



Nigeria's Immigration Reforms 2025: A New Era of Digitalisation and Compliance



Over the past few months, Nigeria's immigration system has undergone sweeping reforms, reshaping visa issuance to foreign nationals to enter, reside, and work in the country. Beginning with policy pronouncements in early 2025 and followed by a series of regulatory updates, the Federal Ministry of Interior and the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) have introduced digital-driven procedures, stricter compliance requirements, and revamped visa categories.

This article highlights the key developments and their implications for travellers, expatriates, and businesses.

e-Visa System

The introduction of the e-Visa system is one of the most important shifts in Nigeria's immigration framework. Replacing the former Visa on Arrival (VoA) regime, the e-Visa introduces 13 (thirteen) distinct categories designed to cater to different short-term visit purposes, including tourism, creative arts, academic exchanges, study tours, cultural exchange, and emergency relief. Each visa class has tailored requirements based on the nature of the visit, ensuring a more structured approach to entry. The e-Visa itself is valid for 90 (ninety) days from the date of issuance, but it only permits a maximum stay of 30 (thirty) days in Nigeria and cannot be extended. This stands in contrast with the VoA system, which had a pre-approval slip that was valid for only fourteen days, the actual visa issued upon arrival and could be extended multiple times in-country. The e-Visa system thus signals a move towards stricter entry and stay regulation while providing more organised categories for specific visitor needs.

Landing and Exit Cards

To strengthen monitoring and enforcement, the new regime requires all travellers irrespective of the visa category to complete a Landing Card before arrival and an Exit Card before departure. These cards, submitted alongside the traveller's e-Visa, provide immigration authorities with a complete record of expatriate movement into and out of the country.

The aim is to curb overstays and ensure timely enforcement of visa conditions by creating a digital trail that supports more effective immigration control.

Beyond compliance, this measure enhances national security by enabling the government to track foreign nationals more precisely and respond swiftly to irregularities.

Citizenship and Business (C&B) platform

The Citizenship and Business Management (C&B) Platform has been introduced to streamline the application and processing of citizenship and business-related services. These include applications for citizenship by naturalisation, registration, or renunciation, as well as the grant of Special Immigration Status. The platform also facilitates the issuance and management of Business Permits and Expatriate Quota positions, including the monitoring of their utilisation. Companies holding existing quotas (legacy quotas) or permits are required to upload them onto the platform. The uploaded documents must be vetted and approved before use, and the revised fees will apply.

When uploading a new or existing quota, it is essential to specify whether the expatriate is **in-country** or **out-country**, as the processing requirements differ:

- **Out-country:** This applies to new entrants, meaning expatriates without a valid Subject to Regularization (STR) visa or Combined Expatriate Residence Permit and Aliens Card (CERPAC) whose applications Electronic Comprehensive Expatriate Residence Permit and Automated Cards (e-CERPAC) will be processed outside Nigeria.
- **In-country:** This applies to expatriates already in Nigeria on valid STR visas or CERPAC cards. In such cases, the process will be treated as a regularization or renewal, and biometric capturing will take place in Nigeria.

It is important to note that e-CERPAC and e-TWP applications are contingent on the successful completion of the company's registration and approval on the C&B Platform.

The login credentials and information generated from the platform will be used to initiate e-CERPAC and e-TWP applications.

As part of the platform's implementation, the Ministry has also introduced a significant increase in the fees for services processed through the C&B platform. These revised fees apply to Business Permits, Expatriate Quota positions, and various citizenship-related application.

Electronic Temporary Work Permit (e-TWP)

The Temporary Work Permit (TWP) has been modernised, fully digitised, and is now referred to as the Electronic Temporary Work Permit (e-TWP). Under the new system, companies are required to open an account on the e-TWP portal through which all applications are processed. Applicants complete an electronic form and upload all mandatory supporting documents, which include a passport photograph, the biodata page of their international passport, curriculum vitae, academic qualifications, a formal letter of application, and flight tickets.

Once the documents are uploaded, payment is made. Unlike the previous regime where fees varied depending on nationality, the e-TWP now applies a flat fee structure to all applicants. In addition, an insurance fee is payable by expatriates as part of the process.

Currently, the e-TWP is issued strictly for three months as the six-month option has not yet taken effect. It remains a single-entry permit, is not extendable, and applicants can choose to complete their processing either in-country or out-of-country.

e-CERPAC

The Electronic Comprehensive Expatriate Residence Permit and Automated Card (e-CERPAC) now serves as the core document for expatriates seeking residence and work opportunities in Nigeria. Unlike the old system, the e-CERPAC eliminates the need for pre-arrival (Subject to Regularisation visa) and post-arrival (regularisation of the visa to obtain CERPAC).

This change significantly reduces administrative delays and ensures that expatriates arrive with full legal authorisation.

The e-CERPAC covers a wide range of categories, including expatriate employees of companies and their dependants (R2A), expatriates employed in Free Trade Zones (R3A), expatriates employed by government or international non-governmental organisations (R4A and R5A), clerics and missionaries (R6A), students (R7A), and spouses of Nigerian citizens (N1A).

The application process differs depending on whether the expatriate is outside Nigeria or already in-country.

As Subject to Regularisation (STR) visas no longer exist; instead, the process begins on the Citizenship and Business (C&B) platform where companies register and apply for expatriate quotas. Using C&B login credentials, employers then apply on the e-CERPAC portal, providing personal and passport information alongside supporting documents such as employment contracts, CVs, qualifications, police clearance, and expatriate quota verification. Once approved, Out-of-country applicants are directed to the relevant Nigerian embassy for capturing and submission. For in-country applicants, referring to expatriates holding valid STR visas or CERPAC cards, the process involves renewal using the same documents as the initial application under the same employer. After online submission and review, the expatriate attends a scheduled appointment at an NIS office for capturing.

The e-CERPAC once issued will be sent to the company's email address and be downloaded from the company's e-CERPAC portal along with the insurance certificate.

Fees for the e-CERPAC (R2A) visa process include \$2,000 (CERPAC fee), \$1,000 (insurance), \$129 (processing), and \$20 (card delivery). The final e-CERPAC card is delivered directly to the applicant's office.

Expatriate Comprehensive Insurance

This is now a mandatory requirement for the issuance of Temporary Work Permits (TWP), e-CERPAC, and standard CERPAC.

The Policy is designed to ensure that all foreign nationals residing in Nigeria are adequately protected against unexpected health emergencies, security incidents, and other unforeseen events. The requirement for valid insurance coverage prior to the approval of residence permits is intended to promote a responsible, secure, and well-regulated migration environment.

Overstay Penalties and Entry Bans

A structured penalty system has also been introduced to deal with overstays. Foreign nationals who remain in Nigeria after their visa expires are subject to;

1. a fine of \$15 per day
 2. if the overstay exceeds three months, the individual becomes subject to a five-year entry ban.
 3. In cases where the overstay is one year or more, a ten-year ban will apply.
- This change is designed to encourage strict compliance with visa conditions and to deter abuse of Nigeria's immigration policies.

Conclusion

Nigeria's 2025 immigration reforms represent a paradigm shift towards digitalisation, compliance, and accountability. With the e-Visa, e-CERPAC, NCIA framework, and mandatory expatriate insurance, the country has introduced measures to streamline processes, improve security, and foster transparency.

While the reforms bring efficiency, they also demand greater diligence from companies, expatriates, and immigration service providers in navigating the new system.

Should you require further assistance or clarification on the above, please feel free to contact pamilerin.akabunwa@moroomafrica.com

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