

e-FRRO Scheme launched for foreigners visiting India

Summary

The Ministry of Home Affairs has recently launched an e-Foreigners Regional Registration Office (e-FRRO) scheme¹ to provide fast and efficient services to foreigners visiting India.

e-FRRO, a web-based application, has been implemented on a pan India basis on the same lines as the e-visa scheme. The e-FRRO scheme is aimed at building a centralised and transparent online platform for foreigners to avail visa-related services, providing a user-friendly experience.

Background and e-FRRO scheme highlights

- Foreigners staying in India on a visa with duration of more than 180 days are required to get themselves registered with their respective FROs/FRROs. Similarly, foreigners requiring various visa-related services such as visa extension, visa conversion, change of address, change of educational institutions, exit permits etc. are currently required to visit the FROs/ FRROs.
- In order to bring in more transparency, e-FRRO was implemented on a pilot basis in four FRROs (i.e. Bangalore, Chennai, Delhi and Mumbai) in February 2018. After its successful run, it has now been rolled out in the remaining eight FRROs (Kolkata, Amritsar, Hyderabad, Cochin, Thiruvananthapuram, Calicut, Lucknow and Ahmedabad).
- Taking a cue from the already successfully running e-Visa scheme, the e-FRRO scheme has been implemented on the Immigration, Visa, Foreigners' Registration and Tracking (IVFRT) platform with negligible extra expenditure.

¹ Press release dated 13 April 2018

- In the new system, foreigners would be able to get as many as 27 visa and immigration-related services in India from the comfort of their place of stay. Using e-FRRO application, foreigners can create their User ID by registering themselves and apply online through registered user ID for various visa and immigration-related services in India, such as registration, visa extension, visa conversion, exit permit etc. They would not be required to appear in person at the FRO/FRRO office.
- The necessary Immigration/Visa document, e.g. Registration Permit/Certificate (RP/RC), Visa Extension Certificate etc., will be sent by post on the address mentioned in the online application. It would also be electronically sent to the foreigner on his registered email ID. In case of exigency, the foreigner can visit the FRRO/FRO office directly for such service.
- Major changes w.r.t. current C-FRO (Centralised Foreigners Registration Office) system and e-FRRO are as under:

Current C-FRO System	Proposed e-FRRO
Foreigner needs to take appointment online and mandatorily visit FRRO/FRO office.	No requirement of mandatorily visiting FRRO/FRO office. However, in certain exceptional cases, the foreigner may be required to visit the FRRO/FRO on a scheduled date and time for an interview.
Endorsement in Passport and Signed/ Stamped RC/ RP given to the Applicant.	No endorsement in Passport. Digitally signed immigration document. Emphasis on online verification.
Manual interface	Online, cashless and paperless procedure.
Lack of expertise at FRO level in dealing with foreigners.	Uniform and standardised services through FRROs under Bureau of Immigration. FROs to be consulted online by FRROs.

Our comments

This is a welcome move which will ease the registration and other visa-related requirements of foreigners visiting India for more than 180 days. Launching the e-FRRO scheme is another step under the government's vision of Digital India and Ease of doing business in India.



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