

CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL GUYANA

# IMPACT REPORT

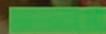
2019-2020

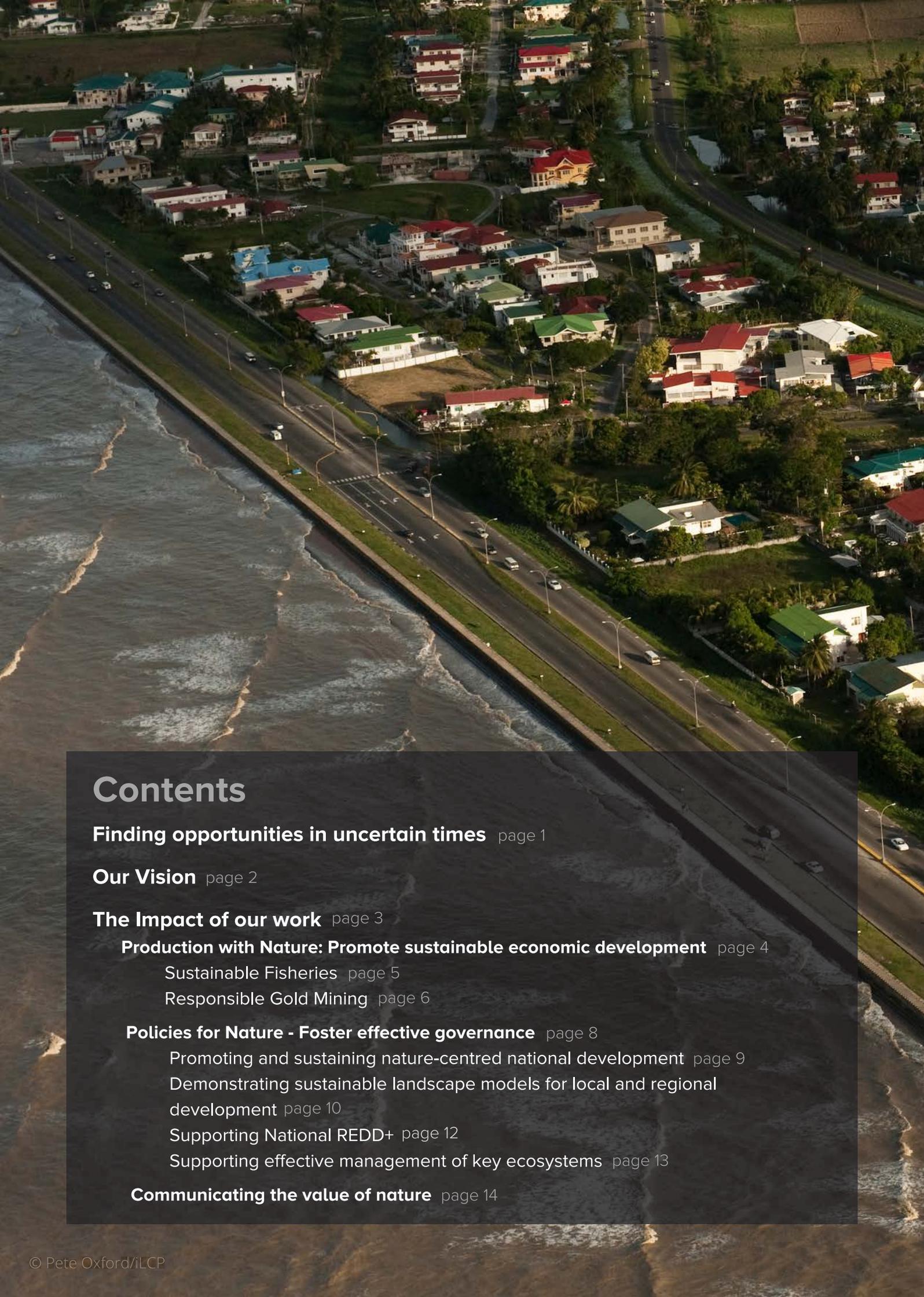


CONSERVATION  
INTERNATIONAL



Guyana



An aerial photograph of a coastal town. A multi-lane highway runs parallel to the ocean on the left side of the image. The town is built on a slight rise, with numerous houses and buildings, many with colorful roofs (red, blue, green). There are palm trees and other tropical vegetation scattered throughout. The ocean waves are visible on the left, breaking onto a sandy beach. The overall scene is a mix of urban development and natural coastal environment.

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# FINDING OPPORTUNITIES IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

The last two-years have fundamentally changed the way we work at CI-Guyana, as much of the period was defined by local political uncertainty and the global COVID-19 pandemic. Despite these challenges, CI-Guyana adapted and continued to support nature as the cornerstone of Guyana's development, while achieving progress in several key areas.

In response to the pandemic, we shifted to remote working, halting all field activities from mid-March 2020. We focused on retooling to the new circumstances and were able to further our partnerships and work in research, sustainability planning, and capacity building, as we continued to promote the development of nature-based solutions.

Our work remains laser focused on supporting Guyana's sustainable development - building on our collaboration with the Guyanese people, government, and institutions for more than three decades. Our knowledge and experience in pioneering nature-based solutions to pressing environmental, economic, social, and other challenges are more relevant today than ever. As Guyana focuses on post-Covid economic recovery and addressing the immediate needs of its people, our work can support these efforts through initiatives that enhance Guyana's natural wealth and contributions to a stable global climate.

The climate crisis, the pandemic, and the drop in oil demand have highlighted the vulnerability of an oil-dependent economy and increased recognition of the value of forests and nature in ensuring that our planet remains liveable. Unlike the volatility and uncertainty that define extractive commodity prices, the economic value of Guyana's forests, is projected to increase well into the future, as the value of their ecosystem services is increasingly monetized.

Guyana is uniquely resourced to model truly sustainable development by leveraging the increasing value of our intact forests and emerging opportunities in climate finance, while investing our extractive revenues in a more sustainable future. Ensuring that our increased economic fortunes are invested in delivering improved human wellbeing will depend on the continued maintenance of Guyana's forests and other ecosystems. These natural systems have been, and will continue to be, central to the provision of sustainable revenue, jobs, livelihoods, and sustenance for current and future generations of Guyanese. es to be relevant today. This brief report highlights some of our achievements in 2019 and 2020.

We look forward to continuing to enhance our contribution to Guyana's low-carbon sustainable development in the years to come.

# OUR VISION

Driven by Guyana's potential as a global model for development rooted in the conservation of nature, CI-Guyana's vision is that Guyanese value and secure their natural heritage as a cornerstone of their wellbeing and development.

Guyana can develop socially and economically while simultaneously providing leadership in addressing the climate crisis and the catastrophic loss of ecosystems and biodiversity. Our natural wealth provides us the opportunity to show the world the true value of nature – as the provider of all the ecosystems services so necessary in securing lasting human development.

CI-Guyana is working with diverse partners in pursuit of this vision by helping to achieve development in harmony with the nature and improving environmental practices in the key sectors of the economy.

Since 1989, Conservation International has supported efforts in Guyana to establish and finance a national system of protected areas and develop conservation-based economic opportunities, including in rural communities, as part of its broader mission to help conserve nature for the benefit of all people. CI-Guyana brings this long history, experiences, and relationships throughout Guyanese society, together with the reach our global network of expertise to help deliver holistic and sustainable solutions to Guyana's environmental and development challenges. We use sound science, demonstrate innovations on the ground, and build effective partnerships to achieve impact.

During 2019 and 2020 our work focused on achieving impacts in three broad areas:

1. Production With Nature - Promoting Sustainable Economic Development;
2. Policies for Nature - Fostering Effective Governance; and
3. Communicating Nature's Value - We ARE Nature.



# THE IMPACT OF OUR WORK



# PRODUCTION WITH NATURE

Promote sustainable economic development

Private sector involvement is key to Guyana's sustainable development. We support the growth of diversified, higher-value, and sustainable businesses as the foundation of a sustainable economy. Our efforts in 2019 and 2020 focused on supporting sustainable artisanal fisheries and reducing the negative environmental and human impacts of gold mining. We also initiated engagements to further our support to the nature-based tourism sector especially for post-Covid recovery and to improve the general performance and resilience of the sector. We are also keen to support climate-resilient agriculture and the creation of an alliance of business leaders to foster domestic private sector participation in sustainable development.

# SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES

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Marine fish and shrimp supplied by artisanal fisherfolk constitute a large share of the Guyanese diet; and contribute significantly to the export market. Approximately 11,000 Guyanese obtain their livelihoods from artisanal fisheries, and fisheries accounted for 2% of GDP in 2017 (US\$83). In 2019, CI-Guyana and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), partnered with Arizona State University (ASU), Ocean Outcomes, Wilderness Markets and the Ministry of Agriculture's Fisheries Department to identify fisheries improvement opportunities and develop scalable business cases for investment in the improvement of the shrimp and groundfish fisheries. This collaboration produced a series of recommendations for improvement of the fisheries' economic, environmental, and social performance.





## RESPONSIBLE GOLD MINING

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Gold mining has long been a major component of Guyana's economy, providing over 15,000 livelihoods and 15% of Guyana's GDP. Currently, record gold prices are financing a resurgence of investment in the sector. Gold mining is also the leading driver (75% in 2019) of deforestation in Guyana. The ASGM's traditional methods also rely on the use of mercury, a powerful neurotoxin, that has significant and long-term impacts on human and environmental health.

CI-Guyana, in collaboration with partners in the ASGM sector, continued working to reduce the negative environmental impacts of gold mining by improving the efficiency of prospecting and extraction, reducing the use of mercury in processing, and contributing to the design and implementation of appropriate public policies and private practices that encourage responsible mining.

We supported and partnered with the two main private sector associations representing the sector: the Guyana Gold and Diamond Miners Association (GGDMA) and the Guyana Women Miners Organisation (GWMO). Additionally, a grant to the National Toshias' Council (NTC) expanded their secretariat staff and built capacity to monitor and provide support to indigenous communities participating in or being affected by mining.

The responsible mining work:

- Supported the establishment of GGDMA's Technical Services Unit.
- Supported the identification and demonstration of low-impact, low-cost prospecting methods useful for ASGM miners.
- Supported identification and field demonstrations of Guyana-appropriate mercury-free gold recovery technologies.
- Supported continuous Education & Awareness sessions on the dangers of mercury for key stakeholders in mining.
- Promoted the establishment of a mercury-free ASGM supply chain with measures to secure the chain-of-custody to downstream markets.
- Supported the conduct of the first Gender and Social Analysis of the local ASGM Sector that evaluated and raised awareness of the contribution of women along the gold value chain
- Supported marginal miners to diversify their livelihood.



# POLICIES FOR NATURE

## Fostering Effective Governance

Our work promotes and supports national development policy that recognizes the maintenance of Guyana's natural capital as a primary goal. We support the demonstration of sustainable landscapes planning models; the continuation of a national REDD+ programme that delivers growing economic benefits; and development and implementation of strong ecosystem management measures.

# PROMOTING AND SUSTAINING NATURE-CENTRED NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We continued our support for maintaining natural capital as a central focus of Guyana's development strategy and policies. We supported and facilitated several civil society engagements and built their capacity to participate in the development of the Natural Resource Fund (NRF) and to promote the inclusion of provisions to explicitly embrace the maintenance of nature as a key goal of the fund. In addition, several recommendations were generated from these public engagements that, when included in the current Bill, created a more robust and functional piece of legislation. We have also supported efforts to improve environmental policies and regulatory frameworks governing the extractive industry to meet international commitments under agreements such as the Minamata Convention.



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## DEMONSTRATING SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPE MODELS FOR LOCAL & REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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A key aspect of our work is to improve the capacity of community and regional stakeholders, often dependent on intact ecosystems for their livelihoods, to plan for and pursue their own development. Our work supports stakeholders with effective tools and access to information to help them make wise choices for their development and environment.

We continue to support communities to facilitate consultative processes to articulate development plans for their villages, that value their natural, cultural, and human assets. During 2019 and 2020, CI-Guyana and partner organizations supported 3 communities in the Rupununi and Region 8 to develop long-term village plans.

Building on our efforts over more than three decades in the Rupununi, CI-Guyana worked with stakeholders in the region to develop an integrated strategy to support holistic and sustainable development in the Region through actions in four programmatic areas – land use planning and management; sustainable enterprises and livelihoods; governance and capacity development; and sustainable financing. Our work supported the development of a regional development plan by the Regional Democratic Council and capacity building at key regional governmental agencies.



# SUPPORTING NATIONAL REDD+

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Since 2010, CI-Guyana has been providing technical and financial oversight of the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) grant for the development and operation of Guyana's ground-breaking Monitoring Reporting and Verification System (MRVS) by the Guyana Forestry Commission's (GFC). Since its inception, the MRVS has made continuous incremental gains and built tremendous capacity to consistently deliver accurate assessments, making transparent the trends and drivers of forest change with enormous policy and decision-making application. Our collaboration with the GFC supported the MRVS through its second phase, including the conduct of forest change and emission assessment for 2018 and 2019, and developed a roadmap for development into the third phase.

CI-Guyana was part of a consortium contracted to facilitate the drafting of Guyana's REDD+ Strategy, Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) and Environment and Social Management Framework (ESMF). Development of the draft REDD+ Strategy concluded in 2019 and included engagement of stakeholders from 52 indigenous and local communities, public and private sector agencies, and civil society.



# SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF KEY ECOSYSTEMS

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The efficient and sustainable management of Guyana's ecosystems is the central pillar of our work and one of our most impactful contributions over the years. Building on our legacy of facilitating the establishment and financing of Guyana's National Protected Areas System (NPAS), we are beginning to support coastal zone management. Recognizing the Guiana Shield's importance as an intact ecological region, we seek opportunities to foster regional collaboration and promote Guyana's conservation leadership.

We continued to support the operation and growth of the Protected Areas Trust to ensure adequate financing for NPAS long term management. Recognizing the importance of maintenance of our coastal habitat especially in the face of climate change and rising sea levels, we supported actions to fully protect Guyana's remaining mangrove ecosystems from clearing and conversion and expansion of mangrove cover through restoration.

In 2019, together with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the National Agricultural Research and Extension Institute's (NAREI) Mangrove Department, we helped address key knowledge gaps regarding Guyana's mangrove ecosystems and contributed to enhanced regional and local coordination for their restoration and management. This collaboration produced a series of products, including an updated national mangrove cover map; a review of mangrove restoration efforts in Guyana; an assessment of mangrove management policies, regulations, and tenure arrangements; and first-of-their-kind research on Guyana's blue carbon inventories, ecosystem valuation and carbon financing potential, among others. (available at <https://nbslmegef.wordpress.com/>).



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# COMMUNICATING THE VALUE OF NATURE

## We ARE Nature

Actions by a broad cross section of Guyanese society are essential to the realization of sustainable development. We recognise that a respect for and dependence on nature is embedded in the Guyanese psyche; running through our identity as individuals and as a people. For us Guyanese; We are nature.

Our efforts focused on expanding the stakeholders with whom we work and building their capacity to implement actions within their own spheres of influence. To this end, CI-Guyana supported the University of Guyana (UG) to expand field-based experiential learning opportunities by financing the participation of more than 120 students and faculty in expeditions to the Iwokrama Forest, Pibiri and Manaka forest stations, coastal mangroves, and the Roraima Agricultural Research Station in Brazil. The students and faculty gained critical hands-on experience in biodiversity monitoring, reduced impact logging, coastal dynamics, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable agriculture, among others.

Our support to UG also included commencing work to enhance the capacity of the university to educate, train and support research programs for the next generation of Guyanese leaders in conservation, sustainable development, and economic diversification. Support commenced to enhance the academic qualifications for a cohort of UG faculty with higher education degrees and training through the Arizona State University (ASU). Support was also provided to enhance the university's financial and grants management capacity, with support provided for the development of accounting and project management capacities and provision of the hardware and software needed to effectively carry out this work.



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