

Vietnam considers visa waivers for more countries

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Vietnam would consider unilaterally offering visa-free stays to citizens from more countries to attract international tourists, according to a governmental resolution on tourism development issued Thursday May 18).

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs would be tasked with completing documents on expanding unilateral visa waiving policies to be submitted to the government.

The Ministry of Public Security is instructed to report back to the government on expanding the list of countries eligible for e-visa.

The Ministry of Transport is tasked with making it easier for international airlines to open routes to Vietnam, and making the coordination of flight time more flexible.

The Ministry of Industry and Trade is tasked with adding more tourism

accommodations while the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism would develop business networks to join the global tourism supply chain.

The Ministry of Finance would propose preferential loan packages for tourism businesses, according to the resolution.

Other ministries are tasked with promoting negotiations for visa waivers with other countries.

Since March, Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh has instructed the government to look into expanding the list of countries eligible for visa-free entrance into Vietnam. Vietnam now allows visa waivers for 25 countries, while Malaysia and Singapore allow 162 countries, the Philippines 157 countries and Thailand 65 countries.

The lower number of countries eligible for Vietnam's visa waiving policies makes Vietnam less competitive compared to other countries in the region, according to tourism insiders.

The government would also propose to the National Assembly to make adjustments to immigration laws to make it easier for foreigners to enter Vietnam regarding visa issuance, as well as extending the duration of stay for foreigners in Vietnam.

The assembly is set to vote for changes on visa length at a session starting May 22.

Vietnam's tourism aims to welcome 8 million international visitors and 102 million domestic tourists this year, totaling to a revenue of VND650 trillion (\$27.7 billion).

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