

Immigration Alert

Nigeria Immigration Service announces introduction of e-visa application system and automated landing and exit cards

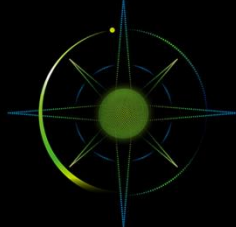


Introduction

The Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) has announced the introduction of an electronic visa (e-visa) application system and roll-out of automated landing and exit cards. The announcement was communicated in a circular dated 2 May 2025 (hereinafter “the Circular”).

The e-visa application system and automated landing and exit cards, are part of reforms by the Federal Government of Nigeria to automate key immigration processes, improve operational efficiency, and enhance the overall experience of travellers. Based on the Circular, the e-visa application system and automated landing and exit cards took effect from 1 May 2025.

We have provided key highlights of the Circular and our views on this latest development around the Nigerian immigration system.



Highlights of the Circular

1. The e-visa system

- a. **Full automation:** The e-visa process is now fully automated. Upon approval of an application for a visa, the e-visa sticker, with a unique QR code would be sent directly to the applicant's email.
- b. **Quicker turnaround:** Visa decisions will be made within 48 hours of completing an online visa application and making the required visa fee payment.
- c. **Introduction of more short visit visas:** The new e-visa system expands the range of available visa categories from two (2) to thirteen (13) short visit visa types¹. Previously, the Visa on Arrival (VoA) system supported only the business visa (single entry) and the tourist visa (single entry).
- d. **Validity of visa:** The e-visa is valid for a period ranging from 30 to 90 days depending on the visa category.
- e. **Duration of stay:** The maximum permitted duration of stay under an e-visa is 90 days from the date of entry. Extensions are not permissible.
- f. **Discontinuation of Visa on Arrival (VoA):** The previous electronic visa system i.e., VoA, will be discontinued effective 1 May 2025. However, existing VoAs will remain valid until 30 May 2025.

2. Automated landing & exit cards

The current manual landing and exit cards used by the NIS have been replaced with a digital version.

Inbound passengers (excluding Nigerians) are required to complete the landing card online before boarding. Similarly, all outbound passengers are required to complete the exit card online before boarding.

These forms can be completed via the official portal: <https://lecard.immigration.gov.ng>.

¹ The visa types are Business visa (single entry), Business visa (multiple entry), Business visa (frequently travelled business executives), Visitor's visa (single entry), Tourist visa, Transit visa, Sports visa, Creative arts visa, Study tour visa, Academic exchange program (students, scholars, lecturers), International cultural exchange visa, Emergency relief work visa and Returning holders of foreign passports who are Nigerians by birth.

3. Grace period for voluntary exit

A three-month grace period, from 1 May to 1 August 2025, has been granted to foreign nationals residing in Nigeria with expired visas, to voluntarily depart the country without incurring any penalties.

4. Fines and penalties for overstay

New fines and penalties have been introduced for foreigners who overstay their visas, and this will take effect from 2 August 2025.

The penalties are as follows:

- a. US\$15 per day of overstay
- b. Three months and above: US\$15 per day plus a 5-year entry ban
- c. One year and above: US\$15 per day plus a permanent entry ban



Matters arising

1. Implementation date of the e-visa system

As of the time of issuing this publication, the e-visa platform is not fully operational. This presents a challenge for prospective travellers and businesses who seek the correct channel to obtain a visa.

We recommend that NIS immediately issues an official notice to acknowledge the challenges with the platform and steps taken to resolve the challenges. Importantly, an alternative process should be rolled out pending the time the e-visa platform is operational.

2. Discontinuation of the VoA system

A part of the Circular states that the VoA will be discontinued from 1 May 2025, while another part states that already issued VoAs will remain valid until 30 May 2025.

Based on the VoA system, no VoA approval issued by 1 May 2025 will remain valid as of 30 May 2025, as the approval letter is valid for 14 days from the date of issuance. This creates a gap in the communication with respect to actual discontinuation of the VoA system.

3. Issuance of visa stickers

It is not clear if foreigners would still require visa stickers embossed on international passports when they arrive in Nigeria.

To avoid any confusion at the port of entry, NIS would need to confirm if the e-visa and QR code will fully replace the need for any physical visa stickers at the port of entry.

4. Penalties for overstay

The Circular references two commencement dates for the implementation of overstay fines and penalties. These dates are 2 August 2025 and 1 September 2025.

While it is likely that the mention of 1 September 2025 is a typographical error, an official communication from NIS would help provide clarity to stakeholders.

5. Penalties and the e-pass system

Under the e-pass system, foreigners who overstay their visas are required to pay an e-pass fee as well as the applicable penalty for overstaying the visa. Now that new penalties have been introduced, would foreigners who overstay their visas still be required to pay the e-pass fee?



Conclusion

The recent immigration reforms by the Federal Government of Nigeria have improved the experience of travellers coming into and leaving Nigeria. More reforms are therefore welcome, if they continue to improve travel experience and ensure compliance with the extant immigration legislation.

Businesses and travellers – especially non-Nigerian travellers – are advised to take note of the new changes to obtaining visas and registering entry into and exit from Nigeria. Specific focus should be placed on complying with the terms of visas and/or leveraging the amnesty scheme to depart the country or regularize overstays.

If you require further clarification or seek to understand how this would impact you or your business, please reach out to ngtaxpartners@deloitte.com.



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