

**BEST PRACTICE BY THE GOVERNMENT OF GUYANA**  
**STANDARD FORMAT FOR PRESENTATION OF INFORMATION ON BEST**  
**PRACTICES**

**Institution:** The Ministry of Housing and Water

**Title:** The Ministry of Housing and Water: Electronic Planning and Development Single Window System

**Topic-** Single Window System to streamline the process for planning and development applications.

**Subject of the Convention-**Article III Preventative Measures

**Description of the best practice:**

Guyana's Electronic Planning and Development Single Window System is part of the Government's agenda to modernize the public service. An agenda to create a public service that is innovative, vibrant, entrepreneurial and responsive to the unprecedented growth and development opportunities that the country is experiencing.

The System was established by **section 4** of the **Planning and Development Single Window System Act, No. 11 of 2023**.

**Section 4 of the Act Provides that -**

- (1) There is hereby established a single window system to be known as the Planning and Development Single Window System.*
- (2) The System shall serve as the single-entry point for planning and development applications to-*
  - (a) submit planning and development applications electronically or in paper form;*
  - (b) submit other relevant documents, information and data electronically or in paper form;*
  - (c) process and approve planning and development applications; and*
  - (d) facilitate electronic or non-electronic payments for transactions lodged through the system.*
- (3) Whenever there is any interruption in the method of submission of documents, information or data, the Central Authority shall immediately notify the users and end users and provide an alternative method and submission.*

This Act was passed in Guyana's National Assembly on July 20, 2023 and enacted on August 2, 2023.

The Government, through the Ministry of Housing and Water, under the Central Housing and Planning Authority (CHPA) officially launched the Electronic Planning and Development Single Window System in June 2024.

The Single Window System is a centralized entry point for all planning and development applications. This online platform is a one-stop shop that allows applicants to submit, track, and receive updates on their applications from anywhere in the world. The objective is to improve efficiency, transparency, and investor-friendliness in the development process by centralizing and simplifying approvals. The system removes any form of subjectivity and reduces opportunities for corruption as it aims to eliminate human biases and increase transparency and efficiency. Users can submit, monitor, and track their applications from any location, receiving real-time updates via email. The system aims to reduce the permit processing time from three months to a streamlined thirty to forty-five (30-45) days.

The Single Window System integrates the Central Board of Health, the Ministry of Public Works, the River and Defense Board, the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Guyana Fire Service, the Guyana Civil Aviation Authority, the National Trust of Guyana, the Guyana Office for Investment, the Land Registry, the Deeds Registry, Guyana Water Incorporated, and local government authorities, including the 10 municipalities and 80 Neighborhood Democratic Councils.

The daily operations are managed by a dedicated unit, ensuring data maintenance and user assistance.

**Reasons/Importance:** Reasons for pursuing best practice should be given. A description should be made of the situation in place before the adoption of the best practice and identification of the problem or problems it is to address:

***Response:***

In the past applicants had to go through approximately 13 agencies (depending on the type of developmental application) to process their applications and this had to be done in person. With each agency, one had to submit different applications with various requirements. This application process proved to be untenable and as noted by the Private Sector in Guyana, the old red tape system resulted in the loss of USD1 billion in investments in 2020.

The government found it unacceptable that millions of dollars in investments and thousands of jobs were being delayed due to the cumbersome 'red tape' within the Central Housing and Planning Authority (CHPA) and other government agencies involved in the approval process. Government also wanted to improve the process of doing business in Guyana.

With Guyana experiencing rapid transformation and expansion, the implementation of this technologically advanced solution was critical and necessary.

According to His Excellency President Dr Irfaan Ali:-

***“The system is totally antiquated for the type of development and the speed of development that is taking place in Guyana currently. It is taking away the human biases and making it a more rule-based, system-based and that is how we want the country to run. The system must work, the system must be trusted, the system must be efficient.”***

**Approach:** What was the proposed design and methodology for applying the best practice? What was considered in its design and methodology? Were other countries’ experiences taken into account? Was a model law taken into account?

### ***Response***

This initiative was guided by the following principles:

- ❖ Clear accountability and predictability
- ❖ Transparency of requirements to submit an application
- ❖ Single input for all planning and development applications
- ❖ Regulatory timelines for decisions
- ❖ Enhanced monitoring and enforcement
- ❖ Adherence to national/regional policies.

The methodology and design included extensive consultations at all levels of Government and with industry experts on the legislation and development of the platform. The Single Window System is a homegrown innovation by Guyana. The system's software was developed by Guyana’s National Data Management Authority (NDMA).

The system is predicated on the receipt of a Complete Application. Since all the requirements are defined and publicly accessible, applicants are expected to submit the mandatory requirements at the time of application. The timelines will not commence until a complete application is submitted and documents validated for completeness.

### **The system also caters for the following:**

- Pre-application consultation process that allows applicants to schedule meetings with CHPA prior to applying.
- Allow applicants to track the status of their applications.
- Enable Ministries/Agencies/Municipalities/NDCs to collaborate in real time on reviewing the applications.
- Coordinated site visits.
- Strengthen the storage and retrieval of planning and development application across the country.

It is important to note that while Guyana is enhancing its connectivity index and access to the internet, there is recognition that some interior locations in the country may not readily be in a position to submit electronic applications. In this regard, staff of the CHPA and the Local Authorities convert a paper application into an electronic format for input into the system.

**Implementation:** How is the best practice being implemented? What were the human and financial resources needed for its implementation?

***Response***

In accordance with the Planning and Development Single Window System Act 11 of 2023, a unit has been established within the Central Housing and Planning Authority (CH&PA) to manage the day-to-day function of the system, maintain an electronic database, and assist users, among other duties.

**Implementation includes 5 key elements: -**

1. Providing one-window access for CHPA to act as a single point of entry for planning;
2. Dashboards allowing staff to monitor the status of individual applications;
3. Application tracking allowing users/applicants to make submissions and track application progress;
4. Deadlines to enable timely processing of applications;
5. Scalability to ensure that the IT solution can accommodate increased application volumes, staff changes, and be configured to accommodate changes to evolving workflows.

In addition, the following initiatives were undertaken to support implementation:

- ❖ Memoranda of Understanding with Ministries/Agencies/Local Governments establishing roles and responsibilities, expectations on timeliness, accessing the system and protecting the privacy and confidentiality of the information;
- ❖ Creating a Single Window Planning Unit as mandated under the Act to operationalize the System;
- ❖ Working with the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development to strengthen the local government entities' ability to process applications;
- ❖ Strengthening the capacity of CHPA staff to support residents and businesses seeking planning and development approvals;
- ❖ Videos and other public service materials and regional information sessions to increase awareness of the new system;
- ❖ Creating a dedicated "Rapid Response Team" as a transition team to train staff and relevant personnel of the partner agencies and to address any early implementation challenges in a timely manner;

- ❖ Ongoing monitoring and capacity building at the Central and Local Government Levels.
- ❖ Continuous training and support for users of the system.

Technological upgrades, particularly for the Local Authorities, had to be done. This was in the form of acquisition of computer systems, scanners, and upgraded secured internet service.

**Outcome:** What is the end result or expected end result of implementing the best practice? What are the benefits and/or success stories? Have they addressed the problems originally identified as necessitating the best practice to be implemented? What has been its impact?

***Response:***

The objective is expeditious processing of applications, reducing delays and improving efficiency. The online platform provides clear and accessible information about the application process, enhancing transparency. The simplified and efficient process is expected to attract more investors and developers within and from outside Guyana. In addition, the system has reduced bureaucratic delays and red tape associated with traditional application processes.

Further, no Guyanese, or no investor, must fear that their application will be denied for any subjective reason.

**Implementation Figures as of August 22, 2025**

<b>Total Registered Users (Applicants)</b>	7036	<b>Notes</b>
Total registered users created applications	2275	
Total created applications submitted	2943	There are more applications submitted than the number of applicants because an applicant can submit multiple applications.
Total active applications (actively processing)	2143	Active applications = total submitted – total closed – total withdrawn
<b>Total finalized/closed applications</b>	<b>545</b>	
- Single Family Residential	438	
- Multi-Family Residential	18	
- Change of Use	8	
- Industrial	13	
- Institutional	5	
- Agriculture	3	
- Land Subdivision	1	
- Commercial	59	
<i>Total withdrawn applications</i>	295	
<b>Status of Full Applications</b>		

Single Family Residential Applications addressed within 30 days	372	
Non-Residential Applications addressed within 30 days (simple)	17	
Non-Residential Applications addressed within 45 days (complex)	33	
<b>Total Types of Applications</b>		
- Single Family Residential	1629	
- Commercial	590	
- Institutional	28	
- Change of Use	68	
- Industrial	124	
- Multi-Family Residential	513	
- Agriculture	10	
- Land Subdivision	9	
- Infrastructure	5	
- Recreation	3	
- Mixed-Use	1	
<b>Status of Protected Areas Commission (PAC) Under CHPA Review</b>		
Total PAC submitted	197	
Total Meetings Completed	11	Total scheduled meetings = 26 Not all PACs require a meeting.
Total PAC addressed within a week	0	

Source: Ministry of Housing and Water (CHPA)

**Potential for technical cooperation:** Can the best practice be adapted and used by other countries? Is it possible to provide technical assistance to other countries in implementing the best practice? Provide the point of contact for the entity that can facilitate technical assistance.

**Response:**

Yes, the platform is meant to be transferable and can be shared with MESICIC member countries. This should be done through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and the Ministry of Housing and Water.

**Point of contacts:**

Mrs. Elizabeth Harper- Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

- Telephone Number - +592 226 -1606, 592 -623-4815

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**Follow-up:** Who or what groups will monitor the practice’s implementation? How will its implementation be monitored? Will there be a Follow-up Report?

***Response:***

The CH&PA, which is governed by a Board of Directors in accordance with their statute, will monitor the System’s performance, ensuring transparency and efficiency. Additionally, the implementation of the System will be monitored by the Planning and Oversight Committee established pursuant to **section 17 of the Act**, which provides that-

**17. (1)** *There is hereby established a committee to be known as the Planning Oversight Committee to carry out the functions conferred upon it by this Act.*

**(2)** *The Committee shall comprise of the following members-*

- (a) a suitably qualified chairperson appointed by the Minister,*
- (b) the director of the Unit;*
- (c) one person appointed by the Minister, after inviting nominations, from the private sector having knowledge and experience of matters relevant to land development and drawn from the areas of business, finance, law, physical planning, natural science, land surveying and architecture or engineering; and*
- (d) two persons appointed by the Minister, after inviting nominations, from the Guyana Association of Professional Engineers, the Guyana Planning Association, the Guyana Architects’ Association and the Guyana Association of Professional Surveyors Incorporated.*

**(3)** *The appointment of any member of the Committee and any change of membership thereof shall be notified in the Gazette.*

**Section 18** of the Act sets out the functions of the Committee which include overseeing and monitoring the Central Authority's progress in implementing the System.

**Section 18. (1)** *states - The Committee shall be responsible for the following functions-*

- (a) overseeing and monitoring the Central Authority’s progress in implementing the System;*

*(b) advising the Minister on the Central Authority's performance of its functions for the purpose of furthering the efficient and orderly operations of the System; and*

*(c) considering and communicating to the Minister the advice or opinion of the Committee on any matter referred to it by the Minister.*

*(2) The Committee shall be responsible for implementing the policies given to it by the Minister.*

The Committee is responsible for submitting a report to the Minister who shall cause the report to be laid in the National Assembly in accordance with Section 19.

**Specifically, section 19 of the Act states: -**

*19. (1) The Committee shall, within four months after the end of the first year, prepare and submit to the Minister a report setting out-*

*(a) the steps that the Central Authority has taken to implement the System;*

*(b) any outstanding issues hindering the implementation and effective performance to resolve the issues.*

*(2) The Minister shall cause a copy of every report made under subsection (1) to be laid in the National Assembly.*

*(3) The Central Authority shall maintain a secure and updated registry listing of all authorized relevant agencies.*

**Lessons:** What are some of the lessons learned in implementing Best Practice? What are the challenges in implementing the best practice?

***Response:***

Notable capacity gaps at the local authority levels (digital literacy, staffing, and change management) required targeted support and training. Many local authorities lacked financial and human resources to participate effectively. In view of the afore mentioned, the CHPA continues to provide focused training for personnel of the Local Authorities. To address the capacity gap, the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development provided support to the local authorities through the purchase of computer systems and installation of secure internet connection.

In addition, some applicants are also digitally challenged and would make physical visits to the CHPA and the various Local Authorities for assistance. Some local authorities in the beginning were unable to assist these applicants who visited them with paper-based applications, since they had not acquired the required scanners to scan the building plans and upload them to the portal. In this regard, they refer such cases to CHPA to facilitate application upload on the portal. To address this situation, the CHPA is currently enhancing its Regional Housing Offices with large format scanners to provide support to the local authorities within the respective regions.



To ensure these challenges do not significantly impact the work of CHPA in processing applications in a timely manner, the staff at CHPA are currently coordinating with CHPA's Public Relations Unit to prepare detailed user manuals, videos and informercial for the public.

**Documentation:** Where can further information be found regarding the best practice (e.g., Internet links)?

***Response:***

The Ministry of Housing and Water website.

Link: <https://chpa.gov.gy/single-window/#>

**Contact:** Who can be contacted for further information?

***Response:***

- Mr. Bishram Kuppen – Permanent Secretary – Ministry of Housing and Water.
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