

MRVS STEERING COMMITTEE (MRVS SC)
Summary of Meeting 26
November 23, 2017

The 26th meeting of the MRVS Steering Committee was held on November 23, 2017 in the Lower Conference Room of the Guyana Forestry Commission. Key areas of discussion during this meeting updates on the progress of the MRVS for Years 6 to 9; the preliminary results of Year 6 (2015-2016) forest area change assessment and Winrock International's workplan for Year 6 for implementation of the Forest Carbon Monitoring System.

The key points arising from the meeting are summarised below:

1. The GFC will be exploring the use of other imagery sources as part of a “no REDD+ payment” scenario which is a priority for this second phase. Freely available imagery sources will be explored for suitability in Guyana’s context. Sentinel optical imagery which has a resolution of 10m is one such imagery source that has been considered and used in the Year 6 assessment, in conjunction with Landsat 7 and 8.
2. For the assessment year 2015 – 2016, total forest areas recorded at the end of the assessment period 2014 was 18.47 million hectares. Forest change to non-forest was mapped at 18 416 ha. From an annual perspective, this is 9,206 ha annually. This is a decrease of a total of 2 769 ha when compared to Year 5. This equates to a deforestation rate of 0.050% which is a decrease from the year 5 assessment of 0.065%.
3. Mining activities have been identified as the major driver of forest area change. The area of deforestation attributed to mining (which includes mining infrastructure) has decreased from Year 5 (10,191) to Year 6 (6,782 ha - annualised). Deforestation attributed to mining accounts for approximately 85% of all recorded deforestation in 2014 (Year 5) and 74% in year 6.
4. As part of improvements to the MRVS, the GFC had engaged Google Earth Engine to support the GFC’s efforts in conduct mapping analysis for forest area assessment. Google Earth Engine is a computing platform that allows users to run geospatial analysis on Google's infrastructure. The GEE allows for use of pre-processed imagery, as well as cloud masking that will save time and increases the GFC’s efficiency in imagery analysis.
5. In measuring degradation for Year 6, instead of a national wall to wall approach that has previously been used, a sample-based system was devised using the Accuracy Assessment datasets. By using this approach a stratified sample was done focusing on hotspot areas and those areas were mapped for degradation.