



28 April 2022

Utkarsh

fyi-request-21986-52dd009c@requests.fyi.org.nz

DOIA 2223-1954

Tēnā koe Utkarsh

Thank you for your correspondence of 3 March 2023 to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information regarding applications in the Skilled Migrant Category (SMC):-

Kindly provide the information with respect to the SMC applications selected and processed after the EOI process:

- 1. What is the total number of applications received after ITA being issued through the EOI process since Nov 2022?*
- 2. How many SMC applications were pending before 9 Nov 2022?*
- 3. How many applications have been received against these ITA issued from Nov 2022 to March 2023 (please add in the latest selection i.e. March 2023, in your response)?*
- 4. Has INZ started processing these applications?*
- 5. Please provide a detailed breakdown of the number of SMC applications received, pending allocations, under processing, and decided upon.*
- 6. Among the SMC applications in Question 5 above, please provide a detailed breakdown of the applications accepted for priority processing and general queue applications received, pending allocation, under processing, and decided upon.*
- 7. How many of these applications :-*
 - a) have a high median wage as required by INZ.*
 - b) have an occupation registration required for priority processing.*
 - c) How many of these applications have requested priority processing? Please provide the details of applications accepted for priority processing and the grounds for acceptance.*
 - d) Are there any SMC applications accepted for priority processing for reasons other than INZ operation manual 16.1? Please provide details on the grounds of acceptance, if possible.*
- 8. Can INZ provide details on the number of SMC applications in the general queue?*
- 9. How many SMC applications from General Queue submitted after 03 Dec 2022 have been allocated a CO?*
- 10. Can INZ confirm that no SMC applications submitted after 3 Dec 2022 have been assigned a CO from the general queue as of the date of response?*
- 11. How many applications has INZ prioritized in accordance with NZ operation manual 16.1?*
- 12. Is INZ prioritizing all the applications in accordance with NZ operation manual 16.1 where occupational registration is required or only the one's where an application is made for priority?*

Our response

- 1. What is the total number of applications received after ITA being issued through the EOI process since Nov 2022?*

As at 4 April 2023, the total number of Skilled Migrant Category (SMC) applications received since 9 November 2022 was 3,877.
- 2. How many SMC applications were pending before 9 Nov 2022?*

As at 8 November 2022, there were 1,107 SMC applications on hand.

3. How many applications have been received against these ITA issued from Nov 2022 to March 2023 (please add in the latest selection i.e. March 2023, in your response)?”

As at 4 April 2023, there have been no applications received from Invitations to Apply (ITA) sent out from the 9 November 2022 draw. The last ITAs sent out from which Immigration New Zealand (INZ) has received applications was 18 March 2020. For context, all existing applications that were submitted before April 2020 have been allocated to case officers for assessment.

4. Has INZ started processing these applications?”

We can confirm that INZ has started processing the applications referred to in the answer to questions one and two.

5. Please provide a detailed breakdown of the number of SMC applications received, pending allocations, under processing, and decided upon”

A detailed breakdown is provided as requested in the table at Appendix A. As at 4 April, there were 22 applications in the Priority SMC queue.

6. Among the SMC applications in Question 5 above, please provide a detailed breakdown of the applications accepted for priority processing and general queue applications received, pending allocation, under processing, and decided upon”

As at 13 April 2022, of the 22 priority applications, 10 had been approved, one was under assessment, six had been allocated to a case officer for processing, four were waiting for further information from the applicant, and one had been withdrawn.

7. How many of these applications :-

a) have a high median wage as required by INZ.

b) have an occupation registration required for priority processing.

Of the 10 applications which had been approved, all met the remuneration threshold, all had job offers in areas where there are regional skills shortages, all had a recognised qualification in the relevant job skill. Only one had a job offer paying over twice the median wage.

c) How many of these applications have requested priority processing? Please provide the details of applications accepted for priority processing and the grounds for acceptance

We understand this part of your request to relate to the 4,984 total applications identified in the answer to questions one and two.

This part of your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Act as the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research. To provide information on which of these applications requested priority and on what grounds, would require the manual cross referencing of applications across two systems which would take significant resources to do.

In accordance with section 18A(1)(a) of the Act, we have considered whether fixing a charge under section 15 or extending the time limit under section 15(a) would enable the request to be granted but it is our opinion that it would not.

d) Are there any SMC applications accepted for priority processing for reasons other than INZ operation manual 16.1? Please provide details on the grounds of acceptance, if possible"

INZ prioritises applications in line with instructions. However, INZ has updated its process to respond to escalation requests for urgent allocation for employment related visas (and associated family members) for both temporary work visas and skilled resident visas. A request for escalation will be considered against the following criteria:-

- compelling personal circumstances
- humanitarian factors, and
- matters of national interest.

Priority processing can be requested using the Employment Visa Escalation (EVE) framework. You can find more information regarding this at the following link:-

<https://www.immigration.govt.nz/knowledgebase/kb-question/kb-question-1195-1>

8. Can INZ provide details on the number of SMC applications in the general queue?"

As at 4 April 2023, there were 2,398 SMC applications in the general queue. As explained in question three, these are applications which have been received since the category reopened in November 2022.

9. How many SMC applications from the General Queue submitted after 03 Dec 2022 have been allocated a CO?"

As at 4 April, of the SMC applications submitted since 3 December 2022, 453 had been allocated to a case officer for processing.

10. Can INZ confirm that no SMC applications submitted after 3 Dec 2022 have been assigned a CO from the general queue as of the date of response?"

Of the SMC applications submitted after 3 December 2022, as at 4 April, 453 had been assigned to a case officer.

11. How many applications has INZ prioritized in accordance with NZ operation manual 16.1?"

As noted in the response to question seven, as at 13 April 2022, of the 22 priority applications, 10 had been approved, and all met the occupational registration requirement. SMC applications where job offers met the conditions set out in instruction A16.1 are prioritised.

12. Is INZ prioritizing all the applications in accordance with NZ operation manual 16.1 where occupational registration is required or only the one's where an application is made for priority?"

As noted in the response to questions seven and 11, INZ prioritises applications in line with instructions. However, INZ has updated its process to respond to escalation requests for urgent allocation for employment related visas (and associated family members) for both temporary work visas and skilled resident visas. Priority processing can be requested using the Employment Visa Escalation (EVE) framework as outlined above.

For any further information relating to the skilled residence data, please refer to the link below for the most up-to-date information. This is updated fortnightly and provides the most up to date information: -

<https://www.immigration.govt.nz/new-zealand-visas/waiting-for-a-visa/how-long-it-takes-to-process-your-visa-application/smc-and-rfw-timeframe-information>

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of the Ministry's response to your request, in accordance with section 28(3) of the Act. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your request or this response, please contact INZOIAs@mbie.govt.nz

Nāku iti nei, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Owen', with a large loop at the end.

Richard Owen
General Manager (Acting), Border and Visa Operations
Immigration New Zealand

Appendix A

Skilled Migrant applications as at 4 April 2023

Decision type	Skilled Migrant Application Status	Number
Being processed	Allocated to a Case Officer	453
	General Queue	2,398
	Priority SMC Queue	22
	Other Queues or NADO Online	1,206
Approved	Approved	679
Declined	Declined Failed Instructions	93
	Withdrawn no fee refund	44
	Cancelled - data entry error	1
	Replaced by new application	1
	Withdrawn - replaced by 2021 Resident Visa application	30
	Withdrawn fee refunded	22
	Other decision	34