SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS

SUMMARY
Saint Kitts and Nevis is a federal constitutional monarchy with two spheres of government, the federal government and the Nevis Island administration, which is recognised in Chapter X of the constitution. There is no local government on Saint Kitts which is governed by the federal government, but the Nevis Island assembly serves as a local government for that island, has local tax-raising powers, and receives financial disbursements from the federal government proportional to the population of Nevis. Following the 2017 local government elections 12.5% of assembly members were women. The Nevis Island administration is empowered in Nevis by the constitution to pass laws that promote peace, order and good government on the island and, among other responsibilities, is responsible on the island for airports and seaports, education, extraction and processing of minerals, fisheries, health, welfare and labour.

1. NATIONAL GOVERNMENT
Saint Kitts and Nevis is a federal constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy, based on the Westminster mode. The prime minister is appointed for a term of up to five years by the governor-general from among the elected members of parliament and is usually the person who commands the support of the majority of representatives. The unicameral parliament, known as the National Assembly, comprises 14 or 15 members, depending on circumstances: 11 representatives who are elected to represent single-member constituencies on both islands, and three or four appointed senators – two or three chosen on the advice of the prime minister and one on the advice of the leader of the opposition. Members are elected or appointed for terms of up to five years. Cabinet is appointed by the governor-general on the advice of the prime minister. Following the 2020 election, 9% national assembly members were women.

2. LEGAL BASIS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT
2.1 Constitutional provisions
The constitution identifies the island of Saint Kitts and the island of Nevis as a sovereign democratic federal state. Whilst there is no general constitutional provision for local government, the Nevis Island assembly is enshrined in Chapter 10 of the constitution, which gives details of the assembly’s constitution, powers, finances and functions.

2.2 Main legislative texts
The main legislative text is the Constitution Order 1983.

2.3 Proposed legislative changes
No legislative changes are proposed.

2.4 National urban policy
There is no specific urban policy but a number of government policies are relevant to urban development, including the Tourism Sector Strategy, the National Social Protection Strategy and Action Plan, and the Making Saint Kitts and Nevis a Great Place to Grow Up and Grow Old strategy.

3. STRUCTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT
3.1 Local government within the state
There is no local government on Saint Kitts. There are 14 parishes across the two islands, but these are administrative structures of the national government. Saint Kitts is divided into nine parishes, which serve as administrative units. Nevis has a single island authority with a high degree of autonomy which is a local government within the federation, and it also has five parishes which serve as administrative units.

3.2 Ministerial oversight
The Nevis Island assembly has autonomy from the federal government.

3.3 Council types
3.3.1 The Nevis Island assembly
The unicameral government for the island and is composed of eight members: five directly elected members from single-member constituencies and three members appointed by the governor-general, two on the advice of the premier and one on the advice of the leader of the opposition. The assembly is headed by a premier who is appointed by the governor-general following indirect elections. The premier forms a cabinet consisting of a deputy premier, other elected members and a maximum of two nominated members.

4. ELECTIONS
Elections are manged by the Election Commission.

4.1 Recent local elections
The latest Nevis Island assembly elections took place in December 2017, with a turnout of 59%. The previous election was in 2013 with a turnout of 81%. The next elections are due in December 2022.

KEY FACTS
POPULATION (2020 estimate): 53,000
AREA (UN 2006): 261 sq km
CAPITAL: Basseterre
CURRENCY: East Caribbean dollar (XCD)
HEAD OF STATE: HM Queen Elizabeth II
GOVERNOR-GENERAL: Sir S.W. Tapley Seaton
HEAD OF GOVERNMENT: Prime Minister Timothy Harris
FORM OF GOVERNMENT: constitutional monarchy
PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM: unicameral
STATE STRUCTURE: federal
LANGUAGES: English (official)
NATIONAL ELECTIONS:
last: Feb 2020, turnout: data unavailable at the time of publication; next: Feb 2025
WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT (2020):
9%
NEVIS ISLAND ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS:
last: 2017, turnout: 59%; next: 2022
WOMEN NEVIS ISLAND ASSEMBLY MEMBERS (2017):
12.5%
LOCAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE as a percentage of total government expenditure 2018:
24.5%
### 4.2 Voting system

The five elected members of the Nevis Island assembly are elected using the first-past-the-post system.

### 4.3 Elected representatives

The assembly is headed by an indirectly elected premier who, along with the elected members and appointed senators from their party form a cabinet known as the Nevis Island Assembly.

### 4.4 Women’s representation

Following the 2017 and 2013 elections 12.5% (1/8) of members of the Nevis Island assembly were women; up from zero (0/8) women in the assembly in 2011 and 2006.

### 5. SYSTEMS FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

#### 5.1 Legal requirement

There is no legal requirement for community involvement except in the case of the separation of Nevis from the federation, when a bill of separation would have to be supported by a two-thirds majority in a referendum on Nevis.

#### 5.2 Implementation

The Nevis Island assembly organises a monthly radio press conference to keep citizens informed and to answer questions from the press. There are also regular town hall meetings that are open to the public.

#### 5.3 ICT use in citizen engagement

Nevis Island assembly uses social media to reach out and engage younger citizens.

### 6. ORGANISED LOCAL GOVERNMENT

There are no organisations of local government.

### 7. INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

The premier and the prime minister are in direct contact on any issues of national significance and on those functions not devolved to the assembly, such as policing, public safety, and law and order. Any disputes between the Nevis Island administration and the federal government would be arbitrated by the High Court.

### 8. MONITORING SYSTEMS

No details are available.

### 9. FINANCE, STAFFING AND RESOURCES

#### 9.1 Local government expenditure

In line with constitutional provisions, 2020 expenditure by the Nevis Island administration was 25.9% of total government expenditure.

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### Table 37.1a Distribution of parishes and population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saint Kitts</td>
<td>34,918</td>
<td>35,968</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christ Church Nichola Town</td>
<td>2,626</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Ann Sandy Point</td>
<td>1,922</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint George/Basseterre</td>
<td>12,635</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint John/Capesterre</td>
<td>2,962</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Mary Cayon</td>
<td>3,435</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Paul/Capesterre</td>
<td>2,432</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Peter/Basseterre</td>
<td>4,670</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Thomas Middle Island</td>
<td>2,535</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinity Palmetto Point</td>
<td>1,701</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nevis</td>
<td>12,277</td>
<td>12,646</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Paul Charlestown</td>
<td>1,847</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint John Figtree</td>
<td>3,827</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint George Gingerland</td>
<td>2,496</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Thomas Lowland</td>
<td>2,069</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint James Windward</td>
<td>2,038</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>47,195</strong></td>
<td><strong>48,614</strong></td>
<td><strong>69.3</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2011 Census of Population and Housing

### Table 37.1b Women Nevis Island ministers following the last four local elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nevis Island (NI) ministers</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female NI ministers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male NI ministers</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total NI ministers</strong></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Nevis Island Assembly correspondence with CLGF

### Table 37.2a Aggregate income and expenditure for local government 2020 (estimate)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>XCDm</th>
<th>Expenditure</th>
<th>XC$ m</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Centre-local transfers</td>
<td>36.50</td>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>89.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total grants</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrestricted</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>Property</td>
<td>57.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locally raised revenue</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property taxes</td>
<td>38.55</td>
<td>Services</td>
<td>41.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licences and fees</td>
<td>135.54</td>
<td>Road maintenance</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>na</td>
<td></td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</strong></td>
<td>220.10</td>
<td><strong>TOTAL INCOME</strong></td>
<td>177.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Nevis Island Administration budget estimates and National budget estimates
Table 37.2b Local government expenditure as a percentage of total government expenditure 2013–19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total government expenditure</td>
<td>702.99</td>
<td>748.67</td>
<td>805.66</td>
<td>759.60</td>
<td>859.65</td>
<td>878.77</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total local government expenditure</td>
<td>124.20</td>
<td>148.34</td>
<td>149.43</td>
<td>171.56</td>
<td>204.04</td>
<td>214.49</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local government expenditure as a percentage of total government expenditure</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Nevis Island Assembly communication with CLGF

9.2 Locally raised revenue
All revenues raised by the Nevis Island administration are paid into the Nevis Island Consolidated Fund.

9.3 Transfers
All taxes raised by the federal government are split proportionally between the federal government and the Nevis Island administration and the share allocated to Nevis is determined by reference to the population of Nevis as a proportion of the whole country according to the latest available official national census.

9.4 Loans
The Nevis Island administration is empowered to take loans; however, it must consult with the federal government it is receiving an external loan and the loaning agency requires a guarantor.

9.5 Local authority staff
The number of staff of the administration is determined by the premier and they are under the supervision of the permanent secretary of human resources stationed on the island of Nevis, who is in direct communication with the chairman of the Public Service Commission.

10. DISTRIBUTION OF SERVICE DELIVERY RESPONSIBILITY

10.1 Overview of local government service delivery responsibility
The Nevis Island administration is responsible for the following functions: airports and seaports; education, extraction and processing of minerals, fisheries, agriculture, healthcare and welfare, labour, infrastructure development, government land and buildings, and licensing of imports and exports.

10.2 ICT use in service delivery
The Nevis Island administration has its own website[^10] which provides a citizens’ portal from both assembly proceedings and services such as information on rates, property tax and VAT. Proceedings from the Nevis Island assembly are recorded and broadcast monthly on Nevis Television and online.[^10]

10.3 The role of local government in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
The prime minister of Saint Kitts and Nevis reaffirmed his government’s commitment to the SDGs at a speech to the UN General Assembly in 2015, with a specific focus on healthcare and education.[^27] In March 2017, the Nevis administration’s Ministry of Social Development organised an inaugural sub-regional conference for women and girls with participants from across the Caribbean. The aim was to underscore the Nevis Island administration’s commitment to women’s empowerment, within the context of the SDGs.[^27] Furthermore, in November 2017, parliament agreed a new youth policy which will help achieve SDGs relating to the youth of Saint Kitts and Nevis.[^27] The Nevis Island administration recently hosted a biennial three-day regional forum focused on achieving the SDGs, and has been working with the national government especially on the issue of intergenerational engagement between the youth and elderly.[^27]

REFERENCES AND USEFUL WEBSITES

37.1a National Portal www.gov.kn
37.1b Inter-Parliamentary Union ‘Women in national parliaments’ www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm
37.2 Constitution of Saint Kitts & Nevis http://pdba.georgetown.edu/Constitutions/Kitts/kitts83.html
37.3c Population estimate UNDESDCA https://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/DataQuery
37.3d Nevis Island Assembly www.nia.gov.kn
37.3e Office of the Prime Minister www.gov.kn
37.4a Elections Commission www.gov.kn
37.5 www.facebook.com/PressSecretaryToThePremierNevis
37.6 No reference for this section
37.7 No reference for this section
37.8 No reference for this section
37.9 Data provided by Saint Kitts High Commission, London.
37.10a Nevis Island Administration https://nia.gov.kn/
37.10b Nevis television www.nevisvisionline.com
37.11b UN statistics service area http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/dyb/dyb2006/Table03.pdf
37.11c Commonwealth Local Government knowledge hub www.clgf.org.uk/resource-centre/knowledge-hub
Annex 37a  Summary of service provision in different spheres of government in Saint Kitts and Nevis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Delivering authority</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National government</td>
<td>Nevis Island assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GENERAL ADMINISTRATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fire protection</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Civil protection</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Criminal justice</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Civil status register</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Statistical office</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Electoral register</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>EDUCATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-school (kindergarten and nursery)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vocational and technical</td>
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<tr>
<td>Higher education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adult education</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SOCIAL WELFARE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Family welfare services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welfare homes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Social security</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PUBLIC HEALTH</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary care</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hospitals</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Health protection</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>HOUSING AND TOWN PLANNING</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Town planning</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Regional planning</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TRANSPORT</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Roads</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
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<tr>
<td>Urban roads</td>
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<tr>
<td>Urban rail</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ports</td>
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<td><strong>ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC SANITATION</strong></td>
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<td>Water and sanitation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Refuse collection and disposal</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cemeteries and crematoria</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slaughterhouses</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental protection</td>
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<td>Consumer protection</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CULTURE, LEISURE AND SPORTS</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatre and concerts</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Museums and libraries</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Parks and open spaces</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sports and leisure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Religious facilities</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>UTILITIES</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Gas services</td>
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<tr>
<td>District heating</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Water supply</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Electricity</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ECONOMIC</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, forests and fisheries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Local economic development/promotion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Trade and industry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- sole responsibility service
- joint responsibility service
- discretionary service

www.clgf.org.uk/saint_kitts_and_nevis