The right kind of long-term investment

Investment and citizenship opportunities in one of the world’s most beautiful, peaceful, and secluded climes offers individuals and families alike a path toward freedom, prosperity, and far greater flexibility.
Antigua and Barbuda: the Caribbean multicultural paradise gets back to what it does best

With some of the strictest health protocols and lowest infection rates on the planet, Antigua and Barbuda’s 365 pristine beaches have never been more welcoming

Aerial view of English Harbour, a natural harbor in the far south of Antigua

Now that a partial end is in sight to the woes of the past year, people are returning to what they know and love: friends, family, and beautiful foreign climes. With record-low cases in 2020 and some of the most successful pandemic-response measures on the planet, the island paradise of Antigua and Barbuda is not only open for business; it’s welcoming the kind of smart travelers and remote workers who know how to take advantage of a good thing when they see it, too.

With many office places now a thing of the ancient past, all around the world a new breed of mobile employee is emerging: the kind who sees the forest for the trees. “Wherever you are,” says Minister of Tourism and Investment Charles Fernandez, “you are just a few minutes from a beach. You could go for a swim on your break and return to work refreshed, having enjoyed some Vitamin D and sea and sand.”

The minister is not joking. Though its largest island, Antigua, is merely a dozen miles across, the island nation enjoys nearly 100 miles of some of the Caribbean’s most pristine beaches. Not for nothing is it called the ‘land of 365 beaches.’

Paradise regained

Despite having small harbors and lagoons, there are one of the reasons visitors began flocking back to Antigua and Barbuda toward the end of 2020; paradise lost no longer. With direct flights from New York, London, Charlotte, Atlanta, Miami, and Montreal, North Americans from across the eastern seaboard can reach Antigua and Barbuda within 3-4 hours. “We like to think we are very close to the United States,” says Minister Fernandez, addressing remote workers in particular. “If you had to go back for any reason, it’s a short flight.”

Throughout all of 2020, Antigua and Barbuda’s population of 100,000 suffered from merely 193 confirmed cases of Covid-19 and five related deaths — less than practically anywhere on the planet. Only 1 out of every 629 Antiguans or Barbudans was infected last year, compared to nearly 1 in 5 Americans.

The right measures

For foreigners traveling here, the government’s extensive health protocols have maintained an ideal balance between fun and safety. You can still go snorkeling with sting rays and explore offshore islands, but only through certified, Covid-compliant operators. Moreover, every hotel — even on the luxurious private island of Jumby Bay — must abide by the strictest public health protocols. What’s more, vaccinating the country’s population of 100,000 should not be a terrible hurdle, either. It received 24,000 doses of AstraZeneca/Oxford in early April through COVAX and is expected to receive another 10,000 by the end of May. Though this is still shy of the mark for herd immunity, which is thought to be around 70% of the population, it is still a very good start.

“In terms of tourism,” Minister Fernandez said, “we have been able to guarantee the safety of our visitors and frontline personnel interacting with them.”

In talks with major carriers in Europe and North America, Antigua and Barbuda has also been working around the clock to become a regional flight hub. Not only is it nearer than ever to reopen, with the lowest crime rate in the region, a very good climate, and arguably the friendliest people, as the minister reminds us, the rest of the world is ready to get back there, too.

“We could be entitled to boast a bit in terms of tourism,” the minister says. “We have one of the most modern airports in the region.’ And size matters, in various ways. “We have managed to accomplish that thanks to the small size of our island. We are now putting the infrastructure in place to ensure that we have the most modern cruise port in the region,” he told Prisma Reports. “We are just completing our cargo port, which will also be amongst the most modern in the region.”

The government’s vision is for Antigua and Barbuda to become the beating heart and hub of the Caribbean. “All we need to do is put the ingredients in place,” said Fernandez.

Wherever you are, you are just a few minutes from a beach. You could go for a swim during a break and return to work, refreshed, having enjoyed some Vitamin D and sea and sand.”

Charles Fernandez, Minister of Tourism and Investment

For further information please visit www.prisma-reports.com

Fact and figures on one of the region’s most exciting young economies

Population
100,000

Political Status
Independent from Britain since 1981

Total land area
170 square miles

Currency
Eastern Caribbean dollar, $0.37 per unit

Companies registered per year
230

Taxes
Flat tax of 20% on incomes exceeding $100,000 under tax efficient permanent residency programme

V. C. Bird International Airport
Serving over 20 airlines since 2015

Per capita GDP
$26,400

57.96 Mbps average speed

Stay-over tourists
Over 1 million visited from 2017-19

5.9% of the population, it is still a very good start.

3 For further information please visit www.prisma-reports.com
Charles Fernandez discusses the successful series of measures his country has taken to prevent infections and keep the doors open to intrepid sun-seekers from around the world.

**CF:** Our tourism is based on three pillars: air travel, cruise arrivals, and yacht arrivals. The industry has been hit hard throughout the pandemic, particularly in the first quarter of this year. Antigua and Barbuda are one of the few countries that have been able to keep open for business. For that, we moved very quickly after the pandemic subsided to allow for those yachts to come in. Even though flights and cruises were shut down, a number of the cruises, especially the cruises, were able to enter Antigua.

**PR:** How would you summarize your role at handling the pandemic and the protocols put in place to resume tourism?

**CF:** One of the first things we did as a country in the tourism sector was work on bringing in a leading medical technology into the Ministry of Tourism. While the Ministry of Health was focusing on COVID-related protocols, we were looking to put protocols in place for incoming yachts, flights, and yachts. We were able to put all these in place and hand them over to the Ministry of Health, which could either tweak or approve them. We also used some of our personnel to help the Ministry of Health.

We did a number of things to ensure that when we relaxed our measures, we would be ready for our visitors. The aim was not just to keep visitors safe but also to ensure that our people meeting and interacting with them would be, too. We made all of our hotels register their medical doctors with us; ensure there was always a nurse on duty, and always set aside one or two rooms for anyone who came in with flu-like symptoms, to test for and isolate them.

We also ensured that all of the protocols were observed, i.e., washing stations, temperature checks for incoming guests, and special seals showing incoming guests that their rooms had been totally sanitized and cleaned in between guests. We worked with a number of these initiatives, and I can tell you there is no evidence yet of any case linked to a visitor to our community in Antigua and Barbuda. That is because we were so careful in terms of training our personnel who were on the frontline interacting with visitors. We have seen a number of spikes now, which we believe is due to a number of Antiguans and Barbudians coming home for the holidays over Christmas and New Year. They should have been staying in isolation for 14 days upon return, but a lot of them ignored that, took their masks off, and went around in the communities, which created something of a problem for us. Antigua was one of the 58 places in the world where the government has worked incredibly well with the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO): ventilators, oxygenators, and various other medical equipment and medical related to COVID we have. We have now got between 50 and 75 rooms specifically designed for that purpose. We have worked incredibly hard not only to prevent, but if necessary, also care for those suffering from COVID, they locates or visitors.

**PR:** As part of the island’s commitment to safe travel and tourist experience, you have created a new app called “Explore Antigua.” What is this?

**CF:** That type of technology reduces the person-to-person contact, so you don’t have to interact with anyone to find out just about any information. Previously, you might be out driving in the countryside and stop at the side of the road to ask someone from a village how to get to a particular place: technology is reducing that kind of interaction, which in turn reduces the possibility of infection.

**PR:** What are your plans to attract new airlines to the island?

**CF:** Before the pandemic, we had discussions with a number of airlines who were expected to start flying to Antigua and Barbuda, however, we are just a few minutes from a beach — so we could go for a run, a walk and return to work, refreshed, having enjoyed some Vitamin D and sunshine.

We are blessed with three hours from Miami and four hours from New York by air. We like to think we are very close to the United States — if you had to go back for any reason, it’s a short flight. The government has invested a lot of money in technology related to COVID care at the Infectious Disease Centre, so if you came here and had some illness, especially COVID, you can be assured that we also offer first-rate healthcare. This is what makes us a desirable destination for those who want to come and work remotely.

**PR:** Infrastructure and construction is another important engine.

We have everything that is approved by the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO): ventilators, oxygenators, and various other medical equipment and medical related to COVID we have. We have now got between 50 and 75 rooms specifically designed for that purpose. We have worked incredibly hard not only to prevent, but if necessary, also care for those suffering from COVID, they locates or visitors.

**PR:** What can you tell us about the island’s competition?

**CF:** If you would say that the Caribbean as a whole is very similar, but Antigua and Barbuda’s biggest advantage include having the lowest crime rate in the region, a very good climate, and arguably the friendliest people.

**PR:** You previously served as Minister of Foreign Affairs and Immigration. Have your priorities evolved since then?

**CF:** Both, our different, but important. The main difference, I find, is that in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, we are three hours from Miami and four from New York. We like to think we are very close to the United States — if you had to go back for any reason, it’s a short flight. But rest assured, we also offer first-rate healthcare.

It is very difficult to measure your success. In the Ministry of Tourism, on the success of vaccines, it is very easy to measure your success or lack thereof. For example, in 2019, the number of visitors to Antigua and Barbuda passed the ‘one million mark’, a new record for us and something we were very proud of. However, in 2020, as people lost their jobs, some of them did not come through. We are confident that this will be within the next two to three months.

**PR:** Lonely Planet’s “First In Trav- el” Awards named Antigua and Barbuda 2021’s Emerging Sus- tainable Destination of the Year. What can you tell us about the Green Connector programme?

**CF:** “The Green Connector” is a route on the South Western side of the island — that part of the island tends to get a lot more rain than other parts of the island, so the drive there, you feel almost as if you’re in a different country. It is very green and tropical. There are lots of mango trees and a lot of different types of fruits available. We have made a huge commitment to ensure that we protect that area as a green zone.

**PR:** What lessons has your govern- ment learned in the last year?

**CF:** First, that people with under- lying issues such as obesity and non-communicable diseases suffered much more, which means the most important thing for us to prioritize is health. Antigua and Barbuda’s biggest advantages include having the lowest crime rate in the region, a very good climate, and arguably the friendliest people. Underlying issues such as obesity and non-communicable diseases suffered much more, which means the most important thing for us to prioritize is health. Antigua and Barbuda’s biggest advantages include having the lowest crime rate in the region, a very good climate, and arguably the friendliest people.

We have made a huge commitment to healthy lifestyles. This will translate to more productivity and fewer sick days; the economy and country in general will benefit.

**PR:** What is your final message to readers?

Considering that we believe the world will not be normal for a long time, the most important thing right now is getting vaccines, an issue that most developing countries have also seen. People need to understand that unless everyone gets a vaccine, nobody will be safe. COVID-19 will not go away. In the meantime, we also run the risk of creating and spreading different variants. So, my last words are an appeal to developed countries. They must understand that they are not in this alone; they cannot resolve this by only vaccinating their own people.
Charmaine Quindain-Donovan explains the personal and professional benefits of taking up citizenship in paradise

**PR:** What are the benefits of your programme?

**CD:** It is very important that readers understand that the benefits of programmes such as the Antigua and Barbuda Citizenship by Investment Programme are holistic. Yes, benefits accrue to the client, but the programmes are being made — through applicants also have a great deal to gain. Prior to joining this industry and working with the Citizenship by Investment Unit, I had not realised how great a social good these programmes were for many people. There are millions of people, who, by virtue of where they are born, are restricted in many ways, including their ability to travel. Most require travel visas to a significant number of jurisdictions, which severely hampers their ability to conduct business. Many also have restrictions on the type of business they can engage in, which impacts wealth creation and their financial status. The advent of these programmes provides wealth and enhanced lifestyle choices that inevitably lead to happier and fuller lives and freedom.

However, we go beyond simply issuing citizenship to individuals who may be in need of greater mobility. We are working to dismantle barriers to obligation to the wider community of nations. This is why we undertake this process with great care and due diligence; we grant the privilege of citizenship to those who want to support the programme’s growth. We want to make sure that those who hold our citizenship are good reps. As a result, our due diligence process is very robust; we have several different tiers of due diligence and a number of compli- ance professionals working on our team to ensure we have a keen eye on the backgrounds and character- istics of potential applicants. The programme is our way of doing due diligence, a common process that the first programme to require that reports on the programme be made in parliament twice a year. Our Unit is commitment to upholding international and ethical standards.

**PR:** There are many places that offer this kind of programme. Why do you think Antigua and Barbuda is a good fit for your set of offerings. Can you tell us about the fourth category that has been introduced?

**CD:** This is a very dynamic pro- gramme — and clients are always eager to try new offerings. We are always looking at the industry and determining the needs of our clients. We ensure that we remain flexible enough to create options that could help more people, constantly looking at the needs of various people in different jurisdictions to see how best we can create products and services that are in line with what they need. We started with three options. Most countries would have offered the donation option — the National Development Fund — as well as the opportunity to purchase real estate; but we saw that there was an opportunity for us to attract people to develop businesses here as well.

We want to diversify our economy, and saw the China oil and gas company as a vehicle to facilitate this. We want people to focus more on agriculture and agro-pro- cessing. We also want to invite people who are experts in the technolog- ical field — our experience with the ongoing global pandemic crystallizes the need for this important technology and it will be to the emergence and re-emerg- ence of markets, which is why we continue to invite investors who wish to establish technology-based com- panies in our country. Our Country also has an abundance in Antigua and Barbuda for marine development, remote educa- tion, and manufacturing. The in- vestment in business options allows for this type of economic diversifica- tion and expansion to take place. So far, the most of the business investments that have been focused on real estate — we have a number of hotels — but we are still encouraging people to utilise the other opportunities available. Being the pioneers that we are, we wanted to bring the fourth category of the University of the West Indies to Antigua and Barbuda. UWJ is in the top 5% of the world’s universities. It was founded over 70 years ago, of school or university age, we wanted to create an option that helps include them, too. So you apply un- der the University of the West Indies option and, if your dependents of university age will be able to attend the university, tuition free, for one year. The proceeds of this investment option will go towards expanding the university here in Antigua, as well as continually providing the financing it needs to be sustainable. We pride ourselves on being a responsive and responsible programme.

**PR:** The Prime Minister said 366 applications were received in 2020, generating $117.5 million, a target set to double this year. What are your goals and expecta- tions for 2021?

**CD:** We intend to deliver on this mandate, but we know we have a reasonable government cognisant of the challenges been faced by us. After the pandemic, we have been getting a lot of interest. That, plus the changes made to our processes internally, will help us to also attract even more applications than last year. We have been determined to achieve about the 100% increase. We recog- nise this mandate and are working hard to ensure that we can deliver it to the government.

**PR:** Transparency is so important. How are you working with anti-money laundering and financial counter-terrorism programmes to protect the country’s image?

**CD:** Since the programme’s inception, our focus has been to ensure that successful applicants are individ- uals whose names would be proud to call citizens. Over time we have expanded and reinforced our vetting process. We have on board with us a number of due diligence agencies who provide background checks and similar services to Fortune 500 companies. They are very well-versed in confirming the identities of the persons who apply, looking into their background, and making sure that whatever infor- mation they submitted on their applications is true and accurate, and that those persons are of good repute. We also have connections with intel- ligence agencies that provide us with information that is not necessarily widely available in the public domain. We also undergo an identity check through ‘open source’ checks, and compile all the information collected from the various sources previously mentioned in order to make an as- sessment of the application. As I said before, we have a num- ber of certified anti-money launder- ing and financial counter-terrorism professionals on staff. I am one of them. Together we ensure that each applicant and their dependents are thoroughly vetted, so that by the end of the processes internally, will help us to

The advent of these programmes provides flexibility and enhanced lifestyle choices that inevitably lead to happier and fuller lives and freedom. But we go beyond simply issuing citizenship to individuals who may be in need of greater mobility. We are working to dismantle barriers to obligation to the wider community of nations. This is why we undertake this process with great care and due diligence; we grant the privilege of citizenship to those who want to support the programme’s growth. We want to make sure that those who hold our citizenship are good reps. As a result, our due diligence process is very robust; we have several different tiers of due diligence and a number of compli- ance professionals working on our team to ensure we have a keen eye on the backgrounds and character- istics of potential applicants. The programme is our way of doing due diligence, a common process that most countries would have offered to attract people to develop businesses here as well.

We want to diversify our economy, and saw the China oil and gas company as a vehicle to facilitate this. We want people to focus more on agriculture and agro-pro- cessing. We also want to invite people who are experts in the technolog- ical field — our experience with the ongoing global pandemic crystallizes the need for this important technology and it will be to the emergence and re-emerg- ence of markets, which is why we continue to invite investors who wish to establish technology-based com- panies in our country. Our Country also has an abundance in Antigua and Barbuda for marine development, remote educa- tion, and manufacturing. The in- vestment in business options allows for this type of economic diversifica- tion and expansion to take place. So far, the most of the business investments that have been focused on real estate — we have a number of hotels — but we are still encouraging people to utilise the other opportunities available. Being the pioneers that we are, we wanted to bring the fourth category of the University of the West Indies to Antigua and Barbuda. UWJ is in the top 5% of the world’s universities. It was founded over 70 years ago, of school or university age, we wanted to create an option that helps include them, too. So you apply un- der the University of the West Indies option and, if your dependents of university age will be able to attend the university, tuition free, for one year. The proceeds of this investment option will go towards expanding the university here in Antigua, as well as continually providing the financing it needs to be sustainable. We pride ourselves on being a responsive and responsible programme.

**PR:** The Prime Minister said 366 applications were received in 2020, generating $117.5 million, a target set to double this year. What are your goals and expecta- tions for 2021?

**CD:** We intend to deliver on this mandate, but we know we have a reasonable government cognisant of the challenges been faced by us. After the pandemic, we have been getting a lot of interest. That, plus the changes made to our processes internally, will help us to also attract even more applications than last year. We have been determined to achieve about the 100% increase. We recog- nise this mandate and are working hard to ensure that we can deliver it to the government.

**PR:** Covid-19 has tested govern- ments and communities around the world. What lessons are there to be learned?

**CD:** The key lesson that not only Antigua and Barbuda — but all govern- ments — have learned is that there are always alternative ways to ac- complish your goals. We have been accustomed to committing to work this every day, but now we know we can connect remotely to the network via a virtual private network to work from home. We understand that being the pioneers that we are, we will be a little more open-minded and innovative in our thinking.

**PR:** How long does the online ap- plications take to complete?

**CD:** Our governing legislation man- dates that we complete an application in 90 days. This year, we have been able to turn around applications in 6-8 weeks on average. We have taken the time to work on the pro- cess, get through the paperwork more quickly, and get the information we need to complete each applicant’s assessment. Of course, there are exceptions, in some instances, ap- plicant information is missing, which can cause delays. Overall, we are very excited and optimistic about the state of our process right now.

**PR:** What is your final message to potential applicants from the U.S.?

**CD:** I would like to say that we re- ally do welcome these applications and are heartened to receive them. Processing U.S. applications is gener- ally seamless, which leads to a very efficient turnaround time, so we encourage submission of these. I wish to stress that while we do not circumvent or shy away from our processes, since the information on U.S. citizens is so readily available, we are able to process their files in a very timely manner. As you might be aware, in the U.S., much of the informa- tion required in accessible elec- tronically, which facilitates a more ef- ficient assessment of the applicant. So we would like to invite all American citizens who desire to apply to the Antigua and Barbuda programme to do so.

We have had a long history of diplo- matic relations with our neighbour to the north, not to mention an equally long history welcoming tourists from the US. We understand that our culture and atmosphere are very similar, so we are excited to have you with both hands, readily, willingly, and warmly.

Charmaine Quindain-Donovan, CEO, Citizenship by Investment Unit

Five Islands Campus of the University of the West Indies, a CIP Investment Option

Panoramic view of historic St. John’s, the 400-year-old capital of Antigua & Barbuda and its environs

Charmaine Quindain-Donovan, CEO, Citizenship by Investment Unit Antigua and Barbuda

For further information please visit www.prisma-reports.com
In this turbulent period, are you satisfied with your options of where to go or where to live? Antigua and Barbuda can provide the safety and security you and your family need in these uncertain times. Become a citizen through our **Citizenship by Investment Programme**. With visa-free access to over 150 countries across the globe, flexibility for your wealth management needs, no tax on your worldwide income nor inheritance tax, you can rest assured that your family’s best interest is served both now and in the future. For more information on this unmatched opportunity, visit:

[CIP.GOV.AG](http://CIP.GOV.AG)