

Announcement on the Call for Applications for Recommendation for Special Naturalization of Outstanding Private-Sector Talent

In order to identify and attract outstanding global talent that will contribute to the Korean economy, applications are invited from candidates in the private sector for recommendation for special naturalization, as follows.

February 11, 2026

Minister of SMEs and Startups

1 Overview of the Special Naturalization for Outstanding Talent [hereinafter referred to as 'Special Naturalization']

□ Overview

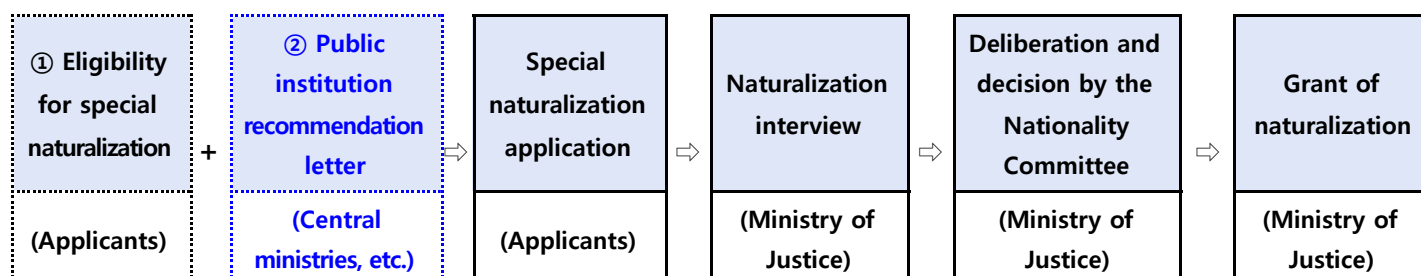
o The Ministry of Justice grants Korean nationality to individuals who possess outstanding abilities in science, the economy, culture, sports, etc., and are recognized as likely to contribute to Korea's national interest. Instead of requiring renunciation of the applicant's original nationality, dual nationality is permitted.

* Special naturalization categories (10 Categories) : 1. Prominent persons, 2. Excellent in academic research, 3. Excellent in culture and arts, 4. Excellent in sports, 5. Outstanding employees from domestic or overseas companies, 6. Employees in new-industry or advanced-technology fields, 7. Holders of original/core technologies in new-industry or advanced-technology fields, 8. Holders of intellectual property rights, 9. Holders of professional skills/technologies, 10. Employment at international organizations

□ Eligibility Requirements and Nationality Acquisition Procedures

o Final approval for naturalization is granted to ① individuals who meet the basic requirements for special naturalization, have received ② a recommendation from a public institution or similar entity, and have completed the nationality acquisition procedures administered by the Ministry of Justice.

<Procedure for Acquisition of Nationality (Special Naturalization)>



□ MSS Recommendation Categories

o The Ministry of SMEs and Startups(MSS) plans to issue letters of recommendation for the private sector categories listed below, following a review, among the ten special naturalization categories.

* As a government ministry supporting businesses, the MSS actively identifies and attracts global talent that can contribute to the Korean economy. Recommendations may also be made through institutions other than the MSS.

<Basic Requirements for Special Naturalization in the Private Sector Categories>

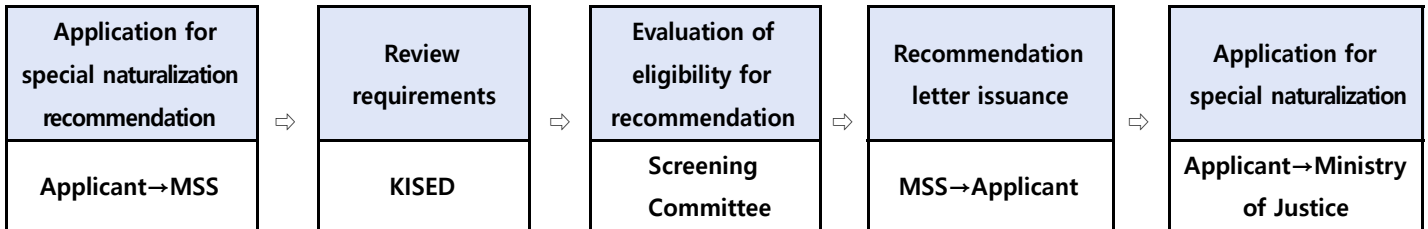
| No. | Category | Basic Requirements (Experience, etc.) | Income Requirements |
|-----|--|---|---|
| 5 | Employees from domestic or overseas companies; Employees at foreign-invested companies | <p>① A person with at least 3 years of work experience at one of the world's top 300 companies selected within the past 3 years by leading global economic magazines (e.g., FORTUNE, THE ECONOMIST), who works (or has a confirmed plan to work) on a full-time basis as an inside director (executive) at a large enterprise subject to the 「Monopoly Regulation and Fair Trade Act」.</p> <p>※ Foreign-national compatriots who have at least one year of work experience at a top 500 company may be exempt from the domestic employment requirement if their potential contribution to the national interest is specifically recognized through contracts (or collaboration) with the Government of the Republic of Korea or major domestic corporations.</p> <p>② A person with at least 3 years of work experience at one of the world's top 300 companies selected within the past 3 years by leading global economic magazines, who works (or has a confirmed plan to work) on a full-time basis as an inside director at a middle standing enterprise subject to the 「Special Act on the Promotion of Growth and Strengthening of Competitiveness of Middle Standing Enterprises」.</p> <p>※ Foreign-national compatriots who have at least two years of work experience at a top 500 company may be exempt from the domestic employment requirement if their potential contribution to the national interest is specifically recognized through contracts (or collaboration) with the Government of the Republic of Korea or major domestic corporations.</p> <p>③ A person who has worked for at least 3 years as an inside director or above at a domestic company located in Korea with</p> <p>(i) at least 100 regular employees and (ii) paid-in capital exceeding KRW 8 billion.</p> <p>※ For foreign-national compatriots: at least 2 years.</p> <p>④ The representative of a sole proprietorship or a corporation whose average annual export performance over the last 3 years is at least USD 5 million (the entity must be an SME under the 「Framework Act on Small and Medium Enterprises」, and the applicant must be the actual principal manager).</p> <p>※ For foreign-national compatriots: at least USD 2million.</p> <p>⑤ A person who (as representative director or above) has resided in Korea for at least 3 years at a foreign-invested company (individual or corporation) that invested at least USD 500,000 under the 「Foreign Investment Promotion Act」, and who has (i) a tax payment record of at least KRW 300 million and (ii) employs at least 30 Korean nationals.</p> | <p>At least twice the per capita GNI (1.5 times or more for foreign-national compatriots)</p> <p>Supporting documents proving performance</p> <p>Supporting documents proving performance</p> |
| 6 | Employees in new-industry or advanced-technology fields | <p>A person with at least 2 years of research or development experience in a new-industry field* or an advanced-technology field**, who is employed (or is scheduled to be employed) by a domestic company or research institute.</p> <p>* New-industry fields: System Semiconductors, Bio-health, Future Vehicles, Artificial Intelligence, etc.</p> <p>** Advanced-technology fields: New materials, Information Technology(IT), e-business, Biotechnology(BT), Nanotechnology(NT), Transport machinery, Environment/energy, Digital home appliances, Convergence industries, Software.</p> <p>※ Foreign-national compatriots with at least one year of work experience may be exempt from the domestic employment requirement if their potential contribution to the national interest is specifically recognized through contracts (or collaboration) with domestic companies or research institutions.</p> | <p>At least twice the per capita GNI (1.5 times or more for foreign-national compatriots)</p> |

| | | | |
|---|--|--|------|
| 7 | Holders of original technologies in new-industry, advanced technology, science, etc. | A person who possesses world-class original/core technologies in new-industry, advanced-technology, science, etc., that have not yet been commercialized. | None |
| 8 | Holders of domestic/overseas intellectual property rights | A person who holds domestic or overseas intellectual property rights (patents, utility model rights, design rights) and whose total income derived from patents, etc. is at least KRW 100 million (including income from assignment/transfer of patent rights). | None |

Recommendation Procedure (MSS)

- o Receive recommendation applications, review requirements, undergo evaluation by the committee, and issue recommendation letters.

<Special naturalization recommendation procedure of MSS>



2 Application Eligibility and Required Documents

Application Eligibility

- o A person who seeks special naturalization and meets the basic eligibility requirements for special naturalization in the relevant field.

Required Documents : Please submit online using the attached form

| Required Documents | Remarks |
|--|--|
| ① All documents proving the fulfillment of the basic requirements for special naturalization | The language of submission depends on the respective certificate format. |
| ② Current employer's request for special naturalization recommendation | Submit in Korean |
| ③ Application for special naturalization recommendation for outstanding talent | Submissions may be made in either Korean or English |
| ④ Consent to provision, use, and collection of personal information | Submit in Korean |
| ⑤ Copy of passport or residence card | |
| ⑥ Other materials required for review (optional) | |

※ View the Fortune Global 500 Companies List : fortune.com/ranking/global500/

Evaluation Procedure

① Requirements Review

- Review whether the basic requirements for special naturalization are met based on the submitted documents
- Applicants may be excluded from review if the basic requirements are not met, if the submitted documents cannot be verified, or if false information is provided.

② Presentation Evaluation

- Applicants must attend the screening committee in person (video participation is permitted in unavoidable cases) and present the validity of the special naturalization recommendation, etc.
- Presentation time : approximately 20 minutes / Q&A session : approximately 10 minutes

③ Decision on Recommendation

- The screening committee will comprehensively review the submitted documents and presentation and make a decision.

 Evaluation Criteria

- Comprehensive evaluation of the applicant's excellence and potential contribution to the national interest

<Recommendation Evaluation Criteria>

| Evaluation Items | Details | Points |
|---|---|--------|
| 1. Basic qualifications & competencies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Excellence of academic background/major ■ Professional competencies and achievements (certifications, awards, papers, patents, etc.) | 20 |
| 2. Excellence of prior experience, etc. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Level/duration/difficulty of experience ■ Key achievements and accomplishments | 20 |
| 3. Role and performance at current organization/company | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Position and level of responsibility within the company ■ Major achievements within the company | 25 |
| 4. Potential contribution to national interest in the future | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Specificity of the contribution plan ■ Feasibility (capabilities, resources, networks, etc.) | 25 |
| 5. Intention to settle in Korea | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Plan to reside in Korea, Intention to settle with family/ community, Korean language proficiency, etc | 10 |

4 Application and Submission

Application Period : Starting February 11, 2026, applications will be accepted on a rolling basis.

Application Method : Submit online at :

<https://airtable.com/appkd63wQDUOCZTXj/pagM7eKmKT2LH59XL/form>

5 Notes

Notes on Application

- o The application form and all documents must be submitted directly by the applicant for special naturalization.
- If the applicant and the person listed on the application form and submitted documents do not match, the applicant may be excluded from the evaluation process.
- o The applicant may be requested to submit additional or supplementary documents necessary for verification of eligibility and evaluation, and the applicant must cooperate.

Notes on Evaluation

- o The applicant must personally participate in the presentation evaluation (no proxy presentations allowed). Failure to participate will result in disqualification from the evaluation process.
- o To ensure fairness, the entire presentation evaluation process may be recorded or videotaped.

Notes after Recommendation

- o Receiving a special naturalization recommendation letter from the Ministry of SMEs and Startups does not necessarily mean final approval of the special naturalization.
- After receiving the special naturalization recommendation letter, the applicant must apply for special naturalization with the Ministry of Justice and undergo the Ministry's final review process.
 - * Special naturalization may not be approved depending on the results of the Ministry of Justice's review.
- o Even after recommendation, if it is discovered that the basic requirements for special naturalization are not met or that false information has been submitted, the recommendation may be revoked.

(Application Inquiries) Global Startup Center

o Email : startup.korea.visa@gmail.com

(Other Inquiries) KISED

o Email : yjee@kised.or.kr