



Chandrawat  
& Partners

# GUIDE ON IMMIGRATION PROCEDURE FOR EAST TIMOR

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# SYSTEM OF IMMIGRATION

The immigration policy emphasizes the broadening of the economic base of South Asia by concentrating especially on the obtaining of those immigrants who are in a position to render a meaningful contribution in this regard.

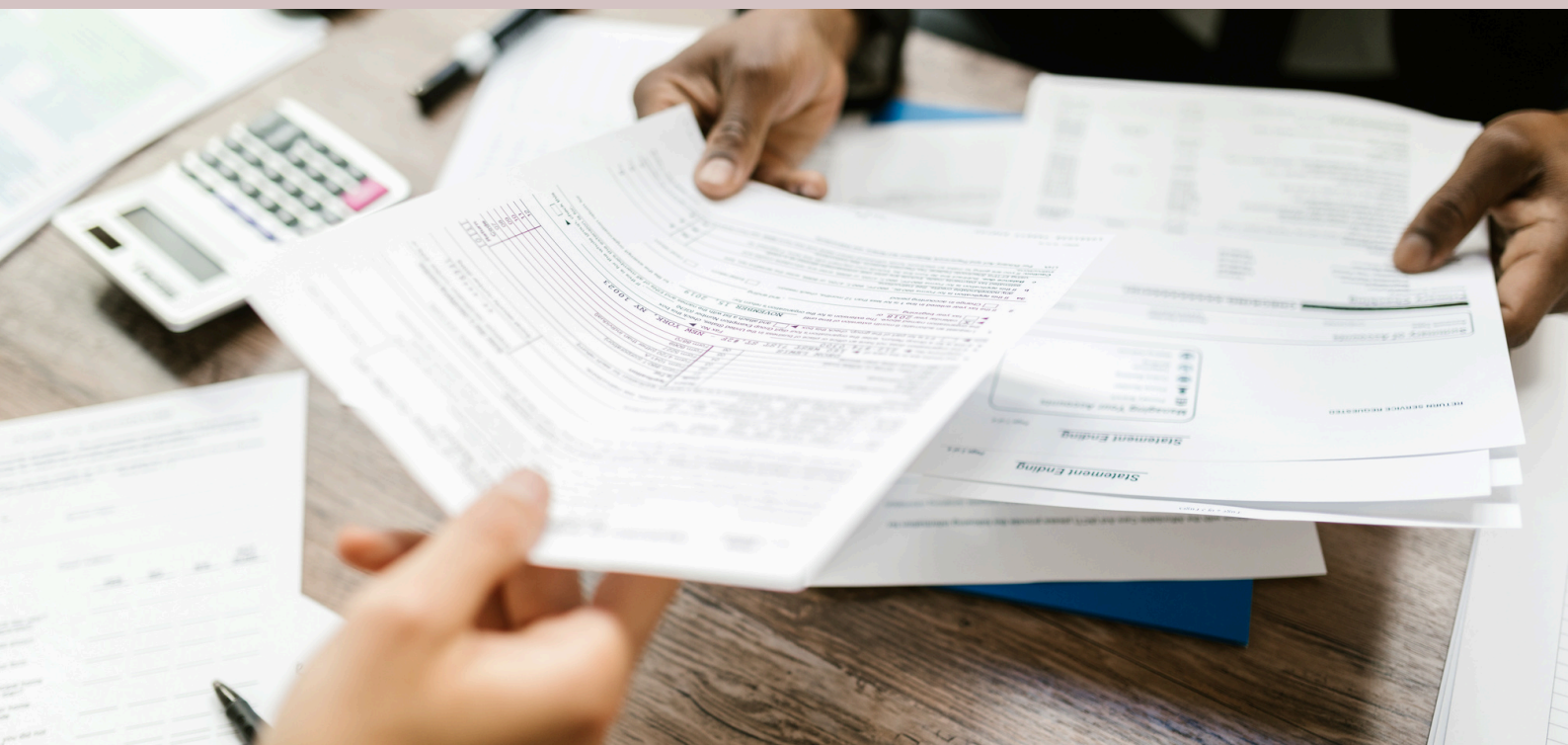
The Immigration and Asylum Law of 2003 defines the conditions under which foreigners may enter and stay in Timor-Leste, their rights and duties, as well as the penalties for non-compliance. The law also sets the framework for prosecuting crimes associated with migration. It would take 3-4 working days to process an East Timor visa as per the Act. The requirements are:

- The applicant must be of good character;
- The applicant must be a desirable inhabitant;
- The applicant must not be likely to be harmful to the welfare of the East Timor;
- The applicant must not follow an occupation in which there is already a sufficient number of persons available to meet the requirements of the country;
- The Applicant eligible for the visa must fill out the application form.
- The applicant must submit all the required documents needed for the visa;
- Complete the payment process for the visa and biometrics;
- Schedule biometrics and visa interview; and
- Receive visa and plan travel.

These requirements are aimed at the individual selection and all applications for permanent residence are considered on merit by an autonomous statutory body, the Immigrants Selection Board. Those eligible to apply for permanent residence must fall into one of the categories listed in the Immigration Act. The Immigration and Asylum Act, of 2003 makes provision for various categories of Permanent Residence as per article 37 of the Act.

Some general requirements for permanent residence are:

- Worker with a work permit for five years stay for 5 years;
- Person should be the spouse of a permanent resident or citizen of East Timor;
- A child under the age of 21 is related to one of these individuals;
- The recipient of an employment offer;
- When a person possesses exceptional abilities;
- Starting a business;
- Is the refugee;
- Is the retired individual; and
- Is the relative of East Timor citizen or permanent resident (limited to parents, children, or siblings).



# DIFFERENT PURPOSE OF IMMIGRATION

Individuals can immigrate to East Timor for employment purposes. This may include obtaining a job offer from an employer in East Timor and securing the necessary work visa or permit to work and reside in the country. This mainly comprises of professionals, skilled workers, or individuals with specific expertise who are recruited by Timorese companies or organizations.

Individuals seeking to establish or invest in businesses in East Timor can immigrate for entrepreneurial purposes as the country provide huge oil reserves. Depending on the specific investment or business venture, there may be specific requirements and procedures to follow. East Timor allows for family reunification, where individuals can immigrate to join their close family members who are already citizens or permanent residents of the country. The sponsoring family member would typically need to meet certain criteria and provide the necessary documentation.

Individuals can immigrate to East Timor for educational purposes. Timor-Leste may attract immigrants who wish to pursue higher education or specialised training in its educational institutions. Students may seek to enroll in universities, colleges, or vocational training programs. This typically involves obtaining acceptance into a recognised educational institution in East Timor and acquiring the necessary student visa or permit to study and reside there.

In exceptional circumstances, individuals facing persecution or displacement in their home country may be eligible for immigration to East Timor for humanitarian or refugee purposes. This typically involves going through the appropriate channels and demonstrating the need for protection.

Timor-Leste may offer investment opportunities that attract individuals seeking to establish or expand businesses in the country. Immigrant investors may contribute to the local economy, create job opportunities, and stimulate growth.

Lastly, some individuals may choose to immigrate to East Timor to engage in volunteer work or contribute to nonprofit organizations operating in the country. This can provide opportunities for temporary stays or further immigration options. Some individuals choose to immigrate to Timor-Leste for retirement purposes. The country's tropical climate, natural beauty, and cost of living may be appealing to retirees looking for a peaceful and affordable place to live.



# NON DIRECT ROUTES OF IMMIGRATION

The country's geographical context influences migration flows. The terrestrial borders with Indonesia and the proximity to Australia are both characterized by strong migratory flows, including irregular migration, Indonesia being a country of origin and transit and Australia one of destination. Timor-Leste is the only dollar-based economy in the region, with ongoing infrastructure programmes. The construction sector, which lacks specialized human resources, often relies on migrant workforces.

Some organizations and NGOs operating in East Timor offer opportunities for individuals to volunteer or work on specific projects. These opportunities may provide avenues for temporary stays, and in some cases, may lead to further immigration options. If an individual marries a Timorese citizen, he may be eligible for a spouse visa that allows him to immigrate to East Timor. The specific requirements and procedures would need to be followed in accordance with Timorese immigration laws.

The historical background of the country, namely the Portuguese colonial presence and the Indonesian occupation, contributed to migratory flows and to the establishment of family and ethnic networks which tend to encourage migration. Socioeconomic indicators and the dynamics of internal migration between rural and urban areas and international migration reveal that emigration will continue.

# IMPORTANT VISAS

The legal framework that regulates foreigners' entrance and stay in Timor-Leste, the Immigration and Asylum Law, includes four classes of common visas: a work visa and a visa to establish residence and two types of permits.

In order to enter and stay in Timor-Leste with any of these visas, the foreigner must have the financial resources required by the Immigration Law: USD 100 per entrance and USD 50 for each day of stay. If the foreigner does not have those amounts, a national citizen or a foreigner living in the country can assume the responsibility of providing resources for his or her stay (Article 18).

- **Tourist visa:** It is valid for up to 90 days and is granted to foreigners who intend to visit the country for tourism, visits and business meetings (Article 35, No. 1). This visa is authorized by the Migration Service and can be requested at the border.
- **Business visa:** This is also a Class I visa, issued to foreign nationals who intend to visit Timor-Leste for short-term business-related reasons such as attending meetings, conferences, or exploring business opportunities.
- **Transit visa:** The Class II visa is the transit visa and is granted to foreigners who are in transit through the national territory en route to another country or between two international flights. It is valid for maximum of 72 hours and is also authorized by the Migration Service.
- **Student visa:** It is for foreigners intending to study in national territory. it is valid for up to a year and is renewable for the same period of time depending on proof of academic performance, enrolment and demonstration of means of subsistence and lodging.





- **Cultural, scientific, sporting or media:** It is intended for foreigners who are in national territory for cultural purposes or for scientific research. The holder must be an artist, athlete or a correspondent of a foreign media organization. This visa allows a stay that corresponds to the duration of the agreement or mission up to 180 extendable days, and it can be issued for one or multiple entries.
- **Work visa:** The work visa is granted to foreigners to work in Timor-Leste. Therefore, the holder can enter the country in order to temporarily perform a remunerated professional or independent activity (Article 36 of the Immigration and Asylum Law). The work visa is valid for a year and can be renewed for equal periods up to three years.
- **Diplomatic and official visas:** These visas are issued to diplomats, government officials, and representatives of international organizations who are visiting Timor-Leste on official business.
- **Temporary resident visa:** This visa is granted to individuals who wish to reside in Timor-Leste for an extended period for purposes other than employment or education, such as family reunification, investment, or retirement.
- **Family reunification:** Family reunification is possible for foreigners who possess a residence permit or refugee status. Family members eligible for family reunification are children under 18 years old and spouses.

# LICENSE AND DOCUMENTS

The documents which an applicant will need to submit for a Timor-Leste Visa application are:

**I. Passport:** A valid passport is a fundamental requirement for immigration to Timor-Leste. It should have a remaining validity of at least six months beyond the intended period of stay.

**II. Visa:** Depending on the purpose of immigration, individuals may need to obtain a specific type of visa, such as a tourist visa, business visa, work visa, student visa, or temporary resident visa.

**III. Application form:** Applicants must complete an immigration application form, providing personal details, purpose of visit, intended length of stay, and other relevant information.



**IV. Supporting documents:** Various supporting documents may be required, depending on the purpose of immigration. These can include but are not limited to:

- **Proof of accommodation:** Documents such as hotel reservations, rental agreements, or letters of invitation from a host may be required.
- **Proof of financial means:** Evidence of sufficient funds to cover expenses during the stay, such as bank statements or sponsorship letters, may be necessary.
- **Employment-related documents:** For work visas, individuals may need to provide a job offer letter, employment contract, or other documents related to their employment in Timor-Leste.
- **Educational documents:** For student visas, applicants may need to submit acceptance letters from educational institutions, transcripts, or proof of enrolment.
- **Health and insurance documents:** Some visas may require proof of health insurance coverage and/or a medical certificate indicating good health.

**V. Police clearance certificate:** Depending on the purpose of immigration and the applicant's country of origin, a police clearance certificate or criminal record check may be required to demonstrate good character and meet the immigration requirements.

**VI. Vaccination certificate:** Timor-Leste may have specific vaccination requirements. Applicants may need to provide a vaccination certificate or proof of immunization for certain diseases.

# RECENT CHANGES TO IMMIGRATION POLICY

Following East Timor's independence from Indonesia in 2002, the country established its own immigration policies, regulating entry and stay of foreign nationals.

East Timor has entered into agreements with certain countries to allow visa-free access for their citizens. In recent years, East Timor implemented an online visa application system called "e-Visa," allowing individuals to apply for visas electronically.

This system aims to streamline the visa application process. Also, East Timor has participated in regional initiatives such as the Association of South East Asian Nations ("ASEAN") and the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), which can influence its immigration policies and collaborations with neighbouring countries.



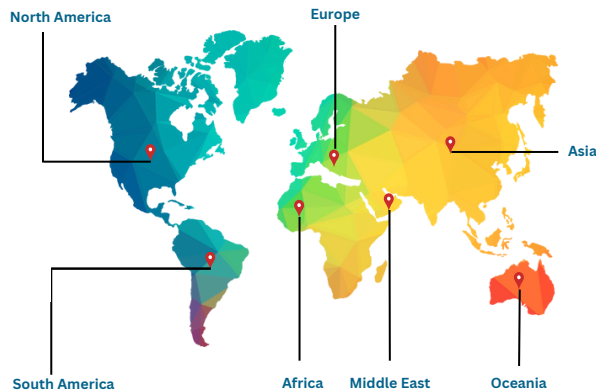
# HOW WE CAN HELP ?



At Chandrawat & Partners, we provide full service for immigration law, including visa applications, sponsorship applications, interview preparation, appeals process, and general counselling. Some of the services provided by our team are as follows:

- Our team helps our clients apply for visas across the spectrum like employment, education, entertainment, business, and tourist visas.
- Our team also works with the internal application processes to ensure full compliance with the law.
- Our team can assist clients with single or multiple-entry business visas, social visas, visa-on-arrival, and visit visa extensions.
- Our team can assist clients in immigration audits, deportation cases, detainment cases, and administrative court cases.

## SERVING CLIENTS WORLDWIDE



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