

3 January 2023

Immigration

Saudi Arabia | Fee Increases and Skill Verification Program

Impact **Medium**

Fee increases

Summary

The Saudi Cabinet recently approved a new amendment that has increased the costs for renewing exit and reentry permits for residents who are outside the Kingdom.

The Detail

The Saudi Cabinet recently passed a new amendment that doubled the costs for renewing exit and reentry permits for residents who are outside the Kingdom.

The new amendment states that the exit and entry visa charge is SR200 for a single trip with a two-month maximum duration, SR100 for each additional month if the resident is inside the Kingdom, and SR200 plus double the fee for each subsequent month if the resident is outside the Kingdom.

The cost for multi-entry visits is SR 500 for three months, SR 200 for each subsequent month if the resident is inside the Kingdom, and SR doubled for each additional month if the applicant is outside the Kingdom.

A change to the residency law pertaining to the renewal of residency permits for domestic workers' and foreign employees' partners was also approved by the Cabinet. According to the modification, the charge for residency renewal when outside the Kingdom will be twice what is taken in within the Kingdom via the Ministry of Interior's electronic portal.

Skill Verification Program

Summary

The Skill Verification Program (SVP) was rolled out in India by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development (MHRSD) at the end of December 2022.

The Detail

At the end of December 2022, the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development (MHRSD) introduced the Skill Verification Program (SVP) in India. Before Indian workers may apply for a Saudi work visa, the Program requires them to pass written and practical tests for qualified workers. The program will involve practical and theoretical assessments in the workers' specialised sectors in order to ensure that all skilled workers in the Kingdom possess the necessary abilities to perform the profession for which they were hired.

New Delhi, the capital of India, and Mumbai, the largest city and the nation's commercial metropolis, will host the program's trial phase for the external track. Five occupations, including plumbing, electrical work, welding, refrigeration/air conditioning work, and car electrical work, will be part of the first phase skill testing. Additional professions will go through this process and be added to the program in the future, and we will monitor developments closely.

Background

The SVP is a continuation of the MHRSD's initiatives to increase the professional competence of skilled workers in the Saudi labour market, increase their productivity, raise the standard of the professional services they offer, and decrease the influx of unqualified people.

In order to guarantee the competency of skilled professionals in the Saudi labour market, the Ministry launched the SVP in March 2021 in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Technical and Vocational Training Corporation (TVTC).

In an effort to help the workforce develop its abilities in accordance with worldwide standards and to fulfil the demands of the regional labour market, the ministry has set its sights on 23 specialisations. The Ministry began the first phase of SVP for five professions in Pakistan in September 2022. Twelve testing facilities were set up as part of the scheme to test Pakistani skilled professionals before they could apply for a work visa for Saudi Arabia. In order to administer the tests, Takamol of MHRSD and Pakistan's National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC) created testing facilities in eight locations.

A number of recognised worldwide examination centres are involved in the second track of SVP, which attempts to assess professional labour needs and evaluate the skills of professional employees currently present in the Kingdom.

How we can help

We are closely monitoring Immigration changes in Saudi Arabia, and can advise you and your employees with respect to the impact of those changes as well as conduct any assessments with respect to activities, duration and purpose of travel.

Contact us

For a deeper discussion on the above, please reach out to your Vialto Partners point of contact, or alternatively:

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