

Saudi Arabia: Suspension of the National Labour Gateway 'Taqat' for block visa applications

November 2018

In brief

Companies in Saudi Arabia are no longer required to advertise their potential job vacancies on the Taqat portal as a part of the recruitment process, prior to hiring an expatriate and application for block visas/employee quota. This change represents a significant boost for employers operating in the private sector and will be perceived by companies as a welcome relaxation to the general recruitment process and timelines.

In detail

The Ministry of Labour in Saudi Arabia ("MoL") in their recent public announcement confirmed that companies operating in Saudi Arabia's private sector are now exempt from the requirement of conducting local labour market testing and advertising for job vacancies on the 'Taqat' portal, prior to hiring a foreign national and making an application for a block visa/employee quota.

Prior to this directive, as a prequisite to the block visa application, companies were required to post their job vacancies onto the 'Taqat' portal for a specific amount of time which was dependent upon their Nitaqat status (7 days for platinum category, 14 days for high green category and 45 days for medium and low green category). This process added an additional administrative layer to the overall recruitment process which companies had to ensure they factored in.

The takeaway

This change represents a significant respite to companies seeking to hire foreign nationals as this will significantly decrease the timelines for processing of the work/residence permits (Iqamas) for new hires to be work ready in Saudi Arabia.

Let's talk

PwC Middle East Tax and Legal contacts

Mark Schofield, *Dubai*
Middle East Tax and Legal Services Leader
T: +971 (0)4 304 7250
E: mark.d.schofield@pwc.com

Darren Harris, *Dubai*
Middle East Legal Services Leader
T: +971 (0)4 304 3309
E: darren.harris@pwc.com

Anir Chatterji, *Dubai*
Director - Middle East Immigration & Employment Leader
T: +971 (0)4 304 3922
E: anir.chatterji@pwc.com