

Thailand's New Visa Strategies to Supercharge Economic Growth

On 28 May 2024, the Thai government announced major updates to its visa policies to attract more global citizens, digital nomads, and skilled professionals alike. The new measures will be rolled out in three stages with the aim of boosting tourism and attract skilled talent in focused industries. The first stage, which became effective on 15 July 2024 focuses on visa-free entry and the introduction of a new visa for foreigners who will be working remotely from Thailand ("**Workcation**").

Stage 1: Short-Term Measures

1. Extended Visa Exemption:

- Tourists and short-term business visitors can stay for up to 60 days, an increase from 30 days, while the list of countries for these visitors has been expanded from 57 to 93 countries.

2. Extended Visa on Arrival ("**VOA**"):

- The nationalities of visitors who are eligible to apply for a VOA at the immigration checkpoints for tourism purposes expanded from 19 to 31 countries. The VOA will be valid for a period not exceeding 15 days.

3. Destination Thailand Visa ("**DTV**"):

- The DTV is a new visa which will allow eligible foreign nationals such as remote workers, digital nomads, freelancers, and participants in certain cultural activities (e.g., Muay Thai, martial arts, Thai cuisine, medical treatment, seminars, music festivals, or other cultural activities that maybe announced from time to time) to stay temporarily in Thailand from 60 days to five years, with each stay limited to 180 days.

The DTV promotion provides substantial benefits for eligible applicants for their Workcation purposes. The qualifications and benefits for the applicant are elaborated below.

Qualifications for DTV Applicants

1. Main Applicant for those engaged in Remote Work or Long-Term Tourism:

- Must be at least 20 years old; and
- Must be a foreigner in a high-skilled profession, or a digital nomad/ engaged in freelance work; or
- Must be participating in certain cultural activities unique to Thailand.

2. Sponsors:

- The main applicant can sponsor a DTV for their legal spouse and legitimate children under 20 years old.

3. Financial Requirements:

- Applicants must provide financial proof or evidence of support (e.g. pay slip, bank statement), or have a guarantor with funds not less than the equivalent of THB500,000 for the duration of the DTV.

4. Stay Duration and Fees:

- The DTV allows a stay of up to 180 days per visit.
- The DTV fee is THB10,000, valid for five years on a multiple-entry basis, and eligible for a one-time extension of up to 180 days (six months) per visit, with an additional fee of THB10,000.

The Thai government's new visa policy marks a promising step towards further embracing the tech industry, skilled expats, and digital nomads with remote work capabilities in the coming years. By attracting a diverse global talent pool, these reforms have the potential to significantly boost Thailand's workforce skills and offer compelling incentives for entrepreneurs and startups aiming to establish or expand their presence in the country.

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