

ALLIANCE FOR CHANGE

CITIZENSHIP, IMMIGRATION & REFUGEE POLICY FOR GUYANA



Balancing Growth, Security, and Human Dignity in a Modern Economy

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As Guyana evolves into a dynamic oil-rich economy, its immigration and citizenship laws must support growth, protect national interests, and uphold human dignity. This policy offers a two-pronged framework:

Attracting and integrating skilled migrants, investors, and diaspora, while ensuring orderly border management, transparent land use, and secure naturalisation pathways. **Responding humanely and efficiently to refugee and humanitarian needs**, particularly from regional neighbours facing crisis, such as Haiti, Venezuela, and Cuba.

1. IMMIGRATION POLICY FRAMEWORK

A. Categories of Entry

- **Skilled & Investment Migrants:** Fast-tracked medium-term permits (3–5 years), renewable with performance



evaluations. Permit holders may work and invest but are not automatically eligible for voting or citizenship.





- **Contract / Tied Workers:** Time-bound permits tied to specific employers; no direct path to citizenship unless transitioning to skilled or permanent residency status.

- **CARICOM Nationals:** Honouring CSME free movement commitments. Skilled certificate holders may work without permits; others are evaluated case-by-case.

- **Humanitarian Visa (HV) Holders:** Nationals from Haiti, Venezuela, and Cuba fleeing crises may apply for HVs valid up to 24 months (renewable once), allowing access to work, healthcare, education, and public services.

B. Visa Duration & Entry Requirements

- **Medium-Term Skilled Permits:** Issued for 3 years, renewable once; recognition of foreign credentials encouraged.
- **Permission to Land:** Mandatory pre-entry screening and approval for all work-based permits.

2. PATHWAYS TO RESIDENCY AND CITIZENSHIP

- **Permanent Residency (PR):** Available after 5 years of continuous legal stay with demonstrable contribution (taxes, skilled work, investment).

Naturalisation:

- **Non-CARICOM Nationals:** PR holders may apply after 2 additional years (total 7 years).
- **CARICOM Nationals:** Eligible for naturalisation after 5 years of PR.
- **HV Holders:** Accelerated path to PR after 1 year of employment + community service; citizenship after 5 years of residence under simplified naturalisation.

3. LAND OWNERSHIP & SAFEGUARDS

A. Land Access Rules

- **Foreign nationals** restricted from owning agricultural or strategic lands but may lease for up to 99 years.





and migration classes.

5. ECONOMIC INCLUSION & DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT

A. Skills Strategy

- Reestablish a **Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration**, coordinating with Labour and Planning to forecast national skills needs and set intake quotas.
- Integrate humanitarian and skilled migrants into **training, certification, and labour market readiness** programs in collaboration with IOM and technical institutes.

B. Targeted Talent Attraction

- Launch **diaspora bonds, global recruitment campaigns**, and academic partnerships to attract Guyanese abroad and international experts in oil & gas, agriculture, healthcare, tech, and education.
- Introduce **microcredit facilities** and diploma revalidation for refugee entrepreneurs and professionals.

6. INTEGRATION, SOCIAL SUPPORT & REFUGEE PROTECTION

- Facilitate **family reunification** within 90 days for HV, PR, and skilled permit holders.
- Provide **public healthcare, basic education, psychosocial support**, and assign community sponsors for refugee families.
- Offer **language and cultural orientation** (English and Guyanese Creole).
- Coordinate inter-ministerial support and partner with **UNHCR**, NGOs, and faith-based groups.

- Introduce mandatory **disclosure of nationality and purpose** in real estate transactions.
- Enforce **threshold-based approvals** for foreign land purchases above a set limit (e.g., X hectares).

B. State Land Sales & Use

- **Tighten covenants** on lands sold to non-citizens—penalize land flipping and exclusive enclaves; apply **reversion clauses** for violations.

4. INSTITUTIONAL REFORM & REGULATORY MODERNISATION

- **Legislative Amendments:** Update the Citizenship Act, Immigration Act, Aliens Registration Act, Land Registry laws, and Reservation of Agricultural Land Act to align with this policy.
- **Electronic Integration:** Implement an **e-visa and work permit system** allowing inter-agency data sharing (Immigration, Tax, Land, Labour).
- **Clarity in Law:** Define and codify residence rights, refugee statuses, land ownership rules,



7. BORDER SECURITY & HUMAN RIGHTS

- Expand **border control capacity**, implement **biometric entry/exit systems**, and respect the Global Compact for Migration and refugee protection principles.
- Enforce **non-refoulement** and prohibit arbitrary detention.
- Develop **anti-trafficking units**, victim support shelters, and train frontline staff in **trauma-informed care** and **human rights protocols**.

8. TRANSPARENCY, MONITORING & REVIEW

- Create a **Migration and Citizenship Dashboard** modeled after Brazil's *DataMigra* for public visibility into:
- Visa approvals and PR applications
 - Citizenship grants
 - Refugee and HV status updates
 - Land ownership by non-citizens
 - Mandate **annual parliamentary reports** assessing impacts on:
 - Labour markets
 - Real estate
 - Demographic shifts
 - Public services
 - National security

9. IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP

PHASE	KEY ACTIONS
0–6 months	Draft legal amendments; pilot e-visa system; define skilled visa criteria; initiate HV issuance
6–18 months	Roll out PR framework; activate land restrictions; integrate labour forecasting and refugee support systems
18–36 months	Launch diaspora campaigns; enhance PR-to-citizenship pipeline; enforce land covenants; evaluate refugee integration outcomes
Annual	Conduct impact reviews; update quotas; publish transparency reports on all migration and refugee matters

CONCLUSION

This integrated policy framework ensures Guyana attracts critical skills and investment while maintaining land sovereignty, social cohesion, and international humanitarian obligations. By combining **targeted economic migration**, **clear citizenship pathways**, and **humane refugee policies**, Guyana positions itself as a **regional model for balanced, ethical, and strategic migration governance**.

