

NEW FAST-TRACK SCHEME IN GREENLAND

The Government of Greenland and the Danish Ministry of Immigration and Integration have entered into agreement on a fast-track scheme for Greenland regarding the processing of applications for resident and work permits. The scheme came into force on 24 September 2021.

The purpose of the fast-track scheme is to make the recruiting of foreigners more flexible in order to adapt to the need for a foreign labour force during periods of low unemployment.

Less waiting time

Under the fast-track scheme, a special process applies to foreigners who have received a job offer or an employment agreement with a company being listed on the Government of Greenland's list of preapproved companies. The Government of Greenland may pre-approve companies whose salary and employment terms and conditions are usual in Greenland, and when special occupational circumstances exist.

The fast-track scheme entails a significant reduction in the waiting time for the processing of foreign workers' applications for residence and work permits, which until now has been up to 90 days. Applications covered by fast-track scheme are exempted from consultation with the Government of Greenland, and the processing time is thereby reduced to be up to 1 month from the application date.

What means the fast-track scheme in practice

The fast-track scheme means in practice that an applicant, who has a job offer or an employment agreement with a pre-approved company in Greenland, may now also file the application *after* his/her entry to Greenland, provided the applicant otherwise stays lawfully in Greenland. However, the authorities have so far informed that the applicant may still not commence to work until the permit is granted by Danish Agency for International Recruitment and Integration (SIRI).

However, we draw attention to the "mineral resource rule". This rule implies that employees, who carry out work in relation to activities pursuant to the Mineral Resources Act, may enter Greenland and carry out work even without having a residence and work permit, provided such stay does not exceed 90 days, and that the relevant scope of work can be finished within the same period. Please note that a VISA is still required, if the employee is from a country for which VISA is required.

Permit from the local municipality must also still be obtained when hiring foreign labour to positions covered by the Act on intake of foreign labour.

Enlist your company to the fast-track scheme

Companies that wish to use the fast-track scheme must submit an application to be added to the list of pre-approved companies.

The application must include the following information:

- The company's company registration number and name
- Contract for the relevant job type, e.g. cook, cleaner, carpenter etc.
- Information on salary and employment conditions, which at least corresponds to usual Greenlandic conditions
- The company must have headquarters or a branch office in Greenland

The processing time for the application to be pre-approved for the fast-track scheme is expected to be up to 14 days. Application to be included on the list can be sent to the head of department Lona Lyngé in the Department of Social Affairs and the Labour Market via email: isn@nanoq.gl.

Want to know more?

If you wish to know more or have questions regarding the fast-track scheme, you are welcome to contact lawyer Helen Kibsgaard (hk@nuna-law.gl) or junior associate Iris Ohms Jørgensen(ij@nuna-law.gl).