



FIFA WORLD CUP QATAR 2022:

IMMIGRATION IMPLICATIONS - A SHORT GUIDE FOR BUSINESSES AND TRAVELLERS

INTRODUCTION

This November, the State of Qatar will make history as the first Middle Eastern country to open its doors to football fans from across the globe as it hosts the FIFA World Cup 2022. The tournament starts on November 20th, 2022, with the final match to be played on December 18th, 2022. It is expected that over a million people will visit Qatar during the tournament, with approximately 500,000 visitors entering the country on the busiest days. This large influx of travellers will likely result in substantial pressure on immigration and other government authorities in Qatar.

If you are planning to travel to Qatar this year, we recommend that you monitor the situation (including any potential travel and entry restrictions) closer to your expected date of travel as further changes to government policies and processes are anticipated. Fragomen will be [reporting on these changes](#) as they are announced.

IMPACT ON BUSINESSES

The ripple effect of the excitement surrounding the games has already resulted in many business opportunities for investors, entrepreneurs, and companies in Qatar. Large volumes of foreign workers have been mobilized and it is expected that changes in immigration policies will come into force to manage the large number of travellers. It is necessary that businesses in Qatar prepare for this influx and understand its impact. The main factors to consider are:

- ▶ **sponsorship requirements** in the case of specific visa categories;
- ▶ potential **delays** in the processing of immigration applications due to increased volumes; and
- ▶ potential **restrictions on visa issuance and entry** to Qatar.

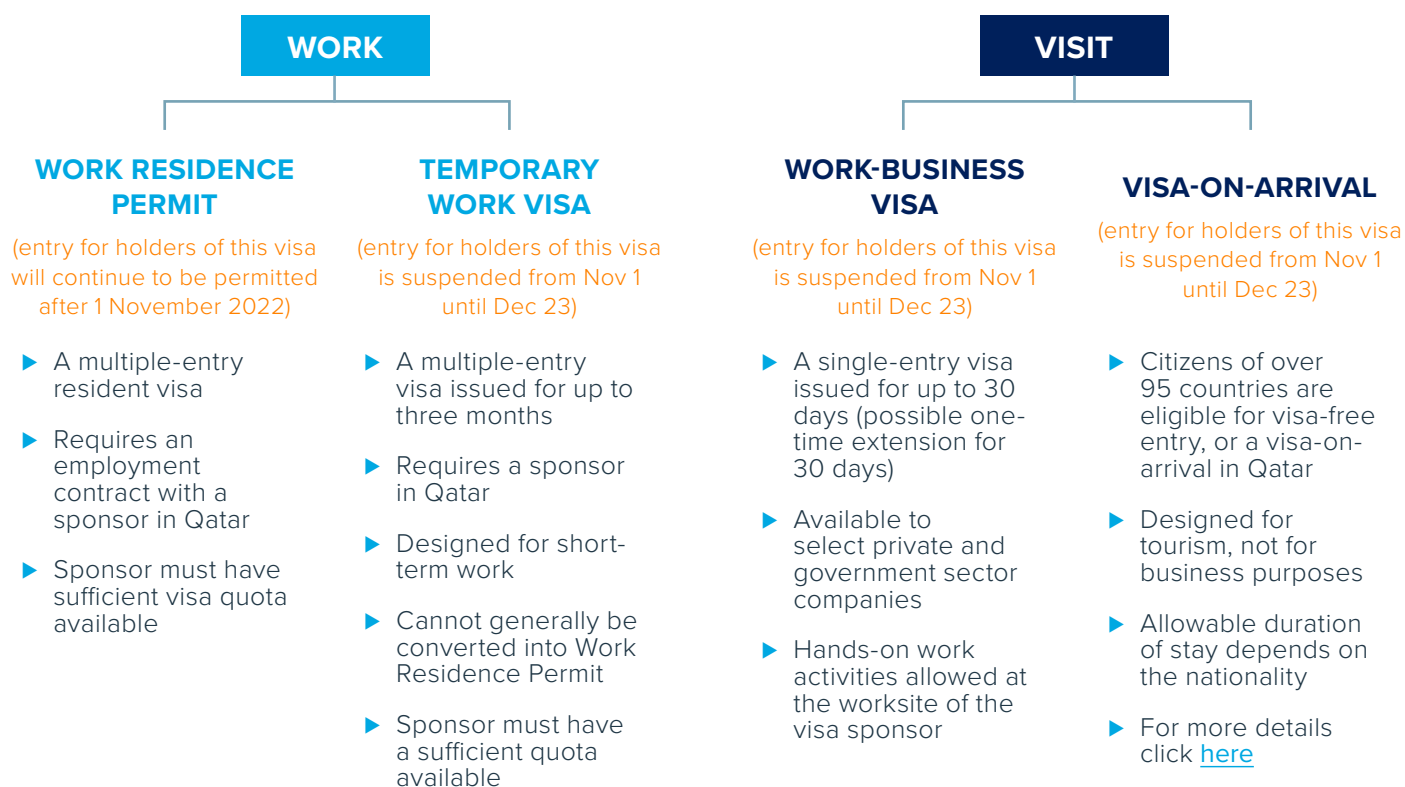
Sponsorship Requirements

When choosing the appropriate immigration route, the following key aspects must be assessed:

- ▶ purpose of travel and duration of stay in Qatar (i.e.: business vs work);
- ▶ scope of activities that will be carried out; and
- ▶ for whom the activities will be conducted.

Qatar's immigration system is primarily founded on the principle of sponsorship, therefore businesses seeking to employ foreign workers will likely be required to have a presence in Qatar. Businesses have several immigration options available to them, although entry to Qatar for holders of select visa categories is expected to be suspended during the tournament. If your company does not have a registered entity in Qatar, we recommend that you reach out to us for support and further information on available options.

Considering the above, and depending on individual circumstances, businesses have a choice of the following immigration options:



Delays in the Processing of Immigration Applications

It is anticipated that large volumes of entries may result in delays with the processing of new immigration and employment-related applications. The limited capacity of government authorities, and the prioritization of immigration cases associated with the management of visitors entering Qatar for the World Cup, are likely to impact the adjudication process, particularly of more complex applications.

Restrictions on Entry to Qatar

It is expected that foreign nationals travelling to Qatar **from November 1st, 2022 until December 23rd, 2022** will be exempt from vaccination requirements, obtaining an Ehteraz entry permit and that all travellers will need to present a PCR test not older than 48 hours before departure from the first embarkation point.

Additionally, those seeking entry to Qatar **from November 1st, 2022, until December 23rd, 2022** must hold a Hayya Card which serves as a means of identification and substitutes as an entry visa to Qatar. All visitors not attending the FIFA World Cup tournament and thus not holding the Hayya Card (with limited exceptions including for nationals of Qatar and holders of a residence permit, among others), will be denied entry to Qatar. Please click [here](#) for more details on the expected entry restrictions.

The Hayya Card application process requires the applicant to have purchased a FIFA World Cup 2022 ticket and have proof of accommodation in Qatar (regardless of staying at a hotel, or with family or friends). One non-resident ticket holder will be able to invite three non-ticket holders to Qatar for the duration of the tournament. The accommodation requirement does not apply if the total duration of stay in Qatar is under 24 hours. For more information on the Hayya Card, please read our [blog post](#). To apply for the card, please click [here](#). For more details on available accommodation options during the tournament, please click [here](#).

It is also important to understand that visa issuance, entry restrictions and requirements are subject to change that could be applied in practice without prior notice.

REGIONAL TRAVEL

To facilitate tourism throughout the Middle East region, the governments of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Saudi Arabia will soon start issuing multiple-entry visit visas to World Cup 2022 attendees holding a Hayya Card. The UAE visa will allow stays of up to 90 days, and the Saudi visa will permit a stay of up to 60 days. Visitors traveling to either of the two countries will not be required to enter Qatar first. The application process in Saudi Arabia commenced on October 16th, 2022 (click [here](#) to apply), and in the UAE, it will commence on November 1st, 2022 (click [here](#) to apply). Similar special visa programs have been [announced for Oman and Jordan](#), with detailed conditions expected to be announced.

This guide was published on 17 October 2022, and due to the circumstances, there are frequent changes.



CONTACT



AZEEM MOHIUDDIN

Partner
Doha, Qatar
T: +974 4019 1101
amohiuddin@fragomen.com



MARCIN KUBAREK

Senior Manager
Dubai (FZ), United Arab Emirates
T: +971 4 8181 722
mkubarek@fragomen.com



VLADIMIR JANKOVICH

Senior Manager
Doha, Qatar
T: +974 4019 1102
vjankovic@fragomen.com

FRAGOMEN
www.fragomen.com