Bangkok Global Law
540, Unit 1705, 17th Floor, Mercury Tower,Ploenchit Road,
Lumpini, Pathumwan, Bangkok 10330 Thailand
Tel: +(66) 2 2525895-6 Fax: +(66) 2 2525897
Website: www.bgloballaw.com
E-mail: info@bgloballaw.com

Foreign Investment Applications in Thailand surge 37% in the first half of 2025

Thailand has witnessed a significant increase in foreign investment during the first half of 2025, with applications under the Foreign Business Act B.E. 2542 ("FBA") rising sharply. 502 foreign investors sought approval to operate businesses in Thailand, representing a 30% increase year-on-year. The total investment value amounted to 111 billion baht, marking a 37% rise compared to the same period in 2024.

Foreign businesses applied through two principal channels:

- **Foreign Business Licences (FBLs)**: 123 applications; and
- **Foreign Business Certificates (FBCs)**: 379 applications, granted under investment promotion laws, Industrial Estate Authority of Thailand regulations, or international treaties.

Approval figures increased by 117 cases year-on-year, with total investment value expanding by 30 billion baht. The top five investor nations were Japan (43 billion baht), the United States (2.79 billion), China (18.3 billion), Singapore (17.4 billion), and Hong Kong (8.31 billion).

The Eastern Economic Corridor ("EEC") continued to attract strong interest, recording 158 investment cases worth 62.9 billion baht—accounting for 31% of applications and 56% of total investment value nationwide. Leading EEC investors included Japan, China, and Singapore, with key sectors being retail, R&D services for engineering plastics, data centers, digital platforms, and contract manufacturing.

The government emphasized its commitment to supporting foreign investment, noting ongoing global trade uncertainties, including US reciprocal tariffs and regional border tensions. Thailand will continue to enhance investment incentives and provide regulatory facilitation to maintain investor confidence.

The FBA serves as the principal legislation governing foreign investment in Thai businesses, classifying restricted activities into three lists:

- **List 1**: Activities strictly prohibited to foreigners (e.g., mass media, agriculture).
- **List 2**: Sensitive sectors affecting national security, culture, and environment, requiring Cabinet approval (e.g., weapons manufacturing, domestic water transport).
- **List 3**: Sectors where Thais are not yet ready to compete, requiring approval from the Director-General of the Department of Business Development and the Foreign Business Committee (e.g., retail, wholesale, advertising, construction, hotels).

The surge in applications underscores Thailand's continued attractiveness as an investment destination, particularly in high-value and technology-driven sectors, while reinforcing the role of the FBA in balancing foreign participation with domestic economic interests.

Should you have any question, please do not hesitate to contact us via info@bgloballaw.com