

Key Facts Foundations

The Foundations (Jersey) Law 2009 (the “Law”) came into force on 17 July 2009, taking Jersey to the forefront of jurisdictions offering foundations.

The concept of a Jersey foundation combines many aspects of both a trust and a body corporate, and since its inception has provided many uses for offshore planning, as well as being of particular interest and appeal to planners from civil law jurisdictions already familiar with foundations.

Since its introduction, Jersey has also seen the migration of many foundations domiciled in jurisdictions such as Liechtenstein and Panama or a merger of them with Jersey foundations.

Features of a Jersey Foundation

- A Jersey foundation is a body corporate registered with the Registrar of Companies and is governed by the Law, its charter and its regulations (if any).
- **Name** – A foundation’s name must end in the word “foundation” or an equivalent translation into a foreign language.
- **Charter** – All foundations have a charter. The charter is a public document which sets out the name and objectives of the foundation. The detailed provisions applicable to the foundation can be included in the public charter or in the regulations, which is a private document, although the government of Jersey plans to introduce amendments to the Law, requiring the filing of an abridged version of the foundation’s regulations. (The charter, or any part of it, may be in any language. However it is important to note that

a translation in English must be provided at the time the proposed charter is submitted to the Companies Registry.)

- **Registration** – The charter must be lodged with the registrar on incorporation, and must specify
 - The name of the foundation
 - The objectives for which the foundation was established (which can be charitable, non-charitable or both, and can be for the benefit of people, purposes or both)
 - The names and addresses of the first members of the foundation’s council
 - The details of any initial endowment
 - What will happen to foundation assets should the foundation be wound up and dissolved
 - Details of the event or time, such as the happening of an event or the expiration of a fixed period of time, to cause the foundation to be wound up and dissolved
- **Regulations** – The regulations set out how the foundation’s assets are to be administered and how its objectives are to be achieved.
- **Founder** – The person or entity instigating the Jersey foundation is the founder. The founder instructs the qualified person to apply for the incorporation. The founder need not be the same person who provides any endowment or financial contributions. The identity of the founder need

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not be disclosed. If disclosed, founder's rights may be reserved to the founder by appropriate provisions in the charter and regulations.

- **Guardian** – A Jersey foundation must have a guardian whose function is to ensure that the council carries out its functions and administers the foundation's assets in accordance with the objectives of the foundation. Additionally, the role of guardian may be carried out by the founder or the qualified person, but no other council member can be the guardian.
- **Council** – A foundation is required to have a council that is the body responsible for fulfilling the aims of the foundation in accordance with the Law, charter and regulations. The council must have at least one "qualified" member (a person registered with and regulated by the Jersey Financial Services Commission to carry on trust company business; Trident Trust Company Ltd is registered to conduct these activities) and must also have a guardian to oversee the work of the council and to whom the council are accountable.
- **Beneficiaries** – A foundation need not have beneficiaries. If there are beneficiaries, they have no interest in the foundation's assets and beneficiaries are not owed fiduciary duties by the foundation or the council members. Unless required by the charter or regulations a foundation is not required to provide any person (including a beneficiary) with any information about the foundation or its administration.
- A Jersey foundation has a separate corporate personality but unlike a company it has no shareholders. It can sue and be sued in its own name and enter contracts in its own name. Like a company, the regulations provide for most commercial transactions which a company can undertake such as winding up, dissolution, merger with other foundations or corporate bodies and migration from the Island to other jurisdictions. The regulations may also set out the functions that may be delegated by the council.
- No initial endowment – Unlike a trust, there is no requirement for an initial endowment to initiate its existence.
- A Jersey foundation cannot itself trade other than trading activities which are incidental to the attainment of its objectives. (It can own interests in underlying trading entities.)
- A Jersey foundation can hold foreign property, but cannot own property located in Jersey.
- A Jersey foundation can have any objectives (including charitable or non-charitable objectives, defined purposes or to benefit beneficiaries) provided they are lawful.
- There are no Jersey income or capital taxes for non-resident taxpayers.
- There are certain administrative requirements such as having a business address in Jersey, and ensuring the name and business address of the foundation appear on written communications. Statutory and financial books and records must be maintained at the business address. The business address will be the address of the locally regulated council member.
- Migration and merger – Re-domiciliation, continuance and merger provisions are similar to companies.
- The council of members must make sure that a foundation's records are kept and prepared properly and are accurate.

Flexible Applications

- **"Corporate-like"** – A Jersey foundation could be said to resemble a company by reason of its incorporation and registration; its constitution being similar to Memorandum and Articles of

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Association; the council members being akin to a board of directors; indefinite duration; and flexibility as regards provisions to cover such corporate actions such as re-domiciliation, continuance, merger, dissolution and winding up.

- **“Trust-like”** – A Jersey foundation could also be said to resemble a trust in many aspects. The founder may resemble a “Settlor” (perhaps with certain powers reserved to him or her) who makes an endowment (settlement) for the benefit of beneficiaries who cannot own the assets, but for whom the assets can be administered for their present or ultimate benefit. Alternatively the founder may remain anonymous, thereby resembling a “declaration of trust”. The charter and regulations may in many respects resemble a discretionary or fixed interest trust instrument. The Jersey foundation may also be created by will or other testamentary writing. The guardian is similar to a protector.

- **Charitable or Commercial Purposes** – The Jersey foundation may be established for purposes broadly “charitable” (e.g., cultural, philanthropic, scientific, educational, humanitarian or religious purposes) or “commercial” (non-trading purposes) in the same manner that a “purpose trust” and underlying companies may be applied (e.g., the holding of entities to carry out licensing of intellectual property, leasing, provision of benefits to incentivise employees or the holding of SPVs for capital market and financial structuring, etc.). A Jersey foundation may be used instead of a non-charitable purpose trust to hold the shares of a Private Trust Company (PTC), which is set up to act as trustee for one or more family trusts, with the board of directors of the PTC comprising certain family members.

Typical Uses of a Foundation

- To act as a holding or investment vehicle to own and/or invest in shares, interests and stocks of private companies or other securities
- To assist private individuals with global asset management
- To deal with succession and inheritance planning and wealth preservation
- To avoid probate requirements and forced heirship in certain countries
- To protect persons at a disadvantage due to minority or incapacity who cannot manage their assets or risk losing the same
- To protect against fragmentation and outsiders gaining control of family businesses which are passed down through the generations
- Asset protection

Offices

The Americas/Caribbean

Bahamas

Trident Corporate Services
(Bahamas) Ltd
T: +1 242 322 6154
bahamas@tridenttrust.com

Barbados

Trident Corporate Services
(Barbados) Ltd
T: +1 246 621 0760
barbados@tridenttrust.com

British Virgin Islands

Trident Trust Company (BVI) Ltd
T: +1 284 494 2434
bvi@tridenttrust.com

Canada

TT Services (Canada) Ltd
T: +1 604 687 0811
vancouver@tridenttrust.com

Cayman Islands

Trident Trust Company
(Cayman) Ltd
T: +1 345 949 0880
cayman@tridenttrust.com

Nevis

Morning Star Holdings Ltd
T: +1 869 469 1817
nevis@tridenttrust.com

Meridian Trust Company Ltd

T: +1 869 469 1333
nevis@tridenttrust.com

Panama

Trident Trust (Panama) S.A.
T: +507 302 7494
panama@tridenttrust.com

United States

Atlanta
Trident Corporate Services, Inc
T: +1 404 233 5275
usa@tridenttrust.com

Trident Fund Services, Inc

T: +1 404 364 2019
americasfunds@tridenttrust.com

Miami

Integritas, Inc
T: +1 305 405 9006
contact@integritastrust.com

New York

Trident Corporate Services, Inc
T: +1 212 840 8280
nyc@tridenttrust.com

Sioux Falls

Trident Trust Company
(South Dakota) Inc
T: +1 605 679 4355
sd@tridenttrust.com

US Virgin Islands

Trident Trust Company (VI) Ltd
T: +1 340 774 7322
usvi@tridenttrust.com

Asia

Hong Kong

Trident Corporate Services (Asia) Ltd,
Trident Fund Services (HK) Ltd
& Trident Trust Company (HK) Ltd
T: +852 2805 2000
hongkong@tridenttrust.com

New Zealand

Trident Trust Company (NZ) Ltd
T: +64 9 300 6067
nz@tridenttrust.com

Singapore

Trident Corporate Services
(Singapore) Pte Ltd, Trident Fund
Services (Singapore) Pte Ltd &
Trident Trust Company (Singapore)
Pte Ltd
T: +65 6653 1800
singapore@tridenttrust.com

EMEA

Cyprus

Trident Trust Company (Cyprus) Ltd
T: +357 258 20 650
cyprus@tridenttrust.com

Dubai

Trident Trust Company (UAE) Ltd
DMCC Branch
T: +971 4 423 9988
dubai@tridenttrust.com

Trident Fund Services (DIFC) Ltd

T: +971 4 277 1191
dubai@tridenttrust.com

Guernsey

Trident Trust Company
(Guernsey) Ltd
T: +44 1481 727571
guernsey@tridenttrust.com

Isle of Man

Trident Trust Company (IOM) Ltd
T: +44 1624 646700
iom@tridenttrust.com

Jersey

Trident Trust Company Ltd
T: +44 1534 733401
jersey@tridenttrust.com

Luxembourg

Trident Trust Company
(Luxembourg) S.A.
T: +352 26 30 28 48
luxembourg@tridenttrust.com

Malta

Trident Corporate Services
(Malta) Limited &
Trident Trust Company (Malta) Ltd
T: +356 21 434 525
malta@tridenttrust.com

Mauritius

Trident Trust Company
(Mauritius) Ltd
T: +230 210 9770
mauritius@tridenttrust.com

Seychelles

Trident Trust Company
(Seychelles) Ltd
T: +248 4 422 000
seychelles@tridenttrust.com

Switzerland

Trident Corporate Services AG
T: +41 44 396 1080
switzerland@tridenttrust.com

United Kingdom

Trident Trust Company (UK) Ltd
T: +44 20 7935 1503
uk@tridenttrust.com

Trident Company

Services (UK) Ltd
T: +44 20 7487 0460
corpservices@tridenttrust.com