



Integrated Country Strategy

GUYANA

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1. Chief of Mission Priorities

Vision: U.S. Embassy Georgetown is committed to helping Guyana achieve success during a transformational decade while deepening the U.S.-Guyana strategic partnership.

Summary: In service to U.S. citizens and interests in Guyana, the Mission strives for a stronger bilateral partnership supporting improved governance, prosperity, and security in Guyana. With new-found oil revenue, Guyana is at a point of inflection. It can succumb to the resource curse in which more wealth yields less democracy, stability, and transparency, or it can use the wealth to invest in its own institutions and promote economic diversification and social welfare. Guiding our efforts to support Guyana's journey to greater prosperity will be diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility; ensuring climate concerns are incorporated into policy making; and emphasizing the importance of transparency and accountability at all levels of government to preserve democracy. This path will provide more opportunities for U.S. educational institutions, firms, and citizens to partner with Guyana, and ensure that our interventions are sustainable.

Opportunities

Governance: As the Government of Guyana continues its ambitious decade of development, we are committed to democratic values and processes at the national, regional, and local levels, ensuring that Guyana remains a reliable democratic partner in the hemisphere. We will work to strengthen Guyanese democratic institutions through close attention to accountability and transparency. We will focus on local governance, including timely local elections, to ensure Guyanese institutions are effective and responsive to the public. Considering massive oil wealth coming online as well as a tradition of non-transparent decision-making processes in procurement and resource allocation, we will address corruption so that all Guyanese benefit from the emerging wealth and the country does not fall victim to the resource curse. Mindful of Guyana's desire to showcase its commitment to democratic principles, we must consider vulnerabilities that could undermine democracy, including a winner-take-all political tradition based largely on ethnic divisions. To help repair these divisions, we will emphasize that diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility must guide decision-making if the country is to

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become a regional leader and work for all citizens. Equally important is calling for sustainable migration policies indicating Guyana's shift from a country of emigration to one of immigration. Reflecting the goals of the Biden administration, we will ensure climate considerations guide our discussions and engagements with the government and the broader public.

Prosperity: We will work with the Government of Guyana to encourage greater responsiveness to expressions of community need, most notably in infrastructure, education, health, citizen security, and environmental resilience. Complementing that work, we will partner with the government on the tools needed to properly manage new-found oil wealth and unleash private sector growth, focusing on transparency, accountability, rule of law, and improving the business enabling environment for foreign investment. We will channel Guyana's desire to improve its infrastructure by emphasizing quality investments with U.S. government financing to overcome a legacy of projects that carried with them cost overruns and quality control concerns. Our engagements in the energy sector will encourage climate-friendly energy policies, including renewable energy projects. Diversity and inclusion will guide our interactions with local business support organizations, to ensure that U.S. companies and Guyanese companies see diversity as a point of strength. As we promote a better understanding of the American tradition of strong local institutions, we will empower Guyana's civil society organizations through training and exchange programs. The expected result: stronger institutions through active citizen involvement. As the continued flow of migrants and refugees from Venezuela and other nationalities puts a strain on the country's finite resources, we will communicate that migration is a source of strength and can contribute to shared prosperity for all of Guyana's residents.

Security: Guyana's poorly monitored land borders, ports, remote airstrips, and river networks leave it vulnerable to the trafficking of illegal goods, narcotics, and people. This permissive environment, coupled with corruption and an under-resourced security sector, create opportunities for transnational criminal and terrorist threats to exploit gaps in border security in the region. We will assist Guyana in developing a politically inclusive National Security Strategy that addresses Guyana's growing security challenges and support the Guyana Defence

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Force's (GDF) efforts to improve domain awareness to shape decisions and responses to security threats. Our civilian and military security programs will strive to improve Guyana's ability to address transnational threats, respond to natural disasters, build port security capacity, and reinforce judicial institutions and commitment to the rule of law. Investing in the Guyana Police Force (GPF), with initiatives designed to increase the professionalism and skills of the force, as well as promoting greater diversity and inclusion in its recruitment, aims to address the street crime that most concerns the average Guyanese citizen. We will leverage our resources to ensure, through health and education programs, that Guyana is equipped to respond to COVID-19 and other public health crises. Guiding our interventions will be the message that for our cooperation to be sustainable, the government must be willing to invest more of its own resources in security, to include the increased participation of women within its security forces. As potential Venezuelan aggression remains Guyana's most potent external threat, we will strive to remain the country's security partner of choice when it comes to equipment procurement and training.

Partnership

To remain Guyana's partner of choice for governance, prosperity, and security, we will focus on people-to-people exchanges as well as government-to-government exchanges. We will also strive to expand our work to all of Guyana's ten regions so that both cities and hinterlands will see the benefits of partnership with the United States government and its people. As the mission is the primary U.S. interlocutor with the Georgetown-based Caribbean Community (CARICOM), we will seek to build a closer relationship on multilateral issues of concern, to include climate, trade, governance, and security. CARICOM's fourteen member states vote in the United Nations (UN) and Organization of American States (OAS), so positive engagement with CARICOM can pay dividends in other areas of U.S. foreign policy concern.

Resources

Our management platform will focus on attracting and retaining talent, both USDH and LES. We will advocate at the highest levels for the right incentives and adjust our management platform towards creating an environment that best positions Mission staff to navigate the challenges of living and working in Guyana. This includes our commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. The influx of foreign companies searching for local labor has made the employment environment challenging, and we will look for ways to improve local staff recruitment and retention policies so that the mission remains an attractive place to work and thrive. We will continue to empower our local staff, the mission's institutional memory, with the requisite training and skills building. We will work with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to strengthen diplomatic privileges and immunities so that all of our diplomats can carry out our mission effectively and with the Department of State to provide the appropriate level of benefits to diplomats who serve here.

Success

Guyana will achieve success if: a) the government commits its own resources to the country's development and security in a transparent manner; b) an open business climate stimulates domestic and foreign investment across all sectors; and c) civil society grows stronger by holding its government accountable; d) national and local government bodies adopt best practices and increase transparency and accountability. The United States will achieve success if we remain Guyana's partner of choice.

2. Mission Strategic Framework

Mission Goal 1: Support Guyana's commitment to inclusive and democratic governance, institutions, and policies, and transparent management of natural resource revenues.

- **Mission Objective 1.1:** Guyanese government institutions are committed to transparency, accountability, responsiveness, and inclusivity of all citizens.
- **Mission Objective 1.2:** Guyana balances a responsible and transparent framework to manage natural resource revenues with policies that promote renewable energy and combat climate change.
- **Mission Objective 1.3:** Guyana holds constitutionally-mandated elections that are free, fair, and inclusive.

Mission Goal 2: Increase bilateral prosperity through the expansion of equitable, sustainable, climate-friendly trade and investment, and people-to-people ties.

- **Mission Objective 2.1:** Guyana improves its business enabling environment, policies, and government regulations to ensure an inclusive, level playing field for international investment and local businesses.
- **Mission Objective 2.2:** U.S. firms providing quality goods and services can access, compete, and succeed in the Guyanese market.
- **Mission Objective 2.3:** Cultural, educational, and people-to-people ties are increased between the U.S. and Guyana to enhance receptivity to U.S. values and leadership.

Mission Goal 3: Support Guyana's domestic and regional security, strengthen the rule of law, and protect U.S. borders

- **Mission Objective 3.1:** Guyana's security, law enforcement, and government institutions improve their capabilities to provide security to their citizens and address transnational security threats.
- **Mission Objective 3.2:** Guyana builds its organizational capacity to respond to climate change, natural disasters, and public health crises.
- **Mission Objective 3.3:** U.S. borders and U.S. citizens are protected.

Management Objective 1: A work environment that attracts and retains a high quality, diverse workforce is fostered.

Management Objective 2: A work environment that ensures mission goals can be achieved safely, securely, and efficiently is fostered.

3. Mission Goals and Objectives

Mission Goal 1: Support Guyana's commitment to inclusive and democratic governance, institutions, and policies, and transparent management of natural resource revenues.

Description: Steadily rising offshore oil and gas production revenues are poised to transform Guyana from one of the poorest countries in the hemisphere to one of the richest. As Guyana, long plagued by weak institutions and politically-sensitive ethnic divisions, accrues more wealth, the dangers of falling victim to the resource curse only increase. This goal supports U.S. efforts to strengthen democratic values and institutions, so that Guyana builds a strong foundation of good governance as it is transformed by increasing wealth. Key to these efforts is supporting good governance and strong institutions by leveraging U.S. government and private sector tools to ensure that Guyana's newfound wealth benefits all Guyanese, and to safeguard domestic and regional stability.

Objective 1.1: Guyanese government institutions are committed to transparency, accountability, responsiveness, and inclusivity of all citizens.

- **Justification:** Changes in power in Guyana are generally accompanied by corruption charges against outgoing officials who have allegedly enriched themselves at public expense. This worrying trend indicates the challenges of Guyanese institutions to hold those in office behaving unethically or illegally to account. In parallel, the lack of transparency in the dealings of some public officials require an informed citizenry that can call out abuses of power with impunity. Providing trainings for government officials on public ethics, ensuring ethics oversight is in place, and nurturing local civil society organizations through capacity building and education can raise greater awareness and ensure that Guyanese leaders are working in the best interests of all Guyanese.
- **Linkages:** JSP Objective 3.1: Democracy & Governance;
JSP Objective 3.2: Equity & Inclusion; JSP Objective 3.3: Combating Corruption;

JRS Objective 1.1: Support efforts to restore and strengthen accountable, resilient, and inclusive democracies that deliver for their citizens; JRS Objective 1.2: Counter corruption and impunity to strengthen democratic institutions

- **Risks:** An increased number of public officials who enrich themselves at taxpayer expense, coupled with intimidation of citizens who seek to hold their government and its representatives to account will make it hard for Guyana to defend its desired image as a model of governance in the Caribbean. Guyana has made some strides on the Transparency International index – ranking 87 in 2022 – but risks further backsliding if corrupt government officials are not held accountable. Post continues to message at the highest levels that corruption deters high quality investment and is expanding outreach to civil society groups that seek to raise awareness on transparency issues.

Objective 1.2: Guyana balances a responsible and transparent framework to manage natural resource revenues with policies that promote renewable energy and combat climate change.

- **Justification:** Outlays from Guyana’s Natural Resource Fund (NRF) will determine the fate of the country’s development in key areas, including health, education, physical infrastructure, and security. How it is managed will highlight if it reflects narrow leadership priorities or the priorities and needs of all Guyanese. In parallel, as offshore oil and gas revenues fund Guyana’s future, it is essential for the country to transition from an economy powered largely by imported heavy fuel oil and diesel to one that incorporates a more diverse mix of energy. U.S. government-provided resources on sovereign wealth fund management, in addition to engagements that further incentivize Guyana’s low deforestation and transition from polluting fossil fuels will help conserve the delicate Amazon ecosystem and maintain Guyana’s status as a carbon sink.
- **Linkages:** JSP Objective 1.2, Climate Change; JSP Objective 2.4: Strengthen Resilience; JSP Objective 3.1: Democracy & Governance; JSP Objective 1.2: Counter corruption and impunity to strengthen democratic institutions; JRS Objective 5.1: Promote a clean, resilient, and secure energy future; JRS Objective 5.3: Promote natural climate solutions;

JRS Objective 5.4: Conserve biodiversity and protect critical ecosystems in the Hemisphere

- **Risks:** NRF spending that only reflects the narrow interests of certain decisionmakers has the potential to turn the fund into a vehicle for corruption and waste. Such decision making could spill over into management of Guyana's other natural resources, such as its gold and forests. Continued engagements with IFIs and international partners to ensure the NRF comports with international principles, in addition to continued incentives for low deforestation rates and sustainable mining practices aim to support good natural resource governance practices.

Objective 1.3: Guyana holds constitutionally-mandated elections that are free, fair, and inclusive.

- **Justification:** Guyana's constitution calls for regularly-scheduled elections at the national and the regional and local level. Executing these elections on time and according to the constitution is essential to Guyana's democratic character and to telegraphing to the region and hemisphere that its government is accountable to its citizens. Post will support elections with international election observers and build skills and capacity among domestic civil society groups to ensure that the correct policies, procedures, and laws are followed during both national and regional/local elections.
- **Linkages:** JSP Objective 3.1: Democracy & Governance; JRS Objective 1.1: Support efforts to restore and strengthen accountable, resilient, and inclusive democracies that deliver for their citizens;
- **Risks:** Guyana's national elections can be a place where a commitment to democratic principles comes into conflict with winner-take-all, and often ethnically-driven, politics. A protracted electoral crisis in 2020 highlighted this danger, and over the past two national election cycles, each major party, when faced with defeat, challenged the results in court. Another protracted electoral crisis will delay key policy decisions and reduce regional and hemispheric trust in Guyanese democracy.

Mission Goal 2: Increase bilateral prosperity through the expansion of equitable, sustainable, climate-friendly trade and investment, and people-to-people ties.

Description: Guyana's newfound oil wealth is poised to transform the country into one of the hemisphere's richest countries, per capita. This presents enormous potential for U.S. trade and investment, as Guyana seeks to radically reshape itself through large investments in physical infrastructure, health, education, security, and technology. We will support Guyana's ambitions by helping to shape the operating environment, so that U.S. businesses are competitive and Guyana can achieve inclusive and sustainable economic growth. At the same time, increasing our cultural and people-to-people ties, including among marginalized communities, will build further support for American values and thereby enhance bilateral prosperity.

Objective 2.1: Guyana improves its business enabling environment, policies, and government regulations to ensure an inclusive, level playing field for international investment and local businesses.

- **Justification:** Government procurement practices are often characterized by opaqueness, inefficiency, and sole-source providers, frustrating potential international investors. We will encourage best value procurement over lowest cost, in tandem with a transparent, electronic and accessible procurement platform. This will foster competition and ensure Guyana is an attractive market for U.S. companies to do business and partner with local ventures.
- **Linkages:** JSP Objective 2.1, Economic Governance; JSP Objective 2.2: Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Growth; JSP Objective 3.2: Equity & Inclusion; JRS Objective 4.1: Foster fair trade and investment and a more economically competitive region; JRS Objective 4.2: Improve the climate for U.S. businesses; JRS Objective 4.3: Support inclusive and sustainable economic growth; Bureau Objective 3.3: Strengthen host country resilience to authoritarian foreign influence.

- **Risks:** Prioritizing lowest cost procurement will crowd out U.S. bidders for goods and services, make Guyana more dependent on businesses providing lower quality goods, and entice unscrupulous foreign actors. Opaque, non-electronic bidding processes disadvantage U.S. companies who may not be easily access tender information and miss out on opportunities. While we will continue to make U.S. companies aware of business opportunities, we will also work with Guyanese leadership to develop tools to further attract reputable international partners.

Objective 2.2: U.S. firms providing quality goods and services can access, compete, and succeed in the Guyanese market.

- **Justification:** In addition to the high-profile energy and infrastructure sectors, transportation, logistics, agriculture, education, and health care offer opportunities for U.S. investment as well. To take advantage of these numerous opportunities, we will leverage our status as a Commercial Partner Post to support legitimate, vetted U.S. companies interested in the Guyanese market. We will provide them with the tools to foster partnerships with local businesses and develop relationships with the host government. As Guyana balances its status as a fossil fuel producer with its transition to cleaner sources of energy, we will work to draw U.S. companies interested in mitigating the effects of climate change.
- **Linkages:** JSP Objective 2.1, Economic Governance; JSP Objective 2.2: Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Growth; JRS Objective 4.2: Improve the climate for U.S. businesses.
- **Risks:** The inability of established U.S. firms to succeed in Guyana will have a chilling effect on foreign direct investment, making it harder to promote Guyana as a favorable investment destination. Barriers to entry for U.S. companies will open the door for lesser quality firms and create an unstable economic foundation for high quality development.

Objective 2.3: Cultural, educational, and people-to-people ties are increased between the U.S. and Guyana to enhance receptivity to U.S. values and leadership.

- **Justification:** A flourishing Guyanese diaspora in the United States is a strong foundation on which to further build bilateral cultural ties and educate the public about American values. Our digital platforms, public outreach programs, and educational exchanges further amplify these messages. We will continue these initiatives and broaden them to reach underserved and marginalized communities in order to promote the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and accessibility. This will continue to build support for our values and foster greater harmony and tolerance.
- **Linkages:** JSP Strategic Objective 1.5: Build Support for American Values; JRS Objective 2.1: Promote social inclusion and respect for the human dignity and rights of all persons, especially members of marginalized communities, including African-Descendant, Indigenous, LGBTQI+, persons with disabilities, women, and girls, through diplomatic engagement and public diplomacy; JSP Objective 2.2: Advance racial and gender equity; JRS Objective 6.1: Engage publics and influence opinion to build support for American Values.
- **Risks:** In a free and open media environment, uninformed and biased messages against the United States are often allowed to circulate freely. Sustained people-to-people engagements enable us to counter these messages so our local partners have the information and the support to push back against false narratives.

Mission Goal 3: Support Guyana's domestic and regional security, strengthen the rule of law, and protect U.S. borders

Description: Guyana's natural resources, unpatrolled hinterlands and border with Venezuela make it especially vulnerable to security threats. Assisting military, law enforcement, and government institutions to improve maritime and terrestrial border security, prosecute criminals, and combat transnational criminal organizations are essential to maintaining security. Narcotics trafficking, trafficking in persons, natural disasters, and pandemics are all potential sources of destabilization and our partnership with Guyanese institutions to address these areas will safeguard regional and hemispheric security. Maintaining our role as a key security partner is essential to shaping Guyanese security strategy, operations, and tactics, guided by U.S. values and best practices.

Objective 3.1: Guyana's security, law enforcement, and government institutions improve their capabilities to provide security to their citizens and address transnational security threats.

- **Justification:** With the advent of natural resource wealth, Guyana may become even more attractive to transnational criminal and third country actors who seek to exploit and undermine its historically weak security institutions. Building the capacity of Guyana's law enforcement and defense institutions to detect and deter criminal organizations, and keep all residents safe, will be essential to maintaining Guyana's security and protecting the rule of law. Our work with law enforcement institutions to extradite criminals to Guyana for trial will keep U.S. citizens safe.
- **Linkages:** JSP Objective 1.4 - Peace and Security; JSP Objective 3.4: Manage Migration; JRS Objective 1.1, Combat Illicit Networks; JRS Objective 1.3: Strengthen judicial systems and the equitable application of the rule of law; JRS Objective 3.2: Build safe communities through violence prevention and intervention, including a focus on gender-based violence JRS Objective 3.3: Strengthen host country resilience to authoritarian foreign influence; JRS Objective 3.4: Counter transnational criminal organizations and illicit networks

- **Risks:** Weak security institutions will (1) lead to a greater proliferation of crime, making Guyanese citizens and U.S. visitors unsafe, dissuade foreign direct investment, and destabilize the country and the region, enabling bad actors to exert more authority than the elected government, and (2) embolden Venezuelan bad actors to threaten the sovereignty of the country and regional security.

Objective 3.2: Guyana builds its organizational capacity to respond to climate change, natural disasters, and public health crises.

- **Justification:** The twin realities of COVID-19 and intensifying annual flooding have tested the abilities of Guyanese institutions to maintain transportation and commercial links, provide basic services, and safeguard public health. U.S.-government provided COVID-19 vaccines, HIV-related assistance and flood relief have served as critical lifelines to both the Guyanese government and its citizens and assist them in building greater resilience. We will continue to provide this assistance and build capacity so Guyana is better equipped to face these regular shocks in the future. Enhancing resilience to climate change and natural disasters will assist Guyanese institutions be better placed to provide reliable energy flows, enhancing domestic and regional security.
- **Linkages:** JSP Strategic Objective 1.1: Leadership in strengthening global health security; JSP Objective 1.4, Humanitarian Leadership; JSP Objective 1.2 climate change; JSP Objective 2.4: Strengthen Resilience; JRS Objective 5.2: Build resilience to climate change and ensure food and water security.
- **Risks:** Poor public health and intensifying flooding wrought by climate change will result in greater deaths and destruction of property, commercial goods, transportation networks and vital shoreline erosion that imperil local communities. Continued U.S. assistance in providing equipment and training seeks to address these key challenges.

Objective 3.3: U.S. borders and U.S. citizens are protected through efficient provision of consular services.

- **Justification:** Facilitating legitimate travel, protecting U.S. borders and the provision of U.S. citizen consular services are the cornerstones of the Bureau of Consular Affairs Functional Strategy. As the designated visa processing post for four countries (Guyana, Cuba, Suriname and French Guiana), Embassy Georgetown faces immigrant visa backlogs in excess of 30,000 cases for Cuba alone (in FY22), with pent up demand for nonimmigrant visa services stemming from COVID-19 lockdowns during 2020 and 2021. Post seeks to reduce backlogs and normalize visas operations, despite the ongoing pandemic, and enhance safeguards for the growing number of U.S. citizens who visit Guyana for tourism, oil sector employment and family visits. Building local capacity to ascend to the Hague Convention on Abduction will ensure necessary security protocols are in place to combat parental abduction of minor U.S. citizen children.
- **Linkages:** JSP Strategic Objective 1.4 - Peace and Security; JSP Strategic Objective 5.1 – Information and Services; JSP Objective 5.2: Facilitate Legitimate Travel; JRS Objective 1.2, Protect U.S. borders and prevent illegal immigration; JRS Objective 3.1: Protect U.S. citizens, ensure secure borders, promote safe, humane, and orderly immigration and asylum systems, enhance protections for refugees and displaced persons, and promote stability in areas impacted by migration.
- **Risks:** A sustained consular backlog puts regular strain on resources at post, especially as it is a designated site for processing of Cuban immigrant visas. It weakens the image of the United States as having the resources to provide timely and orderly visa services. An inability to provide efficient and responsive American Citizen Services could endanger U.S. citizens. In the absence of a bilateral partnership with Guyana under the Hague convention on Abduction, the consular section has limited ability to assist in returning abducted children to their place of habitual residence.

4. Management Objectives

Management Objective 1: A work environment that attracts and retains a high quality, diverse workforce is fostered.

- **Justification:** Guyana's tremendous growth due to the energy industry demands that Embassy Georgetown has a strong and agile platform to achieve our bilateral objectives in governance, prosperity, and security. Coupled with the demands of this exponential growth on a historically small post are a long-established critical rating for crime; difficulty in securing appropriate and affordable housing; and quality concerns with the existing international school. These phenomena place even greater stress on staff. Furthermore, despite the high cost of consumer goods, Post's allowance was canceled in 2021, imposing a financial hardship on USDH. The result has been a high turnover among USDH, frequent curtailments, a reduced ability to attract bidders on open positions, and a reliance on TDY staff to fill in gaps. The expanding footprint of multinational companies seeking high quality local talent poses an additional threat of luring away Post's highly professional LE staff with better salaries and benefits. The only sustainable solution is to improve the quality of life at Post and in the workplace in order to increase overall staff satisfaction and morale. Part of this strategy includes our ongoing commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) to attract and retain our talent, and model DEIA principles in action both inside and outside the mission.
- **Linkages:** JRS Cross Cutting Management Objective
- **Risks:** Without a mission fully staffed by USDH and LES who have the tools and support to be able to complete their jobs, we will be unable to accomplish the goals and objectives enumerated above, therefore ceding ground to other countries whose goals and values may stand diametrically opposed to ours.

Management Objective 2: A work environment that ensures mission goals can be achieved safely, securely, and efficiently is fostered.

- **Justification:** More agencies continue to move into the existing chancery building, and increase their staffing footprint, leading to shrinking available space and overcrowding, an additional challenge in the age of COVID. We will make use of existing space in a way that safeguards public health and enables employees to do their jobs. Upgrades to Mission-wide IT systems will enable employees complete if tasks if nationwide data networks fail. Technological advancement has also led to a redesign of financial management procedures. Constantly scrutinizing and updating those procedures, and staying current on training, helps streamline operations and leads to improved customer service.
- **Linkages:** JRS Cross Cutting Management Objective
- **Risks:** An inability to provide the physical, technological, and administrative tools to employees will harm employee morale and impair efforts to improve employee recruitment and retention.