

The tropical paradise is ideally placed to become the Dubai of the Caribbean

As Antigua and Barbuda continues to transform itself into a tourism, logistics and investment hub for its region, idyllic beaches are just the beginning of the country's many attractions for visitors and investors

The twin-island nation of Antigua and Barbuda is rebounding faster from Covid-19 than most of its Caribbean neighbours, with the IMF expecting it to achieve a 7-per cent gross domestic product growth rate in 2022. Driving that growth is a world-class luxury tourism sector, which has warmly welcomed travellers throughout the pandemic. "While others closed their borders, we did not. Instead, we made sure that Antigua and Barbuda is a safe environment for visitors," explains E P Chet Greene, Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Immigration.

The government achieved this by introducing strict safety protocols; inspecting, training and certifying all tourism facilities; investing in medical infrastructure; and rapidly vaccinating the majority of its 100,000 citizens. "As well as responding to the challenges we faced, we have also embraced opportunities to diversify our economy," says Greene.

For Charles Fernandez, Minister of Tourism and Investment, participation at Expo 2020 Dubai has been a lucrative opportunity. "Our pavilion has generated tremendous interest and given us the chance to showcase that Antigua and Barbuda is a stunningly beautiful country, surrounded by turquoise seas, with 365 of the most appealing pink and white sandy beaches.

"It has so much to offer: our friendly population, our vibrant and unique culture and cuisine, in addition to boasting historical gems and the lowest crime rate in the Caribbean. We have a fantastic sports tourism sector offering and hosting international events such as cricket, yachting, kite surfing, athletics and golf," he enthuses.



Antigua and Barbuda's new Nomad Digital Residence Visa opens up the islands to remote-working professionals

Stronger links with the UAE

Alongside its Expo presence, last year Antigua and Barbuda appointed a resident ambassador and established a Citizenship by Investment Unit office in the UAE, a country it aims to emulate. "We can become the Dubai of the Caribbean by positioning

ourselves as a logistics, tourism and investment gateway for our region," says Greene. To help realise its vision, the nation has invested heavily in transport and logistics infrastructure. It boasts the Caribbean's leading airport, which offers daily flights to most of the world's key travel hubs,

and is now engaged in discussions with Emirates about a direct flight to the UAE. "Based on our strategic location in the Caribbean, having our country as the first stop from the Middle East makes sense, with feeder flights then moving passengers to other islands," Greene notes.

The government is also constructing a second international airport on Barbuda, has developed a new \$95-million cargo port and is modernising its cruise port that can accommodate the largest cruise ships.

Investment in green-energy infrastructure is another priority for a state committed to sustainability. For



E P Chet Greene
Minister of Foreign Affairs,
International Trade and Immigration



Charles Fernandez
Minister of Tourism and Investment

instance, Barbuda will soon be powered exclusively by the sun, thanks to a solar-and-battery hybrid-plant project called Green Barbuda that is funded by the UAE-Caribbean Renewable Energy Fund. When it comes to foreign investments in tourism, the hotel sector is currently very active, according to Fernandez. "There is interest in medical tourism, including medical cannabis and stem-cell industries, as well," he states.

The first Caribbean nation to implement a regulatory framework for digital assets is also becoming a hub for innovative technology investors.

To further boost its digital economy, the government is in the process of investing around \$40 million in an already extensive high-speed cable system. That connectivity, plus the addition of a two-year Nomad Digital Residence Visa to the islands' citizenship-by-investment (CBI) programme, is attracting remote-working professionals. As Greene points out, "The visa allows people to live and work here and be a part of our nation. We want the world to enjoy Antigua and Barbuda, be it through cruises, overnight stays, our digital nomad programme or our CBI initiative."

"Our port's new cargo terminal will support the vision of establishing Antigua and Barbuda as a logistics hub and gateway to the Caribbean."

E P CHET GREENE, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND IMMIGRATION

A uniquely attractive, wide-ranging programme for second citizenships

Antigua and Barbuda's highly ranked citizenship-by-investment programme is gaining in popularity, especially with larger families

In 2021, applications to Antigua and Barbuda's citizenship-by-investment (CBI) programme rose by 36 per cent, with 498 people seeking to become part of a multicultural society made up of authentically warm and friendly people that enjoy a fantastic quality of life.

The programme was launched in 2013, after the government had carried out extensive research into investment migration and established a Citizenship by Investment Unit (CIU) to manage it. "The applications started coming in and we soon realised that a lot of people are very interested in becoming citizens and investing in the multitude of opportunities available in this country," reveals Charmaine Quinland-Donovan, CEO CIU.

She states that Antigua and Barbuda is a singularly attractive option

for CBI. "For example, out of the five countries in this region that have a programme, Antigua and Barbuda has the most convenient airlift as we are positioned right in the middle of the Caribbean archipelago. Our passport also opens up access to over 160 countries visa-free," she confirms.

The twin-island nation has the competitive advantage of having a highly advanced healthcare system and first-class international education institutions that run from primary schools to a University of the West Indies campus that ranks among the top 1.5 per cent of universities worldwide. "Our programme is structured to be the most competitive and affordable for large families. Living in Antigua and Barbuda provides comfort as the quality of real estate construction is

outstanding," Quinland-Donovan asserts.

There are numerous other reasons to pick the islands as a second-citizenship destination. It is a stable and safe democracy with parliamentary and legal systems based on those of the UK that guarantee the protection of investments and the rights of individuals. The business-friendly nation also imposes no taxes on local or international income, inheritance, capital gains or investment returns.

Another major benefit of CBI in Antigua and Barbuda is the application process itself, which is simple and can be completed online. The wide-ranging programme offers four pathways to citizenship for investors. "The first is to make a contribution to our National Development Fund of \$100,000 for a

family of four or fewer, which rises to \$125,000 for larger families. The second option is to purchase real estate. The minimum threshold for one applicant is \$200,000, although most units that are currently available are priced at \$400,000 or above, but it is also possible to co-own a property with another applicant, if each invests at least \$200,000," she explains.

The third path is unique to Antigua and Barbuda: investing in a business. According to Quinland-Donovan, "This can be an existing local business or you can set up a new one. For a single investor, the minimum investment would be \$1.5 million or a partnership of investors would need to reach a threshold of at least \$5 million."

The programme's final route is investment in the further development



Charmaine Quinland-Donovan
CEO, Citizenship by Investment Unit

of the country's University of the West Indies campus and the CEO is confident that there is no better CBI option for large families anywhere in the world: "The minimum number of family members that can apply for this is six, who would invest a total of \$150,000. That includes government processing fees, although larger families incur additional fees of \$15,000 per person."

The other three pathways to citizenship all involve processing charges of \$30,000 for applications with up to four people, which increases by \$15,000 for every extra individual. "There are also due-diligence costs, as we pride ourselves on applying the highest standards in that respect. These range from \$7,500 for applicants and their spouses to zero for children under 12," she adds.

The Middle East is a market of focus for the CIU, as Quinland-Donovan made clear when she visited Dubai Expo 2020 in November 2021. "We hosted several events for our stakeholders and diaspora on Antigua and Barbuda's national day. Some other countries see CBI as a purely transactional process, but citizenship is an emotional issue for us and I wanted our diaspora to know that Antigua and Barbuda is their home: they are free to bring their family to live here, work from the beach and watch the waves rolling on the sand at any time."

You have Options

If we have learned anything over the last two years, it is that the script of life can be rewritten at a moment's notice. However your life story unfolds, be confident that you will always have options with a second citizenship from Antigua and Barbuda.

Choose the Antigua and Barbuda Citizenship by Investment Programme – the first choice for second citizenship.

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