Visa Facilitation in South-East Asia

Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Program

June 2024

Photo @ Travel Vietnam

Agenda

01 Southeast Asia Tourist Visa Context

02 Visa Types, Strategies & Impacts

03 Challenges & Recommendations

01. Southeast Asia Tourist Visa Context

Photo @ Pixabay

Visa Policy Priorities in Southeast Asia

Country/Region	Policy-Strategy
Cambodia Roadmap for Recovery of Cambodia Tourism During and Post-COVID-19	• Attract long-term "quality tourists" with special visas, e.g., wellness and retirement
Indonesia *The National Medium-term Development Plan for 2020–2024*	• Increase the length of stay and tourism spending by improving accessibility, attractions, and amenities
Lao PDR *Tourism Recovery Roadmap 2021-2025*	• Increase tourist arrivals and their average length of stay from 5 to 7 days by improving regional integration and visa facilitation • Improve regional visa facilitation through digitalization and agreements with other governments
Philippines *National Tourism Development Plan 2023-2028*	• Promote barrier-free and frictionless travel, including the adoption of more liberal visa policies, electronic visas, and policies that promote seamless travel and digital tourism transformation
Thailand *Third National Tourism Development Plan 2023-2027*	• Applying innovation and technology to manage tourism efficiently • Adaptability and digital transformation to promote diverse and creative forms of high-potential tourism
Viet Nam *Tourism Development Strategy to 2030*	• Facilitate travel for international tourists and establish new international relationships with key current and future markets • Attract markets with substantial outbound tourism potential, higher spending, and longer length of stay

Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Program

Southeast Asia Visa Openness (at a glance)

	2023 UNWTO Visa Openness Score (out of 100)	2024 WEF TTDI Visa Requirements Global Rank (vs 140 Countries)
Cambodia	72	10
Indonesia	53	39
Lao PDR	62	27
Philippines	47	48
Thailand	59	31
Viet Nam	42*	53

* Viet Nam made all countries eligible for e-visas in 2023 but after the cut off date for both reports.

02.

Visa Types, Strategies & Impacts

Photo @ Pixabay

Tourist Visa Types

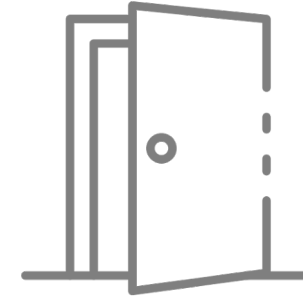| Visa	Description
Regular	Must be obtained pre-departure, either in person or through an authorized agency, at a designated embassy or consulate.
Visa on Arrival (VOA)	Applied for on arrival at a designated international port of entry.
Electronic Visa on Arrival (E-VOA)	Requires the same application documents as the VOA but are submitted online pre-arrival and approved on arrival.
Electronic Visa (E-visa)	Completely online processes with approval received via email pre-departure.
Visa Exemption	No application process or fee.

Tourist Visa Strategies: Increase IVAS

Visa Facilitation

The process of simplifying visa requirements and procedures for travelers, including new visa modalities such as VOA and E-Visa.

Impacts:
Issuance of new visa types increased demand by 8.1%.

Examples: India's e-visas: +21% IVAs

Visa Openness

The extent to which countries facilitate travel by easing restrictions to obtain a visa.

Impacts:
Visa-free travel increased demand at 16.6%

Example: Indonesia's visa waiver to 169 countries: +24% IVAS from 2015 to 2018.

Tourist Visa Policy Strategies: High-Yield Strategy

Goal
Increase average expenditure and length of stay (LOS)

Benefits
Greater economic benefits, lower negative impacts.

Market
Expenditure and LOS positively correlated to age, income level, employment status, availability of natural spaces, and travel type, not nationality.

New Visa Type: Digital Nomad Visa

Photo @ Freepik

Digital Nomads
- Telecommuters, freelancers, location-independent workers, remote workers, and online entrepreneurs who use technology to live and work from anywhere.
- Typically stay longer
- Support themselves through foreign income while consuming local goods and services
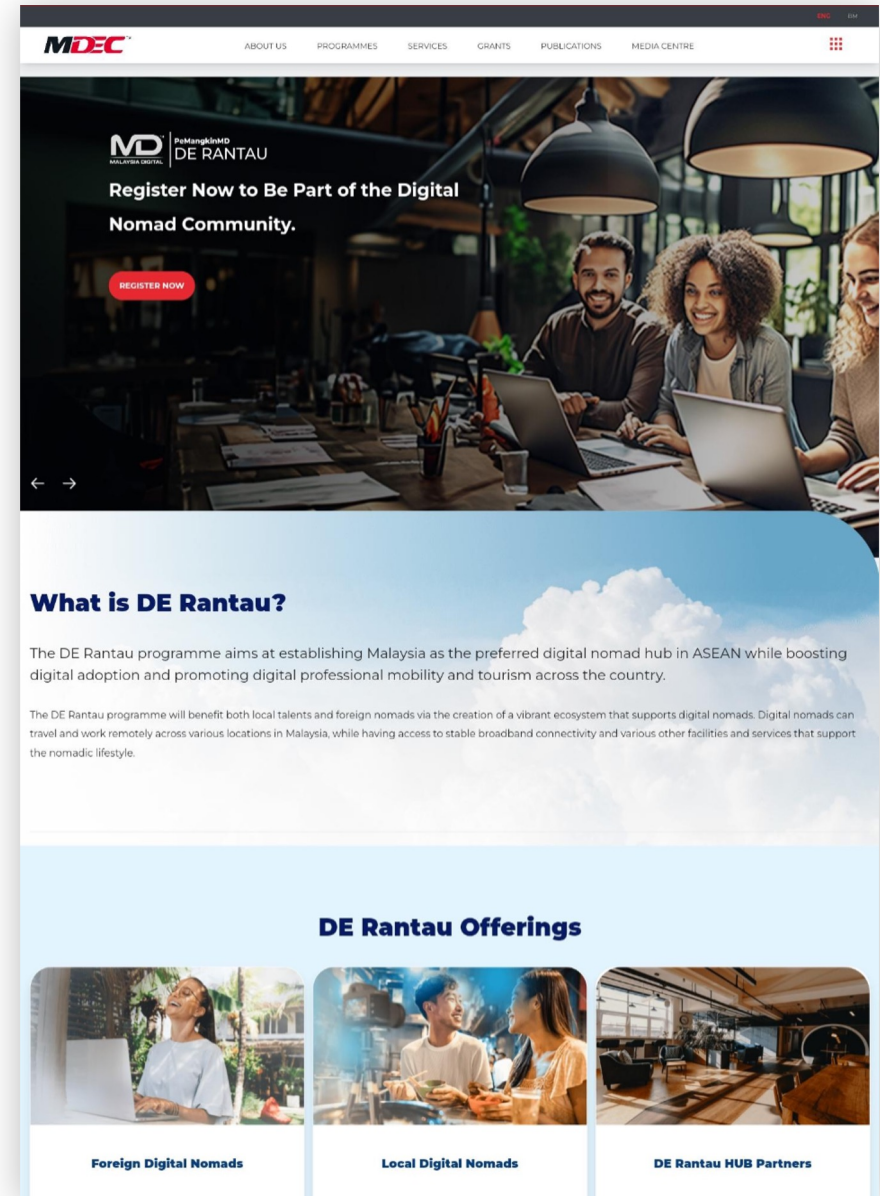
Digital Nomad Visas (DNVs)
- Allow to stay and work legally in a destination for a set period without local employment.
- Typically require an application fee and verification of a minimum income or proof of sufficient funds.
  - Spain: Must earn double the country's minimum wage
  - United Arab Emirates: minimum salary requirement of $5,000 per month
  - Brazil: min. salary $1,500 per month.
- Some countries charge only visa fees.
  - Bahamas: $1,000 fee for remote worker visa.

Malaysia's Nomad Pass

- Launched in 2023, SEA's only specific DNV

- The Nomad Pass is for freelancers, independent contractors, and remote workers (employed by a company but allowed to work remotely).

- No minimum financial requirements

- **Required:** CV, higher education certificate, criminal record check, medical insurance, valid employment contract (or project contract, in the case of freelancers), 3 months bank statement, and 3 months income statement.

- **Fees:** RM1,000 ($226), or RM500 ($113) for dependents.

- **Duration:** 3 to 12 months with possible renewal of 12 months.

Source: Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation.

New Visa Type: Retirement & Second Home Visas

Photo @ Freepik

Higher-income visitors
- Retirees, high net worth individuals
- Encourage longer stays, higher spending, and investment

Examples
- Cambodia: 1-3 year multiple-entry visas to high-spending and high-income source markets of Japan, ROK, and PRC.
- Indonesia: **Second Home Visa** valid for 5 to 10 years for foreign investors, tourists, and retirees.
- Thailand:
  - Long Stay Visa: 1 to 5-year duration for foreigners over 50 if they meet minimum financial requirements.
  - Long-term Resident Visa: 10-year visa for wealthy individuals, pensioners, and highly skilled professionals.
  - Smart Visa: For executives, entrepreneurs, and investors wishing to invest in eligible industries in Thailand

ADB CAREC

03.

Challenges & Recommendations

Photo @ Pixabay

Visa Policy Challenges

Security Concerns
Security concerns. Balancing objectives to improve visa openness with the imperative of strong immigration and border controls presents a significant challenge.

Role of National Tourism Organizations
Visa policy is primarily set by foreign affairs and immigration agencies, whose main responsibilities go beyond promoting tourism growth. National tourism organizations often play a secondary role.

E-Visa Management
Transitioning to and maintaining e-visa systems is challenging. Secure and efficient e-visa platforms requires significant digital infrastructure, cybersecurity capabilities, data privacy controls, and user-friendly website optimization.

Limited Ports of Entry
Restricting the number and geographic spread of international ports of entry offering VOA and e-visa inconveniences visitors and can hamper the success of visa policy reforms.

Lack of Online Visa Extension Services
The limited availability of online visa extension services creates inconvenience and deters visitors from extending their stay

Lack of E-Payment Options
Limiting the type of currency accepted for VOA fees and limiting payment options to cash only can deter tourists from selecting this type of visa, or worse, from deciding to visit a destination.

Exacerbating Inequality
Longer-staying visitors may impact the host destination's cultural, economic, and physical environment.

Visa Policy Recommendations

Increase visa exemptions, visa on arrival, and e-visas for top spending and long-staying markets

Granting more high-spending and/or long-staying nationalities visa-free entry is an evidence-based policy that increases visitor arrivals.

Create new visa categories

Taking a whole-government approach, countries should continue pursuing the creation of tailored visa categories that make the destination attractive to such higher-spending visitors.

Improve official websites offering tourist visa services.

Optimization strategies require a whole-government approach to update content, manage channels, and analyze user behavior information.

Continue optimizing visa facilitation

- Accept e-visas and issuing VOAs at all international ports of entry
- Create online visa extension facilities
- Allow diverse VOA electronic payment platforms

Free Tool - E-Visa Facilitation Checklist

Website Visibility

Does your official e-visa site show up as the top result for basic Google searches? Does it state it is the official website? Does the URL include [e-visa], [government domain], and [country domain]?

Website Navigation

Does it clearly present menus and instructions? Is it mobile friendly? Is the application available in other languages beside English and Chinese?

Clear Information

Is there a country selection/visa type drop down menu? Are the visa prices, payment options, permitted length of stay, processing times, required documents, and ports of entry communicated before beginning the application? Does the applicant receive an email confirming submission and expected processing date immediately after applying?

KAЗ РУС ENG 中文 e.gov

Services   Personal account   Support request   Old version of the portal

Visa-migration portal of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Issuance of entry/exit visas to the Republic of Kazakhstan

To display the available categories of visa select the country and the multiplicity of visa:

Country:

Visa multiplicity:

The following types of visas are available for E-Visa:

- single-entry business visa;
- single-entry tourist visa;
- single-entry treatment visa;
- single-entry investor visa.

Single entry visas entitle the visa recipient to a **single entry** into the Republic of Kazakhstan, **travel through its territory, stay in it** and **leave** the Republic of Kazakhstan **for a time** , for the purposes and under the conditions established by the visa.

Visas are issued *after payment of consular* fees and state duties in accordance with the legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Paid amounts of consular fees are non-refundable.

Get visa >

Full service name:
Issuance of entry/exit visas to the Republic of Kazakhstan

Who provides the service
Foreign Offices of the Republic of Kazakhstan / Territorial divisions of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Who can receive the service?
Foreign citizen

Period of service provision
5 (five) working days
If the coordinating body does not provide a response within the specified period, the state service shall be provided within 1 working day after receipt of the approval.

Service cost
state fee for tourist visa - $ 60, for business - $ 80, for treatment - $80
Service Instruction
Download instruction

Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Program

ADB   CAREC

Thank You.

Trevor Weltman
Partner, Clickable Impact

✉ trevor.weltman@clickableasia.com

🌐 www.clickableasia.com

Photo @ Pixabay