

BUSINESS FACILITATION

In this section of the Axis Finance Act Series 2023, we will run through some of the recent noteworthy measures introduced and amendments made to the law, pursuant to the finance act, relating to working and living in Mauritius.

Mauritius has earned the reputation of being a destination of choice to both work and live owing to its conducive business environment, socio-economic infrastructure, legislative structure among several other compelling reasons. Year on year, new measures are introduced or amendments are made to the law to make the jurisdiction even more appealing to non-citizens.

One of the amendments made to the **Non-Citizens (Employment Restriction) Act** with a view to streamline applications for work permits and move away from manual submissions is for those applications to be made online henceforth, more precisely on the national Electronic licensing platform (“NELS”). It is also a key initiative to improve the investment and doing business climate in Mauritius.

An application for work permit will be deemed to have been approved and an electronic work permit certificate will be issued by NELS if no response has been obtained from the Ministry of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training within 30 working days from the date of the complete application, unless the applicant has received, during that period, a notification from the ministry that the application is still under consideration.

Several important amendments have also been brought to the **Economic Development Board Act**, as follows:



The minimum salary for an occupation permit holder under the professional category has been reduced from Rs 60,000 to Rs 30,000, irrespective of the sector. Initially it was Rs 30,000 only for ICT, BPO, pharmaceutical manufacturing, Food processing, fund accounting and compliance sectors.



Secondly, Obtaining an occupation permit will no longer be conditional on having a local bank account. Accordingly, the criteria for the obtention of a residence permit for retired non-citizens has been amended such that instead of submitting evidence of transfer of funds to the retired non-citizens' local bank account, the following will need to be submitted:

- (a) a certified bank statement from the retired non-citizen's country of origin or residence showing a minimum amount of USD 18, 000; or
- (b) a guaranteed minimum income of USD 1,500 per month.



Additionally, The initial investment requirement of USD 50,000 for an occupation permit holder under the category of investor and USD 35,000 for an occupation permit holder under the category of self-employed, are now exempt at the time of issuance of the permit. They will be required to submit:

- (a) a certified bank statement from his/her country of origin or residence, showing sufficient proof of funds; and
- (b) a written undertaking to transfer USD 50k from abroad into his/her bank account in Mauritius within 60 days of issuance of his permits. Post monitoring will be carried out.



Mauritius had opened its doors for the job market to foreign students who have studied in a tertiary education institution in the country. Accordingly, such students are required to submit an application for 'The young professional occupation permit'. Until recent amendments, it was restricted to certain fields only such as artificial intelligence, biotechnology, fintech, robotics, financials services and IT. It is now open to all fields.

Moreover, An important amendment made to the Immigration act is that a retired non-citizen and his family will be granted a residence permit on the acquisition of a property in a PDS project relating to senior living provided that:

- (a) The acquisition price exceeds USD 200,000 at the time of signature of the title deed; and
- (b) The non-citizen is aged above 50 years old at the time of application.

The status of resident shall remain valid as long as the buyer holds the property.

Finally, to the **Non-citizen (property restriction) act**, two amendments made are that:

A resident non-citizen can purchase or acquire, with the approval of the minister, a residential property, outside of the approved schemes, provided that:

- (a) the non-citizen has not acquired the status of resident by virtue of him being the spouse, dependent child parent or other dependent of the holder of a permit under the immigration act 2022;
- (b) only one property is purchased or acquired;
- (c) the purchase price is not less than USD 500,000; and
- (d) any duty leviable is paid

Non-citizens are also allowed to acquire residential properties in a sustainable city, similar to Smart City Scheme. Accordingly, a non-citizen and his family will be granted a residence permit on the acquisition of property of a minimum price of USD 375,000 under the Sustainable City Scheme. The status of resident will remain valid as long as the buyer holds the property.

Establishing yourself in a new jurisdiction is seamless if you have the right information and right partner for assistance. At Axis, we can assist you in finding the right option that suits your lifestyle and objectives and applying for or renewing any of the aforementioned permits in Mauritius, free consultations are available on request, contact us on Info@axis.mu.

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