

VISITOR VISA REFORM: REDUCING THE BARRIERS FOR TRAVEL TO AUSTRALIA



TOURISM & TRANSPORT FORUM (TTF)
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PUBLIC POLICY INTERESTS OF
LEADING CORPORATIONS AND
INSTITUTIONS IN THE AUSTRALIAN
TOURISM, TRANSPORT AND
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Tourism is an economic development strategy for Australia that can deliver increasing economic activity, including jobs and business opportunities across the country. It is an industry in which Australia has significant natural advantages that, with the right investment and policy frameworks, could see the sector make an even greater contribution to economic activity.

Governments across the country have endorsed the Tourism 2020 target of doubling overnight visitor expenditure and are taking steps to grow their visitor economies. Reaching the \$140 billion target will generate tens of billions of dollars in additional expenditure across Australia.

Australia's location in the Asia-Pacific presents us with an unparalleled opportunity to benefit from the structural shift occurring in the global economy, including growing demand for travel from the burgeoning Asian middle classes, especially in China. However, this will not happen organically and it is essential to understand that other destinations have also recognised the potential of the growing wealth in Asia.

Not only will the emergence of an Asian travelling class continue to provide potential visitors, but their increasing buying power also makes them a key market for Australian goods and services, including food and wine, education, health and technology. Tourism can provide an entrée to future relationships which can further benefit the Australian economy, creating jobs, supporting regional and national development, and driving sustainable industry.

Especially with the mining investment boom waning and heavy manufacturing continuing to decline, tourism can play a critical role in our future prosperity. Maximising the benefits of this potential requires the removal of barriers for travellers from those markets. The cost and inconvenience of obtaining a visa to visit Australia represents one such barrier to travel. Reform to our visa processing system, as well as increased investment in marketing and visitor infrastructure, will be essential if we are to reach our Tourism 2020 expenditure goals.

Australia cannot afford to lose the competitive advantage of our proximity to Asia through complacency.

While Australia was at the forefront of facilitating travel as a signatory to the first UN protocol that recommended visa-free travel to foster international travel in 1963 and in introducing low-cost electronic travel authorities in the 1990s, progress has been slower in recent years. Other destinations have recognised the opportunity and are responding, with Australia's offer no longer world leading.

While there is work underway to improve visitor visa processes, including a gradual move to online processing and the introduction of three-year, multiple entry visas for Chinese business travellers, a much more ambitious reform agenda is required if Australia is to maximise the opportunities of growing outbound travel from Asian markets. Australia must focus on reforms which will make a material difference and ensure that our offering is competitive with other destinations.

Regaining a world-leading position on visa processing has the potential to accelerate international visitation to Australia and deliver tens of billions of dollars a year in additional expenditure, helping to create thousands of jobs across the country. Doing so requires reforms to make it quicker, easier and more affordable for more international tourists to come to Australia.

TRAVELLERS SEE VISAS MAINLY AS A FORMALITY THAT IMPOSES A COST. IF THE COST OF OBTAINING A VISA EXCEEDS A THRESHOLD, POTENTIAL TRAVELLERS ARE SIMPLY DETERRED FROM MAKING A PARTICULAR JOURNEY OR CHOOSE AN ALTERNATIVE DESTINATION WITH LESS HASSLE.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Prioritise the implementation of online visitor visa processing for key markets including China and India

Continue to review and simplify documentary requirements of visitor visa applications

Extend multiple-year multiple entry visas to leisure visitors and other countries

Review whether the needs of key source markets are being met and roll out forms in other languages

Examine the current visitor visa fee structure with a view to introducing a more equitable approach that recognises the economic contribution of tourism

Introduce a fee-for-service premium option for faster processing of visitor visas

Build on the Cricket World Cup single visa initiative to move towards common visitor visas for Australia and New Zealand

PART I – AN AGENDA FOR VISITOR VISA REFORM



INTRODUCTION

More than one billion people travelled internationally in 2012, setting a new milestone for the industry. By 2030 this figure is expected to top 1.8 billion, with the greatest share of this growth in the Asia Pacific.¹

In Australia, tourism has been identified as one of five super-growth industries, capable of collectively delivering an additional AUD250 billion to the national economy over the next 20 years.² Australian tourism is serious about meeting this opportunity, with the Australian government and all the states and territories and industry endorsing an aggressive tourism target as part of the Tourism 2020 Strategy.³ But essential to underpin the target of doubling overnight visitor spending to AUD140 billion a year by the end of the decade will be stronger and continuing growth in visitor arrivals from Asian markets.

REFORMS TO OUR VISITOR VISA SCHEME COULD BE A KEY GAME CHANGER IN HELPING AUSTRALIAN TOURISM ACHIEVE ITS AMBITIONS AND MAXIMISE THE POTENTIAL OF THE VISITOR ECONOMY AS AN ECONOMIC DRIVER FOR AUSTRALIA.

The Tourism 2020 Strategy established a target range of AUD115 to 140 billion in annual overnight visitor spending, but at the moment even the lower end of the range seems out of reach.

We can, however, adjust current policy settings and dramatically increase Australia's chances of achieving the top end of the target or even more. Reforms to our visitor visa scheme could be a key game changer in helping Australian tourism achieve its ambitions and maximise the potential of the visitor economy as an economic driver for Australia.

But there is work to do if we are to get there. While Australia was once seen as a leader in this area, signing up to the first United Nations' protocol that recommended visa-free travel as a way to foster international travel and tourism⁴ in 1963, and introducing the Electronic Travel Authority (ETA) in 1996 – first for Singapore and US passport holders travelling on Qantas and Singapore Airlines⁵ – other countries have now caught up to and surpassed Australia.

The Henley & Partners Visa Restriction Index,⁶ which is produced in cooperation with the International Air Transport Association (IATA), points to how important the reform is for Australian tourism given our dependence on Asian source markets to underpin growth to

reach our targets. The index ranks countries according to the visa-free access its citizens enjoy to travel to other countries. Citizens of Malaysia and South Korea are the least restricted among their Asian peers. Both countries rank high on the list, with their citizens able to travel to more than 160 countries visa-free. Nationals of other Asian source markets critical to Australia – such as China, India, Indonesia and Vietnam – face considerable travel restrictions to many of these destinations, in contrast to the ease of travel that Australians and other Western travellers enjoy.

OUR COMPARATIVE STANDING WHEN IT COMES TO VISITOR VISAS HAS SLIPPED IN RECENT YEARS AS OTHER DESTINATIONS HAVE IDENTIFIED STREAMLINED VISITOR VISA ARRANGEMENTS AS A KEY COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE AND HAVE STARTED TO RESPOND WITH INNOVATIVE AND ATTRACTIVE OFFERS.

TTF's *Australia in the Asian Century: Visitor Economy Report Card*⁷ asked whether Australia's visitor visa processes were streamlined, timely and cost-competitive. More than half of respondents rated Australia's current efforts around visitor visas as requiring work (D) or failing (F).

TTF has long championed easing of visa restrictions as a potential competitive advantage for Australia. The country's comparative standing when it comes to visitor visas has slipped in recent years as other destinations have identified streamlined visitor visa arrangements as a key competitive advantage and have started to respond with innovative and attractive offers.

There is mounting evidence that improvements in visa facilitation lead to increased visitation, spending and job creation in the destination countries, making it imperative for Australia to prioritise investment and reform in this critical area.

This report features a comparison of Australia's visitor visa regime with that of our major competitor destinations when it comes to key Asian growth source markets to set out the facts behind our call for quicker, easier and more affordable visitor visas.

¹ *Tourism Towards 2030* (2013), United Nations World Tourism Organization

² *Positioning for prosperity? Catching the next wave* (2014), Deloitte

³ *2020 Tourism Industry Potential* (Nov 2010), Australian Government Department of Energy, Resources and Tourism and Tourism Australia

⁴ United Nations Conference on International Travel and Tourism (1964), Recommendations on International Travel and Tourism, 21 Aug – 5 Sep 1963, Rome

⁵ *Policy study on an EU Electronic System for Travel Authorization (EU ETA) – Annexes Case study: Australia* (2011), Price Waterhouse Coopers

⁶ *The Henley & Partners Visa Restriction Index 2013*, Henley & Partners Holdings Plc

⁷ *Australia in the Asian Century: Visitor Economy Report Card – Australia's tourism leaders rate our progress* (2014), Tourism & Transport Forum

AUSTRALIA'S VISITOR VISA SYSTEM

Australia's universal visa system requires that all those travelling to Australia who are not Australian citizens or residents have a visa to enter Australia, except New Zealand citizens who can apply for a visa on arrival. Visitors to Australia, depending on their country of citizenship, require one of the following visas:

Electronic Travel Authority (subclass 601)

- for nationals of low risk countries
- application can be completed online and must be made from outside Australia
- valid for 12 months with three months' stay permitted on each entry
- service charge of AUD20 for this application

eVisitor (subclass 651)

- for European nationals
- application can be completed online and must be made from outside Australia
- valid for 12 months with three months' stay permitted on each entry
- no charge for the application

Subclass 600 visa

- has four streams – tourist, sponsored family, business visitor and Approved Destination Status (ADS) streams
- either paper-based or online application depending on nationality, must initially be made from outside Australia but can also be applied for to extend a person's stay
- generally granted for a three, six or 12-month period for either single or multiple entries
- cost of AUD130

As the Australian tourism industry looks increasingly to Asian markets to realise its ambitions of achieving AUD140 billion in overnight visitor expenditure by the end of the decade, the disparity between the requirements of our traditional source markets and visitors from some of these key Asian markets requires close review. Existing visa requirements mean a Chinese independent traveller faces a fee of AUD130, has to produce considerable evidence, complete a 15-page paper-based application and wait up to 15 days for processing.

In contrast, a potential visitor from the United States, Britain or even Hong Kong can simply fill in a quick online form and receive an electronic visa for AUD20. Similar barriers impact potential visitors from India, Indonesia and Vietnam.

VISA FACILITATION AS A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

The Tourism Ministers' Summit held in conjunction with the 2012 World Travel Market in London concluded that visa processes and policies continue to be barriers to international travel, with restrictive visa policies and complex entry formalities impacting the growth of the industry. This is particularly the case for emerging economies – including those in Asia – which represent the fastest-growing outbound travel markets.⁸

The difficulty and complexity of obtaining visas deter potential travellers, acting effectively as a barrier to trade. As countries look to facilitate cross-border movement of goods to support their international trade agendas, removing restrictions on the movement of travellers should receive equal attention.⁹

While considerable progress has been made in recent decades to facilitate travel, there are still significant opportunities to improve visa procedures through technology and information sharing. Research jointly commissioned by the World Travel & Tourism Council and the UN World Tourism Organization estimated the potential increased visitation, economic activity and job creation which could result from reforms in visa processes – with the potential for an extra five million jobs in G20 countries in the coming years.¹⁰

Visa facilitation efforts have generally led to increases in tourism demand for the destination country, with case studies showing an increase in arrivals of five to 25 per cent following policy setting adjustments.¹¹ Opportunities for improved visa facilitation include enhanced information for potential visitors, enhanced information sharing between governments, reduced documentation and increased processing capacity.

Many countries have identified streamlined visitor visa arrangements as a key competitive advantage and are responding to the opportunity more quickly than Australia. Every month, other countries are announcing their efforts to make it easier for visitors to come to their countries.

⁸ Visa facilitation: Stimulating economic growth and development through tourism (2013), UNWTO

⁹ Smart Travel – Unlocking Economic Growth and Development through Travel Facilitation (2014), World Economic Forum

¹⁰ The Impact of Visa Facilitation on Job Creation in the G20 Economies (2012), UNWTO and WTTC

¹¹ Ibid.

INCREASING COMPETITION IN VISITOR VISAS

Evidence of this renewed focus on making travel for Chinese citizens easier can be found in both Australia's traditional competitor set and also in those countries emerging as new rivals for Asian visitors.

For example, India recently announced it would offer visas on arrival to visitors from 180 countries at its major airports, up from the current 11 countries.¹²

Responding to growing demand from China, already their largest visa market, the UK government recently announced that 24-hour Super Priority Visas would be available to potential visitors in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou.¹³ The introduction of same-day visas for repeat international travellers follows other recent improvements including a pass-back service which allows visitors to apply for the UK and Schengen visa at the same time, launch of a new online form with fewer questions, premium service lounges in key cities and reduced documentary requirements for repeat visitors.

The European Commission is debating proposals to make short-stay visas more flexible to increase travel to the Schengen area. It is expected this could increase trips by 30 to 60 percent, generating EUR130 billion in additional spending and 1.3 million tourism jobs within five years. Some of the changes being proposed include reducing processing time, simplifying supporting documents and expediting requests for multiple-entry visas and extending the length of stay.¹⁴

Countries are recognising the positive and significant signal that visitor visa facilitation can have. In light of the impact of recent political turmoil on its reputation as a travel destination, Thailand implemented a series of tourism promotion measures including extending existing visitor visas by 30 days and offering free visas for Chinese tourists.¹⁵

Probably the most significant challenge Australia faces is the focus that the United States has given to improving its visitor visa processes. The US Department of State has made significant investments to dramatically reduce wait times for interviews and to improve the visitor experience with increases in staffing and streamlining of the application procedures.¹⁶ In fact, Chinese visitors to the United States can now pick up their visas at any of the 900 China CITIC Bank branches instead of at a US embassy.¹⁷

AUSTRALIA VS. OUR COMPETITORS

An examination of Australia's visitor visa requirements and processes for potential visitors from key Asian source markets – China, Malaysia, South Korea, India, Vietnam and Indonesia – reveals opportunities for reforms to make Australia a more attractive destination for potential visitors. Analysis of some of our competitors – New Zealand, UK, the US, Canada and the Schengen area – shows where we are on par or falling behind the pack. It also shows where there are opportunities for Australia to create competitive advantage by reviewing, streamlining and improving its visitor visa system.

Working with a leading consulting firm, we have examined the visitor visa requirements and processes potential visitors face when making the decision to travel to a number of destinations. The specific documentary requirements were considered, whether the application was available online or paper-based, the lodgement of the application, the processing time, validity period and cost.



¹² India to extend visa-on-arrival facility to tourists from 180 nations, <http://www.ndtv.com/article/india/india-to-extend-visa-on-arrival-facility-to-tourists-from-180-nations-479814>, 6 February 2014

¹³ Immigration Minister announces new improvements to the visa system in China, www.gov.uk/government/news/immigration-minister-announces-new-improvements-to-the-visa-system-in-china, 28 July 2014

¹⁴ Brussels proposes the creation of a 'roaming visa' to attract rich tourists, <http://www.tourism-review.com/reducing-visa-procedures-to-drive-tourists-to-europe-news4091>

¹⁵ With free visas, Thailand tells Chinese tourists 'please come back soon', Reuters, 5 September 2014

¹⁶ Gateway to Jobs & Growth: Creating a Better Traveler Entry Process (2013), U.S. Travel Association

¹⁷ Coming to a beach near you: How the growing Chinese middle class is changing the global tourism industry, The Economist, 19 April 2014

Summary comparison of visitor visa processes

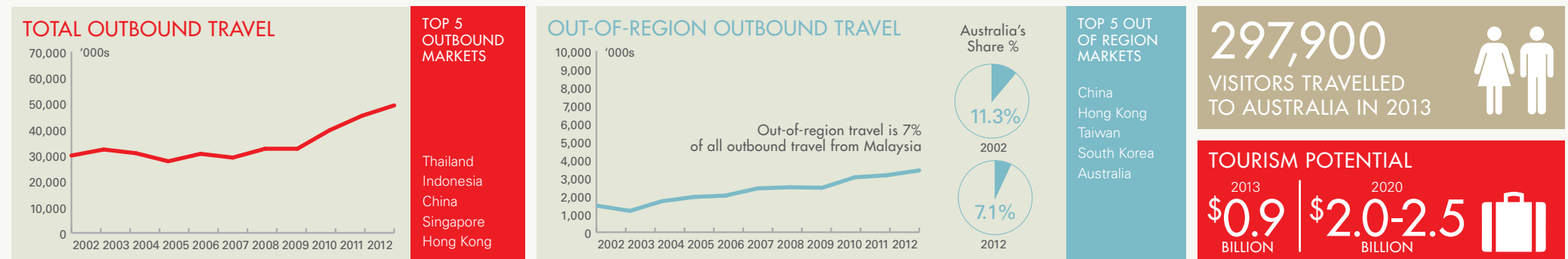
	<div> <div>■ Visa difficult to obtain</div> <div>■ Visa less difficult to obtain</div> <div>■ Visa easy to obtain</div> </div>					
	CHINA	MALAYSIA	SOUTH KOREA	INDIA	INDONESIA	VIETNAM
2002	190,000	160,000	190,000	45,000	90,000	9,000
2013	710,000	280,000	200,000	170,000	140,000	40,000
Australia (non-ADS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper-based, lodge at visa centre (3 locations) 15 business days AUD130 3, 6 or 12 months Multiple entry Business: 3-year multiple-entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electronic Travel Authority (ETA) 1 day AUD20 Under 3 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electronic Travel Authority (ETA) 1 day AUD20 Under 3 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper-based, lodge at visa centre (12 locations) 1 month AUD130 3, 6 or 12 months Multiple entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper-based, lodge at visa centre (2 locations) 1 month AUD130 3, 6 or 12 months Multiple entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper-based, lodge at visa centre (2 locations) 1 month AUD130 3, 6 or 12 months Multiple entry
New Zealand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper-based 5-20 days NZD165 Up to 24 months Multiple entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visa waiver country Under 3 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visa waiver country Under 3 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper-based 25 days NZD165 Up to 12 months Multiple entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper-based 25 days NZD165 Up to 12 months Multiple entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper-based 25 days NZD165 Up to 12 months Multiple entry
United Kingdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application 3 weeks GBP83 Up to 6 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visa national exempt Up to 6 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visa national exempt Up to 6 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application 3 weeks GBP83 Up to 6 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application 3 weeks GBP83 Up to 6 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application 3 weeks GBP83 Up to 6 months
USA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application 1-7 days for interview 1-2 working days for processing USD160 Up to 6 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application 1 day for interview 1 working day for processing USD160 Up to 6 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visa waiver Electronic System for Travel Authorisation (ESTA) USD160 2-year, multiple entry for up to 90 days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application 1-7 days for interview 1-2 working days for processing USD160 Up to 6 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application 2 days for interview 1 working day for processing USD160 Up to 6 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application 1 day for interview 1 working day for processing USD160 Up to 6 months
Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application or paper-based 13 days CAD100 (max family CAD500) 6 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application or paper-based 17 days CAD100 (max family CAD500) 6 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visa exempt country Up to 6 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application or paper-based 12 days CAD100 (max family CAD500) 6 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application or paper-based 6 days CAD100 (max family CAD500) 6 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application or paper-based 36 days CAD100 (max family CAD500) 6 months
Schengen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper-based, lodged at embassy/consulate 12-15 days EUR60 Max stay of 90 days in 180 day period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No visa required Up to 3 months within a 6-month period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No visa required Up to 3 months within a 6-month period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper-based, lodged at consulate 2-10 working days EUR60 Max stay of 90 days in 180 day period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper-based, lodged at consulate 2-10 working days EUR60 Max stay of 90 days in 180 day period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper-based, lodged at consulate 2-10 working days EUR60 Max stay of 90 days in 180 day period

THE OPPORTUNITY: SNAPSHOTS OF SIX KEY MARKETS

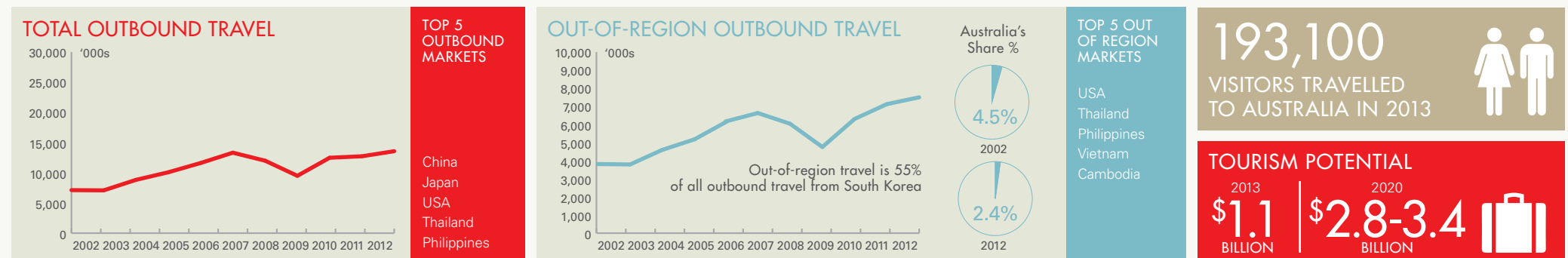
CHINA



MALAYSIA



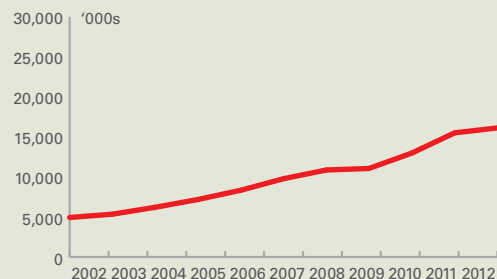
SOUTH KOREA



Sources: 2014 Market Profiles, TA, Tourism Economics, Tourism Decision Metrics | 2013 Market Profiles, TA, Tourism Economics, Tourism Decision Metrics | ABS, OADs

INDIA

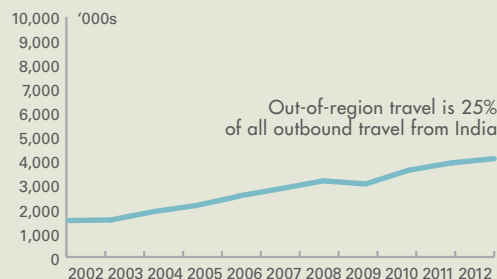
TOTAL OUTBOUND TRAVEL



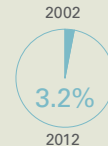
TOP 5 OUTBOUND MARKETS

Bahrain
Thailand
Singapore
Saudi Arabia
UAE

OUT-OF-REGION OUTBOUND TRAVEL



Australia's Share %



TOP 5 OUT OF REGION MARKETS

USA
France
UK
Hong Kong
Switzerland

171,700

VISITORS TRAVELLED TO AUSTRALIA IN 2013



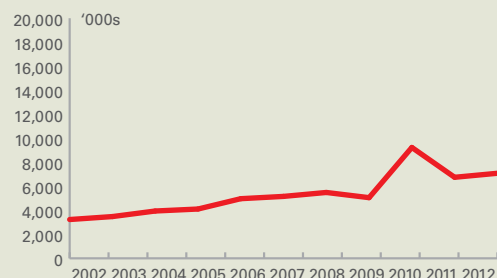
TOURISM POTENTIAL

2013: \$0.7 BILLION | 2020: \$1.9-2.3 BILLION



INDONESIA

TOTAL OUTBOUND TRAVEL



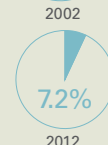
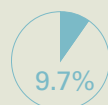
TOP 5 OUTBOUND MARKETS

Malaysia
Singapore
China
Saudi Arabia
Hong Kong

OUT-OF-REGION OUTBOUND TRAVEL



Australia's Share %



TOP 5 OUT OF REGION MARKETS

China
Hong Kong
South Korea
Macau
Australia

150,700

VISITORS TRAVELLED TO AUSTRALIA IN 2013



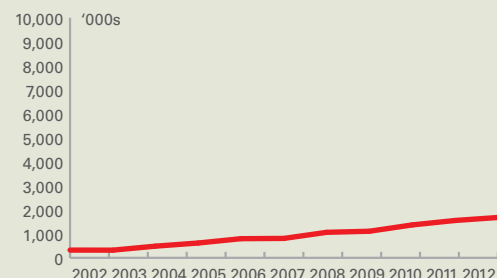
TOURISM POTENTIAL

2013: \$0.6 BILLION | NO PROJECTION FOR 2020



VIETNAM

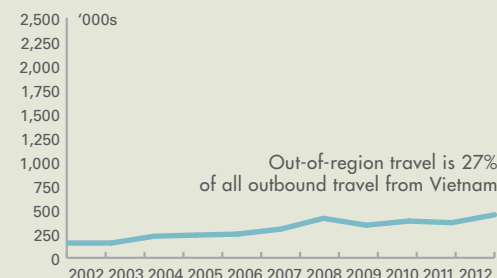
TOTAL OUTBOUND TRAVEL



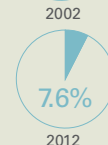
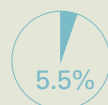
TOP 5 OUTBOUND MARKETS

Cambodia
Thailand
Laos
China
Singapore

OUT-OF-REGION OUTBOUND TRAVEL



Australia's Share %



TOP 5 OUT OF REGION MARKETS

Korea
France
Russia
Japan
United States

42,600

VISITORS TRAVELLED TO AUSTRALIA IN 2013



TOURISM POTENTIAL

2013: \$0.5 BILLION | NO PROJECTION FOR 2020



TTF'S VISITOR VISA REFORM AGENDA

TTF has been an active participant in discussions around visitor visa reforms for a number of years. While the commitment to rolling out online processing to all countries was strongly applauded when announced in 2013, the pace of overall reform must increase dramatically if Australia hopes to maintain or grow market share. We recognise that progress is being made – including the gradual move to online processing for all countries and the introduction of three-year, multiple entry visas for Chinese business travellers – however, much more ambitious reforms are needed if Australia is to maximise the opportunities of the increase in travel in Asia.

Critical visitor visa reforms

ONLINE

The implementation of online visitor visa processing across all countries must prioritise key growth source markets. While recognising the overall workload in implementing online processing to markets such as China and India is significant, the current approach of tackling smaller but less important markets is delaying the benefits which could be achieved from the move to online applications for these key markets.

The move to online applications also presents an opportunity to reduce processing costs, enabling resources to be redirected to reducing processing times and other passenger processing responsibilities.

Prioritise the implementation of online visitor visa processing for key markets including China and India.

SIMPLIFY

The current visitor visa documentary requirements can prove prohibitive to potential visitors. Recent work to simplify the list of information and document requirements is welcome and should continue. Other countries are taking further steps to streamline requirements for repeat visitors or those with a specific frequent flyer status – to minimise requirements for frequent travellers.

Visitors who have already been to Australia and have complied with all visa requirements should face a significantly reduced evidentiary burden. This approach should allow for faster processing of repeat visitors while enabling additional resources to be dedicated to first-time visitors.

Continue to review and simplify documentary requirements of visitor visa applications.

MULTIPLE-ENTRY

The option of three-year multiple-entry visas for the business visitor stream for Chinese visitors presents a real opportunity to improve Australia's competitiveness while reducing processing costs. The further roll-out of similar options for leisure visitors and to other markets is essential if Australia is to match the offering of other competitors who have introduced similar products over recent years.

Similar to other reforms above, multiple-entry visas reduce processing costs but would also encourage repeat visits.

Extend multiple-year multiple-entry visas to leisure visitors and other countries.

ACCESSIBLE

Recognising that the department, individual embassies and consulates, and in-market travel agents produce forms, instructions and other materials in a number of languages to assist visitors in applying for visitor visas, there is a need to review current practices to ensure that potential visitors are provided with the relevant information required in their language to facilitate the visitor visa application process.

Review whether the needs of key source markets are being met and roll out forms in other languages.

COMPETITIVE

There is a need to examine the current visa fee structure with a view to introducing a new approach to address inequities in visitor visa costs between Australia's traditional and emerging source markets. Visitors from Malaysia, Hong Kong and Singapore face an AUD20 service fee and visitors from Europe can apply for free, while visitors from our key target markets such as China face an application fee of AUD130.

With the eventual roll-out of the electronic platform to all nationalities and simplified forms with reduced evidentiary requirements, the cost of processing should be reduced across all visitor visa classes facilitating a review of the current fee structure.

There is also a need to consider the significant economic benefit derived from international visitors and to not view the visa fee as a revenue source to government.

Examine the current visitor visa fee structure with a view to introducing a more equitable approach that recognises the economic contribution of tourism.

PREMIUM SERVICE

Introducing a user-pays premium visitor visa processing model would provide a faster option for passengers willing to pay for this service. A number of competitor destinations are introducing this service responding to shifts in trip planning behaviour and visitor demand. A premium visitor visa processing model should include an option for premium customs and immigration clearance on arrival.

The development and ongoing administration of a premium service should be designed to not impact on resourcing for other visitor visa processing.

Introduce a fee-for-service premium option for faster processing of visitor visas.

COMMON VISAS

There is an opportunity to examine the outcomes of the current Australia-New Zealand joint visitor visa processing approach for the 2015 Cricket World Cup to assess opportunities for further joint visitor visa initiatives in the future. The experience of working together and having established information-sharing and data-transfer protocols should provide a head start to future work. Common visas would provide a competitive advantage for both countries, recognising the attractiveness of multiple country visitor visas such as those offered by Schengen countries and an increasing number of neighbouring countries.

Build on the Cricket World Cup single visa initiative to move towards common visitor visas for Australia and New Zealand.

PART II – A VISITOR VISA COMPARISON WITH KEY COMPETITORS

This section of the report will look at the Australian visitor visa requirements and processes for visitors from Australia's key Asian source markets – China, Malaysia, South Korea India, Vietnam and Indonesia. A similar examination of requirements and processes in New Zealand, the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada and the Schengen area is also undertaken to highlight the opportunities for Australia to create competitive advantage by reviewing, streamlining and improving its visitor visa system.



Summary comparison of visitor visa processes

	CHINA	MALAYSIA	SOUTH KOREA	INDIA	INDONESIA	VIETNAM
2002	190,000	160,000	190,000	45,000	90,000	9,000
2013	710,000	280,000	200,000	170,000	140,000	40,000
Australia (non-ADS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper-based, lodge at visa centre (3 locations) 15 business days AUD130 3, 6 or 12 months Multiple entry Business: 3-year, multiple-entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electronic Travel Authority (ETA) 1 day AUD20 Under 3 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electronic Travel Authority (ETA) 1 day AUD20 Under 3 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper-based, lodge at visa centre (12 locations) 1 month AUD130 3, 6 or 12 months Multiple entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper-based, lodge at visa centre (2 locations) 1 month AUD130 3, 6 or 12 months Multiple entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper-based, lodge at visa centre (2 locations) 1 month AUD130 3, 6 or 12 months Multiple entry
New Zealand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper-based 5-20 days NZD165 Up to 24 month Multiple entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visa waiver country (under 3 months) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visa waiver country (under 3 months) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper-based 25 days NZD165 Up to 12 months Multiple entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper-based 25 days NZD165 Up to 12 months Multiple entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper-based 25 days NZD165 Up to 12 months Multiple entry
United Kingdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application 3 weeks GBP83 Up to 6 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visa national exempt (up to 6 months) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visa national exempt (up to 6 months) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application 3 weeks GBP83 Up to 6 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application 3 weeks GBP83 Up to 6 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application 3 weeks GBP83 Up to 6 months
USA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application 1-7 days for interview 1-2 working days for processing USD160 Up to 6 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application 1 day for interview 1 working day for processing USD160 Up to 6 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visa waiver Electronic System for Travel Authorisation (ESTA) USD160 2-year, multiple entry for up to 90 days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application 1-7 days for interview 1-2 working days for processing USD160 Up to 6 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application 2 days for interview 1 working day for processing USD160 Up to 6 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application 1 day for interview 1 working day for processing USD160 Up to 6 months
Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application or paper-based 13 days CAD100 (max family CAD500) 6 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application or paper-based 20 days CAD100 (max family CAD500) 6 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visa exempt country Up to 6 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application or paper-based 12 days CAD100 (max family CAD500) 6 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application or paper-based 6 days CAD100 (max family CAD500) 6 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online application or paper-based 36 days CAD100 (max family CAD500) 6 months
Schengen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper-based, lodged at embassy/consulate 12-15 days EUR60 Max stay of 90 days in 180 day period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No visa required (up to 3 months within a 6-month period) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No visa required (up to 3 months within a 6-month period) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper-based, lodged at embassy/consulate 2-10 working days EUR60 Max stay of 90 days in 180 day period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper-based, lodged at embassy/consulate 2-10 working days EUR60 Max stay of 90 days in 180 day period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper-based, lodged at embassy/consulate 2-10 working days EUR60 Max stay of 90 days in 180 day period

AUSTRALIA

General overview of Australia's visitor visa program

History of Australia's visitor visa program

Australia's visitor visa program has undergone significant change over the past few decades. Prior to 1989, immigration officers had responsibility to grant a visa or entry permit to a non-citizen based on criteria set out in a series of policy manuals. This approach was replaced after a 1994 review by the Joint Standing Committee on Migration¹ in relation to the effectiveness of the program brought about the first major changes to the program, creating a simpler, more streamlined and consistent application and assessment process.

The most recent changes to the visitor visa program took effect in March 2013 through the implementation of the *Migration Amendment Regulation 2013 (No. 1)*, an amendment to the *Migration Regulations 1994* undertaken as part of the government's *Better Regulation Ministerial Partnership* between the then Minister for Immigration and Citizenship and Minister for Finance and Deregulation announced in June 2010, which included a commitment to reducing the total number of visa subclasses by the end of 2015.

Australia's current visitor visa program

Australia's universal visa system requires that all those travelling to Australia who are not Australian citizens require a visa to enter Australia. The following visitor visa classes are available to visitors to Australia, depending on their country of citizenship (see Appendix A for details).

- **Electronic Travel Authority (subclass 601)**
 - The Electronic Travel Authority (ETA) is for those considered low risk nationals
 - Valid for 12 months with three months' stay permitted on each entry to Australia
 - Application can be completed online and must be made from outside Australia
 - There is currently a service charge of AUD20 for this application
- **eVisitor (subclass 651)**
 - The eVisitor visa is for European nationals
 - Valid for 12 months with three months' stay permitted on each entry to Australia
 - Application can be completed online and must be made from outside Australia
 - There is no charge for the application

- **Subclass 600 visa**
 - Comprised of four streams: tourist, sponsored family, business visitor and Approved Destination Status (ADS) streams
 - Depending on the applicant's nationality, the application may be either paper-based or online
 - Generally granted for a three, six or less commonly 12-month period for either single or multiple entries to Australia²
 - Application must initially be made from outside Australia, but can also be applied for to extend a person's stay once they are in Australia³
 - There is a cost of AUD130 for the application

Other elements of Australia's visitor visa system

Australia's participation in China's Approved Destination Status scheme

Australia obtained Approved Destination Status (ADS) with China in 1999, which is now administered through an ADS stream of the subclass 600 visa. This bilateral tourism agreement is designed for nationals of the People's Republic of China (excluding Hong Kong and Macau) who are participating in a tour organised by a travel agent specified by the Minister. Applicants must follow a prescribed tour although the visa allows for some flexibility in itinerary. These applications are lodged with the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) through a flat file system in groups of at least two applicants by the travel agent.

Australia's Preferred Aussie Specialist program

The Preferred Aussie Specialist (PAS) program, introduced in December 2003 as a joint initiative with Tourism Australia, has selected travel agents that have been recommended by Tourism Australia and approved by DIBP. Applications lodged through PAS agents are generally fast-tracked. This program currently exists in India, Mexico, Indonesia and Thailand. PAS agents in India are also able to lodge online applications.

¹ http://www.apf.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House_of_Representatives_Committees?url=reports/1996/1996_issuespaper.pdf

² Parents of adult Australian citizens or permanent children may be granted a visa up to three years with 12 months' stay permitted on each entry

³ Sponsored family and ADS streams will have a mandatory 'no further stay' condition placed on their visa

Australian visitor visa requirements

SOURCE COUNTRY	TECHNICAL ASPECTS/LEGISLATION	DOCUMENTATION/ INFORMATION REQUIRED	PROCESSING TIME ⁴	METHOD OF LODGEMENT	COST	FEATURES: VALIDITY, MULTIPLE ENTRY, ETC.
China ⁵	ADS visitors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subclass 600 visa - Approved Destination Status (ADS) stream Applicant must be a citizen of China and resident in mainland China The applicant is a member of a specified tour travelling for sightseeing and related activities Family members must make their own application Must be in mainland China for the grant of the visa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Passport biodata page Passport photograph Tour itinerary List of all participants <p>NOTE: Tour organiser will submit all applications for group together</p>	2-3 days	Application made by the travel agent via an online flat file system	AUD130	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Period of stay determined by tour arrangements Generally single entry unless the tour involves departure and re-entry to Australia
	Non-ADS visitors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must apply for a subclass 600 visa Intention is for a temporary stay Adequate means to support themselves Purpose of stay is not for business or medical treatment Meet general health and character requirements Family members must make their own application 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Passport or copies of biodata page, back page with signature and all pages with visas/stamps Passport photograph Family registration booklet (hukou) National ID card Documents to evidence that the intention is to be a visitor such as invitations from friends/family in Australia or itinerary for travel Evidence of incentive to return home e.g. family, employment, etc. Evidence of sufficient funds 	15 days ⁶	Paper-based application at an Australian Visa Application Centre (VAC) in Beijing, Shanghai or Guangzhou	AUD130	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally for a 3 or 6 month period, less commonly allows for 12 months' stay Provides for either single or multiple entries
South Korea & Malaysia	Under three months <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electronic Tourist Authority (ETA) 	N/A – generally automatically granted	1 working day	Online application	AUD20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12 months validity with 3 months' stay permitted on each entry
	More than three months <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subclass 600 visa – online stream Intention is for a temporary stay Adequate means to support themselves Purpose of stay is not for business or medical treatment Meet general health and character requirements Family members must make their own application 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Passport biodata page Passport photograph Documents to evidence that the intention is to be a visitor such as invitations from friends/family in Australia or itinerary for travel Evidence of incentive to return home, e.g. family, employment, etc. Evidence of sufficient funds 	1 working day	Online application	AUD130	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally for a 3 or 6 month period, less commonly allows for 12 months' stay Parents of Australian citizen or permanent residents able to get longer validity visas

⁴ Department of Immigration and Border Protection (2014), Visitor Visa Processing Times

⁵ Refers to citizens of the People's Republic of China. Citizens of the Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong are able to apply for an ETA for a stay of up to 3 months or an e600 visa

⁶ Standard processing time as indicated on Australian Embassy, China website in September 2014 - <http://www.china.embassy.gov.au/bjng/DIMA03020104.htm>

Australian visitor visa requirements (continued)

SOURCE COUNTRY	TECHNICAL ASPECTS/LEGISLATION	DOCUMENTATION/ INFORMATION REQUIRED	PROCESSING TIME ⁴	METHOD OF LODGEMENT	COST	FEATURES: VALIDITY, MULTIPLE ENTRY, ETC.
India Vietnam Indonesia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subclass 600 visa Intention is for a temporary stay Adequate means to support themselves Purpose of stay is not for business or medical treatment Meet general health and character requirements Family members must make their own application 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Passport biodata page Passport photograph Documents to evidence that the intention is to be a visitor such as invitations from friends/ family in Australia or itinerary for travel Evidence of incentive to return home, e.g. family, employment, etc. Evidence of sufficient funds 	1 month	<p>Paper-based application</p> <p>Lodged with an Australian Visa Application Centre (VAC)</p> <p>India: 12 locations</p> <p>Vietnam: Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City</p> <p>Indonesia: Jakarta or Bali</p>	AUD130	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally for a 3 or 6 month period, less commonly allows for 12 months' stay Also provides for either a single or multiple entry Parents of Australian citizen or permanent residents able to get longer validity visas



NEW ZEALAND

General overview of the visitor visa program

Immigration New Zealand (INZ) has focused on increasing visitor numbers generally with NZD7 million in dedicated funding announced in April 2013 to achieve this. The funding has been targeted at creating a bilingual website and application forms to help applicants more easily understand the process. In the first instance, this has been developed for Chinese visitors with a view to expanding into other key market languages.

Like Australia, New Zealand obtained Approved Destination Status (ADS) with China in 1999, facilitating travel from Chinese tour groups. INZ has recently completed a China Market Review to establish objectives to increase their market share of Chinese visitors and has introduced the following measures:

- INZ and carriers Air New Zealand and China Southern Airlines have agreed that Chinese applicants who have a certain frequent flyer status under their respective programs will not have to provide evidence of employment or sufficient funds as part of their application process
- Working with Air New Zealand, Auckland Airport and China Southern Airlines to streamline visa processes for Chinese tourists more generally
- Chinese visitors can now be granted 24-month multi-entry tourist visas⁷

While New Zealand has 31 different visitor visa categories for a range of visitor-based activities, for the purpose of general tourism most nationals would either be subject to visa waiver arrangements whereby they would not need to make an application for stays of three months or less for tourism purposes or, alternatively, would need to apply for a V2.1 visa for a stay of up to 12 months with multiple entries possible.

For visitors from visa waiver countries,⁸ there is no requirement to make an online or paper-based application prior to travel. Visas are issued upon arrival by INZ at the airport for a stay of up to three months.

⁷ <http://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/new-extended-visitor-visas-chinese-tourists>

⁸ <http://glossary.immigration.govt.nz/VisaFreeCountries.htm>



New Zealand visitor visa requirements

SOURCE COUNTRY	TECHNICAL ASPECTS/LEGISLATION	DOCUMENTATION/ INFORMATION REQUIRED	PROCESSING TIME ⁹	METHOD OF LODGEMENT	COST	FEATURES: VALIDITY, MULTIPLE ENTRY, ETC.
China ¹⁰	ADS visitors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ADS applicants must apply for a visitor visa Be a bona fide applicant, i.e. intend to abide by purpose of visa and period of stay granted Coming for a lawful purpose, e.g. holiday, sightseeing, family and social visits, amateur sport, business consultation, medical treatment, guest of government visits Have sufficient funds and evidence of onward travel unless sponsored by a New Zealand citizen or residence class visa holder Meet health and character requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valid passport Passport photograph Documents to evidence that the intention is to be a visitor such as invitations from friends/ family in New Zealand or itinerary for travel Evidence of incentive to return home, e.g. family, employment, etc. Evidence of sufficient funds Medical and police certificates if wishing to stay for more than 6 months Chinese identification document 	3 working days	Lodged by the travel agent	NZD50	Length of stay granted based on tour itinerary
	Non-ADS visitors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must apply for a visitor visa Be a bona fide applicant, i.e. intend to abide by purpose of visa and period of stay granted Coming for a lawful purpose, e.g. holiday, sightseeing, family and social visits, amateur sport, business consultation, medical treatment, guest of government visits Have sufficient funds and evidence of onward travel unless sponsored by a New Zealand citizen or residence class visa holder Meet health and character requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valid passport Passport photograph Documents to evidence that the intention is to be a visitor such as invitations from friends/ family in New Zealand or itinerary for travel Evidence of incentive to return home, e.g. family, employment, etc. Evidence of sufficient funds Medical and police certificates if wishing to stay for more than 6 months Chinese identification document 	5 – 20 working days	Paper-based application lodged at the INZ office	NZD165	Up to 24 months, multiple entry
	China Southern Airlines/Air New Zealand Gold and Silver card holders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must apply for a visitor visa Be a bona fide applicant, i.e. intend to abide by purpose of visa and period of stay granted Coming for a lawful purpose, e.g. holiday, sightseeing, family and social visits, amateur sport, business consultation, medical treatment, guest of government visits Have sufficient funds and evidence of onward travel unless sponsored by a New Zealand citizen or residence class visa holder Meet health and character requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valid passport Passport photograph Copy of airline gold or silver card Airline letter of certificate or flight record A travel itinerary showing outward travel from New Zealand Chinese identification document 	5 – 20 working days	Paper-based application lodged at the INZ office nearest to applicant in Beijing, Guangzhou or Shanghai	NZD165	Up to 24 months, multiple entry

New Zealand visitor visa requirements (continued)

SOURCE COUNTRY	TECHNICAL ASPECTS/LEGISLATION	DOCUMENTATION/ INFORMATION REQUIRED	PROCESSING TIME ⁹	METHOD OF LODGEMENT	COST	FEATURES: VALIDITY, MULTIPLE ENTRY, ETC.
South Korea & Malaysia	Under three months <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visa Waiver country • Meet health and character requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valid passport 	Nil	N/A – granted at immigration clearance	N/A	Up to 3 months upon entry with no more than 6 months allowed in total in any 12 month period
	More than three months <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subclass 600 visa – online stream • Intention is for a temporary stay • Adequate means to support themselves • Purpose of stay is not for business or medical treatment • Meet general health and character requirements • Family members must make their own application 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valid passport • Passport photograph • Documents to evidence that the intention is to be a visitor such as invitations from friends/ family in New Zealand or itinerary for travel • Evidence of incentive to return home, e.g. family, employment, etc. • Evidence of sufficient funds • Medical and police certificates if wishing to stay for more than 6 months 	Up to 4 weeks	Paper-based application South Korea: at INZ office in Seoul Malaysia: at Visa Application Centre in Singapore	NZD165	Visa granted for up to 12 months with multiple entries possible
India Vietnam Indonesia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must apply for a visitor visa • Be a bona fide applicant, i.e. intend to abide by purpose of visa and period of stay granted • Coming for a lawful purpose, e.g. holiday, sightseeing, family and social visits, amateur sport, business consultation, medical treatment, guest of government visits • Have sufficient funds and evidence of onward travel unless sponsored by a New Zealand citizen or residence class visa holder • Meet health and character requirements • Partners and children up to 19 years of age can be included 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valid passport • Passport photograph • Documents to evidence that the intention is to be a visitor such as invitations from friends/ family in New Zealand or itinerary for travel • Evidence of incentive to return home, e.g. family, employment, etc. • Evidence of sufficient funds • Medical and police certificates if wishing to stay for more than 6 months 	Within 25 days ¹¹	Paper-based application India: lodged at nearest TT Service Branch Vietnam: at INZ office in Hanoi Indonesia: at INZ office in Jakarta	NZD165	Up to 12 months, multiple entry

⁹ Local post listing on <http://www.immigration.govt.nz/migrant/general/aboutnzis/contactus>

¹⁰ Refers to citizens of the People's Republic of China. Citizens of the Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong are a listed visa waiver country for stays of up to 3 months with no more than 6 months allowed in any 12 month period

¹¹ <http://www.immigration.govt.nz/branch/India/timeframes.htm>



UNITED KINGDOM

General overview of the visitor visa program

The United Kingdom has a range of visitor visa categories including but not limited to those coming as academics, coming prior to the commencement of study, medical treatment and those coming to visit family, etc.

The vast majority of visitor visa applications for the United Kingdom are submitted online.

In most cases a visitor visa would be valid for a maximum six-month period. Regular travellers who have had a number of UK business visit visas issued in the past, and have always met the requirements outlined in the immigration rules, have the option of applying for a five or ten-year multiple-entry visitor visa permitting travel to the UK throughout that time, limited to a maximum of six months in any 12-month period.

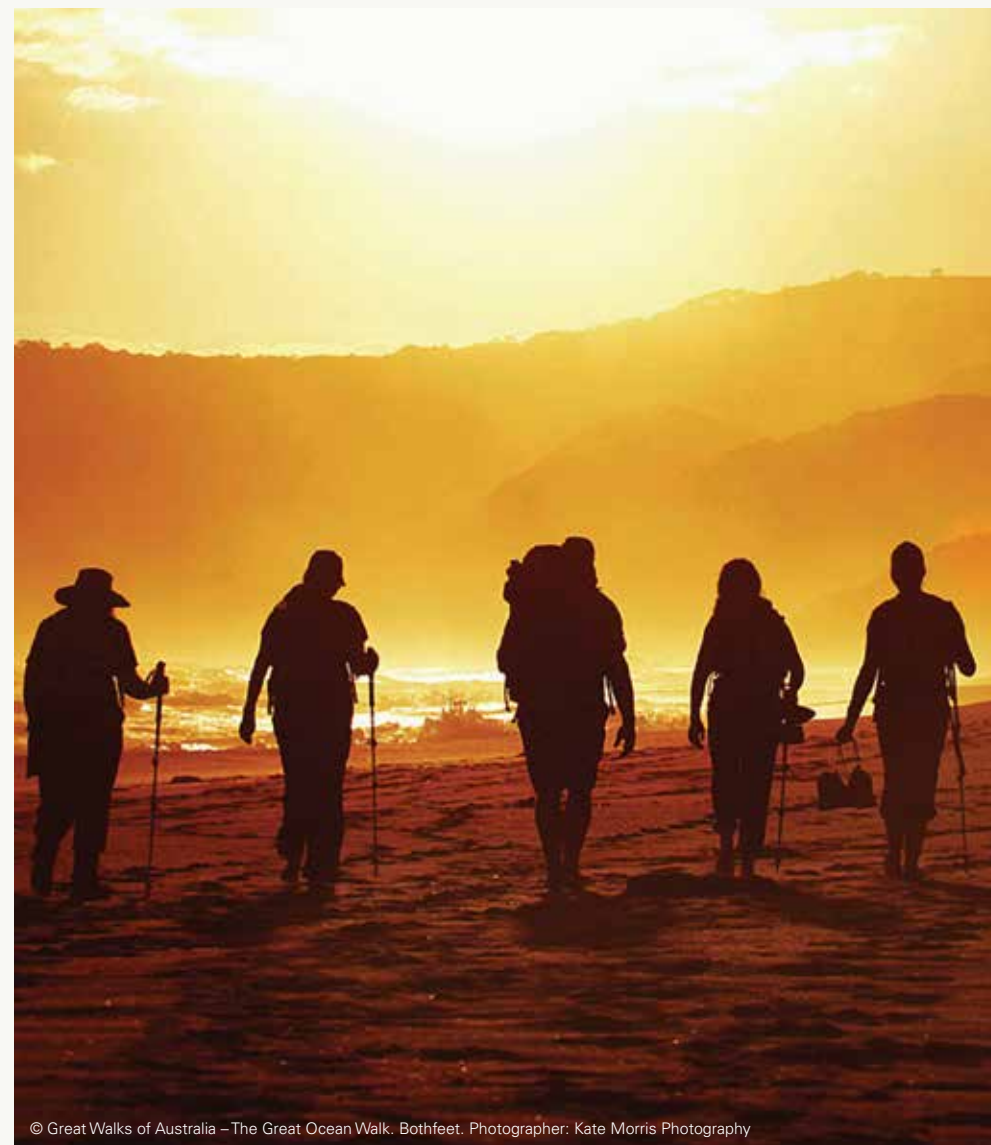
The United Kingdom signed a Memorandum of Understanding with China in January 2005 to facilitate entry of Chinese visitors under the Approved Destination Status (ADS). The agreement includes tour groups of five or more people for a period not exceeding 30 days which are organised by an ADS-licensed tour operator.

The UK has also announced some changes in line with an increased focus on Chinese visitors:

- A 24-hour service for general and business visitors launched in August 2014
- A pilot program that commenced in November 2013 enabling selected travel agents applying for visitor visas through the ADS scheme to make an offline application using the Schengen application forms with an addendum form to cover the UK as well

The UK has introduced priority processing services for visitor visa applications for some countries, but currently just for business visitors for 90 countries, with additional countries to be added.

There is a visa waiver program in place for nationals of Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates that commenced in January 2014 that allows for stays of up to six months.¹² Applicants need to register online 48 hours before departure. Kuwait is expected to be added to this list later this year.



© Great Walks of Australia – The Great Ocean Walk. Bothfeet. Photographer: Kate Morris Photography

¹² UK electronic visa waiver introduced for Oman, Qatar and UEA, <https://www.ogv.uk/government/news/uk-electronic-visa-waiver-introduced-for-oman-qatar-and-uae>

United Kingdom visitor visa requirements

SOURCE COUNTRY	TECHNICAL ASPECTS/LEGISLATION	DOCUMENTATION/ INFORMATION REQUIRED	PROCESSING TIME ¹³	METHOD OF LODGEMENT	COST	FEATURES: VALIDITY, MULTIPLE ENTRY, ETC.
China¹⁴	ADS visitors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must apply for a visitor visa • Maximum 30 days • Intend to tour with approved provider • Evidence of intention to leave after the visit • Family members must make their own application • Anyone under 18 years of age is ineligible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passport biodata page • Passport photograph • Evidence that the intention is to be a visitor, e.g. invitations from friends/family in the UK or itinerary for travel • Evidence of incentive to return home, e.g. family, employment, etc. • Evidence of sufficient funds • Chinese identification document 	5-15 working days	Lodged by the travel agent at least three weeks before departure	GBP83	Maximum stay of 30 days
	ADS visitors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must apply for a visitor visa • Maximum 30 days • Intend to tour with approved provider • Evidence of intention to leave after the visit • Family members must make their own application • Anyone under 18 years of age is ineligible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passport biodata page • Passport photograph • Evidence that the intention is to be a visitor, e.g. invitations from friends/family in the UK or itinerary for travel • Evidence of incentive to return home, e.g. family, employment, etc. • Evidence of sufficient funds • Chinese identification document 	90% of applications processed within 15 days ¹⁵	Online application	GBP83	Valid for a maximum period of 6 months
South Korea & Malaysia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visa national exempt countries • Meet general health and character requirements 	N/A	N/A	N/A – issued at immigration clearance	N/A	Valid for a maximum period of 6 months
India Vietnam Indonesia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General visitor visa application • Must have previous travel and immigration history assessed to determine suitability • Purpose and length of intended stay required • Sufficient funds to support themselves and cost of onward or return travel • Family members must make their own application 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passport biodata page • Passport photograph • Evidence that the intention is to be a visitor such as invitations from friends/family in the UK or itinerary for travel • Evidence of incentive to return home, e.g. family, employment, etc. • Evidence of sufficient funds 	90% of applications processed within 3 weeks ¹⁶	Online application	GBP83	Valid for a maximum period of 6 months

¹³ <https://www.gov.uk/visa-processing-times>

¹⁴ Refers to citizens of the People's Republic of China. Citizens of the Special Administrative Regions of Hong Kong and Macau are a listed visa waiver country.

¹⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/visa-processing-times>

¹⁶ <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas-immigration/visiting/>

UNITED STATES

General overview of the visitor visa program

The U.S. Department of State (DOS) consular officer who issues the visa must be satisfied that the foreign national is entitled to a non-immigrant status. Notably, the Immigration and Nationality Act ('INA') s214(b) generally presumes that all aliens seeking admission to the United States are coming to live permanently. As a result, most aliens seeking to qualify for a non-immigrant visa must demonstrate that they are not coming to reside permanently.

The U.S. has expanded the visa waiver program (VWP), which allows nationals from 36 countries to enter the United States as temporary visitors for business or pleasure without obtaining a visa from a U.S. consulate abroad. The INA provides for the temporary admission of various categories of foreign nationals, known as non-immigrants. Non-immigrants are admitted for a temporary period of time and a specific purpose, including as tourists, students, and temporary workers.

Many non-immigrant visas are valid for multiple entries as well as multiple years.

The U.S. has had Approved Destination Status (ADS) in place since 2008.

In 2012, the President signed an Executive Order establishing a new Task Force on Travel and Competitiveness leading to the development of a National Travel and Tourism Strategy with a goal of attracting 100 million international visitors by 2021, generating spending of USD250 billion annually. The strategy includes reforms in the areas of traveller facilitation including expanding their Visa Waiver Program, enhancing visa processing and expanding trusted traveller programs.



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US visa requirements

SOURCE COUNTRY	TECHNICAL ASPECTS/ LEGISLATION	DOCUMENTATION/ INFORMATION REQUIRED	PROCESSING TIMEFRAMES ¹⁷		METHOD OF LODGEMENT	COST	FEATURES: VALIDITY, MULTIPLE ENTRY, ETC.
			INTERVIEW	PROCESSING			
China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> B-2 visitor visa application The purpose of the trip is for a temporary visit, such as business, pleasure, or medical treatment Intention to remain only for a specific period of time Incentive to return home including a residence, social or economic ties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DS-160 application form completed online with a copy of the passport biodata page and passport photograph attached Other supporting documents evidencing the reason for the visit and incentive to return (to provide at interview) 	1 – 7 calendar days for an interview Variation will depend on location	1 – 2 working days for processing	Online application Interview required at an Embassy/ Consulate in Beijing, Shanghai, Chengdu, Guangzhou or Shenyang	USD160	Generally 6 months' validity for multiple entries
South Korea & Malaysia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visa waiver country Be in possession of a round-trip ticket Have a machine-readable passport valid for 6 months beyond the period of travel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicants must complete an Electronic System for Travel Authorisation (ESTA) prior to arrival 	Application for ESTA recommended 72 hours before arrival ¹⁸		N/A	N/A	N/A N/A
Malaysia Vietnam India Indonesia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> B-2 visitor visa application The purpose of the trip is for a temporary visit, such as business, pleasure, or medical treatment Intention to remain only for a specific period of time Incentive to return home including a residence, social or economic ties 	DS-160 application form completed online with a copy of the passport biodata page and passport photograph attached Other supporting documents evidencing the reason for the visit and incentive to return (to provide at interview)	Malaysia/Vietnam: 1 calendar day India: 1-7 calendar days Indonesia: 2 calendar days	Malaysia/Vietnam: 1 working day India: 1-2 working days Indonesia: 1 working day	Interview required at an Embassy/ Consulate Malaysia: Kuala Lumpur Vietnam: Hanoi & Ho Chi Minh City India: New Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata & Hyderabad Indonesia: Jakarta	USD160	Generally 6 months' validity for multiple entries

¹⁷ Source: Department of Immigration and Border Protection (2014), Visitor Visa Processing Times

¹⁸ http://cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/id_visa/business_pleasure/vwp/faq_vwp.xml#WhoNeedstoApplyforESTA

CANADA

General overview of the visitor visa program

Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) continues to expand its network of visa application centres (VACs) to facilitate faster processing times. It is expected that by the end of 2014, there will be over 133 VACs in 96 countries and all VACs will be equipped to collect biometric information.

In Canada, visitors are a class of temporary residents who are legally authorised to enter the country temporarily to holiday, visit family, conduct business, etc. Depending on an individual's nationality, a foreign national may be required to obtain a temporary resident visa (TRV) before he or she is permitted to enter Canada (see Appendix C). If a foreign national requires a TRV, they must submit an application to a visa office outside Canada before travelling.

Canada obtained Approved Destination Status (ADS) with China in 2010, facilitating Chinese national tour groups to enter Canada.

In July 2011, the duration of multiple-entry visas was increased from five years to 10 years, allowing visitors to enter and exit Canada for up to six months at a time over the period. As of February 2014, visitors will automatically be considered for a 10-year multiple entry visa. At the same time, the fee for the TRV was reduced from CAD150 to CAD100 for the processing of either a single- or multiple-entry visa.

There is a maximum fee of CAD500 for families applying for visitor visas.

Certain foreign nationals seeking temporary entry to Canada are now required to give fingerprints and have their photograph taken as part of their application for temporary residence, if their country of nationality is one of the 30 selected countries. Within the Asia-Pacific region, currently only Vietnam, Cambodia and Burma require biometrics for applicants for a Canadian visitor visa. If an applicant is required to submit biometrics, there is an additional fee of CAD85 per person, and similar to the TRV, there is a maximum fee of CAD170 for families.

CIC is working towards a fully paperless system to facilitate information sharing and communication between offices and introduced the Global Case Management System in December 2012 to accept electronic applications for TRVs and visitor extensions whether applicants are in Canada or abroad. Applicants can pay their fees, submit their applications and upload their supporting documents online.



Canadian visa requirements for source countries

SOURCE COUNTRY	TECHNICAL ASPECTS/LEGISLATION	DOCUMENTATION/ INFORMATION REQUIRED	PROCESSING TIME ¹⁹	METHOD OF LODGEMENT	COST	FEATURES: VALIDITY, MULTIPLE ENTRY, ETC.
China ¹⁴	ADS Visitors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must apply for a Temporary Residence Visa (TRV) • Must show evidence of visa upon entering and that they will leave by the end of their authorised stay • Must meet health and character requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passport valid for a least one year • Copy of national identify card • Two photos (or digital photo if applying online) • Letter from the employer granting leave of absence, retirement certificate indicating amount of pension or a letter from school if a student travelling during a period other than school holiday • Bank documents showing financial history over several months • Evidence of assets in China 	13 days	Paper-based application lodged by the travel agent through VFS Global in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Chongqing	CAD100 (max for family CAD500)	<p>Generally granted for six months for single entry, although it can be granted for multiple entries</p> <p>In some cases, a shorter period may be granted</p>
	Non-ADS Visitors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must apply for a Temporary Residence Visa (TRV) • Must show evidence of visa upon entering and that they will leave by the end of their authorised stay • Application must be made either where the foreign national is located or in their country of nationality • Must meet health and character requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passport valid for at least one year • Copy of national identity card • Two photos (or digital photo if applying online) • Letter from the employer granting leave of absence, retirement certificate indicating amount of pension or a letter from school if a student travelling during a period other than school holiday • Bank documents showing financial history over several months • Evidence of assets in China <p>For those visiting family/friends:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proof of relationship with the inviter in Canada • An invitation letter from inviter stating purpose and duration of visit • A list of people in the inviter's household • A copy of the inviter's citizenship or immigration status document • Proof of the inviter's income and financial situation • If the inviter is a student, a letter of acceptance from the inviter's school <p>Additional documents for tourists (groups of four or less)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of any previous travel (e.g. previous passports) • A detailed travel itinerary 	13 days	Paper-based application process managed through VFS Global in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Chongqing	CAD100 (max for family CAD500)	Six months for either single or multiple entry

¹⁹ <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/times/temp/visitors.asp>

Canadian visa requirements for source countries (continued)

SOURCE COUNTRY	TECHNICAL ASPECTS/LEGISLATION	DOCUMENTATION/ INFORMATION REQUIRED	PROCESSING TIME ¹⁹	METHOD OF LODGEMENT	COST	FEATURES: VALIDITY, MULTIPLE ENTRY, ETC.
South Korea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visa exempt country • Valid travel document • Have ties that require you to return home, e.g. home, job, financial assets • Meet health and character requirements • Intend to leave at the end of the authorised stay • Have sufficient funds for the stay 	Passport valid for at least one year	N/A - issued at immigration clearance	N/A	N/A	Generally granted for 6 months for single entry
Malaysia India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must apply for a Temporary Residence Visa (TRV) • Must show evidence of visa upon entering and that they will leave by the end of their authorised stay • Application must be made either where the foreign national is located or in their country of nationality • Must meet health and character requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passport valid for at least one year • Two photos (or digital photo if applying online) • Proof of sufficient funds • Copy of a valid return ticket and/or travel itinerary 	<p>Malaysia: 17 days</p> <p>India: 12 days (New Delhi) or 20 days (Chandigarh)</p>	<p>Application can be done online or by paper lodgement</p> <p>Process managed through VFS Global in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and in nine VFS Global centres in India</p>	CAD100 (max for family CAD500)	Generally granted for 6 months for single entry, although it can be granted for multiple entry
Vietnam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must apply for a Temporary Residence Visa (TRV) • Must show evidence of visa upon entering and that they will leave by the end of their authorised stay • Application must be made either where the foreign national is located or in their country of nationality • Must meet health and character requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passport valid for at least one year • Proof of sufficient funds • Copy of a valid return ticket and/or travel itinerary • Biometrics required – applicant must attend a Visa Application Centre to submit a digital passport photograph and fingerprints 	36 days	<p>Application can be done online or lodged in person at a Visa Application Centre</p> <p>Process managed through VFS Global in Ho Chi Minh City & Hanoi, Vietnam</p>	CAD100 (max for family CAD500) CAD85 for bio-metrics	Generally granted for 6 months for single entry, although it can be granted for multiple entry
Indonesia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must apply for a Temporary Residence Visa (TRV) • Must show evidence of visa upon entering and that they will leave by the end of their authorised stay • Application must be made either where the foreign national is located or in their country of nationality • Must meet health and character requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passport valid for at least one year • Two photos (or digital photos if applying online) • Proof of sufficient funds • Certified translation and copy of Family Card (Kartu Keluarga) • Copy of a valid return ticket and/or travel itinerary 	6 days	<p>Application can be done online or by paper lodgement</p> <p>Process managed through VFS Global in Jakarta and Surabaya</p>	CAD100 (maximum for family CAD500)	Generally granted for 6 months for single entry, although it can be granted for multiple entry



SCHENGEN COUNTRIES

General overview of the visitor visa program

Travelling in Europe has been simplified with the introduction of the so-called Schengen visa, which is comprised of 26 European countries. The current participating countries are Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

The Schengen visa allows for a person to travel from one member state to another within the Schengen region during the validity of the visa. Internal border controls are limited with no or few stops and checks.

Because a visa for one Schengen country is also valid for other Schengen countries, the member states have a duty to notify each other about the arrival of foreign nationals, though the implementation of this requirement varies between jurisdictions.

There is, in principle, only one visa option which is the C-visa, which is for short stays in the Schengen area. The visa is not intended as a business visa though allowed activities vary between member states.

The short-stay visa is limited to a maximum of three months in a six-month period. Longer stays required a National Visa (D-visa) which is issued by individual countries.

Approved Destination Status (ADS) was agreed between the Schengen countries and China in 2003. Applications from those participating in an ADS tour will be lodged by an approved travel agent for groups of at least five, but not more than 50, applicants.



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Schengen visa requirements for source countries

SOURCE COUNTRY	TECHNICAL ASPECTS/LEGISLATION	DOCUMENTATION/ INFORMATION REQUIRED	PROCESSING TIME ²⁰	METHOD OF LODGEMENT	COST	FEATURES: VALIDITY, MULTIPLE ENTRY, ETC.
China	ADS Visitors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must apply for a C-visa through a travel agent 		2-15 days depending on jurisdiction	Lodged via travel agent	EUR60	30 days' maximum stay in Schengen countries
	Non-ADS Visitors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must apply for a C-visa Hold a passport that requires a visa Have a valid travel document that is not older than 10 years and at time of applying be valid for a further 3 months beyond the date on which the visa period ends Not a risk to public order, domestic security, public health, or the international relations of one of the Schengen countries Adequate and valid travel medical insurance coverage Have sufficient means of support Be able to show your travel purposes Person's name must not be on the list of persons to be refused by one of the Schengen countries There may be no risk of settlement, with sufficient guarantee of return to home country, e.g. strong social and/or economic ties with country of origin or country of continuous residence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valid travel document (passport) Two passport photographs Documents showing plausible cause for return to country of origin or residence, e.g. employer's declaration, rental agreement, records of your children attending school, proof of ownership of property, etc. Evidence of valid medical travel insurance for the period of stay with EUR30,000 minimum coverage for the Schengen area Evidence of purpose of your trip, e.g. hotel reservation, invitation letter, etc. Proof of sufficient means of financial support of at least EUR34 per person per day Proof of travel reservation (may be provided after the visa is granted) 	12-15 days	Paper lodged in person at embassy or consulate of country of first entry or where the majority of the stay will be	EUR60	Maximum stay of 90 days in total in any of the Schengen countries within any period of 180 days is permitted Can be granted for a shorter period in accordance with the proposed activities

²⁰ Source: Department of Immigration and Border Protection (2014), Visitor Visa Processing Times

Schengen visa requirements for source countries (continued)

SOURCE COUNTRY	TECHNICAL ASPECTS/LEGISLATION	DOCUMENTATION/ INFORMATION REQUIRED	PROCESSING TIME ²⁰	METHOD OF LODGEMENT	COST	FEATURES: VALIDITY, MULTIPLE ENTRY, ETC.
South Korea & Malaysia	Stays under three months <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No visa required Not a risk to public order, domestic security, public health, or the international relations of one of the Schengen countries Adequate and valid travel medical insurance coverage Sufficient means of support Able to show purpose of travel Person's name must not be on the list of persons to be refused by one of the Schengen countries There may be no risk of settlement, with sufficient guarantee of return to home country, e.g. strong social and/or economic ties with country of origin or country of continuous residence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valid travel document less than 10 years old and valid for a further 3 months beyond the end of the visa period 	N/A	Granted upon entry	N/A	Maximum stay of 90 days in total in any of the Schengen countries within any period of 180 days is permitted
	Stays over three months <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must apply for a D-visa, governed by each member state 					
India Vietnam Indonesia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application for a C-visa Have a valid travel document Not a risk to public order, domestic security, public health, or the international relations of one of the Schengen countries Adequate and valid travel medical insurance coverage Have sufficient means of support Able to show your travel purposes Person's name must not be on the list of persons to be refused by one of the Schengen countries There may be no risk of settlement, with sufficient guarantee or return to home country, for example strong social and/or economic ties with country of origin or country of continuous residence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valid travel document less than 10 years old and valid for a further 3 months beyond the end of the visa period Two passport photographs Documents showing plausible cause for return to country of origin or residence, e.g. employer's declaration, a rental agreement, records of your children attending school, proof of ownership of property, etc. Evidence of valid medical travel insurance for the period of stay with EUR30,000 minimum coverage for the Schengen area Evidence of purpose of your trip, e.g. hotel reservation, invitation letter, etc. Proof of sufficient means of financial support of at least EUR34 per person per day or a sponsor declaration Proof of travel reservation (may be provided after the visa is granted) 	Between 2 and 15 days depending on the jurisdiction	Paper-based application lodged in person at the Embassy or Consulate of country of first entry into the Schengen area or where the majority of the stay will be Will be issued as a sticker placed in your passport	EUR60	Maximum stay of 90 days in total in any of the Schengen countries within any period of 180 days is permitted Can be granted for the period of intended activity



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