



Integrated Country Strategy

Guyana

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Table of Contents

1. Chief of Mission Priorities..... 2

2. Mission Strategic Framework 4

3. Mission Goals and Objectives..... 5

4. Management Objectives..... 9

1. Chief of Mission Priorities

Guyana is a country of tremendous potential, with pristine rainforests, an abundance of land, and proven mineral resources, including an estimated 4 billion barrels of oil, which are expected to yield revenues starting in mid-2020. Once production begins, the gross domestic product (GDP) could at least triple over the first five to 10 years. Guyana is poised to transition from one of the poorest countries in South America to a regional leader. At present, Guyana still faces considerable challenges from underdeveloped infrastructure, historically weak and sometimes corrupt democratic institutions, poverty, drug trafficking, and violent crime. The United States has a strong interest in partnering with Guyana to meet these challenges and fulfill its potential. The Embassy plans to: (1) support the Government of Guyana (GoG) as it emerges as a petroleum producer and leverages the sector's revenues to expand economic opportunities, infrastructure development, and social services; (2) increase bilateral trade and investment; and, (3) work with the GoG and the Guyanese people to solidify gains in democratic governance and citizen security. All of these goals have an eye toward the expected revenues from oil exploration in order to promote growth across the board.

Developments over the past three years have dramatically reshaped Embassy priorities. The current GoG is eager to deepen the bilateral relationship, diplomatically and commercially, and seeks significant assistance on numerous fronts, most notably on security, rule of law, improving transparency, and the extractive industries. Toward this end, we plan to continue our robust security assistance program through International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INL) funds under the umbrella of the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI) and pursue funding opportunities in the energy sector.

At present, there is no established regulatory framework for offshore extraction or the management of resources flowing from that extraction, but U.S. companies, as well as other international investors, are working at breakneck speed, currently aiming to move into production in March 2020. Leveraging the interagency Energy Governance Capacity Initiative (EGCI), the Embassy has prioritized and accelerated our assistance to the GoG to establish a regulatory framework that will transparently and efficiently manage potential revenues for the benefit of the Guyanese people, as well as ensure the protection of Guyana's incredibly biodiverse environment.

We will support Guyana in strengthening its democratic institutions and citizen security by increasing respect for the rule of law. Simultaneously, we will encourage the GoG to foster civil society capacity and increase the participation of underrepresented populations in the social, economic, and political spheres, most notably women, youth, indigenous, and LGBTI persons. In line with Guyanese President David Granger's Shared Prosperity Agenda, our efforts to expand economic opportunities to the people of Guyana will raise the standard of living while simultaneously providing legitimate employment opportunities that reduce the allure of illegal activities. Additionally, we will create new opportunities and an expanded market for American

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businesses. A more prosperous Guyana is a better trade partner, which creates more opportunities for U.S. firms and furthers our National Export Initiative. Currently, we have a trade surplus with Guyana, but that could change if large amounts of petroleum were exported to the United States. Specifically, the expanded use of clean, renewable energy in Guyana's interior regions provides an opening for U.S. energy firms, while protecting the Guyanese environment, improving infrastructure to severely underdeveloped areas, and furthering the Caribbean Energy Security Initiative. The end goal is a GoG that is accountable to its citizens, provides them necessary social services, effectively combats illegal activities, and creates economic prosperity, while protecting the incredible biodiversity that the country possesses.

This Embassy also manages the United States' relationship with the Georgetown-based Caribbean Community (CARICOM). We seek to enhance the already improved relationship of the last few years, thereby increasing our ability to engage CARICOM and advance U.S. interests through regional cooperation, specifically regional security and trade. CARICOM's 14 member states vote in the UN and OAS, so efforts with CARICOM often pay off in other areas that are of high priority to the whole of the USG.

With the lack of development outside of the Embassy and the Mission's staffing and space challenges, our management objectives are designed to bolster morale by creating a more stable work environment, with appropriate staffing levels and adequate office space.

As we work to achieve our goals and objectives, we will deepen our bilateral relationship, diplomatically and commercially, with this regional partner and help the GoG to create a safer, more prosperous, and more inclusive Guyana.

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2. Mission Strategic Framework

Mission Goal 1: Promote responsible exploitation of natural resources as the GoG emerges as a petroleum producer and leverages the sector's revenues to expand economic opportunities, infrastructure development, and social services

Mission Objective 1.1: Persuade the GoG to effectively and transparently manage anticipated oil revenues for the benefit of the Guyanese people

Mission Objective 1.2: Encourage the GoG to offset the environmental effects of its hydrocarbon production by increasing its use of clean and renewable energy technology to reduce Guyana's carbon footprint, promote sustainable landscapes, and create opportunities for U.S. companies

Mission Goal 2: Increase U.S. competitiveness in Guyana by supporting open, fair, and reciprocal bilateral trade and investment.

Mission Objective 2.1: Promote U.S. goods and services to local companies

Mission Objective 2.2: Encourage U.S. companies to enter the Guyanese market

Mission Objective 2.3: Encourage local stakeholders to lobby the GoG to provide adequate and effective intellectual property rights

Mission Goal 3: Work with the GoG and its people to solidify gains in democratic governance and citizen security

Mission Objective 3.1: Assist the GoG to build, enforce, and sustain the rule of law to ensure more government accountability to the citizenry.

Mission Objective 3.2: Help Guyana to strengthen its civil society by building capacity

Management Objective 1: Create an environment where employees are excited to go to work by improving workplace morale, which leads to increased productivity and staff retention

Management Objective 2: Bolster customer satisfaction and ensure a safe and comfortable working environment by complying with safety standards and reducing vulnerabilities.

3. Mission Goals and Objectives

Mission Goal 1: Promote responsible exploitation of natural resources as the GoG emerges as a petroleum producer and leverages the sector’s revenues to expand economic opportunities, infrastructure development, and social services

Description and Linkages: In line with the National Security Strategy (NSS) to “preserve peace through strength,” Post will support the GoG to strengthen its own economic power, which, in turn, should make the GoG self-reliant and less susceptible to predatory behavior by China. Similarly, we address the Joint Regional Strategy (JRS) goal to promote a prosperous hemisphere by building on our previous efforts to support energy security and infrastructure development through increased engagement and targeted programming. Increasing the capacity and resilience of the host nation, benefits the GoG and its people, but also contributes to “renewing America’s competitive advantage” in keeping with the Joint Strategic Plan (JSP). Guyana could be an asset in our JRS efforts to restore democracy in Venezuela, but has been reticent to stand with us on certain key issues. Previously, Guyana’s economic dependence on Venezuelan oil and reliance on Venezuela as a primary rice export market had tied the GoG’s hands politically. Supporting the GoG as it responsibly develops and transparently manages its own energy and transforms its revenues into tangible improvements in the standard of living for its people is the most obvious way to address these topline USG goals. As Guyana transitions from an aid recipient nation, and into a regional economic leader, we expect to see the GoG become more of a partner to advance U.S. policies and values on the international stage.

Mission Objective 1.1: Persuade the GoG to effectively and transparently manage anticipated oil revenues for the benefit of the Guyanese people

Justification: The development of a comprehensive sovereign wealth fund is the opportunity Guyana has been anticipating to leverage future prosperity into development. The sovereign wealth fund should immediately begin to invest in education, health, infrastructure, agriculture, and security. The input of the Guyanese people into the process will be instrumental to ensure the appropriate funds and mechanisms are in place to protect prosperity and pave a pathway to long-term growth.

Mission Objective 1.2: Encourage the GoG to increase its use of clean and renewable energy technology to reduce Guyana’s carbon footprint, promote sustainable landscapes, and create opportunities for U.S. companies

Justification: Guyana is part of the Guiana Shield, one of the most biodiverse areas in the world. The country’s tropical rain forests host a wide variety of forest types that provide habitat for 6,300 plant and 2,300 known animal species. A sustainable environmental policy with community support and appropriate and well-enforced regulatory frameworks will encourage

responsible investors while protecting the environment. Biodiversity conservation, sustainable forestry, and climate change mitigation are interrelated, and Guyana's decision to base its development strategy on the exploitation of its natural resources – hydrocarbons, forestry, and minerals – will make the conservation of biodiversity even more important going forward. It is imperative that the GoG establish a regulatory regime to ensure safe and environmentally-conscious exploitation of these resources.

Mission Goal 2: Increase U.S. competitiveness in Guyana by supporting open, fair, and reciprocal bilateral trade and investment.

Description and Linkages: All our governing high-level strategies reference expanding partnerships with the private sector and civil society to promote free, fair and reciprocal economic relationships. Working in this way to advance bilateral trade relationships, and doing so with a view to improving the climate for U.S. businesses (including through IPR protection) will ultimately address the JSP goal to “advance American leadership through balanced engagement.” With estimates showing more people of Guyanese descent in the U.S. (up to 800,000) than in Guyana (750,000), the country has a deep cultural connection with the United States. However, relatively few U.S. firms operate in Guyana. In FY2015, we discovered that there is a hunger for American goods in Guyana, but very few retailers knew how or where to make contacts with U.S. firms. Through several successful delegations to U.S. trade shows, we were able to foster partnerships between U.S. and Guyanese firms, resulting in roughly \$1 million in purchases from U.S. firms in just nine months. We plan to continue promoting both Guyanese participation at U.S. trade shows and U.S. participation at Guyanese trade shows. The Embassy will also work with the GoG to alleviate the largest barrier to entry to the Guyanese market – an onerous registration, tax, and regulatory regime. Another byproduct of the cultural connection we share with the Guyanese, visa demand has tripled over the last year. The Consular Section will continue its mission to enable legitimate travel of Guyanese to the United States, which injects tourism revenue into the U.S. economy.

Mission Objective 2.1: Promote U.S. goods and services to the GoG and local companies

Justification: As Guyana develops its local markets, the vast majority of its infrastructure improvement projects will still require importation of materials and technology. We will encourage the GoG and the private sector to consider the United States as its primary international source of such resources.

Mission Objective 2.2: Encourage U.S. companies to enter the Guyanese market

Justification: There is strong interest for American goods in Guyana, but very few retailers knew how or where to make contacts with U.S. firms. Through several successful delegations to U.S. trade shows and a recent reverse trade mission, we were able to foster partnerships between U.S. and Guyanese firms, resulting in more than \$1 million in purchases from U.S.

firms. The bilateral commercial relationship will continue to grow if we help create links in both markets.

Mission Goal 3: Work with the GoG and its people to solidify gains in democratic governance and citizen security

Description and Linkages: This mission goal draws heavily on the Joint Regional Strategy (JRS) priority to “combat corruption and impunity to foster growth and security.” Under previous administrations, the Guyanese political system had been marked by an unusually high degree of centralization of authority and government services, which has stifled political development and accountability. For example, there were no local elections held between 1994 and 2015, even though the constitution stipulates that they be held every three years. Through the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI) and by carrying out Post’s INL objectives, we can bolster the ability of Guyana’s security forces to counter transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) and improve citizen security, which is a National Security Strategy (NSS) priority. We will work toward reducing corruption and increasing accountability by government officials and security forces, making accountable, responsive government available to the Guyanese people.

One goal of the Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) is to promote healthy, educated, and productive populations. Limited educational and economic opportunities, underdevelopment, and lack of citizen security are all factors that have encouraged Guyana’s best and brightest to emigrate to the developed world. Of those who remain in Guyana to complete a tertiary education, more than 80% emigrate within 10 years of graduation. Supporting the GoG to address the social problems that underlie the brain drain and deficiency in human capital and capacity that it causes locally, can help retain talented individuals and make remigration an attractive option for Guyana’s diaspora abroad.

Deepening respect for human rights and expanding institutional connections are key themes of the JRS. Also in line with the JRS, we must capitalize on the seat of CARICOM being located in Georgetown to bolster support for U.S. positions within multilateral institutions.

Mission Objective 3.1 Assist the GoG to build, enforce, and sustain the rule of law to ensure more government accountability to the citizenry.

Justification: Our enhanced engagement with the current GoG creates the opportunity to remedy some previous policies which hindered transparency and accountability to the electorate. Nurturing a stable and peaceful political environment that promotes more inclusive, participatory and democratic processes would strengthen Guyana’s democratic institutions and promote good governance more responsive to the diverse needs of Guyana’s society.

Mission Objective 3.2: Help Guyana to strengthen its civil society by building capacity

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Justification: We can support the Government of Guyana to promote a culture of human rights by working with the political parties to strengthen democratic processes and political institutions, develop consensus-building mechanisms, and broaden political participation and citizen representation, including from traditionally underserved, marginalized, and vulnerable groups.

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8

4. Management Objectives

Management Objective 1: Create an environment where employees are excited to come to work by improving workplace morale, which leads to increased productivity and staff retention.

Justification: Embassy Georgetown is a small post, both in number of staff and physical structure. Both American and local staff are buried in work, with evening and weekend overtime a common practice. This frenetic pace also interferes with planning and communication within and between sections. For example, the Public Affairs Section is just one U.S. direct hire (USDH) officer and one Locally Employed (LE) Staff. The combined Political and Economic Section has just two USDHs and two LE Staff, one of whom is also the Ambassador's protocol assistant. And neither section has a dedicated administrative staff person. After completing the myriad required tasks, there is very little flexibility remaining to work on advancing Post-specific goals, which are the activities that are both most responsive to our mission, and are often the most fulfilling to complete. We will work with WHA/EX to continue to rightsize our staff to be better positioned to advance the Mission strategic goals laid out in this document.

Relaxation from the busy work schedule is important, but is limited by minimal opportunities in this small city, combined with a critical crime rate. To bolster morale, the Community Liaison Office (CLO) and the Foreign Service National Association of Guyana (FSNAG) hold regular activities both at the Chancery and off-site. These activities are well attended and create a sense of community across the various offices and agencies, as well as between American and LE Staff. We will continue to support these activities.

Management Objective 2: Bolster customer satisfaction and ensure a safe and comfortable working environment by complying with safety standards and reducing vulnerabilities.

Justification: Physical space requirements are challenging. DEA's permanent staff arrived in FY2016, adding three people to the already-full Chancery building. A Marine Security Guard Detachment also arrived in FY2017, requiring space for the Detachment's office. The recent OIG inspection required additional changes to meet space and security needs, which moved several more individuals previously based offsite into the Chancery. We will continue to work with representatives from the Bureau of Overseas Building Operations (OBO) to find a permanent solution to these physical space limitations.