



IMMIGRATION REGULATORY UPDATE

NOVEMBER 22, 2023

Our Firm is pleased to provide updates regarding the latest regulatory and compliance initiatives underway at the Federal Ministry of Interior. Kindly find the updates below:



MINISTRY OF
INTERIOR

A. AUTHORIZED AGENT OF THE FEDERAL MINISTRY OF INTERIOR

In a significant move towards streamlining administrative processes, the Federal Ministry of Interior (“FMI” or the “Ministry”) has introduced a comprehensive licensing regime for agents. This initiative of the Ministry aims to enhance efficiency and accountability in various governmental processes within the FMI. The Ministry invited Expressions of Interest (“Eoi”) for the issuance of licenses to qualified entities to act as authorized agents of the FMI in processing vital services such as business permits, expatriate quotas, statutory marriages, citizenship and residence permits, public places of worship licensing, and inspectorate services. By entrusting these services to licensed agents, the FMI seeks to expedite and enhance service delivery while maintaining higher standards of compliance.

Expression of Interest and Shortlisting Process

Following the FMI's call for Expressions of Interest and our Firm's satisfaction of all requirements, we are elated to share that our Firm was successfully shortlisted as one of the few selected entities which has signed the License Agreement with the Ministry to provide services in line with the new licensing regime.

As part of the shortlisting process, key representatives of the Firm participated in a training program organised by the Ministry during which comprehensive insights into the intricacies of the new licensing regime and its operational nuances were provided. Successful completion of the training assures of our readiness to excel in this role when the Ministry commences full implementation of this regime.

B. IMPLEMENTATION OF PENALTIES FOR FAILURE TO SUBMIT MONTHLY EXPATRIATE QUOTA RETURNS PROMPTLY

The FMI, in a recent Public Notice noted that the Ministry will commence full implementation of penalties for late filing of monthly expatriate quota returns from December 2023. A company is required to obtain Expatriate Quota approval from the FMI where it is desirous of employing expatriate personnel. Companies that utilize expatriate quota positions are required to submit monthly returns covering details of the expatriates, together with their Nigerian understudies on the Ministry's customised portal known as "**Ecitibiz**".

The applicable penalties as highlighted in the Public Notice are as follows:

1. A company that submits its monthly expatriate quota returns after the first ten (10) days of the following month will be liable to pay One Hundred Thousand Naira (NGN100,000);
2. A company that submits its monthly expatriate quota returns after the first twenty (20) days of the following month will be liable to pay One Hundred and Fifty Thousand Naira (NGN150,000); and
3. A company that submits its monthly expatriate quota returns after the first twenty-five (25) days of the following month will be liable to pay Two Hundred Thousand Naira (NGN200,000).



Companies that are currently utilizing Expatriate Quota positions are therefore advised to take the necessary steps to ensure compliance with the foregoing to avoid accompanying sanctions with non-compliance.

Banwo & Ighodalo possesses the requisite expertise and competence to provide legal advisory services on immigration matters including the acquisition of essential permits, visas, certificates and licenses as mandated by Nigerian law.

This newsletter is only intended to provide general information on the subject matter and does not by itself create a client/attorney relationship between readers and our Law Firm or serve as legal advice. We are available to provide specialist legal advice on the readers' specific circumstances when they arise.

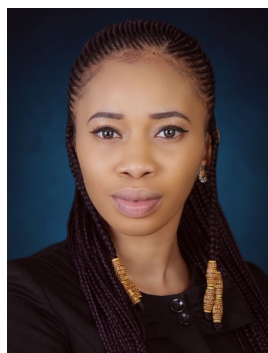
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