

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO Apostille Questionnaire 2021

The responses are reflected as provided by Contracting Parties subject to minor typographical corrections.

Joining the Apostille Convention	
1. Did you join the Convention after 2010?	[a] Yes.
<i>For Parties that joined the Convention after 2010.</i>	
1.1. Did you require implementing legislation to give the Apostille Convention the force of law?	No.
2. Are foreign public documents exempted from legalisation by virtue of your internal law, practice, or any bilateral / multilateral agreements (excluding the Apostille Convention)?	[c] No.
Competent Authorities	
3. How many Competent Authorities have you designated under the Apostille Convention? <i>If unknown, please specify the reason for this and provide an approximate number.</i>	One (1) Office of Attorney General and Legal Affairs, Trinidad and Tobago
4. Do your diplomatic missions abroad play a role in the Apostille issuance process?	[b] Yes, our diplomatic missions act as intermediaries between the applicant and Competent Authority (e.g. forwarding applications and transmitting Apostilles once issued). <i>Documents are transmitted to the Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago</i>
Substantive Scope	
5. Is the concept of 'public document' defined in your internal law?	[b] No.
6. Have you experienced any difficulties in characterising a 'public document' for the purposes of the Apostille Convention?	[a] Yes. <i>Certain scanned signatures are currently not accepted</i>
7. Has the exclusion of 'documents executed by diplomatic or consular agents' (Art. 1(3)(a)) from the scope of the Apostille Convention given rise to any difficulties?	[c] No.
8. Do you think this Art. 1(3)(a) exclusion is justified in the context of the modern operation of the Convention?	[b] No.
9. Has the exclusion of 'administrative documents dealing directly with commercial or customs operations' (Art. 1(3)(b)) from the scope of the Apostille Convention given rise to any difficulties?	[c] No.
10. Do you think this Art. 1(3)(b) exclusion is justified in the context of the modern operation of the Convention?	[b] No.

11. Do you issue (outgoing) or accept (incoming) Apostilles for any of the following categories of document?		Issue	Accept
	Certificates of origin		X
	Export licences		X
	Import licences		X
	Health and safety certificates issued by the relevant government authorities or agencies		X
	Certificates of products registration		X
	Certificates of conformity		X
	End user certificates (i.e. documents certifying that the buyer is the end user of acquired goods)		X
	Commercial invoices		X
Apostille Process			
Certification of Public Documents			
12. Do any of your public documents require some other intermediate certification before the issuance of an Apostille?	[a] Yes, an intermediate certification is required for some categories of public documents.		
<i>For Parties that answered yes to Q12.</i> 12.1. What categories of public document require intermediate certification and why?	Category of public document	Why certification is required	
	Academic Certificates	Signatures change often, as persons are promoted in offices faster than usual in Universities	
	Power of Attorney	If a power of attorney is not done by a notary public, signatures are not accepted	
	Invoices	Invoices are emanated from private institutions in Trinidad and Tobago, as such these documents will require to be notarized first before the Apostille stamp is affixed	
	Business Invoices and documents issued from certain government institutions	Persons are usually promoted faster in office and signatures change quickly	
Requesting an Apostille (Outgoing)			
13. How can an Apostille be requested?	[a] In person.		X
	[b] By post.		
	[c] By email.		
	[d] Through a website.		
	[e] Other. <i>Through and Trinidad and Tobago Diplomatic Mission abroad</i>		X

14.	When issuing an Apostille, do you enquire about the State of destination?	[a] Yes, in the application form.		
15.	How long does it take for an Apostille to be issued?	In-person request (paper Apostille)	Other requests (from the time of receipt) (paper Apostille)	e-Apostille requests
		Within five working days	Within five working days	Within five working days
16.	Does your Competent Authority impose a fee for issuing an Apostille?	[c] No.		
Issuing an Apostille (Outgoing)				
17.	How is the origin of a public document verified for the purpose of issuing an Apostille (i.e. verification of the authenticity of the signature, the capacity of the signer, and the identity of the seal / stamp (Art. 5(2))?	[b] Multiple Competent Authorities. [i] A single, centralised, database of sample signatures / seals / stamps, maintained in paper form.		
18.	How does a Competent Authority address situations where it is unable to verify the origin of the public document?	[a] The Competent Authority will contact the issuing authority to confirm authenticity, issue the Apostille, and then add the new signature, stamp or seal to the database.		
19.	In what language(s) are the 10 standard items of your Apostilles available?	[a] In one language. <i>English</i>		
20.	In what language(s) are the blank fields of your Apostilles filled in?	[a] In one language. <i>English</i>		
21.	How are the blank fields of your Apostilles filled in?	[a] By hand.		
Apostille Registers				
22.	How is your Apostille register, required by Article 7, maintained?	[a] Single Competent Authority. [iii] Paper form.		
23.	What particulars are contained in your Apostille register?	[a] Number and date of the Apostille (required).		X
		[b] Name and capacity of the person signing the document and / or the name of authority whose seal or stamp is affixed (required).		X
		[c] Name and / or type of underlying document.		X
		[d] Description of the contents of underlying document.		X
		[e] Name of the applicant.		X
		[f] State of destination.		X
		[g] Copy of the Apostille.		
		[h] Copy of the underlying document.		
		[i] Other.		
24.	Is there a limit to how long records can be retained on the Apostille register?	[d] No.		

25. If your register is <i>not</i> publicly accessible, how frequently do your Competent Authorities receive requests to verify an Apostille they have issued in the register?	[a] Never.	
Technology & the e-APP		
26. Under your internal law, do you recognise electronic / digital signatures as functionally equivalent to handwritten signatures (<i>i.e.</i> can a public document be signed electronically)?	[b] No.	
27. Under your internal law, are public documents executed, or able to be executed, in electronic form (whether or not they are to be used abroad under the Convention)?	[b] No, public documents are never executed in electronic form.	
28. Do you issue e-Apostilles?	[b] No. [ii] We are not currently planning to implement the e-Apostille component.	
<p><i>For Parties that answered no to Q28.</i></p> <p>28.1. What challenges are you facing that may prevent you from implementing the e-Apostille?</p>	[a] Internal law limitations.	
	[b] Judicial or administrative structure.	
	[c] Implementation challenges (e.g. lack of resources, lack of infrastructure).	
	[d] Cost.	X
	[e] System interoperability / compatibility.	
	[f] Security concerns.	
	[g] Other.	
<p><i>For Parties that answered no to Q28.</i></p> <p>28.2. How do you issue an Apostille for a public document executed in electronic form?</p>	[b] By paper Apostille, attached to a hard copy of the electronic public document.	
29. Are your authorities equipped to accept incoming e-Apostilles?	[c] No. <i>Cost Factor</i>	
30. Do you maintain an e-Register?	[a] Yes.	
<p><i>For Parties that answered yes to Q30.</i></p> <p>30.2. What technology is used to maintain your e-Register?</p>	[a] A government-built platform.	
31. Have you been in contact with other Competent Authorities that operate an e-APP component and exchanged information and / or relevant experience?	[b] No.	
Issues with Apostilles		
32. Has an Apostille <i>issued</i> by your Competent Authority ever been refused by the authorities of another Contracting Party on the following grounds:	[a] Form requirements (e.g. square-shaped, sides of at least nine centimetres, border, ink, etc).	
	[b] The manner in which the Apostille was affixed / attached to the underlying document.	
	[c] The Apostille was not signed.	
	[d] One or more of the standard informational items were not filled in.	

	[e] The Apostille was in electronic form (<i>an e-Apostille</i>).	
	[f] The underlying public document was in electronic form.	
	[g] The underlying public document had expired / was not issued within a certain timeframe.	
	[h] The underlying document was not a public document under the law of the destination.	
	[i] Other.	
	[j] Unknown.	
	[k] No / Not applicable.	X
33. Has your Competent Authority ever been requested by external Competent Authorities to certify or confirm your procedure for issuing Apostilles?	[b] No.	
34. Has an Apostille <i>received</i> by your authorities ever been refused on the following grounds:	[a] The issuing State was not a Contracting Party to the Apostille Convention.	
	[b] Form requirements (e.g. square-shaped, sides of at least nine centimetres, border, ink, etc).	
	[c] The manner in which the Apostille was affixed / attached to the underlying document.	
	[d] The Apostille was not signed.	
	[e] One or more of the standard informational items were not filled in.	
	[f] The Apostille was in electronic form (<i>an e-Apostille</i>).	
	[g] The underlying public document was in electronic form.	
	[h] The underlying public document had expired / was not issued within a certain timeframe.	
	[i] The underlying document was not a public document under the law of the destination.	
	[j] Other.	
	[k] Unknown.	
	[l] No / Not applicable.	X

Miscellaneous	
35. Would you be interested in attending the 2021 meeting of the Special Commission on the practical operation of the Apostille Convention?	[a] Yes, if possible, in person.
36. Have you encountered any persistent difficulties, issues, or challenges in the operation of the Apostille Convention that you would like discussed at the 2021 Special Commission? <i>If yes, would you like your answer to this question to be published without reference to your authority or State?</i>	[a] Yes. <i>Implementation of Fees</i>
37. Do you have any suggestions that could assist in the promotion, implementation, or operation of the Apostille Convention? <i>If yes, would you like your answer to this question to be published without reference to your authority or State?</i>	[a] Yes. <i>More printed literatures and an online platform for Apostille and its purpose. This is necessary due to Covid as most parties are adopting to an online approach. Information should be easily accessible.</i>
38. Would you be interested in attending the 12 th International Forum on the e-APP (to be held in conjunction with the meeting of the Special Commission)?	[a] Yes, if possible, in person.
39. Are there any specific topics or practical issues that you would like discussed at the e-APP Forum? <i>If yes, would you like your answer to this question to be published without reference to your authority or State?</i>	[a] Yes. <i>User friendly manual.</i>
40. The Permanent Bureau is in the process of drafting a 2 nd edition of the Apostille Handbook. Are there any specific topics, suggestions for presentation or formatting, or any other proposals for inclusion? <i>Please note that answers to this question will not be incorporated into the first draft of the 2nd edition. The PB will take them into account in preparing subsequent drafts.</i> <i>If yes, would you like your answer to this question to be published without reference to your authority or State?</i>	[b] No.