

GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN  
MINISTRY OF COMMERCE

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No. 3(1)/2022-T0-I

Islamabad, the 03<sup>rd</sup> July, 2023

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: POLICY GUIDELINES FOR SELECTION, APPOINTMENT AND POSTING OF TRADE AND INVESTMENT OFFICERS (BS-18 TO BS-21) IN PAKISTAN'S TRADE MISSIONS ABROAD

The undersigned is directed to refer to the subject noted above and to state that in order to reform Pakistan's Trade Offices abroad for enabling them to deal with trade challenges in a changed geo-strategic environment and to ensure efficient use of resources, the Prime Minister has been pleased to approve the following policy guidelines for appointment of Trade and Investment Officers (TIOs):

**1) Selection Process:**

- a) The Ministry of Commerce shall ensure that selection process is transparent, and merit based. Transparency and merit shall be clearly visible from the processes, procedures and practices that are adopted for selection.
- b) All posts of Trade and Investment Officers, except Ambassador WTO-Geneva (BS-21/22), Economic Minister-Brussels (BS-20), two posts of Trade and Investment Counsellors (TIC)-WTO, Geneva (BS-19) and Director (ECO)-Tehran (BS-19), that are vacant and available or are likely to become vacant and available within next twelve (12) months shall be advertised along with the eligibility criteria (**Annex-A**) to invite applications.

c) The selection process for Ambassador WTO-Geneva (BS-21/22), Economic Minister-Brussels (BS-20), two posts of Trade and Investment Counsellors (TIC)-WTO, Geneva (BS-19) and Director (ECO)-Tehran (BS-19) will be done through Special Selection Board (SSB).

- d) Excluding the five (05) posts mentioned in para 1(c), a minimum of 40%, 50% and 60% of the vacancies in any particular selection cycle will be reserved for BS-20, BS-19 and BS-18 officers of CTG respectively. In case the sufficient number of CTG officers cannot qualify to fill these reserved vacancies, the unfilled ones will go to general pool.
- e) After receipt of applications subsequent to advertisement of the posts, short listing for all applications shall be done by a Committee constituted by the Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, according to eligibility criteria laid down in these guidelines.

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- f) In order to utilize their contacts and networking, candidates from amongst the Pakistani Diaspora and the Private Sector (Pakistani nationals) shall be eligible for appointment, subject to fulfilment of criteria laid down in these guidelines. There shall be a quota of 10% for such candidates in the posts of Trade and Investment Officers in Pakistan's Missions abroad. For the purpose of this policy, Pakistani Diaspora shall be considered for countries of their foreign nationality/residency only.

In case of non-availability of suitable candidates for reserved positions of private sector/Pakistani diaspora, the qualified public sector candidates shall be considered against the 10% quota in order of merit.

- g) The shortlisted candidates shall appear in a Specialized Test having following components:
- i. Written Test of 100 marks related to academic background, professional knowledge and analytical skills.
  - ii. Psychometric test of the candidates qualifying written test. Separate marks are not awarded for the psychological assessment. The psychometric report shall be placed before the interview board for consideration. In case of Government servants, evaluation reports of mandatory trainings (MCMC, SMC, NMC/NDU) shall also be placed before the interview board. If a candidate remains absent in the psychological assessment, he/she shall not be allowed to appear for interview.
  - iii. The Written as well as psychometric tests shall be conducted by LUMS/IBA in selected city/cities of Pakistan and designated Pakistan's Missions abroad (for Pakistani Diaspora) as decided by MoC. The Overall weightage of the written test/ assessment shall be 60% and passing marks will be 60%.

h) The final evaluation of qualifying candidates shall be done through interview by an Interview Board headed by the Commerce Minister (or Advisor to Prime Minister on Commerce), constituted with approval of the Prime Minister. The weightage of the interview shall be 40%.

The composition of the Interview Board shall be:

- i. Commerce Minister / Advisor on Commerce (Chairman)
- ii. Secretary Commerce
- iii. Secretary Foreign Affairs
- iv. Secretary Establishment Division
- v. Secretary Board of Investment
- vi. Chief Executive TDAP
- vii. An expert from private sector appointed by Ministry of Commerce

The candidates from the Pakistani Diaspora living abroad who have cleared the written test, would be interviewed via video link at the designated Pakistani Missions.

  
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- i) The Interview Board shall interview the candidates on the following parameters:

Parameter	Maximum Marks
i. Leadership Qualities	30
ii. Interpersonal and Communication skills [Interpersonal skills 15 marks; Communication skills 10 marks, knowledge of relevant foreign language; 05 marks]	30
iii. Domain Knowledge	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>


- j) Successful candidates shall (in order of their merit, comprising of summation of scores in written test and interview) be given the option to choose the station of their choice from amongst available stations. Preference will be given to those candidates who have knowledge of foreign language related to the vacant posts.
- k) The final list of candidates recommended by the Interview Board shall be submitted (in order of merit) to the Prime Minister for approval.
- l) A waiting list of the candidates shall also be submitted (in order of merit) along with the list of the candidates recommended for appointment for approval of Prime Minister. This list shall be used to fill vacancies which arise due to poor performance of the TIO or if the selected TIO does not accept the provisional offer of appointment within seven working days of the offer letter or does not join / assume charge of the post within 90 days (excluding delays due to official processes like issuance of visa etc.) or if a TIO returns earlier than his/her tenure on special grounds or is unable to serve.

**2) Training:**

After selection, a training program for a period and manner designed by Ministry of Commerce shall be held at Pakistan Institute of Trade and Development (PITAD). During the training, the TIOs (designate) shall be attached with private sector/trade bodies, to understand the specific issues/problems relating to export of goods/services to their respective countries of posting.

**3) Tenure:**

- a) The tenure of TIOs shall be set as three years only (this shall also apply to officers who are currently on posting abroad). A maximum of two tenures of postings in Pakistan's Missions abroad shall be allowed during the entire career of the officer concerned with an intervening period of 3 years (on the closing date of submission of applications) between two tenures; however, for officers of CTG, the maximum limit of tenure shall be three (03) and the intervening period shall be two (2) years.

  
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- b) In order to make use of the experience of erstwhile TIOs on their return from posting abroad, the first right of their placement will rest with Secretary Commerce for a period of upto two years.
- c) Extensions of tenures on grounds of family-related issues (pregnancy, illness of immediate family members) shall not be allowed. However, in exceptional cases, extension upto one year shall be allowed with the approval of Prime Minister. The TIOs shall be allowed to stay at their own expenses after relinquishing charge, provided their parent departments allow them to stay after charge relinquishment.

**4) Pre-Departure Formalities:**

The following additional pre-departure formalities (in addition to those required by the Establishment Division) shall be fulfilled by the selected TIOs:

- a) The private sector candidates shall submit an undertaking that they face no conflict of interest of any nature arising out of their posting at the allocated station and shall immediately disclose such conflict of interest in case that occurs during the continuation of their tenure.
- b) After completion of training and attachment, all selected TIOs shall submit a provisional Economic Outreach Plan in the format prescribed by the Ministry of Commerce. Within 60 days of arrival at the place of posting, the TIOs shall finalize and submit their Economic Outreach Plans to Ministry of Commerce which will become part of their respective KPIs.

**5) Joining and Relieving Time:**

The joining time for the selected TIO shall be fifteen days, and likewise the relieving time for relinquishing TIO shall also be fifteen (15) days, thereby allowing an overlap of fifteen (15) days.

**6) Monitoring and Evaluation Committee:**

The Trade Officers Monitoring and Evaluation Committee (TOMECE) of the Ministry of Commerce (**Annex-B**) shall continue to monitor and evaluate performance of the TIOs based on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) (**Annex-C**). It shall recall those TIOs whose performance is found to be "Below Average" anytime during his / her tenure by the Ministry of Commerce.

**7) Nomenclature of Posts:**

The current nomenclature of the posts shall remain unchanged, to reflect the true nature of the job [Trade and Investment Minister / Consul General (BS-20); Trade and Investment Counsellor (BS-19); Trade and Investment Attache (BS-18)]. These Officers will also be responsible to the Board of Investment for investment related tasks.

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**8) Location:**

In order to be close to the business centres, where necessary the Ministry of Commerce shall relocate the Trade Offices (out of the Mission) to areas within or in vicinity of Commercial areas of the cities.

**9) Relaxation or Exception to the above Policy Guidelines:**

There shall be no relaxation or exception to the above policy guidelines except with the prior approval of the Prime Minister.

2. This policy supersedes all previous policies for Selection of Trade and Investment Officers in Pakistan's Missions abroad.



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**POLICY GUIDELINES FOR SELECTION, APPOINTMENT AND POSTING OF  
TRADE AND INVESTMENT OFFICERS (BS-18 TO BS-21) IN PAKISTAN'S  
MISSIONS ABROAD**

**ELIGIBILITY AND INELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

**1. Public Sector Candidates**

**Conditions for Eligibility:**

- a) Officers (BPS-18 to BPS-20) of all occupational groups of the Civil Service of Pakistan having served for at least three (3) of the last ten (10) years on relevant positions in the office of Prime Minister and in Federal Government in Ministry of Commerce (and organizations under it, except insurance sector), Finance Division, Economic Affairs Division, Revenue Division, Ministry of Industries and Production, Ministry of National Food Security and Research, Federal Board of Revenue, Board of Investment and in offices of Chief Ministers and in Provincial Departments of Finance, Commerce, Investment, Industries, Provincial Revenue Authorities and Boards of Revenue. TPS employees of TDAP (TPS- 1&2) are also eligible.
- b) Officers in promotion zone can apply, subject to submission of a notarized undertaking that (if selected) they will not demand promotion-related trainings/actualization of promotion at the same post/upgradation of the posts during their tenure.
- c) Upper age limit is 56 years (on the closing date of submission of applications).

**Conditions for Ineligibility:**

- a) Officers against whom are pending disciplinary proceedings or those who have been awarded major penalty under Efficiency & Disciplinary Rules, 1973.
- b) Officers who are beneficiaries of Plea Bargain / Voluntary Return.
- c) Officers who do not apply through the proper channel.
- d) Officers who do not have complete Performance Evaluation Reports (PERs) for the last five years at the time of interviews with minimum average of 'VERY GOOD' or total of 45/50 marks in PERs.
- e) Officers who have been posted for a total of six years in Pakistan's Missions abroad (in any number of tenures) except for CTG officers who will be regulated under Para-3(a) of the Policy
- f) Officers who were previously posted against any of the posts in the Missions but were recalled on account of poor performance.



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