

A GUIDE TO IMMIGRATION AND SECOND CITIZENSHIP

Thursday, February 20, 2020



GULF NEWS



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Global mobility

From skilled immigration to investor programmes, we've covered everything you need to know to maximise your chances of success

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Get to know RIF Trust, the Middle East's leading Citizenship & Residency by Investment Advisory.

BY SYED AMEEN KADER
Special to GN Focus

Started as a niche segment, the investment migration market was estimated at \$21.4 billion (Dh78.59 billion) in 2018, with projections suggesting it will reach \$100 billion in revenue by 2025 if the 23 per cent CAGR trend persists, according to Investment Migration Insider, a knowledge platform for the sector.

“One of the key drivers of demand is securing easier and faster travel, for UAE residents needing to travel regularly for business. Citizenship by Investment (CBI) provides an opportunity for visa-free access to a much wider range of countries,” says Liam Bailey, global head of research at Knight Frank.

Sohail Saleem, Immigration Expert and Group General Manager at AAA Associates Immigration Services, agrees that attaining global mobility is the prime reason why many UAE residents are going for CBI schemes.

Key drivers of growth

Given that many UAE residents hail from countries that are witnessing increasing economic and political instability, Zaid Aldayriyeh, Managing Director at Citizenship Bay, says they seek out second citizenships and passports through investment to ensure family security and increased mobility.

UAE residents with ‘weak’ passports that have limited visa-free travel capabilities are also driving this demand for CBI programmes.



● Investment migration has gained immense popularity over the last three decades to become a multi-billion dollar industry today, with over 100 programmes currently on offer

“Also, a second citizenship allows many parents to have the option of sending their children to study at respected high schools and universities in Europe and North America and this gives them the peace of mind that they can visit them at any time,” says David Regueiro, Chief Operating Officer, RIF Trust.

The rise in the number of high net worth individuals (HNWIs) and ultra-high net worth individuals (UHNWIs) is another key factor driving demand for CRBI programmes.

According to the 2019 Knight Frank Wealth Report, 36 per cent of UHNWIs already hold a second passport, up from 34 per cent in 2018, with 26 per cent planning to emigrate permanently, up from 21 per cent.

Bailey says CBI schemes have been growing in popularity globally – Chinese demand has been the clear driver for most – but demand from the Middle East is growing steadily.

The UAE welcomed over a thousand individuals into the millionaire

club in 2018, taking their population to 53,798, whereas the population of UHNWIs also increased to a total of 693.

As most UAE HNWIs are businesspeople, Regueiro says a second citizenship allows them to fly out of the UAE without having to worry

about obtaining a visa or lengthy border interviews.

Hot destinations

The real standout markets in 2019 were Malta, Portugal and the US, according to Knight Frank’s Bailey.

Traditionally Portugal had not been on the radar for UAE buyers, however, with the introduction of the Golden Visa programme, the country has seen a significant increase in enquiries.

“In the UAE, nationals from Lebanon, Pakistan, India, Syria, Saudi Arabia and others are looking for a Portuguese passport,” says Carla Gomes, Managing Partner at Gate to Portugal Investments. “Other countries investing in the Portuguese Golden Visa are mainly China, Brazil, Turkey, South Africa and Russia.”

Other major countries that are seeing increasing demand for second citizenship are the Commonwealth of Dominica, St. Kitts & Nevis, Antigua and Barbuda, Turkey, and Vanuatu.

“The main reason that these countries are top choices for investors is the low investment requirement, fast processing times and a high visa-free score of passports,” says Saleem of AAA Associates.

For residency by investment, he adds the top choices are Portugal, Canada, Spain and Greece. “Investors choose these countries for residence because of great business opportunities, better lifestyle and good return on investment.”

Aldayriyeh of Citizenship Bay points out that the Caribbean countries are popular for their affordability factor, whereas Cyprus is a sought-after destination among UHNWIs as it’s the only European citizenship that can be obtained in six months, without residency requirements.

Another rising star in 2019, he adds, was Turkey’s CIP due to the coun-



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● Panorama of Saint Kitts and its capital Basseterre, a popular destination for global investors

LEAD FROM PAGE 2



Liam Bailey
Global Head of Research,
Knight Frank

try's popularity among people in the Middle East, its geographical proximity to the Gulf region, and the programme's competitive investment requirements.

Top programmes

In 2020, industry players expect Caribbean programmes to continue to lead the way. "However, another programme to look out for this year is Vanuatu's CIB programme, which has gained some traction in recent months," says Al-dayriyeh.

While immigration is a very personal process with every individual having different requirements, Vrinda Gupta, Managing Partner at Vazir Group, says a hotlist for 2020 would be Canada's Entrepreneur Permanent Residency Programme; the Cyprus Citizenship by Investment Programme; and the Greece Golden Visa.

Regueiro highlights the Grenada CBI programme that comes with two options – an investment of \$220,000 into prime real estate or a government donation of \$150,000 with applicants receiving their citizenship in as little as three months, giving them visa-free access to 142 countries, including China.

Focus on due diligence

Looking into 2020, Knight Frank's Bailey says the biggest trend to watch for won't be the expansion of new locations offering citizenship-by-investment – which will happen – rather it will be a big and sustained push towards increased due diligence.

"This will be happening at the point of initial application, with a sharper focus on the reputation of the applicant, and the source of their wealth. There will also be increasing focus on the social impact of investment through these schemes," he says.

Alternative routes

Not just property investment, industry experts say people have the options to acquire citizenship or residency by various other means including a donation to a designated government fund, making fixed bank deposits, purchasing government bonds, and making a fixed capital investment in an approved business.

For instance, the Caribbean Islands and Malta offer a choice between the real estate or investing in government bonds.

"However, the most sought after non-real estate programme in our experience is the Canadian Entrepreneur Permanent

NEW PASTURES

The UAE, with its 8.58 million international migrants, who account for upto 88 per cent of the total population of the country, according to United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, continues to see an increasing number of residents immigrating to other countries.

"There is a growing demand for immigration in the UAE and most of it is due to increased awareness and of course availability of more options across the globe," says Vrinda Gupta, Managing Partner at Vazir Group (pictured).

She says the most cited factors influencing an individual's decisions are stability, children's education, social benefits, free healthcare, better tax policies, business opportunities and visa-free travel.

In terms of preferred countries, Gupta says Canada remains one



of the top destinations for immigration for UAE residents as it has multiple immigration programmes, options and criteria to match most individual circumstances.

While Canada and traditional markets such as the US and the UK continue to attract UAE residents, other popular options for skilled immigration such as Australia, New Zealand, Germany and France are seeing increasing demand as well.

Residency Programme, for start-ups," says Gupta.

While donating to a government was originally the most popular option for obtaining a second citizenship, particularly in the Caribbean, due to its

lower price point, Regueiro says nowadays investors are instead choosing to invest in real estate as they can often receive a positive ROI and in the process also receive a second citizenship. ■



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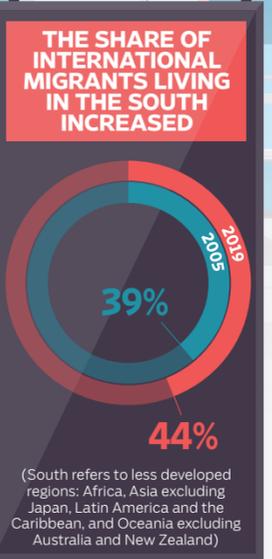
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PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

• A look at the key trends shaping international migration

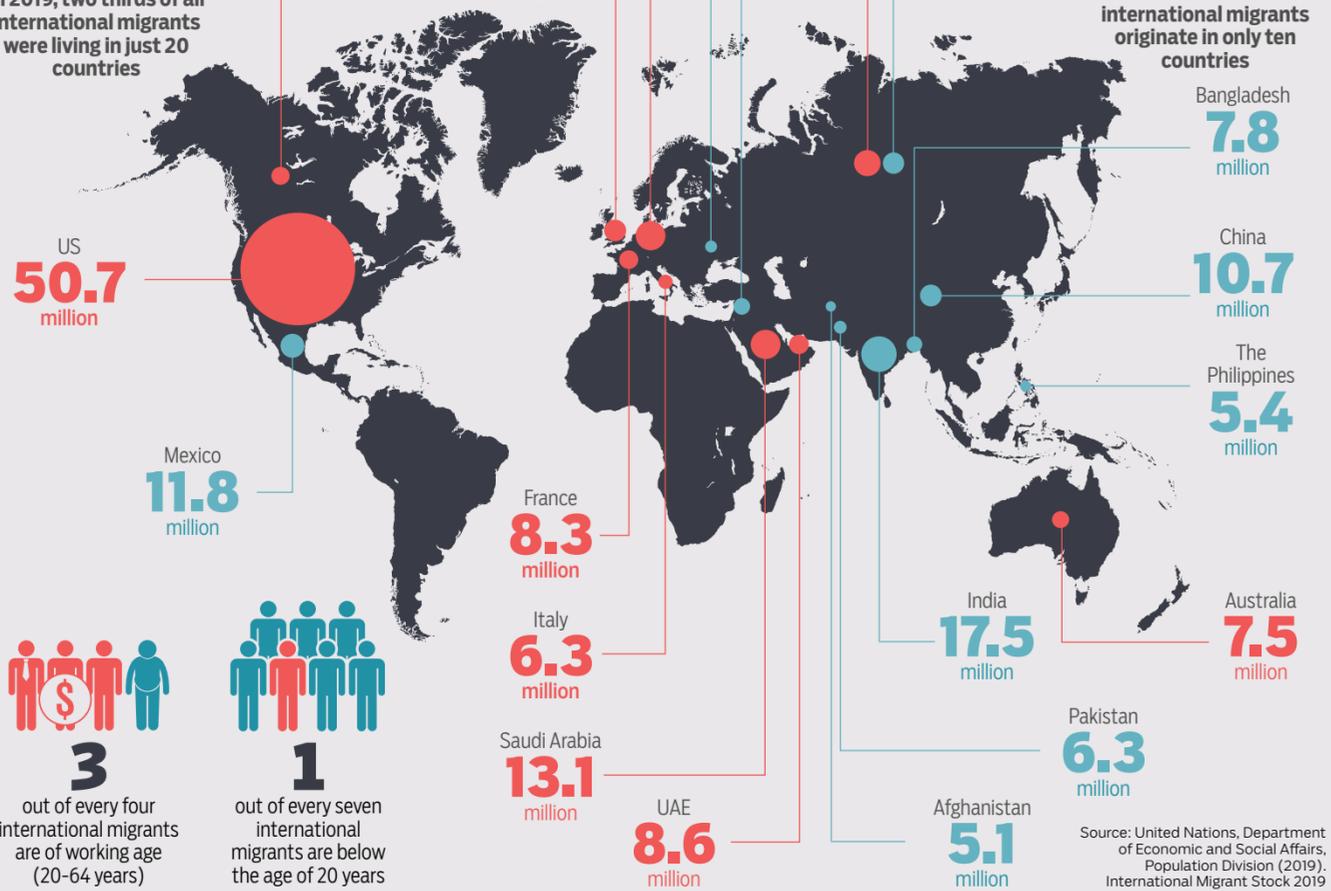


NUMBER OF MIGRANTS IN 2019



TOP 10 host countries

In 2019, two thirds of all international migrants were living in just 20 countries



3 out of every four international migrants are of working age (20-64 years)

1 out of every seven international migrants are below the age of 20 years

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019). International Migrant Stock 2019



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4 STEPS TO PREPARE FOR THE BIG MOVE

● Experts suggest tips for stress-free migration

BY HELGA JENSEN-FORDE
Special for GN Focus

There are many things to consider when emigrating, such as finances, visa paperwork, and tying up all the loose ends before you leave. This can appear mindboggling at first glance but, with a little bit of preparation, it needn't be a stressful experience. For anyone considering pastures new,

having a countdown in place will make things easier and preparation can begin as far in advance as four years before the move.

However, the first thing to consider is where to emigrate. With so many places offering residency around the world, there are a barrage of options.

"Three major factors which residents look at when they de-

cide to immigrate are opportunities, security and family," says Clint Mark Khan, Director, Y-Axis Middle East. "Each country has an occupation list highlighting professions and skills that are highly in demand, and this is re-



flective of the labour market needs of that country. It's important to check if your occupation is in demand as well as the employability options in that country before you make the move."

1
48 - 36 MONTHS

Once you've narrowed down a destination, it's important to begin saving and that can never start early enough.

"Financial planning for immigration should start as early as possible," says **Damodhar Mata**, Senior Consultant, Nexus Group. "If not earlier, you should begin at least 48-36 months before immigration."



He explains, "How much money you need depends on many factors, such as the country you are migrating to, the size of your family, age of your children and, most importantly, your skill set to quickly find a job in the new country. In addition to the immigration expenses, you need to factor in upfront settling costs, at least 6-12 months of living expenses, and some money for contingencies. For a family of four, I would recommend setting aside anywhere between \$45,000 (Dh162,000) - \$75,000."

2
35 - 24 MONTHS

You might not be quite ready to leave at this stage, but it can be helpful to apply for residency well before your planned leaving date. Therefore, finding someone who can help with the tricky legalities of immigration regulations is a good start.

Regulated Canadian Immigration Consultant, **Shanaz Lakhani**,

CEO, Vision Immigration Advisory, says, "Immigration has its own complexities, there are so many intricacies which require legal and technical know-how. Hiring a consultant can get your application submitted correctly the first time around, meaning that you have the greatest chance of success. Obtaining a visa can be much easier and faster using the services of an in-house immigration lawyer as they will be with you at every step of the process."



3
23 - 12 MONTHS

With a helpful immigration consultant, you can now start the visa application process, if you're eligible.

"Check your eligibility options as soon as you can and apply when eligible, and the rules are in your favour, because immigration rules keep changing," Khan suggests. "Once your application is approved, you get 3-6 months to make your first entry. Most countries only require you to enter the country for a day after your residency is granted and then you can return and continue with your life in the UAE."

For those finding themselves eligible for the necessary residency, the paperwork requirement depends on the country.

Jorawar Singh, Managing Director, Stratix Consultants, who specialises in Canadian immigration, says, "Canadian immigration is based upon a point system and the main factors to claim the points under the Federal Skilled Worker category are age, education, work experience, language proficiency, education of spouse, relatives in Canada, and Canadian degrees and work experience. To claim these points, clients have to provide several documents, including birth and education certificates; along with their Canadian equivalency documents; employment-related documents; International English Language Testing System (IELTS) or Technical and Further Education (TAFE) certificates; and proof of relationship documents for Canadian blood relatives."



4
11-1 MONTH

Once the paperwork is approved, it's time to look for employment and setting up your new home. If you haven't done so already, it's a good idea to start networking as the countdown concludes. "If you're moving permanently, it's best to build your connections through family, friends and professional networking sites," says Khan from Y-Axis. "Some applicants start applying for a job once the visa is granted so, as soon as they land, they have a few employers who are ready to interview them."



MOVING ABROAD CHECKLIST

"Before leaving the UAE, you must settle all debts such as personal loan, credit cards, car loans and obtain a clearance letter confirming the same," says Mata from Nexus Group. "Bear in mind that it could take anywhere between 15-25 days to get such a letter. If you have a mortgage in the UAE and intend to keep it, then it's vital that you let the bank know how you are planning to pay the mortgage. Additionally, you will have to close all utility accounts such as Dewa, Etisalat/DU and Salik; settle with your landlord, sell your car, pay outstanding fines, cancel your visa as well as those of your dependents."



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Open doors to new opportunities with a second passport

● **GN Focus** highlights the top reasons to invest in residency and second citizenship



BY DAVID REGUEIRO

The top benefits of investing in a second passport through a citizenship-by-investment programme are visa-free travel and access to major countries like the UK, the US, EU, and China. This gives high-net-worth individuals (HNWI) and families the unrestricted global access, without the worry of visa applications and border interviews.

There is also the added benefit of having a permanent Plan-B insurance policy for the investors and their family, if they ever need to suddenly relocate due to war or even a global health scare. Some countries face travel bans and holding another passport can avoid that restriction.

Citizenship programmes

For clients seeking greater visa-free access, the top citizenship programmes include

the Caribbean-based options, like St Lucia, St Kitts & Nevis and Grenada, due to their lower costs and there is no need to spend time in the country to qualify for citizenship. They also provide the option to include children and/or parents in the application.

Grenada is different from other Caribbean options as it's also an E2 treaty country, offering its citizens the chance to apply for a US non-immigrant visa by starting a business in the US.

We have also seen demand for the Vanuatu citizenship programme due to its efficient processing of applications. The newest citizenship programme is being offered by Montenegro. While not yet a member of the EU, it is expected to join in 2025,



● St Lucia in the Caribbean draws investors from across the world



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● Kotor in Montenegro. Demand for citizenship programmes in Montenegro is growing steadily

which would certainly increase the value of the passport. It is priced less than half the cost of traditional EU citizenship programmes.

The world's number one citizenship option is the Malta Individual Investor Programme (MIIP) and while it is more costly than most other programmes, the standards are high and the passport is very valuable. Once you become a citizen of Malta, clients have the right to live and work anywhere in the EU and the passport affords visa-free travel to over 180 countries including Canada and the US.

Choose your options right

There is no one size fits all as each client is unique. The best way to choose a programme is to find an advisory that is credible and knowledgeable and will explain all the options available in detail.

When we first meet with a client, we listen to their needs, goals, and motivations to better understand their individual profile and then proceed to advise them on a list of the best residency or citizenship options based on their personal preferences, requirements and limitations.

— The writer is COO of RIF Trust



● The harbour on St Paul's Bay with fishing boats and tourist ships at Bugibba in Malta. Citizens of Malta have the right to live and work anywhere in the EU



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HOW TO CHOOSE AN IMMIGRATION CONSULTANT

● Are you planning to emigrate soon? Here's what you need to know before you hire the services of a reliable consultant



BY CLINT MARK KHAN
Special to
GN Focus

Immigration consultants are licensed to represent clients applying to immigrate, guiding them throughout the process of obtaining the visas. There is an increase in the number of inexperienced consultants in the UAE, who are neither registered nor experienced enough to advise an aspiring immigrant. Before hiring the services of a reliable consultant, follow these simple, but critical guidelines.

Registration matters

Get a registered immigration agent to manage your visa application. For example, they must be registered with the office of Migration Agents Registration Authority (MARA) for Australian immigration and the Immigration Consultants of Canada Regulatory Council (ICCRC), the national regulatory body that oversees regulated Canadian immigration professionals.

Verify their company name on the official websites, such as Mara.gov.au and icrc-crcic.ca, as registered consultants are bound by

their codes of conduct. A lot of consultants in the UAE work in partnership with external consultants. So they are not directly liable and responsible for a client who pays them. Read the retainer agreement carefully before you pay any consultation fees to an agent.

A reliable immigration consultant must be in business for several years, with experience in processing thousands of applications. The experience of the consultant gained over years while processing varied cases and profiles, would help a new applicant increase his chances of immigrating successfully, as his application and documentation requirements may change based on his nationality and place of study. So, it is

best to use someone who is in business for at least 20 years and has handled many applications in the past, knowing the policies and procedures for immigration thoroughly.

Check credentials

Another way to identify if you are working with a reputed company is to check and see if they are associated with any big companies or endorsed by any reputed authorities, embassies and consulates.

Success doesn't come cheap

While inexperienced companies often come cheaper than the experienced ones, you may be put-

ting your visa application at risk by going with the cheaper option. The immigration system globally is very complex and you often need years of experience to fully understand it. So ask about your consultant's years of experience in immigration before you commit to work with them.

Are they equipped to guide?

Your immigration consultant must be able to give you an idea of your chances of success at the initial stage of the application process. If they foresee any delays, they should be able to immediately recommend alternative options to you, increasing your chances of success.

Watch for red flags

Avoid immigration companies who are promising you a guaranteed job once you land in the foreign country. These companies are not genuine as an immigration consultant can neither issue job offers nor act as a recruitment agent. These tricks are often used to attract customers and make money. You have to be aware of these fraudulent practices carried out in the industry under the name of immigration consultancies.

— The writer is Director, Y-Axis Middle East



WHAT CAN LEARNING ENGLISH DO FOR YOU?

• Speaking English well can change your life. Here's how

Learning a new language can open doors in more ways than one, particularly when it comes to building a new life overseas. Not only does it offer inroads into a new culture, but the added fluency offers an opportunity to make friends and improves your job prospects. And when that language is English, the benefits are significantly greater.

"Settling into a new life overseas is more than what we think," says Satya Priya Anand, Manager, English for Adults at the British Council in the UAE, an institute specialising in international cultural and educational opportunities. "People move into a whole new world with new languages, cultures and infrastructure."

As the world's lingua franca, or default connecting language, English helps people bridge gaps in all kinds of situations, whether in a business meeting or at the grocery store. "English is the language of the world," Anand says. "Being good at English helps people make new friends, build their social circle and travel comfortably."

"Without English, a person could be surrounded by people but still feel isolated and alone."

So it makes sense that the ability to communicate in English is a prerequisite to studying in or emigrating to countries such as the UK, the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) is one way to test that skill. It is the world's most popular English-language test for higher education and global migration. The British Council administers the test and offers courses in the English language



• Students at the British Council. Its IELTS preparation courses are specially designed to optimise students' test potential



Satya Priya Anand
Manager, English for Adults,
The British Council



Colin Hoy
Digital Co-ordinator,
The British Council

experience or training, and is a migration requirement for Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the UK.

Preparing for IELTS at the British Council

Besides being a well-known place to take the test, the British Council offers test-takers a wealth of support and training. "The British Council can help you succeed on your IELTS journey with a wide range of study materials and resources, from free online practice tests to face-to-face training," Hoy says.

Free resources include online courses that explain each element of the test with advice from a video tutor and a team of experienced IELTS educators. The Council's IELTS mobile app allows you to learn English at your own pace. There are sample tests and questions for listening, reading, writing and speaking as well as grammar and vocabulary tips and quizzes, so you can brush up on your skills at any time.

"In our face-to-face courses you'll be taught by highly qualified English specialists who will get you acquainted with the test format and improve your skills when writing, speaking, reading and listening in English," Hoy adds.

Attending English classes at the British Council can help with cultural acclimatisation, adds teacher Liza Simon. "Our lessons highlight special days and prac-

that are designed to improve communications skills and develop intercultural fluency.

Getting ready for IELTS

"IELTS measures the language proficiency of people who want to study or work where English is used as the language of communication," explains Colin Hoy, Digital Co-ordinator at the British Council. As such, more than 10,000 academic, government and business organisations worldwide use it as proof of English proficiency.

There are two types of IELTS exams. The Academic test is for those applying for higher education or professional registration in an English-speaking environment. The General Training test is for people going to English-speaking countries for secondary education, work



STUDENTS SPEAK

SOUMYA MUKHERJEE
I had appeared for my IELTS (General) test in mid 2018 but the scores were not satisfactory. Having learnt about the IELTS Coach programme offered by the British Council, I decided to register myself and reap the benefits. The result showed it all.



Under the guidance of Salma Rahmed, Teacher of English at the British Council, the course taught me the key strategies, which I feel are of utmost importance, apart from regularly practising the tests. I highly recommend this course specifically conducted by the British Council for all those who strive to succeed and make a difference in the career of their choice.

SAFIYA ABDURAIMOVA

The IELTS Intensive course at the British Council in Sharjah definitely had a huge impact on my final scores. I achieved a band 8 in my IELTS exam, solely because of my dedicated tutor who carefully and steadily guided me through the journey of preparation. I would recommend this course to anyone who wishes to get a higher score, while needing a hand in understanding how IELTS actually works.



tices around the world, and along with our events and social activities, heighten awareness of cultures, customs and etiquette. This will stand our students in good stead as they settle into a new country, as tolerance and understanding are key while integrating into a new culture." ■

— By Keith J. Fernandez, Special to GN Focus

To find out more about the format of the test as well as about IELTS at the British Council, visit [Britishcouncil.ae/en/exam/ielts/prepare](https://www.britishcouncil.org/en/exam/ielts/prepare)

WHAT'S IT LIKE LEARNING ENGLISH AS AN ADULT AT THE BRITISH COUNCIL?



Returning to the classroom environment can be a daunting idea for many, so the British Council focuses on creating a pleasant, fun experience for its adult students with a range of different methods and resources.

"Our lessons are enjoyable, communicative and relevant to student needs," says Liza Simon, teacher at the

British Council (pictured). "We ensure learners receive individual attention and our teaching methods take into consideration different learning styles to maximise learning."

The student mix typically includes young people aspiring to get into university, professionals wanting to further their career, housewives eager to support their children in their

studies, or those dreaming of moving to a new country.

"The aim of each lesson is to encourage the production of language so that students leave each lesson with a sense of achievement," Simon adds. "Using familiar contexts and providing authentic tasks means that even beginners can venture out and start using English in real-life situations."

FIND THE RIGHT SUPPORT

• **GN Focus** profiles some of the top consultants in the UAE for all your immigration, citizenship and residency planning



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Y-AXIS

- Years of service** 21
- Number of clients** Professional advice was given to nearly 40,000 prospective migrants last year
- Specialisation** Immigration, visas and career counselling
- Registration and accreditation**
 - Migration Agents Registration Authority (MARA)
 - Member of Migration Institutes of Australia (MIA)
 - Immigration Consultants of Canada Regulatory Council (ICCRC)
 - British Council
- Key services** Immigration representation for permanent residency; business visas; tourist and visit visas; telephone consultations; rejected visa applications; administrative appeals tribunal assistance; and free counselling
- CSR Activities:** Y-Axis Foundation, working in association with US Embassy
Y-axis.com

RIF TRUST

- Years of service** 8
- Number of clients** Over 1,000
- Specialisation** Investment migration
- Registration and accreditation**
 - Approved Marketing Agents for Anguilla, Antigua & Barbuda, Canada, Cyprus, St Kitts & Nevis, St Lucia, Dominica, Grenada, Vanuatu, Malta, New Zealand and the UK
 - Investment Migration Council Members
- Key services:** Citizenship by investment; residency by investment; and government advisory
Riftrust.com

AAA ASSOCIATES

- Years of service** Servicing the second citizenship and investor immigration industry for the last two decades
- Number of clients** 3000
- Specialisation** Second citizenship and residence by investment programmes; business migration; and all other investor relocation needs
- Registration and accreditation**
 - AAA Associates is authorised by all major jurisdictions dealing with citizenship and residency by investments
 - It is approved and authorised by Citizenship by Investment Unit of Commonwealth of Dominica, St. Kitts & Nevis, Antigua & Barbuda and St. Lucia to name a few
 - Member of Immigration Consultants of Canada Regulatory Council
 - Regulated Canadian Immigration Consultant
- Key services** Full representation; phone consultation; in-person consultation; one-stop solution for all second passport and investor immigration needs; end-to-end services, from initial phone consultation, detailed in-person assessment of the profile to timely delivery of visa and passports. AAA Associates is authorised to fully represent applicants for residence and citizenship applications
Aaa-international.com



VISION IMMIGRATION ADVISORY

- Years of service** 26
- Number of clients** More than 30,000 cases
- Specialisation** Skilled migration to Canada, Australia and New Zealand; investor and entrepreneur migration to the US, the UK and Canada; second citizenship and family sponsorship
- Registration and accreditation**
 - ICCRC (RCIC - R413855)
 - MARA Offshore (3010078)
- Key services** Consultation and complete guidance in-person and overseas through phone and e-mails; documentation and profile creation; guidance on ECA and IELTS; submission of applications for skilled migration programmes; and complete solutions from consultation to business plan creation for investor programmes
Visionconsultancy.com



STRATIX CONSULTANTS

- Years of service** 6
- Number of clients** 25,000 plus families
- Specialisation** Second passport through investments; residency through investments; skilled immigration; and student visa
- Registration and accreditation** Its lawyers are registered and have membership from the following:
 - Law Society of Upper Canada
 - Migration Agents Registration Authority (MARA) Australia
 - The Immigration Consultants of Canada Regulatory Council (ICCRC)
- Key services** Initial one-on-one consultation session; representation and processing of the entire permanent resident visa/passports; professional and business-related guidance for professionals, entrepreneurs, investors; and post-landing services
Stratixconsultants.com



CITIZENSHIP BAY

- Years of service** 4
- Number of clients** Hundreds since inception
- Specialisation** Caribbean and European citizenship and residency
- Registration and accreditation**
 - Registered in Dubai to promote government-approved citizenship by investment programmes
 - Official licensed representative for multiple Caribbean and European countries
- Key services** Free phone and in-person consultation; advice on suitable programmes and investment options; pre-screening and thorough assessment of clients; A-Z handling of applications, including full representation of clients; and after-sales services including assistance with document renewals and registration of new dependents
Citizenshipbay.com



VAZIR GROUP

- Years of service** 16
- Number of clients** Over 1,000 since 2004
- Specialisation** Immigration services
- Key services** Faster timeframes for various countries; exclusive, unique and personalised programmes in GCC; affordable and refundable payment schemes; dedicated customer manager; end-to-end services; and support after getting the permanent residency in Canada
Vazirgroup.com

YOUR ESSENTIAL IMMIGRATION CHECKLIST

• Top tips to help you avoid any critical mistakes during the process

By JORAWAR SINGH
Special to GN Focus

code of ethics of all governments.

Check the experience of immigration lawyers

Make sure that your chosen Canadian lawyer, ICCRC agent or MARA agent for Australian immigration has ample experience in his field. You can verify the same on government websites.

Don't fall for consultants charging low fees

There's a cost involved in offering quality services through representation of registered immigration lawyers; customer service through experienced staff; and post-landing services in Canada or Australia. Consultants who are giving you all these at a flexible or low payment plan will never be able to fulfill their commitments in the long run.

Don't trust a consultant for work permits or job offers

Never trust a consultant charging hefty amount of money for arranging job offers. You will simply lose your hard-earned money. If you have obtained a genuine job offer on your merit by dealing with the employers directly, use a consultant for the representation and processing of work permit or permanent residency applications.

Ask for references

If your immigration consultant is genuine, customer-service oriented and experienced, they will have ample success stories to share with you. A good immigration consultant should be willing to provide references of their past clients when needed.

Knowledge checks

Check if the consultant is well aware of immigration laws, process flow and application procedure. Also find out if they can offer professional guidance on regulated occupations. Note that all professions that are regulated, need registration. So candidates have to go through a licensing procedure in Canada and Australia before they start working.

Don't use fake documents

You should never work with consultants giving you assurance of arranging fake education documents or experience certificates. This practice is completely against the



— The writer is Managing Director of Stratix Consultants

CALL OF A DISTANT SHORE

• How they explored new opportunities elsewhere

BASIL KADARA

I have lived a fruitful life in the UAE with my Emirati mother and Syrian father. I am 35 years old and working as a General Manager at Diaedu, a company that organises medical events. As I am heavily involved with both managing and operating events in the region, travel is a major part of my life. However, in recent years this has become a major challenge due to my Syrian passport.

While I am extremely proud of my heritage, my Syrian citizenship does not allow me access to several countries, so I have to constantly apply for travel visas. I therefore decided to act and after diligent research came across RIF Trust. A quick visit to RIF Trust's Dubai office immediately convinced me that they were a professional and genuine advisory. I was assigned an advisor that made the entire process smooth and easy. Together, we decided that the St. Kitts & Nevis citizenship programme would be the best option for me.

My life is forever changed, both professionally and personally. I travel comfortably now and the only planning I do is booking a flight and hotel.



KANWAL ZULFIQAR

I am a teacher by profession but after moving to Canada last year, I started working at an administrative position. Teaching is a regulated profession in Canada, requiring a licence from a regulatory body.

We chose Canada because it is an immigrant-friendly nation with free basic healthcare and excellent educational and job opportunities. The best thing is after staying for three years, you can get Canadian citizenship.

In our case, Y-Axis took care of all the paperwork for immigration, guiding us at every step of the process. Y-Axis made our journey very smooth and fast.



After moving to Canada, we rented a place to stay through Kijiji.com. Renting is the best option for newcomers to Canada.

I got my first job three months after moving to Canada. I dropped my CV in person to various places and got an interview call. There are many employment centres in Canada to help newcomers find a job.

Cost of living for a person is around 1,400 CAD (Dh3,800) a month including rent, groceries and transportation.

Newcomers can go to a local library and attend sessions to integrate into the society. These sessions guide people about jobs, writing resumes and provide voluntary opportunities.

AYHAM ALHAMACH

While I am originally from Syria, I applied for second citizenship in Dominica for the ease of travel and also to explore business opportunities.

I approached AAA Associates to find out about citizenship by investment programmes. I discussed my requirements with the AAA team and after careful evaluation of my profile, we decided to opt for second citizenship in Dominica. They provided me with the best solutions for the citizenship programme, making the whole process easy and smooth. I invested in Anichi Resort and Spa, a Marriott Autograph Collection Hotel.

With the new citizenship, I have secured mine as well as my family's future. I can now travel visa-free to multiple countries around the world. This helps me make quick business decisions, and I can stay ahead of my competitors. I now have a passport that has given me some peace of mind.

With the new citizenship, I have secured mine as well as my family's future. I can now travel visa-free to multiple countries around the world. This helps me make quick business decisions, and I can stay ahead of my competitors. I now have a passport that has given me some peace of mind.



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VAZIR GROUP

RESIDENCY & CITIZENSHIP BY INVESTMENT

UNIQUE AND EXCLUSIVE PROGRAMS

CANADA

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CYPRUS | THE CARIBBEAN ISLANDS | TURKEY

A GLOBAL FUTURE AWAITS



CITIZENSHIP BAY

Offering globally accredited citizenship and residency programmes

In conversation with Zaid Aldayriyeh, Managing Director, Citizenship Bay.

Could you tell us a bit on Citizenship Bay?

This is a leading consultancy firm in the UAE specialising in investment-based citizenship and residency programmes. Headquartered in Dubai, Citizenship Bay caters to clients locally and internationally.

Our citizenship and residency programmes are globally accredited and highly reputable. Citizenship Bay is proud to be one of the very few firms authorised by multiple governments around the world to promote their citizenship programmes.

Acquiring a second citizenship is a life-changing endeavour, so we take it very seriously. There

is a lot of thought, due diligence and decision making involved in the process, which could be stressful. But that is what we're here to help our clients for. Not only do we offer our clients expertise and guidance, but we also provide them with peace of mind and a smooth, stress-free journey towards global citizenship.

All our clients can expect:

- A multilingual team of specialised consultants
- Free consultation, pre-screening, and assessment
- Money-back guarantee
- Unmatched confidentiality standards
- Highly personalised service
- Tailored, bespoke solutions
- Experience of working with different nationalities and backgrounds

What demand have you noticed for citizenship-by-investment programmes in the UAE?

Interest in second citizenship

has been growing steadily among residents in the UAE, with people becoming more and more aware of such programmes and their benefits. Applications from the UAE have always represented a significant percentage of the total number of citizenship-by-investment applicants globally.

Who are your main clients investing in these programmes?

Businessmen and company executives who are mainly from countries that are politically unstable or war-torn, are looking for second citizenship solutions for them and their families.

What kind of investments are usually needed to qualify for these programmes?

A minimum of \$100,000 (Dh367,250) is required, in addition to other miscellaneous fees. The investment amount depends on the programme and the number of family members included in an application.



How many clients did you help in securing second passports from the UAE?

We have helped hundreds of clients from the UAE, the GCC, as well as internationally. Around 30 per cent of our business comes from the UAE.



● Zaid Aldayriyeh

Y-AXIS

A trusted name in overseas careers and visas

Y-Axis is an overseas career consultant specialising in immigration and visas.

Established in 1999, Y-Axis has more than 45 company-owned and managed offices across India, Dubai and Sharjah in the UAE, and Melbourne and Sydney in Australia, with over 1,200 employees serving more than one million customers. This is one of the world's largest B2C immigration firms.

"As part of our portfolio of services, we provide personal one-to-one counselling to about 50,000 individual enquiries every month for migration, study abroad opportunities and work visas," says Clint Mark Khan, Director, Y-Axis Middle East.

"Over 50 per cent of our customers are through word of mouth," he says. "No other company understands the demands of overseas careers as we do."

"Our core competence lies in being a career counsellor where we aim to inspire, motivate, counsel, convince and persuade our clients to explore opportunities



● Staff of Y-Axis

abroad. People approach us with a dream that they have aspired for all their lives, while some come to us even with their last hopes being pinned on us. What we do impacts lives and livelihoods and that is why we take our job very seriously.

"Clients trust our brand and appreciate the transparency in our processes, which are backed by a proper legal agreement."

"Our global resettlement services offer end-to-end solu-

tions allowing you to land in any country and experience our support until you settle down permanently.

"We have deployed the cutting-edge customer relationship management (CRM) solution – Salesforce.com – and our telephone system is powered by 3CX."

Y-Axis Middle East is registered with the office of Migration Agents Registration Authority (MARA) for Australian immigration and the Immigration Consultants of

Canada Regulatory Council (IC-CRC), the national regulatory body that oversees Canadian immigration professionals.

"We are bound by the code of conduct stipulated by these authorities," says Khan. "We are also associated with some of the biggest brands in the industry such as Salesforce.com and operate as the British Council's trusted gold partner. Whenever you think about overseas careers and visas, think Y-Axis."



Immigration

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- Legendary Client Care ■ Ethical Service Practice

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CANADA

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Immigration by Investment



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Corporate L-1
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RIF Trust

“Pick an agency that is credible and experienced”

David Regueiro, COO of RIF Trust, answers some of our questions on investment-led immigration.

How do you help people choose the right programme?



David Regueiro

What are the key things we need to keep in mind while selecting an advisor for residency and second citizenship?

As we enter the new decade and governments tighten their regulations and requirements for high-net-worth individuals (HNWIs) to qualify for their residency or citizenship-by-investment programmes (RBI/CBI), it is very important to be careful which firm you go to for guidance. It is important to pick an agency that is credible and experienced to ensure the best chances of a successful application. This is where an agency like RIF Trust comes in.

We usually prefer to meet our clients face-to-face at our office in Business Bay and take the time to understand their unique situation, goals, financial position etc. We then suggest a bespoke CBI or RBI solution, from the range of over 20 programmes we offer, that is best suited to the client's needs.

What are the top programmes currently available for UAE residents?

The Caribbean citizenship programmes, particularly St Kitts & Nevis, St Lucia, and Grenada, are



generally the most popular programmes with UAE residents as they are reasonably priced options. However, we've recently seen many applications for Vanuatu due to its extremely efficient processing times.

Some clients that have goals of uprooting and relocating themselves or their family are seeing the added value of RBI

countries like Portugal, Greece, and Malta. These programmes provide greater access to Europe, granting the opportunity for applicants to study, live and travel anywhere in the EU Schengen Area.

We also see demand for EU CBIs offered by Malta and Cyprus. Once you become a citizen of either country, you can live and work anywhere

in the EU. However, these programmes are more exclusive due to their higher investment costs.

How does RIF Trust help streamline the application process for an investor, supporting him through the journey until he gets the passports?

At RIF Trust, we hand hold the client through every step of the application process from start to finish and beyond. We handle all the paperwork, their due diligence and are completely transparent with the client, so that they are aware of every aspect of their application. We also are the only advisory to offer post-landing services in the form of the RIF Club, which takes care of our clients after they receive their passports.

VAZIR GROUP

Guiding you through every step of the immigration process

In conversation with Vrinda Gupta, Managing Partner, Vazir Group.

even in settling down in a foreign nation after they immigrate.

Could you brief us on Vazir Group, highlighting how you could help UAE residents immigrate as well as opt for a second passport?

Vazir Group is an immigration advisory boutique that has been helping individuals secure their future through access to global opportunities since 2004.

With offices in Dubai and Toronto, the team of expert consultants at Vazir Group assists clients with unique programmes and financing options to over 10 destinations.

The company takes pride in supporting applicants through every step of their journey, supporting them

How many clients have you helped to immigrate last year?

We remained above our yearly average last year, helping over 60 clients to immigrate to various destinations in the world using our diverse programmes.

What are some of the top destinations for immigration for UAE residents?

Depending on individual requirements, Canada remains the destination of choice for families



looking to relocate from the UAE. Cyprus maintains its spot as the top choice for business professionals looking for a good investment opportunity in Europe, great taxation system and unmatched mobility in terms of visa-free access to the world. Greece, Portugal and the Caribbean Islands are also very popular owing to their individual advantages and price points.

Finally, what are your tips for people looking for an immigration consultant?

Ensure that your consultant of choice is reputable and trustworthy, and has a sound and stable infrastructure rather than operating as a sales office for another immigration consultant. Hire a consultant who can guide you to choose the most suitable immigration programme depending on your long-term goals and current circumstances and doesn't force-sell the options that they have. Choose someone who is transparent about the process and timelines of immigration.

AAA ASSOCIATES

“We follow the principle of great customer service and swift delivery”



Imran Farooq, CEO, AAA Associates, with Emmanuel Nanthan, Head of Citizenship by Investment Unit, Dominica

In conversation with Imran Farooq, CEO, AAA Associates:

How could AAA Associates help UAE residents emigrate through citizenship and residency by investment programmes?

AAA Associates is the largest immigration Company in the Middle East and has helped thousands of applicants to immigrate to countries of their choice. Our qualified, well trained, experienced consultants understand the customers' specific needs. They evaluate and assess their potential to ensure selection of the right kind of programme as per their needs. Proper case preparation, submission and representation are the responsibilities of the experienced case processing team who ensure best customer service, best possible case preparation and representation for successful outcome. AAA Associates is authorised by all major

jurisdictions dealing with citizenship and residency by investment programmes. We follow the principle of great customer service and swift delivery. This combined with state-of-the-art infrastructure and a global reach helps us meet our customers' expectations. We offer programmes across the world including the US, Canada, Caribbean, Europe and Oceania.

How many clients did you handle last year?

Over 400 customers have put their trust in us over the last 12 months and we are delighted to have been able to deliver on our service promise. At AAA the customer always comes first and those customers are now enjoying the benefits of second citizenship.

How do you maintain an edge in the UAE's competitive immigration consultancy space?

Our tagline says it all – Your One Stop Solution for Second Passport and Investment Migration. We provide end-to-end services to our customers from the initial consultation to passport or residency delivery. AAA has almost two decades of experience in the immigration sector. The dedicated and highly qualified sales and customer service team based in the UAE and their international counterparts ensure that each customer has selected the product that best meets their individual needs. Additionally, we have built a strong network with the various government entities to ensure our customers receive the best possible service with the fastest turnaround times. As customers often receive their citizenship and or second passport in less than six months they frequently act as our ambassadors, promoting our service to their friends, colleagues and families.

EXPLORE INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN DOMINICA

Emmanuel Nanthan, Head of Dominica Citizenship by Investment Unit, answers our questions on what draws investors to this Caribbean island nation

What demand have you noticed for citizenship by investment programmes in Dominica among UAE residents?

Many UAE residents apply for Dominican citizenship. The UAE is a melting pot and people from all over the world work and live here. They need to travel extensively for business and are familiar about how the Dominican programme can help them as many of their friends have already opted for this programme. They are a living testimony to the success of Dominica's programme on how people can explore new business opportunities in the Caribbean.

What kind of investments are usually needed for second citizenship in Dominica?

For the Dominican citizenship programme, an investor could apply directly in the government's Economic Diversification Fund or in an approved real estate project like Anichi Resort & Spa, a Marriott Autograph Collection hotel. The direct government investment is only \$100,000 (Dh367,250) plus fees for a single applicant and \$200,000 plus fees in approved real estate project. Single applicants generally invest directly in the government fund while families apply for the real estate option. Properties from international brands like Kempinski, Hilton and Marriott are on offer for investments although Kempinski is already sold out.

VISION IMMIGRATION ADVISORY

Three questions to ask before hiring an immigration agent

Why is it important to approach Vision for immigration when you can handle the process on your own?

Immigration processes can be confusing, time consuming and complicated. A licensed firm like Vision is legally bound by a code of professional ethics, strictly observing the stringent rules regarding the quality of service, confidentiality and professionalism. Any breach of these codes is an act of non-compliance, while it is illegal to misrepresent a case to the immigration authorities. A well-experienced firm knows how to build a case keeping a client's strengths in focus, increasing their chances of approval. With regular updates, profile optimisation practices, and the immigration authority's familiarity of our brand, you choose success when you decide to work with Vision.



third-party, when both are Regulated Canadian Immigration Consultants (RCICs)?

When it comes to immigration visa approvals (ITA's/COPR's), there should never be a confusion on whether the case will succeed

or fail. Having an in-house RCIC ensures ethical practice and the watchful eye of a legal professional on case processing, case-building and submissions and this is the fundamental difference between reaching your dream or being left behind.

Off-shore RCICs are not available on call due to possible time/location differences, or other circumstantial situations. Our in-house RCIC, Shanaz Lakhani, signs off every single case, with a direct interest in client success due to her position as CEO of the firm.

How can I avoid immigration fraud?

It is an offence punishable by law to provide immigration services for a fee or other considerations, if you are not regulated. Any active and government certified lawyer or legal professional will never indulge in any fraudulent practice.

You have the right to demand



• Shanaz Lakhani, CEO, Vision Immigration Advisory

a clear explanation of the assessment criteria, the basis of your eligibility for the programme, and the credentials of the advisor or legal professional in question. Never accept a suggestion to manufacture false documents.

Don't disclose information that lies outside the parameters of the case, and always check the concerned government's regulatory body website for the license number and the name of the firm you use.

Canada, for example, confirms professionals and their contact details on the ICCRC website – icrc-crcic.ca. With 25 years of trust, Vision invites all clients to exercise these rights.

STRATIX CONSULTANTS

Beware of immigration consultants offering jobs

In conversation with Jorawar Singh, Managing Director, Stratix Consultants:

Could you tell us a bit about Stratix Consultants?

Stratix has the expertise and experience of many years in helping people to relocate and obtaining second passports for investors, entrepreneurs or skilled professionals. During this journey, we have also created an awareness of the benefits of unique citizenship programmes available in countries such as the US, Europe, the Caribbean Islands, Turkey and Vanuatu, not only in the UAE but also in other GCC countries through our physical presence in Qatar, Kuwait, Oman and Saudi Arabia. We have offices in Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Sharjah in the UAE. For skilled professionals who are interested to emigrate to Canada or Australia, we have registered lawyers and MARA consultants for smooth and hassle free processing of



applications. We can also help our clients settle down in the destination country after getting the permanent residency. We have an in-house Stratix Employment Orientation (SEO) process for skilled professionals where we offer our clients professional guidance on how they can prepare for the job market. This includes guidance related to various registration and license procedure for regulated professions.

What are the top countries when it comes to immigration?

Countries where immigration is more concentrated can be categorised into three segments.

Citizenship by investment: Cyprus, Malta, Caribbean Islands, Turkey and Vanuatu

Permanent residency by investment: Canada, USA, UK, Greece, Portugal, Spain, Malta, Australia and New Zealand



• Jorawar Singh

Skilled professional permanent residency: Canada and Australia

What are your tips for people looking to emigrate and explore work opportunities abroad?

There are many consultants in the UAE who are processing work permits for Canada and Europe. They are charging hefty amounts for arranging job offers that are not genuine. During the last stage of processing the work permits, visa applications authorities can easily reject the application by citing reasons that job offers are not genuine. This means applicants may lose the entire professional fees that they have paid to the consultants or lawyers. Services of immigration consultants or lawyers can be used for the representation and processing of the work permits, if you have genuine job offers that you have obtained on your own from the employers in these countries by applying directly and after going through proper interviews.

How do you maintain an edge over other immigration consultants in the UAE?

As an experienced immigration consultant, we understand the requirement of our applicants and based on their needs we can recommend them suitable immigration programmes.

During the initial stage of screening, we can assess the applicants based on current immigration laws. Screening at the initial stage is critical because the correct assessment of the candidate and the successful selection of the programme can lead to successful outcomes. We also maintain high standards of customer services.

BRITISH COUNCIL

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Meet your local advisor
from the Middle East's

leading residency & citizenship advisory

“My life is forever changed, both professionally and personally. I travel comfortably now and the only planning I do is booking a flight and hotel.”

- B.K., RIF Trust Client

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