

BRIDGING HORIZONS

**A BUSINESS RECONNAISSANCE OF
BARBADOS - GUYANA
OPPORTUNITIES**

JOHN SNAGG

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ISBN: 978-976-97620-0-8

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Editing / Book Layout by

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FOREWORD

by Norma Shorey

*For **Bridging Horizons: A Business Reconnaissance of Barbados-Guyana Opportunities** by John Snagg*

Some books inform. Others inspire. *Bridging Horizons* does both.

With clarity, vision, and strategic insight, this book presents a compelling case for the economic potential that lies between Barbados and Guyana. It invites readers to see not just countries, but possibilities, where others may only see uncertainty. *Bridging Horizons* is more than an exploration of trade and commerce; it is a road map for regional prosperity, woven through historical eyes, personal linkages, and driven by economic opportunity.



Norma 2019 surrounded by associates, Barbadian and Guyanese

Barbados and Guyana—two nations with distinct yet complementary strengths—are positioned for a new era of collaboration. Barbados, a regional hub for financial services, tourism, and business innovation, pairs naturally with Guyana’s rich natural resources, multicultural dynamism, and emerging infrastructure. Together, they can forge powerful synergies to drive sustainable development across the Caribbean and into Latin America.

As coordinator on a pilot business mission to Guyana in 2019 on behalf of Caribbean Institute of Management Consultants (CIMC), Barbados Coalition of Service Industries (BCSI), and sponsored by Barbados Investment & Development Cooperation (BIDC), (now Export Barbados). I witnessed John engaging directly with stakeholders, walking the land, asking the hard questions, and connecting vision with opportunity. John speaks from the heart – from his lived experience – offering case studies, strategic insights, and actionable steps for those seeking to navigate the complexities of cross-border business ventures.

Every chapter sheds light on the key pillars of opportunity—trade, infrastructure, agriculture, energy, and, most of all, the people who will make it all happen. What makes *Bridging Horizons* stand out is its ability to weave history, business insight, and bold ideas into a straightforward, forward-looking narrative.

More than data and analysis, this is a call to action. A challenge to rethink traditional barriers. A chance to be a part of a transformative journey. John’s work is a gift to entrepreneurs, policymakers, investors, and all those committed to regional cooperation and shared prosperity.

As you turn these pages, may you be inspired by what is possible—and be moved to be part of what’s next.

The future belongs to the bold. *Bridging Horizons* points the way.

PREFACE

This journey truly began in 2019 when I was among the eight business professionals who chose to take up an opportunity offered by the Barbados Government through its agency, Export Barbados. Initially, around 300 business people attended a meeting hosted by Minister Sandra Husbands at the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus. The government presented its vision and invited expressions of interest for a reconnaissance mission to Guyana. From that group, 25 individuals indicated a desire to explore the opportunity further, but only eight of us ultimately committed to the journey. We were not selected by the government—we self-selected, choosing to step into unknown territory to meet potential partners we had never encountered before. That is why I refer to this group as the 'brave hearts.'

The mission took us to CARICOM Headquarters in Georgetown, Guyana, where we also visited several businesses and had engagements with key institutions. Some members visited the offices of the United Nations, while others—including myself—held a detailed meeting with IPED, a Guyanese finance company specializing in funding small businesses. The executive in charge of loans at the time shared that IPED had zero loan defaults on their books—a remarkable achievement. He explained that when clients ran into challenges, IPED worked closely with them to resolve issues rather than pushing for immediate repayment. He expressed genuine enthusiasm about our visit and emphasized that Guyana needed the type of services our team offered. He was particularly encouraged by what he had learned about our affiliations, including our involvement with the Barbados Coalition of Services Industries (BCSI).

Transition to a Broader Mission: The next chapter in this journey began in January 2022. Now, as the CEO of a dedicated team, I returned to Guyana with a clear vision: to identify and highlight opportunities that investors, business leaders, and stakeholders across

the Caribbean could capitalize on. This second mission, sponsored by Barbados Guyana Business Focus Group (BarGuy), was a more thorough reconnaissance of Guyana's landscape, economy, and potential, and was supported by insights and practical groundwork laid by my team members Nigel Danjou and Raphael Bagot, both businessmen from Guyana. It provided a unique look into Guyana's evolving infrastructure, vibrant culture, and economic landscape, setting the stage for real possibilities.

Why This Book? The insights presented here are crafted as a series of short stories. They are built from on-the-ground experience, encounters with local cultures, interactions with communities, and observations of Guyana's stunning natural resources and environment. They paint a picture of the vibrant opportunities in agriculture, infrastructure, tourism, and renewable energy. Our goal is simple: to offer an easy-to-read, actionable guide that informs readers about Guyana's business landscape in a way that is grounded in reality, curiosity, and possibility.

Importantly, this book is not an official document or endorsement from any government. Instead, it is a reflection of our independent, on the ground reconnaissance and research, aimed at sharing viable solutions for investors and stakeholders. With this work, we open a window into the commercial potential of a Guyanese-Barbadian partnership and explore the rich tapestry of culture, economy, and opportunity that lies within.



Stabroek Market is the largest market of Georgetown, Guyana.

INTRODUCTION

Setting the Stage: A Journey of Opportunity

The Caribbean has always been a place where cultures, trade routes, and economies converge. Yet, as our world grows more interconnected, the region's unique blend of natural resources and strategic location stands out as a new frontier for sustainable growth and collaborative ventures. For years, this potential lay beneath the surface, hinted at in occasional business forums and diplomatic exchanges, but rarely pursued with focused intent.

In 2019, I joined in order to explore the business possibilities between Barbados and Guyana. As one of the eight selected participants, I saw firsthand the untapped potential Guyana offered and the entrepreneurial spirit among its people. From the capital's bustling markets to the vast agricultural topography, the nation seemed poised for growth, particularly as it was entering a transformative phase with the discovery of significant oil reserves. The mission was enlightening, and it laid the foundation for a deeper understanding of how the two nations could forge lasting economic ties.

A Return with a Broader Vision

Three years later, in January 2022, I returned to Guyana with a focused purpose. This time, it was more than a reconnaissance trip; it was an in-depth exploration with a broader vision. Now leading a team, I approached this mission as a storyteller, a connector, and an observer. My role was not only to assess Guyana's business landscape but also to capture the essence of its people and culture for potential investors and readers across the Caribbean and beyond.

As we journeyed across Georgetown, Linden, Mahaica-Berbice, and Lethem, we engaged with local leaders, entrepreneurs, and community members, each interaction shedding light on Guyana's vibrant economy and rich history. We sought to understand the nation's unique position as a gateway to South America, the growing emphasis on agriculture, and the prospects in eco-tourism and renewable energy. This was a journey driven by curiosity and a commitment to uncovering opportunities for growth.

Bridging Horizons: A Business Reconnaissance of Barbados-Guyana Opportunities switches effortlessly between business insights and cultural snapshots. It is an amalgamation of storytelling and statistics, helping the reader understand, not just the numbers, but also the heartbeat of Guyana, and how Barbados can assist in its economic and business development.