

Zanzibar

Status **Special jurisdiction profile**

GDP / person **\$1k**

Population **2.16M**

10-yr trend **6.2%**

Gradual **8.7%**

Fast **8.4%**

WHERE ZANZIBAR STARTS

Zanzibar is the atlas's only jurisdiction-level profile. It exercises substantial self-government within the United Republic of Tanzania and is outside the 157-country rankings. The economy is tourism-led and has about 2.2 million residents. Zanzibar received about 917,000 visitors in 2025, with average spending near \$263 per day. Annual growth averaged 6.2% over the previous ten years, and adult literacy is 90.6%. Physical build speed scores 4.0 out of 5; the new airport terminal roughly doubled passenger capacity. Catch-up headroom scores 4.5. Compute and energy access scores 1.0 because nearly all grid power comes through a submarine cable from the mainland and local data-center capacity is limited. AI diffusion capacity scores 1.9. At GDP per person of \$1,395, the most immediate opportunities relate to the visitors already arriving.

THE THREE PATHS

These results are simulations rather than forecasts, and Zanzibar is shown alongside rather than within the 157-country ranking. Under **Modest**, growth is 6.3% a year, implying a doubling about every eleven years, compared with a Sub-Saharan median of 3.6%. Under **Gradual**, growth rises over two decades to 8.7% when AGI matures around 2045, implying a doubling about every eight years. The longer transition gives Zanzibar time to improve power, skills and connectivity. Under **Fast**, growth reaches 8.4% from the early 2030s, slightly below the Gradual result because Fast places greater weight on compute, capital and frontier access. Politics and regulation could change any path; the model holds the response of Zanzibaris and their government constant.

HOW YOU WOULD KNOW WHICH WORLD YOU ARE IN

Three global indicators distinguish the scenarios. The first is whether METR's task-horizon measure continues to double every four to five months through 2027–28; METR publishes it at metr.org. The second is continued compound growth in frontier-lab revenue and capital expenditure, tracked by Epoch AI at epoch.ai. The third is growth above trend among the ten to twenty most-ready economies, particularly the United States and China, in the early 2030s. Double-digit growth soon after 2030 is consistent with Fast; growth one or two percentage points

above trend by the mid-2030s is consistent with Gradual. Zanzibar-specific indicators include the share of bookings made through AI assistants and direct channels, visitor spending against the \$350 target, mainland data-center and interconnector announcements, and use of ZanExplore levy data in government decisions.

IF GROWTH GOES EXPLOSIVE

At 8.7% annual growth, Zanzibar's economy doubles about every eight years. That is rapid relative to its own history while remaining below a frontier economy growing near 20%. On an archipelago of about 2,500 square kilometers, repeated doubling would increase pressure on land, water, waste systems and the shoreline. Tourism is the main exposure. If AI agents plan and book more travel, destinations need data those systems can read and trust. Foreign platforms currently mediate much of Zanzibar's tourism and retain 15–30% of each booking, while hotels import much of their food. Greater growth could therefore produce substantial leakage abroad. The response is to develop destination data and direct booking systems and to connect farms, fishers and seaweed growers with hotel demand. Water and power utilities, permitting offices and the revenue authority would also need to manage an economy doubling every eight years.

WHAT ZANZIBAR CAN DO NOW

The first priority is AI diffusion capacity, currently 1.9. Digital skills for tourism and government workers, deployment-permissive rules and analytics added to ZanMalipo, e-Saini, eProz and ZanExplore are useful under all three scenarios; this is no-regret work a cautious government can begin today. The second is geopolitical positioning, currently 2.0 and largely managed through the Union. Continued technology access matters in every scenario, as does offering sites, subsea cables and tourism data in access negotiations. The third is specific to faster takeoff. Compute and energy access scores 1.0 and has little effect under Modest, but becomes the strongest constraint under Fast; domestic generation supplied none of Zanzibar's electricity in 2020. Mauritius provides a relevant example through programs that connect farms with hotel procurement and retain more visitor spending locally. The [policy editor](#) shows how changes in these scores affect Zanzibar's modeled path.

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

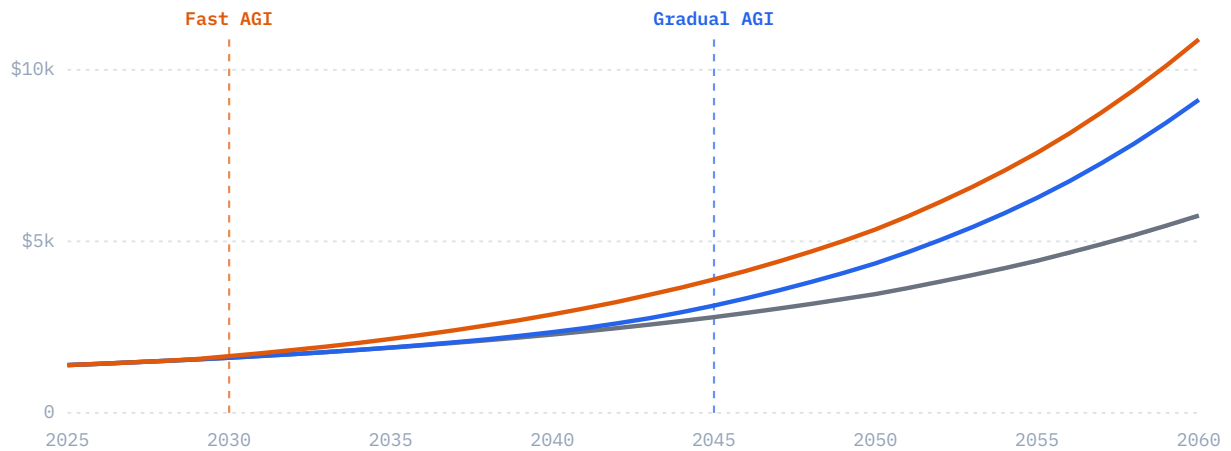
score 2 / 5 · weight 8 under skeptic → 12 under fast takeoff

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

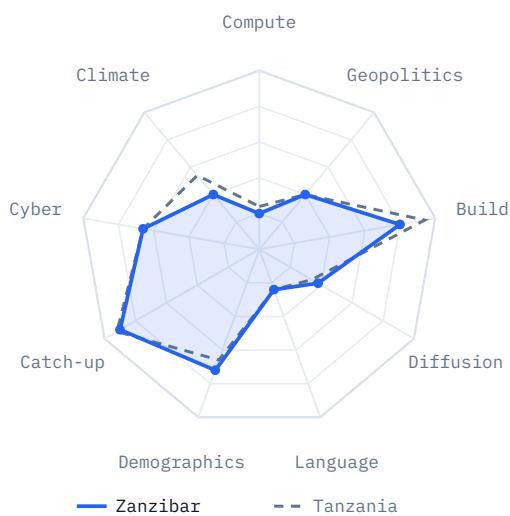
The no-regret levers pay off in every scenario, so a cautious government can act on them today. The AGI bets become decisive only if takeoff is real.

GDP per person to 2060, by scenario



Linear scale; solid lines are the three scenarios, dashed grey the no-AI baseline. Growth ramps from 2027 to each scenario's rate at its AGI year (Fast ~2030, Gradual ~2045), then holds. Timing and divergence are the point, not end levels; steep paths exit the top of the capped axis.

The nine factors



Solid: Zanzibar. Dashed: Tanzania, the Union benchmark. Scores are relative to the 157 ranked countries (3 ≈ global median, 5 = leading today).

Outcomes under each scenario

SCENARIO	GROWTH / YR	WORLD RANK	INDEX	DOUBLING
Modest	6.3%	not ranked	54.2	11.3 yrs
Gradual	8.7%	not ranked	51.4	8.3 yrs
Fast	8.4%	not ranked	47.2	8.6 yrs

Post-AGI growth rate, ranking (this jurisdiction profile sits outside the 157-country rankings), 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 is not the binding constraint on growth in this scenario, so AI produces meaningful but conventional gains. Each country receives a one-time increase of a few percent of GDP, phased in through 2035, after which growth returns to trend. This represents the mainstream economic view.

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

Zanzibar: 6.3% growth a year

Gradual Erdil & Besiroglu, base case

Broad automation, on a long timeline

Broad automation of remote work arrives around 2045, with gains accumulating from the late 2020s. Annual growth reaches about 20% in the best-positioned countries, ten times the current frontier trend. The longer transition gives countries time to adapt, producing widely shared but uneven gains.

up to about 20% a year after 2045, or ten times the current frontier trend

Zanzibar: 8.7% growth a year

Fast Erdil & Besiroglu, fast takeoff

Fast takeoff; current infrastructure determines the initial position

Broad transformation arrives around 2030, before countries have much time to adjust. Countries that already possess compute, capital and construction capacity receive the largest gains. Differences in national growth widen substantially, and some countries grow more slowly than they would without AGI.

up to ~40%/yr from 2030

Zanzibar: 8.4% growth a year

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.

Special jurisdiction profile

Zanzibar governs itself within the United Republic of Tanzania and sits outside the atlas's 157-country rankings. This brief applies the same framework, scores and formulas at jurisdiction level, with Tanzania and a set of island and tourism economies as reference points.

Reference economies — growth & rank under Gradual:

Tanzania 9.4% · #62

Mauritius 4.4% · #134

Cabo Verde 9.3% · #64

Jamaica 6.5% · #103

Maldives 7% · #99

The regional picture — Lower complement scores and greater sensitivity to the speed of takeoff

Sub-Saharan Africa has the lowest regional scores and is the only region whose modeled result is better under a slow takeoff than a fast one. Fast gives greater weight to compute, capital and geopolitical access, where the region scores lowest. Roughly 600 million people lack electricity and the region holds less than 1% of global data-center capacity, while its workforce is growing faster than any other region. The projections used here show Nigeria adding more people by 2045 than Germany's current population. Results differ across the forty countries. South Africa and Kenya have substantial digital economies; Senegal, Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire show selective adoption; and Nigeria and Ethiopia combine large young populations with exposure if AI substitutes for labor. Nine states, including countries in the Sahel, DR Congo and Zimbabwe, fall in the High-risk / volatile archetype because state capacity constrains growth before technology does. Mobile money demonstrates the possibility of technological leapfrogging, but compute capacity has not expanded on a comparable scale. Across all three scenarios, expanding electricity, connectivity and device access produces the largest modeled improvement for the region, and the twenty years before Gradual reaches maturity provide the lowest-cost period in which to act.

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