Baseline Assessment Report

"Policy recommendations and guidelines for set-up of an Electronic Visa and Work Visa system"

TA/008/2015

Table of Contents

List of acronyms

ACP- Group of African, Caribbean and Pacific States

ACS-AEC- Association of Caribbean States

CARICOM- Caribbean Community

CARICOM IMPACS- CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security

CARIPASS- CARICOM Travel Pass

CSME/CARICOM – CARICOM Single Market and Economy

CSO- Civil Society Organisation

CVQ- Caribbean Vocational Qualification

EU- European Union

GRO- General Register Office

ICT- Information and Communications Technology

IDS- Institute of Development Studies, University of Guyana

ILO- International Labour Organization

IOM- International Organization for Migration

LMIS- Labour Market Information System

NGO- Non-Governmental Organisation

NSA- Non-State Actor

REC- Regional Economic Community

RCP- Regional Consultative Process on Migration

SALISES- Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies, University of the West Indies

UG- University of Guyana

UWI- University of the West Indies

Executive summary

This report briefly outlines the observations gleaned from desktop research and a short field visit to the Cooperative Republic of Guyana with regard to the state of affairs regarding procedures for visa processing and issuance by Guyana, existing institutional arrangements and coordination among relevant in-country institutions.

The report notes a paucity of data available on the efficiency of visa application processing, and provides a number of indicators that provide a measure of the same and also delimits a number of baseline indicators that can be used in the assessment of the Technical Assistance (TA) intervention linked to this Baseline Assessment (BA).

The report also suggests that given the political and social sensitivity of labour migration, the proposed TA intervention is refined so as to:

a) more clearly provide for participation and consultation with stakeholders in the private sector, in alignment with the "ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration", which notes that governments, in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations should engage in international cooperation to promote managed migration for employment purposes, in particular in terms of the development of information exchange and labour migration policy (2006:7); and

b) incorporate experience sharing with relevant regional institutions such as CARICOM and ACS-AEC, that treat with labour and professional mobility as well as current and emerging Regional Consultative Processes on Migration (RCPs) in the Caribbean Basin sub-region.

1. Introduction and background

➢ *Overview of planned technical assistance intervention*

Guyana has expressed interest in developing an electronic visa system for all visa categories and an integrated employment visa and work permit system in order to: i) facilitate

communication and information-sharing among stakeholders as well as improving the security of the current visa processing system to meet local and global demands for advanced security for the travelling public; ii) improve standards on protection of travelers' data; and iii) curb irregular migration.

The planned TA intervention responds to the interest expressed by providing policy recommendations and guidelines for the establishment of an electronic visa (E-Visa) system and for the integration of processing systems of employment visas and work permits into a single work visa. The current work plan of the TA intervention envisages a review of current procedures and systems, the development of a proposed plan of action for the establishment of the electronic visa and integrated work visa systems, including recommendations for guidelines for system upgrades and database building and management relative to the production of electronic visas.

It is notable that this intervention takes place in the context of efforts by the Government of Guyana to upgrade and computerise records of its General Register Office, involving the conversion of some two million birth, death and marriage registration records for the period 1869 to 2015 into a component of the envisaged Civil Events Registration System (CERS) over the next three years (2015-2018).

➢ *Rationale for the baseline assessment*

The specific objectives of the present BA are to:

1. Provide an overview of the state of affairs on the specific subject of the request of the Guyanese government prior to the actual implementation of the TA intervention, to be used as a reference against which to compare the results achieved through the TA intervention and with the objective of evaluating its impact and contribution to the improvement of the initial situation, including a specific review of visa policy and notes on the sustainability of the technical assistance intervention.

2. Offer inputs and guidance useful to fine-tune TA intervention and further define the work plan for the TA intervention.

3. Identifying the major <u>stakeholders and Non State Actors</u> (NSAs)[1] working in the thematic area of the request in aid of the identification and mapping of potential NSAs in the Co-operative Republic of Guyana that might be asked to submit target project proposals through a dedicated facility of the Action.

2. Baseline assessment methodology

A **literature review** covering migration policy and legislation in Guyana and the wider Caribbean regarding mobility, visa processing, border management and labour migration, as well as review of documentation from other RECs relative to the introduction and processing of e-Visas, was conducted prior to the five-day field mission (September 20-25, 2015) to the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, with the aim of developing a list of potential respondents and provide a preliminary indication of baseline indicators and specific data relative to the labour migration into the country.

While some data was available in terms of the number of visas issued over the past decade, there were limitations encountered in terms of statistics relative to:

a) the ratio of applications versus visas issued;
b) visa processing times;
c) document forgery interception; and
d) other indicators that might provide a baseline in terms of the security, efficiency and transparency of the current system.

Additional literature, including Government statements and specimens of existing visa documents and application forms were accessed through the IOM. A full list of sources of information accessed is provided in <u>Annex 1</u>.

Primary research methods were limited to **in-depth semi-structured interviews** with key informants as indicated in <u>Annex 2</u>, in particular: personnel of various ministries within the Government of Guyana; IOM staff; representatives of private sector; labour union umbrella institutions identified during the mission as involved in inter-sectoral dialogue on the issue of labour migration and economic development in Guyana.

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[1] See https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/civil-society_en

3. Assessment results

3.1 State of affairs

➤ **Status of the relevant legislation and/or regulatory framework**

The Cooperative Republic of Guyana is signatory to some 44 ILO Conventions, including Convention no. 189 addressing treatment and mobility of domestic workers, ratified in 2013. Guyana is also a signatory to the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas (2001) which includes provisions on labour migration and mobility and is a member of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy. These regional and international commitments are applied in consideration of the local regulatory framework governing the entry, exit and engagement in work by foreign nationals, which includes: the Aliens (Immigration and Registration) Act – Chap 14:03, which establishes rules relative to the roles of immigration officers and ministers with regard to the administration of the act, a clear definition of irregular migration into Guyana as well as procedures related to the registration of foreign nationals present within the borders of Guyana; the Immigration Act- Chap 14:02 which further designates responsibilities relative to immigration matters, establishes documents and procedures relative to lawful entry into Guyana, and outlines offenses relative to mistreatment of immigration officers and irregular migration; and the Guyana Citizenship Act – Chap 14:01(1967, last amended in 1974), which provides criteria for the acquisition and loss of Guyanese citizenship.

The Immigration Act of Guyana details the conditions and procedures of entry into Guyana. The Aliens (Immigration and Registration) Act "regulates the entry of aliens (or foreign nationals) into Guyana" and provides provision of their registration, whilst Article 232 of the Constitution of Guyana defines who is an 'alien' or foreign national. The Guyana Investment Act (2004) also stipulates that the Government shall facilitate foreign investors and foreign personnel of investors in obtaining work permits in compliance with the Immigration Act. Except for the latter, the legislation relative to immigration and citizenship does not recognize exceptions relative to the provisions of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas or any other agreements undertaken by Guyana relative to facilitated mobility, despite the inclusion of exceptions to the Aliens Act relative to the movement of Commonwealth civil servants and consular officials of foreign powers, whose entry is in practice handled by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in consultation with the Department of Citizenship and Immigration.

These legislations and legal provisions identify the Commissioner of Police as the Chief Immigration Officer for immigration matters, whilst the Ministry of Home Affairs (recently renamed the Ministry of Public Security) is the subject ministry on policy that sets the criteria for application of visas, guidelines for processing of visas and visa fees. This mandate now falls under the purview of the recently established Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Ministry of the Presidency, which has been allocated some 262,163,000 GYD in 2015 according to the Ministry of Finance.

- **Mapping of the policy / legislative process**

From discussions held during the field visit, as well as the desk review on policy and legislative processes within the region, it is notable that the development of a functional e-visa system is already envisaged in terms of the provision of recommended stays and mobility within the CSME/CARICOM region through the application of the CARIPASS (CARICOM Travel Pass) system.

This system was modeled on a border security system employed by Cricket World Cup (CWC) 2007 host countries, including Antigua, Barbados, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana. In this instance, system upgrades were made both within host countries and at consulates of participating nations to enhance visa security, based on the issuance and use of machine-readable visas. The CARIPASS system was projected for launch for use by all CARICOM nationals travelling to other member states in 2009, with oversight by the CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (CARICOM IMPACS). The system was to be based on the issuance of an e-ID travel card which would allow passage of CARICOM nationals and legal residents across borders within the region, creating the equivalent of a trusted traveler regime valid at air and sea ports in the CARICOM region.

Most important to the issue of the proposed e-visa system, however, given the clear differentiation between the entry protocols for CSME/CARICOM nationals and non-nationals, is the underlying infrastructure of data collection and sharing that would be a part of the CARIPASS system. Desktop and primary research has indicated that officials from the Caribbean Community have met up to 2013 to discuss the implementation of the system of regional border management with the participation of representatives from Guyana. While interest was expressed in finalizing the implementation of the CARIPASS system in the

course of interviews, especially given the presence of unused card stock and equipment for the CARIPASS system implementation, the system's implementation status and schedule remains unclear.

➢ **Data Relative to Immigration and Visa Issuance in Guyana**

There are currently 58 countries whose nationals are exempt of visa requirements for entry into Guyana. Countries exempt include a large number (29) from the Caribbean and Latin American region, but also include European and North American nationals. It is unclear if the exemptions and requirements for visas for Guyana are aligned with other Caribbean nations, in particular Trinidad and Tobago, which is important by dint of the routes taken by commercial airlines that service Guyana.

Table 1: Numbers of Immigrants Relative to the Total Populations of Selected CARICOM Member States (2000/2001/2002)

Countries	Total Population	Total Immigrants	Immigrants as a percentage of total population	CARICOM nationals as a percentage of Immigrants	Non-C. nation percer Immig
Antigua & Barbuda	76,896	23,602	30.7	69.9	30.1
Belize	240,204	34,274	14.3	1.6	98.4
Guyana	**741,772**	**9,451**	**1.3**	**37.9**	**62.1**
Jamaica	2,607,632	25,233	0.01	22.6	77.4
Montserrat	4,991	847	17.0	74.8	25.2
St. Kitts & Nevis	42,197	6,264	14.9	41.9	58.1
St. Lucia	157,490	5,080	3.2	54.2	45.8

Source: Thomas-Hope and McIntosh (2010: 10-11). Based on data provided by CARICOM Member States

According to the World Bank Migration and Remittances Factbook (2011), as of 2010 the stock of immigrants to Guyana was numbered at 11,600 persons or 1.5% of the total population. Of these, 46.5% were female, and 0% were refugees. The top source country was Suriname followed by Brazil. Within CARICOM, the top source countries in order of immigration numbers were Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, St. Lucia and Barbados, while the top non-CARICOM source countries were Brazil, Venezuela, the United States of America, China, United Kingdom and Canada. Since then, data provided by the Ministry of the Presidency indicates that in 2012, work permits totaling 1,050 were granted of which 991 were for Brazilians and 24 for Chinese. In 2013, Guyanese authorities granted work

permits to 462 Brazilians, while in 2014, some 744 work permits were issued, of which 694 were issued to Brazilians. Similarly, so far in 2015, 236 of the 304 work permits granted were issued to Brazilian nationals.

➢ **Visa Application and Processing Procedures in Guyana**

The Ministry of Home Affairs (as of May 11, 2011) introduced new procedures for the issuance of visas for visitors, workers, students and businesspersons, which included provisions for the vetting and admission of the families of migrant workers. Among the main features of these changes were: 1) adjustments in the duration and fees associated with various classes of visas (visitor, employment, student and business), 2) the granting of five (5) year multiple entry visas to persons with Business Visas upon arrival at the Guyanese border or by the Ministry of Home Affairs (now Ministry of Public Security), and 3) additional restrictions on foreign nationals who enter Guyana with Tourist Visas in terms of remaining in Guyana on an extension of stay for more than three (3) months or taking up employment. The Government of Guyana works with a visa document that is issued in the form of a rubber stamp with limited security features.

Foreign nationals that require visas for entry into Guyana can obtain a visa prior to departure at a Guyana Embassy, High Commission or Consulate. Alternatively, tourist, student and business visas can be obtained at ports of arrival. Officials have also noted that in some cases, the possession of American, Canadian, British or European Union 'Schengen' visas may be used in Guyana as *bona fides* for foreign nationals.

Under the current system, visas are issued with associated numbers, but a database associating names or biometric data for verification against the visa numbers does not exist, creating ample room for the duplication or forgery. The porousness of the borders among many countries in South America combined with the centralisation of visa-issuance procedures in the far-North of the country, may provide incentives for non-compliance with visa requirements by migrants from neighbouring countries, whose presence in the country has been noted anecdotally to be increasing with economic declines in the region and relatively better conditions in the Guyanese labour market.

The roots of migration towards Guyana are diverse, and measures are required to provide support to the modernization of the processing systems, as well as longer term policy

frameworks that ensure the alignment between the policy and institutional structures in areas such as trade, education, labour, security and anti-corruption initiatives that have an impact on the management of migration.

Guyana's current system and procedures for the processing of employment visa and extension of stay for work involves manual inputting of data, centralised operations in its capital Georgetown and does not allow for remote payments.

Table 2: Criteria, Duration and Fees – Visas Issuance and Renewal – Cooperative Republic of Guyana

VISA TYPE	COST AND CRITERIA	DURATION	EXTENSION PROCEDURE
Visitor (non-CARICOM nationals)	25 USD/5125 GYD	One month	Renewal for periods of one month available for an additional 25 USD/ 5125 GYD up to a maximum stay of three (3) months.
Employment	140 USD/28700 GYD, subject to background checks on employer and individual applicant	Multiple Entry, 3 years	Renewable while in Guyana. Renewal for periods of three (3) years available for an additional 140 USD/28700 GYD
Student	140 USD/28700 GYD, subject to approval via Ministry of Education and background check	Multiple Entry, 3 years	Renewal for periods of three (3) years available for an additional 140 USD/28700 GYD
Business	140 USD/28700 GYD, subject to background checks	Multiple Entry, 5 years	Renewal for periods of three (5) years available for an additional 140 USD/28700 GYD

It is notable that visa fees are payable upon approval of the application. Like all visa classes, the issuance of an employment visa is in the form of a rubber stamp; this is equally in need of an upgrade for improved security and standardisation. The issuance of an employment visa and the provision of an extension of stay/work permit are separate rubber stamps imprinted onto the pages of a traveler's passport that would see the usage of more than one

page in one's passport. Further, there must also be the accommodation of the landing or entry stamp in the passport. The consequence is the utilisation of limited space in a traveler's passport along with the complexities associated with numerous stamps. In terms of the dependents of workers, officials noted a gap in the treatment of family reunification, in particular in terms of adult dependents and minors whose age would not qualify them for a student-visa, and the importance of sharing best practices in the Caribbean in this regard.

The planned technical assistance intervention responds to the interest expressed by providing policy recommendations and guidelines for the establishment of an electronic visa (E-Visa) system and for the integration of processing systems of employment visas and work permits into a single work visa, whose processing would take into consideration changing policy approaches with regards to labour market information systems and needs assessments.

In terms of skills gap analysis, officials indicated that needs assessments are to be introduced, especially given cases of the entry of unskilled labour to fill positions which are perceived to be easily filled by Guyanese workers. Relatedly, the advertisement of all jobs would be part of establishing the shortage of labour within Guyana as a prerequisite for engaging foreign nationals.

Existing data suggests that attention to the emigration and return migration patterns of Guyanese nationals may be important in directing the operation of its visa and labour immigration mechanisms. In their 2010 report on migration-related capacity development in Guyana, Thomas-Hope and McIntosh provided an overview of the occupational structure of work permits accorded to foreign nationals entering Guyana over a short period of April-June 2009. In this period, 37% were Technicians and Associated professionals, 24% service workers, shop and market sales workers, 22% elementary occupations. Interestingly, they note that these categories are in fact the same as those which dominated the emigration of Guyanese nationals in the same period, concluding that labour immigration is in fact providing replacements of skills lost to the local labour force through emigration (Thomas-Hope and McIntosh, 2010: 11).

3.2   Key baseline indicators

➢ *Proposed baseline indicators to monitor and evaluate progress of the Technical Assistance intervention*

Guidelines and Plan of Action to inform Government

Proposed indicators are:

1) No. of private sector and NSA institutions identified within Guyana as potential partners involved in the discussions preceding the formulation of the policy recommendations and guidelines.

2) Formation of one team of reformers, involving national government representatives, academia, labour and private sector[2].

3) No. of meetings of multi-stakeholder teams or other relevant government bodies to consider guidelines and plan of action produced.

4) Identification of priorities for institutional and CSO capacity-building, including training and research needs.

Recommendations for work visa system

Proposed indicators are:

5) Review of the status of eID and CARIPASS implementation process at the regional and local level.

6) Production of draft document of process for issuance of integrated work permit and employment visa, with cost-comparison of at least two options.

These indicators are provided to measure the coverage of issues of centralization of processing of visa applications, and the possibility of distributing such functions to other key points in Guyana given the nature of its industrial activities, in particular mining and the labour migration associated with this activity. They also respond to the importance of capitalizing on the technology and expertise associated with the CARIPASS system to reduce costs and lead-time involved in implementing the e-visa system in Guyana.

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[2] The role of the reform team would be contribute to knowledge management and information sharing, provide input on decision-making regarding implementation and also facilitate the measurement of results and outcomes of the revised system.

3.3 Stakeholders mapping and analysis

➢ **Government Institutions**

Name	Relevance	Notes
Ministry of the Presidency **Department of Citizenship and Immigration**	The Department of Citizenship and Immigration is headed by the Minister of Citizenship and operates under the aegis of the Ministry of the Presidency. Among its other functions, the Department is responsible for the provision of Immigration support services for foreign nationals, including the processing of visas, work permits, extensions of stay and the process of accessing Guyanese citizenship by foreign nationals. *Direct contact was made with this stakeholder as indicated in Annex 3.*	Tel: (592) 227-5034 Web: http://www.motp.gov.gy Shiv Chanderpaul Dr Bourda Georgetown, Guyana
Ministry of the Presidency **E-Governance Unit**	The E-Governance Unit is involved in the development of horizontal infrastructure for the more efficient operation of government ministries and agencies throughout Guyana, and is involved in the normalization and harmonization of technology platforms used in these agencies, including ports of entry. In this regard, this Unit is relevant to the development and implementation of the e-visa, including coordination and data sharing among government ministries.	Tel: (592) 227-5034 Web: http://www.motp.gov.gy Shiv Chanderpaul Dr Bourda Georgetown, Guyana
GO-Invest	The Guyana Office for Investment (GO-Invest) is a semi-autonomous body under the auspices of the Office of the President, responsible for export	Tel: (592) 225-0658 Web: www.goinvest.gov.gy

	promotion and investment facilitation and promotion. As part of its latter function, GO-Invest deals directly with potential investors and firms that may be desirous of bringing workers and professionals into Guyana. Under the current process, applications are made for workers via their prospective employer, and GO-Invest does in some cases assist with the processing of these applications.	E-mail: goinvest@goinvest.gov.gy 190 Camp & Church Streets, Georgetown, Guyana.
Ministry of Education	The Ministry of Education is responsible for the process of recognition of professional and technical qualifications, and may play a significant role in the processing of work visa applications. The Ministry also plays a role through its National Accreditation Council in terms of the accreditation of onshore and offshore educational institutions, which may be a related source of immigration into Guyana and would be related to the processing of visas for students.	General Tel: (592) 223-7900 (National Accreditation Council) Tel: (592) 225-9526 Web: http://www.education.gov.gy 21 Brickdam, Georgetown, Guyana.
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	The Ministry of Foreign Affairs issues visas with the approval of the Ministry of Citizenship, and works in close consultation with the Ministry both in transmitting applications submitted to Guyanese missions as well as processing visas for diplomats and international public servants. *Direct contact was made with this stakeholder as indicated in Annex 3.*	Tel : (592) 226-1606/8/ 225-6467 Fax: (592) 225-9192 E-mail: minfor@guyana.net.gy Web: www.minfor.gov.gy 254 South Road & Shiv Chanderpaul Drive, Bourda,

		Georgetown
Ministry of Health	The Ministry of Health is responsible for ensuring the safety of labour migrants as well as the local population, and would need to be consulted in terms of any health issues associated with cross-border movement.	Tel : (592) 226-5861 – 5 Fax: (592) 225-4505 E-mail: ministerofhealth@gmail.com Web: www.health.gov.gy Brickdam Street, Stabroek, Georgetown
Ministry of Social Security **Department of Labour**	The Department of Labour is responsible for the supervision of the application of the laws regarding labour, including the rights of migrant workers in Guyana. Of particular importance among its departments is the Central Recruitment and Manpower Agency which performs the role of data collection on labour and skill availability and furnishing information to employers who wish to recruit workers and persons who are seeking employment. This agency, in tandem with the Statistical Unit of the	Tel : (592) 226-6115/ 223-7585 Fax: (592) 227-1308 Web: www.mlhsss.gov.gy 1 Water Street, Stabroek, Georgetown, Guyana

	Department of Labour, would be central to the development of any labour market information systems that would complement the visa application and processing system for migrant workers.	
Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce	As a key possible source of information on persons seeking information on travelling to, working in or investing in Guyana, the Ministry of Tourism may play an important role in providing up-to-date and accurate information in a number of formats to prospective migrants on cost of living, accommodation and procedures for visas and other relevant documentation prior to travel.	Tel : (592) 226-2505 Fax: (592) 225-9898 Web: www.mintic.gov.gy 229 South Road, Lacytown, Georgetown, Guyana

Private Sector and Labour Unions

Name	Relevance	Notes
Georgetown Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCI)	The GCCI represents a wide range of business interests, and intervenes on various issues affecting entrepreneurship, export promotion and business best practices. It has also published a guide to investment in Guyana. *Direct contact was made with this stakeholder as indicated in Annex 3.*	Tel: (592) 466-9453 Fax: (869) 466-6957 Website: www.gcci.gy 156 Waterloo Street North Cummingsburg

		Georgetown, Guyana
Private Sector Commission of Guyana (PSC)	The PSC was established in 1992 as a not-for-profit organization, which represents the interests of five private sector associations as well as corporate members which have been admitted since 1997. An umbrella organisation covering a wide range of private sector and employer organisations, the PSC would be a relevant interlocutor in terms of streamlining the application process for incoming labour and recruitment in general.	Tel: (592) 226-3519; 225-5846 E-mail: info@gcci.gy, gccicommerce2009@gmail.com Web: http://www.gcci.gy 156 Waterloo Street North Cummingsburg Georgetown, Guyana
Guyana Trade Union Congress (GTUC)	The GTUC is an umbrella labour institution for 22 affiliated unions with a membership of some 7000. The GTUC has involvement in the national, regional and international discussions on labour rights and decent work, including in the context of the migration of workers and their families. Direct contact was made with this stakeholder as indicated in Annex 3.	Telephone: +592 697-4216 (M)

Research and Social Dialogue Institutions

Name	Relevance	Notes
Critchlow Labour College	The CLC was established in 1967 as the education arm of the trade union movement and provides training and dialogue opportunities around key labour issues in Guyana.	Tel : (592) 226-2481 Woolford Avenue, Non Pareil Georgetown, Guyana
The Institute of Development Studies (IDS)	IDS is a Department within the Faculty of Social Sciences dedicated to multi-disciplinary research on areas of relevance to the economic and social development of Guyana, CARICOM and the wider Caribbean, including economic growth, trade, labour, globalisation and regional cooperation as well as the role of ICTs in the Guyanese economy	Tel : (592) 222-5409 Fax : (592) 222-5551 E-mail: idstransition_uog@ymail.com **Turkeyen Campus**, University of Guyana, Turkeyen Campus P.O. Box 10-1110 Greater Georgetown, Guyana.
Sir Arthur Lewis	Based in Barbados, the SALISES is a specialist research institution that	Tel :(246) 417-4478

| Institute of Social and Economic Studies (SALISES) | focusses on issues related to remittances, population and development; data collection and management. | Fax: (246) 424-7291
Email: salises@cavehill.uwi.edu. |

Regional Organisations

Name	Relevance	Notes
CARICOM IMPACS	Among the primary responsibilities of IMPACS are the execution of regional projects and dissemination of relevant information in matters relating to crime and security to CARICOM Member States. Based in Trinidad and Tobago, the IMPACS is also the implementing agency for the CARIPASS system and would be central to any discussion of the use of lesson learned or technologies from this system.	Tel: (868)-625-4441 Web: http://www.caricomimpacs.org 19-20 Victoria Square, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago

3.4 Feedback regarding the Technical Assistance Fiche

➢ *Relation of the proposed TA intervention to the assessed state of affairs*

The proposed intervention's focuses on strengthening the connection between migration and development planning in Guyana as well as contributing to the improvement of systems that support free and facilitated movement is well placed given the assessed state of affairs.

The policy recommendations and guidelines generated should take into account the need to:

1) develop adequate capacity in terms of underlying data collection, storage and sharing functions;

2) political and legal-institutional arrangements outlined in the description of the legal framework;

3) measures of consultation with regional bodies to ensure that the development or upgrading of technology solutions and physical infrastructure, as well the structure and training of implementation teams and/or relevant personnel ensures some level of uniformity and interoperability among the systems of CARICOM/CSME countries.

➢ *Proposed adjustments to the technical assistance fiche and related justification*

III. METHODOLOGY

BENEFICIARIES

While the main beneficiaries noted in the Technical Assistance Fiche remain central to the intervention, a wider range of institutional stakeholders identified in the baseline assessment, including GO Invest, the Ministry of Social Affairs and its relevant agencies, and the Ministry of Education, should be mentioned as beneficiaries of the action.

ACTIVITIES

• *Review, analyse and report on current procedures and systems for the processing of visas and work permits and identify risks and challenges with recommendations to enhance security standards for visa and work permit processing.*

Given the paucity of information available on the efficiency of the current system, this activity should explicitly include an analysis of data collection methods on visa applications currently in place and a recommendation on how to improve them and include also the production of a data management note covering available information on the following for the period 2011-2015:

- o No. of applicants by class
    - o Number of Work Permits and Visas Issued by Country of Nationality of Applicants
    - o Number of Dependent or Immediate Relative Immigrant Visas Issued (by Area of Birth)
    - o No. of refusals and reasons
- o Total number of visa applications refused (disaggregated by Country of Nationality)
    - o Total number of visa applications refused (by reason for non-issuance)
- o Cases of breach or fraud
    - o No of cases of forged or fraudulent visas detected by enforcement officials (by Country of Nationality)
- o Processing Times and Transparency
    - o Average time of processing of visa application, regardless of refusal or issuance
    - o Average time of processing of visa application, by stage of process
    - o Availability and format of information issued on application status to applicants or sponsors.

V. SUSTAINABILITY

The specific objectives of this assessment expressly include a review of the sustainability of the TA intervention. Given the state of affairs noted in the course of the field visit, the sustainability of the technical assistance intervention will depend on the following factors:

1) Development of a functional framework for cooperation and information-sharing among stakeholders, including non-state actors within Guyana.

2) Involvement and consultation with RECs and regional partners on the integration of the envisioned system into ongoing attempts to streamline free movement within the Caribbean region.

3) As a subset to point 1), the integration of ongoing efforts to upgrade the management of citizenship data via the computerisation of the General Register Office (GRO) and more general efforts to improve governance efficiency and interconnectivity via the E-Governance unit with the specific intervention of the implementation of the e-Visa and integrated work visa system, currently supported by the Inter-American Development Bank through its 2012-2016 Country Strategy with the Cooperative Republic of Guyana.

4) Development of functional LMIS: Labour market information systems play a dual role in ensuring the suitability of current visa regulations to government fiscal and economic development policies, and providing a basis for evidence-based discussion and decision-making regarding the availability of local skills and the need for foreign workers in various sectors or the economy in general.

➢ *Risk assessment*

Management of Electronic Payments: The development of an electronic visa system may involve the creation of facilities for online payment of fees. The viability, security and transparency of such facilities would have to be explicitly envisaged in the guidelines produced, with lines of accountability established through stakeholder consultation in terms of the handling and recording of online transactions. Possible actors in this regard include: Ministry of Public Security; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Ministry of the Presidency; Ministry of Finance.

Language barrier: As indicated in the state of affairs, the vast majority of visas granted by Guyana over the past three years have been to persons whose first language is not English. The need for translation should be expressly taken into account in terms of informing

applicants of their status and rights as migrant workers, especially if employers responsible for the submission of applications to the government of Guyana may have less difficulties with the language barrier. Possible actors in this regard include: Ministry of Tourism; Ministry of Social Security; Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Annexes

Annex 1 – List of literature reviewed

- Bjerre, L. et al. 2015. Conceptualizing and Measuring Immigration Policies: A Comparative Perspective. International Migration Review Vol XLIX: no. 3, pp. 555-600.

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Annex 2 – Questionnaires

The following were used as the basis for semi-structured interviews conducted during the field mission:

1. Please describe the current process of visa processing and issuance in Guyana, including the application process. What is your institution's role in the process?
2. Please provide your assessment of the efficiency of the system? Can you provide any information on the processing times involved in different classes? From your experience, what are current waiting times like in terms of visa applications?
3. (If not already answered) How are payments for visa applications handled currently?
4. Can you estimate the number of visas rejected, accepted or applications received over the course of the past few years?
5. Are there data available on the number of forged visas or travel documents seized over the past few years?
6. How does the immigration process differ between CARICOM nationals and non-CARICOM nationals in Guyana? Are CSME provisions fully enforced?
7. Have there been noticeable changes in the characteristics of migration into Guyana over the past few years? Please elaborate.
8. What are the characteristics of public debate or perception around the influx of migrant workers? Have there been any changes over the past few years?
9. Are there any other institutions that might be considered stakeholders in terms of the visa application process (institutional or NSA)?
10. Are systems available to determine labour availability or skills shortages in Guyana? (Is your institution able to provide such data?)
11. Can you describe the process related to the collection and treatment of data relative to labour migration into Guyana? Is your institution current active in producing data on migration? How is this data shared with other institutions?
12. What sort of assistance (technical or otherwise) might be required to implement the e-visa system- In your institution? Within the wider policy structure?

Annex 3 – List of key informants

Name	Position	Organisation	Contact details	Date of the meeting/ call held	Comments on contacts made
Benedikt Madl	Head, Bilateral Development Cooperation	Delegation of the European Union to Guyana, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago, and the Dutch Overseas Countries and Territories	Email: benedikt.madl@eeas.europa.eu 11 Sendall Place, Stabroek, Georgetown, Guyana Tel.: +(592) 226 4004	Monday September 21, 3:30pm	Discussions re official correspondence/ introductions, priority contacts Discussion of data processing and management
Amb. Esther Griffith	Chief of Protocol	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Email: egriffith@minfor.gov.gy 'Ramphal House', Charlotte Street and Shiv Chanderpaul Drive, Bourda,	Tuesday September 22nd	Review of role of Ministry of Foreign Affairs in visa processing Discussion on institutional

			Georgetown, Guyana, S.A. Tel: (592) 226-9070 Mobile: (592) 623-9407	10.00am	coordination Problem identification and discussion of data regarding entry-exit, no, of applications and rejections, exemptions, payment processing,
Carol Lewis-Primo	Head	Immigration and Support Services, Ministry of Citizenship	Email: homemin@guyana.net.gy 6 Brickdam, Georgetown, Guyana Tel: (592) 226-2444/2445 ext. 229	Tuesday September 22, 1:30pm	Discussion on institutional coordination Problem identification and discussion of data regarding entry-exit, no, of applications and rejections, exemptions, payment processing,
Rui Reis	Chief of Mission	IOM Guyana	roreis@iom.int 592-225-3745	Wednesday 23rd, 9.30am	Discussion of data processing and management Discussion of comparative experiences in other Caribbean countries Discussion of IOM interventions and available technologies in terms of visa processing and border management

Winston Felix	Minister of Citizenship,	Ministry of the Presidency	winston_felix70@yahoo.com	Wednesday 23rd, 10.30 am	Problem identification and discussion of data regarding entry-exit, no, of applications and rejections, exemptions, payment processing, labour market information and family reunification
Dale Alves	Senior Superintendent and Deputy Chief Immigration Officer	Immigration and Passport Office	592 226 4700	Wednesday 23rd, 10.30 am	Problem identification and discussion of data regarding entry-exit, no, of applications and rejections, exemptions, payment processing, labour market information and family reunification
Mr Lance Hinds,	President	Georgetown Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCI)	lance.hinds@brainstreetgroup.com +592 624-4831 (M), +592 225-5353 (W), +592 225-5846 (O)	Wednesday 23rd, 1.30pm	Discussion re private sector/employer experiences with visa processing and application process, statistical data available from private sector, public perception of labour migration, and framework for data collection and treatment within GCCI.

Lincoln Lewis	General Secretary	Guyana Trade Union Congress (GTUC)	lincolnblewis@yahoo.com +592 697-4216 (M) Critchlow Labour College (CLC) Woolford Avenue, Non Pareil Park Georgetown, Guyana	Wednesday 23rd, 2.15pm	Discussion of labour unions' position on labour migration and representation of migrant workers Discussion of cases of mistreatment of foreign workers Any indicators of priority areas recruitment, data generation or data deficits, and communication regarding the policy.
Eraina Yaw	Project Coordinator	IOM Guyana	eyaw@iom.int	Wednesday 23rd 3.30pm	Discussion of UK visa system in terms of payment modalities Border management proposals and visa process
Nathalie Hanley	National Project Coordinator for the Caribbean	IOM Guyana	nhanley@iom.int	Wednesday 23rd 3.30pm	Discussion of centralization of processing in Georgetown Outline of GRO reforms

Annex 4 – Data on key Non-State Actors

GEORGETOWN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

Full name of the organization and acronym (if available)	**Georgetown Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCI)**
Organization address and general contact details	156 Waterloo Street North Cummingsburg Georgetown, Guyana Tel: (592) 466-9453 Fax: (869) 466-6957 Website: www.gcci.gy
Contact person details	President: Lance Hinds lance.hinds@brainstreetgroup.com +592 624-4831 (M), +592 225-5353 (W), +592 225-5846 (O
Background	Established in 1890, GCCI as the voice for member businesses that promotes and protects the interests of members by fostering ethical business practices in business, trade and services and advocating on their behalf through adherence to quality standards, training and education.
Resources	Office/s, staff
Core mandate of the organization	Capacity Building, Research, Communication and Advocacy and Resource Mobilisation, Governance and Promotion and Protection of Trade
Legal status in the country	Non-governmental organization
Ongoing activities	n/a
Past activities relevant to the subject	n/a
Field presence in the country	Georgetown/operational throughout country

GUYANA TRADE UNION CONGRESS (GTUC)

Full name of the organization and acronym (if available)	**Guyana Trade Union Congress (GTUC)**
Organization address and general contact details	Critchlow Labour College Tel : (592) 226-2481 Woolford Avenue, Non Pareil Park Georgetown, Guyana
Contact person details	Lincoln Lewis, General Secretary lincolnblewis@yahoo.com +592 697-4216 (M)
Background	Founded in 1941, the GTUC is an umbrella labour institution for 22 affiliated unions with a membership of some 7000 persons. It is an affiliate of the International Trade Union Confederation.
Resources	Office/s, staff.
Core mandate of the organization	Industrial relations, social dialogue.
Legal status in the country	Non-governmental organization
Ongoing activities	The GTUC has been in severe financial difficulties due to withheld funding from government for a number of years. It is now in the process of planning its programme of interventions, which includes communications and research in several areas of worker issues, including labour migration.
Past activities relevant to the subject	The GTUC has involvement in the national, regional and international discussions on labour rights and decent work, including in the context of the migration of workers and their families.
Field presence in the country	Georgetown/Operational throughout the country