



# New Regulations on Labor Migration Will Enter Into Force Starting March 1, 2026

New rules on Labor Migration will take force from March 1. The modifications will apply to foreign nationals who plan to engage in paid activities in Georgia.

According to new rules any foreign national wishing to work for a local employer or engage in other paid activities (such as providing services, trading, or entrepreneurship) must obtain a Work Permit in advance.

The modifications will be applied to:



Foreign nationals who do not hold a permanent residence permit in Georgia and work for a local employer, including those performing their work remotely.



Foreign nationals who do not hold a permanent residence permit and are engaged in Self-Employment

According to the definition provided in the law, a Self-Employed Foreigner is a person who carries out labor activities in Georgia, including those engaged in trade, services, or other types of economic activities, or who acts as a partner, independent contractor, or is otherwise involved in entrepreneurial/labor activities, where the purpose of such activity is to obtain financial gain.

Accordingly, the requirements of the law apply not only to foreign nationals employed by a local employer or providing services, including individual entrepreneurs, but also to directors, partners, and members of supervisory boards of legal entities registered in Georgia.

## What is Required for a Foreign National to work Legally in Georgia?

A foreign national can work or engage in other paid activities in Georgia only if all the following conditions are met:



An Employment Agreement that complies with the requirements of the law is concluded between the foreign national and the local employer, except in the case of a Self-Employed Foreigner, who may enter into a Service Agreement or operate, for example, as an individual entrepreneur, director, or partner.



The Labor Immigrant or Self-Employed Foreigner has obtained a work permit



The foreign national holds the appropriate immigration status: a Work Residence Permit, a D1-category Work Visa, or another type of Residence Permit provided by Georgian legislation. Specifically:

- If the foreign national is not present in Georgia, they must apply to the relevant authority for a D1 Work Visa no later than 30 days after obtaining the Work Permit.
- If the foreign national is already legally present in Georgia, they must apply to the relevant authority for a Work or IT Residence Permit no later than 10 days after obtaining the Work Permit.



Possession of a Work Permit is a precondition for obtaining a Work Visa or a Work/IT Residence Permit. If the Work Permit is not granted, the relevant authority will refuse to issue the Visa and/or Residence Permit.

Additionally, if the foreign national is unable to obtain a Visa or Residence Permit, their Work Permit will be annulled, which will automatically lead to the termination of the Employment Agreement concluded with them.

The obligation to obtain a D1 Visa or a Work/IT Residence Permit does not apply to foreign nationals who already hold a valid residence permit in Georgia or who work remotely without the need to enter the country.

## What Procedures are Known at this Stage?

- The Work Permit is issued by the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labor, Health, and Social Protection of Georgia. The application is submitted by the local employer after concluding the Employment Agreement or by the Self-Employed Foreigner.
- The application and needed documentation shall be submitted by:
  - The employer, if the Employment Agreement is concluded with the foreign national
  - The Self-Employed Foreigner, if he is not an employee and is engaged in other paid activity.
- The Work Permit is issued:
  - If an employee, with the right to work for a specific local employer
  - In case of Self-Employed Foreigner with specification of the particular activity or specialty.
- The Ministry reviews the application and makes decision within 30 days.
- The exact fee for the Permit has not yet been determined; however, the law stipulates that the service fee (including expedited processing) must not exceed GEL 500.00.

## What New Obligations Will the Employers have?

- If an Employment Agreement with a labor migrant is terminated prematurely or modified, the employer must report this information in the Ministry's electronic system within 5 days.
- If the employer wishes to prolong the Employment Agreement, they must apply for the extension of the Work Permit at least 30 days before its expiration.
- If the Ministry notifies that the foreign national's Work Permit has been annulled or that the permit has been denied, the employer must terminate the Employment Agreement and submit the supporting documents within 5 days.

## What Awaits to Foreign Nationals who are Already Employed before March 1?



Those who are registered in the Ministry's electronic database by March 1, 2026, must obtain a Work Permit and the corresponding Residence Permit no later than January 1, 2027.



## New Rules in Practice: What Challenges Are Emerging?

Several unclear and problematic issues were revealed in the modifications, specifically:

- Due to the very broad definition of a "Self-Employed Foreigner" obtaining a Work Permit will also be required for foreign directors, partners, and members of supervisory boards of legal entities registered in Georgia, even if they do not reside in the country permanently.
- It is still unclear whether Self-Employed Foreigners residing in Georgia but earning income by working with foreign companies will need a Work Permit.
- The changes also affect foreign nationals who previously entered and stayed in Georgia visa-free for the legally permitted period. Under the new rules, anyone who obtains a Work Permit will be required to have a D1 Work Visa or, if already in Georgia, a Work Residence Permit.
- The rule stating that a Work Permit may be annulled if a Self-Employed Foreigner stays outside Georgia for more than six months is also problematic. It is unclear how this will affect individuals who do not reside permanently in Georgia, for instance foreign directors, partners, and board members.
- The appeal mechanism is also weak: if a foreign national is denied a Work Permit, they can appeal the decision, but this process does not halt their deport from the country. In other words, they may be required to leave Georgia even while their appeal is still under consideration.

At this stage, it is also unknown exactly within what timeframes and under what procedures the application for a Work Permit must be submitted, and which documents will be required. It is only known that the Government of Georgia must adopt the detailed rules for issuing Work Permit by March 1, 2026. We hope that these regulations will clarify the aforementioned unclear and problematic issues.