

# BIDA Work Permit Application Checklist for Foreign Employees

Bangladesh | BIDA OSS Portal | Do not allow a foreign employee to start work before the permit is issued

Any foreign national working in Bangladesh must hold a valid BIDA work permit. This applies regardless of company type: private limited company, subsidiary, branch office, or liaison office. **The foreign employee cannot legally start work until the permit is issued and in hand.** The application is submitted through the BIDA One Stop Service portal at [bidaoss.gov.bd](http://bidaoss.gov.bd). Typical processing time is 4-8 weeks after a complete application is submitted.

## STEP 1 Check the foreign employee quota before you start

### 1 : 5

Standard ratio  
(most sectors)

### 1 : 20

Manufacturing  
(EPZ and non-EPZ)

### Varies

Senior management  
(BIDA may grant exceptions)

Confirm how many Bangladeshi employees are currently on payroll

*Foreign employee quota is based on active Bangladeshi employees at the time of application.*

Confirm how many work permits your company currently holds

*The number of approved foreign employees is also capped by your BIDA company registration or BIDA approval letter (for branch/liaison offices).*

Confirm the new position falls within your remaining quota

*If you are already at the quota limit, apply to BIDA for a quota increase before submitting the work permit application.*

Confirm the role is listed in your BIDA company registration or BIDA approval letter (for branch/liaison)

*If the role type is new, a BIDA amendment may be required before the work permit can be approved.*

## STEP 2 Prepare company documents

Certificate of incorporation from RJSC (or BIDA approval letter for branch/liaison offices)

Valid trade license

TIN certificate

VAT/BIN certificate (if registered)

Memorandum and Articles of Association

Board resolution or appointment letter authorizing the foreign employee for the specified role

Organization chart showing the new position and reporting line

*The chart should show the full company structure, number of Bangladeshi employees, and where the foreign national fits. BIDA uses this to verify quota.*

Justification letter explaining why the role cannot be filled by a Bangladeshi national

*This is one of the most scrutinized parts of the application. Be specific: list the technical skills, language requirements, or headquarters requirements that make a local hire impractical for this specific role.*

Last 6 months bank statements of the company

*Shows the company is financially active and can support the payroll.*

Salary structure / offer letter for the foreign employee

*The salary must be transferred to a Bangladesh bank account. BIDA may cross-check salary payment records on renewal.*

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## STEP 3 Prepare personal documents for the foreign employee

|  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | Passport copy (valid for at least 6 months beyond the requested work permit end date)                                                                                                                                                                 |
|  | Recent passport-size photograph                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|  | Educational qualifications (degree certificates, diplomas)<br><i>Must match the requirements stated in the justification letter. A senior technical role requiring a degree must show the degree.</i>                                                 |
|  | Professional certifications (if the role requires them)                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|  | Curriculum vitae (CV/resume)<br><i>Should be consistent with educational qualifications and experience certificates. Inconsistencies between the CV and experience letters are a common rejection cause.</i>                                          |
|  | Experience certificates from all previous employers listed on the CV<br><i>On company letterhead, signed by HR or an authorized signatory. Must state: role, dates of employment, and key responsibilities. BIDA requires these to be verifiable.</i> |
|  | Police clearance certificate from country of origin<br><i>Issued by the national police authority in the employee's home country. Must be recent (typically within 6 months of application). Get it apostilled or embassy-attested.</i>               |
|  | Medical certificate<br><i>A general fitness certificate from a registered medical practitioner. Some categories require specific tests.</i>                                                                                                           |

## STEP 4 No Objection Certificate (NOC) from sector ministry (if required)

|  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|--|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | Confirm whether your sector requires a ministry NOC<br><i>Required sectors include: banking and financial services (Bangladesh Bank), insurance (IDRA), telecommunications (BTRC), pharmaceuticals (DGDA), energy and power (BPDB / MoPEMR), shipping and ports. If in doubt, confirm with BIDA before applying.</i> |
|  | [IF REQUIRED] Submit NOC application to the relevant sector ministry<br><i>Allow 2-4 weeks for NOC processing. Do not submit the BIDA work permit application until the NOC is in hand.</i>                                                                                                                          |
|  | [IF REQUIRED] Receive NOC letter from the sector ministry and include it in the BIDA application                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

## STEP 5 Submit through the BIDA portal (4-8 weeks for approval)

|  |                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|--|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | Log in to BIDA One Stop Service portal at <a href="http://bidaoss.gov.bd">bidaoss.gov.bd</a>                                                                                                                  |
|  | Start a new work permit application and select the correct company entity                                                                                                                                     |
|  | Complete the online application form (personal details, role, salary, work permit duration requested)                                                                                                         |
|  | Upload all company documents (Step 2)                                                                                                                                                                         |
|  | Upload all personal documents (Step 3)                                                                                                                                                                        |
|  | [IF APPLICABLE] Upload NOC from sector ministry (Step 4)                                                                                                                                                      |
|  | Pay BIDA work permit fee through the portal<br><i>Fee: BDT 5,000 per year of permit (typical permit is 1-2 years). Payable online.</i>                                                                        |
|  | Submit the application and note the application reference number                                                                                                                                              |
|  | Monitor the BIDA portal for clarification requests<br><i>BIDA may ask for additional documents or revised justification. Respond within the stated deadline. Failure to respond suspends the application.</i> |

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- ☐ Receive BIDA work permit approval letter
- ☐ Print or save the work permit (the foreign employee must carry it)

## STEP 6 Visa (if the employee is not yet in Bangladesh)

With the BIDA work permit issued, apply for a work permit visa at the Bangladesh embassy or high commission in the employee's home country

*The work permit visa category is E-2. It requires the BIDA work permit letter and a visa application fee.*

Once in Bangladesh on a work permit visa, the employee can begin work

[EMPLOYEES ALREADY ON VISIT VISA] If the employee is already in Bangladesh on a visit visa, confirm visa status before they begin any work. Working on a visit visa is illegal regardless of whether the work permit has been approved.

*Some employees arrive on a visit visa while the work permit is being processed. They may stay but cannot work until the permit is in hand and the appropriate visa endorsement is arranged.*

## Renewal checklist (start 3 months before expiry)

Track work permit expiry date for each foreign employee

Submit renewal application 3 months before expiry

*A lapsed work permit means the employee is working without authorization. BIDA imposes penalties on the company, not just the employee.*

For renewal, prepare: updated company financials, updated payslips or salary payment proof, updated employee CV and passport copy, updated police clearance (if expired)

Pay renewal fee: BDT 5,000 per year of extension

[BRANCH / LIAISON] Confirm BIDA company approval has not expired before submitting renewal

*An expired BIDA company approval blocks all work permit renewals. BIDA company approval must be renewed first.*

## Estimated timeline from decision to first day of work

| Stage                                      | Activity                                                       | Estimated time     |
|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1                                          | Quota check and role confirmation                              | 1-3 days           |
| 2-3                                        | Prepare company and personal documents                         | 2-3 weeks          |
| 4                                          | NOC from sector ministry (if required)                         | 2-4 weeks          |
| 5                                          | BIDA portal review and approval                                | 4-8 weeks          |
| 6                                          | Visa application at Bangladesh embassy (if outside Bangladesh) | 1-2 weeks          |
| Total: decision to first day of legal work |                                                                | Approx. 8-16 weeks |

### Important notes

The work permit is tied to the specific company and role. If the employee changes role significantly or moves to a different company, a new application is required.

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The salary must be paid to a Bangladesh bank account and must match the salary stated in the work permit application. BIDA checks this on renewal.

A foreign employee on a visit visa cannot work, even if the work permit is under review. Let the employee remain idle (or work remotely for the parent company) until the permit is issued.

Police clearance certificates expire. For a 2-year work permit renewal, a new police clearance may be required if the original is more than 6 months old at the time of renewal.

If BIDA rejects the application, the rejection letter specifies the reason. Most rejections are fixable: insufficient justification, quota exceeded, or document mismatch. Reapply with the issue corrected.

Track every foreign employee's permit expiry date in a central calendar. A lapsed permit exposes the company (not just the employee) to penalties.

## Common rejection reasons (and how to avoid them)

Justification letter too generic: "We need someone with international experience" is not enough. Name the specific technical skill or headquarters role requirement that makes a Bangladeshi hire impractical for this position.

Quota limit reached: The system blocks applications if you are at or over the ratio. Confirm quota before preparing documents.

CV-document mismatch: An experience letter showing 3 years at a firm that the CV lists as 5 years is a red flag. Make sure all documents are consistent.

Police clearance expired or not apostilled: Get a fresh one if needed. Apostille or embassy attestation is mandatory.

NOC missing for a regulated sector: BIDA will not process the application without it. Confirm whether your sector requires one before you start.

**We handle the full BIDA work permit process for foreign employees.** Khan Akber & Co. prepares the application, coordinates the NOC where required, reviews every document before submission, and monitors BIDA for clarification requests. We manage renewals so no permit lapses. Free initial consultation. [khanakber.com/contact](http://khanakber.com/contact)