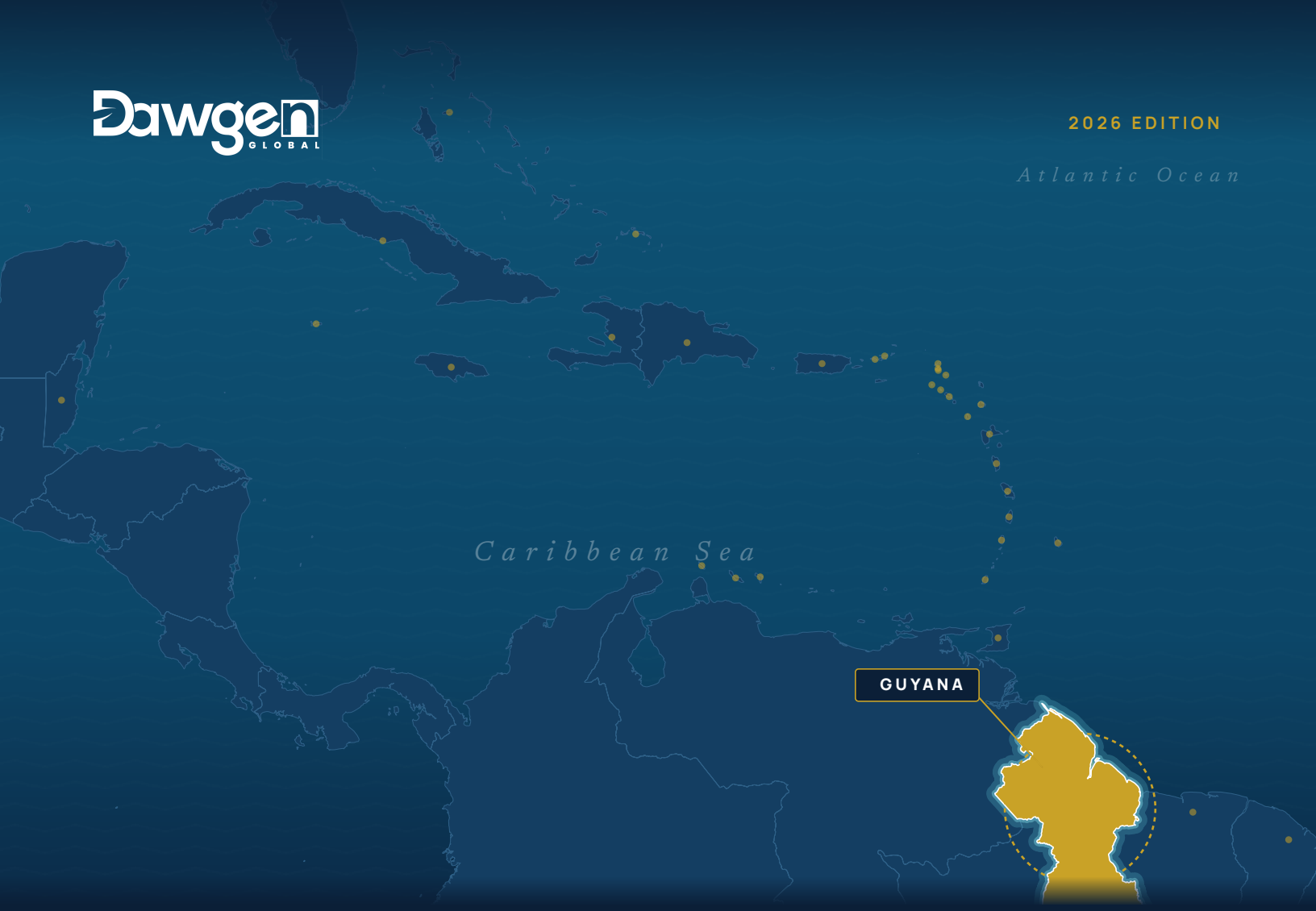
Dawgen GLOBAL

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CARIBBEAN SERVICE DESK · MAINLAND CARIBBEAN

Doing Business in Guyana

A practical guide to establishing, operating and growing a business in Guyana

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FOREWORD

Guyana is one of the fastest-changing economies in the world. Since oil production began in 2019, investment and demand for skilled services have grown at a remarkable pace.

Investors choose Guyana for good reason: an English-speaking, common-law CARICOM member on the South American mainland, home to the CARICOM Secretariat, with rich natural resources and a fast-growing oil and gas sector. Opportunity sits alongside complexity: registration, tax, local content, employment and licensing rules all need careful handling.

This guide sets out what you need to know in plain language: how to choose a structure, how the set-up process works, what taxes apply, how to employ people, and which incentives may be available. It is written for investors, entrepreneurs and regional and international groups considering Guyana.

We serve clients in Guyana through Dawgen Global's Caribbean Service Desk, managed from our headquarters in Kingston, and we are ready to help you turn a plan into a well-run, compliant business.

Dr. Dawkins Brown, Ph.D., MCMI, ACFE

Executive Chairman, Dawgen Global

How to use this guide

This guide gives a practical overview of establishing and running a business in Guyana. It is general information, current to October 2026, and is not a substitute for advice on your circumstances. Rates and rules change; speak to us before you act.

OVERVIEW

01 Guyana at a glance

The only English-speaking country in South America, with an economy transformed by offshore oil alongside mining, agriculture and forestry.

CAPITAL
Georgetown
Seat of the CARICOM Secretariat

POPULATION
About 800,000
Large diaspora in the US, Canada and the UK

LANGUAGE
English
Official language of business and law

CURRENCY
Guyana dollar (GYD)
Stable at about GYD 208 to US$1; no exchange controls

LEGAL SYSTEM
English common law
Final appeal to the Caribbean Court of Justice

TIME ZONE
UTC−4
All year; no daylight saving

CORPORATION TAX
25% / 40%
25% non-commercial; 40% commercial; 45% telephone companies

VALUE ADDED TAX
14%
Registration at GYD 15 million taxable supplies a year

TRADE AGREEMENTS
CARICOM, EU, UK, US
CSME; EU and UK EPAs; Caribbean Basin Initiative

Leading sectors

Oil and gas · Oil and gas supply services · Gold and bauxite mining · Agriculture and agro-processing · Forestry and timber · Construction and real estate · Financial services · Eco-tourism and hospitality · Manufacturing

Gateways

Cheddi Jagan International (Timehri) and Eugene F. Correia International (Ogle) airports serve North America and the region. Georgetown's port on the Demerara River handles most cargo.

Public holidays

National days and Hindu, Muslim and Christian festivals, including Republic Day (23 February), Phagwah, Eid ul-Adha, Emancipation Day (1 August), Deepavali and Christmas.

INVESTMENT CLIMATE

02 Why Guyana

Rapid growth, abundant natural resources and an English-speaking, common-law system make Guyana a natural mainland base.

Strategic location

Guyana sits on the north-east coast of South America, bordering Brazil, Venezuela and Suriname, and is a full member of CARICOM. Businesses can serve the Caribbean and northern South America from one base.

A growing, English-speaking workforce

The workforce is English-speaking and building technical skills through the University of Guyana, technical institutes and oil and gas industry training. Demand for skilled staff is high.

Familiar legal framework

Company and contract law follow English common law, with final appeal to the Caribbean Court of Justice. The Investment Act guarantees the transfer of profits and capital abroad, subject to tax.

A transformed economy

Production from the offshore Stabroek Block began in December 2019 and has expanded with each new development. The 2026 budget estimated real GDP growth of 19.3% in 2025 and projected 16.2% for 2026. Oil revenues flow to the Natural Resource Fund, which finances large public investment in roads, bridges, housing, power and health.

The Local Content Act, 2021 gives Guyanese nationals and companies priority in the petroleum supply chain, shaping how foreign investors enter that sector.

Where the opportunities are

Sector	Examples of opportunity
Oil and gas services	Logistics, fabrication, catering, engineering, environmental and support services, often through joint ventures with Guyanese firms
Construction	Infrastructure, housing, commercial property and building materials
Agriculture	Rice, agro-processing, aquaculture, food security and import substitution
Hospitality	Hotels, business accommodation, eco-tourism and food services
Energy	Gas-to-energy, solar, hydropower and energy efficiency

GO-Invest

The Guyana Office for Investment (GO-Invest) is the national investment promotion agency. It provides information to investors, helps with approvals and processes applications for investment incentives.

LEGAL VEHICLES

03 Choosing a business structure

Most investors use a company incorporated under the Companies Act. Overseas companies may instead register as an external company. The right choice depends on liability, tax, local content and exit plans.

Vehicle	Key features	Typical use	Main obligations
Private company	Separate legal entity; shareholders' liability limited to their shares; directors and a company secretary; registered office in Guyana	Most operating businesses and subsidiaries of foreign groups	Annual return to the Commercial Registry; corporation tax returns; beneficial ownership information
Public company	Can offer shares to the public; may list on the Guyana Stock Exchange; stricter governance and disclosure	Larger businesses raising capital	Audited financial statements; securities law and listing rules
External company (branch)	Overseas company registered to do business in Guyana; not a separate legal entity; needs a resident agent	Projects, contracts and market entry by foreign companies	Registration with the Commercial Registry; tax on Guyana profits; 20% branch profits tax
Partnership	Partnership under the Partnership Act; partners may be personally liable	Professional practices and family businesses	Business name registration; partners taxed on their share of profits
Sole trader	Individual trading in their own name or a registered business name; unlimited liability	Small owner-managed businesses	Business name registration; personal income tax

Foreign ownership and local content

Foreign investors may own 100% of a Guyanese company in most sectors. To count as a Guyanese company under the Local Content Act, a petroleum-sector supplier must be at least 51% owned by Guyanese nationals and meet staffing requirements. Banking, insurance and other regulated activities need a licence before trading starts.

Beneficial ownership

Companies should keep accurate information on the individuals who ultimately own or control them; banks and regulators collect it under anti-money laundering law. Government has announced a review of the Companies Act with stronger beneficial ownership rules.

GETTING STARTED

04 Setting up: step by step

Companies are registered with the Commercial Registry of the Deeds and Commercial Registries Authority (DCRA) in Georgetown. Incorporation is quick once documents are ready; bank accounts and licences usually take longer.

1 **Plan the structure and name** — WEEK 1

Choose the vehicle, shareholding and directors, considering local content rules for the petroleum sector, and reserve the proposed name.

2 **Incorporate with the Commercial Registry** — WEEK 1–2

File the articles of incorporation, a statutory declaration by an attorney-at-law and details of the first directors, secretary and registered office.

3 **Open a bank account** — WEEK 2–6

Banks apply full know-your-customer checks on the company, directors and beneficial owners. Allow extra time where owners are overseas.

4 **Register for tax and NIS** — WEEK 2–4

Obtain a taxpayer identification number (TIN) from the Guyana Revenue Authority, register for VAT if taxable supplies will reach GYD 15 million a year, and register as an employer with NIS.

5 **Obtain licences and permits** — VARIES

Apply for sector and trade licences, planning and environmental approvals, Local Content Register entry for petroleum suppliers, and work permits for foreign staff.

6 **Prepare for data protection** — BEFORE TRADING

The Data Protection Act, 2023 is being brought fully into force and a Data Protection Commissioner is in post. Build its requirements in now.

7 **Set up accounting and compliance** — BEFORE TRADING

Put in place bookkeeping, payroll, IFRS-compliant reporting, a tax and filing calendar, and anti-money laundering controls where your sector requires them.

Documents you will usually need

Certified passport and proof of address for each director, shareholder and beneficial owner; a registered office in Guyana; and, for an external company, certified constitutional documents, a certificate of good standing and a power of attorney appointing a Guyana resident.

TAXATION

05 Tax at a glance

Guyana taxes resident companies on worldwide income and non-residents on Guyana-source income. The headline rates are below; our separate Guyana Tax Guide covers each tax in detail.

Business taxes	
Corporation tax	25% (non-commercial companies); 40% (commercial companies, banks and most insurers); 45% (telephone companies)
Minimum tax	Commercial companies pay at least 2% of turnover; any excess can be carried forward
VAT	14% standard rate; 0% on zero-rated supplies; registration at GYD 15 million a year
Capital gains tax	20% on net gains; gains within 12 months taxed as income
Property tax	Companies: nil on the first GYD 40 million of net property, 0.5% on the next GYD 20 million, 0.75% above
Customs	Duty under the CARICOM Common External Tariff, plus VAT and excise where applicable

Individuals	
Income tax threshold	GYD 140,000 a month (GYD 1,680,000 a year) from 2026, or one-third of income if higher
Income tax rates	25% on chargeable income up to GYD 3,360,000 a year; 35% above

Withholding tax (non-residents)	Rate*
Dividends, interest, royalties	20%
Branch profits	20%
Certain contract payments	10%

*Domestic rates. Guyana has tax treaties with Canada, the UK, the United Arab Emirates and CARICOM members, which may reduce these rates.

Recent changes

The 2026 budget raised the income tax threshold to GYD 140,000 a month, removed corporation tax for agriculture and agro-processing and for child and elderly care businesses, removed VAT on locally made furniture and jewellery, and continued the exemption of individuals from property tax.

PEOPLE

06 Employing people

Employment law is protective but predictable. Employers must register with the National Insurance Scheme, deduct and pay PAYE and NIS monthly, and observe minimum standards on wages, leave and termination.

Minimum standards

- **Minimum wage:** GYD 60,147 a month (GYD 347 an hour) for private sector workers
- **Hours:** 40-hour week over no more than five days; overtime is paid above this
- **Annual leave:** at least 12 working days' paid leave a year under the Leave with Pay Act
- **Sickness:** NIS sickness benefit for certified illness, from the fourth day
- **Maternity:** 13 weeks' NIS maternity benefit for qualifying employees
- **Notice:** generally two weeks (under one year's service) or one month (one year or more)
- **Severance:** after one year's service, one week's pay per year for years 1–5, two weeks for years 6–10 and three weeks thereafter, capped at 52 weeks

Statutory payroll contributions

Contribution	Employee	Employer
Income tax (PAYE)	25% / 35%	—
National Insurance Scheme	5.6%	8.4%

NIS applies to insurable earnings up to GYD 280,000 a month. PAYE is paid to the GRA by the 14th, and NIS by the 15th, of the following month.

Bringing in foreign staff

Work permits

Foreign nationals need a work permit from the Ministry of Home Affairs, applied for by the employer with a landing permit. Employers usually advertise the vacancy locally first.

CARICOM skilled nationals

Qualified nationals of participating CARICOM states with a CARICOM Skills Certificate, and their spouses, do not need a work permit.

Local content

In the petroleum sector, operators and contractors must give first consideration to Guyanese nationals for employment and report on local hiring.

HR essentials from day one

Give every employee written terms of employment, keep accurate time, pay and leave records, register each employee's TIN and NIS number, and adopt a staff handbook covering conduct, grievances, data protection and health and safety. Most disputes we see start with missing paperwork, not bad intentions.

MONEY AND ASSETS

07 Banking, currency and property

Banking and finance

Banks, insurers and other financial institutions are supervised by the Bank of Guyana; the Guyana Securities Council oversees securities.

- **No exchange controls:** the Investment Act allows profits, dividends and capital to be transferred abroad, subject to tax
- **Stable currency:** about GYD 208 to US$1 for several years
- **Foreign currency accounts** are available, although local obligations are normally settled in Guyana dollars
- **Capital markets:** the Guyana Stock Exchange lists equities and debt
- **Compliance:** expect thorough anti-money laundering and know-your-customer checks

Financial reporting

Companies prepare financial statements under IFRS, or IFRS for SMEs where eligible, and generally file audited statements with their annual returns.

Land and property

Foreign investors may buy or lease land; an external company needs a licence to hold land. Much land is State land, leased through the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission. Private titles are recorded at the Deeds Registry, so title searches matter.

Typical costs on a property purchase	
Stamp duty and fees	Payable on the conveyance and on registration of the transport
Capital gains tax	20% of the seller's gain where applicable
Legal fees	Agreed with the attorneys for each party
Property tax	Annual tax on companies' net property; individuals exempt

Before you build

Development needs planning approval from the Central Housing and Planning Authority or the local authority, and larger projects need an environmental authorisation from the Environmental Protection Agency.

GROWTH LEVERS

08 Incentives, trade and customs

Guyana offers tax holidays, duty and VAT exemptions and sector concessions, alongside preferential access to regional and international markets.

Key incentive regimes

Regime	What it offers
Tax holidays	Corporation tax holidays, usually up to five years and sometimes ten, for new activity in designated sectors
Investment concessions	Customs duty and VAT exemptions on most plant, machinery and equipment, and on raw and packaging materials for manufacturers
Sector exemptions	From 2026, no corporation tax for agriculture and agro-processing or child and elderly care; private education and health care are exempt
Small businesses	Concessions for businesses registered with the Small Business Bureau
Export allowance	Relief on qualifying export income, extended in 2026 to value-added timber products

Eligibility and conditions apply. We can assess which incentives fit your project and prepare applications through GO-Invest.

Market access

- **CARICOM Single Market and Economy:** duty-free trade in qualifying goods across member states, with a Common External Tariff on imports
- **CARIFORUM–EU and CARIFORUM–UK Economic Partnership Agreements:** preferential access to Europe
- **Caribbean Basin Initiative:** duty-free access to the United States for many products
- **CARICOM trade agreements** with Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba and the Dominican Republic

Customs

The Guyana Revenue Authority administers customs through its electronic declaration system. Importers need a TIN. Duty is charged on the customs value at tariff rates, plus VAT and, for certain goods, excise tax. The 2026 budget removed duty and VAT on security equipment.

COMPLIANCE

09 Regulators and compliance calendar

Who regulates what

Body	Role
Deeds and Commercial Registries Authority	Company and business registration, annual returns, land deeds
Guyana Revenue Authority	Income and corporation tax, VAT, PAYE, property tax and customs
Bank of Guyana	Banks, insurance, pensions and foreign exchange
Guyana Securities Council	Securities and the stock exchange
Financial Intelligence Unit	Anti-money laundering reporting
National Insurance Scheme	Social security contributions and benefits
Local Content Secretariat	Local content plans and the Local Content Register
Ministry of Home Affairs	Landing and work permits
Data Protection Commissioner	Data protection
Environmental Protection Agency	Environmental authorisations

Key filing dates

When	What
14th of each month	PAYE and withholding tax for the previous month
15th of each month	NIS contributions for the previous month
21st of each month	VAT return and payment for the previous month
15 March, 15 June, 15 September, 15 December	Quarterly corporation tax instalments
30 April	Corporation tax and property tax returns and final payment; individual income tax returns
Each year	Annual return to the Commercial Registry

Guyana taxes on a calendar-year basis. Late filing and payment attract penalties and interest, which build quickly.

Anti-money laundering

Financial institutions and designated non-financial businesses, including real estate dealers, dealers in precious metals, attorneys and accountants in certain activities, must meet anti-money laundering obligations and report suspicious transactions to the Financial Intelligence Unit.

ACTION PLAN

10 Your first 90 days: checklist

Use this checklist to track the essential steps from decision to first trading day.

Days 1–30: establish

- [ ] Agree business plan, structure and ownership
- [ ] Check local content rules for your sector
- [ ] Search and reserve the company name
- [ ] Gather KYC documents for directors and owners
- [ ] File incorporation with the Commercial Registry
- [ ] Record beneficial ownership information
- [ ] Apply to open business bank accounts

Days 31–60: register and license

- [ ] Obtain a TIN from the GRA
- [ ] Register for VAT if at the GYD 15 million threshold
- [ ] Register as an employer with NIS
- [ ] Apply for sector and trade licences
- [ ] Apply for work permits for foreign staff
- [ ] Join the Local Content Register if eligible
- [ ] Assess eligibility for incentives

Days 61–90: operate

- [ ] Set up the accounting system and chart of accounts
- [ ] Set up payroll, PAYE and NIS deductions
- [ ] Issue written employment terms
- [ ] Build the tax and filing calendar
- [ ] Put AML and data protection policies in place
- [ ] Agree year-end and audit arrangements

Ongoing

- [ ] Monthly PAYE, NIS and VAT filings
- [ ] Quarterly corporation tax instalments
- [ ] Annual tax return and financial statements
- [ ] Annual return to the Commercial Registry
- [ ] Renew licences and permits on time

YOUR PARTNER

11 How Dawgen Global helps

One Dawgen Global team supports you through our Caribbean Service Desk, managed from our headquarters in Kingston.

Market entry and structuring

Choice of vehicle, tax structuring, local content planning, feasibility studies and business plans.

Incorporation and corporate secretarial

Company formation, statutory registers, annual returns and beneficial ownership records.

Tax advisory and compliance

Registrations, planning, VAT, PAYE, returns, transfer pricing and tax audits, through our Caribbean Tax Service Desk.

Accounting and payroll outsourcing

Bookkeeping, management accounts, payroll and a Virtual CFO.

Audit and assurance

Statutory audits, reviews and special-purpose reporting for lenders and parent companies.

HR, immigration and legal support

Employment contracts, HR policies, work permits and legal process support, with our panel of attorneys.

Risk and compliance

AML programmes, data protection readiness, internal audit and governance.

Technology and cyber

Systems selection, digital transformation, cybersecurity and AI governance.

Incentive applications

Incentive and concession assessments and applications.

Start with a conversation

Tell us your plans for Guyana, and we will set out the steps, timeline and costs. Some regulated services are performed by affiliated firms; we will advise you of the arrangements when you make a request. Fees are tailored to each client's circumstances and set out in an engagement letter. Email **guyana@dawgen.com** or **info@dawgen.global**, or call (876) 926-5210.

Talk to the Guyana Caribbean Service Desk

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Key official sources

- Guyana Revenue Authority (gra.gov.gy)
- Deeds and Commercial Registries Authority (dcra.gov.gy)
- Guyana Office for Investment (goinvest.gov.gy)
- National Insurance Scheme (nis.org.gy)
- Bank of Guyana (bankofguyana.org.gy)
- Ministry of Home Affairs (moha.gov.gy)
- Ministry of Natural Resources, Local Content Secretariat (nre.gov.gy)
- Ministry of Finance (finance.gov.gy)



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