

Nigeria reviews immigration procedures



For a deeper discussion, please contact any member of our Dispute Resolution team below or your usual contact with PwC Nigeria:

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Background

As part of Nigeria's drive to improve the ease of doing business, the Nigeria immigration service (NIS) has announced changes to the scope of activities that can be carried out on a business visa.

The NIS has also shortened the approval period for visa on arrival, opened new production centres for residence permits and decentralised the reissuance of missing passports or those requiring biodata changes.

Business Visa

Before the new changes announced by the Minister of Information on 26 February 2017,

business visas were limited to business meetings. Under the new visa regime, foreigners can now obtain business visas where a temporary work permit was previously required. These include visits for conferences, seminars, contract negotiation, marketing, sales, purchase, distribution of goods, trade fairs, job interviews, training of Nigerians, emergency or relief work and research. Also crew members, staff of non-governmental organisations and musical concert performers can now apply for business visas.

Procedure for obtaining Business visas

Applicants are to apply for the visas in their country of origin or legal residence. Each High Commission may have different requirements.

Visa on Arrival (VoA)

The VoA facility is available to business visitors who may not be able to obtain visas at the Nigerian Missions/Embassies in their countries of residence either due to the absence of a Nigerian mission in those countries or exigencies of urgent business travels. It is issued for a month but can be extended to 90 days.

Procedure for obtaining Visa on Arrival

Step 1

A representative in Nigeria must apply for a VoA approval. The application must contain information such as the visitor's name, passport number,

nationality, purpose of visit, date of entry etc.

The approval is issued within 48 hours and valid for 14 days after issuance.

Step 2

Applicants are to log on to <https://portal.immigration.gov.ng> to fill the necessary information and pay the VoA fee. At the port of entry, visitors are to present the approval letter and evidence of payment. An entry visa will be issued subsequently.

Decentralisation of NIS

The NIS has decentralised the re-issuance of passports from its headquarters to the state commands. Previously, Nigerians who needed to make changes to their passport details due to marriage or those who lost their passports had to apply at the headquarters in Abuja.

New Production Centres

The NIS has opened 28 new residence permit production centres across state commands. Previously, three state commands could share a zonal production centre often causing delays and backlogs.

Takeaway

The new changes are expected to make it easier for foreigners to visit Nigeria for business, tourism or other purposes.

It is important to note that expatriates who are on business visa may be exposed to personal income tax if they derive income from Nigeria.