

Growing wealth brings challenges and opportunities in Vietnam

Sylvie Ma, Managing Partner, Henley & Partners, talks to Hubbis about the wealth and citizenship planning opportunities in Vietnam.

RISING WEALTH IN VIETNAM WILL EVENTUALLY CREATE exciting opportunities in wealth management, according to Ma, even though the industry is in its infancy right now.

“There’s more wealth in Vietnam, and wealthy individuals will need more solutions, like financial planning,

wealth planning, and even like how to create trusts,” she says. “They are now accumulating wealth, and they, I think, will eventually move to wealth management.”

She says that Vietnam is an emerging country, an emerging economy with an emerging currency, and a population that is young and growing, which is driving the economy forward. “The average... 50% of the population is aged between 24 and 50 years old.”

According to Ma, Vietnam’s wealthy are not using wealth management at this point. “Same for citizenship planning,” she explains. “That’s a thing that they don’t think about it at this point of time, but with the trends and the growth in Vietnam, I believe that more and more will want or be able to apply for citizenship investment.”

Citizenship planning, when it picks up among Vietnam’s wealthy, would probably be for security reasons, as they will like to secure their money outside of Vietnam.

She additionally points out that the Vietnam passport ranks only 88th on the Henley Partner Index.

“I believe the wealthy individual should have a second passport,” she says. “Like Jim Rogers says, ‘It’s a must to have a second house, but if you can, have a second passport,’ because the world will encounter a lot of problems; it’s like insurance.”

She points out that in 2017, Vietnam was only behind China in the number of applicants to the US EB5 Visa program (that allows immigrant investors to become permanent US residents), and more and more Vietnamese are also looking at Canada and Australia. Ma notes that currently, the law does not make it easy for a Vietnamese individual to invest abroad. “You need to get the license,” she says. “They call it an investment abroad license; it’s complicated, for sure, but it’s allowed.” ■



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