



UN Tourism

UNITED NATIONS
WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION

Tourism Visa Openness Report 2023

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Acknowledgments

The *Tourism Visa Openness Report 2023* was developed by the Sustainable Development of Tourism Department of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), overseen by Ms. Zoritsa Urosevic, UNWTO Executive Director.

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Key findings

- After the lifting of COVID-19 pandemic-related travel restrictions, the openness of destinations to international travel has returned to pre-pandemic levels. .
- The trend over time indicates that fewer people worldwide require a traditional visa to travel. While 77% of the world's population was required to apply for a traditional tourism visa before departure in 2008, this figure has fallen to 47% in 2023.
- The use of electronic visas (eVisas) has increased sixfold from 3% to 18% between 2013 and 2023.
- Destinations have become **less reciprocal in their visa policies** compared to previous years, demonstrating a growing trend of unilateral action in facilitating travel for international tourism.
- Digitalization in the post-COVID-19 period has increased further, as have specific new visa types, such as digital nomad visas.

Key data, as of May 2023¹

- 47% of the world population are subject to **traditional visa²** requirements.
- 18% of the world population can apply for an **eVisa**.
- 14% of the world population can obtain a **visa on arrival**.
- Only 21% of the world's population can travel for tourism purposes **without any kind of visa** (refer to table 4.1).
- Asia and the Pacific have the **highest openness score³ of all world regions**, with 46 points.
- The **most open subregions** are South-East Asia, East Africa and the Caribbean.
- South Asia and West Africa are the subregions that have seen the **greatest increase** in openness since the last UNWTO report in 2018.
- Central and North Africa, North America and Northern and Western Europe remain the **most restrictive subregions**, with North America being the most restrictive worldwide.

¹ After completing data collection in May 2023, data analysis started. During the preparation period of the current report some developments were observed as follows:

i. China introduced a unilateral visa-free entry policy for holders of ordinary passports from France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and Malaysia during the period 1 December 2023 to 30 November 2024. For more information please consult: The State Council of the People's Republic of China (2024), 'China's visa-free policy facilitates travels from six countries', online available at: https://english.www.gov.cn/news/202401/02/content_WS659342f3c6d0868f4e8e2b0b.html [10-01-2024].

ii. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) approved the Unified Gulf Tourist Visa System proposal, which is scheduled to be implemented between 2024 and 2025. This visa regime will allow individuals to visit several of the six member states of the GCC. For more information please consult: Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (2023), 'HE GCCSG: The Unified GCC Tourist Visa Project, online available at: <https://www.gcc-sg.org/en-us/MediaCenter/NewsCooperation/News/Pages/news2023-11-8-4.aspx> [12-12-2023].

iii. In December 2023, Malaysia announced a visa liberalisation plan to attract foreign tourists and generate national income. Among the measures mentioned are the visa waiver for Chinese and Indian nationals, effective 1 December 2023 to 31 December 2024, and the extension of the visa validity period from three to six months. For more information please consult: Immigration Department of Malaysia – Ministry of Home Affairs (2023), 'Visa Liberation Plan', Government of Malaysia, Putrajaya, online available at: <https://www.imi.gov.my/index.php/en/pengumuman/visa-liberalisation-plan/> [20-12-2023].

iv. Kenya introduced as of January 2024 an electronic travel authorization. For more information please consult: Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government – State Department for Immigration Services (2024), 'Implementation of Electronic Travel Authorization (eTA)', online available at: <https://immigration.go.ke/> [10-01-2024].

² In 2012, eVisas were recorded separately for the first time.

³ The Tourism Visa Openness Index scores range from 0 to 100. The higher the score of the openness index, the more visas are facilitated. Openness indicates to what extent a destination is facilitating tourism. It is calculated by summing the percentage of the world population exempt from obtaining a visa with the percentages of no visa weighted by 1, visa on arrival weighted by 0.7, eVisa by 0.5 and traditional visa weighted by 0.

- **Visa exemptions** are most common in the Caribbean (45%) and in Central America (31%).
- **Visa on arrival policies** are comparatively common in East Africa (46%), South Asia (38%), South-East Asia (36%) and West Africa (32%).
- **eVisa** programmes are prevalent in West and East Africa (36%) and South Asia (31%), while North Africa, Central America, Northern and Western Europe do not offer eVisas.
- Progress in visa facilitation is observed in the **Middle East**, where the percentage of world population requiring a traditional visa fell from 71% in 2015 to 57% in 2023. Over the same period of time the provision of eVisa rose from 10% in 2015 to 15% in 2023, and visa on arrival from 17% to 24%.
- Reciprocal visa exemption among members of the **Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)** has increased from 2% in 2018 to 87% in 2023.
- **Traditional visa** requirements are most prevalent in North America (84%), North Africa (79%), followed by the Western and Northern European subregions and North East Asia, all with rates above 70%.
- 15 of the 20 **most open destinations** are Small Island Developing States.
- The percentage of **reciprocal visa policies** has decreased from 71% in 2008 to 42% in 2023.
- **Non-reciprocal policies** have doubled from 2008 to 2023, from 29% to 58%.
- **Advanced economies** show a higher degree of reciprocal openness (81%) compared to **emerging economies** (39%).
- The highest levels of open reciprocity within the economic and political blocs surveyed are found in the **Schengen area** and the **Economic Community of West African States**.
- **Emerging economies** have seen a decrease in reciprocity among themselves from 54% in 2013 to 39% in 2023..



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Introduction

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has been monitoring the evolution of visa policies since 1963. Since 2008, data has been collected on a regular basis and consequently validated through surveys and communication with member states. Regular reports have been published since 2013 and are available on the UNWTO website.⁴ These reports include the **Tourism Visa Openness Index** that measures the degree to which destinations facilitate tourism and how open a country is in terms of visa facilitation for tourism purposes. Also, **mobility scores** are included that indicate to what extent citizens around the world are subject to visa policies, as well as an in-depth analysis of the **reciprocity of visa policies**.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, when COVID-19-related travel restrictions became significantly more important for international travel, and in light of the unprecedented challenges the pandemic posed to the tourism sector, UNWTO supported the sector with monitoring and reporting on COVID-19-related travel restrictions. Over the course of this unparalleled period for tourism, the Secretariat published a total of twelve global reports, including analysis of the complex interplay of sustainability, health and tourism-related factors that influenced the adoption of the various travel restriction measures.⁵

UNWTO's *Tourism Visa Openness Report 2023* continues the previous analysis of visa policies

and aims to provide destinations with evidence-based insights to help prioritize related facilitation measures.

Visa policies are among the most important government formalities affecting international tourism. Only half a century ago, travel was heavily influenced by customs regulations, currency exchange limitations and visa formalities. The development of policies and procedures for visas, as well as for other key travel documents such as passports, is closely linked to the development of tourism. With the rapid growth of international tourism in recent decades, the quality, reliability and functionality of visas and other travel documents have evolved.

Much progress has been made in travel facilitation, which has contributed to the growth of the tourism sector. Particularly noteworthy are the regional agreements between selected economic and political blocs that mutually exempt all or certain categories of travellers from visa requirements.

Furthermore, in response to the impact of the global travel restrictions caused by the pandemic, many countries have created special visas, such as the digital nomad visa⁶. Such visa aimed to attract long-term visitors during the pandemic, support recovery and attract a specific high technological profile of talent to their countries.⁷

⁴ World Tourism Organization (n.d.), 'Travel Facilitation', UNWTO, Madrid, online available at: <https://www.unwto.org/sustainable-development/travel-facilitation> [30-10-2023].

⁵ World Tourism Organization (2020–2023), COVID-19-related Travel Restrictions – A Global Review for Tourism, twelve reports, UNWTO, Madrid, online available at: <https://www.unwto.org/covid-19-travel-restrictions> [30-10-2023].

⁶ World Tourism Organization (2023), UNWTO Brief – Digital Nomad Visas, UNWTO, Madrid, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284424481>.

⁷ For more information on Digital Nomad Visa see Box 1.

However, despite the progress made, current visa policies are still often inadequate, inefficient, and an unnecessary burden for international travellers.

Visas perform several functions. They are used to ensure security, to control immigration and limit the entry, duration of stay or activities of travellers, to generate revenue and apply measures of reciprocity, and to ensure that a destination's carrying capacity is not exceeded and this way to control tourism demand. Although security is commonly cited as the most important reason for having a visa requirement in place, in practice all the functions mentioned can be observed and are reasons for introducing or maintaining a visa.

Travellers see visas mainly as a formality with costs. If the cost of obtaining a visa – either the direct monetary cost imposed in the form of fees or the indirect costs, which may include distance, time spent waiting in lines and the complexity of the process – exceeds a certain threshold, potential travellers may be deterred from making a particular journey or may choose an alternative destination that is easier accessible.

It is noteworthy that in 1963, at the United Nations Conference on International Travel and Tourism in Rome, delegates from 87 States agreed that “Governments should extend to the maximum number of countries the practice of abolishing, through bilateral agreements or by unilateral decision, the requirement of entry visas for temporary visitors”⁸. Over the course

of six decades since this conference, significant progress has been made, yet it still falls short of the real potential to create a seamless travel experience for visitors.



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⁸ United Nations Conference on International Travel and Tourism (1964), Recommendations on International Travel and Tourism, August 21–September 5, 1963, Rome.

States represented at the conference were: Afghanistan, Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic (now Belarus), Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, the Congo (Leopold-Ville), Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia (now Czechia and Slovakia), Denmark, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Federal Republic of Germany, Finland, France, Greece, Guatemala, Holy See, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Mali, Mexico, Morocco, Nepal, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Romania, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Somalia, Republic of South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey (now Türkiye), Uganda, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (now Ukraine), Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (now Russian Federation), United Arab Republic (now Egypt and Syria), United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Venezuela and Yugoslavia (now Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia). UN specialized agencies: FAO, UNESCO, ICAO, WHO, IMCO.

Methodological note

For the 2023 report, data was collected between January and May 2023. The process included a comprehensive review of official destination websites from January to April 2023, verification of information with secondary public sources and a detailed formal consultation process on the findings with all national (tourism) authorities in May 2023.

For the purpose of the report, only measures applicable to temporary visitors (tourists) holding ordinary passports⁹ were considered. The report distinguishes between the following four categories of visa policies are considered:

- **Traditional visa:** all traditional paper visas affixed in the passport and all other types of non-electronic visas that must be obtained before departure;
- **eVisa:** all types of electronic entry and travel authorization that the traveller must obtain prior to departure;
- **Visa on arrival:** all visas acquired upon arrival at the destination without any prior preparation for the journey. Typically, this type of visa is issued in the form of a stamp, sticker or other visible endorsement in the passport; and
- **No visa:** no entry permit is required when entering the destination.

Additionally, historical data from the year 1980 were gathered from the UNWTO archive records,

which detail border formalities as they were reported by member states at that time. This data provides a valuable baseline for understanding the evolution of international travel regulations and visa requirements over an extended period, offering a unique perspective on how travel facilitation and border management have changed in the past four decades.

The report further highlights some of the key findings of the UNWTO Brief on Digital Nomad Visas published in November 2023.¹⁰

⁹ Excluding diplomatic passports or similar.

¹⁰ World Tourism Organization (2023), UNWTO Brief – Digital Nomad Visas, UNWTO, Madrid, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284424481>.

1. COVID-19-related travel restrictions 2020–2023

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on international tourism, negatively affecting destinations, host communities and tourism-dependent sectors. As highlighted in the twelve *UNWTO COVID-19-related Travel Restrictions Reports*,¹¹ travel restrictions evolved rapidly and diversely during the pandemic, overshadowing the impact of existing visa policies on the movement of travellers. A peak in travel restrictions was observed in May 2020, when 75% of all destinations worldwide had their borders completely closed, effectively halting international tourism and contributing to an unprecedented 72% drop in international tourist arrivals (ITAs) in 2020.¹² Gradually, with a better understanding of the virus and its variants, combined with global vaccine rollouts, governments began adopting a more risk-based approach, leading to the gradual easing and lifting of travel restrictions.

The lifting of travel restrictions occurred through various mechanisms, leading to substantial geographical differences in the recovery of the tourism sector. Destinations in Europe and the Americas generally led the way in easing travel restrictions and experienced the strongest tourism recovery compared to other regions. However, uncertainty remained a major challenge for international travellers during the pandemic, as did frequent changes and adjustments to travel restrictions at short notice, lack of communication of restrictions on government and tourism-related websites and additional financial costs due to testing and quarantine requirements. The recommendation of the Emergency Committee of the World Health Organization (WHO) to end the Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) for COVID-19 on 4 May 2023 marked a significant milestone of the global effort to control the pandemic.



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¹¹ World Tourism Organization (2020–2023), *COVID-19-related Travel Restrictions – A Global Review for Tourism*, twelve reports, UNWTO, Madrid, online available at: <https://www.unwto.org/covid-19-travel-restrictions> [30-10-2023].

¹² World Tourism Organization (2023), *International Tourism Highlights, 2023 Edition – The impact of COVID-19 on tourism (2020–2022)*, UNWTO, Madrid, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284424504>.



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The findings from the twelve *COVID-19-related Travel Restrictions Reports* underline that destinations responded to the pandemic in highly diverse and dynamic ways. Those with better environmental performance, higher health and hygiene standards and a greater reliance on tourism tended to lift travel restrictions earlier. Conversely, emerging economies and Small Island Developing States often imposed full border closures more quickly, maintained them for longer and introduced additional traveller requirements as COVID-19 response measures. The European Union (EU) established the EU Digital COVID Certificate, which covered COVID-19 vaccination, test and recovery. With more than 2.3 billion certificates issued it significantly enabled the tourism recovery in the European Union and beyond.¹³

Consequently, the COVID-19 pandemic underscored the importance of facilitated travel and highlighted the necessity of an evidence-based approach to achieve objectives with those measures and to make corrections as needed. The intricate interplay between the environment, health and tourism sectors necessitates a multifaceted, evidence-based approach that incorporates aspects of governance, health, environment and culture. This will be crucial in addressing future challenges and building a more resilient and sustainable tourism sector.

¹³ European Commission (2023), 'The EU Digital COVID Certificate', European Commission, Brussels, online available at: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/coronavirus-response/safe-covid-19-vaccines-europeans/eu-digital-covid-certificate_en [30-10-2023].

2. The role of visas

The management of state borders, including the regulation of people's entry, is a sovereign right, governed by specifically enacted policies. Although the Universal Declaration of Human Rights articulates in Article 13 the right to freedom of movement within and the right to leave and return to one's country, it does not confer this right with regard to entering foreign states. Consequently, states maintain the authority to regulate the admission of foreign nationals into their territories.¹⁴

Visas serve as the principal mechanism through which states exert this control. These regulations can be unilaterally determined or established through bilateral or multilateral agreements with other states. Thus, visa policies are among the most impactful governmental measures affecting international tourism and influencing inbound tourism. At the same time, the rapid expansion of international tourism in the past seven decades and the link to visa policies has emphasized the need for improved quality, reliability and functionality of visas and other travel documents.

Visas serve several critical functions, such as ensuring security, controlling immigration, generating revenue, applying reciprocity measures and managing a destination's carrying capacity to control tourism demand. While security is often cited as the primary reason for imposing visa requirements, the other functions are equally

operative and form the basis for the introduction or maintenance of visas.

From the traveller's perspective, visas are often seen as costly and burdensome formalities. If the expense of acquiring a visa – be it the direct cost in fees or the indirect costs associated with distance, time and procedural complexity – exceeds a certain threshold, potential travellers may be deterred from visiting or may opt for destinations with more accessible entry processes.

While historically travel was profoundly affected by a wide range of measures such as customs regulations and currency exchange limitations, in recent times, one of the key advancements contributing to the remarkable growth of the tourism sector has been the facilitation of visa processes in many countries. The significance of visa policies for tourism has been recognized for decades as evidenced at the above-mentioned United Nations Conference on International Travel and Tourism in Rome in 1963. It was then that delegates from 87 states agreed that governments should extensively eliminate visa requirements, either through bilateral pacts or unilateral decisions, to improve travel accessibility.

Furthermore, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), held in Helsinki in 1975 and from which resulted the Organization of Security and Cooperation (OSCE), aimed to

¹⁴ This was also confirmed in the World Tourism Organization Declaration on the Facilitation of Tourist Travel, adopted at the eighteenth session of the UNWTO General Assembly in June 2009, in which the General Assembly reaffirms the sovereign right of States to control the access of foreign nationals to their territories, notably by means of visa policies, which they have the authority to determine freely, unilaterally, or in cooperation with other States and recognizes the discretionary authority of States in this regard, yet it considers that improving visa issuance modalities could help facilitate tourist travel significantly. See for more information: World Tourism Organization (2009), 'Declaration on the Facilitation of Tourist Travel, Eighteenth session of the World Tourism General Assembly, Astana, Kazakhstan, 5–8 October 2009', UNWTO, Madrid, online available at: <https://www.e-unwto.org/toc/unwtogad/2009/1> [14/12/2023].

overcome the Cold War rivalry by addressing the human dimension and centralizing the discussion on the increase of human contacts. This resulted in the elaboration of a catalogue of measures to develop inter-systemic and interhuman relations through concrete activities in transnational mobility issues (e.g., sports and tourism). This included the reduction of administrative barriers such as visas, as well as the improvement of tourism offers and information on travel possibilities. In the aftermath of the Helsinki Final Act,¹⁵ travel facilitation improved, and some countries agreed to lift their visa requirements, leading to increased tourism flows.

In addition, the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS)¹⁶ that entered into force in 1995, by the World Trade Organization (WTO), plays an important role in regulating the international movement of people in the context of service provision. Mode 2 (Consumption Abroad) refers to services consumed in the country where they are produced, and where inbound tourism consumption is contemplated. Mode 4 (movement of natural persons) within the GATS,¹⁷ involves the supply of a service by a service

supplier of one country through the temporary presence of “natural persons” in the territory of another country. This mode is particularly relevant in times of staff shortages in the tourism sector. WTO members must ensure that their regulations and policies do not discriminate against foreign service providers supplying services through this mode. Mode 4 offers possibilities for receiving and supplier countries, by addressing the workforce deficits that constrain economic growth, raise labour costs, reduce competitiveness and create fiscal pressures, while providing opportunities for supplier countries to increase exports, create employment, receive remittances and benefit from the transfer of skills, knowledge and technologies.¹⁸ However, the GATS does not cover natural persons seeking access to the employment market and measures regarding citizenship, residence or employment on a permanent basis. In addition, government policies and practices regarding the entry and temporary stay of natural persons, including application of visa and work permit requirements, are not determined by mode 4.¹⁹ Thus governments are free to regulate entry and temporary stay, provided these measures do not nullify or impair the commitments taken

¹⁵ Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (1975), Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe – Final Act, Helsinki 1975, OSCE, Vienna, online available at: <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/5/c/39501.pdf>. [30-10-2023].

¹⁶ All members of the World Trade Organization are members of the GATS that is the first trade agreement to cover trade in services and outlines four modes of supply: Mode 1: Cross border, Mode 2: Consumption abroad, Mode 3: Commercial presence, and Mode 4: Movement of natural persons. For purposes of structuring the commitments, WTO members have used a classification system comprised of 12 core service sectors, one of which is tourism and travel related services. Information available online at: https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/serv_e/gsintr_e.pdf [30-10-2023].

¹⁷ In addition, for tourism mode 4 covers business travellers, i.e., short-term stays of a few months (often limited to three months) with no remuneration received in the host country, temporary movements of between a few months to a few years, including existing employees transferred within the same foreign controlled company (intra-corporate transferees, generally limited to 2–5 years), service suppliers on specific term contracts with foreign or nationally-owned firms, self-employed service providers, whose remuneration is wholly or only partly received in the host country.

For more information please consult:

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, World Bank and International Organization for Migration (2003) Seminar on Trade and Migration (2003), ‘A quick guide to the GATS and Mode 4’, Geneva, online available at: https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1486/files/2018-07/quick_guide.pdf. [30-10-2023].

World Trade Organization, General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), ‘Movement of natural persons (mode 4)’, WTO, Geneva, online available at: https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/serv_e/movement_persons_e/movement_persons_e.htm [30-10-2023].

¹⁸ Chanda, R. (2018), The Case for Mode 4: Recognizing the Gains and Addressing the Challenges, WTO, Geneva, available online at: www.wto.org [22-12-2023].

¹⁹ World Trade Organization (2004), ‘IOM/World Bank/WTO Trade and Migration Background Paper’, IOM, World Bank, WTO Seminar on Trade and Migration, WTO, Geneva, online available at: <https://www.wto.org/index.htm> [14-12-2023].

by WTO members.²⁰ Discussions among WTO members on a specific GATS visa that would outline multilaterally accepted guidelines such as administrative procedures, verification forms and eligibility conditions have not yet yielded any results.²¹

As governments look to further develop international tourism, visa policies remain a crucial area for additional improvement. Recognizing that visa requirements can act as deterrents, there is a continuous push towards streamlining processes and reducing barriers, all while maintaining a balance between the free movement of tourists and the sovereign prerogative of states to protect their borders.



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²⁰ World Trade Organization (2004), 'Movement of natural persons under the GATS', IOM, World Bank, WTO Seminar on Trade and Migration, WTO, Geneva, available online at: https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1486/files/jahia/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/shared/mainsite/microsites/IDM/workshops/Trade_2004_04051004/set_pre_mamdouh.pdf [22-12-2023].

²¹ World Trade Organization (2004), 'Movement of natural persons under the GATS', IOM, World Bank, WTO Seminar on Trade and Migration, WTO, Geneva, available online at: https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1486/files/jahia/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/shared/mainsite/microsites/IDM/workshops/Trade_2004_04051004/set_pre_mamdouh.pdf [22-12-2023].

Box 1 :**Digital nomad visas**

The *UNWTO Brief – Digital Nomad Visas* looks at the background and current state of digital nomadism trends^a and provides an analysis of existing digital nomad visas (DNVs) covering 54 destinations, mostly located in the Americas and Europe. It examines the DNV programmes in seven areas: application process; duration of visa; taxation; insurance; accommodation; minimum income requirements; and criminal records check. According to this analysis, the rise in DNVs has gone hand-in-hand with an increase in digital nomads, with destinations in all regions working to meet the market trend.

A digital nomad visa provides nomads the freedom to work in a country without an official relationship with a national employer. This type of visa is more comprehensive than a visitor visa and offers more flexibility than traditional work visas. This makes it an ideal option for those who wish to work remotely, continue the professional pursuit while embracing the opportunity to experience life in the host destination's unique setting

Key findings of the report include:

47% of destinations offer visas for up to one year.

39% of destinations exempt digital nomads from tax payments.

17% of destinations do not have minimum income requirements.

76% of destinations have online applications for DNV programmes.

80% of destinations process applications within one-month period.

Only 6% of destinations have no visa fees for application.

Almost all destinations require some form of criminal records check.

Estonia was the first country that officially introduced a specialized digital nomad visa programme in July 2020.

Aruba, Georgia, and Mauritius process visas free of charge. The highest visa fees are in Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, the Cayman Islands and Grenada

Canada offers the shortest stay for digital nomads while Thailand issues the longest DNVs.

Generally, digital nomads become tax residents in the host country (with few exceptions) after 183 days of their stay.

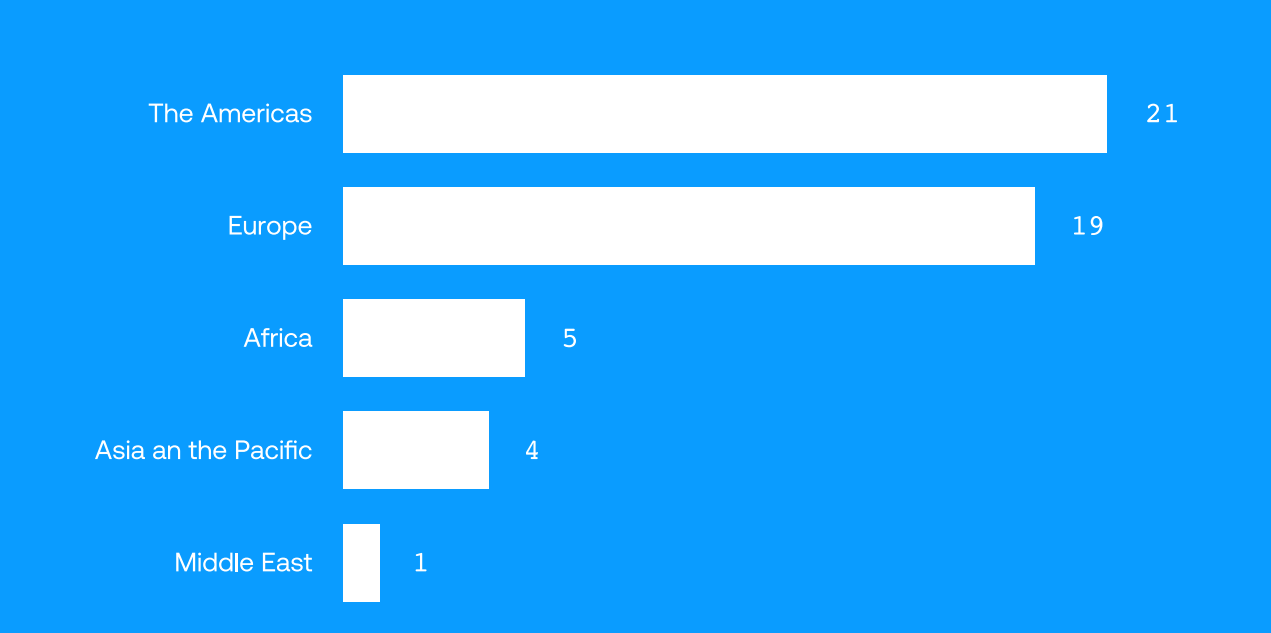
Antigua and Barbuda, Brazil, Cabo Verde, Curaçao, Georgia, Malta, Mauritius, Namibia, and Seychelles require that visa holders possess both health and

travel insurance, while the rest of the destinations require either travel or health insurance.

Antigua and Barbuda, Curaçao, Iceland and Panama do not require visa applicants to make advance arrangements for their accommodation.

The highest income requirements are in the Cayman Islands, Indonesia, and Mexico whereas Anguilla, Argentina, the Bahamas, Curaçao, Morocco and Saint Lucia do not have any minimum monthly income requirements as part of the visa application.

Figure 2.1: Number of countries with digital nomad visa programmes by region



Sources:World Tourism Organization (2023), UNWTO Brief – Digital Nomad Visas, UNWTO, Madrid, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284424481>.
a. Grouped by regional classification of UNWTO
b. A digital nomad is a person who uses technology to work remotely while travelling to different locations. The term digital nomad has been used since the early 1990s to describe a type of travelling and working lifestyle enabled by computer networking and mobile devices.

3. The global and regional dimensions to visas

Visa regulations create a framework that can either facilitate or hinder international travel, impacting everything from personal vacations to business trips. This chapter explores the ways in which different visa categories influence not just individual travel plans but also shaping the dynamics of global and regional mobility.

3.1. The global dimension

3.1.1. Traditional visa

Traditional visa requirements continue to be the most prevalent form of entry regulation, with a considerable impact on international mobility. In 2023, these traditional visa policies affect almost half of the world's population – 47% to be precise.²² This means that a substantial segment of global travellers must engage with often cumbersome bureaucratic processes that precede their travel. Obtaining a traditional visa usually entails a sequence of steps including the gathering of necessary documentation, the payment of application fees and sometimes lengthy processing times.

The implications of such a widespread reliance on traditional visas are far-reaching. For some, the challenges of securing a visa can discourage travel altogether, impacting not only personal plans but also broader cultural exchange and international relations. Additionally, for countries with stringent visa regimes, tourism and foreign business opportunities may be lost to nations with more facilitated entry requirements.

3.1.2. eVisa

The implementation of eVisa systems underscores a transitional shift in global immigration policy, aimed at simplifying the visa process while aligning with the ultimate goal of reducing visa requirements overall. Catering in 2023 to 18% of the global population, eVisas serve as a necessary interim solution, particularly for citizens with less widely accepted travel documents. By offering an efficient online application process, these systems mitigate some of the traditional barriers to entry, paving the way for a future where visa-free travel becomes the norm. While not an end in themselves, eVisas represent a progressive step towards the broader aspiration of visa abolition, balancing the need for secure borders with the facilitation of international travel in an increasingly connected world.

3.1.3. Visa on arrival

Visa-on-arrival policies, presently covering 14% of the global population, offer a more expedient route to international travel. Such policies enable travellers to obtain their visa directly at the destination, significantly streamlining the pre-travel procedures. Despite their relative flexibility compared to conventional visas, these on-arrival arrangements still impose certain entry conditions determined by the destination country, including requirements for evidence of accommodation, proof of sufficient financial means, and possession of a return or onward ticket.

²² In 2012, eVisas were accounted for separately for the first time.

3.1.4. No visa requirement or visa exemption

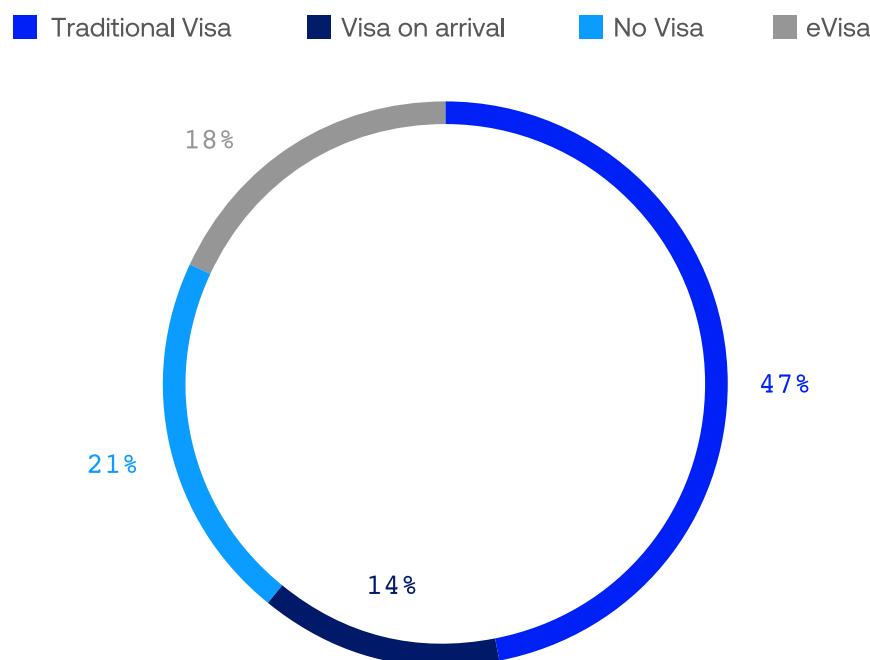
A noteworthy 21% of the global population are exempt of any visa requirements, symbolizing the utmost convenience in international travel. It allows travellers to cross borders without the preliminary step of visa acquisition, reflecting a progressive move towards enhancing global mobility. The absence of visa requirements streamlines the travel process, inviting last-minute trips and potentially boosting tourism. Moreover, it removes bureaucratic and financial hurdles that can deter people from exploring new destinations, likely increasing tourism and cultural exchange. Visa-free arrangements not only facilitate leisure and business travel but also manifest the diplomatic goodwill and collaboration between countries, emphasizing an open-door policy that can lead to mutual economic and cultural benefits.

3.2. Evolution of global visa policies

An in-depth analysis of the changes in visa policies across the globe reveals a dynamic picture of international travel and its regulatory environment. UNWTO coded and analysed visa regulation data reaching back to 1980 not only to reflect the progression of travel accessibility but also to indicate geopolitical shifts and technological advancements influencing these policies.

Figure 3.3 presents a visual narrative of these changes, mapping out the progression of visa regulations and their impact on global mobility. The figure not only highlights the general trend towards more facilitated visa policies but also underscores regional and temporal variations, showing how barriers to travel have been progressively lowered.

Figure 3.1: World population subject to visa policies, 2023 (%)



Source: Data compiled by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), May 2023.

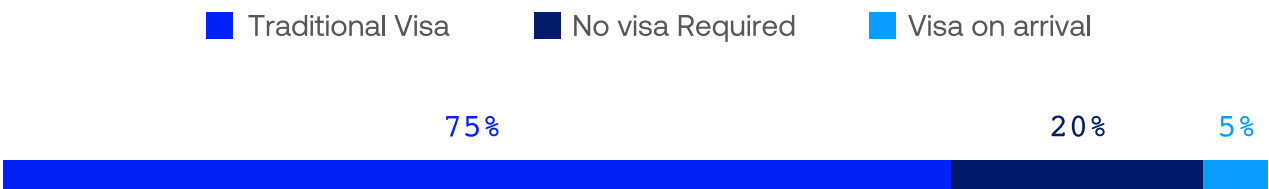
3.2.1. Visa policies in 1980

In 1980, destinations on average required 75% of the world’s population to obtain a visa before embarking on an international journey (see figure 3.2). Additionally, 5% had the option of obtaining a visa on arrival, while 20% were exempt from visa requirements for tourism-related travel. This data provides a baseline, illustrating the initial landscape of global visa policies.

3.2.2. Evolution of visa facilitation since 1980

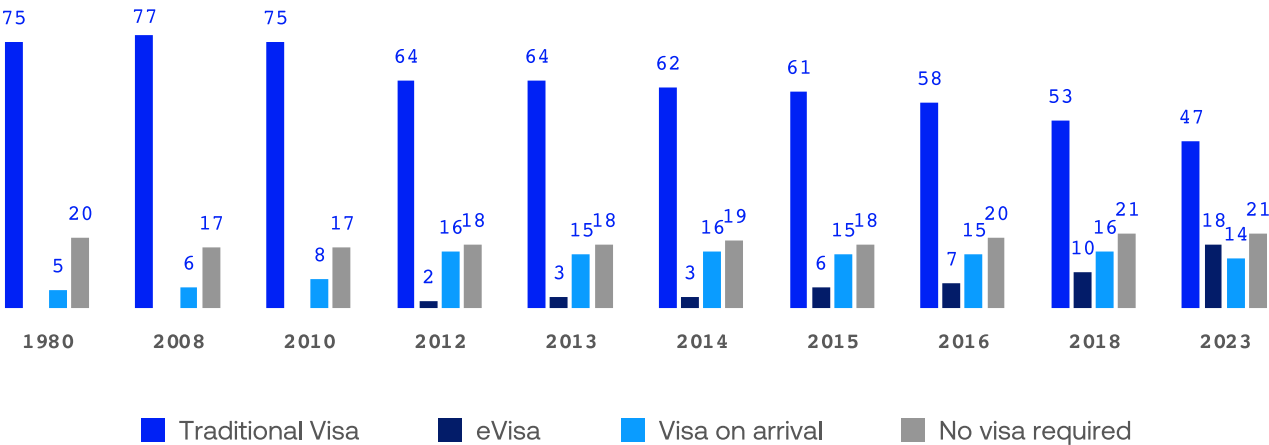
Figure 3.3 graphically illustrates the sustained prevalence of traditional visa requirements, which held strong until the turn of the decade in 2010. This period marked a pivotal shift as various forms of visa policies began to emerge more prominently across the globe. In 2008, the global landscape was such that on average, a significant 77% of the world’s population was obligated to secure a traditional visa prior to their travels.

Figure 3.2: World population subject to visa policies, 1980



Source: Data compiled by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

Figure 3.3: World population subject to different types of visa policies, 1980–2023 (%)



Notes: Before 2012 no differentiation was made between eVisa and visa on arrival, hence both categories were grouped under visa on arrival. Data on visa policies was difficult to retrieve during the COVID-19 pandemic 2020–2023, as policies were shadowed by travel restrictions. During this period, UNWTO concentrated on publishing twelve reports analysing the impact of COVID-19-related restrictions for international tourism, replacing temporarily the *Tourism Visa Openness Reports*.

Source: World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), based on information of national official institutions.

The decline of traditional visa requirements

However, this stringent approach has since undergone a gradual easing; by 2015, the proportion requiring traditional visas had notably declined to 61%. This trend continued its downward trajectory, reducing further to 47% in 2023. This evolution over a span of 15 years marks a transformative period in which international travel has become progressively more accessible due to the diversification of visa policies, signifying an important move away from strict entry regulations to fostering a more open global travel environment.

Visa on arrival: A steady rise

The visa on arrival category has also experienced substantial growth, with its prevalence markedly increasing from 1980 to 2023. This trend reflects a global move towards the benefits of streamlining entry procedures at the destination, reducing the need for travellers to undertake extensive preparations before departure. A particularly notable period of change was between 2010 and 2012, which saw the most rapid decrease in traditional visa requirements. Within this brief window, there was a remarkable surge in the adoption of visa on arrival policies, with their incidence doubling from 8% to 16%.

Unwavering accessibility: no visa requirements

In contrast to the fluctuating trends observed in other visa categories, the percentage of the global population exempt from visa requirements has remained notably stable since 1980, fluctuating slightly around 20% and 21%. This suggests that while there has been some commitment to open borders and the facilitation of hassle-free travel, there is still room to expand this accessibility for a larger share of the global population.

The ascendance of eVisa systems

An upward trend in the adoption of eVisa systems marks a significant transition in visa policies worldwide. Initially representing a mere 2% in 2012, the utilization of eVisas has surged to encompass 18% of the global population on average. This shift towards digitalization is not an end in itself but a strategic facilitation tool that simplifies the visa application process while maintaining necessary security measures. It reflects a broader movement to harness technology for enhancing travel convenience without compromising the integrity of borders.

4. Worldwide openness

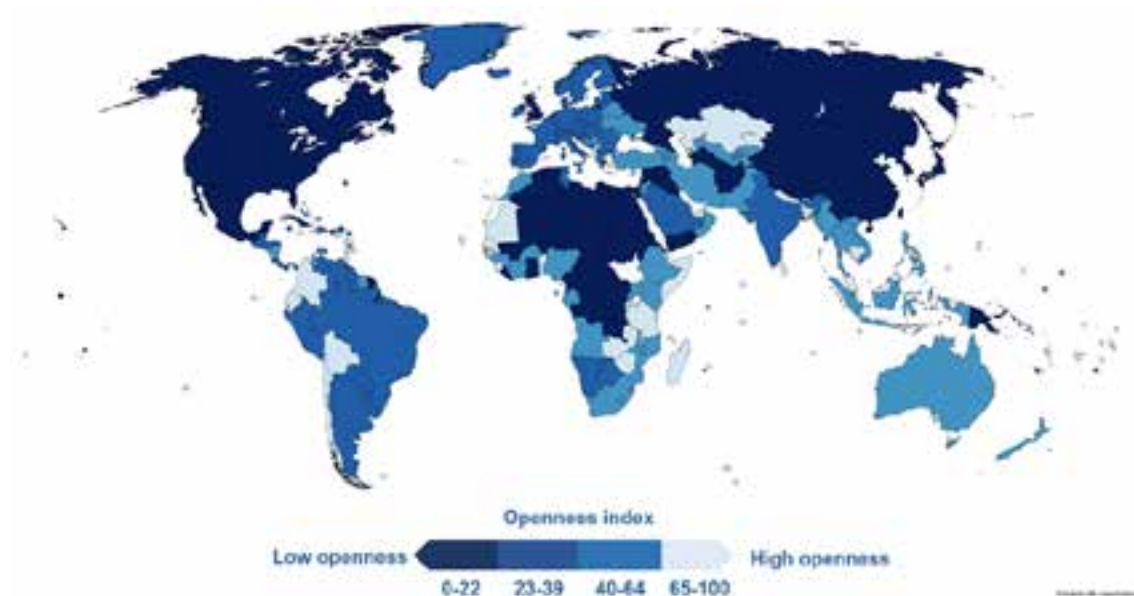
The Tourism Visa Openness Index, introduced by UNWTO for a first time in 2013, measures the degree to which destinations facilitate tourism, with scores spanning from 0 to 100. A higher score indicates more visa facilitation and thus greater openness of a country. Reflecting the global policy advancements of recent years, the world's total openness has steadily risen, culminating in a peak of 40 index points on average in 2023 (see figure 4.2).

4.1. The openness score – Regional perspectives and evolution over time

The openness score is an essential metric for understanding how accessible different

destinations are to international travellers. It provides a quantifiable measure of the ease with which tourists can enter various countries by evaluating different visa policies. This chapter takes a closer look at the openness score by breaking it down from a regional perspective. Such an analysis allows for a comparison of how different regions are adapting to the global trend towards increased mobility and tourism. It offers insights into which areas of the world are leading in facilitating travel and which are lagging behind, providing a nuanced picture of the international travel landscape. Moreover, the chapter explores the dynamic evolution of visa policies over time, identifying trends, shifts and patterns in policy changes.

Figure 4.1: Tourism Visa Openness Index by country, 2023



Note: The higher the score on the Openness Index, the more visas are facilitated. *Openness* indicates to what extent a destination is facilitating tourism. It is calculated by summing the percentage of the world's population exempt from obtaining a visa, with the percentages of no visa by 1, visa on arrival weighted by 0.7 and eVisa by 0.5 and traditional visa weighted by 0.

Source: World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), based on information of national official institutions.

Table 4.1: Global overview and subregions of destinations subject to visa policies, 2023
(% of world population)

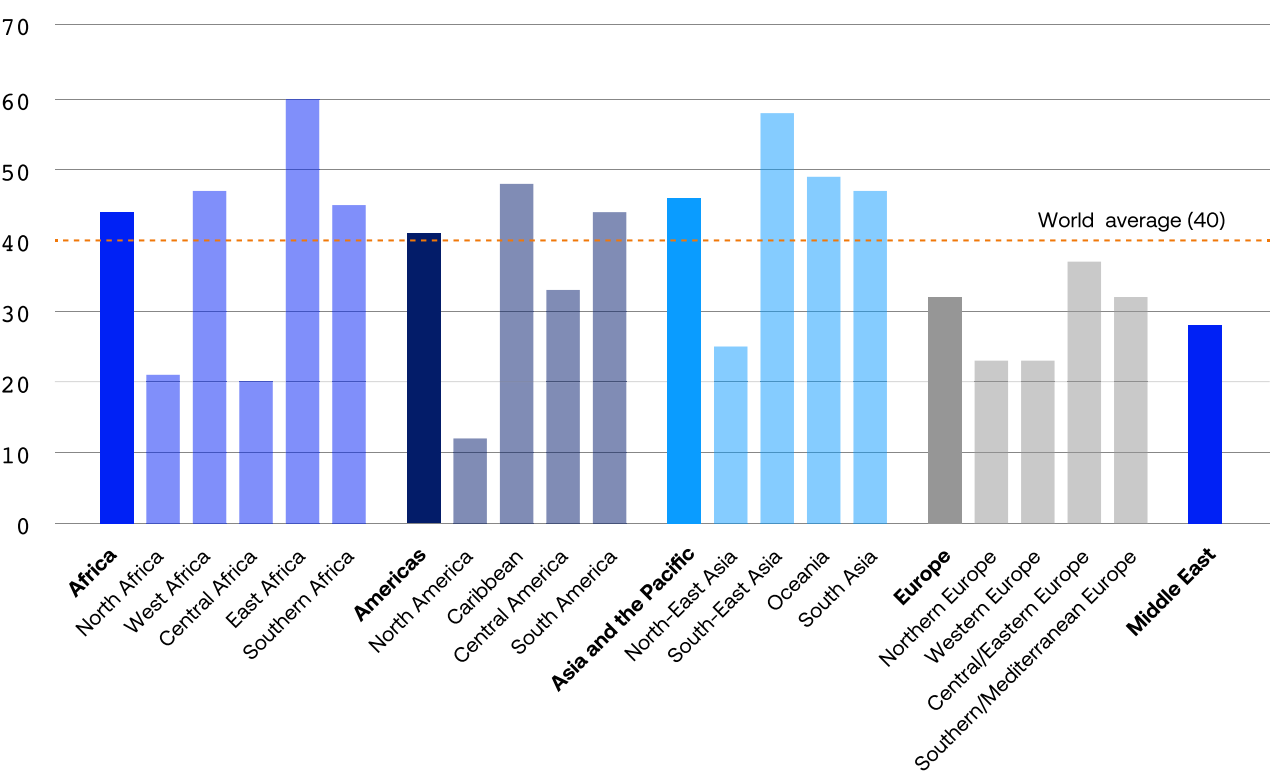
	Tourism Visa Openness Index ^a	World population subject to visa policies (%)			
		No visa	Visa on arrival	eVisa	Traditional visa ^b
World	40	21%	14%	18%	47%
Advanced economies^c	27	22%	0%	8%	69%
Emerging economies^c	43	20%	17%	21%	42%
By UNWTO regions:					
Africa	44	12%	24%	31%	33%
North Africa	21	20%	1%	0%	79%
West Africa	47	13%	23%	36%	28%
Central Africa	20	6%	2%	27%	66%
East Africa	60	9%	46%	36%	9%
Southern Africa	45	29%	2%	29%	40%
Americas	41	33%	3%	10%	53%
North America	12	7%	0%	9%	84%
Caribbean	48	45%	1%	6%	48%
Central America	33	31%	3%	0%	66%
South America	44	29%	6%	21%	44%
Asia and the Pacific	46	19%	25%	20%	37%
North-East Asia	25	20%	2%	7%	71%
South-East Asia	58	24%	36%	19%	21%
Oceania	49	26%	18%	21%	35%
South Asia	47	5%	38%	31%	26%
Europe	32	26%	1%	11%	63%
Northern Europe	23	23%	0%	0%	77%
Western Europe	23	23%	0%	0%	77%
Central/Eastern Europe	37	26%	1%	20%	53%
Southern/Mediterranean Europe	32	28%	0%	8%	64%
of which EU-27 ^d	23	23%	0%	0%	77%
Middle East	28	4%	24%	15%	57%

Note: Due to rounding, aggregates do not necessarily add to 100.

- The Tourism Visa Openness Index scores range from 0 to 100. The higher the score on the Tourism Visa Openness Index, the more visas are facilitated. *Openness* indicates to what extent a destination is facilitating tourism. It is calculated by summing the percentage of the world population exempt from obtaining a visa with the percentages of no visa weighted by 1, visa on arrival weighted by 0.7, eVisa by 0.5 and traditional visa weighted by 0. For the (sub)regional totals, the percentages of the four different visa categories and the resulting openness score represent the averages of economies in that group (where destination economies are weighted by natural logarithm of the population size, i.e., $\times 1,000$ population, in order to take into account differences in destination size).
- Traditional visa means that a visa has to be obtained prior to departure and is not an electronic visa (eVisa).
- Advanced economies and emerging economies classifications are based on: International Monetary Fund (2023), *World Economic Outlook*, April 2023, IMF, Washington, D.C., online available at <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/weo-database/2023/April> [11-12-1023]. Of the 216 destinations analysed in 2023, 41 are classified as advanced economies and 175 as emerging economies.
- The EU-27 countries are Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.

Source: World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), based on information of national official institutions.

Figure 4.2: Tourism Visa Openness Index score by region, 2023



Note: The higher the score on the Tourism Visa Openness Index, the more visas are facilitated. *Openness* indicates to what extent a destination is facilitating tourism. It is calculated by summing the percentage of the world's population exempt from obtaining a visa, with the percentages of no visa by 1, visa on arrival weighted by 0.7 and eVisa by 0.5 and traditional visa weighted by 0.

Source: Data compiled by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), May 2023.

4.1.1. Africa

From a regional perspective, Africa has made significant progress in visa facilitation. The Tourism Visa Openness Index score of 44 exceeds the global average, indicating a generally hospitable approach to international visitors. Nonetheless, the continent exhibits a diverse array of visa policies, with its various subregions displaying a broad spectrum of openness to international tourism.

By May 2023,²³ the requirement for a traditional visa to enter Africa has dropped to 33% of the world's population, down from 45% in 2018. Efforts to expand the adoption of eVisas have

been successful, with 31% of people globally now able to obtain an eVisa prior to their journey – a significant increase from just 12% in 2018.

While North Africa and Central Africa enforce some of the region's and the world's most rigorous visa regulations, East Africa stands out as the most welcoming subregion globally. This is particularly due to its visa on arrival policy, which allows 46% of the travellers of the world to obtain a visa upon entry, and its eVisa system, which is available to 36% of international tourists.

Figure 4.3: Africa: world population subject to visa policies, 2012–2023 (%)



Note: Data on visa policies was difficult to retrieve during the COVID-19 pandemic 2020–2023, as policies were shadowed by travel restrictions. During this period, UNWTO concentrated on publishing twelve reports analysing the impact of COVID-19-related restrictions for international tourism, replacing temporarily the *Tourism Visa Openness Reports*.

Source: Data compiled by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), May 2023.

²³ After completing data collection in May 2023, data analysis started. During the preparation period of the current report the following development was observed: In December 2023, Kenya's President announced that a visa will no longer be required for tourists as of January 2024. An electronic travel authorization will be required instead. For further information, please consult:

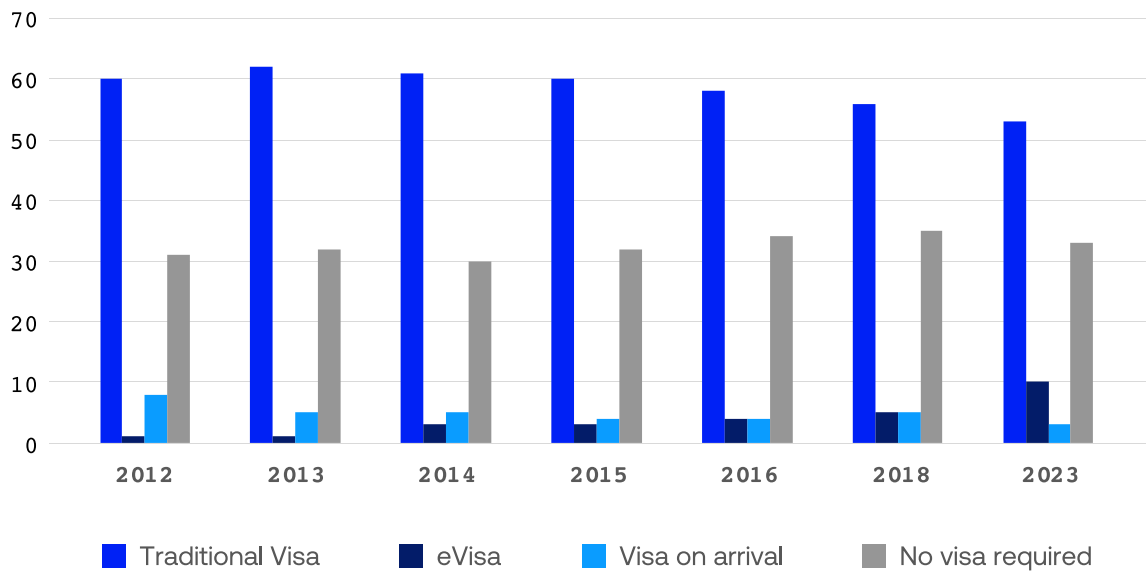
Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government – State Department for Immigration Services (2024), 'Implementation of Electronic Travel Authorization (eTA)', online available at: <https://immigration.go.ke/> [10-01-2024].

4.1.2. The Americas

With 33% of the world’s population able to enter without a visa, this region has the highest rate of visa exemptions compared to others. Yet, a substantial 53% still need to secure a traditional visa before departure. North America is the most restrictive subregion on a global scale, allowing a mere 7% of the world’s population visa exempted entry.²⁴

In contrast, the Caribbean is recognized as one of the most welcoming subregions, with 45% of people worldwide enjoying visa exempted access. Likewise, countries in Central and South America have eliminated visa requirements for a considerable number of source markets, confirming the Americas’ position as a front-runner in visa facilitation.

Figure 4.4: The Americas: world population subject to by visa policies, 2012–2023 (%)



Note: Data on visa policies was difficult to retrieve during the COVID-19 pandemic 2020–2023, as policies were shadowed by travel restrictions. During this period, UNWTO concentrated on publishing twelve reports analysing the impact of COVID-19-related restrictions for international tourism, replacing temporarily the *Tourism Visa Openness Reports*.
Source: Data compiled by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), May 2023.

²⁴ Although not all eVisa programmes are technically classified as visas (for example, the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) in the United States of America is not a visa according to law), they are similar in form and function and have been therefore categorized as eVisas.

4.1.3. Asia and the Pacific

The region continues to pave the way in facilitating international travel. With a Tourism Visa Openness Index score of 46, it stands well above the global average and outperforms all other regions. Asia and the Pacific offer visa on arrival options to a quarter of the world’s population, a figure unmatched by any other region.

By May 2023,²⁵ 19% of the world’s population can enter this region without a visa. Additionally, 25% are eligible for visas on arrival, 20% can apply for an eVisa and the remaining 37% must secure a traditional visa.

A closer look at the subregions reveals that South-East Asia is among the most accommodating areas worldwide. As of 2023, 24% of the global population can enter without a visa, 36% are eligible for a visa on arrival, 19% can apply for an eVisa and only 21% are required to obtain a traditional visa before travelling to South-East Asia.

Figure 4.5: Asia and the Pacific: world population subject to visa policies, 2012–2023 (%)



Note: Data on visa policies was difficult to retrieve during the COVID-19 pandemic 2020–2023, as policies were shadowed by travel restrictions. During this period, UNWTO concentrated on publishing twelve reports analysing the impact of COVID-19-related restrictions for international tourism, replacing temporarily the *Tourism Visa Openness Reports*.

Source: Data compiled by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), May 2023.

²⁵ After completing data collection in May 2023, data analysis started. During the preparation period of the current report following developments were observed:

- i. China introduced a unilateral visa-free entry policy for holders of ordinary passports from France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and Malaysia during the period 1 December 2023 to 30 November 2024. For more information please consult: The State Council of the People's Republic of China (2024), 'China's visa-free policy facilitates travels from six countries', online available at: https://english.www.gov.cn/news/202401/02/content_WS659342f3c6d0868f4e8e2b0b.html [10-01-2024].
- ii. In December 2023, Malaysia announced a visa liberalisation plan to attract foreign tourists and generate national income. Among the measures mentioned are the visa waiver for Chinese and Indian nationals, effective 1 December 2023 to 31 December 2024, and the extension of the visa validity period from three to six months. For more information please consult: Immigration Department of Malaysia – Ministry of Home Affairs (2023), 'Visa Liberation Plan', Government of Malaysia, Putrajaya, online available at: <https://www.imi.gov.my/index.php/en/pengumuman/visa-liberalisation-plan/> [20-12-2023].

4.1.4. Europe

European destinations have maintained relatively restrictive visa policies, albeit with some progression in recent years. As of 2023, 26% of the world’s population can enter Europe without a visa, an increase from 22% in 2015. Nonetheless, Europe has the highest demand for traditional visas, with 63% of the global population requiring one for entry, though this is down from 76% in 2015.

The availability of eVisas has also seen a significant rise, serving 2% of the global population in 2015 and expanding to 11% in 2023. On the other hand, Europe offers the least possibility for visas on arrival, extending this convenience to only 1% of the global population.

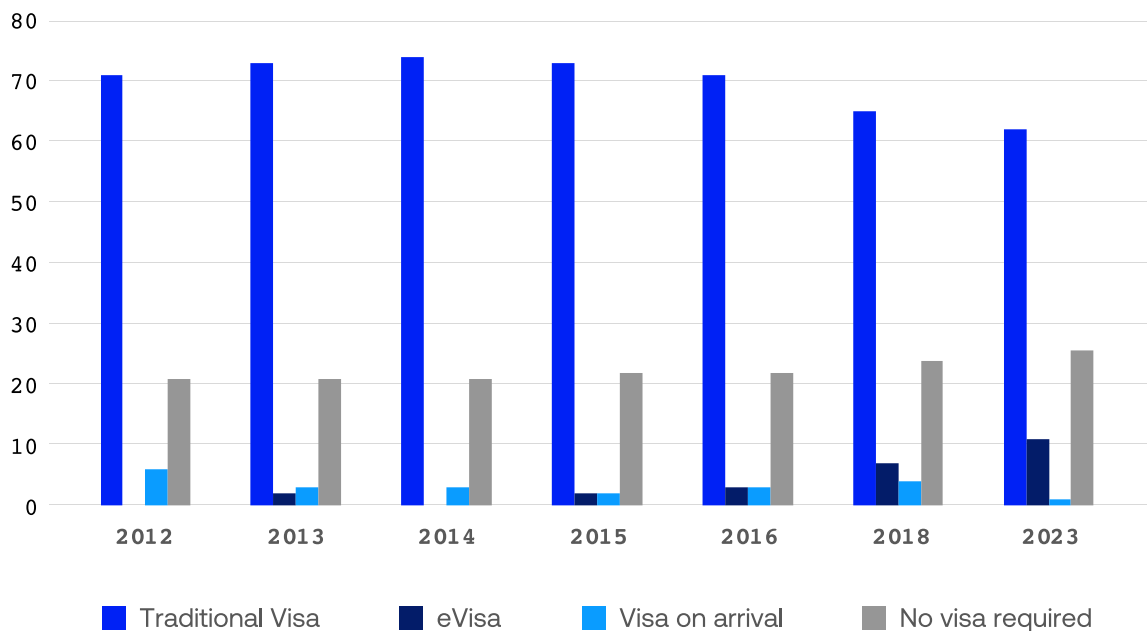
Examining subregional visa policies, Northern, Western and Southern/Mediterranean Europe

exhibit relatively consistent regulations, with each requiring a traditional visa from comparable portions of the global population and simultaneously offering visa waivers to a substantial number of travellers.

The Central/Eastern European subregion has made commendable strides in enhancing accessibility, eliminating visa requirements for 26% of the world’s population in 2023, up from 20% in 2018.

In the wider European framework, the EU-27 nations show significant openness, especially as they permit 23% of the global population to enter visa-free.

Figure 4.6: Europe: world population subject to visa policies, 2012–2023 (%)



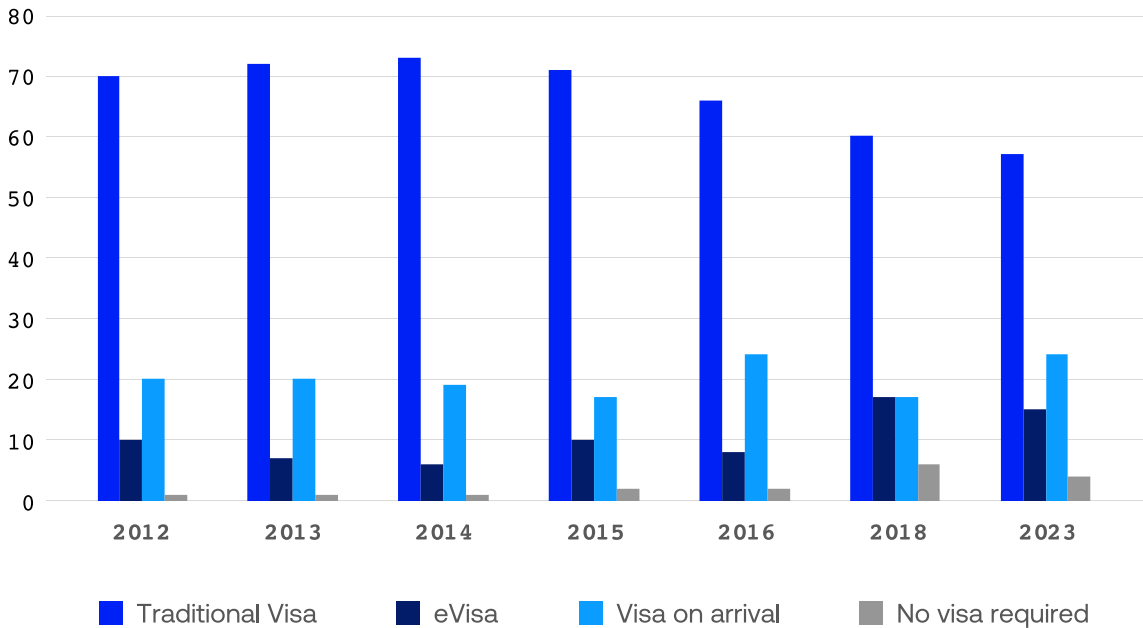
Note: Data on visa policies was difficult to retrieve during the COVID-19 pandemic 2020–2023, as policies were shadowed by travel restrictions. During this period, UNWTO concentrated on publishing twelve reports analysing the impact of COVID-19-related restrictions for international tourism, replacing temporarily the *Tourism Visa Openness Reports*.

Source: Data compiled by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), May 2023.

4.1.5. Middle East

The Middle East region has made important progress in visa facilitation. In 2015, a significant 71% of the world’s population needed to secure a traditional visa before visiting the Middle East. By May 2023 ²⁶, this figure reduced to 57%. At the same time, the provision of eVisas rose from 10% in 2015 to 15% in 2023. Moreover, the percentage of the world’s population eligible for a visa on arrival increased from 17% to 24% over the same period. Despite these improvements in visa processing, the region maintains the lowest rate of visa exemptions, with only 4% of the global population able to enter without any visa.

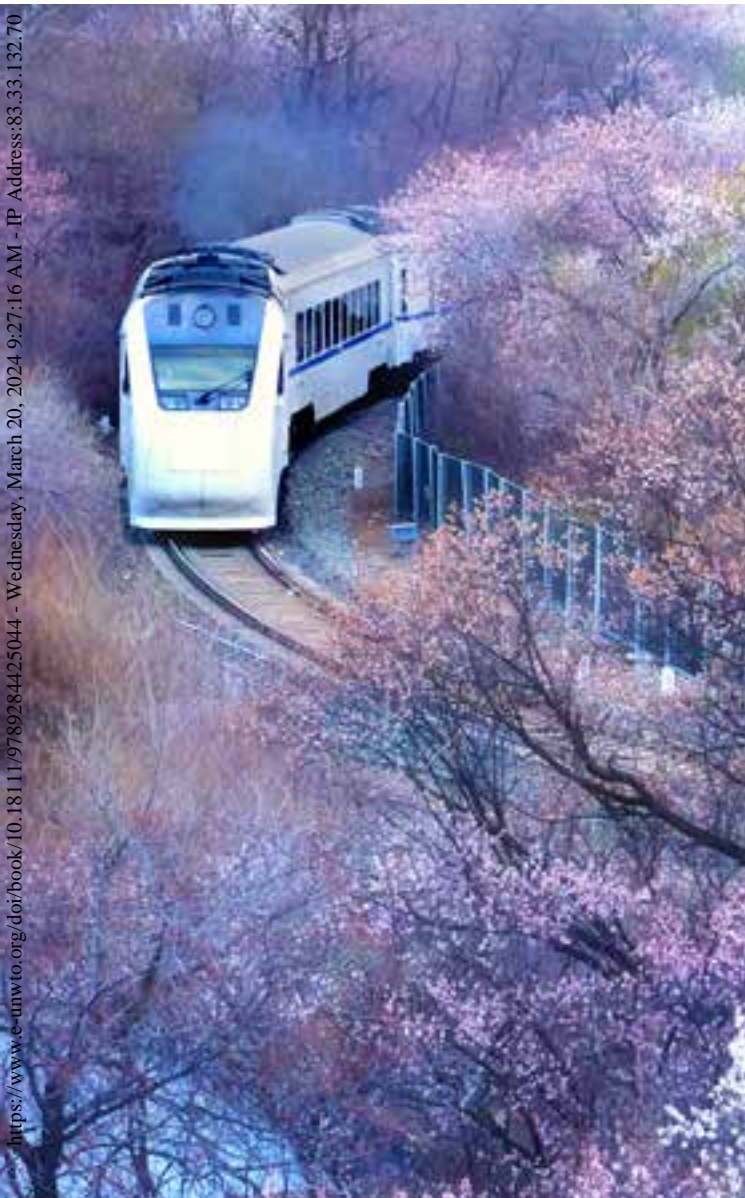
Figure 4.7: Middle East: world population subject to visa policies, 2012–2023 (%)



Note: Data on visa policies was difficult to retrieve during the COVID-19 pandemic 2020–2023, as policies were shadowed by travel restrictions. During this period, UNWTO concentrated on publishing twelve reports analysing the impact of COVID-19-related restrictions for international tourism, replacing temporarily the *Tourism Visa Openness Reports*.

Source: Data compiled by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), May 2023.

²⁶ After completing data collection in May 2023, data analysis started. During the preparation period of the current report following developments were observed: The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) approved the Unified Gulf Tourist Visa System proposal, which is scheduled to be implemented between 2024 and 2025. This visa regime will allow individuals to visit several of the six member states of the GCC. For more information please consult: Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (2023), 'HE GCCSG: The Unified GCC Tourist Visa Project, online available at: <https://www.gcc-sg.org/en-us/MediaCenter/NewsCooperation/News/Pages/news2023-11-8-4.aspx> [12-12-2023].



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4.1.6. Conclusion

In summary, the visa policies across the regions exhibit distinct patterns.

Visa exemptions are most prominent in the Caribbean, where 45% of the world's population can enter without a visa, followed by Central America at 31% and Oceania at 26%. Nonetheless, the proportion of the global population that benefits from these exemptions has remained relatively unchanged, with minimal deviation from the figures recorded since the 1980s.

There has been a substantial increase in the availability of visas on arrival, indicating a trend among numerous countries to facilitate more efficient entry procedures and enhance travel convenience. Visas on arrival are particularly widespread in East Africa, where 46% of the world's population can obtain them, South Asia (38%), South-East Asia (36%) and West Africa (32%).

The rise of eVisas represents the most significant evolution in visa policies. Once a novel concept, eVisas now play an integral role in global travel regulations. They are especially prevalent in both West and East Africa, where 36% of the population can utilize eVisa options, as well as in South Asia (31%). In contrast, regions such as North Africa, Central America, Northern and Western Europe currently do not extend eVisa facilities.

There is a discernible global downtrend in the requirement for traditional visas prior to travel, suggesting an overarching move towards more lenient and tourist-friendly policies. However, traditional visas are still predominantly required by North America (84%), North Africa (79%) and in the subregions of Western and Northern Europe and North-East Asia, where the necessity exceeds 70%.

4.2. The twenty most open destinations, 2023

While analysing countries based on their Tourism Visa Openness Index score it is remarkable that in 2023, 15 of the top 20 most open countries are Small Island Developing States (SIDS).²⁷ The first eight most open destinations are SIDS, with the leading three situated in Oceania, the next three in the Caribbean and one in Africa. In the regional spread, the list includes three destinations from Africa, ten from the Americas and seven from Asia and the Pacific.

It is also noteworthy that tourism plays a vital economic role in these areas. Nine out of these twenty states²⁸ are significantly reliant on tourism, with the sector accounting for more than 20% of their GDP.²⁹ Historically, the composition of this list has been consistent, with SIDS consistently appearing among the least restrictive destinations.³⁰

Table 4.2: Tourism Visa Openness Index score – most open countries, 2023

	Country	Tourism Visa Openness Index
1	Cook Islands	100.0
1	Niue	100.0
1	Micronesia	100.0
4	Dominica	99.8
5	Haiti	95.9
6	Barbados	95.1
7	Saint Kitts and Nevis	89.0
8	Mauritius	85.0
9	Macao (China)	84.1
10	Malaysia	80.5
11	Ecuador	79.3
12	Vanuatu	77.5
13	Fiji	77.3
14	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	76.4
15	Montserrat	76.3
16	Trinidad and Tobago	75.5
16	Bolivia	75.5
18	Antigua and Barbuda	74.7
19	Cabo Verde	74.4
20	Rwanda	73.2

Note: The Tourism Visa Openness Index ranges from 0 to 100. The higher the score of the Openness Index, the more visas are facilitated, the more open the destination is.

Source: Data compiled by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) based on information of national official institutions.

²⁷ According to the official classification by the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UNOHRLLS) there are 57 SIDS, of which 38 are member states of the United Nations. For more information, please consult: United Nations (n.d.), 'Small Island Developing States', online available at: <https://www.un.org/ohrrls/content/small-island-developing-states> [30-10-2023].

²⁸ Data is available for sixteen destinations.

²⁹ The tourism gross domestic product (T-GDP) relates to the importance of tourism in the economy of a destination as percentage of the overall GDP. For the purpose of the twelve COVID-19 related travel restriction reports destinations were grouped in four clusters of economic importance, namely low, moderate, considerable and high. For more information on the methodology please consult: World Tourism Organization (2023), The End of COVID-19-related Travel Restrictions – Summary of findings from the COVID-19-related Travel Restriction reports, UNWTO, Madrid, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284424320>.

³⁰ In 2013 among the twenty most open destinations also twelve SIDS were listed. See for more information: World Tourism Organization (2013), Tourism visa openness report: Visa facilitation as means to stimulate tourism growth, UNWTO, Madrid, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284415731>.

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4.3. Emerging and advanced economies

When comparing the visa facilitation measures of emerging and advanced economies³¹ to global openness standards, data from 2023 reveals that emerging economies had the highest openness regarding entry visa requirements for tourism, scoring 43 on the Tourism Visa Openness Index. This score exceeds the global average. Over recent years, the openness of emerging economies has closely mirrored the global average and surpassed it by 2016. Thus, emerging economies have been and remain the driving force behind the trend of increasing openness.

In contrast, advanced economies have exhibited stability in their visa openness, maintaining a level they slightly elevated in 2014, for nearly a decade now.

Delving deeper into travel requirements for emerging economies, 42% of the world's population require a traditional visa, while 21% need an eVisa. In contrast, for destinations in advanced economies, 69% of the global population require a traditional visa and 8% qualify for an eVisa.

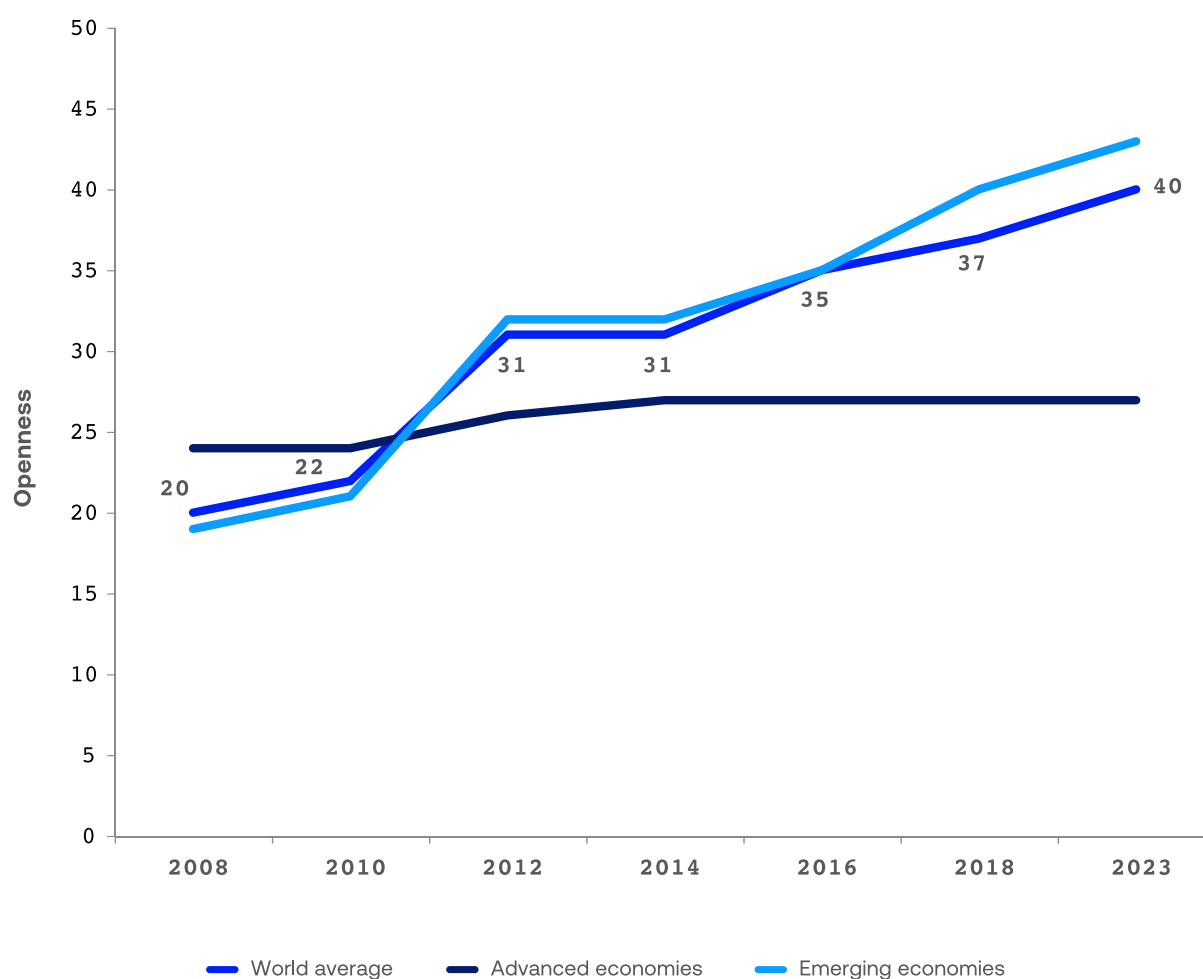
The adoption of eVisa has increased from 3% in 2014 to 21% in 2023 in emerging economies, compared to 4% to 8% in advanced economies, which can highlight the significant impact of digital solutions in optimizing visa processes. Interestingly, international tourist arrivals rose by 30.3% for emerging economies from 2014 to 2019 (pre-covid ITA), at a faster pace than that of advanced economies.

³¹ Advanced and emerging economies classifications are based on: International Monetary Fund, 'World Economic Outlook Database – Groups and Aggregate Information', IMF, Washington, D.C., online available at: <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/weo-database/2023/April/groups-and-aggregates> [30-10-2023].

Regarding full visa exemptions, this policy is slightly more common in advanced economies at 22%, compared to 20% in emerging economies. For

context, in 2018, the figures stood at 25% for advanced economies versus 17% for emerging ones.

Figure 4.8: Tourism Visa Openness Index score – global trends in visa policy openness, 1980–2023



Notes: The Tourism Visa Openness Index ranges from 0 to 100. The higher the score of the Openness Index, the more visas are facilitated, the more open the destination is. However, to facilitate the understanding, the above visualization only portrays ranges up to 50.

Data on visa policies was difficult to retrieve during the COVID-19 pandemic 2020–2023, as policies were shadowed by travel restrictions. During this period, UNWTO concentrated on publishing twelve reports analysing the impact of COVID-19-related restrictions for international tourism, replacing temporarily the *Tourism Visa Openness Reports*.

Source: Data compiled by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) based on information of national official institutions.

5. Reciprocity

While reciprocal visa policies are often advocated for fostering equitable international relations, it is worth considering that such policies may not be necessary or even beneficial in all circumstances. Firstly, the unilateral visa facilitation can be a strategic approach for destinations looking to boost tourism and business travel without necessarily receiving the same treatment in return. By unilaterally removing visa requirements for citizens of certain countries, a destination can attract tourists and business travellers, which can lead to significant economic benefits, such as increased spending and investment in the local economy, without compromising its own citizens' ease of travel. Secondly, security concerns may necessitate a non-reciprocal approach to visa policies. A country may determine that it is not in its best interest to allow the same level of access to its territory as its citizens enjoy abroad, especially if there are concerns about illegal immigration, security threats or if the socioeconomic conditions between the two countries are asymmetrical. Additionally, reciprocity can sometimes lead to a tit-for-tat escalation, where countries impose visa restrictions on each other's citizens in response to the actions of the other, which can lead to decreased travel and diplomatic frictions.

Ultimately, changing dynamics of global travel demand lets visa policies evolve accordingly. For tourism, strict reciprocity has become less of a strategic imperative. Destinations must focus on their specific tourism agendas, economic interests and security imperatives, which may justify a move away from reciprocal visa arrangements. Embracing a non-reciprocal visa policy allows destinations to fine-tune their entry requirements to cater to key markets and strategic tourism initiatives.

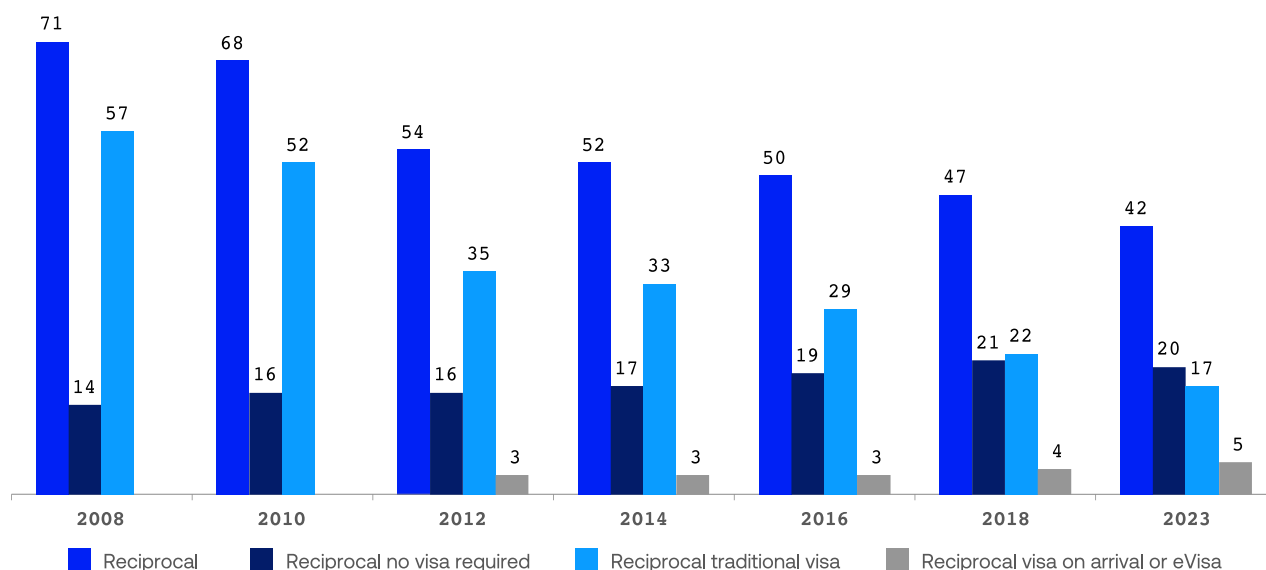
5.1. Reciprocity of visa policies in 2023: main findings

In 2023, 42% of visa policies are reciprocal,³² marking a decline from 71% in 2008, 54% in 2013, and 51% in 2015. This trend highlights a move away from reciprocal visa arrangements in recent years, as illustrated in figure 5.1. Conversely, the prevalence of non-reciprocal visa policies has seen a notable increase, doubling from 29% in 2008 to 58% in 2023, which points to a growing inclination towards unilateral visa openness.

From 2008 to 2023, the landscape of reciprocal visa policies has also transformed. The share of reciprocally open policies, where neither country requires a visa from the other's citizens, has risen modestly from 14% to 20%. In stark contrast, the proportion of reciprocally closed policies, where both countries mandate visas from each other's citizens, has sharply fallen from 57% to 17%.

A slight uptick has been observed for pairs of countries that have implemented mutual eVisa or visa on arrival policies, accounting for 3% and 2% respectively. The most significant change is evident in the surge of non-reciprocal policy combinations, which have escalated from 29% in 2008 to 58% in 2023. This shift underscores a trend towards unilateral liberalization, with countries unilaterally implementing varied visa policies such as exemption from visa requirements (11%), visa on arrival (15%), and eVisa (16%). These figures suggest an increasing propensity for destinations to facilitate entry for international visitors independently, without the expectation of reciprocal concessions.

³² For this analysis of reciprocity, data has been used on 37,830 country pairs in total ($195 \times 195 - 195$) for the years: 2008, 2010, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2023. As each pair is combined with its reciprocal (for instance China–France with France–China) there is consequently only half the number of reciprocal pairs ($37,830 / 2 = 18,915$).

Figure 5.1: Global reciprocal visa policies, 2008–2023 (%)

Notes: For this analysis of reciprocity, data has been used on 37,830 country pairs in total. As each pair is combined with its reciprocal (for instance China–France and France–China).

The column “Reciprocal” represents the total of reciprocal visa policies, while the column “Reciprocal traditional visa” is the percentage of the total reciprocity that require reciprocal traditional visa, the “Reciprocal no visa required” column stands for countries that have lifted visa requirements among each other, while the “Reciprocal visa on arrival or eVisa” column shows the percentage of reciprocity on visa on arrival and eVisa.

Due to rounding, aggregates do not necessarily add up to 100.

Data on visa policies was difficult to retrieve during the COVID-19 pandemic 2020–2023, as policies were shadowed by travel restrictions. During this period, UNWTO concentrated on publishing twelve reports analysing the impact of COVID-19-related restrictions for international tourism, replacing temporarily the *Tourism Visa Openness Reports*.

Source: Data compiled by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), May 2023.

When analysing the mutual openness of countries, particularly in the context of their economic development levels, the following observations can be made for the year 2023:

Advanced economies maintain a high degree of reciprocal openness, with 81% of policy pairs exhibiting mutual visa exemption in 2023, a stark contrast to the 39% observed among emerging economies. In only 19% of these pairings, one country allows visa exemption while the other requires a traditional visa, an eVisa or a visa on arrival.

There has been a notable decline in reciprocal arrangements among emerging economies, falling from 54% in 2015 to 39% in 2023. This trend

is mirrored in the reduction of mutual traditional visa requirements, which have decreased from 41% in 2013 to 19% in 2023. Additionally, 13% of policy pairs are reciprocally open and in 4% of the cases, both countries offer an eVisa to each other’s citizens, marking an increase from none previously.

In 9% of the pairs, one country offers a unilateral visa waiver while the other requires a traditional visa. The combination of one country requiring a visa and the other an eVisa is observed in 19% of the pairs, a figure that has grown more common among asymmetric policies. This is a shift from the previous pattern where 24% of pairs in 2015 involved one country offering a visa on arrival and the other a traditional visa.

The reciprocity of visa policies between emerging and advanced economies has seen a slight increase, with 27% of country pairs having reciprocally open policies in 2023, up from 20% in 2013. There has also been a reduction in pairs with mutual visa requirements, decreasing from 30% in 2013 to 15% in 2023.

In 17% of the pairs, emerging economies have unilaterally removed visa requirements, while the advanced economies continue to require a traditional visa. There is a marked rise in the number of emerging economies granting eVisas to citizens of advanced economies, now at 12% of pairs.

Table 5.1: Visa facilitation reciprocity for travel within and between groups of advanced and emerging economies, 2023

Visa facilitation reciprocity for travel within and between groups of advanced and emerging economies, 2023									
		Travel between							
		Total		Advanced economies		Emerging economies		Emerging and advanced economies	
		18915	100%	780	100%	11935	100%	6200	100%
Total		8030	42	634	81	4661	39	2735	44
Reciprocal	noVisa noVisa	3860	20	629	81	1532	13	1699	27
	visa on arrival visa on arrival	380	2	0	0	354	3	26	0
	evisa evisa	597	3	5	1	517	4	75	1
	Visa Visa	3193	17	0	0	2258	19	935	15
Total		10885	58	146	19	7274	61	3465	56
Not reciprocal	no visa visa	2092	11	7	1	1051	9	1034	17
	visa on arrival visa	2914	15	0	0	1954	16	960	15
	evisa visa	3045	16	0	0	2274	19	771	12
	no visa evisa	905	5	138	18	551	5	216	3
	visa on arrival evisa	1003	5	0	0	898	8	105	2
	no visa visa on arrival	559	3	1	0	546	5	12	0
	no visa visa	37	0	-	-	-	-	37	1
	visa on arrival visa	39	0	-	-	-	-	39	1
	evisa visa	88	0	-	-	-	-	88	1
	no visa evisa	64	0	-	-	-	-	64	1
	visa on arrival evisa	27	0	-	-	-	-	27	0
	no visa visa on arrival	112	1	-	-	-	-	112	2

Notes: Advanced economies and emerging economies classifications are based on: International Monetary Fund (n.d.), 'World Economic Outlook Database – Groups and Aggregate Information', IMF, Washington, D.C., online available at: <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/weo-database/2023/April/groups-and-aggregates> [30-10-2023].

Of the 216 destinations analysed in 2023, 41 are classified as advanced economies and 175 as emerging economies.

Due to rounding, aggregates do not necessarily add up to 100.

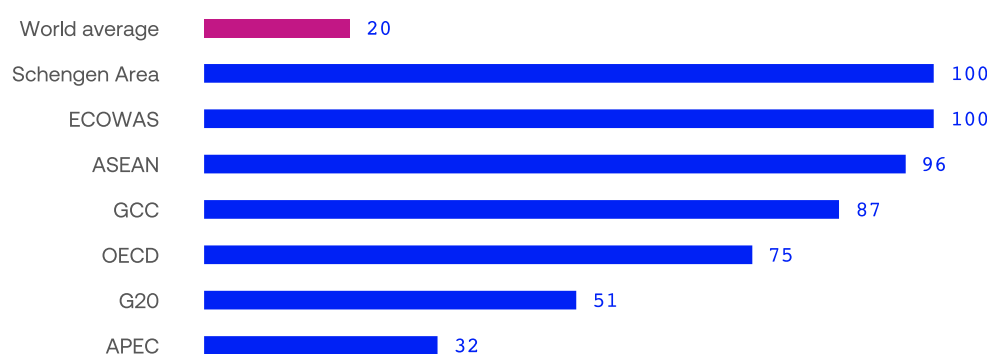
Sources: Data compiled by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), May 2023, and based on information of national official institutions.

5.2. Reciprocity: focus on economic and political blocs

Examining regional and economic blocs reveals a distinct pattern of higher reciprocal visa exemptions among member states compared to the global average, highlighting a trend toward greater cooperation and openness. The most pronounced levels of open reciprocity within the surveyed blocs are found in the Schengen area³³ and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), both at 100%.

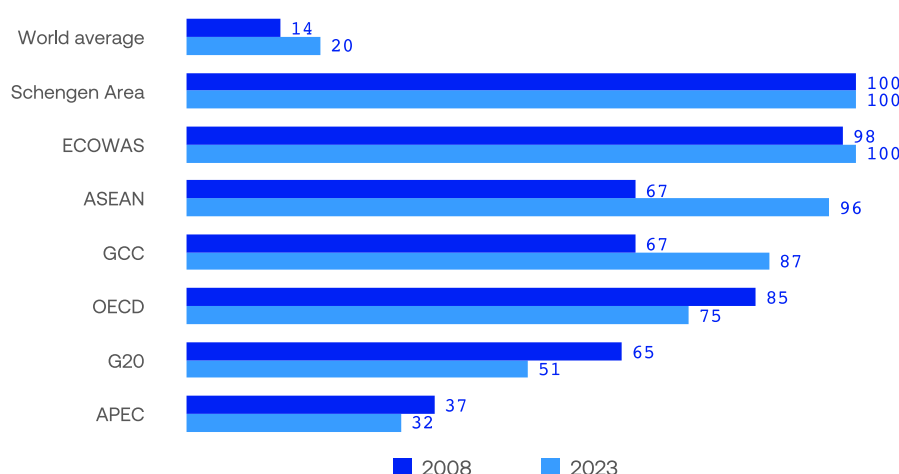
Additionally, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) exhibits very high levels at 96%, followed by the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) at 87%, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) member states at 75%. Moreover, G20 members demonstrate a notable degree of open reciprocity, with 51% of policy pairs reciprocally open and the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation member states show a level of 32% (see figure 5.2).

Figure 5.2: Open reciprocity among members of selected and economic and political blocs, 2023 (%)



Source: Data compiled by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), May 2023.

Figure 5.3: Evolution of open reciprocity within selected economic and political blocs, 2008 and 2023 (%)



Source: Data compiled by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), May 2023.

³³ The Schengen area encompasses almost all EU member states and a few associated non-EU countries. For more information please consult: European Commission (n.d.), 'Schengen, borders and visa', Policies, online available at: https://commission.europa.eu/index_en [30-10-2023].

https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284425044 - Wednesday, March 20, 2024 9:27:16 AM - IP Address: 83.33.132.70

The analysis of political and economic blocs in 2008 and 2023 reveals fluctuations, with both increases and decreases in open reciprocity among members. Overall, there has been a rise in reciprocity rates within these blocs. Specifically, the Schengen and ECOWAS regions have consistently maintained their levels of reciprocity throughout both years.

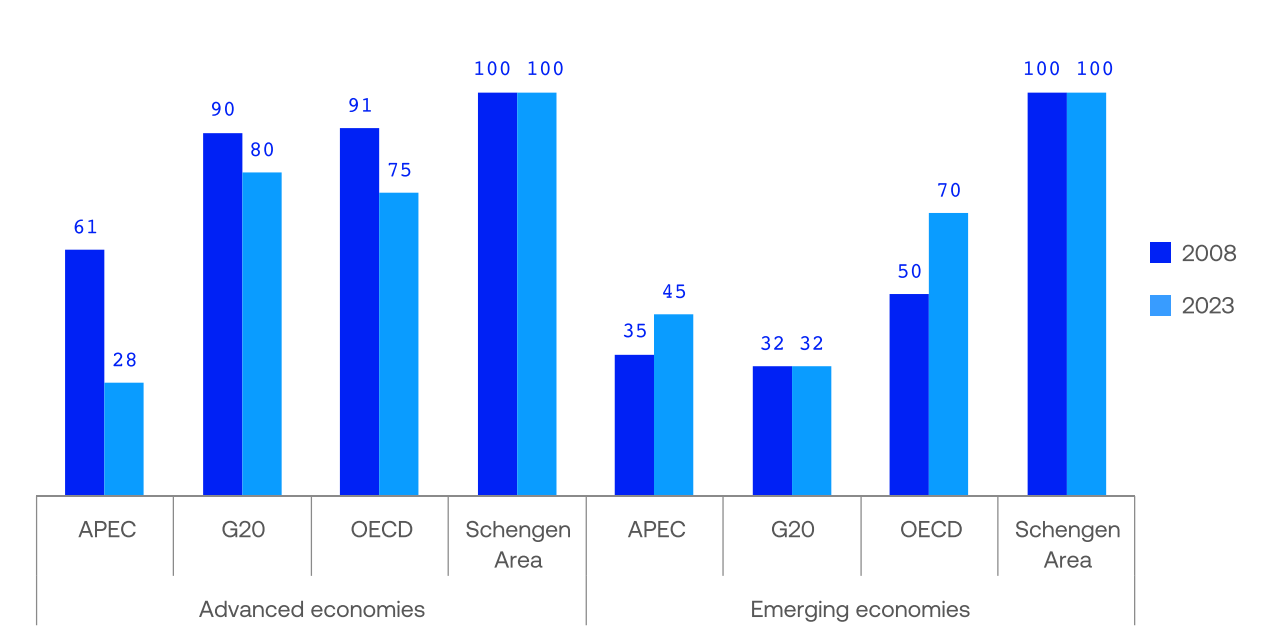
While the OECD, G20 and APEC experienced slight decreases in open reciprocity among their members, ASEAN countries saw the most significant increase, with open reciprocity soaring from 67% in 2008 to 96% in 2023. This underscores the impact of regional integration and policy reforms aimed at enhancing the free movement of people within these blocs.

For instance, the G20 economies exhibited a general stability in open reciprocity, maintaining a rate of 64% in 2015. However, the decline from 65% to 51% is noteworthy. This downturn may be attributed to a variety of factors, including

security concerns, shifting economic priorities, evolving migration trends and other economic considerations.

A closer examination of the facilitation measures within economic and regional blocs reveals a divergence between advanced and emerging economies. Among the emerging economies, the percentage of reciprocally open visa policies maintained or increased fell from 2008 to 2023, while in advanced economies, it maintained or dropped. Within APEC, emerging economies improved their open reciprocity from 35% to 45%, whereas advanced economies saw a reduction in mutually open visa policies from 61% to 28%.

Figure 5.4: Open reciprocity among advanced and emerging economies within selected regional and economic blocs, 2008 and 2023 (%)



Source: Data compiled by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), May 2023.

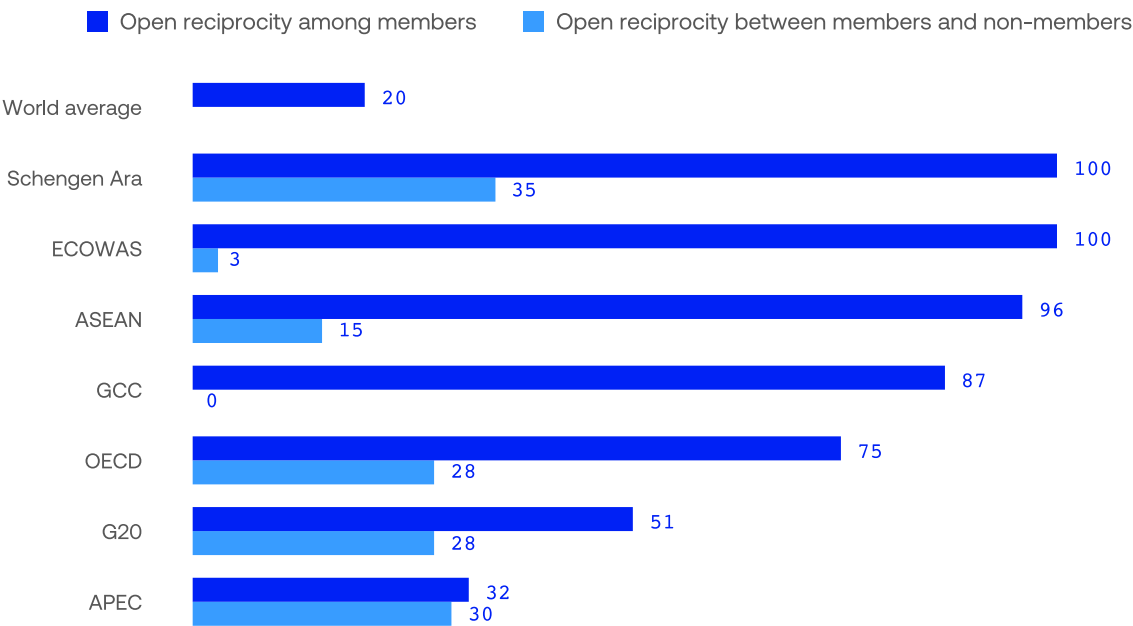
The observations underscore the intricate interplay of visa facilitation across various regional and economic blocs. They indicate that political and economic factors are key in shaping strategic visa policies. These policies aim to optimize benefits for citizens and foster enhanced visa facilitation for tourists.

However, a high degree of open reciprocity within a bloc often does not translate to non- members. For instance, blocs like the GCC, ECOWAS and ASEAN exhibit high internal reciprocity but impose

strict visa requirements on non-members, with reciprocity in country pairs not exceeding 15%, falling below the global average.

Conversely, the benefits of visa facilitation are not exclusively for bloc members but also influence relations with non-member countries. This is demonstrated by blocs such as the Schengen area,³⁴ which shows 35% reciprocity and the OECD and G20 with 28%, as well as APEC with 30% – all of which surpass the global average of 20%.

Figure 5.5: Open reciprocity among members and between members and non-members of regional and economic blocs, 2023 (%)



Source: Data compiled by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), May 2023.

³⁴ The European Commission has developed the European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS) that will provide an authorization for visitors from countries that do not need a visa to enter the Schengen Zone with a cost of EUR 7. It is expected to be launched in 2025. For more information please consult: European Commission (n.d.), 'European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS)', online available at: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/schengen-borders-and-visa/smart-borders/european-travel-information-authorisation-system_en [30-10-2023].

6. Interregional and intraregional performances

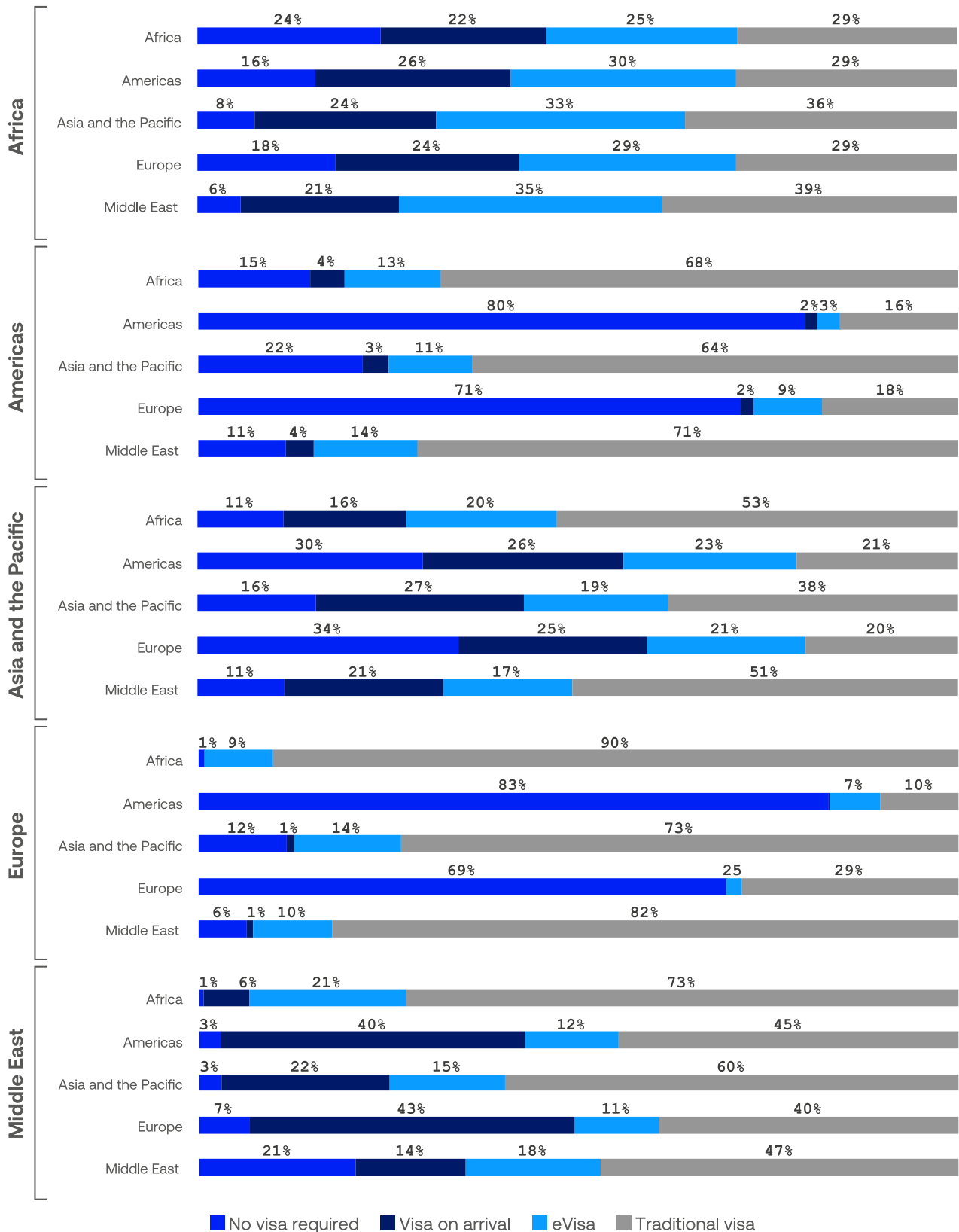
Looking at intraregional facilitation patterns, the region which facilitates intraregional travel the most is the Americas, where 80% of the population can travel within their own region without a visa, followed by Europe, with 69% of Europeans, not requiring a visa to travel within Europe.

In terms of interregional travel, Europe has facilitated entry requirements the most to the citizens from the Americas, with 83% not requiring a visa to travel to Europe, and vice versa, 71% of Europeans not requiring a visa to travel to the Americas.

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Figure 6.1: Population subject to interregional and intraregional visa facilitation, 2023 (%)

7. Mobility of citizens – outbound potential and visas

Visa policies have a profound and varied impact on people. Citizens from certain countries benefit from a privileged position in the international arena; they often can enjoy the comfort of travelling to numerous destinations without the need for a traditional visa or can easily obtain a visa upon arrival. This ease of movement is typically a result of diplomatic agreements and the perceived low risk of illegal immigration or security concerns associated with these countries.

On the other hand, citizens from countries that are subject to more stringent visa requirements face a starkly different reality. They are frequently required to navigate a complex and sometimes costly process to obtain a traditional visa before they can travel internationally. This often involves providing extensive documentation, undergoing rigorous background checks and sometimes facing long waiting periods for visa approval.

The disparity in visa policies can have significant implications for individuals and nations alike. For some, it facilitates effortless business travel, tourism and cultural exchange, while for others, it represents a barrier to accessing same opportunities. This imbalance can affect international relations, business development, tourism, cultural exchange and even personal relationships across borders.

Data from 2023 underscores a significant surge in the global mobility of citizens from all countries, marking a departure from the patterns observed between 2008 and 2015. This shift reflects a changing landscape in international travel and visa policies, with implications for global engagement and access. The following table presents the countries whose citizens have the highest mobility score in 2023.³⁵

³⁵ *Mobility* indicates to what extent citizens around the world are affected by visa policies. It is a measure ranging from 0 to 215. The higher the score, the more mobile the citizens of that country are. It is calculated by summing travel visa policies required of each country's citizens with weights of no visa weighted by 1, visa on arrival weighted by 0.7, eVisa by 0.5 and traditional visa weighted by 0.

Table 7.1: Mobility score: top 30 countries whose citizens are affected the least by visa restrictions, 2023

	Countries with most mobile citizens	Mobility score		Countries with most mobile citizens	Mobility score
1	Singapore	172.0	17	Canada	167.4
2	Germany	170.1	18	United Kingdom	167.1
3	Italy	169.3	18	Greece	167.1
3	Spain	169.3	20	Poland	167.0
5	Denmark	169.1	21	Norway	166.8
5	Sweden	169.1	22	Malaysia	166.7
5	France	169.1	23	Czech Republic	166.6
8	Netherlands	168.8	24	Ireland	165.9
9	Austria	168.6	25	Korea, Republic of	165.6
9	Belgium	168.6	26	Hungary	165.4
9	Portugal	168.6	27	Malta	164.9
12	Finland	168.4	28	Lithuania	164.6
12	Luxembourg	168.4	28	Slovakia	164.6
14	United States of America	168.2	30	New Zealand	164.4
14	Switzerland	168.2	30	Estonia	164.4
16	Japan	167.7	30	Latvia	164.4

Note: *Mobility* indicates to what extent citizens around the world are subject to visa policies. It is a measure ranging from 0 to 215. The higher the score, the more mobile the citizens of that country are. It is calculated by summing travel visa policies required of each country's citizens with weights of no visa weighted by 1, visa on arrival weighted by 0.7, eVisa by 0.5 and traditional visa weighted by 0.

Source: Data compiled by the UNWTO, based on information from national official institutions

8. Conclusions

In 2023, with the lifting of COVID-19-related travel restrictions, visa facilitation has resurfaced as a key priority for many destinations globally. This has led to more accessible entry requirements and streamlined processes for temporary visitors, while contributing to the swift recovery of international tourism. Historical analysis shows that visa facilitation is an evolving field, consistently aiming to balance security needs with the promotion of openness to stimulate economic growth and international cooperation.

There has been a notable and consistent increase in visa facilitation efforts, marked by the widespread adoption of eVisa and visa on arrival policies. In implementing these measures, destinations are increasingly utilizing modern technology to improve processing capabilities, while enhancing security measures. Furthermore, a trend is emerging towards the use of sophisticated segmentation techniques and strategies within visa facilitation frameworks.

UNWTO reports have consistently shown that visa policy reforms positively impact tourism, leading to more visitors and economic benefits. Recognizing this and the changing international travel landscape, UNWTO has identified key opportunities for enhancing visa facilitation in destinations. These opportunities are designed to overcome existing challenges and maximize the benefits of streamlined visa processes. The conclusions that follow focus on strategic areas for advancement and innovation in visa facilitation, aiming to help destinations make the most of evolving travel trends while upholding essential security standards.

1. Integrate tourism perspective into visa policies

To enhance tourism growth through improved visa policies, the integration of tourism perspectives into visa strategies is key. This can be achieved by forming dedicated teams comprising representatives from ministries responsible for tourism, security, foreign affairs and transportation. These teams should work in unison to develop unilateral visa policies that prioritize tourism development over reciprocal arrangements, using data-driven insights for policy formulation.

2. Implement targeted visa exemption programmes

The implementation of targeted visa exemption programmes is crucial. Such can be introduced for specific traveller markets identified as low-risk through comprehensive security assessments. Additionally, expanding visa on arrival facilities to certain countries or traveller categories can significantly streamline the entry process. In addition, a feedback mechanism to gather insights from traveller groups, such as digital nomads, can ensure a visa program's continuous improvement and its responsiveness to needs and local socio-economic impacts of such.

3. Enhance communication on visa policies

Communication about visa policies also plays a vital role. A centralized, multilingual

online portal should be established, offering detailed and regularly updated information on visa categories, procedures and entry requirements. This information should be actively disseminated across various official communication channels to reach a broad audience of potential travellers.

4. Streamline visa application processes

Streamlining the visa application process is another critical area. The adoption of advanced ICT solutions can greatly improve the efficiency and tracking of visa applications. Replacing traditional in-person interviews with virtual or remote assessments can minimize inconvenience for applicants and simplifying the visa application format to focus on essential information will reduce administrative burdens. As such, eVisas, including for digital nomads, for example, align with the digitization trend of visa processes, enhancing accessibility and efficiency. Coupled with regional agreements to standardize these visas, this approach can simplify the process, ensure easier visa acquisition and promote cross-border mobility and collaboration.

5. Accelerate visa processing times

To enhance visitor experience further, accelerating visa processing times is essential, particularly for online and mobile applications. Investing in technologies that expedite visa processing, along with implementing pre-screening systems using centralized databases and biometric data can significantly improve efficiency.



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6. Optimize entry procedures

Optimizing entry procedures is also important. By collecting passenger information in advance, waiting times at borders can be reduced. Expanding visa processing centers and consular services during peak seasons, along with introducing segmented queue management at ports of entry for different traveller groups, can greatly enhance the efficiency of border controls.

7. Differentiate treatment based on risk

Differentiating treatment based on risk assessment is another effective strategy. Visa exemptions should be applied to high-mobility, low-risk markets and specific niche groups. Additionally, the use of eVisas and visas on arrival for medium-risk markets can be beneficial, particularly in destinations without extensive overseas representation.

8. Develop regional visa facilitation measures

Developing regional visa facilitation measures can significantly boost tourism. Establishing regional visa arrangements promotes multi-destination travel within a unified framework, enhancing the region's attractiveness. Offering extended-duration visas and multiple-entry visas encourages repeat visits, and implementing special visa measures for high-priority groups and event participants can greatly enhance a destination's competitiveness. This also applies to digital nomad visas, which can be an innovative way to attract and retain highly skilled workers to a destination.

9. Adapt to digital trends while considering regional collaboration

Emphasizing eVisa might align with the digitization trend in visa processes, enhancing accessibility and efficiency. Coupled with regional agreements to standardize these visas, this approach can simplify the process, secure easier visa acquisition and promote cross-border mobility and collaboration.

By focussing on these areas, destinations not only improve the efficiency and accessibility of their visa policies but also significantly enhance their appeal as tourism destinations, contributing to the sector's growth while maintaining essential security standards.

Annex 1: World population subject to visa policies of destinations, 2023

Tourism Visa Openness Index scores range from 0 to 100; the higher the score of the Openness Index, the more visas are facilitated. *Openness* indicates to what extent a destination is facilitating tourism. It is calculated by summing the percentage of the world population exempt from obtaining a visa with the percentages of no visa weighted by 1, visa on arrival weighted by 0.7, eVisa by 0.5 and traditional visa weighted by 0. Destination economies are weighted by natural logarithm of the population size (i.e., $\times 1,000$ population) in order to take into account differences in destination size.

Table A.1: World population subject to visa policies of destinations, 2023

Country	No visa	Visa on arrival	eVisa	Traditional Visa	Tourism Visa Openness Index
Afghanistan	0%	0%	0%	100%	0.00
Albania	43%	0%	57%	0%	71.64
Algeria	1%	0%	0%	99%	1.47
Andorra	24%	0%	0%	76%	23.66
Angola	2%	0%	98%	0%	51.00
Anguilla	21%	0%	0%	79%	21.14
Antigua and Barbuda	49%	0%	51%	0%	74.70
Argentina	28%	0%	0%	72%	28.32
Armenia	40%	0%	0%	60%	40.41
Aruba	23%	0%	0%	77%	23.49
Australia	0%	0%	100%	0%	49.91
Austria	24%	0%	0%	76%	23.58
Azerbaijan	5%	26%	45%	24%	45.75
Bahamas	51%	0%	0%	49%	51.02
Bahrain	1%	44%	53%	2%	58.32
Bangladesh	3%	36%	0%	61%	28.20
Barbados	95%	0%	0%	5%	95.06
Belarus	45%	0%	0%	55%	44.52
Belgium	24%	0%	0%	76%	23.55
Belize	28%	0%	0%	72%	28.08
Benin	37%	0%	63%	0%	68.42
Bermuda	29%	0%	0%	71%	29.01

Country	No visa	Visa on arrival	eVisa	Traditional Visa	Tourism Visa Openness Index
Bhutan	20%	0%	80%	0%	60.06
Bolivia	19%	81%	1%	0%	75.49
Bonaire	23%	0%	0%	77%	23.49
Bosnia and Herzegovina	45%	0%	0%	55%	44.93
Botswana	30%	0%	0%	70%	29.90
Brazil	33%	0%	0%	67%	32.79
British Virgin Islands	48%	0%	0%	52%	47.84
Brunei	27%	19%	0%	54%	40.13
Bulgaria	24%	0%	0%	76%	23.60
Burkina Faso	6%	0%	92%	2%	51.98
Burundi	3%	97%	0%	0%	71.02
Cabo Verde	15%	85%	0%	0%	74.38
Cambodia	8%	92%	0%	0%	72.31
Cameroon	3%	0%	0%	96%	3.70
Canada	4%	0%	12%	83%	10.39
Cayman Islands	24%	0%	0%	76%	24.19
Central African Republic	6%	0%	0%	94%	5.89
Chad	5%	0%	0%	95%	5.37
Chile	33%	0%	67%	0%	66.34
China	1%	0%	0%	99%	0.64

Country	No visa	Visa on arrival	eVisa	Traditional Visa	Tourism Visa Openness Index
Colombia	31%	0%	69%	0%	65.57
Comoros Islands	0%	100%	0%	0%	70.00
Congo	1%	2%	0%	98%	1.93
Congo, Democratic Republic of	1%	1%	0%	98%	1.63
Cook Islands	100%	0%	0%	0%	100.00
Costa Rica	27%	0%	0%	73%	27.08
Côte d'Ivoire	8%	0%	92%	0%	53.86
Croatia	24%	0%	0%	76%	23.62
Cuba	3%	0%	0%	97%	2.89
Curaçao	24%	0%	0%	76%	23.53
Cyprus	24%	0%	0%	76%	23.65
Czech Republic	24%	0%	0%	76%	23.56
Denmark	24%	0%	0%	76%	23.61
Djibouti	0%	100%	0%	0%	70.02
Dominica	100%	0%	0%	0%	99.82
Dominican Republic	29%	0%	0%	71%	29.39
Ecuador	59%	0%	41%	0%	79.30
Egypt	1%	28%	0%	71%	20.87
El Salvador	45%	0%	0%	55%	45.20
Equatorial Guinea	24%	0%	0%	76%	24.03
Eritrea	1%	2%	0%	98%	1.88
Estonia	24%	0%	0%	76%	23.65
Ethiopia	1%	0%	99%	0%	50.34
Fiji	77%	0%	0%	23%	77.35
Finland	24%	0%	0%	76%	23.61
France	23%	0%	0%	77%	23.02
French Guiana	20%	0%	0%	80%	20.48
French Polynesia	24%	0%	0%	76%	23.67
Gabon	2%	0%	98%	0%	51.07
Gambia	44%	4%	0%	52%	47.03
Georgia	30%	0%	51%	19%	55.65
Germany	23%	0%	0%	77%	22.84
Ghana	8%	10%	0%	83%	14.25

Country	No visa	Visa on arrival	eVisa	Traditional Visa	Tourism Visa Openness Index
Greece	24%	0%	0%	76%	23.56
Grenada	69%	0%	0%	31%	68.53
Guadeloupe	24%	0%	0%	76%	23.74
Guatemala	28%	0%	0%	72%	27.54
Guinea-Bissau	5%	95%	0%	0%	71.60
Guinea, Republic of	8%	0%	92%	0%	53.99
Guyana	25%	0%	0%	75%	25.32
Haiti	96%	0%	0%	4%	95.87
Honduras	28%	0%	0%	72%	27.86
Hong Kong, China	61%	0%	21%	18%	71.39
Hungary	24%	0%	0%	76%	23.57
Iceland	24%	0%	0%	76%	23.66
India	0%	0%	75%	24%	38.14
Indonesia	5%	68%	0%	26%	53.16
Iran	23%	0%	77%	0%	61.38
Iraq	0%	0%	0%	100%	0.00
Ireland	23%	0%	0%	77%	22.90
Israel	28%	0%	0%	72%	27.93
Italy	23%	0%	0%	77%	23.08
Jamaica	68%	2%	0%	29%	69.93
Japan	20%	0%	0%	80%	19.53
Jordan	3%	72%	0%	24%	53.90
Kazakhstan	46%	0%	45%	9%	68.66
Kenya	6%	0%	91%	2%	52.00
Kiribati	17%	0%	0%	83%	16.70
Korea, Democratic People's Republic of	0%	0%	0%	100%	0.00
Korea, Republic of	0%	0%	29%	71%	14.67
Kuwait	1%	17%	0%	82%	12.96
Kyrgyzstan	28%	0%	72%	0%	63.90
Lao People's Democratic Republic	13%	70%	1%	16%	62.42
Latvia	24%	0%	0%	76%	23.65
Lebanon	0%	54%	0%	46%	37.94

Country	No visa	Visa on arrival	eVisa	Traditional Visa	Tourism Visa Openness Index
Lesotho	18%	0%	82%	0%	59.11
Liberia	5%	0%	0%	94%	5.44
Libya	0%	0%	0%	100%	0.13
Liechtenstein	24%	0%	0%	76%	23.66
Lithuania	24%	0%	0%	76%	23.64
Luxembourg	24%	0%	0%	76%	23.66
Macao, China	70%	20%	0%	10%	84.11
Macedonia	25%	0%	0%	75%	24.81
Madagascar	0%	100%	0%	0%	70.00
Malawi	5%	51%	44%	0%	62.35
Malaysia	47%	36%	16%	0%	80.48
Maldives	0%	100%	0%	0%	70.00
Mali	11%	1%	0%	89%	11.17
Malta	24%	0%	0%	76%	23.66
Marshall Islands	11%	42%	0%	46%	41.06
Martinique	23%	0%	0%	77%	22.74
Mauritania	2%	98%	0%	0%	70.42
Mauritius	69%	22%	0%	8%	84.98
Mexico	18%	0%	4%	79%	19.48
Micronesia	100%	0%	0%	0%	100.00
Moldova	28%	0%	72%	0%	63.93
Monaco	24%	0%	0%	76%	23.66
Mongolia	18%	0%	0%	82%	17.75
Montenegro	27%	0%	0%	73%	27.32
Montserrat	53%	0%	47%	0%	76.32
Morocco	50%	0%	2%	48%	50.97
Mozambique	3%	0%	97%	0%	51.40
Myanmar	8%	0%	75%	18%	44.81
Namibia	27%	10%	0%	63%	33.92
Nauru	0%	3%	97%	0%	50.51
Nepal	0%	94%	0%	6%	65.99
Netherlands	23%	0%	0%	77%	23.49
New Caledonia	23%	0%	0%	77%	22.79
New Zealand	21%	0%	79%	0%	60.59
Nicaragua	27%	20%	0%	53%	40.95
Niger	6%	0%	0%	94%	6.04
Nigeria	3%	10%	86%	0%	53.69

Country	No visa	Visa on arrival	eVisa	Traditional Visa	Tourism Visa Openness Index
Niue	100%	0%	0%	0%	100.00
Norway	24%	0%	0%	76%	23.61
Oman	1%	0%	99%	0%	50.36
Pakistan	0%	45%	33%	22%	48.17
Palau	10%	87%	0%	3%	71.01
Panama	32%	0%	0%	68%	32.21
Papua New Guinea	0%	27%	0%	73%	18.67
Paraguay	27%	0%	0%	73%	26.97
Peru	33%	0%	0%	67%	33.15
Philippines	47%	0%	0%	53%	47.43
Poland	23%	0%	0%	77%	23.29
Portugal	24%	0%	0%	76%	23.56
Puerto Rico	5%	0%	10%	86%	9.59
Qatar	1%	74%	0%	26%	52.29
Reunion	24%	0%	0%	76%	24.50
Romania	23%	0%	0%	77%	23.48
Russian Federation	12%	0%	0%	88%	11.66
Rwanda	11%	89%	0%	0%	73.23
Saba	23%	0%	0%	77%	23.49
Saint Kitts and Nevis	78%	0%	22%	0%	89.04
Saint Lucia	44%	31%	0%	25%	65.49
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	76%	0%	0%	24%	76.37
Samoa	0%	100%	0%	0%	70.00
San Marino	24%	0%	0%	76%	23.66
Sao Tome e Principe	21%	18%	61%	0%	64.14
Saudi Arabia	0%	34%	2%	64%	24.81
Senegal	42%	37%	0%	22%	67.45
Serbia	47%	0%	0%	53%	47.27
Seychelles	0%	0%	100%	0%	50.00
Sierra Leone	5%	76%	19%	0%	67.84
Singapore	45%	0%	55%	0%	72.50
Sint Eustatius	23%	0%	0%	77%	23.49
Sint Maarten	23%	0%	0%	77%	23.48
Slovak Republic	24%	0%	0%	76%	23.61

Country	No visa	Visa on arrival	eVisa	Traditional Visa	Tourism Visa Openness Index
Slovenia	24%	0%	0%	76%	23.64
Solomon Islands	6%	14%	0%	80%	15.69
Somalia	0%	100%	0%	0%	70.00
South Africa	27%	0%	52%	21%	53.02
Spain	23%	0%	0%	77%	23.20
Sri Lanka	0%	87%	12%	1%	67.07
Sudan	1%	2%	0%	97%	2.16
Suriname	0%	0%	100%	0%	50.00
Swaziland	45%	0%	0%	55%	44.90
Sweden	24%	0%	0%	76%	23.56
Switzerland	24%	0%	0%	76%	23.58
Syrian Arab Republic	3%	2%	0%	95%	4.20
Taiwan Province of China	18%	0%	4%	78%	20.14
Tajikistan	26%	0%	54%	19%	53.47
Tanzania	5%	81%	13%	0%	68.94
Thailand	32%	38%	0%	30%	58.66
Timor-Leste	11%	89%	0%	0%	73.18
Togo	5%	0%	95%	0%	52.62
Tonga	6%	33%	0%	61%	29.23
Trinidad and Tobago	51%	0%	49%	0%	75.53
Tunisia	30%	0%	0%	70%	29.64
Türkiye	27%	2%	57%	14%	56.60
Turkmenistan	0%	0%	0%	100%	0.00
Turks and Caicos Islands	44%	0%	0%	56%	44.44
Tuvalu	6%	94%	0%	0%	71.74
Uganda	4%	0%	96%	0%	52.14
Ukraine	23%	0%	48%	29%	46.91
United Arab Emirates	36%	0%	64%	0%	67.80
United Kingdom	22%	0%	1%	77%	22.22
United States of America	1%	0%	10%	89%	5.57
Uruguay	27%	0%	0%	73%	27.38
Uzbekistan	45%	0%	36%	19%	63.26

Country	No visa	Visa on arrival	eVisa	Traditional Visa	Tourism Visa Openness Index
Vanuatu	78%	0%	0%	22%	77.52
Venezuela	25%	0%	0%	75%	25.22
Viet Nam	17%	0%	52%	32%	42.46
Yemen	0%	4%	0%	96%	2.46
Zambia	38%	17%	45%	0%	72.61
Zimbabwe	7%	72%	21%	0%	67.84

Annex 2: UNWTO regions and subregions

Africa

East Africa

Burundi
Comoros
Djibouti
Eritrea
Ethiopia
Kenya
Madagascar
Malawi
Mauritius
Mozambique
Reunion
Rwanda
Seychelles
Somalia
Tanzania, United Republic of
Uganda
Zambia
Zimbabwe

Central Africa

Angola
Cameroon
Central African Republic
Chad
Congo
Congo, Democratic Republic of the
Equatorial Guinea
Gabon
Sao Tome and Principe

North Africa

Algeria
Morocco
South Sudan
Sudan
Tunisia

Southern Africa

Botswana
Eswatini
Lesotho
Namibia
South Africa

West Africa

Benin
Burkina Faso
Cabo Verde
Côte d'Ivoire
Gambia
Ghana
Guinea
Guinea-Bissau
Liberia
Mali
Mauritania
Niger
Nigeria
Saint Helena
Senegal
Sierra Leone
Togo

Americas

Caribbean

Anguilla
Antigua and Barbuda
Aruba
Bahamas
Barbados
Bermuda
British Virgin Islands
Cayman Islands
Cuba
Curaçao
Dominica
Dominican Republic
Grenada
Guadeloupe
Haiti
Jamaica
Martinique
Montserrat
Puerto Rico
Saint Kitts and Nevis
Saint Lucia
Saint Vincent and The Grenadines
Sint Maarten (Dutch Part)
Trinidad and Tobago
Turks and Caicos Islands
United States Virgin Islands

Asia and the Pacific

Central America

Belize
Costa Rica
El Salvador
Guatemala
Honduras
Nicaragua
Panama

North America

Canada
Greenland
Mexico
Saint Pierre and Miquelon
United States of America

South America

Argentina
Bolivia, Plurinational State of
Brazil
Chile
Colombia
Ecuador
Falkland Islands
French Guiana
Guyana
Paraguay
Peru
Suriname
Uruguay
Venezuela, Bolivarian Republic of

North-East Asia

China
Hong Kong (China)
Japan
Korea, Democratic People's
Republic of
Korea, Republic of
Macao (China)
Mongolia
Taiwan Province of China

South-East Asia

Brunei Darussalam
Cambodia
Indonesia
Lao People's Democratic
Republic
Malaysia
Myanmar
Philippines
Singapore
Thailand
Timor-Leste
Viet Nam

Australasia

Australia
New Zealand

Melanesia

Fiji
New Caledonia
Papua New Guinea
Solomon Islands
Vanuatu

Micronesia

Guam
Kiribati
Marshall Islands
Micronesia, Federated States
of Nauru
Northern Mariana Islands
Palau

Polynesia

American Samoa
Cook Islands
French Polynesia
Niue
Pitcairn
Samoa
Tokelau
Tonga
Tuvalu
Wallis and Futuna Islands

South Asia

Afghanistan
Bangladesh
Bhutan
India
Iran, Islamic Republic of
Maldives
Nepal
Pakistan
Sri Lanka

Europe

Central/Eastern Europe

Armenia
Azerbaijan
Belarus
Bulgaria
Czech Republic (Czechia)
Estonia
Georgia
Hungary
Kazakhstan
Kyrgyzstan
Latvia
Lithuania
Moldova, Republic of
Poland
Romania
Russian Federation
Slovakia
Tajikistan
Turkmenistan
Ukraine
Uzbekistan

Northern Europe

Denmark
Finland
Iceland
Ireland
Norway
Sweden
United Kingdom

Southern Europe

Albania
Andorra
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Croatia
Greece
Holy See
Italy
Malta
Montenegro North Macedonia
Portugal
San Marino
Serbia
Spain

Western Europe

Austria
Belgium
France
Germany
Liechtenstein
Luxembourg
Monaco
Netherlands
Switzerland

East Mediterranean Europe

Cyprus
Israel
Türkiye

Middle East

Bahrain
Egypt
Iraq
Jordan
Kuwait
Lebanon
Libya
Oman
Qatar
Saudi Arabia
State of Palestine
Syrian Arab Republic
United Arab Emirates
Yemen

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Tourism Visa Openness Report 2023

ISBN, printed version: 978-92-844-2503-7

ISBN, electronic version: 978-92-844-2504-4

DOI: 10.18111/9789284425044

Cover image: © Sean Pavone | Dreamstime.com

Published by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), Madrid, Spain

First published: 2024

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WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), a United Nations specialized agency, is the leading international organization with the decisive and central role in promoting the development of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism. It serves as a global forum for tourism policy issues and a practical source of tourism know-how. Its membership includes 160 countries, 6 territories, 2 permanent observers and over 500 Affiliate Members.

World Tourism Organization (UN Tourism)

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