



Photo: Coconuts Yangon

A JOURNEY OF A THOUSAND MILES BEGINS WITH A SINGLE STEP...

A practical step plan for expatriate's return and travel to Myanmar in the current conditions

Clients have been often raising queries relating to the process and actions required to arrange for a travel to Myanmar by an expatriate employee. There are many cases when people have been outside of Myanmar since the beginning of 2020. For many, their previously issued Myanmar visas are about to expire. Although modern technology allows to remain virtually connected with your team, for many industries it is still very important to remain in the same time zone and location with your other team members.

Summary and sequence of the steps involved

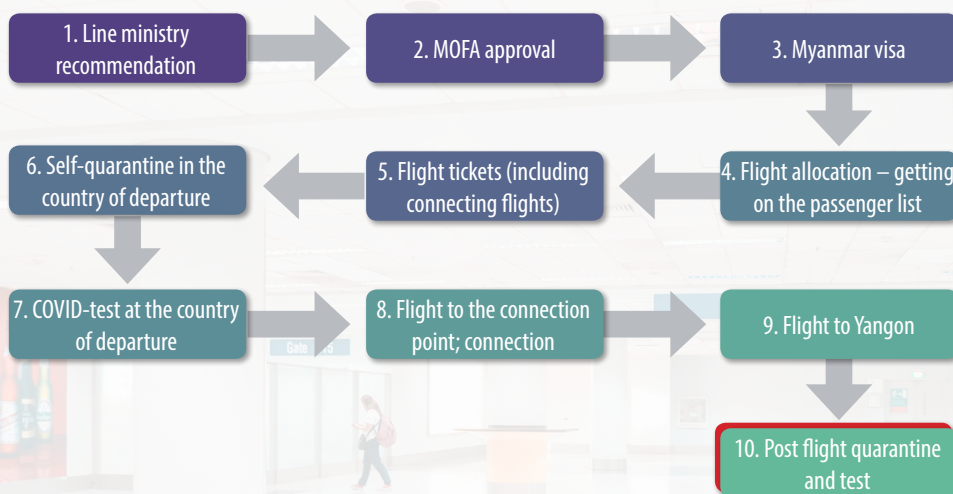
1. Line ministry recommendation
2. MOFA approval
3. Myanmar visa
4. Flight allocation – getting on the passenger list
5. Flight tickets (including connecting flights)
6. Self-quarantine in the country of departure
7. COVID-test at the country of departure
8. Flight to the connection point; connection
9. Flight to Yangon
10. Post flight quarantine and test

Implementing the process and practical observations

Steps 1 and 2

At the moment, while only individually approved flights are allowed to travel to Myanmar, a foreigner would be allowed to use one of them after a special approval from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) of Myanmar is obtained.

In practice, in order for MOFA to grant such an approval, the organization that employs the returning foreigner should first seek to obtain a recommendation letter from a line agency. Which agency would be appropriate for that, depends on the industry of the



company and the type of business in which it is involved. There is no precise form of the application, but it is generally expected to describe the reasons which necessitate the travel to Myanmar of a particular person.

As far as we can observe, obtaining these 2 approvals is critical. Until these authorizations are obtained, it seems impractical to undertake any other parts of the process.

Step 3

Once approvals from Myanmar ministries are obtained, the returnee would need to contact the Myanmar embassy in the country of his/her current location (or the nearest Myanmar embassy if there is no Myanmar representation in the current country).

If the current Myanmar visa has expired, or there is no Myanmar entry visa, it should be obtained/renewed at the Myanmar embassy.

Step 4

The next or parallel step is to decide which flight can be used. This again depends on the current location. The schedule of approved relief flights is subject to ongoing changes and updates, often on monthly basis. Usually, the information on what could be the next available flights with available seats could be obtained from the Myanmar embassy with which you are liaising for the purposes of the visa.

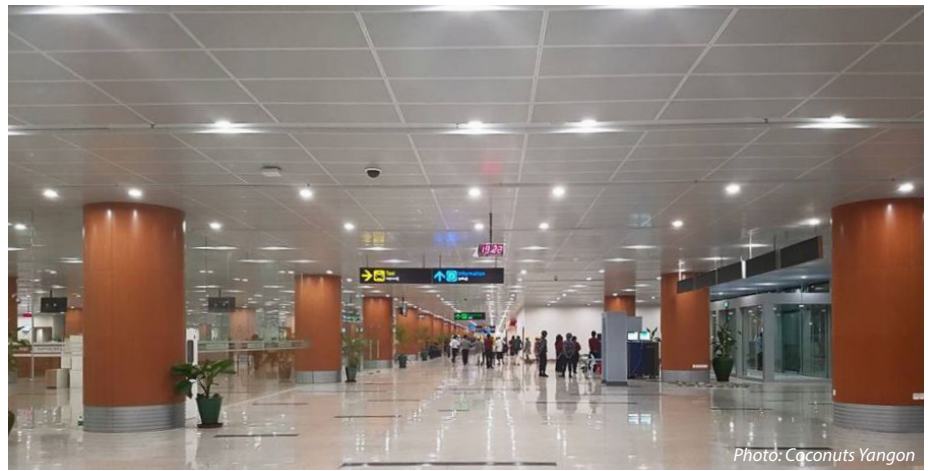


Photo: Caconuts Yangon

Step 5

Once the embassy has confirmed that you have been approved for a particular flight, you can proceed to purchasing the tickets. The process would depend on the particular airline which you may need to consult with, to confirm details of purchase and payment.

If you are connecting, you accordingly would need to arrange for your tickets for your connecting flights too.

Step 6

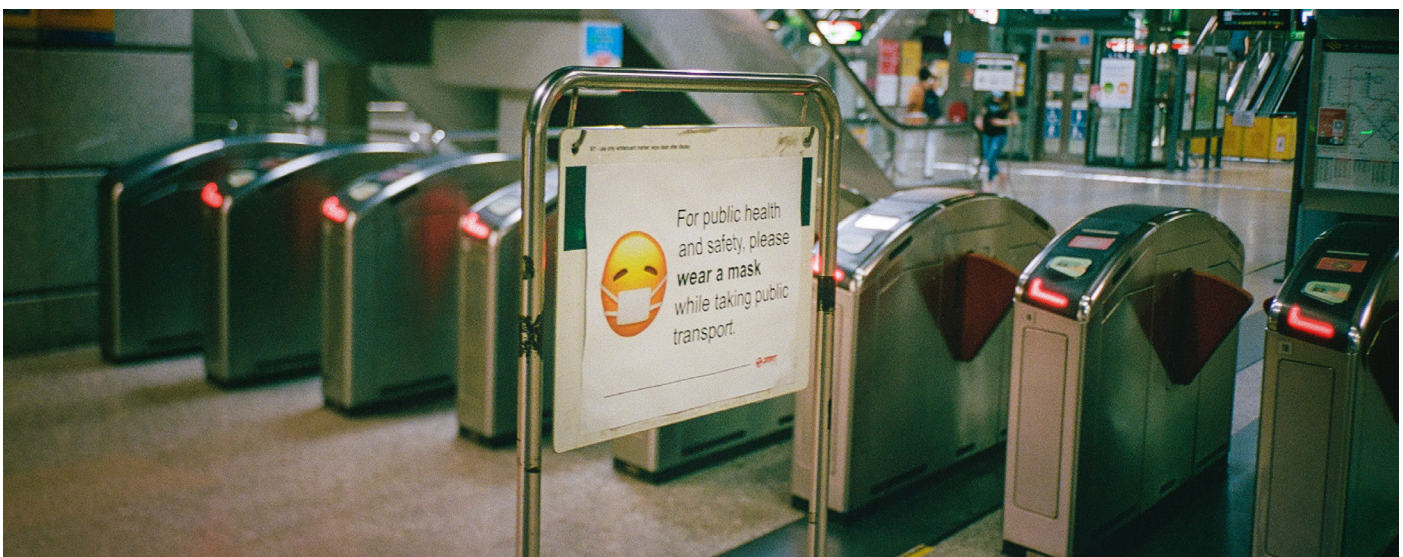
You will most likely be required to ensure that you have remained in a 7-day home quarantine before departing from your current location. There seems to be no unified form of confirmation in this respect, and based on what has been reported, different travelers produce different types of confirmations depending on what can be available in the relevant country (e.g. certification by a doctor, police officer or a notary).

Step 7

A negative COVID test issued not more than 72-hour prior to departure is required. This is becoming quite challenging to obtain in different countries, in particular where the volume of required testing is substantial. In most cases the laboratory can only guarantee providing results to you within 72-hour from collection of samples, meaning that there is a risk that the test would not be ready by the moment of your departure.

Steps 8 and 9

With all the paperwork, you will be boarding the flight to Myanmar (or to a connecting flight first). As a practical matter please pay particular attention to the travel requirements in your current/transit country. Lockdown and transiting restrictions are being put in place quite frequently. Please also review the requirements applicable to the visas and length of permitted



transfer time at the connecting airport if you need to use it.

Step 10

Once you arrive to Yangon, you will need to be prepared to see the airport looking differently than usual, with additional checking stations by health authorities. However, the document processing and baggage collection routines at the airport are efficiently organised and do not take long time. There is a requirement for post-arrival quarantine (hotel and home) and additional testing. The list of hotel(s) that would be designated as accepting the arriving passengers would usually change day-by-day. Once your arrival date is confirmed, you would be able to identify which hotel(s) can be expected to accommodate you. Testing would typically happen a few days after your arrival, and might be at your quarantine hotel, or at a different location.

Practical observations

The process is obviously not straightforward and usually takes considerable time. Thus, once you are certain about the need to travel, it is better to start implementing as soon as possible. You will have to liaise a lot with the Myanmar embassies, and your company-employer would be dealing with relevant ministries in Myanmar.

You also need to be prepared to incur

considerable costs – including for testing, flight tickets (many flights are specially chartered flights these days, and the ticket price is substantially higher than usual), quarantine hotel accommodation and meals and additional testing on arrival.

VDB Loi can provide legal support to you and your employer, in particular on the aspects that require application to Myanmar authorities for approvals. Please do not hesitate to [contact us](#), if you require assistance.

Reservation: the above sets out the steps that, based on practical experience, had to be taken by returnees to Myanmar. It shall not be regarded as legal advice and is not intended to be a citation or interpretation of any existing laws and regulations (which are subject to rapid change and updates from time to time). In addition, some business chambers and foreign embassies in Myanmar from time to time arrange for special relief flights – in which case, the steps involved to travel by them may be different and would typically be described by the organizer.

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