

## **New BOI Center Supports Non-BOI Companies in Bringing Specialists to Work in Thailand**

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The Thai Board of Investment (BOI) established a new Strategic Talent Center (STC) on July 3, 2017, to provide assistance to private Thai and foreign companies that are seeking to recruit highly skilled Thai and foreign specialists in the fields of science and technology to support their businesses in Thailand.

The BOI will act as the coordinator for the STC, with support provided by a number of other government agencies involved in science and technology in Thailand, such as the Ministry of Digital Economy and Society, the National Research Council of Thailand, the National Science and Technology Development Agency, the National Science Technology and Innovation Policy Office, and the Thailand Research Fund.

STC services are available to all private companies, regardless of whether they are under BOI promotion or not. Moreover, non-BOI companies are entitled to be exempt from the 4:1 ratio of local Thai employees to foreign employees.

Some of the key services provided by the STC are outlined below:

### **1) Providing Qualification Recognition for Foreign Specialists**

Employers who wish to employ a foreign specialist should first complete an application and submit supporting documents online to the STC to obtain qualification recognition for the foreign employee.

Upon receiving the online application, the STC will forward the information to the relevant government agency for consideration, which will take at least 20 working days. If the application is approved, the STC will be notified and will proceed with registering the foreign specialist's qualifications in their database, in addition to informing the specialist's employer.

### **2) Providing Letters of Support for Visa Applications Oversea**

Once a foreign specialist's qualification is recognized within the STC network, his/her employer can submit a hardcopy application to request a letter of support from the STC for the specialist's use in applying for a non-immigrant business ("Non-B") visa at a Royal Thai Embassy or Consulate-General overseas.

The STC will usually prepare a letter of support within one working day, and will inform the employer to collect the letter and send it abroad to the recognized specialist

With the STC letter of support, the specialist will not be required to request a pre-approval work permit from the Department of Employment, and/or provide copies of the employer's corporate and tax documents, to apply for a Non-B visa at a Royal Thai Embassy or Consulate-General overseas.

### **3) Facilitating Applications to Bring Foreign Specialists to Thailand**

Once a Royal Thai Embassy or Consulate-General overseas has granted a Non-B visa to a recognized foreign specialist, the employer can submit a hardcopy application (forms Kor. Kor. Tor. 2 and Kor. Kor. Tor. 3) and supporting documents to the STC to bring the specialist to Thailand.

If the application is approved, the STC will notify the Department of Employment, the Immigration Bureau, and the foreign specialist's employer within two working days.

The employer can then notify their foreign specialist to travel to Thailand to apply for a work permit and Non-B visa extension at the One-Stop Service Center within 15 days of the approval date. Once extended, the foreign specialist's visa will be valid for up to one year, subject to renewal before the visa expiry date.

After October 1, 2018, the entire process for non-BOI companies to request letters of support for foreign specialists' visa applications, and submit applications to bring foreign specialists to Thailand will be migrated online to the BOI's Single Window System for Visas and Work Permits, enabling applications to be submitted and notifications to be made electronically.

It is expected that the STC will play a key role in facilitating private sector participation in the government's plan to transform Thailand into an innovation and technology-driven economy by providing important recruitment services to seek out highly skilled Thai and foreign specialists who possess the necessary expertise in science and technology to help drive Thailand's future economic development.

This summary is designed to provide general information only and is not offered as specific advice on any particular matter.

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