

# Enabling Local Sustainable Development through Community-based Enterprises

## Introduction

Globalization and growing interconnectivity introduces new opportunities and threats to intact landscapes. Improved accessibility can improve trade by reducing the cost to move people and goods but can lead to major negative social and environmental impacts (CI-Guyana and CI, 2014). Reduced trade costs within can put biological and cultural assets at risk by improving the prospects for potentially unsustainable conversion and extraction for economic gains within important landscapes. Local enterprises that derive livelihood, economic and other benefits while maintaining natural and cultural wealth can help better secure sustainable development in these contexts. These enterprises fit well within the socioecological and policy context of the landscape and therefore fostering their growth is essential to enhance sustainable development in biologically and culturally important landscapes. This is especially important in the context of national policies for green development (Jordan, 2015).

## Rupununi Low Carbon Livelihood Project

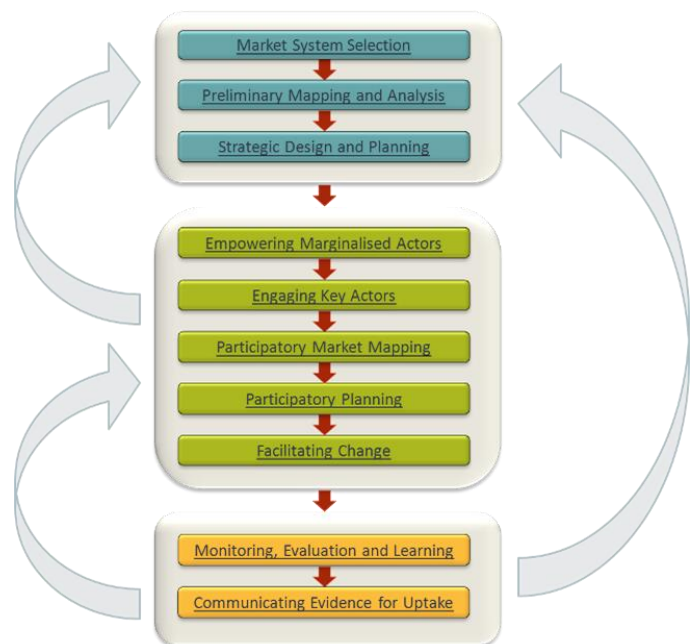
CI-Guyana is testing ways to strengthen and create sustainable community-based enterprises (CBEs) in the Rupununi, one of the most biologically and culturally important regions of South America. This initiative focuses on nature-based tourism, agriculture and related enterprises as stakeholders identified them as having the best prospects for addressing the needs of the Rupununi whilst remaining within the ecological and social limits of the region (CI-Guyana, 2013, 2015). The project aims to enable CBEs to (1) enhance and ensure sustainability of livelihoods; (2) grow village, regional, and national economies; and (3) maintain the capacity of the Rupununi to provide environmental services such as climate regulation and biodiversity habitat for future generations (CI-Guyana, 2013).

## Results/Outputs

Specific strategic interventions to enhance livelihoods by improving profitability and

competitiveness of CBEs were identified using the Participatory Market Systems Development (PMSD) approach (Figure 1) (Practical Action, 2014). The PMSD approach aims to develop sustainable enterprises at scale in an inclusive manner based on participation, systems thinking and facilitation, and it has been used in many parts of the World (Practical Action, 2016a). Project interventions have primarily focused on the provision of technical support and capacity for sustainable business planning and development, enhancing networking amongst enterprises as well as between CBEs and potential markets, and improving access to affordable financing (CI-Guyana, 2015). The support of a local financial institution – the Guyana Bank for Trade and Industry (GBTI) – and the Government of Guyana has provided enterprises in the region with access to business financing for sustainable ventures on preferential terms (CI-Guyana, 2014).

Figure 1: The PMSD approach (Practical Action, 2016b).



## Challenges and Lessons

Indigenous and local communities in the Rupununi have shown strong interest in developing sustainable enterprises and sustainable development of the region. The PMSD approach provided an effective means of identifying hurdles to the success of sustainable CBEs across the entire system, including policy and regulatory constraints. The integration of civil society, private sector and government stakeholders for sustained provision of technical support, capacity development and financial services is proving to be critical for the long-term success.

## Conclusion

The approaches employed thus far to enhance the prospects of sustainable enterprises in the Rupununi have shown great promise. Further exploration and expansion of their application can help effectively downscale achievement of national low-carbon green sustainable development to local contexts.

## References

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