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GOVERNANCE ENHANCEMENT PROJECT (GEP)

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funded project, the Governance Enhancement Project (GEP) is implemented by Tetra Tech ARD, a US-based development firm. The purpose of the project is to enhance democratic processes and governance institutions by promoting citizen inclusion and greater accountability at all levels of governance; facilitating transparent and fair political and electoral processes and encouraging ethnic harmony among citizens.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

To further consolidate democratic governance in Guyana through:

- **Rule of Law and Human Rights:** increasing access to justice through increased use of the court connected mediation process and the training of justice sector personnel;
- **Good Governance:** improve local governance systems through capacity building and citizen's participation in local government;
- **Consensus Building and Political Processes:** foster interaction among major stakeholders including political parties on issues of national importance and acceptable electoral processes; and
- **Civil Society:** increasing the involvement of civil society in decision making processes.

APPROACH

GEPS's technical approach is based on partnering with organizations and individuals that are trusted and respected to serve as bridge builders, in a multi-ethnic society. One of the core components of GEP is increasing civil society's role in promoting a democratic political culture and access to representative institutions, and better enabling these institutions to incorporate citizen participation.

Implementation of the GEP activities to enhance governance in Guyana is based on strong and effective partnerships with institutions of the Government of Guyana (GoG), Civil Society Organizations (CSO), the private sector and the international donor community. The GEP is premised on the recognition that government and civil society are intertwined and requires multi-sector engagement. This means that sustainable outcomes are achieved by bringing all stakeholders together on targeted issues of mutual interest. In this process, GEP utilizes the Advance Participatory Method (APM), which is a set of facilitation tools used with a group of people in workshops to generate concrete results and a sense of group ownership over those results, to strengthen public participation in development activities.

GEP PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Working with various sectors of the judicial system, GEP has an ongoing program to provide training in mediation, alternative dispute resolution processes and domestic violence protocols. These activities are designed for employees within the justice sector, social workers, leaders in faith based organizations, leaders in the Amerindian community and other interested individuals.
- GEP has introduced the Civil Society Enhancement Initiative (CSEI), which is designed to provide support to selected CSOs, including the private sector, to more effectively engage in public policy decision-making.
- Partnering with election management bodies, CSOs and the private sector to promote international standards of election administration and effective citizen participation in the political and electoral processes during the national and regional election cycle.
- GEP small grants program provides financial assistance to CSOs to undertake specific projects aimed at building effective coalitions within civil society and affect change in priority issues.

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