BRITISH INDIAN OCEAN TERRITORY

INTRODUCTION

Formerly administered as part of the British Crown Colony of Mauritius, the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT) was established as an overseas territory of the UK in 1965. A number of the islands of the territory were later transferred to the Seychelles when it attained independence in 1976.

GOVERNMENT

Chief of State
Queen ELIZABETH II

Head of Government
Commissioner Ben MERRICK

Government Type
Overseas Territory of the UK; administered by a commissioner, resident in the UK

Capital
Diego Garcia, the largest and most southerly of the islands, is inhabited, and serves as a joint UK-US naval support facility

Legislature
NA

GEOGRAPHY

Area
total: 60 sq km
land: 60 sq km (44 Diego Garcia)
water: 54,340 sq km
note: includes the entire Chagos Archipelago of 55 islands

Climate
tropical marine; hot, humid, moderated by trade winds

Natural Resources
good natural harbor in the lagoon of Diego Garcia

ECONOMY

Economic Overview
small island territory economy; economic activity mainly on Diego Garcia with national military installations; recently settled disputes with Mauritius have increased oil exports; established marine reserve has limited commercial fishing

GDP (Purchasing Power Parity)
NA

GDP per capita (Purchasing Power Parity)
NA

Exports
NA

Imports
NA

PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Population
approximately 3,000 UK and US military personnel and civilian contractors living on the island of Diego Garcia
note: approximately 1,200 former agricultural workers resident in the Chagos Archipelago, often referred to as Chagossians or Ilois, were relocated to Mauritius and the Seychelles in the 1960s and 1970s (2018)

Population Growth
NA

Ethnicity
no indigenous inhabitants

Language
NA

Religion
NA

Urbanization
NA

Literacy
NA

as of October 2021