

# Chainsaw Milling Project, Guyana

Project Update

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## What is chainsaw milling?

Chainsaw milling in the context of the project means the conversion of logs into lumber at stump using a chainsaw.

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## The Chainsaw Milling Project in Guyana

...engaging stakeholders at the grassroots to influence change and improve livelihoods in forest-dependent communities

Chainsaw milling is a main source of income for forest dependent communities in Guyana. It provides direct employment for approximately 8000 persons. Although measures have been taken by the Guyana Forestry Commission to regulate this growing sub-sector, there are challenges still to be addressed.

The EU funded Chainsaw Milling Project is working to get transformative change in the forest sector by building the capacity of stakeholders from grassroots level to engage in dialogue to examine the issues surrounding chainsaw milling and sustainable livelihood; propose and implement practical and strategic solutions to the issues; and influence future policies for addressing the negative impacts of chainsaw milling in Guyana, while maintaining its positive socio-economic effects for local and indigenous people.

The project's strategy has been to first understand the genesis, development, drivers and impacts of chainsaw milling in Guyana and make a projection for its future based on the current national development strategies. This was done through research conducted in 2008. The findings of the research were then shared with a wider audience at a meeting of the Guiana Shield/Caribbean countries in 2009 at which chainsaw milling policies adopted by participating countries were examined for best approaches for regulating chainsaw lumbering. The research is also being used to inform community and regional (administrative) and national level multi-stakeholder dialogues which commenced in 2010 where representatives of all stakeholder groups affected by chainsaw milling are meeting for the first time to discuss their issues and propose solutions to these issues in an amicable way.

At the local level, the project, since 2008, has been working with three pilot communities (Ituni, Orealla/Siparuta and Annai District) to build their capacity for ongoing dialogue, sustainable forest management and sustainable livelihoods. Read more on the progress of the Chainsaw Milling Project in Guyana inside this issue.



# Chainsaw milling in Guyana: research findings

Chainsaw milling provides income and livelihoods for a large number of persons within and outside forested areas, and affordable lumber for the local markets. However, there are many concerns surrounding the practice. These concerns include the continued availability of accessible commercial stocks of forests, waste and underutilization of timber resources as a result of poor cutting techniques and practices; poor occupational health and safety practices, and poor level of compliance with approved environmental practices.

In 2008, the project conducted research into the background, drivers, impact and diagnosis of chainsaw milling in Guyana. The research culminated in the preparation of a draft case study and the publication of a synopsis paper on chainsaw milling in Guyana in 2009.

This research revealed that chainsaw milling emerged as a major component of the timber industry in Guyana contributing an estimated 40 percent of total royalties on logs and lumber received by the Guyana Forestry Commission (Clarke 2009).

Some of the main drivers of chainsaw milling in Guyana include the scarcity of viable livelihood alternatives in rural areas and the availability and access to forest and labor resources for chainsaw milling. There is scope for profits due to strong demand for cheap lumber on the domestic market, and chainsaw millers can easily obtain chainsaws through short-term informal financing options and hire purchase. Chainsaw milling is also sustained by an enabling policy environment in which the Guyana Forestry Commission supports the formation of Community Forest Associations (CFAs).

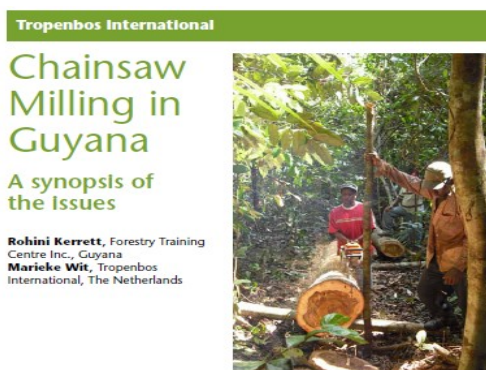
Positive impacts of chainsaw milling include employment for rural communities and financial benefits for a large number of people along the supply chain. On the negative side chainsaw millers are less likely to follow the Code of Practice for timber harvesting, there are numerous violations of the forest laws which range from travelling with expired or no documents to cutting of undersized trees, sourcing logs from outside concessions (poaching), harvesting protected species and false declaration of harvested volume. Other troubling issues associated with chainsaw milling include operators not adhering to forest laws or forest management guidelines, low prices offered for chainsaw milled lumber by lumber dealers, chainsaw operators receiving only partial payment for lumber sold, revenues collected not clearly accounted for by community logging associations and quotas for some SFPs being inadequate to meet the needs of members.

## Conclusions

1. The overall performance of the chainsaw milling subsector appears to be inadequate to address the local livelihood requirements of chainsaw operators and dependent communities.
2. The commercial depletion of accessible forests to date suggests that the current number of saws and operators cannot be sustained, at least not everywhere in the State Forests or on private lands. Alternative economic activities are needed to support long-term livelihood goals.
3. Chainsaw milling will need to increase its efficiency in conversion to achieve higher recovery rates. The industry will also need to improve its compliance with the Code of Practice and other forest management prescriptions.
4. The success of optimizing the benefit flows from chainsaw milling will not be realized without a new national policy and strategy on the utilization of the national forestry resource that addresses the negative aspects of chainsaw milling. Two general lines of actions are recommended:
  - i. Strategic interventions in view of the future of chainsaw lumbering. Multi-stakeholder dialogue is crucial in this process.
  - ii. Improvement of current practices for example improved functioning of CFAs, including matching the number of CFA members to the size and quality of the forest resource.

*Read more in the publication:*

Kerrett, R and Wit, M. 2009. *Chainsaw Milling in Guyana: A synopsis of the issues.*



Chainsaw milling has emerged as a significant component of the timber industry in Guyana. Despite its many benefits, there are major concerns about chainsaw milling: sustainability; under-utilization of timber resources; safety; and environmental concerns.

This synopsis paper presents an overview of the chainsaw milling sub-sector in Guyana. It is based on the results of a series of studies of the legal and institutional framework, socio-economic drivers and impacts of chainsaw milling. Both strategic and practical interventions are recommended to improve current practices — within the context of sustainable forest management — in order to optimize the benefits to communities that depend on chainsaw milling.





# Workshop on Chainsaw Milling in the Guiana Shield/ Caribbean - Georgetown

As part of the project's objective to determine international best practice for policies to address illegal chainsaw lumbering, two regional level workshops (one in West Africa and one in the Guiana Shield/Caribbean) were organized aimed at sharing of experiences and approaches for policies by decision makers within the forest authorities around the world.

The Workshop on Chainsaw Milling in the Guiana Shield/Caribbean was successfully held during July 8-9, 2009 at the Regency Suite/Hotel in Georgetown, Guyana.

This workshop was attended by 81 participants comprising 16 foreign delegates from Government agencies responsible for Forest Management in Belize, Dominica, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, Trinidad & Tobago, and Suriname, a researcher from the Netherlands presenting the Bolivia Case Study, a representative from the Chainsaw Milling Project in Ghana, representatives from Tropenbos International Netherlands and Suriname, representatives from the Caricom Secretariat in Guyana and from the US Forest Service; and 65 local stakeholders representing the natural resources management agencies and the timber industry in Guyana.

The Guyana, Ghana and Bolivia case studies were presented along with country presentations of Belize, Dominica, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, Trinidad & Tobago, and Suriname.

## Synthesis of the workshop

Chainsaw milling underscores the complexity and interdisciplinarity of sustainable development issues. On one hand there is the need to protect the integrity of ecological systems, and on the other, there is the need for livelihood opportunities. A balance must therefore be achieved. Societies are also heterogeneous despite similarities in some aspects. Hence, replication of policies could be a challenge.

## A. Some of the issues with chainsaw milling

### Institutional and Policy Framework

Illegality vs. legality; competing land use; failure to market chainsaw lumber at a sustainable price; poor compliance and absence of quality control systems/rigid enforcement mechanisms; lack of regulation of operations and consequent difficulty in compliance monitoring; failure to fully integrate chainsaw milling into forest policy development; and ambiguity of legislation.

### Capability and Empowerment of Stakeholders

Lack of/limited knowledge and understanding of the regulatory framework; lack of/limited capacity at individual, organizations and systemic or strategic levels; limited



Participants at the Workshop on Chainsaw Milling in the Guiana Shield/Caribbean held in Georgetown, 2009.

community participation in natural resources management; lack of training in efficient harvesting techniques; lack of training in safe practices; conflicts among multiple resource users (land uses) and erosion of social capital (trust, conflicts among stakeholders, particularly in Guyana and Ghana); poor organizational structure (typical of an informal sector activity) and consequently less negotiating power.

## B. Drivers of chainsaw milling

High incidence of poverty; natural disasters and internal war; high market demand/affordable prices/construction of homes; low investment or pre-financing facilities and technology available; livelihood opportunities/decline in more formalized economic activities; absence of enforcement mechanism/limited enforcement capability and low entry requirements; increased accessibility to forests through improved infrastructure.

## C. The effects of chainsaw milling

Cutting of undersized trees; generation of waste or poor recovery; harvesting of protected species/illegal logging and poaching; poor occupational health and safety; revenue loss to the State; poor silviculture practices; invasion of convalescent or protected area.

## D. Recommended Policy Options for Best Practices (Generic)

### Capacity Building

Improving the institutional framework; organizational strengthening for example, establishment of a Compliance Monitoring Unit; awareness building and skills training through public outreach programmes; technology development (to optimize benefits and increase efficiencies-doing more with less); action-oriented research to inform policies.

## Legislative

Limiting the logging season; enabling appropriate forms of chainsaw milling (Code of Practice); banning is NOT an option.

## Stakeholder Involvement

There is need for a paradigm shift (from top-down to bottom-up management); promotion of Community Forest Management Plans; multi-stakeholder dialogue and con-

flict resolution; shared decision making in forest governance, Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM).

## Socio-Economic

Facilitate development of other sustainable livelihood opportunities as part of National Poverty Reduction Strategy or National Development Strategies (macro-economic policy interventions).

# Multi-stakeholder dialogue

The project is using multi-stakeholder dialogue (MSD) as the key mechanism for developing consensus for addressing the problems associated with chainsaw milling. The MSD is guided and supported by a task force of key stakeholder representatives, information from research, and capacity building of stakeholders to participate in the dialogue.

In 2008, the MSD process started with a stakeholder analysis to identify stakeholders and key risks to the MSD. Focus group meetings were then held in 2009 with key stakeholder groups with objectives of (a) sharing information on the project; and (b) learning from them the key issues in relation to chainsaw lumbering, their hopes, fears and expectations of the multi-stakeholder dialogue process, and the way forward in general. The project then held a preparatory meeting in November 2009 aimed at the establishment of the multi-stakeholder dialogue. This meeting built agreement on the priority issues, structure and general plan for the formal MSD meetings that would be most effective for discussing, learning and reaching consensus on the way forward for chainsaw milling in Guyana.

The MSD in Guyana is structured into local, regional and national level interrelated dialogues (see diagram 1).

Four regional level MSDs were held in 2010. The objectives and summaries of these meetings follow.

## Regional MSD Meeting Objectives

1. To continue the stakeholder dialogue, consensus and capacity building process for community livelihood and sustainable forest management.
2. To engage participants in discussing and recommending solutions for chainsaw lumbering issues identified by stakeholders as key to sustainable livelihood.
3. To demonstrate and facilitate hands-on practice with a range of different technologies for more effectively converting logs into lumber.

## MSD 1, Annai, Region 9. February 17-18, 2010

The first regional MSD, like the other three, was a two-day meeting. The first day was devoted to dialogue on the issues and the second day to presentations on sustainable forest management and alternative livelihood options, and the logs-to-lumber equipment demonstrations. Fifty-seven persons participated. Some of the main concerns had to do with the land use plan for the region, forest fire prevention, involvement of youth in all development related issues, and consultation with Amerindian communities when issuing licenses for land use near their communities. The experience of the first MSD led to the decision to hold a series of MSD preparatory meetings in the other regions to (i) prepare stakeholders to begin identifying their issues and become familiar with issues raised by other stakeholder groups; (ii) understand the principles and the work of representation; and (iii) identify stake-

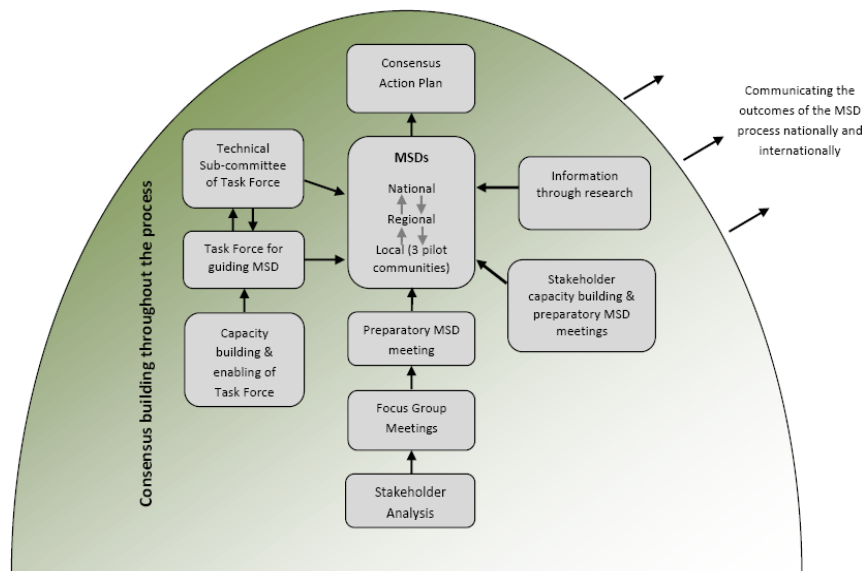


Diagram 1. MSD process in Guyana



holder representatives to participate in the formal MSD meeting.

### **MSD 2, Linden, Region 10, July 7-8, 2010**

As a result of the preparatory meetings, this second regional MSD saw the 33 stakeholder representatives participating in an active and more informed manner. An extended session was held on the second day to address alternative livelihood options because of the serious depression this region faces with the substantial down-sizing of bauxite mining and processing operations once the mainstay that region's economy. Among the many recommendations of participants were the development of chainsaw specific policies, regulations and standards to monitor and manage operations and improve the quality of the chainsaw product and generally bring the legislation more in line with current realities.



**Participants at MSD 2, Linden, Region 10**

### **MSD 3, Corriverton, Region 6, August 17-18, 2010**

The third MSD was held on the east Berbice coast because the remote up-river locations of the two pilot communities in this region would have tested transportation and accommodation capacities. Two Tropenbos representatives, the Overall Coordinator and the project's mid-term evaluator based in Suriname, joined the 42 stakeholder representatives in the dialogue. One of the important governance issues raised by this MSD was the necessity for true representation at decision-making levels by grassroots operators (through their village councils and forest associations) in the Forest Products Association, the Guyana Forestry Commission and the Guyana Manufacturers Association.

### **MSD 4, Anna Regina, Region 2, October 19-20, 2010**

The fourth regional MSD (45 participants) signaled the need for the Guyana Forestry Commission to facilitate the Guyana Gold Mining Commission (GGMC) in ensuring the mining community comply with sustainable forest management guidelines. The GGMC is a key stakeholder agency that has



**Participants at MSD 1, Annai, Region 9**

yet to embrace the MSD process. During the upcoming national level MSD, the Project plans to ensure GGMC's participation. As this region has no Project pilot community, the MSD did not benefit (as the others have) from a series of capacity building initiatives facilitated through the Community Forestry Component. Nonetheless, because of genuinely participatory nature of the meeting and the positive interactions between representatives of the regulatory agencies and grassroots people, the MSD was warmly received and the communities are looking forward to a continuing relationship with the project, the Forestry Training Centre and the Guyana Forestry Commission.



**Practical Demonstration at MSD Day 2**

*This is just the starting point to where we want to go; in 10 years new challenges will arise; we have to educate ourselves and our community to see the value of our resources and how we value ourselves and future generations; it is said that great men stand on the shoulders of great men (C Lyte, CFA)*

Download and read full MSD reports from the project's website at [www.chainsawmilling.org](http://www.chainsawmilling.org).

# Community Support Activities

Since 2008, the Chainsaw Milling Project has been working with three forest dependent communities (Ituni, Orealla/Siparuta and Annai District) building their capacities for better management of forests and sustainable livelihoods. Below is a map showing the location of the pilot communities of the project.

Capacity building activities conducted in the pilot communities during 2008-2010 included:



- Organization of community groups
  - Orealla/Siparuta Forestry Group
  - Ituni Women in Action Group
- Sponsorship of 5 community residents to attend the Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC) Timber Grading Course.
- Two-week basic Forest Management Training in collaboration with Forestry Training Centre Inc (FTCI).
- One-day Community Forest Management Workshops
- One-day Participatory Management Workshops
- One-day Marketing and Sales Workshops
- One-day Community Livelihood Development Workshops and meetings at the community level to discuss livelihood options
- One-day training workshop in Forest Laws and Code of Practice in collaboration with GFC.
- Two-week Reduced Impact Logging training for 9 students from Bina Hill Institute
- Skills exchange for the production of craft from non-timber forest resources and the facilitation of participants of this skills exchange to attend GuyExpo 2009 to expose them to products produced and marketed locally.
- Preparation of manuals on bookkeeping and project planning and implementation and provision of trainings in both areas.
- Facilitation/linking communities with financial institutions (such as Institute for Private Enterprise Development) and projects (such as Women of Worth for single mothers) to assist in financing of alternative livelihood projects.
- Household livelihood surveys to assess the dependence on chainsaw lumbering in the pilot communities.

The EU-funded project “Developing alternatives for illegal chainsaw milling in Ghana and Guyana through multi-stakeholder dialogue” is carried out by Tropenbos International in collaboration with Forestry Training Centre Inc and Iwokrama International Centre for Rainforest Conservation and Development (Iwokrama) in Guyana, with support from the Guyana Forestry Commission. The project aims to find sustainable solutions for problems associated with the production of lumber for the local timber markets in Ghana and Guyana.

The content of this publication is the sole responsibility of the Chainsaw Milling Project in Guyana and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.

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