

Countries offering remote work visas are a product of remote work becoming a long-term reality for many companies and workers.

While the transition did not occur under the ideal setting, some employees now may express interest in being offered the tools and freedom to transition to “[digital nomads](#).”

According to Kate Lister, president of [Global Workplace Analytics](#): “Having had a taste, even under less-than-ideal conditions, employees are saying they want more. The genie is out of the bottle, and it’s not going back in.”

While the future will probably look more like a hybrid version of office and remote work, many employees will be drawn to the freedom to live and work from wherever they choose, rather than where they must.

## Table of Contents

[What is a remote work visa?](#)

[What are the requirements for a remote work visa?](#)

[Countries offering remote work visas or programs for digital nomads](#)

[The Middle East](#)

[Africa](#)

[Europe](#)

[Latin America](#)

[The Caribbean](#)

[Where does your company stand when your employees use a digital nomad visa?](#)

[Are there any obligations for your company?](#)

[What are the tax implications if you have employees on remote work visas?](#)

[What if your employees decide to relocate to another country permanently?](#)

[How can your company employ and pay international employees compliantly?](#)

## What is a remote work visa?

Countries seeking remote workers are looking to attract spending and promote international tourism and investment. In turn, remote workers are attracted to these nations for a change in weather or scenery, to escape the traditional “work-life,” and to experience other cultures while telecommuting to work.

The problem is that these individuals exist in a legal gray area. They may not have access to a traditional work visa, and they cannot work or stay very long on a tourist visa. In order to attract remote workers, several countries have taken to offering visas [tailored to remote workers](#).

### Digital nomads vs. freelancers

It is worth noting that the terms “remote workers” and “digital nomads” usually apply to professionals who are employed. On the other hand, self-employed individuals, contractors, or freelancers work for themselves or a roster of clients. Some [countries offer visas exclusively for freelancers and independent contractors](#).



## What are the requirements for a remote work visa?

Remote work visas allow professionals to experience extended stays in these countries while working. The specification for each visa varies depending on the country, but often includes an active employment relationship and a minimum salary.

Remote work visa requirements:

- Proof of employment  
The basis for obtaining a remote work visa is that a company outside of that country must employ a professional. This means that only employed professionals are eligible for these visas.
- Minimum income requirements  
Most countries, such as Mexico, Estonia, and Georgia, require applicants to have a minimum monthly income. This minimum can range from \$1,500- \$4,200, depending on country-specific laws.
- Insurance

Countries want to know that remote workers will not become a burden on their healthcare system. Therefore, nations such as Dubai and Antigua and Barbuda require that applicants have health insurance with proper coverage in their territories. Mauritius requires that all applicants have both health and travel insurance for their entire stay.

- Taxes

If visa holders spend [more than 183 days](#) in a consecutive 12-month period in Estonia, they will be considered a tax resident. In Georgia, all digital nomads must pay taxes for their entire stay.

- Quarantine

Depending on the current Covid-19 infection rate in each territory, some countries may require a quarantine period for applicants whenever they enter. For example, Barbados requires a mandatory Covid-19 test and 48-hour quarantine. In Estonia, the quarantine period is 14 days. Countries like Jamaica ask for a negative test, but only from travelers coming from [some countries](#) with high infection rates.

- Fees

There is often an application fee involved in obtaining a remote visa. Some nations may not require fees from applicants from nations that do not require a visa to enter their country, such as Iceland. In the case of Mauritius, the visa is free for all applicants. Fees can also increase if any family members are accompanying the professional.

- Background check

The Caribbean nation of Antigua and Barbuda is among those that require a background check. Other countries that require a background check include the Cayman Islands and Croatia.

[Most countries, such as Mexico, Estonia, and Georgia, require applicants to have a minimum monthly income. Click To Tweet](#)

## Countries offering remote work visas or programs for digital nomads

### The Middle East

1. Dubai: The United Arab Emirates (UAE) nation's [visa is valid for one year](#). It costs \$287 and requires applicants to have employment paying at least \$5,000 USD per month. The visa grants professionals all the benefits that locals have, including access to utilities and schooling.



## Africa

2. Mauritius: The East African nation offers its [Premium Visa](#) to professionals looking to stay and work for up to one year.



## Europe

3. Greece: The Greek government has not specified any guidelines for the duration, fees, and requirements of its visa. However, the [European Union specifies](#) that a general rule for digital nomad visas will include:

- A valid and eligible passport
- Proof of employment or steady income

To attract remote workers, Greece's parliament passed a new law that gives digital nomads and Greek workers who return to the country a [50 percent tax exemption](#) on income earned in Greece for up to seven years.



4. Georgia: This nation's government launched a program under the name "[Remotely from Georgia](#)" to attract remote workers. Professionals from [95 countries](#) will be able to apply to this program if they intend to remain in the country longer than 180 days and no more than a year.

Applicants must prove that they have a minimum monthly income of \$2,000 and that they can pay taxes.



5. Estonia: With its [Digital Nomad Visa](#), Estonia hopes to make it legal for remote workers to use tourist visas to enter the country.

To qualify for this visa, applicants must prove that they meet the minimum income threshold (\$4,252 gross tax) in the six months preceding the application. They must also prove that they have an active contract with a company outside of Estonia, operate their own company outside of Estonia, or have clients outside of the country.





6. Iceland: This [Schengen Area](#) nation offers a [long-term visa](#) for temporary workers from [countries that don't require a visa](#) to enter Iceland, or for workers who Icelandic authorities haven't issued a visa for in the previous 12 months.

This visa is valid for six months. If workers apply for this visa while they are in other European Schengen Area nations, the visa is only valid for 90 days.



7. Croatia: In January 2021, Croatia [updated its immigration laws](#) to include digital nomads. Under the new provisions, remote workers employed outside of Croatia may stay in the country for up to 90 days.



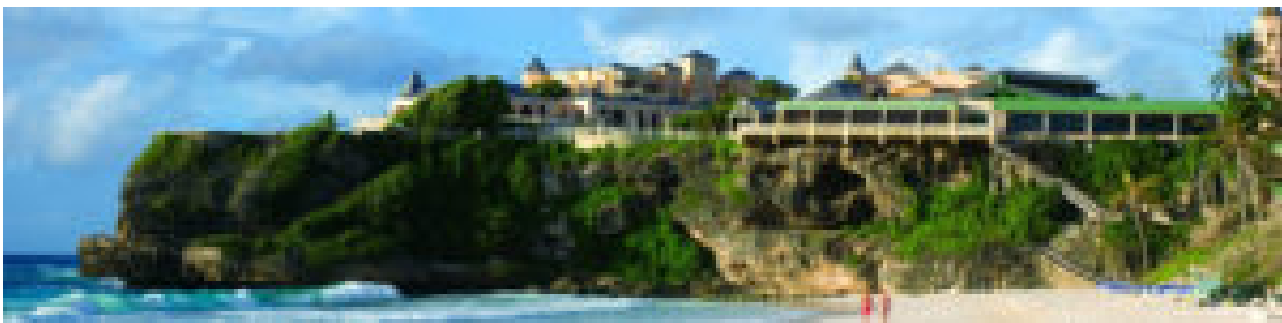
## Latin America

8. Mexico: One of the preferred destinations for digital nomads, Mexico offers a [Temporary Resident Visa](#) for those looking for a stay of over 180 days and less than four years. Applicants must provide proof of employment with a monthly income of at least \$1,505 after taxes during the previous six months.



## The Caribbean

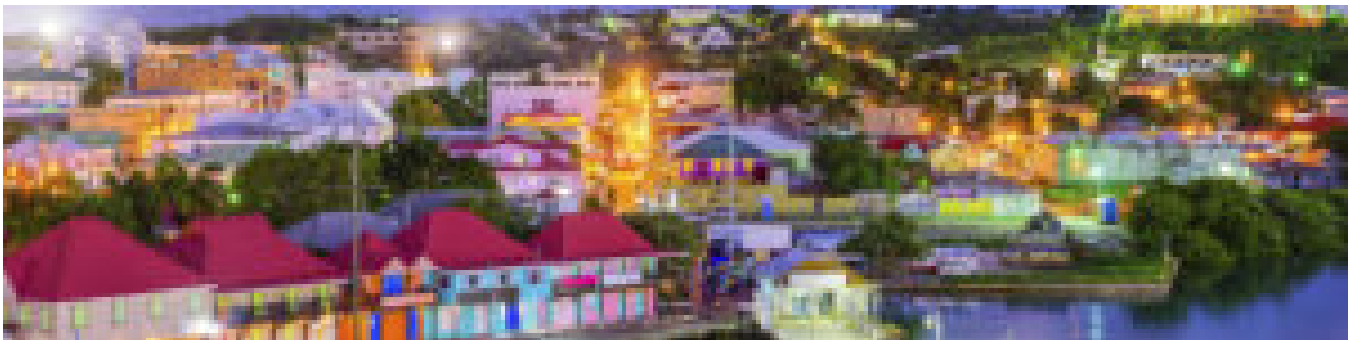
9. Barbados: The [Barbados Welcome Stamp](#) allows remote workers to spend up to 12 months in the Caribbean nation. The stamp can be renewed for an extended period after the first year.



10. Bermuda: The Program, “[Work From Bermuda](#),” is meant for digital nomads who wish to remain in the country for up to a year.

11. Cayman Islands: This nation offers the “[Global Citizen Concierge](#)” to welcome international professionals “[who are eager for a change of scenery](#)” and are employed by companies outside of the Cayman Islands.

12. Antigua and Barbuda: Antigua and Barbuda offers remote workers the [Nomad Digital Residence](#) (NDR) visa. The visa gives remote workers and dependents a chance to reside in the country for up to two years.



13. Anguilla: British territory in the Caribbean, Anguilla, offers digital nomads a [visa](#) to work remotely for up to a year.

14. Jamaica: For those looking to work remotely from Jamaica, the country now offers a visa for digital nomads that is good for up to six months. Applicants from countries at high risk of Covid-19 must apply for a [travel authorization](#).



15. Aruba: The island launched [One Happy Workation](#), a visa that allows U.S. visitors to stay up to 90 days by booking a participating villa, hotel, or condominium.

### **Where does your company stand when your employees use a digital nomad visa?**

At this point, you are probably wondering what to do if one or several of your employees requests to relocate through a remote work visa. A good starting point is to put a mobility policy in place that sets out the circumstance where your company will permit an international move. This should include clarity around roles and responsibilities, and provide information on who will pay for moving expenses, what to do in an emergency, and who is responsible for whatever tax considerations your employee may have to undertake.

### **Are there any obligations for your company?**

As previously stated, digital nomad visas are meant for those employed by companies outside of the host country. Applicants will not be registered as employees in another country

and are responsible for completing all the paperwork, figuring out the logistics of their move, and paying taxes, if applicable.

Your company may offer to assist employees, but it is not under any obligations to do so.

### **What are the tax implications if you have employees on remote work visas?**

Depending on each country's tax laws, some employees on remote work visas will have to simultaneously pay taxes internationally and locally. The employing entity will have to continue to make all obligatory tax deductions in the home location. In turn, the workers may be obligated to pay taxes in their remote location while they're in residence.

In the case of U.S. citizens, [double taxation](#) is always a possibility unless there is a tax agreement or other exception.

[In the case of U.S. citizens, double taxation is always a possibility unless there is a tax agreement or other exception. Click To Tweet](#)

### **What if your employees decide to relocate to another country permanently?**

Some employees might fall in love with a country while on a remote work visa and ask to make a permanent move. If your company decides to consider granting these requests, things get a bit more complex. Your company must now figure out how to employ people compliantly in another country, which includes:

- Securing a work visa for your employee(s)
- Learning how to make payroll compliant
- Understanding all local rules and regulations
- Providing mandatory benefits
- Consulting local legal and financial experts
- Providing HR support for your employees

But not everything about a permanent move is a burden. Successful companies can adapt to rapid change. Having employees across the world can help you find new opportunities and

diversify your business.

An Employer of Record (EOR) allows companies to avoid the burden of hiring globally while allowing them to achieve their international potential.

### **How can your company employ and pay international employees compliantly?**

Establishing a corporate entity in another country can be a time-consuming and expensive task. Rather than incorporate internationally, your company can rely on an Employer of Record to employ your workforce. An EOR partners with companies as an international legal employer, handling payroll, taxes, benefits, and HR functions.

With legal entities across the world, an EOR ensures you can continue to employ workers without having to go through all of the trouble of registering in another country.

With an EOR, the transition can be seamless. When your team goes global, compliance becomes even more critical. Reach out to Globalization Partners to help you figure out the best path forward.