



18 July 2023

Muhammad

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DOIA 2223-2960

Tēnā koe Muhammad

Thank you for your email of 19 June 2023 to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

“How many SMC Applications are currently waiting for a decision? I need to know the applications who have been assigned to a case officer but a decision hasn’t been made. Please divide the list into two groups:

1- How many onshore SMC Applicants are waiting for a decision on their application who lodged their completed applications before March 2020?

2- How many onshore SMC applicants are waiting for a decision who lodged their completed applications after Nov 2022?

3- What is the longest processing time of a SMC application from January 2020 to date? It would be great if you could mention how many applications took more than 40 months to process.

4- When INZ will disclose the processing time of SMC applications publicly? It is important to know the processing time because it will help future applicants in determining their expectations.

5- Is there any timeframe when INZ will complete the processing of onshore SMC applications? Or it is still unknown like 3 years ago.

6- How many cases officers are currently working on SMC applications? And what is the basis of this allocation?

7- What is the new expected launch date of SMC6?”

Our Response

Question 1



As at 24 June 2023, there were 121 Skilled Migrant Category Resident Visa (SMC) applicants with applications allocated and in progress that had submitted their applications before 1 March 2020, and were onshore as at 24 June 2023.

As at 24 June 2023, there were 86 SMC applicants with applications allocated and in progress that had submitted their applications onshore before 1 March 2020. Please note, these applicants could be either onshore or offshore despite submitting their applications onshore.

Question 2

As at 24 June 2023, there were 4,494 SMC applicants with applications allocated and in progress that had submitted their applications after 1 November 2022, and were onshore as at 24 June 2023.

As at 24 June 2023, there were 4,813 SMC applicants with applications allocated and in progress that had submitted their applications onshore after 1 November 2022. Please note, these applicants could be either onshore or offshore despite submitting their applications onshore.

Question 3

For applications submitted between 1 January 2020 and 24 June 2023, the longest time taken to process a SMC application was 905 weekdays (excluding public holidays).

Within the above timeframe, 102 SMC applications took more than 40 months to process.

Question 4

It is our intention to publish the processing times for SMC applications lodged after November 2022. It is expected that it will take a couple of weeks from the end of each month for the processing times to be updated on the Immigration New Zealand (INZ) website.

Although the processing times were previously published on the INZ website, they were removed following feedback from INZ customers, which had indicated that the figures published did not reflect realistic processing timeframes and may place licenced immigration advisors and immigration lawyers in difficult situations with their clientele. It was decided that the timeframes would not return to the website until they more accurately represented processing times. The inaccuracy was due to the period when we were unable to process these visas during the covid lockdown and border closure periods.

Please refer to the table below for the processing timeframes for SMC applications in weekdays (excluding public holidays) as at 24 June 2023.

50% completed (in weekdays)	90% completed (in weekdays)
86	873

Question 5

All SMC applications lodged prior to March 2020 have now been allocated to immigration officers for assessment. You may refer to the table above to review the processing timeframes as at 24 June 2023. Please note that the time it takes to decide an application also depends on a number of factors, including third-party checks and, in some cases, waiting for information to be provided by an applicant. It is not uncommon for some applications to have longer processing times than others due to their relative complexity.

Question 6

There were 49 immigration officers processing SMC applications as at 21 June 2023. The allocation of this workforce can change based on INZ visa processing priorities.

Question 7

On 21 June 2023, the former Minister of Immigration announced that, from 9 October 2023, various changes would be made to the existing settings of SMC. More information about these can be found on the INZ website:

<https://www.immigration.govt.nz/new-zealand-visas/preparing-a-visa-application/living-in-new-zealand-permanently/new-zealand-skilled-residence-pathways/changes-to-the-skilled-migrant-category-resident-visa>

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. 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 noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Carley', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Michael Carley

(Acting) Principal Advisor, Visa Operations, on behalf of the Chief Operating Officer
Immigration New Zealand