



FreeZone**Aruba**

## GENERAL **INFORMATION**



Your gateway for worldwide business



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## Introduction

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Thank you for your interest in the Free Zone of Aruba, your gateway for worldwide business. We are a 'one-stop shop' address to facilitate business.

In this general information package you will find an overview of the benefits of the Free Zone, how to set up a free zone business as well as other relevant information regarding the Free Zone of Aruba.

We sincerely hope this brochure will provide you with a general understanding of the Free Zone of Aruba, our operations and ways to improve your competitive position.

If you wish to obtain detailed information, please feel free to contact us. It is a pleasure doing business with you.

Free Zone Aruba (FZA) Team





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## 1. The Aruba Free Zone

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The Free Zone of Aruba offers a multitude of possibilities for your business, whether you are looking for improved logistics, export to new markets, offering services to international clients, improved return on investment, technology parks or a foreign trade zone. All this and more is available in the Aruba Free Zone.



### International focus

The Free Zone of Aruba has been operational since the 1950's. Over the years the main types of businesses within the zone have been a reflection of local business going global.

Whereas there used to be a focus on traditional trade with Colombia and Venezuela, the current clients in the free zone operate in many different areas and are geared towards a broader market. In recent years there has been increasing interest from European, Canadian and United States based business that want to make use of commercial opportunities in the Caribbean and Latin America.

### Gateway to growing markets in South America

The growing consumer market in South America offers great possibilities for quality consumer goods and innovative technology. If companies already have existing investments in different countries in the region, the Free Zone of Aruba would be the ideal place to open a regional headquarters.

Concentrating the sales and marketing, training, research and development (R&D), or warehousing of high cost components in the free zone offers great flexibility, security and an added return on investment (ROI) for companies wishing to do business amidst unstable socio-economic and political factors throughout Latin America.

### Trade agreements

Another added benefit of operating from the Free Zone of Aruba are the possibilities offered by specific trade agreements, such as the OCT (Overseas Countries and Territories) for those wishing to export to the EU, and the CBI (Caribbean Basin Initiative) for those wishing to export to the United States. Contact our Account Executives for more information.



## **New focus on service companies**

Services compose our fastest growing sector, having been made possible by means of the new free zone legislation enacted in 2001. Many types of services, with the exception of financial services, are possible. Opportunities lie in the area of medical clinics, technical services such as engineering, logistics, software development, green energy, research and development (R&D) and many more.

## **Niche markets and project development**

Free Zone Aruba (FZA) is currently promoting niche markets, such as companies needing a distribution hub and high-tech companies and countries wanting to showcase their goods to prospective buyers, saving time and money on both sides. The free zone planning has taken expansion of all types of business into consideration; there are 100 hectares adjacent to the port and airport available for development.

Most countries offer some special customs and/or tax controls to attract export oriented businesses. Think of Foreign Trade Zones, Export Processing Zones, Industrial Parks, Logistic Zones, Economic Development Zones, etc. Aruba offers a multitude of possibilities using a single and simple term: the Free Zone.



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## 2. Free Zone Aruba (FZA)

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Free Zone Aruba (FZA) is a limited liability company owned by the Aruban Government. Our objectives are to promote the Aruban Free Zone and to manage and develop the free zone properties and facilities.



Our vision is:

*“To be the primary business partner for trustworthy, successful, internationally operating companies that add value to the Aruban economy, by managing an attractive and secure free zone environment in a professional and dynamic manner.”*

We focus on three main goals:

### **Attract solid international investments**

By means of concession we issue the admission licenses and administrate the operating requirements. Our ‘one-stop shop’ model facilitates and accelerates the establishment of a client’s company in the free zone. Using our network we can assist the client in a variety of ways.

### **Develop and manage attractive free zone facilities**

On-site Customs services ensure a smooth flow of goods, and private security further enhances the safety of the free zone areas. Warehousing and office space costs are far below the market price. The new free zone area in Barcadera is adjacent to the harbor and airport, which forms a unique hub. We offer flexible options to our clients either to rent a space or build your own. Project developers are invited to discuss construction proposals.

### **Promote a high class and world renowned free zone**

We pride ourselves in having regulations that promote international business and the reputation of the free zone and our clients. The integrity system we developed and use meets the highest international standards and recommendations.

Free Zone Aruba (FZA)’s policy is closely linked with the macro-economic policy of the Government of Aruba: *The Green Gateway: A knowledge-driven, entrepreneurial economy.*





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## 3. Business Opportunities

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Almost all types of businesses are allowed in the Free Zone Aruba, such as:

- Trade in final products
- Technology-based activities
- All types of services aimed at foreign clients (financial services are excluded)
- Combination of all of the above

Furthermore, Free Zone Aruba (FZA) is looking for project developers interested in constructing facilities to house free zone businesses.

### Trade

Traditional trade in finished goods has been the most well-known type of free zone business. Taking (inter)national laws and treaties into account, all types of products may be transhipped through the Free Zone. Flow of trade activities may occur in different volumes and in many forms. The safety and security of the Free Zone of Aruba is of particular advantage.

Examples of trade activities in the Free Zone are:

#### **Bulk import and export:**

Import of containerized or bulk goods which are temporarily stored in the Free Zone and are exported to the end destination at a later time.

#### **Freight consolidation and distribution:**

Several small shipments are forwarded to a company in the Free Zone and are bundled and shipped together to the end destination. On the other hand, containerized goods may be stored and later shipped on in smaller quantities, for example parts for repairs and/or high value products. The close proximity of the airport and container port to the Free Zone is an added value.

#### **Retail sales to tourists:**

The purchases of goods by tourists in the Free Zone which are taken out of the country for consumption is also considered a free zone activity. Some restrictions and additional requirements may apply.

#### **Drop shipments (or indent trade):**

Drop shipments whereby the goods do not physically pass through the Free Zone, are also considered an export activity (the sales contracts are signed by a free zone company), and are therefore eligible for the fiscal incentives of the Free Zone. This type of trade makes use of the advantages of Aruba as a business destination, such as safety and security, multi-lingual workforce, the central location to service different Latin-American countries, etc.





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### **Showcasing:**

Showcasing of products by a free zone company to potential buyers can be of particular interest. After a contract has been signed, the goods can be shipped directly from the producer to the purchaser.

### **Technology**

Both the existing free zone properties and the new Barcadera Free Zone area, which is located adjacent to the harbor, offer excellent locations for the establishment of technology-based activities.

A large variety of industrial and other technology-based activities in the areas of manufacturing, packaging, assembling and processing are allowed in the Free Zone.

Examples include:

- Processing and packaging, canning, bottling and/or labeling;
- Repair, maintenance, substantial alteration, renovation or reconstruction of goods;
- Added value processing of goods to meet the eligibility requirements of the OCT (European Union) or CBI (USA) trade incentives;
- Recycling: the extraction and sale of recyclable products;
- Aquaculture.

Technology-based companies holding a license to operate in the Free Zone do not incur any import duties on packing materials, raw materials, semi-manufactured products and components to be used in the production process. In some cases, construction materials for the facility may be brought in duty free.

Aruba is currently updating its environmental laws to meet international standards and protect the island as a tourist destination and healthy living environment. Please contact us concerning specific questions regarding the possibilities to develop technology-based activities in the Free Zone.

### **Services**

The Aruba Free Zone is an excellent facility to provide export-oriented service activities to the global market. The modernized free zone legislation allows for different types of service companies to operate from the Free Zone.

All types of services geared towards foreign clients (excluding financial services) are allowed in the Free Zone, including services in the areas of:

Information media and telecommunications:

Creating, enhancing and storing information products in media, transmitting information products using analog and digital signals, and providing transmission services and/or operating the





infrastructure to enable the transmission and storage of information and information products;

Professional, scientific and technical services:

Scientific research, architecture, engineering, computer systems design, law, accountancy, marketing and advertising, market research, management and other consultancy, veterinary science, professional photography, etc.;

Administrative and support services:

Sales and marketing, office administration, hiring and placing personnel for others, preparing documents, taking orders for clients by telephone, providing credit reporting or collecting services, arranging travel and travel tours, etc.

## Other service activities

Besides the examples of service activities highlighted above, FZA is also focusing on attracting emerging business opportunities such as medical tourism and services in the fields of education and learning.

Faster internet speed, open source technology, cloud computing and the growth of socially interactive platforms (social media) enable creative and innovative new forms of service exports. Free Zone Aruba (FZA) is open to explore these new business opportunities with you.

## Green Technology

The macro-economic policy of the Government of Aruba is strongly focused on attracting, developing and implementing Green Technology. The renowned Dutch research institute TNO has set up a facility on Aruba to test and certify renewable energy technology making use of Aruba's unique climate and location.

The Free Zone of Aruba can be used for companies operating in the field of green technology, interested in setting up a regional hub for sales and marketing, R&D and the storage and distribution of components.

A current example of activities relating to Green Technology is a modern recycling facility, where recyclable products are extracted and sold on the international market. The facility can also be used as a showcase for the sale of the technology.

Possible business concepts:

- Setting up a renewable energy facility as a showcase for the sale of the technology;
- The storage and distribution of parts and components relating to green technology;
- Projects relating to sustainable food supplies and aquaculture;
- Showcasing construction methods highlighting green technology.





## Project Development

Free Zone Aruba (FZA) invites project developers to use the available property of the Barcadera Free Zone for the construction of facilities to promote the development of the Free Zone.



There is approximately 40 hectare prime construction property available, adjacent to the harbor and in close proximity to the airport, for the development of free zone aligned business concepts. As a developer, the properties can then be leased to companies operating with the free zone status.

Possibilities include:

- The construction of incubator facilities for startup free zone businesses. This could be warehouse facilities and/or office buildings.
- An International Commerce Center operating as a high tech showcase. Countries and companies from all over the world will showcase their goods, in many cases the newest technological developments. Besides attracting businessmen to arrange their meetings and sales on Aruba, it will offer a unique tourist attraction.

Please note that Project Developers are not considered free zone companies and do not enjoy the fiscal incentives. Please contact us for more information.





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## 4. Why Join

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You can enhance your competitive edge by choosing the Free Zone of Aruba. If you are an export-oriented company or offer services to international customers, then the Aruba Free Zone can offer extensive advantages.

### **Benefits of joining the Aruba Free Zone**

A free zone company in Aruba enjoys four major financial benefits:

- 2% tax over all profits generated from free zone activities
- 0% import duties and excises on goods imported and exported through the Free Zone
- 0% turnover tax over the turnover generated from free zone activities
- Exemption from foreign exchange commissions on foreign currency payments

### **Other business benefits**

- No local partner required to establish a free zone company (full foreign ownership)
- Exemption from the Business License Act, Free Zone Aruba (FZA) is your one-stop shop
- No minimum investment capital required to start up a business in the free zone
- The location of the free zone creates a unique hub with the airport and harbor
- No import duties on equipment and machinery acquired for company use
- A US dollar account at a local bank ensures efficiency in payments
- Retail sales to tourists and local sales are possible
- The sales agreement is signed on Aruba, but the goods can be shipped straight from the source to the customer (without going through Aruba).
- On-site customs services
- Clear and transparent regulations, 24-hour security
- Flexible construction possibilities

If you would like to find out more about how the Aruba Free Zone can benefit your company then please get in touch. Our Account Executives are always happy to help.





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## 5. Services to Free Zone Companies

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Free Zone Aruba (FZA) is proud to offer a wide selection of services to our clients operating from the Free Zone of Aruba.

We are committed to guiding our clients in a professional manner and working closely with different government departments, notaries, banks and legal, tax and financial advisors in order to optimize the process of establishment of free zone companies.

We often participate in national and international business events and our clients are welcome to join us, either in person or by sending materials along.

### **Exhibitions and international contacts**

FZA works to actively promote the Free Zone and the companies that operate within it, both internationally and locally. On a regular basis FZA participates in both local and international business-oriented exhibitions, events and conventions. Our free zone clients are given the opportunity to join in the delegation, or to send along marketing material. Where possible, FZA assists in arranging matchmaking sessions when foreign business delegations visit Aruba.

### **Business opportunities**

FZA is often contacted by international businesses seeking to contact our clients and/or offering business opportunities, and we are happy to pass this information on to our clients. We also are constantly online and in contact with other organizations and inform our clients of business opportunities.

### **Government**

If our clients need assistance in dealing with Customs, obtaining residency/work permits, requesting long-lease land, etc. we are happy to help. Our extensive network of contacts is available for our clients and our account executives are there to assist whenever possible.

### **Questions and requests**

Our clients can request information regarding trade regulations, market information, etc. and we will help where we can. We can form a lobby together with the client to open up new opportunities. As an example, we have teamed up with our clients to introduce new international payment methods on Aruba.

### **Maintenance and security**

We do our utmost to maintain and improve our facilities and provide a safe, secure and accessible business environment.





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## 6. Setting up a Free Zone Company

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If you see potential in the business opportunities offered by the Free Zone of Aruba, please feel free to contact us.

Each client will be referred to an account executive who will assist, guide and support the client through the various procedures. We are proud of our one-stop shop approach to get your company up and running in the Free Zone.

The account executive will make a preliminary assessment of the type of business activities you wish to start in the Free Zone and how your requirements (such as location, public utilities and operational support) can be met. The exchange of preliminary information can take place in person, by phone, fax or email. All information will be treated as confidential.

After having gone through the basic information exchange for admission to the free zone, you can incorporate your free zone company at a local notary. We have close contact with the notaries and they are well informed regarding the specific requirements.

Upon acceptance of admission to the Free Zone, FZA will issue an admissions license and a contract will be signed between FZA and the new free zone company.

You can find detailed information regarding the admission procedure in chapter 4.

### **Intermediary services**

The FZA team is committed to guiding its clients in a professional manner and working closely with different government departments, notaries, banks and legal, tax and financial advisors in order to optimize the process of establishment of free zone companies.

We can facilitate in the process of obtaining necessary work and residency permits. Also, we can assist in obtaining long-lease property if the client wishes to construct its own facility.





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## 7. Costs and Fees

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All services provided by Free Zone Aruba (FZA) in relation to the admissions procedure are free of charge. However, there are a few costs and fees one should bear in mind for budget purposes.

### Startup costs

The notary charges are paid directly to the notary to incorporate a limited liability company (NV). The current notary charges are about Afl. 2300 (US\$1300,-).

### Operational costs

Once the company has been admitted to the free zone, certain fees apply.

### Freezone Facility Charge

Once a free zone company is admitted to the Free Zone it is subject to payment of the Freezone Facility Charge (FFC). The FFC is currently set at 1.12% of the net turnover and will be charged on a monthly basis, figured over the previous month. Turnover refers to the total value of sales of merchandise (traded for own account), cash or credit, in the reported period, whether from export or sales to the local market, as well as the value of export of merchandise or goods processed on behalf of third parties. In addition, the value of all services rendered, including management fees, lease income, etc. are also part of turnover.

The FFC is used by FZA to cover various facilities and investments, such as security, maintenance, marketing, promotion and further development of the free zone.  
Rent of warehouses, office spaces and construction plots.

A free zone company is required to have a physical address in the free zone. The physical address can be a warehouse or an office space.

### Warehouses

At the Bushiri Free Zone there are warehouses available for rent at affordable prices. FZA provides a one-year lease agreement which can be extended on an annual basis. The rental price is Afl. 91,35 (US\$ 51.32) (including 1.5% BBO) per m2 per year. FZA requires a deposit equal to 2 months lease at the moment of signing a lease contract with a client.





## Office spaces

At Bushiri Free Zone there are convenient office spaces available. The monthly rental prices of the office spaces range from Afl. 400 (US\$ 224.72) (including 1.5% BBO) to Afl. 1220 (US\$ 685.39) (including 1.5% BBO). FZA also offers a one-year lease agreement for the offices which can be extended on an annual basis. FZA requires a deposit equal to 2 months lease at the moment of signing of a lease contract with a client.



## Construction plots

The acquisition of the right of lease on a property for the construction of buildings at Barcadera Free Zone for commercial or industrial purposes proceeds through an option procedure. The option right is issued by the Department of Infrastructure and Planning (DIP) and it provides the holder the right of option on a lease agreement with the Aruban government for a piece of property.

The option fee is 3% per year of the property value which is currently determined at Afl. 50/US\$ 28.09 per square meter (m<sup>2</sup>) per year. Additional costs and investments related to the option, include: land surveying and administrative costs, bank guarantee costs (coverage of 10% of the total investment), etc.

If the company complies with all requirements during the option period, the right of lease on the property will be granted. The annual lease on the property is 6% of the determined property value. Land and property taxes are also applicable. For detailed information on the different ownership options, please contact FZA.





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## 8. Locations and Facilities

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Free Zone Aruba (FZA) is proud to offer a wide selection of services to those interested in acquiring the free zone status and to those companies operating from the Free Zone. We offer warehousing and office space for rent at very competitive prices. There is also the possibility to construct your own facilities at the Barcadera Free Zone.

### Bushiri Free Zone

The Bushiri Free Zone covers an area of 9.2 hectare (22.7 acres) and is situated a very short distance from the Oranjestad harbor. The distance between the Bushiri Free Zone and downtown Oranjestad is approximately 1.6 km (1 mile); the distance to the international airport is 4.8 km (3 miles).

#### Quick facts:

- Covers area of 9.2 hectare (22.7 acres).
- 7000 square meters (75,000 square feet) of warehouse space.
- 4.7 hectare (11.6 acres) of open-air storage space.
- Office and showroom spaces of different sizes.
- Short distance to airport and Oranjestad harbor.
- In operation since 1999.

### Warehouses

The standard warehouses at the Bushiri Free Zone are on average 300 square meters (3,229 square feet). The floor to ceiling height is 5.5 meters (17 feet) measuring from the lowest point and 7 1/2 meters (19 feet) measuring from the highest point.

The units are suitable for storage of goods or for industrial activities and can be rented on a yearly basis. All units have standard utilities like electricity, water and sanitary facilities.

### Office spaces

The office spaces at Bushiri Free Zone are of different sizes and are convenient for all types of service-oriented business activities. The units may also serve as showroom spaces. The office spaces are ready-to-use facilities, with:

- Air conditioning,
- Carpets,
- Blinds,
- Standard telephone/fax/small network lines installed,
- Alarm monitoring access doors, intercom system and general areas,
- Water and electricity supply of general areas is covered by FZA (expenses office electricity and phone is for the tenant),
- Use of general areas, incl. kitchen areas,
- Small waste disposal,
- General areas cleaning.

If you would like to know more about our office spaces, then please contact us.





## Barcadera Free Zone

The Barcadera Free Zone lies adjacent to the cargo port at Barcadera, 3.2 km (2 miles) east of the international airport. It covers an area of approximately 45 hectare (111 acres).

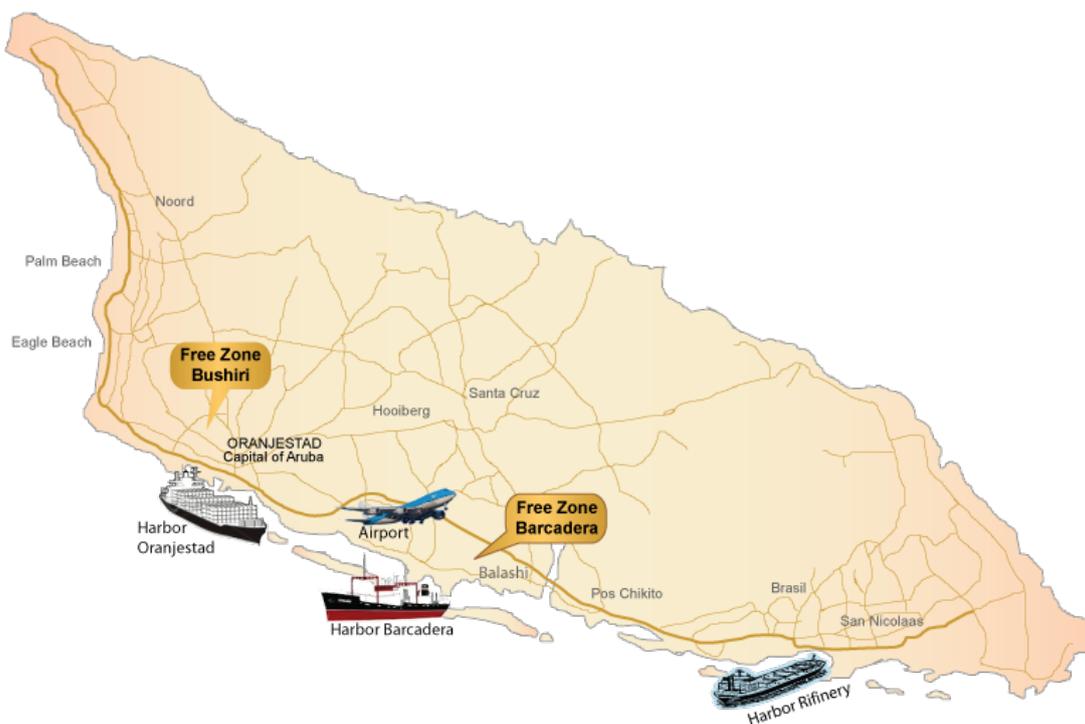
### Quick facts:

- First phase area covers 45 hectare (111 acres).
- Industrial park: 11.7 hectare (29 acres) of land available for development.
- Trade zone: 12.4 hectare (30.6 acres) of land available for development.
- Services/Showroom park: 20.4 hectare (50.4 acres) of land available for development.
- Adjacent to airport and Barcadera harbor.
- In operation since 2009.

## Lease land for construction

At Barcadera Free Zone there are ready-to-build sites available for business activities that require custom-made buildings. The area at Barcadera is broadly divided into three sections: light-industrial zone, trade zone (for warehousing) and services zone.

The acquisition of the right of lease on a property for the construction of buildings at Barcadera Free Zone for commercial or industrial purposes proceeds through an option procedure. The option right is issued by the Department of Infrastructure and Planning (DIP).





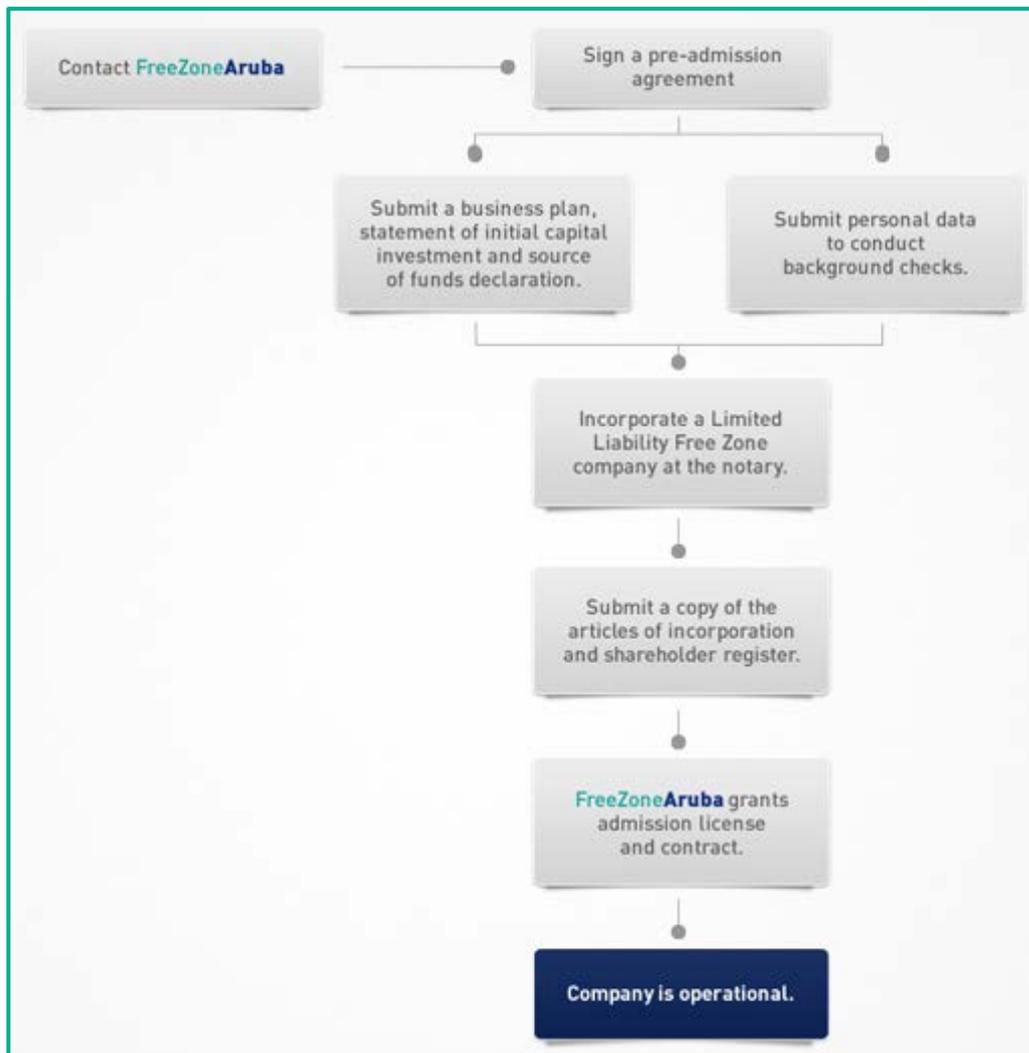
## 9. Admission Procedure

Free Zone Aruba (FZA) offers a unique ‘one-stop shop’ approach to establishing your business in the Free Zone of Aruba.

### 1. First contact Free Zone Aruba (FZA)

We advise anyone interested in establishing a company in the Free Zone of Aruba to contact FZA first. This way we can help and guide you through the process, making it easy and straightforward to complete.

During the initial contact one of our account executives will make a preliminary assessment of the type of business activities that you are proposing, and how your needs for particular facilities (such as location, public utilities and operational support) can be met.





## 2. Sign a pre-admissions agreement

If you decide to go ahead with the admission procedure, a pre-admissions agreement is signed between your company and FZA. This document regulates the information flow necessary to complete the admissions procedure. You can download the Pre-admissions agreement from our forms page.

## 3. Submit business information and legal documents

The required company information (business information and legal documents) is needed to assess the legal establishment of a limited liability company and to obtain an overview of the proposed free zone operations. All submitted information will remain confidential.

The business information required includes:

- **A business plan.** The business plan will help FZA gain an understanding of your proposed business activities in the Free Zone. It is important to assess whether we can meet the demands of your planned operations and whether the operations will benefit the development of the Free Zone. You can download information about the business plan from the forms page.
- **Information for background checks.** Your company should submit personal information on all the managing directors, shareholders and those who will represent the free zone company. FZA will send this data to the official authorities, who will conduct a background check. You can download the form for background checks from the forms page.

In order to complete the admissions procedure as quickly as possible, we recommend that your company first submits the business plan and the relevant personal data to FZA as soon as possible after the pre-admissions agreement has been signed. The following documents can be submitted later.

- **A source of funds declaration.** This declaration states the source of the initial investment for the incorporation and startup of the free zone activities. You can download the source of funds declaration from the forms page.
- **A proof of income statement.** The client is requested to send a proof of income statement from the bank or a certified public accountant, substantiating the capital that will be used to start up the company.
- **A formal admission request.** In consultation with the account executive, you can submit a formal request for admission to the Free Zone to the managing director of FZA. By law, the decision to admit a company to the Free Zone will take place within three (3) months after receiving the formal request. However, because of our one-stop shop approach we have already obtained the necessary information and the procedure can be completed in a much shorter period of time.

As part of the admission procedure, your company should obtain and provide the following legal documents:





- **The articles of incorporation.** The articles of incorporation are drawn up by the notary in the Dutch language. By law, the articles of incorporation must comply with certain conditions, such as being a limited liability company that operates exclusively in the Free Zone. The local notaries are aware of these requirements and work closely with the account executives.
- **The certificate of no objection for founding a limited liability company.** This declaration is issued by the Minister of Justice based on the drafted articles of incorporation. The notary will take care of this.
- **The shareholders' register (notary).** The shareholders' register must contain the complete names and full addresses of individual shareholders. If a shareholder is a legal entity, further information must be supplied concerning the natural persons behind this entity.
- **The certificate of registration of Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Aruba.** The client has to register the limited liability company at the Chamber of Commerce and at Industry of Aruba, where the certificate of registration can be obtained.

#### 4. Formal admission

When all the necessary documents have been submitted, reviewed and approved the free zone company is formally admitted to the Free Zone by means of an admissions license and contract. These documents define which activities may be performed and the subsequent operating requirements. The account executive can further elaborate on the operating and location requirements, depending on the proposed activities stated by the individual client.

#### Local representation

If the managing director is a non-resident, a local representative needs to be appointed. Local representation can be done by any person legally residing on Aruba (and in the possession of a work permit, if applicable) or organization incorporated under Aruban law. In the case of an organization, no more than two persons may be appointed as local representative.

In the case your company would like to appoint a local representative, please contact an account executive for more specific information.

#### 5. Regulations

Free Zone Aruba (FZA) welcomes new clients and the expansion of free zone business. With a few exceptions, we welcome all internationally operating companies to join the Free Zone of Aruba.

The Aruban Free Zone offers many benefits; however, there are some basic rules that apply. Our experience is that our clients do not find these rules too demanding, and actually support the promotion of international business integrity.

Some examples of free zone rules and regulations:

- The free zone company must be locally incorporated
- Transparency concerning the Ultimate Beneficial Owners
- No services may be sold to the local market





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- The free zone company must be operational (inactivity for a period longer than three months may lead to revocation of the admissions license)
  - Free zone companies must adhere to certain operating requirements, mainly geared toward transparency in recordkeeping and KYC-principles
  - Free zone companies have to be physically located in a designated free zone area
  - If the managing director is not a legal resident of Aruba, a local representative is required
  - Payments received in cash above \$10.000 must be reported
  - Even though free zone companies are exempt from the Nuisance Act, strict rules are enforced to ensure minimal environmental impact





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## 10. Aruba

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Aruba is world-renowned as the perfect location for a high-class vacation experience. The fact is that Aruba is also the perfect place to set up a business operating on an international scale.

All the characteristics that have made Aruba a tourist destination are in fact components that make it a success as an international business destination: location, safety and security, multi-lingual and highly educated workforce.

Follow those that have discovered the key to the perfect living environment: Bring Your Business to Paradise (B2P).



### Aruba: At a glance

#### Location

Aruba is located just 19 miles off the coast of Venezuela in the southwest of the Caribbean. It serves a unique position as the most westerly of the OCTs (Overseas Countries and Territories holding a special status within the European Union) in the Caribbean, an ideal place in the east-west, north-south trade corridors.

It is 19.6 miles long and 6 miles across, at its widest point, with an area of approximately 74.5 square miles (193 square km).

#### History

The beautiful island of Aruba was discovered by Europeans in 1499. During the years that followed ownership of the island changed hands several times, till the Dutch took possession and the Dutch influences are still present in the social, legal and political system.

On January 1, 1986 Aruba obtained its 'Status Aparte', thereby enabling it to become a separate entity within the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

After the constitutional reform of October 10, 2010 (dissolution of the Netherlands Antilles) both Curaçao and Saint Maarten also became constituents within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The four parts of the Kingdom - the Netherlands, Aruba, Curaçao and Saint Maarten - are referred to as "countries", and participate on a basis of equality as partners in the Kingdom. This guarantees a stable, business-friendly legal system and unique trade possibilities with the European Union.

Aruba maintains direct ties with the Netherlands, but it has complete autonomy over its own internal affairs. The Kingdom is constitutionally responsible for defense and foreign affairs of the entire kingdom.

The population of Aruba enjoys one of the highest levels of education and per capita income in the region, and the quality of life is high.





## Tourist and business destination



The pillars of the Aruban economy are tourism, oil refining, manufactured exports and offshore financial services. Tourism is the island's principal industry, employer and foreign exchange earner.

Constant warm weather and some of the most beautiful beaches in the world attract over one million visitors a year, 57% being American. Hotel capacity has expanded fivefold since 1985 and will continue to

grow in the coming years to meet the market demands.

Aruba's characteristics create a "total package" as a tourist and business destination: safety, location, general environment, business environment and infrastructure.

### Safety

Aruba has a very low crime rate and the island breathes a general sense of security. This has been and is an important contributing factor to the steady growth in tourism. Safety is also of great importance to the business community in general and particularly for those using Aruba as a distribution hub.

The island lies outside the hurricane belt and therefore usually avoids the effects of tropical storms.

### Business climate

English is the main business language on the island. Spanish, Dutch and Papiamentu are also widely spoken. The government and labor relations are very stable. The fact that Aruba is tourism-oriented has many benefits for the business community:

- Service oriented
- Multi-lingual
- 24/7 economy
- Excellent international connections

The banking system is sound and complies with the highest international standards, and US dollar accounts may be opened. There are incentives in place for certain types of investment and businesses.

Aruba prides itself on offering integrity, quality and reliability in its business dealings. These qualities have already made the island a #1 tourist destination.





## Infrastructure

Aruba has modern port facilities. The cruise port will soon be enlarged and upgraded, after the commercial harbor moves to just east of the airport. This close location, together with the free zone, will create a unique hub for air/sea cargo. The port complies with international security regulations (ISPS), securing its position in the region.



The Reina Beatrix International Airport offers modern passenger and cargo facilities and there are (multi) direct daily flights to Europe, the US and Latin America. The airport proudly offers US Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) pre-clearance, which vastly facilitates traveling to the US.

