



Q3 2026 · ISSUE 02

The Digital Borders Report

What moved inside the world's digital
entry systems this quarter.

Published by EntryCheck



ABOUT THIS ISSUE

A quarter of movement.

Issue 01 measured the stock: how many countries run some form of digital entry, what it costs, how fast it clears. It was the baseline, and it still is.

Issue 02 measures the flow. Over the third quarter the registry itself changed modestly. What changed underneath it did not. One hundred and twenty-one entry-policy events were logged across fifty-two countries, and almost none of them were a country adopting digital entry for the first time.

They were countries that already had it: migrating to new platforms, launching companion apps, moving pilots onto a mandatory footing, and adjusting who qualifies. The adoption story of the last decade is turning into an operating story, and that is a different thing to track.

Every figure here is drawn from the same live registry and change log as Issue 01, dated, with third-party statistics attributed to their original source.

AR Abdi, Founder

Data as of 30 September 2026.



THE HEADLINES

Key findings.

- 01** The registry grew from 138 countries to 142. That is wider coverage rather than new adoption: the number of countries running an eTA or a digital arrival card did not change at all.
- 02** 121 entry-policy events were logged across 52 countries in three months. The busiest movers were India, Thailand, the European Union and South Africa, none of them adopting digital entry for the first time.
- 03** The clearest pattern of the quarter was compulsion: declarations, arrival cards and authorisations moving from optional to required.
- 04** Not every mandate held. A Kenyan court suspended the insurance requirement attached to the country's eTA.
- 05** The EU's ETIAS slipped again, now expected in 2027. The largest digital border programme in the world spent the quarter not launching.
- 06** Japan published the design of JESTA, a new authorisation for visa-exempt visitors, scheduled for its 2028 fiscal year. Where existing eTAs are multi-entry and valid for years, JESTA requires a separate application for each entry.



PART I · THE MAP

How the map changed.

Coverage against the Issue 01 baseline. Four countries were added this quarter, which widens the registry rather than records new adoption. The number of countries running an eTA or a digital arrival card did not change.

	JUNE	SEPT	
Countries tracked	138	142	+4
Verified	132	136	+4
Issue an eVisa	108	112	+4
Run an eTA	18	18	no change
Digital arrival card	31	31	no change

BY REGION

Africa	48	48	no change
Asia	42	43	+1
Americas	31	33	+2
Europe	12	12	no change
Oceania	5	6	+1

Source: EntryCheck registry. Data as of 30 September 2026.



PART II · THE FLOW

121 changes, 52 countries.

121

entry-policy events logged
between July and September



47

expanded access

40

other change

34

tightened

Almost none of this was a country adopting digital entry for the first time. It was countries that already had it, but changing how it works: migrating to new platforms, launching companion apps, moving pilots onto a mandatory footing, and adjusting who qualifies. The adoption phase is giving way to an operating phase.

HALF OF THESE COUNTRIES CHANGED ONE THING

Half the countries in this count logged a single change, while ten produced nearly half the total. The activity is concentrated, not spread evenly across the map.

Source: EntryCheck change log, 1 July to 30 September 2026. Impact grade is assigned on review.



PART II · THE FLOW

The movers.

Countries with the most recorded activity this quarter.

8	India	Health declaration relaunched, group eVisa, biometric kiosks
8	Thailand	Exemptions revised, arrival card mandated, eGates opened
7	European Union	ETIAS postponed again, now expected 2027
7	South Africa	Declarations mandated, eTA launched, fee introduced
5	Kenya	eTA scope changed, insurance requirement contested
4	New Zealand	Visitor visa applications moved online
3	Japan	JESTA published for the 2028 fiscal year
3	China	Online accommodation registration expanded

Source: EntryCheck change log, Q3 2026.



PART III · THE PATTERN

From optional to required.

The clearest pattern of the quarter was compulsion. Systems that had run as pilots, or as a recommended step, moved onto a mandatory footing. Seventeen of the one hundred and twenty-one logged events described something becoming required.

South Africa	Online travel declarations mandated for all arrivals and departures.
Papua New Guinea	Digital arrival card mandated for all international travellers.
Bolivia	The SIGEMIG online entry form became required for most travellers.
India	Air Suvidha 2.0, a mandatory health declaration, was relaunched in July.
Kazakhstan	QazETA published a phased timeline for becoming a condition of entry.

REQUIRED MEANS BEFORE DEPARTURE

Every system on this page is completed before travel. The border is where it is checked, not where it is done.

Source: EntryCheck change log, Q3 2026.



PART III · CASE STUDY I

A system's first quarter.

South Africa

Seven recorded events between July and August.

3 Jul	Online travel declarations mandated for all arrivals and departures.
19 Jul	Visa-free entry expanded for 22 African nations.
29 Jul	Online electronic travel authorisation launched for Indian visitors.
12 Aug	The electronic travel authorisation officially goes live.
19 Aug	The new system rejects thousands of fraudulent applications.
22 Aug	An R500 fee is introduced for the authorisation.

Seven recorded events in a single quarter, covering the whole lifecycle of a new system: mandate, launch, enforcement, then price. Few countries compress that arc into ninety days, and it is a useful preview of what the next adopters will meet.

Source: EntryCheck change log, Q3 2026.



PART III · CASE STUDY II

A form becomes a prerequisite.

Thailand

The paper arrival card was abolished this quarter and the digital one made mandatory. By September it gated the fastest lane at the border.

Replaced	The paper TM.6 card was abolished. The digital arrival card is now mandatory.
Deadline	It must be completed up to 72 hours before arrival.
Companion	The THIM app entered pilot alongside the card. It does not replace it.
eGates	From 22 September a completed card is required to use the automated gates at Suvarnabhumi.
Next	A proposed 450 baht arrival fee is expected to be collected through the same channels.

THE FAST LANE IS NOW CONDITIONAL

Digital entry did not remove a step here. It added the conditions under which a step can be skipped.

Source: EntryCheck change log, Q3 2026. eGate detail as published by thaigov.go.th.



PART IV · THE PIPELINE

Announced now, live later.

Not everything logged this quarter has happened yet. These are the announcements that carry a future date, and the date is the useful part: it is what a traveller, an airline or a booking platform has to plan around.

Japan	JESTA, requiring a separate application for each entry, is scheduled for the fiscal year ending 31 March 2029.
New Zealand	From 1 October 2026, paper applications end for 24 visitor visa categories and the transit visa.
Kazakhstan	QazETA is in pilot, with a phased timeline published for making it a condition of entry.
Thailand	A 450 baht arrival fee is expected to be collected through the digital entry channels, date not set.
Egypt	From 1 January 2027 the single-entry visa fee rises to \$33, and the digital visa on arrival to \$39.
European Union	ETIAS is now expected in 2027, at €20, valid three years, with no biometrics collected at application.

HALF OF THESE CARRY NO FIRM DATE

Kazakhstan's timeline is phased, Thailand's fee has no start date, and ETIAS has moved before. An announcement and a date have not been finalised.

Source: EntryCheck change log, Q3 2026. Dates as published by the relevant authority.



PART IV · OUTLOOK

What to watch.

Pilots become conditions of entry

Several authorisations are running in pilot with a published timeline. The question for the next quarter is which of them become a requirement, and how much notice travellers get.

Authorisation moves to one per entry

Japan's JESTA, scheduled for its 2028 fiscal year, is built around a separate application for each entry, where existing eTAs are multi-entry and valid for years. Officers will be able to omit the landing stamp and send entry details by email, a change that reaches Japan's tax-free shopping rules.

Declarations spread faster than visas

The digital declaration and the arrival card are moving through more countries than eVisas are, because they apply to every traveller rather than only those who need a visa.

Enforcement becomes the story

One system rejected thousands of fraudulent applications this quarter. As these platforms mature, what they catch becomes as newsworthy as what they issue.



PART V · OUR READERSHIP

ChatGPT is now third.

16%

of new visitors arrive from ChatGPT, roughly three times the share from Bing



43%

direct

32%

Google

16%

ChatGPT

They arrive with a narrower question than search visitors, and they rarely come back. That is the shape of the service working rather than failing: someone is sent to confirm a single link, confirms it, and leaves.

WHERE IT IS READ

Four continents and seven languages this quarter, with Europe, Africa and Asia the most active regions.

Source: Google Analytics, entrycheck.org, 27 June to 24 September 2026.



PART V · OUR READERSHIP

How readers arrive.

Issue 01 noted that AI assistants had begun citing EntryCheck. Over the third quarter they became one of its largest sources of new readers.

Direct	43% of new visitors, the largest single source.
Google	32%, and the largest search source.
ChatGPT	16%, ranking third overall and roughly three times Bing.
Returning	Almost all traffic is first-time, at 98% of visitors.
Reach	Four continents and seven languages, led by Birmingham, London, Casablanca and Dhaka.

VERIFICATION IS INCREASINGLY BECOMING IMPORTANT

98% of visitors this quarter were first-time. A check made once a trip does not build an audience. That behaviour belongs inside a booking flow, not beside it.

Source: Google Analytics, entrycheck.org, 27 June to 24 September 2026.



PART V · REFERENCE

Methodology & sources.

Registry figures are drawn from EntryCheck's directory of official government entry portals, covering 142 countries. Each portal is verified against the EntryCheck Standard, which checks government ownership, domain authenticity, SSL, directness, and records the date it was last reviewed.

Change figures are drawn from the EntryCheck change log for 1 July to 30 September 2026: 121 recorded entry-policy events across 52 countries. Each event carries a date, a country and an impact grade assigned on review. Third-party statistics are attributed to their original source throughout.

Comparisons to June refer to Issue 01, whose data was current as of 30 June 2026. Where a count is unchanged, it is shown as unchanged rather than omitted.

Not every listed portal is working. Some are announced before the portal opens. Others were serving and have stopped. Either way the country stays listed with its official address, tagged Unverified until it can be confirmed again.

HOW TO CITE

EntryCheck, The Digital Borders Report, Issue 02, Q3 2026.
entrycheck.org/reports

Data as of 30 September 2026.



PART V · REFERENCE

Important notice.

NOT ADVICE

This report is published for information only. It is not legal, immigration or travel advice, and it does not state whether any individual requires a visa or authorisation. Entry requirements vary by nationality and change frequently. Always confirm your requirements with the official government portal for your destination before travelling or making payment.

FEES AND CURRENCY

Fees shown are government fees, set and collected by the relevant authorities. EntryCheck does not charge for, process or submit applications. Amounts shown in USD are converted from local currencies at rates current as of 30 September 2026 and are indicative only.

INDEPENDENCE

EntryCheck is an independent service and is not affiliated with, endorsed by, or acting on behalf of any government or public authority. Country names, portal names and trademarks belong to their respective owners.

NO WARRANTY

Information is provided as is, without warranty of any kind. Every figure is verified and dated at the time of publication, but EntryCheck accepts no liability for decisions made in reliance on this report.

© 2026 EntryCheck. Figures may be quoted with attribution to EntryCheck, The Digital Borders Report, Issue 02, Q3 2026.



Travel's verification layer.

EntryCheck maintains an independent registry of the official government eVisa, eTA and digital arrival card portals.

142 countries as of 30 September 2026

STAY UPDATED

Sign up so that you can be notified when the next issue is out.

entrycheck.org/reports

USE THE REGISTRY

The same registry, as an API. Checking a portal is free and needs no key.

entrycheck.org/api