

## **NAMIBIA – Immigration & Visa**



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**04.04.2016**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Namibia is a country in South Western Africa, bordered in the south by South Africa, in the east by Botswana and in the north by Angola. Namibia's capital is Windhoek and the country's total population is just over 2 million. Although English is the sole official language, German and Afrikaans are also widely spoken due to the period of colonial occupation by the Germans and also Afrikaaner. Agriculture, Tourism and Mining are the foundation of Namibia's economy which experienced an average 5.2% GDP growth over the last 5 years.

This manual/brochure aims to provide a brief overview of the immigration landscape of Namibia.

## **ABOUT IBN**

IBN Business & Immigration Solutions provides a full range of immigration services for Southern Africa. With our professional and trusted network of partners on the ground, we are familiar with the practical reality, which governs immigration rules & regulations.

IBN has been in the industry for nearly 2 decades. The company holds its headquarters in Cape Town and boasts 3 offices, in Johannesburg, Stellenbosch and Windhoek, Namibia. With its team of over 20 caring and dedicated immigration professionals prepared to go the extra mile to find the best immigration solution for you.

IBN has opened our first international office in Windhoek, Namibia, in April 2016.

## **OUR SERVICES FOR NAMIBIA**

Our team of immigration specialists will facilitate your immigration to Namibia. We provide superior comprehensive service and expert advice – to global corporations as well as individuals - on all immigration requirements to be met according to the nature of your stay in Namibia and will advise on the best immigration solutions.

## **NAMIBIA IMMIGRATION LANDSCAPE**

The primary legislation governing immigration in Namibia is the Immigration Act of 1993. This document serves as the primary source for all immigration services provided in Namibia and its framework has been designed with a pragmatic approach. The 1993 Act is the only official legislative material available to provide an overview of the legal landscape. However, in practice, the Namibian Government has jurisdiction to influence certain applications of the Act under specific sections and circumstances and these official instructions are seldom reflected in public records.

It is therefore vital to have a presence on the ground in order to provide the best practical source.

### **WHAT IS A VISA?**

A visa is an official endorsement in a passport, which allows the bearer to proceed to the relevant country's territory provided that such bearer complies with the terms and conditions stipulated on the obtained visa.

### **TYPE OF VISAS and PERMITS ISSUED TO FOREIGN NATIONALS**

- Business visa
- Short term work permit (90 days)
- Long term work permit
- Study permit
- Accompanying permit
- Tourist/holiday visa
- Investors permit / self employed

### **WHAT IS A TOURIST VISA?**

A tourist visa is for people coming to visit Namibia, it is not meant for people wishing to conduct any form of business or to perform any work related activities.

People from visa-exempt countries can enter Namibia with their valid passport and will get a visa for 90 days at port of entry.

People from visa-restricted countries will need to apply in their home country at the Namibian Representation. Should there not be any representation in their country, they can contact an immigration agent in Namibia who will obtain on their behalf a “letter of approval” letter which will be used to travel to Namibia. The related visa will subsequently be endorsed at the port of entry. For passport holders from visa restricted countries, a visa can be issued for a period varying from 30 to 90 days, at the discretion of the Namibian authorities.

### **WHAT IS A BUSINESS VISA?**

A business visa is intended for a person who comes to Namibia to attend meetings, conferences, seminars, corporate events, business prospecting missions, official government visits, sports events, expositions, trade fairs, or attending short training courses (no longer than 90 days). A business visa DOES NOT allow the holder to take up employment in Namibia, do on site work at a third party or to take on any activity where remuneration is received (eg. Consultancy).

The business visa is issued for a single entry and for up to a maximum of 90 days per annum. However, practice shows that business visas tend to be issued for a period not exceeding 14 days; the recent tendency shows an even tighter issuance for business visas: single entry visas valid for 5 working days on average.

An important recent change is that all business visa must be applied at the Namibian missions abroad before the applicant travels. Before the change these visa were issued upon arrival for visa exempt countries. Thus, South African passport holders who wish to attend, for instance, a board meeting must apply before the travel for a business visa at the Consulate or Embassy.

### **WHO NEEDS A BUSINESS VISA?**

People who conduct visits to Namibia of a business nature. For example: to attend corporate meetings, seminars, conferences, etc. Business visas do not apply in any way to people conducting any type of work or form of employment, being directly or indirectly (consultants, sub-contractors and such).

## WHERE TO APPLY FOR A TOURIST OR BUSINESS VISA?

People from visa-restricted countries will have to apply for a business/tourist visa before they travel to Namibia, at the Namibian embassy in their country. If there is no Namibian embassy in your home country you may contact an immigration agent in Namibia who will obtain on your behalf a “letter of approval” (it basically confirms that your visa is being approved), you will take this letter with you and hand it to the official when entering Namibia so that the visa can be endorsed at the port of entry.

Business visa must be applied at the mission abroad before the intended travel.

### VISA EXEMPT COUNTRIES

Angola	Armenia	Australia	Austria	Azerbaijan	Belarus
Belgium	Botswana	Brazil	Canada	Cuba	Denmark
Finland	France	Georgia	Germany	Hong Kong	Iceland
Ireland	Italy	Japan	Kazakhstan	Kenya	Kyrgyzstan
Lesotho	Lichtenstein	Luxembourg	Macau	Malawi	Malaysia
Mauritius	Moldova	Mozambique	Netherlands	New Zealand	Norway
Portugal	Russia	Singapore	South Africa	Spain	Swaziland
Sweden	Switzerland	Tanzania	Turkmenistan	Ukraine	UK
USA	Uzbekistan	Zambia	Zimbabwe		

## **WHAT IS A WORK PERMIT?**

A work permit is an authorization granted to nationals to work specifying the length of time allocated for the specific activity and description of persons authorized to be employed. The permit specifies the employer, which will be employing the foreign national and the professional occupation, which this foreign national will be taking in the territory during the period authorized by the permit.

### **MAIN CATEGORIES OF WORK PERMITS IN NAMIBIA**

- There are 2 types of short term work permits that applicants can apply for to enter Namibia and work there for a short while:
  - (1) 3 months' work visa
  - (2) 6 months' work visa – being phased out
- Long-term work permits must be applied for by individuals who wish to work in Namibia for 7 months or longer. Long-term work permits are issued for 1 and 2 years.

### **PROCESSING TIME FOR A SHORT TERM WORK VISA**

The processing time is approximately 14 working days + 3 days to endorse the visa into the passport.

### **PROCESSING TIME FOR A LONG TERM WORK PERMIT AND HOW LONG IS IT VALID FOR?**

The processing time for a long-term work permit is approximately 3 to 4 months and it can be allocated for 1 or 2 years, depending on your contract of employment.

### **CAN A WORK PERMIT BE RENEWED?**

Yes, it can be renewed should your employment contract be renewed or extended. A work permit is up for renewal every two years (depending on what was originally granted in the previous permit).

### **WHAT DOCUMENTS ARE REQUIRED FOR A WORK PERMIT?**

Passport, tertiary qualifications/training certificates, job offer, advertisements, medical, radiological, police clearance from home country, unsuccessful candidates letter and CVS, CV of the applicant, reference letters motivation letter from the company, social security, deed of surety, tax registration from the company.

### **INSTITUTION(S) ISSUING WORK PERMITS AND PLACE OF SUBMISSION**

Work permits need to be submitted at the Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration in Namibia.

### **PROCEDURE TO FOLLOW IN CASE OF REJECTION OF WORK PERMIT APPLICATION**

Once a rejection is received the timeframe to depart will be stated on the letter. If you are not appealing you need to leave within the given period, this is usually seven days after rejection. For a long term visa the letter will state the amount of days. The appeal process currently takes 2-5 months before an outcome is received.

### **HAS NAMIBIA GOT A QUOTA SYSTEM?**

No, there is no quota on the number of foreign employees allowed to work for companies in Namibia.

## **WHAT OTHER PERMITS ARE THERE FOR NAMIBIA?**

- Study permits: to be applied for by the individuals who will make use of basic and tertiary education. A study permit is issued for 2 years and can be renewed.
- Investor/self-employed work permit: to be applied for by individuals who wish to establish a new company in Namibia either through a Namibian close corporation or a Namibian company.

## **WHO QUALIFIES FOR A STUDY PERMIT?**

Study permits are for foreigners who wish to study in Namibia; it applies to basic education studies as well as tertiary and higher education. A Namibia specific is that the Department only issues study permits at a specific time during the year. However, if an applicant wishes to join a school outside this period then all the schools will allow him to do so.

## **WHO QUALIFIES FOR AN INVESTOR'S PERMIT?**

An investor's/ Self-employed work permit can be issued to applicants who want to establish a close corporation or to invest in a Namibian company. This is a complex process due to the numerous permissions to be obtained from various departments.

Obtaining an investor permit for Namibia is a multi-step process. Firstly, the investor must obtain the necessary permissions and registrations to be able to make the investment. Secondly, an application for a work permit/self-employed permit will be made.

The duration of the permit – generally 2 years - remains at the discretion of the Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration.

## **WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS TO OBTAIN PERMANENT RESIDENCE?**

A residence permit is usually granted to foreign nationals who have been working in Namibia for a given number of years consecutively. Bearing in mind that it still up to the discretion of the Ministry to grant the residence or not.



You need to have been on a work permit in Namibia for a period of 10 years before being able to apply for PR.

### **HOW DO I QUALIFY FOR PERMANENT RESIDENCE?**

Obtaining permanent residency in Namibia is a daunting and complex process. Each application is taken on merit and the requirements will differ depending on whether you are working, retired, an investor or otherwise.

The requirements at present is proof of being financially sustainable, this can be shown by funds and property in Namibia realizing to an amount ranging from 2-3 million. There are no age restrictions when applying for permanent residency. Government professionals may also apply as well as foreigner who are staying in Namibia for 10-12 years, there is however no guarantee that PR will be granted for such persons. The applicant may not await the outcome within Namibia.

### **HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO ISSUE A PERMANENT RESIDENCE PERMIT?**

The processing time for a permanent residence permit is, like in most countries, a rather long process, on average 1 to 1 ½ years.

### **DOES NAMIBIA RECOGNISE “LIFE PARTNERS”?**

No. Namibia only recognizes marriages. Therefore, a life partner cannot qualify for a spousal visa and will have to qualify in his/her own right for his/her permit.

### **WHAT IS NAMIBIA VIEW IN RESPECT OF SAME-SEX COUPLES?**

Same-sex marriage is not allowed in Namibia. Therefore, similarly to life partners, they need to qualify in their own right.

## **IBN OUTBOUND SERVICES**

The preparation of immigration applications for outbound is done at our offices in South Africa, thus ensuring fast response and processing times, leaving our trusted network of local partners the role of assisting with the local submission when required and as our point of contact with the immigration authorities in their respective countries.

For corporate and private clients located in South Africa and in need of outbound migration services we are able to assist them with short-term visas as well as work permit applications submitted to the local Embassies in these countries.

We can also assist you in other countries, for example India and UAE, please just ask us.

### **IBN OFFICES:**

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