



Global Immigration alert

May 2024

Thailand

New 10-year visa for qualifying highly skilled foreign nationals

Executive summary

On 14 May 2024, the Thai cabinet approved a new 10-year visa to attract highly skilled foreigners to work in the [Eastern Economic Corridor](#) (EEC). Details regarding when the authorities will begin accepting applications are yet to be announced.

Background

The EEC is part of the “Thailand 4.0” initiative, a strategy for the country to achieve high-income status by 2036. The EEC project is aimed at physical and social transformation in three provinces in Eastern Thailand (i.e., Rayong, Chonburi and Chachoengsao) through a focus on 12 sectors, including automation and robotics, aviation and logistics, and biofuel and biochemicals.

Key developments

The EEC Visa will be available to the following categories of foreign nationals:

- ▶ Specialists (S): Individuals who are highly skilled and specialized in any of the 12 target sectors
- ▶ Executives (E): Individuals responsible for management and decision-making related to business operations in the EEC
- ▶ Professionals (P): Individuals working in any of the 12 target sectors or those with experience in areas that can benefit these sectors

- ▶ Others (O): Eligible dependents (i.e., spouses and children) of individuals who qualify under any of the categories above (dependents will be able to stay for the same period as the principal applicant)

Successful applicants, including dependents, will be:

- ▶ Issued a visa that will enable them to work and reside in Thailand for up to five years initially and up to 10 years maximum, not exceeding the period specified in their employment contract
- ▶ Subject to a fixed personal income tax rate of 17% (compared to the maximum rate of 35% in Thailand)
- ▶ Required to complete a notification process once a year

Impact on employers

The EEC Visa will enable companies to attract highly skilled foreign nationals with expertise in the 12 target sectors in a more cost-effective manner. The tax incentives associated with the EEC Visa may reduce employers' tax obligations (e.g., if a company absorbs personal income tax on behalf of its employees, it will be required to pay only a flat rate of 17%). Additionally, the 10-year validity period is expected to reduce the administrative challenges associated with frequent visa renewals. Companies may assess whether they meet the requirements for sponsoring EEC Visas.

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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