

Republic of Colombia



About Colombia

Capital City:

- Bogota

Monetary Unit:

- Colombian Peso (COP)

Major Language:

- Spanish

Main Exports:

- Petroleum
- Coffee
- Coal
- Nickel
- Emeralds
- Apparel

Our Immigration Services in Colombia

Visas for Temporary Visitors, Business Visitors and Volunteers of NGOs – Guidance & assistance with visa applications filed with the Colombian Consulates abroad

Temporary Technical Permits – For foreign nationals who will enter Colombia on a short-term basis to provide urgent technical services to a Colombian company

Temporary Visas for Entrepreneurship – For foreign nationals entering Colombia as the legal representative, president or executive director of a foreign organization with operations in Colombia or with a Colombian company

Work/Employee Visas – Filed with the Foreigners Department of the Administrative Department of Security (DAS)

The Colombian Economy

Home to over 45 million people, Colombia is Latin America's oldest and most stable democracy. It has a free market economy which was ranked 37th among 183 economies by the World Bank's Doing Business 2010 report. President Santos, inaugurated in August 2010, highlighted five "locomotives" stimulating economic growth: extractive industries; agriculture; infrastructure; housing; and innovation. (<http://tinyurl.com/29zzny>)

Recent economic reports indicate the Colombian economy will maintain a strong growth rate, close to 5% annually, mainly due to investments in the mining and energy sectors. Colombia's Central Bank president forecasts the economy may grow as much as 5.5 % this year as credit and consumer confidence is increasing, creating "perfect" conditions for growth. Economic growth is expected to continue in 2012. (<http://tinyurl.com/3holue5>).

Foreign direct investment (FDI) in Colombia reached a record \$10 billion for 2008, but dropped to \$7.2 billion in 2009 before beginning to recover in 2010, especially in the oil sector. Pro-business reforms in the oil and gas sectors and export-led growth, fueled by the Andean Trade Promotion and Drug Eradication Act, have enhanced Colombia's investment climate.

For detailed information about Colombia's Economic Outlook, visit: <http://tinyurl.com/6z2bb6j>

Business Travel to Colombia

Foreign nationals who wish to travel to Colombia should ensure their passports are valid for at least six months and contain at

least two blank, visa pages. Business visas are issued to company executives, sales executives/representatives, merchants, and industrialists, who wish to travel to Colombia for temporary periods to attend business meetings, carry out commercial activities or research. People planning to travel in order to establish commercial and trade connections, attend academic seminars, conferences, expositions, short term studies, interviews for employment, medical treatment, or to participate in scientific, sporting and cultural events that will not be compensated, may apply for Temporary Visitors Visas. Holders of Business and Temporary Visitors Visas cannot establish permanent residence in Colombia, and their activities cannot be compensated as salaries in Colombia.

For more information regarding visa requirements, visit the following link: <http://tinyurl.com/6hzzszw>

Living in Colombia

Colombia has the second largest population in South America, after Brazil, and has the third largest Spanish-speaking population in the world, after Mexico and Spain. It is the only country on the continent of South America with coastline on both the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea. In between, is a nation of rich biodiversity, including the Amazon rainforest and the Andes Mountains. Source: <http://tinyurl.com/66m6p53>

Colombia is a tropical country of incredible diversity and charm. Its land and water transportation network is one of the most extensive in Latin America with 141,374 kilometers of paved roads and more than 18,000 kilometers of waterways. Most

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expatriates settle in the urban areas including Bogota, Cali, Cartagena, and Medellin. Although English is spoken in most urban areas, learning Spanish is highly recommended.

Colombian Business Culture

In Colombian business culture, cultivating close personal relationships and building trust are considered vital components for a successful working environment. Most

Colombian companies tend to have vertical hierarchies, where decisions are made from senior members, although often opinion of subordinates is sought. Titles are important and should be given respect.

It is important to schedule appointments several weeks in advance. Business lunches are a favorable method of conducting business and may last for several hours.

Printed business materials should be provided in Spanish. <http://tinyurl.com/5sahgtx>

Colombian Work Permit Process

1

Qualifying organizations within Colombia may sponsor foreign nationals for work authorization by submitting a work visa application at a Colombian Embassy abroad.

If the foreign national is in possession of a business visa or prior approval from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is needed, then the application may be applied for at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bogota, Colombia.

2

Multiple entry visa is issued which will facilitate travel in and out of the country as they wish for the validity of the entry permit

3

Any foreign national who obtains a visa for more than three months of validity must appear before the Foreigners Department of (DAS) in order to be registered and obtain a foreign identity card within 15 calendar days from entry or visa issuance

How Goel & Anderson can assist your organization in Colombia

Organizations that wish to employ foreign workers abroad require an immigration service provider with a record of successfully coordinating and delivering global, business immigration services for multinational organizations. Goel & Anderson practices exclusively in the field of immigration to assist your company with the recruitment, hiring, and retention of foreign workers across the globe, including Colombia. We understand that time and resources are valuable to your business and that staffing an international project can be critical to your business' reputation and success. We are committed to efficiently delivering business immigration solutions that combine broad global coverage with a depth of local expertise.

We carefully select co-counsel who share our service and compliance-oriented approach to meet the needs of organizations doing business in the global marketplace. Our Global Immigration Practice group and local counsel work closely together to ensure comprehensive business coordination and seamless delivery of services. Our immigration services include end-to-end processing, including: Work Permit and Visa Application preparation and

filing; detailed guidance on the visa stamping and post-entry process; and tracking key expiration dates. Personal representation at the Colombian Embassy or Consulate abroad and Local Police or Immigration Department may be available.

Generally, the Ministry of Social Protection sets forth limits to the number of foreign national workers that may be hired by a particular organization in Colombia. Thus, if your company's Colombian office anticipates engaging foreign talent, an early analysis of immigration options and strategies, as well as a thorough understanding of the sponsorship obligations, will better position your project for success. We also understand that despite careful planning, emergent issues can arise. We are well positioned to assist your business to address unexpected business requirements. Because global immigration matters do not occur within a vacuum and the law is infrequently static, we seek local experts who may also assist with a range of related legal services, including corporate formation, contracts, employment agreements, licensing, and transactions and who will advise of changes in policy and procedures.

With headquarters outside of Washington, DC in Reston, Virginia and operations in Pune, India, Goel & Anderson is an immigration firm that is international in scope and personal in nature. We are known as a firm that is highly professional and also highly human. We offer clients extensive experience and a comprehensive understanding of all areas of business, employment, and family-based immigration law worldwide.

For more information about our Global Immigration Practice and services, please contact Jill Marie Bussey at jill.bussey@goellaw.com or +1 703.796.9881.

*Goel & Anderson, LLC does not engage in the practice of law within India. All services in India are provided by our affiliate, G&A Immigration Services Private Limited.

The information contained in this document is intended for informational purposes only, is general in nature, and does not constitute legal guidance.



Innovative Approaches to Immigration Law

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