



# BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS FACT SHEET

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Company type	Business Company (BC)
Timeframe for company formation	2 to 3 days
Governing corporate legislation	The BVI Financial Service Commission is the governing authority, and companies are regulated under the Business Companies Act 2004.
Legislation	Modern offshore legislation
Legal system	Common Law
Corporate taxation	No Taxes of any sort. While the company may not be liable to pay taxes, please consult with a tax/legal advisor in your country of residence, to determine your own tax liability.
Accessibility of records	There is no public register of company officers.
Time zone	GMT -4
Currency	United States Dollar (USD)

## SHARE CAPITAL

Standard currency	USD
Standard authorised capital	USD 50,000
Minimum paid up	None

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## SHAREHOLDERS, DIRECTORS AND COMPANY OFFICERS

Minimum number of Shareholders	1
Minimum number of Directors	1
Locally-based requirement	No
Requirement to appoint Company Secretary	No

## ACCOUNTING REQUIREMENTS

### Requirement to prepare accounts

No accounting / reporting requirements. N.B. As per Section 98 of the Business Companies Act 2004 (Amended) a company must keep such records and underlying documentation as necessary to establish its financial situation and explain its transactions.

Requirement to appoint auditor	No
Requirement to file accounts	No
Accessibility of accounts	None

## DOCUMENT REQUIREMENTS

Certified copy of valid passport (or national identity card), Proof of address (issued within the last 3 months) in English or translated into English, Bank reference letter.

## INCORPORATION FEES

Initial set-up and first year	USD 2,090
Per year from second year	USD 1,900



## COUNTRY INFORMATION

The British Virgin Islands (BVI) are a British Crown Colony boasting approximately 40 islands, which are situated in the Caribbean about 60 miles east of Puerto Rico. The principal island of the archipelago is Tortola, where the capital city of the BVI, Road Town, is located. Under the 1976 constitution, the BVI are independent from the UK, except with regards to its external affairs, defence, internal security, civil services, and court administration for which the UK keeps responsibility. The BVI are one of the oldest internationally recognised offshore centres. Many other offshore jurisdictions based themselves on the BVI's laws before developing their own corporate laws.

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## POLITICAL STRUCTURE

The British Virgin Islands operate as a parliamentary democracy. Ultimate executive authority in the BVI is vested in the Queen, and is exercised on her behalf by the Governor of the British Virgin Islands. The Governor is appointed by the Queen on the advice of the British Government. Defence and most Foreign Affairs remain the responsibility of the United Kingdom. The Head of Government under the constitution is the Premier, who is elected in a general election along with the other members of the ruling government as well as the members of the opposition. A Cabinet is nominated by the Premier and appointed and chaired by the Governor. The Legislature consists of the Queen (represented by the Governor) and a unicameral House of Assembly made up of 13 elected members plus the Speaker and the Attorney General.

## ECONOMY

As an offshore financial centre, the BVI enjoys one of the more prosperous economies of the Caribbean region. The twin pillars of the economy are tourism and financial services, as tourism employs the greatest number of people within the Territory, while 51.8% of the Government's revenue comes directly from the financial services associated with the territory's status as an offshore financial centre. Agriculture and industry account for only a small proportion of the islands' GDP. The BVI's agricultural produce includes fruit, vegetables, sugar cane, livestock, and poultry, and industries include rum distillation, construction, and boat building. The official currency of the British Virgin Islands is the United States dollar (USD), the currency also used by the United States Virgin Islands.

## POPULATION

As of the 2010 Census, the population of the British Virgin Islands was 28,054, of whom approximately 23,500 live on Tortola. The majority of the population (82%) of the BVI are Afro-Caribbean, however, the islands are also comprised of the following ethnicities: mixed (5.9%); white (6.8%), East Indian (3.0%). British Virgin Islanders are classed as British Overseas Territories citizens and since 2002 have had an entitlement to take up full UK citizenship. Although the territory is not part of the European Union and not directly subject to EU law, its citizens are deemed to be citizens of the EU as well.

## LANGUAGE

The primary language of the British Virgin Islands is English, although a local dialect known as Virgin Islands Creole (or Virgin Islands Creole English) is spoken in the Virgin Islands and the nearby islands of Saba, Saint Martin and Sint Eustatius. Spanish is also spoken in the BVI by those of Puerto Rican and Dominican descent.

### POPULATION

28,054 (2010)

### LANGUAGE

English

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## COMPANY FORMATION INFORMATION

### Incorporation Procedure

Upon receipt of the client's KYC documents (passport copy and proof of address issued within the last 3 months) and description of the intended business activity, and after our legal department's due diligence checks, SFM will incorporate the BC via our BVI-based agent as it is necessary for the registered office of the company to be maintained in the British Virgin Islands at the address of a licensed management company.

### Incorporation Timeframe

Two to three days.

### Trading Restrictions

A BVI BC cannot trade within the British Virgin Islands or own real estate there. BCs cannot conduct the business of banking, insurance, fund or trust management, collective investment schemes, investment advice, or any other banking or insurance industry-related activity (without an appropriate license or government permission). Moreover, a BVI BC cannot offer its shares for sale to the public.

### Name Restrictions

Any name in a language other than English must be translated to ensure that the name is not restricted. A BVI BC's name must end with a word, phrase or abbreviation that indicates Limited Liability, such as "Limited", "Ltd.", "Société Anonyme", "S.A.", "Corporation", "Corp.", or any relevant abbreviation. Restricted names include those suggesting the patronage of the Royal Family or the Government of the BVI such as, "Imperial", "Royal", "Republic", "Commonwealth", or "Government". Other restrictions are placed on names that have already been incorporated or names that are similar to those that have been incorporated to avoid confusion.

### Corporate Documents Language

English

## NOTES

\* Subject to the constraints of the due diligence procedure.

\*\* Documents must be provided for every person related to the company.

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