

# BARBADOS

## SUMMARY

Barbados is a parliamentary democracy without elected local government. However, the Constituency Councils Act 2009 created 30 appointed constituency councils. Department of Constituency Empowerment (DCE) within the Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Community Development<sup>5.3c</sup> has responsibility for Barbados' constituency empowerment programme and, by extension, for the CCs. In 2010, 40.7% of constituency councillors and 16.7% of council chairpersons were women. Local government income is fixed and BB\$100,000 per council is allocated annually and so constituency council expenditure is slowly reducing and is around 0.07% of total government expenditure. Constituency Councils provide a wide range of services based on the needs of their constituents. CCs are also expected to effectively and efficiently assist in the management of national government resources assigned for the development of each constituency, within a framework of good governance.

## 1. NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Barbados is a parliamentary democracy with a bicameral parliamentary system.<sup>5.1a</sup> The head of state is HM Queen Elizabeth II who is represented by, a governor-general who is a national of the country. The parliament comprises an elected house of assembly and an appointed senate. The house of assembly has 30 members elected by universal adult suffrage every five years. The senate has 21 members appointed by the governor-general: 12 on the advice of the prime minister, two on the advice of the leader of the opposition and the remaining seven at the governor-general's discretion. Following the 2013 national elections, 16.7% of the members of the house of assembly and 23.8% of senators were women.<sup>5.1b</sup> The prime minister, usually the leader of the majority party, is head of the government. The governor-general appoints 18 ministers to the cabinet from within the house of assembly on the advice of the prime minister.

## 2. LEGAL BASIS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### 2.1 Constitutional provisions

There is no constitutional provision.<sup>5.2a</sup>

### 2.2 Main legislative texts

The main legislative text is the Constituency Councils Act 2009<sup>5.2b</sup>, the latest amendment to which was on 26 September 2014<sup>5.2c</sup>.

### 2.3 Proposed legislative changes

No information available

### 2.4 National urban policy

The Physical Development Plan 2017<sup>5.2d</sup>, which the Government is in the process of updating, is intended to provide a vision for sustainable growth and development by setting out policies to guide relationships between land uses, built form, mobility, community facilities and physical infrastructure. It is also intended to be a framework to facilitate and guide investment, both public and private, to 2035 with the goal of promoting a healthy, prosperous and resilient nation.

## 3. STRUCTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### 3.1 Local government within the state

There is no elected local government in Barbados. Local governance is delivered through appointed councillors who are chosen after a detailed process that begins with their applying to serve. For administrative purposes Barbados is divided into 11 parishes plus the capital city of Bridgetown. These are further divided into 30 electoral districts or constituencies, each of which has a constituency council (CC).

### 3.2 Ministerial oversight

The Department of Constituency Empowerment (DCE) within the Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Community Development<sup>5.3c</sup> (MSCCECD) has responsibility for Barbados' constituency empowerment programme and, by extension, for the CCs. In addition to the creation of both the DCE and the CCs the programme will also in the future create constituency empowerment centres.

### 3.3 Constituency councils

Constituency councils<sup>5.3c</sup> (CCs) have been established in all 30 constituencies across Barbados. Local governance in Barbados takes the form of a voluntary constituency-based model which forms an integral part of Barbados' constituency empowerment programme. Each CC consists of 11 persons appointed by the minister, including a chairperson and a treasurer. Individuals are invited to apply to serve on the CC for the area in which they live or for an area with which they are otherwise associated. A selection committee of senior civil servants makes recommendations to the minister on who should be selected to serve on the CCs. Significant attention is paid to selecting persons who have relevant community experience and/or who represent a special interest group. The local member of parliament is an ex-officio member of the CC. Members hold office for a term of two years and are eligible for reappointment for a further term.



## KEY FACTS

**POPULATION (2017 estimate):**  
292,366

**AREA (UN 2006):**  
430 sq km

**CAPITAL:**  
Bridgetown

**CURRENCY:**  
Barbadian dollar (BB\$)

**HEAD OF STATE:**  
HM Queen Elizabeth II

**GOVERNOR-GENERAL (ACTING):**  
Sir Philip Greaves

**HEAD OF GOVERNMENT:**  
Prime Minister Freundel Stuart

**FORM OF GOVERNMENT:**  
constitutional monarchy with  
parliamentary democracy

**PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM:**  
bicameral

**STATE STRUCTURE:**  
unitary

**LANGUAGES:**  
English (official), Bajan (recognised)

**NATIONAL ELECTIONS:**  
last: 2013, turnout: 62%; next: 2018

**WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT (2013):**  
assembly members 16.7%, senators 23.8%

**LOCAL ELECTIONS:**  
there is no elected local government

**WOMEN COUNCILLORS (2010):**  
40.7%

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE  
as a percentage of total government  
expenditure 2017-18: 0.07%**

**Table 5.1a Distribution of councils and population**

Parish	Constituency councils	Population (2010 Census)	Population (2017 estimate)	% rural (2015)
Christ Church	5	54,336	na	na
St Andrew	1	5,139	na	na
St George	2	19,767	na	na
St James	3	28,498	na	na
St John	1	8,963	na	na
St Joseph	1	6,620	na	na
St Lucy	1	9,758	na	na
St Michael*	11	88,529	na	na
St Peter	1	11,300	na	na
St Philip	3	30,662	na	na
St Thomas	1	14,249	na	na
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>277,821</b>	<b>292,366</b>	<b>32.4</b>

\* includes Bridgetown Source: DCE correspondence with CLGF, census<sup>5.3a</sup> and World Bank<sup>5.3b</sup>

The CC is defined as 'a legally established body of local representatives, who have been appointed and given the authority to voice the concerns of the various residents of the constituency', and its role is 'to maintain links with the Government and its agencies; and to effectively and efficiently assist in the management of resources assigned for the development of the given constituency'. Each CC has a number of sub-committees which gather socioeconomic information on the constituency, paying particular attention to demographic and geographic particularities. The sub-committees then advise the CC as to the major needs and concerns in their areas. Larger projects are worked on in partnership with the DCE and other stakeholders. Many smaller projects are carried out by the CCs in direct collaboration with the community. The CC also acts as an advocacy group and supports public and private sector organisations by lobbying on behalf of constituents.

#### 4. ELECTIONS

##### 4.1 Recent local elections 4.2 Voting system

There is no elected local government<sup>5.4</sup>.

##### 4.2 Voting system

Not applicable.

##### 4.3 Elected representatives

As per the amendments made to the Constituency Councils Act 2009, dated 26 September 2014, each council now has 11 members appointed by the minister, including a chairperson and a treasurer. Members hold office for a term of two years and are eligible to hold office for a maximum of six years or three terms. In the selection process for nominated councillors, efforts are made to ensure all vulnerable groups are included.

##### 4.4 Women's representation

In 2010 96/236 councillors (40.7%) were women and in 2013, five of the 30 chairpersons (16.7%) were women.

## 5. SYSTEMS FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

### 5.1 Legal requirement

The 2014 amendment to the Constituency Councils Act 2009 requires that each CC hold annual public meetings to update local residents on its progress and agenda for the prescribed period. Previously this requirement was biannual. The Constituency Councils Act 2009 requires CCs to build databases of their constituency in collaboration with government departments and to identify the priority needs of their constituency based on supporting data. The Act invites the public to submit requests to the CCs outlining any particular needs, and these must be discussed at CC meetings and formally reported on.

### 5.2 Implementation

No information available.

### 5.3 ICT use in citizen engagement

There was a centrally-managed constituency councils' website with pages for each council. Since 2016, this has been discontinued.

## 6. ORGANISED LOCAL GOVERNMENT

There are no organised country-wide associations of local government.

## 7. INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

The DCE has set up formal protocols to liaise with all major government departments on behalf of the CCs, which allow for the fast-tracking of issues that arise at CC level. The CCs have named contact persons within various ministries and can contact them directly. Regular meetings are held between the leadership of the CCs and the ministry to share best practice and ideas as well as to address any concerns that may arise.

## 8. MONITORING SYSTEMS

Each CC must keep financial and other records for seven years and submit monthly to the MSCCED through the DCE. Each CC must also be audited annually. The

**Table 5.1b Women councillors and chairpersons following the last four local elections**

Election	2010		2013		2015		2017	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>Councillors</b>								
Female councillors	96	40.7	na	na	na	na	na	na
Male councillors	140	59.3	na	na	na	na	na	na
<b>Total councillors</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Chairperson</b>								
Female chairperson	na	na	5	16.7	na	na	na	na
Male chairperson	na	na	25	83.3	na	na	na	na
<b>Total chairpersons</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: DCE correspondence with CLGF



auditor general may at any time carry out an investigation of the accounts of a CC. The DCE must submit a detailed account of the activities of each CC annually.

## 9. FINANCE, STAFFING AND RESOURCES

### 9.1 Local government expenditure

Local government expenditure as the proportion of total government expenditure has slightly dropped from 0.08% in 2013 to 0.07% in 2017, table 5.2b.

### 9.2 Locally raised revenue

The 2014 amendment to the Constituency Councils Act 2009 enabled the councils to raise their own funds

### 9.3 Transfers

Each of the 30 CCs receives BB\$100,000 per annum from the national government. CCs receive money in tranches and have their accounts replenished only when there is a satisfactory report on spending. The funds are kept in central accounts and released to the CCs as projects and programmes are undertaken and reported on. Each CC has its own bank account into which its money is deposited. The chairperson and treasurer sign off expenditure on behalf of the CC.

### 9.4 Local authority staff

There is an officer of the DCE (a full-time salaried public servant) posted in every constituency, whose role is to liaise with the public on behalf of the CCs. Members of the constituency councils

receive an annual stipend of BB\$120 (US\$60) each, except for the chairperson, who receives BB\$200 (US\$100). All members of councils therefore serve on a voluntary basis.

### 9.5 Loans

No information available.

## 10. DISTRIBUTION OF SERVICE DELIVERY RESPONSIBILITY

### 10.1 Overview of local government service delivery responsibility

CCs provide a wide range of services based on the needs of their constituents. CCs are also expected to effectively and efficiently assist in the management of national government resources assigned for the development of each constituency, within a framework of good governance.

### 10.2 ICT use in service delivery

No information available.

### 10.3 The role of local government in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Barbados was the first country to appoint a permanent secretary with responsibility for SDG coordination. The Prime Minister has created the role within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade. Further, the Economic Affairs Division of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs has also started to integrating the UN SDGs into Barbados' growth and development strategy (BGDS) 2013-2020.<sup>510</sup>

## REFERENCES AND USEFUL WEBSITES

- 5.1a Government of Barbados website [www.gov.bb](http://www.gov.bb)
- 5.1b Women in national parliaments. [www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm](http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm)
- 5.2a Constitution [www.oas.org/dil/The\\_Constitution\\_of\\_Barbados.pdf](http://www.oas.org/dil/The_Constitution_of_Barbados.pdf)
- 5.2b Constituency Councils Act 2009 [www.barbadosparliament.com/htmlarea/uploaded/File/Act/2009/The%20Constituency%20Councils%20Act.%202009.pdf](http://www.barbadosparliament.com/htmlarea/uploaded/File/Act/2009/The%20Constituency%20Councils%20Act.%202009.pdf)
- 5.2c [www.barbadosparliament.com/uploads/bill\\_resolution/aa618bc0655c4328f0c5ae8078acec97.p](http://www.barbadosparliament.com/uploads/bill_resolution/aa618bc0655c4328f0c5ae8078acec97.p)
- 5.2d Physical Development Plan, as amended 2017 [www.townplanning.gov.bb/pdp](http://www.townplanning.gov.bb/pdp)
- 5.3a Population and Housing Census 2010, Barbados Statistical Service [www.barstats.gov.bb/files/documents/PHC\\_2010\\_Census\\_Volume\\_1.pdf](http://www.barstats.gov.bb/files/documents/PHC_2010_Census_Volume_1.pdf)
- 5.3b Data on rural population figures: <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.TOTL>
- 5.3c Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Community Development [www.socialcare.gov.bb](http://www.socialcare.gov.bb)
- 5.4 Election commission [www.electoral.barbados.gov.bb](http://www.electoral.barbados.gov.bb)
- 5.5 Constituency councils' website [www.councils.gov.bb](http://www.councils.gov.bb)
- 5.6 No references for these sections
- 5.7 No references for these sections
- 5.8 No references for these sections
- 5.9 Calculated BB\$100,000 transfer to each constituency council provided in the profile by the MSCCED and total government expenditure [www.barbadosparliament.com/uploads/document/63cafecdc2d13f78bc57b995a8e41e22.pdf](http://www.barbadosparliament.com/uploads/document/63cafecdc2d13f78bc57b995a8e41e22.pdf)
- 5.10 Integrating the UN SDGs into Barbados growth and development strategy (BGDS) 2013-2020, Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs [www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/events/files/integrating\\_the\\_un\\_sdgs\\_into\\_barbados\\_growth\\_and\\_development\\_strategy\\_bgds\\_2013-2020\\_-\\_barbados\\_-\\_patrick\\_mccaskie.pdf](http://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/events/files/integrating_the_un_sdgs_into_barbados_growth_and_development_strategy_bgds_2013-2020_-_barbados_-_patrick_mccaskie.pdf)
- 5.11a UN 2012 surface area <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/dyb/dyb2006/Table03.pdf>
- 1.11b Commonwealth Local Government Knowledge Hub [www.clgf.org.uk/resource-centre/knowledge-hub](http://www.clgf.org.uk/resource-centre/knowledge-hub)
- 5.11c UNDP HDR Barbados country profile <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/BRB>

**Table 5.2a Income and expenditure for local government in 2016**

Income	2016 BB\$m	Expenditure	2016 BB\$m
<b>Centre-local transfers</b>		<b>Administration</b>	
Restricted	3.0	Staff	na
<b>Locally raised revenue</b>		Other administrative costs	na
Property taxes	0.0	<b>Services</b>	
Licences and fees	0.0	Roads	na
Other income	0.0	Water	na
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>-3.0</b>

Source: DCE correspondence with CLGF

**Table 5.2b Local government expenditure as a percentage of total government expenditure 2013-2017**

	2013 actual BB\$m	2014 estimated BB\$m	2015 estimated BB\$m	2016 estimated BB\$m	2017 budgeted BB\$m
Total government expenditure	3,994.7	3,957.9	4,003.5	4,441.3	4,549.5
Total local government expenditure	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
<b>Local government expenditure as a percentage of total government expenditure</b>	<b>0.08</b>	<b>0.08</b>	<b>0.07</b>	<b>0.07</b>	<b>0.07</b>

Source: Calculated by CLGF from section 9.3 and Barbados govt. budget estimates 2017/18<sup>59</sup>

**Annex 5a Summary of service provision in different spheres of government in Barbados**

Services	Delivering authority		Remarks
	National government	Constituency councils	
<b>GENERAL ADMINISTRATION</b>			
Police	■		
Fire protection	■		
Civil protection	■		
Criminal justice	■		
Civil status register	■		
Statistical office	■		
Electoral register	■		
<b>EDUCATION</b>			
Pre-school (kindergarten and nursery)			
Primary	■		
Secondary	■		
Vocational and technical			
Higher education	■		
Adult education			
<b>SOCIAL WELFARE</b>			
Family welfare services	■		
Welfare homes	■		
Social security	■		
<b>PUBLIC HEALTH</b>			
Primary care	■		
Hospitals	■		
Health protection	■		
<b>HOUSING AND TOWN PLANNING</b>			
Housing	■		
Town planning	■		
Regional planning	■		
<b>TRANSPORT</b>			
Roads	■		
Transport	■		
Urban roads	■		
Urban rail	■		
Ports	■		
Airports	■		
<b>ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC SANITATION</b>			
Water and sanitation	■		
Refuse collection and disposal	■		
Cemeteries and crematoria			
Slaughterhouses	■		
Environmental protection	■		
Consumer protection	■		
<b>CULTURE, LEISURE AND SPORTS</b>			
Theatre and concerts	■		
Museums and libraries	■		
Parks and open spaces	■		
Sports and leisure	■		
Religious facilities	■		
<b>UTILITIES</b>			
Gas services	■		
District heating	■		
Water supply	■		
Electricity	■		
<b>ECONOMIC</b>			
Agriculture, forests and fisheries	■		
Economic promotion	■		
Trade and industry	■		
Tourism	■		

■ sole responsibility service 
 ■ joint responsibility service 
 ■ discretionary service