

Mobility: Immigration alert

November 2023

United Arab Emirates

UAE Minister of Economy announces single unified visa for Gulf Cooperation Council countries

Executive summary

According to the Emirates News Agency (WAM), the UAE Minister of Economy [announced](#) on 23 October 2023 that the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries will introduce a unified tourist visa within the next two years, which will enable holders to travel across the six Gulf countries (i.e., Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE).

Key developments

In a statement to the WAM, the Minister outlined that specific regulations and legislation for the visa will be developed, with a targeted rollout between 2024 and 2025, conditional on the readiness of each GCC country's internal systems. According to the Minister, the Emirates Tourism Council has developed a tourist route within the UAE that connects all seven emirates, adding that the unified visa is intended to promote travel within the GCC.

It is not yet known whether holders of resident visas issued by GCC countries would be required, or have the option, to apply for the unified visa once it is launched. Currently, these individuals must obtain a visa issued by a GCC country prior to traveling to that country. [GCC nationals](#) can travel among the GCC countries without a visa. Further details are expected to be released in the coming months.

Impact

The Minister emphasized that the introduction of this new visa will enable individuals to access the six GCC countries using a single visa. The visa is expected to facilitate economic cooperation and collaboration among the Gulf nations.

Key steps

EY will continue to monitor these developments. Should you have any questions, we encourage you to contact one of our immigration professionals.

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Roman Gusev

Partner - People Advisory Services, Global Immigration
Tel: +973 3365 1121
Email: roman.gusev@bh.ey.com

Sana Sheikh

Senior Manager - People Advisory Services, Global Immigration
Tel: +971 5219 11078
Email: sana.sheikh@ae.ey.com

Anjana Joseph

Consultant - People Advisory Services, Global Immigration
Tel: +971 50 3959653
Email: anjana.joseph@ae.ey.com