

VIETNAM CONTINUES WITH E-VISA POLICY IN VIEW OF TOURISM GROWTH



In January 2017, Vietnam launched a pilot e-visa policy. Based on this, citizens from 40 countries were enabled to apply for e-visas. The list of eligible countries included USA, China, Japan, the UK or Germany. The list was later expanded to six more countries, including India and Canada. This program seems to have paid off, which is why the Vietnamese government extended the policy until 2021.

Official data show that until the end of August 2018, more than 240 thousand foreigners entered Vietnam using electronic visas. The program enabled foreigners to apply for 30-day, single-entry visas for holidays in the Asian country. **The price per e-visa is \$25 and the overall procedure demands completion of a form available on the website of the Ministry of Public Security of Vietnam.**

This is another step in Vietnam's ambition to become an important tourist destination. Earlier in 2018, Vietnam extended their visa exemption policy for visitors from Western European countries like France or Germany or Southern European countries like Italy and Spain. Moreover, citizens of countries like Russia, Norway, Finland or Sweden are also freed of the necessity to apply for visas when travelling to Vietnam.

In recent years, Vietnamese tourism has been increasing steadily. With many popular sites, Vietnam has become better known around the world. Through its contributions to the national economy, tourism has become the spearhead of the country's socio-economic development.

Currently, community tourism, directly managed by locals, contributes greatly to the socio-economic development. In general, it is growing strongly in rural and poorer areas. This type of tourism allows travelers, especially foreigners, to discover the daily life of the inhabitants.

Last year, Vietnam attracted 12.9 million foreign visitors, while in 1990 the country was visited by 250,000 foreigners. The number of foreigners has multiplied by 52 and that of domestic travelers by 72. But the government is not satisfied with this only and aims higher.

A project is in development to reorganize the sector by 2025. According to forecasts, by 2025, Vietnamese tourism could attract about 32 million foreigners, achieve a turnover of 45 billion dollars and contribute to 10% of the country's GDP. Moreover, the tourism industry is expected to create 6 million jobs, including 2 million direct ones.

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