

KOREA VISA APPLICATION CENTER (KVAC) PROGRAMME

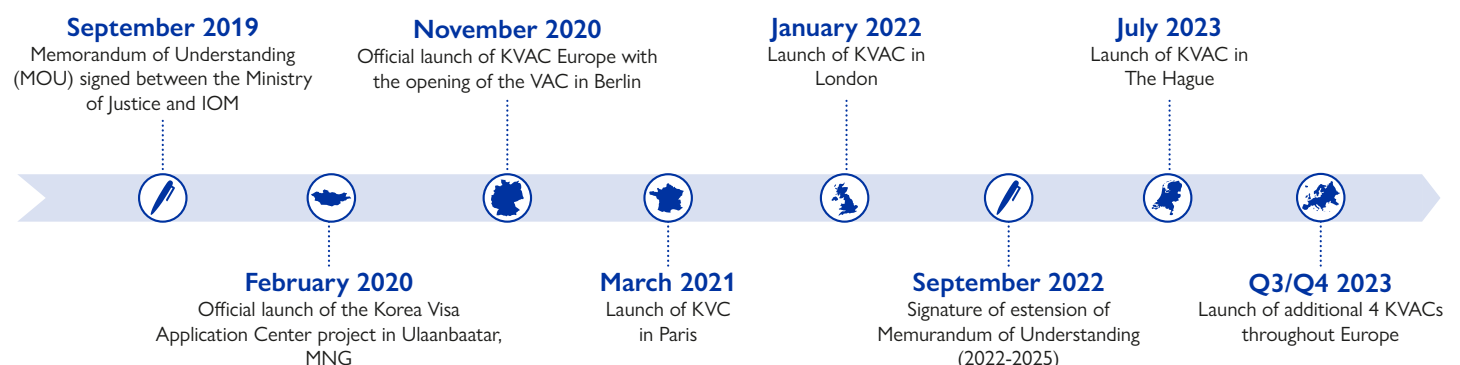
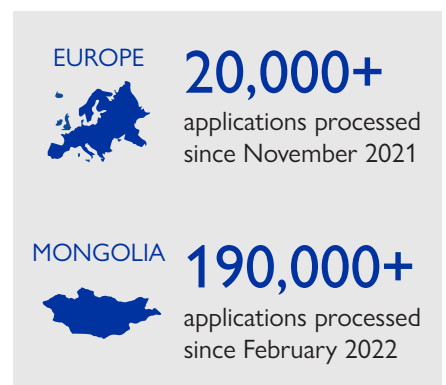
THE PROJECT

In response to a request from the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) of the Government of the Republic of Korea (ROK), IOM Immigration and Border Governance Division and the Immigration and Visas Unit (IOM HQ) developed and implemented the Korea Visa Application Center (KVAC) project to provide technical and operational support to jointly redesign Korea visa processing system through a network of Visa Application Centers (VAC) across Europe and in Mongolia.

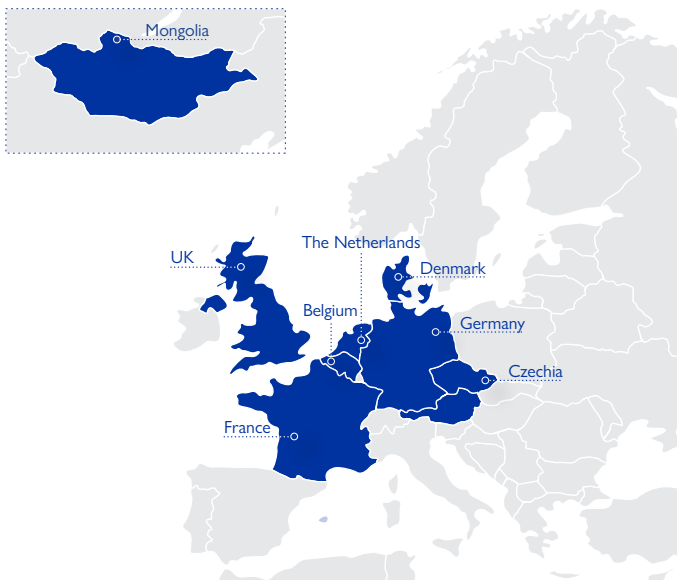
Upon the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding in September 2019, IOM acts as the only partner offering visa application related services to individuals intending to enter Korea for short or long stay. The objective of this project is to support the efforts of the Republic of Korea to facilitate orderly, safe, and regular migration by enhancing visa processing capacities through the establishment and operationalization of Visa Application Centers.

The project outcomes differ between Europe and Mongolia. In Europe, the establishment of the KVAC network aims at ensuring convenience to visa applicants. In 2019, the Korean Ministry of Justice decided to centralize the visa decision process. The ROK Embassy in Berlin was identified as the diplomatic representation that would be responsible for verifying the visa application requests of 24 countries across the European continent. IOM was invited to launch Visa Application Centers where MOJ planned to discontinue local visa processing. In Mongolia, the Ministry of Justice identified IOM as the best actor to establish a Visa Application Center that could support the efforts of the local ROK Embassy and MOJ to discourage the interference of unscrupulous brokers. The Republic of Korea and Mongolia have historical cultural and economic ties and the number of visa applications from Mongolia to Korea is over 160,000 per year. The ROK Embassy in Ulaanbaatar is requested to conduct exhaustive verifications of the documents submitted because, due to the lengthy processing times and the complexity of the visa system, prospective migrants often rely on agents to prepare the visa documentation and cases of exploitation are frequent. Through the establishment of the KVAC, IOM has implemented activities that enables the ROK Embassy to ensure the highest quality and security standards, provide a safe and dignified space for visa applicants, and fasten the visa decision making process.

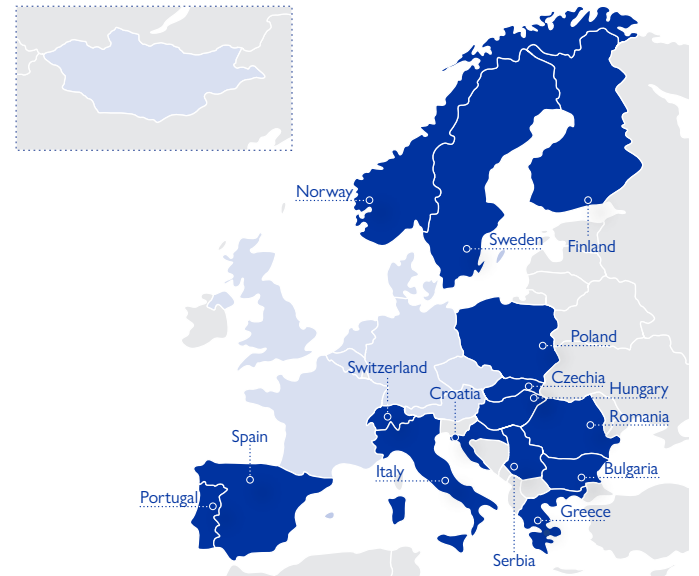
The project MOU includes two phases to be rolled out within the duration of the MOU. IOM is currently in Phase 1. During Phase 1, IOM will open KVAC in nine locations. Phase 2 will follow, upon completion of Phase 1, planned to happen by mid-2024, and subject to the financial sustainability of the project. Phase 2 includes 18 more Centers. Currently IOM is operating five locations, Ulaanbaatar, Berlin, Paris, London, and The Hague.



PHASE 1: 9 Locations



PHASE 2: 27 Locations



SOLUTIONS

The activities implemented through the KVIC project aim at responding to the existing challenges for visa applicants and the Government of the Republic of Korea. The identification of adequate premises, and their subsequent renovation and refurbishment provide migrants with a local tailored office to submit visa application documents and obtain visa related support.

The provision of accurate and timely information in multiple languages on immigration policies, eligibility criteria, required documentation, and processing time enhances the capacity of migrants to make informed decisions, and promoting safe, orderly, and regular migration. By ensuring access to high-level quality support in local languages, shortening geographical distances and reducing costs, and ensuring localized approaches and flexible and alternative solutions, IOM guarantees facilitated access to the admission procedures established by the Government of the Republic of Korea, limiting the risks for prospective migrants to resource to unscrupulous brokers or irregular pathways.

While the Mongolia and the European Centers offer specific tailored solutions, all Korea Visa Application Centers provide the following services:



Facilities tailored to the local contexts and needs;



Information provision in person and through dedicated multi-language contact-centre, information material, and website;



Facilitation of communication between the relevant ROK Embassy and the visa applicants, the inviters, and the sponsors;



Appointment booking solutions, including through online system and via contact-centre;



Document completeness checks according to the checklists shared by the relevant ROK Embassy;



Management of visa and service fees;



Additional optional services depending on the context and agreed with MOJ and the local ROK Embassies to ensure convenience for visa applicants;



Data inputs and secure electronic transmission of data in the MOJ visa system;



Logistics of travel and visa application supporting documents.

