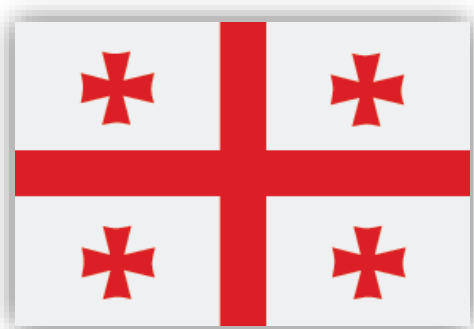


Questionnaire for Contracting Parties to the 1961 Apostille Convention



Georgia

Table of Contents

I.	Implementation of the e-APP.....	1
A.	First component: e-Apostille.....	1
B.	Second component: e-Register.....	2
II.	Technology and the e-APP (including the use of digital signatures)	2
III.	Issuance of e-Apostilles	4
IV.	Operation of an e-Register.....	5
V.	Issues with e-Apostilles.....	6
VI.	Education and training.....	6
VII.	Miscellaneous.....	7
VIII.	Additional information & supporting documents	7

Questionnaire for Contracting Parties to the 1961 Apostille Convention

Please note that not all questions require a response from all Contracting Parties; some are directed only at Contracting Parties that have not implemented one or both components of the e-APP. Likewise, other questions are addressed solely to those who have implemented and operate the e-APP.

I. Implementation of the e-APP

The questions below are intended to identify all Contracting Parties that have implemented one or both components of the e-APP (*i.e.*, those that issue e-Apostilles and/or operate an e-Register). Likewise, for Contracting Parties that have implemented neither component, the questions seek to clarify the stage they have reached in considering the e-APP, as well as the challenges that may be preventing its implementation.

A. First component: e-Apostille

1 Does your State issue e-Apostilles?

Yes, e-Apostilles have been issued since *[September 2020]*

No, e-Apostilles have not been implemented yet.

If not, please specify:

We are studying the use of e-Apostilles and plan to implement the e-Apostille component.

Please specify, if relevant: N/A

We are not currently planning to implement the e-Apostille component.

For Parties that answered “No, e-Apostilles have not been implemented yet”, please answer question 1.1

1.1 What challenges is your State facing that may prevent it from implementing e-Apostilles?

More than one answer is possible.

Internal law limitations.

Judicial or administrative structure.

Implementation challenges (e.g., lack of resources, lack of infrastructure).

Cost.

System interoperability / compatibility.

Security concerns.

Other – please specify: N/A

If relevant, please explain any of the options above: N/A

2 Regardless of whether your State currently issues e-Apostilles, are your receiving agencies equipped or able to accept and process incoming e-Apostilles (*i.e.*, e-Apostilles issued by other Contracting Parties)?

Yes, all e-Apostilles can be processed.

Yes, but on certain conditions – please specify: N/A

No – please explain why not: N/A

Unknown.

Please explain further any of the items above, if relevant: N/A

B. Second component: e-Register

3 Does your State maintain an e-Register?

Yes, an e-Register has been implemented on [<http://apostille.cra.ge/>
<http://www.my.gov.ge/> - (<https://www.my.gov.ge/en-us/services/9/service/287>)]

If yes, please indicate any specific features of your e-Register (e.g., whether your State maintains multiple e-Registers, different types of e-Registers for various Competent Authorities, or separate registers for paper and e-Apostilles, etc.): [*The e-Register of the Public Service Development Agency is specified for both paper and e-Apostilles.*]

No, an e-Register has not been implemented yet.

If not, please specify:

We are studying the use of an e-Register and plan to implement the e-Register component.

Please specify, if relevant: N/A

We are not currently planning to implement the e-Register component.

For Parties that answered “No, an e-Register has not been implemented yet”, please answer question 3.1:

3.1 What challenges is your State facing that may prevent it from implementing an e-Register?

More than one answer is possible.

Internal law limitations.

Judicial or administrative structure.

Implementation challenges (e.g., lack of resources, lack of infrastructure).

Cost.

System interoperability / compatibility.

Security concerns.

Other – please specify: N/A

If relevant, please explain any of the options above: N/A

II. Technology and the e-APP (including the use of digital signatures)

The questions below are intended to further understand how Contracting Parties recognise and use electronic or digital signatures, and how electronic public documents interact with the Apostille process, particularly in cases where the e-Apostille component has not yet been implemented.

For the purposes of this questionnaire, an **electronic signature** is a name, initial, mark or symbol that is affixed to, or logically associated with, a document or other record in electronic form, to evidence the signing of that document or record. A **digital signature** is a special type of electronic signature which works with encryption technology and can be authenticated using a digital certificate.

4 Under your internal law, for your own domestic public documents, do you recognise electronic / digital signatures as functionally equivalent to handwritten (wet) signatures (i.e., allowing your public documents to be signed electronically)?

Yes, please specify (including whether there are any requirements or technical standards for using electronic / digital signatures): [*According to the Decree of the Government of Georgia #405 as of August 18, 2016 "On Approval of the Rules for Certification of Documents with Apostille", both the original document and the printed version of an electronic document certified by an authorized person or an electronic or a paper copy of a tangible document certified in accordance with the appropriate procedure are subject to certification with Apostille. If the document is electronic, according to Article 4, Paragraph 3 of the Law of Georgia "On Electronic Documents and Electronic Trust Services", a printed version of an electronic document shall be a copy of the*]

electronic document and shall have the same legal force as the electronic document if it has been certified and/or verified by a person responsible for signing or an authorised person provided for by the legislation of Georgia. According to the same Law, a qualified trust service provider - an entity that is authorised in accordance with this Law and provides one or more qualified trust services provided for by this Law is the LEPL - Public Service Development Agency.]

- No.
 Other – for example, electronic signatures are only permissible for certain categories of documents. Please specify: N/A
 Unknown.

For Parties that answered Q.4 affirmatively, please answer question 4.1:

4.1 For incoming electronic public documents (i.e., those issued by other Contracting Parties), does your State impose specific requirements or technical standards for accepting electronic / digital signatures?

- Yes – please specify the applicable requirements or technical standards: N/A
 No.
 Other – please specify: N/A
 Unknown.

5 Under your internal law, do foreign electronic public documents have the same probative value as paper public documents?

- Yes – Please specify (including whether your receiving agencies are able to accept and process incoming electronic public documents): *[Any foreign document shall be duly certified in accordance with the legislation.]*
 No.
 It depends – please specify: N/A
 Other – please specify: N/A
 Unknown.

If relevant, please explain further any of the options above: N/A

6 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 1961 Apostille Convention)?

- Yes, all public documents are executed or able to be executed in electronic form.
 Yes, certain categories of public documents are executed or able to be executed in electronic form.
 No, public documents are never executed in electronic form.

If relevant, please explain any of the options above: N/A

For Parties that answered affirmatively and execute, or are able to execute, public documents in electronic form, please answer question 6.1:

6.1 Can electronic public documents issued in your State be verified by foreign receiving agencies?

- Yes – please specify how they can be verified: N/A
 No.
 Other – please specify: *[If a public electronic document can be verified, this information shall be indicated on the submitted document.]*
 Unknown.

6.2 If your State executes, or is able to execute, electronic public documents but has not implemented the e-Apostille component, how is an Apostille issued for such electronic documents?

- The public document must first be executed in paper format.

- A hard copy of the electronic public document is printed and a paper Apostille is issued and attached.
- Other – please specify: N/A

III. Issuance of e-Apostilles

The questions below are intended to identify any requirements or conditions that Contracting Parties may impose for issuing e-Apostilles, as well as to understand the procedures followed by the Competent Authorities and how the underlying public document is treated.

- 7 **Does your State have any requirements, conditions, or limitations for issuing e-Apostilles? If so, please describe them (e.g., requirements concerning the identity of the applicant; the use of specific platforms or digital solutions for applications; the nature or the form of the underlying public document; etc.).**

Yes – please specify: *[A person wishing to certify a document with e-Apostille can submit an application without leaving home electronically online, from the portal - www.my.gov.ge and from the official website of the Agency - www.sda.gov.ge. The registration form can be filled out using a qualified electronic signature or video communication. The applicant shall upload the document to be certified, which must be presented in a form that complies with the ISO 32000 standard (a PDF document is meant). When submitting an electronic document, it is possible to request a qualified timestamp and confirmation of the presence of automatic verification of certificates. After the registered application is reviewed by the Apostille and Legalization Division of the Agency, in case of a positive decision, e-Apostille will be generated by the system and published on the above-mentioned websites, where the interested person will be able to check the status of the application by the application number and code, to see, as well as download the e-Apostille, to which the document certified with e-Apostille will be attached. In both cases, the document certified with e-Apostille will be sent to the applicant via e-mail. The interested person may also visit the LEPL - Public Service Halls or territorial offices of the Agency in person and file an application for certification of a document with e-Apostille.]*

No.

Please explain further any of the items above, if relevant: N/A

- 8 **Under your internal law, which of the following formats of public documents are eligible for the issuance of e-Apostilles?**

More than one answer is possible.

- Electronic public documents.
- Paper public documents that have been scanned by a public official.
- Paper public documents that have been scanned by applicants.

If relevant, please explain any of the options above: N/A

- 9 **Does your State issue paper Apostilles alongside e-Apostilles?**

- Yes.
- No, we only issue e-Apostilles.

- 9.1 **If yes, please indicate the proportion of e-Apostilles issued in comparison to paper Apostilles. If known, provide any specific reasons that may explain the difference in proportions.**

[Since the introduction of the e-Apostille, approximately 760,000 documents have been certified with a physical Apostille, while 290 documents have been certified with the e-Apostille. This distribution may be related to the fact that some countries that are members of the Convention have not yet implemented e-Apostille.]

- 9.2 If **yes**, what are the criteria for issuing paper Apostilles versus e-Apostilles (e.g., is the nature or the form of the underlying public document decisive, or can applicants choose between the two formats)?

[According to the Decree #405 of the Government of Georgia as of August 18, 2016 "On Approval of the Rules for Certification of Documents with Apostille", it is possible to certify a tangible document with a tangible Apostille, and an electronic document with e-Apostille. According to the aforementioned Decree, the Apostille affixed to a tangible document is self-adhesive paper with a 10X10 stamp with the appropriate text. The self-adhesive paper is covered with four different types of exclusive, guilloche protective nets, some of the lines of which are microtext. The protective net is made with anti-copy and luminous paint. The inscriptions "საქართველო" and "Georgia" are made with invisible paint. Meanwhile, the e-Apostille on an electronic document is a document generated in accordance with the ISO 32000 standard. The text of the Apostille must be clearly and legibly executed in Georgian and English. Depending on the nature of the document, the applicant chooses to certify the document with a tangible Apostille or e-Apostille.]

- 9.3 If **not**, how does your State issue e-Apostilles for paper-based documents?

N/A

- 10 When issuing e-Apostilles for electronic public documents, does your State preserve the electronic / digital signature of the underlying document?

Yes, the electronic / digital signature is preserved. Please explain how this is done: *[The e-Apostille has the electronic stamp of the LEPL - Public Service Development Agency. The document that was certified with the e-Apostille is attached to the e-Apostille as an attachment, and at the same time, the electronic stamp of the document issuer is preserved on the certified document.]*

No, only the electronic / digital signature of the e-Apostille is preserved.

If relevant, please explain any of the options above: N/A

- 11 When issuing e-Apostilles, how does your Competent Authority complete the standard informational items on the Certificate? Please indicate whether there are any differences compared with issuing paper Apostilles or authenticating paper public documents.

The Competent Authority completes all standard informational items in the same manner as when issuing paper Apostilles or authenticating paper public documents.

The Competent Authority completes the items differently as follows:

- Items 2-4: N/A
- Items 7 and/or 10: N/A

- 12 In addition to the digital signature, does your e-Apostille include any other security or technical features, such as QR codes, encryption, digital watermarks, or similar measures?

[QR code]

IV. Operation of an e-Register

- 13 What particulars are contained in your e-Register?

More than one answer is possible.

Number and date of the Apostille (required).

Name and capacity of the person signing the document and / or the name of authority whose seal or stamp is affixed (required).

Name and / or type of underlying document.

Description of the contents of underlying document.

- Name of the applicant.
- State of destination.
- Copy of the Apostille.
- Copy of the underlying public document.
- Other – please specify: N/A

If relevant, please explain any of the options above: N/A

V. Issues with e-Apostilles

The questions below are intended to assess the practical acceptance of e-Apostilles among Contracting Parties to the 1961 Apostille Convention. They aim to identify whether e-Apostilles issued or received by a Contracting Party have ever been refused, the reasons for any such refusals, and the actions taken in response.

14 Has an e-Apostille issued by your Competent Authority ever been refused by the authorities of another Contracting Party?

- Unknown.
- No.
- Yes, please provide any further information, in particular the reasons why the e-Apostille was refused, if known: N/A

15 If an e-Apostille has been rejected, what actions were taken in response?

More than one answer is possible.

- A paper Apostille was issued instead.
- Contacted the receiving authority.
- Contacted the Competent Authority of the place of destination.
- Contacted nearest diplomatic mission of the place of destination.
- Contacted own diplomatic mission accredited to the place of destination.
- Contacted the Permanent Bureau.
- No action taken.
- Other, please specify: N/A
- Unknown.

If relevant, please explain any of the options above: N/A

16 Has an e-Apostille received by your authorities ever been refused?

- Unknown.
- No.
- Yes, please provide any further information, in particular the reasons why the e-Apostille was refused, if known: N/A

If relevant, please explain any of the options above: N/A

VI. Education and training

17 Has your State implemented training activities or issued any guidelines on the operation of the e-APP for officers in the Competent Authority(ies)?

- No.
- Yes, please specify: *[The second edition of the "Apostille Handbook - Practical Handbook on the Operation of the Apostille Convention" has been translated from English into Georgian and published on the official website of the Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH).]*

18 Has your State implemented training activities or issued any guidelines on the acceptance of e-Apostilles and the operation of e-Registers for receiving authorities?

- No.
 Yes, please specify: N/A

If your State has issued guidelines or supporting documentation for receiving authorities, please indicate the format used, the type of information included, how the documents have been distributed, and how frequently they are issued, if known: N/A

19 Is / Are your Competent Authority(ies) willing and able to meet with other Competent Authorities to discuss the implementation and operation of the e-APP and to exchange experiences?

- Yes, please specify: *[The requested information regarding the implementation of e-Apostille is sent to interested contracting parties via email. We have shared our experience regarding the implementation of e-Apostille with Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan.]*
 No, please specify: N/A.
 Unknown.

VII. Miscellaneous

20 Do you have any suggestions that could assist in the promotion, implementation, and / or operation of the e-APP?

- No.
 Yes - please specify: *[We would like to integrate artificial intelligence into the Apostille program.]*

21 Are there any specific topics or practical issues related to the e-APP that your State would like have discussed at the 14th International Forum on the e-APP?

- No.
 Yes - please specify: N/A

22 Please confirm whether your responses to this questionnaire can be published on the HCCH website.

- No.
 Yes - please specify whether certain questions should not be published: N/A

VIII. Additional information & supporting documents

23 Please indicate any additional information or documentation to support your response. This may include resources for the general public or guidelines for Competent Authority staff, as well as any recent judicial decisions, legislative developments, books, articles, or published works relevant to the operation of the 1961 Apostille Convention.

N/A

Please attach any relevant documents when submitting the questionnaire to secretariat@hcch.net.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.