

Assessment of OV achievements in the visa regime

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Outcome 5:

Reform the visa regime to facilitate skilled immigration and support tourism

5.1 Scarce skills

Key structural reform	Desired outcome of reform	Key reform actions
Improve regulatory frameworks and processes for issuing work permits for scarce skills and for skilled immigration (<i>source: Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan</i>)	a) Short-term skills shortage reduced – businesses able to obtain skills which are not available in SA b) Time taken to obtain permits reduced	a) Carry out review of regulatory frameworks and processes b) Adjust regulatory frameworks c) Design and implement process improvements

5.2 Tourism

Key structural reform	Desired outcome of reform	Key reform actions
Implement e-Visa and visa waivers (<i>source: Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan</i>)	Growth in tourism	Implement full rollout of e-Visa system to 14 countries

OV Process Phase 1 implementation

Followed the general OV process of implementation, monitoring, adjustment etc

For the business visa project OV contracted Mavuso Msimang, former DG of Home Affairs (and genuine MK veteran) to lead the investigation into excessively time-consuming processing of business and tourist visas

Previously the Minister of Home Affairs had appointed Dr Cassius Lubisi to head a commission of experts to investigate problems in the permitting section of the DHA. They produced a very valuable report with extensive recommendations.

Implementation: Business visas

Goal	Action	Stage of implementation
Improve regulatory frameworks and processes for issuing work permits for scarce skills and for skilled immigration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simplify the application process • Reduce backlog and improve efficiency of processing • Introduction of e-visa system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Some</u> simplification embodied in the 05/24 Immigration Act amendment (not yet law) • Business reports encouraging improvements in efficiency and reduction of backlog • E-visa system needs to be strengthened and broadened
Reduce complexity and lengthy processes for processing routine business visas	Trusted employer system	Introduced October 2023; 68 so far? Needs to be evaluated and expanded
Implementation of points system	Framework introduced in 05/24 Immigration Act amendment	Bill promulgated by minister Not clear (from the bill) if this complicates or replaces the critical skills list
Accommodation of digital nomads in visa system	Provision in 05/24 amendment (with R1m p/a floor)	Bill promulgated

Implementation: Tourist Visas

Goal	Action	Stage of implementation
Simplify visa applications	E-visa	For business and tourist visits. Has been implemented but there may be in issue of response times—there is no guaranteed response maximum period and it appears that it can take months
Waivers	Visa free access	There is a growing number of countries, including African countries, whose citizens do not need visas short-term visits

Areas of achievement outside of OV goals

Institution of an SIU investigation into the permitting section of DHA is very important and very significant (but why 2 years after the recommendation of the Lubisi Commission)?

There are reports of investments in improving IT systems in the department, but are they substantial enough—will they meet the benchmarks set by the Lubisi commission?

Concerns to be considered by the new administration (in addition to follow through on Phase 1)

Rooting out corruption and charging and dismissing staff where required (*Lubisi Commission; SIU investigation approved by President and Minister and appears to be underway*)

Appointment of sufficient capable staff at all levels, especially in IT and permitting (*Lubisi Commission*) Delays and bad/unfair decisions and probably corruption continue to plague the DHA

Development of integrated digitised systems with integrity as specified in the Lubisi Commission report

Short termism on exemption permits (latest legal defeat and policy intervention by court)

5% cut in the budget of DHA as announced in the February budget (the biggest cut in any national department) could be a constraint

Other questions

White paper—'final version' does not really seem to reflect the trajectory of the department entirely and has some inaccuracies—what is the process for implementation?

Are the proposals on dealing with asylum seekers contained in the White Paper realistic? No.

There seems to be divisions or confusion in home affairs—despite the progress—the DHA continues to ignore court orders.

Why is the process of issuing regulations, laws and directives in the DHA so erratic—very often have errors pointed out by outsiders and are resubmitted months later (capacity of leadership and senior professionals inadequate)?

Can the culture of the DHA be improved?

E-visa—is it working? Can it be deepened and broadened?

Joint Southern Africa tourist visa Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe have agreed to Schengen-style 'univisa'. Why not South Africa?

South Africa needs inclusion programs to reduce tensions between citizens and immigrants.