financial constraints.

There is also a very significant demand for land in Region 3, especially from residents of the Tuschen/ Zeelugt area. The new housing schemes are inhabited by farmers from Bonasika, Lanaballi, islands in the Essequibo River and other riverain areas, who prefer to acquire agricultural lands within the Region 3 Coast and East Bank Essequibo. However, public lands are limited in these areas.

Squatting has been a major challenge, especially in Port Kaituma, the Soesdyke/Linden Highway and within the environment of the Cheddi Jagan International Airport. Some of the squatters who have migrated from the hinterland were in illegal occupation of lands along the Soesdyke/Linden highway. This has created land allocation problems at the Commission since they occupy land, which were processed for leases.

## **9.11 Conclusion**

The Division was very successful in the achievement of its work programme and Capital Works. The new staff adapted quickly to the work and acquired the experience to undertake routine land administration activities. In addition, staff pursuing higher education has contributed to an improved quality of work. Stringent supervision by the Senior Staff, as well as the morale and work ethics of the staff resulted in high productivity and improved quality of work.

## **7.0 CORPORATE AFFAIRS DIVISION**

The Corporate Affairs Division continued to work with the other line Divisions and with the Office of the Commissioner towards maintaining the organization's sustainability. The Division is fully responsible for the management of the Commission's Financial and Human Resources as well as the General Administration for the Maintenance and Protection of its Assets. During the period, this Division made the following achievements.

### **7.1 Finance Section**

This report documents the major activities for the year ended December 31, 2013 and presents the financial status of the Commission. The report is presented into three sections as follows:

#### **7.2 The Objectives of the Finance Section**

- To establish and implement an effective revenue collection system
- To establish, implement and maintain sound Financial Accounting System in keeping with Generally Accepted Accounting Practices.
- To establish Systems and Procedures to ensure that the Commission's resources are effectively utilized in accordance with established Financial Regulations.
- To collect and account for all rents payable in relation to the sale or lease of Public Lands, and such rates, duties, fees, fines and charges as may be prescribed by law.

#### **7.3 Constraints**

- Land rent is the Commission's main source of revenue and remains a source of concern as the rental rates remained the same since 2001. However, the revenue base needs to be increased
- Non-payment by lessees has hindered the Commission's ability to be financially sustainable.

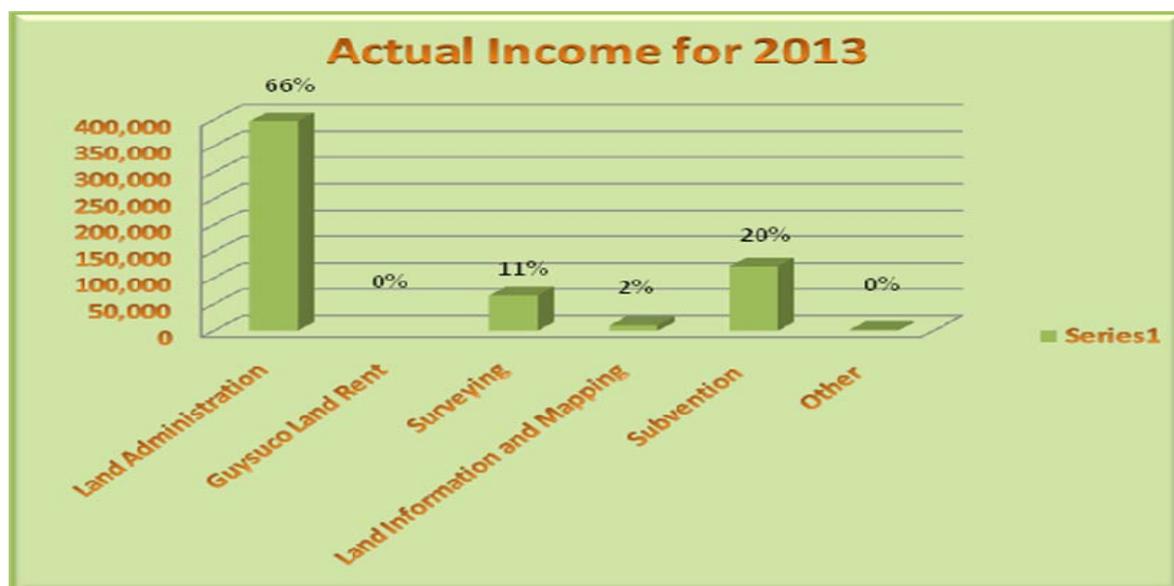
## 7.4 Income Review

The Commission continued its revenue collection in 2013, towards the drive for self-sustainability. Revenues are generated from three main activities of the Commission, namely, Land Administration (including processing and conveyance of land), Surveying, and Land Information and Mapping.

The Recurrent Revenue Budget for 2013 was \$334,675M. The budget was revised to \$377,559M, based on the trend of collection during the year. The Commission received the total sum of \$122,072M Current Subvention from Central Government for the reporting year. Actual Income amounted to \$597,945M including the Current Subvention allocation.

The Table below shows the composition of the Recurrent Revenue generation:

G\$'000	Income Source	Budget 2013	Revised Estimates for 2013	Actual Income for 2013
1.	Land Administration	286,791	316,826	397,089
2.	Surveying	39,875	48,624	66,285
3.	Land Information and Mapping	8,009	10,465	10,381
4.	Subvention			122,072
	Other		1,644	2,118
	<b>Total</b>	<b>334,675</b>	<b>377,559</b>	<b>597,945</b>



## 7.5 Operating Expenditure

The Table below shows the details of the expenditure for the year. The total operating expenditure budget for 2013 was \$442,412 M of which \$279,577M was related to employment cost and \$162,835M was related to other recurrent expenditure.

The actual Expenditure for the year was \$470,248M of which \$313,826M was related to employment cost and \$156,422M was related to other recurrent expenditure.

The Table depicts details of the expenditure in 2013

<b>G \$'000</b>	<b>Budget 2013</b>	<b>Actual 2013</b>
<b>Total Commission</b>	<b>442,412</b>	<b>470,248</b>
<i>Employment Cost</i>	<i>279,577</i>	<i>313,826</i>
<i>Other Charges</i>	<i>162,835</i>	<i>156,422</i>

## 7.6 Capital Programmes

<b>Project Activity</b>	<b>G\$000</b>
<b>Office Equipment</b>	<b>7,580</b>
<b>Office Furniture</b>	<b>2,673</b>
<b>Survey Equipment</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Boat</b>	<b>3,775</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14,065</b>

During 2013, capital expenditure financed by the Commission was restricted to items and activities essential to the operations of the Commission. Capital expenditure totaled \$14,065M as follows:

The sum of \$20M was allocated to the Commission by Central Government to assist with Land Development in various areas of the country and the procurement of a Vehicle as follows:

<b>Project Activity</b>	<b>Location</b>
Cadastral Survey	Region # 1 Port Kaituma
Cadastral Survey	Region # 2 Onderneeming
Geo-referencing of Stock Plans	Region #s 3, 7 & 10
Cadastral Survey	Region #6 Bloomfield
Procurement of Vehicle	Region #9 Lethem

### **7.7 Summary**

Generally, the Commission improved the quality of service to its clients. In spite of the constraints, the Commission experienced an increase of income over expenditure by \$127,697M. The Finance Section practices prudent Financial Management. However, the inability to collect rent continued to be a major constraint regarding revenue generation.

### **7.8 Administration Section**

The Administration Section continued to lend support to the various Divisions of the Commission. The Section maintained the building and its environment. The Section also ensured that the Commission's fleet of vehicles was properly managed, maintained and the necessary documents were updated. Four vehicles were added to the fleet, one (1) for the Amaila's Falls Project, one (1) through capital funds and two (2) cars were received from Guyana Revenue Authority (GRA) as gifts. The two cars needed extensive servicing.

During the year, the generator had malfunctioned (due to its age and capacity), and a decision was made to repair various components at the cost of \$4M. An automatic transfer switch and emergency shutdown system were also procured and installed on the generator to make it operational with minor repairs to be completed.

Repairs were completed on the Region 2 Office Building and living quarters on the upper flat of the building. This was to facilitate the transfer of a staff from Head Office to take up the position of Senior Land Administration Officer, following the retirement of the Senior Land Administration Officer (SLAO).

Repairs commenced on the Region 7 Office Building and fence. However, work on the building was discontinued since additional work was encountered which required a supplemental estimate submission. There has been a delay in receiving an approval from the National Procurement and Tender Board Administration.

The Administration Section continued to spearhead the procurement of stationeries/furnishings, equipment, refreshment, and items for field exercises for surveyors.

In addition to the above, the Administrative Section provided Secretarial assistance for the Legal Officer/Corporate Secretary who resigned in June 2013. These duties included

Management Meeting minutes, Board Meeting minutes and Dispute Resolution Committee minutes.

The Regional Offices were inspected for capital works. Furthermore, the new Strategic Plan was discussed with the Regional staff, in addition to the Standard Operating Procedure of Finance, and various issues in Human Resources, Finance and Administrative affecting the Staff. As a result, staff was satisfied with the resolution of various issues.

The Section was also responsible for the necessary arrangements for the Commission's participation at Mashramani activities, World Environment Day/Green Walk, Forestry Day, Mining Week Walk, Pork Knockers Day, December Staff social, Carol Singing and Old Year's Day under the Benab. In addition, the Section was responsible for the Commission's participation in Berbice Exposition, GuyExpo, GGMC expo, and TIVET Career day fair.

### **7.9 Human Resources**

The Human Resources Section is responsible for managing the Commission's Human Resources in such a way that it contributes to the creation and realization of the Commission's Mission, Vision, Strategies and Goals.

#### **Strategic objectives of the Human Resources Section:-**

- To provide efficient and effective services that promote the development and welfare of its employees.
- To recruit and retain a highly skilled and competent team that is motivated to produce quality service.
- To establish and implement a comprehensive training plan for staff development.
- To establish and maintain a comprehensive Human Resources Policy to satisfy the needs of the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission

During the year, the following activities were undertaken by the Human Resource's Section:

#### **Training**

During the reporting year the following training Programmes were attended by staff:

- One (1) person – Project Management
- Two (2) persons-Government Accounting Procedures
- Eighteen (18) persons- Global Positioning System (GPS) at (GL&SC)
- One (1) person – Environment and Natural Resource Economics
- One (1) person – Gender Awareness
- Three (3) persons – Business Management and Administration at IPED
- Thirty- five (35) persons- Lease Management Systems (GL&SC)
- Twenty (20) persons – Geographic Information System (GL&SC)
- Eighty-one persons – High Quality Customer Service (GL&SC)

## **Resignation**

During the year, nine (9) persons resigned from the Commission.

## **Employment**

During the year, the following positions were filled:

1. Five (5) Land Administration Officers- Land Admin. Division
2. One (1) Finance Officer
3. Two (2) Administrative Assistants
4. Eight (8) Survey Technicians
5. Two (2) Filing Clerks
6. One (1) Boat Captain
7. Two (2) Drivers
8. One (1) Database Analyst I
9. One (1) word Processor
10. Five(5) Survey Information Assistants
11. One (1) IT Technician III
12. One (1) IT Technician II
13. One (1) Surveyor
14. One (1) Business Unit Coordinator

## **Appointments**

During the reporting year, the following appointments were made:

- Survey Technician II
- Senior Land Admin. Officer- Region No: 4
- Database Technician II
- Finance Officer
- Finance Officer II
- Human Resources Officer III
- Data Base Technician
- Store Keeper

## **Retirement**

During the year, two (2) persons retired from the Commission.

## **Transfers**

During the reporting year the following transfers were done:

- A Senior Surveyor was transferred to the Land Admin. Division as Senior Land Admin. Officer (ag)
- The Word Processor Region 6 was transferred to Head office as a Database Technician.
- A staff was transfer to the Surveys Division as Surveyor