

Land and Real Estate Ownership Laws

Overview	The ownership of land by foreigners is governed by three laws: Law No. 15 of 1963, Law No. 143 of 1981, and Law No. 230 of 1996.
Law No. 15 of 1963	Law No. 15 stipulates that no foreigners, whether natural or juristic persons, may acquire agricultural land.
Law No. 143 of 1981	<p>Law No. 143 governs the acquisition and ownership of desert land. Certain limits are placed on the number of feddans (one feddan is equal to approximately one hectare) that may be owned by individuals, families, co-operatives, partnerships and corporations. Partnerships are permitted to own 10,000 feddans. Joint stock companies are permitted to own 50,000 feddans.</p> <p>Partnerships and joint stock companies may own desert land within these limits, even if foreign partners or shareholders are involved, provided that at least 51 per cent of the capital is owned by Egyptians. Upon liquidation of the company, however, the land must revert to Egyptian ownership. Article 1 of Law No. 143 defines desert land as the land lying two kilometers outside the borders of the city.</p> <p>Furthermore, the lease of desert land for more than 50 years is also considered to be ownership under Law No. 143. Although companies formed under the Investment Law No. 8 of 1997 do not require Egyptian participation, companies that undertake projects over desert land must be owned in their majority by Egyptians. (The President of the Republic may decide to treat Arab nationals as Egyptian nationals for purposes of this law).</p>
Law No. 230 of 1996	<p>On July 14, 1996 Law No. 230 superseded Law No. 56 of 1988. The new law allows non-Egyptians to own real estate (vacant or built) under the following conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Ownership is limited to two real estate properties in Egypt that serve as accommodation for the owner and his family (spouses and minors) in addition to the right to own real estate needed for activities licensed by the Egyptian Government.▪ The area of each real estate property does not exceed 4,000 m².▪ The real estate is not considered a historical site. <p>Exemption from first and second conditions is subject to the approval of the Prime Minister. Ownership in tourist areas and new communities is subject to conditions established by the Cabinet of Ministers.</p>

Furthermore, non-Egyptians owning vacant real estate in Egypt must build within a period of five years from the date their ownership is registered by a notary public. Non-Egyptians may only sell their real estate five years after registration of ownership, unless the consent of the Prime Minister for an exemption is obtained.