Dawgen GLOBAL

2026 EDITION



CARIBBEAN SERVICE DESK · CARIBBEAN NETHERLANDS

Doing Business in Saba

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

CONTENTS

01	Saba at a glance	3
02	Why Saba	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

Saba is one of the smallest economies in the Caribbean: a volcanic island that is part of the Netherlands, uses the US dollar and shares a simple tax system with Bonaire and St Eustatius.

Since 10 October 2010 Saba has been a special municipality of the Netherlands, with Dutch law, Dutch courts and national government services delivered on the island. Investors find a tax system with no profit tax for locally established businesses, a nature and diving reputation, a medical school and a new harbour under construction. They also find a very small market, limited land and rules that differ from both the European Netherlands and the rest of the Caribbean.

This guide sets out in plain language how to choose a structure, how set-up works, what taxes apply, how to employ people and which reliefs may be available. It is written for investors, entrepreneurs and regional groups considering Saba.

We serve clients in Saba 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 Saba. 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 Saba at a glance

A special municipality of the Netherlands in the north-eastern Caribbean, with a small economy built on public services, education, eco-tourism and diving.

CAPITAL
The Bottom
Seat of the Public Entity Saba; Windwardside is the second village

POPULATION
2,270
At 1 January 2026, up 5% in 2025 (Statistics Netherlands)

LANGUAGES
English and Dutch
English is the everyday language of the island

CURRENCY
US dollar (USD)
Official currency since 1 January 2011

LEGAL SYSTEM
Dutch civil law
BES legislation; final appeal to the Supreme Court of the Netherlands

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

PROFIT TAX
None
7.5% revenue tax on distributed profits instead

GENERAL EXPENDITURE TAX
6% / 4%
ABB on goods and on services respectively

STATUS
Part of the Netherlands
Outside the EU; an EU overseas country and territory

Leading sectors

Public administration · Medical education · Eco-tourism and hiking · Diving and marine tourism · Construction · Fishing · Retail and services · Renewable energy

Gateways

Juancho E. Yrausquin Airport, with one of the shortest commercial runways in the world, has short flights to Sint Maarten. Ferries and cargo use Fort Bay; a hurricane-resistant harbour is being built at Black Rocks.

Public holidays

Public holidays follow the Dutch calendar with local days, including King's Day (27 April), Labour Day (1 May) and Saba Day, celebrated in early December.

INVESTMENT CLIMATE

02 Why Saba

Dutch institutions, a US dollar economy and a simple tax system make Saba a distinctive base for a small, focused business.

Location and access

Saba lies about 45 km south-west of Sint Maarten, which is its link to international flights. The island covers about 13 km² and rises to Mount Scenery, the highest point in the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Dutch legal certainty

Saba is part of the Netherlands. Company, contract and property law follow the BES Civil Code, civil-law notaries handle formations and land transfers, and national bodies supervise tax, finance and immigration.

A simple tax system

Since 2011 the BES islands have had their own tax system, built on wage and income tax, property tax, a tax on distributed profits and a general expenditure tax. Saba's ABB rates are lower than Bonaire's, and Saba levies no island surcharge on property tax.

A small, stable economy

Government, the medical school and tourism are the main sources of income and jobs. Saba University School of Medicine brings students and faculty who support housing, retail and services. The Dutch government and the Public Entity are investing in the new harbour, renewable energy, housing and agriculture to make the economy more resilient.

The market is very small. Labour, housing, building land and transport capacity are limited, so careful planning of staff, premises, logistics and permits matters from the start.

Where the opportunities are

Sector	Examples of opportunity
Tourism	Small hotels and guest houses, dive and hiking operators, restaurants and tours
Education	Student housing and services linked to the medical school; research and field study
Construction	Housing, public works and harbour-related projects
Energy and food	Solar, storage, agriculture and fishing to reduce import dependence

Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland

The Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland (RCN) delivers Dutch national government services on the island, including work permits and labour affairs. The Public Entity Saba is responsible for local matters such as land, planning and business establishment licences.

LEGAL VEHICLES

03 Choosing a business structure

Most investors use a private limited company (BV) or a public limited company (NV) under the BES Civil Code. The right choice depends on liability, tax status, financing and exit plans.

Vehicle	Key features	Typical use	Main obligations
Private limited company (BV)	Separate legal entity; shareholders' liability limited to their shares; formed by notarial deed; shares registered	Most operating businesses and subsidiaries of foreign groups	Chamber of Commerce registration; annual accounts to the tax office; revenue tax on distributions
Public limited company (NV)	Separate legal entity formed by notarial deed; suits larger or more widely held businesses	Larger businesses and joint ventures	As for a BV; stricter governance and reporting
Branch of a foreign company	Registered in the trade register with a place of business on Saba; not a separate legal entity	Projects, contracts and market entry	Registration; tax on the Saba establishment; annual accounts
General or limited partnership (VOF, CV)	Partnership of two or more persons; general partners personally liable	Professional practices and family businesses	Registration; partners taxed on their share of profits
Sole trader (eenmanszaak)	Individual trading in their own name; unlimited liability	Small owner-managed businesses	Registration; personal income tax
Foundation (stichting)	No members or shareholders; formed by notarial deed	Charities, nature and community bodies	Registration; annual accounts where required

Tax status of the company

A company actually established on Saba asks the tax office for a decision on its place of establishment. Companies that do not qualify, such as passive holding or financing entities without local substance, may fall under Dutch corporate income tax and dividend tax instead.

Licence and identification

Every business on Saba, whatever its legal form, needs a business establishment licence from the Public Entity Saba. Notaries, banks and other service providers must identify the ultimate beneficial owners under BES anti-money laundering law.

GETTING STARTED

04 Setting up: step by step

Companies are formed by a civil-law notary and registered with the Chamber of Commerce. The business establishment licence, bank account and permits usually take longer than formation.

1 **Plan the structure and business plan** — WEEK 1–2

Choose the vehicle, shareholding and directors, check the name in the trade register and prepare a business and financial plan.

2 **Execute the deed of incorporation** — WEEK 2–4

A civil-law notary serving Saba prepares and executes the deed and articles, after identifying the founders and beneficial owners. Notarial capacity on the island is limited, so book early.

3 **Register with the Chamber of Commerce** — WEEK 3–4

Register the business in the trade register kept by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of St Eustatius and Saba.

4 **Apply for the business establishment licence** — WEEK 3–8

Submit the application to the Public Entity Saba with the business plan and financial plan. Further conditions can apply by type of business.

5 **Open a bank account and register for tax** — WEEK 3–8

Complete bank know-your-customer checks, and register with the Belastingdienst Caribisch Nederland for ABB and as an employer, with a place-of-establishment request.

6 **Obtain other permits and set up compliance** — BEFORE TRADING

Obtain operational, building and sector licences and work permits as needed, and put bookkeeping, payroll and a filing calendar in place.

Documents you will usually need

Valid passport and proof of address for each director, shareholder and beneficial owner; a business plan and financial plan; details of the source of funds; a business address on Saba; and, for a branch, certified constitutional documents and a recent extract from the home registry.

TAXATION

05 Tax at a glance

Saba applies the BES tax system shared with Bonaire and St Eustatius. Residents are taxed on worldwide income and non-residents on BES-source income. Saba has its own ABB rates and no property tax surcharge.

Business taxes	
Profit tax	None for companies with a place-of-establishment decision; non-qualifying entities may face Dutch corporate income tax
Revenue tax	7.5% on profits distributed by BES entities, withheld by the entity (5% until 2024)
ABB	6% on goods and imports; 4% on services; 5% on insurance; 25% on passenger cars; 0% on very efficient cars and exports
Property tax	17.5% of a deemed 4% yield, 0.7% of value a year on Saba, with no island surcharge; owner-occupied homes exempt
Transfer tax	5% of the value of real property, paid by the buyer through the notary
Customs	No general import duty; ABB on imports and excise on fuel, alcohol and tobacco

Individuals (2026)	
Tax-free sum	USD 21,956 a year
Income tax rates	29.4% up to the Belastingdienst threshold; 38.4% above, with AOV and AWW premiums

Withholding on payments	Rate
Dividends	7.5%
Interest	Generally nil
Royalties and fees	Generally nil

Saba is generally outside the Netherlands' bilateral tax treaties. The BES tax rules and arrangements within the Kingdom deal with double taxation with the European Netherlands, Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten. Take advice before cross-border payments.

Recent changes

The revenue tax rose to 7.5% from 2025. From 1 January 2026 the first income tax rate fell to 29.4% and the top rate rose to 38.4%. Bills before Parliament for 2027 would cut fuel duty on Saba by 4.19 US cents a litre for 2027, raise the hotel property tax rate and allow ABB fiscal unity for wholly owned groups.

PEOPLE

06 Employing people

Employment law follows the BES Civil Code and related BES laws. Employers withhold wage tax and premiums, pay employer premiums and need permission to dismiss.

Minimum standards

- **Minimum wage:** USD 10.66 an hour on Saba from 1 January 2026, for workers aged 21 and over; lower youth rates apply
- **Hours:** set by the BES Working Hours Act 2000, with rules on rest and overtime
- **Vacation:** at least three times the weekly contracted hours each year, on full pay
- **Sickness:** wages continue during illness; employers can reclaim part from the RCN
- **Pregnancy and maternity:** 6 weeks before and 10 weeks after birth, on full pay
- **Dismissal:** needs a permit from the RCN labour affairs unit, except summary dismissal
- **Severance:** cessantia payment is due when an employee is dismissed through no fault of their own

Statutory payroll contributions

Contribution	Employee	Employer
Wage tax with AOV and AWW	29.4% / 38.4%	—
Health insurance	Included	9.3%
Sickness insurance	—	0.7%
Accident insurance	—	0.2%
Cessantia	—	0.1%

Employer premiums total 10.3% of wages, with no ceiling. Returns are usually quarterly, or monthly for larger employers, with payment by the 15th day after the period.

Bringing in foreign staff

Work permits

Employers need a work permit (tewerkstellingsvergunning) before employing a foreign national. Applications go through the IND office and are assessed by the RCN social affairs unit.

Local recruitment first

Report the vacancy at least five weeks before applying and advertise in at least two media. A permit is granted only if local recruitment fails.

Residence

A work permit needs a valid or pending residence permit from the IND. Dutch nationals do not need a work permit, and some occupations are exempt.

HR essentials from day one

Give every employee written terms of employment, keep accurate time, pay and leave records, register each employee with the tax office, and adopt a staff handbook covering conduct, grievances, data protection and safety. On a small island, plan housing for incoming staff early.

MONEY AND ASSETS

07 Banking, currency and property

Banking and finance

Saba has very few banking outlets, and many businesses also bank in Sint Maarten or Curaçao. Banks serving the BES islands are supervised by De Nederlandsche Bank (DNB) and the Netherlands Authority for the Financial Markets (AFM) under the BES financial markets law.

- **US dollar economy:** the US dollar has been the official currency since 1 January 2011
- **No exchange controls:** funds, profits and capital can move freely, subject to bank checks
- **Compliance:** expect thorough anti-money laundering and know-your-customer checks under BES law

Financial reporting

All entities established in the Caribbean Netherlands file a balance sheet, profit and loss account and notes with the tax office within nine months of the year-end.

Land and property

Foreign nationals and foreign-owned companies may own property. Land is held privately or granted by the Public Entity on long lease (erfpacht). Historical gaps in title records and inherited family land are common, so a title and boundary check with the land registry (Kadaster) is essential before buying.

Typical costs on a property purchase	
Transfer tax	5% of the value, paid by the buyer
Notary and registry fees	Charged by the notary and the land registry
Property tax	0.7% of value a year; owner-occupied homes exempt
Ground rent	Annual, on long-lease land

Before you build

Development needs a building permit from the Public Entity Saba under the island spatial development ordinance. Steep terrain, the Saba Marine Park and nature areas limit where building is possible.

GROWTH LEVERS

08 Incentives, trade and customs

Saba offers no tax holidays. Its main advantages lie in the tax system itself, with lower ABB rates than Bonaire and targeted reliefs for hotels, investment and exports.

Key reliefs

Relief	What it offers
No profit tax	Retained profits untaxed for qualifying local companies; 7.5% revenue tax only on distributions
Hotel property tax rate	Reduced rate for hotels not owned by individuals, set by the Belastingdienst; a rise to 12% is proposed for 2027
Investment exemption	Property tax exemption for five or ten years on value added by building or improvement
ABB reliefs	Zero rate on exports; exemptions for listed goods and services, including basic foods and renewable energy equipment

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

Market access

- **EU overseas country and territory:** preferential access to the European Union for goods of qualifying origin
- **Sint Maarten hub:** most goods and visitors arrive through Sint Maarten by sea or air
- **US dollar pricing:** no currency risk on trade with the United States
- **No general import duty** on goods brought into Saba

Customs

Douane Caribisch Nederland, part of the Belastingdienst Caribisch Nederland, handles imports and exports through Fort Bay and the airport. ABB is charged on imports at the goods rate, and excise applies to fuel, alcohol and tobacco.

COMPLIANCE

09 Regulators and compliance calendar

Who regulates what

Body	Role
Chamber of Commerce and Industry St Eustatius and Saba	Trade register
Belastingdienst Caribisch Nederland	Income and wage tax, ABB, property, transfer and revenue tax, customs
Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland	Work permits, labour affairs, dismissal permits
IND	Residence permits
DNB and AFM	Banking, insurance, investment and conduct supervision
FIU-Nederland	Unusual transaction reports
BES data protection supervisor	Data protection
Public Entity Saba	Business establishment licences, land, planning and building permits

Key filing dates

When	What
By the 15th day after each period	Payroll tax return and payment, usually quarterly, or monthly for larger employers
Each quarter	ABB return and payment, by the date on the invitation
After each distribution	Revenue tax return and payment for the period
Spring	Individual income tax returns (the 2025 return was due by 18 May 2026)
30 September	Annual accounts to the tax office for a December year-end
Each year	Property tax assessment; keep trade register details and licences up to date

Exact deadlines are printed on the invitations issued by the tax office. Late filing and payment attract penalties and interest, which build quickly.

Anti-money laundering

Financial institutions and designated businesses, including notaries, accountants, real estate agents and dealers in high-value goods, must meet BES anti-money laundering obligations and report unusual transactions to FIU-Nederland.

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 company name in the trade register
- [ ] Gather KYC documents for directors and owners
- [ ] Book a civil-law notary serving Saba
- [ ] Execute the deed of incorporation
- [ ] Register with the Chamber of Commerce
- [ ] Apply to open business bank accounts

Days 31–60: register and license

- [ ] Apply for the business establishment licence
- [ ] Register with the tax office for ABB and payroll
- [ ] Request a place-of-establishment decision
- [ ] Report vacancies and apply for work permits
- [ ] Secure premises, staff housing and insurance
- [ ] Check title and boundaries before any purchase

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

Ongoing

- [ ] Payroll tax returns and payments
- [ ] Quarterly ABB returns
- [ ] Revenue tax on any distributions
- [ ] Annual accounts to the tax office
- [ ] Renew permits and licences 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

Coordination with notaries, trade register filings and statutory records.

Tax advisory and compliance

Registrations, place-of-establishment decisions, ABB, payroll, revenue tax and tax audits, through our Caribbean Tax Service Desk.

Accounting and payroll outsourcing

Bookkeeping, annual accounts, payroll and a Virtual CFO.

Audit and assurance

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

HR, immigration and legal support

Employment contracts, HR policies, work permit applications 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.

Relief applications

Property tax, ABB and customs relief assessments and applications.

Start with a conversation

Tell us your plans for Saba, 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 **saba@dawgen.com** or **info@dawgen.global**, or call (876) 926-5210.

Talk to the Saba Caribbean Service Desk

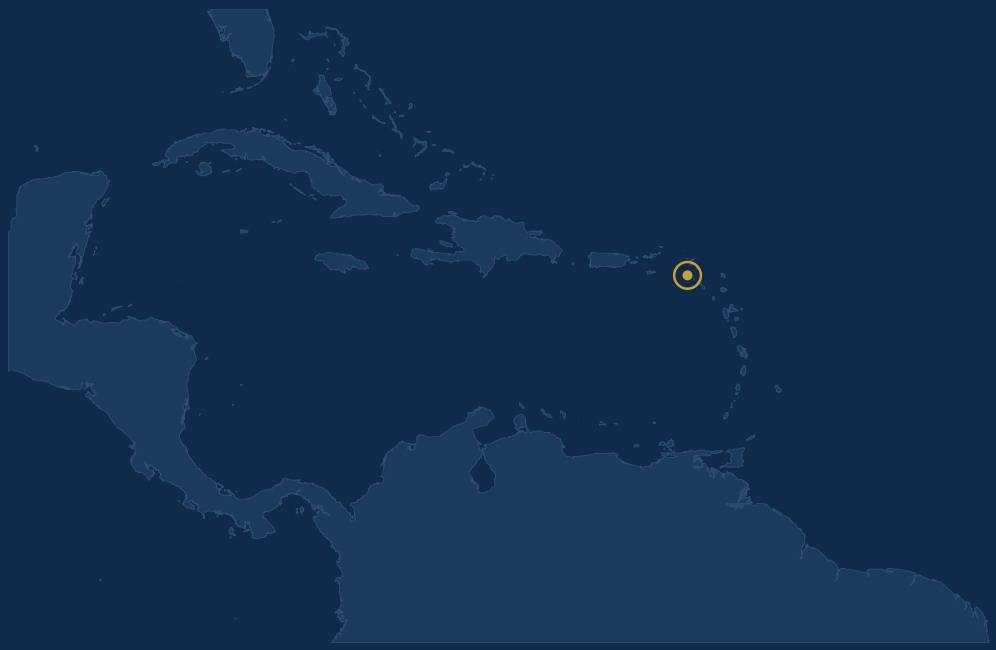
Contact

saba@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

- Belastingdienst Caribisch Nederland (belastingdienst-cn.nl)
- Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland (rijksdienstcn.com)
- Public Entity Saba (sabagov.nl)
- Chamber of Commerce and Industry St Eustatius and Saba (statiasabachamber.com)
- IND Caribisch Nederland (ind.nl)
- De Nederlandsche Bank (dnb.nl)
- Netherlands Authority for the Financial Markets (afm.nl)
- Statistics Netherlands (cbs.nl)



This publication contains general information only, current to October 2026, and is not professional advice. Tax rates, thresholds and procedures change frequently, and several measures for 2027 were still before the Dutch Parliament at the time of writing; 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.