

Final Report: Lessons from the Planning Phase of the Guyana Development Gateway¹

Project Start Date : January 2004

Project End Date : April 2007

Was the project finished on time?

The Planning Project did not finish within the nine months as planned originally. The plans for partnership building changed and DevNet assumed responsibility for building the content on the GyDG to develop it 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.

Information and knowledge material produced during the project

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.

All other project documents are available from the project website, and there has been an average of 50 reads of the page per week since December 2005.

Project Achievements

| Activities | Achievements |
|----------------------|---|
| Partnership Building | The Partnership Building activities sought to raise awareness of the GyDG and to generate interest. 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. This resulted in several meetings with different stakeholders from Government agencies. Partnership building is a continuous process, and informal partnerships were developed with other organisations for the sharing of content |

¹ The format for this document is taken from the “Country Development Gateway Manual : Planning Phase”

| Activities | Achievements |
|-----------------------|---|
| 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 functionality was extensive.</p> <p>DevNet then implemented the GyDG on the Drupal platform and this proved to be successful in meeting the technical requirements.</p> <p>During 2005 and 2006, DevNet made the decision to expand the content on the GyDG so as to make it content rich and accessible. The number of hits on the portal increased with the visibility of the content, especially through the search engines. The number of items of content available on the portal at the time of writing this report is Annex 2 to this document. There is an average of 470 hits is per week on the site.</p> |
| Program Management | <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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</p> |
| Business Planning | <p>The Business Plan was developed as a sustainability plan for the GyDG portal which would be managed by DevNet.</p> |
| Governance | <p>The Executive Committee of DevNet will oversee the implementation of 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.</p> |

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.
- *Challenges and Failures*

| Activities | Challenges and Failures |
|-----------------------|---|
| Partnership Building | The capacity of prospective partners to share content was developed in some cases to the extent in which those partners had their own websites, while other prospective partners did not have any content available. At the same time, the decision about whether the GyDG had to be a separate entity had to be resolved, and it was recognised that the GyDG could be managed by DevNet. The partnership arrangements did not result as was intended in the project proposal. There were several exploratory meetings. and the initiation of a Steering Committee which however was not sustained as the members were involved in other projects within their organisations. |
| Documentation | The data to complete the e-readiness assessment was not readily available and some anecdotal evidence had to be used. 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. |
| 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. DevNet had offered tools such as the Local Projects Database, the Digi Market tool and the Aid Effectiveness Platform to the Government agencies. The problem of spammers escalated as the number of spammers registering with the GyDG grew to such an extent that the Register New User function had to be disabled for a period , during which time the Content Manager would register users based on requests. |

| Activities | Challenges and Failures |
|--------------------|--|
| Program Management | The transition from the individual Task Manager offered by the GyDG to the CG Task Manager resulted in some delays and the communication arrangements and reporting procedures between DGF and the GyDG project team would change. 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 some savings over time . |
| 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. |

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. |

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 objective 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. There were face to face meetings, email communication and conference calls which allowed for contact. The communication between country gateways also allowed for sharing of ideas.

End of Report

Submitted 15 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 |
| Tranche payment to support GyDG Implementation after Project Evaluation Report | May 2007 | 3500 |

Annex 2 Items of Content

| <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 |