

International expansion – legal checklist for fast-growth companies

Planning your next move abroad? Here's what to have on your radar

1. Market entry structuring

- Have you selected the right legal structure? (e.g. subsidiary vs branch vs JV vs licensing)
- Have you assessed local tax and repatriation rules?
- Do you understand local incorporation and compliance obligations?

2. Regulatory and licensing

- Does your product/service trigger any local regulatory regimes? (e.g. financial services, health, education, data).
- Do you need any permits, certifications, or regulatory filings before launch?
- Are there any restrictions on foreign ownership or directors?

3. Commercial contracts & local law

- Have your standard contracts (e.g. customer, supplier, distribution) been reviewed for enforceability under local law?
- Are you clear on mandatory local consumer protection, limitation of liability, and unfair terms rules?

4. People & employment

- Have you taken advice on local employment laws (e.g. mandatory benefits, probation periods, termination)?
- Are your employment contracts and handbooks locally compliant?
- Do you need to register as an employer or set up a local payroll/tax presence?

5. IP Protection & brand

- Have you secured trademark registrations in the new territory?
- Do your NDAs, IP assignments and licensing agreements cover local law and courts?
- Are you clear on any country-specific IP risks (e.g. employee-created IP or first-to-file regimes)?

6. Data, cybersecurity & tech

- Does the new country have specific data protection laws (e.g. GDPR-equivalents)?
- Do your privacy policies and practices need local tailoring?
- Are cross-border data transfers lawful under local rules?

7. Tax, transfer pricing & incentives

- Have you reviewed corporate tax rates, VAT/sales taxes and employee tax exposures?
- Is your intercompany pricing policy transfer pricing compliant?
- Are there any government grants or incentives available?

8. Local partner or investor involvement

- Are you planning to take on a local JV partner or investor?
- Is there a need for reserved matters, board seats, or specific exit mechanics?

Final thoughts

International growth can unlock new customers, capital, and talent – but success depends on getting the right legal setup from the start. Take the time to assess the regulatory, tax, and employment landscape before you commit

Let's talk

Whether it's setting up a US Delaware entity, registering your brand in APAC, or navigating employment law in Europe, our team supports high-growth companies and their investors with international expansion.

We can coordinate local counsel, review your cross-border structures, and futureproof your contracts, IP and compliance – leaving you to focus on scaling.

Ashfords – Venture & Growth Capital Team

Pragmatic legal advice for ambitious founders



Sam Brown

s.brown@ashfords.co.uk

T +44 (0)20 7544 2402



Chris Dyson

c.dyson@ashfords.co.uk

T +44 (0)117 321 8054



Rory Suggett

r.suggett@ashfords.co.uk

T +44 (0)117 321 8067

Our insights in this document are intended to be for general information purposes only, may not cover every aspect of the topic with which it deals, and should not be relied on as legal advice or as an alternative to taking legal advice. English law is subject to change and the insights shared may not reflect the latest legal developments. You should always seek appropriate legal advice before taking, or refraining from taking, any action based on the information contained in this document. Ashfords disclaims all liability for any loss, howsoever caused, arising directly or indirectly from reliance on the information contained within this document.

Ashfords LLP is a limited liability partnership, registered in England and Wales with number OC342432, and its registered office is at Ashford House, Grenadier Road, Exeter, EX1 3LH. The firm's VAT number is GB 844 5024 39. Ashfords LLP is authorised and regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority with number 508761. A list of members of Ashfords LLP, and their professional qualifications, is available at the registered office. The term partner is used to refer to a member of Ashfords LLP or an employee of equivalent standing.

A copy of the Solicitors Regulation Authority's Standards and Regulations 2019 can be found at www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/standards-regulations.

Sign up to our newsletter **Venture** to receive more insights for growing businesses

Find further useful resources on the **Ashfords' Business Scaleup Hub**

 Follow us on **LinkedIn**