

# Mobility: Immigration alert

February 2024



## Bahrain

Bahrain suspends conversion of visitor visas to work visas or dependent visas without a sponsor

### Executive summary

On 12 February 2024, Bahrain's Interior Ministry Undersecretary for Nationality, Passports and Residence Affairs (NPRA) [announced](#) that individuals are no longer allowed to convert their visitor visas to work visas or dependent visas without a sponsor.

### Key developments

Holders of visitor visas can no longer convert their visas to work visas or dependent visas without a sponsor. Individuals who hold a visit visa sponsored by a Bahraini entity can still convert their visa to a work visa (or dependent visa) from within Bahrain if they receive an employment offer from the same sponsor (or are a qualifying dependent of such an individual). The fees for this conversion have been increased to BHD250 (approx. USD 663), up from BHD60 (approx. USD 160).

Visit visa holders who are in Bahrain and receive an employment offer from another sponsor must exit and re-enter Bahrain with a valid work visa. Foreign nationals who are outside Bahrain and receive an employment offer must obtain a work visa in their home country or country of residence prior to traveling to Bahrain.

The Interior Ministry Undersecretary added that the NPRA's decision is in line with government directives to support the local workforce and promote the National Labour Market Plan. These changes would be implemented in cooperation with the Labour Market Regulatory Authority.

Previously, holders of visit visas (including tourist visas, e-visitor visas and visas on arrival) were permitted to convert their visit visas to work or residency visas from within Bahrain.

### Impact on employers

Companies may review and update their internal policies as required to comply with the new requirements, including completion of relevant work visa application processes outside Bahrain.

### 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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