



LEGAL UPDATES

NAP Million
Alemu &
Partners LLP

June 5th, 2026

Ethiopia's Investment and Property-Based Visa Framework: Key Features of Immigration Amendment Regulation No. 581/2025

1. Introduction

Immigration Amendment Regulation No. 581/2025, which entered into force on 15 December 2025, introduced significant changes to Ethiopia's immigration framework. The Regulation establishes new visa categories for qualifying foreign investors and foreign nationals who own or possess immovable property in Ethiopia, thereby creating long-term, multiple-entry visa pathways linked to investment and property ownership. It also introduces internship and exit visa categories and revises the validity periods of certain passport types. These reforms are believed to be reflecting Ethiopia's broader efforts to attract foreign investment, facilitate international mobility, and modernize its immigration regime. The practical implementation of some of the new visa categories, particularly the Golden Visa, remains subject to further directives and administrative procedures.

2. Key Legislative Amendments

Regulation No. 581/2025 amends the previous Immigration Regulation No. 114/2004 by introducing four new visa categories (Articles 21–24) and adjusting passport validity periods.

I. The Golden Visa (Article 21)

The flagship provision establishes a long-term investment residency category.

- **Standard Threshold (Art. 21(1)):** The Golden Visa shall be issued to a foreign national who invests over ten million (10,000,000) USD.
- **Special Circumstances (Art. 21(2)):** Notwithstanding the standard threshold, a foreign national who invests over five million (5,000,000) USD and participates in an activity favorable to Ethiopia's economic development (e.g., job creation or technology transfer) may be granted a Golden Visa under special circumstances.
- **Duration and Renewal (Art. 21(4)):** The Golden Visa is a multiple-entry visa, renewable every ten (10) years.
- **Implementing Authority (Art. 21(3)):** Detailed implementation shall be determined by a directive (subsidiary legislation).

A. Property-Based Visa (Article 22)

- Eligibility (Art. 22(1)): A visa shall be issued to a foreign national who is the owner or possessor of immovable property in Ethiopia, in accordance with relevant property laws.
- Duration and Renewal (Art. 22(2)): The visa shall be a multiple-entry visa, renewable every five (5) years.

B. Other Introductions (Articles 23-24)

- Internship Visa: Formalizes entry for temporary, non-employment practical training.
- Exit Visa: Codifies the requirement for foreign nationals to obtain an exit visa upon departure, which is contingent on settling fines or tax obligations.

C. Passport Amendments (Article 11 Amendment)

The regulation revises the validity of the following passport as:

- Diplomatic Passport: 5 years;
- Service Passport: 5 years;
- Alien Passport: 3 years (provision noted; specific amendment text refers to paragraphs (a), (b), and (e) – Alien Passport listed as (c) in provided text).

II. Key conditions for the Property Visa include:

- Minimum Investment: \$150,000 per house (paid in foreign currency);
- Foreigners own the house but hold the land under a state leasehold;
- Local bank financing is prohibited; funds must originate from external sources;
- limited to one house per individual, subject to exceptions for national interest.

III. Fee Structure & Fiscal Context

The Ethiopian Immigration and Citizenship Service (ICS) has published specific fees to accompany the new regulations:

- For Golden Visa (10 years): Reported cost of \$10,000 (renewal fee: \$10,000; expedited renewal: \$12,500);
- Property Visa (5 years): \$4,000;
- 5-Year Residence Permit: \$3,000;
- Premium Processing: \$4,000–\$4,500 (for 1–2-day processing).

IV. Practical Considerations for Investors

- The reduced investment threshold of USD \$5 million under Article 21(2) is discretionary (“may be granted under special circumstances”), not automatic. Applicants must demonstrate job creation or technology transfer.
- The Property Visa (Article 22, 5-year renewal) is distinct from the Golden Visa (Article 21, 10-year renewal). Property ownership alone does not qualify for the Golden Visa unless accompanied by qualifying investment.

V. Conclusion

Regulation No. 581/2025 represents a deliberate and legally codified shift by the Ethiopian government toward attracting foreign capital through residence-based incentives. By introducing the Golden Visa and the Property Visa, Ethiopia now offers two distinct investment migration pathways.

About Million Alemu and Partners LLP

Million Alemu and Partners Legal Services LLP is a full-service law firm based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, providing comprehensive legal advisory and representation services to local and international clients. The firm is recognized for its commitment to excellence, practical legal solutions, and a client-centered approach across diverse practice areas. With a team of experienced legal professionals, the firm advises on corporate and commercial law, dispute resolution, regulatory compliance, and other key areas critical to doing business in Ethiopia.

Contact Information

Office Address:

Kazanchis, KazAddis Building, 8th Floor, near Urael Church, in front of Mulugeta Commercial Center

Telephone:

- [+251 911 60 0334](tel:+251911600334)
- [+251 968 66 6677](tel:+251968666677)

Email: inquiries@millionlegalservices.com

Website: www.millionlegalservices.com

DISCLAIMER

1. *The content contained herein is for educational purposes only and is not intended as legal advice, nor does it constitute an advertisement, solicitation, or offer of services.*
2. *No attorney-client relationship is formed by your access or review of this material.*
3. *As legal matters are fact-specific, you are strongly advised to consult with a qualified legal professional before taking any legal action.*