AMAZONIA [French Guiana]

Current situation & main challenges

Socio-economic context

- Vast territory (same size as Austria) covered to 94% by forests
- Multicultural society, very wealthy from an historical point of view
- Economic growth of 4% mostly driven by investments, the spatial sector and by the demographic dynamics
- Imports are five times higher than exports
- Population growing at an annual rate of 3.7%, doubling by 2030 with a very high youth rate (44% is under 20)
- Unemployment reached 22.3% in 2013, twice the French average
- 63% of electricity is produced thanks to renewable energies (mainly photovoltaics, hydropower and biomass)
- 12% of the population has no access to drinking water and one in three homes has no electricity
- Numerous illegal activities, such as gold mining and fishing, at the Guiana Shield level

Legal and political context

- French overseas department since 1946 and a French overseas region since 1982
- Strategic position being the only French and European territory in South America
- Strong economic dependency on France
- Weak regional cooperation at the Guiana Shield level

The figures reported are coming from the Regional Planning Scheme [SAR]

Facts & figures

Geography

| Total area:                  | 209,846 km² |
| Land area*:                | 83,846 km² (40%) |
| Protected land area**:     | 24,606 km² (12%) |

Exclusive economic zone (EEZ)***

| Marine protected area (MPA, % of EEZ)****: | 133 km² (<0.1%) |

Overseas Regions

- French Guiana (F)

Socio-economic facts*****

| Total population:            | (250,109) |
| Population density:          | 3/km² |
| Average annual GDP:          | €3,919 million |
| Main income sources (% of average annual GDP): |
  - Primary sector (4%) |
  - Secondary sector (20%) |
  - Tertiary sector (76%) |

Human development index

- 0.806

Biodiversity

Natural areas of great heritage value*****

- Terrestrial mammals (2): Neusticoumys oxyopoides (VU), Ateles paniscus (VU). Reptiles (10): Pachycephalus dumerilii (VU), Birds (12): Rupicola rupestris (LC), Pachyphleps trivittatus (NT), Oxyurates cristatus (LC), Phyllolepis gisleri (LC), Sakesphorus melanolanthorax (LC), Amazona duiffrensisia (NT), Penelope marila (LC), Crax alector (VU), Mymotherula surinamensis (VU), Pycnogonia spilogaster (VU), Ramphastos lucanus (VU), Plenodoma hasitata (EN). Plants (7): Myristica peltata (VU), Rupicola rupicola (LC), Psophia psophia (VU), Myrrethrella surinamensis (VU), Chelonoidis denticulate (VU). Birds (2): Patagioenas subvinacea (VU). Threatened species not endemic******

- Terrestrial mammals (7): Tapirus terrestris (VU), Plenodoma hasitata (EN).
- Reptiles (12): Podocnemis unifilis (VU), Dermochelys coriacea (VU), Caretta caretta (EN), Lepidochelys kempi (CR), Eretmochelys imbricate (CR), Chelonia mydas (EN), Chelonioidea denticulata (VU), Birds (2): Patagioenas subvinacea (VU), Ramphastos vitellinus (VU). Threatened species not endemic******

- Terrestrial mammals (7): Tapirus terrestris (VU), Plenodoma hasitata (EN).
**Current conservation status**

**Threats and pressures on biodiversity**

- Deforestation for agriculture and mining activities, causing erosion and habitat loss
- Land fragmentation because of urbanization, especially at the western part of the coastline
- Poor wastewater management polluting rivers, especially in urban centers
- Illegal gold mining, mercury is a main source of pollution for rivers and contamination of freshwater fishes. It is also a big health problem for communities living at the rivers
- Unregulated hunting
- Invasive flora (e.g. Acacia mangium)
- Unsustainable fishing activities related to illegal fishing

**Current investments**

*Life+ Cap DOM*

Creation of a marine ZNIEFF (Zone naturelle d'intérêt écologique, faunistique et floristique)  
Update of terrestrial ZNIEFFs  
Annual budgets for the seven Natural Reserves (€1.46 million)  
Annual budget for the two Natural Parks  
National action plan for marine turtles in French Guiana

**Critical areas for action**

**Marine environment**

Sea mounts, rocky seabeds, migration corridors: these areas provide habitat for benthic fishes as well as rare and unique species  
Continental slopes.

**Coastal environment**

Mangroves, mudflats and estuaries: these ecosystems maintain water quality and clarity, serve as nursery for fish and invertebrates, shelter a great avifauna, and protect the shorelines from erosion.  
Turtle nesting areas  
Dry and flood savannahs, coastline forests on rocks, forests on white sands and sandbanks (“forêts sur cordons sableux”): these rare and unique ecosystems represent a potential ressource for building material.

**Terrestrial environment**

Lot of the terrestrial areas are ecological corridors linking reservoirs of terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity within the territory, which may shelter a lot of endemic species. Although they have suffered only little fragmentation in the past they remain very fragile and are also threatened by illegal gold mining.

**Investment niches**

Except for marine turtles, environmental issues related to marine biodiversity have not drawn a lot of attention yet in French Guiana.

Regional cooperation at the Guiana Shield level needs to be developed, particularly protected areas management and promoting environmental-friendly practices.

**Important conservation activities**

**Parc Amazonien de Guyane**

**Annual budget:** €7 million  
**Activities:** National park created in 2007, aiming to preserve and add value to the incredible biodiversity but also the cultural aspects of communities living in the park by helping them to develop sustainably.  
**Results:** Development of a Charter for the territories, monitoring of wildlife and gold mining activities, etc.

**Plan de restauration des tortues marines en Guyane**

**Budget:** €3 million  
**Activities:** Implemented by WWF and ONCFS (Office national de la chasse et de la faune sauvage) under the direction of DEAL (Direction de l'environnement, de l'aménagement et du logement). Activities were planned on a 5-year basis (2007-2012). The project was focused on the conservation of three turtle species: Dermochelys coriacea, Lepidochelys olivacea and Chelonia mydas.  
**Results:** The use of TTED (Trash and Turtle Excluder Device) being obligatory in 2010, public awareness raised, Sandwatch beach monitoring strengthened and local authorities involved in marine turtle conservation.

**Life+ CAP DOM**

**Budget:** €2.3 million for Martinique, Réunion, Guiana  
**Activities:** Conservation of priority bird species in the French Overseas departments (2010-2015). Project coordinated by GEPOG (Groupe d’Étude et de Protection des Oiseaux en Guyane) and steered by la Région and the DEAL. In the dry savannahs, experiments carried out on techniques to manage invasive flora, slash and burn practices and reclamation following agricultural use. Gained more knowledge on the species cock-of-the-rock and, in consultation with the businesses and institutions involved, access to the most exposed caves will be restricted and certain sites classified as non-exploitable. Bird-watching tourism adapted. Started developing the first conservation plan for the species agami heron.  
**Assesment of the status of sites of national interest for avifauna and implementation of a monitoring protocol (STOC-EPS) for common birds.**  
**Results:** New management techniques developed for the savannahs. Coq-of-the-rock diet studied in order to understand its habitat. Argos tracking to understand the ecology and behaviour of agami herons. Monitoring protocol STOC-EPS implemented and observers trained.

**Useful links**


**May 2015**
Protected Areas in French Guiana

Legend
- Classified sites
- Listed sites
- Biotope protection order
- National Natural Reserve
- Regional Natural Reserve
- Biological Reserve
- Amazonian Park (core area)
- Amazonian Park (free membership area)

1:2 Protected Areas in French Guiana. Source: GéoGuyane (2014)
1:3 Labelled Areas and inventories in French Guiana. Source: GéoGuyane (2014)