

**GUYANA  
ELECTIONS  
COMMISSION**

**Report On  
Major Activities  
Conducted During  
2004**

# **MAJOR ACTIVITIES OF GECOM DURING 2004**

## **Repairs to Multiple Identification Issuing (MIDI) System File Server.**

Following failures in the production of National ID Cards, the services of a De La Rue expert on MIDI systems, was procured by GECOM (January 7-14, 2004) through De la Rue to repair one of the RAID drives of the MIDI system file server. The server, which stores the ID Card production data, was repaired by the Consultant. Consequently, GECOM was able to commence corrections to and replacement of National Id Cards.

## **IMPROVING GECOM'S SECURITY**

In view of worrying crime trends and the concomitant need to improve physical security arrangements at its Head Office located at 41, High Street, Kingston, Georgetown, the Guyana Elections Commission commissioned an internal analysis of the current security arrangements. In this regard, a team of GECOM senior staff, headed by Mr. Keith Lowenfield was mandated by the Commission to conduct the analysis (not lastly with the help of hired expertise) and make recommendations for improvements to the current security arrangements.

Simultaneously, the Commission requested assistance from the Security Section of an Embassy, which has experience in these matters, to assess GECOM's current security arrangements and to submit a proposal for new security arrangements. Consequent upon the completion of both reviews, separate Reports were submitted to the Commission and the green light was given to implement the relevant advice. The Reports are attached herewith as **APPENDIX I** and **APPENDIX II**.

## **Procurement and Installation of a New Generator at GECOM's Head Office**

A new generator set with the capacity to supply electricity to the entire Head Office Complex was procured from MACORP and installed at the Commission's premises. The generator, which cost US\$ 29,100.00 was paid for by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), which was the implementing arm of USAID in Guyana, while installation which was executed by Minelli Engineering Ltd to the tune of G\$3.1 million, was paid for by the Government of Guyana.

The procurement and installation of the new 225 KVA generating set became necessary due to the need for increased power supply to the different departments of the Commission\Secretariat, and more specifically to ensure the efficient and uninterrupted functioning of the Information Systems Division. The daily electricity requirement of the Commission\Secretariat during occurrences of external power failures had outgrown the capacity of the Perkins generator which was being used prior to the acquisition of the new generator.

## **Disposal of Old Equipment and Furniture**

During the year 2004, The GECOM Secretariat followed due process and disposed of a variety of obsolete items which were being stored on the Commission's premises thereby occupying a significant amount of space unnecessarily. The disposal process involved the setting up of a Board of Survey by the Ministry of Finance to assess and comment on the state and value of the articles in question and to make recommendations for necessary action.

Consequent upon the completion of the work of the Board of Survey, the Commission disposed of obsolete items including IT equipment, electrical appliances, auto accessories and office furniture.

### **Voter Education Officer's two-week attachment to Trinidad and Tobago**

Recognising its responsibility to build citizens trust in the election process and confidence in the election system and outcome, the Guyana Elections Commission dispatched Mr. Deolall Ramlall, Civic/Voter Manager on a twelve-day attachment to the Elections and Boundaries Commission (EBC) of Trinidad and Tobago. (See **APPENDIX III** for a full report on this attachment).

### **RATIONALE:**

The Elections Commission has the Constitutional responsibility to conduct the registration of voters and to administer elections in an independent and impartial manner to an informed citizenry. As such the Commission has an obligation to protect the voting rights of citizens, and to ensure that the will of the voters is reflected in the outcome of the election.

In essence, the Commission has a responsibility to build citizens trust in the election process and confidence in the election system and outcome. The organisation's image and reputation for openness are based on the perceptions of voters, which in turn are based on how well informed they think they are. The more informed voters are about the registration and election processes and their responsibility in it, the more likely they are to trust the administrators and managers, and have faith in the credibility and outcome of the election.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

The Civic/Voter Education Division has therefore embarked on an aggressive programme to:

- (1) Empower people to use their inherent power as citizens to transform their society by electing the persons they want to govern them through informed choice based on programmes that will protect and promote welfare and interest;
- (2) Impart knowledge and develop civic competence in the process and practice of elections, and promote their ethical behavior in the election process;
- (3) Instill in the people the conviction that they have power through the vote and the means to elect democratic, transparent, accountable and capable government, which will strive to provide quality education and promote good health, provide job opportunities and improved quality of life for all;
- (4) Create awareness in the people about the need to and importance of free and fair elections, the need to exercise their freedom of making informed choices in electing their leaders and the duty and responsibility of every Guyanese to guard against electoral malpractices;
- (5) Minimize and eradicate electoral fraud through awareness of manipulation and the election process;

- (6) Minimize and eradicate electoral violence and other malpractice, which are mainly a product of ignorance and misunderstanding of electoral procedures;
- (7) Minimize voter apathy and encourage voting through appreciation and understanding of the negative effects of non-participation in registration and voting;
- (8) Enable the voter to identify and use the qualities of good leadership in making the voting decision regarding on who to vote for; and
- (9) Create awareness that the national destiny of the country depends on their vote. They are thus guardians of the electoral process which they should guard jealously.

**ACTIVITIES:**

The attachment is designed to allow for the Manager to:

1. Gather data on Continuous Registration activities, the conduct of General Elections and the last Local Government Elections;
2. Identify the Voter Education activities planned and executed and the various strategies/methodologies employed;
3. Examine the training strategies/plans employed in the Voter Education programme;
4. Discuss the various media used to implement the Voter Education strategy;
5. Collect samples/specimens of materials on Voter Education used for Continuous Registration as well as elections and document information on their usefulness;
6. Discuss and document the strategies and methodologies employed in the dissemination of information from the central level to the field operatives and finally to the members of the public;
7. Visit Regional Offices and document specific strategies used by field staff to educate the members of the public and assess the effectiveness of those strategies;
8. Prepare an Operational Manual for the delivery of programmes by the Civic/Voter Education Division; and
9. Develop in accordance with the proposed programme structure (See CV/Ed Consultant Report) a Civic/Voter Education Programme to support the delivery of Local Government Elections in Guyana.

**DELIVERABLES:**

1. An Operational Manual for the delivery of programmes by the Division;

2. A planned Civic/Voter Education Programme to support phases of the Electoral Process and utilizing the framework proposed by the CVE Consultant; and
3. Relevant samples of materials (specimen) to illustrate the various activities/messages to be conveyed to the voters.

### **Microsoft Project Management Training Course**

As part of the Commission's staff development policy, nine members of its Senior Management staff participated at a customized short course on Microsoft Project Management which was conducted by the University of Guyana.

The Course was designed to align candidates' mental model of the computer system with the concept/reality that the computer is a tool which could enhance effective management and to expose them to various computer applications in relation to Microsoft and Microsoft Office Suite. In addition, the Course sought to expose candidates to the mechanics involved in the use of Programme Evaluation and Reporting Technique (PERT) as a project scheduling tool with and without computer application.

The objective of the Course was to ensure that Candidates would become aware of the use of the computer as a tool and medium of communication within the management setting, develop skills in the use of the computer in project scheduling and be able to use Microsoft Office as a suite of application rather than as an individual tool.

The specific areas of study covered during the Course were "Demystifying the Computer; Information Visualisation; Office Tools; Project Planning; Scheduling Techniques; Project Definition; Definition and Modification of Tasks; Specification and Assignment of Resources; Monitoring Progress; View and Report on Project Status; and Managing Multiple Projects.

The Course was successfully completed by all of the participants.

### **Local Government Elections**

Keeping in mind that the holding of Local Government Elections was still possible before the upcoming 2006 General and Regional Elections, the Commission continued to focus on preparations for such an eventuality. See **APPENDIX 1V** for a comprehensive plan for Local Government Elections in Project Format.

### **Concept Paper on Continuous Registration**

In view of the need for an efficient and fair registration process and out of which an electoral list that is verified and considered acceptable to all stakeholders is produced, the Commission is moving in the direction of implementation a Continuous Registration process. In this regard, the Secretariat has developed a Concept paper for Continuous Registration (**APPENDIX V**). The Concept Paper is currently a subject of discussion among the Parliamentary Political Parties and the Commission. It is expected that upon conclusion of these deliberations, the Concept Paper would be finalized/modified as may be necessary in

order that Continuous Registration could be implemented under unanimously agreed conditions.

### **Legislative Changes**

The current laws pertaining to the registrations of Persons as catered for the National Registration Act Cap. 19:08 provides for national registration to be conducted periodically. In order to facilitate the institutionalization and implementation of Continuous Registration, the Commission has developed a proposal for relevant legislative amendments. This proposal (**APPENDIX VI**) is currently being reviewed by the Parliamentary Political Parties, after which their respective comments would be forwarded to the Commission for consideration and necessary action. The Proposal would then be forwarded to the Attorney General's Chambers for ratification prior to being sent to Parliament for approval.

### **Rules for the Conduct of Continuous Registration**

In anticipation of the implementation of Continuous Registration the Commission has developed proposed set of rules to govern/guide the effective and efficient conduct of Continuous Registration. This proposed set of Rules is attached at **APPENDIX VII**.

### **Needs Assessment**

The Guyana Elections Commission procured the Services of Mr. Keith Hathaway, Consultant, under the auspices of the Commonwealth Secretariat, to undertake a Needs Assessment regarding GECOM's preparedness for the forthcoming General and Regional Elections.

The Consultant was required to conduct a needs assessment of the Guyana Elections Commission, which took into account its mandate, structure, staffing, funding, budget, legal obligations, operational requirements and any other aspects that may be relevant. The Consultant has since completed the Needs Assessment and submitted his Report (**APPENDIX VIII**) to GECOM's Chairman.

### **Meeting with the Parliamentary Political Parties**

The Guyana Elections Commission has been meeting with the Parliamentary Political Parties in a consultative approach towards ensuring transparency as plans are being developed in preparation for forthcoming General and Regional Elections. See **APPENDIX IX** for Reports of separate meetings GECOM held with the PPP/C, PNCR and ROAR.

### **Procurement of Hardware/Software for GECOM's IT Division**

The Guyana Elections has purchased computer hardware and software to valued at G\$16,032,803.04 in a move to upgrade the efficiency of the IT Division.

The items procured include the following:-

HP ProLiant ML 570 Generation 2	1
HP ProLiant ML 330	2
HP JetDirect 610N Network Card for HP LaserJet 8150 Printer	3

(C4169A)	
HP 3000 Sheet Stacker/Stapler for HP LaserJet 8150 Printer (C4788A)	3
HP 2000 Sheet Multipurpose Input Paper Tray (C4781A)	3
HP Workstation XW3100 PC	1
HP Flat Panel Monitor L1502	1
Keyboard, Video and Mouse 4 Port Switch	1
HP Laptop Computer	1
DVD RW ROM	1
Computers	23
Printers	23

### **Fraud in GECOM's Accounts Division**

In keeping with its policy of transparency in its operations, and to allay any concerns about its integrity, the Guyana Elections Commission invited the Office of the Auditor General to Conduct an audit of its accounts after internal investigations by the Commission's Internal Auditor revealed several instances of irregularities within the Accounts Division. Consequent upon the completion of independent investigations, the Office of the Auditor General submitted its Report (**APPENDIX X**) to the Commission's Chairman.

Having studied the Report of the Auditor General's Office, the Commission felt that it could no longer vest confidence in the staff members who was mentioned in the Report as being involved in the fraud and initiated necessary action to effect the termination of their services.

### **IT Manager's Attachment to the Elections and Boundaries Commission – Trinidad and Tobago**

GECOM's Information Systems Manager, Mr. Michael Griffith was dispatched on a four-day attachment to the elections and Boundaries Commission (EBC) of Trinidad and Tobago to get exposure to the functions associated with the Multiple Identification Issuing System (MIDIS) in use by that organization. This course of action was initiated by the Commission so that Mr. Griffith could get an insight into the ID Card production methods and processes pertaining to the use of the MIDI system which was being used by the EBC for the production of National ID Cards in the process of Continuous Registration. See **APPENDIX XI** for Mr. Griffith's Report on the attachment.

### **Investigation pertaining to deficiencies being encountered with the MIDI system**

In efforts to address operational (hardware and software) deficiencies which have recently been encountered with the Multiple Identity Issuing System (MIDIS) in the process of producing National Identification cards, the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) commissioned De La Rue Identity Systems - the supplier of the system – to dispatch one of its technicians to

Guyana to conduct an on-the-spot inspection and evaluation of the MIDI system with a view to upgrading it, or replacing it with a new and improved version. This resulted in Mr. Mr. Glyn Williams, Senior Software Engineer of De La Rue Identity Systems being dispatched to GECOM to conduct a study of the MIDI system. The Research Triangle Institute (RTI) was also approached for assistance in terms of doing a study of the MIDI system, the result being the dispatch of Mr. Michael Yard, Information Technology Expert to GECOM under the auspices of USAID/Democracy International to work in conjunction with Mr. Glyn Williams. The findings and recommendations arising out of investigations conducted by Mr. Yard and Mr. Williams, and Mr. Michael Griffith, GECOM's IT Manager, is attached at **APPENDIX XII** of this Report

**Proposal for Voter Registration in the Continuous Registration Mode – APPENDIX XIII**

The Proposal for Voter Registration in the Continuous Registration Mode is a refinement of the aspect of the Vision Scope document produced by Michael Yarde, an Information Technology consultant who was mandated to provide technical assistance to the Commission, in the design of an appropriate Voter Registration and Data Entry System for Guyana pertaining to the specifics of the registration process. It addresses those gaps in Mr. Yard's Report that may have been the result of a misunderstanding on his part of some of the peculiarities of the Guyana situation, particularly those aspects of the process that relate to the handling and processing of transactions resulting from Claims and Objections. In addition, an attempt has been made to indicate the specific outputs of the several stages of the process, in order to aid the implementation management and control of the continuous registration process.

**Draft of Activities with Concomitant Timelines Associated with the forthcoming 2006 General and Regional Elections**

The Guyana Elections Commission/Secretariat has prepared a 1<sup>st</sup> draft of activities, in Microsoft Project Management format, with concomitant timelines associated with a 2006 General and Regional Elections project. See **APPENDIX XIV** for details.

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### **ACQUISITIONS AND DISPOSALS**

#### **Procurement of Hardware/Software for GECOM’s IT Division**

The Guyana Elections has purchased computer hardware and software to valued at G\$16,032,803.04 in a move to upgrade the efficiency of the IT Division. The items procured include the following:-

HP ProLiant ML 570 Generation 2	1
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HP Workstation XW3100 PC	1
HP Flat Panel Monitor L1502	1

Keyboard, Video and Mouse 4 Port Switch	1
HP Laptop Computer	1
DVD RW ROM	1
Computers	23
Printers	23

### **Acquisition of Additional Vehicle**

GECOM was gifted with a used (four wheel drive) vehicle by one of the agencies which worked in Guyana with funding from the USAID. This vehicle was received in working order during June 2004 and is now being used as one of the Commission's fleet of vehicles.

### **Disposal of old Equipment and Furniture**

During the year 2004, the GECOM Secretariat followed due process and disposed of a variety of obsolete items which were being stored on the Commission's premises thereby occupying a significant amount of space unnecessarily. The disposal process involved the setting up of a Board of Survey by the Ministry of Finance to assess and comment on the state and value of the articles in question and to make recommendations for necessary action. Consequent upon the completion of the work of the Board of Survey, the Commission disposed of the obsolete items which included IT equipment, electrical appliances, auto accessories and office furniture.

## **TRAINING/EXPOSURE**

### **Voter Education Officer's two-week attachment to Trinidad and Tobago**

Deolall Ramlall, GECOM's Civic/Voter Manager was sent by the Commission on a twelve-day attachment to the Elections and Boundaries Commission (EBC) of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Ramlall's attachment was effected in cognizance of the Commission's Constitutional responsibility to conduct the registration of voters and to administer elections in an independent and impartial manner to an informed citizenry and to meet its obligation to protect the voting rights of citizens, and to ensure that the will of the voters is reflected in the outcome of the election.

In essence, the Commission has a responsibility to build citizens trust in the election process and confidence in the election system and outcome. The organisation's image and reputation for openness are based on the perceptions of voters, which in turn are based on how well informed they think they are. The more informed voters are about the registration and election processes and their responsibility in it, the more likely they are to trust the administrators and managers, and have faith in the credibility and outcome of the election. Mr. Ramlall's attachment sought to give exposure to the manner in which the EBC OF Trinidad and Tobago structured and conducted their civic/voter education strategies and how best such strategies could inform the civic/voter education of the Commission.

### **Microsoft Project Management Training Course**

As part of the Commission's staff development policy, **nine members of its Senior Management staff** participated at a customized short course on Microsoft Project Management which was conducted by the University of Guyana during June-July, 2004.

The Course was designed to align candidates' mental model of the computer system with the concept/reality that the computer as a tool which could enhance effective management, and to expose them to various computer applications in relation to Microsoft and Microsoft Office Suite. In addition, the Course sought to expose candidates to the mechanics involved in the use of Programme Evaluation and Reporting Technique (PERT) as a project scheduling tool with and without computer application.

The objective of the Course was to ensure that Candidates would become aware of the use of the computer as a tool and medium of communication within the management setting, develop skills in the use of the computer in project scheduling, and be able to use Microsoft Office as a suite of application rather than as an individual tool.

The specific areas of study covered during the Course were "Demystifying the Computer; Information Visualisation; Office Tools; Project Planning; Scheduling Techniques; Project Definition; Definition and Modification of Tasks; Specification and Assignment of Resources; Monitoring Progress; View and Report on Project Status; and Managing Multiple Projects.

Having successfully completed the Course, the participants are now geared to develop and implement strategic plans, using the Microsoft Project Management format which allows for efficient project implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

### **IT Manager's Attachment to the Elections and Boundaries Commission – Trinidad and Tobago**

GECOM's Information Systems Manager, Mr. Michael Griffith was dispatched on a four-day attachment to the elections and Boundaries Commission (EBC) of Trinidad and Tobago to get exposure to the functions associated with the Multiple Identification Issuing System (MIDIS) in use by that organization. This course of action was initiated by the Commission so that Mr. Griffith could get an insight into the ID Card production methods and processes pertaining to the use of the MIDI system which was being used by the EBC for the production of National ID Cards in the process of Continuous Registration.

## **CONTINUOUS REGISTRATION**

### **Rules for the Conduct of Continuous Registration**

In anticipation of the implementation of Continuous Registration the Secretariat has developed proposed set of rules to govern/guide the effective and efficient conduct of Continuous Registration. This proposed set of rules is currently before the Commission and the Parliamentary Political Parties for scrutiny.

### **Concept Paper on Continuous Registration**

In view of the need for an efficient and fair registration process out of which an electoral list that is verified and considered acceptable to all stakeholders can be produced, the Commission is moving in the direction of implementation a Continuous Registration process. In this regard, the Secretariat has developed a Concept Paper for Continuous Registration. The Concept Paper was circulated to the Parliamentary Political Parties for perusal and comments. The Commission has since received the comments/suggestions from the political Parties, which are now being considered for inclusion in the Concept Paper. It is expected that upon conclusion its

deliberations, the Commission would modify/finalise the Concept Paper, as may be necessary, in order that Continuous Registration could be implemented under unanimously agreed conditions.

### **Legislative Changes**

The current laws pertaining to the registrations of Persons as catered for the National Registration Act Cap. 19:08 provides for national registration to be conducted periodically. In order to facilitate the institutionalization and implementation of Continuous Registration, the Commission has developed a proposal for relevant legislative amendments. This proposal is currently being reviewed by the Parliamentary Political Parties, after which their respective comments would be taken into consideration by the Commission in the finalization of the Proposal. The Proposal would then be forwarded to the Attorney General's Chambers for ratification prior to being sent to Parliament for approval.

### **Proposal for Voter Registration in the Continuous Registration Mode**

The Proposal for Voter Registration in the Continuous Registration Mode is a refinement of the aspect of the Vision Scope document produced by Michael Yarde, an Information Technology consultant who was mandated to provide technical assistance to the Commission, in the design of an appropriate Voter Registration and Data Entry System for Guyana pertaining to the specifics of the registration process. It addresses those gaps in Mr. Yarde's Report that may have been the result of a misunderstanding on his part of some of the peculiarities of the Guyana situation, particularly those aspects of the process that relate to the handling and processing of transactions resulting from Claims and Objections. In addition, an attempt has been made to indicate the specific outputs of the several stages of the process, in order to aid the implementation management and control of the continuous registration process.

## **2006 GENERAL AND REGIONAL ELECTIONS**

### **Draft of Activities with Concomitant Timelines associated with the forthcoming 2006 General and Regional Elections**

The Guyana Elections Commission/Secretariat has prepared a 1<sup>st</sup> draft of activities, in Microsoft Project Management format, with concomitant timelines associated with a 2006 General and Regional Elections project. This course of action was taken in the Commission's efforts to bring

itself to state of readiness (as is possible under the current circumstances) with regards to the holding of the General and Regional Elections in 2006.

### **NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

The Guyana Elections Commission procured the Services of Mr. Keith Hathaway, Consultant, under the auspices of the Commonwealth Secretariat, to undertake a Needs Assessment regarding GECOM's preparedness for the forthcoming General and Regional Elections.

The Consultant was required to conduct a needs assessment of the Guyana Elections Commission, which took into account its mandate, structure, staffing, funding, budget, legal obligations, operational requirements and any other aspects that may be relevant. The Consultant has since completed the Needs Assessment and submitted his Report to GECOM's Chairman.

### **STAFF MATTERS**

#### **Appointment of IT Manager and Internal Auditor**

The Commission made two significant appointments at senior management level during 2004 in a deliberate effort to ensure the perpetuation of satisfactory operations of the Secretariat. Mr. Mike Griffith was appointed as IT Manager while Mr. Lindsay Bascomb was appointed to the position of Internal.

#### **Fraud in GECOM's Accounts Division**

In keeping with its policy of transparency in its operations, and to allay any concerns about its integrity, the Guyana Elections Commission invited the Office of the Auditor General to conduct an audit of its accounts. This was done after internal investigations by the Commission's Internal Auditor revealed several instances of irregularities within the Accounts Division. Consequent upon the completion of independent investigations, the Office of the Auditor General submitted its Report to the Commission's Chairman.

Having studied the findings of the Auditor General's Office as recorded in its Report, the Commission felt that it had to follow the recommendations of the Auditor General's Department.

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS**

Keeping in mind that there was the possibility that the holding of Local Government Elections could be scheduled before the upcoming 2006 General and Regional Elections, the Commission continued to focus on preparations for such an eventuality. In this regard, the Commission has developed a Plan of Activities pertaining to the holding of these elections.

### **MEETING WITH THE PARLIAMENTARY POLITICAL PARTIES**

The Guyana Elections Commission has been meeting with the Parliamentary Political Parties in a consultative approach towards ensuring transparency as plans are being developed in preparation for forthcoming General and Regional Elections.

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