

THE STORY OF US

**Green Paper on Bermuda's
Application for Full Membership
in the Caribbean Community**

March 2026



GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA
Ministry of Home Affairs





Green Paper on Bermuda's Application for Full Membership in the Caribbean Community

March 2026

The Ministry of Home Affairs
Government Administration Building,
1st Floor, 30 Parliament Street, Hamilton HM 12, Bermuda
+1 (441) 444-1401
mhahq@gov.bm



Table of Contents



02 **Minister's Foreword**
The Story of Us

03 **The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) - Foundation for our Future**
Bermuda's CARICOM Relationship Timeline

07 **Chapter 1 - Understanding Full Membership in CARICOM**

- What is CARICOM?
- Bermuda's Constitutional Status and its Limits
- Bermuda's Participation in the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME)

18 **Chapter 2 - Why Bermuda Should Pursue Full CARICOM Membership**
Limits of Associate Status: Why Full Membership is a Strategic Necessity

36 **Chapter 3 - What Full Membership will Mean for Bermudians**

42 **Chapter 4 - Consultation**

- The Public Consultation Process
- Bermudian Perspectives and Questions About CARICOM

53 **Chapter 5 - Conclusion**

54 **Glossary of Terms**

Minister's Foreword

The Story of Us



Minister Alexa N. H. Lightbourne J.P., M.P.
Minister of Home Affairs

Bermuda stands at a defining moment. Almost 23 years ago, Former Premier Dame Jennifer Smith brought a historic motion to the House of Assembly, setting Bermuda on the path to CARICOM Associate Membership. Today, we advance a new public conversation about full membership.

This moment invites us to look not only forward, but inward, to remember who we are, where we come from, and how our story fits within the larger Caribbean story. The question is not whether change will come, change is inevitable. *The question is, How will Bermuda define itself in the face of that change?*

At its heart, this is the story of us.

Our history has never been solitary. Families, faiths, food, music, and the daily rhythms of island life bind Bermuda to the Caribbean. For more than three centuries, Bermudian vessels sailed the Caribbean Sea. From the 1670s, our sailors worked the salt pans of the Turks Islands, our shipwrights built some of the fastest sloops in the Atlantic, and our families put down roots from Grand Turk to Kingston. We must remember this shared heritage and examine the stories told that fight to keep us apart, and ask: *Who benefits from our division?*

Division has kept us small. Connection makes us strong.

This Green paper invites us to consider how Bermuda, in support of its future, might move from the margins of regional decision-making to its centre. We have the opportunity to actively shape outcomes on issues that already affect Bermudian lives: food security, health preparedness, climate resilience, digital policy, education, and youth opportunity. This provides more doors for Bermudians to walk through, more hands to work alongside, more opportunities to turn shared identity into shared progress.

The Government is advancing a structured, transparent process. We will present the implications, the costs, and the benefits.

You are invited to find your place in this story. Bring your hopes, your skepticism, and your solutions. The future we build will reflect the care we give this moment.



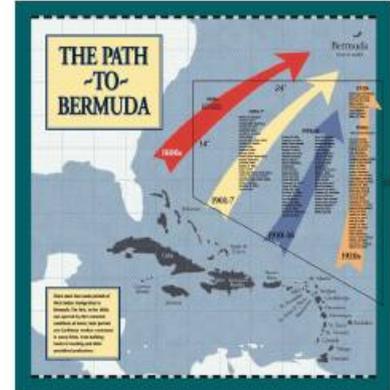
“Belonging is not a tether that binds us. It is the bridge we choose, the strength we share, and the home we build together.”





The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Foundation for our Future

Bermuda has never been an island in isolation. While our geography places us in the North Atlantic, our history, our values, and our institutional foundations are inextricably linked to the Caribbean. Bermuda is the northernmost point in the “Greater Caribbean”, and we share a common journey of resilience, a legal heritage built on democracy and the rule of law, and a cultural identity that spans the Atlantic. For over twenty years, we have worked alongside our Caribbean neighbours as an Associate Member. This relationship has served us well, but it has reached its structural limits.



The Government of Bermuda believes the evidence strongly supports a transition from Associate to Full Membership and has initiated this Green Paper to present that case transparently, examine the commitments involved, and invite public scrutiny before any final decision is taken. Our position is clear: **pursuing Full Membership in CARICOM is a strategic necessity for Bermuda’s long-term resilience and prosperity.**

Green Paper Purpose

This Green Paper lays out the strategic framework and research that underpins this opportunity. It is designed to move the national conversation beyond sentiment and into a detailed examination of how Full Membership functions in practice. Its purpose is to anchor the public debate in three core areas:

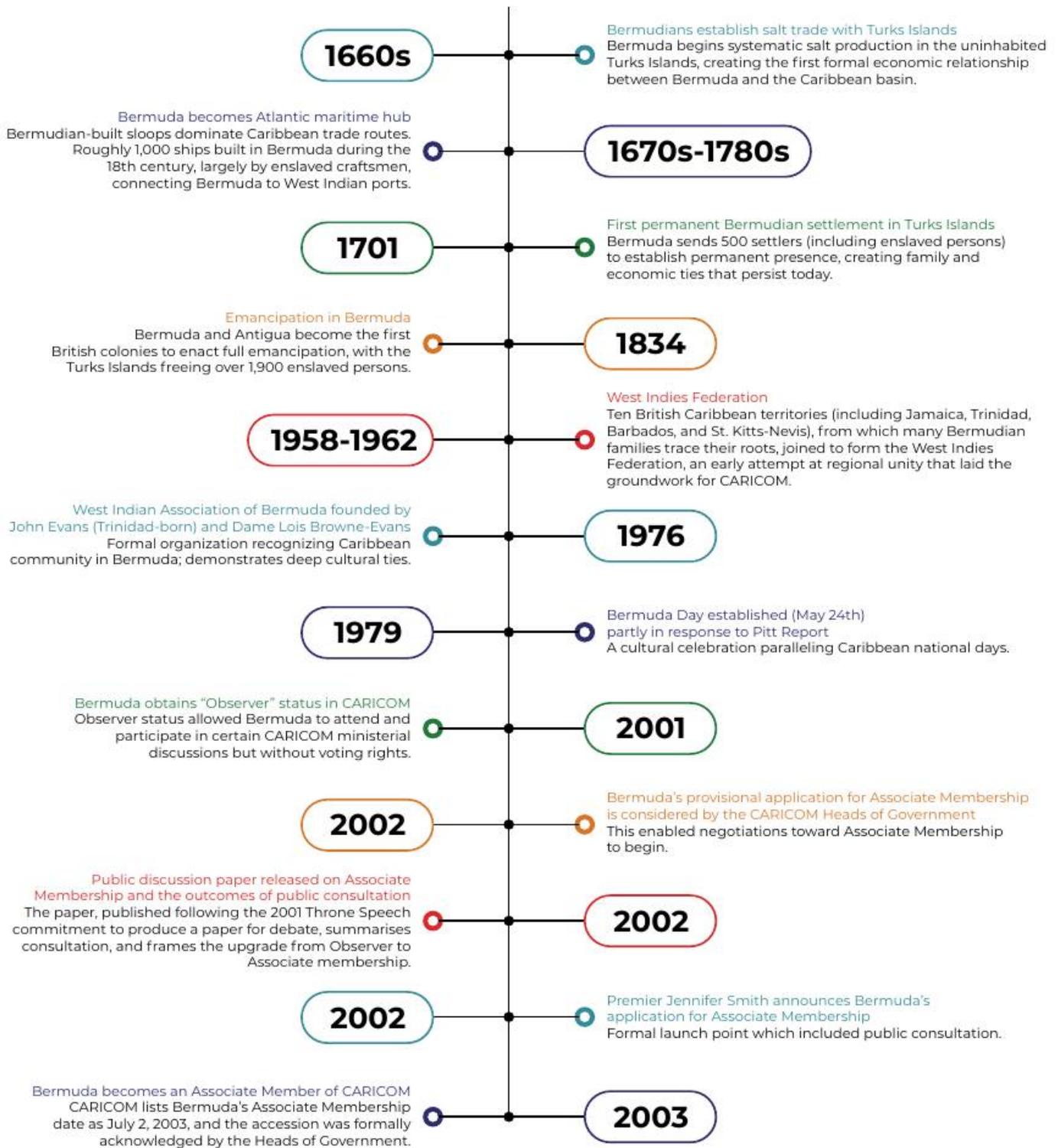


A Legacy of Deliberate Progress

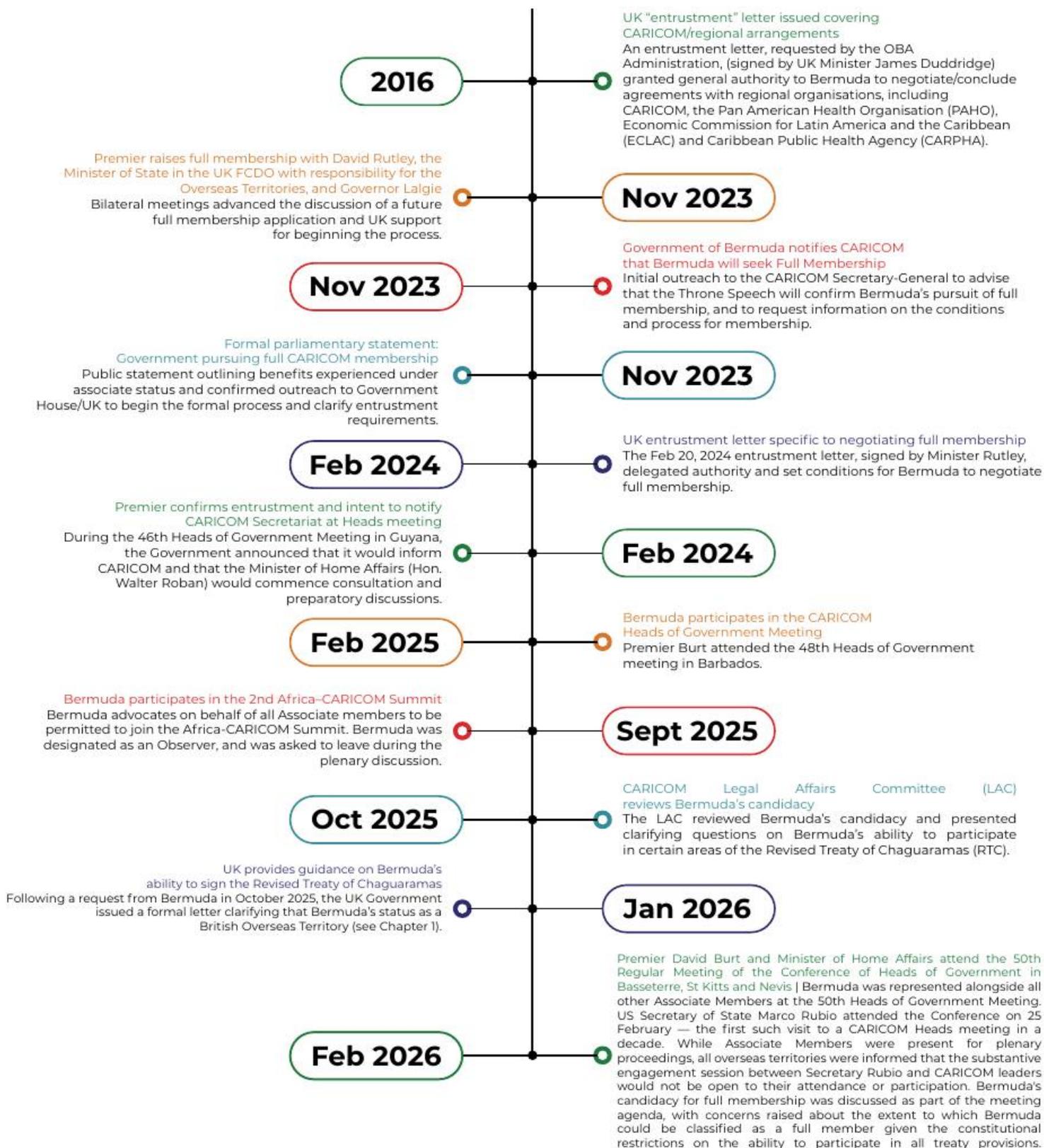
Our journey toward Full Membership is a natural step after nearly 30 years of involvement in CARICOM. It does not constitute a sudden policy shift. We are not joining a new family; we are claiming a seat at the table of a family to which we have always belonged.

Today, in a world of global inflation, supply chain shocks, and climate emergencies, the status of Associate Member no longer provides **the protection and access Bermuda will require to thrive in the 21st Century.** The alternative is to remain as we are. Associate Membership has served Bermuda for over two decades and continues to provide a framework for regional cooperation. However, as this paper demonstrates, that framework has reached structural limits that prevent Bermuda from participating in the decisions, partnerships, and financing mechanisms that are now shaping the region’s future. The question this paper puts before Bermudians is whether those limits are acceptable, or whether the time has come to seek full partnership.

Bermuda's CARICOM Relationship Timeline



Bermuda's CARICOM Relationship Timeline (cont.)



The Path Forward

This Green Paper asks Bermudians to consider a practical proposition: that the Caribbean is not only where our cultural and family roots lie, but where many of the solutions to our most pressing policy challenges already exist.

Bermuda routinely looks externally for consultants, technical expertise, and policy models, often at considerable expense, and with results that require significant adaptation to our context. Yet across the Caribbean, governments managing economies of comparable scale are developing approaches to the same challenges we face: cost of living pressures, climate adaptation, healthcare delivery, workforce development, and economic diversification. Their solutions are built for small island realities. They operate within similar legal traditions.

Full CARICOM membership is the mechanism that turns this proximity into partnership. The chapters that follow set out in detail what membership would mean: what Bermuda gains, what Bermuda commits to, and where the limits of our participation lie. Across each of these areas, the underlying proposition is that acting alongside fifteen member states gives Bermuda the collective weight to secure trade opportunities, development finance, technical cooperation, and a greater voice in regional and global forums.

“

“The thousands gathered in the sub-zero weather at the City Hall to urge on the birthing of the new world reflected the diversity that seeds the solidarity that will be needed for the difficult journey forward.”

”

- Glenn Fubler





Chapter 1

Understanding Full Membership in CARICOM

What is CARICOM?

CARICOM is a regional organisation that brings together Caribbean countries and territories to promote economic growth, social progress, and collective action on shared challenges. It is not a political union; each member retains its own government and national identity while working collectively for shared benefit.

CARICOM was established by the 1973 Treaty of Chaguaramas, and was later revised in 2001 to introduce the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME), an economic integration initiative that promotes trade, investment, and optional free movement among member states.

The Revised Treaty has moved CARICOM from primarily a cooperative arrangement to a more integrated economic and legal framework aimed at strengthening the region's economic development, competitiveness, and global integration.

The Revised Treaty seeks to:

- Improve standards of living and work in CARICOM states
- Achieve full employment and sustained economic development
- Promote economic integration, trade liberalisation, and competitiveness
- Ensure equitable economic development
- Coordinate foreign and trade policies
- Strengthen functional cooperation (education, health, culture, security)

The Establishment of CARICOM

The idea of Caribbean unity has deep roots. In 1958, 10 British Caribbean territories formed the West Indies Federation, an early attempt to bring the islands together under a single governance framework. Although the Federation ended in 1962, it left behind a commitment to regional cooperation and common institutions such as the University of the West Indies.

In 1965, several Caribbean countries established the Caribbean Free Trade Association (CARIFTA) to strengthen trade within the region. By the early 1970s, however, it became clear that a free trade area alone was insufficient. As the United Kingdom prepared to join the European Economic Community, Caribbean states faced the potential loss of long-standing trade preferences, exposing the vulnerability of small island economies that were dependent on external markets.

Caribbean leaders recognised the need for a deeper form of cooperation that extended beyond trade to include social development, common services, and coordinated policies in other sectors. In 1973, this vision took shape with the signing of the Treaty of Chaguaramas, which established CARICOM. The Treaty, revised over time, continues to guide the organisation's work and commitments today.

Membership in CARICOM

CARICOM has two levels of participation:



Full Members

take part in all decision-making and enjoy the full rights and responsibilities of the Community.

Associate Members

may participate in many areas of work but cannot vote.

Full Members

1. Antigua and Barbuda
2. Barbados
3. The Bahamas
4. Belize
5. Dominica
6. Grenada
7. Guyana
8. Haiti
9. Jamaica
10. Montserrat
**Montserrat is the only British Overseas Territory with full membership. It is considered a Protocol Member since it never signed the Revised Treaty.*
11. Saint Kitts and Nevis
12. Saint Lucia
13. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
14. Suriname
15. Trinidad and Tobago

Associate Members

1. Anguilla
 2. Bermuda
 3. British Virgin Islands
 4. Cayman Islands
 5. Curaçao*
 6. Martinique*
 7. Turks and Caicos Islands
- *All are British Overseas Territories, with the exception of Curaçao and Martinique.

CARICOM continues to grow. Curaçao became an Associate Member in 2024, and Martinique signed the Agreement to become an Associate Member in 2025. As of February 2026, the Turks and Caicos Islands and the British Virgin Islands have indicated their interest in exploring full membership, with both territories represented at the 50th Heads of Government Meeting by their Deputy Premier and Premier respectively.

Bermuda's Constitutional Status and its Limits

Bermuda's path toward full CARICOM membership is shaped, and constrained, by its constitutional status as a British Overseas Territory. Unlike the sovereign states that make up CARICOM's existing membership, Bermuda does not hold independent authority over its own external affairs. Under Section 60(1) of the Bermuda Constitution Order 1968, the Governor, is responsible for the conduct of business with respect to external affairs, defence (including armed forces), internal security, and the police. These are known as the Governor's "reserved powers," and they reflect the UK's fundamental constitutional responsibilities for Bermuda.

The UK has progressively expanded Bermuda's room to engage regionally through a series of Letters of Entrustment, formal delegations of authority under Section 60(2) of the Constitution. The 2009 Letter of Entrustment granted Bermuda general authority to negotiate and conclude trade agreements relating to goods and services. The 2016 Letter supplemented this by authorising the Government to engage directly with Caribbean regional organisations, including CARICOM, PAHO, ECLAC, and CARPHA, and to conclude agreements within their ambit. Most significantly, the 2024 Letter of Entrustment, issued on 20 February 2024 by then-UK Minister David Rutley, specifically authorised Bermuda to "negotiate with CARICOM and its member states for Bermuda to become a full member of that organisation."

However, the 2024 Letter comes with conditions that define the boundaries of what any membership agreement can contain. In particular, it requires that Bermuda's representative abstains on any issues under discussion in CARICOM that have a direct bearing on external relations, defence, or security, and disassociates from any statement made by CARICOM on such matters. It further stipulates that any proposed text for Bermuda's full membership must be submitted to the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, and that a further Letter of Entrustment will be required before Bermuda can formally enter into any agreement for full membership.

These conditions do not prevent Bermuda from becoming a full CARICOM member, but they do shape the kind of member Bermuda can be.

The current Agreement between the Caribbean Community and the Government of Bermuda was signed on 2 July 2003 at the Twenty-Fourth Meeting of the Conference in Montego Bay, Jamaica.

It is important to note that the vast majority of CARICOM's practical work falls within Bermuda's delegated authority. Bermuda would be able to participate fully in shaping regional policy on health and education (through COHSOD), trade and economic development (through COTED, on most matters), food and nutrition security, climate resilience and disaster management, digital infrastructure and governance, cultural cooperation and sports, and the development of new economic sectors including the blue economy. The areas constrained by the UK's guidance relate primarily to external affairs, binding arbitration, and certain working groups with non-CARICOM partners. The clause-by-clause review of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas currently underway will establish the precise scope of Bermuda's participation and provide the clarity needed to negotiate accession terms that are meaningful in practice.

Inputs from the UK Government

The UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) has issued two "Letters of Entrustment" since 2016, which delegate certain powers to the Government of Bermuda to engage with CARICOM, and broadly define how Bermuda could participate in CARICOM as a full member.

March 2016 - Letter of Entrustment - General Authority for Regional Cooperation

The UK granted the Government of Bermuda general authority to conclude both bilateral and multilateral agreements with Caribbean regional groups. Subject to the conditions of the 2009 Entrustment, Bermuda is permitted to:

1. Negotiate and sign agreements within the scope of CARICOM, the Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO), the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA), or other regional organisations.
2. Engage directly in other Caribbean regional affairs that are of interest to or affect Bermuda.

February 2024 - Letter of Entrustment - Authority to Negotiate Full Membership

The UK authorised Bermuda to enter negotiations for Full Membership in CARICOM. The UK clarified its key requirements for Bermuda's membership:

1. The UK retains overall responsibility for Bermuda's external affairs.
2. Bermuda is required to abstain from discussions with a direct bearing on external relations, defense, or security, and must disassociate itself from any CARICOM statements on these matters.

January 2026 - Guidance to Clarify the UK's Position on the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas

The UK provided further input on how Bermuda's status as a British Overseas Territory will constrain its participation in certain parts of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas (RTC) and the wider rights and obligations of full membership in CARICOM:

1. Bermuda may associate itself with CARICOM statements related to external affairs only where they are consistent with UK policy and the Bermuda Constitution. The UK will evaluate this on a case-by-case basis.
2. Bermuda is not automatically authorised to represent itself in CARICOM's working groups with external global partners (such as China or the EU).
3. Bermuda cannot participate in binding arbitration within CARICOM, as Bermuda does not have an international legal personality separate from the UK.
4. Any participation in CARICOM's "Free Movement" provisions requires careful consideration by the UK, specifically regarding how such moves might impact access to British nationality or future migration pathways to the UK.

Bermuda's Approach to the CSME: Measured Integration

The Government recognises the CSME as a core pillar of CARICOM's integration framework and is committed to engaging with it constructively. At the same time, Bermuda's economic profile is distinct: our high concentration of international businesses, specialised labour market, and small physical size require an approach to integration that is tailored to our circumstances. This is consistent with the flexibility built into the CARICOM framework itself, which allows member states to calibrate their participation to reflect national realities.

What is the CSME?

The Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME) was established by the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas in 2001. The CSME is designed to create a single, unified economic space where goods, services, capital, and people move without barriers, giving small island economies greater scale and strength.

The Government recognises that the CSME is a central pillar of the CARICOM integration framework and that member states' willingness to engage with its provisions is a measure of their commitment to the Community. Bermuda's approach is to begin with targeted engagement in areas where our participation can be immediate and substantive, with a view to broadening that engagement over time as the legal and institutional conditions allow. This approach is consistent with the practice of existing members. The Bahamas remains a Full Member that does not participate in the CSME. Montserrat, the only British Overseas Territory with Full Membership, operates under comparable constitutional constraints. Haiti participates on modified terms that reflect its unique circumstances. Bermuda's proposed negotiating positions, set out below, are starting positions for discussion with CARICOM member states, not fixed limits.

The CSME is built upon five pillars:



The Treaty commits member states to:

- | A Common External Tariff (CET) for importing goods from outside of CARICOM
- | Harmonised trade, industrial, agricultural, and competition policies
- | Rules on anti-dumping, subsidies, and safeguards
- | Promotion of private sector development and small and medium enterprises
- | Special provisions recognise the needs of Less Developed Countries (LDCs) within CARICOM.

The Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) was also created in 2001, which has:

- Original jurisdiction to interpret and apply the Treaty
- Authority to ensure uniform application of Community law
- A role in resolving disputes among states, institutions, businesses, and individuals

The “Single Market” is largely operational, while the “Single Economy” (macroeconomic harmonisation and possible monetary integration) remains a longer-term goal. Member countries have opportunities to negotiate country to country arrangements that fit within existing legal and regulatory frameworks that govern commercial activity in any country.

Twelve CARICOM countries currently participate in the CSME: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago. The Bahamas, Montserrat and Haiti do not participate in the CSME.

Bermuda will Protect Current State

While the Government recognises that economic integration is a powerful engine for regional growth, we also acknowledge that Bermuda’s economic profile is distinct from many of our Caribbean neighbours. Our high concentration of international businesses, specialised labour market, and small physical size mean that a “one-size-fits-all” adoption of the CSME is neither responsible nor practical for Bermuda at this time.

Bermuda's Approach to the CARICOM Single Market and Economy:

Bermuda intends to engage with the CSME on a measured, phased basis. The Bahamas provides an established precedent: as a Full Member of CARICOM that does not participate in the CSME, it demonstrates that selective engagement is an accepted and functional model within the Community. Bermuda’s approach will be guided by the following

principles:

1. **Bermuda will maintain full authority over its immigration framework and labour market.** Any engagement with the Treaty's provisions on movement of persons will be targeted and managed, designed to address specific workforce needs identified by Bermuda due to our size and also viability. The Government is proposing a structured approach that would facilitate access to skills and qualifications that align with Bermuda's economic priorities, while preserving Bermuda's existing work permit system and immigration controls.

2. **Bermuda will enter specific reservations where the Treaty's obligations would require Bermuda to dismantle regulatory frameworks.** This protects our economic model, particularly in financial services, which accounts for the majority of Government revenue and is subject to rigorous international supervisory standards. Bermuda has proposed targeted cooperation alternatives in these sectors that enable regional partnership without compromising domestic regulatory integrity.

CSME Pillar	Government's Position
Free Movement of Skilled Persons	<p>We are protective. Bermuda will not accept open borders. We will continue to manage its labour market through the existing work permit system, under which Bermudian employment is always the first priority. Where positions remain unfilled by Bermudians, the Government intends to develop a awareness channel through CARICOM that connects qualified Caribbean professionals with opportunities such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Accountants · Actuaries · Registered Nurses · Butcher · Beauticians · Landscape Gardeners · Masons · Underwriters · Secondary Education Teachers
Free Movement of Goods	<p>We are engaged, with targeted protections. Bermuda supports the principle of regional trade integration and will not introduce new restrictions on imports or exports of Community origin other than as permitted under the Treaty and will seek to advance legislative reforms to enhance participation.</p>
Free Movement of Services	<p>We are measured. While we want to open new markets for our professional (re)insurance and financial firms, we will seek to preserve the "60/40" rule and other domestic protections that ensure local companies remain competitive within our own borders.</p>
Free Movement of Capital	<p>We will manage risks. We aim to facilitate high-value investment while ensuring that our "blue-chip" regulatory standards and anti-money laundering frameworks are never compromised.</p>
Right of Establishment for Businesses	<p>We will safeguard. Bermuda will maintain the right to distinguish between local and "exempted" companies to protect the ability of Bermudian-owned businesses to carry on and compete for business locally.</p>

Where We Are Now And What Comes Next

The final terms of Bermuda's accession have not yet been agreed. Under Article 237 of the Revised Treaty, Bermuda's reservations must be specified in writing and consented to by the existing signatory states. (Article 237 establishes that any territory seeking membership may accede to the Treaty on such terms and conditions as the Conference may decide, ensuring that Bermuda's specific participation scope is agreed rather than imposed.)

Under the 2024 Letter of Entrustment, the proposed membership text must be submitted to the UK for review, and a further Letter of Entrustment must be issued before Bermuda can formally accede. These are constitutional requirements, not discretionary steps.

The Government has completed the detailed, article-by-article review that both CARICOM and the UK have required. The reservations Bermuda is advancing are targeted, covering four areas: immigration and labour market management; regulatory authority over financial services and key economic sectors; Bermuda's existing legal structures, including the inapplicability of binding international dispute settlement to a non-sovereign territory; and the constitutional requirement that external relations, defence, and security remain subject to UK authority under the Governor's reserved powers. Where they reflect domestic policy choices, they remain subject to negotiation with CARICOM member states.

This Green Paper is part of that process. Public feedback will directly inform the positions the Government advances with the CARICOM Secretariat, the Legal Affairs Committee, the Conference of Heads of Government, and the UK. The objective is to secure membership terms that give Bermuda a meaningful voice in the Caribbean Community and access to the opportunities full membership affords while maintaining the immigration controls, labour market protections, regulatory sovereignty, and fiscal independence that underpin our domestic stability and economic success.

The Cost of Membership

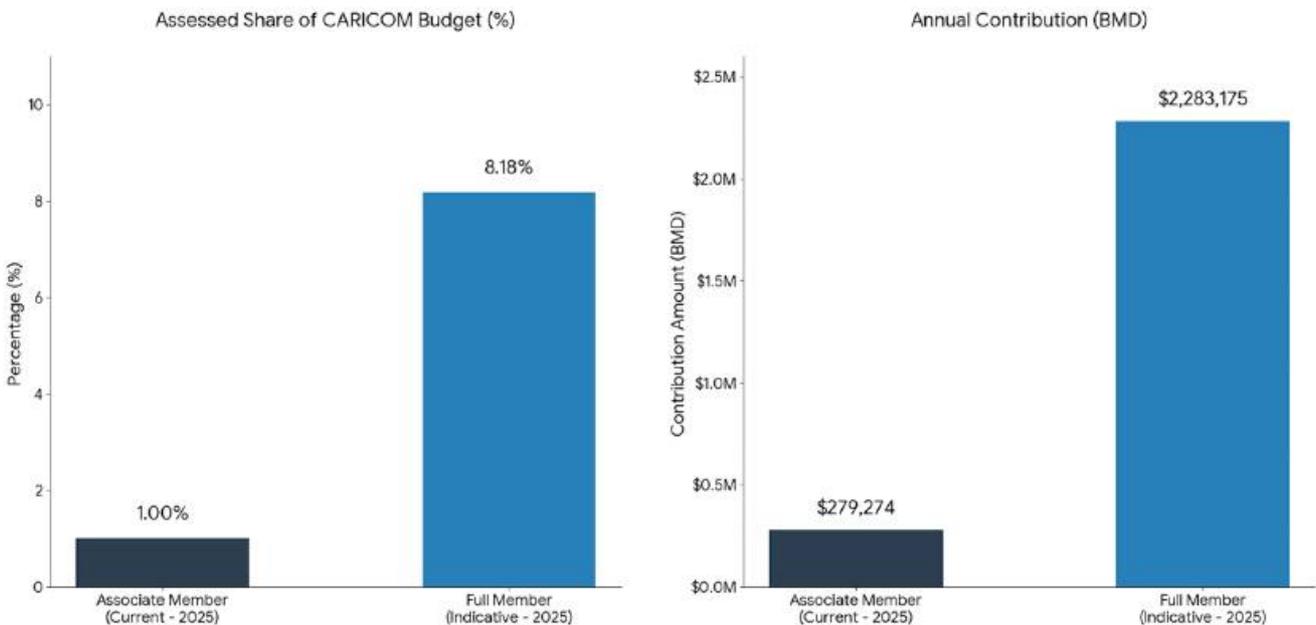
The CARICOM Secretariat and its programmes are funded through annual contributions from all Member States and Associate Members. Moving to Full Membership involves a change in status and proposes greater input, and full access to the Community's resources. Correspondingly, Bermuda would also assume a larger financial responsibility.



How Bermuda's Membership Contribution is Calculated

CARICOM determines how much each member country pays each year using a formula designed to be fair and based on a country's ability to pay.

1. CARICOM assesses each country's economic strength, measured using its GDP (Gross Domestic Product), averaged over a period of three years. For some members, the formula also adjusts GDP to reflect debt levels, so countries with heavier debt burdens are not unfairly penalised.
2. Once all countries' adjusted GDP figures are compared, each country is assigned a percentage share of the total CARICOM budget. Bigger and wealthier economies generally receive a larger share, while smaller economies receive a smaller share.
3. After this calculation, CARICOM adjusts the contributions using rules approved by the Community Council of Ministers to make sure contributions remain reasonable and balanced.
 - a. Associate Members pay a fixed 1% of the budget, regardless of size.
 - b. Haiti pays a fixed 6%, recognising its unique economic circumstances.
 - c. More Developed Countries (MDCs) must pay at least 7% of the budget.
 - d. No single country can be asked to pay more than 22% of the total budget.



Source: Caribbean Community Secretariat (Aug 19 2025)

Current Contribution (Associate Member): In 2025, Bermuda's assessed contribution as an Associate Member was approximately \$279,000.

Indicative Contribution (Full Member): In August 2025, the CARICOM Secretariat provided an estimate of \$2.28 million for Bermuda's contribution as a Full Member.

Becoming a Full Member in CARICOM represents an annual increase to our contribution of approximately \$2 million, reflecting the transition from a partial participant to a core member. To put this in perspective, the estimated \$2.28 million contribution corresponds to approximately 0.16 percent of the Government of Bermuda's 2025/26 annual expenditure, a fraction of the national budget committed to unlocking high-value benefits currently unavailable to us on our own or under our limited Associate Member status.

Note: The figure above is derived from CARICOM's standard methodology for calculating member contributions. However, Bermuda's membership terms will include specific reservations on treaty provisions where participation is not possible under our constitutional framework. The scope of Bermuda's actual participation in CARICOM activities will therefore be narrower than that of a fully sovereign member state with no reservations. The Government's position is that Bermuda's financial contribution should reflect the terms of membership it is able to accept. The final contribution will be determined through negotiation with the CARICOM Secretariat as part of the accession process.

A Strategic Investment in Our Future

The Government views the membership contribution as a strategic investment into a regional platform that provides two primary economic advantages, currently unavailable to us on our own or under our limited Associate Member status:

- Policy efficiency through collaboration with similar peers
- Market connectivity by tapping into the Community's network of economic opportunities

Full Membership changes our trajectory from being a spectator to becoming a shareholder, granting us access to regional and global opportunities that we simply cannot reach on our own.

The "Peer Effect": Policy Efficiency

Working alongside 15 regional partners who share our economic and institutional profile allows us to reduce costs by tackling critical policy issues that affect us all. These include climate change, food security, cost of living, and international regulatory pressures on issues like beneficial ownership and banking "de-risking". We will benefit from co-developing solutions for shared challenges while pooling administrative costs.

Actively participating in initiatives like CARICOM's "25 by 2025" food security initiative (launched under Guyana's presidency to increase regional food production by 25% and reduce the Caribbean's food import bill).

Strengthening and shaping regional cooperation on early-warning systems, preparedness and adaptation through shared institutions and partnerships. Contribute to the global advocacy of CARICOM and its member countries on fairer access to climate finance, including through Bridgetown Initiative, Loss and Damage Fund, and Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI).



Access to New, High-Growth Markets

Bermuda is no stranger to international commerce. Our (re)insurance and financial services sectors operate globally, and the Government maintains productive bilateral relationships with key partners. These relationships, however, are concentrated in established markets; primarily the United States, the United Kingdom, and Europe.

CARICOM membership is about expanding the map. Bermuda seeks to deepen relationships to complement what Bermuda already has. This also facilitates a collective negotiating weight that no small jurisdiction can generate alone.

New markets for Bermudian business: CARICOM's expanding partnerships create pathways for Bermudian firms in (re)insurance, FinTech, professional services, and tourism to reach new customer bases.

Foreign Direct Investment: Membership opens doors to new capital pools for investment in Bermudian businesses, including the US\$5 billion Afreximbank facility for CARICOM members (expanded from US\$3 billion at the 50th HGC in February 2026) and the new UAE comprehensive economic partnership currently being negotiated with the Community.

Infrastructure Investment: The Saudi Fund for Development has committed significant resources to individual CARICOM members; approximately \$100 million to Barbados, \$75 million to St. Lucia, \$55 million to The Bahamas, \$50 million to St. Vincent and the Grenadines, \$41 million to Dominica, and \$40 million to St. Kitts and Nevis. A second Saudi-CARICOM Summit is planned for 2026. As an Associate Member, Bermuda is not eligible for these facilities.

Technical assistance and public service capacity building: The Canada-CARICOM Expert Deployment Mechanism provides member state governments with Canadian technical expertise, at no cost, in governance, economic diversification, and climate resilience. The Treaty itself, under Article 157, provides for assistance in legislative drafting, trade compliance, competition policy, and the training of public service employees. For a jurisdiction where the public service carries the full range of government functions with limited specialist depth, this kind of targeted support is a force multiplier.



Chapter 2

Why Bermuda Should Pursue Full CARICOM Membership



“

"Establishing a link with CARICOM is a natural expression of historical, cultural and ancestral ties that bind Bermuda to the Caribbean region. The bond goes deeper than the economic and tangible; it includes a shared history, blood relations and cultural affinities."

”

- Dame Jennifer Smith, 2002

Bermuda must be clear-eyed about what CARICOM membership can and cannot be. Our constitutional framework means there will always be areas of the Treaty where we participate with reservations. That is the reality this Green Paper has set out in detail.

But that reality does not diminish the opportunity. It defines it.

In an increasingly volatile global environment, where trade disruptions, supply chain fragility, climate emergencies, and shifting geopolitical alignments, Bermuda faces the same pressures as every other small island economy in the Caribbean. The rising cost of imported goods. Energy insecurity. The escalating cost of climate adaptation. The challenge of economic diversification beyond a narrow base.

What CARICOM offers is the ability to confront these shared challenges through coordinated trade policy that strengthens purchasing power, through joint approaches to climate financing and resilience infrastructure, through access to development partnerships and technical cooperation that no territory of 64,000 people could command on its own.

The membership Bermuda is pursuing will not be identical to that of a sovereign member state. But it can deliver tangible benefits to Bermudians in the areas that matter most: the cost of living, economic opportunity, climate preparedness, and regional standing.

Our Similarities are a Launchpad for Shared Prosperity

Bermuda shares a wide range of common traits with the Caribbean; more extensive than with any other region globally. These ties are not just historical or symbolic; they offer unique strategic benefits that can only be fully realised through Full Membership in CARICOM.

What Connects Bermuda to CARICOM?



Note: Bermuda's ability to fully pursue the below opportunities will be restricted by our constitutional status as a British Overseas Territory. In its January 2026 guidance, the UK Government signaled that it intends to maintain tight control over matters related to external affairs, including:

1. The UK will not automatically permit Bermuda to take part in CARICOM working groups with external partners.
2. Bermuda can only associate itself with CARICOM statements related to external affairs where they are consistent with UK policy and the Bermuda Constitution.
3. Bermuda cannot participate in binding arbitration within CARICOM, as Bermuda does not have an international legal personality separate from the UK.

See Chapter 1 for further details.

Shared Economic Challenges

Bermuda is a small island economy deeply dependent on its external partners and friends, a reality that exposes us to significant systemic risk. Like our Caribbean neighbours in Kingston, Bridgetown, and Nassau, we face the constant pressures of small physical scale, limited economic diversity, and extreme import dependence.

The International Business sector accounts for roughly one-third of our Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which means that our national stability hinges on the health of the global economy and shifts in international regulation. This lack of diversification is a shared regional trait. For example, tourism accounted for nearly 60% of the GDP in Antigua and Barbuda, leaving both Bermuda and its neighbours highly vulnerable to external shocks.

We are also dependent on imports. Approximately 90% of what we eat comes from overseas, and 98% of our electricity is generated from imported fuel. When global shipping is disrupted or fuel prices rise, the cost of groceries, electricity, and transport rises with it. Our Caribbean neighbours live with these same pressures.

Recent history has displayed that a single policy change abroad can be devastating to the viability of our economy. For instance, when the US proposed port fees targeting Chinese-built vessels in 2025, the measure threatened to affect the primary cargo vessel serving Bermuda's food import route, exposing the fragility of a supply chain that depends on a single shipping service.

The Opportunities

Create Shared Policy Solutions

Through enhanced ties we have the opportunity to pool resources and skills to coordinate economic development policies and programmes tailored to the unique characteristics of our small island economies. We can join coordinated regional responses to external policy changes, such as CARICOM's collective advocacy in 2025, which contributed to adjustments in the US tariff regime and helped protect regional supply lines. The CARICOM Secretariat has estimated the annual value of the tariff relief secured at approximately \$653 million for regional exporters.

Create New Industries

Combine Bermuda's natural strengths with CARICOM countries to create new industries that diversify our economies. For example, Bermuda has a long history in the space sector with a National Space Strategy, and sharing ITU satellite slots with CARICOM countries, we are well-positioned to spearhead the foundation for a new Caribbean space and communications industry. At the CARICOM Heads of Government Summit in July 2025, Barbados Prime Minister Mottley underscored that sovereignty today requires control over data and communications, and that satellite capacity is essential infrastructure for the region. In collaboration with Barbados and CARICOM, we could obtain support from international organisations and partners like the United Nations KiboCube initiative and in collaboration with CARICOM's partners to jumpstart the space mandate to create new economic opportunities that benefit our country and the region more broadly.

Access New Markets in the Caribbean and Globally

Stronger economic ties with CARICOM gives Bermudian businesses access to new customer bases in an 18-million-person regional economy. At the same time, CARICOM is building trade and investment ties with fast-growing markets in Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America, from which Bermuda is currently excluded.

Reduce the Cost of Living

Bermuda is on the sidelines of Caribbean solutions to address the cost of living and supply chain challenges. We observe the efforts of Guyana's President, Dr. Irfaan Ali, to spearhead CARICOM's "25 by 2025" programme to increase food production and offset costly imports. Other CARICOM leaders are also taking steps to strengthen supply chains through new cargo shipping routes, an inter-island ferry service, and by potentially acquiring cargo aircraft. Bermuda deserves to benefit from these collective discussions.

Shared Climate Reality

The growing impact of climate change has cemented the reality that Bermuda and the Caribbean share the same risks and vulnerabilities. Bermudians rebuild after hurricanes just as our Caribbean neighbours do, and face the same rising insurance costs, damaged homes, and eroded coastlines.

Since 2000, the Atlantic has experienced more Category 4 and 5 hurricanes than in the four previous decades combined. In October 2025, Hurricane Melissa demonstrated this escalating force as one of the most intense storms on record. While Bermuda suffered widespread disruption and power loss for 20,000 households, Jamaica faced a catastrophic \$8.8 billion loss, equivalent to a staggering 41% of its GDP.



Our shared risk has already forged a bond of mutual support. Bermuda has consistently deployed the Bermuda Regiment to support regional recovery, most notably after Hurricanes Ivan (2004), Irma, and Maria (2017). Conversely, Caribbean utility crews have supported Bermuda's recovery through CARILEC following major events like Hurricane Fabian.

Bermuda already attends regional organisation meetings such as the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC) and the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF).

The Opportunities

Regional Disaster Response and Resilience Efforts

Enhanced ties facilitate deepened participation in regional efforts to mitigate shared climate risks. Greater participation in regional bodies like the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) can provide Bermuda access to shared resources and funding necessary to protect our wellbeing in the face of escalating climate risks, such as Japan-funded upgrades to the Caribbean Multi-Hazard Early Warning System, improving early warning, preparedness, and resilience against natural disasters.

Influence Global Conversations on Climate Finance

Working with CARICOM countries, Bermuda can pursue access to much-needed climate finance to address our vulnerabilities. CARICOM and its countries' leaders are championing the case for more abundant and accessible climate finance; critical funding to help us build resilience and recover after disasters. Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley is championing the Bridgetown Initiative to call for financial system reform, Antigua and Barbuda Prime Minister Gaston Browne has spearheaded the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index for fairer access to finance, and CARICOM has been instrumental in the creation of a global Loss and Damage Fund. Working with the Caribbean, Bermuda will have a pathway to influence global discourse on climate change and resilience that directly affects each of us.



Leadership in Climate Insurance

Bermuda is already a global leader in (re)insurance and InsurTech. By working directly with a region that is leading the global conversation on climate finance, Bermuda can establish itself as the undisputed global focal point for climate risk finance. This partnership creates a massive growth opportunity for new financial products that protect islands and accelerate the energy transition, turning our local expertise into a regional and global industry standard.

Unique Geography as “Large Ocean States”

The sea has always been the thread that links Bermuda to the Caribbean and beyond. By the early 18th century, Bermuda maintained one of the largest merchant fleets in the British Atlantic. Bermudian vessels, built from native cedar by skilled Black shipwrights, developed a three-part trade circuit: carrying workers and supplies to the Turks Islands for salt production, transporting salt to North American ports for the fishing industry, and

“Rapidly the Bermudians became major players in the Colonial carrying trade, assisted by their very uniquely designed and highly cost effective small Sloops. Both they and their vessels became completely integrated into, and a very visible part of, life in the Caribbean and North American world of the 1690s and early 18th century.”

— Blood & Pigment, "Leopards of the Seas: Bermuda Sloops in the Golden Age of Piracy"

returning home with provisions. This "triangle trade" positioned Bermuda as a critical node linking the greater Caribbean, the American mainland, and the Atlantic world. The ocean defines our geography, our cultural heritage, and is central to our common identity.

While the United Nations designates has Bermuda and its Caribbean peers as Small Island Developing States (SIDS), a term that emphasises our vulnerability to climate change and economic shocks, Caribbean leaders, led by Prime Minister Mia Mottley of Barbados, are actively shifting this narrative to define us as “Large Ocean States”. This recognises that we are not defined by our vulnerabilities and small landmasses, but by the vast, resource-rich ocean territories we steward; reshaping how our island countries see, protect, and invest in our marine wealth.

In the case of Bermuda, our land may cover just fifty-three square kilometres, but our Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) extends across nearly 465,000, placing us among the world’s largest countries.

The Opportunities

Drive Blue Economy Growth

The ocean is perhaps our greatest economic asset, offering opportunities for long-term prosperity when managed sustainably. By aligning regulatory frameworks, encouraging joint research and industry collaboration with CARICOM peers, Bermuda can accelerate the growth of its own high-tech Blue Economy. This could include co-developing policies that support areas like sustainable fisheries, marine biotechnology, and ocean-based renewable energy. Rather than building these sectors in isolation, Bermuda can share

resources and expertise with regional neighbours who are already undertaking collective initiatives, such as the formulation of CARICOM's Regional Ocean Governance Policy and Ocean Governance Framework.

Access Blue Economy Investment

Closer cooperation with CARICOM opens doors to large-scale "blue" financing and investment pipelines that typically target regional blocs rather than individual islands. By participating in regional industry development, Bermuda can strengthen its position to attract capital for both public infrastructure and private-sector innovation. For example, in July 2025, CARICOM and Germany formalised cooperation in six areas including Blue Economy, and capacity building for employment in emerging 'green and blue' sectors. This participation is limited to full CARICOM members.

Protect our Marine Ecosystems

Shared threats to our marine environment require shared solutions. Aligning with regional programmes allows for the exchange of data and technologies dedicated to protecting our natural assets. For instance, Bermuda's reef restoration efforts can be strengthened by integrating with regional networks like the Bahamas Reef Rescue Network, to share resources for "Super Coral" cultivation and large-scale outplanting.

A Voice in Global Ocean Governance

As a British Overseas Territory, Bermuda is unable to participate in bodies such as the United Nations, International Maritime Organization, or Convention on Biological Diversity. Collaborating with CARICOM and its partner Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), would give Bermuda a voice on the international stage on the issues that impact us, such as global ocean policy. CARICOM, for example, has been a leading voice in negotiating the High Seas Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction Agreement (BBNJ) to secure fair benefit-sharing, financing, and capacity-building for small island states.

“ Many of the Bermudan slaves would have been trained as sailors, which was not surprising because Bermuda's main business was trading by sea, mostly salt from the Turks Islands. ”

— Turks and Caicos Museum

Common Institutional DNA

Bermuda shares a common institutional history with CARICOM countries, including a common-law legal system and the Westminster model of government. Our shared frameworks have matured into a common democratic rhythm: parliaments that welcome open debate, courts that apply fairness and precedent, and public institutions that are built on



Furthermore, our countries govern on similar complex issues, such as our need to develop world-class regulatory frameworks for Anti-Money Laundering (AML), Counter-Terrorist Financing (CTF), and economic substance to address mounting international regulatory pressure.

The Opportunities

Institutional alignment allows us to collaborate on governance solutions rather than "reinventing the wheel" in isolation. For Bermudians, partnership can deliver a more responsive and efficient government that leverages the combined expertise of many other countries to solve local problems building on the combined investment in external expertise.

Collaborate on Legislation and Regulation

Collaboration enables knowledge sharing of efficient and streamlined regulatory frameworks for emerging issues like Artificial Intelligence (AI) governance. The June 2025 CARICOM School of Digital Transformation and Innovation (SoDTIC) already serves as a shared tool to support the region's governance of emerging technologies.

Deploy Shared Technology Solutions

Through full membership, Bermuda can join CARICOM full member countries in the co-development of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) solutions for our governments, in areas like data protection and digital identity, improving the quality and speed of government services for every citizen. A prime example of this success is the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA), which has already deployed region-wide digital disease surveillance systems that allow countries to coordinate responses in real-time.

Cultural, Historical and Ancestral Ties

Bermuda's history is linked to the broader Atlantic story of migration and resilience. The same ships that carried our ancestors in slavery across the Middle Passage established permanent links between us and the Greater Caribbean, creating shared foundations in language, faith, and family structures. These ancestral ties remain active today through the countless Bermudian families with direct relations in cities like Bridgetown, Kingston, and Nassau.

The Salt Trade: Foundation of Shared History

From the 1660s, Bermudian seafarers discovered that the uninhabited Turks Islands, at the southern end of the Bahamas archipelago, offered ideal conditions for salt production. What began as an informal collection evolved into a sophisticated industry that shaped both territories for three centuries.

Bermudian sloops arrived each February, leaving enslaved workers and overseers to rake salt through the summer months. The ships returned in November to collect the "white gold" and transport it to North American and Caribbean markets. By 1772, Bermuda was supplying nearly 40 million pounds of salt annually to the American colonies.

Bermuda's constitutional claim to the Turks Islands, contested with the Bahamas throughout the 18th century, reflected how deeply intertwined these island communities had become. Family names crossed between territories including Bradshaw, Charles, Thomas, Scott, Crichton, Lambert, Smith, Bean, Crisson, DeGraff, Durham, Adderley, Haskell, Wood, Spencer, Frith, Talbot, and Tatem and are found on both sides of this historic

connection to this day.

This shared heritage is most visible in our traditions of resistance and celebration. While our CARICOM neighbours celebrate survival through Carnival, Crop Over, or Junkanoo, Bermuda expresses that same spirit of emancipation through Cup Match and our Gombey dancers.

Mary Prince and Emancipation

The connections between Bermuda and the Caribbean were also forged through the shared experience of enslavement. Mary Prince, born enslaved in Bermuda in 1788, was sold to owners in the Turks Islands and later Antigua before arriving in London. Her narrative was the first account by an enslaved Black woman published in Britain which galvanized the abolition movement.



When the British Parliament passed the Slavery Abolition Act in 1833, Bermuda and Antigua became the first colonies to implement full emancipation on August 1, 1834. Over 1,900 enslaved persons were freed on the Turks Islands alone. This shared date of liberation, now commemorated in Bermuda's Cup Match holiday and across the Caribbean, marks a common passage from bondage to freedom.

These are all regional expressions of a common journey from enslavement, to emancipation to modern-day empowerment. This connection underpins our enduring social values of community, fairness, and self-reliance.

The Drum That Binds Us

The Gombey is a living thread connecting Bermuda to West Africa and the wider Caribbean. Scholars have traced this tradition directly to the masking ceremonies of the Igbo people of Nigeria, whose Agaba and Mgbedike masks embodied strength and spirituality. As enslaved Africans were scattered across the Americas, these traditions evolved into Jamaica's Jonkonnu, the Bahamas' Junkanoo, St. Kitts' Masquerade, and Bermuda's Gombey, all descendants of customs that enslaved people kept alive against extraordinary odds.



Jonkonnu



Agaba Mask



Mgbedike Mask



Gombey

African Musical Elements Across the Caribbean and Bermuda



Call-and-Response

- West African vocal tradition; communal singing patterns
- Calypso, mento, reggae, soca; "chantwell" tradition
- Gombey snare drum call-and-response patterns

Polyrhythmic Drumming

- Multiple interlocking rhythms; batá drums (Yoruba), djembe
- Rumba (Cuba), kumina (Jamaica), shango (Trinidad)
- Gombey Mother drum (bass) + snare drums + side drums



Goombay/Gumba Drums

- Igbo box drums
- Bahamian Goombay; Jamaican kumina drums
- Gombey drum tradition (name derived from same root)

Steel Pan

- 20th century innovation)
- Trinidad: steelpan invented 1930s
- Bermuda: Esso Steel Band (1950s+); steelpan culture adopted



Calypso/Soca

- West African kaiso tradition
- Trinidad: calypso, soca; pan-Caribbean spread
- Bermuda: calypso adopted; Bermuda Strollers internationally known

The word "Gombey" itself shares its root with the Bahamian "Goombay," both derived from African words meaning "rhythm" or "drum." When Bermuda's Gombey drummers play, they use a configuration found across the African diaspora: a Mother drum providing the heartbeat, snare drums creating rhythmic conversation through call and response, and side drums layering complexity. This polyrhythmic structure of multiple interlocking rhythms creating a unified whole is a direct inheritance from West Africa.

In 1761, the Bermuda legislature moved to suppress Gombey dancing following a slave conspiracy, an act that reveals how colonial authorities viewed African cultural expression as a genuine threat to their power. Rather than seeing dancing as mere entertainment, they recognized it as a coded form of communication, community solidarity, and cultural resistance. The ban was an attempt to fracture the cultural bonds that connected enslaved and free people of color across the island. Yet what survived underground became part of Bermuda's living cultural memory, eventually resurging in Gombey, Junkanoo influences, and contemporary Caribbean music. Similar bans occurred across the Caribbean, yet the tradition survived. The suppression itself proves the drum's power: authorities would not ban something powerless.

The Dominican Republic's Guloyas and Bermuda's Gombey are direct descendants of these traditions.

“ The Guloyas feature pointed masks resembling Igbo designs, accompanied by flutes and drums reminiscent of Igbo musical styles. ”

— Ozi Ikòrò, "Cultural Continuities: The Igbo Origins and Global Legacy of Masking in the Caribbean and Americas" (2025)

The Opportunities

Tackle Social Issues

Our shared values and similar community structures mean that Caribbean regional efforts in education, social policy, and community development are more likely to succeed at home. We can solve problems for societies that look, think, and act like our own.

Africa-CARICOM Shared Identity

Bermuda's history is part of a broader transatlantic narrative. Our society was shaped by the same forces that built the modern Caribbean. This is a demographic and cultural reality that connects us to the Caribbean and, together, to a global community of more than 1.4 billion Africans and over 200 million people in the African diaspora.

The Atlantic Crossing

60%

Black Bermudians trace ancestry to West Africa and the Caribbean.

Bermuda's African heritage arrived through multiple pathways. Early enslaved Africans came directly from West Africa, but many also arrived from Caribbean colonies. Spanish-speaking populations from former Spanish territories in the West Indies alarmed white Protestant settlers as early as the mid-17th century.

This demographic reality shaped Bermuda's culture, economy, and institutions. The skill of enslaved and free Black Bermudians as shipwrights, sailors, and blacksmiths drove the colony's maritime success; and connected Bermuda permanently to the wider Caribbean world.

In 2012, the African Union (AU) formally designated the diaspora as the "Sixth Region" of Africa. This status moves the relationship beyond history and into modernity, recognising Bermuda and the Caribbean as an extension of the African continent with a formal role in its development.

Bermuda has already made significant efforts to build relationships in Africa alongside its CARICOM peers. In September 2025, Bermuda's Minister of Home Affairs, The Hon. Alexa Lightbourne, attended the Second Africa-CARICOM Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. While invitations were automatic for full CARICOM members, Bermuda only secured its participation after advocating to be included on a case-by-case basis. Despite the invitation, Bermuda was designated as an observer, excluded from agenda setting or decision-making, and the delegation was asked to leave during plenary discussions. Bermuda has also participated in the Afreximbank Afri-Caribbean Trade and Investment Forum (ACTIF) events, which directly resulted in a landmark Memorandum of Understanding on Economic, Trade and Technical Co-operation with Ghana in November 2024.

Our Story Through Cuisine

Bermudian kitchens on a Sunday morning present a scene replicated across the Caribbean: salt cod with potatoes. The Sunday codfish breakfast, served with banana, avocado, egg, and Johnny bread, tells the story of enslaved people transforming cheap rations into beloved tradition. The same story unfolds in Jamaica with ackee and saltfish, in Barbados with codfish cakes, and in Puerto Rico with bacalaitos.

At Christmas, Bermudian families gather around cassava pie; a dish layered with grated cassava root, chicken, and pork. Cassava itself traces to the Indigenous peoples of the Caribbean, and the tradition of cassava dishes runs from Jamaica's bammy to Trinidad's cassava pone. When Bermudians serve Hoppin' John on New Year's Day for good luck, they join a tradition that spans the African diaspora, from the Sea Islands of South Carolina to the Bahamas, all descended from West African cultivation of black-eyed peas and rice.

Shared Dates of Commemoration

Cup Match is Bermuda's most beloved summer tradition, two days of cricket, camaraderie, and celebration that effectively shut down the island. But Cup Match is more than sport. Its timing commemorates August 1, 1834, when Bermuda and Antigua became the first British colonies to enact full emancipation without an apprenticeship period.



Shared Ingredients & Dishes Across the African Diaspora



Codfish & Potatoes

Sunday breakfast tradition; boiled salt cod with potatoes, bananas, avocado, egg

Jamaica: Ackee & Saltfish; Barbados: Codfish cakes; Puerto Rico: Bacalaitos

Salted cod provided to enslaved people as cheap, shelf-stable protein; transformed into cultural staple

Cassava Pie

Dense, layered Christmas dish with grated cassava, chicken, pork, spices

Throughout Caribbean: bammy (Jamaica), cassava flatbread, various cassava preparations

Cassava: Indigenous Amerindian crop adopted throughout Caribbean; cassareep (cassava juice) basis for Caribbean pepperpot



Hoppin' John

Rice and black-eyed peas; New Year's good luck dish

Throughout Caribbean: "Peas and Rice" (Bahamas, Jamaica); Moros y Cristianos (Cuba)

West African: black-eyed peas brought from Africa; rice cultivation knowledge from Senegambia

Fish Chowder

Spicy stew with rockfish/snapper, sherry peppers, black rum

Caribbean fish stews with local variations

Fusion of British chowder tradition with African/Caribbean spices



Conch Fritters

Fried conch meat with spices

Bahamas: Conch fritters; throughout Caribbean

Indigenous Amerindian food source; preparation methods influenced by African frying traditions

Curry Dishes

Curried mussels, curry seasonings

Throughout Caribbean: curry goat, curry chicken

Indo-Caribbean influence spreading through British colonial networks



Rum-based beverages

Rum Swizzle, Dark 'n' Stormy

Throughout Caribbean: rum punch, various rum cocktails

Molasses/sugar cane → rum production across Caribbean; enslaved labor in sugar/rum production

The second day, Mary Prince Day, honors a woman born enslaved in Bermuda whose narrative helped galvanize the abolition movement.

This same date, August 1, is celebrated as Emancipation Day across the Caribbean: in Jamaica, the Bahamas, Barbados and Trinidad. Barbados's Crop Over festival culminates in Kadooment Day, the first Monday of August, transforming the old harvest celebration into a jubilee. Throughout the region, the first week of August carries the same meaning: the anniversary of freedom.

Bermuda and the Caribbean as Freedom's Shore

On February 11, 1835, six months after Bermuda enacted emancipation, the American slave ship *Enterprise* was blown into Hamilton Harbour carrying 78 enslaved men, women, and children in appalling conditions.

“

“...because if Bermuda is going to fix the problems that are hurting us, then we must be willing to talk openly, even when it's uncomfortable, even when it challenges what we have always believed.”

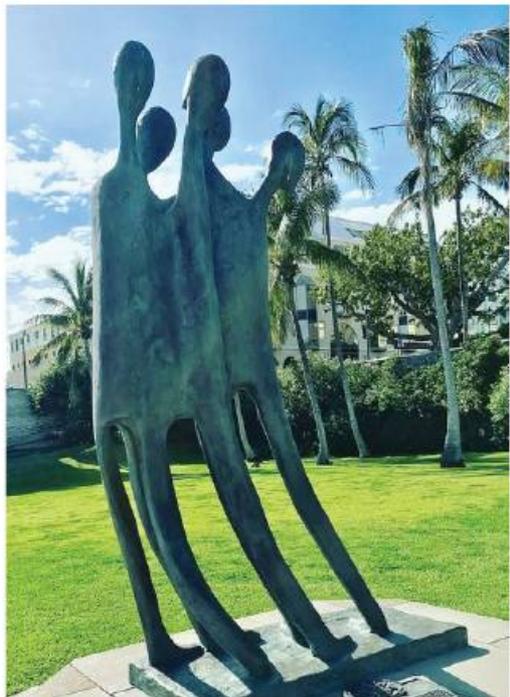
”

- Ben Smith 2026

Bermudians acted immediately. Richard Tucker, a formerly enslaved man and member of Bermuda's Friendly Societies, served the ship's captain with a writ of habeas corpus. The Bermuda Supreme Court convened at 9 p.m. on February 18 and interviewed each enslaved person individually, asking whether they wished to return to the United States or remain in Bermuda as free persons. 72 chose freedom. When they landed at Barr's Bay Park, an "immense crowd" of Bermudians, many freed just the year before, gathered to welcome them.

The *Enterprise* was part of a documented chain of liberations across the British Caribbean: the *Comet* (Bahamas, 1830),

the *Encomium* (Bahamas, 1833), the *Hermosa* (Bahamas, 1840), and most famously the *Creole* (Bahamas, 1841). When enslaved Americans aboard the *Creole* revolted and demanded to be taken to British territory, one leader said they should sail to the Bahamas because he knew "the slaves from the *Hermosa* had gained their freedom there the previous year." That knowledge, passed among enslaved people across the American South, traced directly back to Bermuda's actions in 1835.



Today, the bronze statue "We Arrive" by Bermudian artist Chesley Trott stands at Barr's Bay Park, commemorating those 72 souls who chose freedom. The statue is one of more than 50 Sites of Memory on Bermuda's African Diaspora Heritage Trail, a trail that connects Bermuda's story to the global African diaspora and the wider Caribbean freedom struggle.

Between 1830 and 1840, four US slave ships – the Comet, the Encomium, the Enterprise, and the Hermosa – had been driven into British ports and several hundred captives freed. The Creole revolt and stand off in Nassau harbor was a culmination rather than an aberration.

“

”

— Jeffrey R. Kerr-Ritchie, *Rebellious Passage*
(Cambridge University Press, 2019)

The Opportunities

Closer alignment with the Caribbean provides a direct gateway to one of our ancestral continent and one of the world's fastest-growing economic regions. Currently, however, Bermuda risks being left behind as an outsider in the flourishing economic and political partnership between Africa and CARICOM.

Access Africa-Caribbean Trade and Investment Channels

Closer cooperation allows Bermuda to plug into expanding trade. Since extending membership to CARICOM in 2022, Afreximbank has committed US\$5 billion to regional initiatives (increased from US\$3 billion at the 50th CARICOM Heads of Government Meeting in February 2026). This includes the US\$180 million Africa Trade Centre in Barbados, which serves as a hub linking Africa to Caribbean and North Atlantic markets.

Shape Global Action on Reparatory Justice

Bermuda has an opportunity to pursue reparatory justice alongside a family of countries that share our inter-generational experience of slavery and colonialism. CARICOM's Ten-Point Plan for Reparatory Justice, which calls for concrete outcomes such as development financing, technology transfer, and debt relief, has already been endorsed for global adoption by the UN Permanent Forum on People of African Descent. In July 2025, Attorney General the Hon. Kim Wilkerson confirmed Bermuda's alignment with the plan, noting the importance of tackling the lasting impacts of slavery on Bermuda's population today.

Bermuda can now expand its involvement in this joint pursuit. The September 2025 Africa-CARICOM Summit convened under the theme "Transcontinental Partnership in Pursuit of Reparatory Justice for Africans and People of African Descent through Reparations," resulting in a commitment to create the African Caribbean Joint Mechanism on Reparative Justice. As this historic collaboration between the African Union and CARICOM takes shape, Bermuda has the chance to be part of a unified voice seeking acknowledgment and redress for centuries of harm.

Cooperation with African Countries

Bermuda has the opportunity to tap into the direct "South-South" exchanges already connecting CARICOM to Africa. The ability to pursue initiatives similar to the Rwanda-Jamaica Digital Justice Partnership, where Rwanda is exporting its world-class GovTech systems to modernise Caribbean legal frameworks, or collaborate on education like The Bahamas and Botswana, which has resulted in scholarships and graduate spaces for island students. Similarly, closer engagement will allow Bermuda to join initiatives like

the Health Development Partnership for Africa and the Caribbean (HeDPAC) which aims to reinforce regional healthcare resilience.

Bermuda's connection to the Caribbean is neither symbolic nor new. Out of that passage came language, rhythm, faith, and family bonds that no distance could erase. These are the bonds that history tried to fracture yet could never break. Each generation has found new ways to rebuild those bridges, through education, trade, and the simple act of recognising ourselves in one another.

Limits of Associate Status: Why Full Membership is a Strategic Necessity

Bermuda has participated in CARICOM for nearly 23 years as an Associate Member. Since 2003, this relationship has provided a helpful framework for regional collaboration and allowed Bermuda to benefit from numerous technical cooperation initiatives, ranging from public health support during COVID-19, to disaster recovery efforts following major hurricanes, to Bermuda's participation in CARIFTA Games and the Caribbean Festival of the Arts (CARIFESTA).

However, the world of 2026 is vastly different from that of twenty years ago. Bermuda is a small country operating in an increasingly fast paced and volatile global environment. We face pressing modern challenges like global supply chain disruptions and the intensifying effects of climate change. To build a more prosperous future and drive the wellbeing of all Bermudians, we must transition from mere participation in CARICOM, as an Associate Member, to a true partnership, as a Full Member with neighbours who share our heritage, institutional structure and daily realities.



Our Associate Membership imposes structural ceilings on our potential in three critical ways.



The Voting Gap

As an Associate Member, Bermuda is frequently in the room but excluded from the power of a vote in CARICOM's decision-making organs. We observe the design of regional initiatives but hold no formal power to shape them. Currently, Bermuda often relies on full members, such as The Bahamas, which represents the interests of Associate Members, to advocate for our inclusion on the regional agenda. This means we have little influence over regional policies, programmes and financing, even when they directly impact us. This exclusion was demonstrated most recently at the 50th CARICOM Heads of Government Meeting in February 2026, when US Secretary of State Marco Rubio met with CARICOM Full Member leaders in the most significant US-Caribbean engagement in over a decade. Bermuda and all other Associate Members were informed that the substantive engagement session would not be open to their attendance or participation. While Associate Members were present for the opening plenary, they were not in the room when the framework for future US-CARICOM cooperation was discussed and agreed upon. Even in areas where Bermuda is not formally excluded, we do not have the standing and credibility that full membership affords in order to participate as a true equal within the family.

The Economic Cooperation Gap - Exclusion from Global Conversations

Bermuda is currently excluded from CARICOM's collective efforts to build economic relationships with major global economies. While CARICOM builds trade and investment channels with partners in Africa, Saudi Arabia, Colombia, India, and more, Bermuda is left out. We are excluded from the Summits where agreements are signed and investment corridors are created. We have been excluded from crucial opportunities like the Afreximbank US\$3 billion financing facility or the Saudi Arabia-CARICOM Summit, which led to a \$2.5 billion investment commitment for Caribbean development, things which Bermuda cannot negotiate as effectively on its own.

The Participation Gap

Without full membership, Bermuda has limited access to many CARICOM initiatives across trade, health, climate, education, and digital infrastructure. Eligibility for funding and technical assistance is typically tied to full membership, which means Bermuda often engages only partially or after programmes are already underway. Associate status also limits Bermuda's ability to influence the design and delivery of regional initiatives, reducing their relevance and impact for Bermudians.

Full membership changes our position fundamentally. It is the step that turns limited participation into a full partnership. It gives Bermuda a seat and a voice in shaping the decisions that affect our daily lives, from food security and the cost of living to climate resilience and regional security.

To understand why this move is an imperative for our national resilience, we must look at how our participation will change when moving from a "listener" to a "partner".

	Associate Membership Disadvantages	Full Membership
Regional Decision-Making & Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can attend Heads of Government Meetings only as an observer (e.g. 2018, 2025). • Excluded from CARICOM policy groups: the Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD), Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED), and Council for Foreign and Community Relations (COFCOR). • Decisions on cooperation in health, education, trade, international engagement, climate, security and more are made without Bermuda's involvement. • Bermuda's interests are often supported by other members, rather than directly advanced by us. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate and vote at Heads of Government and in COHSOD, COTED, and COFCOR, while respecting constitutional limitations. • Shape regional priorities and solutions on issues that matter to Bermuda, including cost of living, supply chains, health, education, climate resilience, and security.
Global Economic Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excluded from CARICOM's engagement with other countries/regions. • Not invited to the Saudi Arabia-CARICOM Summit (2023), India-CARICOM Summit (2024), etc. • Attended the Africa-CARICOM Summit (2025) because we advocated to be included, and we were designated as "Observer" alongside other unnamed observers, not as "Bermuda". We were seated apart from the full member states. • Lost opportunities for financing, investment and cultural exchange. Bermuda is excluded from the US\$5 billion Afreximbank facility for CARICOM members (expanded from US\$3 billion at the 50th HGC in February 2026), as well as more than US\$446 million in lending from the Saudi Fund for Development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in CARICOM efforts to build relationships with countries in Africa, Middle East, Latin America, etc. • Promote Bermuda directly as an investment and trade partner. • Access regional trade, investment, and financing initiatives linked to CARICOM. • Gain new markets for Bermudian industries: (re)insurance, fintech, renewable energy, blue economy.
Trade, Supply Chains & Cost of Living	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not part of COTED, where trade and supply-chain decisions are made. • Outside regional efforts to lower logistics costs, e.g. the regional ferry service. • Excluded from CARICOM trade negotiations with external partners, where preferential access and supply arrangements are agreed. • Example: 2025 negotiations to expand CARICOM's Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement (TECA) with Colombia, which influence regional supply routes and prices, but do not include Bermuda. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate and vote in COTED to shape decisions that can lower prices, create supply routes, etc. • Participate in regional initiatives to lower costs and strengthen supply chains: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "25 by 2025" food security agenda. • UNCTAD trade resilience partnership. • Regional pharmaceutical procurement/manufacturing.
Health & Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not part of COHSOD, where health, education, and other social policy decisions are made. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate and vote in COHSOD, to shape regional health, education, and social priorities. • Access regional health initiatives, funding streams, and coordinated approaches to shared challenges like NCDs and future pandemics. • Engage deeper in regional initiatives on skills development, Technical and Vocational Education and Training, digital education, and education planning. • Collaborate on curriculum, research, and education programmes relevant to Caribbean island societies.
Climate Change, Disaster Response & Solidarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperation is largely operational and reactive, with limited participation in the regional bodies that set priorities for climate resilience, disaster financing, and recovery. • Limited influence over CARICOM's collective climate positions and advocacy efforts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shape CARICOM's collective advocacy on climate finance, including Barbados' Bridgetown Initiative, which is driving global reform of funding for small island states. • Contribute to and benefit from regional leadership on the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI) and Loss and Damage, strengthening access to resilience and recovery financing. • Capitalise on our insurance leadership to shape the evolution of regional insurance and risk-financing solutions, including Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF), to better reflect Bermuda's exposure and needs. • Strengthen regional cooperation on early warning systems, preparedness, and climate adaptation through shared institutions and partnerships.

Economic & Sectoral Cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement is largely ad hoc, without participation in CARICOM's core economic decision-making councils. Current engagement includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with regional bodies including CARILEC, CARPHA, and the Caribbean Telecommunications Union. BELCO participates in CARILEC's Disaster Assistance Programme; BELCO's President, Mr Wayne Caines, became Chairman of the CARILEC Board (2025). Hosted the 10th CARICOM IMPACS meeting (2008) and is engaged in security, financial integrity initiatives. Rejoined the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) in 2023, supporting regional development. The Premier serves on the CARICOM Sub-Committee for Science and Technology (ICT). Bermuda Police Service has partnered with counterparts across the region to investigate serious cases, and recruit officers from other countries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate and vote in COTED, shaping regional trade, economic, energy, transport, and digital policy. Ensure Bermuda's economic interests are considered at the point where regional strategies are designed. Move to broader, structured cooperation and economic planning with other similar small island economies. Shape and benefit from regional initiatives on digital infrastructure, energy resilience, transport connectivity, and tourism development. Strengthen pathways for Bermudian businesses to partner, invest, and operate regionally.
Access to Labour & Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bermuda manages labour access through its existing work permit system. Emerging labour shortages in key sectors requires new access to labour and skills. Recruitment from CARICOM countries occurs, but without a structured regional framework aligned to Bermuda's skills needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support targeted access to skilled labour in areas of shortage, using Bermuda's work permit system. Enable structured cooperation on skills development and recruitment with CARICOM. Draw from a pool of Englishspeaking, trained, and culturally aligned professionals. Maintain Bermuda's full control over immigration policy, with protections for Bermudian jobs and opportunities.
Culture and Sport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation has been intermittently in CARICOM's regional cultural and sporting events. Sent an 18-member delegation to CARIFESTA XV (Barbados, 2025), including Combey's, musicians, artists and writers, to showcase Bermudian culture within the Caribbean and African families. Bermuda has both hosted (in '75, '80, '04, '12) and competed in the annual CARIFTA Games (track and field) and CARIFTA Aquatics. Bermuda's national cricket team also competed in the 2007 ICC Cricket World Cup, which was hosted in the West Indies, while the Royal Bermuda Regiment provided security support for the event. Bermudian cricketers have also competed in numerous other international tournaments held in the Caribbean, across senior and junior men's and women's divisions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate fully in CARICOM decision-making on policies for culture, sport, and youth development through COHSOD. Move from ad-hoc, event-based participation to institutionalised cooperation in sport and culture. Shape and benefit from regional strategies for the creative industries, sports-led economic development (including cricket), and youth engagement. Strengthen cultural exchange and cooperation with Africa through CARICOM-led initiatives, including the reparations conversation.

This Green Paper is designed to support an informed public conversation. Before presenting the detail of what Full Membership would mean in practice, it is important to set out the range of options available to Bermuda.

Options	Overview	Benefits	Costs and Risks
Remain an Associate Member	<p>Bermuda could choose to maintain its current Associate Membership. This is the status quo and involves no new commitments, no additional financial contribution, and no change to existing arrangements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No new financial obligations No change to immigration, trade, or regulatory frameworks Continued participation in functional cooperation (health, disaster response, culture, sport) 	<p>Bermuda remains excluded from voting in all CARICOM decision-making organs. Bermuda cannot participate in CARICOM's expanding partnerships with Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America. Bermuda is excluded from substantive engagement with visiting leaders and external partners, as demonstrated at the 50th HCC. Bermuda does not have access to development financing facilities linked to Full Membership. The structural limits identified in this paper (the Voting Gap, the Economic Cooperation Gap, and the Participation Gap) persist and may widen as CARICOM deepens its integration.</p>
Enhanced Associate Engagement	<p>Bermuda could seek to negotiate an enhanced form of Associate Membership that provides greater participation rights without assuming the full obligations of membership. This could include observer status with speaking rights in selected councils, bilateral cooperation agreements with individual CARICOM Member States, and participation in specific programmes on a case-by-case basis.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incremental improvement in participation without the commitments of Full Membership Lower financial contribution 	<p>No precedent exists within CARICOM for an enhanced Associate status. The Community's institutional framework provides for two tiers of membership (Full and Associate), and creating a bespoke third tier would require the consent of all Member States. There is a risk that this approach would be perceived as seeking the benefits of integration without the commitment, potentially damaging Bermuda's credibility with existing members. The structural gaps in voting, economic partnerships, and programme access would remain unresolved.</p>
Pursue Full Membership with Negotiated Reservations	<p>Bermuda could pursue Full Membership under Article 237 of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, with specific reservations reflecting its constitutional status as a British Overseas Territory and its distinct economic profile. This is the option the Government has been advancing, and the detailed implications are set out in the chapters that follow.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full voting rights in CARICOM's decision-making organs Access to the Community's expanding economic partnerships and development financing Participation in collective advocacy on climate, trade, and development A seat at the table when decisions affecting Bermuda's region are made The ability to shape regional policy 	<p>Higher annual financial contribution (estimated at \$2.28 million, approximately 0.16 percent of Government expenditure). Bermuda's constitutional constraints mean that participation will be narrower than that of a sovereign member state. There is a risk that the reservations Bermuda requires are not accepted by CARICOM Member States.</p>



Chapter 3

What Full Membership Will Mean for Bermudians

The transition to Full Membership in CARICOM represents a deliberate move to create a stronger, more resilient future for all Bermudians. It is an opportunity to stand as a closer partner with our Caribbean neighbours who share our heritage, institutions and our daily realities. By joining this family of countries as a peer, we can work together to build a Bermuda that is better prepared for the challenges and opportunities of today's fast-changing world.

Membership in CARICOM is fundamentally about having a voice in the decisions that can positively shape our lives. It means partnering with a region of 18 million people to find local solutions for lowering the cost of living, creating new career pathways for our young people, and attracting the international investment needed to diversify and grow our economy.

Full Membership gives Bermuda the power to help design regional strategies rather than simply adjusting to programmes and policies set by others. Whether we are coordinating on climate resilience, strengthening our public health systems, or building new economic relationships with countries in Africa or the Middle East, being a partner in CARICOM ensures that Bermuda's unique needs are built into the foundation of every regional effort.

The discussion that follows outlines how Full Membership can create tangible progress for our households, our workers, and our businesses, on issues that matter to Bermuda.



Reduce Costs & Strengthen Supply Chains

Lowering the price of essentials. Diversifying our source markets for food, fuel, equipment and other goods, while creating new supply chain links to the Caribbean and Latin America to reduce costs.



Give Bermuda a Voice on Issues that Matter

Giving us a seat at the table. Allowing Bermuda to shape regional policies and access new programmes that impact our daily lives, from climate resilience, to health, education, and crime.



Open Doors for Bermudian Business & Talent

Connecting us to opportunity. Access for Bermudian businesses and entrepreneurs to a 18-million-person market with similar systems of law and business. Create new market opportunities in new industries like the Blue Economy and Space.



Build Stronger Global Partnerships

Giving you access to global markets. Gaining direct access to new investment, trade and technical support corridors with fast-growing regions like Africa, India, and the Middle East.



Protect Our Islands Through Shared Climate Action

Protecting us from growing climate threats. Moving from fighting climate threats alone to co-designing regional adaptation programs and leveraging a powerful collective voice to secure the global funding and justice needed to protect our homes and livelihoods.



1. Give Bermuda a Voice on Issues that Matter

Bermuda can shape regional policies that touch our daily lives. Within CARICOM, countries work together on the issues that define life across the Caribbean: climate change, health, education, crime, and more. Although Bermuda does not have an independent voice in those forums, such as the United Nations and the World Trade Organization, full membership would ensure that our perspectives are carried within the Caribbean's collective positions and that we help guide the advocacy that protects the shared interests of the region we belong to.

Joining CARICOM strengthens Bermuda's ability to shape regional progress and ensures that our voice is carried into the wider world by partners who share our challenges and aspirations.



2. Reduce Costs and Strengthen Our Supply Chains

The cost of living in Bermuda continues to rise. Almost all of what we consume, from food and medicine to energy and construction materials, arrives by ship or plane, mostly via the United States. Rising transport costs, global supply disruptions, and limited sources

of fuel and food have made essentials less affordable and their availability less reliable. Every household feels these pressures.

Caribbean countries share these challenges, and through CARICOM, are confronting them together. This same cooperative spirit is shaping new opportunities for trade and investment around the world. In 2025, CARICOM and Colombia began expanding their Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement (TECA), a partnership that aims to increase agricultural trade, support manufacturing, and open access to new regional markets. At a time when the United States, the largest trading partner of both CARICOM and Bermuda, is introducing policies that threaten the stability of prices and supplies, CARICOM is building new friendships with partners close to home. Bermuda was not part of that discussion, even though the outcomes will influence the very supply routes and prices that affect our daily lives.

CARICOM governments are also working side by side to strengthen food and energy security, improve transport links, and reduce dependence on distant suppliers. A regional ferry service is being developed to move people and cargo more efficiently between islands, while an agreement with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) is building the islands' collective trade resilience and strengthening food security. CARICOM's partnership with the Health Development Partnership for Africa and the Caribbean (HeDPAC) is helping countries pool medical procurement and lower healthcare costs. The "25 by 2025" initiative is increasing regional food production and reducing import dependence, while countries like Barbados are investing in regional pharmaceutical manufacturing to secure CARICOM countries' access to critical medicines.

These efforts are supported by a shared trade framework through CARICOM's Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED). COTED brings the region's governments together to create a common trade policy, address shared economic threats, and negotiate new international partnerships that protect and promote the wellbeing of CARICOM citizens. At its 60th meeting in June 2025, COTED advanced a regional industrial policy and agreed on updates to tariffs and trade rules to strengthen local production and defend regional markets. When the United States introduced new tariffs under its "America First" policies, CARICOM presented a united front, pooling its expertise and influence to protect regional interests. Bermuda, meanwhile, had to lobby alone, without the shared resources or collective strength that come from being part of that alliance.





3. Open Doors for Bermudian Business and Talent

Full membership in CARICOM would give current and aspiring entrepreneurial Bermudian businesses and professionals a stronger place in the region's growing economy. The Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME) links member countries through shared frameworks for trade, services, and investment, creating a regional market of more than 18 million people, bound by shared history and familiar systems of law, business, and governance.

This opens new opportunities across the sectors where our expertise already stands out. There is growing demand for collaboration in financial regulation, tourism, technology, and creative industries; areas where Bermudian skill and innovation can thrive. As Caribbean countries invest in new industries such as ocean management, renewable energy, space research, and climate science, more doors are opening for partnership and shared innovation that build on Bermuda's strengths. Our small and medium-sized businesses would gain access to regional networks, opportunities to join collaborative projects, and to attract investment and skilled talent from across the Caribbean.

CARICOM is already driving this progress through the Single ICT Space, supported by the Caribbean Association of National Telecommunication Organizations (CANTO). The initiative is connecting the region through stronger digital infrastructure, modern public services, and new opportunities for digital enterprise. In exchange, Bermuda can demonstrate its leadership in digital finance and innovation shaping regional transformation.

The same momentum is driving new international partnerships. At the 2025 AfriCaribbean Trade and Investment Forum, organised by Afreximbank, more than \$300 million in trade and investment deals were signed between Africa and the Caribbean. These growing networks are opening doors for joint ventures, knowledge exchange, and investment that strengthen the region's competitiveness.



4. Build Stronger Global Partnerships Through CARICOM

CARICOM is reaching outward, connecting the Caribbean family with regions that are shaping the global economy. Recent summits with Saudi Arabia (2023), India (2024), Brazil (2025), and the African Union (2025) have deepened cooperation in trade, investment, education, and culture. These gatherings are where major regional projects are launched, financing is negotiated, common positions are forged that expand the Caribbean's reach and influence.

These growing partnerships matter for Bermuda. They are creating a global network of cooperation that can bring investment, learning, and innovation to our shores. Full membership would place Bermuda at the heart of these new economic and cultural relationships, ensuring that our perspectives are part of the decisions being made and that our people share in the opportunities they create.



5. Protect Our Islands Through Shared Climate Action

Across the region, countries are fighting back together and CARICOM has become a driving force in global climate action. CARICOM is also coordinating regional efforts through the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC), and the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF), to build shared systems for preparation, response, and recovery.

The case for full CARICOM membership is ultimately about belonging. To stand with family is to share strength, resources, and purpose. Full membership in CARICOM means working with those who understand Bermuda best: small islands that know the cost of isolation and the value of unity. It is a step that honours our shared history while opening the way to a more secure, prosperous, and confident future within our Caribbean family.



Full membership would give Bermuda a seat in shaping these efforts and a stronger voice in the global fight for climate justice. Our experience in (re)insurance, climate-risk finance and environmental innovation can help strengthen regional efforts and unlock the funding needed to protect our island communities. Working side by side with our Caribbean family, Bermuda can help design solutions that safeguard our homes, support recovery after disasters, and build a more resilient future across the region we belong to.

Bermuda's pursuit of full CARICOM membership takes place at a moment of heightened geopolitical complexity in the Western Hemisphere. The United States, which remains Bermuda's most important economic partner, is reasserting its strategic presence in the Caribbean under what the current administration has described as a renewed commitment to hemispheric partnership. At the 50th CARICOM Heads of Government Meeting in February 2026, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio attended directly from the State of the Union address, the most senior US engagement with CARICOM in a decade. The resulting Joint Statement committed both parties to developing a comprehensive US-CARICOM Cooperation Framework covering migration, security, trade, investment, and disaster recovery. At the same time, the broader US-Caribbean relationship is undergoing

significant shifts. The US has also taken direct military and diplomatic action in the region, including operations relating to Venezuela, and has maintained a visible naval presence in Caribbean waters. These developments have prompted commentary in both the Caribbean and Bermudian media about the nature of the US-Caribbean relationship in 2026. The Government acknowledges these realities and is clear-eyed about the need to navigate this landscape carefully.

Bermuda's economic wellbeing depends on strong relationships with the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada. Nothing in CARICOM membership alters those bilateral ties. Bermuda's representative offices in Washington, London, and Brussels will continue their work, and the Government will continue to prioritise these partnerships.

CARICOM's own member states are themselves America's trading partners, security allies, and neighbours. The Joint Statement issued at the 50th HGC confirms that the US-CARICOM relationship is a cooperative one, notwithstanding the tensions that exist. Deepening Bermuda's partnership with its Caribbean neighbours does not diminish its relationships with Washington and London; it demonstrates that Bermuda is a proactive and connected jurisdiction, engaged in its own region while maintaining the bilateral ties on which its prosperity depends. The Government recognises that the geopolitical environment will continue to evolve, and that Bermuda's approach to CARICOM membership must remain responsive to these changes. The terms of membership being negotiated include the structural safeguards necessary to protect Bermuda's position in all foreseeable scenarios.

For Bermuda, these developments underscore the importance of having a seat at the table rather than standing outside the room. As an Associate Member, Bermuda was excluded from the substantive session with Secretary Rubio. Had Bermuda been a Full Member, it would have been present as these consequential discussions unfolded.

The Government is clear-eyed about the need to navigate this landscape carefully. Bermuda's economic wellbeing depends on strong relationships with the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada, and nothing in CARICOM membership alters those bilateral ties. Bermuda's status as a British Overseas Territory provides a structural safeguard: the UK retains responsibility for external affairs, and the 2024 entrustment conditions require Bermuda to disassociate from CARICOM statements on external affairs that are not consistent with UK policy. This means Bermuda can benefit from CARICOM's collective platform on economic and social issues while maintaining its own position on matters of geopolitical sensitivity.

CARICOM membership and strong US-UK ties are not in tension. They are complementary. Our Caribbean neighbours are themselves America's trading partners, security allies, and neighbours. Deepening our partnership with them does not diminish our relationships with Washington and London; it demonstrates that Bermuda is a proactive and connected jurisdiction, engaged in its own region and open to the world.



Chapter 4

Consultation

The Government of Bermuda is committed to a process of transparency and inclusion regarding the pursuit of Full Membership in CARICOM. This transition is a national undertaking, and its success depends on the informed participation of the public, the business sector, and the wider community. To this end, the Government seeks to not only inform Bermudians about the strategic shifts in regional integration but to actively listen to and gather feedback on the diverse views, questions, and concerns held across our community.

The Ministry of Home Affairs has conducted, and continues to engage on, a wide-ranging series of consultation sessions designed to reach a broad cross-section of Bermuda's stakeholders. These engagements have been structured to ensure that everyone, from small business owners and union representatives to international business leaders and sporting bodies, are reflected in the national discussion, on how Full Membership might impact their specific sectors and daily lives.

Q4 2025 Bermuda Omnibus Survey

The Q4 2025 Bermuda Omnibus Survey (n=400, ±4.9%) asked residents to rate the personal importance of various factors related to Bermuda and its economy in the context of CARICOM. Respondents were asked to rate the importance of specific policy factors in the context of CARICOM, not to indicate whether they support or oppose full membership. The results should be read as a measure of public priorities, not as a proxy for a public vote on membership itself.

Residents rated stronger food security as the most important factor, with 55% offering top importance scores of 9 or 10 on a 10-point scale (mean 7.9). This was followed by environmental and climate resilience (46%, mean 7.6), health and public safety cooperation (44%, mean 7.6), university education, skills, and training opportunities (43%, mean 7.5), greater energy resilience (41%, mean 7.5), and expanded trade and economic growth (41%, mean 7.3).

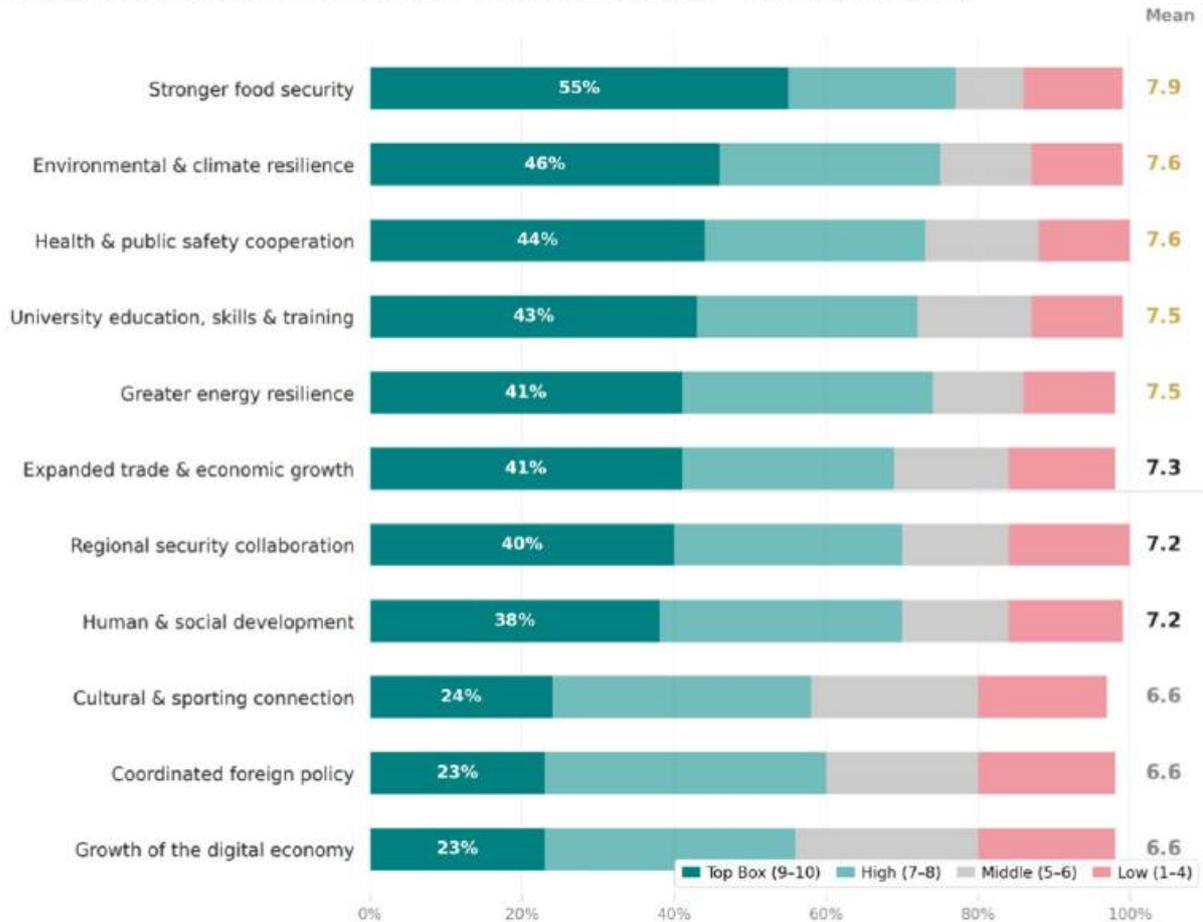
Additional factors rated important by more than half of residents at the 7–10 level included regional security collaboration (40% top box, mean 7.2), human and social development (38%, mean 7.2), cultural and sporting connection and identity (24%, mean 6.6), coordinated foreign policy (23%, mean 6.6), and growth of the digital economy (23%, mean 6.6).

The survey identified notable demographic differences in how residents view the importance of these factors. Those with household incomes below \$150,000 more commonly assigned importance to energy resilience, university education and training, health and public safety, and climate resilience. Women were more likely than men to view university education, health and public safety, and climate resilience as important. Residents younger than 55 placed greater importance on food security, energy resilience, expanded trade, and university education. Black residents were more likely than white residents to consider each factor important across all categories. Food security and expanded trade were rated more highly by non-Bermudian residents than by Bermudians.

Additional factors rated important by more than half of residents at the 7–10 level included regional security collaboration (40% top box), human and social development (38%), cultural and sporting connections (24%), coordinated foreign policy (23%), and growth of the digital economy (23%). The survey was designed to assess the relative importance of specific policy factors rather than to measure support for or opposition to membership at this preliminary stage.

Importance of Factors to Bermuda and Its Economy

How important is each factor to you personally? (1 = Not at all important, 10 = Extremely important)



Source: Q4 2025 Bermuda Omnibus Survey, Narrative Research Bermuda, n=400 telephone interviews, Dec 3-14, 2025, ±4.9%.

Stakeholder Consultation Summaries

As of early 2026, informed by the sentiments of the omnibus survey, the Ministry successfully completed 11 formal consultations with a variety of organisations and representative bodies. Many organisations invited to participate reserved their contribution until after the green paper was published.

Among those organisations that were invited and indicated they would provide their input following the Green Paper’s publication are the Bermuda Chamber of Commerce, the Association of Bermuda International Companies (ABIC), the Bermuda Bar Association, the Association of Bermuda Insurers and Reinsurers (ABIR), and the Bermuda Hotel Association. The Government welcomes their participation in the next phase of consultation and considers their perspectives essential to a comprehensive assessment. The summaries below reflect the contributions received as of early 2026.



Bermuda Economic Development Corporation (BEDC)

The BEDC stated that it fully supports the move towards Full Membership. The Corporation presented a six-point summary of its position focused on how Full Membership would affect Bermuda-based entrepreneurs and small businesses.

The BEDC identified the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME) as the primary mechanism through which entrepreneurship benefits would flow. These include duty-free and reduced-barrier regional trade for goods, easier cross-border provision of services in areas such as consulting, IT, and creative industries, and access to a wider customer base. The BEDC noted that the CSME's Right of Establishment would allow Bermudian firms to set up businesses in other member states under CSME rules. Freer movement of capital was identified as a means of encouraging cross-border investment and regional venture capital. The BEDC pointed to the CARICOM Development Fund as a source of grants and concessional funding for micro, small, and medium enterprises, and to region-wide programmes such as youth entrepreneurship training, creative industry grants, and startup accelerators. The BEDC also identified collective trade diplomacy and the harmonisation of standards as reducing regulatory friction for small firms seeking to operate regionally.



West Indian Association of Bermuda (WIAB)

The WIAB stated that it is in full support of the Government pursuing Full Membership.

The WIAB acknowledged uncertainty and anxiety in some sections of Bermuda regarding the CSME and noted that not all member countries participate in all CSME areas, with individual countries free to negotiate specific terms. The Association referenced what it described as a historical narrative of Bermuda not being a geographical or cultural part of the Caribbean, and stated that some anti-CARICOM sentiment is rooted in what it characterised as distorted history. The WIAB pointed to the absence of Caribbean history from Bermuda's public school curriculum as having contributed to a sense of distance from the wider Caribbean. The Association called for education and reliable information rather than speculation on the subject of free movement, work permits, and employment impacts. The WIAB identified opportunities for deeper connectivity through agriculture and food supply networks, seasonal job opportunities in tourism and hospitality, and regional educational institutions including the University of the West Indies, flight schools, and veterinary colleges.



Cari-Genetics & Daily Male (Prostate Awareness Bermuda Charity)

Both organisations expressed support for Full Membership.

Cari-Genetics is a Bermuda-based company operating in genetic testing with a focus on black and brown-skinned populations, a demographic the organisation stated is not typically used in pharmaceutical testing by major drug companies. The company reported that it is building relationships and credibility in the Caribbean and that Full Membership would facilitate its expansion and create career development opportunities for Bermudian scientists. Daily Male is a Bermuda-based charity raising awareness about prostate health issues for black and brown-skinned men. Both organisations stated that Full Membership would strengthen their access to Caribbean populations and contribute to improved regional healthcare outcomes. The organisations characterised their work as beneficial to Bermuda's reputation in the region.



CRICKET BOARD

Bermuda Cricket Board (BCB)

The BCB stated that Full Membership could unlock strategic opportunities for cricket development while also presenting risks that require planning.

Policy alignment with CARICOM sports development initiatives in player development, administration, and coaching. Access to regional grants and funding for infrastructure and youth programmes. Opportunities for regional tournament participation, including invitations from Cricket West Indies at youth and senior levels for men, women, boys, and girls. Access to coaching exchanges, certification programmes, regional academies, and workshops on sports science and player analytics. Sports tourism through incoming and outgoing tours, and cultural exchange.

In considering the risks, the potential requirements to align Bermuda's sports governance with regional policies, unknown membership fees and increased travel and logistics costs with uncertain return on investment, a likely performance gap against stronger Caribbean teams given Bermuda's small population and potential scheduling conflicts between domestic and regional tournaments were identified.



Bermuda Olympic Association (BOA)

The BOA stated that it does not anticipate its mission, mandate, or programmes will be negatively impacted by Full Membership. It also stated that it does not anticipate meaningful new avenues or development opportunities arising specifically from the change in membership status.

The BOA is a longstanding member of the Caribbean Association of National Olympic Committees (CANOC) and stated it maintains healthy reciprocal working relationships with Caribbean governing bodies and countries. The BOA noted that its regional relationships are with international federations such as the Central American and Caribbean Athletics Association (CACAC), and these are not governed by CARICOM membership status. The BOA acknowledged there may be slightly more administrative tasks as a result of Full Membership and that there could be learning from CARICOM members on governance and event management, though this would likely result from strengthened bilateral ties rather than membership status itself. The BOA also acknowledged potential opportunities for increased athlete sponsorship and funding through expanded commercial activity.



Citizens Uprooting Racism in Bermuda (CURB)

CURB stated that it supports Bermuda's exploration of Full Membership, particularly where CARICOM's work aligns with its mission around justice, reparatory frameworks, cultural identity, and equitable development. CURB stated it remains strictly non-partisan.

CURB's perspective is shaped by CARICOM's leadership on justice-centred initiatives such as reparations and decolonisation, Bermuda's historical and cultural connections to the Caribbean, and potential educational, cultural, social, and economic opportunities. CURB recognised that residents may have legitimate questions and concerns related to sovereignty, cost, immigration, and economic competitiveness, and stated these are best addressed through clear, accessible information rather than persuasion. CURB proposed a role as a facilitator of information sharing and public education, not as an advocacy or politically aligned agency. CURB outlined plans for a months-long public education strategy including fact sheets, explainer materials, infographics, a dedicated information webpage, community town halls, facilitated dialogues, youth engagement sessions, stakeholder roundtables, and targeted media outreach.



Bermuda Credit Union

The Bermuda Credit Union stated that it views the potential transition to Full Membership as a positive and strategic development for Bermuda.

The Credit Union is a member of the Caribbean Confederation of Credit Unions (CCCU) and stated that it already maintains regional relationships through collaboration, shared best practices, and mutual assistance. It noted that a significant portion of its membership has family, cultural, and ancestral ties throughout the Caribbean. The Credit Union identified potential benefits including greater access to CARICOM institutions in areas such as trade, health, education, labour mobility, and economic development, as well as improved collaboration in financial inclusion, SME development, remittance services, and regional crisis-response frameworks. The Credit Union raised the importance of carefully managing potential de-risking pressures within the international financial system, stating that clear regulatory alignment, strong governance, and effective communication with correspondent banking partners will be essential. The Credit Union also noted that realising the benefits of membership will depend on adequate institutional capacity, resourcing, technical support, and structured engagement mechanisms at both national and sectoral levels.



GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA
Ministry of National Security

Ministry of National Security

The Ministry stated that it currently experiences the major benefits of CARICOM as they relate to its mission and mandate under the existing Associate Membership arrangement.

The Ministry noted that its uniformed services, including the Bermuda Police Service, H.M. Customs, Bermuda Fire and Rescue, and the Royal Bermuda Regiment, are currently invited to and participate in regional training activities. The Ministry stated that Full Membership is not viewed as likely to influence these existing relationships or outcomes in a material way, and that Bermuda has always funded its own participation. However, the Ministry identified that Full Membership could provide access to the Regional Security System, which could improve internal security practices and provide enhanced training in specialised areas. The Ministry described its relationship with the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) as involving consistent and open communication. Bermuda's current contributions to the region were noted, including sharing of policies and standard operating procedures, cyber security advice and guidance, and Bermuda's role as an established member of the Financial Action Task Force providing guidance on anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing. The Ministry noted that Bermuda's cyber security infrastructure is considered effective by CARICOM countries and that Bermuda provided and received information with CARICOM Members during the COVID-19 period.



Bermuda Public Services Union (BPSU)

The BPSU identified both concerns and potential benefits associated with Full Membership from a trade union perspective.

The BPSU noted that labour law practices vary throughout the CARICOM region and stated that if there is movement of labour, local laws must take precedence and this must be clearly articulated. The union stated that free movement of labour may create concerns among members about job competition and potential employer misuse of foreign labour that could weaken bargaining strength. The BPSU also raised the possibility that CARICOM decisions may affect Bermuda indirectly, and that the union could be unintentionally associated with or obligated to decisions imposed on the Bermuda Government through the CARICOM relationship.

The BPSU in consideration of the benefits noted that full Membership could provide a collective environment reinforcing advocacy for workers' rights and protections, a platform supporting decent work policies and gender equality, and regional strength reinforcing trade union collaboration. The BPSU identified opportunities for collaborative training and reassignment in other jurisdictions, and the adoption of regional best practices in governance, financial management, social security, and pension fund planning. The BPSU stated that Bermuda's involvement should also consider what Bermuda can bring to CARICOM, noting the union's awareness of Caribbean public sector workers who do not have pension plans or the ability to engage in collective bargaining. The BPSU framed this in the context of its motto: "Onward and Upward Together."



One Bermuda Alliance (OBA)

The OBA did not provide a final position on Full Membership but raised a number of procedural and policy concerns and stated it would provide a formal response to the discussion document once published.

The OBA raised the fragility of the international business sector and stated that executives may relocate operations if they perceive instability or unfavourable geopolitical alignment. The OBA raised concerns about potential "guilt by association" if the CARICOM Secretariat takes positions that conflict with US interests. The OBA requested evidence supporting claims that membership would increase trade routes or lower costs. The OBA requested a comparative document setting out the specific differences between Associate and Full Membership, including costs, security impacts, and movement of people.

Bermudian Perspectives and Questions About CARICOM

The Government's approach to date has been to listen to the views and concerns. The consultation process has raised a number of important concerns, assumptions, and claims regarding what Full Membership would mean for Bermuda in practice.

Many of these reflect genuine questions about jobs, economic control, immigration, sovereignty, and value for money. Others are based on misunderstandings about how CARICOM operates or how Bermuda would participate as a member. The Government acknowledges that clarity is essential for a productive national debate. In the sections that follow, these specific claims and questions are laid out alongside the Government's direct response to ensure the public has access to factual information.

Below are a list of statements that were shared in the consultation process. We provide some comments in response to the concerns raised.

"Bermudians will lose jobs to CARICOM nationals who migrate to Bermuda."

The Government's position is that Bermuda will retain full control over its immigration laws and work permit systems. Full membership does not automatically grant CARICOM nationals the right to live or work in Bermuda. The terms of any engagement with free movement provisions will be subject to negotiation and public consultation.

Bermuda will continue to manage its own borders and domestic labour market, as many other CARICOM members currently do. Any future labour access would be targeted, skills-based, and specifically designed to address local shortages. Protection and promotion of Bermudian employment will remain a priority and stay firmly in place.

"Wages and working conditions will be driven down by an influx of lower-cost regional labour."

Bermuda law, not CARICOM, governs our wages, benefits, work permits, and employment protections. Membership does not require Bermuda to open its labour market broadly or weaken existing standards.

- Wages, working conditions and work permits remain under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Government of Bermuda.
- Targeted access to specialised skills from CARICOM countries can actually strengthen local productivity and economic performance, which could support higher wages in Bermuda rather than undermining them.

"Full membership will cost too much for what Bermuda gets back."

See Chapter 1.

“Full membership will force Bermuda to amend the 60/40 company ownership rule, reducing Bermudian participation and control in the economy.”

CARICOM membership will not automatically require the removal of national ownership rules. Whether Bermuda’s 60/40 framework specifically would require any adjustment is not settled and would depend on legal interpretation, negotiated arrangements, and domestic policy choices.

“International companies will move jobs elsewhere in the region while keeping Bermuda registrations.”

Bermuda’s economic substance requirements already anchor activity and employment on the island. CARICOM membership does not change these requirements or Bermuda’s willingness to enforce them.

Companies also employ people in Bermuda because of our world-class regulatory environment and talent pool/concentration of global expertise in professional services, reinsurance, fintech, and other areas of international business. Membership in CARICOM does not undermine this incentive to hire and operate in Bermuda.

“Full membership will force Bermuda to amend the 60/40 company ownership rule, reducing Bermudian participation and control in the economy.”

CARICOM membership will not automatically require the removal of national ownership rules. Whether Bermuda’s 60/40 framework specifically would require any adjustment is not settled and would depend on legal interpretation, negotiated arrangements, and domestic policy choices.

“CARICOM membership could expose Bermuda to higher Money Laundering (AML) or compliance risks, harming our reputation and competitiveness in international business.”

Bermuda’s AML and financial regulatory regimes are governed by global international standards, not by CARICOM. Strict domestic controls and our commitment to regulatory excellence will be maintained without exception.

- Any increase in financial or business flows resulting from deeper CARICOM links will be subject to the same rigorous scrutiny and world-class compliance frameworks applied to all other international transactions.
- The Bermuda Monetary Authority (BMA) will continue to operate independently, ensuring that regional integration does not come at the expense of our global reputation for financial integrity.
- The Government and the BMA remain fully committed to international standards; Full Membership provides a platform for cooperation, but it does not lower the gate for AML/CFT risks.

“CARICOM membership will allow regional professional service providers to enter Bermuda and undercut local firms (e.g. lawyers and accountants).”

Bermuda will continue to regulate professional licensing and market-access controls. National regulation for service providers remains a domestic authority and is not automatically removed by the CSME.

- The CSME provisions on the Right of Establishment allow for the establishment of businesses, but they do not override national requirements for professional licensing, certification, or local regulatory oversight.
- Bermuda’s professional services sector possesses an unparalleled concentration of specialised knowledge and skills in law, accountancy, actuarial services, wealth management, and more.
- Because of this competitive edge, Full Membership is more likely to create expansion opportunities for Bermudian firms to export their services into the regional market than to result in local providers being displaced.

“CARICOM will make decisions that harm Bermuda’s reputation.”

CARICOM does not have the authority to make binding decisions on Bermuda’s behalf. Member states speak for themselves and retain control over their own policies and standards. However, the Government acknowledges that CARICOM communiques and Secretariat statements do carry associative weight, and this is a legitimate concern. Bermuda’s position as a British Overseas Territory provides a structural safeguard. This mechanism ensures that Bermuda maintains its own voice on matters of geopolitical or reputational sensitivity. Full membership would also allow Bermuda to be present when regional positions are discussed, ensuring that collective statements reflect Bermuda’s realities rather than being shaped without our input.

“CARICOM will make decisions for Bermuda and reduce our control over our domestic affairs.”

CARICOM is not a political union and does not have the power to impose laws or override Bermuda’s domestic authority. The Government of Bermuda retains full control over its internal affairs, while the United Kingdom remains responsible for external affairs, security, and defense.

- Full Membership actually increases Bermuda’s influence by giving us a formal vote to shape regional policies and programmes that directly benefit our citizens, such as on matters of cost-of-living, climate impacts, and trade.
- Membership provides Bermuda with a collective voice in regional and international arenas that we do not currently possess as a non-sovereign territory.

“Aligning more closely with the Caribbean means abandoning our traditional economic partners like the UK, EU, US, and Canada.”

Full Membership in CARICOM broadens our partnerships; it does not replace or diminish our traditional relationships in any way. The United Kingdom, United States, European Union, and Canada remain central to Bermuda’s economic wellbeing, and these ties will continue to be prioritised, and our representative offices in London, Brussels, and Washington, D.C. will continue their vital work.

“As a British Overseas Territory, Bermuda cannot participate meaningfully.”

While Bermuda's status as a British Overseas Territory means we cannot participate on matters of external affairs without permission from the UK, the majority of CARICOM's work focuses on economic and social issues that fall squarely within Bermuda's delegated authority. For further details on our constitutional status, see Chapter 3 (Bermuda's Constitutional Status and its Limits)

“Citizenship-by-investment programmes could be used to bypass Bermuda's controls.”

Bermuda will continue to manage its own immigration system, and CARICOM membership does not override these controls.

Holding citizenship in another CARICOM country through a "citizenship-by-investment" program does not grant an individual any automatic right to enter, live, or work in Bermuda.

All individuals seeking entry or residency will continue to be subject to Bermuda's existing immigration protocols to ensure no bad actors can bypass our standards.

“The Government has already decided to become a Full Member, so why bother consulting the public?”

Bermuda is advancing the process to explore and negotiate full membership in CARICOM, alongside a structured public education and engagement process.

The intention is to understand the implications fully, hear from the public, and negotiate terms that reflect Bermuda's unique circumstances.

“Government should focus on local issues first before worrying about CARICOM.”

Membership in CARICOM is, at its heart, a strategy for solving our most pressing local issues. Far from being a distraction, this partnership is a direct response to the "kitchen table" challenges that Bermudians face every day, such as the high cost of groceries, food security, and community safety, which are often too large for a small island to tackle alone.

Our experience as an Associate Member has proven that we are stronger together; from receiving and lending critical aid after hurricanes to navigating the COVID-19 pandemic with the specialised support of the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA), to the protection we receive through the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF).

Instead of spending millions for Bermuda to "reinvent the wheel" on every new policy, we can share the cost and expertise of 15 other countries to deliver better local services in health, education, disaster resilience and more at a lower cost.



Chapter 5

Conclusion



Bermuda's connection to the Caribbean is neither symbolic nor recent. It is rooted in family, in shared history, and in bonds that the geography of the Atlantic could stretch but never sever. Bermudian families trace their roots from Hamilton to Bridgetown, Kingston, and Castries. Our institutions, our culture, and our economic life have been shaped by these ties across generations; through education, through trade, through the recognition of shared experience.

Associate Membership in CARICOM gave formal expression to a relationship that has existed for centuries. Since then, Bermuda has stood alongside its Caribbean partners in health cooperation, disaster response, education, and cultural exchange. Each act of cooperation has reinforced a straightforward truth: that the challenges facing small island communities are better met together than alone.

This Green Paper has set out, what full membership would mean for Bermuda, what it opens up, what it requires, and where our constitutional framework sets limits. Bermuda will not join CARICOM on identical terms to a sovereign state. What is being proposed is the deepest and most substantive form of participation that our constitutional arrangements permit, a membership that gives Bermuda enhanced proximity and input into decisions that shape our region, access to the economic and institutional partnerships that full members benefit from, and a voice at tables where the issues that affect Bermudians' daily lives are being addressed.

The question this paper puts to the people of Bermuda is whether we seize this opportunity, to participate in the trade relationships, climate partnerships, and regional conversations our Caribbean neighbours are leading.

Our history with the Caribbean is one of endurance and renewal. The opportunity before us is to write its next chapter with a clear-eyed strategy that serves the people of Bermuda.

This Green Paper establishes the strategic, legal, and historical framework for considering Full Membership. The Government recognises that the public consultation will generate questions that require rigorous quantitative answers. Together with the legal findings of the clause-by-clause review of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas and the feedback gathered through this public consultation, will form the basis of a White Paper to be presented to Parliament.



Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

This glossary provides definitions for the key terms, institutions, agreements, and concepts referenced in the Green Paper on Bermuda's Application for Full Membership in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

Term	Description	Source
Afreximbank <i>(African Export-Import Bank)</i>	A Pan-African multilateral financial institution established by the African Union to finance and promote intra- and extra-African trade. Since extending membership to CARICOM in 2022, Afreximbank has committed US\$5 billion to regional initiatives (increased from US\$3 billion at the 50th CARICOM Heads of Government Meeting in February 2026), including the \$180 million Africa Trade Centre in Barbados. Access to Afreximbank financing is generally restricted to full CARICOM members.	Green Paper, pp. 15, 30. Source: Afreximbank.
Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)	An intergovernmental organisation of low-lying coastal and small island countries that acts as a negotiating voice for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) within the United Nations system, particularly on climate change, ocean sustainability, and disaster risk reduction.	Green Paper, p. 21. Source: AOSIS / United Nations.
Associate Membership	A formal status within CARICOM that allows a territory or state to participate in certain activities, meetings, and programmes without holding full decision-making rights. Associate Members typically cannot vote in major decisions but may engage in technical cooperation and sectoral discussions. Associate Members pay a fixed 1% of the CARICOM budget. Bermuda has held Associate Membership since 2003.	Green Paper, pp. 07, 13, 52. Source: Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas.
Blue Economy	The sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods, and ocean ecosystem health. For Bermuda and the Caribbean, this encompasses sustainable fisheries, marine biotechnology, ocean-based renewable energy, and marine tourism. CARICOM is developing a Regional Ocean Governance Policy to coordinate Blue Economy development.	Green Paper, pp. 20, 35. Source: World Bank.
Bridgetown Initiative	A reform agenda championed by Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley calling for fundamental changes to the global financial architecture to provide developing nations, particularly Small Island Developing States, with greater access to affordable climate finance, reformed credit-rating systems, and restructured debt instruments.	Green Paper, pp. 14, 19, 33. Source: Government of Barbados.
British Overseas Territory (BOT)	A territory under the jurisdiction and sovereignty of the United Kingdom which does not form part of the UK itself. Bermuda is one of 14 British Overseas Territories. Under the 1968 Bermuda Constitution, the UK retains responsibility for Bermuda's external affairs, defence, and internal security, which constrains Bermuda's ability to participate in certain CARICOM activities independently.	Green Paper, pp. 05, 09, 10, 17, 50. Source: Bermuda Constitution Order 1968.
25 by 2025	A CARICOM initiative led by Guyana's President Dr. Irfaan Ali to reduce the Caribbean's food import bill by 25 percent by 2025 through increased regional food production, improved agricultural supply chains, and strengthened food security.	Green Paper, pp. 14, 18. Source: CARICOM Secretariat.
Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF)	A multi-country risk pool that provides parametric insurance coverage to Caribbean and Central American governments against natural hazards such as hurricanes, earthquakes, and excess rainfall. CCRIF makes rapid payouts based on pre-agreed trigger parameters, helping governments finance immediate disaster response. Bermuda currently participates in CCRIF.	Green Paper, pp. 19, 33, 39, 50. Source: CCRIF SPC.



Glossary of Terms and Acronyms



Term	Description	Source
Caribbean Community (CARICOM)	A regional intergovernmental organisation established in 1973 by the Treaty of Chaguaramas to promote economic integration, foreign policy coordination, human and social development, and functional cooperation among Caribbean states. CARICOM currently has 15 Full Members and 7 Associate Members. It is not a political union; each member retains its own government and national identity.	Green Paper, pp. 03, 07–08, 52. Source: Treaty of Chaguaramas, 1973.
Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC)	The official CARICOM entity responsible for coordinating the region's response to climate change. Based in Belize, the CCCCC provides climate change-related policy advice and guidelines, and facilitates access to financing for adaptation and mitigation projects.	Green Paper, pp. 19, 39. Source: CARICOM Secretariat.
Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ)	An international court established in 2001 with two jurisdictions: an original jurisdiction to interpret and apply the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas (including the CSME), and an appellate jurisdiction that serves as the final court of appeal for certain CARICOM member states, replacing the UK Privy Council.	Green Paper, p. 11. Source: Agreement Establishing the CCJ, 2001.
Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA)	A CARICOM institution responsible for coordinating emergency response, disaster preparedness, and resilience-building across the Caribbean. CDEMA facilitates rapid deployment of resources, training, and shared early-warning systems among participating states.	Green Paper, pp. 19, 39, 45. Source: CARICOM Secretariat.
Caribbean Free Trade Association (CARIFTA)	A regional free trade organisation established in 1965 by several Caribbean countries to promote trade within the region. CARIFTA was the precursor to CARICOM and was superseded in 1973 when the Treaty of Chaguaramas broadened the scope of cooperation beyond trade to include social development and coordinated policies.	Green Paper, pp. 08, 52. Source: CARICOM Secretariat.
CARICOM Development Fund (CDF)	A CARICOM institution that provides financial and technical assistance to disadvantaged countries, regions, and sectors within the Community to address economic disparities and support development in less-developed member states.	Green Paper, p. 42. Source: Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, Article 158.
CARICOM IMPACS <i>(Implementation Agency for Crime and Security)</i>	The CARICOM agency responsible for coordinating regional crime and security initiatives, including counter-terrorism, maritime security, cybersecurity, and intelligence sharing among member states. Bermuda hosted the 10th CARICOM IMPACS meeting in 2008.	Green Paper, p. 34. Source: CARICOM Secretariat.
CARICOM Skills Certificate	A certificate issued to qualified CARICOM nationals in specified categories, including university graduates, holders of associate degrees, artists, musicians, sportspersons, and media workers, granting them the right to seek employment in participating CSME member states without a work permit. The certificate does not guarantee employment and must be verified by the receiving state's competent authority.	Green Paper, p. 10. Source: Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, Articles 32, 46.



Glossary of Terms and Acronyms



Term	Description	Source
CARIFESTA <i>(Caribbean Festival of Arts)</i>	A regional cultural festival organised under the auspices of CARICOM that brings together artists, performers, writers, and cultural practitioners from across the Caribbean. Bermuda sent an 18-member delegation to CARIFESTA XV in Barbados in 2025, including Gombeyes, musicians, artists, and writers.	Green Paper, pp. 31, 34. Source: CARICOM Secretariat.
CARIFTA Games	An annual track and field and aquatics competition for under-20 and under-17 athletes from CARICOM member states and associate members. Bermuda has both hosted (1975, 1980, 2004, 2012) and competed in the annual Games.	Green Paper, pp. 31, 34. Source: NACAC.
CARILEC <i>(Caribbean Electric Utility Services Corporation)</i>	A regional association of electric utilities serving the Caribbean, including Bermuda's BELCO. CARILEC coordinates disaster assistance, technical training, and knowledge sharing among member utilities. BELCO's President, Wayne Caines, became Chairman of the CARILEC Board in 2025.	Green Paper, pp. 19, 34. Source: CARILEC.
CARPHA <i>(Caribbean Public Health Agency)</i>	The single regional public health agency for CARICOM, established in 2013. CARPHA consolidates several pre-existing Caribbean health institutions and provides advisory, surveillance, laboratory, and response services. CARPHA deployed region-wide digital disease surveillance during COVID-19.	Green Paper, pp. 09, 22, 34, 50. Source: CARPHA Agreement, 2011.
COFCOR <i>(Council for Foreign and Community Relations)</i>	One of CARICOM's principal organs, responsible for coordinating the Community's external relations and foreign policy positions. Associate Members are excluded from COFCOR; Full Members participate and vote.	Green Paper, pp. 32-33. Source: Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, Article 17.
COHSOD <i>(Council for Human and Social Development)</i>	One of CARICOM's principal organs, responsible for promoting human and social development in areas such as health, education, labour, housing, gender, youth, culture, and sport. Associate Members are excluded from COHSOD; Full Members participate and vote.	Green Paper, pp. 32-34. Source: Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, Article 16.
Common External Tariff (CET)	A uniform tariff rate applied by all CARICOM member states on goods imported from countries outside the Community. The CET is a core element of the CSME designed to create a level playing field within the regional market and strengthen the Community's negotiating position with external trading partners.	Green Paper, p. 11. Source: Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, Part Three.
COTED <i>(Council for Trade and Economic Development)</i>	One of CARICOM's principal organs, responsible for promoting trade and economic development, coordinating economic policy, and managing the Community's trade relations with external partners. COTED oversees the Common External Tariff, trade agreements, and regional industrial policy. Associate Members are excluded; Full Members participate and vote.	Green Paper, pp. 32-34, 37. Source: Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, Article 15.



Glossary of Terms and Acronyms



Term	Description	Source
Counter-Terrorist Financing (CTF)	The set of laws, regulations, and enforcement actions designed to prevent the financing of terrorism. CTF frameworks are governed by international standards set by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and are implemented domestically in Bermuda by the Bermuda Monetary Authority.	Green Paper, pp. 21, 45. Source: FATF.
Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)	Shared digital systems and platforms such as digital identity, data exchange, and payment systems, that underpin a country's digital economy and government services. CARICOM is co-developing DPI solutions through initiatives such as the School of Digital Transformation and Innovation (SoDTIC).	Green Paper, p. 22. Source: United Nations Development Programme.
Entrustment	A legal or constitutional arrangement through which the United Kingdom delegates authority to a British Overseas Territory to conduct certain external affairs or represent itself in specified regional or international forums. Bermuda has received two relevant entrustment letters: a March 2016 letter granting general authority for regional cooperation, and a February 2024 letter specifically authorising Bermuda to negotiate full CARICOM membership, subject to conditions.	Green Paper, pp. 05, 09, 52. Source: UK FCDO.
Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)	A maritime zone extending up to 200 nautical miles from a coastal state's baseline, within which the state has sovereign rights over natural resources, including fisheries, seabed minerals, and energy production. Bermuda's EEZ covers approximately 465,000 square kilometres, compared to its 53 square kilometre land area.	Green Paper, p. 20
Financial Action Task Force (FATF)	An intergovernmental body that sets international standards for combating money laundering, terrorist financing, and proliferation financing. Bermuda is an established member of the FATF's Caribbean-focused affiliate and is subject to its mutual evaluation process.	Green Paper, p. 45. Source: FATF.
Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)	The United Kingdom government department responsible for foreign affairs, diplomacy, and international development. The FCDO manages the UK's relationships with its Overseas Territories and issues entrustment letters authorising them to participate in regional organisations such as CARICOM.	Green Paper, pp. 09, 52. Source: UK Government.
Full Membership	The highest level of membership within CARICOM, granting full rights and obligations, including voting power, participation in all decision-making bodies (the Conference of Heads of Government, COTED, COHSOD, COFCOR), and adherence to the obligations of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas. Full Members also assume a higher financial contribution to the CARICOM budget, assessed based on GDP.	Green Paper, p. 52
Gombey	A Bermudian masked dance tradition rooted in West African masking ceremonies, particularly those of the Igbo people of Nigeria. Scholars trace the Gombey's origins to the same cultural complex that produced Jamaica's Jonkonnu, the Bahamas' Junkanoo, and St. Kitts' Masquerade. The word "Gombey" shares its root with the Bahamian "Goombay," both derived from African words meaning "rhythm" or "drum."	Green Paper, pp. 24–26



Glossary of Terms and Acronyms



Term	Description	Source
Greater Caribbean	A geopolitical term referring to the wider Caribbean Basin, including CARICOM Member States, Central American countries, parts of South America, Mexico, and other territories bordering the Caribbean Sea. Bermuda is described as the northernmost point in the Greater Caribbean.	Green Paper, pp. 03, 52.
Gross Domestic Product (GDP)	The total monetary value of all finished goods and services produced within a country's borders over a specified period, typically one year. GDP is used as the primary measure for calculating each CARICOM member's assessed contribution to the organisation's budget.	Green Paper, pp. 13, 17.
Heads of Government Conference	The supreme governing organ of CARICOM, comprising the heads of government of all Full Member States. The Conference is responsible for determining and providing policy direction for the Community. Associate Members may attend as observers but cannot vote.	Green Paper, pp. 04–05, 32–33. Source: Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, Article 12.
HeDPAC <i>(Health Development Partnership for Africa and the Caribbean)</i>	A partnership initiative between African and Caribbean nations to pool medical procurement, strengthen healthcare systems, lower pharmaceutical costs, and build regional healthcare resilience through shared resources and expertise.	Green Paper, pp. 31, 37. Source: CARICOM Secretariat.
Large Ocean States	A reframing of the "Small Island Developing States" (SIDS) concept, championed by Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley and other Caribbean leaders, that defines island nations not by the smallness of their landmasses but by the vastness of their maritime territories. The concept underscores the resource wealth and strategic importance of the ocean spaces these nations steward.	Green Paper, pp. 16, 20. Source: Government of Barbados.
Less Developed Countries <i>(LDCs, within CARICOM)</i>	A classification within CARICOM referring to the smaller and economically more vulnerable member states that receive special provisions, including trade protections and development assistance, under the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas. CARICOM LDCs include Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.	Green Paper, p. 11. Source: Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, Article 4.
Loss and Damage Fund	A global climate finance mechanism established under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to provide financial assistance to developing countries that have suffered loss and damage from climate change impacts. CARICOM played an instrumental role in its creation.	Green Paper, p. 19
More Developed Countries <i>(MDCs, within CARICOM)</i>	A classification within CARICOM referring to the larger and more economically advanced member states. MDCs include Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago. MDCs are required to pay at least 7% of the CARICOM budget. The Bahamas and Haiti are treated under separate arrangements.	Green Paper, p. 13. Source: Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, Article 4.



Glossary of Terms and Acronyms



Term	Description	Source
Multi-dimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI)	A composite index developed under the leadership of Antigua and Barbuda Prime Minister Gaston Browne to measure the economic, environmental, and social vulnerabilities of Small Island Developing States. The MVI is designed to provide a fairer basis for determining access to concessional finance and international support, beyond traditional income-per-capita measures.	Green Paper, p. 19
Observer Status	A non-member status within CARICOM that grants permission to attend certain meetings without voting rights or participation in decision-making. Observer status allows limited engagement in discussions and access to documents. Bermuda held Observer status from 1976 before becoming an Associate Member in 2003.	Green Paper, pp. 04, 52. Source: CARICOM Secretariat.
Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO)	The regional office of the World Health Organization for the Americas, serving as the specialised health agency for the Inter-American system. PAHO provides technical cooperation and mobilises partnerships to improve health and well-being in the Americas, including the Caribbean. Bermuda's 2016 entrustment letter covers engagement with PAHO.	Green Paper, p. 09. Source: PAHO / World Health Organization.
Regional Security System (RSS)	A collective security arrangement among several Eastern Caribbean states that provides for mutual defence, crisis response, disaster relief, and law enforcement cooperation. Full CARICOM membership could provide Bermuda access to the RSS for enhanced training and specialised security practices.	Green Paper, p. 45. Source: RSS Treaty, 1996.
Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas (RTC)	The founding treaty of CARICOM, signed in 1973 in Chaguaramas, Trinidad and Tobago, by Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago. The original Treaty established the Caribbean Community and Common Market. The revised 2001 legal instrument restructured CARICOM and established the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME). The RTC defines the rights and obligations of Member States, the Community's institutional structures, and the framework for economic integration and functional cooperation. Bermuda is currently conducting a clause-by-clause review of the RTC to identify which provisions may be restricted by the UK's constitutional guidance.	Green Paper, pp. 05, 07, 09–11, 52. Source: CARICOM Secretariat.
Right of Establishment	A CSME provision allowing businesses from one CARICOM member state to set up subsidiaries, branches, or agencies in another member state without discriminatory restrictions. Bermuda's position is to safeguard the distinction between local and "exempted" companies to protect the competitiveness of Bermudian-owned businesses.	Green Paper, p. 12
60/40 Rule	A Bermuda regulatory framework requiring that at least 60% of a local company's equity be held by Bermudians. The rule is designed to protect Bermudian participation and ownership in the domestic economy. The Government has stated that CARICOM membership will not automatically require the removal of national ownership rules.	Green Paper, pp. 12, 48. Source: Bermuda Companies Act 1981.
Small Island Developing States (SIDS)	A United Nations designation for small island countries and territories that share common sustainable development challenges, including small physical size, remoteness, vulnerability to external economic shocks, climate change, and natural disasters. Bermuda and all CARICOM member states are classified as SIDS.	Green Paper, p. 20. Source: United Nations.



Glossary of Terms and Acronyms



Term	Description	Source
Small Island Developing States (SIDS)	A United Nations designation for small island countries and territories that share common sustainable development challenges, including small physical size, remoteness, vulnerability to external economic shocks, climate change, and natural disasters. Bermuda and all CARICOM member states are classified as SIDS.	Green Paper, p. 20. Source: United Nations.
SoDTIC <i>(CARICOM School of Digital Transformation and Innovation)</i>	A CARICOM initiative launched in June 2025 to support the region's governance of emerging technologies, digital transformation, and innovation capacity-building, including areas such as Artificial Intelligence governance and digital public services.	Green Paper, p. 22
Treaty of Chaguaramas	The founding treaty of CARICOM, signed in 1973 in Chaguaramas, Trinidad and Tobago, by Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago. The original Treaty established the Caribbean Community and Common Market. It was substantially revised in 2001 to create the CSME framework.	Green Paper, pp. 7–8
UNCTAD <i>(United Nations Conference on Trade and Development)</i>	A United Nations body that supports developing countries in accessing the benefits of the global economy through analysis, consensus-building, and technical assistance on trade, investment, and development. CARICOM has partnered with UNCTAD on trade resilience and food security initiatives.	Green Paper, p. 37
West Indies Federation (1958–1962)	A short-lived political federation of ten British Caribbean territories, including Jamaica, Trinidad, Barbados, and St. Kitts-Nevis, intended to bring the islands together under a single governance framework in preparation for collective independence. Although the Federation dissolved in 1962, it left behind a commitment to regional cooperation and common institutions such as the University of the West Indies, and laid the groundwork for what would become CARICOM.	Green Paper, pp. 04, 08.

Note: This glossary is intended as a reference companion to the Green Paper and is not exhaustive. Terms may carry additional legal or technical meanings in specific contexts. For the authoritative text of CARICOM's legal instruments, refer to the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas and associated protocols, available at caricom.org.



GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA
Ministry of Home Affairs