

## Investment Opportunities

There are a plethora of reasons to invest in Barbados. Consider first, the country itself, consistently ranked by both the United Nations and the vaunted Economist Intelligence Unit as one of the top 40 countries worldwide for its quality of life.

This is attributable not just to the usual sun, sea and sand, but to Barbados' mastery of the more substantial things that add quality to life such as excellent utility services, road networks and high levels of education.

You should also consider Barbados' business environment, which is filled with potential for any investor. The Global Competitiveness Report/Global Competitiveness Index for 2006-2007 ranks Barbados highly - fourth in the Western Hemisphere and 31st among 125 countries worldwide. The island also boasts a stable economy, currency and democracy.

Most of all, you should consider what is in it for you. This list is considerable - tax holidays, exemption from exchange controls, full repatriation of capital, profits and dividends, government subsidisation of factory space in modern industrial parks and duty-free access to the United States, Canada, European Union and CARICOM countries - among other benefits and incentives.

So are you ready to invest in Barbados? Friends can set you on this path, with a run-down of where some of the best investment opportunities are to be found. Government agencies such as Invest Barbados and the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc can help you make your Barbados-based business a reality.

### Information Technology

The Information Technology sector has an increasingly strong profile in Barbados with several call centres, data processing centres and credit card processing centres already established here. There are many incentives for investors in this area, including exemption from import duties on imports of equipment or machinery required for the enterprise and competitive rental rates, including many government-subsidised office and factory spaces.

#### Niche Manufacturing

This is a growing sector that is ripe for further development and investment. Barbados' highly skilled population makes it especially fitting for the specialised training often required in niche manufacturing areas such as production of optical devices and medical supplies, electronic equipment and even high fashion.

Investors in this area can benefit from benefits such as full exemption from import duties on the components, raw materials and equipment needed for their enterprise.

#### Financial Services

The financial services sector is booming in Barbados and with good reason. There are actually over 2300 operations in Barbados working in international trade and commerce under the International Business Companies Act and the Societies with Restricted Liability Act.

Modern, flexible legislation, double taxation agreements with a wide network of nations across the world and excellent support services have helped draw investors. They recognise that there are all kinds of direct incentives and indirect benefits to establishing an international financial service operation in Barbados, including special tax concessions for specially qualified professionals needed for it.

### Tourism and Real Estate

Barbados' tourism product is recognized globally as one of the strongest there is. The island has had a strong tourism industry for the last half-century and the Barbados brand has become synonymous with high quality and high value.

Barbados has shown itself capable of managing major events such as the ICC Cricket World Cup 2007 and the world golf championship. For discerning VIP visitors such as world golf No.1 Tiger Woods, who chose to get married here in 2004, Barbados combination of competence and quality keep bringing them back.

This is also why major hotel brands such as the Hilton and Four Seasons have been attracted to Barbados as have world-class, boutique resorts such as the famous five-diamond Sandy Lane resort. It is also why Barbados has experienced a period of unprecedented growth and investment in its coveted real estate, especially that along the Platinum Coast of the west of the island. Hence it is no surprise that in real terms, travel and tourism is expected to grow by 4.6% per annum between 2002 and 2012.

There are myriad benefits to investing in tourism-related ventures in Barbados. These include duty-free concessions and a wide range of tax deductions on things such as marketing expenditure, training, product development and research and any loans used to improve the property.