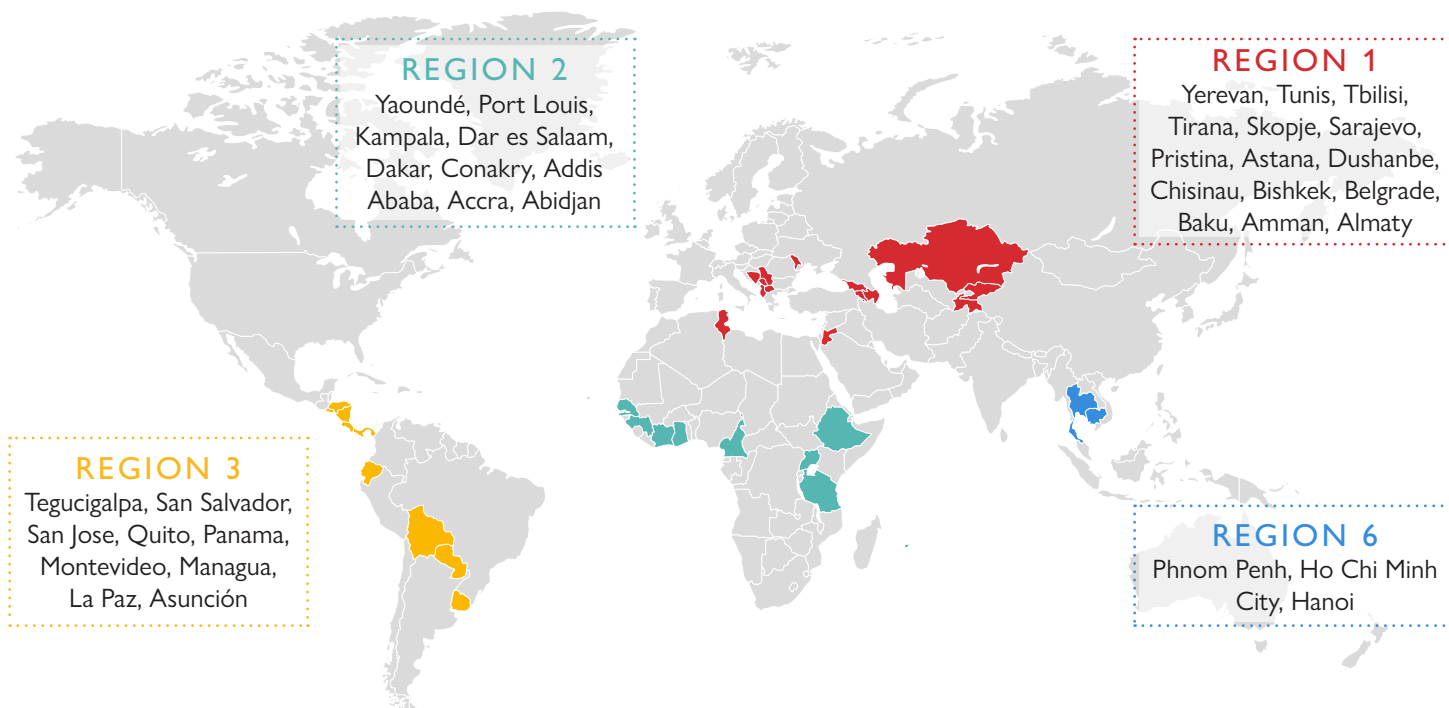# CANADA VISA APPLICATION CENTRE (CVAC) PROGRAMME

IOM OPERATED CVAC NETWORK

IOM operates globally **36 Canada Visa Application Centres (CVAC)** across **four** of the six **Regions** included in the Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) global tender.

REGION 2
Yaoundé, Port Louis, Kampala, Dar es Salaam, Dakar, Conakry, Addis Ababa, Accra, Abidjan

REGION 1
Yerevan, Tunis, Tbilisi, Tirana, Skopje, Sarajevo, Pristina, Astana, Dushanbe, Chisinau, Bishkek, Belgrade, Baku, Amman, Almaty

REGION 3
Tegucigalpa, San Salvador, San Jose, Quito, Panama, Montevideo, Managua, La Paz, Asunción

REGION 6
Phnom Penh, Ho Chi Minh City, Hanoi

VISA TYPES

SHORT TERM VISITS
Visitor visas including Tourism, Family Visit, Business, Temporary Residence permit (including study and work for less than 6 months)

LONG TERM VISITS
Work permit (skilled workers, self-employed, start-up), Family Class Sponsorship, Permanent Residence permits

PROJECT INTRODUCTION

IOM initiated the CVAC programme in 2013 with a private-public partnership with VFS Global. The CVAC is the first project that IOM Immigration and Border Governance implemented at global scale aimed at facilitating the visa application process for all visa types (short and long stays).

IOM currently operates 36 CVAC locations of the VFS Global network and assists over 200,000 beneficiaries per year. Since the beginning of the project, the CVAC have assisted over 1,000,000 beneficiaries.

In support of promoting regular migration pathways, the CVAC programme continues to facilitate application procedures that safeguard the rights and needs of migrants while maintaining States' security and policy considerations. Through the project, IOM ensures timely and well-organized access to migration pathways and to consular services. In addition, the project benefits IRCC Migration and Visa Offices, through the implementation of all administrative processes related to visa processing.

CVAC SOLUTIONS TO BENEFICIARIES AND IRCC

The CVAC project is comprehensive of all solutions that IOM offers for visa application facilitation.

TAILORED FACILITIES

Each of the 36 locations hosts tailored facilities that meet the highest quality, security, and safety standards. The CVAC offices are built in line with the contractual requirements established by IRCC to ensure a flowless journey for the visa applicants. Front and back office areas are separated and secured through access controls and monitored through CCTV. The waiting area space is designed to host all expected visa applicants whose entrance and exit is managed through a queue management system. Layered permissions are given to the CVAC staff members to guarantee security of applicants' property and IOM and IRCC equipment.

APPOINTMENT SCHEDULING

The CVAC receives visa applicants only upon appointment. While before pandemic, applicants were also received as walk-ins, since COVID-19 IRCC has requested mandatory appointment bookings to ensure that the facilities are not overcrowded. Visa applicants are requested to book an appointment online through the CVAC system, upon filling the relevant request online in the IRCC portal. Visa applicants are requested to already select in the online system the visa type and fill basic biographic information and travel document data. The CVAC staff is informed in advance of the visa applicants who will visit the premises and can timely organize allocation of resources.

DATA INPUT AND BIOMETRIC ENROLLMENT

Each visa application must be recorded in the CVAC case management system to ensure reporting and tracking capacity. The CVAC utilizes a dedicated case management system where IOM staff records information such as minimum biographic data, contacts of the applicants, and services selected at the CVAC. Upon completion of the data inputs and verification of the receipt of payment, the visa applicant is received at the biometric booth where the CVAC staff will enroll the biometric data (live picture and fingerprints) through the IRCC system. The biometric enrollment process is regulated by high security processes that include the setup of the booth, the Video Management System and dedicated equipment, as well as identity verification steps that the CVAC staff is trained to conduct. The case management system is used to report on accounting, application processed, and service provided. It includes the possibility of updating the status of one visa application to ensure easy tracking by the visa applicant.

REMOTE INTERVIEW FACILITATION

During the pandemic, IRCC decided to rely on the CVAC network to facilitate the interview process for certain visa applicants whose cases might require a higher level of verification. Selected CVAC locations (Yaounde, Addis, Tirana, Viet Nam, Conakry, and Sal Salvador) were requested to build within the CVAC facilities a dedicated room to be equipped with a workstation and the remote interview (online) solution. The CVAC receives the list of the interview cases by the relevant IRCC Visa Office and contacts the applicant to confirm the time. The applicant and often the family members are accompanied to the interview room, the interview solution is tested and the beneficiaries are left for the interview with IRCC authorities.

INFORMATION PROVISION

The CVAC project facilitates access to accurate, up-to-date, and transparent information improving the capacity of migrants to make informed decisions and ensures standardized support. The customized website provides comprehensive information, in multiple languages, about immigration regulations, eligibility criteria, visa types and processes, and allows beneficiaries to download all requested forms for the visa application. All CVAC locations also provide information through a dedicated contact-centre and chat-bot service.

DOCUMENT COMPLETENESS CHECKS

The CVAC receives all regular visa types and conducts document completeness checks according to the relevant checklist shared by IRCC. While the CVAC staff cannot suggest nor provide guidance on eligibility criteria, IOM personnel must verify that the documentation is in line with the requirements of IRCC and timely inform the visa applicants in case of any missing or incorrect document. Communications and follow-ups with the visa applicants is the responsibility of the CVAC.

DOCUMENT LOGISTICS

The Centers are responsible for the safe storage and management of the travel and visa application supporting documents of the beneficiaries. Depending on the locations and the requested services by the applicants, documents are received in person or via mail. The CVAC delivers or ships to the relevant IRCC Visa Office the applications processed on a schedule that is previously coordinated with the relevant Canadian representation that is in charge of the visa decision. All applications are sealed and tracked through a barcode. Upon visa decision by the IRCC Visa Office, the passport and the visa result (either approval or refusal) are shipped back to or collected at the Visa Office by the CVAC in sealed envelopes. The CVAC will then return the passport and visa decision to the applicants either via courier or in person at the Center.

ASSISTANCE TO VULNERABLE MIGRANTS – UKRAINE RESPONSE

IRCC has implemented several measures to facilitate visa processing for Ukrainian nationals and their family members. Recognizing the efficiency and convenience of the Visa Application Centers, IRCC leveraged the CVAC network to process the Canada Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (CUAET) applications. The CVAC provides priority appointments to the beneficiaries that IRCC has pre-screened and identified as eligible for the CUAET and processes the applications at zero costs for the beneficiaries. The CVAC provides basic information to the selected CUAET cases, in accordance with the regulations of IRCC and refers the visa applicants to IRCC hotlines and support centres.

From March 28, 2022 when the CVAC officially started the new service until the end of April 2023, over 22,000 Ukrainian nationals and their family members have been assisted.