

Guyana

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Summary

This report provides an overview of the legal and regulatory framework governing Fintech, digital finance, crypto assets, virtual asset service providers (VASPs), digital payments, tokenisation and related technologies in Guyana.

At present, Guyana does not have a comprehensive Fintech code or dedicated crypto asset legislation. Instead, Fintech activities are regulated through a combination of legislation governing banking, payment systems, money transmission, anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT), intellectual property, secured transactions and general commercial law.

The principal regulator is the Bank of Guyana, which oversees licensed financial institutions, payment systems and payment service providers under the National Payments System Act 2018 and related legislation. The Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) and the Guyana Compliance Commission also play important roles in AML/CFT supervision and policy development, particularly in relation to virtual assets and VASPs.

Guyana has undertaken significant reforms in relation to digital payments and electronic money but has not yet implemented dedicated frameworks governing crypto assets, VASPs, open banking, tokenisation, decentralised finance ('DeFi') or central bank digital currencies (CBDCs). Consequently, many Fintech and crypto-related activities continue to be governed by general principles of contract, property, company, insolvency and intellectual property law.

The regulatory environment may therefore be characterised as an emerging framework that is increasingly aligned with international standards, particularly those developed by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), while remaining relatively undeveloped in relation to crypto assets and digital asset markets.

1. Fintech regulatory framework: a summary of the most relevant laws and regulations concerning Fintech and financial innovation.

Overview

Guyana does not currently have a standalone Fintech Act or a dedicated legislative framework applicable exclusively to Fintech businesses. Instead, Fintech companies are regulated according to the nature of the activities they undertake.

The legal framework applicable to Fintech businesses is derived principally from:

- the National Payments System Act 2018 (the 'NPS Act');
- the Bank of Guyana Act, Cap 85:02;
- the Financial Institutions Act 1995;
- the Money Transfer Agencies Licensing Act 2009;

- the Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism Act, Cap 10:11;
- the Electronic Communications and Transactions Act 2023; and
- regulations, guidelines and supervisory instruments issued by the Bank of Guyana.

The Bank of Guyana is the primary regulator responsible for oversight of the payment ecosystem and financial institutions.

The NPS Act

The NPS Act represents the most significant Fintech-related legislation currently in force.

The Act establishes the legal framework for:

- payment systems;
- payment service providers (PSPs);
- electronic payment instruments;
- electronic fund transfers;
- clearing and settlement systems;
- payment system operators; and
- oversight of the national payment system.

The Act provides the legal basis for participation by both banks and appropriately licensed non-bank PSPs. The law was intended to modernise Guyana's payment infrastructure and facilitate the migration from cash-based transactions towards electronic payments.

Financial Institutions Act

The Financial Institutions Act governs:

- banks;
- licensed financial institutions;
- prudential regulation;
- capital requirements;
- supervisory powers; and
- permissible financial activities.

A Fintech company that engages in regulated banking activities would ordinarily require licensing under this framework rather than merely operating as a technology provider.

Money Transfer Agencies Licensing Act

The Money Transfer Agencies Licensing Act regulates:

- money remittance services;
- money transmission businesses; and
- related agency arrangements.

Fintech businesses involved in domestic or international money transfers may therefore be subject to this law, in addition to the NPS Act.

Anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) framework

Guyana's AML/CFT regime plays an increasingly important role in Fintech regulation. Fintech businesses may be subject to obligations relating to:

- customer due diligence (CDD);
- know-your-customer (KYC) requirements;
- beneficial ownership identification;
- suspicious transaction reporting;
- sanctions compliance;
- transaction monitoring; and
- record retention.

The AML/CFT framework is heavily influenced by Financial Action Task Force (FATF) recommendations and regional standards promoted by the Caribbean FATF.

Future developments

The most significant anticipated reforms concern:

- electronic money;
- digital wallets;
- payment system interoperability;

- digital financial inclusion; and
- FATF-compliant regulation of virtual assets.

At present, there is no dedicated Fintech bill before Parliament.

2. Regulation of crypto assets: a summary of the legal framework regarding crypto assets and how they are regulated.

Overview

Guyana has not enacted a comprehensive legal framework governing crypto assets, cryptocurrencies, stablecoins, security tokens or decentralised finance. Consequently, crypto assets are regulated indirectly through existing legal principles and the AML/CFT framework.

Legal nature of cryptocurrencies

Cryptocurrencies are not legal tender in Guyana. At present, there is no legislation classifying crypto assets as:

- currency;
- securities;
- commodities; or
- a separate category of property.

The more likely legal characterisation is that crypto assets would be treated as intangible assets or forms of digital property depending on the context in which the issue arises.

Questions concerning ownership, transfer and enforcement therefore continue to be governed by general principles of property law, contract law and equity.

Tax treatment

Guyana has not enacted a crypto-specific taxation regime. Accordingly, ordinary tax principles are likely to apply. Potential tax consequences may arise under:

- income tax legislation;
- capital gains tax legislation; and
- general business taxation principles.

Whether gains derived from crypto assets are treated as income or capital gains would depend on the facts of the particular case.

Central bank digital currencies (CBDCs)

Guyana has not launched a CBDC, nor has the Bank of Guyana published a comprehensive CBDC framework comparable to those being developed in:

- China;
- the European Union;
- the Bahamas; or
- certain Eastern Caribbean jurisdictions.

If implemented in the future, a Guyanese CBDC would be likely to operate as a sovereign monetary instrument and would be fundamentally different from private cryptocurrencies.

Investor protection

At present, there is no dedicated investor protection framework applicable specifically to crypto assets. Accordingly, investors generally rely on:

- contract law;
- consumer protection principles;
- fraud remedies;
- AML/CFT protections; and
- ordinary civil claims.

This creates a higher degree of legal uncertainty than exists in jurisdictions with dedicated crypto regulatory frameworks.

Regulatory direction

The current direction appears to be towards increased FATF compliance and AML/CFT supervision rather than the immediate adoption of a comprehensive crypto asset licensing regime.

3. Payment service providers and digital wallets: a summary of regulations applying to payment service providers and/or digital wallets.

Overview

PSPs and digital wallet operators are regulated primarily under the NPS Act and are supervised by the Bank of Guyana. The NPS Act represents the cornerstone of Guyana's modern payment framework and establishes the legal basis for:

- payment systems;
- PSPs;
- electronic payment instruments;
- clearing and settlement systems;
- electronic fund transfers; and
- payment system operators.

The law is intended to facilitate the modernisation of Guyana's payment infrastructure and promote electronic payment mechanisms.

Regulatory authority

The Bank of Guyana is the principal regulatory authority responsible for:

- licensing PSPs;
- supervising payment systems;
- promoting payment system efficiency;
- ensuring operational stability; and
- protecting the integrity of the payment ecosystem.

The Bank exercises its authority under both the Bank of Guyana Act and the NPS Act.

Licensing requirements

Entities providing payment services generally require authorisation or licensing unless specifically exempted by law. The precise regulatory treatment depends on the nature of the services being offered. Relevant activities may include:

- payment processing;
- merchant acquiring services;
- payment gateways;
- electronic fund transfers;
- money transmission services;
- digital wallets; and
- electronic money services.

The Bank of Guyana has also issued guidance establishing expectations concerning:

- governance;
- operational risk management;
- cybersecurity;
- internal controls;
- business continuity;
- customer protection; and
- regulatory reporting.

Electronic money and digital wallets

Guyana does not yet have a fully implemented standalone electronic money statute comparable to those found in larger jurisdictions. However, the Bank of Guyana has published draft regulations addressing:

- electronic money issuers;
- stored-value products;
- safeguarding of customer funds;
- redemption rights;
- prudential requirements; and
- supervision of electronic money services.

The regulatory framework therefore continues to evolve towards more comprehensive regulation of digital wallets and electronic money products.

Consumer protection

Although Guyana has not adopted a consumer protection framework equivalent to the revised Payment Services Directive ('PSD2') or other comprehensive payment services legislation, PSPs are generally expected to maintain:

- operational security;
- fraud prevention controls;
- complaint handling procedures;
- customer disclosures; and
- appropriate governance structures.

Future developments

The most significant anticipated developments concern:

- implementation of electronic money regulations;
- increased interoperability among payment systems;
- expansion of digital wallet usage;
- real-time payment infrastructure; and
- participation by non-bank PSPs.

4. Special support to Fintechs: a description of special programmes supporting the Fintech ecosystem, Fintech startups (eg, regulatory sandboxes and accelerator programmes) and regulations regarding special support.

Overview

Guyana currently does not operate a dedicated Fintech regulatory sandbox, innovation hub or Fintech accelerator programme. Fintech businesses generally enter the market through ordinary regulatory channels and are subject to the same licensing and supervisory requirements as other market participants.

Regulatory sandbox

Unlike jurisdictions such as:

- the United Kingdom;
- Singapore;
- Brazil; and
- several Caribbean jurisdictions,

Guyana has not established a formal regulatory sandbox allowing Fintech companies to test innovative products under modified regulatory requirements. Accordingly, at present, there is no framework under which Fintech businesses may obtain temporary exemptions or regulatory waivers to facilitate experimentation.

Innovation programmes

Guyana also does not currently maintain:

- a dedicated Fintech office;
- a Fintech innovation facilitator;
- a regulator-sponsored accelerator programme; or
- a specialised Fintech licensing pathway.

However, Fintech businesses may benefit indirectly from broader governmental and regional initiatives aimed at:

- digital transformation;
- entrepreneurship;
- financial inclusion;
- innovation; and
- technology adoption.

National payment modernisation

Although not specifically directed at Fintech startups, the modernisation of the national payment infrastructure represents one of the most significant governmental initiatives supporting Fintech development. These reforms encourage:

- digital payments;
- electronic money solutions;
- payment system interoperability; and
- participation by non-bank payment providers.

Future outlook

As Guyana's digital economy continues to expand, it is possible that future policy initiatives may include:

- regulatory sandbox programmes;
- innovation hubs;
- Fintech accelerators; or
- open finance initiatives.

However, at present, no such programmes have been formally adopted.

5. Open banking: a summary of regulations regarding open banking and direct or indirect regulations that affect open banking.

Overview

Guyana does not currently have a dedicated open banking or open finance regime.

There are no laws requiring banks to provide third-party access to customer financial data through application programming interfaces (APIs), nor is there a framework governing:

- account information service providers;
- payment initiation service providers; or
- customer-directed financial data sharing.

Absence of mandatory data sharing

At present, banks are not required to:

- share customer account information;
- provide standardised API access;
- facilitate third-party payment initiation; or
- participate in open banking ecosystems.

Any data-sharing arrangements currently in existence are contractual rather than regulatory.

Existing legal framework

Although open banking legislation does not exist, several legal regimes would influence any future framework, including:

The NPS Act

The NPS Act establishes the technological and legal infrastructure necessary for electronic payments and interoperability.

Financial Institutions Act

The Financial Institutions Act governs banking activities and customer relationships. Any future open banking framework would be likely to require amendments addressing:

- confidentiality;
- customer consent;
- liability allocation;
- outsourcing; and
- cybersecurity.

Banking confidentiality

Traditional duties of confidentiality remain important under Guyanese banking law. Any future open banking framework would need to balance:

- customer privacy;
- customer consent; and
- financial innovation.

Future developments

At present, no open banking legislation is under consideration. However, the continued modernisation of the payment system may create conditions supporting future open finance initiatives.

6. Regulation of virtual asset service providers.

Overview

Guyana has not enacted a dedicated virtual asset service provider (VASP) licensing regime. Unlike jurisdictions operating comprehensive crypto asset frameworks, Guyana currently regulates virtual assets primarily through an AML/CFT lens.

FATF-based framework

Guyana has adopted FATF terminology relating to:

- virtual assets; and
- VASP.

These concepts have been incorporated into national risk assessments and AML/CFT policy discussions.

Under FATF standards, VASPs typically include businesses engaged in:

- exchange of virtual assets for fiat currency;
- exchange of virtual assets for other virtual assets;
- transfer of virtual assets;
- custodial wallet services; and
- participation in token issuance activities.

Current legal position

There is currently:

- no VASP Act;
- no crypto exchange licence;
- no crypto custody licence;
- no registration regime for VASPs; and
- no prudential supervisory framework comparable to those in leading crypto jurisdictions.

Consequently, VASP regulation remains at a developmental stage.

Supervisory authorities

The principal authorities involved are as follows

- Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU): responsible for AML/CFT intelligence, risk assessment and policy implementation;
- Guyana Compliance Commission: expected to play an important supervisory role regarding AML/CFT compliance by designated entities; and
- Bank of Guyana: responsible for the traditional financial sector and payment systems, but not presently operating a dedicated VASP licensing regime.

Future Developments

The most likely near-term development is enhanced AML/CFT supervision of virtual asset activities rather than a comprehensive prudential crypto regime.

7. AML and the Travel Rule in crypto asset transactions.

Overview

Guyana has taken steps towards incorporating virtual assets and VASPs into its AML/CFT framework. However, as of June 2026, Guyana has not implemented a comprehensive and enforceable Travel Rule regime comparable to those operating in the EU, Singapore, Switzerland and the UK.

The regulatory framework is, therefore, best described as being in transition, with policy alignment towards FATF standards, but without a fully developed domestic implementation framework.

AML/CFT legislative framework

The principal law is the Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism Act, Cap 10:11. The AML/CFT framework imposes obligations concerning:

- CDD;
- KYC procedures;
- beneficial ownership identification;
- record keeping;
- suspicious transaction reporting;
- sanctions compliance; and
- internal compliance programmes.

Guyana's AML/CFT framework has been developed largely in response to FATF and Caribbean FATF recommendations.

FATF Recommendations and virtual assets

FATF Recommendation 15 requires jurisdictions to regulate virtual assets and VASPs for AML/CFT purposes.

Recommendation 16 (the 'Travel Rule') contemplates that VASPs should collect, maintain and transmit information relating to:

- originators:
 - name;
 - account or wallet identifier;
 - physical address, identification number or equivalent identifying information;

- beneficiaries
 - name; and
 - account or wallet identifier.

The purpose is to ensure that identifying information accompanies virtual asset transfers in a manner similar to wire transfers within the traditional banking sector.

Current position in Guyana

While Guyana’s policy documents recognise FATF standards relating to virtual assets, at present, there is no publicly available regulation that comprehensively prescribes:

- Travel Rule data requirements;
- transmission standards;
- compliance thresholds;
- wallet verification procedures; or
- domestic versus cross-border treatment.

Accordingly, Travel Rule implementation remains incomplete.

Supervisory authorities

The principal authorities involved are:

- FIU: responsible for AML/CFT intelligence gathering, analysis and risk assessment; and
- Guyana Compliance Commission: expected to exercise AML/CFT supervisory functions in relation to designated non-financial businesses and potentially virtual asset-related activities.

Other authorities

Depending upon the circumstances:

- Special Organised Crime Unit (SOCU);
- Guyana Police Force;
- Director of Public Prosecutions; and
- Bank of Guyana

may become involved in enforcement activities.

Future developments

Future reforms are likely to focus on:

- FATF-compliant VASP supervision;
- Travel Rule implementation;
- enhanced CDD requirements; and
- greater transparency in virtual asset transfers.

8. Enforcement and cross-border recognition of tokenisation and structuring of secured transactions involving crypto assets.

Overview

Guyana has not enacted legislation specifically governing:

- tokenised real estate;
- tokenised securities;
- security tokens;
- digital bonds;
- decentralised finance instruments; or
- blockchain-based collateral structures.

Consequently, such transactions must be analysed using existing principles of:

- contract law;
- property law;
- secured transactions law;
- company law;
- insolvency law; and
- private international law.

Tokenised assets

A distinction must be made between:

- the token itself; and
- the underlying asset represented by the token.

The legal rights associated with the underlying asset remain determinative.

Tokenised real estate

Ownership of land in Guyana is governed by:

- the Deeds Registry system; and
- the Land Registry system.

A blockchain token cannot, by itself, transfer legal title to Guyanese real property. Compliance with statutory registration requirements remains necessary.

Tokenised debt instruments

Debt obligations may be represented electronically.

However, the legal enforceability of the debt depends on:

- the contractual arrangements;
- corporate authority;
- compliance with applicable law; and
- ordinary principles governing debt obligations.

Collateral used in crypto transactions

Typical collateral may include:

- traditional assets
 - land;
 - shares;
 - receivables;
 - bank accounts;

- contractual rights;
- inventory;
- equipment; and
- digital assets.

Although not expressly regulated, parties may seek to use:

- crypto assets;
- tokenised assets;
- digital wallets; or
- custodial interests

as collateral. However, the legal effectiveness of such arrangements remains untested.

Creation and perfection of security interests

Real property

Security over land is generally created through mortgages or debentures over the relevant real property interest. The applicable perfection requirements depend on whether the property is held under the Deeds Registry or Land Registry system. Registration is required to establish priority and bind third parties.

Movable property

Security interests over movable property may now be created and registered under the Security Interests in Movable Property Act 2024. This is relevant to collateral such as:

- equipment;
- inventory;
- receivables;
- bank accounts or deposit claims;
- contractual rights;
- intellectual property (IP) rights, where capable of being treated as movable/intangible collateral;
- shares or other investment property, subject to the applicable rules; and
- other movable or intangible assets.

The Act modernises the framework for taking security over movable property and provides for perfection principally through registration of a notice in the relevant security interests registry, and, where applicable, by control or possession depending on the type of collateral. Accordingly, where a crypto-related transaction is secured by movable or intangible assets in Guyana, the parties should consider whether the collateral falls within the scope of the Security Interests in Movable Property Act 2024 and whether registration is required or advisable to perfect the security interest and establish priority against third parties, insolvency representatives and competing secured creditors.

Corporate assets

Security granted by a Guyanese company may also need to be considered under the Companies Act, Cap 89:01, particularly where the security constitutes a registrable charge. Accordingly, where a company creates security over its assets, both the Companies Act registration regime and the Security Interests in Movable Property Act 2024 should be considered.

In practice, counsel should determine whether dual registration is required or prudent, particularly for debentures, fixed charges, floating charges and security over receivables or other movable assets.

Receivables and intangibles

Security over receivables, contractual rights and other intangibles may be created by assignment, charge or other security agreement. Following the enactment of the Security Interests in Movable Property Act 2024, perfection will generally require analysis of the Act's registration and priority rules. Notice to the underlying debtor may also remain relevant as a practical matter, particularly for enforcement and payment redirection, even where registration is used for perfection.

Crypto assets and digital assets

There is still no Guyanese statute dealing specifically with crypto assets as a distinct class of collateral. However, the Security Interests in Movable Property Act 2024 is potentially relevant where a crypto asset or tokenised right can be characterised as movable or intangible property.

Because the treatment of crypto assets under the Act has not yet been tested by the courts, secured parties should consider additional practical protections, including:

- custody arrangements;
- control of wallets or private keys;
- multi-signature arrangements;
- contractual control agreements;
- offshore custody structures; and
- express enforcement provisions.

The legal position remains more certain where the collateral is a traditional movable or intangible asset, such as receivables, shares, contractual rights or deposit claims, and less certain where the collateral consists directly of crypto assets or tokens.

Foreign governing law

Guyanese courts generally recognise foreign governing law clauses in commercial agreements provided that:

- the choice is bona fide;
- the transaction is lawful; and
- enforcement would not be contrary to public policy.

This principle would ordinarily apply to crypto-related agreements.

Enforcement

Upon default, enforcement options depend on the collateral involved. Available remedies may include:

- judicial sale;
- appointment of a receiver;
- foreclosure;
- contractual realisation rights;
- insolvency proceedings; and
- equitable remedies.

No special enforcement regime exists for crypto assets. The principal practical challenges concern:

- custody;
- tracing;
- valuation; and
- control of digital assets.

9. Litigation and jurisdiction on crypto assets: legal implications of disputes involving crypto assets.

Overview

There is no crypto-specific jurisdictional framework in Guyana. Disputes involving crypto assets are governed by ordinary principles of:

- contract law;
- civil procedure;
- conflict of laws;
- arbitration law; and
- enforcement of judgments.

Foreign jurisdiction clauses

Parties are generally free to agree that disputes will be determined by foreign courts. Such agreements are ordinarily enforceable where:

- clearly drafted;
- freely negotiated;
- lawful; and
- not contrary to public policy.

Exclusive jurisdiction clauses

Exclusive jurisdiction clauses are generally respected by Guyanese courts. Where proceedings are commenced in Guyana contrary to an exclusive foreign jurisdiction clause, the court may:

- stay proceedings;
- decline jurisdiction; or
- otherwise require the parties to litigate in the chosen forum.

Governing law clauses

Parties may generally select foreign governing law, including:

- English law;
- New York law;
- Singapore law; or
- other foreign legal systems.

Such choices are commonly respected in international commercial transactions.

Arbitration

Arbitration clauses are likewise generally enforceable. This is particularly relevant to crypto transactions because:

- parties are often located in different jurisdictions;
- assets may exist across multiple jurisdictions; and
- specialised expertise may be required.

Foreign judgments

Foreign judgments may generally be recognised and enforced in Guyana either:

- under reciprocal enforcement legislation where applicable; or
- through common law proceedings on the judgment debt.

Practical challenges

The most significant challenges in crypto disputes typically involve:

- identifying ownership;
- locating assets;
- tracing transactions;
- proving control of wallets;
- anonymity; and
- cross-border enforcement.

10. Intellectual property (IP) and crypto assets: legal protection, ownership, enforcement and monetisation of IP rights related to digital and virtual assets.

Overview

Guyana has no crypto-specific IP regime. IP relating to blockchain and crypto projects is protected through ordinary IP laws governing:

- patents;
- trademarks;
- copyright;
- industrial designs;
- confidential information; and
- trade secrets.

Protection of innovations

Patents

Patent protection may be available for inventions that are:

- novel;
- inventive; and
- industrially applicable.

Blockchain-related technologies may qualify where the statutory requirements are met.

Copyright

Copyright protection is particularly important for:

- software;
- source code;
- smart contract code;
- white papers;

- documentation;
- websites; and
- digital content.

Protection generally arises automatically upon creation.

Trademarks

Trademark protection may be obtained for:

- exchange names;
- wallet brands;
- platform names;
- logos; and
- associated commercial identifiers.

Ownership

Ownership depends upon:

- the applicable IP regime;
- employment relationships; and
- contractual arrangements.

For Fintech and blockchain projects, clear assignment provisions are particularly important where development is undertaken by contractors.

Enforcement

Rights may generally be enforced through:

- injunctions;
- damages;
- accounts of profits;
- delivery up orders;

- declaratory relief; and
- related civil remedies.

Certain infringements may also attract criminal sanctions.

Foreign protection

Because IP rights are territorial, businesses frequently seek protection in jurisdictions where:

- customers are located;
- products are marketed;
- investment is sought; or
- enforcement may become necessary.

Common considerations include:

- market size;
- commercial significance;
- enforcement effectiveness; and
- cost.

Monetisation

IP relating to crypto assets may generally be monetised through:

- licensing;
- assignments;
- royalty arrangements;
- technology transfer agreements;
- software-as-a-service models; and
- commercialisation agreements.

There are no crypto-specific restrictions on such monetisation.

Conclusion

Guyana's Fintech framework remains at an early but rapidly developing stage. The NPS Act provides a modern foundation for digital payments and electronic financial services, while the Bank of Guyana continues to expand the regulatory framework applicable to PSPs and electronic money.

By contrast, crypto assets, tokenisation, decentralised finance, open banking and VASP regulation remain comparatively underdeveloped. Current regulation is driven primarily by AML/CFT considerations and FATF standards rather than comprehensive sector-specific legislation.

As digital financial services continue to expand and international regulatory standards evolve, Guyana is likely to face increasing pressure to adopt more detailed frameworks governing virtual assets, VASPs, digital identity, tokenisation, electronic money and cross-border digital finance. Until such reforms occur, participants in these sectors must continue to rely on the existing frameworks of banking law, contract law, company law, property law, IP law and AML/CFT regulation when structuring products and conducting business in Guyana.



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