

# Navigating the evolving landscape of immigration: Saudi Arabia

## Key Takeaways



**Webinar**



**27 March 2024**



**12:30pm-1:30pm GST**



# Key Takeaways

## 1. Consequences of Non-Compliant Visas in Saudi Arabia:

- Non-compliant visas can result in severe legal penalties, including fines, deportation, or even imprisonment. It's crucial to ensure visa compliance to avoid such consequences.
- Employers also face penalties for hiring individuals with improper visas. This includes fines and potential bans on hiring in the future.
- Individuals with non-compliant visas may lose their rights to work, reside, or travel within Saudi Arabia. This can greatly impact their personal and professional life.
- Saudi is a key market for you, do you really want to lose it for trying to cut corners for cost and ease? Don't risk it, ensure compliance with the correct procedures.

## 2. HR Planning is important:

- If you are expanding your business into the region, HR is a crucial part of the process to oversee various aspects such as visas, training programs, and adherence to Saudisation policies.
- An integral component of HR planning involves implementing robust strategies for visa compliance, ensuring that all employees possess the appropriate visas for their roles.
- HR Planning should encompass timely visa renewals to prevent lapses in compliance and avoid legal issues.
- HR departments should conduct training sessions to educate employees on visa regulations, emphasising the importance of compliance.

## 3. Find a Partner on the Ground in Saudi Arabia:

- Whether you are going there for the first time, or have been there many times, use external partners and let them help you. You don't have to do it alone.
- Ask for help, people like us are here to help you.
- Partnering with a local organisation or consultant in Saudi Arabia provides invaluable local expertise on visa regulations and processes.
- Having a local partner enables quick access to updated information, ensuring timely and accurate responses to visa-related queries.
- A local partner can also help navigate cultural nuances, which can be important when dealing with government agencies and officials in Saudi Arabia.

# FAQ's

Question	Answer
I need to understand the consequences of using a business visa for productive work in Saudi Arabia.	A business visa does not permit 'hands on work'. If you need to conduct work for a short period of time, a temporary work visa would be required, which is valid for 3 months and can be extended for a further 3 months. Penalty/fines/block on company to issue visas could be imposed for breach.
<p>What is driving the boom in Saudi Arabia?            How is the country making itself more attractive for relocating employees / families?            What do you expect are the next steps of this country transformation?</p>	Saudi Arabia's 2030 vision aimed at diversifying the economy away from oil dependency, has spurred significant investment in various sectors such as tourism, entertainment, technology, and renewable energy with large scale infrastructure projects including new cities, transportation networks and industrial zones driving economic growth and attracting both domestic and foreign investment. There is a young population in Saudi Arabia driving demand for goods and services, which is driving consumption and economic activity.
How do your clients move funds from Saudi Arabia to other countries for export and import purposes? Do they face difficulty?	Please speak with your bank in relation to this query.
I want to know the intricacies of Saudi Arabia's Immigration policies and procedures.	In short summary, to live and work in Saudi Arabia you must have a work permit and residence visa by way of corporate sponsorship. Expats already working in the country will complete a visa / Iqama transfer whereas expats hired from outside the country will need to attend to the home country preapprovals. The Pre-approvals must be done in the home country or country of residence. Each country has their own requirements. The company will need a quota and to meet saudisation requirements in order to hire an expat from inside or outside the country. The residence and work permit will be issued for one year but is renewable.
I have a JAFZA offshore co. under EER. I am planning to register this company as a foreign company in KSA. They request a financial statement of the company. My question is, "is there a minimal financial standing for acceptance? what is it?"	You need to be in business for at least one year and be profitable to be able to set up your company in Saudi Arabia.
Please can you give some info re exit visas? How do they work? Are they required each time an employee or family member leaves KSA even for a few days?	Once you have a residency you need to obtain an exit/re-entry visa to be able to leave Saudi Arabia. This is issued by the sponsor through Muqem and can be valid for 3, 6, 11 months.
Is it possible to switch from a temporary work visa to a residence visa without leaving the country?	No.

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Is it correct that your first hire must be a Saudi national?	Yes. After the GM has been appointed the first hire must be a Saudi national.
Those people who use a tourist visa, do they get turned away on arrival? What is the re-course with boarder control?	Yes, they could. They could face fines, deportation and a ban from returning to the country.
Can I use a tourist visa? And can I apply myself or do I need an agent?	The answer to this question is dependent on the purpose of use for the tourist visa, if you are only visiting the country for tourism then yes, a tourist visa cannot be used to attend to business meetings or work locally. You can apply online yourself, no need for an agent.
I am a business consultant going to Riyadh for client meetings for 1 day and I would like to spend an extra day working from my company's office and getting to know my colleagues. Can I use a tourist visa?	First, if you are going for client meetings, you need a business visa. You can certainly go to the office to meet with your colleagues, but you should not undertake any 'hands on' work whilst there.
Is a valid UAE driving license is acceptable for a resident of KSA with iqama?	No, you need to have a Saudi driving licence if you are resident there.
I own a consultancy firm in Dubai and plan to expand in KSA by hiring just one British consultant who is currently based there on their spouse's visa. Do I still need to hire a Saudi national as well?	Yes, your first hire will have to be a Saudi national. Once the Saudi national has been hired, you will then be able to get a quota to hire an expat. Keep in mind that the expat cannot work on the dependent visa, he will need to convert to a work visa.
Are you seeing the premium residency iqama becoming increasingly popular? Are you seeing the employer or employee cover the costs?	The premium residency iqama is not yet popular. It will depend on the company policy if they want to cover the cost or not.
We would like to offer our employees and families the opportunity to go on a 3 day orientation/preview trip before commencing work in Saudi. Can this be done on a tourist/evisa? Can they apply for the evisa while the documentation is being gathered for their Iqama?	Yes, they can enter on a tourist/e-visa.
Who is in charge for providing the medical insurance?	The employer is responsible for providing medical insurance for the employee and their dependents.
We had a case where the dependent visa from the UK was approved electronically, and no stamping was necessary - is this something that is going to be applied to all visa types and other countries?	Things are changing constantly so this may happen in future for other countries as well.
Is it possible to switch from a temporary work visa to a residence visa without leaving the country?	No.
From entering the country on a residence visa to the point when the employee can leave again (i.e. for a business travel) how long does it take? Do all in country processes need to be completed before the employee can travel out of the country for the first time?	It takes an average of 2 weeks assuming no issues with documents or systems. Once the work permit and Iqama are issued, the employee will need to get the exit/re-entry visa issued and will then be able to travel.

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Will certified documents by the UAE authorities, like a university degree, help at any stage?	Documents need to be attested as per local country rules and at the Saudi Arabia embassy and then MOFA in Saudi Arabia.  KSA has joined the Hague convention and therefore, apostilled documents from other member states are accepted and do not require the full attestation process. The UAE is currently not a member.
Is it true that the GM has all the power in the company as they are the ones who make all decisions and are the point of contact?	The GM is responsible for the company and is the authorised signatory and makes decisions on behalf of the company. They are the point of contact when the company is first established, and the GM uses their mobile number and email for all set up and portal registrations.
Is Saudisation quota calculated by department or in general? Meaning, in marketing, for example we have 10% Saudi nationals and in HR - 100% - is it OK?	Quotas are calculated based on the number of employees, activity of the company and industry. Algorithms calculate the quotas and a company's performance in terms of Saudisation can be obtained on the QIWA portal. Also, certain jobs are designated for Saudi nationals only so you will need to comply.
What are the benefits of the premium residency visa?	As we understand it at this early stage, the premium residency treats the individual like a Saudi citizen.
What is the scope of service you can provide for an in-country IQAMA process/exit-entry visa process?	We can provide the full service. We will need access to the company portals so that we can submit applications and issue documents.
Are there any restrictions or watch outs when employing in Saudi Arabia without a company legal entity registered in Saudi Arabia? If the legal entity is in another country. What do I need to do?	You must have a Saudi registered company to be able to hire in KSA. If you don't, then you can use a manpower of EOR (Employer of record).
I currently have an employee from our UAE office, working in Saudi on a business visa for the last 12 months. What do I need to do to provide a work and residency visa in KSA?	Firstly, you will need to setup a local entity or make use of an employer of record / Manpower company to sponsor the work visa. The employee will then need to exit the country, cancel the business visa and then apply from their home country/country of residence for a work and resident visa. Once the work visa has been issued and stamped by the embassy/consulate the employee can then enter Saudi Arabia and complete the post-arrivals matters.
Can I hire an expat that is already inside KSA and working for another company?	Yes. They can do a transfer of sponsorship from one employer to another employer, provided the current employer agrees.
How long does it take to get an engineering certificate?	The professional certificates takes approximately 5 working days for applicants already holding a work visa / Iqama. 15-20 working days for individuals who do not have a work visa.

# Who We Are



EER Middle East is the region's leading expert in corporate services, immigration and relocation.

Locally, regionally and internationally, EER Middle East has an unrivalled reputation for providing exceptional performance and comprehensive, tailored service to aid a range of clients interested in the dynamic markets of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Owned and operated by visionary female leaders, the company has been facilitating global mobility and business solutions since 2005.



# Thank You



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