

Nigeria: New Visa Policy 2020 takes effect from October 2020

October 26, 2020

In brief

The Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) launched the Nigeria Visa Policy 2020 (the NVP 2020) on February 4, 2020. This was created as part of the continuous effort of the Federal Government to support the country's Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) by ensuring that local visa policies reflect global best practices.

The NVP 2020 seeks to improve the ease of doing business, attract foreign direct investment, tourists, and individuals with specialized skills without compromising national security.

In detail

Key highlights of the NVP 2020

- **New visa classes** – The NVP 2020 expands the previous six classes of visas to 79 classes. Each visa class is intended to cover every conceivable travel purpose. Nigerians who were born abroad with dual citizenship or who renounced Nigerian Citizenship also have special visa classes. Each visa will have a unique code for ease of identification and processing.
- **Visa on Arrival** – The Visa on Arrival is available for short visits to passport holders of African Union member states.
- **Visa application process** – It reviews the visa application process to include embassies, application centers, Visa on Arrival, e-Visas, and the automation of Temporary Work Permit (TWP) application.

The effective date of the NVP 2020 was not announced at the time it was launched. The Comptroller General of Immigration has now published an effective date.

Effective date

Though introduced earlier in the year, the NVP 2020 comes into effect at all ports of entry and Nigerian Missions from October 1, 2020.

New visa classes

There are four visa exemption classes:

1. Citizens of any Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS);

2. Visa abolishment agreement countries;
3. International organisations; and
4. Reciprocity visa waiver agreement countries.

There are 75 new visa mandatory classes (previously six) broadly in three groups as follows:

- **Short Visit Visas** (24 classes) – Allows people visit for no more than three months on tourism, business travel, seminars, etc.
- **Temporary Residence Visas** (36 classes) – Allows individuals to reside in Nigeria for a period not exceeding two years on employment, also for students, interns, etc.
- **Permanent Residence Visas** (15 classes) – Caters to long-term stay by retirees, investors, highly skilled immigrants and their spouses. Permits for principal applicants ranging from five years to an indefinite period.

The purpose of the expansion is to ensure specific visa needs are met by the applicable visa class. Where visitors to Nigeria were generally categorized as business, work, tourist, or transit persons, the NVP 2020 has created visa classes to suit the varied status of visitors.

As an example, Nigeria did not have a specific visa class for missionaries or students. These intending visitors had to apply for the Subject to Regularisation (STR) visa under the old regime.

Transition period

The NIS is yet to confirm how these changes affect existing visa holders. It is expected that visitors with valid visas and resident expatriates who have regularized STR visas will continue to use them. However, all new applicants will have to apply for the new visas as applicable.

New visa fees

In a press release issued on September 30, 2020, the Comptroller General of immigration encouraged concerned stakeholders to visit the official website of the NIS for more details. The new visa fees can be accessed using [this link](#).

The takeaway

The implementation of the NVP 2020 is a welcome development as interested individuals and stakeholders have anticipated the change since the initial announcement was made in February 2020. We expect the new classes would enable effective monitoring of visitors, data analysis by the Government to enhance security, and potentially ease travel ambitions of investors to promote national growth.

Intending visitors and current residents will need to familiarize themselves with the new categories and fees to ensure accurate applications and avoid penalties or discomfiting travel situations.

Let's talk

For a deeper discussion of how this impacts your business, please contact your Global Mobility Services engagement team or one of the following professionals:

Global Mobility Services – People and Organization – Nigeria

Esiri Agbeyi, *Partner*
Emuesiri.agbeyi@pwc.com

Seun Oyetunmbi, *Manager*
Seun.oyetunmbi@pwc.com

Ilebeye Achor, *Senior Associate*
ilebeye.achor@pwc.com

Global Mobility Services – United States

John Shea, *US Leader*
john.w.shea@pwc.com

Global Mobility Services – Global

Leo Palazzuoli, *Global Leader*
leo.palazzuoli@pwc.com

Meet the [Global Mobility Services global leadership team](#)

© 2020 PwC. All rights reserved. PwC refers to the PwC network and/or one or more of its member firms, each of which is a separate legal entity. Please see www.pwc.com/structure for further details.

This content is for general information purposes only, and should not be used as a substitute for consultation with professional advisors.

At PwC, our purpose is to build trust in society and solve important problems. We're a network of firms in 158 countries with over 250,000 people who are committed to delivering quality in assurance, advisory and tax services. Find out more and tell us what matters to you by visiting us at www.pwc.com.