How to Start a Company in Kazakhstan

How long does it take to start a company in Kazakhstan? Registration itself is quick; the real work is choosing the right structure, preparing documents from abroad and making the company able to operate — tax, bank and people. This guide walks through each step and the decisions that are hard to undo.

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Key points

- Decide what the entity must do — sell, employ, hold land or licences, or only represent the parent — before choosing its legal form.
- A single-founder LLP can be registered online in up to one working day; foreign documents and the bank account take most of the time.
- Foreign founders need a document confirming their right to be registered under the migration rules, such as a business visa or residence permit.
- No one can legitimately guarantee a bank account, a licence or an incentive.

Step 1 — Decide what the company must do

Start with the business, not the form. A representative office represents and protects the parent's interests but is not meant for commercial activity. A branch can carry on the parent's business, but it is not a separate legal entity, so the parent answers for its obligations. A limited liability partnership (LLP, TOO) is a separate legal entity and the usual choice for trading, manufacturing and hiring.

If the company may later apply to a special economic zone, note that an SEZ participant must be a legal entity — a branch does not qualify. Our guide LLP vs Branch vs Representative Office compares the options side by side.

Step 2 — Prepare the documents from abroad

Documents issued outside Kazakhstan must be legalised or apostilled and translated, with the translation notarised. This is usually the slowest part of the process, so start it as soon as the structure is agreed.

- Extract from the parent company's trade register
- Parent company charter and decision to establish the entity
- Passport copies of founders and the director
- Power of attorney for the head of a branch or representative office
- Ownership structure up to the ultimate beneficial owners

- Document confirming the foreign founder's right to be registered under the migration rules, such as a business visa or residence permit

Step 3 — Register the entity

An LLP goes through state registration; a branch or representative office goes through accounting registration with the justice authorities. A single-founder LLP can be registered online in up to one working day; applications filed through a public service centre take up to five days.

For small businesses the minimum charter capital of an LLP can be zero. Medium and large businesses need at least 100 monthly calculation indices (MRP); the MRP is set every year by the budget law.

Step 4 — Make the company able to operate

A registered company is not yet a working one. Before the first contract it needs an electronic digital signature, a legal address, an accounting and reporting set-up and an assessment of whether it must register for VAT.

- Electronic digital signature for the company and its director
- Legal address in Kazakhstan
- Accountant or outsourced accounting, tax reporting calendar
- VAT registration assessment
- Internal documents: director's powers, signing rules

Step 5 — Open a bank account

The decision belongs to the bank's compliance department, and complex or multi-level ownership takes longer to review. Prepare the KYC package early: ownership chart, source of funds, business description and expected transactions. Choose a bank whose risk appetite fits your profile rather than applying everywhere at once.

Step 6 — Licences and people

Regulated activities need licences or permits before they start, and each is a separate procedure. Local employees need written employment contracts under Kazakhstan labour law. Foreign specialists generally need work permits, and the timeline depends on the permit category — build that lead time into the hiring plan.

Common mistakes

- Opening a representative office and then using it to sell — this can create a taxable permanent establishment.
- Registering first and thinking about SEZ or land rules later.
- Starting foreign document legalisation after the registration date is set.
- Relying on anyone who promises a guaranteed bank account.
- Buying a business with land without checking the land rules for companies with foreign participation.

Considering Kazakhstan?

Tell us what you want to build. We will tell you what it actually takes — the steps, the risks, and the realistic timeline — before you commit capital.

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