



GMS Flash Alert

Immigration Edition

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Thailand - "Smart Visa" Designed to Attract Highly-Skilled Professionals

By mid-January 2018, the government of Thailand will launch a "Smart Visa" scheme¹ which grants four years' permission to live and work in Thailand for investors and highly-skilled professionals working within 10 specialized fields, identified by the government in its technology push under the "Thailand 4.0" plan. These fields include automotive, electronics, food technology, digital technology, robotics, aviation, and logistics.

WHY THIS MATTERS

The main objective of the new visa scheme is to attract entrepreneurs and experts who have a high level of technical skills and know-how and to encourage them to stay in Thailand longer – this is aimed at encouraging knowledge transfer that could boost business growth in the country and enhance long-term economic benefits.

This is a welcome incentive that could help reduce administrative burdens and costs for those qualifying for the "Smart Visa" and their employers.

Aspects of Smart Visa Program in Brief

Initially the target groups are as follows:

1. Entrepreneurs investing in new businesses
2. Highly-skilled professionals
3. High-level executives
4. Start-up business owners.

Benefits and privileges are as follows:

1. 4-year visa;
2. No work permit required;
3. Dependents (spouse and children) also to be entitled to the same privilege as under Smart Visa; and
4. The current requirement that foreigners submit a report every 90 days to the relevant Immigration officer is now extended to once a year (rather than every 90 days).

KPMG NOTE

An initial announcement about the Smart Visa was provided by the Thai Mini-Cabinet on 18 August 2017. The Board of Investment along with Immigration Bureau, Ministry of Labour, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs are working together to finalize pertinent conditions and criteria which are to include an amendment of the regulations to support this scheme. Details concerning eligibility and application procedures will be forthcoming.

FOOTNOTE:

- 1 See Smart Visa (Thai version), [click here](#).

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* Please note that KPMG LLP (U.S.) does not provide any immigration services. However, KPMG Law LLP in Canada can assist clients with U.S. immigration matters.

The information contained in this newsletter was submitted by the KPMG International member firm in Thailand.

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