



Tourism Product Assessment and Training conducted at Moraikobai Village, Region 5

- GTA prioritises facilitating more community-owned and led tourism in Guyana with the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs

The Guyana Tourism Authority (GTA) conducted a tourism product assessment at Moraikobai Village in Region 5 from February 11-15, 2019. The team, which comprised the Guyana Tourism Authority, Ministry of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs, and Rainforest Tours. The purpose of this assessment was to support the Village Council and the Tourism Committee in developing an action-oriented roadmap for tourism development in Moraikobai. GTA's role was to share its expertise and guide the community in addressing challenges, assessing the visitor readiness, identifying and prioritising opportunities, and setting the course to build a more prosperous community-owned and led tourism model in the village.

The Moraikobai Village Council has already embarked on the construction of an eco-lodge with support from the Projects Department of the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs (MOIPA). This assessment, in combination with the construction of the new lodge, are geared toward making new tourism product accessible to Georgetown and other urban areas. Key products to be developed are designed for nature enthusiasts, birders, and sports fishing, and other travellers who are looking for authentic cultural experiences.

The GTA has also been working closely with the MOIPA and community leaders on comparable projects in Chenapou, Warakpoa, and Karasabai. "Inspired by the world-class examples in Surama, Rewa, and Yupakari villages, the Ministry of Business, through the GTA and in collaboration with the MOIPA, has made it a priority to scale up community-owned and led tourism development in indigenous communities nationwide," explained Brian T. Mullis, Director of the Guyana Tourism Authority. "Not only is indigenous tourism in demand from travellers, it has been proven to be a successful and sustainable solution and a life-changing business model in Guyana."

The GTA, MOIPA and Rainforest Tours also successfully executed a Tour Guide and Culinary Arts Training with the Moraikobai Tourism Committee and other interested residents during their visit. These trainings were carefully planned and facilitated to prepare and empower the Arawak community to independently host visitors and to satisfy their expectations during their visit.

A total of eight (8) males and four (4) females were trained as tour guides, which was led by Mr. Kamrul Baksh and Mr. Frank Singh. Ms. Margaret Cornette, a Catering Facilitator from Hinterland Employment Youth Service (HEYS) Department within the MOIPA facilitated the culinary training; eighteen (18) females were trained. The participants were able to prepare foods using the ingredients that are local to the community. List of dishes include cassava ho la la, cassava bread custard and pudding, farine white pudding, farine fruit cake, farine cheesestraw, and more.

Moraikobai is the only indigenous community located in Region 5, and it is situated 96 miles from Mahaicony Bridge, Berbice Highway. This community has a population of approximately 900 residents with 181 households. The village is also accessible via a one hour drive and journey up the Mahaica River, which takes less than two hours. During a peaceful boat ride, you can spot various species of birds including the famous hoatzin, Guyana's National Bird.

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About the Guyana Tourism Authority: The Guyana Tourism Authority (GTA) is a semi-autonomous governmental organisation responsible for developing and promoting sustainable tourism in Guyana through collaboration with sister agencies and the tourism private sector in order to maximise local socio-economic and conservation outcomes and improve the visitors' experience. The GTA is focused on Guyana becoming recognised locally and internationally as a premier destination for protecting its natural and cultural heritage, providing authentic experiences, and maximizing local economic benefits. For more information, visit www.guyanaturism.com or call (592) 219-0094.

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