



Mexican Embassy pledges support to Guyana as the country navigates its emerging Oil and Gas Sector

As we approach the end of 2018, it seems concerns over the emerging oil and gas sector are on everyone's mind given that the first oil is expected in 2020. Citizens share skepticism on what exactly this means for Guyana and what framework the country will use to manage this industry given that it's new to the country. In response, stakeholder organisations are rapidly drawing up robust policies and strategies to cater to this new industry with an emphasis on strengthening technical capacity to regulate and monitor the sector.

Sharing experiences

In an effort to share relevant experiences and jumpstart the transfer of skills for capacity-building among Guyanese stakeholders. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) along with members from critical organisations involved in the extractive and natural resources sectors were invited by the Mexican Embassy to take part in a two and half day workshop with experts from the Mexican Agency for Security, Energy and the Environment (ASEA). Executive Director of ASEA, Mr. Carlos de Regules and his team traveled to Guyana from Mexico to share their experience in the petroleum industry. The Executive Director shared that he felt privileged to be able to witness, first-hand, how Guyana is preparing for the oil and gas industry, "It is a personal satisfaction for me being able to be here with you and feeling a little bit of the same feeling we had four years ago when we were launching (ASEA) in Mexico."

The team noted that Mexico has been managing their oil and gas sector since 1904; however, four years ago the organisation underwent a major reform placing an emphasis on environmental regulations and safety in the sector.

Mexican Agency for Security, Energy and the Environment (ASEA)

ASEA was established in 2015 as a regulatory agency within Mexico's Ministry of the Environment to oversee industrial safety, operational security and environmental protection regarding the extractive industries in order to foster sustainable development. In its short time of operating, ASEA has managed over 300 oil platforms, six refineries with over 60,000 km of pipeline, and more than 100 oil and gas storage facilities. Since commencing operations, Carlos de Regules said, 107 contracts have been awarded with US\$200B, committed for future investment and 74 companies from over 20 countries visiting Mexico to seek investment opportunities.

Knowledge transfer

The ASEA team discussed their organisation's regulatory model for industry safety and environmental protection in the oil and gas industry. The executive director noted that "Our lesson four years later is that regulatory certainty is a good deal for the industry. This is what we have found out and we have been working closely with different stakeholders to build these regulations." Presentations were also made on insurance guidelines, risk management, best practice principles for regulatory policies and monitoring and enforcement. The Executive Director also delivered a presentation on scenario thinking on the best practices in managing oil, which addressed how the EPA and other key stakeholders can move forward in strengthening its capacity and sponsorship.

As Guyana moves forward

The Executive Director, ASEA, emphasized that Mexico's recent experience can be of value to Guyana in deciding how to better harness this oil and gas industry to make it positive for the country Guyana can benefit significantly from best practices and lessons learned from countries who have been involved in this sector. As the regulatory body, the EPA is committed to staying vigilant and ensuring that companies are in compliance with the Environmental Protection Act, Cap 20:05, Laws of Guyana. To this end, the Agency continues to work closely with partners both local and international to ensure it is adequately prepared for first oil in 2020.

Mexican Ambassador to Guyana, H.E. Ivan Sierra expressed optimism that the event was a launching pad for future bilateral partnerships with the Government of Mexico. Ambassador Sierra also announced an internship for four representatives from Guyana to join at Mexican Agency for Security, Energy and the Environment (ASEA) in a six week comprehensive internship program that would involve further capacity building and training in the oil and gas sector. The internship offer was further extended to a staff of the EPA.

You can share your ideas and questions by sending letters to: "Our Earth, Our Environment", C/O ECEA Programme, Environmental Protection Agency, Ganges Street, Sophia, GEORGETOWN, or email us at: eit.epaguyana@gmail.com or follow us on Facebook and Instagram.

Sources

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