

## Research Dossier: Barbados

Geographic Region (ITU/UN)

The Americas  
Caribbean

Currency

BBD

ISO 3166 Code

BB

MCC

342

Calling Code

+1 246

ITU Member

Yes

ITU-R Region

Region-2



## Overview

Barbados is an island country in the Lesser Antilles, in the Caribbean region of North America.

From as early as 1851 cables were being laid between the English Caribbean and the USA, for use in telegraph services. By 1914 technology had moved on so that telephone calls could be placed via a wireless station in Barbados. This new technology threatened the cable companies who had invested heavily in the laying of cables, and so in 1929 the British Government merged the cable and wireless companies, which then became the Cable & Wireless project in 1934.

During World War II the need for telecommunications increased and so Barbados developed a high frequency radio facility, which became a key radio relay point in global telecommunications.

In the 1970's when satellites emerged to aid international communications, Barbados built an earth station at Congor Bay in St. John, and this formed the nucleus for an international telephone-switching centers for, not only Barbados, but much of the English Caribbean.

By 1982 fibre optic cables were introduced in Barbados, again a first for the Caribbean region. Today the country boasts 100% FTTH fibre optic coverage.

Cellular mobile phone service came in 1991 and four years later the first Internet Service Providers sprung up. 3G UMTS mobile services became available late 2006, and 4G LTE services introduced in 2017. According to latest ITU data (June 2017) mobile coverage reaches 100% of the population, and 4G LTE accessible by 20% of citizens although increasing rapidly.

Barbados is a member of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and as such follows radio frequency harmonisation principles according to ITU-R **Region-2**. The regulatory body governing communications policy is the Ministry of Finance, Economic Affairs, Telecommunications, and Investment, and the Fair Trading Commission is charged with regulating the country's radio frequency spectrum activities such as planning, allocations, and licencing.

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