



Vietnam Adopts the Hague Apostille Convention: A Significant Leap in Administrative Reform

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On 25 February 2026, the Deputy Prime Minister of Vietnam, H.E. Bui Thanh Son signed Decision 330/QĐ-TTg (**Decision 330**) approving the plan to implement the Convention Abolishing the Requirement of Legalisation for Foreign Public Documents (**the Apostille Convention**). This reform marks a critical milestone in Vietnam’s commitment to streamlining cross-border administrative procedures and enhancing the investment climate for foreign enterprises.

The new legal framework

Under the implementation plan (**the Plan**), the traditional multi-step consular legalisation process will be replaced by a single Apostille certification. The transition aims to significantly reduce the administrative burden on international investors by eliminating the need for embassy-level authentication for public documents from member states.

Comparison table of key features:

Feature	Current Method (Consular Legalisation)	New Method (Apostille System)
Process Steps	Multi-step: Involves home country certification, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) legalisation, and Vietnamese Consular authentication.	Streamlined: Direct recognition via a single Apostille stamp issued by the originating country’s competent authority.
Documentation	Heavy: Requires multiple sets of original documents and translations for each layer of government review.	Minimal: One certificate, the Apostille, is attached to the public document, which is then directly recognised in Vietnam.
Processing Time	Weeks to months: Logistics between foreign ministries and embassies often cause significant project delays.	Days: Streamlined via the National Public Service Portal with a focus on electronic processing (e-Apostille).
Costs	High: Multiple sets of fees for various government agencies and potential courier costs between countries.	Low: A one-time fee at the source.

Key implementation milestones

- **15 June 2026:** Deadline for the MOFA to present the guiding Decree to the Government.
- **11 September 2026:** The Apostille Convention officially takes effect for Vietnam.
- **2027-2030:** Authority for Apostille issuance will be progressively decentralised to provincial specialised agencies.

Practical implications for investors

- **Accelerated market entry:** Corporate filings, M&A documentation, and power of attorney forms will no longer require months of embassy back-and-forth.
- **Labour mobility:** The onboarding of foreign experts will be accelerated through the simplified authentication of degrees and background checks.
- **Judicial & legal certainty:** Licensing authorities (such as the Department of Finance of the applicable province) and Courts are legally mandated to accept these documents, eliminating local discretionary delays.

Moreover, it also benefits Vietnamese companies by simplifying cross-border document authentication. It reduces costs, shortens processing time, and facilitates international transactions, investment, and expansion.

Conclusion

It reduces time, cost, and administrative burden for cross-border transactions, including M&A, financing, and licensing. Investors can rely on faster execution and greater legal certainty, improving deal efficiency and making Vietnam a more attractive and accessible investment destination.

It improves efficiency and aligns Vietnam with global standards, making it easier for businesses to operate and collaborate with foreign partners. This transition is more than a procedural change; it is a clear indicator of Vietnam's commitment to a friction-less investment environment.

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