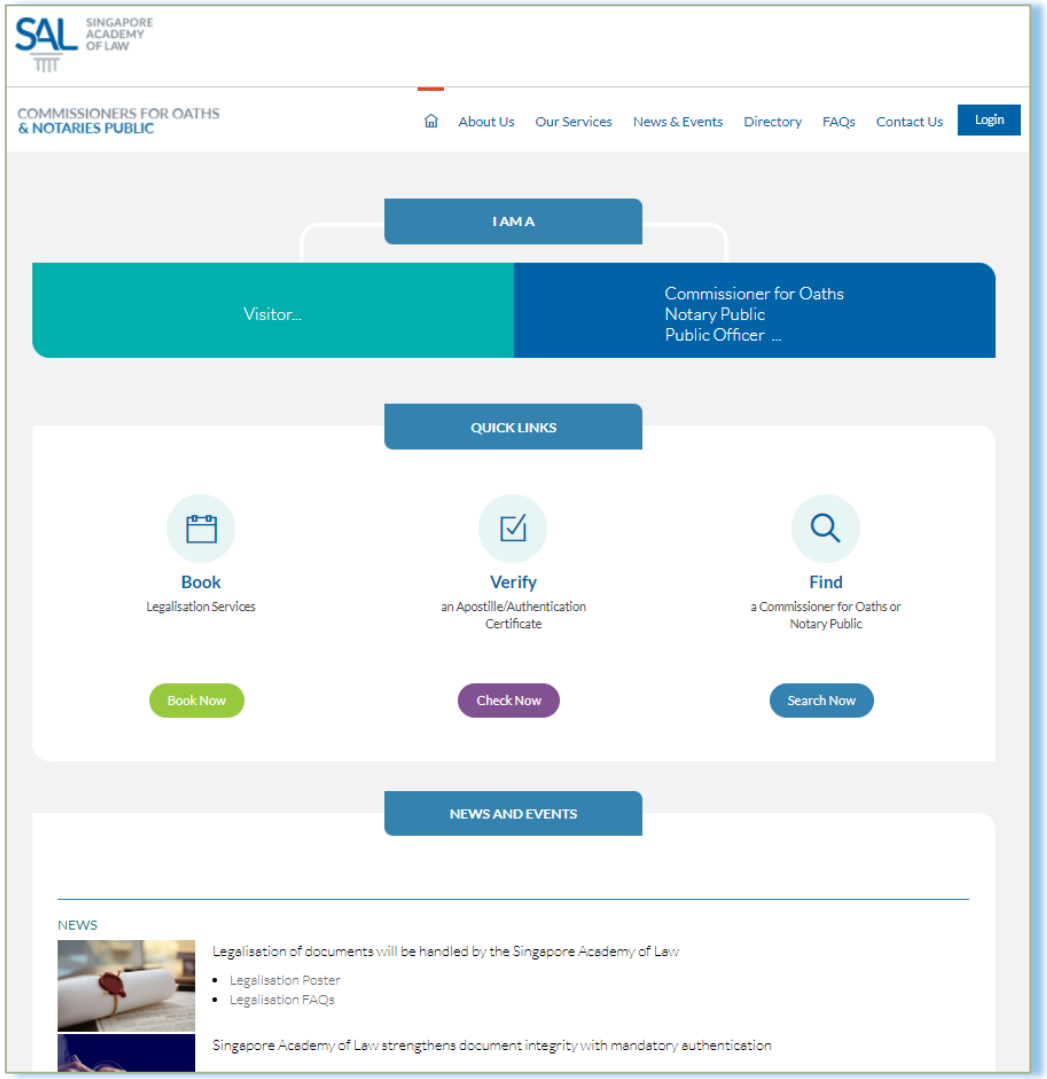
Implementing the e-APP in Singapore

On 18 January 2021, the Republic of Singapore deposited its instrument of accession to the HCCH Convention of 5 October 1961 Abolishing the Requirement of Legalisation for Foreign Public Documents (Apostille Convention)

SINGAPORE ACADEMY OF LAW

The Singapore Academy of Law (SAL), a statutory body headed by the Chief Justice of Singapore, is Singapore's sole appointed Competent Authority for the Apostille Convention

Singapore's e-Register Component



- Singapore's e-Register (*https://legalisation.sal.sg/*) was launched in 2019
- Serves as a one-stop platform for all legalisation matters in Singapore
- Provides notary search, online payment and verification functions for the public
- Features a digital workbench for notarisation by notaries and legalisation by SAL officers

THE ISSUES

Reports of fraudulent notarisation due to:

- No uniform format for notarisation
- Need for authentication of notarisation determined by receiving party
- No verification process to allow receiving party to check that a notarised document was authentic

?

PROBLEM

THE ISSUES

Reports of fraudulent notarisation due to:

- No uniform format for notarisation
- Need for authentication was determined by receiving party
- No verification process to allow receiving party to check that a notarised document was authentic

PROBLEM

THE RESOLUTIONS

Embarked on exercise to enhance the security of the notarisation and authentication process:

- Enact rules to specify format of notarial certificates
- Explored the viability of a system similar to e-Register a component of the e-APP
- The e-Register to contain particulars of all documents notarised in Singapore and authenticated by SAL

SOLUTION

In 2016, SAL attended the 4th Apostille Special Commission and 10th e-APP Forum in the Hague to understand the experience of Contracting Parties who have implemented e-Registers

Fourth meeting of the Apostille Special Commission and 10th e-APP Forum

From 2 to 4 November 2016, over 190 experts from over 65 States and international organisations around the world participated in the fourth meeting of the Special Commission on the practical operation of the *Hague Convention on Abolishing the Requirement of Legalisation for Foreign Public Documents* (Apostille Convention). For the first time, a meeting of the Special Commission was directly preceded by an International Forum on the electronic Apostille Program (e-APP). The 10th International Forum took place on 1 November 2016.

The Apostille Convention is, to date, the most widely ratified and acceded to of the Hague Conventions, with 112 Contracting Parties. Its popularity is due in large part to its significance in the lives of citizens and facilitation of cross-border trade and commerce. As a result, the Apostille Convention has proven to be extremely useful and is applied millions of times each year throughout the world. The e-APP continues to facilitate the effective and secure operation of the Convention and has also experienced an impressive expansion in recent years, with over 200 authorities in 29 Contracting Parties now having implemented one or both components of the e-APP.

Tackling Singapore's Problem Statement

THE ISSUES

Reports of fraudulent notarisation due to:

- No uniform format for notarisation
- Need for authentication was determined by receiving party
- No verification process to allow receiving party to check that a notarised document was authentic

THE RESOLUTIONS

Embarked on exercise to enhance the security of the notarisation and authentication process:

- Enact rules to specify format of notarial certificates
- Explored the viability of a system similar to e-Register a component of the e-APP
- The e-Register to contain particulars of all documents notarised in Singapore and authenticated by SAL

THE OUTCOMES

E-Register for notarised documents:

- Mandatory authentication of all notarial certificates issued in Singapore
- Notarial certificates to be system-generated through e-Register and to bear a unique ID number
- Verification portal at www.legalisation.sal.org.sg

PROBLEM

SOLUTION

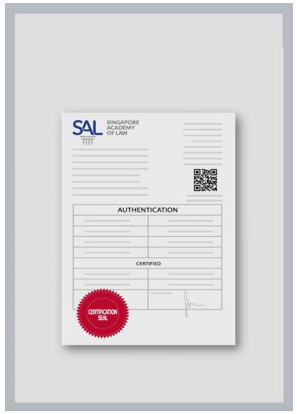
RESULT

From 1 Oct 2019:-

RESULT

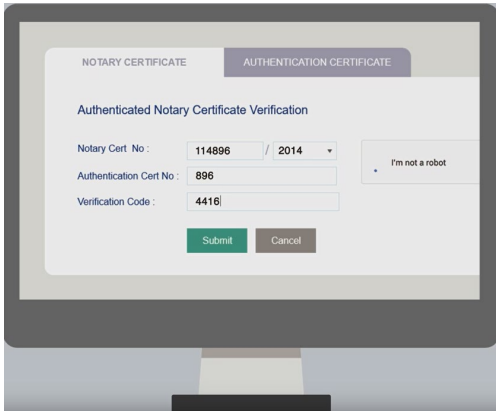
NOTARISATION

- All notarial certificates and authentication certificates are processed and generated through the e-Register system
- Notarial and Authentication certificates are serialised and QR-coded by the e-Register



AUTHENTICATION

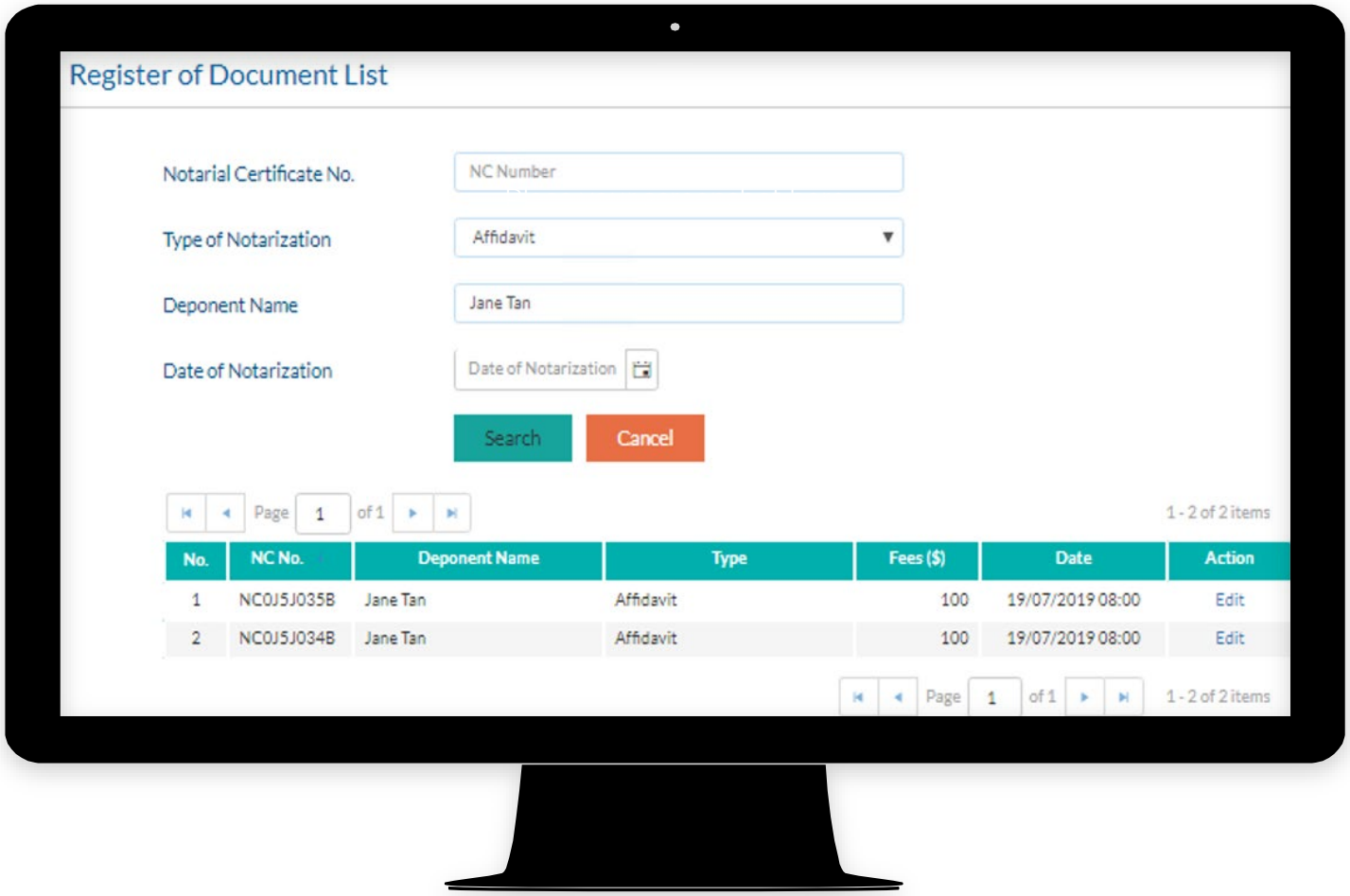
- It is mandatory for all documents to be authenticated by SAL



VERIFICATION

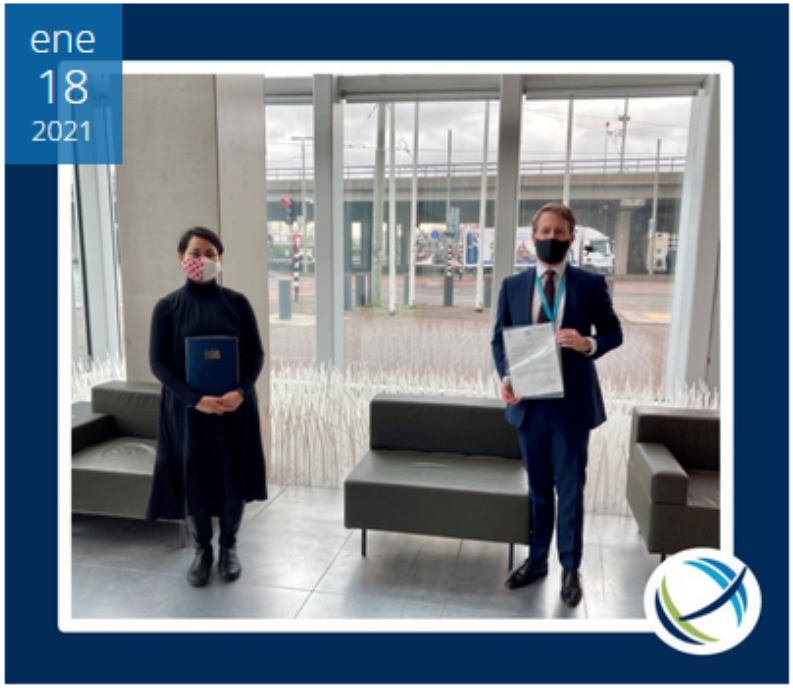
- A recipient of the notarised document will be able to search and verify the authenticity of the notarised document via a search register/portal in the E-Register system

- ✓ The e-Register ensures a complete proper record of documents notarised.
- ✓ All notarial certificates will bear a unique system-generated ID number.
- ✓ The system also allows you to view past notarisation records as well as void submitted authentications



- The Apostille Convention entered into force in Singapore on 16 September 2021
- SAL is the sole Competent Authority for the issuance of Apostilles in Singapore

Singapore accedes to the Apostille Convention



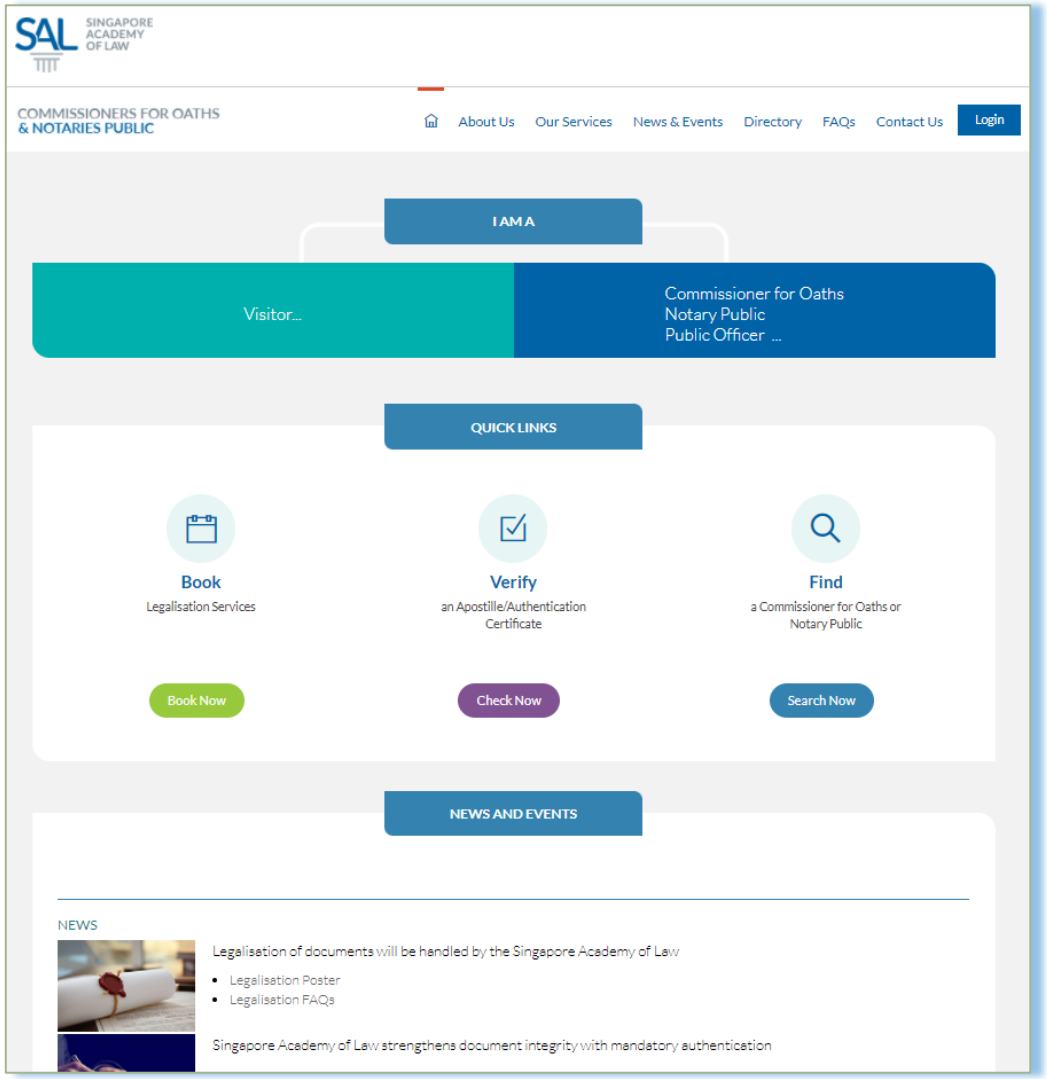
Today, 18 January 2021, the Republic of Singapore deposited its instrument of accession to the *HCCH Convention of 5 October 1961 Abolishing the Requirement of Legalisation for Foreign Public Documents* (Apostille Convention).

On behalf of the Embassy of Singapore, Minister-Counsellor Davinia Aziz deposited the instrument and is pictured with Mr Rieks Boekholt, Legal Officer, representing the depositary, the Treaties Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the Netherlands.

With the accession of Singapore, the Apostille Convention now has 120 Contracting Parties. Singapore is the third ASEAN Member State to join the Apostille Convention. It will enter into force for Singapore on 16 September 2021. More information on this Convention is available on the **Apostille Section** of the HCCH website.

Singapore has been a Member of the HCCH since 2014 and is now a Contracting Party to **four HCCH Conventions**.

Implementation of the e-APP : e-Register Component



- Singapore's e-Register (*https://legalisation.sal.sg/*) was launched in 2019
- Serves as a one-stop platform for all legalisation matters in Singapore
- Provides appointment booking, notary search, online payment and verification functions for the public
- Features a digital workbench for notarisation by Notaries and legalisation by SAL officers

Updated to cover Apostilles since 16 September 2021

Single Track Legalisation Process for Contracting and non-Contracting Parties

APOSTILLE

(Convention de La Haye du 5 Octobre 1961)

This **Apostille** only certifies the authenticity of the signature, seal or stamp and the capacity of the person who has signed the attached Singapore public document, and, where appropriate, the identity of the seal or stamp. It does not certify the authenticity of the underlying document.

If this document is to be used in a country not party to the Hague Convention of the 5th of October 1961, it should be presented to the consular section of the mission representing that country.

To verify this **Apostille**, go to https://legalisation.sal.sg or scan QR code:

Verification code: 35

1. **Country:**	Singapore
This public document	
2. **Has been signed by:**	[illegible]
3. **Acting in the capacity of:**	Notary Public
4. **Bears the seal/stamp of:**	Notary Public
Certified	
5. **At:**	Singapore Academy of Law
6. **The:**	24th September 2021
7. **By:**	Melissa Goh, Deputy Director, SAL
8. **No.:**	[illegible]
9. **Seal/Stamp:**	10. **Signature:**

SINGAPORE ACADEMY OF LAW CERTIFICATION SEAL

- Apostille affixed to reverse side of underlying document
- SAL issues apostilles for legalised documents bound for both contracting and non-contracting parties
- Additional text to notify that if the document is to be used in a country not party to the Hague Convention of the 5th of October 1961, it should be presented to the consular section of the mission representing that country.

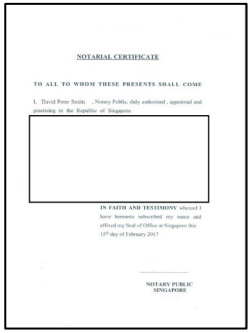
Overview of e-Register's role in the Legalisation Process

Private Document

Contact Notary

Applicant goes to e-Register to find a notary public

Editing on NC Template



Notarisation

Notary public logs into e-Register to draft *jurat*, applicant makes online payment

Completed NC

Notarial Certificate (NC)

A Notarial Certificate (NC) is generated through the e-Register

Applicant brings notarised document to SAL

- Staff scans QR code on NC, generates and affixes Apostille

Public Document

Request Apostille

Applicant submits online legalisation request via e-Register

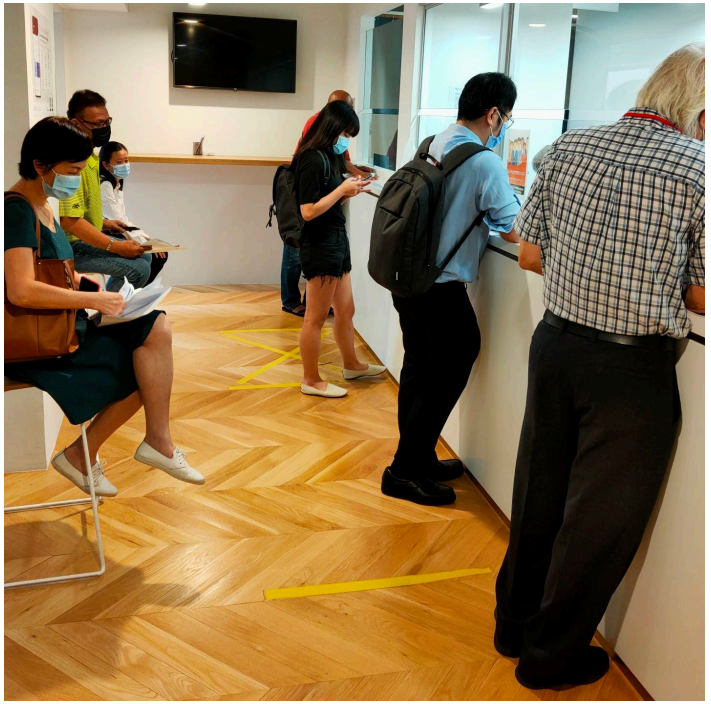
Confirmation and Payment

Applicant makes online payment

Applicant brings public document to SAL

- Staff checks public doc's authenticity against database and affixes Apostille

SAL issues an average of 800 **paper apostilles** over the counter daily



Average turnaround time of under 1 min for issuing each Apostille

A fee of S$10.70 is chargeable for each document legalised

Singapore's e-Register is a Category 2 e-Register

SINGAPORE ACADEMY OF LAW

COMMISSIONERS FOR OATHS & NOTARIES PUBLIC

About Us | Our Services | News & Events | Directory | FAQs | Contact Us | Login

Verification of Apostille/Authentication Certificate

Verify Apostille Certificate | Verify Authentication Certificate

(for certificates issued from 16 September 2021)

Apostille Certificate No: *Apostille Certificate Number*

Notarial Certificate No: *Notarial Certificate Number*

Apostille Verification Code: *Verification Code of Apostille Certificate*

Submit | Cancel

APOSTILLE

(Convention de La Haye du 5 Octobre 1961)

This **Apostille** only certifies the authenticity of the signature, seal or stamp and the capacity of the person who has signed the attached Singapore public document, and, where appropriate, the identity of the seal or stamp. It does not certify the authenticity of the underlying document.

If this document is to be used in a country not party to the Hague Convention of the 5th of October 1961, it should be presented to the consular section of the mission representing that country.

To verify this **Apostille**, go to https://legalisation.sal.sg or scan QR code:

Verification code: 35

1. **Country:**	Singapore
This public document	
2. **Has been signed by:**	[illegible] ret
3. **Acting in the capacity of:**	Notary Public
4. **Bears the seal/stamp of:**	Notary Public
Certified	
5. **At:**	Singapore Academy of Law
6. **The:**	24th September 2021
7. **By:**	Melissa Goh, Deputy Director, SAL
8. **No.:**	[illegible] 11
9. **Seal/Stamp:**	10. **Signature:**

CERTIFICATION SEAL

Search Results

Authentication / Legalisation / Apostille

Country	Singapore
This public document has been signed by	Lim Hin Chye
Acting in the capacity of	Notary Public
Bear the seal / stamp of	Notary Public

Certified

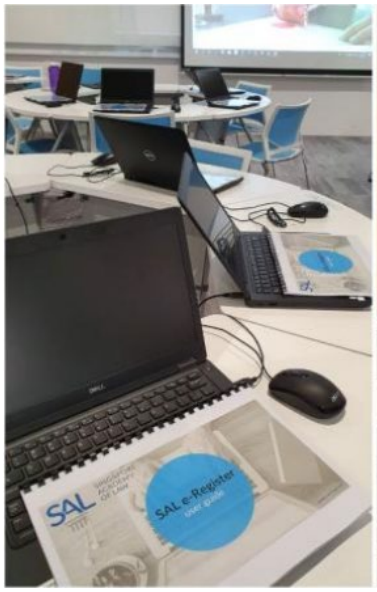
At	Singapore Academy of Law
The	17/12/2020
By	Low Hui Min, Director, SAL
Document Serial No	AC0K9S0QHA

This **Authentication Certificate / Legalisation Certificate / Apostille** only certifies the authenticity of the signature and the capacity of the person who has signed the public document, and where appropriate, the identity of the seal or stamp which the public document bears.

This Certificate is not valid if the seal of the Singapore Academy of Law is removed or altered in any way whatsoever. This Certificate does not authenticate or confirm the content of the Document for which it was issued

E-Register Rollout and Training for the Notary Public Community

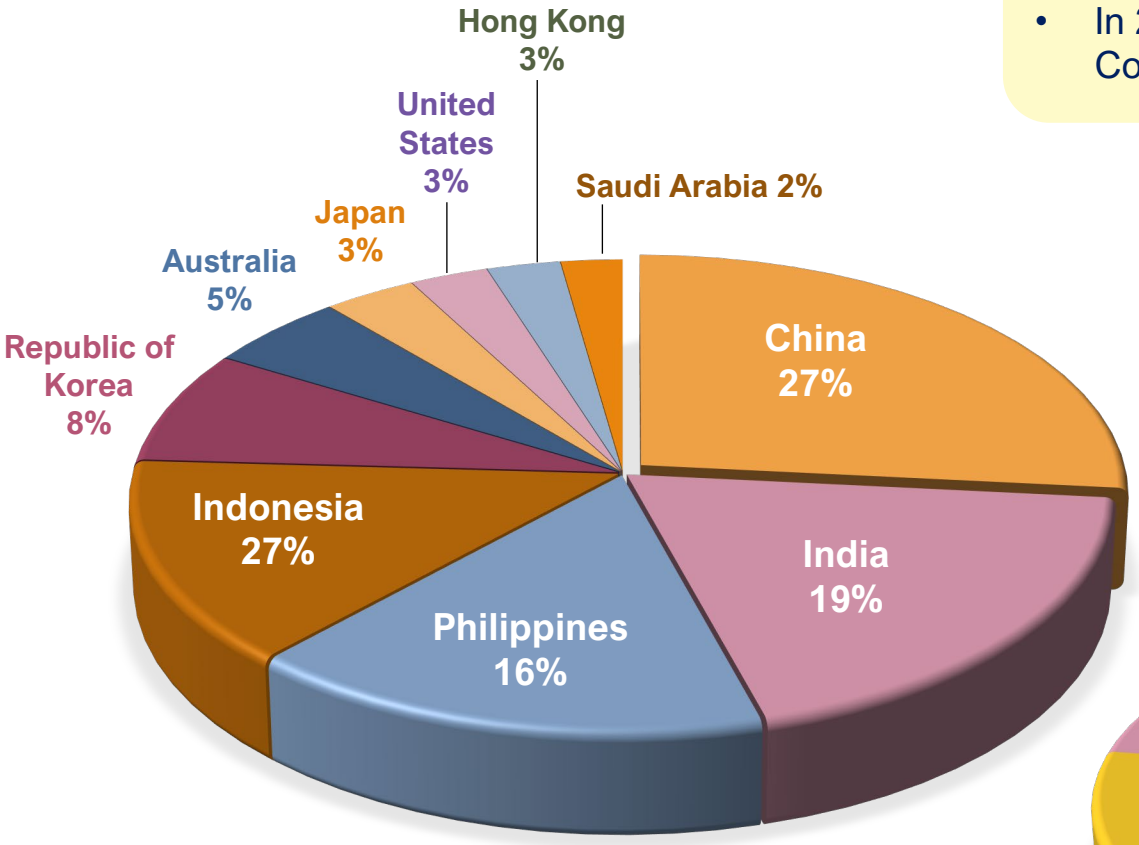
Almost 40 training sessions were conducted for over 700 notaries over 2 months before operationalisation in October 2019



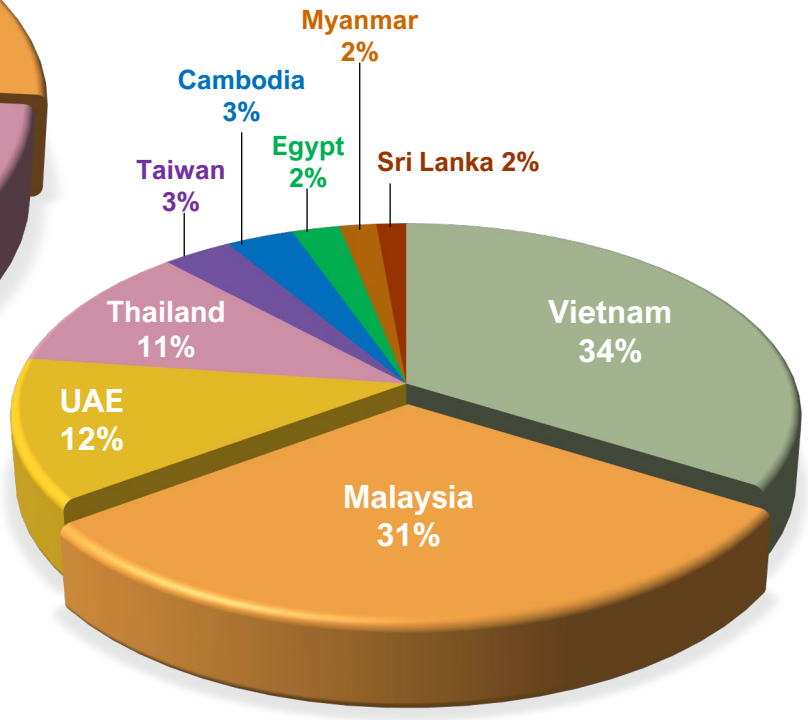
More than 70% of Apostilles issued in 2023 bound for Contracting Parties

Top Destinations among **Contracting Parties**

- Over **500,000 Apostilles issued*** via e-Register since 16 September 2021:
- In 2023, over 70% of Apostilles bound for Contracting States



Top Destinations among
Non-contracting Parties (Legalisations)



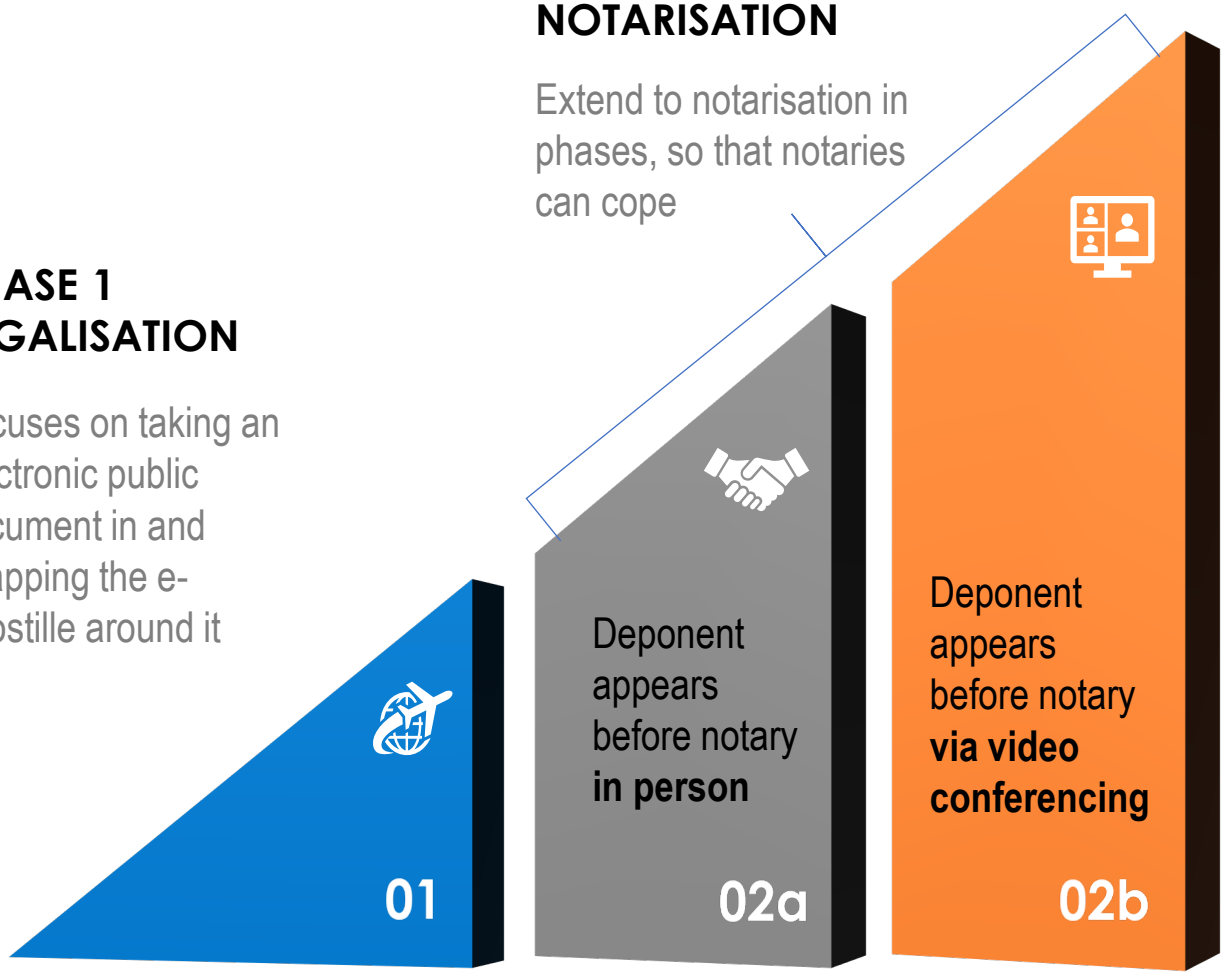
* *% of total apostilles processed via e-Register since the Apostille Convention came into force in Singapore*

PHASE 1
LEGALISATION

Focuses on taking an electronic public document in and wrapping the e-apostille around it

PHASE 2
NOTARISATION

Extend to notarisation in phases, so that notaries can cope

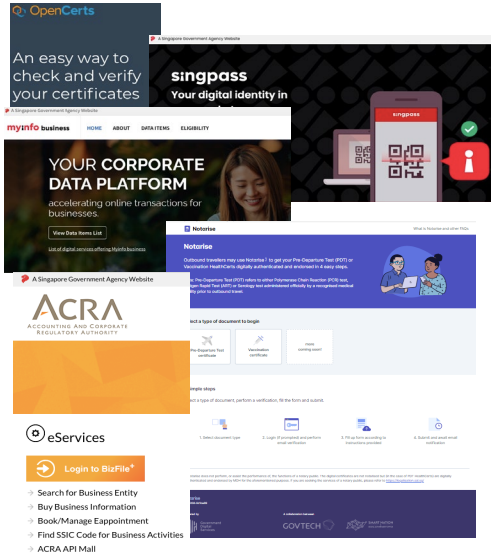


1. Authenticate

2. Verify

3. Transact

Public/Govt Databases

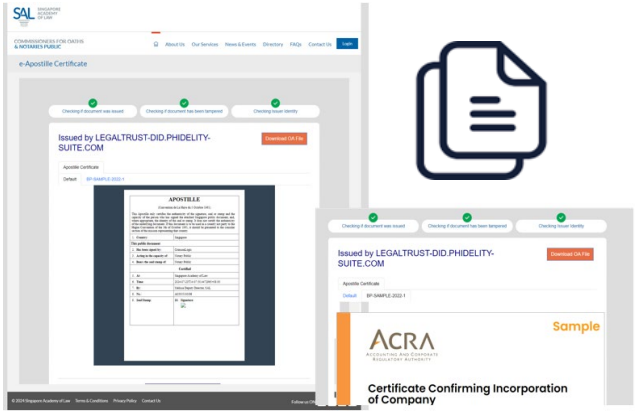


- Applicant self-authenticates via SingPass at respective Govt database to access the electronic public document

E-Register verifies public document

- Applicant shares access to electronic public documents with SAL
- SAL verifies electronic document

E-Apostille is issued to the electronic doc



- SAL generates e-apostille to be attached to electronic public document as a single file
- This is emailed to the applicant
- Receiving party can verify at www.legalisation.sal.sg

ACRA
Accounting And Corporate Regulatory Authority

SAL

INFOCOMM MEDIA DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Thank You