Barbados — The water meter, the fish stall and the public contract



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An AI investment in Barbados should answer questions that residents can check. Who received the water saved by finding a leak? Which fish vendor had to correct a price? Could a small supplier still bid? The tests proposed here put those questions into procurement and public reporting.

The decision before local leaders

This paper proposes two starting points for Barbados. Before either begins, the service owner should agree on an existing comparison service, a way to challenge an error and the conditions for ending the trial.

Run a shadow forecast on a metered water route without changing allocations.

Proposed lead. Participating water operations manager

What to measure. Report forecast error in volume and hours staff spent resolving discrepancies.

Test a tender enquiry with first-time and returning suppliers.

Proposed lead. Participating procurement officer

What to measure. Count incorrect registration answers and time to notify bidders of each correction.

Local evidence in context

Indicator	Value	Observation	Source
Population	282,623	2025	World Bank WDI
GDP per person, current US dollars	28,365	2025	World Bank WDI
Residents aged 65 and over	17.1%	2025	World Bank WDI
People using the internet	70.4%	2024	ITU / World Bank

The year and geographic coverage belong to each observation. These figures describe the jurisdiction as a whole. Collect service-level figures before setting a cost target, staff requirement or digital access threshold.

Economic and social needs

Who earns the margin on a landing?

FAO’s fisheries study describes Barbados landing sites where catches are sold directly to consumers or to fish vendors, predominantly women. If a price tool records only the first sale, it misses ice, sorting, transport and fish left unsold. A proposed market trial should let vendors review the unit, product and time recorded before a suggested price appears to buyers.

Policy response. Compare the tool’s prices with sales of the same fish in the same form and unit.

FAO, fisheries and aquaculture circular, Barbados fisheries asset and value-chain analysis

An accessible route to disability services

Barbados’s revised draft Estimates for 2026–27 list a directory of services and supports among the National Disability Unit’s activities. A search assistant for that directory could send someone to the right office but present its telephone number as an image a screen reader cannot read. A trial should include residents using assistive technology and count whether they reach the service and obtain a response.

Policy response. Test one complete enquiry with a screen reader, a telephone and an in-person alternative.

Parliament of Barbados, revised draft Estimates 2026–27, National Disability Unit, PDF p. 369

Public institutions and environmental needs

Tender questions deserve a written answer

Barbados's 2023 procurement amendment assigns the Chief Procurement Officer responsibility for maintaining the Suppliers Register. A procurement assistant may help a small firm assemble documents, but an incorrect answer about registration could prevent it from bidding before a deadline. The proposed safeguard is a route to a procurement officer who can check an answer against published instructions and issue the same correction to all affected bidders.

Policy response. Record the tender version and publish substantive corrections to all potential bidders.

Government of Barbados, Public Procurement (Amendment) Act 2023–11, replacement section 85, PDF p. 27

Who checks a water forecast?

The Barbados Water Authority is implementing the South Coast Water Reclamation Project. Reclaimed water introduces a practical question for an AI forecast: when a model reports more water available, what measurement and which intended use support that claim? A site trial should keep reclaimed flows separate from other supply and send unexplained changes to an operator before a forecast influences an allocation.

Policy response. Compare forecast volume with metered flow and document the operator's decision when they diverge.

Barbados Water Authority, Climate Resilient South Coast Water Reclamation Project

How the policy would change a decision

Trial a credit application with irregular earnings. When the tool recommends refusal, have an officer open the underlying income evidence and decide the case independently. Check that the officer can reverse the result and that the applicant receives the corrected decision.

- Trace every step that can end an application, including a form that silently stops the applicant from proceeding.
- Give applicants an intelligible account of the information used and the likely consequence. Let someone unfamiliar with the model test the notice and the route to a reviewer.
- Investigate mistaken refusals, including cases involving irregular income. Link the correction to the application so it remains visible on reconsideration.

The head of lending should approve the decision process only after the privacy lead records the section 18 analysis and the result of the section 65 assessment where required. Keep an example that demonstrates a real override and what the applicant sees.

Source: CAIA jurisdiction guide for Barbados. The worked example illustrates the proposal.

Take a leak report by phone

Test voice reports in Bajan and in standard English. Invite people who cannot use a smartphone to phone in a report. Ask them to repeat the location the tool recorded.

The local pilot connects to Energy, water and data centres · Industry and workforce. Review R09 · R11 in the regional risk register.

Implementation and public review

Stage	Evidence or decision	Proposed responsibility
Before the trial	Define a completed case and sample the current process. Include people who use the phone, desk or an offline route.	Participating water operations manager
During shadow testing	Report forecast error in volume and hours staff spent resolving discrepancies. Compare the same cases through both routes and record every override.	Participating water operations manager
At the local decision	Count incorrect registration answers and time to notify bidders of each correction. Record whether the result justifies a live trial and identify the person who can stop it.	Participating procurement officer
After six months	Publish results by channel, the correction time, unresolved complaints and the decision to continue, revise or stop.	Local service owner

What partners can share

Offer Caribbean utilities a shared set of leak tests and repair-time measures. Keep customer addresses and decisions over water allocation with the Barbadian service owner.

Record the local approval, correction route and stop authority before exchanging results. Other jurisdictions can reuse the method and run their own tests. Regional recommendation 5.

Where to draw the boundary

An office adopting this proposal would still need to check its own powers, contracts and data permissions. Organisations named as possible reviewers or leads have not been appointed by this publication. Publish any accepted role and its date with the local trial record.

A 90-day plan for the first service

Run a shadow forecast on a metered water route without changing allocations.

Proposed pilot lead. Participating water operations manager

A water forecast overlooks a leak reported by phone

Failure to test. A metered route appears stable because a call-centre report has not entered the forecast data.

Evidence to retain. Keep source times for the calls and meters, observed use, forecast errors and the dispatch supervisor’s decision.

Pause condition. A known leak or unresolved reading could change a proposed allocation.

When	Proposed action and evidence
Days 1–30	Participating water operations manager agrees the eligible cases, existing service measures, staffed alternative and authorised decision owner. Record reviewers and a cost estimate in local currency for staff time, testing, access and recovery. Identify the funding source and who would approve it.

When	Proposed action and evidence
Days 31–60	Run the original and proposed routes on the same sample. Report forecast error in volume and hours staff spent resolving discrepancies. Report counted errors and eligible cases by channel and language where lawful, plus the time from error report to correction.
Days 61–90	Witness the fallback, correction and restart before asking the accountable officer for a decision. Pause on the condition above. Record affected cases, unresolved issues, costs and the date for the next check.
Six months after live launch	Publish a lawful comparison with the baseline, including corrections, open complaints and the decision to continue, change or end the use.

Sponsorship, funding and the proposed lead’s acceptance require a recorded local decision. Share test methods with Caribbean partners using the local data permissions.

Sector guide · Barbados Water Authority, Climate Resilient South Coast Water Reclamation Project · Local evidence and sources · Regional high-impact use rules · Local risk scenario

Sources and method

The committee used published local evidence to select the four priorities and compared them with the Caribbean AI Framework's requirements for access, data, skills, oversight and adoption. Recommendations and stories are editorial proposals. This edition reports no results from a completed local pilot.

1. FAO, fisheries and aquaculture circular, Barbados fisheries asset and value-chain analysis
2. Parliament of Barbados, revised draft Estimates 2026–27, National Disability Unit, PDF p. 369
3. Government of Barbados, Public Procurement (Amendment) Act 2023–11, replacement section 85, PDF p. 27
4. Barbados Water Authority, Climate Resilient South Coast Water Reclamation Project
5. World Bank WDI — Population
6. World Bank WDI — GDP per person, current US dollars
7. World Bank WDI — Residents aged 65 and over
8. ITU / World Bank — People using the internet
9. Barbados jurisdiction guide, Caribbean AI Association
10. Barbados pilot note, Caribbean AI Association
11. Caribbean AI Framework, consultation edition, 27 November 2026

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