

GUAINÍA

The [2023 Subnational Risk Index](#) shows Guainía has a moderate investment risk. Despite its agricultural potential and growing tourism industry, the department faces significant logistical challenges due to its remote location and limited access, which is only possible via air or river. The lack of financial institutions heightens economic risks, over-reliance on the public sector, and limited recognition by investors.

SECURITY:

Guainía has the lowest security risk in Colombia, with a low homicide rate ([1.8 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2022](#)) and no kidnappings or [massacres](#) reported. The vast jungle terrain of the department complicates the mobility and response capabilities of the Public Force. Guainía also has low levels of illicit crops ([37 hectares](#) in 2022). Still [illegal mining](#) remains a significant issue, attracting armed groups that are in dispute for the territorial control and illicit economies of the department. Despite initiatives to convert miners to legal activities, illegal mining remains more financially attractive, undermining formal economic development. Along the border with Venezuela, [population displacement](#) has been reported due to military operations, exacerbating the demand for essential services. Extortion by armed groups undermines local institutions and hinders economic development in the region.

ECONOMY:

Guainía faces high economic risks. It is the third department in Colombia and second in the Amazon region with the lowest financial inclusion, with only [35.29%](#) of adults having a financial product. Limited access to credit (12.2%) and microcredit (3.4%) hinders economic development, increasing informality, inequality, and poverty. The department has low human capital, with only [10.24%](#) of the population holding higher education degrees. According to [Guainía's economic profile](#), the economy relies heavily on public spending and defense (43.4%) and the primary sector. Illegal mining, especially for coltan and gold, is rampant, fueling [armed groups](#). At the same time, [contraband](#) and environmental degradation exacerbate social conflicts and undermine indigenous cultural identity. Labor reconversion initiatives have struggled to compete with the high earnings from illegal mining, which according to consulted sources triples the profits of agriculture. Interinstitutional efforts like [Emprende Pro Mujer](#) aim to empower women entrepreneurs, offering financial training and business models to strengthen the local economy.

INSTITUTIONALITY:

Guainía ranks sixth nationally and third regionally for institutional risk (moderate risk). It has a low performance score (57.2 out of 100) in the 2021 [Departmental Performance Measurement](#), highlighting public spending and institutional management deficiencies. Allegations of [mismanagement in the School Feeding Program](#) and investigations into [local deputies](#) have further eroded trust in transparency and financial resource management. In terms of digital governance, Guainía scored poorly (60 out of 100) on the 2022 [Digital Government Index](#), indicating inefficient integration of ICT. According to the [2024 Departmental Competitiveness Index](#) it also ranked last in facilitating administrative processes, exacerbated by inadequate internet infrastructure. Despite a score of 72.9 in the 2022 [Transparency, Access to Information, and Fight Against Corruption Index](#), recent corruption cases involving [former governors](#) have raised

concerns about accountability and hindered private sector development. In May 2023, officials formed the [Accidental Commission of Amazorinoquía](#) to promote 46 infrastructure projects in tourism, transport, and agriculture, but experts who were consulted for our report note that Guainía has made limited progress in the implementation of these infrastructure projects.

SOCIETY:

Guainía has the third highest social risk in the country, with a significant rise in the [Multidimensional Poverty Measurement](#) (MPM) from 46.5% in 2022 to 52.1% in 2023. Despite nearly universal health insurance coverage ([98.9%](#)), Guainía struggles with inadequate infrastructure, including only one poorly equipped hospital. The department also suffers from severe energy poverty, with [73%](#) lacking adequate energy sources and frequent service interruptions. According to DANE, in 2022, only [18.9%](#) of households in Guainía had internet access, but the government is working to improve connectivity, which could enhance educational opportunities. Indigenous communities comprise [75%](#) of the population and are crucial in private sector projects. However, leaders of the communities demand that environmental [initiatives](#) respect their traditional practices. Migration issues, particularly irregular Venezuelan migration, put pressure on local institutions, although the region has managed the influx relatively well. Protests are infrequent, but community concerns about state presence and migration regulation are likely to increase discontent.

ENVIRONMENT:

Guainía ranks third nationally and second regionally for low environmental risk. In 2022, it reported no environmental contamination cases; only some incidents of [natural resource damage](#) and [illegal exploitation](#) of renewable resources occurred. The presence of armed groups due to intimidation is likely to lead to underreporting of these crimes. Illegal mining, controlled by criminal groups, generates [over COP 600 billion monthly](#), polluting water sources and damaging the reputation of legal mining. Researchers are currently assessing the water quality of the Atabapo and Inírida rivers, where mining activities commonly use mercury and other toxins. Sources contacted for this report said the government is developing socio-labor transition plans and environmental conservation strategies to mitigate the impact on the Puinawai Natural Reserve, promoting sustainable practices among local communities. According to IDEAM in 2023, Guainía deforested 1,782 hectares, largely due to indigenous logging for housing and the burning of agricultural land. Guainía also plays a significant role in COP16, showcasing the [Inírida flower](#), with plans for export to boost sustainable development, although currently, there is only [one producer](#). The local government is enhancing [payments](#) for environmental services, benefiting around 30 families and aiming to combat deforestation.

POLITICS:

Guainía has the sixth lowest political risk in the country and the third lowest in the Amazon region. From 2012 to 2023, all elected governors completed their terms. Still, on [June 2023](#), two former governors, Óscar Rodríguez (2012-2015) and Eliécer Zapata (2016-2019), admitted to involvement in crimes such as conspiracy to commit a crime, improper contracting, and embezzlement during their administration. The former governor, Juan Carlos Iral (2020-2023), is [under investigation](#) for alleged irregularities in a project involving over COP 16 billion. In 2022, Guainía reported [11](#) victims of abuse of authority and [3](#) for threats against human rights defenders, indicating effective citizen oversight of institutions and reducing potential corruption risks. In our analysis, it is important to clarify that we work exclusively with municipalities and not with Non-Municipalized Areas (ANM). This is because the ANM's atypical nature does not fit the territorial logic defined by the [Constitution](#). In its risk analysis of indicative factors of electoral fraud and violence with transhumance in the local elections of 2023, the Electoral Observation Mission (MOE) includes the ANM within the

department's count of municipalities at risk. In the case of Guainía, while the MOE considers eight municipalities, we consider two and six ANMs. So, according to the MOE, during the 2023 elections, [37.5%](#) of municipalities in Guainía faced risks related to electoral fraud and violence.

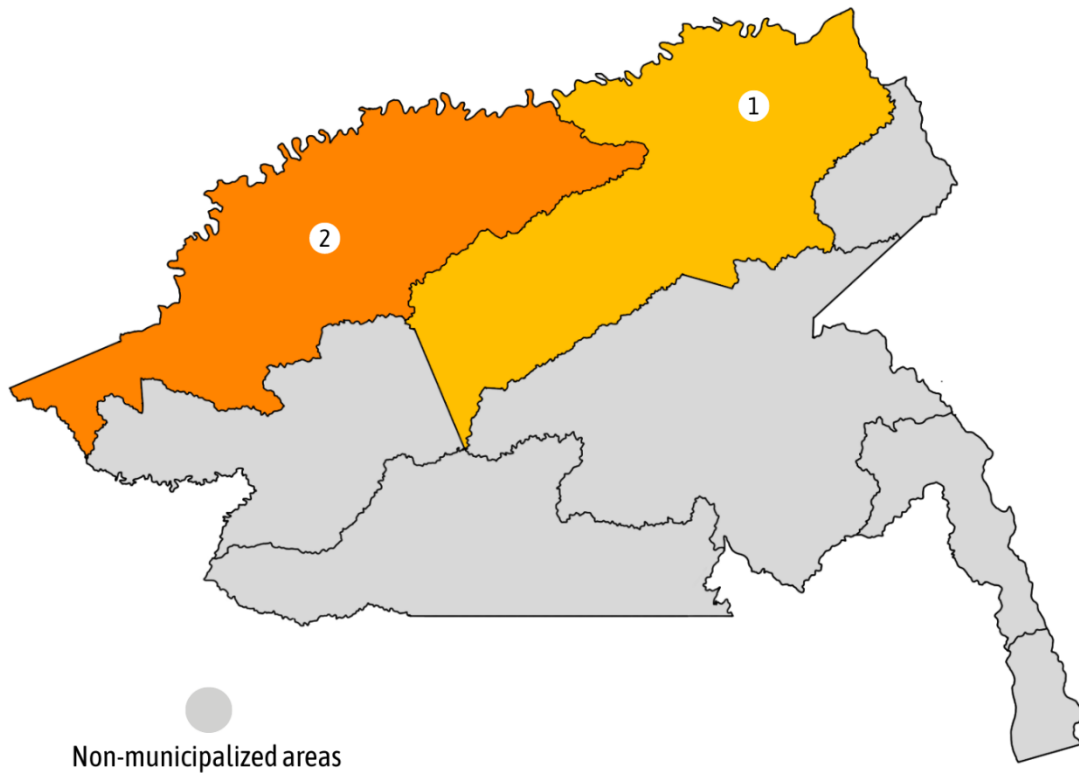
TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE:

According to the [Departmental Development Plan 2020-2023](#), Guainía has a road network of 302.28 kilometers, of which over half are untreated and only 23.67% are paved. The network comprises only urban and tertiary roads, as the department does not have primary or secondary networks. In 2021, the National Institute of Roads invested [COP 3.514 billion](#) in rural and regional road projects, providing around 240 jobs, but the improvements are limited. Former governor Juan Carlos Iral's (2020-2023) administration invested approximately [COP 6.667 billion](#) in road construction to enhance connectivity and tourism. However, audits revealed financial irregularities, raising concerns about transparency and accountability in infrastructure projects. Additionally, Guainía relies on a limited river transport system ([14 docks](#)), which, if strengthened, will likely boost trade and employment. Recent investments in river protection and infrastructure projects have stalled, further restricting economic opportunities and interconnectivity with other regions. Plans are underway to revive river transport to improve access and address urgent needs due to the lack of road infrastructure.

INVESTMENT SECTORS:

<p>AGRICULTURAL SECTOR</p>	<p>In 2023, the agricultural sector contributed 10.6% to Guainía's GDP, characterized by itinerant farming practices. Key permanent crops include pineapple (45.8%) and plantain (40.8%), with cassava (97%) being the most important transitional crop. Favorable climate and soil conditions enhance crop quality. Initiatives to promote cacao and Sacha Inchi cultivation aim to boost employment and food security while investments in processing facilities are underway.</p>
<p>LIVESTOCK SECTOR</p>	<p>Cattle ranching is one of the leading livestock activities, with production aimed exclusively at the departmental level by supplying meat and milk. Experts noted that cattle production has significant development opportunities, potentially meeting not only the departmental demand but also part of Vichada's, taking advantage of intersectoral agreements with this department. Additionally, traditional fishing thrives due to abundant waterways.</p>
<p>EXTRACTIVE SECTOR</p>	<p>In 2022, the mining and quarrying sector contributed 7.4% to Guainía's GDP, indicating its potential for economic impact. Despite the lack of formal metal extraction due to unlicensed operations, the presence of 33 mining titles suggests (none of the titles have environmental licensing) opportunities for future development. There is hope that the proposed Colombian Mining Company (EcoMinerales) could regulate and support the mining industry, paving the way for formal companies to invest in the region.</p>
<p>TOURISM AND COMMERCE SECTOR</p>	<p>The commerce, hotel, and tourism sector is the second largest contributor to Guainía's GDP, accounting for 16.3% in 2023. Recognized as a key tourist destination in the Amazon, Guainía offers a diverse ecotourism experience that boosts the local economy. Investments in docks and airstrips aim to improve connectivity and attract more visitors, while commerce, with 679 active businesses, benefits from the region's tourism and cultural potential.</p>

GUAINÍA 2023 RISK MAP



- 1. Inírida
- 2. Barrancominas



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Colombia Risk Analysis is a political risk consultancy. We provide decision-makers with insights, analysis, context, and projections about the political, economic, and social environment in Colombia, enabling them to make informed decisions.