

Annex A

Analytical Evidence to Support Guyana's Green State Development Strategy: Vision 2040

Background, Introduction, Planning and Socio-Political Context

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List of Acronyms used in the Annexes

ABD	Asian Development Bank
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AMCAR	Amazon Caribbean Guyana Limited
AMI	Advancing Metering Infrastructure
ASIF	Avoid, Shift, Improve Framework
BAU	Business as Usual
BPO	Business Process Outsourcing
BTAP	Budget Transparency Action Plan
CAP	Conservancy Adaptation Project
CAPE	Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination
CARIBCAN	Caribbean Canada Trade Agreement
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CD	Communicable Disease
CDB	Caribbean Development Bank
CET	Common External Tariff
CFO	Community Forest Organisation
CH&PA	Central Housing and Planning Authority
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CJIA	Cheddi Jagan International Airport
CNG	Compressed Natural Gas
CO ₂	Carbon Dioxide
CPCE	Cyril Potter College of Education
CSEC	Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate
CSME	Caribbean Single Market Economy
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DBIS	Demerara Berbice Interconnection System
DDL	Demerara Distillers Limited
DEI	Disaster Exposure Index
DHB	Demerara Harbour Bridge
D&I	Drainage and Irrigation
DoE	Department of Environment
DoEn	Department of Energy
DWT	Deadweight Tonnes
DSL	Digital Subscriber Line
EAC	European Agriculture Council
EDWC	East Demerara Water Conservancy
EE	Energy Efficiency
EEC	European Economic Community
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EFSA	Economically and Fiscally Sustainable Amount

EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EITI	Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
EPMU	Expenditure Programming Management Unit
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ERP	Economy Recovery Program
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
ESDCB	Education for Sustainable Development Policy Coordinating Body
ESIA	Environmental and Social Impact Assessment
ESRA	Electricity Sector Reform Act
EU-CARIFORUM	European Union Caribbean Forum Economic Partnership Agreement
EU - FLEGT	European Union Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation United Nations
FCPF	Forest Carbon Partnership Facility
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FID	Final Investment Decision
FMAA	Financial Management and Accountability Act 2003
FSC	Forest Stewardship
FSSD	Financing Solutions for Sustainable Development
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GCSDF	Guyana Civil Society Development Foundation
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GE	Green Economy
GEA	Guyana Energy Agency
GEMS	Green Economy Modelling Study
GFC	Guyana Forestry Commission
GFCF	Green Finance Catalyzing Facility
GGB	Guyana Gold Board
GGMC	Guyana Geology and Mines Commission
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GIB	Green Investment Bank
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
GITEP	Guyana Improving Teacher Education Project
GLDA	Guyana Livestock Development Authority
GL&SC	Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission
GMC	Guyana Marketing Corporation
GMO	Genetically Modified Organisms
GNBS	Guyana National Bureau of Standards
GO-INVEST	Guyana Office for Investment
GPL	Guyana Power and Light Inc.
GRA	Guyana Revenue Authority
GRDB	Guyana Rice Development Board

GSDS/CO	Green State Development Strategy Coordination Office
GRIF	Guyana REDD+ Investment Fund
GTA	Guyana Tourism Authority
GTIS	Guyana Trade and Investment
GTT	Guyana Telephone and Telegraph
GuySuCo	Guyana Sugar Corporation
GWl	Guyana Water Inc.
GyD	Guyanese Dollars
HA	High Ambition
HECI	Hinterland Electrification Co. Inc.
HFLD	High Forest Low Deforestation
HFO	Heavy Fuel Oil
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDA	International Development Association
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IFAD	International Fund for Agriculture & Development
IFM	Independent Forest Monitoring
IIC	Iwokrama International Centre for Rainforest Conservation & Development
IIRSA	Initiative for Integration of Regional Infrastructure in South America
ILO	International Labour Organisation
ILUP	Integrated Land Use Planning system
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPED	Institute of Private Enterprise Development
ISP	Internet Service Provider
KFZ	Kingston Free Zone
KPO	Knowledge Process Outsourcing
KTEO	Kiloton of Oil-Equivalent
KV	Kilovolts
KW	Kilowatt
LA	Low Ambition
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
LCD	Least Developed Countries
LCDS	Low Carbon Development Strategy
LCR	Low Carbon Resilience
LED	Light Emitting Diode
LFO	Light Fuel Oil
LGBTQI	Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Queer, Transgender, Intersex
LNG	Liquified Natural Gas
LPG	Liquefied Petroleum Gas
LUS	Lesser Utilised Species
LV	Low Voltage

MADC	More Advanced Developing Countries
MARAD	Maritime Administration Department
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEA	Multinational Environmental Agreement
MERD	Monitoring, Evaluating, Reporting and Development
MICE	Meeting/Incentive/Conferences/Exhibition
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MIS	Management Information System
MMA-ADA	Mahaica-Mahaicony Abary – Agricultural Development Authority
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoC	Ministry of Communities
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoIPA	Ministry of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs
MNR	Ministry of Natural Resources
MoPH	Ministry of Public Health
MoPI	Ministry of Public Infrastructure
MoPT	Ministry of Public Telecommunications
MoSP	Ministry of Social Protection
MoTP	Ministry of the Presidency
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSC	Marine Stewardship Council
MTEF	Medium-term Expenditure Framework
MRV	Monitoring, Reporting and Verification
MV	Medium Voltage
NAREI	National Agricultural Research and Extension Unit
NBAP	National Biodiversity Action Plans
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NCD	Non-Communicable Diseases
NCS	National Competitiveness Strategy
NDIA	National Drainage and Infrastructure Authority
NDMA	National Data Management Authority
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NGSA	National Grade Six Assessment
NICIL	National Industrial and Commercial Investments Limited
NLP	National Land Policy
NPPO	National Plant Protection Organisation
NPTA	National Procurement and Tender Administration
NRF	Natural Resource Fund
NRFA	Natural Resource Fund Act
NTD	Neglected Tropical Diseases
NWC	National Water Council
NWMC	National Wildlife Management Commission

OAS	Organization of American States
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OIM	Opt-in Mechanism
OSH	Occupational Safety & Health
O&M	Operations and Maintenance
PA	Protected Area
PAC	Protected Areas Commission
PAHO	Pan American Health Organisation
PAYE	Pay-as-you-earn
PCPMU	Policy Coordination and Programme Management Unit
PEFA	Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability
PES	Payment for ecosystem services
PFMAP	Public Financial Management Action Plan
PIMA	Public Investment Management Assessment
PPC	Public Procurement Commission
PPGHS	Package of Publicly Guaranteed Health Services
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
PSA	Production Sharing Agreement
PV	Photovoltaic
RAI	Remote Area Incentive
RAP	Recycled Asphalt Pavement
REDD+	Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
RIL	Reduced Impact Logging
R&D	Research and development
SBB	Small Business Bureau
SBC	Small Business Council
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SIDS	Small Island Development States
SFEP	State Forest Exploratory Permit
SFP	State Forest Permit
SG-SCS	Suriname – Guyana Submarine Cable System
SLDMP	Sustainable Land Development and Management Programme
SMEs	Small-to-medium sized enterprises
SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standards
SPU	Special Purpose Unit
SWF	Sovereign Wealth Fund
SSC	Social Cost of Carbon
TADAT	Tax Administration and Diagnostic Assessment Tool
TFA	Trade Facilitation Agreement
TJ	Terajoule
TSA	Timber Sales Agreement

TSC	Teaching Service Commission
TVET	Technical, Vocational, Education and Training
UG	University of Guyana
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCBD	United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity
UNCTD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNISDR	United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
VAT	Value Added Tax
VPA	Voluntary Partnership Agreement
WCL	Wood Cutting Leases
WCMC	Wildlife Conservation and Management Commission
WDWC	West Demerara Water Conservancy
WHO	World Health Organisation
WSG	Work Services Group
WTO	World Trade Organisation
WUA	Water Users Association
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

1 Background and Introduction

1.1 Background

It is well worth reminding that the Indigenous word *Guianas*, meaning “land of many waters” that gave Guyana its name, reflects the extent and richness of the country’s natural heritage. Beginning from the time of its Indigenous or ‘first peoples’ (~38,000 years ago), the people of Guyana have had a deep connection to their natural environment. History records that the First Peoples migrated northward through South America along rivers, over mountains and plains, settling along the northern coasts (what is today Guyana, Suriname and French Guyana) and ultimately in other Caribbean islands further north. During those early periods, the Indigenous people were hunter-gatherers and made their livelihoods within wide swaths of forests across South America; but change was on the horizon.

The Indigenous lifestyle would dramatically be altered several millennia later, with the arrival of colonial European powers into the West Indies during the 15th Century. The Arawaks, Warrau and Caribs settled mainly along the coasts and coastal plain. The Arawaks lived in communes, cultivated, hunted and fished peacefully, while the Caribs gained a reputation for more aggressive, marauding lifestyles. They were eventually coerced into labour in service of the early colonisers.

A century later, Guyana’s coast would be transformed by its Dutch colonisers, who specialised in techniques of ‘poldering’, that is, impounding then draining swamp lands with a system of drainage canals developed for agricultural production. Initially settling in riverine locations along the Essequibo, Demerara and Berbice rivers and further east, the Dutch forced Guyana’s indigenous population to work on the early agricultural plantations. When their numbers were decimated from diseases and ill treatment, the Dutch turned to the importation of African slaves. In spite of the brutality, this era of Guyana’s history was noted for the management of land resources – particularly in coastal wetlands – that were converted to agricultural produce. The country was highly favoured by the colonisers for plantation agriculture in comparison to their island neighbours to the north, because of large and fertile land resources.

By the 1800s, ‘British Guiana’ emerged as a plantation economy, mainly based on sugar cane production in coastal areas. In the post-emancipation years, Guyanese society was increasingly multi-ethnic with the arrival of Portuguese and Chinese labourers, followed by East Indian indentured labourers to work the plantations. African slaves escaping the brutality of plantation life in coastal regions, took refuge in the hinterland, settling in communities and growing crops on small plots. Later on, the British colonists discovered, then mined gold deposits west of the Essequibo river, raising tensions along the border with Venezuela, who claimed this part of the country’s territory. The border dispute remains unresolved to this day.

As Guyana’s development progressed through the 1900s, labour unions emerged with increased calls for better social conditions, and with consequent political organisation. The end of the system of indentured labour saw East Indian immigrants moving to the emerging rice farms. Bauxite extraction began to increase. Meanwhile, sugar as the main export was challenged by fluctuating commodity prices. Agricultural costs in the coastal regions were steadily increasing with the constant need for drainage and irrigation and growing demand for fairer wages. British colonial rule lasted until the country’s independence in 1966, but

plantation agriculture (sugar, rice and other crops) and natural resource exploitation e.g. gold, bauxite and other minerals (e.g. diamonds) are still part of Guyana's economic and social contexts.

In 2009, as the world was still coming to terms with its failure to reach a negotiated agreement to limit carbon emissions, Guyana led the way in a pioneering partnership with the Government of Norway to preserve its forests and in doing so, to effectively safeguard an immense capacity for carbon storage and biodiversity. Although transactional, this partnership underscored the country's obligations to the Paris Agreement as part of the global compact in the fight against climate change. The partnership has promised \$250 million in payments to Guyana, contingent upon the completion of activities to preserve forest cover, sustainably manage uses therein, transition to renewable energy sources for electricity supply, and to diversifying agricultural production, among other objectives. The timing could not have been better for Guyana, as it achieved a head start and international recognition for its low carbon approach to national and economic development

The role and importance of land in the history of the Guyanese people encapsulated above are significant parts of its story. Popular sobriquets such as the "land of the giants" and the "land of many waters", speak to the country's vast expanses of intact forests, habitats and ecosystems supporting equally large species (some of which are the largest in the world) including the many rivers draining north from watersheds along the Venezuelan and Brazilian borders. Guyana is the largest among Caribbean countries, is self-sufficient in food production and aims to be the "breadbasket of the Caribbean". These attributes, however, belie the country's current standing as the second poorest in the Caribbean, after Haiti.

Looking back from the perspective of today, the aspirations for economic development and diversification that is based on the country's vast natural wealth are part of a long standing and unfulfilled desire that has remained somewhat of an elusive dream.

As the country's history proves, however, challenge and change are always on the horizon. The year 2018 will be noted for the enormous discoveries of oil & gas revealed in the exploration leases of Exxon Mobil and others in Guyana's territorial waters. The country is once again at a pivotal stage in its development history: and a transformation is needed to deal with the revenue windfall from oil & gas, estimated at current prices to be on the scale of billions (US). This could, however, be the proverbial 'blessing' that carries the risk of the 'curse'.

It is into this reality that the *Green State Development Strategy: Vision 2040* has emerged. The enormous opportunity that lies ahead requires a scale of rethinking, re-planning and restructuring that must be evenly matched by the determination of the Guyanese people to contribute their talent and creativity and to act as the occasion warrants. The Strategy develops the pathway and policy proposals that are of priority for investment. In the final analysis, however it is the Guyanese people – actors in public and private sector, civil society groups, youths, men and women of all creeds and persuasions – who must accomplish the objectives of the 'green state' agenda.

1.2 Document Purpose

The diagnostic effort involved months of consultations, meetings, discussions and research based on the priorities established in the *Framework Document for the Green State*

Development Strategy (2017). These Annexes discuss, analyse and present the findings of the research exercises, including consultations conducted across Guyana's 10 administrative regions, and among multi-stakeholder expert groups that deliberated on the seven priority themes. As in any undertaking of this scale, the time required for assembling, collating and analysing information, consulting with all levels of society and documenting the varied points of views, is hardly ever enough.

Notwithstanding, the assessments analyse Guyana's current situation and set the basis for the proposals of the *Green State Development Strategy: Vision 2040* that articulates the Government of Guyana's development vision, policy and strategy for the next 20 years. The Strategy therefore serves as an overarching document that prioritises and guides the associated implementing actions of government ministries and agencies specifically. It should also be used by the cooperating private sector, other civil society groups, donors and investors as a guide for participating in and supporting the economic and social development in the country and in making investments over the short-, medium- and long terms.

1.3 Methodology

The Annexes were compiled from: i) a review and assessment of secondary information and data; ii) reports on public events, regional and bilateral consultations e.g. with multi-stakeholder expert groups, in towns and communities, and through "Green Conversation" panel and media events; iii) macroeconomic modeling and capacity building on scenarios of economic restructuring and transformation based on green economy principles; iv) technical workshops sharing tools, knowledge, methods and approaches; and v) one-on-one interviews with senior staff and planners of Government ministries and other state agencies. The relevant reports related to these activities are included and activities are summarised below.

1.4 Reviews, Assessments and Analyses

Desk-top research, situation and diagnostic analyses were conducted to inform the assessment of the current baseline condition of the country and the design of the *Green State Development Strategy: Vision 2040*. These assessments included:

- ***A Rapid Integrated Assessment (RIA)***: In response to a request from the Government of Guyana, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) provided support for a Rapid Integrated Assessment (RIA) to assess the integration of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for the *Green State Development Strategy: Vision 2040*. The RIA analysed available national and regional strategy documents and action plans to determine the country's readiness to embark on SDG implementation. Associated with this work was an assessment of the levels of multi-actor approaches required for implementation of the SDG targets.

"Workshop on Multidimensional approaches for the 2030 agenda: Aligning the Sustainable Development Goals in the Green State Development strategy": The results of the RIA provided the context for a subsequent workshop on integrating the SDGs into development planning, hosted 15th – 16th March 2018 in Georgetown organised by UNDP and UN Environment. Participants included members of the Green State Development Strategy Thematic Expert Groups, government representatives and other stakeholders. The Workshop output provided the first step to

developing a Theory of Change for the *Green State Development Strategy: Vision 2040*.

- **Desktop research and situation analyses:** Green State Development Strategy Coordination Office staff, and local and external consultants also conducted analyses of existing studies on Guyana's economic, social, environmental conditions and situation, reviewing national and sector policies, strategies, plans and reports, as available and accessible (see Annex D: "Stocktaking Report" of the University of Guyana).

1.5 Nation-wide public Consultations

As an inclusionary democracy, Article 13 of the *Constitution of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana* requires that its citizens participate in decision-making especially where it affects their well-being. To that end, His Excellency the President, Brigadier David A. Granger announced at the launch of the Green State Development Strategy process on 22nd November 2017, that the citizens of Guyana will have their say on the priorities of the Strategy. A range of consultations were therefore conducted in support of the elaboration of the Strategy, involving multi-stakeholder groups and community-based interactions across the 10 administrative regions (see Annex G).

The general objective of the multi-stakeholder national consultation process was to embrace a total participatory approach to ensure public participation in the design and elaboration of the Green State Development Strategy Vision 2040. The specific objectives were to:

- a. Create awareness and better understanding on the framework document of the Green State Development Strategy; and
- b. Engage with diverse stakeholder groups to identify Regional priorities, aspirations, challenges, and receive proposals for the Green State Development Strategy Vision 2040.

The Green State Development Strategy Coordination Office collaborated with the Department of the Environment of the Ministry of the Presidency, the Ministry of Communities and the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs, Regional Democratic Councils and Neighbourhood Democratic Councils, to ensure maximum participation from communities and villagers, local chambers of commerce, community and other citizen groups active in each of the regions.

The Coordination Office also partnered with World Wildlife Fund Guianas (WWF) on the national consultations (see consultation reports in Annex G). The former organised and executed consultations in the four coastal regions, namely, Region 3 (Essequibo Islands-West Demerara), Region 4 (Demerara-Mahaica), Region 5 (Mahaica-Berbice) and Region 6 (East Berbice-Corentyne), while the latter organised the hinterland consultations i.e. in Region 1 (Barima-Waini), Region 2 (Pomeroon-Supenaam), Region 7 (Cuyuni-Mazaruni), Region 8 (Potaro-Siparuni), Region 9 (Upper Takutu-Upper Essequibo) and Region 10 (Upper Demerara-Berbice). There were fifteen (15) coastal consultations organised by the Coordination Office between April and July 2018; and seventeen (17) hinterland consultations conducted by WWF during August-October 2018, for a total of thirty-two consultation cluster meetings across the country.

The consultations followed a participatory approach designed to allow for contributions from all participants irrespective of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. The meetings were

day-long events divided into two sessions. The first was a plenary session to create awareness on the Green State Development Strategy Framework document and inform on the concept and practices of green development, while the second session undertook the group discussion format to solicit feedback on: i) their vision for the communities/Region over the next 20; ii) the five main issues faced by their families and communities in the Region; and iii) the likely solutions to address the identified problem. Where possible, efforts were made to separate the responses by age groups (youth < 24 years) and gender.

Before closing of the day's proceedings, participants were asked to work together to craft and agree on a common vision statement for their community or Region.

1.6 Bilateral meetings

The Coordination Office conducted frequent engagements with representatives from various public agencies, private sector bodies and civil society organisations. The objectives of these meetings were to present the framework of the *Green State Development Strategy: Vision 2040*, receive inputs for conducting sector analyses, and policy recommendations for consideration for inclusion in the *Strategy*. At the public level, participants included ministers of government, permanent secretaries, agency and department heads, and senior planners. Engagement with the private sector included discussions with the Private Sector Commission, Georgetown Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Guyana Manufacturing and Services Association. Civil society meetings included the Transparency Institute Guyana Inc., Rise, Organise and Rebuild Guyana, and the National Tshaos Council.

1.7 Green Conversations

Building on a prior model of public information talks previously conducted in the country, Conservation International-Guyana was contracted to conduct five (5) "Green Conversations" events (see Annex C). These featured expert speakers and panelists in open session answering questions from participants on specific topics and themes of relevance to the green state agenda.

The objective was to inform the national population on topics of relevance to the 'green state' agenda and to receive feedback. These events were conducted in parallel with social media promotions including video packages that are freely accessible on the GSDS' social media platforms e.g. Facebook and Instagram. The events were conducted in Linden, Bartica, Lethem, New Amsterdam and Georgetown. A total of seven events were conducted in 2018.

1.8 Thematic Expert Groups

In launching the *Green State Development Strategy: Vision 2040* process in November 2017, His Excellency the President also inaugurated the multi-stakeholder thematic expert groups. These comprised 136 men and women from the public/private sectors and civil society groups organized within seven thematic groups, reviewing sector policies, plans and reports, and drafting recommendations and thematic priorities for the *Green State Development Strategy: Vision 2040*.

1.9 Economic Modelling

In July 2017, UN Environment and the Ministry of Finance, in collaboration with the Partnership for Action on the Green Economy (PAGE) held high-level consultations with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Natural Resources and Ministry of Public Infrastructure. It was agreed that agriculture, forestry, energy and infrastructure would be prioritised for the economic modelling exercises. In July 2018, model simulations economic assessments were conducted to: i) estimate the required investments to achieve identified national and/or sustainable development targets; (ii) identify the policies for enabling the required investments; and (iii) assess multiple impacts of proposed policies using a range of economic, social and environmental indicators. This effort was supported by research from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) on green jobs and the requirements for a just transition to decent work; and the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) on green industrial development.

2 Socio-Political Context

2.1 Population

According to the latest census,¹ the population of Guyana in 2012 was 746,955 inhabitants, slightly lower than the 2002 population (751,223). 64% of the country's population is below the age of 35. In Guyana, approximately 90% of the population resides on the 459 km coastal strip that is approximately 1.5m below sea level. This densely populated area also has the highest concentration of agricultural, infrastructural and communications networks.

2.2 Human Development

In UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI) Report (2016)², Guyana is listed in the medium human development category. The country's 2015 HDI was 0.638 positioning it at number 127 out of 188 countries. From 1990-2015, Guyana's HDI value increased by 17.9%³ from 0.541 to 0.638. The HDI improvements are explained from an increase by 3 years of the country's life expectancy at birth; an increase by 1.6 years of mean years of schooling; and a significant increase by 209.8% of Gross National Income (GNI) per capita. Putting these figures in perspective, the UNDP HDI report describes Guyana's 2015 HDI of 0.638 as slightly above the global average in the medium human development category (0.631), but below the Latin America and Caribbean regional average (0.751).

The UNDP HDI Statistical update (2018)⁴ of HDI values for CARICOM countries is listed in the table below. Guyana made slight improvements over its 2015 HDI across all indicators.

Table 1: Guyana's Human Development Index Ranking (2018)

CARICOM Country	Human Development Index	Gross National Income (GNI) US\$	Global Rank (Out of 189 Countries)
Bahamas	0.807	26,681	54
Barbados	0.800	15,843	58
Trinidad & Tobago	0.784	28,622	69
Antigua & Barbuda	0.780	20,764	70
St. Kitts and Nevis	0.778	23,978	72
Grenada	0.772	12,864	75
St. Lucia	0.747	11,685	90
Jamaica	0.732	7,846	97
St. Vincent &	0.723	10,499	99

¹ 2012 National Population and Housing Census – Final Report, Bureau of Statistics Guyana, May 2016

² UNDP Human Development Report, 2016

³ Ibid.

⁴ Source: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries>.

CARICOM Country	Human Development Index	Gross National Income (GNI) US\$	Global Rank (Out of 189 Countries)
Grenadines			
Suriname	0.720	13,366	100
Dominica	0.715	8,344	103
Belize	0.708	7,166	106
Guyana	0.654	7,447	125
Haiti	0.498	1,665	168

Note: Latin America & Caribbean Ave. = 0.758; Medium HDI = 0.645
Source: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries>

However, the country still lags significantly behind its CARICOM neighbours and the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) Average HDI of 0.758. CARICOM countries are ranked in the High Human Development category, except for Guyana ranked in the Medium Human Development category and Haiti ranked in the Low Human Development category. Similarly, the performance indicators demonstrate that male-female HDI disparity is higher for Guyana compared to CARICOM and LAC countries.

UNDP's Caribbean Human Development Report (2016)⁵ describes the region's specific circumstances and persistent deep structural challenges that hinder its progress in human development and economic transformation. For the region to progress it must now regard and measure human development in multi-dimensional terms i.e. defined by householder access to decent work, quality education, gender equality, social protection and quality care systems, coupled with commensurate improvements in environmental quality and safety.

2.3 Indigenous Peoples

2.3.1 Pre-Colonial Period

Guyanese Amerindians are descendants of the original, pre-Columbian inhabitants of Guyana. Archaeological evidence suggests that Amerindian people first arrived in northwestern Guyana about 11,000 years ago,⁶ several millennia before the arrival of the European colonists. The Warrau, were reported to be the first people to enter Guyana from the northwestern parts of the country.⁷ Other groups arrived and occupied various parts of the country to the south. Today's indigenous groups continue to inhabit the same areas as their ancestors engaged in their traditional livelihoods and cultural practices (e.g. fishing, hunting, farming).

⁵ UNDP "Caribbean Human Report: Multi-Dimensional Progress: Human Resilience Beyond Income" 2016, 248pp.

⁶ Denis Williams: 1995: Pages in Guyanese History

⁷ Almás, O; Anselmo, L; George, L; Griffiths, T; J. La Rose: 2014. Indigenous Peoples' Rights, Forests and Climate Policies in Guyana: a special report

Indigenous Peoples were mainly hunters; but over 4,000 years they evolved to become hunter-gatherers with a diet based on wild animals, larvae of beetles, wild honey, wild cashew and the Ite palm (*Mauritia flexuosa*). The Ite palm, which flourishes in swampy places, was used to produce a type of flour, which was the main source of starch for early Indigenous Peoples.⁸ Severe droughts would later decimate the Ite palms thereby affecting supplies of flour. This forced the early Indigenous Peoples to look for alternatives, introducing cassava for example, into their diets.

The starch of the cassava is still used to make flour for the baking of their cassava bread and other by-products. The domestication of cassava was the first indication of early Indigenous Peoples' intent to establish semi-permanent agricultural communities.⁹ The adoption and domestication of the bitter cassava and development of skills to process the raw product were major impacts on Indigenous Peoples' culture and diet. They recognised that the soils they cultivated were not very fertile to sustain successive crops, and there was need to move onto new locations after the first crops. Their shifting cultivation patterns also informed methods of managing soil fertility to prevent nutrient exhaustion and land degradation.

Centuries later and following the well-known encounters with European colonists, many of the earliest groups of Indigenous Peoples either became extinct or migrated to neighbouring countries.

2.3.2 Pre-Independence

By the end of the nineteenth century, the principal Indigenous groups that existed in Guyana included the Caribs, the Akawois or Waikas, the Arawaks, the Warraus, the Magariouts, or Manoas, Arecunas, Makuschis, Patamonos, Wapisianas; Wai-Wai, the Patamonas,¹⁰ Tarumas, Trios, and Atorads. The Wai-Wais arrived early in the 20th century from the forests in Northern Brazil and occupied the Deep South area of Guyana near the source of the Essequibo River.

Christianity was introduced to Indigenous Peoples in the 19th century by European Christian Missionaries. Between 1831 – 1840 there were five Missions established in Indigenous areas. The Missionaries constructed schools in all areas where there were missions and imparted academic and religious education on the residents.¹¹ Another Christian denomination that has penetrated Indigenous communities is the Seventh Day Adventists. At present, most Indigenous Peoples in Guyana have adopted Christianity as their religion.

2.3.3 Post-Independence

Guyana's Indigenous communities are now mostly (over 90%) located in the hinterland regions, and their populations are higher in Barima-Waina, Cuyuni-Mazaruni, Potaro-Siparuni and Upper Takutu-Upper Essequibo. Since attaining Independence in 1966, Guyana has seen a

⁸ <http://www.guyana.org/features/guyanastory/chapter2.html>

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ <http://guyanese.ru/en/amerindians-guyana.php>

rapid growth in the Indigenous population increasing from around 30,000 persons¹² in the late 1960's to 50,222¹³ in 1993 to 68,675¹⁴ in 2002, and now 70,000-75,000 persons. These figures include the nine groups of Indigenous Peoples presently existing in Guyana: Carib, Arawak, Warrau, Akawaio, Arekuna, Makushi, Patamona, Waiwai, and Wapisiana.

With the current high fertility rates¹⁵ among Indigenous women, the size of the Indigenous population is expected to increase within the next 20 years. The majority of communities are located in remote places with hostile terrain causing access to their villages to be difficult and long in duration, particularly in the north Pakaraimas, Upper-Mazaruni and southern parts of Guyana. Some other Indigenous communities are located in coastal regions along rivers such as the Mahaica, Mahaicony, Pomeroon, Corentyne, Berbice and Demerara. Though the coastal Indigenous communities are easier to access than their hinterland counterparts, they are still faced with the challenges of high transportation costs and access roads that are in most cases in a very deplorable state.

At present, there are 212 communities occupying approximately 33,074 km² of lands or 15.4 % of the country's total land area. Though socio-cultural changes are evident in most, if not all, of the communities, the basic ingredients of Indigenous culture remain unchanged, for instance, the prominent status of the Chief (Toshao) and Councilors in decision-making positions in the village.

The Government of Guyana has committed to improving the lives of Indigenous Peoples and to integrating them into society. Over the last 50 years, initiatives undertaken to improve the lives of Indigenous Peoples in Guyana included:

- The establishment of an Amerindian Land Commission in 1969 to address problems with land titling for Indigenous communities. Indigenous Peoples are now the largest private land owners in Guyana; accounting for approximately 13.5% ownership of the national land area.
- Granting of Land Title to over 129 communities.
- Appointment of Indigenous Peoples to be Members of Parliament.
- Establishment of a Government Ministry to deal specifically with Indigenous Peoples Affairs.
- Establishment of an Amerindian Development Fund to provide socio-economic opportunities to communities.
- Legal recognition of Protected Areas in Indigenous communities.
- Government scholarships to Indigenous students for local and overseas training.
- Construction of schools and health centres in various communities.

¹² Brothwell, D.R: The Amerindians of Guyana: A Biological Review. British Museum of Natural History

¹³ J. Vereecke 1994: National Report on Indigenous Peoples and development

¹⁴ Guyana's National Population Census 2012.

¹⁵ Ibid

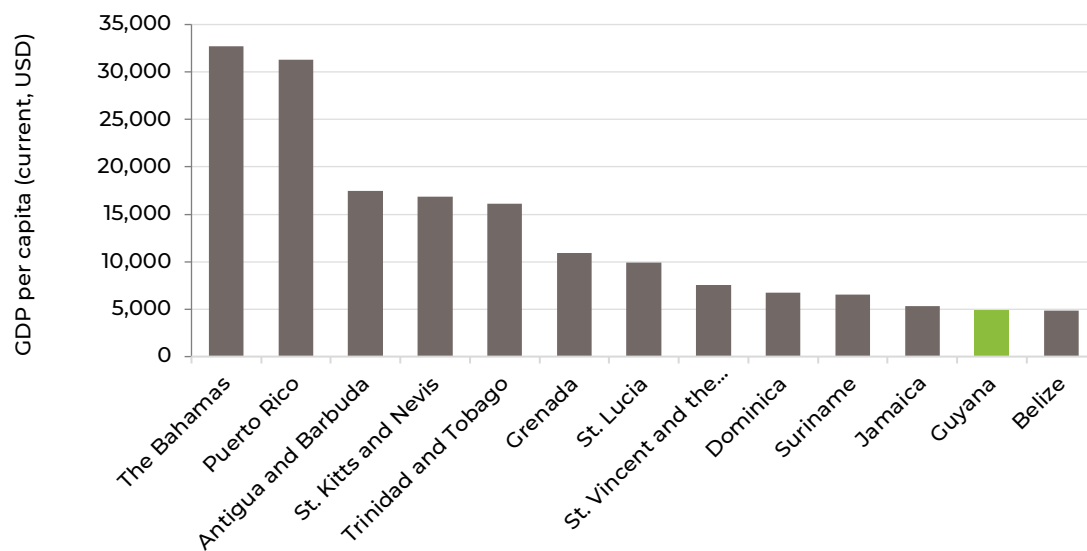
- Free transportation for students at the beginning and end of each school term.
- Opportunities for more Indigenous women to be actively involved in the national development and administration of their communities, for example, women have become ministers of government, Tashaos, project managers and internationally recognised advocates of Indigenous Peoples.

3 Historical Economic Performance

3.1 Income, poverty and inequality

In contrast to other CARICOM and higher income countries, Guyana's economy relies heavily on primary commodities which provide little opportunity for economic diversification. Guyana's GDP per capita is below that of other CARICOM countries (Figure 1). Guyana's economy consists primarily of local (non-traded) services, and agricultural and mining commodities such as gold, bauxite, sugar, fish, shrimp and timber. These sectors are low in value-add and complexity, which means they provide relatively little domestic economic benefit and relatively little opportunity for economic diversification into related industries. In contrast, several other countries in the CARICOM region are supported by tourism and finance, which have high value-add. More broadly, upper middle-income countries are generally characterised by an industrial transformation in which they move away from exporting raw commodities into processing, manufacturing and higher-value add services. This is in stark contrast to the structure of the Guyanese economy.

Figure 1: Per Capita GDP of Caribbean Countries

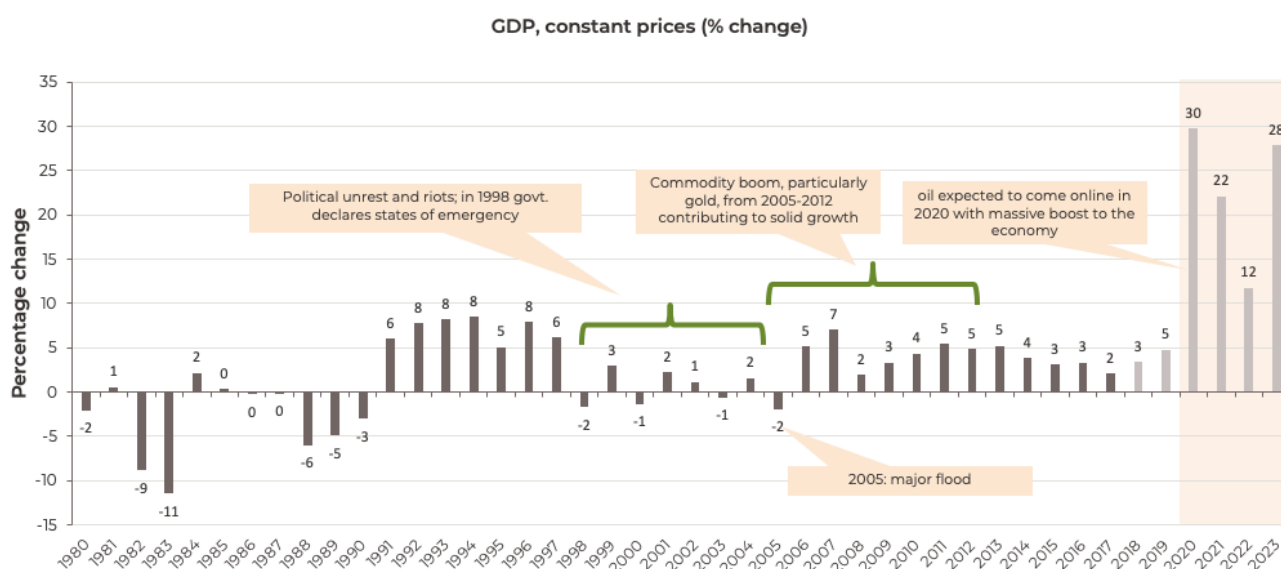


Source: World Bank, 2018 data

Guyana's growth has been hampered by natural disasters, political instability and international commodity price shocks (Figure 2). Before the liberalisation of 1989, Guyana's economy was deeply socialist and stagnated for a significant period. With liberalisation came a series of privatisations, the relaxation of price controls, opening up to world trade, and stronger incentives for private investment. Initially, growth was slow to recover, but with a rescheduling of debt in 1991, foreign investment increased, and the economy bounced back. The years of strong positive growth, however, came to an end around 1997 when political instability took hold of Guyana due to disputed election results. A state of emergency was declared in 1998 followed by several years of violence, riots and instability. During this period, growth dropped

considerably (Figures 2 and 3). In 2005 and 2006, severe flooding significantly impacted the economy.¹⁶ Month long floods affected more than 150,000 people and resulted in the loss of thousands of acres of rice, according to the NASA Earth Observatory. This shows how Guyana has had a relatively volatile growth trajectory.

Figure 2: Percentage Change in Guyana's GDP (1980-2023)

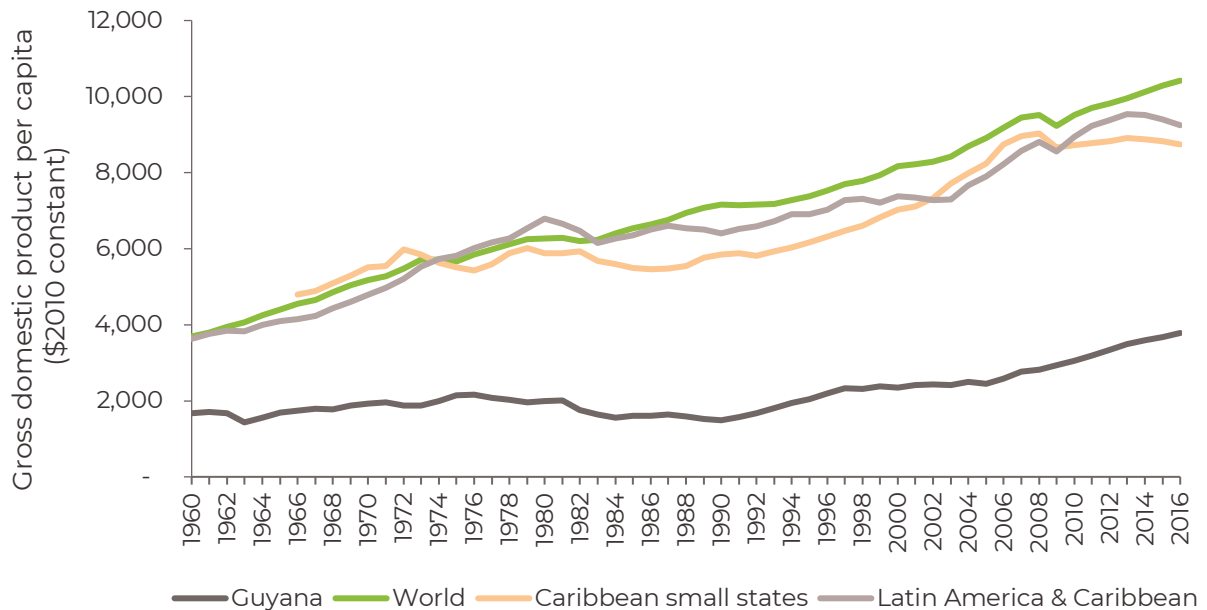


Note: The lighter shaded bars are forecasts
Source: IMF, World Economic Outlook Database

Growth rebounded in 2006 thanks to booming commodity markets and is expected to accelerate dramatically as Guyana becomes an oil exporter. Real GDP growth increased on the back of a recovery in agriculture, along with continued strong gold production and robust activity in the non-tradable sector. Guyana's growth in the late 2000s was buoyed by high commodity prices, foreign direct investment and expansion of private sector credit. The most recent forecasts take into account Guyana's position as an oil exporter and show an astonishing 25% increase in GDP in the year 2020, when oil production is expected to commence.

¹⁶ UNDP. (2005). Guyana Macro-Socio Economic Assessment of the Damage and Losses Caused by the January-February 2005 Flooding.

Figure 3: Comparison of Guyana's GDP Growth



Source: World Bank

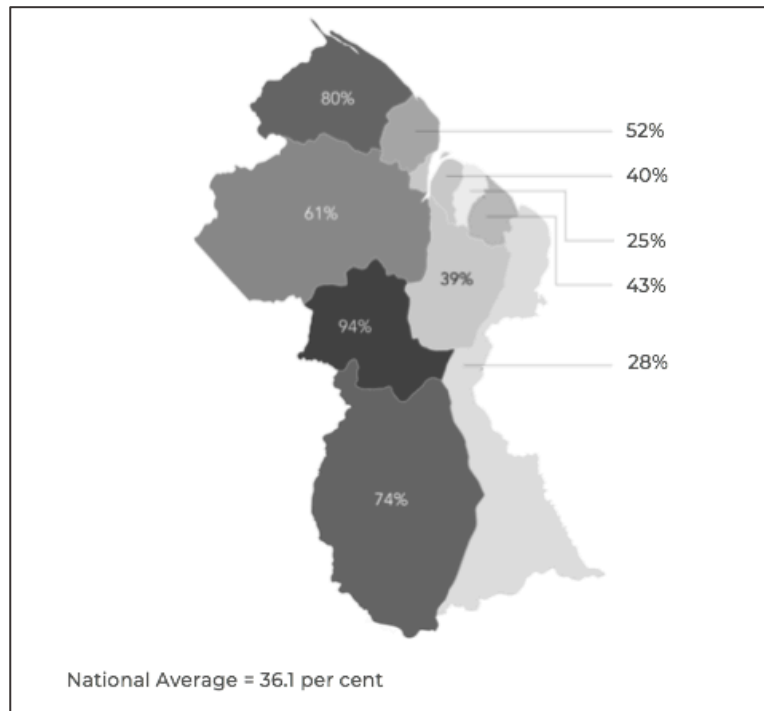
However, Guyana will need to take concrete measures to ensure that its oil wealth is used for sustainable and inclusive development. While Guyana is expected to see a surge in its GDP from oil production, it cannot expect this to automatically trickle down and address poverty. The case of Trinidad and Tobago is illustrative since despite the economy's significant oil and gas wealth, 20% of the population still lives below the poverty line and the economy is made little progress in diversification. Windfall increases in national GDP due to resource revenues also come with a risk of the 'resource curse' in which the revenues are consistently misused and lead to poor developmental outcomes. Guyana's immediate neighbour, Venezuela, is an example of this. Guyana's efforts to ensure that any revenues are managed responsibly are discussed in Annex A(1)¹⁷.

Inclusive and sustainable development are high priorities for Guyana given the state of poverty and human development. Almost four out of ten Guyanese people live in poverty today, defined as surviving on an income of USD 1.75 per day. Moreover, nearly half of all children under the age of 16 live in families that are in poverty. As last measured in 2014, 12% of children under the age of 5 are malnourished, limiting their potential for educational achievement and thereby affecting Guyana's accumulation of human capital. Additionally, gender inequality is worse than regional standards. Guyana's rank in the UNDP Gender Inequality Index, which considers women's health, economic rights, and political status, is 117th out of 188, based on 2015 data. In contrast, peer countries rank much higher: Barbados is 51st, The Bahamas is 77th and Belize is 81st. Guyana's maternal mortality ratio is 229 deaths per 100,000 live births which is over three times the regional average of 67. Female economic

¹⁷ Annex A(1): Fiscal and Monetary Policy

participation is low with only 44% of working age females engaged in the labor force relative to 79% of males. This is more unequal than the average Latin American or Caribbean country. This demonstrates that despite strong GDP performance in recent years, there is still an urgent need for inclusive development.

Map 1: National Poverty Rate by Region



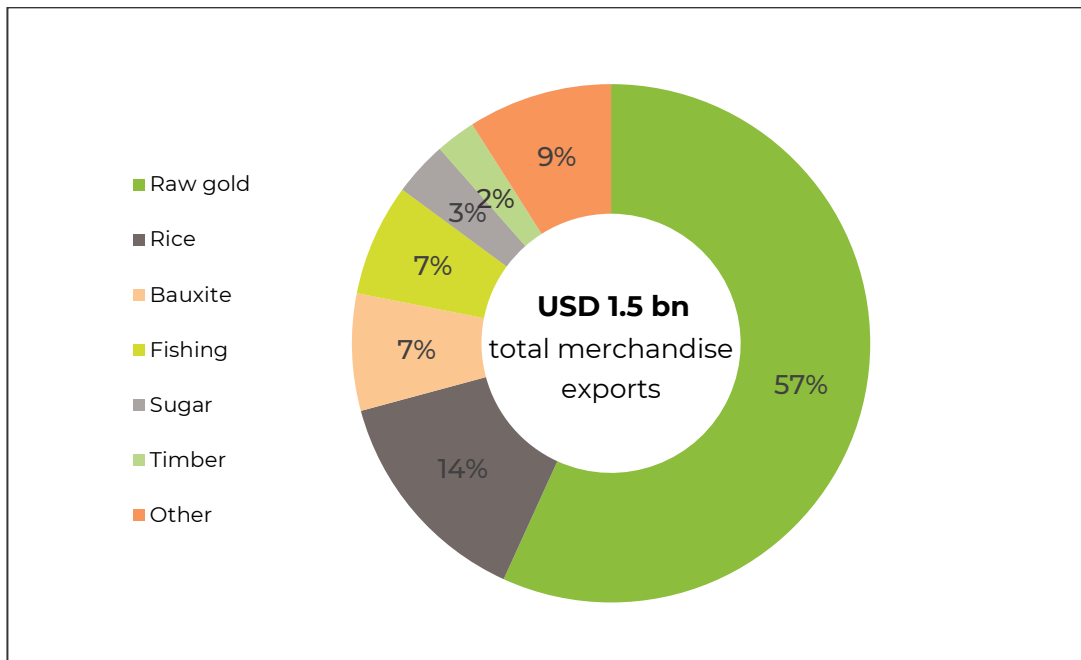
*Note: Figure shows national poverty rate (income <USD1.75/day, 2011-15)
Source: Government of Guyana, Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper: 2011-2015*

3.2 Key Economic Sectors

Guyana's economy is heavily dependent on the 'six sisters': gold, bauxite, sugar, rice, fish and timber. Guyana's dependency on these commodities is also reflected in exports. The sectors account for nearly 80% of Guyana's exports (Figure 4). These goods do not embody many skills or technology that Guyana could use to diversify its economic base. For example, unlike the electronics sector which has a lot of applications across industries ranging from telecommunications to engineering and marketing, extractive industries are relatively isolated and have far fewer backward and forward linkages with the rest of the economy. This makes it harder for Guyana to exploit its existing strengths to develop new industries.

Furthermore, the high share of primary commodities in the economy makes Guyana vulnerable to international commodity price shocks. Figure 5 demonstrates the scale of price fluctuations in four of Guyana's key commodities over the last 30 years. Price movements can be sharp and sudden: the price of rice doubled between 2007 and 2008 and subsequently lost half of this gain in the following two years. This unpredictable environment makes it challenging for businesses and investors to forecast revenue and hinders long term investment as a result. It also results in volatile incomes for many ordinary Guyanese citizens.

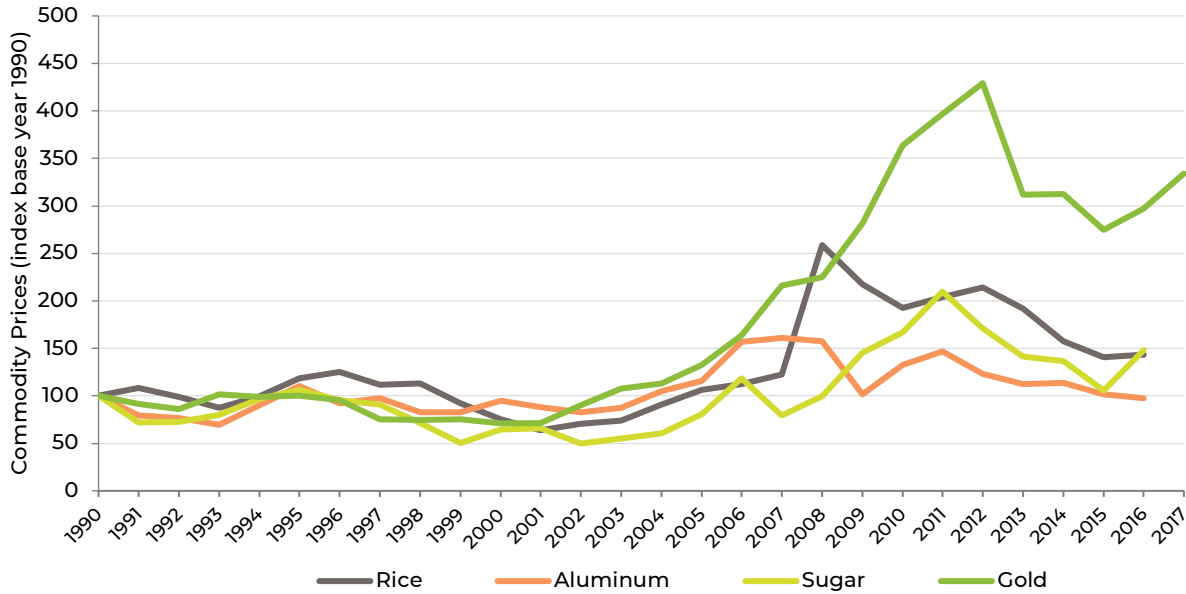
Figure 4: Guyana's Commodity Exports



Source: Guyana Bureau of Statistics

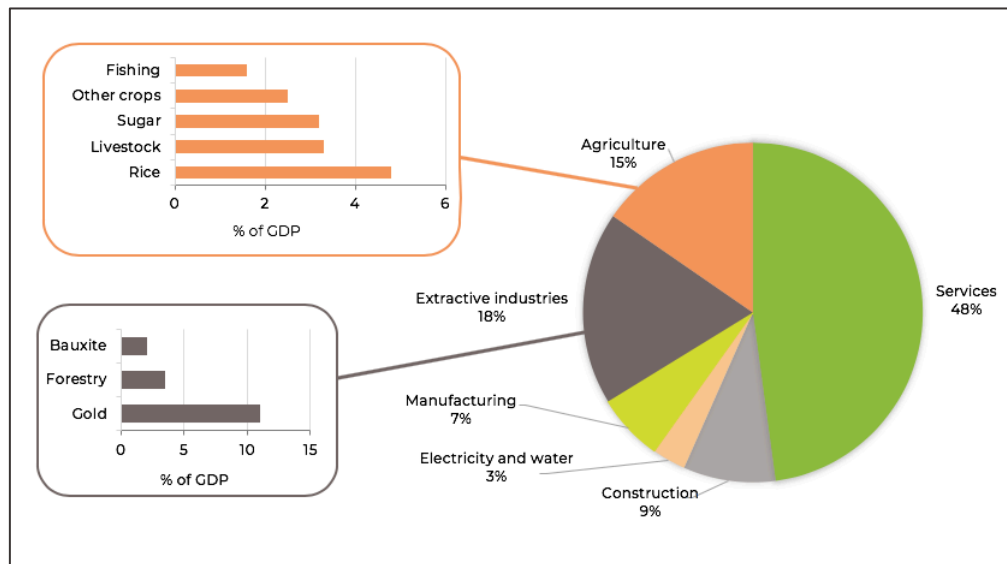
Primary commodity markets drive demand in a range of other sectors, such as services and industry, amplifying the impact of this volatility. Services is Guyana's largest sector in terms of contribution to GDP (Figure 6). Wholesale and retail trade are the largest services subsector, followed by transportation and storage and then construction. The service sector shows large co-movements with agriculture and mining. This is because much of Guyana's retail and transportation activity is tied to trading activity in mining and agricultural commodities. Extractive industries, that include forestry, bauxite and gold make up nearly a fifth of the economy in terms of direct contribution. Mining and agriculture are dominated by domestic private companies which draw heavily from other domestic sectors in the economy (with the exception of the large machinery for the extraction of gold, which is imported).

Figure 5: Price Movement of Guyana's Key Commodities



Source: The World Bank

Figure 6: GDP Contribution by Sector



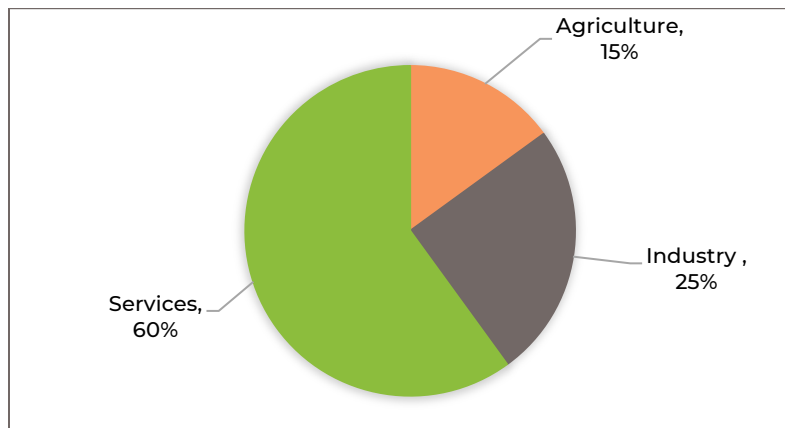
Source: Bank of Guyana, 2015 data

While unemployment rates are moderate, participation rates are extremely low indicating Guyana has significant untapped potential. Unemployment in Guyana has remained stable over the past two decades at around 10 to 12%. However, participation rates remain relatively

low. Only 44% of working age females engage in the labour force, reflecting an untapped potential to unlock further resources. The corresponding figure for males is 79%.

While formal employment is heavily concentrated in the service sector, Guyana also has a sizable unregulated informal sector. In 2017, 60% of Guyana's workforce was employed in the service sector. Industry and agriculture accounted for 25% and 15% respectively. The informal economy comprises a diversified set of unregulated income-generating activities, roughly a third of the size of the formal economy. Although this has reduced since the socialist era, it remains a significant untapped source of public income and poses serious health and safety risks to the workforce. This pattern is common across the Caribbean, for example, in the Bahamas, the informal sector is estimated to be 20%-30% of GDP and in Suriname, 35%-45%.

Figure 7: Employment by Key Sectors



Source: ILO, 2017 data

4 National Development Policies

4.1 National Development Strategy (1996-2021)

4.1.1 Background

The preparation of the *National Development Strategy* (NDS) was supervised by the Ministry of Finance. In keeping promoting a participatory approach, twenty technical working groups, embracing more than two hundred individuals from government, NGOs, the business community, and the University of Guyana, were tasked with developing the Strategy. Support was also provided through experts from international and bilateral donor agencies.

A first draft was published in 1996. It presented a vision of Guyana, where, over the next ten years, there would be an income growth as a result of increased employment and production, greater connectivity that would influence settlement patterns and support economic development in the hinterlands, improved quality and access to basic services and greater participation of citizens in society and the economy. The strategy covered four broad areas of policy, namely, macroeconomic, the social-, productive- and the infrastructure sectors, and was organised into six volumes. [Volume 1](#) presents the objectives and includes summaries of technical chapters. [Volume 2](#) deals in-depth with macro-economic policy, at issues such as taxation, reform of the public sector and banking policy. [Volume 3](#) presents forward-looking policies for the social sector, considering areas such as poverty, the environment, gender and Amerindian issues. [Volume 4](#) describes the productive sectors addressing rice development, forest management, the role of the private sector and tourism. [Volume 5](#) discusses the infrastructure sectors, including energy sector and transport development. [Volume 6](#) contains recommendations for legislative changes and a programme of public investment.

The main goal of the National Development Strategy is people-centred development, defined as “the progressive realisation of the abilities and talents of each individual for his/her own satisfaction and enhancement of the good of the community and the nation.”

This associated with four (4) broad national objectives: i) economic growth; ii) poverty alleviation and reduction; iii) satisfaction of basic social and economic needs; and iv) sustainment of a democratic and fully participatory society. These objectives are underscored by three basic principles of sustainability that reflected international development objectives, including Agenda 21: environmental, fiscal and institutional sustainability.

However, the Strategy was never laid in the Parliament, nor was it accepted by the opposition party at the time, who viewed its development as a campaigning tool for the party in government. It was observed that although many Guyanese experts contributed to the development of the Strategy, a number of other, well-qualified persons did not have the opportunity to participate.

Recognising the effort to develop the Strategy and that it provided a useful policy framework to guide the future development of Guyana, it was agreed by the Minister of Finance and the Carter Centre that a second draft would be prepared. To that end in 1998, a National

Development Strategy Committee was assembled by the Carter Center,¹⁸ with approval of the then Minister of Finance. This Committee comprised public sector and civil society members tasked with updating the Strategy in a way that would be acceptable to all stakeholders. The Committee was given full autonomy and it was agreed that the final document would be approved by the Cabinet and then to be laid in the Parliament, unaltered.

The Committee's work was completed in 2001 and the new *National Development Strategy* presented a vision for Guyana in the year 2010. The rewriting of the NDS entailed, in many cases, changes in philosophy, substance and thrust. Notwithstanding, wherever it was realised that the early drafts still met the requirements of Guyana's future development, they were substantially retained. In addition to the chapters contained in the first draft, the second draft included new chapters on Governance, Information Technology and The Guyanese Family.

4.1.2 Policy Objectives

The revised Strategy defined its objectives as i) the attainment of the highest rates of economic growth; ii) poverty alleviation; iii) geographic unity and integration; iv) equitable distribution of economic activity; and v) diversification of the economy. Considered as aspects that would enable development, the Strategy promoted greater political inclusivity in governance, higher productivity and education reform.

4.1.3 Strategies

The revised *National Development Strategy* promoted a diversified economy with manufacturing and information technology as the drivers of economic transformation. This required a shift from the reliance on the traditional economic sectors (i.e. sugar, forestry and fisheries), emphasis was placed on processing of raw materials and achieving greater export value added. Economic activity would be geographically dispersed as a result of investment in social services and public infrastructure in Guyana's hinterland. This required greater connectivity between the coastland and hinterland, coupled with economic incentives for private sector investment that would spur an increase in population density in the hinterland.

The Strategic framework for implementation highlighted the following pillars:

- i) **Democracy and Governance**, with aims of inclusion, participation, accountability and transparency. New laws would enable a greater degree of involvement of civil society in the formulation and implementation of policies and special emphasis was placed on the inclusion of minorities in the decision-making process. Central to the issue of governance is a functional local government system with increased authority and power to formulate development priorities, enact local laws and collect revenue. The public service would be adequately staffed and emoluments increased. Law and order would be bolstered by a better trained and more diverse

¹⁸ The Carter Center is a nongovernmental, not-for-profit organisation founded in 1982 by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and his wife Rosalynn Carter in partnership with Emory University in 1980. Its fundamental commitment is to promote human rights and the alleviation of human suffering, to prevent and resolve conflicts, enhance freedom and democracy, and improve health, globally.

- police service as well as an independent judiciary whose justices would be appointed through a process that includes all major political parties.
- ii) **Macro-economic policy and economic management** identified proposals for economic growth. These include reforming the tax system, elimination of certain taxes and simplification of tax collection processes; formulation of an investment strategy and creation of an investment agency to expedite and facilitate investment in Guyana; and creation of export promotion zones to promote trade and encourage exportation of value-added products.
 - iii) **Transport infrastructure** that was afforded the highest priority, particularly the establishment of a road network across Guyana. The road network would connect Guyana to South America through Brazil, Venezuela and Suriname. Bridges across the Supenaam, Essequibo, Demerara and Berbice rivers would be constructed. There were also proposals for critical upgrades and extensions to the airports at Timehri and Ogle, as well as rehabilitation of hinterland airstrips. These are complimented by proposals for deep water harbours in the Demerara and Berbice rivers.
 - iv) **Information technology** was proposed to propel the modernisation of Guyana, particularly the liberalisation and rationalisation of the telecommunications sector. Further emphasis was placed on reforming the Public Utilities Commission, computerising the public service, utilising information technology in education and the establishment of public information technology centres.
 - v) **Eradication of poverty** through the enhancement of social services and improvements in productivity. The ambition was to provide universal access to educational and health facilities throughout the country, including adequately equipped facilities with cadres of trained personnel. Through fiscal incentives, the private sector and commercial banks were to be encouraged to finance construction of homes for poorer segments of the population who would have received gifts of land. Micro-credit facilities for small and medium scale entrepreneurs in the agricultural, manufacturing and services sectors were also proposed.
 - vi) **Reform of public sector institutions** was considered important for achieving the objectives of key sectors. The reform would have covered all ministries, public service departments and parastatal organisations, including a rationalisation of agency functions for greater effectiveness and efficiency of services.
 - vii) **Family and gender** were to be mainstreamed in social and economic development activities and in decision-making with the creation of a Women's Affairs Bureau located in the ministry with responsibility for national development planning. A Family Code would be formulated and implemented giving guidance to families on values and acceptable standards of conduct. Support for youth would be provided through social and recreational programmes, and institutions for support of the elderly would be created.
 - viii) **Conservation of the environment** was also considered a priority in Guyana's national development. It was envisioned that personnel would be trained and

placed in the institutions whose operations impacted the environment, to support sustainable management. Development projects would only be approved after rigorous environmental impact studies.

- ix) **Indigenous Peoples** were singled out for special treatment. Important interventions included land demarcation and distribution; review of the Amerindian Act with the participation of Indigenous communities; enactment of legislation for protecting and preserving Indigenous cultural and intellectual property rights; establishment of an Amerindian Development Fund, and support for elaboration of development plans.

Other chapters of the *National Development Strategy* address the productive sectors: agriculture, aquaculture, manufacturing, forestry and mining; urban development: housing, education and human development; land, water and natural resource conservation; and tourism, labour, culture and sport.

The implementation of the *National development Strategy* would have been overseen by a National Development Commission that reported to Parliament. While government revenues and financing from bilateral and multilateral sources were identified as the main funding mechanisms, the Strategy would also rely on public private partnerships with the private sector for financing the infrastructural development programme. The Strategy also cited the lack of a critical mass of professionals required to implement the strategy, and sought technical assistance from donors, the Guyanese diaspora overseas, and non-nationals.

4.2 Guyana Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2001)

4.2.1 Background

Guyana's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) was elaborated in the context of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative. The external debt crisis of the 1980s severely impacted on low-income countries, many of which, in the 1990s, were still beleaguered by the crisis. Guyana's external debt in 1999 stood at US 1.08 billion dollars, 156% of its GDP of US 694 million dollars.¹⁹ The HIPC initiative was the international community's response to help these low-income countries to reduce their debts to levels which were more sustainable and compatible with growth and poverty reduction.²⁰ This process of debt reduction was coupled with fundamental reforms in social and economic policies towards poverty reduction and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (2000). In addition to meeting other eligibility criteria,²¹ countries had to prepare and implement a poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP) as a condition for full debt relief. PRSPs describe the country's macroeconomic, structural and social policies and programs over a three year or longer horizon to promote

¹⁹ Data from the Auditor General's Report, Guyana (1999) and the World Bank; <http://www.audit.org.gy/pubs/AnnualReport1999.pdf>; <https://data.worldbank.org/country/Guyana>

²⁰ Gottschalk R. (2015) The Effectiveness of IMF/World Bank-Funded Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. In: Bangura Y. (eds) *Developmental Pathways to Poverty Reduction*. Developmental Pathways to Poverty Reduction Series. Palgrave Macmillan, London

²¹ These include: having an unsustainable debt burden, able to borrow from the International Development Agency and have a track record of reform through IMF and World Bank programs.

broad-based growth and reduce poverty.²² These strategies are expected to be updated every three years (3), with annual progress reports.

During the period 2000-2015, Guyana prepared an interim poverty reduction strategy paper, two poverty reduction strategy papers and two PRSP progress reports. Guyana's poverty reduction strategy replaced the *Economic Policy Framework* (1998-2001) as the overarching agenda for development. Prior to the preparation of the Strategy, an *Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper* (IPRSP) was prepared in October 2000, the purpose of which was to facilitate public consultation. It analysed the country's poverty situation, existing poverty reduction activities, and laid out the process for producing a fully developed PRSP in a participatory fashion.²³ In 2001, a full PRSP was prepared after public consultations were completed on the *Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper*. Based on recommendations from the public consultations, priorities and resource allocations were revised in the final version.

Guyana's first PRSP was submitted to the Joint Boards of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in November 2001. Annual reports were prepared in 2004 and 2005 highlighting the progress and challenges in implementing the poverty reduction strategy. A second poverty reduction strategy was drafted in 2008 but was not made public. The most recent poverty reduction strategy was developed in 2011 against the backdrop of the 2008 financial crisis and the *Low Carbon Development Strategy* (2009).

4.2.2 The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2002-2005)

Guyana's first poverty reduction strategy also re-emphasised the recommendations of the *National Development Strategy*, and addressed areas of economic policy, good governance, infrastructure development and improvement in social services. The *Poverty Reduction Strategy* emerged from the *Living Standards Survey* (1992), which indicated that 43% of the Guyanese population lived in poverty.²⁴

4.2.3 Policy Objectives

With the ultimate goal of poverty reduction, its main objectives are: (i) sustained economic expansion within the context of a deepening participatory democracy; (ii) access to social services including education, health, water and housing; and (iii) strengthening social safety nets, including expansion where necessary.

4.2.4 Strategies

To achieve the objectives identified, the poverty reduction strategy rests on the following seven pillars:

- a) ***Broad-based, jobs-generating economic growth.*** Recognizing the country's growth over the past decade based on a sound macroeconomic framework that was

²² <http://www.imf.org/external/np/prsp/prsp.aspx>

²³ <http://www.imf.org/external/np/prsp/prsp.aspx>; Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, Guyana (2000)

²⁴ National Land Use Strategy, 2013

supported by institutional and regulatory reforms, this objective recommended: (i) maintaining a stable macroeconomic framework through strong fiscal and monetary policies and strengthening Guyana's external reserve position; (ii) adopting sector policies to stimulate production with a focus on the stimulation of valued-added production of agricultural produce, wood and precious metals. Agriculture in particular was targeted for converting leasehold to freehold properties, expanding farm sizes, improving extension services, drainage and irrigation; (iii) modernising the traditional economic base – focused mainly on sugar and GuySuCo's operations, with proposals to sell unproductive assets, restructure the institution and improve productivity; and (iv) providing systemic support for private sector development including expanding exports and opportunities for cottage industries, and supporting small businesses by promoting technology use, improving infrastructure services and developing human resources.

- b) **Environmental protection.** With the country's dependency on its natural resource base: i.e. exploitation of minerals and forest products, a focus on environmental protection was developed to alleviate the risk of environmental degradation. This objective also sought to integrate quality of life with sustainable use of natural resources and protection and conservation of unique habitats and biodiversity through involvement of local communities. Mining was also the focus of attention for its impact on forest-, land- and water- resources, for which a forest monitoring programme, guidelines and codes of practice were recommended to mitigate against deforestation, land degradation and pollution.
- c) **Stronger institutions and better governance.** This pillar required broad regulatory and institutional reforms, public accountability, confidence building in the judicial and political systems, local government reforms and protecting fundamental human rights. It emphasised public sector modernisation e.g. reforming bidding and procurement processes, decentralising public services and improving land use development and allocation frameworks. Significantly, the now defunct State Planning Secretariat was slated for improvement and supervision of land administration and in project design, implementation and evaluation. The mandates and procedures of other institutions (e.g. the Public Procurement Commission, GLSC), regional and local government structures also came under review for the purposes of enhanced and effective local government administration, improvement of planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting.
- d) **Investment in human capital.** Strategies focused on securing investments in both formal education, traditional knowledge and health care, with emphasis on preventive health and HIV/AIDS awareness and treatment. In education, priorities related to reforming the curriculum and expanding use of information technology, addressing problems related to access and attendance at secondary schools, teacher training, qualifications and working environments, among others. Health sector priorities centred on reducing morbidity and mortality rates, improving access to health services e.g. maternal and child health, managing and treating communicable and chronic diseases, mental health and improving nutrition.

- e) **Investment in physical capital.** Water, sanitation, and housing infrastructure were prioritized for stimulating economic growth. For the water sector, the recently established Guyana Water Company had the mandate to improve access to safe, potable water for 95 percent of the population through more streamlined activities that expanded water production (infrastructure and treatment) and strengthened facility rehabilitation and maintenance services. Sanitation activities prioritized rehabilitation of the sewer system including cleaning, repair and/or replacement of on-lot and municipal sewers, pump stations and the existing outfall, and construction of a sludge pre-treatment facility. Interventions in housing sought to strengthen land markets, expedite the divestiture of public land for sound residential settlement, accelerate squatter regularization programmes.

Private sector involvement was encouraged for complex infrastructure projects, particularly through joint ventures in public works to encourage technology transfer in the local construction industry. Investments were prioritized for the construction of the Berbice river bridge through a build, own, transfer (BOT) mechanism, while feasibility studies were to be commissioned for a deep-water harbour, a container port and construction of the Guyana-Brazil road link. Critical road networks servicing farms and connections to markets were targeted for upgrading, as well as ferries and stellingings.

Drainage and irrigation priorities included establishment of water users' associations comprising farmers, implementing drainage and irrigation work programmes. Notably, Phase III of the Mahaica-Mahaicony Abary Agricultural Development Authority (MMA-ADA) drainage and irrigation system between the Abary and Mahaica rivers was scheduled for implementation. This included the development of the Mahaicony conservancy, rehabilitation of the Black Bush Polder, along with other regional drainage and irrigation systems.

The energy infrastructure network was also slated for upgrade and expansion particularly in rural areas.

- f) **Improved safety nets.** The Strategy envisaged the establishment of a social safety net supported by donor agencies, for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged populations, e.g. displaced workers, pregnant women, the elderly and disabled, including the provision of electricity and water subsidies.
- g) **Special intervention programmes.** This objective promised development of special programmes for the poorest of regions e.g. in the hinterland communities of regions 1, 8 and 9 and the bauxite dependent communities of Upper Demerara-Berbice. Projects proposed to improve access to economic opportunities and deliver improvements in infrastructure, education and health, among other local community-based activities. Upper Demerara-Berbice was prioritized for the implementation of the Linden Economic Advancement Project establishing business development and incubator units for start-up operations with a revolving fund for microcredits and an investment facility to attract local and foreign investment.

Implementation of the poverty reduction strategy required involvement actors at the four levels of government: central government, regional democratic councils, the neighbourhood democratic councils and the village councils, collaboratively implementing the multi-year

poverty action plan. A Poverty Reduction Strategy Secretariat was to be established to manage implementation and the public participatory process, including coordination and monitoring activities of the responsible line ministries and agencies.

4.3 National Land Use Plan (NLUP) (2013)

4.3.1 Background

The National Land Use Plan (NLUP) distinguishes land cover and land use, with the former relating to anything that provides physical cover e.g. buildings, roads, crops, forests, water bodies, while land use relates to the purpose to which land is put. Forests is the dominant land cover in Guyana at 87.8%, followed by savannahs (7.4%) and water bodies (1.4%). Of the human-influenced land uses, cropland accounts for 1.54% (3,261 km²) and built up areas cover a miniscule 0.16% (348 km²).

Among the key productive sectors, land cover from rice farming has ranged between 60,000 ha – 72,000 ha (Regions 2, 4 & 6) and sugar plantations cover 44,500 ha (Regions 3, 4, 5 & 6). Protected areas cover about 5% of the land area (1,726,832 ha) with future plans to expand coverage by an additional 2 million ha (~8.5%).

As with other national policies, and prior to the NLUP, there were several attempts at developing a land/land use policy over more than a decade (2000-2012) as interest in the topic fluctuated with the priorities of various government administrations. The *National Development Strategy* (1996) in its promotion of agricultural expansion and diversification as strategies to alleviate poverty, recognized the importance of rational land use planning and established clear priorities for a land policy to regularize land tenure along with a supporting national physical plan. This was later reaffirmed in the *Poverty Reduction Strategy* (2001).

Even as land use conflicts remained and several committees were established in subsequent years to address these, the development of a land/land use policy or physical plan remained elusive goals. It was not until the year 2012 that the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission (GLSC) through its UNDP-funded *Sustainable Land Management* project laid the groundwork for a land use policy that led to the elaboration of the NLUP.

The *National Land Use Plan 2013* (NLUP) is the most comprehensive policy document for spatial development planning in Guyana. It is intended to provide a strategic framework to guide land development decisions, as a guide for decision-making and on optimal land uses at a regional level. It is not however, a prescriptive document that would zone various areas of the country for specific uses but derives from a policy of multiple land uses so that options can be considered by policymakers for attracting investment. Through its series of maps, it provides a picture of current land use, where resources are located or allocated and the potential for other land uses, with descriptions of the requirements for developing those resources.

The NLUP was developed with other government agencies whose roles and responsibilities involved land use planning and natural resource management. The physical data collection phase took about one year (2011-2012) to complete that included normalizations and corrections applied to existing data sets and mapping new areas. A number of public

consultations with stakeholders was conducted in parallel, to understand the underlying causes of complaints and conflicts arising from the multiple land uses.

The NLUP provides an extensive review of the country's natural (land, soils, fresh- and groundwater, forests, energy), mineral (bauxite, alumina, gold, diamonds, oil and gas, manganese²⁵) and aggregate (sand, loam, crushed stone) resources accompanied by location and distribution maps. A land capability assessment of soils suitable or not for agriculture is included, along with sector-by-sector assessments of land use potential.

The NLUP mapping data is at national-level scales (of 1:1m or 1:2.5m), providing thus a key development planning tool. It is not, however, a zoning tool, although the need for zoning is paramount, particularly along the coastal plain.

The rationale behind the NLUP remains relevant today:

- *Institutional*: managing a rationalized land use system that resolves increasingly overlapping claims issued for forestry, mining, agriculture, infrastructure particularly housing, and Amerindian title claims, which contribute to or result from unclear, opaque land tenure. Land use decision-making is highly centralized (Cabinet level) with minimal involvement of the Regional Democratic Councils or Neighbourhood Democratic Councils. Overlapping agency mandates also impact regional planning e.g. in the case of the Central Housing and Planning Authority (CH&PA) and the GLSC which both undertake regional planning, and because agencies such as the GFC, GGMC and GLSC issue leases on the same lands allocated for EPA management.
- *Land capability risks*: the coastal plains contain the most fertile soils for agriculture; but these lands are now in competition with increased housing demand, urban sprawl, abandoned and unproductive lands, that collectively exacerbate land pressures. Coastal lands are also generally below sea level and therefore subject to sea level rises and storm surges that in a projected worst-case climate modelling scenario, can result in flooding to areas of 140,000 ha or more.
- *Socio-economic*: The desire for infrastructure connectivity across Guyana and within the wider northern South America is also necessary for international trade, to connect farms to markets, promote and support economic restructuring and expansion.

4.3.2 Land Use Conflicts

A recent mapping and analysis of grievances connected to natural resource management in the context of REDD+ separated conflicts into two types: institution-related and land-related.²⁶ The specific types of conflicts under each category are described as follows:

- i) Institution-Related Grievances (MNR, EPA, GGMC, GFC GLSC, WCMC, PAC, the Police and the Courts)
 - Land management processes related to mining, forestry, agriculture and titling;

²⁵ The country also has other mineral resources e.g. clay, feldspar, kaolin, molybdenum, nickel, niobium and tantalum (source: 2014 USGS Minerals Yearbook, Guyana, August 2014).

²⁶ TCG. May 2018. Scoping Study on Grievance Patterns and Existing Redress Mechanisms.

- Corruption of officers with agencies related to mining and forest management;
 - Lack of coordination among forest-related agencies and entities leading to conflicts on the ground;
 - Limited stakeholder engagement.
- ii) Land-Related Grievances
- Multiple uses resulting from overlapping allocation of lands by GLSC, GGMC and GFC;
 - Titling, demarcation and extension of Indigenous villages;
 - Agricultural allocations and activities by large- and small-scale farmers;
 - Allocation of logging and mining concessions in Indigenous villages (titled and untitled) and in customary lands of villages near concessions;
 - The management and use of roads;
 - Environmental damage and degradation;
 - Threats to wildlife;
 - Adverse impacts on the lives of hinterland communities;
 - Infringements of protected areas;
 - Conflicts between users of the same resource within specific areas (e.g. between miners, between foresters, and between indigenous communities).

These grievances point to the absence of a rationalized and effective land use policy and land use planning system, as well as the difference in mapping systems used by the GLSC, GFC and GGMC.

4.3.3 Land Uses by Sector

The NLUP also analyses land use by sector:

- a) Agriculture: land use for agriculture is described in terms of soil capability or limits to crop production. Broadly speaking, the well-drained soils of the coastal plain (Essequibo Islands-West Demerara, Demerara-Mahaica, Mahaica-Berbice, East Berbice-Corentyne) form the best agricultural lands and have relatively high fertility. Minimal management inputs are required in localized areas with high salinity or toxicity. Further inland (southwards) away from the coasts, the soils are less fertile, but moderately suitable for agriculture but with fertilizer and other management inputs. The poorest agricultural soils demonstrate problems not only with fertility and toxicity but also water retention i.e. drainage, or ease of cultivation i.e. steep slopes. The Rupununi Savannahs for example, with their deep soils that flood for 3-4 months of the year and desiccate during long dry periods, pose challenges for large scale agriculture and require extensive management inputs to improve agricultural potential. Other areas are characterized as 'non-agriculture' lands due to severe limitations for cultivation such as steep slopes and rocky soils, and are found mainly in upland, forested areas. The NLUP's land classification system however is extensive and complex

and has described and mapped localities across Guyana according to their suitability for agriculture. Lands recommended for aquaculture for example are the former rice farms in the coastal plain long abandoned by farmers, that are also flat and free of peaty or high salinity soils. Apart from the above physical limitations, agriculture is also constrained by land tenure and administrative barriers (see Annex A (2)), policies such as the *Low Carbon Development Strategy* that prioritized forest protection, remoteness and limited road access to upland and interior locations with consequent poor access to markets.

- b) Forestry: the NLUP characterises lands suitable for forestry by value as determined by assessing attendant tree species, GFC lease types and conditions, topography including access and location and forest management class. In that regard, lands with high-to-medium forestry potential are found in the northwestern parts of Guyana along the Cuyuni, Mazaruni and Essequibo rivers (Barima-Waini and Cuyuni-Mazaruni), and between the Essequibo and Berbice Rivers east of Iwokrama. Plantation forestry, even though not yet in practice, is described as best suited for abandoned lands in the coastal plains and infertile savannahs, where it can provide co-benefits.

Like agriculture, forestry is also constrained by policy, access and competing or conflicting land uses e.g. mining, as well as a low standing volume of valued commercial species and poor management practices.

- c) Mining: minerals and aggregate potential are site specific, with most concentrated in Barima-Waino, Cuyuni-Mazaruni, Potaro-Siparuni and Upper Demerara-Berbice and less so in Upper Takutu-Upper Essequibo. Gold is mined principally along the Greenstone Belts in river floodplains from the northwest to the central parts of the country with minor deposits in quartz veins along the south. Diamonds are mapped mainly within alluvial deposits in the northwest. Bauxite deposits are mainly found within belts that extend from the Pomeroon river in Pomeroon-Supenaam in the northwest, through the town of Linden and east past Kwakwani in East Berbice-Corentyne. Manganese is mined mainly in Barima-Waini at Matthews Ridge. Other minerals identified but not yet mined include uranium/rare earth metals at scattered locations (Port Kaituma – Barima-Waini, Mahdia – Potaro-Siparuni) and in the Rupununi Savannas (Upper Takutu-Upper Essequibo).

While mining presents many conflicts to other land uses already described, there are also constraints in the sector. These relate to the lack of comprehensive resource surveys, mining operational costs including power supply and availability, remoteness of sites and difficult terrain. The NLUP describes that miners typically regard their operations as ‘temporary use of land’ that once the ore is mined, can revert to forest and other uses. In the absence of more stringent environmental regulations in the sector.

- d) Energy: specific sites have been mapped for previously known potential for renewable energy sources, most significantly hydro power with a total estimated potential of

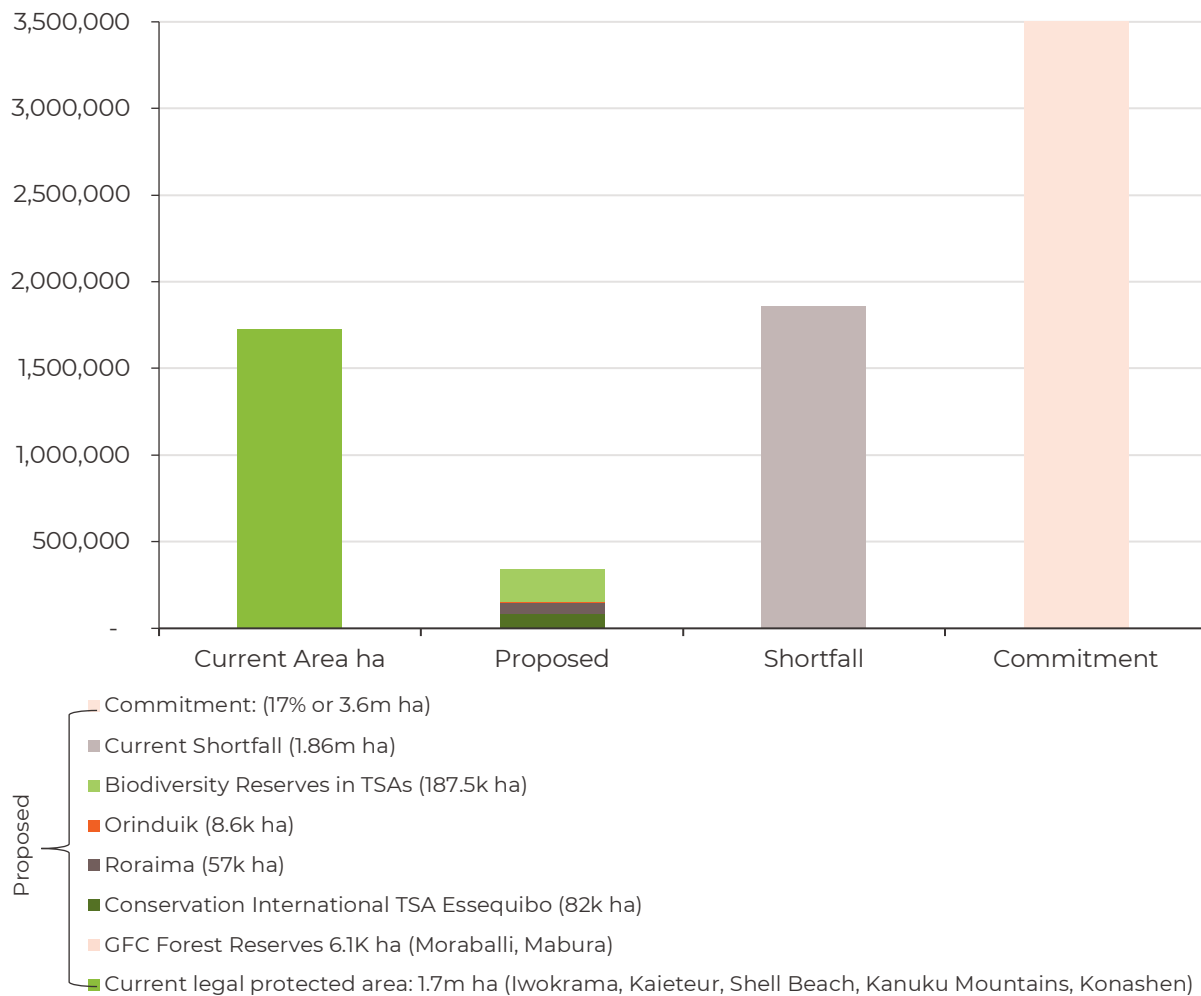
4.5GW – 7GW. There are 67 identified hydro power sites²⁷ that straddle the major river basins of the Cuyuni, Mazaruni, Potaro and Essequibo rivers, e.g. Amaila Falls, Turtruba and Tumatumari. Other sites have been identified as having suitable potential for installation of small scale (1MW) solar photovoltaic (PV) systems e.g. at Eccles. Whilst the discussion for production of biomass and biofuels has pointed to use of bagasse (from sugar plantations) and rice husks (rice farms) and from palm oil plantations (produce by a plant located in Barima-Waini) respectively, a supporting policy decision is still needed.

- e) Protected areas: The NLUP describes five legally protected areas comprising a total of 17,262 km² or 8.2% of the total land area (Figure 10). As a signatory to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, Guyana committed to protect at least 17% (3.6m ha) of its terrestrial area by 2020 that will require an additional 1.86m ha of land. Areas already identified include GFC's forest reserves (6,100 ha or 0.1%), Conservation International's timber sales agreement at Essequibo (82,102 or 0.4%) and other proposed areas e.g. Roraima, Orinduik that collectively amount to a total of 341,489 ha or 1.6%. These proposed areas when added to areas under protection (1.7m ha) totals 2m ha, giving a shortfall of 1.8m ha.

To make up the shortfall, the NLUP has identified areas south of the '4th parallel' i.e. south of Iwokrama, as having significant potential because of its wide expanse of intact forests that are not suited for either logging or agriculture because of low value timber, hilly terrain and remoteness. Their suitability for protected area status however, relates to their valued ecosystem services and as important headwaters for the Essequibo, Corentyne and Berbice rivers. Other areas identified for possible protected area status include the Pakaraima Mountains – watersheds and Amerindian lands; and the Rupununi Savannas – the northern Rupununi has only been demarcated for protection as a wetland area of importance, as Guyana is not a signatory to the RAMSAR Convention. The Konashen area in the southern Rupununi are Amerindian lands that are declared for protected status.

²⁷ NLUP cites an inventory completed by the Guyana Energy Agency.

Figure 8: Guyana's protected areas (current and proposed)



- f) Housing and Settlements: while a function of population distribution, these are concentrated along the coastal plain and in the city of Georgetown. The NLUP uses 2002 Census data. However, the 2012 Census²⁸ describes an annual negative growth rate of -0.04% for Guyana's population. In 2012, total population was 747,884 persons – 77.5% in the coastal plain (42% in Demerara-Mahaica). Average population density remained unchanged from the prior decade at 3.5 persons per square kilometre, with coastal regions at more than double this average at 9.6 persons per square kilometre. In comparison to 2002, slightly less people (26.4%) in 2012 live in urban areas indicating an outward shift of persons to housing schemes outside of Georgetown.

Within Guyana's ten administrative regions, there are 65 National Democratic Councils (with an average of 18 councillors), nine towns, three of which have recently been

²⁸ "Guyana Population and Housing Census, 2012, Preliminary Report", Bureau of Statistics, Guyana, June 2014; 70pp.

accorded municipality status²⁹. The NLUP describes a pattern of ribbon development for housing and infrastructure along rivers and roads. New housing areas targeted in 2012 by the CH&PA were mainly within the coastal plain at East Bank Demerara, on former GuySuCo sugar lands in East Coast Demerara, and in Essequibo Islands-West Demerara in response to demand. Even though the NLUP is encouraging housing development in areas away from the coastal plain, it acknowledges the likelihood of increasing pressures and competition between settlements (infrastructure and housing) and arable land (agriculture, livestock and aquaculture).

The NLUP advocates for “planned nuclear settlements” designed for more efficient services. It argues for example, for the development of the deep-water port at the proposed site at the Berbice River mouth (Mahaica Berbice and East Berbice-Corentyne) that is already sparsely populated or experiencing population decline, as an incentive for shifting populations away from the heavily populated Essequibo Islands-West Demerara and Demerara-Mahaica (especially concentrated around Georgetown). Regions 5 & 6 comprise prime agricultural land (rice, sugar); but it is argued that this suggestion could open up the backlands to urbanization with better linkages and services for agriculture. Planned nuclear settlements is consistent with a low-carbon development approach, would ensure that the land capability of the coastal plain is properly studied and can inform urban planning for the most efficient use of land, whilst addressing problems of flooding and seawater incursion.

4.4 National Competitiveness Strategy (2006)

4.4.1 Background

The rationale for the *National Competitiveness Strategy* arose from the *National Development Strategy*, which addressed Guyana’s heavy dependence on the production and export of unprocessed commodities. Through Guyana’s access to preferential markets, such as in the EU, Canada and the US, exports are sold at favourable prices not obtainable in the open market. Although a wide range of products can be exported to these markets, the number of products that are exported is limited because of productive capacity and ability to meet import standards for those markets. As such, production for export has been restricted to a few commodities using outmoded production techniques. With the removal of preferential market access, and with its favourable prices, Guyana’s exports will struggle to compete on the open market.

In May 2006, the Government of Guyana, in partnership with the Private Sector, elaborated the *National Competitiveness Strategy*, together with an action plan and institutional arrangements for its implementation. Building on the work of the *National Development Strategy* process, and with the aim of delivering on its goals, the *National Competitiveness Strategy* re-emphasised the need for the diversification of the Guyanese economy through an expansion of the productive base and improvements in competitiveness. The urgency of these

²⁹ The 9 towns include: Georgetown, New Amsterdam, Corriverton, Rose Hall, Anna Regina and Linden, with Bartica, Lethem, Mabaruma and Mahdia recently elevated to township status.

objectives pointed to the reality of the speed of globalisation and its resulting liberalisation of international trade.

4.4.2 Policy Objectives

The overarching goal of the *National Competitiveness Strategy* was to create a national competitiveness framework for diversifying the product base, premised on establishing an enabling environment for private sector growth. The *National Competitiveness Strategy* effectively upgraded the competitiveness and economic priorities in the *National Development Strategy* factoring in the current realities. These include the restructuring of the EU's sugar protocol which will reduce the price by over 36% over four years, and associated challenges and opportunities of the liberalisation of trade and movement of capital, people and technology and increasing competition from other developing countries. It developed one hundred and twenty-two (122) actions to enhance national competitiveness that were framed in the context of three main policy approaches:

- a) **Core competitiveness policies:** macroeconomic, fiscal, and supply side policies. Incentive policies proposed debt forgiveness with a view to more effective donor engagement and with a package of fiscal measures that included taxation reform, reduction of corporate taxes and reform of the system of tax exemptions; and strengthened regimes for fair trading and consumer protection. Supply-side activities sought to reform export promotion particularly the key institutions, review the Investment Act and regulatory framework, strengthen small businesses with improved access to finance management and marketing services, and to establish a credit bureau. Other activities addressed improving labour skills, training and certification, and uptake of technology. Notably, land policy reform was recommended with particular emphasis on land allocation and security of tenure. Proposals were also developed for a dispute resolution mechanism comprising a commercial court and procedures for alternative dispute resolution.
- b) **Sector specific policies:** were developed addressing both traditional economic sectors and those presenting diversification opportunities. In this regard nine sectors and sub-sectors were targeted for interventions: the traditional sectors of sugar, rice, forestry (logging) and mining; with diversification opportunities identified in non-traditional agriculture, fisheries, manufacturing, tourism and information technology sub-sectors.

For traditional agriculture, sugar industry policies focused on the construction of a sugar refinery at Skeldon and upgrades to estates in Albion, Enmore and Blairmont. Value-adding activities included ethanol production, sugar products and electricity co-generation. Rice was scheduled for infrastructure development, particularly drainage and irrigation, as well as access to new markets and production of processed rice products. Improvements in forestry management involved promotion of lesser known species for logging. Mining sought to explore a wider variety of minerals, with technical assistance, training and research for better enforcement of environmental regulations and resource management.

Non-traditional agricultural proposals targeted fruits, vegetables and livestock as opportunities for investments, supported by extension services, provision of credit facilities and construction of an abattoir designed to international standards. A semi-

autonomous fisheries agency was established that would determine maximum yield for seabobs and manage exploration of deep-water fishing.

Industrial parks and export promotion zones were identified to encourage manufacturing, while tourism investment needs focused on product development and infrastructure access and connectivity, particularly in the hinterland.

- c) **Detailed strategies:** were elaborated for those sub-sectors which promised the most compelling growth prospects: aquaculture, non-traditional agricultural products, agro-processing, contract manufacturing/export services, organic food products, eco- and business tourism, and forest products. Priorities rested on infrastructure development, human capacity development, institutional strengthening, provision of support services and securing market access for exports.

These policies were to be guided by five principles that promoted a systematic approach, export bias, targeted support, the subsidiary principle and a supply chain approach.

Implementing the *National Competitiveness Strategy* was expected to be driven by the line ministries and agencies. The strategy called for a National Competitiveness Council supported by a National Competitiveness Strategy Unit. The Council would be responsible for ongoing development and implementation of the strategy, with representation from Government, the private sector and organised labour.

4.5 Low Carbon Development Strategy (2010 updated 2013)

4.5.1 Background

The *Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS)* was launched in 2009 under the leadership of the former President Bharrat Jagdeo, to guide Guyana's development towards a low-carbon, low-deforestation, climate resilient pathway. The Strategy had both national and international contexts: the stagnation of the Guyanese economy compounded by the devastating floods of 2005 with calculated losses estimated at 60% of the country's GDP; and the setbacks resulting from the inability of the international community to agree at that time, on a legally-binding global climate agreement. These provided the impetus for the then Government to demonstrate the country's local and global commitment to combating climate change and simultaneously to reset the basis for the country's economic development. Another more persuasive impetus came from commitments made particularly by the Government of Norway to pay countries such as Brazil, Indonesia and Guyana – countries with large stands of forests – to conserve their forests in a global compact to reduce carbon loss from deforestation and forest degradation. The economic value of Guyana's vast reserves of standing, intact forests was brought fully into view on the principle that "forests [were] worth more alive than dead".

By recognising the value of carbon stored in forests, Guyana signaled its contribution to the global climate agenda by promoting measures for avoiding deforestation and forest degradation and participating in the mechanism for Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The intention was to create a global model of climate resilience. To that end, the Government signed a landmark agreement with the Government of Norway in 2009

in which the latter agreed to provide Guyana with up to US\$250 million by 2015 in performance-based payments for avoided deforestation in support of the prioritised actions of the *Low Carbon Development Strategy*. It remains the highest value agreement per capita, secured by any country to protect its forest.

The central idea behind the *Low Carbon Development Strategy* therefore is sustainable development that preserves intact forests and consequently biodiversity, ecosystems services and global climate services. With the *National Development Strategy* serving as the overarching framework, the *Low Carbon Development Strategy* established the basis for low-carbon investments in a diversified economy that promoted processing, industry and high value added.

The LCDS was developed in June 2009 then updated in December 2009 after a series of public consultations. The second draft incorporated the Memorandum of Understanding between the Governments of Norway and Guyana. A third draft of the LCDS was finalised in 2010 after another round of public consultations and included inputs from the 2009 UNFCCC Climate Conference in Copenhagen, outlining the basis on which Guyana would participate in REDD+ in spite of the lack of agreement on its funding mechanism. This final draft identified the country's commitments for 2010 and 2011, its priorities for 2012-2015 and a framework for further consultations and refinement of the Strategy. In 2013, a further update was published that reported on the priority areas.

4.5.2 Policy Objectives

The LCDS identified eight near- and medium-term priorities for action:

1) *Starting the Transition to a New Economy (2009-2013)*: eight strategic investment actions were prioritised:

- *Renewable energy*: Guyana's power supply is almost completely based on fossil fuels. The principal investment intended for the delivery of renewable energy was the Amaila Falls Hydropower Project. It was estimated that 92% of the country's energy related emissions would be eliminated through this project. Smaller run-of-the-river hydropower facilities were also identified for investment to supply power to education, health and agricultural facilities in indigenous communities.
- *Amerindian development*: through the Hinterland Renewable Energy project, investments funded off-grid, distributed solar PV based power to Indigenous homes providing them electricity for the first time. By 2013, 11,000 home-based solar PV systems were installed in close to 200 communities, with 400 Indigenous persons trained in system installation, operation and maintenance. Other indigenous project activities involved implementation of Community Development Plans. By 2013, 166 Amerindian villages had prepared Plans, with 27 earmarked for implementation.

The Government advanced its commitment to fast-tracking Indigenous land claims in accordance with the Amerindian Act through its Amerindian Land Titling Project³⁰

³⁰ UNDP "Amerindian Land Titling and Demarcation" 2014; executed by the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs (now Ministry of Indigenous Peoples Affairs), implemented by the Guyana Lands & Surveys Commission and the Deeds Registry.

(funded under the Guyana-Norway agreement). Activities included boundary demarcation, title registration and entertaining requests for extension of Indigenous lands. By 2013, of the 166 Amerindian communities, only 12 remained with outstanding title requests, while 37 demarcation and 33 extension requests were yet to be processed. Indigenous communities were also provided an opt-in mechanism to bring their forested lands under a REDD+ agreement and the priorities of the *Low Carbon Development Strategy*, while also establishing an Amerindian Development Fund to finance the community development plans.

- *Expanding the digital economy and avoiding a digital divide*: a fibre optic cable from Georgetown to Lethem operated by GT&T was constructed under an e-Government initiative that enhanced broadband connectivity between the coast and the hinterland and would facilitate connections to Brazil's telecommunications network. By 2013, the 530km fibre optic cable was near completion, with a 2nd phase linking the hinterland (Rupununi) about to begin. A "one laptop per family" project was also envisioned as part of the initiative to utilise the new infrastructure to provide e-services to rural and hinterland communities. Liberalisation of the telecommunications sector was also planned through a new Telecommunications Bill laid before the Parliament.
- *Support for micro- and small enterprises and vulnerable groups' low carbon livelihoods*: In 2013, the Strategy earmarked \$US5M of a total allocation of US\$10M to enable low carbon economic opportunities for micro- and small businesses. The Small Business Bureau would be equipped to provide financing and support for business development, which would have created an estimated 2,200 jobs.
- *Centre for bio-diversity research and curriculum development*: supporting partnerships for a world class biodiversity research facility and for curriculum development at the University of Guyana.
- *Climate resilience and adaptation*: following the experiences of the devastating 2005 floods, the first investment priority was for rehabilitating the canals of the East Demerara Water Conservancy to improve water management.
- *Monitoring, Reporting & Verification (MRV) and other low carbon development strategy supporting tasks*: the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment was established to lead national efforts towards a low carbon future. It was also mandated to lead Guyana's trading initiatives particularly as they related to forestry and mining. For the mining sector, the Ministry oversaw improved governance and sustainable development through the country's commitments to the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI) and the UN Minamata Convention on Mercury pollution. For forestry it coordinated through the GFC, the country's participation in the EU Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (EU-FLEGT) facility under a voluntary partnership agreement that ensures legal timber exports to the EU under an improved governance and assurance system, as well as Independent Forest Monitoring (IFM) to independently verify Guyana's REDD+ performance.

Five institutions were also targeted for institutional strengthening: i) the Office of Climate Change for its role in coordinating stakeholder consultations on the Strategy and on climate mitigation, adaptation and forest conservation; ii) The *Low Carbon*

Development Strategy Project Management Office tasked with accelerating projects; iii) the Guyana REDD+ Investment Fund (GRIF) established in 2010 to manage funds under the Guyana-Norway agreement and from other donors for implementing the Strategy; iv) the REDD+ Secretariat implementing MRV activities and determining Guyana's annual forest payments; and v) the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) monitoring and ensuring adherence to international environmental standards for all GRIF investments.

Other initiatives included support for high potential low carbon sectors: in agriculture – fruits and vegetables and aquaculture; in information technology – business process outsourcing; eco-tourism; and a clean transportation programme.

4.5.3 The Next Stage in the Low Carbon Transition (2013-2015)

Apart from continued pursuit of the above-listed 8 investment priorities, 5 additional medium-term priorities were described for the next transition stage:

- *Climate resilience, adaptation and water management*: an allocation of US\$100M was put towards a one-time effort to ensure Guyana's ability to cope with climate-induced events guided by a "Climate Resilience Strategy and Action Plan", which prioritized: i) upgrading of infrastructure assets to protect against flooding, including upgrades to the drainage and irrigation system, dredging and desilting of major rivers, upgrades to the East Demerara Water Conservancy to protect the city of Georgetown, and expansion of use of mangroves as natural sea defences along the East Bank and East Coast; ii) hinterland adaptation protecting community livelihoods through use of appropriate plant varieties and crop management techniques and construction of all-weather roads, bridges and new drainage and irrigation systems; iii) an adaptation readiness programme that promoted early-warning system, data collection, analysis and dissemination of timely information on weather events and potential impacts.
- *Support of high potential, low carbon sectors*: a \$30M US allocation for implementing the priorities of the *National Competitiveness Strategy* and ensuring low carbon objectives e.g. business process outsourcing that was showing impressive growth; eco-tourism with nature-, adventure- and community-based potential and linked to higher valued added agricultural activities e.g. aquaculture, fruits and vegetables, along with a more sustainable forestry and mining sectors.
- *Hinterland and Amerindian Development*: continuing previous work – completing the Amerindian titling project and resolving all disputes related thereto; capitalising the Amerindian Development Fund for funding implementation of community development plan, whilst also advancing the "Opt-In" process for managing titled Amerindian lands. Investment allocations were also earmarked for other measures in hinterland areas e.g. hinterland adaption, improving ICT access and facilitating distance learning.
- *Centre for Biodiversity*: investments were also prioritised for establishing a scientific research centre for biodiversity at the University of Guyana.
- *Clean Transportation Programme*: \$2M US was allocated for funding studies on a low carbon transportation sector identifying the benefits for Guyana.

In developing a global model for REDD+, it is notable that Guyana was the first country to establish a national-scale REDD+ based programme based on the sale of forest climate services. Upon this foundation, the global model would comprise building blocks of proxies: a monitoring proxy with specific indicators that determine how much money is paid to Guyana from verifiable avoided greenhouse (GHG) emissions; a climate finance proxy as an interim mechanism for attracting multi-donor financing³¹; and a safeguards proxy for achieving agreed social and environmental standards until the UNFCCC safeguards were available.

The implementation of the *Low Carbon Development Strategy* was supervised by a multi-stakeholder steering committee chaired by the Ministry of Finance and including representatives³² from other key and relevant government agencies, the private sector and civil society groups, along with the GRIF Trustee – the World Bank.

4.6 Climate Resilience Strategy and Action Plan (2015)

4.6.1 Background

Guyana, because of its location below sea level and its high level of exposure to climate risks has been considered highly vulnerable to the threats of climate change. The impacts of this vulnerability were felt through extreme flooding on the coast in 2005 and other events in subsequent years including droughts. Climate scientists have predicted that the earth's temperature will continue to rise which in turn will result in sea level rises and unorthodox precipitation. While Guyana continues to take action to address the risks posed by climate change, gaps still remain. In this regard, the *Climate Resilience Strategy and Action Plan* serves as the overarching framework of Guyana's response for building resilience and adapting to climate change.

The strategy builds on previous efforts such as the *Low Carbon Development Strategy* and the *National Adaptation Strategy to Address Climate Change in the Agricultural Sector*. It identifies low, medium, high and serious climate risks and priority resilience actions to address these risks. Mitigation measures are presented in a dual track approach which recommends the prioritisation of early-start, costed climate resilience project concepts in four key sectors that are prone to the effects of climate change: agriculture, health, sea defence, and drainage and irrigation. Track two assesses vulnerabilities of other key sectors and provides a programme of adaptation responses. Together, these efforts contribute to building a framework for national adaptation planning and climate resilience. Completed in 2015, the Climate Resilience Strategy and Action Plan articulated a timeframe for implementation from 2016-2020 and an iteration of the strategy in 2020 to guide future implementation.

³¹ In the absence of an agreed REDD+ funding mechanism.

³² Other multi-stakeholder Committee members include representatives from the Ministry of the Presidency, the Guyana Forestry Commission, the Guyana Gold and Diamond Miners Association, the Private Sector Commission, the National Tosaos Council, the North Rupununi District Development Board, the Amerindian Action Movement of Guyana, the National Amerindian Development Foundation, the Guyanese Organisation of Indigenous People, the University of Guyana, Conservation International, World Wildlife Fund, the Iwokrama International Centre, the Forest Producers Association, the Guyana Trades Union Congress, the Amerindian People's Association, the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission, the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Guyana, and other individuals.

4.6.2 Policy Objectives

The *Climate Resilience Strategy and Action Plan* supports Guyana's vision 2020 agenda for a green economy through the prioritisation of three key outcomes: climate resilience measures implemented across four priority sectors and other remaining sectors; capacity development for national adaptation planning; and securing financing and mainstreaming climate resilience into the national budget process.

To realise these outcomes, the *Climate Resilience Strategy and Action Plan* provides a roadmap for the next five years; project concept notes for four priority areas; identification of the most pressing climate risks and related resilience measures across 15 sectors; capacity building actions to support adaptation efforts and a financing plan to implement the strategy. The strategy and action plan are underpinned by five cross-cutting pillars: (i) information, research and systematic observation, (ii) institutions and capacity building, (iii) policy and legal frameworks, (iv) infrastructure and technology; and (v) finance.

The strategy roadmap proposed a five-year timeframe between 2016-2020 for the implementation of the project concept notes, climate resilience measures across 15 sectors, capacity building for adaptation and financing for mainstreaming climate resilience in future expenditure. It was anticipated that progress against these outcomes would be reviewed in 2020 with a view to taking stock, conducting another iteration of the strategy and continuing implementation for delivery of the outcomes over the next five-year period. This articulation of the roadmap was in keeping with the new government term and the national planning cycle. While a broad five-year cycle was proposed as a roadmap, the sequencing of projects and activities for accomplishing outcomes were not elaborated.

Project concept notes were conceptualised to deliver bankable, early-start, climate resilience investments that focus on key priority areas. These projects were selected based on readiness to be implemented, availability of information on financing requirements, and alignment with national priorities. It was expected that these concept notes would be developed into full proposals to present to potential donors and partners for funding. The agriculture, health, sea defence, and drainage and irrigation sectors were selected because of their impact on economic development and human well-being.

In the agriculture sector, investments prioritised included (i) improvement of water resource management with emphasis on resilience to droughts; (ii) diversification of agri-business with support to farmers for commercialisation of organic and nice crops, strengthening of credit facilities and extension services; (iii) promotion of farm management practices that incorporate climate risk adaptation such as land use and tillage practices, plant breeding and fertilizer application, as well as feasibility of introducing crop insurance; (iv) improvement in capacity-building through tailor-made training, improve skills development in climate risk reduction and support to farmers for maintaining information management systems. These priority investments amount to approximately US\$14 million and would be implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture.

Priority investments in public health were estimated at US\$18 million. Implemented by the Ministry of Public Health, investment priorities centred on (i) expansion of disaster management, surveillance and early warning systems; (ii) activities to promote access to safe water and hygienic sanitation facilities; (iii) reduction of vector borne diseases; (iv)

improvements in health infrastructure retrofitted for climate resilience and powered by renewable energy sources; (v) development of human capacity to respond to impacts on health; and (vi) public promotion of information on climate related health impacts.

Enhancement and maintenance of sea defences are critical investments considering Guyana's low-lying coastline, the increasing intensity of precipitation and the rise in sea levels. These investments have been estimated at US\$46 million and aim to minimise the risk of flooding and erosion. Priorities included (i) mangrove restoration through replanting and conservation programmes; (ii) evaluation of sea and river defence structures and rehabilitation of structures based on climate resilient designs; and (iii) public awareness campaign and stakeholder involvement in maintaining sea and river defence structures.

The final concept note focused on the strengthening of drainage and irrigation systems along the coast. Priority investment areas identified were (i) improved capacity of the drainage network through separation of agricultural and urban systems in selected areas, construction of new canals and improved mechanised pump capacity at Lusignan and Liliendaal; (ii) create additional water users associations and facilitate better coordination between drainage and irrigation managers and farmers; (iii) strengthen the capacity of the National Drainage and Irrigation Authority to implement to provide services; and (iv) public awareness on drainage and solid waste management. These investments were estimated at US\$33 million to be implemented by the National Drainage and Irrigation Authority.

Climate risks and resilience measures were identified for an additional twelve areas together with those identified for the sectors covered in the project concept notes. The new areas include community and regional development, ecosystems and biodiversity, energy, fisheries, forestry, housing, Indigenous Peoples, mining, tourism, trade, transport and water. These individualised resilience measures are based on climate risks, opportunities and vulnerability profiles of each area; specific actions are grouped along the five cross-cutting pillars.

Capacity building actions were proposed in the strategy to fill the gaps that exist in local capacity to implement adaptation and resilience measures. While several agencies have climate change as central to their mandate, implementation of the strategy would require broad-based coordination and collaboration of and between agencies. In line with the five pillars of adaptation, priorities included enhancing data collection, storage and analysis to support decision-making and reporting; training in the use and management of climate resilience information; inclusion of climate change considerations in policy development and national planning activities; incentives to increase availability of financing for climate resilience and adaptation measures; and use of technology in developing tools and implementing solutions.

Guyana will require significant resources for financing the implementation of the strategy. The main source of financing for actualising climate change activities is the *Guyana REDD+ Investment Fund* solely capitalised through Guyana's agreement with Norway. Outside of this fund, Guyana's access to climate fund resources has been minimal compared to its Caribbean counterparts. Therefore, Guyana needs to pursue a robust financing plan that would secure funding for its climate change agenda. In this regard, the strategy recommended the strengthening of the infrastructure needed to access climate related funding through capacity building for developing project proposals, funding requests, and for engaging multilateral and bilateral partners; establishment of a climate fund, based on the experience of

the *Guyana REDD+ Investment Fund*, to centralise financing through which allocations will be made for the implementation of the strategy; the integration of climate change considerations into the national budget process through a review of public expenditure to identify a baseline of climate-related expenditure to inform decision-making; and support for implementing agencies in the development of full proposals for financing the identified project concepts in the four key sectors.

The implementation mechanism for the *Climate Resilience Strategy and Action Plan* envisaged the four priority project concepts being executed by the related sector agencies and through partnerships between agencies with similar mandates. Measures identified across other sectors are addressed to those agencies responsible for the respective sectors. The strategy recommended that an agency be mandated to coordinate implementation and monitor and assess progress against achievement of outcomes. This function should be performed by an existing institution with cross-sectoral committees established to provide support.

4.7 Strategic Plan for Promoting and Enhancing Social Cohesion in Guyana (2017-2021)

4.7.1 Background

Historically, ethnic insecurity and lack of trust have been a constant aspect of Guyanese society. Since the social unrest in the early 1960s that resulted in the loss of hundreds of lives, Guyanese have struggled to erase the scourge of ethnic conflict which has been continually fueled by divisive politics.³³ Tensions are usually inflamed during national elections: periods of unrest were experienced after the 1992, 1997 and 2001 elections.³⁴

Various peace-building activities were implemented to address these conflicts. In 2000, the Ethnic Relations Commission was established³⁵ to promote equality and the elimination of discrimination, investigate complaints of racial discrimination, and other functions in line with promoting social cohesion.³⁶ Between 2003-2006, a *Social Cohesion Programme* was implemented by the United Nations Development Programme and a similar project was also funded by USAID to increase capacity for managing conflicts.

These efforts have been largely credited for the peaceful periods experienced after the elections of 2006. In 2008, the *Enhanced Public Trust, Security and Inclusion* project was executed by UNDP to build on the success of the *Social Cohesion Programme*, completed in 2011. Since then, there has not been any major project interventions related to social cohesion until 2015 when the Ministry of Social Cohesion was created by the new administration.

³³ Myers, Roxanne; Calder, Jason "Toward Ethnic Conflict Transformation: A Case Study of Citizen Peacebuilding Initiatives on the 2006 Guyana Elections" 2011, available at: <https://www.future.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Calder-&-Myers-Toward-Ethnic-Conflict-Transformation-in-Guyana-2011.pdf>

³⁴ *ibid*

³⁵ By Constitutional Amendment (#2) Act of 2000.

³⁶ Constitution of Guyana, Article 212D.

Following extensive national consultations across the country, and with public, private sector and civil society, that culminated in a roundtable discussion of key stakeholders, organised by the Ministry, the idea for a strategic plan to address identified issues was conceived. Indeed, the priorities of the *Strategic Plan* were informed by the main issues raised in the consultations. “Social cohesion” was defined as “a process of nurturing individual and community relationships in building a unified Guyana”. The *Strategic Plan* is also consonant with the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* and particularly Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) #16, peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development.

The Ministry of Social Cohesion maintains a coordinating role among other government agencies for advocating and monitoring the implementation of legislation and policies, and for fostering partnership and collaboration with other civil society groups.

Five outcomes for promoting and enhancing social cohesion were developed:

- *Economic equity and opportunities for all*: the Constitution guarantees equality and opportunities for all Guyanese on economic activities, rights and benefits, regardless of ethnicity, gender, creed or physical ability. There is a perception, however, that for persons living in the hinterland, workers in low-skilled jobs (e.g. miners, domestic workers, handymen), the unemployed, those living with disabilities, school drop-outs, or those otherwise regarded as poor, among other disadvantaged groups, they disproportionately lack opportunities for advancement, are unfairly treated or discriminated against. The issues relate to a broad sweep of services and facilities that would otherwise be more accessible in coastal area locations e.g. employment, public services (education and health) and financial services. The Plan calls on responsible public sector agencies that already have the mandate to “protect, proscribe, enable, or sanction economic behaviors, as appropriate, towards providing a level playing field for all”.
- *Citizen safety and security*: following on from the above, a lack of access to public and other services is also related to perceptions of insecurity. Hinterland communities feel less assured that assistance will be forthcoming for accidents, health or crime emergencies. In coastal communities, pollution threats (water and air quality, mosquito infestation) road accidents and murder/suicides have become so common place that there is either deep distrust of the police or a lack of confidence in emergency first responders. The Plan emphasizes the significant role that law enforcement plays in fostering feelings of safety and security among the citizenry, which is fundamental to achieving social cohesion.
- *Social inclusion and tolerance*: During the consultations stage that informed the development of the *Strategic Plan*, many viewpoints on discrimination or intolerance were aired on prejudice against persons with different lifestyles. A variety of persons suffered because of their age (usually the elderly) or economic stages in life (usually the poor), for their alternative lifestyles as in the case of LGBTQI³⁷ persons, religious or political beliefs, styles of dress, mental illness or other aberrant behaviours. Participants volunteered explanations for such prejudices that ranged from a lack of education or willingness to tolerate or understand the choices or lifestyles of others, the stigma attached to certain

³⁷ LGBTQI: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex.

physical conditions or lifestyles, or the frequency with which some groups conveniently blame others for their situations in life. Communities called for interventions designed to educate, inform and raise awareness on available laws that enshrine the rights of the individual, on appropriate norms, attitudes and behaviours, and the teaching of respect, tolerance and acceptance of diversity, including at the early childhood level.

- *Inclusive and participatory governance*: This pillar of the *Strategic Plan* garnered the widest-ranging feedback from the consultations. Participants bemoaned their unfamiliarity with the Constitution and blamed the system of education and the general lack of effort on the part of responsible agencies for this. There were also complaints about the system of representation by elected officials, including a lack of transparency on decisions taken by the Parliament and the failure to regularly include and/or inform especially young people in the decision-making process or in projects that stimulate. Perhaps the most disturbing feedback related to the lack of a sense of national or civic responsibility and pride in being members of a specific community or being Guyanese. This suggests a sense of frustration and neglect, with the paucity of e.g. local libraries for accessing information and knowledge; opportunities to showcase handicrafts, local produce, cuisine and culture; low priority for enhancing community life and cohesion through facilities for recreation, health, education and other essential services. Participants believed that these could go a long way to promote better cohesion and participation in civic life.
- *Harmonious ethnic and race relations*: ethnic and race relations have had some improvement from the low points of a decade or more ago, when strife and conflict were commonplace. Notwithstanding, tensions seem to flare up during election cycles and persist in less visible ways between the major ethnic groups (Afro-Guyanese and Indo-Guyanese), indigenous people and other minority ethnicities. These problems are probably rooted in Guyana's colonial past and the stratification of society that characterized the then plantation economy. The consultations also suggest some deterioration in relations along cultural and religious lines, but even these are not homogenous across communities and regions. Most participants believed and with some hope, that ethnic and race relations are based on misconceptions and stereotyping that could be addressed with better opportunities for education, information exchange, sowing seeds of trust and sharing.

4.7.2 Policy Objectives

The Strategic Plan articulates the vision of “[a] unified Guyana where diversities are embraced, conflicts resolved, networks and collaboration with stakeholders strengthened, equity promoted, and decision-making processes result in equal opportunities and benefits to all”. In addition, social cohesion in Guyana require attention to the following principles:

- i) Promoting inclusive growth and reducing socio-economic inequalities;
- ii) Strengthening peoples’ participation and advancing human development;
- iii) Promoting social inclusion and acceptance of diversity;
- iv) Enhancing citizen and community safety and security;
- v) Promoting inclusionary democracy, at all levels of governance, and strengthening the role of social partners in socio-economic processes; and

- vi) Promoting a culture of peace, reconciliation, harmony, trust, inclusion, equality, and respect for diversity.

The *Strategic Plan* further details interventions under four interrelated action areas:

- *Enhancing government capacity*: Specific activities focus on building capacity to implement and deliver at local levels. These include upgrading technical training facilities and emphasising use of small grants programmes; equipping local government staff with the skills and tools to provide e.g. counselling for those affected by suicide, abuse and sexual harassment; promoting 'green' initiatives such as organic farming, use of renewable energy sources; promotion of environmentally sustainable mining and forestry practices; capacity building for conflict resolution and mediation; awareness-raising on local government and public administration to encourage civic involvement, better transparency and governance; and enhancing knowledge in management and data collection at the Ministry of Social Cohesion.
- *Institutional strengthening*: Activities will promote better employment practices, including labour protections particularly for low- and unskilled workers; promotion of citizen involvement in security and safety such as in community policing groups with better improved collaboration between citizens and the police; strengthening especially the commissions on ethnic relations, child rights, women and gender equality and Indigenous Peoples; provision of age appropriate information to and for out-of-school youths on the Constitution and on governance; organising and supporting national events and activities for greater cohesion such as religious, cultural and sporting events, including a 'national social cohesion day'; hosting of national and local conversations on race and ethnicity and dissemination of appropriate messages from these conversations.
- *Influencing development and implementation of sector policies*: screening to ensure that aspects of social cohesion are adopted and through participatory methodologies; policy and legislation that protect persons from discrimination; emphasizing economic opportunities for small businesses and aligning national policies with international commitments.
- *Building an enabling and supportive environment*: through programmatic actions that build trust, strengthen solidarity and bolster feelings of safety, security, pride and happiness. Specific actions should pursue economic activities at community levels; promote of a better understanding of varying lifestyles and life situations, and sensitise on undesirable behaviours and discriminatory practices.

As social cohesion remains a cross sectoral issue, implementation of the *Strategic Plan* would be done in partnership with relevant state institutions including the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Social Cohesion but in a spirit of mutual respect, cooperation and accountability. The Ministry of Social Cohesion will retain responsibility for overall coordination, engaging civil society and the private sector, and implementation outcomes.

4.8 Guyana's Draft Framework National Cultural Policy (2018-2025)

4.8.1 Background

Guyana has a rich and diverse cultural heritage. Historically, this cultural plurality has contributed to the divisions that have stymied its development, despite it being a resource rich country. History notwithstanding, Guyana's rich cultural heritage can play an important role in integrating society and fostering a shared identity that transcends all divides. This view is supported by UNESCO who believes that cultural practices can be used to integrate members of different communities, thereby contributing to dialogue and decreasing psychological distances.³⁸ The Constitution of Guyana, in its preamble, speaks to the celebration of Guyanese cultural and racial diversity, and valuing the special place of the Indigenous Peoples. The celebration of Guyana's cultural heritage promotes greater self-awareness, an understanding of the complexities of the varied traditions, beliefs and values, and inspires self-reliance. Culture plays a critical role in nation-building and, especially in the Guyanese context, can be a tool to foster social cohesion.

Since the creation of a portfolio for culture, the responsibility for this department has shifted over the years. Culture was initially the mandate of the National History and Arts Council founded in 1965. This mandate was then transferred to the Ministry of Education. In 1989, after a process of reassignment, Culture formed part of the Ministry of Culture and Social Development under the responsibility of the Vice-President and Deputy Prime Minister. By 1991, the Ministry of Education was re-organised and Culture was once again put under the aegis of that ministry, renamed the Ministry of Education and Cultural Development.³⁹ In the mid-1990s a Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport was created and a directorate with responsibility for Culture was subsequently introduced. In 2015, the portfolio for the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport was incorporated into the Ministry of Education, with directorates for the departments of Culture, Youth and Sport.

Two years later, in 2017, the decision was taken to delink these departments from the education portfolio and merge them with the Department of Social Cohesion under the Ministry of the Presidency. The responsibility for culture thus rests with the renamed Department of Social Cohesion, Culture, Youth and Sport – Ministry of the Presidency. This new organisation of departments recognises the nexus between culture and social cohesion and the role of sport and youth development in achieving social cohesion, and the preservation and development of culture. Close linkages remain between the Ministry of Education and the new Department of Social Cohesion, Culture, Youth and Sport.

Since the creation of Guyana's first cultural policy in 1977, there have been some attempts to update and refine a strategy to guide the mainstreaming, preservation and development of the country's cultural heritage. In 2008, a draft national cultural policy was developed and, by 2014, the Department of Culture in its 2014-2018 action plan committed to review, enact and implement a policy and legal framework for culture and national heritage. With the change in

³⁸ UNESCO, Dialogues on Culture Report

³⁹ World Data on Education, 6 ed., Guyana, 2006/2007 – available at http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/archive/Countries/WDE/2006/LATIN_AMERICA_and_the_CARIBBEAN/Guyana/Guyana.htm

administration in 2015 and the reorganisation of the portfolio of culture, renewed emphasis was placed on culture and through a process of consultation, research and work that had already begun, a *Framework National Cultural Policy* was drafted to guide the implementation of specific policy interventions in three main areas: Mainstreaming Culture in Development; Cultural Heritage Preservation, Protection and Promotion; and Creative Arts and Industries Development.

4.8.2 Policy Objectives:

The primary purpose of the *Framework National Cultural Policy* is to outline constitutionally-based commitments to ensuring that Guyana's diverse heritage is both celebrated and employed as a tool for cohesion in order that all Guyanese, youth in particular, have access to a good, fulfilling, creative life in a society in which the rights of all citizens are respected. The main objectives of the policy are to:

- Ensure that strong, sustainable systems are put in place to identify, protect and preserve both tangible and intangible cultural heritage and to promote diversity as the core national identity.
- Develop Guyana's creative arts and industries and other forms of cultural expression in order to both enrich the life of citizens as well as to diversify the evolving economy.
- Ensure that culture is mainstreamed into development initiatives in keeping with both national priorities and international obligations.

These objectives are based on five pillars: (i) *National Development Centrality* – the integration of culture to support national development, (ii) *International Integration* – recognition of Guyana's international commitments on culture and development; (iii) *General Resilience* – cultural policy must be based on consultation and consensus to drive resource mobilisation and innovation; (iv) *General Integrity* – good governance and transparency in implementation of cultural initiatives is critical for sustainability; and (v) *Cultural Equity* – the creation of policy measures that recognises diversity in Guyana's cultural landscape and the empowerment of local communities to exercise the diversity of cultural expression.

The framework provides three broad areas for policy implementation, namely: (i) Mainstreaming Culture in Development; (ii) Heritage Preservation, Protection and Promotion; and (iii) Creative Arts and Cultural Industries Development.

Mainstreaming Culture in Development – based on research and consultations, three areas relevant to mainstreaming culture were identified: (i) education, (ii) environment, and (iii) citizenship. The examination of education through a cultural lens, provides opportunities for innovative solutions to challenges engendered by Guyana's diversity. The development of human resources in arts and culture education is critical for the growth of cultural industries and regional development.

The strategic priorities for culture and education are: comprehensively examine the challenges faced by students, particularly in the Indigenous community, and implement courses in the language of first instruction; enhance arts education in schools within a comprehensive STEM+A policy paradigm; ensure that cultural equity is created and sustained within the public education system; and enhance the role of multicultural education as a critical

component of curriculum reform. Culture can be transferred through sustainable environmental practices and Indigenous languages and cultural expressions often contain valuable information about the environment.

Within the context of a green economy, the following will be prioritised: empowering Indigenous communities in maintaining and transmitting their culture to future generations; creating channels of communication among Indigenous and other hinterland communities; creating and maintaining mechanisms for Indigenous inputs into national programmes for sustainable development; creating monitoring and evaluation as well as impact assessment models for external engagement with Indigenous cultural spaces; recognising and rewarding best practice initiatives on cultural preservation both within Indigenous communities and from external operators.

Promoting deeper levels of understanding among the various religious, ethnic and cultural groups is critical for developing Guyanese citizenship. The priorities in this regard include: establishing mechanisms under which there are regular fora for national dialogues on citizen identity, rights and access to participation in national life; establishing mechanisms for community-organised, government-supported historiography projects and inter-community cultural knowledge sharing; and supporting creative arts initiatives that speak directly to the issue of citizenship and social cohesion.

Heritage Preservation, Protection and Promotion – Guyana has seen successes in this area through its established programmes, particularly in preservation of built heritage.

Notwithstanding these successes in tangible heritage protection, there are deficiencies in the policy environment and limited intangible cultural heritage stewardship. The general policy thrust in this area will be to assess the correct current state of tangible and intangible cultural heritage; develop mechanisms to strengthen weak areas of cultural heritage preservation, protection and promotion; and bring Guyana in line with its international commitments and obligations on cultural heritage preservation, protection and promotion. Some of the specific actions identified include the establishment of a National Heritage Commission, updating of the National Trust Act, establishing a national built heritage preservation strategy and protocol, establishing a National Museums Board, updating and enforcing the National Archives Act, implementation of a multiyear national preservation, expansion and digitisation strategy, implementing a comprehensive intellectual property rights regime that covers traditional knowledge, mapping of the entire traditional linguistic heritage of Guyana and the official recognition of the validity of non-English languages as part of our national patrimony.

Creative Arts and Cultural Industries Development - creative industry development is increasingly becoming a central pillar of economic development and/or diversification for developed and developing countries alike. Guyana's creative industry has tremendous potential for growth based on its diverse multicultural heritage and a spirit of creative innovation that has found expression in a multiplicity of ways from indigenous architecture, to hybrid culinary culture to creative arts. Additionally, Guyana's landscape provides a rich and variegated backdrop for the development of cultural industry initiatives such as filmmaking and festivals. The priorities for development of the industry are to create an environment where the creative citizen has a fundamental right to exist as an individual and to contribute to society to the best of their ability without fear; establish innovative educational mechanisms to enhance the development of the creative citizen; establish and maintain mechanisms that

sustain and reward artistic excellence through transparent and innovative systems; create an environment where the creative citizen can earn a fair and dignified living; and affirm in policy as well as practice the critical role that creative expression has to play in economic development as well as national social cohesion. Specific activities identified include: establishment of a National Creative Industries Development Commission, incentivising private sector investment in the musical arts, establish a marketing and promotion mechanism for Guyanese music, providing arts management scholarships and training support, marketing Guyana as a destination for production of television and cinematic projects, establishing municipal art galleries in all Guyana's townships, researching and documenting traditional crafts and providing support for transmission of knowledge and enhancing the architectural talent pool by providing internships, scholarships and fast-tracking public service seniority for exemplary young architects.

The *Framework National Cultural Policy* is a working policy that will be implemented over two five-year policy formulation cycles, 2016-2020 and 2021-2025. Each cycle will include a policy formulation process that stakeholder participation, a mapping of the policy implementation environment, and implementation of the policy as informed by the formulation and mapping exercises. The responsibility for implementation of the *Framework National Cultural Policy* rests with the Department of Social Cohesion, Culture, Youth and Sport. Notwithstanding this overarching responsibility, there is need for collaboration and an inter-ministry effort for realisation of the policy objectives.

5 Sectoral Policies

5.1 National Land Transport Strategy and Action Plan (2016-2026)⁴⁰

5.1.1 Background

The land transport network is critical to Guyana's growth and development as it provides the main means of moving people, goods and services between locations at local and national levels. Key sectors of the economy such as agriculture, manufacturing and extractives depend heavily on land transport. Without adequate infrastructure, development can be stymied.

Historically, Guyana's transportation network was concentrated in the coastal plain and served commercial and agricultural interests, principally sugar cane plantations. Sugar estates along the coast were connected to the main trading ports of Georgetown and New Amsterdam in the east. Railroads were first used as the principal means of transporting goods, machinery and equipment along for example, what is now the Railway Embankment road from Plaisance to Rosignol near the Berbice River; in the west through Parika – Vreed-en-Hoop and towards the south connecting the Potaro goldfields and adjacent agricultural activities. The road networks basically followed this pattern and crossings across the Essequibo, Demerara and Berbice rivers were completed by boat.

With a land size of 215,000 square kilometres, the *Land Transportation Plan* describes a total of 7,970 km of road, with 19% primary roads and 21% feeder roads that service agricultural areas, mainly in the coastal plain. The Plan also describes that there only 35% of roads are paved. The road network along the coast is extensive and of general good quality but is not continuous due to barriers posed by rivers.

Primary roads (458km) are mainly found within the coastal plain. These extend from the capital city Georgetown, east, connecting the towns of Mahaicony, Rosignol, New Amsterdam and Corriverton on the Corentyne river at the Suriname border. This network features bridge crossings across the Mahaica, Mahaicony and Berbice Rivers. The network also extends south from Georgetown linking the Cheddi Jagan International Airport at Timehri, branching further south to Linden, along the Linden-Soesdyke highway and linking other secondary and feeder roads. To the west, linked via the Demerara River bridge crossing, primary roads connect the towns of Parika, Anna Regina and up to Charity.

In the hinterland, the land transport network is generally inadequate or non-existent, with hardly any primary roads which inhibit interconnectivity among communities and between those communities and the coast. This is a barrier to economic growth and limits access by communities to critical public services e.g. electricity supply, health and education.

With the increase in motorised transport, the rise in housing developments in urban areas in and near the capital city, road transport networks have become congested. The high incidence of road accidents with its resultant social and economic effects are also of major concern to policymakers.

⁴⁰ The discussion in this section is to be read in conjunction with Annex A(5) that presents a macroeconomic assessment of critical infrastructure networks including that of land transportation.

It is against this background that the *National Land Transport Strategy and Action Plan* was commissioned. The strategy covers a 10-year horizon from 2016-2026 and is complemented by an action plan that provides short-, medium- and long-term outcomes. The Strategy was developed from a study of the land transport sector which assessed the land transport challenges, outlines the priority infrastructure investments for the 10-year horizon and identifies the transformational changes required to deliver these investments.

5.1.2 Policy Objectives

The vision articulated by the National Land Transport Strategy and Action Plan is for “the development of a sustainable and interconnected land transport system within and between the coastland and hinterland communities and proposed development areas for efficient and safe movement of people goods and services in support of national development”.

The Strategy has 3 key objectives that address:

- i) The legal and institutional framework including the management of the network: closing gaps within the legal and institutional framework for an improved land transport network; institutional strengthening of the Central Transport Planning Unit as the department responsible for setting transport policy and enforcing regulations, and the Works Services Group that supervises the works, building technical capacity for management of investments, and upgrading technology and equipment for better maintenance of road networks.
- ii) Efficiency, safety and environmental considerations: through improved road design and building standards with the aim of achieving greater efficiency, safety and with reduced environmental impact. Activities include assessments of the safety and efficiency of road networks, education and awareness-raising programmes on safe use of transport networks and updating environmental regulations and standards.
- iii) Coastal and hinterland connectivity and integrated national development: increasing the inter-connectivity between the hinterland and the coast as detailed in the master plan – a product of inter-agency cooperation and planning.

A functional road network is fundamental for developing the economy, connecting agricultural farms to their markets, facilitating exports from the main shipping port at Georgetown or at borders, and to facilitate community livelihoods and population mobility, among other uses. With three new townships recently declared (Bartica, Lethem, Mabaruma and Mahdia), fulfilling their roles as townships also raises expectations of good connectivity between road corridors that will enhance other infrastructure modalities e.g. ICT, air- and sea ports, utilities and related services, and facilitate orderly and planned settlement and housing development.

To that end, the Transportation Plan also refers to the country’s commitment to the 2030 SDGs and specifically Goal #9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure) and Goal #11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities). In the absence of national targets, target 1 of Goal #9 becomes an objective for expanding the road network:

“the need to develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and trans-border infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all”.

Target 2 of Goal #11 is also an objective:

“to provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons”

The total estimated investment is US\$2.68 billion based on short-, medium- and long-term investment projects, which are discussed in Annex A(5)⁴¹.

5.2 Ministry of Business Strategic Plan (2016-2020)

5.2.1 Background

The Ministry of Business was established in 2015 as a new ministry with the mandate to support economic growth in Guyana. The responsible Minister is responsible for policy and is supported by a secretariat. Operations are managed by the permanent and deputy permanent secretary.

While the Permanent Secretary has overall responsibility for the Ministry, the Deputy Permanent Secretary oversees the Ministry’s core functions. The Ministry’s policy-making work is executed via its departments (Commerce, Industry Development, Tourism, Business Strategy and Policy Unit, National Exhibition Centre) and implemented in collaboration with its semi-autonomous agencies⁴².

The Ministry’s mandate has four key pillars:

- i) **Investment promotion:** led by Go-Invest, Guyana’s investment promotion agency, the goal is for investment to drive the country’s development outcomes related to e.g. infrastructure, telecommunications, energy and education.
- ii) **Work force enhancement:** the objective is to increase the size and quality of Guyana’s labour force through better jobs and by improving businesses, which account for 80% of Guyana’s tax revenues. Businesses are also regarded as key partners in the design of effective labour market policies, in employment and poverty reduction and especially for vulnerable groups. This pillar also seeks to remove the traditional constraints to business competitiveness e.g. limited access to credit and a good quality work force.
- iii) **Sustainable development:** The pillar emphasises the important role played by Guyana’s private sector as a major employer and source of high skilled jobs, source of 80% of the country’s total expenditure in new capital. Sustained business growth requires transparent, predictable and evidence-based economic and regulatory policies, as

⁴¹ Annex A(5): Resilient Infrastructure and Spatial Development.

⁴² Semi-autonomous bodies of the Ministry include: the National Exhibition Centre (NEC), the Guyana Office for Investment (GO-Invest), the Guyana National Bureau of Standards (GNBS), the Small Business Bureau (SBB), the Guyana Tourism Authority, the National Standards Council, and the Small Business Council.

reflected through strong governance structures, macroeconomic stability, a diversified economic base, increased human capital investments, upgrading of firm capabilities, environmental protection and national unity.

- iv) **Export promotion:** This objective is to drive the economy towards more value-added industries, standardisation and regional competitiveness. Priorities will harmonize international and domestic standards, foster industrial development, manufacturing and services, with support provided especially to small businesses.

5.2.2 Policy Objectives

The Ministry's 5-year Strategic Action Plan is organized into 5 component actions identifying short term (2015-2016) and medium term (2017-2020) activities, with the implementing responsibilities spread across the Ministry's departments and semi-autonomous agencies:

1. **Improve the ease of doing business in Guyana:** The Department of Commerce, Go-Invest, GNBS, SBB will work to ensure overall good performance of the economy against the indicators for ease of doing business e.g. credit, corruption, investor protection, registering property, accessing electricity and trading across borders and a more liberalized market. Activities will lay the legal and operational framework for a Single Window System for Trade Transactions and online business registration platform, a local metrology standard and related facilities and a strengthened and more transparent investor framework.
2. **Attract increased foreign investments in the economy:** The Ministry and its agencies, Go-Invest and GNBS will work to significantly improve investor confidence and consequently investments for economic growth. Activities will strengthen Go-Invest in its investment facilitation role with established targets for 200+ investment projects worth over \$13B GD. Go-Invest will increase its visibility among investors and the Guyanese diaspora, design and implement a more attractive incentives scheme facilitated by tools e.g. investor guidelines, trade agreements, website, business certification and promotional materials, among others.
3. **Support the development and exports of value-added industries:** the objective are to increase the overall value of exports, comply with international export standards and to increase by 15% the exports of certified goods produced by SMEs. The Ministry's Departments of Commerce and Industry, the NEC, Go-Invest, GNBS, SBB are collaborating to develop rules and procedures for new and existing industrial estates, drafting an industrial policy, promoting low-carbon SMEs, providing small business improvement training and financing instruments e.g. loans and grants and raising awareness and visibility of Guyana's export by hosting international trade expos.
4. **Increase the economic opportunities and capabilities of vulnerable groups:** The Ministry is collaborating with the Ministries of Education, Social Protection, Communities and Agriculture to reduce poverty and unemployment and to ensure inclusive development particularly among vulnerable groups and in rural areas. Small business support and information services will be provided across all regions of Guyana accessing the regional networks of e.g. the Ministry of Communities and the Ministry of Education.

5. **Expand the Ministry's capacity to develop and promote sustainable business-friendly policies:** The Ministry is executing its responsibility for accountability, transparency and good governance by publishing its procurement activities and how small businesses in particular have benefitted and demonstrating that its industrial promotion accomplishments are linked to the requirements of international competitiveness standards. Its website will be enhanced to ensure transparency in its expenditures, its recruitment and procurement practices, among others.

The Strategic Action Plan is aligned to the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and specifically SDG #8: "*Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all*". A monitoring and evaluation framework articulates the systems and data used to monitor performance and report on progress, and is linked to the national budget process as managed by the Ministry of Finance.

5.2.3 Guyana Tourism Authority Draft Living Strategy Action Plan (2018-2020)

5.2.3.1 Background

Apart from business and export facilitation, the Department of Tourism of the Ministry of Business and the Guyana Tourism Authority (statutory agency) are responsible for setting tourism policy, and developing and promoting sustainable tourism in Guyana, respectively.

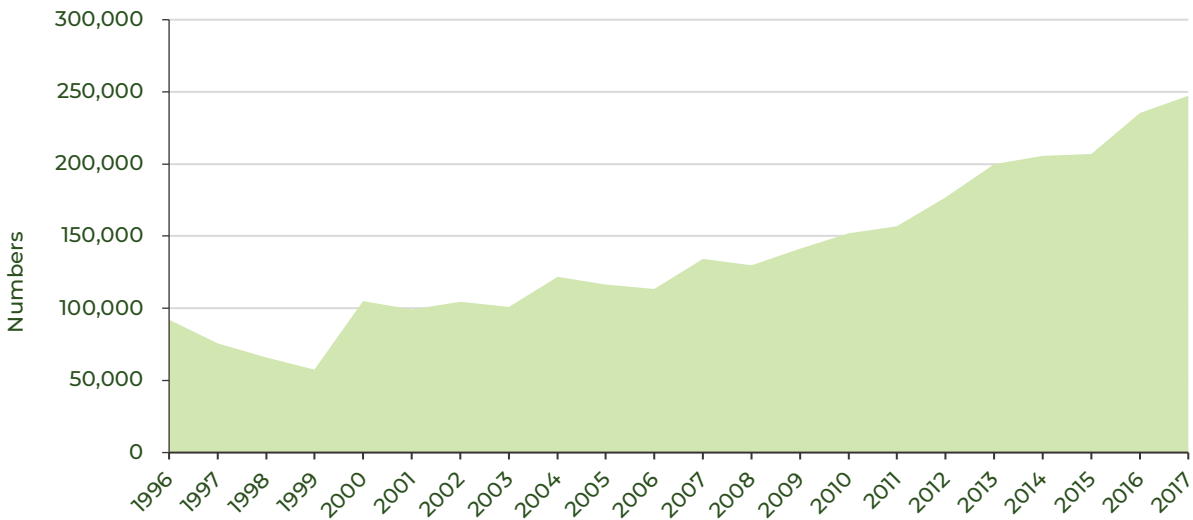
The Guyana Tourism Authority (GTA) licenses businesses to conduct tourism services operating as providers of accommodation including lodges and resorts, tour operators and guides to operate in Guyana.⁴³ Business must apply for a license along with the prescribed fee and satisfy all requirements. An annual license fee is payable as in the case of accommodation according to the number of rooms. Tour operators also pay a fixed application and license fee, with the latter renewable annually. Tour guides must submit a fee-based application, provide evidence of qualifications, skills and training among other criteria in order to secure a license.

The GTA conducts training courses for hotel and tourism industry staff in customer services, First Aid & CPR, adventure and tour guiding, business and financial management. It compiles an annual tourism statistical digest, reports on visitor arrivals data and provides tendering opportunities for special projects e.g. marketing and other industry development tools.

Guyana's main visitor market is the Caribbean region (47.5%), followed by the United States (31.6%) and Canada (8.6%). Arrivals are showing steady growth since the mid-1990s (Figure 11) and for July 2018 are already at 65% of the 2017 total.

⁴³ See Guyana Tourism Authority [website](#).

Figure 9: Visitor Arrivals to Guyana*



*Arrivals data is compiled by the GTA from the four main ports of entry of Guyana, namely Cheddi Jagan International Airport (CJIA), Eugene F. Correia International Airport (EFCIA), Moleson Creek (Guyana/Suriname Border Crossing) and Lethem (Guyana/Brazil Border Crossing).

Source: Guyana Tourism Authority

5.2.3.2 Policy Objectives

The GTA has developed a *2018-2020 Living Strategic Action Plan* (draft). Its Vision 2020 is “To be recognized internationally, by the year 2020, as a leading destination for sustainable, nature-based tourism experiences”. The Plan promotes the “Destination Guyana” brand as one of natural and cultural heritage assets that aim to help Guyana become a “green state”. The core focus is on developing a “nature-based” product that exceeds visitor expectations, whilst also contributing to the national economy and quality of life for all Guyanese.

The Plan describes four strategic goals:

- 1) **Optimize nation-wide socio-economic and conservation outcomes from tourism:** GTA will pursue closer alignment of the sector with the *Green State Development Strategy: Vision 2040*, and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, and foster collaboration and engagement with key public and private sector stakeholders and partners. The objective is to optimize its destination development, marketing and sales in a more systematic manner that raises the value of and investment in the country’s key cultural and heritage assets and promotes competitive products and services for the benefit of the people of Guyana. Product development and consumption will be guided by the “green state” and sustainable tourism agenda and applicable standards and regulations.
- 2) **Support and empower Guyana’s tourism industry:** The objective is to ensure that the industry has available, adequate and stable financial resources to accomplish its growth, development and sustainability objectives. GTA will therefore be more strategic in its fundraising and partnerships with donors and private sector businesses

and maximize fees from its licensing operations. The fundraising strategy will enhance tourism capacity development, data collection and visitor monitoring and appreciation via its Welcome Centers.

- 3) **Champion the value of tourism:** The GTA will seek to streamline its licensing operations for greater efficiency and compliance, and to maximize revenues. The Plan also emphasizes strategic alliances at domestic, regional and international levels to better manage and improve air transportation connectivity and services, visitor safety, security and crisis management, private sector competitiveness and a progressive policy and regulatory environment, among other objectives. The GTA will also work to empower youth and other vulnerable groups to meaningfully participate in and contribute to the sector.
- 4) **Raise the profile of the GTA as a professional organization:** Promoting good employee relations, attracting and retaining top talent will ensure that the GTA has the requisite capacity and skills to develop a professionalized operation and accomplish its mission. This foresees a participatory planning process with its stakeholders, transparency in its decision-making and ensuring a good working environment that strengthens employee performance and effectiveness.

The GTA is seeking to become more proactive and in the forefront of an emerging tourism sector in Guyana that is community-oriented and niche-based, with high value which provides business and employment opportunities and improves quality of life for stakeholders.