



Guyana Development Gateway

Sharing information and knowledge for the development of Guyana

Final Project Evaluation Report : Planning Phase of the Guyana Development Gateway

Part A: Lessons from the Planning Phase

Part B: Self Evaluation of the Planning Project

Project Start Date : January, 2004

Project End Date : April , 2007

Report submitted : May 2007

A: Lessons from the Planning Phase¹

1. Timeliness and Budget

Was the project finished on time?

The Planning Project exceeded the nine months as planned originally. The scheduled end date was August 2004, and the actual completion date is April 2007. The limited amount of digital relevant content available on development issues delayed the building of the portal which could be used to market the GyDG. DevNet assumed responsibility for building the content on the GyDG to develop the prototype into a live portal at <http://www.guyanagateway.org.gy>.

Did the project meet budget?

Yes, the project stayed within budget due to careful fiscal management based on the Memoranda of Understanding between the Office of the President and DevNet. The Final Expenditure table is in Annex 1 to this report. The Fiscal Management plan was based on deliverables rather than on allocations for recurrent expenditure.

2. Information and knowledge material produced during the project, and knowledge dissemination

<i>Item</i>	<i>Location and details</i>
E-readiness Assessment	The E-readiness Assessment was produced in November 2004 and is available through the link at http://www.guyanagateway.org.gy/files/Gy_E_Readiness.pdf
Developing the Information Society in Guyana : Challenges and Opportunities	This document was developed by members of DevNet and published in March 2006. The document is available at http://www.guyanagateway.org.gy/files/guyana_is_poa.pdf

All other project documents are available from the project website at <http://www.guyanagateway.org.gy/?q=node/11>. There has been an average of 50 reads of the page per week since December 2005. Additional announcements are done of specific items of content through mailing lists such as the Guyanese Yahoo Group (with about 4,000 members).

DevNet also manages a civil society partnership group called the Peacebuilders Network of about 120 persons who represent different organisations involved in the promotion of social cohesion, and through this updates are announced on different content items which are published on the GyDG.

¹ This report follows the format outlined in the Country Gateway Planning Manual used during the infoDev stage of the project management. The Evaluation is adapted from the Mid-Term Evaluation report for the Implementation Projects

3. Project Achievements

Activities	Achievements
Partnership Building	<p>The Planning Project was initiated with letters of no objection from the Ministry of Finance, while the United Nations Development Programme – Guyana Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Red Thread Women's Development Organisation issued letters of support.</p> <p>The Partnership Building activities sought to raise awareness of the GyDG and to generate interest. It was decided that it would be better to do individual consultations with different organisations and individuals rather than host collective workshops and meetings. This resulted in several meetings with potential partners in different sectors. The results of those discussions are summarised in the evaluation report later on this document. Partnership building is a continuous process, and informal partnerships were developed with other organisations for the sharing of content</p> <p>DevNet, through a partnership with the USAID funded Guyana Democracy Consolidation Conflict Resolution project, engaged several NGOs in hosting of websites and in producing and sharing their content to support advocacy, and their own good governance. The GyDG was marketed as an alternative for those NGOs who were not ready to build their own sites and to share content.</p> <p>The Development Gateway Foundation recommended the <i>Digi Market</i> and the <i>AID Management Platform</i> for consideration by the Government of Guyana. The proposals were made for initial feasibility studies, but due to the public sector reform in place, it was felt that these tools would not be used at this time. The Government Information News Agency hosts the announcements of all tenders and vacancies.</p> <p>The Ministry of Finance is responsible for AID co-ordination and has developed its own tools to co-ordinate Aid programmes.</p>
Documentation	<p>The following documents were produced during the Planning Phase</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Terms of Reference for the GyDG Planning Project ● Strategic Concept Document ● E-Readiness Assessment ● E-needs Assessment ● Partnership Report ● Business Plan
Prototype Development	<p>The first prototype was developed in 2004. A pilot was tested using the Digi Platform, but DevNet realised that the skills were not available to maintain that platform and that the extensive functionality exceeded the projected needs of the GyDG.</p> <p>DevNet then implemented the GyDG on the Drupal platform and this proved to be successful in meeting the technical and functional requirements. The Drupal platform was chosen since there were technical skills available voluntarily to support the building of the site. Drupal has emerged as an intuitive content management system which is user-friendly and reliable.</p> <p>During 2005 and 2006, DevNet made the decision to expand the content on the GyDG so as to make the portal content-rich and accessible. The number of hits on the portal increased with the visibility of the content, especially through the search engines. The distribution of items of content available on the portal at the time of writing this report is Annex 2 to this document.</p> <p>There are 160 items of content, and a listing of 72 organisations at the time of writing this report.</p> <p>Events for public attendance are also promoted on the site.</p>

Activities	Achievements
	There is an average of 470 hits per week on the site. A search on Google for "guyana development" returns the GyDG site with the highest ranking.
Program Management	The Development Gateway initiative was in a state of flux, and there was a transition from the management by the World Bank of the Country Gateway projects during 2004. The GyDG team maintained contact with the first Task Manager, Kristin Lado and then subsequently with the team from the Development Gateway Foundation's Country Gateway management team. The Office of the President assigned Project Managers – Rachel Andrade-Sankar from January 2004 to December 2004 and then Grace Mc Calman from January 2005. The DevNet project officer assigned to the GyDG is Vidyaratha Kisson for the duration of the project. The project management was flexible enough to allow for the changing project context, while there were some gaps as DevNet sought to realign the portal to be content rich. The Country Gateway meeting in Bonn in June 2004 also contributed to an awareness of the importance of the GyDG in an international context and the membership of the Latin American and Caribbean CGN has the potential for networking and resource sharing, even though there is a language difference.
Business Planning	The Business Plan was developed as a sustainability plan for the GyDG portal which would be managed by DevNet.
Governance	The Executive Committee of DevNet will oversee the adherence to the Editorial Policy while ensuring that adequate resources are available for the sustainability of the website. There were no queries or concerns raised about any of the content proposed and shared via the GyDG, and the GyDG has been publicised in different forum with different sectors of the community.

The following are Best Practices

- The development of the prototype early on in the planning phase is essential to the demonstration and awareness building of prospective gateway, especially in a society which is new to sharing information via the Internet.
- DevNet's ICT4D focus meant that the staff had an interest and awareness of development issues in different sectors of Guyana. As a result, the acquisition of content from civil society organisations and networks was effected through extensive personal networks, which are easy to form in a 'small' society.

4. Challenges and Failures

Activities	Challenges and Failures
Partnership Building	The partnership arrangements did not result as was intended in the project proposal and the initiation of a Steering Committee which however was not sustained as the members were involved in other projects within their organisations. As a result, DevNet engaged in relationships with other partners who were keen to share content without any formal relationship.
Documentation	The data to complete the e-readiness assessment and e-needs assessment was not readily available and some anecdotal evidence had to be used based on feedback through focus groups and interviews. The Country Gateway team at the Development Gateway Foundation(DGF) had developed some guidelines for the various reports. However, the reporting requirements also changed as the DGF philosophy changed to accommodate needs. The Business Plan format for example, assumes that the Gateway will be a self sustaining entity, rather than allow for other arrangements where the Gateway could be managed as a portal by an existing entity.

Activities	Challenges and Failures
Prototype Development	In the early days of the planning phase, it was not clear whether Country Gateways had to standardise on the technologies, and this uncertainty delayed the start of the prototype. In September of 2004, it was recognised that alternatives to the Digi platform could be used and DevNet selected Drupal. The features and the modules which are implemented are discussed later in the document. The problem of spammers escalated as the number of spammers registering with the GyDG grew to such an extent that the <i>Register New User</i> function had to be disabled for a period , during which time the Content Manager would register users based on requests.
Program Management	There was an adjustment when the Development Gateway Foundation assumed full responsibility for the management of the Country Gateway projects and the Task Manager format came to an end. The completion of the planning grant was important, and DevNet wanted to ensure that the project would be successful. The evolution of the portal also resulted in a start to what would have been previously termed the 'Implementation Phase' of the GyDG planning.
Business Planning	The Business Plan format had to be adapted to reflect the model of the GyDG which is going to be a portal managed by DevNet.
Governance	There have been no issues with Governance of the GyDG.

5. Lessons Learned

Activities	Lessons learned
Partnership Building	The Development Gateway was a new initiative and trying to explain the concept to prospective partners worked only when the representatives of the partner groups were Internet and ICT literate. The development of the prototype and now the live portal will make it much easier to invite partnerships for content provision.
Documentation	The documentation required in the planning phase is not suitable for all models of the Country Gateway, and the challenge was to adapt the formats for the reports.
Prototype Development	The flexibility offered by Content Management Systems are an option for Country Gateways , especially those who do not have extensive technical expertise. The scalability is an issue for the PHP/MySQL based and the solution must be able to address this issue. It was not envisaged that the GyDG would have an active forum or bulletin board for example – other technologies would have to be considered to support that kind of functionality.
Program Management	The mode of delivering payment for specific deliverables was successful in the relationship between Office of the President and DevNet and in ensuring good management of the budget as the project time was extended. While there were recurrent costs, the deliverable focussed approach enabled the milestones to be achieved in the Planning Project.

6. The Structure of the Planning Phase

The project proposal for the Planning Phase was designed to achieve the following objectives :-

1. Conduct needs assessment and country readiness for the Guyana Country Gateway
2. Develop a Business Plan outlining the process for establishing the Guyana portal of the Global Development Gateway
3. Develop the governance structure needed to support the portal using the SDNP - Guyana model
4. Identify content providers and a mechanism for sharing and updating of content
5. Promotion of the concept of the Guyana Country Gateway in different sectors
6. Develop a Guyana Gateway Demonstration site and demonstration tools and products for services

This project achieved its objectives with outcomes which indicate that the GyDG is a useful tool to support the development efforts in Guyana.

The needs assessment and country readiness documents set the stage for understanding the context in which the GyDG, and DevNet could work . It was recognised earlier that the Governance structure of DevNet which evolved out of the SDNP – Guyana project was suitable to ensure that the portal is open and accessible to the beneficiaries.

The number of documents required in the planning phase for the GyDG is extensive and the required documentation associated with the Planning Project could have been less.

The project management arrangements were successful and flexible to allow for easy communication with the staff of the Development Gateway Foundation (DGF) . There were face to face meetings, email communication and conference calls during the course of the planning project. The DGF team has always been responsive to requests for information and updates.

B. Evaluation of the GyDG Planning Project

1. Key changes in the Project Context

There has been a progressive growth in the deployment in ICT access across Guyana's coast land which has been limited by the lack of progress on the telecommunication reform and the continued relatively high price and limited reach of Internet type bandwidth.

Many Government and other related agencies have embarked on the development of their websites to share their content. At the time of designing the GyDG proposal, there was limited content available on the GyDG from local agencies, and the GyDG was projected as a portal which could share that content, or even in some instances create appropriate content. It was anticipated that the telecommunications reform would have moved ahead quickly.

The partnership planning arrangements were then adjusted and it was recognised that the GyDG portal could serve a wider cross section of the population through a mechanism which allowed h social networks, to share content and to encourage students and others to access content. The GyDG should also adjust to link with content for younger people, who form the majority of Internet users in Guyana.

The Guyanese society and 'development' sector is small, and the knowledge gained by Civil Society groups in development activities is growing and there is an emphasis being placed on networking, especially in the AIDS prevention and treatment programmes.

The rapid growth of cellular phone use means that content could also be shared in different ways, and the future of the GyDG is to align the technical platform to accommodate access through the mobile phones and PDAs.

2. Key Problems

The development community in Guyana indicated that it needs data and statistics on various issues, and data collection and statistical analysis is not available. The other types of information which is used is based on reports and records of activities carried out as part of project reports.. Statutory reports are sources of information from the Government, while reports on the performance of projects and other initiatives also help to guide justifications for follow up actions. Many of the reports are not available in digital format.

The problem with content for the GyDG is that the amount of 'information' which could be deemed credible and which could be used as development related, is small, and the GyDG therefore is not likely to see a rapid increase in development related content as with the country gateways from larger countries.

There is a cultural attitude in which some organisations do not see that there might be value in sharing their work electronically. This can only change as more organisations change their paradigm of knowledge dissemination. One very active organisation in Guyana when asked for the electronic version of its reports indicated that they had to sell the report to recover the costs of printing and production.

The DevNet team has worked with organisations to let them know that the electronic production of reports and other documents for printing could also result in PDF versions which could be shared via the web and that the costs of producing research should not rely on the printed report only being sold. This will increase the amount of content which could be shared through the portal and through the NGO websites.

3. Partnership Building

Partnership building activities were focussed around a series of meetings with key agencies and meetings with groups of people from different sectors. The outcome of these partnership explorations is shown below (first reported in the “Partnership Report”) :-

<i>Government entities and autonomous agencies</i>	<i>Results</i>
Office of the President-Poverty Reduction Secretariat (PRS)	The PRS Secretariat was discussing various options for information sharing, and decided to use their own website at http://www.povertyreduction.gov.gy as part of their communication strategy.
Ministry of Health	The Ministry of Health had recognised the need for sharing information and has developed two sites using their own resources at http://www.health.gov.gy and http://www.hiv.gov.gy .
Ministry of Education,	The Ministry of Education were interested in support to build their own website , and agreed to share any relevant reports and information via the GyDG portal. The site at http://www.education.gov.gy is a work in progress while other content about education in Guyana is shared through the GyDG.
Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce	The Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce was interested in support for some of the sharing of information related to the development of the tourism industry. They subsequently used their own resources to build http://www.mintic.gov.gy .
Ministry of Agriculture	The Ministry of Agriculture developed the website at http://www.agriculture.gov.gy . A meeting was held with some farmers in Region 4 to discuss access to markets outside of Guyana. The Ministry has subsequently expanded its marketing and diversification strategy and the website of the Guyana Marketing Corporation – http://www.newgmc.com is used to facilitate those marketing strategies
Government Information and News Agency	The Government Information and News Agency (GINA) has its own site at http://www.gina.gov.gy and agreed that links could be shared for reports and other information.
Guyana Office for Investment	The Guyana Office for Investment has its own website at http://www.goinvest.gov.gy and uses it to share information about investment in Guyana . Other content about doing business in Guyana is shared through the GyDG – including content from external providers.
Guyana Tourism Authority	The Guyana Tourism Authority at the time of the feasibility study did not have its own website, but subsequently developed and has resources to maintain the site at http://www.guyana-tourism.com Other tourism and travel information comes from travel articles published in different print media, and with links to independent travel guides which add to the body of knowledge about travelling in Guyana.

<i>Private Companies</i>	<i>Results</i>
Broadband Inc (a wireless provider);	The purpose of this meeting was to discuss Broadband Inc's expansion strategy and any possible partnership to develop connectivity within the hinterland regions of Guyana, areas not covered by the monopoly provider GT&T. It was agreed that the best option would be for community based groups to seek their own funding, while Broadband would investigate best price options depending on the requirements.
RedSpider.biz (a private hosting company) and with Internet Works and Guyana Net (Internet Service Providers)	This meeting was used to brief the participants about the GyDG. These companies are involved in developing and hosting websites for Government and other entities in Guyana, and it was recognised that they would encourage their clients to share the data and grant access to information.

<i>Civil Society Organisations</i>	<i>Results</i>
Georgetown Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCCI)	The GCCCI was identified as a prospective partner to share resources related to the development of SMEs. The GCCCI indicated interest, but also noted that they had to build capacity to respond to some other policy development and other opportunities. They were able to develop their own site at http://www.georgetownchamberofcommerce.org/
Guyana Small Business Association	The Guyana Small Business Association recognised the opportunities of partnership. The Association was completing other project mandates.
Other civil society groups and networks	DevNet consulted with different groups and networks such as the Peace Building Network. Information related to the activities of non-governmental organisations are through the GyDG. This information takes the form of announcements of workshops, seminars, training programmes and reports of research and surveys. The report recently released “

<i>Donor Agencies</i>	<i>Results</i>
USAID UNDP British High Commission Inter-American Development Bank World Bank Canadian High Commission	The meeting with the donor community was held while the Task Manager from the World Bank was in Guyana. All the resident donor agencies were present and they agreed that at a local level, they would be willing to support any initiative which would improve Governance and social cohesion. This meeting was held with the support of the World Bank . All of the representatives noted that their reports, project documents and similar type materials became available from the agency websites after they were authorised for the the public domain.

4. Portal : content and Technology

a) *Functionality of the portal*

The portal was built using Drupal, a free and open source content management system. Drupal was selected because it provided the flexibility to allow for various functionalities without any need for extensive programming knowledge at DevNet. Drupal is also scalable and as the GyDG expands, new features could be added. DevNet has used Drupal subsequently in some of the other website development.

The modules which are functional and their characteristics are described below :

Module	Characteristics
Content creation and submission	Users of the GyDG could create and add content, and there are currently three types of content GyDG resource – which is used for the documents, articles, links to websites and databases, etc. Organisations – for listings of organisations and contact details Events
Taxonomy and Category	Content could be classified using more than one Category type. There are two types used currently 'Topic' with listings for different sectors; and Resource Type. The taxonomy list could be expanded, and each resource could be assigned to multiple categories.
User registration with different access levels	The GyDG portal was established to allow for user registration, with a delayed approval from the Content Manager. This feature was disabled after there was a high number of spammers who were registering as users. Valid users could be registered through an email contact.
Full text Searching	The GyDG allows for full text searching of all text of the entire or specific sections of the site. The text of the content records is indexed automatically. There is currently no searching of the electronic PDF or other document format attachments. This will be deployed in another update.
Personalisation	The GyDG could allow for personalised themes and specific settings for content and updates.
Other modules which could be implemented	The other modules such as forums , mail outs to subscribed users and content generation have to be implemented as the content grows. These updates have been sent through various lists. The Internet culture is growing in Guyana, and Guyanese do not readily subscribe for updates
Access monitoring	The site administrator can view logs of access and referrals to the portal, and check on the statistics for each page in the site. The portal also indicates the number of reads on each item of content. The site logs are kept for the previous 16 weeks.

DevNet will be updating the portal so that it could accommodate the use of images in the full text articles.

b) *Content Generation*

Content is generated manually by the Content Manager and other users. There is a deferred publishing approach to allow for approval of proposed content. The content is put on the portal as links, with abstracts; full text articles, or documents and other report types as attachments to 'nodes' which are the content records.

Organisation listings come from the organisations, while events are generated based on public

advertisements and announcements.

The sources of content include :

- Government websites
- Articles from open peer reviewed journals
- Non governmental organisations
- Government agencies such as the National Commission on Disabilities which do not have websites
- Individuals who have conducted research which has been reviewed e.g. students
- Website of International financing institutions and other donors
- Articles from the Guyana Chronicle, and other print media , especially for Tourism/travel knowledge

c) Users of the GyDG

The users of the GyDG tend to be persons who are searching for development related information, and the referrals indicate a range of search mechanisms from other places. Most of the referrals are from the search engines, where users are looking for a variety of information.

Other referrals are from the Development Gateway and other Country Gateway sites.

d) Number of items

There are 160 items of content, and a listing of 72 NGOs.

New information is uploaded at a rate of 1 item per week on average. This depends on the availability of suitable content.

There is an average of 470 hits per week on the site. Unfortunately , we cannot disaggregate the spammer type hits from those who are downloading content. The most popular nodes seem to be those relating Health/HIV prevention, Private sector development and social cohesion.

5. Activities of the Country Gateway

DevNet is the organisation which will sustain the GyDG . Throughout the planning phase, DevNet has been building capacity by engaging in different activities to promote the use of Information and Communications Technologies for development. These include :-

- A project funded by the Institute for the Connectivity in the Americas and executed in partnership with NGOs in the Dominican Republic and Jamaica to Strengthen the Caribbean ICT Virtual Stakeholder's Community
- A project in partnership with the USAID – Guyana Democracy Consolidation and Conflict Resolution project to support 60 non-governmental organisations and other agencies in use of the Internet for knowledge dissemination.
- Consultancies for Government and other agencies to support the use of ICTs
- A pilot project on developing e-learning with one of the vocational training institutions in Guyana
- Piloting a low cost access using the Linux Terminal Server Project with a community based organisation
- Technical Support to the UNDP-Guyana Country Office (which also includes hosting of the UNDP-Guyana website) and adhoc support to other agencies.

DevNet's website at <http://www.devnet.org.gy> which has a list of its activities.

6. Fundraising

DevNet engages in different project type activities and revenue based activities to sustain its work and efforts.

7. Governance

The project proposal indicated that the Governance of the GyDG would be in a similar model to the Steering Committee of the Sustainable Development Networking Programme (SDNP) which concluded in 2004. The Executive Committee of DevNet consists of the following persons :-

Mr Lance Hinds
Mr Valimiki Singh
Mr Andrew Mancey
Ms Surujdai Ramraj
Mr Oliver Insanally
Mr Rudolph Collins A A
Ms Grace McCalman – Representative of the Government of Guyana
Ms Gillian Thompson – Representative of the National Library

The Executive Committee is appointed to the constitution of DevNet which is registered under the Friendly Societies Act of Guyana.

The Editorial Policy for the GyDG would be managed by the Executive Committee of DevNet.

8. Support from the Development Gateway Foundation

The project management changed from the Task Manager offered by the World Bank, to a different format through the Country Gateways Department of the Development Gateway. The GyDG also recognised that there was a paradigm shift in the relationship with the DGF in that the DGF also wanted a more bilateral relationship to explore opportunities for the Country Gateways to implement DGF products and services.

DevNet participates in the Country Gateway Network, and in the Latin America and the Caribbean Network (even though there are language barriers) and expects to continue to do this as part of the resource sharing.

End of Report

18 May, 2007

Annex 1 Final Expenditure Table

This table shows the disbursement of the Project Grant during the period since January 2004. The GyDG project team managed to sustain the evolution of the prototype to the portal while remaining within the budget.

Deliverable	Date of payment	USD
Advance	April 2004	1500
Completion of Strategic Concept Document	April 2004	500
Completion of E-readiness and E-needs assessment	January 2005	5000
Portal	March 2006	5000
Content Management (first payment)	August 2006	9000
Partnership report	April 2007	3000
Business Plan ,	May 2007	6000
Final Report	May 2007	4000
Marketing and Promotion Costs for GyDG (advance)	May 2007	2500
Project Evaluation Report (to be used as part of sustainability costs)	May 2007	3500

Annex 2 – Distribution of Items of Content by taxonomy

<i>Category</i>	<i>Number of Related Items</i>
Agriculture	22
Biodiversity	7
Children	2
Civil Society	67
Culture, Cultural development	14
Education, Literacy	22
Environment and Disaster Management	36
Gender	38
Governance	16
Health	50
HIV/AIDS	35
ICT	12
International Development Co-operation	23
NGO Resource	1
Poverty Reduction	38
Private Sector development	18
SME Development	24
Social Cohesion and Peace Building	65
Tourism	11
Youth	3