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SiMODiSA Policy Task Team – Increasing the attractiveness of the SA Business Visa

The attraction and retention of entrepreneurial talent to and in South Africa has the potential to significantly benefit the country's economy. SA has a functional version of this concept in the form of the business visa. We are still able to attract international entrepreneurs despite South Africa being outperformed in attracting the scarce skills and talents of international entrepreneurs, the country's political uncertainties and an arduous process of applying for a business visa.

There are many challenges with the SA Business Visa policy. In 2016, the Department of Home Affairs noted that "South Africa has not yet put in place adequate policies, strategies, institutions and capacity for attracting, recruiting and retaining international migrants with the necessary skills and resources". A 2018 report by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) shows that the situation is still the same today; noting that South is unable to find the skills it needs in the quantities as stipulated by its critical skills list.

In our 2014 Policy White Paper, SiMODiSA identified the following core challenges in regards to the SA Business Visa:

- Red-tape & delays in applying
- Unpredictability - lack of clarity in the processing system
- Limitations with regards to timeframe of the Visa (5 years)
- Lack of proper marketing and information about the visa
- Application is through foreign embassies & not in person
- General perception that the SA economy is not open to foreign skills and entrepreneurs.

In the same paper, SiMODiSA proposed recommendations to improve the attractiveness and relevance of the SA Business Visa. These were:

- Offer a five-year visa for entrepreneurs who meet the capital-funding and job-creation requirements (the visa duration was increased from 2 to 3 years in the 2014 regulations to Immigration Act of 2002).
- Allow up to five applicants per venture to apply together, and accept applications online / by courier, but collections in person.
- Process applications timeously through a single online interface, with email tracking through the processing phases.
- Include foreign graduates from a South African tertiary institution along with the National Interest sectors as eligible for reduced capital investments.
- Allow staggered job-creation requirements, of 30% local employees by two years, and 60% within five years.

SiMODiSA START-UP

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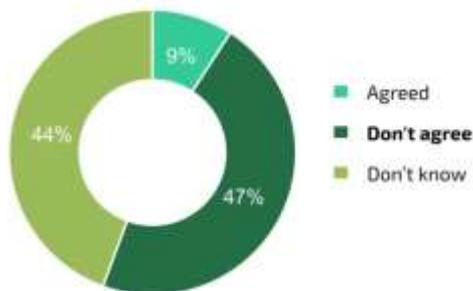
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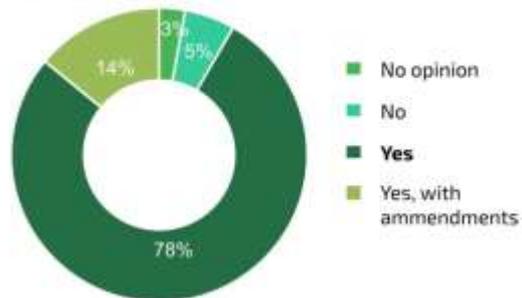
- Actively market the visa overseas as an exciting opportunity for entrepreneurs to start promising new ventures in South Africa.

Our 2018 Industry Report on policy progress revealed that no visible changes have been made to the regulations and criteria specific to the SA Business Visa. The constraint of attracting foreign talent to South Africa remains a critical barrier. This has necessitated the need to create a policy task team to address these constraints and advocate for improvements in this area.

IT'S EASIER FOR GLOBAL ENTREPRENEURS TO GET AN SA BUSINESS VISA...



IS THIS POLICY RECOMMENDATION STILL NECESSARY?



Source: SiMODiSA 2018 Industry Report

In March 2020, SiMODiSA created a SA Business Visas Policy Task Team consisting of SiMODiSA members. The task team will consult with organizations and individuals who are experts in this area and are affected by the unattractiveness of the business visa; and make recommendations on measures needed to improve the policy. The recommendations will then be presented to government and the private sector in an effort to collaborate with either/both on improving the policy area.

The task team will be led by Amina Williams, Entrepreneur & Chief Partnerships Officer at the Pan African Chamber of Commerce. Members of the task team include Matsi Modise, SiMODiSA Vice Chairperson; Mckevin Ayaba, Southern Africa Start-Up Awards CEO; and Johnny Muteba, Pan African Chamber of Commerce CEO.

We invite individuals and organizations who wish to be involved in the task team to reach out to the SiMODiSA Operations Manager, Tumi Makhubele via email on tumi@simodisa.org.