



A Guide to International Business Companies (IBC) of the Bahamas

HONG KONG PANAMA PORTUGAL

Bahamas International Business Companies

KEY CORPORATE FEATURES

General

Type of Company	Business Company
Type of Law	Common
Shelf company availability	No
Our time to establish a new company	2 - 5 days
Minimum government fees (excluding taxation)	US\$400
Corporate Taxation	Nil
Double Taxation Treaty Access	No
Share capital or equivalent	
Standard currency	US\$
Permitted currencies	Any
Minimum paid up	US\$1
Usual authorised	US\$50,000

Directors

Minimum number	One
Local required	No
Publicly accessible records	Yes
Location of meetings	Anywhere

Shareholders

Minimum number	One
Publicly accessible records	No
Location of meetings	Anywhere

Company Secretary

Aspen provides professional company secretary to ensure prompt and correct compliance at the jurisdiction.

Accounts

Requirements to prepare	Yes
Audit requirements	No
Requirements to file accounts	No
Publicly accessible accounts	No

Recurring Government Costs

Minimum Annual Tax / Licence Fee	US\$400
Annual Return Filing Fee	Nil

Other

Requirement to file annual return	No
Change in domicile permitted	Yes

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Bahamas extends in a 1,225 km arc from 78 km east of Palm Beach, Florida, to just north of Haiti. The Bahamas consists of an archipelago of approximately 700 islands and 2,400 cays.

Population and Political Structure

The population of the Bahamas is approximately 412,000. In July 1973, the Bahamas gained its independence and became a Member of the Commonwealth of Nations. The Government follows a British Constitutional pattern and has a Prime Minister, Cabinet of Ministers, an appointed Senate, and a House of Assembly elected by the people to control and administer the day-to-day affairs of the Bahamas. The Head of State is HM King Charles III and he is represented by a Governor General. The law of the Bahamas is based on English Common Law and the Court System, also modeled after the British system with Magistrates Courts, and a Supreme Court, with the ultimate court of appeal being the [Judicial Committee of the Privy Council](#) in the United Kingdom.

The Bahamas is a full member of the [Caribbean Community](#) (CARICOM), but is not part of the [CARICOM Single Market and Economy](#)

Infrastructure and Economy

The Bahamas has excellent communications. There are direct flights from Europe as well as many US cities. Miami is only 30 minutes away and New York is less than three hours away.

Its economy is based on tourism and offshore finance. In 2024, The Bahamas recorded a new tourism high of about 11.22 million visitors (air and sea combined), up about 16% from 2023. Agriculture and manufacturing form the third largest sector of the Bahamian economy, representing 5–7% of total GDP.

Language

The official and spoken language is English.

Currency

Bahamas Dollar is on a par with the US Dollar.

Exchange Control

Residents are subject to Exchange Control, but International Business Companies are exempt.

Type of Law

Statute Law and Common Law based on English Common Law.

Principal Corporate Legislation

International Business Companies Act 2000, the International Business Companies (Amendment) Act 2004, International Business Companies (Amendment) Bill 2025.

BAHAMAS COMPANY INFORMATION

Procedure to Incorporate

Registered Agent prepares the Memorandum of Association, which after being signed by the two subscribers is delivered to the Registry. The Articles of Association can either be filed at the same time as the Memorandum of Association or within 30 days from the date of incorporation.

Restrictions on Trading

IBCs can conduct business with Bahamians and may also own Bahamian real estate, but local exchange controls and stamp duty will apply in these cases. Unless government permission is granted, these companies cannot undertake the business of banking, insurance, assurance, reinsurance, fund management, collective investment schemes, trust management, trusteeship, the rendering of investment advice or any other activity that would suggest an association with the banking or insurance industries. They cannot sell its own shares or solicit funds from the public.

Registered Office Required

Yes, must be maintained in the Bahamas at the address of a licensed management company or law firm together with a Registered Agent.

Name Restrictions

Any name that has already been incorporated, or a name that is so similar as to cause confusion. Names such as royal or imperial. Any name which, in the opinion of the Registrar, is considered undesirable, obscene or offensive, or any name, which suggests the patronage of the Bahamas Government. Names containing the words: Bank, building society, savings, loans, insurance, assurance, reinsurance, fund management, investment fund, trust, trustees, Chamber of Commerce, university, municipal or their foreign language equivalents or any name in English or a foreign language that may suggest association with the banking or insurance industries all require special consent and/or licence.

The name can be in any language using the Latin alphabet. The Registrar may require an English translation to ensure that the proposed name is not on the list of restricted names.

All company names must end in with the suffix: Limited, Corporation, Incorporated, Société Anonyme, Sociedad Anónima, Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung or the relevant abbreviations.

BAHAMAS COMPLIANCE

Authorised and Issued Share Capital

The normal authorised share capital is US\$50,000; divided in to 50,000 shares of US\$1, this being the maximum capital for the minimum duty payable at the time of incorporation and the maximum authorised

share capital for the minimum licence fee payable annually. The share capital may be expressed in any currency. The minimum issued capital is either two shares of no par value or two shares of par value.

Classes of Shares Permitted

Registered shares, shares of no par value, preference shares, redeemable shares and shares with or without voting rights.

Taxation

The Bahamas is a pure tax haven and has no direct taxation in the form of income tax, capital gains tax, gift tax or inheritance tax, no tax on wealth or taxes on shares, dividends and interests.

Double Taxation Agreements

The Bahamas is not a party to any double tax treaties.

Licence Fee

Companies with an authorised share capital, with a par value, up to US\$50,000 pay the sum of US\$400 per year. Companies with an authorised share capital with a par value greater than US\$50,001 pay the sum of US\$1,200 per year.

Financial Statements Requirements

In 2018, Bahamas changed its legislation regarding International Business Companies (IBCs) and the Commercial Entities (Substance Requirement) Act ("CESRA"). This Act was further amended in 2023.

CESRA imposes an annual reporting obligation on all Registered Agents to submit certain information to the Ministry of Finance within nine (9) months of an entity's fiscal year end. To comply with CESRA, all commercial entities are required to have a fiscal (financial) year end. Resolutions are required to be passed to declare one. All entities are further required to provide Beneficial Owners information to the Registered Agent. Where an entity is an "included entity" that falls under the definition of a commercial entity and is engaged in relevant activities, at least one of the following supporting documents are required for CESRA filing: -

1. Financial Statements for the relevant fiscal period,
2. Tax Return; and
3. Tax Residency Certificate.

Some entities may not require any of the above supporting documents.

There is no requirement to audit IBCs' financial statements nor to file financial statements.

IBCs however must keep accounting records, financial statements and source documents that reflect the company's financial position.

The accounting records adopted by the Bahamas are the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). The period of keeping accounting records and documents is not less than 5 years after making the transaction.

A declaration regarding the maintenance of accounting records and the accessibility of the accounting records to the company's registered agent should be made who will file such with the Registrar. The declaration should be filed by 30th September every year to the Registrar. If there is a change in the company's registered agent, a copy of the declaration must be filed with the Registrar by the new agent within 30 days from the date of appointment of the new agent.

Directors

The minimum number of directors is one. Directors may be natural persons or bodies corporate. They may be of any nationality and need not be resident in the Bahamas. Nominee Directors are prohibited under the Amendment Bill 2025.

Company Secretary

The International Companies Act 2000 makes no specific reference to a company secretary, but one is normally appointed to facilitate signing obligations.

Shareholders

Minimum number of shareholders: two subscribers, but the shares can be transferred to a single person. Nominee shareholders are allowed provided they disclose the identity and relevant particulars of the natural person who ultimately directly or indirectly owns or controls a company to the registered agent. Such declaration of trust must be maintained at the company's registered office.

A register of members needs to be maintained at the Registered Office but is not open to the public.

The foregoing does not constitute legal advice and it is merely The Aspen Groups' opinion based on use and experience. If you are not a professional service provider, please consult a tax attorney, solicitor, and/or accountant before you pursue any venture in a jurisdiction other than your place of tax domicile. The Aspen Group is available to meet with you and assess your requirements. Legal evaluations in each jurisdiction are available at a time cost fee.

If you would like additional information on this jurisdiction, please contact us at enquiries@aspenoffshore.com or contact our offices below.

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