Dawgen GLOBAL

2026 EDITION



CARIBBEAN SERVICE DESK · SOUTHERN CARIBBEAN

Doing Business in Curaçao

A practical guide to establishing, operating and growing a business in Curaçao

CONTENTS

01	Curaçao at a glance	3
02	Why Curaçao	4
03	Choosing a business structure	5
04	Setting up: step by step	6
05	Tax at a glance	7
06	Employing people	8
07	Banking, currency and property	9
08	Incentives, trade and customs	10
09	Regulators and compliance calendar	11
10	Your first 90 days: checklist	12
11	How Dawgen Global helps	13

FOREWORD

Curaçao is one of the most internationally connected economies in the southern Caribbean, with a deep natural harbour, an established financial sector and close ties to Europe, the Americas and the wider region.

Investors choose Curaçao for good reason: a constituent country of the Kingdom of the Netherlands with a Dutch civil-law system, a multilingual workforce, a currency pegged to the US dollar and long experience in trade, logistics, tourism and financial services. Opportunity sits alongside complexity. Registration, tax, foreign exchange, employment and licensing rules all need careful handling from the first day.

This guide sets out what you need to know in plain language: how to choose a structure, how the set-up process works, what taxes apply, how to employ people, and which incentives may be available. It is written for investors, entrepreneurs and regional and international groups considering Curaçao.

We serve clients in Curaçao through Dawgen Global's Caribbean Service Desk, managed from our headquarters in Kingston, and we are ready to help you turn a plan into a well-run, compliant business.

Dr. Dawkins Brown, Ph.D., MCMI, ACFE

Executive Chairman, Dawgen Global

How to use this guide

This guide gives a practical overview of establishing and running a business in Curaçao. It is general information, current to October 2026, and is not a substitute for advice on your circumstances. Rates and rules change; speak to us before you act.

OVERVIEW

01 Curaçao at a glance

A constituent country of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, with an economy built on tourism, logistics, financial services and ship repair.

CAPITAL
Willemstad
Commercial, financial and government centre

POPULATION
About 155,000
Large community in the Netherlands

LANGUAGES
Papiamentu, Dutch, English
All three official; Spanish widely spoken

CURRENCY
Caribbean guilder (XCG)
Pegged at Cg 1.79 to US$1

LEGAL SYSTEM
Dutch civil law
Final appeal to the Supreme Court of the Netherlands

TIME ZONE
UTC−4
Atlantic Standard Time all year; no daylight saving

PROFIT TAX
22%
15% on the first Cg 500,000 of taxable profit

TURNOVER TAX (OB)
6%
7% and 9% in certain cases; no registration threshold

TRADE TIES
Kingdom, EU OCT
Kingdom of the Netherlands; EU association

Leading sectors

Tourism and hospitality · Trade and logistics · Financial and fiduciary services · Ship repair and maritime · Free zone trading · ICT and digital services · Energy · Construction and real estate

Gateways

Curaçao International Airport has direct flights to the Netherlands, the Americas and the region. Willemstad's deep-water harbour handles cargo, cruise ships and ship repair.

Public holidays

Public holidays include Carnival Monday, Good Friday and Easter Monday, King's Day (27 April), Labour Day (1 May), Flag Day (2 July) and Curaçao Day (10 October).

INVESTMENT CLIMATE

02 Why Curaçao

Kingdom ties, a multilingual workforce and a long trading history make Curaçao a natural base between Europe, the Americas and the Caribbean.

Strategic location

Curaçao lies outside the main hurricane belt, close to the northern coast of South America and on shipping routes between the Panama Canal, the Caribbean and Europe. Businesses serve Latin America, the Caribbean and Europe from one base.

Multilingual workforce

Many people speak Papiamentu, Dutch, English and Spanish, which supports tourism, trade and regional services. The University of Curaçao and vocational institutions supply professional and technical skills.

Kingdom legal framework

Company, contract and property law follow the Dutch civil-law tradition. Cases go to the Joint Court of Justice, with final appeal to the Supreme Court of the Netherlands.

A changing economy

Curaçao's public finances are supervised by the Kingdom's Board of Financial Supervision. In recent years the government has moved to a territorial profit tax system, introduced a two-tier profit tax rate, replaced the Netherlands Antillean guilder with the Caribbean guilder and opened a beneficial ownership register.

The Dutch Caribbean Securities Exchange in Willemstad lists equities, debt and funds.

Where the opportunities are

Sector	Examples of opportunity
Tourism	Hotels and resorts, attractions, diving and watersports, and supply chains for food and services
Logistics	Warehousing, distribution, regional trading and re-export through the free zones
Maritime	Ship repair, maintenance and port services
Business services	Shared service and call centres, IT and data centres, fund and fiduciary services
Energy	Wind and solar generation, storage and energy efficiency

Investment support

The Ministry of Economic Development promotes investment and handles business licensing questions. Curinde, the government-owned free zone company, operates the free zones at the harbour and the airport.

LEGAL VEHICLES

03 Choosing a business structure

Most investors use a private limited company (BV) or a public limited company (NV), formed by notarial deed. Foreign companies may register a branch. The choice depends on liability, tax, financing and exit plans.

Vehicle	Key features	Typical use	Main obligations
Private limited company (BV)	Separate legal entity formed by notarial deed; no minimum share capital; one director and one shareholder may suffice	Most operating businesses and subsidiaries of foreign groups	Trade register and UBO filings; profit tax returns; annual financial statements
Public limited company (NV)	Separate legal entity; suited to wider shareholdings and listing	Larger businesses, regulated entities and listed companies	As for a BV; audit where the law or a regulator requires it
Branch of a foreign company	Registered in the trade register; not a separate legal entity	Projects, contracts and market entry by foreign companies	Trade register filings; profit tax on Curaçao profits
Foundation (stichting) and private foundation	No members or shareholders; a private foundation (SPF) may hold family assets	Charities, holding and estate planning	Trade register and UBO filings; profit tax where the foundation carries on business
Partnership (VOF or CV)	General or limited partnership; general partners personally liable	Professional practices and family businesses	Trade register filings; partners taxed on their share of profits
Sole proprietorship	Individual trading in their own name; unlimited liability	Small owner-managed businesses	Trade register filings; personal income tax

Foreign ownership

Foreign investors may own 100% of a Curaçao company, with no general residency rule for directors. Banking, insurance, trust services and gaming need a licence before trading starts.

Beneficial ownership

Legal entities must register their ultimate beneficial owners (UBOs) with the Chamber of Commerce. Existing entities had until 30 September 2025; changes must be reported within two weeks. Fines reach Cg 25,000.

GETTING STARTED

04 Setting up: step by step

Companies are formed before a civil-law notary and registered with the Chamber of Commerce, usually within a few weeks once documents are ready; bank accounts and licences take longer.

1 **Plan the structure and name** — WEEK 1

Choose the vehicle, shareholding and directors, and check that the proposed name is available in the Chamber of Commerce trade register.

2 **Execute the deed and register** — WEEK 1–3

A Curaçao civil-law notary completes due diligence, executes the deed of incorporation and articles, and registers the company and its UBOs with the Chamber of Commerce.

3 **Open a bank account** — WEEK 2–6

Banks apply full know-your-customer checks on the company, directors and beneficial owners. Allow extra time where owners are overseas.

4 **Register for taxes and premiums** — WEEK 2–4

Register with the Tax Department for profit tax, turnover tax and wage tax, and as an employer with the Social Insurance Bank (SVB). Consider foreign exchange status with the Central Bank.

5 **Obtain licences and permits** — VARIES

Apply for a business licence where needed, sector licences from the Central Bank or Gaming Authority, building permits, and work and residence permits for foreign staff.

6 **Protect personal data** — BEFORE TRADING

Businesses processing personal data must comply with the National Ordinance on the Protection of Personal Data.

7 **Set up accounting and compliance** — BEFORE TRADING

Put in place bookkeeping, payroll, financial reporting, a tax and filing calendar, and anti-money laundering controls where your sector requires them.

Documents you will usually need

Certified passport and proof of address for each director, shareholder and beneficial owner; bank or professional references; a registered address in Curaçao; and, for a branch, certified constitutional documents and a recent extract from the foreign company's home registry.

TAXATION

05 Tax at a glance

Since 2020 Curaçao taxes companies on a territorial basis: only Curaçao-source profit is taxed. There is no withholding tax on dividends, interest or royalties. The headline rates are below.

Business taxes	
Profit tax	15% on the first Cg 500,000 of taxable profit; 22% above
Special rates	3% for qualifying ship repair, service centres, warehousing and fund services; 0% for investment companies and qualifying IP income
Minimum tax	15% income inclusion rule for multinational groups with revenue of €750 million or more, from 2025; no domestic top-up tax
Turnover tax (OB)	6% general; 7% on insurance and short-term tourist rentals; 9% on imports and certain goods; no threshold
Transfer tax	4% on transfers of real estate, paid by the buyer
Property tax	Annual, 0.4% to 0.6% of value by band
Customs	Import duties under the Curaçao tariff, plus OB on imports

Individuals	
Residents	Taxed on worldwide income, with allowances and deductions
Income tax rates	Six bands from 9.75% to 46.5%; brackets widened for 2026

Withholding tax (non-residents)	Rate*
Dividends	Nil
Interest	Nil
Royalties and fees	Nil

*Domestic rates. Curaçao has a tax arrangement with the Netherlands and treaties with Malta and within the Kingdom. A treaty with Barbados was initialled in 2025. Unilateral relief applies where no treaty does.

Recent changes

Parliament approved the minimum tax ordinance on 1 September 2026, introducing only the income inclusion rule, retroactive to 2025; publication is pending. In 2025 Curaçao opened its UBO register, revoked the planned dividend withholding tax and tightened the expatriate regime. The 2026 wage tax brackets were widened.

PEOPLE

06 Employing people

Employment law is protective, and dismissal generally needs official permission. Employers must register with the SVB, pay wage tax and premiums monthly, and observe minimum standards.

Minimum standards

- **Minimum wage:** Cg 11.93 an hour (Cg 2,067.87 a month on a 40-hour week) from 1 January 2026, for employees aged 21 and over
- **Leave:** statutory minimum paid annual leave, often improved by contract or collective agreement
- **Sickness:** SVB sickness benefit for employees below the wage ceiling
- **Maternity:** pregnancy and maternity leave with SVB benefit
- **Dismissal:** generally needs a permit from the Ministry of Social Development, Labour and Welfare or a court ruling
- **Severance:** cessantia payment on dismissal for business reasons, based on years of service

Statutory payroll contributions

Contribution	Employee	Employer
Wage tax	9.75% to 46.5%	—
Old age (AOV)	6%	9%
Survivors (AWW)	0.5%	0.5%
Basic health (BVZ)	4.3%	9.3%
Special medical (AVBZ)	1.5%	0.5%
Sickness and accident	—	1.9% plus 0.5% to 5%

2026 caps: AOV and AWW Cg 100,000 a year; BVZ Cg 150,000; sickness and accident Cg 85,753.20. Wage tax and premiums are paid monthly.

Bringing in foreign staff

Work and residence permits

Foreign nationals need a work permit, applied for by the employer, and a residence permit. Dutch nationals do not need a work permit but must register.

Expatriate regime

Qualifying expatriates with at least Cg 150,000 a year in pay may receive tax-free allowances for up to five years. The employer must arrange a local trainee within a year.

Youth employment

Since July 2025 a wage tax and premium exemption applies to qualifying employees aged 18 to 29, and limited overtime is exempt for lower earners.

HR essentials from day one

Give every employee written terms of employment, keep accurate time, pay and leave records, register each employee with the SVB, and adopt a staff handbook covering conduct, grievances, data protection and health and safety. Most disputes we see start with missing paperwork, not bad intentions.

MONEY AND ASSETS

07 Banking, currency and property

Banking and finance

Banks, insurers, pension funds and trust service providers are supervised by the Centrale Bank van Curaçao en Sint Maarten (CBCS).

- **New currency:** the Caribbean guilder replaced the Netherlands Antillean guilder one for one on 31 March 2025; the old guilder ceased to be legal tender on 1 July 2025
- **Fixed currency:** pegged at Cg 1.79 to US$1
- **Foreign exchange regulations:** the CBCS licenses transactions between residents and non-residents, mostly through banks; a licence fee may apply to some payments abroad
- **Compliance:** expect thorough anti-money laundering and know-your-customer checks

Financial reporting

Companies keep accounts and prepare annual financial statements under the Civil Code. Larger and regulated companies need an audit.

Land and property

Foreign nationals and companies may hold property in Curaçao. Land is held either as freehold or, for much government land, under a long lease (erfpacht) with an annual ground rent. Transfers are made by notarial deed and recorded at the Land Registry (Kadaster).

Typical costs on a property purchase	
Transfer tax	4% of the value, paid by the buyer
Notary and registry fees	For the deed and Land Registry entry
Legal fees	Agreed with the advisers for each party
Property tax	Annual, 0.4% to 0.6% of value

Before you build

Development needs a building permit, and an erfpacht site may need consent for a change of use. Larger coastal projects may need environmental review.

GROWTH LEVERS

08 Incentives, trade and customs

Curaçao's incentives centre on reduced profit tax rates, investment allowances and the free zones, alongside Kingdom and EU ties.

Key incentive regimes

Regime	What it offers
3% profit tax rate	For qualifying ship and aircraft repair, service and data centres, warehousing and fund services
Investment companies and IP	0% for qualifying Curaçao investment companies and for IP income that meets the OECD nexus test
Investment allowance	Extra 10% deduction on qualifying new investment; losses carried forward 10 years
Free zones (e-zones)	Customs duty and OB relief on goods traded in the zones; the 2% profit tax rate was abolished from 2020
Participation exemption	Exempts qualifying dividends and gains on shareholdings

Eligibility and conditions apply to each regime. We can assess which incentives fit your project and prepare the applications.

Market access

- **Kingdom of the Netherlands:** close links with the Netherlands, Aruba and Sint Maarten
- **EU Overseas Countries and Territories:** EU association, with preferential access for qualifying goods
- **Free zones:** goods may be stored, processed and re-exported without import duties

Customs

Curaçao Customs handles imports and exports. Duty is charged on the customs value at tariff rates, plus OB and, for some products, excise. Goods entering the local market from a free zone bear duty and OB.

Gaming

The National Ordinance on Games of Chance replaced the former master licence system. Online operators are now licensed directly by the Curaçao Gaming Authority.

COMPLIANCE

09 Regulators and compliance calendar

Who regulates what

Body	Role
Chamber of Commerce	Trade register and UBO register
Tax Department	Profit tax, OB, wage tax and property taxes
Curaçao Customs	Imports, exports and duties
CBCS	Banks, insurers, pensions, trust services and foreign exchange
Social Insurance Bank (SVB)	AOV, AWW, BVZ and sickness and accident insurance
Financial Intelligence Unit (MOT)	Unusual transaction reporting
Curaçao Gaming Authority	Land-based and online gaming
Ministry of Social Development, Labour and Welfare	Work permits, dismissal permits and labour standards
Land Registry and planning authorities	Property records, erfpacht, building permits

Key filing dates

When	What
By the 15th of each month	Wage tax and premiums for the previous month; OB return and payment for the previous month
Quarterly or annual	OB for smaller businesses: annual below Cg 30,000 turnover; quarterly up to Cg 75,000
31 March	Provisional profit tax return and payment for the previous year; no extension
30 June	Final profit tax return and payment, unless an extension is granted
30 June 2027	First minimum tax filings expected for in-scope groups
Within two weeks	Report UBO changes to the Chamber of Commerce

Dates shown are for a company with a December year-end. Late filing and payment attract penalties and interest, which build quickly.

Anti-money laundering

Financial institutions and designated businesses, including real estate brokers, notaries, lawyers, accountants and gaming operators, must report unusual transactions to the MOT.

ACTION PLAN

10 Your first 90 days: checklist

Use this checklist to track the essential steps from decision to first trading day.

Days 1–30: establish

- [ ] Agree business plan, structure and ownership
- [ ] Check the proposed company name
- [ ] Gather KYC documents for directors and owners
- [ ] Instruct a Curaçao civil-law notary
- [ ] Execute the deed of incorporation
- [ ] Register with the Chamber of Commerce
- [ ] Register the UBOs
- [ ] Apply to open business bank accounts

Days 31–60: register and license

- [ ] Register for profit tax, OB and wage tax
- [ ] Register as an employer with the SVB
- [ ] Confirm the CBCS foreign exchange position
- [ ] Apply for business and sector licences
- [ ] Apply for work and residence permits
- [ ] Assess eligibility for incentives
- [ ] Lease premises and arrange insurance cover

Days 61–90: operate

- [ ] Set up the accounting system and chart of accounts
- [ ] Set up payroll, wage tax and premiums
- [ ] Issue written employment contracts
- [ ] Build the tax and filing calendar
- [ ] Put AML and data protection policies in place
- [ ] Agree year-end and audit arrangements

Ongoing

- [ ] Monthly wage tax, premium and OB filings
- [ ] Provisional and final profit tax returns
- [ ] Annual financial statements
- [ ] Keep trade register and UBO details current
- [ ] Renew licences and permits on time

YOUR PARTNER

11 How Dawgen Global helps

One Dawgen Global team supports you through our Caribbean Service Desk, managed from our headquarters in Kingston.

Market entry and structuring

Choice of vehicle, group and tax structuring, feasibility studies and business plans.

Incorporation and corporate secretarial

Company formation, statutory records and trade register and UBO filings.

Tax advisory and compliance

Registrations, planning, OB, wage tax, returns and transfer pricing, through our Caribbean Tax Service Desk.

Accounting and payroll outsourcing

Bookkeeping, management accounts, payroll and a Virtual CFO.

Audit and assurance

Statutory audits, reviews and special-purpose reporting for lenders and parent companies.

HR, immigration and legal support

Employment contracts, HR policies, work permits and legal process support, with our panel of attorneys.

Risk and compliance

AML programmes, data protection compliance, internal audit and governance.

Technology and cyber

Systems selection, digital transformation, cybersecurity and AI governance.

Incentive applications

Incentive and permit assessments and applications.

Start with a conversation

Tell us your plans for Curaçao, and we will set out the steps, timeline and costs. Some regulated services are performed by affiliated firms; we will advise you of the arrangements when you make a request. Fees are tailored to each client's circumstances and set out in an engagement letter. Email **curacao@dawgen.com** or **info@dawgen.global**, or call (876) 926-5210.

Talk to the Curaçao Caribbean Service Desk

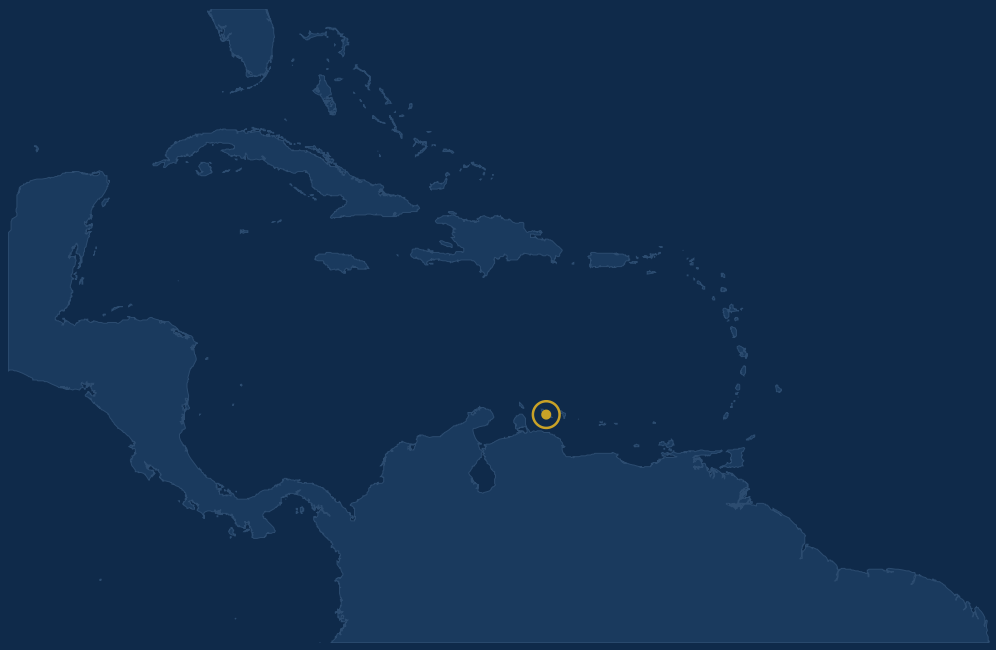
Contact

curacao@dawgen.com

Dawgen Global, Dawgen Towers
47-49 Trinidad Terrace, Kingston 5, Jamaica
(876) 926-5210 · (876) 630-2011
(876) 929-3670 · (876) 929-3870
US toll free 855-354-2447
info@dawgen.global · dawgen.global

Key official sources

- Government of Curaçao, Ministry of Finance and Tax Department (gobiernu.cw)
- Chamber of Commerce and Industry Curaçao (curacao-chamber.cw)
- Centrale Bank van Curaçao en Sint Maarten (centralbank.cw)
- Social Insurance Bank, SVB (svbcur.org)
- Ministry of Social Development, Labour and Welfare (gobiernu.cw)
- Curaçao Customs (gobiernu.cw)
- Curaçao Gaming Authority (cga.cw)
- Dutch Caribbean Securities Exchange (dcsx.cw)



This publication contains general information only, current to October 2026, and is not professional advice. Tax rates, thresholds and procedures change frequently; confirm the current position with Dawgen Global or the relevant authority before acting. Some regulated services are performed by affiliated firms; we will advise you of the arrangements when you make a request.
© 2026 Dawgen Global Caribbean Limited. All rights reserved. Maps: Dawgen Global.