

# Antigua strengthens online gambling regulations

The Caribbean country of Antigua and Barbuda, the first known country to establish online gambling is moving to strengthen its regulations as it relates to the industry.

The Directorate of Offshore Gaming, a division of the Financial Services Regulatory Commission in the online gambling jurisdiction of Antigua and Barbuda has announced it has plans to stiffen regulations and compliance requirements for operators.

Compliance, for example, will now be validated by ongoing external audits and all of Antigua's eGaming licensees will fall under the same guidelines that apply to Antiguan financial institutions.

Director of Gaming, Kaye McDonald says, "our regulatory model is founded on three distinct pillars: prevention of money laundering; licensee integrity, transparency and accountability; and, above all, safeguarding the interests and well-being of the players."

McDonald added, "our licensees work with us collaboratively to continuously improve compliance measures, they recognise that a strong regulatory system protects their players and enhances the credibility of the industry in general, which is in everyone's mutual interest".

Ensuring compliance requirements are tracked and the requirements meet the guidelines, the Financial Services Regulatory Commission will engage a program that will become part of the information system and computer aided auditing tools that are gambling industry related. Compliance includes the "white listing" criteria mandated in the UK.

The Director of Gaming said that the monitoring system was a collaborative effort brought about by the licensees input.

Antigua's operators are required to contribute to the Responsible Gambling and Gambling Addiction Research and Education Fund as a prerequisite to being licensed in the jurisdiction.

McDonald concluded, "the ongoing improvements to our statutory requirements ensure that our licensees comply with internationally accepted best practices, and further affirms their commitment to socially responsible practices". (DH)