

Residence Permit for Foreigners in Ethiopia

Description

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The FDRE Immigration and Citizenship Service has a mandate to issue residence permits for foreigners. Immigration Proclamation No 354/2003 and Immigration Council of Ministers Regulation No 114/2004(the Regulation) regulate how residence permits are issued in Ethiopia for foreigners.

From an investment perspective, a residence permit is issued for a foreigner when such a foreigner submits an investment permit issued in his/her name. The investment permit is acquired from the Ethiopian Investment Commission(EIC). This means the foreigner has invested in Ethiopia as a sole proprietorship.

When a foreigner investor is a shareholder of a company or branch company, then he/she is entitled to get a residence permit.

In addition to being an investor or shareholder, expatriate personnel, hired by an enterprise in Ethiopia,

are entitled to have a residence permit. These expatriates need to acquire work permits first.



The effect of acquiring a residence permit allows the holder of such a residence permit to enter and exit the country and live in any part of the country for the validity period of the permit.

The required documents for obtaining residence permit include passport copy, visa copy, photo, signature, work permit or memorandum of association for a shareholder, application letter from the hosting company and support letter from EIC.

The residence permit can extend to family members as well. Those children or spouses of the foreigner who held a residence permit can apply for a family member residence ID. In addition to the general requirement mentioned above, an authenticated birth certificate is needed for children. For spouses, an authenticated marriage certificate has to be presented.

As per the Regulation, residence permit can either be permanent or temporary. Permanent residence permit is issued to those foreigners who have been adopted by Ethiopians. Permanent residence permit is also issued for those foreigners who have valid marriages with Ethiopian and a lapse of at least one year since the conclusion of marriage. Permanent residence permit also extends to family members of foreigners holding permanent residence permit in Ethiopia. More so permanent residence permit may be given to foreigners coming to reside in Ethiopia without either being engaged in any gainful activities or ascertained not to become a public burden. Such a permit can also extend to members of their families.

Permanent residence may be issued to foreigners who have established his/her domicile in Ethiopia and lived in Ethiopia for at least 3 years preceding the submission of his/her application. Such a foreigner needs to exhibit a sufficient and lawful source of income to maintain himself or herself and his/her family. Such a person has to be of good character as well.

The Regulation provides on Article 28(4) that a foreigner who is engaged in investment or humanitarian activities in Ethiopia or who has made or is expected to make contributions in the interest of Ethiopia may be issued permanent residence permit without the need to live in Ethiopia for three years.

On the other hand, temporary residence permits are issued for foreigners upon application and fulfilling the requirements mentioned in these articles above. Article 29(2) of the Regulation states that temporary residence permit is valid up to one year and be replaced by a new one where it becomes necessary to stay longer.

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