

Barbados

Archetype **Stalled middle**

GDP / person **\$28k**

Population **0.28M**

10-yr trend **0.8%**

Gradual **3.1%** · #147

Fast **4.7%** · #129

WHERE BARBADOS STARTS

Barbados is a stalled middle: middling income, middling scores, slow growth. At roughly \$28,365 GDP per person it ranks among the Caribbean's richer economies, built on tourism and offshore finance. But ten-year trend growth is just 0.8% a year, and the scores explain the drift. Language inclusion is 4.9 out of 5, near the world's top — an English-speaking workforce that absorbs global tools with ease. Yet AI diffusion capacity is only 1.9, and compute and energy access sits at 1 out of 5, the floor: Barbados has almost no data-center capacity and imports most of its power. Physical build speed is 2.7. The country became a republic in 2021 and, through the Bridgetown Initiative, has pressed to reform how the world finances climate resilience. Its strength is people who can use the technology; its constraint is nearly everything needed to host it.

THE THREE PATHS

These are simulations, not forecasts. The Modest path is the baseline; the two AGI scenarios fork from it. Under the **Modest** scenario, AI stays a normal technology. Barbados would barely move: 0.9% growth a year, 146th of 157. Gains would arrive as cheaper imported software, not as anything it owns. Under **Gradual** takeoff, growth would climb slowly for two decades and reach 3.1% a year once AGI matures around 2045, ranking 147th. At that pace the economy doubles in about 23 years — better than today, but still slow. English fluency lets Barbados adopt tools fast, yet with little power, compute or build capacity, adoption alone lifts growth only modestly. Under **Fast** takeoff, growth would reach 4.7% a year from the early 2030s, a doubling roughly every 15 years, and the rank would improve to 129th. Even the fast world leaves Barbados near the back, because it rewards the compute and scale it lacks. Politics could slow or redirect any path. How Barbadians and their government respond to transformative AI is a variable the model holds constant.

HOW YOU WOULD KNOW WHICH WORLD YOU ARE IN

The three scenarios look almost identical until about 2030, so watch leading indicators, not GDP, and check them live rather than trust any snapshot. Three global signals matter most. First, whether the METR task-horizon curve keeps doubling every four to five months through 2027–28; METR publishes it at metr.org. Second, whether frontier-lab revenue and capital spending keep compounding; Epoch AI tracks both at epoch.ai. Third, whether growth in the ten to twenty most-ready economies — the United States and China above all — breaks above trend in the early 2030s. Double-digit growth there within a couple of years of 2030 would signal a fast world; a point or two above trend by the mid-2030s, a gradual

one; a fade back to trend, a modest one. Barbados's own signals would arrive earlier than its GDP data: tourism bookings and spending from richer American and British visitors, new flows into the offshore finance sector, and how fast government services move online.

IF GROWTH GOES EXPLOSIVE

For Barbados, explosive is the wrong word. At 4.7% growth a year under the Fast scenario, it would run well ahead of its own 0.8% history, but far behind a frontier compounding near 39% a year. That is catch-up at home and relative decline against the leaders at once. An economy growing 4.7% a year doubles in about 15 years, so a child born today would finish school in a country twice as rich — real progress, but no leap. Rising rich-country incomes would lift the tourism Barbados sells, and stronger wages at home would ease the pressure on skilled Barbadians to emigrate. The honest downside is dependence. If Barbados only rents computing and buys AI services from abroad, its gains can be repriced or cut off by decisions made elsewhere, and it owns none of the capability. The hedge is to build some capacity of its own and negotiate firm access, not open-ended reliance. Even at these modest rates, the pace-setter shifts to the state: the customs service, the Financial Services Commission and the courts would have to permit, supervise and adjudicate faster than they do today.

WHAT BARBADOS CAN DO NOW

Three levers follow from the scores, and the first two pay off whether or not AGI arrives. The first is AI diffusion, low at 1.9. Digital skills, permissive rules for deploying AI and digitizing government services carry real weight even in the skeptic's world, so this is a no-regret move that builds on the country's top strength, its English-speaking workforce. The second is geopolitical positioning, at 2. Staying aligned with trusted-partner frameworks and keeping clean access to capital markets protects the offshore finance sector under every scenario — another no-regret step. The third lever is the bet. Compute and energy access, at 1 out of 5, barely moves growth if AI stays ordinary, but under a fast takeoff it becomes Barbados's single biggest lever. Closing it means fast permits and power-and-land packages to attract hosting investment, hard for a \$8bn economy to fund alone. Barbados can adapt a peer's model: Lithuania made itself an EU fintech hub by fast-tracking licences for financial-technology firms. A cautious government can act on the two no-regret levers today and lose nothing if the skeptics are right. Open the atlas's [policy editor](#) to see how moving any of these scores reshapes Barbados's path under each scenario.

The three levers — and which pay off regardless

AI diffusion capacity

score 1.9 / 5 · weight 24 under skeptic → 13 under fast takeoff

Counts under the Modest scenario too (24→13). Closing this gap pays off whether or not AGI arrives.

No-regret

Compute & energy access

score 1 / 5 · weight 8 under skeptic → 24 under fast takeoff

Weight climbs from 8 to 24 as takeoff nears. It barely moves growth if AI stays ordinary — the lever that needs a view on the takeoff.

AGI bet

Trusted chip & tech access

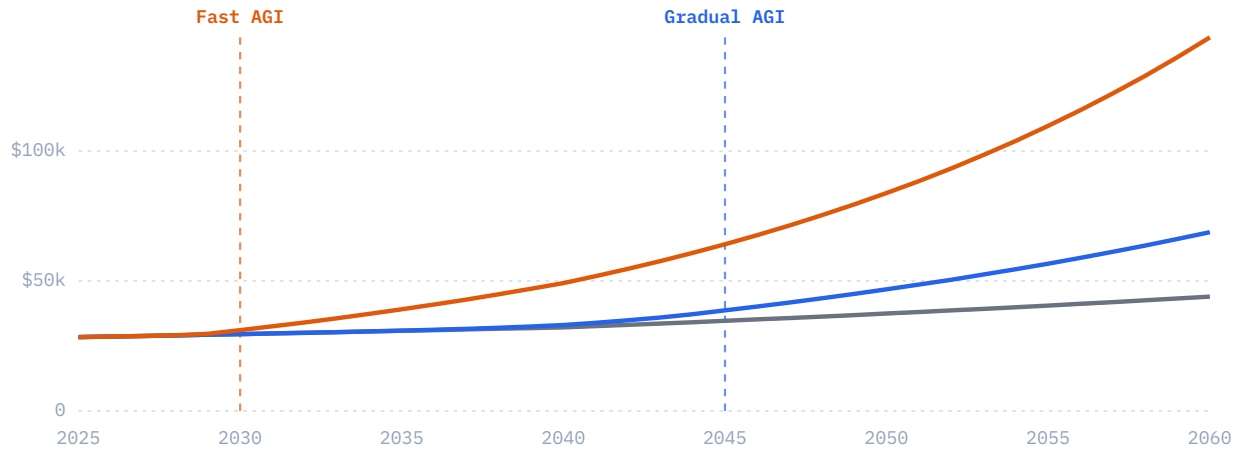
score 2 / 5 · weight 8 under skeptic → 12 under fast takeoff

Weight climbs from 8 to 12 as takeoff nears. It barely moves growth if AI stays ordinary — the lever that needs a view on the takeoff.

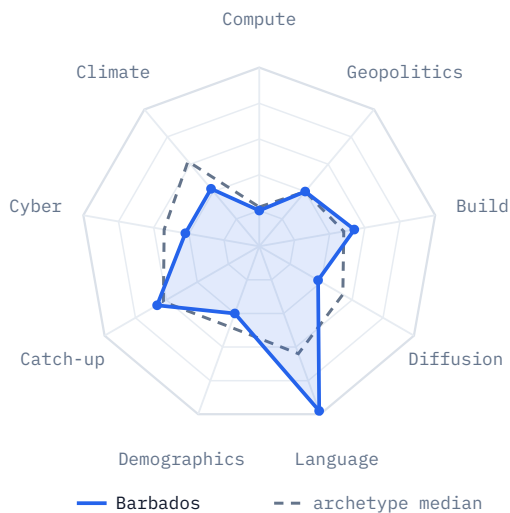
AGI bet

The no-regret levers pay off in every scenario, so a cautious government can act on them today. The AGI bets become decisive only if takeoff is real.

GDP per person to 2060, by scenario



The nine factors



Solid: Barbados. Dashed: the median of its archetype. Scores are relative to the other 156 countries (3 ≈ global median, 5 = leading today).

Outcomes under each scenario

SCENARIO	GROWTH / YR	WORLD RANK	INDEX	DOUBLING
Modest	0.9%	146 / 157	47.6	—
Gradual	3.1%	147 / 157	45.3	22.7 yrs
Fast	4.7%	129 / 157	43.8	15.1 yrs

Post-AGI growth rate, rank among 157 countries, AGI Growth Index (0–100, scenario-weighted), and the implied economy doubling time. The Modest path is the baseline the AGI scenarios fork from.

THE THREE SCENARIOS

Modest the Acemoglu view

AI as a normal productivity tool

Intelligence was never the binding constraint on growth, so AI delivers real but ordinary gains. Each country gets a one-time boost of a couple of percent of GDP, phased in through 2035; growth then returns to trend. The mainstream-economics view.

≤0.66% TFP over a decade — a one-time gain

Barbados: 0.9% growth a year · #146 of 157

Gradual Erdil & Besiroglu, base case

Broad automation, on a long timeline

Broad automation of remote work arrives around 2045, with gains building slowly from the late 2020s. Growth then reaches up to ~20% a year for the best-positioned countries — ten times today's frontier trend. A slow arrival gives countries time to adapt, so the gains are wide but uneven.

up to ~20%/yr after 2045 — 10× the frontier trend

Barbados: 3.1% growth a year · #147 of 157

Fast Erdil & Besiroglu, fast takeoff

Fast takeoff — today's infrastructure decides

Transformation lands around 2030, before countries can adjust. Whoever already owns compute, capital and the ability to build wins; the gap between countries widens dramatically — and some are left growing slower than they would have without AGI.

up to ~40%/yr from 2030

Barbados: 4.7% growth a year · #129 of 157

Factor scores — and where policy bites



♦ marks this country's highest-leverage policy targets: the weakest factors carrying the most weight under the AGI scenarios. The atlas's interactive policy editor (agigrowth.org/#editor) simulates how raising any score changes growth under each scenario.

Archetype: Stalled middle

Neither frontier nor fragile: middling income, middling scores, slow growth — at every size, from micro-states to Brazil.

Wins: No clean window — gains arrive imported, and late.

Watch: Drift: the gap to every faster group compounds year by year.

Jordan 11.8% · #37

Brazil 11% · #43

Mexico 10.4% · #48

Ecuador 10% · #54

Thailand 10% · #55

Slovakia 9.6% · #59

Argentina 9.5% · #61

Lithuania 9.3% · #63

Cabo Verde 9.3% · #64

Croatia 9.1% · #67

The regional picture — Small, open, service-led — exposed at both ends.

The Caribbean's economies are small, open and service-led: tourism and offshore finance in the Bahamas and Barbados, gas and petrochemicals in Trinidad & Tobago, services and diaspora ties in Jamaica. English proficiency and workable institutions help absorption, and an AGI-era boom in rich-country incomes would, if it comes, lift the tourism these economies sell. But nothing here changes the arithmetic of scale: no build story, hurricane exposure that climate change worsens, and gains that arrive as cheaper imported services rather than owned capability. Haiti is the region's hardest case and sits in the high-risk tier — state fragility, not technology, will decide its next twenty years. For the rest, the plausible path is steady, imported improvement: better tools, cheaper services, little leverage.

Method, in brief

Each country is scored 1–5 on nine factors from public data (World Bank, Epoch AI, ITU, IMF and national sources). A scenario-weighted average forms the AGI Growth Index (0–100), which maps to a post-AGI growth rate inside ceilings derived from Erdil & Besiroglu (2023): ~20% growth a year for the best-positioned country under Gradual takeoff (AGI ~2045), ~40% under Fast (AGI ~2030); growth ramps convexly from 2027. The scenario sets the growth rates on offer; the index only decides where each country sits within them. The Modest scenario is the skeptics' baseline — a small uplift on each country's own ten-year trend. These are simulations for structured thinking, not forecasts; no probabilities are attached to any scenario.

Watch the global signals live: the METR task-horizon curve at metr.org/time-horizons · frontier-lab revenue at epoch.ai/ai-companies · AI-chip spending at epoch.ai/ai-chip-sales.

Explore further: full methodology agigrowth.org/#methodology · map & rankings agigrowth.org/#explore · country profiles agigrowth.org/#countries · policy editor agigrowth.org/#editor