



WWF GUIANAS PROGRAMME

2015-2018

CONTEXT

WWF is the only international conservation organization that is active in each of the three Guianas and, over a period of many decades, has established itself as a highly respected, credible and effective partner. In line with the mission of WWF worldwide, WWF Guianas seeks to achieve the long-term vision:

“the rich and globally significant landscapes of the Guianas are safeguarded for future generations whilst delivering tangible sustained benefits for people and nature”

The three Guianas sit at the heart of the Guiana Shield an ancient geological formation with outstanding biodiversity. There are an estimated 20,000 plant species and at least 4,000 vertebrate species found in the region many of which are endemic. Recognising this extraordinary abundance and that each of the three territories are relatively small, WWF proposes to work at both national and regional scales. At a national level, WWF will seek to become more strongly embedded locally and will continue to work in close partnership with government and government agencies, NGOs and civil society and, increasingly with the private sector whilst options for regional cooperation, joint planning and shared learning will be identified and promoted.

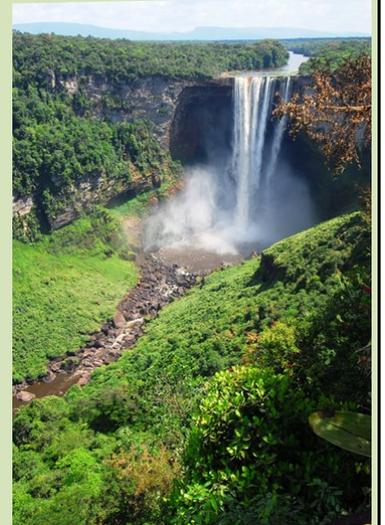
Building on our rich history, WWF has developed a new three year programme (July 2015 – June 2018) addressing targeted conservation issues and responding to specific existing and emerging threats. Six core strategies have been developed each with their own longer-term goal and with communications as an additional cross cutting theme. This translates to 23 distinct objectives that will give direction to our efforts over the coming years. These Strategies are detailed below.

Strategy 1: PROTECTED AREAS

Goal: By 2020, the PA network has increased in size, shows better representativeness and is effectively managed

An effective protected area system is the fundamental tool for protecting biodiversity. The Convention of Biological Diversity and the Aichi targets commit signatories to designating 17% of their terrestrial and 10% of their marine territory as protected. Each of the three Guianas has signed this convention but, to date, none have fully achieved this.

Working with governments and local communities, WWF will support work to identify critical areas for protection, help establish appropriate legislative frameworks and promote best management practices.



Strategy 2: BETTER PRACTICES IN THE EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRY



Goal: By 2020, mining is controlled to ensure environmental damage is minimised and mitigated

Minerals, primarily gold, are a critical contributor to national GDP across the Guianas and it can also be reasonably assumed that significantly increased oil and gas extraction will occur in the near future. Of primary concern are the on-going problems associated with the small-scale gold sector. This includes those described as informal or illegal but also any registered miners who do not comply with regulations. Their impact, both through direct environmental damage to forests and waterways at the mining sites as well as their wanton use of mercury with its significant negative health effects, is enormous.

WWF will work with all stakeholders, including the welcome engagement of the private sector, to bring a complete stop to mercury use in mining. This will be coupled with support to better regulation of the sector and the parallel promotion of a certification scheme to create a bigger market for 'responsible gold'.

Strategy 3: ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE

Goal: By 2020, robust and coherent environmental policy instruments exist and mechanisms for adherence and accountability by all parties are in place

The Guianas are still covered with over 80% forest cover and have deforestation rates of <math><0.1\%</math> per year making them almost unique globally. As forests are depleted elsewhere there is an increasing interest from large-scale foreign investors to tap into Guianas rich resources and this process has already begun. The same trend is also apparent in the mining and fishery sectors with foreign companies seeking and gaining approval for concessions. Whilst foreign investments are much needed there remains a significant risk that resource exploitation at this unprecedented scale will take place without sufficient safeguards in place.



The ultimate aim is to have a sustainable use of the countries' natural resources. To that end, WWF will work with all parties to identify and help address gaps in regulations, strengthen governance and monitoring processes in order to maximize the benefits accruing to each country whilst ensuring that strong social and environmental safeguards are firmly in place.

Strategy 4: MANAGEMENT OF ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

Goal: By 2020, ecosystem services are demonstrated to offer a viable economic contribution to green development within the Guianas

Nature provides a host of services useful to humankind. With their huge expanses of undisturbed ecosystems and small human populations this is especially true in the Guianas. Some of these are already beginning to be, or have the potential to be, monetized such as schemes that pay for carbon-absorbing forests, fresh potable water, and rich biodiversity (through nature-based tourism).



WWF will work with relevant agencies and communities that protect these resources to ensure fair benefits are realised and transparent and equitable benefit-sharing mechanisms put in place. Strong support will be given to build the capacity of local communities to monitor and thereby better manage those services of importance and value to them.

Strategy 5: SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES

Goal: By 2020 regional priority fisheries are sustainably managed and contribute to local livelihoods



The Guianas coastline stretches for some 1,200km and fishing is an extremely important source of income as well as food. There are an estimated 2,700 fishing vessels in the three countries but much remains to be done in terms of proper registration - and subsequent monitoring - of these fleets to achieve successful management of these marine resources. Of particular concern is the level of illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing.

WWF will work with the fishery authorities and fishing communities to promote a well regulated and well managed fishery sector to ensure sustainability of fishery stocks. This will include promotion of enforcement collaboration between countries to tackle IUU. Support will also be given to implement planned policy changes and to ensure targeted fisheries can meet market requirements for export including support to relevant certification schemes

Strategy 6: MARINE SPECIES CONSERVATION

This strategy has two specific themes: marine turtles and Sotalia dolphin.

Goal 1: By 2020, leatherback, green and olive ridley turtle populations are stabilized or increasing and main threats are measurably reduced

The Guianas have nesting beaches for four of the world's seven marine turtle species. For two, the leatherback and green turtles, these are globally significant. Despite promising successes the future of these populations is far from secure as egg poaching and bycatch continue to be serious causes of mortality. Also, thanks to the highly dynamic beach profiles, nesting sites are shifting on a year by year basis posing logistical problems for enforcement agencies.



Goal 2: By 2020, the population of Sotalia is stabilized or increasing in the Guianas, with long-term monitoring schemes, and bycatch is measurably reduced



Although seen regularly in some of the river mouths and in the shallow seas, very little is known about the status of the Sotalia dolphin. It is certainly a bycatch victim and will drown when caught in fishing nets but, without a deeper understanding of its populations and habits, it is difficult to put in place protective measures.

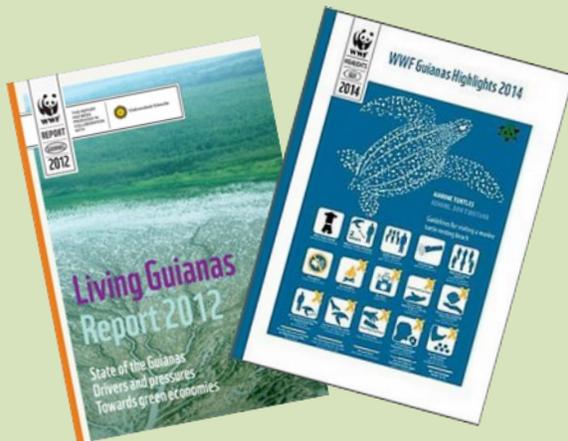
WWF will work closely with the relevant authorities and the fishing industry to better understand the status of these much-loved creatures, to raise awareness about the threats amongst the wider populations, foster social change to eradicate turtle egg consumption

and support enforcement agencies to give these animals the protection they need.

Strategy 7: COMMUNICATIONS

Goal: By 2020, WWF is considered as the pre-eminent and most trustworthy conservation NGO across the Guianas

WWF is well-known and well-regarded across the region for its environmental awareness work. Through constant engagement, WWF will reinforce the values of a healthy and diverse environment, help keep the populations of the Guianas informed of emerging threats – and conservation successes – and foster a sense of pride, responsibility and ownership of their natural heritage.



For further information on our work please see our website <http://www.wwfguianas.org/> or contact us at:

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